

The Tennessee Press

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DeLoach resigns as Times Free Press president

STAFF REPORTS
Chattanooga Times Free Press
March 4, 2022

Jeff DeLoach, president of the Chattanooga Times Free Press for the past five years, resigned in March as head of the Chattanooga Publishing Co.

Mark Lane, president of the newspaper division of WEHCO Media, Inc., which owns the Times Free Press, is acting as the interim president of the newspaper until a replacement is named. Lane said he will split his time between Chattanooga and Little Rock, Ark., where WEHCO is based, until the company hires the next president for the Times Free Press.

"We continue to be committed to Chattanooga, our readers, advertis-



DeLoach

ers and employees," Lane said Friday, March 4. "We're extremely impressed with the quality of journalism that the Times Free Press covers in the local commu-

nity. We know that we have a fantastic newspaper in Chattanooga." He said the company will begin an immediate search for the next president. "We are very blessed to have a very strong executive leadership team in Chattanooga," Lane said.

WEHCO Media Inc. operates daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, digital service agencies and cable

television companies in six states. The company has been family-owned since its founding in 1909.

DeLoach, a 61-year-old native of Jackson, Tenn., who has worked in the newspaper industry for the past four decades, succeeded Bruce Hartmann as head of the Times Free Press in 2017 when Hartmann took a job with the UT Medical Center.

"When I married Laurette in 1991, I told her we are going to work hard, save, and retire at 55," DeLoach said. "Well, it's been almost seven years past that now. This year marked my 42nd year in the newspaper business and we have decided it's time to retire, travel, and on occasion travel to visit our three children.

"The newspaper business has

been really good to me and my family. The opportunity five years ago to move back to my home state of Tennessee and work for WEHCO Media in Chattanooga has been a real blessing -- and a fantastic way to end my time in the business. It is a great company and the TFP is a great newspaper. We plan to remain in Chattanooga and Tennessee permanently."

The Times Free Press publishes two monthly magazines, Chatter and Edge; a quarterly magazine, Get Out Chattanooga; and three community newspapers. WEHCO also operates Flypaper, a digital marketing agency, in Chattanooga.

This story includes content researched and added by TPA.

Small but mighty: Community newspapers play important role

Editor's note: This column was edited to fit the space available.

When the staff at Grainger Today learned Gilmore Dock was on fire, we were pushing against the deadline for that week's issue.

Following a quick discussion, Grainger Today's reporter raced from the building to go see what was happening. As the reporter headed out to see the situation firsthand, those left in the office checked social media feeds and found photos and videos being



GUEST COLUMN

TRACEY WOLFE

shared of what appeared to be a heartbreakingly large blaze which would certainly deserve reporting by the local newspaper.

Some local TV news stations

soon picked up on the social media posts and began reporting the fire, even as two of our staff were onsite at that point, attempting to photograph the fire and those battling the blaze. Some of the TV news stations shared photos and/or video that had been shared on social media when reporting the fire.

An attempt to stave off printing the just-completed (on our end) issue of Grainger Today in order to inform readers about the fire was unsuccessful. Stopping the presses

doesn't happen in real life the way it does in Hollywood. The printer had already undertaken the printing of that week's issue.

The fire at Gilmore Dock happened Tuesday, Feb. 1. With the Wednesday, Feb. 2 issue already in print, the question became what to do about that coverage? Should we throw some photos online and leave at that, since the next printed issue would hit the racks more

See **WOLFE** Page 2

Body camera public record exemption needs update for more accountability

DEBORAH FISHER
TN Coalition for Open Government
February 25, 2022

Editor's note: This article was published by the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government Feb. 25 and does not include any state legislature discussion or action that might have taken place since that date.

A public records exemption that makes confidential certain video footage captured by law enforcement body cameras is set to expire this year. And instead of renewing the exemption, we need lawmakers to review its problems and fix it.

When lawmakers passed the bill in 2017, they put a repeal date on it so that the exemption could be

reviewed. But a bill on the calendar (that was to be heard in early March) in the Senate State and Local Committee would simply extend the exemption another five years.

The exemption makes confidential any police bodycam video that depicts minors when taken inside a K-12 school; the interior of any facility licensed under the "healing

arts" and the "mental health and substance abuse and intellectual and developmental disabilities" parts of the law; and the interior of a private residence that is not being investigated as a crime scene.

The exemption was passed as an effort to protect privacy rights

See **BODYCAM** Page 3

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TPAers with suggestions, questions or comments about items in The Tennessee Press are welcome to contact the managing editor. Call Mike Towle, (615) 293-5771; or email editor@tnpress.com. The deadline for the June 2022 issue is May 3, 2022.

As the world changes, so must we

American novelist, essayist and poet Barbara Kingsolver opined, “The changes we dread most may contain our salvation,” in her book *Small Wonder*. The book is a collection of hopeful essays. That single quote is a warning and hope all wrapped into nine simple words, and it could easily and aptly be applied to the newspaper industry.

For two decades most of us have acknowledged – or have come to acknowledge – that a digital evolution is necessary for our survival. We’ve dreaded the necessary drastic changes due to the unknowns and what is in the grand scheme still is a relatively shallow pool of data to support decisions that will impact our businesses for decades to come.

As the world changes so must we, as painful or as uncomfortable as change might be. It’s literally a matter of survival for our individual businesses, for our industry, and by extension, our democracy.

The Tennessee Press Association also must pivot, change and adapt to the ever-changing landscape.

In recent weeks, your TPA board and membership have approved a number of bylaws changes; some small and some significant. Maybe the most momentous was the move to admit online-only news organizations into our membership. For most of the present membership, it was an easy decision and it



YOUR PRESIDING REPORTER

RICK THOMASON

received overwhelming support when the votes were tallied.

Not surprisingly, that single approval has opened more discussion and debate. What will be the dues structure for online-only organizations? What are the criteria that will allow admission?

As we move forward with the digital evolution, our friends at the Chattanooga Free Press presented another challenge and debate when they recently announced they will soon have just one print day (Sundays) but will publish a robust e-paper the other six days a week. Chattanooga is taking the most aggressive approach to this model, but other publications will come up with the right strategy for them. That makes us take a serious look at the word ‘publish’ and how it’s defined in our bylaws.

Why is it important that we attempt to clarify the meaning of ‘publish’? Because it impacts contests and, more importantly, the dues structure and income of TPA. When dues and income are impact-

ed, so are functions and programs.

What’s next for us to consider? What next-big-thing innovation will present challenges and opportunities? Gosh, if we knew that we’d all be millionaires, right?

Here’s the thing: Whatever that next innovation or speed bump is, we must address it sooner rather than later. We must do our best to stay out in front of ideas, platforms, and trends that present us with more ways to grow and adapt TPA to best meet the needs of our members.

Our association exists to advocate for its membership. That membership looks different than it did 20 years ago. With the recent bylaws changes, TPA membership 20 years from now will hardly resemble what it looks like today. And that’s as it should be.

We must change as the news environment changes. We must be willing to have open minds to the realities of an evolving business. If we are, your TPA will gain in strength and numbers and be an even stronger advocate for you than it is today.

Rick Thomason is Tennessee Press Association president for the 2021-22 term. He is publisher of the Kingsport Times-News/ Johnson City Press and president of Six Rivers Media, LLC.

WOLFE from Page 1

than a week later? The answer to that question was to return to the scene the following day for photos depicting the damage to one of Grainger County’s longtime marinas and add them to photos we had taken of the fire for more complete coverage than anyone else made the effort to provide.

So, what good is a newspaper that might have news that is a week old?

A whole lot of good.

Small community newspapers do a lot with little. Small staffs, limited resources and a lack of clairvoyance among staffers to just know everything that is happening can make for a tough job. Long days, sometimes long weeks, and a nagging sense of guilt that comes with the thought that something has been missed can mean great stress.

What would happen if commu-

nity newspapers didn’t exist? Community newspapers are hyper-focused on the local community.

Do you want to know what is happening in your local government? Check the local newspaper.

What upcoming events are planned in the community? Check the local newspaper.

How did that important high school ballgame play out? Check the local newspaper.

What exactly happened during that catastrophic event 15, 20 or more years ago? Check the local newspaper. Local community newspapers create a historical record for the area. A record that would only include the most dramatic news stories if the details were searched at larger news organizations that cover multiple counties’ news.

Coverage of local government meetings, school activities and athletics, business openings, fundraisers, and even local folks with amaz-

ing talents won’t often be found in other news media’s coverage. Sure, a TV news station or a larger newspaper might choose to cover a local government meeting if they believe something of large-scale interest might take place, but are they there for every meeting? No.

The local community newspaper is your local government watchdog. Always there, watching for impropriety, or even just bad manners, exhibited by those elected by the trust of their constituents. The local newspaper is present at each county and local city meeting to let citizens know what elected servants are doing, or what they’re failing to do. The local newspaper promotes local businesses and individuals, telling their stories and helping to ensure they are informed about things that affect them.

Tracey Wolfe is editor of Grainger Today.

Get ready for Tri-State Convention in Memphis in June

What are your plans for June 23, 24 and 25? That, of course, is a rhetorical question. You plan to be in Memphis!

It is exciting to think about getting everyone back together, in person, in Memphis, and with publishers and editors from the Mississippi and Arkansas associations for a Tri-State Convention! What a great way to say goodbye to the last two years and hello to the opportunities in front of our members.

COVID has certainly interrupted our regular flow of in-person meetings and conventions, but I believe this summer will be a great opportunity for us all to 'reconnect' in a more meaningful way. I know I have spoken with several of our members that are



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CAROL DANIELS

all ready and thrilled that we will once again be meeting in person.

Leaders from the three associations have been busy planning great speaker sessions, social time, silent auction and, of course, some great meals. I do hope you are planning to attend. We are all looking forward to seeing YOU!

Legislative matters

As I write this, The Tennessee

General Assembly was still in session and there are several bills that we are following and working. Most of these bills concern electronic meetings, which the pandemic brought to the forefront of public policy. Legislators want to define what access and responsibilities the counties and municipalities have to be sure the public has full access. We are also working a couple of bills that could impact public notice. HB2519 and HB2600 would increase the minimum amount that triggers requirement for public notice from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Lawmakers are saying it is time to increase these numbers because they have not been increased for several years. We have been arguing that the 142,428

small businesses (with fewer than 100 employees) in Tennessee would see a \$10,000 business opportunity as one they would like to know about. Some legislators argue that their government constituents tell them they do not have any contracts to offer for bid under \$25,000 now. Our response is, "OK, then why do you need to change the laws? Seems like what we have is working properly."

We will keep you informed as to what you can do to help and what happens to the legislation we are tracking.

Thank you.
Carol

Carol Daniels is executive director of Tennessee Press Association.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

April 2022

- 8-10: 2022 Women in Journalism Workshop, Reynolds Journalism Institute, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo., <https://rjionline.org/>
- 9-10: Family Owners & Next Generation Leadership Conference, in advance of Mega-Conference (see event listed below), JW Marriott Bonnet Creek Resort, Orlando, Fla., newspapers.org/family-owners
- 10-12: News Industry Mega-Conference, presented by America's Newspapers, JW Marriott Bonnet Creek Resort, Orlando, Fla., mega-conference.com

May 2022

- 19-20: E&P and 360 Media Alliance: News Publishing Business Summit, Hilton Hotel Airport, St. Louis, Mo.

June 2022

- 23-25: Tri-State Press Convention, Arkansas • Mississippi • Tennessee, "Bylines, Blues & BBQ," Memphis.
- 23-26: 2022 Investigative Reporters & Editors virtual annual conference, Denver, Co.

July 2022

- 20-24: 2022 International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors Convention, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky.

August 2022

- 25-27: 2022 National Native Media Conference, Native American Journalists Association in partnership with the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University, Tempe, Ariz.

October 2022

- 26-30: Fall National College Media Association Convention in conjunction with Associated Collegiate Press, Grand Hyatt Washington, Washington D.C.

BODYCAM from Page 1

of citizens and children in these places. But it goes too far and puts video that should be subject to the public records law concerning



Fisher

police actions outside the public's reach simply because they occurred in a certain place.

The purpose of body camera video is to record law enforcement interactions with

citizens. When a law enforcement officer is accused, the video could be proof to clear the officer. Or the footage could implicate the officer in violating the law or violating important policies, such as use-of-force or excessive-force policies.

Bodycam footage is important to prosecutors, internal review units, courts and citizens. It's a step up from relying on a person's memory of an event.

Flaw is basing exemption on where, not what

The exemption that was signed into law in 2017 makes bodycam video confidential based on where the video was taken not based on what the body camera footage depicts. That's the flaw.

What if a law enforcement action that has come under official



Submitted photo

review took place in a vet's office or a city animal shelter? In a nursing home? In an alcohol rehab center? In an optometrist's office? In a pharmacy? In a dentist's office? In a podiatrist's office? In a physical therapist's office? In a massage establishment? In an assisted-living facility?

If you were a citizen inside one of these facilities exempt under the law and footage captured what happened to you in your interaction with law enforcement, don't you deserve access to the footage as much as the police officer?

But in these places, according to the current statute, the body camera footage is confidential no matter what's on the video and no matter how important to the public interest in law-enforcement

accountability.

Police may argue that they can release the video even if the statute says the video is confidential. But it is not clear that state law allows law enforcement or anyone else to release a record that is confidential by statute. And even if they had that kind of discretion, it would be their call on whether to do so or not.

Transparency may be allowed in shooting deaths, but not, for example, a chokehold death

One statute (T.C.A. § 38-8-311) allows the investigative record of an "officer-involved shooting

death" to become a public record "after the completion of the prosecutorial function by the district attorney general."

But it only applies when a person was shot and killed by a law enforcement officer. It would not apply, for example, when a person was killed in a chokehold by police. It would not apply when someone was seriously injured or maimed by law enforcement. It would not apply when a school resource officer (considered law enforcement) used excessive force on children in a school.

Individual privacy can still be protected

Individual privacy should still be protected and continues to be an important issue intertwined with the use of body cameras by police.

But it's also possible to protect citizen privacy and innocent bystanders through redaction before video is released. Clients, patients, youth or others in schools or facilities licensed by the state who happen to be captured in a bodycam video but are unrelated to the law enforcement action in question can still be protected in this way.

We need a different approach so that body camera footage can do what it's supposed to do when the video deals with oversight and accountability of law enforcement.

Deborah Fisher is executive director of Tennessee Coalition for Open Government.

A blast from the past can be an advertiser's best idea

In order to look ahead to a new advertising idea, sometimes it helps to take a look at the past. When an advertiser has been in business for a number of years, there are plenty of possibilities.

Let's take a look at a few idea-starters. Although there's some natural overlap, it helps to examine each one separately:

1. Years of experience: This is a good starting point. You can either talk about the number of years the company has been in operation, or you can emphasize the cumulative years key members have been on the team. For example, "We have been in business for 75 years," or "Our service team has a total of 312 years of experience."

By themselves, these facts don't mean much – and in fact, could indicate that the company



AD-LIBS®

JOHN FOUST

is outdated and out of touch with today's consumers. The secret is to connect an age-related statistic to a specific benefit: "Our service team has 312 years of overall experience. This means we have encountered – and successfully diagnosed – just about every plumbing problem."

This kind of information could become the main subject of an image ad campaign – or be shortened to be used as a tagline throughout that company's marketing.

2. Business anniversary: Of course, any business can celebrate an anniversary, even if it's for one year in operation. An anniversary just means more when it's an impressive number.

Your advertiser could throw a party to celebrate the anniversary of when they opened their doors. They could invite customers to drop by for a slice of birthday cake or have a sale featuring "throw-back prices" on selected products.

3. Archives: You advertisers might have a wealth of inspiration in their files. Anything that documents the start and growth of a business can spark ideas. Photos can illustrate the construction of branch offices, the history of relationships with existing customers, or the evolution of flagship products.

You might be surprised at what you find: internal newsletters, early brochures on products that became best sellers, maybe even old copies of ads that announced special events.

4. Profile of founder(s): A conversation with – or about – the people who started the company can uncover some fascinating facts. Could one of these tidbits become the theme of an ad?

5. Then and now (what's changed, what hasn't?): Think of the "New look, same great taste" label we see on so many packaged goods.

When a company has been around for a long time, change is a consideration. Obviously, some older things have been good enough to keep and some things are newer and better. Those things – both old

and new – can be selling points.

Have the advertiser's product lines expanded since the beginning? Are there new locations? New hours?

Does the company still have the customer service focus it had in the beginning? Is that philosophy in a frame – and can it be photographed?

It adds up to this: sometimes, a blast from the past is just what the idea process needs.

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NEWS & MOVES

Tri-State Press Convention set for June 23-25

The Tri-State Press Convention is just two months away and set for June 23-25 in Memphis. For the third time in 18 years, the Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee press associations will meet together for a summer convention. Please save the dates and plan to join your fellow newspaper professionals for Bylines, Blues and BBQ!

The convention agenda and details will be available on April 25. Please visit the convention site at www.tristatepress.org.

The event will be held at the Sheraton Memphis Downtown Hotel. The convention rate is \$154 plus tax and parking, per night. Reservations may be made by calling (844) 683-8959. The convention hotel code for the special rate is PAJ.

This will be TPA's second in-person event since February 2020.

*Staff reports
March 20, 2022*

Adams names Hochanadel as VP of HR

Adams Publishing Group, parent company of The Daily Times, named Faith Hochanadel its vice



Hochanadel

president of human resources for the East Division and head of the companywide HR division.

Hochanadel was most recently vice president of human resources

at InhabitIQ, a Knoxville-based tech company. She has worked in the human resources industry for 18 years, is certified by HRCI and SHRM, and is an active member of the Tennessee Valley Human Resource Association.

"We are very pleased to have Faith join Adams Publishing Group as VP of human resources. She has the right experience and education to lead our team forward," said Nick Monico, chief operating officer of Adams Publishing Group.

Mark Adams, CEO/President of APG said, "Faith's experience outside of the media sector will bring a fresh perspective to our organization as we centralize HR across APG."

Her appointment was to be effective Feb. 21. Hochanadel will be based in Maryville at The Daily Times.

Hochanadel received her Masters of Legal Studies, human resource management, summa cum

laude, from Trinity Law School in June 2020. Her undergraduate degree was in biology from Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Va. She spent her junior year abroad in Reading, England, and after graduation she worked as an au pair in Geneva, Switzerland.

Hochanadel lives in Knoxville with her husband of 24 years and her two daughters.

Most weekends are spent on the sidelines of a soccer field, cheering on her high schooler. She is happy to work in Maryville, having previously lived here for 10 years and having been a member of the Junior Service League of Maryville for five years.

She loves reading and learning, traveling and meeting people.

*The Daily Times, Maryville
Feb. 22, 2022*

Sisco named executive editor of Daily Times

Award-winning veteran journalist Mike Sisco has been named executive editor at The Daily Times in Maryville.

The Eastern Kentucky University alum and decorated U.S. Navy veteran succeeds J. Todd Foster, who departed The Daily Times in December 2021.



Sisco

Prior to originally joining The Daily Times in 1999, Sisco worked at the Mountain Citizen and the Martin County Sun, (both in Inez, Ky.); Logan (W.Va.) Banner, and the Lincoln (W.Va.) Journal. Along the way, Sisco has been awarded by the Kentucky Weekly Press Association, the Kentucky Press Association and the West Virginia Press association.

He left the area in 2001 for a 10-year stint at the St. Croix (Virgin Islands) Avis before returning to The Daily Times in 2011, rising through the ranks from copy editor/designer to assistant news editor, news editor and city editor.

"I'm thrilled that Mike has accepted the position of executive

editor. Mike has the experience and stamina to lead our news team by example," Daily Times Publisher Bryan Sandmeier said. "Mike has been part of our team for 10 years, earning the respect of the staff. This decision was easy. Mike is an excellent fit to move us forward."

Sisco said he looked forward to the challenges ahead — and to deepening his connection to Blount County.

"As a child of eastern Kentucky, the mountains are in my blood," he said. "I am lucky to be able to live and work in the most beautiful area in the country. I'm looking forward to developing strong bonds with the Blount County community and leading the dedicated staff at The Daily Times."

*The Daily Times, Maryville
March 4, 2022*

See **NEWS & MOVES** Page 8



Tennessee Press Service Advertising Placement Snapshot

	ROP:	Networks:
February 2022	\$89,251	\$22,716
Year* as of Feb. 28	\$283,572	\$72,007

* The TPS Fiscal Year runs Dec. 1 through Nov. 30

Seize opportunity to steer, moderate election noise

Election coverage was a priority when I toiled behind the editor's desk. It was all-hands-on-deck in the newsroom as we sought information to help voters make their choices.

As a final step, we endorsed in all races from the city council to U.S. president. Many newspapers today, small and large, have regrettably dropped weighing in on the editorial page. I believe it's a missed opportunity, but that's a topic for a different column.

Newspapers do have the opportunity to provide meaningful coverage at a time when substantive debate is often lost in the volumes of campaign rhetoric. Campaigns are increasingly sophisticated in targeting their audiences. The messages, unfortunately, are all too often sound bites that lack meaningful context.

Newspapers should step up and fill the void – use your community knowledge to provide an inside look at candidates, to set a framework for constructive debate on issues. It takes work, and now is the time to start planning for the November 2022 elections.

Comprehensive election coverage can be exhausting and strain



COMMUNITY NEWSROOM SUCCESS

JIM PUMARLO

newsrooms already strapped for resources. Focus efforts on those races that matter most to your readers and those contests where you have the greatest insight. Local contests should take priority.

Here is one checklist, in no particular order, to consider as you prepare for elections. You can certainly expand during a brainstorming session with staffs.

Examine the races. Review coverage from the previous election to identify issues that generated the most attention and see if the topics are relevant in this cycle. Go beyond the newspaper family, and solicit perspectives from others in the community.

Create master calendar. Identify key internal and external dates that provide benchmarks for substantive coverage. Internal dates include such things as a schedule

for candidate profiles and question-and-answer (Q&A) on hot-button topics. External dates include such items as campaign finance reports and candidate forums.

Be uniform in announcing candidacies. Incumbents and challengers alike will scrutinize all aspects of coverage. Consistency is key, especially when announcing their candidacies. It's likely the first opportunity to introduce many of these individuals to readers, and it sets the tone for fair and responsible coverage of races and issues.

Plan play-by-play coverage. Campaigns are a continuum from initial announcements to rallies and debates to the barrage of press releases. Each element prompts a decision. Does the statement or event warrant broad public attention? If so, does each candidate deserve a voice and have an opportunity to be in your report?

Stick to issues. Coverage of local races can be especially challenging as candidates are friends, neighbors and co-workers. The best course is to focus on issues and avoid straying into personalities.

Acknowledge that some contests simply fall off the radar.

Candidates for state and federal offices are certain to seek attention for their campaigns. News organizations have strong arguments to devote resources to local candidates. At the same time, set criteria for reports on regional and/or statewide races.

Identify criteria for covering debates. Evaluate the sponsors. Consider the timing of debates with respect to other planned stories.

Be alert to races that demand special attention. Plans must be flexible. Staffs must be ready to pivot for distinctive developments in races that might not have been on the radar.

Enlist a citizens panel. Take the initiative to provide a variety of perspectives on the issues and candidates. Consider enlisting a panel of citizens representative of community demographics. Solicit their observations at critical twists and turns during the campaign. Postings can be online, providing timely and relevant commentary.

More and more citizens are turned off by today's political dynamics, and for good reason. Campaigns increasingly ramp up rhetoric that serves to energize their bases but also further

polarizes voters. Hyper-partisan politics unfortunately is becoming commonplace in local politics, too.

Newspapers have the opportunity to play a critical role by setting standards for fair and responsible coverage of public affairs. Take the lead in elevating the quality of debate in the months-long election season. As one editor aptly stated, "To sustain democracy, you need people who care about facts and want to read facts. That's what we're here for."

Grab the opening. A civilized and meaningful discourse on the issues will benefit the candidates, the voters and your community.

Jim Pumarlo is former editor of the Red Wing (Minn.) Republican Eagle. He writes, speaks and provides training on community newsroom success strategies. He is author of "Journalism Primer: A Guide to Community News Coverage," "Votes and Quotes: A Guide to Outstanding Election Coverage" and "Bad News and Good Judgment: A Guide to Reporting on Sensitive Issues in Small-Town Newspapers." He can be reached at www.pumarlo.com and welcomes comments and questions at jim@pumarlo.com.

OBITUARIES

Sherri Gardner Howell

Sherri Gardner Howell, the trusted longtime columnist and features and entertainment editor at the Knoxville News Sentinel, passed away on Tuesday, March 15. She was 67.

Gardner Howell spent her life telling stories through her column, oftentimes chronicling her own family. This connected her to the people of East Tennessee, many of whom felt they knew her even if they'd never met.

She died while on a cruise with her husband, Neville Howell, in Kingston, Jamaica, after a brief illness, according to family.

Gardner Howell was the "mama" of the newsroom, retired longtime food writer Mary Constantine said, someone who nurtured and cared for her reporters but also someone who knew how to gently but firmly push to achieve their full potential.



Gardner Howell

"Sherri was a fierce advocate for both her employees and her community, and she inspired loyalty from both," said former News Sentinel reporter Kristi Nelson.

"Her ability to connect with people was part of what made her a beloved friend, a venerated newsroom leader, and a writer and an editor who could recognize a compelling feature story and nurture it to publication."

A native of West Tennessee, Gardner Howell began working for the News Sentinel while a junior at the University of Tennessee in 1975. She was hired the following year.

Gardner Howell wrote her first "Rhymes and Reasons" column in 1988 for the paper's new Family and Religion section. Between then and when it last ran, in May

2017, the column would make her a household name. Later that year she was inducted into the East Tennessee Writers Hall of Fame.

She wrote about food and life and work and her children and family and later her grandchildren. She continued writing the column even as she left the News Sentinel to become publisher of the KNS Media Group's Blount Today.

Most recently she was a columnist for KnoxTNToday, where she wrote her "Kitchen Table Talk" column. She managed her own media relations company, SGH Enterprises, and had recently launched a travel planning company, SGH Go Travel, inspired by her love of cruising.

She is survived by her husband of 44 years, Neville Howell, her sons Trey (Kinsey) of Nashville and Brett (Olivia Neal) of Seattle and three grandsons; and her brother, Tim Gardner of Lexington, Tenn.

March 16, 2022
Knoxville News Sentinel

Bill Lane

Bill Lane, 79, went to be with the Lord Tuesday, March 15, after a brave battle with cancer.

Born May 11, 1942 in Kingsport, Bill was a sportswriter with the Kingsport Times-News for almost 50 years before retiring in 2012. He wrote the Famous Major Hoople column for 47 years as a combination of football predictions and entertainment.

He was named sportswriter of the year in both the state of Virginia and the state of Tennessee. Bill cared for the people and was an inspiration to so many. It was believed that he might have had a hand in athletes he covered getting 2,500 scholarships.

"He was easily one of the most recognizable people in the Model City for an older generation," said fellow sportswriter Tanner Cook. "Even if his world-famous 'Major Amos B. Hoople' column each



Lane

week gave coaches bulletin-board material, they still got a chuckle out of the uniqueness of the writing. . . . And boy, he could spin a tale."

Douglas Fritz, another sportswriter, said, "He started at the Times News one year before I was born. He knew the ropes, the places you could get burned, and the best way to navigate ornery coaches, emotional fans, and cranky editors."

Surviving are his loving wife of 58 years, Rita Gray Lane; two sons, Marty Lane (Debbey), Gate City, VA, and Shannon Lane (Karen), DeLand, FL; one grandson; one great-grandson two sisters' and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

March 16, 2022
Johnson City Press; staff reports

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE I: The Paris Post-Intelligencer

Doug Rogers' designs include Disney castles, Bethlehem

GLENN TANNER
The Paris Post-Intelligencer
April 1, 2022

Paris, Tenn., native Doug Rogers was working for Walt Disney Company when he found himself in the middle of one of the odder moments of his life.

It was in the early part of the last decade, and Rogers was working as a Disney Imagineer — the company's name for the creative team of artists, engineers and designers who make the Disney theme parks come to life.

His mission: Design a castle and other structures for the new Shanghai Disneyland park.

"The first time I was there, I met with this official there to talk about the castle and she was the Communist Party representative," Rogers said. "So I'm thinking, 'Let me get this straight — I'm from Paris, Tennessee, I'm in Shanghai, China, out in the middle of this big mud field, talking with a Chinese Communist Party member about building a fairy tale castle. And it was raining."

"That was one of those really odd moments. It was like, 'Who would have thought this?'" he said.

Now a Glendale, Calif., resident, Rogers is known as a world-class



Submitted

Doug Rogers of Paris, Tenn., stands before the filming set of the city gates of Jerusalem he designed for the History Channel docudrama "Why the Nativity?"

set and production designer and art director who was the designer for two of the six castles at Disney theme parks.

He talked about his career, as well as his current project, while on the train back home from the

Bethlehem set he designed for an upcoming History Channel docudrama on the Nativity.

He actually got his start building castles as a student set builder at Henry County High School (HCHS).

"The first set I ever did was in Paris," he said. "It was a backdrop for the swing choir in the high school and it was a castle. I needed a big area to paint it out on."

Mary Rhea — whose son Gar was a good friend of Rogers

— made the basement of their Tudor-style house on Chickasaw Road available.

After the set was complete, Rogers knew he wanted to do more.

Today, designing castles is a big part of what he's known for. He's created castles out of thin air for animated movies like "Shrek" and "Tangled." He also was the designer of two of the six Disney theme park castles — the Enchanted Storybook Castle at Disneyland Shanghai and the Castle of Magical Dreams at Disneyland Hong Kong.

"During my life or career, at various times I've done castles," Rogers said. "Now I'm Mister Castle, basically. Which is funny, because people who know me from theater think of me as a minimalist-style designer, but everybody from film thinks of me as someone who's overly ornate, and a real stickler for historical detail — stuff like that."

A Voracious Reader

After graduating from HCHS in 1978, Rogers went on to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts in communication design at Baylor University, and a Master of Fine Arts in scenic

See **DESIGNS** Page 10

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE I: The Wilson Post, Lebanon

Autistic entrepreneur starts cardboard box pickup business in Lebanon

Laurie Everett
The Wilson Post, Lebanon
April 16, 2021

One day about a year ago, Lebanon resident Ashton Gilbert solved a bit of a box problem for his mom, invented a way to make money for himself and kept his dad from getting grumpy. Ashton now offers a service for many online shoppers knee-deep in bulky empty boxes.

UnBoxed is his company and was born out of necessity, said his mom, Ashley York. She runs a busy décor and gifts business out of her Lebanon home and found herself smothered in cardboard on a more than regular basis.

"I was having the battle of the boxes with my husband and something had to give," York said.

What "gave" was the seed of an idea for a small business her son Ashton could start that would provide a much-needed service of box pickup during these times when people opt for online purchase and delivery.

Gilbert started UnBoxed early in 2021 and within about a month already had nearly 10 regular customers who depended on him to haul away their boxes.

A lot of York's friends order from Amazon and she quipped a couple months ago Amazon could make a lot of money if it charged to pick up their empty boxes. Customers count on him to pick up their boxes twice a month (usually on Tuesdays) at a cost of \$25 for broken down boxes or \$35 twice a month if Gilbert breaks them

down. He and his mom take them to the Lebanon recycling center.

Ashley Seibers is already a loyal customer. She said she has known Gilbert a couple of years.

"I've been a customer for just over a month now," said Seibers, who lives in Lebanon. "Ashton comes twice a month to pick up my boxes. He's such a great young man. We break them down and he comes and is so timely. He's never missed a pickup."

Seibers works for the state's Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

"Any way I can see a way to support individuals with disabilities I am all in to empower them and give them employment

See **ENTREPRENEUR** Page 7



Photos by Dallus Whitfield, The Wilson Post, Lebanon
Lebanon resident Ashton Gilbert in early 2021 started a business picking up empty cardboard boxes to take to the city recycling center.



Gilbert's home is just down the road from his family. He's one of six siblings and during lockdown and home school Zoom calls it was difficult for him to understand that his video games made too much noise at critical times.

"We first got him a camper and parked it in the driveway, so he could do his thing and have his own space," said York. "Then it so happened a house came up for sale really close and it was just a perfect fit for him."

Gilbert lives pretty much independently a short jog down the street from the family. He uses the microwave to make "mostly the same exact meals every day," and loves his cat named Anibene. Gilbert is a heavy-duty Star Wars fan and can begin and end many conversations with thoughts about the movie franchise.

His mom takes care of the social

media part of the business and is his "business chauffeur," but Gilbert does all the heavy lifting (literally) and all other aspects of his business.

This is a huge milestone for Gilbert.

"Education is and was an extreme battle and struggle," York said.

"Couple autism with an intellectual disability, it was frustrating. But he had a lot of people who believed in him and are patient with him."

It took quite a while for Gilbert's size to catch up with his age, adding another notch of worry for his parents.

And while Gilbert is part of ECF CHOICES (The Employment and Community First CHOICES) program that offers services to help people become employed and live as independently as possible in the community, the pandemic and accompanying lockdown of services put a damper on his case

being picked up thoroughly. So, Unboxed is the perfect job for now. And, maybe for quite some time if the business keeps progressing.

Gilbert said he really likes owning his own business.

"Everyone is really nice to me," he said. "I like to work and I like helping people with recycling cardboard."

When asked about advice he has for new entrepreneurs, he said, "You have to be able to wake up on time, and talk to people."

Already, he's made about \$200. What's he doing with this flush of cash?

"My mom is helping me learn to budget money for household expenses, but I am wanting to save for a VR and PS5 video game system," he said.

But, when one customer paid him in cash, he admits he splurged on some ice cream.

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ENTREPRENEUR from Page 6

options," she said.

Even as a closet Amazon buyer? "Well, I guess you could say that I am an avid Amazon orderer," Seibers said. "Especially during the pandemic, and we are about to be a foster family and have been ordering a ton."

She said anyone who knows Gilbert is behind him 100 percent. "He's just incredible, and, it sure helps us out and eliminates a trip to the recycle center. I hope Ashton's business continues to grow; it's a great service to the community," she said.

This new business is small but mighty, and quite a big deal to Gilbert, 20. He is a special young man who is on the autism spectrum and also has some intellectual disabilities. He graduated from Lebanon High with a special needs diploma and has since wanted to become more independent with his own spending money and with a

focus on an endeavor.

York raised him and his sister as a single mom for nine years and said she noticed something was a bit different when her son was quite young. She said it took a long time to get an official diagnosis of autism.

"He's a unique case," she said. "He's not cut and dried. We all have a preconceived notion about what autism is. Most people think 'Rain Man' or the non-verbals. It is a spectrum. Cases like Ashton's are lesser known."

Gilbert sometimes doesn't look people in the eye, and if someone jokes with him, he might get a tad offended. He takes everything literally. However, he is extremely social, ran for student council in seventh grade — and won — and was a talented wrestler in school.

York said her son's intellectual ability is about ages 8-12, and his maturity level has grown by leaps and bounds the past two years.

"He very punctual, polite and eager to provide a box pickup service for his customers," said York.

NEWS & MOVES from Page 4

Farragut Press changing its publication day

The Farragut Press was set to officially change its weekly publication day from Thursday to Wednesday effective April 6. According to Publisher Tony Cox, the newspaper has been printed and mostly carrier delivered on Wednesdays for years. The official publication day change will not change deadlines.

*Farragut Press
March 22, 2022*

Paris P-I trims print edition to three days

After nearly 100 years of publishing at least five days a week, The Post-Intelligencer is trimming its days in print to three days a week.

Beginning the week of March 14, subscribers started getting three paper editions a week, supplemented by digital offerings including news, sports, obituaries and more in between print editions.

“The pandemic hit everyone differently, and it hit us by impacting our advertisers,” P-I Editor and Publisher Michael Williams said. “Some closed during parts of the pandemic, others couldn’t find inventory, and the bottom line is it affected the advertising in our paper, which is what lets us pay our employees and publish local news for our subscribers.”

The other factor in the decision is the shrinking of the world by



Williams

the internet that has seen several avid P-I readers finding their national, state and world news online rather than in the pages of The P-I.

“When we made the decision to cut to three days per week in print, we freed up our staff to create even more local content for our readers,” Williams said. “We are making the commitment to become the sort of hyper-local community newspaper the industry has seen the most growth in the last several years.”

“We want to cover more than local meetings and sports. We want to tell the stories of the people of Henry County.”

In making a commitment to increase local content during the cut to three print days, The P-I expects readers to find three papers chock-full of local news, features, sports, obituaries and more.

“Our readers won’t see any favorite features go away. We still plan to cover everything we’ve covered before. You’ll still get puzzles, comics, Dear Abby, everything you get the paper for now will still be there, with maybe one exception,” Williams said.

The one feature being eliminated is the daily television grids. An expensive feature that hasn’t had advertiser support in years, The P-I isn’t renewing the TV grids because of the prevalence of TV schedules built into virtually every

digital cable, satellite tv or streaming option. That feature was also to end March 14.

The decision to cut Tuesday and Thursday were partly because those were typically the papers with the least advertising support, and therefore usually the smallest. Results from local sports, obituaries, meetings and more will be published on the website, which is included with each paid subscription.

Throughout the pandemic, The P-I has seen its website continue to flourish with large amounts of traffic, and also has seen new subscribers each month. The P-I will continue to be delivered Monday, Wednesday and Friday with same-day delivery by carrier and U.S. Postal Service in Henry County and in zip codes beginning with 382. Delayed postal delivery will continue in all other postal zip codes.

*The Paris Post-Intelligencer
Feb. 28, 2022*

Fayette Falcon raises per copy price to \$.50 after 41 years

The Fayette Falcon is changing the cost of the newspaper to 50 cents. This is the first change in price since January 15, 1981. Editor and owner Carolyn Rhea states we have needed to make this change for a long time.

The newspaper per copy price had been at 25 cents for all of that time.

*The Fayette Falcon
March 30, 2022*

UT forms educational partnership with major advertising/PR agency

REBECCA WRIGHT
Knoxville News Sentinel
March 25, 2022

When Joseph Mazer thinks about what makes him nervous as dean of the University of Tennessee’s College of Communication and Information, it always comes back to student opportunity.

Mazer wants to make sure that every student in the college has access to meaningful connections that expose students to real-world



Mazer

experiences, whether that’s through internships, hands-on classroom experiences or networking.

Now, because of a one-of-its-kind industry partnership with a world-class Knoxville agency, students in the college’s advertising and public relations programs are guaranteed to get a taste of the real world before graduating.

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville and Tombras are coming together to expand and enhance the College of Communication and Information’s advertising and public relations school.

“This vision, and this gift, actually makes me less nervous, because I know that we are going to be providing those opportunities to students so that they could move through and excel,” Mazer said in an exclusive interview with Knox News.

Not only will the partnership provide industry experiences for current and upcoming advertising and public relations students, but it also will prioritize recruiting historically underrepresented students from high schools across the state of Tennessee, fostering an industry that is more representative of the state and the nation.

“There’s a lot of companies ... that are trying to do the right thing and have a more diverse workforce. What we’re doing is going to be so impactful because it’s addressing the root problem of getting more talent into the system, through the system, and trained up,” Dooley Tombras, president of the agency, said in an exclusive interview with Knox News. “The long-term impact on that really

could change the status quo in the advertising industry.”

The partnership was announced March 25. Here’s what it means for the future of the school.

Recruitment at the high school level

One of the school’s goals is to double the number of underrepresented minority graduates in the advertising and public relations programs at UT.

This starts with connecting with students while they are still in high school and helping them understand what a career in advertising or public relations could look like before they even step foot on campus.

“We’ll have a real grassroots, hands-on approach going into high schools, particularly Flagship high schools across Tennessee, and really get the message there and have it on their mind to start thinking about what a career in advertising and public relations would look like,” said Beth Foster, the director of the school.

There are 38 Flagship high schools across the state. Students accepted into UT from these high schools receive a scholarship that, when combined with the Tennessee HOPE scholarship, covers tuition and mandatory fees for up to eight semesters.

The work has already started. This week, high school students from Fulton High School, the Knox County Schools communications magnet school and a UT Flagship high school, explored different areas of the college and learned about programs, including advertising and public relations.

“If we wait to start trying to make changes in the industry until our students are already here, we are late,” Mazer said.

Expanding the faculty

More students means more faculty will be needed at the school, but UT and Tombras are already anticipating that need.

One is the Charles Tombras professor position. This role, named after Tombras founder Charles Tombras Sr., who graduated from UT in 1936, will be a key player in

TPA Foundation solicits donated items for the Tri-State Press Convention Silent Auction June 24-25

We are reaching out to our membership for big ticket popular auction items such as seats to Titans, Predators, Grizzlies, University of Tennessee, University of Memphis or MTSU athletic events. Tickets to shows at the Orpheum, Nashville Theatre, etc. Rounds of golf, passes to Dollywood, Graceland or other tourist attractions in or near the state would be great. If anyone has a vacation home or condo they would be willing to donate for a few nights that would be an awesome auction item. *Funds generated by items TPA members donate will be given to the TPA Foundation.*

Anyone with items to donate or other suggestions for the silent auction can email TPAF President Victor Parkins at victor@milanmirrorexchange.com

Post your newspaper’s open positions at www.tnpress.com

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Free Press

Reporter, Valley Publishing

Tennessee private employers may not require vaccination

In recent months most of the news coverage involving vaccine mandates has addressed the attempt by OSHA to impose an emergency vaccine mandate on private employers with one hundred (100) or more employees. As we all know the U.S. Supreme Court has stayed the OSHA mandate as an unconstitutional overreach by that agency.

Tennessee passed a new law that went into effect Nov. 12, 2021. That law prohibits most private employers from taking adverse actions against employees who refuse to provide proof of vaccination status if they object to receiving the Covid-19 vaccine for any reason.

The law states "A private business, governmental entity, school,



LEGAL UPDATE

L. MICHAEL ZINSER

or local education agency shall not compel or otherwise take an adverse action against a person to compel the person to provide proof of vaccination if the person objects to receiving a Covid-19 vaccine for any reason." The laws stated purpose "is to safeguard the constitutional rights and liberty interests of persons during the Covid-19 pandemic." The law goes on to state

that it is to "be construed broadly to effectuate this purpose."

The law does not prohibit a private employer from asking employees to provide proof of vaccination status. However, an employer cannot take an adverse action against an employee who objects. If an employer asks and the employee refuses to answer the question, the employer has no recourse.

What is significant about the personal freedom provided in the new law is that employees can object "for any reason." The employee need not state a religious objection or any other reason. The employee can just object.

Employers cannot take "adverse actions" against employees who

object to the vaccine. Employers may not:

- Terminate employees.
- Discriminate "in any manner that affects the employee's employment, including compensation, terms, conditions, locations, rights, communities, promotions or privileges."
- Offer incentives to employees to get the vaccine.
- Deny employment to an applicant because the individual objects to the Covid-19 vaccine.

It also creates a Cause of Action for employees who are terminated or discriminated against. The adversely affected employee can seek reinstatement, compensatory damages and attorney's fees.

This new law does not prohibit private businesses from requiring employees to wear a mask in the workplace. However, I recently advised a client against a rule requiring only the unvaccinated to wear masks. This would constitute discrimination under the new law. That employer decided to permit, but not require, mask wearing.

The law sunsets in July 2023. As I write this column, there is no pending legislation to change the law.

L. Michael Zinser of Gallatin, Tenn., represents employers on a nationwide basis in the areas of labor and employment. He can be reached at 615.244.9700 and mzins@zinslaw.com.

UT from Page 8

recruiting students to the school.

"I'm grateful to . . . the Tombras family for decades of support," Foster said. "The doors they've opened for students are innumerable, and thinking about the impact they've already made and the impact they will make it, it's overwhelming."

Employees at Tombras have and will continue to serve as adjunct faculty within the school as well, providing students with networking opportunities in the classroom.

"I think it's really unique to have a partnership like that between a major business and a university," Dooley said. "And I think that it's disproportionately important for advertising and public relations versus other industries because our industry has been disrupted dramatically with digital technology and data. It continues to evolve so much."

Creating innovative classrooms

The school hopefully will see renovations and upgrades to classroom spaces and technology.

The school plans to eventually expand its physical footprint in the building and upgrade faculty offices, classrooms and meeting spaces. The renderings feature collaboration hubs, production labs and modern office-style rooms that reflect a similar environment that students might be walking into when they graduate.

"The Tombras School is doubling its square footage in the building. And it's going to be state-of-the-art in terms of learning laboratories and facilities that mimic the agency environment," Mazer said. "I would hope a year from now that we would be in the middle of renovation on that project, pending state approval."

About UT's Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations

The University of Tennessee's School of Advertising and Public Relations launched in 2003, but public relations and advertising classes had been offered at UT since 1914.

It's part of the university's College of Communication and Information, which offers undergraduate and graduate programs in advertising, communication studies, information sciences, journalism and electronic media and public relations. The college is home to about 70 faculty members and currently has 1,500 enrolled students.

About Tombras

Tombras is a full-service independent agency based in Knoxville. The company has offices in Atlanta, Charlotte, Washington, D.C., and New York City. Staffers create advertising strategies for more than 50 different clients, including Zaxby's, MoonPie and Orangetheory.

Sun eliminates Saturday print edition

SUBMITTED
The Jackson Sun
March 10, 2022

Editor's note: In a letter sent out to subscribers of The Jackson Sun and copied to the Tennessee Press Association, Sun editor Brandon Shields announced details of his newspaper's changes surrounding the elimination of its Saturday print edition. Most of that letter follows below:

"The Jackson Sun has been a vital part of the fabric of our community since its inception, bringing readers the reliable, local and passionate journalism

you know and expect. While our commitment remains steadfast, we want to inform you of an important change. With more and more of our readers engaging with our content online, we are announcing a bold step towards our future.

"Beginning March 26, 2022, The Jackson Sun will transition from delivering the Saturday print edition to providing you a full Saturday electronic edition (e-Edition), a digital version of our newspaper, available to you early morning. With the exception of Saturday, you will continue to receive the print edition delivered

according to your existing schedule. Your current subscription rate will not change.

"As a loyal subscriber, we understand this change will impact you, which is why we are taking every step to ensure you have easy access to the news, sports, events and information you value most.

"While a printed newspaper once was the sole means of accessing news and information, we now offer many ways to connect with The Jackson Sun beyond print. Your subscription includes

See **SUN** Page 10

TPA Needs YOU to judge the Hoosier State Press Better Newspaper Contest in late May

TPA needs judges for the Hoosier State Press Association's contests at the end of May. Please sign up to judge at tinyurl.com/JudgeforHoosiers or email to rgentile@tnpress.com. Thank you!

Free webinars for TPA members

May 5
Warming Up Cold Calls

May 12
From Once Upon a Time to the End

Register at www.OnlineMediaCampus.com. Contact rgentile@tnpress.com for the TPA coupon code.

Archived webinars also available with TPA code.

Local news outlets can help readers vet sources of information on invasion in Ukraine

This morning as soon as I woke up, I went immediately to search for news from Ukraine. It's hard to imagine a more important, more devastating story gripping the world right now.

It is not a local story for much of America, yet, and its significance is undoubtedly greater to those of us who lived through the Cold War. I spent much of my childhood with the possibility of war with Russia, with nuclear bomb drills and fictional depictions on TV that didn't seem far-fetched.

The top foreign policy story that consistently captivates many Americans these days is climate change, according to the latest Pew Research survey.

Russia still matters. It mattered enough to be a survey question for Pew, which asked respondents whether limiting the influence and power of Russia should be a top foreign policy priority of the US government; between 37 and



LOCAL MATTERS

JACKIE SPINNER

45 percent indicated it would, a spread that reflects whether they believed international cooperation was beneficial to solving the problem.

It begs the question: what role, if any, do local news outlets have in even covering this story?

We are the referee in a news information battle, throwing flags when we need to and making the hard call after seeing the replay. People trust us, at least more than they trust national news.

We have an obligation to our readers to point them to credible news sources about Russia and Ukraine, even if we might not

be covering the story ourselves. Russia's propaganda machine is effective at influencing our readers. We know this well from the 2016 presidential election. At the smallest, most local levels, the Russians were there to steer our readers in one direction, to create dissent, to occupy the agenda. They're already in our comment sections. Do our readers know how to spot a troll?

This is the time to partner with a local public radio or TV outlet, to team up to promote news literacy on this story. Instead of simply interviewing the Russian and Eastern European experts at the community college or other educational institution, I would ask them to help explain to readers where readers can go to find more information, to find credible information. I'd share the Instagram names of Ukrainian photographers; they're not hard to find. I'd provide links to En-

glish-language Ukrainian news outlets like the Kyiv Independent. Let people get news directly from the source if they don't like our filter.

Even if our readers have grown tired after 20 years of war in Afghanistan, we can explain why this is different. For 77 years, international order has maintained that big countries don't take smaller ones by force. Such an order has given us peace for decades even though it might not seem that way.

Even with the civil wars and regional conflicts, that order has enabled global cooperation to bring people together to try to solve problems of climate change, refugees, terrorism and yes, even the pandemic. It has opened trade.

A world in which Russia can grab what it wants because of its size and military power is not a world that makes the lives of our readers better. In fact, it's a world with deep economic costs. It's a

world that will make it harder to solve the local problems that vex us because we will be too distracted by the big ones.

I personally do not want my children to grow up under the threat of nuclear war. I don't want them to grow up in a world in which America's power continues to be diminished, where big is better, where small is at risk. I don't want our external threats to hog the attention; our internal ones, which the Jan. 6 insurrection showed, are also real.

But mostly, I don't want our readers to turn away, and I know, after decades in the business, that they will if I don't give them a reason not to.

Jackie Spinner is the editor of Gateway Journalism Review. This commentary was originally published March 3 by Gateway Journalism Review, and is reprinted here with Spinner's permission.

DESIGNS from Page 6

design from Yale University.

His Friday night ritual while at Yale was going out for pizza, then spending hours at the Yale Library — one of the largest libraries in the world — reading whatever books drew his attention.

"I've always been someone who enjoys history, who enjoys reading," he said. "It never stops." He draws on that knowledge base — and from an extensive collection of textures and patterns — for his design work.

Today, he and his wife, Susan Slagle Rogers, are voracious readers, and often pore through stacks of magazines while watching television.

"She's looking for recipes and news, and I am always ripping out pages of something that catches my eye — a pattern or a fabric."

The two met at Dreamworks Animation, where they were both working, and married after a six-week courtship. Today, he is one of six partners at Design/Build Productions — a company formed mostly of former Disney Imagineers who left after the company moved the Imagineering headquarters from California to Florida.

Susan Rogers is an animation

producer at Gaumont, the world's oldest film company, and is currently working with Paul McCartney for "High in the Clouds," an animated film built on his children's book.

"She's really, really good at it," Doug says of his wife's production skills. "Her motto is to get as much quality on the screen as possible — make sure all the money you spend on the film is on the screen."

A Hometown Boy

Although he's working in the rarefied air of Hollywood, Rogers is still very much in touch with his roots, and clearly proud of his hometown.

His official website and the Design Build notes that he's from Paris, calling it "home of 'The World's Biggest Fish Fry.'"

He remembers getting trapped as an eight-year-old behind the judge's stand in a Henry County courtroom while looking for the late Harold Jackson — who was known for giving out candy.

He waited for nearly an hour in anguish while court went on, terrified of being spotted by bailiffs or by Jackson himself, before he was able to sneak out again. Today, when he returns home to Paris, he always takes time to photograph the changes that are going on

around the court square.

He's also been known to slip homages to Paris and his friends into his work.

In his most recent project, "Why the Nativity?" currently filming in a remote area outside San Diego, Rogers slipped his friend Susan Jones and her husband into a piece of concept art for the Bethlehem census. Years ago, he went one step further with the Henry County Courthouse. While working as the production designer on "Tangled," he planned to have the lanterns during the song "I See the Light" drift up past a re-creation of the courthouse he'd slipped into the town square set. Instead, a change was made, and the scene was moved in front of the castle.

However, the courthouse did make an appearance in the short film "Tangled Ever After," where it can be seen during the 10-minute short currently airing on Disney+. Rogers said he kept the courthouse's presence in the kingdom of Corona a secret, only telling his friends Jones and Daisy Wheeler Boettner. "I think it's time to reveal the secret," he said. Rogers hopes people realize what a treasure Paris has in its picturesque town square and would love to see it restored one day. "It's a real jewel," he said.

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*The Jackson Sun
March 10, 2022*

OBITUARIES

Gladys Whitley, 90, of Covington, Tennessee, passed away on Saturday, April 16, 2022. Gladys is preceded in death by her husband, George Truitt Whitley, who was a former TPA



Whitley

president and former publisher of The Covington Leader.

She is survived by her two sons, Dr. Stan Jordan Whitley (Sharon) and Bret Hyde Whitley (Dorothy).

Maley-Yarbrough Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

Her complete obituary will be published in the May edition.

Unpacking Cancel Culture: Is it censorship, civil right or something else?

There's no shortage of passionate opinions about cancel culture. Depending on who you ask:

- Cancel culture is on the rise. Cancel culture isn't real.
 - Canceling has little to no effect on the canceled. Canceling ruins lives.
 - Cancel culture is a threat to free speech. Cancel culture is just speech holding others accountable.
- There isn't agreement on what "canceling" means.

Cancel culture, as defined by Dictionary.com, is "the popular practice of withdrawing support for (canceling) public figures and companies after they have done or said something considered objectionable or offensive."

It's a simple but extremely broad concept, and it's difficult to determine its limits.

Does any kind of public backlash or reputational damage count as being canceled, or does it need to rise to a certain level? Does it have to be permanent? Can you be canceled by just a few people? Does cancellation have to involve an organized campaign, or can the term just apply to widespread, uncoordinated criticism? Can you cancel someone who has no public reputation? Can you cancel someone who's already dead?

Many discussions about cancel culture devolve into arguments over whether or not a particular person was really canceled — which side steps questions of whether, and under what circumstances, cancellation is right or wrong.

Cancel culture perceived either of two ways



FREEDOM FORUM: PERSPECTIVE

LATA NOTT

Cancel culture can be hostile to free speech — but it also is free speech.

To be clear: Cancel culture doesn't violate the First Amendment, because the First Amendment only protects against the government punishing speech and doesn't apply to what private individuals do. But it impacts something the First Amendment is meant to protect: free expression. If a fear of being canceled causes people to self-censor, that harms the public discourse.

A good example of this would be the case of David Shor, a polling researcher who sent a tweet in May 2020 summarizing an academic paper that compared the effects of nonviolent and violent protests on election turnouts. Ari Trujillo-Wesler, co-founder of deep canvassing app OpenField, criticized the tweet for "minimizing black grief and rage to 'bad campaign tactic for the Democrats'" and later said the academic paper's analysis was "sloppy and underwhelming." Regardless of whether you agree with Shor or Trujillo-Wesler, neither, or both, this Twitter conversation enriched the public dialogue about the intersection of race, politics, social movements and public opinion. But because Shor was fired from his job shortly afterward, discussions like these are less likely to occur

in the future. People like Shor will hesitate to weigh in on current events, and the public discourse will be poorer for it.

More than four in 10 people (45%) say they have, at least once, not expressed an opinion for fear of punishment, the Freedom Forum found in its Where America Stands survey. Nearly half (49%) have never shared a political opinion on social media.

At the same time, I'm not ready to declare that cancel culture is the enemy of free speech. It is, in essence, speech responding to other speech. To quote internet culture reporter Aja Romano's excellent explainer on the topic: "To many people, this process of publicly calling for accountability, and boycotting if nothing else seems to work, has become an important tool of social justice — a way of combatting, through collective action, some of the huge power imbalances that often exist between public figures with far-reaching platforms and audiences, and the people and communities their words and actions may harm."

Cancel culture can play key role in democracy

Viewed in this light, cancel culture can actually play an important role in the democratic process. For instance, former New York governor Andrew Cuomo described it as cancel culture when people called for him to resign after reports were released that he covered up COVID-19 nursing home deaths and that several women had made allegations of sexual misconduct against him. Under the dictionary definition

of cancel culture, Cuomo was right, but it's hard to argue that exposing the wrongdoing of an elected official and holding him accountable cuts against the values of free expression. If anything, it's exactly the kind of discourse the First Amendment was meant to protect.

It's hard to gauge how prevalent or how powerful cancel culture really is.

Writers like Michael Hobbes have argued that the panic about cancel culture is overblown and that media coverage of cancellations make them seem much more common than they actually are. This is a fair point. Incidents of cancel culture are probably over-represented in the news because, let's face it, cancel culture is more fun to read and write about than say, the politics of judicial elections (which you should probably read about after this). Still, that heightened awareness of cancel culture is likely to end up feeding its chilling effect on speech.

It's also been argued that cancel culture is a myth, because cancellations don't stick. People like Dave Chappelle, Louis C.K. and Morgan Wallen are often trotted out as examples of supposedly canceled celebrities who are still making a good living. But social media has made it possible to cancel even people who are not famous, and these people tend to have fewer resources to defend themselves or recover from cancellation. It can also depend on who is doing the canceling. Being canceled by liberal groups only made conservative provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos' brand stronger, but cancellation by the Conservative Political Action Conference effec-

tively ended his career.

Just over a third (37%) of people say there's nothing wrong with celebrities or others with strong opinions getting boycotted or "cancelled" for making controversial comments online or in public, the Where America Stands survey found. Nearly three in 10 weren't sure.

Canceling individuals won't create real, lasting change — but holding institutions accountable might.

Separate from the debate over whether cancel culture is right or wrong or pro- or anti-free speech, is the question of whether it works as a tool for political and social change. As writer Freddie deBoer asks: "What is a plausible scenario through which [canceling] actually impacts the issues people claim to care about? How do you actually cancel your way to a better world? . . . If problems are structural they can't be fixed with the removal of individuals."

The examples of cancellations that created lasting change that come to my mind are the civil rights movement's boycotts of segregated businesses and government institutions like Montgomery's bus system and New York City's schools. There's a lesson in that: Structural problems need structural solutions. Firing or shaming a few people is unlikely to even put a dent in those problems.

Lata Nott is a Freedom Forum fellow for the First Amendment. Follow her on Twitter at @LataNott. This column was originally published Feb. 9, 2022 by Lata Nott in First Five, Perspective.

How to support disabled journalists in your newsroom

HANNAH WISE
Reynolds Journalism Institute
March 31, 2022

One of the questions I have received the most during my RJJ fellowship was about how many disabled journalists are working in newsrooms. It is impossible to know because disability is not included in most newsroom diversity reports.

There are notable disabled journalists such as Serge F. Kovaleski, Wendy Lu, Eric Garcia, and Sara Luteran, but often disabled

journalists are as invisible in our industry as disabled people are in society.

The physical and technological barriers that disabled people face regularly are in newsrooms, too. Canadian journalist Bailey Martens wrote for Canadaland about how she could not physically enter a news organization's building for her first day because the accessible buttons on the doors were not working.

"How could I possibly feel like I belong in an industry where I can't even get in the door?" she wrote.

As Luteran writes for Nieman Reports: "There need to be more disabled journalists in newsrooms, telling complex, difficult stories about disability. Hire disabled journalists. Hire journalists who might not have perfectly smooth resumes, but who have experienced the disability service system first-hand."

"Ask your disabled employees, if you have any, what they need to build their careers, and to build pathways and pipelines for younger disabled journalists. Diversity initiatives in newsrooms are vitally

important, not only when considering race or gender, but also when considering disability status."

And don't try to say that there is a pipeline problem. Disabled Writers has an excellent database of disabled writers, their focus areas and brief bios.

Here are a few suggestions of how newsroom leaders can support disabled journalists:

1. Include disability in employee surveys: Give employees the opportunity to self-identify as disabled

on employee engagement surveys. Anonymous company surveys have moved in recent years to ask employees questions about their identity including race, gender and sexuality. But disability is often not accounted for in diversity efforts.

Unless disabled employees are given the opportunity to self-identify, companies will continue to lack understanding of how many disabled people work in their organization. Knowing that there

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Tennessean gets second straight '10 That Do It Right' nod from E&P

ROBIN BLINDER
Editor and Publisher
March 1, 2022

Editor's note: Editor and Publisher, a prominent, long-standing publication dedicated to coverage of the U.S. journalism industry, announced in its March 2022 issue its annual selection of "10 News Publishers That Do It Right." For the second year in a row, The Tennessean, Nashville, was one of the 10 publishers selected. Following is what Editor and Publisher wrote in honoring the Tennessean, accompanied by three selections of Tennessean art that ran with the E&P story. Reprinted with permission of Editor and Publisher.

The Tennessean (Nashville), I believe, is the first news media property to repeat on the 10 That Do It Right list two years in a row. But after reading the submission and looking at their accomplishments, we had to ask, "If not them, then who?" The Tennessean not only covers their local community of Nashville but, as the flagship for the South Region of the USA TODAY Network, they lead, coordinate and elevate regional journalism across their five-state region.

When asked about their growth, Michael Anastasi, vice president and editor at The Tennessean, gave me the good news of strong growth, with a 26.7% increase for digital-only subscribers to nearly 33,000 and subscriber page views growth of 40%. But instead, he said, "This year, however, we would really like to bring your attention to our work focused on serving and reflecting the totality

of the community we cover." Utilizing a three-pronged approach, they evaluated their efforts on 1) inside the company/staff, 2) their engagement and 3) their coverage.

By the summer of 2021, The Tennessean conducted an official diversity audit and found that they were just shy of their community (28.3% to 29.6%). They've continued to work and believe that their next official audit will show that they have met their goal to reflect the community they serve.



Anastasi

Community engagement included the successful evolution of the Black Tennessee Voices brand, which launched in 2020 and now consists of a podcast, a curated monthly newsletter, a page of Black writers in their expanded Sunday insight print section and Lebron Hill's column on Black issues. The success of this program is illustrated in the newsletter's open rate of 40% and click-through rate of 8%, exceeding the company benchmarks. In addition, in 2021, they launched Latino Tennessee Voices, modeled after BTY, to better connect with Nashville's 14% population of Latino heritage. That, too, has been a success, with a doubling of the subscriber base.

Content is always a key focus for The Tennessean. Waverly, Tennessee came into the nation's awareness in August 2021, when, in the space of twelve minutes, the



Photo by George Walker IV, The Tennessean, Nashville

Waverly residents come together in an embrace as they gather to clean a flood-damaged home on Monday, August 23, 2021, in Waverly, Tenn. The Tennessean's immediate breaking news and longer enterprise and investigative coverage from the disaster was one of the organization's highlights in 2021.

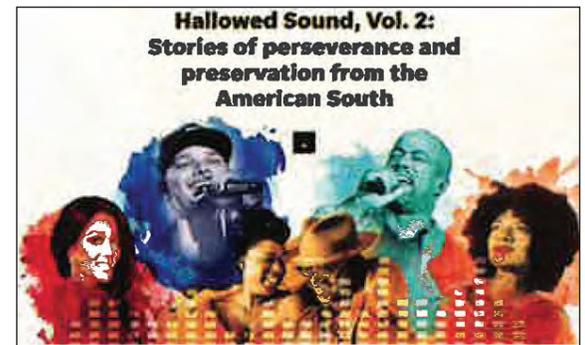
Middle Tennessee community of 4,300 found itself in a dangerous flooding situation that would take 20 precious lives from their midst. The Tennessean covered this once-in-a-thousand-years meteorologic event with their typical passion, sensitivity and thoroughness - telling the initial story about the severity of the damage, giving daily reports with updates (one, in particular, explaining the fluctuating death toll), following Governor Bill Lee and state legislators as they visited the area and telling stories of rescues and survivors as they recounted tales of perseverance, rebuilding, fears for the future and struggles with mental health.

At The Tennessean, editorial focuses on writing for and not just about the diverse communities they cover.

"Hallowed Sound" is a two-part

project that focuses on the Black experience illustrated through music. "The Confederate Reckoning" is an 18-month collaborative project of the USA TODAY Network newsrooms across the South to critically examine the legacy of the Confederacy, Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era and their influence on communities today."

Whatever they do, The Tennessean has a firm commitment to growth and service to their entire community - now and in the future. Anastasi summed it up, "I am immensely proud of our leadership team and staff. Receiv-



The Tennessean's two-installment enterprise package "Hallowed Sound" was an expansive, year-long project examining the contributions and influences of Black artists and a sharing of the Black experience and the social justice movement through music.



Photo by Andrew Nelles, The Tennessean, Nashville

Waverly Central High School's Kade Anderson (34) leads his team onto the field before a game against Sycamore at Sycamore High School in Pleasant View, Tenn., on Friday, September 3, 2021. The game was the team's first since severe storms and extreme flash floods killed 20 people and left more than 200 families homeless in the Waverly area.

ing this recognition for the second consecutive year is a testament to the commitment to consistent excellence that they bring every day! Obviously, we at E&P agree.

4. Encourage the formation of disability focused employee resource groups: Employee resource groups (ERGs) help foster open dialogue and connections among employees. Many companies facilitate ERGs for women, people of color, LGBTQ employees and parents.

Adding a disability ERG, as McClatchy recently announced, gives employees a dedicated space to learn, grow, and share experiences. ERGs can also make it easier for employees to raise issues of inequity with newsroom leaders.

Hannah Wise is a member of the Reynolds Journalism Institute Fellows Class of 2021-22. This article was originally published March 31, 2022, and is republished with permission.

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are more disabled journalists in a newsroom can help employees feel more engaged and build connections. And the information can help the company identify and meet the needs that disabled employees have within the organization.

2. Build a newsroom culture of flexibility: The COVID-19 pandemic has proven that it is possible for newsrooms to operate remotely. As news organizations prepare to return to their physical spaces, leaders should build a culture of flexibility and know how our physical work environments affect our health and safety.

A culture of flexibility requires a clear policy informed by staff feedback. It means training for managers and an increased focus on communication and onboarding. And it opens doors to journalists who otherwise may be excluded by strict in-office policies.

Flexible work environments and hours make it easier for all employees to have healthy work-life chemistry. It makes it possible to schedule appointments, take care of our loved ones, and have fulfilling careers.

3. Make the process for requesting accommodations clear and easy to find: A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to the job, work environ-

ment or the way things are usually done during the hiring process to enable a disabled person to not only get a job, but to successfully perform the job's tasks. Accommodations are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It can feel scary to request a workplace accommodation. Often the process to request an accommodation within a news organization is hidden within a company's benefits guidelines or buried in other HR documents. Rarely are accommodations discussed with all employees as part of the onboarding process.

If newsrooms want to make disabled people feel comfortable at work, they must make requesting accommodations a standard part of the work experience.



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In memory of

Elenora Easterly Edwards

given in remembrance by Alice Jones Torbett