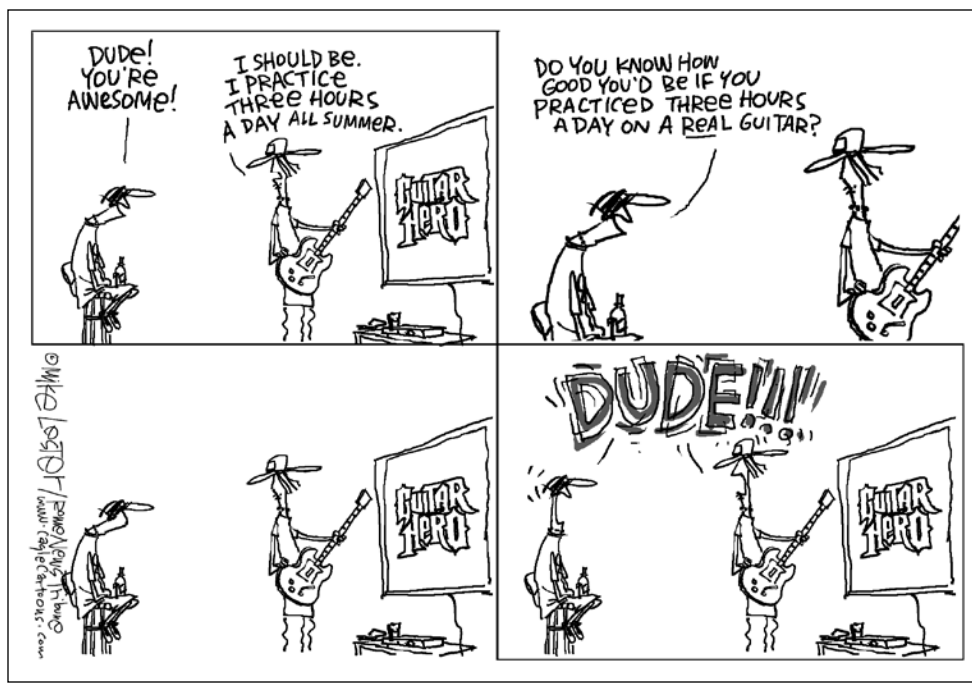


EDITORIAL CARTOON

MIKE LESTER, THE ROME NEWS-TRIBUNE



OTHER CAMPUSES

JOEL COHEN, THE DIAMONDBACK (UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND)

American journalism's cloudy future

It's 1 a.m. on a recent Tuesday, and I have just finished up another shift of my internship at The (Baltimore) Sun. I say good night to everyone, not knowing if it's the last time I will see them in the newsroom. I walk past the rows and rows of empty desks, telling myself that the only reason no one is there is because deadline has passed.

As I walk through the walkway and into the parking garage, I look out through the lights and wonder who will cover the city below me after the job and budget cuts. Having already cut jobs and with the announcement of more job cuts forthcoming, what will the future hold?

As I get into my car and make my way down the parking garage, I feel as if I am descending as fast as The Sun's circulation numbers. I speed up. As I pass Camden Yards on my right, I begin to think of the numerous ways besides tomorrow's newspaper that I can find out who won that night's Orioles game.

You see, that's the problem. People don't feel the need to read newspapers when they have an infinite number of alternate resources from which to get their news. Why find out what Manager Dave Trembly said about the latest O's collapse tomorrow when I can just go to Orioles.com and find out right now? Until newspapers find a way to generate a positive cash flow from their multimedia endeavors, their problems will persist.

When newspapers publish their own articles on their own Web sites, they are able to generate revenue from the advertisements on the page. The problem is, many times the Associated Press will pick up these same stories and mass distribute them across the country. Once the story gets posted on another Web site, the newspaper loses all rights to money generated from advertising on that

page.

As I near Frederick, I see an "exit only" sign ahead of me. I begin to think if now's the time to take that short exit ramp and get out of the industry while I still can. I decide to switch lanes and decline the invitation. Two minutes later, I see another sign that reads "lane ends 2,000 feet." Is this the end of the road for the newspaper industry? Once again, I switch lanes.

As I enter Frederick, I begin to think of how hard it must be for local newspapers. If conglomerates such as the Tribune Company and The Washington Post Company are struggling, I can only imagine the turmoil at The Frederick News-Post.

As I exit the highway and pass my former high school, I begin to think about the students in the high school's journalism class. Will there even be jobs for them when they graduate college? Will newspapers still exist?

I hit a yellow light, which promptly turns to red. I begin to contemplate the state of the newspaper in the United States. Has the industry come to a slow period, just gearing up for the green light to go ahead? Or has it come to a complete halt, with a permanent blinking red as its only option?

The light turns green.

As I turn into my driveway, The Beatles' "Here Comes the Sun" begins to play. The only line I hear before turning off the car is "Here comes the sun, and I say it's all right."

I enter the house and get ready for bed. As I fall asleep, I dream of the good ol' days when newspapers were cash cows and were the main source of news and information for millions of Americans each morning.

The next morning, I wake up and walk down the driveway to get the newspaper, hoping The Sun will come out tomorrow.

Celebrating red, white, and blue with a green card

Happy 232nd Birthday America! Today is July 11th, and words cannot express how proud I am to be an American.

This may be because I'm not American in the traditional sense of having citizenship. Coincidentally, this lack of "red-white-and-blue" in my blood is what stopped me from writing what would have been a more relevant article one week ago on Independence Day.

Apparently a Green Card does not protect you from extensive background checks by the CIA, FBI and DI on what is one of the most patriotic days in the world.

Now that I haven't been deported or tried for treason, everything's clear.

The Fourth of July is a celebration of patriotism, freedom, acceptance and opportunity (to strike fear in those who unlike us, hate everything that the Star-Spangled Banner stands for and will do anything to see America burn). No, not the Canadians.

To an outsider looking in on the superpower that is the United States, it can be a daunting place. As a sixth-grader in Saskatchewan, I was terrified to learn that I was moving to Chicago. I remember having a nightmare that I was in a school lobby in Minnesota, dodging bullets from guns wielded by punks with chains connecting their noses to their ears.

But ten years and a few fireworks later, I feel like I'm beginning to finally fit in and understand what it means to be an American.

Last week, I sat on a grassy field peppered by happy revelers decked in red, white and blue. For many, the potent mix of patriotism, a day off work and alcohol conjured up a celebratory dance that was reminiscent of the clap-bounce seen on Family Feud.

Before any sparks hit the sky, the lights turned-off and everyone sat anxiously with



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their eyes glued above. You could sense the tension mounting as we waited for something spectacular to wake us up.

Then the fireworks lit up the dark night. Instead of staying focused on the explosions, I usually spend some time during the show watching the expressions of those around me. Everyone sat smiling and staring at the sky, in awe of the colors blowing up above.

You could sense the tension mounting as we waited for something spectacular to wake us up.

It happens every year, but for some reason I never expect it. There's a strange, palpable feeling of unity and a quiet dignity in the audience during the 15 minutes of pyrotechnics. Even when the finale rained a potentially dangerous blanket of fireballs down on the revelers, they erupted in celebration.

I'm not quite sure what it is, but there's something there in that celebration on the Fourth of July that seems so powerful that if we

were to channel it into something else, it may lead to something greater.

This is what makes America beautiful. Unfortunately when the song "America the Beautiful" was played, many sang along and swayed in happiness. I didn't know any of the words.

There are only a few moments in my life when I feel like a terrorist, but that was one of them.

Sujoy is a senior in biochemistry who is not a terrorist, but a Green Card holder now eligible for citizenship.

Readers' opinions

The Daily Illini reserves the right to edit or reject any contributions. Summer letters must be limited to 200 words. Contributions must be typed and include the author's name, address and phone number.

University students must include their year in school and college.

Inquiries about possible guest columns should be submitted to opinions editor Andrew Mason via e-mail or by calling 217.337.8366.

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