

Letters

From page 14

ty. Our freedom would be lost if ment ever takes this right away from us. Everything our founding fathers have fought for and everything we all have fought to maintain over the past two centuries would be lost. This is something that we all should remember and pay tribute to when July 4th rolls around, because this is what our independence and freedom is all about.

The Oregon Supreme Court reaffirms our first amendment right in the "State of Oregon v. William Charles Johnson" by city Article 1, section 8, of the Oregon Constitution: "No law shall be passed restraining the free expression of opinions, or restricting the right to speak, write, or print freely on any subject whatever; but every person shall be responsible for the abuse of this right."

A city council member who doesn't agree with this fundamental right should resign.

A word specifically for Kevin, Cindy, and Brett: I don't think I ever really said you didn't question. I believe I said you rarely vote against the VPD. Even if you are friends with Mike you should refrain from showing any bias of favor for the VPD...it doesn't look good. Furthermore, the questions you do ask are rather shallow. As a council person, I personally wouldn't accept just an answer. I would place all requests under the microscope and require a "Show Me" or a "Please Produce Documentation."

With this I close and it's time to move on. I'm sure everyone is getting tired of hearing about this.

Edward Johnson
Vernonia

Citizen appreciates Vernonia police work

To the Editor:

I sincerely wish to apologize to the fine officers of the Vernonia Police Department for the letters written by Mr. Johnson and Ms. Brasure. Their words and sentiments do not represent all the citizens of Vernonia that you protect and serve. We are fortunate to have officers of your caliber. I, for one, truly appreciate your service to our community.

I do have one suggestion, however, and that would be to have Ms. Brasure submit your next shift schedule. She apparently knows a way to cover 24 hours a day for seven days with four police officers. (Ms. Brasure, don't forget they each need two days off a week when planning that schedule.)

Mr. Johnson and Ms. Brasure think that because Vernonia is a small town our crimes are somehow less significant than larger cities? I work for a larger city (yes, I commute) and the crimes are the same, just on a smaller scale. Police officers are trained to handle different crimes requiring different standards of force. I don't know of any police academy that instructs their recruits to use force based on the size of the town.

In Vernonia, and in larger cities, it is typical for parents with problem children to blame the police (and the schools), rather than take responsibility themselves. Most children grow up and never have contact with police, unless in a positive manner. If your child is having negative contact with police, there is most likely a reason for it. Implementing a School Resource Officer (SRO's) Program in the Vernonia School system would address juvenile crime and safety concerns. SRO's promote a safe, secure, and orderly learning environment, as well as, facilitate youth programs to address ju-

venile needs and the opportunity to succeed. Isn't that what we want as a community?

I know what it means to be a police officer, as my grandfather was Vernonia's first "paid" law enforcement officer. His name was Acel Dallas Lolley. I am extremely proud of his service and dedication to this community. He made many sacrifices in order to "serve" this city, most of which went unnoticed and unappreciated. I missed my grandfather while growing up because he was serving and protecting people like Mr. Johnson and Ms. Brasure while the rest of his family attended a school function, enjoyed a holiday, or went to Church.

VPD, I thank each of you for your sacrifice, service and tireless dedication to preserving our communities' safety. I do notice and appreciate you.

Proud Granddaughter of Former Chief Lolley,

Allyson Cameron,
Evidence Technician
Vernonia

Many enjoyed great 4th of July parade

To the Editor:

We want to thank all who participated in the 4th of July Parade. It seems every year it gets bigger and better.

Don and I followed the parade through town and couldn't believe all the people who came out to watch it. The sidewalks were full from Weed to State Ave. You would have thought it was the Jamboree.

If you enjoyed the fireworks, and I'm sure you did, you can still donate towards them. You can donate at Wauna in a Tom Ramsey Fireworks account. The fireworks this year cost \$4,500 and your donation would be greatly appreciated.

De Loris Webb
Vernonia Pride

Thanks for helping support fireworks

To the Editor:

Thank you to everyone who donated money for Vernonia's 4th of July fireworks show. Together we raised over \$4500. All of the money that was raised went to the purchase the fireworks only. I also want to say a special thank you to Lily Buchanan and Sara Rhodes for

taking the initiative and coming up with the dog wash idea to help raise money for the fireworks. These young girls demonstrated to me the true spirit of America and patriotism. I am proud to say that our fireworks show was put on by our community and as long as we keep this up we will have future fireworks shows on the Fourth of July.

Tom D. Ramsey
Vernonia Fire Works Crew
Lead Pyrotechnician

Community Garden prize was fantastic!

To the Editor:

Thanks to the Vernonia Community Garden Project. Thanks for the great raffle prize I won. What a great job you guys did. The yard has never looked better. Where do I buy the next ticket?

Thanks to Nikki and Zachary Larke, Kelli and Ben Schulte, Mark Lemay, Jeana Gump, Marilyn, Abigail and Hannah Nicks. Thanks, Gang.

Ann Mitchell
Vernonia

Good law enforcers don't commit crimes

To the Editor:

We expect our law enforcement to protect and serve, not eavesdrop and commit acts of voyeurism. But that is exactly what two Federal Bureau of Investigation Agents recently did in Fairmont, West Virginia.

The non-profit organization Hospice International, which provides health care to low income elderly in need of medical treatment, hosted an event to provide inexpensive prom dresses to West Virginia teenage girls.

Two FBI agents, Gary Sutton Jr., 40, of New Milton, WV and Charles Hommema of Buchanan, WV, moved a surveillance camera above the dressing room. They zoomed in on the teenage girls while they changed clothes. Both were charged with criminal invasion of privacy and conspiracy. Their trials were recently postponed. More than a hundred girls were violated by the FBI agents.

"I can't even begin to put words around what I consider an unspeakable act: the misuse of surveillance by a branch

of our government in a place we felt so secure," said Cynthia Woodyard, organizer of the event (AP, April 2009). "Never in a million years would we have thought something like this would happen. We're in shock."

Technology has made video cameras much smaller. They can be nearly impossible to detect. Taking from statistics by criminologists, it is likely that hundreds of times more crimes like the one in West Virginia have occurred, but the FBI culprits were not caught. We need greater oversight of law enforcement, and the creation of a Department of Civil Liberties Protection.

Having personally been beaten nearly to death for merely participating peacefully in a demonstration in Washington, DC, for action on climate change, I know first hand the horrors of a police state without checks and balances. We need major changes to prevent civil liberties violations from occurring again. Repealing the Patriot Act, which creates a secret, Gestapo police force, is a critical first step.

It is the lack of transparency that the so-called Patriot Act creates, that opens the doors for crimes like the horrific violations of teenage girls that recently occurred in West Virginia. These crimes are now regularly committed by "law" enforcement.

Chad Kister
Nelsonville, Ohio

Wants Elliot Forest protesters prosecuted

To the Editor:

To State Attorney General John Kroger:

This is an excellent opportunity for you to "walk the walk" on your pledge to get tough on environmental crimes.

Unless you intend to maintain a double standard in your treatment of Oregonians under the law, the actions taken by protesters on the Elliot State Forest certainly qualify as environmental crimes including trespass, destruction of property and physical damages caused by overturning a vehicle to use as a barricade. These crimes occurred on state lands.

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