Work well done is its own reward

BY TOMMY DRUEN
COLUMNIST

We often complain about the aches and pains of getting older, but there are a few quiet perks. One unexpected advantage I've discovered is that it's considerably easier to see my favorite bands in concert. For one thing, getting tickets is no longer a frantic scramble or constant busy signal. More importantly, I can actually afford to be where I can see the band without squinting. And there is nothing wrong with a reserved seat, as a sweaty mosh pit would probably leave me in traction.

Recently I joined with fellow members of my generation at a Better Than Ezra show. The band sounded every bit as sharp as they did when I first heard them back in 1995. They also understood their crowd, mixing in a few shrewdly chosen covers with their own hits. When they struck the opening chords of Sublime's "What I Got," something remarkable happened. Within seconds, the entire crowd erupted in unison, singing every lyric back toward the stage with an absolutely joyful fervor.

Even while singing along, my mind recalled the tragic history behind that song. For nearly a decade, Sublime had been little more than a scruffy California trio clawing for any foothold they could find. Frontman and guitarist Brad Nowell and his bandmates played rowdy backyard parties, slept in battered vans, scraped together pocket change for studio time, and handed out homemade cassette tapes. They spent years pouring their souls into their music during a time when practically nobody was paying the slightest bit of attention.

Then came 1996. In May, just two months before the band's major-label debut arrived in stores, Nowell died of a drug overdose in a motel room. He was only twenty-eight years old. When the self-titled album finally hit the shelves, it became a nationwide sensation. "What I Got" soared straight to No. 1 on the alternative chart, while tracks like "Santeria" and "Wrong Way" became ubiquitous anthems on rock stations. Sublime became one of the definitive sounds of the decade, yet Nowell was not there to witness it. He had paid every ounce of his dues, but never heard the thunderous applause that followed. It was over before it had begun.

It is a poignant reminder of an enduring truth: the person who plants the sapling rarely gets to enjoy the cooling shade of the full-grown tree. History is filled with creators whose genius only resonated long after they had left the room. Vincent van Gogh died believing himself to be a failure. Herman Melville published Moby-Dick in 1851, but it was not a commercial success. By the time he died in 1891, only a few thousand copies had been sold. Today, it is routinely regarded as one of the greatest American novels ever written. Gregor Mendel published his groundbreaking work on hybrid plants in 1866, but it attracted little attention during his lifetime. His work was essentially forgotten until scientists rediscovered it around the turn of the century, and today he is known as the father of modern genetics.

The list could go on. Sometimes recognition comes years later, sometimes generations later, and sometimes it never comes at all. In every case, the person who did the work may never know what it eventually meant to the rest of the world.

The lesson here is not that hard work is futile, but that applause makes for a terrible compass. If an endeavor is worth undertaking, its real value comes from the honest act of doing, not from whether the world throws a parade. A fresh blackberry pie does not taste one bit sweeter because a blue ribbon gets pinned to the tin at the county fair, and a well-tended flowerbed is not a waste of effort just because the neighbors drove past without turning their heads. And I dare say nobody is framing a meticulously crafted spreadsheet.

We cannot control whether other people notice our labor or appreciate our craftsmanship. If we spend our lives measuring our worth by the fickle opinions of strangers, we have surrendered our independence and handed them the ruler. Far better to do the work simply because it matters to your own heart.

Dr. Jonas Salk once said, "The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more." I like that. It's great to set goals for ourselves, and it's even better to achieve them, but we need to remember that they are our goals. They are personal.

Brad Nowell never got to stand beneath arena lights and hear a massive crowd sing his creations back to him. But nearly thirty years later, a rapidly-graying group of strangers was still lifting their voices to lyrics written in obscurity. The recognition may arrive late, or it may never show up at all. But when you put something genuine into the world, it has a way of outliving the silence.



Photo submitted

Preacher Kevin Strausbaugh and Tom Stivers accept Remington Crum's donation to Beaver Baptist Church for the purchase of food for Harrison County's Backpack Program. Crum raised $2,220 as his Beta Club service project.

Beta Club project yields large donation to H.C. Backpack Program

Remington Crum, a 5th grade student at Eastside Elementary, set a sizable goal for his Beta Club project this year. For his service project he decided to raise $1500 for his church's participation in the Harrison County Backpack Program, which provides food on the weekends and holidays for students facing food insecurity.

Crum not only met that goal he blew it out of the water, raising $2,220. Beaver Baptist Church will use the funds to buy food to fill bags for the county's Backpack Program.

This is Crum's second year raising funds for this cause. Last year, he raised $1,300.

"I don't want the kids I go to school with to go hungry," he said. Quoting his pastor, Kevin Strausbaugh, he added, "Brother Kevin always says the word only works if you work it."



Betsy Smith

Jill Rosenbaum stands beside her horse as Pastor Scot Robinson blesses him.

Blessing of the Animals

On Sunday afternoon, Oct. 18, a congregation of a hairier sort gathered on the lawn behind Cynthiana Presbyterian Church. About a dozen dogs and one quarter horse were brought by their owners for a Blessing of the Animals, performed by Pastor Scot Robinson.

The humans participated in a brief service made even briefer by the belated appearance of the horse. The dogs set up a cacophony of barking at the strange, giant creature that made proceeding with any sort of formal service a lost cause, much to the amusement of all.

One by one, Robinson offered treats and a blessing over each animal and presented St. Francis medals for their collars. St. Francis of Assisi is known in the Catholic Church as the patron saint of animals.



Betsy Smith

Jay and Laura Sanders present two of the five hunting dogs they brought to be blessed by Pastor Scot Robinson, right.

RESIDENTS

FROM PAGE A1

acknowledged and an opportunity made to share feelings and grieve.

Wells acknowledged that as a key need she wants to work on at a state level.

Asked their opinions of nursing homes before they entered long-term care, the residents' replies included "That's where you go to die," and "They just leave you in bed."

An HNR resident said when he entered care he feared losing his independence. "I gave up everything ... I still have a problem dealing with that."

He added, though, that it has given his wife a chance to enjoy the company of others and play cards, which she loves.

An EN resident talked of the close friendships she's made and of late evenings talking, laughing and getting "rowdy."

When asked by Wells about whether staff is adequate, the HNR resident who reported feeling neglected responded with a hard "no" but was quick to explain he did not blame the staff. He acknowledged how hard it is for aids and bemoaned the high rate of turnover. He reported aids being asked to take on housekeeping duties on top of their regular work.

"I wish we had a magic wand to make it better for them."

The two EH residents agreed, saying staff there is stretched very thin, too. One described situations in which a good staff member will stay a couple of weeks and leave, saying they "just can't take the stress."

In terms of activities, the more vocal of the two HNR residents indicated things had improved. He said there were lots of cookouts this summer and a Bluegrass concert. Crafts and exercise opportunities were better now that two people are doing activities.

CR residents reported several activities take place Monday through Friday but not as much on the weekends, though church services are offered every Sunday afternoon.

Wells also asked about the care plan meetings that occur for each resident every 90 days. CR residents said they attended theirs.

The vocal HNR resident said his felt more like "going through the motions ... I don't feel like they listen when I say what I want."

Wells reminded residents to let the ombudsman know and that they can attend the meeting with them.

Asked whether they got out of the facility occaisionally, the HNR resident said the staff are already too overworked.

CR residents said they get out some. One is looking forward to a personal trip to Renfro Valley.

Wells asked residents what message they would like to deliver. Residents stressed the desire to get help when needed; to feel like part of a family and not a number; and not to be forgotten.

Wells concluded the forum by commenting on the current trend toward for-profit long-term care facilities.

"Nursing homes right now have become so much different than they were 30 years ago. And in some ways that's great, and in some ways it's terrible. And a lot of the nursing homes here in town are not owned by a Kentuckian any more. They are not non-profit; they are for profit. And that to me, as an advocate and a person, is a violation of what healthcare should be."

She said every dollar paid by taxes and individuals for resident care should go precisely for that. In addition, the money is draining off to another state.

"Nursing homes have been bought by for-profit companies that are squeezing every cent out of the people working there, as you've said—overworking them, under-appreciating them, throwing them away. And if that's what those owners are doing to the staff that work there, how else would a resident feel if not abandoned and left alone?"

For more information or to learn how to improve long-term care, email nhoa@ombuddy.org or call (859) 277-9215.

YOUR CUSTOMER JUST READ THIS AD.
ADVERTISE WITH US.

ADVERTISED NOVEMBER 2026
THE FOLLOWING FIDUCIARY APPOINTMENTS WERE FILED IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2026 ALL CREDITORS MUST FILE THEIR CLAIMS WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF APPOINTMENT PER KRS 395.100.

DECEDENT/ MINOR	FIDUCIARY/ GUARDIAN	ATTORNEY	DATE APPOINTED
JENNIFER ELAINE GANN	CHRISTOPHER DALE GANN 104 W MILL ST CYNTHIANA, KY	KELLI MULBERRY 122 E PIKE ST CYNTHIANA, KY	10/14/26
JUDITH FAYE JONES	MARTIN JONES 4285 KY HWY 1842 N CYNTHIANA, KY	ELIAS LITTLE 115 E PIKE ST CYNTHIANA, KY	10/12/26

RACHEL NORTHCUTT,
HARRISON CO. CIRCUIT CLERK