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The consequences of your vaccination decision

California is experiencing an entirely new disturbance in the Force.

MICHAEL REAGAN
MAKING SENSE
Cagle columnist

The Magic Kingdom has become the Measles Kingdom. Disneyland is ground zero for the largest outbreak of measles in the last 15 years. So far, more than 100 cases have been reported since the initial exposure, some from as far away as Boston. (Rest assured, Mickey and Goofy are still fine.)

This makes last year's fear of an Ebola outbreak spreading across the nation look even more prescient and the sleepy, lethargic response of the CDC look even worse.

Measles was so rare, it was one of those diseases that I feared environmentalists would try to put on the endangered species list. When I was a boy, mothers used to have an informal measles network. When one child came down with it, the other mothers would rush their kids over to be exposed, so they could get the illness and be done with it. This was also the procedure with chicken pox.

But with the development of safe, effective vaccines, measles almost disappeared. I was anticipating a measles exhibition in the Smithsonian to mark the date when it finally vanished, but I didn't anticipate Jenny McCarthy would stop flaunting her boobs and start preaching to boobs.

McCarthy — a former Playboy centerfold — and a "doctor" whose medical license has since been revoked, began warning the public about a non-existent connection between measles and autism. Most of us simply ignored her misinformation, but a recent study showed the two demographics where McCarthy's message made inroads were Americans with very little education and those with advanced degrees.

Presumably both demographics include Disneyland patrons.

As a result, gullible parents have been refusing

to have their children vaccinated. For a while this was fine. These parents are parasites depending on the good sense of those that do vaccinate their children to keep the disease rare enough to protect the unvaccinated. But now we may be past the tipping point where so many children are unvaccinated that epidemics can break out.

This means there is more to consider than the expense when contemplating being trapped inside a submarine on the Finding Nemo ride.

Some in the medical profession have taken note and are taking sensible steps.

The Associated Press reports Dr. Charles Goodman, a pediatrician in Los Angeles, has banned unvaccinated children from his office: "Parents who choose not to give measles shots, they're not just putting their kids at risk, but they're also putting other kids at risk — especially kids in my waiting room."

And Dr. Goodman is not alone.

But there are complaints from mothers unhappy that little Typhoid Mary can't visit the doctor. Doty Hagmier, founder of Moms in Charge, told AP that mothers are feeling "betrayed and upset." Just like the moms whose kids become ill because of her negligence.

The decision to vaccinate or not vaccinate belongs to the parents, but the parents should also be responsible enough to live with the results of their decision and demand the rest of us be put at risk because they chose to take their medical advice from a Playboy bunny.

— ©2015 Michael Reagan. Michael Reagan is the son of President Ronald Reagan, a political consultant and author. Send comments to Reagan@caglecartoons.com. His column is distributed exclusively by Cagle Cartoons newspaper syndicate



Something to brag about?

If the Hermiston School District's plan to become the premier district in the state doesn't work out, perhaps it can go into public relations instead.

The Oregon Department of Education released the graduation rate information for districts in the state last week, and, in short order, the school district had a press release on its website hailing its success. According to the school district press release, Hermiston High School's District's four-year cohort graduation rate was 85.04 percent. It's five-year cohort rate — including students who graduated in five, rather than four, years, was also 85.04 percent.

While these numbers and the fact that the district out-performed the state sound impressive — especially if you're grading on a curve — it was a clear example of an agency manipulating data to suit its own purposes.

What the district failed to mention in its press release was the overall graduation rate with the numbers for the Innovative Learning Center, the

JESSICA KELLER
HERMISTON HERALD
Editor

district's alternative high school, factored in. While the state includes the ILC's numbers when calculating the overall graduation rate in its report, the school district apparently prefers not to even mention the ILC. Of course, factor the ILC in and suddenly the graduation rate drops to 67.89 percent, which actually is not as good as the state's average.

In his presentation at the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Citizens Banquet Wednesday, during which teachers are also honored, Hermiston Superintendent Fred Maiocco, with no trace of irony, recited the high school's graduation rate numbers as an example of the progress the school district is making in its goal to become the premier school district in the state. Of course, he only presented the graduation rate numbers from the main high school

— apparently the only ones that matter — and not the overall rate with the ILC stats.

A word of caution to the school district: Don't believe your own PR lest you be forced to eat your words in future.

While it might be uncomfortable for the district to admit, especially when spinning graduation numbers into a pretty package, the ILC is an offshoot of Hermiston High School. The teenagers it serves are high school students; if and when they graduate, they do it with their peers at HHS; and the state no doubt calculates the overall graduation rate with the ILC in mind because many of its students started high school at HHS.

An even more indisputable inconvenient truth — especially when district officials are tying graduation rates to premier district examples — is the ILC is part of the district — even when district officials want to dissociate it from the "regular" high school. How many people

would associate a 67.89 percent district graduation rate with a premier school district or even evidence the district is making progress in its goal to become a premier district. How many people would consider a 67.89 percent graduation rate a bragging point at all? District officials can differentiate the school buildings in their calculations, but, really, they're only putting lipstick on a pig. Even if it is a lovely shade of magenta.

A better tack for the district to take in future is to leave the lipstick in its tube and present the graduation rates in their pure form and then follow up with all the things the district is doing — or going to do — to improve those numbers. Because the school district is committed in its goal to becoming the premier district in the state — where all its students count and are counted.

— Jessica Keller is the editor of the Hermiston Herald. She can be reached at jkeller@hermistonherald.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'The right thing to do'

Editor,

In the past year I have attended several funerals of 90-year-old men who were memorialized as being members of "America's Greatest Generation." Tom Brokaw, in his 1998 book "The Greatest Generation," said, "It is, I believe, the greatest generation any society has ever produced." These men and women did what they did because it was "the right thing to do."

They came of age during the Great Depression and witnessed the anxiety and hardship that was occurring when unemployment of able-bodied men was about 25 percent. The children of these unemployed were often malnourished, ill and had to quit school to work alongside adults who resented their taking the job of a man.

When the government initiated the New Deal with its WPA and CCC programs giving the unemployed jobs, there were many who resented the intrusion of government into their lives and the increase in taxes this entailed. But, over time, they came to realize it was "the right thing to do."

Things were still only marginally better when World War II began. The timeline for the start of the war was September 1939 to August 1945. We officially entered on Dec. 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Over 16 million U.S.

men and women were in uniform, with 292,000 being killed on the battlefield and 114,000 more dying from other causes. Many more were wounded.

Our military/industrial complex went into overdrive. Many key jobs were done by women. Folks at home went "all in" sacrificing to make sure our troops and allies were supplied with the best that was available. It was "the right thing to do."

As bad as our losses were, we fared better than most of the rest of the world. It is estimated that from 60 to 80 million people died as a result of this war. When one thing of the impact this carnage must have had on these veterans, it is no wonder they did not want to talk about it when they came home.

When these veterans came home, we had become an industrial giant, and these veterans needed the skills to fit in. The GI Bill was passed, paying for school tuition and expenses, and low-cost loans for mortgages and businesses became available. We also realized a good portion of the world was hurting and financial assistance would help them get "back on their feet," so we made loans to them. This all cost money, but they viewed it as "the right thing to do."

Our highway system needed improvement to bring about a speedy evacuation of our cities in the case of a feared atomic bomb attack, and it was decided that we needed a national system of interstate and defense

highways. The 41,000 miles developed gave our veterans employment and made our country the envy of much of the world.

With all of this happening, it is obvious that we had incurred a massive debt, 112.7 percent of GDP at the conclusion of the war, the highest in our history. This "Greatest Generation" paid it off in about 20 years. How did they accomplish this? By taxing incomes over \$200,000 with a tax rate of about 90 percent and being blessed with the longest run of economic success in our history. I only knew one person who admitted to being in the 90 percent bracket. He confided to me in 1947 that he made a lot of money, probably more in the previous year than I ever would make in my lifetime as a teacher. He told me he could never be a teacher, but he was good at making money. He made a point of telling me that it was his generation that had incurred this debt, and he felt it was his generation's obligation to pay the debt, "the right thing to do."

In the memorials I attended, little was mentioned about what these men had done while in the service. Had they been asked, they would probably have said they did their duty. In response to all the volunteers service, they had done during their lifetime, they probably would have said, "It was the right thing to do."

CARLISLE HARRISON
HERMISTON

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