

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction 1

- 1 The Mystery of Caroline County, Virginia
(Bowling Green) 13
- 2 What's Vexing Macon, Georgia? (Macon) 19
- 3 Red Streets Versus Blue Streets in McKeesport,
Pennsylvania (McKeesport) 27
- 4 Fighting the Wall Along the Rio Grande
(McAllen) 35
- 5 Are Democrats an Endangered Species in
Caroline County? (Bowling Green) 41
- 6 Yes, Dorothy, We Are Way Outside the Beltway
(Macon) 49
- 7 Fear and Loathing in the Time of Coronavirus
(McKeesport) 55
- 8 In the Rio Grande Valley, a Border Closes, and Signs of a
Wall Appear as the Pandemic Spreads (McAllen) 63

- 9 The Ghost of a Weekly Covers the Pandemic
(Bowling Green) 69
- 10 Standing on Sinking Sand, Living in Limbo (Macon) 77
- 11 Transparency in a Time of Pandemic (McKeesport) 85
- 12 COVID-19 Has Changed How We Report Stories
on the Border (McAllen) 91
- 13 How the Pandemic Is Playing in Rural Virginia
(Bowling Green) 97
- 14 A Good Idea at the Time (Macon) 105
- 15 In Towns Like McKeesport, the Future Was Already Precarious.
Then Came Coronavirus. (McKeesport) 113
- 16 Saving Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge Extends Beyond
Political Boundaries (McAllen) 117
- 17 At the Edge of a Pandemic, Its Direction Unknown
(Bowling Green) 123
- 18 Dirty Politics in the Digital Age (Macon) 131
- 19 How Facebook Has Undermined Communal Conversation
in McKeesport (McKeesport) 139
- 20 South Texas Was Reopening. Now COVID-19
Is Roaring Back. (McAllen) 145
- 21 Racism, Confederate Statues, and the View from
Frog Level, Virginia (Bowling Green) 151
- 22 Macon-Bibb County Votes While a Nation Protests
(Macon) 159
- 23 “McAllen and South Texas Need Help Now”
(McAllen) 167
- 24 When a Newspaper Dies, What Fills the Void?
(Bowling Green) 173

- 25 To School or Not to School—a Burning Question
(Macon) 181
- 26 What Will “Normal” Mean After COVID-19?
(McKeesport) 191
- 27 South Texas Is a Bad Algorithm Right Now
(McAllen) 197
- 28 In Rural Virginia, a Tale of Two Congressional Districts
(Bowling Green) 203
- 29 A Local Election, School Reopenings, and the Pandemic
(Macon) 211
- 30 Will Western Pennsylvania Become a String of
Ghost Towns? (McKeesport) 219
- 31 Where Are the Campaign Signs and the *Politiqueras*?
(McAllen) 227
- 32 A Confederate Soldier Moves On (Bowling Green) 233
- 33 Macon–Bibb County and the Unrelenting
Shock of COVID-19 (Macon) 241
- 34 Will the Sons of Steelworkers See Trump’s COVID-19
Behavior as Strong or Reckless? (McKeesport) 249
- 35 Counting on Next Year Being Much Better
(McAllen) 257
- 36 Election Day Approaches 263
- Postscript: January 20, 2021 271

