

# The Tennessee Press

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## Thomason assumes 2021-22 TPA presidency as officers announced

**ROBYN GENTILE**  
Tennessee Press Association  
August 18, 2021

Rick Thomason, publisher of The Kingsport Times News and the Johnson City Press, is the new president of the Tennessee Press Association (TPA).

TPA is the trade association of the state's daily and non-daily newspapers. It is composed of 18 daily newspapers and 113 non-daily newspapers.

Thomason succeeds Daniel Richardson, publisher of the Carroll County News Leader and vice president of Magic Valley Publishing, Inc.

Other officers elected at TPA's Business Session during the Concurrent Board of Directors Meeting and Business Session on August 19 were Jack McNeely, publisher of the Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, re-elected vice president for non-daily newspapers; Daniel Williams, general manager of The



Thomason

Paris Post-Intelligencer, elected vice president for daily newspapers; Chris Sherrill Vass, public editor of the Chattanooga Times Free Press, elected secretary; and

Eric Barnes, publisher of The Daily News, Memphis, re-elected treasurer.

Directors elected for two-year terms representing District One are: Sandy Dodson, publisher of The Bledsonian-Banner, Pikeville; Dale Gentry, publisher of The Standard Banner, Jefferson City; and Paul Mauney, publisher of The Greeneville Sun.

Directors elected for two-year terms representing District Three are: Calvin Anderson, publisher of The New Tri-State Defender,

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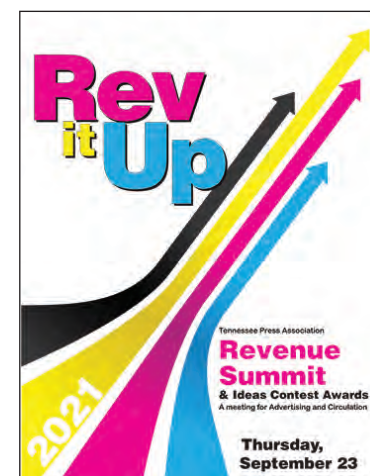
## Virtual Ad/Circ Revenue Summit to include Ideas Contest awards

**ROBYN GENTILE**  
Tennessee Press Association  
August 18, 2021

September 23 will feature an opportunity for all TPA members—a revenue summit for advertising and circulation professionals and the presentation of the 2021 Ideas Contest Awards. The event will be virtual.

The summit will feature a "21 Ideas for 2021" session to be presented by Ryan Dohrn of Brainswell Media. Dohrn, a 30-year veteran media revenue advisor, has helped more than 500 media companies not only grow revenue but thrive through the pandemic.

In this fast-paced online workshop, Dohrn will share 21 proven and tested revenue ideas that any newspaper can launch for less than \$500. Come prepared to learn, laugh, and fall in love with some new ideas to grow your



bottom line.

In addition to the Ryan Dohrn session, there will be an idea exchange for advertising, a separate circulation roundtable and idea exchange and the annual Ideas

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## It's about more than just paper and ink (and pixels)

*Editor's note: Even though Daniel Richardson has ended his year-long 2020-21 reign as TPA president, he offered this column as one more opportunity to address TPA members (at least for now):*

For many reasons, the past year or so has, in my mind, highlighted the importance of journalism in our country and communities. The Covid-19 pandemic deeply scared many of us and, though for good reason, forced us to shut ourselves away from our family, friends and communities. There are many who are no longer with us as a result of the pandemic, which is still raging strong in many parts of the world and has seen a resurgence in America with the aggressive Delta variant.

When people are uncertain and



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EX-PRESIDING  
REPORTER**

DANIEL RICHARDSON

afraid, there is a certain small comfort that can be provided by access to accurate information. That realization puts a huge burden and dilemma on media organizations. Unfortunately, some media organizations have taken advantage and exploited our fears for their economic gain. Media organizations who exploit our readers' pain and fear have given media a bad reputation. Fortunately, most of our local

newspapers have strengthened relationships with their readers and the communities they serve because instead of exploiting fear and lack of information we have informed our readers, helped them find answers and reported on what their government is doing about the pandemic.

### 'News deserts' created around the country

That isn't to say community newspapers have it easy. The pandemic accelerated the growth of digital access to news, information and shopping which further emphasized the gap between community newspapers and media organizations that reach large audiences. The rapid growth in digital infor-

mation access was accompanied by more advertisers taking advantage of programmatic digital advertising placement to target ads based on the computer user's behavior. For most community newspapers, there aren't enough people in the market to make a material financial difference if the newspaper allows programmatic advertising on their web site, where an ad server like Google pays publishers based on the number of impressions.

Community newspapers, by design, have a limited market from which to pull readership, and they are thereby forced to cultivate long-term relationships with their readers with whom they share a common

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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; or email editor@tnpress.com. The deadline for the November 2021 issue is October 5, 2021.

# Keep a 'readers first' mentality

There were no designs on a career in newspapers when I left my college life. Nope. Armed with a degree in mass communications (radio and television), an on-air radio gig or a production spot in television were on my radar. But print? Meh.

A short stint as a reporter at a weekly newspaper in Dothan, Ala., would tide me over until the just-right electronic media position came along. That was September 1980.

It's 41 years later and I couldn't be prouder to have been a part of what has to be one of the most gratifying careers on the planet. Positions over four-plus decades as a general assignment reporter, sports reporter, sports editor, editor of both weekly and daily newspapers, publisher of both weekly and daily newspapers and president of a small family-owned company have given me a broad look at our industry.

Aside from my current position as publisher and president of Six Rivers Media in the northeast corner of the state, becoming president of the Tennessee Press Association is probably the biggest honor of my professional career. A particular honor was watching the TPA State Press Contests awards presentations just a few days ago, the same day I was handed the gavel as the 2021-22 president of TPA. Once a news guy, always a news guy, I'm told. I think the old



## YOUR PRESIDING REPORTER

RICK THOMASON

adage is true.

To those award winners, let me extend another hearty congratulations! More importantly, every one of you, along with every journalist in Tennessee and across the globe, deserves the thanks and gratitude of all of us. What you do is invaluable and often thankless work. But it is vital for your communities.

The awards you just received represent acknowledgement from your esteemed peers. They reviewed hundreds of entries and yours rose to the top. They flagged your work as the best of the best in the State of Tennessee. Hang those awards up. Be proud of them. Heck, brag about them to your readers, if you haven't already.

But never forget that you ultimately do not write for your peers. You write for your readers. Always and without exception. Your peers don't keep you in business. Your readers do.

Keep focused on that simple fact, no matter whether you're writing a two-inch brief or a six-part exposé on government corruption.

Write for those who depend on

you for trusted information, no matter whether you're writing a book review or a soccer game story.

Every day, millions of Tennesseans pick up your product or visit your website or social media pages and expect to learn something they didn't know, read something with depth or find ideas to help plan their weekend. They expect something relevant to them. If journalists write for their audience, their audience will appreciate that rewarding reading experience. If journalists write for themselves and their peers, they're putting words on a page that ring hollow with readers who will abandon them for someone else who understands their needs.

We work in a service industry. Some of you just bristled at that statement. But we serve at the pleasure of our readers and customers who can fire us at a moment's notice. We serve – or should serve – to inform and entertain readers and to deliver advertising messages in the best content vehicle we can produce with the resources at our disposal.

No matter your job at your property, keep a Readers First mentality. It will serve your community well.

*Rick Thomason is Tennessee Press Association president for the 2021-22 term. He is the publisher of the Kingsport Times News/Johnson City Press and president of Six Rivers Media, LLC.*

# How to build data capacity in your newsroom

## CLAYTON ALDERN Reynolds Journalism Institute March 11, 2021

Data rarely has a better idea, because data doesn't think. People think. Sometimes data can help people think a little better. The problem is that it doesn't always feel that way.

Over the course of this Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) fellowship, I've thought a lot about how to integrate climate data into more of our reporting pipelines; about cheap and easy manners in which climate journalists can be better data reporters. But I've also noticed that building data capacity in small

and/or nonprofit newsrooms isn't as easy as it ought to be—regardless of subject matter.

And so while much of my work here has been borne out at the environmental magazine Grist, a large portion has recently been directed at the organizational questions hinted at above.

If you're a small newsroom interested in building out a data journalism team, where do you start? There are plenty of guides out there for "how to be a data journalist." There aren't that many for "how to build a data journalism team for as few dollars as possible."

In partnership with RJI and RJI Innovation student staffer

Tatyana Monnay, I've the Data Unit Guide. It seeks to offer some pointers toward the aforementioned goal.

In particular, we want to offer start-up resources for small-to-medium and nonprofit newsrooms interested in building out their data journalism capacity. The guide's ideal reader is, well, someone at one of those organizations tasked with doing exactly that. The guide is free to use, and we've sought to integrate as many free and open-source tools as possible throughout. It's 2021. Data journalism doesn't have to be expensive.



# New anti-protest laws would mute first amendment freedoms

*Editor's note: This column is part of the First Five series of columns and podcasts produced by the Freedom Forum, a nonprofit foundation that works to foster First Amendment freedoms for all.*

## A year of protest

Through public protests, rallies and marches since the May 2020 death of George Floyd, we have seen a revived, frank — and yes, at times, confrontational — national conversation over racial injustice, policing and other issues.

Most events were peaceful and many marked a continuation of the Black Lives Matter movement of recent years, calling society to account over the ongoing tragedy of the deaths of Black men and women at the hands of police.

Demonstrations on other critical issues have also occurred, for example, in opposition to COVID-19 mandates, advocating action on climate change and in reaction to election results. And then there was the Jan. 6 insurrectionist assault on the U.S. Capitol — a violent act which, it should be noted, was not protected by the First Amendment, despite claims to the contrary.



## FREEDOM FORUM: PERSPECTIVE

GENE POLICINSKI

## State lawmakers propose protest limits

State lawmakers' response to the public outcries: "State policymakers have introduced at least 100 proposals since June 2020 to reduce the scope of Americans' right to protest," says a new report from PEN America.

In Florida and several other states, a person is now protected from civil lawsuits for driving into a group of protestors blocking streets — even if someone is killed. Florida's new law also makes simply blocking that street, a common form of public protest throughout American history, a felony, which could bring a five-year prison term.

Other proposed or adopted laws would allow authorities to jail arrested protesters until a first

"Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters."

— Frederick Douglass

court appearance by removing the option for posting bail. Many impose new, unrelated and draconian penalties for violations, such as loss of unemployment benefits, state aid to dependent children and even the ability to run for public office.

Sponsors of the new bills in various legislatures often fly the flag of preventing violence, despite the reality that most public protests nationwide are peaceful and that laws already on the books are powerful tools to discourage and punish illegal conduct.

## Protest is designed to create discomfort

Lest we forget, public protest is inherently a "safety valve" for social pressures. "Through exercise of their First Amendment rights of speech, assembly, association and petition, rather than through riot or revolution, [protesters] sought to bring about political, social and economic change," Justice John Paul Stevens wrote in a 1982 decision involving protest and its aftereffects, *NAACP v. Claiborne Hardware Co.*

The First Amendment does not provide shelter for riots or violence — period. But "a function of free speech under our system of government is to invite dispute," Justice William O. Douglas wrote in 1949, in *Terminiello v. Chicago*, and speech "may indeed best serve its high purpose when it induces a condition of unrest, creates dissatisfaction with conditions as they are, or even stirs people to anger."

Given the likelihood of constitutional challenges to the harshest aspects of the various

See **POLICINSKI** Page 12

## NEWS & MOVES

### Sparks takes over UT beat for Knox News

*Editor's note: This is a shortened version of Adam Sparks' first-person account written for UT football fans, announcing his taking over the UT beat for Knox News.*

Sitting at the kitchen table with a notebook in one hand and a grass-stained football in the other, I aimed my ears at the clock radio as my mom turned the dial.

*Crackle, crackle, crackle.*

Then John Ward's distinct voice cut the static, and so my family settled in for the afternoon.

It was a fall Saturday in the early 1990s, long before the creation of the SEC Network and expanded TV college football packages. The Tennessee Vols were playing one of those frustrating pay-per-view games, a broadcast set aside from the major networks and Jefferson Pilot Sports schedule.

My parents, two frugal



Sparks

elementary school teachers, weren't about to shell out money to watch a non-conference game. So the FM dial delivered the action.

The upside was that we got to hear Ward, the masterful Voice of the Vols, paint the picture. Then the TV replay on "Big Orange Sunday" the next afternoon confirmed the images he put into our minds.

Three decades later, I recently married an East Tennessee school teacher (Roll Oak Ridge Wildcats, roll!), moved to Knoxville and settled in with my notebook to cover Vols football for Knox News and the USA TODAY Network.

It's the latest chapter in a sports writing career that spans 20 years and now three FBS programs in my home state. I covered my alma mater Middle Tennessee

State for The Daily News Journal, Murfreesboro, (2001-14) and Vanderbilt for The Tennessean, Nashville (2014-21). And I've checked off all three stars on our state flag, living in West, Middle and East Tennessee.

I've occasionally assisted Vols coverage already. One of my favorite sports writing memories as a father was years ago covering a Vols fan event, where I lost track of my 8-year-old daughter and coach Derek Dooley. I found them together, discussing her rec league soccer season.

Now, don't misunderstand my opening story. As a kid, I cheered on Andy Kelly, Carl Pickens and Dale Carter. I wore an old Vols T-shirt under my shoulder pads in high school. And I sweated in Neyland Stadium through the same heat that sidelined Smokey in the 1991 UCLA game.

But I'm not an orange-clad fan because I believe journalists leave allegiance behind. As a sports writer, I've developed valued

relationships with coaches, athletes, administrators and fans at every school I've covered. I've enjoyed telling their stories and seeing their success, and my Vols coverage should continue that. That seems like so long ago but sometimes like it was yesterday. I know you know what I mean.

*Knox News, Knoxville  
July 26, 2021*

### Bobo is new editor of Review

*Editor's note: This is Jeff Bobo's first-person account of his becoming editor of the Rogersville Review.*

As a lad I had a Chicago Tribune paper route, and occasionally our manager would take us out to sell newspapers on the street during festivals and parades in my little hometown.

During one festival I tried to sell a Tribune to our longtime

See **NEWS & MOVES** Page 4

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

### September 2021

- 1-5: 2021 Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) National Convention, New Orleans, La. Visit [spj.org](http://spj.org) for more details as they become available.
- 23: 2021 Tennessee Press Association virtual Revenue Summit for advertising and circulation
- 23: TPA Ideas Contest Awards Virtual Presentation
- Sept. 30-Oct. 2: National Newspaper Association's 135th Annual Convention and Trade Show, Hyatt Regency, Jacksonville, Fla.

### October 2021

- 2: 2021 National Newspaper Association (NNA) Annual Meeting, Jacksonville Riverfront Hyatt Regency, Jacksonville, Fla.
- 3-9: National Newspaper Week [www.nationalnewspaperweek.com](http://www.nationalnewspaperweek.com)
- 14-17: National College Media Association Fall Convention 2021, offered in conjunction with Associated Collegiate Press, New Orleans, Sheraton New Orleans
- 15-16: America's Newspapers Family Owners and Next Generation Leadership Conference, The Broadmoor Hotel, Colorado Springs, Co.
- 17-19: America's Newspapers Senior Leadership Conference, The Broadmoor Hotel, Colorado Springs, Co.

### November 2021

- 11-13: The Association for Women in Communication 2021 National Conference, "Versatility: Elevating Your Voice in Changing Times," virtual event as well as in-person event, Bloomington-Normal Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, Normal, Ill.

### March 2022

- 8-13: 2022 Spring National College Media Association Convention, New York Marriott Marquis, New York, NY

### June 2022

- 23-25: Tri-State Press Convention June 23-25, 2022 Arkansas • Mississippi • Tennessee, to be held in Memphis

# Free offers, with creativity, can generate big results

Generally speaking, there are two types of advertising. Image advertising, which is often referred to as institutional advertising, is designed to create a positive overall impression. Response advertising's objective is to generate immediate results.

Let's take a few moments to examine a category of response advertising – the free offer. "Free" is one of the most powerful words in advertising. Here are some idea starters:

**1. Free sample.** This usually applies to a small portion of a particular product. Imagine an ice cream shop that offers customers a free taste of a seasonal flavor. Or a new bakery that runs a coupon for a complimentary doughnut.

**2. Free trial.** This is not a money-back guarantee. It's a way



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JOHN FOUST

for consumers to take temporary ownership of a product, without an upfront cost. Premium cable television channels often use this tactic to introduce viewers to their shows.

**3. Extra product free.** Think of a restaurant that offers a free dessert with a meal. A variation of this tactic has become so popular that it has its own acronym: BOGO, as in "buy one, get one." The "get one" could be the same or

similar product for no cost or half price.

**4. Free gift.** This offer goes beyond samples, trials and extra products. Some companies give away products that may be unrelated to what they sell; for example, "Buy a widget and get a \$25 gift card from XYZ coffee shop."

**5. Free demonstration.** Although most product demonstrations are available at no charge, many businesses don't like to make that offer. Maybe they think it's too much trouble. On the other hand, there's the powerboat dealer in North Carolina that invites serious prospects to test drive their boats in the lake behind their showroom.

**6. Free information.** "Write for our free brochure" used to be a common line in ads, but it has

been largely replaced by "visit our web site." There are other ways to provide free information. Think of an investment firm that offers a free book on retirement or other relevant topics.

**7. Free service** (analysis, consultation, etc.). Real estate agents frequently offer free, no-obligation listing evaluations. Can one of your advertisers provide something similar?

**8. Free training.** When I was in the tenth grade, I saved up for a long time to buy a used guitar. The store won my business, because: (1) the guitar was a real beauty and (2) they offered three free lessons with the purchase.

**9. Free installation.** Free assembly or installation can be a big selling point. Several years ago, I was on the verge of buying

a chair from an office supply store. But when I learned they had a \$25 assembly fee – even for the chair I wanted, which was already assembled – I went somewhere else.

**10. Free delivery.** Take a hint from online sellers who sometimes provide free shipping. They know the persuasiveness of no-cost delivery. A local brick-and-mortar advertiser can attract attention with a phrase like: "Can't pick it up? We'll deliver it to you for free."

*(c) Copyright 2021 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*

## NEWS & MOVES from Page 3

State Sen. Adeline GeoKaris, who was one of the few Illinois politicians during my lifetime to avoid criminal probes and/or prison.

Sen. Geokaris didn't want a Tribune, but she gave me a quarter and sent me into the drug store to get her a copy of our local hometown paper.

When I got back, I asked her why she didn't want a Tribune. She said we're in Zion, Ill., and the Chicago paper focused mainly on Cook County, the next county over where Chicago is located. She said the Tribune didn't cover our community unless something really bad or controversial happened.

Sen. Geokaris told me if you want to know what's going on at home, you have to read the local paper. The good senator taught me two lessons that day. With that 25 cent tip, she taught me that I was never going to get rich in the newspaper business.

The second lesson was the importance of the local hometown newspaper. Up to that point all I cared about was the Tribune sports page and whether or not the Cubs and White Sox got beat the previous day. The rest of the Tribune was full of things that happening far away that had little or no relevance to my community.

When I started investigating my hometown newspaper, however, I discovered things were happening



Bobo

every day with familiar names and places. They even ran my name in the paper occasionally, especially when I played on a winning travel baseball

team in 1985.

The sports editor spelled my last name "BoBo" with an extra capital B, and one time when I hit a solo home run he printed that I'd hit a "solar" home run, which everybody laughed about. It was big deal back then seeing your name in the hometown newspaper (albeit with two capital B's) and I believe it still is today.

That brings me to the point of this day's sermon.

Many of you know me from my 23 years covering Hawkins County from another newspaper based in the next county over. I can't begin to tell you how proud, honored and privileged I feel today addressing you as the new editor of the Rogersville Review.

I love Rogersville and Hawkins County. From the beginning of my time covering this county, I've always wanted to be editor of the Review. Both communities are lucky to still have a small town newspaper in the era of social media.

My little hometown newspaper in Zion, Ill. went kaput years ago, and it left a big hole in the

community. The Chicago Tribune doesn't cover our city councils or our county commission, or our high school sports, or put the kids' names in the paper when they make the honor roll.

Nobody else is going to cover your towns, communities and county as thoroughly as your own hometown paper.

It's important to know what your elected officials are up to. It's also important for them to know you're watching everything they do.

Now that I have this awesome responsibility, I make the following promises to you.

I will work hard to keep the public informed to the best of my ability. I will always be objective and tell the story the way I see it.

Although I'm obligated to report the "bad" news, I will always go out of my way to look for good positive news.

This is your community newspaper, and I want it to tell your stories. I plan on utilizing a lot of community journalism, and encourage you to tell your own stories, and submit them to me.

*Rogersville Review*  
Aug. 9, 2021

## Young is Leaf-Chronicle's new news director

Veteran journalist Nicole Young has stepped into her new role as news director for The Leaf-Chron-



Young

icle.

"I think it's going to be a great opportunity, and I think the people in Clarksville will be excited to see some positive changes," Young said.

Young replaces Gary Estwick, who is now editor of The Daily News Journal in Murfreesboro and Tennessee Region editor.

Young, a Mobile, Ala., native, is a graduate of Dickson County High School and UT-Martin, where she earned a degree in communications. She started her career as a reporter for the Robertson County Times in 2005 and joined the staff of The Tennessean in 2006, where she worked for seven years.

After the birth of her twins, Young returned to Robertson County and became editor of The Times in 2016. She later took the lead of The Ashland City Times and Tennessean-Sumner.

She has been married to her college sweetheart for 16 years, and most of their time is devoted to their now 8-year-old twins, who play softball and baseball.

"I'm at the ball field all the time," joked Young, whose daughter recently played in a tournament in Clarksville.

In the coming weeks, Young

said her top initiative is meeting community members.

"I want to find out what readers in Clarksville want to see more of, and give it to them. I think we have a great staff in Clarksville, and I'm looking forward to working with them," Young said.

*The Leaf-Chronicle, Clarksville*  
Aug. 18, 2021

## Employment Opportunities

### Advertising Representative

Full-time position selling and helping design effective print/online advertising for customers and prospective customers of The Courier, a weekly newspaper in Savannah, Tenn. Job also entails computer data entry to track sales for bookkeeping and production departments.

Email cover letters and resumes to: Editor Ron Schaming, at [schaming@courieranywhere.com](mailto:schaming@courieranywhere.com)

### Circulation Manager

Daily newspaper seeking Circulation Manager. Under the direction of the Director, you will oversee the daily operations, customer service, deliveries and promotions. Please submit resume to [resumes@lcs.net](mailto:resumes@lcs.net).

**Post your newspaper's job openings at [tnpress.com](http://tnpress.com)**



# Are you making the effort to tell your own stories?

I circulated a column celebrating community newspapers earlier this year in recognition of Sunshine Week. Its publication prompted a few comments.

One reader, who hailed from a Minneapolis suburb, read the column in his local paper. He wrote, in part:

"I enjoyed the message about the relevance and importance of trained journalists. My issue that I struggle with journalism or journalists in general after this latest election cycle is the intentional bias in the reporting. Politically I lean more conservative, and I am very sensitive to the majority liberal bias in the mainstream commercial media. It seems that it is no longer even avoided or denied, but even accepted as a given. ... How and why should we trust our journalists to ever be fair and honest in their craft when this bias exists?"

Journalists climb this wall every day, I replied. Community newspapers are far from perfect, I added, but said I find it disappointing and misleading when community press gets branded under the broad brush of "the media."



## COMMUNITY NEWSROOM SUCCESS

JIM PUMARLO

He thanked me for my perspective, relating it to his experience in local versus state or national politics. "At the local or community level, where we see and greet each other on the street, there is a higher level of accountability and authenticity required than when there is distance that divides us. I will look for that value proposition in my local community newspaper."

A great exchange, I said to myself, but with only one reader. How do we reach the masses?

My challenge to editors and publishers: Are you telling your own stories? Are you having regular conversations with readers and explaining news decisions?

Newspapers play a vital role in the everyday life of a community and its citizens. We take pride in delivering stories that readers like

to read and stories they should read, but it's not without guidelines for what does and does not get published.

Then we frequently fall short in explaining policies. Too often the standard response to an inquiry is simply, "Sorry, but it doesn't fit our guidelines." Or, "We've always done it that way."

I cannot overstate the value of communicating regularly with readers on your operations. Brainstorm among your employees – go beyond the newsroom – and you'll generate more than enough topics to address.

What's your policy for column submissions?

What are your guidelines for weddings, engagements, open houses?

Why don't youth sports leagues receive as much attention as varsity sports?

Who don't you publish photos of all check presentations?

What qualifies as news and what constitutes an ad when it comes to business reports?

How do you handle news from civic clubs?

These topics, and many more, can be addressed at most any time.

Some topics might warrant an explanation in regular cycles. Election season is a great example. Do you implement special guidelines for letters to the editor? Or how about a response to the frequent cry: What gives you the right to offer editorial endorsements – "to tell us" who to vote for?

Other columns are prompted by specific circumstances. In one instance, I responded to a complaint that our review of a school play was too negative.

Another reader told us it was in poor taste to run a photo showing a beer bottle at an election night victory party in the sheriff's race. I alerted the winning candidate, and explained our decision-making, letting him know I was going to address the comment in a column.

We also were questioned on how we reported sensitive subjects, too. In these cases, you should give pause as to whether and when you should explain your policy. There is a time and place for writing about your guidelines on suicide reports – and you most definitely want to discuss the circumstances with the affected individuals in advance of writing anything.

Community newspapers are increasingly challenged in today's fractured media landscape and in the atmosphere of "fake news." Being transparent in your operations is most important to remain relevant to readers and advertisers.

I wrote a weekly column for 20-plus years as editor of the Red Wing Republican Eagle. My intent was not to convince readers that a decision was the right way or only way to handle a report. Rather, my goal was to help them understand our rationale and to know that decisions were not made on a whim.

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

## RICHARDSON from Page 1

interest in the place they live. I believe those relationships will make the difference for community-focused newspapers, and I fear newspapers that do not strengthen and develop those relationships are digging their own graves, and the grave of democracy.

I have a friend who works for a software company that offers circulation software to newspapers. He told me recently the company was losing two newspaper customers this month because they were ceasing publication.

This is happening all too often, in many cases creating "news deserts" in parts of the country. This is a very dangerous thing to happen for obvious reasons, and democratic-minded citizens should take note and do more to protect their local newspapers. When there is no journalistic organization monitoring the movements and motives of local government and other powerful organizations, there is often no real way to hold them accountable to the

people for whom they supposedly labor. Sadly, the smaller the organization, county, city, etc., the easier it is for officials to get away with abuse of power, embezzlement, and other misdeeds.

Now, it isn't only in places where the newspapers have totally closed shop that suffer from "news desert" results. A newspaper that exists in a market but fails to fulfill its duty as watchdog for the people can be worse than one that shuts down entirely. At least if the newspaper shuts down, the people know there is no one watching officials closely. And the market is open for another newspaper or news organization to come in. When a newspaper is present but fails to monitor, investigate, and report what it should, the community has a false sense of security. There is a watchdog in a sense, but he's asleep, or dead. Many who have slipped into corrupt activities would have never approached that slope if they knew they were being watched closely – people don't speed when the state trooper is behind them.

## Real journalism sustains democratic society

So, as we head into fall and what looks to be a busy election campaign season, let's remember the role we play, or are expected to play, in this society that has over the past 200 years developed into what many would say is the best in the world. It is real journalism that enables and sustains a democratic society. In order for a government to be of the people, for the people, and by the people, the people must know what the government is doing. Of course, those in government would love the opportunity to tell the people themselves what they are up to. Let the press secretaries put it on a government website somewhere. We don't need to go into the myriad of problems that causes.

I don't know how many of you are fans of the film "Pirates of the Caribbean" and its sequels, but for some odd reason the great philosopher Captain Jack Sparrow once offered a description of a ship that comes to mind when I think about

what community newspapers are and what they represent.

"It's not just a keel and a hull and a deck and sails, that's what a ship needs," he says, "but what a ship is . . . what the Black Pearl really is . . . is freedom."

So, to close, I'll borrow the concept as applied to a community newspaper. It's not just a press and paper and ink and a route and a website and advertising and a team, that's what a newspaper needs. But what a newspaper is . . . what a real community newspaper is . . . is freedom. Freedom from tyranny of the few over an ignorant people, freedom from confusion, misinformation, and reliance on propaganda for information. Freedom for one who challenges the status quo to have a platform to respectfully promote their take on an issue. Freedom of information. Freedom of speech. It's freedom.

*Daniel Richardson is publisher of the Carroll County News Leader, Huntingdon, and group publisher of the eastern division of Magic*

*Valley Publishing,*



The Tennessee Press Association Foundation gratefully acknowledges a contribution

In memory of  
**Dennis Richardson**

given in  
remembrance by  
Elizabeth Kennedy  
Blackstone



TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE I: Hendersonville Standard

# 'Brand New Key' singer unlocks new home in Hendersonville

TENA LEE  
Hendersonville Standard  
March 11, 2021

Melanie Safka has a brand-new key. But unlike her number one hit by the same name five decades ago, it won't unlock a pair of roller skates.

It will, however, allow her to enter her new abode in Hendersonville – a place she's finally calling home after visiting her daughter here for several years.

## Playing Woodstock

Known the world over by just her first name, the singer-songwriter first gained popularity in folk music circles after performing

during the first night of the Woodstock music festival. Along with Joan Baez and Janis Joplin, the then little-known 22-year-old was just one of three solo female acts to play the now historic three-day event in August of 1969.

The New York native had become a part of the folk music scene playing clubs in Greenwich Village in the mid-1960s. By the summer of 1969 she had scored a hit in France called "Bobo's Party," and her song "Beautiful People" was getting a lot of play on underground radio in the U.S., she recalls.

"So one percent of the audience at Woodstock had heard of me," the 73-year-old laughs now.

Melanie was in Europe recording a movie soundtrack when her producer and husband, Peter Schekeryk, learned of a music festival being planned by some of his friends in upstate New York.

The budding songstress had second thoughts about leaving her husband in London when he suggested that she go.

"I had no clue that it was going to be as big as it was," she says.

She recalls boarding a helicopter to the venue with her mother in tow.

"Who's this?" asked an organizer. When she identified the woman as her mother, the man said that only artists and managers were allowed to board. So off she flew on her first helicopter ride, leaving her mother behind.

"I was in total terror. I looked below me and thought it was some sort of crop covering the ground. It turned out to be just an insane amount of people," she said.

She was ushered into a tent and was told to wait.

"All day people would come in and say 'you're on next and then they'd leave,'" she said. "I never saw anybody."

At one point a girl with flowers around her head brought her a jar of honey. The girl said that Baez, who was staying in a larger tent nearby, heard her coughing and thought it would help. "That was my Woodstock moment," she says. "Of course, she had been my idol."

Melanie ended up playing a 25-minute set at 1 a.m. when another band refused to go onstage in the rain. She received two encores and a place in rock and roll history.

After Woodstock, where fans struck matches during her performance – an act that would be repeated at concerts for decades with lighters and then cell phones – Melanie wrote about the experience in "Lay Down (Candles in the Rain)." The breakthrough record hit number six on the Billboard Hot 100 and became a global success.

In 1971, Melanie left her record label to start her own, Neighborhood Records, with Schekeryk. Later that year she released "Brand New Key," also known as "The Roller Skate Song." The pop



Submitted photos  
Top photo: Melanie performing earlier in her career. Bottom photo: Melanie today, now living in Hendersonville.

song hit number one in the U.S., Australia and Canada, and was ranked the number nine song of 1972 by Billboard. Melanie was also named Billboard's top female vocalist for 1972.

Throughout the years, Melanie continued to write, record and tour with Schekeryk. The two also raised three children together.

See **MELANIE** Page 7

**Rev it Up**  
2021

Tennessee Press Association  
**Revenue Summit**  
& Ideas Contest Awards  
A meeting for Advertising and Circulation

**Thursday, September 23**  
via Zoom

Register online at:  
[tinyurl.com/TPARevenueSummit](https://tinyurl.com/TPARevenueSummit)



## TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE II: Murfreesboro Post

# Flight attendant Locke becomes children's travel book author

**TAYLA COURAGE**  
Main Street Media, Gallatin  
May 14, 2021

Flight attendant and new author Kattera Locke of Murfreesboro turned her travels into children's books starring her 6-year-old son, Elias, during last year's pandemic-induced downtime.

Locke, a former call center trainer, made the career switch to flight attendant for US Airways, now American Airlines, in 2013 when she was living in Atlanta. After being denied a promotion, a coworker suggested becoming a flight attendant to turn Locke's love for travel into a full-time career.

Writing, however, has been in the picture for much longer. As a child, Locke said she would spend time making her own story books with hand-drawn illustrations and fake copyright symbols. Her grandmother, Loraine Jackson, was also a published writer and poet.

"It was just something I wanted to do," said Locke, whose childhood book operation became the preface to her journey into self-publishing via Amazon and Ingram last year.

Locke was born in Cookeville, but her family relocated to Murfreesboro when she was in the fifth grade. She graduated from Blackman High School and attended the University of Memphis and Middle Tennessee State University. She lived in Georgia for a bit before returning to the 'Boro in 2014.

She wrote two children's travel books documenting her and her son's trips overseas in a series called "Elias and the Magic Blanket." She's told the stories of their vacation to Barcelona in 2017 and their spontaneous trip to Turks and Caicos Islands in 2019 during her time away from work because of the pandemic.

"When I initially started, I thought it was going to be an easy process and quick and fast, but it's not always like that," said Locke. "I wanted to make sure I was doing everything properly. Even though I was doing it myself, I still wanted that guidance."

Locke said Scholastic editor Amy Betz, who worked on "The Magic School Bus" book series, was a big help in guiding her through the revision process. Illustrator Alana

See **LOCKE** Page 10



Photos by Tayla Courage, Murfreesboro Post

Flight attendant and children's book author Kattera Locke (left) and her 6-year-old son Elias (right) show their books and a 'Blankie The Magic Blanket' at Locke's Linebaugh Library book signing recently. Locke said she was inspired to write children's books to document their travels. Elias said his favorite activities on their travels have been swimming and boogie boarding on their trip to Hawaii.

## MELANIE from Page 6

The couple quietly moved to the Nashville area 15 years ago by purchasing a condo on Old Hickory Lake with the intention of buying a house in Nashville.

"Peter decided Nashville is the new music city," she said. "For so many years if you wanted to go where the music was, you needed to go to L. A or New York. I didn't want to live in either of those places anymore."

Los Angeles, in particular.

"I hate L. A. I despise it," she said. "There is an incredible insincerity that glosses over everything."

Melanie visited Nashville a few times over the years, most memorably appearing twice on "The Johnny Cash Show" that taped at the Ryman Auditorium from 1969-1971. Her 1969 performance with Cash of the song, "Silver Threads and Golden Needles," has had thousands of views on YouTube.

"Johnny Cash was an absolute

highlight," she says. "I instantly loved him. He was just such a renegade."

The condo was supposed to be temporary until Melanie and her husband found a house. However, Schekeyk died suddenly in 2010 while the two were shopping together in Framington, Mass.

"We were together for 45 years. He was my partner, my friend, someone I would run songs by," she said.

Devastated, the only thing Melanie knew to do was to move forward. "I just kept breathing and creating," she said.

Recently nominated for a Lifetime Achievement Award by Folk Alliance International, she continues to write and connect with her music in the ways that she can during a global pandemic.

"I feel like I'm needed and should be touring," she said. "It's an energy. It's communication. I miss that."

She held a livestream concert through Facebook (she has more

than 45,000 followers) on Jan. 30 where she'll play some of her classic songs as well as some new material for an upcoming album.

While spending more time at home, she says she began to feel hemmed in and needed more space and a yard to call her own.

"We realized we don't like shared walls," she said. She and her son started looking for a house in Hendersonville where her daughter has lived for the last 10 years.

As she takes a break from settling in, she jokes about this stage in her life. "I'm at an age when most people are downsizing," she laughs. "And here I am upsizing."

So, is Hendersonville "hip" enough for this preeminent "hippie?"

She laughs again.

"When you're in your own universe and music, you seem to fit in anywhere, and you learn that people are people," she says. "There's kind of a vibe on the peninsula. I just really like it."

## 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>.

## And the Winner is...

TPA Advertising & Circulation

**2021 Ideas Contest Awards**

virtual presentation via Zoom

Thursday, September 23

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

Details were mailed and emailed to winning newspapers in early September as well as posted online at [www.tnpress.com](http://www.tnpress.com).

Register online at: [tinyurl.com/TPARevenueSummit](http://tinyurl.com/TPARevenueSummit)



# Journalists are creators now, and that's a good thing

Journalism's hostility is understandable, but our denial is not. In 2009, the former editor-in-chief at Thomson Reuters, David Schlesinger, described journalism as one of the great self-declared professions. He wrote, "I am a journalist because I said I was one more than two decades ago and have spent the years since working on my abilities. I am not one because I am somehow anointed with a certificate or an exam result. Journalism is ideally designed for democratization."

We're living in a remarkable time when reporters no longer have to win an editor's approval to publish a story, reach an audience, and get paid. In fact, anyone can technically do it, which is why the distinction between professional journalists (people employed by news organizations) and creators (individuals producing journalistic content online) no longer exists.

Our current state of affairs shouldn't be a surprise. Since the mid-2000s, we've documented the proliferation of bloggers, YouTube creators, and social media influencers on Instagram, Snapchat, and now TikTok, with measured skepticism, if not outright disdain. In 2009, the idea of newsrooms publishing "citizen journalism" and "user-generated content" were hotly debated issues. In 2012, when Instagram came onto the



## JOURNALISM EDUCATION

YVONNE LEOW

scene, photojournalists penned scathing columns criticizing "app photographers" for creating artistic masterpieces without learning the tools of the trade. In retrospect, these industry terms — citizen journalism, UGC, app photographers — revealed our collective trepidation. They served to differentiate the role of journalists from everyday citizens, as if we were never both.

Many of us feel that journalism is a calling. We consider original reporting to be a public service, a job that is essential to saving democracy. Like a doctor, teacher, or firefighter, we imbue our work with such a sense of honor and ethics that it's often unfathomable to identify with anything else. But time and time again, emerging technologies have pushed the news industry in unpredictable directions, reminding us that we are no longer commanders of our own destiny, but rather anxious passengers along for the ride. Our hostility is understandable, but our

denial is not.

In 2017, nearly 17 million Americans earned a total of \$6.8 billion by posting their personal creations on platform companies. Over the years, that number has undoubtedly grown as almost everyone with an Internet connection communicates, learns, works, or plays on a digital platform. Whether it's Amazon Publishing, Pinterest, or Twitch, these platform companies are developing the tools, and progressively the rules, for how we conduct ourselves online. If we're not building these platforms, then we're players within them, and in the ever-expanding passion economy, journalists are creators like everyone else.

It partly explains why the public's trust in traditional media is at an all-time low while digital news consumption is at an all-time high. If people are trusting legacy news organizations less and less, where else are they turning to for news and information?

The numbers speak for themselves:

- On Inauguration Day 2021, CNN beat every other television network by drawing 7.7 million total viewers that day, while CNBC's Inauguration live stream on YouTube peaked at 10.2 million views and the #inauguration2021 hashtag on TikTok garnered 215.1 million views.

- In terms of their direct access to everyday people, last year, TikTok joined the "1 billion monthly active user (MAU) club alongside Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, WhatsApp, YouTube and WeChat" and is on track to hit 1.2 billion MAUs this year. The New York Times, on the other hand, boasted a record 7 million digital subscribers in 2021 and aims to hit 10 million subscribers in 2025.

Journalism's ability to reach eyeballs and engage people's attention matters. Digital subscriptions might be helping legacy news organizations survive, but paywalls aren't addressing the massive amounts of people who are seeking their daily news and information on YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, and the like. There is a vacuum of factual reporting on these platforms, and this is where journalists and creators can learn a lot from one another.

Creators are self-made storytellers and entrepreneurs. They began by mastering a platform's features to develop their own brand of content. They didn't raise venture capital or apply for foundation funding to kick off their journey, and success didn't strike overnight. The creator path is an exercise in persistence, and their profiles are littered with failed creative experiments. Isabelle Boemeke is a perfect example.

Dressed in funky, colorful out-

fits, Boemeke's TikTok videos riff off of personal wellness and makeup routine tropes to sneak in facts about nuclear energy and carbon emissions. Her videos use TikTok's augmented reality filters, sound effects, and editing features to create bizarrely captivating content about abstract topics like climate change. Her first 19 videos average between 1 and 2,000 views, but her latest TikTok reached 229,000 views. Boemeke's content looks more like music videos than legacy journalism, but she's informing her 19,000 followers (and counting) about a complex issue that they may not have learned otherwise.

Finally, creators are incentivized to be collaborative. Michael DiBenedetto is a TikTok'er and cofounder of an augmented reality startup called Flow Immersive. Last November, he teamed up with fellow TikTok'er Dr. Kat Wallace, an epidemiologist and adjunct professor at the University of Illinois Chicago, to produce a video about the spread of Covid in America. Their video generated 2.2 million views, 323,000 likes, and 3,500 comments. Unlike lone reporters who were trained to hunt for scoops and break news before their competitors, creators optimize for originality and creativity. Nineteen minds are better than one, as they say, which is why

See **LEOW** Page 10

## DATA from Page 3

Speaking of: DUG is an open-source project. Take issue with any of our advice? Are we missing a tool? Are we missing a whole section? Fill in the blanks for us on GitHub! We see today's launch as the 'beta version'. In an ideal world, this thing grows over time.

Mostly broadly, the current manifestation of the project covers people, organizational structure, tech and tools, measuring value, and fundraising. DUG relies on the premise that different newsrooms will be approaching the issue at different stages in their organizational trajectories.

Your newsroom might already have a data unit. It might already have one and not consider it to be one. It might have one and call it something else, or it might employ the constituent employees of a data unit but scatter them



Aldern

throughout the organization without the anchors of camaraderie and appropriate business cards. DUG seeks to offer a set of best practices for thinking about the

size, position, and organization of such a team in your newsroom—regardless of the stage it's at.

In other words, just like there's no one way to build a story, there's no one way to build a data team. But just because that sentence sounds like a cliché doesn't mean we don't have anything marginally useful to say elsewhere in the guide! If you're tasked with recruiting this kind of talent to your newsroom—or you want to rethink how your own team is organized—DUG has some concrete

ideas for thinking through these organizational processes.

The guide is live at <https://dug.news/>. Check it out—and better yet, submit a pull request!

As for me, I'll be working on implementing this guide at good ol' Grist, the magazine where we've been workshoping a lot of the principles at hand. If you'd like to stay in touch, my contact info is below. Thanks for all the messages and tips thus far, thanks for reading, and thanks for building this thing with me! Onward.

*Clayton Aldern is a data strategist at Grist, headquartered in Seattle, Wash.. As a 2020–2021 Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) Fellow, he created materials to guide newsrooms in covering climate issues. He can be reached at [caldern@grist.org](mailto:caldern@grist.org) on Twitter @compatibilism. This article is republished here with RJI's permission.*

## SUMMIT from Page 1

Contest awards. There are approximately 225 winning entries that include ads, special sections and circulation ideas. Every attendee will receive the link to the slideshow after the summit.



Dohrn



Richardson

Prizes will be awarded to the top three ideas as voted on by the participants. The advertising idea exchange will be moderated by Darrell Richardson, advertising director of The Daily Times, Maryville, who is chair of the



Long

TPA Advertising Committee.

The circulation idea exchange will be moderated by Dale Long, circulation director of The Greeneville Sun and chair of the Circulation

Committee.

**Schedule: (Central Time)**

9:00 a.m. Ryan Dohrn

10:00 a.m. Advertising Idea Exchange

1:00 p.m. Ideas Contest Awards

2:00 p.m. Circulation Idea Exchange

Ryan Dohrn's session is being sponsored by Tennessee Press Service. The summit will be free to all TPA members. Registration details have been emailed and are posted at [www.tnpress.com](http://www.tnpress.com). Register at [tinyurl.com/TPARevenueSummit](http://tinyurl.com/TPARevenueSummit).



# Newsrooms owe it to their Asian-American readers to get sourced, break stereotypes

Here we are yet again.

We just can't seem to get it right when reporting on race.

On March 18, a 21-year-old white man was arrested and charged with murder after allegedly going on a shooting rampage at three Atlanta-area businesses that left eight people dead, six of whom were Asian women.

Although the suspect at this writing had not been officially charged with a hate crime, the shootings were part of a rise in attacks on Asians in America.

In writing those last two paragraphs, I followed the guidance of the Asian American Journalists Association. I listed the race of the suspect because I noted the race of the victims. I avoided using the coded term "massage parlor" because of the way Asian women, in particular, have been hypersexualized. I also put the shootings into context of the larger problem that is occurring right now, in many communities.

Across America, attacks against Asians and Asian Americans are on the rise, according to the national coalition, Stop AAPI Hate. (AAPI stands for Asian American and Pacific Islanders.) Already in 2021, there have been more than 500 reports of hate-motivated attacks. The Pew Research Center found that about three-in-10 Asian adults (31%) say they have been subject to slurs or jokes because of their race or ethnicity since the outbreak began, compared



**LOCAL  
MATTERS**

JACKIE SPINNER

with 21% of Black adults, 15% of Hispanic adults and 8% of white adults.

When our newsrooms don't reflect the diversity of the communities we cover, and they don't, it's up to us to go out of our way to figure out how to report fairly and inclusively, seeking out diverse sources and looking for guidance from journalism organizations like AAJA or the National Association of Hispanic Journalists or Journalism and Women Symposium.

Much of the reporting from Atlanta, particularly at first, seemed hesitant to make the connection between the victims and their race. Whether these shootings officially end up being a hate crime or not, the fact is that a white man targeted Asian-owned business, and we can report that. We can report that the victims were almost all Asian Americans. We can report that there has been a rise in attacks on Asians and Asian Americans, notably since the pandemic began.

Instead news outlets seemed to give deference to the shooter who allegedly told police that he



Submitted photo by Victoria Pickering via Flickr

targeted the businesses because of a "sex addiction."

News outlets jumped on that narrative because it reinforced their own stereotypes of Asian-owned "massage parlors." Many did so without even knowing that it was wrong. That's the problem with not having diversity in our newsrooms. There is no one to point out an alternative narrative to the predominant, privileged one that exists.

Although small community newspapers may not have reported on the breaking news story to the extent that major publications or outlets did, that doesn't mean they can't use this moment for reflection about what's missing from

their own coverage. That doesn't mean we can't all figure out how to be better.

The first step is to get sourced. Who are the Asian Americans in your community and have they experienced an increase in hate? I'm not talking about running out to get reaction from Asian Americans about the attacks in Atlanta. I'm talking about looking at our communities and thinking about who lives there and what challenges they face before and after the shootings, which could be thousands of miles away. I'm talking about asking our school boards how they teach about Asian American history.

I'm talking about asking our elected officials what they plan to do to address hate crimes in our own communities, whether the hate is directed at Asian Americans or Black residents or Jewish residents. I'm talking about inviting conversations about race and difference and better monitoring our comment sections and social media accounts.

If you are feeling weary about the additional layers required in thinking about how we cover these kinds of stories, imagine the fatigue of our readers who have to watch us get it wrong time and again. Imagine the conversations the Asian American parents in our communities must have with their children when we report inaccurately or when we perpetuate stereotypes.

Sure, some of our readers are going to roll their eyes or push back at what they see as attempts to be "politically correct." Maybe some in our newsroom agree.

It doesn't matter. The time has long passed for us to step up.

*This story first appeared in an April edition of Gateway Journalism Review. It is republished here with the permission of its author, Jackie Spinner. A former staff writer for The Washington Post, Spinner is the editor of Gateway Journalism Review and an associate professor at Columbia College Chicago. Follow her on Twitter @jackiespinner.*

## OFFICERS from Page 1

Memphis; E. Scott Critchlow, co-publisher of the Union City Daily Messenger; and Victor Parkins, publisher of The Mirror-Exchange, Milan.

Daniel Richardson will continue on the board for one year as immediate past president. Also continuing on the Board as directors are Maria De Varenne, executive editor of The Tennessean, Nashville; Dave Gould, owner of Main Street Media of Tennessee, Gallatin; and Keith Ponder, publisher of The Tullahoma News.

The TPA Board of Directors elected trustees to serve on the Tennessee Press Association Foundation (TPAF) Board of Trustees for three-year terms. Re-elected trustees are: Bob Atkins, Eric Barnes, David Critchlow, Jr., R.

Jack Fishman, W.R. (Ron) Fryar, Dale Gentry, Gregg Jones, John Jones, Jr. and Chris Sherrill Vass.

## TPAF elections

TPAF officers elected at the July 16 TPAF Board of Trustees meeting are Victor Parkins, publisher of The Mirror-Exchange, Milan, re-elected president, and R. Michael Fishman, publisher of the Citizen Tribune, Morristown, re-elected vice president.

## TPS elections

Directors of the Tennessee Press Service (TPS), business affiliate of TPA, elected to three-years terms during the August 19 Stockholders Meeting are Mike Fishman, publisher of the Citizen Tribune, Morristown, and W.R.(Ron) Fryar,

Cannon Courier, Woodbury. Continuing as TPS directors are David Critchlow, Union City Daily Messenger; Dave Gould, Main Street Media of Tennessee, Gallatin; Jana Thomasson, The Mountain Press, Sevierville; and Michael Williams, The Paris Post-Intelligencer.

At the July 14 TPS Board of Directors Meeting, Dave Gould; Main Street Media of Tennessee, Gallatin; was re-elected president for a one-year term, and Michael Williams was elected vice president for a one-year term.

## About Rick Thomason

Rick Thomason joined the board of the Tennessee Press Association in 2020.

Thomason is a 41-year veteran of the newspaper business. He has served as a general assignment

reporter, sports reporter, sports editor, editor of both weekly and daily newspapers, and publisher of both weeklies and daily newspapers. He currently serves as publisher of both the Kingsport Times News and the Johnson City Press, and is president of Six Rivers Media, LLC, the parent company of both the Times News and the Press.

He is a graduate of Auburn University with a BS in mass communications with a minor in biology and a double minor in chemistry. He is also a graduate of the condensed MBA program at the Media Management Center at Northwestern University.

In his spare time he is an avid reader, photographer and last year took up the sport of kickboxing.

## About TPA

The TPA was founded in 1870-71 for the purpose of creating a unified voice for the newspaper industry in Tennessee. Today, TPA continues to provide assistance to its 131 member newspapers by monitoring legislative activities, providing training programs, issuing press credentials, maintaining a website and providing regular meetings and forums to foster the exchange of information and ideas.

The TPA presidency rotates among TPA's three divisions of Tennessee - East, Middle and West - and alternates each year between a daily and non-daily publication.

**Next month: State Press Contests awards coverage and awards luncheon photos.**

**LOCKE from Page 7**

Magdalene transformed some of Locke's family vacation photos into bright, colorful illustrations that draw young readers into each story.

She said her son and his real-life "Blankie," a baby blanket given to him at birth, were the inspirations for the storytelling to start.

"I mean it goes everywhere with us," said Locke, who thought the blanket would make an great, magical travel companion. "It goes with us on our trips. He sleeps with it at night, and we've lost it a few times overseas and have had to find it."

**Lessons from a trip**

She said the Turks and Caicos trip was one she and Elias look back on the most fondly. It was a spur-of-the-moment decision caused by a flat tire and a missed flight to the Dominican Republic that ended up being a lesson in

generosity and flexibility.

After pulling over at a gas station, Locke said a couple of strangers helped change her tire before continuing their commute to work.

"Just starting off the trip, I thought that was just great. Just showing him the kindness of strangers. It showed him also that things happen," said Locke. "Things don't always go your way, but, you know, it may turn out better than you had originally planned."

Those lessons are conveyed on the pages of the books through things as simple as trying new foods like conch fritters, activities like snorkeling, and even interacting with the locals of a different culture.

Locke said her curious little boy will "try anything once," and that she encourages him to "give things a chance."



Locke thumbs through the pages of her first children's book "Elias and the Magic Blanket Turks & Caicos" at her Linebaugh Library book signing in Murfreesboro. It's the first of two travel books with her son Elias, 6 (right), as the main adventurer.

**Adventures in kindergarten**

At the back of each book is a trivia page, listing fun facts for parents and teachers to share with their children and students about

each destination in question.

Although Elias will soon wrap up his kindergarten year at the Discovery School in Murfreesboro, Locke said she plans to continue working in travel time on school and holiday breaks.

The books have even made their way into the school's kindergarten classrooms after Locke read the story via Zoom.

Elias' kindergarten teacher Teresa McCarthy said that the kids "thought it was so cool" that their classmate had a book written about his travels.

"We loved it so much that we turned it into a project for all of kindergarten titled 'The Magic Blanket Travels the World'. Each student chose a different country and learned about its culture, traditions, holidays, and customs. Then students shared what they learned by creating a visual, costume or work of art," McCarthy

wrote in an email.

The project is expected to become an annual tradition for the little ones.

Locke's time off from American Airlines came to an end in April, and she's back on board at her Washington, D.C.-based airline job, which takes her across the United States and the islands in the Caribbean Sea. When she's away on flights, Elias stays with his grandmother, Debbie Locke.

She hopes to continue the series with books on their 2016 trip to Australia and their recent Spring Break getaway to Hawaii. She'd also like to see the series on television as a cartoon adaptation.

"I hope that young readers identify themselves with Elias. I hope it encourages them to travel because I think that they can see how much he learns when we do go to these different places," said Locke.

**LEOW from Page 8**

collab houses are the physical embodiment of how much YouTubers and TikTok'ers prefer to swap ideas and promote one another.

It's worth noting that the Washington Post's graphic reporter Harry Stevens also produced a hugely successful data visualization explaining the spread of Covid, but therein lies the point. We now live in a world in which TikTok's algorithm operates as the homepage editor and people like DiBennigno, Wallace, and Boemeke are one of many journalists providing news and information to millions of people. These creators aren't employed by legacy newsrooms or graduates from prestigious journalism schools, their stories didn't go through a traditional editing process, and they never have to. Instead, creators have the freedom to focus on what matters most: to cultivate a community of people around their work. If they do that well, monetization opportunities follow suit.

Top creators not only master a platform and grow a following, but they're also given a crash course in how to monetize their content. YouTube was a pioneer in supporting YouTubers and they have an online Creator Academy that's jammed with creator resources. TikTok recently launched a Creator Fund and Snapchat is paying millions of dollars directly to creators on their platform.

Becoming a full-time creator isn't suitable for every journalist, but an entrepreneurial mindset is necessary for all. Legacy journalism institutions are beginning to offer training to journalists pursuing the creator route, but we're missing the greater opportunity to engage creators who are interested in producing journalistic content.

Becoming a full-time creator isn't suitable for every journalist, but an entrepreneurial mindset is necessary for all. Legacy journalism institutions are beginning to offer training to journalists pursuing the creator route, but we're missing the greater opportunity to engage creators who are interested in producing journalistic content. Our honorable, but parochial definition of "quality journalism" not only prevents us from reaching the massive amount of people on digital platforms, but we're also failing to learn from and engage the next generation of media producers.

One of the few organizations that are responding to the journalist-turned-creator movement is CUNY's Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. It offers an online Entrepreneurial Journalism Creators Program specifically geared towards journalists who want to support independent projects. Anita Zielina, the director of strategic initiatives, explains why the graduate school shifted from

supporting founders who wanted to launch news companies to independent journalists who were working on their own podcast, newsletter, or video series.

"If you're really looking to build a scalable organization, you need an influx of angel capital, philanthropic funding, or VC funding," Zielina says. "Many of the startups



Submitted photo

Fausto Sandoval, Unsplash

I see die at an early stage because they don't have the seed capital to make it to the next." The lack of a funding pipeline in journalism is a critical challenge.

But, Zielina says, "There is a new generation of entrepreneurs who are starting niche, micro ventures, or passion projects to earn a living. I'm optimistic because there's a lot happening in the creator ecosystem."

Jeremy Gilbert, the Knight Chair for Digital Media Strategy at Medill and the former director of strategic

initiatives at the Washington Post, is also teaching his students how journalism functions as a business. Managing a profit and loss statement, churn, sponsorships, and a marketing budget are increasingly part of the curriculum at Medill.

"Everyone that graduates from journalism school needs to know what it means to be an entrepreneur," says Gilbert. "They'll be more ready to pursue their goals regardless of where they land. In their mid-careers, they'll be able to step into leadership positions, and when they're leading a team or organization, they'll have a better sense of how the media business works."

Then, there's the value journalists can offer to creators. The news industry has an incredible opportunity to teach platform-savvy storytellers how to conduct fair and thorough interviews, how to file a FOIA request, how to scrape

and mine data for anomalies, how to produce explanatory graphics, how to vet your sources and verify photoshopped images, and the list goes on and on. Johnny Harris, a former Vox.com video journalist who became a full-time creator, recently published a YouTube video called "7 things I've learned about journalism in 7 years of being a journalist." The video has been viewed more than 127,000 times and is absolutely worth the watch. He reminds us that some of jour-

nalism's most defining traditions, i.e. finding fact-based evidence to support our assertions, can find a home in the world of creators.

In the eyes of platforms and people, journalists and creators are one and the same. What many journalists once coined as "user-generated content" are now stories that regularly educate, entertain, and inspire billions of people around the world. As our media ecosystem rapidly evolves, it would be a mistake for the news industry to double down on traditional standards of "quality journalism" when people on platforms have already redefined what quality news and information means to them. Democratic appeals to save journalism continue to reek of fear and self-preservation because we refuse to appreciate how technology has systematically democratized our craft. Creators are thriving on the frontier of this tidal shift, and together, journalists can thrive, too.

*Yvonne Leow originally wrote this column, published in February 2021, for Reynolds Journalism Institute. She is a digital media consultant and founder of Bewilder. In 2018, she co-founded a local media company called By The Bay, and has previously consulted for tech companies like Nextdoor and Sequoia Capital. Yvonne formerly worked for Vox.com, Digital First Media, and the Associated Press. You can find her at @YvonneLeow.*



## OBITUARIES

### Dennis Richardson

*Editor's note: Because of deadline considerations, The Tennessee Press was able to run only an abbreviated obituary for Dennis Richardson in our August issue. A longer version of his obituary is presented here.*

Dennis Richardson, owner of Magic Valley Publishing Co. and beloved husband, father, and grandfather, passed away suddenly and peacefully at his Camden home on Monday, July 26.



Richardson

Born in Nashville on March 23, 1951, he was the youngest of seven children. His father was a sharecropper who provided well for his family but passed away when Dennis was two years old. After graduating from Joelton High School, Dennis attended the University of Tennessee at Martin, where he studied Engineering. He transferred to UT Knoxville to study Journalism, but returned to finish at UT Martin where he graduated and met his wife, Lisa Hatley.

He began his newspaper career at The Paris Post-Intelligencer (PI) as sports editor. After a couple of years at the PI and a short time at the Carroll County News, he was hired as editor of the Weakley County Press (Martin) by Randal Benderman, who became his lifelong mentor in newspaper publishing. Dennis left the Weakley County Press and moved to Clarksville to work as a copy editor at the state's oldest continuously publishing newspaper, The Leaf-Chronicle.

Dennis and Lisa became newspaper publishers in 1983 when they purchased the Carroll County News (Huntingdon). Soon after, they incorporated the business as Magic Valley Publishing, Inc. (MVP). Later in 1992, MVP purchased the Carroll Leader merging it with the Carroll County News to create the Carroll County News-Leader. In 1994, Dennis added the Camden Chronicle to MVP.

More acquisitions followed and included: the Print Shop (Waverly), Fulton (Ky.) Leader, Hickman County (Ky.) Gazette, Hickman (Ky.) Courier, Carlisle (Ky.) Weekly,

Ballard (Ky.) Weekly, Dekalb Co. News, Crockett County Times, Lake County Banner (Tiptonville), Waverly News-Democrat, Buffalo River Review (Linden), Wayne County News (Waynesboro), Chester County Independent (Henderson), The Leader (Covington), Collierville Herald, Collierville Independent, Bartlett Express, Shelby Sun-Times, Germantown News, Millington Star, Shopper News (Gibson), and the Dresden Enterprise. The company also started a regional travel magazine, Discover West Tennessee, in December 2020. Dennis was also the owner of two radio stations, WRJB 95.9 FM and WFWL 1220 AM.

During 38 years as an employer with hundreds of employees people over that time, no case comes to the memory of his family where he denied an employee a vacation request, or a pay advance when an employee facing financial hardships requested it. Many who left the company returned soon after, and several employees have worked for MVP for more than 15 years.

He was a long-time member and deacon at the Camden Church of Christ, a Rotarian, first as a charter member of Rotary Club of Huntingdon and then the Rotary Club of Camden.

He served on directorship boards for the Tennessee Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Carey Counseling Center, and various other organizations throughout his life. He spent several years working as a newspaper broker, first for W.B. Grimes and Co. of New York, then on his own.

While working for W.B. Grimes, Dennis brokered the largest newspaper deal in the company's history in 2012, working day and night for months to close the deal.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Samuel Loren and Ella Matthews Richardson; three brothers, Sam Richardson, Jim Richardson, and John Richardson, and two sisters, Betty Armstrong and Frances Richardson. He leaves behind his beloved wife of 46 years, Lisa; three sons, Mark (Angie), Matthew, and Daniel (Lena); one daughter, Gerilyn (Clint) Burnett; five granddaughters, Anistyn, Ashby, Emmalyn, Elizabeth, and Ella Richardson; and one grandson, Mason Richardson, and one sister, Ruth Johnson.

Submitted  
July 28, 2021

### Max Heath

The death of NNA's Postal Chair Emeritus Max Heath, Shelbyville, Ky., on July 28 set off a period of mourning across the community newspaper industry.

Heath's family told the National Newspaper Association/NNA Foundation Boards of Directors that Heath had suffered a hemorrhagic stroke on July 23. His wife, Ruth Ann of Shelbyville, and son Jason of Louisville, Kentucky, were at his side as local friends stopped at a Louisville hospital to pay respects.

Heath was 75. He went into semi-retirement as NNA's Postal Committee chair in phases during the past several years as the new Postal Team led by NNA Past President Matthew Paxton, publisher of The News-Gazette in Lexington, Virginia, and Brad Hill, CEO of Interlink, began to pick up his many duties. Heath remained as a consultant to the committee until his death.

He was executive editor of Landmark Community Newspapers Inc., for 21 years before retiring into a consultancy that continued until the newspapers' sale to Paxton Media in 2021. As editor and chief postal advisor, he oversaw 52 weekly and daily newspapers in 12 states, seven collegiate sports newspapers, seven free newspapers, 30 shoppers and more than 30 specialty titles. He was in charge of acquisition development from 2001 to 2008.

Heath stepped into NNA's top postal policy position in 1989 when he joined the Postmaster General's Mailers Technical Advisory Committee, a post he maintained in emeritus status through 2021. The Postal Service presented its first Special Achievement award at the National Postal Forum on Sept. 2, 1998. He served on numerous task forces and special committees to oversee the many changes in USPS and to guide its technical and logistical initiatives to preserve the affordable national mail delivery options of the community newspapers he so cherished. As NNA's top guru, he conducted dozens of training seminars for NNA and other newspaper associations through the early 2000s, retiring only from the travel and never from the advisory function.



Heath

Regulatory Commission, often educating the commissioners, staff and USPS logistics experts on how newspapers were being handled in the field by USPS. He was principal editor of NNA's Postal Tips book in 1998 and monthly contributor to Publishers' Auxiliary's Postal Tips column.

NNA Foundation President Matt Adelman noted that as NNA and NNAF shifted its postal training into the Foundation, Max had remained a constant source of wisdom and support. NNAF will continue to use Heath's educational materials to assist community newspapers, Adelman said.

"Max has long been a legend in the newspaper industry across the country as the go-to guy for anything postal and has always been a stalwart ally of newspapers of any size and shape," Adelman said. "He will be greatly missed as a true friend as well as a mentor, industry leader and invaluable partner in our constant struggle with postal issues on all fronts. His commitment and dedication to NNA and NNAF mirrored his passion for the newspaper industry throughout the many decades we have held him in such high regard. We look forward to honoring him and his immense level of service to our industry as we continue his work."

NNA Executive Director Lynne Lance said NNA members would continue to receive postal advice and assistance through NNA's Postal Hotline.

"Max's generous way of helping people to understand the ins and outs of using the mail will live on in the education he provided his successors. No one will ever replace the knowledge Max had. But we pledge to honor his legacy by making sure community newspapers remain in the forefront of the Postal Service's mission," she said.

National Newspaper Association  
July 28, 2021

### Robert Shaw

Robert Shaw, whose more than 40-year career with The Associated Press included leading news coverage in three states, has died. He was 79.

Shaw died July 22 in the Dallas suburb of Lewisville with family around him, his daughter, Erin Moore, said.

"He was very competent at his job, did it calmly, did it without fanfare and was widely respected both within the staff and outside the staff, among the members," said former AP President Lou Boccardi.



Shaw

Shaw was the AP bureau chief in Little Rock, Arkansas, when

he retired in 2007. He covered everything from plane crashes to hurricanes to politics and entertainment during his career. Shaw was known as a perfectionist in his news coverage, as well as a leader focused on the wellbeing of his staff.

"He wanted to make sure everything was perfect, so he left no stone unturned," said Lindel Hutson, a longtime friend and colleague.

Shaw, a native of Conway, Arkansas, began his journalism career at the Arkansas Gazette in Little Rock. He joined the AP in St. Louis in 1965 and transferred to the Little Rock bureau the following year.

Robbie Shaw remembered his father talking about covering a civil rights march in the late 1960s in West Memphis, Arkansas, when he was attacked by people protesting the march.

"Dad was at a phone booth calling in his story, and they squirted lighter fluid on his pants and set his pants on fire," he said.

Shaw was named correspondent in Memphis, Tenn., in 1973 and in Jackson, Miss., two years later. While in Mississippi he covered the 1977 plane crash that killed three members of the band Lynyrd Skynyrd. He was named bureau chief in Little Rock in November 1996, just after Arkansas native Bill Clinton won his second presidential term.

Associated Press  
July 26, 2021



TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE III: The Paris Post-Intelligencer

# Traveling piano tuner helps churches stay in right key

**JUSTIN HODGES**  
The Paris Post-Intelligencer  
February 25, 2021

When Dennis Gabriel was attending college at the University of Missouri, he began playing piano at local weddings to help pay the bills.

He had been playing the instrument since he was 5, and was on the cusp of a decades-long career as a piano technician. On a random Friday night, at a wedding in Linn, Mo., Gabriel had to perform on a broken piano, irritating him so much that he dedicated his post-retirement years to tuning pianos.

“I had a day’s notice before I did the wedding, so there was little time to prepare. When I got to the church I found several of the keys didn’t work. There was no way of fixing it before the show since it’s a two- to three-day process, so I played the wedding on this stinkin’ broken piano. It angered me so much that I told



myself, ‘If I make it to retirement, I’m going to make sure that churches have pianos that work,’” Gabriel said.

After retiring at age 63, Gabriel stayed true to his goals and has spent the past seven years traveling the country fixing pianos

at churches and care facilities. He hasn’t charged any money for the 600-plus pianos he has tuned in that time. Gabriel has traveled with his wife, Sue, to 45 states and parts of Canada for this venture, fixing two to three pianos a week on average.

Photo by Justin Hodges, The Paris Post-Intelligencer

**Dennis Gabriel of Independence, Mo., is pictured taking apart the assembly of a piano in the sanctuary room of First Presbyterian Church in Paris. Gabriel travels all over the country fixing and tuning pianos for churches and care facilities that might not have the money available to fix their instruments. Gabriel drives a motor home with his wife, Sue. He parks the motor home in each city while he’s there. He has tuned more than 600 pianos and counting since going into retirement.**

His most recent appointment was in Paris at First Presbyterian Church, located at 105 S. Market St.

Gabriel has different ways of finding which churches are in need of a piano tune-up, but in this case all he did was call First Presbyterian’s secretary Diane McDowell. Then he showed up one morning to start fixing two pianos at the church.

“I happened to be right there in the room when he called, the timing was perfect,” said Min-Kyo Jung, the music director for the church.

## Using his craft

Gabriel’s proclamation came 40 years before his retirement. In that stretch, he spent three years in the U.S. Army and served in Vietnam in 1970 before working as a piano technician for the piano departments of universities, including the University of Texas and the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Gabriel owned his own business, Gabriel Piano Services, in the 1970s in Blue Springs, Mo., which is now

owned and operated by his son, Van Gabriel.

Gabriel has been dedicated to teaching people the art of tuning pianos. He did so as a part-time job in college and has taught the craft to more than 40 people since then. Now, Gabriel seeks an apprentice to join him on this journey and eventually take over this work.

“I’d like someone to go on the road with us for two years, learn the ins and outs, do the work and see the world. After that, once they’ve mastered the craft, they can go out into a big city and make this a career.”

It takes Gabriel about three days to fix any given piano, which he is able to take apart and put back together like a mechanic would with a Mercedes. Fixing pianos is his own form of ministry and it has allowed for him and his wife to live leisurely in retirement. Gabriel does what he does to lend a hand but also because when he plays the piano, he wants it to be able to perform at its best so that he can perform at his best.

Gabriel is a native of Independence, Mo., and has spent many of his years residing in Kansas City, Mo. This past June, he was to be in Grand Rapids, Mich., performing for a church’s grand reopening after it was burned down by an arsonist.

He said he hopes to accomplish his work in all 50 states in the United States by the end of this year, with just Rhode Island, Delaware, Wyoming, Nevada, New Mexico and Washington, D.C. left on his board. He’ll be in Paris for another day or so as he assists First Presbyterian, and then it’s off to the next church in need of his expertise.

## POLICINSKI from Page 3

proposals, it is not difficult to see immediate political gain as an underlying motivation for backing such laws. Politicians supporting new protest limits may exploit momentary fears of occasional disruption or even rarer violence to drive partisan support for quashing opposing views and getting such laws passed.

But on all sides of the political spectrum, we will have to live with those laws well beyond such moments and endure the limitations on protest rights no matter our issues or stances.

That’s a shameful misuse of genuine concerns about both social justice and public safety, and a betrayal of the First Amendment values prized by our nation’s founders.

## Why we need protest

Americans have long used their rights of public protest to express opposition or, in causing discomfort, prompt positive social change. In 1857, social reformer and statesman Frederick Douglass noted in a speech against slavery that “the whole history of the prog-



Submitted photo

ress of human liberty shows that all concessions . . . have been born of earnest struggle . . . Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.”

Again and again, our nation has seen the “thunder and lightning” of colliding views on what’s best for our nation and heard the “awful roar” of protest on issues from women’s rights to civil rights to LBGTQ rights, from anti-tax to anti-COVID-19 mask mandates, on

both sides of abortion law issues and more.

There is no doubt we are a better nation for all that intentional tumult — and that we will be a lesser nation if attempts to stifle our efforts to “petition for redress of grievances” ultimately mute our First Amendment freedoms of speech, assembly and petition.

*Gene Policinski is Freedom Forum Senior Fellow for the First Amendment. This column was originally published by the Freedom Forum in June 2021. You can reach Policinski at [gpolicinski@freedomforum.org](mailto:gpolicinski@freedomforum.org)*



## Tennessee Press Service Advertising Placement Snapshot

	ROP:	Networks:
July 2021	\$106,242	\$18,336
Year* as of July 31	\$701,220	\$146,423

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