

Here's how you can help

By Dink NeSmith

Thank you, Oglethorpe County. Your calls, emails and letters keep coming.

Your loyalty and support of *The Echo* and our community are just what this newspaper needs. Next week will end one era and begin another. Since 1956, the Maxwell family has been at the helm of *The Oglethorpe Echo*. The family's positive contributions deserve our praise.

Starting on Nov. 1, **The Oglethorpe Echo Legacy Inc.** will take its first step into the future. This novel approach will not succeed without you. You keep asking, "How can I help?"

Here's how:

- **Subscribe.** And keep resubscribing. Encourage others to do the same. Expect a countywide circulation campaign in the coming months. Readership is the lifeblood of a newspaper. **You can help.**

- **Advertise.** No matter the size of your ad, make *The Echo* a regular part of your advertising strategies. You must be a good

business before you can achieve any of your other goals. Traditionally, advertising is 80 percent of the newspaper's revenue. **You can help.**

- **Donate.** By forming a new nonprofit corporation, *The Echo* can accept your tax-deductible donations. The IRS has our application. Once approved, all donations will be made tax-deductible, retroactively. In between UGA semesters, we will be using paid college interns. Perhaps you'd like to sponsor one or more interns. **You can help.**

- **Adopt.** For *The Echo* to be a sustainable business, it needs to cover its overhead. Perhaps you'd like to "adopt" some portion of the printing, postage, utility bills (power, water, phone and internet), and assorted other expenses. For



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example, the water and sewer bill is \$40 per month. **You can help.**

- **Donate energy.** Maybe you'd like to volunteer for a variety of services, such as mowing the grass, trimming the hedge and planting seasonal flowers. How are you with a paint brush? The front exterior needs painting. Inside will get a fresh coat of paint, too. If you are handy with tools, there's a wall to be built to separate the lobby and the warehouse space. **You can help.**

- **Donate time.** *The Echo* will need volunteers to help keep the office open. We'll organize **Friends of the Echo** to help answer the telephone, greet customers and assist with offices duties. If you enjoy talking with folks, perhaps you'd enjoy selling advertising during the Christmas season or for the annual graduation edition. There's always something that needs to be done. **You can help.**

A community newspaper should be much like your grandma's quilt. It keeps you covered. *The Oglethorpe Echo* gathers information and stitches those patches of news and advertising into 52

unique editions each year. Geographically, Oglethorpe is one of Georgia's largest counties. It's a long way from Vesta to Maxeys. We

can't be everywhere, every time. **You can help.**

We salute the contributions of Ralph Maxwell and his family. Next week, Ralph will "stitch" together his last edition of *The Oglethorpe Echo*. I hope you will reach out to Ralph and express your gratitude. Be sure to say "thank you" to Jessica Colquitt, Brenda Norman, Elaine McGarity and John Williams, too.

Our goal is twofold. We want *The Oglethorpe Echo* to be an essential part of your lives, while extending its 148-year legacy for generations to come.

We cannot do this alone.

You can help.

Thank you.

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(For more commentaries visit www.dinknesmith.com.)

We welcome your donations.
Make checks payable to The Oglethorpe Echo Legacy, Inc.
Post Office Box 268, Lexington, GA 30648

(Application for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status has been submitted to the IRS. When approved, donations will made tax-deductible, retroactively. Process typically takes several months.)