

# 2022 State Press Contests Awards

Special Section

October 2022

## 2022 UT-TPA State Press Contests First-Place Winners



Photo by Tony Centonze, for Tennessee Press Association

Seated/kneeling in front, left to right: Dave Paulson, The Tennessean, Nashville; Rick Thomason, Six Rivers Media, Kingsport; David Plazas, The Tennessean, Nashville; Lyle Graves, The Nashville/Knoxville Ledgers; David Laprad, Hamilton County Herald, Chattanooga. Second row left to right: Cassie Stephenson, The Tennessean, Nashville; Melanie King, McNairy County News, Selmer; Chris Vass, Chattanooga Times Free Press; Shirley Nanney, Carroll County News Leader, Huntingdon; Kerri Bartlett, The Daily Herald, Columbia; Danny Wade, The Humboldt Chronicle; Scarlet Elliott, The Mirror-Exchange, Milan; Craig Harris, The Lebanon Democrat; Tena Lee, Hendersonville Standard; Sherry Mitchell, Hendersonville Standard; Brooke McCain, The Brownsville Press; Brian Cutshall, The Greeneville Sun. Standing, left to right: Ben Goad and Matt Leimkuehler, The Tennessean, Nashville; Jay Powell, The Daily Herald, Columbia; Michaela Brewer, Johnson City (she is not with a paper, was a guest invited to hold awards); Logan Watson, The Gazette, Trenton; Jonathan Roberts, Johnson City Press; Holly Viers, Kingsport Times News; Jim Herrin and Amanda Loshbough, , Herald-Citizen, Cookeville; Echo Day, The Leader, Covington; Kendall Patterson, Chester County Independent, Henderson; Erin Douglas, The Tullahoma News; John Coffelt, Manchester Times; Scott Stewart, The Pulaski Citizen; Kyle Murphy, The Tullahoma News; Ivan Aronin, The Wilson Post, Lebanon; Robby O'Daniel, The LaFollette Press; Karanja Ajanaku, The New Tri-State Defender, Memphis; Dale Gentry, The Standard Banner, Jefferson City; Scott Winfree, Carthage Courier; Brad Schmitt, The Tennessean, Nashville; Ron Schaming, The Courier, Savannah; Sandy Dodson, The Bledsonian-Banner, Pikeville; and Mari-Alice Jasper, Fort Campbell Courier, Clarksville.

### 2022 General Excellence Award Presentations

Photos below by Donn Jones, Donn Jones Photography / Awards presented by Dr. Carrie Castille, Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President for the UT Institute of Agriculture

Group I Brownsville Press



Brooke McCain accepts the Group I General Excellence award for the Brownsville Press.

Group II The Standard Banner, Jefferson City



Dale Gentry accepts the Group II General Excellence award for The Standard Banner, Jefferson City.

Group III The Nashville Ledger



Lyle Graves receives the Group III General Excellence award for The Nashville Ledger.

Group IV Kingsport Times-News



Holly Viers accepts the Group IV General Excellence plaque for the Kingsport Times-News.

Group V The Tennessean, Nashville



Michael Anastasi and Ben Goad accept the General Excellence award for The Tennessean, Nashville.

# UT, Tennessee Press Association announce 2022 newspaper contest winners

## STAFF REPORTS August 26, 2022

Newspaper publishers, editors, writers and designers won top awards on Friday, Aug. 26, in the Tennessee Press Association's 2022 State Press Contests co-sponsored by the University of Tennessee System, which has been a part of the annual event since 1940. The awards were presented at the Sheraton Music City Hotel in Nashville.

The Tennessean (Nashville), Kingsport Times-News, The Nash-

ville Ledger, The Standard Banner (Jefferson City) and Brownsville Press won the top general excellence awards in their respective divisions at the association's ceremony, held in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Tennessean won 14 first-place awards. The Chattanooga Times Free Press and the Kingsport Times-News each received seven first-place awards. The Johnson City Press won six first-place awards.

As part of the annual contest, newspapers winning first-place awards in the categories of editorials,

best single editorial, and public service were to receive \$250 prizes from UT's Edward J. Meeman Foundation. The Tennessean and the Kingsport Times-News swept the awards for their respective divisions, winning in all three categories. The Meeman Foundation was established in 1968 at UT to fund the contest, provide professional critiques of journalists' work, and support journalism students and educators.

"Our long partnership with TPA reflects our shared commitment to education and accountability to all

Tennesseans," said Carrie L. Castillo, UTIA senior vice chancellor and senior vice president, who presented the awards at the ceremony. "We're grateful to be able to work with TPA to make that happen."

"These annual press awards by the TPA show our commitment to the communities we serve," said Jack McNeely, who at the time was TPA president. "They also recognize the outstanding work and dedication of our newsroom staffs across the Volunteer State."

"These awards recognize excep-

tional work in all three divisions of the state and at news organizations of all sizes," said Alison Gerber, chair of the TPA Contests Committee. "Tennesseans are fortunate to have had working journalists covering their communities. Congratulations to the winners."

Reciprocal judging is done with another state's association. This year, the Hoosier State Press Association of Indiana judged 1,130 entries from 67 of the Tennessee Press Association's 133 member newspapers

## Index to first-place winners republished in this section

### General Excellence

**Group I. Brownsville Press**

**Group II. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City**

**Group III. The Nashville Ledger**

**Group IV. Kingsport Times-News**

**Group V. The Tennessean, Nashville**

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### Make-Up & Appearance

**I. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon**

**II. Fort Campbell Courier, Clarksville**

**III. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville**

**IV. Johnson City Press**

**V. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Pages 19-20

### Best Single Editorial

**I. The Erwin Record**

"What happens when no one is listening?"

Bryan Stevens

Page 12

**II. Main Street Clarksville**

"Richard Garrett needs to resign"

Cheri Reeves, Dave Gould

Page 13

**III. Crossville Chronicle**

"Sign up for a shot of hope"

Heather Mullinix

Page 14

**IV. Kingsport Times-News**

"Meth Mountain not a feel-good series"

Rick Thomason

Page 15

**V. The Tennessean, Nashville**

"Blackburn and Hagerty complicit in Trump insurrection"

David Plazas

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### Best Personal Humor Column

**I. Brownsville Press**

"My name is Gene"

Tommy Russell

Page 23

**II. Pulaski Citizen**

"They left me asleep on the pews"

Scott Stewart

Page 24

**III. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville**

"Honey, where did you put the cheese?"

Jim Herrin

Page 25

**IV. Johnson City Press**

"It's mayhem at the vet's office!"

Joe Avento

Page 26

**V. The Commercial Appeal, Memphis**

"A new carol for the Bluff City"

John Beifuss

Page 27

### Best News Photograph

**I. The New Tri-State Defender, Memphis**

"Spirit of gratitude"

Gary S. Whitlow

Page 9

**II. Main Street Nashville**

"Opry's 5,000th broadcast"

Larry McCormack

Page 10

**III. The Nashville Ledger,**  
"Nashville's history not easily

recreated"

Michelle Morrow

Page 11

**IV. The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro**

"Officer funeral"

Helen Comer

Page 12

**V. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

"Walking tall against violence"

Troy Stolt

Page 13

### Best Feature Photograph

**I. The Gazette, Trenton**

"King for a day"

Logan Watson

Page 21

**II. The Standard-Banner, Jefferson City**

"Taryn Kosak on rings"

Dale Gentry

Page 22

**III. The Daily Herald, Columbia**

"How to say goodbye"

Mike Christen

Page 22

**IV. Citizen Tribune, Morristown**

"The Fighter"

Drew Robinson

Page 23

**V. The Tennessean, Nashville**

"Derek and Rockey Klein share kiss"

Stephanie Amador

Page 24

### Best Sports Photograph

**I. Chester County Independent, Henderson**

"You're out!"

Kendall Patterson

Page 25

**II. The Dickson Post**

"Laying down the tag"

Marty Allison

Page 25

**III. Crossville Chronicle**

"Panthers record first district sweep"

Michael Lindsay

Page 25

**IV. The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville**

"Clarksville wins stalemate"

Henry Taylor

Page 26

**V. The Tennessean, Nashville**

"Bucs, Titans fight at practice"

George Walker IV

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### Best Personal Column

**I. The New Tri-State Defender, Memphis**

"Why I couldn't stop crying on Inauguration Day"

Lee Eric Smith

Page 28

**II. The Leader, Covington**

"Anti-CRT war uniting us"

Echo Day

Page 28

**III. The Nashville Ledger**

"Nothing is black and white"

Joe Rogers

Page 29

**IV. Kingsport Times-News**

"Remembering my father and his flag"

Ned Jilton II

Page 29

**V. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

"An auction for the ages"

Mark Kennedy

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### Headline Writing

**I. The Humboldt Chronicle**

Danny Wade

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**II. The LaFollette Press**

Robby O'Daniel

Page 32

**III. Cleveland Daily Banner**

Rick Norton

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**IV. Kingsport Times-News**

Frank Cannon

Page 30

**V. The Tennessean, Nashville**

Staff

# Complete list of 2022 TPA SPC winners

## General Excellence

**Group I.** Brownsville Press

**Group II.** The Standard Banner, Jefferson City

**Group III.** The Nashville Ledger

**Group IV.** Kingsport Times-News

**Group V.** The Tennessean, Nashville

(Editor's note: Judge's comments edited to fit in space allotted.)

*including a couple of key details about the storm and ensuing damage. Excellent detail with stirring personal accounts. Definitely deserving of the top spot.*

**2. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City**

Steve Marion, Mark Brown

*Judge's comments: This story provided a lot of detail in a saga that no-doubt captured area residents's attention over several days. Excellent work reporting all that happened leading up to the final standoff. A few small issues that kept this piece from being No. 1, but still overall great work.*



## Best Breaking News Coverage

### Group I

**1. Carthage Courier**

Eddie West

*Judge's comments: Very timely and important. Great inclusion of all the public documents and other information available. It would be nice to see a quote from an official, but that may not have been possible at the time. Overall, good breaking news coverage.*

**2. Carthage Courier**

Eddie West

*Judge's comments: It's good to list the facts as stated in public record or press releases. I'm left wondering if Halford is somehow connected to the schools. I noticed in the caption above on the online form it says "gym instructor," but that title is not in the headline or story. (Maybe that was a later discovery.) Regardless, this is definitely a pressing story for the community.*

**3. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon**

Shirley Nanney

**4. Brownsville Press**

Carlton Veirs, Brooke McCain, Eliza Ford

**5. Portland Sun**

### Group II

**1. Hendersonville Standard**

Tena Lee, Sherry Mitchell

*Judge's comments: Impactful lead. It was descriptive while also*

**3. Hendersonville Standard**

Tena Lee, Sherry Mitchell

*Judge's comments: The writer had some fun with the lead and then got to the information important to readers. The coverage provides a lot of depth and background information. Excellent work on a story about a project that would be a major investment in a local community.*

**4. The Leader, Covington**

Echo Day

**5. Cheatham County Exchange, Pleasant View**

Sharon Lurie, Ivan Aronin



Submitted photos solicited from first-place winners for use in this section. More available on some following pages

**Top left:** Lyle Reid, Brownsville Press, obviously has a sharp eye for good commentary. He was part of the Press's team that won for Best Editorials in Group I. Ditto his Press teammate Carlton Viers, top right, who also had a hand in the Press's first-place awards for Business Coverage and News Reporting. **Bottom left:** Ethan Steinquest, Fort Campbell Courier, Clarksville, had a hand in multiple Group II awards, as did Brad Schmitt (bottom right), The Tennessean, Nashville, in Group V.

**4. Union City Daily Messenger**

Chris Menees

**5. Crossville Chronicle**

Michael R. Moser, Heather Mullinix

### Group IV

**1. The Greeneville Sun**

Scott Jenkins, Ken Little

**2. Kingsport Times-News**

Mike Still

**3. Bristol Herald Courier**

David McGee, David Crigger

**4. The Jackson Sun**

Brandon Shields

See **WINNERS**, Page 4

# Past UT-TPA State Press Contests Sweepstakes and General Excellence Winners

## From TPA Archives

A points-based Sweepstakes Award was established in 1999. In 2006 the category of General Excellence became a points-based award and replaced the Sweepstakes Award. The newspaper in each of the five contests divisions (Groups I, II, III, IV and V) with the highest total points in its group receives the General Excellence Award.

### 1999 Sweepstakes Award

I – Chester County Independent, Henderson  
II – The Review Appeal, Franklin  
III – The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro  
IV – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2000 Sweepstakes Award

I – Chester County Independent, Henderson  
II – Southern Standard, McMinnville  
III – The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro  
IV – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2001 Sweepstakes Award

I – The Rutherford Courier, Smyrna  
II – Southern Standard, McMinnville  
III – The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville  
IV – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2002 Sweepstakes Award

I – Chester County Independent, Henderson  
II – Southern Standard, McMinnville  
III – The Daily News Journal,

### Murfreesboro

IV – Chattanooga Times Free Press

### 2003 Sweepstakes Award

I – The Erwin Record  
II – Southern Standard, McMinnville  
III – The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro  
IV – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2004 Sweepstakes Award

I – The Erwin Record  
II – Southern Standard, McMinnville  
III – The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro  
IV – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2005 Sweepstakes Award

I – The Erwin Record  
II – Southern Standard, McMinnville  
III – The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro  
IV – The Commercial Appeal, Memphis

### 2006 General Excellence

I – The Erwin Record  
II – LaFollette Press  
III – The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville  
IV – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2007 General Excellence

I – The Erwin Record  
II – The Standard Banner, Jefferson City  
III – The Daily Herald, Columbia  
IV – The Commercial Appeal, Memphis

### 2. The Commercial Appeal, Memphis Staff

*Judge's comments:* There is everything you look for here: Detail, eyewitness accounts and a true sense of humanity, all related to one terrible incident.

### 3. Chattanooga Times Free Press

*Judge's comments:* Interesting reporting on a bizarre case. A few more voices - and some perspective on this kind of incident -- could've taken it to the next level.

### Best Business Coverage

### 2008 General Excellence

I – The Erwin Record  
II – Memphis Business Journal  
III – Southern Standard, McMinnville  
IV – The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville  
V – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2009 General Excellence

I – The Erwin Record  
II – The Standard Banner, Jefferson City, and Manchester Times  
III – Elizabethton Star  
IV – The Jackson Sun  
V – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2010 General Excellence

I – The Erwin Record  
II – The Standard Banner, Jefferson City  
III – Shelbyville Times-Gazette  
IV – The Jackson Sun  
V – The Commercial Appeal, Memphis

### 2011 General Excellence

I – The Erwin Record  
II – The Standard Banner, Jefferson City  
III – Southern Standard, McMinnville  
IV – The Jackson Sun  
V – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2012 General Excellence

I – Herald & Tribune, Jonesborough

### Group I

#### 1. Brownsville Press

Carlton Veirs, Brooke McCain, Carolyn Tomlin

*Judge's comments:* Great presentation with emphasis on community impact, great use of photography and focus on local business.

#### 2. The Erwin Record

Bryan Stevens, Richard Rourk

*Judge's comments:* Another newspaper focusing extensively on local business coverage. Nice headline writing and photography.

#### 3. Portland Sun

Bonnie Fussell, Sherry Mitchell

II – (a tie) Gallatin News Examiner and Grainger Today, Bean Station

III – Southern Standard, McMinnville  
IV – The Jackson Sun  
V – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2013 General Excellence

I – Herald & Tribune, Jonesborough  
II – (a tie) The Standard Banner, Jefferson City, and Manchester Times  
III – Elizabethton Star  
IV – The Jackson Sun  
V – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2014 General Excellence

I – The Erwin Record  
II – The LaFollette Press  
III – Elizabethton Star  
IV – The Jackson Sun  
V – Chattanooga Times Free Press

### 2015 General Excellence

I – (a tie) Independent Herald, Oneida and The Portland Leader  
II – The Wilson Post, Lebanon  
III – Southern Standard, McMinnville  
IV – The Jackson Sun  
V – Chattanooga Times Free Press

### 2016 General Excellence

I – The Portland Leader  
II – The Standard Banner, Jefferson City  
III – The Lebanon Democrat  
IV – The Jackson Sun  
V – Chattanooga Times Free Press

### 2017 General Excellence

I – The Gallatin News  
II – The Wilson Post, Lebanon  
III – (Tie) The Daily Herald, Columbia, and The Lebanon Democrat  
IV – Johnson City Press  
V – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2018 General Excellence

I – Independent Herald, Oneida  
II – The Standard Banner, Jefferson City  
III – The Nashville Ledger  
IV – Bristol Herald Courier  
V – The Tennessean, Nashville

### 2019 General Excellence

I – The Gallatin News  
II – Hendersonville Standard  
III – The Nashville Ledger  
IV – Johnson City Press  
V – Chattanooga Times Free Press

### 2020 General Excellence

I – Hamilton County Herald, Chattanooga  
II – Knoxville Ledger  
III – The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville  
IV – Johnson City Press  
V – Chattanooga Times Free Press

### 2021 General Excellence

I – The Gallatin News  
II – The Standard Banner, Jefferson City  
III – The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarkesville  
IV – Johnson City Press  
V – Chattanooga Times Free Press

Sharon Lurie, Sean Barry, Randy Moomaw, Ivan Aronin

### 5. Cheatham County Exchange, Pleasant View

Sharon Lurie, Sean Barry, Ivan Aronin, Randy Moomaw

### Group III

#### 1. farragutpress

Tammy Cheek, Alan Sloan, Michelle Hollenhead

*Judge's comments:* Submissions demonstrate the Farragut Press's commitment to covering local business from all angles (openings, closings, milestone and profiles) in

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Submitted

**Dale Gentry, The Standard Banner, Jefferson City, whose newspaper won the Group II General Excellence award for the ninth time and several other first-place plaques, shared this recent photo of his holding a plaque for a mini-golf tournament he won. He is joined by his grandkids (left to right) Taryn Kosak, Rylee Gentry, Emersyn Gentry, Aiden Gentry, and Kailey Kosak, who often join him for memorable mini-golf matches.**



Submitted

**Heather Mullinix, Crossville Chronicle, is a familiar sight when it comes to the winner's circle at TPA press awards ceremonies. This year she took top honors for Best Single Editorial in Group III as well as being named for several other awards. Here she is pictured kayaking at Fancher Falls on Center Hill Lake near Smithville in Middle Tennessee.**



Submitted

**Above 'selfie' photos, left to right: Kerri Bartlett and Jay Powell, both of The Daily Herald, Columbia, took turns proudly showing off the Daily Herald's stack of first-place plaques from the 2022 TPA State Press Contests. Above right: The Gazette, Trenton, Editor Logan Watson with Paul Allen, the subject of Watson's Best Feature Photograph winner "King for a Day" and unofficial mascot of the Peabody Golden Tide**



Submitted

Sirena Clark (far left) and Mari-Alice Jasper (second from left), Fort Campbell Courier, Clarksville, had roles in the Courier's first-place award for Group II Makeup & Appearance, while Jasper also won for Best Single Feature. Clark and her dog, Raya, love long hikes outdoors and cuddling together on the couch. When Jasper isn't writing stories about soldiers and their families, she loves to perform with the Clarksville Adult Color Guard. Michelle Hollenhead (third from left) and Tammy Cheek (far right), farragutpress, both had roles in their newspaper's victory for Best Business Coverage in Group III. Hollenhead is seen here enjoying the company of her cat Stella, who is helping her recover from knee surgery.

## **WINNERS, from Page 4**

**appropriate context and detail. It is clear the staff has a keen sense of what readers want to know. Writing is consistently clear, concise and enjoyable. The headlines are effective and the visuals are sharp. More interesting photographs would take this paper's business coverage to the next level.**

### **2. The Nashville Ledger**

Kathy Carlson, Hollie Deese, Bill Lewis, Joe Morris, Tom Wood, Richard Courtney, Catherine Mayhew

**Judge's comments:** Stories localize nationwide trends, and then dive deep to explore them further in a way that is easy for readers to digest. Headlines and cover designs are clever and eye-catching. Photo quantity and quality could be significantly improved in terms of resolution and interesting subject matter, especially when played large over multi-page spreads.

### **3. Crossville Chronicle**

Heather Mullinix

**Judge's comments:** Business coverage is engaging and provides context beyond the immediate questions that readers might have about what's moving in next door. Excellent localization of the nation-

wide trend about venues suffering during COVID-19 shutdowns. Print presentation is effective but would benefit from more art when possible.

### **4. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville**

Lindsay Pride, Jim Herrin, Megan Reagan, Irene Sullivan

### **5. Cleveland Daily Banner**

Kaitlin Gebby, Allen Mincey, Tim Siniard, Rick Norton

### **Group IV**

#### **1. The Daily Times, Maryville**

Andrew Jones, Amy Beth Miller

**Judge's comments:** Series of stories on the Smith & Wesson move, with the various angles including procedural steps, make it clear that this newspaper intends to be the go-to source for the most complete, comprehensive details on the detail. The initial Oct. 1 reporting, packaging and presentation were excellent.

#### **2. Kingsport Times-News**

Marina Waters, J.H. Osborne, Aviree Moore

**Judge's comments:** Nice writing; strong storytelling, capturing history and new developments with multiple articles. I felt like I was along with reporter hearing the sources share first-hand. Nice

*bonus: the article podcasts!*

#### **3. The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro**

Nancy DeGennaro, Helen Comer, Scott Broden

**Judge's comments:** Reporters go the extra mile to ensure stories not just capture the news, but the response and impact through deep layered sourcing, including with the Kroger closure and airline flights. Supplemental audio and video add to great storytelling in a multimedia age

#### **4. The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville**

Jimmy Settle

#### **5. Bristol Herald Courier**

David McGee, Maria Basileo

### **Group V**

#### **1. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Dave Flessner, Mary Fortune, Mike Pare, Jay Greeson

**Judge's comments:** Impressive business coverage written with authority, while keeping the content conversational, engaging and informative. The visual presentations, including graphics, are outstanding. Great planning has to be involved and the execution matches the intent. Journalism

worth emulating - even beyond business news.

#### **2. The Tennessean, Nashville**

Sandy Mazza, Cassandra Stephenson, Adam Friedman

**Judge's comments:** With compelling topics from the whiskey entrepreneur's tie to Jack Daniels to traditional growth and development issues, the reporting and writing combine for readable stories that should hold any reader's attention. Among the best in the bunch were the records-driven look at housing anxiety issues as many fear the lifting of eviction moratoriums during the pandemic to the watchdog story on the skepticism involving a 99-year parking garage lease - a good money trail story.

#### **3. The Commercial Appeal, Memphis**

Staff

**Judge's comments:** The CA is making its mark by telling the story behind the story, evidenced with coverage such as the financial challenges for a declining number of Black farmers to the Navigating the Skies piece looking at concerns about the pool of pilots. Most impressive was the straightforward effort to give 50 major employers in the market a chance to comment on vaccine mandates

- another story with local reporting but sourcing that elevates it to a national story.

## **Best Digital Presentation**

### **Group I, Group II, Group III**

#### **1. The Daily Herald, Columbia**

Jay Powell, Mike Christen, Kerri Bartlett, Ayrika Whitney

**Judge's comments:** This was exceptionally well done. Strong and engaging writing, compelling use of photos and videos. Very strong layout. Very nicely done.

#### **2. The Nashville Ledger**

Mike Hopey, Michelle Morrow

**Judge's comments:** This was a very engaging, well-told piece about a significant district in the city. The very well-executed graphic and the photos throughout did a tremendous job of highlighting this story and drawing readers throughout.

#### **3. The Wilson Post, Lebanon**

Carrie Tomlin, Ivan Aronin, Sabrina Knowles, Debby Mabry, Mary Anne Ferrell, Devon O'Day

#### **4. Crossville Chronicle**

Michael Lindsay

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**WINNERS, from Page 6**

**5. Hendersonville Standard**  
Zach Womble, Brett Berwager,  
Phil Stauder

**Group IV, Group V**

**1. The Tennessean, Nashville Staff**

Judge's comments: This is a thoroughly impressive piece of journalism. Add to that the presentation, interactive elements, videos and photos and it is important and impressive from start to finish. What an extraordinary accomplishment.

**2. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Alison Shirk, Jody Park

Judge's comments: Impressive foray into a potential new digital reality. The interactivity of the new digital format that allows readers to move from stories to galleries to videos with relative ease is noteworthy.

**3. Kingsport Times-News**  
Audrey Shuppert

**4. The Greeneville Sun**  
Lorelei Goff, Brian Cutshall

**5. The Daily Times, Maryville**

**Best Education Reporting****Group I**

**1. The Tri-City Reporter, Dyer Logan Watson**

**2. Macon County Times, Lafayette**  
Craig Harris, Kayla Fleming

**3. Portland Sun**  
Bonnie Fussell, Sherry Mitchell

**4. Carthage Courier**  
Eddie West

**5. Herald & Tribune, Jonesborough**  
Marina Waters, Caleb Anderson

**Group II**

**1. The LaFollette Press**  
Robby O'Daniel

Judge's comments: The work done but the LaFollette Press made a significant difference in their community and demonstrated excellent

in journalism.

**2. Hendersonville Standard**  
Tena Lee, Sherry Mitchell

Judge's comments: The Hendersonville Standard provided informative coverage and pertinent topics for the area's parents with clear, concise writing.

**3. Cheatham County Exchange, Pleasant View**

Sharon Lurie, Randy Moomaw, Sean Barry, Ivan Aronin

Judge's comments: The Cheatham County Exchange provided a wide array of high quality coverage on the happenings of Cheatham County education.

**4. Main Street Nashville**

Roger Fregoso, Vivian Jones, Payne Ray, Karen Grigsby

**5. Murfreesboro Post**

Tayla Courage, Ivan Aronin, Jason Reynolds

**Group III**

**1. The Daily Herald, Columbia**  
Mike Christen

Judge's comments: Exceptional work from Mike Christen who is single-handedly and skillfully wielding many reporting tools in telling these stories. The samples from the series examining the closing of McDowell Elementary School were great -- in-depth, well-organized, detailed and compelling. The harder news samples addressing budget issues and a coach investigation were deftly handled, too. Well done.

**2. Cleveland Daily Banner**

Kaitlin Gebby, Autumn Hughes

Judge's comments: The Cleveland Daily Banner offers an excellent range of topics in its coverage -- legislative updates, schools addressing and/or attempting to avoid discussion of race and sexuality, and profiles of stakeholders (including a charming piece about an English teacher couple who met themselves as students in an English class). Clean and tightly-written. All in all, great job.

**3. Crossville Chronicle**

Heather Mullinix

Judge's comments: Well-sourced, comprehensive reporting on important issues. Nice to see ongoing/

follow-up coverage of teacher salaries. Extras like the chart comparing salaries across counties really help contextualize information. The reporting here goes beyond what's happening and works to explain why. Good job.

**4. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville**

Jim Herrin, Lindsay Pride

**5. The Newport Plain Talk**

Matthew Winter, Eric Rhodes

**Group IV**

**1. Kingsport Times-News**

Rick Wagner, J.H. Osborne

**2. The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro**

Scott Broden, Helen Comer

**3. Bristol Herald Courier**

David McGee, Sarah Wade

**4. Johnson City Press**

David Floyd, Kayla Hackney, Robert Houk, Jonathan Roberts, John Thompson

**5. The Jackson Sun**

Lasherica Thornton

**Group V**

**1. The Tennessean, Nashville**  
Meghan Mangrum

Judge's comments: Subject matter: Reports on school and education were timely, with a lot of photos. Coverage: Used multiple sources, many of those being the students themselves. Composition: Written well and topic headings were labeled.

**2. The Commercial Appeal, Memphis**

Laura Testino

Judge's comments: Subject matter: Reporters did a good job writing about each individual school topic that would be of interest to that community. Coverage: Topics were researched, using a variety of sources. Composition: Articles were well-written and stayed on topic.

**3. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Barry Counter, Wyatt Massey, Anika Chaturvedi, Kelcey Caulder, Andy Sher

Judge's comments: Subject matter: Timely stories about schools and universities that most readers in that area would find interesting.

Coverage: Stories were clearly researched and had multiple sources. Composition: Stories flowed well, and got to the point.

**Best Feature Photograph****Group I**

**1. The Gazette, Trenton**  
Logan Watson

**2. New Tri State Defender, Memphis**

Gary S. Whitlow

**3. Carthage Courier**

Eddie West

**4. Lewis County Herald, Hohenwald**

Katelin Carroll

**5. McNairy County News, Selmer**

Russell Ingle

**Group II**

**1. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City**  
Dale Gentry

Judge's comments: No doubt about it, this was the best photo. It was well composed, focused and exposed. It's far and away the winner in this group.

**2. Murfreesboro Post**

Tayla Courage

Judge's comments: Easily in second place. It captures the emotion of the moment. It was well done with difficult ambient lighting.

**3. The Courier News, Clinton**

Kenneth Leinart

Judge's comments: Exposure and space between the two subjects pushed this from second to third place. Otherwise this is a solid photo.

**4. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City**

Dale Gentry

**5. The Leader, Covington**  
Echo Day

**Group III**

**1. The Daily Herald, Columbia**  
Mike Christen

Judge's comments: Masterfully captured quiet moment. Well-writ-

ten caption provides the context. The framing gives a sense of place beyond the person.

**2. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville**  
Megan Reagan

Judge's comments: Cute and clean frame. I wish there were a little more of a moment happening.

**3. The Daily Herald, Columbia**  
Mike Christen

Judge's comments: Clean but expected frame. I'd like to see the photographer take risks and try for something more unique.

**4. The Paris Post-Intelligencer**  
Ken Walker

**5. The Wilson Post, Lebanon**  
Dallus Whitfield

**Group IV**

**1. Citizen Tribune, Morristown**  
Drew Robinson

**2. The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro**  
Helen Comer

**3. The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro**  
Helen Comer

**4. Kingsport Times-News**  
Marina Waters

**5. Bristol Herald Courier**  
David Crigger

**Group V**

**1. The Tennessean, Nashville**  
Stephanie Amador

Judge's comments: This was a tough decision, but the emotion of a solitary moment in a chaotic and crowded setting, plus the photographer's skill in capturing that moment put this on top.

**2. Chattanooga Times Free Press**  
Robin Rudd

Judge's comments: Love the color and pageantry of these photos. Really an excellent choice to focus on the faces of the congregation in the main photo. With the kids, the photographer really does a great job of capturing that "This is our moment" feel.

See **WINNERS**, Page 8

**WINNERS**, from Page 7

**3. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Matt Hamilton

**Best Graphics and/or Illustrations**

**Group I, Group II, Group III**

**1. Carthage Courier**

Shea Haile, Ken Beck

Judge's comments: This entry features a wide range of well-designed graphics on differing subjects, making it the "best in class."

**2. Brownsville Press**

Mark Kendrick

Judge's comments: A solid entry featuring a variety of graphics that help tell stories.

**3. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City**

Dale Gentry

Judge's comments: Good clean graphics that also help tell a story.

**4. Hamilton County Herald, Chattanooga**

David Laprad

**5. The Erwin Record**

Charles Holt

**Group IV, Group V**

**1. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

**2. The Tennessean, Nashville**  
Erin Crabb, Merry Eccles, Brian Gray, Diandra Spicak

**3. Johnson City Press**  
Brian Reece, Jonathan Roberts, Kayla Hackney

**4. Kingsport Times-News**  
Cesar Santiago

**5. The Daily Times, Maryville**  
Marcus Fitzsimmons

**Best News Photograph**

**Group I**

**1. New Tri State Defender, Memphis**

Gary S. Whitlow

**2. Chester County Independent, Henderson**

Kendall Patterson



Submitted

Say hello to the above Johnson City Press trio: Top left is Jonathon Roberts; kneeling in front is Robert Houk; and top right is Kayla Hackney, showing off their fair share of UT-TPA State Press Contests hardware.

**3. The Tri-City Reporter, Dyer**

Lori Cathey

**4. Carthage Courier**

Eddie West

**5. Herald & Tribune, Jonesborough**

Serina Marshall

**Group II**

**1. Main Street Nashville**

Larry McCormack

Judge's comments: Quintessential Tennessee news photo. The moment, lighting and framing add complete context for the story.

**2. Pulaski Citizen**

Ron Mayes

Judge's comments: The unique perspective shows the scale, and futile effort by the fire department.

**3. The Dickson Post**

Sharon Lurie

Judge's comments: Classic reaction

photo. I wish the image was a little cleaner frame, but the moment was captured at the perfect time.

**4. Main Street Nashville**

Larry McCormack

**5. Fort Campbell Courier, Clarksville**

**Group III**

**1. The Nashville Ledger**

Michelle Morrow

Judge's comments: A very busy photo but it told the story well of the process of rebuilding after an explosion.

**2. The Knoxville Ledger**

Michael Patrick

Judge's comments: Not the hardest news in this competition but it told the story well of a bicycle repairman. Nice attention to detail.

**3. Cleveland Daily Banner**

Daniel Guy



Submitted

"What's up, Doc?" Logan Watson (the one standing on the left), The Gazette, Trenton, makes an encore appearance among the selfies in this section. Watson won top prize in the UT-TPA State Press Contests for Best Feature Photograph in Group I.



Submitted

Jim Herrin, Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, with the subjects of many of his columns, from left, daughter Anna Grace, wife Jane, and daughter Jen- na. Herrin won top prize for Best Personal Humor column in Group III.

**4. Shelbyville Times-Gazette**

David Melson

**5. The Wilson Post, Lebanon**

Xavier Smith

**freesboro**

Helen Comer

Judge's comments: This really stands out from all of the entries as the best group of photos.

**Group IV**

**1. The Daily News Journal, Mur-**

See **WINNERS**, Page 9

**First place award****Best News Photograph Group I**

Gary S. Whitlow –  
New Tri-State Defender, Memphis

**2. Citizen Tribune, Morristown**

Drew Robinson

*Judge's comments: Easily second place. The photographer focused on what was important about this story.*

**3. Johnson City Press**

Jonathan Roberts

*Judge's comments: Heart rending. Photographer's bravery to be commended. Didn't settle for a long shot.*

**4. The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro**

Helen Comer

**5. The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville**

Henry Taylor

**Group V****1. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Troy Stolt

**2. The Tennessean, Nashville**

George Walker IV

**3. The Tennessean, Nashville**

Andrew Nelles

**Best News Reporting Group I****1. Brownsville Press**

Carlton Veirs, Brooke McCain, Eliza Ford

*Judge's comments: Great coverage and great attempt at keeping the governor's office honest. The writing verged on opinionated at times and could be more polished but this entry stands out nonetheless.*

**2. Herald & Tribune, Jonesborough**

Marina Waters, Serina Marshall

*Judge's comments: The community interest in this story is clear. Great job to the reporter for hearing out the people who are living with the problem. Writing could have been more polished, but it is an overall great package.*

**3. New Tri-State Defender, Memphis**

Karanja A. Ajanku

*Judge's comments: This package shows well the impact of gun violence on Memphis. However,*



Submitted

Shea Haile, Carthage Courier, had a hand in winning for Best Graphics and/or Illustrations in Group I. This photo is from her trip to Zoo Knoxville in July, where she has stopped the last two years on her way back from vacationing in the mountains. "I enjoy seeing wildlife and the beautiful mountain scenery," she said. "This is a Malayan Tiger that decided to take a nice, big yawn right as I got my picture taken with him."

*the inclusion of the commentary was puzzling and part of a story on Young Dolph was cut off. If the entry had been more organized this would have been my No. 1.*

**4. Brownsville Press**

Carlton Veirs

**5. Herald & Tribune, Jonesborough****Group II****1. Main Street Nashville**

Vivian Jones, Karen Grigsby

*Judge's comments: Whether and how to regulate party vehicles may sound like a little problem, but it's a big deal in Nashville. The issue is in good hands with Main Street Nashville's work.*

**2. The Gallatin News**

Josh Cross, Sherry Mitchell

*Judge's comments: A fire chief is a key city official, and his resignation and what happens next is important to readers. The Gallatin News*

*was all over it.*

**3. Hamilton County Herald, Chattanooga**

David Laprad

*Judge's comments: Why would profiles about lawyers and former lawyers place in a news writing contest? The Hamilton County Herald did them very well.*

**4. Cheatham County Exchange, Pleasant View**

Sharon Lurie, Ivan Aronin

**5. The Leader, Covington****Group III****1. The Daily Herald, Columbia**

Jay Powell, Mike Christen, Kerri Bartlett, Ayrika Whitney

*Judge's comments: This is why history matters. "Forgotten history" is a tremendous, multilayered effort to capture a community's current struggles through a fresh look at*

See **WINNERS**, Page 10

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**h's church family findsateful worship and praise**

Two local rap veterans share thoughts on gun violence, solutions: Page 6

of Nov. 17 when two gunmen pulled onto the parking lot of Makeda's Homemade "Butter Cookies" at 2370 Airways, where Young Dolph was inside, making a purchase.

The gunman shot into the store, hitting Thornton several times before

jumping back into their vehicle, a white Mercedes, and speeding off.

Pastor Rodney Herron said the church will miss Young Dolph, but his spirit of giving and sharing will help keep his memory alive.

"We want to always remember to give back to others who are in need," said Herron. "It's important to let people know that somebody loves

SEE DOLPH ON PAGE 2



The Sunday service at James Church the holiest church Young feature stories about rap singer Gary S. Whitlow Enterprise



Pervis Payne, who faced the death penalty for 34 hours, hugs his attorney, Kelley Henry, after a Shelby County judge vacated his death sentence during a Tuesday hearing. (Photo: Gary S. Whitlow/GSW Enterprises)

**Spirit of gratitude engulfs Pervis Payne after death sentence vacated**

by Dr. Sybil C. Mitchell  
Special to The New Tri-State Defender

When the death sentence for Pervis Payne was vacated during a Tuesday morning (Nov. 23) hearing, a shout of victory rose from Payne's supporters, who filled the courtroom.

The proceeding was the formal declaration extending from a Nov. 18 announcement by

Shelby County District Attorney General Amy Weirich. At that time, Weirich said her office had received information that the state's expert "could not say that Payne's intellectual functioning is outside the range for intellectually disabled." Executions of the mentally disabled were ruled unconstitutional in 2002, when the U.S. Supreme Court found they violate the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment.

But until Gov. Bill Lee signed a bill this summer making Tennessee's law retroactive in prohibiting the execution of the intellectually disabled, Tennessee had no mechanism for an inmate to reopen his case to press claim of intellectual disability.

Executions of the mentally disabled were ruled unconstitutional in 2002, when the U.S. Supreme Court found they violate the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and un-

usual punishment.

Shelby County Judge Paula Skahan ha-

SEE PAYNE ON PAGE 2

**WINNERS**, from Page 9

*its past. The words, photos and video all work together in this well-planned and -executed project.*

**2. Union City Daily Messenger**  
Donna Ryder, Chris Menees

*Judge's comments: This package shows hustle and initiative in the face of what must have been challenging circumstances. There were some nice touches in the writing, including this line: "Crews said it is not the first time the old church building had been damaged, but will probably be the last."*

**3. The Wilson Post, Lebanon**  
Ken Beck, Ivan Aronin

*Judge's comments: Solid reporting and very nice writing on a compelling subject.*

**4. The Mountain Press,**  
Sevierville  
Jeff Farrell**5. The Tullahoma News**  
Erin McCullough**Group IV****1. Johnson City Press**

David Floyd, Becky Campbell, Kayla Hackney, Robert Houk, Jonathan Roberts

*Judge's comments: Great comprehensive coverage with many interesting angles. I really loved how you included the voices of the people experiencing homelessness and also asked readers for solutions to get them more engaged.*

**2. The Jackson Sun**  
Brandon Shields

*Judge's comments: Comprehensive government coverage. I really liked the explanations and the emphasis on "why this matters to me."*

**3. Bristol Herald Courier**  
David McGee, Sarah Wade

*Judge's comments: Well-reported on an important topic.*

**4. Johnson City Press**  
Jonathan Roberts, Joe Avento, David Floyd**5. Citizen Tribune, Morristown**  
John Gullion, Cliff Hightower**Group V****1. The Tennessean, Nashville**  
Cassandra Stephenson, Adam Friedman

*Judge's comments: Perfect example of reporting done right. Important information for all readers, and stories are interesting for all, no matter where they're from.*

**2. The Commercial Appeal,**  
Memphis  
Daniel Connolly

*Judge's comments: All of Daniel's stories were informative, able to keep readers' attention and so well-written. Great example of prime reporting.*

**3. Chattanooga Times Free**  
Press  
Andy Sher

*Judge's comments: In-depth, informative reporting from the moment the news broke.*

**Best Personal Column**  
**Group I****1. New Tri State Defender,**  
Memphis  
Lee Eric Smith

*Judge's comments: I appreciated the raw emotion conveyed in this column, and the frank, up-front approach the writer took. The columnist made you FEEL what he felt that day, which is tougher to do than you think.*

**2. Herald & Tribune,**  
Jonesborough  
Nancy Kavanaugh

*Judge's comments: Nostalgia pieces can be a tough sell, but this column does a nice job of building images in the reader's mind through carefully crafted sentences. I felt like a companion to the writer as I made my way down the street on "laundry day."*

**3. Herald & Tribune,**  
Jonesborough  
John L. Kiener

*Judge's comments: I appreciate a column that can peel back the curtain to show you colorful, interesting tidbits in other peoples' lives.*

**4. New Tri State Defender,**  
Memphis  
Lee Eric Smith**5. The Gazette, Trenton**  
Logan Watson**Best Personal Column**  
**Group II****1. The Leader, Covington**

*Judge's comments: A viewpoint, that brings a solution to a controversial issue. Great column!*

**2. The Standard Banner,**  
Jefferson City  
Steve Marion

*Judge's comments: I loved it! All of it. And I'm making that cake..*

**3. Pulaski Citizen**  
Scott Stewart

*Judge's comments: Well-written viewpoint that more people could benefit from reading.*

**4. The Courier News, Clinton**  
Kenneth Leinart**5. The LaFollette Press**  
Eva Herinkova**Group III****1. The Nashville Ledger**  
Joe Rogers

*Judge's comments: Joe gets right to the point, illustrating the hypocrisy of politicians squashing discussion of race in schools through the critical race theory crusade. He closes with a strong illustration of his point through an encounter with an industrious kid, who may face uphill battles because of attitudes like those of the politicians. Excellent column.*

**2. The Daily Herald, Columbia**  
Kerri Bartlett

*Judge's comments: Powerful writing from Kerri Bartlett. Her column puts a face on a homeless man, who nonetheless clearly felt he had a home in Columbia as a town and the Presbyterian church as a place to stay. Kerri found the right moments from a funeral services to paint a picture of a human being for readers who didn't know him. They got to know him through her column. Excellent work.*

**3. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville**  
Jim Herrin

*Judge's comments: Jim nails it with his flashback to an explosive 1997 annexation dispute and its foreshadowing of detrimental social*

**First place award****Best News**  
**Photograph**  
**Group II**

Larry McCormack –  
Main Street Nashville



Carly Pearce and Marty Stuart press a button Tuesday to begin the countdown to the Grand Ole Opry's 5,000th broadcast on Oct. 30.

# Metro

## BY PAYNE RA

Main Street Nashville Metro Nashville requiring students to opt out of the can lawmakers a refuses to compl

MNPS will require, Dire said in a statem will instead kee "further review.

"The Metro N are charged with keeping them sa ing policies, dui gation strategy to opt out of the

# Chi

## Stuart, Pearce begin countdown to Opry's 5,000th broadcast

### BY JOSH EWERS

Main Street Nashville Through depression, war, civil unrest and pan-

media food-fights and insults. The impulsive, rude behavior of residents freaking out over annexation before realizing the city officials had already decided to undo the annexation fits 2020 to a T. Succinctly written and spot-on.

**4. The Knoxville Ledger**  
Joe Rogers**5. Cleveland Daily Banner**  
Rick Norton**Group IV****1. Kingsport Times-News**  
Ned Jilton

A very powerful, a very moving piece of writing. Thank you for sharing this -- and thanks to your father for his service.

**2. Bristol Herald Courier**  
Roger Watson

For those considering what should be done about the student debt problem, we have been given another angle to consider.

**3. Bristol Herald Courier**  
Joe Tennis

Judge's comments: The category See WINNERS, Page 11

**First place award****Best News Photograph Group III**

*Michelle Morrow –  
The Nashville Ledger*



Story by Hollie Deese begins on page 2



Tim Walker, executive director of the Metro Historical Commission, surveys the damage done on Second Avenue N. with Patrick McIntyre and Commission staff.

## BRINGING SECOND AVE. BACK FROM THE BLAST

**WINNERS, from Page 10**

is "best personal column," and the writer gives as personal insight into his friend and collaborator.

**4. Johnson City Press**  
David Floyd

**5. Johnson City Press**  
Nathan Baker

**Group V****1. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Mark Kennedy

Judge's comments: A captivating and emotional story, written skillfully, artfully. Connects with the reader and strikes tenderly on so many chords. This is the type of story telling that newspaper col-

umnists can do so well. This story is one of the best I've encountered in a while. Thank you to the columnist for sharing this personal story with his readers.

**2. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

David Cook

**3. The Tennessean, Nashville**

David Plazas

**Best Personal Humor Column****Group I****1. Brownsville Press**

Tommy Russell

**2. The Erwin Record**

Bryan Stevens, Ralph Hood

**3. Carthage Courier**

Larry Woody

**4. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon**

Ron Park

**5. The Gazette, Trenton**

Logan Watson

**Group II****1. Pulaski Citizen**

Scott Stewart

**2. Main Street Nashville**

Karen Grigsby

**3. Main Street Nashville**

Joe Dubin

**4. The Courier News, Clinton**

Kenneth Leinart

**5. Pulaski Citizen**

Scott Stewart

**Group III****1. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville**

Jim Herrin

Judge's comments: Delightfully fun column. I laughed out loud with Jim's analogy of his wife's vegetables' arrangement in the fridge being "like putting a hat on a hat." Well done and funny.

**2. The Nashville Ledger**

Lyle Graves

Judge's comments: Great story and analogy for the COVID-19 pandemic dilemma of abandoning the handshake. Stellar writing.

**3. The Knoxville Ledger**

Joe Rogers

Judge's comments: Clever click-bait column, with a nice dive into those tempting but unrewarding websites. Joe deftly attaches the local elements and gives those a humorous twist, too.

**4. Shelbyville Times-Gazette**

Zoe Haggard

**5. Crossville Chronicle**

Rebekah Beeler

**Group IV****1. Johnson City Press**

Joe Avento

Judge's comments: Whether you have a pet or not, this column will hold your interest! It was engaging and amusing, an overall great read about Daisy Duke!

**2. Kingsport Times-News**

Marina Waters

Judge's comments: What a great idea, and such an interesting read for both locals and visitors. This column provided lots of entertainment.

**3. Bristol Herald Courier**

Joe Tennis

Judge's comments: A funny take on the holidays. This was an enjoyable read

**4. Bristol Herald Courier**

Joe Tennis

**5. Kingsport Times-News**

J.H. Osborne

**Group V****1. The Commercial Appeal, Memphis**

John Beifuss

Judge's comments: Not only was this clever, but this was super entertaining - even for readers who don't live in Memphis. The accompanying video was the star on top of the tree!

**2. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Mark Kennedy

Judge's comments: This column was wildly entertaining!

**3. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Mark Kennedy

Judge's comments: Super witty and entertaining column.

**Best Single Editorial****Group I****1. The Erwin Record**

Bryan Stevens

Judge's comments: Clever hook that kept me interested. Timely for the time it was written.

**2. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon**

Ron Park, Shirley Nanney

Judge's comments: Straight and to the point... nothing wrong with that.

**3. Macon County Times, Lafayette**

Craig Harris

Judge's comments: Well-written, but more of a sports column or event sidebar than an editorial. I think there's a distinction between the two.

**4. Brownsville Press**

Carlton Veirs

**5. The Gazette, Trenton**

Logan Watson

**Group II****1. Main Street Clarksville**

Cheri Reeves, Dave Gould

Judge's comments: Holding public officials accountable is a key component of editorial writing. This editorial does so forcefully and effectively. Writing is clear and compelling. Clear winner.

**2. The Gallatin News**

Josh Cross, Tena Lee, Sherry Mitchell, Dave Gould

**3. Hendersonville Standard**

Tena Lee, Sherry Mitchell, Josh Cross, Dave Gould

**4. Grainger Today, Bean Station**

Tracey Wolfe

**5. The Gallatin News**

Josh Cross, Tena Lee, Sherry Mitchell, Dave Gould

**Group III****1. Crossville Chronicle**

Heather Mullinix

See **WINNERS**, Page 12

# What happens when no one's listening?

"Do you hear me? Do you care?" Those lyrics open a 1982 New Wave buried gem by the title of "Words".

I'm a child of the '80s. Perhaps those who are children of the '60s or '70s will understand. There's always a pop song, sometimes an obscure one, in my mental catalog that will help me sort out my thoughts.

Dale Bozzio, best known as the founder of the New Wave band Missing Persons, sang one of the group's biggest hits, "Words," with a quirky voice and a unique persona. Bozzio and her band are unfairly classified as one-hit wonders. Today, "Words" and some of the group's other singles are classics of early New Age music.

That's neither here nor there when it comes to my renewed interest in the song "Words" and its prescient lyrics. If you make it to the end of these words, at the most you've lost a few minutes of time over a silly song from decades ago.

Like the best of the written word, however, there are unexpected layers.

Here's another sample from the lyrics: "What are words for when no one listens anymore? What are words for when no one listens? What are words for when no one listens? It's no use talkin' at all."

Wouldn't Bozzio have had great fun if social media had existed in the early 1980s? Well, maybe not. That must stand out as another great thing about that decade – no internet and no Facebook.

We can't talk to each other these days. We don't listen. We don't want to listen. We go so far as to deny the true value of words.

Words are useful. Words can express sympathy and empathy. Words can impart knowledge. Words can deliver urgent warnings, if we listen.



## First place award

### Best Single Editorial Group I

*Bryan Stevens – The Erwin Record*

#### Meeman Award Winner

Words can get twisted. Words can be used to spread lies. Words can express fear and hate. Words magnify confusion, unless we take the time to think about them critically.

Here are a few more lyrics from the song: "Something has to happen to change the direction. What little filters through is giving you the wrong impression. It's a sorry state . . ."

I'm not interested in arguing about how we got into our sorry state. We're there. We've been there for some time now.

What happened to people who care about others? What happened to a sense of being united? People praise the heroes who won World War II as "the greatest generation." Rightfully so. Everything I've read and studied about that era backs up that description. So, tell me, how have we gotten so far off course?

It's frustrating. As Bozzio sings in her song, "I might as well go up and talk to a wall 'cause all the words are having no effect at all. It's a funny thing. Am I all alone?"

I hope not. I'm looking for signs that those of us living here in this era of strange times can unite behind a common cause. Americans scrimped, saved, sacrificed and rationed to help win World War II. Already, far more Americans have died from COVID-19 than American soldiers were killed in World War II.

But we don't even want to wear

a mask, let alone get a vaccination that could save not only our own lives but those of others.

Back to "Words" and Bozzio: "Pursue it further and another thing you'll find: Not only are they deaf and dumb, they could be going blind, and no one notices. I think I'll dye my hair blue."

Someone look Bozzio up and give her some sort of award. Then ask her where she's hidden her time machine/crystal ball.

"Media overload bombarding you with action?" Bozzio sings. "It's getting near impossible to cause distraction. Someone answer me before I pull out the plug."

These words have been my attempt to understand.

I'll close with some more "Words" lyrics:

"My lips are moving and the sound's coming out. The words are audible, but I have my doubts that you realize what has been said. You look at me as if you're in a daze. It's like the feeling at the end of the page when you realize you don't know what you just read."

If you feel that way, it's all right. I don't think words are changing any minds.

These words are just my attempt to remind myself later that I tried to use words to help.

"So tell me what are words for?" "Do you care?"

The words of Jesus Christ in the Holy Bible put it another way: "Those who have ears to hear, let them hear."

#### 4. Crossville Chronicle Heather Mullinix

#### 5. The Knoxville Ledger Joe Rogers

#### Group IV

#### 1. Kingsport Times-News Rick Thomason

Judge's comments: Editorial is sharply focused on the meth

#### 4. Crossville Chronicle Heather Mullinix

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#### 4. Crossville Chronicle Heather Mullinix

#### 5. The Knoxville Ledger Joe Rogers

#### Group IV

#### 1. Kingsport Times-News Rick Thomason

Judge's comments: Editorial is sharply focused on the meth

## WINNERS, from Page 11

Judge's comments: Well done. Presents the fact in an easy-to-understand manner. Well done.

### 2. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville

Jim Herrin, Lindsay Pride

Judge's comments: COVID has divided so many communities. This editorial works to encourage more

to get vaccinated. We don't if they did or not but they made a compelling argument.

### 3. Cleveland Daily Banner

Rick Norton

Judge's comments: Such a tragedy but this newspaper turned that tragedy into a chance to remind the public of the dangers of drinking and driving.



## First place award

### Best News Photograph Group IV

*Helen Comer – The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro*

## La Vergne remembers fallen officer at memorial service



La Vergne Chief of Police Burrel "Chip" Davis presents a flag to Anna Stolinsky, 4, the daughter of fallen La Vergne Police Detective Lt. Kevin Stolinsky, during his funeral service on Wednesday at LifePoint Church in Smyrna. Stolinsky's wife and Anna's mother, Casey Stolinsky, and Kevin Stolinsky's father, Martin Jack "Marty" Stolinsky, look on. HELEN COMER/THE DAILY NEWS JOURNAL

Nancy DeGennaro  
Murfreesboro Daily News Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

On the morning of Nov. 12, La Vergne Police Detective Kevin Stolinsky applied for a promotion to lieutenant — a pro-

motion he would receive, but never see. Stolinsky died on duty later that day from a medical emergency.

"You made it brother. We're going to miss you," La Vergne Police Chief Chip Davis said Wednesday afternoon at LifePoint Church in Smyrna during a me-

morial service to honor Stolinsky. Later, Davis presented Stolinsky's 4-year-old daughter, Anna, with an American flag in honor of her father's 20 years of service.

See OFFICER, Page 3A

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problem and explains clearly why the series Meth Mountain is being published.

Michael Cisco

## Group V

### 1. The Tennessean, Nashville

David Plazas

### 2. The Tennessean, Nashville

David Plazas

### 3. Chattanooga Times Free Press

Pam Sohn

## Best Single Feature

### Group I

#### 1. Herald & Tribune, Jonesborough

See WINNERS, Page 13

**First place award****Best News  
Photograph  
Group V**

Troy Stolt –  
Chattanooga Times Free Press

he state's public schools. So testing, said it began accept- bottles and a prepaid shipping of lead in their drink

## Walking tall against violence

Staff photos by Troy Stolt



On Sunday, Laney Oliver, 12, embraces her mother, Toyia, who is making a video of a speaker during a walk through College Hill Courts put on by PEAK Chattanooga to address gun violence within the city.



**Left:** Tristan Sutton, 10, his father, Temus, and younger brother Aiden, 5, listen to a speech during the walk. **Top:** Resident Patrick Postell confronts Chattanooga police Sgt. Jason Holmes during the walk. Postell said he believed not enough has been done to help Chattanooga's Black community, and was skeptical of the walk's intentions. **Above:** Keye Blackmon speaks during the walk.



## Lucky doll triggers family's trip around the world

When it was announced week that a Chattanooga family had been awarded a directed trip around the

Life Stories

# Richard Garrett needs to resign

Clarksville city council member and Mayor Pro Tem Richard Garrett should resign from his elected positions based on his residency outside the city ward to which he was elected, as well as outside the Clarksville city limits.

District Attorney John Carney has yet to complete his investigation into where Garrett lays his head and what address he calls home, but it's apparent Garrett has violated Clarksville's city charter.

A member of the council can live once elected into office of a particular ward "... for the duration of their term of office, in the ward from which they were elected to serve," according to the charter. "There can only be one principal residence."

However, Garrett continually names two addresses as his principal residence. One is at 3398 Damien Drive in Clarksville's Ward 1 and the other at 1488 Collins View Way in the Stones Manor subdivision just outside the city limits.

The Garrett case, investigated by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and also the district attorney for the 19th Judicial District, could result in federal, state and local violations. Under penalty of perjury, Garrett could face felony charges due to his falsifying information with his voting records.

Convictions could result in several years in prison and hefty fines.

In his oath of office administered Jan. 7, 2019, Garrett swore to support the constitution, obeying all the laws of the United States and the state of Tennessee.

He also swore in all respects to support and obey the charter, all ordinances and resolutions of the city of Clarksville.

Garrett needs to show his true leadership by obeying the law – pure and simple. He has blatantly disobeyed the law by moving outside of the city and continuing to vote and make important city decisions since July 2020.

**First place award****Best Single Editorial  
Group II**

Cheri Reeves, Dave Gould – Main Street Clarksville

Time will tell if the justice system holds Garrett accountable for his actions, but Garrett needs to quit wasting taxpayer's money investigating these allegations. He needs to quit making city decisions in a city in which evidence shows he does not even live.

Garrett has four addresses on file in the Montgomery County Election Commission office in Clarksville. The earliest on file is in October 2008 when he registered his address as 3415 Oak Lawn Drive.

When he qualified as a candidate in Ward 1 in 2018, Garrett listed 3398 Damien Drive as his address.

In May, Garrett changed from the Damien Drive address to the Oak Lawn address, which is where he is currently registered.

### July 8, 2020

According to property records from the Montgomery County tax assessor's office, Garrett and his wife, Laquvia, are listed as the homeowners of the house at 1488 Collins View Way. It is in Stones Manor in Montgomery County, outside the Clarksville city limits. They bought the home July 8, 2020. In the couple's deed of trust on file with the county, both Garrett and his wife signed the document and had it notarized. The deed requires the borrower to occupy, establish and use the property as their "principal residence" within 60 days of the execution of the document.

### Aug. 6, 2020

According to Montgomery County Election Commission records, Garrett signed an application July 18, 2020, for early voting in the Aug. 6, 2020, state primary

and Montgomery County general election. He listed his address as 3398 Damien Drive in Clarksville. Nov. 3, 2020

According to Montgomery County Election Commission records, Garrett voted in the Nov. 3, 2020, state general, special county general and the city of Clarksville elections and signed a document that said his address was 3398 Damien Drive in Clarksville.

### Actions, violations against Garrett

Bruce Griffy, a Clarksville resident, filed a request for ouster against Garrett in October. The complaint claimed Garrett violated the city ethics code and state election laws. In January, Montgomery County Commissioner James Lewis, who served for 10 years as a Clarksville city councilperson, filed an ouster complaint against Garrett. Additionally, Lewis sent an accusation of an ethics violation to the city, which was notarized Jan. 12. The document charged Garrett didn't live in the ward in which he was elected to serve. The ethics commission has yet to rule on the complaint.

### Garrett: Go home

With all of the evidence that Garrett lives in a home outside Clarksville, he needs to quit his charade of representing Clarksville taxpayers. It's apparent he has and continues to violate city, state and federal laws as he remains in his role as the mayor pro tem and Ward 1 representative in Clarksville. Richard Garrett needs to step down from elected office and go home to Montgomery County. All the evidence says that's where he calls home.

## WINNERS, from Page 12

Marina Waters

Judge's comments: A very touching and well-written story that anyone with a family business can relate to. Great job.

## 2. Macon County Times, Lafayette

Craig Harris

Judge's comments: An informative piece that touches on an issue that many have likely not had to experience themselves. Well-written.

## 3. The Erwin Record

Bryan Stevens

Judge's comments: This story painted a portrait of this railroad family that was very touching. Good job.

## 4. Brownsville Press

See WINNERS, Page 14

**WINNERS**, from Page 13

Brooke McCain

**5. The Gazette, Trenton**  
Logan Watson**Group II****1. Fort Campbell Courier,**  
**Clarksville**

Mari-Alice Jasper

*Judge's comments: This is a hard, but important, topic to tackle. You were able to take a routine talk and make it informative and touching by not only telling the story of loss, but how the soldiers also have experienced loss.***2. Main Street Nashville**

Ashley Perham, Larry McCormack, Karen Grigsby

*Judge's comments: An interesting way to approach a story. You were able to tell these women's stories in an effective and compact way. Nothing was lost in the delivery.***3. The Gallatin News**

Josh Cross, Sherry Mitchell

*Judge's comments: This is a sweet story about a pillar in the community who dedicated his life to helping animals. This is a feel-good story that I want to read!***4. Main Street Nashville**

Tim Ghianni, Karen Grigsby

**5. The Dickson Post**

Casey Patrick, Ivan Aronin

**Group III****1. The Daily Herald, Columbia**

Mike Christen, Kerri Bartlett, Ayrika Whitney

*Judge's comments: Such an important story dealing with a forgotten part of history, and its recognition today. The writing was vivid, the organization of the story was seamless and the narrative gripping. Well done.***2. The Nashville Ledger**

Margaret Sizemore

*Judge's comments: A really well-done examination of a significant issue, weaving in statistics and past efforts with ongoing initiatives.***3. The Knoxville Ledger**

Nancy Henderson

*Judge's comments: Gripping story about an important facility for those impacted by violence, illustrated through the real life experience of someone who turned there for help.***4. The Daily Herald, Columbia**

Jay Powell, Mike Christen, Kerri Bartlett, Ayrika Whitney

**5. The Wilson Post, Lebanon**

Ken Beck, Ivan Aronin

**Group IV****1. The Greeneville Sun**

Lorelei Goff

*Judge's comments: Great detail and start to the article. I also learned so much about being a blacksmith. The writer really elevated a topic that could have been mundane.***2. The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro**

Nancy DeGennaro, Helen Comer

*Judge's comments: Great start. Plus it's an important historical story.***3. Bristol Herald Courier**

Tim Hayes

*Judge's comments: Wow, what a sad story. Very comprehensive. Only wish we could have got to the scene of him reading the newspaper about the crash a little sooner.***4. The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville**

Alexis Clark, Henry Taylor

**5. Kingsport Times-News**

Marina Waters, J.H. Osborne

**Group V****1. The Tennessean, Nashville**

Brad Schmitt

**2. The Tennessean, Nashville**

Brad Schmitt

**3. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Wyatt Massey, Mary Fortune

**Best Special Issue or Section****Group I****1. McNairy County News,**  
**Selmer**

Russell Ingle, Suzanne Ingle, Brenda Cauley

# Sign up for a shot of hope

**First place award****Best Single Editorial Group III***Heather Mullinix – Crossville Chronicle**I got my first COVID-19 vaccine shot last week.**Side effects included a slightly sore arm and a feeling of hope.**Thanks to the vaccine, I could soon visit family without worrying that I'm bringing them a dangerous illness that could take them from me. I might be able to plan vacations and travel after a year of looking at my four walls. And, I can worry a little less about what happens to my colleagues if I'm exposed to the virus and have to be out for a stretch of time.**I won't get into the nitty-gritty details, but I qualified under the expansion of vaccine distribution to the Phase 1c group — the more than 1.5 million Tennesseans who have underlying health conditions that put us at greater risk of serious illness or death should we get the virus.**Now, Tennessee has again expanded access to these vaccines to the Phase 2a and 2b and to anyone age 55 and older.**Phase 2a/2b allows workers in critical industries to get a vaccine. The state considers 2a critical infrastructure workers to be individuals working in child and adult protective services who have direct public exposure, commercial agriculture workers, commercial food production workers, corrections staff not already eligible for the vaccine and public transit workers.**The 2b critical infrastructure workers include anyone working in postal, package or freight delivery; people who work in public infrastructure; telecommunications employees; and utility or energy employees.**The state just opened up vaccine eligibility for these groups over the weekend. It was only two weeks earlier that vaccine eligibility last***Meeman Award Winner***expanded.**Part of that is because supplies of the vaccine are starting to pick up in the state.**Unfortunately, part of the expansion is because some people aren't getting the vaccine even though they are eligible.**Tennessee Commissioner of Health Dr. Lisa Piercey said last week that there are more than 500,000 available vaccine appointments statewide. And that only includes appointments with the 89 rural health departments. The metro departments handle their own appointment systems, as do retail pharmacies, which also have vaccines available.**In Middle Tennessee, about 80% of vaccination appointments are full, but that number falls to 50% in rural East Tennessee and to less than 20% in West Tennessee.**You can schedule a vaccine online at covid19.tn.gov — you can use a computer, a tablet or your phone.**If you don't have internet access or aren't comfortable using a computer, you can call to schedule an appointment — 866-442-5301.**So far, more than 23,000 residents of Cumberland County have had at least one dose of a vaccine — more than 25% of our population! And, 14.21% are fully vaccinated with two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer**vaccine or the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.**Medical professionals tell us that even people who had COVID-19 should still get a vaccine because the immunity from the illness has only been proven to last about 8 months. And we may need boosters of the COVID-19 vaccine in the future, much like we had to get boosters of our childhood immunizations and you have to get a very unpleasant tetanus booster every few years.**If you aren't a fan of needles, believe me — I get it. I'm a big cry baby about needles. I don't like them in my arm. I do not like them on a farm. I do not like them here or there. I do not like them anywhere.**But I don't want COVID-19, and I don't want the people I'm around to have COVID-19.**And I have to give our Cumberland County Health Department a huge compliment — I couldn't even feel the shot. Yes, my arm hurt a little later, but the shot itself was painless. It was a quick and easy process.**If you have questions about the vaccine, contact the health department or your doctor. They can answer your questions and address your concerns. Then, please, make your appointment to get a vaccine — online at covid19.tn.gov or call 866-442-5301.**Chad Fred Bailey, John Keiner, Kris Koester**Judge's comments: I really loved the photos. Just wish those putting the pages together would have given more thought to what went into that section or how it was laid out.***3. Lewis County Herald, Hohenwald**

Hulon Dunn, Julie Reeves, Katalin Carroll, Callie Dunn

*Judge's comments: Great idea to honor first responders. This is the first publication I've seen where the spouses of the responders were ever considered to be a part of such a tribute.***4. Macon County Times, Lafayette**

Craig Harris

**5. The Erwin Record**Bryan Stevens, Richard Rourk,  
See **WINNERS**, Page 15

## 'Meth Mountain' isn't a feel-good series, but it's necessary

It wasn't that many months ago when the conversations around drug abuse in Northeast Tennessee centered squarely on one issue: opioids.

Big Pharma saw lawsuits dropping on them like a brutal hailstorm. Opioid overdoses sometimes overran emergency rooms. Clinics scrambled to treat the addicted.

Oh, but how quickly things changed.

Today opioids have faded into the distance and methamines – meth, for short – dominate the addiction and law enforcement conversation. It was that abrupt swing over a relatively brief period that prompted the Times-News series "Meth Mountain," which begins publication today and will publish over the next four days.

"Is it really that big of a deal that you need to devote four days to the issue?" you might ask.

You will see that the answer is an unequivocal "Yes."

Let's look at some federal crime statistics for the United States Sentencing Commission Fiscal Year 2020 Report:

Of more than 64,000 federal cases reported nationwide, 26.1% were drug offenders. In Tennessee, the percentage of drug offenders in federal cases was 44.2%. That's disturbing for the state. But in the Eastern District of Tennessee, the number jumps to a terrifying 60.3%.

Of the cases mentioned above, meth was the primary drug in 47.7% of cases nationally. Here in



**Meeman Award  
Winner**

### First place award Best Single Editorial Group IV

**Rick Thomason –  
Kingsport Times-News**

the Eastern District, it's 78.8% of federal drug cases.

Nationwide, there were 16,390 drug-trafficking cases. Tennessee accounted for 518 of them. The Eastern District saw 365 of those 518 cases.

So we simply shift resources to address the shift in the drug of choice, right?

If it were only that simple. But no. Not even close.

Identifying the source of meth is a far different task than identifying the source of opioids. Law enforcement officials we interviewed, as you will see, find almost no likenesses in dealing with the distribution of the products nor in dealing with addicts.

Clinicians we interviewed will tell you they could treat opioid addicts who wished to be treated. Meth addicts, on first use, dive into an all-consuming personal hell from which there is, more often than not, no return. You will hear from one person many of you know who did return through sheer determination and with an unparalleled support system. His story is not the norm, but it is one of hope.

Lawmakers at the local, state

and federal levels struggle with the simple question, "What can we do?" So far, the answers have been few. That's not a criticism because, as you will see, the problem presents a complex set of issues that transcends borders, economics and social classes. Trying to address one of those issues is tough. Trying to tackle all three is, well, confounding at best simply due to the nature of the drug, the source, the distribution network and the speed with which meth gets a stranglehold on its victims.

None of us wanted to write or publish the "Meth Mountain" series. None of us wanted to admit that Tennessee's Eastern District is the epicenter of the meth-amphetamine problem.

But here we are in the bull's-eye. And without bringing a problem and all its complexities to light, there's no hope of addressing the debilitating consequences in any meaningful way.

"Meth Mountain" brings stories of horrifying addiction, unfathomable statistical data and pleas for help from law enforcement and the courts.

"Meth Mountain" isn't a feel-good series. It's real. It's raw. It's horrifying. But it's necessary.

## WINNERS, from Page 14

Lisa Whaley, Marcella Brooks, Kathy Carmichael

### Group II

#### 1. The Mirror-Exchange, Milan

Victor Parkins, Michael Odom, Danny Wade, Gary Smith, Logan Watson, Lori Cathey

*Judge's comments: What an excellent way to highlight local athletes. Photo reproduction is spectacular. Short features on local athletes are of great interest to readers. Design aspects such as the athlete cutouts and typography (with logo) displaying the winners' names puts it*

over the top.

#### 2. Pulaski Citizen

Cary Jane Malone, Mark Mize, Johnny Phelps, Barbara Harmon, Dan Watson, Rebecca Brooks, Scott Stewart

*Judge's comments: Easily the prettiest of the special sections submitted. A beautiful cover with plenty more excellent photography inside. Some really nice design aspects.*

#### 3. Fort Campbell Courier, Clarksville

Ethan Steinquest, Sirena Clark, Mari-Alice Jasper, Maria Rice McClure, Brendalyn Player

*Judge's comments: One of the best graduation issues I've ever seen. Excellent mix of stories featuring local graduates. Had the photo reproduction been stronger, this entry could have finished even higher.*

#### 4. The Courier News, Clinton

Kenneth Leinart

#### 5. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City

Steve Marion, Mark Brown, Dale Gentry, Shane Cook, Kim Cook, Steven Lloyd

### Group III

#### 1. Union City Daily Messenger

*Judge's comments: Herculean*

work by Kevin Weakens. Excellent cover, great photography and graphics work throughout.

#### 2. Crossville Chronicle

Cheryl Duncan, Heather Mullinix, Rebekah Beeler, Michael Lindsay, Stephen Prudhomme

*Judge's comments: Like the specificity of the magazine; made it stand out from others. Excellent editorial content.*

#### 3. The Tullahoma News

Erin Douglas, Duane Sherrill, Erin McCullough

*Judge's comments: Well done. Only criticism would be: no credits for the writing or photos. But this will be a keeper for many people.*

### Group IV

#### 1. Bristol Herald Courier

Brian Woodson, Tim Hayes, Allen Gregory, George Stone, David Crigger

*Judge's comments: Impressive in volume and quality of content. Great job.*

#### 2. Johnson City Press

Jeff Birchfield, Jason Bullard

*Judge's comments: Everything a race fan needs to know. Looks like someone enjoys doing this, too!*

#### 3. Citizen Tribune, Morristown

John Gullion, Drew Robinson, Wade Littleton

*Judge's comments: Timely tributes, good local stories.*

### Group V

#### 1. The Tennessean, Nashville Staff

*Judge's comments: Super tourism tool that establishes the paper as a community partner. Very well done.*

#### 2. Chattanooga Times Free Press

Matt McClane

*Judge's comments: About as cool as a special section can get... very fitting for its theme.*

### Best Sports Coverage

#### Group I

#### 1. Macon County Times, Lafayette

Craig Harris, Terry McCormick

*Judge's comments: Good, well-rounded effort.*

#### 2. The Erwin Record

Bryan Stevens, Richard Rourk, Trey Williams

#### 3. Herald & Tribune, Jonesborough

Trey Williams, Earl Neikirk, Ron Williams, Avery Davis, Marina Waters, Lisa Whaley

#### 4. Carthage Courier

Shea Haile

#### 5. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon

Jim Steele, Russell Bush, Ron Park

### Group II

#### 1. The Leader, Covington

Jeff Ireland

#### 2. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City

Dennis Barker, J.D. Vaughn

#### 3. The LaFollette Press

Robby O'Daniel, J.T. Russell

#### 4. The Connection, Springfield

Russell Vannozzi, Blaine Kellar, Joel Clinger, Phil Stauder, Brett Berwager, Ian Castle

#### 5. Murfreesboro Post

Monte Hale, Russell Vannozzi, Tyler Palmateer, Harrison McClary, Jeff Neal

### Group III

#### 1. Crossville Chronicle

Michael Lindsay

#### 2. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville

Ben Craven, Braden Wall

#### 3. The Wilson Post, Lebanon

Tommy Bryan, Larry Woody, Bob Tamboli, Steve Wampler, Bobbie Kay Bryan, Dallus Whitfield

#### 4. farragutpress

Alan Sloan, Ken Lay, Carlos Reviez, Bill Howard, Preston Jones, Michelle Hollenhead, Jeremy Wiggs

#### 5. The Nashville Ledger

See WINNERS, Page 17

# 2022 General Excellence Winners

Circulation Group I: Combined weekly circulation of 2,999 or less

## Brownsville Press



**Cheote Engineering** is not coming to Brownsville. The Whiteville-based company will, instead, locate in Bolivar. Cheote's plant was to be built on land owned by manufacturing business and bring at least 50 highly specialized jobs to the community. The story, published in Monday's edition of the Jackson Sun on March 22, states Cheote will invest \$8 million and bring 100 high paying jobs to Bolivar.

Cheote announced last year it would move with the Brownsville-Haywood County Industrial Development board for tax incentives and its plans to locate in a building once occupied by TV tuner manufacturer Sartor-Tarvis, located on Duvernay near the entrance to the business park.

Why did Cheote Engineering dump its plans to come to Brownsville? That's the question asked by a reader March 11, and the checks will be delivered April 15, according to a statement by Schools Superintendent Joey Hassell.

Hassell said the money comes from a recent grant made by the Cheote Engineering Foundation providing \$11,000 for teacher pay and about \$17,000 in local grants.

Certified workers receive \$50 each. Other staffers can expect \$30. Hassell says everyone on the payroll will receive a bonus.

## Braden says on schedule

Accepting resumes for 150 jobs

BradenHealth says it is on track to reopen the Brownsville hospital. The news came in a press release issued Monday, March 22.

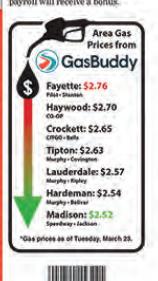
Calling it a "proud day," the company "is currently on schedule for an October 2021 reopening." Construction projects are underway, and replacement of the old roof is beginning in the coming weeks.

When BradenHealth negotiated the deal for the hospital last year, it predicted an October opening. It had under 150 workers and was accepting resumes now for later review. Applicants may send the resumes to BradenHealth, 1000 South Main Hospital, C/O Human Resources, 200 West Church Street, Lexington, Tennessee, 38501.

BradentHealth says it will require job seekers to undergo COVID-19 testing and provide proof of vaccination. The company will undergo standard screening procedures, including screening, contracting, and approvals by state and federal authorities. Braden's COO

Kyle Kopke wrote,

"BradentHealth says it will require job seekers to undergo COVID-19 testing and provide proof of vaccination. The company will undergo standard screening procedures, including screening, contracting, and approvals by state and federal authorities. Braden's COO



Submitted

Brooke McCain, editor of the Brownsville Press, is all smiles over her newspaper's 2022 General Excellence award.

Circulation Group II: Combined weekly circulation of 3,000-6,999

## The Standard Banner, Jefferson City



Tony Centonze photo, for TPA  
Dale Gentry, editor of The Standard Banner, Jefferson City, with wife, Teresa, at the Aug. 26 State Press Contests luncheon.

Circulation Group III: Non-dailies with a combined weekly distribution of 7,000 and above and Dailies with a combined weekly distribution less than 20,000

## The Nashville Ledger



**GM LOOKS TO ERASE THE WORST FAIL OF HIS 5 NFL DRAFTS**

Photo by Michael Conroy | AP

Jon Robinson.

*Coupled with a pair of big free agent whiffs, the 2020 offseason was one to forget for Titans*

By Terry McCormick

COVID-19 changed many things in 2020. Everything from how we do our work, to dining, shopping, attending church, even eating dinner at a restaurant, became more complicated.

The mighty National Football League proved even wasn't immune to the impact of the virus. There was a virtual draft, canceled offseason and preseason work and virus outbreaks within teams that comprised against the league in 2020.

Somewhat, though, the league persevered, playing in empty or limited capacity stadiums and adapting around the virus.

The Tennessee Titan endure their share of hardship — being the first team to suffer through a locker room outbreak of the virus, feeling the sting of a 13-game losing streak, and prematurely concluding too quickly about the curse and eventually drawing a fine from the league for their COVID transgressions.

At the Titans and the league now prepare for the 2021 NFL Draft — April 29-May 1 in Cleveland — it's easy to see how the COVID-influenced, fly-by-the-seat-your-pants approach that teams were taking to evaluating and selecting draft prospects a year ago wrought havoc in that process.

After meeting players at the NFL Combine a year ago, the evaluation process was essentially shut down — no pro days, no private workouts, no bringing in prospects in for visits. Just Zoom calls, as much video tape as possible, and teams had to remotely and then hope for the best and trust the players were pick on draft weekend.

No team was buster harder than the Titans.

Consider the well-chronicled fiasco of first-round pick Isaiah Wilson, who seemed to lose focus and interest in football as soon

he cashed his first NFL paycheck. That the Titans eventually gave up and shipped him to Miami for the equivalent of a money blocking sled and a long-used footballs is telling enough.

The fact that Wilson wore his jersey with the Dolphins, getting released less than a week after being acquired, fits all you need to know about just how bad a pick that was for the Titans.

Times > PAGE 17

### Titans draft class 2020

Here's how last year's class fared during its rookie season:

■ **Isaiah Wilson (OL):** Round 1, Pick 29 — Released in one game. Traded to Miami in offseason, released one week later.

■ **Kristian Fulton (CB):** Round 2, Pick 61 — Six games, two started. One interception, one sack, 16 tackles

■ **Darryn Evans (RB):** Round 3, Pick 93 — Five games, no starts. 54 yards on 14 carries, two receptions for 27 yards and one touchdown

■ **Larell Murchison (DL):** Round 5, Pick 174 — Ten games, no starts. Five tackles

■ **Cole McDonald (QB):** Round 7, Pick 224 — Released after first week of training camp

■ **Chris Jackson (S):** Round 7, Pick 243 — 11 games, three starts. Twenty-four tackles



**WINNERS**, from Page 17

Kendall Patterson

**2. Brownsville Press**

Benjamin Naylor

**3. Carthage Courier**

Rachel Bennett

**4. The Gazette, Trenton**

Gary Smith

**5. Manchester Times**

Angela Payne

**Group II****1. The Dickson Post**

Marty Allison

*Judge's comments: It's everything you want in a sports action photo - clear subjects, tight crop, the ball, good color pop, a little chaos. The photographer really did well to compose this photo, and his others were nice compliments to back up his lead photo. Well done.*

**2. The Connection, Springfield**

Brett Berwager

*Judge's comments: Being able to get inside a moment and bring that to the reader is the aim of most sports photographers. Well done on being in the right spot at the right time.*

**3. The Connection, Springfield**

Phil Stauber

*Judge's comments: Sometimes you just get lucky catching a moment no one else notices. Good catch on this one.*

**4. Hendersonville Standard**

Brett Berwager

**5. Main Street Clarksville**

Robert Smith

**Group III****1. Crossville Chronicle**

Michael Lindsay

*Judge's comments: Favorite photo in the contest. To catch the kid mid-flip with his teammates in the background is incredible.*

**2. The Tullahoma News**

Erin Douglas, Paul Henry

*Judge's comments: The series of events here is really good. The process of the catch and the emotion afterward are all a part of one big*

*story, and it's captured here.*

**3. The Tullahoma News**

Erin Douglas

*Judge's comments: To be able to catch this kid mid-jump that high in the air and still capture the surrounding defenders, including the one he leaped over, is really good stuff and takes a tremendous amount of focus.*

**4. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville**

Ben Craven

**5. The Wilson Post, Lebanon**

Brad Jones

**Group IV****1. The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville**

Henry Taylor

*Judge's comments: Excellent jube image. The hammer and bear make the image different and unexpected.*

**2. Citizen Tribune, Morristown**

Rob Harvey

*Judge's comments: Great moment. Nice use of the frame. Lots of emotion corner to corner.*

**3. The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro**

Helen Comer

**4. Kingsport Times-News**

Tanner Cook

**5. Bristol Herald Courier**

David Crigger

**Group V****1. The Tennessean, Nashville**

George Walker IV

**2. The Tennessean, Nashville**

Andrew Nelles

**3. Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Robin Rudd

**Best Sports Writing**  
**Group I****1. Macon County Times, Lafayette**

Craig Harris

*Judge's comments: Well-written and the writer did a good job of letting his subjects drive the narrative*

**Blackburn and Hagerty complicit in Trump insurrection****First place award****Best Single Editorial Group V**

*David Plazas –  
The Tennessean, Nashville*

against American democracy while talking about the merits of peaceful protest.

They later decided to withdraw their objections, with Blackburn merely tweeting in the evening: "I will vote in support of certifying the electoral college results." Hagerty said nothing. No explanations, though Tennesseans deserve them.

In 2020, when Hagerty ran for the Senate with Trump's "complete and total" endorsement, he cast Black Lives Matter protesters as an "angry mob."

But the "angry mob" didn't manifest itself as Black men and women demanding social justice. It appeared as a horde of angry white men and women carrying Trump and Confederate flags as they stormed the U.S. Capitol, desecrating a sacred institution. Blackburn and Hagerty helped propagate the messages that led the rioters to insurrection because they chose to not tell them the truth.

Five people are dead, including U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick. Dozens were injured. Police officers put their lives on the line for members of Congress.

Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty are complicit.

**What kind of legacy will Tennessee's senators leave?**

"Those who choose to continue to support (Trump's) dangerous gambit by objecting to the results of a legitimate, democratic election will forever be seen as being complicit in an unprecedented attack against our democracy," Romney said Wednesday night.

"They will be remembered for their role in this shameful episode in American history. That will be their legacy."

Tennessee has elected senators in recent history who created proud legacies of achievement, leadership and decency including Howard Baker, Estes Kefauver, Jim Sasser, Al Gore Sr. and Jr., and Bill Frist.

What kind of legacy will be left by Blackburn and Hagerty? And for that matter, by Tennessee's Republican House members – Reps. Diana Harshbarger, Tim Burchett, Chuck Fleischmann, Scott DesJarlais, John Rose, Mark Green and David Kustoff – who all objected to one or more states' electoral votes even after the authorities quelled the insurrection?

The senators were like children playing with matches who only showed remorse after they set the house on fire.

That is not what a member of Congress is supposed to do. They take an oath to defend the Constitution, not to any one person.

Tennesseans deserve so much better.

**5. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon**

Jim Steele, Russell Bush

**Group II****1. The Courier News, Clinton**

Kenneth Leinart

*Judge's comments: Just one sample to go off of, but Ken found an angle and worked it very, very well. Human interest stories should make a human interested to read it, and this column did just that. Well done.*

**2. Hendersonville Standard**

Zach Womble, Russell Vannozzi

*Judge's comments: Zach brings a professional angle to all of his works. His writing is concise, hits all the high points and draws the reader in with solid attention getting to lead the stories.*

**3. The Gallatin News**

Zach Womble

*Judge's comments: Zach's work See WINNERS, Page 19*

# 2022 Make-up & Appearance Winners

## **Circulation Group I: Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon**



## Circulation Group II: **Fort Campbell Courier, Clarksville**



## Circulation Group III: **Herald-Citizen, Cookeville**



**WINNERS**, from Page 19

Allen Gregory, Tim Hayes, Brian Woodson

**Group V**1. The Tennessean, Nashville  
Gentry Estes, Adam Sparks

2. Chattanooga Times Free Press

Stephen Hargis, Mark Wiedmer, David Paschall

**Coronavirus Features Coverage Group I**

1. New Tri State Defender, Memphis

Karanja Ajanaku, Dr. Sybil Mitchell, Jerome Wright, Candace A. Gray

*Judge's comments: Impressive first person accounts, descriptive writing, photos that helped tell the story effectively and nice presentation. Very well done.*2. Carthage Courier  
Eddie West*Judge's comments: Lots of staff-written content on this subject which is very crucial for the community. In-depth coverage on pandemic issues that were well-written.*3. McNairy County News, Selmer  
Russell Ingle4. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon  
Shirley Nanney, Dennis Richardson, Ron Park**Group II**

1. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City

Steve Marion, Mark Brown, Dale Gentry

2. Hamilton County Herald, Chattanooga

David Laprad

3. The McKenzie Banner  
Joel Washburn, Brittany Martin4. Grainger Today, Bean Station  
See **WINNERS**, Page 21

# 2022 Make-up & Appearance Winners

## Circulation Group IV: **Johnson City Press**

**ELIZABHTON** City leaders eye adding shelter \$ A6    **SUPREME COURT** **Vax battle** Justice won't block college mandate. A2    **ETSU FOOTBALL** A step closer: It's finally full pads for Buccaneers. A1

**Johnson City Press**  
TRI-CITIES, TENNESSEE johnsoncitypress.com

FRIDAY, AUGUST 13, 2021 \$1.00

**Johnson City population soars beyond 70,000**

**Census 2020**

Photo by MICHAEL DUNN/JOHNSON CITY PRESS

## Circulation Group V: **Chattanooga Times Free Press**

**REGION** Nonprofit to fund upgrade to Signal Centers playground    **SPORTS** See results of Friday night prep football action    **BUSINESS** Chattanooga area's first meadery opens in Rossville

TO GIVE THE NEWS IMPARTIALLY, WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR

**Chattanooga Times Free Press**

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2022 TIMESFREEPRESS.COM VOL. 152 | NO. 278 | \$2.

## Thousands of Haitian migrants converge on Texas border town

BY ERIC GAY AND ELLIOTT SPAGAT THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Thousands of Haitian migrants have assembled under and around a bridge in a small Texas border town as chaos unfolded Friday and presented the Biden administration with a new challenge as it tries to manage large numbers of asylum-seekers who have been reaching U.S. soil.

Migrants crossed the Rio Grande freely and in a steady stream, going back and forth between the U.S. and Mexico through knee-deep water with small children in tow, some in their arms. Unable to buy supplies in the U.S., they returned briefly to Mexico for food and cardboard to settle temporary homes under the bridge in Del Rio, a city of 35,000 that has been severely strained by migrant flows in recent months.

Migrants pitched tents and built makeshift shelters from

corrugated metal and plastic sheeting in the river.

The vast majority of the migrants, mostly men, arrived at the bridge on Friday — said Eddie Owens, who is the city's top elected official a

and described the scene under the bridge as "chaotic."

Some families have been under the bridge for as long as six days.

See **MIGRANTS** ▶

## Local Afghan man eager for family reunion



Walled Dorany stands in front of One to One Health on Tuesday.

BY COLLEN LONG, RICHARD LARSON AND MICHAEL KORNZELMAN THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON — Barely. Capitol Police say they are taking no chances as they prepare for a Saturday rally the U.S. Capitol in support of President Donald Trump after his violent Jan. 6 insurrection.

Though it is unclear if the big rally will be, the Capitol Police and Metropolitan Police are fully activating in an effort to avoid a repeat of the pre-noon attack. Unprecedented police were overwhelmed as hundreds of President Donald Trump supporters broke into the Capitol and interrupted the certification of Joe Biden's victory.

After multiple protests, many believe the most likely possibility is violence. Saturday will involve clash between the protesters' counter-protesters who are still here.

A permit for the protest allows 700 people. Many more are expected to be there.

On Saturday, the protest will be held in front of the U.S. Capitol building.

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**First place award**  
**Best Feature Photograph**  
**Group I**  
– Logan Watson  
*The Gazette, Trenton*

## King for a Day

YOUNG PAUL ALLEN proved to be Peabody's lucky charm Thursday night as he was carried to the field on the shoulders of the Peabody Golden Tide Thursday night. The Tide opened their season with a big win, defeating the Milan Bulldogs 35-25. Peabody will host the Westview Chargers Friday night at Walter Kilzer Stadium. Photo by Logan Watson.

### WINNERS, from Page 20

Laura Lakins

**5. The Mirror-Exchange, Milan**  
Caleb Revill

#### Group III

**1. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville**  
Jim Herrin, Lindsay Pride, Paige Stanage

Judge's comments: There is a lot going on here to admire. The first two stories in about families struggling with the coronavirus were incredibly emotional and well-written. Definitely sets the tone of the coronavirus pandemic. The piece about residents taking to social media to relate their COVID experiences is a particular angle on the pandemic I hadn't come across before. I also admired the inclusion of people who have adopted pets in the story about dog adoptions rising. Lastly, the column series about contracting the virus, reflecting on it and getting the vaccine has great description about the whole process and seems relatable. Fantastic work.

**2. The Nashville Ledger**  
Catherine Mayhew, Kathy Carlson, Tom Wood

Judge's comments: There are some great features here on people in the community working amid the COVID pandemic, whether it be to help defeat the virus or keep their gym business afloat. The piece on shaking hands seemed like an interesting way to break into the larger question we had all been asking at that time: "Will we ever return to normal?" And, lastly, the story on "pandemic puppies" had a nice amount of facts and statistics sprinkled in with bits from pet owners. Nice variety of well-written pieces.

**3. Cleveland Daily Banner**  
Autumn Hughes, Tim Siniard, Kaitlin Gebby, Rick Norton

**4. The Knoxville Ledger**  
Nancy Henderson

**5. The Wilson Post, Lebanon**  
Laurie Everett, Angie Mayes, Xavier Smith, Ivan Aronin

#### Group IV

**1. Johnson City Press**  
Jonathan Roberts, Kayla Hackney, David Floyd, Brian Reese, Robert Pierce

Judge's comments: This is a collection of quick hit but impactful stories that show a variety of pandemic coverage. Each piece was more interesting than the last. From the stories covered to the design and writing, this paper's coverage of the global health emergency is can't-miss reporting for local readers.

**2. Kingsport Times-News**  
Holly Viers

Judge's comments: Fascinating in-depth look at one of the most important topics to come out of the pandemic: How does it affect our kids' education? And what are our teachers doing to help? As it turns out, they innovated, and the reporter captured that innovation with a well-researched pair of stories.

**3. Bristol Herald Courier**

David McGee, Joe Tennis, Tom Netherland, Robert Sorrell, Sarah Wade, David Crigger

Judge's comments: It's obvious a lot of effort went into producing this package that not only provides readers a look at how the pandemic impacted their community a year ago but will provide historian a detailed account for years to come.

**4. The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro**

Nancy DeGennaro, Helen Comer, Gary Estwick, Cecil Joyce, Scott Broden

**5. The Jackson Sun**

Brandon Shields

#### Group V

**1. The Commercial Appeal, Memphis**

Staff

Judge's comments: There was a lot of hard work that went into these stories, and it shows. Great ideas and different angles to covering the virus. Great job!

**2. The Tennessean, Nashville**

Brett Kelman, Keith Sharon, Brad Schmitt, Rachel Wegner

Judge's comments: The human factor was a strong point in these stories. A lot of good information.

**3. Chattanooga Times Free Press**  
Elizabeth Fite, Wyatt Massey

Judge's comments: Very interesting stories.

#### Coronavirus News Coverage

##### Group I

**1. The Bledsonian-Banner, Pikeville**

Chase Smith, Sandy Dodson

**2. Macon County Times, Lafayette**

Craig Harris, Kayla Fleming

**3. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon**

Ron Park, Shirley Nanney

**4. Brownsville Press**

Carlton Veirs, Brooke McCain

##### Group II

**1. Hamilton County Herald, Chattanooga**

David Laprad

Judge's comments: The staff excels at zooming in on narrow slices of life and explaining how those industries and people are representative of COVID-19 overall impact on the greater community. The writing is compelling and informative.

**2. Cheatham County Exchange, Pleasant View**

Sharon Lurie, Ivan Aronin, Sean Barry, Randy Moomaw

Judge's comments: Personal stories are powerful, and the staff at the Cheatham County Exchange does an excellent job of bringing to life the individual stories of members and community institutions during a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic.

**3. Fort Campbell Courier, Clarksville**

Mari-Alice Jasper, Ethan Steinquest, Sirena Clark, Maria Rice McClure, Brendalyn Player

**4. The Courier, Savannah**

R. Kelly Jordan, Ron Schaming

**5. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City**

Steve Marion, Mark Brown

##### Group III

**1. The Nashville Ledger**  
Kathy Carlson, Catherine Mayhew, Tom Wood

**2. Cleveland Daily Banner**  
Tim Siniard, Kaitlin Gebby

**3. The Wilson Post, Lebanon**  
Angie Mayes, Xavier Smith, Ivan Aronin

**4. The Tullahoma News**  
Duane Sherrill, Kyle Murphy, Erin McCullough, Zach Birdsong

**5. The Knoxville Ledger**  
Nancy Henderson

##### Group IV

**1. Johnson City Press**  
Jonathan Roberts, David Floyd, Robert Houk

Judge's comments: Good stories and good writing. This shows a depth in reporting that most of the other entrants in this contest sorely lacked.

**2. Citizen Tribune, Morristown**  
John Gullion, Cliff Hightower

Judge's comments: Good stories and good writing. The depth of the reporting was solid and the follow-through was great with coverage to see.

**3. Bristol Herald Courier**  
David McGee, Joaquin Mancera, David Crigger

**4. The Greeneville Sun**  
Spencer Morrell, Ken Little, Cameron Judd

**5. The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville**  
Alexis Clark, Jimmy Settle, Henry Taylor, Kyra Watts

##### Group V

**1. Chattanooga Times Free Press**  
Elizabeth Fite, Wyatt Massey

Dave Flessner, Anika Chaturvedi, Sara Grace Taylor

**2. The Tennessean, Nashville**  
Brett Kelman, Keith Sharon, Brad Schmitt, Mariah Timms, Stella Yu

**3. The Commercial Appeal, Memphis**  
Staff

See WINNERS, Page 22

**WINNERS**, from Page 21**Editorials**  
**Group I**

1. Brownsville Press  
Carlton Veirs, Lyle Reid
2. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon  
Shirley Nanney, Ron Park, Dennis Richardson
3. The Erwin Record  
Bryan Stevens, Michael Briggs, Frances Lamberts, Ray Knapp
4. The Gazette, Trenton  
Logan Watson, Cara Zarecor
5. The Tri-City Reporter, Dyer  
Logan Watson, Clayburn Peeples, Cara Zarecor

**Group II**

1. Hendersonville Standard  
Tena Lee, Sherry Mitchell, Josh Cross, Dave Gould
- Judge's comments:* Good set of editorials, two of which take government officials to task for failure to repair an important road and failure to supply COVID statistics on local schools, respectively. Strong voice and sound reasoning.

2. The Gallatin News  
Tena Lee, Sherry Mitchell, Josh Cross, Dave Gould

*Judge's comments:* Strong group of editorials, advocating for public meeting transparency and better city department head hiring practices.

3. The Herald Chronicle, Winchester  
Gina Moore, Greg King, Terry Tucker, Alan Clark

4. The Mirror-Exchange, Milan  
Victor Parkins

5. The McKenzie Banner  
Jason Martin

**Group III**

1. The Knoxville Ledger  
Joe Rogers

*Judge's comments:* Vibrant writing that flows seamlessly, tying ideas together with the deft skill of a storyteller. The editorials made political stories seem enticing and comfortable, overcoming the dry-

**First place award****Best Feature Photograph Group II**

*Dale Gentry – The Standard Banner, Jefferson City*



ness that can sometimes accompany those subjects. The one about the Lil' Free Library wonderfully chastised a person or people who were spoiling a lovely community asset. Great job.

2. The Nashville Ledger

Joe Rogers

*Judge's comments:* Very easy-going writing that made examining potentially difficult subject matters seem like a conversation with a friend. The writer emphatically made his point without being overbearing or arrogant. Bravo.

**First place award****Best Feature Photograph Group III**

*Mike Christen – The Daily Herald, Columbia*



3. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville  
Lindsay Pride, Jim Herrin

*Judge's comments:* Concise and to-the-point editorials that don't dance around the issues. Each covered an impactful local issue, while in the case of the firearm carrying entry, touching on new state legislation that would be of interest to readers.

4. Cleveland Daily Banner  
Rick Norton

5. Crossville Chronicle  
Heather Mullinx

**Group IV**

1. Kingsport Times-News  
Ted Como, Rick Thomason

*Judge's comments:* Excellent writing and subject matter choices. The display is adequate to draw reader attention. This entry stands above the rest in quality.

2. Bristol Herald Courier  
Roger Watson

*Judge's comments:* Subject matter was the best in the group. The display hurt this entry because it did not stand out on the page.

3. Johnson City Press  
Nathan Baker

**Group V**

1. The Tennessean, Nashville  
David Plazas

*Judge's comments:* Strong, authoritative writing on a mix of topics. Editorials are anchored not just with critical commentary but with potential solutions, demonstrating watchdog leadership.

2. Chattanooga Times Free Press  
Pam Sohn

*Judge's comments:* Editorials are chatty with appropriate context driven by compelling numbers. The writer knows how to make their case.

**Headline Writing****Group I**

1. The Humboldt Chronicle  
Danny Wade

2. Carthage Courier  
Ken Beck, Shea Haile

3. Brownsville Press  
Carlton Veirs, Brooke McCain, Joe Sills

See **WINNERS**, Page 23

# My name is Gene

Humor has always, as far as I can remember, been a very real part of who I am. My seniors, who by the way are dwindling, tell me my father loved humor. I see humor in almost anything, although some humorous thoughts are better kept to myself! I do a fairly good job keeping my mouth shut when an inappropriate thought comes to mind. Humor, like truth, has proper limits, at least in my opinion.

I do have fun with my senility, for example. Better to laugh as to cry. But there are progressions of mental decline that are not to be made fun of. True advanced Alzheimer's disease is one. My sister sadly suffered especially in her last year from vascular dementia, which often follows a stroke. Not to be wished upon anyone.

Perhaps you heard the joke, which was I believe told by Henny Youngman, "I love to do gigs at nursing homes. You only have to know one joke!" Do I have to explain that one? Another joke of the many for which he was famous is, "When I read about the



**First place award**  
**Best Personal Humor Column**  
**Group I**

*Tommy Russell –  
Brownsville Press*

evils of drinking, I gave it up. Not drinking... reading!" There's sweet humor as well as kindness in this next story. I think you will enjoy it.

Gene McGehee of Vidalia, La., is 91 years old. Not only has he lost several of his front teeth; he has lost both his short and his long-term memory. Steve Hartman of CBS is my source for this story of how youth brought sunlight into the darkness of one elderly man's life.

One day, on one of the many forgettable mundane days that made his life dreary, Gene McGehee walked out into his front yard. Little did he know that a teacher, Megan Nunez, with the daycare across the street had been watching him. She had a beautiful Act

of Kindness up her sleeve.

On that day she gathered up her pre-school class like a hen gathering her chickens and marched them across the road to meet Mr. McGehee for the first time. They immediately asked him to play with them. And he did! He took to those laughing squealing kids like a duck takes to water. Life came back to him. They even made him dance a jig. Mind you, this is a 91-year-old man suffering from chronic depressive loneliness!

Megan knows now that every day, weather permitting, she gets to meet Gene McGehee for the first time all over again! He always

See **RUSSELL**, Page 23

**First place award**

**Best Feature Photograph**  
**Group IV**

*Drew Robinson –  
Citizen Tribune, Morristown*



## THE FIGHTER

**WINNERS**, from Page 22

**Group II**

1. **The LaFollette Press**  
Robby O'Daniel

*Judge's comments: The essence of good headline writing: Short and eye-catching, Congratulations!*

2. **The Gallatin News**  
Josh Cross, Sherry Mitchell

*Judge's comments: The headline writer seems to have listened to a lot of Top 40 radio -- and when it comes to connecting with readers, that's not a bad thing.*

3. **Hamilton County Herald, Chattanooga**  
David Laprad

4. **Cheatham County Exchange, Pleasant View**  
Ivan Aronin

5. **Murfreesboro Post**  
Ivan Aronin

**Group III**

1. **Cleveland Daily Banner**

Rick Norton

2. **The Knoxville Ledger**  
Lyle Graves

3. **The Nashville Ledger**  
Lyle Graves

4. **The Tullahoma News**  
Duane Sherrill

5. **The Wilson Post, Lebanon**  
Ivan Aronin

**Group IV**

1. **Kingsport Times-News**

Frank Cannon

*Judge's comments: "These beauts are made for walking" is smart and sly, and the other two were nearly as good. Congratulations!*

2. **Johnson City Press**  
Brian Reese

*Judge's comments: Three excellent entries, as noted in the compe-*

*tition comment, very well done. Love the use of "one fish, two fish" and "this site has cookies."*

3. **Citizen Tribune, Morristown**  
John Gullion

4. **The Daily Times, Maryville**  
Michael Sisco, Abby Potter,  
Marcus Fitzsimmons

5. **The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro**  
Will Backus

**Group V**

1. **The Tennessean, Nashville**  
Staff

2. **Chattanooga Times Free Press**

Anne Braly, Barry Courier, Lisa Denton

**Investigative Reporting**  
**Group I**

1. **Manchester Times**

2. **Brownsville Press**  
Carlton Veirs

3. **Brownsville Press**  
Eliza Ford

**Group II**

1. **The LaFollette Press**  
Robby O'Daniel

*Judge's comments: In-depth coverage, good background information with witness statements. Easy to follow story.*

2. **The Gallatin News**  
Josh Cross, Sherry Mitchell

*Judge's comments: Stories covered lots of angles, good interviews with pertinent information.*

3. **The Courier, Savannah**  
R. Kelly Jordan

4. **The Standard Banner, Jefferson City**  
Mark Brown

5. **Grainger Today, Bean Station**

Tracey Wolfe

**Group III**

1. **Cleveland Daily Banner**  
Tim Siniard

*Judge's comments: Impressive look at a simple question: Are our bridges safe? The reporter dug deep into a long list of area projects and plans, holding officials accountable for spending taxpayers' money.*

2. **Cleveland Daily Banner**  
Tim Siniard

*Judge's comments: A thorough review of an important topic that literally impacts everyone who drives through the community.*

3. **The Tullahoma News**  
Erin McCullough

*Judge's comments: It's clear the reporter spent a lot of time and effort gaining the major players' trust to come up ongoing cover-*

See **WINNERS**, Page 24

# They left me asleep on that pew

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

The following story has been passed down as First Baptist Church of Pulaski lore for the past 40-plus years. I still get to relive it with some of my more seasoned fellow church members. I will admit I used to be embarrassed a little by it when I was younger, but now I just embrace the opportunity to share the memory with anyone who wants to talk about it.

I can only tell this from the perspectives of those who witnessed it because I was asleep for the whole thing.

It had to take place in the mid-1970s because I'm pretty sure I was no older than 10. My dad was pastor at FBC, and was a tremendous pastor and preacher, but, as a less than 10-year-old, sitting still for more than 10 minutes was never one of my strengths. I would usually resort to fidgeting or sleeping, and on this night it was sleeping.

Apparently, I was *real* tired because, when the service was over, I moved from the pew I was sleeping on to one of the front pews, where I went right back to sleep. For me it seemed like only a few minutes before my dad was shaking me and telling me it's time to go home, but in reality at least an hour had passed, and a lot had transpired while I snoozed.

While all three of my older siblings had all been at the church that evening, in their own cars, and my parents in their own cars, I



## First place award

### Best Personal Humor Column Group II

*Scott Stewart—  
Pulaski Citizen*

was not in any of the cars that left the church that evening headed to the Stewart home.

That's because they had all left me asleep on that front pew.

The story I've been told goes that everyone thought I was with someone else, and they all gathered back at our home where my mom commenced to frying up some hamburgers for supper. Now I loved the show Mannix on Sunday nights that would come on one of the three or four channels we got on our big ole TV, and yes, I was the remote. I would park in front of the TV and spin that dial for my dad like the wind spinning a weathervane, but on Sunday evening I'd be glued to the TV watching Mannix.

At some point my mom started asking me what I wanted on my burger only to be met with silence. A search of the house came back with no me and resulted in what I can only imagine was a very interesting conversation. Now that I think about it, I've never actually asked what happened when they found out I wasn't there.

My dad jumped back in his car

and raced back to the church, probably expecting to find a terrified kid in a big old dark church (I've been in that church when it's dark, by the way, and when you're a kid it's very unnerving to say the least). I'm sure dad was relieved to find that I remained deeply asleep on the pew. We headed home, I ate my hamburger, watched my Mannix and went off to bed none the wiser.

Sometime later, while riding in the car with my parents, they asked me what I'd do if I was ever left alone at church. I reasoned that I would go to the phone and call somebody. Being the quick thinker, I became suspicious and inquired if there was a reason they would ask such a question. They finally admitted it. I'm not sure, but I think they only admitted it because dad wanted to use it in a sermon and/or they had already told the story to their friends and knew it would get back to me. Otherwise, I'm not sure they would have ever told me.

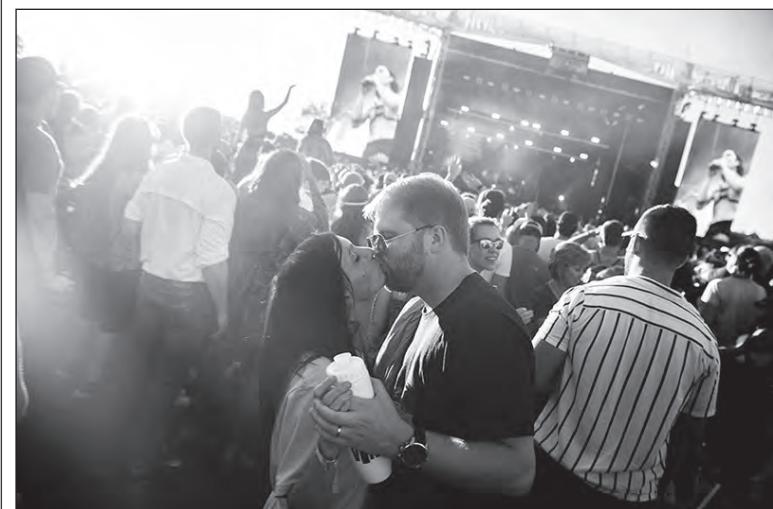
Reminiscing about this story got me to thinking: can you imagine if that happened today? The news channel folks and social media gang would scream out about the pastor



## First place award

### Best Feature Photograph Group V

*Stephanie Amador –  
The Tennessean, Nashville*



and family who left this poor child in the dark at church alone. The child would be scarred for life, not because he was ever actually in any danger, but because so many people would be crawling over themselves to tell the child how traumatized he should be, and therefore, traumatized he would certainly become.

Today, the parents in this scenario would be more traumatized than the child. I'm glad my parents let me make mistakes even though they knew I'd have to live with the

consequences. They let me make choices even though they knew they wouldn't always agree with what I did. They let me live my life, even when they knew I could get hurt. I learned a lot of hard lessons because my parents let me learn them, and that included not falling asleep on the church pew unless you have your own ride home. *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*

— Proverbs 22:6

## WINNERS, from Page 23

age of a significant topic for the community.

### 4. The Nashville Ledger

Kathy Carlson

### 5. Crossville Chronicle

Heather Mullinix

#### Group IV

### 1. Kingsport Times-News

Judge's comments: It is challenging these days for any news organization to muster the staffing and focus to publish a multi-month project, but that challenge is even tougher for an 18,000-circulation daily. Yet when your community is seemingly under siege, you're left

with no choice as evidenced by the package of stories presented in the Kingsport Times-News. The reporting served a vital and lasting function: It brought together a community who needed to be confronted with the scope of the problems before it. The stories also highlighted areas of success as well as an option that decision-makers should consider as more people seek recovery.

### 2. The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville

Jennifer Babich, Henry Taylor, Nicole Young

Judge's comments: The three-part series approached the subject with equal parts humanity and ferocity - much like some of the par-

ents interviewed in the series. The strong reporting also is backed up by statistics and complaints filed by advocacy organizations.

### 3. The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro

Nancy DeGennaro, Adam Friedman, Helen Comer, Henry Taylor, Mark Zaleski

Judge's comments: The story contains strong evidence why state leaders should reconsider their restrictions of a fundamental right. Unfortunately, as the reporting shows, Tennessee remains one of the worst states when it comes to felony disenfranchisement.

#### Group V

### 1. The Tennessean, Nashville

## Stella Yu

Judge's comments: The reporting illustrates how a decade of inaction from government officials helped contribute to a fatal flood. It used compelling anecdotes and interviews to emotionally hook readers while also detailing the failures by their government leaders. The reporting quoted those leaders' reasons for failure, but then also exposed the inadequacies in the stated defenses.

### 2. The Tennessean, Nashville

Brett Kelman

Judge's comments: Strong sourcing, dogged reporting and clear writing reveal the consequences of political interference in the state's public health department.

*The stories rose above he said she said articles because the reporters were able to acquire sensitive interviews and documents to paint a full and more truthful picture.*

### 3. Chattanooga Times Free Press

Wyatt Massey

## Local Features

#### Group I

### 1. Macon County Times, Lafayette

Craig Harris, Terry McCormick

Judge's comments: A balance of good feature topics, well-written,

See WINNERS, Page 26



**First place award**  
**Best Sports Photograph Group I**

Kendall Patterson Chester County Independent, Henderson



Third baseman Kallen Emerson tags a Lexington runner out at third on an attempted steal. Photo by Kendall Patterson

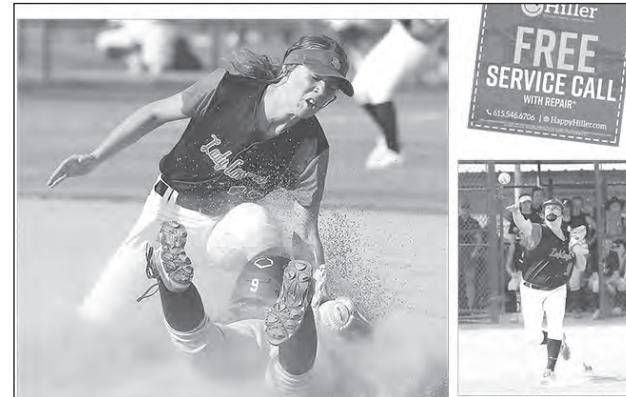


Tori Trice slides in safely at home plate for a score after a hit by Madison Burton on Saturday, March 20. Photo by Kendall Patterson



**First place award**  
**Best Sports Photograph Group II**

Marty Allison—  
The Dickson Post



Dickson's Brittany Hunt tags out a runner attempting to steal.



Dickson's Kate Peters stretches at first to get an out.

Dickson's Ashlan Benning throws a runner out at first after fielding a bunt.



**First place award**  
**Best Sports Photograph Group III**

Michael Lindsay  
— Crossville Chronicle



center fielder Cameron McDonald, 1, does a celebratory backflip following the Panthers' 7-6 District 6AAA win at White County on Tuesday. Michael Lindsay/Crossville Chronicle

Panthers record first district sweep since 2013



By MICHAEL LINDSAY  
Chronicle sports editor

It's been a while since Stoen  
Memorial baseball swept a distri-

cutive opponent.

Eight years, to be exact.

The Panthers got that.

They key off their back this week as

they sweep White County in

District 6AAA action.

"That was a grow-up game,"

Stokes said. "We had some guys

in some different spots, and it

wasn't that we got beat. It

I couldn't be more proud of my

guys."

After the Panthers' sweep, the

board early as a Whiteburg

single-scored McDonald in the

first inning.

SMHS trailed 4-1 after two

innings before a massive third

inning came in the form of the

fifth. Whiteburg scored via a

passed ball, giving them a 3-1

advantage.

The Panthers found home

once more as Nick Owsian

After White County scored

in the top of the fourth, Stokes

added the rest of two more

innings before the Panthers

scored four runs to etake

the lead.

The Panthers would score

in the fourth and fifth but get

closer as SMHS won 7-6.

"Cade coming in down

4-1 was an absolute

Stokes.

"He pitched a heck

of a game, and they fed off

his energy. They put some runs

on us, and we struck right back."

The Panthers are currently

5-3 overall and 2-0 in District

6AAA play.

"Every day is business,

and we're playing clean ba-

# 'Honey, where did you put the cheese?'

The wife seems particularly proud of her accomplishment — so proud, in fact, that she took to Facebook to proclaim the achievement.

"I have spent my weekend cleaning and reorganizing the fridge and freezer," she boasted. "I even labeled things that clearly don't need to be labeled in the hopes that when I'm told we have no food or, my favorite, I can't find it, that someone will figure it out. And put it back."

Jane, methinks, is destined for disappointment if she expects that her husband and children are, in any way, going to be able to follow her alleged organizational plan.

As I helpfully pointed out to her, I am never able to figure out where anything is once she decides to reorganize. Of course, I could never find anything before the reorganization either, but that's beside the point.



**First place award**  
**Best Personal Humor Column Group III**

Jim Herrin –  
Herald-Citizen, Cookeville

The point is that the world and everything in it should revolve around me and the way I want things organized.

For example, we had need for a pair of pliers the other day. I know where \*I\* would have put the pliers, but that location did not fit Jane's grand organizational scheme, so I didn't know where they were. As she started to tell me, Jane changed her mind.

"It's easier for me to just go get them than it is to explain it to you," she said.

And she was right. Because

as she went to get the pliers, she found that they were not, in fact, where she had thought they were.

I nobly resisted telling her that it was no wonder that she had lost them, given that the middle of a junk pile in the bottom of the hall closet was not the ideal place for pliers.

"I would never have put them there," I chirped happily as she scowled in frustration.

In fact, virtually everything in the house is not where I would have put it.

In the BWK era (before wife and

kids), I knew the precise location of everything I owned.

My music collection was arranged both alphabetically and chronologically, my books were sorted by both subject and author, and my tools were all carefully contained in a toolbox.

No so these days. My orderly life has descended into unremitting chaos.

All the wife and children had to do was follow my system and all would have been right with the world, but they failed miserably. My carefully curated collections were strewn about willy nilly and never returned to their proper place as I was forced to wander about in slack-jawed confusion, wondering if I ever truly had a copy of "Hotel California."

I grouse about it occasionally (just to keep my grousing muscles in good order), but my gripes usually fall on deaf ears.

As did my suggestion that putting vegetables into individual containers which are then placed into the refrigerator's vegetable drawer is like putting a hat on a hat.

Jane wants it that way, and that's the way it's going to be.

I think she realizes that it will take maybe two days for the offspring to re-messify all of her work. The children, after all, are comfortable living with the squalor of their pig sties, er, bedrooms, so they certainly can't concern themselves with spilled drinks or misplaced leftovers.

But, like good husbands everywhere, I will allow her a brief moment of triumph. A moment to revel in a job well done. To anticipate my inevitable question.

"Honey, where did you put the cheese?"

To which she is likely to reply, "Next to the pliers."

# It's mayhem at the vet's office

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

Who's a good girl?

Not Daisy Duke. Not on the day she went to the vet.

Our sassy bloodhound spent the morning downtown at Robinson Animal Hospital, where she was to have some shots and a general exam. Apparently, the shots and exam went well.

Then this happened ...

When her appointment was finished and she was waiting to be picked up, I received a text. It was a message you never want to get from your vet.

"Daisy Duke is done. She pooped in the room, stomped in it and got it on her leash."

She never stops making me proud.

That's a text that doesn't exactly make a dog dad happy when he has to go pick up his canine princess. It's kind of like getting your kid from school when they've spent the afternoon in the principal's office. You love 'em, but they can still make you mad.

In reality, though, I can't stay mad at Daisy Duke for long. As soon as she flashes that slightly cross-eyed, crooked-tooth smile, which is often, my heart melts again.

At least Daisy Duke didn't reenact her monthly-or-so episode when she goes to Robinson's to get her nails trimmed. It takes three people, with the biggest guy holding her down, to trim those talons. And if you happen to be nearby, you can hear the ruckus. It sounds like an all-out dog attack



## First place award

### Best Personal Humor Column Group IV

*Joe Avento – Johnson City Press*

with howling, barking, baying and growling.

When she's done, everybody's exhausted. Everybody except Daisy Duke, that is. She prances out of the treatment room, wags her tail and generally looks like nothing happened.

If she could talk — and she tries — she'd say, "Nothing to see here."

And boy, was there much to see after a recent spring cleaning of the backyard.

Among the items hidden in the brush, buried in a hole or just strewn about the yard were:

- One sneaker. We don't know where the other one is.

- Two drainage pipes she dug up a couple of years ago. That has turned into her favorite toy. One of them is bigger than her, and so far it's been tougher.

- One half of a chewed-up aluminum can.

- Two dryer vents from the side of the house. One wasn't enough, so she took the replacement down as well.

- Several flower pots. Many of them were just half flower pots where she chewed off parts. Some had so many teeth marks they appeared bullet-riddled. Among

them was a pot that had been in a hanging basket. Don't even ask how she got that one.

- The remnants of what used to be footballs and soccer balls.

- Three sprinklers from the garden that had been chewed almost past the point of recognition. They won't be sprinkling this spring.

- The filling from the rest of the deck-furniture cushions. This one was definitely our fault for leaving them out after she had already stated her intentions months earlier by tearing one to shreds and creating what looked like a winter wonderland on the back porch.

Every night, Daisy Duke comes in with mud on her nose. Her full-time job is to bury bones. And then dig them up and bury them again.

We're pretty sure sometime down the road we won't have a blade of grass left in the backyard. We are sure, however, that there will always be plenty of reminders that Destructo-hound lives within our walls.

And the next time she goes to the vet, she'll spend a few more minutes out on the grass before she goes through that door —22, for everyone's sake.

consistently packaged to showcase the work.

## 2. Herald & Tribune, Jonesborough

Serina Marshall, Mary Whaley, Lisa Whaley  
**WINNERS**, from Page 24

Judge's comments: I enjoyed reading each story, good presentation.

## 3. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon

Shirley Nanney, Daniel Richardson

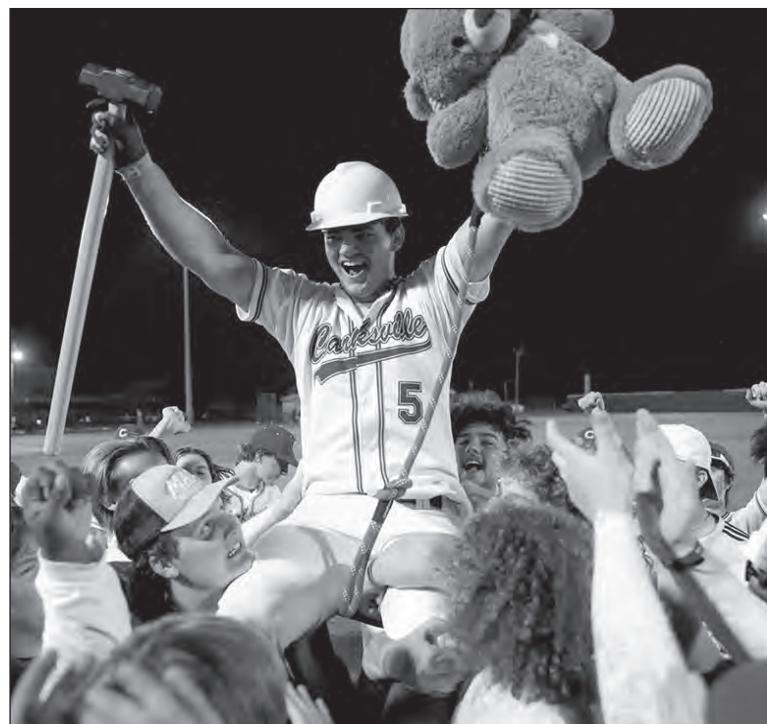
Judge's comments: Each story submitted has a compelling human interest element that draws the reader in. Layout for the "Justice for Anthony" story is creative and appropriate for the story's subject matter; it is an effective visual cue that attracts readers to



## First place award

### Best Sports Photograph Group IV

*Henry Taylor – The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville*



s and fans hoist up Clarksville's Kyle Magrane (5) with a hammer and stuffed bear in hand after beating Mt. Juliet, the Region 5-AAA tournament semifinal Monday in Clarksville. HENRY TAYLOR/THE LEAF-CHRONICLE

# Magrane wins battle of Vandy recruits

## 3. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City

Steve Marion, Mark Brown, Dale Gentry

photos throughout made this a good read.

## 2. Cleveland Daily Banner

Tim Siniard, Rick Norton, Gwen Swiger, Allen Mincey, Kaitlin Debby, Daniel Guy, George Starr

Judge's comments: I enjoyed reading this paper. A good mix of stories with interesting photos and good storytelling.

## 3. The Knoxville Ledger

Nancy Henderson

## 4. The Nashville Ledger

Hollie Deese, Margaret Size-more, Tom Wood

## 5. The Wilson Post, Lebanon

See **WINNERS**, Page 27

the story. Photos were adequate but could be improved.

## 2. Main Street Nashville

Karen Grigsby, Laurie Everett, Mary Hance, Catherine Mayhew, Ashley Perham, Tim Ghianni, Bethany Bowman

Judge's comments: Submissions demonstrate how Main Street Nashville caters to a diverse array of reader interests. Stories and headlines were engaging and entertaining. Quality art helped supplement stories, and overall layouts were inviting and easy to follow.

## 4. Carthage Courier

Ken Beck, Eddie West

## 5. Brownsville Press

Carlton Veirs, Brooke McCain

### Group II

## 1. The Leader, Covington

Echo Day

Judge's comments: Each story submitted has a compelling human interest element that draws the reader in. Layout for the "Justice for Anthony" story is creative and appropriate for the story's subject matter; it is an effective visual cue that attracts readers to

## 4. Murfreesboro Post

Tayla Courage, Ivan Aronin, Dan Epright, Frank Caperton

## 5. Fort Campbell Courier, Clarksville

Maria Rice McClure, Mari-Alice Jasper, Ethan Steinquest, Sirena Clark, Brendalyn Player

### Group III

## 1. The Tullahoma News

Kyle Murphy, Erin Douglas

Judge's comments: I enjoyed reading these. The historical pieces, the paper's aesthetic choice for signifying article jumps, and the

# A new carol for the Bluff City

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

Who needs turtle doves and French hens when you've got disco ducks and funky chickens? That thought represents (part of) the motivation for this presentation of "The 12 Days of Memphis," a new carol for the Bluff City, a place with a Mississippi River bridge that is illuminated 365 nights a year with enough colorful lights to serve as a landing strip for Santa and his reindeer.

The truer motivation is that an editor asked: John, can you write a "Twelve Days of Christmas" song about Memphis? To which I replied, like Bob Dylan in his non-Christmas song "Isis": "Well, I guess."

Hey, it's a living. I guess.

So here it is, "The 12 Days of Memphis," a song that scans like the original, but with a Memphis flavor.

While some of the references are obvious, others perhaps aren't, so footnotes at the end of the song offer an explanation.

To bring life to this carol (or should a Memphis holiday song be called a carol, in homage to Carla Thomas?), we recruited the Freedom Singers, a vocal ensemble that is part of the Creative Underground arts mission of the Center for Transforming Communities, an organization that uses art to uplift and help "heal" neighborhoods hit by violence and other traumas.

So, are you and your tonsils ready to rumble? If so, start singing:

1. On the first day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

2. On the second day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

3. On the third day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

Three 6 Mafia

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

4. On the fourth day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

The Million Dollar Quartet

Three 6 Mafia

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

5. On the fifth day of Memphis



## First place award

### Best Personal Humor Column Group V

*John Beifuss –  
The Commercial Appeal, Memphis*

my true love sent to me,

5 wrestling rings  
The Million Dollar Quartet

Three 6 Mafia

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

6. On the sixth day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

6 tournament wins  
5 wrestling rings

The Million Dollar Quartet

Three 6 Mafia

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

7. On the seventh day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

7 Funky Chickens

6 tournament wins

5 wrestling rings

The Million Dollar Quartet

Three 6 Mafia

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

8. On the eighth day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

8 Disco Ducks

7 Funky Chickens

6 tournament wins

5 wrestling rings

The Million Dollar Quartet

Three 6 Mafia

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

9. On the ninth day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

926 E. McLemore

8 Disco Ducks

7 Funky Chickens

6 tournament wins

5 wrestling rings

The Million Dollar Quartet

Three 6 Mafia

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

10. On the tenth day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

10 hits by the Box Tops

926 E. McLemore

8 Disco Ducks

7 Funky Chickens

6 tournament wins

5 wrestling rings

The Million Dollar Quartet

Three 6 Mafia

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

11. On the eleventh day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

11 slabs of ribs

10 hits by the Box Tops

926 E. McLemore

8 Disco Ducks

7 Funky Chickens

6 tournament wins

5 wrestling rings

The Million Dollar Quartet

Three 6 Mafia

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

12. On the twelfth day of Memphis my true love sent to me,

12 jookers jookin'

11 slabs of ribs

10 hits by the Box Tops

926 E. McLemore

8 Disco Ducks

7 Funky Chickens

6 tournament wins

5 wrestling rings

The Million Dollar Quartet

Three 6 Mafia

2 local mayors

And Ja Morant, with a healthy knee

## Notes:

1. Memphis Grizzlies star point guard Ja Morant suffered a sprained knee during a Nov. 26 game against the Atlanta Hawks.

2. The local "dual government" system means that Memphis residents essentially have a city and county mayor, posts currently held by Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland and Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris.

3. Three 6 Mafia is a Memphis rap group best known for the "Hustle & Flow" anthem "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp" (co-written

See BEIFUSS, Page 30



## First place award

### Best Sports Photograph Group V

*George Walker IV –  
The Tennessean, Nashville*



## WINNERS, from Page 26

Xavier Smith, Laurie Everett, Ken Beck, Angie Mayes, Sabrina Knowles, Ivan Aronin, Larry Woody

### Group IV

#### 1. Johnson City Press

Robert Houk, David Floyd, Jonathan Roberts

*Judge's comments: Layouts of stories along with lots of pictures really drew your eyes to the page. Well-written and informative stories. Local stories were well-researched.*

#### 2. Kingsport Times-News

Rick Wagner

*Judge's comments: Great job of coverage with excellent research and photos to enhance reader appeal of newspaper. Composition of articles were well done and displayed in a way as to catch the reader's eye.*

#### 3. The Daily Times, Maryville

Melanie Tucker

### Group V

#### 1. The Commercial Appeal, Memphis

John Beifuss, Jennifer Chandler, Bob Mehr

*Judge's comments: Good job in coverage, composition and display. Story placement and good photos drew me in with lively topics and good information used for the stories. Farm story was informative and Elvis Trivia was entertaining.*

#### 2. Chattanooga Times Free Press

Jay Greeson, Anne Braly, Barry Courier, Lisa Denton, Robin Rudd, La Shawn Pagan, Patrick MacCoon

*Judge's comments: Articles were very well written, informative with a personal touch. Paragraphs flowed well and good quotes were used, especially in the K-9 story.*

#### 3. The Tennessean, Nashville

Matt LeimKuehler, Leigh Guidry, Keith Sharon, Brad Schmitt

## Make-Up & Appearance

### Group I

#### 1. Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon

Christy Slaman, Jennifer Fox, Tracy Kelley

*Judge's comments: Exceptional high school football preview section on bright white stock. Overall, this is the flashiest design entry.*

See WINNERS, Page 28

## Why I couldn't stop crying on Inauguration Day

Dammit America, you got me. Again.

Like so many of us, I made a point of being in front of a television on Inauguration Day. Given the dynamics of the past four years – let alone a pandemic and an attempted coup just two weeks prior – I had my doubts about America. Truth is, I still do.

So why did I feel a tear run down my cheek almost as soon as Sen. Amy Klobuchar opened up the ceremony? I mean, I cried when Barack Obama was inaugurated just 12 years ago; I defy you to find me an African American who didn't. But . . . Amy Klobuchar?

She spoke about how Abraham Lincoln demanded construction of the U.S. Capitol Dome continue even as the war raged. "If people see The U.S. Capitol going on, it is a sign we intend the Union shall go on," she quoted Lincoln saying.

"It now falls on all of us . . . to take up the torch of democracy, not as a weapon of political arson, but as an instrument for good," Klobuchar added. "We pledge today to never take our democracy for granted."

Cue the tears. And it didn't stop there. While singing the national anthem, Lady Gaga looked like she was about to explode with joy. Even Jennifer Lopez's mashup of "This Land is Your Land" and "America The Beautiful" was



### First place award

#### Best Personal Column Group I

*Lee Eric Smith –  
The New Tri-State Defender*

moving, as it spoke very directly to whose nation this is.

After I'd dried my unexpected tears, it was time for the expected ones: The moment when one woman would shatter multiple ceilings in the American story, by saying some very plain words.

"I, Kamala Devi Harris, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend The Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. That I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same. That I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion. That I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

The biracial daughter of immigrants and an alumnae of an HBCU is now one heartbeat away from becoming the leader of the free world. Yeah, America, you got me. Again.

Argh! What is this feeling? It's vaguely familiar but it's been so long I've almost forgotten the word

for it . . . ah, yes: HOPE. And man, could we use summamat right now.

Before the inauguration, NBC News' Chuck Todd made a striking observation about the challenges ahead for the Biden Administration. He noted that Lincoln had to deal with an insurrection; Woodrow Wilson had the 1919 influenza pandemic; FDR had the Great Depression; JFK had the racial and social unrest of the 1960s. Individually, each crisis was monumental. Biden enters office having to deal with all four at once. That's not including the national or global crisis that is surely coming.

COVID isn't going anywhere, unarmed citizens of color are still being shot, and homegrown terrorism may be on the rise. Wildfires will rage, hurricanes will ravage. It's a cliché but things will get worse before they get better. And yet, I have hope.

Like generations of African

See **SMITH**, Page 31

## WINNERS, from Page 27

Sometimes, the use of illustrations, color and headlines is over the top, but it reflects the ambition to grab the reader's attention.

### 2. Portland Sun

Mark Rodgers, Jim Anderson, Sherry Mitchell, Zach Womble

Judge's comments: Appealing A1 centerpiece treatments and simple but consistent design of inside pages.

### 3. Brownsville Press

Brooke McCain, Mark Kendrick

### 4. The Humboldt Chronicle

Danny Wade

### 5. Macon County Times Lafayette

Craig Harris

### Group II

#### 1. Fort Campbell Courier, Clarksville

Maria Rice McClure, Mari-Alice Jasper, Ethan Steinquest, Sirena Clark, Brendalyn Player

Judge's comments: I liked the large photos, the squaring off of the articles. Great coverage of Fort Campbell and the happenings at the base and surrounding areas.

#### 2. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City

Kim Cook, Dale Gentry, Ray Seabolt, J.D. Vaughn, Jesse Woody

Judge's comments: The layout of the front pages made you want to go inside and how the banner and a large photo on the front drew you to the special features inside was excellent.

### 3. Pulaski Citizen

Cary Jane Malone, Mark Mize, Wade Neely

#### 4. Grainger Today, Bean Station

Robert Turner

#### 5. The Dickson Post

Jim Anderson, Mark Rodgers, Pam Wingett, Mary Anne Ferrell, Ivan Aronin, Casey Patrick, Marty Allison

### Group III

#### 1. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville

Lindsay Pride, Amanda Loshbough, Don Foy

#### 2. The Wilson Post, Lebanon

Carrie Tomlin, Ivan Aronin, Tommy Bryan, Mary Anne Ferrell, Dallus Whitfield

#### 3. Shelbyville Times-Gazette

## Anti-CRT war is uniting us, but it is really unnecessary



### First place award

#### Best Personal Column Group II

*Echo Day –  
The Leader, Covington*

It's incredible the way the Tipton County Republican Party has brought people together lately.

In the last two weeks I have talked with both Democrats and Republicans who can agree on one thing: TCRP's far right campaign against Critical Race Theory is misguided at best.

They're working on a dangerous campaign to discredit our school system by suggesting Critical Race Theory is being taught in our elementary, middle and high schools. If the powers that be agree, the system could lose its state and federal funding, thanks to new legislation passed by Tennessee lawmakers this session.

Through a post on their Facebook page on July 2 they suggested any lesson which teaches one group oppresses another, or has oppressed another, is CRT and shouldn't be taught. To illustrate their argument, they used a per-

sonal narrative from the Amplify curriculum called "Hello, My Name Is" where an Asian woman named Jennifer Lou, whose family emigrated to New England, recalls her adolescent wishes to like her white friends due to beauty standards and the standards of normalcy in American families.

As the story wraps up, she realizes she's perfect just as she is. The story is representative of many of our childhood desires to be more like someone else, whether that's having blue eyes and blond hair (such is one of the themes of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*) or, as was my wish, to be more extroverted and not have a backside that always drew attention. Lou's story is about race, however, and not about other features.

They have also shared a personal narrative written by Rosa Parks and have tried to discredit her recollection.

See **DAY**, Page 31

Matt McClane, Cindy Diefenderfer, Rick Moore, Bill Ramsey

### 2. The Tennessean, Nashville Staff

## Public Service Group I

#### 1. The Courier, Savannah

Linda White, R. Kelly Jordan, Ron Schaming, Jeremy Smith, Keegan Monard

#### 2. Hickman County Times, Centerville

Bradley Martin

#### 3. The Dickson Post

Ashley Perham, Larry McCormack, Sean Barry, Ivan Aronin, Karen Grigsby, Dave Gould

### Group V

#### 1. Chattanooga Times Free Press

See **WINNERS**, Page 30

# Nothing is black and white when discussing race

Two opposite schools of thought compete when it comes to the topic of race in America. One holds that we should talk about it a lot because of the corrosive and continuing impact of racism in our society.

The other contends that we shouldn't talk about it at all because it's divisive.

I find myself somewhere in between the two views, drifting slightly at times in one direction or the other.

The current animating factor in the discussion is a concept known by the vague term "critical race theory." You've perhaps read that Tennessee legislators went to great, last-minute efforts to ban the teaching of it in public schools here.

Tennessee isn't alone. At least five other states have taken similar actions, with some 20 others considering it.

You'd think that critical race theory is the gravest threat facing our society.

"Racially motivated propaganda," Marsha Blackburn has called it. Our senior senator is not given to entertaining points of view at



**First place award**  
**Best Personal Column Group III**  
Joe Rogers –  
*The Nashville Ledger*

variance with her own.

Tennessee legislators didn't ban it by name, but by implied description. The measure they passed threatens to withhold state funding from schools that teach, among other things:

- That one "race or sex is inherently superior to another"
- That race or sex determines "moral character"
- That some people should be discriminated against based on race or sex, or that Tennessee or the U.S. "is fundamentally or irredeemably racist or sexist."

For good measure, funding would also be withheld from schools "promoting or advocating the violent overthrow of the United States government."

I'm pretty sure that the violent

overthrow of the United States government is not being advocated in Tennessee public schools. Nor, I suspect, is any notion of racial superiority being promoted.

No, that's just cover language. What the legislators really want is to prevent any acknowledgment of the extent of racism in this country.

Not all the legislators feel that way. But most of the ones who look like me do. They argue that the best approach to dealing with race is to somehow be "color-blind." As if that were possible.

It's naive – or worse – to try to ignore the impact that race has had, and continues to have, on life in this country. The question is how to deal with it.

A bare minimum would be to

recognize the uneven impact that laws can have on different groups of people and take steps to remedy those inequities. A frequently cited example involves disparities in sentencing laws for crack versus powder cocaine, which led to nine times as many Black people as white people going to prison for cocaine violations.

In my understanding, acknowledging and rectifying that sort of injustice is what critical race theory was designed to do. That's why it's taught in law schools.

I approach this whole topic with considerable caution, fully aware that a person of my skin tone, advanced years and Southern upbringing might not be considered an unbiased voice. And I confess to not being totally immune to the influence of those factors.

For example, I disagree with the decision by some news organizations to capitalize Black, but not white or brown or any other color when referring to race. And I can appreciate why some white people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have had to work long and hard to succeed bristle at the con-

cept of white privilege.

Maybe "privilege" is too contentious. It's more like a free pass, an exemption from the prevailing form of discrimination. We white folks get that exemption through the accident of birth. Doesn't mean we don't face other obstacles, varied and complex. But the free pass on skin color is a biggie.

I was reminded of that the other day in the grocery store parking lot when I was approached by a young boy, maybe 8 or 10, selling candy for some school project.

He was about as winsome a kid as I've ever encountered, smiling and telling me how he was going to be the next Tom Brady someday. I applaud dreams like that. I wished him well.

But I also know that, if he does succeed, he'll do it despite having skin a lot darker than Brady's. And, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream notwithstanding, that some people will always think less of him because of that pigment.

It's the kind of thing worth thinking about, even if we're not talking about it.

# A time of remembering my father and his flag

Memorial Day, Flag Day, Father's Day and July 3 are all so close together and hold a special meaning for me.

I collect flags, some original, some reproductions from different periods of our nation's history. In the collection I have a WWII chaplain's flag, WWI signal flags and American flags from many different eras.

But the cornerstone of my collection is a faded, modern-day 50-star flag. It was my father's flag.

My dad served in the Army, 101st Airborne, Able Company of the 502, in Germany. He never told me many stories. He talked about being "soldier of the day." He talked about the boat ride across the ocean as they passed through a storm and also seeing the white cliffs of Dover, England.

Another time he talked about when he and a buddy in his unit, this was post war as part of the army of occupation, decided to try



**First place award**  
**Best Personal Column Group IV**  
Ned Jilton II –  
*Kingsport Times-News*

snow skiing even though neither knew what they were doing.

They thought, just for starters, they would ski across the slope before they tried going down the slope. When they stopped on the other side, they couldn't go anywhere so they stepped off their skis to turn them around. "The next thing I knew," my dad said, "I was up to my waist in snow."

Being two boys from the southern part of the United States, they hadn't counted on how deep the snow can get in the mountains of Germany.

My dad's time in the 101st was cut short by an injury to his right

arm that refused to heal. The reason it refused to heal was because of what happened to him early in life. At some point before he was born, the blood flow to my dad's right arm had been restricted.

When he was born, the doctors wanted to amputate, but his mother refused to allow them to take his arm, and she massaged and worked it regularly. She saved my dad's right arm.

While his right arm was always a little weaker than his left, it didn't stop him from pitching professional baseball, as a lefty, or making it into the 101st Airborne.

But now, because that right arm refused to heal to the doctors' liking, he was transferred out. First, he was transferred to the airborne artillery and then to the 2nd Infantry Regiment.

My dad wanted to stay in the Army and applied for Officers Candidate School. He received endorsements from his superiors but somewhere up the chain of command someone stated that he was too old for OCS; the Army was trying to revitalize with younger officers. I have to laugh at this because it was this same youth movement that almost kept Gen. George S. Patton out of WWII, as some felt he was too old for field command at the start of the war.

Denied OCS, my dad finished his tour of duty and came home, graduated from East Tennessee State College (it was not a university back then), and carried on with his life.

I remember that my dad always

flew an American flag on various holidays. After us kids moved out and my parents moved into a condo, he would fly the flag every day, putting it up in the morning and taking it down in the evening or when the weather turned bad. He even put up the flag the morning he went into the hospital for surgery. Sadly, he never came home as cancer claimed him a few days later.

The flag flew unattended for several months, until one day I was visiting and happened to notice it. The colors had faded and it had gotten hung on a tree limb. I took the old flag down, rolled it up and put it in my car planning to turn it over to the VFW or American Legion for proper disposal.

The day came to turn it over, but suddenly I didn't have the heart. As I looked at that faded old flag, it struck me: This is my father's flag.

# An auction for the ages for a boy, his truck

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

The paperwork on the old 1973 Ford truck says it belongs to me, but the real owner is our 14-year-old son. His mother and I bought the pale-yellow pickup last Saturday at the Mecum Auction downtown at the Convention Center.

For decades, the truck belonged to Walter Hawk, a man our two boys called Papa. A dear friend of the family, Walter died a year ago this month of COVID-19, before there was a widely available vaccine.

Walter was the closest thing our boys, ages 14 and 19, had to a second grandfather. My father died before either of them were born. They have a biological grandfather, Wade Frazier, whom they call PaPaw and love with their whole hearts. But they loved Walter, too.

He was the first family member our boys have lost. And they both took it hard.

Last year, before Walter got sick, our older son spent months painting him a picture of a hawk. Not to be outdone, our younger son promised to build Walter a table.

Walter Hawk, who lived in Jefferson County, Tenn., was a man of simple beginnings who became an entrepreneur and built a successful mail-order shooting supply company.

In his spare time, Walter collected cars, mostly '60s- and '70s-era muscle cars and trucks. As his shooting supply business flourished, so did his collection, which he kept warehoused in old



## First place award

### Best Personal Column Group V

**Mark Kennedy –  
Chattanooga Times Free Press**

buildings around Jefferson City.

Walter loved fast cars. His most cherished piece was a 1969 Dodge Daytona with less than 10,000 miles on the odometer. It is long, gray and sleek and looks like something born in the ocean. Walter had a soft spot for trucks, too. Yellow ones. Every time the boys went to visit him, they would beg Papa to go see his cars.

In the months after Walter died, his widow, Martha, decided to sell his cars and trucks through Mecum Auctions so other collectors could buy them and baby them just like Walter did. At the time, she didn't know that our boys were interested in his old trucks.

By happenstance (or perhaps by heaven's plan), the trucks landed here in Chattanooga a year to the week after Walter died. When our boys learned about the auction, they started begging to get one of them, a Ford F350 with a big, loud V-8 engine.

Our 19-year-old son, who is off at college, texted us that he wanted to sell his car, his guitar and his brand-new Canon camera — his most prized possessions — to help us win one of the trucks for his little brother.

We said, "No, Son, we've got

this."

Meanwhile, our younger son, who had nothing of value to sell, started calling relatives to line up odd jobs for himself. He also brought me \$900 in cash, his life savings, which he had earned cutting lawns and serving as a scorekeeper at family trap shoots. Meanwhile, a couple of family members heard about the auction and offered to contribute to the cause.

Finally, last Saturday, the family gathered at the Chattanooga Convention Center for the big sale. I was the designated bidder, and I was so nervous I had to hold my hands together in my lap to keep them from trembling. Also at the auction were my wife, both boys, my sister, Walter's widow Martha, and Walter's good friend, Roger.

My big fear was that I would somehow get confused and lose track of the bidding. Mecum sells a car every two minutes, and sometimes when I get nervous my mind spins. I asked one of the ringmen, who shouts out the bids, to come stand beside me when the truck came across the stage.

Walter, who loved auctions, always told Martha, "If you want

something bad enough, put your hand up and don't put it down until the man with the hammer says 'sold.'"

Finally, about 10:30 a.m. last Saturday, our truck rolled out. Lot number S17. "A 1973 Ford F350 Super Camper. No reserve!"

When the bidding gained pace, I kept my eyes locked on the ringman. As I raised my hand to bid, I felt other offers flying in from over my right shoulder; but I didn't dare turn around to look. The back of my neck felt hot.

Then, when the hammer finally came down — crack! — I realized we had won the bid! My hand was still up in the air. Mercy.

Meanwhile, I felt all the blood drain out of my face, and I thought for a second I might pass out from sheer relief.

After a few minutes passed, our 14-year-old decided he wanted to

go see his truck, which by then was parked back on the Convention Center floor. He climbed into the cabin and gripped the steering wheel with both hands. He sat there with his back straight, grinning from ear to ear. A sign on the windshield said, "Sold."

"Are you the new owner?" a man asked. "Yes, sir, I sure am," our son said.

In that moment I imagined Walter looking down from heaven and laughing out loud.

Twice this week, I've seen a hawk flying lazily over our neighborhood on Signal Mountain.

Looking up at the sky, I thought, "We did good, Mr. Hawk. We kept our hand up until the man with the hammer said 'sold.'"

Because no boys on Earth had ever wanted a truck more than our two sons wanted that old Ford pickup.

## WINNERS, from Page 28

### 4. The Standard Banner, Jefferson City

Steve Marion, Mark Brown,  
Kimary Clelland

### 5. Grainger Today, Bean Station

Tracey Wolfe, Laura Lakins,  
Robert Turner

### Group III

#### 1. The Wilson Post, Lebanon

Ivan Aronin, Xavier Smith,  
Laurie Everett, Angie Mayes, Ken  
Beck, Dallus Whitfield, Tommy  
Bryan

#### 2. Cleveland Daily Banner

Tim Siniard, Daniel Guy, Autumn  
Hughes, Rick Norton, Jack  
McNeely

#### 3. The Nashville Ledger

Margaret Sizemore

#### 4. Union City Daily Messenger

Donna Ryder, Chris Menees

### Group IV

#### 1. Kingsport Times-News

#### 2. Johnson City Press

David Floyd, Kayla Hackney,  
Robert Houk, Jonathan Roberts,  
Nathan Baker

## Sunday Editions

### 1. The Tennessean, Nashville Staff

### 2. Johnson City Press

Brian Reese, Jason Bullard,  
Robert Pierce, John Stout

### 3. Cleveland Daily Banner Staff

### 4. Chattanooga Times Free Press

Matt McClane

### 5. Bristol Herald Courier Staff

## BEIFUSS, from Page 27

with Frayser Boy), which in 2006 won the Academy Award for Best Original Song.

4. "The Million Dollar Quartet" is the nickname given to the four famous Sun recording artists who came together for an impromptu jam session in 1956: Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Johnny Cash.

5. If you need a Memphis substitute for "golden rings," what better than "wrestling rings," the professional home away from home for such beloved grapplers, past and present, as Jerry Lawler, Jackie

### Fargo and Sputnik Monroe?

6. Assuming they aren't relegated to the bottom-rung "play-in" round, the Memphis Tigers, if they make it to the NCAA basketball tournament, will need six wins to be national champions.

7. In 1969, Memphis' "Crown Prince of Dance," Rufus Thomas, recorded his immortal hit "Do the Funky Chicken."

8. If you include a chicken, you must also include a duck. In 1976, Memphis deejay Rick Dees had a No. 1 pop hit with "Disco Duck."

9. 926 E. McLemore is the address of the old Stax Records studio and the current Stax Museum of

### American Soul Music.

10. The Memphis rock-soul combo the Box Tops did, in fact, place 10 songs in the Billboard Hot 100 chart from 1967 to 1970: "The Letter" (which reached No. 1), "Neon Rainbow" (24), "Cry Like a Baby" (2), "Choo Train" (26), "I Met Her in Church" (37), "Sweet Cream Ladies, For-ward March" (28), "I Shall Be Released" (67), "Soul Deep" (18), "Turn on a Dream" (58) and "You Keep Tightening Up on Me" (92).

11. Had to get barbecue in there some-where. It's a law.

12. "Jookin" is a highly fluid improvisatory Memphis dance style developed in the 1990s.

**DAY, from Page 28**

tions of her school days because she did not say that rural white students had similar conditions.

They have used the Greek myth about Hades, which is part of a unit on myths and fables, and student test data from 2018-19 to help underscore their point.

It's all a little bit insane, to be quite honest, and you can laugh at it until you realize they're on a mission to discredit the school system, its leader, administrators, teachers and students. Their goal is to cause a big fuss about curriculum, gain a following, then get seats on the school board in order

to implement curriculum they believe to be important and proper.

I have a lot to say on this subject, as do they, but I think we should all be productive in our disagreement and work toward a solution.

If you're concerned about test scores, why not advocate for literacy programs, lobbying for more funding and better benefits for our teachers, work with the superintendent to find a cooperative solution, or volunteer with programs like Arise2Read or donating books?

If you're concerned about racism and minority children feeling less than, because you want the Jennifer Lous of the world to feel beautiful as they already are, show up at

our schools with books like "I Am Enough," "All Because You Matter," "When God Made You," "Little Legends" and "Little Leaders" and so many others which focus on Black and brown excellence and leadership.

If you are really passionate about racial disparities and encouraging Black children, why not introduce them to local leaders who look like them, who can tell their story, who can inspire them?

If you want to make a difference, talk to white children about the truth, as it actually happened instead of the nice, easier-to-accept way it's done now. Let's have middle schoolers go on field trips to

the National Civil Rights Museum and let's reflect on why there is a movement simply to express the fact that Black lives matter. Not matter more, matter too.

Instead there are complaints on Facebook, the sharing of distasteful and ridiculous memes, and invitations to the people who are campaigning against CRT, which is only taught as a specialized course in law school, to TCRP meetings to fear-monger the crowd.

Teaching the current curriculum, being actively anti-racist and teaching children what happened in an accurate way is If you want to make a difference, talk to white children about the truth, as it actu-

ally happened instead of the nice, not teaching CRT, and someone needs to say that in big bold letters.

I will do that if no one else will.

Thankfully I know I'm not standing alone. There are people from both sides silently standing with me. Like I've said, a select few from TCRP have really hit it out of the park with uniting different political groups against this issue, and that's an achievement. (When school board member Farrel Vincent and I wholeheartedly agree on this issue you know it must really be a bad move.)

Let's be productive and quit this ridiculous war on our school system over a non-issue.

**JILTON, from Page 29**

He put this flag up every morning and took it down every evening. He defended this flag around the world. He faced this flag, ball cap over his heart, before every ball game he pitched.

As I sat in my car with tears in my eyes, I realized that this flag stood for more than a nation. It stood for family. It stood for the passing of dreams, ideas and beliefs from father to son, generation to generation, dating all the way back to the founding of this nation.

I took the old flag home.

My dad had that flag for years. As long as he took care of it, the colors stayed bright and true. It took only a few months of being left unattended for the colors to fade and the flag to fall into disrepair.

The same could be said for the

freedoms we enjoy in this country. As long as we stay vigilant, our freedoms could last for centuries. If we let down our guard, our freedoms will fade like the colors of that old flag.

I placed a flag on my father's grave for Memorial Day and flew

my own flag for Flag Day and will on Father's Day. I will also fly my flag on July 3. Many will think it is for Independence Day on the fourth, and they will in part be right. But my father's birthday is July 3, and I always remember him when I put up my flag.

**SMITH, from Page 28**

Americans, my country has broken my heart many times before – the times when we dared dream that these lofty ideals of America might become a reality, only to watch her fall short time and time again. Despite Biden's explicitly stated and presumably sincere pledge to dismantle systemic racism, America hasn't fallen short for the last time.

But I'll be damned if she doesn't keep getting back up, taking one creaky step forward at a time toward becoming "a more perfect union." On Jan. 6, America took a

hit from a misguided lynch mob. Just two weeks later, she was back on her feet – her "head bloodied, but unbowed."

Tito, get me some tissue.

There's Garth freakin' Brooks on my TV, asking not just the socially distanced crowd at the Capitol to sing "Amazing Grace" with him, but everyone at home as well. If you somehow managed to keep your eyes dry while you were singing – and you KNOW you were singing — you may need your soul examined. Knowing the world was singing along in a universal moment of solidarity and humility . . . actually, I'm getting

a little choked up even writing about it now.

Now that I know it apparently is possible to overdose on optimism, I needed a dose of reality. As I make a habit to do, I flipped over to Fox News on Inauguration Night to see what was being said to the other half of America.

I was disappointed but not surprised to hear Always-Trumper Sean Hannity rip into Biden as a liar, even as fireworks lit up the Washington Monument. When he noticed footage of Harris giving her first remarks as VP, "Get that off the screen," he grumbled.

Sad, because here's some of

what Hannity refused to air or let his audience hear:

"(W)hat President Joe Biden has called upon us to summon now (is) the courage to see beyond crisis. To do what is hard, to do what is good," said Vice President Harris. "To unite, to believe in ourselves, believe in our country, believe in what we can do together. Thank you, and may God bless America."

President Biden delivered a stirring and inspiring address of his own, but was upstaged when all the accumulated hope and optimism stepped to the microphone wearing radiant, youthful brown

skin, braids and a bright yellow coat. National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman's poem "The Hill We Climb" will be quoted for generations to come, none more than the poem's final lines:

"When day comes, we step out of the shade aflame and unafraid," she beamed. "The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it."

"If only we're brave enough to be it."

If you're feeling hopeful and inspired like I am, awesome.

Now dry your eyes and roll up your sleeves. We've got work to do.

**RUSSELL, from Page 23**

smiles and says, "Who are you?" "My name is Gene," always sweetly follows. Megan tells the children, "His brain is sort of sick, but Mr. Gene always remembers us with his heart." Steve Hartman said, "Dementia causes so much memory loss, but evidently acceptance and compassion are unforgettable."

Now every morning that the kids come over to play in his front yard, Mr. McGehee hears the somehow familiar sound and heads for his coat and hat. Out the door he goes! Not that he remembers anyone's name or even what it is that draws him outside. It's like when he hears

the children's laughter, he somehow remembers there's joy to be found. His daughter, Kathy, says that her father's inexplicable drive is because he recognizes the sound of love. "Everybody responds to love," she says.

This reminds me of Maya Angelou's famous quote. "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Be a part of the solution. Wash up, mask up and choose kindness. Try leaving everyone you meet a little happier than you found them.

For a better world,  
Tommy Russell.



Donn Jones, Donn Jones Photography

Left to right: Craig Harris, Macon County Times, Lafayette, receives the first-place plaque for Group I Best Sports Coverage from presenter UTIA's Carrie Castille; Shirley Nanney, Crossville Chronicle, accepts the award for Group III Best Make-up & Appearance; and Karanja Ajanaku, New Tri-State Defender, Memphis, picks up the Group I Best Personal Column award on behalf of Lee Eric Smith.

# 2022 Headline Writing Winners

## Circulation Group I: The Humboldt Chronicle



## Circulation Group IV: Kingsport Times-News



## Circulation Group II: The LaFollette Press



## Circulation Group III: Cleveland Daily Banner



## Circulation Group V: The Tennessean, Nashville



Tenn. project may mean growth in West Tenn.

Leaders see chance to reverse population drop

Daniel Connolly and Samuel Haddman, Times Staff Writers • Special to USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

The planned Blue Oval City Ford electric-vehicle assembly facility east of Memphis could be what is now a largely agricultural area of West Tennessee, with fields along Interstate 40 to a significant part of the greater regional economy.

What could be the largest private investment in Tennessee history — \$5.6 billion from Ford and its South Korean partner, SK

## 'TIPPING POINT'

NASHVILLE LEADERS, BUSINESSES SPAR OVER LOWER BROADWAY'S FUTURE



**BOONDOGGLE OR TAXPAYER BOON?**  
Cooper blasts Fifth + Broadway garage deal

