

# Opinion

## Thoughts on a penny

So President Donald Trump has ordered the Treasury to quit making pennies. This makes sense to many serious people. A penny costs about four cents to make, so it's a losing proposition for taxpayers every time one is minted.

They didn't ask me for my opinion, but then again my opinion is not worth much. Nobody's opinions are worth much.

For example, if you beg a penny for my thoughts, I'll likely give you my two cents, which is one cent more than you asked for. This is also a losing proposition because sometimes you don't have time for two cents worth of my ramblings.

No, opinions are not worth much at all.

Do you know what is worth a lot? Questions.

There are million-dollar questions. For example, a million-dollar question might be: What in the heck are people going to do with their gigantic collections of pennies? If they turn in their pennies, there's a good chance that the banks will take them somewhere where they will be



CHARLIE  
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EDITOR

destroyed, melted down, in an effort to recoup some of the expensive copper and zinc, which will then be used to make quarters—or something.

So instead I expect people to hoard pennies (like they were already doing). These gigantic buckets of pennies will be held indefinitely in the homes of Americans, and passed down through the ages. A descendant of yours might one day jubilantly inherit your gigantic hoard of pennies. The descendant will cackle with glee as the pennies run through his or her fingers, as they mutter: "Mine! All mine!"

Seriously. One day, pennies could be worth a staggering five cents apiece.

A penny saved then would be worth more than a penny earned. Take that, Benjamin Franklin!

Another question, that may or may not be worth a million dollars, is: What will we do with our sales tax rate?

So you go to the store, and you buy something for a dollar, and the sales tax is 6%. The clerk will turn and ask you for a dollar and six cents, but you won't have any

pennies. So then you'll stand there and silently stare at each other. Then tension will build until the clerk gets on the intercom and asks for a manager.

They can't ask you for six cents sales tax if there are no pennies, right?

They also wouldn't dare increase the tax to ten cents, would they? I mean—they would, but if we're following rounding rules, six cents is much closer to five cents than it is to ten cents. Isn't that how rounding works?

Maybe not government rounding, which I think is to the nearest million dollars.

Although there are many million-dollar questions, and thoughts cost just two cents, there are also five-dollar words and fifty-cent words.

Mark Twain once said that you shouldn't use a five-dollar word when a fifty-cent word will do. It's good advice, especially if you're looking to save money. A fifty-cent word might be something like "money" whereas a five-dollar word would be something like "legal tender."

I've got a five-dollar word for you today: "Malapropism." Makes cents, doesn't it?

## Storm's legislative update

It's official. House Bill 1 has been signed into law, marking another step forward in delivering tax relief to hardworking Kentuckians. This measure authorizes the next half-percentage reduction in the state's individual income tax, bringing it down from 4% to 3.5 percent. As a result, an estimated \$718 million will remain in the hands of Kentucky families, allowing them to save, invest, and spend as they see fit. This reduction will officially take effect on Jan. 1, 2026 and continue our commitment to responsible tax policy that benefits individuals and the state's economy.

With this priority completing the legislative process, several other priorities continued along during week three of the 2025 Legislative Session ahead of bill filing deadlines next week. The last day to file legislation in the Senate is Tuesday, February 18. The deadline for the state House of Representatives is Wednesday, February 19.

In the meantime, lawmakers returned to Frankfort this week. We convened for legislative business at the historic Old State Capitol, where we approved Senate Bill (SB) 313, officially designating June as Kentucky History Month.

I'm proud to share that my bill, SB 26, has passed the Senate with strong support, marking an important step toward protecting the rights of parents and prospective

adoptive parents with disabilities in Kentucky. This legislation ensures that a disability alone cannot be used as the sole reason to terminate parental rights or deny adoption or foster care opportunities. Our child welfare system exists to protect children, but too often, individuals with disabilities face unnecessary barriers despite their ability and willingness to provide safe, loving homes. I've worked closely with experts and advocates who shared heartbreaking stories of parents who lost custody even after meeting all case plan requirements. SB 26 addresses these issues by requiring the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) to consider adaptive services and supports before disapproving a placement. It also mandates proper documentation of these evaluations to ensure transparency and fairness in decision-making.

This bill aligns state policy with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and sends a clear message: disability should never automatically disqualify someone from being a parent or caregiver. Families deserve a fair chance to stay together, and SB 26 helps make that possible. I appreciate the Senate's support and look forward to working with my House colleagues as the bill progresses.



SEN. BRANDON  
STORM

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## My mute button has died

There are serious happenings and there are even more serious happenings but the most serious happening hit me this week. The "mute" button on my TV remote control gave up the ghost and died! I am sure there are worse things in life like a concussion, a car crash, or a case of Covid but right now I am at my wit's end over the loss of my mute button. As far as TV goes, it's the best thing that ever happened to me since I got my first color set in 1974.

Let's face it, I have used, over-used, and abused that little button. It has saved me from frustration, anger, and a severe case of mental illness on more than one occasion. It has kept me from kicking small animals, slapping friends and family, and threatening major TV networks with mountains of written complaints.

I am spoiled! There's no doubt about it. I remember the first TV set I got. It was used, it was a black and white portable, it had no remote control, and, most importantly, it had no mute button. I don't recall how I lived through all that but I was young when I got that set. I was delighted to have it and I had never heard of a mute button. I think they didn't even make remote controls in those days.

Ignorance is bliss, or so they say, but several years later I became acquainted with a remote with a mute button and I'll never go back.

I digress. I mentioned my first TV set and said it was portable. That meant that if you were strong as an ox you could pick it up and move it around. I was young and strong as an ox then. As I recall, the screen was about 19 inches or maybe a little smaller. What is amazing is that with the advances we have seen in TV sets, at my older-than-dirt age and lack of strength, I could probably move a 56-inch TV set with little help from anyone. I take it back! I'd have to get my nephew to come and move it and hook it up for me. Actually, I don't have a wall large enough for a 56-inch TV so the



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WELLS

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question is moot.

I remember the first thing that made me use my mute button over and over.

It still does! I cannot stand to watch the commercials with Flo and those certifiable idiots in the Progressive commercials. Flo was bad enough but they have added a cast of annoying characters. Since my mute button died, I just turn my head and run the volume control to zero.

Recently a new series of commercials for a "personal injury" lawyer (we used to call them ambulance chasers) who claims to be a "bulldog" have driven me up the wall. He is so annoying with his glasses and googly eyes and strident voice that I just change the channel immediately because I gave up trying to mute him.

Bear with me because I'm going to mention my most hated TV commercials that star Frank Thomas and Doug Flutie. Erectile dysfunction! The moment I see Frank Thomas I try my best to mute the commercial. I think Frank Thomas is single-handedly responsible for the death of my mute button. I would throw a shoe through my TV screen before I ever hear him say again, "And she'll like it, too." No, you big dolt! You are disgusting and my mute button died because of you!

I started writing this column in August 1998. At that time I made a vow to steer clear of religion and politics, intending never to let my personal religious and political opinions be part of this column. I am now breaking my vow. It has become increasingly clear that I am smarter, more empathetic, and more caring for my fellow citizens than the man who was just elected POTUS. Beyond that, I will say only that my mute button is sadly missed because of him. I will turn off the entire network to avoid his insanity.

So, does anyone know how to fix a mute button on a remote or am I going to be forced to buy a new remote? Let me know. What a hoot!

### THE AMISH COOK

## Simplicity and possibility

**BY GLORIA YODER**

The children all left for school. Whew! While I love them more than words, a quiet house is also welcome to the mind and body. I debated where I should start on a Monday morning such as this. The floors needed a broom again, there were more things to be done before the hog butchering at our house the next two days, but none of that stuff really held the highest priority to me; doesn't life consist of things that can't be seen? Still there are things to be done. I grabbed the broom; some quick swipes gave the house a facelift. Amazing how so much dirt can be accumulated in such a short time.

I decided to fuel myself first before tackling some much-needed organizing in the garage, where the meals would be served throughout the butcher days. I mixed up a protein drink, sat by my desk, and opened my favorite devotional, "My Utmost for His Highest." This specific book has a way of giving me what I need at the moment, with whatever I'm be dealing with. The book's author, Oswald Chambers, had no idea when he was teaching College students many years ago, that one day after his passing, his inspirations would be printed and sold.

As I relished the quiet this morning, I savored those first words my eyes fell on, "Never look for justice in this world. If we are devoted to Jesus Christ we have nothing to do with what we meet, whether it is just or unjust. Jesus says, Go steadily on with what I have told you to do, and I will guard your life..." Whew, that doesn't give too much elbow room for self-pity or fear.

I am thankful that God understands our weakness and continually leads us on even when we stumble or fall.

Hi there. It's bedtime by now and I am wrapping up my day by touching base with you all. Highlights from the day include having had the opportunity to chat with my baby sister who is no longer a baby, helping butcher deer at my brother's house, and tackling the long-awaited task of cleaning out the garage.

How can it be so fun organizing for how much you've dreaded a task? Perhaps it's because it's one of those things that require lots of little decisions on what to keep, what to pass on, and what to store in which drawer or tote. I'm learning as I go. It is a satisfaction all its own to end up with fewer items to put back in place than what I started out with.

There are always eager little hands to save what goes into the trash. Tonight I had a little lad ask if he could climb into the dumpster to see what he could find. Um, no. I don't think so. Though I try to be very careful not to place anything in the trash that is of value or useful to the children, they seem to have a way of finding potential in all sorts of little trinkets. Thus, I have learned that when I am sorting through my

storage totes, it works best to also have a tote for the trash to simplify the, "Mom may I keep this?" questions. No one but Mom and Big Sister Julia know what that tote full is for.

I remember all too well when I was that little girl, wanting to keep anything that represented potential. As my mom used to say when I was a teenager, "Gloria's closet is full of endless possibilities." At that time I was pleased with every bit of it; now I sigh a little sigh. I had not known the joy of clutter-free living. I tell my children that if they learn to live in an organized manner, whether it is in their school desk or their dresser drawers at home, they will be doing a lifelong favor for themselves. It pays to pay the price of orderliness, one step at a time.

I've been amazed at how much simpler life is, even in busy seasons, to have a minimal amount of things in your house. Toys are an example. The day we placed our toys in organizers on shelves out of reach of busy little hands, we had less clutter and clean-up. (I keep out one set of toys, such as Legos or magnetic tiles.) Since children thrive on using their imagination, and trying new things, they are allowed toys at any time, with the agreement that they pick them up when they are finished with them.

My sister, just younger than I, is one of those people who is just orderly with everything she does. I can listen to her for a long time, gleaning tidbits she has gathered. Isn't it amazing how there is always something to be learned from someone?

I admire my sister-in-law Regina's ways of keeping order in her home and having her boys help with chores around the house. We were thrilled when they shared the exciting news of twin boys on the way! From the oldest teenage boy to the little girls, they are all as happy as can be about it. It will be interesting to keep watching them as they shift gears and keep going with these new additions.

Tonight Regina made a yummy Pineapple Cake. It's been a long time since I had a cake like that, matter of fact, I had forgotten there is such a thing. Julia and I will be making one, one of these days. Here's the recipe for you to try for yourself.

### PINEAPPLE SHEET CAKE

**2 cups sugar**  
**2 eggs**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla**  
**20 ounces crushed pineapple, undrained**  
**2 ½ cup flour**  
**2 teaspoons baking powder**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**1 cup chopped nuts (optional)**

In a large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients. Mix well. Pour into a greased 10 by 15 inch baking pan. Bake at 350 for 35 minutes. Cool and spread with cream cheese icing.

**Cream Cheese Icing**

**8 oz. Cream cheese, softened**  
**½ cup butter, softened**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla**  
**3 ½ cup powdered sugar**

Beat all together until smooth, if desired, sprinkle with ½ cup nuts.

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