

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

## OUR VIEW

## Amazing people lined up to join the council

Jackie Linton's recent election to the Hermiston City Council is the latest of many proud moments for the city. Events like this one are exciting, as they showcase and promote the diversity of our local government. As we celebrate this historic moment, however, let's not lose sight of just one of the positive aspects that already exist about the council.

Take note of the quality people who have lined up for a chance to be on the council. The council has eight members, and four of the seats were up for grabs. Three of four of the seats were contested, with only Councilor Jackie Myers running unopposed.

In many cities, there aren't such races. Here, not only did Hermiston citizens get choices, they received good ones.

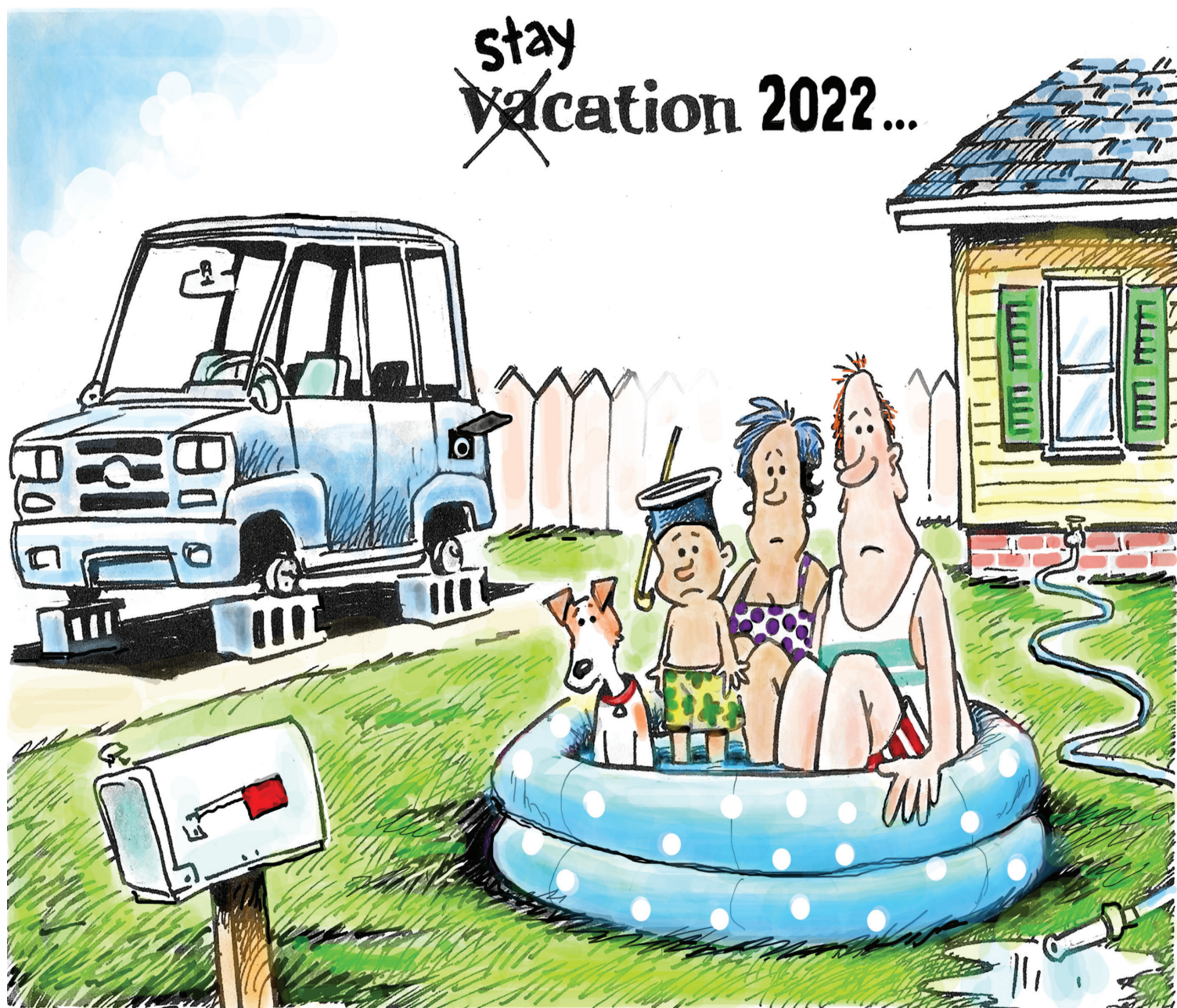
During the council candidate forum before the election, then-candidate David McCarthy said that any one of them would do a good job. And we believe him. McCarthy, an active member of the community, is ubiquitous in town, he knows everyone and is likely to know a good egg from a bad one.

Councilor Lori Davis, who lost her seat to Linton is a professional and thoughtful member of the council. Elected to serve on the council starting in 2010, she is a respected member of the body. Likewise, council member Phillip Spicerkuhn is praised by people throughout town. His professionalism and willingness to press for answers during meetings will be missed.

Then there is Stan Stradley, who lost his election to Councilor Roy Barron. Stradley, a former executive director of the Housing Authority of the County of Umatilla, likely would've brought important insights to a city struggling with housing. Barron, though, is a known and highly esteemed council member. It would be difficult for anyone to unseat him.

A council of the people who lost the latest Hermiston City Council races would be a great start to one in most other cities. Hopefully, they will find some other way to contribute to the town.

Meanwhile, Hermiston goes forward with a dutiful and bright group that is terrifically diverse. We wish Linton and company the best as they face the challenges of the coming year.



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## COLUMN

## We must act now on gun legislation

When most people are asked about their greatest death-related fear, they say cancer. I agree that it is a worry; I am also afraid of cancer. But I have been thinking of another fear lately, as I look at the tragedy that happened in Uvalde, Texas.

Nineteen elementary school children and two adults were gunned down. This is the most fearful evil I can imagine. This is a terrible way to die, suffering such fear and pain, caused by a weapon designed for war.

This is an event that has put our country in despair. It also has affected the world.

Until we have effective gun laws that are going to protect and Congress makes a move to pass



**JOSE GARCIA**  
RATTLIN' CAGES

new gun law reforms, we will not be protected. Schools, shopping malls, concerts, entire communities are not going to be safe.

Guns are terrible killers in America, and I think many gun owners don't realize the cause for concern. Our children need a cure, and they need it soon.

We need to put this issue before our local and state representatives. What are they doing about this problem? How will they take action on their promises to enact gun control?

This is an issue that requires we act peacefully as a community. We want to send a clear message that we want our children to be safe. We must practice love and caring relationships with our children, we must start the talks about resentments and hate.

To make a commitment for everlasting love and friendship as parents, we must start now.

■ Jose Garcia is the chair of the Hispanic Advisory Committee in Hermiston.

## COLUMN

## Safe schools start well outside the classroom

We are heartbroken by the tragedy at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. Though the events unfolded many miles away, we all feel the impact of violence when it touches a school. Our thoughts extend to the families, students and community that is in so many ways similar to our own.

The Board of Directors and I want you to know that Hermiston School District works hard every day to keep students safe. When these tragedies occur, it is understandable that parents put themselves in the shoes of those dealing with the aftermath of horrific events. We feel that deeply.

Our best protection is a community that looks out for one another and cares for those who are struggling, combined with daily vigilance, purposeful planning and clear protocols at every school. The process doesn't start when tragedy strikes and doesn't end when the national spotlight on school safety fades.

When it comes to facilities, the Hermiston community has consistently invested in upgrading and maintaining buildings with clear lines of sight at entries and exits and modern security systems in place. We have specific measures in place



**TRICIA MOONEY**  
OTHER VIEWS

for the safety of all students and staff across the district that are specified for each building, and we work continuously to improve those measures. The Hermiston Police Department is immediately alerted for any non-planned fire alarm, and staff and students are trained on how to respond in any kind of emergency.

But safety planning goes beyond drills and security cameras. It takes thoughtful, well-trained staff to provide support for our students, including counselors, our student services team, safety support specialist, mental health specialists, campus monitors, teachers and many others. We tell every student who walks through the doors that they are important and cared for, and we take that promise seriously.

Our partnership with the Hermiston Police

Department is not just as an emergency response team, but to build relationships day in and day out. Resource officers are an integral part of our schools and, along with teachers, counselors and other staff, help mentor and watch over students.

Hermiston schools must be safe, welcoming places for all students and staff to learn and thrive. It's our commitment to provide both. You can read about our safety and security measures on the school's website at [www.hermiston.k12.or.us](http://www.hermiston.k12.or.us).

We don't always know how a student will be affected in a crisis like the one in Uvalde and the news coverage and conversations that follow, but parents know their children the best of anyone. We ask that you talk with your students and remind them that their school is a safe place and that we are united in our commitment to the safety of our schools, staff and students. Thank you for the care you give to our community of children.

We join together as a community in grief and in solidarity with Uvalde. We are shaken but not shattered.

■ Tricia Mooney is the superintendent of the Hermiston School District.

**HERMISTON HERALD**

Volume 115 • Number 23

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Periodical postage paid at Hermiston, OR.  
Postmaster, send address changes to:  
Hermiston Herald, 333 E. Main St.,  
Hermiston, OR 97838.

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The Hermiston Herald (USPS 242220, ISSN 8750-4782) is published weekly at Hermiston Herald, 333 E. Main St., Hermiston, OR 97838, 541-567-6457.



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Newsprint by Envision

Printed on recycled newspaper

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