



BOB’S
THOUGHTS

BOB BAUM

Olympic nuggets from an aging brain

The Tokyo Olympics would just be getting under way this week had COVID-19 not struck. Now they’re delayed for a year.

And it goes without saying that the Olympics are monstrous undertakings. The last ones to break even were the 1984 Los Angeles Games, coincidentally also the first of the 10 Olympics I had the great pleasure to cover.

What follows are a few behind-the-scenes nuggets from the seven Summer Olympics I attended. I’m gonna remember them while I still can.

Los Angeles, 1984

Los Angeles was a wonder for a small-town guy suddenly thrust into the heart of sport’s biggest stage. But before I moved on to the centerpiece event of track and field, I covered weightlifting (yeah, really). I knew nothing about it but labored on.

See Olympics/Page 3B



BETWEEN
THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

The value of a daily garden tour

It’s amazing how much better things do when you water them! For years now I have suspected that the secret to having a green thumb is simply remembering to water a little before the plant goes into stress from thirst.

My persimmon tree was doing fine and looked healthy. Then I watered it and it looked more vibrant and grew a lot of new leaves. It is good to make daily garden rounds and critically examine your plants. It’s not easy to practice what I preach, but I’m getting better, gradually.

Garden chores

- Apply final treatment for borers on hardwood trees.
- Divide and reset oriental poppies after flowering as the foliage dies
- Blossom-end rot of tomatoes and peppers occurs when soil moisture is uneven.

See Garden/Page 3B

A Sampling Of Scrumptious Recipes



Huy Mach/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Halloween candy bark.

CHOCOLATE: It’s The Ultimate Comfort

By Daniel Neman
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Many years ago, before we ever started dating, the woman who became my wife told me the tragic story of a horrible weekend conference.

She was a reporter at the time, and she was sent to a journalism conference a couple of hundred miles away. She went with another reporter from the same paper, and that was the problem.

This man was odd. He was very odd. Even among journalists, a profession that tends to attract weirdos, deviants and social misfits, he was an oddball. We would get together in little groups (weirdos in one corner, deviants in another, social misfits in a third) and talk about how strange he was.

And it wasn’t an endearing sort of oddness, either. A lot of journalists have that. His was the sort of annoying oddness that you did not want to be around for very long.

Which brings us back to the long-ago weekend my future wife spent with him at the conference. They were in each other’s company for far longer than she liked. He was making her crazy.

Then, a heavy mountaintop snowstorm on their drive back delayed their return for one more night. It was more than she could take. The next day, before they set out for the final leg of their trip, she decided to treat herself to a badly needed hot fudge sundae.

“It was the only time in my life that chocolate didn’t help,” she said.

And that was the moment I fell in love with her.

“Comfort me with apples,” says the Song of Solomon and Ruth Reichl. They have a point. Food has the power to comfort and console. It wraps us in its warmth, it swathes us like an old blanket.

There is a reason they call it comfort food. It brings us to a better and happier state of mind.

The woman in the Song of Solomon is lovesick; she seeks consolation in pressed raisin cakes and apples. I appreciate the sentiment, but I’m not entirely on board with her choices.

When I was lovesick in my youth, my comfort foods were ice cream and Doritos, though not at the same time. When I was lovesick as an adult, my comfort foods were ice cream and alcohol. Sometimes at the same time.

Doughnuts too, of course. Doughnuts are a constant. That’s the problem with not being lovesick: not enough excuses to eat doughnuts.

We all have foods that we turn to in times of sorrow and need. It’s why we bring food to people who are mourning. It’s why we try to cheer up friends by taking them out to dinner.

When I am beset by sadness, doughnuts do not make me feel all better, but they

make me feel a little better. Or at least they don’t make me feel worse. Perhaps a second doughnut would help.

Chocolate always works for my wife and a lot of other people I know. If I had known enough to give more chocolate to more women, I might not have been lovesick as often. And then I would have needed less ice cream.

But now, my wife admits, she is moving away from her beloved chocolate. Her new comfort food is salted caramel.

STRAWBERRY CHOCOLATE TART

Yield: 8 servings

- 2 tablespoons whole almonds
- 2 tablespoons confectioners sugar
- 1 pinch salt
- ½ stick plus 2 tablespoons (6 tablespoons total) unsalted butter, at room temperature, cut into pieces, divided
- 3 eggs, divided
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 3 pounds fresh strawberries, washed and trimmed, divided
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 7 ounces bittersweet chocolate
- ½ cup heavy cream

See Chocolate/Page 2B

A mystery of history: The building at 1501 Madison

By Ginny Mammen

The name of the person who constructed the building at 1501 Madison is a mystery, but most likely it was built by Charles E. Harris, born in 1891. His parents were Franklin and Maria Harris, who had come to Illinois from Canada.

When Charles was a very small child the family moved to La Grande where his father, known as Frank the Art Man, established the “Gift Shop” in downtown. In 1920 Charles was clerking in a local retail art store which was about the time Frank had sold his business to returning soldier Harley Richardson.

Shortly after his father sold the store, Charles turned cabinet maker, becoming the proprietor of his own shop called La Grande Construction & Supply Co. at 1501 Madison. The shop provided screens for doors and



Photo by Ashley O'Toole

The ghost sign at 1501 Madison St. in La Grande.

windows as well as custom cabinets for La Grande homes.

At age 34 he married Marie, a woman with two teenage children. In less than 15 years Charles was divorced and living with his

parents.

Sometime in the 1940s he remarried and he and his new wife, Lucille, settled into the house at 1505 Madison. No records were found for children of Charles.

Charles lived a quiet life in La Grande, unlike his father and other men about town we have learned about in previous articles. He was a carpenter and a hard worker who remodeled numerous houses and downtown buildings. In addition to his shop at 1501 Madison he owned the building at the corner of Greenwood and Jefferson. D.D. Miller purchased this building and moved his cabinet shop into it in 1942.

An untimely end came for Charles, age 59, in September of 1950. He was visiting with a couple of neighbors in their backyard

and enjoying a bit too much wine. Apparently another neighbor, named Avery Green, who lived across the back fence, came out to pick cucumbers in his garden and started using profane language. What started as a verbal fight with name-calling erupted into a full-blown fist fight that moved to the front of the house where Charles was knocked down and his head hit the sidewalk. He was taken to the hospital, where he died as a result of a cerebral hemorrhage.

We would probably never have learned of Charles E. Harris or his untimely end if not for the need to know about the ghost sign appearing above the door at 1501 Madison. The ghost sign on the Greenwood side of the building is still one of history’s mysteries.

Keep looking up. Enjoy!