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Patrick Graham

# Helping students read, and lead

Students across Walton County are back in class for the new school year. They have kicked off the new year with textbooks, tablets and supplies in hand. Here at *The Tribune*, we want to make sure and put another instructional tool in the hands of local students as well.

That tool? The newspaper. The Newspaper In Education program or NIE program is a more than decade-long partnership among *The Walton Tribune*, the business community and local schools enabling students and teachers across the county to use the newspaper in the classroom at no cost to local schools or school systems.

Through NIE, teachers and students receive newspapers every publication day (Wednesdays and weekends) during the school year, utilizing age-appropriate lesson plans provided by the newspaper to take advantage of the one-of-a-kind “living textbook” opportunity the

newspaper represents. While reading and writing are areas the paper can really help students develop, it can also be utilized in subjects across the board — from math, to social studies to family and consumer sciences — and by all age groups.

Through the years the program has been utilized by thousands of teachers and students in the paper’s coverage area. In fact, many local teachers, like Tricia Brown of Monroe Area High School for example, have been part of NIE from the beginning and are strong advocates of the program.

“I love receiving *The Walton Tribune* in my classroom twice a week,” Brown said when asked about NIE. “My students start up or warm up every day is ‘In the News’ where they have to read at least two current events going on around the community and world. They also have to choose a business-related story since they are in a business class. On Mondays and Wednesdays they are asked to use *The Walton Tribune* to get their articles.

“I also encourage the stu-

dents to take the paper home and share it with their parents or guardians so they too can be informed with what is going on in the community in which they live.

“Lastly, students love to see themselves in the paper! I sponsor the Future Business Leaders of America and I submit our news and celebrations frequently. When my members are in the paper, I always give them a copy to share with their families! Again, I love receiving *The Walton Tribune* in my classroom!”

Helping students and teachers through the NIE program is one of the best things we do as a newspaper, and we wouldn’t be able to do it without the

generosity of sponsors. However, we need even more sponsors so we can expand the program’s reach and provide newspapers to even more local students and teachers.

Whether a business or an individual, all are welcome to contribute to the NIE cause. If you would like to partner with us on the NIE program, please contact me at 770-267-2443 or at [patrick.graham@waltontribune.com](mailto:patrick.graham@waltontribune.com) in order to discuss the program in greater detail.

NIE helps students become better readers and better leaders. Who wouldn’t want to be a part of that?

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Stephen Milligan

## Do we agree on anything anymore?

I have complained in this space in the past about the rampant increase in political polarization in the nation.

Whereas once it seemed we agreed on a great many of the same core beliefs, with our differences arising from concepts of scale or execution in how to address issues we all could identify, that’s not the case anymore.

Now it seems we’re split into camps with entirely different worldviews, with essentially no overlap in conceptual frameworks. Where once the U.S. was a great big “Us,” pitted against the terrible “Them” that was, at any given point, the Soviets or the Nazis or whatever tribal organization that allowed us to pit our animosity outwards, now half the country is engaged in an “Us vs. Them” conflict with the other half.

Part of this split is due to the fracture of the national monoculture. Once we all consumed the same TV shows, movies and music because that was what there was — three TV channels, one movie screen in your area, just a handful of radio stations on the dials getting thier material from all the same record labels.

Now, with the increasingly splintered attention span of the internet, no one group is guaranteed to watch, read or listen to any of the same stuff as another demographic. Outside of a mega-hit franchise like the Marvel movies, we all have our cultural camps and have ceased to overlap with any others.

How bad is it?

We can’t even agree anymore on Winnie the Pooh.

Just this past week, a story went viral when a woman angrily confronted her neighbor for flying a banner from her porch flagpole with Tigger on it.

Yes, Tigger, the exuberant bouncy friend of Pooh, Piglet and Christopher Robin, is now another front in the culture war.

The woman complained the Tigger flag was “tacky,” claimed its presence went against nonexistent community rules (there were no HOA rules or covenants in this neighborhood) and essentially tried to passively aggressively shame the homeowner into taking poor Tigger down.

The Karen didn’t win. (Seriously, I feel sorry for anyone actually named Karen these days.) The encounter, recorded automatically by the homeowner’s Ring camera, was posted online and the Tigger-hater shamed so extensively online she backed off after a “drive-by apology.”

Seriously, though, Tigger? Are we so broken we can’t even agree on how awesome he is? Then again, I have a coworker who said the other day she disliked Winnie the Pooh, to my everlasting shock.

I dare not ask her thoughts about Paddington Bear. I don’t need another culture war breaking out when I least expect it.

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Monroe Area High School students recently competed in Georgia FBLA Region 13 Virtual Conference during the 2020-21 school year. Students who placed included, back, from left, Jamiya Shipley, Katherine Sargent and Emaleigh Ellison; and front, from left, Kelly Still, Makenna Reavis and adviser Tricia Brown. Special to The Tribune

Emily Hayes

## Great joy in the creative girl who dances to the beat of her own drum

Lin-Manuel Miranda debuted a new animated musical last week on Netflix about a kinkajou (basically a rainforest raccoon) who’s on a journey to deliver a love song for a friend.

If you’re not familiar with Miranda, he’s the creator of Broadway shows such as “In the Heights” and “Hamilton: An American Musical.” He’s kind of a big deal, and now so it seems is his latest, “Vivo.”

I’m a Miranda fan, having seen both “Hamilton” and “In the Heights” performed on the stage, so I was excited to have something to share with my 7-year-old daughter that was more on her level. The music and lyrics are just as creative as I expected they’d be, and of course Miranda nails it as the voice of “Vivo.” However, it’s the young girl he befriends who almost steals the show, and whom my Cora especially loves. Gabi is a purple-haired little spark plug, voiced by Ynairaly Simo, and her anthem song, “My Own Drum,” isn’t the central



theme of the movie, but it’s a good one.

I’ve

written before about Cora’s mini-concerts during car rides to school, and “My Own Drum” has been on repeat for more than a week now. In it, Gabi sings lines such as, “I bounce to the beat of my own drum, I’m a wow in a world full of ho-hum, I’m a wild young lady but you know, ’sum? I’d rather be at home with my own drum.”

Cora loves the strong melody, the heavy beat, the somewhat cacophony of sounds, and she jams out in a way I’ve never heard her jam before. It’s extraordinary. And although I don’t think she truly understands exactly what she’s exalting, anyone that’s spent more than five minutes with Cora knows this is the anthem for her.

Cora is a textbook extrovert, and while parenting multiple kids is tricky, it’s especially difficult when an

extrovert comes last into a family full of introverts. So while my husband and teenage daughter and I come home at the end of the day and want to spread out and have some quiet time to regroup, Cora is the little girl doing handstands in the living room and talking non-stop. She’s building forts at 6 a.m. on the weekends, talking non-stop. She’s dragging out all the blocks because she never wants to play in the playroom, because she wants someone to talk to non-stop.

This girl talks non-stop.

But she also has the most infectious laugh. Her fiery red hair paired with brown eyes has drawn the attention of strangers since she was a newborn, and that giggle will draw a smile from even the grumpiest-looking person in the grocery store.

She finds joy in even the most mundane tasks, like waiting in the car before a music lesson. All of her emotions are big, which means she experiences big

anger and big sadness ... and big love.

She gives the best hugs, y’all.

While I’ve continually tried to remind myself over the years that she is different from her older sister, I think part of me has always hoped she’d eventually fall more into the category of “easy parenting.”

It’s difficult to admit this, because in a way it means I was hoping my daughter would change, but in reality I would never change this stubborn young lady who might some day change the world.

She’s certainly changed mine.

It’s no secret that Cora was one of the best surprises of my life, and I only hope that I continually at least try to see the world as she sees it, and to at least try to live in the world as she lives in it. Because she is most certainly a “wow in a world full of ho-hum,” and what better way is there to be?

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