

# OPINION

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## Kathy Griffin, not the victim . Advocate General Manager John Finney

Kathy Griffin was looking for the shock and awe factor holding a bloody beheaded Trump last week. It was planned and calculated to draw the extreme reaction and cater to the far left.

This is not a photo that was just taken on a whim; it was planned out with her staff, set up with a professional photographer, and the head was manufactured for this shoot. This was all done on purpose. Not one person on her staff thought this was crossing the line or done in bad taste.

We have been appalled by images by ISIS beheading hostages over the past few years. The thought of cutting a person's head off while they are still alive is terrifying. She is mocking and belittling the families killed by ISIS in this manner.

Since the photograph was published CNN has cut ties with Kathy Griffin and advertisers have dropped her as a spokesperson.

Good old far left and fellow comedian Rep. Al Franken commented "I think she can recover." She did donate to his campaign.

Chelsea Clinton tweeted in response to the photo being published. "This is vile and wrong. It is never funny to joke about

killing the president." She understands being the child of the President of the United States and has stated before that Baron Trump needs to be left out of the spotlight. This is an image Baron at eleven years old has to contend with. I applaud her for this.

Kathy Griffin did apologize for the photo shoot and the

image has been removed from the photographer's social media accounts. I would hope this is the last disgusting attack on our President no matter which party they are from, but I have a feeling it is not.

Over the weekend she began claiming that she was the victim, that the Trump family was "personally trying to ruin my live forever" she stated.

He did not start this confrontation with her, he just responded to the photograph she created. He responded with how his eleven year old son felt seeing this picture. She is not the victim, she is the instigator.

I keep telling my daughters not to post anything on the internet they would regret one day because it will always be there for the rest of their life. Social media has created an outlet where too many act before they think. Hind sight is always 20/20 on our mistakes.

Whether or not you support the President and their families; they should be treated with dignity and respect, especially their young children.

Mocking and making fun of them is one thing, threatening and beheading is another.

Have more respect for everyone; society will be better for all.



## Pulling our heads out of the partisan sand



By Emily Weathers Kennedy

We all have it. Our comfort zone. Our nesting place. After a day at work or even a vacation, we all seek to nestle in the place we feel most comfortable. Usually this place is home. For me, it's on a farm in Loretto. My husband, Kerry, and I say that we could stay here for weeks on end and not see a

soul and be happy.

But in reality, we ALL need each other. It is in our nature to reach out to associate with human beings. Friends. Associates. None of us lives in a vacuum (except maybe cloistered monks and nuns, and they isolate themselves for a reason). And, the healthiest of us realize that in order to thrive as a person and a society, we need other people.

It would be so easy for me to bury my head in

the proverbial sand (or brown soil of my gardens) and be content. I cannot, however, be content when my fellow Lawrence Countians, Tennesseans, and Americans do not flourish and indeed suffer.

So, yes, I want folks to have the same healthcare as I do. It should not be contingent on someone's job that he or she can get health benefits. So many are between jobs or in companies that don't offer insurance. Some have preexisting conditions that make insurance unaffordable. This is why there should be a single payer system for everyone in the country to be able to buy into. Think this is unattainable? Think again.

Recently it has been disclosed that the ACA is not in a "death spiral" as declared by Republican lawmakers. Insurance companies are pulling out for other reasons, even as they record substantial profits. According to the LA Times, a federal judge declared Aetna's self removal "...at least partially in response to a federal antitrust lawsuit blocking its proposed \$34-billion merger with Humana.

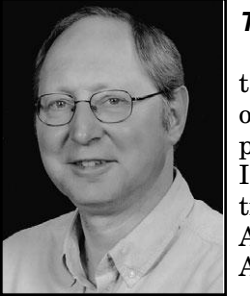
Aetna threatened federal officials with the pullout before the lawsuit was filed, and followed through on its threat once it was filed." People's lives should also not be dependent upon an insurance company's profits or outlandish salaries for its CEO (According to documents filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Aetna's Mark T. Bertolini was compensated \$8.26 million last year, down from \$36.36 million in 2012). And, to understand why certain lawmakers oppose a single payer system, look to see how much they have taken from the insurance lobby. Follow the money.

It is in all of our best interest to attention to the health of the planet. Only the foolhardy deny that our planet is becoming adversely affected by the climate change that we compounded with our cars and our desire for more and more manufactured goods. Protecting our world is our responsibility; what we leave our children and our grandchildren is our legacy. It is in our country's best interest to continue to lead the world with the Paris Accord. After all, the only other two countries not on board are Nicaragua and Syria. The former does not believe the requirements are stringent enough; the latter is in a civil war. To see why some lawmakers advised the president to pull out of the Paris Accord, look into the contributions those lawmakers took from industrial polluters. Just follow the money.

Elections must not be about one issue. So, voting for someone solely because he says he will bring jobs to our area sounds good, but is short sighted. Believe me, every legislator, both national and state, knows his or her constituency wants jobs. But, jobs are about adapting to the changing economy and what is current and necessary. Knowing and promising are not doing. Trump promised a great deal in this regard but can't seem to stay out of controversy and off Twitter enough to govern.

At some point in our lives, we must step out of our comfort zones and pull our heads out of the partisan sand to address the issues that affect our world. We do not live in a bubble, as much as we would like to do so. Our little spot in Lawrence County cannot be secure until the bigger world is healthy too.

## How much do you hate property taxes?



Tyrades! by Danny Tyree

Many people in my hometown have been freaking out over their property tax appraisals, so it was timely that I discovered a Motley Fool article titled "Why Property Taxes Are The Most Hated Levy In America."

First, a couple of disclaimers. Since I have a child in public school, I have not felt particularly overwhelmed by my own tax bill. And I'm truly appreciative of a conscientious county employee who got two worthless buildings removed from my mother's tax appraisal.

Still, I can see why a survey conducted by Gallup, CNN and USA Today a decade ago declared the property tax to be the most despised tax by more than a two-to-one margin.

It is hard to wrap your mind around the logic of some taxes. Sure, "sin taxes" indulge our Puritanical heritage of discouraging antisocial behaviors. And fuel taxes defray the costs of infrastructure. But income taxes punish us for working and investing. And property taxes punish us for (a) keeping realtors busy or (b) upgrading the appearance of our existing property.

It's fortunate that marriages don't follow the same logic. ("You cleaned up the garage, remembered my birthday and brought me roses? Your sorry rear end is spending the night in the dog house, and you'll be hearing from my lawyer!")

Theoretically, adding a room to your house, constructing a tool shed or remedying an eyesore does place an additional strain on county/city resources; but surely the magnitude is exaggerated. ("That darned Houlihan added a hummingbird feeder to this gazebo. Now we'll have to add a second shift of cops to watch for gang activity.")

It's creepy the way the municipalities use drive-by viewings and even drones to guess at your property's value. Creepy and juvenile. It's like operating government with a big game of "I spy with my little eye." What's next? The sales tax people use a lively game of hopscotch to set rates?

True, many tax assessors have a heart; but others can be quite unsympathetic. ("Well, your great-great grandfather should have THOUGHT about the city someday needing a new meth treatment clinic with 500-channel satellite dishes before he bought this property.")

Many tax assessors live in the mythical land of "IF." You know, like "IF you sold your land for a subdivision, it would be worth a jillion dollars." Of course, the response should be something like, "IF your dog was dropped from a plane wearing a nuclear bomb, it would wipe out a lot of ISIS tunnels. Should I call the Pentagon, or shall we just agree to disagree???"

Granted, tax assessors have a thankless job, carrying out someone else's master plan. Someone else's IDIOTIC master plan. Hitting someone with a big bill AFTER they've tied up their money in a mortgage and property insurance? I can imagine government geniuses saying, "I notice you've fired every bit of ammunition in your pistol. How would you like to be my personal bodyguard?"

Scrutinize your assessment for errors. Other than that, I can't help you. Even if you try to stay under the radar, your assessment may rise simply because your neighbors threw caution to the wind and made the neighborhood as a whole more valuable. Whatever you do, don't let the Neil Sedaka lyrics "I'm living right next door to an angel" blare from your house. Your assessment could soar to high heaven.

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## Speaker wraps up the legislative session



By Tennessee Speaker of the House, Beth Harwell

The first session of the 110th General Assembly has concluded, and so many positive things were accomplished for the people of Tennessee. We continued the tradition of managing our state's resources well and prioritizing those things that make Tennessee prosperous. I believe our work

this year ensures that our state is a place where people want to live, work, own and operate a business, raise a family, and retire.

BALANCED BUDGET

The budget process is not always easy, but each year, we balance our budget. This year's \$37 billion budget cuts taxes, puts \$132 million in the state's Rainy Day Fund which helps maintain our Triple A bond rating, fully funds Tennessee's educational system, and focuses on job recruitment and infrastructure investments. For a second year in a row, and the second year in recorded Tennessee history, the state budget does not take on any new debt.

EDUCATION

In addition to the historic investments made in K-12 education over the last several years, this year we

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