

Public Square

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Tis the season for optimism

By LYNDON ZAITZ

I have always been an optimist and I am determined to remain optimistic, especially as we head into a new year.

I refuse to be part of the anger that has permeated the country this year. Regardless of the cause of people's anger and frustration—political, financial, cultural—I will not take part and will rather be part of the calming and soothing that is sorely needed.

What is the source of my optimism? The source is my experience in and knowledge of the world. I firmly believe that a person doesn't wake in the morning wondering how they can make another's day horrible. We all have our daily lives to live which leaves little time to mess with someone else.

The saying that the best things in life are free is true and I wish everyone would subscribe to that view. It doesn't cost a cent to be nice. It doesn't cost a cent to offer a pleasant "Hello." A smile goes a long way; it is wonderful to experience how that little gesture can be calming and disarm someone is mad at how the universe is treating them. A scowl is not the default expression of people; everyone wants to be happy and there no greater validation for us when we can bring a bit

of sunshine into someone's day.

These thoughts are prevalent this time of year. Messages conveyed in Christmas carols and holiday stories make us feel warm and sentimental. Peace on earth begins with each of us—that's a powerful tool to have at your disposal.

This a time when we gather family and friends close to us. This holiday is a time to set aside disagreements and embrace those who mean the most to us. We cannot allow opportunities to show how we care for loved ones go by. I'd rather share stories and play games than rehash political arguments from 2020.

One of the greetings I offer during this season is: "May the joy of the holidays be yours throughout the new year." It may sound like a generic Christmas card message, but when you think about it, it's not. Just as world peace begins with each of us, the joy we experience during the year begins with us, as well. It is a matter of remembering. In a year such as we've experienced, remembering what brought us joy and happiness in the past is important.

I am optimistic about the new year because I choose to be. "Don't just stand there, do something!" will be fitting motto for 2021. Life

is either something that happens to us or life is something we direct. I prefer to have some semblance of control. That includes how I react to people and situations. I will be polite and sincere and warm. I am optimistic that people will respond in kind.

I will await the new year, reveling in the holidays: I will be (at my) home for Christmas; a walnut sauce will be cooking on the stove (rather than chestnuts roasting); I will hear what you hear (non-stop carols) and my halls will be decked.

'Tis the season of giving. I am more thrilled with what I can give rather than what I can receive. I have never returned a gift and I don't make a list of what I 'want.' I am happy with whatever someone takes the time to choose, wrap and present. I don't think of what I might get as a present...it's a gift and I cherish it.

The new year will come soon enough. Life has changed. I can lament the change all I want but it won't matter. Adaptation is the new normal. Some embrace progress, others don't like change at all. I say, 2021, show us what you've got, I'm up for the challenge.

(Lyndon Zaitz is publisher of the Keizertimes.)

on my mind

Has America's Suez moment come?

By PATRICK J. BUCHANAN

Two thousand-twenty will surely qualify as an "annus horribilis" in the history of the Republic.

By New Year's, one in every 1,000 Americans, 330,000, will be dead from the worst pandemic in 100 years. The U.S. economy will have sustained a blow to rival the worst year of the Great Depression.

And by the end of December, much of the nation will be back in lockdown, with Joe Biden repeatedly predicting a "dark winter" ahead.

Only at the apex of World War II has the U.S. deficit and debt been so large a share of our economy.

In the wake of George Floyd's death in Minneapolis, the summer of 2020 produced riots the extent of which rivaled the week after the murder of Martin Luther King in 1968.

Also revealed by the BLM uprising of 2020 was an unknown depth of hatred many U.S. citizens have for their country's history, as they pulled down and smashed statues of men once revered as the greatest leaders—Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lee, Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson.

By year's end, tens of millions were denying the legitimacy of the designated president-elect, who was to take office on Jan. 20. Both parties were charging the other with trying to "steal" the presidency.

Can a nation so distracted, so divided, so at war with itself continue to meet all of the duties, obligations and commitments that are ours as the self-proclaimed "leader of the free world"? Are we still the people and country we used to be?

While we tear ourselves apart, we remain obligated to defend nearly 30 nations of Europe from Russia. We are committed to ostracizing and isolating Iran and going to war if she should seek to build nuclear weapons like those held by her neighbors Israel, Pakistan, India, Russia and China.

Why is this our duty? We are strategically "pivoting" to Asia to contain a China that is the rising power of the new century and whose economy and armed forces rival our own, while its population is four times larger.

If South Korea is attacked by the North, or Japan or the Philippines find themselves fighting China over rocks in the South and East China seas, we are obligated to treat any Chinese attack as an attack upon us.

Three decades ago, historian Paul Kennedy used the term "imperial overstretch" to describe what happens to great powers when their global commitments become too extensive to sustain.

This happened to the British at the end of World War II when, bled, broken and bankrupted by the six-year war with Germany, she began to shed her colonies. In the fall of 1956, Prime Minister Anthony Eden, Churchill's foreign secretary, was ordered by President Eisenhower to get his troops out of Suez under an American threat to sink the British pound.

The British Empire was finished. The imperial overstretch of the Soviet Empire was exposed from 1989 to 1991, with the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Iron Curtain. The captive nations of Eastern Europe broke free. The USSR then disintegrated along ethnic and tribal lines into 15 nations.

Its diversity tore the Soviet Union apart.

On Dec. 2, at Brookings Institution, joint chiefs chair Gen. Mark

Milley said: "There's a considerable amount that the United States expends on overseas deployments, on overseas bases and locations, etc. Is every one of those absolutely, positively necessary for the defense of the United States?" The Defense Department, Milley added, must "take a hard look at what we do, where we do it."

In a separate talk at the United States Naval Institute, the chairman added that U.S. permanent basing arrangements are "derivative of where World War II ended."

Indeed, NATO was formed and its war guarantees were issued to Western Europe in 1949, seven decades ago. War guarantees to South Korea, Japan, the Philippines and Australia were all issued from 1950 to 1960.

These commitments to go to war for other nations were issued when Stalin was in the Kremlin, a 400,000-man Red Army sat on the Elbe in Germany, and Mao and his madness had just come to power in Peking.

How long must we sustain all these alliances and soldier on in the "forever wars" of the Middle East? Do we Americans still have the national unity, sense of purpose, and disposition to sacrifice for the cause of Western civilization we had in the early days of the Cold War?

Or has our own Suez moment arrived?

President Trump did not extricate us from the "forever wars," but he did draw down our troop levels in Afghanistan and Iraq. And he did raise the question of how many more decades must we defend a rich Europe from a declining Russia that has a fourth of its population and a tenth of its wealth.

(Creators Syndicate)

other voices!

Needed relief expected with special session

With Legislative Committee Days scheduled for this week, Christmas right around the corner, and the 2021 legislative session starting in January, Gov. Kate Brown has decided to call for a special session on December 21. What does this mean and what will be addressed?

The governor has called for the third special session this year, which means legislators must go vote on legislation that has been proposed by her and the presiding leadership.

A Special Session Committee will be formed to discuss the legislation with public hearings and work sessions. Upon passage, any legislation will go to both the House and Senate for a vote. The intent is to have any proposed legislation passed in one day.

This special session will give much needed relief to hurting Oregonians. Proposed legislation includes COVID-19 liability protections for schools, a critical first step to get schools reopened, support for renters and landlords, as well as technical changes in the restaurant industry that will help hard-working Oregonians and small businesses.

It is my sincere hope that both parties can work together for the good of all of Oregon as we navigate through this pandemic.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas. And as always, my office is always open for any assistance you might need.

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from the capitol

By BILL POST

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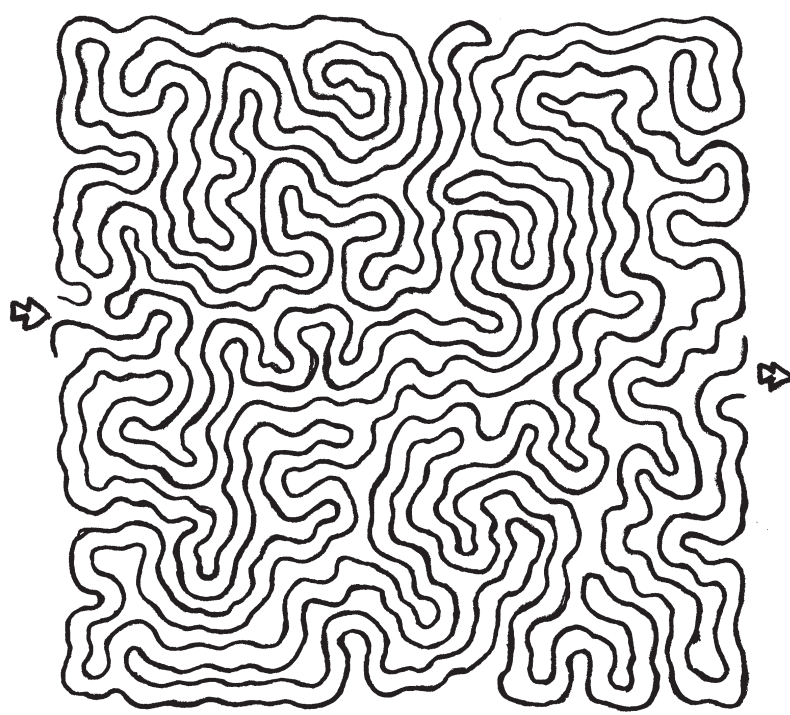


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maze



Maze by Jonathan Graf of Keizer

sudoku

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