

Special Commentary



National Newspaper Week; perspectives from your news team

national, daily and non-daily — celebrating what each brings to the continued pursuit of truth, information and perspective under the First Amendment and Freedom of the Press.

Since 1890, whether called the Siuslaw Oar, The West or the Siuslaw News, this has been your community newspaper. Over the last 127 years, while the technology utilized in bringing you stories and images has advanced from the 1892 Palmer

& Rey 10x15 press that sits in the front office, to the new 2017

for flesh-and-blood reporters to research and write the stories

ties we cover, from Florence to Mapleton, Swisshome and Deadwood.

In recognition of National Newspaper Week, I asked each of the reporters in our newsroom to reflect on what being a journalist means to them, particularly as part of a small community living within the sometimes complicated context presented by the interconnected nature of today's world — where the events taking place across the

state and even the world can have local impacts and implications.

As a rule, reporters go to great lengths to avoid becoming part of the story. Today, I'd like to bend that rule just a bit to let them talk about journalism in their own words in the hope of getting to know the flesh-and-blood members of your newsroom and community just a little better ...

From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

iMacs with 21.5-inch screens we just received a few weeks ago, the one element that has remained the same is the need that capture the achievements, concerns, challenges and celebrations that distinguish each generation within the communi-

As I mentioned in Saturday's editorial, National Newspaper Week began Sunday and continues through Saturday, Oct. 7, with newspapers — community,



Pursuing story

was in middle school and global events exploded into the public consciousness.

In our homes, schools, businesses and communities, Americans talked about wars, and rumors of war, while news broadcasts explored the attacks, motives and consequences.

Newspapers printed front-page Associated Press (AP) articles, bringing national news right down to my tabletop. Soon, I wasn't just reading the big news, though those stories often caught my eye first. The lead item would draw my attention farther down the page to the regional and local news. Here, I could read about Eugene-area events and businesses, and even about Veneta, Florence and places I had actually been to.

News became real when it

applied to me.

For three semesters in high school, I was the news editor of our monthly news magazine. I had to interview school staff, volunteers and classmates about issues that impacted their day-

English, and my minor in communications allowed me to continue to write — this time with my college newspaper.

I took a break from the regular kind of story while I pursued my master of fine arts in

Siuslaw News.

In my summer here, I learned about "AP Style" in writing and formatting as the newsroom taught me about the inner workings of the newspaper. I experienced the unique community Florence has formed. I even wrote a little: about Queen Rhododendra's cape, the local radio-controlled aircraft group and Siuslaw Public Library's Summer Reading Program.

When a reporter position opened up, Bartlett and Baer agreed they wanted me. Now when I enter a new place, I have only to tell someone I am there "with the paper" to find an instant welcome.

That's what Siuslaw News has been for me — a welcome.

It is my connection with the community as I work to bring

stories to light.

I hope when people pick up their newspaper, the Siuslaw News is filled with articles that connect them to the community; that talk about local events; that tell a story.

I hope that reading their neighbors' words on the Opinions page brings a new perspective or a reason for friendly debate. I hope that pictures of Viking and Sailor sports feature their favorite players; that the firefighter they know gets mentioned in a board meeting; that local organizations listen to their input during a public meeting.

I hope the community knows that the Siuslaw News works hard every week to tell your stories — your stories, and mine.

Chantelle Meyer

FEATURES EDITOR

to-day lives. For an introverted teen, it gave me the chance to connect with people and learn their stories.

Stories became the hook I needed as I began to look beyond high school and into future careers I could pursue.

That love of story led me to get a bachelor's of arts in

Creative Writing, specifically for children. When I came home, a conversation with my aunt, Cindy Wobbe, led to a meeting with Jenna Bartlett, then the general manager of Siuslaw News. These amazing women worked with Editor Theresa Baer to set up my first internship right here at the

Like many people who grew up before computers were an ever-present component to modern living, the newspaper has been a constant in my life.

I grew from reading each day's comics pages — especially the bright colors in the special Sunday edition — to looking at the arts and entertainment sections, before finally "graduating" to the front page when I started to become aware of local and world events. This, for me, was on Sept. 11, 2001, when I



'A good newspaper is a nation talking to itself' — Arthur Miller

There were days when the snow was unplowed, falling and freezing.

It didn't matter.

There were days when the rain never stopped and I was soaked from head to toe. One morning, my fingers and toes were blueish grey and the tingling when they warmed up was so intense it hurt.

It didn't matter. I never missed a day of delivery and I was always filled with a sense of accomplishment; a sense that I had played just a small part in the process of delivering the news of the day to my neighbors. I got to know my neighbors in a way that was both intimate (as I would often see folks in their pajamas or nightgowns) and affirming.

I knew that in every house in our neighborhood, one of the first things that everyone would do was walk outside and get the paper. It made me feel as if, even at 10 years old, I was a part of the rhythm and culture of our neighborhood. It made me feel proud.

I feel that same sense of pride today and every day that I am fortunate enough to have a "by-line" or a photo credit in the Siuslaw News.

"Journalism is what we need to make democracy work"

—Walter Cronkite

Walter Cronkite was a hero to my grandparents. The daily rituals that make up the day for families of the middle class often ended at the dinner table

that I would know, directly from her and Uncle Walter, what was good, just and right.

This was the time in America's history when we were struggling with racism, the war in Vietnam and the murders of our leaders. This nightly news ritual instilled

Mark Brennan

CITY REPORTER

watching "Uncle Walter," as he was referred to at my grandmother's. Nightly, he would tell America what was important, some things we should know about, think about and ultimately talk about.

It was the feeling that someone had to make sense out of the wild, crazy world — and the nation's most respected journalist was that person in my young world. My grandmother would have me sit with her and watch the news. She talked to me about the events of the day as if it was important that I realize what was going on. I found out many years later that she did this so that I could make a difference — and

within me the desire to help — by finding out what was happening, figuring out whether it was right or wrong, and then trying to contribute to the improvement of my community by doing something about it.

I feel this same calling today, and I continue to work to make a difference in people's lives by finding out what's going on, informing folks about it and helping them understand what it means.

"I think all good reporting is the same thing — the best attainable version of the truth"

— Carl Bernstein

The movie "All the

President's Men" was a turning point in my life. When I realized that not only could reporters tell others what was going on, but that they also could shape the news by investigating what was going on, I had a mission: I would become the best version of Woodward and Bernstein and Cronkite that I could.

This decision led me on a journey that took decades to complete. I started taking classes in writing and photography. I took classes in news-gathering, reporting, and story construction.

It took more than two decades of study, practice and dedication to attain this goal. These years of effort eventually led to my obtaining a degree in Journalism from the University of Oregon.

I have never regretted a day of the effort, or a day of the time spent learning and practicing the craft handed down from Walter to my grandmother to me.

"There is no substitute for face-to-face reporting"

—Thomas Friedman

These days I spend most of my time talking to people that

want to tell me a story. Sometimes it is a story of hope. Other times it is a story of fear or pain or rejection.

This sounds sad, but often-times when people hear about a problem they mobilize resources and personnel to spring into action to help others.

I have found that even a single person hearing about a problem can help. I have seen this scenario numerous times over the past year. Someone tells me a story which I relate to our community — and they receive help.

This has led me to talk with an inspiring young man fighting a deadly disease, men and women who were dying and felt no one cared, and to community leaders trying to convey to their constituents why to vote for them.

It is the ultimate fulfillment of my grandmother's dream.

The fact that I get to help, inform, castigate, sympathize or cry with my neighbors is an honor and a privilege that I do not take lightly.

I think my grandmother would be proud.

Newspapers have always been an important component in my life. My first job, for which I received the sum of \$2 a week plus tips, was as a newspaper delivery boy. I had 26 houses on my route when I started and I was 10 years old (which was the minimum age required to have a route).

I grew up in Massachusetts and the weather is often foul. Rain and snow were a constant part of the landscape from September through May. At that time, there was a morning paper and an evening edition. I started out delivering the morning paper, getting up at 5 a.m. and bundling up, grabbing the print grey canvas bag that I carried my papers in and filling it at the corner drop off box.

Then I would spend the next hour-and-a-half walking the three miles on my route to deliver the day's first news to my neighborhood.



Enamored with privilege of making the news real again

the 10-minute diatribes by TV news pundits devoid of introspection; partisan websites that tilt an issue to an extreme point of view; and the 500-word newspaper reports that attempt to encapsulate complex issues into 15 paragraphs or less.

Fake news isn't just an absence of fact, but a manipulation of the world around us.

A challenge has been made to the media:

Don't lie to us.

Don't shortchange us.

Don't try to persuade us to a point of view.

Journalists have been tasked to make journalism honest and relevant again.

We can't just slide by with a simple quote from a politician.

Jared Anderson

COMMUNITY REPORTER

We have to honestly and fully explain the context of it. We have to look at multiple points of view within historical context to get to the ultimate truth of the matter. We have to tell

complex stories that not only inform, but create understanding.

We have to regain the trust of the public and make news

real again.

To be a part of this transformation is a privilege.

Now, whether or not I'm effective at it is a different story. Three months in, I'm

finding more and more that I have absolutely no idea what I'm doing.

I'm admittedly confused by why Ned picked me for this job. My background is in writing collegiate textbooks, medical studies and playwriting.

Actors don't even read plays; they just highlight their lines.

And the length of my articles? I have one coworker who berates me once a week saying, "Oh look, another 'War and Peace.'"

I am constantly embarrassed by my work, but I'm

I'm so proud to be a journalist at this moment in history. No matter what politicians or statistics say, I firmly believe we're entering a golden age of journalism, and it all has to do with fake news.

To me, fake news isn't just purposefully printing lies. It's