

EDITORIAL

Shrine spirit defies the pandemic

The East-West Shrine All-Star Football Game has featured plenty of memorable football plays since the game moved to Baker City in 1973.

But though it's a celebration of Oregon's top players from the state's smaller high schools, the Shrine game has always been about far more than touch-downs and tackles.

And no year has shown more clearly the core purpose of this annual event than 2020.

Because there was no event.

No football game at Baker Bulldog Memorial Stadium.

No parade through downtown, with Shriners driving their comically tiny go-carts and bathtubs and Model Ts.

No Baker County Cattlewomen's breakfast in Geiser-Pollman Park.

But the most important thing will happen, in defiance of the pandemic.

The East-West Shrine Game committee, as it does every year, will send a check to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Portland.

The place where it's not hyberbolic to say that miracles happen.

For nearly half a century the Shrine Game in Baker City has been a major fundraising for the Portland hospital, which treats children, for free, for a variety of conditions.

The Shrine committee announced in early May that this year's game, set for Aug. 1, was canceled due to the coronavirus.

But neither organizers, nor the dozens of people and businesses that donate to the hospital under the auspices of the game, were content with simply writing off the annual fundraiser.

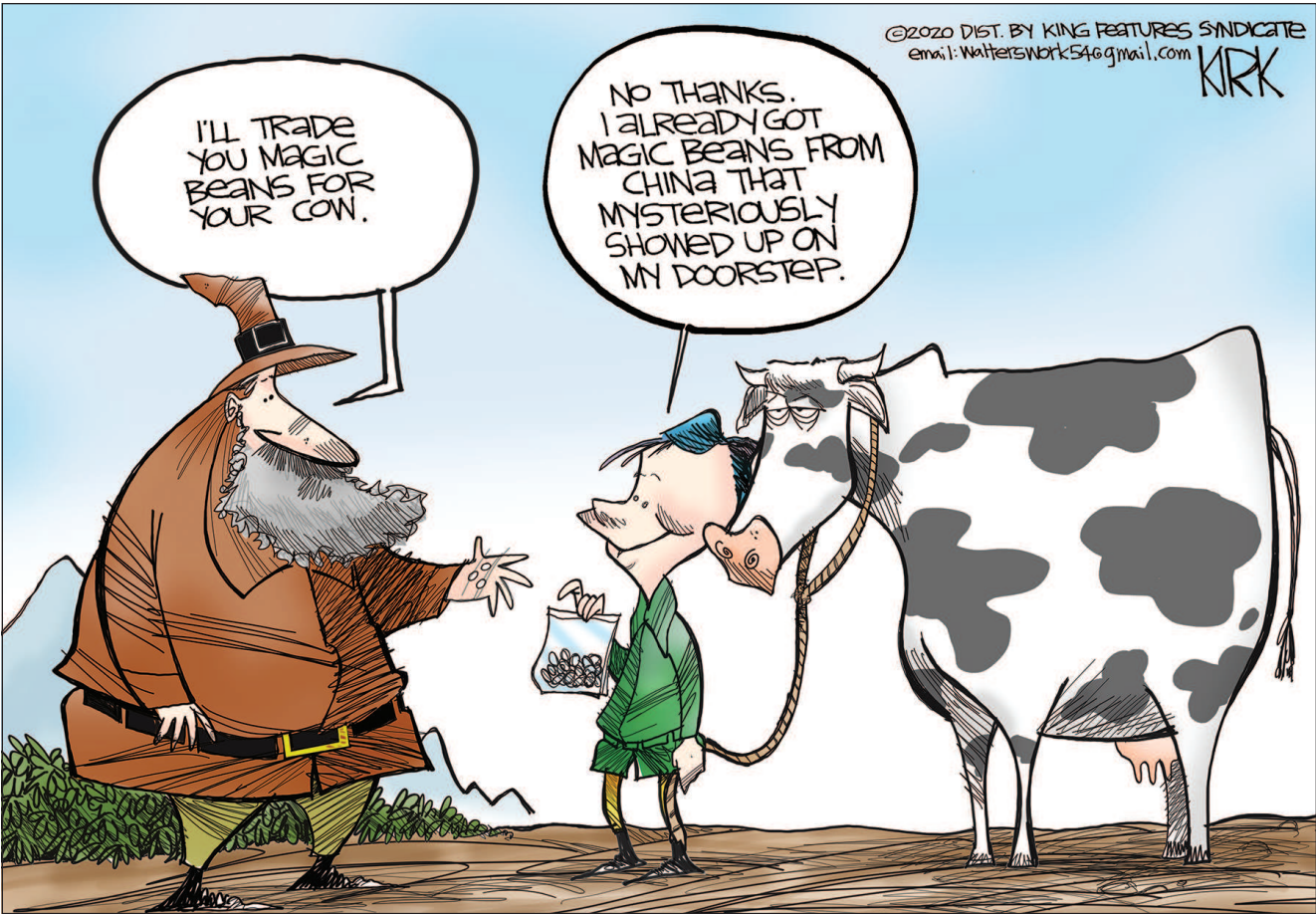
Randy Guyer of Baker City, the committee's treasurer, said Monday that he expects this year's check to the Portland hospital will be in the \$30,000 range, similar to the contribution in recent years.

That will include more than 100 donations from Baker County farmers and ranchers, \$1,000 from the Haines Stampede Rodeo Association, and contributions from other individuals, businesses and Shrine clubs statewide.

There will also be the proceeds from the sale of the annual Shrine steer, a tradition that distinguishes the Baker City event from other fundraisers for Shriners hospitals. The steer — this year's animal is a Black Angus cross raised by Ty Morrison, a 2020 Baker High School graduate — was bought by the Baker County CattleWomen and Cattlemen, and on Friday evening the steer, which Morrison named Chubby, will be "bought" and then re-donated several times.

The generosity and selfless spirit that so many people have shown in the midst of this pandemic and its economic deprivations are gratifying.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



Your views

A tale of two recent letters to the editor

In the Aug. 1, 2020, edition of the Baker City Herald are two letters to the editor penned by people, neither of whom I know personally. One letter, penned by Thomas Wilcoxson, conveys a message of pride in our country, our flag, our veterans, and a hope of unity and change through peaceful protest.

The second, penned by Mike Meyer, offers no such positive message, but serves to alienate and divide which is so typical of those on the left. His message, if you read between the lines, and from other letters he's written to this paper; is, if you disagree with me or what I believe, you can leave, and in this letter, offers to help you pack. I wish, in no way, to call attention to myself, but a bit about me, before I continue. I'm going on 74, born and raised in

Oregon, lived in Oregon all my life, save my service years (1967-70) and while a relative newcomer to Baker City, (lived here 26 years), my roots run deep in this county. My maternal grandfather, his parents and his brother emigrated here in 1882 when granddad was 15. He married my grandmother in 1903, and they had two daughters, my aunt, born in Haines in 1904 and my mom, born in Haines in 1908. I happen to have the 1925 yearbook when my mom graduated from Baker High School. My great-grandparents are buried in Haines, another great-grandmother on my mom's maternal side, buried in Wingville, and my maternal grandpa, grandma and aunt are buried at Mount Hope.

I own property in Idaho, Mr. Meyer, and love every minute I'm there. Were it not for my health I would consider a

move, one that I would not take lightly, but such a move would be made of my own volition and not by you or anybody that thinks like you. I would tread lightly, if I were you, Mr. Meyer. An educated guess tells me there are far more people east of Highway 97 that would gladly help pack your bags for a trip back to Portland than there are those that would pack my bags for a move to Idaho. You conclude your letter with "Peace to all," which is hypocritical in my view. If your letter was an attempt at humor, I'm not amused.

This is my one and only letter to this paper, of this kind, in 26 years, and may be my last. I've better things to do than sit around staring at my calendar, "Xing" off the days until I can write another one.

Donald Neugart
Baker City

OTHER VIEWS

Mars mission and valuing science

Editorial from The Baltimore Sun:

From writer H.G. Wells to filmmaker Ridley Scott, the possibility of life on Mars has long sparked the public's imagination for generations. And if there ever was a time when a world could use a demonstration of the power of science, or at least a hopeful distraction, it is in the Year of Oh-My-Lord 2020.

Earth is caught not only in a raging COVID-19 pandemic but in an extraordinary rejection of the systemic study of the natural world. When a sitting member of Congress who openly defies social distancing norms contracts the virus and then blames mask-wearing for his fate, as Texas Republican Rep. Louie Gohmert did, while a sitting president promotes videos of a woman who believes the coronavirus has already been cured (and warns about having sex with demons), as Donald Trump did, then maybe it's time everyone got back in the classroom for some remedial instruction. Perhaps a NASA mission is just what the doctor ordered.

Certainly, the July 30 launch was not as dramatic as aliens landing in New Jersey bent on destroying mankind or astronaut Mark Watney getting stuck on the red planet in the movie "The Martian" and forced to MacGyver his survival, or even the

antennae rising from the back of Uncle Martin's head in "My Favorite Martian." But at least the Perseverance rover now headed to Mars is real and not fictional. Its mission is to closely examine the rocks and soil beginning with the Jezero Crater while the companion drone helicopter Ingenuity hovers 15 feet above the surface to check out the challenges of the Martian flight.

It's entirely possible Perseverance will uncover signs of ancient microbial life on Mars as it roams the planet. It's not the first such U.S.-led effort (four others, Curiosity, Opportunity, Spirit, and the original Mars rover, Sojourner, came before it) but it's the most capable with the ability to drill and store core samples and ramble across the landscape for the equivalent of two earth years.

It's a shame that now comes the boring part. Perseverance won't land until February. In movies, this is usually the moment where there's a montage of rocket hurtling clips interspersed with scenes of NASA personnel hunched over computers before a landing takes place about 30 seconds later. Still, this gives everyone time to marvel at how human ingenuity and knowledge has reached the point where a remotely controlled robot stuffed with all kinds of technology from lasers to drills, cameras and microphones, sitting on

top of a powerful Atlas V rocket can be launched into space with the press of a button on a mission that will take years to complete.

Isn't that amazing? This isn't science fiction. It's a product of a Mars exploration effort decades in the making. And this time the United States is not alone. Studying Mars is now an international effort with the United Arab Emirates' Hope and China's Question to Heaven spacecraft already on their way, the former destined to circle the planet to study its weather and the latter to send its own rover to the surface.

Now, cut to the final reel and imagine if Perseverance discovers evidence of some one-celled organism that lived on Mars 3.7 billion years ago when the planet was more habitable with a watery surface. Fossils? Maybe not but some trace of organic chemicals could exist. Will third planet inhabitants see such a breakthrough as the answer to the eternal question, is there life beyond Earth, or as a fraud perpetrated by the liberal eggheads with their fake news co-conspirators?

Here's a good pretest: Is the person reacting to such an event wearing a mask to prevent the virus from spreading or still insisting that hydroxy-chloroquine is a cure so why bother? Sometimes reality truly is stranger than fiction. Onward.

OTHER VIEWS

Editorial from The Los Angeles Times:

Prizing loyalty over qualifications, President Donald Trump has nominated several economists with oddball or inconsistent views of monetary policy for seats on the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, along with several with solid credentials. The Senate has ably sorted the wheat from the chaff so far, but that may change soon — and it couldn't come at a worse time.

Two weeks ago, the Senate Banking Committee voted to endorse Trump's two most recent nominees, sending them to the full Senate for a final vote. One mainstream choice drew

bipartisan support from committee members: Christopher J. Waller, director of research at the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank. The other, quirky pick advanced only with Republican votes: economist Judy Shelton, whose main qualification appears to be the work she did in 2016 for Trump's campaign.

By law, the Fed has two missions: keeping inflation in check and pushing for full employment. In practice, the Fed board has played a key role in helping the U.S. economy recover from recession, holding down interest rates and making it easier for struggling businesses to obtain loans. The central bank's efforts have been especially

important in the last two decades, as the deep ideological divide among lawmakers has prevented Congress from responding as aggressively as it should to downturns. And after the 2008-2009 recession, the Fed was given new powers for regulating and supervising systemically important financial institutions.

Shelton, however, wants to turn back the clock to the days when the Fed didn't intervene quickly and creatively to help the economy. She is best known for advocating a rules-based system of monetary policy, where each nation's currency has a fixed and predictable value.

And in particular, she likes the gold standard, which the United States embraced from its founding until the Fed finally abandoned it in 1973. The rigid gold standard is the antithesis of modern monetary policy, which seeks to increase the supply of money when credit is dangerously tight and decrease it when inflation is eating away the dollar's value.

Economists roundly reject the idea of returning to the gold standard. It makes no sense — and ignores the lessons of history — to abandon the central bank's ability to react to crises in the banking system and the wider economy.

Shelton's main arguments boil down to nostalgia for a bygone era when countries weren't so interconnected, trade volumes were lower and savings accounts paid more than negligible interest rates. Returning to the gold standard or other hamstrung monetary policy won't bring those days back.

Nor is it a good idea to tie the Fed more closely to Congress and the White House, as Shelton favors. Trump may want a Fed board that responds to his needs, but the rest of us need a central bank that tunes out the political noise and focuses on its mission.