



## **THE IDLE AMERICAN**

### **A Couple of Good 'Uns....**

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

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**They are** a lovable couple--Dr. Chris Liebrum and his wife, Cindy--known for quickly-triggered smiles, positive attitudes, deep faith and commitment to close-knit families.

Married for 52 years, they have reached highest peaks and navigated life's storms--shortening them when possible--confident of a safe arrival on the other side. They're the kind of folks whose company is treasured.

Cindy has earned “life of the party” status, laughing--even cackling--all the way, sometimes way out on limbs. Comparatively, Chris is content in the shade of trees, maybe planting something to bloom later. In short, they personify the expression heard during long ago cattle drives: “They’ll do to ride the river with.” ...

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**They’re proud** of their sons, Cory and Clay, their daughters-in-law and their four grandchildren. Chris and Cindy, who met as students at Howard Payne University, carve out “family time” admirably. This was difficult to accomplish during Chris’s schedule-packed professional years of denominational leadership,

Even with their mid-70s now at hand, they press on, barely slowed in “semi-retirement.” Chris works parttime for his alma mater, and still preaches often on Sundays throughout Texas.

They are beloved by everyone, even friends with other religious beliefs or political leanings. I deeply value their friendship, these thoughtful, caring Christians. He is studied, his words carefully chosen when serious topics are broached. Cindy can be serious, too, but most friends can’t remember the last time she was. She’s always “at the ready” to snap pictures. Fact is, the camera strap marks formerly marking the back of her neck are slowly disappearing. Now, she values her smartphone, handy not only for “yakking” but also for photography. Grandchildren are favorite targets, as are much else that moves, or--for that matter--stands still....

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**I joke** with them endlessly, sometimes even jabbing a bit, and they jab back, particularly Cindy. She’s a joyful soul, but probably would be a lousy poker player.

Chris, with quiet reserve and contemplation, can steer around most workaday challenges, two of which will be addressed in this column. To most people, they’ll fit in the “minutia box,” probably even at the very bottom.

Neither is mentioned critically, and typically broached jokingly. He can’t pronounce “New Braunfels,” and he’s colorblind. (I don’t intend to joke about his visual condition, but he does.)....

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**First things** first. Like television newsmen who never knew they'd need to pronounce "Uvalde" often until the shootings there, Chris never thought he'd need to pronounce--or try to pronounce--"New Braunfels" on a regular basis.

Not so fast! HPU has a branch campus there, so he's often involved in discussions that include the community's name. In the past, he's been able to "mumble through it," or simply go ahead and pronounce it "New Braunsfel" or "New Braunsfels," like many others do. I have tried endlessly to help him conquer this slight pronunciatonal flaw, but so far have been unsuccessful. It's his "blind spot," so to speak, similar to my failure to understand the difference in "imply" and "infer."

Trying to do so makes my hair hurt....

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**Now, let's** jump into his world which often isn't "black and white," but various other shades and hues, most of which he has learned to live with.

He and Cindy are theater-go'ers, treasuring attendance at live productions like "Wicked," a Broadway hit that opened in 2003. They've seen it at least a half-dozen times on various stages, most recently at Dallas Summer Musicals. At intermission, he heard a lady seated behind him mention the green-colored witch, Elphaba. Puzzled, he turned to Cindy, expressing that he'd never realized the witch's greenish hue.

Chris is doubly careful at traffic lights, too. "I try to go with the flow," he says, "And I've learned that the shortest measurement of time is that brief moment between the light turning green and the horn honking behind me.

Remember, I told you their faults are few....

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