

OPINION

- Columnists
- Letters to the Editor

Spring has come and the legislature is going home ■ Advocate Publisher Sam D. Kennedy

It seems we can now breathe a little easier. No, Obamacare is still not working and free for everyone, and no, you cannot keep your health care or your doctor if they don't want you.

And no, our President's fierce words and the threats of Senator McCain, and others, who just love a war, have not cowed the Russians into turning tail and surrendering. It is awful the way they interfere with their neighbors. Why can't they be nice as we are to Cuba by not recognizing them and to Central

American countries where we have been helpful by providing insurgent groups with toys like guns and rockets, not to mention CIA agents?

But life goes on and back to the good news:

Our Legislature is going home!

Legislators at home can do little damage.

I always feel better when they leave the bright lights of Music City and return to their own towns and neighborhoods, far from the noisy receptions, parties, and back-slapping. Such amenities are provided by a ratio of ten lobbyists to one of our chosen. Lobbyists are nice. They give legislators advice and comfort away from home.

They may not have waxed and grown strong but they have certainly waxed us on occasions. But they did pass a budget. That is better than our leaders in Washington. They cannot pass go.

Now all the little boys who played cowboy, who are now pushing sixty, will get to play cowboy again and strap a long forty four on their hips, and walk down the street to protect the common folk and shoot the baddies. If

we had more Democrats, we could have a shootout in the middle of downtown just before election time. That would be one way to narrow the field. Unfortunately, the only Democrat I could find in a two county area was a rank coward and did not like the odds.

They are even going to cure bad cursive writing. Good luck! Several years of dedicated effort on the part of good teachers in grammar school totally failed in my case. I can't even read my own.

Seriously, thank your friendly legislator. They take a lot of guff and remember, you elected them.

It takes a lot of nerve to run for office. Asking someone to vote for you is as tough as the task of a sixteen-year-old boy asking a girl for a date. So be nice to them and ask a legislator to lunch while he is home and you want nothing.

Income tax procrastinators, unite!

■ TYRADES!

Danny Tyree

Suddenly, I don't feel so alone.

According to the Internal Revenue Service, roughly one in five Americans file their federal and state income tax returns in the final

week before the April 15 deadline. Yes, every year, despite

my best intentions, I wind up rushing to complete my returns at the last minute. A dark cloud and a constant nagging doubt haunt the entire first quarter of every year. So why don't I do something about it?

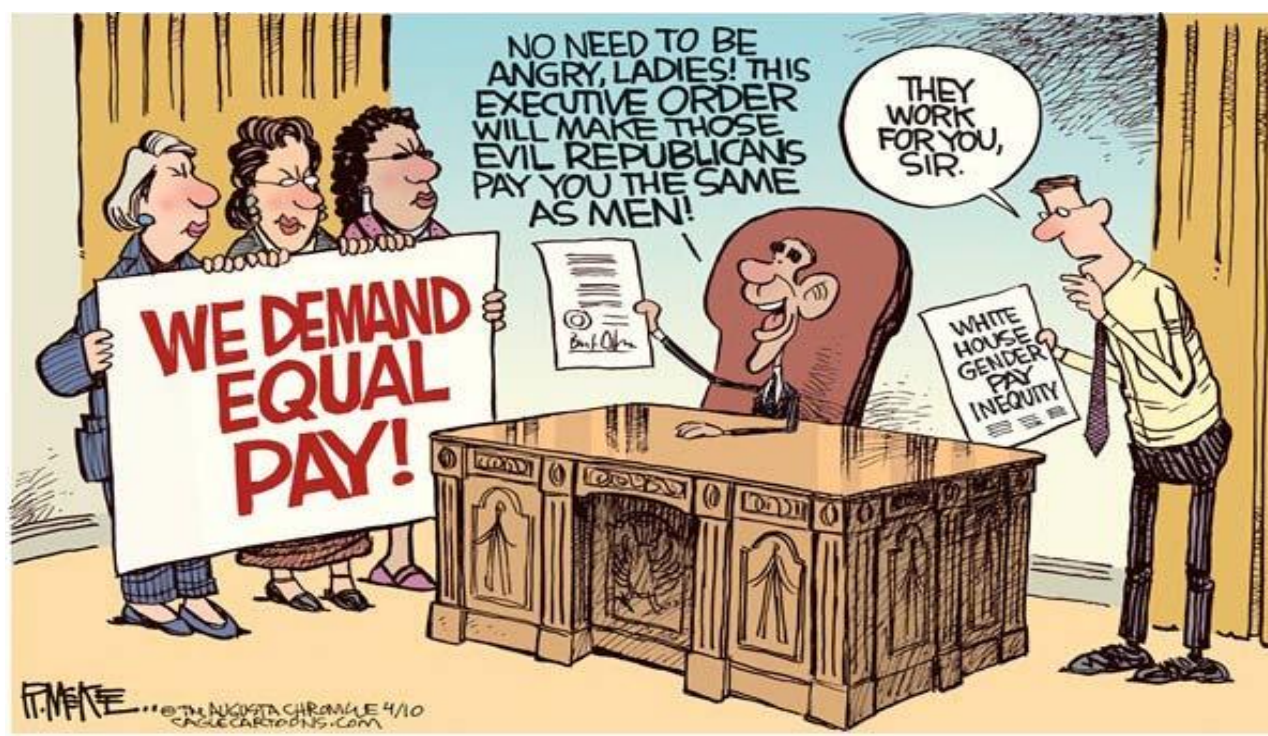
Blame a lot of it on my cockeyed optimism and adherence to one of the ugliest words in the English language: "surely." Ignoring Murphy's Law and possible power outages, computer viruses, unexpected visitors, and funerals, I tell myself, "Surely I'll get it completed tonight. And if not tonight, surely next week. And if not next week, surely next month." Then I tell myself, "Don't call me Shirley," and suddenly I'm off researching Leslie Nielsen instead of preparing my taxes.

I'm hesitant to rush my taxes because all the major web portals such as AOL keep posting tax-related tips well past the first day of spring, and I'm afraid I'll miss something if I file early. You know the articles: "Seven Surprising Expenses That Are Deductible," "10 Mistakes Not To Make Next Year" and "Did you hear the one about the priest, the rabbi and the minister who walked into a bar - and drank themselves to death because they forgot about the solar panel credit?"

I drag my feet about filing because I dread slogging through mounds of questions that might actually hide a single applicable query. I day-dream about a future with FACIAL RECOGNITION SOFTWARE for tax filing - a future in which I could ask the computer, "Do I LOOK like someone with an ex-wife who spent at least part of the tax year driving a train through a penal institution housing foreign trustees convicted of abusing nonqualified compensation plans? What? Try looking again, in this different light."

I appreciate the free software for online tax filing, but I procrastinate because I loathe the constant invitations to pay for the DELUXE package. ("Are you SURE you live at 753 Maple Street? We could double-check that for you, for a mere pittance. The planet Pluto turned down a chance to go deluxe in 2005 and look what happened

Continued on A-5



Letters to the Editor

Does he want someone else to pay for what he wants?

To the Editor:

Abraham Lincoln was once quoted as saying of a progressive Democrat that "He can compress the most words into the smallest idea of any man I ever met." Well, maybe the man wasn't progressive at all.

I read of such a person in the *Advocate* last week, April 9, 2014. For those in the county who may have read the letter entitled "A Proud County Does Raise Taxes" have forgotten, or maybe never read, what one of the founding fathers said, to-wit: "That government is best which governs least." [Thomas Jefferson]

The people who wrote the check he mentioned, as well as the state which collected sales tax et al, don't have a source of revenue other than what they tax us.

Tennessee dodged a bullet this week ■ By Emily Weathers Kennedy

Having lunch with my mother and sister the other day in a little restaurant in the south end of the county, an interesting topic of conversation arose. My mother, no stranger to current events at 84, was interested in my take on the new gun law making news in Tennessee. I had been following it but was unsure of the technicalities of the legislation. So, seeing a friendly looking gentleman at the next table, I asked him politely if he knew of the controversy.

The man explained what the hoopla was about so that we could understand, sort of. It seems that the Tennessee Senate passed Bill 2424 by a count of 25-2 with no debate that removed the permit and training requirement to "open carry" a gun in Tennessee. The previous statute required a handgun carry permit to carry a gun either openly or concealed. This permit's prerequisites included a gun safety course taught by a certified instructor, a criminal background check, and a fee. With the new law, the permit and training requirement would have only been in place for "concealed carry."

After he finished describing the major points of the legislation, he added, "I'm not a fan of this. But," he continued, "I do believe in concealed carry."

"Why don't you like the open carry change?" I asked several times, trying to understand as he elaborated. "It would be like this," he said. "People would be bringing guns into businesses all over the place just for the show of it. Showing off is how people get killed. Suppose someone causes trouble 30 feet away from you. You pull out your gun and shoot. You will probably go to jail."

I was animated by this point. I recalled to him how I had seen a fellow bring a gun into a local fast food restaurant where my teenage daughter worked. It was slung on his hip like he was Wyatt Earp. I was disturbed—disturbed that my daughter had to see his weapon, disturbed that I had to have a nagging discomfort about gun safety as I was trying to enjoy my weekend lunch.

Then the man said, "I could be carrying a gun right now for all you know."

My mother, sister, and I looked at each other in stunned silence. I piped up, "Well, are you?"

"I carry it everywhere I go. I don't leave home without it. When I have breakfast with the locals in the mornings, most of us are packing. You just don't know it."

All I could muster was "Why? Why do you feel that you have to carry guns in this county with so little crime, especially here in this little café?"

His answer is something I suspect justifies most others' excuses. He said, "If someone is breaking into my house when I come home, I would rather be able to confront him armed than unarmed. I've had a carry permit for years."

There was my answer. People are afraid. Folks like this man believe in the imminent danger of someone out to get them, their loved ones, or their possessions. That kind of fear is bolstered by talk radio and other media outlets. He and his friends believe that if people can conceal a weapon, then robbers will hesitate before holding up stores and restaurants due to the fear of the "stand your

Were we to have less government, not more, it wouldn't cost so much and, therefore, would require less income, so that we could afford more at the local level.

It seems to me, a poor country bumpkin, that all the demand for new and higher taxes reiterates the progressive political line of the Obama Administration. The greatest increases in taxation always come from the Democrat politicians more than any other party. What great plans does the letter-writer have for the increase in revenue?

Surely, we must pay for what we need, but he seems to want someone else to pay for what he wants. Higher taxes have never attracted folks to clamber for them, nor business to rush to places which promise to tax them more. As for pride, I've heard it comes before the fall.

By the way, what happened to the extra \$300 million?

Sincerely
William B. Caudle II

ground" justification.

I applaud my lunch conversationalist for his desire that people who want to open carry weapons fall under the same scrutiny as those with concealed carry permits. He is right that the "showing off" factor could be dangerous and disconcerting at best. But I am also left with two other thoughts.

One, thinking that taking a weapon around with you in public places is somehow protective to you and detrimental to perpetrators is a naive notion. It smacks of the frontier lawlessness mentality where every citizen can assess a crisis situation, use a gun accordingly, and not go to jail. If someone were robbing a Subway (a big if), waving your gun with bystanders in the room will as likely get people killed as diffuse the situation. You think you are reasonable and can shoot? What about the guy who passes a background check and can carry his weapon the same as you, but he's mentally ill or can't fire a shot and hit the broad side of a barn? This isn't the rootin' tootin' shootin' Wild West, after all. No one, other than law enforcement, should be able to carry guns, concealed or unconcealed, into public places. The fellow in the café above admitted that if he pulled out a gun and shot someone attempting to rob the place, he could go to jail. I can't grasp, then, why the gun in the first place?

When the founding fathers offered protection from a tyrannical government in the Second Amendment, they

Continued on A-5

Capitol Hill Week in Review

■ State Senator

Joey Hensley MD

Senate passes legislation to protect and give more rights to victims of crime Bill aims to uphold Tennessee's death penalty law

The State Senate passed several bills this week to



protect and give more rights to crime victims, including a bill

giving victims of rape the power to keep their identity private. The action came as the nation recognized National Crime Victims' Week, an annual observance to promote victims' right and honor crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. Senate Bill 2254 provides that identifying information regarding the victim will be treated as confidential following a guilty plea or conviction. The information would not be open for inspection by members of the public, unless the victim waives the right to confidentiality.

The legislation is designed to be sensitive to the victims of sexual offenses and their desire to keep their identity private following the conclusion of a trial where the defendant is found guilty. It requires the district attorney general to inform the victims of their right to privacy. Nothing in the bill can be used to deny access to the public part of this file as long as the personal information is redacted.

The State Senate also passed Senate Bill 2084 this week which repeals the statute of limitations for rape, aggravated rape, rape of a child and aggravated rape of a child, as long as law enforcement or the district attorney general has been notified within three years of the offense. The Senate approved a minor House amendment on the bill on Wednesday and sent the proposal to the governor for his signature. The legislation pertains to acts committed on or after the bill's July 1, 2014 effective date and offenses committed prior to that date, as long as the statute of limitations has not expired. The current statutes of limitations range from 8 years to 15 years for rape of an adult and up to 25 years after the 18th birthday of the victim when the offense involves a child.

Sex Offender Registry -- In similar action, Senators voted to approve legislation which defines "offender against children" for purpose of the state's Sex Offender Registry as a sexual offender, violent sexual offender, or violent juvenile sexual offender if the victim in one or more of the offender's crimes was 12 years old or younger.

Continued on A-5

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