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CAPPERS

Taken to Heart for More Than 125 Years

Editor's Notebook

At the Great Wall, a new angle seen

This month, one of the monuments to American industry and ingenuity celebrates the 70th anniversary of its completion. As an engineering marvel, the Hoover Dam ranks up there with the Great Wall of China.

Besides touting the technical achievements, though, Hoover Dam historians sadly recount that 110 workers lost their lives during the construction, which was finished two years ahead of schedule. Historians insist there are no bodies entombed in the massive edifice holding back the Colorado River. But the myth persists.

By contrast, Chinese engineers see it differently. Years ago, my Chinese colleagues in a technology publishing venture took me to the Great Wall. As we looked toward the dry Mongolian plains, one of them proudly explained that over a million workers had died during nearly 2,000 years of building and continual renovation. And, he went on, they were all buried with the materials used to form the wall. Nothing to brag about by OSHA standards, I thought. But without a trace of remorse, he said the workers had not died in vain because their spirits provided extra eyes to keep watch for approaching enemies.

So, maybe it's all in the way you look at things. First impressions, people are told, mean everything; and as the cliché goes, you only get one chance to make a good one. But in this month's Heart of the Home section, Kate Marchbanks and her contributors point out that sometimes the first impression you take or get from someone can be wrong.

More seniors than you might think are changing a common perception that cyberspace is no place for the elderly. The number of senior bloggers – Internet diary keepers – is growing according to a recent Pew Study.

On a sad note, a once-vital part of Americana has succumbed to the speed and reach of the Internet and other communication technologies. After more than 150 years of service Western Union has shut down its telegram service STOP



Dennis McLaughlin
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