

## Jeff Around Town – August 2nd, 2024

**Jeff:** Well, now time for, well, Jeff Around Town. That would be, well, yours truly. I was originally going to talk a little bit about Cyber Seniors at Do Space, and that's going to come up next week. But the storm happened, and so I've got a little Jeff Around Town about storms.

You know, like the tornadoes that came through last April, and again, those hurricane-like winds that blew through Wednesday, well, those kind of storms can often bring people together and you see it all the time, neighbor helping neighbor, stranger helping neighbor with chainsaws and shovels and rakes. But what about when you're stuck inside, waiting out the storm with a few friends, but maybe even a few strangers?

Well, that's what happened Wednesday night at Blue Line Coffee in Dundee. A group of us were there for our French conversation meetup. On Wednesday's show, I just happened to mention something about this French conversation group, and a listener named Danielle called the station and left a message for moi, for yours truly. And, well, I gave Danielle a call back and, well, it turns out she's from Switzerland and had been looking for others to speak French with. So, I told her, hey, why not stop by Blue Line that night? And that was, you know, before the storm was brewing.

And as we were there and the storm approached, you know, we French speakers were working on our vocabulary regarding bad weather. For me, I have actually been hit by lightning. So, I was practicing the phrase, “j'ai été frappé par la foudre.” And then, as the skies were getting darker, I didn't think that we'd see Danielle. It would be her first time and hadn't met yet. But then right before the storm hit, there she was. She sat down, and we exchanged a few words in French just moments before that storm roared through. And then the power went out.

Next, the water started coming in under the door of Blue Line and from around the windows, and just the owner, the incredible owner, along with Chelsea, one of the wonderful baristas, scrambled to batten down the hatches and to start mopping up. And, well, we all offered to help, of course. But instead, what did they say? No, please go be with your group. Go practice French. It's in the dark. And oh, by the way, by the way, we have some treats for you.

So, there in the dark, Shauna, who also works at Blue Line, brought out this incredible and beautiful charcuterie plate, baguettes and crackers and cheese and grapes and cherries and profiteroles, which are these little puff pastries with ice cream or cream or something. I'm not really sure what was in there because it was dark, but it was so, so tasty. And apparently, they'd already planned on presenting to us, this to us as a surprise.

But somehow, in the darkness, the rain and wind blowing like a hurricane, and with our new friend from Switzerland, it felt even more special. And again, they said, eat, practice your French. And so, and just, oh, just before Blue Line closed down, someone snuck over to the gas station for some gas station wine over to Abe's. And actually, it's really good wine, but it just sounds fun and maybe more French to say gas station wine. And so, with the wind howling and the rain pouring, it felt as though Danielle had been part of our group all along. If you've seen the TV series, *The Bear*, you know that it's a show about a group of friends and relatives trying to build this great restaurant. And yes, at times, it can be chaotic, but in the

end, it's ultimately about people caring for each other. And the show is based on this wonderful book called *Unreasonable Hospitality*. It's all about taking care of people, bringing them joy, even when it doesn't cost anything.

Later, after the skies would clear, we'd go back into the world to head home to clear branches from our yards and maybe from our neighbor's yards. Some of us discovering our car window had been shattered from a fallen tree in Dundee. But during the storm, instead of feeling stuck inside a darkened coffee shop, we felt safe and at home.

What the staff did at Blue Line was unreasonable hospitality. And I hope through all these storms that you've also experienced unreasonable hospitality or have offered unreasonable hospitality to others, because that's what we do. That's who we are here in the Midwest.

And that's another Jeff Around Town. Thanks for listening.