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The Tennessee Press

Volume 82

April 2019

No. 10

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Plan now for 2019 Summer Convention in Chattanooga

ROBYN GENTILE
Member Services Manager, TPA
March 18, 2019

TPA members should plan now for the Summer Convention, July 18-19, in Chattanooga.

The packed agenda includes the State Press Contests Awards Luncheon, Advertising/Circulation Conference, a reception and TPA Presidential installation at the Tennessee Aquarium and a Tennessee Newspaper Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.



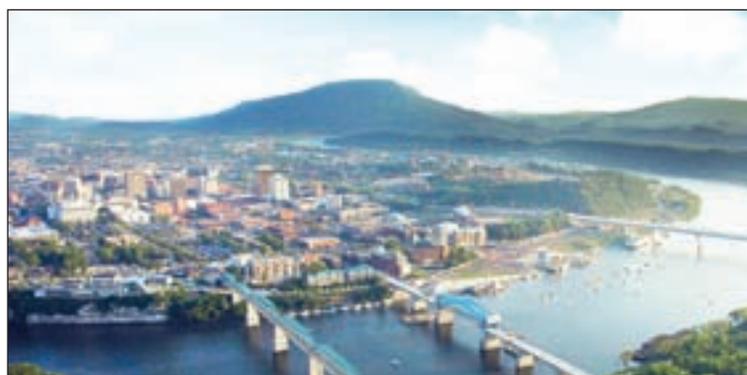
Jones



Seigenthaler

Hall of Fame Induction

Selected for posthumous induction into the Tennessee Newspaper Hall of Fame are: John M. Jones III, who was publisher of The Greeneville Sun; John Seigenthaler, who was a former publisher of The Tennessean, Nashville and founding editorial director



Chattanooga Convention & Visitors Bureau

An aerial view of Chattanooga, host city for the 2019 TPA Summer Convention, July 18-19.



Whitley

State Press Awards

The convention will begin at noon on Thursday with the

presentation of the State Press Contests Awards. Winners will be notified of an award, but not placement, by May 24. Convention registrants will be able to attend the reception at the Tennessee Aquarium, where TPA's new president will be installed. Slated to be nominated for the 2019-20 TPA presidency is Chris Vass, public editor of the Chattanooga Times Free Press.

presentation of the State Press Contests Awards. Winners will be notified of an award, but not placement, by May 24.

Convention registrants will be able to attend the reception at the Tennessee Aquarium, where TPA's new president will be installed. Slated to be nominated for the 2019-20 TPA presidency is Chris Vass, public editor of the Chattanooga Times Free Press.

Advertising/Circulation Conference

Friday will feature the Adver-

tising/Circulation Conference and Ideas Contest Awards Luncheon, as well as sessions for the newsroom.

The convention will be held at The Read House Hotel, a luxury historic hotel in the heart of downtown. The hotel underwent renovations in 2018. TPA convention attendees may make reservations by contacting the hotel at (423) 266-4121. The convention rate is \$159 plus tax per night. The hotel offers valet parking.

The convention schedule follows:

Thursday, July 18

Noon. State Press Contests Awards Luncheon
2:30 p.m. TPA Board of Directors Meeting & Concurrent Business Session

4:00 p.m. Newsroom Session
6:00 p.m. Reception and Presidential Installation at the Tennessee Aquarium (until 8:00 p.m.)

Friday, July 19

8:00 a.m. Breakfast
9:00 a.m. Advertising Sessions
9:00 a.m. Circulation Sessions
9:00 a.m. Newsroom Sessions
Noon. Ad/Circ Ideas Contest Awards Luncheon
1:30 p.m. TPS Stockholders

See **CONVENTION** Page 8

After 82 years, Tennessean's pressroom goes quiet

BRETT KELMAN
The Tennessean, Nashville
February 11, 2019

Editor's Note: The following story was published by The Tennessean, Nashville, in mid-February, in advance of the newspaper's move from its longtime home at 1100 Broadway in Nashville to rented offices elsewhere in the city. The move also meant a closing down of The Tennessean's presses in March, with its print products now being

produced in Knoxville.

It is the day before Thanksgiving, and deep inside The Tennessean building on Broadway, a great mechanical beast has begun to stir. The machine is fed 32 tons of recycled paper from spools half as large as a car and slurps up black ink piped in from 4,200-gallon vats in a basement two floors below.

The stale air stinks like roofing tar. The floor is slippery with a faint inky dew. A blue wall of machinery, as large and loud as a

passing train, starts to churn and hiss, stamping aluminum against rubber and rubber against paper until a ribbon of printed pages flies by in a blur.

After a chaotic moment, the beast spits out its first newspaper. Then another. Then another. Then dozens and hundreds and thousands more, piled together on a narrow conveyor belt that leads into a soundproofed room where six pressmen in ink-stained work shirts wait anxiously.

They grab copies and flip through the pages, checking for defects.

"OK, guys," shouts Mark Epling, a longtime supervisor. "This is our last chance to get it right."

This is The Tennessean pressroom, where for more than 80 years a few dozen anonymous press operators have pursued the tireless, underappreciated and impossible goal of printing the perfect page. Some of these pressmen have been here for decades,

See **TENNESSEAN** Page 8

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Mike Towle Managing Editor
Robyn Gentile Production Coordinator



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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; send a note to 117 Township Court, Hendersonville, TN 37075, or email editor@tnpress.com. The deadline for the June issue is Tuesday, May 2.

TN health-care coverage in urgent mode

Tennessee has a major health care dilemma: the working poor don't have medical care coverage as good as what many other states in the country have. Because the general assembly legislators would not accept Governor Bill Haslam's proposal that was a hybrid of the Affordable Care Act, there are more than 400,000 Tennesseans with no health-care coverage. These are people who make 138 percent or less of the poverty level. As Governor Bill Lee has said, the admonition to we public servants is clear: do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly. Surely, allowing more than 400,000 working poor to have medical coverage with Medicaid expansion would meet this admonition.

Governor Lee has established a Healthcare Modernization Task Force that will work closely with private sector stakeholders, policy makers and communities across the state to develop a list of reforms and investments in health-care provision for all Tennesseans. But in the meantime, let's do the merciful thing and the compassionate, caring



**YOUR
PRESIDING
REPORTER**

DOUG HORNE

act of approving the hybrid affordable care act proposal that Governor Haslam recommended.

Governor Lee and Haslam worked very well together on the transition. Wouldn't it be wise policy for Governor Lee to work with the legislature to approve the Haslam proposal for health care for more than 400,000 adults and children in our state with no coverage? What a gracious, honorable, compassionate and merciful thing to do. Both Haslam and Lee are Republicans. They are close allies and work well together, and the Republican majority legislature along with the Democrats should be ready to make a move on this matter. Isn't it time? At last count Tennessee had lost

11 rural hospitals and more were on the brink of closing. This is a tragedy in so many ways for employment, health care, the schools and business sales in the area as well as for the general morale and attitude of the greater community. The innovative ideas and proposals of the Governor's Healthcare Modernization Task Force will address the rural hospital closure problem and, hopefully, make Tennessee a world-class health-care market for our citizens built on transparency and competition. This is the governor's ambitious goal and we all applaud him for this.

We all know that proper health care and its provision and cost together comprise the most urgent problem facing all of our businesses and our lives.

Doug Horne

Doug Horne, owner of Republic Newspapers, Knoxville, is the President of the Tennessee Press Association for 2018-19.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Bond named TPA District 2 director

Amanda Hill Bond, editor and publisher of the Pickett County



Bond

Press, has been appointed to serve as a TPA director of District Two by TPA President Doug Horne. Her appointment was effective March 15, and the term expires at the conclusion of the 2020 Summer Convention. Bond was appointed to fill the unexpired term of William Mitchell, who retired at the end of March.

*Staff reports
March 15, 2019*

Banner combines Sunday, Monday editions

The Cleveland Daily Banner began publishing a combined Sunday/Monday print edition of the newspaper on March 3.

Cleveland's community newspa-

per is now publishing in print five days a week: Sunday/Monday, and Tuesday through Friday.

"The decision to combine our Sunday and Monday editions was driven primarily by sharp increases in newsprint costs over the past two years," Banner Publisher Ralph Baldwin said. "Our costs for newsprint rose 26 percent over the last 18 months, with seven increases."

He added, "Over the last two years, newsprint costs have soared 38 percent with 10 increases. Newsprint is our second-biggest expense behind payroll in publishing the Banner."

He stressed, "Readers will receive all of the features they're accustomed to in the combined Sunday/Monday paper. Subscribers will have full access to our website, which will be updated with news and obituaries by 10 a.m. on Mondays."

In addition, weekday single-copy sales will increase to 75 cents daily and \$1.50 on Sundays, beginning March 1.

"We'll continue to add new products for our readers and advertisers," Baldwin said. This year, we're planning on having our first community event for seniors. We're



Baldwin

also planning improvements to our online and digital offerings."

Baldwin emphasized, "The Banner's core focus continues to be covering and serving our local community with your local newspaper, the Cleveland Daily Banner."

*Cleveland Daily Banner
Feb. 6, 2019*

Standard website now has video segment

The Southern Standard, McMinnville, is seizing the power of technology and adding video segments to its website.

A regular feature called "The Scoop" discusses main headlines and gives readers a glimpse of stories that will appear in the newspaper's next edition. It goes online the day before the newspaper is published.

Standard reporter Atlanta

See **NEWS** Page 7

The readers are out there, waiting for you to engage them

I recently heard Jeff Sonderman speak about how readers interact with newspapers, both print and digital, and about how the American Press Institute (API) is doing research on new publishing models and ways to make journalism sustainable.

API conducts regular surveys about how consumers are finding and using media. The good news is that, according to the Institute's research, 65 percent of Americans interact with news topics more than once a day, 59 percent reported they engage several times a day.

Also, 90 percent say it is important, or extremely important, that they keep up with news and information. And the engagement with news products is intentional, with 63 percent of people reporting they actively seek out news and information versus 37 percent who tend to "bump" into it.

Sonderman, API's deputy executive director, said the orga-



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CAROL DANIELS

nization's work and research is available on the API website for all media to use.

API focuses on four main areas of research: understanding audiences, growing reader revenue, accountability journalism, and supporting organizational change and transformation. Their research is available at www.mediainsights.org.

On the legislative front

The Tennessee General Assembly session is well underway, as seen in the fact that more than 1,400 bills, including 400 "caption" bills, have been filed. We are following bills on school

bus video, government contracts, accident reports, 911 calls, public notice bills and more.

Thank you to everyone who has been making calls to your local representatives on behalf of your Tennessee Press Association; I'm sure there will be many more call requests before the session is over. And as I've mentioned before, you are invited to come and spend time with me during session. Contact me to let me know when you'd like to come, and let's arrange it.

Driving reader engagement

Last month a coworker shared an article with me that I think you should read. It was about how some newspapers are adding a print section to their papers (mostly on Sundays) that are focusing on solutions, stories and people making their communities or regions better.

These additions comprise "good news," though they are way more than that. The sections have not only been successful, but they are also driving engagement and sponsors. One newspaper has launched a series of events for speakers.

All of our members regularly publish stories about how their communities are solving problems, but the idea of putting a focus on those stories and running them in a section gives you the chance to brand it, have a place for it each day, and create sponsorships. You'll find the article at: <https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2019/good-news-these-newspapers-added-a-print-section-on-good-news/>

Thank you,
Carol

Carol Daniels is the executive director of the Tennessee Press Association.

TN Supreme Court expands protections for journalists

ADAM TAMBURIN
The Tennessean, Nashville
March 13, 2019

The Tennessee Supreme Court on Wednesday (March 13) expanded protections for reporters facing defamation claims while also ruling that reporters facing those claims could be ordered to identify their sources in court.

The ruling came in an ongoing legal battle between Phil Williams, WTVF NewsChannel 5's chief investigative reporter, and Nashville District Attorney Glenn Funk.

Funk filed a \$200 million libel suit against Williams in February 2016, following two news stories about a deal Funk struck with David Chase, a Nashville developer. Williams reported on a deposition in which Chase suggested that he believed he was being "blackmailed" by Funk during plea deal arrangements.

Funk's legal team wanted to see Williams' investigative files related to the story to determine if he acted in malice, or ill will, an element previously necessary for public officials to win a libel case.

The court denied the request to see those files and found that mal-

ice could no longer be used against journalists in defamation suits.

Court: Motive can't be factor in defamation cases

In their unanimous ruling, the state's high court said a reporter's motive could not be used as a factor in defamation cases, ruling the question of malice moot and broadening the state's fair-report privilege, which protects journalists from libel claims.

"The Supreme Court explained that, so long as reports of official acts and proceedings are fair and accurate, the fair report privilege applies," a media release from the court stated.

However, the court did say journalists using the fair-report privilege to defend against defamation claims could be ordered to disclose the source of their reporting in court.

The court emphasized the distinction between identifying a source and disclosing information from a source in its 20-page order.

"The exception to the shield law allows a court to compel disclosure of the source of a media defendant's information — how media defendants know something; it does not authorize a court to compel media

Read the court's opinion at: www.tsc.state.tn.us/courts/supreme-court/opinions/2019/03/13/glenn-r-funk-v-scripps-media-inc-et-al

defendants to disclose the information the source provided," the court found.

Attorneys for Williams already have said their source was the deposition and court files in the Chase case — "the trial court will have to determine whether these disclosures amount to a sufficient description of the source of information," the Supreme Court ruled.

The trial court initially ordered Williams to hand over his investigative files. But the state appeals court overturned that decision, leading to the review of that ques-

tion by the Supreme Court.

With that question settled, the case returns to the trial court for continued consideration of the overarching libel claim.

Attorney Ron Harris, who is representing Williams and the TV station, said his clients were pleased with the court's ruling.

Attorney Jim Kay, who represents Funk, said Wednesday's opinion was "the result that we expected." He said Funk's legal team would continue develop their case and push to set a trial on the libel claim this year.



Carol Daniels/TPA

TPA Vice President Chris Vass and Sen. Todd Gardenhire pose for a photo on March 25. Vass spent the day visiting legislators with TPA Executive Director Carol Daniels. All members are invited to do so.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

APRIL

15: TPA Foundation deadline for grant applications

MAY

13-17: International News Media Association (INMA), World Congress of News Media, The TimesCenter, New York, N.Y.

JUNE

13-16: 2019 Investigative Reporters & Editors (IRE) Conference, Marriott Marquis Houston, Houston, Tex.
19-23: 2019 International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors Conference, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga.

23-25: 2019 American Jewish Press Association (AJPA) Annual Conference, St. Louis, Mo.
27-29: National Federation of Press Women Annual Convention, Baton Rouge Capitol Center, Baton Rouge, La.

JULY

18-19: Tennessee Press Association Summer Convention, Chattanooga
19: TPA Advertising/Circulation Conference, Chattanooga
19: TN Newspaper Hall of Fame Induction, Chattanooga

SEPTEMBER

9-10: ASNE-APME News Leadership Conference, New Orleans Marriott, New Orleans, La.

OCTOBER

3-5: 2019 National Newspaper Association's 133rd Annual Convention and Trade Show. The Pfister Hotel, Milwaukee, Wis.

6-8: Southern Newspaper Publishers Association (SNPA) - Inland Annual Meeting, J.W. Marriott Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

NOVEMBER

Oct. 31 - Nov. 3: College Media Association Fall National College Media Convention 2019, in conjunction with Associated Collegiate Press, Grand Hyatt Washington, Washington, D.C.

Four words for ad professionals: 'Oh yeah? Prove it.'

I once encountered a car dealer who took advertising puffery to new levels. They publicized themselves as being No. 1 in every conceivable category. Their general advertising theme was, "We're number one." Their new car slogan was, "We're number one in new cars." Their used-car slogan was, "We're number one in used cars." Their service department's slogan was, "We're number one in service." And of course, their logo featured their name inside a number one.

That approach must have simplified their advertising strategy meetings: "Let's just tell everybody we're number one in everything."

I'm no legal expert, but I suspect that they could not have been prevented from using that exaggeration, because saying "we're



AD-LIBS®

JOHN FOUST

number one" is like saying "we're the best." It's just too common to be taken as a serious deception.

The more important issue is in the fact that the ads had no credibility. There was no proof to back up the claims. Consumers were never presented with any reasons to believe what the dealership was saying.

I thought of that old ad campaign recently, when I saw a series of ads for another car dealership. Like the old dealership, they were marketing themselves as a

preferred place to buy a car. But unlike those old ads, these claims were on solid ground, because they were supported by evidence. The ads showed long-time customers holding up fingers to represent the number of cars they had purchased from the dealership. It was an attention grabber – a simple and effective way to sell the dealership's longevity and reputation.

Unsubstantiated claims are lazy. It takes practically no effort to write a headline like, "We're number one" or "Best deals in town." On the other hand, it takes some creativity to come up with the right kind of supportive evidence.

The work is worth the effort. While consumers ignore exaggerations and unsupported claims, they respond to relevant promises and offers that are backed up by evidence.

When you're writing an ad or making a sales presentation, it might help to imagine someone sitting on the other side of the desk with arms crossed, saying, "Oh yeah? Prove it."

There are many forms of proof – statistics, photographs, and testimonials, for example. Here's how evidence can help:

"Our new widget is the best on the market" has no muscle. It's better to say, "According to XYZ research, our widget has a 95 percent durability rating."

"Our paper is better than any other advertising option" is an empty statement. It's better to write, "Let me tell you about the great results that Retailer X gained from advertising in our paper. Their sales increased by 27 percent during the first month."

"Our customers love us" is

weak. It's more effective to say, "Here's what our customers say about us."

Just because we believe something doesn't make it believable to others. There is power in proof. Make that imaginary skeptic on the other side of the desk smile and you're on the right track.

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KNS's Satterfield wins Scripps Howard award for coal ash stories

JIM GAINES
Knoxville New Sentinel
March 6, 2019

Knoxville News Sentinel investigative journalist Jamie Satterfield's reporting on the aftermath of the 2008 coal ash spill at Tennessee Valley Authority's Kingston Fossil Plant was named the winner in the community journalism category of the 66th Scripps Howard Awards.

The contest named three finalists in each of 15 categories, narrowed from 912 entries in one of journalism's most prestigious contests. Results were judged by veteran journalists and media industry leaders at the Poynter

Institute for Media Studies in St. Petersburg, Florida.

"I love East Tennessee. It's where I met my late husband, where we raised a family and where I continue to call home," Satterfield said Tuesday. "I would serve this community for free and without accolade in gratitude, but I am honored and thankful for this recognition."

"Without strong local journalism, folks like these workers would have no voice. It's a privilege to bring our readers their stories."



Satterfield

The Tennessean also named award finalist

Satterfield, with more than 28 years' experience covering law and crime, was named the winner among finalists in the category that included reporting from The Tennessean in Nashville and the Charleston (South Carolina) Post and Courier.

"We're so proud of Jamie's relentless reporting on a topic of such vital interest to East Tennessee and beyond," said Joel Christopher, Knoxville News Sentinel executive editor. "Strong local journalism provides an irreplaceable safeguard for the health and welfare of our communities."

The Tennessean's "Safekeepers" investigation dealt with the practice of holding pre-trial defendants, including many teenagers, in solitary confinement. In May, then-Gov. Bill Haslam signed a bill establishing more oversight and forbidding the holding of juvenile safekeepers in adult prisons.

Liz Carter, president and CEO of the Scripps Howard Foundation, said in the announcement, "A resounding theme from the judges this year was the collaboration across news organizations large and small to produce stories with impact."

"This perfectly captures the spirit of the awards and we are

impressed by the work submitted this year."

Satterfield will receive a \$10,000 prize along with winners of other categories. The awards will be presented April 18 in Cincinnati.

"Reporters like Jamie are why local journalism matters. She digs and doesn't give up until she has the truth," said Michael Anastasi, vice president of news for USA TODAY NETWORK-Tennessee.

"As a result, Tennesseans know the inside story about how the nation's largest public utility treated workers in the aftermath of one of the worst environmental disasters in the country."

TRACKS

Lang-Peters is new Roane County News GM

Neva Lang-Peters has been named general manager of the Roane County News. Lang-Peters will also serve as GM of Landmark Community Newspaper's Ten-



Lang-Peters

nessee newspaper group, which includes the Roane County News, LaFollette Press and the Morgan County News.

Lang-Peters has been with the Roane County News since 2011 and was hired as the circulation manager before being promoted to business manager in 2016.

As business manager she helped to consolidate the business offices, circulation and HR functions for the three newspapers.

For the past year she has provided steady leadership in various functional areas when the Tennessee papers were without a general manager.

Roane County News, Kingston March 10, 2019

Lindsay promoted to GM at Morgan County News

Landmark Community News-

papers Inc. (LCNI) has announced that Johnny "Goose" Lindsay has been promoted to the role of general manager of Morgan County News.

Lindsay has served as editor of Morgan County News since November 2017 and has worked



Lindsay

for LCNI for all but eight months since 2001.

Lindsay said, "In 2018, Morgan County News showed the largest gain in circulation of any LCNI newspaper nationwide. A big reason is we have people from the top down that care about producing a quality product each week for our readers."

Morgan County News, Wartburg March 6, 2019

Visual impact will most likely generate high readership

Do you want to grab the attention of your readers with your very first page?

Of course you do! With every issue, you want your front page to have high readership. You want it to be your best-read page.

You can get that strong readership by making sure the design of the front is compelling. And the key to that compelling design is a strong visual element.

The front page (and other pages, like your sports front) requires a dominant visual that will draw readers into the page — and keep them there.

Some thoughts:

SIZE: Nothing creates impact like size. Make your lead photo (or chart, or graphic or illustration) the largest element on the page. How big? Think in terms of a quarter of the size of your news hole. “Wow, that’s big!” you might say. My response: “Yes . . . it is. And that’s why it has the impact we need.”

PLACEMENT: Position your lead visual near the top of your news



**By
DESIGN**

ED HENNINGER

hole, where it will be seen quickly. No, it need not fall directly below the nameplate every time, but placing the lead visual over the optical center (a bit above and left of actual center) works well for most fronts.

THE FOLD: It’s OK to place your dominant art across the fold, but try to keep most of it toward the top of the page. If some falls below the fold, that’s OK.

OTHER VISUALS: Make them no larger than about half the size of your lead art. That way, they don’t fight the lead art for attention. How many other visuals on the page? I suggest no more than one or two other pieces. Head shots here and there usually won’t draw attention from the lead element,

but too many photos (especially if they’re close to the same size as the lead element) will create a hodgepodge on the page.

HORIZONTAL OR VERTICAL? Should your dominant art be horizontal . . . or vertical? In a word . . . yes.

GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT: Select the best photo, edit and crop it correctly, and then place it. If it’s a sports photo, OK. Put it on your front and refer to the story inside. Look for the photo that has the strongest appeal. That’s your page 1 picture!

When it comes to the design of your front page, strive for impact by using a compelling visual. That approach is sure to create stronger readership.

ED HENNINGER is an independent newspaper consultant and the Director of Henninger Consulting. Want a free evaluation of your newspaper’s design? Just contact Ed: edh@henningerconsulting.com or 803-325-5252.

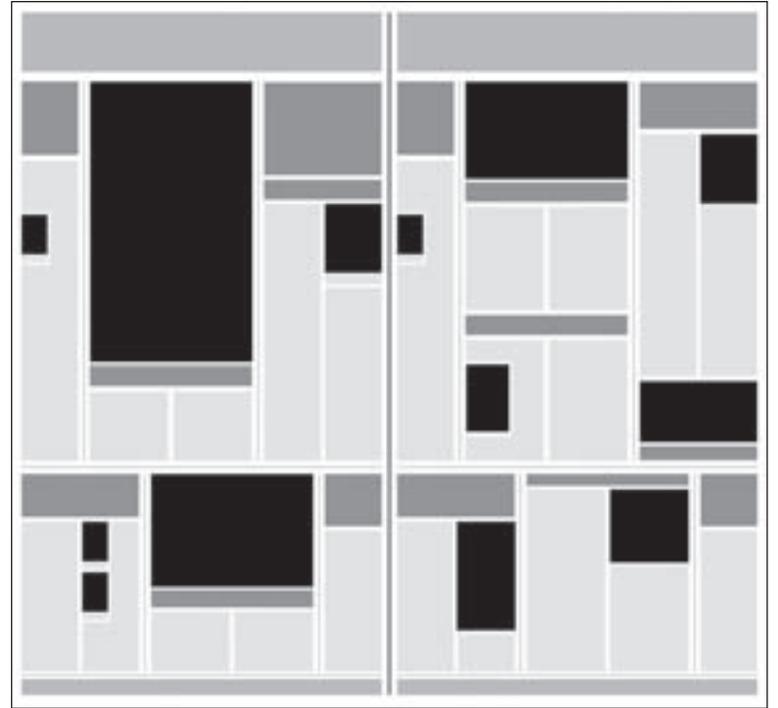


Illustration courtesy of Ed Henninger

The front page at left has high strong impact. At right . . . a hodgepodge.

Collierville Herald celebrates 90 years of publishing

ECHO DAY
Collierville Herald
March 1, 2019

“Howdy Folks” was the headline of the first column in Volume 1, Issue 1 of The Collierville Herald. It was published on March 1, 1929, 90 years ago today.

“Collierville is to have a Weekly Newspaper” has been heard on the streets and through other papers for the past month – well folks ‘Here we are,’ it began. “After some ‘ups and downs’ we have the equipment installed and are giving you here-with the first issue of The Collierville Herald.”

The column continued with its reasons for choosing Collierville for its publication. “We chose Collierville, believing in its future growth and development . . . We believe in the town and in the country around it and come to you to offer our best storylines in helping to bring about the development of resources.”

Back then the flag – which is where the paper’s name is printed on the front page – called Collierville “the dairy town.”



Collierville Herald Archives/Morton Museum

The first issue of The Collierville Herald was published 90 years ago on March 1, 1929.

Collierville was once the trade center of the cotton industry in West Tennessee, according to the Collierville Chamber of Commerce, until the boll weevil came in in the 1920s. It was during the Roaring Twenties that Collierville’s industrial efforts became focused on dairy.

The Herald began its publication eight months before the stock market crashed and the Great Depression began. Its first column was full of hope for the future and its editor and publisher wanted to be part of the town’s prosperity.

“A newspaper can be an asset

to a town and medium of development through advertising and in the meantime a community booster. Cooperation will make it possible for us to succeed in our undertaking. We want to give Collierville and Collierville’s trade territory the news – just the things that happen “around home. It is not our plan to try to get out a Metropolitan newspaper but just a ‘good, Country Weekly Newspaper.’”

Other items featured in the eight-page first issue included stories of successful business endeavors, the

expansion of an orchard, society columns and news from the local schools.

The paper’s original editor, Walter H. Harris, had a sense of humor, telling his readers, “Now folks, you are going to find mistakes in the Herald – mistakes in spelling and mistakes in English. There are two reasons for this – one, we don’t know any better and the other is, if we did some big city paper would find it out and Collierville would lose the best newspaper man she ever had.”



**Tennessee Press Service
Advertising Placement
Snapshot**

	ROP:	Networks:
February 2019	\$85,603	\$15,746
Year* as of Feb. 28	\$218,507	\$50,414

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

Heavy rains, wind create havoc across Cocke County

STAFF REPORTS
The Newport Plain Talk
February 25, 2019

Editor's note: Much of Tennessee was hit with steady, heavy rains in late February, putting newspapers to the test in bringing readers comprehensive coverage even, in some cases, while being significantly affected themselves by the rains and flood waters. Here is one such take, from The Newport Plain Talk.

Mother Nature had her grasp tightly around Cocke County over the weekend of Feb. 23-24.

As if the previous week's sporadic rains weren't enough, rainfall began in earnest early Saturday morning, Feb. 23, and continued for almost 12 hours straight. Several locations reported between two and three inches for the 24-hour period of Saturday.

The rainfall quickly caused havoc around the county, in addition to the rockslide that closed I-40 in North Carolina on Friday night, Feb. 22.

Creeks and ditches overflowed their banks and into yards and houses. Most of the more significant reports happened in the Parrottsville, Carson Springs and Bybee areas, along with rising creeks in Cosby.

Cosby Creek overflowed its banks and inundated portions of the Triple Creek Campground, located just off of US Highway 321 and on Lower Bogard Road. Several streams and creeks also overflowed their banks and onto 321 and Middle Creek Road. Jones Cove Road and Highway 73 were closed in portions as well.

Other reports saw high water on US Highway 25/70, across from CF Group, which had its parking lot submerged in places. The Cocke County A&I Fairgrounds, which is also the site of Cocke County's Fire Department and Emergency Management Agency office, was also under water in portions on Saturday.

The heavy rains and the flood-



Photo by David Popiel, The Newport Plain Talk

Cosby Creek roared through the Liberty Road community in Cocke County during the weekend just above Caney Creek Road during the height of the weekend rains on Feb. 22-24.

ing aftermath forced cancellation of several local church services on Sunday, as well as the decision to call off classes for Cocke Schools.

The Cocke County EMA office reported on its Facebook page that at one point 33 local roads were

facing flooding issues.

Several buildings and businesses in the downtown Newport area also were impacted with flood waters and runoff. The Newport Plain Talk's ground floor had several inches on the surface.

Following the heavy rains, which in some areas lasted until early Sunday morning, Feb. 24, came strong winds. The winds knocked down numerous trees, including one in Chestnut Hill, which forced the closure and detour of traffic on Highway 411.

Newport Utilities reported that its system experienced more than 3,000 outages this weekend.

"The heavy rains, followed by high winds, resulted in fallen or leaning trees on the lines," NU Electric Department manager Curtis Williamson said via email on Monday morning, Feb. 25. "Our system reached a peak outage count of 3,077 customers.

"Since the blunt of the rain storm has passed, we continue to receive new outages due to fallen trees. We thank everyone for their patience as crews continue to work diligently in all areas involved. We also want to thank all road crews and law enforcement for a job well done."

Day of destruction: Newspapers survive to chronicle hurricane's historic blow

SEAN IRELAND
Georgia Press Bulletin
November 2018

Editor's note: The following story, which was originally published in the Georgia Press Bulletin and is reprinted here by permission of the Georgia Press Association, recounts the damage caused by Hurricane Michael in October 2018 and how it affected the Donalsonville News, a newspaper based in southwest Georgia.

Two-by-fours flying through the air like arrows. The roof of the police station torn away, impaling his car parked on the street. The shards of glass from his apartment's front windows found embedded in the back wall.

Listen to David Maxwell describe how Hurricane Michael slammed into downtown Donalsonville, and you'll shake your head at the harrowing images in disbelief as chills crawl up and down your spine.

Maxwell rode out Hurricane Michael in his apartment over the office of the Donalsonville News, where he is editor of the weekly newspaper. The historic storm, rated a Category 4 when

it made landfall, was one of the most powerful to ever hit the U.S. when it struck the Florida coast on the morning of Oct. 10. It was still blowing winds of more than 100 miles per hour when it blasted into Donalsonville and all of southwest Georgia later that day.

Maxwell spent four hours huddled with his dog in his bathroom listening as Michael battered away. He heard the roof of the historic fire department — located a block away — crash into the newspaper's office below.

'I've never been so scared in all my life'

With the wind ripping and tearing at every structure, "it was like downtown was screaming," he said. And then, for 30 minutes, as Michael's eye wall passed directly over town, "it was like a sunny day. It was so unnerving because you still had the anticipation of going through it again. I've never been so scared in all my life."

Somehow, Maxwell survived. And thanks to a lot of hard, emotionally difficult work and the

generosity of friends and other newspapers in Georgia, the News didn't miss an issue.

Neither did other newspapers that were directly in Michael's path in Georgia, though like the News, they suffered damages, went days without power or Internet access and had employees dealing with their own personal losses.

In Bainbridge, as the storm raged, Post-Searchlight editor Powell Cobb waited in the hallway outside his downtown apartment when collapsing brick spires on the roof damaged the building's sprinkler system. The lobby flooded, and for hours, the fire alarm wailed away.

Finally, at midnight, when the storm passed, with his building declared unsafe, he went to the newspaper's office and spent the night in a sleeping bag on the floor. At 6:30 a.m., he got up and went out to begin reporting on the disaster.

In the days after, he stayed with friends before finding a new place. His own car was destroyed by more falling brick. Post-Searchlight Publisher Mark

Pope's wife's car was also totaled when a tree fell on it.

"Every employee had something that was damaged," Pope said. "A tree on a house or a tree on a car. It's the new normal to talk about your damages when you see someone. It's amazing that we only had one fatality in Georgia. When you see the destruction that happened — and even one death is too many — there could have been so much more loss of life."

Piles of debris were six feet deep

Recovery will be a long process. The roofs of most buildings are blue because of the tarps strapped across them. Maxwell says most roads in Seminole County have six-foot piles of debris alongside waiting to be collected. Some schools were still out weeks after the storm and some houses in more remote areas won't get power restored for weeks more.

But in all these places, newspapers will be there to chronicle the cleanup and keep their residents

informed about it all. That none here missed publishing a single issue speaks to the dedication of the people responsible for the work, in places like Donalsonville, Bainbridge, Blakely, Colquitt, Cairo and Camilla.

"My reporter here is fairly new, and he assumed we wouldn't do a paper the week after [the storm]," said Sonja Stroyls, publisher of The Camilla Enterprise and the Pelham Journal. "I said, 'As long as I'm here, we're going to get a paper out.'"

In the bull's eye

That type of resolve was popping up in southwest Georgia before Michael even made landfall.

Compared with Hurricane Florence earlier this year, there was little advance notice of the fast-moving storm, and forecasts did not predict its strength until the last hours before it hit. But the timing of a Wednesday afternoon strike pushed Pope into moving up the weekly printing schedule

HURRICANE from Page 6

at the Post-Searchlight, where most of the other weekly newspapers in the area — and some from Alabama and Florida — are printed.

He wanted to make sure that all of his other newspaper customers were done and could be delivered without being affected. “Our busiest print days are Tuesday and Wednesday. On Monday, I started calling some of our customers and told them, ‘If you are going to print, get here on Tuesday, and we’ll get you done.’” Pope said. “As it turned out, we printed all day Tuesday until about 4 a.m. on Wednesday.”

After driving to Cairo with copies of that week’s edition of The Messenger, Pope and Maxwell met at a diner for coffee while the Donalsonville News was being printed in the wee hours of Wednesday morning. “We sat there less than 12 hours before it arrived,” Pope said. “Nobody still was overly concerned. We knew it would be bad, but nothing like it was.”

While his boss worked to get other newspapers printed, Cobb prepared for covering the storm’s aftermath for The Post-Searchlight’s Saturday edition. The paper publishes twice a week.

Little did he know how directly he would be affected by the hurricane.

‘It was like a train, but it didn’t go away for five or six hours’

The winds picked up in Bainbridge about 3:30 p.m., he recalled. “People describe tornadoes as sounding like a train going by,” he said. “This was like that. It was like a train, but it didn’t go away for five or six hours.”

The decorative brick spires on the roof of his downtown apartment building couldn’t take the constant pounding and began crashing down, either on the cars parked on the street out front or on the top of the building itself.

When one came through the roof of a neighbor’s apartment, Cobb and others evacuated into the hallway. “We couldn’t leave, and the power was out and then the fire alarm started going off,” he said. “It was eight hours of listening to the fire alarm ringing

sitting in the hallway.”

After the storm passed, residents were told they could not stay in the building, so he gathered a few things and headed for the newspaper office to try sleeping for a few hours before getting to work.

Pressing forward

Cobb got up at first light on Thursday morning, grabbed a camera and ventured out to take photos. “It was worse than what I could ever have imagined,” he said. “We weren’t expecting anything close to what Hurricane Michael did. It was like something from a war zone. You’re looking around and seeing all these familiar spots just destroyed . . . It was unrecognizable in most areas.”

For others, the day after the storm was spent mostly trying to cut a way out of neighborhoods and roadways choked by downed trees and other debris. Pope had to cut two trees out of the road just to go 100 feet from his home.

When he got to The Post-Searchlight building, a power pole was laying on it, and it was missing its shingles.

It was like that other places too.

At the Donalsonville News, the front of the office had a hole punched in it from the fire station roof. The staff has had to move into the back of the building to work.

At The Camilla Enterprise, the roof of a neighboring building landed on the paper’s loading dock. “Thursday, nobody worked. We couldn’t get here because there were so many power lines down,” Stroyls said. “We all came in on Friday, and that’s when we started.”

But how do you start when there’s no power and spotty computer communication with the outside world?

Generators, for one. Borrowed internet from the kindness of neighbors for another. Using cell phone hot spots to connect too. Driving out of town to find supplies, power and connectivity.

None of it was easy. Maxwell — the only editorial staffer in Donalsonville — was reporting, photographing, writing and designing the News. It was hot, hard work, and it was complicated by the tears that were coming on a regular basis. “It was an



Submitted photo

Hurricane Michael blew a roof from another block into the front office of the Donalsonville News, in southwest Georgia. Editor David Maxwell examined the damage the next day.

edition I don’t ever want to do again,” he said. “Every single thing I did was literally while I was crying. It was extremely emotional. It was like a war zone.”

It was days before power was restored for most of the affected newspapers. Generators were the order of the day, but even with some power, networks were down, and connectivity was a problem.

“It blew out our server and we still don’t have internet service,” said Terry Toole, publisher of the Miller County Liberal of Colquitt. “Our power just started back on Monday (Oct. 29).”

“We’re doing it on a drive about the size of half a pack of cards. This is the worst thing I’ve seen in my 83 years. We’ve got three [phone] lines, and only one works sometimes. Our internet, we’re stealing from somebody else next door. If they didn’t have it, we wouldn’t have gotten a paper out the next three weeks. We’re working three computers off nothing.”

Similarly, at The Enterprise, Stroyls said the staff got out its first post-Michael edition running just two computers. It was put on a flash drive and then driven to where internet service could be found so it could be sent to the printer. “We got it out with no phone lines and no Internet,” she said. “I’ve been in the newspaper business for 30 years, and you just know that if you have to get it done, you do what you have to do to get it done. I would’ve driven to Atlanta for internet service if I had to.”

Saturday edition printed at The Valdosta Daily Times

While The Post-Searchlight was without power, its press could not run. Pope called Vince Cribb, production manager at The Valdosta Daily Times, who offered to print the Saturday, Oct. 13, edition of the paper. Offers flooded in from other newspapers for help with reporting, pagination, website updates and printing.

Meanwhile, journalists like Cobb and Maxwell were working to get critical information about relief and recovery efforts to their residents. It was hot and humid work, done with no power and no air conditioning, not to mention

the stress of the situation. But they did it because it’s what newspapers do when tragedy comes.

“People sometimes don’t understand that we have a job where we’ve got to go out and report what’s happening [no matter the circumstances],” Pope said. “I’m happy that we did what we did. We got the news out to the community, and I hope our staff never forgets what they’ve accomplished.”

Cobb learned just three days after the storm that he was going to have to move out of his apartment. He stayed with friends for several days, and now has a new apartment. Being busy helped during that time.

“I think it was almost comforting to be able to do the job I have been doing everyday for the past five years,” Cobb said. “I report the news and that day the news was a hurricane that ripped apart the town. It was a sense of duty. I think if you would ask a lot of our readers who were reading the news on their phones, it was a comforting

See **HURRICANE** Page 10

NEWS from Page 2

Northcutt is the host of “The Scoop.” It’s a brief segment typically a couple minutes long.

The plan is for the video segments to broaden in scope and include other areas of coverage such as sports.

“With online analytics, we can easily track what stories and videos are the most popular on our website,” said Standard Publisher Patricia Zechman. “In the weeks that we’ve been filming ‘The

Scoop,’ it has received thousands of views. This tells us our readers are interested in having a video component to their news coverage.”

Southern Standard newspaper subscribers get a password that provides full website access at no extra charge with their paid subscription. Online-only subscriptions can also be purchased for less than the charge of a printed newspaper subscription.

Southern Standard, McMinnville Feb. 6, 2019

Save the dates!

July 18-19

TPA Summer Convention

- State Press Awards Luncheon, Thurs., July 18
- Reception at the Tennessee Aquarium, July 18
- Advertising/Circulation Conference, July 19
- Hall of Fame Induction, July 19

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Make it a mantra: 'Get one more source'

I think as journalists we can all agree that there is no such thing as an “over-sourced” story.

Readers will never complain that a reporter talked to too many people, read too many reports or examined too many documents.

A well-sourced article or feature story is easy to identify. Most, if not all, of the critical questions are answered. The range of voices is wide. The piece has details, specifics, numbers and examples that deepen understanding.

Readers feel complete after reading a highly-sourced article, and journalists gain a big advantage as reporters and writers if they go beyond the obvious or easy-to-get.

Interviewing enough people and examining enough documents allows for improved writing and storytelling. A writer can be more authoritative. A point can be made, expanded upon and extended into deeper discussions in the piece. With extensive sourcing, a story can go beyond explanation and branch into “solutions journalism,” where the writer reveals what has worked elsewhere or examines options to



BETTER WRITING WITH BART

BART PFANKUCH

make things better. Not all sources need to be quoted in the piece, but going deeper will always broaden your understanding of a topic.

Here are some tips and tactics to quickly expand sourcing on quick-hit daily stories, deeper weekenders and long-range projects. I urge all reporters to hustle, be thoughtful and dive into their work as early as possible so they have the idea, energy and time to improve sourcing.

- Use online public records to strengthen your reporting. I recently attended a seminar called “Quick-hit Investigations” by noted investigative reporter Dee Hall at the annual Wisconsin Newspaper Association conference. The major takeaway: Learn about documents

and reports that state and federal agencies maintain online and then use those – even on daily stories – to seek out a few relevant data points, facts or financial figures that will broaden the depth of your piece, allow for historical context or help prove a point.

- Scour the internet for studies or research papers related to your topic. This has never been easier. Writing about wind farms, flu symptoms, pesticides, railroads, cancer, beef processing, pipelines, restaurant cleanliness, sidewalk costs, weather patterns or the lifespan of a bridge? I bet you can search online and quickly find three reports or studies on any of those topics from reputable sources. Stay away from consumer or product sites and rely more on government reports and university studies. Search a bit longer to find one directly related to your topic. Tidbits from those reports will add depth to your piece and credibility to your reporting.

- Do an online clip check to see what others have written. If you find other media outlets have

already tackled your topic, feel free to re-interview their sources or, in a pinch, quote directly from their findings. Double check facts and fully attribute the material.

- Think beyond the obvious when seeking sources to call by phone or interview in person. Talk to your editor, colleagues and anyone who will lend an ear and ask them what they want to know about a story or who they would call if they were the reporter. Spend five quiet minutes just thinking about who would be great to interview for your piece, and then make a wish list. Spend a half hour more trying to reach one or two of those people. Even if your success rate shooting for an extra primo source is only 50 percent, your work will be better for it.

- On breaking news, always shoot for one more witness, bystander, emergency responder or police officer. Feel free to interview the talky person everyone else is interviewing, but keep an eye out for the shy or hovering witness who often has more to tell but isn't seeking attention. In a neighbor-

hood, leave business cards with “Please call me” scribbled on them in the door jams of potential witnesses who aren't home. Get to know police and first responders to build trust so they'll speak to you when you need it most.

- Seek out expert sources. These tend to fit nicely in longer pieces on more complex topics, but there's no harm in having a conversation with an expert on breaking news or a daily story or in advance of a meeting. Always review an expert's credentials and history to reduce the chance you encounter a zealot. Again, university and government researchers are the best, though thinktank analysts and industry experts can sometimes fill the bill.

- Do this now: Take a sheet of paper, write “Get One More Source!” on it and tape it up in your cube or above your computer. Then, follow your own good advice.

Bart Pfankuch is an investigative reporter for South Dakota News Watch, online at sdnewswatch.org. Write to him at bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org.



Photo by Larry McCormack, The Tennessean, Nashville

Wayne Dale installs a new roll of newsprint as the Tennessean pressmen print the Thanksgiving Day paper, Nov. 21, 2018.

TENNESSEAN from Page 1

printing more than a billion newspapers over careers that will soon come to a humble end.

But, for now, the work continues as diligently as ever. Printing begins as the sun sets and runs until after midnight, then starts again around dawn and ends at lunch. When the work is finally done, three presses have printed not only The Tennessean but also The New York Times, USA

TODAY, The Daily News Journal, The Leaf-Chronicle, The Huntsville Times, The Columbia Daily Herald and several other smaller publications.

The mantra here is clear: Print it fast and print it pretty. Journalists might get all the bylines and all the credit, the pressmen say, but nobody is going to read their stories if the paper is late or ugly.

“The way I see it, I'm an artist,” said Wayne Dale, 62, who has worked in the pressroom since he

took a part-time job in high school in 1972. As he talks, Dale preps a giant paper roll for printing, and has little time to stop and chat. A deadline looms.

“If we print 200,000 of these, that's 200,000 people who get to see my work,” Dale adds. “What other artist in Nashville can say that?”

Newspapers have been printed at 1100 Broadway since 1937, when a deal between The Tennessean and its then-competitor, the Nashville Banner, put both newspapers in the same building. Presses ran day and night for decades, and although the Banner went out of business in 1998, The Tennessean soon swelled to fill the empty space, with circulation rising to about 300,000 copies on Sundays.

Those were the boom times, which now feel like a distant memory to the handful of pressmen who remain. Print circulation has plummeted since the heyday of the late '90s, and the pressroom has become a decreasingly essential cog in newspaper operations as more and more readers have shifted to digital products.

The Tennessean will move from

its longtime building in May, leaving the old, worn behemoth to be consumed by Gulch redevelopment. The newsroom will relocate down the street to the upper floors of a West End high-rise, but printing was to be shifted to the Knoxville News Sentinel and the (Louisville) Courier-Journal, fellow Gannett newspapers. The Tennessean's presses will be scrapped for parts and left to crumble when the building is demolished by a new owner.

About 30 pressroom workers will lose what for many is the only job they have known. Many don't have enough savings to retire, so they will seek new work in a new industry. Some hope to stay in the printing business — packages or advertisements or even beer cans — but not newspapers.

“I've spent my whole life on deadline,” said Epling, forcing a smile as finished papers are loaded into trucks at the end of a shift. “Now it is time to try something else.”

The pressroom's final deadline is still weeks away, but the Thanksgiving paper was a melancholy milestone of the impending end. The Thanksgiving edition is the

single largest newspaper of the year, so the work is reminiscent of better days when print circulation was bigger, page counts were higher and press jobs felt forever secure.

“You can't just bring anyone in off the streets and expect them to handle these machines,” said James Parnell, a pressroom manager who has worked at The Tennessean for 36 years. “It's a race against the clock every night. This is a real craft, and it's a shame it's going away.”

CONVENTION from Page 1

- 1:30 p.m. Ad Idea Exchange Session
- 1:30 p.m. Circulation Idea Exchange Session
- 2:00 p.m. TPA Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting
- 3:00 p.m. Ad/Circ sessions end
- 5:00 p.m. Reception
- 6:00 p.m. Tennessee Newspaper Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

Registration details will be available by May 17.

U.S. Department of Labor proposed new overtime rule

This writer and many others predicted that the Department of Labor, under the leadership of Secretary Acosta, would publish a new proposed rule in March 2019. The new proposed rule would increase the salary level threshold that must be met in order to be overtime exempt under the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

The new proposed rule, announced March 7, 2019, will increase that threshold from \$23,660 per year (or \$455 per week) to \$35,308 per year (or \$679 per week). This new threshold is far less than the threshold proposed by the Obama administration that was permanently enjoined nationwide by a federal court in Texas.



LEGAL UPDATE

L. MICHAEL ZINSER

Significantly, the proposed rule does not call for automatic annual adjustments to the salary threshold; does not create different salary levels based on region of the country; and does not make any changes to the duties tests.

In addition to increasing the salary threshold, the new proposed rule would permit employers to count nondiscretionary bonuses and incentive payments (including

commissions) paid to employees to satisfy up to 10 percent of the salary threshold. The proposed new rule also modifies the “highly compensated employee” exemption, increasing the annual compensation threshold for that exemption from \$100,000 to \$147,414.

Increase salary or reclassify?

Under the proposed rule, if a currently salary-exempt person is not currently making \$35,308 per year, it is decision time. The decision is whether to increase the employee’s salary to that level or to reclassify that individual as non-exempt. That decision will be based upon

many factors including:

- How close the current salary is to the new \$35,308 figure
- How many hours per week the employee is currently working
- Consideration of morale problems and reclassifying of current exempt employee as non-exempt

Timing of Decision

Employers have lots of time to plan and react. The announcement of the proposed rule is just the first step in a long process. As I write this in early March, the rule is open for a 60-day comment period. After receiving all of the comments, the Department of Labor will review them and determine whether they want to make

any changes to the proposed rule. It is currently estimated that a final rule will not take effect until January 2020.

Employers should now conduct an audit of these positions to determine which positions will receive an increase in salary and which will be converted to non-exempt. This is also a good time to conduct an audit of their duties to ensure that these individuals meet the duties test.

I will continue to monitor developments and provide updates.

L. Michael Zinser is president of The Zinser Law Firm, P.C., in Nashville, Tenn. He can be reached at 615.255.9700 and zinser@zinsers-law.com.

Existing on small ads is nothing new in our business

PETER W. WAGNER
N’West Iowa Review
February 1, 2019

Smaller ads sold mostly to locally-owned businesses are a part of a community paper’s DNA. There weren’t any supermarkets, department stores or automobile dealerships with the majority of midwestern newspapers back at the turn of the nineteenth century.

I have a framed copy of the Jan. 1, 1873 Sheldon Mail hanging on the wall of my office. What is most surprising is the largest display ad in the now 145-year-old publication is an ad that measures one column by 3.5 inches. More importantly, all the ads in that first edition wouldn’t fill a half of a broadsheet page today.

When my wife and I put out our first publication, The Golden Shopper, our largest ad was a half-page on the front page. Most of the remaining pages were filled with 2 x 3, 2 x 5 and occasional quarter-page ads. The nationally controlled firms all felt they had to advertise in the much older, more established newspaper.

We were thankful for those locally-purchased small ads, however, and, somehow, we survived. In the boom times before corporate inserts, we regularly printed four process color broadside pages for our local Hy-Vee grocery store.

That too, disappeared, and we still survived.

We were thankful for them when we had them, however, and we survived. The truth is that our publishing industry is changing in ways that is making it difficult to sustain and be profitable in both the paid circulation and free distribution publishing business. The same is true of most other forms of local business. But as long as papers have a commitment to providing solid local news and information to our community, newspapers and shoppers alike will find new opportunities to sell print advertising to an appreciative local market.

Communities still need a printed product to flourish

Communities now are a local supplier of professionally written and edited information. Study after study has concluded communities need a printed publication to flourish. Without a competent local paper, communities suffer the eventual loss of everything from main street retail synergy to in-town grade and high schools to much needed sales and property tax revenues.

A study by the North Carolina School of Media and Journalism found that more than 1,300 communities have completely lost their

sources of local news. The local printed paper must continue to exist, and it can through persistence, creativity and a commitment from the local ownership. The secret of such success is “Telling your story!” For newspapers that means both sharing all the important local news of the community from the city chambers to the little league as well as the advertising and marketing services the publication offers.

No business has ever succeeded in “saving itself out of financial difficulty.” Most successful business leaders turn a difficult corner by increasing the material and service delivered. I was in Hawaii recently and saw an interesting large red poster in many windows on one island. It read: Here is what you did by buying from us:

1. You contributed your dollars to local economy.
2. You celebrated the unique buying opportunities of our community.
3. You helped create local employment.
4. You encouraged the building of a community.
5. You kept important tax dollars at home.
6. You benefited from our expertise.
7. You invested in local enterprise.
8. You made this community and all it offers a destination.

Everything promoted on that poster could also be said, with a bit of a twist in the wording, of the local paper. Our biggest failing as a publishing industry is we don’t tell our story strongly or often enough. If we don’t blow our own horn, who will? Michael Bugeja, author of Interpersonal Divide in the Age of the Machine, recently wrote: “Don’t overlook newspapers. They are the lifeblood of the community. Subscribe to your hometown paper. Go farther and buy gift subscriptions for your relatives and friends. Discuss the news face to face at the dinner table instead of on Facebook. If you have children, let them see you poring over the pages of the paper, pointing out stories about school, hobbies, and upcoming events you might attend. If you want to get rid of fake news support your local newspaper. It takes a village to save a local newspaper. But saving a village is worth the price of a subscription.

Peter W. Wagner is founder and publisher of the award-winning N’West Iowa REVIEW and 13 additional publications. This free monthly GET REAL newsletter is written exclusively for state and national press associations and distributed by them to their members. To get Wagner’s free PAPER DOLLARS email newsletter for publishers, editors and sales managers,

email him at pww@iowainformation.com. The two monthly email newsletters contain information completely different than found in Wagner’s monthly Publisher’s Auxiliary column. Wagner can be contacted by emailing pww@iowainformation.com or calling his cell at 712-348-3550.



The Tennessee Press Association Foundation gratefully acknowledges a contribution

In memory of
Betty Kennedy

given in fond remembrance by

The Fishman Family
R. Jack & Nancy
Jeff & Karen
Mike & Angie

OBITUARIES

Tom Hill

Tom Hill, former publisher of The Oak Ridger, died March 23, 2019.

A memorial will be held on May 11, 2019 at 3 p.m. with a reception following until 6 p.m. at the Pollard Auditorium in Oak Ridge.

His obituary will be included in the May edition of The Tennessee Press.

For more information please visit www.weatherfordmortuary.com.

Ewell Herman Balltrip

Ewell Herman Balltrip of Somerset, Ky. entered into the Kingdom of Heaven on March 7, 2019, surrounded by his family after a long battle with chronic illness. A native of Harlan, Ky., he was born May 27, 1950 and was the only son of Beatrice Meadors Balltrip and Lloyd Balltrip.

Balltrip's career spanned almost 50 years in community journalism, public service, and as the executive of a non-profit organization. As

a journalist, he advanced from a summer intern position at his hometown newspaper, The Harlan Daily Enterprise, to become its publisher. He continued to serve as a publisher with the New York Times Company in Middlesboro, Ky. and Dyersburg, Tenn.

On March 25, Balltrip was to



Balltrip

be inducted into the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame. He also served with the Tennessee Valley Corridor, a group promoting areas of Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Alabama and Virginia as one of the premier science and technology regions in the nation.

Submitted
March 9, 2019

Elizabeth "Betty" Finney Kennedy

Mrs. Elizabeth Ridley "Betty" Finney Kennedy, 89, died Tuesday, March 5, 2019, at her residence, Greenway Farm, in Columbia -- her loving family in attendance.

Funeral services were to be conducted Friday, March 8, at First Presbyterian Church with Dr. Paul Bauer officiating. Following the service, friends and family were invited to a celebration of Mrs. Kennedy's life at the Kennedy-Blackstone home, Greenway Farm. A private family graveside service was to be held March 9 at Wilkes Cemetery with the Reverend Father Chris Bowhay officiating.

Mrs. (Sam D.) Finney Kennedy was born August 14, 1929, in Columbia to John Wesley Finney and Elizabeth Read Ridley Finney (formerly of Murfreesboro). Mr. Finney was publisher of The Columbia Daily Herald and an officer in the Marine Corps. Mrs. Finney worked along with her husband at



Submitted photo

Elizabeth "Betty" Finney Kennedy and her husband of 64 years, Sam Kennedy. Sam passed away in 2018, Betty last month.

the paper.

During World War II, Mr. Finney was chairman of the Maury County Draft Board and later served as a Marine liaison to the civilian population first in South Bend, Indiana, and then in Nashville. While living in Nashville, when Mrs. Kennedy was 16 and attending Hillsboro High School, they were heartbroken to learn of the loss of her only sibling, Jack Finney, fighting in France. The family returned to Columbia after the war, and Mrs. Kennedy graduated from Central High School in the Class of 1947.

Agnes Scott College in Atlanta was next for Mrs. Kennedy, as well as journalism classes at Emory University. She worked for the

Georgia Press Association and the Atlanta Constitution during her time in Georgia.

In the early 1950s, while at home in Columbia, working for her father, lightning struck, and she began seeing a young assistant district attorney who would become her husband and partner, Sam Delk Kennedy. By his own description (and confirmed by others), he met Betty Finney "soliciting (advertising) on the street."

"I called her John Finney's secret weapon because she could sell an ad to a man down to his last nickel," Mr. Kennedy would joke.

John Finney's secret weapon soon became Sam Kennedy's secret weapon when the couple married on November 6, 1954, and so began a 64-year adventure highlighted by the births of their two children, Delk (Sam Jr.) in 1956 and Elizabeth Ridley Finney Kennedy (II) in 1961, as well as by leadership in The Columbia Daily Herald until its sale in 1983, and in the newspaper industry statewide. After the Herald sale, the Kennedys owned five weekly newspapers in Mt. Pleasant, Parsons, Linden, Waverly, and Lawrenceburg over a period of years.

Mrs. Kennedy's local interests included long-time support of the Maury County Public Library, the James K. Polk Memorial Association, and Columbia State Community College (where the library is named after her father, John W.

Finney). Mrs. Kennedy was a member of First Presbyterian Church for more than 50 years. She also took great pleasure in her friendships with members of the Tennessee Press Association. Publishers from across the state and their families were among her friends dating back to childhood as she grew up in the business.

Survivors include her son, Sam Delk Kennedy, Jr. (Mary Susan Berry Kennedy) of Columbia; daughter, Elizabeth Ridley Finney Kennedy Blackstone (William "Billy" Blackstone) of Columbia; grandchildren, Samuel Delk Kennedy, III (Rachel Vest Kennedy) of the Kettle Mills Community, Mary Susan Berry Kennedy of Chicago, William Emory Blackstone, Jr., of Columbia, John Finney Kennedy "Jack" Blackstone of Chicago, Elizabeth Ridley Hartwell "Eliza" Blackstone of Charlottesville, Virginia; and great grandchildren, Margaret Berry Kennedy, Samuel Delk Kennedy, IV, Anne Ridley Greenfield Kennedy of the Kettle Mills Community, sister-in-law, Frances Kennedy Logsdon of Columbia; and beloved first cousin, Granville Sumner Ridley Bouldin of Murfreesboro.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Sam Delk Kennedy, on May 1, 2018, and her older brother, John William Finney.

By Elizabeth Kennedy Blackstone
March 7, 2019



The Tennessee Press Association Foundation gratefully acknowledges a contribution

In memory of
**Sam & Betty
Kennedy**

given in fond
remembrance by

Tony Kessler

HURRICANE from Page 7

thing knowing that their newspaper had boots on the ground.

"We were finding out things like, 'How soon is the Salvation Army and Red Cross going to be getting here? Where can you stay if your house has a tree in the roof?' We want to get it out there so someone can use it. It was a sense of duty — that's what we had to do. No one else could share that information with such a wide audience."

People kept abreast of the news

As challenging as it may have been with spotty delivery and no

power, people made sure to keep up with the news. The Post-Searchlight recorded nearly 40,000 more page views in October than previous months. People rely on their newspapers to provide information in times of crisis.

Maxwell said Seminole County residents have told him that the News was their only source for information. Though he often wondered whether he could get through it, he persevered because he knew they were relying on the newspaper.

Others in these communities recognized the importance of newspapers too. In Bainbridge, the local hospital gave Cobb and other Post-Searchlight journalists a storage area to use to charge phones and computers and to

work. Several area publishers worked with helpful elected representatives to get power restored to The Post-Searchlight as quickly as possible to get the press running again.

As hard as they worked to keep information flowing, the work of recovering won't be any easier for these newspapers or their communities.

There are estimates from the Georgia Dept. of Agriculture of a \$600 million loss in cotton, \$480 million in produce and \$560 million in pecans. The Georgia Forestry Commission reports 79,000 acres of forest are a complete loss.

Schools were closed for weeks after the storm. In Seminole County, it took until November for schools to open in temporary lo-

cations. Most structures have blue tarps to protect damaged roofs, and it will take months, even years, for repair work to be completed.

For southwest Georgia, Hurricane Michael will be a touchstone event, with generations referring to times as "Before the Storm," and "After the Storm." Pope worries whether Bainbridge will ever fully recover and how long it might take.

One thing he knows. He won't stay for the next storm. "My wife had mentioned the day of the storm, 'Why don't we leave?' I thought, 'It won't be that bad, and if something happens, we need to be here.' But not anymore. In the future, we leave in a heartbeat. It was as scary as anything I've ever been through."

LAWSUIT from Page 12

Douglas B. Janney III, said the victory Monday was the result of “Mr. Anderson finally being able to have his day in court.”

Janney is a Nashville-based labor and employment lawyer who focuses on workplace discrimination, wrongful termination and harassment situations. He added that the jury dropped a charge of age discrimination, and while the lawsuit originally aimed to reinstate Anderson to his teaching position, there was no word yet on if that will occur.

Meanwhile, Johnathan Taylor, the attorney for the defendants, including the Oak Ridge Schools Board of Education and Marczak, said neither he nor the defendants in the case were making any public statements at this time — including whether or not they will appeal the verdict.

Taylor also said his team has not yet had an opportunity to investigate the relevant issues that might lead to an appeal.

Anderson retired from Oak Ridge Schools during the second quarter of 2015 amid a series of allegations, The Oak Ridger, a sister publication of the The Daily Herald, originally reported.

The lawsuit indicated that primary complaints against Anderson, a 38-year teacher at Oak Ridge High School, were related to the sleeping arrangements of a high school track team trip to Columbia, S.C., in April 2015 that had upset parents.

The exact details of these arrangements were not disclosed by the complaint.

According to the filed complaint, Anderson was called into a meeting with the former principal at Oak Ridge High School, David Bryant, on April 13, 2015, which was initiated and led by Marczak.

The suit claimed the meeting was to discuss allegations from the the school trip out of state. During the meeting, Anderson was suspended from all of his track and field duties.

“We will see how this might affect your teaching position” and, “When I find you negligent, I will fire you,” Marczak told Anderson during the meeting, the complaint said.

Anderson was told that he would be suspended through May 11 and that he would only be allowed to continue as an assistant coach until the end of the 2015 season. He was advised to hold a parent meeting to

discuss the parents’ concerns, the complaint stated.

On April 30, Anderson was then terminated from his position after Marczak told him the school district received reports that he had inappropriate contact with a student 12 years prior.



Photo by Mike Christen, The Daily Herald, Columbia

Chris Marczak (far right, pictured in 2016), superintendent of Maury County Public Schools, has been ordered by a federal court jury to pay \$540,000 as part of a lawsuit brought by a former teacher/coach.

Told to leave in handcuffs

The complaint described how Marczak told Anderson he would receive a call from the police, and that he should stay at home because “you will probably be arrested today.”

“Marczak concluded by stating, ‘Have a nice day,’ the complaint said.

Anderson was then escorted out of the building by a school resource officer who was requested by Marczak to put handcuffs on Anderson, according to the complaint.

The lawsuit states the officer did not comply as Anderson was not under arrest. “Marczak did this for no reason other than to embarrass, humiliate and shame Mr. Anderson,” the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit states that Marczak or someone acting at his direction contacted local news sources notifying them of Anderson’s termination and made false, misleading, incomplete and disparaging statements about the former teacher to “place him in a false light before the public.”

In July, Anderson then filed his retirement from the school district with the belief he had no other choice, the complaint stated.

The complaint also claimed Anderson was discriminated against

because he had been seen drinking wine in the presence of students while on a trip to Paris, France.

The suit outlined that two other teachers who drank wine on the trips were not disciplined. The suit states the trip wasn’t a school function so “all applicable local laws were followed, and only students

and in opposition to the way allegations made against him had been handled by city school officials. Among the more than 16 teachers, residents and students speaking in support of Anderson at the May 26, 2015, school board meeting were former BOE member and retired teacher Dan DiGregorio, as well as retired math teacher Benita Albert.

DiGregorio said Anderson was “leaving, basically, without a cursor nod and I don’t think we should treat people that way — especially when we say teachers are our most important asset.”

In a prepared note, Albert referred to a May 13, 2015, statement given to the public in which the board of education referred to a “process” for investigating the allegations against Anderson.

Find another job

According to the lawsuit, in the weeks that followed Anderson’s termination various Oak Ridge school board members went to Borchers individually and advised the superintendent that Marczak should be discharged or replaced. The lawsuit also claims that Borchers advised Marczak in the late spring or summer of 2015 that he needed to attempt to locate another position with another school system as soon as possible.

Before unanimously voting to offer Marczak a position at the end of July 2015, the MCPS school board ranked Marczak as a 97 out of a possible 100 during a preliminary video interview. Nine out of 11 board members chose him as their top candidate, Board member Wayne Lindsey said. Blue Valley, Kansas, School District School Administration Executive Director William “Tony” Lake was ranked second with a score of 53.

He officially signed a five-year contract in August 2015, with an annual salary of \$175,000, later increased to \$180,000.

In mid-September 2015, The Oak Ridger reported that according to two investigative reports from the Oak Ridge Police Department — obtained through an open-records request — both an Oak Ridge High School vice principal and the school system’s director of student services were made aware of allegations against Anderson but never reported them to the proper authorities. Prior to that revelation, the publication said Anderson County District Attorney General David Clark

wouldn’t be prosecuting Anderson.

No police charges

In a letter to the city’s then-Police Chief James T. “Jim” Akagi, DA Clark said the complaints against Anderson were “legally too old to prosecute” with the exception of complaints made by one woman — which was described as a “he said, she said” situation without physical evidence.

In response to several questions asked of Borchers by The Oak Ridger at the time, the superintendent stated (in part): “As I think you know, the Oak Ridge Schools takes any and all allegations of misconduct very seriously. We are dedicated to protecting our students and creating a safe and productive learning environment for our entire school community.

“Your questions request comments on specific knowledge we possess related to the incidents described and referenced in the Oak Ridge Police Department’s reports. While the police department’s investigation of our former teacher has concluded, the Oak Ridge Schools’ effort to investigate and fully evaluate its personnel’s response to this matter is ongoing, in part using the very same information gathered at our request by the Oak Ridge Police. Once the school system’s investigation is completed, appropriate corrective action will be taken if indicated.”

When contacted for comment, Oak Ridge Board of Education Chairperson Keys Fillauer said he had no comment and that he’d allow Borchers to respond to The Oak Ridger’s questions.

Anderson was called for comment in August 2015 in regard to the DA choosing not to prosecute, he told The Oak Ridger he had been advised by his attorney at the time to send such requests to him. However, Anderson’s attorney at the time didn’t return The Oak Ridger’s phone call.

Anderson’s lawsuit asked for compensation for damages including front and back pay, emotional suffering, punitive damages, attorney’s fees and the cost of litigation to include expert fees, damages for humiliation and embarrassment, damages for outrageous conduct and malicious harassment and all other remedies and injunctions as are necessary and proper to eliminate discriminatory practices.

Showcase Submissions

TPA members are encouraged to submit stories to be featured in this monthly Showcase space. Share your best work for other TPA publishers, editors and reporters to see. Each submitted story should include at least one photo and cutline as well as an editor’s introduction. Send submissions to editor@tnpress.com.

ing his termination.

In the latter part of May 2015, supporters of Anderson, who also served as chair of the Oak Ridge High School’s science department, came out in force to an Oak Ridge Board of Education meeting, The Oak Ridger reported.

For more than an hour, individuals spoke in support of Anderson

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE I: The Mirror-Exchange, Milan

Driver and kids escape from car in floodwater sinkhole

STEVE SHORT
The Mirror-Exchange, Milan
February 25, 2019

Mirror-Exchange editor's note: Images and video taken at the scene of this incident were posted on the Mirror-Exchange Facebook page Feb. 23 and attracted national news attention, with weather.com and Good Morning America, including the story and images. Ms. Hufstedler did an interview with Good Morning America Sunday, Feb. 24.

Driving in the rain on a downward sloping hill on Otha Holt Rd. in rural Gibson Co., Dinah Hufstedler stepped on the brakes of her Volkswagen Jetta. Up ahead was a lake of water. Floodwater flowed from a nearby field, pouring left to right across the country road.

Rainfall over several days and nights had flooded low-lying fields. Creeks and drainage ditches in the area were swollen and overflowing their banks.

In the car with Dinah were her seven-year-old grandson, Keegan Lanciloti, buckled in a booster seat in the back, and 10-year-old Brady Sellers, the son of friends who were on a trip overseas.

"We saw all this water," Dinah recalled. "I was thinking how deep it looked, and that it was running really fast. It looked too dangerous to go through. I didn't come near the water. We stopped at least five car lengths from it."

"Before I had chance to back up, my front wheels all of the sudden dropped into the ground," she said. "It didn't seem that far down, so I put it in reverse to try and back it up. Within a second, I knew that wasn't going to happen. I realized it wasn't going to move."

"I'm just one of those people... I'm always thinking, 'What would I do if a situation happened?'" she said. "But I didn't think about a sinkhole."

"My windows were still working, so I rolled down the window," she added. "The pavement was halfway up the windows at that point. I told Brady he was going to have to climb through the passenger side window. It was muddy on the driver side but solid pavement on the passenger side."

"Brady climbed out of the passenger window, and I reached back to unhook Keegan from his booster seat. I knew we didn't have much time. I was pulling Keegan from the back to the front."

His foot was stuck for a minute, and he said, 'I can't get out.' I told Brady he was going to have to pull Keegan out of the window, as I helped push him out. When he got out of the car he started crying, and I knew he was thinking about his mother.

"As soon as the boys were safe, I climbed out of the car myself," she added. "I got them a safe distance away from the car and called 911."



Photo by Steve Short, The Mirror-Exchange, Milan

Torrential rains in late February caused this sinkhole (on Otha Holt Road in rural Gibson County), to open underneath the vehicle of Dinah Hufstedler while she and her two grandchildren were inside. Everyone escaped.

"Within a minute or less after I got out of the car, the car sunk down and was standing straight up with the ground all the way to the back windows," she said. "Only half the car was showing above ground."

Fast-flowing water filled the sinkhole and flooded into an adjoining field.

Brady started talking about how God had saved them, Hufstedler said. "I was trying to think of positive things to say. I told them, 'Every time God does something, he does it for a reason. We have to learn to see things through his eyes.' I didn't

want them to be afraid of something the rest of their lives."

"I told them, 'The nice thing about this, is that one day in the future this could happen to you, and you'll know how to save somebody's life.' I told them to go to school and tell people how Jesus saved your life."

Gibson Co. Sheriff Paul Thomas was in the area to check on flooding. He arrived in his vehicle on the far side of the high water and waded through to help Hufstedler and the boys. He helped carry the boys across the flooded road to his car.

"Sheriff Thomas said the creek was overflowing, and culverts were overflowing, and it had been raining so much, water was going under that part of the road, and it had been slowly deteriorating," said Ms. Hufstedler.

"When we were sitting in his car, we saw parts of the road fall off into the hole," she added. "We never saw how big it was. We didn't know."

Sheriff Dept. deputies and responders arrived at the scene to divert traffic. A wrecker crew was able to attach a cable to the partially submerged car and pull it back onto the road.

Hufstedler later called Brady's parents, Mike and Roberta ("Boo") Sellers, who were in Israel.

"(Dinah) was amazing," Ms. Sellers said in a message. "She shared with us how Brady responded and helped her and Keegan. We got to talk to Brady later that night. He sent my husband something that he wrote about it. We are so very thankful that he was with her when this happened."

Sheriff Thomas said he believed the sinkhole was caused by the flooding, and he expected the road would be closed indefinitely.

"I'm alive and well," Ms. Hufstedler said, reflecting on the misadventure. "My only fear was when the car first sank. I was not expecting that. But all three of us got out without even a scratch."

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE II: The Daily Herald, Columbia

Former faculty member wins \$1.7M lawsuit against Oak Ridge Schools

MIKE CHRISTEN
The Daily Herald, Columbia
March 20, 2019

Editor's note: Darrell Richardson and Ben Pounds, The Oak Ridger, also contributed to this story.

A former teacher and coach with Oak Ridge Schools was awarded \$1.7 million by a jury in U.S. District Court in March, ending a week-long trial that named Maury County Public Schools Superintendent Chris Marczak in the lawsuit.

The civil case also provided reasoning as to why the administrator pursued a position with Maury County Schools.

John Edward Anderson, now in his mid-to-late 60s, was a former track coach and chemistry teacher. He sued the East Tennessee public school district and its head administrators for wrongful termination, breach of contract, defamation, lack of due process and a "false light" invasion of his privacy stemming from a series of incidents dating back to April 2015, four months before Marczak signed his contract with MCPS to serve as its new superintendent.

The lawsuit filed in federal court named Oak Ridge Schools and specifically listed Marczak, who had served as the district's assistant

superintendent since 2013, along with then and current Schools Superintendent Bruce Borchers.

The federal court jury ordered Marczak to award the former educator \$540,000 in damages, Borchers to award \$515,000 along with \$660,097 from the school district for a total of \$1,715,097. Both likely have insurance policies from their work with the school district that would pay the damages, if not appealed.

"Oak Ridge Schools subjected Mr. Anderson to a hostile work environment and discriminated against him in the terms, conditions and privileges of employment

because of age, in violation of the ADEA (The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967) and the THRA (Tennessee Human Rights Act)," the complaint states.

Anderson was 62 at the time of his termination with the school district.

"Defendants Borchers and Marczak published false statements of fact about Mr. Anderson to third parties and the public including other Oak Ridge Schools administrators, School Board members, faculty, staff, third parties and the news media, including false allegations of serious criminal misconduct and repeatedly falsely

stating that Mr. Anderson was 'going to go to prison' as a result of the allegations, despite his never having been charged or convicted of any offense."

Marczak: A lot more to this

Marczak said he will release a formal statement in the coming days, but he did speak briefly with The Daily Herald. "There is a lot more to this than just the surface," Marczak said.

Anderson's attorney in the case,