

Standard online reader survey



Q: Do you think more than 10,000 Warren County residents will vote in this election?

YES or NO

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Like steel, newsprint tariffs create trouble

Freedom of the press, including our ability to convey to you Little League scores, church socials and how your local governments are performing, is under siege — by a single Washington state newsprint manufacturer owned by a New York hedge fund.

The North Pacific Paper Company (NORPAC), which hedge fund One Rock Capital Partners bought in 2016, petitioned the U.S. Department of Commerce earlier this year for newsprint tariffs that have reached about 30 percent. The firm, which employs fewer than 300, argues Canadian newsprint companies that supply most U.S. newspapers have an unfair advantage by using Canadian government subsidies to undercut American prices.

The problem is that if you include NORPAC, the United States is down to five newsprint manufacturers, one of which is partially owned by Canadian interests and two others — in Georgia and Mississippi — are owned outright by Canada. There isn't enough U.S.-produced newsprint to supply the nation's newspapers. Not even close.

And Canada didn't drive U.S. manufacturers out of business. A 75 percent drop in newsprint consumption over the past two decades is responsible, fueled by the rise of the Internet and the resulting drastic reductions in revenues. U.S. newspapers employed 426,000 two decades ago and now have 150,000 workers, The Associated Press reported

Daily Times of Maryville

recently.

To show you how devastating these tariffs are on newspapers large and small, consider that newsprint is a newspaper's second-largest expense, behind employee salaries.

There might be some relief on the horizon. Three dozen federal lawmakers, including three Tennessee congressmen, testified against the tariffs before the U.S. International Trade Commission.

"The damage this tariff will do to the newspaper and printing industries will be catastrophic," testified Rep. Jim Cooper, D-Tenn. "Less news will lead to an increasingly distant and ill-informed American citizen."

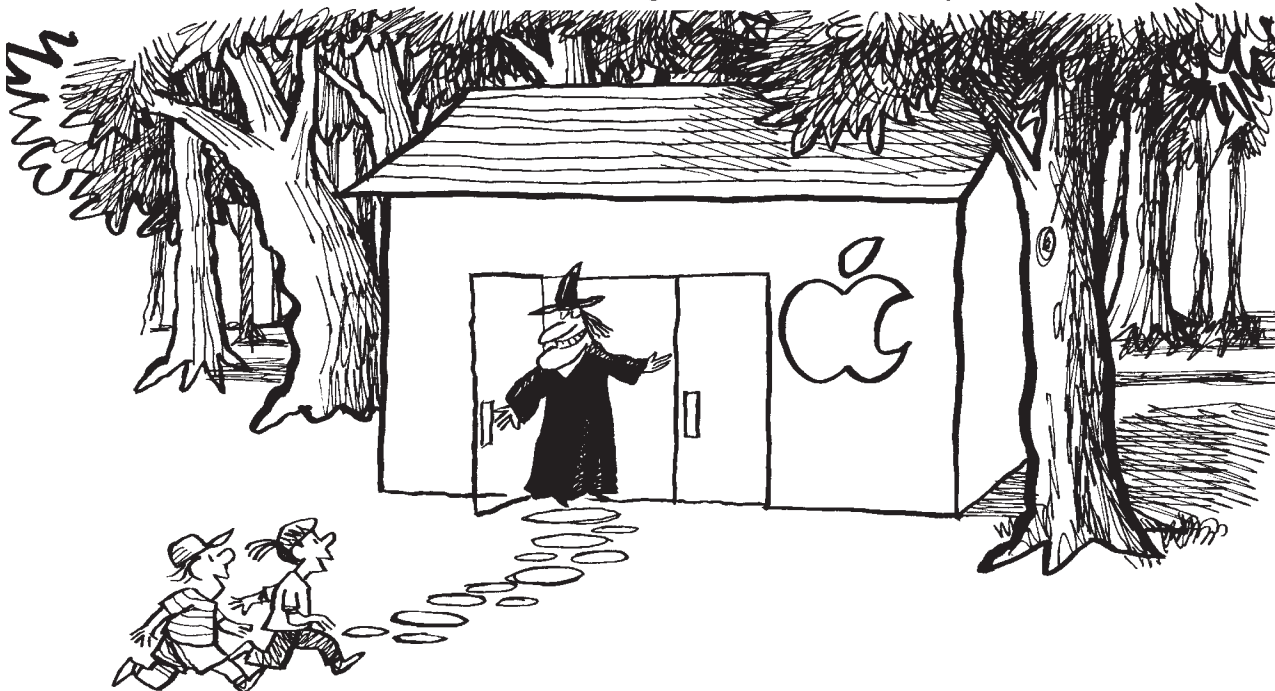
Also testifying against the tariffs were Reps. Phil Roe and Chuck Fleischmann, two Tennessee Republicans.

"At a time when the print industry is already facing significant market challenges, I would urge you to consider the inevitable loss of domestic jobs that would be caused by increased tariffs on paper imports," Roe testified.

We urge our readers to click on <https://www.stopnewsprinttariffs.org/join-the-fight-to-protect-u-s-jobs/> and sign the petition to end these unnecessary and catastrophic tariffs.

And we urge you to call your lawmakers and speak out forcefully on behalf of the First Amendment.

HANSEL & GRETEL TODAY...



GOP midterm fear rising

From time to time, I've been catching up with a Republican strategist who is trying to help the GOP keep control of the House in this November's midterm elections. It's been an up-and-down ride.

"I would put the odds of keeping the House at exactly 50-50," he told me in January.

"I get how bad things seemingly are," he said during a particularly tumultuous time in April. "But if the election were today, I'd bet my son's college tuition we'd keep the House."

He was even more confident by June. "We keep the House," he told me. "I'd bet a lot of money on that."

And now: "The last 30 days have been really bad. I really wouldn't want to have the election today."

Looking back, each change in the strategist's mood has been the result of whatever President Trump was doing at that particular moment. His current anguish is the product of what he called 30 days of rubbish. By that, he meant the period of time beginning with Trump's decision to separate families crossing illegally into the United States and ending with his performance at the Helsinki summit.

Both hurt Republicans, the strategist said, but probably the Trump-Putin summit hurt more. If the past is any lesson, memories will fade. But the problem going forward is that as future Trumpian incidents occur, Republicans will have less and less time to recover before Nov. 6.

"The next couple of weeks/months are critical in that we have had peaks and valleys before, but they always got fixed," the strategist said. "The fear is that we're running out of time and maybe they won't get fixed."

Perhaps the biggest underlying question of the coming elections is the relationship between presidential job approval and the House GOP's re-election chances. It's often observed that Trump is keeping the favor of his base supporters. He is. But Republican strategists are watching his approval sink in some educated, affluent congressional districts with lots of independent voters the party needs to hold the House.

A second GOP strategist pointed to the economy, a subject of lots of undeniably good news. But whatever happy stories there are about growth and the stock market, he said, "It's still income and wages."

"With over half the country living paycheck-to-paycheck, the question for them is, is there enough improvement occurring they can see themselves beginning to break out of that paycheck-to-paycheck cycle?"

Right now, the RealClearPolitics average of polls has Democrats up about 7 percentage points in the so-called generic ballot question, which asks which party a voter plans to choose for his or her representative in Congress.

Still, GOP victory remains possible. What Republicans would like now is the absence of noise and distraction coming from the White House.

"We just need a decent level of calmness so we can message," said the first strategist. "If we could just have calmness, we could talk about the economy and ICE. And if we could talk about the economy and ICE, we'd be fine."

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

COLUMNIST

BYRON YORK



Thanks for the lack of memories

Where are my keys? This is the second time in a year I've lost them.

The first time was at the Wasting Another Day Golf Course, where all the retired guys play. I was the designated driver that day, and the four of us ended up standing outside my car with our clubs -- waiting for me to dig my keys out of my bag, open the car and turn on the air conditioning. Except my keys were no longer in my bag.

I had answered a very important phone call on the 15th hole, and must have pulled out my keys at the same time and dropped them. The 15th hole is, naturally, the farthest hole from the clubhouse.

"What was so important that you had to answer the phone?"

"It was from my doctor's office."

"Scheduling a brain transplant?"

"Are you kidding?" jumped in Andy. "A brain would reject him."

"Are you two finished?"

"We're just getting started. We're not the ones that lost our keys."

"That's right, I forgot. While I was losing my keys, you guys were losing golf balls. There was that one in the marsh on four, the other one on --"

"That's not the same thing at all."

"-- twelve, and two on 14. Funny, my memory seems perfect now."

I called Sue to see if she'd drive out to the golf course with my extra set of keys. She was no happier than Harvey and Andy were about it.

"How is it possible to lose all your keys? Your key-ring is the size of a softball. You'd think you'd notice if something like that went missing."

Why don't you just wait there for someone to find them and turn them in?"

"I'm sure they will. Sometime next week, maybe. What are you doing that's so important you can't drive out here with my extra keys?"

"I was enjoying some 'me' time."

"Without me? How is that possible?"

"It's a puzzlement."

"So when can you get here?"

"I'm thinking Thursday." This was a Tuesday.

"I know it's an imposition, but remember, 'For better or worse.'"

"When does the 'better' part start?"

For all that, she showed up a half-hour later with the extra keys. She threw them at me through the open window of her moving car.

And then I lost them again last week. I have no idea where my keys are. I didn't play golf this week, so I knew where they weren't. If I don't find them soon, I'll have to get them replaced, which doesn't come cheap. The car key alone will cost \$330 at the dealer's.

We all forget things; it's just that we add a layer of meaning to it with age. I could never remember poems or phone numbers when I was young, so why do I think I should be able to do it now?

Besides, my cellphone does all that for me. There's even a thing you can attach to your keys, and the cellphone will tell you where they are.

But I forgot to buy it. Contact Jim Mullen at mullen.jim@gmail.com.

VILLAGE IDIOT

JIM MULLEN



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LIVIN' LA VIDA LACY

LACY GARRISON



My adventures behind the wheel

You know how Facebook Timehops to posts you made years ago? Well, mine reminded me of my last car wreck. I've had three cars totaled in my lifetime (RIP Ruby, Goldie and Ruby II).

I'm not the best driver. I get anxiety in heavy traffic and I hunch over the steering wheel. If I'm in an unfamiliar area, I have to be solely fixated on the task of driving. Do I hold Ross' hand while I drive or talk about other things? Nope, not a chance and if you ask Ross, he'll tell you.

So, here's the sad end of my first car, Ruby. I felt like the coolest driving my red Saturn with tinted windows, a customized license plate with my name airbrushed on it and a ruby dangling from my rear-view mirror.

One day, I was about to leave our house and I couldn't get Ruby to go when I put her in reverse. I hollered at Grandpa and seeing the solution he leaned in and released the parking brake. Ruby was in neutral and instantly began rolling backward down the steep hill (with Grandpa still hanging halfway out of my car). I watched in shock as she entered the woods and crumpled into the trees.

My next car was a gold Honda Accord. I always felt a little detached from Goldie, which seemed more like a family car, but I enjoyed the CD player that held six CDs at once. She met her untimely end while I was home visiting from college. I was driving by Chicken Chef when suddenly I was knocked into the crash lane by a teen from Indiana, who didn't look before switching lanes. You know you're in a small town when your sister shows up after hearing the news while working her shift at KFC. She got in his face yelling "You could have hurt my sister! You're paying for that!" reminding me of a little chihuahua in attack mode.

So, that leads me to Ruby II, my red Altima. This is the most frustrating of the three. I had just deep cleaned Ruby II, gotten a new air freshener and bought new tires. I was driving over by Cookeville Regional Medical Center with Ross. While completely stopped at a stop sign, I noticed I couldn't see the driver of the Toyota. I quickly asked Ross, "Is she going to hit us?" then yelled "She's going to hit us!" Want to guess what she was doing when she hit us head on? That's right, texting.

To be fair, I feel like I need to mention a few of my own driving blunders. Once, I had my foot wrapped from a twisted ankle and accidentally backed through my grandparents' garage door. My cousin Bailey said "You're in trouble!" before running home to leave me to deal with the consequences. I've also backed into a brick mailbox and tried telling Grandpa it might be buffed out. Nope, ended up needing a new bumper. Oh, and don't get me started on the one-way streets. I've lost count of the times I've gone the wrong direction.

Now, I drive another Altima that my niece named Coco. So far, so good and let's pray it stays that way.

Standard reporter Lacy Garrison can be reached at 473-2191.