

COMMUNITY

A Tribute to Charles Mattox - Heaven is a lot like Kentucky  
THE OLD TOBACCO KNIFE AND THE BOOGEYMAN

The other day I found myself admiring an old tobacco knife that had once belonged to my late grandfather. I'm sure my late father also used it when he was in his early tobacco-cutting prime. A family friend had coincidentally reminded me, just a few days before, of how my dad had once cut 6600 sticks of tobacco in six days and he'd had to drop all of the sticks in the process. I then remembered Dad telling me about the feat when younger. He told me how he had parked a trailer wagon loaded with tobacco sticks on one end of the large tobacco patch. He was alone and would drop sticks out a row and cut back, get more sticks and drop out another row, and then cut back. I was about 16-years-old when he first told me about it and I told him the feat didn't seem like anything to write home about, to me. He just shrugged and grunted in the familiar way he sometimes did and then asked me if I had ever seen 6600 tobacco sticks loaded on a trailer wagon before at any one particular time. Of course, I hadn't. He told me that 6600 tobacco sticks on a wagon looked like it would take a week just to drop them, let alone cut that many. I was young, and he couldn't tell me any-

thing, though he often tried. I'm 44 years old now, dear reader. I'm starting to feel like I'm way past my prime. Don't get me wrong, I had a prime, a great prime, but I feel like I'm way past it now. I feel like I'd barely measure up to be a third of the man my father was when he was at my same exact age. Maybe a fifth of a man Grandpaw was at the same age. I finally beat Dad in a tobacco-cutting race when I was about 23-years-old. He was over 50, and I still only beat him by a few stalks, and then only because I cheated. It was the only time I ever bested him at anything as far as I can recollect. It just about killed him too, and when I tried to joke with him about it, he never said anything, but just looked at the ground while he sharpened his knife and spear. It was the first time he ever looked old to me. Now, sometimes I feel very old myself, and I guess that's because I've honestly seen a lot in my 44 years. Our society has changed drastically in the past four decades. The changes haven't all been for the better. "The world is getting a little rougher every day," Dad used to say

frequently when I was growing up. Coming from a man who dropped out of high school to volunteer for the tail end of WW II as a teenager and who later caught the front end of Korea as a young man, well, I considered it a pretty bold statement to be made by someone who was living the good life in his older days. Mom never complained about anything. She was always an anchor of happiness. "The world isn't changing, father, (she always called him father in my presence when she spoke in earnest) and if it is, well its meant to be," she would say with a smile. But now that I look back on it, and back on what I am finally beginning to understand about my parents' lives, I believe the world has changed more in the past four decades than in any other four decades in the history of our world. Just an opinion, and a selfish one at that, but the thought started bugging me this week and the more I would fondle that old tobacco knife, the more it bothered me until I started jotting down a few thoughts about it. "When I was growing up" is taken from my very vivid memories of my early childhood. When I was growing up Tobacco farmers

burned tobacco beds in the spring and hand-tied the cured tobacco that winter during stripping season. When I was growing up Farm families worked together and housed all of their own tobacco, and folks would have laughed loudly if anyone suggested that they should hire Hispanics to do the work for them. When I was growing up Martin Luther King Jr., was still alive. Robert Kennedy was still alive. Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix were both still alive and were in their artistic prime. When I was growing up Everyone was talking about Vietnam. It seemed to be somewhere very far away, maybe even so far away that Puff the Magic Dragon lived there, you know, by the sea. He frolicked in the autumn mist in a land called honah lee. That seemed like it could be a place in Vietnam to me. Puff was a monster, it would seem, but not ferocious. Not like the Boogeyman. When I was growing up. The Boogeyman lived in the dark. Sometimes late at night I would think the Boogeyman was under the bed so I made sure I was completely covered up with my blanket. Everyone knows a Boogeyman can't drag you out of bed by your feet if your feet are completely covered up with a blanket. That's one of the first things you learn as a kid. Now it seems like, if you watch the evening news anyway, the Boogeyman is everywhere, and doesn't just come out after dark. Now it seems as if the Boogeyman comes out whenever it wants and covering your feet with a blanket will do no good. No good at all. Sometimes it seems like the entire fabric of our society, our nation's blanket if your will, is becoming torn apart and won't protect us from anything anymore, especially the Boogeyman. The Boogeyman has taken to wearing three-piece suits these days. When I was growing up I was in the fist grade at Flemingsburg Elementary School. and we

used to drink our milk from big old glass bottles. There weren't any plastic liquid containers. When someone dropped a bottle of milk it made a humongous crash When I was growing up NASA hadn't yet sent a man to the moon. When I was growing up Drive-thru restaurants in northeastern Kentucky were scarcer than hen's teeth. When I was growing up There was no such thing as HIV or the AIDS virus. No such thing as school shootings. No such thing as crack cocaine. No such thing as suicide bombers. No such thing as improvised explosive devices. Life sure isn't the same way now as when I was growing up. That's for sure.

CLOSED

The Nicholas County Fiscal Court will be closed on Monday February 16th in observance of the Presidents' Day and will resume to normal business hours on Tuesday February 17th.

CLOSED

The Nicholas County Convenience Center will be closed on Monday February 16th in observance of the Presidents' Day and will resume to normal business hours on Tuesday February 17th.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Project No. 24-025

City of Mt. Olivet  
(Owner)

Separate sealed bids for the purchase and delivery of Grinder Pumps will be received by the City of Mt. Olivet at the office of the City of Mt. Olivet, 54 E. Walnut Street, Mt Olivet, KY 41064 until 11:30 A.M., E.S.T. 2/16/2026, and then at said office publicly opened and read aloud.

The Bid Documents may be examined at the following:  
Buffalo Trace Area Development District, 201 Government Street, Maysville, KY, 41056, on Mondays through Fridays between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM; and at the office of the City of Mt. Olivet, 54 E. Walnut Street, Mt Olivet, KY 41064, on Mondays through Fridays between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

Copies are also available for download on Buffalo Trace Area Development District's website at [www.btadd.com](http://www.btadd.com).

The owner reserves the right to waive any informalities or to reject any or all bids.

Attention of bidders is particularly called to the requirements as to conditions of employment to be observed and minimum wage rates to be paid under the contract, Section 3, Section 109 and BABA and Title VI and other requirements, if applicable. Minority bidders are encouraged to bid.

No bidder may withdraw his bid within 90 days after the actual date of the opening thereof.

1/12/2026  
(Date)

Jennifer Whalen, Mayor, City of Mt. Olivet


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