

Changing times in the news business

by Julian Sereno

It's been 10 years since the bottom fell out of the newspaper business. One of the high profile casualties of the Great Recession, metropolitan dailies lost advertisers galore: real estate with the collapse of the housing market, cars dealers with the collapse of the auto industry, and classified advertising, which all went online to sites such as craigslist.

Reporters and editors were axed by the thousands, papers got smaller and went online or shut down completely. It took billionaire oligarchs such as Carlos Slim to save the *New York Times* and Jeff Bezos to save the *Washington Post*. It got so bad that Warren Buffett warned investors to not buy newspapers under

any circumstances.

In the Triangle, both dailies, the *Raleigh News and Observer* and my alma mater, the *Durham Herald-Sun*, shed staff and newsprint, but survive. The *Chapel Hill Herald* and the *Carrboro Citizen* didn't.

Metropolitan dailies believe their future is online, and that is where they are putting their money. That is where they break their major stories and investigative pieces. That is because online is where young people go for all their information. Millennials and even Generation X members rarely read words printed on paper; all they read is on their computers, tablets and smart phones.

The same forces roiling the dailies roils

niche publications as well. Which brings us to some changes at your community newspaper and niche publication, *Chatham County Line*.

The papers have gotten smaller. Last year, eight out of our 10 issues had eight pages, and only two had 12 pages, the norm heretofore. Ads were down as were articles.

But less turned out to be more. Amazingly, and unexpectedly, unique hits on our website, www.chathamcountyline.org, exploded, from less than 1,000 a month in 2016 (9,577 total unique hits) to more than 2,000 a month in 2017 (24,068 total unique hits). I have no idea if the two phenomena are related. It is certainly an interesting coincidence.

Meanwhile McClatchy, which owns The

N&O, recently bought the *Herald-Sun*. Warren Buffett would have approved; he changed his mind about newspaper ownership, said newspapers were still essential, and started buying them up himself—including the *Omaha World-Herald*, his hometown newspaper. It has a beautiful website.

For me personally, for the first time in 40 years, I no longer subscribe to a printed newspaper. It is now all digital. I know I'll miss my printed paper. After all, you can't use a digital subscription to start a fire in a wood stove, wrap valuables, clean fish or line the bottom of a bird cage.

Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.

Politics ca 2018

by Don Lein

We are now approximately one year into the Trump presidency and some predictable and some unpredictable things are happening. Most of the media and the Democratic Party are in denial and trying to figure out a strategy to delegitimize Trump as President and develop a winning strategy for the 2018 elections. Reportage has given way to partisan rants, such as racist, tax cuts for the rich, repeatedly using foul language, etc. Not only does the left twist the news, in some instances they have totally fabricated it, in order to discredit Trump and his accomplishments.

The Trump Administration had some fun with the fake/slanted news stories and recently announced the winners of the 2017 Fake News awards. Although more slanted than fake, the number one award went to the NY Times and Paul Krugman and his prediction that the markets would never recover from Trump and his policies. Needless to say, the markets are now at record highs. Of course, leftist apologists are saying the market's strength is a delayed result of Obama policies. Krugman has always leaned more toward the Socialist model of government spending/intervention/control. Also, a winner was Time magazine which falsely reported that Trump removed a bust of Martin Luther King from the Oval Office. The Washington Post ranked high with its story that Trump's "soldout" rally in Pensacola was, in fact, playing to an empty house. The reporter took the pictures before the doors opened and the Post ran the story!!! It's quite remarkable how the press has lost its objectivity.

Also, there has been a recent foofaraw about the president's

purported use of the word "sh**house". The source of the rumor was a senator who in the past has had credibility problems, so it may be a variation on the theme of "fake news". Also, members of the fourth estate were bemoaning the fact that such language was being bandied about concerning the President's offices and how embarrassing that was to explain, especially to youngsters. Where was the everpresent press when we had to explain BJs, cigars and sex play in the Oval Office to our youngsters at our dinner tables?? Or why there was a team in place to obfuscate the stories surrounding the "Bimbo eruptions" with the First Lady being its leader—apparently feminism and political practicality cannot coexist.

Another interpretation of those remarks paints the president as a "racist", however Senator Rand Paul who has gone on a number of medical mission trips to Haiti and Central America, which were paid for by private citizen Donald Trump and other benefactors. Just one of his charities. It's called letting your money do your talking!

In the wake of the many revelations in Hollywood about the shenanigans that have been going on unreported for decades, Oprah Winfrey gave a very impassioned speech on behalf of women who have been taken advantage of. Was she simply exploiting a situation that everyone knew what was going on and did nothing about for her own political advantage? Lots of pictures of her and Weinstein exist and he was no different then than he is now. Perhaps more telling was her handling of Bill Clinton and his series of sexcapades. While he was a guest on her show, victims of his sexual predation were not allowed equal access to tell their story. Some leftists are even championing her for a Presidential run.

While Democrats fret about how to both delegitimize Trump and boost their own election chances in 2018, the Gray Lady aka a New York Times has been doing a bit of soul searching and wondering on their editorial pages why some of their readers are not drinking the proffered kool-aid. They state "Not all readers have been persuaded" to the NYT political view. Apparently, the dramatic left turn that they took during the Vietnam War may be in need of correction. They report that they have readers who actually like Trump's economic agenda and they wish to better understand them and their views. Thus, they are allowing these voters a platform to explain to the readers why it is legitimate and why it is likely to succeed, to the benefit of the country. Be on the alert for more openness in the future — perhaps.

One of the first items to be discussed should be the passion the millennials have for Socialism. They clearly are ignorant of socialism's history and consistency of failure, wherever tried. The siren cry of fixing inequality by government methods has motivated advocates in any number of countries, but it always fails — why?? According to Margaret Thatcher "The problem with Socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money." Youthful ignorance can be excused — as Churchill has said "If you are not a liberal at age 20 you have no heart; if you are not a Conservative by age 30, you have no head." Churchill gave us the following warning "Socialism is the philosophy of failure, the creed of ignorance, and the gospel of envy." When every voter, young and old understands socialism and all its ramifications we will become a better nation.

Don Lein is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. A Chatham resident, he is involved in a variety of civic organizations.

Hollywood consistently degrades society

by Jeff Davidson

At first glance, 2017 appeared to be a banner year for movies. Anytime you would open the newspaper to the movie section, the appeal was strong. When visiting RottenTomatoes.com, you couldn't ignore the large number of movies rated 80 percent or higher. Yet, a nagging, insidious trend has continued for decades: Hollywood increasingly degrades society via storylines, profanity, and a multitude of devices.

In *I, Tonya*, one might expect to hear the f-word, but to hear it more than 120 times? In *Beatriz at Dinner*, John Lithgow, playing a greedy capitalist, uses the f-word in every 4th or 5th sentence in a dinner scene, with friends, and an adoring wife. Surprisingly, they all seem to find such deportment normal and socially acceptable.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

In a scene from the highly rated and acclaimed *Lady Bird*, the mother rants at her family seated at the dinner table: "Make your own f___ dinner." Gratuitous, egregious, and offensive, masquerading as entertainment? What parent, who sends her daughter to Catholic school, acts in this manner?

In *Three Billboards Outside of Ebbing Missouri* the level of profanity is over the top. Every 8th or 10th word out of Frances McDormand's mouth, and out of the mouths of the townspeople, is f___ you, f___ this, and f___ that. Early in the movie, Woody Harrelson, who plays the police chief, answers greets a caller, during his Easter dinner with his young wife and his two young children with "You god___ as___." He then smiles and winks at his children and says, "Sorry girls," as if such language in that setting is permissible as some kind of an inside joke.

The website KidsInMind.com counts about 84 f-words and its derivatives, in *Three Billboards*. The sordid language doesn't end there for this 115 minute movie: consider 36 scatological terms,

23 milder obscenities, 15 "anatomical" references, 7 disparaging remarks concerning African-Americans, 4 explicit sexual references, 2 disturbing terms for homosexuals, 2 disrespectful terms for Hispanic people, and 1 demeaning term for small people, amidst name-calling such as dummy, idiots, retards, crazy old ladies, stupid, dumb, fat boy, fat little Mexican boy, wife beaters, lazy, scumbags; provocative language on average every 40 seconds. Okay, it's a black comedy, we get it, and each of us has the option to skip seeing the movie but many actors, critics, and film societies chose it as the best picture of the year. Really?

INEPT, UNIMAGINATIVE WRITING

In *The Florida Project*, about children of single mothers, living in the throes of Disney World, guess what I hear throughout the whole movie, with no break? In the acclaimed thriller, *Get Out*, it's more of the same. In at least a dozen of the top movies this season, the f-word predominates. It's standard fare in *Good Night and Landline*, and is more lightly sprinkled throughout *Molly's Game* and *All the Money in the World*.

A friend told me, "I've never thought of myself as prudish at all — but I cringe at the current use of vulgarity — and I have been known to walk out of more than one movie because of it!"

Is there no other substitute for egregious and repeated profanity? Are screenwriters so inept that they cannot derive more clever ways to express characters' emotions? Let's be frank: using the f-word is a sign of a language deficiency, where the writer does not have a sufficiently broad vocabulary to accurately and intelligently express his or her emotions.

Would you care to argue that dropping in the f-word is "keeping it real?" How real was it for 50+ years when Hollywood movies grossly over-represented the percentage of individuals who smoke cigarettes? (and still do.) In this age, when few people read history or historical novels, too many get most of what they 'know' from the cinema. Perhaps worse, cultures

around the world, who gobble up what Hollywood has to offer, derive parallaxed views of what our country is like.

James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart, and earlier in his career, Clinton Eastwood, played tough guys, often in dire situations, and you never heard the f-word once. The same for females playing 'tough' roles... think Betty Davis, Barbara Stanwick, and Lana Turner. We remember these actors in their classic roles. Who can you cite in movies these days for classic portrayals?

THE TEEN SCENE

Of all the films cited above, *Ladybird* is the most troubling with its 15 f-words. Not many people are going to see *The Florida Project* or *Beatriz at Dinner*. People might expect profanity in *Three Billboards*, *I, Tonya*, and *Get Out*. But *Ladybird*? *Ladybird* is the movie that every other teen in America will eventually see, and many will see it multiple times. This is the movie that potentially has the most enduring cultural impact. There was no reason to drop the f-word in that early family dinner scene.

At the least, the screenwriter could have said "freaking," not a great alternative, but at least a bit less harmless than you know what. Moreover, there were so many other ways for the mother to express her frustration and anger.

Alas, Hollywood has got our culture by the throat, and it's intentional. A 50+ year all-out assault, starting with the anti-heros of the late 1960s, and it's getting worse. Dropping the f-bomb is just an easy — and I daresay — calculated way for writers, producers, and directors to degrade society. They ought to know better and they ought to do better.

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VISA

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catalogados como "trabajadores de temporada".

Así como Samuel necesitaba de patrocinio para conseguir una visa, también necesitaba de alguien quien le ayudara a llenar la solicitud; el formulario debe ser llenado en inglés, una lengua que Samuel desconoce por completo; el

solicitante debe declarar su dirección residencial, y Samuel vive en un México rural donde no existen nombres de calles ni números en las casas; y finalmente, en años recientes el departamento de estado de los USA ha permitido el procesamiento de solicitudes por vía de la internet, y Samuel no sabe de computadoras.

Si hubiese existido una fila accesible para gente como Samuel, estoy segura que él la hubiese hecho. Pero no la hay.

Aunque esta historia tiene de trasfondo la geografía de Alabama, la experiencia de Samuel ofrece lecciones para nuestra nortea Carolina. Nuestro estado se ubica nacionalmente en tercer lugar en cuanto al uso de visas H2A. De hecho, son muchos los empleadores en nuestro estado quienes contratarían trabajadores propiamente acreditados si pudieran hacerlo. Aunque es verdad que a estos empleadores les afecta la falta de filas en la ventanilla

de visados, hasta la fecha, y sin lugar a dudas, los malestares ocasionados por las políticas migratorias de los EEUU los soportan sobre todo inmigrantes como Samuel.

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