



Iowa Newspaper Association Bulletin

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ACLU appeals ruling that denies access to Iowa police records in Autumn Steele shooting

BY LUCK NOZICKA
DES MOINES REGISTER

The ACLU of Iowa on Friday appealed a ruling that could limit the public's access to information about officer-involved shootings and other investigations.

The group said Monday it appealed the Iowa Public Information Board's February ruling that gave its blessing to police agencies that withhold videos, 911 calls and other records from the public.

All records gathered as part of a criminal investigation can be considered part of a "peace officers' investigative report" and are therefore exempt from open records requests — even following the conclusion of a case, the board ruled. The ACLU argues the board got the law wrong.

Until the appeal, the decision to keep secret the body-camera video of the killing of 34-year-old Autumn Steele, who was shot by a Burlington police officer, ended a four-year public records fight.

While the board found that Burlington police and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation did not violate Iowa's public records law, it shared the "complainants' frustration with the lack of publicly available information after a police-involved shooting."

In the appeal, the ACLU asked for 911 calls and videos to be considered part of the basic facts and circumstances of an incident that Iowa law enforcement agencies are required to release. The records would not be kept from the public unless disclosure would "plainly and seriously jeopardize an investigation or pose a clear and present danger" to someone.

The petition also asked for investigative reports to only be potentially confidential if an investigation is ongoing. Even when deemed possibly confidential, reports are subject to a "balancing test" to determine whether they should be disclosed, the ACLU said.

Rita Bettis Austen, the ACLU of Iowa's legal director, said the group has serious concerns about the public being denied access to video and other police records. She again urged legislators to clarify Iowa's public records laws.

"Year after year, the Legislature has failed to tackle the need for separate body camera legislation," Bettis Austen said, calling the appeal crucial to holding public officials accountable.

The appeal was filed in Polk County on behalf of Adam Klein, the Steele family's attorney.

"The City of Burlington has worked every day for more than four years to cover up the truth about Autumn's death," Klein said in a statement. "They may be too afraid to tell the truth to the citizens they claim to serve, but we are not afraid."

Steele died in January 2015 after Burlington Police Officer Jesse Hill drew his gun in reaction to a barking dog at the scene of a domestic dispute. Hill slipped and shot the unarmed mother as she stood beside her crying toddler.

Neither law enforcement nor the family has alleged Hill deliberately shot Steele. Hill was never charged with a crime and returned to work shortly after the incident.

But Steele's family members contend the officer acted recklessly, saying his behavior has been whitewashed by law enforcement in an effort to deflect accountability.

DCI released a 12-second clip from Hill's body camera but contends it has the legal ability to forever withhold other records in the case.

Steele's family spent years challenging the Iowa agencies that denied them access to review records in the case, including 911 calls and the full police video.

The family received a \$2 million settlement last year from the city of Burlington to settle a wrongful death lawsuit. And in connection with that case, a federal judge ordered multiple videos and records released.

The video introduced in the federal case shows Hill sobbing to another officer.

"I'm f----- going to prison," Hill could be heard saying.

The records also include a report by former Des Moines County Attorney Amy Beavers that exonerated the officer of charges. The report excluded multiple witness statements at the scene that said the dog was not acting aggressively when Hill drew his gun.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

This article was originally published by the Des Moines Register. Read the full article online at <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/crime-and-courts/2019/03/25/autumn-steele-aclu-iowa-police-shooting-burlington-crime-public-information-video-officer-involved/3267264002/>

Luke Nozicka is breaking news reporter for the Des Moines Register. Follow him on Twitter at @LukeNozicka.

question of the week

An attorney has asked our newspaper to file the affidavits of probate publication at the courthouse. Is this legal?

According to INA Legal Hotline attorney Joe Quinn, the probate attorneys at his firm receive the affidavits from the newspaper and then they file them with the court.

"Although there is nothing that prohibits the paper from filing them, I would be concerned that if something fell through the cracks and there was an error in filing somehow the paper would be blamed and brought into the middle of a dispute," Quinn said. "I guess it might be less of a concern if the lawyer would agree to indemnify and hold the paper harmless for any damages caused by a problem with a filing. Absent such a hold harmless, I recommend that the paper decline to take on the responsibility of filing the affidavits."

Mobile microlearning works! Sample the first course in digital journalism delivered to your phone

BY LINDA AUSTIN

PROJECT DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATED PRESS MEDIA EDITORS' NEWSTRAIN

Almost two years ago, I asked for help in identifying your training needs in digital journalism. More than 700 of you responded to a survey, with three-quarters supporting the idea of bite-size lessons delivered via your smartphone.

The idea was to overcome the biggest obstacle to training for journalists — lack of time — by providing learning in five-minute chunks that could be consumed while on public transit or waiting in line. In the past decade, mobile microlearning has taken off in other industries but not yet in journalism.

Now, the results are back from that first course in digital journalism delivered via mobile microlearning, using the EdApp. And you responded enthusiastically.

All of the 35 journalists who took that first course — The 5 C's of Writing News for Mobile Audiences — would recommend it to other journalists interested in the subject.

Read the full post: <https://www.rjionline.org/stories/mobile-microlearning-works-sample-the-first-course-in-digital-journalism-de>

Have you heard about your new INA member benefit?

As a valued INA member, you can now access all Online Media Campus webinars **free of charge!**

This library of webinars provides high-quality, low-cost online training to media professionals. More than 20 programs are offered annually on writing and editorial topics, print and online advertising sales, technology, social networking, management issues and much more. These cost-effective and time-efficient webinars are designed to offer fresh ideas to improve job skills, without the need for travel and time away from the office.

Use the code IAtraining at www.onlinemediacampus.com to register. Questions? Contact Jana Shepherd at jshepherd@inanews.com.

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Newspaper loses two of its 'family' in accident

BY JIM JOHNSON

PUBLISHER, THE KALONA NEWS

There is a pall over The News office. Last week, we lost two of our colleagues, killed in an accident while they were delivering newspapers to stores around Washington and Johnson counties.

It was nearly three hours after the accident that we first learned about it.

At first the details were sketchy. A sheriff's office investigator stopped at the office to get information on the two involved. He had no details.

Bit by bit, as the afternoon went on, we learned the details. The news was devastating.

Jerry Lee Coblentz's van, for a reason not yet known, ran off Highway 218 just more than a mile south of Highland High School. The van ended upside down in a creek.

A passerby pulled Mandy Shetler from the van and began CPR, getting her heart started again. Coblentz was trapped in the wreckage. He died before rescue workers arrived.

Shetler was taken to University of Iowa Hospital where she died at 7:20 p.m., family members at her side.

Coblentz was 77; Shetler was 75.

The death has shaken our staff and the community where both lived all of their lives.

Every fall, Coblentz was the one who drove the streets of Kalona, picking up leaves that residents left by the curb and taking them to his farm on 150th Street.

If someone needed a ride to an appointment, Coblentz was there with his van, driving people who had no other way to reach doctors' offices and clinics.

Shetler lived in Kalona all of her life. She was Amish and easily recognized around town. In earlier years, she babysat children, including now City Administrator Ryan Schlabaugh when he was a boy. She worked as a waitress at the Wayside Inn and then in the food services department at Pleasantview Home.

For nearly 30 years, she worked at The News, delivering newspapers and performing numerous odd jobs at the newspaper. No one could remember her missing a day of work. She scheduled her

vacations so she returned on Wednesdays to deliver the newspapers to the stores where it was sold.

Last Thursday, her desk was empty, a stark reminder of the loss we suffered. Yet work had to continue. There was another newspaper to publish, another set of deadlines to meet. The work continued with a dull ache in our hearts.

Both Coblentz and Shetler spent their lives helping and volunteering in the community.

Shetler was remembered for her laugh, her optimism and for always having a kind word for those around her.

Shetler told about her early life on an Amish farm west of Kalona, walking to school with her many siblings. She baked bread in her cast iron stove for church services and special events. That cast-iron stove was used to heat irons that she used to keep her clothes beautifully pressed.

In her free time, she made blankets from scrap cloth for missions overseas.

Shetler loved to talk about her many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews living in Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Ohio. She was looking forward to going to a grandnephew's wedding in June.

"She lived a simple life," Leslie Miller said at Shetler's funeral service. "She lived a happy life."

Coblentz's wife of 57 years, Lena Ruth, noted all her husband had done for those in need.

"He was always out helping people all over," she said. "I wonder what is going to happen to those people now."





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IN THIS ISSUE...

- Media Generational Strategies: What Drives Your Consumers?

View and submit ads on the Internet at www.INAnews.com. Students and professionals may also submit their resumes for online viewing.

There is no charge for most of these ads. They are a free service to INA active (newspaper) members only. The name of the newspaper in the ad must be the same as published in the current INA Directory.

If you are trying to help an employee relocate, please send us the ad information on your letterhead, rather than having the employee write us. We will not run ads for persons living in a member's town without first clearing the ad with the publisher.

Please have copy to the INA office no later than noon on Monday. The INA will make the determination of whether an ad qualifies for free or paid publication. If payment for an ad is not enclosed with the ad, the INA will require payment in advance before the ad will be published.

Ads for products or services which could be marketed for a profit may be published for a fee of \$10 per insertion, paid in advance, with a 40-word maximum.

Recruitment (help wanted) ads for positions in states other than Iowa may be published for a fee of \$25 per insertion, with a 100-word maximum.

For more information, contact Cicely Gordon at cgordon@inaneews.com.

FREE MEMBER EXCHANGE

▼ HELP WANTED

ADVERTISING MANAGER. The Marshall Independent, a Monday-Saturday publication, is hiring an advertising manager. This position is responsible for management of the advertising department while serving as a member of the leadership team.

Duties include:

- Training, managing sales representatives;
- Establishing sales goals and ensuring sure they are met;
- Assisting reps in developing, selling print and digital campaigns;
- Direct selling to accounts;
- Working with the publisher to develop new revenue ideas;
- Completing administrative tasks and reports as required.

This position includes a generous salary as well as commission, along with a full benefits package. To apply, send a resume and cover letter to gorear@marshallindependent.com. 0327

EDUCATION & BUSINESS REPORTER. The Ottumwa Courier is seeking a reporter to cover education and business, fast-paced beats that generate award-winning stories. The full-time position reports to the managing editor. We're looking for someone who is enthusiastic and would rather be out working a story than working a desk. Two to three years' experience is preferred, but ambitious new reporters will be considered. The successful applicant will be willing to dive in headfirst, work well in a close-knit newsroom, and have a clean driving record. Send a resume and writing samples to Managing Editor Matt Milner at mmilner@ottumwacourier.com. 0327

NEWS EDITOR. Mid-America Publishing and Printing a leader in community newspapers and custom printing in Iowa is seeking a full-time news editor for The Pioneer Enterprise based in Rockwell and the Sheffield Press located in Sheffield. The successful candidate will work on both papers, possess creative writing skills, be able to shoot photos and video and be able to manage social media platforms. Should have an affinity for feature stories and ability to interview plus investigate news of all types in and around Cerro Gordo and Franklin Counties. Column writing proficiency a huge plus. Above average communication skills, the ability to meet deadlines and flexibility in scheduling also required. Competitive benefits include health, dental and vision insurance, paid time off; vacation accrual; 401K w/match; collaborative working environment with family owned company. Great opportunity to network with professionals from 23 similar publications as well. Call Pam DeVries at 641-486-2585 Ext 118 for more details today! 0410

▼ FOR SALE

Considering a sale of your newspaper but not sure where to start? Iowa's newest media broker, Scenic Trail Media Brokers, LLC, is here to help you. Scenic Trail Media Brokers will work with you in every step of the process to properly market your newspaper to help you attract the right buyer for your property. We'll work with you until the final closing to make sure you get top dollar. Call Ryan Harvey today at 515-689-1151 or reach him by email at scenictrailmediabrokers@gmail.com for more information.

Iowa weekly newspaper for sale; excellent community; city, school, county legals, gross around \$200K. 40 year owner seeking to slow down. Contact Northeast Iowa, Iowa Newspaper Association, 319 E. 5th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Contact: Iowa Newspaper Association, 319 E. 5th St., Des Moines, Iowa.

Two weekly newspapers, including one in county seat community. Progressive communities. City, county, school legals. Located in southwest Iowa. Contact: Weekly Newspapers, Iowa Newspaper Association, 319 E. 5th St., Des Moines, Iowa.

Profitable group of three small weekly newspapers for sale in South Dakota, two in Black Hills. If interested write to: S.D. Newspapers c/o Iowa Newspaper Association, 319 E. 5th St., Des Moines, IA 50309.

NEW! Profitable weekly newspaper for sale in Winfield, IA. Covers 4 communities/3 school districts. If interested contact: robin.therme@gmail.com.

IN NEED OF NEW LISTINGS. This could be the right time to sell! *Appraisals-Consultations-Brokerage services* Your full service broker, News Brokerage of Iowa, dtappnewsbrokerageofiowa@gmail.com, 319-350-2770.



An Iowa Newspaper Foundation webinar...

MEDIA GENERATIONAL STRATEGIES: WHAT DRIVES YOUR CONSUMERS?



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Thursday, April 18 1-2 p.m. CST

Registration fee: FREE · Deadline: April 15

IN THIS WEBINAR...

Can your products hit a bulls-eye with each generation you choose to target: Millennials, GenX, Boomers, Silents? How is generational strategy different from demographic strategy? In this webinar we will discuss two fundamental truths to explain the dramatic differences amongst the generations and the need for all newspapers to understand those differences.

Truth #1: Between birth and our early 20s, we form most of the core values and beliefs that we'll embrace our entire lives.

Truth #2: The experiences and teachings of our Formative Years mold our core values that guide our consumer decisions.

Chuck Underwood helps you understand the unique values and attitudes that drive each generation's unique consumer, career, and lifestyle decisions.

THE PRESENTER...

Chuck Underwood



As the founder and principal of Ohio-based The Generational Imperative, Inc., a generational business consultancy, Chuck Underwood trains American business, government, education, religion, and all other sectors in a full list of generational strategies. Three decades of research and front-line application with an A-List of clients. His 2018 book, "America's Generation in the Workplace, Marketplace and Living Room," is the most comprehensive presentation of generational business strategies ever published.

Underwood spent his earlier career in the mass media of radio and television, first as an award-winning broadcast journalist and national sports play-by-play announcer, and then as a creator and producer of original programming.



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Webinar Registration

YES! Sign me up for the *Media Generational Strategies: What Drives Your Consumers?* webinar
Thursday, April 18.

Registration fee: free to Iowa Newspaper Association members

Find out more at www.onlinemediacampus.com or contact Erica Wipperling at 515-422-9052 or ewipperling@inanews.com.

Registration deadline: April 15

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EMAIL to ewipperling@inanews.com or REGISTER ONLINE at ONLINEMEDIACAMPUS.COM

RECEIPT OF REGISTRATION:

You will receive log-in instructions 48-hours prior to the webinar you've registered for. If you have questions, please contact Erica Wipperling at ewipperling@inanews.com or 515-422-9052.