

VOLUME XCVII
July 2019

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF



" The God who gave us life gave us liberty...
Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when
we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction...
that these liberties are the gift of God? "

Thomas Jefferson

Submit your comments to our Editor, Jacquie Hinton, about "The Shepherd's Staff;" and, any other *thoughts* you might have about the publication that you feel will be constructive or interesting to our readers. You may do so by emailing us at:





Prayer & Planning

Kim and I are enjoying some cooler weather at Peace Haven (www.peace-haven.org) on Camano Island, WA!

Last year our church leaders decided it would be wise to have their senior pastor take a couple of weeks in the summer to get away from the PCC campus and spend some time in fervent prayer seeking God's will regarding ministry plans for the coming six to twelve months. During our time here we are praying for you, our church family, for our leaders, for the varied ministries of PCC and for clarity as we serve in this important role of shepherd of this flock. In addition to studying the Bible, we have several helpful books we will be working through. We will also be making contact with some others with pastoral experience in hopes of gleaning helpful nuggets of wisdom.

Please keep us in your prayers that God might continue to help us grow in Him and that we might discern the will of the Lord for our unique church family. Pray for Pastor Caleb as he brings God's Word to the congregation and ministers as a shepherd in our absence. Pray for our leadership boards and our ministry leaders that we will continue to work together in unity. Pray that we will eagerly pursue all that God desires as we move into the last half of the year and into 2020.

[Update on the hummingbird story from last month's column: By the time we returned from our time at Village Missions Staff Conference, our little hummer was gone and the eggs were left behind. I surmise that this was a young female with her first clutch of eggs. She may have lacked the experience to see the process through. It is also possible that something happened to her because we have not seen her at all (around the nest, at the feeder or in the yard) since our return.]

...Pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss

(1 Thessalonians 5:25-26)

Serving the Savior,
Pastor Keith

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Bear With One Another

Well folks, I made it. Possibly the most sensational, inspirational, and celebrational thing I've accomplished. Easily the most muppetational. That's right: I now own all of the theatrically released Muppet movies on Blu-ray. I was nearly there a month ago, but, thanks to the generosity of my in-laws this past birthday, *Muppets Take Manhattan* now sits proudly in our movie shelf alongside its seven peers.

Please, a standing ovation isn't necessary.

It's been over two years since my last Muppets-themed Shepherd's Staff article (my one line mention back in January of this year doesn't count). My love for the Muppets goes back to at least 1996. I was but a wee lad of six years old when I saw *Muppet Treasure Island* in the theater. I don't remember if I shed actual tears when it was over, but I definitely felt the turmoil of wanting this movie to never end. Sure, part of that is due to the thoroughly compelling narrative of Robert Louis Stevenson (if you've never read the original *Treasure Island*, I'd strongly encourage you to), but much of it came from the fun of these marionette puppets and the great human cast alongside whom they worked. Some of y'all may remember that I was ready to pledge money to the fictional Muppet Telethon a few years ago (yes, I was twenty-one when *The Muppets* came out, don't sweat it). I know that the Jim Henson company has made some serious missteps in recent years. Their liberalness seems completely antithetical to the overall feel of the Muppets to me and I wish they'd get their act together when it comes to their worldview. That being said, I love the Muppets.

For all of my fandom, though, I can't escape a regrettable reality. Blunt seems best in this case: some of their jokes are just bad. There are unfortunately some sly innuendos every once in a while, but by "bad" here I don't mean crude, suggestive, or otherwise unwholesome. No, the bad jokes I'm referencing are best epitomized in one particular character. When Amy and I were discussing the Muppets the other day, she mentioned that she really doesn't care for him. I put up a bit of a struggle in his defense, but she has a point. Oh, Fozzie. Sometimes...

I'm not a pun guy. I like to laugh just as much as the next person and I love a well-timed and executed joke. Puns are just rough on me. There's a way to share a pun, but in my book that's through the teller's making it clear that he knows that the pun is lame. If you're a pun person, more power to you. I prefer to use them very sparingly.

Often, the jokes of the notorious Muppet bear are somehow a step below puns. They're just bad. They're not limited to Fozzie, either. Whenever I watch through Muppet movies (particularly those of the original *Muppet Show* era), there are a handful of points at which I have to cringe because the humor is so lame. My love for the Muppets is rooted in their good-natured and largely transparent sense of humor. Sometimes those very qualities dip into realms that are too on the nose to work for me. When a joke fails to land (or even to take off), Amy will look over at me with eyes halfway through a roll. My response? A shrug, a sheepish smile, and an excuse something along the lines of, "Yeah, but they're the Muppets!" I won't defend sinful decisions made by Brian Henson and others and I won't stand by the few morally questionable jokes to come out in Muppet productions. I will, however, ardently stand up for Kermit, Gonzo, Statler, and Waldorf against Muppet naysayers despite whatever legitimate points they may have.

As I reflected on *Muppets Take Manhattan* the other evening with this thought in mind, a concept and a verse made their way into my thoughts. First Corinthians 13.7 says, "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." There are a handful of different words translated into our English "bearing" family. Though Greek is a pretty versatile and flexible language, this particular word "bears" carries with it the idea of protection. It actually comes from a root meaning a roof. Paul almost seems to be suggesting that love builds a roof over others that preserves them from what might otherwise fall on them.

I will defend the Muppets from unquestionably justified accusations. Why? Because I think they're great. I'll put that roof over them and point out their excellent qualities. (Peter Falk in *The Great Muppet Caper*? Hysterical. It's on YouTube if you're curious.) Effectively, I "love" the Muppets. You may "love" a ball team or a talk



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show host or someone who posts cooking tips on Instagram. Even if the Cowboys are having a rough season and the coach seems to be making some lousy calls, you'll still adorn your rig with a blue star. You'll put that roof up when someone points out the (100% accurate) fact that some of the acting in *Heartland* can rank just south of a primary school production. We're used to bearing with the faults of our interests. How well do we carry that over into our relationships?

Our love for people is to far exceed our love for brands, shows, or fictional characters. Paul seems to be immediately referencing church family in 1 Corinthians 13, but it's certainly not restricted to that. If you live with an unbelieving family member, how readily do you put up a roof to defend him or her when someone attacks? How often do you raise up this shelter to protect him or her from *your* valid accusations? If someone at church hurts you, are you more likely to hold a grudge for a few years or to dismiss it just like you would a lame (or even somewhat offensive) episode of your favorite tv show? I would never encourage you to lower standards of holiness and Christ-exalting conduct (for yourself or for others). Call sin, sin, ten times out of ten. Even so, God says that love covers a multitude of those very sins (1 Peter 4.8).

We can't do this on our own. Because of Jesus, however, this high calling is not beyond us. God has poured His love into our hearts (Romans 5.5). The Holy Spirit's energizing power gives us the strength to put a roof over one another. How can you go about applying 1 Corinthians 13.7 today?

Let Fozzie's lame jokes remind you that we as Christians are called to *bear* with one another. (And now I'll go hang my head in shame at my, ahem, "joke" and give you an opportunity to put Scripture into practice.)

By God's grace,
Pastor Caleb





June, 2019

Prayer—Answers

Thank you for your generosity. . . In sending us and praying for us in Asia!

I interacted personally with US and South Korean soldiers near the DMZ, as well as missionaries and civilians.

The two top photos to the right show about half of those people.

In Japan we enjoyed meeting with a sailor we knew at Whidbey Island, WA.

We also had a great reunion with one of our sons and his family, and fellowship with their friends in Bible study and church. The bottom two photos show a few of those people.





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Prayer Requests and News

“Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.” 1 Peter 1:13 (NIV 1978)

Please pray this verse for us and for the people with whom we minister to grow in setting their hope fully on and in Christ.

We are asking the Lord for clarity and direction as we consider the current and future ministry opportunities - locally with individuals and small groups in the US military community as well as among French, German and African friends in other communities.

Over the summer we will host Navigator missionaries from overseas, including Côte d'Ivoire, and we will visit Navigator ministries and contacts in European countries. We will wrap up the season at a US Military retreat in Germany with our fellow staff and leaders over Labor Day.

Thank you for your support in the work of knowing Christ, making Him known and helping others do the same!

Mike & Karen Kotecki

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Mike and Karen Kotecki are Navigator Missionaries in Germany that our PCC family supports.



SELF CONTROL (OR THE LACK OF)


By Sharon Ankrum



Of all the fruits of the spirit I struggle with *“self control”* is the most. By the time we say all the **fruits of the spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control**,- we are out of breath, so I guess that is why we barely breathe it out at all.

We have prayed about addictions of various sorts each week, and I truly can understand how difficult it must be to have something so in control of you that you can't think past it. Crave it, taste it, even smell it. When my kids were little, I used to try and sneak a candy bar, but they could hear that paper crackle in their sleep, so yes, even hear it.

I am a sugarhollic! If I put any sweet thing in my mouth, I want more, more, more. I have been known to eat a BIG Hershey candy bar and not be satisfied, so to resist the temptation of eating a second, I put all the ones in my freezer in the GARBAGE. There! took that problem away! I do little tricks, like put sweet things in my garage freezer to resist just taking a nibble. Believe me frozen cookies are almost as good as fresh ones. NO SELF CONTROL! When there is a party, I like taking sweets so I can leave them there and not be a glutton and take it home and eat the whole blasted thing. I guess that is my self control mechanism. Once Amy Jones gave me a box of chocolate macadamia turtles. There were 16

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in the box, boy oh boy what a treat! I thought I would have a couple and before I knew it the box was empty, not even a piece of flaked chocolate (no self control) but I couldn't throw such a lovely gift away, even though I was half sick to my stomach. Consequences of being a glutton!

Addiction is allowing something to control your thoughts continually, without satisfaction, always wanting more, more, more. Proverbs 25:28 (ESV)
"A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls." But God has said He has given us self control and steadfastness.

2 Peter 1:6 (ESV)
"and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness".

When that cookie, or piece of cake calls, I have to remember that God is in control, and through the finished work of Christ on the cross, and my faith in Him, I no longer belong to Cake or Candy, but that my thoughts are heavenly, it is not I that live, but Christ in me.

Do I still want sweet things? Absolutely! With self control, I can have a small amount and walk away. If that means not baking at Christmas or fixing my favorite Crème Brûlée's so be it. Maybe there will be a party!

Proverbs 23:2 says *"and put a knife to your throat if you are given to appetite", ESV.* I don't think I can go that far, but avoiding the temptation rather than submitting is letting Jesus have control. After all, He is the sweetest, most satisfying dessert of all.



Rhyolite, Nevada By Bob Jacobs

It was on August 9, 1904 that Frank "Shorty" Harris made the discovery that would cause one of the greatest mining rushes of the 1900s, and make Harris one of the region's most famous individuals. The strike would lead to the rise of Rhyolite, one of the great mining cities of the era and one of the most dramatic boom and bust towns in the history of the West.

NOTE: The town is named for "rhyolite", an igneous rock composed of light colored silicates, usually buff to pink and occasionally light gray. It belongs to the same rock class as granite but is much less common.

NOTE: Igneous rock is formed through the cooling and solidification of lava.

The Rhyolite town site was platted in January of 1905 by a group of claim owners that decided they might do better promoting a town at the site of their claims rather than working the mines on them. Rhyolite was laid out with 36 blocks, and lots were initially given away to miners to get the camp started.

Rhyolite was still a tent camp as summer started in 1905. In what was certainly one of the largest tent cities in the old west, an estimated 2,000 people were already residing in the new settlement. Rhyolite's first and most important challenge was water. Three separate companies competed to bring water to the new city. Water was delivered from various springs in the area, piped for miles and stored in tanks above the city. The first water system was online in July of 1905. The first railroad reached Rhyolite in December of 1906. Rhyolite's already explosive growth and development intensified with anticipation of the railroad's arrival. A December, 1906 edition of the Los Angeles Herald stated "Rhyolite is the Real Thing" and describes the "Remarkable Development of a Mining Town with Coming of Railroads." Investors and mining men are coming into the district every day. The recent strikes on the Gold Bar, Homestake, Gibraltar, Mayflower, Starlight, Tramps, Victor, and a score of other mines of rich ore has created an excitement all over the country. Rhyolite would ultimately be served by three competing railroads.

Many wood frame buildings were built during the second half of 1905 and in 1906. It wasn't until the fall of 1906 that the significant rock and concrete structures started appearing that still survive as haunted ruins in the Rhyolite ghost town. Rhyolite had evolved from a tent camp to a significant city in just two years. In 1907 the city had electricity, concrete sidewalks, water mains, telephone lines, newspapers, banks, police and fire departments, a stock exchange, an opera house, a hospital, a school, and numerous other businesses. In the height of its prosperity Rhyolite claimed a population of almost 10,000 and was the center of a thriving region.

The fortunes of mining towns were often volatile, but Rhyolite was likely the most dramatic tale of boom and bust of all the great camps in the West. The financial panic of 1907 had tightened the capital markets, resulting in little funding for additional mine development. Rhyolite was now at the mercy of its mines; if they didn't produce the local economy would be in crisis. The Montgomery Shoshone mine operated at a loss in 1910 and closed in 1911, devastating Rhyolite's economy. Similar results were coming out of other mines in the district. The high-grade ore that had brought fame to this area turned out to be in narrow veins that pinched out at depth. The lower grade ore was not profitable to mine in those days, and many mines closed.

By 1909 no new ore was being discovered and it became evident that the mine's days were numbered. By 1910 the population of Rhyolite was reported to be 675, less than ten percent of the peak population less than three years earlier. That year all three banks closed. The last newspaper shut down in June of 1912, the post office closed in November of 1913 and the last train left Rhyolite station in July of 1914. In 1916 the power company shut down the plant and removed the lines. In rapid succession Rhyolite's entire modern infrastructure was lost, the Santa Barbara Daily Press reported on January 2, 1921 that "Rhyolite, the once thriving center of the Bullfrog mining boom of fourteen years ago, has taken its place among the ghost towns of the west. A Mrs. Dyer, proprietor of the Rhyolite hotel and her son are the only permanent residents."

Today Rhyolite is a ghost town that is maintained by the BLM. The town is a popular tourist destination and is called "one of the west's most photographed towns". Some of the remaining buildings include the railroad depot, the ruins of the Cook Bank building, the Porter Brothers store, the school, and the famous John Kelly bottle house that was built in 1906 out of over 50,000 beer bottles. Many of Rhyolite's buildings were moved to Beatty and other communities. The more permanent structures like the impressive three-story Cook Bank building were gutted for salvage and the significant concrete walls have been mostly

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destroyed by time, weather and vandalism.

Rhyolite is clearly one of the best ghost towns in Nye County and in the state of Nevada. However the weather and vandalism is taking its toll on Rhyolite, as with every Ghost Town. Every year there is a little less of Rhyolite to enjoy so I would suggest that you visit this area soon before it disappears for eternity.

To get here go North on State Route 95 to Beatty and at the four way stop sign in the center of Beatty take a left (West) on State Route 374 for a about 4 miles and turn right (North) on the road to Rhyolite approximately a mile or so up this road, watch for the sign to Rhyolite. This trip is a little over one hour from Pahrump (one way).

NOTE: When driving thru Beatty after you take the left (West) turn on State Route 373, in about ¼ mile look to your left and you will see the Beatty Museum which is worth a visit and it's a good place to get additional information on the area.



Cook Bank Building in Rhyolite, Nevada



Some of the remaining structures in Rhyolite, Nevada



One of the many General Stores in Rhyolite, Nevada



School building in Rhyolite, Nevada

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Jail House in Rhyolite, Nevada



Bottle House in Rhyolite, Nevada



Old Caboose in Rhyolite, Nevada



Inside of old caboose in Rhyolite, Nevada

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The only remaining Train Station in Rhyolite, Nevada



An overview of other remains in Rhyolite, Nevada

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“Tell-a-phone, Tell-a-graph, Tell-a-woman”

Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. 1 Timothy 5:13 ESV

I remember growing up during World War II and over and over again I would hear on the radio the need to **not** talk about the war strategies (*what's "war strategies?"*) – your defense job – your military family, etc. Time and time again, announcements were made via radio and movies to not talk about the moves, plans, or strategies of troop movements. Being so young, I didn't really understand what this meant. But I do remember my father laughing when he heard a radio announcer saying to be careful of “loose” talk; and, ended his discourse by saying – “loose lips may sink ships; but remember - Tell-a-phone, Tell-a-graph, Tell-a-woman.”

Of course, we all know that “loose lips” are not just indicative to the female gender. Males do a lot of “gossiping,” too. But it is called or disguised as “informing, debating or discussing.”

We also all know that geographically the traits and social environments differ greatly. For example: Northerners are depicted as being cold and closed mouth. Easterners are depicted as being snobbish and clannish. Southerners are depicted as being gossipy and loud. And, westerners are depicted as being just plain “different.”

I don't really believe we can paste any specific label on any specific area; because, while environment may play a key part in social development – other social environments such as home, church and schools are something that add major flavors to this social brew.

I was brought up – quite firmly, that what goes on in our home stays there; and, what I know or see in others are not discussed outside the family. And, I must confess that most easterners are brought up that way. That's why when I became an adult and opened some of my family's closets, I was quite shocked! But I respect the need of others' desires to maintain the right of privacy when making decisions.

While a lot of geographical areas enjoy “back fence” discussions, easterners are very “closed mouth” about their affairs. However, at this time there seems to be a thriving drive to outdo the normal news media and family environmental concerns and use other means and media to discuss/spread people's concerns and problems. And, also, they may be used as a means to hurt or injure others psychologically and socially.

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I am glad to say that my closest and dearest friends respect my right to my privacy. What a warm, healthy and assuring feeling that is. I can share my feelings, my issues and my pains with them without having someone other than them walk up to me and ask me about my problems/issues. I feel so upended and betrayed when someone comes up to me and asks about an issue that they can neither help, assist nor contribute to. They just want to know! And, then?!? It is my honest request that before you ask about and/or before you repeat something you heard or ask about something you heard – that you have a sincere need to become involved in the answers to your questions; or, are you just asking to satisfy your curiosity.

There is a government security level that pronounces on documents the edict of “on a need to know basis.” So, before you pass on something you have heard – are you passing it on to someone who has “a need to know basis?” Or, is this information being passed on “as I know something you don’t know basis.” Or, on a “how much do you know that I don’t know basis?” Upgrade your standards! You have enough going on in your own life not to allot time to become involved in their issues. If they need you, they will involve you. But until that time, “butt out and button up!”

A perverse person stirs up conflict,
and a gossip separates close friends.

Proverbs 16:28

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