

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

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FROM THE RECTOR

How media betrays the nation and its investors

The incompetent narcissists who produce America's mainstream media have for decades been betraying both the nation and their shareholders – a fact that has been made manifest in the media's coverage of the run up to the 2016 Presidential Election.

Indeed, it should be clear – beyond all doubt – that it is the media that is primarily responsible for the extraordinarily low and ugly level of political discourse that disgraces not just the nation's capital and state houses, but our local council chambers.

It is a grave insult to the intellect of even the most low brow news consumer that the media treats seriously the overblown rhetoric and grotesque insults politicians of both parties routinely hurl at each other.

News ought to have some basis in truth. While it, thus, worth reporting that Mr Donald Trump's strategy is to call his opponents in the race for the Republican presidential nomination 'idiots', 'stupid', and 'no-nothings', it certainly isn't worth revisiting it on a daily basis.

Mr Trump is a shrewd businessman and, although he has yet to prove it, he might well have the makings of a capable president. But he has is also a flamboyant showman who knows a good publicity stunt when he sees one.

He calls his opponents rude names because he knows the media will report it constantly, giving him column inches by the acre and hours of television and radio time all for free.

Once upon a time, when newsmen and women were a good deal more professional than they are today, they regarded it as a matter of honour to recognise publicity stunts for what they are and ignore them. Giving anybody – especially politicians – free advertising used to be an anathema to media professionals.

(Back then, public relations operatives were rated by their ability to sucker editors into accepting publicity stunts as genuine news. Today they don't even have to go through the motions. These days it seems that most news starts out as a public relations handout.)

In the age when news journalists actually practiced their craft, politicians who wanted media exposure actually had to earn it with policy proposals or debating points that made some degree of sense. Otherwise they had to pay for it.

Politics is admittedly not the most principled of occupations. Politicians of all stripes are prone to make ugly and outlandish accusations against those who disagree with them.

But does anybody with half a brain honestly believe the Republicans have 'declared war on women' – a demographic group that comprises more than half the electorate? Can anybody but the most gullible, no matter their politics, seriously think the Democrats actually *intend* to drive the nation into bankruptcy?

Such stuff isn't news; it's just blather, and news organisations have a duty to sort fact from this type of fiction.

This basic responsibility seems to be honoured mainly in the breach, thus folks might be led to conclude that naïfs, amateurs or outright traitors to their craft staff most American newsroom. But such a conclusion is not entirely fair.

Like so many other trades today, the problem starts with the way its practitioners are taught their 'trade' – a word used advisedly.

Journalism, no matter the pretensions journalists harbour, is not a 'profession'. It has more in common with carpentry and plumbing than 'learned professions' such the Law and the Church. But the fact it is a trade or craft should in no way diminish it.

As with so many trades in which skills were once traditionally passed on through the apprenticeship system, the teaching of news

journalism has been taken over by almost exclusively by colleges and universities.

However, unlike architecture, engineering, agriculture and business studies, the academic environment is unsuited to the imparting of the skills necessary to be a good reporter.

A great newspaper tycoon once declared the qualifications for a news journalist to be 'shorthand, typing, and a sort of low animal cunning'. Modern journalistic education teaches nothing of the kind.

The qualities aspiring that news journalists really need to develop are exceptional insight and acute observation. An extensive working knowledge of what used to be called 'civics' is also essential.

An illustration of the vital role insight plays is found in the case of a young reporter assigned to cover an important society wedding. The copy deadline came and went without a story being filed. Next day the youngster explained: 'There was no story. The wedding didn't take place. The bridegroom didn't turn up!'

The Parish Prayer List

Our Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, ring the parish office on 410 560 6776.

FOR RECOVERY: Hilarie, Jack, Donald, Evelyn, Cal, Finton, Edie, Cary, Judy, Julie, Phyllis, Steve, Wendy, Matthew, Adele, Starr, Helen, Emily, Marty, Don, Linda, Elizabeth, Cathy, William, Dan, Lindsey, Shelby, Rob, Dick, Melissa, Paula, Sandra, Diane, Hobie, Nathan, Francine, Susan, Holly, Hayley, John, Nancy, Gloria, Judy

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Melba, Scott, Charles, Vinnie, Doug, Rusty, Ian, Lisa, Fritz, Carey

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes

Modern journalistic education, by contrast, places a heavy emphasis not on writing, but on 'writing' in quotation marks. This foolish pretension that news writing is a form of literature is responsible for the interminable, self-indulgent screeds of woolly, ill-organised text that today passes for news reporting.

Real news writing is far from literature. It is essentially utilitarian – merely the vehicle by which news is transmitted. At best, news writing should be to a degree formulaic – the 'where, what, how and whys' of events expressed in straightforward, declarative sentences.

The literary pretensions of today's journalists have led to the laughable phenomena of reporters accusing each other of plagiarism – as though it could actually be possible to plagiarise tomorrow's fish wrapper.

It also, I suspect, engenders the apparently insatiable appetite for journalism awards; an orgy of self-congratulation that encompasses the putatively sublime and the patently ridiculous – from the Pulitzers to the local sanitation department's 'Journalist of the Year'.

Small wonder the mainstream media's most avid consumers are the folks who produce it. This, in turn, explains why most mainstream news organisations are on the ropes. **GPH***

FROM THE PARISH TEA PARTY

Afternoon Teas need your reservations

Afternoon teas have become so popular that we have had to limit the number of reservations we can accept. We are able to comfortably serve 40 guests. We ask that you please make a reservation using the sign up sheet in the main reception area, leaving your name and a contact number. If you later find yourself unable to attend, please contact the Parish Office immediately so we can offer your place to the next person on the standby list. **ANNIE HAWKINS**

FROM THE MUSIC OFFICE

Now hiring choirboys – apply today!

Saint Stephen's Choir Academy, the voice-training programme which provides the choristers for our parish choir, is looking for new recruits. If you know a family member, friend, neighbour, or random kid on the street who enjoys singing, wishes to receive a *free* classical music education, and who might be interested in earning a stipend in the process, please contact the Admissions Director, Mrs Cheryl Nickol, on **410 329 6399** or at **admissions@choiracademy.org**

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ChoirAcademy.org

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Ven. Canon Guy P. Hawtin, *Rector*
The Ven. Michael Kerouac, *Vicar*
The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki, *Associate Rectors*
The Rev. M. Wiley Hawks, *Priest · Adric, Magister Chori*
Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8 am: Said Eucharist
9.15 am: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)
11 am: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)
6 pm: Choral Evensong (as announced: evensong.ststeve.com)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, **6 pm:** Evening Prayer
Friday, **12 noon:** Healing Eucharist
Saturday, **5 pm:** Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Mondays, 6.30 pm: Bridge Club
Tuesdays, 7 am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)
Thursdays, 10 am: Knitting Circle
Fridays, 10.30 am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Saturday, 19 September, 6 pm
Parish Picnic
Wednesday, 21 October, 12 noon
The Ladies Who Lunch meet at Basta Pasta

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

St Stephen's Anglican Church
11856 Mays Chapel Road
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