

New year provides opportunities to connect

The end of one year and the start of another provides an opportunity for reflections and setting goals for the new year.

On the reflective aspect of turning the calendar page, 2016 proved a difficult year for the Hermiston Herald family. Many members of our staff suffered losses in the year just ended.

Most notably, we were forced to say goodbye to G.M. "Jerry" Reed, the former owner/publisher of the Herald and father to current Hermiston office manager Shannon Paxton.

I used to think in order to be a good journalist I would have to learn to be dispassionate, unemotional or at the very least, hide and control those emotions. I never learned the Vulcan trait to control emotions so completely and effectively. I no longer want to, either. I've had the opportunity to work with a lot of journalists in a 28-plus year career, many of them highly intelligent, professional, talented journalists who were also thoughtful, compassionate

people. Yes, we have had to deal with the permanent loss that death brings, but we've also lost some staff members that have moved on to other opportunities. We miss their presence, their humor and their friendship.

Change can be hard. But sometimes it brings new colleagues into our family, like our newest colleague, Jayati Ramakrishnan, who joined our team in December. We look forward to working with her and getting to know her better in 2017.

I'm not prone to making predictions. I prefer fact-based reporting. But some trends for 2017 can safely be foreseen. Hermiston, and the surrounding area, will continue to grow. There will be new businesses, new opportunities. Some will succeed. Others may not, but the area and it's people will adapt.

Growth is in our community's DNA. And here, at the Herald, we are looking for ways to adapt, and hopefully grow, too.

In the coming weeks we

will be adding some new features or expanding some existing ones.

For example, we will start adding some staff picks to our coming event calendar, to feature some events we think are worth some extra attention and notoriety.

We will also start including an upcoming meeting calendar to let area residents know when local agencies will be meeting to provide more opportunities for civic involvement.

We are also looking for local people willing to write regularly about topics we may not get to often enough with our staff coverage. For example, if you have an interest in youth or recreational sports, we'd love to feature coverage of youth soccer, Little League, local softball

leagues, bowling leagues, etc. Or maybe your interests and expertise lies in enjoying our great outdoors, with activities like fishing, hunting, cycling, etc., we could add a regular column about that if we had someone willing to share some of their time and expertise. Just tell us what we are missing and how you can help us fill that need. Ideally, we'd like to get at least four regular contributors, and rotate the contribution on about a once a month basis. We'll love contributions of various ages and interests.

I, too, plan to contribute regular weekly columns, but instead of my past practice of sharing with readers what's going on inside the Herald, we will look outside in the wider community and sharing more infor-

mation about what people are saying and doing that made our community special.

We also plan to start a regular Q and A feature, giving us all a better chance to know one of our neighbors each week.

Those are some of our ideas for new features coming in 2017. We'd love to hear your suggestions for ways to make the Herald a trusted and valued news source. If you have ideas for who we should reach out to as possible contributors for columns you'd find interesting, or suggestions for who would make a good Q&A subject, or have other ideas, write to me at editor@hermistonherald.com or call me at 541-564-4532.

We need you, and your neighbors, as readers, sub-

scribers and advertisers in 2017. In exchange we will prove you a trustworthy, reliable source of information about upcoming events and recent happening that will affect you, your family and your work life. We are firm believers that information is key to making rewarding life and lifestyle decision on how to spend your time and money.

We lost some of our closest supporters of the paper in 2016, we would love to welcome some new ones into the fold in 2017.

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

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4
HERMISTON AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 4 p.m. Hermiston Airport lounge, 1600 Airport Way, Hermiston (541-567-5521).

UMATILLA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, 7 p.m. Umatilla Fire Department, 305 Willamette St., Umatilla (541-922-2770).

MONDAY, JANUARY 9
HERMISTON CITY COUNCIL, 7 p.m. Hermiston City Hall council chambers, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston (541-567-5521).

HERMISTON SCHOOL DISTRICT, 6:30 p.m. district office, 502 W. Standard Ave., Hermiston (541-667-6000).

IRRIGON FIRE DISTRICT, 7 a.m. Irrigon Fire Department, 705 N.E. Main Ave., Irrigon (541-922-3133).

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10
PORT OF UMATILLA COMMISSION, 1 p.m. Port of Umatilla offices, 505 Willamette Ave., Umatilla (541-922-3224).

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11
HERMISTON PLANNING COMMISSION, 7 p.m. Hermiston City Hall, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston (541-567-5521).

MORROW COUNTY COURT, 9 a.m. Irrigon Public Library, 200 N.E. Main Ave., Irrigon (541-676-9061).

PORT OF MORROW COMMISSION, 1:30 p.m. Port of Morrow, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman (541-481-7678).

RIVERSIDE SITE COUNCIL, 5:30 p.m. Riverside High School library, 210 N.E. Boardman Ave., Boardman (541-676-9128).

STANFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT, 7 p.m. Stanfield School District office, 1120 N. Main St., Stanfield (541-449-3305).

UMATILLA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1, 7 p.m. Hermiston Safety Center, 320 S. First St., Hermiston (Reta Larson 541-567-8822).

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12
BOARDMAN RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, 1 p.m. Boardman Fire Department, 300

S. Wilson Lane, Boardman (541-481-3473).

HERMISTON PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION, 5:30 p.m. Hermiston City Hall, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston (541-567-5521).

UMATILLA SCHOOL DISTRICT, 7 p.m. Umatilla School District office, 1001 Sixth St., Umatilla (541-922-6500).

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13
EASTERN OREGON TRADE & EVENT CENTER AUTHORITY, 7 a.m. EOTEC main building, 1705 E. Airport Road, Hermiston (541-289-9800).

MONDAY, JANUARY 16
ECHO SCHOOL DISTRICT, 6 p.m. Echo Community School, 600 Gerone St., Echo (541-376-8436).

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17
IRRIGON CITY COUNCIL, 6 p.m. Irrigon City Hall, 500 N.E. Main Ave., Irrigon (541-922-3047).

STANFIELD CITY COUNCIL, 7 p.m. Stanfield City Hall council chambers, 160 S. Main St., Stanfield (541-449-3831).

OREGON TRAIL LIBRARY DISTRICT, 7 p.m. Oregon Trail Library District office, 200 S. Main St., Boardman (541-481-3365).

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18
MORROW COUNTY COURT, 9 a.m. Port of Morrow conference room, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman (541-676-9061).

BOARDMAN PLANNING COMMISSION, 7 p.m. Boardman City Hall, 200 City Center Circle, Boardman (541-481-9252).

UMATILLA HOSPITAL DISTRICT, 7:30 p.m. Umatilla Medical Clinic, 1890 Seventh St., Umatilla (541-922-3104).

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19
ECHO CITY COUNCIL, 4 p.m. Echo City Hall, 20 S. Bonanza St., Echo (541-376-8411).

HERMISTON IRRIGATION DISTRICT, 4 p.m. Hermiston Irrigation District office conference room, 366 E. Hurlburt Ave., Hermiston (541-567-3024).

U.S. Cellular

— SWITCH & GET —

HALF OFF

ANY SMARTPHONE PLUS, GET UP TO \$650 MORE*

It's a great deal from the network with a stronger signal in the Middle of Anywhere.

*In U.S. Cellular® Promo Cards

TAI CHI - MOVING FOR BETTER BALANCE
FREE class to work on balance, strengthen muscles, improve posture and core strength. Great for all ages!
Monday & Wednesday Starting January 16th
Basic/Beginners class: 9-10am
Advanced Class: 10-11am
GSMC Wellness Center (behind the hospital)
Call 541-567-2185 or 541-667-3509 to register

BODY & BALANCE
FREE class using the Bal-A-Vis-X approach to safely improve balance, movement, and strengthen body control. Great for all ages and fitness levels!
Monday & Wednesday Starting Jan. 4th
11:00 - 12:00pm
Call 541-567-2185 or 541-667-3509 to register

BEGINNER & INTERMEDIATE BANDS CLASSES:
Strengthen & improve flexibility and overall health & balance.
Tuesday & Thursdays Starting January 3rd
Beginners class: 8:15-8:45am
Intermediate Class: 9-9:30am
GSMC Wellness Center (behind the hospital)
Call Kathy Thomas, 541-667-3400 x3050

Information or to register call (541) 667-3509 or email healthinfo@gshealth.org www.gshealth.org

GOOD SHEPHERD

Like Us On Facebook | Instagram | LinkedIn | Twitter

Learn more at uscellular.com/halfoff

Things we want you to know: New Shared Connect Plan, Retail Installment Contract, Device Protection+, port-in and Smartphone turn-in required. Credit approval also required. A \$25 Device Activation Fee applies. A Regulatory Cost Recovery Fee (currently \$1.82) applies; this is not a tax or govt. required charge. Additional fees (including Device Connection Charges), taxes, terms, conditions and coverage areas apply and may vary by plan, service and phone. Offers valid at participating locations only and cannot be combined. See store or uscellular.com for details. **Half off Smartphones:** 50% off rebate on base model Smartphone devices. Rebate fulfilled in the form of a U.S. Cellular® Promotional Card issued by MetaBank® Member FDIC, pursuant to a license from Visa U.S.A. Inc. Valid only for purchases at U.S. Cellular stores and uscellular.com. Devices \$399 or higher are eligible for \$200 Promotional Card at the point of sale and remaining balance in arrears. Devices \$200 or less are eligible for \$100 Promotional Card at the point of sale. For Promotional Cards in arrears, allow 8-10 weeks for processing after final submission. **Up to \$650 Switcher Promo:** Each line requesting Up to \$650 Switcher Promo must port in current number to U.S. Cellular, purchase a new device through a Retail Installment Contract on a Shared Connect Plan with Device Protection+ and turn in their device. If device turn-in is not received before bill submission, or no device is turned in, Switcher Promo will be capped at \$350 per line. Submit final bill identifying Early Termination Fee (ETF) or final device balance owed within 60 days of activation date to uscellular.com/contractpayoff or via mail to U.S. Cellular Switcher Promo Program 5591-61, PO Box 752257, El Paso, TX 88575-2257. Customer will receive credit equal to the lesser of the ETF or remaining device balance reflected on final bill or \$650 subject to the conditions of the offer. U.S. Cellular Promotional Card issued by MetaBank® Member FDIC, pursuant to a license from Visa U.S.A. Inc. Valid only for purchases at U.S. Cellular stores and uscellular.com. Allow 8-10 weeks for processing after final submission. **Turned-in Smartphone must be in fully functional, working condition without any liquid damage or broken components, including, but not limited to, a cracked housing. Smartphone must power on and cannot be pin locked. Device Protection+ (DP+):** Minimum monthly price is \$8.99 per phone. A service fee/deductible per approved claim applies. You may cancel anytime. Property insurance is underwritten by American Bankers Insurance Company of Florida and provided under a Master Policy issued to U.S. Cellular. You will be the certificate holder on U.S. Cellular's Master Policy for loss/theft benefits. Service Contract Obligor is Federal Warranty Service Corporation in all states except CA (Sureway, Inc.) and OK (Assurant Service Protection, Inc.). Limitations and exclusions apply. For more information, see an associate for a DP+ brochure. **Kansas Customers:** In areas in which U.S. Cellular receives support from the Federal Universal Service Fund, all reasonable requests for service must be met. Unresolved questions concerning services availability can be directed to the Kansas Corporation Commission Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection at 1-800-662-0027. Limited-time offer. Trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners. ©2016 U.S. Cellular