

Readers Lend Their Voices... continued from page 4

To the Members of WOEC,
I feel honored to introduce you to Erika Paleck for those of you who don't know her. Erika is running for Position #5 on the WOEC Board.

I have known Erika for 10+ years and have known her to be very ethical, honest, informed, and willing to learn. Her husband Bob had held the same position for nine years and learning about WOEC and the inner workings was a joint effort.

I met Erika while being a part of the Ford Family Leadership Cohort 2. Erika excelled during the conference and was a driving force to get the courtyard built next to the Learning Center (currently the Senior Center thrift store). She is also a leader in the Junior Salmon Auction for the past 11+ years. She is a member of the City Planning Commission, the Vernonia Health Center Board, and other organizations. When she commits to be a part of the organizations she researches and becomes very knowledgeable about what needs to be done and how to do it. She is always willing to listen to other points of view. You will notice that when she becomes involved in something it's a long-term commitment.

Erika Paleck is a genuine good person and will be a valuable asset to the WOEC Board. I urge you to vote for Erika Paleck for Position #5 on the WOEC Board.

Carol Davis
Vernonia

To the Editor,

The recent article about the militia in the Voice intrigued me as it began with the local militia's aim to be a community support group. Their members are vetted and they deny any racist ideology. They meet regularly to get "better at what we're doing..." "The weaponry is way down the ladder of importance..." The group states they are training for good support, but it is not clear how this is being accomplished, what standards/certification might be involved, and how coordination with local entities would be accomplished on an everyday basis, let alone in an emergency.

I truly have respect and gratitude for those in our community who donate time and effort to volunteer to help with the myriad of social responsibilities and obligations. People undergo specific training and must display commitment over time. These people serve quietly and some are elected by the public. Volunteers do not insist on anonymity. It is

unclear to me why the militia members did not name themselves. I do not understand the "security and privacy" concerns. I don't know a single community volunteer who feels this way when providing public service.

The purpose of a militia is clear in the word. The possession and use of weapons is essential. Our local militia has worn uniforms and have, until recently, carried weapons while walking around town in groups. Being able to assist authorities will entail much more than the militia introducing themselves or having "contact" with local government, business owners, and community groups.

I am all for a group that trains and is able to "assist the local authorities" in "the event of an earthquake or forest fire." But our militia states that it plans to use weapons to protect the community. They will "defend themselves and the community" from "looters and outside attack." I don't know who these looters and attackers might be. The militia has not asked me if I want this defense. As a member of this community, I do NOT want this type of protection from a militia.

I would like to learn more about the local militia and get the opportunity to meet and talk with them. A community meeting with a moderator, predetermined questions and discussion points, and also an opportunity for less formal verbal exchange might be arranged. Other community groups and officials could attend. I'm not sure how to organize this, but I'd be willing to team up with someone to pull it together if there is interest.

Jana Swedo
Vernonia

To the Editor,

A group of us have some concerns after reading the recent article regarding the militia. Most concerning, members of the militia want to remain anonymous, but say they are supporting the community.

This brings up a few questions: Who are you helping? How do you know what our collective views and opinions are in Vernonia where we have a wide variety of views? What is the outside attack you are protecting from? How do you determine who is part of our community and who is not?

We appreciate and absolutely need volunteers in the community but are not endorsing a militia taking action against others in the name of "protecting

Vernonia." Without open representation of your views, there is no way to have this important community conversation.

As some members and allies of minority groups in Vernonia, we feel uncomfortable with an anonymous militia saying they are "here to help." There are many examples of militias in Oregon and across the country perpetrating hateful speech or attacks against people of color, immigrants, religious minorities, women, members of the LG-BTQ community, or simply people with views different than their own. Knowing anonymous members of a militia are walking around town "protecting" Vernonia leads us to assume that verbal or physical violence could be directed towards minority groups, whether residents or visitors. If you truly have nothing to hide and don't share these views with other militias, then being open about your identities and opinions could alleviate some of these concerns.

Vernonia has experienced several natural disasters in recent history, and demonstrated extreme generosity between members of the community. We have volunteer groups that train in different skill sets that will be able to help in future natural disasters. Instead of training in a militia setting that has raised many concerns, why not plug into those already existing organizations?

We are withholding our names out of concerns for personal safety until we hear more information about the militia's views and a willingness to be open about their identities.

Finally, thank you *Vernonia's Voice* for your work on community information and conversation.

Concerned Citizens
Vernonia

Editors note: Vernonia's Voice has a policy of not publishing Letters to the Editor that are submitted anonymously. In the article this letter references (Appearance By Local Militia Raises Questions, Militia Provides Answers, July 4, 2019), the organizers of the militia declined to be identified and asked to remain anonymous. Because we agreed to that condition, we have decided to waive our policy, if requested, for letters we receive on this issue at this time.

Fellow WOEC Members,

I've had a chance to at least chat briefly with the candidates vying to be our next Board Directors representing Districts 2 and 5. I still recommend keeping our powder dry and hold

off deciding until we hear more directly from them, unless you already know them of course. But here's my take so far:

For a breath of fresh air and new ideas, and a better shot at eventually getting control of our rates with better accountability, I like Jennifer Johnson for District 5 and Dave Crawford for District 2. I'll have more to say later once I get to know all these folks better. Thank you for sharing my concern about our Co-op. It's time for a change!

Nick Galaday
Vernonia
Outgoing Director Dist. 5 -WOEC

City Council Meets to Address Complaint

The Vernonia City Council met with their Legal Counsel, Rueben Cleaveland, in Executive Session on July 29 under ORS 192.660 (2)(f): "To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection." Upon returning to open session, the Council directed Cleaveland to draft a letter to City staff in response to a complaint filed by the City Administrator. Council also requested Cleaveland research training resources provided by the City's insurance company, CIS, to improve future interactions between Council and staff.

Vernonia Police Blotter July 15-30, 2019

Reports Taken/Arrests

- July 18, 2019 Arrest on a Warrant near HWY 47

Citation/Other

- July 15, 2019 Cited for Driving While Suspended, Driving Uninsured, and Switched Vehicle Plates near Riverside Drive
- July 19, 2019 Cited for violation of the Posted Speed 41/20 mph near Cougar Street
- July 20, 2019 Cited for Driving While Suspended, No Insurance, and Expired Registration near Madison Avenue
- July 22, 2019 Cited for Driving While Suspended near State Avenue
- July 24, 2019 Cited for Dog at Large near Maple Street
- July 24, 2019 Cited for Driving While Suspended, No Motorcycle Endorsement, and Driving Uninsured near Jefferson Avenue
- July 25, 2019 Cited for Driving While Suspended near Rose Avenue
- July 26, 2019 Cited for Driving While Suspended and Driving Uninsured near Bridge Street

Vernonia Police Department responds to calls that do not always end in Arrest, Report, or Citation. 7/15/2019 through 7/30/2019 VPD had 132 calls for service.

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