

FROM THE EDITOR

Decades of memories flowered in fair grounds

GARY L WEST
SHADES OF GRAY



It's almost time for the Umatilla County Fair and I am excited to be back home again for the fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo.

I have not been home for the fair and rodeo for many years, so it is particularly poignant to be back for the 100th anniversary edition of the fair and for the last fair and rodeo to be held at the fairgrounds in the middle of town.

Fair time was always my favorite time of year in my youth. After I grew up, went away to school and ventured further afield as part of my early journalism career, I got to experience other fairs in other counties in Oregon and California, but it was never quite the same experience. The other fairs, including the Oregon State Fair in Salem, just didn't seem as good somehow.

The reason no other fair has been able to live up to this fair in my mind is because the Umatilla County Fair was woven into the fabric of my memories as part of the tapestry of annual ritual.

Arguably, some of these other fairs were better by one or more subjective measures. Many were bigger, had bigger name entertainers and featured more exhibits. Bigger did not necessarily make them better. I couldn't put my finger on why, though, but I think I finally figured it out.

Those days spent at the Umatilla County Fair weren't just about the elephant ear confections or midway games or trinkets collected at the various commercial booths. It was about a time in life that can never be recaptured.

In my teens, fair time was filled with anticipation. It was something I looked forward to all summer, as did many of my peers. Some were in groups like 4-H and entered items to be judged in the fair.

But for me, it was often the first opportunity to see friends from school who I hadn't seen in months. I lived out in the country, as did many of them, and many of them worked on family farms over the summer. So, between the distances involved and people's summer obligations, summer was often an isolating time of year in those years before I had a car or a driver's license.

But each August, I always knew everyone would make time to spend some time at the fair.

My mom often volunteered to work in one of the commercial exhibit booths, so I helped her in the booth in exchange for a ride to town and admission to the fair.

Traipsing around the fairgrounds provided a way to renew school friendships and exhibit a little adolescent independence. Some years, I was captivated by the midway games, there was a brief fascination with some of the carnival rides and as my interest in photography grew, there was interest in the photo and art exhibits.

Mostly, though, fair time meant time with friends after a summer absence that seemed painfully long. It was, in many ways, one of the last hurrahs of each summer.

The reason no other fair has been able to live up to this fair in my mind is because the Umatilla County Fair was woven into the fabric of my memories as part of the tapestry of annual ritual.

This year feels a little like summers of my youth, filled with anticipation for the fair. Who will I see? What stories will we share? I've been home for a few months now and have had the opportunity to see many old friends and I am looking forward to seeing more familiar faces in a familiar place one last time, before the fair moves to its new home. I am also looking forward to meeting new people who I have not yet had the opportunity to talk with.

I'll be spending some time in the Hermiston Herald/East Oregonian booth along with coworkers. Come by and see us and chat for a bit.

Share your fair and rodeo photos using the hashtags #UmatillaCountyFair or #FarmCityProRodeo on Facebook and Twitter and show the world what makes the 100th anniversary fair and final rodeo in the downtown arena special for you. We may use some of the photos in the Aug. 19 edition of the Hermiston Herald.

In the meantime, I'll see you at the fair.

Gary L. West is editor of the Hermiston Herald and Hermiston editor for the East Oregonian. Reach him at gwest@hermistonherald.com or follow him on Twitter @GaryLWest or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/journalist.gwest.

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

2	5	7	1	4	9	6	3	8
9	3	8	6	5	2	7	1	4
1	6	4	8	7	3	2	9	5
4	1	5	7	6	8	3	2	9
6	2	9	3	1	5	8	4	7
7	8	3	9	2	4	5	6	1
3	9	2	5	8	1	4	7	6
8	4	6	2	9	7	1	5	3
5	7	1	4	3	6	9	8	2

DISCOVER

THE HERMISTON DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

JOIN US THURSDAY AUGUST 6 4:30-7:00PM

Check out Downtown and join in the fun! Refreshments, Passport Bonus, Discounts

Stop in the following businesses and enjoy the hospitality! Pick up a passport and get it marked at four or more businesses, then turn it in to enter a drawing!

- Alexander Daniel Jewelry Works • Bloomz
- Andee's Boutique • Defining Details • Goss Jewelers
- Hale's Restaurant • Hermiston Drug • Indulge • Rescrub
- Lucky Endz Gifts • Mailing Made Easy
- Nookie's Restaurant & Hermiston Brewing Co.
- The Pheasant Cafe & Lounge
- C&R Mercantile Co. • Country Gourmet & BBQ

PASSPORT

to Hermiston Downtown District

THANK YOU TO THE SUPPORTING MERCHANTS!

American Printing, Banner Bank, Home Town Mortgage Group, Kay C's Art & Collectibles, Premier Physical Therapy, East Oregonian, Hermiston Herald

In support of our downtown Hermiston Merchants!

HOME TOWN MORTGAGE GROUP

Melisa Webb NMLS #311680
Kim Arbogast NMLS #230847
Samantha Webb Loan officer NMLS #1210610

AMERICAN PACIFIC MORTGAGE

505 E. Main St., Suite A
Hermiston, OR 541-564-5900

NMLS #471758-1850
hermistonhomeloans.com

Discover your local print shop and enjoy color copies for

29¢ per side*

American Printing

Since 1985

541.567.8073

53 W Beebe Ave, Hermiston

*Some restrictions apply. Good on Discover Downtown Hermiston days only. See store for complete details.

INDULGE

- Home Decor
- Jewelry • Wine
- Candles

541-567-3733
158 E. Main St., Hermiston

Like us on Facebook!
facebook.com/indulgehomedecor

MAILING MADE EASY... @ MAIL OFFICE PLUS

Your Downtown Mailbox & Business Center

\$2.00 OFF any \$5.00 min. FAX

541-567-6351, Fax: 541-567-7672
242 E. Main Street, Hermiston
(Back Entrance on Hurlburt Avenue)

ALEXANDER DANIEL JEWELRY WORKS

Family Owned Independent Jeweler

- ~ Laser Welder ~ Eyeglass Frame Repair
- ~ Custom Designs & Restyling
- ~ Original & Custom Design
- ~ Free Cleaning & Inspections
- ~ All Repairs Done in House ~

10 YEARS IN HERMISTON • 30 YEARS EXPERIENCE

245 E. Main St., Ste C, Hermiston • Phone: 541-289-5001

Hours: Tues-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm • Se Habla Español • [adjewelryworks.com](#)

EAST OREGONIAN

SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES

211 S.E. Byers, Pendleton
541-966-0800
541-567-6211
[www.eastoregonian.com](#)

Hermiston Herald

Supporting Our Local Businesses

541-564-4530
800-522-0255

333 E. Main St., Hermiston, OR
[www.hermistonherald.com](#)

Lucky Endz Gifts

20% off Home Decor (seasonal)

239 E. Main Street • Hermiston
541-289-1112

25% off DENIM

Andee's Boutique

243-A East Main Street, Hermiston
(541) 567-5618

Discover Your Downtown!

Gifts • Cosmetics
Perfumes • Cards
Old Fashion Soda Fountain
Gift wrapping always a courtesy

HERMISTON DRUG & GIFT

"Where Old Friends Meet."

114 E. Main St. • Hermiston • 541-567-3072
Hours: Mon-Fri 8am-6pm • Sat 8am-3pm • Closed Sun

Kay C's Art & Collectibles

167 E. Main St., Hermiston • 541-289-1800

Estate liquidation service with the 'best cash payout'. We will either buy out your estate or conduct a sale for you. We guarantee you the HIGHEST \$\$ return over any other liquidator.

"We guarantee it."

Paying highest cash amount for gold jewelry, silver dollars, coins and silverware. We pay CASH!

Goss Family JEWELERS

Your Local Jeweler

20% off All Jewelry & Jewelry Repair

Phone: 541-786-8413
215 E. Main St., Ste. A
Hermiston, OR 97838

Hours:
Monday-Friday 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Think Local - Shop Downtown Hermiston