



kazoo



ulu knife

...Guess which one didn't clear airport security?

THE IDLE AMERICAN

Someone Call Security....

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

Column #1,108 for Release Week of September 8, 2024, or Later

Stephen Cox is not an imposing figure. Still, he has the countenance and features to be a Clark Kent look-alike, even if considerably smaller in stature.

You remember Clark, right? He's the guy who morphed quickly from his role as a reporter for a large metropolitan newspaper into Superman, the movie and comic book figure who flew around Gotham City beating the daylights out of the bad guys.

Cox, now thirty-something, even has eyewear like Kent's. The distinguished San Antonio music educator appears to be much younger than his actual age, but he--like Kent--remains super cool in all circumstances, though never donning a cape, leaping over buildings in a single bound or putting the hurt on anybody....

He's so genteel, always careful to give others the benefit of doubts.

Cox has long been known as the kind of mentor whom students remember fondly for the rest of their lives. Beloved by his wife, children and a host of others, he has been a "hit" wherever he has struck up the band. If Mr. Holland had not preceded him, there easily could have been a "Mr. Cox's Opus."

By all measures, he is simply the best....

Such respect is heaped on him by acclamation; no vote is needed. He's "Mr. Wonderful"--one of the last guys on the planet one would expect to run afoul of airport TSA personnel.

Obviously never having laid eyes on this simple musical instrument, the agent didn't initially believe Cox's explanation about the kazoo in his pocket detected by x-ray. To him, it looked lethal. To Cox, it was a joke, since everyone can play kazoos easily if they have breath and "sing" such syllables as doo, too, who or vrrr into the kazoo.

Unflappable, Cox told the agent about the music convention he'd attended, then details about the simple instrument. He remained calm and wasn't asked to play his kazoo. Isn't there a poem admonishing us to keep our heads about us, when others are losing theirs? Soon, he was allowed to board, his kazoo in hand....

My, how things have changed, particularly airport security. I recall boarding a plane in Dallas, long before 9-11.

En route to Amarillo for a speaking engagement, I was unaware that pheasant hunting season began with the next sunrise. Dozens of boarders placed their shotguns in overhead bins, counting the hours until dawn.

"Those guns aren't loaded, are they?" flight attendants joked....

I had a Stephen Cox experience shortly after 9-11. My wife and I were returning from a trip to Alaska, where she purchased ulu knives to gift our sons-in-law come Christmas. They were miniature versions of ulu knives that are used largely in Alaska.

One might guess them to be "pizza-slicers" if seen on kitchen counters in the USofA.

As we prepared to leave, suitcases filled quickly, so she stuffed the knives into her carry-on bag....

At security check, a mean-spirited woman who looked capable of playing tackle on an NFL team lectured us sternly about dimensions, weights and what could NOT be included in our carry-ons. I yawned, thinking that no such items were in my pouch.

Wrong! My wife--weary as her carry-on bag became "too heavy"--innocently extracted the ulu knives and stuck them into my bag, unbeknownst to me. To this day, she swears she considered them to be Christmas gifts, not dangerous weapons.

"What do we have here?" the agent sneered. "They're going to stay with me." I tried to explain that Brenda thought they'd be nice Christmas gifts. I also failed to feign Cox's innocence, hopeful that the tears streaming down my cheeks would help. The agent, however, wasn't buying it. I could only hope the confiscated knives wound up under Christmas trees of young Eskimos who dreamed that Santa would somehow avoid security checks as his sleigh flew throughout the world on Christmas Eve....

Dr. Newbury, longtime university president, continues to speak and write. The Idle American, begun in 2003, is one of the nation's longest-running syndicated humor columns. Contact: 817-447-3872. Email: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Website: www.speakerdoc.com.