

Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Of course girls can wrestle

Brandon Young loves wrestling.

And like a lot of people who have a great affinity for an activity, he relishes the chance to introduce others to the sport that means so much to him.

Whether they are boys or girls is irrelevant to Young, who is Baker High School's wrestling coach.

So when a few girls expressed interest in competing for the Bulldogs a couple of years ago, Young encouraged them.

This year, with more girls wanting to wrestle, he took the next step and suggested that the Baker School District add a separate girls wrestling team at BHS.

Buell Gonzales Jr., the district's new athletic director, said he expects to hire an assistant this week who will coordinate the girls' practices. Young will remain the head coach for the entire Bulldog team.

The prospects for this new team are exciting.

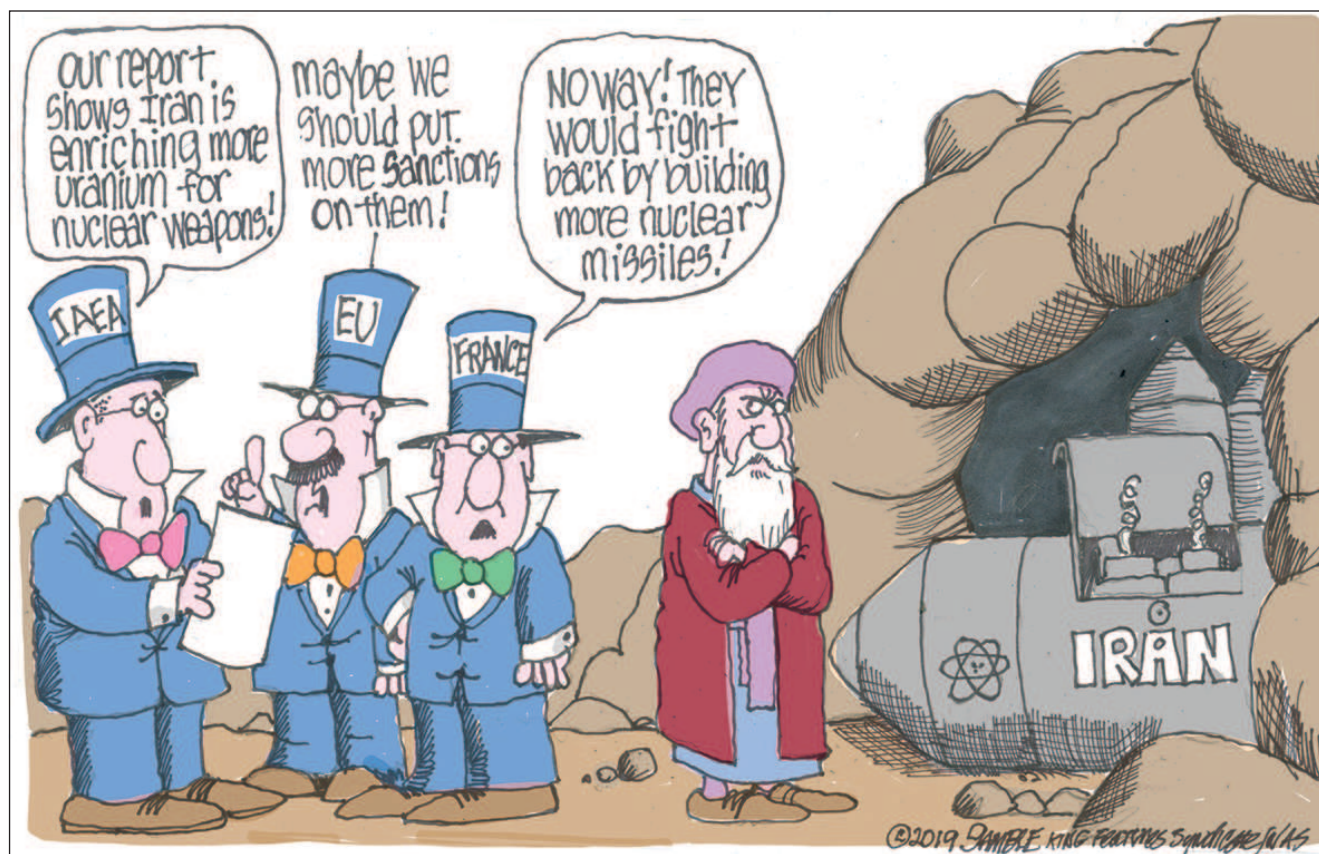
Young has molded the BHS wrestling team into a power over the past several years.

In 2015 the Bulldogs set a school record when 10 wrestlers qualified for the state tournament. A year later Baker won its first Greater Oregon League championship. In 2017 the Bulldogs repeated that feat and sent 14 wrestlers to state. And in 2019 Baker earned its first team trophy at the state meet, finishing fourth.

Although girls will occasionally have to decide whether they want to compete against boys, in events that lack enough girls to warrant a separate bracket, they will have their own division at both the district and state meets this year.

It's a welcome addition to the athletic options for Baker students, and a chance for new wrestlers to understand, and share, Young's love for the sport.

—Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



Your views

Beyond whistles: Creating a super fast train system

This is in regards to Baker City's loud train whistles. Just another thought to think about.

I've often thought, while enduring the effects of those awesome loud horns, that the tracks should be relocated out along the freeway. Side rails could be used for any further need to pick up freight or facilitate other necessary business. Think on this! In the long run it would save lives and certainly make for a more pleasant environment.

Futuristic! A super train that ran from Portland across the nation at super speeds. This is not out of the question. The superstructure could be alongside existing rails and existing freeways: the rails on structures above and next to the freight train railroad. Its only stops being at major places

Letters to the editor

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(like Pendleton, Baker City, Ontario, Boise and so forth) at stations along the rail for passengers and other things, perhaps like mail. A shuttle bus, taxis and other conveyances would be used to reach destinations away from these locations along the route. Definitely many new opportunities for businesses.

These trains travel at speeds above 200 mph. Say, you left Baker City at 9 a.m. You could be in Portland by 11 a.m. (figuring in two stops along the way). Maybe even less! Go shopping, the theater, cultural event or maybe even a sports event and possibly be home again the same day.

Such a means of transportation would cut down on freeway traffic, jet fuels released into the atmosphere, diesel fuels and others. I am sure the accident and death rates would also be far less. I envision American technology creating a system that is ice-free in the winter months (perhaps through solar units) and a cool, comfortable ride in the summer. The safest, fastest, most efficient and beautiful communication system in the world. We either move ahead or we stagnate.

Bertina Eastman
Baker City

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Under Corvette's hood: Where's the engine?

If you get a chance to examine a 2020 Chevrolet Corvette and you pop the hood, expecting to gaze upon the mechanical majesty that is the classic overhead-valve V-8 engine, prepare for a shock.

You won't find Chevy's iconic small-block there, exuding the pleasant scent of metal and warm oil.

You won't find any engine at all.

What you will find is an empty space suitable for wedging in a couple of sacks of groceries. This is not something you would have done under the hood of any Corvette made since the model was introduced in 1953.

Internal combustion engines have unfortunate effects on dairy products, among other potential problems.

The 2020 Corvette is not merely a refreshed model.

It's a revolutionary one — the first mid-engined version of America's most renowned sports car.

That means the engine sits not in front of the driver and passenger, but behind them.

(Although the engine is ahead of the rear axle, a placement that differentiates a mid-engined car from a rear-engined, such as Porsche's 911 or the beloved Volkswagen Beetle, both of which have their engine at the back.)

To someone who has no particular interest in automobiles — or at any rate in automobiles powered by nasty fossil fuels, as the Corvette continues to be — this likely doesn't qualify as a milestone.

But America, whose growing eminence in the world during the 20th century roughly paralleled the



JAYSON JACOBY

increasing ubiquity of the motor vehicle, maintains a considerable affinity for cars.

And the Corvette is among a handful of models that long ago attained the status of legend.

(Others, I would submit, include the Ford Mustang and the Jeep.)

Chevrolet has introduced just eight generations of the Corvette during its 66-year run, so the unveiling of the latest is always significant.

But the eighth generation (C8 to aficionados), which goes on sale in early 2020, might be the most noteworthy because of the engine's position.

I sat in a Corvette once — a C3 from the mid 1970s — but so far as I can recall I've never ridden in one that was moving. I've definitely never driven a Corvette.

(Late addition: After writing the preceding paragraph I had the most unexpected chance to ride in a Corvette. This came about through the unusual confluence of acquiring a tent trailer and an auto parts store not stocking the proper adapter for a wiring harness. Anyway, it was a 2005 model. And the trailer salesman who owns it accelerated so rapidly that I think my pancreas and liver temporarily swapped places.)

The Corvette has never been as rare as, say, a Ferrari or a Lamborghini.

Nor as expensive, a measurement that frequently goes along with exclusivity.

But Corvettes have always been a niche model by General Motors standards, produced in relatively small numbers and with a price tag well above that of mainstream four-door sedans.

My only real connection to the Corvette, albeit a tenuous one, is through my dad.

Four years before I was born he owned what today is among the more coveted, and valuable, Corvettes — a 1966 convertible with the big-block 427-cubic-inch V-8 (albeit the "lesser" version, with 390 horsepower rather than 425).

My dad bought the Corvette new for about \$4,200.

He was just 21, which is about one-third the age, or so it seems to me, of the typical Corvette driver nowadays. Inflation, it turns out, has weighed more heavily on sports cars than on some other items, and the Corvette no longer is within the financial reach of a young person with a steady, but decidedly middle-class, income.

Based solely on the cost of living, that 1966 Corvette would go for about \$33,000 today.

But in reality you'd have to spend almost twice as much to procure a mid-engined Vette (the estimated base price is about \$59,000, but based on what I've read about the number of pre-orders I doubt you could find one that wasn't quite a bit more dear).

My dad's Corvette — I can't help but think of it in the possessive, although he didn't own it for long — became part of my family's lore

even though neither I nor any of my three siblings ever actually saw the vehicle.

My dad also owned a 1965 Mustang with the high-performance 289, and a 1966 Chevrolet Chevelle, also with a 427.

As far back as I can remember the subject of my dad's former cars was a common topic of conversation, and inevitably this led to a rueful discussion about what his erstwhile fleet would fetch on the collector market.

We talk about those cars, each of which would cover the annual tuition at an Ivy League school (and considerably more, in the case of the Corvette), in the same way some people lament their decision to pass on IBM stock at a buck a share, or a signed first-edition Dickens going for 50 cents at a yard sale down the street.

I doubt I'll get to drive a mid-engined Corvette.

I certainly won't be dickering with any Chevy salespeople.

But it might be worth hanging around a showroom, waiting to watch a shopper standing in front of a new Vette with a puzzled expression on his face as he stares into the most unexpected cavern.

I wish Oregon's transportation department was as proud of its rocks as Wyoming's is.

We covered several hundred miles of the Cowboy State's highways during a vacation in July and I was pleasantly surprised that in two sections, one in the Bighorn Mountains west of Buffalo, the

other in the Wind River Canyon south of Thermopolis, Wyoming, the department had thoughtfully erected signs naming the rock formations in the roadcuts and listing their approximate ages.

This seems to me a fine use of the public right-of-way.

You needn't be a geologist, of course, to be curious about roadside rocks. And age, with people as with geologic strata, is perhaps the commonest question most of us have when we see someone, or something, new.

Oregon's geologic story, and its abundance of mountain roads that slice through basalt, sandstone and schist, among many other types, certainly justify a signing scheme similar to Wyoming's.

We even have a state agency devoted to the topic — rocks, that is, not signs — and I have no doubt the experts at the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries could get together the necessary data with no great trouble.

I would find it gratifying, while driving over the Blue Mountains between La Grande and Pendleton, to see a sign for the Columbia River Basalt, age about 15.5 million years, or to reach Elkhorn Summit above Anthony Lakes and read that I am driving between granitic outcrops of the Bald Mountain Batholith, about 140 million to 160 million years old.

This is not information quite so valuable, perhaps, as the distance to the nearest gas station.

But it is worth knowing.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.