

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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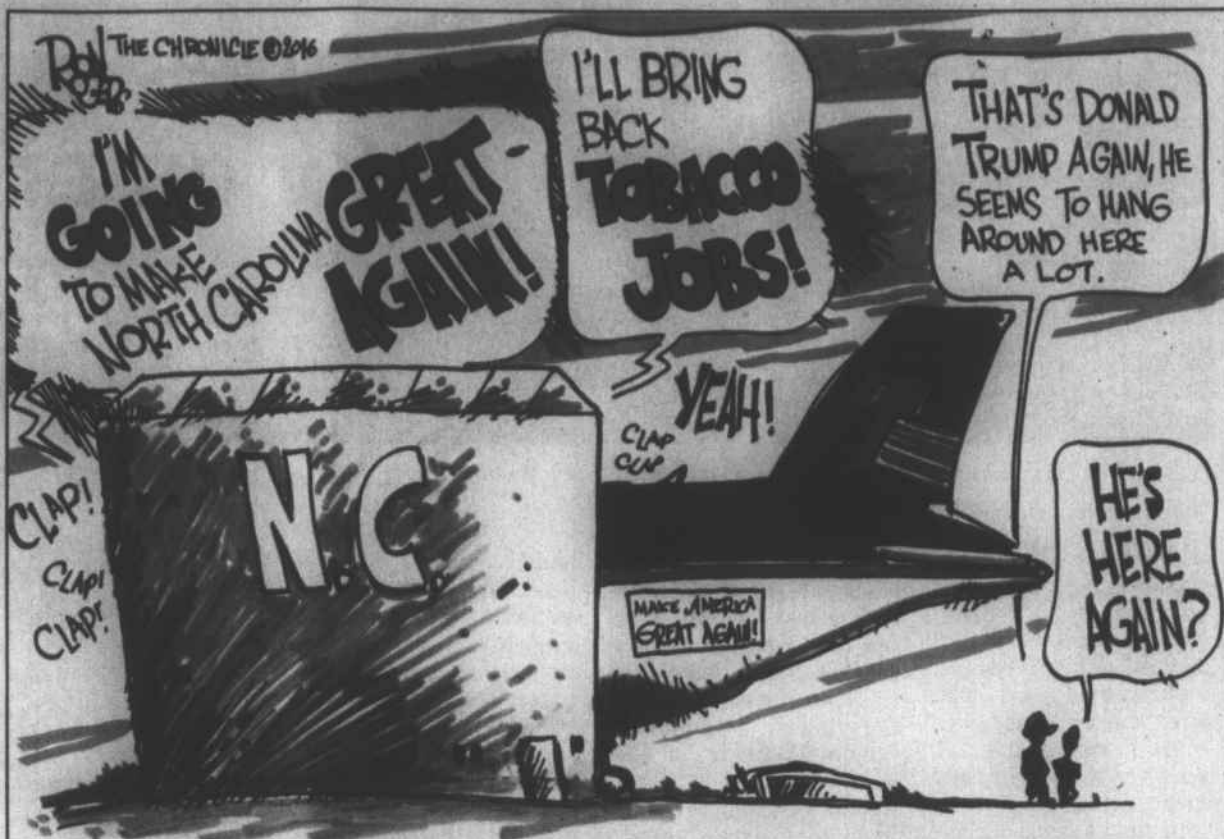
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Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.



Keep focused as new school year starts

It's back-to-school time. You can tell because of the number of back-to-school events popping up. Various things are promoted at these events. Some promote speakers, some promote fun activities and most promote the distribution of backpacks.

Organizations and churches gather items to distribute to students in need of items for school. A good question is, how many distribute what students really need for school, in fact, for life?

This is the 21st century, and many things from the past are no longer relevant. But we shouldn't make reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic some of them.

The experts say newspapers are dwindling in circulation because people, especially young people, don't read anymore. News reports say cursive writing is not being taught in schools anymore. Also, news reports say there is talk about bringing back geometry and algebra. Where did they go?

Audio and video rule these days. Students, from the youngest to the oldest, are using computers, tablets even mobile phones to learn and communicate. However, African-Americans need to remember their history. Many ancestors broke out of the chains of slavery by having the ability to read. Frederick Douglass is a prime example.

Reading material has taken on new forms, but the words still must be read. Many slaves learned how to read via the Bible. The Bible is still the same as it was during slavery times. People can still read the same Bible, but now they might read it on an electronic Bible, tablet, computer or mobile phone. The Bible also is now on audio devices, but reading helps augment understanding of the Bible. Reading helps the understanding of many things, but people have to know how to read in order to understand and gain that understanding. The Scriptures are projected on many projection screens in churches for congregations, and church officials believe members can read them, but how many members can't read what is up there?

What if students can't read a copy of the Constitution, such as the one Mr. Khizr Khan pulled from his pocket and offered to give to GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump at the Democratic National Convention?

If students are not learning cursive writing, how are they writing their signatures? Have we reverted back to the time when African-Americans just signed an X as their signatures because they didn't know how to write their names? Writing letters by hand used to be an art in some circles. Think about how much handwritten letters of our famous ancestors are worth now.

And 'rithmetic is still needed. People use some all the time, like when we pay for items we purchase at retail outlets. We should be calculating the money we need to purchase items and how much we should be getting back from the retailer. It's cumbersome to use a calculator for every purchase when we could just use the calculator we carry around with us all the time: our brains.

Even journalists, who mostly write for a living, use arithmetic, especially the ones who must design the news pages. They even use some geometry.

The point is that we have come to a bad place in the 21st century when at least one entire school has been designated as a literacy school because its students can't read well enough to make the grade. We have got to get back to our roots, when teachers actually taught students what they needed to know to make it in the world and students were respectful enough to learn what was taught.

President Obama said: "If we want America to lead in the 21st century, nothing is more important than giving everyone the best education possible - from the day they start preschool to the day they start their career."

If we don't get back on track, we could end up living in the dismal world Trump described during the Republican National Convention.

So, while we are gathering backpacks for students to use when they go back to school, let's put something in those backpacks that will really fuel their futures: a book to read.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

N.C. DOT urges public to attend meeting on proposed widening

To the Editor:

The N.C. Department of Transportation needs to hear from you (the public)!

Officials will hold an open house public meeting for the proposed widening of Big Mill Farm Road from I-40 Business to West Mountain Street in Kernersville.

The purpose of this project is to improve connectivity and capacity in this area.

The open house public meeting will be held Tuesday, Aug. 16, at the East Forsyth Middle School cafeteria, at 810 Bagley Drive, Kernersville, from 4 to 7 p.m.

Interested citizens are encouraged to attend at any time during those hours. Please note, there will not be a formal presentation.

N.C. DOT and consultant staff will be available to provide information on the project, answer questions and receive comments.

The public can view maps displaying the location and design of the project as they become available online at <http://ncdot.gov/projects/publicmeetings/default.html>.

Anyone desiring additional information may contact Wilson Stroud, Project Development Engineer, at 919-707-6045 or via email at wstroud@ncdot.gov. Comments may be submitted until Aug. 30.

N.C. DOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled persons who wish to participate in this workshop. Anyone requiring special services should contact Diane Wilson, Senior Public Involvement Officer, at 919-707-6073 or email: pdwilson1@ncdot.gov as early as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Miracle King
Communications Officer
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NCDOT Public Affairs
Greensboro

State should take action against people responsible for cruelty to animals on farms

To the Editor:

Anti-whistleblower laws (commonly called "ag-gag" laws) effectively block anyone from exposing cruelty to animals, food safety issues, poor working conditions, and more.

In January this year, North Carolina's own ag-gag law, HB 405, went into effect. This law gives employers the right to sue those who document and expose welfare issues on their property without permission, thereby threatening crucial eyewitness investigations, such as PETA's recent exposé of a Sanderson Farms hatchery that documented dying and dead chicks and chicks ground up while still alive.

Earlier this year, PETA and a coalition of groups filed a federal lawsuit challenging HB 405, which is now pending in federal court.

Despite the Constitution's long-time recognition of the right to challenge laws that chill First Amendment activities without first having to violate the law, North Carolina is arguing that PETA or any other group that seeks to challenge the unconstitutional law must first risk millions of dollars in potential liability by violating it and being sued.

Instead of violating the First Amendment rights of those who expose cruelty, North Carolina should take action against those who are responsible for such cruelty on factory farms.

Jared Goodman
Director of Animal Law
PETA Foundation
Los Angeles, California

State Democrats join others to challenge 2016 plan that changes congressional districts

To the Editor:

Polls show that Democrats, Republicans and Independents alike believe that gerrymandered electoral districts are bad for our state and nation.

Today [Aug. 5] the North Carolina Democratic Party is joining with Common Cause and concerned voters from across the state to challenge the validity of the gerrymandered congressional plan enacted by the General Assembly in 2016.

In a state in which 50 percent of the voters cast their ballots for Democratic candidates and only 30 percent of registered voters identify

themselves as Republicans, the Republican-dominated legislature has enacted a plan designed to award 10 of our 13 seats in Congress to Republican candidates. That is wrong by any measure. We are asking the courts to strike down the 2016 plan and lay out the limitations our Constitution imposes on partisan greed.

North Carolina Democratic Party
Executive Director Kimberly Reynolds
Raleigh

We must fully restore the protections of the Voting Rights Act

To the Editor:

As we commemorate the 51st anniversary of the Voting Rights Act [on Aug. 5], members of the Congressional Black Caucus call upon our House Republican colleagues to support bipartisan legislation to fully restore the protections of the VRA.

The VRA is the most successful piece of civil rights legislation in our country's history. Yet, in the more than three years since the Supreme Court's ruling in Shelby County v. Holder, we have witnessed a series of coordinated attacks on voting rights in states across the country.

On this 51st anniversary, let's recommit to our work to restore the VRA and pass legislation that will expand access to the ballot box for millions of Americans. It is up to each of us, as members of Congress, to ensure the path to participate in our country's democratic process remains clear and unfettered for all individuals once and for all.

U.S. Rep. G. K. Butterfield (D-NC)
Congressional Black Caucus
Chairman
Washington, D.C.

Note: Three years ago, in Shelby County v. Holder, the Supreme Court invalidated a key component of the VRA that prevented discrimination before it occurred. Since then, new restrictions have been put in place in 22 states - 18 of them Republican led - since 2010, making it harder for millions of Americans to exercise their right to vote.

We Welcome Your Feedback

Submit letters and guest columns to letters@wschronicle.com before 5 p.m. Friday for the next week's publication date.

Letters intended for publication should be addressed "Letters to the Editor" and include your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep letters to 350 words or less.

If you are writing a guest column, please include a photo of yourself, your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep guest columns to 550 words or less. Letters and columns can also be mailed or dropped off at W-S Chronicle, 617 N. Liberty St., W-S, NC, 27101; or sent via our website, www.wschronicle.com.

We reserve the right to edit any item submitted for clarity or brevity and determine when and whether material will be used.

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