

# Opinion

## Important dates from Oldham County Clerk's office

The Oldham County Clerk's Office wants to take this opportunity to inform all voters of upcoming election information.

For the upcoming election, I would like to remind the voters of their responsibility to make sure your address is correct in the Voter Registration Department of the Oldham County Clerk's Office. If you have any questions, please call 222-0047 before Election Day.

There will be several ways to cast your ballot this election cycle:

1. Requesting an Absentee Ballot via mail by visiting GOVOTE.KY.GOV
2. Excused Voting May 6-8 and May 11-13, 2026, in the Oldham County Clerk's La Grange Office, located at 100 West Jefferson Street in La Grange, during regular business hours for reasons outlined in KRS117.076(2)

3. No-Excuse Early Voting on Thursday, May 14 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday, May 15 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, May 16 from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the John Black Center, located at 1551 N. Highway 393 in Buckner and Crestwood Baptist Church, located at 6400 Sweetbay Drive in Crestwood

4. Vote on Election Day, May 19, 2026, at nine countywide voting centers from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. No matter where you live, you can vote at any of these centers:

- Oldham County High School, 1150 N Hwy 393, Buckner
- South Oldham Middle School, 6403 W Hwy 146, Crestwood
- North Oldham High School, 1815 S Hwy 1793, Goshen
- Westport Baptist Life Center, 6415 Washington St., Westport
- Pewee Valley Fire Station 1,

8607 Foley Ave, Pewee Valley  
 • La Grange Baptist Church, 1139 Commerce Pkwy, La Grange

• Crestwood Baptist Church, 6400 Sweetbay Dr, Crestwood  
 • Goshen Elementary, 12518 Ridgemoor Drive, Prospect  
 • East Oldham Middle School, 1201 E. Hwy 22, Crestwood

Please remember a valid Kentucky ID is required to vote. For more information visit the County Clerk's website at oldhamcounty-clerk.ky.gov.

On March 17, 2026, the Oldham County Board of Elections will travel to the South Oldham Government Center located at 6710 W. Hwy. 146 in Crestwood to examine the voting machines and determine whether the requirements of KRS 117.165 have been met.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Voter Registration Department at 222-0047 with any questions.

Amy B. Alvey is the Oldham County Clerk.



AMY B. ALVEY

### STAY THIRSTY

## Mentors matter

In my last column, I mentioned that it's beneficial for a businessperson to share what they're going through with a good friend, partner, mentor, advisor or counselor. In my case, several people offered me emotional support, expertise and objective, personalized advice. Each served as a guide during a different leg of my entrepreneurial journey and shared their deep, expert knowledge of the terrain I was traversing. They include John Haertzen, Dr. Charles Haertzen, Mike Duncan, J.B. Triplett, Al Bissmeyer, Jon Bednarski, Jim Robinson, John Johnson and Neal Harding. I would not have been as successful without them.

It's interesting to note that each of my mentors and partners share one very admirable trait — they didn't flaunt their wealth or title. Despite their status and abundant resources, they never made others feel uncomfortable or envious. Of course, they had the nice things money can buy, but they didn't feel the need to show off. They taught me there were more important things than trophies of prosperity by how they preferred to spend their money on family, or by investing in businesses and supporting charitable endeavors. They also taught me, by example, that an impressive résumé or a fat bank account doesn't make one person more important than another. Of all the many lessons they shared with me, those were the most valuable.

One of my most significant mentors was Jim "J.B." Robinson, an angel investor that purchased a large stake in Rocket Man back in 1995. J.B. was the co-founder of Robinson-Nugent, a publicly traded company acquired by 3M for \$115 million (more than \$250 million today). His extensive private investment portfolio included Caldwell Tanks, the builder of the award-winning Mickey Mouse tank at Disney World, and the 120-foot-tall baseball bat at the Louisville Slugger Museum.

J.B.'s vast business experience had not only given him financial wealth, but also a wealth of knowledge, and his guidance was invaluable. He had a way to distilling his knowledge into simple, catchy and easy-to-remember phrases like "profit is the cost of the future" and "volume is for vanity."

The greatest lesson I took from J.B. wasn't something he taught me directly but made clear by his mere presence—the importance of having great advisors. While J. B. was terrific in that role, as he would admit, he didn't know everything or have all the answers. To maximize our businesses' potential, I needed a diversity of knowledge and guidance from other experts who had

achieved success in their respective fields.

To that end, I joined a CEO roundtable through the Louisville Chamber of Commerce. My 10-member group consisted of presidents, owners and/or CEOs of local companies in a variety of different industries with no overlap. We met monthly to discuss topics impacting our businesses and share experiences, gain diverse insights and challenge one another in ways that helped each of us achieve our goals.

It wasn't just the camaraderie of a group of equally motivated leaders who faced many of the same challenges and pressures I did. A thousand words cannot express my gratitude to my fellow roundtable members.

### ROCKET WISDOM Form an advisory board or join a CEO roundtable

I strongly encourage any business owner to form an informal advisory board and/or join a CEO roundtable. An advisory board is, as the name suggests, advisory in nature, whereas a governing board makes binding decisions. Individuals agreeing to serve can provide knowledge, tactical advice and introductions to other resources, all of which can be incredibly helpful to your organization.

Participation in a CEO roundtable can provide you with access to numerous benefits, including the interaction and sharing of experiences with other business leaders that allow participants to learn from each other's achievements and mistakes. They can help you address challenges, improve decision-making and ultimately drive business growth.

In addition to the CEO Roundtable, my conversations with like-minded entrepreneurs that have endured the pain of starting a business, meeting a payroll and putting their own financial health on the line were especially useful. I can relate to the quote by Brené Brown, "If you're not in the arena getting your ass kicked, I'm not interested in your feedback." The flipside of that quote is, if you're in the arena, I value your insights. A few fine people that fall into that category in Oldham County are Bill Howard, Norm Gill and Rob Hunter.

Stay Thirsty.

Mark Haertzen is a resident of Oldham County and the founder of Rocket Man, Rocket Storage and many other businesses. He is the author of "Stay Thirsty - A Serial Entrepreneur's Tale of Success & Failure," available online at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Walmart and www.staythirstythebook.com. Mark can be reached at markh@rocketman.com.



MARK HAERTZEN



HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Maurice LaRochelle

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### ELECT WINTERS DIETRICH FOR PVA

Dear Editor,  
 In Albert Harrison's recent advertisement, "Property Taxes (Again?)," I believe he does get two things correct. I served as the Property Valuation Administrator (PVA) in Oldham County for 12 years before retiring, and Barbara Winters Dietrich, my former wife, is the current PVA. Between the two of us, that represents 24 years of experience and firsthand

knowledge of how the office operates and how the property tax system works in this county.

Experience and firsthand knowledge are imperative for the position of Property Valuation Administrator. On May 19, voters should re-elect Barbara Winters Dietrich as Oldham County PVA. She is the only candidate with the experience and knowledge necessary to serve effectively in this role.

Ron Winters of La Grange

### BILL

FROM PAGE A4

Why would a pastor be against religious instruction during the school day? I believe it is unnecessary and unwise.

The Holy Spirit is currently active through teachers and staff who share the love of Christ through their actions. Students like Cooper Doyle, at Oldham County High School, who lead weekly Bible studies to an over-capacity room. Leaders of FCA and Young Life who do the hard work of meeting with teams and groups without disrupting the school day.

The teachings and practices of outside religious groups are inconsistent with the instruction and inclusive environment that public schools provide Kentucky students. For example, LifeWise Academy holds an inerrant view of Scripture. Inerrancy is word-for-word, literal interpretation of the Bible. Many faithful Christians believe in biblical inerrancy. Other Christians believe inerrancy provides insufficient historical and cultural context and author authority.

An inerrant reading of Paul's letters instructs women to remain silent and not to take head leadership roles in the church, home or society. This interpretation limits the role of women. Programs offered during school hours will be seen by students as the teaching and policy of the school. As a parent, I can see the difference between LifeWise Academy and social studies class. Elementary school students will not see the difference.

Imagine a girl getting off the bus and saying to her dad, "Today at school I learned..." She may finish that sentence with "men have spiritual authority over women."

In some churches, a girl sees a woman in leadership on Sunday. When she feels a longing in her heart to follow in the female pastor's footsteps, what religious instruction will she receive from a volunteer on Monday? Would she hear that God has called men to be

leaders in the church and women to support? Would she hear that wives are called to submit to their husbands? Would what she heard during school hours limit her leadership capacity in society?

Inerrant interpretations of the Bible have hard news for LGBTQIA+, divorced, Jewish and Muslim students and families. Is such news consistent with the environment of Kentucky public schools?

An inerrant interpretation claims the Earth is 6,000-10,000 years old. Some inerrantists claim that a belief in seven-day (24-hour-per-day) creation is essential for biblical authority.

Many faithful Christians hold these views and walk with people as they apply the Bible to their lives. Other Christian organizations interpret the Bible in a different way. The answers kids receive to their questions once a week from a rotation of volunteers will vary widely. Is it wise and a good use of instructional time to add the confusion of multiple religious influences during the school day?

In places like Oldham County, moral and religious instruction will grow rapidly. LifeWise's three-year plan in Oldham County has chapters in nine-plus schools, 90-plus volunteers and \$640,000 raised by the end of the 2027-2028 school year. In 2028-2029 it plans to expand to middle and high schools. LifeWise alone will require coordination from teachers and staff. So will every religious group that would like to offer instruction.

Oldham County LifeWise coordinators are faithful Christians who long to share the good news of Christ to children in a healthy way. My concern is the large number of volunteers they will need to recruit to complete their mission. As ministries grow, they require more adult supervision. Capable and gifted leaders are hard to find. Warm bodies begin to meet student-to-adult ratios.

Will the volunteers providing religious instruction be as gifted and trained during school hours as the teachers who kids are encountering during the

school day? Will they be able to serve children with special needs at levels acceptable to school boards? Will volunteer interactions be harmful?

Sadly, hurtful people intentionally target ministries because their screening, training and accountability are less stringent than other organizations. Many Christian leaders are slow to hold people accountable because ministers are "nice" or lack the organizational support to make hard and confidential decisions.

Moral and religious groups will do everything in their power to screen, train and hold people accountable. Unfortunately, abuse will happen during school hours as ministries grow.

Hurt that comes from a place, people and God that are supposed to be safe and good creates physical and spiritual trauma. Religious and moral instruction during school hours located on or off school grounds opens the door to preventable hurt.

In 2025 and 2026, the Oldham County school board, administrators, teachers and staff have been distracted from their mission by just one well-organized request and community response. House Bill 829 requires boards to give access to all moral and religious instruction that meets the state requirements.

Other moral and religious groups like Methodists, Episcopalians, Latter-Day Saints, Muslims, Jews, Harry Potter fans, Dungeons and Dragons gamers — the list goes on — will organize and ask to host a group during school hours. HB 829 requires the school board to be open to all groups, meaning religious instruction during school hours could easily become very hard to manage.

On or off site, moral and religious instruction is not needed and unwise during school hours. HB 829 is not needed. The Holy Spirit is on the move in the public schools. We would be wise to follow the Spirit's lead.

Rev. Derek Robinette is the Senior Pastor at Crestwood United Methodist Church.

### LETTERS TO EDITOR

Letters to the editor should include your name, address and phone number where you can be reached for verification. Letters should be limited to 500 words. The Era reserves the right to edit all letters for clarity, style and taste. The Era restricts publication of multiple letters on the same topic from the same author to two letters and one per every 30 days. The Era also reserves the right to hold all letters considered libelous or in poor taste. Letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Era staff.

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### ADVERTISING:

Ad deadlines are noon Monday unless there is a holiday or a countywide issue. Kentuckiana ads are due by 4 p.m. one week prior to publication.

#### SUBMITTED ITEMS:

Any submitted obituaries, news, photos, editorials and community page items must be at the Era office by noon Monday for that week's publication.

#### CORRECTIONS:

The Era will publish a correction of any error that it is made aware of. The newspaper will also make clarification of facts that may be misconstrued. The newspaper strives for accuracy, fairness and clarity in its coverage of Oldham County.