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# MIDLOTHIAN MIRROR

A TRUE REFLECTION OF LOCAL EVENTS

## The Empty Pew

W. Jene Miller

On Jan. 4, 1968, a Mr. Jack Cooper wrote to the BROOMFIELD (Colorado) STAR-BUILDER asking why the editor bothered to publish the paper. The letter writer went on to say some derogatory things about the editorials and lack of "news of any consequence."

I am not here concerned about defending that editor (who certainly does not need any defense from me). I am concerned about the very honest question about the small newspapers. Mr. Cooper may not even see this column, but others will.

My thesis is that the role of the small, independent newspaper is vital to the American scene. It is crucial in many areas.

In the matter of political editorializing, it is not difficult to demonstrate the failure of major newspapers to be unbiased or independent. The excellent NEW YORK TIMES even assigned a special reporter to cover the Jim Garrison work because it would not allow its regular reporter for that area to report as he honestly saw things materialize. Chicago houses a paper so right-wing, that its very by-line on copy is enough to keep articles out of reputable newspapers, but not most big-city presses.

In fact, the giants of journalism were originally small, inde-

pendent editors. Think of Horace Greeley and William Allen White in by-gone days. Think of Elijah Parish Lovejoy. Remember in our own day H. M. Baggarly, Penn Jones, Gene Cervi, P. D. East and J. R. Freeman, to name just a few who have courageously witnessed against the powers of vested interest.

In the matter of advertising, the small newspaper is crucial. What small town merchant could afford to advertise across half a state to reach his customers in one town? Think of local political issues which could not reach the public except for a local press. Those who seek political positions in small town (and are often serving without salary) could not be known if they had to depend upon some huge paper several counties away.

Perhaps most significant of all is the matter of community spirit. It is the "local" hometown newspaper that generates the uniting force behind many worthy community drives. It is the "folks back home" that servicemen want to read about halfway around the world.

This column is not to answer Mr. Cooper, but to say that next time you see the editor of your own small townpaper, thank him! Some of those ulcers he's working on are for you!

More motor-vehicle accidents occur in the last half of the year.