

A brother's sacrifice



MATT HENRY

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Being raised in the 1950s, for better or for worse, when it came to discipline of children, corporal punishment was the norm. No timeout for me, no standing in the corner, no taking away the cellphone — no, punishment for me meant a beating, usually by my mother.

As an only child raised in the 1930s, her father would punish her by whipping her calves with a belt. Violence as discipline was her norm. Much like the belt, she also used implements in punishing my brother and me.

She began by using wooden paddles (she'd buy them and rip the red rubber ball and string off). It didn't take too long for the paddle to break on my naked behind. Then she advanced to wooden mixing spoons that didn't break so easily; when those too eventually broke, she graduated to plastic hair brushes and steel mixing spoons that didn't break.

My childhood was peppered with these painful beatings and it made me a scared and paranoid child. In counseling years later for what I thought was normal discipline, my therapist said my brother and I would have been removed from our home. Between my parents and school bullies, I knew no safety from harm. What, you might ask, did you do to warrant such painful beatings?

As a child of 8, I was used to watching my mother put on lipstick which, for whatever reason, I found intriguing. I suppose it was because she was the only one in our home that did. One day when I was alone in the house, I decided to satisfy my curiosity. I opened her medicine cabinet and took out one of her lipstick tubes. I took off the cap, extended the red stick and marveled. Shiny, semi-solid, waxy, it felt like greasy chalk between my clumsy kid fingers.

Suddenly, the unthinkable happened — it broke in half. I felt the surge of terror run through my veins as I tried unsuccessfully to jam the two pieces together, smooth over the crack and gently retract the stick in its case, now leaning at a definite angle. I was horrified for I knew that if she discovered it, I would get it bad. The thought of the beating plunged me into immediate fear.

A few days went by quietly without a peep. I breathed with relief, thinking that my repair job had actually worked. My 4-year-old brother and I were playing on the living room floor, my father sat on the couch reading the paper. At one point I saw my mother head to the bathroom and I held my breath. A few minutes went by. Nothing. I had dodged that bullet meant for me. Suddenly, my peace was shattered by an angry scream coming from the bathroom. My mind shut down immediately and my body went frigid and immovable. My brother lifted his head, oblivious to what was about to happen. My mother came down the hall, livid, holding her favorite wood mixing

spoon. She stood above us holding the broken lipstick and screamed, "Which one of you did this?" Her anger was over the top and I was afraid.

Instinctively, I clammed up. I was terrified. My little brother was dumbfounded of course. He hadn't a clue of what had happened or what was about to go down. Silence and stupefaction greeted her. She then pulled a maneuver she'd never tried before.

She yelled, "If one of you doesn't tell me right now, you're both going to get it." I remained stoically frozen in terror. But I also remember thinking that that treatment was so over the top — that she would actually punish the innocent for the guilty one — that she couldn't possibly be serious.

At that moment, the most bizarre thing I could think of happened. My little brother spoke, calling what I was sure was her bluff. He looked at her holding that waxy casualty of my hands and quietly said, "I did it." Before either of us could take a breath, she swooped down, silently, gracefully and in one movement wrapped an arm around his tiny waist, pulled him down over the sacrificial altar of her knee and venting her spleen, began.

The knife for me was stayed at the last possible second, for a different sacrifice had been found for both of us — Abraham had a ram and I had my brother. And I suspect much like the ram had, my brother screamed as the wooden lash came down and down and down and down some more.

Let me assure you dear reader, the punishment I received that day was ultimately far worse than what my brother experienced. Out of sheer terror, I had thrown my very own brother under the bus and witnessed the execution that had my name on it. It was beyond awful. I've lived with the shame and guilt and pain my whole life. Neither of us ever spoke a word about it, until much later in our 40s.

It had taken me three decades to work up the courage to address the memory with him, to own up to my deep shame and guilt, to ask for his forgiveness. Shaking, my voice quivering, I began to speak: "Josh, do you remember once when we were kids when mom came out of the?" he finished the sentence, "the lipstick."

I was burning in hell with shame, grief, embarrassment, guilt, all the fun emotions of what it means to be human. But now I had the opening to ask him the question that had haunted me all those years — why? Why had he, at 4 years old, taken a horrible beating voluntarily that was meant for me?

He simply said the truth. "Well, Matt," he spoke quietly, "I knew she was serious and I figured at some point I was going to get it anyway, so I claimed it to save you from having to get it too."

A sacrifice of trauma, of terror, of violence, given for me unbidden. Let those with ears to hear, let them hear.

The Rev. Dr. Matt Henry is a retired American Baptist/United Methodist pastor, who pastored the Pendleton First United Church and now joyfully makes "hippie food" for the houseless at the Warming Station.

Easter Bunny returns to region

East Oregonian

After taking a sabbatical in many places in 2020 because of the global pandemic, the Easter Bunny is hopping back into action this year. Some area activities for the kids include:

PENDLETON

Willowbrook Terrace
•707 S.W. 37th St.

•Friday, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Bring a basket to collect eggs and enjoy a fun time for the entire family. The event includes treats and golden egg prizes. The Easter bunny will make a special appearance.

HERMISTON

Butte Park
•1245 N.W. Seventh St.

•Friday, 8 p.m.

He's baaaack and the Easter bunny is scattering more than 8,000 Easter eggs at Butte Park for the annual Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt. The free event, coordinated by Hermiston Parks & Recreation, is sponsored by Rogers Toyota of Hermiston. Children 10 and under are invited to bring a flashlight and gather eggs. (541-667-5018).

Hermiston Christian Center

•1825 W. Highland Ave.

•Sunday, 6 a.m.

Make a day of it during the Hermiston Christian Center's Easter celebration, which includes a morning hike to the Hermiston Butte (leaving from the parking lot at Umatilla Electric Cooperative, 750 W. Elm). After watching the sun rise and a time of prayer and worship, back at the church there will be a continental breakfast at 9 a.m.; followed by a worship service at 10 a.m. and an Easter egg hunt afterward. (541-567-3480)

IRRIGON

Irrigon Marina Park
•430 Eighth St. N.E.

•Saturday, 11 a.m.

The Community Easter EggTravaganza offers fun



East Oregonian, File

Seth Grigsby, 2, participates in a special Easter egg hunt at Hermiston Church of the Nazarene in 2019.

for infants and children. (541-922-3054)

Irrigon Moose Lodge

•220 N.E. Third St.

•Saturday, 10 a.m. to noon

With COVID-19 concerns, Irrigon Moose Lodge 2486 & Chapter 2144 is getting creative with a drive-by Easter event while supplies last. Children 0-12 are encouraged to swing by with their parents to pick up a bag of candy-filled Easter eggs. Also, some lucky kids will find a special prize ticket. (541-922-1802).

MILTON-FREEWATER

Pioneer Posse Grounds
•84581 Highway 11

•Saturday, 10 a.m.

Children ages 1-10 are invited to the annual community Easter egg hunt. Easter bunny helpers will include royalty from the Pioneer Posse and Walla Walla Fair & Frontier Days. People are asked to wear masks.

Milton-Freewater Drive-In Theater

•84322 Highway 11

•Sunday, April 4, 8-10 a.m.

The second annual Easter at the Milton-Freewater Drive-In Theater, presented by the Milton-Freewater Faith Bible Church, will be a presentation of "Via Dolorosa," a live dramatization and music in English and Spanish to be enjoyed from the comfort of your vehicle, streamed live through radio. Free, but the event is limited to 300 vehicles so it's best to arrive early. (317-727-8957)

PILOT ROCK

City hall & elementary school

•200 Vern McGowan Drive

•Saturday, 9 a.m.

The Pilot Rock Chamber of Commerce is hosting community Easter egg hunts for babes in arms through students in fifth grade. People should gather at Pilot Rock Elementary School

and at the nearby Pilot Rock City Park. Candy and donations can be dropped off at city hall or call Heather at 541-377-2764 (541-443-2811).

STANFIELD

Coe Park

•West Coe Avenue

•Saturday, 10 a.m.

Kids up to age 12 are invited to a community Easter egg hunt. Coordinated by Stanfield Moose Lodge #920, the event features lots of eggs and some special prizes. (541-449-3304)

UMATILLA

Nugent Park

•725 Eighth St.

•Friday, 8 p.m.

A Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by the city of Umatilla will offer kids in three divided age groups an opportunity to search in the dark. Be sure to bring a flashlight, an Easter basket and wear masks. (541-922-3226).

COMMUNITY BRIEFING

Community Center welcomes breakfast crowd

STANFIELD — The monthly community breakfast at the Stanfield Community Center returns Saturday, April 3, from 7-10 a.m. at 225 W. Roosevelt.

With an à la carte menu, people can pick and choose what they would like to eat. Rose Emerson said the average cost for a breakfast meal is \$7.

The breakfast will be held the first Saturday of each month. For more information, contact Emerson at remerson1206@gmail.com or call the center at 541-449-1332.

Fishtrap Fireside features longtime favorite

ENTERPRISE — Fishtrap Fireside wraps up its eighth season of readings from Wallowa County writers on Friday, April 2, beginning at 7 p.m., with longtime Fishtrap favorite Pamela Royes, and new voices in Dustin Lyons and Adele Schott.

The series can be

accessed online at www.fishtrap.org/fishtrap-fireside-2/, or on Fishtrap's YouTube channel. A video of the event also will be available following the program.

Fishtrap Fireside is a monthly reading series featuring diverse voices from around Wallowa County. Each month's episode offers a fresh look at what people of the West are thinking about and writing down.

The April episode of Fishtrap Fireside is sponsored by Wallowa Lake Lodge.

Joseph Center to host youth art festival

JOSEPH — The Joseph Center for Arts in Culture in Joseph opens The Wallowa Valley Youth Arts Festival on Saturday, April 10, from 12-5 p.m. The exhibit will run through April 17.

"The Youth Arts Festival is a great way to celebrate Wallowa Valley students' artwork, and we want to show off all the talents in the safest way possible. Last year, we had to cancel the event due to COVID-19

Closure, but with caution, I think we can make the event fun," said Executive Director Cheryl Coughlan in a press release.

Pamela Beach, Joseph Center art instructor shared, "Kiddos are really excited to have the Youth Arts Festival back so they can show off their works and see what others are creating and what kid doesn't love getting a ribbon ... it's a long time coming and I'm thrilled to see what kids have been creating."

With COVID-19 restrictions, the gallery will be limited to 30 visitors and all visitors must wear masks while in the building. The center will give out Art Bags to visitors, and awards will be presented to the artists and their artwork. Refreshments and snacks will be available to visitors.

The Youth Arts Festival has always been under the umbrella of the Wallowa Valley Arts Council. In fall of 2019, the Arts Council merged with the Joseph Center, and this year's festival will be the Joseph Center's first official festival.

"We are so honored to take over this program, we want to make this a special annual event where

the community can come together and celebrate the talented art students we have in this county," said Megan Wolfe, program coordinator at the Joseph Center.

The event is co-sponsored by Building Healthy Families. Other sponsors include the Soroptimist of Wallowa County.

Local officers graduate from DPSST classes

SALEM — Deputy Sheriff Devon Patrick, of the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, recently completed requirements for the Basic Corrections Local Class 44 through the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. And Parole and Probation Officer Kimberly Robinson of Umatilla County Community Corrections graduated from the 82nd Basic Parole & Probation Officer Class.

Patrick and Robinson will graduate during private ceremonies on Friday, April 9, at the Oregon Public Safety Academy in Salem, due to COVID-19 protocols. For more information, visit www.oregon.gov/dpsst.

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