

commentary

from other pens...

The camaraderie with Germany is gone

It was a time to which Americans and Germans can look back with nostalgia. Their leaders, Bill Clinton and Helmut Kohl, both known for hearty appetites, made a point of dining together during their frequent encounters. They often matched each other calorie-for-calorie, then joked afterward about how much each other ate.

There is not much chance of that kind of camaraderie these days. The United States and Germany, partners for half a century, are on the outs.

Kohl's successor, Gerhard Schroeder, sees the United States as a kind of rogue colossus guided by Bush's penchant for go-it-alone policies.

Bush, in turn, has made known he believes Schroeder was playing fast and loose with the German-American alliance by converting his election campaign into an essentially anti-American enterprise.

Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., says the Congress should consider ordering the redeployment of 70,000 U.S. troops now based in Germany.

Now that the election is over with a fresh mandate for Schroeder, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer is expected to come to Washington to try to put the relationship on a more normal footing.

Schroeder himself has started to reach out to Bush. Thus far, however, the president is not in a mood to be wooed. When asked Wednesday if he could forgive and forget, Bush put up his palm as if to say, "Stop."

As White House press secretary Ari Fleischer explained Bush's view on Tuesday, "I don't think anybody should be surprised ... that words and actions have consequences, and they don't go away after the election."

Says Charles Kupchan of the Council on Foreign Relations: "The German chancellor running on an anti-American platform speaks volumes about how far the drift has gone"

The souring of relations, not only with Germany but with much of Europe, has been under way for years. The United States has long been irritated over the relatively low levels of military spending in Germany, not to mention other European countries.

The United States spends about 3 percent of its gross domestic product on defense; Germany spends less than half that, reflecting a view that conflicts should be settled through laws, rules and negotiation.

On Tuesday, Schroeder's defense minister, Peter Struck, offered at a NATO meeting in Warsaw to join the Netherlands in taking joint command of the international security force in Afghanistan. It's that sort of military burden the United States has long prodded its European allies to shoulder, and Struck pointedly said he hoped the Americans would appreciate the gesture. So far, there's been no indication of that.

Germany has become a multilateralist champion, pushing for a united Europe. The United States, especially under Bush, is among the nations most prone to unilateral responses, viewing global and regional institutions warily because they could impair American freedom to maneuver.

When Germany's justice minister drew comparisons between Bush and Adolf Hitler last week, it was too much for Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y. "What nation was there to provide Germany with the billions of dollars that were needed to make its post-World War II rebuilding effort possible?" Schumer asked.

"What nation guaranteed Germany's safety during the Cold War by stationing thousands of troops to guard against a Soviet invasion?"

Kapchan of the Council on Foreign Relations says a generational change in Europe and the United States is loosening trans-Atlantic ties.

Younger Americans and Europeans "with no firsthand memory of the post-World War II reconstruction plan do not bring to the table the same memories that have for years bound America to Europe," he said.

As Ivo Daalder of the Brookings Institution sees it, Bush should not be absolved of responsibility for the sad state of U.S.-German relations. He says Schroeder tapped into fertile ground when he took on Bush during the campaign, pointing to the president's refusal to heed German thinking on issues ranging from global warming to tariffs on European imports.

"If the relationship is poisoned, it was poisoned a long time ago," he says.

EDITOR'S NOTE — *George Gedda has covered foreign affairs for The Associated Press since 1968.*



Truck could improve his golf game

It's too bad Steve doesn't play golf. His game would improve overnight.

His uncle's ghost would be sure to help out.

Uncle Lew was an avid golfer — and he was good at it. He played all over Colorado and Utah and was a city champion in Denver.

He died last year after a long illness.

This weekend, we bought his truck from Aunt Mary.

It's a company vehicle, and Steve will be using it to get to the papers in Goodland, Colby, Norton, St. Francis and Bird City.

Instead of golf clubs, the back end of the black Explorer will be filled with computers and paper. And it's just too bad Steve doesn't play golf.

Many years ago, back in Colorado, we bought a Blazer from the widow of an avid fisherman. The



cynthia haynes

• open season

former owner had lived, breathed and talked about nothing but fishing for the last 20 years of his life.

He didn't have the truck very long. He had driven it home from the dealership and died a few days later. It was in great shape, with 85 miles on it, but was considered a used vehicle, which put it in our price range.

It, too, was a company car and was used to haul computers and paper.

However, it also had Steve's fishing pole, creel

and flies in the back end. When the trip took him near a stream and the day was beautiful, he was sometimes late getting to where he was supposed to be going.

He claimed he never had such good luck fishing as when he owned that truck.

If the ghost of a fisherman can help his successor, I know that Uncle Lew would be quietly whispering golfing tips into Steve's ear.

But Steve doesn't play golf, and I'm not going to suggest he take it up.

The last time he bought one of these trucks, he kept disappearing, and when he came home, we always ended up having fish for supper.

And frankly, golf balls aren't that tasty.

(But Uncle Lew was a pretty good fisherman, too, remember?)

Wedding adds to Brown Palace memories

We married off our girl Rachel the other day at the big old ballroom at the Brown Palace in Denver.

It was one more memory to add to a list stretching back through 20 years as publishers in Colorado and in Kansas.

Maybe you've never been to the Brown. It is, and has been since it was built in the century before the last, the class hotel in Denver. Most nights, we don't think we can afford to stay there.

It's become a central point in our lives, like our homes, our offices, our mothers' homes (now sold off) and a few others. Union Station in Kansas City comes to mind.

The Brown is the site each year of the Colorado Press Association annual convention. It's been held there as long as anyone can remember, though other hotels are newer, offer lower rates and have far better convention facilities.

Press conventions in Kansas are held at Hiltons and Holiday Inns, and they're nice. But if the Brown is the Show, the Airport Hilton in Wichita is in a Class A league.

The Brown is a fine hotel. The food is way too expensive, but I know it is good. I can't even afford to eat in the coffee shop, but I have a beer there now and then.

Some classy hotels, the bellman will ask you if you want some ice, or tell you where to find the machine. At the Holiday Inn, you just hear it hum-



steve haynes

• along the sappa

ming down the hall.

At the Brown, the ice is there when you get to the room. There's a nice little, hand-written note from the manager and staff. A chocolate on your pillow. A bed that's been turned down and fluffed.

Never stayed at the Waldorf or the Ritz, but I'd imagine them to be that way, but snooty. The Brown is never snooty. It's a place where stockmen stay during the National Western, where President Bush stayed when he was in Denver, where Ike recuperated from his heart attack.

The big ballroom is not that old. It was built in the 1950s along with the old hotel's tower addition. That tower became an albatross, its rooms beautiful but way too small for modern America. Today they run it as a separate hotel, a Comfort Inn. It's nice, but you have to get your own ice.

Because we're always at meetings there in February, that's when most of my memories were formed. I first met with fellow publishers there, made a lot of friends there, was patted down to hear George Bush the elder speak there as vice president, became president of the press association

there and later, Newspaper Person of the Year.

Every year, the Brown puts on a little welcoming reception, free food and drinks for an hour to tell the press "thanks" for returning. In the old days, the shrimp bucket was bottomless. Today it runs out in 10-15 minutes, but it's still quite a spread.

Supposedly, the feast was for registered conventiongoers, but I knew one publisher who never paid a dime, but showed up each year with an old badge. Those were the days. Most of those nights are a blur today.

Saturday was different. It was a fancy location, and a society wedding of sorts, what with a mayor, a college president and a U.S. senator in the crowd. But the stars were two really nice, really talented kids, a girl from Denver and a boy from Colby who sort of stumbled onto each other out here on the High Plains. I was in lucky enough to be there when it started, and to be there Saturday.

From the service to the toast, and the special dances they asked the DJ to put on, it was everything a wedding should be. Rachel and Mitch are out in Las Vegas today, enjoying a week off before we put them back to work.

Who knows what the future will hold for them — careers, kids, memories of their own. I suspect that the Brown Palace ballroom will be a central point for them, too, and I'm willing to bet that Saturday was only the first of many memories they'll have from it.

The bar association sees the light

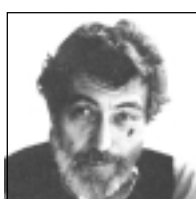
It should not be surprising that in the year 2002, the American Bar Association — which bills itself as "the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world" — should elect a distinguished black lawyer as its president-elect. But it's important that civics classes teach why he is the FIRST black president-elect of the ABA, founded in 1878.

Dennis Archer has been a twice-elected mayor of Detroit, a justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, and president of the State Bar of Michigan. When he became the ABA's president-elect in August, he was escorted to the podium in Washington by Mrs. Thurgood Marshall, widow of the first black justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Even more dramatic was the composition of his other escorts. Along with past presidents of the ABA were past presidents of the National Bar Association, a professional organization of black lawyers created in 1925. Why form the National Bar Association? Because, for years, black lawyers were refused admission to the ABA, which, as it describes itself, "provides law school accreditation, continuing legal education, information about the law, programs to assist lawyers and judges in their work and initiatives to improve the legal system for the public."

At least the ABA, in its press release on Archer's elevation, did not hide its lily-white past. Deep into that press release, the ABA noted that "Archer could not (in his acceptance speech) help but think of lawyers of color who had preceded him, and were at one time denied membership in the ABA."

A partial list followed in the release, including Justice Thurgood Marshall and such highly respected lower-court federal judges as William



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• commentary

Hastie, Constance Baker Motley and Damon J. Keith. Also mentioned, solely by name, was one of the most influential law professors in American history, Charles Hamilton Houston. At Howard University law school, he trained hundreds of black lawyers and was a key legal strategist in the long, hard battles to include blacks in the 14th Amendment's guarantee of "equal protection under the laws."

Justice Marshall worked for Houston at the NAACP, and Justice William O. Douglas called Houston "one of the top 10 advocates to appear before the United States Supreme Court." But how many Americans, of any color, are taught about Charles Hamilton Houston?

Archer had his own hard road to prominence in the legal profession. His father was a laborer with a third-grade education, and his mother was a homemaker. He grew up in a home without indoor plumbing. While in high school, he set pins in a bowling alley and caddied for golfers. Before going to law school, Archer was a teacher of disabled children. At that point in his life, he says, he had never even met a lawyer.

In his acceptance speech at the ABA, Archer looked at all the successful lawyers in front of him and urged them to "remember why you went to law school."

He reminded them of the lawyer's oath to represent the oppressed, especially those who can't af-

ford lawyers.

Justice Marshall also often tried to persuade more lawyers to engage in public interest law and not spend their entire careers enabling corporations to become bigger. And his colleague and close friend, Justice William Brennan, in a 1986 speech before the ABA's Section on Individual Rights and Responsibilities, said, "We do not yet have justice, equal and practical, for the members of minority groups, for the criminally accused, for the displaced persons of the technological revolution, for alienated youth, for the urban masses, for the unrepresented consumer ... for all, in short, who do not partake of the abundance of American life. ... The goal of universal equality, freedom and prosperity is far from won and ... ugly inequities continue to mar the face of our nation. We are surely nearer the beginning than the end of the struggle."

And this struggle for equal protection of the laws encompasses all Americans who are without meaningful access to the courts as more and more younger lawyers are avoiding public interest law, and large firms are reducing their pro bono work for the poor and working class.

As head of the ABA, Dennis Archer has a chance to awaken the nation to the "ugly inequities" that continue to mar the face of this country.

Nat Hentoff is a nationally renowned authority on the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights.

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