

CAPTION CONTEST

WE PROVIDE THE CARTOON — YOU MAKE IT FUNNY!



- ▶ Go to courant.com/captioncontest. Enter your caption in the field where it says "Post a comment."
- ▶ To be considered for a prize, you must also enter your name and phone number. Your information will NOT be published online, we just need it to verify your entry if your caption is judged a winner.
- ▶ Enter as often as you like until Thursday at 5 p.m., when we'll stop taking entries.
- ▶ You can continue to submit entries by regular mail using the form below. Look for the winner online and in the next Sunday Opinion section.

CAPTION _____

NAME _____

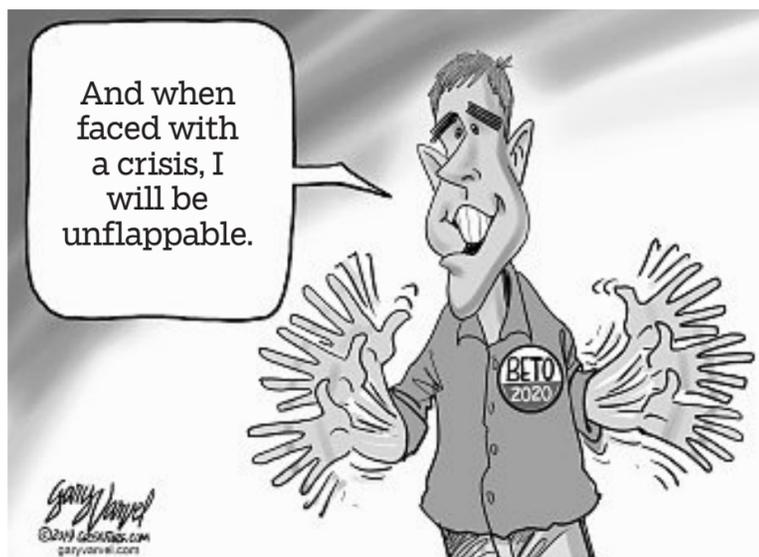
ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

Mail to: Caption Contest, The Courant, 285 Broad St., Hartford, CT 06115

LAST WEEK'S WINNER

MICHAEL FISHMAN, OCALA, FLA.



HONORABLE MENTIONS

I can't get these sleeves to roll down.
Lewis Shilane, Joplin, Mo.

You will become sleepy, very sleepy.
James Schoch, Simsbury

You should see me at an auction.
Christopher Ttofi, Newington

I can shake more hands this way.
Bil Drena, North Stonington

They said that I should practice shaking hands.
Glenn Maynard, Wethersfield

Digital

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will — thanks to their technology-saturated upbringing.

For one, they've seldom experienced the joy of reading a real newspaper, scanning every page and discovering cool stories that otherwise would not see the light of day. Author Wally Lamb explains in a recent Courant article (March 10, "Why Libraries Matter") how a similar experience became his remedy for writer's block: "I'd get up from the (library's) study carrel I thought of as mine and wander the stacks where, frequently, serendipitous 'accidents' happened" — a moment when Lamb would come across a book, out of the blue, whose ideas loosened his mental

logjam.

And so it is with newspapers. The simple act of holding a broadsheet of paper and poring over its contents often leads to unexpected articles and intriguing photos. Try doing that on a newspaper website. Scrolling through content on a small screen — especially a smartphone — rarely unearths the golden nuggets of information that scanning a newspaper page would.

Same thing with maps, especially the ones I still keep in the glove box of my car. When I was a kid, I loved unfolding these outsized documents and spreading them out on the floor to plan my family's holiday road trips from Baltimore to eastern Pennsylvania. I could see the entire route — crossroads, attractions, landmarks — on one contiguous sheet of paper. I felt like a TV detective, mapping out an investigation

on a bulletin board with photos, index cards, push pins and yarn.

Today, we talk to our GPS systems to get point-by-point directions from Siri or Alexa or some other automated voice. But in the process, we lose our sense of place. We lack any feeling of anticipation for the next crossroad, attraction, or landmark. We become robots ourselves, following a program written by other robots.

Other examples abound. Music today is downloaded minus the artistic album covers and illuminating liner notes. Photographs are taken impulsively and stored haphazardly with not one physical photo album in sight.

David Sax wrote about this phenomenon in "The Revenge of Analog: Real Things and Why They Matter." Rather than a "screed against digital technology," the book is an appreciation for how "we now

crave experiences that are more tactile and human-centric."

"Analog gives us the joy of creating and possessing real, tangible things in realms where physical objects and experiences are fading," Sax writes. "These pleasures range from the serendipity of getting a roll of film back from the developer ... to the luxurious sound of unfolding the Sunday newspaper."

I had never heard of Sax's book. I found it — serendipitously — while browsing in New Haven's brick-and-mortar Atticus Bookstore.

How much longer before we lose all of these predigital encounters to the unrelenting march of technology?

Barth Keck is an English teacher at Haddam-Killingworth High School.

I'm a convicted toll evader, and I'm only a little ashamed

BY JANE M. BAILEY

Every February since 1985, I remember with shame, and a touch of hubris, that I am a convicted toll evader.

We lived in Hampton, N.H., near the coast, and we spent weekends at our small getaway chalet overlooking Lake Winnepesaukee. This one weekend was especially cold, but we'd had a good time cross-country skiing. My husband and I had come in separate cars, so we headed home at different times on Sunday evening. He took our 8-year-old daughter, and I had our 4-year-old, who promptly fell asleep.

As I rolled into the first of three toll booths, I discovered that my wallet was empty. I frantically searched the glove compartment, the ashtray, the side panel, the floor mats and the seats and found nothing except a wad of chewed gum and a couple of gooey lollipop sticks. I looked sheepishly at the toll collector.

"I don't seem to have 20 cents. I'm sorry; I didn't know my wallet was empty."

"Just pay 40 cents the next time you come through," the attendant said.

Relieved, I drove on. About 20 minutes ahead, I hit the second toll. This time, I was more brazen.

"Hi, I don't have any money in my wallet, but I come through here every week, so I'll put double in next week. Is that OK?"

"That's not our procedure. Please park on the right, cross to the office on the other side of the highway and arrange your payment there."

"Sir, do you mean I have to cross all six lanes of toll booth traffic? I've got a 4-year-old asleep who I'll have to carry with me."

"Yes ma'am, that's what I said." In disbelief, I pulled into the parking lot. I looked at the six lanes of highway traffic backing up at the toll booths. I looked at my sleeping son. This is where the hubris comes in.

I was not about to carry my child across six lanes of icy roadway. After emptying every possible pocket in the car and taking



JOHN KEITH/GETTY/ISTOCKPHOTO

The author is a convicted toll evader.

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a furtive glance at the tollbooth, I gunned it out of there.

One more and I'm home-free, I thought.

The last toll booth was only a mile from home. There I told my story for the third time. The attendant smiled and handed me a pre-addressed envelope. "Simply put your toll in here and mail it in. Have a good night."

Whew! I thought. I made it — until I was on the off-ramp and heard a siren behind me.

I glanced in the mirror and saw an ominous red light. The officer was young and handsome.

"Ma'am, did you evade a toll back in Dover?"

"Officer, I didn't evade the toll. I tried to pay. My 4-year-old is asleep, and I would have had to carry him across six lanes of highway. Frankly, it wasn't worth it."

He ripped a ticket out of his book and handed it to me. "You can mail in your fine or take it to

court. Good night."

My hubris now really kicked in. You bet I'll take this to court.

Weeks later, I sat in the courtroom, telling my story under oath, sure that no judge would convict an apple-pie eating, Chevrolet driving first-grade teacher of toll evasion.

All was going well until that handsome officer was called forward. He looked down at his notepad, then looked me in the eye: "Mrs. Bailey, on the evening

of February 24, did you or did you not state to me, 'Frankly, it wasn't worth it?'"

"Well — yes, that's what I said; but I didn't mean it *that way* ..."

"Guilty!" the judge declared with a bang of his gavel.

I slunk out of the courtroom and, shame-faced, paid my fine.

When I got home, I wrote an eloquent complaint to Gov. John Sununu. Soon I received an embossed letter, signed by the governor, stating he was sorry he couldn't retroactively clear my conviction; however, there would now be one standard collection procedure across the state.

Maybe you can thank me for EZ-Pass.

Jane Bailey is a freelance writer who lives in Litchfield. She is the former provost of Post University in Waterbury. A version of this essay previously appeared in The Litchfield Connection.