

This is Erin Dunn from the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

It's been a rough couple of weeks for the media.

First, Brian Williams from NBC Nightly News was suspended for six months without pay for misstating his participation in the Iraq War. And they have started piling on. More reports are surfacing daily questioning his authenticity in other news stories.

News is big business and Williams walked that now blurred line between big time news anchor—solid, grounded, trusted—and the entertainment dance that newscasters must do these days. He inserted himself in the news because that's what viewers expect in 2015.

There is the inevitable escalation of opinions--I've heard the term "gleeful"—from rival news outlets at the demise of Williams.

And I'm not siding with Brian Williams—he got sloppy and did it to himself. Dan Rather was a cautionary tale, but too far in the rear view mirror I guess at this point.

And we lost two award-winning reporters last week. Bob Simon from 60-Minutes in a freak car accident on the West Side Highway in New York City and the highly regarded New York Times Media Critic David Carr.

Here's what David Carr said about the Brian Williams ordeal before his death last week:

“We want our anchors to be both good at reading the news and also pretending to be in the middle of it. That's why, when the forces of man or Mother Nature whip up chaos, both broadcast and cable news outlets are compelled to ship the whole heaving apparatus to far-flung parts of the globe, with an anchor as the flag bearer.

We want our anchors to be everywhere, to be impossibly famous, globe-trotting, hilarious, down-to-earth, and above all, trustworthy. It's a job description that no one can match." End quote.

That's what I meant to say.

On another media note--I was talking with an engineer from SHN in Willits and was telling him about the truly dreadful blog in Humboldt County called the Tuluwat Times—that is the last time I will call it by name, from here on out it's "that blog."

Remember the initial brouhaha around the job that was done in Eureka on the Martin Slough by a contractor from Oregon (who is now suing the City or was)? They blamed SHN for not doing the survey right? I was told that the project is successfully underway—if not already completed. I googled the story to double check and see if any of the local outlets carried that story—I didn't see any. The City hired a new contractor and it's taken care of. The stories listed on google—even when I take out "lawsuit" from the search—are only about the stoppage.

It seems to go back to the Brian Williams situation. If it's not action-packed it isn't worth reporting—even as a follow up to something that was once action-packed. And if it means embellishing or even reporting falsehoods—like that blog—so be it. Or so it seems.

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