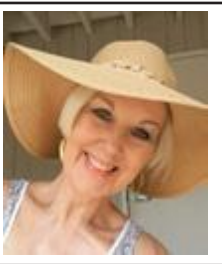


Editorial page

Nolia's Notes

People put in your path (part one)

by NOLIA BIGGERSTAFF



I looked up and there was an older man standing in my kitchen doorway in south Florida. He had an accent and I later found out he was from Canada. He was friendly and told me that he had just bought the house next door and that he just wanted to come over and introduce himself as our new neighbor. We exchanged pleasantries and he left.

As neighbors go, we saw him and his wife as they settled in and as we did yard work we spoke. We knew he did not have a lawn mower, so we cut his grass when we cut ours and when he pruned his tall palm trees, he did ours for us (which was a huge mess and we got the better end of the bargain).

Later we would invite each other to dinner. The first time we had them for dinner, we said the blessing, as we usually do. Afterward, Raymond said that he was an Atheist and did not pray. We told him that we were Christians and that we did. We prayed over meals, they didn't and so it went. Right here, I could tell you how much or if we witnessed to our new neighbors, but that is between me and God. We were friends and neighbors.

I often took his wife shopping. She spoke very, very little English and I spoke very, very little Spanish, but with hand gestures we understood each other pretty well and when salespeople tried to sign her up for store credit cards, which she never understood, I could head them off at the pass for her. We became good friends as neighbors in a town in south Florida.

As the days went by, Raymond would share with me his life story. He had been an air traffic controller and had had a wife and sons, back in the day. That marriage ended in divorce. He quit his job, bought a large sailboat and sailed the seas for about thirty-plus years. He went to ports all over the world. Occasionally he would pick someone up to sail with him, but mostly he was alone.

I asked him one day, "Were you ever afraid on the ocean?" He told me that there was only one time he was really afraid; hard for me to believe there was

only one time. It was dark and he said there was a sheet of water in front of his boat that looked like a curtain. He said that he had never seen anything like it before or since. I told that I just couldn't imagine sailing like that and not believing in God.

On one of his travels, he met his Spanish-speaking wife. She later told me they met at a party in a third world country. None of my business, but she looked like she was a child. I am sure she was twenty one, or so, but Raymond was in his late seventies or early eighties. None of my business.

One day, Raymond came to the door and said he had a cough that was troubling. He had been to the doctor with nothing definitive, but he was concerned. A time or two, they went back to Canada. One day we got word that Raymond was in the hospital. Dwaine went to see him and there was only a picture by the bedside of Dwaine and Raymond during happier times. Raymond said that he had called his wife to come to the hospital to see him, but as far as I know, she never came. Raymond died in a hospital in south Florida. We never heard anything more. The house next door was boarded up and we never heard of any service or anything.

I often wonder just how many folks from all over the world Raymond met in his lifetime. There had to have been thousands and thousands.

I wonder about his first wife and family. What happened to them? None of my business.

I wonder what happened to the young wife. None of my business.

And I wonder what happened to Raymond. Was he saved at the end of his life? His business. I am sad that during his sailing days, he never knew my Jesus, the one who could have calmed his fears that night of the water curtain.

Raymond left an impression on my life and now that you have met him, maybe he has impressed you, as well. He was a person whom, I believe, tried to escape a broken heart by sailing alone for many years, but at the end of his life, it seemed his heart was still broken. Jesus would have fixed that.

This weeks tips from the BBB

Assisted living is one of the fastest growing types of senior housing in the United States. Assisted living facilities usually provide or coordinate personal care services, 24-hour supervision, scheduled and unscheduled assistance, social activities, and some health-related services. These facilities are designed for individuals who cannot live independently, but do not need nursing care on a daily basis.

Costs vary according to the residence, room size, and types of service needed by the resident. Most assisted living facilities charge month-to-month rates, which are generally paid by the residents or by their families from their own financial resources; however, Medicaid and some long-term care insurances might cover some or all of this type of care. Wartime veterans and their spouses may qualify for VA Aid and Attendance Pension based upon income and assets versus the cost of care.

If you decide that an assisted living facility is the best option for you or a family member, the Better Business Bureau suggests the following tips:

- Visit several facilities and talk to the staff, residents and family members who have loved ones in the facility, preferably twice at each facility (once during the week and once on the weekend or evenings. Ask yourself these questions: Is the facility close enough for family and friends to visit conveniently? Does the atmosphere seem pleasant? Does there appear to be enough staff available? Do the residents and staff seem happy and engaged? Do the residents appear to be clean and well groomed? Is the facility clean and well maintained?
- Check licensing as well as complaints filed with your local

Department on Human Services and also check the facility's most recent inspection reports.

- Visit www.longtermcare.gov for information and resources about long term care needs for themselves or a family member.

- Check the facility for safety features including well-lit stairs and halls, handrails in the bathrooms, well-marked exits and a way to call for help if needed.

- Know what the daily or monthly rates are and what is included in this fee. There may be other services available for an extra charge. Find out if the services are provided by the facility's staff or if arrangements are made with other agencies.

- If applicable, find out if the facility accepts Medicaid and your long-term care insurance. Also ask if the facility is Medicaid certified.

- What choices of accommodations are available? Can you get a private room? Do they have rooms with kitchen facilities? Is the bathroom private or shared? Are there private areas other than the bedroom for visits? Is there enough space for personal belongings?

- Find out how you or your family will be involved in any future care planning processes. Be sure you know what will happen if you should need skilled care later on. Will you have to move, or will the facility be able to provide the care you need?

- Be sure to check the facility's business review with the Better Business Bureau.

This transition can be daunting but knowing where to begin and what questions to ask can help make the process much more manageable.

For more tips you can trust, visit www.bbb.org.



Consumers get answers from Ga. Department of Agriculture

Consumer Q's is a weekly question-and-answer column by Arty Schronce at the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Please share your thoughts, questions and suggestions with him by phone, mail or email.

Q: Are there any dwarf pecan trees? Are there any that will be suitable for a small condo garden?

A: Pecans regularly grow 70 to 100 feet tall and can reach 150 feet tall. They have a spread of 40 to 75 feet or more. Even smaller varieties are still considered large trees from a landscaping perspective.

Q: Will drinking alcohol kill any germs that may be in your food?

A: No.

Q: Will the Kentucky coffee tree grow in Georgia? I'm from Louisville and want something to remind me of home.

A: Yes, this interesting member of the bean family will grow in Georgia. Kentucky coffeetree (*Gymnocladus dioica*) is native from New York to Minnesota and south to Nebraska, Oklahoma and Tennessee but is widely planted in other places including the Peach State. A good nursery will help you find one to plant.

Q: I have several pecans on my property. One has flavor that is a little like a hickory nut. Are hickories and pecans related? Could

this be a hybrid?

A: Size and flavor vary among pecans. Having a hickory-like flavor is not proof it is a hybrid. However, pecans and hickories are closely related and they can hybridize. Both belong to the genus *Carya*. The nuts of pecan-hickory hybrids (at least the first-generation hybrids) usually look a little like both parents. They may have long nuts (more like a typical pecan) with shells that are hard (like a hickory). The hybrids between hickories and pecans are called hicans.

Hicans, like all hybrids, may have qualities (good and bad) of both parents. There are several species of hickories; some produce nuts that are not worth gathering and eating. For example, the mockernut hickory has a very thick shell with little meat inside. It "mocks" the more desirable shagbark hickory. The best varieties of hicans combine the good qualities of both parents and are valuable because they can be grown farther north in the United States than regular pecans.

If you have questions about agriculture, horticulture, food safety or services or products regulated by the Georgia Department of Agriculture, write Arty Schronce (arty.schronce@agr.georgia.gov) or visit the department's website at www.agr.georgia.gov.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No need for Hice apology

TO THE EDITOR

In Susan Abramson's attack on 10th District Congressional Representative Hice, she alleges that Representative Hice's tweet and picture as he entered the House of Representatives January 6, "incited and encouraged domestic terrorists."

There is no evidence that anyone in attendance at the Trump rally even saw the tweet and there is not a single witness to testify that the tweet inspired them to enter the US Capitol. It is wildly speculative, and completely unjustified, to suggest that Representative Hice caused anyone to commit a violent act.

As more evidence becomes available concerning the unfortunate events of January 6 in Washington, D.C., it becomes clear that the attacks on the Capitol were pre-planned. The FBI has identified an Antifa activist who masqueraded as a Trump supporter and journalist to orchestrate violent attacks. The FBI arrested members of the Oath Keepers, an organization whose members planned to breach the Capitol prior to the rally. Representative Hice's tweet as he entered the House, could not have influenced such preparation.

Challenging certified electoral votes is within Representative Hice's constitutional rights, is permitted by the rules of the Senate, and not without precedence. Democrats challenged votes from eleven states following the landslide election of President Trump in 2016. No one demanded their resignation.

To declare that there were no problems with the presidential election ignores violations of the constitution, which requires that election laws be determined by state legislatures, not other authorities, and was consistently violated, resulting in thousands of ballots that were cast and counted illegally. There were thousands of sworn affidavits from voters, poll watchers, and even poll workers, attesting to voter fraud and surveillance videos of ballots being scanned repeatedly.

Hours of televised hearings on

voter fraud in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Georgia, convinced 77% of Republican voters that the 2020 presidential election was fraudulent according to the Quinnipiac poll published December 10.

The statement that the, "election was declared to have been the most secure in US history," did not come from "a team appointed by the President," but was issued by Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and was initially drafted by a consortium which included Dominion Voting Machines and software developers at the center of allegations of voting irregularities, hardly a credible source.

Ms. Abramson states that Republican leaders in Georgia "audited the voting and balloting processes and found nothing out of the ordinary." During hand recount, the votes from at least three counties were found not even to be counted, and then there was the video of poll workers pulling suitcases of ballots from under a table where they had been hidden, and scanning them through. There were no poll watchers present, thus counting an estimated 130,000 ballots illegally.

Thus, there were many legitimate reasons for Representative Hice, whose concern was for voting integrity, to challenge electoral votes. There certainly is no need to apologize for effectively representing citizens in the 10th District where he enjoys widespread support.

MICHAEL J. ZELLER

Super Crossword

Answers

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Feral Swine

By Robyn Stewart
Lincoln County Extension Service

This week, I finally got my first call about feral swine being a nuisance up in the Lake Shore Estates area - a call that I've been waiting for since I started here in 2019. Feral hogs are present in all 159 counties of Georgia, but Lincoln County has been fortunate that they haven't been a huge nuisance (or at least I haven't heard of them being one) up until now. With feral swine doing around \$150 million in damages per year in our state, this is an invasive species everyone should be familiar with.

All feral swine are the same biological species, *sus scrofa*, but they may be called different things such as wild boar, wild hogs, or wild pigs. A few factors have contributed to the spread of feral swine populations in the U.S.

In the 1700's and 1800's, pigs often free-ranged on farms, where they had the ability to roam, and in the 1900's wild boar was introduced for sport hunting purposes. The interbreeding of these two types led to a huge population boom in feral pigs, which is also why free-ranging practices are mostly illegal in today's day and age. Other contributions to the feral hog population include the escape of stocked animals from fenced hunting preserves and illegal translocation, where wild pigs are captured and released in new locations for hunting purposes.

In addition to property damage from feral swine populations, they present a significant threat to human and domestic animal health. Feral pigs can carry or transmit at least 30 known diseases and 37 different parasites. Most human transmission of these diseases will occur during field dressing or through the consumption of undercooked meat or pork products from an infected animal. Livestock can be infected via contamination of water, feed, and direct contact with wild animals.

There are some significant biological factors that influence the rapid growth and spread of swine populations in the U.S. First, hogs have a high reproductive potential-pigs hit sexual maturity at as early as 6 months of age, and sows can have up to 16 piglets each year.

This might not sound like much, but in a sounder (group of swine)

of 4 mature females, that's 64 additional pigs per year! Feral swine are also habitat generalizers- which means they can essentially adapt to any type of environment or climate, and opportunistic omnivores, eating everything from plants to animals. This means they can survive in a lot of different climates and on a lot of different food sources - which makes them very resilient. Finally, hogs have few natural predators or causes of mortality (disease, parasites), especially as they mature and get larger. The majority of population control in hogs comes from human hunting and trapping.

There are a few things you should know in regards to identifying and managing feral swine on your property. Often, these animals can go mostly unnoticed until you see significant damage or a live pig. Keep your eyes open for tracks, manure, and other signs such as crop damage, rooting in lawns, gardens, and other areas, mud wallows, beds or nests, and post rubs.

There are a variety of control options to consider. You may consider excluding or fencing the animals off of your property, aerial gunning, hunting with dogs, traditional hunting, or trapping.

Trapping and removing the whole sounder is the most effective method of control, as you can take all individuals out of the area at once.

Most hunting methods can scatter the hogs, which makes further attempts to hunt or trap them more difficult.

While trapping is most effective, homeowners should know it is illegal for them to trap and transport live hogs without a permit from the Georgia Department of Agriculture to do so. If you do choose to trap on your property, be prepared to euthanize the animals before you move them if you do not have the correct permit to do otherwise.

Most folks will choose to hunt the hogs on their property instead of trapping. On private land in Georgia, there is no season or bag limit for hogs and you can hunt them over bait.

If you have more question about feral swine in Georgia, please let us know at uge3181@uga.edu or by calling 706-359-3233.

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