

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Put aside anger and work for a solution

The Vernonia Friendship Jamboree has always been a special occasion for residents of this small town. For 47 years it has been a time for reunions with family and friends who have moved away, a time to reminisce about the past and get caught up on the present. It has been a time to laugh and, sometimes, to get rowdy. This year, a lot of Vernonians got angry.

One bar owner felt so threatened by Police Chief Mike Cahill's attitude that he closed down. That isn't law enforcement, it's closer to coercion.

Officers were stopping people who were seen leaving a bar or tavern—without a sign of erratic driving. That's intimidation.

Officers were riding bicycles on the sidewalk, which is illegal because it's dangerous. That's bullying.

With all of that, and too many instances to enumerate that occurred BEFORE Jamboree, it is time to start working together to find the appropriate law enforcement mode for Vernonia.

Nobody wants to continue without adequate coverage. Everybody wants an officer available when needed.

So what are we going to do about it?

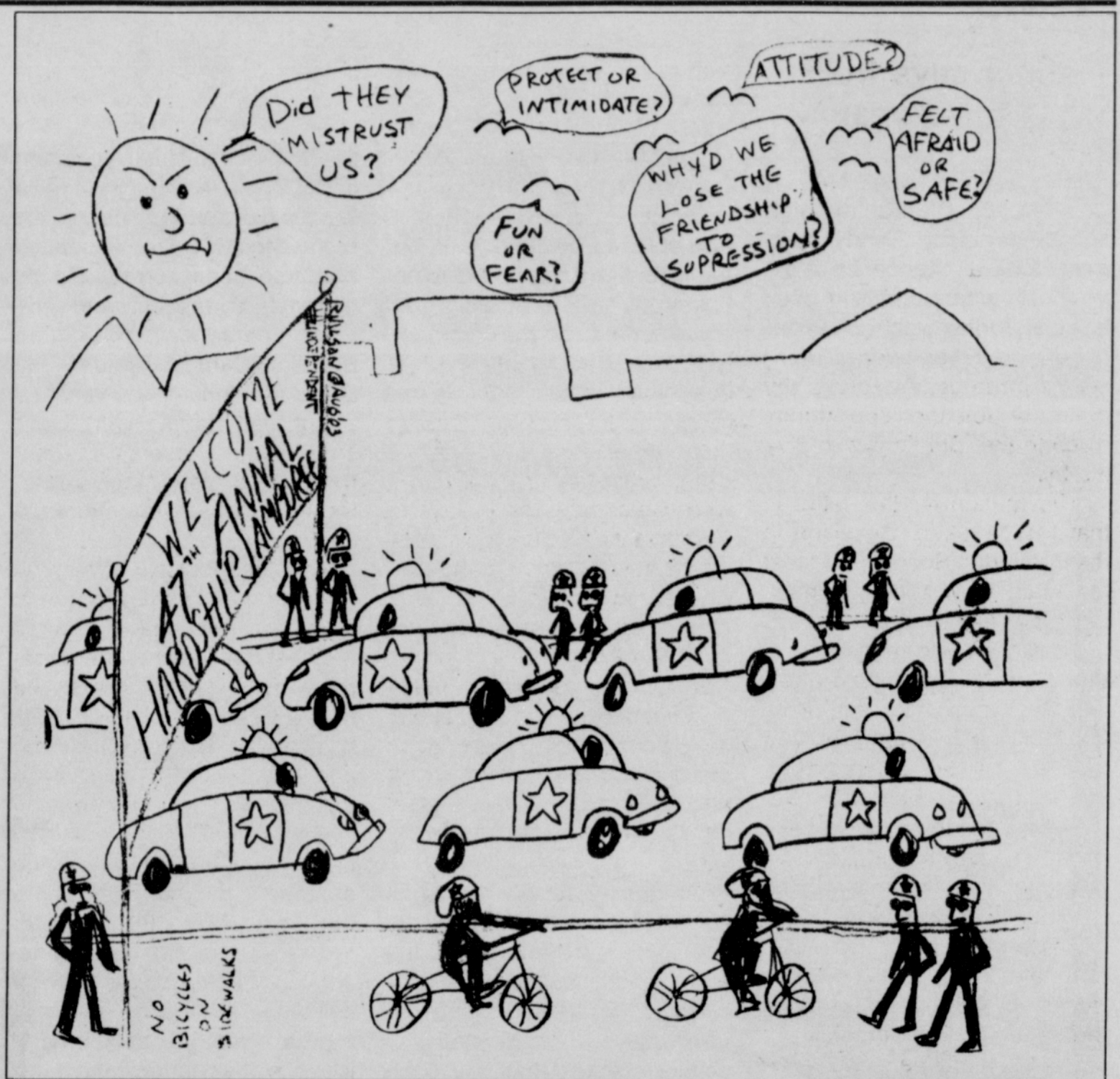
Let's start by thanking the Vernonia City Council for being willing to listen and even moving to a larger meeting room so more people could attend. They didn't have to do that — they wanted to.

Let's thank the city staff, including Chief Cahill, for listening to the complaints.

Let's also thank the people who complained. Even if they were angry, they maintained behavior appropriate for a meeting where they were trying to communicate their concerns.

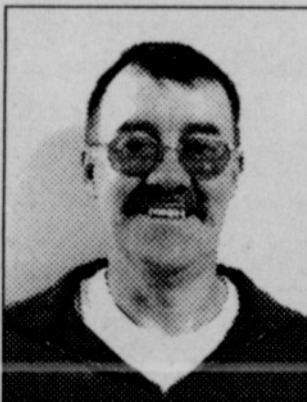
The chief probably developed a better understanding of the somewhat independent streak that runs through Vernonia. Sometimes it's a nuisance, but it has also been our salvation.

The only question now is whether the city council will follow through with a town hall meeting and, then, whether the people who complained will participate in a positive fashion. It's up to us to solve the problem.



Ike Says...

By Dale Webb, Member
Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



West Nile virus, to my knowledge, has not been detected in our area, though experts have predicted that it will spread into Oregon this year. I have been closely watching Crows, which are an indicator species for West Nile because they are highly susceptible to the virus, which is spread by mosquitoes. I thought I might be onto something when I found a dead crow in my front yard but, looking up, it appeared that the crow was probably killed by an electric shock from the transformer on the power pole above me. Curiously, a few days later, another crow lay dead at the base of the power pole. Both crows were juveniles and were probably overly curious about the transformer wiring. I have never seen this before, but crows seem to be having bad luck this year in other ways, also. At my dad's house there was a juvenile crow running around on the ground for several days because it had gotten out of the nest too early and could not yet fly. I'm not sure, but I find it hard to believe that the crow survived the local cats. I have also noticed several crows smashed into the pavement on area highways. This is unusual, crows are very clever and figure out how to avoid traffic at an early age. This is certainly not the year of the crow!

I have to laugh when I see all the hype about West Nile virus — marketing for mosquito repellants, mosquito zappers, mosquito trappers, etc?

While a person should try to limit their exposure to mosquito bites, you will never be able to entirely eliminate it. I am concerned about the push for wide-spread spraying of mosquito breeding grounds. This will be a waste of time and money and has potential to damage the environment. People should eliminate standing pools of water around their house, especially those old tires that collect water in them. I have two ornamental fishponds at my house. They are stocked with goldfish and they seem to keep the mosquitoes at bay, contrary to what some news reports say.

Finally, I have seen a handful of fawns this year; they sure are cute. Please be careful while driving near rivers at this time of year because Doe deer seem to be drawn to the rivers the first few months after giving birth. I'm not sure why they do this, since they pass up other water sources on their way to the river. I speculate that they are actually going into the water to cool off, with the effects of nursing causing this behavior.

Bull elk are in full velvet now and their horns are just about fully developed. The bigger bulls will start to shed their velvet soon, in preparation for the annual rut, which brings us to the start of bow elk season. Bow hunters may have a tough time this year due to extensive fire-danger closures in the area. The weather has been too hot and dry, and fire danger levels will climb quickly from here on. Be very careful if you go into the woods and carry the required water/fire extinguisher, axe and shovel in your vehicle.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has posted an advisory on their web page asking anglers to limit fishing during periods of high stream temperatures (68 degrees and above).

Please see page 21