

# News business needs anti-trust safe harbor

News consumption is growing exponentially, but for the past decade, the revenue to news publishers has been on a decline. This is, in large part, because of the unbalanced relationship between news publishers and tech platforms. But that relationship could be changing thanks to the bipartisan introduction of the “Journalism Competition and Preservation Act.” H.R. 2054 was introduced by House Antitrust Subcommittee Chairman David Cicilline, D-Rhode Island, and former House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Doug Collins, R-Georgia. A bipartisan companion bill, S. 1700, was also introduced by Senator John Neely Kennedy, R-Louisiana, member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Senator Amy Klobuchar, D-Minnesota, ranking member of the Senate Antitrust Subcommittee.

The bill, which would provide news publishers a safe harbor in which to collectively negotiate with platforms like Google and Facebook, could help news producers receive the fair distribution and monetization terms we’ve long been fighting to get from the duopoly.

Because of their market dominance — and access to billions of users — the major tech platforms set the rules for news publishers and determine how journalism is displayed, prioritized and monetized. They also capture the vast majority of all digital advertising dollars because of their unique ability to collect consumer data across the web.

All of this has degraded

the relationship between news readers and publishers and rewarded low quality “click-bait” over quality information from real journalists. It has also greatly reduced the financial ability of publishers to invest in newsrooms at a time when our society most needs great, substantive reporting.

It is simply not possible for any individual news publisher to change the basic terms offered by the online behemoths. They are simply much too big and much too influential.

However, there is power in numbers, which is what we need in order to have a fighting chance. The antitrust safe harbor bill would provide a four-year window for news publishers to collectively negotiate for fair terms that would flow earned subscription and advertising dollars back to the publishers, while protecting and preserving Americans’ right to access quality news. Parameters included in the bill ensure that these negotiations would strictly benefit Americans and news publishers at-large, not just one or a few publishers.

The JCPA has until the end of the year to pass the 116th Congress, and we need our representatives to act now to support journalism’s future.

If passed, this bill would allow our industry to more fully control our product by allowing market forces, not two companies, to determine how and for what price our content is offered. It would allow everyone from small local publications to major online publishers the opportunity to receive a return on their investment and therefore sustain quality journalism, which is necessary for an informed democracy and civic society.



## FARMER'S FATE

# Independently messy

Ever noticed the correspondence between a child’s growing independence and the amount of paper towels and cleaning supplies you use? It is wonderful when your 4-year-old takes the initiative to wash the dishes, right? I mean, who actually needs full sets of dishes anyway? Isn’t it chic now to have mismatched dinnerware? And the sink that was overflowing with soapy water — well, the floor needed mopped anyway. All of those thoughts and more fluttered through my head as my barely-turned-4-year-old beamed at me upon walking through that kitchen door. He raised his little hand in greeting, his fingers tightly gripping the soapy-sponge that dripped water down his arm onto his already visibly wet sweat shirt. “I’m helping you, Mommy!” he announced proudly.

“Oh, Bug!” the frustration at the huge mess came out sharper than I’d intended. His eyes clouded just a bit, and I surveyed the mess again. I took a deep breath and started again, “Oh, Bug, you did the dishes for me!”

“I love you, Mommy,” he grinned, splashing more water down the front of the cabinets. I pushed his stool closer to the sink. Anyone wanting to wash dishes should have proper lessons, right? The next half an hour was spent washing dishes that could have been done in half the time — with half the soap and water — but without any toddler independence. And independence is a good thing, right?

Later that week I was chatting with a friend, catching up on our respective holidays. Meanwhile her sons were in her kitchen making smoothies.

“Mom, can we use lemons?”

“Mom, can we use key lime juice?”

“What about white grape juice —



Brianna Walker

and ginger?”

She finally just said, “You can put in anything you want. Just remember you have to drink it. Good or gross, it will have to be gone by midnight.”

Independence with a touch of consequences — I thought it was brilliant. I recalled that situation again, when my husband and I came in from the shop to find that our 4-year-old decided that he was old enough to take a turn making supper. Peanut butter and Parmesan sandwiches. He made enough for the whole family — and lots of guests. The words of my friend played through my head, “Good or gross, it will have to be gone by midnight.” There were more sandwiches than my son could eat by himself (seeing as how he’d “cooked” for all of us), and while my head doesn’t like food to go to waste and my heart supports 4-year-old independence, my stomach just can’t.

I’m not sure my friend would have approved, but technically, she said “Good or gross, it will have to be gone by midnight.” And it was definitely gone by midnight. The hound and the chickens seemed to really enjoy their gourmet PB and Parm meal that night.

Only days later, my little guy decided the dirt in one of my house plants was “too old,” and he took it upon himself to refresh it. He scooped it out of the plant, into a little toy cup, and then proceeded to wash it in the bathroom sink. While the rest of the family was intent on building roads and settlements in Catan, our 4-year-old walked back and forth from the plant to the bathroom several times — until the sink was filled to the brim with black, soupy, pot-

ting soil and water. “Aren’t you glad I made new dirt?” he asked us as we scooped muddy soil back to the plant. Truth be told, it’s a good thing he washed it, because I would never have gotten around to it — probably never even realized that the dirt was old and in need of a wash.

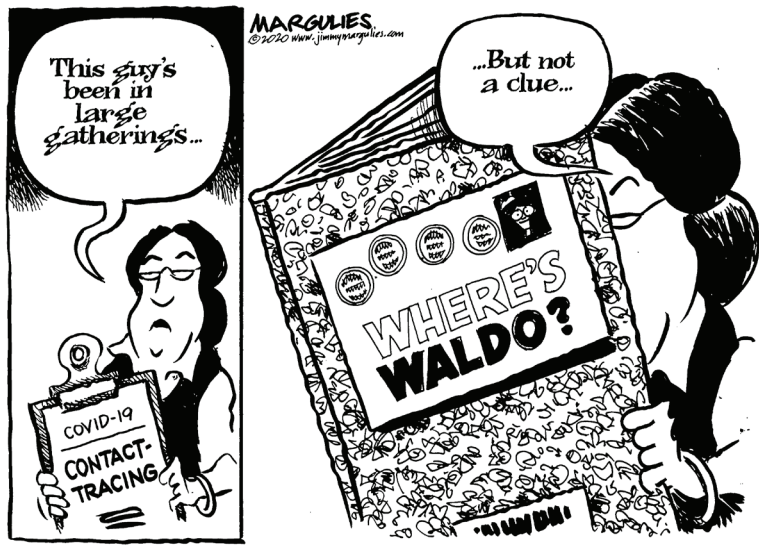
Every day, he becomes more helpful and independent. He fed the fish nearly the entire bottle of food — because the fish looked hungry. He trimmed the dog’s hair — because apparently short-haired dogs need haircuts too. He loves to make his own toast — with half a cup of Brewer’s yeast on top, on the sides, on the floor and usually down his shirt.

Recently he has been switching the laundry from the washing machine to the dryer. It’s one of his favorite things to do now that he is “big and 4.” After another big water mess on the bathroom floor, we mopped it up with towels and he carried them down to the laundry room. I quickly forgot all about them until the next day when I opened the dryer to find those wet towels covered with laundry soap and baking soda.

My house is always filled with ridiculous and unbelievable messes. Like the day my son decided to “fix” the vacuum cleaner in the middle of the living room floor. Or the day he decided to strengthen the furniture in the house with a Costco-size replacement pack of scotch tape.

But I don’t mind too much, because in the end, our house is clean enough to be healthy, dirty enough to be happy, and sooner than I’ll be ready, he’ll be independently messy and buying his own cleaning supplies.

*Brianna Walker occasionally writes about the Farmer’s Fate for the Blue Mountain Eagle.*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### COVID-19 questions

To the Editor:

I’m curious regarding two COVID-19-related items. First, why is the Johns Hopkins COVID-19 website info claiming, as of last Friday, Aug. 21, that our Grant County infection total is eight, but according to the latest Blue Mountain Eagle, both printed and online, is only claiming five? Second question is, exactly what game plan currently exists at the local hospital or emergency care center if someone presents themselves with clear evidence of being infected? Are they admitted locally for treatment, or sent to some other facility — or perhaps just sent back home? Is there an isolated care room, and personnel to man it? I would think there are others besides me wondering what our real world options are in this community if we, or someone close to us, are infected.

Gary Davidson  
Canyon City

*Editor’s note: The Grant County Health Department reported three new cases Aug. 24, bringing the county total to eight.*

### ‘I would prefer being God-loving’

To the Editor:

This is in regard to the mention of God-fearing people by the gentle writer in Mt. Vernon. I am quite attuned to the concept as it has been presented to me in different contexts over the years. In some analyses (mine at present), the concept of God-fearing, i.e. power-fearing, has contributed greatly to physical and other abuse in family, community, nation. It promotes a relationship of

ultimate power by some over others: parent over child, employer over employed, in regulatory agencies like law enforcement, power over everyone. With “God equals power” as the lofty denominator, the very institutions society has evolved for potential survival of all become contorted to crass authoritarianism and survival of only those who abide. The concept of race pertains.

All this surely dates back to the beginning of organized religion as we know it today, Ol’ Boniface cutting down the sacred oaks in Wotan’s ancient groves, etc., and times began a-changing for our ancestors in Northern Europe. Existing minor power structures grew and solidified, reinforced by extraterrestrial absolutism, moving from localized tribal to larger regional arrangements. Feudal society was born, with an overlord at every level, serf to vassal, vassal to knight, knight to lord, on up to duke, prince, king, who in turn was accountable only to a far-off ephemeral heavenly being. So began fear of might, worldly and other-worldly.

I have always questioned fear of authority. The worldly version, in a democratic nation, is intended to serve safety and security of person and possession, as mandated by state or nation. When it claims higher authority, one should beware, and one should object.

If I were to subscribe to any notion of deity, it would be one which does not require obeisance, or thrive on monstrosities of fear. It would be one more self-certain than that, one to be quietly omnipresent without oppressing, one I could see in all I value around me. And I would prefer being God-loving most certainly.

Vega Nunez  
Ritter

### Not swayed by political rhetoric

To the Editor:

This letter is a response to the letter in the Aug. 12 edition submitted by Ashley Stevick.

The word racism is permeating our society. This week I saw it on the cover of a popular magazine and on the wrapper of a protein bar.

The word racism is being used without reason, comparison, and statistics. Is there a documented problem? Where is it? What has been done? What is the plan going forward? Is there a time in history when people of different races have lived better lives? Should we tear down or build up?

Without answers to these questions, the flood of racism language turns into propaganda. The definition of propaganda is: information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view. It presents facts selectively in order to produce emotional rather than rational responses. People who react emotionally are easy to incite. On another point, the electoral college was created to give a measure of equality to all demographics.

The word racism is now being used to make it unpopular. I, for one, stand against the national and local propaganda of the word racism that causes the population to believe sweeping statements as fact that are not undergirded with knowledge, explanation and reason.

Terry Aasness  
Mt. Vernon

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