

Printed news is far from dead

Kansas Press Association
Executive Director
Doug Anstaett



Despite all the doomsayers out there writing obituaries for the nation's newspaper industry, 150 million Americans, two out of three adults, read a local newspaper last week.

Newspaper Association of America research from 2011 by Scarborough USA indicates almost 70 percent of your neighbors read either a printed newspaper or its online counterpart within the past seven days.

How could that be?

Well, it's because newspapers still represent the most trusted source of news in America. I know that's hard to believe when you hear the "mainstream media" criticized at every turn on cable television.

But it's true.

When citizens want to get the facts, they turn to their newspaper.

This is National Newspaper Week, and this year's theme, "Newspapers, Your No. 1 Source for Local News," underscores the importance of the nation's newspapers in the daily lives of its citizens.

Newspapers certainly have their competitors out there: a hundred million websites, hundreds of thousands of bloggers, Facebook, Twitter, billboards, radio and television. And that competition is formidable.

But where does the vast majority of the "authoritative" news coverage originate that other outlets utilize? Simple ... the nation's daily and weekly newspapers.

If print is dead, then why do more than 7,000 weekly and 1,400 daily newspapers still open their doors every day and report what is happening in their communities?

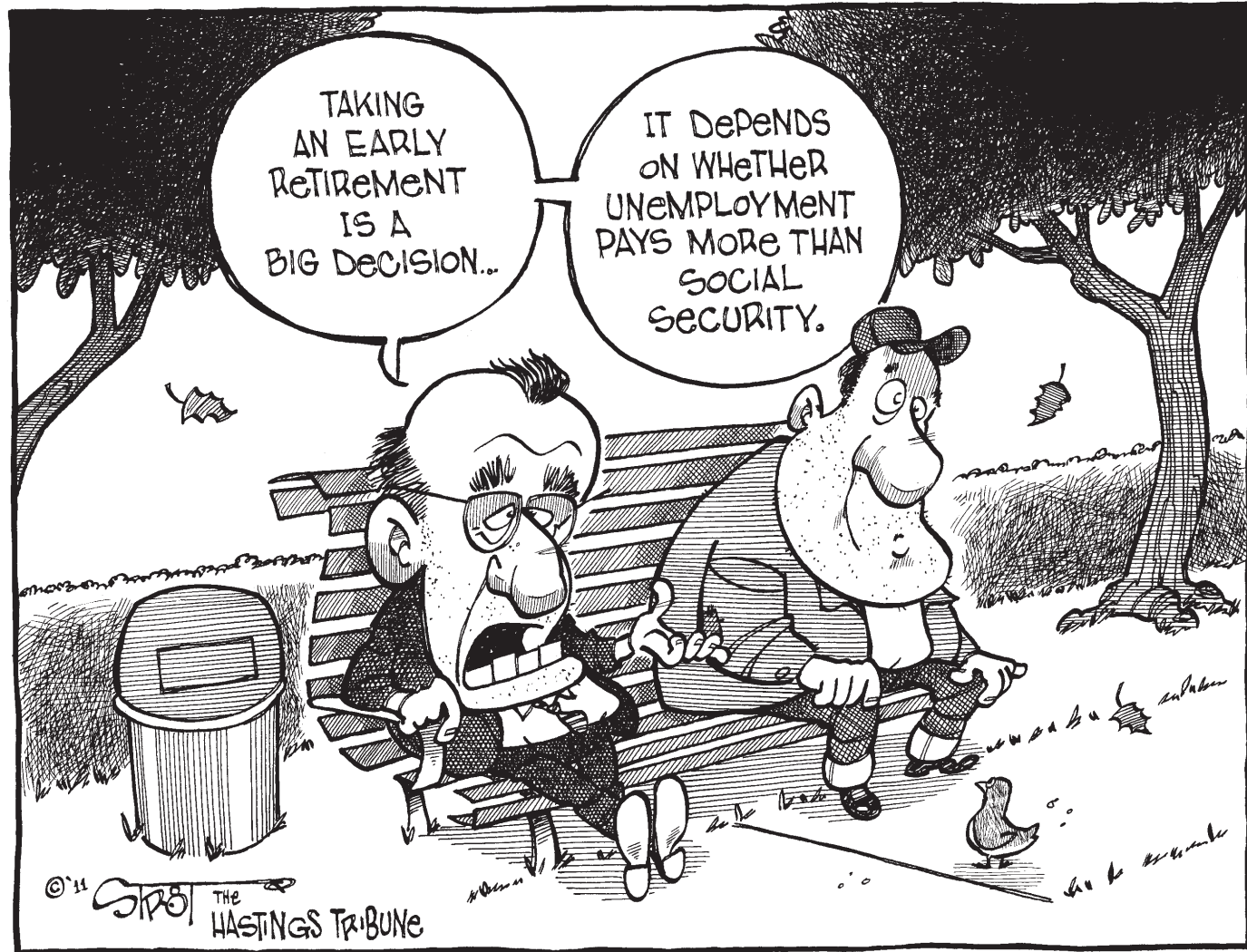
Because they take seriously the importance of local news. They know those who plunk down their hard-earned cash want their newspaper to cover those events that are unique to each community.

Every day, newspapers in our communities cover the big stories and the routine as well. Editors take to heart the newspaper's role as the most comprehensive source of a community's historical record, so births, deaths, weddings, engagements, business accomplishments, crime, courts, real-estate transactions and a myriad of other day-to-day news events are covered along with important government decisions that affect our lives.

Newspapers are the No. 1 source of local news in every city and county in America, because we show up each and every day and cover those stories. It's what our readers have come to expect.

And it's what we do better than any other news source in America.

Doug Anstaett is executive director of the Kansas Press Association and president of the Newspaper Association Managers, representing association managers nationwide. As publisher of the Newton Kansan, and later at the Topeka Capital Journal, he was an award-winning editorial writer.



A break in the weekend routine can be good

Out Back
Carolyn Plotts



the pictures off my camera.

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We were about to leave town when I saw what was playing at the local cinema; "The Help". "Oh," I squealed, "I re-e-e-ally want to see that movie."

Jim said, "Well then, why don't we just stay in town and go see it." We did a drive-through banking drop and then had a nice restaurant meal before heading to the theater.

The theater was almost full when we settled into our seats. I still get a kick out of it when the lights go down and the music comes up. I'm not going to spoil it for you by telling you about the movie. I'm just going to say that, we out here in Whitebread America

western Kansas don't have a clue as to the cultural differences between black servants and their often mean-spirited and prejudiced employers.

There were some teenagers in the audience and I would have loved to interview them following the movie for their perspective. In their lifetime they've never known "Whites Only" water fountains, blacks having to ride in the back of the bus or all-white professional baseball, basketball and football teams. A black president is probably the first president they will remember as adults; schools, sports and society are totally integrated. It's not perfect yet but, in just my lifetime, we have come so far.

It was a great movie and now I want to read the book. That's backward as to how I usually prefer to do it. I prefer to read the book first, but this time, that's just the way it is. However, I'm trying to hold out buying the book until I can get it on a Kindle. That is at the top of my Christmas Wish List. I think Santa may get one so that Jim and I both can enjoy it.

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Taking personal responsibility instead of pointing fingers

Insight
John Schlageck

File this under the category of: "The lamest excuse to come along in my lifetime." What I'm talking about is the continuing attempt by some in the media and entertainment business to saddle America's farm and ranch families with the growing epidemic of obesity. Seems they would like us to believe farmers and ranchers are producing food that is too affordable and too available.

Stop right there. Many Americans can remember a time when their families or neighbors had trouble keeping food on the table. The concept of food that was too cheap was as foreign as paying two bucks for a bottle of pop - that's twice the size it used be and packs twice the calories.

But the times they are a changing and just like our politicians on both sides of the aisle, folks like to play the blame game. You know, look elsewhere, never in the mirror.

Rather than thank farmers for producing abundant, affordable food so that most of us will never experience the pangs of true hunger, making farmers the scapegoat for obesity appears to be too popular a trend. Some also say federal programs that help stabilize the farm economy encourage farmers to overproduce. Blaming agriculture only

diverts attention away from the factors that do contribute to obesity.

This is a slap in the face to the thousands of families that depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and to the millions of Americans whose high standards of living are built on our varied and efficient food, fuel and fiber industry.

Without our nation's farmers and the federal programs that help them through economic and weather disasters, Americans might have to depend on other countries for food just like we already do for oil. That could be a threat not only to our food security, but our national security as well.

Evidence of a global obesity trend indicates that the problem involves more than access to and an abundance of snack foods, desserts and soft drinks. People are reportedly getting heavier even in developing nations where citizens do not have all of the foods and snacks found on our supermarket shelves. That tends to point toward rising incomes and less physical labor around the world as the cause, not just

U.S. food industry practices.

Since when do farmers grow junk food? When did farmers begin to force consumers to eat a specific diet, healthy or otherwise?

Farmers and ranchers are not responsible for the U.S. consumer's dietary and exercise habits. These are all individual choices and matters of personal responsibility.

Whatever happened to personal responsibility in this country?

What about the amount of food we eat at each meal?

How about the many times we eat between meals?

How about the individual holding the knife, fork or spoon?

Used to be a time, I can remember when people didn't eat between meals, or if they did it was something healthy like fruit or nuts. Is that just another long and distant dream of mine?

It is time we start looking for real solutions to fix America's growing weight problem instead of blaming the very hands that nutritiously and safely feed America. It's important to note that while farmers produce a wide range of healthy food options, the ultimate consumer choices - moderation and exercise - are made far beyond the farm or ranch.



Thumbs up to all those people who had the proper upbringing, respect and courtesy to pull to the said of the road and stop during the funeral procession that went down Highway 36 through Norton last Thursday. It was sad to see how many were disrespectful and did not stop. It is a simple act that means so much and doesn't take up a lot of time. Called in.

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumps Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.