

## THE EDITOR'S VIEW

Mark Tomasik on coverage of the Piper layoffs

# An underrated reporting skill

Source-building helps reporter anticipate, break highly important regional story

Source development is one of a reporter's greatest job skills.

The ability to form connections with people knowledgeable about topics on a reporter's assigned beat is essential to being able to produce exclusive, important news.

An outstanding example of that occurred last week when reporter Nadia Vanderhoof broke the story that Piper Aircraft Inc. of Vero Beach had laid off 300 workers without offering severance pay.

Vanderhoof, a talented reporter, specializes in covering business. Because Piper is one of the prominent businesses in our region, Vanderhoof has worked diligently to develop Piper sources since joining our news staff in 2003.

Those efforts paid off Feb. 10 when Vanderhoof's sources, who for weeks had been hinting of a significant layoff at Piper, informed her that employees would be told of the company's decision that morning.

Because of that, Vanderhoof was able to quickly inform the photo editor as well as her assignment editor. Photographer Matthew Ratajczak was assigned to join Vanderhoof on the scene when workers departed the Piper grounds after being told of the layoffs.

That enabled Vanderhoof and Ratajczak to post a breaking-news exclusive on our Web site, TCPalm.com. It also gave them a head start on the story before Piper announced the news to other media outlets.

The result: we were able to provide you with the most complete coverage of this important regional story in print and online.

Vanderhoof updated her story on TCPalm throughout the day and then again for the Feb. 11 newspaper. Her coverage was accurate, balanced, professional. It included detail and reaction from Piper and employees who had lost their jobs. Ratajczak posted video online as well as photos for print and Web.

Interest in this story is strong. Our coverage of the Piper layoffs received the most reader comments on TCPalm last week and it ranked No. 2 among the most e-mailed stories. It also generated more than 15,000 clicks on TCPalm.com.

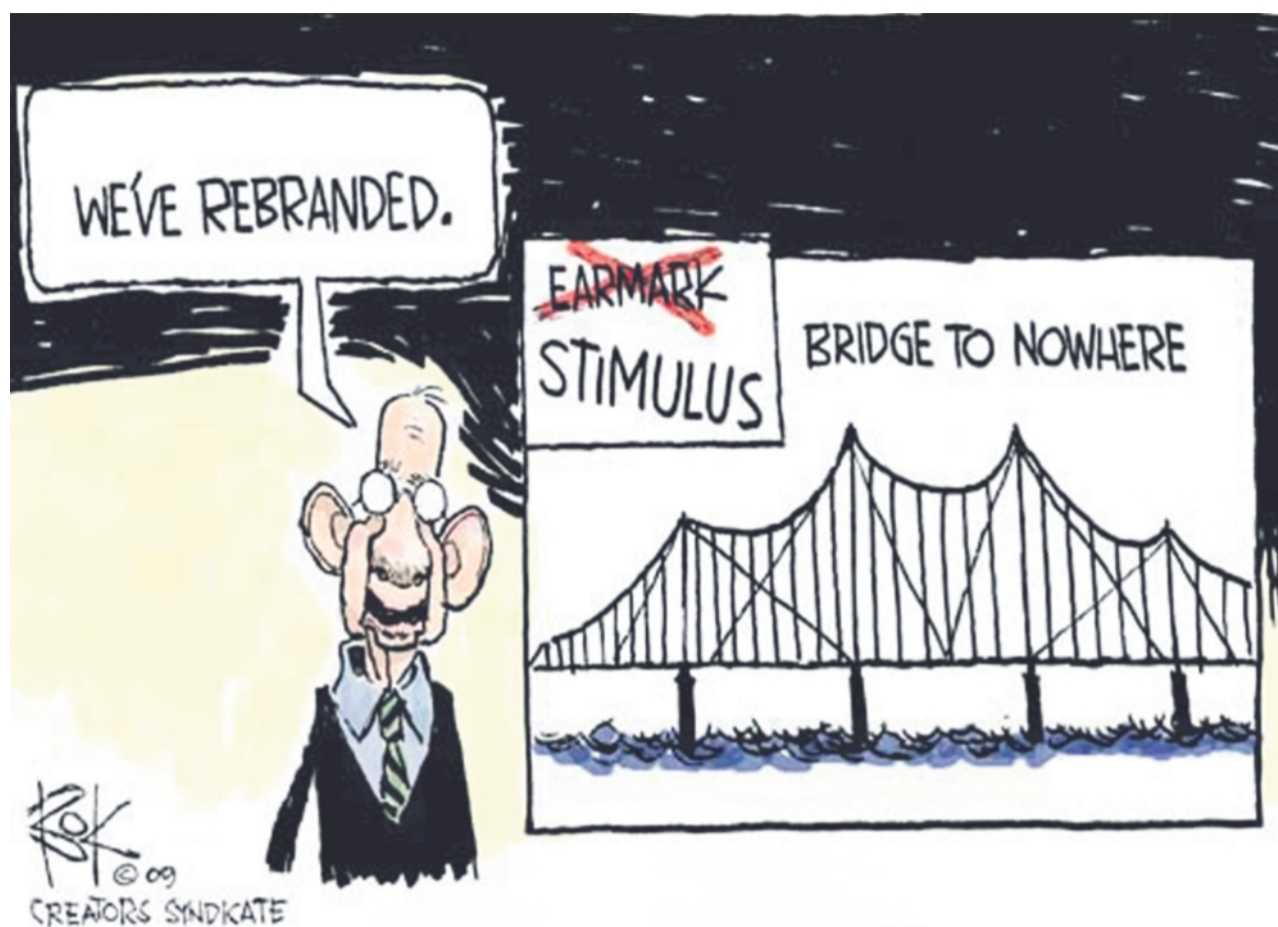
Our obligation to you is to report and deliver local news in a timely and accurate manner. One reason we're able to do that is we have more journalists on staff covering the Treasure Coast than any other news organization in any medium.

There is no pleasure, of course, in covering a story that affects a community and people so negatively. A challenge in reporting a story such as the Piper layoffs is that it impacts so many people in so many different ways. That leads to many perceptions as to how the story should be covered.

We encourage anyone to express viewpoints on this topic through letters to the editor in the newspaper and the comment section of TCPalm.com.

In good times and bad, Piper remains an important part of the Treasure Coast community. We'll continue to devote the resources that provide news of what's happening there.

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## YOUR VIEW

### ECONOMY

#### Media have a job: Unwrap, explain stimulus package

I, like many Americans, Republican and Democrat, am stupified by the numbers associated with the so-called "stimulus." Am I for this package? I don't have a clue, because I really do not have any idea what is in this proposed bill.

That's where the Press Journal comes in. I call on the PJ to step forward and do what no one else seems to want to do — tell us what is in this package. Do your job. Go through this thing and report page by page, billion by billion, where this money is intended to go, and put in terms that taxpaying Americans can understand.

We all need to make an informed decision about this, and it's time the people whose job it is find that information step up. Now, more than ever before, we need you.

**Arthur Lewis**  
Vero Beach

#### Warning: Government may be dangerous to you

This economic recovery plan should be called our economic destruction plan. It will bail out and spend our money on those who made mistakes that should never be rewarded.

We have proof of that with Troubled Asset Relief Program 1.

Now we are planning TARP 2 and a spending plan that will bail out those who caused the problem, as well as socialize our country. We should, as Americans, be voting on something this big, but that will never happen.

Our new president, Barack Hussein Obama, has already shown us change via his agenda lacking ethics, character and experience. His choice of Cabinet members who don't pay taxes and his hunger for power only took a little more than two weeks.

The new head of the IRS, as well as so many others, didn't pay taxes. The new administration and big government doesn't care about raising taxes to pay back the debt they are causing with their big spending spree because they don't pay taxes. They just collect them and spend them.

There is so much of this spending plan the government doesn't want us to know until it's signed. One is socialized medicine, and don't think it's not in there. This means the government will decide your medical care according to your age and purpose to society even though they will use your money.

Also, Obama wants to be in charge of the Census Bureau? That should say it all.

Who was it who said if the enemy can't kill you they will destroy you from within by ruining the economy? If we don't wise up, America could become that place that used to be called the land of the free.

**Lynn S. Oakes**  
Vero Beach

#### Bailouts are poor lesson to the rising generation

Bailing out failed business and then rewarding their CEOs with \$500,000 sends the wrong message to our young people.

The bailout action seems to be an adult extension of graduating a student who hasn't adequately completed the curriculum.

Perhaps such a young person should also have a new car presented to him upon high school "graduation," compliments of the government. And we are the government.

**George Potter**  
Vero Beach

### PRESIDENCY

#### Obama's body language belies mistrust and myopia

Where did the hope go? The president's body language during his Feb. 9 speech and press conference was very telling. He never looked into the camera. (If he did, I missed it.)

His eyes were only on the people in the room. His eyes panned from left to right, always skipping the camera. I wanted to knock on the screen and say, "Hello, President Obama, look over here."

I am always suspicious of people who do not look you in the eye when they talk to you. It undermines confidence and it's a sign that they are hiding something.

This leaves me wondering. Has he become politically myopic? Has he forgotten the people? Why did he focus on the worst of the worst in America? Wallowing in woes has never been productive.

Where was the call for innovation? After all, it's America's innovation that will bring us out of this recession, not government pork spending. Could it be he does not know this? Maybe so. His body language indicates that he lacks confidence in his current direction.

**Jim Zabcik**  
Vero Beach

#### Birthright citizenship isn't always so simple

I hope William Asbury takes a few minutes to actually look up the "laws" about U.S. citizenship.

Simple marriage to an "American citizen" does not confer citizenship. It may make the process of becoming a citizen easier (naturalization process).

If a child is born to a citizen and a non-citizen on U.S. sovereign soil, he/she could actually then have dual citizenship (just like Barack H. Obama, whose father was a British subject at the time of his birth and later a "Kenyan" at that country's independence status in 1963).

Where our president was actually born has never been proven because of his refusal to provide a "vault certificate of birth" (one with a doctor's signature and witnesses with time and place).

A child born to parents who are both U.S. citizens does acquire U.S. citizenship. However, if born in another country, dual citizenship may apply again. (Check the U.S. laws and applicable treaties in effect.)

That said, are your children actually citizens now? Personally, I do not believe someone who never registered for the draft could ever be considered in the same sentence as "more" of an American than George Washington.

God bless, and pray for America.

**Paul A. Mattfeld**  
Barefoot Bay

#### Reviewing the record of Bush's administration

The election is over; Americans have voted. Hopefully, each vote was cast by an individual who beforehand addressed the issues, studied candidates, then voted intelligently. Otherwise, it was hardly a just election.

Now we are in for change — which can be bad or good.

Let's examine the George W. Bush era, 2000-2008:

- Picked up pieces of 9/11 and kept us safe for 7 years, 4 months.
- Saved millions of lives (babies-to-be with his pro-life agenda).
- Prevented Saddam Hussein from getting nukes or other weapons of mass destruction and using them.
- Was close to all our GIs, shedding lots of tears with them and their families.

What about the financial crisis? Oh, yeah, right. After Americans in 2006 voted Democratic House and Senate, we did go downhill. Check with Barney Frank, Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid for an explanation.

And how about God Almighty? Can the Creator also lend a couple words?

Good work, George. Maybe morality trumps finances.

**Rob Kuebrich**  
Vero Beach

## REARVIEW TODAY IN HISTORY

**FLORIDA**  
**In 1919**, the Florida Board of Health reported 3,007 Floridians had died in the first three months of a worldwide influenza outbreak that broke out after World War I.  
**In 1965**, the first Pegasus satellite was launched from Cape Canaveral, its mission to study meteoroids and other potential hazards to Apollo missions.

**ELSEWHERE**  
**In 1868**, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks was organized in New York City.  
**In 1918**, Lithuania proclaimed its independence, which lasted until World War II. (It again declared independence in 1990).

**In 1923**, the burial chamber of King Tutankhamen's recently unearthed tomb was unsealed in Egypt by English archaeologist Howard Carter.  
**In 1945**, American troops landed on the island of Corregidor in the Philippines during World War II.  
**In 1959**, Fidel Castro became premier of Cuba 1½ months after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista.  
**In 1968**, the nation's first 911 emergency telephone system was inaugurated, in Haleyville, Ala.  
**In 1988**, seven people were shot to death during an office rampage in Sunnyvale, Calif., by a man obsessed with a co-worker. (The gunman, Richard Farley, is under sentence of death.)

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We welcome readers' views on matters of public interest. Letters must be signed and include full names, daytime telephone number and street address for verification. Letters may not exceed 300 words, must be original work and will be edited. Seven letters per year, per writer, may be printed.

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