>> Opinion

The Kentucky Standard

Are we asking the right question?

As President Jimmy Carter lies dying in Georgia while I write this, and might have passed away by the time you are reading it, it seems prudent to remember that 1980 election when he lost his reelection bid. Remember when Ronald Regan asked, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" It seems to be surfacing again, but Dan Rather posed that the better question might be: "Do you remember just how bad it was before Biden?"



NELDA **MOORE**

It seems short-term amnesia has hit a lot of Americans, including some in the national press, who have forgotten the refrigerated trucks parked around hospitals in populous areas to be used as temporary "holding pens" for our dead while morgues were filled to capacity and beyond. And that's just the most visceral image that imprinted itself on my brain.

There are plenty more and Mr. Rather listed some, but far from all, and I will share that list here with a few added comments of my own:

- Curtailed legal protections for immigrants, including separating children from their parents
- Passed the biggest corporate tax cut in history, ensuring the middle class would pick up the tab for what could no longer be paid without these tax dollars
- Eliminated scores of environmental protections, including pulling out of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. And just this month invited the fossil fuel CEOs to his home to offer them repeal of all protections the Biden administration had put in place for the donation of $1 billion. So he is willing to sell out a liveable planet for the bargain price of $1 billion. Do the math: with about 8 billion people in the world, this would make us each worth about 12.5 cents. Feeling valued now?
- Overtly supported white nationalists
- Responded to the COVID crisis by flouting science and championing dangerous treatment, resulting in hundreds of thousands of preventable deaths and those refrigerated semis
- Appointed three far-right justices to the Supreme Court, which then overturned Roe v. Wade, perhaps the most egregious to women nationwide. Given the age of several current justices, he might have the opportunity to do more and shove the court even further to the extreme right.
- Withdrew from multiple multinational agreements

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The Opinion page of The Kentucky Standard is the space reserved apart from the news for both the newspaper and others to express their opinions.

These take several forms.

- **Editorial** — Unsigned editorials represent the consensus of The Kentucky Standard's editorial board. Editorials from other newspapers represent those editorial boards.
- **Viewpoints** — Columns in the Viewpoints section are written generally by regular, volunteer contributors and the opinions expressed are their own. The Standard does not discriminate against columns based on political or ideological grounds.
- **Letters** — Readers' views and letters of thanks are written by readers and submitted per our guidelines.
- **Cartoons** — Cartoons are distributed through a syndication service that offers a limited selection from cartoonists and meant normally as a satirical look on current events. They represent the views of the cartoonist.

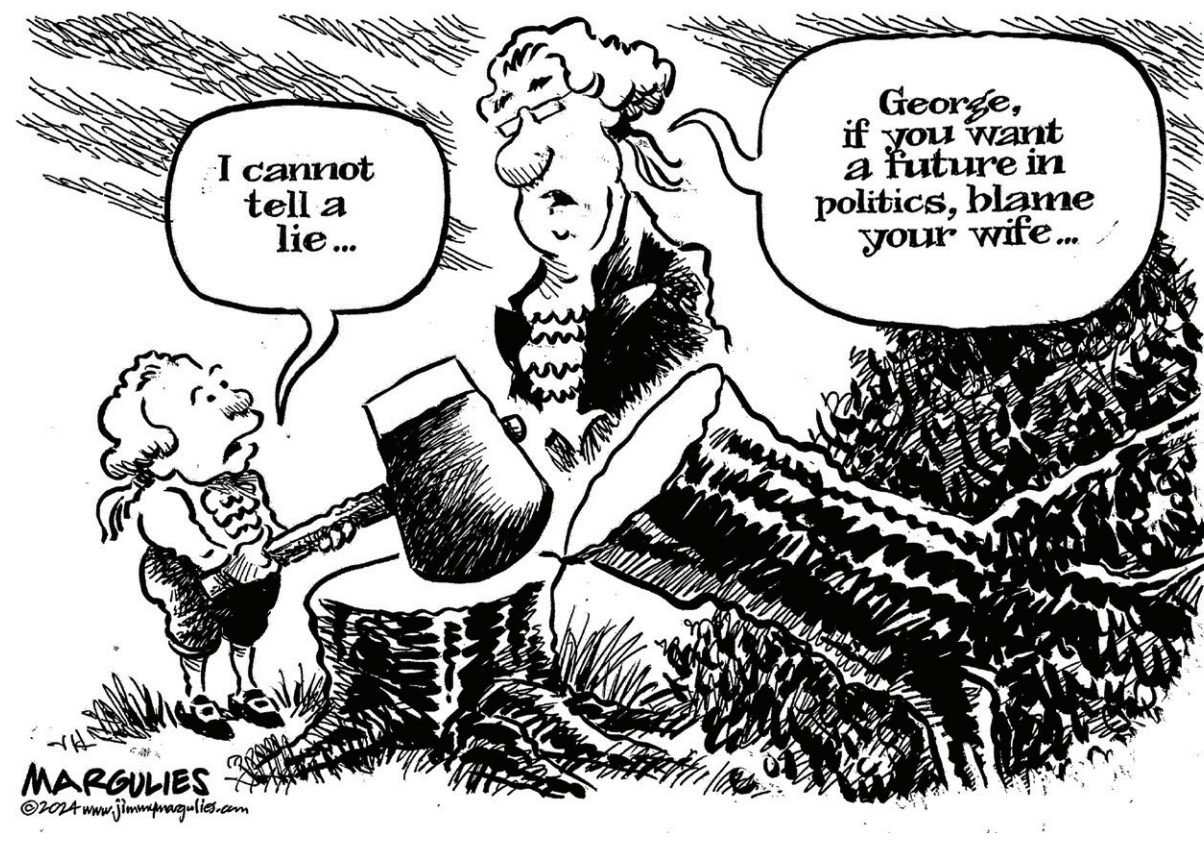
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The Kentucky Standard is the newspaper covering Nelson County and its communities including Bardstown, Bloomfield and New Haven, as well as the unincorporated areas of the county.

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Jailer's spring/summer update 2024

As the weather warms and schools let out for summer breaks, I hope everybody takes time to enjoy this part of the year with your families and loved ones.



JUSTIN **HALL**
NELSON COUNTY JAILER

The inmate work program is now in its 16th month since I started it last year. I'm pleased to report that we have worked more than 30,000 hours, saving the citizens of Nelson County more than $600,000 in labor.

The inmates have been instrumental in bulky item pick-up over the last two years, saving the county from hiring temporary or seasonal employees. We are now maintaining and mowing 90% of all county properties and have helped several nonprofit organizations with various projects. Inmates have also assisted in maintaining and restoring several cemeteries around Nelson County. They take great pride in their work, and I am very happy with the success of our program.

The work program has led to employment for several inmates after their release. The program costs the county zero dollars, as all deputy salaries are paid from the jail commissary fund. Currently, we have five crews going out weekly, compared to just two when we started in February 2023. Last year, we picked up more than 2,000 bags of garbage; this year, we aim to pick up more than 3,000 bags and cover every road in the county.

Future projects include utilizing the inmate work program to help with recycling, garbage pickup, and opening more opportunities for county-wide recycling. I appreciate County Engineer Brad Spalding and John Greenwell for their assistance in setting up these work details. Judge Tim Hutchins and the magistrates of fiscal court have been instrumental in our program's success.

I am a very pro-program Jailer, and we have initiated several programs in the facility to help people secure jobs and stop the revolving door of incarceration. We offer narcotics anonymous, alcoholics anonymous, GED, anger management, MRT, parenting, and domestic violence classes to give inmates the tools they need to live successful and productive lives.

This month, we started a new welding program with the help of Kentucky Adult Higher Education and Nelson County Adult Education. We are one of the first facilities in the state to offer this program. Inmates who work on our outside crews are eligible to join our welding certification program, and upon completion, they will be certified welders with guaranteed employment upon their release. This is a significant milestone in providing employment opportunities and helping inmates break the cycle of incarceration.

We are also working with courts and treatment centers to get inmates with addiction issues into programs, aiming to help them lead productive lives. The opioid epidemic is at its worst in my 18-year career, and we are doing everything we can to combat it on all fronts.

The body scanner we purchased at zero tax dollars has already had nine positive hits, leading to five felony indictments for inmates attempting to smuggle contraband into the jail. While no tool is perfect, this machine has already saved lives. The body scanner, costing $240,000, was paid for out of the Nelson County Jail commissary fund, costing taxpayers nothing.

Our facility has completed its third jail inspection since I became Jailer, and I'm proud to report that these inspections have been described by our jail inspector as "the best inspection he has ever seen at our facility, transforming Nelson County from one of the worst jails he inspected to one of the best."

I am a very pro-local business Jailer, committed to bringing as much of our operating budget back into Kentucky and Nelson County. I have changed the majority of contracts to local businesses, whereas previously more than $500,000 was being paid to out-of-state vendors. I want to keep our tax dollars where they belong — in Nelson County and Kentucky.

For the 2024 budget, we are projected to come in 5% under budget for the year, and next year we are looking at less than a 4% increase in operational costs. This includes a much-needed 3.4% pay raise for our staff, in line with the consumer price index (CPI) increase for Kentucky.

With the contract and spending changes we have implemented, we have already saved well more than $600,000 in the last year and a half.

I am very proud of the progress we have made, but we still have much work to do. Our facility, built in 1987 with an initial capacity of 33 inmates and expanded in 1991 to 102 beds, is aging and inadequate for our county's nearly 50,000 people. For comparison, the LarRue County Detention Center, serving approximately 14,000 citizens, has 153 beds. We are reaching a point where patching up our facility is no longer sufficient, and fiscal court is exploring options for our aging jail.

Staff training has been a priority since I took office, and I am continually seeking opportunities to enhance our staff's training each year. Over the past year and a half, the staff has received more training than in the previous 4 years combined.

Serving as your Jailer has been the privilege of my life. I love Nelson County and am dedicated to making our community the best it can be. As always, I never changed my cell phone number when elected, and I am available to anyone. Feel free to contact me on social media, at (502) 293-9174, or at jailer@nelsoncountyky.gov.

Hope everyone has a great Spring and Summer!

Justin Hall is the Nelson County jailer.

May mosquitoes



CAROLYN **CROMER**
DOWN TO EARTH

As warmer weather arrives, so do those pesky backyard companions: mosquitoes. They bite our skin, they swarm in our ears, they leave us with red welts that can itch for days. Why do mosquitoes exist, and what can we do about them in our outdoor living spaces?

Mosquitoes have been on Earth for about 217 million years, and they have co-evolved as an important food source for fish, birds, bats, amphibians, reptiles, and other insects. Male mosquitoes eat nectar and serve as pollinators for many flowers. Without mosquitoes in our food webs, many animals and plants would suffer.

Certain species of mosquitoes have evolved to prefer breeding habitats in and around human homes (like the ones with white and black legs), sometimes entering buildings or underwater tanks. They lay eggs in standing water and take advantage of the myriad places in our yards where standing water hides, such as gutters, downspout extenders, tarps, toys, bird baths, and trash.

One of the ways we deal with mosquitoes in our yards is by fogging with insecticides. These chemical fogs contain pyrethrins and pyrethroids, neurotoxins that cause almost instant paralysis and death to mosquitoes and other insects. While these chemicals may be safe in small doses for humans and pets, they are lethal to a long list of beneficial insects, including monarch butterflies, honeybees, and fireflies.

Insects are essential to sustain life as we know it. They account

SEE **MAY/PAGE A5**

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