

## Our City

A week ago last Sunday I was taking my dogs for a walk out to the Willow Bay trail. As I turned onto Fort Hall I saw standing water from of the old Larson Paint store to Impressions and Designs. In the small pond a lady was trying to get the water to drain down a clogged storm drain. As she worked in the mess, the cretin driving in front of me sped up and drove through the middle of the pond drenching the lady. I can't write what I said, but cretin minus the colorful adjectives and adverbs fits.

Water was nearly at the door of her salon as she worked to fortify against damage with sand bags. As I stopped midway into the pond to talk to her, another cretin drove by drenching my car and her yet again. The storm drain at issue is one of our down-up-drains; they clog and don't drain typically when the up-drain freezes, which was the case there on Fort Hall. As I talked to her, Mark Scherer from our Street Department stopped across the street on Tyler and began chipping away at the frozen up-drain. I had called Superintendent Daren Dahlke moments before and he showed up at the scene with the right tools for the job; shortly thereafter water began to flow and flooding on Fort Hall was avoided.

The dichotomy between what Mark Scherer voluntarily did and the cretins who choose to drive by and exacerbate the problem is stark in my mind. In a community where so many selflessly give to and help others in need, there remain a few who exhibit no sense of compassion. I suppose the surprising thing is it's the cretins I feel sorry for. I am glad they are a small minority. To those inclined to help others, once again thank you for your service.

Unwittingly I suspect as flooding continued to get worse on Monday and Tuesday of last week our waste water superintendent Pete Cortez noticed a spike above normal inflows during such conditions at the waste water treatment plant. As he investigated, he found that some folks were pumping storm water directly into city sewer drains which is in direct violation of federal and state environmental law and causes serious problems at the treatment plant, not to mention the fines that could be accrued by the city for such acts. I understand the need to evacuate storm water but PLEASE don't use the city sewer lines to do it.

It is difficult to predict whether or not we are through the worst of the runoff and flooding. With snow pack and water content in Snake River basin above 150 percent I think probably not; especially for properties located along any free flowing water ways. Those living here in town in areas where drainage has traditionally been a worry are probably not out of the woods yet either, as it is only mid-February. More rain with daytime temperatures in the mid-40s is expected through the latter half of this week and into next. Hopefully the warmer temperatures will allow the ground to thaw giving the water someplace to go other than down foundation walls and our city streets and gutters.

As I walked the dogs in the wee hours this morning the streets were bare of snow while most sidewalks remain inaccessible. Piles of snow remain around cars that haven't been moved in months and over storm drains where it was pushed and piled all winter. While the piles can't typically be avoided in a winter like this, there is little excuse for the cars that never move. I had hoped that the newly revised parking ordinance would help alleviate the problem and it has to a degree; but still some are insistent that they store their private property on the public

street making snow removal and drainage in some areas impossible. Police Chief Wilkinson and I will be bringing yet another revision to the parking ordinance to the City Council in the next few months. I feel like I need to apologize for asking folks to do the right thing, but then most of you are doing that willingly anyway and no apology is needed. So, I thank you instead for doing your part in making American Falls the best place to live.

Until next week...