

Have a question or need information? Email: mgarcia@ulnnow.com

EDITORIAL

Fake news for those who won't seek truth

The media doesn't always get it right. We know because this newspaper has made its share of mistakes over the last year, most of which we have acknowledged and others that our readers have assigned to us. At times the criticism has centered on content or placement – particularly in cases of tragedy – rather than erroneous reporting.

In this new year we pledge to continue publishing the stories that impact our readers' lives, from the sometimes-mundane but always vital affairs of government to the unique accomplishments of our friends and neighbors and the infrequent tragedies that befall those same people. We will endeavor to be the proverbial mirror that reflects the daily interactions of those who call Uvalde home. And we will insist on absolute transparency on behalf of those who have been charged with the prudent deployment of our tax dollars.

To say that news gathering has changed since this newspaper's ancestor was first lifted from a flat-bed press in 1879 is of course understatement. The transition from hot type (no one even remembers what it was) to digital production was huge, but the advent of the internet and social media has enabled anyone with a smart phone to become a publisher. And while there is potent individual empowerment in that development, it has come at an enormous cost, not only to the financial viability of traditional media but even more worrisome, to the veracity of the news we consume.

In 2000, almost half of American adults got their news from a newspaper and about 56 percent watched news on TV. Today those numbers are 29 percent and 55 percent respectively. The dramatic shift has been toward online sources, which are now used by about four-in-10 Americans (particularly those under age 50) to obtain news.

The good news (if there is any) in online news consumption is that consumers are more likely to get news from professional outlets, including newspapers, than from friends. But those who rely on friends are as likely to say their news is as relevant as professional sources.

The take away is that Americans today have more options on how to inform themselves about relevant events than at any time in history. There is, however, a caveat: with choice comes responsibility. You cannot take unvetted news sources at face value. The purveyors of fake news, whether for reasons of self-enrichment or ego, have become highly skilled in their craft. Without a healthy skepticism towards ideas that all-too easily fit our own, we may be led down a dangerous path.

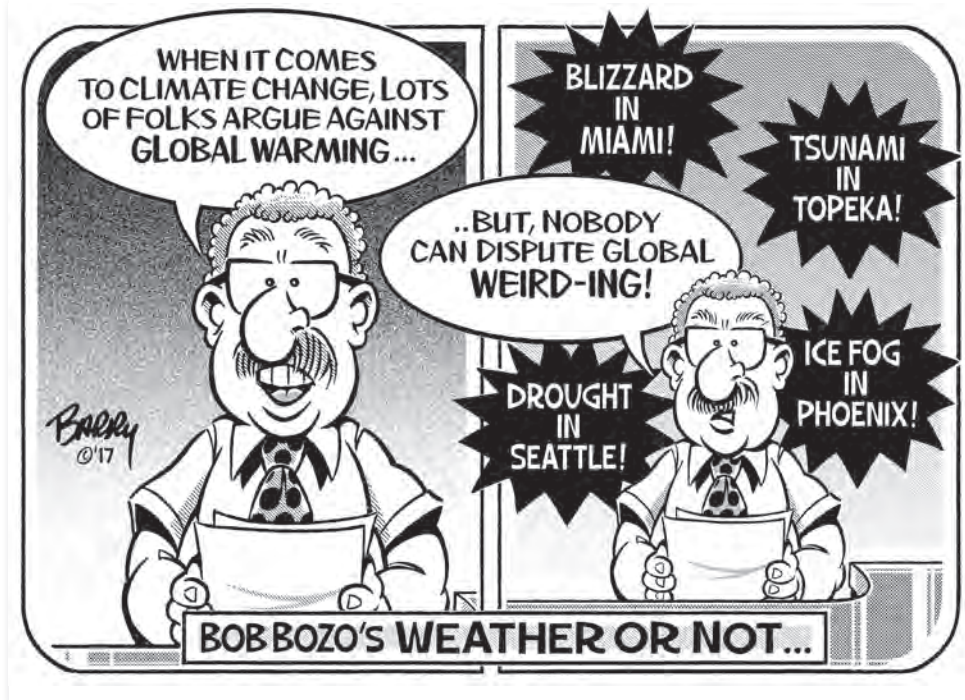
Our democracy was built on personal freedoms but those freedoms cannot endure unless we make wise choices about how and by whom we are governed. Fake news is a tantalizing Trojan horse that we must work to recognize and resist.

WRITE TO US!

Letters to the editor are welcome and encouraged. Letters must be signed and mailing address and telephone number must be included. Letters should not exceed 500 words and are limited to one per month. Those published will be selected on the basis of accuracy, taste, importance and reader interest. Publication is not assured, and all letters will be verified. None will be returned. The editors reserve the right to edit for length, potentially libelous statements and accuracy of information.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Existing rule

In response to the article ("City, water district fear Edwards Aquifer rule update") published Dec. 24, 2017, in the Uvalde Leader-News, the rule change is a clarification of a rule that has existed since 2001 to accommodate and uphold the vested interest in Base Irrigation Groundwater (BIG) among historic users of the Edwards.

The change is intended to protect property rights of an irrigator by clarifying the criteria by which they can continue to realize the value in their water in the event their property becomes incapable of being irrigated for crop production.

The Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) was created by the Texas Legislature in large part as a means to assure a management system for the aquifer that would be governed locally. It is from this legislative act that EAA directors mostly draw authority.

The act is prescriptive in some respects, such as to the methodology for allocating groundwater permits, but less so on other issues. This is the case with irrigation water rights designated as BIG. Through the act, the Legislature mandated allocation of BIG rights on a one-to-one ratio of one acre-foot of water per one acre of historically irrigated land, and tied ownership of the BIG rights to that land; that is to say that these water rights are required to remain with the land for the purpose which the water was used historically.

The act is silent as to what should happen to BIG rights if the historically irrigated land changes in its purpose of use; for example, if it

becomes developed for a purpose other than farm use such that the BIG water would be rendered useless because it can no longer be used for agricultural purposes on that property. Thus, years ago when farmland with BIG rights began to be sold and developed for commercial and municipal purposes, the EAA board opted for a common-sense approach to accommodating these changing circumstances.

The board created rules that allow BIG rights to be separated from the land, at the property owner's sole discretion, and to be converted from their original purpose of use to other beneficial uses when the land becomes something other than an irrigated farm.

This process can only be initiated by the land owner and can be approved by the EAA board only when the land owner can prove that the acreage has been developed or so encroached upon that it is no longer physically possible or practicable to irrigate and farm.

The concept of the BIG conversion rule was born out of necessity in response to a changing economic landscape that threatened to further limit access to Edwards water. The rule provided a way to acknowledge land owners' property rights in both their land and the associated BIG water within a broader regulatory system that already limited how much water could be allocated and pumped from the aquifer.

It's important to note that the EAA has no authority to regulate land use; only to regulate Edwards groundwater.

Luana Buckner
EAA board chairman

Love until it hurts

Have you ever come across someone who almost always smiles, and never utters a bad word about anyone? Have you ever met someone who possesses an attraction, a charm, that compels you to spend time with them? If you have, then you know exactly what I mean when I say that such individuals do not lead perfect lives. They suffer their share of tribulations, yet live quite differently from the rest of us.

I met such an individual about 12 years ago, and what a marvelous imprint he made in my life. He led me to Jesus, all the while preaching, "If we don't love Jesus, how can we love another human being?"

"We cannot run away from our cross," he would say. "We must embrace our crosses in life. And the more we embrace our crosses with love, the more we will be able to bear them."

He was right.

When we are wronged, do we forgive or do we hold on to resentments? Do we talk about others behind their backs? When a married friend goes through a divorce, do we talk about their spouse and tell our friend what a creep he is? Do we encourage the divorce rather than take the time to listen? Do we jump to conclusions and speak defamations about their spouse?

If you are looking for a resolution for the new year, the most profound resolution you can make to attain peace, be considerate of others, and relish life is to cultivate a relationship with Jesus. Life is

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PASTOR'S COLUMN

Be a person after God's own heart

"FOR I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." Psalm 51:3

Our text is taken from the 51st psalm, which was penned by King David after he was confronted with his sin by the prophet Nathan. The normally righteous king had taken another man's wife to be his own, and then sent the woman's husband to certain death in battle in order to cover up his transgression when she became pregnant (2



KEN KEMBLE

Samuel 11). It is an episode in the king's life which I am sure he would rather us not know about – but it is recorded in

God's word, and, as such, it will stand forever, a testimony to the frailty and depravity of man and our desperate need of a savior.

Elsewhere in God's word, David is held up as a shining example of how we ought to be, and is called a man after God's own heart. This, too, is recorded in God's word, and, as such, is forever settled in heaven.

But how can God recommend David to us as an example when he acted so wickedly?

The truth is, David was a man after God's heart, not because he was perfect – David was a man after God's heart because of his humility. With all of his faults, he had a soft heart toward God.

When Nathan confronted David in 2 Samuel chapter 12, the king could have said "I do not need, nor do I want, a prophet like you," and killed him – but he didn't. He acknowledged his sin in brokenness and begged the Lord's forgiveness. He humbled himself.

Here, then, is the key to being a man or woman after God's heart – humility.

Dear reader, I ask you today to take reflection. Are you humble?

So many think that since they have never committed any sin so horrible as David, and since God loved David so much, then they must surely be okay.

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Uvalde Leader-News

Since 1879 A Leader In Southwest Texas

"We will ever work for the upbuilding of the community and section and every new industry – every new enterprise that can be of any benefit whatsoever will receive full support."

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