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Letters

\$1,000,000 is a lot of money to most folks

To the Editor:

I am seventy years old, and I have worked all of my life. I was both saddened and amused to hear RNC Chair Michael Steel say "A million dollars is not a lot of money."

I am sure that to him a Million isn't a big number.

But to me it is an insurmountable amount.

I have good earnings, I make almost \$50,000 a year. If I were to save all of my money, and not spend a cent on food, rent, medical, or clothing it would still take me over 22 years to amass a million dollars.

I see a certain callousness in Michael Steele's comments. I believe that the leaders of the Republican Party have lost touch with the American people, and to quote others "are more inclined to favor Wall Street over Main Street."

**Bill Eagle
St. Helens**

City pointing fingers in wrong direction

To the Editor:

The city council's February 1st meeting turned out to be a rather interesting event. The planning commission's ridiculous sign ordinance attracted many concerned citizens from Vernonia's business community. Their attendance got them more than they bargained for!

Mayor Sally Harrison performed her usual dog and pony show. Oh, how she loves a captive audience.

It appeared Ms. Harrison was upset with Clark McGaugh of *The Independent*. I wonder why? *The Independent* is a publication the residents of Vernonia and Columbia County have relied on for the past 25 years...they are our community's watch dog. They're a publication known for reporting fair, truthful, and accurate articles. Without them there's no telling what the city council would get away with. Bashing a reputable news publication only makes bad press for Ms. Harrison. If she can't take the heat then maybe she should resign her post as mayor. Or maybe...for once...she should try being nice!

Ms. Harrison was the opening act for the city council's main attraction. Mr. Jason Short, [Vernonia Police Captain] Mike Kay's lawyer, made a special guest appearance. Mr. Short came all the way from Hillsboro to do what good defense lawyers do...create confusion. He came here to distract the public from the real issue. Interesting...he just happened to show up when the city council knew there would be a full house. Was this just a coincident or was this another attempt to manipulate the public?

So what's the real issue? The real issue is a public safety officer who may have a se-

vere personality disorder. It's about an alleged felony assault on a female victim in the presence of her child. This occurred while Kay was employed as a public safety officer for the city of Newport. Mr. Short mentioned Kay was acquitted of these charges. Most free-thinking individuals realize a trial is only a legal process. They realize some people are acquitted even when they're still presumed to be guilty. Examples: Bernard Goetz, O.J. Simpson, Lorena Bobbitt, the cops who beat Rodney King, etc.

Mr. Short failed to mention any of the testimony presented by the victim. He must have felt it was irrelevant because it happened long ago. But is it irrelevant? Or...is the victim's testimony a relevant part of Kay's psychological history?

Let's examine a couple of statements. The victim testified under oath, about 12 years ago. She said Kay, while in a rage, made the following threat: "If the Newport Police get me and I lose my job for domestic assault not only will I beat the shit out of you but I will put a bullet in your head and they will find you dead in a ditch."

Less than a year ago, then Interim Police Chief Kay had a suspect subdued and handcuffed. While in a rage he made the following statement: "I carry a gun 24/7 threaten me and watch what happens. You will go home in a f***** bag." At another point..."Come near me or

my family I will put two right in your chest." It then appeared Kay assaulted the suspect causing him to lose consciousness. He drove the suspect to the Vernonia Police Station where the paramedics revived him. There's no indication the suspect made any threats that would cause Kay to behave this way. In fact, the suspect while under duress, begged Kay to stop. Just picture how large a person Kay is. Kay, at one time, bragged he could bench press 425 pounds.

Do these two events sound similar? These are only two examples, there are many more. The city council, Police Chief Frank Grace, and the city administrator are well aware of this; or at least they should be. The DPSST has not yet been informed of this. The city council appears to be grooming Kay for police chief. Is this an individual we want as chief? I personally wouldn't want him working as a chief or public safety officer, anywhere!

I'm not sure why, but until recently, the above mentioned public record appeared to be a secret...even to the district attorney. Maybe they didn't want this made public. Maybe Chief Grace can explain!

**Edward Johnson
Vernonia**

Witt bill is back with no sponsors names

To the Editor:

Last year at this time our state Representative, Brad Witt, introduced a bill in the legislature to allow corporations to seek to use private property without the owner's consent. Natural gas and LNG (Liquid Natural Gas) companies would have been allowed to apply for and receive wetland fill permits on property they didn't own, without even notifying the owner. They could have gotten the

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Salem Scene

*By Representative Brad Witt
Oregon District 31*



When State Economist Tom Potiowski met with the Revenue Committee this week, we were holding our collective breath to see what the prognosis would be for the remainder of the biennium. It was a little worse than we had hoped but better than it could have been. The

forecast showed a continuing revenue decline of \$183 million.

The plan to balance the budget includes passing reforms to the Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) that will recover about \$55 million. In addition, the Legislature left a \$79 million positive general fund balance at the end of the regular session. After factoring in these two sources, the Legislature faces a budget hole of approximately \$50 million. Additionally, we have ap-

proximately \$220 million in the Rainy Day and Education Stability funds. We will still need to pare a little more from non-essential budgets, but will be able to protect core services like education, health care and public safety.

The recession has caused states across the country to pare back critical services and make huge budget reductions, for example, the state of Washington is facing a \$2.8 billion budget deficit. But there are clear signs that Oregon is actually faring better than most other states and is slowly working its way toward recovery. Oregon added 2900 jobs in January, the third best in the nation. As the Legislature works to rebalance the budget over the next three weeks, we will continue to do everything that we can to protect middle class families from the effects of the national and global economic downturn.

I will also speak against bills that I feel are regressive in their effect on those who are least able to afford increases in taxes and fees, as I did on the House floor this week.

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Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters with personal attacks on private citizens. Preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number.