

Local newspapers are here because of you

“The newspaper does everything for us...comforts the afflicted, afflicts the comfortable.” [Finley Peter Dunne \(1867-1936\)](#) American journalist and humorist

This is one of my all-time favorite quotes. Early in my career as a journalist, I was having a bad day. This very experienced newspaperman who was one of my first bosses asked me what I thought my job as a journalist was. After I gave him the typical journalism school answer, he recited Dunne’s quote to me, and it has stuck with me since I was that 21-year-old novice journalist.

It is National Newspaper Week, Oct. 2-8. These are seven days set aside each year for us to recognize the extreme importance newspapers have in communities across the United States and around the world. No matter how our industry changes we will always be there in some form, whether in print or on those little devices we all carry with us 24/7.

Local news in local newspapers is most times the only way readers know what is happening in their communities. News and sports stories in your newspaper are meant to inform readers, connect readers to their neighbors, motivate readers and, most importantly, call our readers to action.

Where else would you get those fifth-generation photos or those fire photos or crash photos; where else would you read the story on the high school field hockey team’s overtime win or learn the local school board is planning to spend \$34 million of taxpayer money to install new HVAC systems at two schools. (That is occurring in the Gettysburg Area School District.)

It is easy to see the world of newspapers is changing. While physical size of newspapers has been shrinking the last few years, the responsibility of the local daily newspaper being the best source of community news has never and will never change. Quite frankly, coverage of small-town news has never been more important, especially in the times in which we currently find ourselves living.

My hometown newspaper, the *Gettysburg Times*, is so incredibly thankful to our readers for allowing us to keep growing our digital footprint and for pointing us in the right direction to find stories that make the most impact in Adams County. If it were not for them, we would not be here.

I know I can speak for all newspapers across Pennsylvania when I say, we may not always like what you have to say to us, but we will always defend your right to say it.

Newspapers in Pennsylvania and across the country and the journalists they employ serve many different roles. We hold the powerful accountable and need to care and account for those who lack power. Depending on the size of our communities, the powerful could include borough council people, county commissioners or the local landlord who is endangering his tenants by not keeping his property up to code.

We serve as community cheerleader, as well as community watchdog. We are a window into the community. We publish pictures of the students of month at the local school district, we attend and review the plays at the community theater, and we cover police news, regardless of the crime. We are truly here because of you, and we want to be here for you. We only succeed when you, our readers, are in tune with what is happening in our community.

We want to entertain you with our comics. We want your feedback, whether positive or negative. We know we are doing our jobs if we hear from you, our friends, neighbors, and subscribers.

We are not asking you to bake us cookies (although those who bring us baked goods are welcome to continue to do so). The best way to help us celebrate National Newspaper Week is to continue to support your local newspaper. There are several ways you can do this. The easiest way is to buy a print or digital subscription. You can also support us by remembering we are here for you and letting us know if there is news happening and we should be there.

Each morning when our offices open at 7 a.m., we start with 16-20 blank pages. By 2 a.m. the next day, all those pages are full of news and photos telling you what has transpired in your community over the past 19 hours. I plan, and newspapers plan, to be the eyes, ears, and voices for our communities for many years to come.

Harry Hartman is publisher of the Gettysburg Times, a member of Sample News Group, and board chairman of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association.