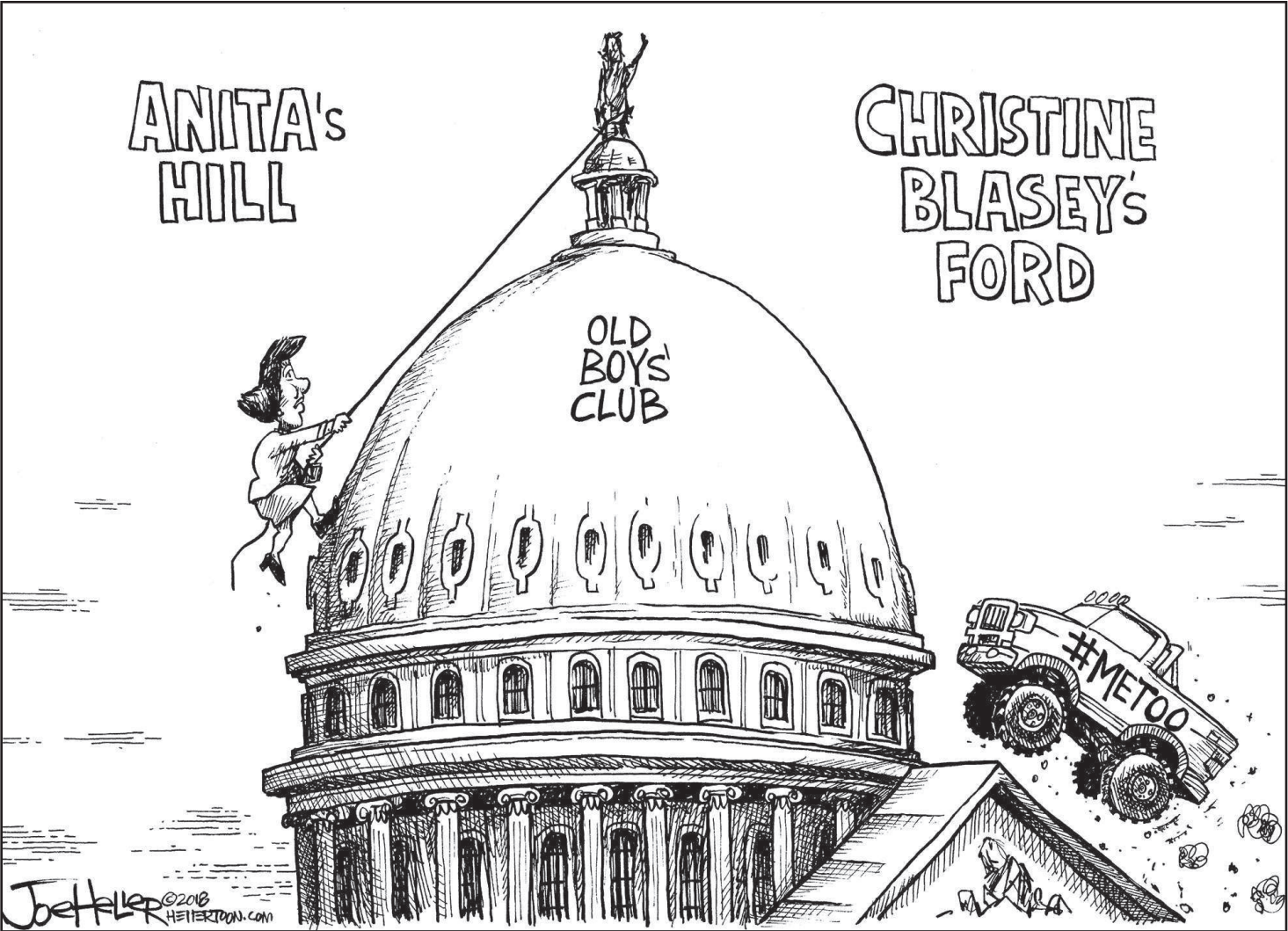


# OPINION

## 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.



## Tricks and truths of sexual assault



By Caitlyn May, editor  
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Every 98 seconds, a sexual assault occurs in the United States.

That is a fact; there's data and research — provided by the Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network (RAINN) — to prove it.

I've met Ann Curry twice.

It was in her capacity as an alumna of the University of Oregon and, in both instances, she tossed away the public relations machine that is the business of higher education and urgently pressed towards the truth; the truth of reporting; the truth of the business.

The truth is the truth.

She talked about her thoughts on native advertising — the new practice that yields a partnership between journalism and advertising. "Orange is the New Black" will buy an ad in the *New York Times* if the *Times* agrees to run a story on female inmates in America. The story may be factual but only exists because a company paid for an ad.

Curry said it made her uncomfortable because journalists should tell readers exactly what story we're trying to tell and why. It made her

uncomfortable because we shouldn't trick people.

And that's why, as a journalist and a woman, it's difficult to watch coverage unfold on Weinstein, Lauer, Moonves and Kavanaugh. It feels more like tricks than truths.

It makes me anxious; the same sort of anxious I felt when Curry gave a tearful farewell after being fired. And when Rose McGowan was ostracized. And when Weinstein's abuse was so systematic and well-known that it reached the lowest common denominator — becoming material for sitcoms and award shows.

I watch senators rally for Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh's career by classifying sexual assault as a teenage "rite of passage," and I feel the same anxious sickness as when men tell me to smile.

They knew; they knew and did nothing. Weinstein's banishment, Lauer's termination — they're just tricks.

The truth is that corporations terminating sexual harassers and abusers now that the culture has changed is just a new way to exhibit power over the women. Firing these men so swiftly, based on the same truths that have been swatted away for years, shows it was always within their power to do so.

They just chose not to.

They chose not to until the potential loss of profit rather than the reality of broken lives forced their hand. Their greed simply played the Cyrano to their sympathy so that it may be perceived as morality.

It feels the same as watching

the very senators who utilized military families during elections now second-guess the accusations against Kavanaugh shouldn't derail his career — turning the same blind eye to the 18,900 military members who experience unwanted sexual contact according to the most recent data.

Maybe those 18,900 service members were drunk. Because when women are drunk, the same sect attempting to dismiss Blasey Ford reasons that a woman has full authority of her faculties and therefore remains at fault. These characteristics, however, don't seem to apply for the abuser.

Instead, they undergo a metamorphosis that defies logic and reason and can only be attributed to the ugly depths of ego that says it's not his fault.

Because, for him, a heightened blood alcohol level excuses him from the burden of blame and the responsibility of guilt.

He was drunk; it's not his fault. She was drunk; what did she expect?

It's why college basketball players get to keep playing despite facing a forcible rape charge — because there is an argument that accusations shouldn't ruin their lives. It's an argument indicative of a broader narrative: That accused men's lives hold a greater value that can be tarnished while the accuser's life isn't worth half as much.

A collegiate basketball career weighs more than a lifetime of emotional health and stability.

The women are speaking up

and the system is tumbling down. But the troubling thing about this flawed revolution is that the system was built in the first place. There was an institutional decision to protect the abuser as an "asset" and discredit the victim as a "liability."

Even in the instances when men find themselves the recipient of a pink slip, a debate emerges over what they're owed and the disturbing argument that they are *entitled* to their bonuses and salaries.

More so than she was entitled to her *body*.

More so than she was entitled to her *choice* to say "No."

A choice guaranteed by the freedom of speech granted to her — essentially — a full 144 years after he earned the same right by simply proclaiming he had it, granted to him by God.

And when people ask why women don't come forward, it's because they don't understand all of this.

They don't understand that 94 percent of women experience PTSD after being assaulted and 13 percent attempt suicide. They don't understand that 994 accused assailants will go free for every 1,000 accused.

In other words, 99 percent get away with it.

And they don't understand that while one woman is deciding whether or not to come forward — whether or not she was raped "enough" for it to count — she doesn't even get two minutes (120 seconds) to make the decision without it happening to another woman somewhere else.

## LETTERS

**Some veterans have no knees to kneel on**

Some NFL players have exercised their 1st Amendment right to take a knee during our National Anthem.

Our armed service members have fought and died to support the right of free speech.

A significant amount of our wounded warrior veterans don't even have knees to kneel on if they wished to.

Think about for a second...

—M.F. Gotcher  
Cottage Grove

**Great 'First Harvest Moon'**

The autumn was brought into the Grove well this past Saturday at the Harvest moon Benefit Concert. We were delighted to have so many young

people attend.

There were quite a few families with kids and youth at this kid friendly music event at the Cottage Grove Armory. All the artists who preformed were very impressed with the warm welcome shown by Cottage Grove.

About \$1,400 was raised by the show and was divided equally among the four participating organizations, Music Money 501C3, KSOW real rural radio, Cottage Grove's Swinging Bridge and Cougar Mountain Farm.

The organizing committee has a lot of people to thank. First of all our generous sponsors. Please help our community by shopping locally and supporting these businesses who help make this a reality: The Brewstation, Brad's Cottage Grove Chevrolet, Banner Bank, the Opal Center for Arts

and Education, Green Day Garden Supply, B&A Automotive and Boyce and Sons landscaping and building supply.

Also the City of Cottage Grove helping with the venue and supporting the technical needs for a quality, down-home show.

Lastly, thank you to all of the volunteers who showed up to help with set up, educating our community at the info tables, and with the thankless task of taking it all down again after the show. So thank you for your support, coming out, dancing and being a part of what makes Cottage Grove a great place to live!

—Dana Merryday  
Cottage Grove

**Big, loud truck just a sign of vanity**

I live on a second floor

apartment. I can hear and see these things at all hours.

Big trucks.

I was out shopping recently one morning only to find upon my return that one was parked in my very clearly assigned parking space. After parking, I told them that they needed to move on. My request was returned with a most hostile response.

Someone who drives a new, noisy, \$50,000-plus truck who has obviously never seen any scratches in the bed is surely only doing so for reasons of vanity.

This sort of conduct must end. Usually it is young males who responsible. Where they get the money for these trucks is beyond my comprehension.

— Charles Ames,  
Cottage Grove

**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 unsourced 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.

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