

Readers Lend Their Voices...

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter to offer my support for Susan Wagner to be re-elected as one of our Vernonia City Councilors.

I have had the privilege to work with Susan in three different ways: The Columbia County Flood Recovery Team 2007-2010; The Ford Family Foundation Institute for Community Leadership Cohort 3 2009-2011; and on Vernonia City Council 2016-2018.

In each of these endeavors, I have found Susan to be: conscientious and concerned about the effect decisions will have on the community at large; thoughtful and pragmatic with serious interest in doing the research that will help keep her informed; able to speak her mind even when it is not easy or "popular;" diligent and unafraid to challenge the "status quo;" and dedicated to service wholeheartedly.

During the Flood Recovery work Susan was instrumental in making sure volunteer hours were recorded properly so the City could get the most "bang for our buck" which helped us match for more dollars that assisted more people recover and adhere to the strict mitigation rules set down by the Federal Government. The Ford Family Foundation Institute for Leadership Program Cohort 3 had the task of choosing a community project that we would seek grant funding for. Ultimately, the group decided on a project that was not Susan's first choice but she did not let that get in the way of the larger mission and she participated fully. And finally, on Council, Susan was inquisitive and willing to delay a vote if she was not sure she fully understood the issue before us.

It is because of these things that I can confidently put my trust and vote in Susan Wagner for her to have a second term as one of our town's Councilors. Please join me in support and Vote for Susan!

Jill Hult
Vernonia

To the Editor,

I recently resigned as a maintenance worker with the Columbia County Parks Department.

I am grateful for my 15 years at the county. I gained valuable and practical skills and learned about leadership and the value of teamwork. My appreciation for systems and project management, and my confidence, has

grown.

I was also able to contribute to my community. My job allowed me to buy a home, and to become an invested community member in St. Helens. I am grateful for this good fortune.

Unfortunately, the opportunity for learning and contribution came to an end under the direction of Casey Garrett, the parks department's supervisor who is also running for election to the Columbia County Board of Commissioners. It was my experience his leadership style discourages teamwork. He is not open to dialogue. Communication, in general, is not a priority, and questions about or any disagreement with his approach is not tolerated.

Casey insulates himself from voices he doesn't wish to entertain. He removes disagreeing voices from any opportunity to contribute to the conversation. In my case, he relegated me to janitorial duties and cut me off from previous responsibilities and inclusion. I no longer had the opportunity to work directly with parks advisory boards, volunteers, work crews, seasonal staff, or park hosts, which had leveraged my strengths and gave me joy. It is a tactic of oppression through assignment, and it is a means of punishing perceived dissent.

Under Casey's management, when I expressed interest in any particular park, I was removed from that park. To cite one example: During the onset of COVID-19 and while Casey was on leave to campaign for the May primary election, I became interested/concerned with the issue of housing insecurity in

Columbia County and how it interfaces with the parks system. I got to know folks who were staying in the parks as I performed my duties.

A houseless young man staying at one of the parks volunteered to help me paint a bathroom in exchange for staying there in his tent (this went through the office). I asked the Columbia County Board of Commissioners about the issue of housing insecurity. This project was in process when Casey returned after the election. I called into the County Commissioners' meeting and expressed my concerns. Two days later, Casey changed my janitorial routine to remove me from the park where I had this connection.

This is his prerogative, but why deny someone's interest and passion when it can be useful? It's demoralizing to be demoted in assignment without cause, explanation, or acknowledgment.

Casey did not acknowledge in any way during the two weeks prior to my leaving that he had received my August 24 intent to resign.

I wonder if Casey believes his management model is more efficient. He does value efficiency. Casey doesn't value people, however, beyond what he can get out of them. If he doesn't want someone on his crew, he pushes that person out and replaces them with one of his friends.

If voted into office this Novem-

HOW TO SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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 first and third Monday of each month. Email: scott@vernoniasvoice.com or mail to: Letters, PO Box 55, Vernonia, OR 97064.

Vernonia School Board Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 8, 6:00 pm Please check the District's website for updates/changes www.vernonia.k12.or.us

ber, I anticipate he will impose the same model as a member of the Columbia County Board of Commissioners.

It was painful working under Casey Garrett. I am not attempting, to convince anyone. This is my experience. I believe those close to the situation, including the County Board of Commissioners, can't deny this has been my experience.

Lori Baker
St. Helens

To the Editor,

This year is the Mist-Birkenfeld Helping Circle's 85th Anniversary. We had hoped to make it really special, but due to COVID-19 we will not be having a Fall Festival this year. This is only the second time in 85 years that we have had to cancel. We want to keep everyone safe. Hopefully we will see you next year.

Shirley Kyser
President

VERNONIA'S
voice
reflecting the spirit of our community

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Columbia Humane Society



Purr-fect Pals

Pansy is a fun loving 13 week old kitten. She is very sweet and friendly, and will make a great addition to any family that is looking to add a bundle of joy. Pansy is looking to go into a home with an already established, social cat or another kitten. In order to meet one of our pets please email animalwelfare@columbiahumane.org to obtain an application. Once we have an approved application on file we will then schedule a time for you to come in

and meet the kitten or cat you are interested in. The adoption fee for kittens is \$125 which includes their current vaccines and treatment for fleas and worms.



Featured Dog

has previously lived with other dogs and does not do well with cats. Due to his size he isn't going to do well with kids under 15 years old. Axel's new home needs to have a fenced yard so he can run around and explore smells on his own terms. If there is going to be another dog in the home she will need to be around the same age or even a little older, a pretty laid back, easy going female that will show him the ropes. Axel can be slow to trust, so a busy home with a lot of people coming and going will not be a great fit. He needs somewhere stable and consistent. He has a lot of love to give and will be a great addition to the family he chooses. If you are interested in meeting Axel we ask that you please email animalwelfare@columbiahumane.org to obtain an

application. Once you have an approved application on file we will then schedule a time for you to come in and meet him. Our kennels are closed to public walk through. We do not offer same day appointments as our staffing is limited and we devote the majority of our days to the needs of the animals that are in our care. If you have any questions please email them to animalwelfare@columbiahumane.org and we will get back to you as soon as possible. Axel's adoption fee is a non-negotiable \$250 which includes his neuter, all his vaccines, treatment for fleas and worms, and his microchip.