

Eye on Editorials

EDITORIAL

The Death of News

By Daniel J. Taylor
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Here I am, kicking off my seventh semester at the PSU:BW campus and I am making a few changes. I am registered in more 400-level classes than I have ever taken at once. I recruited my girlfriend to become a Nittany Lion, and to appease that girlfriend I am learning to like Chinese food. Moreover, I am writing this--my first ever newspaper column.

At first I couldn't even be exactly sure why I wanted to write for the paper--I had never done it before, I never had any knowledge as to how newspapers work, and students like me are never in need of busying their schedules- we are busy enough as it is. On top of those practical reasons was the ever-increasingly obvious reason to stay away from newspaper-writing: newspapers are dying!

The free, instantaneous spread of fictional and factual data is overpowering our printed news in a way that may have never been imaginable even thirty years ago. The kind of information humans--particularly Americans--want, is changing. No longer do we search out double-columned hard facts detailing the horrors of street crime. Nor do we want black-and-white printed ideas of columnists we cannot see, even if their slant is fresh.

We are too lazy and egotistical for newspapers; we shouldn't have to read for our information, we're busy! So we turn to other sources, we get our information elsewhere. To be honest, the quality and relevance of the information is increasingly useless. We get our religion from televangelists, learn about our friends in "Which Twilight character are you?" Facebook quizzes and 140-character tweets, while we catch up on Obama's health-care plan by watching comedic duo John Stewart and Stephen Colbert.

Newspapers are dying. Compared to the internet and the dozen available television news sources, they are terribly inconvenient; you don't need to buy your internet news at the store, nor do you really have to sift around too much to find what it is you're looking for--Google is amazing, after all. On top of that, newspapers simply are not a core part of culture in the way that they used to be.

For weeks I have been thinking, again and again, "What am I doing? Why is this a good idea?" I know it is a weird, relatively insignificant question to be plagued by, but in "Wakefield," Nathaniel Hawthorne assures me that "whenever any subject so forcibly affects the mind, time is well spent in thinking of it," therefore I went full-force into this contemplation. I made several conclusions, when all was said and done.

First, I am not a lover of facts. Perspective is, and always has been, the most important aspect of recording history in my opinion. I care more about what people think and feel than what they do; therefore hard-reporting is not for me. Second, I think newspapers are a great way to keep the masses reading and learning. For many, especially those who do not attend college, these activities quickly dwindle in post-high school life. After all, forty hour weeks don't allow much time for books, after time for children and spouses is calculated into the mix, but the newspaper is one super short-term commitment which keeps the mind from ever totally dying. Three, I have things to say. Damn it, I have LOTS of things to say. Among them, I think George W. Bush is a pretty good guy, I think technology is weakening (not strengthening) people overall, I think that the more we know, the more vulnerable we become, and I think diversity and racism are split upon a razor's edge.

I have lots to say, but I am not so cocky as to say I am correct enough, moral enough, or wise enough to teach anyone anything. But, as I have stated, my focus is perspective. My main joy is discussion and debate; therefore I am going to spend this school year as, hopefully, the initiator of talks. I am going to say what I think for the main reason that I want to hear what you have to say--the world is too big and too diverse a place to disregard the opinions of others. I'm writing for the paper because I want to talk about things more important than facts. Facts don't do it for me. After all, "A thing may happen and be a total lie; another thing may not happen and be truer than the truth." Tim O'Brien said that--now that's what I'm talking about.

Ordinary Tipster

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Pledging to the Planet; Green Notes

If you ate organically, rode your bike at least for one mile, five days a week, to wherever you needed to go, and recycled and reduced the waste you created, you could save over 5,620lbs of CO2 that would otherwise enter into our atmosphere. And imagine if everyone one of us could stick to this pledge - Wow. Mars might look a lot farther away.

Enforcing this proposition, Green Notes is a program that pledges to help upcoming and established artists improve the current state of our environment by making their tours more eco-friendly while promoting the importance of protecting our earth. Several of the "green" touring practices these artists take part in include printing flyers on recycled paper using soy-based ink, selling organic cotton t-shirts, fueling their tour buses with biodiesel fuel, providing organically grown food backstage, and buying renewable wind energy credits to reduce the amount of CO2 emissions, which are a major contributor to global warming, as stated on www.clifgreennotes.com. Since 2005, musicians like Ingrid Michaelson, Guster, Rouge Wave, Ben Kweller, Josh Ritter, Missy Higgins, O.A.R. and many others have been singing and touring their way across the world on a mission towards building a greener planet.

Protect The Places We Play is CLIF Green Notes' benefit album, showcasing the 12 tracks of the artists previously mentioned along with others like Michael Franti, John Butler Trio, and Brett Dennen. 100% of the proceeds go towards organizations that are vigorously working to protect natural playgrounds throughout the country. The proceeds will also support Leave No Trace, Sierra Club, Surfrider Foundation, and the National Environmental Education Foundation. You can purchase or download the album from iTunes for \$7.99.

Even without buying the actual album, you get can two free tracks from Protect The Places We Play just by signing up for their bi-monthly newsletter and email listing.

This organization is actually sponsored by CLIF Bar products, a food company that strives to make deliciously natural and organic snack bars and power drinks like Nectar, Mojo, Builder's, Luna, and Lime-ade.

The total amount of CO2 pledged to reduce on Green Notes' website is currently 4,339,141,391 lbs. If we could just carry out that number into actions, our planet would start to look a whole lot greener and happier.

And it's just that easy and of course, there so many things you can do to help, such as using a stainless steel water bottles instead of a plastic ones, volunteer to keep parks and other places litter-free, recycle in any way possible, plant trees, and support your local farmer by purchasing fresh produce. Waste and littering, in particular, can be very costly. As explained on www.greencoservices.com, "In 2005, the forgone scrap value of 135 billion wasted beverage bottles and cans exceeded \$2.1 billion. This means that had these containers been recycled instead of trashed, they would have been worth over \$2.1 billion on the market." In a world where our national debt is essentially embarrassing and the prices of homes, cars and even food are ridiculous, we could do ourselves all a favor and keep the planet clean.

But if you can't even keep your room clean, well, that's a different story.

The
Lion's
Eye



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