

Recalling impact of Carter's support for Hyde Amendment



Your Turn

Carol Crossed
Guest columnist

The passing of President Jimmy Carter has propelled a national discussion about what is a progressive evangelical.

Carter's brand of Christianity challenged both the left and right to abandon political pressures that violated one's conscience. Stuart Eizenstat, Carter's domestic adviser, said the president took personal pride in ignoring the political consequences of decisions he regarded as principled.

Carter fulfilled his 1976 campaign promise, pardoning religious conscientious objectors in the Vietnam War who opposed killing. Carter's opposition to the death penalty was based on the biblical call to reject "an eye for an eye." Killing is not a principled solution to solving a problem.

One of Carter's most enduring and controversial legacies is the enforcement of the Hyde Amendment which

prevents government money from being used for abortions. Carter took the self-identified "pro-choice" proponents at face value: It was a woman's decision to have one and therefore to pay for one, not the government's.

Far from being a misogynist, the president had a record 38 women on his White House staff, including Rochester's own Vice-Mayor Midge Costanza. Because I was an anti-war activist, I supported Midge's passion to get Carter elected.

It was no surprise that Carter named Costanza to be his public liaison. But it was a surprise when she brought women to the Capitol to lobby the president against the Amendment. Carter was no bartering horse-trader. His adamant support for Hyde helped lead to Costanza's departure from her White House post. Carter's leadership played a role in shaping Democratic Party opinion, but was also a reflection of it.

Like today, early pro-life democratic feminists advocated non-violent solutions to the "feminization of poverty," a phrase actually coined by the Carter administration. Economic inequality could not be solved by the government

aborting poor women's children.

The party platform's stated protection of the 'vulnerable' was understood to be in conflict with support for abortion. The party was reminded of that in 1976 by pro-life candidate Ellen McCormack. She ran in 19 state primaries and captured 22 delegates at the 1976 Democratic National Convention.

In 2024, protecting the "vulnerable" was mentioned 10 times in the Democratic Party's platform. Ironically, Democrats spent a whopping \$149 million on ads that promoted abortion-rights, more than for health care or the economy or crime or human rights.

While Carter did not publicly support overturning Roe v Wade, he condemned abortion throughout his political career. Today, support for the Hyde Amendment continues. Only 36% of Americans support funding abortions.

In a 2021 poll, 78% of Democrats said they believe laws can protect the health and well-being of mothers and the life of the pre-born child.

I think Jimmy Carter would like that.

Carol Crossed is vice president of the board of directors of Feminists Choosing Life of New York.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Grateful reader recounts a chat with Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter

A number of years ago, I was in Naples Florida for a safety conference and found myself alone at the top of a long flight of stairs leading to outside.

As I looked out into the Florida sunshine, I saw a couple start up the stairs.

When they got closer, I realized it was Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter.

They were dressed in hiking clothes and accompanied by a lone Secret Service agent.

When they reached my location, I said "Good Afternoon, Mr. President" and the response was warm and friendly.

At that, they told me they had been in the Everglades for the morning and they then proceeded to ask me about my visit to the area and the conference I was attending.

A warm and friendly conversation ensued for the next five minutes.

I had always liked President Carter from a distance, but their friendly interest in me made me a fan for life. They will both be sorely missed.

Lawrence Dawson
Rochester

We tried to save my brother; a broken system failed him



Your Turn
Destyni Burke
Guest columnist

Addiction doesn't wait. For those battling it, every moment counts, but the system puts up roadblocks at every turn. I know this because I lost my brother, Chance, to these failures.

My brother wasn't just his addiction. He was a developing entrepreneur with big dreams and a huge heart. He loved his family deeply and worked hard to build something of his own. But when he was ready to get help, we faced impossible barriers.

Local resources in Wayne County weren't enough. FLACRA (Finger Lakes Area Counseling and Recovery Agency) offered outpatient therapy and a sliding

fee scale, but Chance needed intensive residential care in a new environment to escape the influences and stress of staying local. Those options came with staggering costs - \$10,000 or more per month without insurance.

What makes this harder is knowing how much money is spent on policing drug-related arrests instead of addressing the root problem.

Addiction is treated as a crime instead of a disease, creating a cycle of punishment rather than recovery. People like my brother end up arrested and trapped in a system that doesn't address the root of their struggles, perpetuating a cycle of hopelessness and lost potential.

When Chance couldn't get into the care he needed, his battle became one he couldn't win.

Addiction recovery should be accessible, affordable, and focused on re-

building lives -- not just drying people out and sending them back into the same circumstances. Comprehensive programs with therapy, skill-building, and long-term support should be the standard.

I'm sharing this story because we need to do better. No family should have to face these barriers when trying to save a loved one. Addiction is a disease, not a choice, and our system needs to reflect that.

Chance didn't fail. The system failed him. No one should have to choose between bankruptcy and saving their loved one. It's time to prioritize recovery over punishment. Let's give people the chance our Chance didn't have.

Destyni Burke of Victor is a mother and advocate for change in addiction treatment systems, writing in memory of her brother, Chance Burke, who died Dec. 18, 2024, at age 29.

How a local native made Christmas special for kids during WWII

Recently I viewed the DVD "The American St Nick: A True Story" and was surprised to learn that the St Nicholas in this documentary was a Rochester soldier of the 28th Infantry Division.

Corporal Richard Brookins wore a local priest's robes and a crudely fashioned (and itchy) rope beard in order to play the role of Saint Nicholas for the children of Wiltz, Luxembourg, during World War II.

Following the war, as the town rebuilt, those who survived the war vowed to never forget and to honor the kindness and generosity of Brookins and those American soldiers who brought back St Nicholas Day in December 1944.

Kindness and generosity are to be shared today, too.

Mary Smith
Rochester

Prioritize reducing carbon emissions in 2025

The D&C's recent coverage of climate change (12/23/24: "2024 Likely to be Earth's Hottest Year") is another powerful reminder for us to prioritize carbon emission reductions in our new year's resolutions.

Using guidance from Monroe County's Climate Action Plan or New York state's, the most impactful actions include: becoming more energy efficient; opting for electric equipment when it's time to replace our fossil-fuel-powered vehicles, furnaces, and home appliances; supporting renewable energy systems; and reducing methane emissions from food waste and agriculture.

Many of these actions will also improve air quality and save you money. Let's resolve to set a new kind of record in 2025 by making it our best year yet in protecting our planet's future.

Bill Maier
Fairport

Yes, you see snow, but climate change still looms

I'm sure we're all happy we saw White Christmas.

And we've certainly had some chilly weather so far this winter.

So, you're saying, "What's all this fuss about global warming?"

Let's not assume because we're having a few really cold days, or a bit more snow lately that the entire Earth is not warming.

As this newspaper has reported, we are living in a time when each year is just a bit warmer than the year before.

We must do something to slow down the Earth's warming trend.

The climate/environment your children and grand-children will be living in will definitely be different than what we're seeing today.

Rod Bailey
Rochester

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Russell

Continued from Page 1F

But the case against TikTok is strong, and the Supreme Court should allow the law - which requires the app to divest from its China-based parent company or it will be banned from app stores and web hosting companies in the United States - to be enforced.

The push to ban TikTok has bipartisan support, including from former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who served in Trump's first term.

John F. Plumb, the principal cyber adviser to the secretary of Defense, describes TikTok as a "potential threat vector" to the United States. In 2023, Plumb told a House Armed Services subcommittee that China, using TikTok, might be able to spread misinformation and collect data on a massive swath of Americans.

Army Gen. Paul Nakasone, commander of U.S. Cyber Command, also testified about the dangers of the app: "If you consider one-third of the adult population receives their news from this app, one-sixth of our children are saying they're constantly on this app, if you consider that there's 150 million people every single day that are obviously touching this app, this provides a foreign nation a platform for information operations, a platform for surveillance, and a concern we have with regards to who controls that data."

Congress thought TikTok was such a threat that the legislation to block it passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support - 352 votes for the ban and only 65 against it.

TikTok is brainwashing our nation's young people

Other popular social media apps like Facebook and Instagram have their own issues, including collecting users' digital footprints and allowing sexual predators to lurk on their platforms.

But there's strong evidence that TikTok shoves pro-China propaganda into the faces of young Americans who spend hours each day on the app. A study conducted by researchers with Rutgers University's Network Contagion Research Institute found that concerns about China using TikTok to indoctrinate America's youth are rooted in reality.

Joel Finkelstein, the institute's co-founder and chief science officer, told The Free Press that the study establishes that "TikTok is actively manipulating perceptions of China and the Chinese Communist Party through algorithmic bias."

China uses TikTok to reshape Americans' opinions of the Asian country, including casting its human rights record in a more positive manner. The app also downplays negative content about China, like the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre and the horrendous treatment of Uyghurs.

Trump is wrong about TikTok

The Supreme Court is likely to weigh First Amendment protections against the national security risk. If the federal government's lawyers can show that TikTok is a true national security threat, they may persuade the conservative justices, who are stalwart First Amendment defenders, to their side.

I'd argue that the United States has a vested interest in ensuring that a foreign government, or a company partially owned by a foreign government, isn't allowed to spread propaganda to millions of Americans through their personal devices.

The Justice Department, arguing in defense of the ban, noted: "The First Amendment would not have required our Nation to tolerate Soviet ownership and control of American radio stations (or other channels of communication and critical infrastructure) during the Cold War, and it likewise does not re-



Last year, Congress passed, and President Joe Biden signed, legislation that bans TikTok in the United States if parent company ByteDance doesn't sell the popular app by Jan. 19. MIKE BLAKE/REUTERS FILE

quire us to tolerate ownership and control of TikTok by a foreign adversary today."

It's a rare instance where I agree with the Biden administration instead of Trump, who asked the court to delay enforcement of the law so the incoming president can pursue "a political resolution."

Trump, on Truth Social, revealed the real reason why he doesn't want TikTok banned. He posted a graphic that shows his popularity on the platform.

Like X, TikTok ebbs and flows with accurate and false information, controversies and conspiracies. It's a cesspool. But Trump doesn't mind a cesspool as long as people love him in it.

Trump missed a good opportunity to put America first. Instead, he prioritized his own popularity. That isn't surprising, but it is disappointing.

Nicole Russell is an opinion columnist with USA TODAY. She lives in Texas with her four kids. Sign up for her newsletter, The Right Track, and get it delivered to your inbox.

ABOUT YOUR D&C TEAM

Reflecting in an era of climate change on winters of yore



Michael Kilian
Executive Editor
Rochester Democrat
and Chronicle

During a recent spate of lake-effect snow warnings in places like Wayne and northern Cayuga counties, the city of Rochester saw very little snowfall.

As I stared out my office window at the bare grass on the Parcel 5 park downtown, I decided to research the winter of 1977-78.

I remember well that cold season, when I was 14 years old, because I spent immense amounts of time shoveling snow.

(Well, I also remember it because the "Saturday Night Fever" movie soundtrack was all over the radio at the time; "Stayin' Alive" and all that.)

Thanks to a 2023 article by Spectrum News meteorologist Todd Kerkman, I learned that I have good reason to hold the winter of 47 years ago in my memory: In 1977-78, we lived through the second-snowiest local winter in recorded history.

Rochester saw a whopping 160.9 inches of snow then, at least five feet more than the seasonal average. The only recorded winter when more flakes fell was 1959-60, which noses out 1977-78 by a mere 0.8 inches.

For the record, two other winters from my childhood made Kerkman's Top 10 list — 1970-71 (third snowiest) and 1978-79 (sixth snowiest).

Remarkably, Western New York is known for Buffalo's Blizzard of January 1977, but that winter doesn't even make Rochester's Top 10 list, mainly because the storm that buried Buffalo struck us only a glancing blow.

Here in the 2020s, the very idea of receiving more than 100 inches of snow, let alone 160, seems remote. Climate change has had the effect for quite a



In this 1978 file photo, Will Irizarry balances a wheel and tire on his head as he trudges along snowy Monroe Avenue to a garage after his car had a flat at Midtown Plaza in Rochester. DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE ARCHIVES

while now of minimizing the number of substantial snowstorms while shrinking the range of areas likely to see much lake-effect snow. Last winter's 50.4 inches amounted to the least local snowfall since 1952-53.

And "lake effect" just hasn't hit here as hard as it once did. Just east of Lake Erie, particularly in Buffalo's South-towns?

Or just east of Lake Ontario, particularly on the Tug Hill Plateau northwest of Rome? Certainly the chance for lots of lake-effect snow has been quite real in recent years.

But in Rochester? Not so much. So while it is easy for any of us to lament "winter," truth is we aren't coping with nearly as much snow (or cold) as we once did.

The Democrat and Chronicle is blessed to have journalists who help Rochester-area readers prepare for inclement weather, in any form. Connect Team reporter Victoria E. Freile writes

up many a storm advisory story for us, year-round. And climate and weather and lakes reporter Steve Howe helps put in context why we see the weather we do.

Please download the D&C app on your phone to receive alerts and read the latest weather stories, about lake-effect snow or summer windstorms or heavy minifall, and you'll see the good work Victoria and Steve and others do.

Having written this column, I'll add this caveat about local weather: Climate trends do not rule out a significant storm burying us one day before spring, or the prevailing winds occasionally piling up the fluffy lake-effect snow in Rochester or Webster or Greece.

Yet it's eminently clear the 14-years-olds of today locally get to spend far less time shoveling than I once did (and, with any luck, more time listening to good music).

Mike Kilian is executive editor. Reach him at mkilian@gannett.com.

Guidelines from Rochester Transit Service for taking a pet/emotional support animal on a bus

Genae Shields
Rochester Democrat and Chronicle
USA TODAY NETWORK

The American Pet Products Association reports that 78% of U.S. households travel with pets yearly, with cats and dogs being the most common companions.

Traveling with a pet can be time-consuming, and living in a city without a car can make things difficult. But did you know that Rochester Regional Transit Service (RTS) allows small pets and emotional support animals on board? Over the holidays, I was dog-sitting and decided to bring the pup to our downtown office. His name is Hiro, and he had never been on a bus before, so I had no idea what to expect on our trip.

After putting on our coats and making several stops for Hiro to sniff around on our walk to the bus stop, we finally caught the #18 bus to the RTS station.

I could tell he was very nervous, but after sitting beside me and oozing some

peanut butter, I knew he was good to go. Other riders were surprised but smiled when they saw him sitting in his seat like a regular passenger.

Once we reached the RTS station, we hopped off the bus and enjoyed our day at the office during a holiday party.

After enduring the journey, here is what you should know before you take your pet or emotional support animal (ESA) for a ride on the bus, according to RTS:

- Keep your pet/ESA in a closed container, cage, or carrier.
- Make sure your pet/ESA is house-trained.
- Hold the carrier on your lap or place it near your feet.
- Don't let the carrier take up a seat or block the aisle.
- The pet/ESA cannot make excessive noise or display threatening behavior.

Genae Shields is the business and development impact reporter working on mobility stories that dive into how peo-



Genae Shields and her friend's dog, Hiro, take the bus Downtown. GENAE SHIELDS/DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

ple get around Rochester and it's surrounding areas. As a member of the local community, Genae enjoys learning about newly emerging businesses and changes that impact Rochester's BIPOC and LGBTQ neighborhoods. She also enjoys supporting local artists and non-profit organizations. Contact Genae at gshields@gannett.com.

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CORRECTIONS

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