



JIM MORAN | CHETEK ALERT PHOTO

Longtime Chetek resident Jim Babbitt joined the Chetek Alert staff earlier this month as contributing editor. He writes weekly feature stories for the newspaper.

Babbitt writing features as Alert's contributing editor

The award-winning Chetek Alert newspaper has announced an opening for a reporter/editorial staffer and Jim Babbitt thinks he has what it takes to do the job. He was hired as contributing editor earlier this month.

The Alert is a small-town weekly newspaper in northwestern Wisconsin which has won numerous awards for journalistic excellence and is beloved in this small tourist get-away about fifty miles northwest of Eau Claire.

Babbitt has had an impressive legal career spanning 30-years as an assistant district attorney, circuit court judge and special prosecutor, but few are aware of his interest in being a journalist. His undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee was in mass communications, and he had several stories published in both the Stanford Daily newspaper and the UWM Post while in college.

"I also read the news on WUWM-FM campus radio station," said Babbitt. "But I think it was because I was the only one of the staffers who could say that tongue-twister on the first try."

On a more serious note, Babbitt said, as a prosecutor, he had over 270 jury trials. "A jury trial requires an attorney to not only understand the facts of the case, but the attorney must

be able to explain complex legal issues and jury instructions in straightforward terms enabling the jurors to render a just and true verdict."

As an instructor at WITC (now Northwoods Tech), Babbitt taught both police recruits and seasoned officers complex topics such as constitutional law, legal updates on search and seizure, and also the necessity to write clear, accurate and concise reports. He went so far as to have the tech school furnish the officers with the basic handbook on great writing, *The Elements of Style*, written by Strunk and [E.B.] White (yes, the same E.B. White who wrote "Charlotte's Web.")

Babbitt, who has now been enjoying retirement for more than a year, was asked why he might want to get back to work said, "the Alert is a great newspaper. I will be fair and unbiased and write readable, interesting and understandable articles. I welcome this opportunity to share my skills as a wordsmith with the community I have lived in for the last 30 years."

Outgoing editor, Carl Cooley, is now news director at WJMC/WKFX/WAQE radio stations in Rice Lake.

Messages for Babbitt may be emailed to features@thechetekalert.com or left on his voicemail at the Alert at 715-924-4118, ext. 15.