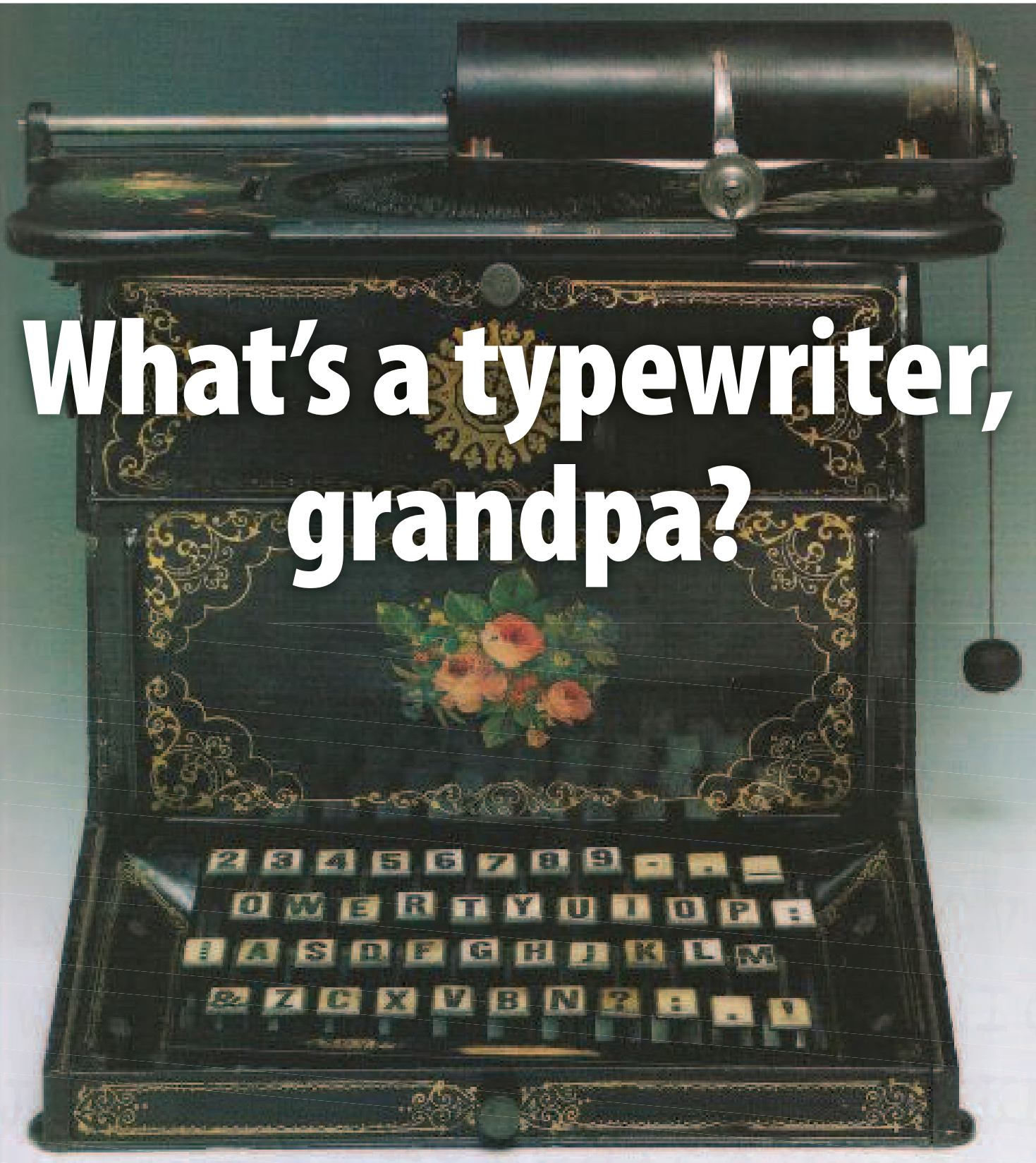




What’s a typewriter, grandpa?

I had something of a jarring journalistic moment the other day. A woman called — on the telephone — and said, “I want to drop off a letter.” I said, can you email it? She said I don’t have a computer. I told her that we didn’t have the office staff to re-input a typed or handwritten letter. Letters need to be submitted via email, verified and adhere to a number of principles. Fifty years ago someone at the front desk would have welcomed the letter writer into the office, taken the handwritten sheets and typed it before delivering to the managing editor, who would pass it to the editor, who would have then passed it to the assistant editor who would type the document and then sent it to the copy editor before going back to the editor. Ah the good old days. Reader’s Digest founder and publisher DeWitt Wallace sent employees anywhere they wanted to go once a year, on the thought that they would become better, more well-rounded human beings as a result. Digest commuters from throughout the New York Metro area could ride to work on company buses to the bucolic offices in Pleasantville. Even though the office was technically in the town of Chappaqua, Wallace preferred the soporific “Pleasantville” postal address. Each May, Fridays became holidays, so workers could tend to their gardens. Type a letter? There were 25 bodies waiting with carbon paper to make a correction.

CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



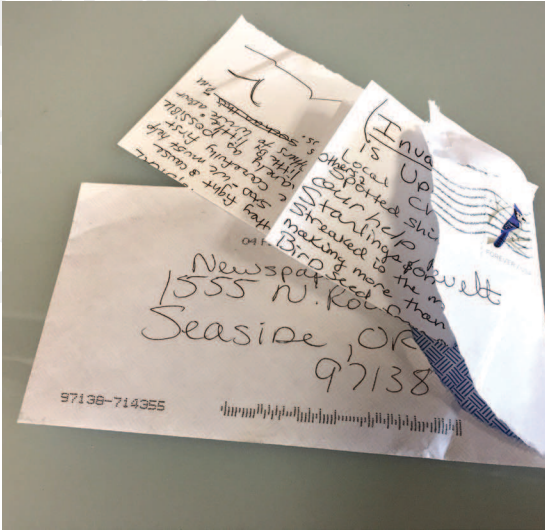
When Spencer Tracy and Robert Redford portrayed real journalists, they inhabited small cities. So there was an awkward pause on the phone. Here was a woman looking to express herself to put pen to paper and share her thoughts. She wanted her ideas shared with the world, but was rendered mute without a computer. Why she didn’t have a computer — access? money? choice? — didn’t really matter. Think about it: Shakespeare scribed; our Founding Fathers, Abraham Lincoln and everyone until Mark Twain decided to turn to the typewriter. He called it “the newfangled typing machine” after he saw a Remington in a Boston store window — in the 1870s. Twain’s 1883 book, “Life on the Mississippi,” was the first literary work to be completed on the machine, Michael Rosenwald of the Washington Post reported last spring. In small towns, journalism was a family affair. I was down at the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum on Friday as they kindly opened their archives to me, old newspaper predecessors to the Gazette. The Cannon was the first on record, published by Jack and Jim Dennon in the late 1940s when a few hundred folks lived in town and street lights were a big issue.

The Cannon started as a Cannon Beach student newspaper — this was before Cannon Beach merged with the Seaside School District — with mimeographed headlines in cursive script. In the 1990s The Upper Left Edge, under the supervision of “Editor/Publisher/Janitor The Beloved Reverend Billy Lloyd Hults” was an exquisite work of art. Headlines read: “Put your good where it will do the most,” and “Jerry Brown for President.” It is the physical appearance and tactile experience that makes print so seductive. Ironic that it would take America’s greatest writer Mark Twain to alter technology inexorably. Typewriter gave way to teletype and fax machines and telexes and bits and bytes, PCs, iMacs, iPhones and apps. Talk about a tsunami, but these took place every generation, then every decade, every year, every second. I gave up my own beloved Hermes 3000 typewriter — so iconic that author William Kotzwinkle wrote a book with the same title — for good in the early ’80s when I got my first personal computer, an AT&T 6300 with dual 5 ¼” floppy disk drives. It’s probably worth something — at a museum. Public works employees recently dug up at 50-year-old time capsule buried underground at the Tolovana Arts Colony. A new capsule was boxed and stored at Whale Park at a celebration on Feb. 14. History goes by quickly. When 2069 comes, those of us still alive may say, “I remember the Internet.” Their descendants will say: “There you go again, grandpa.”

WHEN 2069 COMES, THOSE OF US STILL ALIVE MAY SAY, ‘I REMEMBER THE INTERNET.’



Wikimedia Commons



R.J. Marx

A letter to the editor. Now what do we do?

Bird poop on the window

VIEW FROM THE PORCH

EVE MARX



I woke up this morning to brilliant sun, a gift from the angels who look out on the Left Edge. It had been raining for days, a cold, piercing, rain, the kind that leaks into your collar, sending cold rivulets down your neck. Luckily my hair is long enough to function as a cloak or cowl; still, it’s unpleasant getting drenched. So the gift of morning sun was extra glorious — until I noticed the bird poop. A great robin red breast has been visiting of late. By “great” I mean large. This big boy has taken up residence in my front yard. I like robins. They’re cheerful as can be, and the sight of that great red breast staring in my front window is heartening. The robin prefers to perch on a branch of one of our two apple trees. As I’m working at my desk, I feel his beady bird eyes on me. When I was a child, my parents forced me to take piano lessons. I wasn’t very good. The teacher was a lady named Mrs. Mehich who lived on our street. She had three pianos in her house and a Siamese cat named Mu Chi Chi Meow Meow Meow who hunted birds. One day he got a robin. Mrs. Mechich, who bore more than a passing resemblance to a crane or a flamingo herself, swooped in before he killed it, and for some weeks nursed it back to health. She kept it in a cage in the same room she gave piano lessons. It was an imperious, proud thing, but she acted like it was a pet. When we first moved to this area, I soon learned how obsessed people are with their windows which must be sparkly and smear free. I remarked on this fixation to our landlord, Grant, when we were renting in Gearhart. He built that house and also a house in Cannon Beach. He seemed confused. “People don’t clean their windows in New York?” he asked. Writing this, I’m thinking my day will be marred if I don’t get busy with the Windex and some newspaper and get rid of the bird excrement. I wonder if it’s my pet robin that did this, and if this is his way of telling me my yard belongs to him.



National Park Service

American robin (turdus migratorius).

PUBLIC MEETINGS

FRIDAY, Feb. 22
Emergency Preparedness Committee, 9 a.m., 163 E. Gower St.

TUESDAY, March 5
Cannon Beach City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

WEDNESDAY, March 6
Cannon Beach City Council, 5:30 p.m., work session, Chamber of Commerce and Escape Lodging RV Park, 163 E. Gower St.

MONDAY, March 11
Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors, 6 p.m., 188 E. Sunset Blvd.

TUESDAY, March 12
Cannon Beach City Council, 5:30 p.m., work session, City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

WEDNESDAY, March 13
Cannon Beach City Council, budget preliminary discussions, City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

MONDAY, March 18
Ecola Creek Watershed Council, 4:30 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower, Cannon Beach.

TUESDAY, March 19
Cannon Beach Public Works Committee, 9 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.