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Making a Difference

By Gina Kelly Ellis

Max Lucado is a wonderful Christian writer. He has such a deep understanding and such a masterful way of wording things to make Biblical thoughts understandable for all who read his work. I really admire him and all that he does. He wrote a book called Every Day Deserves a Chance. I love that title. Love the book too! But that title says it all. Every day does deserve a chance. So, do you give everyday a chance?

I am on Facebook fairly often. For those who have no clue, Facebook is a social media site where individuals can express themselves in various ways. For the most part, it is kind of fun, but so often there are comments from people who are determined not to give any day a chance. I just feel so bad for people when the first thing they post each morning is 40 word diatribe on why the day has started out awful and how it is going to continue to be awful and how it is all someone else's fault. Just gets old. Give the day a fighting chance, for crying out loud!

So, how do you greet the new day and give it a chance? Ideally, our first thoughts at waking up ought to be of Jesus and all He has done for you. But, if you are normal, that is probably not the case for you. Many times we greet each day by making a list of what all we have to accomplish that day. Or by rehashing all the problems we know are facing us that day. That is okay, but after you make that list of tasks or problems, why not just hand them over to God? That is one very good way to give the day a chance. When we start our day out by handing our lists over to God, at the end of the day, we will find that the day has gone better and our burden feels lighter.

Another way in which we give each day a chance is to find ways to serve God by serving others. Find ways to meet the needs of others. Find a way to show God to a lost world each day. Just put the needs of others in front of your own needs for a change. When you have spent the day serving God by meeting the needs of those around you, at the day's end you will rest well knowing you gave the day to God and by doing so, you gave the day a chance. As it says in the Bible, "This is the day that the Lord hath made. I will rejoice and be glad in it." So give the day a chance. Give every day a chance and see what a difference it makes!

Going Macho to Mod and Then Back

Texas Journalist...by Willis Webb

It's actually funny to watch the efforts of us guys to look and act macho or mod.

For a guy who grew up the son of a cattle-buyer-rancher-sometime-farmer, although nothing was ever said, I believe my dad really wanted me to follow in his footsteps. I figured he thought journalists pronounced their profession with a lisp.

Right now, I'm carrying a little black bag with a strap over my shoulder. Some pure macho types (you can tell 'em by the combo smirk-sneer on their face) look at me and start to grin their accusatory "sissy" look until they see the tubing running from the bag to a vein in my arm (it's chemo). The look changes from sissy to pity. I don't know which is worse. Neither is macho or mod.

My first real encounter with such male confusion came in the Sixties when long hair came into vogue for men — macho, mod or otherwise.

My flat-top (some say crew cut) was flying out of style. Letting one's hair grow from crew to something you can comb and style is a struggle. In my efforts to go mod hair, I discovered wax, gel, hair spray and unisex hair salons.

As my hair started to reach lengths that could be combed with some help from a roll brush and hair dryer, I went to the salon regularly to convince my hair not to stick straight up but to lay down and look both macho and mod.

In that process, a stylist got carried away with some of the chemicals and the dryer and suddenly my hair began breaking off in clumps. That's when the salon owner fired the stylist and took over the resurrection of my hair's health so I could proceed to the mod look — styled, longer hair.

James, the salon owner (don't call it "shop"), decided I needed a "do" that would allow my hair to "relax." So, I got a perm(anent).

Yeah, the kind that involved curlers, a smelly chemical to achieve "curl," and lots of "heat" from the dryers, hand-held and hood type. That brought on my first significant encounter with macho versus mod.

Now, understand, I was a slender 170-pounder at the time and in pretty good shape. And, as LifeMate has often reminded me, I usually have this "stern" (I say "serious") look on my face.

At any rate, there I sat under the dryer in James' "salon," hair in curlers, a plastic sheet draped around me. In walks this 250-pound-plus, 6-5 man in full Western regalia, 10-gallon hat and all. He strolls to the back of the "salon" where the dryers are located, looks at me, and starts grinning.

Well, LifeMate must have been right at least this once. I must have looked pretty stern because the smile came off the cowboy's face and he turned and left the salon. I believe Cowboy probably thought I had a thumb-buster pistol under that plastic sheet.

At any rate, amongst such challenges I faced, there was also the look with the perm. James left it long enough, that some of the curls dangled over onto my forehead. My boss at the daily paper (he was publisher, I was editor) a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Reserves, thought it was hilarious. I didn't.

So much for trying to be mod. Actually, I just wanted to have hair I could comb like it was when I was a teen.

But, I went around with the perm for a few months until my hair was "healed" a la James.

Slowly, my hair grew out to an over-the-collar length considered "mod" at that time.

Finally, we've returned to sanity with men's hairstyles. Now, it's what individually suits you and as long as you're "looking good" a la Theo Huxtable, you're macho and mod.

Willis Webb is a retired community newspaper editor-publisher of more than 50 years experience. He can be reached by email at wwebb1937@att.net.

Paper 'n Ink:

headlines monitor the world...

By Lynn Brisendine

Winding down National Newspaper Week has me looking at many of the headlines on local, state and national levels observing a myriad of topics and a mix match of the good and the bad.

On a local level, we are in the midst of seeking information concerning several stories, some of them uplifting and others delving into problems our citizens face.

In this business of covering the news, it is too easy to take a he said/she said event and blast away with a one-sided report. We, at this newspaper, try to be as unbiased as possible when covering an ongoing news story.

Tensions are running high as we begin the stretch run on our national political scene. Every day finds new charges and counter arguments from one candidate to the other. Both have millions to spend on attack ads and they are certainly on the offense with less than a month to go.

It appears that much will ride on the coming presidential debates. Most pundits, at least 75 percent of them, gave the last eyeball to eyeball contest to Republican Mitt Romney. The other 25 percent are so caught up in their loyalties to a party that they can not begin to admit anything but victory for their guy, President Obama. Seemingly every week, if not almost daily, another political bombshell explodes and the polls waver from one side to the other in an almost dead-even result.

I thought it downright funny when a reporter asked a group at a Republican rally last week if they put any belief in the polling numbers. Nearly all of them fired back that the polls had been skewed by a liberal national media. "You can't give them any credibility," one interviewee resolutely stated. "So, what to do you think of today's numbers in those polls that sees your candidate in the lead?" asked the reporter. "Well, sometimes they get it right" was the confusing answer.

Two more debates are to be held. And, if the trends continue, we will see those less than credible polls, unless of course they suit your needs, bounce the five to six percent either way again.

It continues to be a toss up deal as this country is divided almost in half when it concerns national politics.

Whatever, I will be happy to see all of this constant turmoil come to an end in 23 days. Of course, I must admit that is naive, as our continuing political split will just take on a different set of parameters.

On the international stage comes a story so contrary to our way of thinking as to be bizarre in the worst sense.

The Taliban shot a 14 year-old girl for having the nerve to stand up and declare her worth as a human being. This young lady seeks an education and wishes to become a doctor. The problem is a religious sect which thinks her being female makes that not just improbable but impossible.

This story isn't taking place in that land of "reason" Afghanistan, but in the neighboring and much more "sophisticated" Pakistan.

Her attempted killing took place on a bus filled with other children being transported to school. The shooter boarded the vehicle and asked for the victim by name and, after identifying her, opened fire.

The Pakistani teenager survived the two bullets. At least she was alive at this writing. Her wounds were treated, and she was said to be improving, but then brain swelling placed her back in jeopardy. Her survival though has been acknowledged by her assassins who blatantly announced their intention to finish the killing should she actually survive.

In the 21st century we see these zealot thugs shooting their own little girls because those little girls want to be classified as people.

In Wednesday's paper, we published an editorial cartoon which had various characters resembling Mideastern types labeled with non flattering descriptions, including: poor medical care, illiteracy, poverty, terrorism and oppression. Two other figures are in the background with one of them telling the other..."of course our real problem is a You Tube video..."

At times these cartoons make statements on a world gone mad like no other. I hope the cartoonist doesn't suffer a jihad.

Headlines, like the cartoons, monitor a mixed up world.

Letter to the Editor

P.O. Box 1200 Seminole, Texas 79360

Sign and include address and phone number...

You may also send your letter via the Internet send it to seminolesentinel.com

The Sentinel requests that letters be concise and reserves the right to edit for libelous content or inappropriate language and space. We will edit a letter to conform with the standards we use in publishing a responsible community newspaper.

Get Ready for Medicare Open Enrollment

By Jason Alderman

For senior citizens, the most important decision you will make this fall comes in the form of choosing the most appropriate Medicare coverage options for next year.

Medicare's 2013 open enrollment period runs from October 15 to December 7, 2012. For most current enrollees, that's the only time to make coverage changes for the coming calendar year (exceptions are made if you later move outside your plan's service area, qualify for financial assistance or a few other situations).

Several changes to Medicare take effect in 2013, including:

• Medicare Part D participants who reach the so-called doughnut hole coverage gap will begin receiving a 52.5 percent discount on brand-name prescription drugs and a 21 percent discount on generics, compared to 2012's 50/14 percent rates.

• Medicare will begin covering additional preventive and screening services, including assessments and counseling for depression, alcohol misuse, cardiovascular disease and obesity.

• A redesigned Medicare Summary Notice, which explains what your doctor/ provider billed for, the Medicare-approved amount, what Medicare paid, and what you must pay.

Medicare also recently overhauled its website (www.medicare.gov), adding many new features and simplifying the language and site navigation. For example:

The homepage now provides direct links for common tasks like applying for Medicare, changing plans, calculating costs, researching what different plans cover and more.

• Search for whether a specific test, item or service is covered under Original Medicare (Parts A and B).

• Quick links to replace a lost Medicare card, find a Medicare Advantage (Part C) or prescription drug plan (Part D).

• Find doctors and other health professionals, nursing homes, hospitals, home health services and health/drug plans, and make side-by-side comparisons of costs and care provided.

• It can be accessed on mobile devices like tablets and smartphones, so you can seek information anywhere, anytime.

Briefly, Medicare provides health care benefits to people age 65 and older and those under 65 with certain disabilities or end-stage renal disease. For most people, the initial enrollment period is the seven-month period that begins three months before the month they turn 65. If you miss that window, you may enroll for the first time between January 1 and March 31 each year, although your coverage won't begin until July 1. To apply for Medicare online, visit www.ssa.gov/medicareonly.

Medicare plans and coverage options include:

• Part A – helps cover inpatient hospital, skilled nursing facility, hospice and home health care services.

• Part B – helps cover doctor's services, outpatient care and some preventive services. It's optional and has a monthly premium.

• Part C (Medicare Advantage) – offers plans run by Medicare-approved private insurers as alternatives to Original Medicare. Most cover prescription drugs and some include extra benefits at additional cost. You're usually required to use the plan's provider network.

• Part D – helps cover the cost of prescription drugs. It's optional and carries a monthly premium. These privately run plans vary widely in terms of cost, copayments and deductibles and medications covered.

Some people also purchase additional Medigap (Medicare Supplemental) insurance offered by private insurers. It follows strict government coverage guidelines and helps pay for many items not covered by Medicare, including deductibles, copayments and coinsurance.

Understanding and choosing the right Medicare options can be complicated and time-consuming. For assistance, call 1-800-633-4227 or read "Medicare & You," a highly detailed guide that explains Medicare in easy-to-understand language – it's found at www.medicare.gov.

Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs. To Follow Jason Alderman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/PracticalMoney.

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