

Editorial & Opinions ENOUGH

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Community Chronicles



By **JENNIFER MOONSONG**
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General Manager
Metcalf/Monroe Division

It's that time of year again, Community Chronicles time! It's one of my favorite special sections of the year.

In the hum-drum routine of keeping track of local news, and determining what needs to take center stage from week to week, there are always more intricate and elaborate personal interest stories that we always hope to get to, but often don't have the space for. Community Chronicles is a celebration of those stories about fascinating people, places and pursuits from around the region.

All these years in rural journalism, with a list of tasks as long as my leg that have to be done every week, my favorite thing that keeps me going and keeps me interested in my work is that every person has a story worth telling.

Their adventures become my adventures as I chronicle other people's lives, and I am excited to say we have some very good tales on local life in next week's papers! Stay tuned.

Jennifer Moonsong has been a journalist in South Central Kentucky for 12 years. She serves as the General Manager for the Metcalfe County and Monroe County, and is a regional features writer.

Keeping up with the Joneses



By **MARY BETH SALLEE**
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There's a phrase that I have heard used throughout my lifetime - keeping up with the Joneses.

It's one of those phrases used to describe those who try to show that they have as much money or wealth as others through all the material possessions they have...new home, new car, lavish vacations, all the designer clothes and purses.

The Joneses buy a boat. You buy a bigger one. They buy a new TV, and you go buy a big screen that takes up an entire wall. You get the drift.

If that's you, if you're trying to keep up with the Joneses, there's one thing you need to know: The Joneses are broke. The Joneses are in debt. While on the outside they look happy wealthy, on the inside they are stricken with stress and worries and are just living paycheck to paycheck while trying to keep the wolves at bay.

Stop trying to keep up with the Joneses because if truth be told, they're probably just trying to keep up with you.

This life should not be about putting you or your family in debt or financial strains just to keep up a certain appearance. You don't need to go broke by trying to look rich. It's simply not worth it.

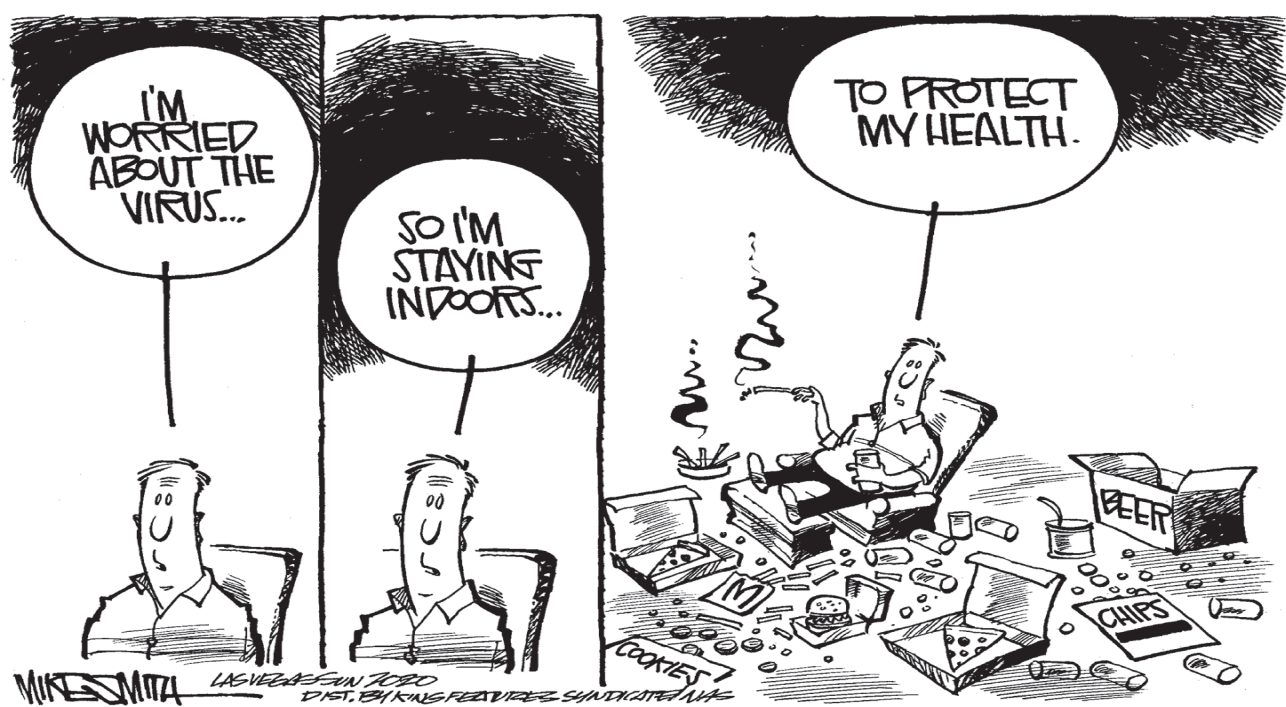
Those material possessions will fade. They will break down. They will stain. They will rust. They will eventually wither away.

As in the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "Comparison is the thief of joy."

Remember, folks: No matter how big our home, how new our car, or how much is in our bank account, our graves will all be the same size.

Stay humble. Work hard. And for goodness sake's, forget about the Joneses.

Mary Beth Sallee resides in Hart County with her husband and son. She works as a reporter for the Hart County News-Herald.



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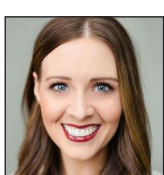
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Op-Ed

Taking a Stand for Crime Victims



By **DR. EMILY BONISTALL POSTEL**
Director of Outreach
Marsy's Law for Kentucky

No one asks to be a crime victim. For many, the experience is the worst situation they will ever face. And for some, it is also their last.

My official role with Marsy's Law for Kentucky began this past fall, but my journey as a crime victims' advocate began nearly 15 years ago. On May 1, 2005, my cousin Lindsey was brutally raped and murdered in her college apartment. Since that horrific day, my family and I have sought to transform our agonizing firsthand experience into a mission to help crime victims and their families.

This is why I support Marsy's Law for Kentucky and why I ask you to do the same, once again. Crime victims need our support.

The loss of my cousin inspires the work I do every day. After she was murdered, I decided to pursue a PhD and make a difference as an educator. I've spent the last decade researching and teaching about the patterns and trends of victimization, the impact on the victim, and the importance of community and court responses to supporting those who have been affected by crime. When I had the opportunity to be a part of the Marsy's Law team, I seized it. Driving awareness of the need to provide and protect basic constitutional rights is more than a job, it's a passion.

As a trained victims' advocate, I have held the hand of many crime victims struggling with the loss of a loved one or navigating the criminal justice system. I firmly believe part of my responsibility is to help crime victims know that they matter, that their story matters, and that they have support. Marsy's Law has given me a powerful platform to expand my reach—not just to crime victims, but to all Kentuckians.

I can personally attest to the significance of providing crime victims a voice in the process. Unfortunately, our state's criminal justice system does not currently grant victims—who are only afforded statutory protections—the voice they deserve. And tragically, their lack of constitutional rights often leads victims—the very people hurt by a crime in the first place—to be retraumatized.

The goal of Marsy's Law is straightforward—to correct this imbalance of justice. There is no hidden meaning. These rights would not infringe on the rights of

those accused of crimes and would not guarantee victim-driven outcomes. It would, however, place the value of victims' rights at the same level that we value the rights of the accused. Marsy's Law simply ensures crime victims enjoy the constitutionally protected rights they deserve.

The right to be notified, to be heard, and to be present at court proceedings are common sense rights any of us would want if we found ourselves navigating the criminal justice system as a victim. Even though crime victims in Kentucky have legal protections in statutory law, this does not always translate to implementation of those rights for all of Kentucky's crime victims. In my role, I hear the heart-wrenching stories from victims across the state who are not notified about hearings or proceedings, who are not given the right to be heard, and who do not receive restitution.

The solution is simple: Marsy's Law would enshrine victims' rights in the constitution and would provide crime victims in Kentucky with the power to assert their legal rights. And if it were not for a last-minute legal challenge on what amounted to a technicality in the 2018 ballot language, crime victims in our state would already have these critical protections.

I am committed to this effort because it is a constitutional amendment written for Kentuckians, by Kentuckians. I am fortunate to work alongside so many courageous survivors, individual supporters, and organizations that have endorsed Marsy's Law (such as law enforcement, mental health advocates, and advocacy groups working with sexual assault victims and victims of child abuse). Support for Marsy's Law is widespread because we all know that victims across the commonwealth are counting on us.

Now is the time to protect their role in our criminal justice system by supporting Senate Bill 15, Marsy's Law for Kentucky. As an advocate, an educator, and the family member of a murder victim, I enthusiastically support Marsy's Law, and hope you will too.

Kentuckians want it. Victims deserve it. And it's time to stand up for them once again.

Dr. Emily Bonistall Postel is the Director of Outreach for Marsy's Law of Kentucky. She is an educator and activist with more than a decade of experience teaching, researching and advocating on behalf of crime victims.

KPA
KENTUCKY PRESS ASSOCIATION

Published each Wednesday.
Advertising package includes total market penetration.
USPS 236-180
Periodicals
Postage Paid At Tompkinsville, KY 42167
201 North Main Street, Suite A
Tompkinsville, KY 42167
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
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