

# Most local news still depends on the newspaper

Herald staff still looking for feedback to keep making your paper better

This is National Newspaper Week. It is great to have a week that honors one's chosen career, but for those of us in the newspaper business, every week is newspaper week.

It consumes our lives, in good — and sometime not so good — ways. We do this, because we love it and want to help keep our neighbors informed about the things happening in our hometowns.

A newspaper serves many functions for a community. It informs, teaches, entertains, and sometimes antagonizes its readers. It marks milestones, like births, graduations, marriages and anniversaries. It's a place people turn in times of tragedy, whether a death in the family or a community calamity, like many Oregonians did last week during the tragic school shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg. It tells us where fun things are happening and who won the game at our alma mater. It tells us what's on sale at our favorite stores.

It's hard to be and do so many things for so many people. But that doesn't stop us from trying.

The Herald staff has long worked to be a newspaper you want to — and need to — read in order to be well informed about events in the greater Hermiston area. But for the past three months we have been actively making changes in how we work and present the news. It is a work in progress. We continue to tinker with the look of the paper, for example, but we are not convinced we've hit on the perfect formula. We live in a rapidly changing community in a rapidly changing world.

In many ways, the Hermiston Herald of today is a far superior newspaper to what it was when I last worked here more than 23 years ago. Technology makes it possible for us to run full color photos and advertisements on every page of the paper. We have a computer system that allows us to report news in print and online faster. In fact, there was no Internet, at least that we were aware of or had access to in 1992. We barely had email and we were still processing film to put photos in the paper.

But we've lost some things too. Most notably, we

don't have as many readers as we once had. People's connection to the paper is not as strong as it was in the years before Internet and cell phone technology gave everyone the ability to carry a mini computer with them. People don't need newspapers for the same things they used to need them for. Everything from weather to coupons, from comics to puzzles, from game scores to TV listings can be found on the phones most people carry.

But what can't be found as readily is local news from sources other than the Hermiston Herald or East Oregonian because no one else has as many journalists covering Hermiston and surrounding communities as we do.

What we do is still a great value. A subscriber can get a year of the Hermiston Herald in print, and unrestricted online access to all stories, including years of our online archives, for less than \$43 a year. That's probably about half the cost someone would pay for one month of cell phone service with a data plan or less than the cost of one month of cable TV. It's about what a family of four would pay to go to an evening showing of a movie at the local theater if you skipped the soft drinks, popcorn and other concessions.

We want to make sure you get even better value for your subscription dollar. That's why we will continue to make refinements to what we do in the months ahead. If you have thoughts on what you can't live without or don't need at all in your Hermiston Herald, please let us know. I suspect our comics pages may not have many loyal readers, for example, yet we spend two pages of space on it each week. If my suspicion is correct, we'd like to spend that space on more local stories and photos.

You can write me at editor@hermistonherald.com. We are also still looking for volunteers for a community advisory committee to help us decide how to make the Herald more relevant to the community in the 21st century.

In the meantime, thanks for reading and happy National Newspaper Week.

*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.*



**Gary L. West**  
SHADES OF GRAY

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Mars may be key to disproving evolution

For years, I have been hopeful that evidence for liquid water would be found on Mars. That discovery has now been made though its surface liquidity seems to vacillate with seasonal changes. The reason I have hoped for this may surprise many. As a Biblical creationist, I believe the discovery of even microbial life on Mars would validate the theory of evolution.

My hope is being realized as scientists discover all of what they believe to be the essential ingredients to foster the evolution of microbial life. With the discovery of liquid water added to the previously

discovered sulfur, nitrogen, hydrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and carbon — all discovered in material drilled out of an ancient streambed called Yellow Knife Bay, it would seem that the stage is set to prove or disprove evolution as being scientifically valid.

There is just one big question: Will the key ingredients for life have assembled themselves into living organisms by now as is supposed they have on Earth?

The fallacy we continue to hear from scientists and journalists is that if there is the combination of these key ingredients of life, with water for a long enough time, microbial life (bacteria, viruses, spores, fungi, algae) will evolve.

The unspoken frustra-

tion of many scientists lies in their failure to discover organic carbons — the building blocks of life. When present, they are easy to find using gas-chromatograph mass spectrometers which the Mars rovers possess. To illustrate, when a living system (microbial plant or animal) synthesizes proteins it incorporates carbon in the form of several stable isotopes that vary slightly in mass (weight), as seen with carbon 12 and the heavier carbon 13.

On Earth the average natural abundance of carbon 12 to carbon 13 is 90 to 1. But if you were to analyze some living thing like a plant, its ratio would be 92 to 1. This slight difference is the signature of biological systems. If you find some questionable residue

and want to know whether it ever breathed, using the spectrometer you measure this ratio. If it measures 92 to 1, then it was once alive. So far they have struck out. The complexity of a single, so-called simple one-celled microbe (e.g., amoeba) is incalculable — more complex than all the moving parts of New York City at rush hour.

The jury is yet out on the Martian question. My conviction is that the evidence will show that chemical evolution is an invalid hypothesis not only for Mars but for Earth, and that I will have an added reason to celebrate the truth that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth."

PASTOR KENT KNIGHT (RETIRED)  
HERMISTON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

### STATE

**District 29: Sen. Bill Hansell,** R-Umatilla Co., 900 Court St. N.E., S-423, Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1729. 101 S.W. Third St., Pendleton, OR 97801 (541) 278-1396. E-mail: ssen.billhansell@state.or.us.

**District 30: Sen. Ted Ferrio-**

**li,** R-John Day; 900 Court St. N.E., S-223 Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1950. 750 W. Main, John Day, OR 97845, (541) 575-2321. E-mail: ferrio.tsen@state.or.us.

**District 58: Rep. Bob Jenson,** R-Pendleton; 900 Court St. N.E., H-480, Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1458. 2126 N.W. 21st., Pendleton,

OR 97801, (541) 276-2707. E-mail: rep.bobjenson@state.or.us.

**District 57: Rep. Greg Smith,** R-Morrow, 900 Court St. N.E., H-280, Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1457. P.O. Box 215, Heppner, OR 97836, (541) 676-5154. E-mail: smith.g.rep@state.or.us.

# Paperwork.



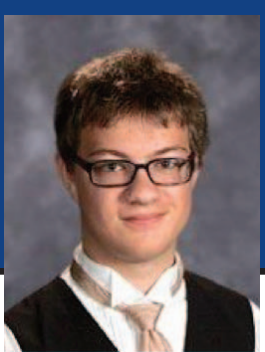
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## STUDENT OF THE WEEK



**Jacob Hendrickson**  
PILOT ROCK HIGH SCHOOL

PRHS student of the week is Jacob Hendrickson. Jacob is a senior this year and very involved with his class as the vice-president. He is a National Honor Society member and looking ahead to college. His involvement in Key Club encompasses many volunteer hours in all kinds of community activities. Jacob is an all-around great student who always exemplifies a positive attitude and outlook on life. Congratulations Jacob.

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