

During this season of thanksgiving, I like to reflect on how the past shaped the future. An all-compassing article would be impossible but several things come to mind.

I am thankful to live in Broken Arrow: a beautiful, young city with a bright future. At the same time, I am thankful for our history and heritage.

By building that future, we honor those that came before us. I am thankful for the group of Muskogee Creek Indians who settled in this area that now bears their name. I am thankful for the residents of Elam for relocating here when news that the railroad's route would go through our location. Many of them became the early leaders of Broken Arrow. I am thankful for those who worked in agriculture and farming during our early years and the opportunities their business savvy afforded our residents. I am thankful to those that mined coal and the jobs that brought. I am thankful to gentlemen such as F.S.Hurd and G.A.Brown for opening banks in our town and operating them with a smile and a handshake. That way of doing business may not be typical today, but seldom did they fail to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome. When you look back at our history, especially through photographs, one can be amazed at the progress of our town. That progress was hard, but rewarding. I am thankful for the women of our community like the ladies of the Self Culture Club. While their efforts to bring a normal school to Broken Arrow may have failed, their work culminated with the arrival of the Haskell State School of Agriculture, the first library, and Sieling Park. I am thankful to the railroad for bringing travel and communication with the world at large here. I am also thankful for the electric company, the ice merchants, the shop keepers, and the school teachers. Without the work of these and countless others Broken Arrow would not be what it is today. Lori Lewis, The Museum Broken Arrow

---- When I was first asked to write what I was thankful for, I panicked. I don't know. Will I have enough to say, what am I thankful

for? What happened next was amazing - a flood of emotion which led to a huge smile. Why? Because I have more to be thankful for that I can ever express in a few sentences. I am thankful for my family and friends. To steal from the movie Jerry Maguire, these are the people who "complete me". They mold who I am and they will mold who I end up being. I cannot mention them all, but I want to mention my husband, Brad, my kids, Dax and Olivia, and my best girlfriends, "the fab five". I am thankful for the Country we live in. I am thankful for the people who have made it possible to live the lives that we do. We are all very blessed to live in the United States, this is great country! I am thankful for our great community. I live in a community that is growing and thriving. We have spectacular schools, wonderful businesses and city leaders who care about the future. I am proud to be from Broken Arrow and I am thankful for all the businesses and residents who make it great! I am thankful for my co-workers and the members of the Chamber. We are a great team. Finally, I am thankful for the ability to choose happy. I am thankful for smiles and laughter and happiness. The world is not always sunshine and roses, but we have the ability to choose happy. We have the ability to love and forgive, to offer smiles and to accept the good in the people we meet and the situations we are a part of. Happy Thanksgiving. April Sailsbury | Senior Vice President BA Chamber of Commerce ---- I am thankful for my Lord and Savior. I am thankful for my family. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve the students, staff and community as a board member for Broken Arrow Public Schools. I am thankful for the freedoms and opportunities provided in the United States of America. Cheryl Kelly President of the BAPS School Board ---- Star Jewelers is thrilled to be a part of our customers everyday fairy tales. For more than 40 years, our

family-owned jewelry store has been privileged to be a part of the Broken Arrow community. Our customers have become our friends. We want to thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for your continued support. Broken Arrow is our home and you are our family. Thank you for being a part of our own fairy tale. Happy Thanksgiving! Thank you, Dayna Matheny ---- I am thankful for my family, friends, good health, the many opportunities for recreation and relaxation we enjoy in Broken Arrow and for children's laughter and delightful smiles. As a community banker I am thankful for the opportunity to invest in our city through service and support to area non-profits and for our officers and employees who choose to be a part of this community commitment I am grateful for the opportunity to be of service to our customers and to invest in local, homegrown business that provide jobs and build prosperity. I am thankful for civic leadership that moves us forward as a community, for entrepreneurship and reinvestment in our revitalized Rose District and Broken Arrow in general. I am thankful for the dedication and hard work of our board of directors, officers and employees and the investment and effort that my grandfather and father made in First National and in Broken Arrow as my family enters its 75th year of bank ownership. I am thankful for our many excellent teachers and school administrators who exhibit such generous dedication. I am thankful for our public works services such as water and sanitation, police and fire protections and medical providers. And perhaps above all, I am grateful for each day that God provides us to share love with one another. Greg Graham Chairman and CEO First National Bank & Trust Co. of Broken Arrow ---- I am thankful to be a part of a church that is teaching me to really love God is to love others. I am thankful for my families -- my biological family and my family that has been gifted to me through friendships. I am thankful to live in a country where I can exercise my freedom. I am thankful for 315 West College and

the difference it has made in my life and the difference it makes in the lives of so many. I am thankful to be a part of a community that demonstrates compassion and tolerance for others. I am thankful for my health so that I can still run, cycle and walk. I am thankful for fresh cut stems as I think they are just beautiful. I am thankful for quiet moments and sunshine. I am thankful for smiles instead of frowns. I truly hold gratitude in my heart each day and hope that I share it with those around me. Kim Goddard Executive Director of Broken Arrow Neighbors ---- When John Ferguson recently asked me that question, at least two dozen answers went through my mind.

There were of course the usual “freedom of speech and worship, my home, friends, family, my job, my rescued dog who is the world’s sweetest canine companion, lack of censorship in what I read, listen to on the radio or watch on television, and the freedom to live where I please as long as I can afford it. Most people would consider what surfaced as my answer at best odd, hugely influenced by my usual Thanksgiving day menu question - what ethnicity will I spotlight this year? I am thankful that across this nation, there will be Thanksgiving meals in as many food ethnicities as there are in the world. In my house, it’s more often Irish fare, mostly because my dad’s father was born and grew up in County Cork, Ireland. My dad embraced his father’s ethnicity, and I did likewise. It’s good, hearty, and often very elegant food, and I enjoy honoring my dad and his dad on this very special day. This year, however, I’m thinking Scottish, thanks to yet another ancestor. Sterling Andrews, a Highlander who was sept to Clan Ross, was probably a survivor of the Battle of Culloden who found a new life (read missed hanging from an English gallows) in one of the Scot colonies in North Carolina. Other years the menu has been English, French, American Southern, Early American and a mix of all of them. I don’t make

Mexican food for Thanksgiving. I serve that cuisine when I have friends at the house for Cinco de Mayo – also a celebration day. I don't do several other world cuisines because I don't know that much about how to prepare the food. But – and this is a huge – I am able to enjoy the flavors, tastes and textures from other countries from the myriad of ethnic restaurants available to us. Those of us – whether it be ourselves or our ancestors - are unbelievably fortunate to have been born or to have landed in this country. And in one way or another, all of us landed here. We are a nation of immigrants – and that includes Native Americans. I'm closer than most of my friends to another country. A few friends are closer than I am – they are either first generation, naturalized citizens or here on a visa. America is a mutt, and I'm proud of that. Just as the mongrel dog – or mutt – is usually stronger, healthier and often smarter than their purebred counterparts, we as a nation are stronger for all our different –flavors–. God Save and Bless America, and help us all to remember we are all either immigrants or descended from immigrants, and we're stronger for the mix. Lucinda Denson ---- The Board of Keep Broken Arrow Beautiful is thankful for all of its 200 volunteers who work on keeping our city clean, safe and beautiful. The Beauty Patrol committee drives about 90 arterial road miles monthly, files a report on the condition of rights of way – grass too tall, fence fallen down, trash etc. That filing is summarized and sent to the City who follows up. Adopt A Corner committee picks up 250 and 600 signs a month in rights of way and disposes of them. Adopt A Miles pick up their miles three or four times a year. The Rose Committee has planted about 150 roses bushes in various locations - BA Library, Centennial Park, 91st and Main entrance. In the spring a Rose Festival celebrates spring at the Farmers Market and draws thousands. The Nelson Commemorative Rose Garden

has been officially approved by City Council. You Tube has a video under the gardenâ€™s title. Neighborhood Beautification certifies HOAs as beautiful when they meet established specifications. a new program launched by a grant from the Broken Arrow Community Foundation which improves entrances at non-homeowner neighborhood entrances. Trash Bash is a spring event, held at Central Park Community Center. The town turns out, gets gloves, bags and safety vests and are assigned a mile of road to pick up. Volunteers are always welcome.

The website is under [keepbrokenarrowbeautiful.org](http://keepbrokenarrowbeautiful.org) and: [info@kbab.biz](mailto:info@kbab.biz). Peggy Striegel Striegel Advertising ---- That something hasnâ€™t worked out the way I wanted it to initially, something better did.

Always. Without fail. My brother. Heâ€™s 5, and he fell asleep on me while I was writing this. (Iâ€™m with my family for Thanksgiving.) The abundance of foods and cultures and restaurants and diners that exist in my little corner of the world, and that I get to taste a little bit of everything as often as I like. Friends who have loved me more than I loved myself, and who taught me how to love myself. Hugs. Cooking, and sharing it with others.

That I live in a hemisphere that experiences all four seasons. Second chances. Third chances. Forgiveness. The ability to say: thank you for that experience, and mean it. Nature. The after-rain smell, the springtime smell. Mountains and trails and the fact I have feet and legs to walk them.. Coffee, and coffee shops. A long meal in a dimly lit restaurant with someone you love. That I have rent to pay, dishes to do, laundry to fold, and dinner to cook; because it means I have my own home, have eaten, am clothed, and have more food available to me. Finding a song you love so much you listen to it 20

times in a row and it just gets better and better with every word and riff and beat you start to memorize. Farmers markets. The smell of someone youâ€™re falling in love with, right when youâ€™re falling in love with them. The fact there is no limit to the number of people we can fall in

love with â€œ and that it is possible to do so, each time, as  
wholly as we did before. Kids. I envy teachers (though I acknowledge how much  
work they do and how crappy Iâ€™d be as one). Warm, comfy beds. This  
is not original (though I wish it were). It comes from Brianna Wiest. Iâ€™m  
just Thankful for the chance to share it with you. Bob Lewis ---- I  
am thankful for being raised by Christian parents that taught me the importance of  
integrity, hard work and service to my country and community. I am thankful for  
my faith in God and the strength and guidance that it brings me. I  
thankful for all of the things in my life that I have experienced in  
my life that have molded me and guided me to the person that I  
am today. I am thankful for ability to work and earning a living for  
the last 35 years in the Construction Industry and blessing of having work. I  
am thankful for the opportunity to serve the community on the Broken Arrow City  
Council and joy that it brings in being part of making a difference in  
the community, it is the best volunteer job that I could have! I am  
thankful for the leaders on our City Council and Michael Spurgeon, our new City  
Manager. I am thankful for my son, Gary who like my father who served  
in the Navy during World War II and my self who served in the  
Marine Corps during the Viet Nam War decided to serve his country in Army  
in Afghanistan War. I am thankful that although now Disabled Veteran he is home  
Safely for the first Thanksgiving in four years. I am most Thankful for my  
amazing wife Sandy and our life together, and for our large family as we  
spend the holidays together, in this City of Broken Arrow that I love !  
Craig Thurmond, Mayor of BA ---- I am thankful to God. He has blessed  
me in so many ways. I am blessed with an amazing family & the  
many friends we have made in the 10 years we have been at Kenosha

cafÃ©. Denies Burke. ---- The year 2015 provided numerous reasons to be thankful for me and my family. Weâ€™re thankful to be given the opportunity to serve the citizens of Broken Arrow and the men and women of the Broken Arrow Fire Department as the fire chief. It is an amazing honor to work with the leadership of our progressive and growing city. I am thankful for the strong citizen support for public safety as recently shown by the passage of the Vision 2025 renewal. It has been a year of great things throughout the city and the fire department as we are working to identify ways to improve the quality of life for each and every Broken Arrow citizen through our mission of â€œServing Others.â€•

I am extremely thankful for a group of dedicated firefighters, who live this mission every day; but most of all I am thankful for family and friends, who provide the support structure, the prayers and the patience as each of our firefighters leave them every day to serve our citizens, especially mine. Serving Others, Jeremy K. Moore, Fire Chief ---- We have the opportunity everyday to walk in thankfulness. It's a choice and some days we choose the high road and do very well while other days even a bad hair day can cause the thankfulness meter to register at nearly a zero. And when asked what one is thankful for, we can quickly, off the cuff, begin to record faith, family, friends, job, health, freedom, retirement, home, car, the list can go on and on. But what if one or two or more of these things didn't quite make the cut? What truly makes the heart thankful in the midst of tragedy, loss of job, family member or dear friend? Or the dreaded diagnosis comes in? Or freedom isn't quite looking like freedom in many ways and certainly in many areas of the world? Often we compare and contrast our thankfulness in light of what someone else has or doesn't have. I sold a print in the store this year that said, "Gratitude is turning what you have into enough." That's a great springboard. But what I



love even more is what God's word reminds me of repeatedly, "In everything, give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Everything? Everything! Lack of or a lot of. Great health or failing health. Employed or jobless. The bible displays to me throughout its pages what awaits me "on the other side" as a follower of Christ so I am most thankful beyond words or measure for the precious gift of salvation and its accompaniment of grace. Material blessings are wonderful, but eternal ones? Doesn't even compare! And so my heart will joyfully exclaim along with the psalmist, this Thanksgiving and every day that follows, "Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!" -- Linda Toppins BELLA VITA ---- As Thanksgiving approaches it is fitting that we reflect on those things we are thankful for. Immediately, some familiar themes come to mind. God, Family, Country are universal and cannot be ignored. For me there are also some themes that have a real personal meaning, These themes come from my association with the Military History Center. my military background and my past civilian career. I am extremely thankful for (not necessarily in any order) Veterans, Military Comrades, and the Educational Community. Veterans: The respect and admiration that today's veterans receive in my opinion is higher now than any time since the end of WW

II. One only has to contrast the treatment our Vietnam veterans received as they returned from Vietnam to the adoration and respect garnered by today's returning servicemen and women. Films like Lone Survivor. The Hurt Locker and American Sniper celebrate the heroism, camaraderie and character of these heroes. They don't just present a pollyanish view of the service but address the struggles that all returning combat veterans deal with. We are visited quite frequently at the MHC by Junior Nipps. a 92 year old WWII veteran and longtime Broken Arrow native. His humble recounting of his exploits in the Pacific are both entertaining and illuminating. He and millions of other "greatest generation" veterans enabled this country to grow and flourish. It can be said and

should be said that America's veterans form the foundation for our country's existence. It

may be a trite saying but it has so much truth. If you can

read or write thank a teacher, for the freedom to read what you want

and write what you want thank a veteran. Military Comrades: The bonds that form

between military comrades are almost indescribable. How do you quantify the feelings that motivate

a soldier to lay down his life for his fellow soldier. In combat it

is not an uncommon event. Military history is full of accounts of servicemen and

women who sacrificed themselves for their comrades. Why would a wounded man lie to

medics about the seriousness of his wounds so he could return to the front

to be with his buddies? What motivates discharged soldiers to reenlist so they can

serve in the same units they were discharged from? Why do soldiers fight anyway?

If you ask them you may get answers like "I fight for God, Country,

and the American Way. If you really get into an in depth conversation with

combat veterans they will usually all tell you the same thing "I fight to

protect my buddy. A simple statement but laden with feeling and truth I spent

a year in Afghanistan with the professional and dedicated men and women of the

45th Infantry Brigade, Oklahoma Army National Guard. I am sure if asked they would

tell you that the bonds they formed will last throughout their lifetime. Educational Community:

I was fortunate to spend 10 years of my early working life as a

teacher in the BA Public School System and a provider of educational products to

school systems across the state. I am doubly fortunate to be married for 49

years to a former school teacher and wonderful wife and mother. I am continually

amazed at the dedication, professionalism and sacrifices made by our educational professionals. Despite habitually

low pay, our teachers use their own money, dedicate extra time and seek additional

training all in an effort to educate our children. No other profession receives as

much scrutiny and criticism for so little financial reward. That's what makes our teachers

and administrators so remarkable. Despite all the hurdles they continue to dedicate their best efforts to make the educational experience for the students as meaningful as possible. I have seen small system principals drive the bus, keep the score at games and substitute in classes when no substitute teachers were available. I have seen large system superintendents make so many difficult decisions you wonder how they can stand the stress. Every day in a classroom (usually overcrowded) throughout this state a teacher is using their skills and training to provide the best education possible. As parents, when we relish in the educational successes of our children, we should always be thankful that a teacher had an important hand in their achievements. Thomas P Mancino BG USA (Ret) President of the Board Military History Center ---- The gathering together of family, the comfort foods, and the moments of reflection all lead to a fulfilling Holiday treat that centers on the blessings God has given us. But Thanksgiving to me is not just a Thursday in November. It is a daily ritual. When I begin to find it far too easy to focus on the negative things going on around me -- financial challenges, illnesses, terrorism, the Presidential election, or just the normal stresses of life -- I have found it most helpful, if not life-saving, to begin a list of the blessings in my life. At first, the list starts slow, if not begrudgingly, because it is focusing on the difficulties in life that has brought me to the need to focus on the blessings. But the list starts, nonetheless. A loving Savior who gave His life for mine; a wife who loves me and makes my life so much better; two amazing children who bring me so much joy; and friends who support me even when I fall short of my best -- the list goes on. Those blessings cannot be taken lightly for they are the essence of my life. But these blessings are only the beginning. I am thankful for a praying mother and praying grandmothers who sought divine wisdom and help in raising me and seeing me through the good times

and the bad. I am thankful for a father and grandfathers who instilled within me by their example and their words a strong work ethic and a respect for the life I have been given. I am thankful for the opportunity to work and live in Broken Arrow my adopted hometown that has given far more to me than I can ever give back (but will spend the rest of my life trying). Then I become more reflective. I am thankful for my mistakes. They have helped shape me. I am thankful for my victories, large and small, for it is in the difficult times I can remember them and, again, be thankful and mindful of the fact that in life there is an up for every down, and a mountain that rises from every valley. Thanksgiving is itself a gift; a moment in time to let us stop, reflect and be grateful. I hope this year, as you and your family sit around a table, or as you sit quietly in your home longing to be with family, or as you lavish in your mansion or shiver in your shack, you stop and list the blessings. I pray that no matter where you are or in what condition you find yourself, as you count, you discover that you have a great deal for which to be thankful.â€• Scott Eudey, Lawyer and City Councilor ---- I honestly feel that I have so many breaths on this earth to be thankful for. From just the notions of having reasons to be thankful for to being able to just simply walk. But more than that, I am thankful for/to a few specifics that have ultimately defined me as a person, husband, father, friend and small businessman. I am, without a shadow of doubt most thankful to know Jesus and have faith in Gods faith in me. I was one of many who knew him but lived in a lukewarm fear of commitment for Christ for such a long time. I am thankful that the lord has sacrificed for my sins and has provided moments/ messages from people that have guided my heart and love back to

him with such a furious passion and the strongest desire for sacrifice and to selflessly reach out and help others in need. I am thankful for my wife, Ava. Most people know her as this amazing furniture artist and decorator who is married to this handsomely talented guy. (hoping she doesn't read this) What most people do not know is that our family's success and path was paved by her hard work, long hours, messed up back, the exhausting dedication for our family, friends and vendors' needs. I am thankful she has had the courage to believe in us and stay faithful to God while being strong when obstacles and doubts plagued our lives. From deaths of loved ones, dead end jobs, no food to eat, worrying about the lights staying on, competition stepping on our dreams or just spiritually defeating moments. She shook it off and has led our family in every direction we have traveled. I am thankful for Mercy. I grew up standing in soup lines. I remember asking many times for something to eat when there wasn't any. I remember sleeping in a shelter while my mother looked for multiple jobs to keep us warm and our bellies full. I am thankful to have reached the point in my life where I can provide food for our hungry, inspire our lost, understand the wisdom of those before me and become voice of testament for those who have suffered. Just as those who helped my family when we were in need and pathless. I am thankful for the love that is bigger than four letters. There is nothing more fulfilling in my life than to wake up and find my daughter snuggling next to me. Holding on to me for warmth, or safety, just because she loves her daddy so. Or eating cereal in the morning talking about "my little ponies" with her. That love is powerful, pure, real, safe, warm, and timeless. Not just a word over used that is losing the meaning. The man I am today is because of the moments of love in my life, but nothing has ever soothed my soul more than, "I love you with

all my heart daddyâ€•. I am thankful for Loyalty. Each and every Vendor and customer at our store. We owe more then we can offer daily to the ones who keep our dream of a faith based family business alive. Without customers our vendors wouldnâ€™t stay, without vendors we wouldnâ€™t have a business. We owe so much to them for believing in us and trusting us to do our very best for them and our community each and every day. So I guess what we are most thankful for has been what has come from the fire in our lives we have walked through. Walking in lifeâ€™s lessons with my wife and daughter, I can honestly say there is nothing I am not humbly thankful for.

Brandon Zambalis â€“ The Vintage Phoenix ---- As Thanksgiving approaches, Iâ€™m thankful, like many, for a merciful God, my family, health, liberty, the blessings of being American and living in the greatest country in the world! But as a new business owner, I am also thankful for the ability to pursue my dreams, friends who have lent a helping hand, and mentors who have guided me through this journey. I am deeply appreciative of those teachers, professors and fellow artists who have imbued to me their knowledge and skills, and who have encouraged and challenged me to pursue a creative life. Those mentors have helped me find passion in working as an artist, and I am deeply thankful for them. Dana Jones, artist/business owner ---- I

am â€œThankfulâ€• for these thingsâ€” My morning normally starts with a â€œGood Morning and Thank You, Lordâ€• silent prayer as I reflect on what will be another special day in this amazing community of caring, gracious, thoughtful and helpful friends. The Thankfulness is for many things. Certainly, there is recognition of eternal God for giving us life itself, but, my thoughts then quickly turn to my familyâ€”sons, daughter, their spouses, grandchildren, their spouses, and great-grandchildrenâ€”four generations of us who now call this, my adopted community, â€œHome.â€• The family, though, began with my loving parents, who taught me to â€œdream big,â€• to a younger sister, who has been a constant encourager, and especially

to my lovely wife, now deceased, who brought music and joy to our life and who supported and helped me realize those dreams. When one seriously considers what being “thankful” implies, many thoughts bounce around in the mind, old memories emerge and the eyes get moist. Being Thankful is the first step toward having a deep sense of “Gratitude,” being content with whatever we have or whatever our circumstances—not what we may “want,” but accepting that whatever we have is “enough.” So, in response to the question, “For what are you Thankful?” I respond, in this order, “God’s Grace, Family and Broken Arrow” including all that the community name implies. Clarence G. Oliver, Jr., Ed.D. Retired Superintendent, Broken Arrow Public Schools ---- I often say people care about what impacts them at the moment. As society has changes and technology improves, we tend to put off more with the idea that doing it later will be no problem. After all what took days before can take mere moments today. Even so, I still seem to struggle in expressing things that matter most. As a pastor and, previously as a hospice chaplain, I have personally been with over three hundred people as they took their last breath. I hear many people tell their stories. No one yet has said, I wish I could go back and work more, complain more or be more self-centered. Many though, have shared regret. Simple words; thank you, I love you, and I’m sorry, are probably the ones that people wish they had shared more often. Having conversations about weightier topics is never easy. Many people emphasize thankfulness during November, especially on social media. This week offers a unique opportunity “an entire day! Everyone, even Wal-Mart, pauses to let people have time to give thanks. In a sense, life shuts down. The good news is, Thanksgiving is not, life throwing a curve ball, requiring a shut down. Thanksgiving is more of a softball. If we will figuratively, step into it and swing the bat “a homerun is almost guaranteed. Homeruns are rare, even in baseball. I hit a few. More rare than a homerun these days, is taking time

to say thank you, I love you, or I'm sorry, to people who matter most in our lives. I say, don't let another holiday pass. Take time to be thankful. You will look back someday and be glad, and it's better than hitting a homerun. Joe Cook, pastor ---- What I am thankful for: I am thankful that my two adult children, Kasey 30 and Ryan 25 that they are happy, healthy and self-sufficient adults. I am thankful for the most adorable grandson, Reece who is smart, funny and full of energy and that I get to see him almost everyday. I am thankful for a very supportive husband, Ross whom I met in the 9th grade and have been extremely happily married to for 35 years. I am really thankful that he loves to cook and go to the grocery store, so my only job is to clean the kitchen. I am proud of his honesty; integrity and willingness to serve our community as a volunteer at the Broken Arrow Police Department as a Reserve Officer, this is after he retired after 28 year career as a Tulsa Police Officer. I have a crazy work schedule working many nights and weekends and he never ever makes me feel guilty, he knows how much I enjoy my job and I am thankful that he supports me each and every day. I am thankful for my co-workers, who have much compassion for the citizens of Broken Arrow; you can't find any police department with more professionalism, and dedication to service from both sworn and non-sworn and makes me proud to say I work for the Broken Arrow Police Department. I am very thankful for our volunteers I am privileged enough to coordinate, all 168 of them. They all have varied talents, personalities and compassion to serve their community and their police department. I am thankful to live-in a community that supports its police department. As my job as the community Liaison I get to work with people on a weekly basis that want to give back to the police department. Many organizations and businesses send food along with appreciative cards to the employees of the



police department both sworn and non-sworn. I am thankful to live in a county where I can be free, have freedom of religion freedom of speech and thankful for those that have served in the armed forces so we can all enjoy these freedoms. Lisa Ford, Crime Prevention Specialist and Community Liaison for the Broken Arrow Police Department ---- First and foremost, I'm thankful for all the blessings that God has bestowed upon me. Each day I thank him for my family and fiancÃ© for their love and support. So excited that Jill and I will be getting married next Spring and spending the rest of our lives together! I'm very grateful for having good health; for being able to stay physically and mentally active today and hopefully into the future. I'm very happy for being back in Oklahoma and having the privilege of serving as Broken Arrow's City Manager. And finally, I'm extremely thankful for the disappointments that I've experienced in my life as they've helped remind me to always be humble, appreciative, and to remember the things that matter the most. Michael L. Spurgeon City Manager ---- "Obviously I am thankful for my Faith and Family but I am also thankful for the opportunity to meet and interact with so many people in the district. From Copan to Wagoner to Porter I have been blessed to attend 1,250 events this year alone. A great deal of those visits have been in Broken Arrow. The friendships I have made in Broken Arrow will go with me forever. Broken Arrow has provided me with great opportunities to serve the people of the District and I am forever thankful for this opportunity." Brian O'Hara, Cong. Jim Bridenstine's staff member ---- Self-reflection is an often overlooked benefit to growing older. As I sat down to write this article, I began to sort through my thoughts and it is amazing at how much age has provided a clarity that I was devoid of in my younger years. Material things that we work our whole lives to accumulate are not nearly as valuable as the price tags might indicate and those things that money cannot buy become quite

priceless later in life. I have four things which I am eternally thankful for at this stage of my life: The first is good health. As we age, friends and family begin to succumb to the never-ending passing of time. Most recently, a wonderful lady I worked with for several years here in Broken Arrow left us all far too soon leaving behind family, friends and with many dreams unfinished. Her passing encouraged me to value each day and love to the fullest. Life has an alarm clock attached and we don't know what time it might go off; so we should live like it is the weekend, not a Monday! The second thing is my wonderful, loving family. My parents and extended family are a blessing and have given me more than I can ever repay, but ultimately my children are the reason for all that I do. Two bright, beautiful daughters make every day a positive challenge and remind me why I go to work and more importantly why I leave the office to go home. I am blessed they get their brains and good looks from their mother so the need for me at home is generally relegated to heavy lifting and killing insects, but I'm forever grateful to be a part of their lives and every achievement they handle with ease makes me proud and thankful beyond measure. The third is being surrounded by consummately professional and ethical co-workers. In these difficult times, every job is scrutinized but our line of work gets intense. I cannot imagine mixing the seriousness of what we do in law enforcement with the pressures of internal conflict and doubt. I am blessed to come to work each day and work with some of the best people in the business. Days that stretch us professionally provide a mental boost which makes work enjoyable and challenging, but getting to share that experience with people who are at the top of their game makes for amazing results personally and professionally. Lastly but most importantly ... I get to wake up each morning while the day is still and quiet and the sun is just beginning to stream

into the room and look over at my wife; to see that for one more day, she has agreed to share the journey with me. For 26 years, through the good and the bad, I cannot imagine a more perfect life than what we have had together. When she is away from me for any length of time, I miss her smile because it brightens my day no matter how dark it has been and each time she takes a hold of my hand it still feels as electric as it did on our first date almost 30 years ago. I will be eternally thankful that she took a chance on a goofy, immature teenager who loved her from the moment he first saw her. David Boggs, Chief of Police Broken Arrow ----

When I think about Thanksgiving, the first thing that comes to mind is the importance of family and how thankful I am for mine. This time of year is always a time of reflection, recalling special memories and anticipating what the next year will bring. One of my favorite memories revolves around the first time my wife, who was my high school sweetheart at the time, invited me to her family's Thanksgiving dinner. It was a tradition in her family for each person around the table to state something for which they were thankful. I might also mention that my high school football coach is my wife's father. So, of course, I was a nervous 18-year-old, wanting nothing more than to impress all the people that were gathered around the table. It crossed my mind to say "I'm thankful for my coach," but luckily, I kept my cool and said that I was thankful to be invited to their festivities. This year, my oldest daughter is bringing home her college boyfriend for Thanksgiving dinner. It seems like just yesterday that my wife and I were in their shoes. I am thankful that I will have my entire family around our Thanksgiving table this year and look forward to making memories we will all cherish in the years to come. Dr. Jarod Mendenhall, Superintendent BAPS ----

As I reflect on what I

am grateful for this Thanksgiving, my heart is full! I am blessed to have had the opportunity to start and grow a small business in the heart of my hometown. Words are not enough to thank my staff and family for their sacrifice and dedication to growing GGM. It is a TEAM effort! Thank you to our loyal customers for allowing us to not just sell you products, but to be a part of your lives! From helping you chose your first formal dress to guiding you as you select bridal and/or bridesmaid dresses, we appreciate you! This time of the year, I always reflect on the family and friends that are a part of my life. I am so truly grateful for the loving family that surrounds me. I have the privilege of working beside my daughter and the support of my husband and son. Finally, I am so thankful that I live in a country where I can worship Christ and express His love every day. In a world of turmoil, I appreciate the men and women of service who sacrifice daily so that I have these opportunities! Kellie Blanton, businesswoman ---- I look forward to taking time from my busy schedule to spend time with my family this Thanksgiving. Iâ€™m thankful that all of my family lives nearby and that we can get together at least one special day for a good meal and good conversation. Iâ€™m also thankful that people want to come by and share their lunch with us; we all become a part of each otherâ€™s lives. Larry Hoefling, co-owner of McHuston Books and Bistro.