

Bob's Corner

Forty years of newspaper work has provided lots of ammunition for reminiscing in columns like this. Gives me a chance to dust off memories and recall what it was like in newsrooms way before the advent of PCs.

My earliest recollections are of the former San Diego "Evening Tribune" newsroom at 919 Second Ave., just off Broadway. The room was painted with what can only be described as bilious green paint. Some would call it institutional green. Whatever: It was used extensively.

It was a large room. Had to be, as it contained the Society Section reporters (all women); the Sports Dept. (all men); general assignment, beat reporters and rewrite men (all males except for an occasional woman); city desk with city editors and assistant city editors, plus managing editor; the telegraph desk (for wire service stories) with the telegraph editor and his assistant; and the photo desk (one guy). There also was the rim, a horseshoe-shaped table with a slot man in the opening, nearly surrounded by the proofreaders, who also wrote headlines.

There was a constant hum of activity, which lessened on nightside, when a smaller staff worked from 2:30 to 10 p.m., although we usually bagged at least an hour of overtime. There also was a copy boy shift from midnight to 6:30 a.m., when you were the only one on the entire third floor. That's fuel for another story.

Most of us smoked cigarettes and drank a lot of coffee. It seemed to be an occupational hazard, along with the stress of meeting absolute deadlines for five editions.

On the fringes of the newsroom were the photo lab, with individual rooms equipped with developing trays and enlargers for each photographer; offices for columnists; the executive editor's office; and the editor's office guarded by his executive secretary, a formidable woman who probably had been a prison guard.

There also was the wire room, filled with clattering teletype machines. It also had desks for the reporters from AP and UPI. I loved the atmosphere; it was exciting in a real sense: clattering typewriters, reporters and photos coming and going; just a controlled chaos all aimed at producing an informative, interesting newspaper. Tension on a deadline.

Oh, I forgot about a far corner of the newsroom; a site with three desks crammed together to accommodate: The copy boys. That's where I started. I was a gofer. I fetched coffee, cleaned and refilled glue pots; sharpened pencils; ran photos to the engravers across the street; picked up the "zincs" with the photo images on them; ran down to Composing. God, it was great to be involved in such a heady operation. Confusion, but with direction.

Through the years since becoming a journalist I've covered plane crashes, train crashes, car crashes, trials, homicides, suicides, wildfires, structure fires; lots of death and destruction, including city council meetings (an inside joke). I've been impressed, depressed and distressed. I've covered power boat and yacht racing, surfing championships, spelling bees, science fairs, high school sports, ship arrivals and departures, memorial services, parades, circuses, and all sorts of meetings.

It's not over yet. Just had to share some recollections. It felt good. Probably won't be able to handle another 40 years, but I'll take what's left. However, don't expect to see my rooms painted institutional green.

Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact, are strictly those of the letter-writers.)

Typed, double-spaced letters written solely to this newspaper are considered for publication. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and legible also can be considered.
Cards of thanks are not accepted as letters.

Consequences of family violence, ignorance From Beth Williams, board member, I.V. Safe House Alliance Cave Junction

The following was written in a letter to her mother by the daughter of the victim of a fatal domestic violence encounter. She had just sold her mom's home.

The victim was a successful businesswoman, well educated, and a practicing Catholic age 72:

"Dear Mom, I'm glad the buyers of your home won't know about the times I came late in the evening when the pitched battles between you and X resulted in the arrival of the police.

"Again, I believed X, and tried to convince you of the logic of his arguments. He was always calm when I arrived. You were nearly hysterical.

"I cannot tell you how much I have learned; how guilty I feel; how desperately I wish I could have seen and understood what I know now.

"He told me many times that he knew how to 'push your buttons.' His delivery was so calm I couldn't fathom that his simply 'pushing' could affect you so. I know now that he 'set you up.'

"I know now that he could scream and argue and get you to retaliate. Then the police would be called, and when they arrived, you appeared to be the only one agitated. To calm you down, they would contact me, and I would come, and we would talk until the early morning.

"You tried to tell me, but I kept trying to change you into what I understood X wanted in order to 'help you see how to save the marriage.'

"It is no consolation that he manipulated me too. I feel responsible for allowing it; for not seeing through it.

"Mostly, more than anything, I wish I had believed you."

There are steps to end domestic violence: Know what it is. Listen, really listen, if someone discloses abuse to you. Develop a safety plan, and if in danger, phone 911.

Be patient, as leaving is a dangerous time. Exercise your legal rights with a restraining or stalking protective order. Do not control him or her. Inform him or her about options and opportunities for help.

Tell him or her: You can get help; you do not deserve this; it is not your fault; I am here for you.

People also can phone I.V. Safe House Alliance at 592-2515 or the following:

*Women's Crisis Support Team in Grants Pass, 479-9349 or (800) 750-9278.

*National Domestic Violence Hotline, (800) 799-SAFE.

*National Sexual Assault Hotline, (800) 656-HOPE.

Often the test of courage is not to die but to live.
- Vittorio Alfieri -

Outrage, 'scandal,' Biscuit allegations From Justin Rohde Cave Junction

I am outraged over Greg Walden's plan for reduced protection for public forests after fire, at the same time as the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest is rocked by logging scandals at the Biscuit post-fire logging project.

I am responding to a newspaper article on more than 100 green trees illegally logged by CLR Timber Holdings Co. The forest service still has not explained recent illegal logging of the Babyfoot Lake Botanical area, and before that was rocked by illegal logging in a protected wilderness area by the same Silver Creek timber company that received lucrative contracts.

We need a full, fair investigation into Babyfoot and other mounting violations by the USDA inspector general that DeFazio's office has requested. Now, more than ever, we need to retain public oversight and environmental safeguards.

When will this free-for-all end? The public demands better management of our public forests.

The forest service failed to adequately protect riparian areas; logged over hiking trails; attempted to allow loggers to mark stream buffers; and re-marked wildlife trees to be logged. In a new national report, Siskiyou National Forest is listed as [one of] the top 10 endangered forest[s] on federal land.

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**The rain it raineth on the just and also
on the unjust fella; But chiefly on the just,
because the unjust steals the just's umbrella.**

- Sam Ervin -

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