Editorial



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Congress considers legislation that would support local news organizations

Editor's Note: The Donalsonville News and America's Newspapers support passage of the Local Journalism Sustainability Act, which was introduced July 16. It is critically important that newspapers across the country get involved and take action to encourage their Congressional representatives to support this legislation. Members are encouraged to publish this opinion piece and the accompanying editorial cartoon — or write their own editorial — to educate the public about this important

In the past five months, Congress has responded to the Coronavirus public health crisis with several emergency relief measures, including the stimulus checks sent to individuals and households, payroll protections to small businesses, expanded unemployment payments, fee waivers for borrowing against 401(K) plans and more.

Now, Congress will get the opportunity to pass a relief measure that protects your access to trustworthy local news, helps grow local businesses through ads placed in local news media - and rewards you for subscribing to a newspaper like this one.

Guest **Editorial Dean Ridings**

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The Local Journalism Sustainability Act, introduced on July 16, is a bipartisan bill co-sponsored by U.S. Representatives Ann Kirkpatrick, a Democrat from Arizona, and Dan Newhouse, a Republican from Washington state. In brief, the legislation provides for tax credits for subscribing to a local newspaper, payroll credit for paying journalists who provide local news, and credit for advertising in local newspapers and local media.

This act responds to the insidious way the pandemic has deeply damaged American communities in a malevolent cycle. It forced the shuttering of many local businesses that stopped advertising in their local paper. Newspapers,

which have seen their revenues plummet, responded by laying off the people who bring the news or dropping the days they publish. That threatens the access to vital news by people in the community who themselves may be out of a job temporarily or permanently and can no longer afford newspaper subscriptions.

Here's how the Local Journalism Sustainability Act would

help everyone caught in this vicious circle:

• Credit for advertising in local newspapers and local media. Businesses with fewer than 1,000 employees would be eligible for a five-year non-refundable tax credit to spend on advertising in local newspapers or local radio or television stations. The credit, up to \$5,000 in the first year and \$2,500 in each of the next four years, would cover 80% of advertising costs in the first year and 50% annually thereafter. This provision helps local businesses as well as local media companies.

• Credit for local newspaper subscriptions. The act provides for a non-refundable tax credit of up to \$250 per year to help cover the costs of subscriptions to local newspapers, in print or digital form, that primarily produce content related to news and current events. The credit would cover 80% of subscription costs in the first year, and 50% thereafter and helps consumers while incentivizing support of local news organiza-

• Payroll credit for journalists. This five-year refundable tax credit could be used by local newspapers on compensation of its journalists up to \$50,000 a year. The credit would cover 50% of compensation, up to \$50,000, in the first year and 30% of compensation, up to \$50,000, in each of the subsequent four years. This provision will go a long way toward ensuring that communities keep their local news coverage.

This simple yet comprehensive legislation helps the three keys to trustworthy, fair and accurate local journalism: citizens, business owners and journalists. This is not a bailout or handout to any of these elements of a thriving community but an urgently needed assist with a strictly limited timeframe responding to an unprecedented public health and economic

Please contact the office of your local U.S. representative to ask them to support your local businesses, your local news media and your access to the trustworthy local news that only your community newspaper provides by co-sponsoring the Local Journalism Sustainability Act.

To see how to contact these legislators by email, phone or mail, just go to https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials.

You'll be taking another important step toward helping your community and its small businesses, including the local newspaper, emerge healthy from this crisis.

On behalf of its approximately 1,500 newspaper and associate member companies, America's Newspapers is committed to explaining, defending and advancing the vital role of newspapers in democracy and civil life. We put an emphasis on educating the public on all the ways newspapers contribute to building a community identity and the success of local businesses. Learn more: www.newspapers.org

Reflections on two great men

Occasionally your words take you where you had no intention of going. As a white person that grew up in the segregated south, I would never have dreamed that my path would cross with the two civil rights giants that died this past week.

Reverend C. T. Vivian and Representative John Lewis both were at the forefront of the struggle for the civil rights of minorities. They were leaders in the movement when I was still in elementary school, totally unaware of the swirling currents of change that still ebb and flow to this day.

Both Vivian and Lewis practiced non-violence even as they were beaten and challenged by angry mobs everywhere during those early days. It takes a great man to turn the other cheek in the face of such hostility, but in doing so they paved the way for much of the progress that has occurred in the past 55 years.

The Hate Crimes speech that eventually resulted in my receiving the John F. Kennedy Profiles in Courage Award, gave me an opportunity to interact with both

Emory University initiated a program called "Hearings for Healings: Testimonies on Racism and Reconciliation." C. T. Vivian and I were the speakers at the first meeting. While the emphasis was on racial healing and reconciliation, I realized after the program that no words on my part could compare with the experiences of Vivian.

We were from two different



Ponderings Dan Ponder dan@donalsonvillenews.com

generations and from two different worlds. I could not imagine his journey, yet he recognized that the battles against racism were won one day, one person at a time. We shook hands recognizing our differences while remaining committed to a better future for all.

Later, National Public Radio conducted a program featuring John Lewis and myself. Although we were in different recording studios in different states, I was drawn to Lewis' manner during our time together. In our discussion, he was courteous, gracious, and treated me with total respect.

I left that interview so impressed with Lewis. He treated me as an equal which I knew was not the case. I followed his career in the years that followed, always aware that he did know how to make good trouble. A native of Troy, Alabama, Lewis served Atlanta for over 30 years in the House of Representatives. His unwavering commitment to doing what was right resulted in him becoming widely known as the conscience of Congress.

I find it so sad that in the nearly two decades since I met Vivian and Lewis, Americans are still talking and fighting about race and inequality. The non-violent path these men took opened so many doors and resulted in long overdue change. How we need that same leadership now.

It is ironic that two giants of the civil rights movement died within 24 hours of each other. I was nothing more than a small footnote in the long careers of these men. However, the opportunity to personally interact with these men gave me a chance to form my own opinion.

These were men who used faith, courage, and a sense of right to confront some of the darkest days of our nation. They worked tirelessly for change all the while advocating nonviolence.

We, all of us, are better off for the work done by C. T. Vivian and John Lewis. Politics aside, they walked tall and straight and left a legacy that will stand the test of time. It was an honor to have known them, if only for the briefest of time.

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A heavy dose of nerdy type casting

I've been thinking about the word "cast" lately. You see, my son and I recently took up fishing. After he saw some fishermen catching fish on a pier on Lake Michigan, he has insisted that I teach him how to fish. Apparently it's better to teach a kid to fish than to merely provide him with

all-you-can-eat fish sticks. As the new school year has been rapidly approaching (with plenty of health-related issues to worry about), I wanted to make good and take Miles fishing. We borrowed some fishing gear from my friend Geoff and headed out to the White River, just north of Indianapolis. Soon Miles and I were putting grubs on hooks and de-tangling fishing lines. I taught him how to cast his line, which got the word "cast" stuck in my head. It has many uses. Let me explain.

The cast of "Friends" is going to do a reunion show on HBO. I think it's going to be called "The One Where Phoebe Gets COVID-19." Ellie Kanner was the casting director for the show. She cast the actors in their now-famous roles. Did you know that Courtney Cox was originally cast as Rachel, but opted to



The Grammar Guy

Curtis Honeycutt

play Monica? She believed Monica's character was a stronger female role.

You get a cast on your leg if you fall out of a tree and break your leg. I have never broken a bone, nor have I had a cavity, for that matter. Don't cast any aspersions on me due to my exceptional bones.

When you stand in the sun, you cast a shadow on the ground. If you stand there long enough, your shadow gets longer and eventually

disappears as the sun sets. There's a metaphor for life in here, but I'm trying not to overthink it.

Of course, these types of words (like "cast") are called "homonyms." These are words that are spelled the same and sound the same but have different meanings. Words that are spelled the same and sound different, and have different meanings are called "homographs." Examples include "bass," "lead," "tear" and "wind."

In all, dictionary.com provides sixty-six different definitions for the word "cast," all of which are either nouns or verbs? Who knew that definition number sixty-six of "cast" is "a low-grade, irregular wool" or that definition sixty-four is a falconry term for "a pair of hawks put in flight together"?

Leave it to me to find such nerdy joy from one word. After all, it's my cast (definition number fifty-five: "tendency, inclination"). The die is

Curtis Honeycutt is a syndicated humor columnist. He is the author of Good Grammar is the Life of the Party: Tips for a Wildly Successful Life. Find more at curtishoneycutt.com

We want your historical Seminole County photos to be a part of the 2020 Seminole County Centennial pictorial publication.



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