

# Hermiston HERALD OPINION & READER'S FORUM

Founded in 1906

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2022

A4

## OUR VIEW

## Club, community support cannot be tamed

Wednesday, April 6, Bill Kuhn stood up in front of the Hermiston Lions Club and received The Helen Keller Benefactor Award for 15 years of service to his club's sight and hearing committee.

This moment occurred at the most recent Lions meeting, and it was intended to recognize Kuhn for his work in helping to bring glasses, hearing aids, tests and surgery to area residents in need. Under Kuhn, the club has helped hundreds of people.

As special as the award ceremony was, however, it does not tell the full story of Kuhn, who has worked on many causes since he started as a Lion in 1976. Nor does it give a complete picture of the club itself, which is also amazing.

In Thursday's meeting, the Lions pledged donations of \$31,500. Causes are the Agape House, Sweet Potato Closet, Made to Thrive, the Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels and more. Money given by the club will feed the hungry and shelter the



**Dave Nevin and Bill Kuhn, Hermiston Lions Club members, pose next to a banner for their club on April 6, 2022. Kuhn had just received an award for having served the Lions in sight and hearing causes for 15 years.**

homeless and clothe the needy.

The list of donation recipients includes some things to make our

community more fun, too. The Hermiston Little League will get \$475 and Funland receives \$3,000 under the

Lions' plans.

The club is able to pay this money thanks to the fundraising of its members. Chowder and flower sales are part of this bounty, as are grants.

And this is not the end of the club's generosity. It is constantly busy organizing scholarships, planning events and helping people in need.

The list of the Lions' good deeds is long and getting longer, and the same goes for the kindly acts of its president. An accounting of it all becomes nearly impossible to calculate. But even if such a list were to be made, it is only part of the picture, still. Kuhn and his Lions are just one of several organizations doing good in our community.

Hermiston, Umatilla, Stanfield, Irigon, Echo and Boardman each has clubs and residents who go above and beyond to help people in need.

We are indebted to such people for their charity and for their example. As we face difficult roads ahead, they will be evermore important to us all.

## COLUMN

## There is a lot to know about Parkinson's Disease



**CAROL CLUPNY**  
SHAKING HANDS

When introduced, it's common for two people to shake hands. Most noticeable about this brief interaction is the grip of the handshake and how long the hands remain engaged.

I recently met someone who knew something about me prior to our first encounter.

"I heard you have Parkinson's. You look great. Your hands don't even shake," she said.

"Well, yes, I do have Parkinson's.

And tremors in my hands in not one of my symptoms. I have to work hard to look this good," I replied.

April is Parkinson's awareness month.

Almost everyone knows somebody with the disease. I usually hear "My grandpa had that," or "My aunt has that."

It's a good time to educate. Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder affecting the dopamine-producing neurons in the substantia nigra portion of the brain.

By the time a person is diagnosed with the disease, 70-80% of these dopamine makers have ceased working. We know that exercise, nutrition and medication may slow the progression, but there is no cure for this disease.

It is now the fastest-growing neurological disease in the US with a new diagnosis made every nine minutes. Parkinson's was previously considered an "old person disease," with most identifications made after age 60. The Parkinson's age of diagnosis has dropped with many "young onsets" demonstrating symptoms between 45-55. I was fifty.

When we think of Parkinson's, we get a picture of a hunched over older man. As he shuffles along, we see his hands tremor. He has stiffness and rigidity, and trouble balancing. He might have trouble swallowing, soft speech, depression, anxiety or any one of approximately 50 symptoms.

"Wait a minute. I just shook

your hand. You said don't tremor," my new friend commented.

The phrase "When you have seen one person with Parkinson's you've seen one person with Parkinson's" describes the disease. There are many symptoms, and no two patients are exactly alike".

I had my own set of symptoms. I was referred to a movement disorder specialist at Oregon Health and Science University. She told me I had 5-7 years before my life would get tough. It's been 14 years. Yes, it's tough but bearable. Exercise is top on the list for treatment. I took up bike riding and now you see me pedaling around town on a bright yellow recumbent trike with a roadrunner flag.

I had a deep brain stimulation procedure in 2016 which gave me an electrical boost. I faithfully take my medication and communicate with my doctor about what's working. And I socialize with a very fun group of people with Parkinson's who meet monthly to learn a little and laugh a lot.

I look forward to meeting new people, here in Hermiston or on my travels promoting my book. Watch out when we shake hands. If you comment that I don't shake when I shake, you'll get an earful about Parkinson's disease.

■ Carol Clupny has lived in Hermiston for 42 years. She is the author of "The Ribbon of Road Ahead: One Woman's Remarkable Journey with Parkinson's Disease."

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Wake up, America

It was not so long ago that much loved Democrat President John F. Kennedy told the nation in his 1961 inaugural address, "Ask not what our country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," implying a sense of self sacrifice was needed by all Americans to keep the torch of freedom burning bright in a world filled with tyranny.

This was an idea most could relate to regardless of political affiliation.

But times have changed, and modern liberal philosophy has become almost unrecognizable to previous generations. It can be more accurately described as "Forget personal sacrifice, keep sitting on your behind and let the government rob your neighbor for you."

I would ask you to read Kennedy's speech, which he referred to God and the people in his speech. He said, "the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God."

When was the last time you heard a political speech from a Democrat politician mention God in their speeches? It has been 61 years since President Kennedy made that speech, and I was a Democrat at the time, now each and

every Democrat political priority can be broken down to a simple concept: They are all designed to take money and power away from individuals, families, communities, businesses, charities and states and transfer it directly to the federal government. I changed my political party affiliation in 2016, and I would encourage the decent Democrats of America to think long and hard for which party you choose to live under. You have until April 26 to change your voting registration in the state of Oregon.

**Kathy Wilson  
Pendleton**

### The burden of Alzheimer's

The number of Americans living with Alzheimer's is growing — and growing fast.

According to the Alzheimer's Association 2022 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report, more than 6 million Americans of all ages have Alzheimer's. In Oregon, there are more than 69,000 people living with Alzheimer's disease and more than 130,000 family members and friends providing care.

As a daughter who watched her

father suffer, battle and die from Alzheimer's, I have seen firsthand how cruel and devastating Alzheimer's is on an individual, the family and the community. My mother served as my father's caregiver. The emotional, physical and financial stress of this disease on caregivers also is a crucial issue. My family and I have experienced the Alzheimer's Association's resources as a lifeline of hope and a reminder that we are not alone.

Through this we've also grasped the depth and reality of how Alzheimer's affects so many people like us, too many people. The association brings hope and support to all of us.

In recent years Congress has made funding Alzheimer's research a priority and it must continue. It is my hope that Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, and Rep. Cliff Bentz will support increasing funding for Alzheimer's research at the NIH by \$226 million for the 2023 fiscal year.

To learn more about the Alzheimer's Association, available resources and how you can get involved in the fight to end Alzheimer's, visit [alz.org/advocate](http://alz.org/advocate).

**Jennifer Chance  
Redmond**

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