

## Letters to the Editor

### Deputy explains why levy is needed

To the Editor:

I support the Columbia County Sheriff's Levy, Measure 5-109. Let me tell you why.

The Sheriff's Office does not have enough deputies to cover the 657 square miles in the county and to provide needed services. It is unsafe for both the citizens and the deputies to not have adequate coverage.

How would you like to be the only deputy on duty responding alone to a "shots fired" call in a remote area of the county? As you respond, you know that no one is available to back you up.

How would you feel if you called 9-1-1 for help, and the dispatcher told you no one was available? Well, this happens a lot. And it is dangerous for the public and for the deputies.

How would you like to end up working a 19-hour shift because there is no relief scheduled and the calls keep coming in? These can be unsafe conditions for any

profession, especially one where you may have to make life or death decisions in a split second.

How would like to respond to an emergency or chase a lawbreaker in a car with over 150,000 miles on it? The "life" of a patrol car is hard. These old cars constantly break down. Can you imagine chasing a criminal at 90 mph in a car with 150,000 miles? I consider myself one of the lucky deputies because my patrol car is only 8 years old with 122,000 miles on the odometer.

Deputies must come back to the St. Helens office to do reports. Every time the citizens lose 40-60 minutes of help. It is a waste of time and money. This measure will allow the deputies to complete their reports out in the field, where they belong.

This levy will fund adequate coverage 24 hours a day, eliminating the large gaps in coverage that currently exist. It will also provide a resident deputy for both the Vernonia/Mist-Birkenfeld and Clatskanie/ Rainier areas.

The Sheriff's Office does the best it can on a limited budget, but it is just not enough.

This is a very small tax increase, only \$7.75 a month for the average homeowner. Please join me and vote yes on Measure 5-109.

Sincerely,  
**Patrick A. Dean**  
Deputy Sheriff  
Vernonia

### More firefighters are needed for daytime

To the Editor:

The board and the personnel of the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District (VRFPD) wish to thank all those who helped out for the fire October 1 at the home of Jake Wolfe; especially the businesses that allowed their employees to leave work to help fight this fire: Mike Pihl Logging, Wolfe Trucking, Buds & Blooms, Adhesive Packaging, City of Hillsboro.

A volunteer department with a paid Chief relies heavily on com-

munity support for fire protection and also relies on mutual aid from neighboring districts. We would like to thank Mist-Birkenfeld, Banks, State Forestry and Scappoose for their assistance.

The fire on October 1 could have caused less damage, had the VRFPD had more experienced, daytime volunteers and had the Chief not been out of town on vacation. This could happen with more volunteers that work swing or midnight shift, or more businesses that will allow people to leave work to fight daytime fires. The VRFPD board has given authorization for adequate coverage in the absence of the fire chief.

The district has set up a committee to address this problem and encourages all community members to attend the next VRFPD board meeting on November 12 at 7:00 p.m., to help with this ongoing effort.

**Paul Epler**  
Fire Chief, VRFPD

### Horse owners need to clean up pathway

To the Editor:

People - Dogs - Horses

I am not the horse whisperer, but I am a voice, on paper, for the folks, babies, kids, baby boomers and us old folks, who walk, run, bike, trike, skate, stroll, rollerblade, skateboard, use wheelchairs, walkers, crutches or canes around the lake.

I have been walking my dog(s) around the lake path since 1986, when it was a rough, rock, clay clod or mud path, and now, the finished path it is today.

Point - In all this time, I have never seen a sign that said Bridle Path.

Walkers with dogs are advised to carry a bag or scooper to clean up after their pets, so, horse riders, use a diaper or pick up one of the two brooms available at the caretaker's yard, tie it to your saddle and sweep up or off the path your pets flowers.

I am not against you nor your horse. Just the fact you don't consider yourself as having to respect other people's use of an unfouled recreational area.

I swept up approximately 50 feet of your horse flowers on Tuesday, October 1. I and other walkers don't appreciate having to drag them by your mess (admitted dogs are scavengers at heart) nor having to step off the path when cross traffic meets at those places.

So, clean up after yourself or stay off the path - PLEASE. I can't say it any more subtly.

**Jacqueline Ramsay**  
Vernonia

### Supports Bernhard, opposes Cason

To the Editor:

Three candidates are running for County Commissioner. Rita Bernhard, the Democratic incumbent, Cathy Taylor (unaffiliated) and Joe Cason of the Constitution Party. Rita has a long record of service in this county. She was a popular mayor of Scappoose. She learned the law of county operations through her years working in the county counsel's office. She has been a good commissioner for the last four years. She is serious, friendly, works hard and spends a lot of time in meetings with citizens groups.

Cathy Taylor is also a nice person and a hard worker. With a little more experience in county finance, law and policy, she would make a good commissioner.

The problem in this race, however, is the Constitution Party candidate, Joe Cason. The Constitution Party, according to its "2000 Platform" is open only to professing Christians, it favors rejecting federal tax support of our local schools, it favors the repeal of the Voting Rights Act (which makes it a crime to use force or coercion to stop people from voting) and virtually all other federal civil rights legislation. It supports only the original U.S. constitution and apparently not the amendments, with the exception of the right to bear arms. And it wants to abolish the federal income tax, which would wipe out more than half of the federal budget and utterly wreck the economy. They also, I kid you not, want to eliminate paper money and have us go back to coins only.

Currently, the county supports programs to control teenage venereal disease and teen pregnancies in our county. Mr. Cason is a leading, angry and emotional advocate of abolishing those programs.

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#### LIBRARY COLUMN TEMPORARILY MOVED

Because of the number of letters in this issue, the library column, Between the Bookends, may be found on pg. 10.

## Opinion-Measures, continued

**Measure 24** would expand the professional scope of licensed denturists by allowing them to install partial dentures, in addition to their current services. It would also allow dentists and denturists to work together in joint business arrangements, much as optometrists and ophthalmologists are allowed to do. This may, or may not, help to slow down the increasing costs of dental care. It is promoted as being financially beneficial to patients, but there is nothing in the measure that can justify the claim. Overall, the benefits are likely to be greater than the liabilities. We recommend a Yes vote on Measure 24.

**Measure 25** would increase the state minimum hourly wage to \$6.90 in January, 2003, and would institute annual adjustments for inflation. In spite of the claims of doom and gloom by the Oregon Farm Bureau, Associated Oregon Industries, Oregon Restaurant Association and Oregon Food Processors *FOODPAC*, all of whom rely on minimum wage workers, our economy will not crumble. Even when two people in a family work at minimum wage, for a combined \$13.80 per hour, by the time they pay for food, rent, utilities, child care and transportation, they are barely getting by. An increase of 40 cents per hour is not exorbitant. We urge a Yes vote on Measure 25.

**Measure 26** would prohibit workers who

obtain signatures on initiative petitions from compensation based on the number of signatures they obtain. It would not prohibit paying for signature gatherers and is intended to reduce the incentive for forged or otherwise illegal signatures. This may or may not do what is intended, but it should get a Yes vote.

**Measure 27** would require labeling of genetically engineered foods. The food industry insists that genetically engineered (GE) foods are perfectly safe while making remarkably wild claims about the cost of labeling. Not all scientists agree that the process is safe. The FDA has not conducted tests on GE foods in spite of warnings by their own scientists. The genetic engineering process has introduced Brazil nut genes in some soy beans; without labels there have been some severe allergic reactions. Some vegetables have been engineered to produce more protein with the addition of animal genes; people who choose not to eat meat have a right to know what is in their food. Other plants have been combined with toxins to kill insects, but there is no way to control the exposure of those toxins to beneficial insects. If GE is not harmful, why are food processors and corporate agriculture opposed to adding a few words to labels? We need to protect our health and the health of our children. Vote Yes on Measure 27.