

# OPINION

## Phrase of the week

**That went south fast:** Meaning to fail or decline, its exact origin is unknown but it became popularized in the 1920s, especially among newspapers' business writers who often used it, or a variation ("go south") to describe the fall in price of a stock or commodity. Common belief attributes its usage to the standard orientation of maps, where south is the downward direction.

## Lyric of the week

I'm starting with the man in the mirror  
I'm asking him to change his ways  
And no message could have been any clearer

If you wanna make the world a better place  
Take a look at yourself and then make a change

Glen Ballard/  
Siedah Garrett  
Man in the Mirror (1987)

# Help us continue to serve you

BY ROBERT BERCZUK

I never thought I'd have to do this. I'm old school and truly believe a newspaper has a four-pronged responsibility to the communities it serves: to inform, educate, protect and entertain. It's never about us — nor should it be. It's about the people and places in those communities. Their experiences. Their lives. Their stories. Well, that's all changed.

I have been blessed beyond any possible expectations I had when I purchased The Jamestown Press 4½ years ago. This community's support and connection to this paper is something I hadn't seen in a long time in a well-traveled and myriad journalism career spanning 30 years and 10 stops along the way.

That support and generosity expands to all aspects of life here on the island. I've never lived anywhere with such a strong sense of community spirit, involvement and genuine concern. For me, being a part of this town — and all it has to offer, especially some of the people with whom I've developed close bonds — is one of the best things that has ever happened to me.

It's a unique, special bond that makes it a joy to come here every day. That feeling is magnified by the hard-working, dedicated (and mostly local) staff here at the paper. This community — and I — are fortunate

to have them.

The coronavirus has impacted all of us in many ways — from topsy-turvy schedules to reduced or lost jobs to businesses being closed for months to now dealing with the uncertainty of how we move forward.

I understand my fellow business owners are hurting, and I'm extraordinarily grateful to those who have been able to maintain their advertising with us. That sole source of revenue is what allows us to mail a free copy of the paper to you every week. Unfortunately, it's no longer enough.

So, I'm turning to you — our faithful readers.

The New England Newspaper & Press Association has established a 501(c)3 to help its members raise money through tax-deductible donations. Through the end of 2020, we are participating in this effort with a goal of raising at least \$50,000 to help us be able to maintain The Jamestown Press in its current form.

More information on how to participate in this voluntary subscription drive can be found on the facing page.

Since we all are in this together, for every \$100 donated to this fundraiser, we will provide a \$20 chamber check to the contributor for their use so other businesses in town also can benefit from this effort. The more we all can do for one another, the easier it will be for all of us to alleviate the uncertainty of how we move forward together.

Berczuk is the owner of The Jamestown Press.

# Amid pandemic, taking pen in hand

BY TOM PURCELL

I can't recall the last time I wrote or received a handwritten letter — but it's time to send such letters again. The reasons why the handwritten letter died are obvious: e-mail, text messaging and cellphones. With how quick those innovations make whipping off a note, why would anybody take an hour to hand-write one?

## ANOTHER VIEW

But how much better off might we be if we started sending such letters again?

I've kept every handwritten letter I ever got, in boxes in my attic. One Saturday in 2000, when I was moving from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C., organizing and storing stuff soured my mood. Until I stumbled upon a handwritten letter I'd received in 1985.

It was from a fellow I'd gone to Penn State with, who'd become an editor in Bangor, Maine. As I read it, it took me back 15 years — to exactly who I was at age 24. I laughed out loud reading it.

The handwritten letter is personal and deeply satisfying in ways electronic communication can't be. E-mail, no matter how well crafted, just isn't memorable.

Consider a letter my grandfather handwrote in 1928.

With great eloquence, he consoled his best friend's wife on the loss of her mother. He wrote that letter when he was 25. My grandfather died when my father

was only 3. That letter is among the most cherished items I have from a grandfather I never got to meet.

Now, during the coronavirus pandemic, the handwritten letter has begun a comeback. Miss Manners and others encourage writing to thank the many people battling the virus on the front lines. They also suggest writing to elderly nursing-home residents and others who've been isolated and shut in for months because simple kindness and compassion can benefit both writer and recipient in these unusual times.

Could the handwritten letter help us address deeper challenges, too? Instead of posting strident snark on social media, why not take time to think things through and explain your viewpoint to a movement leader, a mayor or anyone else unaccustomed to receiving thoughtful, heartfelt letters?

I'll bet writing by hand would help letters' senders and recipients alike begin to realize they have more in common than not — that our communities are not as divided as we may think. We won't know until we try. So, pick up a pen and write some "thank you" cards to people who've sacrificed for all of us during the pandemic. Then write some memorable, uplifting letters to folks who've suffered in isolation for months.

That's a good start, anyhow.

Copyright 2020 Tom Purcell. Purcell is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc.



# THE JAMESTOWN PRESS

An Independent Newspaper Published Every Thursday • Online at [www.JamestownPress.com](http://www.JamestownPress.com)

The Jamestown Press is printed on 100% recycled paper

Member of  
The New England Press Association  
& The Rhode Island Press Association

## OUR ADDRESS

45 Narragansett Avenue, Jamestown, RI 02835  
Phone (401) 423-3200 • Fax (401) 423-1661  
E-mail: [news@jamestownpress.com](mailto:news@jamestownpress.com)  
Online: [www.JamestownPress.com](http://www.JamestownPress.com)

## Office Hours:

Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

OFF-ISLAND: One year...\$48; Six months...\$25

**PUBLISHER:** Robert Berczuk

**EDITOR:** Tim Riel

**PRODUCTION MANAGER:** Linda Nadeau

**REPORTERS:** Ryan Gibbs and Kendra Miller

**COLUMNIST:** Roger Marshall

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Andrea von Hohenleiten

**BOOKKEEPER:** Kate Lucas

**ADVERTISING SALES:** Pat Holtzman

**COPY EDITOR:** Ed Cummins

## DEADLINES

**Classifieds** ..... 5 p.m. on Mondays  
**Display Advertising** ..... 5 p.m. on Fridays  
for the following week's issue  
**Letters to the Editor** ..... 3 p.m. on Mondays  
**News/Press Releases** ..... 3 p.m. on Mondays

## CORRECTION POLICY

**Advertising:** This newspaper does not assume any responsibility for an error in an advertisement, but will reprint without charge that part of an advertisement which was incorrect. Insertions of new advertisements and advertisement changes cannot be guaranteed if copy is received later than 5 p.m. on Fridays.

**Editorial:** This newspaper will correct errors in reporting. Corrections will appear on page 4. Opinions expressed in columns and letters to the editor appearing in this newspaper are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of this newspaper.