

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Journalists keep doing their jobs

Trump isn't the first to whip the press for performing its proper function

The press is not the enemy, despite what President Donald Trump has said numerous times. His relentless campaign against independent journalism is a self-serving strategy meant to shield himself from accountability.

In fact, it is the news media's responsibility to make life uncomfortable for people in power — to be a watchdog on potential abuses of that power. It's no surprise that the politically powerful have long responded by accusing the press of being inaccurate, unfair or unpatriotic.

Vice President Spiro Agnew in 1970 famously referred to the news media as "nattering nabobs of negativism." Two years later, President Richard Nixon said in a taped White House conversation "the press is the enemy," a phrase Trump adopted early in his presidency.

According to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, even President George Washington "expressed dismay that his farewell address might not receive adequate press coverage."

As for Washington's predecessors, the colonial governors had allowed no freedom of the press.

Criticizing the British monarchy was a crime. That is why the press was included among the five freedoms inscribed by our Founders in the First Amendment.

And so, as the nation gets back to business after Independence Day celebrations and vacations, it's worth reflecting on the role of the press in our country and our community.

It would be extreme to somehow blame Trump's exhortations against the media for the mass shooting late last month at a newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland.

As is often the case in workplace violence, this apparently was the work of a deranged man carrying a grudge. Something sent him over the edge. His long-festering complaint had been that the newspaper had written — accurately, according to the courts — about his legal troubles for harassing and threatening a woman.

It is deeply unsettling that, along with a great outpouring of community support, the *Capital Gazette* has now received additional death threats and communications celebrating the slaying of its five newspaper employees. The murders have caused newspapers and television and online news rooms around the country to reassess security measures. Yet even in this environment, even amid the tragedy of losing colleagues in a senseless shooting, we all keep doing our jobs.



Associated Press

As a candidate last year, Donald Trump lashes out at an Associated Press photographer who took a photo of empty chairs at a rally. Trump has continued to bash the press — and First Amendment freedoms — since taking office.

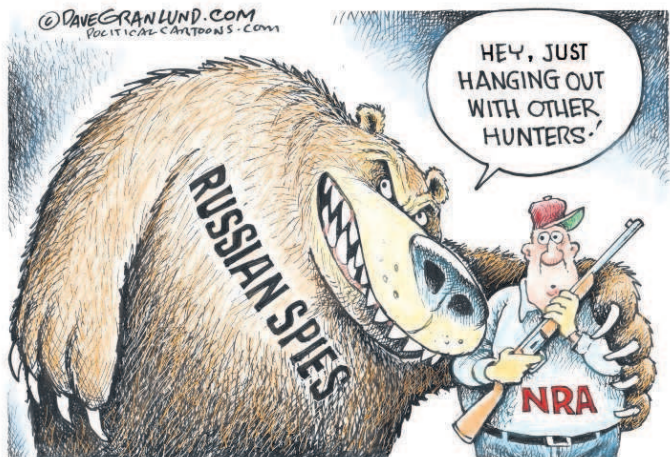
Because that's what journalists do. Journalism is a calling. It's telling stories about crops and canneries, community festivals and classroom projects, and all sorts of groundbreaking and fresh starts, both in construction and in life. It's about crime and punishment, probing the deep underbelly of society and alerting the public not only to what went wrong but also revealing when things go right. It's about going alongside first responders into the winds and wildfires when others are fleeing.

On the opinion pages, it's

cheerleading at times and challenging the community at other times. And, yes, holding the powerful accountable.

It's about seeking truth as best we can and sometimes making mistakes — we're human and fallible despite our best efforts every day — but promptly correcting our factual errors. And it's about always giving readers the last word through letters to the editor, as we have for generations.

People can and will disagree. But that should not make any of us enemies. This is our community and our country — all of ours.



OTHER VIEWS

O'Rourke shared traits with his beloved Pendleton

Larry O'Rourke and Pendleton had a long partnership.

Larry, who died recently at 82, had lots of company because many people are sold on Pendleton. But Larry's quick wit, puckish sense of humor and persistence made him stand out. He will be missed in this community.

My guess is that Larry and his community shared several personality traits.

A drive to achieve. Pendleton history is full of examples of individuals and organizations making their marks in this region and far beyond. Larry and his wife Dorothy were always among the first in town to volunteer to build a support group. If city government voiced a need or a family ran into bad luck, the O'Rourkes would respond.

Being a people person. Seems those who find satisfaction in Pendleton are those who reach out to others. When Larry saw someone struggling to solve something, he would often sign up to help — whether it was putting a historical center on the Umatilla Indian Reservation or student exchange programs in Pendleton or coming up with ideas to help

MIKE FORRESTER
Comment

Pendleton's economy. Pilot Rock rancher Tom Rugg got to know Larry as both built their own airplanes, and Rugg said Larry loved people.

Support education.

Those close to him say he was an excellent teacher both in the classroom and in the cockpit with student aviators. He was interested in his students in the classroom and later. He would come across something new to him — an idea, a product, a discovery — and be inclined to study it to death.

Teamwork. Even though Larry did lots of work for his town, you might not know of it because of his style. He believed deeply in cooperation with others and did not seek to be in the news. At the same time, Larry O'Rourke was honest, frank, to the point. Quite a combination of qualities.

Go for it. Whether it's putting together the best rodeo in the West or organizing to help a displaced family, you will go as far as teamwork, drive and planning take you. A commitment is needed to have a chance for success.

Mike Forrester of Pendleton is former editor of the East Oregonian.

OTHER VIEWS

The localist revolution

We've tried liberalism and conservatism, and now we're trying populism. Maybe the next era of public life will be defined by a resurgence of localism.

Localism is the belief that power should be wielded as much as possible at the neighborhood, city and state levels. Localism is thriving — as a philosophy and a way of doing things — because the national government is dysfunctional while many towns are reviving. Politicians in Washington are miserable, hurling ideological abstractions at one another, but mayors and governors are fulfilled, producing tangible results.

Localism is also thriving these days because many cities have more coherent identities than the nation as a whole. It is thriving because while national politics takes place through the filter of the media circus, local politics by and large does not. It is thriving because we're in an era of low social trust. People really have faith only in the relationships right around them, the change agents who are right on the ground.

Since it will probably be the coming wave, I thought it might be useful to make a few notes:

- Localism is truly a revolution. It literally means flipping the power structure. For the past several decades, money, talent and power have flowed to the centers of national power. Politicians tried to ascend to national office as they advanced their careers. Smart young people flocked to universities, and then to New York and D.C. The federal government assumed greater and greater control of American life.

But under localism, the crucial power center is at the tip of the shovel, where the actual work is being done. Expertise is not in the think tanks but among those who have local knowledge, those with a feel for how things work in a specific place and an awareness of who gets stuff done. Success is not measured by how big you can scale but by how deeply you can connect.

Under localism, national politicians are regarded like generals in Tolstoy novels. They move pieces around the board, but the actual battle is nothing like what they imagine. Wise young people leave the centers for towns where they can make a difference.

- Localism is not federal power wielded on a smaller scale. It's a different kind of power. The first difference is epistemological. The federal policymaker asks, "What can we do about homelessness?" The local person asks Fred or Mary what they need in order to have a home. These different questions yield different results.

The federal person sees things that can be reduced

DAVID BROOKS
Comment

to data. The local person sees things that can be reduced to data but also things that cannot.

The second difference is relational. Federal power is impersonal, uniform, abstract and rule-oriented. Local power is personalistic, relational, affectionate, irregular and based on a shared history of reciprocity and trust. A national system rewards rational intelligence. A local system requires emotional intelligence, too.

- Change happens differently. Federal change often means big shifts quickly, such as when a big law is passed after a long debate, like Obamacare or tax reform. Local change happens more gradually, more iteratively. There's a legacy system, like a public school, a grocery store or an investment fund. Somebody breaks free from the system and creates an innovative alternative, like a charter school, an organic farm market or a crowdsourcing campaign. As Leo Linbeck of the Center for Opportunity Urbanism describes, the new innovators "announce the availability of the upgrade and then allow users to choose when to make the switch." There's a conversation between the legacy system and the innovator, as the former learns from and adapts to the alternative. Change happens through the conversation between old and new.

- There is a different division of labor for making change. As impact investor Deborah Frieze put it in a 2015 TEDx talk, change is led by Walk Outs. These are people who leave the legacy system and pioneer new alternatives. Then there are Illuminators. These are people who analyze and bring attention to the change that is now available.

I'd highlight two other social roles. Elders are the city mothers and fathers who hold sway in the town because of their established positions. The Elders support the Walk Outs, make room for them and reform old systems. Then there are Network Entrepreneurs. They link the Walk Outs, who tend to be lonely, overworked and short-staffed. They help the Walk Outs build a support system and a way to exchange knowledge and care.

Change in a localist world often looks like a renewal of old forms, which were often more intimate and personalistic than the technocratic structures of the past 50 years. Localism stands for the idea that there is no one set of solutions to diverse national problems. Instead, it brings conservatives and liberals together around the thought that people are happiest when their lives are enmeshed in caring face-to-face relationships, building their communities together.

David Brooks, *New York Times*

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