

Hermiston HERALD OPINION & READER'S FORUM

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A4

OUR VIEW

Programs prepare young people, give them voice

In the last Hermiston City Council meeting, the city of Hermiston welcomed young people to sit next to its councilors. This is just one example of programs that encourage teens to step into the world of adults and become more involved in matters that affect them.

At the council meeting, one young adviser, Elizabeth Doherty, took the city up on its invitation. Having gotten involved in a program created by Hermiston High School and the city of Hermiston, Doherty joined the council as a youth adviser, a non-voting role. There, she obtained a front-row seat on discussions of property, energy, future planning and more. At points, the council sought her opinion, and she gave it.

The same program that invited Doherty to the council also encouraged other young advisers to attend committee meetings.

At all of these meetings, the youth advisers are getting involved with Hermiston. They are benefiting from hearing from people, government officials and regular citizens alike, and they are gaining valuable experience.



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald
Youth adviser Elizabeth Doherty, far right, attends the Hermiston City Council meeting March 29, 2022. This was the first council meeting to have a youth adviser.

Also, they are weighing in on important issues. This makes sense. As the city is making decisions on matters that affect future generations, younger

people should be heard in those matters.

Programs that ease young people into the world of adults are not limited to this recent high school/city partnership, though. The recent Spring Welcome conferences at Hermiston High School showed us more ways young people are maturing.

Some of these efforts are taking place through technology. Virtual reality equipment at the school teach skills that kids might not be ready for immediately. By practicing on simulators, they learn the basics of heavy machinery and welding, getting a jump start on the real thing. In addition, CPR dummies allow young people to practice medical techniques.

The students are learning grown-up skills, and they are further developing those skills with training and apprenticeships.

This is exciting news, and we hope that this sort of work continues. We would like to see more opportunities for young people to prepare themselves for future work and responsibilities.

COLUMN

It's about time to recharge through travel



MCKENZIE ROSE
LIFE'S UPSIDES

With COVID-19 on the decline and precautionary restrictions letting up, it's time we all start enjoying the things we've been deprived of for over two years.

Specifically, let's talk about travel.

For two weeks, my family was fortunate enough to travel to Italy — and it was so rejuvenating to have a change of scenery. We spent four days in Rome, six in the Tuscany region and the last two in Venice.

I'll give you some of the highlights.

Our first tour was of the Colosseum, Palatine Hill and the Forum. You may know gladiators fought animals and each other in the Colosseum, but did you know water battles occurred as well? The arena floor would be flooded and warships brought in. We actually visited this area on March 14 — one day before the Ides of March and the anniversary of Caesar's death. People were already placing flowers and money in memoriam of where his body was cremated in the Forum.

Pompeii was another amazing tour, and we learned much more than any history book could offer. For instance, the gas cloud that rolled into nearby Herculaneum was

so hot (over 900 degrees) that food was carbonized and partially preserved. There was literally a charcoal-colored bread loaf on display.

We also saw the earliest design of crosswalks, large stones people would hop across to reach the other side. The stones were spaced close enough so chariots could maneuver, and groves made by chariot traffic were still visible.

Located inside the Vatican City, St. Peter's Basilica is the most outstanding church you will ever see. It has domed ceilings nearly five stories high, stone carvings and oil paintings adorning every wall and so many other decorations that words can't do justice.

For those who want to sneak away from touristy areas, check out

the small villages. Such towns in Tuscany are so untouched by modernism — bumpy cobblestone streets, winding and narrow alleyways, colorful and unique buildings with shutters — the list could continue forever.

We also discovered Italians have a knack for repurposing ancient creations; in Lari, the underground systems of tunnels that served as dungeons are now cellars for wine and aging meats and cheeses.

Venice is a picturesque wonderland. Though surrounded by water, you don't suffer the fishy smell of the ocean, but rather the refreshing sea salt. All the bridges spanning across canals with lively plants along building balconies were breathtaking. If you're looking for

a romantic location, this is a sure winner.

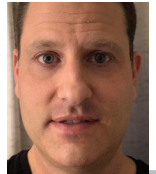
Now, I can't leave out the food. Everything was incredibly flavorful and fresh — not only pizza and pasta, but paninis, grilled vegetables, soups, pastries, meats, gelato and more. Even the pickiest of eaters won't leave hungry.

Upon returning from Italy, we found ourselves more refreshed, positive and energetic. Traveling is such an amazing way to add variety and excitement to your life. The sights, facts, food and memories will stay with you forever, so I encourage you all to go out and experience the world.

McKenzie Rose is a high school student and a resident of Echo.

COLUMN

The cost of poor leadership and hypocrisy



ALEX COOPER
ONIONS AND POTATOES

We seem to require reminders for truths most directly in our line of sight. Among these truths is that leadership exists only where behavior is modeled. This reality is observable in families, schools and the workplace. To lead means to get out in front, often at personal cost or risk, employing action that aligns with words.

When actions do not match words, we have hypocrisy, which weakens a message. Moreover, hypocrisy then induces audiences to dismiss messages wholesale, next, to seek alternatives and often, to oppose the message (and often, the messenger). The impact of this powerful undercurrent, this apparent "repulsion from hypocrisy," could benefit from formal research. The impli-

cations of such research would be of practical utility, given the apparent costs to date of such "repulsion" on real world issues such as COVID-19 and climate change.

With COVID-19, examples of hypocrisy have been countless and blatant. Among these we have seen politicians standing shoulder-to-shoulder while preaching social distance, and health "leaders" puzzling personal approach to masking. These and related behaviors clearly have undermined the force of messages put forth.

Perhaps more impactful still has been the resulting disorientation, one leaving people alone to bridge "leaders'" words and contradicting actions.

Hypocrisy here left a vacuum for galvanization of opposition, justified or not, to pandemic-related mandates and recommendations. As with COVID-19, while some are able to internally reconcile conflicting ideas, in many others, a strong

need for coherence stokes suspicion and resistance.

The issue of climate change is another in which hypocrisy has not only muffled calls to action, but to some degree, spurred active opposition to a message.

Private jets, big cars, consumption of animal products, purchase of countless goods produced with coal energy, population questions, etc., these are all areas in which purported global, national, and local climate "leaders" have seldom been coherent.

Arguments over feasibility and practicalities aside, the head-spinning image of globe-trotting rich country climate bureaucrats, as well as the hypocrisy of many local voices, have soured an audience from heeding prescriptions from these "leaders."

Further, such hypocrisy has repulsed people from the conversation entirely, reducing opportunities for common ground and future actions to be taken.

On the most local of levels, because few of us have large audiences, conceivable costs of any of our personal hypocrisies would seem less than those of well-known figures. But given the observers all of us have, we are all called to be leaders, whether or not we wish to be. We can accurately embody the title of leader by stepping forward in areas in which others may be holding back, including when doing so requires sacrifice. At the same time, we must know that any misalignment between our words and deeds will carry a cost, one greater than we might envision. Others are watching for our next move.

Alex Cooper, a Umatilla resident, is employed by the InterMountain Education Service District, translating documents and working for the Migrant Education Program. He encourages student voice at Umatilla High School through its newspaper, Viking Power!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks to Hermiston

Last Monday, March 28, I filled out a form at city hall in Hermiston, requesting repairs on some potholes in my neighborhood. They asked me to suggest a possible solution and I said maybe fill them in with gravel.

On Tuesday, a street department crew came by and prepared the offending craters for paving.

On Wednesday, they came by and paved them over.

Thank you so, so much.

Renee Lovejoy
Hermiston

Be nice to the person behind the counter

I know we've all had enough of COVID, lack of supplies and rising prices. But I am concerned about what I hear from our checkout people at every store I go to, saying they can't believe how rude and angry people are getting.

Some have even retired early because they have had enough — and you wonder why there aren't more aisles open for checking out?

Granted, there are a lot of people sitting at home and letting us pay for their living, but it is not the people who serve us who have raised prices, slowed the supply chain or made us wait a little longer to get our errands done.

Let's start being much nicer to the person behind the counter who is just trying to make a living and doing their job — let's make their day by being nice. Because if it was you behind that counter instead, how would you feel?

Judi Richter
Elgin

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