When Chloe and I arrived at the newspaper office the next morning to gather the newspapers for our route, everyone cheered and complimented us on our story.

“Excellent job, pups!”

“You two are top rate journalists.”

“Get ready for a Pulitzer.”

Thankfully, the two reporters who had been invited to cover the governor’s speech weren’t upset we had covered the story. We explained how we were on our way to cover a story for the C&W Gazette and it was all a misunderstanding.

“The C&W Gazette?” Mr. Dawson repeated. “Do I have competition?”

“No sir,” I answered. “Chloe and I are only offering a subscription for friends in our neighborhood. Twenty-five cents a copy.”

“I want to be your first subscriber,” Mr. D. said, handing me a quarter. “I also have something else for you.” We watched as our boss grabbed three newspapers from his desk. “Take these home as keepsakes.”

“It looks even better in print,” I said to Chloe, looking at the front page of The County Courier. “I still can’t believe we wrote a lead story. A few weeks ago, I didn’t even know what a byline or cutline was, now our names are in both.”

“It feels fantastic, doesn’t it?” Mr. Dawson asked, winking at us. “Before you start your route, follow me.”

We followed our boss to the basement and stopped at a room with a sign overhead that said, “Morgue.” I noticed Chloe looked as scared as I did. We followed our boss inside the room. I shut my eyes as soon as we stepped inside.

“Open your eyes,” Mr. D. instructed. Obeying our boss, I opened my eyes very carefully. Along the walls were shelves and filing cabinets. Each one was labeled with a date. They started at 1860 and went all the way to 2019.

“The morgue is where we keep newspaper archives,” Mr. D. informed. Chloe and I breathed a sigh of relief. “Oh wait, did you think we kept…” Mr. Dawson burst into hysterical laughter, unable to finish the question. When his giggling was contained, he went to a shelf labeled April 1974. We watched as he thumbed through a few copies and pulled out a paper.

“A journalist never forgets his or her first story. Here’s mine,” Mr. D. said as handed us the paper. The headline read A Funnel of Doom: Super Outbreak of Tornadoes. “This is when I realized the importance of newspapers. Not only do they provide information, they act as history books. Each one of these newspapers contains important history and facts. They also depict what was happening in our culture.” Mr. D. opened that same newspaper and found an ad for a local grocery store. Grade A Eggs @ 0.50 a dozen. “Check this out,” Mr. D. announced, flipping to the classified section. “You could buy a brand-new car for $4,450. See all the history contained in this one newspaper? Can you imagine the history in this room?” We watched as our boss went around the room, selecting certain newspapers from the shelf. When he finished, he put the stack in front of Chloe and me. “Just read the date and headline of the leading story,” he instructed.

October 1862 – Battle of Perryville Comes to End

May 1875 – Aristides wins First Kentucky Derby

February 1900 – Governor Assassinated Day Before He’s Sworn In

January 1937 – Massive Flood of Ohio River Impacts State

May 1977 – Beverly Hills Supper Club Fire Kills 165

November 1983 – Kentucky Elects First Female Governor

August 2006 – Comair Flight 5191 Kills 49

January 2009 – Ice Storm Shuts Down State

April 2012 – UK Hangs 8th NCAA Championship Banner

We had only read nine headlines, yet we were seeing highlights of our state. It was amazing to think that every town had a newspaper with important facts and information.

“These days, most folks get their news from the internet or television, but newspapers delivered news years before folks had internet, television, or even radios,” Mr. Dawson informed, clearly passionate about the news. “Besides, it’s hard to keep a radio broadcast, but you can keep an important newspaper forever. Many newspaper archives can be found online or at some local libraries.”

“Before today, I just thought I was tossing a newspaper in someone’s yard,” I said to Mr. Dawson, “but now I realize we have an important job. We’re keeping our friends and neighbors informed of what’s happening.”

“Bingo!” Mr. D. confirmed. “And speaking of news, you two have a paper to deliver.” Mr. D. handed us our copies of the newspaper to keep and he handed us an envelope. I looked and saw it was addressed to Mom, Dad, Chloe and me. I didn’t know what was in the envelope, but I couldn’t wait to find out!