

So tell me: What's it going to be?



MATT HENRY

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

As a retired pastor, I tend to stay connected to local clergy for friendship and support. I was having coffee recently with one of them, a good, wise, experienced pastor who serves a community church in Weston. We both have analytical minds by nature, shaped and formed by our Christian faith.

So it was that he asked me the million-dollar question: Do you think we (he didn't parse that one) have an unconscious death wish? My unspoken thoughts immediately crackled like a dry grass fire. Who is "we" and who is to decide the definition of that? Unconscious — or rather, as I suspect, quite conscious? And perhaps most important: Are there enough of us that want to live to overcome those of us who seem hellbent on dying and leaving a scorched earth behind?

The first sermon I ever preached in a church setting was as a lay person. The pastor of the church asked me if I would "give the message" at the Easter Sunrise Service of all things. Thinking we were both nuts, I humbly accepted. I was scared to death. What did I

have to tell anyone, especially fellow believers who were much more experienced with the Holy Scriptures than me?

My solution was to not center my reflection on any specific passage but to rather concentrate on the central message of Jesus' Gospel itself — that of supreme self-sacrifice. But my audience could repeat the Easter story in their sleep so what was left to say? In my own simple way, I just brought it home, down out of the transcendent distance and into the imminent moment.

I asked them to merely close their eyes and imagine their favored child or loved one, the one for whom they'd willingly take a bullet. Holding that person in front of their eyes, I envisioned the classic sci-fi scenario of an alien race invading earth, possessing the technology to kill all humans immediately with the mere thought of it. But here's the deal — they will not do that and leave, never to return if one human would give them their most cherished and loved human to take away. For most of them, that was their child.

It was that simple. The simple swap of one — their one — for all, everyone else on the entire planet to go on, especially those they call "enemy." What would be their decision? What would be yours? That decision had been both Abraham's and God's and we have been given their responses: The greatest good for the greater good. The One for the All.

In both cases, I'm sure the decision was beyond imaginable excruciation.

Now think about Bill's question and my inexperienced homily for a second against the current backdrop of particular, historic and largely white-induced hyper-individualism that is drowning the world and casting a future with much uncertainty and anxiety.

As the second act of "Opera COVID" plays out, the uber self-centeredness, the classic American selfishness of anti-vaxxers continues to stump me, particularly because their decision has no grounding in logic or common sense. I continue to hear largely tales of woe from newly-minted white widows who relate how, but for nothing more than egotistic bull-headedness, they no longer have a husband and their children are now one parent away from being orphans.

Is this what our frontline health care providers are sacrificing their own lives for? Simple childish obstinacy? Or is it rather as I suspect — they are willing to sacrifice everyone else on earth so that their own, cherished ideological child survives the dominant alien onslaught above all others? Have we "Americans" bunkered down with a fallout shelter mentality towards each other? You come for the last can of pork and beans on Earth and I'll shoot you?

Another Abraham, this one surnamed Lincoln said to someone who was requesting a prayer that "God might be on the Union side

to win the war," responded wisely and adroitly, "Sir, I am not really concerned about whether God is on our side. I am very concerned we are on God's side."

One theologian puts it like this, "It is difficult to stand on God's side. Perhaps that is why we are so often tempted to believe that God stands on ours." So if that vaccination decision stands the chance of just killing you (your worst fear, you take it and you die) or saving all those you claim you care about (your worst fear: you've been wrong, Facebook Fox led you astray and it's saved their lives from your ideological childishness), what's it going to be?

For bona fide Christians, there can only be one side. The Gospel of ultimate self-sacrifice — the greatest good for the greater good — draws a line in the sand that cannot be breached. So Pastor Dobos, do I believe "we" collective human beings have an unconscious death wish? No, far from it. I believe "I" is quite conscious and only time will tell if we ultimately pull up from our headlong tailspin into destruction, or if we even have the time left to do so.

My challenge to "the other side"? Prove me wrong. Please. For God's sake.

The Rev. 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.

Herald Reid celebrates 100 years

East Oregonian

MILTON-FREEWATER — In the 1940s, Milton-Freewater resident Herald Reid set out to be a teacher — instead he decided to go to work for the government but ended up being a tail gunner on a B-17.

Born Sept. 29, 1921, in Emmett, Idaho, Reid recently turned 100 years old. The Milton-Freewater man joined the ranks as a centenarian with the help of several members of the McLoughlin High School class of 1964. Andy Millar, Sherry Mawhin Sallee and Carolyn Widner Banek stopped by with a birthday cake. In addition, several other former students sent cards.

The World War II veteran took a roundabout way to the classroom — and eventually administrative duties — he joined the U. S. Army Air Forces in 1944. Reid initially went to pilot pre-training but ended up in gunnery training.

His crew was assigned to the 34th Bomb Group, 391st

Bomb Squadron. Reid flew 25 bombing missions, as a tail gunner over Germany. Being the tail gunner, he said, was a very dangerous position.

"I was one of the fortunate ones," Reid said.

Honorably discharged in November 1945, Reid resumed his career in education, teaching chemistry, physics and general science at Mac-Hi. He received his master's in administration from Washington State University and around 1962, Mac-Hi Principal John Turbyne asked Reid to be the vice principal.

After 35 years in education, Reid retired in 1981. In 1992, he was honored as the Milton-Freewater Man of the Year.

Married in 1941, Reid proudly noted he and his late wife, Effie, were married for 69 years and 5 months. The couple had two children, Tana and Gavin. Gavin lives with his father, allowing the 100-year-old to continue living in his home.



Sherry Sallee/Contributed Photo
Members of the McLoughlin High School class of 1964 — Andy Millar, Sherry Mawhin Sallee and Carolyn Widner Banek — helped Herald Reid, the school's former vice principal, celebrate his 100th birthday Sept. 29, 2021.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Downtown district members roll out Cork & Barrel

HERMISTON — The Hermiston Downtown District is again rolling out its Cork & Barrel event with wine and beer tasting. Open to adults 21-and-older, the event also features food, dancing and live music with Frazer Wambeke & Luke Basile and the Chase Craig Band.

Cork & Barrel is Saturday, Oct. 9, 5-10 p.m. on Hermiston's Festival Street, at East Main & Second streets. Advance tickets are \$20 and those bought at the gate are \$25.

Tickets are available at Hermiston Parks & Recreation, 415 S. Highway 395; the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, 1055 S. Highway 395, Suite 111; or Lucky Endz Gifts, 239 E. Main St. For more information, call 541-667-5018, email hermistondowntown@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/Hermistondowntown.

Walk with Ease provides steps to healthy living

HERMISTON — People looking for relief from arthritis pain or just wanting to be active can gain from the Arthritis Foundation's six-week Walk with Ease program. Participants can learn how to safely make physical activity part of their everyday life.

Good Shepherd Health Care System is offering the program free of charge. Open to everyone, pre-registration required.

Walk with Ease, which begins Oct. 11, is offered Mondays, Wednesdays and



Hermiston Downtown District/Contributed Photo

Visiting was plentiful during Hermiston's 2019 Cork & Barrel. This year's event, which is open to adults 21-and-older, is Saturday, Oct. 9, 2021, on Hermiston's Festival Street.

Fridays from 10-11 a.m. at Good Shepherd, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Join the group to focus on low-intensity walking, which is proven to reduce the pain and discomfort of arthritis, increase balance and strength, build confidence in your ability to be physically active and improve overall health.

To register, visit www.eventbrite.com. For questions, call 541-667-3509.

Domestic Violence Services plans virtual fundraiser

PENDLETON — A virtual silent auction and raffle will help support Domestic Violence Services in Umatilla and Morrow counties. The event is being held as part of 2021 National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

People can register via a link at www.dvs-or.org. The website also provides an opportunity for individuals and businesses to make a donation for the virtual auction. Raffle tickets are \$10 each or three for \$25 for

a chance to win a 5-night stay at the Oasis Resort in Palm Springs, valued at \$1,285. Also, "Love Shouldn't Hurt" T-shirts are available for \$20.

Silent auction bidding will open Wednesday, Oct. 27 and closes Tuesday, Nov. 2 at 7 p.m. A Facebook Live drawing will be held for the vacation raffle Nov. 2 at 7:30 p.m.

Domestic Violence Services has served Umatilla and Morrow counties for more than 40 years. It has shelters in Pendleton and Hermiston, as well as advocacy centers in Boardman, Ione and Milton-Freewater.

Its mission is to provide help to all victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. DVS provides safety planning, support groups, training workshops and classes. Services are available in English and Spanish.

In addition to the shelters and advocacy centers, the agency maintains a 24-hour crisis line (800-833-1161).

For more information, contact 541-276-3322, 541-567-0424, events@

dvs-or.org or visit www.dvs-or.org.

Local centenarian invites residents to drive-by party

HERMISTON — Hermiston resident Irene Miller is turning 100, and she is inviting people to a drive-by celebration. The party Saturday, Oct. 9, 2-3:30 p.m., in front of the Harkenrider Senior Activity Center, Hermiston, two days before she officially reaches the century mark.

Miller has been an active part of Hermiston for the past 70 years. Her daughter, Judy Lovins, said when she and her two sisters were young, their mother was their leader in Camp Fire Girls, Bluebirds and 4-H. She also was active in foreign exchange programs. The Miller family sponsored two foreign students. And during a span of many years was gave 23 gallons of blood and volunteered with the hospital auxiliary.

Several Habitat for Humanity homes were built under Irene Miller's leadership in Hermiston and Umatilla, Lovins said. Most recently, she was president of the senior center and part of the team behind the building of Harkenrider Senior Activity Center. She is now an honorary member.

For fun, Irene Miller plays cards and bingo. Whenever she can, she plays a game with her with friends, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

—EO Media Group



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Students in Laura Orr's science class take part in a lesson Sept. 3, 2020, at the Ukiah School District building in Ukiah. A \$7 million project is underway in late 2021 to provide fiber connectivity between Pendleton and the Ukiah School District. The InterMountain Education Service District estimated the project will take approximately a year to complete.

Ukiah School will get broadband through \$7M in state, federal grants

East Oregonian

UKIAH — Thanks to state and federal grants, Ukiah School is getting broadband.

According to an InterMountain Education Service District press release, the \$7 million project will provide fiber connectivity between Pendleton and the Ukiah School District, not only one of the county's smallest school districts, but also its most isolated. Ninety percent of the money is coming from the Federal Communications Commission's E-Rate program while the rest is covered by an Oregon Department of Education grant.

"This is a huge, amazing win for students in our district who will have strong, reliable Internet connection for schoolwork and so much more," Ukiah Superintendent Jim Reger said in a statement. "We so appreciate the dedication and hard

work by IT staff at IMESD to help bring this opportunity to fruition."

The IMESD credited IT staff Nick Lapp, Melinda Miller and Jen Thul with diligently working to secure funding for the project.

"This amazing group of IT employees has invested much over the last three years by writing letters, processing E-Rate special construction applications, crafting RFPs, applying for grants and more," IMESD chief information officer Cheri Rhinhart said in a statement. "Because of their dedicated work, the Ukiah School District will soon have high-speed internet. Students in this rural and remote school will enjoy reliable access to online learning opportunities previously denied them because of very limited internet access."

The education service district also reported the fiber project will take approximately a year to complete.

DROP-IN PEER CENTERS OPEN IN UMATILLA COUNTY



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

Doug Primmer and Jackie Myers, Hermiston city councilors, cut a ribbon Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021, for the opening of the Oregon Washington Health Network's new drop-in peer center in Hermiston with Amy Ashton-Williams, the network's executive director. The network also held openings the same day for centers in Pendleton and Milton-Freewater.