



KOREAN ADVENTURER

By Alan E. Johnson

Living Inside The DMZ

When a truce ended the hostilities of the Korean War, it established a demilitarized zone, or DMZ, that cut across the peninsula, separating North from South.

The DMZ is 4 kilometres wide and 240 km long. It remains enclosed in barbed wire, dotted with landmines (more than anywhere on Earth), and surrounded by hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

The two Koreas are technically still at war, so tensions have run high upon occasion. It is strange, therefore, to see small towns and villages going about their daily affairs inside this zone, as if the war had (almost) never happened.

Both the North and the South established these villages in order to extol each other's superior way of life. Close to Panmunjeom, where peace talks still continue, lies Daesong-dong (the South's model village) and Gijeong (the North's).

Each side has poured money into these showcases. When the Southerners erected a 100 metre flagpole, the North had to have one that was 160 metres tall. The South's schools all have state-of-the-art equipment, including TVs and computers.

In the beginning, villagers were only allowed to enter the zone in order to work their fields. But gradually they have been allowed to settle permanently.

Construction of the model village of Haemaru was completed in 1998, and now is home to 160 residents, most of them elderly, living in 56 houses. Fifteen of these families are engaged in farming. Daesong's population is 226 residents, and they occupy 52 houses.

Since development is very restricted inside the DMZ, it has become something of a nature preserve. Much of the eco-system is left undisturbed, and rare species thrive, along with a great deal of vegetation. Haemaru lies close to where the Imjin River forms a freshwater mudflat, a rare feature. Other rarities include the "golden globe" fish, and an abundance of eels. On the other side of the balance, mosquitoes breed easily within the DMZ's confines, so malaria is still a danger.

The housing is not typically "Korean," but more or less white clapboard houses that you might find in New England.

The population rarely changes, except when someone marries into one of the families. Male residents are allowed to bring their wives here, but female residents marrying outsiders must leave.

Life is fairly pastoral, and almost free of the tension between the two sides if you decide not to acknowledge the little yellow triangles on the fences that read "landmines." People have lost limbs, as well as their lives. As proof of a great deal of military hardware in the area, resident Kim Myeong-cheon displays grenades, unused bullets, and a bayonet, all rusty with age, that he found around his house.

This was the scene of fierce fighting during the war, known as the Battle of the Imjin, where the Chinese came close to breaking through the Allied lines and capturing Seoul.

At the height of the cold war, Northern soldiers would slip across the line to abduct American soldiers, and occasionally a few villagers fell into their nets, as well. Intimidation arose when Northern soldiers sat down and simply watched the Southerners working in their fields.

Residents carry special ID's, and have to endure countless checkpoints when entering or leaving. They have to be back before nightfall, and curfew is 11 p.m.

Recent years have seen tensions between the North and South ease, and so life is getting a little easier. The propaganda that used to be blasted across the zone (going both ways) has quieted down quite a bit. The North's zeal, or financial ability, to compete has become less of late. Giseong is a silhouette of tall buildings in the midst of the zone, but it is only a ghost of its former self, and appears uninhabited.

While the South has grown to become the world's twelfth largest economy, the North has come close to economic collapse. Their soldiers, formerly so keen to bring converts over to their side, are now more than willing to listen to a Southerner, especially if they have food.

Perhaps the best demonstration of the South's rise is Haemaru's scheme to advertise itself as a tourist attraction. Besides a chance to see the town, there is also the Tomb of Huh Jun, a famous Joseon-era scholar of Oriental medicine.

Another sign of the times is the new "special economic zone" of Gaesong, where North and South work together to establish a free-trade area that will benefit both sides.

The railway link between both sides is nearly completed, and is due to be inaugurated by a return visit to the North by former president Kim Dae-jung. Whether the reclusive and paranoid dictator Kim Jung-il will be there to greet him remains to be seen.

SUDOKU

Fill in the missing numbers so every row, column and quadrant contains the number 1 through 9. There is a single solution.

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she is, so he can follow her.

As one stands and watches these two friends, one sees how she is always checking on him, and that he will listen for her bell and then slowly walk to where she is, trusting that she will not lead him astray.

Like the owners of these two horses, God does not throw us away just because we are not perfect or because we have problems or challenges.

He watches over us and even brings others into our lives to help us when we are in need.

Sometimes we are the blind horse being guided by God and those whom he places in our lives. Other times we are the guide horse, helping others see God.



Horse-Sense

Author Unknown

Just up the road from my home is a field, with two horses in it. From a distance, each looks like every other horse. But if one stops the car, or is walking by, one will notice something quite amazing.

Looking into the eyes of one horse will disclose that he is blind. His owner has chosen not to have him put down, but has made a good home for him. This alone is amazing.

Listening, one will hear the sound of a bell. Looking around for the source of the sound, one will see that it comes from the smaller horse in the field. Attached to her bridle is a small bell. It lets her blind friend know where

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

The Middle Wife

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By an Anonymous 2nd grade teacher

I've been teaching now for about fifteen years. I have two kids myself, but the best birth story I know is the one I saw in my own second-grade classroom a few years back.

When I was a kid, I loved show-and-tell. So I always have a few sessions with my students. It helps them get over shyness and usually, show-and-tell is pretty tame. Kids bring in pet turtles, model airplanes, pictures of fish they catch, stuff like that. And I never, ever place any boundaries or limitations on them. If they want to lug it in to school and talk about it, they're welcome.

Well, one day this little girl, Erica, a very bright, very outgoing kid, takes her turn and waddles up to the front of the class with a pillow stuffed under her sweater.

She holds up a snapshot of an infant. "This is Luke, my baby brother, and I'm going to tell you about his birthday. First, Mom and Dad made him as a symbol of their love, and then Dad put a seed in my Mom's stomach, and Luke grew in there. He ate for nine months through an umbrella cord." [She's standing there with her hands on the pillow, and I'm trying not to laugh and wishing I had my camcorder with me. The kids are watching her in amazement.]

ACROSS

- The back side of the neck.
- The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
- Widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions for its fragrant flowers and colorful fruits.
- A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- Any isomeric saturated hydrocarbon found in petroleum and used as a fuel and solvent.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- Panel forming the lower part of an interior wall when it is finished differently from the rest.
- The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- An informal conversation.
- (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- An associate degree in applied science.
- Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
- An informal term for a father.
- Being ten more than one hundred forty.
- An ugly evil-looking old woman.
- An important seaport on the Island of Cebu in the Philippines.
- A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
- A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
- Stable gear consisting of either of two curved supports that are attached to the collar of a draft horse and that hold the traces.

DOWN

- Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
- Jordan's port.
- Seed of a pea plant.
- The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
- Counting the number of white and red blood cells and the number of platelets in 1 cubic millimeter of blood.
- The sixth month of the civil year.
- Type genus of the Ranidae.
- (pathology) An elevation of the skin filled with serous fluid.
- Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
- A slight amount or degree of difference.
- A system of solmization using the solfa syllables.
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
- Medium-sized tree having glossy lanceolate leaves.
- The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- An administrator in charge of a division of a university or college.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- An island in the Netherlands Antilles that is the top of an extinct volcano.
- (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
- A ballistic missile that is capable of traveling from one continent to another.
- A slight indication.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- 30 to 300 kilohertz.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.

"Then, about two Saturdays ago, my Mom starts saying and going, 'Oh, oh, oh, oh!' " [Erica puts a hand behind her back and groans.] "She walked around the house for, like an hour, 'Oh, oh, oh!'" [Now this kid is doing a hysterical duck walk and groaning.]

"My Dad called the middle wife. She delivers babies, but she doesn't have a sign on the car like the Domino's man.

They got my Mom to lie down in bed like this." [Then Erica lies down with her back against the wall.]

"And then, pop! My Mom had this bag of water she kept in there in case he got thirsty, and it just blew up and spilled all over the bed, like psshhheew!" [This kid has her legs spread and with her little hands are miming water flowing away. It was too much!]

"Then the middle wife starts saying 'push, push,' and 'breathe, breathe.' They started counting, but never even got past ten. Then, all of a sudden, out comes my brother. He was covered in yucky stuff, they all said it was from Mom's play-center, so there must be a lot of stuff inside there."

Then Erica stood up, took a big theatrical bow and returned to her seat. I'm sure I applauded the loudest.

Ever since then, if it's show-and-tell day, I bring my camcorder, just in case another Erica comes along.



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Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.
- H. Jackson Brown