

The North Scott Press was judged
First Place for Best Editorial Page,
Iowa Newspaper Association, 2018, 2020, 2021

OPINION

NORTH SCOTT PRESS

Editors look to future with optimism

Transition builds on strong foundation

A thousand right ways exist to run a newspaper, and a few wrong ones.

I've experienced both over my 50 years in the business, so I am heartened to see *The NSP* in Erin Gentz's capable hands, hometown heart, and wonderfully creative mind.

She succeeds some *NSP* long-timers who brought this business to a level few other news companies can claim: Interesting, engaged, vested in community and profitable.



On the Record
by Mark Ridolfi

Respect for Bill and Linda Tubbs, and Scott Campbell. They showed their dedication – in black and white, and read all over – school year after school year, championship after championship, fair after fair, and election after election.

They recruited and cultivated journalists, ad reps, designers and office managers who experienced wonderfully right ways of running newspapers.

I'm lucky to be among them.

Respect for subscribers

Those ol' dogs taught plenty of new tricks over the years. But their faith in the old ones drew me to the paper.

They brought *The NSP* into the digital world without succumbing to the click-bait and switch tactics prevalent everywhere else online.

The NSP drew subscribers digitally and in print the same way: Telling local stories.

The paper earned loyal subscribers by respecting them, listening to them, and sharing their views on truly community editorial pages.

Nearly every day through the holidays, subscribers drop by to re-up, or buy gift subscriptions for family and friends.

Many share *NSP* stories they remember, mostly because they were in them.

Since 1968, *The NSP* has remained dedicated to telling other people's stories.

That won't change.

But it can, and often does, when newspapers change hands. Most other acquired news companies give readers more stories from elsewhere. This cost concession always loses subscribers. Online and print.

In my experience, it's one of the absolutely wrong ways to run news businesses. I've a little experience here. All of my former workplaces have been decimated by layoffs and cutbacks. Two of my former workplaces have been

demolished.

The NSP still stands.

Commitment to local news

And grows. It moves forward under new ownership committed to telling the North Scott story. Publisher Josh Byers has been clear. He's not looking for the latest trend, survey or poll story; not the localized version of some chain-wide report; and not reprinting out-of-state political agendas.

He helped assemble a new staff, and retain the veterans to chart a new course.

The NSP mission remains accurate, engaging stories of North Scott achievements, setbacks, celebrations, anniversaries, passings, births and everything unique to this community.

The NSP moves forward with a new editor who lived through most of these stories, and researched the rest. For the past four years, Erin has shared them with readers through her *Our Past* column.

Those stories are part of the glue that unites this community; fitting, since Erin has been the glue that kept *The NSP* humming. Her ad design, legal notices, police and sheriff's reporting, and obituaries usually produced more content than Scott and me combined.

Every week.

And she created a North Scott arts beat highlighting Lancer Productions and Countryside Community Theatre.

Ol' dogs remain close by

NSP readers get a homegrown editor, well-versed in the news and advertising sides of our industry. That is unheard of in our business.

Even better? Unlike me and most of my contemporaries, Erin's journalism career developed with a successful newspaper.

That's among the reasons I'm thrilled to be here, now.

We welcome a new editor, and two new *NSP* colleagues (read Erin's column!).

Our ol' dogs remain close by, thank goodness. You'll still see familiar bylines.

I'm counting on Erin and our recruits to find some new, right ways to run a newspaper. I know for sure it will include telling more North Scott stories.

Mark Ridolfi has been appointed managing editor of The North Scott Press. He can be contacted mridolfi@northscottpress.com.

'Confidence that we will be just fine'

Look, I'm just as surprised as you are.

Not about Scott retiring. When we in the office found out the news, I was a little sad, but not surprised. He's been hinting at it for a while, and frankly, when you consider how much Scott has given of himself over the



Work in Progress
by Erin Gentz

last 39 years, he's really overdue a break. Plus, he just turned 65. As you get older, your priorities change, and he's definitely got lots of things he doesn't want to miss out on anymore.

But, as I said at the time, whoever replaces Scott will be replacing an institution. He's been Johnny-on-the-spot in the community for nearly as long as I've been alive. Sports, news, features, profiles, commentary, in good times and bad, for better or for worse, Scott's been there and seen just about everything. He is known, trusted, and respected by so many people in this community. Anyone following that kind of act has huge shoes to follow.

So, when Scott and Mark began to talk about moving me into an editor-style role, I was ... apprehensive, to say the least. It's very humbling to be asked to step in for Scott Campbell.

'Not a position I envisioned'

This is not a position I ever envisioned for myself, and if you'd told me when I started here nine years ago that I'd be an editor one day, I would have laughed. But as I've worked, I've always been building upon what I was hired to do.

And Scott has been a big part of helping me to grow and learn and pushing me out of my comfort zone. He's taken me from doing legal notices and designing ads, to reporting family, police and sheriff news, and eventually assigned me my first feature, a story on Lancer Productions' "Schoolhouse Rock" reunion. I would never have had the courage to write my first opinion column without him, or take photos in the community without his encouragement.

More than that, he has been an absolute rock for me and everyone in the office. As with the community at large, he has seen us through great times and dark days. When our friend and office manager Cindy Crain died, my first call was to Scott. When my mother was ill, Scott was someone who I could be honest with. But day to day, he's always been there to make us laugh, give us crap, and generally cheer up the office.

He has always been willing to listen to every single one of us and provide advice or anything else we needed. He has been a champion and advocate for us. And he has been incredibly,

impossibly, selfless with his time and energy.

It has been one of the privileges of my life to be mentored by Scott Campbell, and I am grateful to him every day.

A new mentor

Now, as Scott steps away for some much-needed R&R, I look forward to gaining a new mentor in Mark Ridolfi. He has also been a trusted voice for me, and a critical eye for much of the writing I have done in the last few years. I've seen how well our interns have responded to his guidance, and I am excited to learn from his experience.

And we are looking forward to building our team. Along with our office and circulation manager, Holli Sherwood, and advertising representative, Theresa Blackledge, we are excited to welcome some new folks.

We are bringing on a bright young man, Ross Shinberg, to cover sports. We're also welcoming a very creative young woman, Isabelle Kern, as a graphic designer. You will meet them both very soon. We're upgrading our technology, and we're looking forward to new potential, new projects, and new ideas.

I want to reiterate something that's been said by Scott and others: the major staff changes with Scott's retirement and Jeff taking a new job have nothing to do with the new ownership. Scott has been planning his exit for well over a year, and Jeff was making moves before we even knew about the sale.

If you'd told me a year ago that both Scott and Jeff would be leaving, I'd have been looking for an exit ramp, too. But right now, I have every confidence in the world that we are going to be just fine, even if we might feel like a duck – calm on the surface, but paddling furiously down below.

Change is scary. And I'm still mildly apprehensive. But one thing will never change: our commitment to bringing you local news in a timely, engaging and accurate fashion. As always, we look to you all to tell us what we're doing right and where we can improve. Let us know what's happening in your community, so we can be a part of it, and help share your news with the rest of our readers.

As we turn this page, join me in congratulating Scott Campbell on 39 years of amazing service to this community. He has more than earned the opportunity to take it easy. I will miss him tremendously, but he so deserves to start this new chapter in his life.

From the bottom of my heart, Scott, thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. You have my eternal gratitude.

Erin Gentz has been appointed editor of The North Scott Press. She can be contacted at egentz@northscottpress.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Congratulations, Scott, on retirement!

Editor:

A big congratulations to Scott, on your retirement! I hate to see you leave, but you are very deserving of the time off. I will miss our "world changing" conversations we had in the back office, and the few times I had the privilege to drive you to your truck at the Mississippi Valley Fair. I know there will be many 4-H and FFA kids that will miss you. You were such an inspiration to so many of them!

Enjoy your time with your family and stay active. I look forward to staying in touch.

Butch Richlen
708 High St., Dixon



Readers are invited to submit short editorial tributes, or "roses," to lift up friends and neighbors who are taking the extra step to help others and make our communities better. Submit your "roses" to: North Scott Press, P.O. Box 200, Eldridge, IA 52748, or email: btubbs@northscottpress.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'Beautiful article about our daughter'

Editor:

Re: "Kinley's big day" (*NSP*, Nov. 23):

We would like to thank Scott Campbell for taking the time to write such a beautiful article about our daughter, Kinley. You captured the ups and downs our family endured over the past five years, better than we could have ever anticipated. You helped remind us, we have so much to be thankful for.

You told me everyone has a story to tell; and it was your job to share those stories. You have done a phenomenal job sharing stories and capturing wonderful moments for the past 39 years. You will be greatly missed! The entire North Scott community wishes you the best in your retirement! Thanks again, Scott!

Clint and Katie Albrecht
22022 277th Ave., LeClaire