



DIGITAL redefines newspaper publishing

EO Media Group
Local stories with national interest, such as the Canyon Creek Complex fire in Eastern Oregon in August, can reach people online and through social media.

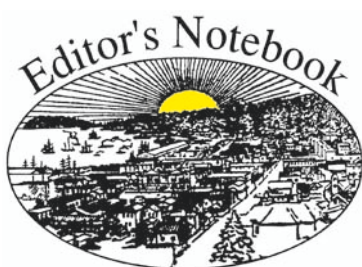
When I give visitors a tour of our building, they are fascinated with the enlarged newspaper mastheads on our walls. Their names capture the history of our newspaper — from the 19th century *Tri-Weekly Astorian* forward.

Showing visitors our digital world is less romantic. It comes up when I get to a room that houses our file servers. When I succeeded my father 28 years ago, that room contained a mainframe computer that served the newspaper's first electronic newsroom system.

My dad's death was only 15 years ago, but he would not recognize the digital landscape in which we operate. Some newspaper owners have been conflicted about the digital world. Just last week I read that a publisher is unplugging his Internet operations.

We have not been conflicted. Our board of directors and management have chosen a measured, incremental path into electronic publishing.

Advertising in our printed products and subscription sales remain our dominant source of revenue. But digital advertising sales are growing. The *Astorian's* advertising staff recently did a sales blitz. It had been



Steve Forrester

seven years since our last big digital sales push. We made a major gain in digital sales. Our advertising representatives discovered that merchants in our communities have become more comfortable with the digital world.

The sales consultant who coached our sales staff, Mike Blinder, was very impressed with the size of The *Astorian's* digital audience.

Crindalyn Lyster, our corporate digital media director, notes that, "We are the leaders in our community on digital. No one competes with us in our markets."

We forget how young the Internet is. When Lyster started at The *Astorian*, our production process consisted of cutting strips of type and pasting them on to the page. Today she is our corporate digital media director. Based at the *Chinook Observer*, Lyster travels throughout our company. In Salem she has a staff of three including Travis Clark, Matt Neznanski and Debbie Evans. The editor of the



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News of the Canyon Creek Complex fire spiked traffic on the Blue Mountain Eagle's Facebook page.

It's anybody's guess where digital is leading publishing

Hermiston Herald, Gary West, is also part of our digital team.

Digital speeds our production process. It also accelerates our news cycles. Digital news delivery makes our weekly newspapers into dailies, and it gives our daily papers a 24-hour news cycle. When a national story breaks in one of our territories, digital allows us to keep possession of the story. We used to rely on the Associated Press to move big stories beyond our market boundaries. Today our digital sites and social me-

dia do that for us.

In the horrific Eastern Oregon fires, the *Blue Mountain Eagle* had a story of national interest. Through its website and social media, the *Eagle's* audience grew dramatically. The *Eagle's* "likes" on Facebook went from 3,463 to 5,335. The top day of the fire story was Aug. 15, when Facebook posts reached 175,332 people. During the fire, posts averaged 43,637 people per day, versus 2,146 prior to the fires.

Observes Lyster: "In 2007 we were dabbling in Facebook. Now we use it

all the time. It is a big traffic driver.

Where are digital forces leading newspaper publishing? Plenty of consultants are prepared to take our money to answer that question. Every week I see invitations to seminars and workshops on the topic. "Driving Digital Revenue" is the title of a November conference sponsored by Inland Newspaper Association.

Everyone is looking for that next big thing.

I agree with Lyster who says this about the future: "It's anybody's guess because digital changes every day. It's hard to know what that shiny object will be that sticks."

—S.A.F

Open forum

Thankful for care

Lately, I have found myself at the point of needing to trust the care of a beloved parent into the hands of strangers. It is a decision that haunts most loving families. The fears, anxieties and feelings of failure and guilt will ring familiar to all in my place.

My self admission that I could no longer safely meet the needs of my mother, brought me finally to Clatsop Care Memory Community. My heart is so full of gratitude, that it is difficult to know where to begin. But I will.

Firstly, I must recognize the beautiful facility, which was well worth waiting for. It is bright and sunny, welcoming and peaceful, expansive yet secure.

Community: I was skeptical of the term. That says a lot more than most care groups are able to deliver, well meaning as they are in the beginning. CCMC has provided that and more.

The individual connection that each and every staff member has made with my mom reflects the overall intention of the administration. But that would not have worked, simply as a business model or vision without the people — each person who was

chosen to be in this place at this time.

It is for each of them that I will be always grateful, and to the wisdom of the director, who chose them.

You can not know the joy of seeing someone who has taken the time to really know your parent, and show true affection and concern, until you have been in our socks.

My hope and prayer for anyone who finds themselves at the place of needing to ask for help with an aging parent who has lost the ability to make some of the basic choices of daily life, is that they would find a community like I have found at CCMC.

They are out there. Who knew? Thank God.

VICKI TATE
Astoria

Limit rentals

I just want to add another voice of opposition to the influx of short term rentals in the Gearhart community. As a home owner in Gearhart for close to 20 years, I believe the fabric and integrity of our small community is at risk when home ownership is solely a commitment to being an absentee landlord. Properties become a

revolving door for renters, who offer little, if any, value to Gearhart, while stressing community resources.

A predominantly Vacation Rentals By Owner (VRBO) destination shifts the very core and nature of a full-time community, eventually changing it into a transient resort destination. This is not a healthy change, and one that should not be taken lightly. Hopefully the council will act fairly and responsibly to put the brakes on the proliferation of absentee home ownership. Please protect the community of Gearhart by limiting homes for hire.

VICKIE ABRAHAMSON
Gearhart

Don't be gullible

One adage commends, "Hope springs eternal." However, another adage warns, "There are two sides to every coin."

While the human penchant to hope for a better future bolsters our spirits, it also leaves us vulnerable to those who beguile and manipulate via false promises. Hope can bring us succor or make us suckers.

During a Sen. Ron Wyden town hall meeting in 2006, an older gen-

tleman in the audience said he worked for minimum wage all his life, but hoped to earn \$60,000 per year if NorthernStar would receive the approval it was seeking to build a liquefied natural gas facility at Bradwood.

Where did he get that notion? NorthernStar had advertised it would employ about 70 people to operate its facility, once built, with an average salary of \$60,000 (though its Securities and Exchange Commission filing, soliciting prospective investors, stated it would hire only half that many people).

Apparently, the gentleman didn't realize that the salary for the staff's unskilled employees would be much less than the average for the entire staff. Therefore, he urged approval for the LNG facility, hoping he would then obtain a \$60,000 job there — one of the delusions NorthernStar shamelessly stoked, until it filed for bankruptcy in 2010 (bilking our county out of the \$186,000 it owed us).

Nowadays, Oregon LNG also dangles promises of "good jobs" for us as if they were bait on fishing hooks. But if any LNG facility is approved, it would be built by bringing in pet-

ro-chemical, cryo, mechanical, electrical, and civil engineers; architects; pipeline-laying riggers; high-tech construction contractors with their already-trained crews; etc. How many of us have the skills and experience to compete for those good jobs?

When completed, the minimal staff for operating the facility would consist of highly-compensated executives and well-compensated specialists, again brought in from elsewhere, with the rest being unskilled laborers.

Those of us who might be hired as unskilled laborers for an LNG facility would be paid what little money unskilled labor routinely fetches, because workers are paid in accordance with how difficult it is to recruit people qualified to fill the positions. Unfortunately for too many of us, unskilled labor is the easiest to recruit; and corporate investors invest to make money, not to charitably hire more people than needed, nor pay higher wages than necessary.

Hope is a good thing. But we need to shun false promises made by those who exploit the flip side of being hopeful: being gullible.

SHEL CANTOR
Astoria



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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