

A two year adventure comes to an end

While stationed at Misawa Air Base in Japan, we got to experience town life when we were given passes to go in and stay the weekend.

Our transportation involved those military 400-ton trucks again. OK, an exaggeration, but the ride felt like that's what we were in, not driving on a road but in the ditch next to it. It was, however, a good way to sober up on the trip back to the base. And the drivers, Japanese guys, didn't help the ride any either.

My favorite place – and a favorite of some of my buddies – was the Kansas Bar. Yep, that's right. Some of the bars were named after states, and they contained accommodations for wholesome activities designed to keep the military crowd from crying for their mommies.

It didn't take the ladies in the bars very long to learn all of our names. I'll never forget this one gal asked me, "Where you from, GI?" And I told her I was from Hays, Kan. "College town, huh?" she replied. Stunned, I said, "Yes, but how did you know that?" She smiled as broadly as a yen (that's the name of their money) and said, "You just told me."

She and the other girls had a good laugh over that. I always called them the clever little mistresses of midnight.

After my buddies and I had downed a few bottles of Japanese beer, we headed for a restaurant. The little waitress, not all that familiar with the English language, asked what we wanted. We were in agreement that we all wanted chicken-fried steaks with french fries.

It was a long exchange for the poor waitress, but eventually she said she thought she knew exactly what we wanted. Well, she was close; we each had a plate on which there was a steak and some fried chicken. I guess that other mess was the french fries. I really didn't want to eat it because it looked like it could get up and walk away.

Because the hour was late and the last truck had departed for the barracks, we decided to bed down at a hotel. Fancy it was not! We rented a room with two beds to accommodate four GIs. The lady at the desk took us up to the third floor to our room.

While we were preparing to jump in, one of the guys looked for the thermostat to get a little bit of heat into the freezing room. The clerk said, "Heat? No have!" She said we should climb in bed and she would bring heat up to the room.

Heat, part of room service? It consisted of a towel wrapped around a heated brick of some kind. She placed one by each of our feet. She said she would check back occasionally during the night to see if we needed more. We did, again and again.

There was no shower, no bath, no nothing to prepare for a new day. When we got back to the barracks, those fortunate airmen who opted to stay on base instead of in town said we looked like something the rats chased out of a sewer line.

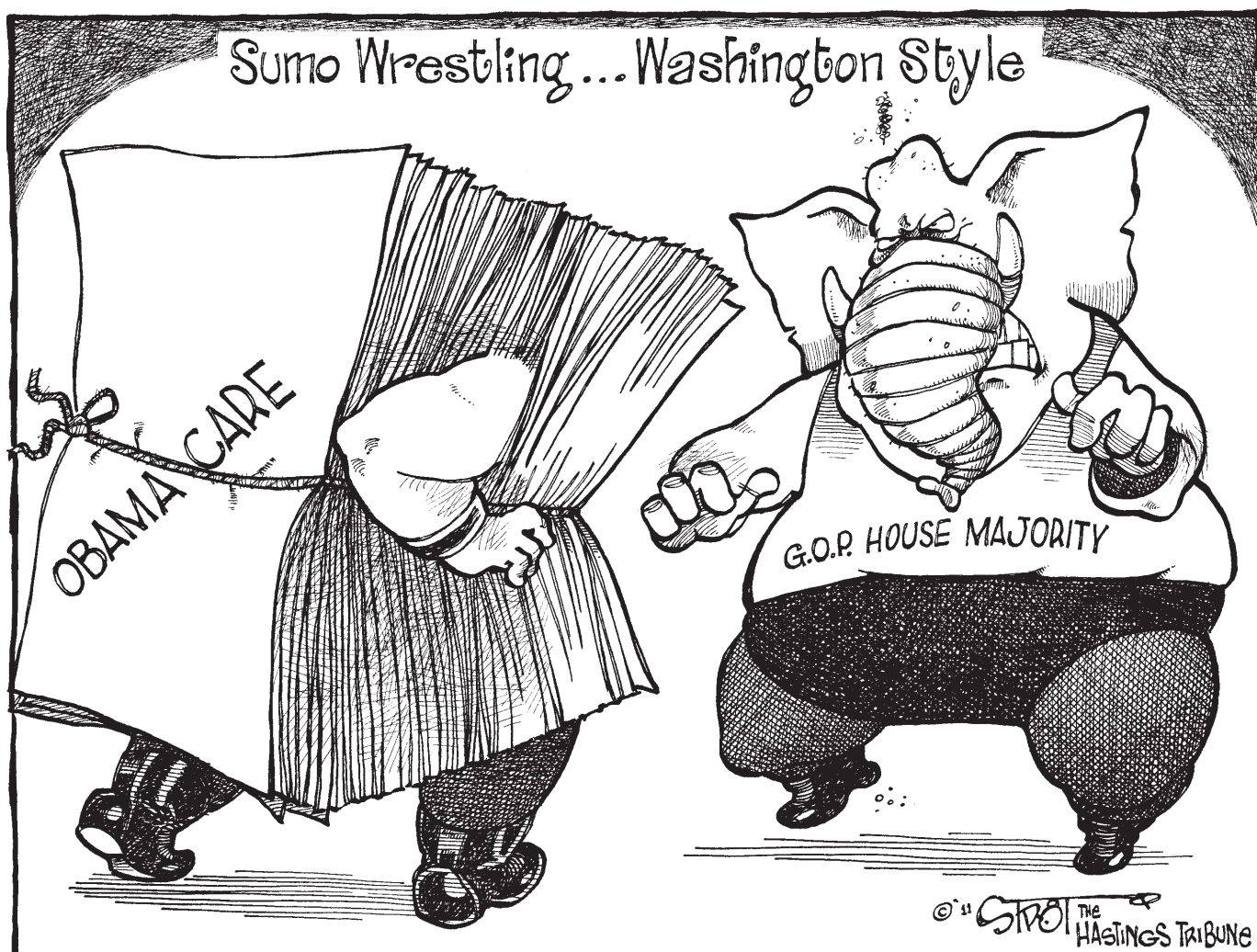
In town, incidentally, sewer lines were a popular sight. They were open lines along the side of the streets and when the need to use them beckoned ... well, you did your thing in the company of many others. Sanitation wasn't a big deal. You can only imagine the odor! That's just the way it was and had been for a long time.

There were times we would venture into the little towns near the base to see what they were like. English was not their thing. Funny how we and they were able to put together what we were asking and they were answering. I liked those little villages. We saw real Japanese people who worked in the fields and some in the towns that only had a handful of little stores.

The two years went by relatively fast. I was a bit misty eyed when we climbed into one of the Flying Tiger aircraft for the trip back to the States. During my time in that country, I learned a lot that books couldn't tell me. And what I thought at the outset was a land of nothing, I learned was a land of plenty – plenty of proud people going about the business of survival.

Unfortunately, I missed a reunion of the veterans who served in the Security Service at Misawa, held in Philadelphia on June 24 to 27. It would have been nice, but some times aging gets in the way.

Stop
Look
Listen
Tom Dreiling



A healthy life Outback

Looking at the clock I see I have about 25 minutes before I have to be someplace. And, since I've never written this column in less than an hour I might be late. It's a good thing my appointment is not life-or-death.

Actually, it could be. A few of us in our little town have organized to create a mini-gym at the old school house. Regular exercise has become a commitment with us and I don't want to let the others down by missing a day. We have brought in all the exercise equipment we had in our basements gathering dust and rust. After a 15 minute walk in the old lunch room we work out on the circuit of equipment, interspersed with hand weights and stretchy bands. Today we hope to introduce a video leading us in low-impact aerobics. Our purpose is to get moving: our motto is "We may be fat but we can still be fit".

Out Back
Carolyn Plotts



his bill for the charges he gives the owners two options. One for the entire amount due or one for a reduced fee plus two meals. So far the owners have chosen option two. Works for us.

-ob-

We've never had a medical doctor in the family before but, we're getting very close. Son-in-law, Adam, is studying to be a para-medic. He's been a volunteer fireman and an Emergency Medical Technician for several years. He really loves it so, this is taking it to the next level which will also allow him to work at a fire station in Dallas. Adam is one of those calm-as-a-cucumber types and I doubt any emergency situation would "rattle" him. I know I would trust him. I trust him with my daughter and I would trust him with my life.

-ob-

The bad thing about this cold weather is Jim's wood shop isn't heated. Why is that bad, you ask? It's bad because he has turned the living room into a work room. Right now, he has a counter-top bar propped up against the back of the love seat with spindle legs jutting out the bottom (or is that the top).

A new restaurant has commissioned him to be their carpenter and this is his third project for them. When he submits

First graders get an education on the farm

"Do you remember what we're going to do?" Lynda Foster asks the 75 youngsters.

"Yeah," they sing back in unison. "What's that?" she asks. "Be quiet," they shout. "Because if you don't what do the cows do?" Foster asks. "They go to the bathroom," the first-graders giggle.

With that dialogue, the elementary students from Winfield Scott Elementary School in Fort Scott begin their morning tour of the Foster Dairy west of the community.

Half the students remain outside to see the feed, facilities and pasture where the 130-head Holstein dairy herd spends its day when not in the milking parlor. The others go inside to see the cows being milked mechanically.

While walking around on the outside farm tour, the first graders see and smell the ingredients fed to a dairy cow including alfalfa, corn, silage and minerals. They have an opportunity to bottle feed and touch the baby calves. They can smell the animals and hear them bah and beller.

The youngsters can see with their own eyes the milk coming from the cow's udder into the milking lines and into the stainless steel tanks.

"Our main message to these children is that milk comes from the cow and not the grocery store," Foster says.

With more than 30 years in the dairy business, Foster knows the importance of making an impression on these young

Insight

John Schlageck

minds. This family has made a conscientious effort to promote their dairy business from the first time they stepped into a milking parlor.

"You've got to hit them at this young age," she says. "When I see these same kids later in town and they come up to me and tell me they remember the trip to our farm, I know we're reaching future milk drinkers and future consumers of other dairy products. I believe in promoting dairy every day. The only way we will stay in business is to have contented consumers drinking milk and eating our products."

Foster and husband, Gary, have conducted tours on their farm for more than 30 years. According to Lynda, they've allowed people to learn about their dairy, "from the get go."

Today, son, David, helps with the operation.

Their "open barn" policy welcomes interested visitors any time they're milking any day.

"We're milking cows twice a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year," Foster says.

"People can come any time from 4 - 9 a.m. or from 3 - 8 p.m. All we ask is they let us know ahead of time when they're coming."

Yes, the Fosters live, eat and breathe

their dairy operation. A visitor only has to listen to the genuine tone of voices Lynda, Gary and David use when caring for their cows to understand the love of their vocation. The cows are as much a part of their family as are their children.

And what do the youngsters think about a tour on a working dairy farm?

Most kids say their favorite thing is the milk, Foster says. The kids say they like to drink it.

Some ask if they can get a dairy calf and take it home to turn into a pet.

"Probably one of the cutest things I ever heard a youngster say after touring our dairy was that he was going to get a Dalmatian calf – you know, one with black and white spots on it," Lynda recalls.

The Fosters enjoy and welcome anyone who wants to come out to their dairy and learn about this vital industry.

"I often run into folks in town at the pharmacy for example, and they'll ask if they can come out," Foster says. "I tell 'em, 'call me and come out and see me.'"

The continuous flow of visitors streaming in and out of the Foster Dairy is a concrete testimonial that agricultural producers must continue to tell their story. Just like good nutrition including milk, meat, fruit, vegetables and bread-cereal are the foundation for good health, promoting their dairy enterprise is a key ingredient for this southeastern Kansas dairy.

Letters to the Editor or Thumbs Up:
e--mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com,
or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654

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Office hours:

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Phone: (785) 877-3361

Fax: (785) 877-3732

E-mail:

nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Dana Paxton.....general manager
advertising director/
email: dpaxton@nwkansas.com

Dick Boyd.....Blue Jay sports
Harriett Gill.....society editor
email: hgill@nwkansas.com

Sherry Hickman....bookkeeping/circulation
Vicki Henderson.....computer production



Thumbs up to the Norton County Arts Council. Thank you for presenting a musical night. Great music and my daughter loved the dancer. Mailed in.

Thumbs up to Nancy Hagman and Mary Kay Woodyard for their great common sense columns! Called in.

Thumbs up to the Prairie Dog State Park and the Norton Longspur Pheasants Forever Chapter for hosting the annual Youth Hunt. Also for all of the food, drinks and fun after the hunt. Emailed in.

Thumbs up to all of those that worked and participated in the dodge ball tournament this past weekend. Emailed in.