



The Courier — 1981 to 2010



Newspaper proudest of times it's helped community

It's also often been center of controversy

By Patricia Snyder of the Daily Courier

When the Daily Courier celebrated its 100-year anniversary, Harry Elliott, the newspaper's longest-serving editor, wrote about a feeling of pride in being a part of the observation on April 3, 1985.

"Surely those who support the paper through subscribing, advertising and reading it are just as entitled to claim it as their Courier as those of us who work here," he wrote. "The Courier is not something that happens in Grants Pass. It is something that is part and parcel of the town, unable to exist without it and inseparable."

For the current editor, Dennis Roler, the highlights have been the times the newspaper has helped people or the community.

"For example, we publicized that a woman cobbler was going blind and would lose her livelihood, all for lack of \$8,000 to remove cataracts on her eyes," Roler said. "Within nine days, friends and strangers had donated the needed \$8,000."

He recalled a series of articles that publicized conditions at Grants Pass High School, then 75 years old, and the public voted in 1995 to pass a \$40 million bond issue to replace GPHS and build Parkside Elementary School.

"On a heavier note," Roler said, "we probably discouraged Josephine County Commissioner Jim Raffenburg from running for a second term in 2008 by telling voters how he was going back on his campaign promises, working at a second job and had inflated his resume to win office."

The newspaper has often found itself at the center of con-



FILE/Daily Courier

Kevin Janoski holds Voorhies, a Sheriff's Office K-9 acquired with money donated in 1995 by the Daily Courier after another K-9 was slain.

troversy and community.

In 1991, the Roy Masters family sued in an attempt to obtain Daily Courier phone records and to force reporters to provide unpublished information, claiming criminal collusion and serving court papers to staff when they went to the radio philosopher's ranch near Selma to interview him for a series about his Foundation of Human Understanding and its followers. A judge dismissed the case.

In 1992, Foundation of Human Understanding member Paul Walter organized a picket of the Courier for what was characterized as a too-liberal slant, especially related to two series, one on Masters and another on Ballot Measure 9, which would have required the government and educators to teach children that homosexuality is "abnormal, wrong,

unnatural and perverse."

Walter was again among the pickets who protested in 1993 after the newspaper continued to publish "For Better or for Worse," even though the comic strip included a homosexual character.

Walter again picketed in 1994, when the Courier published an article about a lesbian-containing comic the paper didn't carry.

In 2000, Walter and his wife, Lorraine, were among those picketing the Courier over its coverage of a hearing about a law enforcement tax levy, claiming the newspaper supported "good ol' boys and high taxes."

In 1995, the Courier gave money to a nonprofit group to replace a slain police dog through the nonprofit Friends of the Canines, which supported a unit of the Josephine County Sheriff's Office run almost entirely on donations.

When Sixth and Seventh streets were repaved in 1999, the Daily Courier helped to arrange block parties to draw people into the downtown.

It again bolstered law enforcement in 2000, when it contracted with the financially struggling Josephine County Sheriff's Office for a deputy to provide random checks — and respond to emergencies when not doing so — while the newspaper expanded its press color capacity and did paving and landscaping at the parking lot on Seventh and K streets.

The new parking lot has been a spot for fundraising car washes, Duck Derby sales and other events to benefit nonprofit groups. In August, the newspaper hosts its annual Fantastic Flea Market for some 50 nonprofit organizations.

In 2001, the Courier drew criticism, including on the national level, that it was too conservative after firing columnist Dan Guthrie following an

uproar over his column characterizing then-President George W. Bush and his staff as cowardly following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

In 2005, the Courier won a lawsuit against the Three Rivers School District, forcing it to make public a \$10,000 resignation agreement with a

teacher who later lost his license because a state board determined that he'd had an inappropriate relationship with a female student.

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Recent decades have witnessed a revolution in news photo technology

By Patricia Snyder of the Daily Courier

The process of delivering photos to Courier readers has evolved as technology has changed.

The early newspaper took a leap forward from sending photos out on the train when it started engraving them in-house, on zinc plates in black-and-white.

The Daily Courier's first immediate-news color photo nearly didn't make it into the newspaper. By the early 1980s, the newspaper was running local color photographs, but they needed time to process the photos for printing. Current photo editor Timothy Bullard, who started at the Courier in November 1986, explained that the process could take three days and two trips to Medford, with the color slides scanned into a format that could be used by the Courier's presses.

Color photographs had to be divided into segments that matched the four ink colors: cyan, magenta, yellow and black. The Daily Courier still prints using a four-color separation process.

In March 1985, North Valley High School boys were playing in the AA basketball tournament in Eugene. They beat La Salle 21-19 in the semifinals on a Friday night and advanced to compete for their first-ever state basketball title.

The newspaper did not have a full-time photographer in



TIM BULLARD/Daily Courier

Kristin McGillivray is seen on Dec. 15, 1999, in first digital image to appear in Daily Courier.

Eugene that day, but stringer Ross Martin captured NVHS players Dan Kroplin and Greg Nygren in the La Salle game. The film was taken for processing to the Eugene Register-Guard, where color separations were made.

Then-sports editor Greg Hanberg put the separations on a Greyhound bus bound for Grants Pass, where sports reporter Jeff Duewel went to pick them up on Saturday morning.

The station, which was then located right behind the Courier on Eighth Street, was usually open on Saturdays, recalled Duewel, who is now a news reporter, and thus the photo should have been available for printing.

But no one was there.

Duewel, in a near-panic, called Courier receptionist Skip Newell, who tracked down the bus station manager at home and got him to open the building and retrieve the photo so that it could run in that day's edition of the newspaper.

NVHS went on to win the state basketball title.

The Courier's color photography process later involved going next door to the Photo Den, which provided overnight service to Eugene for processing, allowing the picture to be published the next day or two days later.

The next step in color photo publication involved purchase of a slide scanner, which allowed the newspaper to digitize color slides.

The staff's first photo taken with a digital camera published on Dec. 15, 1999. Featuring Kristin McGillivray, it accompanied the then-senior at New Hope Christian School's funny story about shopping with her grandmother. McGillivray won the annual writing contest for Under 21, a page written by and for the younger generation.

The newspaper's Under 21 staff now takes some of the Courier's photos, using digital cameras.

Now, photography is completely digital, making it possible for images to be available in minutes. In addition to staff members carrying digital cameras, the public is welcome to e-mail photos to the newspaper.

Nila Martin's been delivering the Daily Courier for 37 years

By Patricia Snyder of the Daily Courier

Daily Courier newspaper carrier Nila Martin hasn't just delivered the news. Sometimes, she's witnessed it.

She's seen wrecks. One day, she was the one to spot a house fire on her Jerome Prairie route. Another time, she noticed that the newspapers were piling up at a single man's house, leading to the discovery of his death.

"When you've had a route so long, you know what a person does," she said.

Martin is the longest-serving of nearly 80 independent carriers who are responsible for getting the newspaper to subscribers. Each day, they drive a total of about 1,800 miles — combined, enough to circumnavigate the world 20 times a year.

Martin's route stretches a little over 40 miles, featuring 350 Daily Couriers and 450 free Country Weekly newspapers, not including the copies she brings to Levi's Market and Deli on Demaray Drive.

"When gas goes down 2 or 3 cents, we think



MARTIN

we're making a lot of money," she said with a laugh. When she started her route, gas was 28 cents a gallon.

She's gone through about 20 cars in her 37 years as a carrier. She started as a substitute delivery driver in October 1972 and, by December, had a route of her own. "I just love to do it," she said. "I love to look at the scenery out there."

She also notices scenery changes, such as a house being painted a different color.

As the area has grown, her route has split five times. It still takes about 2 1/2 hours to cover.

She works with a "paper piker," someone who slides the newspaper into the subscriber's plastic tube while Martin drives.

Some customers, knowing when she's expected, wait for her arrival.

"You just hand them the paper and talk to them for a little bit," she said.

Martin said she wants to beat the record length of time for being a carrier before retirement.

She'll be in her 70s if she wants to beat the record of 53 years.

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