

Letters To The Editor

Seniors Could Face Medicare Trouble

To The Editor:

Anyone 65 or over and anyone getting close, this health plan that the Democrats are trying to pass is going to cut your Medicare big time. The coverage you are use to is going out the door. That's why the seniors in this country are protesting against their plan. If they get this bill past, you are going to get the kind of service they get in Canada. You will wait for any kind of services and might never get it. I just got back from a week in Canada, and the whole week I talked to Canadians about their healthcare. Eight out of 10 said they didn't like it. The biggest problem is they want to cut your benefits so they can give insurance to the uninsured who don't want to pay for it like you had to for years. Also, they want to give the illegal aliens healthcare and prescriptions.

Right now in Frederick, Md., they have a van going around stopping illegals asking them if they need any healthcare or medicines free. This is going on all over this country. These politicians will sell you down the river for votes.

For years it was always said that the Republicans were for the rich and the Democrats were for the working people. That was years ago, not today. The Democrats are for the poor, and the backbone of this country are the working people and they have no representation. Eighty percent of people in this country are satisfied with their healthcare, and everybody in the world wants to come here for medical care. We have the best in the world. If they want to fix Medicare, take the fraud out from some doctors and hospitals. That's where the problem is.

Everybody needs to get in touch with the politicians you voted for and tell them to leave your healthcare alone, especially seniors. This is really going to affect them. This is the most important thing that will affect you in your senior years. You must let them know to leave your Medicare alone and let them know you will vote them out the next election. If they hear that, they might listen to you.

—Dennis Fandl
Warfordsburg

Responds To Healthcare Legislation Letters

To The Editor:

In response to the letters in last week's "News" regarding healthcare legislation:

1. The healthcare crisis is not phony or made-up. Anyone who has been paying attention the last few years knows that there are lots of problems with our healthcare system - including the cost of it. A lot of people have had their benefits - as provided by their employers - curtailed or cut off completely. Employers simply have had a difficult time keeping up with the increasing cost of health insurance for employees. I saw this over the last several years that I worked for the county. In order to keep employees insured, county commissioners had to change plans that sometimes reduced benefits or raised deductibles and co-pays. The commissioners did a good job of shopping around, but the bottom line is that the county is just like other businesses; they have all been struggling to try to keep their people insured, but at ever increasing cost. Other businesses have cut off family coverage or cut off insurance altogether. These are not "made up" stories. They have happened. So why does anyone think the healthcare problem is just a "phony?"

(By the way, although I get a county pension, I do not have insurance through the county anymore. I self pay my own insurance through Aetna. I think that anyone who criticizes or supports efforts to reform health insurance should have to disclose their insurance. I have heard some healthcare reform protesters argue that no reform is needed, and then turn around and admit that they have Medicare or government insurance. Of

course they don't want things to change. So, Mr. Land, what is your insurance coverage? Mr. Joyce, I know you are covered by the county or are eligible for county benefits. Do you still have coverage under your state police retirement?)

2. As far as "healthcare savings accounts" are concerned, I think they are a good idea. But, even the county commissioners did not adopt that option. It sounds good for employees, but isn't as attractive to employers. Trying to fix things piecemeal is not always a good idea.

3. Tort reform is always trotted out as a big answer. But tort law is the way our society regulates behavior and compensates people for the wrongs that other people have done them - including such wrongs as malpractice. To prevent lawsuits when someone has been injured - sometimes severely and for the rest of their lives - or to cap their damages at some artificial number (especially when the doctors and the hospitals and the insurance companies can just raise fees to cover smaller jury awards) sounds like a way to eliminate any regulatory or deterrent effect that tort law is supposed to have.

I am not opposed to tort reform, but I have always thought it should be coupled with some real offers from doctors and hospitals to do some of their own policing of the medical profession. Part of the Obama plan is to encourage just that. Obama urges legislation that would require hospitals and other medical providers to collect and publicly report objective data regarding healthcare costs and quality, including data on preventable medical errors, nurse staffing ratios, hospital-acquired infections, and other information. Health plans would have to publicly report the percentage of their premiums that actually go to paying healthcare costs rather than administrative costs. What is "socialist" or "dictatorial" about that?

As a matter of fact, free-market enthusiasts ought to be behind such efforts. If we want people to make informed, market-driven decisions about healthcare, then we need to make sure they have the information to make wise economic choices. But I'm not so convinced that market forces work in the choice of medical care. When your child is sick, running a high fever, bleeding, vomiting, are you really going to make decisions based on cost?

4. I'm not saying that the legislation before Congress is the best or that it isn't being rushed through. It is a shame that we cannot have a nice, long, quiet, civil debate, based on the issues and not on politicized scare tactics. But that is not going to happen, no matter how long we let it open for debate. We need to act, and not be paralyzed by the lobbyists for insurance companies, hospitals and high-paid medical specialists.

5. Rationing care and making end-of-life decisions. You don't think this doesn't happen already? Insurance companies have lists of drugs that you can't have, even if your doctor prescribed them. In order to get them covered, you have to prove why you need them. A government bureaucrat does not decide whether you have proved your need or not - an insurance company bureaucrat does. Under my own insurance, I can't go to a specialist unless a doctor - who is in the company network - refers me to him. And the specialist has to be "in network" too, or I have to pay him myself. So much for being able to "choose my own doctor." When I took my 90-year-old father to the hospital before he died, I had a heck of time trying to keep the doctors from just writing him off as old and ready to die. The primary physician had never seen him before but just assumed he was invalid and it took persistence to make sure that we got the doctors to give us the full information about his condition so that he could make his own end-of-life decisions. It was not a government bureaucrat who did that, it was the doctors themselves. It would not hurt to have laws and rules that would regulate this kind of thing.

6. Finally, this is addressed to the issue from several weeks ago about the woman who complained about her treatment at Fulton County Medical Center. Mr. Land said it was an example of "entitlement gone amok." I don't think so. It is what you get when you call yourself a "non-profit, community hospital" and when you have your picture in the paper getting a big check from the governor of taxpayer money. Under those circum-

stances you can't blame some people in Fulton County for still thinking of the Medical Center as the community hospital that it was when any citizen could be a "member." Let's understand this - the Medical Center corporation is nonprofit but that doesn't mean that no one is making a profit out of it. I assume that the doctors and administrators are getting some pretty good money. And citizens can no longer be "members." The Medical Center is run by a board of directors. You will have to excuse some people. They still think of the Medical Center in the old-fashioned way. Like when I was a kid, and you would go to the doctor's office and he would the there til 11 or 12 at night seeing a room full of sick patients. And then maybe get out of bed early the next morning for a house call to see a sick kid. And charge fees that you didn't need insurance to pay. Those days are gone. And I am sure it is better now for doctors (justifiably so). But there are a lot of problems for the rest of us - and I didn't just make that up.

Dwight C. Harvey
McConnellsburg

Applause For Great Cove Pool And Staff

To The Editor:

We had no idea what to expect when we took our grandson to Great Cove Pool for swimming lessons, and we were blown out of the water! The pool at Great Cove Water and Recreation Club is a beautiful facility.

The lifeguards and teachers were wonderful with the kids, and it was fun to watch kids of all levels improve over the two-week session. Our grandson was enjoying the lessons and learning so much that when he wanted to sign up for another session, we were happy to oblige. Near the end of the second session, he wished to continue again with more lessons. As lessons are over for this year, he's ready for next summer.

A huge thanks to the absolutely amazing job Mike, Michelle, Stephanie, Jenny, Nikki and Mrs. Kendall have done in enriching the lives of our children by providing them with the opportunity to overcome fears, build confidence and love the water.

We are greatly looking forward to lessons, water aerobics and enjoying use of the pool next year. Thanks, Great Cove Pool, for the wonderful memories, and we look forward to making many more memories. We hope this valuable resource will be open to our community for many years to come!

Craig and Linda Strait
McConnellsburg

"Furiner" Carpetbagger Go Home!

To The Editor:

My family has owned the same farm for nine generations continuously since 1773. I am proud to be a patriotic born-and-bred Fulton County native, country bumpkin who has displayed our U.S. flag every day since 9-11. I am a genealogist and local historian and recognize names appearing after the Civil War might be considered "furiners" by pioneer descendants.

I know Fulton County natives are very intelligent, hardworking and possessing common sense. I resent rabble-rousing "furiner imports" who come into our tranquil community and think they have the superiority to tell us what we should think and not agree with their narrow-minded opinions and worldview. We have the ability to access information and draw our own conclusions without outside interference.

How ironic that they were supposed in employment by our tax dollars; are now eligible for a nice pension, again on our tax dollars; yet still greedily take local jobs away from Fulton County natives, again on our tax dollars. I bet if those jobs were enjoyed by Fulton County natives from start to finish, they would not have been milked for so many years and would have been fully implemented shortly after 9-11. If these imports have such a strong desire to be productive, they should be volunteering their "expertise" for free for the good of all, instead of taking jobs away from locals who are unemployed. Their children are self-supporting adults, yet they take food off tables of native children whose parents cannot find a local job. Local jobs should go to local people.

Yes, I earned my living as an employee of the local taxpayers also. To make sure they got value

for their hard-earned tax dollars, I had the reputation for being one of the most demanding teachers in my school and many complained about the workload. When "teaching for the test" became mandatory, I refused to compromise my ethics and got out.

I do not advocate town hall meeting style mob violence; I do think we should round up these "furiner" import carpetbaggers; pack them up with their hoods; escort them to the Fulton County border; deport them; then erect a fence so they cannot return. No, marrying a local gal does not exempt you from deportation. Once again, you deprived a local boy of happiness by taking away for yourself.

My many non-native friends who know me will realize my words were written "tongue in cheek," or should I say "pen in cheek" to make a point. I truly appreciate their contributions to Fulton County. Of course, the intended import "furiner" recipients will lack the intellectual capacity for introspection to understand the irony between my words and their rants. But, without bothering to check a dictionary, the tag team dynamic duo will continue to vent their spleen with vitriol, whilst I await their response with bated breath. And most readers will see these exchanges as useful as teats on a borehog.

Kenneth Keebaugh
Hustontown

Congressmen Are Hired To Do The People's Will

To The Editor:

Well now! We do seem to be having a lively debate over healthcare reform, do we not? Only those living with the bats could miss the fact that our airwaves, newspapers and town hall meetings are jammed full of angry folks, all making it crystal clear that they simply will not be ignored.

Certainly, we all have our own thoughts on this particular subject. But, just as important as the issue itself is the fact that we are indeed making our voices heard, from one persuasion or the other. That's a good thing. History tells us that one of this democracy's worst threats is apathy. As long as we don't care enough to protest, join in the debate or, even vote, politicians will rightly believe they can do what they jolly well please, when they jolly well please to do so.

They are inclined in this direction because they are convinced that they are far better educated and craftier than we are and that we are far too stupid to know what's good for us. With this in mind, they further assume we will simply allow them to jam their concepts down our collective throats without so much as a whimper. That is regardless of what we believe in, hold dear, or for that matter, what they told us to get elected in the first place.

In this case, they clearly did not count on the intensity of the opposition. They're surprised and even a bit rattled. This becomes evident when they desperately try to shift the focus. It isn't so much healthcare reform now as it is "insurance reform," for instance. Or, they try to reduce all this opposition from obvious outrage to "healthy discourse."

But don't you let them do it! If you object to whatever they're up to, you keep yelling at the top of your lungs! Unless and until they are threatened with the loss of their jobs, they will continue to assume that they cannot be stopped and that we don't give a fat rat about what they're up to. They don't respond to "healthy discourse." They respond to in-your-face, mean and ugly dog-fights each and every time they try to feed us another stack of cow-patties, while trying to convince us they're pancakes.

Despite what they might think, these individuals are not royalty and our country is not their personal kingdom. They are our employees and they promised to do the will of the people who hired them. If their own convictions, preferences and objectives prevent them from doing that will, they should be told they're lousy employees, that we know they're lying to us, that they're wasting our money and then they should be fired!

Bill Watson
Hustontown, PA

Incredulous Over Healthcare Reform Letter To The Editor

To The Editor:

I read with absolute incredulity Mr. Joyce's letter to the editor dated August 13. I don't believe that I have ever read a more misinformed, hysterical or clueless aggregate of nonsense in my life.

The letter begins with a simple statement of "fact." The U.S. has the finest healthcare system in the world. Says who? Mr. Joyce? And by what measure? I checked a few statistics with the World Health Organization and learned the following: The overall ranking of the U.S. worldwide is #37. We are #24 in overall life expectancy. We spend 15.2 percent of our GNP on healthcare, the second highest level in the world. Our infant mortality rate is #29, tied with Poland. So please, the finest in the world, interesting if true.

Moving through the tired bromides of tort reform and "socialized medicine," the latter of which no one is suggesting, Mr. Joyce really picks up claims in paragraph 4 where he states "a government bureaucrat will deny medical treatment to the elderly or anyone with a pre-existing condition that (sic) does not meet politically approved criteria." Mr. Joyce, are you sure you are not confusing this with the existing U.S. healthcare system where pre-existing conditions and rationing are part of every insurance company's operating procedures? Finally not to leave any stone unturned, we are treated to a blanket statement about healthcare in Canada and England. Given the displayed ignorance about U.S. healthcare, I really don't think anyone should take too seriously any claim about Canada or the UK.

What is so troubling about this debate is the cynicism of people who propagate the nonsense that Mr. Joyce espouses. These assertions are lies and the people who disseminate them are either ignorant dupes or cynical liars. An uninformed electorate is the most dangerous beast in the forest, and in the U.S. today we apparently have a large and growing number of them.

Charles Gobin
Berryville, Va.
Former county resident

Queen Pageant

From Page One

day evening's pageant as the second runner-up was Megan Keller, 16, of Waterfall. A Forbes Road High School junior, she is the daughter of Thomas and Holly Keller. She was sponsored by her employer, the New Fort Restaurant, and escorted by a former fair queen, Lauren DeShong.

Past fair queens in attendance at the pageant were: Christina Mellott Ramsey (1995), Carrie Swope (2006), Olivia Strait (2008) and Lauren DeShong (2007).

David Hoover II again served as the master of ceremonies for the event, which was overseen by judges Pat Berrier from Orbisonia; Valerie Park of State College; and Jamie Rhodes from Mapleton Depot. Votes cast by the judges during the competition were tabulated by Rick Strait of Tower Bank and Jess Fraker from F&M Trust.

Vespers held prior to the fair queen pageant kicked off the week of fair activities. Although the services and the pageant have often been plagued by rain and thunderstorms, skies were sunny and bright for this year's opening evening.

The fair runs through Saturday evening with the full-size demolition derby on Wednesday evening and the return of the Sta-Bil National Lawn Mower Racing series for both modified and stock models on Friday evening. Tractor racing is set to get under way at 7 p.m. Saturday's final evening of entertainment will include the 4X4 ORLO INC truck pull at 7 p.m. and a teen dance at 8 p.m. The popular annual 4-H/FFA Livestock Sale will begin at p.m. on Saturday evening.

Koontz

From Page One

Club and a past president. He was also a 50-year member and past president of the Fulton County Chamber of Commerce, 61-year member of the Bedford and Mt. Zion Masonic lodges, a member and supporter of Jaffa Shrine in Altoona, a supporter of the McConnellsburg FFA chapter and the McConnellsburg 4-H clubs, a member and elder of St. Paul's United Church of Christ, and a supporter of the Old Brick Church in Friends Cove, Bedford County.

Auctioneer Lyle Reed said Ray did a lot of good for people

(which later bought it.

"He never made a big show of it," said Reed. "I always admired that about him."

Ray played a significant role in the economic development of Fulton County. He was a founding member of the Fulton County Industrial Development Association, serving for 45 years as a board member and past president in 1964.

"When Fulton Industries (which later became JLG Industries) began, he was the first to help out," said Overly.

Retired businessman K.G. Richards noted Ray's solid support of the Lions Club, and said that Ray would be remembered as a "quiet, easygoing man who was very intelligent in the business world."

"He had a lot of good ideas and he put them to use," said Richards, who also noted that Ray continued to conduct his business affairs and community work until the last six months of his life.

Ray's accomplishments were many, and he was acknowledged for them on numerous occasions. He was honored by the Chamber of Commerce as Man of the Year and Outstanding Citizen, honored in 2008 by the Masonic lodges to which he belonged, and, in 2009, the McConnellsburg Lions Club, which benefited time and again from Ray's generosity, named the Little League ball field at its community park the Ray S. Koontz Field.

Ray will also be remembered as a lifelong hunter who traveled the world hunting sheep, trophy white-tailed deer and bears. He was a founding member of the Mason-Dixon chapter of the Safari Club International and a life member of the Fulton County Pistol and Gun Club and the Fulton County Sportsman's League. His mounted collection of game in the basement of his home was well known by many.

Ray's son Robert remembers his father as "a friend to everybody and a strong community supporter."

"He always gave back to the community and he believed in always buying locally," said Robert. "He once told me he couldn't think of one person he would not want to eat Christmas dinner with. In his eyes, he had no enemies."

"His legacy," said Overly, "is helping people, both large and small."

Besides son Robert of McConnellsburg, Ray is survived by daughters Jane Smith of Katonah, N.Y.; Lena Fox and Betty Calhoun, both of Bedford; Renee Brink of Chambersburg; daughter-in-law Ann Koontz of Greenwich, Conn.; 10 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

Ray's wife, Fay Welsh Koontz, whom he married in November 1960, and son Richard preceded him in death.

Funeral services will be held on Friday at 10 a.m. in McConnellsburg High School auditorium.

See page B3 for full obituary.

**To Place
A Classified
Call Before
4 p.m.
On Monday
717-485-3811**

Clearing The Record

The name of former county commissioner Daniel H. Swain was incorrectly reported in an article (16 Applicants Seek Vacant Commissioner Position) appearing on the front page of last week's edition of the News. Also misstated were the number of terms of office to which the former commissioner had been elected. Swain was elected to four terms of office.

The Fulton County News wants its news reports to be fair and correct in every respect. If you have a question or comment, phone us at 485-4513.