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Letters

Pet Party so much fun there will be another

To the Editor:

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the Pet Party at First Friday on the first day of Jamboree.

Everyone had so much fun making the scarves for their pets and it was so much fun to watch the "dogs bobbin' for dogs"! They had so many different techniques, but large and small alike all got their hot dogs!

Even though we didn't get as many donations as I had wished, Vernonia Cares – Pet Food Division benefitted from your generosity.

Watch for this and more at the next First Friday, September 4, where we'll also be having a Pet Parade & Party. This will be another benefit for Vernonia Cares – Pet Food Division.

If you would like to make a donation to Vernonia Cares, it is open every Tuesday and Thursday. Donations will be gratefully accepted at those times.

**Carol Davis
Vernonia**

Students blamed for Police-caused crash

To the Editor:

The evening of New Year's Eve 2006 was to be a joyous night of celebration and family. My son and nephew headed north to town for a pizza. The terrible phone call came along

with temporary disbelief.

There had been an accident. My nephew, an honor student at V.H.S. and his cousin, my son (an athlete and student) had been in a car wreck. Traveling north to Vernonia, my nephew's vehicle came over a blind hill, to the words across the side of a cruiser's door: Vernonia Police Dept. The cruiser, motionless and lightless, was blocking the entire left and part of the right lane. The driver reacted quickly, swerving to the right, leaving but inches between his car and the front grill of the police car. Yanking back to avoid the embankment, he found himself face-to-face with southbound traffic. Narrowly avoiding a second car my nephew oversteered to the right and was launched off the 30-foot embankment, clipping an alder that actually straightened out their fall. They tumbled 360 degrees width-wise to land tires-down in the frigid waters of Beaver Creek.

As the floor boards filled with water, they jumped on their seats and grabbed valuables. They asked for assistance, from the officers, in retrieving a laptop from the car, but the officer asked only if they needed a rope, but no rope was found. The climb up the cliff was potentially very dangerous for the boys after such a severe accident. The ambulance rushed them to the fire station, someone said there was no need for an alcohol breathalyzer for either because they "looked visi-

bly" sober.

Bringing the boys home, we passed the accident site. The thick black skid marks traced where they swerved back and forth before leaving the highway. Ten hours later I returned to take some pictures. All traces of the skid marks were gone.

Not so patiently we waited for the police report to be finished. Officer Kay stated the boys came speeding over the hill and nearly rear-ended him, as he was increasing his speed coming out of a driveway and already traveling north. A simple look at the alder can prove this claim false, as the injured tree marks where the boys exited the highway, approximately 30 feet from the driveway. Compensation for the car was initially denied as was car towing, hospital bill, vehicle replacement, etc.

The south-bound car with two witnesses swore the police car was spread across their lane at a 90-degree angle. My neighbor said as she drove past the re-routed traffic, "This lasted well into the late evening." Why? There was no glass from the wreckage. My nephew was amazing...successfully maneuvering through both cars without a scratch. From this passerby, I received a notarized statement that city workers were scrubbing the original tire tracks off the highway. Our suspicions were reinforced with information from a respected but unnamed city volunteer who said we, "had

been wronged."

Eventually, the city's insurance caved and compensated the boys, though barely. These two boys could have been such an asset to the community. There wasn't a mar in their past, just awards and many proud moments for their families. They moved out of the county. They left their innocence in that gully. My son no longer talks respectfully of his hometown's law enforcement and my nephew had to drop out of college because he had no transportation.

I desperately worry for anyone coming in contact with this officer, who nearly caused two deaths in my family. I feel success is not judged by financial accumulation but how one reacts to problems in life. God is not done with Officer Kay's education yet.

**Claudia Lee
Vernonia**

Fishing, prizes and ice cream = kids' fun

To the Editor:

The 2009 Jamboree Kids Fish Derby went off well, everybody seems happy with the one hour fishing time.

Thanks to True Value and Vernonia Hardware for donating some fishing tackle, and Larry & Gail Snethen at the Old MILL Eatery. Thanks to Bill Yoe, who auctioned off donated items. The proceeds from the auction will go toward next year's derby. We also had a drawing for prizes. The kids enjoyed that. DeDe Webb donated the ice cream at the end of the derby.

We had seventy-one youths fishing this year, and had a lot of fun. There were quite a few youths from out of town, and a good turn-out of local youths.

A Big thanks to those who helped measure and count the

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Out of My Mind . . .

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not quite as efficient as the VA, but its administrative costs are far less than 10% of premiums, compared to the 30% of for-profit insurers.

So, since Medicare is in the mix, seniors are the target for myriad lies about how they would be affected. The death panel lie, of course, but also that seniors will lose health care, or have to pay more, if the program is expanded. Opponents are doing such a good job that you can hear ludicrous demands from seniors, including "Keep government out of my Medicare!" Such a statement makes it painfully clear that the speaker either doesn't know or has forgotten that *Medicare is a government program*, but also makes it obvious why seniors are targeted.

"Health cooperatives" are now being touted as an alternative to a public option, with their promoters citing rural electric cooperatives as models. The problem, of course, is cost. A lot of members, at least 500,000 of them, are needed

in order to negotiate favorable rates with drug companies, medical suppliers and hospitals.

One area that gets no mention is small businesses, those with 1-10 employees (not 50-100 employees, which are small businesses according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce). Most of these cannot afford to provide health insurance for their employees, many can't even afford it for themselves.

There are countless true stories about people who can't afford health insurance, others who have lost their health insurance, and those who were forced into bankruptcy by massive medical costs. But little attention is focused on how precarious the situation is for those who still have insurance. Too many people are one illness away from bankruptcy and/or homelessness.

One thing is certain: Too many Americans cannot get affordable health care; without a public option, there is no reform. Anything else is using a Band-Aid when surgery is needed.

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.