

from our viewpoint...

Immigration reform is way overdue

You hear so much about border protection these days, but what does it really mean?

Most countries today are opening up their borders, encouraging visitors and investors alike, while the U.S. is tightening its entry requirements and driving people away.

Other countries make people feel like guests, with perfunctory customs inspections, or none at all, and quick processing. America makes visitors — and returning Americans — feel more like criminals.

While Europe is eliminating the need for passports as it becomes more of a nation, the U.S. is making even its own citizens get them to come and go. It's not our neighbors who want more controls, but our own government.

Foreigners who've been to our country tell horror stories about entanglements with the customs and immigration cops, especially the Arabs. Border protection, it seems, can't tell our friends from our foes, so treats everyone as a fiend.

There's a movement to build a wall along the Mexican border, though curiously, not along the Canadian line. Maybe that's because we see Canadians as our northern cousins while we see our neighbors to the south as racially and ethnically different.

Just what is the magic about a border, anyway?

Most controls are aimed at enforcing tax and drug laws, artificial regulations that have little to do with our security. Preventing terrorism, while important, is a law enforcement and intelligence problem, and there's little evidence that our government has gotten much better at either since 2001.

The government has expanded its ability to track everyone, though, and no one knows quite where that might lead. The mania to track and record border entry, especially by Americans, isn't really to prevent terrorism, though. It's just a way for the security apparatus to have more power over us all.

Our immigration system is broken, no doubt, but walls and cameras and record-keeping won't fix it.

If people want to come here to live, well, we used to welcome settlers who wanted to build a new life. There's plenty of room for more.

If people want to work here and send money home, well, American needs workers as much as people need our jobs. Instead of building a wall, we should build a system to register workers and let them in legally, so they'd be sure to pay taxes and get driver's licenses and buy insurance for their cars.

Today, people pay thousands to be smuggled into the country because, simply put, there's no way to get in legally to work. We should make it easier to come here legally than illegally, and make it a serious crime to be here illegally.

Then, the law would be easy to enforce. Today, it's impossible.

Sure, terrorists may try to come. Some may be here already, though there's not much evidence of that. We need to develop sophisticated ways to watch for and track them, as the Europeans and especially the Israelis have done, and not worry so much about making everyone a suspect.

It can be done, but it takes good intelligence and sophisticated law enforcement, not more red tape and ill treatment.

Immigration reform is way overdue, but walls and a bigger border patrol aren't the answer. We need to welcome the world while watching for criminals with a wary eye.

It can be done. — Steve Haynes



Running down the aisles

Steve and I both like to visit grocery stores — and to shop of course — but mostly we're sort of grocery store fans.

We buy most of our food at home, but there are some things that we can't get there. We buy rye bread from Dillons in Colby, bagels from Panera in Denver, Gates and Sons barbecue sauce from the restaurant in Kansas City and teriyaki sauce from King Soopers in Denver, for example.

But even if we're not going to buy anything, we enjoy a trip down the aisles to check out all the stuff we don't need and probably shouldn't eat. Not if we don't want to weigh 300 pounds each, anyway.

We take time to visit one of the King Soopers near the Denver airport every few months when we are ready to head home from a meeting or a trip. A new Safeway in the suburbs can be a revelation.

We take a cart and walk up and down the aisle, spending extra time in the bread and fancy-cheese departments.

We take part of a day sometimes to visit Whole Foods in Denver for fresh fish and to look over the cheese and olive selections. Now, that is a really different grocery. Who knew you could do that many things with tofu? And who'd want to eat them anyway?

Lots of people, apparently. The parking lot and the aisles are always jammed.



cynthia haynes

• open season

Sometimes we hit groceries when we're on trips.

That's how we ended up at one called La Union in Managua, Nicaragua, earlier this month.

Breakfast at our hotel was a \$15-per-person buffet each morning, and that was more food and more money than any of us wanted to spend, so a three-block walk to the store for some fruit and cereal bars seemed like a good idea.

The store was big, modern and air conditioned. We wandered around to see what they had, ending up with fruit, rum, coffee, peroxide and paper.

The fruit was for breakfast, the 18-year-old rum because we thought we should take some of the national beverage home with us and the coffee because I had promised my sister I would bring her some.

The paper we got because, great journalists that we are, neither of us had remembered to bring a notebook.

We were all a little jarred, however, when we

checked out and realized that our cashier, Maria, was wearing a name tag that said Wal-Mart. The long arm of Sam Walton, it seems, reaches into every nook and cranny these days.

Later in the month, when we were shopping at the Super Mercado while on vacation in Mexico, I knew we weren't in a U.S. superstore. Corporate, maybe, but not that big.

We just needed a few things so our son Lacy could make us fresh margaritas: tequila, triple sec, lemons, limes and simple syrup.

Lacy got the booze. Steve got the fruit, and I was in charge of getting the sugar to make the syrup. When they found me, I was pacing up and down and muttering to myself, "Why is there no sugar in this store?"

Of course there's sugar, they said and pointed to the boxes and bags stacked along the aisle.

Nope, I said, not good enough. The shelves held brown sugar, dark brown sugar, powdered sugar, Sugar Twin and Equal. There wasn't even an empty space where granulated sugar should have been.

I eventually found sugar at a little shop near the hotel, and we got our fresh-from-scratch margaritas. Now Lacy is saying he'll make us cosmopolitans if we'll only get him some cranberry juice...

I'm not betting on it.

Singer urges kids to respect

So there we were, tapping our feet, swaying a little to the music, clapping our hands and singing "Puff the Magic Dragon" with Peter himself.

Most of us, anyway.

The college kids across the table, fresh-faced and well scrubbed, didn't know the words and weren't really sure who the old guy was.

They wore bemused expressions, obviously didn't have a clue. Just who is this Peter Yarrow, anyway? Peter, Paul and Mary?

Ah, but the rest of us knew. We knew the words. We knew the tune.

"No," Peter assured us, "It's not about drugs. Believe me; I'm the original Puff Daddy."

Just a song about childhood dreams. No hidden meanings.

Then he sang a few bars from Bob Dylan, "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind; the answer is blowin' in the wind," and talked about being at the March on Washington in 1963 when Dr. King made his "I Have a Dream" speech.

He's backed causes ever since, from Civil Rights to the antiwar movement on up. Today, he said, in his 60s, he's given his time to a new cause: Teaching the children of the world to respect the worth and dignity of each other — and everyone else.

The need should be obvious. In the U.S. alone, he said, 160,000 children stay away from school every day because of bullying of some type: name calling, violence, discrimination, exclusion.

And nearly everyone has experienced some form of this treatment, from the fat kids who are made fun of, to the misfits and racial outcasts, to those who were always picked last for any game or sport.

Mr. Yarrow helped found Operation Respect, a nonprofit that developed a school curriculum to deal with the problem in a positive way, using music to teach children to not just get along, but value all their classmates. Both the course and the song are named "Don't Laugh at Me."

You can see the words or hear



steve haynes

• along the sappa

the song, and get the curriculum, at www.dontlaugh.com. The program, he said, is in more than 22,000 schools around the world, from the U.S. to Europe, and in places as diverse as Croatia and Israel.

The singer said popular culture today isn't helping people see each other as individuals to be valued rather than types to be laughed at or worse. Reality shows encourage treachery and discrimination; others encourage people to lash out. Commentators preach hate and division; talent judged belittle the losers.

"I believe that we're in a terribly difficult time in the world..." he said. "We have enough animosity and anger in this world. We need to reach out and be friends."

He had come to the Wisconsin Newspaper Association convention, where we spent the weekend, to talk about part of the program

aimed a Newspapers in Education efforts, where the package is in the paper and used in schools to promote goodwill and respect.

Peter asked, near the end of his "talk," if the editors would at least consider using it. Nearly everyone raised his or her hand.

Then he called the association's leaders and Hall of Fame inductees and some children and a baby and, yes, some college students, up to the podium, and we all got to sing "Leaving on a Jet Plane" with him, toes tapping, hands clapping.

Peter Yarrow, a very nice man, stayed around to talk with the students, sign autographs and chat with anyone who wanted to meet him. Hugs all around — I got one and so did Cynthia — then he was off for a bowl of soup with Peter Fox, the Wisconsin Press executive director and his wife Nikki. ("Oh, I've got all his albums.")

Peter wasn't leaving, though, until he'd sung a special chorus of "Puff" to one young girl who had trouble hearing the words, face to face at her table, and taken care of all the fans. Soup could wait.

Go to the website. Listen to the song. It's worth the trouble.

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Member: Kansas Press Association

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e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com

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nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(ntbetz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

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