

OUR VIEW

Get ready for Hermiston's Distinguished Citizen Awards

The Distinguished Citizens Awards Gala in Hermiston, March 2, is Hermiston's opportunity to recognize local stars. We are looking forward to it, and we hope people will submit their award nominations for it.

Visit <https://hermistonchamber.com/distinguished-citizens-annual-banquet/> to nominate deserving individuals and businesses for the following awards: Man of the Year, Woman of the Year and Business of the Year. Nomination forms are also available at the chamber office, 630 S. Highway 395. Nominations must be received by Feb. 6.

Every day, we at the Herald are

in touch with excellent people who deserve recognition at an award show like this one. Likewise, we visit businesses which seem deserving of acknowledgement.

When we, for example, attended the Martin Luther King Jr. Peace March recently, we saw speakers and attendees who are great champions in our community. Every time we attend an event, too, whether it be a children's story reading or a pop-up vaccination clinic, we see people who deserve a trophy.

Similarly, when we drive through our town, we come across businesses that can be rewarded for their leadership and community service.

Honoring a local business, just like awarding a person, can brighten not only the recipient's existence; it illuminates our own lives.

We are in the midst of a difficult time, as the coronavirus still has us on the ropes. As the rest of the world suffers, Hermiston does as well. People get sick, and people have died. Masks and social distancing have added to our gloom.

Still, Hermiston can feel great pride, even during its troubles. A beautiful new city hall building is going up in the middle of town. Also, two new school buildings are being built. These structures will serve a growing population.

The town also has Funland Playground, which has not lost much of its new-park shine. This is just one of the things in Hermiston that has resulted from the hard work of people. There is the Hermiston Public Library, Martha's House, Agape House and more; the list of institutions that provide great service to Hermiston is a long one, but the list of people behind those institutions is even longer.

We hope people will fill out nominations and then, if they are able, attend the upcoming gala. Hermiston and its people are worthy of such appreciation.

INSIDE MY SHOES

There's always something going wrong

Do you know how difficult it is to perform everyday tasks with approximately 50% loss of muscle mass in your hand? Unfortunately, I do. And it's my dominant hand — well, once dominant hand.

When I first started noticing problems with my hand I thought it was arthritis. And after comparing symptoms with a friend, I thought I might need to have my thumb fused. However, because I don't have an M.D. after my name, I decided to consult with my physician.

Since I had a telemedicine appointment coming up I figured I'd talk to him then. While I appreciate the convenience of not having to go into the doctor's office, it was rather amusing juggling my phone to show him what was happening with my hand. In retrospect, I'm glad I wasn't suffering from hemorrhoids.

My doc said it could be arthritis but it was best to see an orthopedic surgeon for follow-up. Thus, I was thrust into a long win-

ter's nap waiting for the referral and then getting an appointment. It seems a little ridiculous that I'm an established patient (my chart number is 8), yet I can't just call and make my own appointment.

I mentioned my hand issue to several people and I had someone suggest tart cherries. While they were delicious (thanks Julie Puzey), they didn't make a difference. And Cathy Stolz dropped by some magnet bracelets. I was pretty much willing to try anything.

I finally got into my orthopedic surgeon on Dec. 30. By this time the symptoms had gotten worse. Luckily, the pain has been bearable for the most part.

However, in addition to having difficulty zipping my pants and buttoning my clothes, I have a hard time gripping a pen. And opening jars is totally out of the question. I can still open cans of Pepsi, so the world is still safe.

I was somewhat puzzled when my orthopedic doc first indicated that the problem was likely

related to my elbow, shoulder or neck. Then I remembered the children's song, "Dem Bones" — "The finger bone's connected to the hand bone/ The hand bone's connected to the arm bone/ The arm bone's connected to the shoulder bone."

Now I'm thrust back into the waiting game. I need to see a neurologist for a nerve conduction test. And once again, the way the system is set up, it's a matter of don't call us, we'll call you.

It's all good. As much as I'm dropping stuff these days and having to bend over to pick things up, at least I'm getting some exercise.

I'd say I'm keeping my fingers crossed that the issue is either with my elbow or shoulder but I can't cross my fingers.

As Gilda Radner used to say on "Saturday Night Live" — "It's always something."

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.



Tammy Malgesini

SCHOOL DAYS

Each diploma is a win for Hermiston

The 351 diplomas handed to Hermiston High School graduates in 2021 represent more than just a statistic on a state scorecard.

Those diplomas are stories of individual success, of 351 students' perseverance through challenging times, of thousands of educator and staff investments over the past 13 years to make sure they reached that goal. Graduation is a finish line for K-12 education, but a starting line for the rest of a life. It opens a wider range of opportunities, allowing students to set the course they want to travel.

It is significant that Hermiston School District was able to reach an 88% overall graduation rate and see improvement across every cohort of students. Students who don't speak English as a first language, are economically disadvantaged, or have learning disabilities all graduated at a rate higher than 80%. Even with a steady barrage of obstacles through the second half of their high school careers, these students carried on.

Part of this is because the district has remained focused on quality instruction despite the

pandemic. The state assessment was waived, but the skills required to pass it were not. Each Hermiston graduate in 2021 earned a diploma equivalent to any other year and is equally prepared to enter the wider world.

This quality of instruction is important because graduation isn't a one-year accomplishment. The path starts in kindergarten and relies on continual and steady growth. As excited as we are about the 2021 graduation rates, we're already at work in kindergarten preparing the class of 2035.

It's gratifying to see the systems we've put in place that focus on individual student needs are working. We dedicate ourselves to the idea that no student slips through the cracks, no matter what grade level. Chronic absence in elementary school erodes the foundation of learning. Lack of rigor in middle school can hobble the transition into high school. Lost credits as a freshman can become an insurmountable hurdle as a senior.

Along the way there are numerous social, relational, mental and emotional issues to attend to. Life happens, and helping students

cope with the stresses and challenges can become as important as their academic progress. Investing in counselors and social workers to provide that extra layer of support has been key.

Schools have been a beacon of stability and an essential service, which is why we worked so hard to get them open and keep them open. They stayed true to the mission of providing equitable educational opportunities to every student they serve. That was true in Hermiston, where, by sheer force of will and talent and passion, teachers reached students going through the most difficult years of their lives and helped them move forward.

The steadily improving graduation rate at Hermiston High School is the result of more than a decade of work. It's a testament to the sheer force of will and talent and passion of our educators, and the drive and spirit of a class that refused to be derailed by the obstacles in front of them. It's something the entire Hermiston community can take pride in.

Tricia Mooney is the superintendent of the Hermiston School District.



Tricia Mooney

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Comfortable conservatives are bending reality

It's pathetic how comfortable conservatives are bending reality. Our region's U.S. representative, Cliff Bentz, said last year's deadly Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol Building is being blown out of proportion to divert attention from the real issues facing the country ("Bentz alleges 2020 election was 'bought,'" Jan. 15 edition of the East Oregonian).

I can't imagine a more pressing issue than determining what and who precipitated the attempted insurrection. The efforts of the U.S. House Select Committee on the Jan. 6 attack have clarified the premeditated nature of that attack and the enormity of the organized attempt to subvert the presidential election through massive election fraud.

That's right, while conservatives scream about voter fraud, which is extremely rare and has not affected the outcome of elections, many support the brazen election fraud sought by the former president (such as asking the Georgia secretary of state to "find 11,780" votes). Now they want to enable future election fraud by subverting voting and election protections at the state level.

The crux of the problem is the former president, and many of his minions, refuse to accept the reality of his election loss. And those who begrudgingly admit he lost, downplay his efforts to steal the election and inspire the insurrectionists.

Our country desperately needs people (particularly elected officials) to embrace truth and call out lies. A compulsive liar like the former president wouldn't be a problem if no one listened to him. But his compulsive believers, and the politicians who know better, continue to enable him. The reality is an overwhelming majority of one political party's entire congressional delegation has rejected reality and truth in the quest to secure minority rule.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, 19th century American essayist and staunch opponent of slavery, noted that every violation of truth "is a stab at the health of human society." And thus, our current mess.

Hal McCune Pendleton

Facts don't back Bentz's claim that election was 'bought'

Oregon's District 2 Rep. Clifford Bentz, who represents a grand slice of Oregon, is telling us, according to EO Media Group, that the 2020 election was fraudulent. He cites information written in the Federalist that a group of people who had the money to do so, donated funds to the Center for Tech and Civic Life.

First, The Center for Tech and Civic Life is an organization of and for election workers across the country. It offers courses for how to conduct safe and secure elections. Anyone can go into their website and check out the courses they offer for election workers, including the content of the courses. I suggest everyone do so before accepting Mr. Bentz's word that the Center for Tech and Civic Life acted to influence people to vote a certain way or for election workers to swing the election one way or another.

Next, I found an article from another organization that calls itself 2022 Influence Watch that has much information about what the Center for Tech and Civic Life has done. If the information is correct, it is specific as to where funding went to electoral offices around the country. I did not see any proof in their article that proves the CTCL is in any way partisan. My problem with this article is that it starts out by naming the Center for Tech and Civic Life as a "left-wing" group.

There are several reasons I disagree with Mr. Bentz. One, the Federalist is, and always has been, a mouthpiece for the Republican Party. Two, I find it illogical to infer that the Center for Tech and Civic Life turned the election in favor of President Joe Biden. The Center provided information to election workers about doing their job fairly and effectively. One would expect the influence of the CTCL would cause the election to be conducted fairly and effectively. It is not logical to say President Donald Trump lost just because of the training given. Anyone can check the content of the training to discern whether it favored any candidate.

My conclusions are: Giving a person or group a name, such as "left-wing" or "right-wing" does not provide the validity or non-validity of that person or group. "Correlation does not equal causation" is still the case in any logical argument. I would also infer that Mr. Bentz believes that any election is fraudulent in which his candidate is not the victor.

Evelyn Swart 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.

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