

Letters

Justice and mercy are community needs

To the Editor:

I will ask for forgiveness if I offend anyone here. Our little town seems to be at a near fever pitch. I am pleading with everyone, on both sides of the issue with our schools to please take a breath.

Some of you know how I feel, others do not; that is not the point of this letter. I was very concerned today as I watch the events unfold downtown this evening. Not because a group of people believe that drugs are bad and what Mr. Miller did was wrong.

What I witnessed were many people who were smiling at one another, enjoying fellowship, now looking at those same people with different eyes. It is normal that we will not agree on some issues and as important as this is, please do not allow it to cause division with one another and within the community. We have a right to be angry, we have a right to voice and express our opinions; that is a good thing...

Let us be careful when we speak, that we are speaking the truth and not what we heard someone else say. I have heard comments from people who feel passionate about this for and against, who have clearly not done their homework on the facts. I hope we have the capacity to love and care for the family even if people feel the position should be the cost of the action.

I do not always like or agree with the decisions of those who have authority over me. But I have found that many times, if I would have allowed the process to run its due course, I do not have to wait so long to discover if it was indeed the right course of action to take. If it is not, I can revisit the issue. I have not caused division with friends, community and family, I do not even have to argue my case, it will be clear on its own.

I am not saying people should do nothing, please be kind to one another. We are dealing with relationships and community. I know this letter does not apply to everyone. I even feel myself get caught up in it at times. I need to be careful not to allow emotions alone to dictate my response during

times I feel strongly about something.

I will chose to believe that both justice and mercy can be in the same place here. To see what might be...even when we may not agree, we can still be friends, looked upon as someone in the community that has value. Keep looking out for people's best interest, not so much our own. Strange as it sounds...it works.

If you are a person of faith, and believe in prayer, let us be people who exercise a little faith and pray for our community to come through this stronger still.

**Mark Brown
Vernonia**

Trickle down fascism is active in Vernonia

To the Editor:

I have observed the not too subtle fascist leanings of our Great Illustrious Leaders in the White House with some concern. The arrogant high-handed attitudes seem to be trickling down to lesser governments.

Is all the manure dishonesty or just indifference or incompetence? Whichever it is, it doesn't seem proper.

How's this – they can baffle you with their B.S., dazzle you with their foot work, expect you to accept things "on faith", or when these things fail they foolishly attempt to stifle the media.

Historically, repressive (and/or) dishonest governments or agencies choose to suppress all but the sugar-coated news of their activities. I'm curious as to who in the heck gave some clerk the power to determine what newspaper to ban from City Hall? Totally Fascist.

I would like to hear the guilty parties try to justify this act with a straight face.

I was told at a local large business that they do not carry *The Independent*. They have this right. I have the right to not do business with them anymore. As I do not support repression – I would hope that like-minded people will respond

in kind.

In my youth, the world was assailed by fascist attitudes and action, fortunately, this tide of scum was stopped at least for the time being. Still, when I smell the rot of totalitarian attitudes, I become concerned.

Sadly, I cannot comfortably withhold my tax money from supporting the city, as I can with private businesses, but since my funds are in small part supporting this apparent debacle, I say, "Both papers or no papers." You may find yourselves in hot water (well deserved) if you continue to stock the *Voice* and not *The Independent*.

One question – is anyone in city pay involved in the *Voice*?

People should reference the past (ie., Elroy Miner). The city chose to chisel instead of doing what was right and it cost the taxpayers a bundle.

**R.D. Stevens
Vernonia**

Ed. note: Elroy Miner, referenced above, had a debilitating heart attack while working as a volunteer firefighter. He had not been covered under the City insurance, as required, so he successfully sued and received disability checks from the city for approximately 30 years.

Miller is a casualty in U.S. war on drugs

To the Editor:

Upholding principals.

As I have read little in print in support of Aaron Miller I would like to offer an opinion from the antipodes of mainstream media. I submit that principal Miller is an excellent role model. When confronted by law enforcement who "thought" they smelled marijuana Mr. Miller could just as easily have denied the accusation. However, aware of the consequence, he chose honesty and confirmed the officer's suspicion; while most of us, if we are honest with ourselves, would try to talk our way out of something as simple as a speeding ticket. I applaud Mr. Miller's integrity.

On July 17, 2007, *The Oregonian* asked: "How can a dis-

trict that has quite literally, made a federal case about the use of illegal drugs by students ignore the same offense by an adult who is charged with supervising them?" The answer is simple and lies within the question, Aaron Miller is an adult. Such philosophies as the "double standard" are typically the last bastion of those with no substantial argument. Using such logic it would be fair to say that if Mr. Miller was seen drinking a glass of wine with dinner at a local restaurant his students should be afforded the same freedoms. Sounds crazy when put into context, doesn't it?

While I do not advocate the use of drugs amongst minors I am concerned with the constitutionality of testing students for illegal substances. The constitution is not concerned with age but humanity. Students in the Vernonia school district must prove that they have not committed a crime before they can participate in sporting events. What happened to innocent until proven guilty? I have read quotes from media, school officials and law enforcement regarding this issue and find it interesting that the most intelligent statement was made by a fifteen year old student: "It's just pot." I believe it is time to move past legal and illegal and begin to recognize sensible versus ridiculous, for as the reader should now clearly see, the only casualty in the latest battle of the war on drugs is principal Aaron Miller.

Until now I have offered opinion: I wish to close with fact: Aaron Miller was not on school property when the alleged crime occurred nor was he being paid at the time. Mr. Miller was not supervising any of his students, was not presently responsible for their well being or in any other way influencing their behavior; he was relaxing alone and minding his own business. I suggest the rest of us do the same.

**Norwood Chapman
Portland**

Doesn't believe in a single "incident"

To the Editor:

I am appalled at the position the principle and the school board of Vernonia took regarding Mr. Miller and his drug prob-

lem. Mr. Cox only referred to this situation as an incident. I have worked with people that have used drugs, and after investigation they were involved in more than just an "incident." There was a pattern of using drugs for a long period of time, they just never got caught and people would cover up for them.

With the strict position the Vernonia School District took with drugs in 1995, I believe it is now time for all school personnel at Vernonia including the Principle, Superintendents, teachers and all workers be tested, for drug use on a random basis.

Upon reading the present creed of the Vernonia School District 47J, the last point which reads, "We believe in building a collaborative relationship with our community based on respect, trust, honesty and open communication." How can there be respect, trust and honesty when an "incident" is so minimized. All of you involved with the development of the students are held accountable to these principles contained in your creed.

Mr. Miller needs to be dismissed from the Vernonia School district for his actions and immediately enter a drug diversion program. These are the first steps the school board must take. I wish Mr. Miller no harm I can only wish and pray that someday he will be a benefit to our society.

**Owen Enevoldsen
Vernonia High School
Graduate, Canby**

Teachers direct, only students can learn

To the Editor:

This is about education, and it is less personal than it may at first seem. Bear with me.

It has come to my attention that I am considered by some who have attended my classes to be overly harsh, perhaps even cruel.

The one thing I never wanted to be was a teacher, although – or perhaps because – I descend from several generations of professors and teachers. Fate has other ideas. In my early thirties, in India, I first began to be asked to teach things I know to others who wanted to

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Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters that include personal attacks on private citizens. Because of space limitations, preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number, and all letters are subject to editing for clarity or length.