

VIEWPOINTS

BLONDE AMBITION

America should remember who to thank

It happens every year, but, every year, it seems we get farther away from the truth behind the celebration.

This week is the time of year when we take off a few days to spend time with family, carve a few turkeys, eat far too much dressing, and watch a football game or two. For some, it marks the beginning of the spend-fest of holiday shopping, and the kick-off to the season of gift-giving and mistletoe and Old St. Nick.

I, like most of you, will take part in all of those things. I'll eat too much turkey, gobble down several heapings of sweet potato casserole, and eat a few too many yeast rolls. I'll shop for toys for the grandkids, try on a few pairs of boots that I find on sale, and I'll yell for the Crimson Tide on Saturday.

But Thanksgiving should be so much more than that. It should be more than just

lip-service that we give in our efforts to rush into Christmas. It should be so much more than just the kick-off of the spending frenzy of the holiday season, or a few days off, or a time to yell for our favorite team.

It's the time that begs us to stop long enough to say a collective 'thank you' for all those blessings that we have enjoyed over the year – a celebration of gratitude that began when our nation was still in the womb, still taking the first steps toward forming the greatest democracy the world has ever known.

By its Pilgrim origins, Thanksgiving is uniquely American. It was formed through an early-Ameri-



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can attitude of gratitude from those who came here seeking the freedom to worship the Author of all freedoms.

But today, our nation seems to be increasingly confused about just who should be the recipient of that gratitude.

Today, we so often give credit for our freedoms and our blessings to the creation, not the Creator.

We credit our hard work and our diligence. We credit our sense of 'entitlement' that says we somehow 'deserve' to have all the things we take for granted in this country.

Environmental groups like Sustainable Living Solutions have even told us that we should thank 'Mother Earth' for all of the blessings of living on this planet.

But based on their writings that record

their thoughts and beliefs during the early days of our nation's formative years, our Founding Fathers were not confused about thankfulness at all.

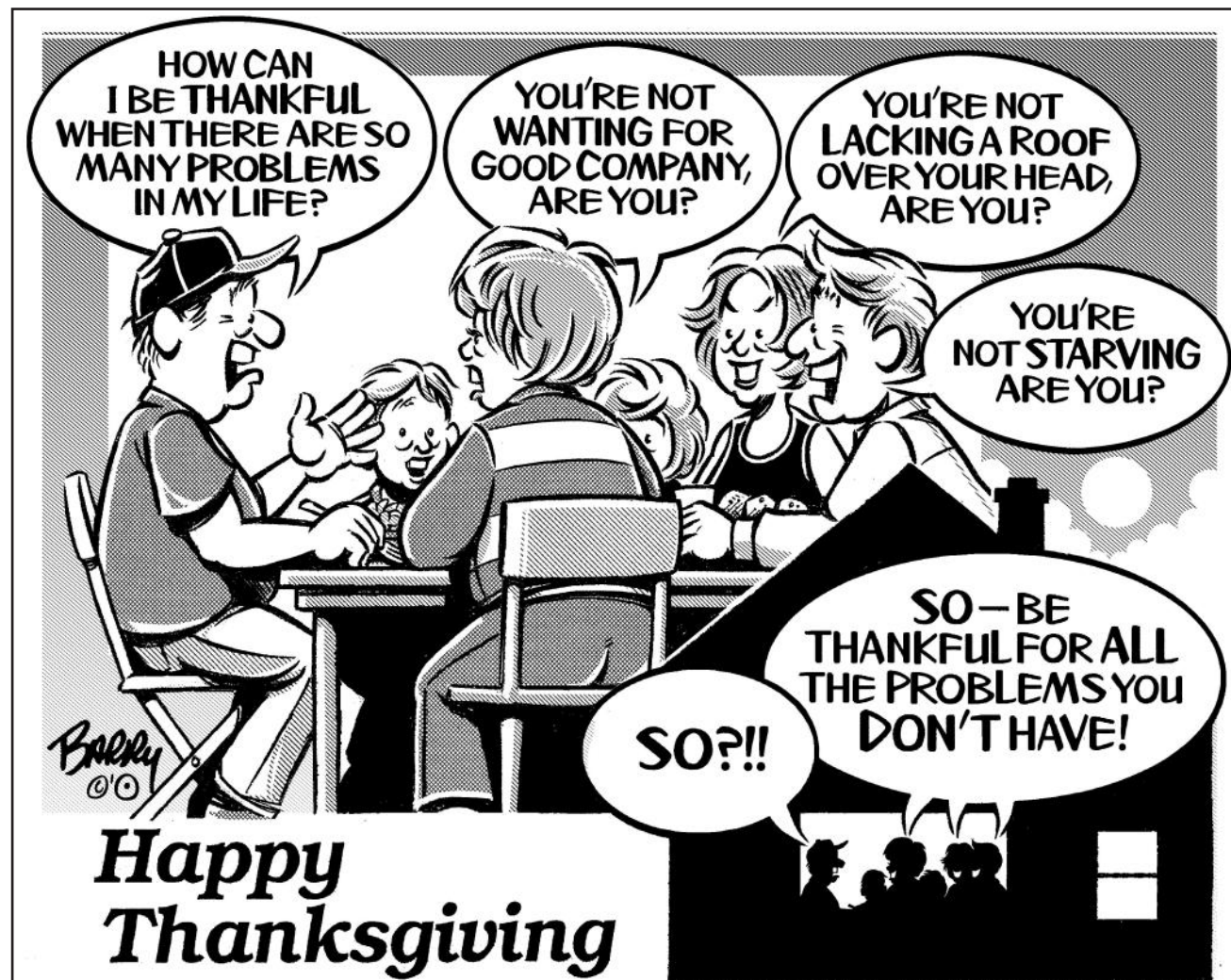
Like many of us, they saw their blessings – blessings of life and liberty and material possession – as things that came with hard work and dedication to a cause greater than themselves. They saw the blessing of freedom as something to be protected through strong hands, fighting against any foe that would take it from us.

And it was. But they also knew that the true Source of those blessings was not in their own hands, but in the hands of the Creator who provided them.

"If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an em-

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JP DOODLES



Happy Thanksgiving

KING'S COMMENTS

In everything, give thanks

By **Bill King**
Contributing columnist

Thanksgiving has changed since I was a kid. Oh, there are a few things that have remained the same. The Detroit Lions still lose to whoever they play that day, but now there are usually three NFL games to watch and perhaps even a college game as well. These days, we have more sports channels to carry these games than we had channels all total back then.

What I eat has changed too. We usually have turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce made with real cranberries, and pies. We always had sweet potato when I was growing up, but I have since discovered that pumpkin isn't bad either. In a pinch, southern pecan pie will do just fine too. Truthfully, I don't think I've ever met a pie I didn't like!

When I was a kid we never had turkey for Thanksgiving, or any other time for that matter. Mama always said she didn't like turkey because it was too dry. I wanted to make that judgment for myself, but somehow I never had a vote. I think the real reason we didn't have turkey was because it cost more than chicken. I heard my family

had turkey once, but I don't think that was for Thanksgiving. Long before my arrival, my family owned a live turkey. Every time my older sister got near old Tom, or maybe it was Tammy, the turkey chased and flogged her. One day Tom attacked Sis one time too many and they had turkey for dinner. Everyone especially enjoyed dinner that evening... everyone except ole Tom. The family never owned another turkey, and I never enjoyed eating one at Thanksgiving. I watched families on television eating turkey and stuffing. I was a little nauseated watching them dig stuff out of a turkey.

I asked Mama what that "stuff" was, and she said, "that stuff is stuffing." The only stuffing I knew about was how we stuffed ourselves with all that good food. I asked "How come we don't have stuffing in our turkey...I mean chicken?" Mama explained that we eat dressing instead. Since we don't stuff dressing inside our turkey,

I mean chicken, I understand why we don't call it stuffing. I don't understand why we call it dressing. I thought dressing was when we put on clothes or what we drown our tossed salad in. Maybe

we should put our Thanksgiving dressing on top of our turkey, I mean, well, you know what I mean. I think the real reason we don't put it inside is because the inside is not big enough to hold it all. We cook a pan full of dressing that is about the size of the Detroit Lion's football field. That would take some more big turkey to hold all that.

Thanksgiving is far more than a time to eat too much food and watch too much football. More importantly, this is a special time of year when we pause to give thanks to God for all He is and all He has done. Yes, we should give thanks for the turkey, the dressing, and the pies but for far more than that. It's not simply about material or tangible things, but about things that can't be seen as well. I am thankful for my family and friends. I'm fine with the fact that my family didn't have turkey back then. What we ate didn't and doesn't matter as much as whom we are blessed to eat with and that we have something to eat.

I am thankful that ole Tom didn't do serious damage to Sis, but I do have to admit, I would have loved seeing him chase her one time around the yard...just a little. Happy Thanksgiving.

FROM THE PRESSBOX

Thankful for more than just a holiday feast

It's the time of the year when we pause for a moment to give thanks for all of the countless blessings that The Almighty has already given us, is giving us and hopefully will continue to give us.

This year for me has been full of some mighty high peaks and some really deep valleys but this past week has been one to treasure.

This past Thursday, I visited the local American Legion post in Butler and had the honor and the privilege of visiting with a few of our World War II veterans. As the years tick by many of our WWII veterans are no longer with us. It was by listening to them tell their stories that I am reminded that most of our heroes don't wear a sports uniform, many are those old guys that sit in a local eatery in the morning drinking coffee and eating sausage biscuits. Though they may not look the part now, there was a time when many of these wrinkled old men, stormed a beach or flew a bomber, marched across Europe or were aboard a ship or on a small island in the Pacific Ocean helping to build a runway to send planes to Tokyo and even Hiroshima and Nagasaki to defend the world against the whims of a dictator. One such man that is no longer with us, a Choctaw County native, earned the Congressional Medal of Honor.

These gentlemen are the reason that we have the freedom we enjoy and can sleep peacefully in our beds at night without fear of waking up under the threat of a foreign land. They are the reason that the average American will consume an average of 5,000 calories Thursday.

After listening to these gentlemen I was reminded of a sign one time that read, "That old veteran is probably more of a bad than you will ever be." It was an honor just to be in their presence. They and their families have given so much and a simple thank you or to stand for the playing of our national anthem or saluting of our flag seems woefully inadequate.

Saturday, I was blessed with the opportunity to sit in the press box at Bryant-Denny Stadium and I was reminded that it's a long way from Fowler Field to the Mother Church of College Football. On days like Saturday and a few weeks ago when I stood on the sidelines of Bryant-Denny I am reminded that not many people get to watch a game from the



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vantage point that I get to enjoy. The Alabama win propelled the Crimson Tide to 10-1 on the season. This is the 12th year in a row that Alabama has won at least 10 games in a season. As an added bonus, a media pass affords you access to the post game press conference with Alabama Head Coach Nick Saban. I raised my hand to ask Coach Saban a question, never expected to be chosen to ask my question

but then, the microphone was placed into my hands, I, Clint Franks, the Sports Editor of The Choctaw Sun-Advocate, located in Gilbertown, Alabama would be allowed to ask Coach Nick Saban a question! I'm in a room with reporters from across the country. The New York Times is there, ESPN is there, ABC, CBS, and NBC FOX is there. I don't mind telling you that this ol' boy who has ate, slept, breathed, bled and cried Crimson Tide through and through in good times and bad in each day of my 41 years was as nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs.

Coach Saban's assistant pointed to me, Coach Saban looked at me and I'm thinking, don't blow it and be the subject of Saban's Best Rants.

I asked Coach Saban to comment on the significance of Alabama's winning at least 10 games for the 12th consecutive season and the level of commitment it takes. Coach was very gracious and answered my question. It should be noted the he spent more time answering my question than anyone else's (believe me I did an internet search for the press conference) not too bad if I do say so myself. Afterwards, Coach's assistant said, good question! I was beside myself.

On the way home, I remembered, if I'm dreaming please don't wake me up. I spent the ride home immersed in thought about the events of the day and remembered that none of it would have been possible without the heroes that I had visited with on Thursday. We all are so blessed, far above what we deserve. To the ones who fought so we didn't have to, to the one's that were willing to fight and die to keep us free, I am thankful for each of you. So as you bow your heads this Thursday and engage in food, fun and fellowship, don't forget to be thankful for the real heroes.

AND THAT'S THE VIEW... FROM THE PRESS-BOX

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