

Hooters girls, and other tales from my chair



BY BRYAN DOOLEY
STAFF WRITER

Like most comedians, I use what I have. I have a disability and I am crippled. These stories are my "Tales from the Crip." This is a play on words that is not meant to be offensive to anyone. I believe in owning everything God gave you.

Living with a physical disability is not as difficult as most people think, because there are perks to balance out the drawbacks. Doors and curbs are almost impossible to navigate alone.

I enjoy getting into the movies for free and not having to wait in lines most of the time. I usually get good parking close to entrances as long as non-disabled people don't abuse the handicap parking stickers.

The first time I visited Guilford, I noticed how people liked to text while walking. That may seem innocent enough, but many times people have fallen into my lap. I don't mind the pretty girls, but the guys? Come on!

When classes first started my freshman year, every time I came out of a building, someone would yell out, "Hey Mike!" I guess they think every good-looking male in a wheelchair is named Mike.

It's also a good thing people tend to like me. Once while trying to get on the elevator in King, I ran over the toes of none other than Alvis Dunn, assistant professor of history, my United States to 1877 professor. In my haste to get off the elevator, I ran over his toes again. I thought for sure he was going to take a letter grade for that!

I have met some famous people like Steve Smith, Carolina Panthers wide receiver, and the Top Cats, the cheerleaders for the Carolina Panthers. My cousins love to go to Hooters with me because the "Hooter Girls" fall all over themselves to get into the picture with me.

Sometimes people give me things like money, foul balls and dinner. It makes them feel good and I'm all for helping others feel good.

All joking aside, this life does have some disadvantages. Some people are afraid of me. Mothers shield their children's eyes or flatten them against a wall as I go by. Some sneak a peek as I pass, and think I didn't notice.

Some think what I have is contagious ... that's outrageous! I have a congenital disorder, not a disease. Some think I can't walk, talk, or think. That's okay. Sometimes other people walk, talk, or think too much. When it's necessary, I astound people with my wit.

I also knew coming to a school that was built in the 1800s might be a challenge. I can't easily maneuver in some buildings like New Garden or Dana Auditorium and I can't visit friends above the first floor in the residence halls.

But, while it has been somewhat difficult getting around at Guilford, the Guilford family has been very supportive.

So, you see, although my physical disability challenges my life, it is not as difficult as most believe, because the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages.

CAMPAIGN CHRONICLES

Politics are not red and blue

My kindergarten teacher made me a partisan.

During the 1996 president election, she handed out a picture of the White House to all of her students. The picture had a little box in the middle, and the teacher explained that we were to glue the picture of the presidential candidate we supported on to it. We had two options, Bill Clinton, the Democratic candidate, or Bob Dole, the Republican candidate.

I was six years old I didn't know anything about politics. I knew whom my parents were voting for, so without hesitation, I picked Clinton.

Later on in high school, during the 2008 election, some of my friends were of age to vote. A few of them decided they were not going to vote, because they did not like either candidate.

Many young adults are constrained by these ideas we are taught in elementary school. We don't stop to think that there are other options.

But there are other options.

According to Politics Daily, an estimated 37 percent of Americans identify themselves as independent or unaffiliated. This is a larger percent than Americans that affiliate with the two major political parties, the Democrats with 34 percent and the Republicans with 28 percent.

The North Carolina Independents is a leadership body of unaffiliated voters in North Carolina that are working with other groups of like-minded independents. They are trying to press for Congress to hold hearings on the second-class status of independent voters. People who belong to the Republican and Democratic parties do not realize the privilege they have compared to Independents.

"In the United States, if you are a member of a major political party, the Democratic or Republican Party, you are given tremendous advantages in the electoral system," said Dr. Omar H. Ali, an historian, independent political analyst, and associate professor of African American studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

"You have election bodies that are overseeing elections that are made up of Democrats and Republicans, redistricting done by partisan terms as opposed to non-partisan terms," said Ali.

Many Americans feel as though the two major political parties do not fully represent their views, which is problematic. People focus so much on the labels of the political parties and not on the underlying issues.

"Especially in these hyper-partisan times, everything is either this or that," said Ali. "And it is to the benefit of the major parties to make the conversation either this or that, but that's not how life is and most people have mixed views on things. People have a whole range, sort of more nuanced understandings of any policy. Take education or foreign policy, women's rights, to life or to abort; these things have a lot of grey room and, in some ways, the two major parties don't make it possible for people to have a conversation."

It seems as though blame and labeling take precedence in our government, rather than working together to find the best solution, to benefit the greater good of the country. Is our government really doing its job with the amount of people who are unsatisfied with the current circumstances?

Independents are the light in the grey area of our chaotic political system.



BY EMILY COOPER
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Saudi women: the long road ahead



BY MILLIE CARTER
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In Saudi Arabia, women must have a male guardian to do the basic things that, to women in the U.S. and other Western nations, are routine activities.

Scrutiny fell upon Saudi Arabia's cultural practices, specifically those regarding gender, when women were granted the right to vote ... in year 2015.

King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz granted women the right to campaign for and be elected to the Shura Council, the kingdom's top advisory council, during the next political session in 18 months.

In response, the Western world rightfully stood up and applauded the kingdom's step in the direction to give women basic human rights.

For example, women are banned from driving cars, and most public buildings and private residences have separate entrances and exits for men and women. Women need their guardian's consent to fly on airplanes and to travel in and out of the country.

And now, women still need their guardian's consent to exercise their newly acquired rights to vote and be elected to official positions,

since women cannot legally drive themselves to work or voting polls.

So, were rights actually given to women at all?

To understand the behind-the-scenes causes and effects of the topic, the gender segregation Saudi Arabia practices is an attempt to preserve the honor and reputation of women in the eyes of the Saudi public. This gender segregation is practiced in order to create a "pure" Islamic society.

Saudi culture has chosen to keep this guardian system practice alive in their daily routines, and the recent grant for women's political involvement has drawn attention from Western nations who wish to judge Saudi Arabia's lack of gender equality.

According to the Global Post's interview with the Grand Mufti, Abdul Aziz Aal al Sheikh stated that the reform leading toward gender equality, including that of giving women the right to vote, were "plots of the enemies of Islam who seek to destroy the faith."

However, in the past five years he has recanted this idea and instead supports King Abdullah's reform policies to give women more rights, including education and the recent political rights.

According to the Global Post, "This turn of events is yet another illustration of the dynamics at work in the centuries-old alliance between the Saudi ruling family and the kingdom's ultraconservative religious establishment."

Many active events might be

responsible for swaying the Grand Mufti and King toward granting more rights to women, including the recent driving protest, in which many women drove cars illegally. This action made the point clear that many women really do want reform and change, and they are beginning to show it publicly. Giving women the right to vote was one of the first steps of this reform.

Granting these rights might be a signal of more gender equality in the nation, but the guardian system still keeps women limited within those rights.

According to the Christian Science Monitor, "The king could be granting these limited rights in order to prevent the kind of protests and revolutions seen in neighboring Arab states."

As Saudi women have already taken to non-violent fighting for more freedom, their voices are simply being watered down by Saudi Arabia's rulers.

Granting the right to vote gives women hope that in the future other requests for their rights might be heard by the Saudi governance. But in the present, these voting rights are still being granted in order to be contradicted by the guardian system. This leaves Saudi women with, in actuality, barely any rights at all.

Maybe the old cliché is true — you win some, you lose some.

But when Saudi women have their foot nudged in the doorway and are not able to fully open their path to liberation, giving up cannot possibly be an option.