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OUR VIEW

Go read a book

Read Across America week kicks off Monday, followed by the birthday of Dr. Seuss.

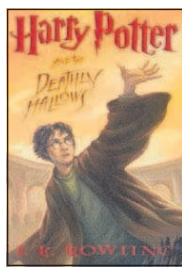
That makes this weekend as good a time as any to remind parents and grandparents, teachers and students about the importance of reading.

In some respects, reading habits have changed for this generation. Instead of reading the comics on the back of a cereal box at the breakfast table, children are more likely to be poking at their screen of choice, watching videos or playing games or conversing with classmates.

But text messaging has made reading and writing ever more critical, perhaps at the expense of inter-personal skills. Being able to express yourself through words is more important than ever. Use bae or fam or lol incorrectly and watch your bae or fam lol at u.

Study after study shows the benefits of reading: It increases your IQ, your vocabulary and your knowledge. Reading fiction improves empathy, increases brain connectivity and function. The number of books in a home is strongly linked to academic achievement.

Reading also gives you memories that can last a lifetime. Here are a few:



Well before I was an advanced enough reader to enjoy a good book on my own, my parents were reading out loud to me. We started with simple picture books, but the tradition of reading out loud lasted far beyond the age of curling up on mom or dad's lap for a bedtime story. I was introduced to many of the classics in elementary or middle school while listening to one of my parents read out loud, stopping to explain complicated words or confusing plot points when needed.

I also experienced all of the Harry Potter books for the first time while listening to my mom read them out loud. I was eight when the first one came out and 18 when the last one was published. Listening to her read the latest Harry Potter installment in the car during a two or three day drive on our family's summer vacation became as much a childhood tradition for me as decorating the Christmas tree. We planned a few road trips around the release of a Harry Potter book, because there was no better way to pass the time on the road and guarantee that my brothers and I would not kill each other in the back seat before the trip was over. We even pulled over on the side of the road for 20 minutes so we could finish "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" before arriving at a family reunion in Colorado.

I read many books on my own over the years that had a great impact on me, but I don't think anything cemented my love of reading as much as those trips to Hogwarts in the family minivan.

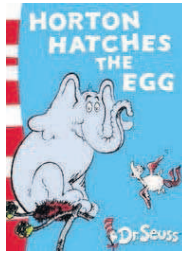
— Jade McDowell, Hermiston reporter

If the point of learning how to read is to be able to absorb and contextualize information, then the highest pinnacle of literacy is baseball cards. I believed that when I was 10 years old and couldn't argue against it today.

The picture books, chapter books and young adult novels were a regular part of my formative years, but none held my attention the way a pack, or deck, or box of baseball cards could. From the basic biographical information to complex statistical analysis, each card carried all the argument you'd need for which player or team was better, along with tiny pieces of the history of the greatest game on earth.

They were a gateway to books like "Moneyball," "Ball Four" and the annual Baseball Prospectus guide — but none of those are as pure as a pack of glossy Upper Deck cards.

— Daniel Wattenburger, managing editor



As a kid, I remember loving "Horton Hatches the Egg" by Dr. Seuss. My mom and I would read it daily for months on end. I'm still convinced that elephant-bird is out there somewhere. 'I meant what I said, and I said what I meant. An elephant's faithful, one hundred per cent.'

— George Plaven, natural resources reporter

Reading was a huge part of my life growing up. My parents read to me from the day I was born, and the first book I really remember connecting with was "One Horse Farm" by Dahlov Ipcar.

Published in 1950, the picture book follows a boy and a horse in rural Maine as the years pass and technology changes around them. In kindergarten, I read the book so many times my teacher gave it to me at the end of the year. The book had been well used and was going to be retired, but because of my love for it, I took it home and still have it on one of my shelves — binding tape and all.

These days, my children read Fancy Nancy and Pete the Cat and Little Green Peas, but there is always time for a family favorite like "One Horse Farm."

— Jennifer Colton, Hermiston education reporter



When I moved past picture books, I read newspaper sports pages, as well as outdoor and adventure tales like "Hatchet" by Gary Paulsen and Ranger Rick magazine.

The first elementary school novel that kicked my imagination into another gear was "Island of the Blue Dolphins," a story about a young American Indian girl left alone on an island off the California coast. I must have spent hours and hours, day after day, in the world of that novel — remapping the island onto notebook pages, inventing new tools to catch clams and, somehow, picking and choosing the friends who would be join me in the next canoe.

That's the true gift of literature: allowing another character to influence your own. The reader grows, experiences, empathizes, imagines and wants to read again.

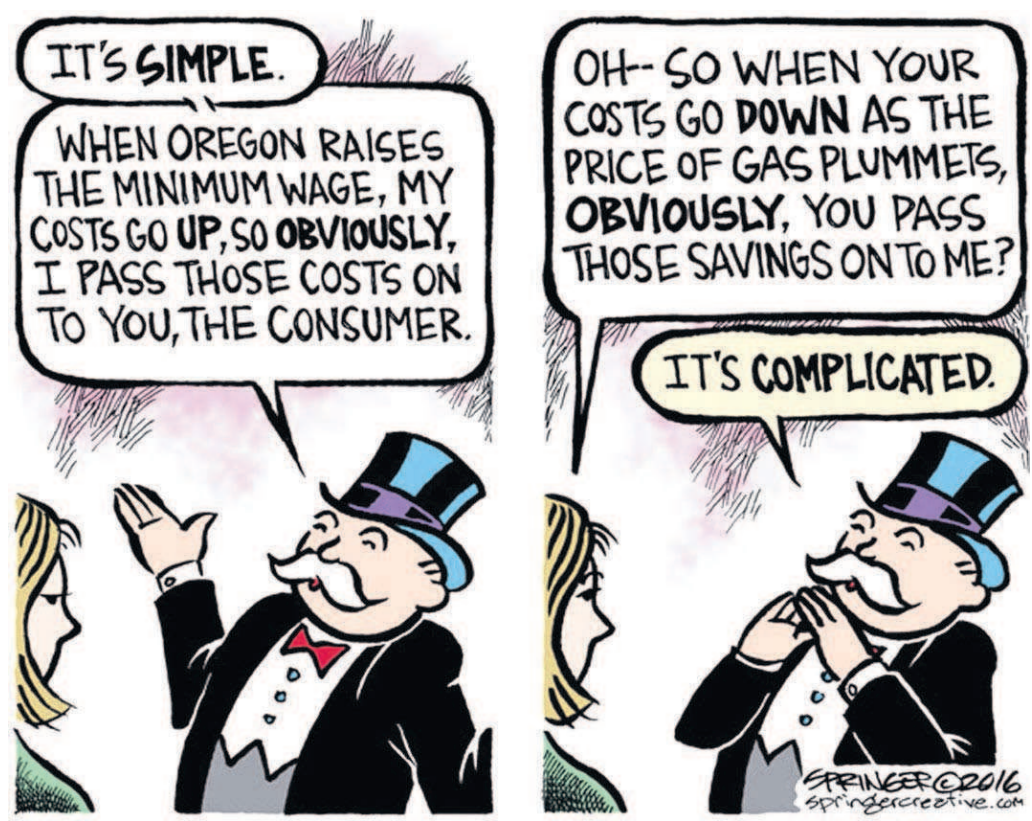
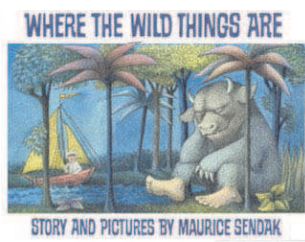
— Tim Trainor, opinion page editor

One of the best things you can do for your children (or nieces and nephews, or random neighbor kids) is read to and with them from infancy. One of my very favorite memories from my son's childhood is reading with him every night before bed. Even when he got into trouble and had other things taken away as punishment, we left his books.

My family went without TV for many years when I was growing up, so we're all voracious readers, and the library is always like a second home. One of our family favorites is "Where the Wild Things Are," by Maurice Sendak. I remember reading it with my parents when my three siblings and I were kids, and it was one of my son's and nephews' favorite books when they were young. I have a copy in a trunk with other favorites like "Harold and the Purple Crayon" and "Goodnight Moon" in anticipation of grandchildren (maybe) someday.

There are millions of books that I could recommend, but every kid is different. The important thing is to find something that gets you excited about reading; then it becomes a lifelong love affair.

— Renée Struthers, community records editor



OTHER VIEWS

The secret side of Trump

Sometimes in a particularly awful presidential race you're forced to take the most bleak and cynical view of the candidates running for the most powerful job in the world. And then you discover you're overestimating.

Today we will consider the upside of Donald Trump.

OK, it was never huge. Possibly not even nugget-size. But people, wasn't there a moment when you thought that he could think outside the normal conservative box? True, his riff against the power of big political donors was just another way to brag about being rich. And he was awful on ... so very many things.

But once in a while, as Trump ranted about the Republican insiders, some actual outsider remarks did pop up. Don't mess with Social Security. Planned Parenthood is a good thing. And everybody ought to have health care.

Earlier in the campaign, he seemed to support a single-payer health care plan, sort of like Bernie Sanders. Wow.

"I am going to take care of everybody. I don't care if it costs me votes or not. Everybody is going to be taken care of," he told Scott Pelley on CBS.

Now it was pretty clear Trump had not actually thought things through. This happens so very frequently, you have to wonder what he talks about on all those plane rides. Schedules? Golf scores? Dinner plans?

This month, Trump still seemed to be moving in the same general health care direction. In a CNN town hall, Anderson Cooper mentioned the Obamacare mandate that everybody must have insurance. The Republicans hate this idea. They believe all Americans have a God-given right to refuse to get health coverage and throw themselves on the mercies of extremely expensive hospital emergency rooms if they get ill.

"Well, I like the mandate," said Trump. "OK, so here's where I'm a little bit different. I don't want people dying on the streets and I say this all the time."

This is how far we have fallen. The leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination keeps bragging that he does not want people dying in the streets.

"Now some people would say, 'That's not a very Republican thing to say,'" he told Cooper.

Wow, Trump clearly has a very low opinion of Republicans. As well as insurance companies. Do you see why a desperate citizen might think he's the lesser of three front-running evils? Remember, right now the party's sensible establishment candidate is a person who does not want to allow abortions for rape victims and who basically believes that the only people who should have to pay



GAIL COLLINS
Comment

taxes are the ones who worked for the money.

Trump said the poor people could be taken care of "through maybe concepts of Medicare. ... That's called heart."

Fast forward three days. Trump is back at CNN talking with Jake Tapper, denying that he wants any mandate.

Pop quiz. After Donald Trump said he did not want a health care mandate after all, he added that he also did not want:

- A) Any more hard questions.
- B) People dying in the streets.

You're right! The answer is B, and in case anyone missed his big-heartedness, Trump added that people would not be "dying on the sidewalks" either.

One of the most universally popular parts of Obamacare is the requirement that insurance companies can't discriminate against people who have pre-existing conditions like diabetes or a prior bout with cancer. The problem is how to keep everybody from waiting until they get sick to insure themselves. You can just create a kind of Medicare for all. Or you can require people to buy insurance, and help the low-income pay the cost.

"I don't like the term mandate, personally, because that sort of means mandatory," Trump explained.

So what the heck does he want? Well, I checked with his campaign. He wants people to be able to establish health savings accounts. He is also looking into the possibility of letting the states run Medicaid with federal block grants, and making health insurance premiums tax-deductible.

People will not die in the streets because there are, you know, emergency rooms.

We will skip over the part where Trump is this far down the road and still working on a basic plan. The more important point is that he's coming down to a health care policy that is the same as Marco Rubio's and Ted Cruz's.

"If most Republicans didn't agree on most of the features of reform then you'd have a story. The fact that they agree should not be a surprise to anyone," said Sam Clovis, the campaign's senior policy adviser, in a phone interview.

The bottom line is that once you really pin him down, Donald Trump is a mail-order conservative Republican, except more trash-talking about Muslims and Mexicans. Surrender hope and be careful not to die in the streets.

Gail Collins joined The New York Times in 1995 as a member of the editorial board and later as an Op-Ed columnist.

YOUR VIEWS

Pendleton, Hermiston rivalry doesn't need a name

I recall back in the 1990s when the Disney Corporation bought the California Angels. A few years prior to the acquisition they had brought out a movie called "Angels In the Outfield," which featured a contrived moment when some of the fans started a "rally" tradition of flapping their arms in imitation of angel wings.

Some genius in marketing thought it would be a great idea if the fans in Anaheim would adopt this as a tradition, so they planted shills in the crowd to start the wing flap at a predetermined moment. The fans, to their credit, weren't having it. The shills were pelted with whatever overpriced concessions that people had on hand, and thus the "tradition" died.

So it is with the "War on 84." This is a completely stupid name invented for murky reasons by the *East Oregonian*. (Never mind that Hermiston is not on I-84.) I cringe whenever I read it.

Most great rivalries don't need a name. Yankees/Redsox is simply Yankees/Redsox. Enough said. Manchester United/Liverpool — same deal. When the Packers play the Bears or the Trailblazers play the Lakers no artificially manufactured name is necessary. Sports fans know the history, emotion and rivalry inherent.

I have never heard a sports fan in either Pendleton or Hermiston call it "The War on 84." Like the Disney sham, it has been tried and rejected. Let it die quietly with or without the required "kick in the pants."

John Scanlan
Pendleton

LETTERS POLICY

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