

Standard online reader survey



Q: Do you think families should be separated after illegal border crossings?

YES or NO

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Newspaper industry needs tariffs removed

The trade war with Canada over steel, aluminum and milk understandably grabs the headlines. But flying under the radar is the battle over Canadian newsprint, a skirmish that's hurting businesses and costing jobs.

In January, the U.S. Commerce Department, responding to a complaint from a New York private equity firm that bought a Washington state mill, imposed a 6.2 percent tariff on imports of Canadian newsprint, then added another 22 percent in March. And U.S. newspapers, to put it mildly, are suffering mightily.

That's why a group of newspaper executives have traveled to Washington, D.C., to try to persuade lawmakers to get the Commerce Department to back off. The tariff already has prompted layoffs, newsprint is typically a newspaper's biggest operating cost behind labor, and caused some newspapers to reduce their number of pages.

Thousands of U.S. newspaper jobs are hanging in the balance.

The Washington state paper mill employs fewer than 300 people. Like some other recent tariffs, the cure is worse than the disease.

Never mind that most U.S. mills quit producing newsprint more than a decade ago as demand fell and traditional newspaper subscribers migrated

Post and Courier Charleston

increasingly to digital news. Or that Canada produces about 60 percent of all newsprint.

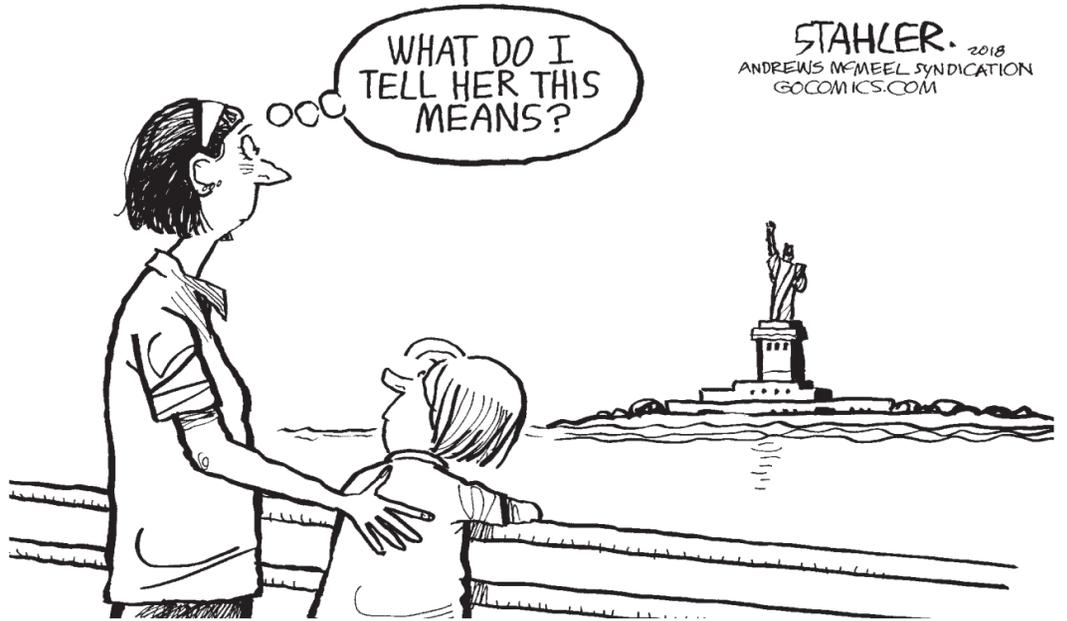
So far, the trade group News Media Alliance, representing some 1,350 U.S. newspapers, has unsuccessfully petitioned the U.S. International Trade Commission to have the case dismissed.

About 50 newspaper executives with the trade group will make their case to lawmakers who are set to testify before the trade commission on July 17. After that, the Commerce Department would make a decision to keep the tariff or lift it.

Our democracy also needs an informed public, a service that newspapers provide to their communities with more depth than other media.

So it's no comfort that fewer than half of the newspapers that existed in 2001 are still in business, and the industry, which employed nearly 412,000 people then, now employs less than half that, according to a 2017 report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The newsprint tariff isn't the only problem newspapers are facing, but it is one the administration can and should address quickly. Lift the tariff on Canadian newsprint.



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FBI's Trump-Russia probe

The struggle to uncover the FBI's conduct in the Trump-Russia probe has made some congressional investigators deeply suspicious of the bureau. But what do those investigators think actually happened in the Trump-Russia affair?

First, they're convinced the FBI has something to hide. In the last 12 months, the bureau has, at various times, ignored, slow-walked, resisted and stonewalled congressional requests for information on the Trump-Russia investigation.

When did the investigation start? How did it start? What measures did the FBI, its lawyers and its informants employ? Getting facts out of the FBI has been a long and arduous task.

First to cause serious suspicion was the Trump dossier. Eyebrows were raised when investigators learned the FBI, at the height of the 2016 presidential campaign, offered to hire a former British spy who was collecting allegations about Trump and Russia.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Rep. Devin Nunes pushed for information. Among other things, he learned the former British spy, well-connected with the FBI, was paid by the Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee. That apparently did not matter.

Then Nunes and others wondered: What did the bureau do with the sensational allegations in the dossier? That gave birth to the so-called "FISA abuse" investigation, when Republicans looked into whether the FBI used unverified allegations from the Trump dossier in proceedings before the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court. It turned out

the FBI did just that, to win a wiretap on Carter Page, who for a short time was a volunteer on candidate Trump's foreign policy advisory board.

Congressional investigators came away with the impression that the FBI was hiding something. It was. Now, Congress is trying to get information about the informant(s) the FBI used in the Trump-Russia probe, and precisely what those informants did.

The bottom line is some Republicans are wondering whether in the above instances, and perhaps others, someone actively tried to frame or entrap or set up Trump figures. And those Republicans wonder whether the FBI knew about it or played some sort of role in it.

In short, there is suspicion the FBI might have abused its tremendous powers in a highly politicized investigation undertaken in the middle of a presidential campaign.

The suspicions are behind the House move to force the FBI to give up information. Last Friday evening, top House lawmakers, including Speaker Paul Ryan, met with bureau and Justice Department officials to demand compliance with House subpoenas. They gave the FBI a tight deadline to produce the subpoenaed information or face serious retaliation, like contempt proceedings, from the House.

Some Republicans believe the FBI will, finally, comply. Maybe that will happen, and maybe it won't. But the only thing that can reduce suspicion in the current atmosphere is more openness.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

COLUMNIST

BYRON
YORK



I don't miss sound of vinyl

They say that most people under the age of 30 these days wouldn't recognize the sound of a needle scratching across a record.

And why would they? I wonder how many of them have even seen a record player. Would they know how to use it? Would they know the difference between a 33 and a 45?

I haven't owned a record player for 30 years. Which is why it bothers me when I hear people say that vinyl records sound better than digital playbacks. I guess some people enjoy pops and clicks and skips in their music, but not me.

There will always be some people who think the "good old days" were better. I used to work with a guy who insisted on using a fountain pen long after computers were common at the workplace. Sometimes I think about him and wonder where he's starving now.

Every album and every song I ever bought as a kid is now on my phone, instantly available. I can access any music I want from the past, the present and from all over the world, instantly -- all of it in pristine condition, in digital files that will never wear out, pop or skip. I do not want to go back to the good old days of going to a record store, flipping through albums for hours, coming home and stacking three or four albums on the record player at a time, then having to be careful not to touch or scratch the record while sliding it back into its cover. And don't leave it in the sun, because it will warp.

In August of 1965, I saw the Beatles

at the Hollywood Bowl. It was the next-to-last show they would play in the U.S. that year. My ticket cost \$5, or as Roger Miller put it, "three hours of pushin' broom." From my seat, I caught a glimpse of an armored car driving to the rear of the bandshell during one of the opening acts. When they took the stage, you could actually hear them over the screaming, even though they used small amps, no monitor speakers, no earpieces and no mixing boards. The vocals came through the PA system.

In my memory, it was a great, unforgettable concert. That probably had more to do with the energy of the audience than the sound. The reality was probably more like a great bar band playing in a stadium. During Paul McCartney's last concert tour, in 2017, the average ticket price was \$145, or 20 hours of minimum-wage work. But he played for over two hours and he had the best equipment money could buy. I doubt he was nostalgic for the old days.

So when people long for the sound of vinyl, or anything else from their past, I have to wonder: Do they miss the thing itself, or the way they felt back then? Because it probably wasn't nearly as good as they think it was.

It's getting harder and harder to separate real memories from rose-tinted nostalgia. That may be part of the vinyl revival. I do miss the album covers and the liner notes, the credits of writer, producer and engineer. But I don't miss the sound.

Contact Jim Mullen at mullen.jim@gmail.com.

VILLAGE IDIOT

JIM
MULLEN



LIVIN' LA VIDA LACY

LACY
GARRISON



Covering wrecks awful part of job

The worst part about my job is covering wrecks. Most of the ones I've covered have been relatively minor, but last Thursday was different. The scene rattled me pretty deeply.

I parked my car alongside Highway 8 atop Harrison Ferry Mountain and made my way toward the scene of the wreck. The truck was totally unrecognizable. I looked for any markings on the charred vehicle that was overturned and leaning against the guardrail and snapped a few quick shots.

Then, family and friends started showing up. A young girl began squalling accompanied by a lady looking around helplessly, crying softly, but also attempting to hold it together long enough to get information from the officers.

An officer told me a helicopter would be there in four minutes to airlift the teen so I retreated to a nearby field to get a couple of shots as it landed. It circled once and suddenly a big red truck came barreling by. The officers yelled for him to get out of the way while he hollered out his window "That's my son!"

I watched as the father and several officers bent down in a circle on the grass and prayed while the helicopter landed. They remained huddled together for several minutes. When they rose, one officer wiped a tear from his eye. Proverbs 17:17 popped into my mind. A true brother is always ready to help in times of need or trouble.

As I started to leave the scene, I noticed the parked vehicles lining the highway. They rolled their windows down hoping for an update while I determinedly walked past the long stretch to my car without looking their way. A car pulled up behind me and another girl jumped out crying and sprinted down the road.

It reminded me of the day Leah died. The anniversary of her death is right around the corner. I had a flashback as I got into my car of the feelings I had experienced -- confusion, shock, disbelief, and pain. I said a quick prayer for the injured teen and his family before driving back down the mountain.

When I got off work, I went to the Back Porch Auction and Event Center to hear the debate held for the County Executive and Sheriff candidates. A lady asked me, "Are you Ken's granddaughter? Are you related to his granddaughter that fell from that balcony?"

Those words are as gruesome to me now as they were then, but I nodded. Then she told me an amazing story of how Leah treated her sister, who had Down syndrome, with such kindness when they would eat at KFC. She told me Leah went out of her way on several occasions to make their dining experience the best possible and they were devastated by her loss.

I needed those kind words and I believe so often others do too. Don't hesitate to share an uplifting memory, words of encouragement or compliments whenever you get the opportunity.

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