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NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

by **Jeff vonKaenel**
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2020 and beyond

It is said that journalism is the first rough draft of history. And since we suspended our print edition after March 19, a lot of history has been made. The COVID-19 pandemic, the righteous anger and protests after the police killing of George Floyd, and the unraveling of the Trump presidency are only a few of the historic events of the last few months.

When I look back over my lifetime, 2020 feels most like 1968. The Vietnam War was televised, its horrors broadcast directly into American homes. It was the year that U.S. troops killed more than 500 Vietnamese civilians in the My Lai massacre. It was the year that Martin Luther King Jr. and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated. It was a year of student protests and bloody clashes between police and demonstrators at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fists at the Summer Olympics in protest of racism.

It was a year of terrible events, turmoil and unrest. People stood up and demanded change. It was a turning point in history.

Part of today's moment in history has been the devastating impact that the pandemic has had on already struggling local community media, including the Chico News & Review. When print advertisers pulled out and our distribution locations closed their doors, we had to suspend print publication.

But since then, our readers have stepped up with donations that have gone directly to fund the work of our reporters. We recently received a federal Paycheck Protection Program loan, which will partially fund our staff for the next few months.

I am proud of the work published online since the shutdown. I appreciate the staffers who have stayed with us despite an uncertain future and miss those who are no longer working with us. And I am so appreciative of the support that we have received from the community.

Thanks to reader donations, paid ads and the federal aid, we were able to come out with this issue. Our hope is to continue reporting and cover America's most important election since 1932. We are considering limited print publication or online-only production, perhaps reinventing ourselves as a nonprofit. We also are reaching out to local nonprofit media organizations about partnerships and talking to potential investors.

Looking into my crystal ball, our future is still unclear. The CN&R was founded in 1977 when the Chico State student paper broke away from the university and moved off campus. Since then, it has always been both a mission and a business.

The mission spoke truth to power, enabled those previously unheard to be heard, presented unpopular views and celebrated the arts. The business side has always been difficult. Speaking truth to power is not always a smart business move. We have been able to survive only because of supportive readers and advertisers, and a staff that went far above and beyond the call of duty.

For the last 43 years, the CN&R has put a weekly spotlight on people and organizations—some that desperately wanted coverage and some that most definitely did not. In the early years, the paper covered the controversial struggle over adopting the Greenline, which created the boundary protecting Chico's westside orchard lands from urban-style development. Recently, we've written more than 300 articles on the Camp Fire alone. At the same time, we've continued to play an important role covering Chico's unique culture, including producing the CAMMIES in support of the vibrant music scene.

Today, we're working to tell one of the biggest stories of our lifetime—how coronavirus is impacting us locally.

This is a historic moment for America. Our country is at a crossroads. In a time of uncertainty and confusion, independent community journalism that covers politics, news and the arts is critical. With your help, we will provide it.

Jeff vonKaenel is the president, CEO and majority owner of the News & Review newspapers in Sacramento, Chico and Reno.