

THE ELLIOTT COUNTY NEWS

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The Ten Commandments: A 'warning label' for our lives and our politics

Warning signs are put in place for a reason.

When we see a sign that says "Bridge may ice in cold weather" or "Caution: flooding ahead" we instinctively are alert that we should be paying close attention to what's in front of us.

Likewise, the warning labels on food or drug products may be written in fine print — but they are not to be neglected. Ignoring the warnings could cause serious problems.

Warning signs in our daily lives are intended for our good and should be heeded. That's one reason why we are grateful that the historic Ten Commandments monument is being returned to the State Capitol grounds. It serves as a visible "warning sign" about God's expectation for the way in which we conduct our lives — including our politics.

Some in the secular world, including many in the news media, wrongly buy into the notion that the monument is simply a religious display that has no place on public property. But such logic is deeply flawed. The Ten Commandments monument reflects a universal moral code that our Founding Fathers embraced and encouraged others to follow.

Historian David Barton correctly states that the founders never envisioned a secular civil government.

As John Adams said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

The Ten Commandments provide a moral and ethical guardrail that all should follow. Why? Because it is for our good. Who can rationally argue



The Ten Commandments monument is currently displayed in Hopkinsville.

that it is wrong to steal, to kill, to lie, to covet or to commit adultery?

Yes, some of the Commandments relate specifically to one's relationship with God, and there is no need to apologize for that. Rather, we hope that they will serve as a constant reminder of God's holiness, our sinfulness and our need for a Savior to repair the broken relationship with our Creator.

The words of Abraham Lincoln are helpful here. He was walking down a hallway in the White House when he overheard someone say, "I certainly hope God is on the Union side."

Lincoln said, "No, that's not right. I am not concerned about that at all. The Lord is always on the side of the right. My constant anxiety and prayer is that I and this nation should always be on the Lord's side."

In this time of fractured, partisan politics, those are good words to remember, and the Ten Commandments monument will be a good reminder of what that looks like.

—KyToday

Social Security Matters

By Russell Gloor, National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens

Ask Rusty — Can My Wife and I get Spouse Benefits from each other?

Dear Rusty: My wife and I are currently collecting Social Security. We both started receiving SS at 62 years old. That said, we get by on a tight budget.

A retired friend told us about an option which allows a spouse to collect half (1/2) of the other spouse's SS monthly income. My question has two parts: 1. Can we both collect on each other's SS? And 2. Are there any pitfalls? Signed: Seeking an Increase

Dear Seeking: Well, I'm afraid spousal benefits aren't quite that simple. One spouse may be eligible for additional benefits from the other, but only if that spouse's personal Social Security retirement benefit at their full retirement age (FRA) is less than half (50%) of the other spouse's FRA entitlement. Note that for spouse benefits, FRA amounts are used regardless of when you actually claim benefits. Full retirement age for both you and your wife is 66, so that means that if you both claimed at 62 your FRA entitlements were higher — about 25% more — than you are both currently receiving.

Since you applied for benefits some time ago at about the same age, one way to estimate if one of you may be entitled to an additional amount as a spouse is to evaluate your current monthly amounts. If either of you are getting a benefit

which is less than half of the other's amount, it's possible that the one with the lower benefit may be entitled to more as a spouse. And note, only one spouse is eligible for benefits — you cannot both get spouse benefits from each other.

Another way to explore this is for the spouse with the lowest monthly Social Security benefit to contact Social Security at 1.800.772.1213 to ask if spouse benefits are available. Noting that contacting SS these days can be a time-consuming process, yet another way is for you to provide us (the AMAC Foundation's SS Advisory Service) with both of your current monthly SS benefit amounts (before any deductions) and the exact ages when each of you claimed. Using that information, we can do the math to see if either of you might be entitled to more as a spouse. But, in the end, only the spouse with the lower benefit may be eligible, and then, only if their FRA entitlement (not their actual current amount) is less than 50% of the other spouse's FRA entitlement.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadviser@amacfoundation.org.

Tid-Bits

STATE CAPITOL TO CLOSE FOR RENOVATION

When the legislature adjourned last week, it will be the last time the lawmakers gather in their chambers until 2028. That's because the Capitol is undergoing a full renovation and the State Capitol will close. But the legislature needs some place to hold its sessions at least through 2026 and 2027, and possibly some into 2028, and the state is building a "new" home for the General Assembly, adjacent to the Capitol Annex. That's where legislator offices are located and all committees meet. The "new" facility will cost in the neighborhood of \$14 million and should be finished in December. The full renovation of the Capitol is going to be in the \$291.5 million range.

—David Thompson.
 Exec. Director.
 Kentucky Press Assn.

TEN COMMANDMENTS WILL RETURN TO CAPITOL GROUNDS

Gov. Andy Beshear has allowed legislation that would return a Ten Commandments monument to the State Capitol grounds, to become law without his signature. The monument was donated by the Kentucky Aerie of the Fraternal Order of Eagles in 1971 and displayed on the Capitol grounds until the 1980s, when it was moved to storage due to a construction project. A later ruling by the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals prohibiting its return was upheld and the monument was returned to the Fraternal Order of Eagles and given to the care of the organization's chapter in Hopkinsville.

However, that order was negated by another high court ruling in 2005 that was based on the historical nature of the monument.

The sponsor of the latest legislation, designated House Joint Resolution 15, Rep. Shane Baker, R-Somerset, noted, "Returning the monument to the Capitol grounds is historic restoration, acknowledging the history and tradition of the Commonwealth and our nation."

NEW LAW ALLOWS LEARNERS PERMITS FOR 15-YEAR-OLDS

Now that a new state law, House Bill 15, has taken effect, allowing 15-year-olds to earn their driver's permits, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet is working quickly to implement the change by making system upgrades so a credential can be issued allowing eligible applicants to take the written permit test. Beginning April 2, applicants can start making an appointment with the Kentucky State Police.

The new law only allows more time for eligible drivers to hold a permit. State law still requires you to be 16 to obtain a license (intermediate). For individuals who have made an appointment prior to that date, please reschedule with Kentucky State Police to prevent delays.

Rollback of Ky.'s water pollution reg. becomes law

From A Story By Liam Niemeyer Of The Kentucky Lantern

FRANKFORT, Ky., March 28 — A controversial bill that would significantly roll back Kentucky's ability to regulate water pollution will become law after the GOP-controlled legislature on Thursday overrode its veto by Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear.

Senate Bill 89, sponsored by Sen. Scott Madon, R-Pineville, would considerably narrow the definition of state waters that are regulated by the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet. Madon, with the backing of the Kentucky Coal Association, has touted the bill as a move to relieve industries from housing construction to coal mining of bureaucratic barriers.

Counties and cities reliant on groundwater to supply their water systems and environmental groups have lambasted the bill as potentially opening the state's water resources to pollution, threatening the groundwater of hundreds of thousands of Kentuckians who rely on rural public water utilities and private wells.

HAPPINESS

Happiness never decreases by being shared. —Buddha

Uncommon Sense

By Dr. Glenn Mollette



Column: When Do People Die?

A Catholic Priest, A Jewish Rabbi and a Baptist minister were discussing the beginning of life.

The Priest said, "Life begins at conception. The Rabbi said he believe at birth. The Baptist minister thought for a minute and said, "I believe life begins when the last child leaves home and the dog dies."

While there are different opinions about when life begins, what is the answer to the question, "When does life end?" Most of us would agree when we breath our last breath is when it's over for us. However, too often the ending of life is even more grim than us fighting for a breath of air and then we are nothing but a body of flesh and bone for some else to dispose.

Too often life for many ends months or maybe even years before our final physical moment. Actually, possibly it has already happened to you and you haven't even realized that you are already dead. You died and you didn't even know it. You've been starring at your television, scrolling through social media and maybe even walking around the aisle of the grocery store just as dead as old King Tut, but not physically, just mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

It happens to the best of

people. You lose all interest in life. You have nothing that you look forward to. There is nothing you particularly want to do. No place you really want to go and nobody you want to be around. You're dying, because you've given up.

There are several scenarios that can bring us to this motionless zombie stage of life. Losing a spouse, losing a job, losing a child, a business failure, financial failure, a major sickness or just outliving all your family and your friends. Too often people detach themselves from everyone or anything going on which limits their activity and interest even more.

No doubt crippling disease changes our personalities and our interests. Battling cancer, diabetes, a neurological disease or take your pick of many more, changes our attitude about wanting to be out and about and doing what we use to do. Going to church, the local Kiwanis

Meeting, or singing in the community choir may not have the same appeal.

Regardless of what you or a loved one has going on it's well to take notice of this stage of life and not be too hard on your friend or yourself. Here is what you must try:

1. Keep moving. Move whatever you can. Even if you

are wheel chair bound, move your mind and whatever part of your body that you can move.

2. Keep doing. Do something. Read, pray, exercise, go to church, walk. Clean your house. Work a job, mentor people. Be a friend to others. Use your imagination.

3. Keep trying. As long as you can breathe, don't quit.

4. Have something to look forward to. This can be anything. Someone's birthday.

A trip to the store. Moving the yard. A family gathering. A weekend trip, a movie, church, it can be most anything.

5. Enjoy whatever you do. Laugh and have a good time.

The only person who can keep you down is yourself. Your number one obstacle is usually yourself. If we can overcome what we mentally put ourselves through then we have a good chance of a good day. A good thought to add here, is the scripture, "If God be for us who can be against us?" Romans 8:21 Another one is "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philipians 4:13

Now, go and have a good day!

Dr. Glenn Mollette is the author of *Uncommon Sense*. Available wherever books are sold.

Policy update supports fiscal responsibility: SSA

March 10 — The Social Security Administration (SSA) announced it will increase the default overpayment withholding rate for Social Security beneficiaries to 100 percent of a person's monthly benefit. The Office of the Chief Actuary estimates this change will result in an increase in overpayment recoveries (i.e., a program savings) of about \$7 billion in the next decade.

"We have the significant responsibility to be good stewards of the trust funds for the American people," said Lee Dudek, Acting Commissioner of Social Security. "It is our duty to revise the overpayment repayment policy back to full withholding, as it was during the Obama administration and first Trump administration, to properly safeguard taxpayer funds."

The agency strives to pay the right person the right amount at the right time, and issues correct payments to most beneficiaries. When an overpayment does occur, the agency is required by law to seek repayment.

As of March 27, the agency will begin mailing notices about the new 100 percent withholding rate, rather than

the recent adjustment of just 10 percent. The withholding rate change applies to new overpayments related to Social Security benefits. The withholding rate for current beneficiaries with an overpayment before March 27 will not change and no action is required. The withholding rate for Supplemental Security Income overpayments remains 10 percent.

People who are overpaid after March 27 will automatically be placed in full recovery at a rate of 100 percent of the Social Security payment. If someone cannot afford full recovery of their overpayment, they can contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or their local office to request a lower rate of recovery.

Additionally, people have the right to appeal the overpayment decision or the amount. They can ask Social Security to waive collection of the overpayment, if they believe it was not their fault and can't afford to pay it back. The agency does not pursue recoveries while an initial appeal or waiver is pending.

For more information about overpayments and appeal rights, visit www.ssa.gov.

DID YOU KNOW?

The April birthstone diamond is a symbol of clarity and strength. Sparkling with an internal fire all its own, diamond is one of the world's most sought-after and adored gemstones. Diamond is so strong, in fact, that its name comes from

the Greek word "adamas," which means "invincible" or "unbreakable." The discovery of diamonds near Kimberley, South Africa, in the late 1860s marked the beginning of the modern diamond market. Entrepreneur Cecil Rhodes estab-

lished De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited in 1888, and by 1900 De Beers controlled an estimated 90 percent of the world's production of rough diamonds.

— The Gemological Institute of America

Thank You For Reading The Paper!!!

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The Elliott County Fiscal Court is requesting proposals from qualified consulting engineering firms for professional services related to the design, permitting, bidding support, and construction oversight of a small wastewater pump station project in Elliott County, Kentucky. The selected firm will be responsible for services including preliminary engineering studies, preparation of plans and specifications, assistance with permitting and regulatory compliance, coordination with relevant agencies, bidding and contractor selection support, construction management, and project close-out documentation. Interested firms should submit proposals that include information about the company's history, size, and relevant project experience, key personnel resumes and roles and references for similar projects. Proposals will be evaluated based on criteria such as relevant experience, qualifications of key personnel, and quality of references. Five hard copies of the proposal must be submitted to Myron Lewis, Elliott County Judge Executive, at 3390 N KY-7, Sandy Hook, KY 41171. Proposals must be received by 4/15/2025 by 4 P.M. Elliott County Fiscal Court reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, request additional information, and waive any informalities or irregularities in the proposal process. For questions regarding this request, please contact Myron Lewis, Elliott County Judge Executive, at 606-738-5335 or ejudge@mrct.com.

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