

VOICES

THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

You can Help Stamp Out Hunger today

Thumbs Up to the thousands of U.S. Postal Service carriers who today are working to eliminate hunger. Your help is needed, too. Here's how: Put down your newspaper or laptop for a few minutes. Go to the kitchen, collect a bag of nonperishable food, and leave it by your mailbox. You're done, and you have just played a role in the nation's largest single-day food drive. The National Association of Letter Carriers is conducting its 23rd annual nationwide Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive today. With the help of thousands of volunteers and food bank staff members, letter carriers are hoping to beat last year's collection of more than 74 million pounds of nonperishable food — the second-highest amount since the drive began in 1992. Last year in Greenville, 77,000 pounds of food, enough to provide 59,230 meals, were collected by carriers for Harvest Hope Food Bank from generous Postal customers, according to a U.S. Postal Service news release. Especially needed today are foods that are high in protein, such as canned tuna, salmon, beans and peanut butter. Canned fruits and vegetables, whole grain, low-sugar cereals, macaroni and cheese dinners and 100 percent fruit juice also are high on the list of most-needed items. Just make sure you don't donate any perishable or homemade items, or anything in glass containers or rusty or unlabeled cans.

Greenville women give \$541,218 to nonprofits

Thumbs Up to the Greenville Women Giving for its extraordinary effort to help charities that aid abused and neglected children, feed the hungry and support the medically underserved. GWG raised \$541,218 this year that will go to eight nonprofit organizations. The 2015 grant recipients were announced this week as this women's philanthropic group officially kicked off its 10th anniversary. This week's grants brought GWG's nine-year total of awards up to \$3.6 million. Those receiving grants were: Mill Village Farms to fund stipends for at-risk youth and their adult supervisors, and educational activities; Safe Harbor for its ManUp initiative; Blue Tent, Inc. for its summer camp and year-round programs providing outreach to abused and neglected children; the Center for Developmental Services for repair and replacement projects, the Frazier Center to create an in-house mental and emotional health counseling center for disadvantaged students and their families; Generation Group Homes of Greenville to renovate its original building, housing teenage boys emerging from the cycle of sexual abuse; Harvest Home Food Bank for repairs to the warehouse freezer and electrical system; and Baylors Free Medical Clinic to expand its existing facility. For more information, visit www.greenvillewomensgiving.org.

HOG Day set a record

Thumbs Up to the record 7,221 volunteers who completed 187 projects a week ago during the 11th annual United Way Hands on Greenville (HOG) Day. Work was done all over Greenville County by 125 teams composed of people from area companies, organizations, church groups, as well as families and individuals. By donating their time, these volunteers helped local nonprofit agencies, schools and parks with everything from landscaping and painting to neighborhood clean-ups and home construction. The United Way calculated that HOG Day produced collectively 29,884 hours of volunteer service that had an in-kind value of more than \$665,000 given back to the community.

Diversity celebrated

Thumbs Up to Upstate leaders in the area of diversity who were honored this week at the 11th Annual Upstate Diversity Awards Dinner. Recognized for their outstanding work were: Legacy Charter School, honored with the William "Bill" T. Wylie Valued Lives Award for School Excellence in Diversity; Carlos Pineda as Outstanding High School Student; Jonathan Kubakundima as Outstanding College Student; United Way of Greenville as Outstanding Nonprofit Organization Award; Denny's Corporation as Outstanding Business; Joy Duer with the Outstanding Contribution to International Diversity Award; Serita Acker with the Calder D. Ehrmann Outstanding Individual Award.

LETTERS



Nation forgets God when women join the workforce

"Rosie the Riveter" recently passed away. She was the symbol of how the USA utilized its population by winning WWII through national unity, especially in the manufacturing of arms. She demonstrated how everyone got behind the war effort in order to get the ultimate victory! This was not always the case when the country went to war. Even though women definitely contributed in each of the national conflicts we have faced, the response in WWII was much greater, and surely affected the complexion of our culture thereafter. Increasing numbers of Christian young women began flowing into the workforce rather than choosing the God-ordained course of getting married and raising a family. What was a mere "dribbling" has turned into "drones," for it appears the majority are choosing a career route, with many Christian schools of higher learning showing three and four to one female/male ratio.

The cause can be summed up in one single phrase: We (The Church) have left our first love. Instead of loving God's plan and the souls of men, our love has been transferred to loving things of this life more than the eternal.

When we love the people and plan God puts in our path, we will continue to follow His ways for the family and the church. Then, we will once again become the conscience of our community, our culture and our country. But, when our love turns to the temporal instead of the eternal, we begin trusting in the ways of men, movements, media pressure etc., and faith in God and His way is eroded. Does not the Good Book say: If the foundations (family, church, government) be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Larry Wolfe Easley

Terrorism seen in U.S.

A writer asked to be corrected if she was wrong about not having any terrorist attacks on our soil during the current administration. OK, you're wrong. To name two: the Fort Hood massacre, where an Islamic terrorist killed a number of our soldiers, and the Boston Marathon bombings, also the work of Islamist terrorists.

Robert I. Recker Jr. Travelers Rest

WE ENCOURAGE YOUR FEEDBACK

We welcome letters on timely, news-related topics. Include your name, home address and telephone number. All letters are verified. All letters are subject to editing. Please limit your letter to fewer than 250 words. Because of the high volume of letters submitted, we are unable to acknowledge or return unpublished letters. All letters to the editor and guest columns may be published or distributed in print, electronic, online or other forms in perpetuity.

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B.H. Beach Editor 864-298-1234 Roger C. Rouse Jr. Managing Editor 864-298-1234 J. Kelly Gill Staff Editor 864-298-1234

DAVE NEILL President and Publisher dave@greenvillenews.com 864-298-4184

WILLIAM FOX Managing Editor wfox@greenvillenews.com 864-298-4244 PAUL HYDE Arts Writer phyde@greenvillenews.com

BETH PADGETT Opinion Editor bpadgett@greenvillenews.com 864-298-4242 MANDRALUIS ROBINSON Sports Columnist mrobinso@greenvillenews.com

STEVE BAUSIS Engagement Editor sbausis@greenvillenews.com 864-298-4242 RHONDA THOMPSON Advertising Account Executive rthompso@greenvillenews.com

The Voices pages offer a marketplace of opinion for readers. Readers are encouraged to share their opinion through letters to the editor. For information, call Beth Padgett at 864-298-4221 or email bpadgett@greenvillenews.com.



Leonard Pitts

Columnist

Don't stop with just protests

The Rev. Tony Lee is the 46-year-old pastor of Community of Hope, an AME church housed in a shopping mall in Hillcrest Heights, Maryland, just minutes from the D.C. line. Under the auspices of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, a Washington-based advocacy group, he led a delegation of 200 African-American men to Capitol Hill. They went to their capital to talk to their legislators about issues that impact their lives: racially stratified policing, education reform, voting rights and more.

It was not about protest. It was about policy. "Protests," Lee told me in a telephone interview, "are one way that pushes people's feet to the fire. ... But ... there's still a need for people to do legislative advocacy, dealing with policy, whether it's from the national to the local, showing people how to be engaged and (affecting) the policies that have such direct impact."

"Too often, said Lee, African-Americans have focused solely on social — an important element of social change, but not the only one.

Full disclosure: I've known Rev. Tony Lee for about eight years. He christened my granddaughter. And I couldn't think of a better person to respond to Tracy. As I said in my last column, she is a reader from Austin, Texas, a 55-year-old white woman, who wrote me that she is heart-sick about police violence against unarmed African-American men. I decided to focus a series of columns — running irregularly — on finding answers to the question she asked me:

"What can I do? "I have a framework for people like her and for others," said Lee. "It's educate, advocate and participate. Educate means to get educated on the issue. A lot of times, what will happen is ... you can end up having a lot of blind spots because you haven't educated yourself on the issues. ... Some of those local and national organizations have a great wealth of information that you can be able to educate yourself on what's happening around some of the issues."

Having educated herself, he said, she should advocate, i.e., start to deal with and talk about these issues and how she feels about them to people who are in decision-making authority in her region, whether it's her local lawmakers or even her national representatives.

Which brings us to the third leg of Lee's model for civic engagement: participate. "Just get connected," he said.

Educate, advocate, participate. It is, admittedly, not an agenda as immediately and viscerally gratifying as street protest, but it highlights a salient truth about American social transformation.

Project Rx helps protect rivers

By Roseann Becher

Pharmacists play a major role in patients' lives — not only by dispensing prescription medications but also by providing valuable information about those medications.

As a pharmacist, I realize our responsibility doesn't end there. We also share in the job of taking care of our planet and keeping it free of pollutants such as expired or no longer needed pharmaceuticals. Unfortunately, some of the more than \$300 billion in prescription medications used by Americans every year make it through the sewage treatment process and into the waterways.

Keeping prescription and over-the-counter medications out of the environment is an important way to prevent pollution and protect our critical natural resources. After being flushed or poured down a drain, many medications pass through sewer and septic systems. Because these systems can't always treat or remove all of the medications, they may end up in streams, lakes and groundwater. This can cause adverse effects in fish and other aquatic wildlife as well as unintentional human exposure to chemicals.

Closer to home, there are other reasons to properly dispose of the unwanted medications and keep them out of the wrong hands. We hear all too often of unfortunate situations with teens and adults taking other family member's medications. Unfortunately, this may, and sometimes does, result in a life-threatening situation. When people have medications left after a loved one dies, family members often do not know what to do with them. Bringing the remaining medications to a drug

take-back program is the best solution to properly dispose of them, keep them from being misused or abused, and lessen pollutants in our environment.

You can make a difference, save lives, and help keep waterways and landfills less polluted by getting rid of old or unwanted medications properly through Project Rx.

Project Rx is a drug take-back program sponsored by ReWa that began in 2010 in collaboration with several Upstate organizations. Project Rx is about protecting our rivers and our residents by properly disposing of medications, whether for environmental protection, pharmaceutical education or drug abuse prevention.

Its success relies on participation by the public to bring old and unwanted medications to designated locations for disposal. The process is simple, offered at no charge and with no questions asked. That means anyone can drop off any kind of medication and the event organizers won't question the drug or where it came from. Project Rx is an enormous public safety benefit from our community partners to our community members.

Many partners including Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, ReWa and the Greenville County Sheriff's Office are actively committed to decreasing the amount of old and unwanted pharmaceuticals in our communities through Project Rx.

GUEST COLUMN



Roseann Becher, RPh, is the director of Pharmacy at St. Francis Eastside. Bon Secours St. Francis Health System is a Project Rx partner.

Since 2010, Project Rx has collected more than 10,866 pounds of unwanted medication. This is more than just a number. It means 10,866 pounds of drugs won't fall into the wrong hands and be used illegally, be casually thrown in the trash and end up in a landfill or pollute our waterways after being flushed down the toilet.

Our next Project Rx event will be held this fall. Plan to stop by our drive-thru location to do your part to keep our waterways and environment clean and safe. But until then people can drop their unused medicine and pharmaceuticals at the Greenville County Law Enforcement Center.

I encourage you to take a few minutes now to go through your medicine cabinets and collect your old and unwanted prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins and supplements, and veterinary medications. Be sure to use a black permanent marker to block out any personal information on labels, but please leave the drug name visible to ensure proper disposal procedures.

In addition to proper disposal, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control recommends reducing the number of unwanted medications by purchasing only the amount you need, centralizing all medications in one location and saying "no" to samples you won't use.