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## A doofus among the media elite

**BY BEN JACOBSON**  
*Telegraph Herald assistant local content editor*



Breaking news: There's an election coming up. More than one probably. I don't know.

Anyway, Iowa is, for lots of probably good reasons that someone else might be able to explain to you, the first battleground state ahead of each presidential election. The months leading up to the Iowa Caucus always are marked by a parade of political hopefuls kissing babies and taking selfies with fans/potential supporters.

As one of the key cities in Iowa, Dubuque often is home to those visits. By the time the 2020 caucus rolls around next February, we'll have seen the challengers so frequently we'll be referring to them by their first names and asking

them to dog-sit when we head to the Dells for the weekend.

So my bosses, in their eminent wisdom and desire to get rid of me for a few days, decided to send me to the University of Chicago's 2020 Campaign Journalism Conference. I was going to rub shoulders with the media elite in the nation's third-biggest city. Assuming I could find a parking space.

The conference was held at Google's Chicago office, a very sleek, functional building with disappointingly few robots wandering around. Panelists included bigwigs from national broadcast journalism outlets, pollsters and other staffers from presidential campaigns and party officials, who mostly got along with each other while sharing the stage.

I had lunch with journalists who casually talked about trying to get out of appearing as a talking head on national television like

they were finding excuses for skipping the third performance of their kid's high school musical. The only way I'm getting on CNN this election cycle is if I accidentally trip and fall on top of a candidate while the cameras are rolling.

As an industry nerd, I found the whole experience fascinating. It was like watching the haggis getting made, with reporters serving as the sheep stomach casing and news scoops and tidbits making up the spiced liver and lung filling.

I learned a thing or two as well. For example, if you don't have a Twitter account, you're basically a non-entity in the high-stakes world of national politics, the journalistic equivalent of a socially awkward seventh-grader sitting alone on the bleachers during the middle school's spring formal.

Also, it's clear that nobody re-

ally has any idea how to cover the 2020 race at this point. The 2016 election defied odds and pollsters in equal measure, prompting the news industry's top minds to re-evaluate all they know about how best to serve and inform readers/viewers/listeners.

Don't be surprised if you see something new and exciting during this campaign cycle. I've heard that one network will be using a live llama as an embedded reporter for one of the candidates. And another will require reporters to deliver live updates while juggling knives.

But don't worry about me and the rest of the TH team. We know exactly what we're doing this election season.

On an unrelated note, anybody know where I could rent a llama? Asking for a friend.

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# Behind the lens

Local photographers share why they take on the responsibility of documenting the 'Big Day'

**BY ERICA LYONS • [erica.lyons@thmedia.com](mailto:erica.lyons@thmedia.com)**

For couples, walking down the aisle is arguably one of the most joyous and fulfilling moments of their relationship. At that point, oftentimes months and months and seemingly endless hours of planning have gone in to making the day as unique and special as possible for the bride and groom and guests alike. Those precious moments are entrusted to be captured by a wedding photographer. They, too, have spent hours working on preparing for the big day. They also feel some pressure as they seek to capture such special moments in time. Photographers from throughout the tri-states share a passion for showcasing the beauty of life's moments. Three of those photographers share their stories with the Telegraph Herald, giving their perspectives from behind the lens.

**UNPOSED PHOTOGRAPHY • Contributed**

## UNPOSED PHOTOGRAPHY



**Cathy West**

Cathy and Jeff West didn't plan on starting a photography business together.

The couple had done photography work individually, as a hobby and as assistant photographers for other photographers but hadn't considered owning a business.



**Jeff West**

Cathy hired Jeff as an assistant for a wedding nine years ago and she jokingly said, "By the end of the day, he was so great that I said that I would never hire another assistant again."

For the Wests, weddings are the heart of their business, which Cathy said has formally had a name for 13 years but has been based in Galena, Ill., for seven years.

"Weddings are where our hearts were," she said. "They're the most excit-

ing and fun. Yes, there's the magic of it's somebody's most special day and there's something special in being a part of that but also realizing (that) what we do helps people to capture the moment. That really drew us back."

They've shot throughout the tri-state area and beyond, saying that different venues have their perks.

"All our venues are fun," Jeff said. "Every venue is so different. You just have to find the character (of a venue) that echoes what you like and that will be the place for you."

The Wests say being a husband-wife team helps them be better business partners and helps them work efficiently on big shoot days.

"We're super in sync, and that makes a huge difference," Cathy said. "It's really easy and pretty seamless because we've been together for so long."

"Each of us has our strengths, and we

really work with that," she added, noting that Jeff usually takes on the lead photographer role.

"We're very hands-on with our couples," Jeff said. "We already know them really well when it comes to the wedding day. Because we plan so much, we know where we're supposed to be when."

Being a married couple, the Wests speak from experience and advise their couples to maintain perspective on their relationship during planning for the big day.

"That's why so many couples do first-looks these days," Jeff said. "They realize that it's all about them and how they're starting their lives together."

Cathy agreed: "You're not just planning this one day. You're planning a life together. So continuing to still build your relationship as a couple is really important. Take the time to nurture each other as a couple."

See **WEDDING, PAGE 3C**

### expert tips

We asked each of our photographers to share a few tips and tricks for couples as they prepare for their big day.

#### UNPOSED PHOTOGRAPHY

- Hire people that you want to work with. — "All you have left at the end of the day is the photos and the video," Jeff West said. "The cake is eaten, the dress is in a box, the flowers all die, but what's left should be work from someone you actually like."
- Pick your wedding party wisely. — "Maybe try not to go crazy ginormous with the wedding party," Cathy West said. "It can become wrangling cats if the couple has to start worrying about the bridal party instead of the bridal party worrying about the couple. The people who are up there should be the people you call when life gets really tough, the people you'll rely on throughout your marriage."

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