Opinion



Do some homework, then get out and vote

It is National Newspaper Week. Obviously, it is a very important week for people in the newspaper business, but also for most Americans who realize that freedom of the press is integral to a free democracy. You don't have to go back many decades to discover those who attacked newspaper, radio and television reporters the loudest were more often than not convicted of the very crimes the journalists uncovered. One of the most remembered quotes from Richard Nixon was, "I am not a crook."

We have a leader in our country right now who repeatedly refers to the press as an enemy of the people. It is a cancer in our country. In 2017 alone, there were 45 physical attacks on journalists. These attacks were on people who were only armed with a paper, pencil and a recorder. This happens when you have someone in a position of power making it sound like this is acceptable.

Our country just went through another of many recent gut-wrenching messes with the latest Supreme Court nomination. I can't say I would have agreed with denying the appointment for something that happened decades ago, but his behavior during the proceedings was unsettling to me. He has been appointed to a body

Off the Mark



that is supposed to be able to make unbiased decisions on the most important cases in our country, keeping an open mind on people of all ideologies. His testimony did not reassure me that this will be the case.

We have the power to make changes in this country. The next opportunity is on Tuesday, Nov. 6. The 2018 primary election turnout in Minnesota, MPR reported, was the highest since 1982. That was slightly over 902,000 people, or 22.7 percent of registered voters. That adds up to slightly more than one in five voting. ONE IN FIVE! Imagine how politicians would sit up and listen if that were closer to 80 percent.

It isn't difficult. If you haven't been following along with this year's candidates, we have more avenues than ever to check out how they stand. Don't seek out far left sites or far right sites to get your information. Check in on multiple trusted websites. to put a stop to it—get out and vote.

"The ideal husband understands every word his wife

doesn't say." — Alfred Hitchcock,

film director

If you think we are on the right track and business should continue as is—get out and vote.

If you think the deliberations on last week's SCOTUS nominee were a joke—get out and vote.

If you thought they ended with an incredibly fair decision—get out and vote.

If you have a problem with border walls and separating immigrants (legal or illegal) from their children—get out and vote.

If you think that is the only way to fix our immigration problem—get out and vote.

If you feel the #MeToo movement could use a little boost from our elected officials—get out and vote.

If you think the #MeToo movement is a plot to ruin the lives of rich, white men—get out and vote.

And if you think that people in some countries not having the opportunity to vote is appalling, then get up and use the power this country gives you—get out and vote.

If you think this week's "Off the Mark" was annoying and misguided, sit down and write a letter to the editor. Then, on Nov. 6—get out and vote.

Needing to laugh?

To the People of the Community:

If you are in need of a good laugh, go see the play at the Opera House this coming weekend. Every person in the cast is fantastic in their role, but can you imagine Editor Mark doing the splits and falling dead? I laughed until my eyes watered. You'll be sorry if you miss it. We Letter to the Editor

are so blessed to have our Opera House and our area talent. Go see it!

> Alvina Welgraven Tyler, MN

Journalism under attack when needed most

When has the work of journalists been more important?

Was it 50 years ago, when America's inner cities were burning and the Pentagon was hiding the scope and nature of the war in Vietnam?

Or 100 years ago, when the administration of President Woodrow Wilson was muzzling newspapers and churning out propaganda in support of the nation's involvement in what would become known as World War I?

Or now, when falsehoods metastasize through social media, foreign governments attempt to subvert our elections, citizens insulate themselves from opposing viewpoints and the president derides as "fake news" the information he doesn't like and calls news media the "enemy of the people?"

It's not difficult to make the case that it's more important now than ever that journalists offer unvarnished facts about important issues after asking hard questions.

But now, the time when journalism is needed most, is when journalism is under duress like never before.

The number of people in newspaper newsrooms has dropped by nearly half since 2006, according to journalism. org.

The president has launched a frontal assault on journalism, and his words have had an impact on his followers. A recent poll indicates 43 percent of Republicans believe President Donald Trump should "have the authority to close news outlets

Guest Column

By Sid Schwartz, editor, The Gazette, Janesville, WI

engaged in bad behavior." Meanwhile, long-developing problems presented by social media continue to fester.

Facebook and Twitter muddy the information waters. They appeal to people who want to read, hear and see only information with which they agree. And social media are vulnerable to manipulation.

President Trump turns to Twitter to deliver what often is misinformation to millions of followers, bypassing the filter of journalists asking, "Is this true?"

Foreign governments have attempted to influence our elections by spreading lies through social media, a scheme that doesn't work through traditional media staffed by skeptical, fact-checking journalists.

The fourth estate has been a check on the power of government since the Bill of Rights was penned. Thomas Jefferson famously wrote that if it were left to him to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, "I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

Now, when facts are increasingly perceived as optional and bad information clogs the internet, we need journalists asking questions, cutting through propaganda and offering fair and balanced reports.

Our republic depends on it.



If you feel disturbed by what you have seen by the current administration and would like

The juiciest gossip in town

I know that spreading gossip and rumors is a pastime for many people. You would think that, being in the newspaper business, I would hear some of the town's juiciest bits. Guess what. It's true. Want to know what I've heard?

Did you hear the one about Lake Benton School? They have been accused of having a positive attitude and having students who like to come to school every day. I have even heard that students do their homework and like their teachers. Can you even believe that? And to top it all off, the Minnesota Department of Education told me that more than half of the students in the school either meet or exceed testing standards in math, reading and science. Seriously?

Then there's the one I heard about the City of Lake Benton's Maintenance Department. Maintenance Supervisor Todd Draper and his assistant, Troy Nordmeyer, actually have the audacity to try to save the city money, and thus the taxpay-



ers' money. For example, Todd encouraged the city not to trade the old maintenance department's pickup in because they had just poured money into it for repairs. Instead, he suggested that they use it as a beater for the really dirty jobs, which would make the new maintenance truck last longer. And when someone in the community needs a hand or advice, Todd and Troy are there. I mean, come on! They actually go above and beyond their job descriptions?

Oh, and that City Administrator/Clerk, did you hear the one about her? Eileen keeps the city within its budget and always seems to find the extra funding when something special comes up. She works with the entire gamut of city departments on their various projects. For example, she put many hours into the citywide deer hunt preparations so the deer population can be curtailed and both the DNR and TNC could be appeased. OMG! Is that any way to run a city?

And don't forget those City Council members. They are the limit! Each council member actually attends the meetings of the subcommittees they have been assigned to and when an ad hoc committee needs to be designated, they step up to the plate there, too. They put alot of personal time into their council positions, listening to the community's needs and wants and concerns and they look for ways to solve problems together, rather than closing their minds to the ideas of others. How could they do such a thing?

Now that you know the juiciest tidbits of gossip and rumor around town, try spreading the good news, instead of the junk that destroys people and communities.

Letters to the Editor policy

The Tyler Tribute encourages readers to participate in the editorial page of this paper. Original and diverse opinions through the form of letters to the editor are encouraged. Due to limited space the Tyler Tribute asks that letters be limited to 300 words or less. Tyler Tribute reserves the right to edit or reject letters that include:

- Crude or profane language
- Personal attacks
- Comments that are disrespectful of individual's race, gender, religion, culture, sexual orientation or ethnicity
- Endorsements or complaints about commercial products or services
- Fiction, short stories or poetry
- Issues that don't relate to or impact the region
- Letters signed "anonymous" or those we are unable to contact will not be printed

The Tyler Tribute will not knowingly publish inaccurate information. Letters intending to address previously published letters should identify the previous letter and address the issues it presented.

All submitted letters should be signed and include a phone number the writer can easily be contacted through, the writer's street address for verification purposes. That information will not be included in the published letter.

Letters must be received by noon Friday for consideration of publication in the Wednesday edition of the Tyler Tribute.

Additional questions can be directed to the Tyler Tribute at 507-247-5502.

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This newspaper tries conscientiously to report the news fairly and accurately. When we fall short of this objective, we welcome complaints to our editor whose name is listed on this page.