

THURSDAY
JUNE 2, 2022



LAMP

SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS, FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS

CONTACT US | Phone: 913-684-5267 | E-mail: ftlvlampeditor@gmail.com | On the Web: www.ftleavenworthlamp.com

1st All-Digital Issue!

Perspectives offered on Lamp's historic, community info roles

Charlotte Richter/Staff writer

Editor's note: This is the third in a series of articles about the Fort Leavenworth Lamp's transition from a print- and web-format publication to an entirely digital newspaper.

The *Fort Leavenworth Lamp* has been providing journalistic coverage of the community for more than 50 years.

Historians and a journalist offer their perspectives on the importance of the community newspaper.

Preserving history for research

Combined Arms Center Command Historian Joseph Bailey and his predecessor, former CAC Command Historian Kelvin Crow, said that the *Fort Leavenworth Lamp*, like other newspapers, provides a perspective of the past and a historical record of the community.

"The *Lamp* has always been one of our go-to sources for tracking and recording historical developments on Fort Leavenworth. In some cases, an article from the *Lamp* is our only source for a particular event that occurred on post," Bailey said.

Bailey said when newspapers are available, they are critical to a historian's craft. He said perspectives often shift over time, but newspapers provide a contemporaneous view of events.

"(Newspapers) are simply an invaluable resource and frequently cover things that are not addressed in other sources. They capture a moment in time and are useful for establishing the context in which historical events occurred," Bailey said.

Crow recalled using newspapers to confirm facts alongside official sources in the history of the Nez Perce imprisonment in Fort Leavenworth.

"If you go down to the airfield on Fort Leavenworth, you'll see a National Park Service plaque about the Nez Perce Trail they have... and the arrival date is wrong. They have the number of people wrong (and) several other details like that. The only reason I know that is because I could go to the newspaper and read the account and see what they said about it," Crow said.

"(Newspapers) can be a great source for stuff that is otherwise utterly lost to history, and it brings a lot of color to our understanding of our own past."

Crow said he has also used the *Fort Leavenworth Lamp* and other papers to track changes in the organization of CAC, which allows commanders to reflect on past systems to formulate future evolutions.

He said expanding digital archives improves accessibility and search processes and reduces costs, but preserving fragile hardcopy artifacts is ideal, especially when digital access is unavailable and impermanent.

Writing for the community

Public Information Officer for the City of Leavenworth Melissa Bower was a reporter with the *Fort Leavenworth Lamp* from 2007- 2012. She said had no prior knowledge of the military before her staff writer role at the *Lamp*.



Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

The Fort Leavenworth Lamp celebrated 50 years of publication in 2021, and the community newspaper has undergone many design changes over the years. The Lamp will transition to entirely digital with the June 2 issue. In 1971, Lt. Col. Robert Simpson, a Command and General Staff College instructor, won a contest to name Fort Leavenworth's new post newspaper "The Lamp." In 1991, the Lamp was officially renamed the Fort Leavenworth Lamp to avoid a trademark conflict with "The Lamp," a corporate publication of the ExxonMobil oil company.

She said the newspaper provides an opportunity for both journalists and the military to learn in tandem, especially with the guidance of the Garrison Public Affairs Office.

"I think the relationship between a contracted journalism company and the Army is a really unique thing," Bower said. "Not only does it bring in journalists to learn about the military, but it also gives these emerging Army officers the opportunity to experience what it's like to conduct media interviews with a little bit of a safety net."

Bower said journalists can provide what the Army refers to as "boots-on-the-ground" for the community. She said the *Fort Leavenworth Lamp* also provides a chance for military families to participate in community journalism beyond the filtered public affairs perspective.

"You need to have somebody there, covering the school board meetings, somebody listening to whatever speeches are going on at some event (and) taking the time to ask

questions after."

She said the digital transition may present an opportunity for a larger audience.

Serving the community for more than 50 years

The *Fort Leavenworth Lamp* is transitioning to an entirely digital publication, with the last print issue May 26 and a new website design June 2, but it is not the *Lamp's* first evolution in publishing.

Fort Leavenworth has had multiple iterations of an installation newspaper over the years, it appears that the post did not even have a newspaper from 1952 until April 8, 1971, when the *Fort Leavenworth Lamp* published its first issue.

"The 20-page weekly tabloid was a 'civilian enterprise' newspaper, meaning a civilian contractor sold advertisements to cover the costs of printing and distribution (as well as secure earnings), while the Garrison Public Affairs Office, representing the Fort Leavenworth commander, provided and approved the paper's news and editorial

content," according to an article by former *Lamp* Editor Bob Kerr, published April 7, 2016, for the 45th anniversary of the *Lamp*. "The *Fort Leavenworth Lamp* has remained a weekly 'CE' tabloid for 45 years (now 51 years) and is published at no-cost to the government."

According to the article, the *Lamp* converted from a tabloid-format newspaper to a two-section broadsheet format in 2008 to improve print quality with better newsprint and more options for color and design.

During the last three years, the *Lamp* has produced a weekly six-page broadsheet print publication, with the reduction in pages due to decreased advertising sales during the pandemic, and is still operating as a no-cost contract between CherryRoad Media and the U.S. Army.

To read more about the *Fort Leavenworth Lamp's* history and for updates on the print-to-digital transition, visit www.ftleavenworthlamp.com.

AT A GLANCE

■ The *Fort Leavenworth Lamp* is now **COMPLETELY DIGITAL**. Read the newspaper online at www.ftleavenworthlamp.com. E-mail ftlvlampeditor@gmail.com with questions, comments, story ideas and submitted content.

■ The Fort Leavenworth **THRIFT SHOP**, 1025 Sheridan Drive, will be open 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. June 4; regular business hours are 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday.

■ Fort Leavenworth Human Animal Bond's "**MEET YOUR THERAPY PETS**" informational and volunteer recruitment event is 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. June 4 at Kansas Country Store, 728 Cherokee St. in Leavenworth.