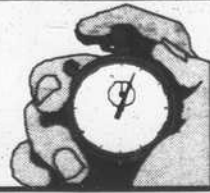


## One-Minute Editorial



OUR HEART GOES OUT TO THE FAMILIES who lost someone in the New York attack of Sept. 11. But, a couple of things have happened to take the luster off the glow.

One is the suit filed by Ellen Mariani. Her husband, Louis, was a passenger on United Airlines Flight 175, the second plane to hit the tower.

Mrs. Mariani, in the first lawsuit against an airline, is seeking unspecified damages. Her lawyer said the airline had a duty to exercise the highest degree of care with regard to safety. When asked, he could not say what the airline should have done but didn't.

Her suit was filed the same day the government announced a program to give money to the families of the victims. According to a spokesman, the average family will receive \$1.6 million but, if the funds are accepted, the survivors must agree not to sue the airlines. Mrs. Mariani said she isn't interested in taxpayers' money, she just "wants her day in court with United Airlines." We think she wants her day—along with a ton of airline money.

The second outrage is the source of the money. Congress just can't come up with money for the poor working stiff, or seniors being strangled by high medical costs, but without batting an eye, they set up a \$15 billion airline bailout bill. Then, they ear-

marked \$6 billion to be paid out to families who lost someone in the New York attack—to keep them from suing the airlines.

To add insult to injury, Kenneth Feinberg, the government fund's lawyer, said the money was "an unprecedented display of taxpayers' generosity." Horsefeathers! Taxpayer generosity had nothing to do with it. Truth be told, it's a political plan to keep the airlines out of court.

We want to go on record saying, as a taxpayer, we would not have voted for the airline money, nor the taxpayers' \$6 billion gift to the victims' families. Money sent to the Red Cross, United Way and a score of other agencies could, if administered honestly and fairly, go a long way to help them out of their financial crisis, without putting taxpayers in one.

You got to admire the politicians. They want to make sure the airlines stay healthy, so, when their business returns to normal they can be just as independent and surly to their customers and provide them with the same low quality service as before.

Now, don't be surprised when, during the next election, you learn the fly-boys are throwing reelection greenbacks around like a Washington snowstorm.

As for Mrs. Mariani, you can form your own opinion.



## THE PASSING PARADE The Week in Review

**Poinsettia sales**—in 2000 were about \$103 million on 13.6 million plants. The red ones were the best sellers.

**Red wine's**—natural chemical may protect against clogged arteries, according to *Nature Journal*. A glass or two every day is all they say you need. Don't chug the bottle.

**Make your money**—last longer. Convert your cash to \$50 bills. The Federal Reserve says dollar bills will last 1.5 years while \$20 bills have a two-year life span. The \$50 bill, they say, will hang around for five years.

**A cemetery company**—in Ft. Lauderdale is being sued for recycling graves. A video shows crushed burial vaults and human remains discarded in the woods.

**Sales of burgas**—the head-to-toe veils worn by women in Afghanistan, are down. After the Taliban was defeated, women stopped buying. One merchant said sales have dropped from 30 per day down to two.

**This could get under your skin**—A surgeon in New Jersey has found a way to embed a tiny computer chip under the skin. The chip could then send your personal information to a scanner. A chip under every politician's skin rigged up to a lie detector. Think of the possibilities!

**Budget in N.C.**—could have a shortfall as high as \$900 million by the end of June. Now would be a good time to give lawmakers a raise in pay.

**Pay raise for Congress**—the third in four years, was approved. It's an increase of \$4,999 making their pay each year \$150,000. Paul Light, a Brookings Institution expert, said, "It looks bad and smells bad."

**Military surgeon**—62-year-old Suhaila Siddiqi is the only female general in the Afghan army.

**General Motors**—wants the government to require daylight running lights on all cars. No mention was made of how much money the automakers would take in supplying the additional bulbs.

**Mistletoe doesn't grow for your kissing pleasure**—The parasite, found in treetops, is an important food source for birds, bees and animals.

**With a \$24 million track improvement**—you will save 20 minutes off your Amtrak train trip from Charlotte to Raleigh. But, you'll have to wait. Repairs won't be completed until about 2004.

**After an attack**—in which 14 members of Parliament were killed, India recalled its top envoy from Islamabad, Pakistan. For the first time in 30 years, bus and train traffic between the two countries has been suspended.

**Argentina's new president**—Adolfo Rodriguez will be asking Spain and the United States for financial help to get his country out of a four-year recession.

**Lord of the Rings**—the movie based on Tolkien's book, has taken the top box office spot after ticket sales topped \$453 million.

**Almost \$600,000**—has been spent to supply Afghanistan's Prime Minister Hamid Karzai and his 29 council members with chairs, desks, telephones, computers and other office items. They are asking for \$24 million from the United Nations to fund the interim government.

**Time magazine**—picked New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani as the publication's Person of the Year.

**Value of Europe's new money**—the euro, was recently pegged at 88 cents against the U.S. dollar.

# Up Coming

**Monday-Friday Dec. 31-Jan. 4**  
Greater Holy Temple, 404 Buffalo Shoals Road, plans New Year's revival services, 7:30 p.m. For information call 704-873-9309 or 704-528-4922.

**Saturday, Jan. 5**  
High school students will compete in annual Quiz Bowl at the Iredell County Agricultural Resource Center, 9:30 a.m. Call 704-878-3090 for information.

**Monday, Jan. 7**  
Friends of the Young Child will meet at the Iredell County Agricultural Resource Center, 444 Bristol Drive, at noon.

**Tuesday, Jan. 8**  
Satellite broadcast planned at 118 E. Broad St., and 1737-F Wilkesboro Highway, 6-7 p.m. The program gives a perspective on state of the nation, economy and financial markets in 2002. Call 704-872-6387 for information.

**Saturday, Jan. 12**  
Allison Woods plans *Winter Ramble*, 10 a.m. - noon. Discover how the creatures cope with the season of cold and scarcity. Cost \$5/person. Please call to register 704-872-7533.

**Thursday, Jan. 17**  
Lake Norman High School Parents Association plans to meet, 7 p.m. at Brawley School Road to discuss fundraising plans and development of 2002-2003 PTO business plan. For information call 704-590-3466.

**Thursday, Jan. 17**  
The Iredell Concert Association plans a concert featuring Alborada at the Roland R. Morgan Auditorium, Mooresville. Call 704-662-3858 for information.

**Friday, Jan. 18**  
A NASCAR auction planned at Statesville Civic Center to benefit the Iredell Museum of Arts & Heritage. Larry Hedrick will host the auction. Auction will open 5:30 - 7 p.m. for viewing and bidding on silent auction items. Live auction will begin at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. Call 704-873-4734 for information.

## Filing Period Delayed

Folks wanting to file as candidates in local elections this year won't be able to do so until mid-February at the earliest. The filing period, normally opening around this time, is delayed this year while state and federal district lines are debated in Raleigh. Many local elections are scheduled to coincide with House and Senate races.

Redistricting will go to the courts to be settled, and the filing period will have to be delayed until those district lines are settled. After the courts get through, the final redistricting has to be approved by the U. S. Department of Justice.

If the lines aren't settled by Feb. 18, the filing period won't open. If the filing period opens later than

Feb. 18, the May 7 primary will be delayed.

Local elections scheduled this year include three seats on the Iredell County Board of Commissioners and four seats on the Iredell-Statesville Board of Education.

Commission Chairman Sara Haire Tice, Vice Chairman Steve Johnson and Tommy Bowles are up for reelection.

School Board Chairman Vaughn Sprinkle, Vice Chairman Tara Cashion and members Jim Head and Ralph Staley all are up for reelection.

If the filing period opens Feb. 18, it will end March 1.

**Published weekly by the Iredell Citizen, Inc.**  
102-B South Center Street • Statesville, NC 28677  
704-872-1200 • 704-872-1280 • Fax 704-872-1281  
circ@iredellcitizen.com • ads@iredellcitizen.com

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