

The Tennessee Press

Official Publication of the Tennessee Press Association

Volume 86

September 2022

No. 3

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Daily Memphian awarded \$250K Knight grant

SUBMITTED
The Daily Memphian
August 16, 2022

The Knight Foundation, the leading national philanthropy supporting new and expanding local news initiatives, announced a \$250,000 grant to The Daily Memphian (www.dailymemphian.com), one of the largest nonprofit, digital local news organizations in the country.

"With a local newsroom that will grow to 42 full-time staffers this year, we are convinced that our model of having subscribers pay a meaningful rate for high-quality content is the most effective way to address the crisis in local journalism," said Eric Barnes, CEO of The Daily Memphian. "Combined with an expanding advertising base and the philanthropic investments that have fueled our growth, we are committed to building a news organization that is financially sound."



Barnes

"The path to sustainability has been fraught for many news organizations, so it's been encouraging to see The Daily Memphian's success growing both its subscriber base and its newsroom," said Jim Brady, Vice President, Journalism for The Knight Foundation. "There's a lot that other news organizations can learn from The Daily Memphian's success, and this grant will also ensure those learnings are able to be shared across the industry."

In the first four years of The

grant will support The Daily Memphian's efforts to continue to add paid subscribers and engage new readers as the organization moves toward financial sustainability.

Daily Memphian's existence, the organization has raised \$10 million in philanthropic donations and generated \$11 million in earned revenue, with the percentage of revenue from subscriptions growing every year. The Daily Memphian now has more than 17,000 paid subscribers paying an average of \$10.25 per month – a remarkable number in an industry dominated by "dollar-a-month" offers and extremely high churn rates.

"We are thrilled about this powerful vote of confidence from The Knight Foundation. The funding from such a respected national source will boost our growth that has so far been fueled by extraordinary community support. We look forward to continually improving The Daily Memphian and building a model that we hope other cities can replicate," said Andy Cates, Chairman of the Board of Mem-

phis Fourth Estate Inc., the 501(c3) nonprofit that oversees The Daily Memphian.

The Knight Foundation's grant will also further support The Daily Memphian's goals of sharing lessons learned and best practices with other local news organizations, including publications supported by The Knight Foundation.

"With over 17,000 paid subscribers, a broad base of individual and foundation supporters, and hundreds of local advertisers, The Daily Memphian has proven to be a leader in building an enduring base of community support," said Duc Luu, Director, Journalism, The Knight Foundation. "We look forward to helping to introduce other publishers to their best practices and lessons learned through, among other efforts, an extensive

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Paxton makes deal to acquire Herald-Citizen, Daily Banner

SUBMITTED
Herald-Citizen, Cookeville
September 2, 2022

The Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, and Cleveland Daily Banner are among five newspapers owned by either Cookeville Newspapers Inc. or Cleveland Newspapers Inc. that are being acquired by Kentucky-based Paxton Media Group.

The Herald-Citizen, the Cleveland Daily Banner, The Cartersville (Ga.) Daily Tribune News, the Chatsworth (Ga.) Times, and The Jasper (Ala.) Daily Mountain Eagle had been owned by Cleveland Newspapers, Inc. and Cookeville Newspapers, Inc., for more than 65 and 47 years, respectively.

Cleveland Newspapers, Inc. has owned and operated daily newspapers in 10 states. Dirks, Van Essen



McNeely

& April, a media merger and acquisition firm based in Santa Fe, N.M., represented Cleveland Newspapers and Cookeville Newspapers in the transaction. Terms of the

transaction were not disclosed.

"Paxton's legacy of community journalism mirrors that of our previous owner," said Jack McNeely, group publisher for the five newspapers and current Tennessee Press Association (TPA) president. "Thus, I anticipate a seamless transition for our staff members, readers and advertisers that have

See **PAXTON** Page 4

TPA changing of the guard



Photo by Donn Jones, Donn Jones Photography

Outgoing TPA President Rick Thomason (right), Six Rivers Media, Kingsport, offers Jack McNeely (left), Cleveland Daily Banner and Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, a few words of encouragement before handing McNeely, the president's gavel during the 2022 TPA State Press Contests Awards Luncheon Aug. 26 in Nashville. See October's *The Tennessee Press* for complete coverage of the TPA awards luncheon. McNeely began his term on June 25, but did not have an installation ceremony until the awards luncheon.

The Tennessee Press

Official Publication of the Tennessee Press Association

(USPS 616-460)
Published monthly by the

TENNESSEE PRESS ASSOCIATION, INC.
412 N. Cedar Bluff Road, Suite 403
Knoxville, Tennessee 37923
Telephone (865) 584-5761/Fax (865) 558-8687/www.tnpress.com

Subscriptions: \$12 annually
Periodicals Postage Paid At Knoxville, TN

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Tennessee Press,
412 N. Cedar Bluff Road, Suite 403, Knoxville, TN 37923

The Tennessee Press is printed by The Standard Banner in Jefferson City, Tenn.

Carol Daniels Editor
Mike Towle..... Managing Editor
Robyn Gentile Production Coordinator



 The Tennessee Press
is printed on recycled paper
and is recyclable.

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TPAers with suggestions, questions or comments about items in The Tennessee Press are welcome to contact the managing editor. Call Mike Towle, (615) 293-5771; or email editor@tnpress.com. The deadline for the November 2022 issue is October 4, 2022.

How to discern 'fake news' from real

"The only difference between being uninformed and misinformed is that one is your choice and the other is theirs."

— Frank Sonnenberg

A few years ago, I had the honor and privilege of participating in a panel discussion on "fake" news. The 90-minute Q&A session was hosted by the Putnam County Republican Party in the County Commission chambers of the courthouse in downtown Cookeville.

Only about 40 folks attended the meeting. They were primarily concerned with information that then-President Donald Trump coined as "Fake News." Full disclosure: I'm a Trump supporter but also believe his "Fake News" narrative has done irreparable harm to our industry's relevance.

Trump's proclamation describing the media as "Public Enemy No. 1" was followed by some apprehension since many fellow conservatives feed on Trump's tweets and announcements like a pool of piranhas.

But there was neither angst nor explosive comments during the panel discussion in Cookeville, only cordial conversation. The biggest misconception at that time, and still prevalent today, is that folks hold their hometown newspapers in the same light as mainstream media. And that's unfair.

When asked who holds the national media accountable for their reporting, I quickly responded, "The American people." If I don't like what I hear on the radio, I change the station. If I don't agree with a television commentator, I turn the channel. It's that simple.

But during my research in prepa-



**YOUR
PRESIDING
REPORTER**

JACK MCNEELY

ration for the panel discussion, I found some tips that folks may use to combat fake news. I shared it with our readers in Cookeville then; and I argue it's still important enough today to share with our readers across the Volunteer State.

In November 2016, Stanford University researchers discovered that across the U.S., many people couldn't tell the difference between a reported news article, a persuasive opinion piece and a corporate ad.

These same researchers generated a list of five questions that help discern fake news from real news. They are:

Who wrote it? Real news contains the real byline of a real journalist dedicated to the truth. Fake news does not. Once you find the byline, look at the writer's bio. This can help you identify whether the item you're reading is a reported news article, a persuasive opinion piece or something else entirely.

What claims does it make? Real news will include multiple primary sources when discussing a controversial claim. Fake news may include fake sources, false URLs, and/or alternative facts that can be disproven through further research.

When was it published? Look at the publication date. If it's "breaking news," be extra careful.

Where was it published? Real news is published by trustworthy media outlets with a record of

strong fact checking, such as the BBC, NPR, the Wall Street Journal, and your hometown newspaper.

If you get your news primarily through social media channels, try to verify that the information is accurate before sharing it. On Twitter, for example, you might look for the blue "verified" checkmark next to a media outlet before sharing a link.

How does it make you feel?

Fake news, like all propaganda, is designed to make you feel strong emotions. So, if you read a news item that makes you feel super angry, pause and take a deep breath. More than likely someone is peddling a wheelbarrow full of horse manure.

If this sounds like a lot of work, just remember that there is no substitute for critical thinking, or, at minimum, common sense.

We've become a spoon-fed society. We want our news and we want it now. But I caution those who'd rather scroll through Facebook or far-left or far-right blogs for substantive information: you're going to get duped.

The free press is not broken. Unfortunately, some journalists make mistakes, network owners choose dollars over ethics, and, God forbid, politicians continue to manipulate the press. However, I am of the opinion that our craft is alive and well, and we will continue to provide our communities with accurate and credible news.

Jack McNeely is president of the Tennessee Press Association. He is also publisher of the Cleveland Daily Banner and the Herald-Citizen in Cookeville. He can be contacted by email at jack.mcneely@cleveland-banner.com.

GRANT from Page 1

report and white paper Knight is supporting."

Every month, The Daily Memphian reaches 115,000 email subscribers, 450,000 visitors to the site, and hundreds of thousands of people via social media, with an audience that reflects the diversity of a community of 1.2 million people, including the majority Black city of Memphis. Unlike most nonprofit news sites, The Daily Memphian has a very broad-based mission to cover a wide range of news in Memphis, including local govern-

ment, neighborhoods, business, arts & culture, food, sports, coverage of historically underserved communities, and much more.

"This subscription revenue is critical to supporting our work to cover the most important stories in our community and to reach as many people as possible in our city," Barnes added.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

"We are social investors who support a more effective democracy by funding free expression

and journalism, arts and culture in community, research in areas of media and democracy, and in the success of American cities and towns where the Knight brothers once published newspapers. Learn more at kf.org."

Founded in 2018, The Daily Memphian (www.dailymemphian.com) was launched in response to a 90% reduction in the newsroom of its long-time local newspaper. Since then, The Daily Memphian has become the largest newsroom in the region and one of the largest news organizations of its kind in the country.

Need answers to your legal questions? It's time to ring (up) Hollow

The Tennessee Press Association celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2021; the Tennessee Press Service is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year; and the TPA Legal Hotline is celebrating its 30th year providing service to our members!

In 1992, the TPA launched the Legal Hotline with the knowledge and expertise of Richard Hollow to be a resource for all our members looking for answers to legal questions. Richard has been a stalwart for you providing in-depth reasoned answers to the many problems you or your staffs encounter serving readers and your communities.

Here are some figures that reveal how valuable this resource



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CAROL DANIELS

is for you:

1. Calls to the hotline range from 125 to over 250 per year, two to five calls a week, with the higher number of calls generally coming during election years.
2. The hotline has provided answers to more than 5,000 inquiries from TPA members since the service launched 30 years ago.
3. Questions to the hotline range from those regarding

potential defamation and invasion of privacy issues to access to meetings and public records. The complexity of the questions has increased as our members have begun distribution and a number of digital platforms.

Who can call the Legal Hotline? Rick answers calls that mostly come from publishers, editors and reporters, but he also gets calls from advertising directors who need his assistance.

In addition to handling the Legal Hotline calls, Richard Hollow is also a valued resource for TPA. Rick has come to many conventions and has led discussions or participated on panels on legal and business questions regarding open records and open meetings

laws. He also serves on the board of directors for the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government (TCOG).

The Legal Hotline was once available to TPA members as a subscription service, but in 2004 the TPA Board realized just how important this service was and made it available to all members at no charge.

You can reach Rick Hollow at 865-769-1709

Rick, thank you for all you have done and continue to contribute to our industry. We are fortunate to have you at our side!

Carol

Carol Daniels is executive director of Tennessee Press Association.

NEWS & MOVES

Revenue Summit and Ideas Contest Awards set for Oct. 20

Save the date of October 20 for the virtual 2022 Revenue Summit and announcement of the Ideas Contest Awards. The day will kick off with a presentation by Kelly Wirges of ProMax Training. The topic is Planning for Success in 2023. Those who attended the recent Tri-State Press Convention had an opportunity to hear Wirges speak and she has presented at past TPA Advertising Conferences. More details will be emailed to members in late September.

*Staff reports
September 6, 2022*

TPA Fall Board Meeting set Nov. 3

The TPA Board of Directors will meet via Zoom on Thursday, Nov. 3 at 9:00 a.m. Central Time/10:00 a.m. Eastern. All TPA members are invited to attend this virtual meeting. Contact Carol Daniels or Robyn Gentile for the Zoom link.

*Staff reports
September 20, 2022*

National Newspaper Week Oct. 2-8

This marks the 82nd year of National Newspaper Week

(NNW), which observes the importance of newspapers to communities large and small.

The theme for 2022 is "Newspapers are relevant." National Newspaper Week runs Oct. 2-8.

NNW is a project of the Newspaper Association Managers. This year's kit, prepared by the North Carolina Press Association, will be available at www.nationalnewspaperweek.com beginning Sept. 21.

TPA sponsors the kit for all of its members to use.

In addition to ads, editorials and editorial cartoons will be available for publication.

There is also a presentation that publishers, editors and ad directors can use when presenting to groups.

Statement of Ownership due Oct. 1

Publishers and editors of all periodicals, including newspapers, are reminded that their annual Statements of Ownership must be filed with the United States Postal Service by Oct. 1. The statements must also be published in the newspaper.

The form is called P.S. Form 3526 Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation.

The PDF of the form can be downloaded at <http://about.usps.com/forms/ps3526.pdf>.

McCormick retires from Herald-Citizen after 44 years



McCormick

The Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, recently celebrated the retirement of an employee who has been with the newspaper for nearly half a century. Circulation Manager Keith McCormick

started his career at the H-C 44 years ago after looking to Tennessee Tech for job placement.

"I thought 'OK,'" he said. "I read newspapers, but I didn't really know a lot about them."

Starting out in sales, he worked his way up to circulation manager in 1985. McCormick spent seven years as a regional sales person, then in 1985 he was promoted to circulation manager

— and a coveted one at that.

"When I was much younger I was a member of the Tennessee Press Association, Southern Circulation Manager Association and the International Circulation Manager Association," he said. "I was able to meet a lot of good people and share good ideas. I received job offers from the Washington Post, Daytona Beach Journal, Commercial Appeal, etc."

He said that in 1989, the Herald-Citizen was ranked among the top 10 in growth percentage in the United States. However, he was always drawn to stay. "The HC has been very blessed with quality people in all the years that I have been here," he said. "We have had very talented people throughout the organization, all in different capacities. We're our own worst enemy and we're so quick to jump to promote

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www.nationalnewspaperweek.com

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

September 2022

- 21-24: Institute for Nonprofit News in conjunction with the Online News Association Conference, Millwick, LA's Arts District, Los Angeles, Cal.
- 24: Freedom Forum First Amendment Festival, featuring special guests Bret Baier of Fox News and a performance by the Gatlin Brothers, Discover Park of America, Union City, Tenn., <https://www.freedomforum.org/>

October 2022

- 1: Deadline to submit to the USPS Statement of Ownership, Management & Circulation
- 2-8: National Newspaper Week, kit available at www.nationalnewspaperweek.com
- 6-8: 2022 National Newspaper Association (NNA) Convention, Hyatt Regency, San Francisco, Cal.
- 12-14: E&P and 360 Media Alliance News Media Business Summit, Sheraton Hotel Downtown, Harrisburg, Pa.
- 14-15: America's Newspapers Family and Independent Owners Conference, The Roosevelt Hotel, New Orleans, La., held in conjunction with the event listed directly below.
- 16-18: America's Newspapers Annual Meeting and Senior Leadership Conference, The Roosevelt Hotel, New Orleans, La.
- 20: TPA Virtual 2022 Revenue Summit and Announcement of Ideas Contest Awards. Kelly Wirges, presentation speaker. Details at tnpress.com
- 26-30: Fall National College Media Association Convention in conjunction with Associated Collegiate Press, Grand Hyatt Washington, Washington D.C.
- ### November 2022
- 3: TPA Fall Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom at 9:00 a.m. Central Time. All members are invited to attend this virtual meeting.

A key question: What's next? Always be looking ahead

Gregory talked to me about a lesson he learned in his early days of selling advertising. "In one of my first presentations, the prospect rejected my ideas for a new campaign. Back at the office, my ad manager must have noticed the stunned look on my face. When I told her what happened, she didn't want to know the gruesome details. She just asked, "Okay, so what's next?"

"That turned out to be great advice. I sat there and gave myself a good talking-to," Gregory said. "Nothing could change the fact that my sales presentation had fallen flat. But what I could change was my approach to that reality. Instead of giving up on that new business prospect, I dove back into my notes, reflected on our con-



AD-LIBS®

JOHN FOUST

versation during my presentation, and developed another campaign proposal. The new ideas were accepted, and I'm happy to say that company became a consistent advertiser.

"What I learned is that it's important to look ahead. Think beyond what is happening right now and be ready to change directions."

Gregory's story reminds me of an old Bob Hope line in a movie

I saw on TV: "All I've gotta do now is figure out what I'm gonna do now." If we look beyond the double-talk of that gag, we'll see some real truth. Our biggest challenge is often figuring out what to do next.

In fact, I believe one of the most important business questions we can ask is, "What's next?" These two little words represent a deliberate focus on the future. This is especially true in a profession such as marketing, which demands constant evaluation and adjustment. Considering the current situation as a new starting point, what's the next step? If we expect to make any progress at all, there should always be another step.

Let's say you make a big sale. I heartily recommend that you

celebrate your success and share the glory with your teammates. But after the high fives at the goal line, it's not a good idea to camp out for a long time in the end zone. Things will not stay like that forever. The game goes on. There's a next step.

What if consumers don't respond to the current offer being made in an advertiser's ads? Do you keep running the offer again and again, hoping that something will change on its own? Or do you analyze the plan and make some adjustments?

If you're a manager who notices that morale in your department is sagging, what can you do to make things better? (Please don't say, "team-building activity.") Do you hope the situation will go away

"when the economy improves?" Or do you take the initiative with a little inter-department research to get to know your team as individuals? Let them help you determine the next step.

It's not complicated. It's simply a matter of evaluating the current situation and asking yourself, "What's next?" Keep asking, and answering, that question and you're on your way.

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The First Amendment future of debate over Roe v. Wade

The First Amendment was not the focus for the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

But the five freedoms in the First Amendment have powered the nation's long, divisive debate over the incredibly personal and societal issue of abortion – and may well be how we frame its future.

Abortion-rights and anti-abortion forces have been seen and heard, largely without government restraint, from hardline moral positions rooted in faith and conscience; to thousands of news media reports, commentaries and guest appearances; rallies and marches by all sides throughout the years; to massive lobbying campaigns targeting elected officials and publicity efforts targeting the rest of us.

In its 5-4 decision, the court deployed the First Amendment as a next step, as the issue now returns to individual states to set their own rules. Justice Samuel Alito's opinion cited a 1992 decision in which the late Justice Antonin Scalia predicted "the permissibility of abortion, and the limitations upon it, are to be resolved like most important questions in our democracy: by citizens trying to persuade one another and then voting."

In other words, the Supreme Court told us that the ultimate de-



**PERSPECTIVE:
FREEDOM
FORUM**

GENE POLCINSKI

cision on legal abortions will come from us, collectively, using our First Amendment rights to speak and write to each other to advance our views and to assemble with people of like minds to ask for a "redress of grievances."

The nation didn't wait to take that instruction from the justices. As soon as the decision was announced, anti-abortion activists pursued to celebrate, and opponents

of reversing Roe took to the streets, the media and online forums to decry the court's action. The newest place for the next generation to join the debate: TikTok, where according to The Washington Post, "Gen Z is harnessing political power by creating bite-size videos on the nation's fastest-growing social media platform."

Dueling demonstrators

Newscasts from outside the Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C., showed daily dueling groups of demonstrators on the sidewalks. Weekend news reports said marches and protests in support of Roe erupted in more than 100 cities and towns across

the nation.

The First Amendment's right to assembly shielded each side. Over the decades, the only limits the government could impose have been to set up physical boundaries on protests and establish rules of conduct for protestors outside clinics where abortions were performed.

As it happens, the right to protest stops at the court's steps, under the theory that the justices' legal decisions are not to be swayed by public sentiment.

Nor are all responses, which in recent days ranged from threats to justices and their families to graffiti defacing a Catholic Church in Reston, Va., protected by the First Amendment. The First Amend-

ment is not a shield for violence, threats or intimidation.

Abortion certainly is not the first or only major issue to enrage, excite and galvanize us to use those core freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly and petition – or to go beyond them.

Newspaper editor killed for supporting slavery

Nearly 200 years ago, a mob killed newspaper editor Elijah Parish Lovejoy for supporting the end of slavery. For decades, women used their First Amendment rights to fight for the right to vote, facing violence like being force-fed during

See **POLCINSKI** Page 5

PAXTON from Page 1

come to trust our credible voice and marketing capabilities."

"We are excited to add these newspapers into the PMG portfolio," PMG President and CEO Jamie Paxton said. "PMG believes strongly in the value of local newspapers and the vital role they play in the communities that they serve. We appreciate being chosen to be the new stewards of these important community assets."

The Herald-Citizen, the 168-year-old Cleveland Daily Banner, 75-year-

old Cartersville Daily Tribune News, and 150-year-old Jasper Daily Mountain Eagle all publish five days per week online and three days per week in print. The Chatsworth Times publishes weekly.

Other publications in the group include Walker Magazine, 385 Magazine, Bradley Essential and Discover Bartow. Paxton Media Group, a family-owned media company headquartered in Paducah, Ky., is managed by fourth- and fifth-generation Paxton family members. The company owns more than 100 newspapers.

Employment Opportunity

Editor & General Manager

Our small county seat weekly, situated in a beautiful part of Middle Tennessee, needs a new leader. As editor and general manager, you'll be responsible planning, producing, and editing content as well as growing franchise cornerstones of subscriber support, digital audience, and community relationships. You'll also be part of a dedicated team of community journalism professionals serving our region with quality products.

Ideal candidates will have journalism degree plus five years' experience in rural, county seat newspaper.

Resumes to kponder@lakewaypublishers.com

Post your newspaper's job openings at tnpress.com

If you want to know how you are doing, ask your readers

Regularly connecting with readers is at the heart of remaining relevant in today's changing and challenging media landscape. The dynamics of staying in touch has been strained by the pandemic and forced isolation during the past two-plus years.

All newsrooms and their complement of editors and reporters likely have formal and informal networks. You connect in a variety of ways to get a pulse of whether you are meeting reader expectations.

But how often do you ask for a direct critique of your news content, the very lifeblood of your product? When is the last time you asked the subjects of a news story what they thought of a report?



COMMUNITY NEWSROOM SUCCESS

JIM PUMARLO

It's a perfect time to launch a "story check," something we implemented during my tenure as editor of the Red Wing Republican Eagle.

The process is straightforward. We'd select a couple of stories from each edition and identify someone mentioned. We'd send a cover letter and ask a series of questions. For example:

Are facts in the story and/or photo outline accurate, including spelling of names and addresses?

Were the quotes attributed to you used in proper context?

In general, do you consider this newspaper to be accurate?

We did our best to diversify the sampling of stories from spot news to features, sports to lifestyle. The individuals may have been quoted from a city council meeting or simply named in a police report, civic club write-up or news brief.

Story checks are also a great opportunity to ask other questions about your product. What are the most interesting sections of the newspaper? How can you improve service? What other topics or subjects warrant your coverage?

Are they a subscriber - why or why not?

Our goal was to solicit feedback from a range of readers - new and longtime residents, young and old, men and women, adults and kids - and from a demographic and geographic representation of our marketplace.

The concerns and ideas identified on the questionnaires will help you reinforce what readers think you are doing right and will challenge you to improve in areas where you are falling short of expectations.

Bottom line, use the story check to seek honest and straightforward answers. Reader feedback always directs you to a stronger product.

Of course, readers should not

have to wait to be asked. Readers rarely are hesitant to offer their opinions on how you are doing your job. A telephone call should always be welcome.

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

'We are going to help people get free'

My mother is a retired teacher. While I always knew she loved me fiercely and that I was very special to her, I was also raised to understand that nobody is that special. We are all just people and it's how we act that matters.

It's impossible to get the balance between joy and preparation for a harsh world just right in child rearing. My parents are my biggest stroke of good luck, and I'm glad my mom helped me understand from an early age that it took a lot of work for anybody, including me, to be good at something. Competence was earned, not made.

'... create more equity by building local news and information systems'

I think being raised this way is one reason I'm so comfortable with incremental progress in my work. My goals are not audacious but they are difficult. I'm trying to help create more equity by building local news and information systems - and reduce harm with my reporting. I've always accepted that incremental progress might be the best I could hope to achieve.

But some people, without this conditioning, are using news and information tools to stretch far past incremental change. Cierra



GUEST COLUMN

SARAH ALVAREZ

Hinton and the team she works with at Scalawag are using their work as a tool for Black Liberation in an attempt to help repair the South. "What I do is conditional to my reality," she said. "but what I dream is not."

Cierra Hinton is the Executive Director of Scalawag. Cierra has an undying love and passion for the complicated South, which she brings to her work at Scalawag where she oversees their operations and big-picture plans.

It is a shockingly pure act of faith to believe that our professional tools; observation, verification, storytelling and information distribution, could be up to such a difficult and necessary task. But Hinton has convinced me. Here is our recent conversation:

Alvarez: You are one of the few people I know whose work in journalism is aiming to be reparative. Why do you do the work that you do in the way that you do it?

Hinton: I don't know that

there's any other part of the country that has been as harmed by media narratives than the South. 56% of Black people in this country live in the South. So you have this dual harm going on. The very real harm that the media has done to Black communities and the harm that the media has done to our region by flattening our collective existence here. It is very harmful, especially for the progress and social change that we're trying to drive in our region.

Black freedom struggles borne from South have effected change

We know that the most transformative and reparative change in this country has come from Black freedom struggles born from the South. That is why reparative work is important, here in particular. That's why our theory of change starts first and foremost with, right relationship with communities and alignment with movements. Really doing our work in alignment with the Black radical tradition is supremely important to us, not only because of the identity of and the people in our organization, but because Black community struggles in the South are a proven birthplace of change.

Alvarez: What is the future you want to see?

Hinton: Our pie in the sky statement is, "a more than just south where media is a liberatory tool." There are tools for liberation; voting is a tool for liberation. Organizing is a tool for liberation. Mutual Aid and wealth redistribution are tools for liberation, and media is, too.

Alvarez: That shouldn't, but does, sound radical.

Hinton: Media is really a part of the state apparatus. That is what makes it radical to say, "No, we're not going to continue to use media to uphold the white supremacist state, the patriarchal



Hinton

state, the capitalistic state. We are going to instead help people get free." And like other liberatory tools, anybody can do media, anybody can do journalism, anybody can tell stories. I think we can tear down the gatekeeping that has been happening for so long, which keeps journalism exclusive to predominantly white wealthy men.

POLICINSKI from Page 4

hunger strikes.

The nation still is embroiled in debating social justice issues around civil rights for people of color. In response to the Black Lives Matter protests over police killings of Black men, some states have enacted draconian laws aimed at stifling the First Amendment rights of speech, assembly and petition. Those laws ignore history. It was the pursuit of those very freedoms - the right to produce change by being heard in a free and open "marketplace of ideas" - that fueled the creation of our nation.

Again and again, Americans have used their First Amendment freedoms to make their case on issues of major social importance - sometimes going beyond their protections. There's also no guarantee any one position will succeed.

The First Amendment favors no side in the issue of abortion's legality, or any other issue of public importance. Nor does it disfavor any view. It does protect from government penalty or censorship any engaged citizen willing to use information, education and participation to, as Scalia wrote, "persuade one another."

Gene Policinski is a Freedom Forum senior fellow for the First Amendment. This commentary was originally published June 29 at freedomforum.org and is republished here with permission.

How the First Amendment protects anonymous speech online

SUBMITTED
Freedom Forum
June 1, 2022

One of the first things we do when we sign up for a new website or platform online is to pick a name – a username, screen name or handle – sometimes unrelated to the name on our government ID. Part of the fun of creating an online persona can be picking a creative or funny pseudonym. It's not all puns and games though. Anonymity can protect privacy and keep people like whistleblowers and activists safe; it can also shield bad behavior.

How can we balance the right to hide our identity with the potential harms of anonymity?

According to Jeff Kosseff, associate professor in the United States Naval Academy Cyber Science Department and author of "The United States of Anonymous: How

the First Amendment Protects Online Speech," this question is not new. "Anonymous speech really is fundamental to the history of the United States."

In fact, many arguments for independence during the colonial era were made anonymously or pseudonymously – with a pen name. So were arguments in support of the Constitution while it was being drafted.

In 1958, the Supreme Court protected the right to associate anonymously, saying the NAACP in Alabama could not be forced to reveal its membership lists. NAACP leaders at the time were regularly targeted with violence.

Florida organizer Harry T. Moore and his wife Harriette were murdered in a bombing of their home on Christmas 1951 thought to be motivated by their anti-racist activism. Revealing the names of NAACP members would likely have endangered those members too.

Why do we need anonymity?

According to Kosseff, there are good reasons to protect anonymity. The ability to speak freely can help separate the content of the speech from the identity of the speaker. Sometimes, if people know who the speaker is, they might think differently about the message. Anonymity can lessen this bias.

More importantly, being anonymous can protect vulnerable people. "People who need to have a voice but don't have the ability to associate their real name with that speech have a very good reason to want to speak anonymously," says Kosseff.

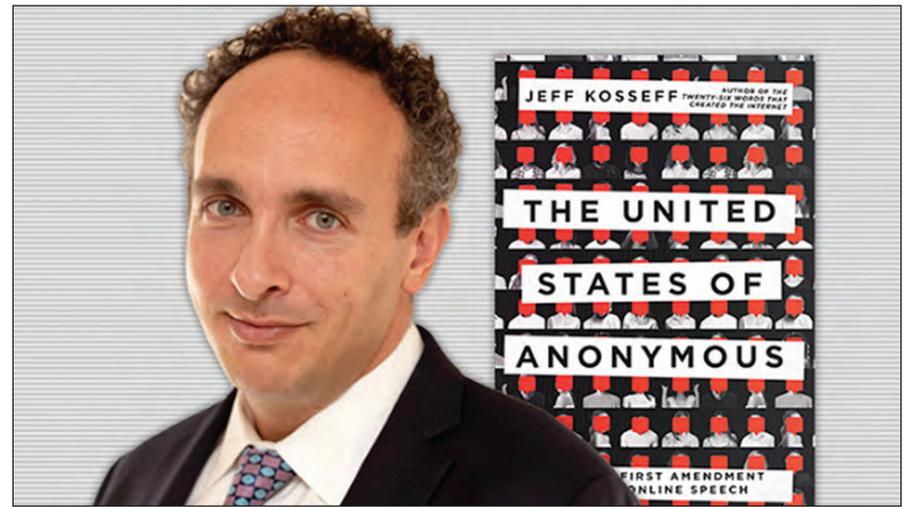
The civil rights movement provides several examples of how anonymity can help keep people safe, like the NAACP v. Alabama case. In a 1960 case, the Supreme Court protected the right of civil rights activists to call out via an anonymous pamphlet a supermarket that was discriminating against Black customers. Because of resistance to new civil rights laws, activists could have been in danger if they had been forced to reveal their identities.

This right, says Kosseff, has been reaffirmed by liberal and conservative justices. One example is a 1995 case overturning an Ohio law that required election publications to include authors' names.

What about anonymity protecting bad actors?

The First Amendment protects anonymity (in most cases). It also protects the right to say unpopular or even abhorrent things (with some exceptions), anonymously or otherwise. "You can't just use a subpoena to unmask someone who's been mean to you," says Kosseff. "The courts have set a fairly high First Amendment standard for being able to subpoena identifying information of online posters."

Getting rid of anonymous speech online wouldn't prevent



Submitted

Jeff Kosseff is associate professor in the United States Naval Academy Cyber Science Department and author of "The United States of Anonymous: How the First Amendment Protects Online Speech." He says anonymity can protect vulnerable people: "People who need to have a voice but don't have the ability to associate their real name with that speech have a very good reason to want to speak anonymously,"

disagreeable speech, says Kosseff, because people say bad things using their real names, too. Some research shows that being able to use pseudonyms could have mixed or even positive impacts on online civility.

That said, different platforms have different policies. Some, like Facebook, technically require user profiles to use real names.

Online pseudonyms aren't absolute or perfect, either. Criminals can and do get unmasked for speech that is truly beyond the protections of the First Amendment. In criminal cases or instances of speech that isn't protected, like true threats, it can be possible to pursue who's behind the screenname.

Who's responsible, platforms or posters?

If someone defames or threatens you online, Kosseff says "you don't sue the platform, you sue the person who posted the content." Watch Kosseff share more about why the website is protected.

What does online anonymity look like around the world?

Kosseff says anonymity online is a spectrum. "People can control what level of identifying information that they post online." So, to

some extent, it's up to everyone to decide if they'll provide no clues as to their identity at all or be fully transparent about who they are. Kosseff notes that it's often possible for other users online to compile various facts you've shared about yourself to learn a lot about you – even potentially your identity.

There's also spectrum to how anonymity online is treated legally around the world. In Europe, privacy is a fundamental human right. Legal protections for anonymity there are more grounded in privacy than in free expression arguments. In authoritarian places, anonymity is difficult or prohibited.

Do we need a national privacy law?

One question Kosseff says we should ask is "How do we better safeguard identifying information so that people can operate anonymously, and we can preserve the values that really underlie so much of our First Amendment precedent?"

A national privacy law, he says, could place less burden on individual users to protect their data and provide much-needed guidance for users on how their data can be shared by companies.

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TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE: The Daily Times, Maryville

The end of an era: As The Daily Times moves to a new location, 307 E. Harper Ave. is eulogized as so much more than a building

Editor's note: This was the first part of a two-part retrospective on The Daily Times, Maryville, as the paper moved operations to 226 Gill St. in Alcoa.

It's ludicrous, of course, to assign sentience to a building ... an inanimate object ... but for those on whom The Daily Times, Maryville, has left an indelible imprint, the structure at 307 E. Harper Ave. in downtown Maryville most definitely possesses an awareness built on a legacy that pre-dates its construction.

It's a shell — quite literally these days — of its former self, and numerous renovations (seven, according to the late Dean Stone) over the decades have transformed it far beyond its original appearance, when its build-out was financed in 1942 by then Times-owner Clyde B. Emert. The in-house press stopped production in 2011 when Jones Media Inc. signed a printing and distribution agreement with the News Sentinel of Knoxville.

The press itself was dismantled a couple of years later, and while CrossFit Pistol Creek has rented part of the massive underbelly of the building in which it is housed, there's plenty of empty space still, both downstairs and up, that have made The Daily Times building an unwieldy Leviathan during a rapidly changing time of news dissemination.

"There's still space downstairs that's not rented out, and even upstairs, as things have become more and more computerized and we've downsized, we just don't need this much space," says Bryan Sandmeier, publisher of The Daily Times. "On top of that, the building is old and in need of repair, and there's just not much that can be done to save it. I hate to be the guy who's going to vacate this building, though, because it's got a long history.

"Everybody in the community knows where The Daily Times is. If you've lived here any time at all, you know this location. And while I hate to be the one to cart everything away and look over our shoulders to see it being pushed over, it's inevitable. It's



**JUST
FOR
TODAY**

STEVE WILDSMITH

going to happen."

And so, with only a few days left in a building that was purchased earlier this year by Stock Creek Properties (a partnership between Randy Massey and Joe Zappa) for \$2.2 million, the time has come to bid 307 E. Harper Ave. goodbye. It seems a simple thing to do — pack up and move a couple of miles away to 226 Gill St. in Alcoa to what locals are familiar with as the Harrison building.

Simple ... but not easy. Because while the computers and desks and bound volumes and even the people can physically relocate, the history ... the legacy ... the tradition of The Daily Times presence in downtown Maryville, for 80 years in the same location, is rooted in a place where ghosts still linger, careers and callings were born and memories will never fade.

"When I think about that building and the various iterations, it's a building — but it's also Dean Stone. It's Anna Irwin. It's Iva Butler. It's Adele McKenzie. It's Fred and Eddie Tipton," says state Rep. Jerome Moon, who served as president and publisher of The Daily Times from 1984-89. "The sale of the paper (to Persis Corp. in 1989) was very bittersweet, but the sale of the building is kind of that, squared."

A deep connection to community

For many of us whose lives are so inextricably intertwined with the stucco-clad structure on East Harper, overlooking a lower city parking lot and separated from Greenbelt Lake by a stand of tall conifers, our introductions were inauspicious ones. I grew up in East Tennessee, but Maryville was the town through which

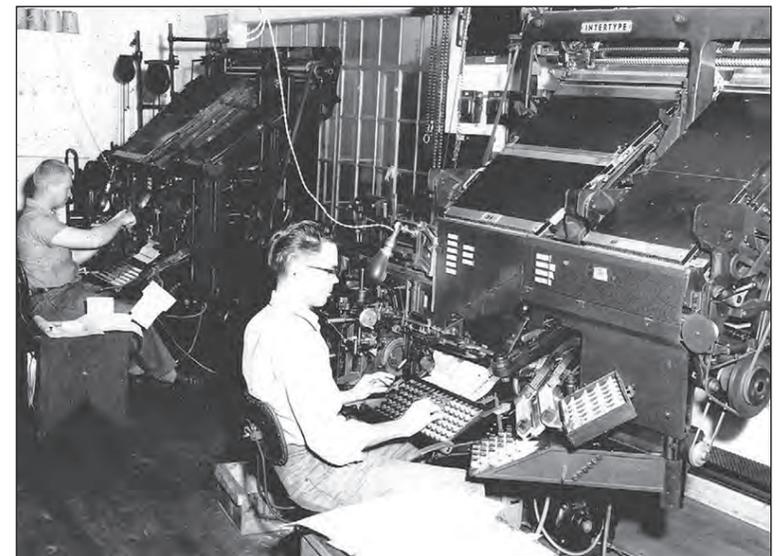
my family passed on the way to the Cades Cove. Frank Trexler, known to all as "Buzz" and an editor who first came to The Daily Times after the sale to Persis, understands that keenly.

"We were between editions at The (Knoxville) Journal (another Persis paper) on Dec. 18, 1989, when it was announced that Persis Corp. bought a five-day afternoon newspaper in Maryville, The Daily Times," Trexler recalled recently. "After the announcement, I was printing out notes for a story I had been working on for some time when (Managing Editor Larry) Aldridge approached me at the line printer. 'We need to send someone over to help run the newsroom until they figure out what to do,' he said, explaining that the managing editor was part of the Tutt Bradford family, owners of The Daily Times.

"We're sending you and Anna Garber. Have you ever been to Maryville?' 'On my way to the Smokies,' I said. Aldridge told me how to get to 307 E. Harper Ave. and the next morning I pulled up to the building and thought, 'They publish a newspaper here?' It looked nothing like my previous employers' facilities. Not only was a newspaper published there, but over time I discovered it had been the chronicler of generations of Blount Countians."

According to research by Stone, Andrew Jackson Neff and son George are credited with founding The Maryville Times in late 1883, when the "initial building was located at 133 West Main (now Broadway), just west of the present location of the Capitol Theater." The first issue was printed in January of 1884, and the Neffs continued as publishers until 1890, when the paper was sold to Andrew Goddard and his sons. In 1914, it was sold again to John H. "Doc" Mitchell, a drug store owner and Maryville's first fire chief, who held it only a year and used it primarily as an organ to promote the political career of U.S. Sen. Luke Lea.

Emert bought it a year later, serving as owner and publisher until 1955, when Bradford pur-



Top photo: The Daily Times, Maryville
Bottom photo: Courtesy of Neal Stone

Top photo: The Daily Times, seen here circa 1955, called 307 E. Harper Ave. in downtown Maryville its home for 80 years until its move to Alcoa a couple miles away in 2022 (see its new home on page 10). At the far left of the top photo is Sterling Seed and Supply, which was absorbed during one of the paper's renovations. Bottom photo: Typesetters work to arrange pages of The Daily Times during the "golden age" of the paper's manual layout. Stock Creek Properties purchased the now-former Daily Times building at 307 E. Harper Ave. for \$2.2 million.

chased it, serving as the owner until its sale to Persis. In 1919, Emert moved the paper to the basement of Proffitt's Department Store at the corner of Broadway Avenue and Cusick Street, where it remained until moving to 307 E. Harper. While a number of journalists earned belt notches at The Daily Times throughout

its history, none is revered more, however, than Stone, a World War II veteran and a former Maryville College student who arrived at the paper a few years later.

Neal Stone, Dean's son, grew up in the building, and his memories of it are intertwined with those

State of rural journalism: Buyers needed, news deserts expanding

The challenges of rural journalism are mainly the challenges of the communities it tries to serve, and many of those challenges are daunting. But they are not dispositive. That was made clear at the National Summit on Journalism in Rural America (June 2022) by some sharp, innovative and courageous editors, publishers, academics and other journalism supporters.

“Community newspapers are still trusted” more than other news media, said Lynne Lance, executive director of the National Newspaper Association, citing the recent survey done for NNA in its the markets of its members, mainly weeklies and small dailies.

But more broadly, when you ask how America’s rural newspapers are doing, you also need to ask, and answer, this question: “How is rural America doing?” said longtime Georgia publisher Robert M. Williams Jr. “It’s hard for any newspaper to ever rise above the quality of the community it operates in,” but there are exceptions, he said.

The biggest problem in most rural communities is shrinking population, and that’s a problem for their news media, as well as the shift of retail business to big-box stores that advertise little, said Tony Baranowski, co-publisher of the Times Citizen in Iowa Falls, Iowa.

For many older newspaper owners in small towns, the biggest problem is finding an acceptable buyer for their newspaper.

“What we see are thousands of independent owners across the country who want to leave their legacy but don’t have someone to buy their paper,” Elizabeth Hansen Shapiro of Columbia University said Saturday morning. She is founder of the National Trust for Local News, which tries to keep local news media in local hands, rather than profit-motivated chains or politically motivated buyers.

Sharon Burton, editor-publisher of the Adair County Community Voice in Columbia, Ky., said she makes money so she can be in the newspaper business. “I’m not in the newspaper business to make money,” like most recent buyers. “It’s obvious by the quality of what they’re doing that they’re not in it because they love newspapering. I think they’re part of our problem,



THE RURAL BLOG

AL CROSS

because they hurt our reputation.”

Some owners who don’t want to sell to such buyers just close their papers, and some such buyers eventually merge or close them, or strip them down so much they create what Penny Abernathy of Northwestern University calls a news desert: a community “with limited access to the sort of credible news and information that feeds democracy at the grassroots level and helps residents make wise decisions about issues that will affect their quality of life and that of future generations.”

Social and political divisions are a growing problem for rural communities and their newspapers. Bill Horner, publisher of the Chatham News and Record in North Carolina, said his county is so divided along racial and political lines that it made him and his partners question whether it was still a place for a general-interest newspaper.

Dink NeSmith is a newspaper chain co-owner who came out of retirement to save The Oglethorpe Echo in northeast Georgia and made it a nonprofit staffed by University of Georgia students. “We began to cover the Black commu-

nity for the first time,” The county is 17% Black. He said a Black truck driver was appreciative, and donated \$500.

In fact, as more higher-education journalism programs try to serve community journalism, one professor, who started a newspaper with her students and is doing hands-on research and testing a new business model at two weekly papers says the efforts are long overdue.

The state of journalism and the news business “is a colossal failure of higher education,” said Teri Finneman, an associate professor of journalism at the University of Kansas.

“Where the hell has the ivory tower been the last 20 years?” Finneman asked. “We are the ones who should have been leading the research, working with the industry, to avoid this mess that we are in right now. . . . It is time for the ivory tower to step up and support our counterparts in the industry.”

Finneman is a researcher of journalism history, but she has launched into doing journalism with her students, as publisher of the Eudora Times in a small town nine miles from her journalism school, which will host “News Desert U.” Oct. 21-22 for journalism educators to address the crisis. “It is time for universities to step up, finally, and do something about this,” she said.

This summer, Finneman is testing a new business model for community papers at Harvey

County Now in Newton, Kan., and the Hillsboro Free Press, which will get \$10,000 to participate. The model aims to get more revenue from the audience with e-newsletters, events and two tiers of memberships. Kansas Publishing Ventures, which owns the papers, is keeping detailed minutes of its weekly meetings on the project, to

publishers think they are. In North Dakota, the only state where she has released her results, 40 percent said they were likely or very likely to donate.

Finneman said she and her colleagues were “taken aback” at the attitude of publishers in focus groups who felt that asking for voluntary support would be



Submitted, photo via Flickr

help develop an information packet for community papers across the nation, Finneman said.

The model is based on surveys that Finneman and other researchers did in Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas, which found that newspaper readers are much more willing to support their papers with money beyond subscriptions that newspaper

admitting failure or showing personal weakness. “They very much saw themselves as a business, as opposed to an unreplaceable civic community organization that a newspaper is,” while “leaving free money on the table.”

She said publishers cited the lack of time and resources for busi-

See **CROSS** Page 9

NEWS & MOVES from Page 3

my time there — everyone was a family.”

McCormick says he hopes the H-C continues its community involvement in his absence.

“I hope the Herald-Citizen continues to be the leader in local news and sports coverage,” he said. “A standard of excellence has been set, and I hope it continues.”

McCormick said that in his retirement, he and his wife plan to travel. While the H-C family is sad to see him go, everyone wishes him much joy and happiness in his next chapter.

*Herald-Citizen, Cookeville
Sept. 2, 2022*

Rose joins Sun news staff

Amy Rose has joined The Greeneville Sun as a staff writer and education editor.



Rose

Rose will primarily cover education and business news.

She previously worked 12 years in the newsroom of The Greeneville Sun, serving as city beat reporter and education editor.

For the past 10 years, Rose has worked in public relations for the Town of Greeneville. Her work

there included organizing the annual American Downtown 4th of July celebration.

Rose is a 1989 graduate of South Greene High School and a 1993 graduate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

She holds a bachelor’s degree in communications with a concentration in news-editorial journalism.

She interned as entertainment editor at UTK’s Daily Beacon and feature writer at The Rogersville Review.

Upon graduation she worked five years as political reporter, education editor, and graphic designer at the Citizen Tribune in Morristown.

Returning home in 1998, she started working for Jones Media,

Inc. as a sales representative for Media Sales & Marketing, then moved to the The Greeneville Sun’s newsroom.

Her reporting assignments have included the opening of Congress in Washington, D.C., a performance of the Greeneville High School Marching Band at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, and interviews with various entertainers and politicians.

“I’m so excited to be writing full time again,” Rose said. “If anyone has any news they would like to share with me, I would love to hear from them.”

*The Greeneville Sun
Aug. 11, 2022*

Perspectives: Court OKs coach's on-field prayer, shifting balance for religious expression

SUBMITTED
Freedom Forum
July 20, 2022

In its decision in *Kennedy v. Bremerton*, the Supreme Court strengthened First Amendment protection for religious speech by government officials.

The case

Public high school football coach Joseph Kennedy filed a lawsuit alleging his rights to free speech and freedom of religion were violated when he was fired for praying at the 50-yard line after each game.

The Bremerton School District in Washington state argued that:

1. As a government employee at work, Kennedy was engaged in “government speech,” which is afforded no protection under the First Amendment.
2. His prayer made it appear that the school district was officially endorsing a particular religion.

The ruling

The school district’s “government speech” justification was somewhat of a Hail Mary pass that few believed would succeed, and the court quickly sacked. Kennedy’s prayers did not occur within the “ordinary scope” of his job duties. Once the game had ended, the court said Kennedy “was not seeking to convey a government-created message. He was not instructing players, discussing strategy, encouraging better on-field performance or engaged in any other speech the district paid him to produce as a coach.”

The court next approached the second argument. It quickly found that Kennedy’s prayer was sincere and held that the school district disciplined him as a result.

This shifted the burden onto the government to justify its policy against prayer as necessary and narrow. It argued the suspension was necessary because a “reasonable observer” would believe the school district was endorsing religion — and violating the First Amendment’s establishment clause — by allowing Kennedy to pray at midfield after games. The court disagreed. In this case, there was no fear of an establishment of religion just because “Mr. Kennedy’s proposal to pray quietly by himself on the field would have meant some people would have seen his religious exercise.” Justice Neil Gorsuch said there was nothing in the record indicating students felt coerced to pray. In fact, “learning how to tolerate speech or prayer of all kinds is ‘part of learning how to live in a pluralistic society,’ a trait of character essential to ‘a tolerant citizenry.’”

Gorsuch feared that the district’s protection of religious liberty was suppression that would be replicated in other ways: “Not only could schools fire teachers for praying quietly over their lunch, for wearing a yarmulke to school or for offering a midday prayer during a break before practice. Under the

district’s rule, a school would be required to do so.”

Expert perspectives

Unbalancing protection for religious exercise and prohibition on government establishing religion:

“Less than a week after its decision in *Carson v. Makin*, a case about funding for religious schools, the court again gave priority to the First Amendment’s free exercise clause’s protection for an individual’s religious practice



Submitted

over the establishment clause’s restriction against government endorsement of religion. With the same 6-3 lineup of justices on each side, the court said ‘the First Amendment doubly protects religious speech’ through the rights of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. The decision in *Kennedy v. Bremerton*, combined with the earlier decision in *Carson v. Makin*, firmly rebalances the establishment clause and the exercise clause.

“What’s different, in other words, is that the court came down twice in favor of ‘me’ prac-

ting my faith versus avoiding the appearance or intentional display of government endorsement.

“This may not simply be a rebalancing of the prior understanding of the establishment clause versus exercise clause equation, it may be an unbalancing. The result is an ever-shrinking separation between church and state. As Justice Sonia Sotomayor said in a dissenting opinion, “[t]he Court now charts a different path, yet again paying almost exclusive attention to the free exercise clause’s protection for

individual religious exercise while giving short shrift to the establishment clause’s prohibition on state establishment of religion.”

— Kevin Goldberg,
Freedom Forum First Amendment specialist

A victory for personal expression:

“The Supreme Court’s decision in *Kennedy v. Bremerton* School District represents a significant victory for freedom of speech.

“A key issue in the case was whether Kennedy engaged in protected personal expression or unprotected government expression. The distinction is important, because under a case known as *Garcetti v. Ceballos* (2006), if a public employee is engaged in official, job-duty speech, that employee is engaged in government speech and has no First Amendment rights.

“Writing for the majority,

Justice Neil Gorsuch explained: ‘[Kennedy] did not speak to government policy. He was not seeking to convey a government-created message. He was not instructing prayers, discussing strategy, encouraging better on-field performance, or engaged in any other speech the District paid him to produce as speech. Simply put: Kennedy’s prayers did not owe their existence to Mr. Kennedy’s responsibilities as a public employee.’

“The court got it right on this fundamental free-speech question. As I wrote in a previous commentary, Joseph Kennedy was engaged in private speech, not government speech, when he prayed on the football field.

“The government speech doctrine is dangerous and can lead to the evisceration of much personal expression for government employees.

“As Justice Alito said, ‘If private speech could be passed off as government speech by simply affixing a government seal of approval, government could silence or muffle the expression of disfavored viewpoints.’

“Fortunately, the Supreme Court understood this and limited application of the doctrine.”

— David L. Hudson, Jr.,
Freedom Forum fellow

Concerning new questions for public schools:

“The decision will make it much more difficult for school officials to know where to draw the line on religious expression by teachers and administrators during the

See **PRAYER** Page 11

CROSS from Page 8

ness-model experimentation, but “Overall, there was very much this underlying fear, the fear of doing something different.”

In a session on what sort of research journalism schools could do to help rural news outlets, Clay Carey of Samford University in Alabama said research projects need to have social value, not just economic and journalistic value. “We all know the future of rural news outlets is tied to the future of rural places,” he said, so “stories of places that are struggling” could be helpful.

The summit’s “research question” was “How can rural communities sustain local journalism that supports local democracy?” Carey said we need research that is centered on the idea of democratic practice, and the essential role of agency: the ability to act on information. He said research has focused on information at the expense of focus on agency, which many people feel they don’t have, and suggested more specific research questions. How can journalistic organizations equip people to be civically engaged? How can they encourage and empower

them? Perhaps by “inviting people to participate in sharing their story,” he said.

More broadly, he said universities should ask, “How can news organizations facilitate collaboration that creates a sense of community and creates positive change?” and think about facilitating collaboration among local newspapers, national and regional organizations, and local entities such as libraries. He said universities can help create frameworks, and reduce risk and risk aversion. And all the while, do research that is “accessible to people outside the

academy. . . . It’s easy for research to be an extractive industry, in the same way that journalism can be an extractive industry.”

Bill Reader of Ohio University, a longtime community journalism scholar, said, “The academy has not been a friend of the cause, overall,” but “Industry leaders have ignored the research of the past, and they are ignoring the research of the present.” He said research needs to take on the knowledge gap between “haves and have-nots” in rural communities. “Helping people become full-fledged members of the community builds support for

the newspaper, long-haul.”

Al Cross is director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues and extension professor of journalism at the University of Kentucky. This story was originally published June 16, 2022, on The Rural Blog and is reprinted here with permission.

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Journalism educators must up their game to stay relevant in their own changing industry

For a decade now, I have been teaching journalism without officially having left the business.

I keep one foot in journalism because I cannot imagine life without it, which sounds admittedly old-fashioned and also is something I cannot teach. Nor is it necessarily practical. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts journalism jobs will decline by 4.8% by 2030.

It's not all bad news. Although newsroom employment in the United States has dropped by 26% since 2008, most of the losses have been at traditional newspapers. Digital news jobs are growing, according to Pew Research. As I remind my photojournalism students, there are plenty of jobs for them in broadcast TV.

Nonetheless, this creates a dilemma for many of us who love journalism and teach journalism, especially with fewer students going to college. According to the National Student Clearinghouse



LOCAL MATTERS

JACKIE SPINNER

Research Center, the undergraduate student body dropped by nearly 1.4 million students or 9.4% during the pandemic. (This, incidentally, is a good story for local news organizations in communities with colleges or universities. Now, more than ever, is the time to hire a higher-ed reporter or at least give the beat to an aspiring student journalist, something I've recommended before in this space.)

In journalism education, we've had to rebrand what we do to some extent so that our students have marketable skills. We teach "storytelling" because non-profits and ad agencies and corporations need

storytellers. We remind our students that being able to write concisely on deadline is a skill that many employers seek and not just newsrooms. Their web design and social media skills are also transferable.

We've had to make certain anyone who teaches journalism has crack digital skills. Maybe a decade ago, you could get away with being the digitally illiterate professor in the cardigan if you had mad writing skills and stellar publication credentials or multiple Emmys. (I have nothing against cardigans. I keep a sweater in my office and laugh at myself every time I wear it.) But no more. Students, and rightfully so, simply do not want to learn from someone who cannot carry on a conversation about artificial intelligence and TikTok (the fastest growing platform for news.) This summer, as someone who oversees a photojournalism degree, I made certain to learn about photogrammetry

and capturing in 3D.

Our academic institutions are slow to respond to changes in the industry. Academia itself doesn't encourage experimentation. It demands that we be methodical and researched. It says it wants collaboration but allows individual departments to retain ownership of words and equipment and knowledge, which is the exact opposite of what is happening in the industry itself.

We worry about the future of the journalism industry when we really need to be worried about our own future as journalism educators.

This is not a moment to study where we should be headed. This is a moment to start walking, taking in as we go, responding as we need to, listening to the future readers and consumers of news in our classrooms, pivoting when we need to. We need to remind the leaders of our institutions of the

importance of journalism, the role we play in our democracy. All of that matters. In fact, it matters now more than ever as the Jan. 6 insurrection at the US Capitol showed.

This is also not a call to abandon copy editing and ethics and the inverted pyramid. I still teach objectivity. This is a call not to cling so tightly to the way we did things that we don't help our students navigate a business in which many journalism professors themselves would have a hard time finding or staying employed.

That is the truth.

Jackie Spinner is the editor of Gateway Journalism Review, which published this article on September 1, 2022. It is reprinted here with her permission. A version of this story first appeared in Publisher's Auxiliary, the only national publication serving America's community newspapers. Follow Spinner on Twitter @jackiespinner.

DAILY TIMES from Page 7

of his father, who by all accounts was a titan of both journalism and the Blount County community.

"Mother passed away when I was 9 years old, so it was just me and dad," Neal recalls. "He used to say we grew up together, which we did. We would go to church on Sundays, and at the time, The Daily Times was an afternoon paper printed Monday through Friday. So after church, we would go eat at Burger King, and we'd go up to the post office uptown there and empty out the mailbox and bring it down, and he would take it to his office to sort. At the main door was a drop box, where people would drop in everything from bowling scores to newspaper articles or whatever, and my job was to go get them out of that box and bring them to him so he could sort through them."

It was in the bowels of the building that Neal's own interests in local history (he's the president of the Little River Railroad Museum in Townsend) led to his discovery of the paper's archives on microfilm, and he began to explore the history of Blount County. Many of those records are preserved in the elder Stone's series of books known as "Snapshots of Blount County History," and one in particular makes his

son chuckle to this day.

"One of them shows the newsroom, and it's the cleanest I've ever seen that thing!" he laughs. "Looking at it, you can see the manual typewriters, and those old phones that were always fascinating to me. Dad's desk was in the center so he could hand out assignments, and it amazed me as a child, the process of putting together the paper.

"The reporters at the time would type out their stories on this cheap, recycled paper, and these desks would be piled high with this paper ... right beside ashtrays running over with ashes! Dad never smoked, and he developed throat cancer after he retired probably due to secondhand smoke, but it seemed like everyone else did. There was a white wall in the newsroom, except it wasn't really white: It was almond-colored from all the smoke.

"I always told Dad it was a wonder there was never a fire!" he added.

Storms, literal and metaphorical

While the caricature of a wild-eyed reporter hunched over a typewriter banging out a story on deadline while chain-smoking Camels has never been a stretch — long-time life editor Melanie



Tom Sherlin, The Daily Times, Maryville

The Daily Times' new digs, seen here, are located at 226 Gill St. in Alcoa. The facility is known to locals as the Harrison building.

Tucker remembers Cable, a fellow reporter, setting up a desk fan to keep long-time crime writer Anna Irwin's smoke from enveloping her desk — when a fire did break out at The Daily Times building in 2008, it wasn't from cigarettes inside the building.

In 2008, a stack of wooden pallets on the loading dock of the building caught fire and climbed the side of the structure to the second-story window of publisher Max Crotser, who was the only person hospitalized from the incident (for breathing problems, but he was released the same day). In true journalistic fashion, Trexler recalls those old instincts taking over ... more concerned with the scoop

than the potential for danger.

"When the alarm went off, we in the newsroom weren't sure if it was another false alarm or the real thing — until they started evacuating the building," Trexler remembers. "Outside, I began to worry other area media might get something online before we did. I went across the street to Broadway United Methodist Church and tried to log in on their internet but was unable to do so. I thought, 'This isn't good. Being beat on even a small story involving The Daily Times would be embarrassing.'

"Firefighters and trucks were scattered around the building, but I managed to sneak in the



Photo courtesy of Neal Stone

Dean Stone (seated), long-time editor of The Daily Times, is pictured here with some of his staff in 1956.

street-side door, went to my office, and knelt down behind the desk, positioned so I could reach the keyboard. I got a sentence or two written and set it to breaking news. I then went back out the same street-side door and was soon met by a firefighter, but I don't recall the conversation ..."

Steve Wildsmith has worked as a writer, editor and freelance journalist for The Daily Times for more than two decades. In addition to coverage of entertainment, he also serves as the social media specialist for Maryville College. This piece was originally published in the June 26, 2022 edition of The Daily Times.

Messenger shuts down presses, moves printing operations off-site

DAVID CRITCHLOW, JR.
Union City Messenger
July 28, 2022

“Stop the presses!”

It’s a common newspaper phrase often associated with breaking news so important that updates need to be made before papers should be distributed to readers. However, in this case, it represents the end of an era of printing our own newspaper onsite.

Due to ongoing staffing shortages, we will no longer be able to print The Messenger at our Union City facility. However, we will continue to have two print editions

each week with our printing done elsewhere. (A few untimely social media posts had some readers confused that we were shutting our doors on the newspaper business, but that is far from the truth. Only our printing will take place elsewhere, and some people may not have even realized we were doing our printing onsite anyway.)

Good pressmen are hard to come by because they require such specialized training that can take years to attain. We’ve been blessed to have some of the very best throughout the history of The Messenger.

While we have had as many

as five quality pressmen at one time, we have been limited to two for the last nine months and they have done an exceptional job taking care of our newspaper, as well as the many other publications we print on a weekly basis.

One of those last two pressmen was on his way out but, in what was almost amazingly perfect timing, we finally hired a pressman from South Dakota and he was able to come in for a couple of weeks. Unfortunately, he made a weekend trip back to the Mount Rushmore State and never returned due to health issues.

For decades, we have taken great pride in our quality printing, with countless numbers of businesses and organizations bringing their print work to us because of that quality. In addition to our print jobs, we are working hard to help our clients find printers for their jobs, as well.

To our newspaper customers and advertisers, we ask for patience during this transition. From a newspaper standpoint, we will be adjusting some of our hours for our print editions, including having earlier deadlines so our printer can fit us into their schedule.

Ideally, this means we will have newspapers available to the public before noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Some news coverage that takes place on Monday nights, however, will now appear in Thursday’s editions due to the shorter deadlines.

We are going to continue to provide the best local coverage around. And we welcome input and suggestions on improving the newspaper moving forward. In the meantime, we appreciate your patience.

David Critchlow Jr. is editor of the Union City Daily Messenger.

Uvalde paper publishes testimony of reporter who lost daughter in shooting

AL CROSS
The Rural Blog
June 12, 2022

The day before senators announced a deal in principle to respond the shooting of students and teachers in Uvalde, Texas, the local newspaper declared, “In its timidity to act, Congress guarantees the suffering will continue.

The twice-weekly Uvalde Leader-News also published the testimony of Kimberly Mata-Rubio, its former News assistant editor and current staff writer, to the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and

Reform. She was the mother of one of the murdered children. Mata-Rubio recalled what she went through the day of the shooting, including attending an awards ceremony for her daughter and other students shortly before the gunman arrived. The she made her case:

“Today, we stand for Lexi, and, as her voice, we demand action. We seek a ban on assault rifles and high-capacity magazines. We understand that for some reason, to some people, to people with money, to people who fund political campaigns, that guns are more important than children, so at this mo-

ment we ask for progress. We seek to raise the age to purchase these weapons from 18 to 21 years of age. We seek red flag laws, stronger background checks. We also want to repeal gun manufacturers liability immunity. . . . I’m a reporter, a student, a mom, a runner. I’ve read to my children since they were in the womb. My husband is a law enforcement officer, an Iraq War veteran. He loves fishing, and our babies. Somewhere out there, a mom is hearing our testimony and thinking to herself, ‘I can’t even imagine their pain,’ not knowing that our reality will one day be

hers, unless we act now.”

In its editorial, the newspaper urged mothers to “heed this prophetic warning” and said “Americans want responsible gun ownership. . . . No single measure lawmakers adopt will put an end to the violence. we are a nation born to it. . . . But with sensible laws, we can reduce the body count.” It also published endorsements of further gun control by local doctor Roy Guerrero and actor Matthew McConaughey, a native of Uvalde.

The newspaper’s approach shows the importance of local newsroom

in such cases, CNN media reporter Oliver Darcy said on the channel’s “Reliable Sources” program.

Meanwhile, Nora Lopez, executive editor of the San Antonio Express-News, talked with Amaris Castillo of NPR for a Poynter Institute story about obstacles the daily paper is encountering to its coverage in Uvalde.

Al Cross is director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues and the extension professor of journalism at the University of Kentucky. This story is reprinted here with permission.

PRAYER from Page 9

contract day. I have worked for 30 years to create a broad consensus, left to right, on how to handle religion in public schools under the First Amendment. While training school staff in hundreds of districts, I have made it clear: The establishment clause of the First Amendment requires that teachers and administrators to remain neutral among religions and between religion and non-religion.

“Now the lines are blurry. To what extent are teachers allowed to practice their faith in the presence of students? Is that private speech or proselytizing? The court does not say.

“By declaring Kennedy’s post-game prayer ‘private speech,’ the court majority ignores that he engaged in religious practices with students for years. This upends years of court precedents

in which, as the dissent explains, ‘this Court consistently has recognized that school officials leading prayer is constitutionally impermissible.’

“Even more concerning than the result is the reasoning the majority uses to get there. Six justices declare past establishment clause tests no longer valid. We have been able to tell teachers to use the Lemon test or, more recently, the endorsement test to determine when school action violates the First Amendment. No more. Now the test is to refer to ‘historical practices and understandings’ and perhaps to consider ‘coercion.’ What this means in practice, no one knows.

“We face a new era of fights, lawsuits and confusion as people who are determined to promote their religion in public schools try to go through the door the Supreme Court has opened with

this terrible decision.”

— Charles C. Haynes, *Freedom Forum senior fellow for religious liberty and founder, Religious Freedom Center*

Troubling ruling undermines tolerance and pluralism:

“It is certainly praiseworthy to urge teaching values of pluralism and tolerance.

“But far from promoting values of pluralism and tolerance, the assault on the establishment clause that Kennedy represents, taken together with the court’s decision less than a week earlier in *Carson v. Makin*, undermines an essential instrument in protecting members of minority faiths and persons of no faith from intolerance and exclusion.

“The court held that establishment clause cases should be determined by ‘reference to historical practices and understandings,’ on the basis that this

approach is more consistent with the religion clauses’ ‘complementary’ purposes. It is far from clear where, in applying this new test, we are to look, and how far back, for guidance.

“Kennedy also muddies the water as to how the coercion test is to be defined, seeming to put in question past school prayer cases that made clear that attendance at school events need not be mandatory or even expected for prayers at such events to have an imper-

missible coercive effect.

“The decision, through its elimination of endorsement and weakening of coercion as tests for identifying when the government impermissibly identifies itself with religion, gravely undermines the imperative that schools remain neutral with respect to religion — and threatens the very values of tolerance and pluralism that it purports to promote.”

— Richard Foltin, *fellow for religious freedom*



Tennessee Press Service Advertising Placement Snapshot

July 2022

Year* as of July 31

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

ROP:

\$86,511

\$887,893

Networks:

\$22,010

\$162,864

'Pardon our dust': Post-Intelligencer moves its offices

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

75 cent



Submitted, The Paris Post-Intelligencer

With piles of boxes and other items littering the entranceway, Daniel Williams (second from left), The Paris Post-Intelligencer's general manager, talks with Ann Lawrence (right) while Paden Stubblefield, the paper's webmaster, listens in. Lawrence was one of the first customers to visit the P-I on its first day at its new location at 205 North Market Street. All the while, employees were unpacking boxes and arranging things in their newspaper's new home. The P-I will stay on its regular Monday-Wednesday-Friday printing schedule.

ALVAREZ from Page 5

'Most people in journalism don't think a lot about how reactionary their work is'

Alvarez: That's great. I think most people who are working in journalism don't think a lot about how reactionary their work is, and that only being reactionary makes it almost impossible to help build a better future. But if you're focusing on repair, are you in some ways stuck in the world that we have today, because you are trying to make it better? How do you walk that line between reparative

and reaction based work?

Hinton: Yeah. That's a really great question. And I think the thing that immediately comes to my mind is a third word, "responsive."

Alvarez: Tell me more.

Hinton: We're going to hire people across our region and their number-one priority is going to be connecting with people and understanding what is happening on the ground. What are solutions and alternative ways of providing for folks especially in places where the state is failing them? Which as we know, are a lot of places right now.

Alvarez: What are you finding to be some of the most important functions of journalism in this new space that you're creating?

'We want people to have a deeper understanding of the social issues we talk about'

Hinton: For us, it's definitely like journalism as an act of solidarity. Training, for example, and allowing people to use our platform. The other thing that we're really committed to is using our journalism to build consciousness. We want people to have a deeper understanding of the social issues we talk about. Waking people's radical imagination up and showing them we can do something different, and let's imagine together with that

something different is.

Alvarez: So what you're building is something that can work in communities that don't have a functioning civic infrastructure, right? Where it's too white supremacist or too broken to include people. You're building a journalism that can work in those communities?

Hinton: I think it works in environments where there is already a strong amount of civic engagement too. It works for the people who have not been engaged and are not showing up. We're talking about how we actually help create a democracy where people who are not wealthy white folks can participate and drive social action for social change.

Alvarez: I'm so appreciative of you and your whole team and the work that you do because you'll say what it's going to take to build a different future. But it's not going to be easy.

Hinton: I know, everybody wants a quick solution! We need to figure out how we actually show up in the community in a way that's consistent. We know that we have to be there and stay there.

Sarah Alvarez is the founder and Editor-in-Chief of Outlier Media, a local newsroom and information service serving Detroiters. This column was provided by Reynolds Journalism Institute and posted on their website on Aug. 3, 2022.