

## **THE IDLE AMERICAN**

**A Joke from the 20th Century....**

**Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury**

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It's an old joke from the 1990s, pulled from the files each time the Super Bowl rolls around.

Late Congressman Charles Stenholm, a distinguished Christian statesman from Ericksdahl (near Stamford) popularized the yarn in Texas, claiming that it originated in Washington, DC. It was during more civil times, when Republicans and Democrats not only talked to each other, but shared jokes across the aisle.

That the joke has whiskers is further linked to the "good old days" because it was shared at Super Bowls featuring the Dallas Cowboys. It was back when there was little argument but that the Cowboys were "America's team." Yes indeed, it was a LONG time ago....

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Here's the joke: The youth minister of a church put up signs all over town inviting youth to attend a Super Bowl party. There'd be sandwiches and cookies for all.

Hours before the party, he grew antsy, fearing they'd run out of food before they ran out of "takers."

As a precaution, he prepared a hasty sign for the sandwich table. It read: "Please take no more than two sandwiches. Remember, God is watching you."....

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**When he** exited, a junior high kid slipped in, noticing the stark request on the sandwich table sign.

He decided to make a sign of his own for the cookie table.

It read: "Take all the cookies you want—God is watching the sandwiches."....

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**During the** recent Christmas/New Year's bowl season, James and Jeanie Williamson and their family gathered at their daughter's home in Houston. Mary and her hubby, Justin, have a spacious home, complete with all kinds of kitchen paraphernalia, the kind Justin, an accomplished cook, deems important. During the visit, Mary and her sister-in-law, Sarah, busied themselves with small talk.

Thinking it may have been misplaced or somehow relocated by the Cornetts' five children, Mary asked, "Where is the sugar bowl?"

Pausing, Sarah answered, "I think it's in New Orleans." Justin, as well as Mary's hubby, John Williamson, and the grandchildren made great sport about the exchange, deciding that the small talk had grown even smaller....

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**Their laughter** perhaps lessened Sarah's shade of red, but powers that be at Texas Christian and Baylor Universities should be blushing about mystifying boo-boo's concerning their basketball playing floors.

Both are obvious to fans who have witnessed home games of both Baylor and TCU.

Let's take the two issues one at a time....

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**At TCU**, the Daniel-Meyer Coliseum is state-of-the-art after a recent multi-million dollar facelift.

Overall, the re-do is magnificent. The floor pattern may be a work of art, but to the hordes of us who'd prefer to follow the game without risking sea sickness, it is lacking. Trying to follow the players and fast ball movement induces dizziness, the artwork appearing to be ocean waves shortly before storms brew. It may win a prize at the art show, but it is hard on TV viewers.

Social media is buzzing with unhappiness with TV coverage at Baylor's new \$212 million Foster Pavilion, where the Bears now play basketball. Fans say that no provisions were made for TV cameras' placement for horizontal shots. Cameras are decidedly directed downward, the effect somewhat lessened by "zooming in."

At a time in history when both Baylor and TCU are combatants in big-time sports with big-time budgets and the big-time glitz that goes with such emphases, changing floor designs and finding new areas dedicated to TV cameras should be "slam dunks."....

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**Somehow, reference** to colors brings to mind a tale attributed to my late Uncle John Harper, who was in law enforcement much of his life.

He often parked near a newly-painted STOP sign. The black letters shined boldly against a brilliant red background. There, he ticketed and lectured motorists failing to come to complete stops. One driver objected, maintaining that he had merely "oozed through" the intersection.

"S-T-O-P don't spell 'ooze'," Uncle John countered, handing him a citation....

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