

CNN uses the Morning Call for report: “How the decline of local news affect communities”

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Uncategorized](#) October 26, 2020



CNN’s “Reliable Sources” with Brian Steltzer, October 25, 2020

CNN’s Brian Steltzer’s segment on the *Morning Call* yesterday (click link above) gives us a good opportunity to reflect on the possibility that Bethlehem will become a news desert.

Thankfully, Christina Tatu seems to have replaced Bethlehem veteran Nicole Radziewicz on the Bethlehem beat. For now, anyway.

But the *Morning Call*, while it gamely moves on, will likely devote less and less coverage to Bethlehem.

Just yesterday afternoon Gadfly and a follower were talking over his back fence about things we would like see covered and need to be covered that are now not being covered.

We do get coverage from *lehighvalleylive.com* and WFMZ, but it’s not the same as having media based here.

And *godhelpus* if we have to depend on Facebook and the social media etceteras.

What to do?

- More than once in these pages Gadfly has recommended subscribing to the *Bethlehem Press* in greater numbers and pressing for a wider and deeper coverage, with more in the way of analysis, of Bethlehem political issues. A community newspaper must survive. It's not very expensive.
- Make sure that there is a replacement for Gadfly, who plans to retire Election Day +1 next May. Applications now being received. Who will step up?
- Encourage more blogs, more citizen journalism — providing more comprehensive coverage and especially alternate viewpoints. Who will step up?

Be sure to see the wonderful 50-picture photo gallery at the head of the following article. Great pictorial history of the paper.

Clarification: A follower points out that my wording might imply criticism of Nicole Radziewich. Ouch! Did not intend that. I meant to say that it was good to see that the hole left by the long-standing, respected NR was filled and not left empty.

Selections from Jon Harris and Andrew Wagaman, "The Morning Call to vacate Allentown office building after 100 years in downtown location." Morning Call, August 12, 2020.

The Morning Call has called Sixth and Linden streets in downtown Allentown home since 1920.

One hundred years later, Tribune Publishing, which owns the newspaper, has decided to permanently vacate The Morning Call's longtime home at 101 N. Sixth St. The news was announced Wednesday in an internal email from Morning Call interim General Manager Timothy Thomas, a decision made amid a pandemic that kept many employees working at home and had the newspaper's parent company searching for ways to save money as advertising revenue dwindled.

"This decision was not made lightly or hastily," said Thomas, who has been interim general manager since early 2019. "Instead, amid a pandemic that prevents us from safely returning to the office for an undetermined period of time, the company has decided to formally close

our portion of the Sixth Street facility sometime in the near future. Once we have a firm date, we will update everyone.”

It remains unclear whether The Morning Call will find another office for its roughly 100 employees, though Thomas said the newspaper would look for a cross-docking and distribution center nearby to replace the existing operation. Employees are being asked to retrieve personal items from the office by Sept. 15.

“Out of an abundance of caution we do not anticipate having employees that can work remotely coming back into the office for the remainder of the year and into 2021,” Tribune spokesperson Max Reinsdorf said.

“With no clear path forward in terms of returning to work, and as the company evaluates its real estate needs in light of health and economic conditions brought about by the pandemic, we have made the difficult decision to permanently close the office.”

[History of The Morning Call in downtown Allentown »](#)

The Morning Call’s presence in Allentown dates to 1883 when a Saturday evening newspaper called The Critic was founded. Following a reader contest, the publication was renamed The Morning Call in 1895.

By 1906, growth necessitated more space and equipment, bringing The Morning Call to 27 S. Sixth St. Operations were moved to Sixth and Linden streets in 1920, where the current building was constructed in 1930, though sections were added to it over the years.

The early 1980s, when the paper was still owned by the Miller family, brought plenty of construction.

An 18-month expansion at the Sixth and Linden Street headquarters was completed in 1983, a project that redesigned five major departments to use one of the most sophisticated computer systems in the nation

Two years earlier, on Aug. 31, 1981, the newspaper’s 270-car, three-level parking garage at Sixth and Turner streets was formally opened. Allentown Mayor Frank Fischl termed the new garage “an indication of your dedication to the center-city.”