

# Opinion

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THE GREENVILLE SUN

EDITOR: MICHAEL S. RENEAU

## We Need To Relearn The Art Of Romance

I still have no idea why Laura Lindsey liked me, but she did.

It happened during my sixth-grade year in the spring of 1974, when she transferred to our school.



TOM PURCELL

Laura had grace and style and was instantly embraced by the popular girls.

She was out of my league, but I pursued her nonetheless.

Trying to impress her one day while playing “keep-away” during recess, I grabbed the ball and ran near her.

I didn’t know it then, but thousands of years of DNA were at work — the same primitive energies that caused cavemen to club each other as cavewomen looked on.

Laura looked at me. For a moment, our eyes locked — I felt a spark in the middle of my heart.

Laura Lindsey liked me! I wanted to buy her something romantic — which was a problem.

First, everything I knew about romance, I’d learned from the fathers in my neighborhood, one of whom bought his wife snow tires for Valentine’s Day.

Second, I was broke. All I could afford was candy.

I got a quarter out of my piggy bank and rode my bike to a nearby Mom-and-Pop convenience store. I eyed the candy display like a jeweler seeking the finest cut of diamond.

After passing over the more costly fare — I almost bought a Mallo Cup but worried I’d eat it before giving it to her — I settled on a Big Buddy, a flat stick of bubble gum that only cost a nickel.

I soon found myself sitting in my sixth-grade classroom, pen in hand, trying to compose the perfect words to write on that flat stick of gum’s wrapper.

After several edits, I settled on this gem: “Laura, here’s something sweet for somebody sweet.”

I set the gum on her desk and rode home.

I couldn’t sleep that night, certain I’d made a mistake — certain I’d be rejected the following morning.

What happened next was worse.

You see, my first act of romance was not met with ridicule, but with Laura’s euphoria and gratitude.

As older generations might say, “I chased her until she caught me!”

I was a wreck.

In the span of 15 hours, my emotional state went from puppy love to doubt to utter terror.

I dodged Laura the rest of that day, the rest of that week and all the way until school let out.

I dodged her the first week of summer by diving under Mr. Bennett’s forsythia shrubs as she rode her bike down my street.

To be sure, practicing the art of romance has never been for the faint of heart.

But why are we making it harder?

We pretend there are no differences between men and women, when the truth is, males and females are incredibly poor at understanding what the other is thinking — at least until we get to know each other well.

We pretend that “hooking up” is fine and dandy, then wonder why there is so much confusion and hurt as we jump from one short-lived relationship to another.

We pretend we don’t admire the romance older generations mastered as they slow-danced, shared handwritten notes and enjoyed an ever-deepening love through many acts of kindness over many years of marriage.

We desperately need to relearn the art of romance — especially a clumsy oaf like me.

In any event, I grew to miss Laura Lindsey over that summer. I hoped to pick up where we left off in the fall.

But before school resumed, Timmy Schmidt swiped her from me.

My first girlfriend dumped me, and I was the last to find out about it.

**The writer is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist and is nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc. Copyright 2018, Tom Purcell. Purcell is author of “Misadventures of a 1970s Childhood” and “Comical Sense: A Lone Humorist Takes on a World Gone Nutty!”**

### BIBLE VERSE

#### Read Psalm 46:1-11

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. — Psalm 46:1 (KJV)

#### Prayer:

Dear Lord, in times of fear, doubt and questioning, give us the strength to continue to do your will. Amen.

#### Thought For The Day

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (See Phil. 4:13)



## Protect Journalists With The Same Laws That Protect All Of Us

BY GENE POLICINSKI

I understand the motivation behind the just-proposed Journalist Protection Act, which would make it a federal crime to attack those involved in reporting the news. The legislation comes at a time of particularly vocal attacks on news operations and individual reporters, many of which stem from the highest office in the land.

I admire the goal — preventing or penalizing misguided thugs who would censor through violence. And I salute California Rep. Eric Swalwell for introducing it in an era in which support for journalism is at an all-time low.

But some part of me — the free press advocate in me — hopes the proposed act never becomes law. Not because journalists don’t need protection, but because I fear unintended consequences. As the old maxim goes, “No good deed goes unpunished.”

The great power, and the proper position, of a free press has always been that it represents “the people.” The press is — simply and magnificently — not a group apart, but part of that group. It is not made up of “elites” or players united in some grand conspiracy to control the news or steer the nation, as some grandstanding politicians claim, but a disjointed gaggle of vocal, well-informed fellow citizens, who are employed to report on behalf of us all. Those who would damage democracy’s checks and balances by isolating the “watchdogs on government” from fellow citizens would like nothing better than to have journalists themselves give credence to such a separation.

In a Feb. 5 news release, Rep. Swalwell makes his good case for the Journalist Protection Act: “President Donald Trump’s campaign and administration have created a toxic atmosphere. It’s not just about labeling reports of his constant falsehoods as #FakeNews — it’s his casting of media personalities and outlets as anti-American targets, and encouraging people to engage in violence.”

Swalwell, while conceding that not all attacks against journalists in the U.S. can be connected to Trump, said nonetheless that “such antagonistic communications help encourage others to think, regardless of their views, that violence against people engaged in journalism is more

acceptable.”

Journalism groups also noted, in the news release, the dangers their members now face. Broadcasters in the field often work alone or with a single colleague, said Charlie Braico, president of the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians. “With their expensive and cumbersome equipment, they are easy and tempting prey for anti-media extremists and thieves.”

“Dozens of physical assaults on journalists doing their jobs were documented by the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker in 2017,” said Rick Blum, director of News Media for Open Government. “Physical violence and intimidation should never get in the way of covering police, protesters, presidents and other public matters.”

The tracker that Blum refers to is a new database, launched and operated by the Committee to Protect Journalists, which logs arrests, harassment and physical attacks on journalists. As of Feb. 7, it showed that since January 2017, 30 reporters in the U.S. have been attacked while covering protests and two reporters had been assaulted by politicians. Globally, the situation is much grimmer: According to Freedom House, an international freedom advocacy group, barely 13 percent of the world’s population lives in nations where the press is considered free. The CPJ reports two journalists killed thus far in 2018, 262 imprisoned since 2017, and 58 journalists missing around the world.

So to all those critics who already are attacking Swalwell’s bill as unneeded or rooted in partisan politics — sorry, but the threat to journalists is real from those who consider violence an acceptable form of press criticism.

Still, we should be wary of giving journalists a special place in the zone of laws that already protect us all from assault, battery or worse. Granted, the proposed act could be an alternative when local officials refuse to follow up on an attack — or do so ineffectively. But I like the old news-gathering maxim that “journalists have no more rights than anyone else ... but also have no fewer rights.”

**Gene Policinski is chief operating officer of the Newseum Institute and senior vice president of the Institute’s First Amendment Center.**

### TODAY IN HISTORY

#### BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 13, the 44th day of 2018. There are 321 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Feb. 13, 1633, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei arrived in Rome for trial before the Inquisition, accused of defending Copernican theory that the Earth revolved around the sun instead of the other way around. (Galileo was found vehemently suspect of heresy, and ended up being sentenced to a form of house arrest.)

On this date:

In 1542, the fifth wife of England’s King Henry VIII, Catherine Howard, was executed for adultery.

In 1741, Andrew Bradford of Pennsylvania published the first American magazine. “The American Magazine, or A Monthly View of the Political State of the British Colonies” lasted three issues.

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln was officially declared winner of the 1860 presidential election as electors cast their ballots.

In 1914, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, also known as ASCAP, was founded in New York.

In 1933, the Warsaw Convention, governing airlines’ liability for international carriage of persons, luggage and goods, went into effect.

In 1935, a jury in Flemington, New Jersey, found Bruno Richard Hauptmann guilty of first-degree murder in the kidnap-slaying of Charles A. Lindbergh Jr.,

the 20-month-old son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh. (Hauptmann was later executed.)

In 1943, during World War II, the U.S. Marine Corps Women’s Reserve was officially established.

In 1968, actress Mae Marsh, known mostly for her silent film work (“The Birth of a Nation”; “Intolerance”), died in Hermosa Beach, California, at age 73.

In 1974, Nobel Prize-winning Russian author Alexander Solzhenitsyn was expelled from the Soviet Union.

In 1988, the 15th Winter Olympics opened in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

In 1998, Dr. David Satcher was sworn in as the 16th Surgeon General of the United States during an Oval Office ceremony.

In 2016, Justice Antonin Scalia, the influential conservative and most provocative member of the U.S. Supreme Court, was found dead at a private residence in the Big Bend area of West Texas; he was 79.

Ten years ago: Under oath and sometimes blistering questioning, seven-time Cy Young Award winner Roger Clemens told Congress: “I have never taken steroids or HGH,” while his accuser, former personal trainer Brian McNamee, sat a few feet away. Hollywood writers returned to work a day after voting to end their 100-day strike that had disrupted the TV season and canceled awards shows. Japanese movie director Kon Ichikawa died in Tokyo at age 92.

Five years ago: Beginning a long farewell to his flock, a weary Pope Benedict XVI celebrated his final public Mass as pontiff, presiding over Ash Wednesday services inside St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican.

### BILLY GRAHAM

*Q: My grandchildren say I worry too much, even about things that don't really matter. I suppose I am a bit of a worrywart, but I've always been like this, and I've told them I'm just too old to change. Am I right? — Mrs. S.G.*

A: It’s true that the older we get, the more we tend to become set in our ways. But it doesn’t have to be like this — and it shouldn’t be, especially with spiritual problems like worrying.

Admittedly some people worry more than others; perhaps you’re one of them. But that doesn’t mean we can’t change, even as we

grow older — with God’s help. Listen: God doesn’t want us to be consumed with worry and anxiety, no matter our age. Instead, He wants us to turn our worries over to Him, and to trust Him for the future. You see, when we allow worries to dominate us, we’re actually saying that God can’t be trusted to take care of us. But He can be trusted!

Learn instead to commit your worries to God in prayer, and to trust Him to take care of them. In addition, let the promises of God’s Word, the Bible, take root in your mind and heart. And once you

commit something to Him, don’t keep taking it back! The Bible says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

In addition, develop a spirit of thankfulness. Thankfulness crowds out worry! Thank God for His love and goodness, and thank Him most of all for Jesus Christ, who gave His life for your salvation.

## The Greenville Sun

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