

EDITOR'S DESK

Editor's Desk: Welcome to the Hermiston Herald

Dear readers,
Welcome to the new *Hermiston Herald*. For some of you, this is merely a redesign of a newspaper you have been faithful to for many years, but for most of you holding this paper in your hands today, it is likely the first time you have ever read this newspaper.



Jade McDowell
NEWS EDITOR

For those of you who are new here, a quick recap: The *Hermiston Herald* was founded in 1906 by Horace Greeley Newport and William Skinner, a year before the city of Hermiston was officially incorporated in 1907. Over the century since, the paper's journalists have faithfully recorded the community's history, documenting everything from world wars to social visits.

The newspaper has changed hands multiple times over the decades, and in May 2008 EO Media Group purchased it from Western Communications. EO Media Group, a family-owned publishing company based in Oregon, continues to print the *Hermiston Herald* today. I have served as the paper's editor since January 2019, after working as a reporter in Hermiston since 2013.

The past decade has been a difficult one for newspapers, and the industry lost half its employees from 2008 to 2018. The *Herald* hasn't been immune to dwindling newspaper subscribers numbers, and earlier this year



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

The final paid subscription of the *Hermiston Herald* runs off the press at the East Oregonian in Pendleton on April 28, 2020. The newspaper has since converted to free distribution to all Hermiston area residents.

EO Media Group decided to chart a new course with this paper, competing directly with free news sources by becoming a free product ourselves. Some of our previous offerings, such as sports and most statewide news, will become premium content for *East Oregonian* subscribers only, but a variety of local reporting, particularly on business, housing and agriculture, will now be freely available to the community.

I could discuss the ins and outs of our many revenue streams and expenses and how we plan to balance the budget going forward, but I won't bore you with the details. Instead, I'll

just express how excited I am to be able to provide news to a much wider audience than before. The research is clear that increased access to local news has many benefits to local communities, including less corruption and waste in government, more community engagement and a better-informed public making smarter decisions about their health and safety.

I'll admit I'm also a little nervous about the change. When our CEO Heidi Wright and publisher Chris Rush first proposed this to me, I had three people reporting to me—a full-time Hermiston reporter, a community editor and a sports editor. Those

positions have since been eliminated due to budget shortfalls caused by COVID-19, and so a very large portion of this project now falls to me, with some help from the staff of the *East Oregonian*.

I hope that you, dear readers, will help with that by being proactive in contacting the newspaper with news. Organizers of community events who in years past have gotten multiple reminder calls from community editor Tammy Malgesini to turn in information about their event will have to get used to the fact that if they don't take the initiative to send information unsolicited, they may miss the opportunity to be listed in the roundup of Veteran's Day events or Christmas bazaars.

If you have questions, feedback, letters to the editor or story ideas, you can contact me at editor@hermistonherald.com or 541-564-4536.

Community news such as announcements of a service club's donation or an upcoming event can be emailed to community@eastoregonian.com.

If you want to advertise in the paper (reaching about 14,000 local households) you can contact Jeanne Jewett at jjewett@hermistonherald.com or 541-564-4531.

Thank you for your patience as we launch this new endeavor, and I hope you enjoy getting the news in your mailbox every Wednesday and online at www.hermistonherald.com seven days a week.

COLUMN

The 'rona wreaks havoc on routines

It's been nearly a decade since my husband and I had internet at home.

After having issues with our provider, we discontinued service. One of our backyard neighbors was gracious enough to share their password with us, which we used for several years. However, when they sold their house and moved not only did we lose nice and considerate neighbors, we lost our internet hookup.

And about neighbors, sometimes I think it would be nice if, like jobs, we could interview people who are considering moving close to us. You know, to see if they are compatible.

But I digress — after losing my job because of a workforce reduction related to COVID-19, I was faced with filing for unemployment insurance. I want to tell you, that was not a fun process on my cellphone.

The instructions clearly indicated to refrain from hitting the back arrow after completing a page. I'm a fairly well educated person and understood this. However, when I clicked on a question mark for more clarification, I had no idea how to get back to the

"page" I was working on.

After a failed attempt at Jedi mind control, I finally decided to click the back arrow. And it took me back, all right — all the way back to the beginning of the form.

Because of a massive increase in requests for service, it took three weeks to finally get our internet hooked up. In addition to waiting for equipment, we had to have new underground cables installed, which required everyone and their dog coming out and painting on our sidewalk, driveway and lawn before they could dig for lines.

I know, I know, what's a few more days after not having internet for nine-plus years? Really, though, it's kinda like putting candy in front of a kid and telling them not to eat it. The anticipation of being able to shop on Amazon on a screen bigger than my hand was almost too much to bear.

People have asked how I'm handling the job loss. Overall, I'm doing pretty good. In fact, I'm a bit surprised that my sleep patterns are much improved.

While getting up several hours earlier than usual, I have learned that my husband and the dogs have their own little morning routine. So, after John provides me with a Pepsi, I've been making a conscious effort to develop my own little routine in the confines

of my daybed room.

Dare I say it, I might be turning into a morning person. When we're finally able to take road trips again, my friends might be surprised to find that I'm actually ready to go. In the past, they were forced to lie to me about our planned departure time to make sure I was up and ready.

I must say the hoarding behaviors for some products is somewhat intriguing. Luckily, John and I had gone to Costco in late February and were stocked up on most of our paper products and household cleaners before the panic hit.

Due to my allergies, I did have to buy some tissues. I was a bit amused that the advertised sale price was three boxes for \$5. However, store restrictions only allowed me to purchase one box.

I will admit that I have a heightened awareness of how much Pepsi I have on hand. But it's not all that different than usual, as I always have a little pyramid of pop in the garage. Believe me, this pandemic wouldn't be pretty if I ran out of Pepsi. #staysafe

Tammy Malgesini, the former Hermiston Herald community editor, enjoys spending time with her husband and two German shepherds, as well as entertaining herself with random musings.



Tammy Malgesini

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter: Make the Herald your own

To the editor:

Congrats to the *Hermiston Herald* on its newfound print audience! I was thrilled to learn that the paper will be delivered to every household in town beginning this month. This is a great publication and community asset, and knowing that it will reach more people than ever before is a good thing for all of us.

I've had the pleasure of working with Jade McDowell since she first moved to Hermiston, and she's the kind of editor you want running a local paper — focused, creative, empathetic and curious.

I encourage everyone reading this, especially those who are holding this paper for the first time (or the first time in years), to make time each week to actively engage with the *Herald*. Read the news and features and get to know more about your town, and then write or call in with story suggestions, letters to the editor, or even just a word of encouragement.

Hermiston is an incredible and diverse community and deserves a voice that represents those values. The *Herald* can be that voice if we all get involved.

Daniel Wattenburger
Hermiston

Letter: Educate young people on COVID-19

To the editor:

A few days ago, I went to get some items at a local convenience store. When I pulled up there were a group of children congregated around the entrance. I don't think they meant to be rude about social distancing; they just didn't understand.

But as I entered, a teenager, noting I was wearing a mask, thought it would be funny to cough in my face on the way in. It was clearly purposeful, as he laughed and joked with his companion afterward about the "dude wearing a mask."

I have to interact with two elderly people and my wife is a nurse. I do not wear a mask to protect myself, but to protect others. I sincerely hope that parents will educate their young people about how serious this crisis is. As an educator, it breaks my heart that these young people were so thoughtless.

Joseph Brusberg
Hermiston

CORRECTIONS

It is the policy of the Hermiston Herald to correct errors as soon as they are discovered. Incorrect information will be corrected on Page 2A. Errors committed on the Opinion page will be corrected on that page. Corrections also are noted in the online versions of our stories.

Please contact the editor at editor@hermistonherald.com or call (541) 564-4533 with issues about this policy or to report errors.

SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters Policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for the Hermiston Herald readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters should be kept to 250 words.

No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. The Hermiston Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content.

Letters must be original and signed by the writer or writers. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include

a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. Only the letter writer's name and city of residence will be published.

OBITUARY POLICY

The Hermiston Herald publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include small photos and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. Expanded death notices will be published at no charge. These include information about services. Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style.

Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at hermistonherald.com/obituaryform, by email to obits@hermistonherald.com, by fax to 541-276-8314, placed via the funeral home or in person at the Hermiston Herald or East Oregonian offices. For more information, call 541-966-0818 or 1-800-522-0255, x221.