



Doing business in a small city that often feels like a tiny town can be tricky. Especially when your work generates a public voice.

Issues of *The Skinnie* come and go every two weeks, usually without complications. But this production cycle has been a little less comfortable than most.

First, I was inexplicably added to an email string by a Skidaway resident and artist whom we have profiled editorially and whose art we have showcased on our cover several times. We have never charged him for coverage, nor asked anything in return. Nor have we rejected any of his requests for consideration. His email seemed to question our willingness to work with him in the future and suggested that outlets like ours are beholden to paid advertisers. To be crystal clear and factually contrary, our editorial integrity is not for sale. We prioritize the quality of our content over its commercial currency. It's a core value that separates us from most, if not all, peer media. This is an important point for me to make.

That said, we cling to another core value that runs deep in the cellular construct of my Italian blood. While we don't assign revenue ambitions to our editorial choices, we fiercely value loyalty and endeavor to give as good as we get in this regard. So, last Saturday night, as I reviewed and revised each piece that populates the pages that follow this one, I was struck with dread.

It was the first time I had seen the things that would appear in this issue, as I am removed from the daily operations of the magazine. A day or so before our press deadline, I begin to tweak our stories, copy correct our PSAs, and finally – a couple of hours before our publishing window closes – conceive this column and type it furiously while Philip waits for his inbox notification to ping.

I opened a file called JParkerV4 and started to read through it line by line. It's a compelling story of a local family business that has adapted and grown, leading to its 50th anniversary, a mark it shares with the Landings this year. This milestone is hard-earned and a big deal.

The author introduces the reader to Parker family members, several of whom are long-time friends of mine with meaningful connections to my family.

But my relationship with Alan Tanenbaum, the president of JB Rourke is very special to me, too. Alan (and his late partner Don McElveen) were the first advertisers to sign on with us in 2003. They have been with us faithfully for 19 years. During that time, Alan has been both personally kind to me and my family and unflinchingly professional as a businessman.

In short, I am a fan of both enterprises and the men and women who put their hearts and souls into them. I agonized about running the J. Parker piece without informing Alan that it was coming. So, I did. And Alan reacted with grace, a character trait that he consistently and effortlessly displays.

Meanwhile, I am happy for the team at J. Parker.

I am extremely competitive. Although there is room for more than one magazine (or website or journal or whatever) in our market, a part of me (not the best or most enlightened part) wants to vanquish the rest. So, I can imagine how it feels when one of our loyal partners sees us metaphorically cavorting with his rival. Though we all strive for it's-just-business detachment, we're human beings before we are capitalists.

Like I said at the beginning: Ours can be a small town. But it seems to be big enough to support two fine clothiers. I hope we honor each of them fairly, guided by the compass that helps us navigate our sometimes-tight quarters, along a path the leads to prosperity for us all.

Scott A. Laurer

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