

EDITORIAL

Newspapers vital for democracy to thrive

Do we want our news censored and distributed by our government?

Do we want our journalists jailed for reporting when our elected officials are corrupt?

This happens in other countries, but not in America where freedom of the press is a bedrock of our democracy. Our Founding Fathers did not want to suffocate the truth and that's why freedom of the press is legally protected by the First Amendment. It's that important.

Unfortunately, not everyone is well-versed in American history and realizes how crucial reliable journalism is to our culture. In recent months, newspapers have been called the "enemy of the people" and we've been vilified for providing "fake news" any time a story arises that may not align with a certain political agenda.

On Thursday, newspapers from Mississippi to Montana decided to push back. Using their own independently written editorials, newspapers participated in a nationwide campaign designed to emphasize the need for fiercely independent news organizations. *The Boston Globe* organized the campaign to encourage a unified voice and an estimated 350 newspapers across the country participated.

The *Southern Standard* is joining the chorus to provide our perspective about the value of journalism and untainted news. Our reporters are dedicated to providing accurate and objective coverage of the Warren County community, whether that news is favorable or not.

We don't necessarily bring you the news you want to hear, or provide the spin our elected officials want to convey. Our objective is unbiased, straightforward coverage and factual reporting that is never misleading.

Sometimes the stories are good, bad, or ugly. We report them all the same.

Taking a glimpse at Wednesday's edition of the *Standard*, two stories made the front page that address government projects.

The lead story discussed how proposed expansion at Warren County Jail will cost \$1.8 million more than expected, due in part to soaring construction costs. Another main story reported on TDOT plans to reconfigure the traffic flow in front of Three Star Mall and make Sparta Street dead end in front of U.S. Auto Sales.

These are two stories that show our government in action. They aren't necessarily favorable of our government, or unfavorable, but they provide basic information residents, and taxpayers, need to know. It's not fake information.

It's easy to portray newspapers as villains because we are often the only watchdogs holding government accountable. Here in Warren County, many official meetings take place with only government officials and the *Southern Standard* reporter in the room. We are the ones taking notes, recording comments and telling the community exactly what's happening and why.

If reporters were banned from government meetings, and elected officials were left to release their own account of what transpired, it would cripple our democracy. It would completely change our society.

Keeping the Fourth Estate alive and well is crucial to the best interests of America. The truth may occasionally make us mad, but truth is knowledge and the best safeguard for a free society.

We're no enemy. On the contrary, we're a great friend and an indispensable resource.

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The stench of hypocrisy

The stench of hypocrisy wafting out of this White House is particularly odious these days. The president continues to denounce what he calls "chain migration" -- the ability of legal immigrants to bring family members into this country -- while his wife's parents have benefited from precisely that process.

Melania Knauss came to the U.S. from Slovenia to work as a model in 1996; after marrying Donald Trump and becoming a citizen, she brought her parents, Viktor and Amalija Knavs, to join her. Recently they became citizens themselves, and we applaud the first lady's devotion to family values. Now the president's son Barron has two grandparents living nearby -- legally. Good for them all.

But the president's attacks on "chain migration" remain relentless and malicious, including this tweet: "Chain migration must end now! Some people come in, and they bring their whole family, who can be truly evil with them. NOT ACCEPTABLE!"

Moreover, he's embraced a proposal that would allow legal immigrants to sponsor only spouses and minor children -- not parents or siblings. If Trump has his way, people like Barron's grandparents would be stuck back in Slovenia.

Michael Wildes, the lawyer who represented Melania's parents, called Trump's immigration policies "unconscionable." Chain migration, better known as family reunification, is a "beautiful bedrock of immigration law," he told CNN.

In an earlier interview with the *Huffington Post*, Wildes explained: "This whole notion of 'chain migra-

tion' being negative is a new phenomenon, and this vocabulary is emanating from people that are xenophobic and do not have a proud sense of our immigration legacy."

It's even worse than that. Trump is playing on xenophobic fears in a cynical and calculated attempt to exploit the anger and anxiety of his core supporters. And he's lying to do that.

The president constantly argues that limiting "chain migration" is necessary to thwart terrorists and preserve jobs. But every study shows conclusively that immigrants commit crimes at far lower rates than native-born Americans, and contribute far more to the economy than they cost.

The president's hypocrisy is especially abhorrent because his own family -- not just his wife's -- has benefited enormously from the "beautiful bedrock" tradition of welcoming immigrants.

His mother, Mary Macleod, emigrated from Scotland in 1930 to join her sister in Queens: a classic case of "chain migration." When his father's father, Friedrich Trump, arrived from Germany in 1885, he was greeted by his sister Katherine and her husband, Peter Schuster.

"If Trump's proposed rules applied," writes Philip Bump in the *Washington Post*, "neither Trump's paternal grandfather nor his mother would be allowed to enter the United States, since each came to meet a sibling already here."

Trump is abandoning the foundation of his own heritage. The reek of that repudiation keeps growing stronger.

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COLUMNISTS
STEVE & COKIE ROBERTS

A crisis of sexual abuse

The last thing an America bishop wanted to see was a letter from the relentless A.W. Richard Sipe, who spent more than a half-century studying the sexual secrets of Catholic clergy.

As a psychotherapist, his research files included hundreds of thousands of pages of church reports and court testimony. He estimated he had served as an expert witness or consultant in 250 civil legal actions.

As a former Benedictine monk and priest, his private files included notes from years of work at the Seton Psychiatric Institute in Baltimore, where he counseled legions of troubled priests sent there by bishops.

"Sooner or later, it will become broadly obvious that there is a systemic connection between the sexual activity by, among and between clerics in positions of authority and control, and the abuse of children," he wrote in a 2016 letter to his local shepherd, San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy. "When men in authority -- cardinals, bishops, rectors, abbots, confessors, professors -- are having or have had an unacknowledged secret-active-sex-life under the guise of celibacy, an atmosphere of tolerance of behaviors within the system is made operative."

Sipe, 85, died on Aug. 8, even as journalists around the world produced -- often with direct links to his work -- yet another wave of news about alleged sins and crimes committed by priests and bishops. The bottom line: Sipe was a critic of the church establishment whose work was impossible for liberal or conservative Catholics to ignore.

"He was the one who -- because of

his unique background -- had firsthand knowledge of the psychosexual problems in the clergy," said Leon J. Podles, a conservative Catholic scholar with years of experience as a federal investigator.

Sipe stood by his estimate that 6 percent of Catholic clergy have some history of sexual abuse, with some dioceses and religious orders seeing figures nearing 25 percent. And in his books -- "A Secret World" in 1990 and "Celibacy in Crisis" in 2003 -- he presented evidence backing this claim: "At any one time, no more than 50 percent of priests are practicing celibacy." The bottom line: "Sexual violation within the RC clergy is systemic. I say that on the basis of observation and scientific conclusion. And I say that with empathy and concern," wrote Sipe, who left the priesthood in 1970 to marry Marianne Benkert, a psychiatrist and former nun.

The 2016 McElroy letter contained page after page of material drawn from court testimonies and documents linked to financial settlements with victims -- including old reports about Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, who recently resigned as a cardinal after a storm of new allegations about his abuse of boys, young men and seminarians.

Sipe was "dealing with realities that were truly demonic," said Podles. "What can you say when men dress boys up as Jesus and then rape them? ... Sipe knew all of the layers of this crisis and he never stopped fighting."

Terry Mattingly is the editor of GetReligion.org. He lives in Oak Ridge.



ON RELIGION
TERRY MATTINGLY



THE SCOOP
JAMES CLARK

Technology to make Standard even better

As editor of a newspaper, I'm often asked my thoughts on the future of the industry. Specifically, people ask me how much longer newspapers will be around in printed format.

As a max, I think we're talking a 10-year lifespan. It could be less, but I don't see more.

This doesn't mean great news organizations like *Southern Standard*, *The Tennessean*, and *New York Times* will cease to exist. It means over the next decade, by my estimation, we'll be moving from newsprint to solely the internet, which can improve our coverage in many respects.

What's vital to remember is most folks want reliable and trustworthy information about their community. They may not take the time to attend county government meetings, but they want to know what's happening with their tax dollars. They want to know if we're getting an indoor pool or package liquor.

The great thing about moving more news to the internet is it can really enhance our coverage. Instead of just stories, we can post videos. Instead of just one picture from an event, we can post dozens. Instead of waiting until the morning to read it in the paper, you can read it online shortly after it happens.

In keeping up with the times, I'm pleased to announce I took my first training session on the *Standard's* new and improved website Monday afternoon. It's the first of many training sessions as it's estimated it will take us about six weeks before our new website goes live. The launch has been set for late September.

From what I've seen, this new website will be like a magic carpet ride when it comes to delivering the news in digital format. It has dozens of snazzy features users will love.

Will this new website replace our printed newspaper? No, not now, but the industry is slowly creeping that way. And this doesn't have to be seen as a catastrophe.

Does anyone long for the days of taking pictures with a camera, then sending the film off to be developed? Of course not. We still take pictures, more pictures than ever, but digital technology makes the process more enjoyable and instant.

Does anyone long for the days of using a landline attached to a wall? Of course not. We still talk on the phone, but cellphones give us the luxury of talking anywhere.

Just because there's not a Blockbuster on every corner doesn't mean we no longer watch movies. Now we can watch movies any time of day by clicking a button on our TV remote.

When it comes to the newspaper industry, I liken the move to digital content to an episode of "Star Trek." It's a bold, new frontier.

For me, it's an exciting time to be a journalist. I did my first Facebook Live broadcast on election night and was able to report who won the race for sheriff about 10 seconds after the results were released. It was instant, accurate reporting and that's what is expected in this age of technology.

People no longer buy cassette tapes, but we still listen to music. By the same token, there will always be a need for trustworthy news, no matter the format.

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