

April 28, 2022

Subject: Stopping the Noise

Last Friday afternoon the weather was warm. Sallie was on the front porch listening to the birds. She asked me to join her. We began to hear voices talking over the Billy Ray Cyrus 1992 hit song, Achy Breaky Heart. We realized it was coming from a nearby neighborhood house.

We are not “no noise freaks,” so the music wasn’t a major concern late in the afternoon. Living in a residential neighborhood does not guarantee freedom from noise generated by neighbors. On weekends we hear lawn mowers, leaf blowers, traffic dogs barking, and children playing in yards. All those routine sounds are a part of community life.

But there are limits to noise and nuisance levels. As it became dark the music continued from the house in question. In fact, it seemed to intensify as well as shifting from country to more contemporary hip hop selections.

We were faced with two options, call the police, or ask the people to turn the music down. Like many residents I don’t like to involve the police if at all possible. I decided to go to the house and ask them to turn the music down.

The doors and windows were open, and the music was very loud. I had to knock rather hard to get the attention of the people inside.

A young man came to the door. I told him I was the mayor and that I lived in the neighborhood. I asked him to turn down the music. As I was speaking, a woman came up and informed me that they were having a wedding party, as if that was justification for the blaring music. She seemed offended by my demeanor and request.

I responded that they were in a residential neighborhood and that the music was disturbing the peace. I informed them that they could either turn the music down, or I could call the police. The music was turned down and the problem was resolved.

I know my transient neighbors did not like my visit, and me messing up their weekend celebration. They were from out of town and were coming to the mountains for a fun weekend.

Here lies the problem, full-time residents want the simple and peaceful enjoyment of their property, but some visitors want to celebrate, kickback and have a good time. Some folks who embrace the STR model would tell me I just have to call the police when there is a noise issue or other violation of the peace. My response is that I should not have to be a constant vigilante of the peace as the transient residents come and go.

There were two short term rental houses occupied in my neighborhood this past weekend. One house was absolutely quiet while the other was the party house. I guess we should be thankful that both were not party houses.

We should have known Billy Ray Cyrus foreshadowed a problem. Next weekend it might be Miley Cyrus singing Party in the USA!