

EDITOR'S DESK

# A small survey makes a big difference

If you have received an invitation from the U.S. Census Bureau to fill out the 2020 Census and have not yet done so, stop what you're doing and go do that now.

It may seem like a small thing, but that five minutes of your time is a huge service to your community.

Census counts are used to determine your representation in government, including how many seats your state gets in Congress. Oregon is one of seven states projected to possibly snag an additional seat in the House of Representatives, taking one away from a slower-growing state, such as California or New York. A low turnout of census responses in Oregon could hurt those chances.

Census data will also be used to divide up representation in the Oregon Legislature. Right now, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 69.7% of Multnomah County households have filled out the census, and 72.1% in Clackamas.

Out here, only 52.2% of Umatilla County households and 42.9% of Morrow County households have responded.

That's good news for Portland residents who are hoping to see the Legislature remain controlled by a supermajority of Democrats from mostly metro areas. It's not so good news for



Jade McDowell  
NEWS EDITOR



Staff photo by Jade McDowell, File

Hermiston's population will be counted along with the rest of the country's during the 2020 U.S. Census.

the people who wish there were more state legislators who understand Eastern Oregon.

Census data also helps determine the distribution of more than \$800 billion in federal grants through more than 300 different programs, such as Medicaid. According to an analysis by George Washington University, in 2015 Oregon lost \$1,169 per person who had not been counted on the 2010 Census.

When a community has a lower rate of participation in the census than other communities, making its population seem smaller than it actually

is, that community gets less than its fair share of funding for everything from Head Start to Section 8 low-income housing to highway improvements. Federal grants using census data have made many local projects possible, including the \$2 million Community Development Block Grant to build Hermiston's new senior center, and the \$1.7 million Echo recently received to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant.

The private industry often uses population growth data as well, to make decisions about where to locate stores, restaurants, offices and

factories.

If political power and money aren't good incentives, how about patriotism? Filling out the census is a civic duty enshrined in the Constitution, right up there with paying your taxes or jury duty.

The idea of a census dates back to biblical times, but the first U.S. Census was taken in 1790, when Thomas Jefferson was president and the entire United States had fewer residents than Oregon does now. Since then, it has charted the growth of our nation a decade at a time, shaping the decisions of our leaders.

If you haven't filled out the census yet, it only takes a few moments of your time. Simply fill out and mail back the paper copy your household has received, visit [2020census.gov](http://2020census.gov) or call 844-330-2020 for English or 844-468-2020 for Spanish. If you don't do one of those things before Sept. 30, taxpayer dollars may be used to send someone to your door to ask you to fill one out in person.

The census only asks for each household member's name, birth date, sex and race and whether the home is a single-family dwelling or apartment. There are no questions about finances, citizenship, political party, religion or other things people sometimes don't like to talk about, and your answers are confidential.

Do it today. Your country and your community thank you for doing your part.

COLUMN

## Pandemic creates Pepsi panic

I recently had a déjà vu moment with my soda of choice.

This past spring when the coronavirus turned my world upside down, I told my friends that John and I would be fine as long as I had my Pepsi Zero Sugar. Part tongue-in-cheek, part serious, it's now getting real.

It started several weeks ago when I couldn't find half-racks of Pepsi Zero at Safeway. In retrospect, I wish I had bought the 6-pack bottles. A couple of days later, I placed a Walmart pickup order and did just that — I should have bought more.

I sent a message to my bestie, Carol Greene, telling her I was in the middle of a crisis. While she laughed, she's well aware of my need for Pepsi. She suggested I look on Amazon (been there, done that and not willing to mortgage the house to buy and have it shipped).

Several years ago, I went through a similar panic, which I wrote about in a January 2016 column. At the time I was drinking Pepsi Next, which was taken off the market. As I mentioned then, I didn't want to go back to the added calories of regular Pepsi and I didn't care for the aftertaste of Diet Pepsi — that's when I discovered Pepsi in the black can. In addition to no sugar or calories, it has twice the caffeine ... perfection!

After again finding an empty space on the shelf where my beloved black can should have been, I asked customer service at Safeway when the Pepsi distributor would be restocking the shelves. She said he had been there earlier that day and proceeded to tell me that there was an aluminum can shortage due to the pandemic. It was her understanding that Pepsi was going to concentrate on producing its primary products, which didn't

include Pepsi Zero.

As my supply dwindled, I understood the desperation that leads addicts to places they wouldn't normally go. I donned a hazmat suit to enter Walmart in search of the elusive black can. I also went to Rite-Aid and Bi-Mart, as well as a handful of convenience stores. I finally returned to Safeway, only to find 6-packs of 7.5 ounce cans.

Who, pray tell, only drinks that small of an amount? It doesn't even feel right in my hand. I bought them all. Before judging me, there were only five — during normal times, it would be nothing for me to buy eight or 12 half-racks when they're on sale.

I told my husband I was likely just putting off the inevitable. It seems that eventually, I'd have to leave the dark side of the black can and make the switch to the silver Diet Pepsi can.

And then, Sunday afternoon my bestie called. Carol found four 6-packs of Pepsi Zero and did I want her to buy them. The answer was a resounding "Yes!" She told me they were on sale but I didn't really care — even full price, it would be much cheaper than what I found on Amazon.

Carol later messaged me saying she was afraid I was in my little pool and wouldn't answer the phone and she wouldn't know what to do. I told her, "For future reference, always buy the 6-packs and half-racks."

I'm OK ... for now. But if you see Pepsi in the black can, don't hesitate to buy it and drop it off at my house — help a desperate addict in need.

---  
*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

### COVID isn't just spread by Hispanics

Well, Dr. Jeremy Anderson, so you blame the Hispanic community for the high number of the COVID-19 cases in Hermiston? Did you do a thorough survey of all the people in Hermiston, all the other provider offices? Does it seem to you that all the Hispanics spread the virus in Hermiston?

I've got news for you, doctor: A lot of people in our community think they won't get the virus. I've seen whites and Hispanics go into a store with no mask on. They think it won't happen to them.

Call the Oregon governor and tell her to open the town again, that you will see that all Hispanics leave town. Maybe then you'll have no more virus in town.

Minerva Bethel  
Hermiston

*Editor's note: This letter is in reference to an article that appeared in the Aug. 6 East Oregonian titled "Skeptic faces push-back from community members."*

### Try a proven method for combatting COVID

The photo of the Will Not Comply Protest in Pendleton graphically demonstrated why we are unable to get the COVID-19 virus under control. The photo shows a woman holding a sign saying "I will not lose my business because you lose your mind". The woman is not wearing a mask and appears to be in close proximity to other demonstrators.

All over the world, the wearing of masks and social distancing have demonstrated success in lowering the incidence of the virus in their population, with the subsequent opening of their businesses. This includes Third World countries. I have always maintained if you are

doing something and getting the same bad results, do something different. I suggest trying something that has proven to work.

As a retired junior high teacher, I recall we always had a small percentage of our student body who loudly proclaimed "they had rights" but were vague on the responsibilities these rights implied. It appears these me-me-me kids have grown big.

Carlisle Harrison  
Hermiston

### Change is possible; work together

Dear Mr. President,

As it appears to be for you, I was upset when NFL players knelt during the national anthem. However, at this time I think we should all kneel for the anthem, as a statement against improper and illegal police actions and in memorial to all past, present, and future victims of police brutality. In this we must agree to disagree.

I am as big a patriot for this country as anyone ever (retired U.S. Navy, ballistic missile submarines), but sometimes things become more important than the primary symbols of this country. Right now, I believe all Americans should shout with one voice, "No more bad police." You do know what they say about one bad apple.

Unfortunately, we have always had bad apples as police, politicians (can name a half a dozen right now), military, and any other job you can name. We probably will always have them. Perhaps now is the time to say something and generate real change. This is our chance to make America truly great. Please join me in this.

Fair winds and following seas.

William Laffen  
Umatilla

### 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](mailto: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](http://hermistonherald.com/obituaryform), by email to [obits@hermistonherald.com](mailto: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.