



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

Hermiston Senior Center volunteers Gary Riesland, left, Virginia Beebe, center, and Darlene Riesland, right, helped a Meals on Wheels patron get help after she spent three days on the floor unable to move after a fall.

Senior center volunteers save woman after fall

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

A Hermiston woman might owe her life to Meals on Wheels.

When volunteer Gary Riesland knocked on Glenda Wilcox's door a couple of weeks ago to deliver a meal, he heard her shouting for someone to call her daughter.

He did, and Pam Lincoln arrived to find that her mother had fallen and been lying on her living room floor, unable to move, for more than 72 hours.

"He truly did save Mom, because she couldn't have held out much longer," Lincoln said, adding that her mom looked "like a zombie" when she found her.

Wilcox was severely dehydrated and spent three days in the intensive care unit before being moved to another unit at Good Shepherd Medical Center for additional care.

Lincoln said she had visited her mom that Friday and Wilcox fell on Saturday night.

Lincoln hadn't been planning on stopping by again until the next Thursday, but Riesland was there Tuesday afternoon.

Riesland said he and his wife Darlene have been delivering meals for the Hermiston Senior Center for more than 30 years.

They started when his mother, who took her meals at the senior center at the time, asked them to consider helping out with delivering meals to homebound seniors who can't make it to the center.

He said they enjoy chatting with people who don't get many visitors as they drop off meals, and in some cases even return on their own time to visit with people or help them out with small things around the house.

During his time delivering meals, Riesland said he has found people who have fallen, and in some cases after he has alerted family or the police that someone didn't answer the door, the person has been found deceased. He has also reported cases of elder abuse that have led to law enforcement getting a senior out of a bad situation.

In the most recent case, Wilcox didn't come to the door as usual but he could hear her yelling from the living room. She didn't answer his questions but repeated over and over again, "Call Pam!"

"I knew something was wrong," he said.

The Rieslands returned to the senior center and told vice president Virginia Beebe, who happens to be Wilcox's cousin. She got in touch with Lincoln, who rushed over to find her mother on the floor, weak and disoriented, and called an ambulance.

Beebe said volunteers will always follow up with emergency contacts if someone doesn't answer the door when they were supposed to be home. It's a service that can be just as important as the food provided on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Lincoln said she is grateful that someone besides her is helping keep an eye on her mom after Lincoln's father died about two months ago.

"It's more than just delivering meals, they deliver friendship and safety," she said.

She said their family will be coming up with better protocols to make sure her mother stays safe while maintaining her independence, and urged other families with elderly members living alone to discuss medical alert bracelets, daily phone check-ins or other safety precautions in case of a medical emergency.

Hermiston School Board selects a new member

Brent Pitney has two children at Hermiston High

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

The Hermiston School Board selected a new board member at its Monday night meeting.

Brent Pitney was sworn in, and immediately joined the rest of the board for an executive session to discuss Superintendent Tricia Mooney's contract.

Pitney was selected from a pool of five candidates, all of whom applied for the spot vacated last month by long-time board member Jason Middleton. Pitney, a lifelong Hermiston resident, works for Knerr Construction and has two children at Hermiston High School.

He said he was excited to be selected, and decided to apply for the position because he wanted to give back.

"I've been in Hermiston 41 years, and I have kids in the system," he said. "I want to be part of the school and help out."

He said he would fill whatever role the board needed him to, but said he hopes especially to be an asset when it comes to passing the next school bond.

At his interview last month, Pitney answered several questions from the board, stating that he did not know the exact role and responsibilities of a school board member in the community, but would learn if he was appointed.

Each board member is "adopted" by one of the district's schools, and attends

events there throughout the year. Pitney said he will likely be taking over that role for Highland Hills Elementary School.

"I already do that with work," he said. "I'll try to be positive, be a voice."

Board members voted 5-1 to appoint Pitney to the seat, with only board member Mark Gomolski voting against. Gomolski nominated Mike Todryk for the spot. Three others also applied for the position: Kris Lerten, Mark Millard and Trish Rossell.

The board also voted unanimously against an amendment to a state school board bylaw, which would preserve one voting position on the OSBA board of directors and legislative policy committee for a member of the OSBA Members of Color Caucus. The resolution, which will be voted on by school boards that are members of OSBA, and uses a weighted system based on student enrollment, stated that the Members of Color Caucus has been supported by the OSBA board of directors since 2016, and has elected officers, regional and at-large representatives, and bylaws.

Board vice-chairman Josh Goller made a statement about the proposed amendment.

"I don't believe this is appropriate," he said. "I believe it is divisive."

He said he felt it set an untenable precedent for OSBA, and that it may encourage other groups to distinguish themselves and ask for specialized treatment. He said that anyone has the opportunity to run for a position on the school board, regardless of race.

The motion failed 6-0.

New traffic signals go live



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

A car moves through the intersection of Elm Avenue and 11th Street in Hermiston.

Hermiston drivers are getting used to two new sets of traffic signals that went live last week.

The Oregon Department of Transportation has installed new sets of lights at the intersection of Elm Avenue and 11th Street, and Orchard Avenue and 11th Street. As part of the project, the department also added a new left turn lane on 11th Street into Good Shepherd

Medical Center's parking lot and made improvements to pedestrian crossings.

The approximately \$1.6 million project was completed in partnership with ODOT, Good Shepherd Health Care System and the

Hermiston man dies in motorcycle crash

HERMISTON HERALD

A Hermiston man died in a motorcycle crash early Thursday morning.

Oregon State Police Sgt. Seth Cooney said the driver was Michael James Wilson, 62, of Hermiston. Although there were no witnesses, Cooney said officers think around 1:55 a.m., Wilson drifted off the roadway and drove into a ditch where he

struck a culvert and was ejected from the motorcycle.

Wilson was traveling southbound on Highway 207 when the wreck happened at Milepost 19, near Buttercreek Road.

Cooney said that area is known for being a high-traffic area for deer crossing, and there have been other crashes there due to deer.

Cooney said about 10 minutes after

the crash another driver came by and saw a headlight on in a nearby field from the motorcycle, but it took a bit longer to locate Wilson.

Wilson died at the scene. Oregon State Police received help from Morrow County Sheriff's Office, Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, Ione and Boardman fire departments, Umatilla County Fire District and Oregon Department of Transportation.

MCKAY CREEK ESTATES

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If you knew that there are several simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of falling, would you do it? You can make a difference. Stay independent longer by fall proofing your home and by getting your glasses and feet checked. Most importantly you can energize your body with exercise. By improving your strength, flexibility and balance you can significantly reduce your risk of a potentially serious fall.

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Free Signs Available

When the copy was submitted for today's ad there was no way of knowing the election results. But, win or lose, we've been involved with this election for eight months and I want to thank my wife, my family, and everyone who has been involved in this adventure.

The one thing I do know is that I have signs in every corner of Umatilla County. Creative Signs tell me that these signs are made of the highest quality materials and could be used for insulation, roofing, patching holes, as souvenirs, or for a variety of other uses. The Bird rescue people are interested in using some of them to keep birds from pecking one another. Some people even re-purpose them for garage sales and include the metal holders. There are probably endless uses but none include putting them back in our garage or in the barn at the ranch.

Every single one of my signs is up for grabs!
Rush out today and claim yours and feel free to take as many as you want.
George Murdock – Umatilla County Commissioner

Paid for by Committee to Re-elect George Murdock, County Commissioner, 191 NW Johns Lane., Pendleton, OR 97801

Please Don't Steal My Sign!