

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Being there to help out year round

The holiday season is here, and the time to volunteer to help those in the community who may be less fortunate or hit hard times is now.

There already have been significant volunteer events this holiday season. The recent Community Fellowship Dinner at Hermiston High School is a good case in point and the Salvation Army continues its renowned mission of helping across the region.

Yet, there will be a greater need, not just through the holiday season but the rest of the year. While helping the community usually takes centerstage during the holidays — as it should — as soon as Jan. 1 rolls around the emphasis seems to evaporate.

We need to change that.

Those who need help do not suddenly no longer need assistance when the clock strikes 12:01 a.m. Jan. 1. The need continues. Food banks still need supplies and help. Homeless centers still need volunteers in March and July and September.

That means all of us in the community can pick just about any time of year to help.

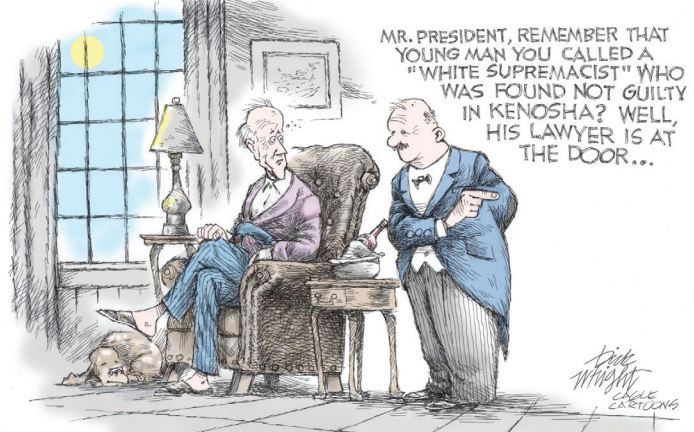
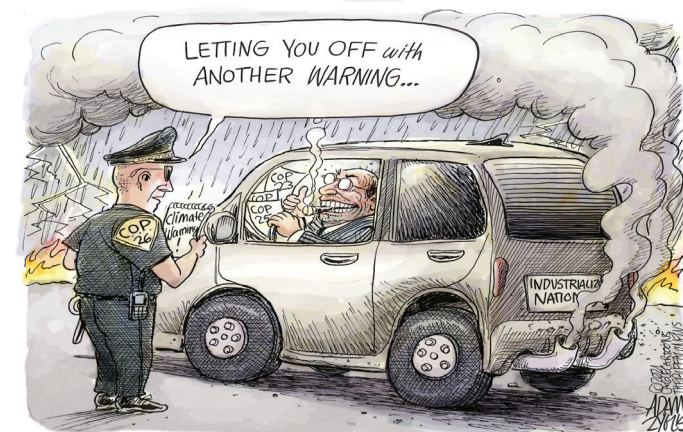
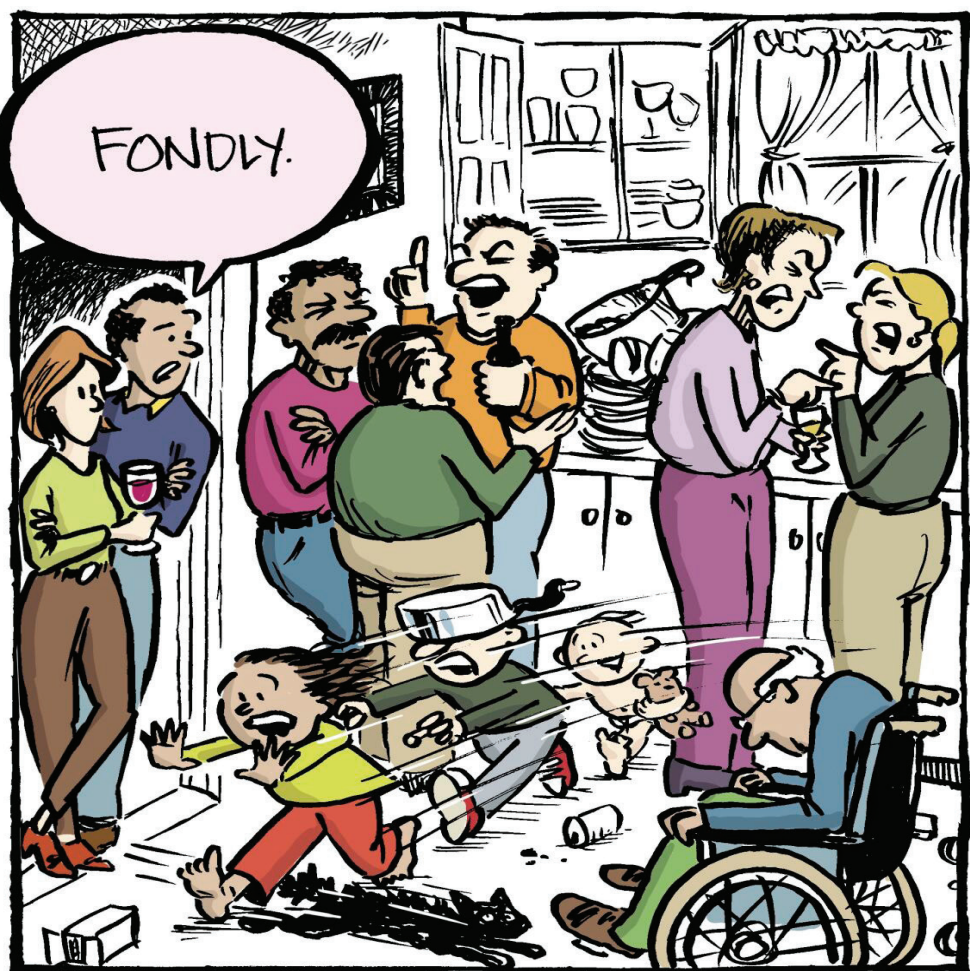
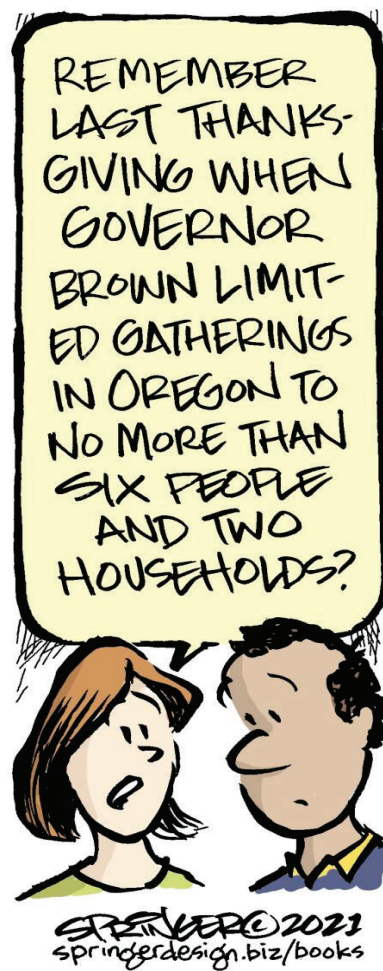
Volunteering to help a local food bank or deciding to donate money, clothes or food is more than just a nice thing to do. It is a concrete statement a person makes to help.

We need move volunteers, not less. We need more people to step up and help across the region. We pride ourselves as a people who pull ourselves up by the bootstraps and often we are successful. Yet there are so many who are not as fortunate, who by circumstances or decisions, find themselves in a situation where they must depend on others for the very existence.

We can forget, after the holidays, the need that will exist at food banks or homeless shelters, but it will persist whether we recognize it or not.

This holiday season we hope everyone remembers there is a need for volunteers, but we also want residents to remember the urgency for help from the community continues throughout the year.

Giving back to one's community, donating time or money or clothes or food is a way to help, but the effort is also one that, in the end, helps build a stronger, more resilient town. We, are indeed, a culture that believes in self-reliance, but sometimes there are those who need just a little more help. Let's make sure this year we are there to provide that help.



The broad jump world record



ANDREW CLARK
A SLICE OF LIFE

Are you familiar with a dik-dik? It is a very small antelope, being about the same as a big jackrabbit. After roasting over an open campfire, a dik-dik makes a perfect entree for a two- or three-person meal.

Last month, we discussed setting a world record 100-meter dash running away from a hippopotamus. That evening also involved an African buffalo, so both of the most dangerous wild animals in Africa were involved.

Today, we'll deal with a dik-dik-associated world record broad jump.

Ticks carry several very bad cattle diseases in tropical Africa, and controlling these killer diseases is both very difficult and very important. The primary control method is having cattle jump into and swim through a dipping vat with a chemical that kills the ticks on the cow.

We were building dipvat in the western Loliondo area of North Masailand, right up against the border of the Serengeti National Park. It was only about 30 kilometers from home, so my wife, Barbara, and my nephew, Mark, who was living with us at the time, had come along for a few days of living in the bush and living off the land.

In early evening, Mark and I set off along the bush-track in my Land Rover pickup to get a dik-dik for dinner. Mark drove and I stood in the back with my bow-and-arrow, and soon there one was standing in an open piece of woods that sloped downward toward us. I took a shot and missed (standard operating procedure), so I went up to retrieve the arrow. As I walked back and forth I looked up and there he was again — a nice, clear shot — and I missed again. So I went up to find that arrow, Mark came looking for the first arrow, and here's where the action begins.

I was walking around with my head down, looking at the ground to find the arrow, when suddenly that was a loud snort about 20-30 yards away and a huge bull buffalo jumped up. A singleton old bull is a deposed king. He has been the leader of the herd, the boss of the harem of women buffalos, the winner of the fights for control, and now he had been run out of the herd by the younger guys and he has nothing at all. He is angry, frustrated, and as I mentioned last month, African buffalos normally are "smart, mean, crafty, agile, fast — and the quintessence of distilled malevolence."

I had awakened the worst animal in Africa from his afternoon nap. We studied each other for about 3/1,000 of a second, then I turned and began running down the hill through the sparse trees. Under circumstances like this, cerebral function speeds up by geometric multi-

ples and the question "what am I going to do?" was resolved in micro-milliseconds — "jump into the bed of the Land Rover so that he hits the vehicle and I'm protected."

So I jumped. The problem, however, was that I was running so fast and jumping so hard that I flew over the Land Rover and landed on the far side of the road — completely missing the pickup bed. I have no memory of how Mark did it, but he reached safety in the cab. I got up and the buffalo was nowhere to be seen. Thinking about his mental process it might be something like, "I thought that thing was one of those stupid humans but it was the wrong color — it was like a palid termite queen that's never seen the light of day and it ran like a wildebeest and jumped like an impala and could even soar like a vulture. Hey, this thing might be dangerous and I'm outta here."

So I never saw him again. That is how I made track and field event history — this had to be a world record broad jump for sure. The length, the height and the velocity all put together how could it not be the record? What a great video it could have been.

The dik-dik was never seen again, either, and the two arrows still are in their resting places in my beloved western Loliondo bush country.

Dr. Andrew Clark is a livestock veterinarian with both domestic and international work experience who lives in Pendleton.

YOUR VIEWS

What can I do about climate change?

We know the answers. Reduce, reuse, recycle. Buy local. We are told we are personally responsible for stopping climate change. But lots of slogans and most of the emphasis on person responsibility as the way to address climate change come from a campaign by large corporations that are major polluters. Yes, we need to monitor and manage our personal carbon footprint but that is not nearly enough. We need to get governments and corporations to quickly stop supporting fossil fuels if we are to reduce enough in time.

We need to vote for climate activist candidates for public office. Government leaders set the policies that lead to a livable world. By ourselves we can't end subsidies for the coal industry. We can't improve the electric grid to effectively use renewable

sources. We need public officials who will lead us to do these things together.

We need to sign up, speak up for climate action. Many groups work to stop climate change and mitigate the effects of the change. By joining one or more organizations, you get counted, and politicians and large corporations care about those counts.

We need to speak up at all levels; with our friends, with the readers of the local newspaper, with our state and federal leaders. (Politicians and corporations count letters, too.) We need to speak up when it is uncomfortable to do so. Understand the issues, but don't wait for perfect knowledge.

We need to share with those who are suffering now from climate change. Share with people whose homes were destroyed by wildfires or hurricanes. Share with people whose wells have been contaminated by rising sea waters or whose crops were reduced or destroyed by drought.

If not now, when? We are told that turning from burning fossil fuels would hurt people and cost too much money. There are immediate wins for everyone from reducing air pollution from burning fossil fuels. It's estimated that 350,000 Americans die every year from air pollution alone. The public health benefits of cleaner air would pay for the costs of getting off fossil fuels. There would be transition impacts for people whose livelihood is tied to fossil fuel industries; those need to be addressed by short-term government programs. But in the not so very long run, the environmental benefit yields economic benefits too. The damage from climate change and the costs of the transition away from carbon only get bigger the longer we wait.

Lindsay Winsor
Milton-Freewater

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