

THREE MINUTES WITH ...

HERMISTON HISTORY



MICHAEL THOMAS

Hermiston High School assistant principal

How long have you lived in Hermiston?

I'm starting my sixth year.

What makes Hermiston so sweet?

I appreciate the people I work with. They are professionals.

Do you belong to any clubs?

I don't right now. I've looked at some, and I probably will join one soon.

What's your favorite restaurant?

Delish Bistro. They're not open right now, and it's driving me crazy.

What's your favorite place to relax in the area?

I love getting out on the river. I have some kayaks.

What's your favorite hobby?

I like to read. That's probably my favorite thing to do. I also like backpacking. I love getting into mountain lakes. That's a lot of fun. If I want to relax, a mountain lake is where I want to be.

What's your favorite book?

That's a tough one, because there are so many of them. I like Orson Scott Card. "Ender's Game" is a great book. I've read a lot of Tom Clancy and Louis L'Amour. "The Walking Drum" by Louis L'Amour is a great book.

What's the best thing about working around kids?

The opportunity to get them headed the right direction. This age, a lot of kids are making the decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. I try to influence them and make them productive members of society.

What is the best piece of advice you have given to one of your students?

There is a line. This line can be a lot of different things. It could be passing classes or failing classes. The closer you are to the line, the more likely you are to fall over the line. The further you stay away from the line, the easier to not fall over the line. An "A" or "B" is a long way from failing. A "D" is closer to failing, and a bad day could put you over the line. The trick in life is to stay away from the line.

Hermiston elementary schools overcrowded in 1946

25 YEARS AGO

Sept. 3, 1996

After about 33 years of being a Hermiston barber, Gene Wicks put away his clippers and razors for the last time at Gene's West Side Barber Shop. His career began in 1963 when he moved from Pilot Rock to Hermiston, following his graduation from barber school two years prior.

He worked alongside Larry Montgomery, who owned the shop at the time. In 1967, Wicks bought out Montgomery and made some upgrades to the shop he described as "a little hole in the wall."

Ed Parkins, who had his hair cut by Wicks for nearly 20 years, joked that Wicks' retirement might impact him, too. "I'll have to buy a guitar and join a rock 'n' roll band, I guess." Parkins was one of Wicks' last customers.

Although Wicks is looking forward to more time for activities he enjoys, like fishing and camping, he said he would miss life as a barber. "You really get to know your customers. When they walk in the door, you know exactly what they want," he said. "You meet a lot of nice people and make a lot of nice friends."

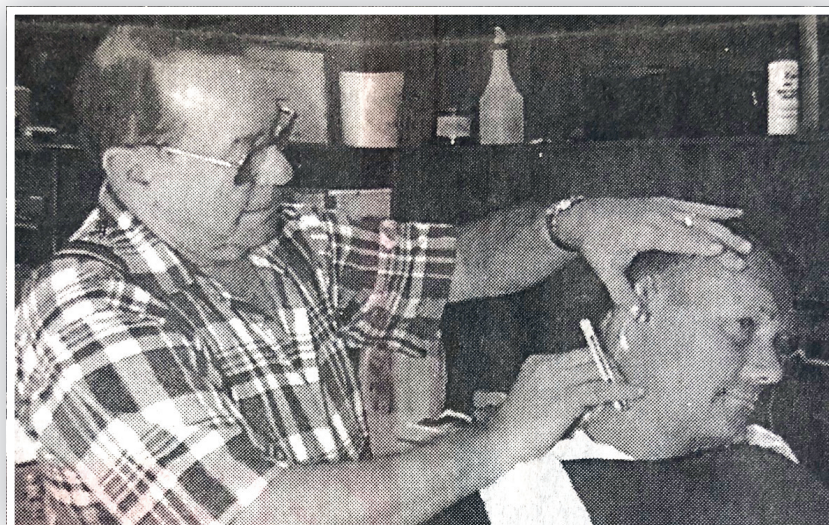
50 YEARS AGO

Sept. 2, 1971

An ambitious recycling project began as nearly 20 tons of shredded garbage was dumped at a six-acre test plot near Boardman. Several weeks ago, the Boeing Company and Columbia Processors Cooperative of Portland announced its plan to recycle garbage from the Portland area onto 100,000 acres they plan to irrigate with the Columbia River.

Elton Weeks, assistant project engineer for Boeing's Boardman Project, said the purpose of the plots would be to study the effects of waste applied at different depths and amounts. Boeing engineers, in cooperation with Oregon State University, will be experimenting with this first batch until the spring. "We'll take detailed tests of the chemical and physical reactions to help determine whether our approach is sound, and whether there will be any effects in the ecology of the area."

Cliff Schiel, chairman of the Metropolitan Disposal Committee, said they received complete approval from all government agencies —



Hermiston Herald, File

Gene Wicks, who operated Gene's West Side Barber Shop in Hermiston for 33 years, uses a straight-edge razor on Ed Parkins, one of the barber's last customers before retiring Aug. 30, 1996.

from "the governor on down" — with the exception of the Metropolitan Service District officials (the governing body of the Tri-Cities area) who said they'd withhold judgement until after the tests.

According to Schiel, the cost and local reaction are considerably favorable. He also said the project is comparatively odorless and reduces leaching problems. "There are tremendous advantages to the method and we haven't found any disadvantages yet."

75 YEARS AGO

Sept. 5, 1946

Though the Hermistonians of 1946 weren't dealing with a pandemic at the time, it seems their elementary schools were just as overwhelmed. In grades one through eight, there were 693 students — a 47 student increase from the 646 of last year. Specifically, the first grade student count topped all others and set a record at 106 students.

To accommodate this great increase, there will be three full first grade sections in town and 23 first graders combined with second graders at Ordnanee. In addition, several upper grade students who live in town will have to be shifted to the other sections that begin at 8 a.m.

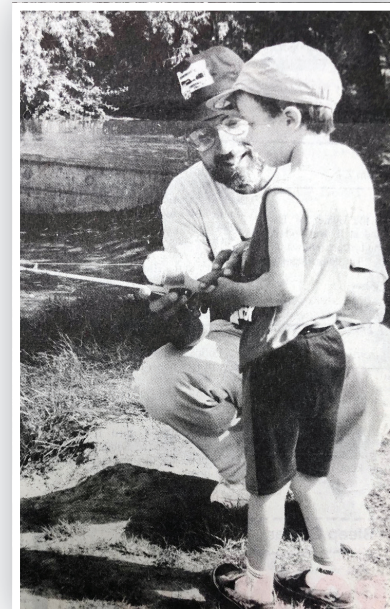
Another portion of the project plan to ease overcrowded conditions is to add another teacher in the intermediate grades. Principal Cliff Norris is still working through this prob-

lem and hopes to provide relief to the overloaded teachers by the beginning of next week.

100 YEARS AGO

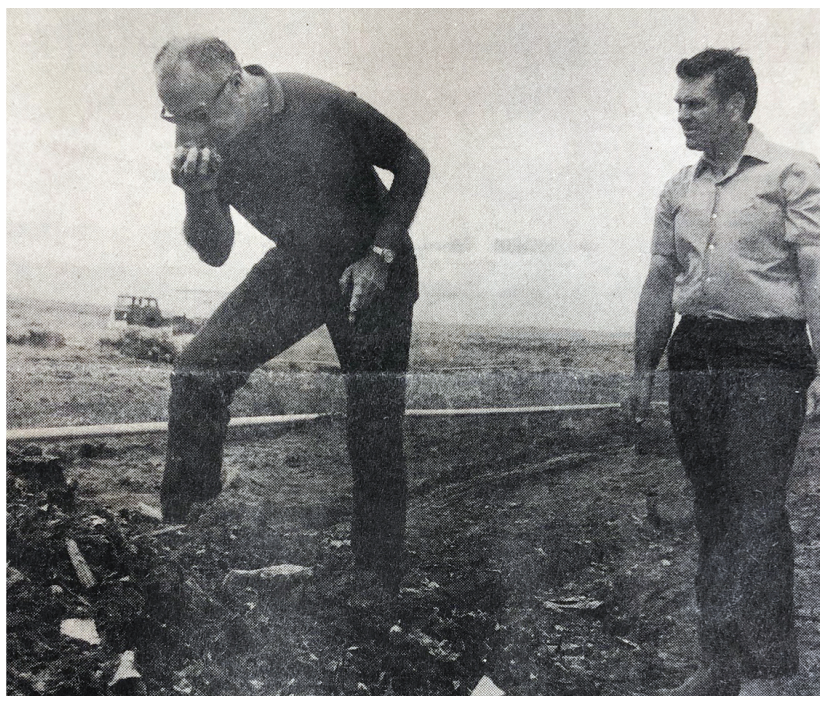
Sept. 1, 1921

In 1921, the Pendleton Round-Up boasted quite an array of famous figures. Among those expected are A. Phimister Proctor, a sculptor who recently completed an equestrian statue of President Roosevelt to be



Hermiston Herald, File

A. J. George fishes for "anything that bites," said his grandfather, Tony George of Umatilla. The two were fishing in one of the small streams in the McNary Wildlife Nature Area in late August 1996.



Hermiston Herald, File

"It doesn't smell so bad," said Cliff Schiel, chairman of the Tri-County Metropolitan Disposal Commission. Schiel and project assistant manager Elton Weeks were on site in late August 1971 for the first test truckload of garbage for Boeing's Boardman recycling project.

presented to the city of Portland by Dr. Waldo Coe; editor of the Cosmopolitan, Verne H. Porter; well-known author Mary Roberta Rinehart; and popular screen favorite Bebe Daniels. They'll take their seats in the grandstand at this 12th annual show.

Being a community affair conducted on a nonprofit basis by the Round-Up Association (which is made up of prominent Pendleton citizens), the Pendleton Round-Up hence attracts thousands of visitors. An additional attraction this year is the Northwest Grain and Hay Show, to be held in Pendleton during Round-Up week. The show is open to the public and a \$1,500 premium list, the greatest ever offered for such products in the northwest, is also capturing the interests of wheat growers and others.

McKenzie Rose, a sophomore at Echo High School, searched Hermiston Herald archives to compile these article summaries.

BY THE WAY

Hermiston Chamber of Commerce to search for new CEO

The **Hermiston Chamber of Commerce** announced last week that **Kristina Olivas**, its chief executive officer since March, will return to her previous job at the **Walmart Distribution Center**. Her last day with the chamber is Sept. 10.

Kris Bennett, the chamber's board of directors chair, said Olivas' skills and energy have been instrumental in reconnecting with its membership, as well as remodeling the chamber's new digs at 630 S. Highway 395. While a date hasn't been set, Bennett said the chamber is gearing up for the move.

Val Hoxie, recently hired chamber executive assistant, is taking on administrative duties and will move forward with existing programs while the chamber searches for a new CEO. Hoxie, who moved to Hermiston in October 2020, most recently worked as human resources/operations manager for **Ponzi Vineyards** in Sherwood.

Larry Fetter is calling it day.

Fetter has served as the **Hermiston Parks and Recreation** director for 10 years and announced he is retiring after a total of 37 years in public service.

Brandon Artz will be interim director as the city looks

to replace the position after Sept. 3.

"It is time for me to explore new trails, new challenges and new adventures in the wild west," Fetter stated in the announcement. "My wife and I have property north of Spokane, and we need to get moved before the snow falls."

He also said overseeing Hermiston's parks and recreation were "the very best 10 years of my career."

To commemorate Fetter's departure, there is a "Farewell Fiesta" on **Wednesday, Sept. 1, 4-7 p.m.**, at the **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center**, 255 N.E. Second St., Hermiston, complete with food, music and celebration.

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Speaking for Hermiston Parks and Recreation, **Sept. 1** is registration day for the city's youth **flag football** and **volleyball**. For more information, visit **www.hermiston.or.us/parksrec**, and on the left side of the page, open **Activities & Recreation** and click the link for Youth sports.

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September is **Library Card Sign-Up Month**. During the month, the **Hermiston Public Library** will offer incentives to community members who don't already

have a card. Library staff encourage people to come and check out all the great things a library card can provide access to at no charge.

The library is at 235 E. Gladys Ave. It's open Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday/Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit **www.hermiston.or.us/library** or call 541-567-2882.

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The **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center** menu for **Thursday, Sept. 2**, is taco casserole, garlic bread, fruit and dessert. The menu for **Tuesday, Sept. 7**, is pork loin, scalloped potatoes, vegetables and dessert. (In-house meals will be served from noon to 12:30 p.m. People planning to dine in are asked to call by 11 a.m.)

For a **Meals on Wheels** delivery in Hermiston, call 541-567-3582 before 10 a.m. to place an order. To pick up a meal for the center at 255 N.E. Second St., call before 11 a.m. Meals are \$5 and can be picked up between 11:30 a.m. and noon.

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The **Boardman Senior Center** now is providing meal delivery. Meals are \$4 paid upon delivery. Call 541-481-3257 to order.