

Opinion

The fabric of Bertie County since 1832

One rule for success...

Growing up in a home with two brothers and a sister helped instill a very competitive nature in all the siblings. We competed at every game imaginable.

As we started school and began to make friends, our home became the neighborhood hangout. Kool-Aid and junk food were abundant as we played whiffle ball, basketball and backyard football. We soon outgrew the perimeters of the yard and started competing at games such as Yahtzee, gin and spades.

The competition was fierce but bending the rules or cheating was never acceptable. Plus, there were just too many eyes watching to ever get away with the occasional addition mistake or hand signal to your spades partner.

How times are changing though; it seems rule changes are at an epidemic level.



TODD LANE

Common Sense Corner

Just weeks ago, Democratic Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, introduced legislation to allow 16-year-olds to vote during federal elections. House Speaker Pelosi and several Democratic Presidential candidates backed this legislation.

These are the same teenagers the North Carolina Legislature just passed legislation to protect from criminal prosecution for most crimes due to the fact they are not fully mature enough to face the consequences of their actions.

I say raise the voter age.

Case in point: Last week I was eating lunch with several cohorts when the conversation worked its way around to President Donald Trump. As the conversation progressed, from out of nowhere a young person's voice chimed in.

Picture this - this lunch group made up of middle-aged men, some Republican and some Democratic, but all "middle of the road types," when this young person intercedes in the conversation. What occurred next was a five-minute rant about what the government owed its young citizens. This attracted a small crowd of millennials who gathered around. To prove a point that millennials are not well enough informed to have an opinion I asked one simple question.

The question, "Who is Mike Pence?" Only one of the younger generation knew he was Vice President of the very country they demanded so much from.

So, I followed that up with another simple question, "Which house of the legislative branch does the Vice President preside over?" To no one's surprise the room went silent and the millennials departed.

To my relief this legislation was defeated, but that did not stop the call for additional rule changes.

Over the past 16 years, two Republican Presidents have lost the popular vote but were still elected. How do we rectify this? We change the rules.

Democratic Presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren last week called for a constitutional amendment to eliminate the electoral college.

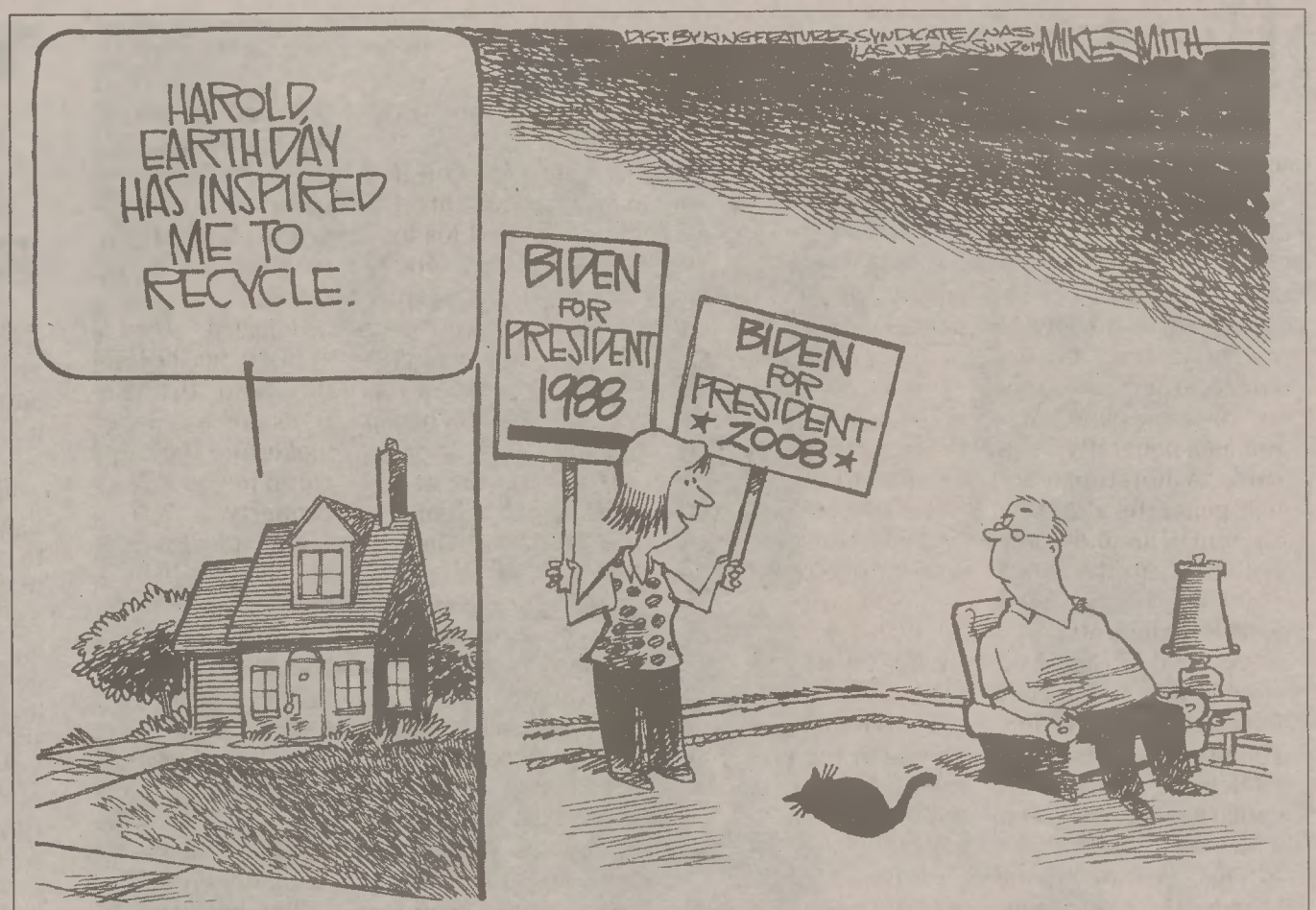
Really? The electoral college was one of the greatest forethoughts the founding fathers placed in the Constitution. It insures states with a small population still had a voice in the election of the President and Vice President. Without the electoral college, candidates would campaign in just a handful of the most populist states. This would eventually lead to smaller states being ignored all together due to a lack of any political power.

The democrats only need one rule change to win the next Presidential election. Put forth a candidate the "middle of the road types" can support and quit reaching out to extremists who wish to fundamentally change this country.

Todd Lane is a retired Windsor Police Chief and First Sgt. of the N.C. Highway Patrol who resides in Johnston County with his wife, Pam. He has served in law enforcement for more than 30 years.

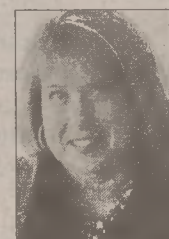
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Email Letters To: twhite@ncweeklies.com



An unfortunate spring 'break'...

Spring break is always an adventure. Maybe not always a good adventure, but exciting nonetheless.



DEBORAH GRIFFIN
Farm Wife
Life

On Thursday, I promised my youngest son we would head to the beach for the day.

It was a glorious morning - the kind you wish you could bottle up and break open on a dreary winter morning.

The slight breeze tickled my skin as we packed up the car.

Baby blue skies stretched above us like a canvas dotted with tiny cotton ball clouds.

My son played with his sole mate, Sophie, our 1-year-old puppy, as I loaded the last of our cargo.

I lifted the hatch to add our beach chairs.

Closing the hatch from the inside, I heard an odd crunching noise. I dismissed it to parking the car under a tree. At time leaves fall into the crevice created by the hatch's opening.

As I backed the car to pick my 15-year-old up where he was playing with the dog, I heard a pier-

ing scream.

"Noooooooooooo!"

I thought I must have - despite the backup camera - run over and killed our beloved pup.

I stopped the car and jumped out. My son was rolling on the ground.

Confused, I ran to him. He acted as if I had just told him he must sacrifice Sophie to the dog gods.

Still on the ground, all he could do was point to the back of the car.

My mind flashed back to that mysterious noise - what could possibly create such anguish?

I looked at the back hatch. Sticking up like a Pop-Tart fresh from the toaster was his iPhone 8-plus.

Cracks already had begun to spider-web across the screen.

Really?

How it became embedded between the car and the back hatch was beyond my comprehension.

Without thinking, he laid his phone on top of the back end of the car when he ran to play with the dog.

I was reminded, considering his reaction, we are way too addicted to our devices.

This is phone number five since his first. After he lost that one, I

had mercy and grace and bought him a second one. The third through fifth, he had to scrimp and save his money because I refused to reward irresponsibility.

I was determined the incident would not ruin our trip to the beach.

He, on the other hand, could not fathom riding and hour and half without his phone.

Despite his trepidation, we had a great day. Snapchat, it turns out, could wait.

Incredibly, when we took the phone to a screen replacement center the next day, we learned just how valuable a thin, \$10 sheet of tempered glass was. Although it did not save his screen, it saved his phone.

One hundred dollars later, he walked out, phone in hand, as if the incident never even happened. (He will pay me back a little at a time.)

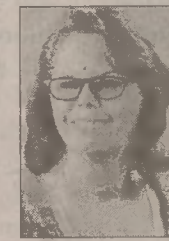
If only all our mistakes were this easy to fix.

A little tempered glass on life could go a long way...

Deborah Griffin is Staff Writer at the Martin County Enterprise & Weekly Herald and the Bertie Ledger-Advance. She can be reached at dgriffin@ncweeklies.com.

Putting aches into perspective...

My right shoulder hurts. I haven't any idea what I did to cause this pain, but middle age is a time of mysteries and "Why does this hurt?" is a question many people in my age bracket ask themselves daily.



JANET STORM
The Daily Reflector

My right shoulder keeps a busy schedule, so it really isn't surprising that it might feel overtaxed. I use it to steer my little dogs when we're

out walking; it's vital when I use the mouse for my computer and it serves as a hook for my handbag. To be truthful, I rarely even think of the heroic efforts of that particular shoulder, but this pain has reminded me of all the burdens it bears.

Pain has a way of drawing things sharply into focus and reminding us how we take ordinary, ache-free days for granted. As I lie in bed, trying not to roll over onto my right side, I bemoan all the times I took that comfortable position without a second thought.

As I push up from a seated position on the floor, I wince and

wonder how much longer the pain will last. And as I stretch to reach something on a high shelf, I contemplate moving things lower to the ground for the sake of my poor, sore shoulder.

Any pain feels like an intrusion, but pain that lingers becomes bigger than that. After a few days it pulls over you like a shadow, darkening everything you do. It becomes easier to hunch in place that to keep moving forward. Every action seems to require extraordinary effort.

This sounds a bit overly dramatic for a sore shoulder, right? Yet in late-night woe-is-me moments, I am convinced it is true.

Still, this brief bout with discomfort pales beside what many other people are facing.

I was reminded of this fact recently when I learned a family member has a mass in her lung.

She went in for an X-ray because - ironically - her arm was in pain. A shadow was seen on the film, so the doctor ordered a CT scan. The scan found her right lung had an opaque mass.

She made an appointment with a specialist and received the worst news imaginable - the mass was a malignant tumor. Lung cancer.

She has started chemotherapy and radiation. She also is struggling to give up a lifelong smoking habit, which she says is almost worse than the treatments.

She has tried to be all the things that cancer patients are urged to be - strong, positive and determined to beat the disease.

But in her own woe-is-me moments, fortitude isn't always easy. The most she can do is go to her appointments, stepping carefully and quietly so she won't shatter like glass.

Meanwhile she lives with her pain - physical, mental and emotional.

Ours is a world full of aches. Some get better with rest and time, others cast a longer shadow.

As my shoulder slowly improves, I think of the pain other people shoulder. It gives me perspective and makes me less apt to whine.

It also makes me profoundly grateful for every day I feel good and hopeful that a day will come when my relative feels better.

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