
Johnson returns to Fennimore as editor

BY MATT JOHNSON

I have often thought about returning to Fennimore and having the opportunity to serve as editor of the Times again.

After 20 years since leaving, I'm back to write news stories, feature stories, take photographs and edit the newspaper.

While I remember Fennimore well, after having been editor of the times from 1992-2001, it's unlikely anyone except life-long city readers of the Times will remember me or know who I am. I will have

some wonderful friends still in Fennimore, but a lot of new people to meet.

My name is Matt Johnson and I'm a publisher of Morris Media of Monroe. Since I left Fennimore we've had some fine community journalists spend time in Fennimore such as Correne (Morgan) Martin and Rob Callahan. The last few years have been more difficult to get a long-term commitment from an editor.

When I left Fennimore, I became managing editor and publisher for numerous papers north of Fennimore in

the La Crosse area. In 2016, I returned to work for the company which publishes the Times. The newspaper group had just acquired a newspaper and publications in Monroe and I moved there to publish that group of products.

After losing our most recent editor in Fennimore, Emily Schendel, to a job change, Morris Newspaper Corporation of Wisconsin Publisher John Ingebritsen and I discussed what could be done to provide greater stability for the Fennimore Times. John suggested I keep working

as publisher in Monroe, but that I split my time between Fennimore and Monroe. I was excited about that.

I already know Fennimore due to my past and I'm impressed with what the city has done to continue to improve itself in the last two decades.

I'll admit that making life changes such as moving, or making changes to a job, are daunting and stressful. Doing these things during COVID19 has made the process even more stressful than usual.

When I had been editor

in Fennimore previously, I had just entered my 20s after graduating from UW-Whitewater. People thought I was much older than I actually was. In the last 20 years, a lot of things have changed. I've had a family and my son is now a junior at UW-Whitewater. I've slowed down preferring a good nap to just about anything else. My main hobby is listening to old-time radio shows and I like to walk.

I've always been a staunch community volunteer. I served



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as president of the Fennimore Chamber of Commerce both in 1996 and 1998. I was a founding member of the Fennimore Grid-Iron Association. I, along with Nancy Vogel, was named a Citizen of the Year in Fennimore in 2001.

I love talking to people about their stories and lives. I understand that it's a privilege to be here and I'm grateful to return to Fennimore. It's quite an opportunity.

The youngsters under 25 won't know me, but there are adults in their 30s and older who will remember me.

Many things about the newspaper business have changed, but the most important things remain the

same. I plan to cover local government, spot news, school and community events and produce human interest stories on the people who live in the area.

I have 10 years of memories involved in participating in events and also covering them. I will mainly be in the background as editor of the Times, because I do have other commitments to other portions of my work elsewhere.

One thing that will be nice is along with having friendships established in Fennimore, I will be closer to my family members in Grant, Crawford and Richland counties.

I'll be moving to Fennimore in the near future. I look forward to seeing you all soon, rekindling some old friendships and making some new ones.