

Howard refuses to give receipt for a cash utility payment, throws cash back

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Simmons. According to Simmons, Howard accused him of having ‘outbursts’ and said, “Every time you come in here to pay your bill you get smart with the staff” and threatened to reach through the window and take Simmons’ hat if he had another ‘outburst.’

Then Howard took the envelope with the cash payment in it and started to walk away. When Simmons asked for his receipt, Howard said, “You’re not going to get it.” Simmons replied, “Then give me my money back.” Howard came back and threw the cash onto the counter, turned and walked away without another word to Simmons.

The amount of money Simmons was trying to pay that day was \$77.00. After his water was shut off on April 2, he found the door hanger on his door saying he owed \$58.50. On April 8, Simmons received a letter from

Howard saying he owes the City of Vernonia \$417.00 to bring him current through April 2008, and threatening to issue a citation for Simmons to appear before the Justice Court. Howard also included his personal opinion of Simmons, “under your gruff exterior and penchant for being rude and obstreperous to my staff you are quite an honorable man.”

Howard told *The Independent* that when he first heard about Simmons he was told that Simmons originally went to Robyn Bassett (city administrator prior to Dick Kline) and pushed everybody around, so it was decided it wasn’t worth dealing with him over the \$1.00 park fee. Howard says Simmons often reduces his staff, Glass and Eckertson, to tears and swears at them saying, “F-- you people”. “If he’s going to be that nasty, I don’t know what else to do. He’s the only guy in town who has refused to pay

these [amounts on the water bill],” Howard said. “I’m willing to work with him, but not if he comes in swearing, screaming and yelling,” Howard continued, “The police have had problems with him.”

Not according to Chief of Police Mat Workman, who did not know of any specific problem that involved Simmons. In fact, Mayor Sally Harrison gave a certificate of appreciation to Simmons last year after Simmons arranged a \$1,500 grant for the Vernonia K9 program from the Forest Grove Order of the Knights of Pythias Delphos #39.

In an effort to confirm Howard’s claim that Simmons had caused city staff to cry, *The Independent* called one of the named staff members. After hearing the question, she referred the call to Howard, who was told that the newspaper was trying to confirm his statement. Howard responded by

saying, “Thank you for calling. Goodbye,” and hung up.

Many, many hunters in Vernonia know Simmons as the instructor of the Hunter Safety Classes here from March of 1994 through August of 2004. Simmons worked for the 47J school district for 11 years, and when he was a contractor, says Simmons, “Whenever they needed something I did it,” referring to his involvement with the city.

A citizen who heard the first part of the Simmons vs. the City discussion on March 31 was tracked down by *The Independent*. When she was asked whether Simmons sounded abusive, rude, or overly loud, the citizen said, “No, he sounded firm, like Leonard does.”

The maximum amount Simmons would owe (he says he paid the \$1.00 for a while before stopping) should be around \$144.50. That’s the \$11.50 for nine months since it

started in August 2007, and \$1.00 for 41 months since it started in December 2004. The letter Howard sent also listed Simmons as not paying the \$12.00 sewer loan amount, but Simmons says he has always paid that part and has receipts to prove it. Howard said the numbers he used in the letter came from amounts given to him by Glass and Kline.

Howard says the bottom line is that the city council approved the \$11.50 to rebuild the loan reserve and it’s not up to him to say anyone can not pay it. Howard would be willing to explain it further to Simmons or says, “Maybe we could work out a longer repayment schedule for him.”

Like many of Vernonia’s citizens, Simmons is in the midst of repairing damage caused by the flood. For now, he has no water to help in his flood recovery as he continues his passive resistance against city hall.

Community Calendar

VERNONIA

Alcoholics Anonymous	Monday	6:30 p.m., 410 North Street
American Legion Post #119	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m., 627 Adams Avenue
Arts & Crafts Society	2nd Thursday	2:00 p.m., City Library
Booster Club	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., VHS Library
Boy Scout Troop 201	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., Scout Cabin
Boy Scout Troop 860	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., LDS Church
Cemetery Beautification Comm.	2nd Thursday	6:30 p.m., City Hall
CERT	4th Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-3018
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-6081
Community Coalition	2nd Monday	12:30 p.m. School District Ofc.
Cub Scout Pack 201	Scout Cabin	For Info Call 503-429-4250
Friends of the Library	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Vernonia Library
Girl Scouts, Neighborhood 4-2		For Info Call 503-819-0143
Hands On Art Committee	1st & 3rd Thursdays	4:00 p.m., City Hall
Izaak Walton League	3rd Thursday	For location call 503-429-7193
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., Buckhorn Restaurant
Municipal Airport Committee	4th Thursday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Narcotics Anonymous	Saturdays	7:00 p.m., 410 North Street
Pioneer Museum		For Info Call 503-429-3713
Public Works Committee	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Cares Directors		For Info call 503-429-1414
Vernonia City Council	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Community PTA	3rd Thursday	7:00 p.m., WGS Library
Vernonia Grange	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., Grange Hall
Vernonia Health Center	2nd Monday	6:00 p.m., 510 Bridge St.
Vernonia Learning Center	1st Wednesday	6:00 p.m., VLC
Vernonia Parks Committee	3rd Wednesday	6:30 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Planning Comm.	1st & 3rd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Pride	3rd Thursday	1:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Ridge Riders	Last Thursday	7:00 p.m., Senior Center
Vernonia RFPD Board	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia School Board	2nd Thursday	6:00 p.m., District Office
Vernonia Sr. Center Board	2nd Friday	1:00 p.m., Senior Center
Vernonia Transfer Station	2nd & 4th Saturdays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.	Behind VHS
Vern. Volunteer Ambulance Assoc.	1st Thursday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
WOEC Directors	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., WOEC

MIST-BIRKENFELD

M-BRFPD Board Business Mtg.	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-BRFPD Board Workshop	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Ambulance Drill	1st & 2nd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Fire Drill	1st & 2nd Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Helping Circle	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B SAR Drill	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Volunteer Assoc.	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Natal Grange Hall
T.O.P.S.	Mondays	6:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Upr Nehalem Watershed Council	For date call 429-2401	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station

BANKS

Alcoholics Anonymous	Fridays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
Alcoholics Anonymous	Wednesdays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
American Legion Post #90	2nd Tuesdays	7:30 p.m., Main Street Post
Banks City Council	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., City Hall
Banks Fire District #13	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Station 13
Banks Library Commission	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Banks Planning Commission	Last Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Banks School Board	2nd Monday	7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library
Banks Youth Group	Sundays, Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg.
Chamber of Commerce	1st Thursday	12:30 p.m., Fire District Office
CPO 14	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Friends of the Library	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., Brown Derby
Sunset Park Assoc.	3rd Wednesday	8:00 p.m., Gun Club
T.O.P.S.	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg.

COLUMBIA COUNTY (All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.)

Board of Commissioners	Wednesdays	10 a.m., Courthouse
Citizens for Senior Justice	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church
Columbia Soil & Water District	3rd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., NRCS , 2514 Sykes
County Fair Board	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg.
County Parks Commission	3rd Monday	6:00 p.m., 1054 Oregon St.
Mental Health Advisory Comm.	3rd Tuesday	10 a.m., 2nd Floor, Courthouse
Comm. on Children & Families	3rd Thursday	5:30 p.m. OSU Ext., 550 N. Hwy. 30
Local Alcohol & Drug Plann. Comm.	2nd Tuesday	3:00 p.m., 2nd Floor, Courthouse

Organizations and meeting dates not listed may be included by calling 429-9410 or by mail to The INDEPENDENT, 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.