

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.

OTHER VIEWS

Curbing vaping will be an uphill battle

The more e-cigarettes grow in popularity and the more they are studied, the more concern arises over their health effects.

While much still needs to be learned about vaping, it's clear teen vaping is a dangerous practice that is likely to create more addicted people, more cigarette smokers and more illness.

Juul Labs has peddled its e-cigarettes with the same skill big tobacco used to hook youth and create a base of lifetime users.

The nicotine taken in with vaping is addictive, and when used in adolescence or young adulthood creates impacts on brain development.

The liquid in e-cigarettes is marketed in a variety of candy flavors clearly aimed at getting kids, unaware of the dangers, to begin using what they often believe is a harmless product.

The Minnesota Department of Health's most recent survey from 2018 reports 1 in 5 high school students use e-cigarettes -- a nearly 50 percent increase since 2014.

While backers of vaping say it is a way cigarette smokers can switch to a less dangerous habit, health officials say e-cigarette use increases the likelihood of smoking cigarettes among young people.

Now comes disturbing news that shows a potential link between vaping and pulmonary disease.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports more than 150 cases of possible vaping-linked lung disease. One person who vaped and developed pulmonary disease has died.

It's too early to know exactly if vaping is the primary cause of the mystery lung diseases, but the CDC is alarmed enough to begin a full investigation into it.

While public awareness over the dangers of vaping is growing, it is a problem that has spread so rapidly and has created such immense financial gain for Juul that slowing its growth will be daunting.

States and the federal government need to step up their efforts.

San Francisco, where Juul Labs is based, became the first city to ban all sales of electronic cigarettes in the city.

Eighteen states have passed laws banning the sale of tobacco, although not all include e-cigarettes.

It's long past time the Minnesota Legislature raise the state's age for buying tobacco and e-cigarettes to 21. So far, 29 cities and four counties in Minnesota have raised the legal buying age for tobacco to 21, but state lawmakers have failed to act.

It's also time for a federal ban on TV advertising for e-cigarettes. While cigarette advertising has been banned on TV for nearly 50 years, vaping isn't addressed in the law.

While going up against vaping will be an uphill battle, it isn't one that should be abandoned.

For decades society failed to challenge big tobacco companies and generations of people were addicted.

The same shouldn't happen with e-cigarettes.

— Mankato Free Press

The Daily Journal

VOLUME 146, ISSUE 171

READER SERVICES

Main phone: 218-736-7511
 Fax: 736-5919
 Address: 914 E. Channing Ave., Fergus Falls
 Web: fergusfallsjournal.com
 Classifieds: 739-7010
 Display advertising: 739-7021
 Photo reprints: 739-7036
 Want to subscribe? Call 736-7511
 Didn't get a paper? Call 736-7511 and we'll make it right.

RATES

By mail
 6 months: \$84.00 12 months: \$168.00

CANCELLATION

Daily Journal subscriptions are non-refundable (any unused balance will be donated to Newspapers in Education).
 When purchasing or renewing a subscription, please choose a package that best suits your needs.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Ken Harty, Publisher 739-7019
 kenh@fergusfallsjournal.com
 Zach Stich, Managing Editor 739-7030
 zach.stich@fergusfallsjournal.com
 Dee Forkey, Bookkeeper 739-7016
 dee.forkey@fergusfallsjournal.com
 Mary Sieling, Assistant Advertising Manager
 mary.sieling@fergusfallsjournal.com 739-7021
 Deb Erickson, Graphics Supervisor 739-7039
 deb.erickson@fergusfallsjournal.com

MARKETING TEAM

Tom Grout, 739-7037
 Amanda Childs, 739-7018
 Jim Sturgeon, 739-7011

NEWS TEAM

Johanna Armstrong, 739-7036
 Brian Hansel, 739-7022
 Mat Holding Eagle, 739-7028

The Daily Journal is published by Fergus Falls Newspapers Inc. at 914 E. Channing, Fergus Falls, Minnesota, 56537, Tuesdays through Saturdays except holidays. Periodicals postage paid at Fergus Falls, Minnesota.
 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Daily Journal, 914 E. Channing Ave., Fergus Falls, MN 56537.
 USPS Publication No. 189880

An inspirational woman, dedicated to helping others

Born in 1932, on a farm in Pine Lake Township about 5 miles Northwest of New York Mills, Bernice Koehler Johnson has faced critical transition periods in her life.



OZZIE TOLLEFSON
 The Lone Driver Notebook

Perhaps the most significant choice came in 2001. At age 69, after a career in real estate and tutoring foreign students, she packed her bags and went to Thailand to teach English to Shan refugees from Burma. An ethnic cleansing war had gone on for 60 years, forcing groups like the Shan to flee their homes in Burma to escape persecution by the Burmese military. Many have sought refuge in Thailand.

Think of it. She was 69 years old. Most of us have retired at that age, content with building birdhouses, knitting, reading and visiting. Not Bernice. She was off on an adventure that took her into the unknown jungle of Thailand to teach the English language. Bernice is small in body, but large in spirit. Her eyes, her warm smile and gentle demeanor express a candor determination. Nothing flamboyant nor demonstrative, her soft voice emanates a reassurance that all good things are possible.

I recently read her book, "The Shan: Refugees Without a Camp," and was moved by her unselfish efforts to meet the challenges of teaching a class of 25 foreign students, ranging in age from 14 to 29. Structured like a daily journal,

Bernice gets into the nitty-gritty of teaching foreign students. First there's the problem of remembering unfamiliar names like Mung Zuen, Sai Hseng, and Ohn Win. But soon Bernice had developed a loving relationship with each of her students. They respected her and were eager to please her. They often addressed her as "Teacher beautiful." Many expressed the feeling that she was like their mother.

She no longer teaches, but is active in expanding the dream she envisioned 18 years ago. There are now three different schools in three separate camps. She has recruited friends to assist her, like Mary Worner of Underwood and Josh Kletschka, a young banker who helped create Schools for Shan Refugees, a 501(c)3 charitable organization established to help Shan refugees from Burma get an education in Thailand. Go to their website for information on donating to this worthy cause: www.shanrefugeeschools.org.

Mary Worner belongs to the Unitarian Church of Underwood, where Bernice came to speak on Aug. 3. Mary helped organize a Thai food potluck fundraising dinner held at the home of Katy Olson and her husband, Ron Roller. A generous \$2,428 was raised for the Shan schools. It's important to mention--this is not missionary work. There is no effort by UCU to change the culture of the Shan; it's strictly about education and physical needs. I asked Worner about Bernice's successes. She said, "Bernice Johnson has done more good for more people during her retirement years than any one I know.



SUBMITTED

INSPIRING: Bernice Koehler Johnson launched a new career at age 69, teaching Shan refugees from Burma.

She has made it possible for hundreds of Shan children and teens to get an education that gives them hope and chances of securing work and lives outside of the migrant camps."

I asked Bernice what her work with the Shan students has done for her personally. She said, "Years ago I read a definition of existentialism: 'Life has no meaning except that which you create for it.' My work with the Shan students has given meaning to my life. I was most impressed by the Shan students almost universal desire to help others. Now, as adults, they are doing just that!" She added a message for teachers and parents. "Show them through word and deed how rewarding it is to help others, regardless of their race or religion."

In Bernice's book she lists the individual successes of

Shan students she taught. A shy boy, who learned computer technology by reading two books, is now creating websites for Shan organizations. Another boy started a radio station. Her youngest student at age 14, is now a graphic designer. She will be attending Waldorf University in Forest City, Iowa. A boy is a journalist for a Shan newspaper, and another is a member of the Burma parliament. The list goes on and on.

Let me close with a line from "The Summer Days" by Mary Oliver. "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" Bernice quoted that line when she spoke at the UCU. She answered that question at age 69. "Help others in need."

Ozzie Tollefson lives near Phelps Mill and is the author of "Mr. Teacher."

POINT OF THE PEN



Eulogy for flowers

It was an unusual assignment at a recent writers group. We had to write a eulogy about an inanimate object. I decided to use flowers as my subject as there are so many varieties to choose from. When I had finished writing, I had included 34 flowers in my short story. It was a rather silly story. But my fellow members enjoyed it so much that they encouraged me to share it with you. See if you can find all 34 varieties.

Poor mourning (morning) Gloria. She was mourning the death of two sisters, Daisy and Aster. Daisy had died of a bleeding heart and Aster died of an infection of a masterwort. Gloria had just returned from her nephew's funeral at the school shooting at Columbine. And now this funeral. It was too much. All her friends were in attendance.

The pallbearers were Lily who lived in the valley, wild Iris from the shady part of town and Susan, who had a black eye from a bachelor button party the night before. Her friend Holly had hocked her last diamond bracelet to attend the funeral.

Daisy and Aster looked so serene in their forget-me-not caskets. Aster's buttercup hair was covered with baby's breath. Daisy wore her granny bonnet with whirling butterflies on it.

The music made a lady's ear drop. There were coral bells ringing and "Baby Blue Eyes" played his golden trumpet.

Busy Lizzie was in the kitchen serving lunch with the Quaker ladies. They served a firecracker of a meal.

Gloria was so upset, she forgot her powder puff in the periwinkle-colored bathroom. She had felt so much passion for the two sisters. She became a wallflower during the remainder of the funeral.

She went home, covered herself with a blanket and mourned alone. She put on her lady slippers and flannel flowered shirt. She sat by her butterfly bush and found peace among the lilies.

Thank you for sharing my story with you today. I hope you too, find peace among the lilies. Bye.



JEAN LEMMON
 Home Away From Home

Jean Lemmon is a columnist for The Fergus Falls Daily Journal.