

What makes Hermiston tick?

One of the great experiences of my professional career has been Leadership Hermiston, a chamber of commerce program intended to give people a crash course on what makes this community tick.

Even as someone who grew up here and has worked at the newspapers (both *Hermiston Herald* and *East Oregonian*) since moving back in 2005, there's a lot happening that's easy to miss. By the time you've toured the farms, factories, city hall, safety center, port and schools, you have a strong sense of the diversity and potential in this area.

It's also a joy to make connections in the class with people who have come to Hermiston from all over and are interested in making it a better place.

That's why I'm always glad when Media Day comes around and we at the *Herald* and *EO* get to tell the class about what we're up to and why it's important.

This year's class visited a few weeks back, and we started by putting them

through the usual test — designing their own front page. We divided the 18 class members into teams of two and gave them all the stories we had at our fingertips the night before with the instruction to put out the most impactful front page they could come up with.

The results are always interesting. Some go with the dramatic — arrests and sentences, car chases and crashes — while others go with the positive — feel-good stories of redemption, awards and scholarships. Sometimes they prefer stories of national significance, other times they opt for small, local events.

Usually, it's a combination of all of the above. And that's what we try to deliver.

If you're reading this, you know what goes into each edition of the *Hermiston Herald*. And you've probably noticed some of the changes we've made in recent months.

For one, we've emphasized a front page centerpiece with content

you can only find here. In today's paper, it's a developed follow-up to the highly significant decision by the city and county to turn control of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center over to the city. A shorter, on-deadline version of the story ran in Tuesday's *East Oregonian*, but we've added context, quotes and fresh photos to help explain what happened and what will happen next.

We've also used the front page spot to explore our new cuisine options in Hermiston, tourism potential in the city and celebrate the high school football team's state championship (with an accompanying five-page spread of photos and stories).

Also on the front page we've added a By The Way column, giving an inside look at some of the stories that are developing or tidbits from around town. We hear as much scuttlebutt as you do, and it's a place where we can address rumors, share kudos and give a brief glimpse at what's in store in the coming weeks and months.

We've also done away with the funny page in favor of a local photo page

toward the back of each edition. While newspapers traditionally carry at least a handful of comics, and we realize a good laugh is a gift, we want to emphasize local people and places as much as possible.

We want the *Hermiston Herald* to be a place of shared experience for the people of Hermiston and the surrounding area. We want to answer your questions, understand your point of view, attend your events and write your stories. Each Wednesday is our chance to do that.

And we're always up for a helping hand. If you have an idea for a story, a great photo you've taken, a piece of writing you'd like to publish or even a comic you've drawn, send it to editor@hermistonherald.com, call us at 541-567-6457 or stop by the office at 333 E. Main St.

We're proud to be your community newspaper, and want to hear from you on what we can do to make it even better.

Daniel Wattenburger is the managing editor of the East Oregonian and a contributing editor for the Hermiston Herald.



Daniel Wattenburger
MANAGING EDITOR



Tammy Malgesini
INSIDE MY SHOES

'Random' process results in jury duty, again

Four out of six staff writers in the news department will have the jury message line on speed dial during the month of February.

What are the odds? With the random process for jury duty, it seems the stars aligned in some bizarre fashion for this to occur.

I found out a few days after the new year that I was being summoned as a juror in the Umatilla County Circuit Court. My husband, John, came bounding up the stairs with an envelope in hand.

I didn't even have to look at it. I knew.

I'm not the only one who doesn't warmly embrace performing this civic duty. The Honorable Thomas Balmer, chief justice of the Oregon Supreme Court, acknowledges this fact.

"I know that jury service can be inconvenient but it's an important and essential part of our democracy," he said in a "Juror Experience Video."

I must say, actually finding that video was grounds for serving the Umatilla & Morrow County Circuit Courts with "contempt of internet." After clicking the link, I was greeted with the dreaded "404 Page Not Found" message.

With persistence, I finally found the video and watched the nearly 19-minute presentation. I'm not sure how long ago it was created, but they may want to consider updating it. Among those talking about the importance of jurors was Bernice Barnett, former Lincoln County district attorney, who hasn't been in that role for more than a decade.

My husband and I have been summoned multiple times over the years. For a

process that's random, that seems odd — especially when numerous people tell me they've never served.

It's not so much that I mind serving — if I actually got to sit in one of the 12 special seats. I've only been ushered into the courtroom on two occasions for the actual jury selection process.

However, I've had to drag myself out of bed on countless occasions and chug a sufficient amount of Pepsi in order to keep my eyes open — only to show up and be told the jury trial wasn't happening. When I whined about that on Facebook, one of my old high school buddies responded.

"Thank you for your service! The jury system would not work without you," wrote Martin Alvey.

As a trial lawyer, Martin knows first-hand how important the process is. And honestly, if I found myself in a courtroom, I would want people sitting in the jury box who took their responsibility seriously.

In August 2013, Judge Dan Hill expressed his gratitude for the jurors being there and being willing to serve before excusing us. I appreciated that he took the time to come in to address us rather than sending in a clerk to convey the message.

I truly do understand the importance of jury duty. In reality, it's just a minor inconvenience. Considering all the rights and freedoms I have as a citizen of this country, the least I can do is be willing to perform this important civic duty.

Tammy Malgesini is the community editor. Her column is Inside my Shoes. Contact her at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539.

Choir students headed to Disneyland

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

Some of Hermiston High School's choral students will be taking a trip to Disneyland this spring, but they won't just be enjoying the rides and sunshine. The group of 31 students will be working with Disney production teams and vocal coaches, as well as touring a major university and getting some choir lessons.

The students will head south the last week of March, during their spring break.

Choir director Jordan Bemrose-Rust said she has done this specific trip five times, either as a student or instructor.

While in California,

the students will perform onstage at Disneyland and participate in a recording session in a studio.

"They will get the music, and they've never seen it before," she said. "They'll sight-read it, and then the person there will rehearse it with them. Then they'll record it, good, bad or ugly."

Then, she said, the students will get to hear their music played back, over an animated film.

They will visit University of Southern California, where they will receive a clinic from the head of the choral department.

She said some other musicians who live in the area will also come and speak to the students.



STAFF PHOTO BY JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN

Hermiston Choir students and their instructor, Jordan Bemrose-Rust, accept a check from Tom Denchel and Nick Kennedy, of Tom Denchel Ford. Back row, from left: Cody Henderson, Denchel, Kennedy, Bemrose-Rust, Marco Lopez. Front row: Destiny Van Fossen, Hailey Roberts, Crystal Alvarez, William Kern, Madison Fricke.

WATER

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As the city looked for better solutions, Hermiston was pioneering a reuse program with West Irrigation District. Water coming from Hermiston's recycled water treatment plant built in 2014 was well within the state's standards for cleanliness, but was too warm to put in the Umatilla River in the summer. So the city worked out a deal with West Irrigation District to pipe the water into their canal during the growing season instead, allowing the district to save money by pumping less water from the Columbia River.

"We're really excited about the project because it was the first time it was done

in the state," Hermiston city manager Byron Smith said.

After getting approval for the project from a laundry list of state agencies, Smith said he and West Irrigation District manager Bev Bridgewater are now sitting on a state committee working to write a set of regulations for other communities that want to follow suit.

Pelleberg said Umatilla wants to do something similar by diverting water coming out of data centers to West Irrigation District.

"We really like what Hermiston is doing with reuse," he said.

Bridgewater said like the Hermiston water, the Umatilla water would likely be used to replace Columbia River water instead of expanding the district's acre-

age. But Pelleberg said he is looking with city engineers at property that could hold massive open-air ponds to hold recycled Class A water created during the winter for use during the summer, and Bridgewater said that project could possibly lead to expanding the district's acreage. The city needs to secure funding first, however.

The discussion was one of several presentations at the Oregon Water Coalition meeting, which was combined with the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce's Business to Business breakfast at Herm-

iston Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

Miff Devlin, water quality supervisor at the Port of Morrow, also spoke about a three-phase recharge project to dilute nitrogen from the groundwater around the port. JR Cook of Northeast Oregon Water Association spoke about an economic impact study being developed for the Mid-Columbia Basin and goals for future water projects in the area. The meeting was wrapped up by a "water rights bootcamp" by attorney Laura Schroeder of Schroeder Law Offices.

STUDENT OF THE WEEK

SPENCER WELLS
Senior – McLoughlin High School

Spencer Wells is a Senior at Mac-Hi. Spencer is part of our Mac-Hi Leadership and a 3 year letterman in football and wrestling. He is a member of our Crimson and Black Honor Choir and 2017 prom and homecoming court. Spencer is active in his church youth group as well as a Eagle Scout. His parents are John and Amy Wells.

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GOOD SHEPHERD

PETE HERNBERG

Do you shudder at the mention of math? Pete Hernberg is one of BMCC's soft spoken heroes ready and willing to swoop in and save BMCC students' day by helping them venture through the gauntlet of mandatory math classes to get to their degree. Yes, you read that right! He's Superman with a scientific calculator.

Pete teaches math and computer science and two years ago, in response to the community's request for trained data center technicians, he and our BMCC Office of Instruction put together the area's only Data Center Technician Certificate program. That program has placed 44 students into very well paying local jobs in the only two years it has been available.

"I've been lucky to have my academic background in math and computer science combine with my hobby of fiddling with computer stuff to give me lots of opportunities to teach interesting classes... I love my students and my colleagues. I enjoy getting to help folks every day." Outside of working Pete likes to read, cook and travel and he goes on to say "...but if I'm honest I spend too much time watching Netflix and YouTube." We hear ya, Pete! Even Superman needs some guilty pleasures!

DEYANIRA MORALES

Deyanira Morales recientemente llegó a la ciudad de Pendleton a establecer el programa de español para la facultad de Lenguas Extranjeras de Blue Mountain Community College.

Originaria de una ciudad fronteriza de Baja California, localizada en el norte de México, realizó su formación académica superior tanto en México como en Los Estados Unidos, especializándose en español y francés.

A lo largo de más de veinte años en este país, ejerció su carrera catedrática en varias universidades y colegios desde el sur de California, hasta el área de Washington, D.C.

Dentro de los diversos sitios donde ella radicó y visitó, se encuentran partes de Europa, y Asia, incluyendo países como Japón, donde vivió por varios años. Ahora nos trae su experiencia profesional así como un enfoque cultural único y diverso a BMCC donde actualmente desempeña el papel de catedrática impartiendo clases de español como lengua extranjera así como para hispanohablantes.

Deyanira espera seguir conociendo e interactuando con el alumnado hispano de nuestro colegio y centros, conectando con la gran comunidad latina de la región, al igual que servir como contacto para los hispanohablantes.

TRANSLATION: Deyanira Morales recently arrived to the city of Pendleton to establish the Spanish program for the Foreign Language Department at Blue Mountain Community College.

Originally from a border city in Baja California, located in northern Mexico, she completed her higher education both in Mexico as well as the United States, specializing in Spanish and French.

Throughout over 20 years living in this country, she has practiced her profession and teaching career in various colleges and universities ranging from southern California, to the Washington, D.C. area.

Among the various places where she has lived and visited are parts of Europe and Asia, including Japan, where she lived for several years. Now she brings to us her professional experience as well as a unique and diverse cultural focus to BMCC where she currently serves as an instructor teaching classes in Spanish as a foreign language as well as Spanish for Heritage speakers.

Deyanira hopes to continue getting to know and interacting with Hispanic students from our college and centers, connecting with the Hispanic community in the region, as well as serving as a liaison with Spanish-speakers.

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