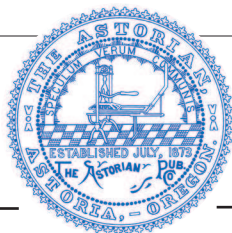


OPINION

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THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873

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OUR VIEW

Press is not enemy of the people

Every size publication plays a role in democracy

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Daily Astorian is joining today with publications around the U.S. to issue a warning about the ongoing assault on America's free and independent press, one of the paramount institutions enshrined in the Constitution. We stand together in defense of our profession and the vital role it plays in government for and by the people.*

News people are accustomed to having a complex relationship with public officials and the partisan citizens who side with them. In some ways, we are like the stereotyped "Internal Affairs Division" in too many television cop shows. Just as Internal Affairs generates hisses by "policing the police," in America a free press jousts with those in power, trying hard as we can to document their deeds, misdeeds, selflessness and self-dealing.

While we work to objectively cover government, basic human nature inclines us toward feeling some sympathy toward those who share our interest in public service, along with disgust at those who abuse the public trust. We must constantly guard against becoming either too friendly or too cynical toward politicians and bureaucrats. It isn't our job to be pals or foes.

Most American journalism is intensely local. We report on what we know best — our own towns, counties and states. Our readers tend to be interested in the same fundamental questions. Can we afford the taxes that politicians want? Are those taxes fair?

How are they being spent? Are we safe? Do our kids have a decent future? Answering these questions — along with chronicling the day-to-day lives of our neighbors — is both our passion and how we make a living in this capitalist system. If we fail at this job, our readers and advertisers abandon us.

At newspapers like The Daily Astorian, we have a strong sense of alliance with the public. Citizens ask for help nearly every day, ranging from answering obscure historical questions to investigating alleged criminality or official malfeasance. Our small staff takes every one of these requests seriously, sometimes responding with background work that spans months — to the frustration of those who hope for quicker justice.

Resulting coverage in recent years has included detailed reporting on the housing crunch and homelessness, management turmoil between county commissioners and the county manager, gaps in mental health and drug treatment, and data-driven examinations of the criminal justice system, among other topics important to our readers.

Our family-owned newspaper group



Newsboys gather in front of the Astoria Budget before their rounds in the 1920s.

has partnered with another to dramatically increase news coverage of Oregon government in Salem. We constantly watch for other opportunities to be useful during a time of dramatic changes in the U.S.

We're proud of our work. But we're the first to admit these efforts are not very remarkable in a nation that, despite our industry's well-documented economic challenges, still possesses a vibrant and dedicated news corps. From one end of the U.S. to the other, journalists are engaged in a moment by moment quest to improve government accountability and tell the

stories of this great land.

The Daily Astorian and its sister newspapers in the Columbia-Pacific region aren't your enemy. Neither is the rest of the American press. Be annoyed all you want at errors we make, or if we exhibit instances of bias, insensitivity or laziness. But don't believe anybody who says we're pursuing any agenda, other than digging out the truth and reporting it as well as we can.

Most of all, we are proud of our communities. We stand shoulder to shoulder with you in striving to keep alive the great American experiment in democracy. We need you with us.

GUEST EDITORIAL

We're standing up to bullying

Public and press must work together to defend democracy

We've been complacent. We thought everybody knew how important a free press was to our world and that all this talk about us being the enemy of the people would be dismissed for the silliness that it is. But the reckless attacks have continued — instigated and encouraged by our president.

When the leader of the free world works to erode the public's trust in the media, the potential for damage is enormous, both here and abroad. We once set an example of free and open government for the world to follow. Now those who seek to suppress the free flow of information are doing so with impunity.

The time has come for us to stand up to the bullying. The role journalism plays in our free society is too crucial to allow this degradation to continue.

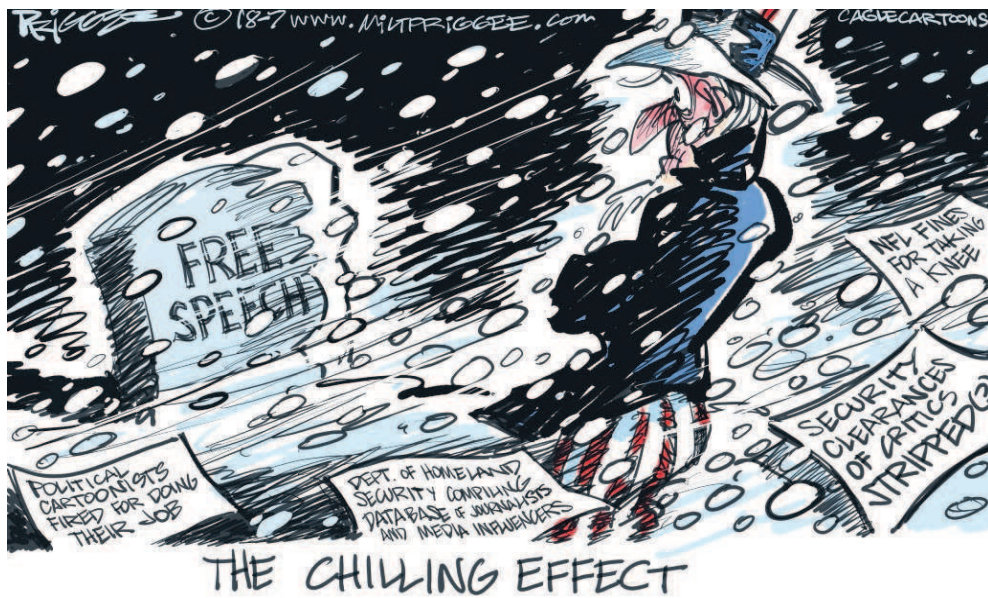
We aren't the enemy of the people. We are the people. We aren't fake news. We are your news and we struggle night and day to get the facts right.

On bitter cold January nights, we're the people's eyes and ears at town, village and school board meetings. We tell the stories of our communities, from the fun of a county fair to the despair a family faces when a loved one dies.

We are always by your side. We shop the same stores, attend the same churches and hike the same trails. We struggle with daycare and worry about paying for retirement.

In our work as journalists, our first loyalty is to you. Our work is guided by a set of principles that demand objectivity, independence, open-mindedness and the pursuit of the truth. We make mistakes, we know. There's nothing we hate more than errors but we acknowledge them, correct them and learn from them.

Our work is a labor of love because we love our country and believe we are playing a vital role in our democracy.



Self-governance demands that our citizens need to be well-informed and that's what we're here to do. We go beyond the government issued press release or briefing and ask tough questions. We hold people in power accountable for their actions. Some think we're rude to question and challenge. We know it's our obligation.

People have been criticizing the press for generations. We are not perfect. But we're striving every day to be a better version of ourselves than we were the day before.

That's why we welcome criticism. But unwarranted attacks that undermine your trust in us cannot stand. The problem has become so serious that newspapers across the nation are speaking out against these attacks in one voice today on their editorial pages. As women's rights pioneer and investigative journalist Ida B. Wells wrote in 1892: "The people must know before they can act and there is no educator to compare with the press."

A guest editorial from the New York Press Association, part of the nationwide defense of freedom of the press.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks to Price for her public service

The news that Cindy Price is leaving the mayoral race due to family issues is a great disappointment ("Price withdraws from Astoria mayor's race," The Daily Astorian, Aug. 15).

Over the past two decades, Cindy has proven herself worthy of the position of mayor by being a thoughtful and responsive city councilor and by her selfless volunteer work, which includes serving on the governing boards of Astoria Visual Arts, KMUN/Coast Community Radio, and the Astoria Ferry, and working night shifts at the Astoria Warming Center.

Those of us who have volunteered alongside Cindy like and respect her immensely. We thank Cindy for her service, and wish her and her family the very best. The Astoria Visual Arts Board looks forward to reaping the benefits of her continued service in the future.

LISA SMITH
Astoria

Why can't Astoria restrict fireworks?

I'm adding my name to the list of requests to limit fireworks. Each year, for several nights, many of us here on Irving Avenue are subjected

to watching our pets being traumatized from the blasts of fireworks in our area, including all the wildlife and bird population, not to mention our veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) — there are more than you may realize.

Many of the blasts are illegal, reaching dangerous heights, capable of starting fires in the dry brush. Each year we report the incidents to the police, only to be told that there were no incidents on arrival of the patrol cars. The incidents go on all night, especially from the Harrison Circle area, the same places each year.

We are fortunate to have an excellent display of fireworks at the East End Mooring Basin. Why can't Astoria restrict fireworks in our neighborhoods, as other cities in Oregon do?

TERRIE REMINGTON
Astoria

Paranoia or political expediency?

George Washington hired the Prussian general Friedrich Von Steuben to organize the colonial forces. He also hired the French Marquis De Lafayette, who was of significant assistance to Washington and the war effort. Neither was an American citizen.

These, and many other foreign citizens, fought in the Colonial War. Whatever George

Washington and the American Congress promised them was honored. The 10,000 immigrants who enlisted in the U.S. military, starting with President George W. Bush, in order to improve their chances of citizenship, now find that promise meaningless. There are some obvious similarities between the current administration's handling of immigrant enlistees, and the way it was done during the height of the Cold War. The current administration's requirement that the U.S. military discharge such immigrant enlistees is shabby, and reminds me of my own situation in 1962.

As a result of the paranoia created by Sen. Joseph McCarthy, I could not be promoted to staff sergeant or go to officer candidate school. Never mind the fact that I had defected from behind the Iron Curtain — I was suspect because I had contact with my mother and siblings in East Germany. Writing to them with my return address of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, might have been giving away secrets.

It appears that there are certain similarities between the paranoia of the Cold War and the tactics of the current administration; except that our current policies on the subject are likely driven by political expediency, rather than for alleged reasons of national security.

ERHARD GROSS
Astoria

We need to get out of our comfort zone

The other morning I sat on a bench overlooking my "Walden Pond," where Alder Creek flows into the mighty Columbia River. I got to pondering what are the keys to success and self-fulfillment, and what are some of the things that limit it.

First, a clue from the Bible: "Do not neglect the gift given you." It's there — "seek and you will find" it.

Second, we all have gifts, but the sad thing is that many of us fail to use them. Why? Because, as Shakespeare said: "Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt."

Third, we need to get out of our comfort zone and have the guts to share our unique gifts with others. We cheat ourselves, the world and our creator by not harvesting and sharing our unique gifts.

A wise sage has this advice "Of all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these: 'It might have been.'" So, if we start now and share our unique gifts, we won't be faced with "it might have been," and hopefully realize success.

JIM BERNARD
Warrenton