

# Debt runs up, clock runs down

David Stark

The Clackamas Print

On Jan. 1, 1791 the national debt was \$75 million. Today the government is adding that much to the debt every hour. With so much deficit spending it's no surprise that experts are predicting that the United States' national debt will pass the \$10 trillion mark by the end of 2007.

When President George W. Bush took office our nation's debt was a little over \$5.6 trillion; since then budget surpluses have collapsed into massive deficits and the debt has risen almost 50 percent. On Jan. 1, 2004 the debt passed the trillion dollar mark, and on Oct. 18, 2005 it passed \$8 trillion. Now keep in mind that it took nearly five years for the debt to go from \$5 to \$6 trillion. I can still remember the

Clinton administration and how everyone was predicting the elimination of the country's debt within 10 years. Congress has had to recently raise the debt ceiling for the fourth time in less than five years.

I don't know about the rest of the nation, but I'd like for the economy to survive at least until my grandchildren are grown. At the rate things are going I wonder if things will last until I have kids.

I'm not saying that I think the government should just stop doing things, I just think things should be prioritized a bit better. I mean, do we really need to add \$200 billion to the budget every year? And if we really do, could schools and tax payers see some of that money?

At the time of this article, the national debt was \$8,365,530,687,635.33. With a population of \$298 million that rounds out to about

\$28,072.25 per person.

Recently the depths of America's debt were highlighted by news out of New York that the National Debt Clock in Times Square is running out of room. The clock only spans 13 digits, which means that when - not if, sadly - the national debt reaches \$10 trillion, the clock will be unable to show the number. This is expected to happen within the next two years.

Anyone can spout figures about our national debt, but usually all this accomplishes is to make everyone else's eyes glaze over. But saying that the National Debt Clock will run out of room within two years ...

well, that makes people sit up and take notice.

The clock was replaced in 2004, in part to fix a happy discovery made in the 1990s - the clock can't run backwards. This is obviously not a prob-

lem facing the clock today. The numbers in the lower places roll up so fast they seem to flicker and change at random.

This is a situation that is going to get much worse before it gets better.



Internet Photo

## English instructor advocates restroom repose for happy love life

James Bryant-Trerise

Contributing Writer

Women, don't read this. There's nothing in it for you. Skip to another section of the sports, maybe.

OK men, I have a story which may help you avoid considerable embarrassment. Plus, following my advice could improve your love life.

My office is on the second floor of Rook Hall. Consequently, I visit the men's room there a lot. There I was one day, mindlessly zipping up as I backed away from the urinal, when my hand brushed something cold and wet on my pants.

Drops of liquid were splattered all down my right pant leg, with a few on my left as well. I first checked to see if there was anyone else in the room; Lord knows one wouldn't want to investigate anything having to do with bodily functions while anyone could see you.

What happened? I really hoped that it was splatter from the urinal flush, and the coldness of the water seemed to corroborate that theory. If it were water from the flushing then it was just water: not too bad, though the fact that it came from a urinal's pipes was disconcerting. But now that the liquid was on my pants, I decided I'd better confirm in an orderly manner. And my worst fears were realized.

Every reasonable man knows why he didn't notice this problem as it was happening. We never look down; who wants to see what's there? We spend our time looking at the tile three inches from our faces and reading the clever lines etched in on the grout between the tiles, things like "why are you reading this" and "don't take James for 122."

Why this splatter happened to me, I have no idea. Perhaps some sort of trajectory analysis could be undertaken. Maybe Steve Brown (physics instructor) could vector in my individual angle of repose (we men are each of us unique, like snowflakes), the arc of the curve of the porcelain and the pressure of my stream to determine the reason why this particular urinal and I do not get along

(Ah, what a thing it is to be educated!). And no, standing in a different place didn't seem to help: I tried that the next time.

So here's the warning: on the second floor of Rook, if you have to pee, sit. Don't stand at the urinal. Sure, it may not happen to you, but is it worth the risk? True, dropping the drawers and sitting take a little longer than whipping down the zipper and firing away. But is it worth the risk? I had to scuttle surreptitiously back to my office and skedaddle on home.

Of course, sitting is still problematic. Some men out there - wait, let me rephrase that - some thoughtless, heartless, clueless bastards out there do not lift the seat ring when they stand to pee in the stall with the can. Let's forget all that about brain size, skull thickness, sloping brow, or whatever: the real distinction between Neanderthal and modern man is whether or not he takes two seconds to lift the seat ring with his shoe before dropping his stream in the bucket.

But a man really shouldn't stand in the stall anyway. Here's why, and here also is why sitting may improve a man's love life.

For reasons unknown to me, I have very rarely stood to pee when there's a can to sit on. I don't know why I got into this habit. Regardless, sitting on the can when peeing is better for a reason I wasn't aware of until I started living with a woman.

Much to my surprise, one day she thanks me for sitting to pee.

"Most men don't," she said. I knew that, but I didn't know why it mattered. She explained about the splatter, but again, I knew that failing to lift the ring meant splatter problems.

"Even with a lifted ring, there's still splatter. It's on the rim of the bowl, underneath it and on the floor around the toilet," she went on.

I grew up in a suburban family with a stay-at-home mom, who, sorry to say, never taught her three boys much about housekeeping. I didn't clean a toilet bowl until I was in my mid-20s, and I didn't do a very good job. So this

explains why, at the age of 30, I was hearing a neat, freak woman ("what's that, sweetie? Oh - OK") - er, woman educating me about pee splatter stains.

How's this going to help with a man's love life? Well, that woman (now my wife) actually told some of her friends about this issue - that I sit. They growled in envy at her good fortune in finding such a thoughtful man.

(Apparently, finding a man thoughtful enough to clean the toilet bowl himself was outside even the realm of imagination.) Now, I've been in Sue Mach's office; I know that not all women are - um, concerned with cleanliness to the degree my wife is. But many are.

The less splatter, the more they like you. Everything helps.

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