

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tennessee highways are in a state of disgrace

While recently taking senior veterans on day trips from the far northwest Tennessee to the mountains of southeast Tennessee, I discovered first-hand what many travelers already know: Tennessee's city, county, and state routes as well as its interstates are in a state of disrepair.

For many years, Tennessee was known for having the best highways and interstate system in the country. Presently, even the interstates are full of huge potholes, either singly or in small groups, that drivers must navigate carefully to avoid disaster, broken tires, or are forced to straddle over or swerve away from them, and any of these actions could result in minor or major accidents.

What has changed to cause such derelict of our highways? How, and if so why, are our transportation taxes not being maximally allotted for the care of our roads? Some newspapers report that corporations don't pay their fair share of taxes, yet we also read of the governor's misplaced priorities. Why is his proposal to reduce and refund state business taxes without full disclosure and transparency?

Furthermore, why champion diverting badly needed tax dollars to a school voucher program designed to reward parents who can already afford to send their children to private schools at the expense of parents who cannot?

And could someone please explain why our state legislators seemingly turn a blind eye to these issues? For those who wish to dispute my opinions, just please use your energies to get the potholes repaired.

Charles Harrison, Nashville 37025

Gore should not be getting this type of publicity

Re: "Ex-VP talks regrets, his hopes for the future," March 15.

It is interesting you give a front page story to a climate alarmist like Al Gore. He has done nothing but become filthy rich while espousing catastrophic climate change. He has made disastrous predictions for decades - everything from polar ice disappearing to disastrous ocean rising. He is a shrill voice of doom and gloom, all to line his pockets.

No matter that he is a Tennessean and a former vice president, he is not someone we should be listening to.

The climate of the earth has been changing since the beginning of time and will continue to do so until the end of time. Carbon is the life force for all plants and trees which then produce oxygen for people and animals to breathe. It is called part of the cycle of life.

Jon Bechtel, Brentwood 37027

Editor's note: Mr. Bechtel's letter was published online on March 20. Below is a response to his opinion.

Al Gore is right and we need more climate change reporting

It is "interesting" that Mr. Bechtel seeks to chastise The Tennessean for giving front-page coverage to former VP of the U.S. and Tennessee Senator, Al Gore, who spoke on the topic of climate change.

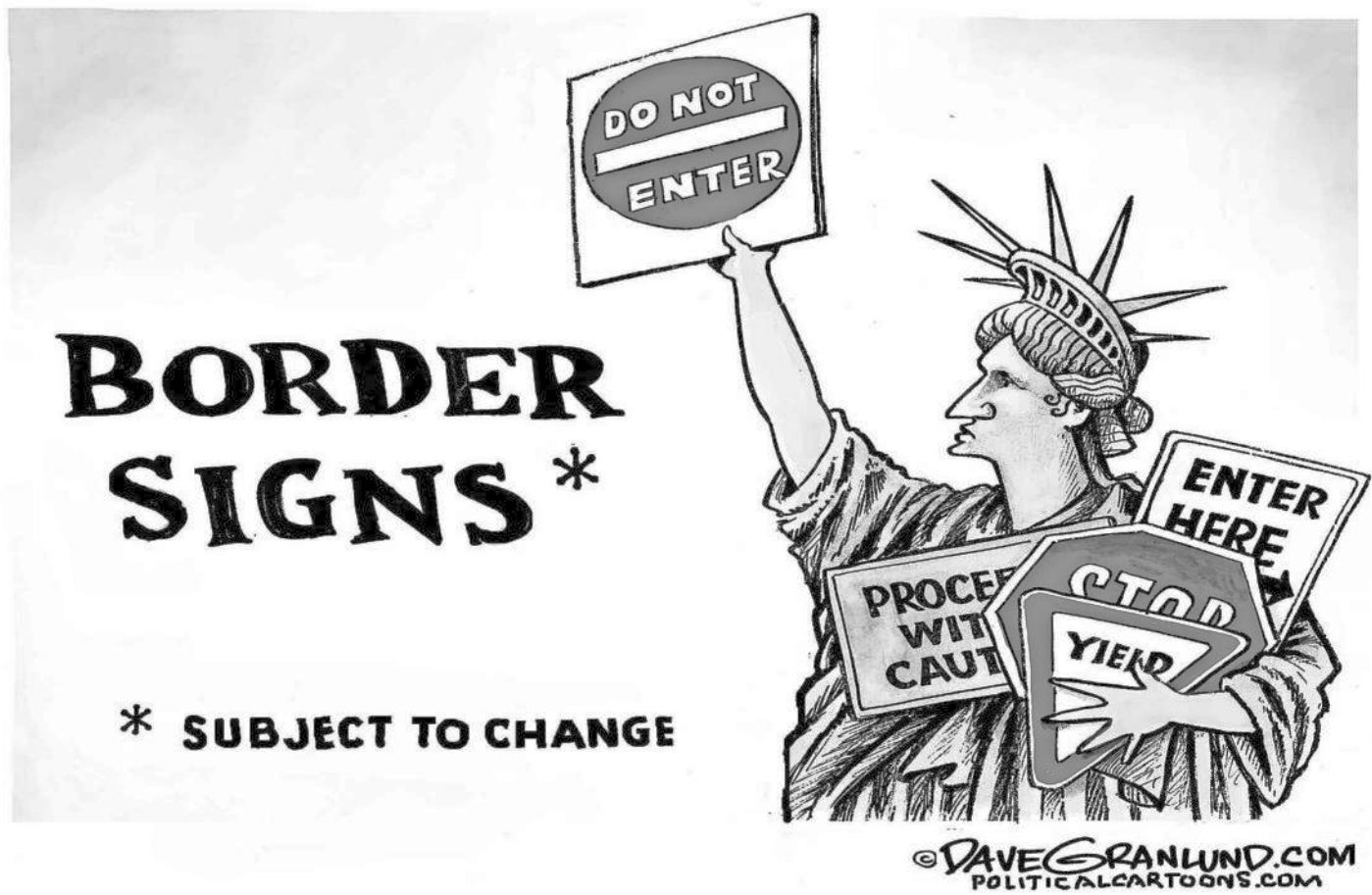
I wonder if it's because he doesn't like Al Gore. Or if it's because he doesn't like discussion about the climate change that is gripping the world, bringing a dark and tragic future for generations to come.

If it's the latter, he needn't worry. I read The Tennessean's Wednesday, March 20, edition, page A7's article "WMO issues 'red alert' on climate change" lay buried behind "The Nashville Elvis Festival" article on page A6.

I would like Tennessean editors to admit they underreport and categorize climate as a "liberal" or "politicized" topic, or else explain why coverage is not equal to coverage of sports, religion, and crime?

We're talking about the only topic common to everyone on my street, my state, and everyone in the world. Climate change is slowly being addressed despite a shameful lack of traditional media coverage.

It doesn't matter who is talking about



climate change, there is no other topic of more importance on this planet right now. There is plenty to cover here. Hire a climate reporter. Bring the conversation to the public and to give the public hope about changes that are happening but are woefully underreported.

Carole Bartoo, Bellevue 37221

Trump supporters hope we forget his handling of COVID

The party of Trump, once a party of Republicans, has thrown a new teaser out to us that they hope will stick if we don't think about it too much.

"Are you better off now than you were four years ago?"

It's baffling that anyone can say, "I was better off in 2020," but there is a memory problem with the party of Trump. They can't even remember a few weeks ago when, at Trump's behest, his bought-and-paid-for lawmakers killed the bipartisan bill designed to fix problems at the border.

How quickly they forget. "Chaos at the border!" is still the rallying cry of the party of Trump.

So maybe we can't expect them to remember four years ago.

People were dying from a pandemic that ultimately killed over a million Americans. Most everyone lost someone to the virus Trump promised would be over by Easter. Instead, COVID raged throughout that year, 2020.

The country shut down four years ago. Yes, that was on Trump's watch. Businesses closed. Churches closed. Schools closed. Remember children trying to do "school" from their bedrooms?

All of it was reflected in the stock market plunge and surge of unemployment. Remember all the people who lost jobs? Remember the empty grocery store shelves, the scramble for toilet paper?

The party of Trump wants you to remember there were lower gas prices, but no one was driving anywhere!

How quickly they forget. We might say they are the party of amnesia.

Phyllis Gobbell, Nashville 37205

'No Mow April' is a good step forward

Thank you, Tennessean! The March 13 newspaper delivered good news for me, and I am sure many others who care about animals and the environment.

Kudos to Forest Hills and the Cumberland River Compact for embracing "No Mow April." Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Pesticides create perfect lawns while killing bees, butterflies and moths. These pollinators allow plants to reproduce, including many food crops. According to Earthwatch Institute, bees are one of the most important species on earth.

I am grateful to the Haynes family who stepped up to save their historic family land for future generations partnering with the Land Trust for Tennes-

see to save scenic, rural landscapes.

And the new director of Wilson Animal Control is experienced and genuinely cares about animal welfare and protection issues. Years ago, I wrote a letter to the Tennessean urging upgrades to their animal control program and a name change for their address at 378 Dump Road, Lebanon.

Wilson County makes news with its ever-increasing growth and development. Animal Control is an important responsibility of county government and Wilson County needs to build a new shelter at a different address.

Laura Turner, Franklin 37069

All Tennessee Congress members should support cancer bill

In 2021 The Metastatic Breast Cancer Access To Care Act (H.R. 549, S. 663) was introduced into the 118th Congress with bipartisan support. This critical legislation, which is pending, would waive the arbitrary, life-threatening five-month waiting periods for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and 24-month waiting period for Medicare benefits for eligible for individuals with metastatic breast cancer (MBC)

This fall, with the encouragement of the National Breast Cancer Coalition, a committee of breast cancer advocates formed a committee, the Tennessee Breast Cancer Advocates (TNBCA) in Tennessee to organize a movement to reach out to our TN legislators to co-sponsor this Bill.

There are currently 240 Congress members signed on in the House and 29 Senate cosponsors, with only one Congressman from Tennessee (Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Memphis).

Metastatic breast cancer (MBC) accounts for 90% of breast cancer deaths, and the average life expectancy has risen from three years. Current law forces those diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer to wait for Social Security Disability Insurance and Medicare benefits. This unnecessary waiting period forces patients into extreme economic hardship as they wait for the care they desperately need and deserve.

While metastatic breast cancer (MBC) is treatable, there is no cure. Living with (MBC) often limits a person's ability to maintain their employment and receive health benefits. Those who retire early need funds to cover their living expenses and access to life-prolonging treatment. Waiting 24 months to receive benefits is unacceptable, as many die waiting for benefits to begin.

Cancer has impacted the lives of countless Tennessee citizens, their family members and loved ones who support them. There are too many women and men in this country who have to deal with how to pay for treatment and how to support their families while they are dealing with metastatic breast cancer.

Arbitrary rules prevent them from readily accessing the medical care they need.

We in the TNBCA committee are working hard to get cosponsors for this important legislation.

We ask our community to write, email or call their representative and senator in Congress to encourage them to sign on to this important legislation.

Sylvia Cappellino, chairperson, Tennessee Breast Cancer Advocates

Why do we allow Trump to keep demonizing his adversaries?

A "blood bath" has been promised by Donald Trump if he is not elected president. I can only surmise he means the Democrats will take the bath.

Since I have always had MAGA people, other Republicans and Republican family members whom I have counted as friends, I can only wonder who is going to come after me, a Democrat.

"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies." So said Abraham Lincoln in his inaugural address on March 4, 1861, probably the best inaugural address ever given. He hoped that "the better angels of our nature" would exert influence. Unfortunately, as we know, the better angels did not prevail then, the Civil War proceeding. Now, we again hope the angels will prevail.

Dicken E Kidwell, Murfreesboro 37130

Columnist wrongly blames high inflation on Biden

Re: "Biden and Trump's weaknesses outmatch their strengths; that's sad," by Cameron Smith, March 17.

While I do sometimes agree with Mr. Smith, I admit that it is not often. I feel I must point out one glaring logical fallacy in his column on the weaknesses of the presidential candidates.

His attribution of the current inflation to President Biden is a classic example of "post hoc ergo propter hoc." It is the same fallacy that laid the blame of the 1929 depression on Herbert Hoover. It is a classical case of American political rhetoric. If something happens during the term of any president, rightly or wrongly, the president is blamed.

As you probably already know, the literal translation of the above Latin phrase is "after this, therefore because of this." The traditional illustration is that if the sun rises after the rooster crows, therefore the rooster's crowing caused the sun to rise.

Mr. Smith fails to offer any proof, other than that it occurred while Biden was president, to indicate that today's inflation is in any way caused by President Biden.

Further, while admitting that Mr. Trump prevented the most recent attempt by the president to do something about our border situation, his blaming the deluge of immigrants prior to Trump's most recent efforts to deter the president's program is, again, blaming something on the president without any proof that indicates that he deserves the blame.

Michael Powell, Knoxville 37922

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