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# The Tennessee Press

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## INSIDE

**Horne: Mantle of leadership not for everyone**

Page 2

**Daniels: Sharing ideas**

Page 3

**Industry News/Tracks**

Page 3

**Obituaries**

Page 5

**McElroy: One more take on public notices**

Page 6

**Sheriff Bart: Need an editor? Look in mirror**

Page 8

**Davis: Meet Becky Moats, TPS network coordinator**

Page 10

**Showcase: Families of inmates pay a price, too**

Page 12

## Times Free Press: 150 years of covering Chattanooga

**ALISON GERBER**  
**Chattanooga Times Free Press**  
**December 30, 2018**

In the year following the devastation of the Civil War, many Chattanoogaans struggled to rebuild and recapture their former success. Old financial empires, many built on slave labor, were decimated. Money to invest in labor and new equipment was in short supply. Times were so desperate, the city's business community published in northern newspapers appeals to investors to come South to build their fortunes.

"Wanted Immediately Any Number of Carpet-Baggers to Come to Chattanooga and Settle," one such ad proclaimed.

As difficult as those times were, there were people who saw Chattanooga's potential.

The seeds of the town's birth as an industrial power were planted by Roane Iron Works. The compa-

ny sought to take advantage of the rich mineral deposits found in the nearby mountains.

In 1869, the firm of Kirby & Gamble was optimistic enough to open a small newspaper, the Chattanooga Daily Times.

The paper was only four pages, but it was crammed with a pleasing mix of news, advertisements — many for land rich in minerals or equipment such as blowing engines, blast furnaces and mining machinery — and practical community announcements. Take this one from Dec. 30, 1869: "A stray hog is at my house near the Vulcan Iron Works. It is a large fat sow, with a crop of the right ear." The author asked that the owner "prove property and pay expenses."

Nine years after that first edition of the Times appeared, a 20-year-old from Knoxville — the son of German immigrants who had worked briefly as a printer's devil

(apprentice) — borrowed \$250 to buy the newspaper.

"Chattanooga had only some 12,000 people and was still in spirit a small town. Yet there were a few persons, including Adolph Ochs, who realized its possibilities," stated his obituary, published in The New York Times in 1935.

Ochs "assumed the paper's \$1,500 debt in addition to the \$250 he had borrowed to buy it; and with his own private fortune of \$37.50 as working capital he became publisher of The Chattanooga Times on July 2, 1878," the obit stated.

Ochs' goals were for The Times to become "the indispensable organ of the business, commercial and productive, of Chattanooga, and of the mineral and agricultural districts" surrounding the town. He wanted his newspaper to be known as a trustworthy source of news.

Ochs built the paper into a suc-

cessful and influential publication.

In 1999, 121 years later, the Times merged with its longtime rival, the Chattanooga Free Press, under the ownership of Walter E. Hussman Jr., a third-generation newspaper publisher from Little Rock, Ark.

The Chattanooga Times Free Press will turn 150 in December.

Only two other businesses in Chattanooga have been operating longer than the paper — T. H. Payne Company, which opened in 1865, and the Miller & Martin law firm, which was founded in 1867.

Over the last 15 decades, the business of gathering and disseminating news has changed dramatically.

Over those 150 years, the newspaper tackled many challenges, faced seismic shifts in technology and reinvented its business model. But through all of those changes, the

See **150 YEARS** Page 2

## McElroy, former TPA president, retires from KNS

**AMY J. VELLUCI**  
**Knoxville News Sentinel**  
**December 21, 2018**

Knoxville News Sentinel Executive Editor Jack McElroy has retired after a 43-year journalism career that netted teams under his leadership multiple national awards for fighting for open government and a Pulitzer Prize for news photography.

McElroy announced the news to News Sentinel staff in December. His last day was to be Feb. 1.

He served as president of the Tennessee Press Association from 2015-16 and chaired the organization's Governmental Affairs Committee for several years.

"It is an absolute honor to have worked with Jack, who will leave a rare and rich legacy in Tennessee," said Michael A. Anastasi, Vice President of News for USA TODAY



Knoxville News Sentinel photo

**Retiring News Sentinel Editor Jack McElroy, shown in 2015.**

Network in Tennessee. "He's a legend, really. His commitment to improve the quality of life in Knox-

ville, his love of East Tennessee, his unwavering passion in service of the First Amendment, and his gentle but firm leadership style . . . these are hallmarks of an outstanding editor and an outstanding man." News Sentinel Executive

Over the past two years under McElroy's leadership, the News Sentinel has been a consistent leader in audience growth in Gannett, the nation's largest news and digital marketing services company.

"It's such a loss for Knoxville," said Deborah Fisher, executive director of the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government. McElroy was a founding member of TCOG.

"He is exactly what a newspaper editor should be as a leader in a community - standing up for the

See **MCELROY** Page 6

### TPA Contests Deadlines

The entry deadline for the 2019 Tennessee State Press Contests is Friday, Feb. 22. The categories are the same as they were in 2018. Entries submitted as PDFs in all but three categories. Those remaining in print are Make-Up and Appearance, Best Special Issue or Section, and Sunday Editions. The entry fee remains \$9 per entry.

Plan now to enter the 2019 Ideas Contest, Tennessee Press Association's contest for advertising and circulation ideas. Entries will be submitted as PDFs online. The deadline is Friday, Feb. 15. There are no changes or additions to the categories for 2019. Fees are \$6 per entry.

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## CONTACT THE MANAGING EDITOR

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 April issue is Tuesday, March 5.

## Leaders set the example; make it a good one

Recently, I was remembering and reflecting on past leaders and presidents of the Tennessee Press Association. There have been many prominent men and women who have served as president of our Press Association since 1870.

Most of these past presidents have gone on to their rich reward, and we miss their leadership and example set for us. We will not forget their dedication and sacrifice and service to provide and maintain the free and independent press for our state and all Tennesseans.

In the arena of local, state and federal public service, there are many politicians who have stood for election and few have experienced victory whereas many have seen defeat. In today's political climate, people say why would anyone expose themselves to the scrutiny and ridicule that goes with such service. Thank God there are men and women who offer themselves to the public as leaders for our democratic institutions because without them we would be in real trouble and descend into anarchy



### YOUR PRESIDING REPORTER

DOUG HORNE

and lose our freedom.

And in business, we look for leaders who will risk their capital and invest time, talent, and resources to make a difference with ideas and services for the public. This is called our free enterprise and capitalistic system, a major basis for our freedom. I once saw a business motto written by someone else that meant a lot to me and I will share that with you now.

It goes like this:

*"Business will continue to go where invited and remain where appreciated.*

*Reputations will continue to be made by many acts and be lost by one.*

*The 'extra mile' will have no traffic jams.*

*Performance will continue to outsell promises.*

*Enthusiasm will be as contagious as ever.*

*Know-how will surpass guess-how.*

*Trust, not tricks, will keep customers loyal.*

*Quality will be priced as a precious possession."*

So in the sectors of the free press, politics, and business, we are blessed with leadership and performance that is critical to our continued success and is the standard bearer and example for the nations of this world who aspire to freedom and justice. And, unfortunately, millions and actually billions live without what we have. So keep leading and being an example for all who see you, communicate with you and know of you.

Blessings to all,  
Doug Horne

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

## 150 YEARS from Page 1

mission of the paper has remained true to the goals of Adolph Ochs.

At its core, every day, the paper tells the story of Chattanooga.

But the way we tell that story has changed enormously.

As recently as two decades ago, the daily newspaper was pieced together by hand then printed on a hulking press before being handed off to a small army of people who delivered it to news racks and doorsteps all over the region.

While that still happens, the newspaper also is delivered in ways that take full advantage of modern technology.

With a few taps on a screen, news is shipped to readers' phones. The Chattanooga Times Free Press can be read on apps and a website. Push notifications and social media are used to alert readers to breaking stories. Videos, audio sound slides and podcasts entertain and inform. Interactive graphics add depth to stories.

Thanks to these new techniques and platforms, we reach more readers than ever before.

But those same technology shifts that allow us to better serve readers also have greatly challenged our

industry's business model and made it harder for newspapers to thrive. Claims of "fake news" have discredited legitimate media organizations.

"The decline in trust in the media is as much a threat as the erosion of the business model," A.G. Sulzberger, publisher of The New York Times and the great-great grandson of Ochs, told a group of editors in October.

We should see them as twin threats, he warned.

Still, journalists go out every day to document the important events in our community. Often the work is fast-paced and exciting; other times it's tedious and requires painstaking labor. Either way, it's important work.

Who else is going to sit through zoning and planning meetings and wade through pages of position papers detailing why a new sewer plant is proposed, as Judy Walton did in her recent coverage of the WWTa sewer expansion plan?

Who will travel to places such as Tupelo, Mississippi, sit through a meeting of the Tennessee Valley Authority board and question those board members about the utility's business strategy or practices, as Dave Flessner did this fall?

Who else will look into the past

of a police officer accused of rapes that were never investigated, as Mark Pace did this year?

Who else will examine the economic forces shaping Chattanooga as the city competes with other cities for capital, as Joan Garrett McClane did in a recent story?

And who will tell the extraordinary stories and chronicle the everyday life of Chattanooga, like the two D-Day survivors who connected after one read a story by Mark Kennedy in the paper about the other. The men enlisted in the same unit, were in basic training together, traveled across the Atlantic Ocean on the same ship and landed on Omaha Beach on the same day. But they didn't meet until November 2017 — 74 years later — brought together by Kennedy's story.

Throughout 2019, the newspaper will look back at the events that shaped Chattanooga over the last 150 years, as well as the newspaper's role in telling that story.

Our job is to be here to record it all, good and bad.

Every day, Ochs' promise is still printed at the top of the paper: "To give the news impartially, without fear or favor."

We try every day to live up to that.

## Don't take current subscribers and readers for granted

I love sharing ideas.

I love sitting down with creative minds and working through ideas and finding ways to bring renewed enthusiasm to the work we do each day. Last month, I asked you to share some ideas with me so that I could share them (in social media-speak, so that I could "boost" them) with our association members. December is not the best month to solicit ideas, I know, and I got what I should have expected . . . so, let me jump start the sharing process with some "guerrilla marketing" from my time as general manager of The Leaf Chronicle in Clarksville.

Like you do, we had incentive programs to obtain new subscribers. And, like most companies (think cellular telephone companies), we spend a lot of effort and money on incentives to entice new subscribers, while we take for granted the loyalty of our existing readers and subscribers.

One morning, I received a call from a subscriber irked that his paper had not been delivered. Unfortunately, it was not the first



### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CAROL DANIELS

time that his carrier had dropped the ball. I decided I would drop off his paper on my way to lunch. As I was leaving the office, I also grabbed a promotional umbrella and one of the coffee mugs we had made for a Leaf Chronicle event earlier that year – this gentleman had been a subscriber for more than 15 years, and I wanted him to feel appreciated.

He was very appreciative of the personal delivery, and the experience sparked an idea about creating a program to, randomly, acknowledge long-term subscribers and just say "thank you!" for being a loyal customer.

I asked the circulation department to add a couple columns for me on our current subscriber list: how long they had been subscri-

ers, and current contact information. Each month, I chose five names from the subscriber list. I sent them an umbrella, mug, or whatever promotional items we had on hand, along with a handwritten note, and my business card. I thanked them for being loyal subscribers and asked them to reach out to me with questions and any thoughts they may have to improve the Leaf Chronicle.

Over the first 12 months, I sent 60 notes, 60 promotional items, and 60 business cards, which doesn't seem like much in a community of 200,000. But, incredibly, I heard back from most of the people I contacted, thanking me, and telling me how surprised they were to receive something from us. That was nice and I kind of expected those responses, but what I didn't expect was the buzz it created. After the first few months, I had several people tell me they had heard I was "thanking" loyal customers and how nice it was. One day a county executive called me and asked when he was getting his umbrella.

Probably the hardest thing for me through this process was setting aside the time each month to write the notes; there is never a lack of things that need to get done. It was definitely a worthwhile investment of my time.

A quick update on the 111th General Assembly. The latest session began on Jan. 8, new representatives from across the state were sworn in, new house and senate committees have been assigned, and, by the time you read this, Bill Lee will have been sworn in as our new governor. I invite each of you to come and spend a morning or afternoon with me during session. It would be great to have you meet with your local representatives at Cordell Hull. The legislators actually enjoy seeing someone from home, and particularly someone from their hometown newspaper.

Carol

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

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

### FEBRUARY

- 6-7: Tennessee Press Association Winter Convention, Doubletree Nashville Downtown Hotel, Nashville
- 15: Deadline - Tennessee Press Association Ad/Circulation Ideas Contest
- 22: Deadline - Tennessee Press Association State Press Contests
- 25-27: Southern Newspaper Publishers Association 2019 Key Executives Mega-Conference, Paris Las Vegas Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev.

### MARCH

- 6-9: College Media Association Spring National College Media Convention 2019, New York Marriott Marquis, New York, NY.

### JULY

- 18-19: Tennessee Press Association Summer Convention and Advertising/Circulation Conference, Chattanooga, Tenn.

### OCTOBER

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

### 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.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Herald-Citizen begins new print schedule

The new year brought a new print publication cycle to readers of the Herald-Citizen. Beginning in early January, the Herald-Citizen started publishing an afternoon paper Tuesday through Friday as well as Sunday morning.

Rather than print a newspaper on Mondays, the Herald-Citizen staff will produce a mobile-optimized digital web page that will be sent to all subscribers and non-sub-

scribers who provide the newspaper with a working email address.

This email blast will preview the week ahead, including newsworthy items, sports and special events sent to your smartphone, tablet or desktop in an easy-to-navigate format.

Death notices will be included in the email blast.

Printed obituaries will continue to be published in the Tuesday through Friday afternoon and Sunday morning editions.

Subscription rates will remain

the same. Based on the current rate of \$95 per year, the average per-paper rate will increase from 31 cents to 37 cents, which includes Sunday.

While there is no planned hike in subscription rates, Herald-Citizen publisher Jack McNeely said the cost of a weekday single-copy newspaper will increase from 50 cents to 75 cents, effective Feb. 1. The Sunday single-copy rate will remain \$1.50.

*Cookeville Herald-Citizen Jan. 6, 2019*

### Herald-Citizen editor chosen for fellowship



Cook

Herald-Citizen City Editor Kate Cook is one of 22 veteran journalists from newsrooms around the world selected for the 2019 class of Kiplinger Fellows at Ohio University.

See **INDUSTRY NEWS** Page 7

## TRACKS

### Carney takes over as Times-Gazette editor

John I. Carney has been named editor of the Shelbyville Times-Gazette by publisher William Mitchell, effective Jan. 1.

Interim editor since Sept. 1, Carney was first hired in 1985 by the late Franklin Yates, who was the T-G's publisher for decades. Carney most recently held the title of city editor.



Carney

"Those who know John know his passion for excellent journalism," Mitchell said. "He has served in the T-G newsroom in several roles, and I look forward to his leadership in this new role."

Former Times-Gazette

editor Mark McGee said, "John has a long history with the Times-Gazette. He knows the county well. He has always been a strong supporter of Shelbyville and Bedford County on many levels. Readers can expect the T-G to thrive under his leadership."

Carney's professional awards include being twice honored by the Tennessee School Boards Association for education-related stories. The news veteran placed

second in 2005 and 2006 in the Inland Press Association's nationwide local news writing contest.

"I'm excited by this opportunity," Carney said. "I would be a little frightened if it weren't for the fact that I was surrounded by such great co-workers, including David Melson, Chris Siers, Dawn Hankins, Mary Cook and Carol Spray here in the newsroom."

See **TRACKS** Page 8

# Reap rewards with meaningful meeting coverage

Newspapers devote significant resources to reporting on meetings of governmental bodies, and for good reason. The decisions – action and non-action on a variety of issues – affect the everyday lives of readers.

But long gone are the days when newspapers can simply regurgitate a body's proceedings from beginning to end. Readers have limited time. Reports must be substantive. Stories must go beyond summarizing the discussion at a city council or school board meeting, and then recording the votes.

The most meaningful stories are those that interpret the practical impact of policy-making decisions. It's essential if you want to connect with readers.

Here is one checklist to enhance your coverage of public affairs:

Identify the news. Write the headline and a summary paragraph. It will help focus your writing. If you don't know where you're going with the story, your readers will be lost as well.

Avoid chronological reports. The first item on an agenda is



## COMMUNITY NEWSROOM SUCCESS

JIM PUMARLO

rarely the most important, if it's even worth a mention. Don't feel obligated to report each and every item.

Lead with the news. Announcing that a group met is not the lead, especially when writing for a non-daily and the story appears two or three days after the meeting.

Put items in descriptive terms. Brighten your writing by making the content understandable to readers. For example, which sentence are more readers likely to connect with: "The city is looking to develop a three-acre parcel of land" or "The city is looking to develop a parcel of land about the size of three football fields."

Readily translate the impact of decisions. Reports are often filled with numbers, and percentages

can be meaningless. For example, a 5-percent increase in garbage fees is better reported as the specific dollar impact on households, retailers, manufacturers.

Include the voices of those affected. Deadlines might dictate reporting only the specific actions of a government body. Depending on the amount of detail provided in meeting previews, focus follow-up stories on the impact of decisions. How will families be affected by higher extracurricular fees? What's the impact of an ordinance to eliminate all neon lights on storefronts?

Track issues. Prepare a summary paragraph of the issue that can be inserted in all stories. Track key dates and votes on the issue to insert as a sidebar, where appropriate. The information is also great background for reporters.

Providing accurate and meaningful reports is the primary task. But words may well go unread unless equal attention is given to presentation. Editors and reporters should review agendas in advance to brainstorm ideas for graphics

and photos. Consider which agenda items may warrant a full-blown story, which can be included in a package of briefs, and which can likely be ignored.

And don't stop with the print edition. Your coverage should span the range of digital platforms at your disposal. Are you tweeting your meetings? Are there opportunities to post video? What about creating a hashtag to convene and enhance a community-wide conversation on topics of particular importance?

The web is useful on two fronts. It allows for immediate reports and places non-daily media on equal footing with daily competition. It has no space constraints and therefore allows for publication of variety of reports, speeches and detailed statistics.

The strongest coverage of public affairs is two-pronged: solid advances to inform readers and ensure robust community discussion, and follow-up reports that provide meaningful interpretation of actions taken by elected bodies. As part of any beat, reporters

should have regular contact and dialogue with elected and appointed officials. Some of the most important stories can occur between meetings.

Make no mistake; it requires hard work to produce solid coverage of public affairs. At the same time, the effort will reap dividends for everyone. Citizens will be more engaged in policy-making. Elected bodies will appreciate the additional attention to and participation in their decisions. And newspapers will increase their relevancy in readers' everyday lives.

*Jim Pumarlo 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](http://www.pumarlo.com) and welcomes comments and questions at [jim@pumarlo.com](mailto:jim@pumarlo.com)*

# Don't kid yourself: Multitasking equals multirisking

Joseph was talking to me about something he feels is important to the ad staff he manages. "These days, there's a lot of talk about multitasking," he said. "But according to what I've read on the subject, there's no such thing. We can shift back and forth between tasks, but doing two tasks at once would be like putting a stick-shift car in first gear and second gear at the same time. It can't be done.

"Sadly, multitasking is seen as a desirable skill," Joseph explained. "I know a lot of people who claim it's one of their greatest strengths. Some job descriptions even list it as a requirement. They just don't understand that multitasking is an unrealistic cliché."

Psychologists agree that a human being is not capable of doing two tasks at the same time. Sure, we can do two things that don't compete for our focus (like carrying on a conversation while walking), but we can't concentrate on more than one thing at a time. When we think we are multitask-



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JOHN FOUST

ing, we are actually task-switching – moving quickly from one thing to another. Think of it as a fast shift between first and second gear.

### Walking while looking at your phone can be hazardous to your health

"I think of multitasking as multirisking," Joseph said. "We've all seen YouTube videos of people walking into telephone poles and falling into fountains while they're looking at their phones. And of course, we know that texting and driving is a lethal combination. Talking on the phone while driving is distracting enough, but texting is stupid. It's as dangerous

as drunk driving.

"In the business world, trying to do two things at once might not put your life in danger, but it can cause mistakes. For example, if you try to write an email and talk on the phone at the same time, you'll risk miscommunicating something to both parties. You can give one or the other your undivided attention, but not both. Even if you don't make a mistake, it can be frustrating to the person on the other end to hear your keyboard clicking in the background.

### Multitasking can also hurt relationships

"Trying to multi-task can also damage relationships," he said. "I remember going to a luncheon which featured several presenters. The manager of one of the speakers was there to support her staff member, but spent the entire time looking down at her phone. Her seat was at the head table, right next to the lectern, so everyone

in the audience could see that she wasn't paying attention.

"A few days later, I ran into the speaker, and he told me that his manager's actions showed that she obviously didn't care about what he was saying, even though he was talking about the company where they both worked. Not surprisingly, a few months later he left to take another job."

Joseph is right about multirisking. When someone tries to con-

centrate on two important things at the same time, it creates a risk that is not worth taking.

*(c) Copyright 2019 by John Foust. All rights reserved. John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: [john@johnfoust.com](mailto:john@johnfoust.com)*

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# Always be careful to put captions in their place

Good news design is the practice of understanding how readers read — then using that understanding to make your newspaper easier, faster and more comfortable for readers to follow.

Part of that calls for proper placement of captions.

During my almost-30 years as a consultant, I've seen captions placed:

1. Below the photo.
2. To the right of the photo.
3. To the left of the photo.
4. Above the photo.
5. Overlaid (and often reversed) on the photo.

Five approaches, used because:

1. Well, it's the correct place to position a caption.
2. The photo and caption will fit in a shallow hole.
3. The photo and caption will fit in a shallow hole.
4. I'll never understand why!
5. The photo and caption will fit in a shallow hole.

I am:

1. Absolutely fine with this placement.
2. Uneasy with this placement.
3. Uneasy with this placement.



By  
DESIGN

ED HENNINGER

4. Absolutely against this placement.

5. Absolutely against this placement.

Here's why:

1. For countless centuries, titles, descriptions and captions on items have been placed below those items. Granted, not in every case, but in most. When you visit a museum or an art gallery (unless they're working very hard to be "different"), you'll most often find the name and/or description of the item below it. That's where we've been trained to look . . . it's where we want to look. So, it makes sense for us to place captions below photos.

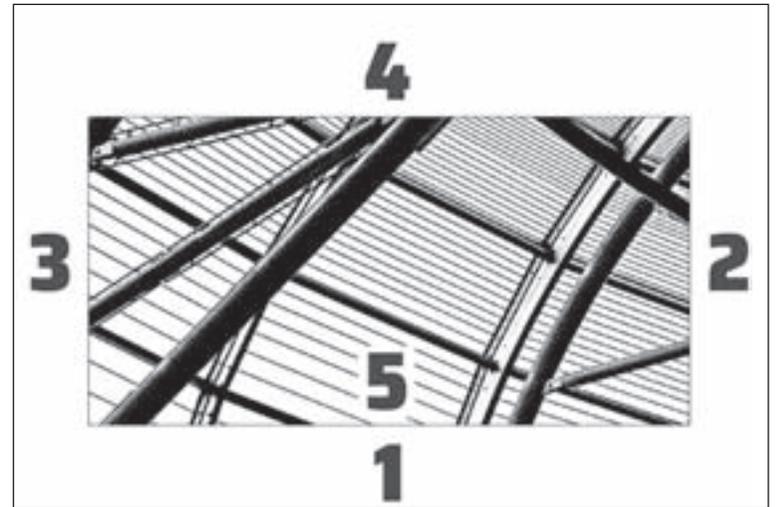
2. Placing the caption to the right of a photo (only if it's absolutely necessary!) allows readers to see the photo first and then follow

normal left-to-right reading flow to find the caption. But . . . it's not below the photo, where readers naturally look first.

3. Placing the caption to the left of a photo may save vertical space, but it reverses normal reading flow, causing readers to have to go left from the photo to read the caption. And . . . it's not below the photo, where readers naturally look first.

4. I am convinced that readers become completely confused when we place a caption above a photo. It's the last place they'll look — and they're often surprised when they find the caption there. It's just unacceptable . . . like driving on the left side of the road here in the U.S. Or holding a knife by the blade to cut your steak.

5. Placing the caption text directly over the photo is a more magazine-y look, but too often it's badly done in newspapers, partly because we don't have the high-quality printing capability of magazines and partly because we don't have the skills to make it work well. Often, this is done just to save some space. A few years ago, I worked with one newspaper



Art submitted by Ed Henninger

The five places where you can position a caption.

client who used this as a standard approach because "...it saves us space so we don't have to edit our stories so tightly." Poor reasoning. If we have to misplace captions because we fail to edit . . . well, then, we're making one mistake to cover up another mistake.

For the sake of readers — for the sake of a better designed newspa-

per — let's put captions in their place.

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](mailto:edh@henningerconsulting.com) | 803-325-5252.

## OBITUARIES

### Arthur Melton

Arthur Melton laughingly referred to himself as a "general flunky" when discussing his job title at The Union City Daily Messenger.

In truth, that's one of the few titles he didn't have at the newspaper in his 65-plus years of dedicated service.

He served as advertising salesman, advertising director, pressman, personnel director, purchasing manager, general manager and IT department director.

The 92-year-old Melton, a resident of Union City, died Friday (Dec. 20) at the Tennessee State Veterans Home in Humboldt.

Mr. Melton was born Feb. 27, 1926, in Martin, Tenn., son of the late Arthur and Bertha (Vaughn) Melton. He married Glenda Logan on Feb. 17, 1951. She died Sept. 4, 2008.

He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and retired as a major in the Tennessee National Guard.

Melton started his Messenger career as an advertising salesman



Melton

in 1951. Until very recently, he continued to help with newspaper rack collections.

"If there was ever anything that needed doing, he would always be the first one to offer

to help — from servicing newspaper racks to running computer wiring throughout the office to painting lines in the parking lot," said Messenger Co-Publisher Scott Critchlow.

Melton was recognized twice during TPA's Nashville conventions, the final time in 2015 as a member of the Tennessee Press Association's 50 Year Club.

Melton is survived by a son, Glenn Melton of Union City; a grandson, Scott Melton of Three Way; and a special caregiver, Linda Scarborough of Three Way.

Union City Daily Messenger  
Dec. 24, 2018

### Jay Searcy

Before ever writing a sports story, Jay Searcy first delivered the news.

He grew up in Oak Ridge and was a paperboy for the Knoxville Journal. Before embarking on his delivery route, he'd devour the Journal's sports page, thereby developing an interest in newspaper work.

His interest spawned a 44-year career as both a sportswriter and editor. He was inducted into the Greater Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame in 2013.

Searcy, 84, died on Saturday, Dec. 29, 2018. He'd been living in Tellico Village for the past 18 years. He's survived by his wife, Jackie, and sons Michael and Mark. A memorial service was to be held at the Community Church at Tellico Village on Jan. 5.

Searcy wrote for the Oak Ridger while in high school, earning \$1 per story. He worked for the Kingsport Times-News before becoming sports editor at the Chattanooga Times.

After Chattanooga, he wrote for



Searcy

the New York Times and was a sports editor and later a writer at the Philadelphia Inquirer. Under his direction, the Inquirer was honored by the Associated Press Sports Editors

three times as the best daily sports section, once for the best Sunday

section and finished among the top 10 in daily sections nine consecutive years. Searcy was the president of APSE in 1984.

Searcy told the News Sentinel in 2013 that the Chattanooga years were important in nurturing his confidence. He was writing editor with a schedule of five columns per week. He'd occasionally improvise to fill the allotment.

Knoxville News Sentinel  
Dec. 30, 2018



### Tennessee Press Service Advertising Placement Snapshot

	ROP:	Networks:
December 2018	\$59,275	\$21,002
Year* as of Dec. 31	\$59,275	\$21,002

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

# If government is serious about public notices, it must take newspapers seriously

*Editor's note: Jack McElroy recently retired as editor of the Knoxville News Sentinel after 17 years with the newspaper. He served as TPA president in 2015-2016 and chaired the organization's Governmental Affairs Committee for several years. Although TPA Public Notices week was in January, McElroy graciously volunteered to write this column about a subject that is of paramount importance 52 weeks a year.*



## PUBLIC NOTICES REDUX

JACK MCELROY

racy since its beginnings, and newspapers always have played a central role, spreading word of public sales, regulations, bid lettings, meetings, seizures, ordinances, elections, and much more.

In recent years, though, some lawmakers have pushed to move public notices out of newspapers and into government websites. This is questionable public policy for many reasons.

First, the assumption that such a change will automatically save tax dollars is dubious. Maintaining websites is not cheap or easy, and many local governments in Tennessee still have only a limited online presence, much less an active web administrator. Bringing

digital operations up to speed in 95 counties and keeping them there would involve expenditures that the legislature can't ignore.

Next, some lawmakers may be under the mistaken impression that newspapers no longer are an effective way to reach the public. Although it's true that print circulation has declined in recent years, Tennessee newspapers still deliver about 4 million copies each week to more than 1.2 million households. Limiting public notices to digital platforms will cut off many Tennesseans, especially senior citizens who are not comfortable with the internet and rely on their printed newspapers.

Besides, by placing announcements in newspapers, the government gets widespread online distribution as well. Under a law that went into effect in 2014, newspapers that print public notices must also post them online at no extra charge. The Tennessee Press Association aggregates all of those online notices onto one, easy-to-use, central

statewide public notice site.

Using newspapers to publish public notices also assures that due process of law is upheld. Permanent, physical records of important announcements can prevent costly legal disputes if the issue of notification is later questioned.

Public notices are especially critical to holding government accountable. They let citizens monitor the actions of officials and be alerted to opportunities to weigh in on issues. Having a neutral third party involved is essential. Otherwise, agencies may be tempted to downplay notices of controversy or announce lucrative opportunities only to chosen insiders.

It's important to keep in mind, too, that newspapers are a "push" technology. They spread information into homes where it can be passively discovered even if it wasn't being sought. Sticking notices somewhere on government websites changes that dynamic. Finding information then becomes a hunting expedition, making it

more likely that average citizens will miss out.

Several years ago, one lawmaker became convinced of the importance of public notice by a constituent who learned that his son was in financial distress only by finding a foreclosure notice in the paper. The younger man had been too embarrassed to seek the help he needed, but his father was able to come to the rescue in time to save his son's home, thanks to public notice.

Each year, the Tennessee Press Association tries to bring attention to this issue during Public Notice Week. This year, that was Jan. 20-26, but this is an important issue the other 51 weeks as well.

Remember, public notice is the third leg of the stool upon which rests our participatory government. The other two are open meetings and access to public records.

If any of those legs gets wobbly, citizens will no longer have a stable seat at the table of democracy. So let's keep public notice in newspapers strong.

When the first Congress met in New York City in 1789, it required that all bills, orders, resolutions and votes be published in newspapers so citizens could know what was happening in their new republic.

A few years later, when Tennessee became a state and adopted its own constitution, it required the legislature to publish any amendment approved by the General Assembly.

Alerting citizens to the activities of government has been fundamental to the operation of our democ-

## MCELROY from Page 1

people and standing up for good government.

"He's not a showboat, not someone who seeks the limelight, but he's been someone who has stuck to it and kept trying to do the right thing. He's someone who has made a difference in the open government arena," Fisher said.

She pointed to his involvement in lawsuits pressing for release of records, including those in the Gatlinburg wildfires, Purdue Pharma in the opioid epidemic and, about six years into his editorship at the News Sentinel, the Black Wednesday lawsuit against the Knox County Commission after that body, in back-room deals, filled term-limited offices with friends, family and insiders; the suit resulted in 12 county appointees having to step down.

During McElroy's tenure at the News Sentinel, the newspaper twice won the national Associated Press Media Editors First Amendment Award as well as the National Journalism Award for Service to the First Amendment and the National Headliner Grand Award for work advancing freedom of information.

## His first day at News Sentinel was 9/11, 2001



Photo by Michael Patrick/Knoxville New Sentinel

Knoxville News Sentinel editor, Jack McElroy, right, talks to Gov. Bill Haslam after his address before the Knoxville Chamber during its annual breakfast Friday, Feb. 17, 2017, in Knoxville.

McElroy came to the News Sentinel 17 years ago from the Rocky Mountain News in Denver, Colorado, where he'd worked for a decade. He was managing editor when the Columbine High School shootings occurred. The newspaper was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for its photographic coverage of the event.

His new role as Knoxville editor was announced in a front-page story in the newspaper on Sept. 11, 2001,

a historic day that eclipsed his personal news, he would tell new hires over the years.

On his first day in the office, this soft-spoken man got to know his staff quickly as they rushed out an Extra edition to cover the story. He and his wife, Debra, now an assistant professor of microbiology at Pellissippi State Community College, had to wait a few days for their planned return trip to Denver since

McGhee Tyson airport had closed.

## His career began in Arizona

McElroy grew up in Tucson, Arizona, where he attended the University of Arizona, earning a bachelor's degree in English in 1975. He started off as a reporter in the small Mexican border town of Douglas, Arizona.

In 1977, he joined The Albuquerque Tribune, an E.W. Scripps Co. newspaper in New Mexico, as a reporter. He worked there 14 years, ultimately as managing editor. While there, he earned a master's degree in management at the University of New Mexico.

A father of three children, now grown, he oversaw the News Sentinel's transition from Scripps to Journal Media Group to Gannett.

"The business has changed enormously with the digital revolution," McElroy said. "That has been difficult, at times. But it also has been a creative challenge to try to find ways to reinvent local journalism. I'm glad to have worked during the traditional industry's golden age, but I also have great faith in the future and the ongoing power of the First Amendment to drive the free flow of

information our society needs."

With so much on his plate in an ever-changing news industry, McElroy easily could have begun "calling it in" when it came to open government advocacy, said Fisher. But he showed up, literally, often driving from Knoxville to Nashville for meetings. He has been serving as the Tennessee Press Association representative to the state's Advisory Committee on Open Government.

## 'Thoughtful, reserved, respected'

Consumer Experience Director Jack Lail, who's worked for the News Sentinel for 35 years, was one of the executive team members who interviewed McElroy for the editor job nearly two decades ago.

"Jack is a very thoughtful and reserved editor. He does more listening than talking. But people respect his decisions and he gets things done. He's respected in his newsroom and in our community.

"Community, political and business leaders across the state respect him for being fair-minded and not given to histrionics. But when he does get wound up, usually about public access, he's always right and people know that," Lail said.

# Christopher named executive editor of News Sentinel

YIHYUN JEONG  
Knoxville News Sentinel  
January 4, 2019

Joel Christopher, executive editor of the Courier Journal in Louisville, is taking the helm of Knoxville News Sentinel, effective in February, as executive editor.

In Louisville, Christopher led one of the best newsrooms in Kentucky, a ten-time Pulitzer winner.

"When you look at the Knoxville newsroom you see there's such a rich legacy and strong investigative journalism," said Christopher, 47, who will begin in his new role on Feb. 4. "Add in the fact that we are part of a very strong Tennessee network ... that's exciting from a news perspective and an audience perspective because of the extra power that goes into important journalism efforts and big breaking news."

Christopher described his new role in Knoxville as a liaison between the newsroom and the community on all levels. "It's vital that an executive editor really forges the deepest possible connections he or she can with the community."

Christopher will replace Jack McElroy, who is retiring on Feb. 1 after a 43-year journalism career and 17 years as top editor in Knoxville.

Christopher said he will be accessible and hold conversations to highlight what residents care about and how the newsroom can address the problems they see in their communities.

Self-described as "not an office guy," Christopher said he plans to be in the "thick of it all" with a seat at the center of the Knoxville newsroom, a two-time winner of the nation's top award for fighting for an open government and the eastern flagship of USA TODAY NETWORK - Tennessee.

## Hands-on editor

"I'm hands on," Christopher said. "I want to encourage a collaborative environment for people to do their best work."

In the two years under Christopher, the Courier Journal staff lifted the veil of secrecy surrounding



Christopher

a state-supported company, Braid Industries. The staff's reporting led to a judge's ruling that Braid Industries needed to release information to the public including the names of Braid investors. The state has appealed that ruling, and the court case is still ongoing.

Other investigations delved into the ties at University of Kentucky with the federal investigations of NCAA basketball as well into nepotism across the University of Louisville's athletic department, which led to new language in its football coaching contracts.

"Joel understands the importance of pursuing and delivering journalism that matters," said Richard Green, editor of the Courier Journal and courierjournal.com. "That means Knoxville can expect a solid commitment to investigative reporting, urgent breaking news and compelling storytelling. I'm grateful for his contributions here in Louisville, and I am confident he will help elevate the already-dynamic News Sentinel staff."

In Knoxville, Christopher will lead a highly regarded newsroom that has been a consistent leader in audience growth in Gannett. The News Sentinel twice won the national Associated Press Media Editors First Amendment Award as well as the National Journalism Award for Service to the First

Amendment and the National Headliner Grand Award for work advancing freedom of information.

It was recognized by the Online News Association for its breaking news coverage in 2017 for coverage of the deadly wildfires in Gatlinburg.

"Joel is a proven leader and major league talent who will continue to build on the legacy of outstanding journalism that Knoxville and East Tennessee have come to expect. He's been a strong advocate of the communities he's served and for the journalists he's led. I can't wait to see what we will accomplish here and throughout the state," said Michael Anastasi, vice president of news for the USA TODAY NETWORK - Tennessee.

The News Sentinel continues to be the digital news leader in the Knoxville market, consistently garnering the most unique visitors and page views among news outlets measured in comScore and continuing on the trajectory News Sentinel leaders have established in the past 18 months.

In October, the News Sentinel showed increases in all desktop and mobile-device engagement measures, including an 18 percent increase in average page views per visit and a 15 percent increase in minutes per visit.

The newsroom launched, Suspicion, a 10-episode true-crime podcast in November. The story of accused East Tennessee "Black Widow" Raynella Dossett Leath is a USA TODAY Network in Tennessee production representing strong collaboration between journalists in Nashville and Knoxville.

Since its launch, the podcast ranked 90 on the iTunes Top 200 charts in the News and Politics category and has had more than 64,000 downloads.

## 'Shoe-leather reporting' and digital acumen

Christopher was born in Wisconsin and graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in political science in 1996.

He has never held a job outside of journalism.

In his first week in college, he joined the Badger Herald, one of the two student daily newspapers on campus. There he learned the fundamentals of reporting that led him to his first job at a small family-owned paper in Watertown, Wis. where he was a sports and news reporter.

He joined Gannett in 1997 at the Wausau Daily Herald. There, he "took the leap into editing," and advanced to become managing editor.

"At the time, those were some of the first efforts in our company where there opportunities for newsrooms to work together on a regular basis," Christopher said. "I was able to get in on what was the start of the 'network' in a sense. We were able to play a big role in testing out those concepts."

In 2005, he joined the Post-Crescent in Appleton, Wis., as a metro editor and became a digital editor in 2006. That year, he headed the team that covered a six-week trial for the murder of Teresa Halbach in Manitowoc County, Wis. The case became famous in 2015 when a documentary, "Making a Murderer," filmed over the course of 10 years, premiered on Netflix.

Christopher brought in reporters and photographers from four different newsrooms to cover the case. He said it allowed the team to be at the forefront of advancing their storytelling and creating a network that leveraged as much resources as they could.

"It was fascinating," Christopher

said. "That experience cemented my belief that you need to have strong local newsrooms that focuses on the community and the region, and also be open to bringing in additional help. It's a huge advantage that not every newsroom has."

Christopher took over digital operations for the network's 10 newsrooms in Wisconsin, and was named vice president of news in 2014. That year he was named the inaugural state-journalist in residence at the University of Wisconsin. He's won state and network awards for leading breaking news and enterprise reporting efforts.

In Dec. 2016, Christopher joined the Courier Journal, where he said he made his first priority reconstituting the investigative team that had "gone dormant in previous years." He banded together a group of strong investigative reporters with skills in data and "classic, strong shoe-leather reporting," led by News and Investigations Director James Wright.

At the same time, Christopher said the newsroom reemphasized and rebuilt their muscles in breaking news to make sure they dominated in their market on the digital front.

Christopher is married to Sarah Riley, also a journalist. They have a six-year-old son.

"We're excited as heck about the recreational opportunities," Christopher said of their move to Knoxville. "Our son is excited beyond belief that he is close to the mountains for the first time in his life."

"We are thrilled to have the opportunity to put down roots in a place that is vibrant and as welcoming as Knoxville. I look forward to the conversations with people on what they care most about."

## INDUSTRY NEWS from Page 3

The newest class includes staff from national newspapers, large-market television and radio, major daily newspapers as well as exclusive online journalists from the U.S. and abroad.

"Being selected as one of 22 national and international journalists as a Kiplinger Fellow is quite an honor for Kate, her Herald-Cit-

izen family and our readers," said Herald-Citizen Publisher Jack McNeely. "Her week-long training in digital journalism compliments our new digital initiatives."

Nearly 400 journalists applied for the fellowship program, which will take place April 7-12 at the Ohio University Scripps School of Journalism in Athens....

Cookeville Herald-Citizen

Dec. 23, 2018



## Contests deadlines 2019

**Ideas Contest—Feb. 15**  
(Advertising & Circulation)

**State Press Contests—Feb. 22**  
(Newsroom)

# Look in the mirror to find your best editor

In an era of constant cutbacks, it can be difficult for newspaper reporters to get good editing.

Many experienced editors have fled or been forced out of a constricting industry. Some who remain are distracted by expanded job duties. Younger editors may not possess the experience and resulting confidence to aggressively edit or rework copy.

Meanwhile, copy editors – long the last line of defense against poor writing – are diminishing in number and may serve as page designers with numerous other duties. Opportunities for training have also been slashed or eliminated.

Yet, all is not lost. Whether or not one works with a top-notch editor, the truly devoted writer can use their skills, work ethic and commitment to quality to aggressively self-edit their copy and improve their writing. Becoming a great writer is a lifelong journey and invariably begins from within.

Here are some ways to eliminate errors, reduce wordiness and sharpen your copy on your own.

• A common catchphrase from my coaching sessions applies here: “Your first draft is never your final draft.” Intense dead-



## BETTER WRITING WITH BART

BART PFANKUCH

line or crisis writing aside, every writer should review their own work more than once (possibly several times) before turning it over to an editor. Printing off a hard copy and marking it up is a worthy technique. Reading the piece aloud and listening for clunky construction or confusing content works wonders. Underlining or highlighting each name, number and fact makes it easy to double-check for accuracy.

• Examine your own copy for indicators – or what I refer to as “triggers” – that reveal the need for a rewrite or rework. You know more editing is needed if you see any of the following: heavy use of punctuation, overly long sentences, lack of parallelism among subjects and verbs, subject-verb disagreement, lengthy separation between a subject and corresponding verb, confusing use of

attribution, repetition of sentence structure or word usage, long introductory clauses, quirkiness or AP style errors.

• Sincerely ask for input or advice, listen to feedback and take it to heart. Every writer has tendencies – some positive, some negative. Reread your material after the edit and look for elements repeatedly changed or cut. Ask your editor what patterns of weakness he or she notices in your copy and heed the advice. Learn from errors and never make the same mistake twice. If you work for a complacent or burned-out editor who reads your story quickly and says, “OK, thanks a lot, have a good night,” do not hesitate to push back and force them to spend more time and give more focus to improving your copy. Be a bit of a pest if you have to. Reading a story and editing a story are not the same.

• Challenge yourself to expand your range and writing techniques. Try to be funny when appropriate. Seek out subjects for an in-depth, definitive profile (increasingly a lost art in modern journalism.) Suggest a first-person piece once in a while. Bend all the rules once you master them, such

as starting with a quote, trying a one- or two-word lead, moving back and forth in time, setting a scene or beginning with the end of the story. However, never hesitate to pull the plug on a new method or technique if it simply does not work.

• Learn some basic concepts of effective writing and implement them. These include sticking to the subject-verb-object sentence structure, avoiding jargon and high-brow or pompous words that are unfamiliar to most readers, rejecting passive voice, steering clear of adjectives and adverbs that weaken and dilute meaning, and always searching for clear, unique subjects and specific, active verbs.

• Respect your readers’ intelligence and time. Most of us have heard the old saying, “I would have written you a shorter letter but I ran out of time.” That’s true in journalism, too. Cutting excess words, reducing redundancy, trimming back quotes and taglines are ways to speed up copy. Write in a conversational tone, but never get too cute or clever with copy to show off or appear boastful. Tell readers what is rather than what isn’t and write

in the affirmative rather than negative voice. Just stick to the facts in most cases.

• Be a student of the craft. Read major newspaper and magazines to see how the experienced professionals write. Emulate what you like from other publications or in the work of colleagues and be critical of your own work in comparison. Go online and read coaching articles like this one. Consistently ask to attend training conferences and eventually even the most frugal editor or publisher will oblige. Visit websites that feature writing and reporting tips and techniques (Poynter.org is a fine example.) Discuss writing with your colleagues and challenge one another to improve.

Writing effectively almost never happens by luck. Increasingly, it is up to writers to put in the time and effort on their own to improve their ability to communicate and write with clarity, concision and flair. In the end, readers will benefit and so will you.

*Bart Pfankuch is an investigative reporter for South Dakota News Watch, online at [sdnewswatch.org](http://sdnewswatch.org). Write to him at [bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org](mailto:bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org).*

**RECENTLY CHANGED YOUR RATES, AD SPECIFICATIONS or PUBLICATION DAYS?**

*Don't forget to update your Tennessee Press Service team!*

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[egoodman@tnpress.com](mailto:egoodman@tnpress.com)

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<https://tnpress.com/post-a-job/>

Reporters • Editors • Advertising Sales • Internships • Pagination • Photographers • Publishers & more

### TRACKS from Page 3

A Nashville native, Carney's family first moved to Bedford County in 1972, when he was 10 years old. He is the eldest son of the Rev. Jack and the late Carrie Carney. He is a 1980 graduate of Cascade High School and a 1984 graduate of Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Okla., where he earned a bachelor's degree in telecommunications.

Carney's civic involvement includes serving as a member of the American Cancer Society Relay for Life event leadership team since 2012. In 2015, he was named the Martha Deason Volunteer of the Year. In addition he's a founding board member of United Way of Bedford County.

He has also been on numerous foreign mission trips, including five to Kenya, which were the inspiration for his self-published novel “Soapstone.”

*Shelbville Times-Gazette  
Dec. 30, 2018*

### McMillan retires from Herald-Citizen

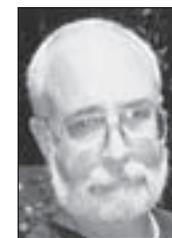
How do you sum up 41 years in the newspaper business? Bob McMillan, who retired Jan. 5 after that length of time at the Herald-Citizen, said it this way:

“These days, you hear a lot of talk about ‘fake news,’ but I’m proud to say that at the local level, we always made an effort to get it right, to keep it balanced.”

McMillan began working at the Herald-Citizen right after graduation from Tennessee Tech with an English-journalism degree in 1977.

When he began, McMillan wrote stories on a manual typewriter and a long, detailed process led to the printing of the paper. By the time he retired, he was using an iMac to write and to paginate the paper.

McMillan has pretty much seen it all, covering city and county government, courts and crime — from tall TV antenna towers installed near houses near the end of the



McMillan

runway at the old Putnam County Airport to citizens threatening to pour concrete in the sewers.

The biggest change he's seen at the Herald-Citizen, McMillan said, is

in the preparation of the younger reporters. “I’m really impressed at how well prepared the young reporters are now,” McMillan said. “Technology has changed a lot, but our mission and approach to providing local news hasn’t changed.”

Herald-Citizen Publisher Jack McNeely said, “While I have only known Bob for less than three years, it did not take long upon my arrival to realize he was an exceptional writer and team player. His daily dose of wit will be missed.”

*Cookeville Herald-Citizen  
Jan. 6, 2019*

## Ad/Circ Ideas Contest

### Deadline: Feb. 15

details at [www.tnpress.com](http://www.tnpress.com)

# NLRB General Counsel issues new advice memoranda

In December 2018, new NLRB General Counsel Peter Robb issued several new Advice Memoranda. Advice Memoranda advise local NLRB offices about how to proceed with a particular unfair labor practice charge.

In one such memorandum, the employer's "Commitment to My Coworkers" policy was found to be lawful. The employer required all employees to read and sign a "Commitment to My Co-Workers document," which included the following language:

1. I will accept responsibility for establishing and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships with you and every member of this team.

2. I will talk to you promptly if I am having a problem with you. The only time I will discuss it with another person is when I need advice or help in deciding how to communicate with you appropriately.

5. I will not complain about another team member and ask you not to as well. If I hear you doing so, I will ask you to talk to that



## LEGAL UPDATE

L. MICHAEL ZINSER

person.

7. I will be committed to finding solutions to problems rather than complaining about them or blaming someone for them and ask you to do the same.

10. I have reviewed policies 47, 61 and 62 from the Employee Guidebook as well as Policy A of the Communication Guidebook that states the use of my cell phone is prohibited by all [employees] unless during my scheduled breaks and I should only use my cell phone in our designated locations.

In finding this document to be legal, General Counsel Robb determined that the rule addressed relationships among coworkers; the employer had significant interests in fostering harmony and stability,

including keeping the workplace harassment free, preventing violence, and avoiding unnecessary conflict or a toxic work environment that could interfere with their activity and other legitimate business goals.

Along with the previous finding, General Counsel Robb also found the following rules to be lawful:

- A rule prohibiting the use of cell phones except during scheduled breaks and in designated break areas. He recognized that employers have a substantial interest in security, the protection of property, the protection of proprietary, confidential, and customer information, avoiding liability and maintaining the integrity of the operation.

- A social media policy that prohibits employees from speaking on behalf of the employer when posting online and requires them, when engaging in online activity relating to the employer, to post a disclaimer stating, "The things expressed on this site are my own and not those of the employer."

General Counsel Peter Robb said this is lawful, recognizing the employer's general legitimate interest in having only authorized individuals speak for the company.

- The prohibition of employees using the employer's logo and other intellectual property. The employer has a strong interest in protecting its intellectual property which could have significant value and can result in significant financial loss if the employer fails to place restriction on their use.

- A confidentiality policy protecting information of patients, coworkers and other employees in addition to confidential or proprietary information about the employer or the employer's finances, business strategy, or any other information that has not been publicly released by the employer. General Counsel Robb stated this policy was lawful as it would not be reasonably read to prohibit employees from engaging in Section 7 rights to discuss wages or working conditions.

These Advice Memoranda are a breath of fresh air. New General

Counsel Peter Robb is bringing back common sense when reviewing employer handbook policies. Employers have a right to maintain civility in the workplace.

## Kentucky Right-To-Work Law is Constitutional

The Supreme Court of Kentucky rejected constitutional challenges to its right-to-work law by a local union and the State AFL-CIO. The Court noted that Section 14(b) of the Taft Hartley Act expressly permits states to pass right-to-work laws. The law had a rational basis because the legislature could clearly make a policy decision that the law might result in more jobs and benefit the overall economic climate of Kentucky.

The Court noted that law applied to all employers and all employees, both public and private. It was clearly legitimate for the state legislature to promote economic

See **ZINSER** Page 10

# A newspaper's unique Vitamin C6 protects the community

**PETER W. WAGNER**  
N'West Iowa Review  
December 1, 2018

A daily dose of vitamin C is thought to keep the human body healthy and functioning. The regular dose of a local publication's unique vitamin C – actually six key services with names starting with the letter C – help keep a town or region healthy, in balance and functioning.

Just a few months after I began dating my wife, Connie, her father gave me a bottle of Rexall Vitamin C tablets. He'd religiously taken one every day for years, he told me, and those little orange pills had kept him healthy and robust when others working in the outdoor construction business were falling ill around him.

I've been taking a 50 mg vitamin C tablet every morning since.

Hometown publications invigorate their trade area with powerful shots of Vitamin C6. These powerful ingredients assure [1] continuity, [2] cooperation, [3] credibility, [4] commitment, [5] consensus and

[6] a true sense of community.

1. **CONTINUITY.** Locally written and edited papers are the most reliable link to the past as well as the most dependable source of informative details regarding what is happening that day or week.

Local newspapers are the first writers of current history. They are the most-often-researched source for individuals seeking family records or community social or cultural information about the past. The community newspaper provides a lifeline that provides **CONTINUITY** from generation to generation as well as between the town's various interest groups.

2. **COOPERATION.** The hometown newspaper encourages local teamwork for the good of all. As the leading media connecting with the majority of local families, the paper is in a position to educate, encourage and clearly explain "the why" something is happening in the community and how citizens can **COOPERATE** with those making the necessary changes and improvements.

Radio cannot create the same

levels of **COOPERATION.** There are too many different stations for any of them to earn the attention of the masses. The Internet can't. That media is overloaded with as many differing opinion blog sites, ideas and voices as stars in the sky. Many of them are shortsighted and biased.

3. **CREDIBILITY.** A newspaper's future depends on earning and keeping the respect of the local readers, advertisers and community leaders. Newspapers cannot afford to get the facts wrong or to take sides when reporting a story. A newspaper's reputation depends upon its **CREDIBILITY.** That hard-earned expectation of honesty and dependability extends beyond the editorial material, in the mind of the reader, to the ads and openly published opinion pieces.

4. **COMMITMENT.** The men and women who own, manage and produce a local newspaper live and raise their families in the town where they are staking their business. They are **COMMITTED** to making that town the best possible place to live, work and invest. Their children attend the local schools,

worship in the local churches and play in the local parks. The family depends upon the decision makers for their individual safety and a certain quality of life. Their **COMMITMENT** to building a better community makes the local paper the town's leading cheerleader for all important events and projects. Papers support those projects with their stories, advertising space, time and often even their own dollars.

5. **CONSENSUS.** Only the local newspaper can create **CONSENSUS** in today's widely changing and diverse community. Radio stations cannot. None have enough listeners to create a general agreement on any subject. Broadcast television cannot. Their coverage area is too large to be able to promote ideas for the common good of a nearby town. Internet bloggers and Facebook cannot. There aren't two bloggers or websites with the same idea, message or purpose. Only the community newspaper, subscribed to and delivered to the majority of homes in the community can change minds, offer detailed ideas and motivate a wide range of citizens to one

common, worthwhile solution.

6. **COMMUNITY.** Everyone belongs to a number of communities: the town they live in, the church they attend, the high school whose team they and their friends cheer for, the organizations they belong to and finally, the place where they work. Individuals are part of those groups because it makes them feel comfortable, safe and secure and often provides an exciting challenge or satisfying experience. Being part of a **COMMUNITY** offers recreation and educational opportunities, guarantees a better, more balanced life and provide a source of income.

Newspapers help enforce that important sense of community with powerful storytelling, reliable reporting and solid leadership. They create a closely-knit group of individuals sharing a common hope, goal and purpose.

*Peter W. Wagner is founder and publisher of the award winning N'West Iowa REVIEW and 13 additional publications. Contact him at 712-348-3550.*

# Meet Becky Moats, network coordinator at TPS

One of the best kept-secrets on the Tennessee Press team is Becky Moats, the Tennessee Press Networks Coordinator. Becky joined Tennessee Press in November 2017 and came to us from The Clarksville Leaf Chronicle. Becky has 12 years of experience in the newspaper industry and puts all of those years of experience to work selling the Tennessee Press Network Program across the state.

If you are not familiar with the network program, a quick overview is in order. The network program exists in display or classified line form. It is a way for regional and national customers to buy ad placements across a large majority of our member papers. It is essentially a remnant program that offers your paper the flexibility of when to place the ad and then gives the customer a discounted rate for their flexibility as to when the ad runs and where it runs. There are other stipulations in place as well, such as limited sizes available in the program; the ads are black and white only, and generally they are prepaid by the client.

One of the lesser-known things about this program, though, is that our member papers can sell this program to their clients. If you have a client that needs ad coverage broader than what your paper or company can deliver, it is a great way for you to remain their primary point of contact and own that relationship but fulfill this need. When you or your sales team sell the ad placement, you retain a larger portion of the ad revenue. Most members participate in this program on a consistent basis. If your paper is not participating and you would like more



**SALES  
SUCCESS**

SHELLEY DAVIS

details on this program or a quick overview for your sales staff, please reach out to us and let us know!

- Shelley Davis, Director of Sales & Marketing  
sdavis@tnpress.com  
615-801-4675

- Becky Moats, Network Coordinator  
bmoats@tnpress.com  
931-624-8916

Below you will find more details about the Network program and some fun facts about Becky!

**Q:** So, Becky – how many ad sizes are available in the network program?

**A:** Four sizes are available - 2x2, 2x4, 2x6, and quarter-page

**Q:** What is the deadline for this program if a member paper wants to place the ad?

**A:** Deadline is noon Tuesday for Classified. Deadline is noon Tuesday for Display ads if the creative is being sent camera-ready. Deadline is Monday at 10 a.m. if we are designing the ad. Ads are black and white only.

**Q:** What are the steps a member paper needs to take if they sell an ad in this program to get it scheduled?

**A:** Email bmoats@tnpress.com the ad size, run dates, area that the ad is being placed in (state-

wide, east, middle, west) customer name and ad copy. I will take care of scheduling and sending to the newspapers. The newspaper will be invoiced.

Thanks for the great info, Becky . . . now, let's take a few minutes to let our members get to know a little more about you!

**Q:** How long have you been in the newspaper industry?

**A:** I have been in the newspaper industry for 12 years. I was at the Leaf Chronicle in the advertising department for 11 years. I have been with TPS since December 2017.

**Q:** What did you do before moving into the publishing world?

**A:** I was training and general manager for Shoney's for eight years.

**Q:** We all have a passion outside of our day jobs, tell us about yours.

**A:** Family time is my favorite time. Maggie, our granddaughter, is six years old. I love spending time with Maggie and shopping for her. When Maggie and I are together, we make the most of every moment cooking, reading, painting and playing games. She is my joy. I have two boxers and a golden retriever that keeps me busy daily.

**Q:** What is the craziest thing you have ever done, at least that you will tell us about?

**A:** In 2009 we left on Christmas night on a fishing trip to Kissimmee, Fla. Four hours down the road, we had a wreck in Georgia. There had been a wreck there earlier in the day at the exit and the road sign warning of the curve was gone. Exiting at fifty miles an hour was way too fast. We took out the second road sign



Submitted photo

**Becky Moats joined TPS in 2017.**

and traveled down an embankment. We were blessed, no one was hurt. The wrecker pulled us to the road. We drove to the nearest hotel. At 8 a.m. we called the insurance company and filed the claim over the phone. We left the truck and boat sitting in the hotel parking lot, rented a truck, loaded our fishing gear in the truck and went on to Florida. We had a friend that stored an old boat in Florida. We used his boat and fished for the next five days. Highlight of the week: I got a big bass (10 pounds)!

**Q:** Tell us about one of your publishing pet peeves!

**A:** I like for information and ads to be correct (wording, dates, photos centered, etc.). The way ads look or the way the news and articles read reflect on us as a company.

**Q:** Tell us about one of your favorite experiences with a customer.

**A:** I am very protective of my customers. My favorite experience is when a challenging customer who wasn't sure about advertising was satisfied and they continued to advertise.

**Q:** What is the most interesting thing you've read recently about media/advertising?

**A:** When an emailed newsletter or advertisement is sent it can easily be deleted and it is gone, but when printed news and/or ads are delivered to your office or home you have it in your hand, in your office or in your home to look at when it is convenient.

**Q:** If you were given a full-page ad in every newspaper in the state in which to put your own message, what would it be?

**A:** Today there seems to be so much negativity in our society. Daily we see what is happening in the world almost instantly. Reviews and opinions can be posted on everything. People instantly comment their negative opinions without thinking of who it might hurt or without knowing what they are speaking about. I would ask people to be kind in their comments and when speaking to others. Maybe that person is having a bad day but still came to work. Maybe they just need someone to say to them: Have a good day! I would ask people to THINK before you speak or comment:

T - Is it TRUTHFUL?

H - Is it HONEST?

I - Is it INSPIRING?

N - Is it NECESSARY?

K - Is it KIND?

*Shelley Davis is the sales and marketing director of Tennessee Press Service.*

## ZINSER from Page 9

development, promote job growth, and to remove Kentucky's economic disadvantages in competing with neighboring states.

## Union information request is not valid

The NLRB's Division of Advice recently opined that an Employer was required to answer a union's information request about how a company would spend its corporate tax savings from the 2017 Tax

Cuts and Jobs Act ("TCJA"). The union stated its purpose for the request was to prepare for bargaining and "to ensure the tax cut raises wages and stops the off-shoring of jobs." The Employer refused to provide the information.

The NLRB decided there was no duty to provide the information because "the Union has failed to identify any provision in the TCJA obligating the Employer to spend its tax savings toward the union's preferred objectives." The NLRB concluded that how the Employer chose to spend its tax savings was

an entrepreneurial decision.

The NLRB also rejected the union's second argument that it needed the information to bargain about business and 401k matches. The union failed to show the information was reasonably necessary to frame or support any union bargaining proposals.

## Illegal actions are not protected by Title VII

Suppose one of your employees filed a charge of discrimination with the EEOC. Suppose further

that the employee, to support the charge, without authorization, copies confidential personnel files and gives them to the EEOC. When you learn about this, you fire the employee for violating your confidentiality policy. The employee then files a new charge, claiming retaliation for her protected activity of gathering evidence to support the original charge.

In a recent case, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit ruled against the employee's retaliation claim. It concluded that the employee violated a state law by

"knowingly and willingly examining, removing, or copying any portion of a confidential personnel file" without authorized access. The Court stated that the illegal actions do not constitute protected activity under Title VII. Further, "it was loath" to provide employees an incentive to rummage through confidential files looking for evidence.

*L. Michael Zinser is president of The Zinser Law Firm, P.C., in Nashville, Tenn. He can be reached at 615.255.9700 and mzinser@zinserslaw.com.*

**INMATES** from Page 12

On face value, the \$100 per month that it would take a person making weekly deposits to fund 30 minutes of calls per day may not seem prohibitive — even if well above market-rate prices for landline services in which a few dollars per month grants unlimited calls. But among court-involved families, who often grapple with poverty, many people simply don't have it, Sawyer says. And because of related transportation costs, in-person visits don't serve as a free substitute, she says.

"It's one thing to charge the cost of a call. It's another thing for people to be making money off another person's misfortune"

American Community Survey statistics show that 28 percent of Shelby County households live below the federal poverty line of \$25,100 for a family of four.

As for the direction of potential reform, Sawyer notes that her priority in looking at commercialization in county jails are juvenile detainees. "My biggest concern here are the kids who can't get in touch with their parents, whose parents can't afford to get in touch with them," Sawyer says.

And she says that she's not certain bringing the per-minute cost down a few more cents is how the county can have the most impact in alleviating family members' burden, given the other fees they face.

**'If there's a way to do it, we would not be opposed'**

In New York, that dynamic prompted families and advocates to demand free calls from city jails, where the vast majority of detainees have yet to be convicted of any crime. And, with the passage of a new municipal ordinance in July 2018, that's what they won.

As opposed to focusing on smaller bills for families, the coalition backing the legislation pushed to eliminate their bill altogether, says Luke Noel, a staff member of the Corrections Accountability Project, which seeks to raise awareness on prison commerce.

For Steve Leech, chief administrative officer for the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, free calls are a non-starter because GTL maintains the phone system and he says the office would have to hire IT employees to take their place. And a

scenario like that in place in Nashville, where GTL still makes money but the county forgoes its share, won't work either, Leech says, because the sheriff's office uses that revenue to fund other aspects of its communications system. Without it, Leech says, the sheriff's office would be forced to request that money from taxpayers.

"What you don't do is hold them in county jail and then raise revenue on low income people while doing it. It's a double injustice."

But Doug Smith, senior policy analyst for the Criminal Justice Coalition in Texas, where rates were recently slashed to 6 cents per minute, disagrees.

"The way that you control costs is to not hold people pretrial. You institute pretrial reforms," he says, citing a growing consensus on the elimination of cash bond, which keeps poor people in jail as they await trial, simply because they can't afford it.

"What you don't do is hold them in county jail and then raise revenue on low-income people while doing it. It's a double injustice," Smith says.

Bonner doesn't disagree that the main solution for taxpayers lies in population decline. "At the end of the day, we need to reduce the population," he says.

"We've got to serve the community in all facets, the incarcerated people as well as our taxpayers," he says. Of any proposals that could lessen costs for families while meeting the sheriff's office's needs, Bonner says, "If there's a way to do it, we would not be opposed."

**Juveniles and pretrial detainees**

In comparison to the county's total \$1.25 billion budget, the \$1 million in jail phone revenue ultimately represents a negligible amount — .08 percent.

Within the total budget, county corrections and the sheriff pull in a combined \$55.5 million. Phone revenue from GTL represents 1.8 percent of that.

Looking at juveniles and pretrial detainees, The Commercial Appeal analyzed monthly payments to the county from GTL and found that the cost of calls for juvenile detainees could be slashed with virtually no change to the county's budget. Over the 2018 fiscal year, the total collected by the county from calls from minors in detention amounted to just over \$4,200.

At Jail East and 201 Poplar — where the majority of pretrial detainees are held on misdemeanors — phone calls brought the county \$517,435 in revenue during the 2018 fiscal year, representing less than 1 percent of the combined revenue of county corrections and the sheriff's office.

Revenue generated from pretrial detainees' phone calls in New York similarly represented a drop in the bucket of the city budget.

"It's clear that it's insignificant for them," Noel says. "But we're

son's ability to successfully re-enter society after serving time.

According to Anthony Alexander, an administrator for Shelby County's Division of Corrections, a 2017 Tennessee Department of Correction study found the county has a 32.7 rate of recidivism — a percentage of former prisoners who reoffend.

**Recidivism**

DeAndre Brown isn't one of them. After serving 25 months

that this would even be possible.

"I was in the process of re-shaping the way I saw the world, redefining who I was as a man," he says. "To have the ability to call home ... I didn't feel so disconnected."

For Brown, access to the phone meant he could teach his oldest son how to tie his first tie; be there for his mom and then-girlfriend, Vinessa, who both found themselves in chemotherapy during Brown's incarceration; and support his little sister as she made her way to high school graduation.

"It provides hope," he says of phone access, "and prisons are places that are hopeless."

Prisons are also places with proliferating populations in Tennessee, which saw a 5.5 percent increase in the number of prisoners in 2017, according to a study by the Vera Institute. That figure runs counter to the national trend in which small declines have taken place every year for the past eight years.

In the meanwhile, support for policies that reduce the likelihood a person will reoffend has gone mainstream, given the costs to taxpayers that mass incarceration entails. In May, the Trump administration announced its support for a range of policies aimed at reducing recidivism.

"What a lot of people call reforms, I call common sense," says Republican state Rep. James White of Texas. White was instrumental in implementing a 77 percent reduction in prison phone rates statewide.

"We know that calls enhance rehabilitation in prison and reintegration in society — from a quantitative standpoint," White says.

Through the phone, Brown's family helped him bridge the gap between his commitment to change and the harsh realities of incarceration.

"We understood that he did something he shouldn't have," Vinessa Brown says. "It wasn't one of those, 'We have to get you out' things. It was 'How do we get you through?'"

But, she adds, "The cost that the family has to pay, for someone else's error, is heartbreaking. I hate to use the word, but it's racket."

"There's something with the justice system that has to change, because the point is to change them," she says of inmates, "not make it inconvenient and put people more in poverty — and not say, 'Well, then don't call them.' Because that's just inhuman."



Photo by Brad Vest, The Commercial Appeal, Memphis

**October 25 2018 - A portion of Shelby County Jail East Women's Facility is seen. Shelby County makes \$1 million in revenue from use of jail phones.**

talking about a lot of money being returned to communities of poverty and communities of color.

"It was a matter of bringing up the conversation and saying, 'We're not stopping until these phone calls are free.'"

Harris, the county mayor, said he's open to re-evaluating the county's GTL contract. The \$1 million in revenue is split evenly between the sheriff's office and Shelby County, which manages the deal.

The county also administers the Division of Corrections, where more than 2,000 inmates sentenced to less than 12 years are currently held.

"Something that is really important to me is families," Harris said. "Maybe we should revise the contract with GTL so that the county is not using inmates connecting with families as a source of revenue."

"We know when inmates stay connected to their families, there is a greater chance they will stay out of prison once released," Harris says, alluding to numerous studies that show that strong family relationships are a key factor in a per-

for bank fraud, Brown has since co-founded the organization Lifeline to Success with his wife, Vinessa Brown.

He thinks pretrial calls should be free for people who have yet to be convicted of any crime. Those who've been convicted, he argues, should have the opportunity to earn access to the phone for good behavior.

"If you remove the ability to keep in contact, it makes it very difficult for a person that is actually using prison the right way to come back to the society, to come home," he says.

Over the past eight years, the Browns' organization has served more than 1,000 ex-offenders in the process of re-entering society, through providing pathways to employment, life skills curriculum and faith-based counseling. Fewer than five of those people have since committed a felony, according to figures provided by the group.

But if DeAndre Brown hadn't been able to make regular calls home a couple times a week while locked up, he says, "I don't think

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE I: The Commercial Appeal, Memphis (Photos by Brad Vest, The Commercial Appeal, Memphis)

# Costly Calls: Shelby County makes \$1 million from jail phones amid national reforms

**SARAH MACARAEG**  
The Commercial Appeal, Memphis  
November 2, 2018

*Reporter's note: Diving into Shelby County's \$1 million contract with jail phone company GTL, The Commercial Appeal's piece, "Costly Calls," compelled impact two weeks after its publication Nov. 2.*

*Built on hundreds of pages of contracting and accounting records obtained through public records requests; and relationships with family members cultivated from days of shoe leather reporting at local jails, the article looked at the revenue Shelby County assesses from exorbitant phone rates charged adult and juvenile inmates across four county facilities.*

*The piece also illustrated the positive correlation between an inmate's ability to keep in touch with their family and a decline in the rate of recidivism, which is the likelihood a person will re-offend. That connection prompted Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris to eliminate all phone fees between juvenile detainees and their parents or legal guardians.*

*The article is also notable in featuring the experiences of the parents of female inmates, whose stories are under-reported, although women represent the fastest-growing segment of jail populations.*

Every day in Memphis, more than 5,000 people, on average, spend their hours locked up inside one of four Shelby County facilities, according to figures provided by county officials. More than half are pretrial detainees, held behind bars before being convicted of any crime. Dozens are children, roughly 300 are women, and the vast majority are men.

Despite their varied circumstances, many inmates share one trait. Every day their family members strain to cover the costs that come with having a loved one incarcerated — from commissary food purchases to talking on the phone.

"They want to charge you for everything," says Randy Letcher, a truck driver whose 25-year-old daughter, Aleisha, is being detained at the county's Jail East facility for women, where she's been awaiting trial on drug possession charges since August.

Letcher wishes he could talk



with his daughter by phone every day, given that she had open heart surgery 10 months ago and is in recovery from addiction.

But Letcher says that after accounting for the \$40 a week he spends on marked-up commissary items, including the aspirin his daughter takes every day as a blood thinner, he can't pay for more than



**Randy Letcher's 25-year-old daughter, Aleisha, is being detained at Shelby County's Jail East facility for women, awaiting trial on drug possession charges.**

a couple calls a week. He also loses hundreds of dollars every time he misses work to be at his daughter's court hearings, Letcher says. And each time he deposits money for calls or the commissary, he's charged a transaction fee of either \$3 or \$5.95 depending on how the money is deposited.

"It takes a toll after a while on the money situation," Letcher says.

That toll, for the corporations on the other side of the prison commu-

nications industry, has transformed over three decades into a nationwide industry that in 2015 was valued at \$1.25 billion — a sum built off exorbitant rates charged inmates and their loved ones to connect.

But private companies aren't alone in commercializing inmate calls. In exchange for granting monopoly rights to operate telecommunications inside a jail or prison system, local governments typically take a portion of the revenue collected off each call, in what's known as a commission fee.

Under its current contract with service provider Global Tel, Shelby County is guaranteed a commission of at least \$1 million per year, according to documents obtained through public records request. That's based on a commission rate of 3.7 cents per minute. If call volume tops 22 million minutes, the county makes an additional 4.5 cents per minute.

But the deal contains a termination clause. And the Global Tel contract is potentially at a crossroads, with new leadership at the helm of county government.

During their campaigns for office, new County Mayor Lee Harris and Sheriff Floyd Bonner were asked about jail phone rates. Each said they were against the county profiting off inmates and their families. Since then, Tami Sawyer, an activist-turned-county commissioner, was appointed chair of the Law Enforcement, Corrections and Courts committee.

Meanwhile, a new era of fairer pricing has begun to unfold in other states.

In Michigan, the fee per deposit has been eliminated. In Texas, bipartisan state leadership slashed rates to 6 cents a minute at the start of the current fiscal year. And in New York

City, calls will soon be free.

NiQuetta Baldrige talks about the high cost of keeping in touch with her daughter who's been awaiting trial since August 2017.

For NiQuetta Baldrige, every cent counts. A beautician who works a second job on the weekends as an aide to people with disabilities, Baldrige funds the commissary and phone fees for her daughter, Keinosha Taper, who's been awaiting trial in a murder and abuse case for which she maintains her innocence, since August 2017.

"It's already a depressing situation because your loved one is incarcerated," Baldrige says. "Then they can't reach out to you because of this money and fee thing going on."

Shelby County's current jail phone cost is just shy of 10 cents a minute — a rate that's at the low end among prisons nationwide. But it's double that of Nashville's Davidson County, which does not collect any commission from call fees.

NiQuetta Baldrige is a beautician who works a second job on the weekends to fund the commissary and phone fees for her daughter, Keinosha Taper, who's been awaiting trial at Jail East since August 2017. (Photo: Brad Vest/The Commercial Appeal)

For a family member like Baldrige, who makes frequent, small deposits as she earns extra cash, it's the \$3 or \$5.95 fee per transaction that adds up. She covers the cost of her daughter's commissary and the calls Taper makes to keep in touch with not only her mother, but also her father and grandmother, who Baldrige says live on fixed incomes.

"Just imagine me and all the other people in Shelby County that they're charging a service fee, every time," Baldrige says. "It's unfair."

## Global Tel Link (GTL)

Davidson County Sheriff Daron Hall, in his successful effort to bring the rate in Nashville's jails to among the lowest in the country, credited Global Tel, which also goes by GTL, with being a "fantastic partner." According to spokes-

man James Lee, the company is committed to working with all interested parties to deliver services that "properly account for the true costs" of services.

In Shelby County, Sawyer is reviewing all communications and commissary contracts for Shelby County detention facilities, which include Juvenile Court; Jail East and 201 Poplar, where women and men are held awaiting trial; and the Shelby County Division of Correction, more commonly known as the Penal Farm, where inmates with lesser sentences are held post-conviction.

One of Sawyer's goals within her first year is to bring a discussion or



**Shelby County Commissioner Tami Sawyer, center, was reviewing all communications and commissary contracts for Shelby County detention facilities.**

resolution before the county commission that tackles the total financial burden of food and phone costs that fall on inmates' loved ones.

"It's an urgent issue for me," says Sawyer. "It's one thing to charge the cost of a call. It's another thing for people to be making money off another person's misfortune."

See **INMATES** Page 11

## Showcase Submissions

TPA members can submit a great story they have published whether it be news, sports, business or features coverage. Share your best work for other member publishers, editors and reporters to see. Each submitted story should include at least one photo and cutline as well as an editor's introduction explaining how the story was reported. Send submissions to [editor@tnpress.com](mailto:editor@tnpress.com).