

EDITOR'S DESK

# This country needs newspapers

A pet peeve among journalists is when people ask, "Why isn't the media covering this?" about a topic that every major media outlet in the country has, indeed, covered with multiple articles.

I could write an entire column about why the "if anything important happens I'm sure I'll see it on social media" method of news consumption is a terrible way to stay informed on matters of actual importance. But today, I want to talk about the times when people are right about something not being covered by journalists.

According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, from 2008 to 2019 news media outlets shed 23% of their newsroom jobs, from 114,000 reporters, editors and photographers/videographers down to 88,000. Newspapers were hit hardest, dropping from 71,000 journalists to 35,000.

These layoffs all happened before the pandemic, when ad revenue plummeted sharply and thousands more were laid off. Most of the remaining journalists have had their pay cut this year, either through wage cuts, hour reductions or monthly furloughs. Some newspapers have closed altogether.

(As a side note, this is why you should trust someone who says "the media" is profiting off the pandemic as much as you should trust someone who doesn't know the difference



Jade McDowell  
NEWS EDITOR



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald, File

The final paid subscription of the Hermiston Herald runs off the press at the East Oregonian in Pendleton on April 28, 2020. The newspaper has since converted to free distribution through mail to thousands of area residents.

between a steer and a bull to explain ranching to you.)

Thousands of missing journalism jobs mean thousands of stories that aren't being told. Those of us left simply can't be in three places at once, and often find ourselves weighing whether the public will be better served if we pursue a story that will take 12 hours or work or write 12 stories that each took one hour.

John Oliver, in his comedy news show "Last Week Tonight," did a great segment in August 2016 explaining how newspapers are the bedrock of the information economy. Other places people get their news — radio, television, social media, blogs and late night shows, including "Last Week Tonight" — are often

repackaging or building on news that was first discovered and reported by newspaper journalists.

Hasan Minhaj, in his show "Patriot Act," this June did a segment in which he explained how local newspapers are "unmatched" in certain areas, including exposing sex offenders. Examples he cited included the *Boston Globe's* uncovering of the Catholic church's handling of priests who molested children, the *Harrisburg Patriot News* breaking the story of Jerry Sandusky, the *Indianapolis Star* exposing Larry Nassar, and the *Miami Herald's* work uncovering the crimes of Jeffrey Epstein.

Much of the *Hermiston Herald* and *East Oregonian's* reporting may not have the same national signifi-

icance, but over the years we have provided a wealth of information to this community about what is going on in local government that has gone way beyond what people can learn from reading press releases on social media.

Even if you aren't a fan of the *Hermiston Herald* or *East Oregonian*, I can promise you that if we went away, we would not be replaced by a news source of better quality. Some towns that have lost their newspapers are now relying on social media rumors and gossip among neighbors to know what is going on in their community. Others are being covered by low-quality clickbait sites written by people from out of town, or insidious new "pay for play" sites that are disguised as objective local news but are actually run by political operatives or corporate public relations firms, as recently reported by *The New York Times*.

Usually when a newspaper position is gone, it's not coming back. But I am optimistic about the work EO Media Group is doing to rebuild our revenue streams that took a hit in the spring. I'm grateful to work for a family-owned company that cares deeply about preserving news coverage in Oregon communities, rather than one of the hedge funds that have been buying and gutting newsrooms to squeeze out whatever short-term profits they can.

This country needs newspapers. Don't count us out yet.

COLUMN

## Breast cancer diagnosis impacts mental health

The fall season brings another opportunity to join together for breast cancer awareness.

All over Umatilla and Morrow counties, people have given their time, money and tears to this cause. In most years, these efforts include relays, walks and other fundraising efforts. While the pandemic has limited our traditional in-person gatherings, we still see impressive efforts from local business, nonprofit and social service organizations to fundraise and draw awareness to breast cancer.

At Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc. (GOBHI), we also consider another aspect of breast cancer — the impact this diagnosis has on mental health and emotional well-being. The American Psychological Association reports that breast cancer can be one of the most distressing events a woman ever experiences, and she may not know where to turn for help.

For example, as women begin what is often a lengthy treatment process, they may find themselves faced with new problems and tremendous worry. There are so many unknowns to face, like how it will affect their personal relationships, the impact on their families, how symptoms manifest, how treatment will affect them and the greatest unknown which cancer throws into the spotlight — the unknown of being here another day.

Here are some quotes from women who have had a breast cancer diagnosis:

"I fell apart. I felt like my life fractured into thousands of pieces. And I sat there looking at it all I thought, this will never all go back together again. I was lost."

"When my treatment was all done, I thought, now what? Every little cough was attached to the fear — is it back?"

"Being faced with my death taught me how to live."

The illness can bring up a mix of feelings — denial, anger, fear, worry, stress, loss of control, problems with self-esteem, sadness, depression, grief, guilt, isolation and so much more. All of this can be overwhelming and contribute to depression, anxiety, panic attacks and other mental health problems.

Feelings of anxiety and depression are normal as women face a breast cancer diagnosis, but that does not mean those feelings should be ignored. Treating the emotional conditions associated with breast cancer is as important as treating the physical illnesses.

We have known for a long time that our emotional well-being affects our physical well-being and healing. It is not always as easy, however, to seek help for the emotional issues.

For some, they feel embarrassed to ask for help because of the stigma associated with mental health problems. It can also be just too daunting to find support for emotional issues when someone is overwhelmed, even emotionally paralyzed, with managing all that cancer brings.

GOBHI has been working in Eastern Oregon as part of the Eastern Oregon

Coordinated Care Organization (EOCCO) to remove mental illnesses from the shadows of shame and help more people who can benefit from treatment. Here are some of the ways you can connect with help:

- Call your local mental health provider about treatment options.
- Ask your doctor or oncologist about support services.

- Talk to your physician or cancer nutritionist about foods that support healing.
- Talk to your physician about your anxiety and what they recommend for help.

- Share the health care resources, including the 24-Hour Crisis Helpline (1-800-866-9780), National Suicide Prevention Line (1-800-273-8255), Lifeways (541-567-2536) and Community Counseling Solutions (541-676-9161).

In addition, family members may experience significant emotional stress when a loved one receives this diagnosis. It is important that they too find the support they need.

October may be the official month for breast cancer awareness, but each day of the year can hold a different meaning for the women with this diagnosis and for their families. GOBHI joins Eastern Oregon communities to support individuals and their families as they deal with a breast cancer diagnosis and as we work together to let them know — that they are not alone.

Ari Wagner is the chief operating officer of GOBHI and a breast cancer survivor.



Ari Wagner

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### This election is important

This is a very important election which may affect the well-being of our country for many years. With Trump we achieved an economy with employment and prosperity at greater heights than previously in our industry. Even during the pandemic we are on track for possibly an even greater economy. Trump lowered our taxes; Biden said he would do away with the tax cuts if he were elected.

Trump brought back manufacturing jobs that were lost during the policies of previous years. He rebuilt our military forces and restored America's dominance in trade and foreign affairs. He has been a champion of law and order when Democratic governors were allowing our cities to burn, mobs to tyrannize the inhabitants, and the power of the police to be curtailed; Portland in our own state has been one of the worst examples of this situation.

Trump removed many regulations which were detrimental to business and restrictive to progress. If the Democrats were elected and enacted the so-called "green new deal," we would possibly encounter the worst living conditions the United States has experienced since the Great Depression.

For these and numerous other reasons, in my opinion Trump is clearly the best choice for our country.

Ron Ingle  
Hermiston

### CORRECTIONS

It is the policy of the Hermiston Herald to correct errors as soon as they are discovered. Incorrect information will be corrected on Page 2A. Errors committed on the Opinion page will be corrected on that page. Corrections also are noted in the online versions of our stories.

Please contact the editor at editor@hermistonherald.com or call (541) 564-4533 with issues about this policy or to report errors.

### SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters Policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for the Hermiston Herald readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters should be kept to 250 words.

No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. The Hermiston Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content.

Letters must be original and signed by the writer or writers. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. Only the letter writer's name and city of residence will be published.

### OBITUARY POLICY

The Hermiston Herald publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include small photos and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. Expanded death notices will be published at no charge. These include information about services. Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style.

Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at hermistonherald.com/obituaryform, by email to obits@hermistonherald.com, by fax to 541-276-8314, placed via the funeral home or in person at the Hermiston Herald or East Oregonian offices. For more information, call 541-966-0818 or 1-800-522-0255, x221.