

LIBRARIAN: Helping kids love reading

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volunteering in classrooms when she can, and serving on the boards of organizations such as the ARC and Special Olympics, where her daughter Jillian is an athlete.

Smalley recalled some of the highlights and shifts throughout her career. She has stayed in contact with some of her students, recalling one girl in the first class she ever taught, who is now a teacher herself.

"She would send me postcards from exotic locales where she was teaching," Smalley said, picking up a photo of the woman teaching in the Philippines. "One of the cool things is having someone like that who I stay in touch with."

In the mid-1990s, after teaching everything from first through sixth grade at several different schools, Smalley said her principal told her about an opening as the librarian at Highland Hills. She had recently had a baby, and after a stint

teaching part-time, she was ready to go back to a full-time position.

"I decided it was probably a good fit for me," she said.

Despite the steep learning curve, Smalley said she enjoyed the new role, working with all grade levels and focusing on teaching kids the proper ways to use library resources.

As schools dealt with budget cuts and changes, she found herself at different schools, or splitting her time at two different schools.

In the late 2000s when the recession hit, the district laid off all but two of the district's librarians — one for the secondary schools, and one for all five elementary schools. Smalley said her seniority in the district meant she got to keep her job.

But there were challenges — having to establish relationships at each building, and figure out the unique needs of different schools with limited time was tough, Smalley said.

"You would think five days a week and five schools sounds real good," Smalley said. "But you have holidays, Wednesday early release. In this position, you flow where you need to go."

She said she will sometimes find herself at all five schools in one day, and her tasks have shifted from the frequent lessons she was able to do when she was just at one school.

"They'd get instructions on book selection, the Dewey Decimal system, how to search for books," Smalley said. "When I was at one building, I felt like the kids would exit with some skills. But now it's impossible to give that level of instruction — now it's instruction at the point of need."

Smalley credited library assistants and teachers with stepping in to fill some of the instruction on how to use library services. The bulk of her time now goes to a few other things: accelerated reading testing, facilitating the Battle of the Books pro-

gram, and some inventory and library management.

But she said she still tries to find as much time as possible to work one-on-one with students.

"A teacher may come to me and say they have a kid that's really not enjoying reading," she said. Smalley enjoys helping those students find books and subjects that interest them.

She noted the major changes in technology since she started working in libraries, from digitizing catalogs to bringing in computers with educational programs.

"We needed to make sure computers are tools, not toys," she said.

Smalley said she's happy to pass the baton to her successor, Megan Reeve, who currently teaches in the Hermiston School District.

"I've worked with her, and she's very supportive of literacy, of reading and of Battle of the Books," she said. "I'm very excited about her carrying on the traditions."



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Kristi Smalley holds her lanyard with keys to all of the libraries she is in charge for the Hermiston School District.

MACGREGOR: Judge says jail will be a big deterrent

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for the state to reduce the convictions to misdemeanors if MacGregor completes probation.

Bendixsen told the court MacGregor could have difficulty finding a job, so she may need more than two years to pay back Tonya's House. Chief deputy prosecutor Jaelyn Jenkins conferred with Bendixsen for a moment and asked the judge to hold off on setting restitution for 90 days. She said MacGregor may have paid some money, and the state needs an accurate accounting. Lieuellen agreed.

MacGregor stood to face the bench while Lieuellen read each charge out loud and asked how she pleaded. MacGregor each time said, "I plead guilty, your honor."

The judge invited Casey White-Zollman, chair of the Tonya's House board, and ElRae Wells, founder of Tonya's House, to speak before he handed down the sentence.

White-Zollman read from a statement and said the board hired and entrusted MacGregor to con-

tinue Tonya's House, but instead, "She stole funds that were supposed to aid in providing a safe and stable place to live for these vulnerable young ladies."

The board hopes MacGregor "learns a hard lesson from her selfish and despicable actions," White-Zollman continued, and hopes "she will never again be entrusted with managing any funds but her own personal ones."

Wells also read a statement. Tonya's House was "a gift from God to help Pendleton's daughters who were homeless," she said, and the nonprofit meant girls would not have to get pregnant, break the law to get help, nor "have to have sex with someone so they would have a place to sleep."

Wells told the court MacGregor stole more than money, she "stole the good futures of Pendleton's daughters."

"Her shame," Wells said, "should know no end."

May God forgive MacGregor, Wells concluded, and maybe when her anger cools, she will be able to forgive her also.

Jenkins said the plea bargain

was a fair resolution, and Bendixsen agreed. But Lieuellen asked if MacGregor spent any time in jail and if the thefts led to the demise of Tonya's House.

Jenkins confirmed MacGregor had not been in jail, and White-Zollman told Lieuellen the organization had been struggling with financial support, but what MacGregor did "was the nail in the coffin."

Lieuellen took a sympathetic tone with MacGregor, who cried during the proceeding. The judge said he could see this touched her, and maybe she got into some financial trouble, took funds and thought she could pay it back later. But the circumstances snowballed, he said, and her actions closed Tonya's House.

Per the plea deal, MacGregor has to write a letter of apology to the Tonya's House board. Lieuellen ordered her to write a second letter of apology to the girls who will never benefit from Tonya's House.

Rather than more fines, Lieuellen said he wanted MacGregor to repay what she owes. He also said

she needed to spend a day or two in the in the Umatilla County Jail.

MacGregor swayed when she heard that.

Long-time criminals get used to going to jail, Lieuellen said, but "for you, I think it's going to be a big deterrent."

Lieuellen decided MacGregor would stay the night and get out at noon Friday. He told her to make whatever arrangements she needed because she was going to jail right from court. Bendixsen asked how long she had.

"Minutes," the judge replied.

A courthouse deputy entered and told MacGregor to place her hands in front of her. He gently clicked handcuffs around her wrists and led her from court to a nearby holding cell.

After the plea hearing, White-Zollman said the second letter of apology will allow MacGregor to realize what she has done, and the order to send her to jail speaks to how valuable Tonya's House was.

White-Zollman said Thursday was exactly one year since the board closed Tonya's House.

EOT: Looking to add employees and customers

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"Our intent is to look at opportunities to grow the business," he said.

Without naming specific locations, he said they are considering areas in adjacent counties on both sides of the river.

"Anything east of the Cascades in Oregon and in Washington is fair game," he said.

He said they will likely see employee growth with that expansion.

Eastern Oregon Telecom currently has about 3,500 customers, and covers area from Tower Road, west of Boardman, to Pendleton. They also provide service to some areas in Washington.

They have been in a new building, on 2180 SE Kelli Blvd., Hermiston, for a month, and have an open house on June 14.

EOT was formed in 1999, and was initially owned by UEC, Douglas Electric Cooperative, four telephone cooperatives and a telecommunications consulting firm. Initially offering telephone services, EOT expanded to high-speed internet in 2003.

BLOGGERS: Creating Facebook posts are collaborative efforts in the department

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arm of the "Stanfield Police Department" does reach into Hermiston! Travis was captured AND ARRESTED while parked in Hermiston sitting in his car by our very own Officer Marcum.

And if you're reading this, Travis's little buddy, feel free to take advantage of the Turn Yourself In Tuesday special our department is having today. Free ride to Pendleton with room and board included for your visit! No need to call for reservations! Just stop in."

The police department's post prompted more than 200 shares to other Facebook pages and more than 400 comments.

Landon during a phone interview Thursday said the Facebook post caught him off guard.

Yes, Landon said, officer Cody Marcum arrested him, but the officer was professional throughout, processed him at the Stanfield Police Department and released him. Landon said Marcum even gave him a ride back into Hermiston. Then came the police department's post, along with a jail house mugshot from four years ago.

"I just don't think it's right," Landon said. "I feel like it's OK for police to use social media to search for information, but to publicly shame someone — I feel it just isn't right."

Landon said he did not want to talk much about the criminal accusations. He said he gave a ride to someone and did not know the

person stashed stolen goods in his car.

"I basically had nothing to do with it," he said.

In spite of friends telling him to not read the Facebook comments, Landon said he does and feels compelled to defend himself — which he did on the Stanfield Police post. But he said he has no answer for how to deal with the social media storm, and it now it is affecting and embarrassing his family.

Stanfield is such a small town, he said, and living there as a gay man was hard enough. The Facebook post has only made life more difficult, so he said he recently took off for a fresh start in Portland. Besides, Landon said, he long wanted to live in a bigger city.

State court records show he has yet to face any charges stemming from this arrest, but the Wasco County District Attorney's Office filed a misdemeanor charge Thursday accusing Landon of possessing heroin on Tuesday. He has to appear in court there Monday for the arraignment. Landon said the charge is bunk and based on a police finding foil he had previously used for smoking drugs.

"I'm on day six of being clean," he said.

Around 60 percent of the comments expressed support for the Stanfield Police Department, Marcum's arrest of Landon or the post itself. Bruce Lewis' post reflected the majority view: "Landed Landon, fantastic. Now grab that Hooligan. None of us enjoy evil doers

shopping in our vehicles. Well done SPD. Woo Hoo!"

Tiffany Lynn summed up a lot of the concerns of the minority: "While funny...I believe public humiliation, like the Puritans used, falls under cruel and unusual punishment. And I agree with the previous comment that it is unprofessional. Also whatever happen to innocent until proven guilty? Bigger mistakes have been made. And I seriously doubt everyone commenting is perfect, let alone has a perfect record."

Stanfield police officer Joyce Wright published the post. She said the commenters supporting the department tend to be from Stanfield and Echo, where Stanfield police provide services, while the negative posts are coming from outsiders, even from other states.

Creating Facebook posts are collaborative efforts in the department, she said. Typically an officer drafts a post then two more staff check it for obvious errors and to make sure it makes sense. Wright said Facebook allows the department to show its good work, ranging from visiting local classrooms to arresting suspected criminals. She said the department only posts arrests of adults and only posts public information. And sometimes officers try to add some humor, she said, but "we don't do it with the intent of publicly shaming anyone."

Social media also can help solve crimes. She said

people view posts and provide tips to police, which is happening in this case. Stanfield police, however, have yet to arrest the person Landon was with.

Wright also said the department's social media guidelines follow those of the Hermiston Police Department, which has used ironic humor in its Facebook posts.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said social media can be a good tool or a slippery slope when police get too cute.

"I'll openly admit I pushed the envelope over the years in news releases," he said, recounting in 2012 when he described a suspect as a "scourge to society." That phrase landed the story in the *Daily Mail* newspaper.

So in January, when he had the department roll out its more aggressive use of Facebook, he said he built in some firewalls. Edmiston is not an administrator of the page.

He said he is not yet comfortable enough with social media, so those duties fall to the lieutenant and two captains. They also ask Edmiston to weigh in before posting statements that could cause a stir.

Before wading deeper into the social media stream, Edmiston said he checked to see what other departments did, particularly police in Kennewick and Pasco. Hermiston also looked at case law for what it can and can not do on social media. Banning comments or commenters, for example, is generally

a no-go for a public body's social media presence.

Hermiston often posts about arrests made and cases it's working, but Edmiston said the department does not seek to ridicule or humiliate anyone. The department includes mug shots of suspects. Edmiston said that helps cut down public records requests for the photos. News agencies instead can just take the image from the post. And the language in those posts matters.

"We have to be aware that in court, it comes down to guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, and people are innocent until proven guilty," he said. "It's important to say yes, even though we arrested this person, they are alleged to have committed the crime."

Stanfield City Manager Blair Larsen said he was "amazed at the response" the police post drew. And negative comments aside, he said "it's really hard for me at least to find anything wrong with it."

Larsen conceded it could be seen as public shaming, but the information is public and nothing in the post states Landon or the other person is guilty of any crime.

"We're not saying they're criminals," he said. "We're just saying this is the fact of what happened."

Larsen also defended the tone of the post. Police work is hard, often unrewarding and requires dealing with some of the worst parts of society, he said. Ao officers should take moments to lighten up. Larsen added he

does not see anything wrong with encouraging a suspect to turn themselves in.

Local defense attorney Kara Davis said police should be cautious about what they post on social media. Their statements can run the risk of contaminating potential jurors. But often by the time even a well-publicized case gets to trial, jurors don't remember Facebook comments.

Rather than the jury, Davis said the bigger issue is whether social media pressures someone with a good defense into taking a plea deal. Some defendants might see negative comments on Facebook, consider their case a lost cause and take an offer when they should not.

Larsen said government can interact with the public in so many ways, but no one reads a budget document by choice. The police department's social media post is a way for government to connect with citizens. Larsen also said he would talk with anyone who felt "truly offended" or wanted to hold conversations on improving the department's use of social media.

Wright said Stanfield police have been on Facebook since November, and with anything new, there's plenty to learn. That includes the realization that Facebook means local situations can become global in no time.

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