

Readers lend their voices...

To The Editor,

I would like for all my friends, neighbors and fellow citizens of Columbia County to know why I support JEFF DICKERSON for SHERIFF. My entire 30 years of Law Enforcement experience was with Columbia County Sheriff's Office. I know Gerry Simmons very well and I will say that he is a hard working individual.

So why don't I support him for the Sheriff's position? I believe he is a good candidate but the County and its' citizens deserve more than just a good, hard working person to fill the role as Sheriff. To date I have not seen or heard anything about Gerry's goals or visions for the Sheriff's Office; except for the short one line statement on his campaign web page. I agree with many citizens who have voiced their opinions that the Sheriff's Office needs to make some changes and not just keep using the excuse that there isn't enough funds.

I believe it is time for someone with fresh ideas and a different perspective. Jeff Dickerson has the necessary Law Enforcement experience and his business experience is an absolute plus, given the fact that the Sheriff is ultimately responsible for preparing and managing two budgets (Jail and Patrol) totaling roughly five million dollars. His degree and experience in journalism is icing on the cake as the Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures are in need of revision and improvement. The Sheriff must be a great communicator, both verbally and in writing. Jeff has demonstrated to me personally that he cares about the Sheriff's Office, its employees and the citizens of this County. He takes the time to tell you his goals and visions; and in turn gives you the time to share your concerns with him. Jeff Dickerson has the qualifications, experience and drive that it will take to make the improvements that are needed. I urge the voters of Columbia County to give him a chance to make a difference.

I believe JEFF DICKERSON is the BEST CHOICE for SHERIFF of Columbia County!

-- Jim Gibson, Clatskanie area resident

To the Editor,

I live in rural Columbia County and I endorse Gerry Simmons for sheriff. Last December Congress failed to pass the Timber Payments resolution resulting in a 25 percent loss of the budget in Columbia County and that money may never come back. The failure to pass that portion of the bill impacts every department in Columbia County as well as all other rural counties in Oregon and Washington. It was a devastating blow.

Gerry Simmons acknowledged that issue during a candidate forum in Rainier and also said he is working for long-term stable funding. The current proposal for bed rentals to the U.S. Marshall's is awaiting Federal approval.

In comparison Mr. Dickerson and his supporters are trying to convince the voters CCSO employees are unprofessional, untrained and derelict of their duties. I feel that is an insidious platform to campaign on.

I have met many deputies over the years and found them to be professional, intelligent and congenial.

Mr. Dickerson says he will ramp-up patrols but it is physically impossible to attain adequate coverage with 7 or 8 deputies. I have yet to hear Dickerson's idea to secure long-term funding.

While Gerry Simmons may not be a great public orator with a boisterous personality he is working hard to get the funding that will bring the CCSO back from the brink of disaster. If long-term funding is not secured,

we won't have to worry about adequate patrol coverage because there will be no Sheriff's Department. Vote Simmons for Sheriff!

-- Elina Tilson, Clatskanie

So in 2007 we imported 3.6 billion barrels of oil. Even at a paltry \$100 per barrel, that is a lot of dinero. Just paying this year's interest on our national debt at a rate of \$1 per second would require over 20,000 years. And not to be an alarmist, but we have a lot of folks out there who don't like us and we have gotten ourselves into two separate wars.

Did I mention that we might not have much time left to start reducing greenhouse gases and switching to clean energy? Meanwhile a number of prominent folks in my party are committing to making the Bush Tax Cuts permanent __ hello!!

Why not re-elect the folks who brought us here? Surely they see the error of their ways by now and will break the choke-hold the special interests have on our government. Or should we take a risk and invest in someone who just may be able to pop the beltway bubble and restore the notion of a government of, by, and for the people? The problems are daunting and the outcome not guaranteed, but is it not worth the investment risk?

This Republican candidate for congress is in for 100 shares of Barack Obama and should he lose the nomination, I will hedge my investment with 50 shares of John McCain, since there is an outside chance that he too could put the nation back on track.

-- Joel Haugen, Scappoose

Letter to the Community;

We'd like believe that "better late than never" is a good substitution for a prompt thank you note. But unfortunately, it is with embarrassment that we submit this public thank you to Mike and Georgiana for an act of extreme kindness displayed a year ago. Hopefully, the timing might pick up their day and remind them that their generosity is still very much appreciated, and that this young man spoken of in this letter is well on his way to acquiring his pilots license and heading off to the Air Force soon. The parents of Bryan Benes would like to say "thank you" to Mike Seager and Georgiana for making a special effort to surprise Bryan on his 18th birthday with an airplane ride in their RV10. They generously donated a couple of their hours to give a flight over Vernonia and the surrounding area. He had a great time. For a young man interested in flying in the Air Force, Mike agreed it was a good idea for him to fly first. Mike also gave of his time to answer Bryan's questions concerning the Air Force. We'd like to thank them for their generous spirit and the opportunity to see Vernonia from the air.

-- Dave and Diane Benes, Vernonia

As I'm sure most people know, Washington Grade School is in very sad shape. When the last earthquake shook Vernonia in February of 2001 "there were cracks in the walls up to 4 inches across and the stairwells separated from the wall nearly a foot," says Byron Brown, "I can't believe they let kids back in at all much less as quickly as they did." Most people wouldn't argue that if another quake of that magnitude hit it would most likely cease to exist, or at least be reduced to a large pile of rubble. This in itself raises my concern quite a bit.

From the 6th of April to about the 15th the pacific coast was bombarded with over 600 small quakes most of which went entirely unnoticed. The significance of this is that they have never heard quakes like this, (they

sound much different from any previously experienced quakes) and they are predicting a 99% chance of another large quake is going to rock Oregon in the next 30 years, but that is where the certainty ends.

They don't know whether it will be tomorrow the next day or 25 years from now. This is why I must urge that something is done about Washington Grade School which is not reinforced and already in bad shape (both structurally and in the fact that there is asbestos in the insulation and it says it right on the pipes that run along the basement ceiling and mold in the basement).

I have no allergies to speak of and I'm not susceptible to mold or dust or anything and going in that basement makes me sick, stuffy, and nauseous. I know that no one really wants to think about it, but I am truly concerned that if nothing is done that the school district may have a school full of dead children. Believe me I love that building as much as anyone else it truly is a beautiful building, but that doesn't change the fact that gravity makes bricks projectiles that are more than capable of killing. I personally don't have a solution to the problem, but I could not let myself just sit and let this matter go unnoticed.

-- Phillip Peerson

Coming up May 18th thru May 24th is "EMS Week". This is the week we celebrate Emergency Medical Services personnel for the work/service that they do. So next time you see a member of EMS whether they are with the Metro West Ambulance Vernonia Volunteer Association or the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District or the Vernonia Police Department make sure you thank them. Without these folks we would not have the great emergency services in Vernonia that we count on.

On a personal note I want to thank all of the volunteers that donate their time for the Ambulance Association. I have had the pleasure of supervising you for the past year. You all have a special place in my heart. This year you all were affected-sharing both tears of happiness and heartache; it takes special people to be able to handle the events that you have gone through including the flood. When I showed up at the station 2 days into the flood, I could not believe the response that you all gave. This town is truly lucky to have such wonderful members of its community. I want to thank all of you for your service this year. You all are a vital part to the EMS team.

To all of those involved in EMS, whether medical, fire or police, I want to wish each one of you "Happy EMS Week"- you all deserve it.

-- Melissa Zimmer, Operations Coordinator/
EMT-B/Vernonia Supervisor

To The Editor,

It seems the longer I campaign for Gerry Simmons for Columbia County Sheriff, the more fine people I meet who are willing to support him.

I suppose his long record of protecting the rights, property, and people of Columbia County have influenced more than a few. The fact that he has been under sheriff since 2000 is in his favor also. His humble, honesty, sincerity and dedication to law and order in Columbia County have undoubtedly influenced others as it has myself. Fifteen years patrolling the highway and four years working for the BATF&E doesn't really qualify his opponent for the duties of the office of sheriff. I believe Gerry is definitely the better qualified no nonsense candidate for the job.

-- Lawrence N. Derby, Clatskanie

HOW TO SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Vernonia's Voice welcomes and requests your thoughts, opinions, and ideas. Please include your name, address, and phone number; limit your letters to 300 words or less. Vernonia's Voice reserves the right to edit, omit, respond, or ask for a response to letters submitted. We will print letters, space permitting. Deadline is the 15th of the month. Email to: news@vernoniasvoice.com or mail to: Letters, PO Box 55, Vernonia 97064.