

## Random acts of kindness refresh the human soul

BY PEGGY BAILEY

The joy of living and working in a democratic nation founded on Christian principles has been so diminished by morbid daily newspaper reports and gory TV news that readers and viewers are gorged to the gills, and tired of them all. It seems the media think we are only interested in who has killed whom, who's being sued, and who is divorcing or being divorced.

Headlines spotlight how many died on the highways today, airliners that crash with hundreds of victims aboard, heavily laden ferries that fail to make shore, and

parents who physically abuse their children. The "news" continues with bloody, descriptive tales about rapes, kidnapping, hostage taking, random killings, and premeditated murders. Being given a steady diet of this can create a sense that nothing is worthwhile. It doesn't take long until these reports can take the edge off the most optimistic person's outlook on life.

Along with this menu of depression as the year ends, are the hustle and bustle of activities sandwiched between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Some may have real meaning and some are utterly ridiculous. It's easy to

### Guest EDITORIAL

become so burdened by business that the real importance of either holiday is lost. In a mad rush to get things done early, Thanksgiving has lost ground to eager Christmas shoppers, enticed by bold newspaper headlines announcing the best days to shop and screaming radio and television advertisements promising prices reduced from 25-50 percent.

It's only after going to the trouble to cut out coupons and show up at ungodly hours named Midnight Madness or Pre-Dawn Blitzes that gullible people find restrictions on nearly every name brand item the store sells. Yet it's legal, due to the print too fine to read on the back of the coupon. Once we've been lured in, we usually give in and pay the full price or leave disgruntled and angry.

However, among all the frustrations, if you look carefully, you might see something that redeems humankind and gives us the impetus to keep trying in a world filled with chaos. A few days ago I watched

from my seat in the local Subway Restaurant as a young man walked over to a booth next to the opposite wall from where I was sitting. He made several trips from the counter to the table where he carefully placed two foot-long sandwiches, potato chips and large soft drinks while his wife waited at the cash register to pay the bill. It took some time for the cashier to make the transaction and while this was going on, the young man sat down and appeared anxious to begin the meal.

However, instead of unwrapping his sandwich and chowing down, he reverently

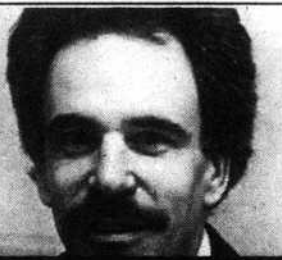
bowed his head, and in a sweeping, graceful motion, removed the baseball cap he was wearing. He placed it on the table and then lost himself in silent prayer. Apparently blotting out the world, he was unaware of his wife and the cashier, or the other customers drifting in and out and lining up to place their orders. It was only after his conversation with God that he took his first bite. Spellbound, I couldn't take my eyes off the young man as this beautiful scene unfolded.

It's not uncommon to see people saying grace over their meals in restaurants. The

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## Don't ask, don't tell intimate details

NC TODAY



Paul O'Connor

I didn't need to know that the Superior Court's Ray Warren is gay. Nor did I want to know it. And, I would not have known had not Warren "outed" himself at a press conference last Wednesday.

By the same sentiment, I didn't need to hear the details of how Bill and Monica entertained themselves in the Oval Office, but I've had no choice considering that I do not live in an ice cave.

In today's sexual/political environment, not only must we hear of all the intimate details and peccadilloes of our leaders, but they feel the need to tell us, before we even ask.

There are several gays serving in the legislature. We all know about them. But we don't ask, they don't tell. Just like I don't ask the straight legislators about their sex lives. To me, there is no more revolting thought than that of a legislator making love - to anyone, or anything.

Warren says that he knows of no one - not a publication, politician or preacher - who planned to out him. He said he doubted very much that any of the state's major newspapers, or gay periodicals, would have outted him. But, he says, he fears that some of his political opponents - members of his own Republican Party - might have done so in the coming

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'Twas the night before Christmas...

## Be careful voting conscience

Let there be no doubt about it.

What we are going through now is awful.

And those responsible - Bill Clinton, Ken Starr, and any of us who have used this tragedy for petty personal or partisan pleasure - cannot be forgiven quickly.

History's judgment will be severe.

For as long as our country endures, and our fellow citizens will pay a heavy penalty for their stupidity and narrow-minded selfishness.

Tragic as it is, this mess brings up important questions in a new context.

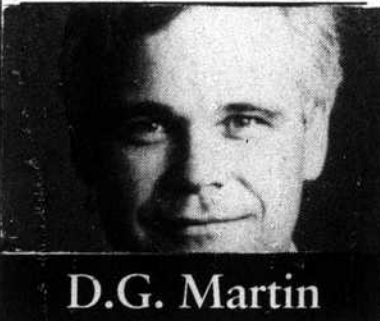
For instance, when do you give people a second chance and when do you burn them for their mistakes?

Some of us have to answer that question every day - supervising people at work, disciplining students in our schools and colleges, deciding whether to keep or get rid of trouble-making, underperforming professional athletes, and judging whether or not to put a teen-aged lawbreaker in jail.

There aren't any easy answers, of course.

But there are some people

### One on ONE



D.G. Martin

who are tough-minded about maintaining clear expectations of appropriate conduct - and also know when to give second chances and how to do it.

Those people are my heroes.

There are lessons for us in this ongoing tragedy, too.

I want to talk about one that intrigues me.

See if you agree with how I explain why most of the Republicans in the House of Representatives favor impeaching the President and most Democrats don't.

The most important facts are not in dispute. So the question before Congress is a simple one. Do the agreed-upon facts call for impeachment?

People of good will can

disagree about the answer to this question. Even though I have strong feelings about this matter, it doesn't surprise me that others see it quite differently.

Nor should it be a surprise if about half the members of the House vote for impeachment and half vote against. But how do you explain the phenomenon of almost all Democrats voting against impeachment and almost all Republicans voting for it?

Well, I can hear your answer coming right through the page. "It's simple, DG, it is raw partisan politics. The Republicans are going to vote against the President no matter what they think about the merits and the Democrats are going to vote against the Republicans. That is just the way it is."

Wait a minute. Listen to North Carolina Congressman Howard Coble. "Do not point accusatory fingers at Democrats or Republicans because there is disagreement.

Assuming we vote our consciences and exercise sound judgment, little else can be asked. Some favor impeachment, some oppose it."

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## Town home to sliver of US aviation history

The wind-swept dunes of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, were the testing grounds for experiments in aviation conducted by Wilbur and Orville Wright in the early years of the 20th century. Their work culminated on Dec. 17, 1903, when they made the first powered airplane flights in history. Today, North Carolina proclaims itself "First in Flight," while the hometown of the Wright Brothers, Dayton, OH, bills itself as "The Birthplace of Aviation." Both have museums and displays of Wright memorabilia.

Edenton, too, has mementos of the Wright Brothers: "genuine parts of the original Kitty Hawk plane," encased in plastic, and authenticated by "an aging Orville Wright."

Man's interest in flight began hundreds of years before Orville and Wilbur Wright were born. Gliders carried people as early as 1853, and experiments with steam-powered aircraft began in 1892. But it was the Wright brothers who "put together the combination of critical characteristics" needed for man to fly.

Seeking unpopulated, treeless plains with predictable wind currents, the Wright Brothers came to Kitty Hawk in 1900 to launch their "man-made kite," according to Fred C. Kelly in his biography of the aviators. For the next three years, they designed and built kites, gliders, engines and instruments in Dayton, then crated up their equipment and shipped it to Elizabeth City by train. Remnants of packing boxes addressed to the brothers also survive in Edenton. In Elizabeth City, the brothers chartered a boat and moved everything to Kitty Hawk Bay. Each year, they rebuilt their simple camp and settled in to test their designs.

When Orville and Wilbur Wright scheduled an experiment in flying, they alerted

### Edenton HISTORY



Mary Ann Coffey

the community by hanging a flag on the side of their work shed. On Dec. 13, the Flyer went aloft with Orville at the controls, wearing his usual stiff white starched collar and a necktie. For the first time in history, a machine carrying a man raised itself by its own power into the air, sailed forward with reduction of speed and landed at a point as high as that from which it started. He flew but 120 feet, "less than the wingspan of many modern airliners, but it represented the beginning of a new age in technology and human achievement," according to the Encarta Encyclopedia. In all, four flights were made that day. Then a gust of wind struck the machine and flipped it over, causing so much damage "that all possibility of further flights with it for that year were at an end."

The Wright boys telegraphed their father of their success, and a telegraph operator in Norfolk, VA alerted The Virginian-Pilot, which gave the event front page, banner headline treatment. The Dayton, OH, paper ignored the news.

The Wright Brothers went back to Dayton, and didn't fly again until 1905, when they returned to Kitty Hawk with the third-Flyer, "the world's first practical airplane." By the end of the season, they were famous. They left the plane and moved into the international arena, touring Europe. In the

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## Should you have economic resolutions for '99?

BY DR. MIKE WALDEN

The new year is typically the time resolutions are made. Many view the beginning of the year as a fresh start - the time to make changes to improve our lives. As we approach 1999, let me suggest ten resolutions to improve your economic life.

(1) I will invest for the long-run and not worry about short-run fluctuations in markets. For example, it's very hard to time the stock market and know when highs

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If you have something you would like to get off your chest, take the time to write the The Chowan Herald. All letters must include your current address, telephone number and signature of the writer. Deadline for the letters is 4 pm on Monday prior to each week's publication.

You

DECIDE

and lows are hit. However, the stock market is virtually assured of rising over five, 10, 15 years or more. People with a long-run perspective are investors; those with a short-term perspective are speculators.

(2) I won't necessarily spend money like my neighbors or as advertisements suggest. Everyone is different, and spending should be directed by individual tastes and preference. Resist peer and advertising pressure if those suggestions don't match your situation and desires.

(3) I will not let my non-

mortgage debt payments take more than 20 percent of my income. Research shows that most people with higher debt loads are headed for financial trouble.

(4) I will think in real, or purchasing power, dollar terms. The purchasing power value of a dollar declines over time because prices rise. For example, \$1,000 buys only 70 percent of what it did 10 years ago. There are techniques to make these comparisons, but the important thing is to recognize this fact when comparing incomes or expenses over time.

(5) I will always compare the benefits and costs of alternative actions before making a decision. The importance of this resolution should be obvious, but it's often ignored. For instance, in families with two working parents, often one parent's income is virtually taken by

taxes, child care expenses and work expenses. Families in this situation would actually be better off financially with one worker.

(6) I will begin a savings plan as soon as possible in order to use compound interest to my advantage. Compound interest means interest earns interest. The sooner you begin saving, the more this works to your advantage. For example, if you save \$100 each month starting at age 35, you'll have about \$100,000 by age 65 if you earn 6 percent annual interest. But if you began your savings plan just five years earlier, at age 30, you'd have over 40 percent more, of \$142,000, at age 65.

(7) I will not forget the importance of insurance. Insurance isn't as flashy as invest-

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