

Southern & Standard

McMinnville, Tennessee

#### **Standard online** reader survey



Q: Were you impressed with **President Trump's first State of** the Union Address?

> 60% YES NO **26%**  DIDN'T SEE IT 14%

#### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## **Expanding Medicaid** would help Tennessee

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing in response to Gov. Haslam's State of the State address which was delivered Jan. 29. First of all, I would like to commend the governor for keeping his remarks upbeat and looking toward the future. However, I feel there were several important issues the governor failed to address.

Even though he proposed the expansion of Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act two years ago, it did not advance and the need for the program is greater now than ever before. Some, including many of our elected officials, believe ACA is all but dead, but this is not the case. There are over 250,000 Tennesseans, including 10,000 veterans, who could receive healthcare if this "expansion" were

approved. Just last week we saw another ramification of the non-expansion. A rural hospital in Decatur County was forced to close its doors, the 10th rural hospital in the state in the last three years. The \$1.2 billion expansion Tennessee would have received would have helped to keep that hospital

Rightly so, the governor stressed his program to address the opioid epidemic. But let's not forget, the single biggest step Tennessee could take to address the problem is to expand Medicaid.

The governor stressed making Tennessee government more efficient. This is all well and good except in many cases this means cutting services for our citizens and the elimination of state positions which results in longer lines, poor customer service, and citizens experiencing more time away

from their work and family. One need look no further than the continual threat of closing our Driver Testing Center here in McMinnville. Our local officials are to be commended for keeping the center open the last two years, but it borders on ridiculous that the local community is funding what is a state responsibility.

Gov. Haslam highlighted the nearly \$450 million he has appropriated for educator salaries across the state over the last several years. However less than that has actually reached the educators during the prior five years in many school districts. The Tennessee Board of Education diverted much of the funding to school infrastructure and health care benefits.

While these are needed improvements, all money promised to hard-working, dedicated educators didn't make it into their wallets, and it appears the governor is touting an accomplishment that didn't happen.

A new governor will take office next January. Hopefully whoever takes office will serve this state well and address these overlooked issues.

Lee Campbell Shadowlawn Street McMinnville

# I WON'T ACCEPT YOUR APOLOGY UNTIL YOU POST IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA. 0

# Policies hurt old, white men

**COLUMNISTS** 

STEVE & COKIE

ROBERTS

Here's who President Trump's anti-immigrant policies would hurt the most: his own base. That is, the aging white males without college degrees who form the core of his support system.

Without a vast infusion of youthful, hardworking, tax-paying immigrants, this country will find it much harder to afford the generous benefits promised to these Trump supporters as they age and retire.

"Trump's immigration plan may seem to be a politically expedient way to reach older whites, who are fearful of the nation's changing demography,"

demographer William Frey told Ron Brownstein of The Atlantic. But "as more white baby boomers retire, the nation's labor force and economic vitality will increasingly

depend on nonwhite immigrants and their children. They will become prime contributors to Social Security and Medicare."

Fred Hiatt argues in *The Washington* Post that "naked self-interest" should prompt Trump supporters to back an increase in immigration, not a rollback. "A vote to choke off immigration is a vote for stagnation and decline,' he writes

Trump has spent his entire career stirring up resentment against foreigners, particularly nonwhite, non-Christian "others." Barack Obama was a closet Muslim from Kenya. Mexicans were rapists. Syrians were terrorists. Africa sent the "worst of the worst" to the U.S. Haitians and Salvadorans were from "s---hole" countries. Only white Norwegians seemed to be

acceptable -- a clear sign of his racist impulses and undertones.

The president continued the same deeply cynical, closed-minded theme in his State of the Union speech, demonizing immigrants as gang members and terrorists, without a single word about the enormous benefits they bring every single day.

Reducing legal immigration is seriously misguided from an economic perspective as well. Trump told Congress he wants to "put America first," but his immigration policy would do exactly the opposite. Sen. Tom Cotton, lead sponsor of the bill

Trump endorses, asserts that these newcomers have caused "a sharp decline in wages for working Americans." But that is flat-out wrong.

The nonpartisan National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine did an exhaustive survey of the research on just this issue, and concluded the impact of immigration on wages is "very small" and dissipates quickly. "Immigration has an overall positive impact on long-run economic growth in the U.S.," the 2016 report stated.

Social Security estimates the number of seniors will grow from 48 million now to 86 million in 2050. But if immigration is cut in half, projects the Pew Research Center, the workforce will not grow at all.

In short, when Trumpians cheer the president's call for reduced immigration, they are endangering their own future. As Trump might tweet: SAD.

Steve and Cokie Roberts can be contacted by email at stevecokie@gmail.com.

## THE SCOOP **JAMES CLARK**

STAHLER. 1/29

#### Would we pay \$70 for show at Park?

We know local residents will pay \$150 to see Kid Rock in Nashville and \$300 to see Justin Timberlake.

The question is how much will people pay to see entertainment at the Park Theater?

So far, Park Theater ticket prices have lingered in the \$20 to \$25 range, give or take a few dollars. The entertainment has been commensurate with the ticket price.

There's nothing wrong with that and I'm not here to disparage the many fine performers who have graced the Park Theater stage over nearly three years. My point is to ask if it's perhaps time to lure some more mid-level bands to the Park, which would result in some more mid-level ticket prices.

Would you pay \$50 to see The Oak Ridge Boys at the Park? How about \$70 a ticket to see The Doobie Brothers?

We're willing to pay well north of \$100 a ticket to see a concert somewhere else. Would we ever pay \$100 to see a show in McMinnville?

"We have to grow to get there," said Park Theater manager Kevin Roberts. "Maybe it's something where I can talk the board into one big show a year and give a band like Kansas or Boston a try.

That would certainly bring buzz to McMinnville and there's something special about seeing a band in a smaller venue that can't be captured when seeing a concert at Bridgestone Arena. Exile keyboard player Marlon Hargis talked about this when I interviewed him Wednesday.

'When you're playing to 5,000 or 10,000, you're not relating personally to people. It's just a crowd," said Hargis. "It's totally different when people are sitting 10 feet away and you're often having conversations in between songs.'

Being cozy does have its drawbacks, the main one being money. With some 500 seats at the Park Theater, there's no way to compare to the likes of 20,000-seat Bridgestone Arena. At \$20 a ticket, a sellout at the Park would bring \$10,000. It would bring \$400,000 at Bridgestone Arena.

There are also problems with doing the math based on a sellout, according to Roberts. "Everybody always tells us their band will sell out, but that doesn't always happen."

Roberts has worked hard developing a 2018 lineup that's nearly full and is taking steps toward bigger names. Big Šmo is a country rapper who has gained recent attention and he'll be performing at the Park on March 9.

Little Texas was a red hot country band in the 1990s with No. 1 singles and Grammy nominations. Little Texas will perform at the Park on May 4. The renowned Glenn Miller Orchestra, which performs around the world, will be at the Park later in the year.

There's no doubt Park Theater revitalization has been a glowing success, an apple pie bursting with flavor for our community. It was Casey Kasem who always reminded us to "reach for the stars" during his weekly Top 40 countdown.

When it comes to the Park Theater, I think it's time to test the waters and see just how high we can reach.

Standard editor James Clark can be reached at 473-2191.

### Social media nurtures fake news

**ON RELIGION** 

**TERRY** 

**M**ATTINGLY

Maybe it's author Michael "Fire and Fury" Wolff hinting that President Trump is having an affair with United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley.

Maybe it's the waves of lies from Russian hackers that have flooded major social media sites, causing global confusion and chaos.

Maybe it's rumors that Pope Francis has a brain tumor or that he's preparing for a Third Vatican Council, one sure to split the Church of Rome.

Whatever "fake news" is, the pope's World Communications Day message made it clear he believes Satan is behind it all.

The problem is that few people -especially in culture-wars America --

agree on what "fake news" means. It's hard to imagine a more partisan term, when Trump shouts it at a rally.

Concerning the crucial definition issue, Pope Francis wrote: "It refers to the spreading

of disinformation online or in the traditional media. It has to do with false information based on nonexistent or distorted data meant to deceive and manipulate the reader. Spreading fake news can serve to advance specific goals, influence political decisions, and serve economic interests.

"The effectiveness of fake news is primarily due to its ability to mimic real news. ... It grasps people's attention by appealing to stereotypes and common social prejudices, and exploiting instantaneous emotions like

anxiety, contempt and frustration." Fake news can, in social media networks, spread so fast that "authoritative denials" fail to contain the dam-

age, said Francis. Part of the problem, however, is that consumers now distrust many authoritative voices in journalism and the

government, noted veteran New York

City journalist Clemente Lisi. Some journalists are part of the

problem, but others carry on doing accurate, balanced reporting. Lots of fake information flows through social media channels, but many proposals to fact-check and control these public forums are frightening in terms of their implications for free speech. Would the public trust their new pro-

Once again, what is fake news? Yes, it's rumors, acidic political fairy tales and outright hoaxes. But can the fakenews label be pinned on screwed-up, mistake-plagued news about current events? Are politicos accurate in yelling "fake news" whenever faced with

information they don't like and want to see suppressed?

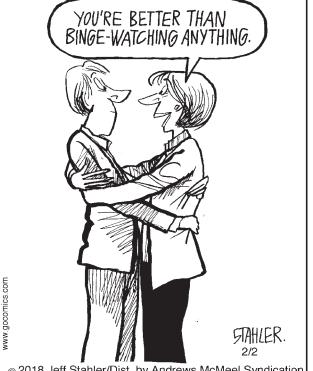
The bottom line, argued Lisi, is clear: "Fake news is a real problem, but the devil really is in the details when it comes

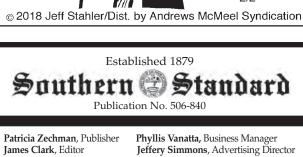
to who's really to blame."

For example, "unmasking" fake news can be hard, argued the pope, because so many news consumers are only paying attention to news sources that reaffirm what they already believe. They never encounter voices and information that "could effectively challenge prejudices and generate constructive dialogue.'

Thus, news consumers -- using social media -- can easily turn into "unwilling accomplices in spreading biased and baseless ideas," he said. "The tragedy of disinformation is that it discredits others, presenting them as enemies, to the point of demonizing them. ... Fake news is a sign of intolerant and hypersensitive attitudes, and leads only to the spread of arrogance and hatred.

Terry Mattingly is the editor of GetReligion.org. He lives in Oak Ridge.





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