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JESSICA KELLER
EDITOR
jkeller@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4533



SAM BARBEE
SPORTS REPORTER
sbarbee@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4542



SEAN HART
REPORTER
smhart@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4534



KIM LA PLANT
OFFICE COORDINATOR
klaplant@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4530



JEANNE JEWETT
MULTI-MEDIA CONSULTANT
jjewett@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4531

To contact the Hermiston Herald for news, advertising or subscription information:

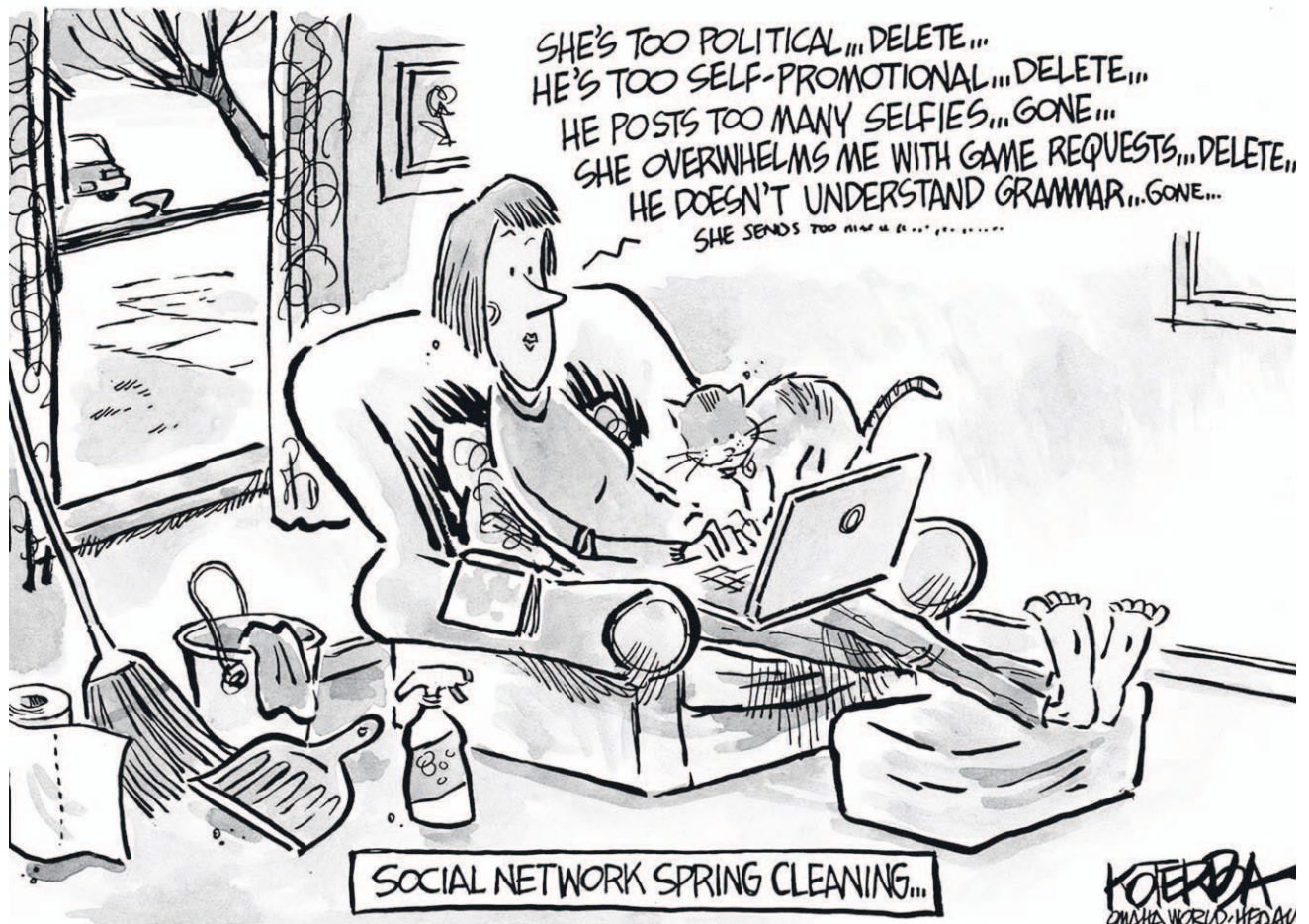
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The looming water crisis: Cry me a river (please!)

All day I faced the barren wastes without the taste of water... — The Sons of the Pioneers

In case you missed it while washing the car, watering the lawn or taking a long shower, the recent United Nations World Water Development Report extrapolates current trends and predicts that the world's water supply will fall 40 percent short of water needs in a mere 15 years.

U.N. officials have publicized the report because water shortages could be devastating to agriculture, ecosystems, economies, health and — most importantly — the wet T-shirt contests they research while in New York City flaunting diplomatic immunity.

The hardest-hit areas would be sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, but, closer to home, a separate NASA Observatory analysis indicates that by the end of the century, the worst drought in 1,000 years could hit the Great Plains and southwestern United States.

And of course we've heard of the mandatory water restrictions and other emergency measures in drought-stricken California. But long-term hope springs eternal. Desalination plants cost a fortune, but just a few of them could provide practically limitless fresh water — and nearly enough salt for the snacks at one Super Bowl party.

The U.N. says many factors have contributed to the global problem, but unchecked population growth is cited as the main culprit. Let me get this straight: the best way to save water is to encourage MORE COLD SHOWERS. Only in Am ... well, only on planet earth.

I know I've been luckier than most, but I have had a little experience with water issues. For 16 years my "day job" has involved working at a farmers cooperative, so I know of the effect of inadequate rainfall on crops and pasture. And during the winter of '94, my wife and I had running water only one day out of a 15-day period (thanks to frozen pipes and — after a one-day reprieve



DANNY TYREE
TYRADES!
Cagle columnist

— a downed power line that idled the pump at the spring). Thank goodness we were able to keep some modicum of romance in our lives. ("How do I love thee? Let me count the deodorants.")

Water shortages will be an annoyance to some, a catastrophe for others — and a financial bonanza for the lucky few. For instance, makers of veterinary anti-nausea medicines. Because all those water-skiing squirrel videos will soon feature hapless squirrels riding tumbling tumbleweeds.

It will take a lot to get people to take this issue seriously. For one thing, folks have faith in American ingenuity. They assume technology will take care of the problem. You know, like a super-hero exoskeleton capable of KICKING THE CAN FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD!

If we don't get a handle on this situation now, we will live in a frightening new world. People will sit around the campfire singing, "Michael, Drag The Boat Ashore." Youngsters in swimming trunks will replace "Cannonball!" with cries of "Tentative toe dip!!!" Right-wing talk-show hosts will rant about "redistribution of perspiration." Philosophers will ask, "Is the glass half-empty or ... half-way to the next county after armed robbers hijacked it???"

Research the issue. Start out with some relatively painless ways to conserve. Really, in a hundred years, who is going to care if you had the lushest lawn on the whole &^%\$# block?

Well, OK, maybe Betty White. But she'll be too busy procuring bootleg water for a wet T-shirt contest to say anything.

— ©2015 Danny Tyree.
Danny welcomes email responses at tyreetrades@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

Ferguson's woes, our costs

Previously, we looked at some of the problems the Department Of Justice found regarding the city of Ferguson and its treatment of residents as mere cash cows to fill city coffers. Whether the DOJ will continue its focus on problem municipalities, or if the issue will die quietly, is unknown. The national focus on municipal issues may have more immediate effects for Oregon, however.

Mentioned last time, the Oregon Legislature is considering HB 3399, a bill which would require municipal and justice courts in the state to become "recording courts." Recording courts would not be courts of record like circuit court, but rather would be required to record criminal proceedings and retain those records for at least a year. While HB 3399 may not be directly related to Ferguson, there is little doubt that the events in Ferguson and the DOJ report will add a momentum to the bill. So what costs will there be?

The most obvious cost will be the cost of recording equipment cities will need to purchase. The quality and technical specifications of the required equipment are still unknown, but recording courts will



THOMAS CREAMING
OFF THE BENCH
Herald columnist

likely not be able to just slap a pocket recorder in the middle of the courtroom and call it good. The simplest systems cost in the \$4,000 to \$7,000 range, and I've heard \$17,000 quoted for some higher-end systems.

Will Oregon settle for something less sophisticated? It may take litigation to find out.

As a result, HB 3399 will put courts out of business. Smaller cities are not going to want to invest thousands of dollars in a court that operates once or twice a month for a dog or weed case. This doesn't mean that lawlessness will reign in those cities, but crimes charged into justice court or circuit court will slow down the justice system — and, as they say, justice delayed is justice denied.

Worse, court handling of civil matters, like small claims and

divorces, will slow, as criminal actions have priority. Do overburdened justice and circuit courts need a new influx of cases? Smaller cities may decide to contract with larger ones for judicial services — traffic citations from Echo are handled by Stanfield — but that still adds a burden to other courts. And there's no guarantee that even justice courts, in some counties, will want to pay for the systems — not when there's a nice court of record right next door.

Then let's look at HB 2571, which may require an unusual level of records retention for officer body cams. Hermiston may well have to figure out how to store more than 100 hours of recorded material per day. That would be 50 daily DVDs if data compression is not allowed. Times 365 days in a year. Times 10 years that public records need to be kept.

At about 20 DVDs per inch, the city would

need to make room (and feel free to correct my math) for approximately three miles of shelving to store all the material! Or a lot of multi-terabyte disk drives. At the moment, the thoughts on HB 3399 and HB 2571 are only middle-worst case guesstimates, and I'll be pleased if the final requirements prove me wrong. There are other costs than money and space, though. In part three of this two-part series, we'll take a look at the costs related to people.

But that's just the not-so-costly opinion of an opinionated guy. Share your costly — or not — opinions in response, particularly if you reach a different math result for the camera content storage! Letters to the editor or by email to hermistonherald offthebench@gmail.com. Names of the terminally shy will be withheld on request.

— Thomas Creasing is a Hermiston resident, municipal court judge and Herald columnist

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hermiston police officers exceeding expectations

Editor,
Several weeks ago, I was privileged to watch two of Hermiston's finest doing their job. In this time of negative images of police officers failing at their job, I think it's important to recognize that many police officers are quietly exceeding expectations in their very stressful and difficult job.

Officers Gutierrez and Cobian responded quickly to a call. They were both professional and gave the caller respect and validation for the call. The officers determined that, at

this point in time, there was not the evidence needed to proceed. Then they encouraged the caller to call again immediately when and if this occurred again.

You might think that this is where the conversation ended. However, both officers proceeded to visit with the caller regarding how this type of incident may be avoided in the future. Rather than exacerbate the situation, they showed their understanding of the caller's unspoken cry for help, of deeper-seated problems. With respect and insight, they asked pertinent questions, actively listened and offered positive suggestions based on what they heard. The

officers also asked the caller to take a look at what part they may have played in the incident.

I believe these two officers are a reflection of our Hermiston Police Department as a whole. I believe that our police department sees its role as providing safety and protection. Do they get it right every time? Most likely not; they are human. After seeing these two officers in action, I believe our police officers and police department get it right more often than not. I thank these officers and all the officers on the Hermiston Police Department.

RHEA FARMER
HERMISTON

ELECTED OFFICIALS

STATE

District 29: Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Umatilla Co., 900 Court St. N.E., S-423, Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1729. 101 S.W. Third St., Pendleton, OR 97801 (541) 278-1396. E-mail: ssen.billhansell@state.or.us.

District 30: Sen. Ted Ferrio-li, R-John Day; 900 Court St. N.E., S-223 Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1950. 750 W. Main, John Day, OR 97845, (541) 575-2321. E-mail: ferriolis.en@state.or.us.

District 58: Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Pendleton; 900 Court St. N.E., H-480, Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-

1458. 2126 N.W. 21st., Pendleton, OR 97801, (541) 276-2707. E-mail: rep.gregbarreto@state.or.us.

District 57: Rep. Greg Smith, R-Morrow, 900 Court St. N.E., H-280, Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1457. P.O. Box 215, Heppner, OR 97836, (541) 676-5154. E-mail: smith.g.rep@state.or.us.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden
Sac Annex Building, 105 Fir St., No. 201, La Grande, OR 97850; (541) 962-7691. E-mail: kathleen_cathey@wyden.senate.gov; (Kathleen Cathey, community repre-

sentative); 717 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510, (202) 224-5244.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley
One World Trade Center, 121 SW Salmon Street, Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; (503) 326-3386; Dirksen Senate Office Building, SDB-40B, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-3753.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (2nd District)
843 E. Main St., Suite 400, Medford, OR 97504, (541) 776-4646, (800) 533-3303; 2352 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-6730

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