

EDITOR'S DESK

# No one should be afraid in their own home

Every week as I write up highlights from the week's police activity for the Hermiston Herald's police log, the same phrase pops up over and over.

"A domestic disturbance was reported ..."

Sometimes the log from 911 dispatch simply gives the address. Other times, a note gives a glimpse into what happened — a man and a woman were screaming at each other in their front yard, or a young child called to report her father punched her mother.



Jade McDowell  
NEWS EDITOR

Domestic violence is a scourge on society, and our community is no exception. If there is one place someone should feel safe, it's their home. But for some people, home is a place where they are constantly walking on eggshells, braced for the next attack.

The results go far beyond bruises and cuts. Physical, sexual and emotional abuse at home leaves a trail of destruction in its wake — post-traumatic stress disorder, sexually transmitted infections, trust issues, job loss, traumatized children and so on.

The stereotype of domestic violence is a husband hitting his wife, but the real picture of violence in the home is varied. It can include unmarried couples and same-sex couples, women abusing men or abuse between non-romantic pairings, such



Area community members walk to raise domestic violence awareness in 2014 during the Domestic Violence Service's annual Walk of Remembrance.

as a grandparent and grandchild. It can also include a variety of abuses that stop short of hitting someone, including stalking, threats, blackmail, breaking things or coercing people into sexual acts they don't want to participate in.

Any perpetrators of these behaviors should be deeply ashamed of themselves and seek professional help from a therapist immediately while removing themselves from a situation where they might be tempted to abuse again.

If you are someone who doesn't feel safe around a family member, significant other or an ex-partner, please do what you need to do to put yourself in a safer situation. Don't

believe the lies that it was your fault for provoking them, that you have no other options, or that it won't happen again. I promise if it happened three times, it will happen four.

There are people waiting to help you the moment you say the word. Some of them might be friends and family who have been concerned about you but thought you might push them farther away if they tried to intervene. Others are strangers with resources just waiting to help survivors.

Domestic Violence Services, Inc. in Umatilla and Morrow counties offers up a long list of help for domestic violence survivors and their loved ones. Those include:

Shelter and supplies for those fleeing an abusive situation

A crisis line

Confidential advice

Help seeking restraining orders and other court advocacy

Life skills classes

Parenting classes

Support groups

Safety planning

Referrals to other resources

Advice and support for family members concerned about a loved one in a domestic violence situation

Some companies and government agencies also recognize the financial difficulties of leaving an abuser, particularly if they were the sole breadwinner in the home. There are fee waivers for domestic violence victims in certain situations, such as leaving a shared cell phone plan.

If you are in an abusive situation and are ready to think about changing your situation, you can find local resources from Domestic Violence Services by visiting [dvs-or.org](http://dvs-or.org), calling the 24-hour crisis hotline at 1-800-833-1161 or, for less urgent matters, calling the Hermiston resource center at 541-567-0424 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. As abusers sometimes track internet browsing and cell phone usage, it may be better to use someone else's device to reach out.

No one should ever feel trapped in an unsafe or emotionally toxic situation. Help is available. Don't hesitate to use it.

COLUMN

## Keep kids writing by sending notes

It's hard to believe school is out for the summer or soon will be. There was no in-person schooling all year in some places, and others had all different modes of learning happening.

No question as far as education goes, this was one atypical year worldwide, and here we are back to summer vacation and that age-old question, "How do I keep my child/children engaged in academics?"



Scott Smith

Writing is the highest form of language processing we have in communication, making it one of the most challenging skills for some students, and is why children often resist it. Writing is a learned skill, not a natural skill like eating. Therefore, it requires more brainpower and work.

The question becomes how do we keep children writing over the summer or other times when they are not in school? One thought might be through letter/note writing during the summer. They can write one or two notes each day. They can write to family and friends or even members of your household. The objective is to have them write.

Having children write cards to others no matter what age forces them to use multiple cognitive skills they will need in their adult life. Because it's hard, you can expect some possible resistance

because they have to recall information, transcribe that information into words, and then write it. Taking the time to tell you who they are writing to and what they are writing about first scaffolds the skills to assist them in writing to the person.

Their card/note should be at least three to five sentences. With real young children, you can have them draw a picture and then tell you about their image, while you write it out for them, but older students need to write their own. Also, having them tell you and writing it out for them can be beneficial for younger children. They can read it back and, better yet, copy it to their card or paper.

Over this past year, with the pandemic, most everyone has felt disconnected at some point or on some level. It has been an emotional time for everyone, from kids to the elderly. Steven Petrow states in his column that hand-written notes and cards have a more significant impact, not only for the person receiving but also for the person writing the message. This creates a multi-purpose use of this time to have your children write notes to others over the summer.

Reading is not left out in this process either. Once written, have them read it back and edit as needed or as you wish. Don't

*IT HAS BEEN AN EMOTIONAL TIME FOR EVERYONE, FROM KIDS TO THE ELDERLY.*

stress over mistakes because, as they continue writing cards, their writing will improve, and friends and grandparents will love cards in any condition.

Hand-written notes are the best if possible. There is research showing that hand-writing is linked to higher brain function. Younger children's manuscript is excellent. Cursive penmanship can help struggling students' brains process to connect the letters and focus attention.

Hopefully, they will also receive notes from people they have written to, which will engage their reading and comprehension skills when those notes come.

This type of passive learning will have a more educational impact on your children than trying to have them read and write as if they were in school every day.

*Dr. Scott Smith is a 40+-year Umatilla County educator and serves on the Decoding Dyslexia-OR board as their parent/teacher liaison.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Scholarship drive builds community

Hats off to the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation for hosting their annual Drive for Scholarships event on June 11. It was so refreshing to see so many people that I haven't had the opportunity to see for 18 months, or more, while supporting such a worthy cause.

I look forward to many more great events that build community and remind us of the greatness we can accomplish together.

Mark Morgan  
Hermiston

### Wind power benefits environment, local economy

At EDP Renewables North America (EDPR NA), we celebrate Oregon's progress in becoming a leading state for renewable energy. To reach our environmental and economic goals, we must build a sustainable economy for our state, which is precisely why Global Wind Day is important to our future, and why the Rattlesnake Road and Wheat Field Wind Farms are living examples of this celebration.

Thanks to a dedicated effort alongside local communities, landowners and business leaders, EDPR NA's Rattlesnake Road and Wheat Field Wind Farms have successfully provided clean energy for over a decade. Since the turbines were commissioned in 2008, more than \$23.3 million has been spent within 50 miles of the wind farms and put back into the local economy. The projects created more than 100 jobs during construction and 26 full-time positions to support the operations and maintenance of the wind farms.

Along with saving critical resources, these two projects have brought over \$20 million in local spending to the area and over \$23 million in payments to local governments, supporting roads, schools, and public safety. Our projects are flourishing thanks to communities around us, and we value their support over the past decade.

While we have seen progress with our projects, building a sustainable future has become more urgent with each passing year. Through the clean power the Rattlesnake Road and Wheat Field Wind Farms produce, we can continue to create an economy that protects our planet while generating new jobs and opportunities for all Oregonians.

Jared Wizner  
Arlington

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.