

The fabric of Bertie County since 1832

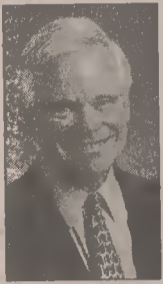
Opinion

Good books for the folks you forgot...

You forgot somebody, didn't you? Somebody who is expecting a present from you? And now, remembering, you have no idea what to give, do you?

Here are some thoughts from my recent reading.

At the top of your list of books for your friends who are public policy or history nerds should be two North Carolina authors whose books recently made the list of The New York Times's 100 Notable Books of 2017.



D.G. MARTIN
One On One

Charlotte native Graham Allison's "Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?" puts the dangers in the U.S.-China dynamic relationship in understandable language. Duke Professor Timothy Tyson's "The Blood of Emmett Till" revisits the 1955 kidnapping and brutal killing of Till, a 14-year-old black youth from Chicago visiting relatives in Mississippi.

Other books for such serious readers include "Julius Chambers: A Life in the Legal Struggle for Civil Rights" by Richard A. Rosen and Joseph Mosnier. Their account of North Carolina's leading civil rights attorney and hero persuaded me that a statue of Chambers belongs on the courthouse lawn of every North Carolina county.

Similarly, Kenneth Janken's "The Wilmington Ten: Violence, Injustice, and the Rise of Black Politics in the 1970s" deals with unhealed wounds of racial turmoil.

If you think these books are too serious for holiday gifts, how about ones that deal with food?

For example, "Deep Run Roots" by TV star and Kinston chef, Vivian Howard, is a story-filled book of recipes and descriptions of great North Carolina foods. It is destined to be a classic.

In "Foster's Market Favorites: 25th Anniversary," another North Carolina food hero, Sarah Foster, shares recipes and tells how her Durham market came to be and came to thrive.

New Bookwatch guest host Randall Kenan's "The Carolina Table: North Carolina Writers on Food" includes his and other North Carolina writers' food memories and images.

"Holy Smoke: The Big Book of North Carolina Barbecue" by John Shelton Reed, Dale Volberg Reed and William McKinney, was recently re-issued in paperback and is a surefire successful present for anyone who loves North Carolina barbecue.

If there is anything more important to North Carolinians than food, it is basketball. Some recent books could be answers to your gift-giving needs.

Veteran sports journalist Art Chansky's "Game Changers: Dean Smith, Charlie Scott, and the Era That Transformed a Southern College Town," tells how a junior high school kid in Harlem became a North Carolina legend.

John Feinstein's "The Legends Club: Dean Smith, Mike Krzyzewski, Jim Valvano, and an Epic College Basketball Rivalry" shows how college basketball became a part of our culture.

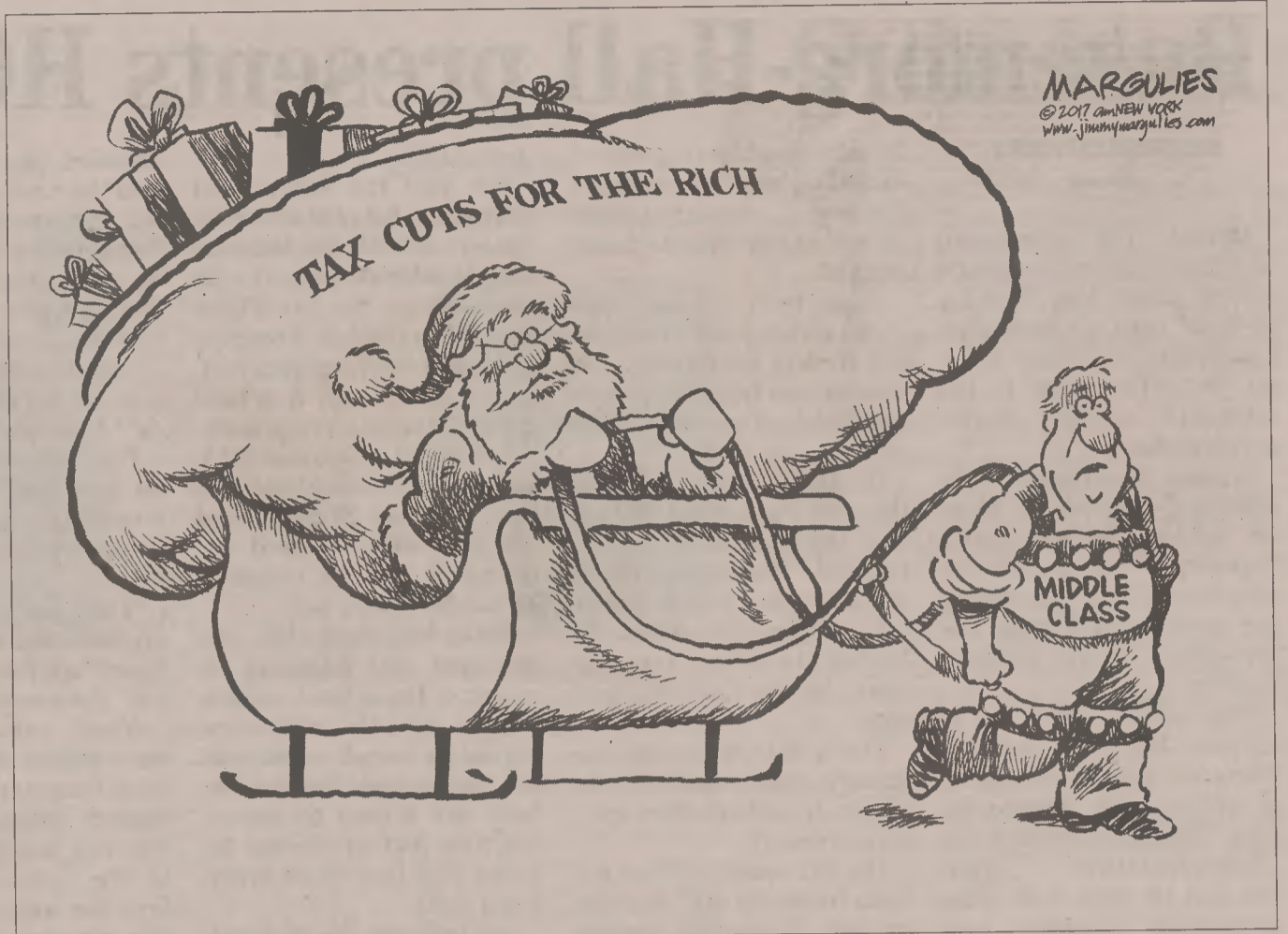
Scott Ellsworth's "The Secret Game: A Wartime Story of Courage, Change, and Basketball's Lost Triumph" uses a forbidden game between a team from North Carolina College for Negroes and an all-white team from Duke in 1944 to help us understand radical transformations of the sport and our culture.

If you need even more ideas, visit your local bookseller or take a look at the books listed on the Bookwatch web page at <http://www.uncv.org/watch/uncv-orgin-als/nc-bookwatch/>

D.G. Martin hosts "North Carolina Bookwatch," which airs Sundays at noon and Thursdays at 5 p.m. on UNC-TV.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Will it ever snow in eastern N.C.?

The snow missed us again. We must live in some type of weird vortex that heats the air just enough for precipitation to stay just barely above 32 degrees.

As soon as all chances of snow are gone, the temperature drops. Has anyone else noticed this? It happens. Every. Single. Time.

Less than an hour and a half away, friends were frolicking in the snow, while we had a never-ending cold, cold rain.

My youngest and I headed out in this messy, driving wetness to do some Christmas shopping for his friends.

Christmas music was playing on the stereo in the car and we could almost imagine what it would look like if it were snowing. Our mood was light.

That is, until the "Twelve Pains of Christmas" came on.

I used to think the song was pretty funny. By the time the song

was over and we hit Greenville holiday traffic, I was ready to turn the car around and head home to hide under the covers until Christmas was over.

If you have never heard the song, consider it a blessing. If you have heard it, you know exactly what I am talking about. It ruins any warm, fuzzy feelings you have about Christmas.

It also validates all the Ebenezer Scrooges out there.

I didn't realize how negatively the song had affected me until it was over. I had a headache and was extremely grumpy.

In Elena Mannes book the "Power of Music" she states that music stimulates more parts of the brain than any other human function. She sees the potential in music's power to even change the brain and affect the way it works.

From now on I will be more careful to what I listen to before entering the holiday hustle in frightful weather.

For the most part, I've been doing all my Christmas shopping online. No crowds, no bad music, no

tempting treats to derail my diet. That was all well and good until a large chain, who shall remain unnamed, shipped a Black Friday gift to my house in the original packaging.

I naively assumed they would package it with some other things I ordered in one big, plain brown box.

It was going to be a huge surprise for my chef-in-training, 13-year-old.

He was the only one at home when the delivery was made.

Eyes wide with a smile struggling not to spread at the corners of his mouth, he told me he had no idea what was in the box.

Who knew Santa wears a brown shirt and pants and drives a big, brown enclosed sleigh these days?

Deborah is Staff Writer for the Bertie Ledger-Advance. She wishes all the Ledger readers a Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year. She can be reached at dgriffin@ncweeklies.com.



DEBORAH GRIFFIN
Farmlife Wife



THADD WHITE
Out Here In Left Field

Over the course of five years leading the Bertie Ledger-Advance, and now almost three editing the Martin County Enterprise & Weekly Herald, I've been asked a treasure trove of questions.

Today, I'll attempt to answer some of them.

1. We recently participated in the Christmas parade/tree lighting/social. Why wasn't our picture in the newspaper?

The short answer is we have limited space, and we simply choose the best photos to run in the newspaper. The long answer is it depends on a variety of things.

The first thing is, if we are printing an article and photos about a Christmas celebration, the best photos are those where people look like they're celebrating - smiling, happy and friendly. Those photos will be our go-to every time.

2. Church A has a lot of news in the church news section. Why isn't our church there?

The answer to this one is simple. We print the news we are provided. If a church has a special

service planned, we'll be glad to publish it if we are afforded the details.

Priority will always go to churches in Bertie County, but we occasionally print services for churches in Chowan, Martin, Hertford and Northampton counties, as they border ours.

3. While on the subject of church, I see pastors in the county writing an article, but never my pastor. Why is that?

Over the course of five years, we've had a number of pastors write columns for our newspaper. Some have moved on, some have died and others continue their work now. We appreciate all their efforts.

The answer may be as simple as I don't know your pastor. I've worked hard as I can to diversify the church columns with pastors of different denominations, races and beliefs, but by-and-large they are men and women I know or have met.

If your pastor is interested in writing for us, I encourage him or her to contact me because we're always looking for new voices for our church page.

4. How do I get information from my group or organization into the newspaper?

We welcome submissions to

the newspaper, and we hope to continue to get more from our community. The long and short is that we accept submissions in the ways you'd expect: mail, email, fax and by dropping it off in the office.

5. When will what I submit run?

The short answer is as soon as we have space. The long answer is that may be quick or it may take a bit. As much as possible, we try to run things in the order they were submitted to make it as fair as possible to everyone bringing things to the newspaper.

That isn't always possible because we may have a small space in a certain edition and the older items are all longer. We do the best we can to do it as fairly and as quickly as possible.

6. Do you mind if I contact and remind you about my article?

Absolutely not. We do have times when articles are submitted and for some reason they don't get to us either because of human or computer error. If you're not sure, always feel free to call or email.

Thadd White is Editor of the Bertie Ledger-Advance and the Martin County Enterprise & Weekly Herald. He can be reached via email at twhite@ncweeklies.com.

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