

OPINION

NEWS-JOURNAL EDITORIAL

Thumbs up, thumbs down

THUMBS UP to the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce, Mountain BizWorks and the Growing Outdoors Partnership for putting together the first Growing Outdoors Discovery Day Thursday, April 25, at Springmaid Mountain.



The presentations were insightful, the attendees engaged and the topic of the utmost importance. The meeting, by all accounts, was a blistering success.

THUMBS DOWN to our elected officials, none of whom attended the Growing Outdoors Discovery Day meeting.



THUMBS UP to Jimmy Hinshaw, Spruce Pine Police Chief Billy Summerlin and the countless others who have stayed the course to ensure the Spruce Pine Alien Conference & Expo, or SPACE, comes to fruition.



There can never be enough events to draw people to our area, and the SPACE festival will positively do just that.

THUMBS UP to another successful Fire on the Mountain Blacksmithing Festival. The event is unique and an asset to the Mitchell County.



THUMBS DOWN to the fire that destroyed yet another building in downtown Spruce Pine.



THUMBS UP to residents of Little Switzerland who will benefit from a new 10,000-gallon water tank.



The committee in charge of the project had to wait five years to make it happen, but they did just that.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

North Carolina needs Medicaid expansion

To the editor:
Many citizens of North Carolina, including many in Mitchell County, are struggling to make ends meet in low-wage jobs. For this reason, more than 500,000 people in our state do not have health care. Adults who have no children, are not disabled or in long-term care are not eligible for Medicaid in North Carolina no matter how low their income.

North Carolina chose not to expand Medicaid, although our tax dollars are going to pay for it in other states.

At stake also is the ability for rural hospitals such as Blue Ridge Regional to survive. If Medicaid were expanded, it would also lead to thousands of jobs in North Carolina. Gov. Roy Cooper is pushing for the expansion of Medicaid to help our working poor. Republicans would like to charge premiums for Medicaid, which most people could not afford.

Please call Sen. Ralph Hise at 919-733-3460 or email Ralph.Hise@ncleg.net and Rep. Josh Dobson at 919-733-5862 or Josh.Dobson@ncleg.net and ask them to support Medicaid Expansion to help our citizens who cannot afford medical treatment and medication and make it more likely that our hospital will survive.

Brenda Willis
Bakersville

Almost immediately, I imagined the fate of a modern day St. Louis, or perhaps a refugee caravan arriving at a U.S. port of entry. Under these proposed changes, we would still welcome legitimate asylum seekers to the “land of the free,” where they would be safe from genocide or murderous gangs, with just one “minor” addition, the application fee.

So, a refugee family that, under threat for death, uses all its available funds to travel, by air, ship or land to our shores must now make sure they have enough money to pay the application fee, or back they go. Well, maybe they could save some money by leaving grandma or one of the children behind.

I’m not saying President Trump’s proposal can’t be implemented, but we would have to make some changes to the poem by Emma Lazarus, “The New Colossus” (“Give me your tired, your poor”), enshrined in a plaque at the base of The Statue of Liberty. Of course, we could chisel out the word “poor,” but that would look unsightly.

My suggestion is to add an asterisk after “poor.” We could add a small, tasteful plaque just below that explains, “By use of the word ‘poor,’ we do not mean penniless. Sufficient funds for an application fee are required. ‘Tired’ is acceptable, but refugees must be able to pay their way in, or back they go.”

Bruce Koran
Bakersville

Time to decrease discharge into river

To the editor:
I attended a hearing Thursday, May 2, to gather comments on six draft wastewater discharge permit renewals for mines in Avery and Mitchell counties. I learned the existing permits used by the five mines in Mitchell and Avery counties had not been changed since 1995 – that was 24 years ago.

These permits allow the mines to discharge industrial wastewater contaminants to the North Toe River in the French Broad River basin. I heard people speak of the economic benefits the mines bring to our counties. I also heard people say it is time to tighten the permits, so we continue to improve our water quality in the Toe River.

Isn’t it time to decrease the discharge into our beautiful Toe River and rewrite the permits?

Claire Wygand
Spruce Pine

Donations needed for senior gift bags

To the editor:
The Mitchell Community Health Partnership annually creates gift bags for all graduating seniors. These gifts are donations from local businesses and agencies of Mitchell County. Some examples of gifts are sunscreen, pens, magnets, Post-It notes, water bottles or other promotional, safety or health-related items.

We do discourage pamphlets and paper handouts, as the students usually trash them.

We would like to ask for your help by contributing an item to this gift bag. We have been very fortunate to provide this annual event over the past several years, and are eager to continue it for all students in Mitchell County Schools.

By offering this gift bag to all MHS seniors, the community has the pleasure of coming together in a healthy atmosphere to provide information and ideas to our young adults. The purpose of the senior bags is to help these young adults to become more aware of the health and safety services available to them as they enter into the next journey in their lives.

Help the Mitchell High School Senior Class of 2019 – a total of 135 students – have a creative gift bag to show your appreciation for their accomplishment.

Because graduation is in mid-June and the gift bags have to be filled, we would like to ask all gifts be brought to the Mitchell County Health Department between the hours of 8 a.m.-4 p.m. before Friday, May 31.

Call 828-688-1209 or call/text 828-385-6181 with any questions.

Thank you in advance for your participation and support toward this event.

Jessica Farley
Toe River Health District

Asylum-seekers should not be charged fee

To the editor:
President Trump’s proposal to add a required application fee for those seeking asylum in the U.S. got me thinking about the fate of the 937 Jewish refugees aboard the M.S. St. Louis that tried, unsuccessfully, to dock in Cuba in 1939. The refugees were also refused entry into Canada and the U.S. The ship was eventually forced to return to Europe, where 254 passengers ultimately perished in the Holocaust. Our current asylum laws were written to help prevent these terrible situations.

COLUMN

Love like no other

Rapper Tupac Shakur and hard-rock band Metallica have very little in common, but there is one thing: both wrote songs about mothers.

Tupac’s “Dear Mama” and Metallica’s “Mama Said” are proof one’s love for one’s mother is ranked among the few things that transcend race, gender, nationality, and just about any other real or perceived division among people these days.



Brandon Roberts

The importance of a mother is even exhibited in the animal kingdom, either by instinct or emotion.

I love my mother. I love her more than I could ever put into words. I don’t talk to or see her enough. I often feel inadequate as a son when I’m not there to carry in her groceries, unload her mulch or rearrange her living room furniture.

As a married man with two older sisters, Mother’s Day also makes me realize what terrific mothers my wife and sisters are. I have watched my wife, Rhonda, do everything she does simply because it might benefit her son in some way. She worries about his grades, his health is far more critical than her own, and if he wants something, she does whatever it takes to make sure he gets it.

Both of my sisters are crazy about their children and their love for them is unwavering.

In all honesty, Mother’s Day makes me glad to be a man. Being a mother seems to be way too difficult for me to handle, and how my mother, or any mother for that matter, makes it look so easy is beyond my level of comprehension.

I’ll call and wish my mom a Happy Mother’s Day, and although to me that is nowhere near a sufficient gesture, she will be OK with that, because that’s just how phenomenal and perfect mothers are.

Brandon Roberts is editor and publisher of the Mitchell News-Journal. He can be reached by email at editor@mitchellnews.com.

ASK DENISE

Husband’s jokes are hurtful

Editor’s note: Writer’s answers do not reflect those of the Mitchell News-Journal and are not meant to replace medical or mental health care.

DEAR DENISE: I have been married for about a year, and for the most part it has been wonderful. My husband is sweet, caring and attentive. I am generally very happy. He has one habit, however, that upsets

See DENISE / 11A

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LETTERS POLICY

The Mitchell News-Journal welcomes letters to the editor about 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 abide by our letters policy:

- Letters must be exclusive to the Mitchell News-Journal;
- Letters must include the writer’s full name, address and phone number for verification. The writer’s name and city of residence will be published;
- Letters must be original – no photocopies;
- Letters should be 500 words or fewer;
- We do not publish poems, excerpts from other publications, 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 at the sole discretion of the Mitchell News-Journal.