

LIFESTYLES

Voices

Anyone can write

Nearly 40 years in the business have taught me that readers are bombarded and overwhelmed with facts. What we long for, though, is meaning and a connection at a deeper and more universal level. And that’s why the Gillette News Record will be running, from time to time, stories from students who are in my writing class, which I’ve been teaching for the past 10 years in Portland, Oregon. I take great satisfaction in helping so-called non-writers find and write stories from their lives and experiences. They walk into my room believing they don’t have what it takes to be a writer. I remind them if they follow their hearts, they will discover they are storytellers. As we all are at our core. These stories have nothing to do with Gillette. They do, however, have everything to do with life. If you are interested in contacting me to tell me your story, I’d like to hear from you.

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Tom Hallman Jr. is a Pulitzer Prize-winning feature writer for the Oregonian newspaper. He’s also a writing coach and has an affinity for Gillette.

A \$100 lesson on life

By SUSAN R. WORKMAN  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS RECORD

I had been working as a teller at the Beaverton Branch about six months. I took my job very seriously and hoped it was a steppingstone. Margaret was the head teller. One Monday she came to my window and told me I needed to lock my cash drawer and report to the manager’s desk. She looked concerned. She was about 20 years older than I, in her mid-forties. I liked her and knew she liked me. She had a quick wit, a nice smile and was always fair. I didn’t cause problems, was always in balance at the end of the day and customers liked me. I was a single mother to a toddler and had to take the bus to work, but I was never late. Margaret’s look worried me. Our manager, Joan, did not have Margaret’s ability to deal with employees and she did not like me.

“You were \$100 out of balance on Friday,” Joan said to me with an accusing tone. I was taken aback. “Plus or minus?” I asked. Her eyes bored into me. “Minus!” she said. Silence.

I flushed because her tone and look were accusatory. I knew the protocol for being out of balance and this was not it. I also knew \$100 was a very large amount. I usually balanced to the penny, so I asked if it was exactly \$100 and was told yes. I would be on “probation.”

If I were out of balance more than the allowed amount one more time in the next six months, I would lose my job. For the next three days, I would not be allowed to work in my window alone. Margaret would watch me as though I were in training again. Humiliation.

I took a break and walked up the stairs. Margaret followed me. She told me not to worry. When they balanced the cash in the vault at the end of the week, they would probably find it. In the meantime, she would work with me in my window, and it would be fine. I thanked her.

She knew I lived paycheck-to-paycheck and earned \$10 a month too much to qualify for food stamps. In her eyes, unlike Joan’s, this did not make me suspect for stealing. Rather, she knew me to be an intelligent, honest person who would never dream of doing something so stupid and risking my job.

Days passed and the \$100 was not found. My humiliation was gone but not forgotten. It was the Christmas season and the weather had turned.

My sister gave me one of her wool coats she didn’t need. Joan stopped me when I was leaving on Thursday and said, “Well that’s a nice coat.”

I was so naive I did not register the accusation in her voice. I thanked her. Pride kept me from saying it was a hand-me-down. When I walked out the door, I realized she was accusing me,

again, of theft. Perhaps I had used the \$100 to buy myself a new coat, or perhaps I had stolen it too.

This was the second time Joan said something to me that almost made me quit my job. Given the means, I would not have returned the next day, but I did not have that choice. The next day, Friday, I was back at my window, cheerfully helping my regular and new customers.

At the Beaverton Branch, we had customers who were immigrants. These customers often waited in line until my window was open. I had lived in Austria so I was familiar with the difficulty of doing daily tasks in a second language. If the customer was from a European country, I could usually recognize their accent and would ask if I they were originally from the country I thought. A very nice older Polish couple was thrilled when I was able to speak a little Polish with them. They invited me to their home for lunch. Joan was not pleased when she heard. I asked her if it was against policy and she said no, but she did not think it was “appropriate.”

Mr. Nguyen was one of my regular customers. He was an older Vietnamese gentleman who never spoke to me and never made eye contact. He came in every Friday to cash his paycheck and always waited in line until I was available.

I understood he did not want to chat. I addressed him respectfully as Mr. Nguyen, knew how to pronounce his name, and did not ask questions like, “How are you today?”

I knew he did not speak English and did not want to be embarrassed. I did not badger him to open an account; rather, I simply cashed his check. I noticed he was in line on Friday, but the line was long and he did not wait for a turn at my window. Margaret cashed his check that day.

At 5 p.m the branch closed. It had been a busy Friday. As I began to count the cash in my drawer to close out, Margaret came up behind me. She placed a \$100 bill on my counter and said, “Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.”

I was confused, so I looked at her and waited for an explanation. “Mr. Nguyen gave this to me today,” Margaret said. “He pointed to you and said, ‘Too much money.’ When you cashed his paycheck last Friday, you gave him \$100 too much.”

I was stunned. I assumed that, like me, Mr. Nguyen lived paycheck to paycheck. He certainly could have used extra money and probably needed it. He did not need to return the \$100. He was, simply, an honest man.

The following Friday, he came to my window to cash his check. I desperately wanted to thank him, to be able to communicate to him that he had saved my job and what that meant.

I said, “thank you,” to him, but he would not meet my eye.

When I finished counting out his money to him, I simply bowed my head.



News Record Photo/August Frank

The Campbell County marching band stands at attention as a drum major makes her way to the next position during a dress rehearsal of the group’s field show “Letters From a Prisoner of War.”

Bands: After strong showing, ‘they can’t wait’ for next year

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things.” As for the students, they credit Schofield’s hard work to getting them ready and peaking for competition.

His role is to keep the band on track. For example, he teaches them discipline, which “overall helps us accomplish things faster,” McDougald said. “It if weren’t for Schofield himself we wouldn’t have gotten that ‘Superior’ level,” he said.

The work culminated in the squad not only getting a “Superior” rating, but receiving positive comments from the other bands and parents in Casper. “Even some of the judges were amazed with how well we played our piece,” McDougald said.

Not quite

There was elation about how they finished the marching season, but disappointment as both schools did not take home caption awards.

“Our marching show was the hardest in the state and our music was the hardest in the state (to perform), so combined they should have given us a caption, but unfortunately we didn’t get it,” McDougald said.

Cheyenne East High School earned caption awards for all six categories: brass, color guard, marching, music, percussion and woodwinds. The only other school to accomplish that was Campbell County High School in 2016

when Schofield was band director there.

Other high schools to earn caption awards this year include: Cheyenne Central, Kelly Walsh (Casper), Worland, Rock Springs and Star Valley.

Thunder Basin was close to earning caption awards in three categories, brass, marching and music. The goal next year is to figure out what the band can do to get the points needed to put the school over the top, Schofield said.

Students are already asking about what next year’s show will be.

“They can’t wait to start marching again,” he said.

Sit-down season

The Monday after state competition, Schofield put on a video of the marching band’s performance and the class celebrated what went well, but the next day it was time to focus on concert band.

“It’s a really fast change,” he said.

With state in the rear-view mirror it is time to transition into concert season, or as Oakley calls it “sit-down season.” Students will perform in seats rather than march and will read sheet music instead of playing by memory.

It will be a lot more relaxed, “you don’t have to memorize as much and you can focus on other things like dynamics,” Iken said.

Upperclassmen in both bands offered freshmen advice going into the concert season and beyond.

TBHS seniors said the band’s freshmen worked hard and played a big role in the band’s success this year, but they need to keep working.

They need to take on more responsibilities such as learning the basics quickly so they can have more time to clean up the details, said Andrew Baughman, TBHS senior and drum captain.

The Bolts will lose 18 seniors next year and it is important that freshmen, sophomores and juniors continue to work hard and put in the time so there won’t be a drop off in performance, he said.

At CCHS, it is important for the underclassmen to make sure they have their rhythms and dynamics down, said Deviin Sollberg, CCHS senior trumpet player.

Peterson said she wants to get better with dynamics, continue learning the bassoon and “enjoy the rest of the year playing and being in the music.”

The CCHS and TBHS jazz bands will play together at Thunder Basin on Nov. 14, then the two schools will put on their own shows.

The entire CCHS band will perform for a fundraiser at Stocktrail Elementary School on Nov. 16. As for TBHS, its jazz band and orchestra will perform Dec. 12 and 19. In March, they will put on a show with Sage Valley Junior High School students.

Senior menus

LUNCHES

**Sunday:** Closed

**Monday:** Beer-battered cod, crispy potato wedges, coleslaw, fruit cocktail and chocolate chip cookie

**Tuesday:** Goulash, corn, bread, garlic toast and vanilla pudding

**Wednesday:** Chicken noodle soup, garden salad with dressing, cheesy broccoli cauliflower soup and a fruit cup

**Thursday:** Chicken cordon bleu, au gratin potatoes, peas, wheat bread and strawberry Jell-O

**Friday:** Sloppy joes, coleslaw, chips and a brownie

ACTIVITIES

**Sunday:** Closed.

**Monday:** 9 a.m., yoga, quilting with Mitzi; 9:25 a.m., walking; 12:45 p.m., line dancing, card making.

**Tuesday:** 9 a.m., Healthy U class, painting; 10 a.m., movement class, computer class; 12:45, pinochle group;

5:30-7:30 p.m., evening outreach.

**Wednesday:** 9 a.m., yoga, ceramics; 9:25 a.m., walking; 9:30 a.m., computers; 10:30 a.m., chair yoga; 12:45 p.m., Xbox bowling, bridge.

**Thursday:** 9 a.m., The Lodge; 10 a.m., painting, movement class; 12:45 p.m., bingo.

**Friday:** 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Hobby Harvest; 9 a.m. quilting with Leona, ceramics; 9:25 a.m., walking.

**Saturday:** 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Hobby Harvest.

The Campbell County Senior Center at 701 Stocktrail Ave. is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Meals are served to seniors age 60 and over from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cost for meal is a suggested \$4.50 contribution and non-senior guests are \$9. Please RSVP for your meal by 1 p.m. the day before.

School menus

SECONDARY and WESTWOOD LUNCH

**Monday:** Honey sriracha chicken thighs with veggie wild rice

**Tuesday:** Beef and bean chili with cinnamon roll

**Wednesday:** Pepperoni sub with cottage cheese and baked potato chips

**Thursday:** Tater tot casserole with lemon garlic green beans

**Friday:** Spaghetti with garlic veggies and garlic bread

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LUNCH

All elementary schools offer one entree. Milk and unlimited fruit and vegetables are offered daily.

**Monday:** Soft shell tacos with refried beans

**Tuesday:** Pancakes with turkey bacon

**Wednesday:** Beef hot dog with roasted potato wedges

**Thursday:** Spaghetti with garlic vegetables

**Friday:** Roasted chicken thigh

with loaded baked potato (Westwood: sack lunch)

ELEMENTARY BREAKFAST

**Monday:** Cereal or yogurt

**Tuesday:** Sunrise quinoa

**Wednesday:** Cereal or yogurt

**Thursday:** Scrambled eggs

**Friday:** Maple long john

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BREAKFAST in the CLASSROOM

**Monday:** Cereal

**Tuesday:** Cereal crunch bar

**Wednesday:** Yogurt with Nutri Grain

**Thursday:** Sausage pancake bites in a bag

**Friday:** Muffins

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