

OPINION

The Courier-Times

"Some men only take from that which is provided for them in life; others repay in part by putting something back into their communities by service and good deeds."

Jerry Clayton, Publisher, 1970-2000

on *The Courier-Times'* mission of community service.

Purity of sport lives on in Special Olympics

If ever there was a reason to celebrate athletic conquest, it was there for the taking Wednesday at Rocket Stadium. Nearly 50 Special Olympics athletes from across Person County took part in the Spring Games. There were no world records set. There were no million-dollar endorsement contracts on the line. There was simply sport for the sheer enjoyment of it. Kay Rudd, with the Person County Arts, Parks and Recreation Department, along with her army of volunteers organized a great event that gave these remarkable athletes their moment in the sun. Yes, there were medals given. Yes, there was pride and excitement at the end of every closely-contested event.

But in this athletic endeavor, even those who didn't medal were great sports. After all, the Spring Games are not about winning and losing. They are about trying.

Too many of us fail to take advantage of opportunities put before us because we fear the embarrassment and rejection of failure. But Special Olympics athletes are winners from the moment they step onto the field of play. You can be sure they don't feel the same kind of pressure that we feel and there is no sense of doom and gloom when their best efforts fall short of the podium.

The Person County community works hard to respect the needs of its most vulnerable populations. Senior citizens enjoy the opportunities provided by the county at the Senior Center, including their own version of the Olympics in the Senior Games.

Events like the Special Olympics serve another important, but vulnerable population: those with developmental disabilities.

We should be proud of the way our community supports those folks. It creates a real lifelong highlight for them and it lets others know Person County willingly supports every segment of our community.

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Striking a positive chord on social media

Last weekend was a doozy. But in a really great way.

My social media feeds filled with posts of young people graduating from college and nearly every post I saw Sunday night was an homage to someone's mother.

I've read that social media isn't necessarily a true representation of people's lives. And, I suspect for the most part that's probably true. You'll never see, for instance, gripes on my social media about bad things that happen – except maybe for the occasional burned supper picture. But my real gripes and problems never reach social media. I see posts from other people who seem to post nothing but negative comments. I find it hard to believe their lives are really that void of joy.

But last weekend, was all about joy. I revel in seeing the successes of my friends' children as they cross the stage and collect a diploma. I like to see how they celebrate the end of a school year, even if they aren't graduating.

And, I enjoy the thankfulness

people express to their mothers on Mother's Day. There are precious few things we can all say we have, but a mother is one of them. Next month, we'll have a similar run of social media posts as young people graduate from high school and people remember the efforts of their fathers to help raise them.

Maybe I'm getting old and crotchety, but I tire of the endless parade of social media posts knocking one group of people or a controversial politician or whatever the post writer feel like criticizing on a given day.

I'd much rather see a photograph of people having fun while they volunteer in their community. I'd much rather see a video of something cute the family pet did. I'd much rather see a parent heaping praise on their child for some accomplishment the child achieved. Those kinds of social media posts make me smile and they make me feel good. Generally speaking, I think most of us would rather feel good than to wallow in self-pity because of some perceived

injustice.

Now, to be sure, I'm a free-speech advocate. I wouldn't curb someone's right to say what they think. That's the primary reason I don't block or unfriend people who regularly post negative comments. But it is interesting to see how regularly I scroll right past their comments without slowing down when I see their name. That's largely because I know what I'm likely to read and I don't want to be pulled down into that morass.

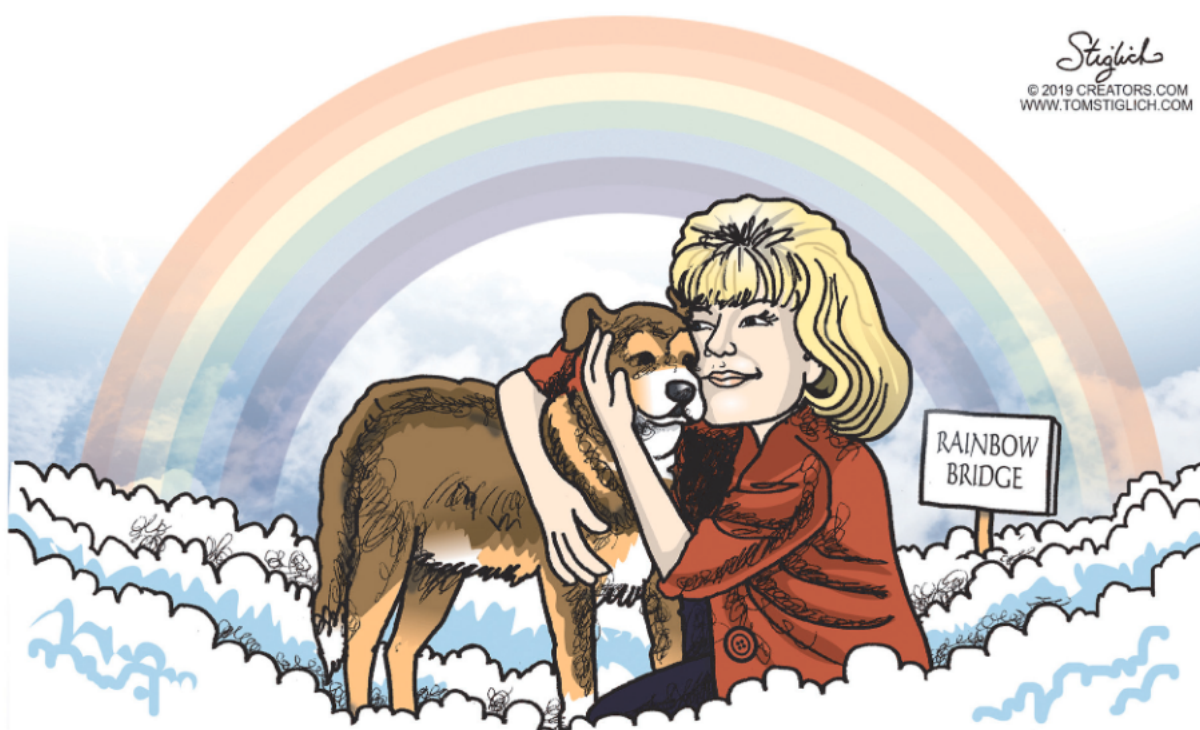
And, for many, social media has become the place to heap praise upon, or criticize politicians and political candidates. But there should be a buyer beware notice attached to everyone of those posts. While journalists are trained to keep their biases limited to the opinion page, social media has no such moral compass. It's a bit like the wild west, especially in campaign season and, in a more modern-day comparison, it's a lot like the steady stream of campaign commercials that fill the airwaves as elections draw closer. I can do without that.

I'd much rather see praise heaped upon those who deserve it.



JOHNNY'S JOURNAL

Johnny Whitfield



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Lecture highlights danger of complacency

To the editor:

My wife and I attended a lecture by Ms. Bonnie Hauser on the World War II Holocaust at the Person County Library Saturday, May 11. She presented a first-hand account of her mother, Rebecca Hauser, a Holocaust survivor. I want to thank the library for bringing Ms. Hauser to Person County to talk about one of the most terrible and terrifying events in history. As we lose more Holocaust survivors everyday, it is imperative that we all take up the cause to remember the inhumanity of the Holocaust. Yet, we can't do so unless we educate ourselves on this subject, and listen to folks like Ms. Hauser, who keep the flame of remembrance alive. We must learn as much as we can, lest we repeat the horrors of the past.

Sadly, we are seeing a resurgence of hatred (actually, it's been there all along) in our country and around the world. Hatred of "the other" destroys societies and countries from within. Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, and homophobia are all very real symptoms of this phenomenon, and we must not be complacent in our fight. When we stand by doing nothing, letting someone else take up the fight; turning a blind eye, choosing to forget, we are on the road to destruction.

There are no easy answers, but we can all learn and listen. Talk to "the other." Be kind and friendly to each other. Let peace, love, and understanding be our foundation. But when it's necessary, stand up to hatred and bigotry. Ms. Hauser has, and we should all

follow her example.

Ms. Hauser and Person County Library, thank you!

Robert Allen
Roxboro

A hospital of choice

To the editor:

If you need a heart and lung transplant, you go to Duke Medical Center, but with an accident or illness, you most likely will find yourself at the nearest hospital.

After my husband, Bob, had a particularly bad fall, hitting his side with implants, the doctor ordered a wireless reading of the implants, to see if these life-saving devices were working properly. This was done, and after no response, the cardiologist was contacted. Unable to access the database, the cardiologist wanted my husband taken to the nearest emergency room.

Bob went immediately to Person Memorial Hospital, where he was connected to a wireless transmitter for his implants. The data was transmitted to a specialist, but it was the weekend, and there was no one available to access/read the transmission. PMH's doctor then called Medtronic, the manufacturer of the implants, to report the problem. A few hours later, a Medtronic specialist arrived at PMH, wheeling equipment to receive and interpret another transmission. The PMH doctor on staff made sure Bob's implants were working and that he was fine before sending him home. Soon after I found myself ill and being treated for pneumonia at PMH.

When you enter a hospital, you see the structure and decor, but what you don't see is the quality of personal-

FROM OUR READERS

ized care a hospital provides. Having been hospitalized in past years at larger, newer hospitals, I noticed the differences. The care I received had me feeling better more rapidly than I thought possible. My veins didn't cooperate for more than a couple of days before requiring a change. One night I asked the nurse to wait until after I prayed before beginning the needed procedure. Not only did she wait, she prayed with me.

Having been admitted through the ER, my white socks became my slippers. When I needed to get out of bed to use the facilities, I would put on the socks and walk about. After five days, I was surprised to find my socks were still clean. PMH didn't get a 'white glove inspection,' but they definitely passed my 'white socks inspection,' though the tiles were old.

Having a local hospital where we can receive immediate care by a staff, who provides kind and compassionate attention, is a blessing. When compared to three top-rated hospitals where I spent days receiving care in past years, PMH was the oldest structure, yet the care I received was excellent and overall, the response from staff was actually better.

Person County has a good local hospital, and PMH deserves the support of county management and the residents of Person County. PMH also provides outpatient therapy. After falling six times in less than three months, Bob went to PMH for therapy. They determined why he was falling during his first session and began treatment. Since beginning his therapy, he hasn't fallen.

To the management and staff of Person Memorial Hospital, we thank you for your excellent care.

Carmen Giggey
Roxboro

Disappointing crowd at Day of Prayer

To the editor,

Although days of prayer have been observed since the founding of our nation, it was on April 17, 1952, that President Harry Truman signed a bill proclaiming a National Day of Prayer.

That law was amended in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan, designating the first Thursday of May for the National Day of Prayer to be observed.

This was a day that our highest government leader, other national, state and local officials and all individuals could meet in groups to pray for God's guidance in dealing with our nation's challenges and to thank him for his blessings on this nation.

Our nation is certainly facing very difficult times as we continue to be involved in international wars, strife within our country as well as disunity, moral and spiritual decline and so many other things that our young people have to deal with on a day-to-day basis such as school shootings, drugs, gangs and violence, just to name a few. God's word says in 2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

Notice the words "pray" and

"heal their land." If we want conditions to improve in our nation, then God's word tells us to pray.

I know that, all over our nation, people were gathered together in prayer on May 2 of this year, but as there are 73 churches listed online in Person County, there were not even 73 people gathered at Merritt Commons that day for prayer. Maybe many of you were praying in your homes, in schools or at work, but it grieved me and I'm sure, God's heart, too, at the small number of people at Merritt Commons for Person County's observance of National Day of Prayer. In previous years that I have been able to attend, there have been much larger groups in attendance consisting of many elected officials as well as church leaders.

Christians complain about their rights being taken from them, but thankfully, this designated time of prayer is one right we still have. When we see thousands of people gathered all over our nation for many other causes, don't you believe it would bring glory to our God to see more people with heads bowed, huddled together in prayer, praising him and seeking his wisdom and guidance for our nation, especially on this designated day of prayer.

Even though Christians can pray everyday for our country, there seems to be strength in numbers. It is for this reason that I encourage us all to mark the first Thursday of May on our calendars each year to observe the National Day of Prayer. Those of you who use calendars on your phones or tablets can mark May 7, 2020.

I just did.

Kathy Oakley
Timberlakes