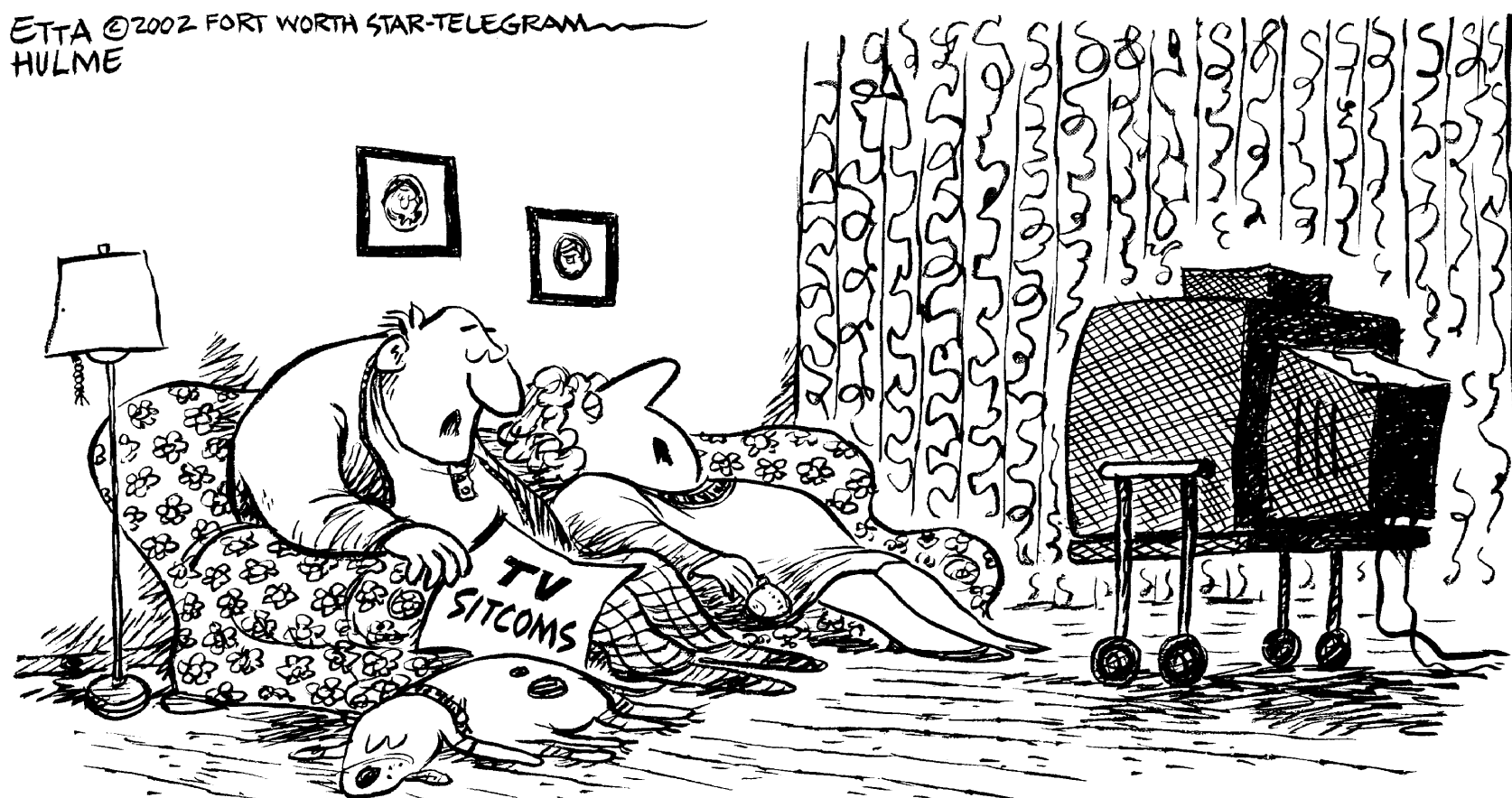


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RESEARCHERS DISCOVER A SAFE INCAPACITATING AGENT WHICH PUTS PEOPLE TO SLEEP QUICKLY ~

Life seems to be passing too quickly

I don't know about you, but for me, all too quickly, life is passing away. Oh, I'm not in immediate danger of dying, but after all, we're all dying.

People are always talking about senior citizens: some are happy to be seniors ("considering the alternative," they say) and others are complaining about those who have aged (some well, some not so well).

So I thought I'd offer the following thoughts by an unknown author to all:

"Senior citizens are constantly being criticized for every conceivable deficiency of the modern world, real or imaginary. We know we are supposed to take responsibility for all we have done and not blame others. But, upon reflection, we would like to point out that it was NOT the senior citizens who took:

- The melody out of music,
- The pride out of appearance,
- The romance out of marriage,
- The responsibility out of parenthood,
- The togetherness out of the family,



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The learning out of education,
The service out of patriotism,
The religion out of school,
The Golden Rule from rulers,
The nativity scene out of cities,
The civility out of behavior,
The refinement out of language,
The dedication out of employment,
The prudence out of spending, or
The ambition out of achievement,
And we certainly are NOT the ones who eliminated patience and tolerance from personal relationships and interactions with others!!!"

Well, as I read all those things, it seems pretty obvious they were written by a Senior Citizen. We "aging" people would like to think our music made

more sense (but how about "Cement Mixer. Putty. Putty" and "Sh-boom, Sh-boom"?), that we kept the world safe for democracy (even when we now don't bother to vote), lived sensible and wonderfully-tolerant lives (but hold a grudge against some minister we had as young adults), and that we have terrific inter-personal relationship skills, but I wonder.

Maybe we could hear the words to our favorite songs.

Maybe we were loyal to our jobs, but employers our ages are now laying off thousands.

We may have had a greater sense of patriotism, but maybe we downplayed America by giving our children too many material things.

We may have (as a group) tolerated more in our marriages and shied away from divorce more than the younger people.

But I know some pretty crusty, cantankerous old people and some that seem pretty angry at something or other.

Maybe they're just jealous of the lifestyles the young people insist on having. Who knows?

Maybe they're just angry that life went by so fast.

I confess: I am a big phony

Everyday it seems that the telephone company comes up with some new service designed specifically to get more money out of me. They know I'll buy anything — Call Waiting, Caller ID, Call Forwarding, Conference Calling, Automatic Redial and Speed Dialing — I've got it all.

And I wonder, how did I ever live without them? Oh yeah, I forgot, I've never made a conference call in my life. I've never forwarded a call to anyone. Haven't got a clue as to how I would go about it. Somebody's Caller ID would probably block it anyway. But it's a great comfort to know I could forward a call if I wanted to. I could have used the Automatic Redial last month when I called my sister, but I forgot I had it. It turns out she had Automatic Missed Call and got back to me right away, so it all worked out in the end.

The phone company says a lot of these services are free. My basic bill is \$24 a month. It used to be \$18. But the extras are free. Or \$6 a month, depending on whose normal acceptable accounting practices you use. If they can get 200 million customers to spend another 75 cents a month for some new



jim
mullen

• the village idiot

service, their CEO can buy an even bigger mansion and get his company to pay for a Manhattan apartment he can live in for free for the rest of his life even after he's left the company. Or they could lower your bill. Which one will happen first do you think?

With that much money out there, they're working on new services even as you read this. Soon you'll be offered things like:

— "Caller Drop." Unlike Call Waiting, there is no annoying beep while you're on the phone. It electronically hangs up on whomever you are talking to and lets the next caller through. You don't have to say, "I'll get back to you," or "Let me take this call." It gets rid of the first call automatically

for only an extra dollar a month. If you want only your most important calls dropped and at the worst possible time, ask for Caller Drop Extra.

— "Just Checking." Phone hasn't rung in quite a while? Why worry that it may not be working, that you may be missing important calls. For pennies a day (150 of them), they will automatically ring your phone at random times up to 10 times each 24 hours to make sure your bell is working. Add \$2 a month to block "Just Checking" between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

— Who Needs Enemies With Friends Like This Plan. Give the phone company the names of five people you really don't like and they'll have their most obnoxious telemarketer call them three times a day for a solid month. Be sure to tell them what time your "friends" eat dinner and what time they'll usually be in bed so they can make sure to call them at the most inconvenient time. For an extra monthly charge, they'll give their phone number to both major political parties and the local public television station and tell them your "friends" have made phone contributions before.

— "Wrong Number Speed Dialing." Stop wasting your time dialing random wrong numbers. Dial *55 and let the phone company dial a wrong number for you. It's easy, it's simple and best yet, use Wrong Number Speed Dialing during off-peak hours and you'll get the biggest savings. Use it often and save.

Jim Mullen is the author of "It Takes A Village Idiot: A Memoir of Life After the City" (Simon and Schuster, 2001). He also contributes regularly to Entertainment Weekly, where he can be reached at jim_mullen@ew.com

City should keep trash system

To the Editor:

Goodland has a new problem so it seems, The Goodland trash issue has many citizens aroused. The two city commissioners who say "We aren't in the trash business," are quite wrong. They should step aside and let someone qualified fill the chairs.

The present trash system between Sherman County and Goodland is working fine.

Sherman County should not take over the trash collection in Goodland. Why? These are two different local governments.

Would anyone think Sherman County should take over the snow removal and street repair in Goodland also?

From the information I have gathered from a reliable source, Sherman County could carry on



from our
readers

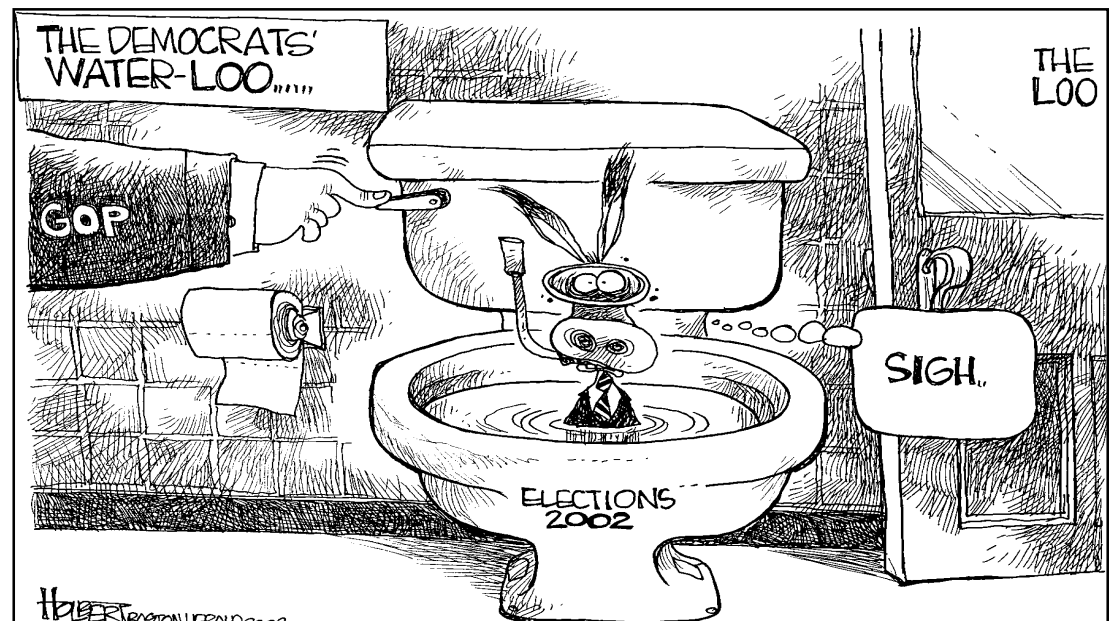
• to the editor

the landfill on their own without the tipping fee from Goodland and with the tipping fee from other close by counties, would do quite well.

Sherman County commissioners should not sign a very complicated agreement with future headaches, just to solve Goodland's feud.

We have one, maybe two County Commissioners that will stand firm.

Lloyd Harden
Goodland



berry's world



"IGNORE HIM. HE'S JUST TRYING TO GET ATTENTION."

The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

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Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nwkansas.com

The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$25; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$79. Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. By mail daily in Kansas, Colorado: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

Incorporating:
**The Sherman
County Herald**
Founded by Thomas McCants
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