Cartoon interpretation by Franziska Lange

Lifeguard shortage

This cartoon by Bob Englehart was published by Cagle Cartoons. It's about the staff shortage that has an effect on all kinds of jobs, in this case lifeguards.

The cartoon shows a beach scene. There's yellow sand in the foreground and the blue sea underneath a cloudless blue sky in the background. Two men are standing in the middle of the cartoon, right next to a lifeguard perch to which a red and white lifebelt is tied with a rope. The perch also has a sign on it that reads "Lifeguard shortage". The man on the left is wearing a red baseball cap, sunglasses, a red T-shirt, black shorts and black sandals. He has a whistle on a chain around his neck and a clipboard under his arm. The red colour of his T-shirt and cap marks him as a lifeguard. There's an old man standing next to him in a stooping posture. He is wearing an orange T-shirt, green shorts and black sandals. The old man has lots of wrinkles and is leaning on a walking stick. He is smiling and looking up at the young man, who asks him, "Do you know how to swim?"

The topic of the cartoon is the staff shortage across many industries and professions. Because of the pandemic, many people switched jobs and now work somewhere else. Employers have problems finding staff, just like the lifeguard in the cartoon. The lifeguard is so desperate, he is even considering an old man who is obviously unsuitable for the job – he has problems walking and probably doesn't have the strength to save swimmers in time. But because it is difficult to find people for the job, the lifeguard is even willing to hire him.

The cartoonist shows how bad the situation is in a light-hearted way. That the lifeguard even considers the old man is funny, though I feel bad for laughing at the old man because he seems quite eager to join the team. And when you think of all the staff that is missing in important jobs, it's not so funny after all.

Hinweis: Die Zugangsdaten zu Ihrem persönlichen Abo dürfen Sie nicht an Dritte weitergeben.

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