

"Stories of My Life"

By Shelby Roy Hopkins

A Poor Trade, Indeed

If one lives long enough, the inevitable sea of change makes its entrance with seemingly callous disregard for the things we at one time held near and dear to our hearts. Most change is for the better, although most of us dare not admit it. All of us, to some degree or another, dread change of any type, and fiercely oppose it on every level. Usually, after the change is implemented, we grudgingly accept and half-heartedly embrace it, although we still hold misgivings about most of it.

Spending most of my formative years in the rural enclaves of central Kentucky, I found myself surrounded by a host of country stores. These little wooden buildings dotted the entire landscape of my youth. Most of them were within an easy bicycle ride from wherever we lived. My family and I frequented them often, wherever we might travel.

Some of these little places of business were poorly stocked and poorly run. Others seemed to "have about everything" its customers might desire. The proprietors of these little businesses often dabbled in many other activities such as farming, driving a school bus, or sometimes even running a little post office from inside their country store.

Many of the little stores were poorly lit and could never be described as "sanitary" by any definition of the word. Some of them had "ice-cold" pop while others sold soft drinks that were lukewarm at best. If the place was clean enough, one might order a bologna and cheese sandwich or whatever other type of lunch meat the storekeeper might have on hand.

"Pickled bologna," sitting in a large, one gallon glass jar on the store's counter, tempted every entering customer who frequented the establishment. The pickled bologna, coiled up much like a rattlesnake in the briny confines of its jar with the voluminous metal lid, welcomed all who found its taste almost irresistible. The customer would tell the storekeeper how much of the delicacy they wanted, often using terminology such as, "Cut me off about 6 or 8 inches of it."

With a large butcher knife located right beside the jar, the storekeeper opened the lid and slid his hand down into the briny liquid and retrieved the delectable treat. Pulling the tasty treat out of the brine until the desired amount was obtained, the sharp knife cut easily through the outer skin protecting the bologna. As the knife sliced through, the remaining bologna plopped back inside the jar, splashing the liquid upwardly as it returned to its coiled position.

The pickled bologna was laid on the nearby scales and the price was obtained. The smell from the brine permeated the entire little building. The storekeeper usually just wiped off the knife and their fingers with a paper towel before finishing their transaction with the customer.

Many of the customers pumped their own gasoline. The gas pumps were left in the "on" position whenever the store was open. The customer pulled up to the pumps, lifted the handle, and started putting the gas into whatever vehicle they might be traveling in on that particular day. I suppose there were a few people who drove off without paying, but in the multitude of years our family owned and operated one of these little stores, I can't remember a single soul who did.

Empty pop bottles were rarely returned to the store for returns on the paid deposit. Most of them were simply thrown into the ditches alongside the roadway. This undesirable habit that many people found abhorrent was not frowned upon nearly as much by we children. These empty pop bottles could be returned to the store for a 3-cent deposit. Later, the deposit jumped to an extraordinary 5-cents a bottle. We young entrepreneurs had seemingly found our life's calling.

Riding along on our bicycles as we scoured the ditches, we could easily pick up a dollar or more in real-time wages in just a couple of hours. Life could not have been any sweeter than the moment we exchanged our collected pop bottles for cold, hard, cash.

Nowadays, the country store is nearly extinct. They have been largely replaced in this area of our country by dollar stores. The dollar stores fill in the gaps wherever Walmart's aren't located. The dollar stores have a lot of stuff in them, and at good prices. They do not, however, have a single thing the country stores used to offer.

The friendly storekeeper of my youth has been replaced most often by a sullen and seemingly depressed teenager who implies by their mannerisms they had rather be fighting a wolverine than waiting on you. As you stand there with your eyes transfixed on the multitude of piercings this child has on their various body parts, you can't help but wonder, "Why? Just Why?"

Without an "Hello", "How are you doing?", or "Kiss my foot", the chain store's latest mercenary sadly proclaims, "That'll be three dollars and fifty-two cents." Reaching into your pocket to pull out a five-dollar bill and some change, you tell the young person, "I'm going to give you five dollars and two cents."

Dismayed and disillusioned by what you just said, the clerk begins to panic and sweat profusely. They would like to wipe the sweat from their nose, but the piercings disallow it. The clerk is sure you have Alzheimer's or dementia. Then, after calmly instructing the clerk to punch into their cash register the amount of money you have given them, they reluctantly do so. Then, magically, the machine tells the bewildered clerk to return $1.50 to the customer. Mystified, the clerk now believes you must surely be some type of Svengali, or another kind of magical creature. They stand in awe of your presence, unable to explain or understand what has just happened.

You exit the building, confidently aware that your presence in the store that day was neither appreciated nor desired. You make a vow to never go back to a place like that again. The audacity of a place that neither cares for you nor your money! As you walk to your car, you can't help but yearn just a bit for the way things used to be. We made a trade years ago, replacing the friendly and welcoming country stores for the modern chain stores, stores that seemingly despise our very existence. I can't help but think we made a very poor trade.

OBITUARIES

Helen Marie Lamb Saylor



Helen Marie Lamb Saylor, 87, of Crab Orchard, KY passed away peacefully at her home on Monday, October 5, 2026.

Helen was born in Lancaster, KY on October 18, 1938 to the late Virgil and Mary (Middleton) Lamb.

She worked for many years as a seamstress for Redwing. She was a member of the Crab Orchard Church of God. Helen enjoyed embroidery, sewing, gardening, and going to yard sales.

Survivors include four children, Anthony (Debbie) Saylor, Juanita Saylor, and companion Chris Faulkner, Mark (Karen) Saylor, and Tim Saylor; nine grandchildren, Joshua Sowder, Jonathan Sowder, Sarah Sims, Jessica Saylor, Morgan Malone, Samantha Love, Andy Saylor, Faith Saylor, and Terry Napier; 18 great grandchildren; one sister, Patsy Means; one brother, William "Tiny" (Sue) Lamb.

In addition to her parents, Helen was preceded in death by three brothers, Billy Lamb, Shelby Lamb, and Ronnie Lamb.

Funeral services were held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, October 9, 2026 at the Crab Orchard Church of God, 507 Cedar Street, Crab Orchard, KY officiated by Bro. Stephen VanHook.

Burial was in the Crab Orchard Cemetery.

Visitation was held on Thursday, October 8, 2026 from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. at Crab Orchard Church of God.

Pallbearers included Joshua Sowder, Jonathan Sowder, Andy Saylor, Chris Lamb, Vernon Lamb, and Dale Lamb.

Honorary Pallbearers included granddaughters, Sarah Sims, Jessica Saylor, Morgan Malone, Samantha Love, and Faith Saylor.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Crab Orchard Church of God Building Fund, P.O. Box 10, Crab Orchard, KY 40419.

McKnight Funeral Home in Crab Orchard was entrusted with the arrangements.

Kenneth Baker



Kenneth was born November 25, 1948, in Garrard County, Kentucky, to his loving parents, Grant and Idabelle Baker. He had one older brother, Donald, and his wife, Linda, two sisters, Louise (Brian) Saylor, and Donna (Pete) Hubbard.

On December 25, 1968, Kenneth married the love of his life, Joyce Saylor Baker. They spent the next 57 years building a beautiful life and family together.

Kenneth was a loving and devoted husband, Dad, Papaw, and friend to everyone around him. The greatest joys of his life were his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He was affectionately known as Pap.

Kenneth leaves behind his children, Angela and her husband, Dan Gibson. His grandchildren, Kayla and her husband, Zachary Lunsford; Brandon Gibson and his wife, Brooklynn; and Kylee Marie Stiles, who was Pap's little sidekick for the past 11 years. Pap's great-grandbabies were very special to him. They will always be told how much he loved and cherished them and what a truly great man their great-grandfather was. He leaves behind three great-grandchildren, River Cade Gibson, Ella Wren Lunsford, and Theo James Lunsford.

Kenneth also leaves behind his sister-in-law, Carolyn Stiles, and brother and sister-in-law, Todd and Janeffer French. John Harbin, a retired Air Force veteran, was a very special part of Kenneth's family for over 47 years.

Kenneth had an incredible work ethic and worked hard his whole life to provide a good life for his family. He worked as a foreman at the National Casket Factory in Lancaster, Kentucky for many years but his true passion was farming. He worked in tobacco as a young teenager and carried that through all of his life.. He loved growing tobacco, working cattle, and taking care of his farms on Drakes Creek.

Kenneth was an outdoorsman and loved hunting, fishing, collecting arrowheads, and beekeeping. He enjoyed visiting with his friends at the Amish auction in Crab Orchard and always shared his vegetables, fruit, flowers and pumpkins with his family and neighbors.

Kenneth loved the Lord from a young age and enjoyed attending Harmons Lick Holiness Church. His life was a reflection of his faith. Kenneth's last church service was just a few Sundays before he went to be with Jesus. During that very special service, he said" I am just resting in the Lord today." On Sunday morning, October 11, 2026, Kenneth finished his race and went peacefully to meet his Savior, surrounded by his family at home. What a comfort to know he truly is resting in the Lord today.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 17, 2026, at Lakes Funeral Home in Berea, with Mikie Leger and Jeff Osborne officiating.

Burial will follow in the Drakes Creek Family Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.

Active pallbearers will be Brandon Gibson, Zachary Lunsford, Todd French, Greg Stiles, Jimmy Hall, Frankie Hall, Wayne Cash, and Daniel Hubbard.

Honorary pallbearers will be John Harbin, Jerry Leger, Guy Lamb, Jeff Stiles, Johnny Baker, Sue Robbins, and Roscoe Asher.

Lakes Funeral Home in Berea is entrusted with the arrangements.

After School Driving Program

The driving program at Garrard County High School will be starting up again this Fall for October and November. The cost is $180. The class will start around the first of October and will once again be taught by former Garrard coach and driver's training instructor Dave McDaniel. City, country and interstate driving will be covered. The program can also help reduce insurance costs. Also students 15 years of age or older with a permit taking the course do not have to take the state's four-hour Graduating Licensing Course. Students will learn maneuvering skills, drive in towns and cities as well as country settings. Students who have afternoon activities can sign up to take the class before school hours begin. Pamphlets and sign-ups are at the Garrard County High School (859) 792-2146 or the Garrard County Board of Education (859) 792-3018. For information contact McDaniel at (859) 329-9188.

Political Letter To The Editor

Letters in support of candidates are encouraged as the 2026 general election draws near. The same guideline as regular letters-to-the editor must be adhered to - limited words (500 maximum), no personal attacks and directed toward issues. Additionally, only one support letter per author for any individual candidate will be allowed prior to each election, primary or general. The Garrard Central Record also reserves the right to limit the number of letters per week based on space.

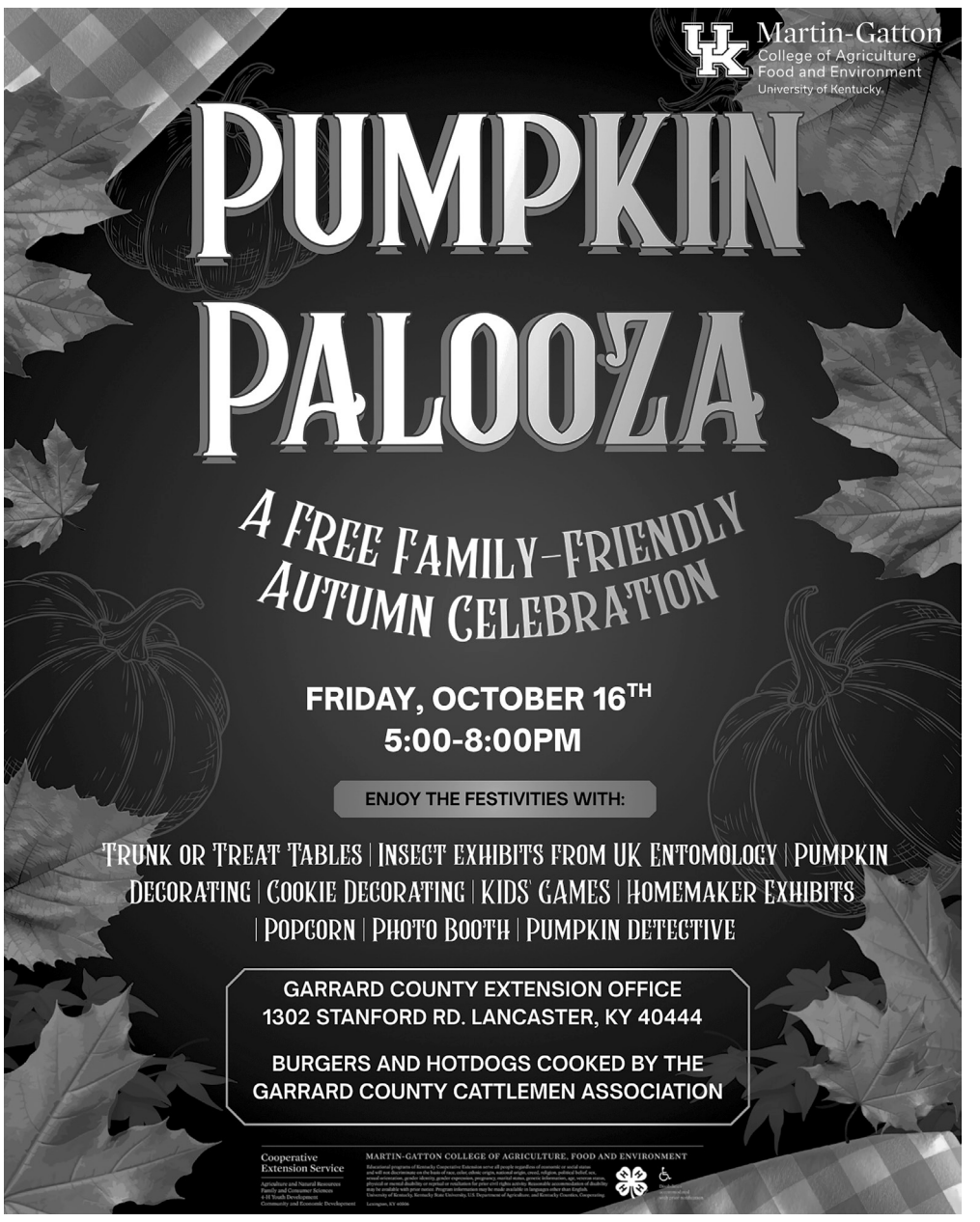
Election Notice

From Garrard County Clerk

The Board of Elections will **Inspect the Voting Machines** at the Courthouse for the upcoming Election on **Thursday**, **October 15, 2026** beginning at **2 p.m.**

On **November 3, 2026 - Election Day**, the Garrard County Clerk's Office will be closed for all motor vehicles transactions. The office will be open for the Election only.

Thank you,
Kevin Montgomery,
Garrard County Clerk



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Letter To Editor Policy
Letters should be no more than 500 words (exceptions at the discretion of the editor). Letter must be written on subjects of general interest to our readers and should deal with current issues. They must not personally attack individuals. Fair and polite criticism of public officials and public figures are allowed. Deadline for Letters to the Editor is noon Tuesday, the week of publication. All letters must be addressed to the editor and not directed to a third person. All letters must be signed with telephone number and home address for verification. No telephone number or address will be published. The Editor reserves the right to edit or reject any letter deemed libelous or otherwise unfit for publication.

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