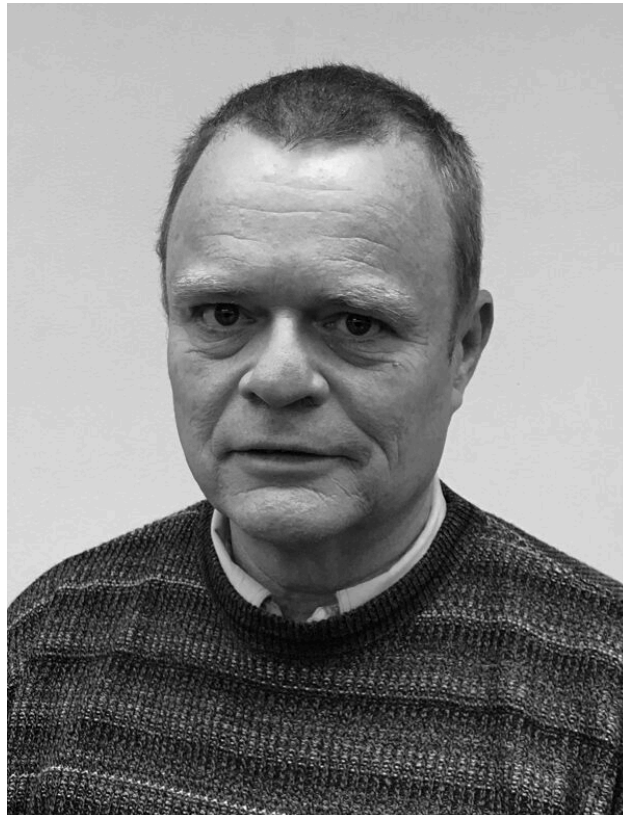


It is finally my time to move on

October 7, 2022



Just over 30 years ago, I was sitting in a hotel room in Sierra Vista, Az., having spent almost every penny I had to rent the room for a month, when I had a knock on the door.

I ended up in Sierra Vista after a particularly trying time in my life. I had recently left college, gone through some turmoil and drive to what I considered my hometown with almost nothing. All I had were good friends and hope. And then came the knock on the door.

I had only been in town one night and very few people knew where I was, but when I opened the door a friend from high school was standing there with a copy of the Sierra Vista Herald. Maria knew I had written a lot in high school and had studied journalism in college, so when she saw a help wanted ad for a sports reporter for the Herald, she went out of her way to find me.

That day, I went to the Sierra Vista Herald office, filled out a paper application and interviewed with the sports editor. The next day, I was a sports reporter, starting a journey that has taken me halfway around the country, allowed me to see things I never imagined and meet people I never dreamed of.

As a side note, two days after Maria knocked on my door, my best friend came over with his girlfriend and her sister. That sister has now been my wife for 27 years. So if you are down or struggling, you never know how much things can change in just a few days.

As a sports reporter, I felt like I was living a dream. I was getting paid \$1,000 a month to watch and report on sports. I felt like the luckiest guy alive.

That feeling has been m^Tatched over and over and over for the last 30 years.

During my time in community newspapers in Arizona, Texas, North Carolina, North Dakota and Oregon, I have been disappointed time after time as I watched talented reporters and editors leave the industry for other opportunities. Most recently, Jerry Burnes, who I hired as a reporter in Williston, N.D., and who went on to become an editor of a group of papers in Minnesota left the newspaper world to work as a spokesperson for an electric company.

I was happy for him and sad for the industry I have grown to love.

Now it's my turn. One week from today, I will work my last day as a full-time editor for The World, the Curry Pilot and the Del Norte Triplicate. I wasn't looking to leave, but I kind of stumbled into an opportunity that I am equally as passionate about and one I felt was too good to pass up.

But don't worry, I won't be going far and I will continue to have a presence in these newspapers. But for the first time in three decades, it won't be as a full-time employee.

As I leave the newspaper industry, I do so with gratitude and a continued love for community news. Over my career, I have watched as small-town papers have lost the influence and impact they once had. Many are struggling to survive, many others have already closed, including one I worked at.

Despite the challenges, I continue to believe firmly in what newspapers like this one stand for and I firmly believe they may be more valuable than they ever have been.

At a time in our world, where "truth" is determined by what politician said something, have an impartial venue to look for information has never been more valuable. Do we mess up? Sure. We do, I do, we all do. But we try very hard to present news that is fair, that is accurate and that our readers can trust. That alone sets most community papers apart.

As I prepare to leave The World, the Pilot and the Triplicate as a full-time employee, I remain committed to local news and to the hard-working reporters, editors and friends I have made throughout the country.