

Perspective

Opinion

Editors Should Not Deal With Objectivity

By JAMES HUBBART

A widespread misconception persists among readers that journalists must practice "objectivity." We do not and should not, and here's why:

Pure objectivity would be to cover a news story by a recitation of the chronological order in which the events occurred. A city council report would start with the meeting being called to order, then proceed through the agenda until adjournment.

If 15 citizens appeared during that meeting to protest a recent increase in city water rates, the account would appear deep down in the story where, perhaps happily for the council members, fewer readers would find it.

A professional wouldn't write the story that way. He makes a subjective judgment on the most important or interesting element of the story and puts that at the top. Developments of lesser interest appear in diminishing order down through the story. That way, if the article must be shortened, as often happens, the cuts can be made from the bottom.

Thus the council story would start off: "Fifteen irate citizens assembled at a city council meeting last night to protest the recently announced 40 percent increase in municipal water rates."

Now it could be that the mayor thought his proclamation of City Cleanup Days was more impor-

tant. He might even complain that the paper "sensationalized" the water rate protest.

The editor makes further subjective judgments when the story reaches his desk. He evaluates the council report in terms of reader interest in comparison with all other stories available for that particular edition. Then, he decides where to place the story and what kind of headline it will have.

For community journals handling mainly local news, these judgment calls can become pretty sensitive. On a daily, few would argue that the Tylenol story or the siege of Beirut would rank higher in news value than the city council. But if the city water is your best story, you go with it, top of page one under a headline that says:

"Citizens protest water rate hikes." These value judgments frequently get us into trouble with accusations that we "blow things out of proportion." The issue is not so much accuracy or impartiality, which we honestly strive for; the question is really one of emphasis.

Do we make bad calls in deciding what's important and what's not? You bet we do. We've overreacted on some stories and missed the boat on others. On balance, however, we probably do as well as most baseball umpires.

(James Hubbard is co-publisher of the Newport (Wash.) Miner, where this column first appeared.)

THEY'RE RAISING OUR PHONE BILL AGAIN...
"... due to the enormous costs incurred recently to upgrade your telephone service to its present state of perfection!"



Isn't That Ironic?

Ever notice how, no matter how much trouble you may have with the telephone company, you always receive your monthly bill on time. Now, with phone company employees on strike, you can't even call them for any kind of assistance. But, you'll still get your bill on time - and if you don't pay it on time, you can be sure you'll hear from the phone company.

Only Yesterday

Rain Drenches Area

FIFTY YEARS AGO - AUGUST 25, 1933

A four-day rain drenched the Back Mountain area, causing creeks to overflow, damaging crops and making roads hazardous. Corn and late oats crops were particularly hard hit by this record rainfall.

Mrs. W.L. Tracy of Shavertown, mother of film actor Lee Tracy, attended the world premier of "Dinner At Eight" at the Astor Theatre in New York City. Although her son was unable to attend, his mother enjoyed the film which featured Lee Tracy.

Married - Lillian F. Geater and James Coolbaugh. You could get butter 2 lb.-29 cents; fresh eggs 21 cents doz.; codfish 2 pkg. 25 cents; crabmeat 21 cents can; sardines 2 cans-15 cents; Maxwell House coffee 31 cents lb.; fruit salad big can 19 cents; pineapple 2 big cans 35 cents; raisin bread 8 cents-loaf.

FORTY YEARS AGO - AUGUST 27, 1943

Dallas Township opened the school year with five new teachers. Cynthia Poad taught Home economics; C. Jane Nagro, senior English and French; Jean Bogart, Latin and English; Frank M. Ferguson, Science and Nancy T. Baldwin, first grade.

C.J. Brown returned after serving four terms as a member of Lehman Township School Board. His father, the late Henderson G. Brown, served many years on the same board before his son was elected to office 24 years ago.

Married - Anna Hardisky and Sgt. Anthony Hudak; Emma Parrish and Edward H. Miles, Jr. Anniversaries - Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon Drake, Lehman Avenue, 25 years; Mr. and Mrs. Jonas J. Nienius, Loyalville, 30 years.

THIRTY YEARS AGO - AUGUST 28, 1953

Dale Warmouth, former Dallas Post staff member, was named director of public relations and alumni secretary at Wilkes College. Warmouth was the son of Mr. Elva Warmouth RD 2 Dallas.

Former Dallas Borough teacher Rodney Edwards had difficulty finding local landmarks when he returned to the Back Mountain for a visit. The old Raub Hotel in the center of town was gone. The trolley station and trolley had been removed and even the bank location was changed. Edwards had not visited in area for 21 years, since he was a teacher during 1930-31 and 32.

Married - Phyllis Shields and Curtis F. Bynon; Kathleen Ferenbach and Mortimer Ryan.

You could get sirloin steaks 89 cents lb.; Long Island Ducks 49 cents lb.; veal roast 49 cents lb.; eggs 59 cents doz.; Swiss cheese 59 cents lb.; white seedless grapes 15 cents lb.; honeydews 59 cents each; saltines 23 cents lb.; peaches 4 cans \$1.

TWENTY YEARS AGO - AUGUST 29, 1963

An estimated 800 teenagers jammed Hanson's pavilion Harveys Lake to dance and listen to rock 'n roll singer Freddie Cannon, national recording star.

Members of the Lehman-Jackson Teeners League copped their third championship in four years. Team members were Pattie Harris, bat girl; Jimmy Harris, Terry Jones, Charlie Kern, Kent Jones, Bill Kanasky, Allen Fox, Eddie Kern, Mark McDermott, Bob Kunkel, Dave Jones, Don Burnett, Ed Dubil and Gerard Harris, Manager.

Engaged - Virginia Drake and James D. Cannon; Connie Elaine Smith and John Baradzziej; Carol Sue Sarratt and Donald W. Bellas; Joan Elvira Schollenberger and Eugene Yanovitch; Diane Bednar and George Edward Serhan.

Deaths - Mrs. Joseph Reid, Noxen; Benjamin Smith, Mt. Zion; Albert Sutliff, Bloomdale; Dr. Kazys Claude Cirtautas, College Misericordia instructor.

You could get turkeys 39 cents lb.; hams 49 cents lb.; clams 3-lb. bag 99 cents; Strawberries 3 pts.-\$1; Italian prunes 2 lb.-29 cents; Wincrest coffee 55 cents lb.; Chicken of the Sea tuna 2-6 1/2 oz. cans 29 cents; 15 oz. box Keebler pecan sandies 49 cents.

TEN YEARS AGO - AUGUST 30, 1973

A "Mini-Twister" storm roared through Dallas, felling large trees. According to the National Weather Service, "the intense thunderstorm with winds up to 50 mph had tornado strength."

Approximately 75 persons were on hand for a hearing variance request by Kingston Township resident Michael J. Kester who wanted to make permanent the present site of a HUD mobile home park. The majority of township residents were strongly against a permanent mobile home park in that area.

You could get chicken legs or breasts 69 cents lb.; pork loins 99 cents lb.; cantaloupes 3 for \$1; macaroni & cheese 5 pkgs. \$1; 48 oz. jar cucumber chips 38 cents; ground beef 98 cents lb.; seedless grapes 39 cents lb.; 1/2 gal. ice cream 49 cents.

Letters

Campaign Chairman Dislikes Ethnicity

DEAR EDITOR:

I want to take this time to applaud all those fine people who have spoken out against the comments of Frank Crossin, Jr. indicating his thoughts that the election will not be won on issues but on ethnic background.

I must say I am biased in that I am Chairman of the Trinisewski-Phillips Campaign Committee, but I truly believe that my position, like the many others who have written on the subject has real merit. While the young Crossin is inexperienced, his recent statement shows immaturity as well.

I know from the people I have talked with all over this county that Mr. Crossin as well as Mr. Brominski is not just in trouble with Protestant voters. He, as well as Mr. Brominski, is in trouble with all people.

In our campaign, there is no discussion of ethnic backgrounds. We are focusing in only on the issues of Luzerne County. It is those issues that are going to elect the Trinisewski-Phillips team and those votes will come from everyone.

SINCERELY,
HAROLD E. TAYLOR
CAMPAIGN CHAIRMAN

Pastor Appreciates Praise

DEAR EDITOR:

Please know the people of Our Lady of Victory Parish Community and myself are deeply grateful to you (Dotty Martin) for your kinds words in your newspaper.

The fact that you took the time and space to mention our people's splendid accomplishment is worthy of

more than passing notice. Be assured of our gratitude as we work together to provide for the young people of our community.

REV. GEORGE A. JEFFREY, PASTOR
OUR LADY OF VICTORY CHURCH
HARVEYS LAKE

Questions Reporter's Objectivity

DEAR EDITOR:

It was with great interest that I read the article in The Dallas Post headlined "Gabriel firing," written by Staff Correspondent, Charlot Denmon.

Mrs. Denmon's ability to remain objective while reporting on the board meeting is admirable in view of

the fact that her brother-in-law, Board Member Tex Wilson, voted to remove Mr. Gabriel.

It is also to her credit as a journalist that she could report on a meeting she had not attended.

SINCERELY,
PATRICIA GREGORY

Thanks Post for Coverage on Picnic

DEAR EDITOR:

Thank you for your coverage and

exposure given to our recent picnic for the Crippled Children and Adults

served by the Wyoming Valley Society for Crippled Children and Adults Association.

Your help in this endeavor is greatly appreciated by all concerned!

ROTARILY,
LEO F. MOHEN
PRESIDENT

Rep. Coslett Comments On New State Budget

The recently enacted state budget included an additional \$100 million to set up a prescription and medical assistance program for the needy elderly.

Rep. Frank Coslett said that lawmakers will spend a great deal of time this summer determining the fairest way to distribute the money.

"Lottery profits are used in Pennsylvania strictly to fund senior citizen programs," he noted. "The overwhelming success of the lottery, especially the biweekly Lotto game, have created a substantial surplus in the Lottery Fund."

Coslett listed the following proposals now being studied by the General Assembly as possible ways of distributing the money.

House Bill 1301 and 1302: These bills establish a pharmaceutical assistance program for Pennsylvania residents age 65 years or older and single whose annual income is below \$9,000 or for married couples with incomes below \$12,000.

Under the proposal, whose qualifying individuals would be required to pay \$4 for each prescription, purchase of insulin, insulin syringes or needles. The Department of Aging would pick up the remaining cost, within reason, of the medical care items purchased.

Those persons already covered in entirety by any other pharmaceutical plan would be ineligible for this program. Individuals covered by partial plans could receive reduced assistance at the discretion of the Department of Aging.

The program would be funded with surplus lottery proceeds. The first year cost estimate is \$100 million. House Bill 1303 and 1304: These bills provide a one-time grant to senior centers for the rehabilitation and renovation of their facilities.

The grants could be used to comply with applicable federal, state or local safety standards, to maintain the senior center in a condition that provides for the health, welfare and safety of senior center in a

condition that provides for the health, welfare and safety of senior citizens and or to make the center accessible to the handicapped.

For the fiscal year 1983-84, \$10 million would be appropriated from the lottery fund.

House Bills 1305 and 1306: These bills appropriate \$50 million in Lottery Fund money to distribute to Area Agencies on Aging to purchase or provide in-home and community services.

The services would be available to those senior citizens and handicapped persons who have insufficient income and suffer incapacities which restrict their ability to carry out the activities of daily living or impede their ability to live independently.

House Bills 1307 and 1308: These measures provide for increases in the property tax, rent rebate and inflation dividend programs. The maximum property tax or rent rebate would increase from \$500 to \$600 and the maximum inflation dividend would be hiked from \$125 to \$325.

House Bill 1309: This measure would provide free rides for persons 65 years or older for shared ride transportation services. The measure calls for a 100 percent reimbursement to public transportation for services to senior citizens.

"There are many bills, similar in nature to those just reviewed," Coslett said. "However, these measures are closer to a floor vote and have the support of the House Health and Welfare Committee."

"Nothing is easier than supporting a program to help senior citizens. However, we must be careful that we (in the Legislature) do not commit resources to the programs that we do not have or may not have in the future."

"There is no guarantee that the Lottery will remain profitable in the years to come so the scope of any program or programs we enact must be geared to fluctuations in lottery proceeds."

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Letters Policy

The Dallas Post encourages and invites its readers to express their opinions, complaints, and/or criticisms in the "Letters to the Editor" column.

Letters to the editor should be typed or written legibly and must be received by Friday at noon for publication the following Wednesday.

All letters to the editor must include a name and a phone number for verification.

Names will be withheld upon request, however, letters received with no verifying phone number will not be published.

IUR Drops

Pennsylvania's insured unemployment rate (IUR) has fallen to its lowest level in 18 months, resulting in the suspension of a federal program that provides extended unemployment compensation benefits, the state Department of Labor and Industry announced recently.

Only five states still have an IUR that enables them to pay benefits under the federal Extended Benefits Program (EB).