

OUR VIEW

Honoring veterans and police is the right thing to do

Hats off to American Legion Post No. 37 for conducting a ceremony last month to honor the Stanfield Police Department.

The post's honor guard showcased the outdoor ceremony where post commander Aaron Wattering presented each of the police department's officers with a certificate of appreciation along with a small monetary gift.

The small ceremony could have been one of those events easy to miss, but its sig-

nificance was huge. The post and the police department represent two elements of our nation that often do not receive the kind of recognition they deserve.

There are around 19 million veterans in the U.S. and all of them deserve thanks from a grateful nation. They don't always get that thanks. That's a shame. As a nation we should hold our veterans up as a shining example of what it means to make a sacrifice for our republic and honor them on a

consistent basis.

Many of them not only sacrificed time but many lost much more in combat, including memories that will forever be a part of their lives.

Police, too, in this nation face a difficult task. They all too often are recognized for the misdeeds of a few and then painted with the same brush. Our police, especially in rural areas of the state — face a difficult job that can be made more difficult by chronic

underfunding and the wavering nature of dangerous crime.

They don't receive the kind of recognition they should, and that is why the ceremony by American Legion Post No. 37 was significant and a very good way to shine a little light on a profession we depend on.

Our police and veterans will never get the type of recognition they not only deserve but the Legion post's little ceremony goes a long way toward filling that gap.

PETERSON'S POINTS

I got a booster shot, and I feel fine

A worker at a local pharmacy gave me a booster shot, further vaccinating me against COVID-19. It is worth reporting what he told me, just in case there is someone out there who has not yet made a final decision about it. Also, I would like to thank the heroes who are engaged in this, and other, work.

First of all, I had received my first vaccination, which was the Johnson & Johnson shot, back in March. It was the single-shot one — one and done, I had thought.

Discovering that another shot was recommended, and mix-and-match was OK, I made my way to Hermiston's Rite Aid store. There, without any sort of appointment and a short line, I waited and got the jab. This one was Pfizer.

The man who gave me the shot was friendly and professional. In preparing it, he told me of his experiences since

this awful pandemic began.

He has made his rounds, he said, serving the West Coast. He has had days where he vaccinated hundreds of people. More recently, he regularly gives around 20 or 30 shots each day. In total, he said, he has given thousands of shots during the pandemic; he is not sure of the exact number.

In all of the shots he has given, he has not had anyone report a major negative reaction, he said. There have been sore arms, and other minor reactions, but nothing that rivals the disease he was helping to fight.

COVID-19 remains worse than our vaccines, he said.

After receiving my latest shot from him, I thanked him for his service, and I left without any sort of feeling that would have diminished his perfect record. My arm did not ache, and I did not feel woozy. After getting my vac-

cination, I felt no different than before.

As I write this, I still am feeling fine. I know other people who have reported minor illness and aches following their vaccination, but I am not one of them.

If I were suffering as a result of a vaccination, I would write of my bad experience. And if I were hearing of terrible reactions, I would be sharing those too. I would even recommend for people to skip this vaccination.

Instead, I am healthy and happy, here recommending the shot and feeling grateful to the people vaccinating us.

The man who helped me at the pharmacy is one person of many who are the frontline of making us well, and their work does not seem easy. At pharmacies, fairs and drive-thru clinics, they come in contact with many people. They put their own health at risk for the purpose of helping others. Meanwhile, they maintain professional and warm

demeanors. I have never seen one of them lose their cool.

And they are not alone in their heroics. Excellent people are now standing up where they are needed. Medical professionals have been among the most visible, and they are due credit, but there are more.

Government officials, teachers, cooks, gardeners, police and fire personnel, retail checkers, maintenance workers, librarians, business owners, lawyers and more are providing essential services.

Also, unpaid volunteers deserve praise for their work. Our food banks, hospitals and schools, just to name a few institutions, function on their labor, too.

This terrible pandemic has revealed the characters of many of us. When this depressing time is over, the people who proved their mettle should not be forgotten.

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



Erick Peterson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kids should simply get off social media

I just read "Equally good and equally horrible," (published in the Oct. 13, 2021, Hermiston Herald) and it just makes my blood boil.

If the adults are not going to man up and put some serious guardrails on social media; if they flat out refuse to protect kids from all manner of bullying and meanness and cruelty, then there is still something very powerful and effective kids can do for themselves and each other. They can simply shut off all social media — I mean it.

If they can get through the first week, then the withdrawal of the first two to three days will be the hardest. But then they will experience a new peace that has been longed for but missing for a very long time. They will surprise themselves by finding other ways of filling their time and connecting with their friends.

I hope they do it en masse. They will be doing themselves and each other a huge favor — and who knows, they might even inspire some change with the groveling social media owners.

**Renee Lovejoy
Hermiston**

We cannot ignore the cost of obesity

The cost of obesity is an emergency we cannot ignore. Despite the conclusive evidence that obesity is a treatable disease, Medicare rules impede millions of Americans from receiving clinically effective and cost-effective obesity solutions.

Medicare currently does not cover safe, Food and Drug Administration-approved anti-obesity medications, and only covers obesity services and treatments called Intensive Behavioral Therapy if it is provided by a primary care physician or other primary care practitioner in a primary care setting. This prevents registered dietitians like me and other specialists from providing effective treatment to older Americans living with obesity.

These laws are rooted in erroneous views of obesity as the result of individual choices. In reality, obesity is a treatable disease, stemming from genetic, biological and environmental factors. For the nearly 100 million Americans living with obesity, a lack of access to affordable care means they are at high risk for some of the leading causes of death like heart disease and stroke.

Congress has a fix at its fingertips, the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act. TROA is a bipartisan bill that will allow registered dietitians and other health experts to independently provide IBT counseling services and will provide access to Food and Drug Administration-approved anti-obesity medications.

The rate of obesity among Medicare beneficiaries doubled from 1987 to 2002 and nearly doubled again by 2016. Congress should work to pass TROA as part of reconciliation to ensure Medicare recipients have access to the treatments and the health practitioners that can help them effectively treat obesity.

**Christine Guenther
Pendleton**

COLUMN

Finding ways to give back

Like many families in our area, we just wrapped up the annual ritual of the fall youth soccer season. It's a mix of growth opportunity, spectator entertainment, and community building.

For the ultra-committed, the youth soccer experience lasts a decade or more. It starts with a mob of cleats and shin guards swarming the ball and culminates with year-round travel teams and high school league play and tournaments. For the rest, it's a handful of falls spent toting pop-up chairs and fruit snacks each Saturday, crossing our fingers for a late start to winter as we watch our kids learn teamwork and sportsmanship.

This fall was pristine. Almost every Saturday was sunny and calm, and Butte Park in Hermiston made an outstanding venue for sharing comfortable space with other families of fans.

As a one-and-done youth soccer player myself after a single campaign that involved me waiting for the ball to

arrive at my feet so I could kick it (it rarely did), I wasn't sure whether our similarly passive kids would have the drive necessary to get into the game.

I also wondered what kind of coaches they would have. I won't go making a retroactive assessment of my own coach's abilities, but I will say I remember the tone of her direction far clearer than the directions themselves.

Both of our kids landed on teams with coaches who very clearly understood the principles of developmental league soccer and offered equal parts grace and opportunity to every player, understanding their differing levels of ability and intensity. And both our kids truly enjoyed the experience.

Soccer's simplicity is the reason it's the most widely played sport in the world. But for it to work well you need dedicated volunteer coaches and refs. Youth sports can bring out both the best and worst in people, and these volunteers often take the brunt of

the darker side.

It's no wonder youth sports leagues struggle to find enough referees and umpires to fill out a full schedule. Coaching a team with your own kid on the roster is a time commitment; showing up to try to impose structure on a children's game while being reviewed by an audience of very partial observers is something else.

For everything our kids learn on the field, we can learn something from the sidelines.

Among those lessons is gratitude, a key part of sportsmanship. It's fitting that we're entering November, a month where we're reminded of thankfulness as a virtue.

Gratitude is not something that comes easy for me. Those who have read this column in the past might be quick to point out that in March I spent the entire space grousing about the month's worthlessness. I spend too much time thinking about the way I wish things were, rather than appreciating the way the way they are.

But I do believe that genuine gratitude has the power

to not only change my internal perspective, but to spread good vibes to others as well. Nobody signs up to ref youth sports for the applause, but a quick thank you after the game goes a long way.

This translates to everywhere else in life. Our individual acts of gratitude can start to offset the selfishness and vitriol that seeps into our lives. Rising above simple good manners and sharing your appreciation for the people around you has a cascading effect. We can all pay it forward while improving our own outlooks.

Being grateful also helps me think about the tremendous amount of time and effort it takes to make a community run. Rather than just enjoying the benefits of others' generosity, I'm inspired to find ways to give back.

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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.

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