

Opinions & Letters to the Editor

Libraries are enriching the community

BY KASEY MORRIS-FLOYD

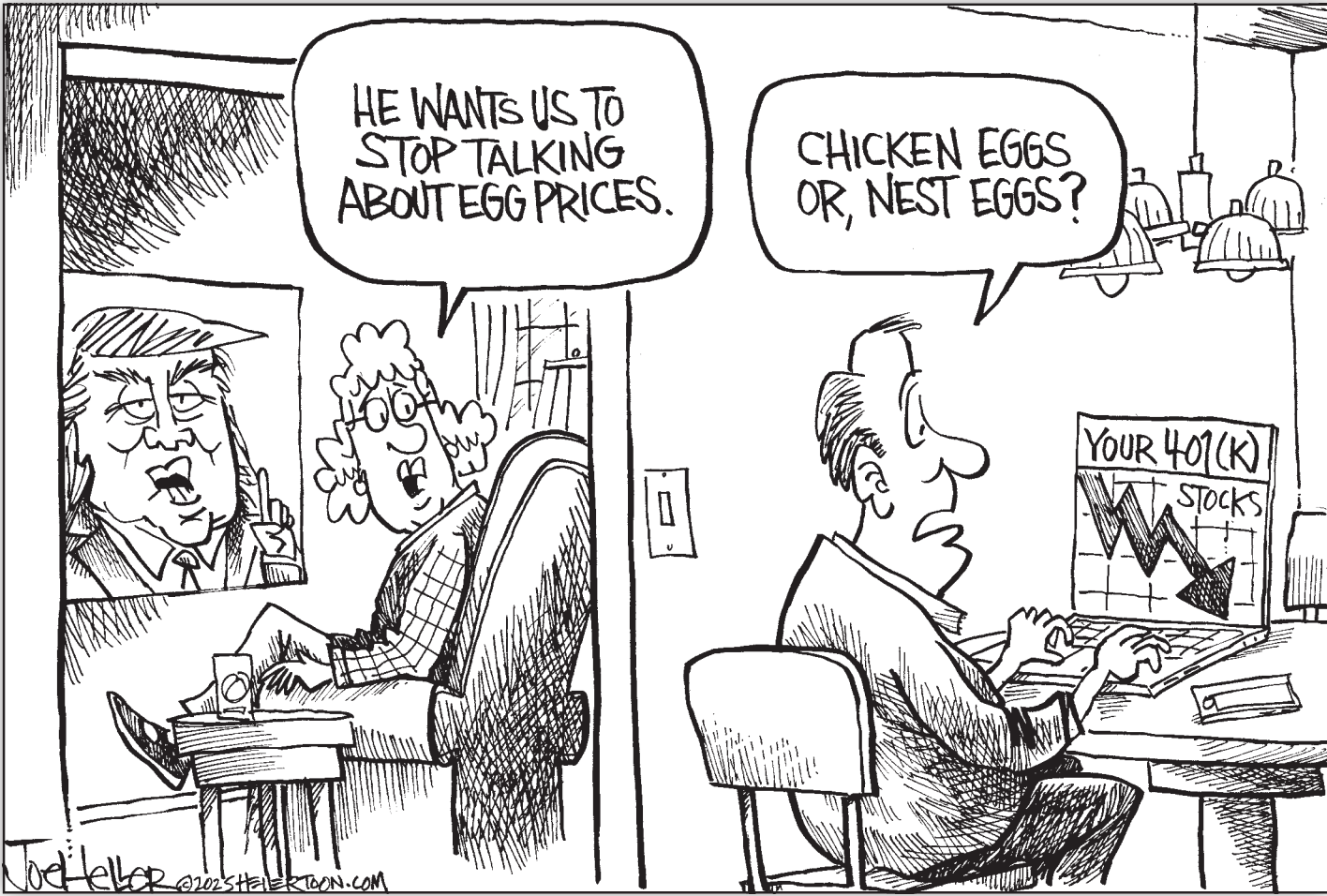
In the spirit of National Reading Month, I thought I would drop in, stretch my “writing legs,” and provide some reading content for a change.

My title might be Advertising Director, but if you read the article Mr. Myrick wrote about my promotion, you’ll know I have an abundance of interests—probably too many—one of which is occasionally dabbling in writing. Therefore, I am going to get a tad bit personal with you, Mountain Advocate readers (or, shall I say, Mountain Advocates?), to better introduce myself.

The Knox County Public Library has a very special place in my heart. Growing up, my grandparents often kept me while my parents were at work and during summer break from school. My grandmother, Jackie Moran, was explicitly fond of trips to the library, and we frequented it during the summer. I remember her bringing in her pre-read issues of Woman’s Day, Woman’s World, and Southern Living once they had achieved a tall enough pile next to her recliner. She always talked about passing things on to others to enjoy. A sentiment I believe any public library embodies. Going to ours felt like a media-specific grocery trip. Stocking up for the week ahead. I can remember that my most notable favorite books to check out were the ones from the DK Eyewitness series, a visual dictionary from Star Wars: Episode One, The Phantom Menace, and (strangely enough) a Barbie Collector’s guide that showed all of the early dolls up to the 1980s - all things that nourished my varied and growing interests.

During that time, the television in my “playroom” of my grandparents’ house relied heavily on the children’s programs on PBS or VHS tapes to be entertaining. Luckily, I could also check out all kinds of movies on VHS from our library. I rented the Robin Williams version of Jumanji so many times that it almost felt like my own personal copy.

As an adult, viewing my childhood and hometown with a much more sentimental and aware lens, it bears stating that our little local library impacted me. As a child, I HAD plenty of books at home. But what could access to an updated and well-stocked library mean to the children, teens, adults and even seniors who don’t have as much? It’s no secret that our county has a large population struggling. And when you think about it, most of us are closer to poverty than we are to becoming millionaires. Libraries are resource hubs for communities. Providing far more than books and movies. They host various events and workshops ranging from hosting the Reptile Museum to a Lego Club to a demonstration of grafting apple trees. Something is bound to be coming up that speaks to your specific interest or, at the very least, seems useful to learn more



about.

We all should desire community enrichment. Human connection is something many folks are starving for nowadays. I could not think of something better for a town or coun-

ty than a building full of books, movies, access to computers and internet connection, workshops or events available for free or low cost. We have been fortunate to have those at the helm of our Knox County Library take such

an active role in revitalizing activities for our community. I genuinely hope a change can occur and we can have the facility that both the staff and the community of Knox County deserves.

EDITORIAL

Let’s call it for what it is... fear.

Each passing year, Kentucky newspapers fight the same tired battle. Sometimes, it’s a different face at the frontlines, but rarely does a legislative session pass that at least one, usually, multiple representatives and senators take up the mantle of “reforming public notices.”

The fight against public notices is an issue the average taxpayer knows nothing about. Why? Because it is not something your typical legislator campaigns on. Why don’t they campaign on it? Because the facts are against them, and there isn’t a logical argument against the “reforms” proposed.

Many legislators take to the floor by sponsoring or co-sponsoring legislation each year aimed at gutting newspapers. They will never call it that, publicly, at least. But that’s what it is. The argument is written in a way that sounds good on the surface.

The tired argument year after year is that public notices, such as bid notices and budget details, should be published on websites run by local governments and government agencies.

An example: ABC Mowing & Excavating has struggled to keep afloat since the pandemic. They have the workforce and the equipment to tackle some vast landscaping and mowing projects, such as school system-wide projects. A public notice for bids would indicate that the local school system is looking for someone to award this contract to for the coming year. This bid practice happens with everything from lawn care to banking services; from the small details to the major ones, public notices keep the playing field fair, at least as far as “advertising” the need for the bid.

A public notice placed on anything other than newsprint, which is forever and cannot be edited, once printed, stands the chance for confusion in where to find these notices, and furthermore, websites get hacked or compromised constantly. Many websites don’t last for more than a couple of years before someone else swoops in to build and maintain a site. In most cases, a flashy new site launches, and the content residing on the old site is gone. At the very least, this possibility exists by using only a government-controlled website.

I haven’t met one person that is opposed to using websites for public notices as one avenue to publish the notice. Some people will never pick up a print newspaper and that’s fine. But most people looking for these notices do.

The argument falls flat to the ears of the average citizen. Yes, public notices cost money, but they account for much less than 1% of a local government’s budget. That’s an incredibly small price to pay for transparency.

At the end of the day, it’s not about what it costs to publish a notice. It’s what’s in it for the legislators pushing the bills. It’s an effort to decrease transparency so you, the voting taxpayer, has no clue what they’re up to. It’s not money. It’s about fear. It’s about the fear that the activities going on locally and in Frankfort will be brought to light.

Thank you, again, to our State Representative, Tom O’Dell Smith, for voting NO on HB 368, the latest House bill designed to pull the wool over the public’s eyes.

In case you didn’t know, all public notices in Kentucky are already online, for free access to everyone, at kypublicnotice.com.

Even a broken clock is right twice a day

A fellow walked out of an antique shop carrying a big grandfather clock he’d just purchased. He had always wanted one and was happy to shell out big bucks for such a great find.

The fellow made it onto the sidewalk when an old drunk bumped into him, knocking the clock out of his hands. It broke all to pieces on the concrete.

“Look what you did,” the fellow said angrily.

“Why don’t you just wear a wristwatch like everyone else?” the old drunk asked.

Time tends to be very important to us on this

side of eternity. We keep our watches and clocks handy so we’ll always know the time of day. We have them on our arms, on our walls, on our phones, on our kitchen ranges, on our nightstands, in our offices, on our vehicle dashboards. Then, twice a year, we have to change all those clocks, at least those that don’t change automatically.

That can be quite the chore, especially with those dashboard clocks. I always struggle to remember which buttons to push and which dial to turn when it comes time to spring forward or fall back. I always



AIN’T IT THE TRUTH

Roger Alford
COLUMNIST

feel a great sense of accomplishment when I, through much trial and error, finally get done.

Perhaps you remem-

ber the time that the Lord set back the clock - well, it was actually a sundial - for King Hezekiah.

Hezekiah was ill and dying, and he prayed for healing. The Bible tells us he turned his face to a wall and wept as he prayed. God heard Hezekiah’s prayer and added 15 years to his life.

Hezekiah had the audacity to ask for proof that the Lord had answered his prayer. I find it fascinating that the Lord, in his great patience, provided that proof.

The prophet Isaiah, who was with Hezeki-

ah at the time, offered a time change as the proof. He asked Hezekiah whether he’d rather the Lord set the sundial forward 10 degrees or back 10 degrees?

Hezekiah thought about this for a moment and decided it would be a lot more difficult to set a sundial back 10 degrees. So, that’s what he asked for.

“And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord: and he brought the shadow 10 degrees backward” (2 Kings 20:11).

That was an incredible miracle. Think about what had to happen in the heav-

ens to make it happen. People have questioned for years how the Lord pulled that off. I’m glad for folks who don’t worry about the “how” but instead just marvel that He “did” it.

There are times when we, like the old drunk who thought the fellow was carrying around a grandfather clock so he’d know the time, can miss the obvious. And, in this case, the obvious is that there’s nothing our Lord can’t do...

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