

# OPINION

## Even more reasons to be outside

On its surface the idea seems trivial, but Spruce Pine resident and creator of “Spruce Pine Rocks” Janie Glenn may be onto something.

We live in a place that begs us to be outside. We live in a place with an abundance of rocks. Why not combine those two things?

Research shows simply being outside makes one’s body and brain healthier.

A study by the University of Essex shows green makes exercise feel easier. The study tested cyclists pedaling in front of green, gray and red images. Those exercising in front of the green experienced fewer mood disturbances and reported they felt lower exertion during their cycling. Other research showed those who exercise outside

are more eager to return for a future workout than those who stick to the gym; an argument for that theory will be divulged in a future News-Journal story about the F3 and FiA exercise groups in Spruce Pine.

Hiking mountains and spending time at high altitudes have both been shown to speed up weight loss because higher altitudes increase metabolism and suppress hunger cravings.

Being outdoors can also increase concentration skills and children with ADHD who play outside show fewer symptoms than those who typically play inside, according to an article on huffpost.com.

Simply taking a walk has been shown to increase creativity, according to the Journal of Experimental Psychology and research published in the Journal of Aging Health shows getting outside daily may help older people stay healthy and functioning longer.

Spending time in nature has been shown to lower stress levels, Seattle-based environmental psychologist Judith Heerwagon told The Huffington Post and one reason may be Mother Nature’s scent. The smell of jasmine, lilacs and roses have been proven to decrease stress and increase relaxation. The scent of fresh pine has even been shown to lower depression and anxiety.

There are a lot of benefits to being outside, even if the reason is finding a rock.

### NEWS-JOURNAL EDITORIAL



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Keep services in Spruce Pine

**To the editor:**

Mission Health Services is proposing to close the maternity services unit at the Blue Ridge Regional Hospital in Spruce Pine, a major employer in Yancey, Mitchell and Avery counties. How will this affect our residents?

As a physician with a long career in offering health services to women and after consulting many local doctors and other health care providers, I believe closing maternity services at our local hospital will have a long-term, negative impact on our rural communities. Earlier this year, Mission closed maternity services at Angel Hospital in Franklin, so we can look at what that rural community’s experience has been to foretell how the closing of those services might impact us here. Here’s what can happen:

Women in labor would have to travel an hour or more to get to a birthing center in Marion or Asheville, including traveling on winding roads over the mountains – think snow or ice – so there would be a greater risk that babies and/or mothers could die while driving or being transported to the nearest hospital.

Should maternity services be discontinued in Spruce Pine, there is a real possibility several local doctors dedicated to caring for pregnant women would move away from our rural area.

The loss of C-section surgery would mean fewer surgeries requiring anesthesia, so our anesthesiologists would have less work and they too could leave us, which would result in fewer or no surgery available locally.

With no maternity care, I wonder what would happen to other services at our hospital? Assuming the loss of surgery, we could eventually be looking at the hospital’s closure, likely leading to its conversion to a rehabilitation center or nursing home.

Emergency medical services supported by X-ray and laboratory personnel and equipment could be moved to Marion or Asheville, leaving only urgent care in Spruce Pine. This would gravely impact ambulance and rescue squad services as long runs to Marion or Asheville would take their toll on ambulances and staff.

Should the hospital close, many well-paying jobs would be lost, which would negatively impact our schools, merchants and overall economic development. Avery, Mitchell and Yancey counties cannot easily absorb or replace these jobs leading to a rise in unemployment and the continued loss of our young people as they move to other communities in search of employment.

In conclusion, a local, general purpose hospital with services for women is vital to the long-term physical and economic health of our rural communities.

Please call Mission Health Services in Asheville, your friends and neighbors, and our state, county and municipal officials to express your support for maintaining these critical services near home.

Ronald Rolett, M.D.  
Celo

### Family thankful for help, prayers

**To the editor:**

The family of Bobby Byrd wishes to say, “thank you” to everyone who has been so helpful during our time of sorrow.

Those who brought food, send cards and flowers, the EMS workers who tried so hard and especially all the prayers: thank you.

Evelyn Byrd  
Spruce Pine

### Head of Montessori school thanks community

**To the editor:**

Spruce Pine Montessori School would like to formally thank our donors, sponsors, volunteers and attendees at this year’s Sweet Rewards Annual Auction.

In honor of our 45th anniversary, we enjoyed food and drink, live music and a sweet slideshow of our year together, celebrating Dr. Maria Montessori’s vision for peace. We raised \$20,000 in operating funds and \$5,000 in scholarship funds due to the many generous people who were a part of this event.

We’d like to give a special shout-out to our sponsors: Arthur Morgan School, Country Cablevision, Eben Concepts, Equinox Woodworks, Foothills Local Meats, Mountain Medical Arts, Penland School of Crafts, People’s Furniture, Richmond Inn Bed & Breakfast, The Quartz Corp and Unimin.

Please come out and join us next year for a fun evening out and to support the longevity of SPMS.

Meghan Lundy-Jones  
Spruce Pine Montessori School



John  
HOOD

## State should not control alcohol

I am a teetotaler who believes that my fellow North Carolinians should be free to buy and consume the alcoholic beverages of their choice from the vendors of their choice.

North Carolina fares relatively well in assessments of personal freedom, according to analysts at the Cato Institute. Their “Freedom in the 50 States” report uses three categories of variables: fiscal, regulatory, and personal. North Carolina’s overall freedom ranking is 19th, but we do best in the personal freedom category, where we rank 13th.

By this broad measure, North Carolina is the freest state in the Southeast. Still, we’d be even higher on the list if our alcohol laws weren’t so restrictive, ranking us 35th in the country in this area.

There are two movements underway in North Carolina that, if successful, would improve the situation. One of them began at the General Assembly this year as House Bill 500. As originally written, it would have allowed craft breweries to distribute up to 200,000 barrels of beer directly to retailers, rather than having to use a state-sanctioned cartel of wholesalers. The current cap is 25,000 barrels.

The wholesalers prevailed in the initial legislative battle, so the version of the bill that ultimately passed the House in late April would only modestly expand the ability of some breweries and wineries to sell their products as they wish. In response, some craft breweries have filed a lawsuit to strike down the state’s distribution cap and franchise laws as a violation of the state constitution.

The other measure, Senate Bill 155, would allow distilleries to sell up to five bottles directly to visiting consumers, up from the current annual limit of one bottle. It would also loosen limits on the sale of spirits at festivals and conventions, while allowing restaurants and retailers to sell alcohol after 10 a.m. on Sundays, two hours earlier than the current limit (which is why the legislation is known as the “brunch bill”). It has already passed the Senate and is now awaiting action in the House.

Some opposition to alcohol deregulation comes from interest groups, public and private, that benefit from the current system. No one should be surprised by their special pleading, which is always skillfully delivered.

But others inside and outside the General Assembly argue that North Carolina’s regulatory scheme is designed to curb alcohol abuse, which they tie to such social ills as drunk driving and domestic abuse.

I think their concerns deserve more respect, although I don’t ultimately agree with their conclusions.

But if your conception of freedom is that it ought only to extend to behavior with which you personally agree, you’ve conceived it out of existence.

The state should certainly punish actions that violate the rights of others, such as drunk driving or violent crimes committed while inebriated. The adult consumption and sale of alcohol, however, are not the proper concern of the state.

Most drinkers aren’t drunks, most drunks aren’t dangerous, and most governmental attempts to save people from themselves create more problems than they solve.

John Hood is chairman of the John Locke Foundation and appears on the talk show “NC SPIN.” Follow him @JohnHoodNC.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Mitchell News-Journal welcomes letters to the editor on issues of local importance. Deadline to submit a letter for publication in the coming week’s edition is 5 p.m. Friday. All writers are expected to follow the our letters policy:

- Letters must be exclusive to the News-Journal;
- Letters must include the writer’s full name, street address and daytime telephone number for verification. The writer’s name and city of residence will be published – names cannot be withheld;
- Letters must be original – no photocopies;
- Letters should be 500 words or fewer;
- We do not publish poems, excerpts from other publication or lengthy submissions of scripture; or letters signed by groups or multiple individuals;
- Letters endorsing or criticizing a business will not be published;
- We reserve the right to edit letters for brevity, style and libel. Publication of any letter is the sole discretion of the Mitchell News-Journal.

## MITCHELL NEWS-JOURNAL

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### Our Mission

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We believe strong newspapers build strong communities – “Newspapers get things done!” Our primary goal is to publish distinguished and profitable community-oriented newspapers.

This mission will be accomplished through the teamwork of professionals dedicated to truth, integrity, loyalty, quality and hard work.

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