

Reports that we are dying are greatly exaggerated

By Cheryl Wormley

International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors

Back in 1897, James Ross Clemens was ill. Not-so-careful passing on of information resulted in word that Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known by his pen name of Mark Twain, was dying in London.

When an enterprising reporter decided to check on Twain before publishing his demise, the author responded, "The report of my death was greatly exaggerated."

Morley Safer, during a Jan. 6 "60 Minutes" report about the newspaper industry, glibly stated, "The facts of life are that newspapers are folding all over the country. It's a dying business." His example was the New Orleans newspaper, *The Times-Picayune*, which recently cut back from publishing seven days a week to three.

When it comes to newspapers, there are two cousins – large metro dailies and community newspapers. The latter includes weeklies (publishing three or fewer days a week) and small dailies. Mr. Safer, as well as reporters and broadcasters from media giants across the United States and around the world, owe it to the public – and to community newspaper owners and staffers – to figure out which of the newspaper cousins is near death and which is alive. Only then, should they should report their findings.

It is the large metro daily newspapers, which make up less than 5 percent of all U.S. newspapers, that are struggling from declines in readership and advertising, printing less often or ceasing publication entirely.

While it is painful to see our metro-daily-newspaper cousins faltering, we, the community newspapers, are not dying. Like Twain, community newspapers say, "Reports of our dying are greatly exaggerated."

Much has been published and broadcast about the decline of metro dailies. It is time to shine a spotlight on the health and vigor of community newspapers and on our role in rural and suburban communities across the country.

Readership of our newspapers, mostly weeklies, is increasing and new community newspapers are being birthed. That the great investor Warren Buffett bought more than 60 community newspapers in 2012 suggests there is present and future value in the weekly and small-daily arm of the industry.

Community newspapers are doing well because people want to read about the actions of their town council and school board, the results of high school sporting events and what's happening in business. Readers turn to community newspapers for public notices, for obituaries and police reports and for engagement, wedding, anniversary and birth announcements. They expect keen and thoughtful editorials as well as a forum for their own opinions – letters to the editor. They read the advertisements, look at every photo and clip articles and photos to post on bulletin boards and hang on refrigerators.

A 2011 survey by the National Newspaper Association and the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri School of Journalism found that 74 percent of people in areas served by newspapers with circulations under 15,000 read one of those papers each week. They spend nearly 40 minutes reading the paper. Then, they share their newspaper with 2.3 more people.

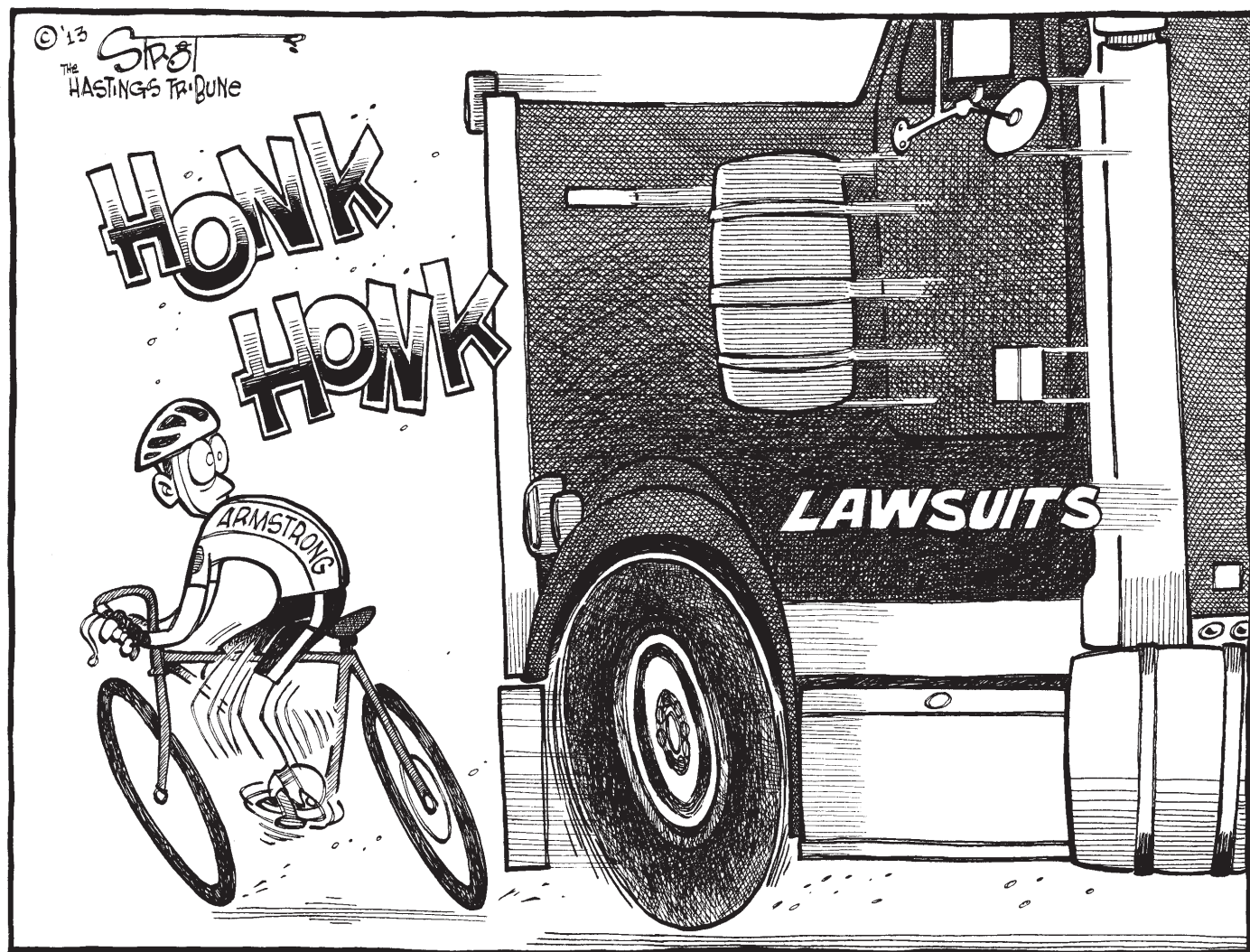
We are watchdogs in our communities. We protect the public's right to know and keep our readers informed about their communities – essential elements in a democracy.

As 21st century technology keeps enhancing the gathering and dissemination of news and information, community newspapers aren't standing idly by. We are in the fray, taking advantage of the immediacy that technology offers. We have developed revenue-producing websites, and we interact with our communities and our readers on email, Facebook and Twitter.

Community newspapers are very much alive. As Bill Tubbs, publisher of *The North Scott Press* and a member of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors, wrote in an editorial Jan. 16, "Morley Safer, you've done us wrong, but here's an offer you can't refuse. Come to Eldridge (Iowa) and spend a week with our staff."

Any of the more than 8,000 community weekly newspapers in the U.S. extend a similar invitation not just to Mr. Safer, but also to everyone who wants to see the healthy cousin. Interview the folks in Freeman, S.D., about the *Freeman Courier*; the high school students in Pittsfield, Ill., about the *Pike Press*; the families in Falmouth, Maine, about *The Forecaster*; the government officials in Espanola, N.M., about the *Rio Grande Sun*; or the business owners in Woodstock, Ga., about *The Cherokee Ledger-News* and set the record straight.

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Off to the doctors we did go

Last week was "The Week of the Doctors."

Both of us are in relatively good health with the usual aches and pains. But last Tuesday we met Jim's new cardiologist who has taken him as a patient after his first doctor retired. A routine visit.

Routine until she said, "I'd like to see you cut down your caffeine."

In a good Gary Coleman imitation, Jim said, "Whatcho talkin' 'bout?"

Jim and caffeine have a strange and wonderful relationship. Jim is strange and caffeine is wonderful. He loves his morning coffee. He loves his Pepsi. He even loves his energy drinks.

The doctor said he could have half 'n half regular and decaf coffee and could have two Pepsi's a day. But under no circumstances could he have energy drinks. Okay. Life will go on. A stop at the grocery store had us set up. A can of decaf to mix with the new can of regular coffee, a case of caffeine-free soda and a "pass" on the energy drink aisle had us set.

I tried to tell him chocolate had caffeine but he Googled it and announced that one ounce of chocolate has about the same amount of caffeine as two cups of decaf coffee. So I lost

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



up coffee, Pepsi, milk and chocolate.

He's soldiering through and we both like the new coffee mix and one percent milk is tolerable. All in all, not a bad trade off if it keeps him healthy a few more years.

-ob-

Did you hear about the little girl who was seated next to an atheist on an airplane? He said to her, "Would you like to talk? Flights go faster if you have a conversation with your fellow passenger." The little girl said, "Sure, what would you like to talk about?"

The atheist said, "Oh, I don't know. How about why there is no God, or no Heaven or Hell, or no life after death?"

"Okay," said the little girl. "But first I want to ask you a question. Why are lima beans big and flat; pinto beans medium-sized and speckled; and navy beans small and white?"

The atheist was stumped. He said, "I have no idea."

To which the little girl replied, "Do you really feel qualified to discuss why there is no God, no Heaven, no Hell or no life after death when you don't know beans?"

that one.

Wednesday found us in another specialists office.

About 25 years ago Jim had surgery on his intestinal tract. And since I've known him, he's never had a check-up for that. At my insistence (Jim might call it nagging) he agreed to see a gastroenterologist.

She did the usual listening, thumping and h-m-m-m-m-ing.

Her final assessment: "I'd like to see you cut out all dairy."

"Okay, Doc. Now, you've gone too far." I know that's what Jim wanted to say, but he didn't. Instead he begged and pleaded, maybe even shed a tear. It worked and she relented to let him try a medication first.

She said, "Try to cut back, though. Go to one percent milk."

Poor guy. What a week of downers for him. It would be easier for him to give up meat and potatoes than to give

Paying attention to the wind chill factor

When the temperatures in Kansas dip below freezing, two types of people usually surface – those who enjoy invigorating weather and those who tolerate the cold from inside. How individuals feel about the cold weather usually depends on where they grew up, age and more importantly, attitude.

Another factor comes into play – wind chill factor. Wind chill factor is usually defined as the cooling effect from wind and temperature on the human body. Wind whisking by exposed skin during cold weather increases a person's heat loss.

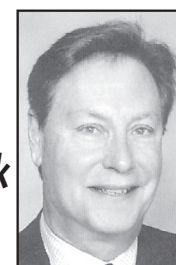
Antarctic explorer, Paul Siple, and his colleague, Charles Passel, first coined the term "wind chill" in 1939. Simply described wind chill as the relative cooling power – heat removal – from the body with various combinations of wind speed and low temperatures.

Some 70 years later, wind chill has become a common term in our everyday conversation. Knowing the factors helps people protect themselves against frostbite and hypothermia.

Tissue damage occurs in frostbite when wind chill temperatures fall below -25 degrees F. Hypothermia results when the rapid loss of the body's internal temperature alters judgment.

Insight

John Schlageck



This sometimes results in death.

People who spend time outdoors during these cold periods – stockmen, construction workers, hunters, runners and skiers – may create their own winds or increase the existing wind. Because movement increases airflow, they should be especially cautious of wind chill.

Manual labor and other physical exertion can cause heat loss also. Sweat begins and heat is removed by vaporization. Breathing cold air also results in the loss of heat from the lungs.

Few people realize that smoking, drinking, prescription drugs and illegal narcotics may also contribute to frostbite or hypothermia during bitterly cold temperatures. All of these dull the senses.

Alcohol dilates the capillaries of the skin and that increases the body's heat

loss. Nicotine smoke absorbed by the blood causes the capillaries to constrict. This restricts the blood flow to the earlobes, fingertips and other regions of the body. Medication can have side effects too, so venture outside during cold weather with extreme caution.

Wind chill charts are available wherever outdoor equipment is sold. Use these charts only as a point of information. Wind chill charts aren't always accurate because they don't take into account all the possibilities of heat loss, or the preventive measures against it.

Air temperature is rarely a reliable indicator of how cold a person will feel outdoors. Elements such as wind speed, relative humidity and sunshine or solar radiation also play a part. A person's health and the type of clothing worn will also affect how a person feels.

When you go outside, dress for the weather and the wind. Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing in several layers. These layers can be removed to prevent perspiration and subsequent chilling. Snug mittens are better protection than fitted gloves.

Always wear a hat, preferably wool, ear protection and a scarf or neck gaiter. If it's bitter cold – stay inside.

Call Dana for your next ad. 877-3361!

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

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Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002



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