

Readers' Forum

Opioid epidemic must be attacked now

There is a nation-wide epidemic of meth and opioid usage which must be attacked from every direction.

It is important for all to recognize the symptoms that users display. Symptoms such as: sores on the body; underweight; rotten teeth; glassy eyes; fidgeting and others. If you see those with these symptoms, get them help immediately.

The victims, however, are not the criminals. We must be assured that law enforcement is going up the ladder to find the sellers. Do not be conned by officials who brag about drug arrests when they are all low-level users.

There is a culture of fear in this community like I have never seen before. They are afraid to speak out on drugs and therefore revert to innuendos in the darkness rather than facts in the light. If there is corruption, it should be brought to the attention of the Mayor's office. If there isn't, the rumors should stop. Either you are part of the solution or a part of the cover-up. There is no in between. Our children are dying and only the cowards refuse to take action. We must be fearless in our support of our children.

In this light I call for the Mayor to implement a hot line for those who see problems but

are afraid to use their names. This hotline must go directly to the Mayor.

In addition, education in schools must show young children the effects of drug usage. There are devastating effects relating to the use of drugs and our children are most vulnerable. They must know the health consequences of their actions.

It is time to hold our leaders accountable. No longer may we be manipulated out of fear. No more may we sell out our children to the evils of drug abuse. Act now for the sake of the children!

Eldon "Cap" Lee
Burnsville

Age-old dispute, over money cause of friction

There is no hint of the cause of the first murder: of why Cain killed Able; but I bet it was because of "Stuff." Stuff --- Property, something of value the two brothers fought over. There is no mention of another woman at the time so it was not a fight over that.

Then it had to be over some kind of stuff, of property, of value that one of them had and the other wanted badly enough to fight to the death for. That kind of age-old dispute, over money, is, I think, at the heart of the current friction between the two extremes of hyper aggressive behavior in our country these days.

"If you don't work, you don't eat," (again, it is Biblical: (2 Thessalonians 3:10). This is the complaint I hear most often from people who are working as hard as they can to make a living for their family. And often, the ones who are the most well off from their industriousness seem to have the most intense resentment for people they perceive as "living off the system," for "welfare cheats," for "bleeding heart liberals"

Yes, there are those who do take advantage and cheat the system. But they are the small minority. At heart the great majority of all of us are honest, hard working and live by the rules.

We are good neighbors, respond with generosity in natural disasters, volunteer to serve in the military to protect our country, and help each other in time of need. But for some, when under stress, it is easy to focus on the person near-at-hand: the neighbor, the guy buying groceries with food stamps, the woman with a bunch of small kids, the man on disability driving a better car than you have. Seeing them up close rubs salt in the wounds of some who feel put upon. Yet for all the number of people gaming the system, they are nothing compared to the giant corporations, banks and financial institutions that have been found guilty of stealing hundreds of billion of

dollars from us.

Every single major defense contractor doing business with the Pentagon has been found guilty and been fined millions of dollars for cheating on government contracts; the "Too Big to Fail Banks" that conspired and caused the great housing crash and near Depression of 2008 have paid 25.1 Billion dollars in fines and settlements for their collusion and criminal practices. 25.1 BILLION DOLLARS! Now that is what I call a real welfare cheat. And the list goes on and on...But these numbers are too big, almost meaningless, and the perpetrators, the executives who ordered and supervised the cheating, (none of whom have served a day in jail), are too remote from us. We cannot connect to them. We cannot relate to them.

They are anonymous. We cannot vent our fury on them because they have retired to their gated estates where they live like kings on their "golden parachutes." So all we can do is vent our anger, our frustration that we have been toyed with, played for the fool, on that fellow who voted the wrong way, for the other party; and on that poor guy down the road who has to live with the guilt that he is a small time cheat. And it is this frustration, that deep, angry feeling that someone is taking advantage of us, that they are getting away with murder at our expense, and that we are helpless to do anything about it, that is the force driving the division in our country today.

It seems contradictory that people cannot recognize what is happening. The division between the ultra-wealthy and the rest of us is beyond belief. In the world today, eight men hold more wealth between them than one-half of all the less wealthy people in the world. Eight men own more money than some three and one half billion people. And five of these men are Americans.

The wealthiest 400 American families will get a tax cut of 33 BILLION dollars in the

proposed new health care bill presented this week.

The top 1% of the wealthiest American families will receive almost 1 TRILLION dollars in tax cuts over the next ten years, while some 800 BILLION dollars will be cut from Medicaid funding. 50% of American babies born each year are paid for under Medicaid, 75 million Americans depend on it. 64% of nursing home residents and the majority of disabled Americans depend on Medicaid. You can say goodbye to Spruce Pine Hospital and to other small, rural hospitals that cannot survive if these cuts to Medicaid are allowed.

But the fight over it is vicious. Why? It is the same old thing: "Stuff." We call it "Money." One side thinks they are being forced against their will to subsidize the other; it is money being taken out of their pockets. The other side thinks they are being discriminated against because they are more dependent, and they see their purpose as serving a greater good for the country as a whole.

Both sides act like little kids: "It's mine." "No, it's mine." "You cheated. Give it back." "No, I won't. You can't make me." And on both sides these are the leaders of our government. Both sides argue, fight, sometimes turn to violence and refuse to negotiate. Are we destined to repeat the Biblical precedent? We need someone to spank them, send them to their rooms, and let some real statesmen and women sit down, stop the name-calling and use their heads to negotiate in good faith, to work it out for the good of the country as has been done before. Some real leadership could bring the sides together to work for a solution that would set a new tone of cooperation and common purpose for the country. Sadly, that leadership seems nowhere in sight. But we will persevere. And you must speak out now and make your voice be heard.

Rob E. Grenell
Burnsville

Re-examining great progressive journalists

"Shameful is the soul afraid to admit ignorance, or fearful at learning anew." It is believed someone once uttered these words. Sounded believable; so it is likely someone did.

In recent years, amid real and imagined existential threats, was born a challenge to re-examine books read or poured over long ago to pass tests or write papers.

Books carted through many states over bumpy highways in this fair land, often in travail across 6 decades.

These, and other books, harvested along the way from the 1960s, from Heinlein to Edgar Cayce, Pope John to William Manchester, Vonnegut to Poe, Lobsang Rampa to the Dalai Lama never leave a person.

It has been an Age of 'Re-discovery'. Relearning and comprehending at last Pope Nicholas' Papal Bull of 1453 giving the Catholic Crowned Heads the power to take, possess, control, all chattel, gold, and resources of all lands claimed in the name of the Sovereign and the Church.

It blueprinted an 'Age of Discovery', the Slave Trade and genocide in a stroke, and that knowledge breezed past until it was re-read. It is the strongest single point of investigation and understanding in Western History and the Social Sciences since the founding of Rome.

Or how it was that without the incredible corruption of the Church there would have been no Renaissance, nor a Reformation? And those great tides in European and Western Civilization would have been stillborn without the development of the printing press, since the Church controlled the reproduction of books, documents, and knowledge in Scriptoria across Europe?

Or that Martin Luther's most savage battles with Satan and his demons were fought in his tower Privy at Wittenburg amid his many digestive and gastric calamities?

It has been painfully discerned studying Stalin, revolts against the Romanovs, 2 volumes of collected critical essays in Russian history, it is learned they are a hard people, but not a cruel people.

In them, sorrow runs deep. It makes them strong, able to

endure serfdom under the czars; the famines, genocide of kulaks, millions of others under Five Year Plans, the abuse, the 20 millions of dead in two separate World Wars. It makes them able to do that which we cannot perceive.

The US is creative and courageous at war, especially in the Pacific in WWII. Yet, it was the overwhelming anger and capacity for sacrifice of the Soviet peoples that sapped Hitler of his strength which collapsed the Reich. Stalingrad?

Heard little in years of study, always thinking D-Day was the turn of the tide in those readings long ago.

Re-examining the great journalists of the Progressive Era 100 years ago, the reader finds Lincoln Steffens, George Seldes, Upton Sinclair, to name but few.

They looked to a better America with a clear eye, a new America, more open and free. They would repair America by speaking out with knowledge and newsprint.

There was Theodore Roosevelt, trust-busting, and labor organizers; but the Robber Barons, federal troops, state militias, troopers, deputized private shooters to gun down unarmed men, women, and children who fought for the rights of the working people to organize. It was done with machine guns in West Virginia and Colorado. Yogi Berra would say "you could look it up".

Unlearn more about our deified warriors. Come to understand Grant was not as bad as thought, nor Lee so perfect as imagined, or Washington the genius of myth.

Patton never denied being a prima donna, though you had to re-read between the lines to see Montgomery.

If not for WWII, Churchill would be a prophet, prolific writer, and historian, for as a strategic mind, he often failed with plans that lost hundreds of thousands of Allied and non-English British servicemen in Indian, Dardanelles, African, Dutch, and even Norwegian campaigns. MacArthur thought himself a god, and expected god-like treatment.

He never bore public blame in his handling of the Bonus Army, but later took a beating at the hands of The Haberdasher of

Hannibal. Maybe "old soldiers never die", but gods retire to Manhattan apartments after being fired. His costly recapture of the Philippines was unneeded, though his post war administration of Japan visionary; but threatening nuclear war and an invasion of China, all the while leaking to a worshipful press, got him canned, and cost him a run at the Presidency.

What of Albert Camus? John Stuart Mill? Bertolt Brecht? Hannah Arendt? Albert Einstein or E E Stanton? Charles Sanders Peirce? Hobbes or Locke? Morte D'Arthur? Lawrence Ferlingetti? Are they bits and pieces in an ancient mist needing a reboot? "Free your mind, and the rest will follow," intones En Vogue!

But suffice to say, the more knowledge perceived and taken onboard, the greater the humility that should result.

Humility leads to an openness and honesty of spirit not compatible with seeking outcomes for greed, hate, or anger's sake. Edgar Allan Poe, Army Sergeant Major, went to West Point, scoring no worse than would Custer.

Both died young, but Poe was thrown out of the Academy for missing chapel, and so managed to hang on to his hair. Is the pride of arms of greater value than sense, dignity, or soul?

So, as Gandhi said, "learn as you might live forever". This man of peace also opined about India 'having Her bloodbath if she must have it'. So, perhaps 25, 30, 40 and 50 or more years ago, in relative youth, a person may not have the sense to comprehend great thoughts with the wisdom of the common tree frog.

Perspective. Or as Pop always said, "the old man may not always be right, but is never far wrong", or, it is a young "youth is wasted on the pony," though that is, another matter.

Minds are cultivated, spirits grown. With looming dotage, it is better to extend a hand to wisdom, avoiding the folly of youth, coming to know ideas missed which could have made of one a better human being.

This, rather than settle for death's meek aspiration? Some thoughts are worth a re-read while there still is time.

Patrick Loudon
Burnsville

Helping Jihadist rebels in Syria on Obama's watch

A few years ago Michael Flynn, a former chief of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), gave an interview on Al Jazeera television concerning Obama's Middle East policy.

Flynn was asked about a 2012 report produced by his agency. The DIA document, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by Judicial Watch, confirmed the view that the fighting to unseat Assad of Syria is a "holy war" being led by al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, and other jihadist terrorists. The Report explains that western nations, as well as Islamic regimes ruling Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Turkey support the effort to overthrow Assad. It says that the motive of the Middle Eastern regimes is to establish a Salafist (Fundamentalist Islam) principality in Eastern Syria.

Flynn said he read the report carefully when it crossed his desk and said "the intelligence was very clear." He warned the Obama administration against supporting jihadist rebels in Syria but the White House ignored the warnings, and continued providing material support -- weapons, PR, communications, funding, training, international legitimacy, and more -- to organizations which had officially been designated terrorist. Flynn said the administration policy to support jihadist rebels was a willful decision.

He said what the Obama administration was doing was "supporting barbarians who are butchering their way through Iraq and Syria, while overthrowing apostate rulers and slaughtering or enslaving non-Sunnis." Flynn said that even while Assad was still (our) anti-terrorist ally, going back to before 2012, Obama was already unlawfully helping to send weapons to al-Qaeda, the

Muslim Brotherhood, and other jihadist forces. Flynn said, "My job was to ensure the accuracy of our intelligence." And he said that he had argued against Obama's deliberate policy of supporting terrorists. Obama's middle East policy was to overthrow apostate rulers in favor of more jihadist leaders. In Egypt, Mubarak was not exactly friendly to the West, but he was not a rabid jihadist.

Obama supported the overthrow of Mybarak and helped to replace him with Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Similarly in Lybia, Obama helped to overthrow Qudhaffi, another apostate leader, in favor of installing a more rabid jihad-

ist leader. That adventure led to the attack against American officials in the Benghazi fiasco.

Next, Obama busied himself in attempting to overthrow Assad the ruler in Syria.

When Obama started the campaign against Assad he asked the Russians to join in the effort. Putin responded by asking Obama why he wanted to aid rebels who eat their enemies, (a rebel had been shown on television news eating the liver of one of Assad's soldiers he had killed). I am disappointed to see that Trump is apparently pursuing the same policy of aiding the rebels in Syria.

Kearney Smith,
Green Mountain

Closing of labor and delivery at BRRH was unacceptable

Mission Health's decision to end labor and delivery services at Blue Ridge Hospital in Spruce Pine is wholly unacceptable.

My office received an announcement from Mission Health in which they announced their CEO's award as one of the top 50 most influential physician executive leaders. As a CEO with supposedly so much influence, I call on Dr. Ronald Paulus to do whatever it takes to keep labor and delivery services open at Blue Ridge Hospital.

My constituents rely on labor and delivery services at Spruce Pine. As Mission Health has made it its mission to gobble up health care entities across western North Carolina, we must hold them accountable to provide services my constituents need. Mission Health is Western North Carolina's largest em-

ployer that controls one of every 16 jobs in Madison County. As a \$1.7 billion non-profit, we cannot stand for Mission not providing health care services where they are needed. We cannot stand by while Mission pulls health care from rural areas and centralizes it in urban areas. My constituents in Haywood, Madison and Yancey Counties must have access to health care.

I was only informed of the Mission's and Blue Ridge Medical's decision 22 minutes before they were set to inform the press. Had I been informed earlier, rest assured I would have fought to keep health care for my constituents.

Dr. Paulus, prove to us that you're worth your \$1.3+ million salary from a non-profit.

Rep. Michelle Presnell
Burnsville

Healthcare in our mountain counties

Good health is essential for our lives to be worthwhile, productive, and enjoyable. Or, put another way, good health is an essential part of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Good health requires healthcare that is available and affordable.

Mission Health is closing the labor and delivery facilities at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital in Spruce Pine on September 30. This is an issue that affects the availability of healthcare. The present current turmoil regarding health insurance and

Medicaid affects affordability.

To provide clear information and discussion of healthcare issues in this part of the mountains, a Healthcare Forum will be held at the Burnsville Town Center at 5:30 on Thursday, July 6.

Forum speakers will include Leslie Boyd whose son died because of the lack of available affordable healthcare. Dr. James Carroll and Dr. Phillip Mitchell of local health clinics, and Jim Parlier talking about insurance. Lee Ruhle, P.A. will speak from his experiences at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital and Bob Carey will talk about Medicaid.

Come learn about what is working, what needs to work better, and what can be done. The forum is sponsored by the Yancey-Mitchell NAACP which works to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of ALL persons.

YANCEY COMMON TIMES JOURNAL
 22 North Main Street, Burnsville, NC 28714
 Telephone: (828) 682-2120 / Fax: (828) 682-3701
 web: www.yanceytimesjournal.com
 news email: david@yanceypaper.com
 advertising email: pat@yanceypaper.com

Publisher / Advertising Manager Pat Randolph
EditorDavid Grindstaff
Business Manager/Bookkeeper Anna Webb
Office Manager/CirculationKatie Hardin
Distribution Bill Wanezek

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
 Yancey Common Times Journal, 22 North Main Street, Burnsville, NC 28714.
 Liability for an error will not exceed the cost of space occupied by the error.
 This newspaper is printed on 100% recycled paper by Bristol Herald Courier.

The Yancey Common Times Journal (USPS) 695-300 is published every Wednesday for \$25.00 per year in Yancey, Mitchell and Madison Counties, \$30.00 per year in North Carolina, and \$40.00 per year for out-of-state. Subscription prices include 6.75% sales tax. Published by The Yancey Journal Inc. Second-class postage paid at Burnsville, N.C. Postmaster.

The Yancey Common Times Journal is published proudly for the citizens of Yancey County and surrounding counties. Our goal is to produce quality, profitable, community-oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty, and strong dedication towards printing the truth. Published and operated by owners Bob Tribble - President / Pat Randolph, Anna Webb - Directors