

from our viewpoint...

Brits: Americans helpful, friendly

It has been said many times the most important contact a traveler makes is the first person they meet, and for the past two weeks we witnessed this first hand.

Everywhere we went with two retired British school teachers, they remarked on how friendly everyone was and how well they were treated.

The journey started in Denver and included stops in Lamar, Colo., Dodge City, Taos, Santa Fe, Houston and New Orleans.

For the two school teachers, John and Liz Mills from Staffordshire, this was their second trip to the United States, and their second visit to New Orleans.

The couple have traveled to Paris, Spain and Portugal in recent years, and were able to compare the experiences with those in the United States.

They said they were treated well in both Spain and Portugal, but had some bad experiences in France.

The only place on our trip where they met a less than enthusiastic person was when we checked into the Days Inn on Canal Street in New Orleans on Monday evening. The girl at the counter must have had a hard day, but she was more non-communicative than unpleasant towards us.

We found nice people in most of the places we went. Looking back at the trip, it is interesting that besides the beautiful places we saw, it was the actions of the people we met, and especially those who were serving us food or drink, that we seem to remember. People were willing to give us recommendations on good places to eat in the French Quarter, and we found them to be as good as they said.

The question of service and the first impression a visitor makes may be hard to explain, but once you experience it from the traveler's side, there is no question that being the first contact has a lot to do with how you and your community are remembered.

As we traveled, the British teachers talked about the things that impressed them the most about our country.

They talked about seeing the American flag everywhere we went, and said this would not be possible in England because a neo-Nazi group has adopted the Union Jack as its symbol.

"In England, we don't wear or display the flag like they do here," John Mills said. "It is because this radical group is using it as their symbol and it is not the national symbol anymore. The government doesn't seem to be able to change it."

There are not as many roads in England, and the Brits found it fascinating to drive from Santa Fe to Houston in a day. John Mills helped with the driving and was able to manage the city traffic of Dallas. He did well in Houston, too, and in New Orleans, except when he got honked at on the narrow Huey P. Long bridge over the Mississippi, which got him a bit flustered.


The trip was a good reminder of what a wonderful country we have, and that from the outside, it is certainly worth working to keep it that way. The next time you are the first person a traveler meets, think about the impression we want people to have of our community and our country. — *Tom Betz*

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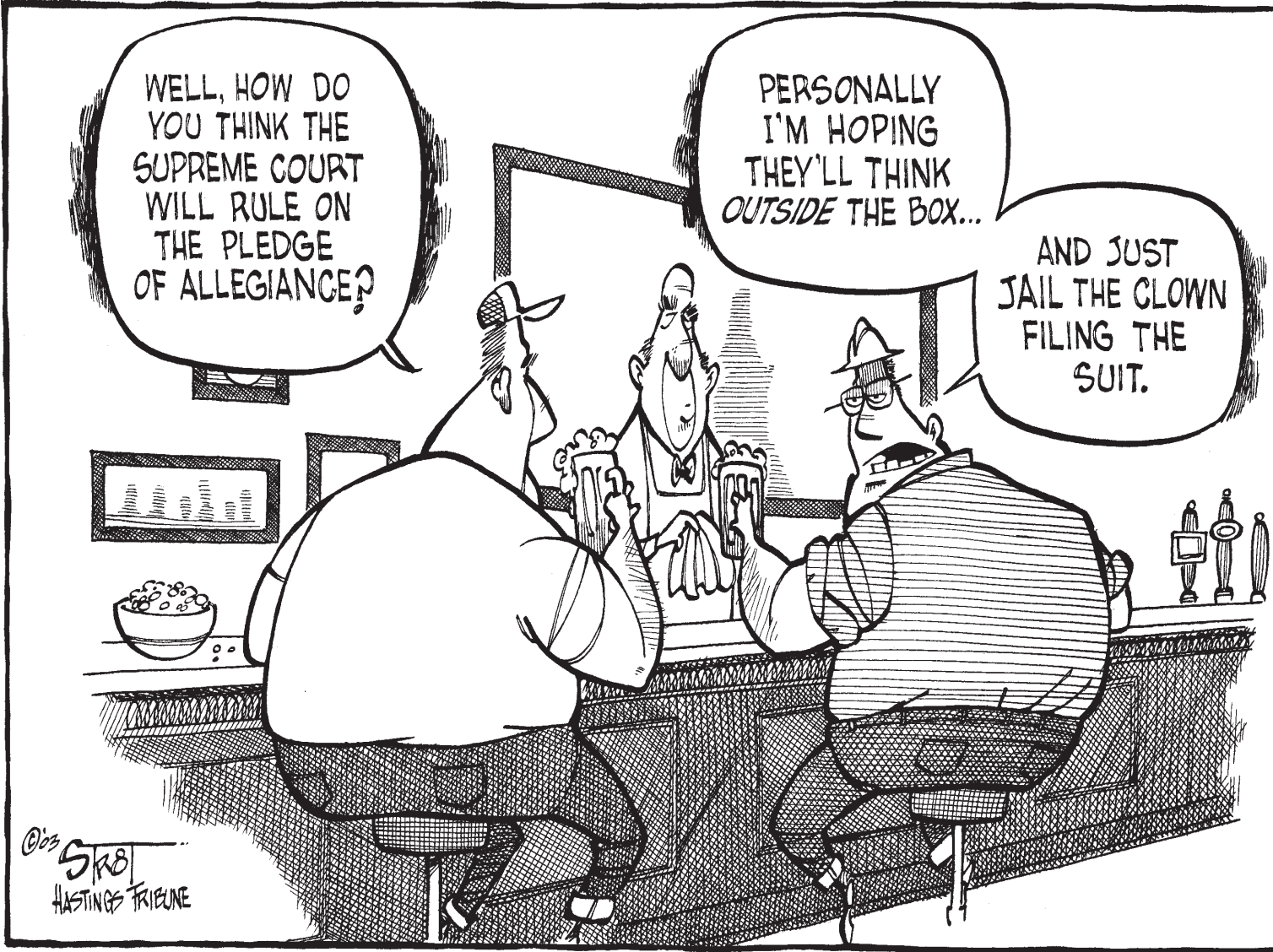
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Call of the road not always happy

I had to go to a two-car wreck the other day. I hate wrecks. I don't like being in them, taking pictures of them or helping at the scene.

I spent six years working as a volunteer emergency medical technician when I lived in Colorado.

I hated every run, but I went, because I felt that I was needed. Because of my job with the newspaper, I was freer to go on calls than the teachers, construction workers and government officials who made up most of the rest of the crew.

It was a small mountain town, and we didn't have a lot of runs, but I seemed to go on most of them.

I only remember a couple of wrecks in those six years, although there were probably more. I wasn't on duty for either of the ones I remember.

I heard the first one on the police radio as Steve and I were coming back to town from a trip to the Valley.

A young man on a motorcycle had started to pass an older couple, whose vehicle was pulling a motor home.



cynthia haynes

● open season

Either the driver didn't put on his left-turn signal or the young man didn't see it. Either way, as the motorcyclist came up beside the trailer, the driver turned into a driveway. The young man and his cycle slid under the trailer.

I arrived before the ambulance. I learned that day that there isn't a whole lot you can do as an emergency medical technician without your ambulance.

I couldn't extricate the cyclist. I couldn't stabilize him. I couldn't even take his blood pressure.

I could check those parts of him that were visible and I could tell that he was breathing and was in pain.

As soon as the ambulance and more help arrived, we freed him and headed for the hospital — a short 1 1/2-hour drive.

He had two broken arms, a broken leg and internal injuries, but lived to tell the tale.

The other accident was worse

A man ran a stop sign and caused a three-vehicle pileup. There were several deaths, including at least one child.

I was on my way to my pharmacy job.

There were already two ambulances on the scene when I stopped to offer my services. I helped an older woman who had severe injuries. The body of a young boy lay on the pavement covered with a blanket. The woman I helped died two days later.

I got to work an hour and a half late and I had to go wash my face and hands and take off my blue pharmacist's smock — both of us were covered in blood.

As I stood on the road last week taking pictures, I prayed for the victims, the emergency workers and those people who would get the call that a loved one had been hurt in an accident.

I hate wrecks. But, someone has to go — to help or just to show others what happens. None of us has to like it.

Foster homes needed in Sherman County

To the Editor:

Currently there are 13 children from Sherman County who have been placed in foster homes in other parts of the state because there are simply not enough licensed homes in Sherman County to meet this need.

Some of these placements are temporary; others are long term. Consequently, these children are not able to be in close proximity to family members.

They're not able to attend the schools they're familiar with, maintain relationships with their classmates and Mends or attend their home churches.

We know there are many caring people in Sherman County who are genuinely concerned



from our readers

● to the editor

about children.

Caring can be expressed in many ways. Some people volunteer at the public library or at school, teach a Sunday school class or work with a Scout group, etc. Perhaps there is another way you haven't thought about to demonstrate your care and concern for children.

Saint Francis is looking for caring people in Sherman County to become licensed foster

parents. Foster parents receive free training, ongoing professional support tax-free compensation, and many other benefits.

The best part is that foster parents have the opportunity to make a difference in a child's life, a child from your own community.

Please help a child from your community remain in your community. If you are interested in knowing more about foster parenting, or just have questions, please call our toll free number, 1-866-999-1599.

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