

We often step back and take a look at the world around us and say, "Wow. Things have changed." Some for the better, others — not so much.

In Friday's paper on page 2, there was a small story on a middle school banning hugging. 'Scuse me? Hugging?

Here is an interesting look at how some things have changed in the past 30 years. For the better? Or not so much?

These scenarios may seem a little out there but they are not that far off the mark if you follow the news.

School 1973 vs. 2012

Scenario: Jack pulls into school parking lot with rifle in gun rack.

1973 — Vice principal comes over, takes a look at Jack's rifle, goes to his car and gets his to show Jack.

2012 — School goes into lockdown, FBI called, Jack hauled off to jail and never sees his truck or gun again. Counselors called in for traumatized students and teachers.

Scenario: Johnny and Mark get into a fist fight after school.

1973 — Crowd gathers. Mark wins. Johnny and Mark shake hands and end up best friends. Nobody goes to jail, nobody arrested, nobody expelled.

2012 — Police called, SWAT team arrives, arrests Johnny and Mark. Charges them with assault, both expelled even though Johnny started it.

Scenario: Jeffrey won't be still in class, disrupts other students.

1973 — Jeffrey sent to office and given a good paddling by principal. Sits still in class.

2012 — Jeffrey given huge doses of Ritalin. Becomes a zombie. School gets extra money from state because Jeffrey has a disability.

Scenario: Billy breaks a window in his father's car and his Dad gives him a whipping.

1973 — Billy is more careful next time, grows up normal, goes to college and becomes a successful businessman.

2012 — Billy's Dad is arrested for child abuse. Billy removed to foster care and joins a gang. Billy's sister is told by state psychologist that she remembers being abused herself and their

Dad goes to prison.

Scenario: Mark gets a headache and takes some headache medicine to school.

1973 — Mark shares headache medicine with principal out on the smoking dock.

2012 — Police called, Mark expelled from school for drug violations. Car searched for drugs and weapons.

Scenario: Mary turns up pregnant.

1973 — Five high school boys leave town. Mary does her senior year at a special school for expectant mothers.

2012 — Middle School Counselor calls Planned Parenthood, who notifies the ACLU. Mary is driven to the next state over and gets an abortion without her parents' consent or knowledge. Mary given condoms and told to be more careful next time.

Scenario: Pedro fails high school English.

1973: Pedro goes to summer school, passes English, goes to college.

2012: Pedro's cause is taken up by the state Democratic party. Newspaper articles appear nationally explaining that teaching English as a requirement for graduation is racist. ACLU files a class action lawsuit against the school system and Pedro's English teacher. English is banned from core curriculum. Pedro is given a diploma anyway but ends up mowing lawns for a living because he can't speak English.

Scenario: Johnny takes apart leftover firecrackers from the 4th of July, puts them in a model airplane paint bottle, blows up a red ant bed.

1973 — Ants die.

2012 — BATF, Homeland Security, FBI called. Johnny charged with domestic terrorism, FBI investigates parents, siblings removed from home, computers confiscated, Johnny's Dad goes on a terror watch list and is never allowed to fly again.

Scenario: Johnny falls while running during recess and scrapes his knee. He is found crying by his teacher, Mary. Mary hugs him to comfort him.

1973 — In a short time, Johnny feels better and goes on playing.

2012 — Mary is accused of being a sexual predator and loses her job. She faces three years in state prison.