

OUR VIEW

Brave National Guard citizen-soldiers deserve support

It is never an easy task to say goodbye to some of the region's best, but we want to wish the members of Hermiston's Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry (Armor) the best as they depart on an overseas deployment.

The recent ceremony for the 75 members of the Oregon Army National Guard outfit at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center sent the citizen-soldiers off in style as they will travel to Fort Bliss, Texas, to complete training for the deployment to somewhere in southwest Asia.

The deployment is certainly an important milestone for the regional Guard unit, but the 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry is no stranger to overseas duty.

Twice during the war on terror, the 3rd Battalion deployed to Iraq. The battalion also can trace its lineage — or history — to units from the 41st Infantry Division that deployed to the Pacific Theater during World War II.

The key point to the deployment is a simple one and as old as the nation. When citizen-soldiers are deployed to foreign

shores, they represent their towns and regions in a very real way. When Guard soldiers are sent overseas, their actions are linked directly to Main Street.

They are not regular Army personnel who come from all over the nation but natives of a specific region with strong ties to their communities. In a sense, when they deploy, so does a piece of Hermiston or Pendleton or La Grande or Baker City.

That is the unique aspect of the Oregon Army National Guard. They are men and women plucked from the rural heartland

and will complete their mission and then return to civilian life and a part-time gig with the National Guard.

For the first time in a long time the nation is not at war but the deployment of the 75 citizen-soldiers is no less meaningful or, to some extent, dangerous. The world is a complicated, messy place and while we wish the very best to our Guardsmen, we hope the community understands their commitment and courage.

We wish the citizen-soldiers of the 116th Cavalry Godspeed and a safe return.

PETERSON'S POINTS

The kids are alright so let's follow their lead

At some point, I'll ratchet up my complaints about young people. I'll diss their fashion, their morals, their work ethic and their adherence to technology. I'll say, they aren't as good as kids were in "my day."

Of course, I'll be wrong.

All of my future opinions about kids will be incorrect, and I hope someone is able to convince me of my wrongheadedness and steer me on the right path.

The truth as I see it now is that the kids are alright. They always have been and they probably always will be, unless we fogeys

somehow corrupt them, as we often do.

If you take issue with this, let me know. But before you do so, please look back to last week's Hermiston Herald, in which an article describes some amazing kids working with 3D printers, VR simulations and more.

Or, take a look at this week's front page, where we describe Veterans Day activities in which youngsters were involved. They were terrifically respectful to our veterans.

Virtually every time I encoun-

ter someone under 18, I am impressed. Whether they are chess players, writers, athletes or activists, today's young people are amazing.

My biggest issues are with people around my own age. In my age range are some real louts, bullies and loudmouths. I know, because I am sometimes guilty of my generation's pitfalls, and I need to apologize.

I am sorry to young people, for every time I did not listen to them, argued against them or even browbeat them to get my way. If it means anything, I sometimes meant well.

If they face existential threats,

they did not cause them. We did. Our parents gave us problems from their parents, and then they blamed us in similar ways that we now accuse our children.

Now, I feel we can either lead, follow or get out of the way. And, frankly, I do not think my generation and all older generations have it within ourselves to be the best leaders. There are great older people, sure, but the best people among us are followers. Such individuals use their resources, talents and strength to serve young people and their world.

I hear of faraway politicians and businesspeople who are working for younger people. Maybe

they are, possibly.

I am sure, though, that top notch older servants exist in our own community. They include the librarians who encourage literacy and joyful hobbies, the teachers who relay information, the pastor who shares wisdom, the retiree who helps build a playground and the nurse who vaccinates against disease. These people, and more, are examples for the rest of us.

So, to all my fellow olds, let's all become better followers, or at least get out of their way.

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



Erick Peterson



Tammy Malgesini

INSIDE MY SHOES

While digging Thanksgiving, I really can't wait for spring

Love fall — October and November typically marks that hoodie season is in full swing.

The colors of autumn and the raking of leaves signals that my favorite holiday is just around the corner. I have always enjoyed Thanksgiving — with fond memories of family meals growing up, a few extra days off from school and leftover turkey.

However, I'm ready to fast-forward to spring. For anyone that views my Facebook page, you know it's "Tulip Central" when spring hits. My page is filled with photos of the various stages — from when they first push through the ground to buds forming to the magnificent blooms.

And this coming spring is going to be awesome — with five new varieties, thanks to Jody Brittain. I CAN'T WAIT.

The funny thing is, if left to my own devices, I might have missed out. You see, I usually forget to order new bulbs until it's too late.

Several years ago, my husband ordered some tulip bulbs as a Christmas present. He planted them when I was at work one day. Several weeks leading up to Christmas, I passed by the furrowed ground going to and from my rig. I thought the neighbor's cat must have been digging around in the garden.

A few days before Christmas, John gave me a hint about one of my gifts. He said I walked by it everyday. Not wanting to wake him late at night, I shined a flashlight all over the living room — looking for my present.

Anyway, this year was no different — I neglected to order new bulbs. However, right before Halloween, I received a small package that had a sticker on it that read, "Live plants. Please handle with love."

In days gone by, I wouldn't have given it a second thought — I would have imme-

diately torn into the box. However, just last year I read about people receiving unsolicited seeds from China. And earlier this year there were reports of questionable white powder being sent in letters.

After a quick internet search, I learned the return address of Old House Gardens was a legitimate nursery in Michigan. I left a voicemail, but didn't expect a call until after the weekend.

Erring on the side of caution, I still didn't open the package. I decided to take a photo of the box and posted it on the "What's Happening Hermiston?" Facebook group.

After reading a few comments, my behavior was edging toward paranoia. I asked my husband to put it outside on top of the garbage can.

I then wrote, "A lot of my friends know I'm into tulips, so maybe somebody was sending me a gift. I guess I can put on a hazmat suit and open the box and see if there's a gift note in it hahaha."

I would have pieced together a reasonable facsimile of personal protective equipment before resorting to throwing away a box that might contain flower bulbs. But about six hours after my original post, I received a message from Jody, who had ordered the tulip bulbs for me this past spring.

I learned a lot about fellow Hermiston residents, friends, acquaintances and even strangers. But the most important thing I gained from this is you never know when your actions will touch someone else's heart — giving me a renewed hope that maybe we really are all in this together.

Tammy Malgesini, the Hermiston Herald community writer, enjoys spending time with her husband and two German shepherds, as well as entertaining herself with random musings.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Bureau of Land Management can protect more of Oregon's public lands

This spring I volunteered in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Adopt-A-Lek program. Hiking across the vast sagebrush sea in the predawn light to watch the greater sage-grouse perform their elaborate mating dance is an experience I hope every Oregonian gets to witness.

Unfortunately, their populations have declined significantly with an 80% range wide decline since 1965. The 4.6 million acres of public lands that are part of the vast Vale Bureau of Land Management District in the southeast corner of Oregon provide some of the best remaining sage grouse habitat left in the West and are important to this bird's future.

Right now, the Vale BLM is updating their Resource Management Plan, an important plan that guides and balances multiple land uses across this entire area. Due to top-down meddling from Washington, D.C., during the previous administration, the current version of the plan falls far short of conserving some of our last, best and most intact fish and wildlife habitats in this area.

In the current version of the plan, not even one acre of 1.2 million acres of wilderness-quality lands would be managed to protect their wild and intact nature. The plan also needs to include more science-based, forward-looking management strategies to ensure these public lands are resistant and resilient to a changing climate.

Fortunately, the BLM can still fix this plan and provide a balanced approach to conserving and managing our public lands in Malheur County. I urge them to do so. Future generations deserve a healthy and wild Owyhee Canyonlands.

Karl J. Findling
Bend

Learn the facts about the River Democracy Act

Misinformation is floating around regarding the River Democracy Act. The Act, S. 192, was proposed by Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, Democrats, and Oregonians assisted by nominating streams for this bill.

It adds 4% of Oregon's rivers and streams to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and provides amendments to NWSR to help reduce wildfire risk and protect water for people who use rivers as their drinking water source.

In Wyden's own words to the Eastern Oregon Counties Association, the River Democracy Act "does not affect management of private property." The River Democracy Act amends the NWSR Act to say that "nothing in this act or an amendment made by this act affects private property rights."

The River Democracy Act does implement a management plan and fire risk reduction plan on federal lands, restore water quality after a fire, give Native Americans a voice in how rivers are managed on federal lands, and retain existing rights on federal land, including mining and grazing permits.

The catastrophe unfolding for salmon in the Lower Snake River shows clean water and fish survival do not automatically remain intact even if they are good quality now.

If there are provisions that opponents of this bill would like, I encourage people to contact Wyden's office to discuss them. Spreading misinformation is not helpful to the discussion.

I appreciate Wyden and Merkley for working to preserve our beautiful rivers.

Elnora Cameron
Joseph

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.

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