

OPINION

OUR VIEW

It’s really vandalism

Election season is heating up as temperatures rise and campaign signs begin to sprout in local yards and along roads.

An election provides the voting public an opportunity to decide who will lead them into the future. Electing candidates based on their views and character is what’s made this nation unique among many in our world.

This democracy’s formal decision-making process begins with a candidate filing the appropriate paperwork to seek a public office when a term is finished.

Once someone has filed, the campaign begins as candidates attempt to convince people to vote for them in the upcoming election.

The process is built to be fair, by allowing candidates, under some guidelines, to tell voters why they are the best candidate for the office. That happens through advertisements, signs and billboards. In addition, candidates are often offered space to give their views in news coverage by newspapers, and on radio and television stations.

But when that process is marred, and in this case literally, by graffiti spread across someone’s campaign

sign, it is an attempt to hurt the entire democratic process.

Shame, shame, shame on whomever took part in spray painting a local candidate’s campaign sign. Regardless of the intention, this is considered vandalism, plain and simple and the culprits should be punished for their behavior.

Campaign signs cost candidates money and are a tried and true way of getting the attention of voters. In this case, it appears these local vandals weren’t really trying to send a message about the election. Instead, they likely just saw a canvas for their graffiti, which was not clever and clearly not art. This vandalism simply makes the vandals who did it look foolish and immature.

And, it’s certainly not likely to change anyone’s decision when they enter the voting booth.

We urge area residents who have allowed signs to be placed on their property to keep an eye on them. If you see someone tampering with them, call local law enforcement.

Vandalizing political signs accomplishes nothing. Our local candidates will be judged on their own merits by the voters.



GUEST COLUMN

Teens not working doesn’t work for America

Here’s a trend that may not bode well for the future of our country: According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 40 percent of 16- to 19-year-olds have summer jobs — down from 75 percent of teens a generation ago.

As it goes, according to the NerdWallet website, teen summer employment has been declining for decades. Why?

One reason is that jobs typically tailored for teens are either shrinking or being taken by older folks. Another is that more teens are attending summer school, participating in extracurricular activities and volunteering.

But a third reason is the most troubling: Fewer teens are willing to flip burgers or work manual labor during their summer vacation, according to recruiting firm Challenger, Gray and Christmas.

Which is a shame, because work is good for teens. It exposes them to how industry works. It teaches them the value of a dollar. It gives them the dignity of exchanging their labor for money that they can use to support



Tom
PURCELL

their education or maybe buy their first junker car.

But most of all, teens who don’t work are missing out on some incredible growth experiences.

I got my very first job in the summer before I became an eighth-grader. I persuaded a neighbor to hire me to cut her lawn for five bucks. She had an electric mower with a long extension cord — which I promptly ran over and destroyed. I got canned before I finished the job.

The next few summers, I worked at a driving range. I had to wake up at 5 a.m., ride my bike 2 miles up a hill, then pick up a couple of acres of golf balls with an aluminum picker. Sometimes, I worked the evening shift. I wore a

metal cage as I worked — as dozens of people tried to hit me with golf balls. I was paid \$1.25 an hour for this honor.

The summer before 10th grade, I built up a decent business mowing lawns, but the summer before my junior year — when I had my driver’s license, finally — I hit the mother lode. I put ads in the paper offering a service to rebuild stone and block retaining walls.

After a few months of mistakes and mishaps, I learned how to bid the jobs. I hired two or three others to help me run the jobs. I slowly began to master the art of cutting and placing stones. And the cash came rolling in. I was doing mighty fine for a 17-year-old and had earned enough in a few months to pay for my first year of college.

I worked a series of jobs in college: dishwasher, janitor, handyman, grass cutter. I worked as a bouncer, too, which involved kicking drunk people out of bars and mopping up that which some patrons couldn’t keep down — the most respect I ever got, then or now.

In any event, these jobs

helped me learn how to socialize and work with others. I learned how to sell, bid jobs and manage money. I learned self-reliance and the joy that comes with a job well done.

As more of today’s teens miss out on such experiences, how might that affect their future? How might it affect America’s future?

Are we encouraging more kids to rely on the government, rather than themselves, to meet their basic needs in their adult years? The Congressional Budget Office recently reported that big-government programs like ObamaCare will discourage people from working.

A strong work ethic is what built America. We need to maintain our work ethic to keep our country going and produce our needed tax revenue.

That’s why I’m troubled that fewer teens want to work these days

Purcell is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist and is nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc.

How to contact your lawmakers

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