

Opinions, yours and ours

The Chatter Box

By Deborah Bennett

Is there such a thing as a "cone-less" pine tree? If not, there certainly should be!

I had the pleasure last week of having to pick up what appeared at the time to be endless buckets of pinecones so that we could cut the grass in our yard.

Now, I have nothing against pine trees. They are beautiful and green year-round and provide shade in the hot summer. I would not even dislike the cones they produce were it not for the fact that I have to pick them up.

Stooping, bending and standing on my head tends to make me dizzy, not to mention the havoc it reeks on my back. By the time I was through picking up all the cones, I thought I was going to have to "crawl" back into the house.

The task led me to wonder what might be the purpose of all those pinecones, so I looked it up. Pine trees have no flowers or fruit. Rather, their seeds are naked and wedged between the prickly scales of a cone, and it takes "two years" for the cones to mature to the point where they open, release their seeds and then fall from the tree.

For two years all of those pinecones have just been hanging around in the trees in my yard, waiting to fall off — and that just had to happen during grass cutting time. Why not in the winter? Then, they could have just lain on the ground until they rotted.

I think those pinecones have been planning their revenge on me for two years. In fact, I am sure of it. It was just their way of getting even for the time we were burning off the pasture and let the fire singe the bark of their trees. Talk about holding a grudge!

But that's okay. The last laugh is mine. We used them to fill a hole in our driveway, and I can't help but smile every time I run them over with my car!

Happy birthday this week to: Celess Deal, Gloria Mock, Brad Davis, Riley Padgett, Josh Lee, Wesley Godbee, Heather James, Tyler Rich, Phyllis Williams, Krystal W. Chance, Norma Clifton, Lee Wilson, John Weston Bragg, Hayden Garvin and Joe Wilson Jr.

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Jim Hite

One of the many perks of living in the country is enjoying that morning cup of coffee on our back porch.

I find it a fantastic way to start the day. Even if our schedule forces us to do a run first thing, the cup of coffee on the back porch can come right after cleaning up.

The weather matters not. It can be cold or warm, wet or dry, windy or still. The key to it all is the quiet, the beauty of nature, the pond, the trees, the symphony of the bird chorus. Sometimes, that first cup is enjoyed while skies are dark or the moon is setting, enjoyed as stars disappear and brightening skies signal the start of another day.

Facing west, I can watch the sunlight as it rolls down from the top of the trees across the pond.

When it is dark, there is little sound of activity. But when light breaks, vehicles traveling nearby roads and the sound of a diesel whistle join nature's chorus.

Looking back over the years, I have enjoyed that morning coffee in many settings. The quiet of the Smoky Mountains, outside motels, hotels, and cafes too numerous to mention in cities all over this great country of ours, at outdoor tables at a French bakery in London or on the River Seine in Paris, in city settings and rural, all have provided their own unique sort of quiet with which to begin living that gift of another day.

But I must admit. No place matches our own back porch!

The reason for these musings has a basis beyond my own enjoyment. Whatever happened to quiet? Whatever happened to enjoying oneself, with being alone, with being content just "being?"

Everywhere, it seems, we see cell phones, earphones, iPods, CD players, noise. I remember when on duty before school seeing the kids coming in with car stereos blasting or their heads moving to the beat in their ear and thinking how in the world a teacher could compete with that!

Back in my disc-jockeying days during the 1960s and 70s, commentators noted that the less talented singers or rock bands had, the more noise and spectacle and volume they used.

Good gracious!! That would mean there is absolutely no talent anywhere nowadays!!

But I digress!

Why a person does not want to take time to be quiet, to enjoy the beauty of this world without distraction can be answered only by that person. Why a person needs constant distraction is, well, personal.

Taking a quiet walk, running without earphones, sitting on a park bench, enjoying a sunrise or sunset for its own sake, walking quietly on the beach, even taking quiet time to be close to God in prayerful silence, each and all and more can deepen our human spirit, can provide peace and joy beyond measure.

I don't see taking time to be quiet as hiding from what goes on in the world. In fact, I would argue that such quiet time well used can make us more aware, more understanding, more open to see what part of God's world we can make better.

And tomorrow morning, as I hold my cup of coffee and see the day begin, I promise to bring each of you who read this before our God in a quiet prayer.

May you do the same for me.

Letters policy

Letters to the editor of *The Millen News* are welcomed and encouraged. These are pages of opinions, yours and ours.

The unsigned editorials generally appearing on the left side of the editorial page represent the opinion of the newspaper and not that of any one person on our staff. Personal columns represent the opinions of the writers whose names appear on them and are not to be considered the opinion of this newspaper, its management or owners. Letters to the editor voice the opinions of the newspaper's readers.

The Millen News reserves the right to edit any and all portions of a letter. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters must include the signature, address and phone number of the writer to allow our staff to authenticate its origin. Letters should be limited to 400 words.

The deadline for letters is Monday at 9 a.m. You can email letters to deborah@eastga.net.

Library News

Hey Kids! Summer is here and school is almost over. Do you want to travel the United States this summer? Reading Takes You Everywhere is the theme of the 2007 Vacation Reading Program this year at the Jenkins County Memorial Library. You can "Go Everywhere" without having to leave your front porch. Come by the Jenkins County Memorial Library to sign up for a summer filled with fun and excitement.

New Books at JCML
LAST SPYMASTER by Gayle Lynds - A nerve tingling, fast paced story about espionage and technology. It examines the moral ambiguity inherent in intelligence and counterterrorism.

THUNDERSTRUCK by Erik Larson - This story tells tale of two men—Hawley Crippen, a very unlikely murderer and Guglielmo Marconi, the obsessive creator of a seemingly supernatural means of communication—whose lives intersect

during on of the greatest criminal chases of all time.

THE BANCROFT STRATEGY by Robert Ludlum - Todd Belknap, a legendary field agent for Consular Operations with a reputation is cut loose from the agency after an operation goes wrong. His best friend, Jared Rinehart is abducted and his abductors refuse to negotiate for this release. Belknap decides to take matters into his own hands.

Websites of interest available online at JCML

Reduce.org
 This site provides suggestions for reducing personal production of waste materials. "When you avoid making garbage in the first place, you don't have to worry about disposing of waste or recycling it later. Changing your habits is the key." Topics include office paper, composting, purchasing decisions, junk mail, transportation, holiday activities, and

more. From the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

URL: <http://www.reduce.org>
Business Plans and Profiles Index

This site provides lists of "types of small businesses and a corresponding sample business plan, profile or book about the business with sources provided after each entry. ... If the plan

or profile is online, a link is provided." Browse by subject, such as accounting, air transportation, baby products, bars, bookstores, and much more. Also includes a bibliography and links to related sites. From the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.
 URL: <http://www.carnegielibrary.org/subject/business/bplansindex.html>

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PUBLIC HEARING
Re: Street Closing - Section of Gilmer Street
 Mayor and Council would like to invite all interested citizens to attend a public hearing on Tuesday, May 22, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. The hearing will be held in Council chambers of Millen City Hall.
 The purpose of the hearing will be to solicit input on the possible closing of a section of Gilmer Street. This section of Gilmer Street is behind West Millen Baptist Church between Williams and Drexel Avenue.
 All interested citizens are urged to attend.
 Mayor and Council
 City of Millen

The Millen News Deadlines

FRIDAY AT NOON:
 Wedding Announcements
 Engagement Announcements
 Anniversary Announcements
 Birth Announcements
 Memoriams and Thank You's

FRIDAY-5PM:
 School News, Chatter Box Items,
 General News Items.

MONDAY-9 AM:
 Letters to the Editor

MONDAY-10 AM:
 Datebook Items, Church News & Obituaries

MONDAY-11 AM:
 Classified & Legal Ads

MONDAY-NOON:
 Retail Display Ads