

OPINION

- Columnists
- Letters to the Editor

Immigration: Truths and Myths ■ Guest Editorial by Emily Weathers Kennedy

On a recent Sunday, Kerry and I visited one of our favorite local Mexican restaurants for lunch. We realized, as we scooped up our salsa with the warm chips, that we were just about as regular as the church crowd in their Sunday clothes. I admit to craving the *guacamole cesaro* just about weekly.

As I looked around the packed dining room, I wondered just how the folks merrily eating away their *pollo Mexicano* and chicken *fajitas* would be affected if the people cooking the food and serving us were hastily deported to Mexico. Would they care or just move on to the next colorful establishment serving Mexican food?

I also wondered, how many of those diners joined the cacophony of voices sharply criticizing the President's executive action giving amnesty to close to 5 million immigrants, largely from Mexico.

Before jumping on the deportation bandwagon, there are a few facts that folks just might find enlightening:

1. According to the National Constitution Center, The American Presidency Project keeps tabs on Executive Orders by presidents dating back to George Washington. President Obama has issued 184 orders so far in his presidency. George W. Bush, issued 291 orders over eight years, while Bill Clinton had 364 and Ronald Reagan 381. Barack Obama has issued the fewest executive orders per year, at 33.27 annually, since President Grover Cleveland's first term.

2. According to the American Immigration Council, presidents have routinely altered immigration policies by executive order, including 18 such changes by five recent Republican presidents — Eisenhower, Ford, Reagan, Bush 41 and Bush 43. None of these presidents was threatened with political reprisal for signing the orders.

3. Reagan used the word *legalization* instead of *amnesty*, but with his 1986 act, 3 million illegal aliens came forward to apply. In this regard, Reagan said: "We have consistently supported a legalization program which is both generous to the alien and fair to the countless thousands of people throughout the world who seek legally to come to America. The legalization provisions in this act will go far to improve

the lives of a class of individuals who now must hide in the shadows, without access to many of the benefits of a free and open society. Very soon many of these men and women will be able to step into the sunlight and, ultimately, if they choose, they may become Americans."

And, to dispel a few myths, according to the American Immigration Council:

1. Immigrants DO pay taxes, in the form of income, property, sales, and taxes at the federal and state level. As far as income tax payments go, sources vary in their accounts, but a range of studies find that immigrants pay between \$90 and \$140 billion a year in federal, state, and local taxes.

2. Immigrants come here to work and reunite with family members, not merely to obtain welfare benefits. The ratio between immigrant use of public benefits and the amount of taxes they pay is consistently favorable to the U.S. In one estimate, immigrants earn about \$240 billion a year, pay about \$90 billion a year in taxes, and use about \$5 billion in public benefits. In other words, all of their money does not get sent back to Mexico.

3. We are *less* a population of immigrants now than we were a *hundred years ago*. The percentage of the U.S. population that is foreign-born stands at 11.5% in the 2000s; in the early 20th century it was approximately 15%.

4. Most of our ancestors came to this country legally because there were no laws against it. That changed in 1882 with the Chinese Exclusion Act. In it, the Congress decided that immigrants from China should be kept out altogether due to their biological inferiority to those of European descent. Over the next four decades, Congress gradually restricted further groups: the poor, the sick, the uneducated, and those suspected of holding questionable ideologies. Further, in 1965, President Johnson signed a bill into law forever closing the doors to open immigration. The new law based eligibility to immigrate not on race or country of origin, but rather on *family connections* and *employability* for skilled workers. For unskilled workers, the demand is high in the U.S. for employees but visa quotas are extremely low. Under the law, a maximum of 5,000 *permanent visas* are

available per year for employer-sponsored workers other than those who are "highly skilled" or "holding advanced degrees."

5. Immigrants of 100 years ago initially often settled in ethnic neighborhoods, spoke native languages, and built up businesses that catered to their fellow émigrés. They experienced the *same* types of discrimination that today's immigrants face. They also integrated within American culture at a *similar rate*, including with English language proficiency.

My ancestors came from England and Germany. My husband's were Scotch-Irish. Did they face the same ethnic discrimination that our Hispanic friends do today? They probably did to some extent as statistics above would indicate. So, I like to think that folks from Mexico, Central, and South America will be as highly regarded someday just like my ancestors. Integration does take time. So does changing the minds of people who must accept diversity because it is here to stay.

When President Obama visited Nashville recently, he said many things about the benefits of allowing people to "come out of the shadows," pay their fines and work without the immediate fear of deportation. (There are an estimated 124,000 illegals in Tennessee from areas as far flung as Somalia, Nepal, Laos, Mexico, and Bangladesh.) He told the audience that their reprieve is temporary; they merely go through the long process of citizenship in the open. He iterated that his executive order is not amnesty. He asked the audience to reach deep down to empathize with people who just want a better life. He reminded us that unless we are from a Native American tribe, we are all truly immigrants ourselves.

But, the president's tongue-in-cheek remark during the question and answer session brings me back to my favorite Mexican restaurant. Obama spoke of benefits to our culture brought by immigrants, adding that ethnic foods were undeniably delicious. He mentioned Korean barbecue. I thought of the *guacamole cesaro* awaiting me next Sunday and wondered if the *pollo loco* might be a nice change of pace.

Christmas parades: Let the fighting begin

■ TYRADES!

Danny Tyree

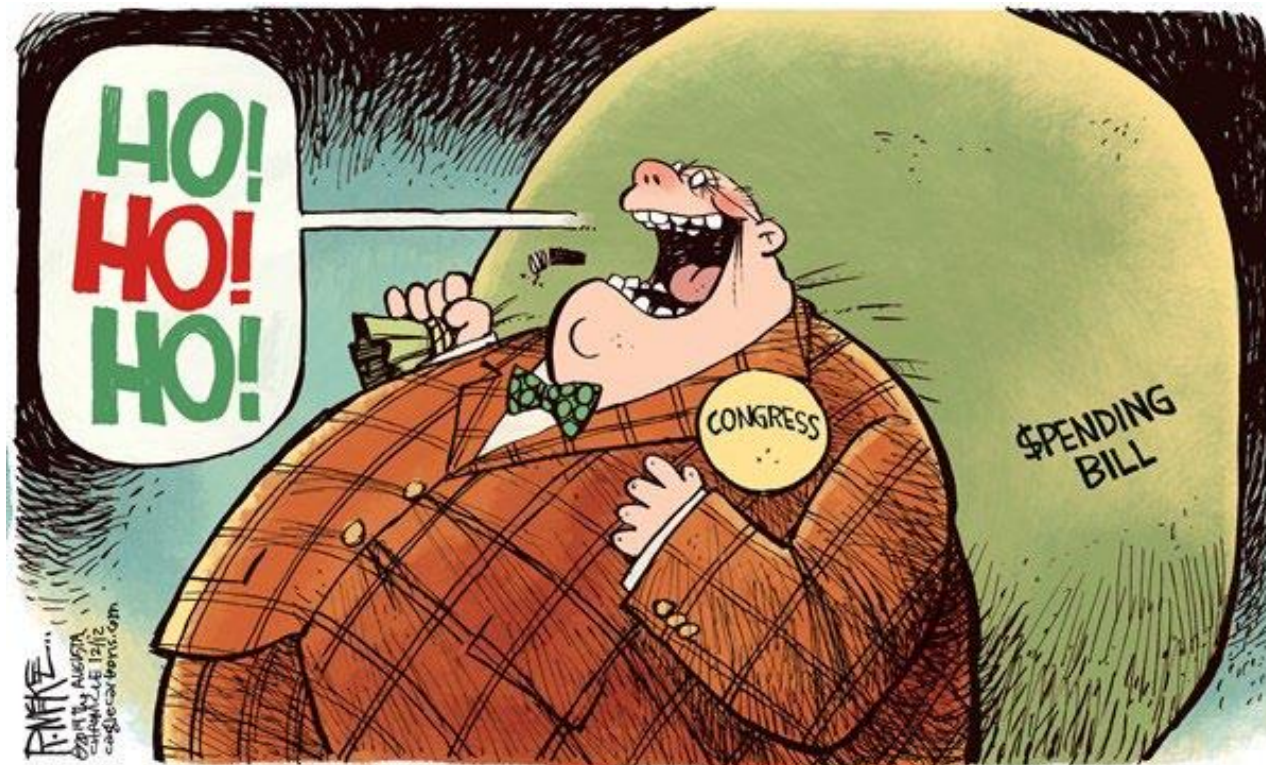
My little sixth-grader Gideon just participated in his first Christmas parade (riding a float for the Westhills Elementary School Honors Club), and a good time seemed to be had by all; but curmudgeon that I am, I wanted to peek at the dark underbelly of the tradition.

Granted, there are pretty slim pickings if you Google "I hate Christmas parades" or "Christmas parade + controversy"; but problems do exist.

The weather was relatively mild for Gideon's parade, but parades progressing at a glacial pace through wind, rain and cold can strip even the cheeriest onlookers and participants of their holiday spirit. Maybe "Hypothermia Around The World" would make a good parade theme. (I came up with that one the year Jack Frost was nipping at my prostate.)

Parade organizers face a herculean task making each year's activities seem fresh, but sometimes it's best to stick with tried-and-true themes such as "Home For The Holidays" or "An Old-Fashioned Christmas". You're just asking for trouble if you employ a theme such as "A Fixed-Income Christmas." That one gave a mercifully unnamed community lyrics including "You Kids Quit Walkin' In My Winter Wonderland," "We three kings of Orient are/Give back our keys/We won't wreck the car" and "Do you see what I see? Of course not - your fancy schmancy doctor botched your cataract surgery!"

Transportation sometimes becomes an issue. Some towns ban horses (to keep the streets cleaner) or limit the number of antique car enthusiasts participating. Hmph! The car buffs have enough problems already. They obsess all year over vehicles built before air conditioning, FM



THE OTHER JOLLY FAT MAN WITH A SACK

Christmas at the Capitol

■ State Senator

Joey Hensley MD

If you have the opportunity during this Christmas season, come and tour the 155 year old State Capitol in Nashville. Here you will see the official Tennessee State Christmas Tree, a 45-foot Norway spruce

from east Tennessee that has been decorated with more than 6,000 LED lights. The tree was once the top of a 75-foot tall tree that was used in a study on shedding needles of Christmas trees conducted by UTIA's Forest Resources Ag Research and Education Center. The entire inside of the Capitol is decked out in its holiday finest with wreaths, garland and trees.

You can also see a statue of President Johnson on display and the dramatic one of President Andrew Jackson on a horse that has been on the grounds since May 1880. Another Tennessee President honored at our state's Capitol is President James K. Polk and his wife Sarah, who are buried on the north side. Other statues on the Capitol grounds are those of Sam Davis, "boy hero of the Confederacy," Sergeant Alvin C. York, the "greatest enlisted soldier of World War I; and Edward Ward Carmack, "statesman and journalist."

I am always pleased when school children from our Counties and Leadership groups come to visit the Capitol. I have found that two aspects of this building capture their attention. The first is the fact that William Strickland, the architect of the Capitol who died before the building was finished in entombed there. He is not alone. Also entombed on the other side of the Capitol is Samuel Morgan, Chairman of the Capitol Building Commission when the Capitol was erected.

The second fact that captures the attention of the school children is the bullet mark on the grand staircase to the House and Senate Chambers. This scar is from a bullet fired



Letters to the Editor

A spine-tingling experience

To the Editor:

Most of the things we deal with on a daily basis are (to use a colloquial word) "falderal." One wit said we lead lives of quiet desperation and, in effect, the difficulties we encounter are really as nothing compared to eternity.

I say this after reading a quote from Albert Einstein, "He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe is as good as dead; his eyes are closed." This is a wonderful world we live in, full of promise and hope.

Just this past week, Monday the 1st of December, this area was feted to a wonderful performance at the Crockett Theatre, by the Bradley Brass, the Nashville Pipe and Drum band, and our own Oratorio Society, to its 28th annual Christmas Pops

Few stayed long enough after the great performance was over. They instead scurried to get home to warmth and comfort. I do hope they thought well of those who gave of their time and talent to leave them with good cheer. I had a spine-tingling experience.

If we all would do as Einstein suggested, (i.e.) to "pause to wonder," we would all be better off by understanding that we live in a world which our Father in heaven has given to us to have joy, especially at this time of the year. Joy and experiences so that we may grow into better people.

William B. Caudle II

My cat Rocky is a Catholic

To the Editor:

My cat Rocky got all excited when some of his stray pals in the neighborhood told him that Pope Francis said animals will be in Heaven. It is difficult to have an honest discussion with Rocky, he's a Liberal Democrat, but I told him Pope Francis did not say any such thing.

Rocky was not convinced and got very angry and just would not accept the fact that Pope Francis was only trying to console a distraught young lad whose dog had died by referring back to a comment made ages ago by a former Pope, Pope Paul VI, who died back in 1978.

Pope Paul VI was also consoling a pet owner who had lost a pet by saying "one day we will see our animals in the eternity of Christ." In 1990, Pope John Paul implied animals have souls and in 2008 Pope Benedict upset animal lovers when he declared only humans were "Called to Eternity."

With this information Rocky argued that I personally had actually confirmed a Hereafter for Animals even if Pope Francis was misquoted while establishing the truth using comments by former Popes which plainly stated that animals would go to Heaven. Rocky was

overlooking the journalistic principle which attributed a comment to Pope Francis that was misleading.

Having no chance to change the mind of my Liberal Feline I simply submitted to Rocky's belief that he would definitely end up in Heaven when he died. After some contemplation he sadly shared how much he would miss me.

James Allen Whitehead



Lawrence County
Advocate

Sam Kennedy, Publisher
John Finney, Managing Editor
Janice Butler, Assistant Manager

<p>NEWS STAFF Elizabeth K. Blackstone, Editor Nancy Brewer, Assistant Editor Sandi Mashburn, Staff Writer Joe Baxter, Sports</p> <p>ADVERTISING STAFF Amber McIntyre, Sales Renee Fleeman, Sales</p> <p>PHOTOGRAPHER Howard Johnston</p> <p>PRODUCTION STAFF Rachel Weaver, Ad Designer Angie Pettigrew, Ad Designer</p>	<p>OFFICE STAFF Katy Adams, Bookkeeping/ Classifieds/ Receptionist</p> <p>PRESS & CIRCULATION Ralph Yeager Donnie Howell Brian Chandler Keith Matthews Chris Dickey David Ray Tanner Osborn</p> <p>DISTRIBUTION Dorothy Belew</p> <p>16,300+ published & delivered twice weekly</p>
--	---

Published each Wednesday and Sunday at
121 North Military Ave., P. O. Box 308, Lawrenceburg, TN 38464
Phone # (931) 762-1726, FAX # (931) 762-7874

www.lawrencecountyadvocate.net