

# OPINION

## EDITORIAL

# Sanctuaries will not protect gun owners' rights

It's a law of both physics and politics that every action has an equal and opposite reaction.

Consider a firearm: you pull a trigger, the hammer falls and a combination of chemical and mechanical processes propels a bullet to its target. It's cause and effect, pure and simple.

In Virginia politics at the moment, the cause is a slate of gun control proposals submitted for consideration in the General Assembly. The effect triggered by this action is a movement by gun owners to protect their rights by petitioning localities to declare themselves Second Amendment sanctuaries. These safe zones would allegedly not cooperate with any state or federal laws that could result in taking away certain types of guns.

The problem is that the gun owners' weapon of choice isn't loaded. Sure, the sanctuary idea sounds good; it's loud like a shotgun, meant to make those seeking to take something away from them think twice. But for all the good it will do, it might as well be a Nerf gun.

The sanctuary resolutions — already enacted in Carroll County and up for consideration this week in Galax and Grayson County — are largely symbolic gestures, with no legal teeth. Because of a legal precedent called Dillon's Rule, a Virginia locality can't simply decide it won't cooperate with state and federal laws. The commonwealth is a Dillon's Rule state, which means that local governments are limited to the powers expressly granted to them by the state. Those who believe sanctuaries will protect their Second Amendment rights will likely be disappointed if Virginia does pass any of the gun control legislation on the table and they discover that their county can provide no remedy at all.

It's understandable why gun owners are concerned right now, whether you agree or disagree with their worries, or fall somewhere in between. Some of the proposals before the General Assembly are common sense measures, like background checks and keeping guns out of the hands of people who have made threats; while others are over-reaching and ill-conceived, such as possibly declaring firearms training to be a paramilitary exercise.

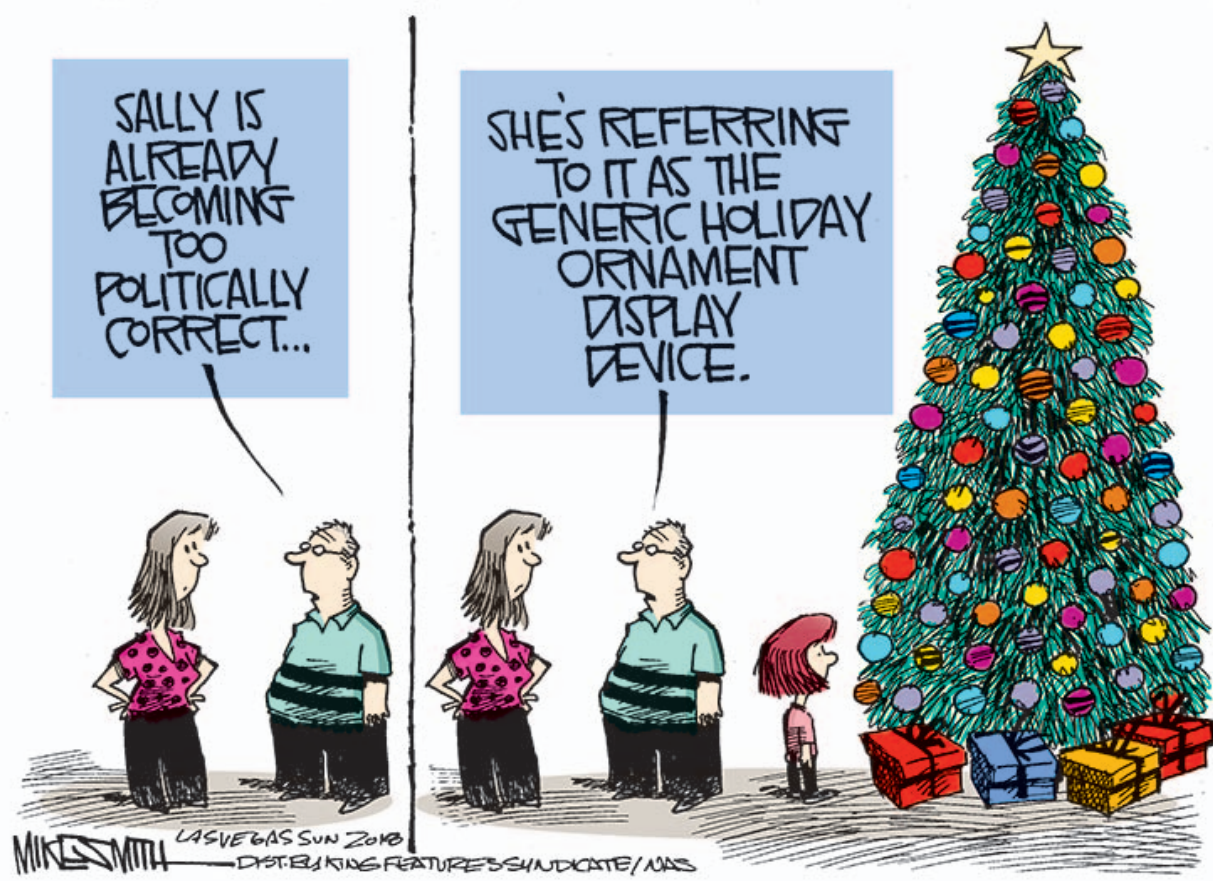
All that is a matter of debate for the General Assembly, and a conversation better served with active participation between lawmakers and the two local groups who organized to request sanctuary resolutions. If things don't go their way, they can push for changes to state law instead of putting all their energy into the empty promise of a sanctuary.

Why do you suppose there has been so little opposition to the Second Amendment sanctuary movement from gun control advocates? It's because they know there's nothing there to protest. They know granting these petitions is harmless, because they won't do what their supporters hope they will to do.

While gun owners won't benefit from sanctuaries, there is one group that certainly has something to gain — elected officials, especially in conservative rural areas. It's an easy political win for sheriffs, council members and supervisors to back sanctuaries and score points among conservative voters. That's not to say all of them are disingenuous — some of our local officials truly believe in the movement and are actively supporting it.

But be wary. Sanctuary resolutions are a cheap way to pander to voters and a chance for political theater, grandstanding and photo ops. Gun owners have real concerns and they deserve real ways to address them, not empty promises.

When the next election comes along, politicians who backed sanctuaries will say, "Look what we did for you," when in reality they did nothing of value.



## READERS' HOTLINE

236-5178, EXTENSION 6

### Accomplishments

I'm calling about all the people in the Hotline today seem to have it in for the president and they keep saying "what has he done for the country?" Well, if you'd pull your head out of a stump or wherever you've had it, you'd know what he's done for the country. All you do evidently is watch CNN. The same bunch of people that's out here complaining about this president are the same ones that spit on us when we come back from Vietnam. The same ones that are in power right now in Washington D.C., except for the president, are the same ones that spit on us when we come back. You want to know what he's done? Well, I'll tell you one thing he's done. I'm a disabled veteran and I can go right over here to the community hospital now and be seen. I don't have to go to the VA because he made that possible. That's one thing he done besides raising the economy in this country. Shoot, I can't name all the things. It'd take me half a day to name all the things he's done for this country. I'll just quit now. That's all I got to say.

### Bad day

Someone was having a bad day. I was in line at the checkout at a local grocery store. An employee called on the intercom for someone to come up front. When she got up there she was very loud and said she was sick and "do not call me up here." Someone needs to tell her that she needs to do customer service classes. Remind her that managers can be replaced, also.

### Heard it from a friend...

I think I should be a witness in the impeachment hearings. I overheard someone in the grocery store line talking about what our president said to someone, that someone else overheard him say to someone else, who overheard it from someone shopping in Walmart, who overheard it from someone else, saying what they thought the president thought and meant by what he was supposed to have said. The only thing that disqualifies me is I've played "telephone" before and I know how that works. Try it. You'll laugh your head off at the things that grow from a simple statement, given enough people playing.

### Drop-off dangers

I'm calling concerning the recent accident next to [Galax Middle School] and then the student getting hit by a car. You know, it's not only due to the parents not using the pick-up and drop-off points properly, there's a lot of them that don't do that, but the traffic is terrible. Every day you see someone speeding through the school zone. Cars are just running way too fast in the school zones and then up there next to the high school you've got a big ol' box trailer sitting right on the edge of the street and then down on the other street you've got another trailer that's been sitting there for a week sticking about four feet out into the street. You have to go around it, or if you're meeting someone you have to stop. I mean, the police could do a little better job policing this school zone and getting

these people that want to park along the street to park properly and reduce quite a bit of the safety hazards that's present. I'm surprised that somebody hasn't got hit or even hurt or killed before now the way it's going up here on the high school hill.

### Pizza a-plenty

The Hillsville area needs some family restaurants. There is no place you can actually sit down and eat homemade vegetables and homemade-type stuff and the ones that are there, the prices are ungodly. There's only just a few that's even located near Hillsville. Why don't somebody try opening one and try giving a competitive price and you'll make it instead of gouging somebody for \$10 for a small meal. We need to get something going in the Hillsville area because it's a shame you have to go out of town to get something to eat and all that's located in Hillsville is pizza, pizza, pizza. We don't want no more pizza places. That's the last thing we need. So, please, Hillsville, open them eyes. Hopefully the mayor will try to get a country-style restaurant in here.

### Pharmacy needs

I just want to call in and mention that I agree with whoever called the Hotline a couple months ago about a local drug store that lets you run a tab up, like people on disability or Social Security, and delivers here in Galax. We need something like that for the older folks, you know, because one day you'll be old.

## RECIPE COLUMN

# Queen of tortes with a whip

I honestly try to have a story or at least a point in my column (most) every week, and I like for it to be funny, but I don't have much space for that AND what I'm about to give you, and you'd really rather have these recipes.

The closest thing I have to a story is that one of my twin step-sisters is gluten-intolerant, and to include her in the Thanksgiving dessert parade, Mom made a gluten-free chocolate torte.

While it was created for one of us, ALL of us ate some. It turned the apple and pumpkin pies into a distant afterthought. It was like eating a dense chocolate cloud, and you will absolutely want to serve one at any fancy holiday dinner party you happen to have.

Some people read "gluten-free" as "diet" or "lite" (gluten-free food is neither), which is actually to your advantage. You can probably announce it as gluten-free at said dinner party, and a few guests will turn it down, chuckling dismissively, "No, none of that health food for me," the fools, because that leaves more left over for YOU.

Some notes: The hardest part of this is fitting the parchment paper into the pan, especially the strip you'll need to cut to go around the sides, and then greasing it again. I suggest you have a tablespoon or so of softened butter on hand to make it easier.

Also worth pointing out is that every member of my family could have climbed on top of the final product and taken a nap, and yet my mother only used store-brand butter. (Admittedly, she's an excellent baker.)

Likewise, bear in mind that "good quality" chocolate could mean something as fancy as Valrhona brand, if you have the money to spare. In all honesty, though,



SHANNON WATKINS

everyday dark chocolate chips from the grocery store have always done me fine in any gourmet recipe.

For the whipped cream, this is a perfect time to let you in on a little trick I found to keep whipped cream stable for hours. Of course I'm pairing it with the torte in this case, but this will let you have whipped cream ready to go all year 'round, from the spoils of a berry-picking sortie to pumpkin pie at next year's Thanksgiving to pretty much whatever.

And here let me insert my personal pet peeve, which is when people write it as "whip cream," which is incorrect. Unless "whip" is a verb in that sentence — "whip cream with a riding crop until it knows it's been naughty" — it's incorrect. It's "whipping cream" before and "whipped cream" after, but at no point is it "whip cream." The very construct drives me crazy. You can imagine what a total delight I am at parties.

My only caveat about it is that if you do make this version more than a few hours ahead of time, find some way to label the bowl you're storing it in. Otherwise, you'll forget what it is, and in the throes of preparation frenzy, think it must be the sour cream and mayonnaise you meant to mix together ahead of time for that dip — you forgot you did it! Look at you, so efficient and handy!

Then you'll end up dumping in a half pound of crab meat and an envelope of that expensive spice mix you bought at the beach last summer. While it'll make a great story in hindsight, you won't end up with anything you can set down next to a veggie platter (though if you do before you figure out the error, your guests will have quite a story, as well).

### Flourless chocolate torte

(from wellplated.com)

9 ounces good-quality dark chocolate (65% cocoa or more), finely chopped  
18 tablespoons (2½ sticks) butter  
(recommended: Kerrygold, Plugra or any European-style butter)  
1½ cups sugar  
7 large eggs at room temperature  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
¼ teaspoon almond extract

Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease a 9" springform pan, line entire pan with parchment paper, and grease again.

Melt the chocolate and butter together over a double boiler or in a microwave-safe bowl until the chocolate is almost completely melted. Remove from heat and stir until smooth and totally melted. Stir in the sugar, then let cool for a few minutes.

Add the eggs one at a time, stirring well after each addition. (Use a spoon or spatula, not an electric mixer.) After all the eggs have been added, continue to stir until the batter is thick and glossy. Stir in the extracts. Pour into the pan.

Bake for 30-35 minutes, until the cake is somewhat set but has a jiggle in the middle. Begin checking at the 30-minute mark, so it doesn't overbake. Let cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then unmold. Let cool completely and lightly dust with powdered sugar just before slicing and serving. Can be served with whipped cream and/or fresh berries.

### Make-Ahead Whipped Cream

(from tastecooking.com)

½ cup sugar  
1½ cups heavy cream  
Pinch kosher salt  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract or seeds scraped from 1 vanilla bean

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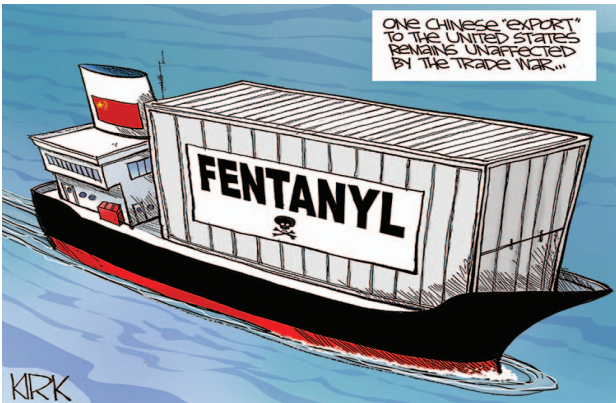
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(from tastecooking.com)

½ cup sugar  
1½ cups heavy cream  
Pinch kosher salt  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract or seeds scraped from 1 vanilla bean

Combine sugar, salt, cream, and vanilla extract, if using, in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. If using a vanilla bean, run the flat of the blade down each half to scrape out the seeds and add them to the cream (reserve the pod for another project). Mix on medium-low speed to dissolve the sugar, about a minute, then increase to medium-high and whip until cream is thick enough to hold firm peaks, about 3 minutes. Use immediately, or cover and refrigerate until needed, up to 8 hours. Refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container for up to 1 week; before serving, briefly re-whip the cream to restore its light and silky texture.

# OPINION



## EDITORIAL

# Politicians' pages are public forums

*Elected officials owe it to their constituents to listen — even if they don't like what they hear*

In the past few months, The Gazette has received several messages and calls expressing concern over posts being deleted from Del. Jeff Campbell's page on Facebook.

The letter from Brian Guynn on today's Opinion page is the most recent.

Campbell's district includes all of Carroll and Wythe counties and portions of Smyth County.

Another of Campbell's local constituents recently shared the explanation they received from the delegate, after they questioned him about deleting posts and comments from his Facebook page.

"This is a campaign page and not an official page of the office of the delegate," Campbell wrote in a Facebook message to the constituent. "Accordingly, I am protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution from being required to provide a public forum for you to promote your positions, which are in opposite to mine. This page is in no way paid for with taxpayer funds."

This explanation was later deleted from Campbell's page, as well, though the constituent provided a screenshot of their conversation to The Gazette.

Campbell (R-Saltville) is seeking re-election in the Nov. 5 election. His page is not designated as part of his current campaign. It is simply called "Delegate Jeff Campbell."

Legal precedents appear to support constituents' complaints about deleted comments.

Two recent court cases have found that public officials cannot delete comments or block the public from their social media accounts simply for disagreeing. Even if the page or account is private, if it is regularly used to conduct or discuss official business, the courts have found that citizens have a right to offer their opinions.

In a 2018 case, Knight First Amendment Inst. at Columbia Univ. v. Trump, a group of seven citizens, represented by the Knight First Amendment Institute, sued President Donald Trump. "Their complaint alleged that when President Trump blocked them on Twitter, he engaged in viewpoint discrimination in a public forum, action that would violate the freedom of speech guarantee of the First Amendment," according to an article by the American Bar Association. "President Trump argued that because this was his private account, created in 2009, it was not subject to First Amendment claims at all."

The District Court found Trump's argument unpersuasive, "as both parties stipulated to the fact that President Trump regularly conducts official business through his private Twitter account," the bar association reported. The court ruled that Trump's Twitter feed was a designated public forum.

"Judge Naomi Buchwald likened his Twitter feed to a public park in which many voices could congregate to express their views and ideas," according to the bar association.

In another case, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the interactive portion of a public official's Facebook page is a "public forum," so an official cannot block people from it because of the opinions they hold, as reported by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

"If your elected representative has an official Facebook page where she invites comments, can she block you from commenting because you criticize her work?" the ACLU wrote in a report on the ruling. "According to a federal appeals court, the answer is a resounding no."

In this case, the chair of a board of supervisors in Virginia briefly blocked a critic from her official Facebook page and deleted a comment he made about her colleagues' management of public funds.

So, courts have ruled that politicians' pages are public forums, and they should be.

In the interest of full disclosure, we must note that The Gazette has deleted comments and blocked users on its Facebook page a few times in the past, when users were harassing the newspaper staff or other users.

We wouldn't tolerate that, and politicians shouldn't have to allow offensive or defamatory comments, either. But dissent and civil discourse aren't harassment.

The difference is that we're a business, not an elected representative of the people, and we could technically delete comments for any reason. However, even though we're allowed to, we don't block people over differences of opinion.

Guynn, today's letter writer, said his comments removed from Campbell's page were about the delegate's voting record, environmental policy and corporate contributions to his campaign.

At the very least, our elected officials should be expected to listen to constituents' concerns and comments, even — especially — if they are dissenting opinions.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Delegate shouldn't delete comments

When elected to office, one expectation constituents have for their representatives is being able to contact them with questions or concerns. In the age of social media, the ability to interact with those we have elected to office has become easy compared to decades ago.

The Virginia House of Delegates Sixth District representative, Del. Jeff Campbell, has a Facebook page that is simply titled "Del. Jeff Campbell." If a constituent was looking to present a problem or concern to Del. Campbell, one would obviously believe this would be a place to do so.

Unfortunately, Del. Campbell does not feel that way. If someone makes a comment or posts a question that the delegate disagrees with or appears damaging to his political career, Del. Campbell takes it upon himself to delete the posts. He has done this several times to multiple individuals.

The majority of posts deleted were not offensive, as far as having inappropriate language or stating a political opinion. This behavior is immoral and it is also illegal, as found in several similar instances in the past.

Since Del. Campbell does not appear to want to answer

legitimate questions, here are some questions we have for Jeff Campbell that can't be deleted:

- Should a voter in your district be allowed to ask questions and make comments about your service to their district in a public forum, such as your Facebook page?
- How can someone in your district trust you to do what is right for them or fight for them when you have taken thousands of dollars from companies like Dominion, AEP and Comcast?
- You were given an A+ voting record by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, supposedly for your "pro business and job creation policies." What jobs have you created in your district that would be deserving of an A+ rating?
- Why do you mostly post about the things you have voted against and very few things about what you have voted for?
- Why did you vote to give millions of dollars in tax refunds to Amazon for jobs in Northern Virginia, but nothing for businesses in your own district?

Brian Guynn  
Galax

## READERS' HOTLINE

236-5178, EXTENSION 6

### Kiss up

When going downtown in Galax, it's like going on a rollercoaster. Bump, bump, bump. Shakes your car all over. Please, somebody help me with this. I don't know who could be in charge, but somebody ought to. It's just terrible looking and our county is so nice. I don't know about the western end up there, but anyways, I know so many places in Grayson County it's just so messy and I know we can do better than that. Let's all work together. Get out there and get with the program. Organize some little groups. Sheriff Vaughan, get the inmates out there. They need to be doing something to earn their lunch.

### Taken away

I am not a Trump supporter, but what he is doing at the border, separating immigrant children from their parents, pales in comparison to what the Department of Social Services is doing in the Twin County area. The children are removed from their homes with no hope of ever being returned to their family. Now they want the training center [for a foster care facility]? Get real. The crisis is not at the border, but right here in Southwest Virginia at your doorstep. Wake up, Twin Counties.

### Solemn reminder

I see the charges of the people in the paper for child abuse. I lost my only child for a medical reason and would love to have her back. Please think, people.

### Credibility destroyed

This is a response to [the call] "Tearing down," and the caller said that everything that the president has done has been great and that we are trying to destroy the office of the president. Well, whatever you think he's done is not great. He has created divisiveness. He has created chaos. He has created a world of uncertainty in our nation, and to think that you said the credibility of the office has been diminished. Well, yes it has, by this man that y'all call a president. He is the most divisive, most racist bigot that ever sat in the Oval Office and the credibility is gone. It has to be restored by some level of common decency and common sense. Common sense is very easy to obtain. All we have to do is ask God to help us in these troubling times so, if you say that he's done everything great, make America great... yes, he has, yes, he has and has diminished through the way he has acted towards everybody that is around him. Everybody is scared of him. The Republicans are scared to death to even speak up for themselves.

### Put down

This is for [letter writer] Mitchell Robinson. You have put our president down enough already. What I want to know is, what would you do if you were president? What would you do for your country? Trump has helped our veterans. Are you a veteran? What about people that collect welfare all their lives, but can work, but won't work because they are too freaking lazy? Maybe you should run for president. I know one thing, I wouldn't vote for you. I love my veterans, my president and my country. I hope that you can someday say the same thing. I don't know where you get your information from. God bless America, God bless Trump and above all, God bless The Hotline.

### Unresolved

When you spend an enormous amount of money at a certain pharmacy and then they will never answer your call, and when you finally get someone on the line they're very rude and tell you they got several people lined up waiting on them. And yet, you run over and try to speak to them and they still don't resolve the problem that you have, I think it's time to hunt somewhere else. It's a shame when you've been there so long.

### Clean-up needed

I'm calling about these horrible roads in Grayson County. My stars, it looks like you could fix a few of those holes up

there on the Carsonville Road, and so much trash everywhere. All that mess on the road. We're going to have to declare a national or a countywide pickup. Please, somebody help me with this. I don't know who could be in charge, but somebody ought to. It's just terrible looking and our county is so nice. I don't know about the western end up there, but anyways, I know so many places in Grayson County it's just so messy and I know we can do better than that. Let's all work together. Get out there and get with the program. Organize some little groups. Sheriff Vaughan, get the inmates out there. They need to be doing something to earn their lunch.

### Abortion opponent

I had to call regarding The Hotline call about the female preacher supporting abortion. Human beings are the only creatures on the planet that think it's OK to kill babies in the womb. It is not natural to kill your own flesh and blood. Does she know that in the first trimester you can see the spinal column and organs? The baby has its own unique set of DNA? That's why Democrats fight so hard against ultrasounds being mandatory, so that the mother can't see her baby moving and realize it's her child. Unless you are raped or you are a victim of incest, you choose if, when and with whom you're going to pull your pants down and have sex. Once you willfully take part in an action that creates life, you don't get to kill it just because it's inconvenient to you. I'm tired of the "it's my body, my choice" argument. The whole "it's my property, it's not a human and I can do with it what I want" is the same argu-

ment that was used in favor of slavery. Maybe that female preacher should stop giving sermons on feelings and worldly things and spend more time preaching from the Bible. Stop trying to be everyone's friend. The Bible says that we cannot serve God and man. You serve one or the other. Holding someone's hand and walking with them straight into Hell is not compassion. You should love someone enough to tell them the truth.

### How it works

To address the conflict of interest concerning VDOT employee seen recently in The Hotline, I'm hoping this information might help. A VDOT employee or any citizen should create a petition by collecting signatures by residential and business owners on said road. That citizen and any other residents of the road should attend a board of supervisors meeting to lobby for the road's improvement. Pictures of road damage should be included. It is then solely up to the board of supervisors to approve the road for improvement. VDOT has nothing to do with this process. As for the waste dump site approval discrepancy you spoke of, I personally couldn't find none, however, I would suggest that citizens that are concerned with such matters would come closer to finding answers by going directly to the source, such as contacting VDOT instead of hiding behind a newspaper Hotline, which after all does appear a bit like sour grapes. I am not a VDOT employee, but would hate to think as one I wouldn't be as entitled as any other citizen to have my road improved.

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NEWS MEDIA  
ALLIANCE

## NO QUESTIONS = NO ANSWERS

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# OPINION

## EDITORIAL

# Grayson needs accessible, affordable healthcare

For the past two years, we have seen the Grayson County administration's dedicated pursuit of affordable and accessible healthcare for citizens.

With the recent announcement of a partnership with Tri-Area Community Health, that goal is closer to being met.

In 2017, the Grayson County Board of Supervisors partnered with the Grayson County Senior Advocacy Committee in an effort to pursue funds for a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center (FQHC). Since then, the effort has moved through several phases and has garnered considerable support from the public.

In 2018, the county conducted a Community Health Assessment survey, in which 300 participants were required to meet the qualifications Grayson County needed to seek approval for a healthcare center. By the survey's deadline, the county received double the required amount, proving the need is widespread.

According to Bill Shepley, Grayson County administrator, the presence of a FQHC in our area would not only make healthcare more affordable for the 60 percent of our community in the low- to mid-range level of income; it will also shorten the community's average travel time of 50 minutes to receive these services — that is almost three times the national average of 17 minutes.

Surrounding hospitals such as Alleghany Memorial Health in Sparta, N.C., and Twin County Regional Healthcare in Galax have also expressed their support for a FQHC in Grayson. In areas that lack sufficient resources for healthcare, facilities such as these often see an overabundance of patients in emergency care, many times with conditions that could have been treated sooner if healthcare had been more accessible and affordable to citizens in need.

Tri-Area Community Health has proven success with its three federally-supported healthcare facilities in the Laurel Fork community of Carroll County, Ferrum and Floyd. Grayson has expressed its gratitude and excitement for this partnership in bringing the county's citizens a resource that is badly needed.

County officials recognize that a strong and healthy community is the backbone to its success in other aspects, and have proven and continue to prove that the citizens are their number one priority.

In the interest of Grayson County and those who choose to call it home, The Gazette and The Declaration stand behind the county's goal to provide these resources to our area. We also commend the efforts of everyone who has played a part so far in bringing these concerns to the forefront of financial discussions in recent years.

Grayson County is generally known as a strong hub for tourism and agriculture; but on our local level, we see the faces behind every educational, economic, and political success. This is a community that is strong because everyone works together and takes care of one another.

The federal government's award of funding for this project would cement a key example of the rewards that can be reaped from a strong and united community.

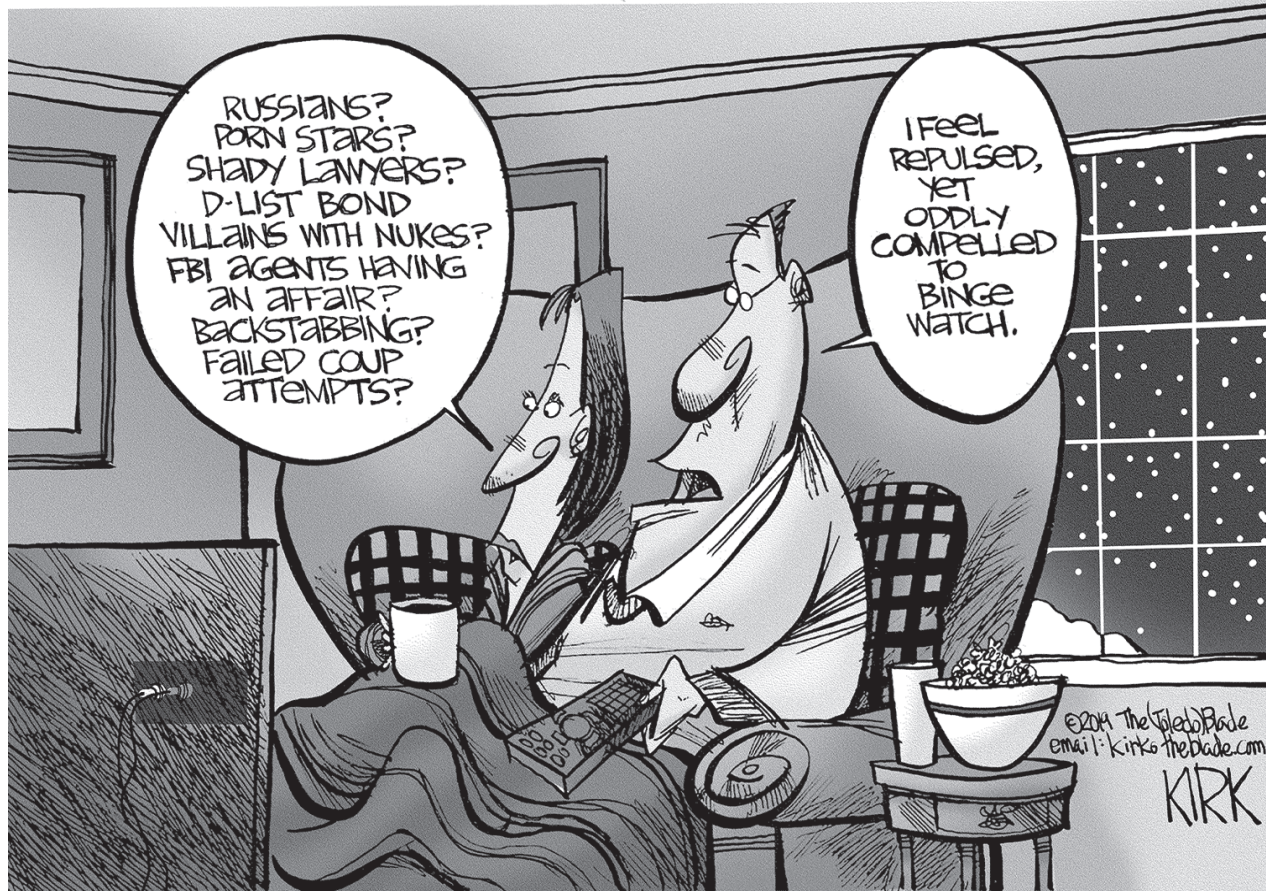
### HOW YOU CAN HELP

*The county needs letters of support to improve its chances of receiving the funds that are necessary to bring a FQHC to Independence.*

Letters of support may be submitted to: Linda C. Osborne, Office Manager, PO Box 217, Independence VA 24348. Letters must be received by April 3 to be processed for the application's deadline.

For more information, contact the county office at (276) 773-2471.

## IF THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION WAS A NETFLIX SERIES



## GAZETTE READERS' HOTLINE

236-5178, EXTENSION 6

### Deeds, not words

Are you a Christian encouraging other men to use the Bible for their will? To pervert the Word, to disclaim the Ten Commandments, to gossip about and abuse his wife, to not live a Christ example life? Christ instructed women to be treated as the weaker vessel because they can be tricked and injured as the serpent tricked Eve. He never instructed women to be treated as less or unimportant. To be used as slaves, to be yelled at, cussed, threatened, to be tormented with worry, to be hit, to be treated in all these ways by their own children. The Bible says not to judge, but it does say to test. If you just accept everyone at their word, enjoy their superficial charms and likability, their seeming generosity, how easygoing and present they are, then you can be tricked and injured by the Devil and his workers. If you place someone in positions of leadership and example in the church, the true test is how they are when they think no one is watching. How they take care of their homes, bills and responsibilities. How they treat, protect and guide their wives and children with love and joyfulness. Colossians 3:23. There are always people... 2 Timothy 3:16 that have lived beyond the plank in their eye so as to direct those with steps... Matthew 7:3-5. Church is not a building you go to one day a week. Are you protectors of the tormented and weak?

### Becoming impersonal

I noticed how we used to have all these video places where we could rent videos, and now Video Connection closed down and most of our Blockbusters are closed down because Netflix is coming out with new streaming service online and stuff. Not everybody likes to go online. Not everybody wants to watch a movie on their phone or stream or have internet or tweet, twerk or Facebook or etc. Not everybody is that hooked up, because there are

people out there that still like to have their privacy and like to have a little sanity left. I noticed also that some of our stores are closing down because of online shopping. Foot traffic is getting lower and lower and that's the reason why that some of our stores are going out of business. It looks like we are going to be going into the internet age, I mean we've always been traveling in that journey and we're just going that way, and it's sad because most of our towns are going to become like ghost towns and people are going to be sitting in their homes on their rear ends instead of getting out and meeting and greeting people like the did back in the day by going shopping and eating in establishments and seeing each other. We're just going to be cold, impersonal people because we're not communicating anymore.

### Be who you are

I don't know where this comes from. It says, "I am neither a sacrifice nor a privilege." I may not be competent or excellent, but I am present. My happiness is me, not you. Not only because you may be temporary, but also because you want me to be what I am not. I cannot be happy when I change merely to satisfy your selfishness, nor can I feel content

when you criticize me for not thinking your thoughts or for seeing like you do. You call me a child and a rebel, and yet each time I have rejected your beliefs, you have rebelled against mine. I do not try to mold your mind. I know you are trying hard enough to be just you and I cannot allow you to tell me what to be, for I am concentrating on being me. You said that I was transparent and easily forgotten, but why did you try to use my lifetime to prove to yourself what you are?" That is a very simple thing about what's going on today. A lot of people are trying to prove who they are through other people. They see other people on the news and they try to be like them. Like all the skinny people criticize the fat people. All the whites criticize the blacks and etc. and so on. It's not right. We need to prove who we are by being who we are and we need to stand firm and believe in ourselves, not let somebody else choose who we are going to be or criticize us for who we are. We are who we are. We are human. We are loved. It doesn't matter the color of our skin or where we come from or our background or what we believe in; we are all trying to be just who we are and we're trying to change the world and we can change the world just one at a time.

### HOW TO WRITE US

The Gazette reserves its editorial page for the exchange of ideas and opinions. Letters to the editor are welcomed. Certain guidelines apply. Letters should be typed, if possible, and signed in the writer's original handwriting. The author must include an address and daytime telephone number so the letter can be verified. **Letters will be edited to 350 words or less for publication.** Writers are limited to one letter every 30 days. The deadline for letters is noon Wednesday. The Gazette reserves the right to edit or refuse any letter.

**MAIL TO: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, THE GAZETTE, 108 WEST STUART DRIVE, GALAX, VA. 24333**  
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## GUEST COLUMN

# A history of Irish immigration

*Editor's note: This opinion piece refers to a Capital News Service article, "Virginia Is For Irish Lovers," which was published in The Gazette's March 15-17 edition. The writer wished to clarify some points about how Irish immigrants came to America.*

The Scot-Irish who settled in Virginia in the 1740s did not come because of the Irish potato famine. The infamous famine was in the 1840s.

They were from today's Northern Ireland and were known as Ulster Scots, because they were originally from the Lowlands of Scotland and had settled there in 1606.

They were Protestant, mostly Presbyterian; many of them were tenant farmers. King James I placed them under royal rule in 1607, claiming the lands of the defeated Irish for the crown. He did this for several reasons, among them hoping to provide a buffer against the Irish Catholics. This "plantation" flourished and grew for the rest of the 1600s.

By 1700, political, religious and economic conditions were such that another migration occurred, this time to the British colonies in North America. This migration was the result of high rents, low wages and too much regulation from Parliament.

Most of them came into the colonies at Philadelphia and settled in western Pennsylvania and came south to Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. They helped provide much-needed actual claim (for Britain) and settlement

against the French and the natives.

They did indeed become the much admired frontiersmen we think of today.

The Irish who came in the 1840s were fleeing the disastrous potato famine. They were mostly Catholic and were from what today is known as the Republic of Ireland. They came into the United States by way of Boston and New York. They suffered a lot of prejudice after they came to the U.S. and lived in some pretty awful circumstances.

The Ulster Scots who had been here for a century did not want to be mistaken for the potato famine Catholic Irish and used the term Scot-Irish to distinguish themselves.

It can be said that the Scot-Irish were "brewed in Scotland, bottled in [Ulster] Ireland, and uncorked in America." This was a statement from the education director from the American Folk Park in North Ireland, who was at a Teacher Institute at the Museum of Frontier Culture in Staunton that I attended in the summer of 1992.

She also told us the only thing Scotch about a Scotsman was his Scotch.

This is a very brief summary. There are several good articles on this on the internet and in traditional encyclopedia resources.

**Lynn McClary**  
Retired Grayson County teacher  
Independence

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