

VIEWS

EDITORIAL:

We need to do better

This week marks the 79th annual National Newspaper Week. The occasion recognizes and celebrates the contributions of newspapers and their employees across North America.

The ink covered folds of newsprint - and wealth of information within - have been an integral piece of modern society for hundreds of years. The late Walter Jackson Ong, an American professor of English literature and cultural historian wrote: "More than any other single invention, writing has transformed human consciousness."

Humans are communicators and thrive in the company of other humans. The Incas and other ancient cultures used to record information by tying knots using coloured strings. Perhaps an early form of news writing, the *quipu* was a remarkably accurate form of recording dates, statistics, and representations of storytelling and poetry.

As humans mastered orality, literacy soon followed. Johannes Gutenberg invented the first printing press in Germany with movable type in the 1400s. By the mid-17th century publications were being printed and distributed in countries around Europe.

In our modern world, technology has evolved from *quipu* to the tangible thin newsprint that smells of nostalgia and leaves inky residue on our fingertips and forearms. The words we read are the breath and life-force of journalists and/or great thinkers who might be our neighbours, our leaders or residents of a faraway land.

In the last two decades the onset of the internet and social media has created a bumpy road for the cultural archive that is the traditional newspaper. It's important to note that humans still want to read, and know, and learn. Newsrooms and journalists have been forced to evolve their methods in an

effort to stay relevant, compete with other media platforms and keep their readers engaged.

Engagement is important now, more than ever.

Historical photos at the *Calgary Herald* office share a glimpse of the newspapers' beginnings in our region. The publishers, editors, writers and other production staff proudly posing in these photos were all - notably - white men. The newspaper started as the *Calgary Herald, Mining and Ranch Advocate and General Advertiser* on August 31, 1883. The entire history and social narrative of our part of Canada was documented by these humble, smiling gentlemen. It's difficult to determine what role women, or other minority groups, had in the flow of information. It's safe to assume that their role was small.

Newspapers in 2019 have a responsibility to ensure that no voices are silent or excluded from their pages, website and social media handles. Modern

THESE DEBATES ARE FASCINATING.
YOU CAN BARELY SEE THE STRINGS.



newsrooms should consist of varying social groups, which of course is reflective of our society's diversity. The media sets a tone for public discourse and inclusivity. Our modern *quipu* should accurately set the public record straight.

We need to do better.

**NEWSPAPERS
MATTER**
NOW MORE  THAN EVER

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER WEEK
OCTOBER 6-12, 2019

CONTACT US

**COCHRANE
Eagle**

Established 2001
Founder: Jack Tennant
2 124 River Avenue
Cochrane, Alberta, Canada
T4C 2C2
T: 403-932-6588
Fax: 403-851-6520
www.CochraneTODAY.ca

PUBLISHER:
Brenda Tennant
btennant@cochrane.greatwest.ca
EDITOR:
Cathi Arola
carola@cochrane.greatwest.ca
REPORTERS:
Chrissy Da Silva
cdasilva@cochrane.greatwest.ca
Troy Durrell
tdurrell@cochrane.greatwest.ca
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER:
Bill Marsh

ADMINISTRATION / CIRCULATION / ACCOUNTING:
Carrie Anderson
classifieds@cochrane.greatwest.ca
accounting@cochrane.greatwest.ca
ADVERTISING:
Kim Smith
ksmith@cochrane.greatwest.ca
Julie Tuite
jtuite@cochrane.greatwest.ca

Published weekly and distributed locally, free of charge by

MAIL AGREEMENT: #40069240

**GREAT WEST
NEWSPAPERS**

nnc National
NewsMedia
Council

VERIFIED
CIRCULATION

**Alberta
Weekly Newspapers
Association**

Letters policy: the Cochrane Eagle welcomes letters to the editor of up to 400 words. Deadline for submissions is 4 p.m. Monday for Thursday's edition. Please sign letters and include a phone number for verification along with the name of the writers home town. Send your letters to: letters@cochrane.greatwest.ca