



Carmage Walls Commentary Prize

2019 Entry Form

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What is the subject/title of the entry? Civility Tennessee

Date(s) of publication? Throughout 2018 and 2019

Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation? Above 50,000

Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.)

Civility Tennessee is a campaign of The Tennessean Editorial Board, based in Nashville, Tennessee, to promote, practice and encourage civil discourse in our community.

Conventional wisdom, after the 2016 presidential election, was that civility was impossible, that people felt comfortable in their echo chambers, and they felt distrustful and even disgusted by those who held different viewpoints or aligned with different political perspectives. Many were not in the mood to be nice, a common definition of civility.

However, the goal of the campaign is to redefine the term civility to align it to its original definition from the Latin word "civitas," which speaks to the responsibility of the citizen to uphold and improve the community.

The values of Civility Tennessee are:

- To encourage conversations, even if they are hard, but in a respectful way
- To enhance civic participation in important conversations of the day
- To help promote voter registration and turnout efforts
- And to increase news literacy and enhance trust of media organizations

We launched on Jan. 12, 2018, and the intention was for it to be a one-year campaign, but given public interest and support, we extended the campaign into 2019.

The foundation of Civility Tennessee is a combination of monthly thought pieces and events in the virtual and physical spaces. (Landing page: <http://civility.tennessean.com> – see specific links for the contest below this explanation)

In addition, a closed Facebook group has allowed people a safe, moderated place to express viewpoints about a variety of difficult issues (<http://facebook.com/groups/CivilityTennessee>).

Part of the success of the campaign has come in the partnerships with key community institutions like the Nashville Public Library, Belmont University, Lipscomb University and Vanderbilt University, where we held our first event, an author Q&A.

Live interviews have revolved around framing how to have tough conversations: On racism, gun violence and the #MeToo movement.

We aligned our midterm election efforts around the values of Civility Tennessee and held a series of debates and forums for governor and U.S. Senate, a special Nashville mayoral election and a transit referendum. Plus required that candidates answer “yes” or “no” to a question on our survey about whether they would commit to being civil.

The biggest event of the year was a conversation at Lipscomb University about “Why Tennesseans Aren’t Voting Like They Should,” which preceded the midterm elections and helped explain why the state was at the bottom of voter turnout in the nation and how to turn that around.

The campaign helped us grow as a trusted community leader and brought people together who would not normally intersect. It also continued the transformation and evolution of the role of the opinion editor to be someone who is heavily engaged in the physical and virtual communities and helps develop solutions to the challenges citizens face.

Column links for contest – PDFs attached to email

Nashville, vote hopefully, not fearfully, but please vote (May 23, 2018 online, in print May 24)

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/columnists/david-plazas/2018/05/23/nashville-vote-hopefully-not-fearfully-but-please-vote/632860002/>

Trump should rise above theater, be more civil (May 30, 2018 online, in print June 3)

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/columnists/david-plazas/2018/05/30/donald-trump-should-rise-above-political-theater-set-civil-tone/656192002/>

On civility: Don't be nice, be a good citizen (June 26, 2018 online, in print July 1)

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/columnists/david-plazas/2018/06/26/civility-means-practicing-citizenship/735882002/>

How to make voting great again in America (July 20, 2018 online, in print July 22)

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/columnists/david-plazas/2018/07/20/how-make-voting-great-again/802233002/>

Clinton, Holt prove incivility is bipartisan (Oct. 18, 2018 online, in print Oct. 19)

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/columnists/david-plazas/2018/10/18/hillary-clinton-andy-holt-incivility-bipartisan/1669205002/>

How to be civil at Thanksgiving gathering (Nov. 20, 2018, in print Nov. 22)

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/columnists/david-plazas/2018/11/20/thanksgiving-stress-family-civil-david-plazas/2054590002/>

Insight

Event on voting and election security

What: “Why aren’t Tennesseans voting like they should? A conversation about security, disenfranchisement and democratic renewal”

Who: Organized by The Tennessean and Lipscomb University’s Nelson and Sue Andrews Institute for Civic Leadership

When: Monday, Aug. 27, 6-8 p.m.

Where: AM Burton Health Sciences Center, Collins Alumni Auditorium, Lipscomb University, 1 University Park Drive, Nashville, TN 37204

Specifics: Exploring this issue in a panel discussion and Q&A with: U.S. Congressman Jim Cooper, D-Nashville; Secretary of State Tre Hargett (Republican); State Sen. Steve Dickerson, R-West Nashville; and Shanna Singh Hughey, president of Think-Tennessee

Tickets: RSVP for your free tickets at event.tennessean.com

Don’t forget to vote

The Tennessee primary election is on Aug. 2.

Early voting goes through July 28.

Learn more at:
<https://sos.tn.gov/elections>



How to make voting great again in America



David Plazas
Columnist
Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENN.

Here is an important takeaway from the infamous July 16 Helsinki, Finland, press conference between U.S. President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin:

After-the-fact affirmation that the Russian government meddled in the 2016 presidential election and that Putin’s regime may do so again in the 2018 midterm elections.

Put aside the president’s clumsy “would”-“wouldn’t” flap for a moment. Republican and Democratic lawmakers loudly sided with intelligence assessments that the meddling happened and that it is unacceptable, and that Russia is no friend to the United States and our democratic principles.

American voters deserve to know that their votes count and that they will be counted fairly and securely. This is our system.

We have seen numerous instances where voting has been compromised or placed at risk. Russians targeted 21 states in the 2016 election, according to the U.S. Homeland Security Department. While Tennessee was not among them, in May, a cyberattack occurred on the Knox County election commission website.

That is precisely why federal and state governments need to invest in making and keeping voting safe – and instilling confidence in citizens that our system works.

Another way to instill that confidence is to work hard – at the governmental, societal and individual levels – to ensure that voters actually come out to the polls to vote.

Take Tennessee, which ranked 50th in voter turnout and 40th in voter registration, according to the latest data from Pew Research Center. That’s unconscionable.

Moreover, voting in Tennessee midterm elections has been falling since 2006, according to data from the Tennessee Secretary of State’s office:

- 1998: 1,026,017
- 2002: 1,687,543
- 2006: 1,868,363
- 2010: 1,620,542
- 2014: 1,430,117

That is an 11 percent drop from 2006 to 2014. During that same period, Tennessee’s population grew by 7.4 percent. Something’s wrong.

Sure, it’s a failure of the citizen who chooses not to do his or her duty, but it is also a failure of government that could have made voting more

accessible and less onerous.

While the voter ideally should be informed and knowledgeable coming to the polls, he or she should also have the opportunity to exercise a choice in the most accessible way.

And there are things that Tennessee can do to make voting great again in the state.

What’s working in Tennessee

Despite accusations by the president and a short-lived commission on voting integrity that there was systemic voter fraud that involved millions of people, there were only 42 statewide cases of fraud found by Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett and his staff in the 2016 election.

That’s a plus, and there are other positive things about the way voting works in the Volunteer State.

- Consider
1. We have early voting.
 2. We finally have online voter registration (<https://ovr.govote.tn.gov/>).
 3. In 2017, the Tennessee General Assembly changed the “use it or lose it” law so that citizens’ names would not be purged from voter rolls if they had not voted after a few election cycles.

However, in light of the June 11 Supreme Court 5-4 decision to affirm a similar “use it or lose it” law in Ohio, Tennessee lawmakers might be tempted to change the law again.

They should resist that temptation.

What’s not working in Tennessee

Voter registration deadline

Right now, Tennessee voters must register to vote no later than 30 days before an election.

That sounds like enough time, but it is a disincentive in our “just-in-time” 21st century world.

What would happen if that changed to same-day registration?

Fifteen states now allow for same-day registration, according to Demos, a public policy organization, and that has led to higher voter turnout.

Voter fraud system

Tennessee uses a system called CrossCheck, which was developed by Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, who led Trump’s short-lived voter fraud committee.

CrossCheck checks names of voters and recommends purges. But, in 2017, research from Stanford University, the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard, Yale, and Microsoft Research

showed that the system was 99 percent inaccurate.

How can our state leaders have confidence in that? You get what you pay for, I guess.

Tennessee might consider using the Electronic Registration Information Center. Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia are using it, as of July 9. The most recent state is South Carolina.

The average cost per state is about \$32,000 annually.

That is a small investment for a state with a \$37 billion budget.

In addition, in a March guest column, Shanna Singh Hughey, president of the Nashville-based ThinkTennessee public policy organization, wrote that a report last year showed that Tennessee left \$30 million unspent for elections upgrades.

In addition, a 2018 ThinkTennessee poll showed 68 percent of Tennesseans believe the state should be doing more to safeguard elections.

“We can do more to safeguard our elections, and we need to do it before it’s too late,” she wrote.

Other ideas: Allowing for more types of IDs besides a driver’s license or state IDs to be used to vote; allowing automatic voter registration when someone gets his or her driver’s license; and allowing for mail-in ballots or absentee ballots that don’t require an excuse to use them.

According to the National Council of State Legislatures, 27 states and D.C. allow for an absentee ballot without an excuse and three states – Washington, Colorado, and Oregon – allow for all-mail voting.

Be a good citizen

I have written a lot about civility over these past few months for The Tennessean’s Civility Tennessee campaign.

Civility, in my mind, is not about the suppression of dissent or fake niceness. It is about being an active citizen.

I am encouraged by efforts like Project Register, created by U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper and state Sen. Steve Dickerson, to engage, first, high school students, and, now, employers to encourage active citizenship.

Our republic is depending on all of us.

David Plazas is the director of opinion and engagement for the USA TODAY NETWORK – Tennessee and opinion and engagement editor for The Tennessean. Call him at (615) 259-8063, email him at dplazas@tennessean.com or tweet to him at [@davidplazas](https://twitter.com/davidplazas).

Opinion

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■ **OUR MISSION:** We stand for the First Amendment and freedom of information. We stand for civility. We fight for the voiceless. We welcome a diversity of opinions.

Clinton, Holt prove incivility is bipartisan



David Plazas
Columnist
Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK - TENN.

Solve this riddle: How are Hillary Clinton and a conservative Tennessee lawmaker alike?

Give up?

Clinton, the unsuccessful 2016 Democratic presidential nominee, and Rep. Andy Holt, R-Dresden (West Tennessee), both have drawn a line in the sand by claiming their side is the only one that is right.

It is proof positive that incivility is bipartisan.

This week, Clinton and Holt made it into my Civility Tennessee campaign presentation, which I delivered to nearly 100 Minneapolis business and civic leaders during their InterCity Leadership Visit to Woolworth on Fifth in downtown Nashville.

In case you have not followed Civility Tennessee, it is an effort started by The Tennessean Editorial Board earlier this year to encourage, promote and practice civil discourse through in-person and virtual events, thought pieces and community conversations.

Our main purpose is to do the opposite of what most people think civility is

all about.

It is not about fake niceness, and it is not about avoiding hard conversations.

Rather, civility is about being good citizens who confront tough issues, solve problems, make efforts to foment respect among diverse groups of people, and participate in civil society, for example, by voting.

So, what did Hillary Clinton and Andy Holt do wrong?

In an interview last Tuesday with CNN's Christiane Amanpour, Clinton, the former first lady, U.S. senator from New York, and Obama era secretary of state, made a shocking statement for someone whose presidential campaign slogan was "Stronger Together."

Clinton told Amanpour: "You cannot be civil with a political party that wants to destroy what you stand for, what you care about. That's why I believe, if we are fortunate enough to win back the House and or the Senate, that's when civility can start again."

That kind of language is divisive, which might win some elections, but it does not heal or restore communities at a time when we need more optimism, hope and goodwill.

Clinton should know better.

Holt, on the other, seems to be proud-

ly boorish.

On Sunday, in reply to a tweet by the Twitter account Nashville Resist, Holt wrote: "What bunch of idiots..." (preceded by three smiley face emojis).

That was Holt being Holt.

What was disappointing, however, was his decision to denounce and boycott a series of lunches of the West Tennessee Economic Development Caucus that would include presentations by, of all people, Democrats — among them, U.S. Senate candidate and former Tennessee governor Phil Bredesen.

On Oct. 1, Holt wrote an email to dozens of state House and Senate members, saying: "I'm a member of this Caucus, but I want it to be VERY CLEAR, that I am not, and have no intention of EVER hosting Phil Bredesen at any event with which I'm associated! Who's (sic) idea was this?"

The message Holt — a leader of this state — sent is that you only listen to people who think like you.

What would Howard Baker do?

The late legendary U.S. Sen. Howard Baker of Tennessee, a Republican, had a famous saying about listening and keeping an open mind: "You should always go through life working on the assumption that the other guy might be

right."

Maybe the other guys or ladies are wrong, but how would you know if you tune them out?

Our imperfect nation formed out of a compromise between people with wildly different views on a variety of issues and has endured through war, bloodshed and controversy.

That is why civility — and substitute it with the word "respect," if you like — matters.

We have been asking dozens of candidates in Tennessee if they will commit to be civil during this campaign.

So far, all have checked the "Yes" box. While the tone of some negative ads seem to be a tacit rejection of that, they are on the record saying they would commit to being civil toward their opponents.

Voters should take note and consider favoring those candidates who are following through.

Maybe Clinton and Holt will be inspired to change their tune.

David Plazas is the director of opinion and engagement for the USA TODAY NETWORK Tennessee and opinion and engagement editor for The Tennessean. Call him at (615) 259-8063, email him at dplazas@tennessean.com or tweet to him at @davidplazas.

#BeTheGift that saves lives with organ donation



Your Turn
Jill Grandas
Guest columnist

I am sharing a picture of myself with a Big Red Bow on my head to draw attention to the need for more organ and tissue donors, and I hope you'll do the same.

Here's why: 115,000 Americans are on the organ transplant waiting list; 20 die each day, still waiting. More than 90 percent of Americans believe registering as an organ and tissue donor is the right thing to do, but only 38 percent of

eligible Tennesseans actually do it.

To close this gap and end the waiting list, Tennessee Donor Services recently launched a nationwide social media campaign called #BeTheGift. It's a fresh and fun way to encourage people to register online as organ and tissue donors. Everyone can use the Big Red Bow filter and register in his or her own state.

Organ and tissue donation is not a subject on everyone's mind. People generally avoid talking and thinking about death, which means we also avoid talking and thinking about donation. #BeTheGift aims to break through that silence. It appeals to Americans' sense of service, calling on all of us to #BeThe-

Gift to others.

If more people #BeTheGift, more people live. If everyone takes a minute to register online, we can save and improve thousands of lives. Even if you're already registered, we need you to share your Big Red Bows. It's a fantastic way to spread the word.

To participate in the #BeTheGift campaign, simply:

- Go to www.BeTheGiftToday.com/.
- Register as a donor (if you're not already).
- Use the Big Red Bow photo filter to gift-wrap yourself.
- Share your photo across your social media channels with the hashtag #Be-

TheGift.

■ Challenge your friends to #BeTheGift, too.

As a proud resident of the Volunteer State, I encourage you — my fellow Tennesseans — to participate in this life-saving campaign. If you believe in organ and tissue donation, go to www.BeTheGiftToday.com, put a Big Red Bow on your picture, and share it. #BeTheGift that helps us save lives. It's fast. It's fun. It's free. And it's important.

You can #BeTheGift that saves lives. *Jill Grandas is executive director of Tennessee Donor Services.*

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Blue wave is coming

I am disappointed in Lamar Alexander's yes vote for Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation.

I hope he is aware that his actions have awakened the fury of Tennessee women and we are counting down the days until November 2020 when we can remove him from office.

He does not represent the people of Tennessee. By his actions, he has told the women of Tennessee that the stories of assault victims are invalid and they will not be believed.

He has placed another member of the "good old boys" club on the Supreme Court and told the men of America their actions do not have consequences. The blue wave is coming for Sen. Alexander.

Terrie Peterson, Antioch 37013

Blackburn not listening

It's been widely reported that Kentucky and Barkley Lakes are victims of an invasive species of fish known as Asian carp.

These fish have migrated into our rivers and streams from the Mississippi River. The Asian carp are threatening the ecosystem and associated fishing and water recreation that is enjoyed by millions on these two lakes.

However, Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn has done absolutely nothing to combat these very harmful fish. I have not seen or heard where she has voiced any



support to the ongoing efforts by the state and federal governments to save our two lakes from this menacing aquatic animal even though both of these lakes are within her Congressional district. These fish cross county, congressional and state lines.

Our representatives in Washington need to take note of the harm Asian carp is having back home. How can she ignore

the pleas of anglers and boaters in her own backyard?

When you compare Congresswoman Blackburn to Phil Bredesen, the contrast is clear. Phil Bredesen heard about problems fishermen have with Asian carp back in May and immediately came up with a plan to try and get these fish under control. Since he announced his proposal, other Senators and Representatives have

joined Bredesen's chorus. But not Marsha Blackburn.

Blackburn's been in Congress 16 years. That's long enough. I'm voting for Phil Bredesen.

Joe Hill, Union City 38261

Lee's misunderstanding

Candidate for governor Bill Lee has revealed on his website and been quoted in the Tennessean a lack of understanding of the principle and practice of separation of church and state.

Lee said, "The phrase 'separation of church and state' has been twisted. It was intended to keep the government out of the church, but not to keep people of faith out of the government."

It is not keeping people of faith out of government.

The Founders knew the prejudicial and detrimental effects of unions and partial unions of church and state from Europe and the colonies. They decided to take a different course.

They said that no government official may promote or subsidize his religion. They would oppose the school vouchers advocated by Bill Lee by which money mostly goes to certain religious schools. To make things worse, it is taken from the public schools.

We have inherited a great gift: the absolute right of conscience resting on a wall of separation between church and state. We must defend the First Amendment.

Charles Sumner, Nashville 37221

TENNESSEAN.COM/OPINION

Go online to see the week's editorials, Tennessee Voices and letters, and share your view on the issues. Subscribers, please go to www.tennessean.com/activate to access additional digital content.

QUESTIONS?

Opinion Engagement Editor David Plazas
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WRITE US

Letters: 250 words or fewer. Name, city and ZIP are published. Address and phone number required for verification only.

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How to be civil at Thanksgiving gathering



David Plazas
Columnist
Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK - TENN.

I have broken a lot of bread with very different people this past year.

This has yielded some rich and sometimes uncomfortable conversations with people holding a wide range of political views, from left to right, and living in urban and rural areas.

Most have been in the Nashville area, though I have traveled around Tennessee a few times for others.

One memorable conversation involved a retired conservative African-American female professor and a white liberal gay activist over biscuits and coffee at a Cracker Barrel. There were some tense moments, but the breakfast ended with a hug.

Not all discussions end like that, but I have entered them with the intent of living up to the expectations The Tennessean Editorial Board set up when we launched Civility Tennessee:

- 1 Get out my comfort zone
- 2 Listen more and speak less, but more thoughtfully
- 3 Find respectful ways to respond to

people with whom I disagree.

While the official start date for Civility Tennessee was in January, the soft launch happened last November when we asked readers to share their best advice for how to handle conversations at Thanksgiving.

It was the first Thanksgiving of the Trump administration after a polarizing presidential election.

Thanksgiving can be such a stressful time with family and friend drama. Mix politics in and it can make for a strenuous, stomach-churning and sweat-inducing day.

The advice that readers gave is timeless.

Three big takeaways:

- Challenge your own views
- Don't start unnecessary fights
- Our leaders need to model civility.

After the most recent midterm election, the last of these did not always materialize.

That is why, if we care about being civil to each other, citizens need to model that behavior and not wait for others to do it for us.

Here are 5 tips to keep your sanity

Civility Tennessee has produced

multiple articles; monthly physical and virtual events, including a book club; Facebook Live conversations on talking about racism, gun violence and sexual assault; and a yearlong drumbeat on improving voter registration and turnout.

The lessons from this year inspired me to share these tips that will hopefully make for better conversations at the table.

1 If you go to a Thanksgiving meal, be present and attentive to others

2 You don't have to talk about politics if you don't want to

3 Take some time to free yourself from your phone to listen to the conversation

4 Speak up if you have something to say, but be willing to listen to others' replies

5 If there is an expectation that tough topics will come up, set some ground rules.

This last tip is what has kept our events remarkably free of drama.

We have set the expectation that these events will be "third places" where ideas will be discussed, where questions and comments will be respectful, and where people understand they have a responsibility to be present.

Return to 'dignity and discipline'

Even setting ground rules will not prevent a rude comment or an argument. We are only human.

Rather than playing the blame game or punching back, hosts should encourage the practice of apology and forgiveness when things get heated.

Some people have told me that civility is impossible in this political era.

I disagree.

It is tough, no doubt, but I remind myself of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s call for "dignity and discipline" and that civility is more than manners.

Civility is about being a good citizen.

Civility is about treating others with respect and expecting them to treat us with respect.

Civility is not faking niceness, avoiding hard conversations or being a passive bystander.

Civility is about taking responsibility for our actions and for the betterment of our community.

Happy Thanksgiving!

David Plazas is the director of opinion and engagement for the USA TODAY NETWORK in Tennessee and opinion and engagement editor for The Tennessean.

US 'nicest place': Syrian refugee's falafel shop

Your Turn

Bruce Kelley
Guest columnist

I want to tell you a classic Reader's Digest story.

One day in February, residents of Bennington County in Vermont gathered to discuss an influx of refugees into New York City that had brought headlines of dislocated, suffering children.

Despite bitter cold, the meeting hall was standing room only. The Vermonters, who generations earlier spirited fugitive slaves from farmhouse to farmhouse until they reached Canada, cooked up a plan to help: They would invite 60 of the children to Vermont that summer to learn the language and customs of their new home while their parents in New York put their lives together.

Any lingering doubts about welcoming refugees from a foreign country into American towns were swept away when

the children piled off the train from New York. To quote from the piece we published, "Why they were just children!"

The year? It was 1939. The refugees? Europeans escaping the Holocaust.

For 96 years, Reader's Digest has told stories of Americans who come together to do good things — and often those tales involve a community welcoming outsiders. One such community is Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh, where 11 people were murdered last month by a gunman who resented their welcoming spirit toward refugees.

As we mourn this tragedy, it is heartening to know there are places in America where love is blooming in place of hate. We became acquainted with many of them in our annual search for the "Nicest Place in America."

There's no more classic American tale than that of Yassin's Falafel House in Knoxville. Its proprietor, Yassin Terou, is a refugee from a horrific civil war in

Syria who came here in 2011 with almost nothing but a gift for preparing Syria's signature food, the falafel.

Just six years later, his well-loved restaurant is a place where Knoxvillians of all faiths, preferences and political persuasions come together to share meals in a "safe place" for "all types," as signs around the restaurant declare.

Inspired by his generosity, Yassin's neighbors and customers nominated his restaurant for our contest.

After a public vote (63,000 votes were cast), Yassin's Falafel House emerged from the pack.

Here's one more classic Reader's Digest story that I hope will remind you of how welcoming America can be.

A small group of locals gathered at the First Baptist church for an annual holiday event called Welcome the Stranger. It's a Christian ritual with Jewish roots, where neighbors greet neighbors, friends, and anyone else who

passes by with warmth and compassion, celebrating the season.

But this year, not everyone was in the spirit. As the speakers stood before the crowd to share their holiday thoughts, a man draped in an American flag began yelling that he was out of a job and immigrants were to blame.

As it happened, a local businessman who was an immigrant took the stage, preparing to speak. He invited the man onstage so immigrant and native-born American could hold the flag together. The man refused. So the immigrant waded into the crowd, invited the man to dinner and offered him a job. When they parted, they shook hands.

As you may have guessed, that immigrant businessman is Yassin Terou, whose restaurant is the 2018 Nicest Place in America.

Bruce Kelley is the editor in chief of Reader's Digest. Follow him on Twitter: @brucekelley

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Me first

Re: "Disrupting and disrespecting," by Mike Dioguardi, Nov. 12.

I am responding to the letter by Mike Dioguardi published in The Tennessean.

The second paragraph indicates that the protester resisted the request of the "uniformed Nashville policeman." However, he describes the intervention and aid from a "short but stocky Black Officer."

So, why was such a specific description of the black officer necessary? Are we to assume that the "uniformed Nashville policeman" was tall and white? These kind of subtle thoughts and innuendos continue to fuel racial unrest.

I do not condone disrespect and disruptions at any time. However, racism and discrimination seem to be on national and international display every day from our leaders and their political party. Compassion for others has taken a back seat to selfishness and "me first."

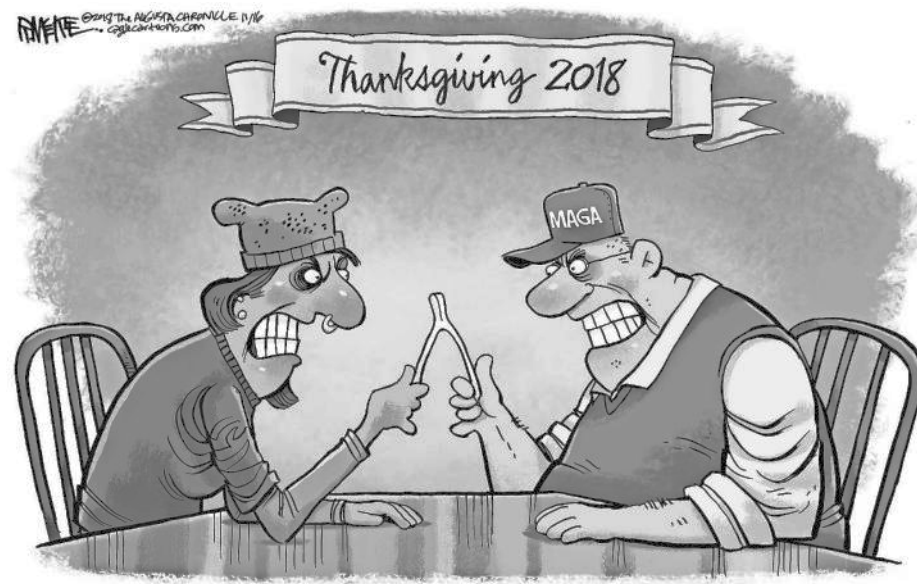
Anne McNair, Nashville 37207

We know what works

Re: "Shape up Tennessee" by Michael Bolduc, Nov. 9.

In his somewhat insulting letter to the editor, Mr. Bolduc says Republicans are either rich white guys or uninformed rural diehards. I think the letter writer is the one who is uninformed.

As has been shown in the past two



years, the conservative form of government has worked beautifully. The economy is booming, unemployment would be zero if it weren't for those who choose not to work. In my opinion, we Republicans are the ones who know what works and what doesn't work.

Instead of moving toward the center, Democrats are steadily becoming socialists. This is not good for our country.

John Bridges, Nashville 37217

The inability to forgive

Say what you will about Christianity and how its tenets and structure have been misused through history, but one of the great central ideas of the belief is forgiveness.

This is so important because when we feel that we have received forgiveness in our lives, we understand how important that gift is and we give it to others. Un-

derstanding and admitting to flaws can lead to empathy and understanding.

When asked about his religion and if he had asked for forgiveness, president Trump said, "No. I don't have anything to ask forgiveness for." This is so central to understanding him. He has an inability to forgive and is driven by revenge and getting even for the smallest of slights.

His mentor, Roy Cohn, taught him to never admit to anything. Life is a scorecard for him. Altruism or good for goodness sake just doesn't make sense to him.

He is damaged. And we see this as his anger and lashing out increase when he is questioned on possible mistakes. He always takes credit, never takes responsibility.

Admitting that you're human and fallible can actually be a freeing and positive experience. It's a shame that no one ever taught this man the power of giving and receiving forgiveness.

Matthew Carlton, Nashville 37216

Dorms should not be co-ed

On Nov. 7, this newspaper ran a story that seven rapes had occurred in University of Tennessee residence halls during the fall 2018 semester.

What did those who decided that co-ed dormitories were a good idea expect? Less campus sexual activity? Higher moral standards, generally? What?

Gene A. Russell, Nashville 37215

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