

EDITOR'S DESK

A career is a journey, not a destination

Dear graduating seniors, Congratulations on your accomplishments in graduating from high school. Whether you stayed the course with a 4.0 GPA or were one of those who worked hard to scrape together a passing grade at the end in far from ideal circumstances, what you have achieved is something you should feel proud of.



Jade McDowell
NEWS EDITOR

Celebrations for that work will look a little bit different this year, and I'm sorry about that. I truly feel for students who have been suffering the disappointment of missing their final musical performance or sports season or just hanging out with friends.

If it is any comfort at all, I will say I believe society sometimes places an outsized role on certain rites of passage. I skipped my high school prom, for example, and turned out fine. I have no idea what any of my friends I've met since high school wore to their prom, or who they went with, or whether they went at all, because it is not something that comes up in day-to-day adult life.

As I thought of what kind of advice I might give you, since you won't have the usual commencement speeches to sit through, I have two pieces of advice relating to what comes next.

The first is to not pay too much attention to the well-known quote "Love what you do and you'll never work a day in your life."

I love my job. I know a lot of people who love their jobs, but in my experience, each one of those people still have



Adrian Corta and Julian Gutierrez announce their post-secondary choice as Blue Mountain Community College during Signing Day at Umatilla High School in 2019.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney, File

the occasional complaint about their employment. They might have to control their impatience with certain customers, stress out when a co-worker quits unexpectedly or not enjoy the paperwork part.

I'm sure Marshawn Lynch loved playing for the Seattle Seahawks in 2015. It was probably a dream come true. But when media day for the Super Bowl came around, he answered every question from reporters with, "I'm just here so I don't get fined," proving even star athletes have parts of their job — like holding press conferences — that feel like work rather than play.

If you test the waters on a college major or other job path and aren't enjoying yourself overall, find something you'll like better. But be cau-

tious about buying into the notion that everyone has One True Calling out there somewhere that will solve all their problems.

That brings me to my second piece of advice, which is not to feel like you have one shot right now at age 18 to pick what the rest of your life will be like, and there is only one right answer.

Some jobs have a pretty straightforward career path. Someone does a plumbing apprenticeship and ends up as a plumber, or goes to nursing school to become a nurse. But there are millions of job titles out there. There is a good chance yours will end up looking more like "content marketing manager for a company that makes toothbrushes."

People don't generally decide in high school they want to work for a

company that makes toothbrushes, but somebody has to do it.

I read a story recently about a woman whose job it is to pick out the artwork for television characters' homes, based on the character's personality, aesthetic, the time period they live in and what they might be able to afford. It's a cool job, but probably not exactly where she imagined she would end up when she graduated from high school.

So remember as you start your journey that the job you'll love might not be one you know exists yet, most college students change their major at least once and most people don't retire from the same company they started at.

A career, like life in general, isn't a journey from A to B but rather a maze with constantly branching paths. I may have chosen to major in journalism, but every day since I have had to make choices. Do I want to stay in my job or is it time for a change? If it's time for a change, do I want to stay in journalism or do something else? If I stay in journalism, what job title would I want to pursue, and what news outlet would I want to work for? If I wanted to get out of journalism, what would I want to do instead?

If you're not sure exactly what you want to do with the rest of your life, don't sweat it. You're not choosing your entire future right now, you're just taking a first step. Every step will bring new choices into view, including the choice to turn back and go in a different direction if you don't like what you see ahead.

So good luck out there. You'll do great.

COLUMN

Help is available when it comes to mental health

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization (EOCCO) and its partner, Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc., (GOBHI) are honored to join our providers throughout Eastern Oregon and beyond in raising awareness and bringing understanding to the significant role that mental health has on one's overall health and wellbeing.



Karen Wheeler

May is an important month for observations recognizing community-serving initiatives. Since 1949, United States communities have observed Mental Health Awareness Month.

We honor this month to recognize the importance of mental health and wellness in our communities. One in five adults in America experience a mental illness. Nearly one in 25 adults live with a serious mental illness.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only emphasized the importance of mental health in daily life. It is normal to feel anxiety and fear

during this pandemic. Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress.

Consider these stress management tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Pause. Breathe. Notice how you feel.
- Take breaks from COVID-19 news and information.
- Make time to sleep and exercise.
- Reach out and stay connected.
- Seek help if feeling overwhelmed or feeling unsafe.

If you are in an immediate danger, call 911. Lines for Life provides free, 24-hour crisis lines for people who are experiencing a mental health crisis, including suicidal thoughts and lines for individuals or family members concerned about substance use. You can find more information at www.linesforlife.org.

If you need help for an urgent but not immediate matter, consider calling the David Romprey Warm Line: 1-800-698-2392.

Community Mental Health Programs offer an array of behavioral health and support services

in each Oregon county. These providers have 24/7 crisis lines and mobile crisis response teams; Eastern Oregon numbers are listed at www.eocco.com/members/crisis-help.

Another helpful resource is Mental Health First Aid, a public education program that introduces participants from all walks of life to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact and overviews appropriate supports. A map of available instructors and courses is posted at mhfaoregon.org.

EOCCO and GOBHI are committed to rural and frontier health care; this mission is more important than ever during times of crisis.

We encourage you to assist us in sharing the important message of Mental Health Month with your friends, families and neighbors — during May and in the months ahead.

Karen Wheeler is the CEO of Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc. and Sean Jessup is the CEO of Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

All lives matter

To the editor:

I received an urgent message from my sister on April 15, 2020, that our cousin's adult grandson, Caleb, was missing. Caleb had graduated from a Salem high school in 2019 and had started an apprenticeship program. Caleb had a history of depression, but was excited about his new prospects in life.

Then COVID-19 hit and he was let go at work. He followed all of the social distancing and stay-at-home guidelines, as did his roommate. With life interrupted, the darkness of despair began to engulf him until it consumed him. Later that day, he was found dead from a self-inflicted wound.

I consider Caleb's death COVID-19 related, though it will not appear on the daily OHA report. It is imperative that the most vulnerable, the elderly and those with fragile health are protected from COVID-19. However, all other Oregonians should be free to choose to stay home or be able to work with safe precautions.

We flattened the COVID19 curve, now it is time to flatten the projected 6,000 suicides related to COVID-19. Let's learn from Caleb: All lives matter and work and school are essential for all of us.

Kris Peterson
Hermiston

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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.



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