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EDITORIAL

We must help kids use technology responsibly

Technology truly is a marvelous force when used correctly, especially in dire circumstances. You only need to look at the last year to see just how lucky we are to have the technology we do.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed our world almost overnight. To halt the spread of the disease, we had to put a lot of our favorite activities on hold. No longer could we gather with a mass of our friends and family for dinner or pack into a theater to see the latest movies.

We were able to fill some of those gaps thanks to technology. Zoom parties replaced live gatherings. Students at all levels adapted to virtual learning. We found different ways to stay involved with the people we know through our technological prowess.

But as the old saying goes, too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. Our society spent a lot more time looking down at screens before the pandemic happened. COVID-19 has made us spend even more time on them whether it is texting friends or checking social media.

How can we make sure that our kids aren't spending too much time on their phones, tablets and laptops? That is what the group Protect Young Eyes seeks to answer.

Technology can be intimidating, especially for older adults. It can be confusing with so many different social media apps and

platforms. Kids and young adults are used to being inundated with information, bouncing back and forth from different social media apps all day. Parents, grandparents, guardians and others may find it hard just to keep up with whatever new thing is attracting the younger crowd's attention on that day.

The organization seeks to help families, schools and others create safer digital environments and recently met with students and parents from Frederica Academy and St. Francis Xavier Catholic School. Protect Young Eyes works to make complicated topics easier to digest by breaking it down into bite-sized portions.

The group also works to build "digital trust" between parents and their children with a framework that focuses on attributes of families whose children use technology well. The steps focus on modeling healthy use of technology, making it a group activity, understanding how youth interact with technology, talking honestly about it and playing an active role in helping youth instead of making it feel combative.

Whether you follow the guidelines that Protect Young Eyes uses or not, it is important for every parent or guardian to talk to their children about how to use technology.

Now is the time to nip any bad habits in the bud, and help them understand that there is a world out there beyond what they see on their screens.

COLUMN / BILL CRANE



'The Bubba Factor' in Georgia's recent runoffs

As I'm writing you now, books are being written about the magical political calculus which "turned the Red State of Georgia Blue." And while I congratulate President Biden, Vice-President Harris, and Senators Ossoff and Warnock, before you all call the painters, let me share with you a story that almost no one is writing about that is also worth hearing. I'll call it the Bubba Factor.

I first met Lauren "Bubba" McDonald in the mid-1980s. I was a young staffer in the Secretary of State's office, McDonald was the powerful and highly regarded Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and a favorite of legendary House Speaker and Democrat, Thomas B. Murphy of Bremen, Georgia. Speaker Murphy had been instrumental in the election and two terms of outgoing Governor Joe Frank Harris and during the election season of 1990, Murphy placed his chips and his influence behind Bubba McDonald running for Governor.

Bubba had followers and support in that governor's race and Democratic Primary, but Ambassador Andrew Young and Lt. Governor Zell Miller had more. Young and Miller would go on to the runoff, and Miller would later become governor.

For a time, McDonald left politics and returned to Commerce and his family funeral home business. He was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Georgia Public Service Commission as a Democrat in 1998 by then-Governor Roy Barnes, serving an unexpired term through 2002. Bubba then ran for re-election, but for the first-time his name appeared on the ballot as just Lauren McDonald — no "Bubba." He lost. Now

there were some other issues at play, Republicans took the governor's office and a U.S. Senate seat as well as Bubba's seat on the Public Service Commission. Each were surprise upsets.

In 2008, Bubba McDonald returned, now a newly minted Republican, and he ran for his PSC seat again. And Lauren "Bubba" McDonald was re-seated on the PSC during that 2008 election for another 6 years, and then re-elected handily in 2014, in a race against Democratic Party challenger Daniel Blackman.

Blackman would seek a rematch in 2020, under conditions much more favorable to statewide Democratic candidates. On the Democratic side during the general election runoff — the Libertarian candidate again prevented the GOP candidate from winning the general election contest outright — billboards, yard signs, and even bumper stickers, featured a ticket of Ossoff, Warnock, and Blackman. State and national party mailers also plugged the potential win by a two-Black man triple play.

But Bubba, who had limited campaign funding and even less attention, ran on two very simple, direct and centrist messages. "I will keep your utility bills low (20 percent below the national average during his tenures on the PSC), and "We need more solar."

That's pretty much it. No social media demagoguery, no real attacks on his opponent. And I should mention, Bubba McDonald was among the first and most ardent supporters of Donald Trump, as a candidate, as president, and throughout his re-election campaign. It may come as no surprise, but other than a brief mention on runoff election eve at the Dalton, Georgia Trump Rally, Pres-

ident Trump never really returned the favor. I personally think him not doing more actually helped Bubba.

When all ballots were in and finally certified, a GOP candidate for the Public Service Commission, which typically down tickets will see 100,000-200,000 ballot count drop-offs, received 2,234,689 votes and bested Daniel Blackman by nearly 125,000 votes in their rematch. The GOP Senate incumbents, each running with practically UNLIMITED resources, would only receive 2,214,979 (Perdue had 20,000 votes LESS than Bubba) and 2,195,841 votes (Loeffler close to 40,000 votes less than Bubba). Both Senate contest had vote totals of 4,484,900+ votes, but the PSC contest also drew 4,435,651.

While many will continue to write the Georgia GOP's political obituary, the real story may be the benefits of reaching out and beyond the party's core and base, giving undecided, Libertarian, and independent voters a place to go...they may just wander back into THAT GOP's bigger tent. Senators Perdue and Loeffler won only two of the top ten counties in metro Atlanta. Bubba outdrew both in each metro Atlanta county by several thousand votes, making several of those core counties almost competitive again for the GOP.

Hardly an outsider, Bubba McDonald has been in public life and public office for nearly four decades. His son with the same name, who goes by Lauren McDonald, now serves in the State House (District 26) as well, serving in his father's old State House seat. I'm telling ya, it's that magic Bubba factor.

You can reach Bill Crane at bill.csicrane@gmail.com.

ANOTHER VIEW / STEVE BREEN



MY ANSWER / BILLY GRAHAM

World's greatest need is the transformation of human nature

From the writings
of the Rev. Billy Graham

Dear Dr. Graham:

My college professor claims that one day humans will be able to create life in what he calls a "custom being," according to how he wants the person to be. It seems far-fetched to me; is it?

— N.M.

Dear N.M.: We live in a revolutionary, changing world. Man's moral capacities lag far behind his technological skills and discoveries. The greatest need in the world is to bring about the transformation of human nature, something man cannot do.

Many of our technologists are saying there is a great need for a new breed of man. Even the political radicals and the humanists talk about the "new man." From this it is clear that they acknowledge that man, as he is, is not good enough. So they look for the arrival of the new man who, they say, will come into being when society

has been changed so that a new environment can produce him. There are also the technocrats who believe that technology is now advancing so rapidly that mankind will be able to create an entirely new human race. Some genetic engineers believe that they will be able to create any type of person they want.

But there is only one ultimate answer to the need of man to be changed. Science and technology cannot change man's basic nature. Economic restructuring cannot change man's basic nature. No amount of self-improvement or wishful thinking can change man's basic nature.

Only God the Creator can recreate us. And that is precisely what He does when we humble ourselves and submit to Jesus Christ.

The Bible says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). What a tremendous statement!

COLUMN / PAT BUCHANAN



Coexistence or cold war with China?

"The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States... does not challenge that position."

Thus did President Nixon, in the Shanghai Communiqué of 1972, accept China's territorial claim to the island of Taiwan.

In 1979, Jimmy Carter severed relations with Taiwan, recognized Beijing as the legitimate government and dissolved the U.S. mutual security treaty with the Republic of China on Taiwan. We ceased to be obligated to go to war to defend Taiwan.

Fast-forward four decades to the first weekend of President Joe Biden's administration. Saturday, China sent eight nuclear-capable bombers and four fighter planes into the air defense identification zone of Taiwan.

Sunday, Beijing sent 16 military aircraft into the same region.

Observing U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and visits by U.S. officials, China is issuing us a reminder: "You Americans are encouraging those on the island who seek independence. Not going to happen. Rather than let Taiwan go, we will fight. Taiwan is a part of China and is a red line for us."

Beijing is said to be seeking a face-to-face meeting with Biden.

Why? Perhaps because incoming Secretary of State Antony Blinken in his confirmation hearings said that President Donald Trump "was right" to take a "tougher approach to China."

Blinken also agreed with outgoing Secretary Mike Pompeo,

who had called China's treatment of its Uighur minority "genocide," and added that our commitment to Taiwan is "something that we hold to very strongly."

Under Xi Jinping, said Blinken, China seeks to "become the leading country in the world — the country that sets the norms, that sets the standards." In short, China's geostrategic goal is to replace the U.S.-created world order with a new world order of its own. Before we proceed further down this road to collision, questions need to be answered.

To whom does Taiwan belong? If the answer is what it has been since 1972 — "Taiwan is a part of China" — then is not encouraging the 25 million Taiwanese to seek independence an "incitement to insurrection" from Beijing's standpoint? And if China uses force to compel Taiwan to repudiate any right to independence, are we prepared to fight a war with a nuclear-armed China over the island's political status and orientation?

When Chinese Communists in 1950 conquered Tibet and began its ethnic and cultural cleansing of the region, what did we do? Basically, nothing.

When China occupied and fortified rocks and reefs across the South China Sea what did we do? Basically, nothing.

When China crushed the Hong Kong democracy protests we encouraged, and imposed a new national security law on the island's 7 million people, what did we do? Basically, nothing.

Now, Xi Jinping has bluntly told America that how China treats Tibetans, Uighurs, Christians and

Falun Gong, all citizens of China, is no more the business of the United States than was our treatment of the indigenous peoples of North America the business of Imperial China.

While China steals intellectual property from U.S. factories in China, who moved the factories there to take advantage of cheap labor where a worker could be hired for \$2 an hour?

Beijing says any attempt to impose our "universal values" on China would amount to interference in her internal affairs. And any attempt to sever from Beijing her jurisdiction over Taiwan or the Spratly or Paracel Islands in the South China Sea will be resisted by force.

Moreover, as none of the disputed rocks and reefs in the South and East China Seas involves any territory claimed by the U.S., and we have conceded for 50 years that Taiwan is "part of China," why are we sending carrier battle groups into these seas and through the Taiwan Strait?

What are we threatening?

On Sunday, a U.S. aircraft carrier battle group, led by the USS Theodore Roosevelt sailed into the South China Sea on a "freedom of navigation" exercise, the first such operation under President Biden.

This was the same day that those Chinese bombers and fighters flew into Taiwan's air identification zone. We need to talk.

Patrick J. Buchanan is the author of "Nixon's White House Wars: The Battles That Made and Broke a President and Divided America Forever."

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