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Letters

Thanks for helping

To the Editor:

We would like to thank Kayla and Bill Long and everyone who showed up for my benefit dinner at Café 47. We had a great turnout. Thank you,

Darroid and Teresa Mushatt

Sometimes the truth is hard to confirm

To the Editor:

"Experience is what you get when you don't get what you want." *Randy Pausch-The Last Lecture.*

I never expected to be writing this letter (don't believe me...ask my husband or boss). I can no longer be quiet though, because what I want is the truth and I'm not getting it, and neither are you! Therefore, I now feel I must share perhaps the most important thing I can; my experience.

I will try to keep this as brief

as possible; but that may be a challenge.

My purpose in writing this letter is to give the citizens of Vernonia the truth regarding blatant lies written about my family in a letter to the editor, in the July 16, 2009, issue of *The Independent*, by current city administrator Bob Young. His statements that, "Mr. Graf has a previous arrest for assault and disorderly conduct, which was known to the officers," and "Mr. Graf had previous contact with the police while under the influence of prescription and potential illegal street drugs, that resulted in his being transported by ambulance." are absolute lies, and I have documents or lack of documents to prove it.

I also share my experience to let you know...be careful whose word you trust.

I can't believe I feel the need to state all of the following, but I want the community to know the truth about who is writing

this. That may be unclear to those of you who have read past letters to the editor. My name is Linda Graf, my husband is Ed Johnson, and our biological son is Elliott Graf, age 18.

I approached Mr. Young in his office and requested a retraction in the newspapers regarding his untrue statements, written as fact about my son. I wanted to know where he got his facts considering he had only been administrator for about 2 weeks when the paper came out including the letter he wrote and signed his name to. I was told he asked for and was submitted written statements by both former administrator Jim Johnson and then acting Police Chief Mike Kay regarding the matter. I asked if those statements were the only thing he based his statements on and he replied, yes. He told me he totally trusted these two men and their statements. My

question is why he would trust anyone's word after knowing them less than two weeks! He assured me he would review the facts and get back to me, which he did. He returned with a verbal statement that he had done a review and he stood by his statements. I then told him I had documents to prove him wrong and wanted the documents the police department had to prove his statements were true. I submitted a request for information form and was denied the papers due to (ORS) 419A.255; which does allow inspection of records by a parent; and Vernonia Police Department juvenile records police 810.43, which I was not given a copy of. I spoke with Police Chief Grace in his office regarding this issue and mentioned the Oregon Records Law. On September 8, 2009, I received a letter from him stating Oregon Revised Statutes may allow an exception for parents, and he would be consulting experts. I am currently awaiting reply on this matter.

Not only do I have medical records to verify what was written is a lie; but I called the Juvenile Department at the courthouse in St. Helens to verify with a counselor that NO ARRESTS were ever charged to Elliott Graf, and followed up with the Circuit Court, who also verified NO ARRESTS for an Elliott Graf. Exactly what my personal records show.

Now I challenge all citizens of Vernonia to find out for yourself the truth, considering my experience, and as I stated previously...be careful whose word you trust.

**Linda Graf
 Vernonia**

Out of My Mind . . .

From page 2

Even the conservative American Medical Association, which has fought every previous attempt, now supports health care reform.

How can anyone feel smugly righteous about condemning others to illness and death by claiming they are opposed to "socialism"? If all those screaming "socialism" really opposed government-supported or joint public/private programs, they would be heading angry throngs demanding that our roads, schools, water systems, fire departments, police departments, armies and navies, Social Security and Medicare be torn up and dismantled! These programs are, after all, just a few of our everyday socialist services.

That pretended opposition to health care reform as socialism is particularly hypocritical when it is spouted by U.S. Representatives and Senators who, as federal employees, have tax subsidized health care benefits. They pay premiums, true, but their costs, generally, are less than most families have to pay.

Sen. Ron Wyden, Sen. Jeff Merkley and Rep. David Wu all use the same health plan, the Blue Cross/Blue Shield standard family plan. The monthly premium (per family) is \$1,120.47, of which they each pay \$356.59 a month. They also have a \$20 co-pay for most doctor visits, and an annual deductible of \$600 per family.

Their rates are low because there are about 8.5 million federal employees, a group so large that no insurance company wants to exclude the marketing potential, even though it means they must charge a little less and cannot deny coverage for pre-existing conditions. A good public

option would be somewhat similar, which is why health insurance companies oppose it so vociferously. They would, of course, support a mandate requiring all of us to buy health insurance – as long as there were no strings attached, like not covering pre-existing conditions.

Returning to Congressional hypocrisy, legitimate concerns about deficit spending are understandable. What is not legitimate is that many of those who supported deficit spending for killing Iraqi civilians and American soldiers in a war of choice, pretend to be concerned about deficit spending for helping Americans stay healthy.

Since they aren't really opposed to either socialism or deficit spending, it is logical to assume that their behavior is influenced by campaign contributions from health insurers, drug companies and Wall Street. That money is just too sweet to ignore.

Janice Fine, of *Dollars and Sense* magazine explains the situation very well:

"If a baseball player slides into home plate and, right before the umpire rules if he is safe or out, the player says to the umpire - 'Here is \$1,000.' What would we call that? We would call that a bribe.

"If a lawyer was arguing a case before a judge and said, 'Your honor before you decide on the guilt or innocence of my client, here is \$1,000.' What would we call that? We would call that a bribe.

"But industry lobbyist walks into the office of a key legislator and hands her or him a check for \$1,000, we call that a campaign contribution. We should call it a bribe."

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.