

I don't think we'll ever know how many complaints they received for the police to issue a tweet, but we hope the chuckles outnumbered the fainting gasps (or do we?).

Ryan Eastman
Eugene

Editor's note: Alas, the Eugene Police Log on Twitter is not an official EPD account. But it is, not unlike the snow penis, entertaining.

OREGON NEEDS PATRICK STARNES

As a born and raised, multi-generation, native Oregonian, it is important to choose someone to govern the state who represents the interests of Oregonians.

This is a state with a very diverse set of lifestyles, occupations and opinions. In governing Oregon we need someone who will listen to the varied and individualistic voices of its citizens, those who live and work here. Not those who simply want to capitalize on its resources or inhabitants, who have nothing emotionally invested in being an Oregonian.

Campaign reform — prioritizing the short and long-term interests of Oregon — is just one of the reasons I support Patrick Starnes. I have personally known him for decades. He is all about Oregon, a man of intelligence, integrity and empathy towards the needs and direction of the state and its varied citi-

zens. He is a hard working, community-oriented kind of guy, having devoted many years of volunteer service to help make Oregon a great place to live.

Starnes is the right choice for this state.

LuAnn Harmon
Westfir

IT'S THE MOMENT TO DECIDE

In the U.S. we have had the freedom to abuse freedom, and we have. Even though we have helped win two world wars fighting for human liberty, after winning the wars, we have nurtured the gluttony of wealth instead — instead of the awareness of human life, awareness

of all life on this small blue planet.

Is it too late to understand how precarious this life on Earth really is? We are still here, so it is not. But in our global crisis in a deadly pandemic, as well as the life-taking storms of climate change, we must act wisely and quickly. These threats to our lives could unite us just enough to respond with intelligent action. It is up to us. Or we could continue to be blinded by self-importance and the god of money.

Which will it be? Survival of the natural world, or survival of the lies of ego? It really is up to us.

Deb Huntley
Eugene

Local and Vocal

VIEWPOINT BY ROBERT EMMONS

The Failure of COP26

THE 2021 CLIMATE CONFERENCE IN GLASGOW IGNORED OVERPOPULATION

As the November climate conference in Glasgow sought agreement among nations to reduce the amount of carbon and methane in the atmosphere and in the oceans, conspicuously missing from their assortment of human created catastrophes — drought, fires, floods, ocean acidification, melting ice, thawing permafrost, famine, etc. — was the root cause of all of them: overpopulation.

Also missing from this charade of empty promises and futile projections was China, a country with the world's largest population and one of the top CO2 producers.

Any mention of the exponential number of us on the planet consistently gets a pass from city councils and county commissions, from state and federal legislators, from politicians of every stripe. Even environmental law conferences are gun-shy, largely because any talk of control and reduction is predictably met by accusations of racism, ethnocentrism, elitism, authoritarianism, sexism and sacrilege. Lower birth rates have been a cause for alarm, for economies predicated on endless and inequitable growth depend on a reliable spawn of workers to fuel their superchargers and falter with too many retirees living too long and feeding at the public trough.

And so we continue to teem like maggots and feed off carrion of our own making. Cities have nowhere to go but up, hogging the sun from those in the shadows. Or they expand beyond their boundaries where weak, corrupt or non-existent land use regulation — little by little, lot by lot — helps transform forests, farms, natural areas and open space into lucrative real estate enterprises for ever more customers, many of them refugees from some other wasted and risky habitat suffering the same degradation.

Shy of falling into the ism trap, many liberal thinkers object that it's not overpopulation but overconsumption that's responsible for most of our ills. To be sure, developed

nations (America chief among them) consume a majority of the world's resources, most of which are controlled and enjoyed by a small percentage of their consumers. Moreover, developing countries, which consume far less, are suffering most from the catastrophic impacts of those enjoying a grosser domestic product.

Clearly, the population-consumption argument isn't either/or but both/and. However, as the "tragedy of the commons" demonstrates, land has a carrying capacity whose quantity and quality erode according to the numbers and scale of the creatures dependent on it. The pursuit of infinite growth on a finite planet has been an ecological, economical and ethical disaster.

In 1968, when Garrett Hardin introduced the "tragedy of the commons" paradigm, the world population was 3.5 billion. In 2021, only half a century later, there are 7.9 billion people on earth and counting. It took 2 million years of human history and prehistory to reach 1 billion people and only 200 years to reach 7.9 billion.

Even if we eliminate economic inequities and reduce consumption, too many bodies remain needing and breeding and too little land and clean air and water to support them. The pollution problem ultimately is a population problem, as Hardin has noted: "It didn't much matter how a lonely frontiersman disposed of his waste. But as the population became denser, the natural chemical and biological recycling processes became overloaded."

Already, even as we continue and accelerate our untenable numbers, lifestyles and practices, many places are becoming uninhabitable and the world a melting pot of refugees with fewer places to run to. Suffocating on air fouled by coal burning, as it has perennially in late fall, New Delhi is again facing an entire lockdown of operations, closing schools and businesses. Urban areas across the country are facing the same conditions from ineffective control of industrial pollution, coal burning, car exhausts and the relentless needs of a country with

the planet's second largest population.

Yet at the 2021 Glasgow climate conference, India demanded — and received — a last minute change in the final climate agreement from a "phase out" to a "phase down" of coal power.

As of this writing, massive amounts of consumer goods are stacked in ports (and accumulating fees) with too few to load them onto ships waiting offshore or onto trucks and rail onshore. Blame for this distribution failure has ranged from the pandemic, to accounting errors, to old-fashioned greed, but what impresses is the monumental amount of stuff that has required precious material and energy resources to manufacture. And all of it wanting dispersal to untold numbers of customers.

While our numbers have increased and economies have grown beyond local to global scales to serve them, what was economical and in sync with the local commons and its natural ecology has morphed into Economy, whose functions and effects have become alien and diffuse and little understood, much less controlled, by those it ostensibly purports to serve. Economy has become king with a decidedly autonomous and autocratic bent, and the natural environment and its inhabitants mere vassals subject to its dictates and whims.

For many the way out of the trap set by the industrial revolution and mass production is another revolution, with renewables and "clean" energy leading the charge — or the colonization of Mars or some other hapless planet boosted by a Musk or a Bezos. Yet why believe that what precipitated an exponential increase of our species will somehow rescue us from its cataclysmic consequences?

Glasgow's focus on carbon and methane merely continued a chronic distraction from facing the real enemy: ourselves, the inordinate and insupportable number of us breeding and consuming too much for the planet to bear. Such conferences will highlight the futility of empty and unenforceable goals and commitments until they ignore the isms, eschew business as usual and recognize the primary importance and environmental toll of human numbers and scale.

Until then it's just more "Blah, blah, blah," as Greta Thunberg aptly declared — outside the convention doors. ■

Robert Emmons is president of LandWatch Lane County.