

# OPINION

- Columnists
- Letters to the Editor

## A fair day's pay for a fair day's work

By Emily Weathers Kennedy; Advocate Guest Columnist

Ah summertime. Warm porch nights. Scrumptious garden vegetables. Maybe a vacation. When our girls were little, vacation time for us meant gathering stuff that we needed desperately to get rid of and holding a yard sale. This was great incentive for the girls: create something out of toys and clothes you don't want or need. Their mama loved it even more. Any excuse for the girls to de-clutter was worth the pain of gathering, pricing, and selling our junk.

Not a family to be frivolous with time or vacation money, my husband would chip in his contribution: work a few hours overtime for extra money. That was a win-win proposition—he got more work done and projects finished, alleviating pressures from his stressful job while providing us extra money to spend.

I now realize that my husband's choice of overtime work/pay when he needed it was a luxury most Americans do not enjoy. In the bubble of my perfect world, I thought the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 gave workers the right to work a 40 hour week or not and choose/accept overtime as it was needed with *compensation* in some form for that extra work, be it time off (comp time) or overtime pay.

I was wrong.

Recently President Barack Obama iterated promises from his State of the Union Address by announcing new proposed standards for the Department of Labor. These standards are to update the ones set in the 1938 Act, then tweaked in 1975, and finally changed drastically in 2004 by the Bush Administration, causing millions of Americans to lose their overtime pay.

The threshold set in 2004 still holds today. Make \$23,660 (still well below the threshold of poverty for

a family of four) and be given a title of manager, and you pretty much can be asked to work as many hours in the week as humanly possible with no extra compensation or time off. Nada. Zip. Because you are a "manager." For many businesses, the ride has been like a gravy train. Why pay for two workers for 80 hours in a week if a company can slap the title of manager on one person and force him or her to work double time? For the past century, the 40-hour workweek has

workers, 56% are women and 53% have at least a college degree.) In addition, the new rules clarify for employers and workers alike which job descriptions are eligible for overtime pay and prevent future erosion of overtime by updating the threshold based on inflation and wage growth over time. This figure also represents the 1975 standard with inflation adjustments.

Many companies have already been paying their employees fairly, so little for them will change. Others will proclaim these standards as business killers, and that is unfortunate. What is more unfortunate is building a successful business on the backs of unpaid labor.

The cornerstone of a sound economic policy for the US includes fairness and decent compensation for middle class workers. A fair wage for a fair day's work. Such a simple concept but illusive to so many.

*Emily Weathers Kennedy is a freelance writer, blogger, artist, photo stylist, and decorator. Her work is online and in product catalogs. Emily lives with her husband, 4 dogs, and 1 cat and writes from their farm in Loretto, where she was born and raised.*



been a cornerstone for American workers. Even with 40 hours, people struggle to balance jobs and family. When overtime hours are thrown in, the struggle intensifies. I well remember my husband's late nights, his missing soccer games and school performances. But, at least he was compensated. That alone took the pressure off and lessened the sting of missing his girls' events.

The new regulations will raise the threshold to \$50,400 per year as of 2016, extending overtime pay to 5 million workers within the first year. (Of these



Emily, (third from right) and fam.

## "Honoring Chattanooga Shooting Victims"

Weekly Column by U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander

(R-Nashville)

When I first got word of the tragedy in Chattanooga, the word that immediately came to mind was heartbroken. Heartbroken for the lives that were lost. Heartbroken for the families who are remaining. Heartbroken for the community of Chattanooga and for Sen. Corker.

Last Friday, at the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, there was a memorial service and nearly 1,000 people attended. Sen. Corker spoke. Gov. Haslam spoke. Others spoke, including the police chief. I was honored to speak as well. I know more people in the country know about what happened that day. Most of them would have liked to be there. You never know quite what to say. Sometimes all you can do is just be there.

In Chattanooga, faith is strong. In Chattanooga, the sense of helping one another is strong. Chattanooga is a place of good neighbors. Chattanooga was recently named the best mid-sized city in America. Everything in Chattanooga has seemed to be going in the right direction – and then this. So it's especially heartbreaking in the community of Chattanooga.

### Local asks others to show support

Scarlet Grooms has placed a memorial flag and teddy bear at the Lawrenceburg National Guard Armory in honor of the servicemen who lost their lives in the recent shooting in Chattanooga. Grooms is asking others to place a small item at the Armory as a show of support. "It could have happened here," said Grooms. "I just want them to know we care."

At the memorial service, I said I had been trying to think about what I could add to the words that were being said. I thought of the time in 1985 when 289 members of the 101st Airborne division lost their lives in a plane crash in Newfoundland, and President Reagan came to Fort Campbell to meet with the families and to talk about it. I was governor then, and I drove up to hear what he had to say. He spoke of those men and women then, as these five were, as peacekeepers – there to protect the lives and to protect the peace, to act as a force for stability and trust for our country. Their work – President Reagan said at the time, of those 289 which can as equally well be said of

these five – was the perfect expression of the best of the Judeo-Christian tradition. They were the ones of whom Christ spoke when he said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

President Reagan said of the 289 who lost their lives 30 years ago what could be said of these five, what a poet said of soldiers in another war, "They will never grow old, they will always be young, and we know one thing with every bit of our thinking, they're in the arms of God."

Chattanoogaans said last Friday the two words, "Chattanooga Strong." They were repeated by Senator Corker, by the governor, by most of the members of the community – people standing up, supporting each other, supporting the families who had been heartbroken by the loss of their loved ones.

I am enormously impressed with the people of Chattanooga. And so is the rest of the country: On July 21, the United States Senate unanimously passed a resolution offered by Sen. Corker and me condemning the deadly attack and honoring the five service members who lost their lives. As we honor the five, we honor the city and its response to this terrible tragedy and I pledge to continue working with Senator Corker to do all that I can to help those five families and to help keep Chattanooga strong.

## Adult Coloring Books: Are they right for you?

**TYRADES!**  
By Danny Tyree



"Sharpen 'em if you got 'em." Once upon a time, people looked upon permission to partake of nicotine as a golden opportunity to relax. Now millions fight stress in a more colorful way.

According to the July 12 "Parade" magazine, coloring books for adults have gone mainstream – with grown-ups merrily embellishing books of paisleys, botanicals, animals, enchanted forests, celebrities, decorative fans and more.

There are million sellers among the more than 150 books available. (That doesn't count the 10-volume set that failed miserably in its attempt to calm down Donald Trump's hair.)

When I was a little kid, both my mother and paternal grandmother benefitted from the paint-by-numbers craze. The world is even more nerve-racking now, so I can understand why so many folks are eager to relax with this childhood-rooted pursuit.

My friend Dinsdale, however, tends to overanalyze everything and countered all my praise.

I told Dinsdale that being immersed in the world of coloring lets people travel back to a simpler time of life. ("Yeah, back when they imagined hypodermic needles to be 10 feet long, the monsters under the bed civilly debated whether youngsters taste better with mustard or mayo and their pet dog abruptly decided to retire to the country after the kid heard screeching tires and a thump outside the house. Good times.")

Looking back at the "Parade" article, I remarked that the opportunity for creativity makes many fans feel like they're a co-creator with the designer of the coloring book. ("Yeah, except that they're the collaborator who doesn't get the money, the fan mail or the podcast interviews. Sounds like the makings for the breakup of a rock band. You know, 'It used to be about the turquoise, man!'")

I thought surely Dinsdale couldn't argue with the value of coloring as a form of therapy or meditation. ("Right – that's why you always see the Dalai Lama traveling the globe promoting peace, harmony and the chance for Crayola to make a boatload of money.")

I mentioned that enthusiasts recommend coloring above other leisure activities because it offers complete absorption,

engaging both hemispheres of the brain. ("Won't that be confusing? When it's winter in one hemisphere, won't it be summer in the other one?") No one ever said Dinsdale was the sharpest crayon in the 64-pack.

I cited the feeling of accomplishment that colorists get from bringing something beautiful into the world. ("Yeah, but they get carried away with their accomplishments, just like the over-achieving garden-sharing neighbors. It's all 'Here come the Lawsons with more geometric designs for the refrigerator door! Quick – start firing the Druckers' excess zucchini at them!'")

Coloring is largely a solitary hobby, but many practitioners display their work via social media or join groups that are

described as being like old-timey quilting bees. ("Quilting bees were a distraction from delivering your 14th child or hitching up the mule and plowing the South 40. These modern gatherings are a distraction from, I don't know, the seven bazillion OTHER things you could be doing in 20-bleepin'-15!")

I hope Dinsdale won't object if I invite my readers to explore the world of adult coloring and to send coloring books as gifts to the appropriate friends.

"Just don't be surprised if they ignore the coloring book and play with the empty box!"

\*Sigh\* Another coloring book, please. I just ripped that one in half.

©2015 Danny Tyree. Danny welcomes email responses at [tyreetyrades@aol.com](mailto:tyreetyrades@aol.com) and visits to his Facebook fan page "Tyree's Tyrades". Danny's weekly column is distributed exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc. newspaper syndicate.

### Letter to the Editor

#### I plan to vote for Mr. Trump for several reasons.

He speaks the truth and says what's on his mind. I agree with his views on border control and illegal immigration.

He is actually an American citizen. Although he has no military background, he has a lot of knowledge about economics and how the business world is ran.

He would not be a puppet president bought out and making decisions by the Elites. Just my thoughts.

Christiane Alsteen  
Lawrenceburg

Contact the  
Lawrence County Advocate  
by mail, P.O. Box 308 L'burg, TN 38464,  
by telephone, 762-1726,  
or email,  
[advocateeditor@bellsouth.net](mailto:advocateeditor@bellsouth.net)

## Lawrence County Advocate

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

#### NEWS STAFF

Elizabeth K. Blackstone, Editor  
LaShawn Baxter, Co Editor  
Sandi Mashburn, Staff Writer  
Joe Baxter, Sports

#### ADVERTISING STAFF

Amber McIntyre, Sales  
Renee Fleeman, Sales

#### PHOTOGRAPHER

Howard Johnston

#### PRODUCTION STAFF

Rachel Weaver, Ad Designer  
Angie Pettigrew, Ad Designer

#### OFFICE STAFF

Katy Adams, Bookkeeping/  
Classifieds/ Receptionist

#### PRESS & CIRCULATION

Ralph Yeager  
Donnie Howell  
Brian Chandler  
Keith Matthews  
Chris Dickey  
David Ray  
Tanner Osborn

#### DISTRIBUTION

Dorothy Belew

16,300+ published &  
delivered twice weekly

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](http://www.lawrencecountyadvocate.net)