

Letters

From page 3

fee and ended up working an 8 hour shift. Many other businesses also did well.

Cycle Oregon staff and volunteers were very professional to work with. When we saw that long line of trucks come in all at once, we got a little scared. They took care of it and everyone and every truck fell into place. Amazing the organization it takes.

These are just a few stories of the excitement and commitment of the day. I must say the only damper we had on the event was the little bit of rain, but all in all it was a huge success. Thanks again to all who helped without you we could not have pulled it off. I would like to extend a special round of thanks to Barb Carr, Dan and Heidi Brown, Marla Rethwill, Marci Gwin, Burt Tschache, Rietta Behnke, Mary Kornegay, the City of Vernonia, Police Chief Matt Workman and Fire Chief Paul Epler, who were all instrumental in the planning process here in Vernonia.

Donna Webb
Vernonia Chamber of
Commerce

Support needed for Sheriff's funding

To the Editor:

The measure on the ballot in Cowlitz County to increase funds for fighting the meth epidemic failed last week, but only by a very narrow margin. It is clear that many voters felt the

county sheriff needed more money in order to fight the steadily increasing problems surrounding the use of methamphetamines. One questioner found, however, that some who voted against the measure felt that simply jailing offenders would not solve the problem.

The enhanced sheriff's operating fund being requested on the November ballot in Columbia County includes a 90-day treatment component in the jail, designed to coincide with the usual length of sentence for a second meth use offense. Citizens working to put the measure on the ballot came to the same conclusion as those who opposed the measure in Cowlitz County; that is, a revolving door with no attempt to break the cycle was not the answer.

In addition to providing treatment, the sheriff's staff will be enhanced by fifteen members, and among other goals, will more than double the current four deputies now available to patrol the roads of the county. The coverage currently provides for one deputy on the day shift and three on nights (forget such niceties as swing and graveyard; it's just nights here). The night men are on call all night, from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m., and if anyone is sick or on vacation, some of those shifts last even longer. All that overtime doesn't save taxpayers any money because all that overtime has to be paid for. The deputies haven't actually received that pay due

to a shortage of funds, but it's accruing and amounts to as much \$60,000 for at least one of the deputies (which will have to be paid upon retirement if not before).

The sheriff is required by law to provide policing in the courthouse and now uses volunteers due to understaffing. The civil deputy (legal paper server) position has been unstaffed for a couple of years. The sheriff serves papers personally, but admits he's about six weeks behind most of the time.

I could go on, but you get the idea. There isn't time to mount a formal campaign prior to the ballots going out in the mail on or about October 21. I urge you to plan to vote for the measure when you receive yours without a formal campaign contact. Just do it because it needs to be done.

Nancy Roche
St Helens

Thanks for response to PTA's Katrina fund

To the Editor:

On behalf of the Vernonia Community PTA, I would like to extend a great thank you to all of the students and staff of Washington Grade School, Vernonia Middle School, Vernonia High School, Mist Grade School and Vernonia Head Start for their contributions to "Bring your dollar to school day," held on September 29.

The PTA organized this fundraiser to benefit the recent victims of Hurricane Katrina. Together we raised \$268.08 to send to the victims of the hurricane. All proceeds will be equally divided between the American Red Cross and Northwest Medical Teams.

Thank you again for your contributions.

Amy Cieloha
Vernonia Community PTA

Send hugs by mail to military overseas

To the Editor:

October is Vernonia Hug a Soldier Month. Here is a great opportunity to show our military that we appreciate what they are going through and are sacrificing to keep America free and to make the world a better and safer place.

Our military personnel involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom work in intense heat in the summer and miserable cold in the winter. The PXs at their bases are either non-existent or run out of basic hygiene necessities and other small comfort items. Our men and women are in constant danger of attacks from anybody, any place, and anytime. They are in a war and every day more are wounded and more pay the ultimate price. The very least we can do is let them know we care about them. Many of the troops get no mail and no support from their family and friends.

I have had the privilege of corresponding with a number of Marines and soldiers in Iraq for the past nine months. For them to take some of their precious free time to write or email me is a great honor. It means so much to them to receive letters of appreciation and support from people they don't know. I have sent banners, weekly letters, monthly care packages and a constant stream of emails to my "adoptees" for the past nine months. Some I never heard from – that's ok. The point is to let them know they are not forgotten over there. With some, I email them every couple of weeks, and I hear back every once in awhile. One wonderful young Marine and I emailed almost daily for eight months. He is now safely back in the states.

As the holidays approach,

please join me in writing letters of appreciation and Christmas cards to sent to these wonderful folks. There are drop boxes for your letters at US Bank, City Hall, NAPA Auto Parts, and during business hours, inside the US Post Office. Address the letters to "Dear Hero" or "Dear Friend." Not sure what to write? It can be just a "Thanks" with our family's signatures. Or a short or lengthy letter about your family and your life. Tell them about your kids, the school play, your work. The family dog and the car breaking down. Attach pictures, kids artwork. Soldiers LOVE letters and drawings from children. Use a store-bought card or make your own. Keep your letters upbeat and friendly. In Christmas cards, slip in a picture of the family. I am also collecting un-used cards for all occasions to send to the troops, so they have nice cards to send to their families. You can put your address and/or email on the cards, but don't expect to hear back. It is so great if you hear back, but they are in a war. And, even though they may not answer, they still appreciate the cards. No stamps needed – they will be mailed in with care packages. Envelopes aren't necessary, but if you use them, please don't seal them.

Do you belong to a group or organization? How about getting your group together and taking an hour to make or write a couple dozen cards and letters? Would you like to help sponsor Christmas care packages? Please give me a call.

Thank you for helping support our military who are in harm's way. A few minutes of your time will bring enormous joy to a number of troops. If you would like to "adopt" your own Marine, Soldier, etc. please go to <www.AnySoldier.com>. This is a fantastic site, and where I have gotten many of my contacts. Another great site is <www.SoldiersAngels.com>.

Sincerely,
Cat Ross
Vernonia

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