

EDITORIAL

Aggressive reporting is good for all

Being in the public eye isn't easy. Some people become public figures because they are victims of circumstance — little Jessica McClure fell down a well; reporter Terry Anderson was kidnapped in Lebanon; secretary Fawn Hall worked for a man named Lt. Col. Oliver North.

However, most public figures choose to become public figures.

Hollywood movie stars and television personalities sell themselves to the public. And the public responds by wanting to know everything about them from their shoe size to what they had for breakfast yesterday.

Politicians also have to sell themselves to the public — their personal ideals, ethical standards and winning personalities are what get them elected — especially in this age of electronic media.

Because of this, the public wants to know everything about them, too.

But, more importantly, the public has a right to know about its elected officials. The fact that they shape the laws which rule our society is reason enough, and it is our duty as watchdogs of government to make sure our lawmakers live up to their constituents' expectations.

When state Sen. Barry Keene recently tried to pass a bill into law which would make it easier for public officials and figures to win libel or slander judgments against the news media, it was defeated by a Senate Judiciary committee.

We at the Ukiah Daily Journal, along with undoubtedly most of the members of the California Newspaper Publishers Association and the California Broadcasters Association, breathed a sigh of relief. Not only for ourselves, but also for the public.

Representatives from both the CNPA and the CBA testified before the committee that such an amendment to the current law was unconstitutional and would "have a chilling impact on aggressive reporting."

Currently, to win a libel or slander suit, this class of plaintiff must prove that a defamatory statement was made with actual malice — with knowledge that it was wrong or with reckless disregard for the truth — on the part of the news media.

Keene's bill would have given public officials and figures an alternative route where they could win a court declaration of falsity by proving, through clear and convincing evidence, that an article or broadcast was false and defamatory. The plaintiffs would not have to show the article or broadcast was written or made with malice or negligence.

He said the bill would give him and other elected officials an easier way of protecting their reputations.

But it also would have discouraged vigorous reporting by encouraging more lawsuits.

The costs of such lawsuits would have been one deterrent. Many media are not corporate giants, but are good at weeding out the truth.

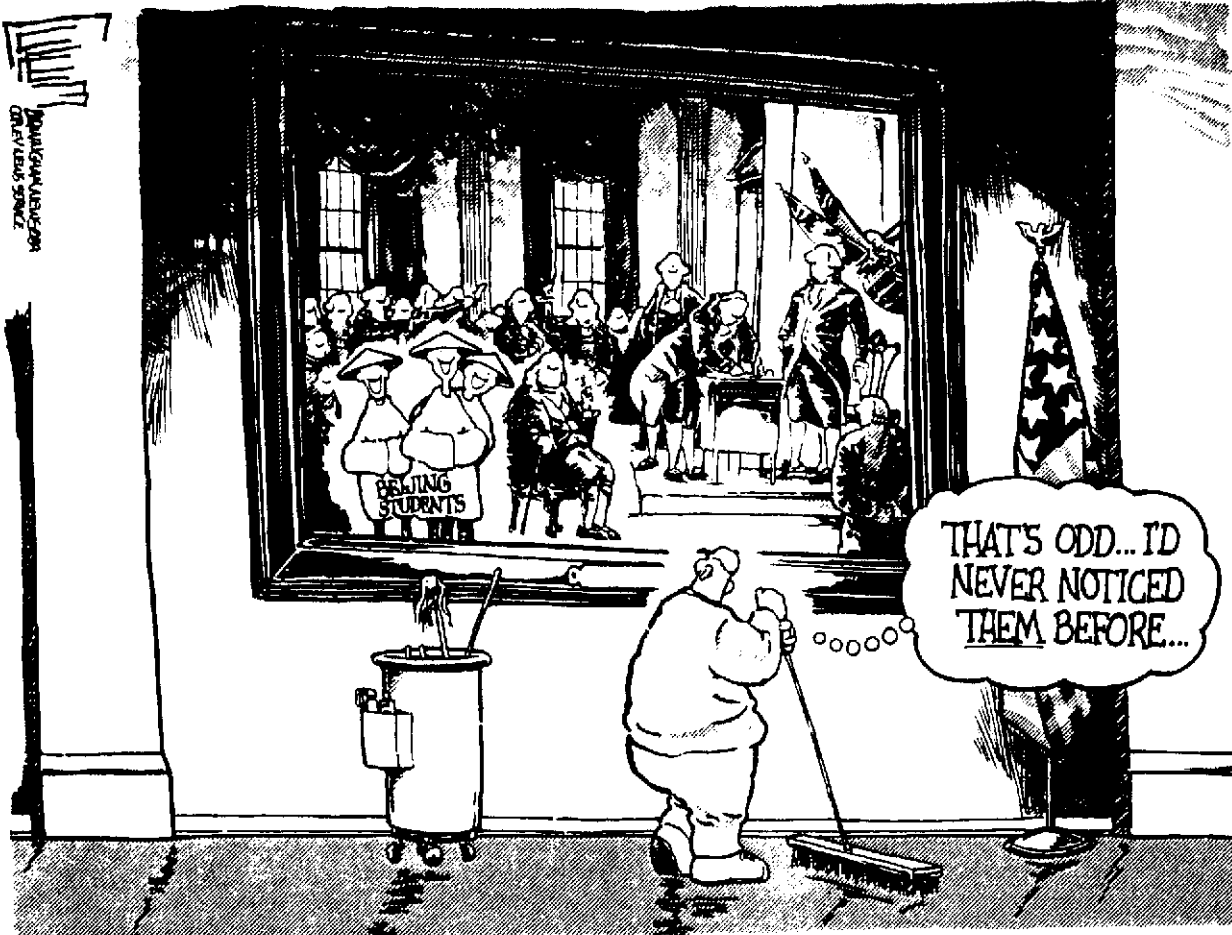
However, when faced with the choice of exposing possible wrongdoing on the part of an elected official and spending great sums of money on legal fees, some news agencies — especially the smaller ones — might be hesitant to pursue such stories.

During the 90 minutes of heated debate on the Keene bill, several of the committee members including Keene were severely critical of the press. Of course, relations between the press and those at the state Capitol are — according to political observers — at an all-time low.

However, during the discussion one committee member, Sen. Art Torres (D-Los Angeles) reminded his colleagues, "We all knew what went along with this job before we ran for office."

Although we don't always agree with the editorial stances of some of our colleagues, we do believe they have the right to be free to express their views and pursue the truth — as we do.

Freedom of the press is not just for those of us in the media, but more importantly for the good of society and democracy as whole. If you disagree, take a look at China.



This was news

Compiled by JODY KJOSA

25 years ago

Thursday, June 4, 1964
Ukiah Daily Journal

The big moment in their scholastic careers will come Thursday, June 11, at 8 o'clock for a record number of Ukiah high school seniors who will receive their diplomas during graduation exercises held at that time in Carl Purdy hall at the Fairgrounds.

The '64 class numbers 156 girls and one boy less, or 155, to make up the total of 311 for a Ukiah high school graduating class of record size. The previous record, that of '63, was 273 graduates.

CITY IS ASKED FOR FENCE AT FAIR-
GROUNDS. Five 12th District Agriculture Association directors and the manager appeared before the City Council last night to "revive" what they considered a 10-year-old agreement by the city to construct a fence and gate along the south boundary of the Fairgrounds, from N. State Street to Mazzoni Road.

Nelmes Smith, board president, told the council that the use of Mazzoni Road as an ingress to the Fairgrounds constituted a nuisance, principally due to "hot-rodders."

Richard Auger, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Auger of Ukiah, has earned his varsity letter in golf at the University of California at Davis for 1964, the University announced this week.

A hole-in-one scored by Ukiah's Bob Chinnock on the Ukiah Municipal Golf Course recently may earn him a trip to Scotland for two and \$1,000 if he is winner of the annual Old Smuggler Hole-in-One Sweepstakes.

Chinnock, who recently received a special ash tray with the hole-in-one golf ball featured in the ash tray design, became eligible for the big sweepstakes upon registering his ace.

50 years ago

Monday, June 5, 1939
The Redwood Journal

CHANCE MEETING REUNITES BROTHERS. For the first time in 21 years, H. H. Wise of Ukiah and his brother, E. M. Wise, were reunited, when Wise, a soldier with the 30th Infantry, U. S. army, camped in Ukiah with the Infantry Friday. Wise has seen service with the army for 20 years, and was recently stationed in the Hawaiian Islands.

The local man's mother had written that E. M. Wise was with the army at Camp Lewis, although she was unaware that he would come to Ukiah. Charles Wise, another brother who resides with H. H. Wise and family, was working north of the Fair grounds when he recognized his brother in the group of soldiers. The family enjoyed a reunion dinner.

OXYGEN TENT INSTALLED IN THE HOSPI-
TAL. Through the efforts of 20-30 club, a new oxygen tent has been installed at Ukiah General Hospital. Funds for the tent, toward which this progressive club has worked for many months, were raised by the Tin Lizzie race in Ukiah.

Local physicians and the superintendent of the hospital were consulted in the choice of the tent and general satisfaction is expressed in the machine now installed.

FOR SALE — Copy of 1865 N. Y. Herald with account of Lincoln's assassination. Bids close July 1. Wm. Ewing, Box 558, Hopland. On display Ukiah

Chamber of Commerce.

98 years ago

Friday, June 5, 1891
Mendocino Dispatch Democrat

In conversation recently with a man of means who was visiting Ukiah for the purpose of considering its desirability as a place of residence, he remarked that we had a beautiful town, advantageously located, but that its lack of sewerage facilities was a terrible drawback. He expressed surprise that we did not put in a good sewerage system.

One of our enterprising exchanges devotes two columns to demonstrate why a girl cannot throw a stone. Time and space could have been saved by applying the same answer to the question as to why she cannot light a match in the good old traditional way.

IMPORTANT TO ADVERTISERS. We have made arrangements with the American Press Association for a regular monthly series of original and suggestive illustrations for use in advertisements. Also for suggestive texts for advertisers. By this arrangement we will be enabled to give our advertisers an opportunity to get up something new and novel in the advertising line.

On the 28th day of May, Mrs. Caroline S. Bidwell, daughter of M. W. Howard, after a life of suffering was called "to the place prepared for the people of God." Mrs. Bidwell has lived since 1858 in the neighborhood of Guerneville, Sonoma county. She was a true, honest, happy Christian woman, resigned to go to Jesus. Her death was a perfect triumph. Her remains were brought here and laid to rest in the family burial ground near her father's residence.

Mrs. Caroline Bidwell was born at Fort Smith, Arkansas, 1839. She joined the Baptist church in 1857. Funeral services were conducted at the grave by Rev. S. L. Sanford.

"Farewell, friends! yet not farewell; Where I am, ye, too shall dwell. I am gone before your face, A moment's time, a little space. When ye come where I have stepped, Ye will wonder why ye wept; Ye will know by wise love taught, That here is all and there is naught." L.C.

Templeton still wants 500 dozen eggs.

According to Wood and Iron the receipts of redwood in San Francisco from Mendocino county for the month of May were as follows: Feet of lumber, 6,355,885; number of shingles, 786,500; railroad ties, 80,662.

There will be preaching at the M. E. Church, South, at 11 o'clock a.m. and 8 p.m. by the Pastor. Subject for evening will be "The Nature, Cause, and Moral Influence of Infidelity."

If you suffer pricking pains on moving the eyes, or cannot bear strong light, and find your sight weak and failing, you should promptly use Dr. J. H. McLean's Strengthening Eye Salve. 25 cents a box.

The Fort Bragg Advocate has moved into new quarters. C. J. Cavanaugh, manager of that paper, has built a fine two story building on Main street. The lower story will be used for the printing office and the upper story for dwelling purposes.

LETTERS

Crop dusting affects air quality

To The Editor:
We hear him buzzing at 6:30 a.m., and have nicknamed him the "Killer Bee."

It's sad, scary, and it leaves us feeling helpless...like the bomb has been dropped and there's nowhere to run. The white cloud lifts slowly upward to the mountain tops, then hangs there, spreading only outward, filling this beautiful valley with copper hydroxide, sulfur, streptomycin, and other unsplorable fungicides.

The crops have had their morning dusting. The agricultural department tells us it should be over soon, but the Rattail blooms can happen at the end of the season, requiring more spray. They list for us the chemical brand names which are legal to use here, then add, "That's probably all that's being used." "Probably" can be a big word in this case.

"Copper hydroxide and sulfur can cause skin, eye, and respiratory irritation," we're told. No kidding? Is that why the little man on the tractor pulling the sprayer wears a protective suit with mask and helmet? Is that why our children are found to be suddenly allergic to "nature?"

"Pesticides do need to be kept confined," says the agricultural department spokesman. "Is blowing them through the air and dropping them from planes confining them?" we ask.

"There's no doubt about it," he replies, "dusts do sit there." We appreciate his honesty.

There are choices. At least in the grocery store. We can choose not to buy the food. But how can we choose not to breathe the air? And if we had a choice, we'd surely prefer to breathe air we can't see!

This is our first spring in Ukiah. We were drawn here by the beauty and the more natural lifestyle. We are surprised by what appears to be a lack of concern by the citizens of the valley. Is everyone just going about their daily business accepting the poor air quality as an inevitable fact of life? Do the people here care?

The Clousers
Ukiah

Family expresses thanks

To The Editor:
We, the family of Art Stilwell, would again like to express our appreciation and thank Dr. Concepcion, Paz, the staff of Valley View Skilled Nursing, and the staff of Ukiah General/Adventist West, for the care, the understanding, and the privacy that was given to Art and the family during his last few days with us.

You made it easier for all of us. We couldn't have done it without you. Thanks for a job well done.

Debbie Doyle, Judy Lehman
Kelly Westergren and Shannon Stilwell

Red Cross really cares

To The Editor:
We have read recently of the Red Cross asking for help for their organization.

My husband and I saw firsthand what wonderful services they perform with your donated dollars. They help people who are victims of tragedies beyond their control. Help is given in many ways, such as giving tools, etc., to help people help themselves, bedding, food, clothing, etc. They give to the individual needs and tide people over until they can function on their own.

In September 1987, a forest fire in the Klamath National Forest swept over my sister and brother-in-law's home they had built themselves, and completely destroyed their home. They lost everything, had no insurance and were at an age that it was impossible to start over.

Enter the Red Cross. They gave what immediate help they could and were very impressed with the way the couple tried to help themselves while being shifted from one place to the other. My sister calls it the "pioneer spirit."

The Red Cross followed the couple through their trying times. After much paper work and going through the right channels, reaching as far as Washington, D.C., it was decided they would build a small home for them.

The lovely one bedroom home is located near where the first home was located. Some fir trees have been planted to screen out the charred trees that are still standing.

The couple has nothing but praise for the Red Cross. They say it is a fine organization with wonderful trained volunteer people for disaster work. They brought a happy ending to a terrible disaster, brought on by lightning that struck the forest.

Mrs. Helen Souza
Willits

Letter policy

The Journal welcomes letters from our readers. However, we reserve the right not to print those letters we consider may be libelous, in bad taste or a personal attack. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced.

All letters must be signed and include an address and phone number for verification. Anonymous letters will not be printed.

Addresses will not be printed, but the writer's name will appear.

-Doonesbury

BY GARRY TRUDEAU



Ukiah Daily
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Mendocino County

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