

New faces at the Review

Newspaper welcomes new editor, ad reps

BY **REGAN KOHLER**
For the Review

There has been a changing of the guard at the Price County Review newspaper's Park Falls office.

Tom LaVenture has been named the Review's new managing editor, and Matt Bablick and Dawn Damrow are the newest multimedia account executives.

Tom LaVenture

A Wisconsin native who grew up in the Superior and Tomahawk areas, Tom LaVenture traveled all over for his Army and journalism careers before coming to Park Falls. After graduating high school, he joined the Army, then returned to study political science and history at University of Wisconsin-Superior. However, he said, "I didn't think I had the core skills to be a lawyer."

He reactivated in the Army, and was stationed in Saudi Arabia

during the Gulf War, before returning to Wisconsin. He went back to UWS, and since all his friends had graduated, he became friends with a lot of the international students. He often took them to the Twin Cities so the students could study for graduate school, and "that's when I met the owner of the Asian American Press," LaVenture said.

Meanwhile, LaVenture had changed his minor to journalism and after taking an introductory class, he said journalism "seemed like a good fit for me."

The Asian American Press, based in St. Paul, were seeking someone not of Asian ancestry to write for their newspaper, so LaVenture went to work for them.

"The Asian American Press ... offered me a chance to work directly with immigrant and refugee communities along with the well-established communities that have lived in Minnesota for over a century," LaVenture said. "Here, at a small weekly paper, I was able

to meet or interview everyone from prime ministers, generals and major actors (to) sports figures."

Some of the well-known figures LaVenture interviewed included Olympic figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi, "Grey's Anatomy" actress Sandra Oh, the last prime minister of South Vietnam Nguyen Ba Can, former India Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, Thai

Prince Chatri Chalerm Yukol and Hmong Gen. Vang Pao.

LaVenture took some time away in 2008 to work for The Daily Journal in International Falls, Minn., arriving "just in time to celebrate centennial events of nearby communities," he said.

He returned to the Asian American Press around the time the economy crashed, so he took a night job at the Ordway Theatre in St. Paul while helping out with the Press until 2014, when he went far away for his career.

LaVenture applied to The Garden Island

newspaper in Kauai, one of the Hawaiian islands. At first, he was turned down for the job, but then their court reporter resigned, so he was hired.

"Living on Kauai was a gift to be immersed in island culture and literally one of the most beautiful places on earth," LaVenture said.

One of his memories from Hawaii was interviewing famous surfer Laird Hamilton.

After a year and a half, The Garden Island changed hands for its umbrella company, and LaVenture "landed in North Dakota," working for the Jamestown Sun.

"I feel that's where I became a better writer," LaVenture said. "The editor was an AP (Associated Press Stylebook) stickler. I learned how to cover government meetings better, too."

Over the years, LaVenture has won numerous media awards, and volunteered for many nonprofits.

After four years, however, LaVenture said he still felt he hadn't put down roots anywhere. He sought jobs in the Midwest and found one at the Daily Globe in

Ironwood, Mich., somewhere he had never been.

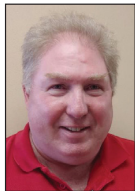
"The Upper Peninsula is just so gorgeous," he said. "It was really unique in that it (the newspaper) covered two counties. It was a huge beat. It was neat to see it still thriving."

This fall, he connected with Price County Review General Manager Jeff Robischon, who asked if he would be interested in taking over the managing editor position vacated by former editor Seth Carlson. Though he enjoyed the UP, LaVenture was interested in becoming an editor again and accepted.

"When you go to a new place, it's always exciting," he said. "This is an opportunity that I really shouldn't pass up."

LaVenture's first day was Monday, Nov. 15.

He said he is excited to be part of a publication that covers such a wide area and supports the community. He also hopes to get back into fishing, now that he's in a place for great outdoor recreation.



LaVenture

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"I look forward to getting out into the community and meeting everybody," he said.

Matt Bablick

Matt Bablick grew up in Price County, graduating from the Park Falls High School. He worked for the Wisconsin Conservation Corps., then as a logger before joining the BNSF Railway, where he traveled across the

country.

"I traveled all over the country for six, seven years," Bablick said. "Traveling really shaped the person I am and I met some wonderful people."

He later returned to Park Falls and the logging industry. Bablick and his brother are big into racing.

"My brother raced on a lot of local tracks," he said. "That was our life-long interest."

Bablick wrote for two racing publications, one a magazine and one a newspaper, for about three years.

"That kind of planted the seed for an interest in print media," Bablick said.

Bablick joined the Price County Review team two months ago as multimedia account executive. His job is to maintain relationships with local businesses, helping them succeed by working on "meeting their marketing and advertising needs."

"We do graphic design to a certain extent for ads," Bablick added.

Having been in larger cities for his previous job, Bablick said it has been great to be a part of the small community he grew up in. He loves the sense of community here, and appreciates his hometown. He also loves taking advantage of the outdoors.

"We (with his fiancée, Kayla Myers) have several dogs and I hunt and fish," he said.



Bablick

Dawn Damrow

Dawn Damrow joined the Price County Review team as multimedia account executive on Oct. 26. A Hawkins native, she began her advertising career many years ago.

"We will not say how many, but many sums it up," she said. "I have done all forms of advertising, from digital, radio and paper. All forms of media are not only essential, but all are very effective, especially in combination."

She has won numerous awards for ad production in every form of media.

Damrow had lived in Park Falls before, working as a hairstylist, and returned in October when she joined the Review team.

"I love interacting with my clients, who actually become friends," Damrow said. "I truly care about the client and helping them come up with a budget tailored to them. I love using my creativity to come up with advertising no one has seen or heard of before."

Damrow looks forward to getting to know the Review's clients and learn what their needs are, what they want to accomplish and how she can obtain that for them.

"I am grateful for this opportunity and looking forward to accomplishing big things for this company, my coworkers and for the clients," she said.



Damrow

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