

Letters to the Editor, continued

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Under these circumstances, it is important not to split the mainstream vote to allow Mr. Cason to slip in. Rita Bernhard is the sensible choice in this important election.

Yours truly,
Michael F. Sheehan
Scappoose

Does not support Comm. Bernhard

To the Editor:

We have an important election this November for County Commissioner, Position #2. It is important for our quality of life (which includes family wages, roads, parks, sheriff patrols, etc.). Commissioner Bernhard is running for another term. What has Commissioner Bernhard done to benefit our county and does she deserve our vote for another four years, given her current track record?

New Business (Jobs) to the County: Commissioner Bernhard endorsed US Gypsum to come into the county at the same time they were filing Chapter 11. This company should have investigated more deeply and not as many benefits given. USG said they'd bring "family wage jobs" into the county. What is Commissioner Bernhard's definition of a family wage job? Her salary or yours?

Surface Mining: Ordinances are not enforced and the surface mining tax is too low.

Commissioners' Salary: Commissioner Bernhard stated that she would not accept (or would give back) this year's annual COLA (cost of living adjustment) of \$4,300 (annual) - a 7.5% increase, bringing her salary to \$62,800. So far, she has not done so.

Budget: Commissioners are always complaining that the budget is tight and they can't make ends meet, but they haven't tried to resolve the problem by raising the tax base or finding other funding sources. With the exception of the Sheriff, Jail and Fair, Commissioner Bernhard doesn't financially support off-site departments (such as Roads, Parks and Animal Control). Why? Because she feels these services are not as important.

Jail Levy: The levy didn't take into consideration operating costs, only building costs. This is an obvious expense that should have been addressed at the time, and not try to hood-wink the public. The County paid a

\$133,410 penalty fee for being four days late in filing documentation on the Jail general obligation bond. Commissioner Bernhard knew about, authorized payment, and refrained from making public this information when she should have kept herself informed of the status of the bond in order to avoid a penalty. Commissioner Bernhard states that this money was interest on the levy. Whatever the circumstances, it could have been and should have been used for other jail expenses in a timely manner, not paid to the IRS as a penalty.

Public Right to Know: Commissioner Bernhard recently went along with other County Commissioners in adopting new fee schedules for public information and/or assistance. This is information that we already pay for with our tax dollars! Why are we paying twice? What about the people who can't afford these costs?

Commissioner Bernhard states she is a team-player. This tells me she won't stand up for her convictions, but will give in to the loudest voice. Commissioner Bernhard has repeatedly disappointed me. This is a very important election, so I will be voting for Cathy Taylor for County Commissioner.

Sincerely,
Thelma Bonar
Warren

Ed. note: Board of Commissioners proposed an increase in the surface mining tax and the voters turned it down.

State Measure 15 may fix school buildings

To the Editor:

On Thursday, September 26th, the Vernonia School Board held a workshop regarding the condition of Washington Grade School. My husband and I were in attendance.

During this workshop, Board Members and others present were given a tour of WGS by our new Superintendent Mike Funderburg and new Maintenance Supervisor John Lewis. Mr. Lewis discovered what appeared to be many structural problems during his recent care of the facility, and what we were shown, first hand, was the dangerously poor condition of the school.

What started as a search for mold and other conditions that might be creating health concerns brought up by parents, and staff at WGS, had escalated into an even more possible serious

structural problem.

Not to diminish the health concerns, where mold and asbestos remain high on the list of issues, but structural concerns had now become primary in regards to the safety of the environment our children are exposed to several hours a day, five days a week.

The superintendent hired Clayton Group Services, Inc., immediately when health concerns were brought to his attention in July. A complete report regarding

their findings is available at the School District Office. Once the clean-up that Clayton Group Services recommends is completed, air quality testing will be done.

With the recent structural issues, Mike Funderburg immediately hired a Structural Engineer to make sure WGS was not an immediate danger to our children structurally, on its own merit. The engineer's report will be made available soon, but the prelimi-

nary reports have indicated the original concerns were not as severe as anticipated, but the facility still does not meet seismic standards, and is unsafe if an earthquake should occur. This fact has been known since May 2001. Reports are available.

I would like to encourage all parents and the community to get involved, and find out the facts for themselves. The School District is taking these issues

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