

from our viewpoint...

A cent in time saves spending nine

The room was stilled for a moment when the total bill for the city/county road repair program came to \$10 million. Another moment of silence came when Mayor Rick Billinger suggested a one-cent sales tax was the best way to do the projects. Nearly everyone in the room had reached the same conclusion: anything short of the full cent was not going to be enough. The surprise was that Billinger would be the one to say that was the best way to go. Over the past few years, anytime the sales tax was discussed, the mayor was one of the first to say he was against it.

His reluctance was understandable because of the business he owns. "This does all the city and county projects," Billinger said. "The best we can do is take it to the people and see if they are willing to pay the price."

"We need to do the bond issue and get the project done, I think we have to move forward. I know 1 percent on a \$100,000 house is quite a kick. I think the people would go for it when they see all the details."

The others in the room agreed the 1 percent for a minimum of 10 years would be the most reasonable approach to these big-ticket projects.

City and county commissioners have said most of the people they have talked to since the \$10 million price tag was published support the plan and think it is the way to go.

"This is long overdue."
"Get it done."
"Let everyone help pay for the roads."

That's what people are saying about the project and the sales tax.

County commissioner Kevin Rasure said he was sure there are people out there who are opposed to any tax increase, but he hasn't heard from them yet.

The two commissions will hold a public hearing on the road project at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 15 at the high school auditorium to present the facts and hear from the public about the plans.

Over the next year, there will be quite a lot of discussion about the sales tax plan as the process to bring it to a vote moves forward.

It seems strange to have to ask Topeka to give the citizens of Sherman County permission to make the decision.

That is what Rep. Jim Morrison talked to the two commissions about Monday.

Because the state has to give its permission, the process will be delayed at least a year until the Legislature is in session next January.

It could be May before the special requests worms its way through the two houses to allow the citizens of Sherman County to vote on the plan.

Let's not think about what the city and county would face if the state doesn't give the citizens the right to vote on this issue.

Repairing the roads is a long way from being a sure thing, but the two commissions deserve applause for getting the ball rolling. — Tom Betz

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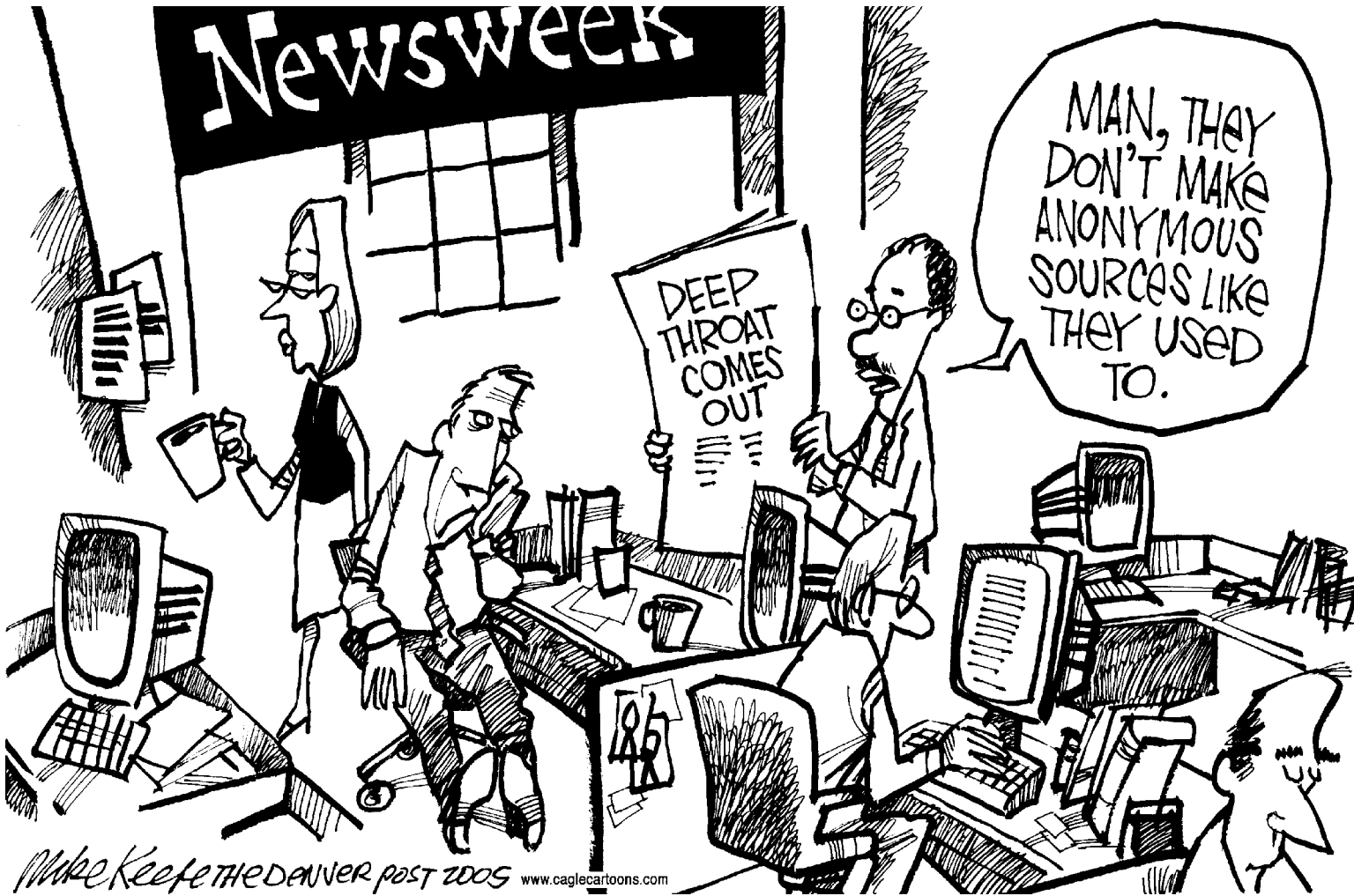
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'Adventures' become 'learning experiences'

Just wait until tomorrow: disasters become adventures and failures become learning experiences.

We had several adventures and a learning experience on our vacation to Georgia and South Carolina earlier this month.

Adventure No. 1 was our trip to Tybee Island, Ga., where we arrived at midnight to find that our condo reservations, booked by our eldest daughter, actually were for the next weekend.

We ended up having a place to stay, a great time and a story to tell our grandchildren. We got our skin damaged by the sun and our hair ruined by the salt water, that is, we worked on our tans and swam in the ocean.

Adventure No. 2 was locking the keys in the truck.

We borrowed our youngest daughter's Explorer. She gave us her spare key.

The truck has both a clicker and a combination keypad, but she didn't give us the clicker and, since she bought the truck used, daughter didn't know the code for the keypad.

All was well for days. Then one evening, I left a window rolled down and Steve put the key back in the ignition to roll it up. He then grabbed something off the seat and closed the door.

I asked if he had locked the truck, and without thinking, he opened the door, hit the lock and



cynthia
haynes

• open season

closed it before remembering that the one and only key was in the ignition.

Oops. Well, we didn't have any plans for the next day anyway.

We were in Augusta, Ga., and daughter was an hour away in Columbia, S.C. It was a work day. She didn't have an extra two hours to come rescue her stranded parents.

We called a Ford dealer. He said it would cost \$45 to put the truck on the computer and find out the code. Just bring it in, the man said.

Yeh, right. If we could bring it in, we wouldn't need the code.

Next we called a locksmith. They'd send somebody right out.

It cost \$50 to get a slim jim tucked in between frame and window and jimmy the door. However, the locksmith showed Steve where the keycode is hidden in the back of the truck. You can't see it unless you have the back end open, so it's safe, but we know where to look now.

Kilts at church make us late for lunch

We were a little late for church Sunday, as usual.

Youngest daughter wanted to take us to "her" church, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Columbia, S.C., where she is a student at the university.

But we had to stop for breakfast, so time was short. And as we skidded into a parking space, the churchyard was full of ministers and choir members and acolytes, all vested in white.

Then there were the guys in kilts.

A full Scottish pipe band. A couple dozen men carrying tartan flags of the various clans.

We looked at each other, and ducked in a side door as the band led the procession down the main aisle of the beautiful 1847 church. Brilliant stained-glass windows, lighted at night, depicted scenes from the Lord's life and times.

A glance at the service leaflet showed we had stumbled onto something called the "Kirkin' o the Tartans," a tradition among churches with a large Scottish following. In Columbia, it apparently alternates between Trinity and the First Presbyterian Church.

Daughter Lindsay said, yeah, she'd seen one in Lawrence.

At the end of the main service, the leader of the Scottish contingent stood and asked the priest to bless his troop: "Reverend Sir, on behalf of the Scots away from Scotland and all descended from that great land, we present these tartans before Almighty God and ask his blessing on these his servants."

Daughter noted that our tartan, the Lindsay, was not present.

"I could have worn my shawl," she said.

And I my tie.

The blessing was given, and the pipers marched out, playing loudly as only a pipe band can. We hung around to take pictures and listen to a few numbers outside, then split for the car.

On the way out, we wandered among the grave-stones in the old church yard.



steve
haynes

• along the sappa

Church has taken way longer than we had planned, but as daughter said, "Any day that begins with 'Scotland the Brave' can't be bad.

And so we were charmed by Columbia.

It's not an old Southern city, because W.T. Sherman put most of it to the torch after he was finished with Atlanta.

Its people are its charm.

It's a college town, and the old mill district is now

filled with bars, restaurants and a trendy grocery.

Everywhere we went, people spoke to us. No one failed to nod and speak a kind word. In the grocery, on the street, on the river walk along the old Columbia canal, everyone smiled. People were easy to talk with.

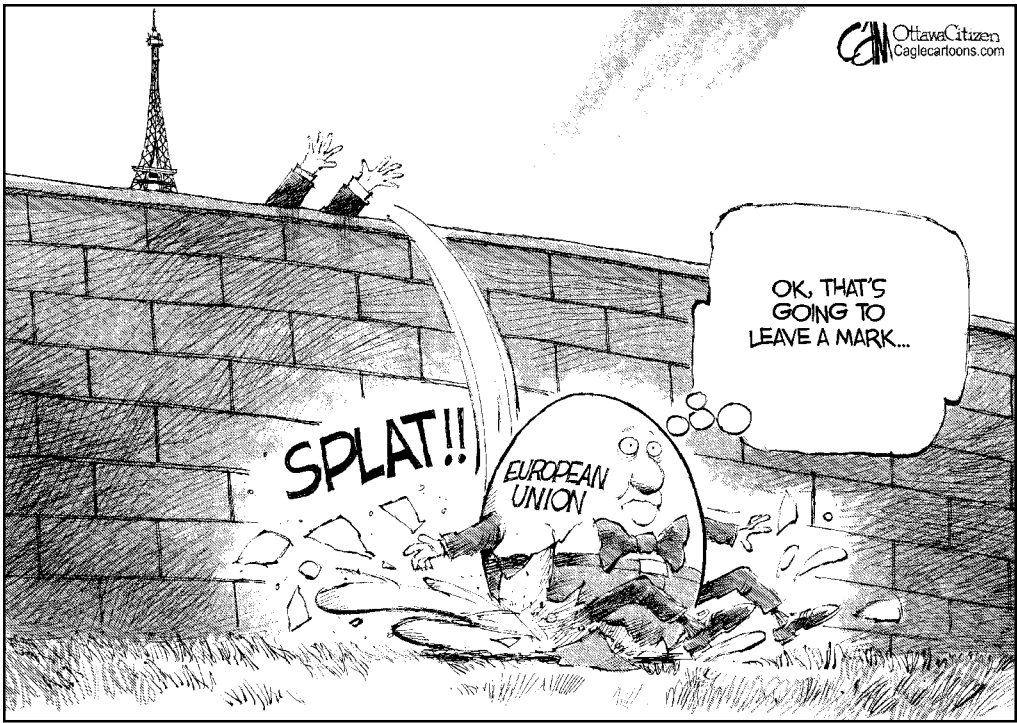
No where we've been, save maybe the High Plains, have we run into more nice people.

Or a better Scotts band.

What I still want to know is, how does he do it? The guy with the little drum and padded sticks? Every Scottish band has one.

While marching and keeping time, he beats the drum, twirls the sticks and beats again, never missing a step. Even, in the movies, while getting shot at.

Maybe next time, we'll get a chance to ask.



garfield

