



J.D. SMITH

FROM THE HEADWATERS OF DRY CREEK

No problema

Thirty-one years ago, Caty and I honeymooned in Mexico. We lived in the high country of central Idaho, 6 miles from town on a hill overlooking the Gold Fork of the Payette River. It was January and we were butt deep in snow, so we scraped the ice from our car, skidded a hundred miles to Boise, then flew to Los Angeles International where we boarded a small Aero Mexico jet headed to San Jose del Cabo, Baja California. During that voyage I learned a couple of ways to manage stress the Latin way.

It was raining hard in LA and the flight was delayed on the tarmac. The aircraft was not quite a flying culvert, but it was smaller than average, with two seats on each side of the aisle. We were hunkered in the back third of the plane. Across the aisle and forward were two middle-aged women who fidgeted and discussed rather loudly how much they hated to fly. That persisted for 10 minutes until the one on the aisle jumped up, pointed the roof of the plane and yelled "Oh my God!" There was a leak somewhere in the skin of the plane and a slow drip had developed that was landing on the arm of her seat.

The solo flight attendant was a young woman in a rather restrictive uniform wearing higher heels than I would have chosen for her occupation. She responded to the commotion, looked over the situation, smiled and said "Una momenta, por favor," then wove her way forward to her station behind the pilots. The nervous pair began to fret about not meeting their tour guides in San Jose because of having to wait while the mechanics fixed the airplane.

They needn't have worried. A couple of minutes later the flight attendant came back down the aisle carrying a box of Kleenex with the top torn off. She carefully balanced it on the seat arm, directly under the leak, smiled again and said "No problema," then went about her business.

Despite the leak, the airplane flew without falling apart. We rented a Volkswagen in San Jose then headed north, up the coast of the Sea of Cortez, bouncing over dirt roads and across arroyos, to Bahia los Frailes, Bay of the Friars, where we pitched a tent on the beach. South of us half a mile were some snazzy white stucco homes that probably were seasonal refuges for other English speakers, but we were the only gringos in the bay.

Our fellow beach mates were 10 fishermen who hopped into three open boats early each morning, spent half an hour netting bait from the bay, then disappeared over the eastern horizon until almost dark when they would ride the high tide, run the boats way up on the sand, then unload their day's catch into a refrigerated van.

Caty spent the days in the clear warm sea marveling at the water critters. I hunkered in the shade and digested Mexican comic books, which are soft pornographic novels. Shreds of my collegiate studies in Greek, Latin, German and Spanish were still floating around between my ears so I could decipher most of the words.

Between the fisherfolks' camp and our tent was a palm-thatched, open-air structure where Raul and Dominga operated a bar and cafe. It was equipped with a small propane refrigerator stocked with beer and pop, a back shelf of tequila and bourbon and a kitchen stove. Dominga cooked while Raul schmoozed. The food was wonderful, especially the machaca made from shark meat dried over the barbwire fence between our camp and the rich folks' winter homes.

We were there only a few days. One mid-afternoon I wandered up to the cafe for another cane sugar Pepsi in a battle weary bottle and noticed the left front tire of Raul's pickup was totally flat. I asked if he had a jack to use on the flat and he shook his head. I told him there probably was some sort of lifting mechanism in our rented VW and he was more than welcome to borrow it. He smiled and said, "Gracias, but we do not need a jack."

I needn't have worried. A half an hour later I watched Carlos, their teenage son, as he rolled a large rock from the arroyo and placed it under the front axle of the truck. He loosened the lug nuts, used a shovel to dig around and under the flat tire, removed the lug nuts, pulled off the old wheel and tire, replaced it with the spare and lug nuts, backfilled and tamped the excavation around the spare, tightened the lug nuts, then hopped in the truck and backed off the rock. No problema.

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

Remembering the 'Unknown'



BRIGIT FARLEY

PAST AND PROLOGUE

If you have been to the nation's capital, you probably visited Arlington Cemetery to watch the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. That soldier was buried 100 years ago, Nov. 11, 1921. The story of his journey home from France remains powerful and moving all these years later.

The idea of burying an unidentified soldier in a place of honor came from Great Britain and France. Two-thirds of the casualties of World War I had no known grave, owing to the lethality of 20th century combat. Some were blown to bits by artillery, others buried alive, still others obliterated when shells destroyed temporary cemeteries. Then there were those who were found but could not be identified. A British chaplain, David Railton, worried about the families who had no body to bury. French politicians expressed similar concern.

In the months after the war, plans for the commemoration of an unknown soldier began to come together. On Nov. 11, 1920, Great Britain buried its Unknown Warrior in London's Westminster Abbey, while his French counterpart was interred beneath the Arch of Triumph in Paris. Now every family of a missing soldier could come to these sites and grieve, knowing the man entombed there could be their son, husband, father or brother.

It seemed unlikely at first that the U.S. would honor an unknown, as top military leaders believed they would account for every missing American. But U.S. Rep Hamilton Fish III of New York, who had led the African-American "Harlem Hell-

fighters" in combat for nearly a year, knew better. In December 1920, Fish introduced legislation calling for the burial of an American unknown soldier.

By March 1921, Congress authorized this initiative and obtained President Woodrow Wilson's signature. The ceremony would take place in Arlington Cemetery on Armistice Day, the third anniversary of the end of World War I, Nov. 11, 1921.

Now the selection of the unknown got underway. In cemeteries near the four key American battlefields in France, military personnel exhumed unidentified American casualties. After a thorough search for any identification, four bodies — one from each cemetery — were transported to the city hall in nearby Chalons-sur-Marne on Oct. 23. There a decorated Army veteran, Sgt. Edward Younger, would select the unknown to be honored. As he walked around the four coffins, Younger remembered feeling numb, unable to choose.

"Then something drew me to the coffin second on my right," he wrote later. "I couldn't take another step. It seemed as if God had raised my hand and guided me."

Younger placed on that coffin a spray of white roses grown by a local city council member. Afterward, the unknown was placed aboard a train bound for the port city of Le Havre, where the U.S.S. Olympia was waiting to transport him home.

A routine voyage turned perilous when remnants of a Florida hurricane hit the Olympia in the north Atlantic. The ship nearly capsized. Finally, the crew was able to right it for a timely arrival at the Washington, D.C., Navy Yard on Nov. 9. An honor guard escorted the coffin to the U.S. Capitol, where the unknown would lie in state in the Rotunda. More than 90,000 visitors came to pay their respects.

On Nov. 11, Armistice Day, a horse-drawn caisson bore the unknown from the Capitol, through the streets of Washington,

across the Potomac to Arlington. A distinguished group of mourners accompanied him, including President Warren Harding, former President Woodrow Wilson, Gen. John J. Pershing, Medal of Honor winners and Gold Star mothers. When the procession reached Arlington's new Memorial Amphitheater, just outside the burial site, the bells of all Washington's churches rang out.

A two-minute silence followed, after which President Harding addressed the invited guests. The president expressed the hope that every mother of a missing American soldier might take comfort in the possibility that "the nation bows in grief over the body of one she bore to live and die ... for the Republic."

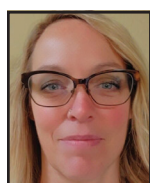
The president then awarded the Unknown the Medal of Honor, followed by foreign military leaders with their nations' highest honors. Crow Indian Chief Plenty Coups rendered a final salute, presenting his war bonnet and coup stick at the gravesite. After the ceremony, the coffin was lowered into the crypt, which contained soil from France, the country in whose defense the Unknown had given his life.

A hundred years later, the unknown lies in a stately white tomb high on the hill at Arlington. Two comrades, unidentified servicemen from World War II and Korea, have joined him. He has a dedicated, 24/7 honor guard comprised of elite soldiers from the Army's Third Infantry, the "Old Guard."

Yet it is the simplicity of the tomb's inscription that impresses, a century on: "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God."

Brigit Farley is a Washington State University professor, student of history, adventurer and Irish heritage girl living in Pendleton.

Measure 110 has us on the right path



AMY ASHTON-WILLIAMS

OTHER VIEWS

Oregonians voted Measure 110 into law exactly one year ago this month. Here's how it's already making a difference in Eastern Oregon and beyond.

Oregonians voted Measure 110 into law, passing it by a 17-point margin and sending the strong message that we want drug use treated as a health issue — not a crime. The measure passed in communities both large and small, urban and rural, progressive and conservative. The law decriminalized all drugs, while offering up a compassionate, science-based approach to treating drug use.

Why did Oregonians across the political spectrum embrace this bold new approach? I believe it's because we have all personally experienced the heartbreak of Oregon's addiction crisis, either ourselves or through the experience of someone we love. Too many of us know what it's like to lose someone to addiction.

For more than 50 years, the U.S. has criminalized people for using drugs, yet the rate of people dying from drug overdoses continues to increase at heartbreaking levels. In our small, close knit community, we see the very real impacts of this nationwide crisis on our friends, neighbors, co-workers and fellow community members. Measure 110 alone cannot fix this nationwide crisis but it's an important tool for how we stop

treating addiction as a moral failing deserving of punishment, and start treating it as a health issue deserving of medical care.

The first round of Measure 110 grants were distributed a few months ago, immediately instilling Oregon's behavioral health system with desperately needed funds to increase access to overdose prevention and addiction recovery services across the state. The Oregon Washington Health Network was one of 70 organizations funded. Measure 110 funds have allowed us to expand in areas where our community desperately needs support, services and, perhaps most of all — hope. We've opened three new drop-in peer centers: one in Pendleton, one in Hermiston and one in Milton-Freewater. These centers will offer low-barrier access to addiction recovery services for people struggling with substance use. Connecting those struggling with addiction with peers who have "lived experience" (typically defined as a person who has a personal history with recovery and addiction) is essential to many a person's recovery journey. Peers make it easier to open up and share, to relate to others, and they can even help them chart a path to recovery.

Our drop-in centers also serve family members. The loved ones of people in crisis often don't know where to turn for support or what they should do to help them. Peers can help family members understand their role in their loved one's recovery journey.

Our story is not unique. In just the first year of this law being approved by Oregon voters, \$30 million in grants and extended

contacts have already been distributed to providers across the state. Overdose prevention and addiction recovery services have been funded in 26 counties. 33 service providers have been able to expand services for the indigent and uninsured. 52 organizations hired peer support specialists. 32 service providers added more recovery, supportive and transitional housing services. 30 organizations have increased overdose prevention services. That's impressive when you consider that this new program is barely off the ground.

For more than 50 years our country has tried and failed to criminalize its way out of a national addiction and overdose crisis. Oregon communities have been denied proper access to addiction recovery services for so long that it's going to take some time before we feel the full positive impacts of this new law. We've got a lot of people who have, for far too long, fallen through the cracks. We're working hard to meet the tremendous need, ensuring there is no wrong door when it comes to accessing critical care.

As a provider I can tell you that I now have hope for Oregon's ability to meet this crisis head on. So, happy one year anniversary, Measure 110. We've got a long way to go but now, finally, we're on the right path.

Amy Ashton-Williams, licensed clinical social worker, is the executive director of the Oregon Washington Health Network, which operates out of Pendleton and serves communities in Umatilla, Union and Morrow Counties. OWHN also serves Walla Walla County in Washington State.

Oregonians deserve reproductive freedom



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OTHER VIEWS

Last month, Oregonians in every corner of the state — from Redmond to Pendleton to McMinnville to Roseburg — took part in a historic moment to march, rally, caravan and demonstrate support for abortion justice. We cannot be complacent and hope the courts will protect us while access to safe, legal abortion hangs on by a thread.

2021 has already been the worst on record for abortion restrictions — which disproportionately harm rural people, people of color and people with low incomes. State legislatures have introduced nearly 600 restrictions this year alone, including 11 here in Oregon.

For the past two months, we've seen the catastrophic impact of a heinous Texas law that bans abortion at six weeks — before most people even know they're pregnant — while empowering and incentivizing vigilante bounty hunters to surveil and harass people. Earlier this month, patients and providers finally had their day in court, and we are hopeful the Supreme Court will step in and block politicians from continuing to wreak havoc.

Then on Dec. 1, the court will hear oral arguments in a pivotal case — a challenge

to Mississippi's cruel 15-week abortion ban — which could hollow out Roe v. Wade and upend 50 years of precedent. If states are allowed to ban all or some abortions, more than 36 million people who can get pregnant in 26 states may have to travel extraordinary distances to get to an abortion provider.

"Destination states" such as Oregon, where abortion rights are safeguarded, would suddenly have the nearest clinics for thousands of patients. The Guttmacher Institute recently reported that if a 15-week ban went into effect, Oregon would see a 234% increase in women of reproductive age who may be forced to drive here for care, including up to 230,000 Idahoans and 670 Nevadans.

Another study shows that rural Oregonians in Baker and Malheur counties would see up to a 35% decrease in abortion access because of the longer travel distance to the nearest provider in Bend.

At this critical time, it's shameful the Deschutes County Commission voted to withhold abortion coverage for county employees, against the Employee Benefits Advisory Committee's recommendation. The county's health plans are regulated by federal law, so they are not subject to state mandates for health care coverage. Cost is a huge barrier to accessing abortion, and these workers will now have subpar coverage that does not meet standards the state has set for the Oregon Health Plan and private commercial insurers.

Commissioners Tony DeBone and

Patti Adair are out of touch with their own constituents: In 2018, Deschutes County voters rejected Ballot Measure 106, sending a clear message that everyone should be able to decide whether and when to become a parent, regardless of how they're insured. Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon thanks Commissioner Phil Chang for voting to follow state standards.

While Roe has been rendered effectively meaningless in Texas, we know that Roe always has been the floor and not the ceiling. In many places across the country, abortion is a right in name only.

That's why no matter what happens in the courts or in other state legislatures, it's essential the Senate passes the Women's Health Protection Act, which would establish a statutory right to provide and receive abortion care. Unfortunately, Rep. Bentz, R-Oregon, turned his back on the health and rights of his constituents by opposing the bill.

Access to abortion is supported by a majority of Oregonians, and given the ongoing threats, it's unconscionable that Bentz, DeBone and Adair would put politics ahead of the needs of the people.

We need lawmakers at all levels of government to ensure all people can make their own health care decisions without political interference. We have no more time to waste.

An Do is the executive director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon.