

Why the First Amendment is in more danger than the Second



Harry's Gang

Pete Radosevich

Welcome to the new Pine Knot News community newspaper.

As a patriotic American, I am proud of our Constitution and all its amendments (I am particularly fond of the 21st).

But there's a reason why the First Amendment comes first.

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press to print the news has protected our country many more times than armed citizens ever have. No gun owner has ever stopped an attack of tyranny; a free press has done it countless times.

Our system of government is good. The Founders figured out how to blend democracy with efficiency; tossed in some checks and balances; and made the whole thing accountable to the people through regularly scheduled elections. But the people we put in charge are not always looking out for "we, the people." Among other reasons, we need the Second Amendment to protect us from tyranny. But how are we going to know something is wrong with our government if the press isn't around to report it?

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press has been under attack by government leaders ever since the Bill of Rights was implemented in 1791, but it has been especially under attack in recent years.

It's become very easy to spread news through the internet, and with its ease comes error and unreliability. After all, now that anyone can spread any rumor, no matter how absurd, more inaccurate rumors gain credibility. Enough people believe rumors that the rumor becomes "truth." Add irresponsible accusations, spin, and downright "reverse" news (when someone says the exact opposite of the truth, leaving some people scratching their heads and others believing it), and real news becomes indistinguishable from the rumors. And there are so many sources for news now that it's easy to crawl into your own sources that support your views and never challenge that view, even when it's wrong.

In fact, I'd guess that the single biggest factor in the deep political divisions we have in our country today may be a result of the overabundance of media. With so many sources, it's no wonder some

people, especially those in power, try to silence any media that disagree with their positions, or with the news organizations that may expose their corruption, or that get in the way of their seizing power. When leaders call respectable media "fake news" and champion biased sources that happen to support their agenda, it's no wonder we hear the President suggest we need to tighten libel laws; yank licenses of media or pass out media licenses as political rewards for favorable coverage. Imagine when our leaders made similar comments about gun rights — the outcry was deafening. But attacks on the media? Inexcusably, such attacks are cheered.

But freedom of speech and of the free press won't be stopped. Real journalists are continuing to cover the important news with journalistic integrity. No one else sits through local school board meetings; reports on city council agenda sessions; or covers county board meetings except local newspapers. Such government bodies control your life more than any resolution on, say, the immigration issue ever will. Local news reporters develop relationships with local leaders and know when to ask the right questions and know whom to ask to get the right answers.

And legitimate news organizations don't violate their journalistic integrity even when attacked by prominent and powerful politicians. For example, The New York Times and the Washington Post continue to research, investigate, and publish stories favorable to the President even though the President has bashed both repeatedly because of their many unfavorable articles. That's the kind of press we need — run by journalists who aren't afraid of punishment for exercising free speech rights

So what's the point of this article? The new Pine Knot News believes that the freedom of the press and free speech are some of the most important rights we, the people, have been granted under our Constitution. And that's how we are going to run our newspaper.

Because if they chip away our First Amendment rights, pretty soon you won't even know when they take away your rights under the Second.

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will continue to provide positive leadership and a strong commitment to Carlton County.

Together we will be able to ensure that our county continues to be a place we are proud of, a place that exemplifies the quality of life offered in this area, a place that shows off the wonderful schools, parks and recreational opportunities while still working hard to find cost-effective ways to provide the good roads, customer service and the public safety we deserve.

Thank you for your support and reminder to vote in the General Election on November 6.

Susan Zmyslony, Moose Lake

Metaphor



Notes from the Small Pond

Parnell Thill

If, overnight, chickens devolved back to velociraptors, we'd be screwed. One of my kids keeps free-range chickens for eggs and the hell of it; they cluck around, cooing and bobbing like nervous lunatics. One sunny August afternoon, in the span of an hour, I watched one of them murder a large leopard frog and a field mouse, mostly for the fun of it. Poultry aren't known as killer meateaters, but there they were, pecking for the insanity of pecking, eyes glassy and empty like Jim Jones, beaking like daggers for the joy of stabbing and the scent of spilled blood, claws like rakes, dragging skin and viscera off bones, all a-wreck. A murderous mess.

If chickens are scary, don't even think about a prehistoric woodpecker. They were here first.

The age of the dinosaurs lasted about 100 times the age of humans (so far); and our misunderstanding of how they lived and with whom they shared the planet is embarrassing. They kept their species alive WAY longer than we've been a species, with our big, fat, awesome, macaroni brains, their capacity for life-stretching

longevity and adaptation vs. our capacity for life-considering and introspection an interesting conversation for barflies and philosophers, forgive the redundancy.

Only an earth-shattering comet killed them, birthed us. (Unless you're one of those conspiracy theorists, banking on the planet being flat and tiny and new and shaking your head about the earth getting warmer and doubting the moon landing and 9/11 being a fake, in which case, stop reading and turn on the TV or consult your mirror-image Facebook friends for a dose of what you wish was your wish, was everyone else's wish. You wish.)

Chickens eat and peck and kill to satisfy their dietary impulse and an innate lust for the doing of it. And they plop out eggs because they're built for it, produced as the result of their consuming wood ticks and spiders and mosquitoes and an occasional mouse or frog. And we, in turn, swallow Eggs Benedict. Over easy. Scrambled. Frog and wood tick and spider-infused omelettes. But yum. Pass the sriracha ... okay, the Tabasco, Baby Boomers ...

When they can't lay, or get sick or wounded, they die, soften at the violence of their sisters. For the spite of it. Thank God they're small these days.

We are what we consume. Let's do so, broadly. As we climb toward November, let's not be dinosaured, would-be chicken victims.

LETTERS to the editor

Research before you vote

In the Carlton School District 93, the upcoming elections in November will be monumental. Susan Karp is the only current school board member running for re-election.

Some of you may have heard of Susan Karp but may not be aware of what she supports in her role as a school board member.

In May 2017, Susan Karp voted to put a referendum on the ballot to construct a new school and auditorium for \$26 million. The special election fees and consulting fees cost the taxpayers in excess of \$43,000 and hundreds of hours of staff time. Her referendum failed 72- to 28 percent.

In January 2018, Susan Karp voted to take \$5.5 million from the taxpayers by a nonvoter-approved levy. Over half of the expenses were for air handling equipment, and nearly \$1 million of the total \$5.5 million for consulting fees. There was no air quality test conducted and presented to the school board to make an informed decision on the need for the air handling equipment.

In October 2018, Susan

Karp voted to renew the superintendent's contract for three years, starting at \$107,171 plus benefits, even though the current contract is not up for renewal until June 30, 2019. She voted for this despite teachers' contract negotiations not being complete, and even though the teachers in the Carlton school district are some of the lowest paid in the state. The superintendent will receive a \$50,000 severance if her position is terminated due to a consolidation or dissolution.

Don't just know who you are voting for. Make sure you know their qualifications and how they may vote. In this case, there are millions of tax dollars and the future of an entire community at stake.

Dave Chmielewski, Carlton

Ketola for County Attorney

This November brings a lot of tough and significant decisions for the residents of Carlton County. I want to share my thoughts and experiences working with Carlton County Attorney candidate Lauri Ketola. Several years ago I was fortunate to meet Lauri

and her family and have been able to get to know her both personally and professionally. Over the years, I have observed Lauri as a mother who is very involved in her children's activities, as a leader organizing and maintaining various efforts and actions to strengthen our community and as an attorney when the stakes were very high and the facts complex. Without a doubt, Lauri will continue to share her compassion, effort, professionalism and leadership with our community if she is elected.

Dan Danielson, Cloquet

Vote for Maki

I am writing in support for Roger Maki to be the next mayor of Cloquet. I have known Roger for many years. He is well-known and is a person who has been involved in city government for several years. He is a man of integrity and honesty. He will serve the people of Cloquet well as mayor.

I encourage everyone to get out and vote on Nov. 6. Voting is a privilege we all have in our democratic country. Please don't neglect this privilege to vote on Election Day.

Dennis Morreim, Cloquet

LETTERS to the editor

County incumbent wants your vote

I am Susan Zmyslony, and as your current District 4 County Commissioner and Board Chair, I am proactive, question how things operate, and embrace better changes in how the county conducts business. The dedication and commitment I provide to the position of County Commissioner is evident not only in the participation of my committees and community activities but also because of my 100 percent attendance at the County Board meetings. I work for the individuals of all communities in District 4 and I