

Help appreciated in this season of Thanksgiving

I used to be a holiday procrastinator. But now, with Thanksgiving still more than a week away, I know what I am thankful for this year.

Simply stated, I am glad to be home.

More specifically, I am glad to be able to regularly spend time with family and friends and be making new friends.

There is a real family feeling to this community, which I had forgotten about in my years away. It is amazing to me how many offers of help I've received since moving back to town. Family, friends, neighbors and coworkers have been generous with their assistance and offers of support. A good friend helped me

find a house and has helped my care for my yard by trimming trees for me and loaning me tools.

When I couldn't get my car to start, Joe Thompson at Eastside Market let me leave it in his parking lot for a while until I could retrieve it. A farmer friend of my father's who stopped at the market took time out of his day to try to help me get it running again. My dad loaned me his car for a day, while mine was in the shop.

When I got sick a few weeks ago, my mom, friends and coworkers of-



Gary L. West
SHADES OF GRAY

ferred to bring me soup and supplies.

A high school classmate's mom gave me a dining table for my kitchen, rebuffing my offer to pay her for it.

When my lawn mower was making funny noises, a neighbor brought over some fuel additive to help make the small motor run better.

It's been humbling how helpful people have been. These are but a few of the offers of generosity that tell me I am truly home again.

Last week I met with three people who have volunteered to share a bit of their time and perspective in our bid to make the Hermiston Herald a more valuable resource to the

community.

Dave Wright, Clara Beas-Fitzgerald and Karen Hutchinson-Talaski have generously agreed to be the inaugural members of an advisory group to talk about the things they like, or don't like, about the Herald and help us find ways to make it a better information source for the community.

Wright is retired from Oregon State Parks and Recreation, where he was the assistant director of operations. Beas-Fitzgerald is a member of the Hermiston City Council and serves on the city's Hispanic Advisory Committee. She also worked for the East Oregonian at one time. Hutchinson-Talaski is the executive director of the Umatilla

Chamber of Commerce. She is also a former reporter for the Hermiston Herald.

Their reasons for volunteering to be advisors vary. But they all care deeply about this community and the people who live here. They have all lived and spent part of their careers elsewhere and now choose to live here.

We are looking for a few more people to join our group. Our next meeting will be at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 17. We plan to meet about once a month to talk about ways the Herald might be able to better serve the community as a news and information source. If you would like to join us, send me an email message at gwest@hermistonherald.com.

com. You don't have to be a subscriber to participate.

Send me an email with a bit of information about yourself and a short description of why you are interested in serving as an advisor to the Hermiston Herald.

Thanks, in advance to all who have, or will, volunteer to participate.

And to all, have a happy and safe Thanksgiving and a joyful holiday season.

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.

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 Ferrioli,
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: ferrioli.sen@state.or.us.

District 58: Rep. Greg Barreto,
R-Cove; 900 Court St. N.E., H-384, Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1458. E-mail: gregbarreto@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.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden
Sac Annex Building, 105 Fir St., No. 201, La

Grande, OR 97850; (541) 962-7691. E-mail: kathleen_cathey@wyden.senate.gov; (Kathleen Cathey, community representative); 717 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510, (202) 224-5244.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley
One World Trade Center, 121 SW Salmon Street, Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204;

(503) 326-3386; Dirksen Senate Office Building, SDB-40B, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-3753.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (2nd District)
843 E. Main St., Suite 400, Medford, OR 97504, (541) 776-4646, (800) 533-3303; 2352 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515, (202) 225-6730

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Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. Phone numbers will not be published.

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