

## Letters

### Krahn's leadership needed for schools

To the Editor:

Help Vernonia build a new school.

The timing for building couldn't be better. It seems strange to say something like that with the current economy, but it's true. The availability of Federal funding due to the relief program will allow us to build the long overdue new school, out of the flood plain.

Our schools, just like most small towns across America, are the hub and lifeblood of our community. It is a sense of pride to students and a place where lifelong friendships for

young adults and parents are born and nurtured. If the schools don't thrive, neither does the town. Is it wise to wait to see if we flood a third time? Then what will we do?

It will require good leadership and experienced professionals to guide us through the bureaucracy that accompanies such funding. I would urge everyone to elect Jim Krahn to the school board. His professional experience, and both nationally and internationally recognized leadership skill, is critical during this process. To have someone of Jim's ability, at our community's disposal is priceless.

**Pat Stacklie**  
Vernonia

### Council doesn't hear citizen complaints

To the Editor:

Regarding the article posting in the April 2, 2009, edition of *The Independent*, page 9, "Vernonia Police Raid MIP Party."

Reading this article one would assume that the Graf kid beat up the public safety offi-

cers. This begs the question: How does a kid who weighs only 135 lbs. beat up two officers who each weigh well over 200 lbs.? Trained professionals! According to others at the party, the violence was initiated by the two officers and after further investigation it's become apparent that Graf was unnecessarily beaten by these officers. Graf sustained multiple injuries from the beating and tasing.

I find this type of conduct by the Vernonia Police Department repulsive. Oppressive abusive police tactics of this nature are unacceptable. This is a violation of a person's civil rights.

I brought this matter before the city council. I wanted Mike Kay to explain his actions. At the time there were quite a few folks at the meeting giving kudos to the Vernonia Police Department and I agree they do deserve kudos for good things they do. However, the city council didn't want to hear what I had to say. It seems to me that if the city council is willing to hear kudos for the police department then they should also be willing to accept negative feedback. If members of the city council find it difficult to address such issues then they shouldn't be city council members and I encourage the public not to re-elect them when it comes time.

It appears that the Vernonia Police Department has no accountability. The chief tells the

city council what they're doing as a police department and the city council just replies, "Wonderful...glad to hear it...let's move on to the new business." This attitude tends to set a very dangerous precedence. The public has the right to know what the police department does and the public has the right to verify what they do. Also, the public has the right to expect their elected public officials to investigate matters of this nature.

The city's council members are the voice of everyone in the community. I encourage the public to become more proactive by attending the city council meetings. The public should know how the city council is spending their money and the public should have the opportunity to reject, or approve, how their money is being spent.

**Edward Johnson**  
Vernonia

### Krahn is an invaluable 47J board member

To the Editor:

47J Citizens: This year, the school board election is occurring at an extremely critical point. Jim Krahn has been an invaluable 47J board member. Please acknowledge his contributions and commitment by voting for Jim.

After the flood of 2007 there was a vacancy on the board. Jim had previously served on the Vernonia School Board, he knew what was involved. Un-

daunted by the amount of work that the term would present, Jim knew he could help the district get through this devastating period. He put his name in and was appointed to a position ready for the huge task of getting our schools back on track after the flood.

Experienced in managing publicly funded entities, Jim knows the importance of keeping himself connected to what is happening in state government. This helps our small town stay on the minds of legislatures.

Jim does not pretend to know it all. He will listen. He also will admit that not every decision is perfect, but he learns from what has happened in the past and moves forward with better knowledge.

Shortly after being appointed in 2008, Jim experienced a very serious personal issue. Many would have resigned at that point, however Jim made sure that he attended every meeting possible either by phone or in person. He is committed to seeing the schools through this period.

Jim's children are grown and his motive is not in one particular area of the school district, it is purely for the greater good of the whole community. Right now the school board is at an extremely critical point in a process that will take a couple years to complete. Please don't throw away his valuable investment. Let him finish the job he

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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.

### Where to Find Them

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## Sen. Merkley holds Town Hall in Scappoose

Although he is a freshman U.S. Senator, Jeff Merkley displayed the calm, unruffled demeanor of a seasoned politician during a Town Hall meeting Sunday, May 3, in Scappoose, as he answered frequently angry questions about immigration, term limits, gun ownership, Social Security, Medicare, the financial system, federal deficits and more.

After an introduction by State Representative Brad Witt, Merkley, who serves on four committees (Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs; Budget; Environment & Public Works; and Health, Education, Labor & Pensions) spoke briefly of his first few months as a senator and his efforts to be-

come acquainted with Republican Senators (He finally started making appointments with them.), then opened the gathering to questions.

The first question was whether there would be legislation on immigration and amnesty for illegal aliens. Merkley expressed doubt that there would be a bill this year, but added that discussion on the topic must involve borders and employers, not just immigrants.

Asked if he supported E-Verify, an on-line verification system for employers to check on Social Security numbers, Merkley said he voted in favor of extending the law.

A man asked about term limits, noting that some legislators

had been in office for 30-40 years, and saying he thought that some of those "involved with General Motors had stock in GM." After explaining that the detailed financial statement of each U.S. Representative and Senator is on their web sites, Merkley recounted Oregon's experiment with term limits, which resulted in a loss of institutional memory as seasoned legislators left the capitol, and increased the power of lobbyists.

Rep. Witt supported that observation, saying that he could speak from a different viewpoint because he had been a lobbyist when term limits were instituted, and "we became the

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