

OUR VIEW

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

Editor's note: The following editorial, written by Francis P. Church, first appeared in *The New York Sun* in 1897. It was an immediate sensation and became one of the most famous editorials ever written.

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of *The Sun*:

Dear Editor: I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in *The Sun*, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon
115 W. 95th St.

Virginia:

Your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence.

We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! He lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.



DEMOCRATS
Have THEIR
OWN PROBLEMS
DELIVERING
SHIPMENTS...



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KIRK

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

On the horns of a DNA dilemma

My DNA test results showed WHAT? The paperwork from my DNA test swab came back. I stood stunned at what I saw.

This all started when a friend stopped by. "Would you like your DNA tested?" the friend asked. "You can find out where your ancestors came from."

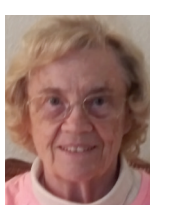
"No, I'm good," I replied. I knew where my ancestors came from — paternal grandparents immigrated here from western Finland, the area of Swedish-speaking Finns with some lines reaching back into Sweden.

I figure I'm 50% Swedish/Finnish. As for maternal great-grandparents, they emigrated from Denmark. I calculate I'm 25% Danish. And for the remaining 25%, England and Western Europe make up the rest.

These immigrants came in the late 1700s, late 1800s or the early 1900s. Each group settled in different parts of the United States. The common thread: each searched for greater religious and political freedoms and economic opportunities.

With my friend's encouragement, in time I relented, purchased a DNA test kit, and sent off the mouth swab.

Horrified, I noted the results showed little mention of Denmark. Instead, the test results showed I was part NORWEGIAN! Not that I have anything against Norwegians — after all, Norway is just across the North Sea from Denmark. It's not as if the results show the country of Maldives — someplace I'd need



Jean Ann Moultrie

to look up on a map to find where it's located. Through the years, our family has learned more about where we've come from. While in college, I discovered we still had relatives in Finland. In time, several of the family have visited there and they have visited here.

I felt such a sense of history when I strolled into the old farmhouse of ancestors — where fifth- and sixth-generation farmers raised rye and flax. In the kitchen, a wood-burning oven baked the wheels of rye bread with a hole in the middle. The poles still remain where the bread was slid onto the poles and then slid into slots near the ceiling — the bread available for the coming month.

A reunion a couple years ago in Finland involved about 300 people celebrating the 200th anniversary of an ancestor's birthday. A handful of us came from the U.S. — most were locals we got to meet.

The DNA list showed only a minuscule percentage from Denmark. How can that be? We knew from records several generations were born and died in Denmark.

A few years ago, a group of Americans organized an event that celebrated the emigration from Scandinavia to America and then to the West. My brother and I played the role of great-grandparents. We drove through areas where they had lived and farmed, located the church

where one ancestor preached in the 1600s.

To further the re-enactment, we boarded sailing vessels where participants acted as part of the crew. Below deck, the sleeping area felt cramped between families. Some of the ships opted to sail to New York. That was more sailing than I could commit to. My brother and I did a shorter stint in the Baltic Sea.

One night, an incredible number of stars seemed to burn holes into the dark sky. The crew leader doled out tasks with some on watch, some in the galley working on breakfast while still dark. The rest of the participants off to assigned duties. I was the only one left behind.

The leader said, "Your task is to stand on the deck and appreciate the beauties of the night." I'd never been given a finer task.

As the bell rang for breakfast, the wind picked up, choppy waves slapped against the boat. When the wind turned to a gale, we scrambled up the stairs to the deck and tugged on ropes to drop the sails. I was at the end of one rope when a wave swept over the rail, hit me behind the knees, knocked me down, and spun me across the deck into a pile of ropes where I smacked my head. Seasickness struck like a hammer to my midsection. I gained a newfound appreciation for those persevering, hardy ancestors looking for a new life.

Jean Ann Moultrie is a Grant County writer. She found Norwegian ancestors six generations back. Oluf and Mette, born in Norway, married and died in Denmark.

M110 needs more accountability for drug users

Nearly a year after Oregon's drug decriminalization experiment began, results point to fewer arrests but little interest in addiction services.

In 2020, Oregon voters approved Measure 110, which decriminalizes small amounts of controlled substances, including meth and heroin, and funds drug addiction treatment and recovery services. It came into effect on Feb. 1 of this year.

As predicted, fewer drug arrests were made in 2021. Instead of earning jail time, those found in possession of drugs are charged with a violation and pay a \$100 fine. Or they can avoid the fine alto-



Rachel Dawson

gether by participating in a health assessment over the phone. As of November, there have been 68 total health assessment screenings. However, 49 callers were not interested in resources and merely underwent the assessment to escape the fine, while only 11 people were connected to some kind of addiction or recovery service.

While M110 is still early in its implementation, this data is tell-

ing. What good will pumping millions of dollars into the behavioral health network be if no one's there seeking help?

What's missing in this equation is any kind of personal accountability. Many of those who need help won't seek it out. Drug courts were helpful in this regard because they pushed addicts into treatment which reduced substance use and drug-involved crimes. Officials should consider adding similar teeth to this program.

Rachel Dawson is a policy analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Vaccine is best bet against omicron

To the editor:
My wife and I were honored to serve as physicians in John Day from 2005 to 2015. When I returned in October to help cover the ER, I heard of a friend/previous patient who had had a very rough case of COVID. My first thought was, "I should have called him to get the vaccine." I didn't expect that response but had I still been working here, I would have reached out and encouraged him and

others to get the vaccine. I'm glad to report he's recovering well. Another patient I saw at the hospital didn't do well.

Now, we as a community and as a nation face omicron, a new and much more transmissible COVID variant. While we don't know how serious these infections will be, it is much more contagious and forecasts suggest the number of hospitalized Oregonians will be two to three times higher than what we experienced in August/September. As a physician who has cared for

multiple COVID patients, I am writing to urge folks in Grant County to either (1) get a booster if you have been vaccinated or (2) get vaccinated. It is the best tool we have to fight this fight. Compared to COVID, it is incredibly safe, and early data shows the booster helps substantially against omicron. Please, for yourself, your family, your community and your health care workers, get vaccinated. I look forward to seeing you in John Day, but not in the hospital.

Andrew Janssen, MD
Hillsboro

WHERE TO WRITE

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- Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: 503-986-1180. Website: leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).
- Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313, oregonlegislature.gov.
- Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale** — 900 Court St. NE, S-301, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1730. Website: oregonlegislature.gov/findley. Email: sen.lynnfindley@oregonlegislature.gov.



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