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OTHER VIEWS



File photo
Frank Harkenrider, at the time a Hermiston City Councilor, represents the Desert Shriners on a float in the Stanfield Fourth of July parade.

Remembering 'Harkie'

A truly full life is something like a play. And a quality production includes an extraordinary cast of characters — some serious and some colorful.

Among the most interesting characters on my life's stage has been my friend Frank Harkenrider, the irrepressible Hermiston icon who died this week at the age of 90.

I last saw Harkie several months ago at the groundbreaking for the new senior citizens center in Hermiston — a facility for which he worked tirelessly and that appropriately will bear his name. At the ceremony he was frail and wrapped in a blanket to stave off the cold winds blowing across the site, but he appeared clearly pleased to be present.

As the ceremony came to a close, he summoned the strength to stand up briefly for a quick photo session. He stayed long enough to greet attendees before being whisked off. I thought at the time how fortunate it was that he could be present for the initial stage of construction because there was a chance he would not see the project through to its completion. Sadly, my concerns were reality.

Frank Harkenrider was both a long-time businessman and a tireless public servant whose record of public service spanned more than half a century. As noted in an earlier article, he saw the population of Hermiston grow from 800 to 17,000 — a fact he shared frequently as part of his repertoire of stories about the success of the community he embraced with every ounce of his being.

In the course of its journey from a dusty village of 800, Hermiston has had the good fortune of being home to a collection of visionaries with the wisdom, energy and foresight to lay the foundation for what would ultimately become an economic powerhouse that today is both Eastern Oregon's largest community and one of the fastest growing cities in the state.

Having been in leadership positions that made him an integral part of critical decisions and benchmarks in that remarkable saga will serve as Harkie's legacy. At a time in our history when the motives and agenda of many elected officials is being called into question, it is refreshing to pause and remember the contributions of an individual whose motives and agenda were never in doubt. While many public officials are guided by opinion polls, Harkie was long on opinion and short on polls. The term operating with the courage of one's conviction is often used loosely. This gentleman invented it.

While he occupied a role in the community often filled by someone with a large home in a fancy neighborhood, Frank and Beverly have lived for years in a modest dwelling not far from



GEORGE MURDOCK
Comment

Hermiston High School. He wasn't a man preoccupied with image. Perhaps this was part of the reason why he seemed to have his finger on the pulse of the community and reflected a genuine understanding and appreciation for the daily lives of those he was regularly-elected to represent.

When I was named editor and publisher of the *East Oregonian*, the first person to contact me was

Harkie. He contacted me many times thereafter but always called from the *EO* offices in Hermiston where there was a direct line that saved long distance charges. I was always happy to hear from him because anyone who writes a column needs to know unique characters in order to get ideas. I got enough stories from Harkie that he could have been the feature every week.

Some of the most amazing tales surrounded his athletic career as both an undersized Division I recruit and then as a Division I water boy who once delayed the start of a major college football game because he accidentally turned the water wagon over on the 50-yard-line.

He made many friends with his oil business, including the late Don Hawkins of Pendleton. Much of their banter surrounded Buckaroo-Bulldog athletics.

One time Harkie suggested he would like to come to Pendleton so I could take him and the Deacon to lunch at Hamley's for a discussion of old times. Somewhere around 3 p.m. I began to wonder if we were also going to have dinner.

One of his greatest loves was the melon fest he invented in order to acquaint the citizens of Portland with both Hermiston and its trademark products. I had the pleasure of accompanying Harkie and Mayor Bob on several such ventures.

One time the two of them brought a pickup load of melons to the *East Oregonian* for distribution to the staff. I told him I thought that effort was intended to remind Portland about the existence of Hermiston. Without missing a beat he said "it's also good to remind the *EO* of the same thing."

One morning during my tenure at the newspaper, I called the house and asked to speak to Frank. Bev, his wife of six decades, said he was out opening up Main Street in Hermiston for the day — just like he does every morning. His stops always included Hermiston Drug and Hale's with another one or two thrown in from time to time.

I'm not quite sure what the daily routine looks like in heaven, but if there is a downtown that needs opening up every morning, there's no doubt in my mind who will be doing it.

George Murdock is a Umatilla County Commissioner.

YOUR VIEWS

Memories of the late, great Frank Harkenrider

Frank Harkenrider was a gem! Forty years ago my husband Gary and I were newlyweds, and we needed to sell a piece of property Gary owned that required a city variance, so that we

could buy or build our own home. At the city council meeting I will never forget Frank telling the rest of the council to get that variance passed so these young folks could get on with their lives. What a sweetheart, and what a character.

Marilyn Stolz
Hermiston

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a phone number. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



OTHER VIEWS

When the White House lies about you

Last week the White House told a lie. It was a small lie and, given the epic scale of this administration's mendacity, a trivial one. It just happened to be about me.

On Thursday I interviewed CIA Director Mike Pompeo on a public stage at the Aspen Security Forum. We covered everything from Russian meddling in the U.S. election to the war in Syria and the nuclear deal with Iran. The director also broke some policy ground with a veiled suggestion that the administration might pursue regime change in North Korea.

There was one sour moment. Midway through the interview, Pompeo abruptly slammed *The New York Times* for publishing

the name last month of a senior covert CIA officer, calling the disclosure "unconscionable."

The line was met with audience applause. I said, "You're talking about Phil Agee," and then repeated the name. Pompeo replied, "I don't know that name," and the interview moved on.

My startled rejoinder was not a reference to the covert CIA officer unmasked by *The Times*, but rather a fumbled attempt to refer to the law governing such disclosures. Philip Agee, as Pompeo and everyone in the audience knew, was the infamous CIA officer who went rogue in the 1970s, wrote a tell-all memoir, and publicly identified the names of scores of CIA officers, front companies and foreign agents. His disclosures led Congress in 1982 to pass the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, aka the "Anti-Agee Act," which made it a federal crime to reveal the names of covert agents. Agee died in Havana in 2008.

If I could have a do-over, I would have recalled the name of the law itself, not the man after whom it was informally named. I might have asked Pompeo why the government didn't just put the law to the constitutional test by suing *The Times*.

L'esprit de l'escalier: I plead guilty. What I didn't do is disclose the name of any covert officer — nor would I have, since I disagree with *The Times'* decision to publish it. So it came as a bad surprise when, the following morning, Dan Scavino, the White House director of social media, tweeted that I had.

"CIA Dir Pompeo calls out @NYTimes for publishing name of an UNDERCOVER CIA agent," he wrote on his official Twitter account, adding, "Just as disgraceful? @BretStephensNYT REPEATS name 2x's!" He also posted a brief clip of the exchange — but muted my voice when I mentioned Agee.

This was nasty, manipulated and false, but it wasn't necessarily a lie. If Scavino had never heard of Agee, didn't know the name of the CIA officer whose name was published by *The Times* and didn't bother to fact check before tweeting, he might have inferred from my reply that I had indeed done what he alleged.

That's a plausible surmise about a White



BRET STEPHENS
Comment

House where the line between idiocy and malice isn't always clear.

To give Scavino the benefit of the doubt, I asked the CIA spokesman to set him straight. I also rebutted his claim on Twitter, emailed and left messages with him on his private number, and wrote the new communications director, Anthony Scaramucci, at his personal email address.

No acknowledgment. No response. The tweet has not been deleted. The CIA has not publicly corrected the record.

The White House is knowingly allowing Scavino's falsehood to stand. That's called lying — which, as Pompeo might say, is "unconscionable."

The White House is knowingly allowing a falsehood to stand.

So what's new, you ask? Well, not much, at least if you're comfortable with a political dispensation in which a senior White House official can stonewall without compunction and expect everyone else to yawn

and shrug. Every administration has a few sulfuric personalities. This one bubbles over and erupts with them, like a fetid geyser at Yellowstone.

Nor is it new that Scavino's attack is also part of a broader White House effort to demonize *The New York Times*. Also in Aspen, Gen. Tony Thomas, head of the Special Operations Command, alleged in an interview that an effort to kill the Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi failed on account of a leak to "a prominent national newspaper" — no prizes for guessing the paper he had in mind.

The general's claim was also dubious, at least as far as *The Times* was concerned. Taken with Pompeo's outburst and Scavino's lie, it raises the question of whether normally apolitical figures aren't being conscripted into Trump's war on the press. That's a worrying thought for institutions, like the CIA, that are supposed to remain above the fray to preserve public trust.

Here's what worries me more: One judges a liar less by the whoppers he tells than by the fibs — by his willingness to live outside the truth even when the advantages of doing so are almost negligible. Scavino's failure to correct the record on something as minute as my exchange with Pompeo suggests he'll lie about anything. And this is the guy who stands at the heart of the Trump administration's social media operation — the most demagogic enterprise of our time.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel has already warned Scavino that he violated the 1939 Hatch Act in April by engaging in "prohibited political activity." If Anthony Scaramucci is serious about cleaning house in his new shop, dismissing Scavino should be a priority. I'll take it instead of the apology I'm still owed.

Bret Stephens won a Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 2013. He began working as a columnist at *The New York Times* in April.

