

# Someone, please, make it stop



BY KIRK ROSS

Let me disabuse you of a notion floating around that somehow something called The Media wants to see a long drawn-out slugfest in the Republican presidential primary.

First, a few definitions:

- “Notion” is a word people who learned how to keyboard on typewriters use for “meme,” which in less than two short decades has become one of the most overused words in puffery.
- “The Media” is a non-existent entity used by people who cannot discern the differences

between a television, a newspaper and a person who operates one of those Twitter machines. Nor can they tell the difference between the many variations among these various publishing mediums.

- A “slugfest” in this case means the process by which delegates are gathered to determine a candidate. Depending on the year and the way in which the process evolves, the alternative term for this is “horserace.”

You may have heard this notion about the monolithic media rubbing its hands with glee and laughing maniacally about a big, messy primary process. That’s because conspiracy theories abound in presidential election years are much easier to use to explain something than reason, which

tends to require some kind of basis in fact.

Reporters who spend every waking minute covering campaigns have always looked for ways to make them seem far more interesting than they are, preferring to cover the horserace rather than the horses and what comes out of them.

This year, with the nomination process drawn out a little longer than usual, gaming out scenarios, speculating on a late entry in the race and the fascination with fluctuations of various poll numbers have drowned out much of the reporting on the views of the candidates.

Such behavior is detrimental. As we progress toward choosing a president, a few other things

– like, say, the candidates’ ideas and the intentions of various billionaires playing with our political system – probably ought to be the focus.

After weeks of hearing essentially the same speech several times a day for weeks, reporters might become numb to what candidates are actually saying. But most of the rest of us aren’t numb to it at all and find some of what’s being kicked around downright frightening.

Candidates now appear willing to say almost anything to appear more conservative. And the more over the top, the better the coverage.

That may seem like just part of the game, but in the process some dangerous ideas are being

put into wide circulation. With the focus on who is up and who is down, too many of these ideas are going unquestioned and unchecked. This has allowed all sorts of truly awful things candidates are tossing out to remain in the public dialogue long enough to do real damage. You have to wonder how many young women aren’t going to get an HPV vaccine or how many state legislators will base a vote on the false assertions that pre-natal care causes abortion or abortion causes breast cancer simply because a candidate said these things and no one called them on it (or if they did call them on it, treated the issue in an “on-the-one-hand/on-the-other-hand” fashion).

Politics has always been an

ugly business, but these days it is so rife with lies that the dialogue has become dangerous. We can’t just throw our hands up and say everybody does it or let the liars off with a wink because they are just playing to their base.

Like most folks with a pundit license, I think once the primary season is over there will be a move to the center and away from appeals to ultra-conservatives. But the damage from ideas based on getting their votes and not based in reality will linger for years to come.

Most of the people in the news business have pretty good BS detectors. But fewer and fewer seem to know what to do when the alarm goes off.



A yarn bomb hits a sculpture near the intersection of Greensboro and Weaver Streets. PHOTO BY ALICIA STEMPER

## YARN BOMB FROM PAGE 1

Typically yarn bombing happens without the knowledge or consent of the town being “bombed.” But Laura Korch, a member of the Carrboro Arts Committee who came up with the idea, went before the Carrboro Board of Alderman in June to get approval.

“When I first got on the arts committee I was thinking about what kind of project I would like to propose,” Korch said.

“Everyone already spends a lot

of time outside in Carrboro walking or riding bikes, so I thought that an outdoor art installation would be perfect.”

Korch said she chose yarn bombing because the material was cheap and colorful.

After the town approved the project, Korch worked on recruiting knitters, ending up with a group of 12, and getting supplies donated.

“It was about brightening spaces and adding color,” Korch said. “People find it kind of funny and playful.”

The yarn decorations are expected to be up for four weeks.

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## LANDFILL FROM PAGE 1

them apart and use them,” she added.

Commissioner Barry Jacobs also expressed his frustration and said he thought a transfer station should be sited closer to the largest trash contributors.

“Personally I am really tired of municipal problems being solved by putting it in rural areas,” Jacobs said. “I would urge Mayor Chilton to come back with a site in Carrboro, and Mayor Kleinschmidt with a site in Chapel Hill.”

The board on Tuesday voted to move forward with negotiating a contract with the Durham waste transfer station as a temporary solution.

In other business Tuesday evening, the board nominated commissioners Pam Hemminger and Foushee to the Historic Rogers Road Task Force and voted to move the county to single-stream recycling using current recycling bins instead of purchasing new roller carts.

## LIBRARY FROM PAGE 1

Friends said, adding that he felt that Carrboro’s input was critical.

“I think it would be a huge mistake for our library to be built in some suburban location where it is only accessible to people having motor vehicles or who have the privilege of living nearby,” he said, adding that the library should be located “where it is accessible to as many families living in poverty as possible.”

“I’d really rather that they not spend \$5 million at all than that they spend the money ... and make the lives of some wealthy, predominantly white people in a suburban area more convenient,” he continued.

“I don’t think anybody on the Friends ... is talking about a suburban library site where no one can get to it,” said Friends member and former alderman Joal Hall Broun. “I think what they’re saying ... is that you need to be realistic” about what the county will spend on a parcel of land.

The board will revisit the criteria at their meeting on March 6.

## CELL PHONES FROM PAGE 1

express her support for the ordinance.

“We wish that no other family would have to endure such a tragic loss,” she said. “My brother was a good man. ... He deserved better. It was an accident that shouldn’t have happened. It was an accident that happened because of a text message that could’ve waited and should’ve waited.”

“Attention needs to be on the road, not a telephone call or text message,” she continued.

Several council members said that while the issue is really a state or national concern, Chapel Hill should take the lead.

“We’ll just see what rules the day over time, and I think it will be determined to be the right thing to do for the state of North Carolina, eventually,” council member Jim Ward said, adding that he would support increasing the fine for violating the ordinance to \$100.

Council member Lee Storrow said he didn’t understand the exceptions for drivers phoning family members.

“I don’t think it becomes any

less dangerous if someone is talking to their children or talking to their parent,” he said.

Czajkowski said that while he agreed that cell phone use by drivers is dangerous, he didn’t believe Chapel Hill had the authority to enact such a ban, citing an advisory letter from an assistant state attorney general indicating this. He also questioned the enforceability of the ordinance.

“Someone can only be cited for using a cell phone if they are stopped for already breaking the law ... which means that someone could literally be on their cell phone waving hello to a policeman who could do nothing about it unless they were violating some other element of the law.”

Last June, Krista Slough, a UNC student who was seriously injured in a car accident last year, and Joe Capowski, a resident who witnessed the accident, petitioned the council to consider the ban. Capowski alleged that the driver of the car that hit Slough was talking on her cell phone at the time of the accident.

Texting while driving and the use of cell phones by drivers under 18 are both already illegal in North Carolina.

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8	9	1	5	3	6	4	2	7
7	3	4	2	1	8	9	6	5
1	7	3	6	9	2	5	4	8
9	4	8	7	5	3	6	1	2
6	2	5	8	4	1	7	9	3
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### CRYPTOQUOTE ANSWER: Sadness

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