

Good deeds drive fear off road

Flowers of appreciation blossom with kindness

Every once and a while something happens to make you rethink an opinion — even if you are as stubborn as I am. Last fall I wrote a column about the fear I encountered when a strange man jumped out in front of my car on a deserted road in the wee hours of the morning. I didn't stop to help him. He could have been a rapist, murderer or a carjacker. The car pulled over on the side of the road could have been strategically placed to look like it had hit the guard rail nearby. A ploy to trap an overzealous do-gooder. His crazed expression could have been cocaine or heroin induced.

MELISSA MEGLIOLA

Columnist



Or, it could have been caused by shock or some type of injury. Maybe the car really had hit the guard rail. He could have really needed my help. His life could have been in jeopardy.

Unsure, stopping was a risk I chose not to take. Afterwards, I spent much of the next day wondering about the man in the road. And then I wrote about how sad it is that today we can't afford to help strangers anymore. About how the danger simply outweighs the importance of human kindness.

We have become a society that is self-protective to the point of destruction. We're scared and emotionally sterile. Looking the other way doesn't even hurt much anymore. Desensitized, we simply try to forget when we learn about the five-year-old child dropped from a fourteenth story window in Chicago. Subconsciously, we vow to stay away from open windows. Sad. But, that's just the way it is, I concluded. And then, last night I talked to my mother on the phone. "Melissa, the most interesting thing happened to your dad and I today," she began, starting a long story. While on their way to visit my younger sister at Texas Tech several weeks ago, my parents passed a broken-down minivan on the side of the highway. They drove past and then, for some unknown reason, decided to go back and see if anyone needed help. My dad pulled onto the shoulder and reversed for several hundred feet before stopping right next to the parked vehicle. Immediately they were met by an older couple. After learning that they needed to find a me-

chanic, my parents offered to drive them to the nearest gas station. The couple decided that the woman would go the gas station, and the man would stay to watch the van.

A few minutes later, the three of them were on their way to the next exit when the woman mentioned something about a tire.

Realizing that they simply needed a tire changed he put the car in reverse again.

Within a few minutes, the spare was in place, and they were headed to Lubbock again. The event was forgotten over the trip.

A few days ago, my parents received a package from the couple they helped on the highway. Inside was a Hummel, a small porcelain figurine made in Germany. The collector's item modeled a young girl watering flowers. A note attached explained that the couple bought the statue in Germany in 1957 and considered it their guardian angel.

Feeling guilty about receiving something so precious to people they don't even know, my parents put the statue on a shelf in the living room and marveled at how much their small act of kindness must have meant to the older couple. And then, yesterday, a neighbor called to congratulate my mom.

"On what?" she asked with surprise.

It was then that she learned that the couple had also

written a letter to the editor of the Plano paper explaining how they had been on their way to El Paso, so that the man could undergo his third surgical attempt to battle

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cancer. They wanted to express their gratitude publicly and inform the Plano community of the "Good Samaritans" living among them.

"We'll never forget their kindness," the woman wrote. "They stopped to help us without knowing that my husband is handicapped."

Little things do matter. Enough to make them worth the risk of personal danger. We're not really protecting ourselves by withdrawing from an already stoic society. Sure, it was the middle of the day when my parents stopped to check on the van. But anyone could have been waiting inside it. A murderer. A rapist. A carjacker. A man and his wife on the way to the hospital.

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major



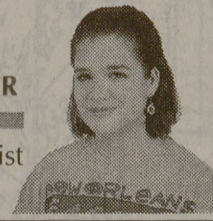
Why, oh why must their little farm go?

Urbanization plows over grandparents' farm, leaving only family memories to rebuild haven

One of my first memories of my grandparents' farm was of my family pulling away in our almost-new Chevy Malibu after one of our weekend visits. "Bye ya'll!" my mom shouted in her usual chout.

LYNN BOOHER

Columnist



One of the two girls on the farm made such an impression on him that Ed felt compelled to come back, ostensibly to look at the cow again. Ed and Hermine, the good-looking daughter, were married the following June.

"Bye ya!" I repeated after her, not old enough to fully form the words. From there on out, I associated the phrase with my grandmother, and she became affectionately known as "Byeya."

In 1928, my great-grandfather Edgar traded his house on 33rd Street in Austin for the farm south of the city. It had no electricity, no telephone, little well water and the sole building on it was a small wooden house with a firewood heater.

Sometimes I think that my mother's greatest regret in life is that my sister and I never had to milk cows. She never lets us forget that she toiled in the dairy barn twice a day for 13 years, trudging through rain and snow, carrying 100 pound milk canisters.

When I complained about cleaning my room, mom would show me her high school ring. Her fingers had been so big from milking cows that the ring that once fit her now falls off her thumb.

I think that my mother's greatest regret in life is that my sister and I never had to milk cows.

Through-out the Great Depression, my grandfather Edward, who ran the dairy, delivered milk, butter and cream to everyone who needed it. Those who could afford to pay bartered for the milk products. Those who had no money or goods received the food on credit. After the Depression, only one person never paid Ed back.

When Granddaddy was old, he still felt the need to help the less fortunate. Hundreds of cats had been deposited on the farm over the years. People apparently thought that a dairy was a more appropriate place to leave their unwanted pets than the animal shelter. Long after the cows were gone, Byeya and Granddaddy had a herd of cats to care for.

One day, during the Depression, when Ed was delivering milk to a grocery store on his route, the store owner suggested that he go to a certain farm to look at a cow. Ed replied that he was already producing more milk than he could sell.

When the store owner explained that there were "two good-looking girls" at the farm, however, Ed decided looking at another cow might not be a bad idea.

grow hay and other crops almost up until his death this summer.

Today the farm is bounded by housing developments, offices and a major hotel. It was annexed into the city of Austin about 10 years ago. All that is left of the once wide-open space is a small, tranquil oasis in the midst of urban chaos.

The family that was rooted there for more than 60 years has flown to the winds, much as the chaff has blown away from the wheat that grew on the farm for so many years.

Ed was the last of the farmers in my family, and now that he is dead, the farm will go with him.

My family can't afford to pay the taxes necessary to keep the land that is so much a part of who we are. So each time I return to Austin, I take what will soon be my last looks at the undulating waves of grain.

And I know that when I take my children there to see a part of their heritage, they will not see the farm as I do, but only the asphalt and offices that cover it.

Lynn Booher is a junior English and psychology major



MAIL CALL

Men and women differ, but chivalry lives on

We are a few of the gentlemen who Hugh Simonich has observed opening doors and offering to give up our seats for a lady. These are not things which we do, because we believe women incapable of performing the same actions. These are things which we do out of courtesy, but they are primarily symbolic. They are ways which we demonstrate following beliefs.

1) Men and women are basically different form one another, and these differences are not trivial.

2) There are certain duties and obligations which men have toward women, among these are to protect, to cherish, and to honor.

We do not believe women to be in any way inferior to men. To say that men and women are identical however, flies in the face of common sense. We have described the way we view the world to explain a code of conduct which many refer

to as chivalry. I do not mean to imply Simonich should act in the same way, or even that women who do not care for chivalry should be forced to accept our courtesies. We do however, take comfort in the fact that we are not alone in observing these beliefs. There are many other men that agree with us, and there are many women who appreciate our position.

David Lewis
Class of '96

Accompanied by 2 signatures

Straight-ticket voting buys cohesive beliefs

Every two years The Battalion editorial board says that straight ticket voting is bad. They say that people should not vote if they are not making educated, considered decisions. If The Battalion is your only source of news you should not vote for anything but governor and senator because they chose not to cover the issue-oriented event that a lot of the Republican candidates took part in this fall on campus. If you don't know the issues or candidates, let me tell you why you should vote straight ticket. When you vote straight ticket, you are voting for a consistent philosophy in government. Most Republicans, for the most part,

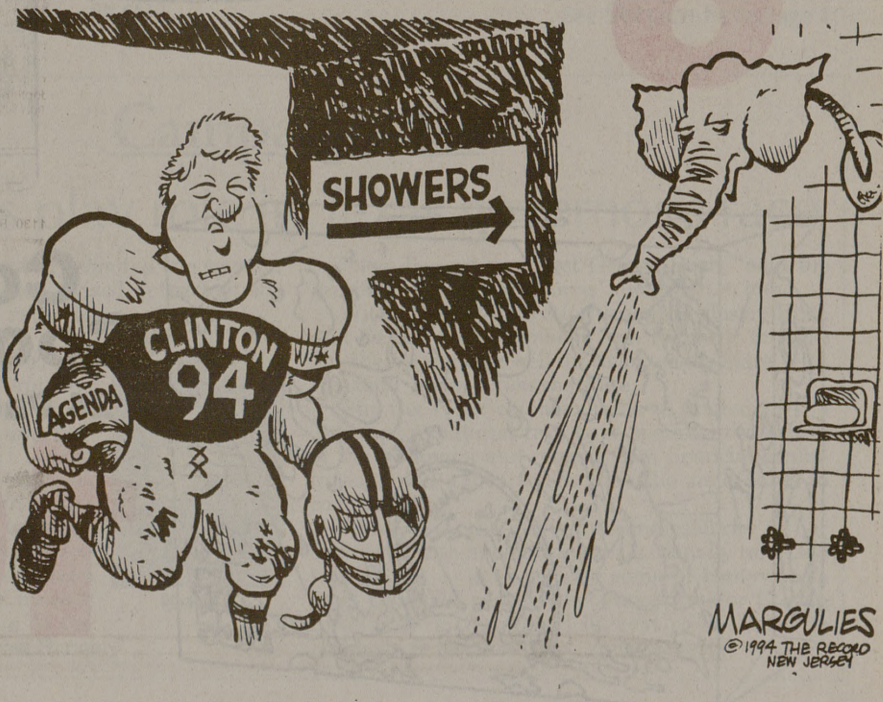
stand together on issues. Republicans stand for low taxes, not because they are greedy, but because the free market, not government, determines maximum utility (greatest efficiency in the allocation of scarce resources). Republicans believe in empowering people over empowering government which explains their stances on property right and gun control.

It is difficult to tell what Democrats stand for. You have "new" Democrats, conservative Democrats, liberal Democrats, etc. The Democrats do not have a consistent philosophy, and inconsistent philosophies cause gridlock. The Republicans do not hold a majority of votes in either the House or the Senate, so the Democrats should be able to pass anything they stand together on. Instead, the Democrats, with an obliging media put a spin on the situation and say the Republicans are obstructionists.

To avoid gridlock don't ticket split, and don't vote straight Democrat. Vote straight-ticket Republican.

Chad Walter
Class of '94

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