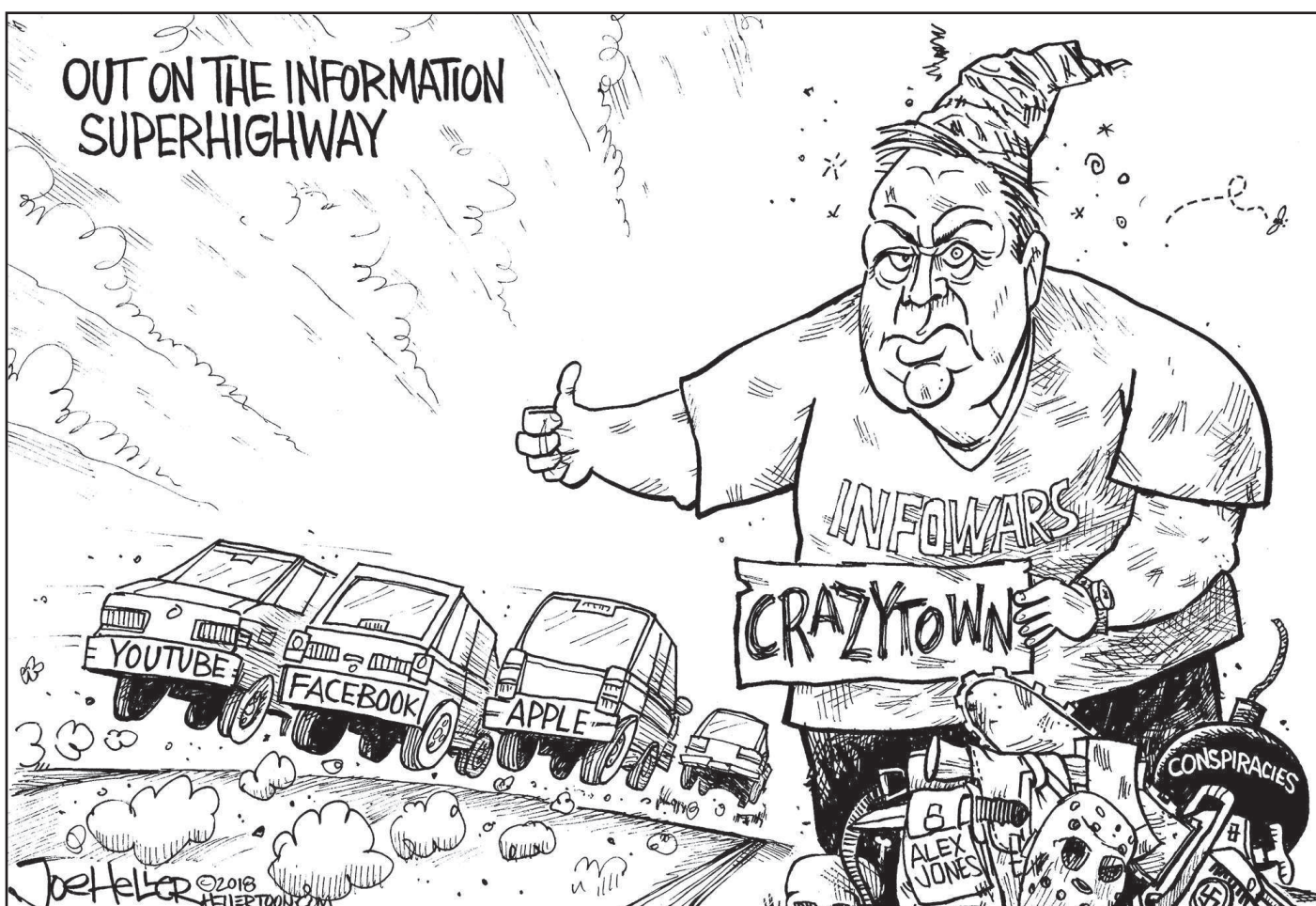


OPINION

The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition their Government for a redress of grievances.



The ripple effect of 'fake news' accusations



among those mentioned by The Globe.

Truth be told, the president's opinion, tweets or statements mean little in the context of our daily work here as journalists

We are a community newspaper with the job of

CNN analysis.

In addition, The Washington Post publishes a running report on the president's spoken and tweeted falsehoods which, as of today, add up to more than 4,000 since his inauguration

charters within every community where a journalist takes notes and reports the news.

We're not perfect. We make mistakes. When we do, we own up to — and correct — them.

Just like there is a difference between tabloid news, social media rumor and American news institutions like *The New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Boston Globe*, there is a difference between an unintentional error and purposely manufactured conjecture.

We have nothing to gain by losing credibility with the communities we serve, which is why we take correcting any mistakes as seriously as we do to avoid making them in the first place

The same day that editors were publishing their opinions on the matter, the U.S. Senate, in a unanimous vocal vote, passed a resolution that "affirms the press is not the enemy of the people" and "condemns attacks on the institution of the free press."

In my mind, that vote underscores the real notion behind the freedom of the press, which is that the most important vote we make is one we take of confidence in one another.

From the managing editor's desk

Ned Hickson

providing news, information and context on the things that directly impact those who live here.

However, in the same way trends in things such as fashion, music or language that begin on one coast inevitably make their way to the other, the same can be said for cultural and social trends.

This is nothing new. What is new is how quickly the ripple effect of those trends make their way from coast to coast, community to community, thanks to our national and global interconnectivity. This is especially true now, in a time of tribalism which hastens us to pick sides rather than engage in dialogue that explores perspectives.

In his first year as president, Donald Trump used the word "fake" in referring to news stories, the media and polls more than 400 times, according to a

That trend and the blanket statements made by our president labeling journalists and media as "the enemy" and perpetrators of "fake news" has created a ripple effect that has made its way into communities across the nation.

This includes our own, where cries of "fake news!" and "opposition party members!" have made their way into social media comments, voicemails, emails and whispers at public meetings when reporting on volatile or controversial subjects.

As the *Houston Chronicle* said in its editorial, "[The president's] broad brush stroke undermines the collective credibility of thousands of American journalists across the country who are the watchdogs over their branches of government."

This includes local, county and state governments, organizations and

Letters to the Editor Policy

The *Sentinel* welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The *Sentinel* readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

Political/Election Letters:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Send letters to:

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