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TPA president Richardson gets leg up on new role

SHIRLEY NANNEY
Carroll County News-Leader,
Huntingdon
August 14, 2020

Carroll County News-Leader Publisher Daniel Richardson wears many hats. He's just added to that list the title of Tennessee Press Association (TPA) president for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. At age 31, he's the TPA's second-youngest president since at least 1970, the youngest in that time being Dale Gentry, publisher of The Standard Banner, Jefferson City, who was 28 when he started serving a one-year term as the association's president in 1983-84.

Because the COVID-19 pandemic forced postponement of the 2020 TPA Summer Convention, which had been originally scheduled for June in Pigeon Forge, alternate plans had to be made for Richardson's ceremonial induction. His taking office eventually was conducted during a virtual TPA board meeting conducted July 17 that was also available for TPA membership viewing. As he sat behind his desk at his Huntingdon newspaper office dressed in white shirt, navy jacket, tie and khaki shorts, (yes shorts), Richardson became the official new president when he virtually "received" the president's symbolic



Photo by Shirley Nanney, Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon

Daniel Richardson, publisher, Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon, quite possibly became the first TPA president ever to take office wearing shorts to the official ceremony held virtually via Zoom on July 17, for which he could only be seen chest level and above.

gavel from outgoing TPA President Chris Vass of the Chattanooga Times Free Press (Vass and Richardson both had gavels in their

hands to make the virtual handoff ceremony more visually realistic, even if a bit humorous.

The in-person 2020 TPA Conven-

tion, which had been rescheduled for September, was ultimately cancelled, replaced by virtual events.

"Sometimes change is inevitable and you just have to adjust and change with it," Richardson said, which is how he has recently described the current state of the newspaper business.

As soon as the gavel was passed, Richardson was off and running (and I do mean running) to some of his other many duties. Besides being a publisher, he is chairman of Associated Publishers, Inc. board of directors, which is a corporation consisting of six newspapers that own a printing plant in Huntingdon.

He has also recently taken on the added responsibilities of group publisher for seven of Magic Valley Publishing's 14 newspapers owned by his parents, Dennis and Lisa Richardson. Besides the News Leader, the newspapers now under Richardson's supervision are the Camden Chronicle, Waverly News-Democrat, Buffalo River Review (Linden), Wayne County News (Waynesboro), Crockett County Times (Alamo) and The Shopper News Weekly.

He is active in church activities and serves as a deacon at the Cam-

See **RICHARDSON** Page 12

Judge affirms ruling in Knox County sheriff case

Knox County Chancellor John Weaver in early July declined a motion by the Knox County Sheriff to alter his order in a recent public records case, even as new information emerged that even more requested records had been withheld.

The sheriff had argued that parts of the order were too onerous, such as making arrest reports freely available for public inspection and having to respond to requests that might be generally phrased.

Weaver in April had ruled in



**TCOG
BLOG**

DEBORAH FISHER

Conley v. Knox County Sheriff Tom Spangler that the Knox County Sheriff's Office violated the public records law in denying access to public records sought by a Uni-

versity of Tennessee sociology professor related to immigration enforcement.

In addition to awarding attorney fees to Meghan Conley, the judge put the sheriff's office under a court order to make changes in the way it handles public records requests and records.

A hearing was held last week to consider the sheriff's motion to alter the order.

See **FISHER** Page 5

Virtual awards announcements set for late September

The Tennessee State Press Contests Awards will be announced via a Zoom call on Thursday, Sept. 24 at 3:00 p.m. EDT.

The TPA Ideas Contest Awards will be announced via Zoom call on Friday, Sept. 25 at 2:00 p.m. EDT. Details will be mailed and emailed to winning newspapers in early September as well as posted online. Contact Robyn Gentile for information at rgentile@tnpress.com.

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TPAers with suggestions, questions or comments about items in The Tennessee Press are welcome to contact the managing editor. Call Mike Towle, (615) 293-5771; send a note to 118 East Kingwood Drive, Suite F16, Murfreesboro, TN 37130, or email editor@tnpress.com. The deadline for the October 2020 issue is September 1.

A warm welcome much appreciated

My welcome into the TPA presidency was as unusual as the times in which we now live.

On Thursday, August 6, I was surprised with a reception of family and friends at my office in Huntingdon, complete with pizza and cake. A giant banner hung on the wall with the TPA logo and “Congratulations President Richardson.” Then, at 2 p.m., local dignitaries arrived, while Huntingdon Mayor Dale Kelley presented me with a certificate of commendation from the Town of Huntingdon. We sat six feet apart and enjoyed the conversation (and the cake).

We capped the day with a “social hour” on Zoom, which Carol Daniels facilitated beautifully. The Zoom call was the only part of the day I had known about, and had therefore been nervous about. I received many words of wisdom from TPA past presidents and members and old friends. The time passed so quickly that I could not believe the hour had expired when we began to wrap up the call.

I want to extend a warm “thank you” to all those who participated or helped plan the day. It was way more than I expected, especially during these wild times. I know that time is precious and while ad revenue is down at most publications along with the rest of the economy, the workload for newspapers hasn’t dropped a bit.



**YOUR
PRESIDING
REPORTER**

DANIEL RICHARDSON

I am sincerely grateful to those who took the time to spend a few minutes on the call.

For those not on the call, I mentioned that my primary goal this year is to bring TPA newspapers closer together. Just like any organization, there are those who participate more than others; it usually comes down to relationships.

It is human nature to want to be around and involved with people that we have strong relationships with. If there is no relationship, then the friction that stops participation (busy schedule, budget cuts, other things that come up) will offset the potential benefit (training, networking, etc.). But once the relationships are built (which takes time) and maintained (more time), the friction is mitigated and the benefits of group participation more pronounced.

This isn’t true just for in-person gatherings and events, but holds true for all types of participation in an organization such as TPA. Contest participation, willingness to judge contests, participation in

legislative lobbying, conference calls, and other activities are affected by the strengths of the members’ relationships to one another and to the organization.

One way I hope to move the needle in growing relationships between newspapers across the state is to tour the state and visit each newspaper. This is something I’ve long wanted to do but believed an impossibility with the raging pandemic the country and state now face. Because of the pandemic, I will wait to begin visits until at least October. Masks will be worn, elbows bumped, all the normal precautions. I will of course ask permission from the publisher or local manager before I visit and will bypass any of those who do not feel comfortable with an in-person visit. If all else fails, we will do a virtual tour.

By mid-September, I plan to have a route plan in place and will begin coordinating with local publishers. I look forward to meeting as many TPA members as possible between now and next July!

Have a great month!

Daniel Richardson, publisher of the Carroll County News Leader, Huntingdon, and group publisher of the eastern division of Music Valley Publishing, is president of the Tennessee Press Association for the 2020-2021 term.

Newsprint might be causing your printing problems - or maybe not

Editor’s note: This column first appeared in the April edition of the National Newspaper Association’s trade newspaper, Publishers’ Auxiliary. It is reprinted here with permission.

As John Banks, a press supervisor I worked with many years ago explained it, “That’s why they call it graphic arts, not graphic science.” He was explaining the fact that printing — particularly printing on newsprint — is fraught with problems, and the solutions are not always simple.

While printing problems can have a variety of causes, many are related to newsprint. Following is a brief list of some issues you might see in your paper and the possible connections to newsprint.



**GUEST
COLUMN**

TONY SMITHSON

Color registration issues

The printing defect that’s highest on the complaint list for readers, advertisers and publishers is poor color registration. This occurs when the four process colors are not printed in exact alignment to one another as the paper (aka the web) runs through the press. While problems with color registra-

tion can be related to mechanical defects with the press, they are often newsprint-related.

When newsprint is wound onto a cardboard core, if the amount of tension applied to the wind is not even across the width of the sheet, uneven tension will result. This causes the newsprint to move through the press unevenly, resulting in color registration problems.

Another newsprint issue that can cause color registration problems is “fan out.” With fan out, the newsprint actually stretches when the first color prints, and shrinks back a little before the subsequent colors are printed. The stretching

See **SMITHSON** Page 4

The future of newspapers lies in the small town

PETER W. WAGNER
N'West Iowa Review
August 1, 2020

The once six-day-a-week, 16,000 circulation newspaper to the north of me reduced its publication schedule to three days a week a few years ago and to just one day this summer.

The newspaper, which was once praised all across the Midwest for its innovative editorial coverage and creative revenue ideas, thrived and grew under three generations of family ownership.

Then the paper was sold to an out-of-state group and circulation and advertising income began to drop. Now, following numerous ownership changes, the paper's subscriber numbers are estimated to be less than a fourth of the once 16,000 number.

Sixty miles south of me Lee Enterprises' Sioux City Journal announced last month it would no longer print a Monday or Tuesday edition and would only deliver that issue online.

The problem for smaller, local publications is their potential to continue publishing is too often judged by what is happening in the often overstuffed, financially extended daily market. "As goes Gannett and McClatchy," the naysayers whisper, "so goes the entire paper publishing business."

But while many smaller home-owned and owner-managed papers also are struggling — especially during the downturn brought about by the coronavirus — some continue to excel. Over the long haul, it will be the smaller, local newspapers and shoppers that will survive.

There are a number of reasons for this, including closer relationships with local retailers and fewer competing digital news sites than in a bigger metro market.

But the biggest reason is community papers still search out and print a great amount of local

information that cannot be found anywhere else. It is not included in the local radio station's five-minute repeats of the day's news or on even the area's most off-the-wall website.

City newspapers make cuts; community papers benefit by staying local

While metro papers have been cutting sections, laying off newsroom, circulation and sales-related employees — choosing to fill their pages with USA Today or other nationally syndicated material — community papers have kept their focus local.

With what has always been an affordable, small but highly dedicated staff, hometown papers have continued, even during the ravages COVID-19, to gather and publish local information important to, and desired by, those who live in the circulation area.

That information runs from what decisions were made at the last city council or transpired at the county supervisors' meetings to photos and biographies of the school district's new teachers as well as the county fair queen and her court. Local names, events and the opportunities to save at nearby stores are what continue to be important to readers today. Local is what is missing from too many metro publications.

Community paper publishers have the advantage of personally knowing and interacting with the majority of their advertisers. While metro and local markets will continue to lose retailers during the difficult period we're experiencing, most small community businesses are managed by owners who actually live in that town. Local publishers and business owners regularly rub elbows with those shopkeepers at the weekly Kiwanis Club meeting, the Main Street coffee shop or the

Friday night ballgame. Publishers, staff and local business owners feel comfortable with each other, trust each other and call each other by first names. Contrast that with metro markets when chain store managers can be move to another location with just a few hours' notice.

It's the volume, uniqueness and quality of the local paper's content that continues to make hometown publications appreciated and essential to the local community.

Always be looking ahead

But that doesn't mean the future will not bring change. Smaller community publishers need to use this downtime to consider what they might do differently tomorrow — and the months down the road. What new services or publications could be added to the operation's revenue stream? What new income could come from creating a community magazine, providing local businesses with content or advertising website design or by investing in digital commercial printing?

Or how about adding a greeting card shop or paperback bookstore to the paper's reception area to increase day-to-day traffic? And here is a wild idea: Why not

turn the paper's front area into a coffee shop? Coffee shops turn a good profit and provide a great listening place for learning what is going on in the community.

Community papers still have a solid future. But continuing to do things the same old way may be holding some back. The traditional way things have always been done may be holding some community papers back.

The best way for hometown papers to fit into the new normal to come is to consider what changes need to be made right now.

Peter W. Wagner is founder and publisher of the award winning N'West Iowa REVIEW and 13 additional publications. This free monthly GET REAL newsletter is written exclusively for State and National Press Associations and distributed by them to their members. Wagner's PAPER DOLLARS email newsletter for publishers, editors and sales managers is free for those who want it. The two monthly email newsletters contain information completely different than found in Wagner's monthly Publisher's Auxiliary column. Wagner can be contacted by emailing pww@iowainformation.com or calling his cell at 712-348-3550.

Statement of Ownership due Oct. 1

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

published in the newspaper.

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

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

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

September 2020

24: 2020 Tennessee Press Association State Press awards presentations to be made virtually, 3 p.m. EDT

25: 2020 Tennessee Press Association Ideas Contest awards presentations to be made virtually, 2 p.m. EDT

October 2020

1-3: National Newspaper Association's 134th Annual Convention and Trade Show, Virtual Convention

6-8: America's Newspapers PIVOT 2020 virtual conference, to include three sessions of Poynter Institute leadership training and senior executive idea exchange, 847-282-9850

22-24: Associated Collegiate Press and College Media Association (ACP/CMA) Fall National College Media Virtual 2020 Convention, collegemediaconvention.org

March 2021

9-14: Spring National College Media Convention 2021, New York Marriott Marquis, New York, N.Y.

June 2021

23-26: 2021 Tennessee • Arkansas • Mississippi Press Associations Tri-State Convention, Memphis.

September 2021

30-Oct. 2: National Newspaper Association's 135th Annual Convention and Trade Show, Hyatt Regency, Jacksonville, Fla.

October 2021

14-17: Fall National College Media Association Convention 2021, offered in conjunction with Associated Collegiate Press, New Orleans, LA, Sheraton New Orleans

And the Winner is...

UT-TPA Tennessee State Press Contests

Awards virtual presentation

Thursday, Sept. 24

3:00 p.m. EDT/ 2:00 p.m. CDT

TPA Advertising & Circulation Ideas

Contest Awards virtual presentation

Friday, Sept. 25

2:00 p.m. EDT/ 1:00 p.m. CDT

Details will be mailed and emailed to winning newspapers in early September as well as posted online at www.tnpress.com. Contact Robyn Gentile for information at rgentile@tnpress.com.

Here are 10 ways to mess up an online presentation

These days, ad professionals are conducting more digital presentations than ever before. While there are some similarities with in-person meetings, there are some significant differences. Let's take a quick look at 10 of the biggest mistakes in online presentations:

1. Problems with technology. "Can you hear me now?" is more than a line from an old television spot; it's a reality of many online conversations. As you plan the presentation, be sure to consider the meeting platform, webcams, and desktop-tablet-phone differences. It's better to address those issues ahead of time than to be surprised when things are underway.

2. Unprofessional appearance. Even if you're presenting from home or an informal business environ-



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JOHN FOUST

ment, it's important to look professional. While a business suit is not necessarily required, be sure to look neat. And don't forget to smile.

3. Camera movement. My wife had a recent call, in which one of the participants started walking around with his laptop computer. For several minutes, the camera treated everyone to jerky views of his ceiling and kitchen cabinets, all while he was talking.

For goodness' sakes, keep the

camera in one position.

4. Distractions. We all know it's not good to see someone fumbling with papers during a meeting at a conference table. That's just as bad in an online presentation because it indicates disorganization. Also, be sure to clean up your background, so it is simple and free of clutter.

5. Hard-to-see exhibits and graphics. Advance planning is the key, here. If you display ads or charts, prepare carefully so everything will go smoothly. If you hold something up to the camera, make sure it is super-simple and in steady hands.

6. Winging it. There's a sneaky little voice in some salespersons' minds that says, "Hey, you're not meeting in someone else's office. You're in familiar surroundings,

and you know so much about your product that you can make the sale just by talking off the cuff."

Don't listen to that voice. The only way to be at your best is to prepare and practice.

7. Not acknowledging everyone. There is often a tendency to talk to the main contact and pay little attention to others in a meeting. That's always bad manners, whether face-to-face or on a screen.

8. Talking in a monotone. It's not just what you say; it's how you say it. One of the fastest ways to lose attention is to speak in a tone of voice that lacks energy and enthusiasm.

Put some excitement in your words.

9. Talking too much. A remote call is not a license to "talk at" people. Whatever the format, a

sales conversation should be a dialogue, not a monologue. Think of ways to encourage. Ask plenty of questions and respond to their answers with respect.

10. Not listening between the lines. Watch for facial expressions and listen for voice inflections, just like you do in on-site presentations. If you don't, you might miss something which could be a deal maker or deal breaker.

(c) Copyright 2020 by John Foust. All rights reserved. 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

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and shrinking is related to how much water the newsprint absorbs when the first color is printed. Fan out is indicated when part of a page is in proper registration but is out of registration closer to the paper's edge.

Poor ink laydown

Splotchy. Coarse. Rough. These are all descriptions for poor ink laydown.

Ink laydown is a measure of how well the ink adheres to the surface of the paper. If the surface of the paper is too smooth, some inks just won't stick properly. If the surface is too rough, some inks will stick to the surface so hard that fibers are actually pulled out of the paper and back into the press in a process called "linting." More on that later.

To prevent poor ink laydown,

newspaper press operators need to achieve a balance between the paper, ink and other chemicals used in the printing process. Any time one of those variables is changed — a new newsprint supplier, for instance — the process needs to be brought back into balance so ink laydown isn't affected.

Poor photo reproduction

While there are many variables related to quality photo reproduction in a newspaper, newsprint has a surprisingly large influence. In addition to the impact of color registration and ink laydown on photos, linting affects photos more than it does type or other solid areas on the page.

When linting occurs, paper fibers build up on the blanket, a rubber-coated roller that transfers ink from the printing plate to the paper. Because good-quality

photos require a smooth transition from light areas to dark areas, poor ink transfer due to linting can make a photo look grainy or flat.

Wrinkles

Wrinkles in the paper can occur either before or during printing. Wrinkles that are visible in a newsprint roll before it goes through the press are referred to as "moisture welts," and don't usually cause much of an issue because the printing process actually smooths them out a little.

Wrinkles that occur during printing are much more noticeable and are the result of uneven tension, as mentioned earlier. This can be caused by the roll of paper itself or part of the press that is

out of alignment.

A much worse defect, known as an "unprinted wrinkle," occurs when paper wrinkles after printing one color and before printing the next. This results in a line across the paper that has no printing and color registration that is way off. Unprinted wrinkles are generally caused by flaws in the roll of newsprint, but on rare occasions, they can be caused by mechanical issues in the press.

Rub-off or Smearing

No one likes having to wash their hands after reading their newspaper, and rub-off can also show up as dark smears or just an overall dirty look to the newspaper. Rub-off is caused by ink that isn't properly

absorbed into the newsprint. This ink can build up on various surfaces on the press and cause those ugly streaks. Although rub-off can be an ink formulation problem, it can also be caused by newsprint with a finish that is too smooth or that has had too much clay added in the paper-making process.

The science of paying proper attention to the newsprint you use will pay dividends in the long run, and the art of balancing paper, water, ink and press is something all pressrooms must master.

Tony Smithson is the regional director of printing operations for Adams Publishing Group's APG Printing Solutions.

Resident files lawsuit against Lebanon City Council

**DEBORAH FISHER
TN Coalition for Open Government
July 3, 2020**

The Lebanon City Council, despite undergoing training in the open meetings and public records law last year to settle a legal claim, must now face a judge over new allegations.

"We had given them the opportunity before and obviously they still don't follow the law even after the training," said Lorrie Hicks, who filed a lawsuit in June alleging new violations of the open meetings and public records statutes.

Hicks' lawsuit outlines a Feb. 27, 2020, meeting in which the mayor's administrative assistant, Debbie Jensen, announced she would be filling in for the mayor, who was absent, and serving as the meeting chair. The vice-chair Fred Burton was present for the meeting, but not asked to chair the meeting.

Attorney not present in closed 'legal meeting'

At one point in the meeting, Jensen "announced there would be a 'legal meeting' and the five

Councilmembers present followed her and Chief of Police Mike Justice into a room behind the dais and closed the door," the lawsuit states. The public was not allowed in.

Under the Open Meetings Act, all meetings of governing bodies are required to be open. However, under the attorney-client privilege, governing bodies may meet with their attorney privately to receive advice and ask questions about pending legal matters.

But at the Feb. 27 meeting, city

See **LAWSUIT** Page 5



**Tennessee Press Service
Advertising Placement
Snapshot**

	ROP:	Networks:
July 2020	\$107,570	\$23,612
Year* as of July 31	\$789,6476	\$119,311

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

Be sure to tell the stories behind the statistics

Everyday news reports are filled with statistics as COVID-19 continues to dominate headlines.

The number of individuals who have tested positive and those who have died of the coronavirus. Patients hospitalized and those in ICU. Confirmed cases broken down by gender, ethnicity and county of residence. The tally of businesses that have closed. The rising unemployment totals. Terms of financial assistance programs available at federal, state and local levels. Bankruptcy and foreclosure totals.

The pandemic is being analyzed at all angles with all sorts of statistics, but numbers are the tip of the story. Statistics ring hollow without providing interpretation and context. How does one community stack up against others? Is a community in better or worse shape than three months ago?

The final step is to tell the stories behind the statistics, to put a face behind the numbers. The pandemic offers numerous opportunities.

What is it like to be on the front lines? Interview a health care worker or first-responder.

How have individuals coped with being in quarantine or with not being able to see loved ones in long-term care facilities?

What is the next step for a business that faces no other choice than



COMMUNITY NEWSROOM SUCCESS

JIM PUMARLO

to permanently close its doors?

A brainstorming session is likely to generate more than enough stories for newsrooms to consider and pursue.

Beyond the pandemic, exploring stories behind statistics should be a regular exercise in newsrooms. Numerous examples can be found in everyday reporting.

The school board is pitching a referendum for a new school. Calculate the tax increase for a factory in the industrial park, a Main Street retail store, a cabin on the outskirts of town, a home in an established neighborhood and a residence in an upscale subdivision. Talk to representative owners and get their reactions to the proposal.

The daily police blotter reports numerous calls to break-ins and thefts in a neighborhood. The police announce a crackdown with extra patrols, and that's reported. But have you walked through the neighborhood yourself to take a

pulse of the families?

The fall harvest will soon be here. How do local yields compare to statewide and national trends? What's the ripple effect on the local economy? Are local farm operations merging? Is a farmer forced to sell, ending three generations of family ownership? An auction signals the last chapter of a foreclosed property.

Annual reports are routinely presented at meetings of local government bodies – from a wrap-up of parent advisory council activities to building permits to public safety. Identify the most compelling statistics. Highlight those in a story, accompanied by a sidebar with the overall facts and figures. The package may generate follow-up coverage.

You don't have to wait for official reports. Brainstorm other ways to bring statistics to life.

Do a feature package on neighborhood activities for National Night Out. Incorporate a sidebar and graphic highlighting appropriate public safety statistics pointing out where the community is doing well and not doing so good.

Does your community have a Habitat for Humanity program? The volunteers and host family are a natural story. In addition, flesh out statistics to beef up the package. What is the available hous-

ing stock locally and what is the average price? Is there a homeless problem, and can it be described in numbers? What is the menu of financing programs for first-time homebuyers?

Many communities honor a volunteer of the year. Is there an umbrella organization that compiles the total number of volunteer hours contributed by businesses and civic organizations in a year?

Round out your high school graduation story with accompanying statistics on a class's cumulative academic achievements – specifically, what's the grand total of post-secondary scholarships awarded to the graduates? Profile a handful of the more noteworthy

recipients.

All of these scenarios present opportunity to report statistics, but a recitation of numbers without interpretation offers little substance for readers. Stories are more vivid and meaningful when names are attached to everyday news. It's a winning formula for your newspaper and your community.

Jim Pumarlo writes, speaks and provides training on community newsroom success strategies. He is author of "Journalism Primer: A Guide to Community News Coverage." He can be reached at www.pumarlo.com and welcomes comments and questions at jim@pumarlo.com.

FISHER from Page 1

Conley's attorney, Andrew Fels, in responding to the sheriff's motion, introduced new information that showed that the sheriff's office withheld specific records requested by Conley and raised questions about Chief Mike Ruble's testimony during the trial. Ruble provides legal counsel to the sheriff.

Fels said in his filed response that the new records were the result of a public records request made in May 2020, after the bench trial and court's ruling in April. He said the request was not made by or at the behest of Conley or himself.

The records produced by the sheriff's office in response to the May 2020 request included a series of emails in the summer and fall of 2018 that showed there was an "urgent" problem with the lack of a proper agreement between ICE and the sheriff's office that needed to be resolved for payment to be properly made.

The emails show back-and-forth communication between the sheriff's office and ICE about a need to resolve the issue.

But when Conley made requests on Aug. 3 and Nov. 8 of 2018 for records "regarding an intergovernmental service agreement related to detention, transportation, or other services that currently exists or is currently being considered," none of these emails were produced to her.

In one instance, Ruble had received an email from a contract specialist with ICE on Nov. 7, asking him for a "status update on

ICE receiving the signed Agreement by COB Friday, Nov. 9, 2018. Please consider that ICE has been funding this agreement without a signed Order." The email came a day before Conley's public records request.

Fels also in his response pointed to Ruble's testimony that denied existence of an IGSA agreement. He later clarified on the stand that one came into effect in July 2018, and he gave it to Conley. However, no information had emerged during the bench trial about written communication about the problems with the ICE agreement beginning in June 2018 and continuing through November 2018.

"Mike Ruble and KCSO were negotiating the signing of an IGSA with ICE while denying Professor Conley's requests for IGSA records," Fels wrote. "KCSO should, at minimum, have divulged the email correspondence between ICE and KCSO, including Mike Ruble, over IGSA 74-13-0015" (referring to the intergovernmental service agreement contract number).

Deborah Fisher is executive director of the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government (TCOG).

LAWSUIT from Page 4

attorney Andy Wright was not present. The lawsuit alleges that the closed meeting was in violation of the law.

Minutes not provided for January, February meetings

The lawsuit also alleges that the city council has not provided meetings minutes. Hicks on May 7 submitted a public records request for minutes of council workshop meetings from Jan. 2 and Feb. 18.

The Open Meetings Act says "The minutes of a meeting of any such governmental body shall be promptly and fully recorded, shall be open to public inspection, and shall include, but not be limited to, a record of persons present, all motions, proposals and resolutions offered, the results of any votes

taken, and a record of individual votes in the event of roll call." [T.C.A. § 8-44-104(a)].

In addition, the public records law requires a response to a public records request within seven business days either providing the records, denying the records, or providing an estimate on when the records will be available. [See T.C.A. § 10-7-503 (a)(2)(B)]

The city has so far failed to produce minutes of the meetings.

City Council underwent open meetings training last year

Hicks has previously sought to have the Lebanon City Council follow the open meetings and public records law.

After city council members in 2019 deliberated via email on a zoning issue, Hicks hired an

attorney who sent a letter to the city outlining the open meetings violations. The letter included an advisory opinion from the Office of Open Records Counsel, reinforcing that email exchanges weighing arguments for a proposed course of action relative to public business violated the law.

The city agreed to settle the matter before a lawsuit was filed. It agreed to reconsider its action on the zoning in a meeting that followed the law, essentially "curing" the previous violation.

The city also agreed to undergo training on the open meetings and public records law. They received training in August from Elisha Hodge, the former Open Records Counsel who now works with Municipal Technical Advisory Services.

Deborah Fisher is executive director of the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government (TCOG).

If you need to update the list of your newspaper's staff receiving this publication, please send an email to: rgentile@tnpress.com.

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE: The Mirror-Exchange, Milan

Milan native makes Nashville scene as 'R&B songstress Candi Willette'



Submitted photo

STEVE SHORT
The Mirror-Exchange, Milan
June 9, 2020

Life is moving fast for Candi Willette these days.

The Milan native is living in the Nashville area, working as a pre-licensed family therapist, planning a podcast called "Love Therapy," rehearsing the lead role for an inspirational stage play – and, by the way – her voice is being heard around the world.

Candi, known to Milan folks as Candice Floyd, is the singer on a neo-soul, R&B record, "Cloud 9," released in April 2020. The soulful, romantic ballad is available on Spotify, Amazon, YouTube and other platforms. The record created a buzz on promotional music websites, where Candi is described as an 'R&B songstress' who sings with passion.

"It was in about 50 countries, and there were 400 downloads by DJ's all over the world," Candice said by phone, just a week after the record's release. "A lot of people like the groove of it. They really like the picture with it as well. It kind of grabs the attention of people to listen."

Nashville performer

Ms. Floyd has been grabbing her share of attention as a Nashville performer. She's appeared in recent years as CandiSoul with her band, the Candi Wrappers, in Nashville, St. Louis, Memphis, Huntsville, Atlanta, the Royalton Bavaro Resort in the Dominican Republic and other places. She was the featured artist for the 2019 "Women Who Rock Nashville" show.

She's also sung background for several artists and Grammy winners, including Dorinda Clark-Cole, Carrie Underwood, Lisa McClendon, Lisa Knowles-Smith, and Myron Butler.

Candice recorded her first EP, "Love Therapy," in 2016. It featured songs from her personal experience dealing with self-hurt and pain, drawn from her work and music. Her therapist role includes counseling women who are serving time in prison. The new play Ms. Floyd is preparing is "The Anointed Crackhead," in which she portrays the character of Kandi. There was to be a live premier on June 5 on the Do It Cuz Productions Facebook page.

"Just going through the rebranding part is really me opening myself up and exposing who I am as a person," she said.

"It's just been hard being in so many roles and not being able to feel like I'm myself."

Milan roots

A 2003 graduate of Milan High School, where she was the marching band drum major, Ms. Floyd comes from a family of musical performers. Her mother is Tammy Floyd Wade, a gospel singer and alderwoman in Milan. Candice earned a degree in Psychology from Tenn. State and her master's in Marriage and Family Therapy from Trevecca Nazarene.

Now she's juggling her therapist career with artistic pursuits. Even if "Cloud 9" doesn't top the Billboard charts, it's a bold statement of Willette's ability and promise as a musical artist.

The record has a relaxed tone with an easy beat and lush, layered keyboards. The lyric opens with Candi's rap-style list of wishes – some trivial (*I wish my butt was bigger, I wish my head was smaller. . . ."), and some poignant ("I wish I felt all the love of a higher power. I wish I never knew the pain of being broken hearted."). The record then moves

See **SONGSTRESS** Page 7

Dunlap wins TPA newspaper directory cover photo contest

STAFF REPORTS
Tennessee Press Association
August 18, 2020

A contest was held to select the main image for the cover of the 2020 Tennessee Newspaper Directory. The winning photograph is by Sarah Dunlap of the Independent Herald



Dunlap

of Oneida. It is of Northrup Falls in the Colditz Cove State Natural Area, which is located in Fentress County in Middle Tennessee. (See photo below.) Dunlap will receive the \$200

prize for her entry.

Lisa Hobbs of the Southern Standard, McMinnville, was the runner-up with her photograph of Fall Creek Falls.

There were 166 total votes, and we thank all members who participated in the voting. One member commented that she would put some of the locations on her list to visit. We hope many people were inspired

to get out and enjoy some of Tennessee's scenic beauty.

TPA wishes to thank all of the photographers who entered this year:

- Becky Barger, The Bledsonian-Banner, Pikeville
- Alyssa Boles, Southern Standard, McMinnville
- Jenny Chevalier, Morgan County News, Wartburg
- Terence Corrigan, Shelbyville Times-Gazette
- Sarah Dunlap, Independent Herald, Oneida
- Lisa Hobbs, Southern Standard, McMinnville
- Rhonda Laughter, Morgan County News, Wartburg
- Chris Simones, Southern Standard, McMinnville
- Chase Smith, The Bledsonian-Banner, Pikeville

Some locations depicted in the entries are:

- Fall Creek Falls, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Obed Wild & Scenic River, Pickett Civilian Conservation Corps Memorial State Park and Rock Island State Park.



SONGSTRESS from Page 6

into a dreamy soundscape, with multiple Willette voices singing, “You got me, you got me on Cloud 9.”

“This sounds like things I struggle with,” Willette said about the song’s opening.

“Cloud 9” record

“Cloud 9” was produced by musician Cersle Kenan of Enliven Production House and co-written by Kenan and Nashville songwriter Desiree Holiday.



Submitted photo

Milan native Candice Floyd, a resident of the Nashville area who released a record titled “Cloud 9” in April, recently made promotional photographs at locations around Milan, including the Polk Clark school building. Ms. Floyd, using the stage name Candi Willette, is juggling a career as a family therapist with artistic pursuits in music and acting.

“Candice did an amazing job bringing this song to life!” said Ms. Holiday. “When I write, I do so very deliberately. Candice brought that same level of attention, I believe, when you listen to the dynamics in her vocal performance in the song.

“I love how she decided to whisper parts of the bridge,” added Holiday. “I was able to give more insight into certain words and phrases, such as ‘I want you in my Yoni.’ ‘Yoni’ is a Sanskrit word for the womb. I chose the word ‘Yoni,’ because it carried more of an esoteric meaning, describing the womb as a sacred place.

“This song is about finding love with someone who sees through all of your faults and short com-

ings,” Holiday said. “I believe Candice connected with the song in that way, brought her own life experience into her performance, allowing ‘Cloud 9’ to connect with listeners on an intimate level.”

When Kenan created the music, he thought of Willette as a vocalist. “I just love her voice, and I thought she would be a great fit for this song,” said Kenan, who teaches a college songwriting class. “We went into the studio, and – man! As she laid the track, it was like a marriage, like they were supposed to fit together. It was a great fit, and ended up being a great recording.”

“My producer, Cersle made this experience in the studio the best I’ve had,” Candice said. “He’s a professional who’s written for people all over the world. I felt comfortable. He also pushed me to come out a little bit, and do some things vocally.”

“I think it’s a ‘vibe’ more than anything else,” said Kenan about “Cloud 9.” “It showcases the talent and range of Candi being soft, sultry and sensual - all at the same time - infused in an urban groove created by myself and a musician named Darius Mines. Even from the first line, I think it catches your ear

and puts you in ‘that mood,’ you know, that mood where there’s not really words to describe it, but a feeling.

“I’m excited about what ‘Cloud 9’ is hopefully going to do, and I think it’s going to be great for her past listeners to really hear how Candi has evolved as an artist,” added Kenan. “For new listeners, I think it will be something cool and snappy to bump in your car, or bump while you’re working out or hanging out, or even in your lay time, because it’s such a laid back, cool song. We look forward to seeing what ‘Cloud 9’ is going to do.”

“‘Cloud 9’ can be anything,” said Candice. “You have to find out what works best for you, what makes you feel alive.”

National Newspaper Week set Oct. 4-10

This marks the 80th year of National Newspaper Week (NNW), which observes the importance of newspapers to communities large and small.

The theme for 2020 is “America Needs Journalists.” National Newspaper Week runs Oct. 4-10.

NNW is a project of the Newspaper Association Managers. This year’s kit, prepared by



the Iowa Press Association, will

be available at www.nationalnewspaperweek.com beginning Sept. 15. Promotional ads are available now.

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

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

The power of Tennessee Newspapers

DID YOU KNOW?

► **Every month, 82% of Tennessee Adults read a newspaper**

► **72% of adults in Tennessee read public notices in newspapers**

- 64% of Tennesseans believe they should STAY in newspapers
- 84% of adults in Tennessee feel newspapers are the most trusted source for public notices

► **Newspapers reach 84% of voters in Tennessee**

► **Local newspapers are relied on more than any other media for information on local government**



► **89% if Tennesseans who are shopping or intending to buy a new vehicle in Tennessee read newspapers**

► **96% of Tennesseans who are considering increasing their education with an educational institution read newspapers**

► **Almost 1/2 of Tennesseans traveled on vacation in the past 12 months, Here is where they went:**

- 37% to visit family
- 17% went to the beach
- 15% visited state or national parks
- 15% went to SHOP
- 13% went to visit a historical attraction
- 12% went because of a sporting event

► **85% of these vacationers read newspapers**

Source: 2020 Coda Ventures Market Study

NEWS & MOVES

Mauney named president of NC Press Association

Paul Mauney, publisher of The Greenville Sun and regional president for Adams Publishing Group's



Mauney

Tennessee/North Carolina/Virginia region, has been elected president of the North Carolina Press Association. His one-year term began on Aug. 1. Mauney previously served as vice president of the association and had worked in North Carolina before coming to The Greenville Sun in July 2019. Mauney also serves as a director on the Tennessee Press Association Board of Directors.

Mauney began his newspaper career at the Shelby (N.C.) Sun Star.

*Staff Reports
Aug. 18, 2020*

Plain Talk introduces bingo game

The Newport Plain Talk was scheduled to kick off Plain Talk Bingo on Sunday, August 2.

Readers were to find an official game card inside the print edition of The Plain Talk that day, with the first numbers being drawn that Wednesday.

Two letter-number combinations will be published each publication day. Patient (and lucky) players will ultimately get the chance to cash in on a \$500 grand prize in the bingo game, which is sponsored by Aire Serv Heating & Air Conditioning.

"We are pleased to sponsor this game since it will interact with thousands of local residents, and I like the fact that people will get a lot of enjoyment out of opening the paper to search for their number and seeing Aire Serv's name tied to this," said Eddie Cato, owner of AireServ in Newport.

"We're always looking for ways to involve our readers, and we wanted to give not only our subscribers but our single copy purchasers additional enjoyment over the next couple of months

through the paper," said Plain Talk publisher Duane Uhls.

"We chose bingo for this readership game because we know it's popular in the area."

As each number is published, players will need to fill in the corresponding space on their game cards. Cash prizes of \$25 will be awarded to the first players who submit their cards to the Plain Talk with outside edges (16), vertical column, horizontal line or the shape of a "X".

One lucky player who fills all the spaces on his or her card will receive a grand prize of \$500.



Uhls

The game will be ongoing until all prizes have been awarded.

Non-subscribers can get in on the action by picking up a bingo card at The Newport Plain Talk office

located at 145 E. Broadway in Newport, Tenn., while supplies last.

They will be able to drop in to check the announced number on any given day without having to purchase a copy of that day's paper. (Numbers won't be available over the phone, or by fax or email.)

Game cards are limited to one per household. Players must be at least 18 years of age to enter, and only original Newport Plain Talk bingo cards will be accepted for validation and to claim any prizes.

Any decisions made by game judges will be final.

*Newport Plain Talk
July 29, 2020*

TPAF trustees, officers elected

On Friday, July 17, the TPA Board of Directors elected Trustees to the Tennessee Press Association Foundation. The following trustees were re-elected to three-year terms: Jim Charlet of Brentwood; Elenora Edwards of Clinton; John Finney of Culleoka; R. Michael Fishman of the Citizen Tribune, Morristown; Victor Parkins of The Mirror-Exchange, Milan; Dennis Richardson of Magic Valley Publishing, Cam-

den; and Michael Williams of The Paris Post-Intelligencer.

Victor Parkins serves as TPAF president and Mike Fishman is the vice president.

Continuing as trustees are: Bob Atkins, Hendersonville; Eric Barnes, The Daily News, Memphis; Nate Crawford, Nashville; David Critchlow, Jr., Union City Daily Messenger

R. Jack Fishman, Lakeway Publishers, Morristown; Ron Fryar, Cannon Courier, Woodbury

Dale Gentry, The Standard Banner, Jefferson City; Doug Horne, Republic Newspapers, Knoxville

Gregg K. Jones, Greeneville; John Jones, Jr., Greeneville; Janet Rail, Independent Appeal, Selmer

Chris Vass, Chattanooga Times Free Press

Joel Washburn, The McKenzie Banner

*Staff Reports
Aug. 18, 2020*

TPS directors, officers elected

Stockholders of the Tennessee Press Service met virtually on Friday, July 17 at 12:30 p.m. EDT.

Stockholders re-elected are Dave Gould, owner of Main Street Media of Tennessee, Gallatin, and Michael Williams, publisher of The Paris Post-Intelligencer, as directors for 3-year terms. R. Michael Fishman, publisher of the Citizen Tribune, Morristown, was also elected to fill the remaining one year for the term of Ralph Baldwin, publisher of the Cleveland Daily Banner. Mr. Baldwin resigned from the Board earlier in the year.

Continuing as TPS directors are David Critchlow, Jr., co-publisher of the Union City Daily Messenger; Ron Fryar, publisher of the Cannon Courier, Woodbury; and Jana Thomasson, publisher of The Mountain Press, Sevierville.

The Tennessee Press Service Board of Directors met on Wednesday, July 15, during which the Board elected its officers. Dave Gould was re-elected as president, and Jana Thomasson was re-elected TPS vice president.

Every TPA member newspaper is a stockholder of the Tennessee Press Service.

Dave Gould asked how TPS can better serve stockholder member newspapers. Send your suggestions to dgould@mainstreetmediatn.com and Carol Daniels, TPS executive vice president, at cdaniels@tnpress.com.

*Staff Reports
Aug. 18, 2020*

XMI is newest TPA associate member

The TPA Board of Directors met virtually on Friday, July 17. Among the Board's actions was the acceptance of XMI, a human resources solutions company based in Nashville, as TPA's newest associate member.

Contacts at XMI are: Daniela Lewis, VP Sales; Email: dlewis@xmigrowth.com; 618 Church Street, Suite 520 Nashville, TN 37219 (615) 248-9255

Website: www.xmigrowth.com; Callie Pfeifer, Marketing Director

Email: cpfeifer@xmigrowth.com

Tennessee Press Service is a client of XMI to handle its payroll process. Visit xmigrowth.com for information about its services.

*Staff Reports
Aug. 18, 2020*

Bates joins Enterprise team

Weakley County native and Martin resident, Sabrina Bates, has joined the Tri-County Publishing team. Bates has accepted the role of editor of the Dresden

Enterprise.

As an alumna of Dresden High School, Bates said she was inspired by journalism in high school when she was tasked with



Bates

submitting the DHS school news to the local newspaper. She developed a passion for writing as a teenager when she began freelancing for "Our Town" magazine, which

is now known as "Hometown."

While taking journalism courses at the University of Tennessee at Martin, Bates accepted a staff writer position for the Weakley County Press in 2004. Since then, she has served the West Tennessee community in various roles, from education to politics to marketing to reporting.

"I believe in the integrity of news reporting. I strive to present all sides of a matter for readers to develop their own opinions about an issue. National news headlines lack a personal connection with their readers. That is what makes local newspapers so very important to the communities they serve," Bates said.

Joel Washburn, owner and publisher of the Dresden Enterprise, McKenzie Banner and Tri-County Publishing, expressed his excitement over Bates' joining the Tri-County team. "I look forward to growing and furthering our community partnerships as we continue to bring our readers the stories that matter to them,"

Bates is a United States Air Force veteran.

*Dresden Enterprise
July 15, 2020*

Political advertising reminders . . .

- Newspapers should not create "Election pricing." All pricing should come from regular rate cards.
 - Frequency discounts can be offered to candidates just as you would a regular customer.
 - Newspapers should not offer different pricing options to candidates based on their party preference or their location.
 - All ads must include a notation that the ad is "paid for by xxxxxx, and authorized by (or not authorized by) xxxxxx."
 - Publishers always have the right to refuse an ad.
- TPA member newspapers may contact the TPA Legal Hotline with advertising law questions. The Hotline number is (865) 769-1715.

OBITUARIES

John L. Sloan

Award-winning outdoor writer and weekly Carthage Courier columnist John L. Sloan passed away Tuesday, June 9.

Sloan, a Lebanon resident who had recently been in declining health, was 75.

"It is with regret that our staff here at the Courier had learned of John's passing," Courier publisher Scott Winfree said. "His passion



Sloan

Sloan's life full of influence for the outdoors was most recently

for the outdoors, hunting, wild-life, etc. was unmatched. I'm not sure I have ever met anyone else who possessed such enthusiasm for living life the way he wanted and did."

noted through an email he shared with Winfree from an admirer that stated: "I enjoy reading your articles in the Carthage Courier. The content and photos have inspired me to start a YouTube channel, Get OutdoorsTN. My goal is to help inspire other people to Get Outdoors for hunting and fishing."

Sloan's weekly columns appeared in the Courier for the past three years and has appeared in

Lebanon's Wilson Post newspaper since 1987. His life was recently chronicled, both in the Courier and Post, in a Ken Beck feature that ran in April.

Sloan captured more than 150 awards in his 60-year-plus writing career that included the 2002 President's Award for best outdoor story of the year. Many of Sloan's writings appeared in major hunting, archery and fishing publications.

The Southeastern Outdoor Press Association, Tennessee Outdoor Writers Association and the Tennessee Press Association were among Sloan's awards haul.

Sloan is survived by his wife Jeannie Sloan; daughter Rachael (Matt) Wrye, and son Jason (Jolene) Sloan; four grandchildren; and sister Elizabeth Phillips.

Carthage Courier
June 18, 2020

Challenge accepted: What newsrooms need to know about Generation Z

SUBMITTED
June 4, 2020

Editor's note: The following article, submitted by Reynolds Institute of Journalism senior information specialist Jennifer Nelson, was compiled and written by University of Missouri School of Journalism students Alexa Diamond, Francene Bethune, Lana Henderson, Regan Huston and Caroline Kealy.

Our capstone team worked with BuzzFeed to find the answer to one complex question: What does Gen Z celebrate? While finding the answer, we were to develop personality profiles that captured what it's like to be a member of Gen Z and give BuzzFeed three to five content

suggestions that would appeal to the growing audience.

After four months of sifting through research, distributing surveys and conducting focus groups, we learned more about Gen Z and modern media consumption habits than we anticipated. It's usually agreed that Gen Z encompasses those born between 1995-2012. For our research, we focused on those who are currently ages 16-25 (born 1995-2004). Newsrooms can't ignore Gen Z and the sooner they embrace learning about it, the more successful they'll be in producing appealing content to the generation full of digital natives. Here are three things to consider about Gen Z-ers:

They feel inundated with negativity

Our research shows that Gen Z feels overwhelmed by the amount of negativity in the news. Other audiences may have a similar reaction, but no other generation has had so much exposure to the media. This generation of digital natives seem to eat, sleep and breathe content consumption. Younger generations have turned to social media as a form of relief and escape from the stress of real life.

But when their timelines are filled with negativity, we see more members of Gen Z actually shutting off social media and taking a mental health break. We

had a total of 19 participants in our focus groups. Some of these participants noted that they have already decided to stop consuming news altogether because it was too negative. We as journalists cannot control what newsworthy events happen around us. But, it's our job to make sure our readers have the resources to be well-informed, and with Gen Z, the environment to take care of mental health.

We suggest that outlets double down on highlighting positive events that are happening. It might not feel like the most groundbreaking journalism, but adding a positivity column or spotlighting something good in the community can make a difference in a Gen Z

reader's consumption.

They want publications to have a personality

When we asked Gen Z what characteristics they look for on a publication's social media platforms, the top answers centered around being noticeably creative, fun and relatable. One social media account that often resonates with Gen Z is Wendy's Twitter account. Wendy's isn't afraid to call out McDonald's on the timeline, or get involved in a funny meme that went viral.

Of course, not every newsroom can go to that extent, and it doesn't

See **GENERATION Z** Page 12

Judge rules Tennessee School Boards Association is 'functional equivalent'

DEBORAH FISHER
TN Coalition for Open Government
July 7, 2020

Editor's note: This article, originally published as a TCOG blog, has been edited to fit this space.

A Davidson County judge ruled July 6 that the Tennessee School Boards Association is subject to the state public records law because it is a functional equivalent of a government agency.

Chancellor Patricia Head Moskal ruled the association subject to the public records law as a functional equivalent of a government agency.

"As a functional equivalent of a governmental agency, the public records in the possession of TSBA, including its training materials, communications regarding its legislative agendas, and its position statements on stated education law and funding, are public records sub-

ject to the provisions of the TPRA," Chancellor Patricia Head Moskal wrote in her ruling.

The case started when Katie Marren, a mother of a student in Williamson County, asked for records from the school boards association that would help show the role the association plays in education policy.

The association denied Marren's request, saying it was a private entity not subject to the public records law. She filed a lawsuit, with Beacon Center of Tennessee representing her.

The Supreme Court established the functional equivalent doctrine in 2002 in a case involving a Memphis nonprofit whose sole purpose was to administer a daycare-matching program for the state. The Court wrote that "when a private entity's relationship with the government is so extensive that the entity serves

as the functional equivalent of a governmental agency, the accountability created by public oversight should be preserved."

Since then, news organizations and ordinary citizens or citizen groups have petitioned the courts about various entities as they have sought records. Six have been found to meet the criteria, including a private company that operates state prisons and local jails, two economic development organizations, and the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association.

The school boards association becomes the seventh. It's the first case considered by the courts involving a government association.

Moskal based her ruling on the amount of government funding, involvement and regulation by the government, and TSBA's role in providing training and professional development for school board

members.

Moskal noted in her ruling that 90.25 percent of association funding comes from public support, including membership dues from local school boards and contract and program service revenues from local and state government for various educational programming and training.

TSBA is also recognized in statutes and regulations. For example, the organization is recognized as the "representative agency of the members of school boards" and state law allows membership dues and travel expenses for meetings to be paid by local boards of education.

The State Board of Education and state Department of Education also have designated the association to develop and conduct the annual mandatory training of school board members, which is required by statute.

TPA Sponsored Webinars for members

For upcoming webinars please visit onlinemediacampus.com.

Archived webinars are free for members.

Code: TNtraining

Register at OnlineMediaCampus.com

Former Times Free Press copy chief Cooper recalls 50 years on the job

DAVID COOPER
Chattanooga Times Free Press
August 1, 2020

The March day I walked into the Chattanooga News-Free Press building looking for a job as a copy boy in 1968 was very different from the day I retired from the Chattanooga Times Free Press earlier this year.

Over a half-century, production and personalities constantly changed. There were both challenges and fun times while putting the latest and most accurate news into the homes and hands of thousands of readers – and taking pride in a business very much in the public eye.

At age 20 I was on furlough from the University of Chattanooga. I had lost my student job. I had bought my first car. I needed money. The afternoon paper needed a copy boy. (Read gopher.) The Youth Opportunity Center connected us.

The editor doing the hiring was Charlie Crane. The Coopers and the Cranes once lived three doors apart, so I had an entrée. He started me the next day.

The job was to circulate around the newsroom all day, collecting stories on paper, sending them up a chute to the union printers in the composing room one floor above and then distributing galley proofs sent back down the chute to various editors and reporters. When the press sprang into action with the first edition, I distributed papers “hot off the press” to every desk in every office and to all the writers and editors.

Immediately, I fell in love with the urgency and excitement of the deadline-driven newsroom, the clacking sound of two dozen teletype machines, the barking of orders by people, like tough City Editor Bill Hagan, and seeing a fresh display of current events roll off the press every day about 11:10 a.m. Even the Typographical Union’s composing room full of Linotype machines spitting out one line of type at a time of cooling hot lead had its charm.

Martin Luther King was assassinated three weeks after I was hired. Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated three months after my hiring. The newsroom took on an urgent tone in getting comprehensive information ready for publishing. Our jobs seemed

very important. Much later, the Challenger explosion, the Waco Branch Davidian mass killings, the Jim Jones cult mass killings in Guyana, and certainly 9/11 would similarly put news professionals in high gear.

The six-days-per-week job took me every day into founder and Publisher Roy McDonald’s office where he sat behind a desk so heavily laden it looked like a small mountain, but he knew where everything was. With a watch on a fob in his shirt pocket and always wearing a white shirt, he peered over his glasses to all comers, often while punching his huge, old-fashioned calculator. “Mr. Roy,” as even the newest employee was supposed to call him, had the weight of hundreds of employees on his shoulders amidst an expensive war with the morning Chattanooga Times. At the same time he was chairman of the board of BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee that he had founded years earlier. His door was always open.

In an adjoining office was Lee Anderson, the wise, mild-mannered editor-in-chief, and Mr. Roy’s son-in-law. He arrived each morning at 6 a.m. on the dot and within one hour cranked out five editorials, seven days a week, using a manual Royal typewriter he pounded with three fingers. He could type faster than I could think. He was involved in almost every good civic endeavor throughout the city and received, over time, numerous awards given by local and national organizations. In addition to writing, he served as managing editor. Over the years Lee became my Sunday school teacher and the most influential person in my life outside of family.

A number of Mr. Roy’s children, grandchildren, sisters and other kin played roles at the paper over time. Quite a few employees throughout the building — a former hosiery mill on Eleventh Street — had come from the Home Stores grocery chain which Mr. Roy had owned but had sold to fuel the paper in its battle against extinction. It was by any measure a family newspaper. And I liked that.

Newsroom of personalities

The newsroom was full of characters. One reporter typed with a



Photos submitted by David Cooper

David Cooper, with the help of Jane O’Neal, checks over a page for a July 4 edition of the newspaper.

cigarette between his fingers, leaving a pile of ashes a half-inch thick under his keyboard. A man in the sports department always had a cigar going. He never drove a car, walking to work from his home at the YMCA. Another reporter had only a few teeth, but they held the cigarettes that were always present. An editor delivered mail between gathering news, always with the stump of a cigar smoldering twixt his lips. Many others also contributed to the smoky room of years ago, so typical in newspaper lore. A seemingly straight-laced reporter thought he fooled his colleagues by secretly smoking only in a men’s room stall. He was sorely embarrassed one morning when he found a note in his cigarette pack that said, “Everyone knows what you’re doing.”

Legendary City Hall reporter J.B. Collins, now 102, would rush back down Eleventh Street to bang out the latest city government news, often being interrupted by calls from a mayor, commissioners or

other City Hall source. Photographer George Moody was a friend to just about every fireman and police officer in town. They regularly called him about arrests or fires, resulting in the Free Press often getting spot news photos that the competition missed.

Business Editor Pete McCall loved covering ribbon-cuttings but didn’t particularly enjoy covering strikes. When he went to Washington, D.C., as a congressman’s press aide, eager, hustling John Vass took on Chattanooga’s business world and conquered it. Another reporter went halfway around the world for an important story, but John Barleycorn almost kept him from writing that story on his return.

Automotive Editor Buddy Houts kept all of us in stitches with his antics in the newsroom, in his humorous columns and in his frequent calls to on-the-air broadcaster Luther Masingill. He often substituted other people’s mugs at the top of his column as a joke. One Saturday night before Easter Sun-

day, Buddy ran a comic picture of a bunny rabbit where Buddy’s photo would usually run. No-nonsense press foreman Skinny Owens came to the newsroom after the bulldog edition had run to question the bunny picture. We told him that was just Buddy fooling around, as usual. Skinny went trudging back to the pressroom saying, “This place is going to —.” More about Skinny a little later.

Elderly Church Editor Hilda Spence was everybody’s favorite. She lovingly took good care of copy brought in by all the preachers in town. When she planned her retirement, a feature story was written about her for the upcoming Easter Sunday. But she died that weekend; the story became a sidebar to her obituary.

The arts critic drew most of the male reporters’ attention when she sashayed through the city room. One sports reporter had a temper. Once he was so angry he just shoved his typewriter off his desk and onto the floor. And one of the married newsmen frequently carried on phone conversations with his lady friend.

There were and are many other newsroom characters and dramas, but only a book could tell all the stories.

On the beat

When news was breaking that the University of Chattanooga was going to become a campus of the University of Tennessee, I attended a gathering where UC President William Masterson would address affected students. Just on a lark, this copy boy wrote an unsolicited story about that meeting. The next morning I showed it to the city editor and he recommended it as a sidebar to the main merger story. My first byline was on Page One!

Just a few years after my arrival at the paper, the contract with the typographical union ran out and negotiations with the printers’ union had not been resolved. To be prepared for the possibility of a strike and to prepare for more modern printing, new “cold type” machinery that spat out stories on paper was purchased to get around the need for the centuries-old hot lead method of printing, and a number of us trained behind locked doors to be ready to print if necessary.

That day happened on Jan. 24, 1972. As a boisterous picket line

COOPER from Page 10

formed outside, that Monday's edition was produced inside by us novices. The union knew we could produce pages, so they convinced the pressmen to go out in sympathy, figuring we couldn't get those pages printed. But foreman Skinny and Pig, a man I never knew except by that nickname, were loyal to Mr. Roy. They instructed a few others in the building who had some mechanical ability how to help, and the press rolled the first day of that strike. The union knew then that it was all over, but picketed for five years. We scabs were cursed day in and day out, newspaper racks around town were destroyed, BB's were sling-shotted from a nearby hill to dent employees' cars, and acid was thrown on some of our vehicles, mine included.

Years earlier, 1942 wartime economies had made it reasonable for the morning Times and the afternoon News-Free Press to form a joint operating agreement (JOA). All departments would be merged except the actual news departments. By the mid '60s, the afternoon News Free-Press sought to separate from the morning Times in the first dissolution of a JOA in American history. From 1966 until 1970, the morning Times brought out an afternoon paper — The Chattanooga Post — as direct competition to the News-Free Press. When I was covering the fire and police beat in 1969 and '70, the Post had a very tenacious police reporter, who, I regret, scooped me from time to time. Not a happy memory.

Money was tight in those competitive days. A number of executives mortgaged their homes to make payroll. I had been buying common stock since day one. When I wanted to purchase my first house, the paymaster in the business office was not at all happy when I asked to cash in that stock. Things were that tight. All the while, lucrative liquor ads and "dirty movie" ads were kept out of the family newspaper. But the afternoon and Sunday paper attracted many subscribers because of the use of color photos, which the competition in those days did not have.

When Lee Anderson recalled the provisions of the Taft-Hartley law, the paper took its case of predatory pricing to the Justice Department. The government found for the News-Free Press on Feb. 24, 1970, and the Post was vanquished in the settlement. A check for \$2.5

million in punitive damages came to Mr. Roy that many of us got to hold in our much-relieved hands. In subsequent years it was again deemed reasonable to have a new JOA, but this time all operations were in the News-Free Press building, except for the Times news department.

Elvis Presley had a big impact on the evening newspaper. When he died in August 1977, we had a big section on his career the next Sunday. The papers sold out and more had to be printed. The public ate it up. So the next Sunday we came out with Elvis II. Once again, it sold out. On the third and fourth Sundays, we had Elvis III and IV. I was given the assignment to lay out those four sections. The wonderful upshot was that many Elvis lovers started subscribing, giving the biggest period of new sales in the paper's history.

Onto the copy desk

I joined the copy desk crew in 1972 as a copy editor. Our task was to edit news copy, write headlines, select photos to run with stories and proofread the pages of each day's first edition. We worked on a horseshoe-shaped desk. The news editor sat inside the horseshoe making story selections and giving orders. The "rim rats" sat on the outside of the horseshoe. That went on for a number of years. First we used manual typewriters, then electric typewriters whose copy could be read by a new computer scanner. As time went by, modern computers were purchased, then later versions and even later versions were employed. Those were tough learning-curve periods with each update.

During President Ronald Reagan's years in office, he would invite editors of supportive papers to come to the nation's capital for press briefings, rather than hosting the usual Washington press corps. Mr. Anderson was invited several times, once sitting next to the president. In 1985, news editors were invited. Our head news editor was in the hospital, so I got the assignment to take his place. Lee gave me a new title to take along — associate news editor.

Secretaries of State and Defense met with us in the Old Executive Office Building. Then we were walked to the White House next door for lunch with the president in the State Dining Room. Each table was hosted by a cabinet secretary or oth-

er high official. Chief of Staff Don Regan was to my immediate left. Making small talk, he asked what the biggest cash crop was in Tennessee at that time. "Marijuana," I told him, to laughter all around the table. I'm sure he expected me to say tobacco, corn, cotton or soybeans, but just a few days before, it had been reported that marijuana indeed brought in more money than any other crop that year.

The fancy tables had monogrammed china, finger bowls, engraved menus as well as engraved boxes of matches. We were served chicken picatta. Ever since, I order that dish when I see it at a restaurant. After the luncheon in those pre-9/11 days, we were turned loose on our own to leave the president's mansion. I passed a guard at the door, sauntered down the semi-circular driveway, passed a guard shack, crossed Pennsylvania Avenue and strolled into LaFayette Park, heading back to my hotel to write stories for the next day's editions.

Suddenly, I realized my reporter's notebook was not with me. My career was dependent on that notebook. There was nothing to do but try to get back in the White House and find it. I told my story to the man in the guard shack. He let me go forward unescorted. I got to the guard at the door. He said to go on in — unescorted! I walked to the State Dining Room where butlers were clearing tables. The man clearing my table said to check the butler's pantry. Venturing there alone, I found the notebook. Again, unescorted, I wandered back down the hall to the door, passed the first guard, then the second one and headed back to the hotel to write. Today that would never happen.

In the '80s and '90s, the travel editor got many offers to visit distant lands and attractions for publicity purposes. Meanwhile, the entertainment editor was invited to movie advance previews that included interviews with the actors. When those editors were swamped with offers, I was invited to take some of those trips. Hawaii and France were my favorite destinations. The films "Platoon" (that won best picture in 1986) and "Big" (including a chat with Tom Hanks) were standouts.

Mr. Roy was very generous and supportive of his people. When I planned to write the history of First Presbyterian Church in 1990, he said, "Do it first class. If it makes money after expenses, it's



David Cooper was a general assignment reporter 50 years ago.

yours. If it doesn't, I'll absorb the costs." Fortunately, it did pay for itself with just a little to spare. Lee Anderson was my proofreader.

Changes are coming

In 1993, the paper's look underwent a major makeover and its original name was returned — Chattanooga Free Press. Mr. Roy bought out the competitive News and merged the name with Free Press. Journalism schools used to snicker that the News-Free Press name made it sound as if it were "free of news." One day when executives were huddled with a designer around a computer pondering a great variety of type styles for the remodeled paper's logo, I wandered by and made a suggestion that they liked and wound up using. It remains today only in the masthead on the Free Press editorial page.

When longtime news editor and symphony trumpeter Stanton Palmer retired, I succeeded him at the helm of the copy desk of 10 men and women. It fell to me to either choose, or authorize, the stories that went on Page One. Ha! Arriving at 2:30 in the morning was the downside!

President Frank McDonald succeeded his father as chairman of the board in 1990. In just a few years, that "Dismembered Tennesseans" member and spokesman was afflicted with Lou Gehrig's Disease. At the same time, other family executives were retirement age. They determined that it would be wise to sell the business.

The Free Press was courted by a number of news organizations, but executives chose to sell to the owner of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette in Little Rock, led by Walter E. Hussman Jr. That was complet-

ed in March 1998. Little changed until the end of the year when it was revealed that Mr. Hussman was going to buy the morning Times as well and would merge the two longtime fierce competitors. Big change was coming. There would be no more working in the morning for an afternoon publication; a morning paper is put out in the evening. The merged paper first appeared on Jan. 5, 1999. Both staffs lost some members to reach the staffing number that made for an effective crew.

The Times' Rick Moore and I shared the news editor job for a year, and then I was named wire editor, daily sifting through stories from several wire services. Twenty-one years now after the merger, seven Times journalists remain in the newsroom, 15 remain from the Free Press, in addition to many later hires.

In the Great Recession, a number of newsroom folks, including myself, were laid off in 2009. After a stint in local tourism, I was rehired as a proofreader in 2013. Six-and-a-half years later, working complications borne of coronavirus distancing led me to decide it was time to hang up the job I loved for a half century.

One silver lining is that I went out as the longest serving of all current employees. Another silver lining is that my younger brother, Clint, who succeeded my mentor, Lee Anderson, as editor of the Free Press editorial page, continues at the paper plying his own excellent journalistic standards.

In the old days, when writers' stories ended, they concluded with what was known as a "30 dash". So, I end my career with a . . .

RICHARDSON from Page 1

den Church of Christ where he and his family attend.

Believes in change

Daniel Richardson was born March 1, 1989, to Dennis and Lisa Richardson. He is the youngest of their four children, who also include Mark Richardson and Matthew Richardson of Drummonds, and Gerilyn Burnett of Knoxville. Both Mark and Matthew serve in managerial positions at their respective newspapers, The Bartlett Express and The Leader in Covington.

Daniel lived in Huntingdon until he was seven years old when the family moved to Camden, where the Richardsons bought The Camden Chronicle from the John Churchwell family.

He was homeschooled for two years by his mother and graduated from Camden High School in 2007.

Daniel received a football scholarship from Cumberland University in Lebanon, where he played for one year.

This was followed by his enlistment in the United States Marine Corps where he served from 2008-2014. During those years, his travels included time in North Carolina, California, Virginia, Wisconsin, Antigua, and deployment to Iraq. He was honorably discharged as a corporal and a squad leader.

In 2010 Richardson returned from Iraq and was transferred to reserve status and enrolled at the University of Tennessee, Martin, to study business management. He graduated in 2012 with honors.

"The Marine Corps taught me that I need to be in a hurry," Richardson said. "You don't waste time in life."

That led him to marry, start a family and purchase a house in a short period of time.



Photos by Shirley Nanney, Carroll County News-Leader, Huntingdon

Daniel Richardson, new TPA president, is joined by his wife, Lena, and their three children Ella (held by Dad); Elizabeth (front left) and Emmalyn (front right) at Daniel's surprise pizza party on Aug. 6. Among the highlights: a proclamation to Daniel from Huntingdon Mayor Dale R. Kelley.

He married Lena Rose Larkins of Camden, the girl that he had unsuccessfully pursued in middle school.

"She finally came around the second time and we married on July 9, 2011, at the Camden Church of Christ," he said.

In May 2012, he began work as editor at the Hickman County Gazette in Clinton, Ky. where he sold ads, covered news, composed the newspaper, labeled it by hand and delivered it to the post office and businesses.

He served a term as president of the Clinton, Ky. Rotary Club while working there.

On July 25, 2012, he and Lena welcomed their first child, a daughter, Emmalyn Kate Richardson. The second daughter, Elizabeth Anne

Richardson, was born Aug. 8, 2014. The third daughter, Ella Rose Richardson, was born May 4, 2018.

In September 2015 he and his family moved to Camden, and he became publisher of the News-Leader that same year. He is a past president of the Camden Rotary Club.

Daniel's first recollection of the Tennessee Press Association was going to the dinner at a TPA convention, when he was seven years old, and where he heard Governor Don Sundquist speak. He recalls drinking lots of virgin Shirley Temple drinks as well.

"I thought the TPA convention was so cool because I felt like I was somebody among all those dressed-up people," he said. "I would listen



Top photo: Daniel Richardson (right) is joined by his parents Dennis and Lisa Richardson. Bottom photo: Ella Richardson practices her spying techniques at her dad's congratulatory party.



as my dad talked shop with those in attendance."

The newspaper business is just a part of his "raisings" he says and he expects newspapers to always be around, but with changes.

He is a firm believer in changes and moving forward.

Editor Shirley Nanney, who has been a part of the News-Leader for 38 years, has watched Daniel grow up and is amazed at how he handles so many top positions with such ease.

"Don't expect to engage him in

conversation very long because he is a mover and shaker with a lot on his agenda," she said. "His happy disposition always makes him a joy to be around."

He says he is looking forward to serving the state's 129 newspapers as president of the Tennessee Press Association.

"I plan to encourage member newspapers to become more involved so they can enjoy the full benefits that TPA membership offers," he said.

GENERATION Z from Page 9

have to.

Gen Z wants to feel like it's consuming news from a publication it knows, trusts and can have a laugh with. Most news that gets published is serious, and it's impossible to find humor in every story. But, Gen Z wants news outlets that interact with them in fun, creative ways, and this should be implemented by every newsroom.

Instead of just being an account that posts links to the top stories

of the day, what about joining in on a viral trend? Posting a playful rivalry with another newsroom? Social media has blurred the lines of professionalism and fun, and it's something newsrooms must acknowledge when trying to appeal to Gen Z.

User-generated content is personal

Members of Gen Z also create content. Cute cat videos, trending TikTok dances and hilarious

tweets go viral every day, and it's becoming more and more obvious that Gen Z is largely responsible for that. To stay relevant and informed about pop culture, especially on social media, it's important to consume Gen Z's content, and oftentimes as journalists we should include it in our stories and posts. To this generation, user-generated content is personal, and there are ways for newsrooms to build closer relationships with the generation and highlight their online clout.

Outlets should already have a

clear set of standards for using user-generated content, and they should continuously evaluate them. One way to take that a step further and create a closer bond with Gen Z is to use the main brand account when reaching out for permission. Not only is this a way for your brand to seem upfront about where it is getting content, but it's also a way to show recognition to the user.

Our second recommendation is to establish a relationship with the content creator. If your newsroom

is doing a TikTok dance, invite the creator of the dance to Zoom in and do it with you. If it's a tweet you're using, give the user a retweet or like on the main brand account. It's important that newsrooms go out of their way to show Gen Z that user-generated content is important for spreading knowledge rather than an exploitation of "clout." Members of this generation value authenticity, and the best way to build on the relationship with the reader that is to incorporate users just as much as the content you may be using.