

OPINION

Gearing up for school with unity in mind

Washington County students went back to school this week — kicking off the 2017-2018 school year for David Crockett, Daniel Boone, Jonesborough, Boones Creek, Sulphur Springs, Lamar, Grandview, Ridgeview, West View and Fall Branch classrooms. Backpacks, lunch boxes and notebooks are already out in full-force — and school buses can now be spotted up and down highways and byways. And, while no child may actually be celebrating the end of summer, there is a certain excitement in the air — along with new clothes, new classrooms, the reuniting of old friends and the making of new. There is also something else in the air this season — a decided feeling of togetherness. Sparked by the recent meeting of students, coaches and teachers, shared in the *Herald & Tribune's* front page article

last week in “We are all Washington County,” the message from Washington County’s Department of Education and Director Kimber Halliburton is clear. We may attend different schools. We may at times compete with each other. But we are all Washington County schools and we support each other. This is a great message for our students — not just between schools but also between fellow classmates. It proudly proclaims that together, Washington County students are always stronger than when apart. It’s also a message that we here at the *Herald & Tribune* would also like to extend to the adults throughout Washington County, whether you have children in the school system or not. Just as each school is an im-

portant part of the Washington County mix, the school system as a whole is a vital part of Washington County. These students are our present and our future, and we all benefit from their growth. We are also much stronger together than apart. Since being together usually means helping each other, we would like to encourage our readers to do just that. Classrooms and their students often benefit from — even depend upon — donations from their communities. Volunteers play a vital role within each school system. And opportunities to help individual students — even with just a word of encouragement — abound. Be on the lookout for such opportunities throughout the new school year. Remember, we are all Washington County. And together, we are strong.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...

Two sisters weigh in on fluoride

EDITOR'S NOTE: The *Herald & Tribune* was delighted to receive these two letters from some of our younger readers. It's a reminder that community topics don't just impact adults.

Editor:
This is my thought about having fluoride being taken out of the water: People say “it is hurting you” or “it’s poisonous.” It can hurt you if you have too much. Fluoride is actually good for you.

If you are a kid like me, the fluoride will go to the enamel and make the teeth that are growing incredibly strong. It also gets into your saliva and then kills bacteria. The Water Department makes sure there is not too much fluoride in your water. It’s not poisonous, and I can prove it. I have been drinking water with fluoride for almost nine years and I am a smart kid.

There is fluoride in tooth paste. Yes there is, but you don’t drink it like you drink water. Soon kids will get

cavities if they take it out. Then the only way to prevent the kids from getting cavities is to take a tablet of fluoride.

And not just kids, everyone will have to take a tablet! That is hard to remember to do every day.

My grandparents tell me how lucky I am to have fluoride, because when they were little like me, they would get cavities. I’m just saying, it really is better if you have fluoride.

If you have too much of anything you can die! Other things can be dangerous like knives, guns and medicine but not if you use them in the right way. You might use a knife to cut watermelon and you might have a gun in your house for protection. You might use a gun to practice shooting a turkey for Thanksgiving.

If someone is sick, they may take medicine to get well, but they could die if they have too much. Fluoride is like medicine. If you

take the right amount it can help.

Who knew last year, I might not be drinking a glass of water with fluoride in it on my birthday. Unless the mayor realizes fluoride is a miracle worker, I will be taking little tablets until who knows when. Knowing this really doesn’t make me smile. Kids will get cavities! The dentists will get rich because they will have to drill and fill your teeth.

If the mayor just listened to someone who can prove that fluoride is great, we wouldn’t have to worry. If I was mayor, I wouldn’t even think about taking out the fluoride even if people were upset. Just wait until all the kids in Jonesborough get cavities and the mayor will either put it back in or not care. I know we need fluoride. I hope you agree.

Grace Marie Argueta
Age: Nearly 9
Entering Grade 3
Jonesborough

Editor:
Many people have been saying that fluoride in water is “un-healthy and dangerous.” They want it to be taken out of the water. This situation is becoming more realistic so I have decided to share my thoughts about it. My grandparents always tell me how lucky I am to have fluoride in my water. They always point out their cavities explaining when they were younger there wasn’t fluoride in water.

I’m lucky to have fluoride because my mom informed me that I will have to take a pill for fluoride so I can

continue having healthy teeth. Who likes pills? Children especially don’t.

Many people ignore the fact that for 70 years people before us have studied fluoride and claimed it safe if not overdosed.

But don’t let me stop you from not believing these smart people who invented things that have helped us to this day.

And for those who still don’t believe me, do you not have someone in your family that drinks more water than you thought was possible?

I know I do and that per-

son is still alive!

I don’t know why people are so afraid of fluoride. There are scarier things out there.

You have a worse chance of dying in a car accident than from fluoride so why don’t we ban cars? Because that would be crazy.

Just about the amount of craziness it takes to take fluoride out of water!

I’ve wanted to live in Jonesborough for my whole life, now I’m not so sure...

Caroline Argueta
Age 12
Jonesborough

Bipartisanship emerging in Congress

“It’s happening,” the Citizens’ Climate Lobby news editor posted in mid-July. “Republicans in Congress are starting to influence climate policy — in the right direction.” The news referenced a vote in the House of Representatives, in which dozens of Republications had joined the Democrats to defeat an anti-climate amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act.

For a long time, the Department of Defense has drawn attention to climate change as a “risk multiplier” for national security.

At a CCL meeting earlier, former Assistant Navy Secretary Katherine Hammack described some of the ways in which the increasingly frequent climate events can impair operational and mission effectiveness of the U.S. military.

Risk of wildfires, for example, can prevent troops from training, military vehicles may be unable to move when the roads into or out of bases are flooded, and thawing permafrost can seriously undermine the safety of buildings at bases in Alaska.

With more than 1,700 U.S. coastal military installations here and overseas, the problems through sea level rise and related disruptions — as seen even at the Norfolk naval base in Virginia — are huge. Presi-

Eye on the Environment

By Frances Lamberts

dent Trump’s Navy secretary nominee acknowledged them to the House Armed Services Committee, stating that “The Navy is totally aware of rising water issues, storm issues, etc.”

On humanitarian and international levels, Secretary Hammack noted the obvious: Prolonged drought and water and food shortages can lead to civil unrest, undermine weak governments and end in military conflict — or lead to mass migrations which, in turn, can destabilize other countries.

During the Obama administration, the DoD had established an office to study climate change impacts, already occurring or projected, and help make the military’s operations more resilient to them.

Among extremely valuable outcomes of the work of that office — saving soldiers’ lives — were “net-zero” base camps in Afghanistan, water being drawn from the air and solar installations generating all electricity there.

Water and fuel, as Secretary Hammack stated, must generally be trucked in to the bases, and 40 percent of the fuel goes

to generators to make electricity.

In 2007 in Iraq, one in 24 convoys carrying these essentials suffered casualties.

They were reduced nearly one-half, to one in 46 convoys suffering casualties, in 2014 in Afghanistan where “net zero” bases produced these essentials locally and needed fuel could all go to mobility, not base operations.

The defense policy bill crafted by the House Armed Services Committee had left in place a directive that “each Service” continue to identify what military installations might be at risk because of climate change and make recommendations on how to protect them.

An amendment by Rep. Perry (R-PA) seeking to strike all climate change language from the bill was soundly defeated when nearly all Republican members of the Climate Solutions Caucus and two dozen more GOP members joined Democratic members to uphold consideration of climate risks by DoD.

Quite an encouraging, huge step forward toward bipartisanship in approaching this important issue!

One wishes that Congressman Roe had been part of the voting block supporting climate action, for military readiness and for communities throughout the country.

Support for local farmers pays off in the end

There is nothing better than slicing up a ripe garden tomato fresh off the vine. However, some may not have the means to grow fresh vegetables in their backyards.

At the Center for Rural Affairs, we work with rural communities to build healthy, sustainable, local food systems. That includes supporting farmers markets.

Farmers markets expand access to fresh, healthy food in communities that need it most.

They provide affordable, competitive prices for low-income families, and many accept food vouchers.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), more than 5,000 farmers markets across the

GUEST COMMENTARY
By Rhea Landholm, Center for Rural Affairs

country accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, with the number of new locations increasing at an average 40 percent per year.

Vendors are reaping the benefits. In 2014, 362,477 SNAP households made at least one purchase at a farmers market, according to the National Farmers Market Coalition.

That means more families are eating healthy and fresh local fruits and vegetables.

Farmers markets also provide beginning farmers a low-cost way to enter the marketplace and grow

their businesses. Small and medium existing farms can supplement their revenue by selling at markets, supporting the sustainability of family farms.

The USDA reported 8,675 markets in the country in 2016, up from 2,863 in 2000. Many consumers now have the opportunity to eat food grown within a few miles of their homes. And, that money stays in their small towns, helping local economies.

Find your farmers market and join us in celebrating National Farmers Market Week, Aug. 6 to 12.

JRT continues to grow, entertain

Editor:
Thank you for publishing the wonderful article about the New York workshop trip by cast, technical folks, directors and the artistic director.

It has been very gratifying to watch the growth of the troupe as well as all the new talent that has become a part

of the theatre.

Each of the 16 participants wrote a summary of their learnings and growth.

The reflections included comments about lighting design education by a Broadway lighting designer, vocal coaching skills to teach to students and auditioning skills as

well as building camaraderie among the JRT company.

Hats off to all who took time away from their “day jobs” to make the 2017-18 season the best ever!

Nancy Kavanaugh
JRT Board Member
Jonesborough

Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.

Albert Einstein

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