

Emus Loose in Egnar: Big Stories from Small Towns

Judy Muller

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At a time when mainstream news media are hemorrhaging and doomsayers are predicting the death of journalism, take heart: the First Amendment is alive and well in small towns across America. In *Emus Loose in Egnar*, award-winning journalist Judy Muller takes the reader on a grassroots tour of rural American newspapers, from an Indian reservation in Montana to the Alaska tundra to Martha's Vineyard, and discovers that many weeklies are not just surviving, but thriving.

In these small towns, stories can range from club news to Klan news, from broken treaties to broken hearts, from banned books to escaped emus; they document the births, deaths, crimes, sports, and local shenanigans that might seem to matter only to those who live there. And yet, as this book shows us, these "little" stories create a mosaic of American life that tells us a great deal about who we are—what moves us, angers us, amuses us.

Filled with characters both quirky and courageous, the book is a heartening reminder that there is a different kind of "bottom line" in the hearts of journalists who keep churning out good stories, week after week, for the corniest of reasons: that our freedoms depend on it. Not that they would put it that way, necessarily. In the words of one editor in Colorado, "If we found a political official misusing taxpayer funds, we wouldn't hesitate to nail him to a stump."



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