OPINION

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

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OUR OPINION

Never Forget

America must remember attack that changed the course of world history

The text of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's address to the nation on Dec. 8, 1941:

Mr. Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives:

Yesterday, December 7th, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its government and its emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific.

Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American island of Oahu, the Japanese ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time, the Japanese government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday, the Japanese government also launched an attack against Malaya.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.

Last night, the Japanese attacked Wake Island.

And this morning, the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.

As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense. But always will our whole nation remember the character of the onslaught against us.

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost, but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph — so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7th, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire.

There's nothing wrong with seeking professional help for mental health

I felt the pervasive uncomfortableness, like gnawing deep inside that couldn't be identified, for several months.


GREG WEATHERBEE

For weeks I knew there was a drastic shift in the way I felt. My ability to process the things going on around me and to meet those things with the appropriate responses had changed.

It was a struggle.

My patience was gone, my temper was running amok, my interests in hobbies had vanished and I had turned into someone no one wanted to be around — at least not for very long.

The final straw was when I felt a fit of rage coming on over some insignificant circumstance. I was fully aware of my surroundings. My consciousness recognized the pressure behind my eyes and the tension that turned my body rigid and stiff.

The fact that my teeth clinched and the burning in my chest increased as my face flushed was not lost on me. I knew full well what was going on, and I was completely incapable of stopping any of it.

And I raged.

When it was over, a bowl was in pieces in the sink, my house was quiet and the only thing I could see was my wife looking at me as if she'd never met me. Her eyes searched mine in an attempt to see if the man she fell in love with was anywhere inside. I can't say if she ever saw him.

Like a coward, I retreated to another part of our home. I went over the events of what had just happened, and I foolishly justified myself and my anger. I knew I was lying to myself as I continued to erroneously validate my feelings and actions. My words were hollow, even as I said them to myself, and, as before — I couldn't stop.

I am a fortunate man. I'm almost embarrassed when I stop to count all that I've been blessed with, especially knowing I'm probably not 100% deserving of the many instances of good fortune I've received. Now, because of things I don't understand, all that was hanging in the balance. I needed help or all of the things I loved in this life were going to slowly disappear.

The next morning, I called a counselor. I wanted to know what was wrong with me and why I couldn't control my emotions. I wanted to be better for my wife and my family. I wanted to be better for me.

"Tell me what's going on, Greg," was the first question asked in my first ever "therapy" session. It may have been one of the most difficult questions I'd ever been asked to answer. I stared into space, searching for the answer I thought would best suit the situation. It's a well-practiced maneuver I'd perfected years ago: Assess the situation, identify an escape, decide what they want to hear and start the process in 3…2…1 — Go!

To this mental health professional, I was not some enigma or a riddle that couldn't be solved. I was no more unique to this person than a block toilet is to a plumber. My bluff was immediately recognized, and I was called on it. I, for the first time in a long time, was stripped of my walls, my clever escapes, my hidden vulnerability and my façade of confidence and manufactured bravado. I had never been more uncomfortable in my life.

I opened up. I bared my already threadbare soul. I spoke freely about my struggles with my temper, the crippling anxiety and the depression that follows an outburst. My words slowly started coming from inside me and not from someone else who was saying them for me. The out-of-body voice was gone, and I heard me in my explanations and confessions.

Mental health isn't any less important than physical health. The pragmatic side of me understands that notion. The reasonable side of me knows that a mind clear of guilt, anger, depression and anxiety is necessary to live a happy life. Knowing all this, why was it so difficult to reach out for help? I'm still mulling over this one.

This time of year will bring about stressors and triggers that will affect millions of people across the country. Many, if not most, will battle the demons of poor mental health alone. They will seem fine in a lot of cases, but the battle within still rages on. I know personally how to act, what to say, when to smile and how to make them think you have life by the tail. I know what is expected of me and I deliver. I know many of you do the same.

Seek help. Talk to a friend. Call a counselor. Get help.

There's no more shame in seeking help for your mental health than going to the doctor for the flu. I promise you, there's an answer for everything, and you are worth the effort to address your mind, body and soul.

Greg Weatherbee is publisher of The Lufkin Daily News. His email address is **greg.weatherbee@lufkindailynews.com.**

House transportation committee tasked with overseeing all things travel-related

As we move past Thanksgiving and approach Christmas, I want to encourage you and your loved ones to embrace the spirit of giving during this season. It's a wonderful time to find ways to lend a hand to those in need within our communities. While many of us are fortunate to have a warm meal and a safe place to sleep, it's important to remember that many are not as fortunate.


TRENT ASHBY

Over the next few weeks, I hope you'll consider contributing to your local food pantry, dropping some spare change in the Salvation Army's red kettle or volunteering your time at a nearby church. What better way to show our gratitude than by supporting one another?

With that, we'll dive back into our examination of House interim charges.

House Interim Charge: Transportation

The House Committee on Transportation has jurisdiction over all matters related to commercial and passenger vehicle operations and licensing, the Texas highway system, airports and air traffic in Texas, water transportation in Texas, and many other issues. The committee also has jurisdiction over the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, the Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Transportation Commission.

During the interim, the committee will study the long-term needs of the maritime industry in Texas, evaluate the implementation status of the Maritime Port Mission Plan, and make recommendations to improve port planning, safety measures, and project completion.

Additionally, the committee will evaluate state-maintained bridges' current status, existing bridge safety standards and long-term financial needs for bridge planning, construction, maintenance and inspection. They will also examine ways to improve bridge project completion.

Finally, the committee will identify Texas' most congested roadways and review state forecasts for future congestion and the expected impact on economic development. The committee will evaluate TxDOT plans for alleviating congestion and consider the necessity of additional options to ensure economic development, congestion and safety goals are achieved in a timely manner with reduced cost to public tax dollars.

The mobile office is taking a break from the road in December but will be back after the Christmas holiday. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact my office if we can help you in any way. My district office may be reached at (936) 634-2762 and my Capitol office may be reached at (512) 463-0508. Additionally, I welcome you to follow along on my official Facebook page, where I will be posting regular updates on what's happening in your state Capitol and sharing information that could be useful to you and your family: facebook.com/RepTrentAshby/.

Trent Ashby is the state representative for District 9 that includes Angelina, Houston, Polk, San Augustine, Tyler and Trinity counties. His email address is **trent.ashby@house.state.tx.us.** He and his staff are available during the week at (512) 463-0508 or (936) 634-2762.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year from American Legion Family No. 113

As another year ends in a few short weeks, we want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and we are looking forward to seeing you more in 2025.


RITA REDD

Dec. 14: National Wreaths Across America-Angelina County Wreaths Across America.

The program will begin promptly at 11 a.m. our time (always at noon at Arlington National Cemetery). The program is held inside the chapel near the back of Garden of Memories. Come on out. Rain or shine, we will be inside. If you sponsored "wreath specific" graves and plan to lay them yourselves, please try to arrive by 10:30 so we can get wreaths to you. Unfortunately, we are short again this year to have a wreath for every veteran in Garden of Memories, but the grave-specific always get filled first before they are set out for general wreath laying. Thank you.

Over the past few months, we have mentioned several things we would like to do in the coming year, but we need your help to carry them out.

Flag Etiquette: In addition to a great brochure with flag etiquette dos and don'ts, we would like to actually show proper raising and lowering, lighting, folding and presenting of the flag.

We would also love to teach the "Meaning of the 13 folds of the Flag." We have had requests to do this several times, but recently we were only given two days and could not get four people together that knew how and were available. This is something every youth organization should know and be prepared to present, not just the local Veteran Service Organizations.

If you have a few minutes extra, have a veteran family member and want to help veterans, please think about joining the American Legion Family No. 113. The ALA (American Legion Auxiliary) is looking for mothers, grandmothers, daughters, granddaughters, sisters, spouses (male or female) of veterans eligible for the American Legion. Currently the auxiliary is needing someone to lead our children and youth programs. We have so much to offer the youth of our community but no one to help get the word out there.

Every Monday, the auxiliary prepares and serves sandwiches at the VA clinic. Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, members of the post and sometimes auxiliary are at the senior center with coffee, doughnuts and fellowship. There is always something going on, and as details are provided, they will be provided here hopefully a month or more ahead of time.

Here are a few dates to remember but events are not finalized as of this writing:

Jan. 1: New Year's Day
Feb. 3: Four Chaplains Day
March 15: American Legion Birthday
April: Month of the Military Child
May: Memorial Day and FET FEST on Saturday May 17, 2025 (always on Armed Forces Day)
June: June 14 Flag Day. Each year for the past few years, the American Legion Auxiliary holds a flag exchange. Bring in your old tattered, torn or badly faded 3' x 5' American flag and get a new one free. This is usually from 3-5 p.m. by the city of Lufkin's annual Flag Day Ceremony, which is then followed by the VFW No. 1836 proper flag disposal.
July 4: Independence Day
Sept. 1: Labor Day
Nov. 11: Veterans Day. The actual date of the parade and some other events are not held on Veterans Day but the weekend before or after.

Check out our Facebook pages at ALA113LufkinTX or AL113AngelinaCounty. The American Legion Family No. 113 website is al113familylufkin.org.

You can join, renew your dues and keep up with what is going on around the country online at legion.org, txlegion.org, alaforveterans.org or alatexas.org.

Rita Redd is the vice president and community liaison for American Legion Auxiliary No. 113. Her email address is **ala113@consolidated.net.**

MALLARD FILLMORE — **By Bruce Tinsley**

