

National newspaper week

Rollie Atkinson, Sonoma West Publishers
For The Sentinel

"Real Newspapers, Real News" is the theme of this year's National Newspaper Week (Oct. 1-7.) Indeed, there's always been lots of "real" at newspapers. Real stories, real journalism, real work, real deadlines, real honesty, real

facts, real changes and, now, real threats. This is the 77th annual National Newspaper Week, a time to reflect on the job of newspapers to keep all things "real" such as real conversation, real democracy, real science, real trade, real faith-sharing, real faith and real friends. Of course we hear lots these days about what's not real— so-called

fake news and alternative facts and the non-stop stream of internet-based noise, disruptions and misinformation. The job of newspapers in America and in thousands of hometowns like ours has never been more challenging — or more challenged.

Once upon a time, newspaper circulation grew faster than the country's population. In many places, newspaper subscriptions actually outnumbered total households. But since at least the 1980s, newspaper circulation in America has been on a steady and worsening decline.

At the same time, newspapers remain the top choice for people seeking real news and reliable information. More than half of all Americans still subscribe or pay for newspapers or access to their websites. America's newspaper audience exceeds today's TV news watchers. Less than 5 percent of this audience tune into FOX, CNN or MSNBC, according to a recent National Newspaper Association survey. Just 11 percent of the survey's respondents said the internet was their primary news source.

Newspapers have survived the advent of radio and broadcast TV. But the threat of 24/7 internet-delivered media, commercials and amusement is disrupting the very reality for which newspapers were first invented. More and more people can't tell the difference between real news and fake news. We use Facebook for faceless conversations, and we won't accept that social media is very often anti-social. No amount of tweets will protect the public's right to know or watchdog our government.

A growing number of people, especially younger ones, think real news should be free and magically appear on their smart

phones. Real journalists are losing their jobs because the old business model of newspapers is busted. Advertising revenues are declining faster than circulation at most newspapers, and hundreds of hometown papers have gone out of business in just the past few years.

"Keeping it real" has become a rallying cry in newsrooms and news websites where journalists are trying to reinvent themselves and keep real news alive — and paid for.

What is the future for newspapers? Cars will soon drive themselves and keyboards may disappear from computers and offices. All news — including the real kind — may be delivered to our phones or even via brain implants. Who knows?

The term "newspaper" may soon define something that has nothing to do with ink or paper, just like Xerox used to mean making copies or an iron horse was actually a train. Newspaper may become a misnomer the way "service station," "ice box" or "tin foil" all refer to vanishing artifacts.

The real matter here is not so much keeping newspapers real; rather it is keeping journalism real. Real news requires fact-checking, research, practice, trust-building and a devotion to truth, honesty and democratic decision making.

Real newspapers were born in times before electricity and telegraphs. Real newspapers have witnessed and experienced changing realities, including the founding of this nation, world wars, space travel and personal computers, and next, robots and artificial intelligence.

Whatever reality that newspapers next face to stay real and keep real news alive will require real readers and real revenues.



Rollie Atkinson

October is breast cancer awareness month



As with many types of cancer, breast cancer is most successfully treated when it is detected early. Over the previous quarter century, death rates for breast cancer have been on the decline, a positive development that Breastcancer.org, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing reliable, complete and up-to-date information about breast cancer, suggests is a byproduct of the heightened awareness of breast cancer over the last 25 years and the increasing emphasis placed on breast cancer screening.

Understanding the symptoms of breast cancer also can help women battle and defeat this potentially deadly disease. While the presence of any of the following symptoms does not necessarily mean breast cancer is present, the appearance of the following should be enough to inspire women and even men to visit their physicians.* Changes in the feeling of the breast or nipple: A change in how the breast or nipple feels could be indicative of a larger problem. If the nipple is especially tender and this persists for an extended period of time, exercise caution and discuss this change with your physician. Similarly, if a lump or thickening develops on or near the breast or underarms, speak with your physician.

* Changes in appearance of the breast: A lump or thickening in the breast may affect the appearance of the breast. Another visible symptom of breast cancer is a change in the skin texture or an enlargement of pores in the skin of the breast, which may appear similar to dimpling, not unlike an orange peel. Swelling or shrinking of the breast, especially when such symptoms appear on just one breast, may also indicate breast cancer. In addition, some women with breast cancer notice a sudden asymmetry with their breasts despite their breasts previously being symmetrical, and such a development should immediately be brought to the attention of a physician.

* Changes in the appearance of the nipple: A nipple that appears different also may be a sign of breast cancer. Some women with breast cancer have noticed a nipple turned slightly inward or inverted prior to their breast cancer diagnosis. Skin of the nipple, as well as that of the breast and areola, which is the dark circle of skin around the nipple, may also become red, scaly or swollen when breast cancer is present.

* Clear or bloody discharge from the nipple: Women who are breastfeeding often notice a milky discharge from their nipple after breastfeeding. Such discharges are normal. However, when a woman who is not breastfeeding notices the presence of a clear or bloody discharge from her nipple, such a development should be brought to the attention of a physician.

Any of the aforementioned signs and symptoms may be a sign of infection or the presence of a cyst, both of which are less severe than the presence of breast cancer. But the success rates of treating cancers that are detected early is such that any potential symptom of breast cancer warrants an immediate discussion with a physician.

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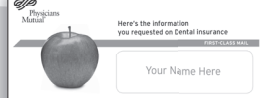
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Oct. 1-7, 2017, is National Newspaper Week, a time to salute the dedicated professionals who work hard to bring you the news.

In this digital age, the newspaper audience has never been greater, with millions reading in print, online or via mobile. No matter the medium, those millions of readers rely on their local newspaper.

"Real Newspapers ... Real News!"

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER WEEK
Oct. 1-7, 2017

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