

To Whom It May Concern:

Turkey Trot has been a well-loved festival for almost three quarters of a century. To Yellville locals (and the surrounding towns), Turkey Trot means many different things. It means fall is here. It means excitement for the Yellville-Summit students because they get to leave school early and walk down to the square. It means a turkey dinner a few weeks earlier than the rest of America. It means a Saturday morning parade and a Saturday night street dance. It means homecoming for many; it means getting to see friends and relatives we only see once a year—at Turkey Trot: our gathering place. It means great music on our beloved historic square. Turkey Trot is so much more than turkeys being released from an airplane. However, to outsiders, that is all it is.

The Yellville Area Chamber of Commerce does not have a part in the release of turkeys from airplanes. We are in charge of planning the events that take place at the festival, the booths that are set up on our courthouse square, and the selling of Turkey Trot merchandise. The release of turkeys from planes has been a part of Turkey Trot for many years, but a third-party individual, not affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce, regulates it. The Federal Air Administration has deemed it legal for this act to occur at our festival as long as it is performed within the parameters that they have set forth. However, we have had much more contention from individuals who believe the Yellville citizens are mistreating animals.

The phantom pilot is named as such for a reason. There is no airstrip in Yellville and therefore we do not have any authority in terms of flight control. Furthermore, Chamber board members, Turkey Trot sponsors, and Chamber members have absolutely no affiliation, jurisdiction, or control over what any individual does in his or her private plane in the air.

The Yellville Area Chamber of Commerce Board urges you to please put a stop to the petitioning of our Board, Chamber members, Turkey Trot sponsors, City and County officials, and citizens to put an end to the “turkey drop” because as has been explained, there is no affiliation or control by any of these individuals. We do not appreciate the residents of our area being threatened, their families being threatened, or the hateful language directed towards them. We do not see the good that comes from threatening a living being in the name of another living being. We sincerely love our town and our festival and wish it to continue to be a place of friendship, family, and fellowship.

Thank you,

The Yellville Area Chamber of Commerce Board

