

FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

Let us become
really hoopy froods

Long before I was a newspaper guy, I was a fan of science fiction and I was an English major.

Once an English major, always an English major.

Pretty much the same goes for being a science fiction fan. The two have their share of crossover. During this time of the COVID-19



PHIL WRIGHT
OBSERVER EDITOR

corona-virus outbreak and the drastic steps we

must take to impede further contagion, certain words from minds greater than most of ours are worth heeding.

Douglas Adams, of course, comes immediately to the forefront. The narrator of his novel “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” explains the guide itself was more popular than the “Encyclopedia Galactica” because it was a bit cheaper and the cover of the “Guide” displays — “in large friendly letters” — the comforting phrase: “Don’t panic.”

Seems like good advice.

The young Paul Atreides in Frank Herbert’s sweeping “Dune” tells us “Fear is the mind-killer.”

How many of us have questioned why there has been the rush on toilet paper? You can almost understand the hoarding of hand sanitizer and canned goods.

Almost, because it is not as though we have ceased making the stuff. But nothing about the symptoms of the 2019 coronavirus indicates the need for pickup loads of toilet paper.

Robert Heinlein in “Time Enough for Love” has this on the value of maintaining your cool: “Heroism’ often consists in keeping your head in an emergency and doing the best you can with what you have instead of panicking and being shot in the tail. People who fight this way win more battles than do intentional heroes; a glory hound often throws away the lives of his mates as well as his own.”

That last bit drives home a good point. Even in a battle with a virus, this is not about you or me, this is about us. All of us.

La Grande Police Chief Brian Harvey issued a statement late Tuesday afternoon reminding residents that local law enforcement and emergency agencies are small, have limited resources and our “emergency communications systems can be overwhelmed.”

Don’t hesitate to dial 911 if you have an emergency, Harvey explained, but if you “have a cause for concern that may not be an emergency, please consider other ways to communicate,” such as using police and fire business phone numbers.

You know: Think before you act. Remember what you do affects others. Don’t panic.

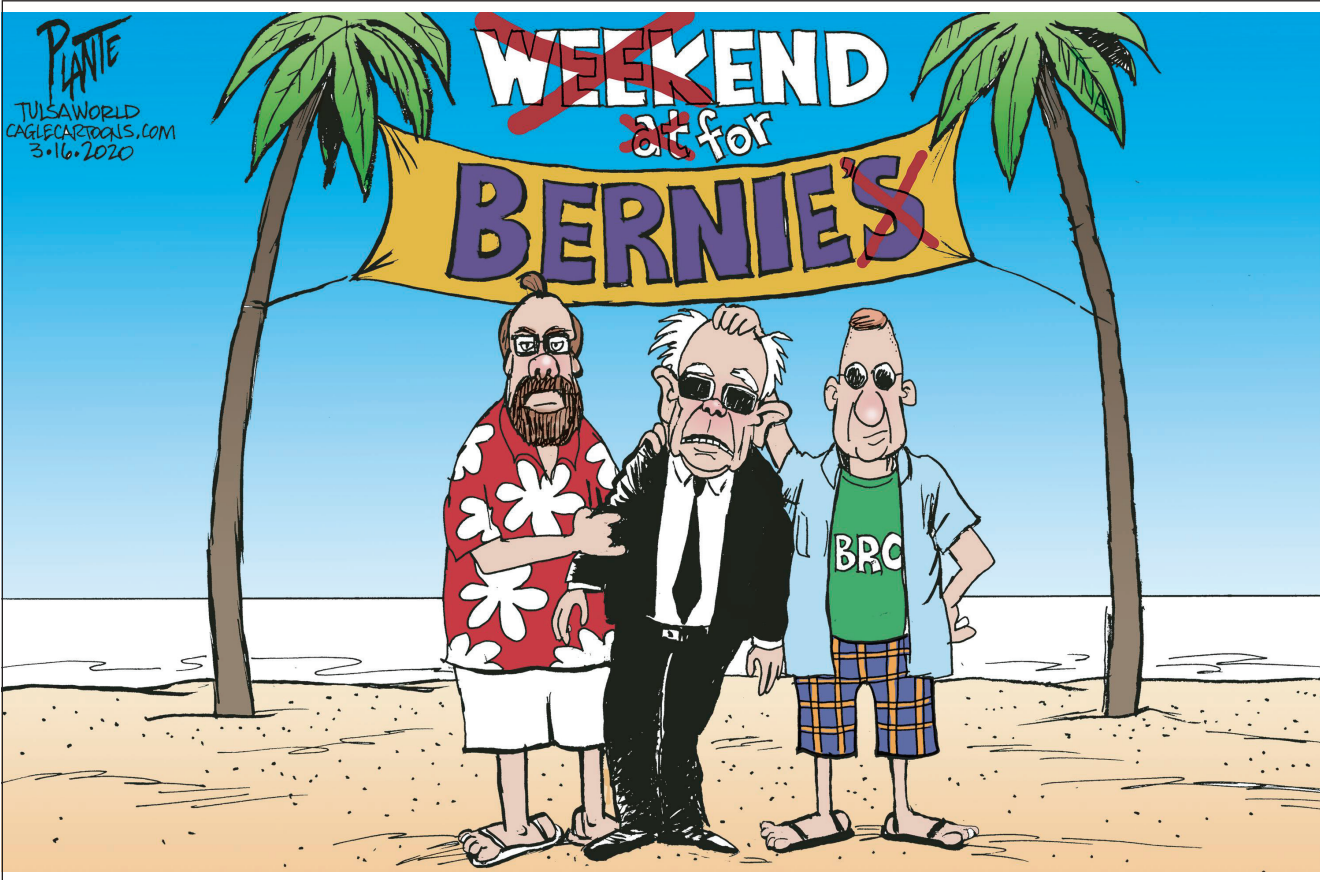
Chuck Palahniuk, the author of “Fight Club,” in his second novel, “Invisible Monster,” delivers this tidbit: “Hysteria is impossible without an audience. Panicking by yourself is the same as laughing alone in an empty room. You feel really silly.”

The simile almost writes itself: Fear and panic can spread like a virus.

Let’s not spread either. Instead, we should behave — to borrow again from Adams — as the hoopy frood who knows where their towel is.

That is, the sort of character who has their act together.

And towels, of course, are so versatile.



Your views

Shaming is not
investigative reporting

On page 2A of the March 10, 2020, edition of The Observer, we saw the headline “Hospital leader peddles conspiracy.” The writer is Emily Cureton of Oregon Public Broadcasting. The article (even the title) appears to be an attempt to discredit a hospital employee, Stefanie Haines, in Burns.

The other goal seems to be silencing any dissenting voices concerning the COVID-19 virus. The writer is misinformed, since she refers to the “debunked dangers of vaccinations.” Really? Debunked? One of our daughters suffered seizures as a result of a vaccination. When we told the pediatrician, he was not even surprised. I suppose Ms. Cureton has not heard of the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, which established the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. So far that fund has paid out \$4.2 billion.

Moreover, the article attacks Ms. Haines’ statements on her Facebook page and at her private business, but it indicates no wrongdoing in her duties at Harney District Hospital. Apparently working for a hospital means Ms. Haines is forbidden to express views in her private life that are outside the “party line.” I suggest that it is the hospital’s responsibility to decide whether Ms. Haines’ activities compromise her professional effectiveness.

While it certainly is the job of journalists to do solid investigative reporting, an attempt to shame an Eastern Oregon resident for her views is not in that category.

Tom Herrmann
La Grande

Bill Miller would make an
excellent sheriff

I am writing on behalf of Bill Miller. Bill and I attended Eastern Oregon University together. We often had the same courses and were members of the Speel Ya Club at the university. Bill always looked out for his fellow students. He was willing to help with any task at a moment’s notice.

One fall, Bill’s family filled all of their deer tags. Knowing his family had more meat than they could eat, he generously gave the surplus to needy students and their families. I was one of those students. To me, this illustrates that Bill cares about others. I feel he is an asset to his community and would make an excellent sheriff.

Bradley Phillips
North Powder

Experience counts —
re-elect Sheriff Rasmussen

Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen is a man to be respected. He is a man to be trusted. Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen is a man to be reelected.

He has more than 23 years of law enforcement experience. What has he done for us? We have school resource deputies to protect our kids and teachers. Boyd is always working with deputies in the drug task force to keep drugs out of our county and away from our kids. He hires community-minded deputies who are connected to the people they serve. Elgin now has a contract to have three deputies serving that community.

In many instances, Boyd was able to take an escalating situation and reduce it to a manageable episode due to his professionalism, extensive training and vast experience. He treats everyone with respect and is considerate of varying opinions. He balances that with being firm and taking charge when the situation warrants.

One of Boyd’s many fine qualities is his ability to listen to the opinions of the public and consider their valuable input. He is a dedicated public servant.

Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen knows Union County. He knows the law. Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen does exactly what he says he will do. That is integrity.

Experience counts. Vote for Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen so he can continue to work for the best interests of the citizens of Union County.

Dave and Zee Koza
La Grande

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