

OUR VIEW

Lending a helping hand can beat the heat

Al Davis, the manager of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center deserves a lot of praise for his actions last week. As temperatures climbed, he made the decision to open the facility so people could find some relief inside an oasis of air conditioning.

Davis surely did not do it for praise and probably is not going to be too comfortable having his noble move highlighted, but good deeds in our community need to be recognized and celebrated.

The weather — specifically the heat — is dominating what we talk about, how we live and work and what we do. No one can do anything about curbing the heat, but there are a lot of things people can do to help those who, for whatever reason, do not have air conditioning or are otherwise limited in escaping the high temperatures.

Davis did the right thing. For some in our community, retreating into the relative comfort of air conditioning is not an option. Instead, they must rely on fans — which help — or simply endure the heat.



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald
An electronic display registers 116 degrees on Tuesday, June 29, 2021 at Armand Larive Middle School in Hermiston as a record-breaking heat wave enveloped the region.

High temperatures are nothing new to our area. We see them every year about this time. What is different this year is the longevity of the high

temps. Into the near future, we are going to continue to bake.

That means everyone should be mindful of the dangers of heat. Heat

stroke and heat exhaustion are the two most common injuries that come to mind.

Heat exhaustion can manifest itself with symptoms such as a headache, dizziness, heavy sweating, nausea and feeling physically weak.

Anyone who begins to experience those types of symptoms should immediately get out of the sun, find a cool environment and drink water. Heat stroke exhibits many of the same symptoms but is far more dangerous. Heat stroke can lead to confusion, slurred speech, high body temperature and dry skin. An individual who suffers from heat stroke must seek immediate medical attention.

The heat is not going to go away soon, so that means all of us must keep a close watch on how we feel during the day. And make sure your neighbors or friends do not fall victim to a heat injury.

We should also do all we can — as Al Davis did last week — to help others if they are unable to rely on air conditioning or fans.

We need to enjoy our summer but be safe when we do.

COLUMN

Prescribed fires help take heat off

It was 102 degrees in Medford on June 1. Let me say that again just in case it didn't fully sink in: Medford suffered temperatures as high as 102 degrees in spring, making it harder for firefighters battling Southern Oregon's first fires of the year.

Now, I usually like Oregon to be in the record-setting business, but not for hot, dry weather in April and May. Having a 100-degree day while still in springtime should ring alarm bells for Oregonians everywhere.

It was not so long ago that Oregon's fire season was only a few weeks in August and September.

The events of Memorial Day weekend only serve as a reminder that the human-caused climate crisis has increased the frequency of fires that threaten lives, businesses and entire communities.

Recently I met with forest managers and first responders in Southern Oregon, Central Oregon and the Willamette Valley to

hear their forecasts for the 2021 fire year.

The bottom line is it's long past time for nickel-and-dime solutions to billion-dollar problems caused by wildfire, such as smoke-related health issues, damage to local economies and life-and-death threats to Oregonians.

Our state has a backlog of roughly 2.5 million acres of federal land in dire need of wildfire prevention. And Oregonians don't want 2.5 million excuses about why there aren't more forest health improvements and prescribed fire treatments completed on these 2.5 million acres.

They just want these fire risks reduced as soon as possible.

The science is clear: Controlled burns clear out dead trees and vegetation as well as break down and return nutrients to the soil, creating healthier and more resilient forests. Prescribed burns or fuel reduction treatments can head off wildfires before they have the chance to burn out of control, devastating lives and livelihoods.

I saw this firsthand in Sisters, where a prescribed burn near the Whychus Creek provided key

support in suppressing the 2017 Milli fire before it could overtake Sisters.

To that end, I recently introduced legislation to increase the pace and scale of prescribed fires. The National Prescribed Fire Act has the support of conservation groups as well as leading timber industry voices because its passage would mean healthier forests for timber harvest, forest ecosystems and outdoor recreation alike.

It's going to take all hands on deck to prevent wildfire in the coming dry seasons, so that's why I have introduced bills to harden our power grid by burying power lines, generate thousands of good-paying jobs for young people reducing fire-causing fuels in the woods, and meet emissions goals by investing in the clean energy sector.

Smart, science-based forestry policy is smart climate policy. If we treat hazardous, fire-starting fuels now in the cooler, wetter months, we can prevent future fires before they have a chance to spark.

Ron Wyden, a Democrat, represents Oregon in the U.S. Senate.



Ron Wyden

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Let's come together and rebuild our society with a common social morality

It's amazing to me the depths to which society has sunk in recent decades.

Discourse, humanity, civility, respect ... all societal traits that are withering and dying, victims of the elimination of a common social morality. So many are committed to the idea that each person is a moral island. Such thinking dissolves the bonds of a society. Without a common social morality, we're all just drifting alone, instinctively clinging to any whose moral values mirror our own, transforming society into warring tribes.

It seems when I was a child I might see a relationship end, perhaps with some hard feelings but people would remain civil toward one another.

Now everything seems to mandatorily become a melodramatic production and bitter feud. And now not just in divorce at the end of a marriage, but at the end of dating relationships as well. Children have studied the bitter divorces of adults and replicated them in their own relationships.

Too few remember that the human being possesses three areas of health in need of constant maintenance, sustenance and care: physical health, mental health, and spiritual health. If one suffers, it drags the other two down with it.

This used to be common knowledge taught in health classes. Now children are instead taught how to procreate without consequence.

The human race needs and desires a return to civil society. And the only way this will ever happen is if individuals become more mindful of their health and sustain all three areas.

Rebuild.

Mark Elfering
Hermiston

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Please contact the editor at editor@hermistonherald.com or call (541) 564-4533 with issues about this policy or to report errors.

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No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. The Hermiston Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content.

Letters must be original and signed by the writer or writers. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. Only the letter writer's name and city of residence will be published.

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