

# Our Community

E-mail your community news items to:  
community@hermistonherald.com

## Memorial Day: A penny isn't much

I spent 45 minutes and left a penny on the headstones of 75 veterans Monday at the Hermiston Cemetery.

It's not much — not even an hour and not even a dollar. But, for me, it's a way to commemorate Memorial Day.

Sometimes people forget the meaning behind the holiday. It's not merely a day off from work (although I did work swing hours) or a day to have a family barbecue.

It's a small gesture — extremely small. It doesn't even compare to the sacrifices made by the men and women who have served in our nation's military.

I became aware of the tradition of leaving coins on headstones nearly a decade ago. Every year since then, sometime during the Memorial Day weekend, I have grabbed a bag of pennies and headed to the cemetery.

According to information I've read, the tradition is a way of paying respects. As the coins increase in value, so does the level of connection the person leaving it has with the deceased:

- A penny means a person visited the grave of the veteran that is buried there.
- A nickel means the person trained or was at boot camp with the deceased veteran.
- A dime represents military personnel who served together.
- A quarter indicates the person was present when the deceased was killed.

Reading the headstone, I learn the date of birth, date of death and the branch of the military the veteran served. Then, I say their name and thank them



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

At the Hermiston Cemetery, numerous coins grace the headstone of Lance Cpl. James B. Huston Jr., who died in 2004 while serving with the U.S. Marine Corps in Iraq. According to tradition, coins on the headstone signifies visitors to the veteran's grave.

for their service while setting a penny down.

Sometimes, I have to brush away grass that has been cast onto the headstone during the mowing process. And, I've even poured water from my bottle to wash away bird droppings. Again, small gestures for people who have made sacrifices to serve our country.

Every once in awhile, someone asks what I'm doing. Such was the case Monday, when an Air Force veteran and his wife noticed the "U.S. Air Force Academy" T-shirt I was wearing.

They said they had come across a pair of headstones — a man and wife who both served in the Air Force. Dismayed that there were no flowers or flags, they returned with a pair of small bouquets. I thought that was

pretty cool.

Of the section I visit each year, I personally know the relatives of less than a handful. And, to me, that makes it even more significant. Those veterans didn't know me — yet they served our country so that I may reap the benefits of the freedoms we have.

Each year I post a photo on Facebook — not because I want attention — but in hopes that maybe someone else will be moved to do a little something to pause a moment and remember to thank our veterans.

*Tammy Malgesini is the community editor. Her column, Inside my Shoes, includes general musings about life. Contact her at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539.*

## Middle school musical to make a splash

Music and artistic exploration by Sandstone Middle School students crescendos with a trio of upcoming performances.

Students and staff will present "The Little Mermaid Jr." Thursday through Saturday at 7 p.m. in the Sandstone Middle School commons, 400 N.E. 10th St., Hermiston. Tickets are \$3 or \$2 with a canned food item. Concessions during intermission will be served by Sandstone leadership students. For those unable to attend the performance, it will be live-streamed on

the district's website

Under the direction of Dan Allen and Lisa McElroy, nearly 100 are participating in the musical. The performance features an orchestra pit crew of about 25, directed by Allen and 25 dancers with Kelsey Tew in charge of choreography.

In addition, 34 costume designers from Chelsea Geer's exploration class planned and created each costume. Students helped sew sequins and feathers, and for many it was their first time sewing something.

Also, under the guidance of Ray Davis, a new set technology using reverse projec-

tion and a stationary set design, which was designed and will be implemented by 32 art students.

The production incorporates reading, drama, music, art and outreach objectives. Students are excited to showcase their talents and invite members of the community to attend one of the performances.

The musical is made possible by funds from the Hermiston Education Foundation. Allen, McElroy, Geer and Davis wrote a grant request in the fall and were awarded about \$3,000 to assist in putting on the theater production.

## New Hope presents sexuality seminar

A special seminar for parents and those working with youths will highlight our culture's fascination with sexuality

The session will address how to have important conversations with youths about gender, social media, sex and porn. The discussion will include when it's best to have particular conversations with children and youths.

Parenting in a Sexually Charged World is Friday from 5:30-9 p.m. at New Hope Community Church, 1350 S. Highway 395. It includes dinner at 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$3 each or \$10 for a family. Also, free childcare is provided from 6-10 p.m. In order to plan, registration is requested by calling 541-567-8441.

The special speaker is Jason Soucinek of Project Six19 in Spokane. He'll talk about the current cultural landscape in

America, what kids are being exposed to and provide a biblical framework for having conversations with kids about

God's design for sexuality.

For more information, call 541-567-8441 or visit Facebook.

**Hermiston Herald**  
NIE  
Printed on recycled newsprint  
VOLUME 111 • NUMBER 20

- Gary L. West | Editor • gwest@hermistonherald.com • 541-564-4532  
 Tammy Malgesini | Community Editor • tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com • 541-564-4539  
 Jayati Ramakrishnan | Reporter • jramakrishnan@hermistonherald.com • 541-564-4534  
 Jade McDowell | Reporter • jmcowell@eastoregonian.com • 541-564-4536  
 Jeanne Jewett | Multi-Media consultant • jjewett@hermistonherald.com • 541-564-4531  
 Shannon Paxton | Office coordinator • spaxton@hermistonherald.com • 541-564-4530  
 Audra Workman | Multi-Media consultant • aworkman@eastoregonian.com • 541-564-4538  
 Dawn Hendricks | Circulation District Manager • dhendricks@eastoregonian.com • 541-564-4540
- To contact the Hermiston Herald for news, advertising or subscription information:  
 • call 541-567-6457  
 • e-mail info@hermistonherald.com  
 • stop by our offices at 333 E. Main St.  
 • visit us online at: hermistonherald.com
- The Hermiston Herald (USPS 242220, ISSN 8750-4782) is published weekly at Hermiston Herald, 333 E. Main St., Hermiston, OR 97838, (541) 567-6457.
- ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
 Delivered by carrier and mail Wednesdays  
 Inside Umatilla/Morrow counties.....\$42.65  
 Outside Umatilla/Morrow counties.....\$53.90
- Periodical postage paid at Hermiston, OR.  
 Postmaster, send address changes to Hermiston Herald, 333 E. Main St., Hermiston, OR 97838.
- Member of EO Media Group Copyright ©2017



Photo credit: Kathy Aney

Hermiston Herald reporter Jayati Ramakrishnan interviews Umatilla County search and rescue supervisor Dwight Johnson

### THE PUBLIC NEEDS THE TRUTH; NOT SOCIAL MEDIA HEADLINES & FAKE NEWS.

The future of our community depends on the ability of journalists to provide the public with investigative journalism.

Help show your support for local journalism by subscribing to the Hermiston Herald.

Follow the conversation at #SupportRealNews

**Hermiston Herald**  
SUPPORTS REAL NEWS.

Visit HermistonHerald.com/hh/Subscribe or call 800-522-0255 today.

**ToyotaTime Sales Event** **0% APR** **Wow!**  
for 60 mo. on 13 different 2017 models

2017 Prius Liftback  
2017 Corolla  
2017 RAV4

also includes  
2017 Corolla iM  
2017 Camry  
2017 Camry Hybrid  
2017 Prius c  
2017 Prius v  
2017 Avalon  
2017 Avalon Hybrid  
2017 Yaris iA  
2017 Sienna  
2017 RAV4 Hybrid

Inland Northwest Toyota Dealers

Or take advantage of special leases on nearly every model!

2017 Camry SE \$179/mo for 36 mos.  
2017 Corolla LE \$159/mo for 36 mos.  
2017 RAV4 LE \$199/mo for 36 mos.

TOYOTA Let's Go Places

**ROGERS TOYOTA OF HERMISTON**  
(541) 567-6461 or 800-522-2308  
ToyotaOfHermiston.com

Every new Toyota comes with ToyotaCare No Cost Service & Roadside\*

Mon - Fri 8:30a - 7:00p  
Saturday 8:30a - 7:00p  
Sunday 10:00a - 5:00p

All financing on approved credit through TFS. All vehicles subject to prior sale. All prices plus tax and title. \$75 dealer doc fee. Offers end 5/31/17. For more details call 1-888-21-TOYOTA.