

The Tennessee Press

Official Publication of the Tennessee Press Association

Volume 85

June 2022

No. 12

INSIDE

Policinski: Roe v. Wade leak a sign of a free press

Page 2

On the Docket: From litigation to legislation

Page 3

News & Moves

Page 3

Pumarlo: What became of public safety reporting?

Page 5

TPA Member Showcases

Pages 6-7, 12

Obituaries

Page 8

Hall is new Daily Times circulation director

Page 10

Zinser: NLRB official takes on First Amendment

Page 11

Memphis journalist sues city for access to police performance documents

DEBORAH FISHER
TN Coalition for Open Government
May 2, 2022

Marc Perrusquia, a journalist whose reporting has exposed problems in the Memphis police department, has filed a lawsuit challenging the city's denial of access to documents that would show how the city responded to a history of trouble with three officers.

Perrusquia is seeking access to the written performance improvement plans of the officers, two of which no longer work for the police department after resigning or quitting amid controversy.

The non-disciplinary documents are plans agreed upon by a supervisor and an officer and are designed to provide guidance to the officer who has been identified for at-risk behavior.

The city of Memphis denied the public records request, citing the Tennessee Public Records Act broadly but without specifying a relevant exemption.

Perrusquia is represented by Paul McAdoo, an attorney with the Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press Local Legal Initiative. The lawsuit was filed in Chancery Court in Memphis on April 26.

Documents would show how city deals with police problems

The lawsuit states: "Public oversight of government and its employees, including of law enforcement entities and officers, is necessary in a democracy; facilitating such over-

sight is the fundamental purpose of the TPRA. Here, Mr. Perrusquia seeks public records that would shine a light on how the City and the Memphis Police Department ("MPD") seeks to improve the performance of MPD officers who have been found to have violated MPD rules, including the rules against the use of excessive force, through non-disciplinary measures."

Perrusquia argues that no exemption in state law makes the performance improvement plans confidential. The city cited T.C.A. § 10-7-504, which has about 60 distinct exemptions covering a broad range of topics, but failed to specify which one was the basis of the denial.

Though not cited by the city, one of the exemptions allows confidentiality regarding employment assistance programs, but this exemption only covers programs for diagnosis and treatment of employees "who are impaired by personal concerns" such as alcohol or marital programs "which may adversely affect employee job performance."

The Performance Enhancement Program operated by Memphis police does not meet the definition of an employee assistance program as defined by the statute, Perrusquia argues. It is a management tool targeting officers who fall short on certain performance measures — such as non-lethal use of force, vehicular pursuits, traffic crashes, citizen complaints and on-the-job injuries.

Lawsuit distinguishes plans from employee assistance programs

Much of the memorandum of law filed with the lawsuit details what Perrusquia knows about the Performance Improvement Plan program

GET READY FOR SOME MEMPHIS MUSIC!
2022 Tri-State Convention, June 23-25



Submitted art



The featured entertainment for this year's Tri-State Press Convention slated for June 23-25 in Memphis will be the 926 Stax Music Academy Alumni Band. They will perform during the Convention's Bylines, Blues and BBQ dinner party on that Friday.

to help explain why it is not an employee assistance program.

The lawsuit also includes legislative history of the employee assistance program exemption in which lawmakers clearly distinguish the EAP from other personnel files. "I would hate to see a situation where someone ... suddenly designates their entire personnel program an employee assistance program and closes down every personnel record in the city, the county or in some other place," said then-Rep. Bill Purcell during a House Judiciary Committee meeting in 1991.

"To that end, the General Assembly accepted an amendment that provided that EAP records under Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-504(d)

must be maintained separately from other, open records," the lawsuit states. It quotes Purcell from the legislative record saying, "There was never any intention by the sponsor ... for [EAP] records, frankly to commingle with other records. But this will just clarify that those records that are already open remain open, remain separate; and the employee assistance program records, which are necessary for their purposes, will be closed."

Lawsuit: City did not cite applicable exemption, judge should award attorney fees

See **LAWSUIT** Page 2

Official Publication of the Tennessee Press Association
The Tennessee Press

(USPS 616-460)
Published monthly by the

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

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

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

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

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



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

TENNESSEE PRESS ASSOCIATION

Rick Thomason, Kingsport Times-News, Johnson City Press..... President
Jack McNeely, Herald-Citizen, Cookeville Vice President
Daniel Williams, The Paris Post-Intelligencer Vice President
Chris Vass, Chattanooga Times Free Press Secretary
Eric Barnes, The Daily News, Memphis Treasurer
Daniel Richardson, Carroll County News Leader, Huntingdon ... Immediate Past President
Carol Daniels Executive Director

DIRECTORS

Scott Critchlow, Union City Daily Messenger District 1
Calvin Anderson, New Tri-State Defender of Memphis..... District 1
Victor Parkins, The Mirror-Exchange, Milan District 1
David Plazas The Tennessean, Nashville District 2
Dave Gould, Main Street Media of Tennessee, Gallatin..... District 2
Keith Ponder, Tullahoma News. District 2
Sandy Dodson, The Bledsonian-Banner, Pikeville..... District 3
Dale Gentry, The Standard Banner, Jefferson City District 3
Paul Mauney, The Greeneville Sun District 3

TENNESSEE PRESS SERVICE

Dave Gould, Main Street Media of Tennessee, Gallatin President
Michael Williams, The Paris Post-Intelligencer Vice President
Mike Fishman, Lakeway Publishers, Morristown..... Director
David Critchlow Jr., Union City Daily Messenger Director
W.R. (Ron) Fryar, Cannon Courier Director
Michael Williams, Paris Post-Intelligencer Director
Carol Daniels Executive Vice President

TENNESSEE PRESS ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION

Victor Parkins, The Milan Mirror-Exchange President
Mike Fishman, Lakeway Publishers, Morristown Vice President
Richard L. Hollow, Knoxville General Counsel
Carol Daniels Secretary-Treasurer

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 August 2022 issue is July 5, 2022.

Roe vs. Wade leak shows benefit of a free press

Well, at least, we know: Roe v. Wade, which has protected abortion rights in the U.S since 1973, seems likely to be overturned.

And we know this not from a government news release or even the announcement of a court decision, but from a leak of a draft document to journalists, whose job is to keep us as informed and up to date as possible on matters of public interest.

At 8:32 p.m. EDT Monday, May 2, the online news organization Politico broke the news that it had obtained a draft of a U.S. Supreme Court opinion showing a 5-4 majority in favor of reversing the court’s seminal Roe v. Wade decision.

Chief Justice John Roberts, even as he decried what seems to be the most “egregious” leak of confidential information in the court’s history, confirmed that Politico had it right. The result of the story has been an explosion of public demonstrations, political punditry on the abortion issue and upcoming elections, and outright speculation on the motives of whoever leaked the draft. It has also offered an introduction for many to the operations of the court, a polarizing body that often operates in secret.

For those debating the ethics of publishing the leaked draft, consider this: If history tells us anything, it’s that when journalists don’t tell us what they know, all they know, or sometimes even just suspect, we are poorer for it. While the tale has been debunked that The New York Times withheld reporting in advance about the misbegotten Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, President John F. Kennedy later ruefully remarked that had the newspaper done even more of its detailed



PERSPECTIVE:
FREEDOM
FORUM

GENE POLICINSKI

stories in advance, the plan might have been shelved.

The classic example of leaks to the press that benefited the nation is Daniel Ellsberg’s 1971 leak of the Pentagon Papers, which peeled back years of government misrepresentation, misdirection and outright lies about U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam.

Would we have known in 2004 without press reports — including leaked photos — of widespread torture at Abu Ghraib by U.S. military jailers? Starting around 2006 and through the 2013 massive information leak by government contractor Edward Snowden, would we know of massive government surveillance of personal online and telephone communications?

None of those examples of a free press doing its job or Politico’s Monday night scoop are without their critics — and perhaps danger as well. We live in a time when documented attacks on journalists for just doing their job are on the rise, in numbers and intensity.

The Associated Press reported that Politico sent a memo to staff members on Tuesday saying it had restricted access to its offices and told security to be “extra vigilant” about visitors. The company also urged employees to consider removing their Politico affiliation on social media accounts. AP reported that The Federalist, a conser-

vative website, headlined a story, “The SCOTUS Abortion Decision Leak is what Actual Treasonous Insurrection Looks Like.”

No, it is not. It is what freedom looks like.

A free press has First Amendment protection from government control to do precisely what Politico did: Tell us things we need to know, with no requirement to wait for official approval or consent.

One thing the online news operation does not have to fear is government prosecution for publishing the leaked material. A 2001 Supreme Court decision involving an intercepted cell phone conversation established that a third party may divulge information they innocently receive, even if the source of that information violated a law in obtaining it. In the case of this leaked Supreme Court draft, it may not have been a criminal act at all.

A clear result of the leaked draft opinion — apart from Justice Roberts’ well-placed concerns about the integrity of court discussions — is a nation energized, engaged and in active debate over the issue of abortion rights.

There’s nothing in the First Amendment that says the five freedoms it protects will always operate in a neat and tidy fashion. In fact, its protection of dissent and “robust and vigorous” discussion appears throughout First Amendment history. On the likely fate of Roe v. Wade: Now we know. Thanks to a free press.

Gene Policinski is a Freedom Forum senior fellow for the First Amendment. This commentary was originally published May 4 at freedomforum.org and is republished here with permission.

LAWSUIT from Page 1

Lawsuit Perrusquia’s lawsuit also asks for the chancellor to award attorneys’ fees and costs, which are allowed under the statute “if the court finds that the governmental entity, or agent thereof, refusing to disclose a record, knew that such record was public and willfully refused to disclose it.”

The lawsuit points out that the Court of Appeals has “stressed that willfulness should be measured ‘in terms of the relative worth of the legal justification cited by the (government entity) to refuse access to

record . . . If a municipality denies access to records by invoking a legal position that is not supported by existing law or by a good faith argument for the modification of existing law, the circumstances of the case will likely warrant a finding of willfulness.”

“The City’s responses in the instant case . . . did ‘not articulate a valid reason as to why [the] records request cannot be entertained,’” the lawsuit says.

“. . . There is no question that the records exist, and there is no applicable exception under the TPRA for Performance Improve-

ment Plans. The City’s citation to Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-504, for the reasons set forth above, is meritless. The City should not avoid an award of reasonable costs, including attorneys’ fees, where it cited a plainly inapplicable exemption in an attempt to shield public records from public scrutiny. Based on the facts of this case and the current state of the law, the City should be found to have willfully refused Mr. Perrusquia’s public records requests.”

At the time this article was written, a court date had not yet been scheduled.

From litigation to legislation: How open meetings lawsuit sparked new transparency requirement

In April, state lawmakers passed a bill strengthening campaign finance and ethics rules. It makes clear that the Tennessee Registry of Election Finance is required to hold public meetings — with advance public notice — when it settles assessed campaign finance penalties exceeding \$25,000. This amendment appears to be an outgrowth of a 2020 open meetings lawsuit in which I represented a group of Tennessee news media and open government organizations, including the Tennessee Press Association.

These days, journalists and news organizations rarely litigate Open Meetings Act cases. But in this lawsuit, the first one filed as part of the Reporters Committee's Local Legal Initiative, we challenged a secret, middle-of-the-night email vote by Registry members. It was a vote held on the eve of an important election deadline to accept a state lawmaker's settlement offer to pay nearly \$45,000 less than the \$65,000-plus in civil penalties



ON THE DOCKET

PAUL McADOO

he owed. The public was never informed about the vote beforehand nor given detailed information about the Registry members' votes after they were cast.

The Tennessee attorney general argued that the email vote was not a meeting under the law, positing that only the attorney general, not the Registry, had the authority to decide to settle with the state lawmaker. Fortunately, a Tennessee judge ruled that the Registry's email vote did, in fact, break the law, writing that the Registry "violated the spirit and requirements of the [Open Meetings Act]."

The ruling showed that such lawsuits can help change the way our government does business.

That's especially true now that we know lawmakers are willing to act when successful litigation reveals flaws that need to be addressed, as evidenced by the Tennessee General Assembly's actions in April.

Bringing cases that spur these kinds of changes and have a lasting impact is one of the central goals of the Local Legal Initiative. Because of this new legislation, members of the press and public will now know five days in advance when the Registry is about to settle fines against a candidate for public office.

And we know that with greater transparency comes increased accountability. It's a fact we've seen bear out in the journalism that's followed the Local Legal Initiative's efforts: When journalists and news organizations have legal support, they can lift the veil of secrecy on law enforcement misconduct, inform voters about the business record of a candidate for governor, and force cities to improve the way they communicate with members

of the press and public.

If we're going to hold public officials and the agencies they lead accountable, we shouldn't shy away from pursuing legal action targeting violations of the Open Meetings Act and other laws intended to keep the public informed about what their government is up to. The Reporters Committee's Local Legal Initiative helps ensure you have an attorney in your corner to help you wage these battles for transparency at no cost to you or your newsroom. Those efforts not only shine a spotlight on the actions of public officials and prompt important changes to government policies — they can help shape laws that benefit both the press and the public well into the future, too.

Paul McAdoo is the Tennessee Local Legal Initiative attorney for the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. He is based in Nashville.

NEWS & MOVES

TN Newspaper Hall of Fame nominations due by Aug. 31

The Tennessee Newspaper Hall of Fame honors those who have made an outstanding contribution to Tennessee newspaper journalism or who have made an extraordinary contribution to their communities and region, or the state, through newspaper journalism. Nominations for the Hall of Fame are being accepted through Aug. 31, 2022, to be considered for induction in 2023.

Sixty honorees have been inducted since the Hall of Fame was established in 1966 as a joint project of TPA and the University of Tennessee. All inductions are made posthumously. Information about the Tennessee Newspaper Hall of Fame, biographical sketches of the honorees and nomination information can be found at <https://tnpress.com/hall-of-fame/> or by sending an email to rgentile@tnpress.com. All nominees must be deceased two or more

years prior to the nomination.

Association officials encourage those submitting nominations to consider including as much material about the nominee as possible.

The Tennessee Newspaper Hall of Fame gallery is located in the Communications Building of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Materials may be submitted electronically by contacting TPA headquarters at (865) 584-5761, ext. 105 or rgentile@tnpress.com.

*Staff Reports
May 31, 2022*

TN comptroller selects Bush as new open records counsel

Tennessee's comptroller has selected Maria Bush as the state's new open records counsel.

Comptroller Jason Mumpower's office on Monday, April 4, announced the selection of the former associate general counsel



Bush

for the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance. Bush previously was a law clerk with Taylor, Pigue, Marchetti & Blair. She is a graduate of Aquinas College and the Belmont University College of Law.

Bush replaces Lee Pope, who had been Tennessee's open records counsel since 2017. Last month, Pope left the job in order to pursue a career in private practice.

In 2008, then-Gov. Phil Bredesen pushed for the creation of the Office of Open Records Counsel to answer questions about the state's public records law and issue informal advisory opinions. It receives inquiries from government entities, citizens and journalists.

*Associated Press
April 5, 2022*

Goad promoted to news director at Tennessean

Ben Goad, who led the business and music teams as a content strategist at The Tennessean, Nashville, for a half dozen years, was recently promoted to the role of news director by editor Michael



Goad

A. Anastasi. Goad now oversees the day-to-day news operations of The Tennessean.

He replaces Maria De Varenne, who retired earlier this spring.

Goad continues a legacy of editors at an internationally and nationally award-winning multimedia and digital news publication that seeks to improve the lives of Middle Tennesseans.

Goad has also covered news in Washington, D.C. and River-

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

June 2022

- 8: TPS Stockholders Meeting via Zoom at 9:00 a.m. CDT
- 23: TPA Concurrent Board Meeting & Business Session, 1 p.m., Sheraton Memphis Downtown Hotel, Memphis.
- 23-25: Tri-State Press Convention, Arkansas • Mississippi • Tennessee, "Bylines, Blues & BBQ," Sheraton Memphis Downtown Hotel, Memphis.
- 23-25: 2022 National Federation of Press Women Conference, Radisson Blu hotel, Fargo, N.D.
- 23-26: 2022 Investigative Reporters & Editors Annual Conference, Denver, Co.
- 26-29: 2022 American Jewish Press Association (AJPA) Conference, Atlanta, Ga.
- 29-30: FuturePrint Leaders Summit, hybrid in-person and virtual event on the future of print technology, Geneva, Switzerland, <http://summit.futureprint.tech>

July 2022

- 20-24: 2022 International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors Convention, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky.

August 2022

- 25-27: 2022 National Native Media Conference, Native American Journalists Association in partnership with the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University, Tempe, Ariz.
- 31: Deadline Tennessee Newspaper Hall of Fame Nominations

October 2022

- 12-14: E&P and 360 Media Alliance News Media Business Summit, Sheraton Hotel Downtown, Harrisburg, Pa.
- 16-18: America's Newspapers Annual Meeting and Senior Leadership Conference, The Roosevelt Hotel, New Orleans, La.
- 26-30: Fall National College Media Association Convention in conjunction with Associated Collegiate Press, Grand Hyatt Washington, Washington D.C.

A good idea is worth the wait, so 'hold your horses'

When I was a kid and jumped to conclusions about something, my father would often say, "Hold your horses, son." That's an old saying that means, "Whoa! Stop and think carefully before making a decision." Dad had a lot of wisdom. He knew that one of the most important lessons he could teach me from an early age was to think before taking action.

There's talk these days about "deferring judgment" when discussing ideas or hearing the opinions of others. That's another way of saying "hold your horses." The concept of delaying judgment has been around for a long time. In fact, it was popularized in the advertising industry by Alex Osborn, a co-founder of the BBDO ad agency. Osborn incorporated judgment deferral in his



AD-LIBS®

JOHN FOUST

rules for creativity. That's because he understood the value of encouraging judgment-free discussions of just-proposed ideas. In his writings, he labeled his system as "brainstorming," a term which has evolved into a general description of creative thinking.

It takes patience to defer judgment. We've all been in meetings where ideas bounce around the room. Somebody mentions the

first glimmer of an ad idea, and before you know it, someone else says, "No, let's consider this other idea." As a result, the first idea dies on the spot – and the discussion narrows in focus, often with the most outgoing person in the room taking center stage. That's not good for authentic brainstorming. And it's not good for the person whose idea was just suppressed.

At this stage in the process, the objective is to gather as many ideas as possible. Encourage ideas to flow, so people can build on each other's creative thinking. Be patient and listen.

Consider Melanie, an ad salesperson who was confronted with a client who wanted to run a big headline that boasted, "We're the popular choice" – an empty claim

with no evidence to back it up. "I cringed when I heard that," she told me, "but I didn't interrupt his train of thought. I told myself to approach his idea as the beginning of the conversation, not something to take a stand against. So I asked questions and listened for possibilities. Along the way, he mentioned that he had recently received compliments about his store's customer service. As he talked, I realized that testimonials could make the concept of popularity come to life. He liked that idea, and we ended up with a campaign which featured a quote from a different loyal customer in each ad – along with that person's photo."

Melanie's advertiser was happy with the outcome, but more important, her approach strength-

ened their marketing partnership. There wasn't any magic involved. It was simply a matter of deferring judgment and soaking up as much information as possible. The advertiser's original idea – as weak as it was – got the ball rolling in the right direction.

The point of all this is to slow down. When you hold your horses a little longer, a better idea may gallop into the picture.

Copyright 2022 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

side, California, before moving to Nashville.

He oversaw the prize-winning "project about the intersection between music and African American roots," and he worked with the engagement team on helping The Tennessean launch a new series about how country music industry leaders are contending with the racial reckoning of 2020.

*The Tennessean, Nashville
April 29, 2022*

Times News wins National Headliner Award

The Kingsport Times News can now add "National Headliner Award winner" to its list of accolades.

The Times News received the honor for its 2021 staff project, "Meth Mountain," which brought the region's methamphetamine epidemic to light through detailed data, analysis and first-person accounts of addiction and recovery.

"It's so gratifying to see everyone's hard work rewarded," Six Rivers Vice President Allen Rau said. "It's especially heartwarming when there is so much input and cooperation from the community on a subject that affects us all. On a personal level, it makes me proud to work with folks who can have such an impact."

The 88th National Headliner Awards recognize the "best

journalism in the United States in 2021," the press release announcing the winners said. The contest was founded in 1934 by the Press Club of Atlantic City and is one of the oldest and largest in the country that recognizes journalistic merit in the communications industry.

"This is one of those 'Am-I-reading-this-right?' moments for a publisher," said Rick Thomason, Times



Thomason

News Publisher and Six Rivers Media president. "Not because I have any reservations about the capabilities of our journalists, but because we were competing against exponentially

larger newsrooms with more resources and in metro markets. Those are the newsrooms that typically win these types of awards."

The Kingsport-based paper earned second place for public service in newspapers not in the top 20 media market. The Post and Courier of Charleston (which is also a Pulitzer Prize-winner) won first place. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Madison Capital Times and Appleton-Post-Crescent took third. Other top award winners included the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago-Sun Times, the Miami Herald and the Philadelphia Inquirer, among others.

"What this proves is that when it comes to top-notch journalism — the kind that matters — size of staff

is of no consequence," Thomason said. "Instead, it's about prioritizing. It's about identifying issues and shining a bright, sometimes uncomfortable, light on them. It's about pulling out all the stops to do impactful journalism. That's what the 'Meth Mountain' series did."

"Congratulations to the entire team for taking on this important topic and for this national recognition of their work. This raises the bar for journalism internally and throughout the region."

*The Kingsport Times News
April 27, 2022*

State Gazette announces new leadership team

Rust Communications has announced that a new leadership team is in place at the State Gazette, Dyersburg. Advertising Director Cecily Simpson and Editor Brandon Hutcheson have been named co-leaders of the local newspaper, effective Saturday, with Shelia Rouse serving in a consultant role.

Dyersburg native Mike Smith, who served in the Publisher role, ended his tenure with the State Gazette on Friday, Feb. 11.

Carrying the torch for The State Gazette are Simpson and Hutcheson, both of whom are excited to begin a new chapter at the paper.

Simpson, 32, was hired at The State Gazette by Rouse in January 2020 as a marketing consultant. She was promoted to Advertising



Simpson



Hutcheson

Manager in August of 2021 and will now take on the role of Advertising Director.

"I am excited to be stepping into the co-leadership role and very much look forward to working with Brandon to continue providing our community with an excellent source of local news," Simpson said. "My experiences at the State Gazette have been nothing less than amazing."

Hutcheson, 32, originally from Lake County, began his employment at The State Gazette in August of 2016 as a reporter. He was promoted to Newsroom Manager in August of 2021, and with the recent change of leadership has been promoted to Editor.

Hutcheson said it is business as usual with the promotion to the leadership role.

"We have a great news team that works hard to bring up-to-date and factual articles to the public. I am only one small piece to the machine that is The State Gazette; however, I am honored to have the opportunity to be part of the leadership team with Cecily at the paper. As a news staff, we will continue to

promote all of the positives we have in our cities and county."

*State Gazette, Dyersburg
Feb. 11, 2022*

Chronicle's Mullinix named among E&P's 2022 'Editors Extraordinaire'

Heather Mullinix, editor of the Crossville Chronicle, was among those selected for Editor & Publisher's 2022 "Editors Extraordinaire" honor. Here's what E&P's Robin Blinder wrote about the award and Mullinix:



Mullinix

"It's easy to recognize those who run the news media company or write award-winning articles, but there

are those behind the scenes whose contributions are immeasurable. In newsrooms across the country, editors bear heavy responsibilities — leading the newsroom, determining what stories should be told and who is best positioned to tell them, challenging assertions, developing talent, elevating journalism — all while maintaining an unwavering commitment to the public's interest. Their names may not always be as familiar as bylined reporters or celebrated columnists, but their

See **MULLINIX** Page 10

What's happened to nuts and bolts of public safety reporting?

Crime and public safety are garnering more headlines across the country. Law enforcement and racial disparities in the criminal justice system are under increasing scrutiny. Newspapers play a key role in examining the dynamics in their own communities.

But what's happened to police logs, the most basic of public safety reporting? Where are the regular records of traffic citations, thefts, property damage, burglaries and much more?

Police logs easily generated the most calls during my tenure as editor. Traffic citations probably topped the list. Nobody likes being linked to a police report – whether it's something as common as speeding or a citation that carries greater stigma, such as a DWI.

We regularly connected with local law enforcement. We routinely reviewed all initial complaint reports. The documentation was part of the menu of public records that readers expected to see in our newspaper.

We also believed the information was valuable to readers in terms of public safety. Is a neighborhood experiencing a rash of vandalism? Are DWIs on the rise? Should residents be on the lookout for another scam artist? Are certain crosswalks particularly dangerous? Has a neighborhood become a haven for narcotics? Is there a pattern to a rash of business burglaries?



COMMUNITY NEWSROOM SUCCESS

JIM PUMARLO

No doubt, traffic citations are among the most worrisome and embarrassing to the violators. A youth is afraid he'll lose his job. A teacher is concerned how she can explain a speeding ticket to students. An elderly woman is flustered by her first-ever ticket. A coach dreads facing his players after getting ticketed for a DWI.

Adding to the frustration – and often anger – of the accused is the lag time between when a ticket is issued and when the court disposes of a case. The delay can be weeks, or even months, depending on circumstances.

We believed both reports were newsworthy. For example, police might break up a neighborhood disturbance and issue several tickets. The community should be apprised immediately. It's equally newsworthy to follow a case to see what penalties are assessed.

With the increased level of crime across the country, it's discouraging to see many newspapers put fewer resources – or, at minimum, less effort – into monitoring police logs. For those

reports that are published, one must ask in many instances: What's the value?

Some newspapers simply copy and paste an agency's computer printout. It may provide a glimpse of a department's activity – but little else. No names. No addresses. The reasons for a call are nondescript: driving complaint, narcotics, domestic, traffic stop, noise, suspicious. No indication if arrests were made.

Some newspapers will translate the logs into their own reports, but the vagueness is alarming. A bike theft on Bush Street. A local business reports a padlock broken and items stolen. An employee theft on the 14000 block of Dellwood Drive. Again, what's the value?

Most glaring is the anonymity of the reports – the lack of the five Ws and H of basic journalism. Reports are meaningless and do nothing to alerting a neighborhood, a community to public safety issues.

Law enforcement undoubtedly is spoon feeding information, selectively deciding what they believe is in the best interests of the public. They give little attention to the fact that most of the nuts and bolts of police reports – names, addresses, specifics of call – is classified as public by law. Their rationale? Adhering to their own rules makes their jobs easier; they won't get the angry phone calls asking why they released the information to the newspaper.

Even more discouraging is that many editors apparently share a similar sentiment. They don't press for substantive details. Their rationale? Let's keep the reports vague and not rile readers.

The dangers to this lack of aggressive reporting are obvious.

First, computer logs likely are transmitted electronically with little or no contact with anyone at the newspaper. Reporters do not develop any relationship with folks at the cop shop. They miss the opportunity to pick up and follow up on spot news, in-depth reports, feature stories and other substantive content for the newspaper.

Second, law enforcement will soon consider it standard operating procedure: Give the newspaper as scant reports as possible. That unfortunately is what many departments are taught. I well recall an officer in my hometown who became the primary contact on our daily rounds. He had just returned from training at the FBI Academy at Quantico, Va. His marching orders were very clear, as he was proud to tell us: Give the newspaper only the information he believed should be shared. We regularly challenged him, reminded him what the law dictated, and we eventually got the information – but it was an ongoing struggle.

Readers frequently asked that a public record be withheld. It might

be a marriage license, divorce proceeding or ambulance run, but tickets were most commonly the concern. Some reasons were had more merit than others.

In the end though, each person was seeking special treatment. Each was asking the impossible because our policy was that we could not pick and choose. Going down that path would place us in the position of being judge and jury – to determine that one person's plea was more worthy than another's. And we'd never know all the facts.

The simplest and fairest policy is to treat all public records as just that – public – in the belief that openness serves the greater number of people over the greatest period of time. At its foundation, police logs provide a pulse of public safety in a community.

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

News outlets and social media provide avalanche of information during crises

How do you sift out the accurate from the inaccurate?

High-stakes, high-interest events such as protests, riots, wars and natural disasters cause an extremely high demand for news that vetted, reported information can't necessarily keep up with. Some people in the misinformation space call these "information incidents" or "misinformation crises." The worldwide spread of COVID in early 2020 is an example of a global, drawn-out information incident.

The Russia-Ukraine war is an especially hazardous example, with a digital information landscape pockmarked with both unintentional misinformation, like misguided social media posts, and intentional, like Russian propaganda.



NEWS BEST PRACTICES

SAMANTHA SUNNE

The second type is often referred to as "disinformation," meaning false information that was knowingly created and disseminated to further a goal. (In casual conversation it is all referred to under the umbrella of "misinformation.") In a recent tweet thread, journalism educator First Draft News outlined the difference, saying it could affect not just the reporting and consumption of information, but

also how players are perceived.

The thread shares a range of tips covering images, videos, social accounts and general phrasing for reporting on high-stakes news events. These include tactics that have been covered in previous columns, like RevEye for reverse image searches and the Internet Archive for backing up webpages. The team also suggests creating image overlays, which add text to an image to indicate that it is fake or misleading.

A lot of the guidance and expert advice (or "expert" advice) is coming from social media, like this thread from Bellingcat. To save it, you can use a Twitter add-on called Thread Reader. The add-on works by just tagging @ThreadReader-

App in a reply or a quote tweet of the thread. This creates a webpage that you can bookmark for later, as well as adds it to Thread Reader's large repository of saved threads. If you didn't save it in time, you can search for older threads using their search function.

You do have to have a Twitter account to use Thread Reader, because you need to tweet at them. But if you connect your account, the tool gives you a dashboard where you can organize your saved threads using hashtags or your own filing system.

But Thread Reader will only archive a series of tweets – it won't save an individual post. For the firehose of individual tweets, you may want to use a tool like

TweetDeck or InoReader to keep up with it all.

TweetDeck is familiar to many journalists as the central tool for both reading and writing tweets, often from multiple accounts. It's also one of the most powerful tools out there for finding relevant tweets. For example, it's one of the only tools that lets you sort or filter results by a minimum number of likes or retweets, allowing you to sift out the many (in some cases, hundreds, or thousands) of tweets that are low-value or low-interest. Just like Thread Reader, the third party tool was bought by Twitter itself, making it easy to integrate your accounts.

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE I: Knoxville News Sentinel

101-year-old: Hughes broke barriers as Black woman in Oak Ridge

ANGELA DENNIS
Knoxville News Sentinel
March 10, 2022

She's Black history and women's history all by herself, and when you sit down with "Mother Clara" you sort of feel like you've known her forever. She serves up warm hugs and a smile and can tell you her life story like anyone half her age.

101-year-old Clara Curd Hall Hughes broke barriers as a Black woman, becoming the first African-American woman to serve on the union board for workers at the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge.

From her tough, humble childhood in rural East Tennessee, working every aspect of her extended family's farm, she worked her way up through manual labor jobs to a place in local history.

As she sits on the sofa in Knoxville, blue sweater and silver jewelry adorning a gorgeous brown complexion resembling that of a woman 30 years younger, she talks about when she was 17 and living in Oliver Springs, doing what she could to make a living for herself, mainly through domestic work, cooking and cleaning in the homes and businesses of white people.

She eventually fell in love and married a coal miner, Freeman Alfred Hall, in 1937. When America joined World War II and the work ramped up near her hometown, she stepped up to play a role.

And her dedication led to her breaking barriers in her work and contributing to the Civil Rights Movement in her own ways.

The Manhattan Project brings Y-12 to Oak Ridge

The Manhattan Project, code name for the American-led effort to develop the atomic bomb during World War II, changed Hughes' life.

In 1941, the U.S. government purchased nearly 60,000 acres of farmland in the Clinch River Valley for the development of a planned city. In 1942, Oak Ridge was established as a production site for the project. Engineers were tasked with quickly building a town to accommodate 30,000 workers, and building the enormously complex plants. So many people living nearby pitched in,



Photo by Brianna Paciorka
Knoxville News Sentinel

Clara Hughes, 101, on Feb. 18, 2022, at her home in West Knoxville.

including Hughes.

"It was the Secret City because we didn't know anything. We better not know anything," Hughes chuckled.

Hughes said it was a scary time.

"There were rumors but we didn't really know what was going on. We heard that the government was gonna come in and build facilities while the war was going on. They rushed in here and started working. They were just taking people's houses, giving them next to nothing for their homes," she said.

"We was scared they was gonna come into Oliver Springs and take ours, too. We had lots of our white friends who got pushed out of Oak Ridge. They just started grazing this place, we were scared to death," she said.

In 1951, Hughes got a job as a janitor working at an electromagnetic plant also known as Y-12, operated for the Atomic Energy Commission by Union Carbide Corp.

It was quite the step up from her years of working for 50 cents a week. Thousands of Black workers flocked to the project, hoping to escape oppressive Jim Crow laws and the drought that devastated farming communities. Despite segregation, unequal pay and housing woes, the 58 cents an hour offered to Black labor workers was higher than they could make anywhere else.

After success with her hands-on work, Hughes was promoted to



Submitted

Hughes cleans at Y-12 during her first position at the plant as a janitor. "It was the Secret City," Hughes said.

maintenance supervisor, a position she held for more than 30 years. Her tireless work earned her a spot as a Y-12 union workers' board member in 1962. She became the first African-American woman to serve on the board.

"I was so proud of myself for getting to a point where I could become a supervisor. There weren't a lot of us Black people who got those kind of jobs. I was the first in my department," she said.

That same year, Hughes and her husband adopted a little girl, the realization of a dream come true.

"You see, I wasn't able to have no children, so when we adopted little Rosa that was the best day of my life," she said.

Hughes retired from Y-12 in 1982 after more than 30 years of dedicated service. She married Franklin Ira Hughes after the death of her first husband.

Memories and Civil Rights

"We didn't have Black history years ago. That just came up here in the last 25-30 years, I guess," pondered Hughes.

Many of the years she spent in Oliver Springs and Oak Ridge were at the peak of the Civil Rights Movement. While racial tensions weren't as high in her town, she knew the reality for Black people had always been one of struggle.

"We just tried to get along with



Photo by Calvin Mattheis, Knoxville News Sentinel

African-American laborers working at a construction site in Oak Ridge.

everybody and love each other during those times. That's all we could do," she said.

She recalls the day Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in 1968.

"I used to enjoy hearing that wonderful man speak and when he got killed it hurt my heart so much. I was sad for a long, long time," she said as her voice quivered.

"If he was still here things would be a lot different than they are now. He talked about his children being able to go to school with little white boys, and that has happened, but things are still not what they could be. We've come a long way but we still got a long ways to go," she said.

Despite equality that still hasn't been achieved, Hughes is happy to have witnessed the first Black president.

Beaming, she got up to show a letter from Barack and Michelle Obama, a 90th birthday gift she received from The White House.

"When I got that, I was so surprised because it just felt so wonderful to see him become our president. He did a beautiful job, and I prayed for him all the time."

She's no stranger to her community. She's been recognized by the Tennessee General Assembly, lauded by mayors and governors, has the key to the city of Oak Ridge, and even has a day in her name declared by Oak Ridge Mayor Warren Gooch.

She's been a member of Little Leaf Baptist Church in Oliver Springs for more than 80 years, and to this day she doesn't miss a Sunday. One of the greatest moments of her life, which she holds dear, is her baptism in a creek at Tuppersville in 1937. "I looked forward to that day for a long, long time," she said as she smiled.

After visiting 49 states, several countries and traveled aboard 13 cruises, she feels pretty complete.

Today, Hughes lives with her family in Knoxville, and while she misses watching TV like she used to, trading in "Days of Our Lives" for gospel music and bird watching, she's still able to enjoy the little things like canning fresh fruits and vegetables, making jellies and preserves, and playing checkers.

Don't forget her favorite pound cake. Her recipe has been passed down in the family over the years.

"I love it when Faye (her niece) makes it. She must have made 50 to 100 pound cakes. It's just so good," she said with a grin.

She's outlived most of her friends, including her daughter Rosa, who passed away in 2017. She's just happy to still be alive, with no hidden beauty secrets and no special diet. The only thing she attributes to more than a century of good living is the Lord.

"I talk to the Lord every day because it's all from him. He couldn't have taken me several years ago, and I just thank the Lord for keeping me here," she said.

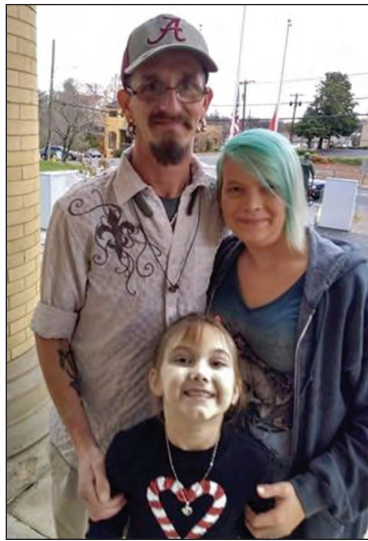
TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE II: The Daily Times, Maryville

A life well-lived and still going: Baby New Year 1992 looks back at 30 years

STEVE WILDSMITH
The Daily Times, Maryville
December 29, 2021

For Ariel Michelle Sartin Key, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Key, who turned 30 years old on Jan. 2, was the first baby born in the new year at Blount Memorial Hospital back in 1992. She obviously has no recollection of the momentous event, but she's heard stories from her aunt and her mother, she told The Daily Times.



Submitted

Ariel Michelle Sartin Key (right), the first baby born at Blount Memorial Hospital in 1992, poses with her husband, Charlie, and her daughter, Valerie Evangeline Simonds, in this 2018 photograph

"I was the new year's baby by fluke, according to what I was told by my aunt and my mom!" Key said. "If it hadn't been for my mom having an emergency C-section, there was another lady waiting to be induced with twins. My mom and my aunt were on the way to the ER because mom was having labor pains, and my aunt was on crutches, and my mom fell down a hill on the way to the hospital.

"When they got her to the ER, they found my umbilical cord was wrapped around my neck, so they had to do an emergency C-section. From what I've been told, the hospital was so busy that night — I'm guessing because of regular

New Year's shenanigans — there were no rooms available, just beds in hallways, but because it was an emergency, they pushed me straight through, basically."

According to The Daily Times' annual coverage of Blount County's Baby New Year, Key was born at 10:59 a.m. Jan. 2 to Susan Sartin of Maryville, weighing 7 pounds, 11 ounces and measuring 19.5 inches. It was a rarity for the first baby of the year to be born so late into it, by childbearing standards — if Susan Sartin had delivered six hours later, Key would have been the latest New Year's baby in 44 years.

Being the first in 1992, however, came with a prize pack that, looking back, serves as a time capsule for businesses no longer around: a \$20 gift certificate from Wynn's, a vinyl record from Roy's Record Shop, a gift certificate to Manning's Kiddie Shop and a "60-count box of Luv's Deluxe Disposable Diapers from Buddy's Supermarket," The Daily Times reported. Other elements of the gift bundle include some recognizable names: flowers from Coulter Florist, a first prescription from Blount Discount Pharmacy and a gift certificate to Foothills Mall.

Key grew up in Maryville and remembers some of those establishments, she said, but over time local growth made it feel too crowded. She and her husband, Charlie, now live in Loudon County with her 10-year-old daughter, Valerie Evangeline Simonds — and on that fateful day of March 29, 2011, when her little girl was born, Key experienced a profound sense of déjà vu.

"I was told by seven doctors that I couldn't have kids, and I was working at the old Shoney's across from Foothills Mall at the time I was pregnant . . . and I tripped and fell," she said. "I was skittish because I had been told I couldn't get pregnant, and I wanted them to do an ultrasound at the hospital. Dr. Nancy Garza, my OB/GYN, got them to do it, and it turned out my little girl's umbilical cord was wrapped twice around her throat as well. Dr. Garza (who still practices in Maryville) literally saved my little girl."

All's well that ends well, however, and for Key, while her life is

more bucolic now that she lives in Loudon County, she still has close ties to Blount County, and to the newspaper that announced to the world her arrival back in 1992.

"Thirty years ago, I was in The Daily Times newspaper as the new year's baby, and then about four years ago, I was in The Daily Times again for driving for Blount Taxi, which was voted as the best taxi in Blount County," she said. "I was in the paper for getting married to my husband, and now I work for The Daily Times as a carrier for Route 114. I've been wrapped up in Blount County and The Daily Times since I was born."

And while she left for a while (she spent five years driving

trucks), she's always come back to this part of East Tennessee. It's where her family feels most content, where it's unusual not to run into an old acquaintance at the gas station, where customers along her route delivering copies of the paper showered her with gifts this holiday season that made it one of the best ever.

"I honestly thought Christmas was going to be in shambles this year, but because of my subscribers, it's been absolutely amazing," she said. "My daughter's, my husband's, everybody's — it was the best Christmas ever."

Such amenities are par for the course, however, when growing up in a town where the first baby of the new year is still cause for

news coverage and celebration. Key's birthdays these days don't look like the parties of her past, when frequenting Two Doors Down in downtown Maryville was a regular occurrence, but given the way in which she came into the world, and the way in which her daughter's entrance mirrored it, every one is a blessing, she added.

"I prefer the lake or the mountains, just getting away from big goings-on and epic parties," she said. "Now, we do bonfires in the field over here at the house on the property we bought, where the house is that we're remodeling. We might invite a few people over, and we just enjoy life with each other."

SAVE THE DATE FOR THIS SUMMER'S

Bylines, Blues & BBQ

Tri-State Press Convention

June 23 - 25, 2022 • Sheraton Downtown Memphis

ARKANSAS
PRESS
ASSOCIATION

OBITUARIES

Dustin Barnes

Dustin Barnes, a Mississippi-raised journalist who became a USA TODAY trending editor known for his professional acumen and irrepressible joy, was found dead Wednesday, May 11, at his home in Nashville, Tenn.. He was 38.

Barnes had been recovering from a heart attack and was discovered by co-workers who went to check on him, according to his mother, Sheila Barnes. She said both the heart attack and death were unexpected.

Current and former co-workers said Barnes was a razor-sharp editor and a life-affirming force of humor and positivity.

"Dustin made an immediate impact at The Tennessean, not only as a skilled journalist but one of those people who lights up every room they step into," said Michael Anastasi, The Tennessean's top editor. "His effervescence made every team he was a member of that much better, and fun. His passion to serve his community, and to be an extraordinary teammate, was evident every day."

Barnes grew up in the small northern Mississippi towns of Chalybeate and Kossuth, writing poetry as a child and dreaming of becoming a journalist, his mother said. He joined Gannett as a reporter at the Clarion-Ledger in Mississippi in 2009 and later worked as a digital strategist at The Tennessean in Nashville.

Madalyn Hoerr, a USA TODAY Network regional planning editor and friend, said Barnes "inspired creativity, challenged the norm and made you want to be a better person."

Barnes was known for his humor and playfulness. "When he came to the house, we took turns trying to scare each other," his mother said. With his father, Harold, he watched Godzilla and Star Trek movies. With other relatives, he quoted from the movie "Steel Magnolias."

"Dustin was also Mariah Carey's No. 1 fan," his mother said. Online, Barnes promoted "Singles Awareness Day" around Valentine's Day, she recalled, laughing.

Last year, Barnes joined USA TODAY, becoming one of the first hires of a newly forming Universal NOW team covering trending news. This year, he was named a trending editor.



Barnes

Yes, I still had a heart attack," he wrote, attaching a picture of Mariah Carey being pushed in a chair. "A week out from the big scare, and things are so much better. I'm good. I'll be fine. You're all stuck with me for a long time."

His parents said he spent a few days at their home before returning to his apartment in Nashville. His mother said the last time she saw him in person was on Mother's Day.

Natalie Alund, a Tennessean reporter and friend who was preparing to take a job with USA TODAY to work with Barnes, was among those mourning the loss of the well-loved journalist who had left his mark on many.

"There are a lot of broken hearts in Music City and beyond tonight," Alund said.

USAToday.com
May 11, 2022

Dr. James Arthur Crook

James Arthur Crook, distinguished journalism educator and director emeritus, School of Journalism, University of Tennessee, died April 30, 2022, in Knoxville, Tenn.



Crook

Dr. Crook was born on May 2, 1939, in Floyd, Iowa, to the late Stanley George and Elta Mary (Norris) Crook. He graduated from Floyd High School in 1958 and earned his bachelor and master degrees at the School of Journalism at the University of Iowa in 1961 and 1963.

Jim met his wife, Diane Adele (Jones), while they were teaching journalism, speech and drama at Marshalltown High School and Iowa Area 6 Community College. They were married on June 25, 1966, in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. That fall, they directed "Guys and Dolls" together in Ames, Iowa.

He earned a Ph.D. in mass communication and education at Iowa State University in 1973, focusing on educational public relations and media literacy. Dr. Crook accepted an appointment as associate professor in the University of Tennessee School of Journalism in 1974 and was promoted to director of the school in 1978 holding this position until his retirement in 2001.

During this time, he also served as visiting professor at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication at Syracuse University and at the Dutch School of Journalism in Utrecht. He joined six American and European journalism schools to create a transatlantic study of Journalism with Stereotypes, funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the European Union.

Dr. Crook was a member and journal editor of the Journalism & Mass Communication Educator for the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) for 13 years, president of the Society of Professional Journalists, East Tennessee chapter, and co-founder and director of the annual Front Page Follies.

Awards for his professional journalism work included recognition from the National Scholastic Press Association, the Tennessee Press Association, and three service awards from the AEJMC. He was inducted to the University of Iowa Journalism Hall of Fame in 2014.

Beyond journalism, Jim was an active member and lay leader at Church Street United Methodist Church where he served on several committees and sang in the choir.

Jim had a love of music. He sang with the Knoxville Choral Society for 20 years and with the Choral Society in Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. He was a charter member of the University of Iowa Old Gold Singers, as well as a member of the Hawkeye marching band. He also participated in community theater in Ames and Marshalltown, Iowa, and in Oak Ridge and Knoxville.

He is survived by his wife Diane and their three children, and 7 grandchildren.

Submitted
May 3, 2022

Charles Eugene Taylor

Charles Eugene Taylor, age



Taylor

87, resident of Somerville, Tenn. and husband of the late Sarabeth Kee Taylor, departed this life Thursday morning, May 19, 2022.

Charles was born July 25, 1934, in Macon, Tenn., the son of the late Samuel Eugene Taylor and the late Mary Jewel Moody Taylor. He attended Fayette County Public Schools and graduated from Fayette County High School. He was married July 10, 1955, to Sarabeth Kee Taylor.

Charles started working at the Fayette Falcon newspaper in 1952 before entering Memphis State University in the fall where he studied journalism. He continued working at the newspaper, and in 1957 he was drafted into the United States Army where he served for two years during the time of the Korean Conflict.

In 1959, he returned to Somerville and became part-owner of the Fayette Falcon. Under Charles' leadership, the Fayette Falcon newspaper was first modernized when it was converted to the offset printing process and later to computers. He began work there in the lowest positions and advanced up to Associate Editor, Managing Editor and went on to serve for many years as Editor and Publisher. He also was a member of the Tennessee Press Association, where he served on numerous committees.

During the years he owned the Fayette Falcon newspaper, he was on call around the clock, day or night, to cover news and take pictures. He received a call from a man in Gallaway one Sunday morning wanting him to meet him at the office because they needed poster paper for Sunday School, which he did.

His wife, Sarabeth, worked by his side, and in 1975 she went to work full time at the Fayette Falcon newspaper. In 1991, they sold the newspaper but continued in business as Taylor Printing & Office Supplies. They both retired in 1998. If you happen to see the throwback photos on Facebook, all of these were taken by Mr. Taylor many years ago. He was a member of the Somerville First United Methodist Church. Charles and

Sarabeth served as MYF (Methodist Youth Foundation) counselors in earlier years. He was the head usher for many, many years at the church.

Charles always enjoyed nature and enjoyed feeding the birds, squirrels, deer and other wildlife around their home. He and his wife had three canine companions which they enjoyed sharing their home with.

Submitted
May 23, 2022

Byrne K. Dunn

Former Lewis County Herald Editor & Publisher Byrne K. Dunn passed away peacefully at the family home early this week. A lifetime community leader, Mrs. Dunn was 89.

Since her retirement in 2012, Mrs. Dunn spent her days at her home on Oakdale Drive in the company of family and caregivers. A series of mini strokes caused the onset of dementia, but the ever-strong mother, grandmother, sister, aunt and friend rallied for many years to prove her tenacity.



Dunn

As the oldest daughter of John L. and Ruth Keaton of Milan, Byrne spent her younger years cooking, sewing and caring for her younger sisters and brother while helping at home. After her 1950 graduation from Milan High School, she worked in insurance sales. It was during this time she met the love of her life, Hulon O. Dunn.

A marriage on January 5, 1952 bound the two for life. A few short years later, the World War II Navy Veteran and his bride learned the Lewis County Herald in Hohenwald was for sale.

With the assistance of Byrne's uncle, William Keaton, then mayor of Hohenwald, the 24 and 30 year olds made the move with newborn son, Hulon Jr.

Ever community minded, they took ownership of the newspaper and print shop from Ernest Pollock in March 1956.

One year later, a second son, Walton, was born, and the family

See **DUNN** Page 9

DUNN from Page 8

settled in to their new life with ease.

Hulon and Byrne were lifelong members of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, serving as elders, Sunday School teachers, and she, as treasurer of the CPW (Cumberland Presbyterian Women) and a member of the choir.

Never in the office or at home were negative words spoken of the community or its people, a family member commented. Ethics of hard work and honesty carried them through their life together.

At the untimely death of Mr. Dunn in June 1987, Byrne smoothly transitioned from Society Editor and proofreader to Editor & Publisher, a title she held for more than 25 years.

Continued was the dedication to Hohenwald, Lewis County and the reporting of events and news. A print shop under her leadership thrived alongside the newspaper.

Both Hulon Jr. and Walton worked alongside her in the immediate years following the death of their father.

Mrs. Dunn was a world traveler, most often with friends, Annette Peery, Barbara Hinson, Tony

Turnbow, Kenneth Kistler, Gabby Spears, Glenda Hayes and others. She made trips that included most of the United States and a special visit to New York City.

Members of this group visited European countries, including Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. Trips to Norway, Alaska and Hawaii are documented in family photos and stories. Mrs. Dunn, always active in her local church and regional Presbytery, also traveled to China and was an ambassador to Japan for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 2008.

She began passing the torch of office management, editing and writing to her daughter, Becky Jane Newbold, in 2003. Her business acumen and common sense brought prosperity to the Lewis County Herald, success she generously shared with local civic groups and her family.

Her high standard of character blessed Hohenwald, Lewis County and she never wavered from doing what she believed right, even when her decisions may have been unpopular with a few.

She provided consistent support to her youngest son, Robert, helping

establish him as a highly successful Nashville-based contractor.

In addition to service to her faith, Mrs. Dunn supported many community groups through her business and with her personal time.

She held an active membership in the Order of the Eastern Star, Chapter 393 for 50 years. A charter member of the Pilot Club of Hohenwald and member for more than 25 years, Mrs. Dunn devotedly raised money for brain-related issues. She was a past member of the Volkspoint organization and a member of the Alpenrosli German Chorus of Hohenwald.

Mrs. Dunn was not only mother to four children, but also adored 12 grandchildren, spending as much time as possible with them. No one ever left her house hungry or without a hug. Homemade meals and desserts, home canned foods from her garden, jellies and wine, as well as hand tailored clothes were simply an extension of her personality she shared with those she loved.

Numerous hours were spent propagating African violets, gardening, designing quilts or experimenting with needlework. Crossword puzzles kept her occupied as did play-

ing Bridge with the Tuesday Night Bridge Club when it was active.

She volunteered her time delivering Meals on Wheels to seniors in Hohenwald for many years.

Mrs. Dunn served on a variety of local and regional boards including the South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance, the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, the Lewis Health Center Community Advisory Committee and the Lewis County Health Council.

In 1992, she was honored with the Heritage Award by the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce. In 2000, the Lewis County Herald was presented the Business of the Year Award and the same year, she was inducted into the Business Hall of Fame by the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce.

In 2009, the Chamber of Commerce recognized Mrs. Dunn with one of their highest honors, the Legend Award, making her the first female to ever receive the honor.

Her accountant once asked where she went to school, praising and admiring her business achievement. Upon hearing her highest education was a high school diploma, he shook his head and remarked,

“That’s amazing. She is one of the smartest business women I’ve ever known.”

Byrne K. Dunn is survived by her daughter, Becky Jane Newbold; three sons, Hulon O. (Valaurie) Dunn Jr., Walton L. Dunn of Hohenwald, and Robert A. (Jessica) Dunn of Pegram; two sisters, Nancy Tucker and Elizabeth Ownby of Milan; a brother, John L. (Elaine) Keaton of Albuquerque, New Mexico and a brother-in-law, William Sherrell (Phoebe) Dunn of Augusta, Georgia.

She is survived by 12 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, and son-in-law Charles Elliott “Shane” Newbold III.

The family wishes to recognize caregivers Chasity Tiller, Mia Hinson, Lauren Tiller, Holly Graves Carroll and Betty Dye for years of service and friendship.

Funeral services were planned for Thursday, March 24, 2022 at McDonald Funeral Home.

*Lewis County Herald
March 24, 2022*

AVALANCHE from Page 5

Inoreader is a newer tool that creates a dashboard of tweets as well as Facebook posts, Reddit subs, and Google alerts. With a Pro account you can add in Telegram and individual newsletters. If you’re not familiar with Telegram, it’s a popular messaging app outside the U.S., making InoReader especially useful if you are covering on-the-ground information in situations like Ukraine.

News events like the Russia-Ukraine war spawn an inordinate amount of fast-moving information, which of course creates many opportunities for the flow of misinformation. Earlier this year, a fact-checking organization called Full Fact released an updated version of their Framework for Information Incidents — essentially a playbook for governments, internet companies and members of the media facing what Full Fact calls “misinformation crises.”

Instead of listing a series of hands-on tools, like the First Draft News thread, Full Fact provides a thoughtful template for how leadership can think about this



crisis, and plan a response. The framework includes a glossary and incorporates research and feedback from other well-respected fact-checking organizations like Chequeado and Africa Check.

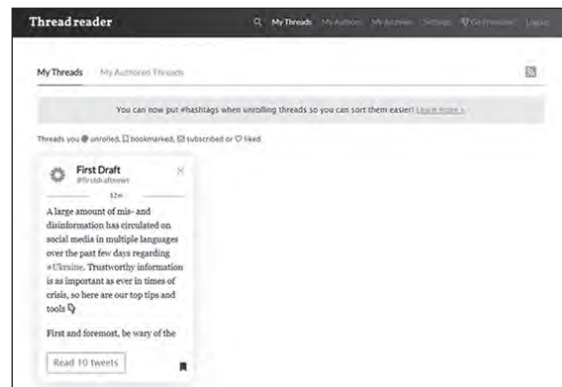
A similar tool is the Verification Handbook published by datajournalism.com. Described by other researchers as a “canonical verification resource,” the Verification Handbook is a ready-to-use guide for fact-checking in any breaking news situation, not just ones that are prone to misinformation.

For reporting on the Russia-Ukraine war itself, journalists must also deal with the heightened threat of propaganda (political-

ly-inspired disinformation) in addition to the usual plethora of rumors, statements, claims and arguments issued from social media.

“There has been a huge demand for information on how mysterious Russian trolls and hackers work,” Bellingcat researcher Aric Toler wrote in a 2020 article titled “How (Not) To Report On Russian Disinformation.” “But the output on these subjects too often reverts to hollow clichés and, ironically, misinformation.”

Toler recommends versing yourself in Russian media outlets and assessing social accounts for bot activity before using them as sources for any kind of content.



The Stanford Cyber Policy Center published its own Newsroom Playbook for Propaganda Reporting, with tools and policies that can be implemented newsroom-wide.

Even for journalists not covering the Russia-Ukraine war, these guidelines can be applied to many other situations where a government is a player in the misinformation game. Though propaganda is not often the focus of anti-misinformation education, because it is only one small part of the misinformation problem, journalists should try to be prepared.

Samantha Sunne is a freelance journalist and trainer based in New

Orleans, Louisiana. She speaks at conferences, universities and newsrooms around the world, including Investigative Reporters & Editors (IRE), the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) and the Lede Program at Columbia University. This commentary was originally published April 13, 2022, by Reynolds Journalism Institute at <https://rjionline.org/>.

Post your newspaper’s job openings at www.tnpress.com.

Contact Robyn Gentile for more information at rgentile@tnpress.com

Recently posted:

Multimedia Sales Consultant,

Chattanooga

Digital Sales & Account

Specialist, Chattanooga

Reporter, Bristol

Reporter, Cleveland

Reporter, Greeneville

New documentary about town of Morocco in Indiana tries to tell 'honest' story

A few years ago I started making documentary films, which has been a new experience for this longtime newspaper reporter, with one exception really. It also is not a lucrative pursuit.

I've done more than just traditional print over the years (decades). As a war correspondent in Iraq, I filed stories, photos and video from the field. I did on-line chats from the battlefield of Fallujah, with my portable satellite positioned just so in the dirt. Even though I'm not a digital native, like many Gen X-ers, I am completely comfortable crossing platforms and have done that over my career.

For me, a documentary is just a different way to tell a story. I still try to do it objectively and fairly.

My latest documentary, Morocco, which aired on Chicago's PBS station on May 5, is about the town of Morocco, Indiana. I spent nearly three years getting to know the people who lived there as we unraveled the mystery of how Morocco got its name. We also filmed in the kingdom of Mo-



LOCAL MATTERS

JACKIE SPINNER

rocco to connect the two places. It cost thousands of dollars to make, much of it raised through grants, including from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, which also partners with Gateway Journalism Review. In the end, I almost wasn't able to broadcast the film on PBS because I couldn't afford the insurance required. (Pulitzer fortunately covered it.)

The film started as a point of curiosity, which is basically the genesis of all good feature stories or investigations no matter the platform. How did this little town in Middle America come to be named after the kingdom of Morocco? I have three Moroccan-born sons, and my oldest two – the third joined our family during the

pandemic – were puzzled when we visited for the first time in 2019. "Where are all the Moroccans?" my then 4-year-old asked as he jumped off a merry-go-round at the playground we have since visited numerous times. He couldn't understand why this Morocco didn't look like the Morocco he knew.

His question started me on a journey that was the basis for the short film. It was the ultimate reporting project in many ways. It also required me to do something I've always had to do as a journalist on these kinds of stories. I had to convince people to talk to me. Even though Morocco, Indiana, is not too far from Chicago, I was the big city filmmaker who arrived in town with a crew of strangers and cameras to ask questions, filming people at the bowling alley, at the farmer's market, at the diner and at the Methodist church. Most everyone was incredibly gracious, including the town president, who made introductions and really made it possible for us to film as much and as long as we did.

As I talked to people, I made sure to point out that I also was Midwestern. The town has deep ties to the US veteran community, and some of our crew are combat veterans. That helped.

We didn't come with too many preconceived notions because so many of us are from places just like Morocco, Indiana. We explored and asked questions and found ourselves endeared by and to the characters we met. Some of them became friends.

I was surprised then by the reaction of one of the people we featured when I emailed him that the film was finally finished and would be shown on TV. "Ever regretted answering a phone call or responding to an email?" he replied. "I hope this is not one of these times."

Though I was initially taken aback, it reminded me how vulnerable people are when journalists – or filmmakers – show up, especially with all the rhetoric in recent years about our intentions and our ability to tell honest stories. People

hand us their history and their dreams for the future and have to trust that we will do right by them.

Of course, my job as a journalist or filmmaker is not to go out of my way to make people look good. That's a different profession. The town officials will likely be disappointed that we dealt with some of the issues around race that people brought up, inevitable in a mostly white town in Middle America. Longtime residents shared the struggles the town has had with economic development, even as it has attracted new business. The town is far from dying. But we didn't make a marketing film.

In the end, we told a good story, an honest story, and we had a good time doing it. That's what matters to any journalist, no matter the platform.

Jackie Spinner is editor of Gateway Journalism Review. A version of this story, dated May 5, 2022, first appeared in Publisher's Auxiliary. This column is republished with her permission.

Hall assumes role as Daily Times' circulation director

MARIAH FRANKLIN
The Daily Times, Maryville
May 23, 2022

As a former reporter, editor and district manager for circulation, David Hall says he's held almost every job in the newspaper industry. With his new position as circulation director of The Daily Times, Maryville, Hall plans to use those experiences to help strengthen relationships with customers and engage the public with the paper.

"I'm customer-service oriented," Hall said. With nearly three weeks



Hall

as circulation director under his belt, he commented that the best parts of his new job are his opportunities to interact with customers and the wider community.

Having grown up working for community-oriented papers, Hall especially values what he calls "hometown" news. He got his first professional break at 11, when he began delivering the

newspapers that his father started publishing as an extension of his radio news outfit.

A Lenoir City native, Hall worked as a reporter in high school, splitting his time between breaking news and delivering papers for his father's papers until he left for college. After graduating, he distributed newspapers in Monroe and Roane County, working alone and with his brother.

About 15 years ago, he picked up a newspaper route with the Knoxville News-Sentinel; he stayed on, working his way into a position as a district manager for distribution

in July 2018.

Though Hall values his experiences with the Knoxville News-Sentinel, he says he's excited to be working at The Daily Times, commenting that its focus on serving the community ensures a strong product for readers.

"I've only been here a few weeks, but already it seems like it's very local here," he said.

Working with the public is a consistent passion of Hall's. Though much of his professional life has been spent in news, he's also held management positions in restaurants in Lenoir City.

While restaurant work was intense and demanding, Hall said, the chance to get to know new people was nonetheless highly rewarding.

Noting Hall's commitment to customer service, The Daily Times' publisher, Bryan Sandmeier, said that he was "delighted that David has joined the management team at The Daily Times."

"David's work at newspapers spans 30-plus years, most recently as a district manager with the Knoxville News-Sentinel. David will make customer service his top priority."

MULLINIX from Page 4

insight, experience and leadership are indispensable.

"Through 2010, Editor and Publisher saluted an "Editor of the Year." We wanted to celebrate the editors' contributions to news media once again, and we believed that many would be deserving.

"Mullinix was nominated by her publisher, who wrote, 'Readers/community first is always top of

mind with Heather. She is respected by all top government officials (city council, county commission, school board) and is known to be fair and honest. ... This editor ensures that we, as a newspaper, will be 80% to 90% locally produced content with any given publication. She's the editor who first tries to find a way to get something in publication, or do something meaningful, rather than look for a reason to do nothing at all."

Added Mullinix: "I am only as good as the staff that supports me. I set high expectations, and we have a culture of mutual respect in our newsroom. We collaborate to find solutions to issues or problems in our processes, and when things get a little crazy, we all pitch in to get the job done.

"It's also important to remember the community you serve. One of the best aspects of working in a small community is the account-

ability our readers provide. I not only field calls and concerns from my office but when I'm out in the community, shopping, having dinner or enjoying a local event. That accountability reminds me of those I serve — the people who live, work and play in my community. That's why we focus on local news coverage. As a twice-weekly paper, we offer national news on our website. Still, our paper is consistently 80% local content, with

everything from the most recent trial or the school board meeting to Little League baseball and the 4-H public speaking winner."

*Editor & Publisher
May 13, 2022*

Send us your news!

editor@tnpress.com
&
rgentile@tnpress.com

First Amendment under assault by NLRB General Counsel

In previous columns I've written about the dangers of the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act). President Biden has not been able to get the PRO Act through Congress.

NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo is attempting to impose as much of that agenda as possible through executive fiat. Remember Abruzzo's nomination to the post of General Counsel was quite controversial. The very day of the President's Inauguration, the President fired then current General Counsel Peter Robb and nominated Jennifer Abruzzo. At her Senate Confirmation Hearing the vote was 50-50, with Vice President Kamala Harris having to cast the tie-breaking vote. Prior to assuming the General Counsel's position, she worked for the Communications Workers of America. This should tell you everything you need to know about where Jennifer Abruzzo comes from.

Eliminating the First Amendment

The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America (in effect since December 15, 1791) reads as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

The First Amendment was codified into the National Labor Relations Act in 1947 when Congress added Section 8(c) to the statute. That section reads:

The expressing of any views, argument, or opinion, or the dissemination thereof, whether in written, printed, graphic, or visual form, shall not constitute or be evidence of an unfair labor practice under any of the provisions of this Act [subchapter] if such expression contains no threat of reprisal or force or promise of benefit.

Unions hate free speech and Section



LEGAL UPDATE

L. MICHAEL ZINSER

8(c). Whenever one of my clients is involved in a union organizing campaign, I counsel that client through the vigorous exercise of the rights of free speech under the First Amendment and in Section 8(c). My clients often prevail in these elections. That is the reason that today unions represent only 6% of the private sector work force. When employees know the truth and the facts, they choose to remain Union Free. That is the secret of the "bright light of the First Amendment."

On February 1, 2022, in an attempt to eliminate Employer free speech rights, General Counsel Abruzzo issued a new Memorandum announcing an initiative to seek injunctions under Section 10(j) of the NLRA as a pre-emptive strike against Employer free speech. This initiative is designed to act as a prior restraint on First Amendment activity. The General Counsel will seek an injunction in union organizing campaigns where she believes facts demonstrate that Employer threats or other coercion may lead to irreparable harm to employees' Section 7 rights. This is intended to muzzle Employers everywhere. The General Counsel is attempting to tip the scales in favor of organized labor winning elections.

On April 7, 2022, General Counsel Abruzzo issued a Memorandum announcing that she will ask the NLRB to find that captive audience speeches are illegal. Since 1948 the NLRB has consistently upheld a Company's right to require employees on company time to attend captive audience speeches. The captive audience speech allows companies to communicate their opposition to unionization. The captive au-

dienced speech is an important exercise of management's First Amendment right under the Constitution and under Section 8(c) of the National Labor Relations Act. General Counsel Abruzzo's memo states that the NLRB "incorrectly" decided that issue 74 years ago and that such meetings are unlawful.

This is a content-based violation of the First Amendment. Companies can clearly require employees to attend meetings to discuss production goals or workplace policies. Banning mention of unionization is blatant speech censorship. That Memo is intended to have a chilling effect on Employers everywhere. Will you decide to follow existing precedent, conduct a captive audience speech, and then risk years of NLRB litigation? Or will you give up your free speech rights? Union organizers have more access to employees today than they ever have. Everybody has a smart phone, an email address, and probably a Facebook account. Employees deserve to hear both sides before they make this all-important decision to unionize. That is why the Captive Audience Meeting on the Employer's premises is so important. Employers have the right and the obligation to get the "other side" to these employees.

In addition to attacking captive audience speeches, General Counsel Abruzzo also wants to eliminate the secret ballot election. Many writers have called the secret ballot election the "Crown Jewel" of the National Labor Relations Act. There is nothing more traditional or revered than a secret ballot democratically conducted election after a vigorous debate on the issues. It is during this vigorous debate



Abruzzo

see why they would want to eliminate elections. In years past, legislative efforts such as the Employer Free Choice Act have failed in Congress. Most recently the PRO Act would have accomplished this goal, but the Administration could not get it through Congress. General Counsel Abruzzo strikes again!

On April 11, 2022, in a brief filed by the General Counsel in a case called Cemax, General Counsel Abruzzo filed a brief urging the NLRB to effectively eliminate secret ballot elections and impose de-facto card check through a 1949 doctrine called The Joy Silk Mills Doctrine. The Joy Silk Mills case would extend bargaining rights to unions merely upon an Employer rejecting a demand for a recognition in the absence of a reasonable, good faith doubt as to the union's majority status, or upon the subsequent commission of independent unfair labor practices. According to the General Counsel's brief, an Employer's lack of good faith "would include situations in which the Employer's reason for refusing to bargain is to gain time in order to persuade employees to change their minds, even using what would

before the election that the effective exercise of an Employer's First Amendment rights is the margin of victory for the Employer and the margin of defeat for organized labor. Thus, you can

otherwise be lawful persuasion." Again, this is a broadside attack on the First Amendment rights of Employers everywhere.

The Joy Silk Mills theory was abandoned by the NLRB in the 1970s. Since that time if a union asked for voluntary recognition based upon signed authorization cards, an Employer has been free to reject that and direct the union to file an Election Petition with the NLRB. This preserves the right to the election, and it preserves the Employer's right to exercise First Amendment rights of communication with its employees to get them all the facts about unionizing in the workplace.

Conclusion

In summary, General Counsel is ignoring the Constitution, the current text of and precedent under the National Labor Relations Act; she is pulling out all the stops to help unions increase their membership. Elimination of Employer First Amendment protected free speech is the core element of General Counsel Abruzzo's lawless strategy. Like a social media censor, she seeks to cancel Employer speech. The Biden Administration has declared War on the Union Free Employer. Employers must fight harder than ever before to preserve the Union-Free Environment.

L. Michael Zinser of Gallatin, Tenn., represents employers on a nationwide basis in the areas of labor and employment. He can be reached at 615.244.9700 and mzinser@zinserlaw.com.

Free webinars for TPA members

June 16

How to do more Enterprise Reporting

June 23

Data Journalism Tools for your Newsroom

Register at www.OnlineMediaCampus.com.
Contact rgentile@tnpress.com for the TPA coupon code.
Archived webinars available

Happy 75th Anniversary TPS and congratulations to the prize winners!

Tennessee Press Service provided 10 free registrations to the Tri-State Press Convention as prizes in celebration of its 75th anniversary.

Congratulations to the winners!

Ashley Benkarski, Tennessee Tribune, Nashville

Brooke McCain, Brownsville Press

Calvin Anderson, The New Tri-State Defender, Memphis

Daniel Williams, The Paris Post-Intelligencer

Darrell Richardson, Brownsville Press

Lacy Gaylord, Brownsville Press

Sandy Dodson, The Bledsonian-Banner, Pikeville

Scarlet Elliott, The Mirror-Exchange, Milan

Shirley Nanney, Carroll County News Leader, Huntingdon

Suzanne Ingle, McNairy County News, Selmer



Tennessee Press Service Advertising Placement Snapshot

| | ROP: | Networks: |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| April 2022 | \$183,076 | \$26,581 |
| Year* as of April 30 | \$581,872 | \$113,607 |

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

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE III: The Wilson Post, Lebanon

Elementary school principal donates organ to save niece's life

LAURIE EVERETT
The Wilson Post, Lebanon
March 8, 2022

Gifts of a second chance at life are a sacred present that can't be paid for, or wrapped with a satin bow, or bestowed as a fancy wedding gift, or a brand-new car kind of thing.

But a Wilson County educator is making that selfless, hope-filled, prayed over, God-take-the-wheel kind of deal happening this month (March 2022).

Dr. Chris Plummer is the principal of West Elementary in Mt. Juliet, highly educated with a master's degree, a recent doctorate, husband to Julie and dad to Kate, 12 and Crews, 9. He's been in education 20 years and has been at West for 10 years, the last seven as principal. He turns 43 on March 14.

Many people who know him well aren't really surprised about his recent, life-altering decision.

Plummer has decided to donate one of his kidneys to save the life of his niece, Amorette Tweed. She is 31, married and has a 2-year-old daughter. Amorette is the daughter of Plummer's sister Doreen.

"It's the right thing to do," Plummer said matter-of-factly last week (in March) in his office at West.

Of course, it's a blood connection between Plummer and his niece, but they are so close in age that it's more like a sibling relationship.

"I have never had to look far for a hero," said Amorette, who lives in Tampa with her family. "As a child I looked up to Uncle Chris for his cool cars, music and friends. I still do to this day consider Chris as my biggest role model."

"As an adult, I have a passion for cars, a love for life and Chris has led by example to be the best friend or family member someone can count on. I am so grateful for this opportunity, and I can't imagine doing it with someone else."

Medical problems at 18 months

When Amorette was just 18 months old, Doreen noticed blood in her little girl's urine. Tests revealed she had renal cell carcinoma, which is a kidney cancer.

"For the next several years my niece had surgeries, radiation and

chemotherapy," Plummer said quietly. "They had to remove the kidney with the cancer, but the other kidney was damaged from the treatments."

But she's a determined woman who graduated high school second in her class. She was told she could never bear children. She certainly beat those odds with Hadley, 2. All with one kidney.

After the birth of her daughter, Amorette said she was feeling lethargic, and tests revealed her kidney was functioning only 10 percent.

"They let her know she needed a kidney," said Plummer.

What's so critical about Plummer's donation to Amorette is that this will be her second attempt for a new kidney. This past summer, her brother Sam (then 26), donated his kidney to her after they realized it was a match.

"The kidney was rejected," Plummer said. "It's less than 1 percent this would happen. They removed the kidney, cleaned it and put it back in and Amorette's body again rejected it."

However, this young mother's body still avoided dialysis. She said she gets a three-hour blood transfusion every Wednesday as treatment. All the while, she works 60 hours a week as a manager of a Toyota dealership.

Doctors put her on both the living donor list and the deceased donor list. Plummer said he was thrilled when tests a few weeks ago at a Tampa hospital showed he too was a perfect donor match for his niece.

"My donation cuts Amorette's wait in half and has an estimated 30-year functionality," said Plummer. "Family should look after family. She's immediate family. I spoke with my wife, family and had a lot of self-reflection. What if one of them needed a donor?"

What the family says

Plummer said his wife is very supportive and knows their family is healthy.

"This truly is a life or death decision for Amorette," Plummer said. "We have a huge support system in this great community of Mt. Juliet. We've all prayed over it. It was a challenging decision to make but



Submitted photos
 West Elementary School Principal Dr. Chris Plummer (right) was to donate a kidney in March to his niece Amorette Tweed (left). Amorette, 31, was diagnosed with kidney cancer when she was 18 months old and one of her kidneys was removed. She lives in Tampa with her family.

was the decision to make."

Julie Plummer works at HCA Healthcare and said she knows the importance of bringing awareness to live organ donations. She said she still can't believe how soon the surgery is.

"Chris's decision to donate a kidney to his niece is simply a matter of his love for family. It was an important decision with many uncertainties – but, nevertheless an easy one to make," she said. "This is Amorette's chance of having a normal life raising her own young daughter. We are all in this together and we hope and pray for success knowing that an earlier donated kidney transplant failed for her."

"We are confident that the transplant team and prayers of family and friends will bring this to a happy and healthy outcome for all – and it sets a wonderful example to our kids."

Julie said Crews' autism has him a little confused about the organ



Amorette Tweed holds Crews Plummer shortly after he was born. Crews' father, Chris, was to donate a kidney to his niece in March.

donation, but she tells him his daddy is going to help his cousin. Kate, a bit older, is emotional, but excited about

her dad's gift of life to someone she feels is so special.

On Feb. 25, Plummer was in his office at 1 p.m. when he got the call from the hospital and heard he was a match, changing his life forever.

"I got a lump in my throat, and I was overcome with emotion," he remembered. "I asked if I could contact my niece with the good news. I said to her 'Do you have a moment? I hope you are ready to get comfortable with a new kidney!'"

They both cried over the phone. He told himself, "This has to work."

"The Vegas odds say it will work," he said with a laugh.

The school situation

Along with making sure everyone at home is settled while he has the surgery, Plummer also had to make sure his work responsibilities were covered. He said Assistant Principal Dr. Alex Juneau will take over as principal for a little while.

This is her first year at West.

"She's been part of this process and is terrific," said Plummer. "She will be resident principal to ensure things run smoothly while I am out."

Juneau said from her first day at West, Plummer made her feel part of the team, and they make decisions together.

"Dr. Chris Plummer is a great definition of a selfless human being," she said. "I am not surprised at all about his donation. This is exactly the person he is. He leads from a servant leadership position and he jumped at this chance to help his niece."

After this week's spring break, Plummer's last day at school was to be March 21 and then he was to head to Tampa General Hospital. At the time he said he hoped to be back at the school around the second week of April after an expected three-week recovery.

"Heck, Sam was back surfing right away!" he said. "But, I promise to take it easy."

"It's hard to put into words," Plummer said. "It feels amazing and I hope this encourages at least one person who hears my story to entertain the idea of live donation. It's about paying it forward."