



We keep the light shining

We covered a City Council meeting this month. We also cover Madison County Fiscal Court meetings.

Why do we make an effort to cover and report those meetings? It's simple: To keep you informed on what is going on within the city and county government.

This week, as has been observed in mid-March since 2005, is Sunshine Week, used "to educate the importance of open government and the dangers of excessive and unnecessary secrecy."

It's our job to keep our readers informed of what transpires during those meetings, especially items that are specifically tied to the agenda, whether it's a resolution or an ordinance that was passed in the city and county. We also are required by law to publish those ordinances before they can be enforced.

Every year it seems, an elected official wants public notices to be online and managed by a local government agency or a third-party entity. Imagine the possibility of corruption that could take place if such law was passed by our state legislature.

We are fortunate to have a mayor and city council as well as county officials, judge-executive and magistrates who are transparent and willing to share what the public needs to know.

We have an open democracy and the people elect those who represent the citizens in local, state and national government. They are to be held accountable to the public because "government functions best when it operates in the open."

In an era where news can be derived from a variety of sources, including social media, it's important now more than ever, to consider your source when it comes to the news. Seek to find journalists who strive to present the facts without tilting the scale.

Our role is to report the news to you, the reader, and keep you updated on the latest government decisions that will affect your life in one way or another.

If not for this paper you wouldn't know when the U.S. 25 widening project was complete and rely strictly on heresy or what someone posted on social media that may or may not be true, considering the source of the information.

There are more than 1,400 cities and towns across America that have lost a newspaper during the last 17 years, according to the Associated Press, based on analysis of data that was compiled by the University of North Carolina.

It's sad.

Imagine a community without a newspaper, whether it be online or print.

How would you know about what happened at the last government meeting? How would you find out what's going on this weekend to plan ahead?

That's why it's vital to have journalists looking after your best interests at all times.



Keith Taylor



Getting your point across

Bad things can happen to anyone at any place and at any time. You don't have to be in a distant country or on an island. It can happen anywhere in America and in any neighborhood. Predators and bad people exist and we are never exactly sure just how close they may be.

This is why we don't take chances like walking around at 3 a.m. in the morning on a deserted beach or almost any town in America. I feel like my neighborhood is very safe but I'm clueless about who may happen to be driving through it at night or even during the day.

Famous last words that are often spoken are, "This is Mayberry. Nothing like that could ever happen here." Sadly, it only takes one time for it to happen here, there or anywhere and a life is taken. A family is forever destroyed and a community mourns forever.

Eighteen-year-olds fight in our military. However, they are very supervised by Sergeants. They are told where to be, what time to be there and exactly what and how to do it. Most of

the time I felt my sons were safer in the military than driving around town after midnight. An 18-year-old on Spring Break is most likely a long way from mom, dad or a dormitory supervisor. Often the temptation to just let go and go wild are too great. There is often plenty of alcohol available and often poor decisions are made. Perhaps like walking on a beach at three in the morning. That's not necessarily a bad idea if you are with four of five other people that you know very well and who have your back. It's not a good idea if there is a possibility that they might just walk off and leave you or lose track of what you are doing.

The missing University of Pittsburgh student in the Dominican Republic, Sudiksha Konanki was obviously a very smart girl majoring in biology and chemistry. The 20-year-



Glenn Mollette

old was last seen on a beach in Punta Cana on March 6th. Our hearts go out to her parents.

We have been reminded of the horrific Natalie Holloway murder. The 18-year-old American high school graduate from Mountain Brook, Alabama, disappeared from the Caribbean island of Aruba on May 30, 2005. She was murdered by Joran van der Sloot.

Parents and young adults should do Spring Break together.

No one is going to say "No" like a like loving dad or mom. There is nothing better than having a dad to say, "Have your butt back here by 11:00" or "No, you can't." Being a parent often involves being unpopular at times throughout life. It will be okay down the road when they are still alive and they come back to say thank you

The reality is that 18-year-olds are adults and will do what they want to do. However, you don't have to underwrite their travel, car, gas and spending money. You can also think of other ways to get your point across.

Could this be the Time?

For decades Richmond, Berea and Madison County governments have had separate comprehensive plans normally updated every five years. All are forward thinking plans for the future of each jurisdiction with minimal consideration given to each other.

Could this be the time all three local governments collaborate on the updating of their comprehensive plans?

It is obvious we are experiencing a population growth explosion. Our total population is expected to exceed 106,000 by 2029, eleven years before the current comprehensive plans predicted! This growth has alarmed some citizens especial-

ly regarding traffic issues.

Comprehensive plans are generally intended to provide guidance and direction to manage growth and still preserve the unique character, culture and heritage of each jurisdiction.

Berea and Richmond are currently in the early stages of updating their respective comprehensive plans. Madison County's current plan is four years old and could use updating.

The Kentucky Housing Corporation recently released a comprehensive study detailing a severe housing shortage across the state. The study indicated that that Madison County had over a 2800 housing unit shortage in 2024 and that the shortage will exceed 6700 by 2029.

If this data is accurate all three governments need to work closely together to determine the best approaches to accom-

modate this many housing units.

Not all Madison Countians are residents of the City of Richmond or the City of Berea, yet all the city citizens are residents of Madison County. Hardly any resident is cognizant of the boundaries between any of the jurisdictions.

Now would be an ideal time for all three entities to sit down with professional guidance to create an overall vision and mission for our great historic county.

The three jurisdictions are like three great ships. We all need to be sailing in formation for the sake of our future. To quote Kentucky's state motto, "United we stand, divided we fall".

As always, I welcome your input at wcrhughes@gmail.com

Billy Ray Hughes
Third District Magistrate

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Publisher: Keith Taylor

Reach us:

Publisher.....Keith Taylor (publisher@bereacitizen.net)
Advertising..... (advertising@bereacitizen.net)
Receptionist.....Vickey Hampton(reception@bereacitizen.net)

Publisher Emeritus: Teresa Scenters

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