

## Hermiston Herald

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## Ferguson again

Ferguson, Missouri, has made it back into the news, this time because of the ... let's be polite and call it "uncomplimentary" ... report issued by the federal Department of Justice in regard to the ... let's be polite and call them "shenanigans" ... that were an ongoing part and parcel of the city's "justice" system.

If reports are accurate, rather than administering justice, it was actually a system for obtaining 14 percent of the city budget from ... let's be polite and call them "highly questionable" ... practices. The similarly sized city of Webster Groves is only 7 percent funded by court fines and fees. Here in the 25 percent smaller city of Hermiston, that number is (last time I looked) right around 3 percent because compliance, not compensation, is the ultimate goal of the Hermiston court.

Two interesting items out of that report and reporting: The first is that the comedic social-comment sorts have noticed, with predictable results. For instance, John Oliver, of HBO's "Last Week Tonight," has an 18-minute dissertation on the topic of municipal violations, available on YouTube for those of you who (like myself) don't have HBO. When you've lost the comedic social commentariat, you know you're in trouble. Evidence of that trouble is demonstrated in the recent resignations of Ferguson's municipal judge and chief of police.

True, Oliver's commentary leaves a lot out in the interest of humor — but it's advocacy, not information. As one local attorney who'd seen the video put it, "He never mentions that people shouldn't drive while suspended and thus get more tickets." It also seems that many of the defendants seem to have a universal defendant problem: not showing up when they should. Ignoring a legal problem does not make it go away.

That said, it may well be that the courts those defendants dealt with were



**THOMAS CREAMING**  
OFF THE BENCH  
Herald columnist

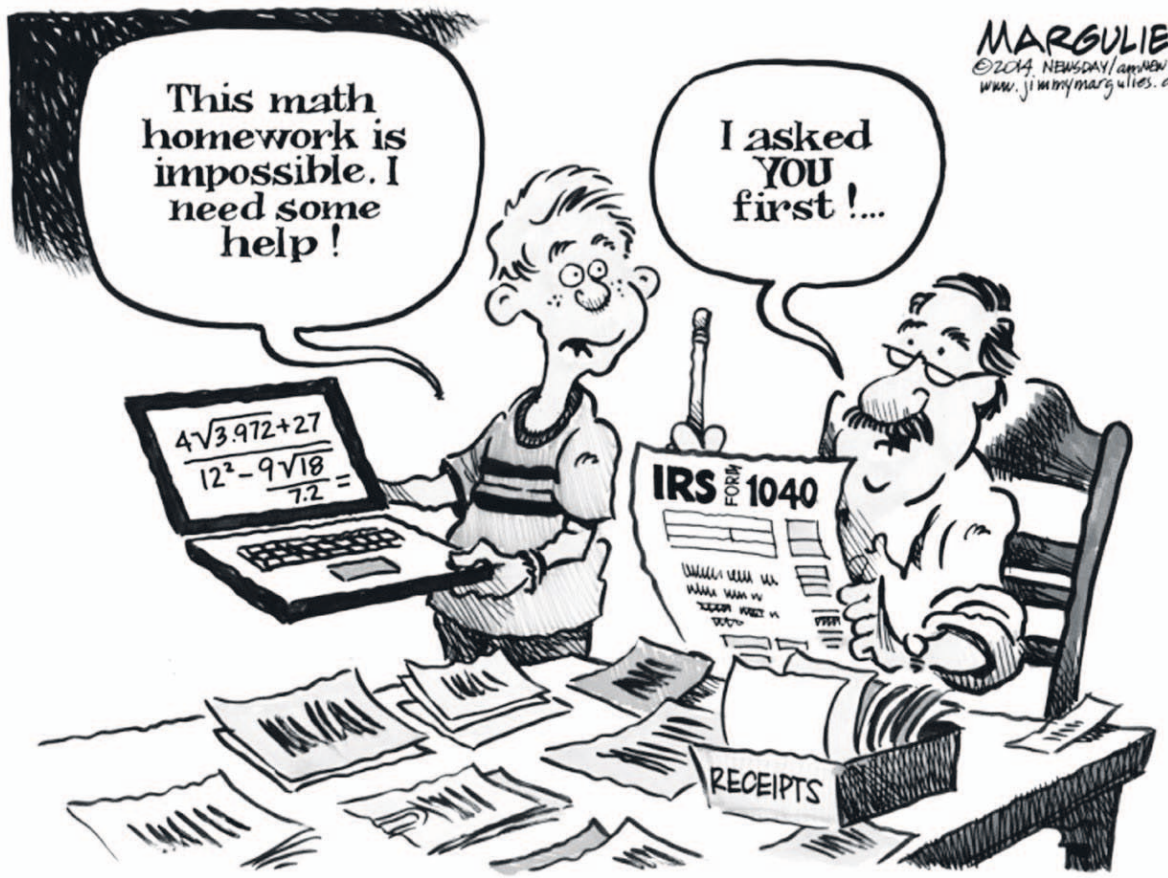
completely unsympathetic, with "Pay up — or else" inscribed over the door in Latin ("Redde, aut sursum," for those interested). Admittedly, the "or else" can occur in Hermiston's court, but only after a long process in which a defendant works hard to demonstrate his disinterest in obeying the law or court orders. "Or else" should not be an only — or the first — municipal violation enforcement policy.

The second item of interest is that Oregon has in the legislative hopper the previously mentioned HB3399. That House Bill has two parts: The first is that it would make all municipal and justice courts in the state "recording courts," not to be confused with "courts of record," such as circuit court. It would require all court proceedings be recorded and available for up to a year after the proceeding. The bill would also require that all judges in the state either be attorneys or have certificates from the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada. Although the bill requires a one-year course, sponsors have said that will be changed to a requirement for only a six-week course.

In short, the problems in Ferguson are having a ripple effect that will cause a number of problems — including costs — out here. Part two of this column will discuss and evaluate just what some of those costs and problems are, since Oregonians are going to be on the hook for paying the costs of that remediation.

However, that's just the ... let's be polite and call it an "opinion" ... of an opinionated guy. Share your polite — or not — opinions in response with letters to the editor or by email to hermistonherald@hermistonherald.com. Names of the terminally shy will be withheld on request.

— Thomas Creasing is the Hermiston Municipal Court judge and Herald columnist



## Our View: Support BMCC bond May 19

When area voters decide whether to vote in favor or against a Blue Mountain Community College facilities bond, we sincerely hope they will choose "yes."

This year's ballot measure, 130-06, which will come up for vote May 19, features many of the same proposals as last year's defeated bond, but there are some things voters may find more appealing, such as a lower price tag.

Unlike the last BMCC bond, the proposed bond measure will cost \$23 million, which equates to 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value for 15 years. According to information provided by BMCC, the average Umatilla County Median home value is \$145,000, and the estimated cost of the bond per year is \$36.25. It should be noted that the asking price this go round is about \$5 million less than the \$28 million voters turned down last year.

BMCC officials have made it very clear they have heard area voters — Hermiston residents were largely not in favor of last year's bond — and have tailored the new proposal accordingly. As BMCC President Cam Preus told the Hermiston Herald, the current bond voters are being asked to approve has a lot of the extras removed. The proposal does not include building a new facility in Pendleton — rather the current one will be renovated — nor will a pool be added or the theater renovated.



**JESSICA KELLER**  
HERMISTON HERALD  
Editor

Still included in the proposal is a precision irrigated agriculture center in Hermiston, as well as a facility in Boardman. The project costs are also much better spelled out this time around: Construction bond costs for the facility in Hermiston, for example, is estimated at a little more than \$3.2 million. The workforce training and early learning center in Boardman will cost about \$4.7 million, and the renovation of the facility for agriculture resource management, equipment and road costs in Pendleton are approximately \$4.2 million.

As well, unlike the previous bond proposal, the site locations for the Hermiston and Boardman projects have been identified, and land will not have to be purchased. The Port of Morrow has agreed to donate up to four acres of land for the Boardman facility. Residents of this area of Umatilla County, however, should be even more excited about the Hermiston Agriculture Research and Extension Center agreeing to allow BMCC to build the precision irrigated ag facility at its site at a cost of \$1 per year.

As far as lease agreements go, you can't do much better than that.

Not only does that partnership save taxpayers money, it will benefit both

BMCC and HAREC. BMCC students will have a place to not only learn about precision irrigated agriculture, but they will get hands-on experience by participating in HAREC projects.

As HAREC Director Phil Hamm said recently, this is a win-win situation. We concur.

One of the biggest arguments in support of passing the BMCC bond is the college's continued effort to educate the area's young adults and provide them opportunities to find living-wage jobs in the area.

Building a precision irrigated agriculture facility at the Hermiston Agriculture Research and Extension Center will go a long way in accomplishing this. Agriculture remains the backbone of industry in the area, and precision irrigation agriculture helps make farm operations more efficient by allowing farmers to control and moderate all aspects of the irrigation process, including water and pesticide distribution.

Training agriculture students in the latest precision irrigation techniques and methods at a local site already dedicated to agriculture will not only ensure they receive the education they need, it will make hiring them that much more attractive to area agriculture operations.

We strongly support ballot measure 130-06 for all these reasons and encourage residents to vote yes on the proposal on May 19's ballot.

## It's not a war on Easter, but...

As my family prepares to celebrate Easter 2015, I feel overwhelmed by the changes the holiday has undergone in both religious and secular terms.

Perhaps it's the haze of passing years that prejudices me, but it seems that the holiday has declined greatly in innocence and reverence since the days I was hugging my stuffed bunny and fighting my cousins for festive eggs in Granny Tyree's front yard.

The White House Easter Egg Roll has devolved into the poor man's version of "It's The Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown." ("I got a chocolate egg," "I got a strawberry egg," "I got a lemon egg," "I got tire tracks from the Secret Service Agent's runaway car.")

Innocent children's songs about hippy-hop rabbits are on the verge of being shanghaied by hip-hop ARTISTS. (I understand good ol' Peter is about to forget the bunny trail and instead get the spotlight in "I like big cottontails and I cannot lie...")

Remember when the



**DANNY TYREE**  
TYRADES!  
Cagle columnist

important question was who got to bite the ears off the chocolate bunny, not who got to BEHEAD the chocolate bunny if it was found in a car with a male other than a family member?

Casual Friday at work has segued right into casual Sunday. Fewer and fewer people care about looking spiffy for Easter. Instead of an Easter bonnet with all the frills upon it, we have a parade of Easter butt-cracks with all the frills upon them.

Cable channels have done way too many historical expose documentaries riding the coattails of Easter. What will we hear next, "Judas Kiss Or Judas Lap Dance: You Be The Judge"?

If da Vinci were painting today, his masterpiece would probably contain product placement and be called "The Last Supper Before Next Exit."

Facebook has shot down its "Feeling Fat" status, but I hear that "Feeling

Crucified" is still in the wings.

Remember when sunrise services could be conducted without side issues such as carbon footprints? ("Sunrise services: where we're reminded that solar panels are the reason for the season. Don't forget your 'God loves windmills this much' poster.")

I understand the next "Fast and Furious" movie will be filmed in the church parking lot immediately after Easter services. ("See ya at Christmas!")

It used to be so much simpler to deal with resurrection skeptics at Easter. Now proselytizing gets met with "So Jesus really gave up a man cave like that? You are pulling my leg!"

It used to be so comforting to think that Jesus Christ came to save everyone. Due to recent "private server" developments at the State Department, scripture is being rewritten to say, "Everyone can be saved — except the people my staff has looked over and decided aren't worth

saving."

Remember when "coming out" meant emerging from the tomb, not coming out to your parishioners? ("Since there's not a single feline mentioned in the Bible, you've probably wondered why I've had the choir director do all those show tunes from 'Cats' ...")

I am cautiously optimistic about NBC's Easter presentation of the early-church drama "A.D." — but I fear that its inspiring moments will soon be negated by a documentary with a promo that blares, "Pontius Pilate washed his hands of the whole matter — or DID he? Hidden-camera footage shows Pilate NOT washing up before sending Christ to his death, or before going to his second-shift job flipping burgers."

— ©2015 Danny Tyree. Danny welcomes email responses at tyreetyrades@aol.com and visits to his Facebook fan page "Tyree's Tyrades." Danny's weekly column is distributed exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc. newspaper syndicate

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Vote yes for BMCC bond

Editor,  
For more than 50 years, Blue Mountain Community College has provided students, young and old, the opportunity to increase their education and improve their value to local employers through a variety of programs, from diesel mechanic to dental assistant to nursing and more. The college is now looking to expand its programs to include a precision irrigated agriculture center in Herm-

iston and a workforce training and early learning center in Boardman. Funding of these centers, along with essential improvements for safety, security and other building upgrades is included in the proposed BMCC bond, ballot measure 130-06.

Providing these programs will allow our students the educational opportunity they need to prepare for employment in these growing industries in Morrow and Umatilla counties. The economic impact of educat-

ing our students multiplies as they settle in to careers, invest in housing and raise their families in our communities.

While we may not have children who will benefit from these BMCC programs, we recognize the value of providing these opportunities to other students. Please join us in voting "YES" on ballot measure 130-06 to support the students of BMCC.

STEVE AND JANET WILLIAMS  
HERMISTON

### Letters Policy

The Hermiston Herald welcomes original letters for publication on public issues and public policies. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. Phone numbers will not be published. Letters may be mailed to the Hermiston Herald, 333 E. Main, Hermiston, OR, 97838; or emailed to editor@hermistonherald.com