

**Online POLL**

Do you plan to attend the Spruce Pine Alien Conference and Expo? Visit [www.mitchellnews.com](http://www.mitchellnews.com) to vote and our Facebook page to leave a response.

**OPINION**

**Last week's poll results**

The Mitchell County Board of Commissioners chose to use money from the sale of home health to fund the Mitchell County Health Department. Do you agree with this decision? **YES: 11% NO: 85% INDIFFERENT: 4%**

**NEWS-JOURNAL EDITORIAL**

**The anatomy, purpose of public meetings**

A big part of the public participation process involves public meetings, hearings or open houses that allow agencies to obtain public input about an issue. But there are other opportunities to meet face-to-face with decision-makers at all levels of government, from the U.S. Congress to the local board of commissioners.

A public meeting is a gathering where people come together to share information, exchange ideas, introduce new services and ways of working or develop relationships and contacts. The purpose of a public meeting or hearing is to discuss issues, not to make decisions. By allowing a two-way flow of information, meetings provide an opportunity for people to share their concerns, hear other points of view and identify areas of conflict. The term "public meeting" is used somewhat loosely to describe anything from community members gathering to informally discuss an issue to more formal events used to obtain comment on an agency decision or action.

While anyone can have a meeting and make it open to the public, public meetings convened by agencies or local governments generally provide a specific opportunity for the public to voice their concerns about a proposed action. At these events, agencies will often give a brief presentation about the proposed action and provide a period for questions and answers.

In the public notice of a proposed action, agencies may include a schedule for public meetings along with other background materials and a request for written comments. Other times agencies may only request written comments.

If no meeting is scheduled, a public meeting may be requested by sending a letter to the agency.



**COLUMN**

**A rare, but beautiful occurrence**

I can't tell if someone is a Democrat or Republican just by looking at them. Some people say they can, but I can't.



Brandon ROBERTS

The conference room at the County Administration Building being filled as it was this past Monday evening for the Mitchell County Board of Commissioners meeting is a wonderful occurrence – one both residents and elected officials should

be glad to see. It's Democracy at work. I saw those people in that room and standing out in the hall. I didn't see Democrats or Republicans. I saw citizens. I saw concerned citizens.

Many people may have forgotten that these meetings are called commissioners meetings, but in reality, these meetings are ours. They belong to the taxpaying electorate of Mitchell County.

Having an open, transparent government is integral to a thriving, vibrant community.

Our elected officials having independent thoughts is just as crucial. How can our local government offi-

cial be open and transparent with the citizens they were elected to represent when it is abundantly clear they haven't been open and transparent with each other?

Members of the public attending a public hearing and expressing their concerns about a decision made by our leaders isn't political. It's their right.

**Brandon Roberts is publisher and editor of the Mitchell News-Journal. He can be reached by email at [editor@mitchellnews.com](mailto:editor@mitchellnews.com) or by calling 828-765-7169.**

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Events mailing list available**

**To the editor:**

For about seven years I have been sending out a weekly email listing of upcoming live performance events in Avery, Mitchell and Yancey counties. The purpose of this listing is to disseminate information about upcoming performances for the mutual benefit of the performers and audience members. During the summer, the list is about nine or 10 pages; during the winter it is about half that.

The list is sent out weekly on Wednesdays.

Send an email to [events@rlgreene.net](mailto:events@rlgreene.net) to be added to the mailing list. You can unsubscribe at any time by clicking the "unsubscribe" button at the bottom of the list. I will not use your email address for any purpose other than providing information related to performances in our area.

**Ron Greene**  
Bakersville

**Hearts as big as Texas**

**To the editor:**

Mitchell High School FBLA had a BBQ fundraiser Friday, May 10, to send students the National FBLA competition this summer in San Antonio, Texas.

After selling more than 750 plates of pork to local businesses, the BBQ was a success.

On behalf of FBLA co-advisor Jennifer Barnett and myself, we would like to thank the businesses and individuals that came together to make sure the profits went back to students by making generous donations. We would also like to extend a special thank you to the Texas Roadhouse of Johnson City, Tennessee, for its contribution of 704 rolls and butter.

Other donors were Carolina BBQ in Newland (coleslaw to feed 210), Smokey Ques in Marion (baked beans to feed 140), Little Tokyo in Burnsville (100 to-go boxes), Stephanie's Ice Cream in Burnsville (300 napkins), The Produce Stand in Spruce Pine (large bag of cabbage), KFC/Taco Bell in Spruce Pine (1,000 utensils), Hef's in Spruce Pine (100 to-go boxes), Bonnie & Clyde's in Red Hill (200 to-go boxes), Bubba's in Burnsville (coleslaw to feed 140), McDonald's in Spruce Pine (250 barbecue sauce packets), Burger King in Spruce Pine (gallon of barbecue sauce), Pig n' Grits in Burnsville (baked beans to feed 50), Southern Ridge Café in Bakersville (two gallons of barbecue sauce), Chad Huggins at Mitchell High School (four sleeves of sauce cups), Western Sizzlin' in Spruce Pine (200 rolls)

and Adam Wheeler for preparing the barbecue.

We would also like to thank the monetary donors who have contributed to the travel fund for our students: Lori Gilchrist, Eben Concepts, Townsend DDS, Zack Snyder, BRP, Young, Miller & Gillespie, Gouge Oil, Sibelco, Bakersville Community Health Center, The Quartz Corp., Ann and Henry Moon, Peoples Furniture and ServiceMaster.

**Taylor Hughes**  
Mitchell High School FBLA Co-advisor

**ACA has many advantages**

**To the editor:**

There has been some talk from people with a political agenda concerning negative remarks about the Affordable Care Act, or ACA, known by some as Obamacare.

Repealing the ACA would cause about 20 million people to lose health coverage. In 2018 alone, 11.8 million people signed up for 2019 coverage. More than 500,000 people are signed up through the ACA in North Carolina.

Most ACA plans cover preventative care and repealing it would also cause those with private health coverage to lose their preventative coverage, which includes nearly 138 million people, of which 29 million are children and 55 million are senior citizens. Almost 56 million people would lose contraceptive coverage.

The ACA slows the rise of health care costs and covers 10 essential health benefits, one of those being the protection of people with pre-existing conditions being denied health insurance. The ACA allows children to stay on their parents' health plans until their 26 years old, even if they get married.

Under the ACA, millions more people have coverage for mental health and substance use disorder services.

Despite the efforts of some to sabotage the ACA, it is working fine. Enrollment is strong because Americans voted with their feet and bought insurance.

Across the insurance marketplace in 2019, premiums are down. Insurers, such as Blue Cross Blue Shield, were able to cut premium costs offered in the individual market. These declines in premiums reflect the broader success of the ACA in controlling health care costs. Many health insurance companies are joining or expanding their presence on the ACA exchanges. Despite constant negativity from the Trump Administration, the exchanges are succeeding.

The ACA has been a blessing to millions of people.

**Joyce Beauchamp**  
Bakersville

**The First Amendment**  
*noun*  
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

**MITCHELL NEWS-JOURNAL**  
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**Our Mission**  
The Mitchell News-Journal is published with pride for the people of Mitchell and adjoining counties by Community Newspapers Inc., in Athens, Georgia. 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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**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.