

OPINION

The opinion page does not reflect to the views of the KyNewsGroup.

Letter to the Editor

Editor –

First, I would like to thank The Carlisle Mercury for hosting the candidate forums. It was wonderful to see the great turnout. Well done!

When I registered to vote in Nicholas County, I was informed that almost all the candidates ran as Democrats so everything was decided in the May primary elections, so only registered Democrats would be able to vote. This had been the case for decades, so regardless of their political leanings, most people registered as Democrats.

Over the past few years, this has changed dramatically. Because most races have candidates from both parties, things are now decided in the November general election. There is also a much closer balance between registered Republican and Democrat voters. This has been both good and bad.

The Good – when the elections were decided in the primaries, if the person currently in office lost the election, they remained in office for another 7½ months with no motivation to put forth any effort. That’s nearly 1/6 of their total term wasted. Additionally, now it’s not just Democrats who get to vote, but also Republicans, Independents, and every other registered voter are now able to participate in elections.

The Bad – Over the past couple of elections, many people (including some candidates) have begun pulling party politics into local elections. There is no justification for this! In order for local candidates to win an election in Nicholas County, they really need to be able to draw support from voters in both parties. There simply isn’t any advantage to the county if a majority of elected officials are from one party or the other. Second amendment issues, reproductive rights vs. right to life... all of the issues that separate Democrats from Republicans... not a single one of these are influenced by city or county elected officials.

This election we have Steve Hamilton (Democrat) and Jeff “Rudy” Randolph (Republican) running for county judge/executive. I respect both and consider both to be my friends and so those party affiliations mean nothing to me. Both served on the fiscal court over 20 years. So how do I decide how to vote?

For six years I attend almost every fiscal court meeting. I had frequent, long conversations with both of these men about various issues facing the county. I witnessed firsthand how they made decisions.

Rudy is a man of action. He can get a little impatient and frustrated with the required procedures – like first and second readings. He wants to make decisions quickly and get things done.

Steve is careful. He studies things out, reading everything line-by-line. He weighs the cost against the long-term benefits before reaching a decision.

Here’s how this usually played out in fiscal court meetings: Before a vote, the county judge would ask for discussion. Rudy would state his opinion and how he planned to vote. When it got around to Steve, he would ask questions he already knew the answer to – trying to get the other magistrates to look at the big picture. This would drive Rudy up the wall. He’d be impatient and just wanted to vote and be done with it. Sometimes this made Steve look like he was always dragging his feet. But later, when I discussed the issue with Steve, he ALWAYS had a deeper understanding of the facts and the costs involved.

One of the major county projects at this time is the joint industrial park with Bourbon County. Most projects are fairly short-term, such as the building of a fire station. The county secures funding, has plans drawn up, submits them to the state for approval, and then contracts with someone for the construction. Each step takes several months, but the whole project is generally completed in 3-4 years. The industrial park is a much longer project – similar to several multi-year projects combined. Each of these sub-projects (such as grading the property, bringing in water, bringing in electricity) takes significant time and significant funding. There are minute details that have to be worked out, each project potentially impacting the next.

We all want a judge/executive who can get things done. But we also want to make sure we have a judge/executive who is detail-oriented enough to make sure things get done right.

Case in point: The restrooms at the Jockey Park shelter. If we don’t take the time to plan things out properly; if we don’t figure out the cost accurately... we either end up with things that don’t work, or that cost even more to fix than if we did it right in the first place.

Rudy is a great guy who would give you the shirt off his back. But everyone on the fiscal court (including Rudy) knew Steve was the details guy and the numbers guy.

Stephen Scalf

Letter to the Editor
cont. from pg. 7

Our relationship also demonstrates the value of cooperation between counties. Steve and I have been able to share information, exchange ideas, and learn from one another’s experiences. We may lead different counties and belong to different political parties, but we recognize that good ideas do not belong to one party, and good government should never be limited by county lines.

I believe Nicholas and McLean counties can benefit from that spirit of cooperation. We can serve as sister counties, learning from our successes, discussing our challenges, and sharing approaches that may help our citizens. There is little sense in reinventing the wheel when another community has already found a practical solution to a problem we share.

Responsible financial management is an important part of that leadership. Public audits, transparent reporting, and accountability to taxpayers are essential to maintaining public trust. Nicholas County’s public financial records provide an important means of evaluating its stewardship, just as McLean County’s records allow our citizens to evaluate mine. Every county judge/executive should welcome that accountability and recognize that responsible financial management is a continuing obligation.

But financial responsibility is about more than numbers on a balance sheet. A strong financial position should provide a foundation for better roads, reliable emergency services, improved public facilities, and opportunities that make rural communities better places to live, work, raise families, and grow old. The ultimate measure of government is not simply what it collects or spends, but how responsibly it uses public resources to improve the lives of ordinary citizens.

That is the broader lesson I see in the relationship between our two counties. We can be careful with taxpayer dollars while continuing to make meaningful improvements. We can acknowledge our challenges without allowing them to define our future. And we can work together without compromising our individual political beliefs.

Steve and I will not agree on every political issue, nor should anyone expect us to. Our differences are part of the democratic process. But I respect the responsibility he carries, the experience he brings to the office, and the willingness he has shown to share that experience with me. I am grateful that I can turn to him for advice as both a fellow county judge/executive and a member of my family.

As we look toward the future of rural Kentucky, I hope more people will recognize the value of this kind of cooperation. Our coun-

ties face many of the same obstacles, and our citizens deserve leaders who are willing to share knowledge, pursue practical solutions, and put the public interest ahead of partisan division.

When the storm comes, the people we serve are not asking whether their county judge/executive is a Democrat or a Republican. They want to know whether their leader is prepared, whether their tax dollars are being managed responsibly, and whether someone is working every day to make their lives better.

That is what holding the helm in a storm is all about.

I am proud to serve McLean County, proud to call Steve Hamilton my father-in-law, and thankful for the relationship we share. Our experience reminds me that public service is strengthened when we are willing to learn from one another, listen to honest advice, and recognize that the work we do is bigger than ourselves.

In the end, our legacy should not be measured by the party we represented, but by the people we served, the trust we earned, and the communities we left behind.”

Curtis Dame
McLean County
Judge/Executive

Robertson County Clerk, Joanie Jolly - Annual Audit - 2024

The report of the audit of the Robertson County Clerk's settlement for the year ending December 31, 2024, has been completed and released. A copy of the complete audit report, including financial statements and supplemental information is on file at the Clerk's Office and available for public inspection during normal business hours. Any citizen may obtain from the Clerk's office a copy of the complete audit report including financial statement and supplemental information. Citizens requesting a personal copy of the Clerk's audit report will be charged for duplication costs at a rate that shall not exceed fifty cents per page. Copies of the financial statement prepared in accordance with KRS 424.220 are available to the public at no cost at the Clerk's office or by mail at Robertson County Clerk, PO Box 75, Mt. Olivet, KY 41064.

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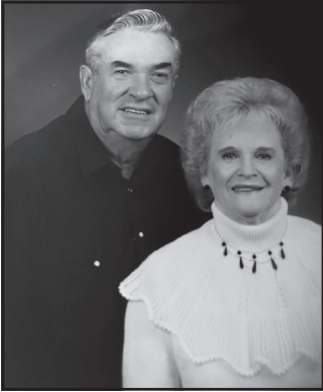
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Re-Elect
DOUG GARRETT
for **CITY COUNCIL**
Your vote & support is appreciated!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Paid for by candidate, Doug Garrett

Happy 78th Wedding Anniversary
GW & Faye Sexton
October 23, 2026



78 years of love that's been shared,
Between two people who God made a pair.

You are an inspiration to us all,
Your love still so strong.

Hand in hand you've walked side by side,
Through ups and downs but with God as your guide.

We pray your legacy will continue to impact us,
All our days long.

78 years of memories that were made,
Your love is a bond that time cannot fade.

To God be the Glory, for all He has done.
We hope that you know that you are loved a ton!

From your first vow, when two stood as one.
You planted a seed in our family tree
And it flourished under the sun.

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