

Letters

Teaching intolerance rewards bigotry

To the Editor:

Open Letter to the Good People of Vernonia: Mr. Miller, principle of our elementary school, is charged with marijuana possession. I've heard and read the righteous indignation of the good citizens of Vernonia. Our policy is zero tolerance! What kind of example is he setting for our precious children? Fire the lawbreaker! And the ever-present call for Mr. Miller to resign! This controversy is inseparable from our view of school, law, and children.

What are we teaching our children? Zero tolerance, why the hell do we accept this bigoted policy? It should be sent back to the propagandist's copy desk stamped try again we reject intolerance. Are we not an open-minded, loving, tolerant people? We know that learning is making mistakes (no mistakes = no learning). If, school is for anything other than turning out intolerant, brain-dead robots obedient to fashion and authority, it is to help the next generation become a little more knowledgeable, a little more skilled at critical thinking, a little more tolerant, a little more compassionate, a little more prepared to live in the world than we are.

What kind of example are we setting for our children? Leaving aside the quaint principle of 'presumption of innocence,' in the rush to judgment why not stone Mr. Miller for his

indiscretion? Or we can examine the law that he is accused of violating. Are the laws of prohibition just? Are they consistent with the rights of a free people? Are they arbitrary, rational? I don't want to write about the hypocrisy of legalized alcohol when there is a prohibition on marijuana. We old people may not get it, but be assured our teenagers see the naked hypocrisy.

What are we teaching our kids? Maybe smoking marijuana is an act of civil disobedience. To violate unjust laws is civil disobedience! We move forward as a people not by freedoms granted by a government, but by the lives we live.

He has no respect for the law! Fire the lawbreaker! It's easy to become drunk on self-righteousness. Like power, it corrupts from within. I didn't see any protests when we invaded two sovereign countries. A war of aggression by any other name still stinks. It's still illegal, is still harmful, and still corrupts the aggressor by making him blind to the humanity of all God's children.

That's all folks! Thanks for your time.

Elliot S. Wisotsky
Vernonia

Fruit thieves may be four legged visitors

To the Editor:

I just wanted to write a quick response to Mr. James Brookins Letter to the Editor in the August 16, 2007 edition of

The Independent. Late last summer, my plum tree was completely full and thick with the branches hanging heavy with ripe wine colored plums just waiting to be harvested. I couldn't wait to bring my baskets out the next morning, and I had planned to pick each sweet juicy jewel. So, as planned, the very next morning I collected my baskets and scurried out under the tree. However, I was shocked to find that EVERY single plum was gone, except for the plums far up towards the very top of the tree. Because my tree is near the road and somewhat out of sight from the house, I obviously assumed that some fruit thieves came out in the dark and "stripped" my tree of all of the plums! So disappointed and disgusted by some people's behavior, I stomped back to the house and vented my frustration to my husband. Now my husband, having a mind of science and a heart of optimism, wanted to look a little closer before agreeing with my bandit theory. He led me back to the tree and patiently looked very carefully at almost every branch. Then he slowly plucked small clumps of deer or elk hair from some of the branches on the tree. The closer I examined the branches, the more I began to see evidence of hair and broken twigs. Embarrassed because I quickly assumed the worst in human nature – I smiled, realizing the real bandits didn't have two legs, but four.

Lynn Berry
Vernonia

Birkenfeld kindness left great memories

To the Editor:

As first time participants in Portland to Coast my team and I were not as prepared as other racers. We did not bring a tent and found ourselves dreading the hot open field that most vans rested in.

After eating at the café in the Country Birkenfeld Store, Mike's generosity made our Portland to Coast experience a lifelong memory when he graciously offered us the shade of his land. Not only did we lose our breath at the sight of such a beautiful piece of property, we were fortunate enough to enjoy a peaceful nap and prepare for

our next legs. People as kind as Mike seem to become more rare each year, but he helped us to see that there are still angels around us. Thank you for a great meal and a place to sleep!

Sincerely,

A Happy Portland to Coast Team.

Kim Almon
Portland

Vernonia needs to re-open old theater

To the Editor:

Several of my classmates enjoyed the annual "Old Timers Picnic" on August 19 in the Anderson Park. It was great to catch up with everyone's whereabouts and share each other's news.

One subject came up we all vehemently agreed upon, even with several residents in Vernonia; why has the downtown theatre never reopened? We all know the disastrous floods and all the restoration it entails but I would think the community-at-large would demand this. The theatre could also be used for drama productions, contests, awards ceremonies, presentations and the like. It is unbelievable there is no entertainment for your residents especially the children and teenagers. Everyone should rent the movie "The Majestic" maybe that would ensure the inspiration to get the ball rolling! Thanks for listening.

Sharlee (Powers) Dougherty
VHS Class of 1955
Emmett, ID

Ed. Note: The theater is privately owned and was closed long before the floods of 1996.

Benefit dinner raised funds for Rhiannon

To the Editor:

The dinner for Rhiannon Meyers' Recovery fund on August 18 was very successful. We served over 100 people and earned over \$1,100 in meals and donations. Friends of Rhiannon – Caressa, Dani, Dylan, Gina, Kaci, Melissa,

Mitch, Sasha and Travis – volunteered to serve, prepare and cleanup.

Special thanks to the Vernonia Senior Center for donating the use of their facilities and to Bill James for footing the bill for the dinner.

We are very appreciative to everyone who volunteered their time and to all the people who attended, as well as those who made such generous donations. Rhiannon's family and friends are very grateful for your support.

Gina Cropp and
Sasha Mack
Vernonia

Let U.S., not county, enforce federal laws

To the Editor:

Recent editorials want to make us believe that the biggest issue facing Columbia County today is the hiring of undocumented workers. It's not maintaining our roads, adequate funding of our schools, stable funding for our county programs, affordable health care coverage for our neighbor or police coverage to make our community safer. Sorry, but I do not buy into that scare tactic. It is certainly not fair that some unscrupulous contractors hire illegal, undocumented workers and then pay them illegal, undocumented wages that end up hurting honest, hard-working, law-abiding local businesses. But that is an enforcement problem (paying someone less than the minimum wage, under-the-table or without a valid social security identification number is already a crime), not a problem calling for more laws.

A note of reality when it comes to the issues revolving around immigration laws – immigration or border security is a Federal responsibility and should remain a Federal responsibility. In the most recent court decision dealing with local efforts to enforce anti-immigration laws, the federal judge

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mind. Bees are one of them, they can make camping unbearable if you are not prepared. The lack of water is going to be another consideration; you may not be able to depend on the usual water sources. The lack of water may also shift animal numbers in localized areas, so keep that in mind. The last consideration is the fire situation. While I am writing this article, the situation has moderated but will take only some lightning to cause major problems. Some areas may have road closures due to ongoing fires, or even last year's fires, so call ahead to find out what is happening where you will be

going.

Donna and I spent a few days backpacking up in the Three Sisters Wilderness area. We hiked in eight miles the first day and camped by a nice lake that I used to fish. Yep, dummy didn't bring his fishing pole and the trout were jumping everywhere. Donna said, "It sure would have been nice to have some pan fried trout." Still kicking my butt for that one! Be safe out there and have fun.

Izaak Walton League,
Nehalem Valley Chapter
meets monthly on the 3rd
Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Call
503-428-7193 for location.

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; all letters are subject to editing for clarity or length.