

OUR VIEW

Stepping up to help make a difference

A community functions and succeeds through several different agencies, institutions and, most of all people.

Yet, one factor that often gets overlooked is the importance of volunteers.

Volunteers are probably one of the most important — and unsung — pieces to community success and we would urge anyone who is interested in giving back to step up and help.

It isn't as easy as it sounds, we get that. We are all busy. We all have bills to pay and work and other obligations that crowd into our lives on a regularly — ready daily and hourly — basis. Pondering a decision to complicate our already busy schedules can be difficult and often leads to an individual bowing out of volunteering.

We'd hope, though, that potential volunteers will look at the other side of the coin. Volunteering to help a local agency or nonprofit delivers its own set of rewards. You get to be part of something and make a difference.

The allure of making a difference is a



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald, File
Tom Bratton, a volunteer with the Hermiston Kiwanis Club, cleans a large pepper on May 27, 2021, during a work party at the newly renovated Funland Playground in Hermiston.

strong one and we are glad of that. People seek affirmations in life from any number of different avenues but the knowledge they can make a difference, no matter how

seemingly small, is a strong motivator.

Volunteers already do lots of work throughout the community that you and I, though, hardly notice. Big events to small venues function and succeed because of people who are behind the scenes, often volunteers, chose to give their time to help.

Every community needs a strong group of people who want to help. There is, of course, usually no monetary compensation if you volunteer, but that isn't the point. Or shouldn't be. The point is to give back to the community, to find a way to enhance other's lives and to help a town or city thrive in a unique way.

There are plenty of places where a person can help, and we need them. When a community can count on a solid corps of volunteers to step up it benefits everyone.

So, if you are looking for something to do, or a way to make a difference, find a way to volunteer. In the long run you won't be disappointed, and our community will be better for it.

COLUMN

I am going full TOW to the max, and I hope you do, too

In recent days, I have been hearing a lot about “the Oregon Way.” I still do not know the etymology of the phrase, or even what would make the Oregon Way different from the Washington Way; the New Jersey Way; or even the Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlilllantysiliogogoch, Wales, Way. Still, I get the gist of it, and I think the Oregon Way is just what we need right now.



Erick Peterson

A U.S. senator visited the Hermiston Herald office to hold a virtual town hall, and it was from him that I first heard the phrase. In the context Ron Wyden used it, “the Oregon Way” — which I will refer to from this point on as TOW— means civil discourse and debate which occurs locally, rather than in Washington, D.C. or some other faraway place.

Possibly, TOW can be explained in the same way the Bible describes love. TOW is patient, TOW is kind. “It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.”

Is that a stretch? Maybe, TOW is better understood with a more contemporary reference. We can take a look a poli-

tics in recent days, or months, or years or decades ... It is hard to know when things went so badly.

Discourse these days seems more contentious than necessary. Personally, I have lost friends and family members because we stopped being able to tolerate one another. In most cases, we quietly discontinued our association with each other. In a few cases, our breakups have been acrimonious. Our final discussions were loud, and our feelings to this day remain bitter.

In some cases, rage is just. It is moral to support the right side of an issue. And I believe that a person should stand up for, and even fight for, the protection of people who are in need.

Still, most of the arguments I see are not of this sort. Sometimes, people fight tooth-and-nail for the wellbeing of individuals, corporations, and associations that are already monstrously powerful.

We need to come together to come to a full understanding of right and wrong, good and evil. And to do this, we will need to reach out to one another in a spirit of love, TOW-wise. We need to talk.

When we talk, we see we have more in common than not. The love we have for our families, the desire for all people to thrive and the hope for our children to

enjoy better lives than we have — these are common to us all.

We all love our mothers, right? Well, most of us love our mothers. I love my mother.

Anyway, I wonder at what we might accomplish if we come together with better hearts and minds, showing empathy, humility and understanding wherever possible. We can change the world. We can do things TOW (TOWly?) to the max, advancing civility and love to a thus far unforeseen extreme. Wouldn't that be nice?

And maybe it is not too late for the world to be corrected or for individuals to salvage a few friendships here and there. As I sit here, I am thinking about reaching out to one person who voted differently than I have in the last few elections, and I am going to try to understand that person. I am going to meet them as a fellow human being, a person who lives in a nearby place and who has have similar beliefs, even if we are combative about key issues.

Whether this is what TOW is, it is how I am going to express the TOW in my heart. I'm going to do things TOW way.

Erick Peterson is the editor and senior reporter of the Hermiston Herald.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Well done on CityFest coverage

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Hermiston Herald for its coverage of the Greater Hermiston CityFest with Andrew Palau. CityFest is just another shining example of the sacrifice of time, talent and treasure that people in the Greater Hermiston area will make to bring an event of this magnitude to benefit the people of our community.

If you were able to attend one of the events, I am sure that you will agree with me that the message was hope-filled and you left the event with a greater appreciation for how our Lord can work in our lives even during these challenging times.

I also pray that many people were touched by the message of Christ's saving grace and will put into action their commitment to living a holy life (not just for the saints like St. Mother Teresa).

We are blessed in our area to have a plethora of faith communities who are more than willing to reach out and welcome anyone who desires to grow in their faith. Christ reminds us in His parables that all we need is faith the size of a mustard seed and a willing spirit.

I would strongly encourage everyone to prayerfully consider strengthening their faith by attending a church service this weekend. Again, I thank the EO for covering this event and, as Father Maxwell prayed at Mass at Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church, let us all pray for the safety of those who attended. May God bless you!

**Kristen Smalley
Hermiston**

COLUMN

Echo-Stanfield soccer is starting something special

The first chapter in the Echo-Stanfield Girls Soccer journey has been quite incredible.



McKenzie Rose

Last year, as with most other sports, we had a short and jam-packed season. Nevertheless, it still was the start of the first ever Echo-Stanfield girls soccer season. We played seven games in a one-month window, with only 10 players. Since you play with 11 on a field, we

were typically a player down, seven v. seven, or 10 v. 10 without subs. We knew that we'd have low numbers for the first couple of years, and although it was challenging, we exceeded expectations.

While we didn't win a game, we didn't lose all of them, either; tying Umatilla both times (1-1 the first game, 2-2 the second), which has had their soc-

cer program around for a while. Though a tie isn't as impressive on paper as a win, it meant a whole lot to us and our confidence as an emerging soccer team.

As a matter of fact, Umatilla was the first team we played. Then-freshman Mayela De La Fuente scored the first goal of the program (and game) off a penalty kick. That first goal really proved to us, and many others, that Echo-Stanfield Girls Soccer was real. After numer-

ous years of asking, encouraging and arranging to get a girls soccer team, it actually happened. That first game, that first goal, will remain special in my memory (and I'd imagine the same with the rest of my team).

Unlike the other teams, we were without any seniors; in fact, half of our team were freshmen. In addition, only three of the girls ever played soccer before, leaving seven that had to learn the game of soccer from the begin-

ning. How they did so well in such a short amount of time speaks to our drive and commitment as a team.

It's downright incredible how fast they learned the game, understood soccer strategy and developed skills. This feat can undoubtedly be attributed to the coachable nature, high work ethic and patience of the team.

This year, our team expanded to 12 players, allowing us to now play a full 11 and have a sub

(which will be a huge benefit). Four of our players are seniors, and though that is a little worrisome in regards to future years, we hope to increase the soccer interest in our schools.

We are extremely thankful for the support from our parents, guidance from our school boards and patience from our coach.

McKenzie Rose writes the "Hermiston History" section every week for the Hermiston Herald.



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) 278-2673 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.