

From the Sheriff's Desk . . .

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Our liberties are enshrined in our state and federal Constitutions, and woe to any law officer who eschews, ignores or tramples upon the constitutional liberties of anyone. People make mistakes, and law officers are no different, but constitutional mistakes, while at times forgivable, are never without consequence. At the very least it could mean intensive training to make sure a constitutional mistake is not repeated. But it could be serious enough that a law officer can lose his or her job and even face economic sanctions.

Because more important than upholding a career – or defending a hard-working

officer – is the premise that the constitutional freedoms of all shall be upheld.

Second, we must uphold the law. I refer back to the declaration in the Declaration of Independence that affirms that government has its authority from “the consent of the governed.” We elect law makers who set forth what the laws are. We enforce those laws, and the courts affirm and interpret those laws. Together, as a community, we take ownership of the laws and change those that do not work for us. That’s what it means to me, when we say we are a democracy under the rule of law.

Once we have the law, it is important to have the law upheld. To uphold a thing is to protect, defend and to enforce the provisions thereof. It isn’t just about taking people to jail, but it certainly can include that, especially when the nature of the offense is such that there is an on-going threat to the life-safety and liberties of the people.

The most important aspect to upholding the law is the concept that we cannot ignore what the law says because we don’t like its provisions or agree with the lawmakers who wrote it. There are always options in how we deal with the law (more in that when we discuss “justice” below), but to ignore the law completely is counter to the mission of every law enforcement agency.

To uphold the law also means to do so even-handedly. We enforce the law without respect to, age, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, life-style, or personal opinions. Like the Gendarme in *Les Miserables*, we need to know and demonstrate that, “The law is the law” without respect to who we are dealing with.

Finally, we must ensure that justice reigns supreme in all our contacts with the public. As I have said before, I believe the greatest privilege and responsibility for law officers is to enforce the law, not because we can, but because we should. Justice demands that our enforcement activities are aimed at producing the greater good. My view is that it isn’t enough just to write tickets, or just to take someone to jail. If these activities serve the greater good (and they certainly can!), then I am all in favor.

We are working here at the sheriff’s office to make sure these values are instilled in every one of our employees.

We hire and retain those individuals who have the greatest promise of upholding these values day in and day out. To be sure, they are all human beings who have the same trials and struggles that many others face in their own lives, and none of us is perfect.

But the question will always be: How close are we to the ideal? And how can get closer? To that end, we are creating and evaluating systems we put in place to monitor and check our progress. We train and remind ourselves that we are public servants and seek to eliminate mind sets to the contrary.

It will always be a destination and a journey. But it is one worth embarking upon, and it has been my privilege to be at the helm these last 22 months. As we approach the halfway mark in this, my first term as sheriff, I am both pleased with the results and anxious to improve. And I thank the voters in Columbia County for entrusting me with this mission.

Leadership.
Values.
Accountability.
Results.

Betsy Johnson

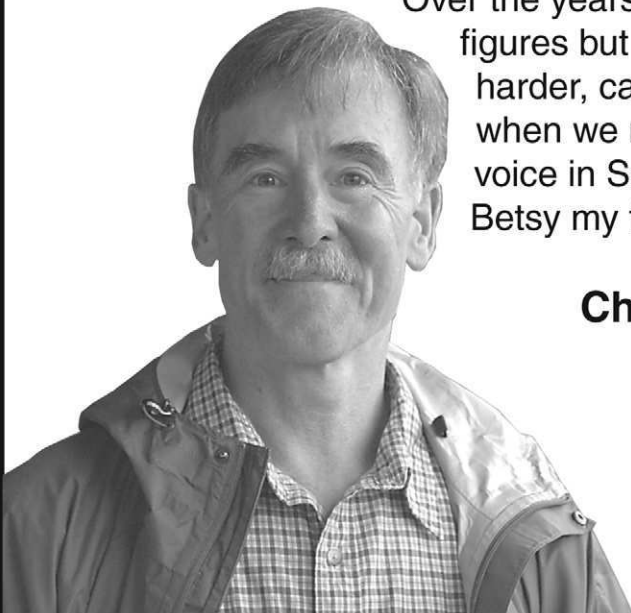


I have known Betsy Johnson for many years and have come to know her as a successful businessperson, an active member of our community and as a generous and caring person. It is in her current role as our State Senator, however, that I have come to respect and admire her even more!

As our Senator, Betsy has demonstrated an uncanny ability to not only pay attention to details but also to understand and communicate the big picture regarding the difficult issues we are all facing. She listens carefully to the concerns of everyday citizens as well as those of local city and county leaders and she works tirelessly to reach common sense solutions – and she follows through!

Over the years, I’ve known many political figures but Betsy stands out. She works harder, cares more and is always there when we need a strong and effective voice in Salem. I am proud to call Betsy my friend and our State Senator.

Chip Bubl
St. Helens



Re-Elect
Betsy Johnson
Our State Senator!
P.O. Box R • Scappoose, Oregon 97056

Letters

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