

Opinion

Being caught in traffic may be for good reason

My story starts with a call from my husband. I was in Goodland not too far from home. Brett said, "Cyn, there's a big fire near town. It looks like it could be by the fairgrounds."

About five minutes later, I got another call. The caller ID came up 785-332-3105, our office number. I thought that was pretty strange as this was his afternoon to dig. Not very often would he get sidetracked on Thursday afternoon.

The fire had him concerned. This call he was a little stern, "The fire is moving down our valley — it could easily hit our land because of the wind direction. Is there anything out of the house that you want me to get?"

Being married to this man for nearly 8 years, I know him to be somewhat over exaggerative, so I calmly responded, "Well, I guess you could grab the pictures and the kids' savings bonds — everything else is pretty replaceable."

He could tell I was being sort of sarcastic and he explained that he was not exaggerating. I continued about my business like there was no cause for concern, until I got another call.

Not more than five minutes had passed. This time the number looked familiar, but I just couldn't figure it out.

It was Brett again, now a little more frantic, he says, "Cyn, you need to get home — the fire is bad. You can't even see our house from the highway."

"It is just beyond our pasture and if this wind doesn't shift, it could be really bad. We've lost electricity and I couldn't call you from home. You need to get home, now!"

That explained the familiar phone number — it was our neighbor's. Our phones are cordless and they have one that is the traditional one that only requires a phone jack.

I left right then and headed for home. Just outside of Goodland, I hit four hurdles: a combine (God bless our farmers!), two oversized load cars, and some sort of telecommunications van.

I wondered, now how am I going to get around this? The oncoming traffic wasn't heavy, but it wasn't light enough to make a four-vehicle pass. Of course, they were all trailing each other so close that you couldn't squeeze in between them.

I was so frustrated and started talking to God. "God, please let me be able to pass them! I've got to get home! Why would you allow me to be held up in a time like this? Please God, please let there be a safe moment to pass."

Well, there never was. I was starting to get really nervous and tried to call Brett to let him know that I was going to be awhile. He was unreachable. I tried his cell phone — no answer. No answer at Eddy and Sherry's either.

Of course, I thought the worst had happened. At this point, I'm nearing the curves and could see no traffic. I was thinking, yes, I can make my move!

That is when I saw flashing lights on the north side of the curves. Another hurdle!

There was a pig on the side of the road. I thought, "Oh no, someone's pigs got loose."

As I rounded the last curve, I realized it was much worse than that. There were flashing lights everywhere and pigs everywhere. A few looked untouched, some were a little bloody, others looked like they were suffering and the rest faced an untimely death.

I never did see the truck or trailer that was carrying these animals. I just prayed that the driver was okay.

I knew I had to get home and was sitting behind a half mile of vehicles at this point. I couldn't see any oncoming traffic, so I proceeded to go to the front of

the line to speak to the officer directing the traffic. I told him that I needed to get home and told him about the prairie fire and wondered if there was any way I could get through.

Just then, I could see the other side and traffic was moving. He told me I'd have to go back to the end of the line as there was oncoming traffic coming. I know I looked like an impatient driver, so once I got back to my spot, I got out of the vehicle and explained to the driver of the van my situation. He told me once our lane got moving, he'd let me pass. I thanked him, but said it wouldn't be necessary as there were many more vehicles in front of him.

Once the land was clear, the officer waved me to the front of the line. Thank you, Lord! I could finally travel the 65-mile-per-hour limit!

As I got closer to Wheeler, I could see the smoke. I still couldn't reach Brett and not knowing what was happening was so frightening.

I needed to talk to someone so I called my sister. I'm so glad she was there. She kept me as calm as I could be and I explained to her, if I could just talk to Brett or my neighbors, I'd be fine, but right now, I don't even know if my house is still standing. I was about 5 miles to the Wheeler corner and my vehicle was starting to smell like smoke. I could see the fire was pretty intense due to the black smoke, but still couldn't pinpoint where it was at. One mile from the corner, I see two ambulances coming toward me, then they turn west onto a gravel road. I'm sure my sister was wondering who she was talking to — I'm usually the calm, cool and collected one counseling her.

I see a road block at the corner, they're not letting anyone through. I grow more frantic. I explain to our local law enforcement, "I need to get through, I'm just 2 miles down the road. The fire is close to my house and I need to get home!"

They reassured me that our house was pretty much out of danger, but I couldn't drive on Highway 36 as it wasn't safe.

I felt so much relief, yet still not knowing where my family was scared me. I'm doing a mental head count — our two oldest are in school; McKenna is with me, and Tyson and Brett are together somewhere. I went back to the gravel road where I originally saw the emergency vehicles turn. Now, I know why they went that way.

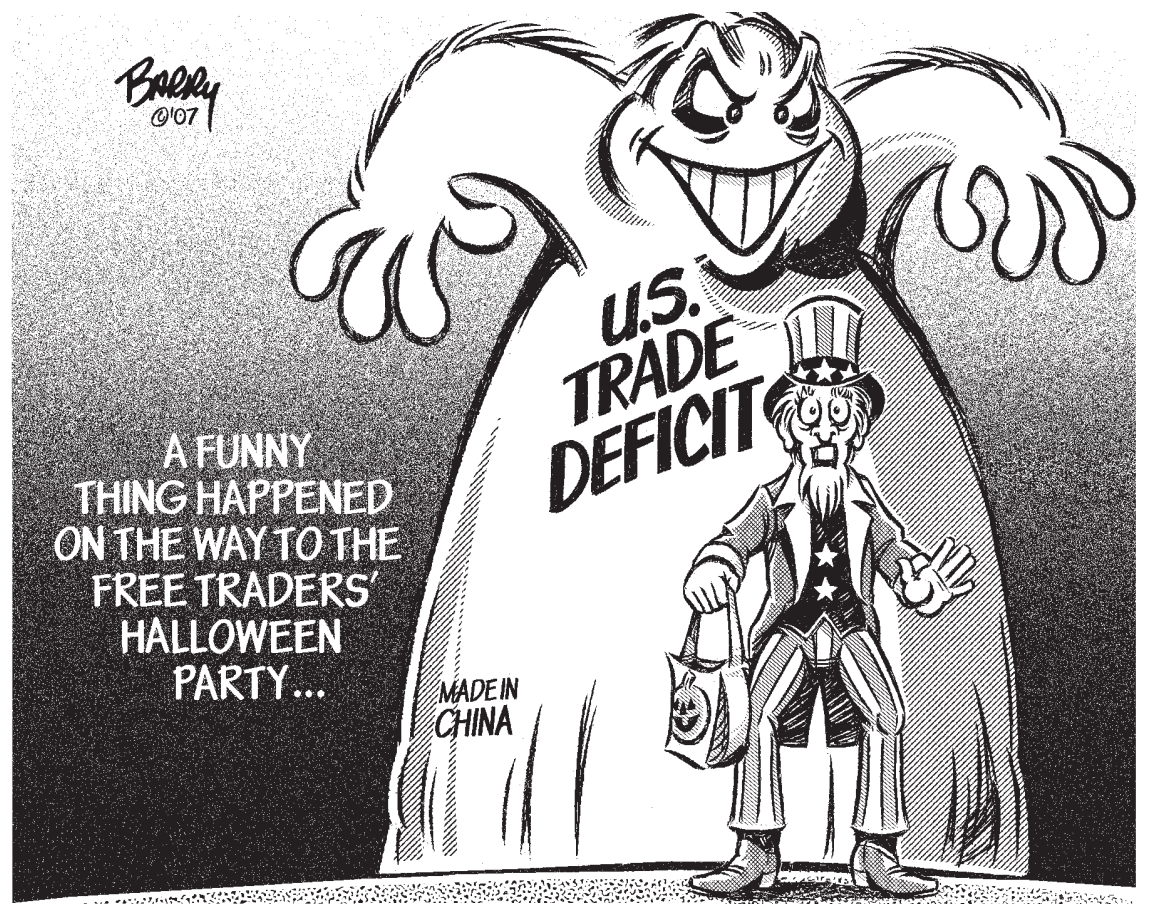
I've always had a great respect for our law enforcement, firefighters, EMS and volunteers. My respect and appreciation just grew ten-fold after the prairie fire of Oct. 18, 2007. Brett and I can't thank you enough for keeping our property safe.

As I watched the news of the devastation in California, all the people who are displaced and they have no idea if they have lost their homes or will return to their homes with the smell of the fire still looming in the air. My heart goes out to them, I have felt what they are feeling.

As I look out our back windows, it is very clear just how close the fire came to our land. The charred ground stretches as far as I can see and its' width stops on the Bracelin's pasture, just short of our fence line. If the wind blows just right, I can still smell the evidence of that afternoon. What a scary memory.

After a week had passed, I finally realized why God put me behind those slow moving vehicles. If he hadn't, I could have suffered a fate similar to those animals. He knew I would have probably driven a little too fast for the conditions or could have gotten caught right in the middle of that accident. We are safe, our house is safe, our animals are safe — life is good, God is great!

Cynthia Poling
St. Francis



News From the Past

75 years ago- 1932

The county commissioners have made some cuts in wages paid. The salary of the county engineer was lowered \$15 a month, and the wages of the road laborers were cut from 35 cents to 30 cents per hour. The salary of the deputy sheriff was dropped from \$65 to

\$50 per month.

The St. Francis Equity in cooperation with Auctioneer Sherlock is making arrangements for opening a real sales yard at the Equity yard near the railroad.

Doctors G. A. Benkelman and J.H.A. Peck have been moving and are about settled in their

respective offices in the Quigley block at the southwest corner of Washington Avenue and Benton Street.

60 years ago- 1947

Tom Roach is constructing a building to be used for storage purposes and a garage for his trucks.

Hangin' With Marge

By
Margaret
Bucholtz



Sunglasses

I had to take my daughter back to Denver to get her glasses fixed. I was really pretty nervous about not only driving in Denver, but also the fact that I was going to be making the trip in one day. Years ago I wouldn't have even thought about it, but age has taken over and now I am not sure what I can and can't do.

I hurried and got ready to go and made sure I had my sunglasses with me. We started out and before long I asked Keri to get my sunglasses out of my purse. They are the magnetic kind so I just

held them up to my glasses and figured they would attach. Funny thing they just fell off. Again I put them back on and it kind of worked until I turned my head to talk. This time one side stayed attached but the other side didn't. There I was with my sunglasses dangling from my face.

My daughter, Lezlie also went with me, both are laughing but finally Keri reached over to hook it back on. Wonderful thought but by then I couldn't see the highway because her arm was in the wrong place.

I jerked my glasses off and asked one of them to bend the sunglasses so they would fit. I just thought that something I had in my heavy purse had probably bent them. That didn't work either.

About then Keri told Lezlie she sure liked her new glasses. As I looked in the mirror to see what her glasses looked like I realized I didn't have my glasses on — that the sunglasses went with.

I guess saving my old ones for a backup plan wasn't working out too well.

Casey's Comments

By
Casey
McCormick



scMcCormick@nwkansas.com
It has been a roller coaster ride for the Colorado Rockies and their fans. What a year for firsts!

They won their first Division Series against the Phillies and first National League Championship when they beat the Diamond Backs. Not bad for a team that is only 15 years old.

To put their accomplishments in perspective, although professional baseball was played in the late 19th Century, the first World Series was played in 1903. The next year, 1904, it was not played since the president of the New York Giants, John T.

Brush, thought the newer American League, was "inferior." The only other time the World Series was not played was in 1994, due to a player's strike.

Every "Fall Classic" has offered an excitement that is uniquely American. It is the climax to each year's version of "the great American past-time."

Some series even gets its own nickname. The 1919 competition is known for the famous "Black Sox" scandal when eight players, including "Shoeless" Joe Jackson, left the game after gamblers got

them to "fix" the outcome.

The 1985 series was the "I-70" series when the St. Louis Cardinals played the Kansas City Royals. The "Earth Quake" series happened when play was interrupted when a tremor hit the Bay Area when the San Francisco Giants took on the Oakland Athletics in 1989.

So cheer up Rockies fans. The team made some big steps and, hopefully, will return to the World Series again in the near future.

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GOD SAYS

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I John 1:8,9

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Praise the Lord

Church of Christ
332-2380, Pars. 332-3424
502 W. Spencer
Norman Morrow - Minister
Bible Class 11 a.m.
Morning Worship 10 a.m.
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
625 S. River • 332-2680
Fr. Roger Meitl
Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m.
Weekday Mass 8 a.m.
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

First Baptist Church
2nd & Scott • 332-3921
J.W. Glidewell, Pastor
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m.,
Wed. AWANA Club 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
St. Francis Community Church
332-3150
204 N. Quincy Street
www.sfccfamily.com
Pastor: David Butler
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Potluck & Communion -
Every 2nd Sunday
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

United Methodist
Church Office 332-2292,
Church 332-2254,
512 S. Scott
Pastor Morita Truman
Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

Salem Lutheran Church
332-3002
Pastor Chris Farmer
Sunday School: 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC
202 N. College
Pastor Ken Hart
332-2928 Pars. 332-2312
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday eve Bible Study 7 p.m.

Seventh-Day Adventist Church
332-2888 • 3rd & Adams
Pastor Mike Larson
Sabbath School 9:30
Morning Worship 10:45

Solid Rock Baptist Church
412 S. Denison
Welcomes You!
Pastor Allen Coon
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30
Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m.

First Christian Church
Pastor Jeff Landers
332-2956 • 118 E. Webster
Bible Fellowship 9:20 a.m.
Church Service 10:30 a.m.

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