

The Alt-Weekly Crisis Hits Nashville. And Democracy | The New York Times

By Margaret Renkl

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[Margaret Renkl](#) reflects on the value of local media—including Nashville’s The Scene, up for auction—and the pressures such media continue to face in light of changes as advertising revenue continues to flee toward media entities like Google and Facebook.

Gone are The Baltimore City Paper, The Philadelphia City Paper, The Boston Phoenix. Last year, here in Tennessee, The Knoxville Mercury shut down. Also last year, Atlanta’s Creative Loafing [laid off all but one person](#) on the entire editorial staff. Even The Village Voice, the alt-weekly that invented alt-weeklies, now survives only online.

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When classified ads — the bread and butter of the newspaper business — migrated online, newspapers big and small suffered. In towns like Nashville, midsize cities too small to sustain more than one daily paper, alt-weeklies morphed from journalism’s irreverent younger siblings into necessary institutions. They covered news the shrinking dailies no longer touched, and they served as urgent competitors in areas where the dailies still invested resources, such as politics.

Source: [The Alt-Weekly Crisis Hits Nashville. And Democracy. - The New York Times](#)