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## Editor closes chapter on 10 years at the *Courier*

*By Correne Martin*

Wrapping up articles about other people's entire lives into a nice and neat bow has become a talent of mine. The words just seem to flow out of my mind, through my soul and onto the keyboard.

But ask me to write about myself and the last decade or two of my career, and it just will not come naturally.

I say this because the time has come for me to announce my departure from the *Courier Press*. After 10.5 years as associate editor, I will leave my position here on Aug. 19 for a new journey. I've accepted a job teaching special education English at Prairie du Chien High School and will start in just a few short weeks.

Not everyone gets a newspaper article written, reporting their resignation. The truth is, this is the best way I could quickly and widely spread the word to all who would need or want to know. It's also a bit of closure for me and this chapter

See EDITOR, page 4

## EDITOR, from page 1

of my life.

My decision to make a career change after 18 years as a community journalist and follow a completely new path was unexpected and painstakingly difficult. For multiple weeks, I lost sleep, I tried to "listen to my gut," and I did my research asking numerous others for their thoughts. I leaned on my supportive husband and my insightful 7- and 10-year-old kids. I literally wrote out the pros and cons, and even hoped to channel some greater spirit to part my haze and tell me what I should do. I went through nervousness, tears, fear, and excitement.

Ultimately, I chose to take the school position as a move that will best benefit my family and our priorities. One moment, I was eager to move on, and the next, I thought maybe I would just stay.

In perspective, I have loved so many of the wonderful opportunities I've been afforded as editor: the people I've met and the friendships I've made, the free experiences I've been given, and the differences I've been blessed to have made. Each week, with each paper, I basically got to start anew with a fresh slate. All this has made the trying days worthwhile.

Yet, quite often, these commitments have pulled me away from my kids and husband on nights and weekends. It just became time for a change, time for my schedule to more closely align with theirs. This has been one of the hardest decisions of my lifetime. But I'm ready to see what else I can do, and ecstatic about the chance to transfer my difference-making desires from the community to my kids' school district. Certainly, the potential to have my summers off has made this pretty enticing too.

Writing this goodbye is incredibly bittersweet. I wish I could thank and hug so many of you in

person. It has been my honor to serve Prairie du Chien and the surrounding communities in recording the happenings for history. With every decision I've made, I've been genuine, and I pray you've noticed that.

About 10 years ago, after my son was born, I went through a period of soul searching because I wondered what my purpose in life was, other than to be a wife and mom of course. It was then that I realized my purpose was to tell people's stories—from the glorified to the ordinary, and everywhere in between.

As I move on, I am passionate about being an influencer who can weave my way into the positive aspects of more people's stories.

What will I miss most? Well, I've bumped elbows with individuals from all walks of life: business leaders, event organizers, heads of government, kids doing amazing things, day-old babies, centenarians, veterans, world travelers, inmates, teachers, lawyers, musicians, historians, scientists, building contractors, homeless, river rats, farmers, Green Bay Packers, Olympians, actors, authors, TV personalities, doctors, environmentalists, and the list goes on.

I can't believe all these people trusted me with their important information and heartfelt comments. My goal was always to put my positive spin on my pieces, straighten the truth, and be fair. I'm proud of what I've accomplished.

It's a good thing most of you won't see my tears, but I do have some thanks to share.

My work family has made it easy to come to the office. They've understood every time I had to run out and take home a sick child. They offered advice and a helping hand when my husband worked on the road for five years. They deeply cared when

my brother went through his heart surgery and organ transplant. They understood my feelings on days where my anxiety was overwhelming. Each of you has made the ride entertaining and I'm forever grateful for our connections.

When I met my former "boss," Gary Howe, I truly met my match. As my motivator and friend, you rolled up your sleeves and hustled alongside us, while also sharing in my life's milestones. You made my days fun and kept throwing tasks my way that would challenge me to be my best. Your family's curation of the *Courier Press* as a community newspaper is one I felt privileged to carry on.

My current administration, Morris **Newspapers**, and my publisher, John Ingebritsen, were there for my first eight years in the workforce. John, you gave me my first job as an editor, at the Fennimore Times, fresh out of college. Now, things have come full circle and I'm appreciative of your confidence in me and your advice.

I also want to thank my successor and colleagues for picking up my baby and handling it with care.

I always thought I would give months of notice prior to leaving here.

But, as things panned out, I've only had a few weeks to do so. I'm honestly still collecting my thoughts.

So, to our loyal readers and regular contributors, I can't name you all but you know how much you meant to me. I hope our paths will continue to cross whenever possible. Remember, it's your community newspaper too, so keep sending your story ideas in and supporting the *Courier* as a business to sustain it into the future.

In choosing a photo to accompany this farewell, I've selected one with my colleague and friend Audrey Posten, and my kids, aboard a canoe for a work-related excursion.

This trip is a priceless example of how the notoriety of being the local **newspaper** editor can get you exclusive experiences you might not do otherwise. It was a blast of a day and I encourage you all to take advantage of such activities that are offered. They're part of what makes our area invaluable and we need to ensure they continue.

Please feel free to email me at [correne.martin@yahoo.com](mailto:correne.martin@yahoo.com) or send me a letter at 52880 Plum Creek Rd., Wauzeka, WI 53821. If you would rather speak to me, let my *Courier* family know your number, and I'll give you a ring.

Aug  
17

2022

Page  
04

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From  
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