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My stealth  
campaign for  
president

You probably have not heard a peep about my campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. All the attention lately has been focused on Lindsey Graham explaining why he’s single, Jeb Bush avoiding his family and Donald Trump telling us all how lucky we are that he is running for president. The way I figure, the more attention they get, the better I look in anonymity.

So far, my plan is working perfectly. If I can remain largely unknown throughout the primary season, the nomination is as good as won. The Republican Party used to brag that it was a big tent. After the last two weeks, the GOP has become a circus tent, and no one likes cleaning up after elephants.

How unpopular are the Republicans running for President? According to Google consumer surveys and reputable opinion polls, Voldemort — the villain from the Harry Potter novels — is viewed more favorably by Americans than Bush and Trump as well as Mike Huckabee, Ted Cruz, Rick Santorum and Chris Christie.

You’d think the most notable thing about Graham is that he thinks the problem with America is that we aren’t at war with enough countries. Told that most Americans lack his fervor for more war, he replied, “Well, don’t vote for me.” Given his single-digit standings in the polls, most Republicans are doing exactly that, but it’s for a different reason.

It’s because he’s a confirmed bachelor, or, as Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois was caught saying recently, a “bro with no ho.” Apparently this is a problem the Founding Fathers did not anticipate, but Graham is a man with a plan, at least when it comes to not having a First Lady.

“Well, I’ve got a sister. She could play that role if necessary,” Graham said. “I’ve got a lot of friends. We’ll have a rotating first lady.”

So far, people don’t seem all that excited about his plan. He should stick to fantasizing about another land war in Iraq.

It’s hard to recapture the majesty of America when Republicans are teasing a United States Senator because he doesn’t have a girlfriend. But maybe Americans are easily bamboozled. That’s the thinking behind Bush’s — I’m sorry, Jeb!’s — campaign to make everyone forget the time we elected his brother. Twice.

Sure, Jeb! — musn’t mention the last name, now



JASON STANFORD  
Cagle columnist

— agrees with his Brother-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named on high-stakes standardized testing, privatizing Social Security, the Middle East and a host of other vital issues of the day on which his brother’s coterie of experts advise him. Jeb!, though loyal to his unnamed relation, is his own man. We know this because not only did he say, “I’m my own man,” but he put an exclamation point behind his first name in the logo: Jeb!

Snappy punctuation might not be enough for Jeb! On the day he announced for president, Jeb! was more disliked than liked among Republicans. Ironically, polls now show that his brother is far more popular than Jeb! is.

Trump is a man for whom punctuation for emphasis is superfluous. His announcement covered myriad subjects under the Republican sun but made only one point: Trump is awesome. It would be easy to disregard Trump as a frivolous exercise in ego amplification if not for the fact that at one point in 2012 he was the front-runner for the nomination I now seek. But having worn out his welcome, he is the least liked person running for president, though Trump is still more popular than Congress.

To be fair, Americans aren’t making golden calves in the images of the other candidates of either party. While viewed much less unfavorably than the other candidates, the Democrats running for president — as well as Rand Paul and Marco Rubio — are still less popular than Darth Vader and the shark from Jaws. I am not making this up.

To know the Republicans running for president is to loathe them. That’s why I steadfastly avoid not only campaigning but refuse to serve if elected. Debates? Don’t need ’em, don’t want ’em. Speeches? Not gonna do it. TV ads? I’d rather watch baseball. The less I do, the better I’m doing.

America, I think this can work.

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Googling the Fountain of Youth

Rich people with too much time and money on their hands often seem to get bored with the hum and drum of their gold-filigreed existences. In response they turn to egalitarian enterprises, such as feudal kings commissioning alchemists to turn base metals into gold, because a lot of stuff back then needed to be filigreed.

Today’s Billionaire Princes of Silicon Valley don’t care so much for filigree as they’ve already figured out how to turn base metal into gold. So they’ve taken to funding molecular biologists and biogerontologists, our modern day alchemists, to conduct experiments to seek out an elixir of life. A liquid or pill that will restore youth and grant longevity. After all, what good is being rich, if you can’t live forever?

Of course, immortality is a relative thing. Compared to our ancestors we already live to be antiques. Wasn’t long ago, folks just up and died. At 35. Of old age. Or were victims of accidents involving livestock. Not to mention plagues, pitchforks and blue meat. Or the village would band together and get rid of you for



WILL DURST  
RAGING MODERATE  
Cagle columnist

the “greater good.” Of course, back then, like today, the “greater good” was always a sort of a fluid measurement.

It didn’t help that the villagers were notoriously twitchy back in the Dark Ages. With vivid imaginations. Look at all they derived from gazing at the stars. “Seriously, you got Gemini the Twins from nine points of light? It’s not even an even number. They’re supposed to be twins. Shouldn’t it be symmetrical? Oh, fraternal twins. You know what I get from that same set of stars? A spigot full of dachshunds. See the floppy ears? Lip of the

nozzle? 3rd sign of the Zodiac should be Dog Spout.”

Most modern diseases existed during olden timey days. Just badly diagnosed. This was when every medical treatment boiled down to two possibilities — put leeches on it or stake through the heart. That was it. One or the other. Medieval doctors only carried two things in their bags — leeches and stakes.

Suffering from epilepsy? Possessed by the devil. Stake through the heart. Dissociative Identity Disorder? Possessed by the devil. Stake through the heart. Bipolar? Parkinsons? Alzheimer’s? You guessed it. Not leeches.

Even something as simple as allergies. “He sneezes fealty to the devil. Stake through the

heart.” “Whoa. Whoa. Dude. It’s spring. Lot of pollen in the air. Could we at least try the leeches?”

You can understand why people tried to be as conventional as possible. Nobody wanted to be known for anything out of the ordinary. People got stakes through the heart because their tomatoes grew too big. And if you had a birthmark in the shape of a trident, forget about it. “No. No. No. That’s not a trident, it’s a spigot full of dachshunds. Look, look, see the nozzle?”

Fact is: The government has given up on funding research. And it’s only because of the Google Gods that a lot of the maladies that confound us today are just a couple of research projects away from being identified and eradicated. Forty years in the future, Siri from Apple Health is going to sound like Bones from Star Trek. “Can you believe these idiots? Using radiation on live human tissue? The barbarians.”

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don’t let your pet roam with a pack

Friday, June 12, about 5:30 p.m., dogs that had come from somewhere south of Alleluia Avenue, swam the river onto the small island that is a deer refuge, near my back yard, and tore to pieces a 4-day old fawn.

Your dogs may be benign and friendly and thought not to be destructive, but when they “pack” they become ferocious hunters/killers, harkening back to their ancient ancestry.

This isn’t the first time they’ve crossed the river and hunted prey.

I understand the accidental escape your pets undertake at times, but please do not indiscriminately set them free for a little exercise,

to dump and cause mayhem near and in our yards.

JANET BOYD  
HERMISTON

Herald change is a bad idea for seniors

I think your plan to change the Hermiston Herald to a once-a-week publication is a very poor idea. Do you realize how many people cannot afford having a computer? There are many, many senior citizens who have never learned to use the things. So, you are excluding this whole sector of readers.

I only take the paper because I like reading the local news, especially about this end of the county (which the Pendleton paper seems

to have forgotten existed). I also like getting the fliers from the local stores. I am a coupon-clipper (something we seniors have to do to make ends meet).

Of course you and your generation grew up on the computer, so you think everyone has one. You would probably be surprised at how many do not have the things in the house and, furthermore, do not care. We got along in the world for hundreds of years without computers or cellphones and do not consider them vitally essential to living.

I regret seeing the newspapers deteriorate, but they certainly are. When my subscription comes up for renewal I am canceling.

CONNIE FISHER  
ECHO

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