

About the Star-Herald's Closure

Recently the Belton Star-Herald closed as part of the latest round of cuts via the Kansas City Star (McClatchy Newspapers). The newspaper's publisher, John Beaudoin, is a friend of mine. I know this is crushing to a person like John, who lives for the newspaper industry and cares with every fiber of his being for his staff and the quality of the product delivered to readers. Within the last several months, John took over as the publisher of the Belton Star-Herald. To the day he received the news, the paper was not losing any money. It was actually profitable.

Knowing John, I was saddened that he had a very short window to prove himself on a weekly newspaper he just took over. Not only that, he was given the disheartening task of writing the last commentary epitaph, letting the staff know that paper was no longer going to be published, along with breaking the news to a community that they no longer have a local newspaper.

With this news in mind, I do find a very positive spoke of encouragement from the likes of Andrea Wood at the Jackson County Advocate. She is an example of an independent American publisher that is successfully keeping the small town newspaper open for the community she lives in. For that, she commands deep respect.

When a community loses their journalistic imprint on a community, it's a chain reaction that has negative consequences. Alas, Mr. Beaudoin has had to watch one of his publications close their doors for the first time in his career, as one crusader a town north of Belton keeps the torch lit for all American weekly newspapers, which are vital to the stream of journalism on a local level.

As a part time journalist, I felt it necessary to defend my friend. I know the last thing John would ever want to do is either let a staffer go or close the doors forever on a newspaper and he had to do both in one day. No one feels worse about this than John and it simply wasn't his fault.

And for Andrea in South Kansas City .. Keep up the good work and being a positive beacon for the weeklies that need to continue strong.

Joe Dimino