

Getting your goat

Each spring, when the city of Pendleton fires up its \$25,000 flower munching, goat-driven weedeater, I think back to when I was a goatherd. To be a bit more precise, I once owned a goat.

Thirteen of us began the winter 32 miles off the nearest plowed road, high in the Salmon River Mountains of central Idaho. Four were under the age of 5. A friend who had a mining claim nearby decided we needed more milk for the smaller citizens, and showed up before the first snows with a half a ton of hay and a milk goat. Her name was Mandy, marked like a mule deer with floppy ears. Howdy had an older resident goat, Granny, who was about milked out. Granny was pleased to have the company.

The only other domestic critters in town were six hens, a pet rat named Roscoe, a Collie named Snoopy, and a full-grown Great Dane named Abby. Abby became a bit overexcited when dealing with quickly moving objects, like humans on sleds. We had a hill where one could flop onto a plastic sled and shoosh 50 yards right into a large hot springs pool. Abby liked to run alongside the sleds and nip at butt cheeks. She rarely drew blood, but I didn't slide down the hill on my back.

In early February, Abby's owners loaded up their snow machine and trailer with kids, announced that they'd had enough of Paradise and were headed back down the mountain to the snow-free sage-

brush. No room for Abby. They would be back to get her in June when the road opened. There were 300 pounds of dry dog food in their cabin. Would I keep her company? She slept beside my bunk. She snored.

At dusk a couple of weeks later, two fellows from the valley showed up on snow machines bearing whiskey and lettuce, precious commodities for the snowbound. We did it up right. When the whiskey was gone, the city boys mounted up and tore back out of town. About midnight, Beth loaded a dishpan from the party house and headed down to the wash room at the foot of the hot pool.

Two minutes later she screamed. We poured out of the party house, down to the pool, to find Abby, red muzzled, standing over Granny's body. Mandy was treading water in the pool. The noise and speed of the snow machines had been more than Abby could stand.

We held a town meeting. Should we shoot Abby? I said that if she was mine I probably would, but she wasn't and I wouldn't kill another's dog. No one else wanted to play executioner. Should we butcher and eat Granny? No, we had plenty of food in the root cellar, particularly with Abby's owners gone. We would bury Granny in the morning. I didn't sleep well with Abby snoring beside my bunk that night. She had just killed a critter that was my size.

It required pick, shovel, axe, pry bar, a bonfire and six hours for Howdy and me to dig a goat grave beneath 5 feet of snow

and through 4 feet of frozen rock patch. When we yarded Granny to her resting place we discovered that she was frozen stiff in a prone position and would not fit in the hole, Granny went to goat paradise as a quadruple amputee. I began locking Mandy in the barn at night.

A month later, days turned warm enough to melt the top inch of snow, which then froze into backcountry side-walks by midnight. Abby had eaten the last of our chickens and we voted her off the mountain. At the next full moon, Stewart, Laurel and Abby walked 15 miles over the frozen slush, down into the Salmon River canyon. Laurel walked back in two weeks later. They had given Abby to a young couple from Boulder who were hitchhiking around the country, and were afraid of cougars. I wondered how hitchhiking with a Great Dane was going to go.

Mandy disappeared during a May lightning storm, just disappeared. I tried tracking her, watching for cougar or bear sign, but could not sort between the goat, deer, and elk tracks. We were back on powdered milk.

The pass opened on the last day of June. One of the first rigs to make it over was Abby's owner. He rolled up to the edge of the hot pool, popped the door on a camper shell and out jumped Abby. Seems he had stopped to pick up some hitchhikers and ended up giving them \$50 for his own dog. He was a bit hissy until we told the Granny story.

The very next morning I woke to a clomping on my porch. Mandy had returned, looking a bit worse for her vacation. The hair was rubbed from her lower legs where she had negotiated deadfall for a couple of months. Her udder was dry. Her backstrap was a tick parking lot. She had lost 20 pounds.

I got out of the goat business on the



J.D. SMITH
FROM THE HEADWATERS
OF DRY CREEK

Fourth of July by talking Abby's owner into letting Abby ride with him in the cab and loading Mandy into the camper. He was to find a herd for her off the mountain, somewhere she wasn't going to be the lone member of her species. I never heard from her again. She didn't write or call. However, I have noted in the Pendleton weedeaters a few buckskin critters with wandering eyes that may carry her DNA.

J.D. Smith is an accomplished writer and jack-of-all-trades. He lives in Athena.

Apollo 11 Golden Anniversary: something for everyone

I feared that the upcoming 50th anniversary of the first manned moon landing might get eclipsed by other celebrations (the 75th anniversary of D-Day, the 50th anniversary of the Stone-wall Riots, the 10th anniversary of financier Jeffrey Epstein's latest girlfriend learning to tie her shoes, etc.), but apparently the sky is the limit for Apollo 11 remembrances.

And why not? This milestone offers something for everyone.

Those of us with enough gray hairs and wrinkles to remember the moon landing as "current events" view the New Frontier nostalgically, although we now experience some of the era's buzzwords with a different perspective. Nowadays the eagerly awaited "splashdown" has less to do with an ocean rendezvous than with the hoped-for results of our latest high-fiber diet.

Youngsters with aspirations of a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) career relish seeing footage of the myriad behind-the-scenes folks who made

the moon landing possible. On the negative side, therapists feel the films may encourage teen suicide. ("Seriously, dude — if I ever get a haircut like that one, strap me to a Saturn rocket and aim me at a brick wall.")

Dance enthusiasts are excited that archival material may finally confirm that Neil Armstrong's hastily scrapped original plans for his first words on the moon were "Put your right foot in, take your right foot out, right foot in and you shake it all about."

On a related note, linguists and survivalists alike are glad that President Kennedy's 1962 speech gave Americans a challenge that was characterized as "hard" — not "easy peasy, lemon squeezy."

Stamp collectors are ecstatic that the United States Postal Service is releasing two commemorative stamps featuring iconic images of the Apollo 11 mission. Next year, the USPS will issue commemorative stamps with iconic images of stamp collectors sitting home alone while their

spouses are out on the town.

Conspiracy theorists are keenly interested in the anniversary. ("Of course, we actually went to the moon instead of filming it out in the desert. But the average person doesn't realize that it was all part of a botched scheme to beam deadly vaccination rays back down on an unsuspecting earth!")

Representatives of a certain fledgling industry hope to capitalize on the wistful thoughts of peaceniks who reminisce, "Maybe it cost billions, but for a few brief days in July of 1969, the world forgot its differences and pulled together." ("Ahem — it might have been cheaper to have given everyone a lifetime supply of marijuana-infused Tang. Just saying.")

Native American activists, mindful of how painfully slow our manned space explorations have been in the past half-century (compared to the rapid spread of railroads, highways and communications infrastructure) look with bemusement on the anniversary. ("Sure, if Columbus had spent three days here, then gone home and 50 years later sponsored a Duran Duran

concert ... yeah, I could live with that.")

More visionary thinkers, on the other hand, see the Apollo 11 hoopla as a jump-start for manned missions to Mars and beyond. Like the Whos in the Dr. Seuss book, certain segments of mankind want to announce to the vast universe, "We are here, we are here, we are here."

Granted, when the bill for the deficit spending comes due, they may sing a different tune. ("We are temporarily indisposed, we are temporarily indisposed, we are temporarily indisposed ... and we didn't leave a forwarding address!")

Danny Tyree wears many hats (but still falls back on that lame comb-over). He is a warehousing and communications specialist for his hometown farmers cooperative, a church deacon, a comic book collector, a husband (wife Melissa is a college biology teacher), and a late-in-life father (6-year-old son Gideon frequently pops up in the columns.) Danny welcomes email responses at tyreetrades@aol.com and visits to his Facebook fan page "Tyree's Tyrades."



DANNY TYREE
COMMENT

Acosta resigned — the Caligula administration lives on

On Monday, Donald Trump dis-invited the then-British ambassador, Kim Darroch, from an official administration dinner with the emir of Qatar, because he was mad about leaked cables in which Darroch assessed the president as "insecure" and "incompetent."

There was room at the dinner, however, for Trump's friend Robert Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots, who was charged in a prostitution sting this year. Kraft was allegedly serviced at a massage parlor that had once been owned by Li Yang, known as Cindy, a regular at Trump's club Mar-a-Lago. Yang is now the target of an FBI inquiry into whether she funneled Chinese money into Trump's political operation.

An ordinary president would not want to remind the world of the Kraft and Yang scandals at a time when Jeffrey Epstein's arrest has hurled Trump's other shady associations back into the limelight. Epstein, indicted on charges of abusing and trafficking underage girls, was a friend of Trump's until the two had a falling out, reportedly over a failed business deal. *The New York Times* reported on a party that Trump threw at Mar-a-Lago whose only guests were him, Epstein and around two dozen women "flown in to provide the entertainment."

Epstein, of course, was also linked to the administration in another way. The president's labor secretary, Alex Acosta, was the U.S. attorney who oversaw a secret, obscenely lenient deal that let Epstein escape federal charges for sex crimes over a decade ago. On Friday, two days after a tendentious, self-serving news conference defending his handling of the Epstein case, Acosta finally resigned.

Even with Acosta gone, however, Epstein remains a living reminder of the depraved milieu from which the president sprang, and of the corruption and misog-

yny that continue to swirl around him. Yet Trump has been only intermittently interested in distancing himself from that milieu. More often he has sought, whether through strategy or instinct, to normalize it.

This weekend, Trump National Doral, the president's other Florida golf club, planned to host a fundraiser allowing golfers to bid on strippers to serve as their caddies. Though the event was canceled when it attracted too much attention, it's at once astounding and not surprising at all that it was approved in the first place.

In truth, a stripper auction is tame by the standard of gross Trump stories, since at least the women were willing. Your eyes would glaze over if I tried to list every Trump associate implicated in the beating or sexual coercion of women. Still, it's worth reviewing a few lowlights, because it's astonishing how quickly the most lurid misdeeds fade from memory, supplanted by new degradations.

Acosta, you'll remember, got his job because Trump's previous pick, Andrew Puzder, withdrew following the revelation that his ex-wife, pseudonymous and in disguise, had appeared on an Oprah episode about "High Class Battered Women." (She later retracted her accusations.)

Steve Bannon, Trump's former chief strategist, was once charged with domestic violence, battery and dissuading a witness. (The case was dropped when his former wife failed to appear in court.) After Bill Shine, a former co-president of Fox News, was forced from his job for his involvement in Fox's sprawling sexual harassment scandals, Trump hired him.

White House staff secretary Rob Porter resigned last year after it was revealed that both of his ex-wives had accused him of abuse. White House speechwriter David

Sorensen resigned after his ex-wife came forward with stories of his violence toward her.

Elliott Brody, a major Trump fundraiser who became the Republican National Committee deputy finance chairman, resigned last year amid news that he'd paid \$1.6 million as hush money to a former Playboy model, Shera Bechard, who said she'd had an abortion after he got her pregnant. (In a lawsuit, Bechard said Brody had been violent.) Casino mogul Steve Wynn, who Trump installed as the RNC's finance chairman, resigned amid accusations that he'd pressured his employees for sex. He remains a major Republican donor.

In 2017, Trump tapped the former chief executive of AccuWeather, Barry Myers, to head the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Then *The Washington Post* discovered a report from a Department of Labor investigation into Myers' company which found a culture of "widespread sexual harassment" that was "severe and pervasive." The Senate hasn't yet voted on Myers' nomination, but the administration hasn't withdrawn it.

And just this week, a senior military officer came forward to accuse Gen. John Hyten, Trump's nominee to be the next vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, of derailing her career when she turned down his sexual advances. "My life was ruined by this," she told *The Associated Press*. (The Air Force reportedly cleared him of misconduct.)

Trump will sometimes jettison men accused of abuse when they become a public relations liability. But his first instinct is empathy, a sentiment he seems otherwise unfamiliar with. In May, he urged Roy Moore, the theocratic Alabama Senate candidate accused of preying on teenage girls, not to run again because he



MICHELLE GOLDBERG
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would lose, but added, "I have nothing against Roy Moore, and unlike many other Republican leaders, wanted him to win."

The president has expressed no sympathy for victims in the Epstein case but has said he felt bad for Acosta.

Trump seems to understand, at least on a limbic level, that the effect of this cavalcade of scandal isn't cumulative. Instead, each one eclipses the last, creating a sense of weary cynicism that makes shock impossible to sustain.

It was just three weeks ago that E. Jean Carroll, a well-known writer, accused Trump of what amounted to a violent rape in the mid-1990s, and two friends of hers confirmed that she'd told them about it at the time. In response, Trump essentially said she was too unattractive to rape — "No. 1, she's not my type" — and claimed that he'd never met her. That was a provable lie; there's a photograph of them together before the alleged attack. It didn't matter. The story drifted from the headlines within a few days.

Since Epstein's arrest, many people have wondered how he was able to get away with his alleged crimes for so long, given all that's publicly known about him. But we also know that the president boasts about sexually assaulting women, that over a dozen have accused him of various sorts of sexual misconduct, and one of them has accused him of rape. We know it, and we know we can't do anything about it, so we live with it and grow numb. Maybe someday justice will come and a new generation will wonder how we tolerated behavior that was always right out in the open.

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