

## Letters

### Saudi Arabia is far worse than Iraq

To the Editor:

15 of 19 of the 9/11 hijackers were from Saudi Arabia. The Reagan administration used Saudi Arabia to channel money to the Contras. The Bush family has close and public ties to the Saudi Royal family; George

Bush Jr. held the hand of a Royal prince on a recent visit.

The Afghani Mujahadeen was supported by the U.S. via Saudi Arabia during the Soviet-Afghan war. The Mujahadeen became the Taliban.

Osama bin Laden, a Royal Saudi, was sent to Afghanistan with American assistance to reconstruct the roads after the

Soviet war. Osama became the architect of 9/11.

Saddam Hussein was our ally in the Iran-Iraq war. Saddam held the three factions of Iraq (a country created artificially by Britain) together with terror. Saddam is gone; the factions are free to fight with only Americans in the way.

Go to DailyMotion.com and

search "juba" or "ied". You will see what Iraq is like first-hand. Is there anything in Iraq worth a single American life? Haven't some of our past influences in the Middle East come back to haunt us? Iraq had nothing to do with Al Qaeda. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are associated with Al Qaeda.

Some guy in Scappoose may know all, now and in the decades to come, but I do not. I am not sure that we are being effective in our defense of America and use of our military.

I am suspicious of people who are sure.

**Roger Lindsley  
Vernonia**

### Appreciate knowing of local businesses

To the Editor:

We would like to express our gratitude to *The Independent* newspaper for printing last year's article about Robert and D'Lisa Watts and their new excavation business. We were just beginning the process of building a house when we read the article and had already turned down two bids from other excavation companies. Hiring local is important to us so when we read the article we contacted the Watts immediately; this could be the smartest homebuilding decision we have made.

To date, Robert has done many jobs for us including septic test holes, driveway cut in and rock spreading, excavation for foundation, and stump removal. In every case the finished product exceeds the required specifications for the job. Robert has the ability to visualize what you need/want and complete the job professionally, quickly and accurately. The billing is also very detailed and accurate and leaves no

unanswered questions regarding the work completed or the costs. We will continue to hire the Watts for any future projects and also recommend them to others.

Robert and D'Lisa are hard working people who offer an excavation business that is honest, fair, and quality driven. Anyone needing earthwork should consider the Watts as their full service excavation contractor. Thanks again to *The Independent* for supporting and promoting our local businesses.

With Gratitude,  
**Chris and Leslie Barnes  
Vernonia**

### Big business good, big government bad

To the Editor:

My wife and I attended Senator Wyden's town hall Saturday, the 27th. We noticed there was no American flag in sight.

The senator correctly noted we need a fence on the border to keep people out of the U.S., not to keep them in. This is a fact. I was disappointed the Senator did not speak of freedom and liberty, or our duty as a nation to promote freedom and liberty in the world. Freedom and liberty for all is the basis of our national greatness. Please think about this.

There was a diverse crowd present and a lively discussion of several issues. Katrina, FEMA and New Orleans were brought up. No one compared the differences in rebuilding the damaged parts of Alabama and Mississippi with the slower re-

**Please see page 24**

**Between the Bookends,**  
the Library column, has  
been moved to page 10.

## Salem Scene

By Representative Brad Witt  
Oregon District 31



The 74th Session of the Legislature convened January 8th and I couldn't be more enthusiastic and optimistic about this session. I have two fabulous committees: I am Chair of the Workforce and Economic Development Committee, and a member of the Revenue Committee. Both of these offer a substantial voice for the district and I look forward to keeping you updated on matters of interest to you.

Additionally, I am on the Regional Maritime Security Coalition (RMSC), a public-private partnership of maritime and land transportation stakeholders in the Columbia-Snake River region. The RMSC exists to improve security for the Columbia River system and beyond. The area covered extends from Lewiston, Idaho, to Astoria, through eight locks and dams, 12 interstate bridges, and 26 ports in Washington and Oregon. It encompasses more than 400 miles of Pacific Coastline, including dozens of small public ports, from Grays Harbor, Washington, to Brookings. The Coalition provides a uniform region-wide system for notifying stakeholders of threats or vulnerabilities and for coordinating information and resources.

I am proud of a recent security exercise conducted by the RMSC. The tri-state, multi-jurisdictional exercise was a test of our ability to trace the movements of four hypothetical terrorists involved in the placement of a "dirty bomb." Security experts from all around the country, including the FBI, TSA, Office of Homeland Security and various branches of our military, attended this exercise. Using real supply chain movements over a mock 12 day period, we were able to identify the location of the threat without disrupting the flow of either passengers or freight. The visiting officials were so impressed that a pilot project is being developed to assess adopting RMSC's security plan in major ports across our nation.

There is also another type of security that is much closer to home. Gov. Kulongoski has challenged the Legislature to approve dedicated funding to add 139 troopers to the Oregon State Police. In the past 20 years, the number of troopers patrolling our state's major highways has declined from 665 to 310, while our population has surged 40% and the number of vehicles is up by 60%! We are putting ourselves and our officers

at risk. The Legislature must find a way to restore reliable, dedicated funding so our State Police can again provide 24/7 coverage.

As many of you know, District 31 is going to be the new home of Cascade Grain, an ethanol production plant that is in the process of site preparation at Port Westward, just outside of Clatskanie. I am enthusiastic about this facility, which is part of a growing industry that will help reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels. Ethanol is a cleaner burning renewable fuel that is blended with gasoline to reduce carbon monoxide and exhaust pollutants that contribute to smog.

Some of the raw materials – called "feed stocks" – used to make ethanol and biodiesel, are canola and mustard, recycled cooking oil, corn, soybeans, sugar, palm oil and wheat. Emerging technology will allow ethanol to be produced from cellulosic feed stock, such as wood waste and agricultural residue, both abundant in Oregon. This will create new markets for Oregon crops and new jobs for Oregon workers.

This new industry will require a commitment from local and state governments for limited tax incentives and tax credits. The economic return that such incentives provide is exemplified by the State of Minnesota. Since Minnesota enacted incentives and a renewable fuel standard (RFS) in 1997, renewable fuels production has resulted in over \$1 billion in economic benefits and supports over 5,000 jobs there. Every dollar of state incentives creates \$12 in economic activity in rural Minnesota. These are tremendous returns, not only for taxpayers, but also for our communities, the environment and the overall economy. House District 31 is fortunate to have attracted such a promising new industry.

Remember those terrible wind storms on December 14th and 15th? Both of the counties that I represent really took a beating, so I asked the Governor to request some relief from FEMA. I'm pleased that the Governor has made that request, and we are waiting to see if we will qualify under the Stafford Act. This act would provide supplemental grants for the repair and restoration of publicly owned facilities and those of certain non-profit organizations. A recently completed survey of the damaged areas found several million dollars in damage.

Don't hesitate to contact my office if you have questions or comments about this article or anything else regarding state government. The office phone number is 503-986-1431; the address is Capitol Building, 900 Court Street, NE, Room H277, Salem, OR 97301; or email Brad.Witt@state.or.us

## Opinion

From page 2

real. It's not easy sitting through hours of financial information and people's lives are often busy.

But those people who do take time to attend and become educated, get real information. This is not a silly popularity contest. It's not a game show. It's our city, and what happens in those meetings impacts our lives. If we don't all pull together, pay attention to what is going on and get involved, we could all be voted off the island.