

Why Snoozing is important

Some of you will be reading this on an oblong piece of newsprint, a lifetime habit acquired at school-age because of something in it that probably had nothing to do with news.

For me, it was a daily drawing of a motorcar and you had to guess its make and model. I ignored everything else, although that didn't seem to stop me becoming a writer of the else from the age of 18.

Or, you might be reading this online, either on the *Stuff* news-site or the digital version that looks exactly like the actual paper but is virtual.

Either way, what I'm about to say is wasted on you, because you already know: you're well aware of the importance of our local paper, affectionately dubbed many years ago *The Daily Snooze*.

Not everybody is. A majority has drifted off into the depths of the internet and social media, making those purveyors of fake news today's biggest information source, taking that mantle from what once topped everything – word-of-mouth.

Believe it or not, research used to tell us that personal conversations - aka phone, street and work gossip - were our top source of breaking stories, even when newspapers were in their heyday.

Think back – if your memories are like mine, you'll remember who told you John Kennedy had been shot (the truck driver who delivered Dad's flour), Princess Di was dead (Lin) or other big news (Gordon Brown, usually).

Despite all that, it's my belief that papers like the *Taranaki Daily News* still play a key role in the way things unfold. Their cachet remains strong.

Apart from Taranaki Regional Council - which fell out long ago with most forms of news media over some now forgotten sin(s) - our local government reps and their professional colleagues know that what appears in the TDN is likely to be seen by most of the province's main players, who they interact with the editor and his reporters accordingly.

Which brings me to the main point (you know I always do this): we need the paper not only to help survive the covid crunch but to move confidently into an economic future in which innovation and flair will be rewarded like no other time in our recent history.

I'm optimistic about the latter, by the way. Whenever excrement strikes the windmills, ideas people and risk-takers are allowed more freedom than when times are steady.

Don't rock the ship is replaced with let's take a punt, what have we got to lose? Such people, treated warily for 95 percent of each economic cycle, are looked to suddenly to save us all.

That actually wasn't the main point, but I think it's worth making.

No, the key thing I want to do here is acknowledge the companies and organisations whose leaders know what I'm talking about when I point to the significance of the *Taranaki Daily News*.

They have continued to advertise, even though in some cases they currently have no customers and no income.

Some aren't unexpected, like supermarkets and banks, which are still doing business. But some can't, and for that reason (based on frequency of advertising but not size of adverts) I salute the following Covid's Heroes: Bayleys, Harcourts, GJ Gardner, Sharrock Motors, Skin Centre, Precision Helicopters, Audiology Centre and Enliven.

Among essential businesses and services who have advertised regularly are New Plymouth District Council (second only to the government with its daily covid-19 pages), Foodstuffs and New World; Kiwibank, Westpac and ANZ banks; TSB Community Trust; MP Jonathan Young; and various undertakers like Eagars, Abrahams, Vospers and Simple.

I'm sure I'm not the only one who has noticed the above loyalty to the paper, and it'll inform future choices about where we spend our money.

It's also good to see TSB Bank join the above unofficial club for the first time on Day 12.

Although a while back its marketers felt the word "Taranaki" was unsuitable for a national player, many Taranakians still regard it as "our bank", one of the few that resisted bank takeovers last century (thank you, David Lean).

FOOTNOTE 1: If my list missed any multiple display advertisers, please email me.

FOOTNOTE 2: We've had to abandon our driveway chats. Human nature being what it is, they turned into noisy parties (without booze), dominated by people with an uncanny ability to talk without breathing. I had to paint a dotted line to keep the drifters at bay (please, council, don't dig it up).