

BAILIWICK NEWS

Volume 4, Issue 1 - January 1, 2020

* * *

Look back at 2019, look ahead at 2020

By Katherine Watt

Looking back

In 2018, KW Investigations LLC published 25 issues (Volume 2). The company earned about \$10,000 from my paralegal work, plus about \$800 from contract research, donations and sales of linocut prints. From those earnings, I drew a salary of about \$6,200 for my writing and publishing work, and spent about \$1,000 on printing and copying, and \$950 on media liability insurance.

At the end of 2018, plans for 2019 included continuing to publish *Bailiwick News*, running for State College Borough Council as an independent, selling some bound volumes, continuing to do paralegal work to help pay some business and household bills, and renewing media liability insurance.

In 2019, I continued doing paralegal work, and published 32 issues of *Bailiwick News* (Volume 3), including coverage of general civics, my Borough Council campaign, Centre Region Council of Governments General Forum procedural rule changes, disciplinary updates on former Centre County District Attorney Stacy Parks Miller, Spring Creek watershed protection efforts in Benner Township, Penn State's Musser Gap to Valleylands project, Pine Hall Forest conservation efforts in Ferguson Township, and air quality and public health issues, including Penn State's proposed West Campus Steam Plant expansion in downtown State College, the botched University Area Joint Authority sewage plant upgrade project, and the health effects of 5G technology.

I distributed the newspaper online at bailiwicknews.com, the *Bailiwick News* Facebook page and through a MailChimp email list of about 700 recipients.

I formatted my past work (*Bailiwick News* Volumes 1 and 2, *Steady State College*, *Energy Sovereignty* and *Watershed Protection: Citizen Campaigns*) into five bound volumes, ordered printed copies from Lulu.com, and donated some of them to Penn State's Special Collections Library and the Centre County Library and Historical Museum in Bellefonte. I sold six bound volumes.

I ran for Borough Council as an independent, participated in candidate forums, video and print interviews and information distribution, earned about 770 votes but did not win a Council seat. I then applied for interim mayor appointment. [Borough Council appointed Ronald Filippelli as interim mayor on Dec. 16; Filippelli will serve for two years, completing former mayor Don Hahn's term.]

In 2019, I also continued linoleum block printmaking, and carved a set of 96-point letters, numerals and punctuation for use in printing notecards and posters.

In 2019, the company earned about \$6,000 from my paralegal work and \$130 from sales of bound volumes, and received about \$500 in donations. From that, I drew a salary of about \$4,800; spent \$979 for media insurance; \$325 on copying costs for public documents and Right to Know requests; \$275 on printing costs for bound volumes; and about \$200 for printmaking supplies (mostly ink) for linocut printing. KW Investigations LLC currently has \$450 worth of unsold inventory of bound volumes and about \$1,800 in the bank, half of which is set aside to pay the 2020 media liability insurance premium due in April.

Looking ahead

In 2020, I plan to publish at least two long-form investigative reports each month and continue distribution via the blog, Facebook and MailChimp.

Reporting focus will be on general civics this year, to continue building up better shared community knowledge about how our current forms of local government actually operate -- in many ways dysfunctional and corporate-controlled -- as foundation for additional critical analysis about possible reforms.

To that end, my first priority in 2020 is to finish digesting State College Borough Council minutes, Centre Region Council of Governments General Forum minutes, and Penn State Board of Trustees minutes for four years: 2016 to 2019.

My second reporting priority will be to attend public meetings, or view the C-NET videos if I can't make it to the meetings, and write monthly, contextualized roundup reporting on four entities: State College Borough Council, COG General Forum and its seven committees, the State College Borough Water Authority and the University Area Joint Authority.

My third priority will be reporting in depth on two issues: Greek Life and alcoholism reform efforts over the past ten years or so, including the Beta Theta Pi/Piazza case if there are substantive developments; and watershed management efforts, including the Spring Creek Watershed Commission proposal for a "one water" plan.

Critical analysis/opinion writing will explore government reform and more rebellious themes such as sortition (government by random selection of eligible citizens, similar to jury duty); nullification (smaller political units nullifying laws promulgated by larger political units to protect citizens' constitutional or charter-

based rights); secession (smaller political units preparing to leave, and/or actually leaving larger political units due to violations of historical social contracts); and confederation (small political units forming alliances with other small political units to provide each other with mutual benefits under new social contracts).

I also might add an intermittent sidebar feature called Ego Wankfest, as a space to call out local government officials for particularly corrupt and/or incompetent acts of local governance.

I plan to format *Bailiwick News* Volume 3 for printing by Lulu.com, distribute bound volumes to Penn State's special collections library and the Centre County Library, and continue offering bound volumes for sale to readers. Also, I've joined Twitter: @amuckraker

On the financial side for 2020, I plan to do more experimenting to help develop viable business models for small-scale, local investigative journalism.

Small, experimental newspapers are important in the general media ecosystem, and all newspapers are struggling to create viable business models in the digital age. Useful books on the topic include *The Death and Life of American Journalism* by Robert McChesney and John Nichols, and *Democracy's Detectives: The Economics of Investigative Journalism* by James Hamilton.

Since incorporation in 2016, I've tried a few different funding mechanisms, but none have proved successful or sustainable. Corporate advertisers, of course, steer clear of supporting investigative work that looks at corporate power abuses.

I built a small subscriber base through PayPal at one point, but discontinued it due to concerns about its effects on editorial independence. Investigative reporters need to be firewalled from their funding sources, to be able to cover government and corporate corruption and incompetence as fully and freely as possible.

Pulling punches to avoid offending advertisers and subscribers doesn't help newspapers support an informed democratic citizenry or hold governments accountable to the people they purport to serve.

Despite the setbacks, I'd like to grow the newspaper. I'd like to make a living publishing it someday, and I'd like to hire other investigative reporters within the next few years, at decent salaries, to expand the breadth and depth of local coverage.

To move in that direction again a little bit, I plan to try a crowd-funding campaign in January to raise \$10,000 to \$12,000 in anonymous donations to cover one year of paid Volume 4 research and writing.

Eventually, I'd like to be part of setting up a blind trust, to which interested Centre County donors could contribute money, which would be administered by an independent third party, and disbursed to KW Investigations LLC and other independent, start-up newspapers, to pay reporter salaries, publishing costs (minimal, at least as long as content is mostly distributed online) and insurance premiums.

I'm also exploring the possibility of partnering with Centre Foundation to apply for a Knight Foundation local journalism grant, to support my own reporting work and potentially hire an additional investigative reporter. More information: knightfoundation.org/programs/journalism/

On the printmaking front, I plan to print and offer for sale sets of linocut typeset "Hello," "Thanks" and other notecards. I'm currently carving a platypus picture. I also plan to submit an application this year for an internship at the Hatch Show Print shop in Nashville, Tennessee. If accepted, I'll get to learn much more about letterpress printmaking during a two-week course in December 2020.

* * *

More on Penn State's Proposed Additional Local Pollution Spewing

Reprint of letter sent to Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection on Dec. 12, 2019

Dear Mr. Zaman:

In follow-up to my letter dated November 20, 2019, regarding the above permit [TVOP – 14-00003K] for the proposed Penn State West Campus Steam Plant Combustion Turbine/Heat Recovery Steam Generation project, I have learned some additional facts and request your response to same.

After I sent my first comment letter, I received an electronic copy of Penn State's March 12, 2019 permit application. Because I believe that municipal zoning offers citizens the best, if not the only, locally-enforceable tool to protect public health and community character, I did a keyword search on the permit application for the word "zoning."

The term appears several times on p. 3 of the 7-page "General Information Form" (p. 32 of the 156-page application package); below is a screenshot of the result.

questions in the Land Use Information section.

LAND USE INFORMATION			
Note: Applicants are encouraged to submit copies of local land use approvals or other evidence of compliance with local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.			
1.	Is there an adopted county or multi-county comprehensive plan?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.	Is there an adopted municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
3.	Is there an adopted county-wide zoning ordinance, municipal zoning ordinance or joint municipal zoning ordinance?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Note: If the Applicant answers "No" to either Questions 1, 2 or 3, the provisions of the PA MPC are not applicable and the Applicant does not need to respond to questions 4 and 5 below. If the Applicant answers "Yes" to questions 1, 2 and 3, the Applicant should respond to questions 4 and 5 below.			
4.	Does the proposed project meet the provisions of the zoning ordinance or does the proposed project have zoning approval? If zoning approval has been received, attach documentation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5.	Have you attached Municipal and County Land Use Letters for the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

The application was signed by a Penn State official, who verified the contents, subject to criminal prosecution for "unsworn falsification to authorities" under Pa.C.S.A. §4904 and 35 P.S. §4009(b)(2), on the "Processes" checklist page (page 51 of the 156-page application package.)

The Penn State permit application indicates the answer "No," to the question, "Is there an adopted municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan?"

As a result, Penn State indicated that the project would not fall under the provisions of the Pa. Municipalities Planning Code, and need not be submitted to the Borough of State College or Centre County for local scrutiny through zoning compliance review or land use review under county, multi-municipal and municipal comprehensive plans and zoning codes.

The answer "No" to the question is a material misrepresentation of fact.

State College Borough has two adopted comprehensive plans.

The State College Downtown Master Plan was adopted by Borough Council on August 19, 2013, and the State College Neighborhood Plan was adopted by Borough Council on July 21, 2014.

Furthermore, State College Borough is party to the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan - a multi-municipal comprehensive plan - adopted by Borough Council on Nov. 25, 2013.

I write to request that DEP respond to this issue in writing.

1. Is DEP aware that State College has adopted municipal and multi-municipal comprehensive plans?
2. Did DEP take into account the existence of the State College comprehensive plans in processing Penn State's permit application?
3. Is Penn State subject to the provisions of those comprehensive plans, such that the West Campus Steam Plant expansion project must be submitted to the Borough of State College and Centre County for municipal and county review?
4. Is Penn State exempt from the provisions of those comprehensive plans through a legal loophole?
5. If Penn State is not exempt, will DEP prosecute any Penn State official(s) for making "unsworn falsification to authorities"?

In addition, I have also been notified that downtown State College qualifies as an "Environmental Justice" area under the DEP Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy, defined as " any census block group with a 30 percent or greater minority population, and/or 20 percent or greater living at or below the poverty level as defined by the most recently available decennial or mid-decade U.S. Census Bureau data."

Under the terms of the Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy, the Penn State West Campus Steam Plant expansion project should have been processed by DEP with expanded public education and public participation procedures, including at least one public hearing in the impacted community.

This has not been done.

* * *

* * *

Founded in 2016, Bailiwick News is an independent, adversarial newspaper offering long-form investigative reporting about Centre County, Pennsylvania government and corporate corruption and incompetence, with an emphasis on promoting ecological and economic resilience. Copying and free dissemination, with attribution to original authors, is permitted and encouraged.

COPYRIGHT 2020
KW INVESTIGATIONS LLC
156 W. Hamilton Ave.
State College PA 16801
(814) 237-0996
kw.investigations.llc@gmail.com
bailiwicknews.com
Bailiwick News on Facebook
@amuckraker on Twitter
#centralpapamphleteer