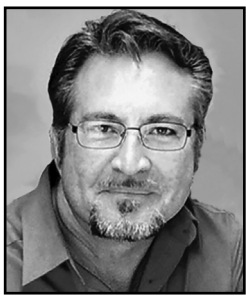


Cottage Grove Sentinel
116 N. Sixth St.
Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

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 the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



Setting the record straight with 'The Chronicle'

in with giant corporately owned newspapers like the GateHouse/Gannett-owned Register-Guard.

After reading his editorial, I felt the need to respond, primarily to clarify some pretty egregious inaccuracies that, coming from a journalist, I found a bit surprising. First, we are not owned by "Media Gen-

To be frank, I took the most offense to that comparison, and his implication that we are merely "The Cottage Grove edition of Media General."

Unlike Mr. Nash, both Damien and Nick are native-born Oregonians who grew up in Lane County; my family moved to Florence in 1981. Everyone

communities not regularly covered by *The Chronicle*.

For our readers, providing a resource — especially at this moment — for people to connect and be informed about ways they can help each other in the communities we serve is just as important as the reporting we do each week.

Lastly, Mr. Nash pointed out that we have reached out to the community for financial support through an opportunity for readers to provide a tax-deductible donation. What he *didn't* mention was that the program is not sponsored by — or connected to — News Media Corporation (or even Media General Corp.) and was established to help community newspapers across the country like *The Sentinel* to maintain staffing and assure local reporting continues in small communities like ours.

We may have a parent company, but we are still responsible for covering our expenses in a time when we are facing challenges never seen in the 131-year history of *The Sentinel*. Just as we are invested in the communities we serve, those who value having a community newspaper have an opportunity to invest in us as well.

The one thing Mr. Nash and I do agree on is the need for local, trusted journalism. As he said in his editorial, "A rising tide lifts all boats, right?"

If that's the case — and I believe it is — then we would do better to remember how, not long ago, we were an example of what makes community journalism *different*, instead of perpetuating a stereotype that we are all the same.

From the Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

eral Corp." (as was stated in the original editorial, which has since been changed).

A quick reference shows that Media General Inc. (which is the closest I could come to the company that was referenced in *The Chronicle* editorial) was dissolved in 2017 and purchased by Nexstar that same year for \$4.6 billion.

That's not us.

Our parent company, News Media Corporation, is family-owned and has been since it was established by John C. Tompkins in 1975. It does own 65 newspapers in eight states (compared to GateHouse/Gannett, with more than 250 papers in 46 states). In addition, papers owned by the Tompkins family are all smaller, community driven publications serving populations averaging 8,000 — with 5,000 being the smallest and 50,000 being the largest.

In Mr. Nash's editorial, he also attempted to draw a correlation between the kind of "generic, faceless bylines ... from some other place" that have become standard for the R-G, and the weekly reporting done by Damien Sherwood, Nick Snyder and myself at *The Sentinel*.

who works at *The Sentinel*, from our general manager Gary Manly, to our office manager Meg Fringer and sales staff Carla Skeel, Gerald Santana and graphics designer Ron Annis, all live in the Cottage Grove area.

I challenge Mr. Nash to find any story in *The Sentinel* that isn't, as he puts it, "a hyper-local vision," which is (ironically) corporate marketing-speak for what is essentially community-based reporting.

That being said, it seems a bit hypocritical trying to paint *The Sentinel* as being a purely money-driven news source occupied by faceless out-of-staters. While we are part of a family-owned parent company, the people writing the stories, attending city council and school board meetings, covering fundraisers and community benefits, reporting on local athletes and students — they don't teleport here from somewhere else.

They live and work here in the valley.

And the press releases and updates you see in *The Sentinel*? They're sent in from folks in Cottage Grove and Creswell, as well as Elkton, Yoncalla, Lorane, Dorena, Drain and other

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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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