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THE ALABAMA

# Gazette

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VOL. 25 - ISSUE 3 – December 2024

[www.alabamagazette.com](http://www.alabamagazette.com)

16 Pages – 2 Sections ©2024

334-356-6700

**THE GAZETTE IS “THE VOICE OF REASON”!**



**Col John Eidsmoe**

## The Magi, the Monarch, and the Messiah

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.* *Matthew 2:1-2*

For 2,000 years, the wise men of the east have intrigued us. Who were they? From whence did they come? Whom were they seeking? And why?

Could their quest have had anything to do, even in part, with the principles of law and government that western civilization has held so dear?

I believe it did. It should not surprise us that these kings or magi would be concerned about law and government. Christ is our personal Savior, but He is lord of the nations as well (*Isaiah 9:6-7; Revelation 12:5, 19:15*). Matthew emphasizes Christ's role as lord of the nations by presenting the account of the magi who came to worship Him. Luke emphasizes Christ's role as personal Savior by presenting the account of the shepherds, common men who came to worship Him. Both are necessary for a complete understanding of His earthly mission.

They sought what man has sought from the beginning: the Savior who would release man from the curse of Adam's Fall and restore him to his original paradise.

*Genesis 3* records that God expelled our original parents from Eden and cursed the ground for their sake after they sinned against Him. But God also promised them a Savior, the "Seed of the Woman" (3:15) who will bruise the head of the serpent. Throughout the generations the faithful have looked for the coming of God's promised Messiah.

### The Rise of the Messianic State

But others have looked to false saviors, and counterfeit messiahs have arisen in every age. God had promised in His Word that the Savior would come first as a suffering servant (*Isaiah 53:1-12*) and only later as a victorious king (*Revelation 19:11-21*). But many, even among God's own people, looked only for the latter. The Christ on the Cross was rejected or ignored, as man looked to the civil government realm for salvation and the restoration of the Golden Age.

Not that civil government is ungodly. Quite the opposite. God ordained civil government (*Romans 13:1-6; I Peter 2:13-17*) to restrain the exercise of sin, enforce order, protect human rights, and foster social organization. Those who are called to civic office have a high godly responsibility to perform.

The problem arises when men look to civil government to perform the functions God has delegated to the Church, or when men look to the Church to perform the functions God has delegated to civil government -- when civil rulers seek to become saviors, and when false messiahs become kings.

Most emphatically, this does not mean government must be divorced from God, or that law must be divorced from Biblical morality. Government functions best when it is based upon the solid foundation of the Ten Commandments. Luther and Calvin both spoke of the Decalogue as the embodiment of natural law, and Dean Wigmore of Northwestern University School of Law called the Ten Commandments "the greatest short moral code ever formulated."

But government's role is limited to enforcing legal principles of right and wrong and defending the liberty and safety of the people. God never intended that civil government should change basic human nature, eradicate all sinful impulses, and usher in the Golden Age. Government must be godly, but government must not try to become God.

But almost from the beginning, people looked to civil rulers to usher in the Golden Age. As Ethelbert Stauffer says in his classic work *Christ and the Caesars* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1952, 1955),

One of the earliest longings of mankind is the longing for God to appear on earth. Egyptians and Persians, Greeks and Romans, relate mysterious myths of gods who once walked the earth in human form. In annual festivals they celebrated the cult renewal of that mythical theophany -- the epiphany of Apollo, the advent of the sun-god, the birth of the heavenly child of the Age, who was to lead in a new era of salvation. With ecstatic cries and hymns they called on the god to appear: "Come and do not delay!" For where the deity moves as a man among men, the dream of the ages is fulfilled, the pain of the world is scattered, and there is heaven on earth.

Such longings represent a corruption of God's promise to send the Messiah, and the tendency to look to the State for that which only God can deliver. And when people expect the State to do that which only God can do, they begin to worship the State as God.

*Continued on page 2*



## 2025 Alabama Legislative Session Begins February 4th!

The Alabama Gazette will have exclusive coverage by Brandon Moseley.

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Col John Eidsmoe

## The Magi, the Monarch, and the Messiah

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### Deification of Emperors

This was common in the pagan world. State worship and emperor worship were the rule rather than the exception. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, tell us that Nimrod took a leading role in the building of the Tower of Babel to avenge himself on God for having destroyed the world by the Flood, and that Nimrod changed the government into a tyranny. Alexander Hislop, in his classic work *The Two Babylons* (Neptune, NJ: Loiseaux, 1916, 1959), says the Sumerians made Nimrod their king, and after his death they deified him and worshipped him as chief of their pantheon of gods.

Worshipping a ruler as though he were a god seems strange to many westerners. Through centuries of Bible teaching we have come to understand God as all-powerful and all-knowing, infinitely above all that man is or could ever be. In the western view no man could ever become God.

But the pagan view is different. Gods are superior to men in knowledge and power, but they are not all-knowing or all-powerful; nor are they perfectly just or righteous. The gods have character flaws much like ours, and they find themselves in the same intrigues and betrayals as men, only on a more colossal scale. The difference between gods and men is one of degree. According to Greek mythology, somewhere between gods and men were heroes. Hercules was not a god but a hero, a man who achieved immortality by his courage and valor.

In the pagan view, then, the idea that the king could be a god, or descended from the gods, or ascended to godlike status, is not that far-fetched. And of course, pagan kings employed all the trappings and ceremonies to encourage that belief.

### Israel vs. Pagan State-Worship

God's Word and God's people stood in marked contrast to this pagan view. Israel began as a confederate republic of twelve tribes governed by elders and judges, with no king in Israel but God Himself. The day would come when Israel would demand a king so they could be like the nations around them, but even then, Israel's king was to be a limited monarch. God spoke prophetically through Moses in *Deuteronomy 17:14-20*:

*"When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;*

*Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.*

*But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.*

*Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.*

*And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:*

*And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:*

*That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."*

Unlike the Egyptian pharaoh who proclaimed himself to be a god and who was worshipped and obeyed as a god, Israel's king was to be one of the people. He must be a Jew, not a foreigner; being of one blood with them, his countrymen were less likely to regard him as a god. He was not to accumulate great wealth or power, and he was to write out a copy of the law of God, read from it daily, and follow it throughout his reign. The great object was that he be under the law of God, and that *"his heart be not lifted up above his brethren."* The king ruled by the law of God and according to the law of God, but he himself was not God but rather one of the people.

### Daniel vs. State-Worship

This was the message of the prophet Daniel to the great Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar -- that God *"removeth kings, and setteth up kings."* (*Daniel 2:21*) Nebuchadnezzar erected a great golden image and commanded all to fall down and worship it (*Chapter 3*); the image represented the Babylonian state, and Nebuchadnezzar as the head of state. Daniel's three friends were willing to show all the respect due a great Babylonian king, but they were willing to face death by fire rather than worship this image or that which it represented (*3:17-18*). As Daniel proclaimed in *4:32* and as King Nebuchadnezzar finally came to understand at the end of *Daniel Chapter 4*, *"the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."*

The Apostle Paul declared that the civil ruler is *"ordained of God"* and is the *"minister of God to thee for good."* (*Romans 13:1-6*) Yet Paul wrote these words from the Corinthian jail, indicating that governmental authority is not absolute. Peter also wrote of the duty to obey civil rulers (*1 Peter 2:13-17*), but when commanded to stop preaching the Gospel he and the other apostles declared, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

### Jesus: Render unto Caesar

In the time of Jesus's earthly ministry the Jews faced testy relations with the Roman authorities. In *Luke 20:19-25* we read that the chief priests and scribes asked Jesus whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus noted the image and superscription of Caesar on the coin and said, *"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."* Lord Acton wrote concerning this passage,

...when Christ said *"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's"*, He gave to the state a legitimacy it had never before enjoyed, and set bounds to it that had never yet been acknowledged. And He not only delivered the precept but he also forged the instrument to execute it. To limit the power of the State ceased to be the hope of patient, ineffectual philosophers and became the perpetual charge of a universal Church.

At the time of Christ, Rome was in transition from republic to empire. The SPQR (Senatus Populus Que Romana) that had governed Rome for half a millennium was becoming a rubber stamp for the emperors who increasingly claimed for themselves the attributes of divinity. Octavian subdued the empire, and the Senate gave him the title Augustus Caesar (Divine King). He issued coins superinscribed Caesar Divi Filius, "Caesar Son of God." Throughout the Empire temples were built and sacrifices and prayers offered to the goddess Roma and the god Augustus, and the poet Virgil proclaimed of Augustus, "This is the man, the one who has been promised again and again," the world savior who was usher in the age of gold. As Stauffer observes, at this time the ancient world trembled with excitement that deliverance was at hand.

## Foundation for Moral Law

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### The Magi Seek the True King



And yet -- the wise men of the east came not to worship Augustus, but to seek Him who is born King of the Jews.

Who were these wise men? Matthew calls them magoi or Magi (*Matthew 2:1*). They probably came from the eastern countries of Persia or Babylon. The priestly caste in those countries known as the Magi had existed for centuries and may have borne some similarity to the Celtic Druids. The Bible does not call them kings, but Tertullian writing around 200 AD says they were well-nigh kings. They were highly influential advisors to the Persian and Babylonian kings, as Daniel attests (*Daniel 1:19-21; 2:2, 24; 4:7-9; 5:7*), and probably played a prominent role in selecting a new king. In so doing, they looked to the will of the heavens, and they believed the will of the heavens was revealed through the stars. And as they looked to the heavens, they saw the Star that led them to Bethlehem.

No scientific theory can adequately explain that Star. Men have called it a meteor, a comet, a heliactical rising, a supernova. But none of these theories can explain a Star that appeared in the east, led the Magi to the west slowly enough that they could follow, then suddenly reversed course in Jerusalem and led to the southeast to Bethlehem. The Star must have been a special creation of God, perhaps a theophanic appearance of God Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit to lead these Magi to Jesus Christ.

But why would these Magi care that One had been born King of the Jews? Possibly they understood the Hebrew concept of law and government, for the Persians recognized that the king is subject to the law and powerless to change the law (*Daniel 6:8, 12, 15*). More likely, they remembered Daniel the Prophet, who had once led the Magi himself.

### Daniel: Master of the Magi

Daniel had been taken captive to Babylon around 605 B.C. He was recognized to be ten times wiser than the Magi and astrologers (*Daniel 1:20*) and rose to prominence in Babylon and later in Persia. He was a trusted advisor to the Babylonian and Persian kings, and in *Daniel 2:24* he used his influence to save the Magi from execution. In *Daniel 4:9* he is called "master of the magicians (magi)," so very likely the learned Magi of Christ's time would recall Daniel and his writings.

In *Daniel 9* we read the most precise of all Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus Christ:

*"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*

*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

*And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."*

The "weeks" (Hebrew heptah) of *Daniel 9* are commonly interpreted as seven-year periods. Sixty-nine seven-year periods equal 483 years. King Artaxerxes of Persia gave the decree to restore and build Jerusalem in 445 BC. 483 years later would be 38 A.D., but the Hebrew year was twelve 30-day months or 360 days. Factoring in the difference would bring us to 31 A.D., the likely date of Christ's crucifixion.

We do not know how much of this the Magi understood. But they remembered the words of their old master, Daniel, and knew that the salvation of the world would come not through the legions of Caesar but through the One Who would be born King of the Jews. And without condoning astrology, God used the means most familiar to them to lead them to His Son.

But the unbelieving world continued to look for a conquering prince, not a suffering savior. Augustus reigned well for the most part, and his reign brought in the pax romana or Roman peace. But the pax romana only restrained sin and evil; it did not conquer them. And after the death of Augustus his plan for government crumbled. But the ancient dream of the god-man who would bring heaven down to earth remained.

With the rise of the Roman Empire, the classical longing for a savior was given a political form. The coming savior was the Emperor, and as the people's hopes were dashed with the tragic collapse of each Emperor, they thirstily looked with equal hope to the next.

### The Messianic State Turns Demonic

When Nero ascended the throne in 54 A.D. at the age of seventeen, the philosopher Seneca said of him,

*"...as the red of morning drives away dark night, as neither haze nor mist endure before the sun's rays, as everything becomes bright when my chariot appears, so it is when Nero ascends the throne. His golden locks, his fair countenance, shine like the sun as it breaks through the clouds. Strife, injustice and envy collapse before him. He restores to the world the Golden Age."*

A lover of Greek culture, Nero proclaimed himself to be *"Zeus the Liberator"* and embarked upon a reign of madness, tyranny, and bloodbaths. He covered Christians with tar and set them up as living torches in the imperial parks, murdered his mother and wife, and kicked to death his lover who was expecting his child. After fourteen years the army revolted, and as Nero committed suicide his dying words were, *"What an artist dies in me!"*

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Succeeding emperors claimed to be the best of gods but acted as the worst of men. And still, men looked to Rome for salvation, seeking the City of God through the City of the Earth. As Stauffer so graphically wrote,

The triumph of the civitas dei was to be reached by the self-exaggeration and self-destruction of the civitas terrena. The self-exaggeration and self-destruction of the classical advent philosophy was completed in the third century A.D. This is the century of which the schoolboy knows nothing because no young mind can bear the knowledge of what happened then. It was the century of the assassination of the emperors, of the sarcophagi of the dance of death, of the systematic persecutions of Christians, the century of twisted titles. Magnus, Maxiums, Maximinus, Magnentius, Maxentius, Maximianus, Maximilianus, are the names given to themselves by those who wanted to be accounted important. In this century the political eschatology on which men had been nourished for thousands of years ran amok through the Roman world. About the year 260 Gallienus struck a coin with the inscription, "The genius of the Roman people has entered the capital of the empire." This patron spirit was incarnate in himself, the emperor Gallienus. In the same decade the imperial genius was murdered. In the year 275 Aurelian was celebrated as "god and lord from birth." In the same year the divine lord was murdered. The following year the emperor Probus ascended the blood-girt throne and struck a series of coins with the famous inscription Adventus Augusti and the portrait of the emperor riding up with his hand raised in greeting and blessing, led by the goddess Victoria. In the year 282 Probus was murdered. In 287 a coin of the emperor Carausius appeared, and on it we see Britannia greeting the emperor, as he arrived from the Continent, with the advent greeting Expectate Veni, Come, Thou Longed-for One. In the Advent hymn the words are "Thou Longing of all the world." Carausius was murdered...

### State Worship Today?

And the story goes on, through the collapse of Rome, the Dark Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, merchantilism, colonialism, imperialism, the modern age, the postmodern and so on down through the years. In an age in which many pride themselves as being too sophisticated to believe the state is divine, the German philosopher Hegel proclaims that the State is god walking on earth, though he used the term "god" in the sense of the World-spirit. An age which ejects the transcendent God of the Bible places man, and the State as the greatest of man's institutions, on the throne in the place of God. We give to the State all authority, we expect the State to make all important decisions, we look to the

State for all material blessings, and we trust the state to make our laws and define our values. Truly, for many modern Americans the State has become our god.

And amid all this intrigue and carnage, Christ was born in a Bethlehem stable. He grew as a humble child in Nazareth, He lived and taught and served among men. He died on a Roman cross, and His enemies thought they had conquered Him. But there He paid the atoning price for the sins of the world, washing away forever the sins the emperors could only imperfectly restrain. And there He established His Kingdom, a Kingdom that is not of this world but that will endure forever.

### Wise Men Still Seek Him

**The Magi were wise men indeed. We don't know how much they understood, but we know they made wise choices. They passed by the Caesars and the Herods of their day and came to worship the newborn King. They were influential men in their day, and they respected and served the kings of their respective lands. But their souls' allegiance was to the King of Kings, to Him who wears the mitre of eternity. They respected the godly state and that ruler who governs according to Biblical principles. But they feared the messianic State that seeks to make itself god. They knew that government service is an honorable vocation, but they also knew that earthly government will never usher in the Golden Age. Only God through His true Son can do that.**

**And on Christmas God did become man. God became incarnate, taking upon Himself human flesh so that He could redeem mankind through His Death on the Cross, His Resurrection, His Ascension, and His Second Coming. Wise men sought Him then, and wise men seek Him now.**

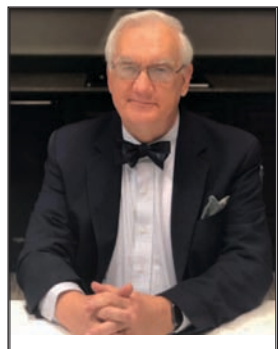
### Venite, Adoremus Dominum!

### "O Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!"

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The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.



Ronald A. Holtsford

### A Little Tongue in Cheek- Is Santa Criminal?

*I suppose the weird side of my sense of humor kicked in while preparing the December 2024 Gazette article. With a little tongue-in-cheek I decided to think on the jolly man and determine whether he may actually incur criminal and civil liability should he ever be investigated.*

For starters, Santa runs a huge enterprise. With so many "employees" I can't imagine he runs it as a sole proprietorship or is it actually a partnership with Mrs. Clause? With such industrious employees, I would think that he would need to protect himself with a limited liability entity such as a corporation, Limited Liability Company (LLC) or a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP). He will certainly need good liability insurance and workman's comp insurance.

His "employees" are reported to be rather undersized and since no one has seen them, the work conditions may be less than standard. Considering the fact that they are located at the North Pole, considered a desolate place bound by ice and snow, any of the employees would have little ability to independently travel from the confines of the Santa, Inc. compound. Though the word is that the employees laugh and sing as they work, one must still wonder how much they enjoy their employment and whether they are held against their will.

Mr. Clause seems to have an abundance of assets in that toys are given to children around the world for free. I wonder where his abundant assets come from? Though one would hate to speculate, there are thoughts that Santa, Inc. may be involved in selling illicit items to raise money for the expenses of his enterprise. Pablo Escobar of Columbia kept the poor villagers loyal to him through gift giving. On the surface Santa, Inc. seems to have the heart of the most eleemosynary company in the world. But I wonder if there are taxing authorities that Santa, Inc. is holding out on.

When Santa leaves the confines of his compound on Christmas Eve, I have never understood that he files any type of flight plan with the various governments of the world. The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) follows Santa each Christmas Eve in an attempt to reduce collisions with other aircraft or a shoot down of Santa by a nation with a nervous trigger finger. Santa can be followed starting December 1st, but especially on Christmas Eve at <https://www.noradsanta.org> I'm quite surprised that there are not a large number of lawsuits following Christmas each year. Think about the fact that this sleigh and reindeer are landing on roofs and probably cause damage equivalent to significant hail. I have a feeling that insurance companies may be interested in Santa paying for roof damage but don't want to ruin their reputation as a type of Scrooge.

The enjoyment of property owners is protected into the sky above their land and down into the earth. Certainly, that protection is violated with Santa flying from house to house. Even drone operators now have rules and regulations.



With Santa entering homes down a chimney, that meets the definition of breaking and entering. While Santa's magical powers allow him to enter homes safely and without disturbance we hear from time to time about individuals having bad intent trying to enter a home down a chimney. Consider the November 2015 case in Fresno County, California when a homeowner started a fire in his fireplace only to hear a man calling for help. Apparently, an attempted burglary, the burglar must have thought he had Santa like powers but became trapped in the chimney. The homeowner put out the fire and called the Fire Department but the man was dead when the fire department broke him out. Burglar stuck in chimney dies after homeowner starts fire.

I suppose that Santa can make an argument that he is invited into homes (an invitee) considering the number of families that leave milk and cookies out for him. It's just the method of entry is irregular and the time of night make the entry a bit sketchy. Speaking of all of the milk and cookies that Santa must consume in one night it has been suggested in my research that Santa may have a cannabis problem. For one man to continually have the "munchies" all night is less than normal.

Over my many decades of life it seems that Santa has somehow managed to remain on the up and up. Considering his circumstances and work and coupled with the immense joy that he brings to children, I hope that his many infractions will continue to be overlooked.

### Have a blessed Christmas!

*This article is informative only and not meant to be all inclusive. Additionally this article does not serve as legal advice to the reader and does not constitute an attorney-client relationship. The reader should seek counsel from their attorney should any questions exist.*

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**May you and your families have a Blessed and Prosperous 2025. God Bless the USA.**



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Steve Flowers

## INSIDE THE STATEHOUSE With Steve Flowers

Steve Flowers is Alabama's leading political columnist. His weekly column appears in over 60 Alabama newspapers. Steve served 16 years in the state legislature. He may be reached at: <https://steveflowers.us/>

### Big Mules Ain't All Bad



Our legendary governor of the 1940's and 1950's was the giant, cartoonish, character James E. "Big Jim" Folsom. Ole Big Jim ran against the big businesses of Birmingham – big banks, utilities, and U.S. Steel – and labeled them the "Big Mules." He campaigned on the back of a flatbed truck in every hamlet in the state. He would dance and sing with his band, the Strawberry Pickers, and rail against the Big Mules of Birmingham and the Big Planters of the Black Belt.

George Wallace came onto the scene in the 1960's. Wallace was a protégé of Big Jim Folsom. Wallace, like Big Jim, Huey Long of Louisiana, and other southern political demagogues, knew you had to find a boogeyman to run against. Wallace had an easy target. His boogeyman was the race issue. He became the most ardent racist segregationist in the south. However, that issue played out when Blacks were given the right to vote in 1965, and quickly constituted 25% of the electorate. Wallace had to find a new boogeyman to run against, so like his mentor, Big Jim, Wallace went after the last Big Mule standing – Alabama Power Company. Wallace was the ultimate demagogue, but history reveals that what is good for Alabama Power is good for Alabama.

While nobody likes paying power bills, most of us fail to consider what we get for our money. We want to see the lights come on when we flip the switch and Alabama Power does a better job at making that happen than just about anybody.

Three years ago, a historic winter blast of cold air on Christmas Eve made the lights go out in Georgia. They also went out in Mississippi, Tennessee, and the Tennessee Valley of Alabama, as rolling blackouts spread across the South. However, the lights stayed on in Alabama Power territory. Yet, when the lights do go out in the middle of the storm, you can rest assured a lineman from Alabama Power will weather the storm, leaving his home and family to get the power back on for your home and family.

Alabama Power does more than just keep the lights on. It has been the driving force behind economic development in Alabama for an entire century. Today, while industries are abandoning plans for investments in other southern states because they cannot get a reliable supply of electricity, business is booming in Alabama Power territory. This is because the leadership of Alabama Power has refused to buckle to left-wing advocates that suggest we run steel mills and factories off solar panels and windmills.

A group calling itself Conservatives for Clean Energy has hired shady political operatives to attack Alabama Power and promote so-called "clean energy." Anytime a pro-solar and pro-windmill group puts the word "conservative" in their name, you can bet there is nothing conservative about them.

Fortunately, for the past decade, our Public Service Commission, which regulates utilities, has had strong leadership and the backbone to stand up to the left-wing forces that would have us sitting in the dark, freezing, and paying higher bills. The President of the PSC, Twinkle Cavanaugh, is as smart and tough as they come. Along with her fellow commissioners, she has held the line on regulations that keep the lights on, the jobs coming, and the cost of electricity around the national average.

To the contrary, Texas deregulated utilities a few years ago and left power suppliers on their own to meet the demands of America's second-biggest state. Windmills and solar panels went up everywhere and utilities cut their maintenance budgets to the bone. Then, in the winter of 2021, the sun went down, the windmills literally froze up, and people started dying. Even as late as this past August, Texas faced rolling blackouts because the utilities could not meet demand.

One reason Alabama is not Texas is because our Public Service Commission demanded that Alabama Power put Alabama families, businesses, and industries ahead of the left-wing environmentalist agenda. It is the PSC's job to hold the power company and all the businesses they regulate accountable, and they do. The Commission has proven it will hold the power company's feet to the fire. For example, the PSC has not granted a rate increase since 2021, and the commission monitors the cost of fuel and other expenses on a monthly basis. The PSC has done an excellent job requiring the power company to cut the fat without sacrificing the muscle needed to care for Alabama families and create more jobs.

Some people will keep taking shots at Alabama Power because they are an obvious Big Mule boogeyman – but it has always been true, if you've got a heavy load to pull you need a big mule.

***"This, then, expresses the true meaning of Christmas. If each of us could give but a fraction to one another of what He gave to the whole human family, how many hearts could heal, how much sorrow and pain could be driven away? There's still time for joy and gladness to touch a sad and lonely soul, still time to feed a hungry child, to wrap a present for a kind old man feeling forlorn and afraid, and to reach out to an abandoned mother raising children on her own." (1985) Ronald Reagan***

## HISTORY BITS AND PIECES THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



Justice Will Sellers

### Two Hundred Years of Election Intrigue

We should be thankful as a nation that electing a president has matured.

Two hundred years ago, it seemed certain that Andrew Jackson would be the next President of the United States. Any casual observer would notice that he had won the popular vote and was on track to win the vote in the Electoral College.



President Andrew Jackson

His presidency seemed assured, but Jackson failed to realize that the House was not bound by anything. The members of the House, who would elect the president, had other political loyalties, and some would not be returning.

The members of the House were independent, isolated and immune from the influence of a national vote, the choice of state legislators and the practical reality of popular opinion. But, even in their status as a lame-duck Congress, the Speaker of the House, Kentuckian Henry Clay, was as powerful as ever. A master of privilege and patronage, Clay detested Jackson and was determined to thwart his road to the presidency.

But when the presidential electors met in December of 1824, what seemed so obvious was soon in doubt. In fact, Jackson would be denied the presidency because he fell short of a majority of the electoral votes.

The fine print of the Twelfth Amendment would, in essence, void both the popular vote and the vote of the Electoral College and throw the election into the House of Representatives. House members had little loyalty to the population, much less to the presidential electors.

Electing the president is one of the few innovative features of our Constitution. Since the founders, like everyone else in the world, had no experience in electing a chief executive officer, they had to devise a method to ensure presidential independence. It was important politically that the president act in the national interest with no obligation or allegiance to other political bodies, so, by process of elimination, all federal and state legislatures were removed from the equation. The smaller, less populous states wanted to make sure they would not be ignored, so an election by popular vote was also off the table.

With all of these competing interests, the idea was to further divide power, acknowledging the importance of the states, yet adding a popular element to the election. Building on the makeup of the House and Senate, the Electoral College would award presidential electors based on the number of house and senate members from each state.

This was a fair compromise that would make certain that a person elected president had both regional and national support. While every 4 years people question the validity of the Electoral College, it seems that the concept has generally stood the test of time. But 200 years ago, the presidential election was an odd assortment of means and methods to determine which individuals would actually serve as presidential electors.

First, there was no set day for the election to occur, and in 1824, the election was conducted over several days. Given the rural nature of the country this was unavoidable. But perhaps one odd wrinkle in the process was that presidential electors were not uniformly elected. Some states choose their electors by the legislature and others elected electors by a statewide vote. So, 200 years ago, the electors from six states were selected by the state legislature, in other states there was a vote, but because not all candidates qualified in every state, the ballot did not contain the names of all candidates.

In hindsight, this seems like a mess, but at the time, given the deference required by the states and the intentional inefficiencies built into the system, most people accepted it for what it was.

Most people, that is, except Andrew Jackson.

Initially, he assumed that since he won both the popular vote and the electoral college that the House, too, would accede to the will of the people and electors.

Under the Twelfth Amendment, when an election is held in the House — and this has happened only twice — the top three candidates are the only candidates for whom members may cast a vote. Additionally, the vote is tallied on a state-by-state basis with each state allotted one vote, but to be awarded this one vote, a candidate must receive a majority of the votes of that state's House delegation.

Before the vote, Clay used his power as speaker and his relationships with political power brokers within each state to influence delegations. When the votes were cast, John Quincy Adams won. Upon becoming President, he appointed Henry Clay as Secretary of State. Jackson's supporters were livid and called this a "corrupt bargain," implying that Adams had offered Clay that position on the precondition he wrangled enough votes.

The corrupt bargain became a myth of American electoral politics with much research to determine whether a deal was made, the nature of the deal and any number of related issues leaving as many questions as answers. Perhaps Henry Clay enjoyed his tenure as Secretary of State for he would never overcome the appearance of impropriety. In normal circumstances, the person selected as Secretary of State would be in the pole position for the presidency, but Clay however would never realize this ambition. He would run for president three times but never escaped the taint of the corrupt bargain.

After being denied the presidency, Jackson would argue with all his vim and vigor of both the unfairness and corruption of the election. He would also denounce the Electoral College and would attempt to have it abolished. Jackson's defeat simply fed his quest to become president. Once he settled down and accepted the reality of his loss, he redoubled his efforts and campaigned to unseat John Quincy Adams.

Andrew Jackson would become president four years later by winning 55% of the popular vote and almost 70% of the electoral votes. He would usher in an American populism widely known as Jacksonian Democracy, but even in his popularity, his attempt to eliminate the electoral college was unsuccessful.



President John Quincy Adams

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*The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.*



Rob Tate

## Robservations...

### CHRISTMAS: A TIME FOR ALL, A TIME FOR REFLECTION, A TIME FOR PEACE MERRY CHRISTMAS, EVERYONE!

**December, 1914.** For over four months, Europe had been embroiled in war. What was initially conceived to be a quick conflict had become a stalemate unlike anything the world had yet seen. With the advent of newer, deadlier weapons of war, the world slaughter had been redefined to accommodate the new world of mass killing. In the first Battle of Ypres, a.k.a. Bloody Flanders, the month-long battle that had just ended on 22 November, saw over 290,000 total casualties on both sides to include, 19,530 Germans and 7,960 British soldiers killed. It is difficult to find numbers of French and Belgians killed in this battle. Unfortunately for Europe, in the modern vernacular, "They ain't seen nothin' yet."

Instead of being home with their loved ones, the soldiers on either side of "No Man's Land" were equally blighted by life and death in the horrendous trenches. Each man, exposed to the relentless cold and wet winter weather, covered in mud, and surrounded by the dead and decaying bodies of their friends they are unable to bury, yearned to be home for Christmas season. For those claustrophobic few who wished to peer over the trenches to peruse the landscape of their own personal hell, care had to be taken every moment because a well-placed sniper round to one's forehead quickly ended any feelings of morbid curiosity. Yes, the battlefields of France in the early days of WWI were a miserable, sorry place. So much more so on the first Christmas in this new age of warfare.

Yet on this Christmas, an amazing, and almost unthinkable thing happened. Whether the motivating factor was fear, homesickness or the love of Christ, or all the above, common men who had been taught to hate and kill their enemy without regard or mercy, rebelled and came together to celebrate life, rejoice in the birth of Christ and to end, albeit momentarily, all the tortuous killing. Yes, folks, the Christmas truce of 1914 really happened. It is no myth or allegory. It happened. Men were willing and able to put aside war and accept peace, if only for a short time. Humanity shone through the overcast of hate.



Every Christmas season I am reminded of this event. Surprisingly, not many people have ever heard of it. There have been dozens of articles written about it and at least one book. The 2005 movie *Joyeux Noël*, worth watching, likewise chronicles this event.

So, what prompted the truce? Several factors played a part. On December 7, 1914, after the slaughter in Ypres, Pope Benedict XV suggested a temporary cessation of the war for the celebration of Christmas. Though Germany agreed to the temporary cease fire, they unfortunately stood alone. Regardless, on Christmas Eve, many German soldiers put candle decorated Christmas trees

on the tops of their trenches and through the darkness, the British soldiers heard many of the Germans celebrating. Peering over their own trenches many Allied soldiers saw Christmas trees for the first time. Throughout the night, singing and the occasional cat call was shouted out toward the British lines. In thick German accents the British could hear a hearty, "happy Christmas to you Englishmen!" The British responded in kind and the friendly jesting went back and forth. (2) Soldiers exchanged songs like, "O Tannenbaum," "O Come All Ye Faithful," and "The First Noël."

By Christmas day, soldiers took it upon themselves to risk death and entered the killing zones between the trenches. "We won't shoot if you don't shoot" was the word of the day. Slowly at first, men from both sides slowly made their way up and over the trenches to meet their dreaded enemy face-to-face. French, Belgians, Brits and Germans. No hate, probably some fear and trepidation, but no regrets. One German soldier recorded, "It was a day of peace in war. It is only a pity that it was not decisive peace." One British soldier wrote, "while you were eating your turkey, etc, I was out talking and shaking hands with the very men I had been trying to kill a few hours before! It was astounding!" (2) Astounding it was.

All along the front, these men spent the day shaking hands, trading personal items, sharing food, future dreams, photos of loved ones, the warmth of fire,

songs, prayers and the love of Christ amid the horrors surrounding them. An extreme example of the fraternization was a soccer game played in the middle of No Man's Land between the Bedfordshire Regiment and the Germans. A member of the Bedfordshire Regiment produced a ball and the large group of soldiers played until the ball was deflated when it hit a barbed wire entanglement. (2) To the surprise of many men on both sides, other than different uniforms, they were the same. It was reported that the Germans got a kick out of the Scots running around in kilts when they realized they really don't wear underwear. A day of "mooning" caused great laughter on both sides.

Throughout history, Christmas truces have been called as a way of burying the dead and on this Christmas, it was reported that in at least one instance, the British and Germans held a combined service for their fallen comrades. (2) It was reported that in some areas of the front, this celebration was called off at midnight Christmas Day while in other areas; it lasted until New Year's Day.

Informal truces are not necessarily historically isolated occurrences. On individual levels, soldiers have always aided other soldiers and in WWII pilots escorted damaged enemy aircraft back toward their own lines. German mega-ace Hans-Joachim Marseille was notorious for flying through deadly anti-aircraft fire in order to drop notes about downed airmen to their home base or not applying the coup-de-grace on an already damaged opponent. When faced with death and killing, humanity often prevails and although the Christmas truce of 1914 certainly does not stand alone in the annals of armed conflict, it is arguably the greatest example of its kind in modern warfare.

Common soldiers as well as some high-ranking officers voluntarily took place in the events that spread across the front that Christmas in 1914. There is also evidence that while some generals opposed the fraternizing actions of their subordinates, they seemed to tolerate and indeed encouraged actions which allowed stress relief, if only temporarily. There would clearly be plenty of time to get back to killing their fellow men. (1) Although certain military leaders were not too happy about this rare form of fraternization, and indeed it was strictly forbidden in following years, the truce was fully publicized from the moment the news reached Germany and England.

Publishing a year later, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his history of 1914 called the Christmas truce "an amazing spectacle" and in a memorable description, saluted it as "one human episode amid all the atrocities which have stained the memory of the war". (1) Keep in mind that this "truce" took place only five months into a war that dragged on for another 47 and took the lives of over 37 million men, women and children. The humanity shown in December of 1914 would certainly face more difficult times in the years to come.

In many ways, the 20th century was defined by war and the many newfound and quite imaginative ways of killing other people. Trench warfare, mustard gas, machine guns, the advent of airpower, submarines, tanks, atomic weapons, fuel-air bombs; you name it. Mass killing is certainly one of the lasting legacies of the last century and we clearly see that in the city busting of Dresden, Coventry, Berlin, Hamburg, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki to name just a few. It has been said human love and decency can only be matched by our unending desire to suffer pain and death up on our own race. It is refreshing, however, at the tactical level of war, where men, like those in 1914, are pitted against other men and killing becomes not just a right but the only way of self-survival that the love of men, each of us created in the image of God, can overcome hatred and the fallacious orders of those who order the soldier to kill those whom they would rather befriend. This is a common theme I found in ALL of my interviews of German Luftwaffe pilots from WWII. Top ace of all time, Erich Hartmann with 352 aerial victories, told me that he hated the war and would much rather have played soccer against the young Russians and Americans that he killed. To him, war was old men telling young men to kill other young men, often without reasons why.

This Christmas season, instead of hate and the thought of war, let us celebrate the love of God and His perfect peace. Those petty differences that separate each of us cannot stand before God's majestic greatness. If soldiers, almost 100 years ago, hell-bent on killing one another in the desolation of war torn France can set aside their differences and celebrate the birth of Christ in peace, why can't we?

1. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special\\_report/1998/10/98/world\\_war\\_i/197627.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1998/10/98/world_war_i/197627.stm)

2. [http://history1900s.about.com/od/1910s/a/christmastruce\\_2.htm](http://history1900s.about.com/od/1910s/a/christmastruce_2.htm)

Note: A must watch, *Celtic Thunder* – "Christmas 1915" – On YouTube only 3:45 in length.

## The 70th Anniversary of the Movie "White Christmas"



This year marks the 70th anniversary of "White Christmas", the movie musical based on Irving Berlin's classic popular Christmas melody of the same name. And in the spirit of the Christmas season, many movie theaters are offering showings of the 1954 film on the big screen on December 15th, 16th, and 17th

after the war's end. After an old army buddy asks them to review his sisters' singing act, they team up with the female pair as portrayed by Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen. And their performing gigs lead them to the empty Columbia Inn in Vermont. An inn that is near bankruptcy due to the lack of tourists as a result of no snow. And also an inn that is coincidentally owned by their former General in the army, General Waverly. Leading to the song and dance duo trying to devise ways to spare their old army general the fate of poverty and bankruptcy.

The movie musical features at least 17 songs, all of which were written by Irving Berlin. A Russian Jewish composer who arrived in the USA at the age of five. And whose compositions form a large part of The Great American Songbook. With The Great American Songbook being a loosely defined canon of 20th Century American jazz standards, popular songs, and show tunes. Irving Berlin is also known for his composition of "God Bless America" which was first made popular by the "Songbird of the South", the contralto, Kate Smith.

In "White Christmas", audiences are treated to the vocals of the crooner, Bing Crosby. Whose vocal style took American popular singing beyond the belting associated with Broadway stars like Al Jolson and Billy Murray. A relative of the classic hymn writer, Fanny Crosby, Bing Crosby's biggest hit song of his career was his recording of "White Christmas" which he introduced on a Christmas Day radio broadcast in 1941. Rosemary Clooney stars in "White Christmas", as well. A 1950s pop singer, she is the aunt of actor George Clooney of "ER" television fame.

The running time for the technicolor film, "White Christmas", is two hours and five minutes.

Review by Luisa

Being a post-World War II musical, the plot centers around two soldiers portrayed by Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye who became a song and dance duo



## Hunter's Pardon- Joe Biden's Ultimate Power Play to Shield Family Corruption



**Perry O. Hooper Jr.**

Founder Let the People Speak  
Founder Patriots First  
Former Alabama State Representative  
Alabama State Republican Executive Committee



We are witnessing one of the most egregious abuses of presidential power in modern history. Joe Biden's "full and unconditional" pardon of his son Hunter Biden is just the latest proof that the swamp is alive and well and must be drained.

Biden has been lying about this for years, and now he's using his office to make sure his son stays untouchable, even after getting caught red-handed and pleading guilty.

It is not just about the pardon itself; it's about the lies that Biden has used as cover for years. Ronald Reagan once said, "Trust, but verify." Well, the media and the Democrats didn't even bother with the "verify" part when it came to Hunter. Outlets like CNN and MSNBC, for example, dismissed any critical examination of Hunter Biden's foreign dealings, treating them as baseless conspiracy theories instead of investigating the facts. They just took every word Biden said as gospel, used it as virtue-signaling ammo, and ran with it like a dog with a bone. But now that the truth is out in the open, where are they? Silent. Complicit. Hoping this all just blows over.

And let's not kid ourselves, this isn't just a simple pardon. No, Biden crafted it to cover "all offenses against the United States" that Hunter "has committed or may have committed" from January 2014 through December 1, 2024. This broad coverage is more than problematic because it essentially grants blanket immunity for a decade of potential wrongdoing, a scope far beyond typical presidential pardons which are usually specific to particular charges or incidents. By making it so vague, Biden ensures that no aspect of Hunter's activities during this period can be investigated or prosecuted. This starting date is significant because January 2014 marks the beginning of Hunter Biden's involvement with Burisma, when he joined the board of the corrupt Ukrainian gas company while his father was Vice President. Sound familiar? It should, because it's almost a carbon copy of the Nixon pardon. That's right, Biden took a page from the same playbook that Gerald Ford used for Nixon, but this time, it's to shield his own flesh and blood from prosecution, including anything to do with Burisma, that corrupt Ukrainian gas company Hunter joined back when Biden was VP.

Where's the accountability? Biden's been lying for years about his son's activities whether it's foreign lobbying, questionable deals, or other shady behavior like the infamous deals with Chinese energy company CEFC, payments from Burisma, or Hunter's questionable art sales. He's sweeping it all under the rug with a pardon that makes sure nobody can reopen the case. Even when Trump takes back the White House, he won't be able to undo this, and that's exactly why Biden did it. You think this was about compassion or a father's love for his son? No, it's about keeping the Biden crime family free of consequence and shielding them from the justice they so rightly deserve.

The reality is simple: Joe Biden misled the American public. He repeatedly claimed that he had no knowledge of Hunter's foreign dealings, despite mounting evidence, including emails and witness testimonies, that suggest otherwise. Now, he's using the most powerful office in the world to cover it all up. The press, the same press that loves to bash Republicans over every perceived misstep, like the extensive coverage of Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings or the criticism of Donald Trump's tax returns is giving him a free pass on Hunter Biden's dealings.



Wikipedia

America, it's time to wake up and realize that we are being played. It's time to demand truth, justice, and transparency from those who are supposed to serve us. We must put pressure on our elected officials to ensure they act in the best interest of the American people and not their own corrupt circles. If Biden can get away with this, what else is he lying about? And who will be next to get that get-out-of-jail-free card?

Here's the real question we need to be asking; how did Joe Biden himself profit from Hunter's activities in this time period? Was it through Hunter's connections with foreign companies, like CEFC or Burisma? Did money from Burisma or other questionable sources somehow make its way back to Joe Biden's pocket. There have been claims about Joe Biden attending meetings with Hunter's business associates, and emails hinting at financial arrangements. Were there any direct payments, indirect benefits, or favors exchanged that could point to a conflict of interest? Were there favors exchanged, deals made, or policies influenced to benefit the Biden family interests? The American people deserve answers. We need to know if Joe Biden personally gained from his son's shady deals, and if so, to what extent was the President of the United States compromised? These are the questions the media should be asking, and these are the answers we should be demanding.

But the good news is, real change is coming. When Donald Trump takes the oath of office once again, we will see the disinfected of transparency and accountability shine through the darkness of corruption. Trump will ensure that no one is above the law, and he will push for a full investigation into any abuses of power. With Trump back in the White House, we can count on a leader who will restore justice, expose the lies, and hold the Biden family accountable for their actions. It's time to drain the swamp for good, and President Donald J. Trump is the man who will get the job done.

*The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.*

## Tuberville urges Congress to pass the NDAA

by Brandon Moseley

December 4, 2024 – WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tommy Tuberville (R-Alabama) spoke on the Senate floor about the urgent need to pass the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NDAA – like the budget – is supposed to be passed before the start of the fiscal year – October 1; but yet again Congress as a whole and especially the Senate has not done their work and gotten this done.

In his speech, Sen. Tuberville highlighted key conservative wins in the NDAA, including slashing funding for gender transition surgeries and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs in the military. Sen. Tuberville emphasized the need for strong leadership in the Pentagon and expressed his continued support for President Trump's nominee for Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth. The Senate version of the NDAA passed out of the Senate Armed Services Committee almost six months ago.

"The Senate's version of this year's NDAA includes some excellent provisions, including a 4.5% pay raise for America's military service members," said Sen. Tuberville. "This is a pay raise for the boots on the ground, not the top brass at the Pentagon. We secured powerful, new security initiatives in the Indo-Pacific. And provisions that advance our Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems technologies."

Tuberville urged the Pentagon to focus, "Focus on its mission to 'deter war and ensure our nation's security.'"

Tuberville said that he supports an amendment, "Slashing all funding for the woke 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion' policies at the DOD. Another amendment prohibits the use of taxpayer dollars for any costs associated with funding gender transition surgeries."

"We need a military that is 100% focused on protecting our country and enhancing national security—not implementing a woke Biden agenda," Sen. Tuberville said. "The military is not a social experiment; it should be a lethal fighting force feared by our enemies and made up of our best and brightest in this country. This is why I applaud the work of the Senate Armed Service Committee and Ranking Member Wicker's leadership for putting together this excellent piece of legislation."

"If Senator Schumer really cared about our military, he would have brought the NDAA up for a vote almost six months ago," charged Tuberville. "But instead, we've been prioritizing liberal judges for the final weeks he has as Majority Leader. Senate Democrats are more interested in burning taxpayer dollars on an unwinnable war in Ukraine than passing our military budget."

"Sadly, we've seen this time and again: leadership that would rather cater to the woke [Biden] administration agenda than ensuring our military is a lethal fighting force," said Sen. Tuberville. "On November 5th, nearly 77 million Americans joined me [in] taking a stand to say, 'enough of this nonsense.' The American people gave President Trump a mandate to get Washington working for the people again."



"President Trump is returning to the White House and has nominated Pete Hegseth to serve as Secretary of Defense," continued Tuberville. "I just met with Pete on Monday, and I have known him for a long time. And he is the man we need leading our military. Pete is smart, he's battle-tested, and he's prepared to lead. Pete has actually had a real job in the military on the battlefield. Not pushing paper in some stuffy room in the Pentagon."

"If confirmed, Pete will focus on rebuilding peace through strength—putting America first and prioritizing America's military readiness," said Tuberville. "He will focus on lethality and maintaining our competitive edge. Not to mention getting our recruitment problems straightened out. And boy, do we have problems. With military recruitment tanking, what better way to inspire young men and women to join the most lethal fighting force in the world than by nominating a decorated veteran who served in two wars and is closer to their age?"

While Tuberville is backing Hegseth some of his Republican colleagues in the Senate have expressed grave reservations. There are allegations that Hegseth has an alcohol problem, was prone to drinking to excess when employed at Fox News; and has acted inappropriately toward women between his two marriages. The Trump transition team has dismissed the reports as a "smear campaign" but some Republican Senators have said that the allegations are troubling. Hegseth for his part has vowed to keep fighting.

Senator Tommy Tuberville was elected to the Senate in 2020. He is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

To connect with the author of this story, or to comment, email [brandonmreporter@gmail.com](mailto:brandonmreporter@gmail.com)

*The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.*



May we always honor how our forefathers worked to establish a Republic by the People and for the people.  
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**"There is no limit to the amount of good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit."**

Ronald Reagan



**John Martin**

**What in the world is the DOGE? No, it is NOT the DOGECOIN or any other cryptocurrency.**

It is a new government agency, but unlike the multitudes of others that range mostly from worthless to oppressive, it is absolutely essential. It is the one that will keep the bad ones in check, limit their power, and even eliminate many of them.

**Welcome to the DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY.**

Yes, our re-elected President Donald Trump has envisioned it. He is expecting it to be a special new

flavor that just might actually work. On this past November 12, 2024, he appointed a very special person to run it—the most brilliant businessman on Earth—ELON MUSK, the super genius who created the mightiest space agency in the world—SPACE X. It has eclipsed all others combined by an order of magnitude. He has taken the foundering TESLA and developed it into the world’s most sophisticated and most profitable electric vehicle producer. He has built and developed STARLINK, the world’s supreme internet provider. Obviously, Musk knows far more about economics than any politician. Trump also nominated Vivek Ramaswamy as an assistant to help Musk whenever he gets too busy.

On November 12, 2024, Trump wrote, “Together, these two wonderful Americans will pave the way for my Administration to dismantle Government Bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditures and restructure Federal Agencies — Essential to the Save America Movement. It will become, potentially, ‘The Manhattan Project’ of our time. Republican politicians have dreamed about the objectives of ‘DOGE’ for a very long time. To drive this kind of drastic change, the Department of Government Efficiency will provide advice and guidance from outside of Government, and will partner with the White House and Office of Management & Budget to drive large scale structural reform, and create an entrepreneurial approach to Government never seen before.”

As we now see, Donald and Elon appear to be good old buddies who are determined to reverse the economic devastation that has been wrought by the policies of the Bush, Obama, and Biden regimes.

For starters, let’s define efficiency. In its simplest context, it means the most output for the money spent—the most “bang” for the buck. But that would not be desired when applied to government—ANY level of government—from the federal down to the states, counties and cities.

For government to be efficient, it must be SMALL and LIMITED in its power. Its purpose is to SERVE, not rule. It must abide by the limits of our Constitution and follow the libertarian principles established by our founding fathers.

There are really only THREE essential functions of government—national defense, roads, bridges and related infrastructure, and courts to protect our rights and property. Other items, like education, belong strictly in the private sector. For government, that means HANDS OFF.

We can look at our history to understand that MOST of our government is non-essential. It just keeps growing and growing, like a malignant cancer, abusing more and more people and imposing higher taxes and insane regulations, mandates, and enforcement. And yes, it also generates needless WAR.

What are the malignant tumors that we must excise from our obese, overgrown government? There are so many of them. We cannot even imagine naming them all. But we can honestly state that the great majority of agencies and programs that have been created, especially since about 1960, range anywhere from worthless to dangerous. They should be shut down and at least most of their personnel FIRED. Let them get productive jobs in the private sector instead of sucking up our tax dollars and pestering and abusing our working people.

For decades, our government has gone far beyond its legitimate authority with absurd enforcement of matters that should never be touched. Yes, some agencies, like the EPA, actually did some good work during their beginnings back when raw sewage and oil were being dumped into many of our rivers. But after the serious polluters were stopped, the EPA became bored with nothing to do. Instead of wisely leaving well enough alone, it proceeded to pursue and impose ridiculous “violations”—even down to classifying mud puddles as “wetlands.” Today, the EPA, along with numerous others, should be terminated.

Where can we start? Let’s begin with the menagerie of agencies and programs that George W. Bush created—the TSA, Homeland Security, the Patriot Act, and all others. How many hijackings did they prevent? Not one. The potential terrorists were nabbed by ordinary citizens, airliner staff and various existing law enforcement. But Bush’s “Gestapo” agents did do plenty of harassment to airline employees and passengers. They even committed crimes. At the Atlanta airport, radio talk show host Neal Boortz personally witnessed the indignity of agents rooting through his luggage and stealing his I-Pod and camera. At airports across the nation, and especially Atlanta, the world’s busiest, agents delayed and abused thousands of passengers.

Two others for the chopping block are Jimmy Carter’s losers—the Departments of Education and Energy.

We must REPEAL the outlandish safety and CAFE mandates imposed onto cars and trucks. Get the government’s hands OFF. The consumers in a free market are far better judges of matters like these. We must uphold our right to build, buy, sell, and import the cars and trucks of our choice—including the now banned

Toyota HiLux Champ and the IMV 0, as well as the famous HiLux itself—the most popular, most durable, and most widely used pickup in the entire world.

America’s people have suffered decades of abusive government overreach and are far beyond fed up with it. It has hamstringed our industries to intolerable levels and even put some out of business. No wonder China and others can make goods cheaper and better than Americans.

Beginning on the 20th of January, 2025—Trump’s first day in office—Musk and Ramaswamy will be poised to lead the DOGE—America’s great cleanup agency. Its specific duty will be to dispose of the bureaucratic riffraff, restore freedom and limits to our government, and save trillions of dollars in the process. Abusive laws must be repealed. Millions of excess personnel must be fired and given opportunities to pursue productive non-government careers. Debts will be reversed into surpluses. Taxes can be drastically lowered. Instead of running amok, our national debt will decline. Once freed from the shackles of bureaucracy, America’s industrial might will blossom and leave the Chinese in our dust without any need for tariffs or any other meddling in free trade.

Can all of this be done? Yes it can. Here is the proof. Barely a year ago, Argentina’s President JAVIER MILEI performed similar reforms and rescued his country from economic collapse. See my July article, ARGENTINA’S MIRACLE WORKER, for details.

Trump would be well advised to invite Milei to his home to discuss plans to rescue both the United States and Argentina.

Trump has Republican majorities in both houses. This will help him overcome obstacles that greedy powers might throw in his way. Don’t forget that these drastic cuts are essential to SAVE OUR COUNTRY. If we fail and suffer an economic collapse, EVERYBODY LOSES, INCLUDING the bureaucrats. If they have any common sense, they will accept the cuts to save themselves.

Elon Musk himself is already hopping mad about government overreach. He has suffered intolerable forced delays, and heavy fines over trivia, like being fined and penalized for dumping clean, potable water onto the ground at his Starbase in Texas. The FAA has imposed an estimated one to two years of needless delays, fines, and forced expenses in the development of his SpaceX starships. Much of the FAA is also a candidate for the chopping block.

Another job for Elon is to guide Donald through his duties with some economic common sense. He must always be alert to prevent him from doing anything really stupid—like his plan to impose insane tariffs (up to 200%) onto imported goods, even from China. Except for limited amounts on luxury items, tariffs should be rejected. High tariffs will NOT solve our competition with China; they will only destroy free trade. They would antagonize the entire world and jeopardize our goal to attain world peace. WE MUST STOP TRUMP’S PROPOSED TARIFF WAR. Instead, we must adopt laissez faire free markets to develop our manufacturing to compete with the so-called “dumping” of foreign goods. We can build just about anything better ourselves once government meddling is eliminated. No racial quotas. No mandated minimum wages. No licensure mandates. No mandated working hours. No stupid safety rules. No abusive enforcement. No abusive or excessive taxes. No complicated paperwork. Let free markets work. Let the American people decide what is fair. Just GET THE GOVERNMENT OUT OF THE WAY. That is the one rational solution that will end our economic woes.

**SOURCES**

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*The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.*



**Elon Musk's proposed DOGE logo.**

**U. S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**



**MISSION STATEMENT**

**Protect the American people, safeguard our borders, and enhance the nation’s economic prosperity.**

**ENDURING MISSION PRIORITIES**

**Counter Terrorism – Anticipate, detect and disrupt the threat of terrorists, their weapons and actions to protect the people and economy of the United States.**

**Combat Transnational Crime – Detect, deter and disrupt transnational organized crime that threatens U.S. national and economic security interests at and beyond the border.**

**Secure the Border – Protect the Homeland through the air, land and maritime environments against illegal entry, illicit activity or other threats to uphold national sovereignty and promote national and economic security.**

**Facilitate Lawful Trade and Protect Revenue – Enable fair, competitive and compliant trade and enforce U.S. laws to ensure safety, prosperity and economic security for the American people.**

**Facilitate Lawful Travel – Enhance, enable and transform the travel experience by anticipating, detecting and intercepting threats prior to and at ports of entry.**

**God Bless the USA!**

## GOVERNOR IVY HOSTS NEW CORRECTIONS OFFICER GRADUATES



December 5, 2024 - MONTGOMERY, AL - Alabama Governor Kay Ivey (R) hosted 96 Correctional Officer Trainees (COTs) set to graduate from the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) Academy. No job is more in short supply in the state of Alabama and no need is more critical in this tight labor environment for state government.

The governor was thrilled to greet this massive class of graduates, the largest during her tenure, on the front steps of the Governor's Mansion. After the governor offered her congratulations and support, she invited the group inside the Mansion to enjoy a reception and to view the Christmas decorations.

"I was excited to welcome these 96 Correctional Officer Trainees to the 'People's House' today ahead of their graduation from the Academy," said Governor Ivey in a statement. "I was doubly proud to celebrate this largest ever class of Correctional Officers since I

took office. I congratulate each of these graduates, and I know they will make a difference in keeping our people safe."

The 96 Correctional Officer graduates gave the governor a hearty 'thank you' for her dedicated leadership and commitment to law enforcement, including those that serve in the state's Corrections system.

On Friday, December 6, 2024, the 96 COTs graduated from the Alabama Criminal Justice Training Center in Selma. The ceremony was held at the Montgomery campus of Church of the Highlands. The trainees satisfactorily completed 10 consecutive weeks of training to obtain Alabama Peace Officers' Standard and Training Commission (APOSTC) certification and become Correctional Officers.

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### Governor Ivey lights Capitol Christmas Tree

December 6, 2024 - MONTGOMERY, AL - Alabama Governor Kay Ivey on Friday held the annual Capitol Christmas tree lighting. The theme of this year's ceremony is "Every Light a Prayer for Peace."

The official state Christmas tree is a 38-foot Eastern Red Cedar from Bullock County. Throughout the week, the tree had been adorned with approximately 40,000 lights and an assortment of ornaments. Concluding the ceremony, the governor officially flipped the switch to illuminate the tree. Students from Montgomery Christian Academy joined the governor in counting down to tree lighting.

Governor Ivey was joined by the Very Reverend Kevin Bazzel of the Catholic Diocese of Birmingham, Garden Club of Alabama Chairman Suzy Shepherd, Major General Clair Gill, and Pastor Mark Betha of First Baptist Church Montgomery. Santa Claus was also in attendance. The 151st Army National Guard Band, two Auburn A Capella groups, Malaudic and Full Auctave, all performed musical selections during the program.

Staff Writer



## ALABAMA LEGISLATURE CONVENES TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4th.



### LEGISLATIVE SESSION IS JUST 56 DAYS AWAY

By Brandon Moseley

December 9, 2024 - MONTGOMERY, AL - most Alabamians are busy preparing for Christmas and most Republicans are anxiously awaiting the return of President Donald J. Trump (R). Democrats on the other hand are mostly dreading the second Trump administration. Little noticed by most Alabamians, the Alabama Legislature is spending this time preparing for the 2025 Alabama regular legislative session which begins on Tuesday, February 4.

This will be the third year of the quadrennium meaning that this is the last legislative session before election year. It is hard to get major pieces of legislation done in a session where everybody is running for the political lives; so this is the last best chance for this legislature to move major pieces of legislation - outside of a special session.

Unlike Congress which is perpetually in session - even though they usually don't get anything significant accomplished - the Alabama Legislature is limited to a maximum of thirty days in a regular session. They have to pass both budgets - the education budget and the general fund budget - renew all state agencies facing a sunset provision, set policies for the schools, make adjustments to the criminal code, confirm governor's appointments, set the economic development policies for the state, and pass whatever legislative changes the 140 members want, and anything they don't get done on the last day of the session is done until next year - unless the governor calls a special session to address something she thinks is essential that the Legislature did not prioritize.

There is also new leadership. Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Reed (R-Jasper) is leaving the Senate to take a position with the Ivey administration focusing on improving the state's workforce. The Republicans, who have a 27 to 8 majority in the Senate - have chosen Sen. Garlan Gudger (R-Cullman) to succeed Reed. Gudger, along with Governor Kay Ivey (R), and Speaker of the House Nathaniel Ledbetter (R-Rainsville) are the three most powerful people in Alabama government. It is not known yet how Gudger's replacing Reed will affect the working relationships between the House, the Senate, and the Governor's office or how the Democratic Party (the opposition party) will react to the change in leadership in the Senate. There are 35 members of the Alabama Senate and 105 members of the Alabama House of Representatives. Republicans have a supermajority in both Houses of the legislature meaning that if the Republicans all agree

they have the votes to shut off any Democratic filibuster and pass whatever legislation they want to pass without any support from Democratic members of either body.

The Alabama Legislature is already working hard in anticipation of the moment that they gavel in. 90 bills have already been filed ahead of the 2025 regular session, by members of the House and the Senate. They address a number of issues including guns, tax policy, and public safety. Last year's session came unraveled at the end of the session due to bickering over competing versions of a gambling bill that members of the House leadership wanted. The in-fighting between the two Houses killed dozens of pieces of noncontroversial legislation on the last days of the 2024 session. Those bills are likely to be reintroduced. Expanding school choice, changing the funding formula for public education, ethics reform, professional licensing in the state, and addressing the failing rural hospitals in Alabama are other issues that could come before the Alabama Legislature in 2025.

There are already meetings scheduled in the next thirty days ahead of the session. On December 9 the Legislative Study Commission on Modernizing K-12 School Education Funding is meeting in room 200 of the Statehouse. On Thursday, December 12, 2024 the Joint Oversight Commission on Opioid Settlement is meeting. On December 19, 2024 the Re-Entry Commission is meeting. On Thursday, January 2 the Contract Review Legislative Oversight Committee is meeting, and on January 22 the Joint Prison Oversight Committee is meeting.

In addition to a new Senate President Pro Tempore the court system will get a new head in January when Chief Justice-elect Sarah Stewart (R) is sworn in replacing the retiring Justice Tom Parker (R). In the Alabama system, the Chief Justice is not only the head of the Supreme Court; but also appoints the administrator of the courts and makes numerous decisions about judge assignments and other court related issues. Stewart is likely to have a set of legislative priorities that she will bring before the Legislature.

**Governor Kay Ivey's annual State of the State address is scheduled for the night of February 4.**

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**SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS  
ARE SAFER AT HOME**

## ATTORNEY FEE CAP INCREASE

Effective November 30, 2024, there will be an increase to the fee cap representatives can charge for help when you do business with Social Security. The maximum dollar amount for fee agreements approved by Social Security will increase from \$7,200 to \$9,200.

If a fee agreement is not filed, a representative can submit a fee petition after completing work on your claim(s). We'll review the value of your representative's services. We'll also let you know the fee your representative is authorized to charge and collect.

For more information, please read our publication, *Your Right to Representation*, at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10075.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10075.pdf).

## SSA TALKS

Listen to our new episode:  
Benefits for Children



## SSA TALKS: CHILD BENEFITS

Kathleen Romig, Senior Advisor in the Office of the Commissioner, joined the latest episode of SSA Talks to discuss the Social Security benefits available to children.

These include:

Survivors benefits for children if their parent dies.

For more information, please read our publication titled Survivor Benefits at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10084.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10084.pdf).

Supplemental Security Income (or SSI) for children if they have a disability or blindness and their families have limited income and resources. Visit our SSI webpage at [www.ssa.gov/ssi](http://www.ssa.gov/ssi) to learn more.

Child benefits also known as "family benefits" on the record of a parent receiving retirement or disability benefits. For more information, please read our publication titled Benefits for Children at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10085.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10085.pdf).

Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits for Youth with Disabilities for adults who have a disability that began before they reached age 22. These benefits are paid from their parent's Social Security earnings record. For more information, please read our publication titled Benefits for Children with Disabilities at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10026.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10026.pdf).

As an advocate and the mother of a child with disabilities, Kathleen knows well the challenges that children and their families encounter. During the episode she discusses how Social Security benefits and SSI help children. She also explains how we are taking more proactive steps to reach children who may be eligible for our benefits and programs.

You can listen to the episode on our SSA Talks webpage at [www.ssa.gov/news/audio-series.html](http://www.ssa.gov/news/audio-series.html) and subscribe to receive alerts about future episodes. You can also listen to previous episodes like "Commissioner O'Malley's Top Priorities" and "Will Social Security be there when i retire?".

For more information and news about Social Security, check out our Communications Corner webpage at [www.ssa.gov/news](http://www.ssa.gov/news).

Please share this with your friends and family – and post it on social media.

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM SOCIAL SECURITY

We hope your holidays are filled with joy and warmth. During this and every season, we want you to know that we are here to serve you. Did you know that our online services are available to help you do business with us in an easy, convenient, and secure way?

**You can create a personal my Social Security account online to:**

- Apply for retirement, spouse, or disability benefits.
- Request a replacement Social Security card.
- Check your application or appeal status.
- Request a name change (in some cases you may have to visit your local office).

**If you receive benefits, you can use your personal my Social Security account to:**

- Change your address. (Social Security benefits only)
- Change your direct deposit information. (Social Security benefits only)
- Instantly get proof of benefits.
- Print your SSA-1099.

**If you do not receive Social Security benefits, you can use a personal my Social Security account to:**

- Get personalized retirement, spouse, or disability benefit estimates.
- Get your Social Security Statement.
- Get instant proof that you do not receive benefits.

You can use these services on the go or from the comfort of your home. Please visit [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount) to view the services available to you.

If you cannot use our online services, you may be able to use our automated telephone services by calling 1-800-772-1213. Automated services are always available.

*Have a safe, happy holiday season and know that we are here for you.*

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## WE'RE MAKING IT EASIER TO DO BUSINESS WITH US ONLINE

We've listened to your feedback concerning your preference to do business with us online. You want the option to submit forms, evidence, and other information electronically. You also want to sign documents electronically before submitting them.

This year we released *eSignature/Upload Documents* as an option to submit documents. This new, online service option allows our employees to electronically request, and our customers to electronically submit, 50 forms and nearly 80 types of evidence. This option eliminates the need to mail, fax, or deliver information to a local Social Security office. By streamlining our document submission process and reducing mail, we are improving the way you do business with us.

### How Does it Work?

Our employee sends the customer a link with the request for the forms and evidence we need to process their application.

The customer authenticates by signing in to, or creating, their personal **my Social Security** account at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount). The customer then reviews the request, completes the form, electronically signs (when signatures are required), and uploads the completed forms and any supporting evidence to our portal.

Note: Customers have 30 days to electronically submit requested information and may receive an email reminder. If the electronic request expires, they can contact our office to ask for a new request or submit the forms and information by mail, fax, or by visiting an office.

To learn more about Upload Documents, visit our FAQ webpage at [faq.ssa.gov/en-US/Topic/?id=CAT-01360](http://faq.ssa.gov/en-US/Topic/?id=CAT-01360).

### Online Forms and Signature Removal

In addition to the *eSignature/Upload Documents* option, we are converting many of our frequently used forms to more convenient online versions. Customers will have the option to complete a user-friendly, fillable online form, then electronically sign and submit it.

Some of our frequently used forms now available to sign and submit electronically include:

- SSA-827, Authorization to Disclose Information to Social Security Administration.
- SSA-820/821, Work Activity Reports.
- SSA-632, Request for a Waiver of Overpayment Recovery.
- SSA-634, Request for Change in Overpayment Recovery Rate.

We have removed the signature requirement for 12 of our most used forms. These forms include:

- SSA-L4201, Employer Requesting Wage Information.
- SSA-789, Request for Reconsideration/Disability Cessation Right to Appear.
- SSA-787, Statement of Patient's Capability to Manage Benefits.

To learn more about the removal of signature requirements from certain Social Security forms, check out our YouTube video Signature Removal from SSA Forms at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmben-skPo4&t=2s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmben-skPo4&t=2s).

Whether you do business with us online, by phone, or in person, we're committed to making it easier for you. We continue to explore more opportunities to make doing business with us easier. Please share this information with others.

## SOCIAL SECURITY'S TOP 10 WEBPAGES FOR 2025

*SSA.gov* is your best resource to learn about Social Security programs and benefits and conduct business with us. Our website is designed to make it easy for you to find what you need. **Here are our top 10 webpages:**

**my Social Security** — You can open a personal my Social Security account to verify your earnings, view your Social Security Statement, get benefit estimates, and more, at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount).

**Social Security blog** — You can find the latest Social Security news and updates at [blog.ssa.gov](http://blog.ssa.gov). You can easily share these informative articles with others.

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)** — Do you need answers to Social Security-related questions? Visit [www.ssa.gov/faq](http://www.ssa.gov/faq) to find answers to common questions and other valuable information.

**Retirement application** — You can complete and submit your online application for retirement benefits in as little as 15 minutes at [www.ssa.gov/retirement](http://www.ssa.gov/retirement).

**Disability application** — You can apply for disability benefits online at [www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability).

**Publications** — Visit our online publication library for information about key subjects at [www.ssa.gov/pubs](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs) (includes audio versions).

**Medicare** — Sign up for Medicare at [www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up](http://www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up).

**Online Services** — You can take care of most business with us by visiting [www.ssa.gov/online-services](http://www.ssa.gov/online-services).

**People Helping Others** — Use these resources to help your family and others in your community at [www.ssa.gov/thirdparty](http://www.ssa.gov/thirdparty).

**Fraud and Scam Prevention and Reporting** — Learn how to recognize and report Social Security fraud and scams at [www.ssa.gov/fraud](http://www.ssa.gov/fraud).

*Remember, if you need information or want to do business with us, the first place to go to is our website. Please share these top resources with your loved ones.*

# Community Lifestyles

**NOTICE!**  
PLEASE GO TO OUR WEBSITE AND VIEW THIS ISSUE AND UPCOMING ISSUES ALONG WITH CURRENT NEWS!  
[www.alabamagazette.com](http://www.alabamagazette.com)

## Honoring Our Heroes



### VETERAN NEWS

#### Dr. Martha P. Simmons

The Alabama Gazette wants to honor Martha for the many years of service to our veterans. She has spent countless hours interviewing, showing special attention, writing stories of the many great Veterans in our area that has served in so many of our American conflicts and wars.



We hope all our readers and especially our veterans enjoy the Alabama Gazette!



Captain Jack Hawkins



Captain Joan E. Ford



Lt Col Charles B. Stults



Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas!

## CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR VETERANS!

These cards were created by children in local classrooms. Teachers encouraged their students to write a message and illustration to a Veteran. These cards were delivered to The Central East Alabama Chapter of The American Red Cross by Dr. Martha Simmons, author of "Honoring Our Heros" in The Alabama Gazette.



Holiday Fire Safety



### VETERANS DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Mary LyBrands.....	December 1st
LeonArd Norman .....	December 1st
Robert C. Carr Jr. ....	December 4th
Waldo Allison Spencer .....	December 12th
Rhon Vernon Carleton .....	December 13th
Peggy Holley .....	December 13th
David Payne .....	December 14th
Robert Harper .....	December 18th
John Robert Miller.....	December 18th
Lamar Smith .....	December 19th
William L. Chivalette .....	December 20th
William Kent Davis.....	December 22nd
David Gordon Stainback .....	December 26th
Lee Aldridge .....	December 28th
Billy Gillyard McKenzie .....	December 28th
James L. Tatum .....	December 29th

### In Remembrance

#### SGT Joseph Collins

Sgt. Collins was a WWII Veteran who served with the U.S. Army Air Corps and worked on the maintenance of B-17 Flying Fortresses in England.



He passed away November 6, 2024 at the age of 104.

His article was published in the January 2020 issue of the Alabama Gazette.



## Chief Warrant Officer 3 LaQuiesha Nicole Andrews: Age 43



Chief Warrant Officer 3 (CW3) LaQuiesha Nicole Andrews served 20 years and seven months in the United States Army. She culminated her military career with the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) of 420A Human Resources Technician. She received the following medals, award decorations, and citations: Meritorious Service Medal (3rd award), Joint Service Commendation Medal (2nd award), Army Commendation Medal (5th award), Joint Service Achievement Medal (2nd award), Army Achievement Award (10th award), Joint Meritorious Unit Award (2nd award), Army Good Conduct Medal (3rd award), National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (3rd award) and NATO Medal.

CW3 Andrews was born May 7, 1981 to her parents, Edward and Linda Andrews, in Montgomery, AL. She graduated from George Washington Carver High School in 1999 where she participated in school activities as a cheerleader, choir member, and she served on the JROTC Drill Team. In addition, CW3 Andrews was selected as the Homecoming Queen during her senior year.

CW3 Andrews had an illustrious military career which involved 10 duty stations and several promotions throughout her service. In January 2000, she volunteered and enlisted in the Army beginning with the rank of Private First Class (PFC). She attended and completed seven weeks of Basic Training at Fort Jackson, SC. Upon graduation from Advanced Individual Training, CW3 Andrews was awarded the primary MOS 75F, Computer Information Systems Management Specialist. In June 2000, she was assigned to the 1st Personnel Services Battalion at Fort Riley, KS, as her first duty station. While she was there, she was promoted to the rank of Specialist (SPC). She earned many awards for competing and winning multiple Soldier of the Quarter Boards. In addition, she was recognized by the Sergeant Major of the Army in person for her superb job performance. Later, CW3 Andrews was directly chosen for a special assignment at the Pentagon in September 2002. At her second duty station, she was promoted to the rank of Sergeant (SGT). She was also selected as the OAA Noncommissioned Officer of the Year after competing and winning previous boards.

In June 2004, CW3 Andrews received orders to USANATO in Naples, Italy. During her tenure, she served on the International Color Guard as the only American and female. She also volunteered and deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan. After this tour, she was assigned to the Missile and Space Intelligence Center located at Redstone Arsenal, AL, from June 2006--July 2009 where she began working as a Human Resources Sergeant. During this time, CW3 Andrews was also promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant (SSG). After multiple interviews and an extensive background check, she was nominated and selected to serve at the White House. For two years, she was assigned to the White House Military Office (WHMO) where she worked as a Presidential Airlift Information and Travel Specialist from June 2009-May 2011. During this nominative assignment, she was recognized at the end of 2009 as the #1 of seven Staff Sergeants within the Operations Directorate. CW3 Andrews was also promoted to the rank of Sergeant First Class (SFC) during her assignment.

In July 2011, CW3 Andrews completed training at the Warrant Officer Candidate School at Fort Rucker, AL. As Warrant Officer (WO1), she became a Human Resources Technician until retirement. She was deployed to Yongsan, Korea, where she was assigned to the 65th Medical Brigade. After completing one year, she returned to the U.S and served at the 164th Theater Airfield Operations Group (TAOG) and the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Career College as the Adjutant both located at Fort Rucker, AL. She was promoted to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CW2) during her tenure. While sitting at her desk one day, she received a phone call asking if she would volunteer for another assignment back in Korea. After she agreed, CW3 Andrews was assigned to the 1st Signal Brigade at Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek, South Korea, for one year. Before her departure, she was promoted to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3 (CW3). She returned to the U.S. and served at the 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command as the Division Strength Manager located at Fort Bliss, TX from October 2018--August 2020. This was her last duty station where she decided it was time to retire from military service.

After military service, CW3 Andrews was employed by the Montgomery Public Schools in Montgomery, AL, working as a JROTC Senior Army Instructor at her alma mater, George Washington Carver High School, for two years inspiring the next generation of leaders. Her tenure was meaningful because it brought her full circle back to where her educational journey began. She was able to share her knowledge, experience and values with her students and help shape them into capable and confident individuals. She is a member of the First Baptist Church of Greater Washington Park in Montgomery, AL, where she takes an active part singing in the choir and with the praise team. CW3 Andrews is involved in civic duties and served as the announcer for the November 11, 2024, Veterans Day parade for the city of Montgomery. She is presently involved in setting up a non-profit, Lender Not the Borrower Foundation, hoping to impact local communities and all over the world through charity, community service, mentorship and sponsorship. In her leisure time, she enjoys traveling and being with friends and family.



CW3 Andrews' conclusions about what her military service means to her are: "Serving in the military was a pivotal experience that profoundly shaped me into the person that I am today. Beyond patriotism and service, it fostered incredible personal growth refining my perspectives, values and outlook on life. The lessons learned and challenges that were overcome continue to inspire my journey." She would like people to remember her for her kindness, authenticity, resilience and spreading happiness wherever she goes inspiring others by being a lender and not a borrower.

She concludes by saying, "Having siblings who served in the military was inspiring and influential. My gratitude for my siblings, Miyoshi, Drew and Orlando and their service is truly heartfelt. Growing up with role models like them paved the way for me. Their example instilled confidence and motivation in me to follow in their footsteps."



## Commander George Henry Teuton: Age 70



Commander (CDR) George Henry Teuton (Hank) served 31 years in the U.S. Coast Guard. Since 1790, the Coast Guard has safeguarded the American people and promoted national security, border security and economic prosperity in a complex and evolving maritime environment. The Coast Guard saves those in peril and protects the Nation from all maritime threats. The Coast Guard is the principal Federal agency responsible for maritime safety, security and environmental stewardship in U.S. ports and inland waterways along more than 95,000 miles of U.S. coastline throughout the 4.5 million square miles of U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and on the high seas.

CDR Teuton received the following medals, awards, ribbons and commendations: CG Meritorious Service Medal, CG Achievement Medal w/"o" Device and two gold stars, DOT Secretary's Outstanding Unit Award Ribbon, CG Unit Commendation w/"O" device and two gold stars, CG Bicentennial Unit Commendation, National Defense Service Medal w/ two bronze Stars, Humanitarian Service Medal w/ two bronze stars, CG Sea Service Ribbon, CG Sharpshooter Rifleman Ribbon and CG Expert Pistol Shot Medal. CDR Teuton's service in the U.S. Coast Guard included nine Military Occupational Specialties resulting from his increasing responsibilities and ranks throughout his service.

After graduating from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut, in 1977, CDR Teuton served 1.5 years as the communications officer aboard USCGC CAMPBELL, a 327 foot Secretary Class ship, engaged primarily in fisheries patrols along the Bering Sea, a marginal sea of the Northern Pacific Ocean forming along the Bering Strait, the divide between the two largest landmasses on Earth, Eurasia and the Americas, boarding foreign vessels to be sure that ships were abiding by the international rules for fishing.

His second assignment was as the commanding officer of a patrol boat, USCGC POINT SPENCER, in the Gulf of Mexico for three years where he was involved saving hundreds of lives and interdicted large quantities of illegal drugs. The following year he put his boating skills to service as the commanding officer of a Surface Effect Ship, the fastest ship in the Gulf of Mexico, USCGC DORADO, proving theories on advanced ship hull designs. This was followed by an assignment to the Coast Guard 8th District Headquarters coordinating search and rescue in the Gulf of Mexico. Whenever a call was received, he would dispatch boats or helicopters for search and rescue.

Next, he taught at the Coast Guard Academy for four years. He then served for three years as the commander of specially trained "jungle warriors" deploying

to seven countries in South America intercepting over one hundred tons of cocaine and an equal amount of precursor chemicals used to transform cocoa leaves into cocaine. He then served the maritime community as a hearing officer adjudicating civil penalties of mariners charged with federal violations of U.S. Federal Code. His last assignment was working in research and development with a special interest in advanced high-speed hull types at the Coast Guard Headquarters Research and Development in Washington, D.C. where he retired from active-duty June 1, 2004.

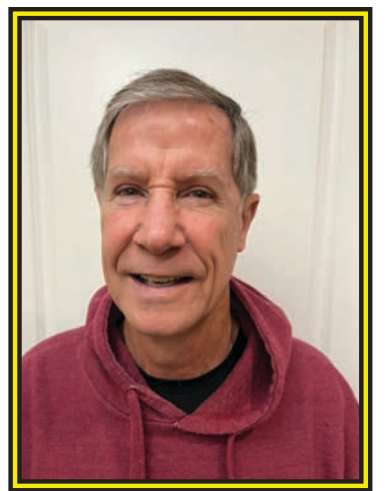
CDR Teuton's reflections about what serving in the U.S. military means to him are: "Serving in the military draws our whole country together. When a person takes the step of entering the military, he gets to know people from all over the country and see how our diverse experiences and traditions can be brought together to provide the basis of national unity to people who might not otherwise have that opportunity."

While as a student at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, CDR Teuton participated in the Officer Christian Fellowship. He states, "While there I learned to trust what God says in His holy Word as more important than mere tradition. I saw the military as my missionary service to God carrying the Gospel to my brothers and sisters in the service."

Following his military service, he returned to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and worked for five years with the Officers Christian Fellowship whose mission is to engage military leaders in Biblical fellowship and growth to equip through Christian service at the intersection of faith, family and profession. CDR Teuton concludes, "I fell in love with saving lives and rescuing people."

CDR Teuton was born November 15, 1954 in San Antonio, TX, to Robert and Lucille Teuton, and graduated from Douglas McArthur High School in 1973. He graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy with a B.S. Degree in History in 1977 and entered military service immediately following graduation. He and his wife, Betsy, were married 34 years until she passed away. He and his wife, Brenda, have been married four years.

After his military retirement, CDR Teuton worked as a consultant with the Office of Naval Research for three years. He traveled to and lived in Israel for two years, and while there received a Master's Degree in Israel Studies. Today, he builds custom guitars under the label Baruch Guitars, a Hebrew word meaning blessed. At this shop, he makes guitars and teaches others the art of luthiery, the making and repairing of stringed instruments such as guitars, violins, banjos and mandolins.



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## Millbrook, AL, Christmas Parade Honors Veterans

Three veterans were honored at the Millbrook, AL, Christmas Parade on December 7, 2024.

Serving as Grand Marshalls, they rode on a special veterans' float that led the Parade. Sergeant First Class (SFC) James Owen Dozier aged 99 served eight years in the United States Army including four years of active duty followed by four years in the U.S. Army Reserve. His Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was Motor Pool driver and service person and then as Cannon Crewman in dangerous combat at the front lines all of the way across France and Germany during WWII. Two other veterans, Lt. Col Rex Keith Snider Sr. and Specialist Robert J. Magdon Sr., also were honored. Lt Col Snider age 90 served 28 years on active duty in the U. S. Air Force. His Occupational Specialty was radar control and R.O.T.C. aide to several generals, and he served during the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Specialist (SPC, E-4) Robert J. Magdon Sr. age 82 served as a missile specialist for three years on active duty in the U.S. Army following the Korean War and three years in the Army Reserve.



## REMEMBERING VETERANS NOT ONLY ON VETERAN'S DAY - BUT EACH DAY - ALL YEAR.

Our nation's veterans deserve to be celebrated every day. They have bravely put their lives on the line so that Americans can walk freely.

In November we celebrate numerous veteran-related holidays: The Marine Corps' Birthday, National Veteran Small Business Week, and Veterans Day, to name a few. It is on days like these that I am somberly reminded of those who have lost their lives so that I might freely live mine. I often think of the many soldiers, including my dad, who have gone before us and who will go after us to protect the liberties we often take for granted.

Growing up as the son of a decorated World War II veteran, I always admired my dad's lifelong dedication to serving his country. His legacy of selfless sacrifice is what inspired me to run for U.S. Senate. In the Senate, I have the opportunity to serve on both the Senate Veterans Affairs and Armed Services Committees. I feel it is my duty to use my position to improve outcomes for both our nation's veterans and its military. Veterans deserve the best possible care and greater opportunities as they acclimate to life after service. While in office, it is my goal to ensure this is every veteran's experience.

Alabama is home to 400,000 veterans. These patriots are all around you – in your neighborhood, church, workplace, or gym. Whether it's through their small businesses, community service, or work to inspire youth of today to become the soldiers of tomorrow, we are lucky these heroes have chosen to call the Yellowhammer State home.

I have had the honor of traveling around Alabama to meet veterans from every corner of our state and to hear stories of their valor. Without fail, each veteran I talk to is passionate about patriotism, community service, and taking care of those who are less fortunate. So many choose to spend their time after the military supporting their neighbors who need it most. That's why I decided to start a Veteran of the Month program where my office honors a different Alabama veteran every month. I have been so inspired by these men and women who truly dedicate their lives to giving back.

But the road for our great veterans isn't always easy. Veterans often shoulder mental, emotional, and physical wounds that few of us will ever understand. Everything we have in this country is because of our military. Our economy, our security, and our way of life are all dependent on a lethal fighting force willing to go to bat for this country. They have chosen to lay their lives on the line for each of us – and the least we can do is take care of them. They should be treated with the utmost dignity and respect.

President Ronald Reagan said it best, "Veterans know better than anyone else the price of freedom, for they have suffered the scars of war. We can offer them no better tribute than to protect what they have won for us." I hope my fellow Alabamians take time during the remainder of this month to thank those in their lives who have valiantly served this country.

To all our veterans: thank you for your sacrifice and may God bless you.

Opinions expressed in the Alabama Gazette are the opinions and viewpoints of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Alabama Gazette staff, advertisers, and/ publishers.

Staff Writer

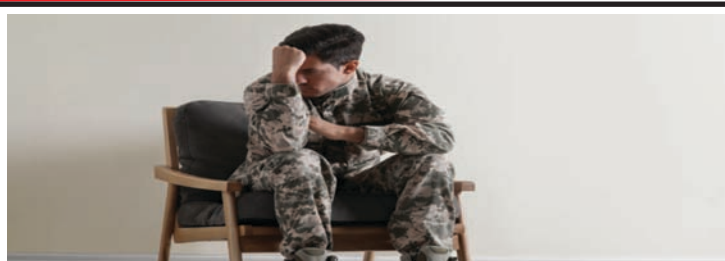
## City of Montgomery Celebrates Veterans Day

The City of Montgomery, AL, celebrated Veterans Day in grand style beginning with a special patriotic parade from the AL Capitol continuing down Dexter Avenue. Special Veterans Day activities were held at the Riverwalk Stadium. Thousands of veterans and others attended as the events unfolded with the arrival of a military helicopter that landed on the baseball field.

COL John A. Eidsmoe, a U.S. Air Force veteran, served as emcee of the ceremonies. An Honor Guard from Maxwell Air Force Base presented the Colors followed by the singing of the National Anthem by Major Thomas Simmons, Staff Chaplain, US Air Force. Chaplain Major Steven Wichern, Staff Chaplain, U.S. Air Force, gave the invocation. Joseph Simon, a 99 year-old WWII U.S. Army veteran, who fought as a combat engineer in the South Pacific, was introduced.

Montgomery Mayor Steven L. Reed addressed the audience followed by COL Shameka Toliver, Commander 42nd Air Base Wing and Mrs. Valerie Russell, Acting Director, Central AL VA Health Care System. Mr. Robert Hendry, Walmart Director of Community Relations, announced that Walmart was giving a free turkey to each veterans present at the event.

The program concluded with the playing of the Armed Forces Medley by the Capitol Sounds Concert Band led by its conductor, John Jackson. After the program, a Resource Fair was held with vendors from many organizations on the Stadium's concourse providing gifts and information to veterans, and a free lunch was provided to veterans from seven food trucks.



**YOU ARE NEVER ALONE...**

*Always Remember the Men and Women who have served our great nation and the sacrifices they made.*

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[www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)

**IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU REMEMBER OUR VETERANS DURING THE UPCOMING HOLIDAY SEASON. MAKE A POINT TO SAY "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE" WHEN YOU SEE A VETERAN WEARING HIS SERVICE CAP. HE IS WEARING HIS CAP BECAUSE IS PROUD OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE HIS COUNTRY. GOD BLESS AMERICA!**



Judge Peggy Givhan

## SOUTHERN GARDENING

### Potpourri - DECEMBER



I can remember as a child growing up in Dothan, Alabama, that everyone would decorate their homes and yards with Christmas displays and decorations. Some even lighting up their roofs with dazzling Santa sleighs with toys spilling out. Some piping out Christmas songs with life like reindeer and giant Christmas trees in their yards. We would all pile into our cars after dark and ride around town in awe of the display and comparing one home's decorations with ours. It was fun entertainment which cost nothing but our time. There would also be groups of carolers going house to house singing all the familiar songs. Tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la. The rage at that time was to display a flocked tree, usually white covered in green or red lights displayed in a picture window. they became so popular, that one would have to order these trees early in the fall to be delivered around the first of December. We also would have fun going out in the woods hunting for mistletoe. I doubt a lot of the younger generation even has a clue about mistletoe. Just the memory of those past times puts me in the Christmas spirit now.

\*\*\*\*\*

It's time to get ready for spraying trees, shrubs and everything in between after the first killing frost. These are the items you will need to have on hand.

1. Hose end sprayer
2. Dormant oil, such as Volk Oil
3. Copper spray if there is fungus, "rust" on your pear trees. The main cause for this fungus is the presence of cedars or junipers. Although rust will most probably not kill the host tree, it does cause a reduction in fruit and it is unsightly. If the tree is young and not full grown, pruning the infected limbs is a solution. Be sure to remove the infected limbs from the area, and do not throw them into a compost pile. Just remember when pruning fruit trees, cut all the way back to the branch. The best time is when the tree is dormant.
4. Lime sulfur for spraying roses and other shrubs for preventing a type of fungus. To save time, Lime sulfur can be mixed with a dormant spray with no adverse effects. Just follow the instructions on the ratios needed.

### PLANT OF THE MONTH--MISTLETOE

(*Viscum album*)



Wikipedia

Did you know that mistletoe is a parasite which attaches to above ground areas of woody trees and shrubs.

Mistletoe has an affinity for Oak trees. They are thick leathery leaved perennials with small white fruit and yellow flowers that form a shrub-like mass on the tree which some refer to as "witches broom".

Historically, it represents romance, fertility and vitality but today, it is associated with Holiday kissing. But don't kiss any part of the mistletoe as it is toxic. If ingested by humans or dogs, it causes nausea, breathing difficulties, vomiting, slowed heart rate, and erratic behavior. Although the literature does not list this poisoning as deadly, it is advised to seek medical help, through a doctor or vet.

Did you know that in some parts of the world concoctions of mistletoe are used to treat cancer. Many years ago, mistletoe was banned by Christians due to its pagan origins, but regained favor in the middle ages.

The tradition of kissing under a mistletoe had its revival in 1520.AD.



www.earth.com

GOOD GARDENING!

MERRY CHRISTMAS



Gary Miller

gary@outdoortruths.org



I noticed that I was shivering. I had seen deer off and on, all morning, and I was afraid any move I made would be detected by a nearby deer. So, I sat still and shivered. That particular morning was not unlike most of the cold mornings when I hunt. I travel light and pack heavy. I try to eliminate sweating while walking to my tree stand. When I get to the stand I either put my clothes on at the base of the tree or when I get to the top. When it's real cold I even change socks after I arrive. This was one of those very cold days.

My plans were to walk in with as few clothes on as possible, and then when I got to the tree, change socks, undershirt, and add my other clothes along with my insulated overalls and jacket. Sounds like a plan. I was running a little late this morning. By the time I stuffed and strapped everything on my backpack, darkness was giving in to dawn. I didn't have a long walk, so I felt everything would be okay. As a came down the trail I was welcomed by

two deer. I could barely see but I could tell it was a buck and a doe. They took off without blowing. When I got to my tree I noticed another deer silhouetted on the hill above me. My plans just changed. Instead of putting my clothes on, on the ground, I would wait until I was in the tree. I quietly made my way up the ladder, hung my backpack on its hook, strapped myself in, grabbed my binoculars, and began gazing at the deer on the hill. For the next few hours other deer came and went making me afraid to move long enough to put my overalls and jacket on. So, I sat and shivered. I watched and shivered. And I shivered and shivered. And then I thought, "I'm an arm's reach from warm relief and won't take it. How dumb can a guy be?" It was so close, but I chose to remain in miserable shape.

I know a lot of people that are that way when it comes to their spiritual lives. They are miserable, lonely, and cold. They know what they need to do. They know how close the answer is, but they refuse to take it because of some kind of fear. Take it from somebody who's been there. To not accept something that is so easy and close is not just a bad idea, it's just plain dumb. Just put it on.

Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 21 years. He has also written five books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men's events for churches and associations. [gary@outdoortruths.org](mailto:gary@outdoortruths.org)

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**Why We Really Need Christmas This Year!**

Let's face it! After this election there is a lot of tension, division and mistrust in our culture, in our communities and in our country right now.

On the political front, we are so divided! More divided than I have ever witnessed in my lifetime. We negatively label each other as Democrats, Republicans, Socialists or Libertarians. We are stereotyped as liberals or conservatives or moderates. It seems we have a hard time having civil conversations about things that matter deeply to us. This isn't just happening in Washington DC. It's happening right here at home with our own friends, co-workers, fellow church members and within our families too. The whole country seems fractioned about a great many things not to mention our current political state of affairs as well as the future direction of our great nation.

On social media, we are quick to post our views and formulate our opinions based on the very limited information we may have on any given subject. We like or dislike, we friend and unfriend, we tweet or post. We spend on average two hours and 24 minutes per day on social media. Some of it is great for staying in touch with our "friends", but I wonder how much of it is all about sharing with the world our political viewpoints, how "great" our life is or comparing ourselves with others and how "blessed" they are.

The world has two major military conflicts happening in Europe and the Middle East. In many US cities and communities, gun violence and criminal activity is a daily concern. We talk about the different sides of town and socioeconomic and racial division. Young girls are being kidnapped and sold into sexual slavery right here in our own state. Atlanta International Airport is one of the biggest hubs (#2 in the world) for sex trafficking. Did you know that I-20 is considered a sex trafficking super highway running right through our state?

Even in my own Methodist world in recent months and years, we have been in the midst of a culture war over biblical world views, the authority of scripture, interpretations of the Bible, the definition of marriage and issues of human sexuality. Please pray for those of us in the Global Methodist Church as we launch and establish this new movement of Methodism and set a bright new course for the future!

Yes, with the troubled state of the world, our unsettled country after the election and the political divisions that still remain, we really need Christmas this year more than ever! My Pastor friend, Shane Bishop, wrote a blog a while back that sparked my interest as he was voicing the

frustrations of many of us and the need for Christmas. He writes:

"I am so ready for the holidays this year... I am especially excited about Christmas. I need Christmas this year. Peace on earth. Goodwill to Men. Christmas Eve services. Angels. Shepherds. Mary. Joseph. Baby Jesus. Hark the Herald! Joy to the World! That kind of stuff. That is exactly what I need.

As we enter the "most wonderful time of the year" don't forget to say a prayer for healing and peace...and for God to raise up healers and peace-makers. And don't be so glued to this earth that you neglect to look up. Look up and see the Christmas star blazing in the night sky and angels announcing to our troubled world that Christ is born...born in you and in me!

Peace dear friends and don't give in to hopelessness, fear and despair. God has this. God has you. You are of value, you matter and you are loved. And most of all, remember that there is hope in Christ. Always has been. Always will be. Hope is the one thing Christmas refuses to allow us to forget...."

**Yes! I really need Christmas this year! How about you?**

**So, what are we going to do about it?**

**Here are some ideas:**

1. Take time to enjoy and appreciate your family gatherings.
2. Take advantage of all the Christmas services, events, plays, parties and concerts.
3. Avail ourselves of the Christmas Eve services, the manger scenes, the children's Christmas programs, the Christmas lights and the great Christmas season music.
4. Read the Christmas stories in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

**We really need Christmas this year!  
 In fact, the whole world really needs Christmas this year!  
 I know I do. I suspect you do too.**

**Merry Christmas!**

Reprint of: Nov/Dec. 2024

*Read the Christmas story.  
 Learn how God loved us  
 so much, he sent his only son  
 to save all mankind.*

*Luke 2: 1-7  
 John 3:16*



*Luke 2: 11  
 For unto you is born this day,  
 in the City of David,  
 a Saviour, which is  
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