

MMC PURCHASES THE SENTINEL & RURAL NEWS

Multi Media Channels has added another newspaper to its family of publications.

Nicole and Travis Rogers, started the Sentinel & Rural News in March 2014.

The Rogers wanted to create a newspaper that “told good news and highlighted the people and businesses of central Wisconsin” – not just in the “Twin Cities” of Owen-Withee but all over Clark County and the southern portion of Taylor County, even into Rusk County. The publication carries the news of Owen-Withee, Curtiss, Thorp, Greenwood, Gilman, Abbotsford, Colby, and Spencer.

The market is situated on the western and northern border of MMC’s current Marshfield market.

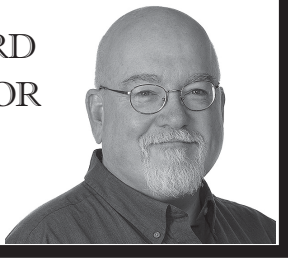
The Rogers were looking to expand into the Neillsville area, when Travis was called to fill in as a pastor in the Ogema area. The couple is now looking to move to that area. Wanting to keep the publication in circulation, the couple approached MMC about taking it over.

On Dec. 10, MMC entered into an agreement to take over the publication. The sale was finalized on Dec. 22. Nicole will stay on to aid in the transition. Nicole and Travis will both continue to contribute to the publication.



AND NOW A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

by Travis Rogers, Jr.
Sentinel & Rural News
Editor-In-Chief



A Last Word from the Editor

In February of 2014, Nicole and I, with Kris Leonhardt and Judy Vollrath, set out to create the finest weekly community newspaper that we possibly could. As we have said before, Kris moved on to bigger things and Judy retired, passing away just this year. Nicole and I continued and we indeed created a newspaper that we are proud of and will always be proud of.

I have a friend in Washington who always said that the toughest thing for a businessperson to do is to know when to hand that business off to somebody who can take it to the next level. Too many times, the founder of this or that company is not the one who can see it through to greatness. Nicole and I do not want to be guilty of that.

In a small business like ours, to grow sometimes means to expand beyond your original vision. We had seriously contemplated expanding our company by accumulating other newspapers. If we were younger, we might have done that. But other opportunities, outside of the newspaper business, began to present themselves. There was no way, however, that we were going to walk away from the newspaper that we love and the community who has been so supportive of us.

Then came a fortuitous meeting with our old friend and original *Sentinel & Rural News* partner Kris Leonhardt. She was now part of the team that published the *Hub City Times* of Marshfield and over 70 other publications. Their company was looking to expand their footprint in the area and,

with the *Sentinel* being their neighbors to the north, it was like fitting together two pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. It was that perfect of a fit.

In a matter of days, and I mean only a few days, we concluded negotiations with Kris and Tim Schreiber, the director of Multi Media Channels, LLC (MMC). The closing on the sale of the *Sentinel & Rural News* takes place on Wednesday, December 22nd.

MMC is the company that can use its greater resources and vast experience to move the *Sentinel* to the outreach and impact that we had envisioned from the beginning. MMC is not the kind of company that creates cookie-cutter publications that all look and feel the same. They are adept at meeting the particular needs of each unique community that they serve. That makes Nicole and I very happy.

That's not to say that Nicole and I are disappearing from the pages of the newspaper. Nicole will continue her *Sunny Side Up* column and I will continue my religion column. In addition, Nicole will continue the layout of the newspaper. Honestly, you won't notice a drastic change. A new sales representative will come aboard, as will new reporters. But you will probably see almost all of the same columnists that you have enjoyed for all these years. That, of course, is entirely up to the decision of MMC. With newspaper ink being in our blood, you'll also see occasional submissions of stories and photographs from Nicole and me because we just can't help ourselves.

So, on this coming Thursday, December 23rd, we will be having our final Christ-

mas open house here at our home and office at 425 Altemburg Ave in Owen, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. It will be a chance to celebrate the transition of the *Sentinel & Rural News* from the ownership of Community Forum Publishing to that of MMC. Kris and others from MMC are planning to be here during that time to celebrate with us and to meet you.

In the weeks to come, I will take the new sales rep around to meet our advertisers and we will introduce the new editor to our contributors.

As we look back on the almost eight-year history of the *Sentinel*, there are so many warm memories, especially of those who have passed. We are so grateful for all the coaches who contributed so much to our understanding of sports and the appreciation for our local sports programs. Terry Laube, Al Guthman, Darrin Obyn, John Weiler, Russ Weiler, Chad Eichstadt, Josh Jalling, and more have always been so generous with their time and talents in sharing their recaps of the weekly games and playoffs.

And we can't talk about schools without mentioning Bob Houts, the district administrator for Owen-Withee schools. Bob has not only been a magnificent communicator and representative on behalf of the school district, I would like to think of him as a friend. Julie Van Ark and Lance Batchelor were always so open and sharing with the goings-on in the high school and elementary school and now Matt Cihlar has stepped into that legacy wonderfully. Susan Beck, Debbie Bredlau, Morgan Mueller, and Stacy Rasmussen have all been terrific representatives of the Owen-Withee schools. Brandy Sonnenberg of the Gilman school district has been our go-to person as has Michele Green of Greenwood schools and her husband Joe Greene, principal of the Greenwood elementary school. It has been a won-

derful experience interacting with all of them.

The librarians from all over have been remarkable sources of information. Louise Olszewski, Brandon Hardin, and Janice Arndt from the Withee Public Library, Loralee Petersen from the Owen Public Library, and Denise Korenuk, former director of the Western Taylor County (Gilman) Public Library, have all been amazing.

We certainly enjoyed every moment with, and every word from, our contributors and columnists, including Don Wyeth, Dr. John Briggs, Dr. Jess Rohde, Mark Tobola, Joe Smoczyk, the hilarious Arian Knops, Kevin Struensee, sweet Darleen Jarocki, Jeffer Scheuer, Frank Varney, and the best mother-in-law anyone could ever hope for, Anne Gajewsky, who submitted wonderful stories, photographs, and book reviews. Then there were all those great photos from Sara Blume, Scott Barth, Jim Scheuer, and others.

Thanks also to the village of Withee board of trustees, Everett Lindgren board president, and Ellen Niemi the village clerk. Everett has been a friend from the beginning. The city clerks of Owen, Terry Ernst, Carol Devine, and Tracy Rau, along with community development coordinator Tim Swiggum have been a pleasure to work with. The same goes for two out of the four police chiefs that I have known in my time here. Chief Jesus Ibarra and Chief Tim Fehlman, along with officer Jake Haugstad, in the Owen-Withee Police Department have always been forthcoming. The same goes for the Thorpe Police Department, starting with Chief Sharon Verges and now Chief Ty Schneider. The Clark County Sheriff's Office has always been forthcoming with information and Taylor County Sheriff Larry Woebeking was fantastic.

When Arlene Knops was

the director of the Ladysmith Chamber of Commerce, we always had an inside track on what was going on in Ladysmith, Bruce, and Rusk County.

Those wonderful Christmas greeting cards that you see in this edition and the seasonal cards that showed up throughout the year were from the personal collection of the inimitable Connie Felton. Not only did she contribute those great cards but she also was a regular columnist for several years with her humorous look at her times and ours in *I Remember*.

And we will always be indebted to the best investigative journalist I ever met, Linda Wyeth. You may recall that it was Linda who made the KKK in Door County cry uncle. She was like a big sister to Nicole

and I and her husband, Don, remains our big brother (but not in an Orwellian sense).

Thank you to all the advertisers who have kept us going for almost eight years. It goes without saying that we could not have done it without you. The same goes for those municipalities who published their legal notices with us: the city of Owen, the town of Hixon, the town of Hoard, the town of Green Grove, the town of Longwood, and Clark County. And the Owen-Withee School District.

But most of all, thanks to you, dear readers. You gave us tips on stories and feedback on what you did (and did not) like and pushback on what you did not agree with. Finally...finally...I get the last word. And that word is...

We love you all.

Withee A&W
212 Division St., Withee, WI
715-229-9944
Open 7 Days a Week
10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

All American Food

YEAR END BLOWOUT SALE! **75% OFF Installation** on a new bath or shower system!

NO INTEREST & NO PAYMENTS for 18 MONTHS!

Call today and receive a \$50 Amazon Gift Card with an in-home estimate!

MAD CITY WINDOWS & BATHS

CALL TODAY! (715)-941-4210
www.madcitybaths.com

1. New orders only. Does not include material costs. Not valid with any other offer, or previous job. See representative for details. 2. Financing available with minimum purchase and approved credit. Mad City Windows & Baths, LLC, is neither a broker nor a lender. Financing is provided by third-party lenders unaffiliated with Mad City Windows & Baths, LLC. Under terms and conditions arranged directly between the customer and each lender. All subject to credit requirements and satisfactory completion of finance documents. Any finance terms advertised are estimates only. Ask for details. New orders only. Not valid with any other offer, or previous job. 3. With in-home estimate and product demonstration to homeowner(s). Limit one per household. Electronic gift card (e-gift card) voucher given upon completion of demonstration to be mailed to by homeowner(s). Subscribers do not carry e-gift cards for security reasons. E-gift card valid on in-home visits only, not applicable to Virtual Store Appointments. Offer not sponsored or promoted by Amazon and is subject to change without notice prior to reservation. Allow 2-3 weeks after demonstration to receive e-gift card. E-gift card valued at \$50.

COUNTRYSIDE BULK FOODS
W9315 Oak Road • 715-669-3318

M-F 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.; Sat. 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Closed Sunday

YUM EARTH Organic Candy

- Gummy Fruits..... \$5.15
- Candy Canes..... \$7.29
- Giggles..... \$7.29
- Candy Cane Pops..... \$7.29

Yogurt

- Yoplait Power Strawberry w/ Acai & Chia 8/5.3 oz. \$3.45
- Dannon Danimals Strawberry 48/4 oz..... \$3.95

Big Bargains

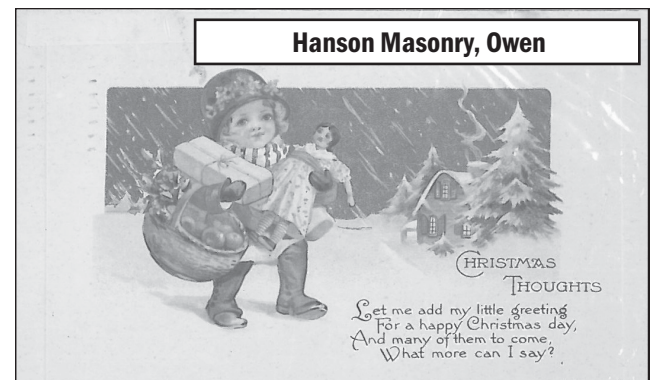
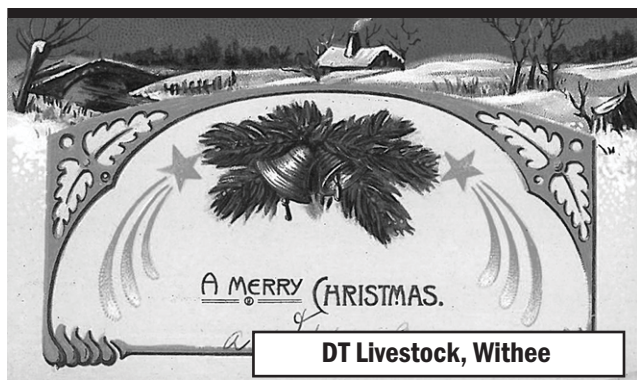
- Clearly Organic Cream of Celery Soup..... 0.85
- Westbrae Natural Organic Chili Beans..... 0.99
- Bush's Organic Kidney Beans..... \$5.65/gal.

Frozen Meat Treats

- Smithfield Sliced Smoked Ham 10 oz..... \$1.45
- Great Value Premium Sausage 18 ct. \$2.19
- Johnsonville Original Pork Grillers 1-lb \$3.29
- Johnsonville Cheddar Brats 5 ct. \$3.60

Potatoes
50 lbs. \$13.95

We will be CLOSED on Christmas Day.
Thank you for your business.



SUNNY SIDE UP

by Nicole Rogers,
Sentinel & Rural News
Managing Editor



Letting Go of the Reins

Things can sure change quickly at times. Less than a month ago, we had an offer to buy our newspaper and as of December 22, 2021, we will be handing over the reins of the *Sentinel* to Multi Media Channels (MMC). The idea to perhaps sell the newspaper cropped up in the last few months for a few reasons, one of which I wrote about a few months back.

You know the column I wrote... about how I was a wimp, and my skin was thinning daily from the stress of being a newspaper publisher in my own hometown. Since then, I have been working at the Owen-Withee School District and loving it! The administration and staff are wonderful, and it is so refreshing to be part of a professional atmosphere. Travis has also been finding himself focusing on his religious teaching more and more and less and less focusing on the newspaper biz, also finding solace in other meaningful endeavors.

Just as we were weighing our options, we thought, "*I wonder if Kris would want to take over the newspaper?*" We both trust her vision for the *Sentinel* because she helped create it. Coincidentally, Kris had contacted me to get together at the same time we were mulling it over and I gave her a rather cryptic message... *I have a possible proposition for you.* Unfortunately, we had to cancel our meeting, but Kris messaged me back and asked, "*Is this about the newspaper?*" "*Wow! Yes, it is,*" I thought to myself. As it turned out, Kris said the company she is a part of might be looking to expand

in this area.

So, there you have it. Prayers answered. Of course, I have gone through many mixed emotions regarding selling our baby. Some days I would look around our office, explore the files, and be overcome with sadness. How could we ever give this up? But then, it would pass, and I would feel relief and excitement for new possibilities that could be waiting out there for us. After we met with Kris and Tim from MMC, we both agreed this is a great company and that sinking, sad feeling began to diminish.

This may have been the best kept secret in town, it was necessary to keep it under wraps. I hope everyone understands the need for discretion.

As Travis said in his column, the readers may not see a significant difference, at least, not right away. Kris assured us that they would like to retain the integrity of the *Sentinel* and our writers and contributors are what makes it so special. I am so grateful and touched by all who made the *Sentinel* so dear to me and to our community. I will still be writing my *Sunny Side Up* column and will be working part-time for MMC and I am happy to be working during this transition period with my friend Kris once again.

I am confident that the *Sentinel* will live on for many years to come and with the added resources of large company, it will be even better than ever. I wish the new *Sentinel and Rural News* owners the absolute best of luck and hope they always see the Sunny Side and, please, take care of our baby.