

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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Founded October 16, 1875

Tip of the hat, kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the growing partnership between the city of Hermiston and Hermiston School District.

A formalized facilities agreement was announced at this week’s city council meeting. Hermiston’s parks and recreation department will have access to the school district’s gyms without paying janitorial fees and the school district will make greater use of the city’s pool.

The latter program in particular should be applauded, as a pilot program at the beginning of the school year found 84 percent of second-graders can’t swim. It’s a vital skill, not just for survival but for fitness, and the city and schools should both encourage it.

Large entities like cities and school districts can greatly benefit from such agreements, but they can also be derailed if personal issues get in the way. We’re glad to see Team Larry (Fetter and Usher) working together to

make the relationship stronger.

There’s a valuable spirit of cooperation in the air, and we look forward to seeing where it goes from here.

A kick in the pants to the would-be poachers who took pot shots at a fake deer last week, and the poachers cited for killing deer on private property the week before.

Together, the reports show unsafe and illegal action for a sport that requires both. Hunters shooting out of their trucks, unaware of whose land they’re on, leaving the carcass to waste when approached by landowners.

Hunting is part of life in Eastern Oregon, and a few reckless bad apples shouldn’t ruin it for the rest of us.

We encourage anyone who sees such behavior to report the violation to TIP@state.or.us or 1-800-452-7888. There are cash and hunting preference points for those who want to uphold the rules.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Mekena Royer, right, talks to her level 1 swim class before taking to the pool Monday at the Hermiston Family Aquatic Center.

A tip of the hat to the Pendleton Police Department for seeking the grant to bring body cameras online.

Police Chief Stuart Roberts has often talked about the financial difficulty in bringing the cameras to a small department, and we can understand that. It’s more than just strapping a GoPro to an officer’s badge.

But we’re pleased that he pursued

the grant and underwent the training necessary to take that step. The cameras will make sure police are following procedures, but also protect them from false accusations.

It’s still going to take some city investment of money and training, but policing in the 21st century requires a greater level of accountability that this technology can provide. Pendleton police will be better for it.

Voters won’t forget Walden’s vote against pre-existing coverage protection

Is Greg Walden’s nose growing? It should be! In the Oct. 5 debate on KTVZ with Jamie McLeod-Skinner, he blatantly lied about his attempts to remove protections for people with pre-existing conditions.

McLeod-Skinner spelled out his record on this. Greg Walden was the principal architect of Trumpcare, the bill that would have removed protections to preexisting conditions that would have resulted in a loss of (or significantly more expensive) coverage for 1 in 4 Oregonians.

Trying to defend himself, Walden babbled that “the charges that have been leveled have been reviewed by the *Washington Post*, politicians have used them, they are Pinocchios, because pre-existing conditions continue to be protected under what we do.” Why yes, Greg, because your efforts to eliminate those protections have, fortunately, failed (so far).

Does Mr. Walden really think his constituents don’t remember that he has tried on many occasions to eliminate those protections? Does he think that just because he has failed in his attempts (so far), that we’ll give him a pass?

We support Jamie McLeod-Skinner.
Shirley and Martin Westfall
Pendleton

Murdock works to make every department better

We have known George Murdock, Donna and their family since he came to Pendleton nearly 20 years ago to serve as superintendent of our education service district. Over the years since, George has worn many hats, all of which entailed community involvement through listening, learning and leadership.

Those skills have enabled him as our county commissioner to spearhead numerous accomplishments in education, public safety, economic development, agriculture, ranching, county health department, mental health, transportation and drug court revival, as well as county budget leadership and middle management empowerment.

We would like to join with a multitude of our fellow constituents in voting to re-elect George Murdock as one of our county commissioners.

Dr. Jake and Cathy Cambier
Pendleton

Second district has stagnated under Walden

As the midterm elections approach, it is time to replace Greg Walden. Mr. Walden was once a capable representative, but as of late, he, like the party that he represents, has lost his way. Since he thinks

Why we left the Umatilla County Health Department

It saddens and frustrates us that our departures from Umatilla County are being held against George Murdock.

We can understand it would be easy to assume that our resignations from Umatilla County Public Health were due to issues with our liaison commissioner, George. Why else would there be so much turnover in department leadership?

While we cannot speak to why the most recent administrator left, we can speak to why we left.

For me, Meghan, it was earning potential and family. I had been with UCo Health for about two years when I got a call from Walla Walla’s director, he was retiring and thought I should apply. Thus, I talked to my husband, a native Walla Wallan, who had been driving Highway 11 weekly to care for my mother in-law. We figured if we were going to make another move, we’d better do it now, before the kids were in school and connected into social networks.

Of course, it was nice that the pay was higher, however cost of living in wine country is much higher. Overall, it was the right decision for our family.

Leaving Umatilla County Public Health was one of the hardest decisions I, Sarah, have made in my career. Ultimately my family and work-life balance were the reasons I chose to leave in 2014. My husband and I were hoping to have children and expand our family. During a time of rapid change in the health care world (implementation of the Affordable Care Act and Coordinated Care Organizations), I did not feel I could provide the time and dedication needed to lead the department in a new era. As a resident of Umatilla County, it was important to me that the individual tasked with leading the public health department was dedicated in a way I could not be at the time.

that his seat is safe and his re-election is guaranteed, his primary focus has been to raise campaign funds for himself and other members of his party by hosting lavish fundraisers attended by wealthy donors. In the meantime, the district that he represents remains economically stagnant, not basking in the economic upturn enjoyed by most Americans.

Mr. Walden pays lip service to his constituents and is rarely seen in the district. He attempts to make the residents of the district believe that he is working for us, but this is just a sham. He has never voted for a middle class tax cut and prides himself on being a fiscal conservative, yet

One thing is certain — those were the hardest conversations to have. Telling George, the county leadership team, the team at UCo Health, that we were leaving. He not only was our boss; he was a mentor, leader and a friend.

George believes in Umatilla County — more than anyone we know. His connections (social and professional) are what help him, and directors like us, get stuff done. He didn’t sit and wait around for things to happen. George was right there when we were recruiting Dr. Jon Hitzman to become our health officer. George was with us in meetings with InterMountain ESD when we developed the wellness nurse positions in Milton-Freewater, Echo, Umatilla, Helix and Athena-Weston. George was there to mull over ideas on what to do with our clinics, expand environmental health programs, and combine health and human services. George was always there; George is always there.

He has a heart for service leadership, integrity, and wisdom. Early on he instilled in us one of the best leadership principles we could have learned — always under-promise and over-deliver. George helped support us in our desire to be working moms, to have it all — there was no glass ceiling. When other career opportunities presented themselves, George supported our decisions, even offering letters of recommendation.

We voted for George Murdock back in 2014, we voted for him in May, and we will vote for him in November. Who better to take voting advice from than those who have worked closest to him?

Sarah Williams and Meghan DeBolt are previous directors of the Umatilla County Health Department. Williams was in the position from 2013-2014 and DeBolt from 2014-2016.

he readily voted for a tax bill that adds \$1.5 trillion to an already staggering national debt and offers significant tax relief to only a small percentage of the residents in our district.

He chairs the powerful congressional energy and commerce committee, yet refuses to place significant emphasis on the development of alternative energy sources, a burgeoning industry that might possibly provide economic opportunities to the district.

Mr. Walden’s opponent, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, is a strong, capable woman, highly educated and well-versed in the political process. She has taken it upon herself to

tirelessly travel to every corner of our vast district. She has tried her best to connect with all people in the district regardless of party affiliation and, most importantly, she has listened.

She understands that the majority of the people in the district are hurting and need some relief by just being presented with opportunities to better themselves and their communities. Ms. McLeod-Skinner has some reasonable and logical proposals to offer affordable health care and improved educational opportunities to the residents of the district.

Mark Petersen
Pendleton

Many thanks to ‘The Knights of Columbus’

I want to make the public aware of a wonderful organization called “The Knights of Columbus” and the fantastic things that they do for the people of Hermiston. This organization supports folks in need and is affiliated with Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church.

I was made aware of this organization through my neighbor, who is a member. I had approached him one afternoon to ask if he knew of anyone who might be willing to do some minor repair jobs around my house. Since I am an older single woman, it is difficult at times to find anyone to help me.

He told me to give him a little while and he would make a few calls. In about an hour or so, here came my neighbor Jerry and Mr. Mark Gomolski, who is also a member of “The Knights of Columbus.”

They spent about an hour or so walking through my home to see what needed to be done. I needed a new kitchen sink and a back door installed in my garage, along with some other minor things. I had already purchased everything in advance and just needed help with the installation. They agreed to come out the next Saturday to do the work.

I had to be away on Saturday to attend a family funeral and when I got home everything was done.

I was truly amazed at the wonderful job they did. They arrived early and came well prepared with their own tools. There were five great gentlemen who came to help me that day and I could not have gotten this done any other way. I felt free to leave them alone in my home and they accomplished everything I needed done.

Incidentally, Mark Gomolski is currently running for City Council and I would support him as a great candidate. He is a person who gets things done and helps people of the Hermiston community. We need people like him running for office.

I would like to thank Mark Gomolski, “The Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Church for coming to my aid at a very difficult time.

Bernadine Chamberlin
Hermiston

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