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The Herald News

# OPINION

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## EDITORIAL

# What I Really Think



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I’ve been told I am too blunt when it comes to saying what I think and that’s ok with me. I realize it’s true. This editorial is going to be one of those blunt, opinionated pieces.

Metcalfe County has a small animal shelter (dogs only), but that shelter is for the dogs found hurt and starving on the roadside. For the dogs people move away and leave to fend for themselves. It’s especially for the innocent puppies dumped on a back road, because the puppy’s owner is too lazy to get their dog spayed.

I am on the animal shelter board. I have always loved animals and I hate to see any of them mistreated.

If I told you how many people ask to surrender their pets to the shelter every day, you would be shocked. They want to surrender them, because they are tired of taking care of them, they’re too old, they are unwanted puppies, etc....

I hear, “I have these puppies and I can’t take care of them. Can you take them at the shelter?”

The answer is, “No, because they are your animals and it is your responsibility to find them homes.”

Now usually at this point, the person starts insulting me, calling me names, or putting down the shelter, because they don’t get to take the easy way out. If you wait a day or so, guess what, those puppies get dumped on a road somewhere in the county.

This person never got their dog spayed and now she has had puppies. Owner, that is your fault for not being responsible enough to get your dog spayed!

Then I hear, “I don’t have the money to get my dog fixed.”

My first thoughts are, I wonder how many expensive tattoos this person has or how many packs of cigarettes they smoke a day. Yet, they don’t have the money to be a responsible pet owner and take care of their dog. It also makes me wonder how they take care of their kids.

Every so often, I see ads for spay/neuter clinics at other places with a special discounted price. I would love for our county to be able to do that; however, we are not financially equipped for that. That’s another reason we work so hard to raise money for the shelter.

Every dog that comes into the shelter is treated for fleas, and ticks, dewormed, vaccinated, and spayed or neutered. That is what your adoption fee covers. The only time a dog is put down is an extreme case such as being so dangerous it can’t be controlled or it’s just so sick there is no hope.

Donna and Doc work really hard taking care of these dogs. I just wish some of the owners around here cared half as much for their own dogs.

# Keep local governments from control of where Public Notices appear

## Kentucky Press Association

The Kentucky House of Representatives has before it House Bill 368 that could change the process of notifying the public what its local city government is doing. HB 368 is sponsored by Rep. Jennifer Decker, R-Shelbyville, and if approved by the General Assembly, would mean all cities in the state could put public notices on their own government-owned website.

Co-sponsors include Rep. Callaway, Bullitt, Jefferson; Rep. Freeland, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken; Rep. Gooch, Crittenden, McLean, Union, Webster; Rep. Imes, Calloway, Trigg; Rep. DJ Johnson, Daviess; Rep. King, Jessamine, Mercer, Washington; Rep. Lehman, Campbell; Rep. Lockett, Fayette, Jessamine.

Public Notices in local newspapers are vital to the proper functioning of democratic government. The public won’t see public notices if they don’t have a computer, and large segments of society lack the financial means to purchase a computer. The government has a fundamental responsibility to ensure adequate notification to the public of its actions. That responsibility cannot be abandoned in favor of cost savings that may prove to be elusive in light of a decrease in effective public notice.

Allowing government officials to post legal ads takes away third-party neutral interest, and removes any independent proof of publication.

Furthermore, placing the responsibility of notifying the public in the hands of government officials

carries with it a potential for abuse. For example, it may create the temptation to change or manipulate the timing of public notices.

Newspapers are a more effective medium by which to reach the public.

The majority of public notices now arrive at citizens’ homes or businesses on a regular schedule and in a context that compels readership (amid local news, features, and other important information).

With an online format, guaranteeing or measuring readership is very difficult, as opposed to newspapers, which are required to demonstrate readership by providing records of paid subscribers, maintaining postal permits, or submitting to outside subscription audits.

Local newspapers have become the traditional medium for public notices and this is exactly where the public expects to find them. (In fact, some commercial services, such as those serving the construction industry, actually mine public notices, and then pass on valuable information via email notification lists.)

An Internet site can appear only on one computer, to one reader at a time. On the other hand, a newspaper can be read and passed along to other readers.

If the issue for the legislature is only to make notices available on the internet, the Kentucky Press Association and its member newspapers took care of that in 2012. Since then, every public notice published in a Kentucky newspaper has been placed on www.

kypublicnotice.com at no additional cost to taxpayers. And those notices are never taken down.

Local governments will argue it is expensive to publish notices in the local newspaper but a study by the Legislative Research Commission shows that cost is minimal. In fact, only about 0.16 percent of a public agency’s budget is spent on putting notices in newspapers. That’s about \$16 for every \$10,000 the local government spends, to quote the LRC’s own study on the cost of public notices.

The stability of newspapers as a medium for public notices is unquestionable because it is in print. The Internet, on the other hand, remains highly vulnerable and unstable. Power surges, computer problems and downed servers can prevent access at any given time.

Government agencies cannot ensure that information located on a server is secure. Due to the presence of hackers, Internet legal ads are open to alteration. Printed legal ads provide a record of public notices that cannot be altered.

Interested parties cannot prove that they were properly notified of an impending action. On the other hand, newspapers provide sworn affidavits that ads were published along with physical tearsheets of the ad as printed.

Contact your State Representative and encourage defeat of House Bill 368 if it’s brought up for a vote. You can leave a message for your Representative by calling 800-372-7181.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

The Edmonton Herald-News welcomes letters to the editor regarding our publications or local issues of importance. Letters should be no more than 300 words; we reserve the right to edit for clarity or length, or to reject letters that are in poor taste or libelous. Writers must include their name and a valid telephone number for verification purposes. Anonymous letters will be rejected. Send your letter by email to [print@jpinews.com](mailto:print@jpinews.com) or [heraldnews@jpinews.com](mailto:heraldnews@jpinews.com). Letters can be mailed to or dropped off at any Jobe Publishing office.