



(https://fenicebanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?oaparams=2__bannerid=361__zoneid=4__cb=ee747e5d66__oadest=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.tkqlhce.com%2Fj65y1A719PYZXSVESTPRRZZYTQZ)

FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2021 | FAIR, 93° (WEATHER/)

- MY ACCOUNT (/ACCOUNT/)
- LOG OUT (/LOGIN.HTML?ACTION=LOGOUT)
- SUBSCRIBE (/BECOME-A-MEMBER/INDEX.HTML)
- E-EDITION (/EEDITIONS/)
- SPECIAL SECTIONS (/SPECIALSECTIONS/)
- PODCASTS (HTTPS://HILLCOUNTRYNEWS.BUZZSPROUT.COM/)

HILL COUNTRY NEWS

ADVANCED SEARCH (/SEARCH.HTML)

- NEWS - (/NEWS/)
- SPORTS - (/SPORTS/)
- ENTERTAINMENT - (/ENTERTAINMENT/)
- OPINION - (/OPINION/)
- ANNOUNCEMENTS - (/ANNOUNCEMENTS/)
- CLASSIFIEDS (/CLASSIFIEDS/)
- LEGAL NOTICES - (/NOTICES/)
- CALENDAR (/CALENDAR/)

The faces of change



(/uploads/original/20170703-233715-

81b88f45ceabcfade9662fab4e49cbad.jpg)

Lights, camera, ...! From left, Cedar Park Media Relations Manager Melanie Carr, Leander ISD Public Relations Manager Dick Ellis and Cedar Park Multimedia Specialist Jolen Johnson all hung up their television jobs for new careers, but they brought their talents with them.

Posted Tuesday, February 5, 2008 5:00 pm

by Jenn Rains, Hill Country News

A news anchor who has interviewed Lady Bird Johnson, George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush; a television news producer who worked the Sept. 11 attacks from the newsroom; a cameraman who spent eight days filming New Orleans right after Hurricane Katrina - they all have one thing in common. They all turned in their microphones, scripts and cameras and brought their expertise to Cedar Park.

There was a time when Dick Ellis sat in front of a television camera, a time when Melanie Carr worked behind the scenes to get a news program produced and a time when Jolen Johnson stood behind the television camera. While Johnson still spends his time behind the camera, roles have reversed for Carr and Ellis since leaving broadcasting.

With a combined 50-plus years of experience in the media and broadcasting industry, Carr, Ellis and Johnson have a lot to contribute to the school district and city, especially in a day and age that revolves around media and digital technology.

Melanie Carr graduated from Texas A&M Corpus Christi with a communications degree and immediately got involved in television film, specifically news broadcasting. Though her official title was producer, "I was a reporter and an anchor and whatever they needed me to be at the time," said Carr.

After spending 10 years as a producer for broadcast television throughout Texas, Carr decided to take a different route with her career; nine months ago she became the communications and media relations manager for the city of Cedar Park. "It was an exciting opportunity with great aspects to the job," said Carr. "I can still work in the TV field, but try other areas and have more variety."

\$180 off
QuickBooks Online Plus

QUICKBOOKS BACKING YOU

Buy now

(https://fenicebanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?

Current Poll Question

oaparams=2__bannerid=306__zoneid=37__cb=218b9e93c1__oadest=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.anddoezrs.net%2Fda74shqnhp4DEC7A78468C8D7C6)

Every month in 2018, Lexington Law challenged

2 MILLION ITEMS

with the three major credit bureaus on behalf of our clients

LEARN MORE

(https://fenicebanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?

flexjobs

Connecting People to Opportunities, Not Offices

Hand-Screened Remote Jobs

(https://fenicebanners.creativecirclemedia.com/www/delivery/ck.php?

Trending stories

oaparams=2__bannerid=318__zoneid=1__cb=01b7de4ccf__oadest=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.tkqlhce.com%2Ffp75y1A719PYZXSVESTPRUTTUQS)

Key takeaways from Biden's \$1.52 trillion spending plan (/stories/key-takeaways-from-bidens-152-trillion-spending-plan,85666)

Soon after coming to work for the city, Carr recruited Jolen Johnson, a former colleague from her time with Austin area news, to join her at the city. A performance studies graduate from Mary Hardin-Baylor, Johnson said he "stumbled into the news business."

Johnson worked for NBC in Waco after college before he moved to the Austin news scene, where he spent the last five years as a photographer for all the news programs on KEYE. After finding out about the multimedia specialist job for Cedar Park through Carr, Johnson thought it would be a nice change from all the "deadlines, daily turnover and stress." Johnson, who has held the position as the city's multimedia specialist for the past six months, is happy with his decision because being the multimedia specialist "allows me to be more creative and free."

"I can do the visual things and I'm not locked down," said Johnson.

Though Ellis did not give up broadcasting to join the staff at the city, like Carr and Johnson, he brought his expertise to a different aspect of Cedar Park. Ellis came to Leander ISD just seven months ago as the communications director. He covers all news media relations for the school district, and is now the man behind the scenes and rarely finds himself in front of a camera nowadays. When he does end up in front of the camera, it's not the nightly news segment he was accustomed to for so long.

With the longest tenure in the broadcasting industry, Ellis spent nearly 25 years as the face in front of the camera for nightly newscasts. After starting out doing radio stuff, he never dreamed he would end up on television. In fact, he told his boss at the time that he did not even want to be on television. That all changed the night a guy did not show up for the evening news report. "I got thrown in the position and I got hooked," said Ellis. Hooked he was because he spent the next 25 years as a news anchor at KTBC and KVUE.

Their extensive backgrounds in different aspects of broadcasting are also proving to be very helpful to the needs of Carr, Ellis and Johnson's new jobs. "I've known the media and TV guys for years so that's a big advantage," said Ellis on how his media background helps him as communications director. "We're working on a lot of plans that use my skills."

"Dick brings a wealth of knowledge and experience about news media," said Bill Britcher, director of school/community relations for Leander ISD. Britcher said he was pleased to have someone with Ellis' background. It is going to be very helpful for the district. "He can improve our working relationship [with the media] and find stories of students more likely to end up on air," he said.

Having a background in broadcasting has also been beneficial for Carr in her new position as media relations manager. "I understand media relations and know what papers have to go through," said Carr.

"It's a tremendous benefit to the city in her ability to relate to media relations," said Jose Madrigal, Cedar Park Assistant City Manager on Carr's background in the media. "They [Johnson and Carr] know what television and radio want and look for.

"The biggest change already has been with the TV [station]," said Madrigal.

"It used to be just a 24-hour slide show," said Johnson, noting that it didn't even have music. However, with his and Carr's creativity, they have created a television station that is informative and has regular programming. They have also teamed up to create, report and film videos and public service announcements (PSA) to enhance the city.

Ellis also felt very sure that he would not go back to being on the air, and he said he is very excited about working for the district. Although he misses the nice people he worked with as a news anchor, "I don't miss having to put on makeup at 4:30 in the afternoon," said Ellis.

Johnson said he does miss some aspects of his former job, but he does not really want to go back to news photography. "This has more opportunities and I can be a better husband and family man," he said.

E-mail jennifer@hillcountrynews.com (mailto:jennifer@hillcountrynews.com)

Army scientists hope their COVID-19 vaccine will be a universal booster shot (/stories/army-scientists-hope-their-covid-19-vaccine-will-be-a-universal-booster-shot,85662)

Calls mount for Biden to track US health care worker deaths from COVID (/stories/calls-mount-for-biden-to-track-us-health-care-worker-deaths-from-covid,85664)

Leander sales tax up 21% in 1st quarter; building permits surge despite snowstorm, COVID-19 (/stories/leander-sales-tax-up-21-in-1st-quarter-building-permits-surge-despite-snowstorm-covid-19,85589)

Leander ISD online-only high school fizzles from lack of interest; all student returning to in-person schooling next year (/stories/leander-isd-online-only-high-school-fizzles-from-lack-of-interest-all-student-returning-to,85643)

(https://fenicebanners.creativecirclemedia.com/oaparams=2_bannerid=366_zoneid=2_cb=b7101e95cc_oades)

Comments

0 Comments

Sort by

Facebook Comments Plugin

Other items that may interest you