

EDITOR'S DESK

# Our ancestors can inspire our sacrifices

In March I wrote a column called “Things to be grateful for in the age of COVID-19.”

Although the positive things I listed then remain true, I have to admit the unrelenting, joyless slog through stress and uncertainty in the months since has dampened my feelings of gratitude.



Jade McDowell  
NEWS EDITOR

This pandemic is hard. Its toll has been immense — physically, mentally, financially — on almost everyone.

One of the difficult aspects of it has been that there's no quick fix. Our modern, comfort-filled society has mostly taught us that we shouldn't have to suffer any sort of discomfort for any significant amount of time. Feeling pain? Take a painkiller. Hungry? Here's a drive-thru. Hot? Turn up the air conditioner. Bored? Pull out your phone.

It's hard not to imagine that our ancestors who worked from sunup to sundown for basic survival, who never had a hot shower in their lives, who survived the Great Depression on scraps or lived in slavery or slept among rats in the trenches of a world war, wouldn't shake their heads in embarrassment at what wimps those who bear their name today turned out to be.

My four-greats grandmother crossed the Atlantic, and then the United States, burying her husband along the Oregon Trail, and then lying sick with cholera in a cov-



Hermiston Herald, File  
**Madison Garrett, left, Katelyn Rickords, Siobhan Holman and Chase Spratling struggle to keep a handcart from rolling down a steep hill during a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Pioneer Trek near Plymouth, Washington, in 2014. Historical reenactments help inspire people with the stories of the difficulties others before them went through.**

ered wagon while her young children cared for her. And yet, I complain if the power goes out for an hour.

This fall people got tired of the sacrifices they were being asked to make, but the world needs us all to toughen up now and be more like those who came before us.

Hospitalizations in the United States are soaring, and some states say they are at or near hospital capacity statewide. Oregon has the lowest number of hospital beds per capita in the nation, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, which means we have less room for letting cases spike out of control.

Even for those who are never admitted to the hospital, an

often-overlooked aspect of the virus is the lingering, sometimes life-changing organ damage that it can cause, along with the “long haulers” who say they have been suffering flu-like symptoms for several months now, with their doctors at a loss for when — or if — they might return to health.

Despite these worrisome effects that have caused lockdowns and other precautions on a global scale, there is light at the end of the tunnel. The effort to defeat this virus has brought together the best minds in the world in an unprecedented scale. Doctors are saving more patients as they refine their treatment strategies and new therapies are approved. And

now we have announcements of vaccines that trials indicate are far more effective than expected.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease specialist, told Jake Tapper on CNN's “Meet the Press” last weekend that if these vaccines become available soon and an “overwhelming majority” of people take them, we could be easing back into “relative normal” by the second or third quarter of 2021.

For now, however, we need to get as many people as possible safely through the winter. Much of the unusually high COVID-19 rate in the United States can be blamed on institutional failures of testing shortages, poorly designed restrictions, mixed messaging and economic failures that have forced people to choose between COVID-19 exposure and no paycheck. But a lack of fortitude when it comes to making sacrifices on a personal level has added even more layers of preventable suffering.

I'm not looking forward to more months of this. I deeply miss having game nights and movie nights with friends, playing indoor sports, traveling, attending concerts, eating inside restaurants, hugging friends and all the other things I've given up since March. But our ancestors have lived through far worse, which means we can do this.

COLUMN

## Expressing gratitude despite pandemic

One thing I appreciate about the month of November is that numerous people in my Facebook newsfeed are posting daily about something that they are grateful for. It has been especially refreshing reading these lately because a lot of things about this past year have basically sucked.

While I've had my share of woes since ushering in 2020, I have much to express gratitude about. One of the most exciting things was taking a 60th birthday trip to California in February with my bestie and her daughter. Carol and I periodically talked about taking Casie to Disneyland since she was around 8 years old — and 20 years later, we can check that off our bucket list.

We squeaked the trip in a month before the global pandemic brought most of the world to a standstill, including shuttering theme parks. However, for those five days, it truly was a magical experience — from flying first class, going to Disneyland, Universal Studios Hollywood and spending a day

in Huntington Beach.

My husband and I absolutely adore our canine kids. And this past year has been no different. It brings me great joy when they exuberantly greet me at the door, eagerly anticipate going on outings and exhibit true unconditional love. My only wish is that they lived longer — well, I'd also really like it if they could talk.

John and I recently had a health scare with his 11-year-old German shepherd, Lucifer, who in his prime weighed more than 100 pounds, began refusing to eat. It was breaking our hearts watching our once majestic dog withering away before our eyes.

Taking him to the doggie doctor, we were prepared for the worst — thinking he might have liver or kidney problems. We were relieved to find out his organs are in pretty good shape. After looking at his lab work, Dr. Barton determined that Lucifer's loss of appetite was likely due to hip pain. He received a cortisone shot and is doing better with his movement and appetite.

During this time, it seems the General, my 8-year-old German shepherd, has packed on the pounds that Lucifer lost. Just the other day while Lucifer was lei-

surely approaching his bowl, I caught the General “red-pawed” chowing down on brother's food. I yelled (OK, I swore) at him, which actually scared Lucifer more than the criminal canine.

I immediately grabbed the General's leash. For a brief moment, he thought he was going for a walk. Imagine his surprise when after attaching the leash to him, I tied it to the door.

I'm also grateful for the simple things — including talking to my folks several times a week and lounging in my little backyard pool with my husband almost daily this past summer. In addition, I appreciate an extensive hat collection that helped me survive a pair of five-week hair crises. And I'm glad that I have yet to run out of Pepsi Zero Sugar.

“Showing gratitude is one of the simplest yet most powerful things humans can do for each other.” — Randy Pausch

*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 and drinking Pepsi Zero.*



Tammy Malgesini

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Distance learning is difficult

As you are aware, we are living in unprecedented times with the pandemic. Our children have had to resort to online learning. I am not faulting the teachers, as I know they are working tirelessly.

The main concern is that children have been locked out of the classrooms for over six months. The socialization, the relationships built with teachers and fellow students are so critical. I am also concerned with the children who were and are continuing to struggle with inequality in technology, watching other siblings while parents have to work, and with the most important factor — nutrition. Schools for a lot of children are a stable place. It's a place of comfort for some in really bad situations. It's a place of love and caring from teachers, staff and others employed by the school or are volunteers, which are so crucial.

Also a real concern is that the schools are the point of contact when children are abused — for important social services that can protect the child and help them get the services they need.

Lastly, it is also really important for kids to be part of activities, drama, music and sports, which helps round out children; these also teach important lessons as well.

It is my hope and prayer that soon school districts will start to be bold and band together to keep fighting for the children and let par-

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ents have a choice while supporting teachers who want to see their students again.

**Shane Robinson**  
Hermiston

### Your turkeys are watching

This is Captain Butterball of the Governor's Party Team. Citizens should be aware that we have microchipped random turkeys and hams at local markets. This allows us to track the destination of these products.

We are authorized to use drones and communications technology to find those persons who choose to disregard the six-person maximum party size for Thanksgiving. Violators will be placed under house arrest and confined to their bathroom. Guests will be sent to their homes. The suspect turkeys and hams will be humanely consumed by members of the team. Repeat offenders will be relocated to Portland where they can join rioters and looters.

Happy holidays to all in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

**Capt. Butterball,**  
**aka Mike Mehren**  
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.

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