

The news today is rife with exotic things like fire and water (~~or lack of it in the form of a drought~~), and lion hunters.

First: the wildfires and drought. Most are painfully aware that California is in a severe drought. I have never seen the reservoirs of the ~~middle San Joaquin~~ <sup>Central</sup> Valley so low, and I have lived long enough to see them pretty low ~~the~~ past 60 plus years. While there is nothing we can do to end the drought, there is something we can do while in drought: conserve water. I notice a lot of lawns are pretty brown throughout the state and especially in our community. Lawns are pretty, but not essential to life. I am glad to read that a recent poll shows that over 2/3's of Americans believe agriculture should be at the front of the line when the water spigot is turned on. This shows a lot of common sense because we can live without many things we deem so important: like green lawns, pretty gardens and swimming pools. But water is vital to life—especially the production of food. ~~Hey, it's nice to keep the rivers flowing and the fish thriving, but drought is a natural cycle of nature and the dams were created to divert water from the ocean to the ground so that crops could be raised.~~ Apart from agriculture we would soon starve. Let's all conserve, but the water that remains, must first flow to the farmer and their crops.

Now, my thoughts about Lion hunters. I notice there has been plenty of news in the paper about animals. Butch and Oscar are canines whose picture is on the front page of the Times Standard: the headline reads: "County animal shelter reaching full capacity." Overleaf, there is a full-page ad w/ pic<sup>ture</sup> of beautiful wild cat that says "We are all Cecil." "End bobcat trapping in California," sponsored by the Humane Society. I am glad that we generally treat animals well in our country. I've been in many countries where there is no humane society: where animals run wild, diseased and skinny through most of the streets. It feels bad! Then there are those who love to kill animals for the sport of it. OK, boys will be boys and the deer population does need to be thinned out each fall. But I do believe the male instinct for killing needs to be properly channeled. There is something distasteful about men who love to go kill exotic animals in far away places so they can hang the animal heads in their trophy rooms. The dentist from Minnesota who paid \$50,000 to shoot ~~a lion named~~ <sup>at</sup> Cecil in Zimbabwe National Park last week has raised the ire of millions around the globe. I understand his life has been threatened and his practice closed; I don't endorse violence as a good solution to violence. But I am very glad that people are angry about the gratuitous killing of the King of Beasts by a man who is seeking cheap thrills by killing this rare and beautiful animal. But, he protests, "The kill was done legally and according to the rules." Is it not amazing how much people will bend the rules for you if you give them \$50,000! Besides, just because something is legal does not make it ethical. Charges are being brought against Dr. Palmer and I am glad: not that it will save Cecil. But it might save Cecil's pride.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment