

# OPINION

## Overcome home office captivity...

Many years ago when our daughters were small, Sharon and I took them to the North Carolina Zoo. We arrived at the observation area for the bear exhibit just in time to see one emerge from behind a big rock. A few people clapped, and the bear turned and disappeared again behind the rock.

A few seconds later, the bear came back. We clapped again, and he turned and disappeared again. Everyone soon realized that the bear was pacing back and forth from boredom. Captive animals will do that.

**MARK RUTLEDGE**

Office work can feel like being confined to a small space. Sometimes one needs to just get up and walk around for a few minutes. That feeling has not come as often since the pandemic changed my work routine.

I'm fortunate to have a job with work I can complete from anywhere the internet can reach. At my workplace, the week has been divided for the last year and a half between home and office so fewer people are in the office at any given time.

It was recently announced that we will go back to the office full time starting in mid-January but that anyone who would like to go back sooner could do so.

Guess what? I'm back. According to the news, the pandemic has changed attitudes toward work. Many people have gone so far as to quit their jobs. They've come to the realization that work is too confining and that it's simply not worth it anymore.

I'm not sure how you do that and pay the bills, but more power to those who apparently have figured that one out.

Then there are the people who don't want to quit their jobs, but they don't want to go back to the office either. That I do not understand.

Working from home seems cool at first. You don't have to put on clothes or deal with traffic. And you never have to share the break room with that slob from accounting.

But there is a dark side. For me, working from home has become like an episode of "The Twilight Zone." I'm at home, but not really. I might be in a staff meeting via video conferencing, but not totally.

I use a laptop computer, and it's as though the thing is constantly sending subliminal messages. It wants me to take a minute here or there to answer some emails or catch up on some work. If I'm up at 6 a.m. with no need to shower, dress or make the morning commute, why not go ahead and get started?

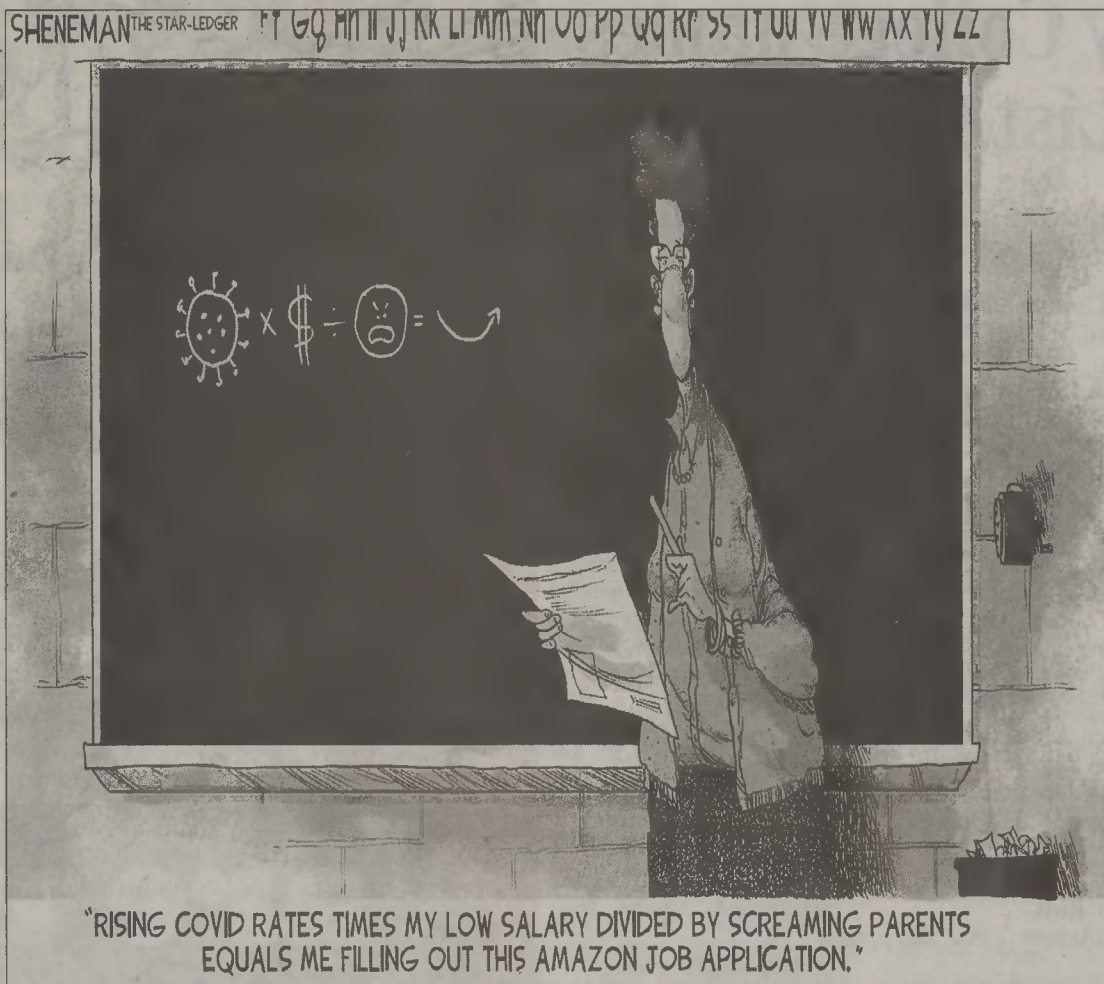
Well, those days are gone. Unless the pandemic situation again mandates otherwise, my work computer lives at work — and I live at home.

It feels good, but sometimes I do need to get out and walk around a bit. I like a short jog during lunch. On rainy days, I've taken to walking up and down stairs for 30 minutes in a mostly abandoned stairwell down the hall from my office.

The top floor dead-ends at a big window looking out onto the roof. Every time I reach the landing at that window, I imagine there's a group of spectators on the other side.

They always clap just before I turn and start back down.

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## A child's excitement...

The amount of joy that fills your heart when your child is just as excited about something as you are is heartwarming.

As you may know by now, I am sure, my family is a family that enjoys hunting and most things outdoors.

My husband and I tend to spend our Saturdays with our son hunting with our hunting dogs and, every now and then, we spend another afternoon during the week still hunting and enjoying the peace of it together.

This year my husband has really been after me to kill my first buck. With that being said, we have two different spots that we still hunt. He has been watching them hard and doing the maintenance to keep the deer coming to those spots.

We have a camera that he has been alternating between the two spots that sends pictures to our phones of what may be there. Two afternoons passed and we both got a notification that a decent size buck was there around dusk both days. After those two days passed we both decided maybe we should go sit in the blind and see if we can. It was about 5 p.m. and I see him walking in. I got all excited. Nick goes, "What? What is it?" I turned and whispered "It's him, it's the buck!"

He then told me to get ready

so that when he got in close enough I could get a good shot.

After about five minutes of trying to get the gun up and get a good shot on him I was able to get situated and get a good shot on him. I pulled the trigger and he fell. When I turned around my husband was grinning just as big as I was.

Well the next thing I know, the buck gets up and takes off, we listen and we hear him crash in the woods not far away. The search began about five minutes or so of walking I hear Nick yell out, "I got him, he's dead, he is right in front of me." The relief I felt when I heard him say that.

Now, I am sure you are wondering why I stated at the top that the amount of joy that fills your heart when your child is just as excited as you are over something.

Well, my little boy was at Nick's parents house while we went hunting. I called my mother in law with so much excitement to tell her that I finally killed a buck.

My little boy heard me tell her and heard her talking to

me. She said that he would ask every five minutes if mommy is here with the deer. She would have to tell him no. When Nick and I pulled down the driveway and he saw the headlights to the truck he immediately took off, slipped his shoes on and out the door he ran.

I had not even made it out of the truck yet and I could hear him at the back of the truck just yelling "deer Nanny, look it's mommy's deer".

I got out of the truck and he was jumping around just yelling in pure excitement. To see that little boy so excited over the fact that mommy had killed a deer just absolutely melted my heart. So as I am sure you can imagine he is next on the list to kill a deer even though he is only three.

He has asked his daddy countless amounts of time to go hunting and now his daddy has no choice but to take him. So with all of that said, I am sure my little boy has gone to school today and informed everybody that mommy killed a deer. His excitement for me just simply melted my heart.

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## If the truth be known...

How often have you heard someone start a sentence with "If the truth be known?"

To me, that translates to "I probably shouldn't say this; but, I'm going to anyway."

The truth is important but it's like fire. Both are essential but both can also be harmful.

There is a classic line in the movie, "A Few Good Men." The Tom Cruise character shouts at Jack Nicholson, "I want the truth." Nicholson quickly responds, "You can't handle the truth." It is so profound that it has found its place in the annals of movie lines.

Justice can best be served at times without knowing the truth. That is not saying that

lying is better than being truthful. It simply means there are times when something should not be said at all.

Silent can truly be golden. Abraham Lincoln once said, "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt." That sounds like something a person nicknamed "Honest Abe" would say.

Let's say that Mary is now a senior citizen that was raised by two loving parents. The last one has just passed and, in a deathbed confession, tells her that they are not her biological parents. Is Mary's life better now that she now knows this secret?

There is Tom. He has been a good neighbor, community volunteer and church leader for over forty years. Should the truth be told that Tom once did time for a stupid act he committed as a teenager?

I always had a close relationship with my father. It got even closer the last couple of years of his life. He had cancer and knew the end was near. I spent a lot of time taking care of him. Daddy and I had a lot of time to talk with the trips to hospitals, doctors, etc.

He shared a lot of his war experiences. I appreciated that, but not so much the hidden skeletons in our family closet. The people involved have long since passed and he was the only one left with that information.

I don't know why; but he felt it necessary to pass it on. I think I will take a Harry Truman approach and let the buck stop here. There is no reason to pass something like that down. Though those involved are long gone, they left family that can only be hurt.

There is also the other side of the coin in which what is said is not the truth. It gets told enough and becomes accepted as the truth. Ask anyone who said, "Play it again, Sam" and the majority will say Humphrey Bogart. He never said that line in the movies.

It's now claimed that Julius Caesar's last words were not "Et tu, Brutus." That's what Shakespeare said he said. I find it hard to believe a man stabbed 20 to 30 times could make a sensible comment anyhow.

I remember, as a kid, the joy and excitement of waking up Christmas morning and seeing what Santa Claus brought. Later some of the older kids on the school playground shared what they believed about Santa. I bought into it; and, it was never the same until I had children of my own.

It was then, and through them, I finally realized the real truth about St. Nick. "Yes Virginia, there really is a Santa Claus."

God bless and have a great day.

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## Denied may just be a delay...

One of the hardest perceptions to interpret is denial. We often feel, or come to the conclusion, that if we are denied, well it's over with.

Whether we are trying to get a job, accepted to a school or trying to buy a car, if we are denied a request or turned down for an occupation we've applied for doesn't mean it's a done deal.

Sometimes denial is "delay" in disguise. The denial may not be your fault. It may be that the person interviewing you is just going through the motions just so they can hire their friend.

If you are turned down for a loan... that can be a delay until you can repair your credit.

I try not to get into religion or doctrine in my columns for the reason that I would like to touch all walks of life across the board. I'm not denying my beliefs, just delaying them until I complete this column (did you like that pun).

With that said, there's a saying that I think a majority of

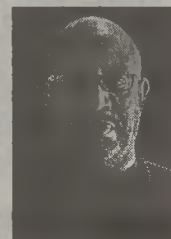
people use. "If it's for you, then you will get it." I fully support this saying even though some may consider it a bit of a cliché.

I can image that thousands of people have filed for disability and thousands of people have been denied. But those that felt compelled to reapply because they felt they had a legit case.

A lot of times the initial denial turned into a delay once their case was approved.

Let's bring this a little closer to home.

We as parents have applied denial pretty frequently in our kid's life. "No, you can't go to the party" and "No, you're not getting a car." Those sentences are straight out denial.



**ANDRE ALFRED**

**PICTURE THAT**

# Bertie Ledger-Advance

WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF BERTIE COUNTY SINCE 1832

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