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## Making a Difference

By Gina Kelly Ellis

"In the morning, when I rise, give me Jesus. You can have all this world. Just give me Jesus. When I am alone, give me Jesus. You can have all this world. Just give me Jesus. When I come to die, give me Jesus. You can have all this world. Just give me Jesus."

These are words from a beautiful song that I was listening to this morning as I was visiting with God about what to write. I have so many things on my mind right now. Sometimes the stresses of life are almost overwhelming. When your mind is burdened, it is sometimes a bit difficult to find the words that God wants said. But that is when we need to remember to ask for Jesus. There is nothing more beautiful than to think about this wonderful friend who is always available, always ready to give the

most perfect advice. It is so wonderful to me think about waking up in the morning and knowing that Jesus is there. It is amazing to think that when I feel so alone, I am truly not because Jesus is there. And then I think of that day when God will finally take me home, there will be Jesus. Does it get any better? Absolutely not.

We are coming out of a horribly contentious election. The negativity did not stop when the vote was over. It rings in your ears everywhere you turn. If we ever needed to remember Jesus, it is now. The sadness of all these negative thoughts and comments I am hearing now is that much of it is coming from Christians who know where Jesus can be found. But it seems instead of looking to Him for help and peace, we would much rather spout gloom and doom. I am not

saying don't stand for your beliefs. Certainly not! In fact, for far too long Christians have been way too silent in our country. But what I am saying is just remember who our God is and remember how powerful He is and remember Jesus.

In the morning, when you rise, look for Jesus. When you feel alone, look for Jesus. And then on that day when it is your turn to get the first sight of heaven, look for Jesus. Don't worry about the world around you. Work to make changes where needed but let God guide you. He has a plan for this country and He has a plan for you. Just step back a minute and follow Him instead of saying horrible things that just don't need saying.

Just give me Jesus. He makes all the difference in my life and in my world. Can I offer you my Jesus?

## Paper 'n Ink:

Rampant change...

By Lynn Brisendine

Four days later... If we learned anything from Tuesday's exercise in Democracy it is that the United States of America isn't your Granddaddy's country any longer.

It would seem that the new normal, a trendy catch phrase of the times, changes pretty regularly these hyped up 21st century days.

I think the last couple of weeks have confirmed my suspicions of massive cultural upheavals in so many areas of our lives in 2012. The presidential race took priority in election coverage, as it certainly should have, but some other items voters passed in a few states could prove to be huge issues coming down the road for all the states.

Colorado and Washington have legalized the sale of recreational marijuana. While the voters in those two states said yes to weed, the federal government continues to say no. Proponents of legalizing this mind altering drug point to the amounts of tax money legal sales could provide to various government tills. Making the sale and use of this substance okay would also ease up the law enforcement's continuing workload, allowing them to concentrate on other substances much worse and more addictive.

Opponents are just as vocal in their arguments of seeing drug abuse escalate. Hemp is just a first step in becoming an addiction of stronger and more debilitating substances.

In two other states, Maryland and Maine, same sex marriages have been legalized. It is a continuing and polarizing issue. Gays are adamant that they should be allowed to marry whomever they choose.

More conservative folks say no. This is a societal taboo from ages past and it is a danger to the family unit which must remain sacrosanct as a bedrock tenant of humanity. Thirty-one states have passed laws banning gay couples to wed.

While some things change, and it seems rapidly, other trends continue long traditions. In my lifetime, after so many national elections, the pundits quickly proclaim the losing party dead and gone.

But, at least in my recollection, the losing party retreats, licks its wounds and rebounds, sometimes within the next two year election cycle.

These ups and downs on the red and blue sides of all political issues has been exacerbated by the rise of various minority groups. Hispanics and African Americans swayed this election as never before. And with their contributions, especially to the Democrats, future ramifications seem inevitable.

We are faced with some ongoing problems that could become outright disasters. Complications that see two sides heading for the "fiscal cliff." A dilemma seeing tax increases and huge spending cuts affecting all of us. This situation we find ourselves embroiled in and worried about is a result of having two entities, who hate each other, constantly maneuvering for political advantage. They have stalled and argued and continually postponed action on this known problem for too long.

It would seem that intelligence should override stubbornness and these "leaders" should put aside their unresolvable differences and find a workable solution. The term for that is compromise.

It's a give and take proposition that we citizens must deal with constantly. But, it seems that we have seen other trends of a minority taking over the process. And it is a vocal group demanding no compromise. "Take us over the cliff," they scream.

Many of our "leaders" became followers and they signed a pledge binding their actions to one party man who makes unreasonable demands. It is wrong headed for people whom the citizens have elected to be bound in their abilities to govern effectively.

If these men and women continue to fight against making things right and we do go over this cliff, then I think many of them will find themselves retired by a citizenry becoming aware and making new rules.

Our country, like it or not, is changing in so many ways at a rate hard to imagine. These rising factions make it clear that compromise is not only reasonable but expected.

## Letter to the Editor

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## Casual Attire is Good, but Icons Recalled Texas Journalist...by Willis Webb

Men's wear has evolved to mostly casual dress these days and that's okay with me. However, don't ask me to name any well-dressed "casual guys" because most dressers who stand out in my vision choose other than my own favored "jeans and a button-down shirt" look.

In addition to retirement allowing a more relaxed approach to my sartorial image, there has been a strong trend in at least the last 10-15 years toward casual dress at the office in most professions. Many businesses today allow the casual look, which means less necktie wear for men as well as being able to shuck a suit or sport coat.

Today, in Texas community newspapers you will see all manner of clothing styles. Gone are the days of visors and elastic arm bands for long-sleeved dress shirts (arm bands were necessary in the first three or four decades of the 20th Century because shirts only came in one sleeve length, ordinarily too long for a majority of men).

A great deal of that diversity of dress depends on what roles a community editor-publisher may play. Generally, it tends to

favor a relaxed but still professional look, particularly if the publisher is involved in the news gathering and/or advertising sales segments of the newspaper. However, if the editor-publisher is heavily involved in the production process, you may see older, rumpled clothes stained with printer's ink. I can't come close to knowing how many of my shirts and trousers and, yes, even occasionally shoes, have been ruined by the ink many say flows through our veins instead of the blood of ordinary mortals.

Some of the young turks in my field, go to the office in shorts and polo shirts.

My mid-life fashion trends still tended to coats and ties in the 1970s-1980s. After all, our peers told us, even small-town editor-publisher types needed to look "professional," whatever that means and entails. And, in those days I tried to emulate those I saw who stood out and made a fashion statement for men.

Yeah, despite disclaimers, macho types really do worry about whether they match up with others in their professional,

work-world lives.

The most bold, suave and debonair fashion statement I ever saw by a newspaper man came in 1972 at a South Texas Press Association convention in Kerrville. That statement was made by a man who had an iconic look, not only in the way he dressed, but in his general appearance and in his demeanor as well.

Cap Henkel (I never knew his real first name) looked like the owner/captain of a luxury yacht. First, there was his white hair, mustache and beard. The first time I saw Cap, he was wearing a skipper blue double-breasted blazer with brass buttons, white trousers, white shoes, a white shirt and a bright red ascot/scarf neatly wrapped and folded in the open neck of the shirt.

He punctuated that look with a curved meerschaum pipe, packed with a pungent tobacco blend.

Cap looked like someone you'd call "commodore" or, at the very least, "captain" (which, of course, we did). He was distinctive in the way he dressed and distinguished in the manner

in which he carried himself.

I can remember every detail of how Cap was dressed, but I can't remember if he was still publishing in Refugio or had already retired and moved to Rockport. Retirement may have been premature, because Cap continued to write a column for Refugio, then the Rockport Pilot and eventually for the Port Aransas South Jetty, once his daughter, Mary, and her lifemate Murray Judson purchased it. However, Cap was already a successful newspaper icon and a leader in Texas publishing, someone that upstart young publishers, such as I was then, looked up to.

Obviously, many community newspaper publishers are great dressers but few so distinctive as my early newspaper hero, Cap, who published newspapers that matched his fashion splendor.

I think I'll dig in our old clothes closet and see if I still have a navy blazer.

Willis Webb is a retired community newspaper editor-publisher. He can be reached by email at [wwebb1937@att.net](mailto:wwebb1937@att.net).

## The Vital Issues Congress Won't Adress

By Lee H. Hamilton

With the elections over, Congress faces a full plate of tough issues when it reconvenes. There will be a lot of talk about fiscal matters, "grand bargains," and sorting out party caucuses. But there's one vitally important question we're certain to hear nothing about.

That is Congress's own behavior — and more specifically, the behavior of its members. After what may be the most widely panned session in modern congressional history, Capitol Hill ought to use every means possible to rebuild the American people's trust. Yet the matter over which it has the most control — striving to ensure the ethical behavior of its members — seems to be on no one's agenda.

Earlier this year, The Wash-

ington Post detailed a stunning array of questionable practices. Its reporters found that 130 members and their families had traded stock in companies registered to lobby before their committees — and that over 5,000 of those trades occurred as the bills those companies were interested in came before Congress. In some cases, the ethics were even dicier. One lawmaker put her name on legislation extending the lifespan of federal grazing permits — which her husband used for feeding his cattle. All told, the Post found, 73 members of Congress "sponsored or co-sponsored legislation in recent years that could benefit businesses or industries in which either they or their family members are involved or invested."

What might seem dubious to

you or me doesn't even raise an eyebrow in Congress, however. Legislators argue that because they need to represent the interests of their constituents, and their own interests often overlap with their constituents', that means leaving them free to enact bills and direct federal money that just happens to boost their financial prospects.

The ethics committees seem largely to agree. Since the scandals that brought down speakers Jim Wright and Newt Gingrich in the 1990s and then-House Majority Leader Tom DeLay in 2004, committee members in both the House and the Senate have been reluctant to police their colleagues. In the past couple of years, only two House members have been disciplined for ethical breaches. The

Senate committee has sent out four "letters of admonishment."

Ethics watchdogs believe the committees are more interested in protecting members than in overseeing them. It's hard to argue with them when the Post investigation found that the ethics committees had given scores of lawmakers permission to direct earmarks to projects close to their own homes and tax money to institutions where they had relatives on the board.

Look, this isn't complicated. To the ethics committees, these members of Congress were in the clear. But in terms of what ordinary citizens expect from their representatives, does their behavior pass the smell test? Is it okay to use public office to help oneself and one's family financially? I

don't think so.

Because there is one rule that the ethics committees seem conveniently to have forgotten: it's the rule that members should always behave in a way that reflects credit on the institution they serve. Instead, what the public sees is an institution that protects its members by holding them to a far lower standard.

This matters at the moment not just because Congress's credibility is in the tank. Four years ago Congress did act — though only under great pressure — to improve its ethical standing. It created the Office of Congressional Ethics, an independent monitor that has used its scant power effectively to review members' behavior and recommend action. Some of the cases it brought were

so compelling they even spurred the ethics committees to investigate. The OCE seems properly to view congressional office as a public trust.

This may be because its board is made up of highly respected former members and public servants. For the office to continue its work, however, half those board members will need to be replaced by the start of the new congressional term in January, because their terms are expiring. So far, House leaders of both parties — who are charged with naming the board — have dragged their heels.

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

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