

Horse sense

By ERNEST V. JOINER



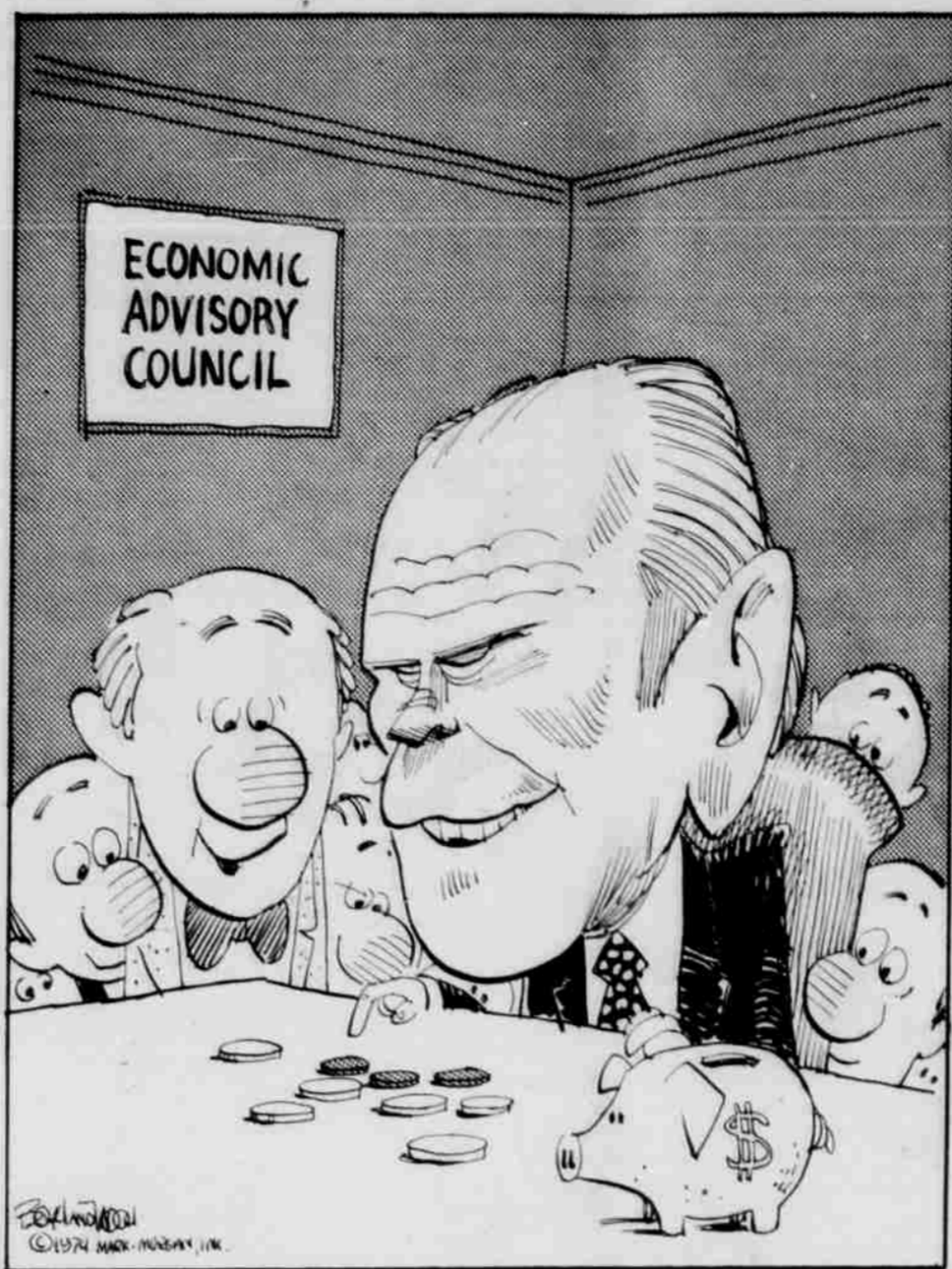
Every year after the July 4 cleanup I begin working up a hate for Christmas. I am reminded that Dec. 25 is not the birth date of Jesus in the first place, that Santa Claus has a pagan origin, that commercialization has all but destroyed the spiritual quality of the occasion, and that the whole thing is a conspiracy to drive people to the wall, financially and emotionally. I develop an affinity for Scrooge, and become one of the best Bah, Humbuggers in the business. But following the Thanksgiving binge something happens. People become noticeably nicer to talk with and there is a warmer, friendlier, kinder feeling among people. I find them doing extraordinary little things for other people, friends or strangers, that are above and beyond the ordinary human consideration. Strangers greet me on the street and their salutations have a sincere and more cheerful quality, and I get the feeling they're genuinely interested in me. Slowly I lose my admiration for Mr. Scrooge. I find myself humming "White Christmas" and admiring beautifully decorated store windows. I remember friends of ages past and make a note that Christmas would be a good time to shock them with a greeting card. I get misty-eyed when carolers come down the street singing traditional songs of Christmas. I smile a lot more, and get smiled at a lot in return. And, once again, I'm hooked on Christmas and just about everything that goes with it. Maybe that's part of the magic of Christmas.

Several years ago columnist Erma Brombeck wrote that there is nothing sadder in this world than to awake Christmas morning and not be a child. No matter how we try we cannot duplicate the excitement of a child as he rips the ribbon and colorful wrapping from packages under a Christmas tree. There is no way an adult can duplicate the wide-eyed wonder and sparkling eyes of a child as he gazes on a glowing, goodie-laden Christmas tree after he has spent half the night awake and awaiting the wonder of it all. No one but a child could make the house ring with laughter and infect an entire household with the spirit of love and joy. Children, I think, are what keeps Christmas alive, perhaps more so than the miracle that gave it birth. Somewhere along the way the Christmases we loved as children are gone, and we don't quite know what happened to make it so. Maybe it happened when we began having our names printed on Christmas greeting cards instead of writing the messages in longhand. Maybe it happened when Christmas tree decorations changed from colored paper chains, stringed popcorn and cranberries to bright tinsel, artificial snow, angel's hair and baubles from the 10-cent store. Perhaps something went out of Christmas when people began trying to solve the gift problem by writing a check instead of baking a cake, making a pair of fudge or knitting a scarf for a loved one. It may have happened when it became easier to hire a hotel banquet room and cater a dinner for loved ones rather than have all the relatives mess up the house during a weeklong family reunion. Maybe it happened when we discovered it was easier to have Bing Crosby sing our Christmas music rather than tramp around in the snow at all hours of the night on a caroling caper. Whatever happened and whenever it happened, we lost something we try desperately to regain every Christmas and that makes us all Children of Christmas. There doesn't have to be children around the house to remind us they gave thanks, love, gratitude, joy and themselves, one to the other. Anyone can give these things, and actually that's what Christmas is all about—giving those things. The ravages of time and creeping cynicism can, as Mrs. Brombeck noted, take the Christmas out of the child, "but you cannot take the child out of Christmas."

I shall always remember my finest Christmas. I was about 10. We lived on a farm in the Oklahoma panhandle. There was no tree: this was plains country. None of us had ever seen a Santa Claus. There weren't even any presents. But this Christmas Eve my mother and sister began baking the cakes, pies, candy and doughnuts for the Christmas dinner. It was Christmas enough just to lick the bowl and spoon after the dough was mixed! That day we spent making paper chains, stringing popcorn and cranberries. There was no tree and no fireplace, but we did the entire living room in festoons of paper we children had colored with school crayons. The night before Christmas was a wonderful time, full of anticipation, and sleep was impossible. At the crack of dawn my younger brother and I stormed down the stairs shouting "Christmas Gift", and rushed to where our long, black cotton stockings hung on the wall. They were stuffed with little but oranges, apples, nuts and candy: the greatest gift to the whole family was a set of checkers, all of which had been bought with carefully hoarded nickels and dimes and hauled by wagon from town, 30 miles away—a long day's travel each way. Dad, one of the best checker players in Texas tournaments, would occasionally lose to one of his two younger sons. That was always a triumph for us. We were both grown before we realized he deliberately "threw" a game now and then, loudly bewailing his loss and simulating anger in defeat, just to keep us interested in the game and to give us a feeling of pride in the competition. There was joy and love here, and each other. I was never to have a more wonderful Christmas because I, like most of us, have ceased to be a Child of Christmas.

If it were possible I would wish for all our friends this Christmas, not the fruits and nuts that delighted me then, but the joy and love we shared that Christmas on a lonely, wind-swept prairie farm.

Last Tuesday night at the Mustang-Cardinal basketball game a Heppner player, Dave McLeod, pushed an lone player into the bleachers. He got his quota of boos from the spectators and was ejected from the game by the officials for unnecessary roughness. McLeod tried to explain at the time why he shoved his opponent, but officials had no time to listen. The following day he came to the Gazette-Times office and inserted a classified ad apologizing for his rude behavior. Asked how it happened, he said that he and the lone player went up after the ball. As he was coming down he saw he was going to land on the back of his opponent. Not wanting to injure the youth, he shoved him out of the way. The lone boy lost his balance and fell into the stands. "Everyone thought I was a dirty player," McLeod said, "but all I wanted to do was keep the player from getting hurt, so I shoved him. Then the fans began booing me, and I guess I lost my cool. That's when I was thrown out of the game." McLeod has published a public apology for what appeared to be a deliberate foul, for which he is to be commended. Now, perhaps, the officials and the spectators who didn't grasp the situation should make a similar apology for not recognizing McLeod's attempt to keep from injuring his opponent. P.S. The Mustangs won the Sportsmanship Trophy at the Elgin Tournament the following Friday and Saturday.



"Right! The Little Brown Ones Are The Pennies! Now We're Getting Somewhere!"

The mail pouch

EDITOR:

In the very near future, or better yet, right after the first of the year, the Chamber of Commerce puppets will be heading for the Salem puppet show. Their purpose will be to oil and grease the law-making machinery, and there's no doubt in my mind but that this will be a big year in the law-making business.

I'm sure that this operation will turn out at least a thousand or more of these bills, and when the dust settles I'll find my taxes have more than doubled and my freedoms had been restricted at least another 60 per cent. So I haven't much to look forward to. As for help, from this operation for the many problems that we have that exist now, it looks impossible.

I see where Senate President Jason Boe suggests a time limit in acting on these bills. In 1972, on one of their better days, they cobbled together 100 laws. Maybe that's not fast enough for them, so it's possible that they may try for 200 this year.

Of course, they're not going to be the only ones heading for Salem this year, because the little old ladies with tennis shoes and hearts as "big as a mountain" will repeat their pilgrimage to the Oregon Capitol begging for "mercy" for the "defenseless animals" that are being exploited by the mess called the human race. Dog-racing, horse-racing, dog fights, cock-fights are just a few that man's evil and twisted brain can cobble together and call it "sports." But for these ladies the clouds look awful dark. For I'm sure they'll be branded "trouble-makers" and escorted from Salem by the National Guard, with an assist from the State Police.

After watching this puppet show for over 40 years, one doesn't have to be a prophet to know what's going to happen, for it's just like playing a cracked record. When this law-making machine is well oiled and working, it can be fed at a tremendous speed, and these bills or laws can be put in up-side down, cross-ways or backwards, it doesn't matter, but the trouble is the only ones who can understand them will be Nixon's attorneys or the Chamber of Commerce.

OTTO H. JORGENSEN JR., Scappoose.

EDITOR:

The purpose of this letter is to confess that I have been mailing your "Horse Sense" columns to President Gerald Ford when most of it pertained to national interests or issues. Occasionally, I mailed a Xeroxed copy to my congressman.

There are many reasons for this action but I will not bore you with an explanation at this time. It may please you to know that anything I would mail to the President would have to be very good.

With warmest personal regards and best wishes for the coming holidays, I am,

LEE EVANS, Santa Rosa, Ca.

EDITOR:

As a member of the Merchants Committee of the Chamber of Commerce I would like to thank Barbara and Jim Paulus for selecting the community Christmas tree, and also seeing that it had a way of getting to its destination; Don McEwen for hauling the tree; Columbia Basin Electric Co-op, Heppner TV Inc., and the crew from the City of Heppner for getting the tree in its place.

Many thanks to the crews for taking time from their busy schedules to string the lights on the tree and also string lights across the streets and on the poles.

I have heard many compliments from several people and must agree with them that it looks nice.

RANDALLE PETERSON, Heppner.

EDITOR:

I would like to thank all of the people who made my stay here in Morrow County such an enjoyable experience.

My grateful thanks to Judge Paul Jones and Carolyn Davis for asking me to come to your county and get the necessary training to complete my college education. Also I would like to give special thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Emmett McKenzie for their gracious hospitality during my stay with them.

The experience gained while working with the various schools, working with families, helping to get a Day Care Center started in Boardman and attending various community meetings will be extremely helpful in my endeavors as a social worker.

BOB CORTINAS

Chamber Mayor of Hardman elects

DEAR MISTER EDITOR:

The Heppner-Morrow County Chamber of Commerce unanimously elected five new members to the board of directors Monday: Harold Kerr, Ray Boyce, Don Cole, Dave Franzen and Marshall Lovgren.

The newly-elected officers will be installed Dec. 30 at the regular noon luncheon of the Chamber. Following the installation, board members will meet to select a president for the coming year.

The Heppner High School Choir entertained the Chamber Monday with a medley of Christmas carols, including "Here, There and Everywhere," "Three Carols for Christmas," "As Lately We Watch" and "Silent Night, Holy Night."

Next Monday, Santa Claus is to pay the Chamber a visit and have members join him in singing Christmas carols.

GAZETTE-TIMES WILL CLOSE DEC. 25-26

The Gazette-Times will be closed Christmas Day and also Thursday, Dec. 26.

Columbia Basin Co-op is relocating power poles that serve the newspaper plant, and the operation will take a full day during which the paper will have no power. Work at the GT will resume at 8 a.m. Friday.

The next issue of the paper will be out Dec. 21, Christmas Eve.

Neither hail, nor snow, nor age nor the price of sugar shall keep my old lady from her appointed rounds.

She has been chose to cook and come Christmas she is going to cook. I give up trying to calm her down years back, Mister Editor, and I come to realize that when she's done I look forward to eating and enjoy the eating more ever year.

She had me addressing and stamping Christmas cards the other night, and I fell to thinking about what the dead letter boxes at all the post offices is going to look like around the first of the year. I figger they is going to be a heap of greetings and best wishes that die for want of a stamp. Ever year, you know, you get a few postage due cards and letters on account of people gitting in a hurry and forgetting to put on the postage. Now the post office people say they won't deliver postage due mail anymore. They say they will return it if they can find the sender, so some of us may be gitting out own Christmas cards at New Year's.

With jest me and the old lady around the house out here in the country, Mister Editor, I have a heap of thinking time. And with the weather closing in the sessions at the country store Saturday nights ain't running as long as usual. I saw a filler in the paper the other day that started me thinking. It said that in 1973 the United States admitted 400,063 people from other countries. These are people who wanted to come here to live, to better themselves, to get out from under a gun, to try and give their children more than they have. I don't know how many Americans left in disgust for other countries, but I'm willing to bet we took in more than we lost. It may be old timey to wave the flag and talk about things like freedom to celebrate Christmas, freedom to do what we want the way we want, but to me the spirit of this holy season is tied direct to what America was in the beginning and, down deep, she still is.

Incidental, the fellers at the country store Saturday night took up this report by a United Nations study group where they said it is possible to control the world on the TV screen. The report warned of brainwashing whole countries by flashing message from satellites to the TV without folks watching even knowing about it. For instant, one country could flash "tired" on all the screens and everybody would feel pooped all day and not know why. The message would come on the screen so quick you would see it but not know you see it, was the way Ed Gonty told it. Ed said this trick already had been showed to work in selling on TV. You keep flashing "popcorn" and everybody in America gits the urge to run to the kitchen and pop a batch. Ed said.

Personal, I reckon that explains my old lady this time of year. They been flashing "cook" and "buy" during all them soap oprys she can't miss.

Yours truly, MAYOR ROY.

EDITOR:

I want to urge all women, regardless of age, to have a medical examination at least every six months for lumps, tumors, or anything unusual in the breasts. Not all tumors are malignant and there may be various causes for the others, but your doctor will decide and treat accordingly.

The time has come for husbands to realize that breast cancer is becoming more prevalent and do their part, insisting and making sure the wives have regular examinations, besides help with the self checkup at home. Any doctor will give instructions or pamphlets on how this is done.

Tumors can show up in a short time and the sooner found, the better. I have had both the bad and good ones, so I know!

CHARLOTTE DOHERTY, Heppner.

Oregon Country

"Oregon's weekly column"

Rick Steber
Kristi Ottoman



Christmas Day 1805, found a cheerless camp for the first overland explorers to reach Oregon Country, the Lewis and Clark expedition. It had been nearly two years since the little party left civilization for their trek into the unknown.

The Oregon coast extended the expedition its usual winter welcome. According to the Lewis and Clark Journals, it had rained continually since the third of December. Dec. 16, Clark wrote in his journal: "rained all last night, we covered ourselves as best we could with Elk skin and set up the greater part of the night." Five days later he added, "rained as usual last night and all today."

If the party had known of the weather conditions perhaps they might not have made camp so near the ocean at Fort Clatsop. But they had hoped to renew their store of salt and sight trading vessels so they could increase their supply of trinkets to use in trade with the Indians.

The expedition began building log winter quarters on December 5. Fighting rain, snow and hail they completed the crude shelters the day before Christmas.

Christmas Day fell on a

Wednesday in the year 1805 with "all the party fired snugly in their huts." According to Clark's journal: "at day light this morning we were awake by the discharge of the fire arms of all our party and a Salute. Shouts and a Song which the whole party joined in under our windows, after which they retired to their rooms, were cheerful all the morning. After breakfast we divided our tobacco, we gave to the men of the party who used tobacco, and to those who do not use it we make a present of a handkerchief. I received a present from Captain Lewis of a fleece hosiery, shirt, draws and socks. Two dozen white weazel tails and some black root. The day proved showery, wet and disagreeable."

There was no Christmas feast in the American outpost. Clark wrote, "we would have spent this day the nativity of Christ in feasting, had we any thing either to raise our spirits or even gratify our appetites, our dinner consisted of pore Elk, so much spoiled that we ate it thro' near necessity, some spoiled pounded fish and a few roots."



Epistle to the travel agents

BY LESTER KINSOLVING

The letter received recently by 1400 U.S. travel agents is something of a classic in the annals of Christian correspondence.

"Through the acquisition of correspondence and computer printouts, the Center For Social Action of the United Church of Christ has evidence that your travel agency has apparently enabled tourists to visit Southern Rhodesia.

"Your activities clearly indicate apparent violations of U.S. laws and regulations and international laws. In the U.S., the penalties for violating these laws are \$10,000, or 10 years imprisonment, or both, and in appropriate cases, forfeiture of property. (See U.S. Department of Treasury regulations, Part 530, Subpart 530.701.)"

This letter further explained in detail that Rhodesia's minority white government has had economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations, which sanctions were implemented by the U.S. government. The letter concluded:

"We therefore respectfully call upon you to cease all such transactions and request that your written reply reach us within 30 days. This is to advise you that if we don't receive a satisfactory reply, we intend to transmit our information to the appropriate U.S. government agencies. Thanking you in advance for your full cooperation. (signed:) Rev. Donald Morton."

By way of response to this ecclesiastical stand-and-deliver order, more than half of the 1400 travel agents ignored it.

Among the 630 who did respond, there were "only about 10 per cent that were hostile," according to the Rev. Mr. Morton's superior, the center's executive director, Rev. Harold Schulz. (Morton was not available for comment as of this writing—since he is overseas, on loan to the World Council of Churches.)

But Travel Weekly magazine reported a nationally negative reaction from travel agents, who described the Morton-UCC letter as "impertinent and presumptuous... overbearing and intimidating... defeating to his own cause."

The magazine also noted that the head of the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets, Attorney Stanley Sommerfield, dissented with South African citizen Morton's interpretation of U.S. law.

"Since the Supreme Court takes a dim view of passport restrictions, there is nothing illegal about U.S. citizens traveling to Rhodesia. And since the licenses to arrange such travel are available on demand, we are hardly in a position to prosecute anyone who inadvertently overlooks this requirement."

But Morton's superior, Harold Schulz, replied: "Sommerfield is wrong." (Perhaps. But the law which Morton cited happened to have been drafted by Sommerfield, himself.)

In Washington, the Rhodisian Office of Information featured in its newsletter a notable piece of American literature:

"He has excited domestic insurrections among us and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions."

"That's Thomas Jefferson in your Declaration of Independence from England," said a Rhodesian spokesman. "We declared our independence from England in 1965—and we too are confronted by merciless savages. For example, in the Central African Republic, they cut off peoples' hands." He went on to note that not even Asian minorities—much less whites—have managed to survive the coming of black nationalism, in such places as Uganda, where 62,000 Asians were deported. "Then there are the growing number of massacres, which seem to escape the concern of some churchmen, such as in Zanzibar and Burundi—although these 110,000 slaughtered were not as bad as the deliberate starvation policy of the Nigerians toward Biafra."

Merry Christmas