

Newspapers, people help document local history

Mark Pavilons



"For a long time now I have tried simply to write the best I can. Sometimes I have good luck and write better than I can."
Ernest Hemingway

We are not as tiny as we are led to believe.

Human history is brimming with stories, anecdotes, tales and documented events. It's filled with people, seemingly unassuming sorts, who've changed history. Many more had smaller parts to play in this drama that has taken tens of thousands of years to unfold. Shakespeare believed we are all mere actors on some massive stage. Others have compared us to tiny grains of sand on a cosmic beach.

Are we so insignificant that we cannot touch the lives of others and make a difference on a small or large scale? Of course not! Like those ripples in a pond made by a single pebble, we can set in motion incredible events that reverberate through history. That potential is there for each and every one of us, whether we realize it not.

I have been in the storytelling business for more than three decades. I have heard incredibly remarkable tales and listened to heart-warming personal anecdotes. I've been told intimate secrets and heard wild accusations. I have strung together pieces that, when examined, reveal valuable insights into people, places and events of our time. I'm a messenger, and recorder of current history. And so are the people I meet and those who work tirelessly, every day, on behalf of their community. From the legion of local volunteers to members of the arts society; from local councillors to our elementary school teachers, our people are shaping the future.

And I'm sharing it with the rest of the world.

Before modern media was born, people kept records in many ways. Whether written on papyrus or carved into stone, the events of the day were given life, and recorded for future generations. Many of our sacred texts and documents have been painstakingly preserved so we can learn, understand and yes, believe.

In Ancient Rome, government announcement bulletins were produced, carved in metal or stone and posted in public places.

In China, early government-produced news sheets were circulated among court officials during the late Han dynasty (2nd and 3rd centuries AD).

In 1556, the government of Venice first published the monthly *Notizie scritte*. These handwritten newsletters were used to convey political, military, and economic news quickly and efficiently to Italian cities through the 1700s.

The "press" emerged with the success of the early printing presses.

The German-language *Relation aller Fürnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien*, printed from 1605 onwards by Johann Carolus in Strasbourg, is often recognized as the first newspaper.

In Boston in 1690, Benjamin Harris published *Publick Occurrences Both Forreign and Domestick*. This is considered the first newspaper in the American colonies even though only one edition was published before the paper was suppressed by the

government. In 1704, the governor allowed The Boston News-Letter to be published and it became the first continuously published newspaper in the colonies. Soon after, weekly papers began popping up in New York and Philadelphia. They mostly carried news from Britain and content that depended on the editor's interests. In 1783, the Pennsylvania Evening Post became the first American daily.

So, these pieces of reading material you hold in your hands every week, are relatively new inventions. And yet they have been responsible for recording everything from war and conflict to massive man-made structures and world wonders. They have helped shape public opinion and caused political unrest. Newspapers have been our voice for only a few hundred years.

At the community level, I've had the pleasure of scribbling down thousands of articles and millions of words. Some may survive the test of time, others will surely fade into the abyss.

Wouldn't it be really neat if someone, in 1,000 years from now, came across an article from the King Weekly Sentinel??They may be researching just how art was taught to youngsters by local art societies. They may be interested in what type of sports people played, or what we did for fun. They may be interested in our form of government and what our officials were paid when money existed. They would likely smile at our automobiles and our large, old-fashioned living quarters! They would be aghast that people died from cancer.

It takes a communal effort to preserve our culture and history.

I couldn't put together a newspaper each week without you ??your opinions, fundraisers, church projects, athletic achievements, personal journeys and acts of compassion.

I'd like to think that each issue of this newspaper is like a snapshot of our community and its people. This collection of newsprint is not unlike those old pieces of papyrus or stone tablets. It may one day be seen as a treasure, something that calls out from a time long ago.

Regardless of what the future holds, I think we should all be grateful that we are living in these interesting times. We are shaping our world and those footprints we leave behind us in the sand all lead somewhere.

Each and every one of us is like that stone tossed into the pond. And what's more, our actions are somewhat immortalized in print, floating around forever on the Internet.

Talk about making the past come alive!