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Letters

Response to tragedy was impressive

To the Editor:
 Even cynics would have to be impressed by the rapid response to the recent tragic shooting of Rainier Police Chief Ralph Painter. Within minutes of the 911 call(s) police units from Longview and Clatskanie were on scene to take control of an unknown situation; followed very shortly by Portland's Incident Command and Employee Assistant Program grief councilors, in addition to countless other responders, who were able to bring this tragedy to its quick and (unfortunately) best possible conclusion.

As a Columbia County resident and small business owner, I wish to convey my thanks to and admiration for these and all the other law enforcement and fire/rescue agencies from surrounding districts, especially – but not limited to – Portland and Multnomah and Washington Counties, for their assistance and support to the city of Rainier during this very rough time. These and others not only provided Honor Guard for Chief Painter while he lay in state in Rainier, they assumed enforcement and service positions throughout Columbia County on Friday, ensuring all officers and associated personnel within the county an opportunity to pay tribute to the Chief by joining the cortege from Kelso to Portland and attendant services at UP's Chiles Center.

Not to be ignored are the officers and fire/rescue personnel from far and wide who came to honor the Chief. Joining virtually every Oregon law enforcement agency in his procession were representatives from at least British Columbia, Chicago, and much of western Washington.

To all of these we must express our thanks and gratitude, and our sorrow at their loss of a fellow officer.

**Jay T. White
 St. Helens
 Scappoose Muffler
 Scappoose**

Follow His light in times of darkness

To the Editor:
 And, it is a Happy New Year!

Having my oldest daughter walk away from being submerged and upside down in the roaring, over-flowing Nehalem (who stops for no one in its way, with its fierce, treacherous debris) this past Saturday. I thank the Lord for His mercy on me.

My girls referred to me as such a "Holy Roller" before. Now after my daughter telling me how she finally got out was by "following the light" in the darkness of the muck – I praise God and cannot stop thanking Him. Never forget to thank the Lord for your life and the lives of those you love.

Best wishes to all this year.
**Virginia Kepner
 Vernonia**

Dr. Gilmore leaving, services to continue

To the Editor:
 Many of you have heard around the community that Dr. Gilmore is retiring. The health board was notified by Providence that her retirement date will be March 4, 2011. We would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her dedication to this community, which was abundantly apparent during the flood of 2007, and the sacrifices she made to continue medical services during and after that disaster.

As stated in our previous letter, we were hoping to have information by the end of 2010 on whether our new partnership was approved. Unfortunately, the Federal government has informed this board that the date of notification has been extended to August of 2011.

We are happy to inform you of a successful meeting with our new potential partner, Coastal Family Health Center, and our current partner, Providence Health & Services, to ensure continuity of care during this time of transition. An arrangement was agreed upon by all parties to ensure adequate staffing in continuing to provide this community quality services.

You will probably notice some new faces at the medical center as the transition unfolds. There are currently positions available for local qualified applicants that can be accessed at providence.org. Employees hired through this process are

anticipated to make the transition to the new partnership with Coastal Family Health Center.

We also want to extend our thanks to the dedicated past and present staff for the quality service they have provided this community.

Happy retirement and best wishes to you, Dr. Gilmore.

Sincerely,
**Vernonia Health Center
 Board of Directors
 Carolyn Keasey, President
 Marie Krahn, Vice President
 Bob Wagner, Treasurer
 Wendy Sears, Secretary
 Ralph Keasey
 Darlene McLeod
 Phil Darrah
 Rebecca McGaugh
 Debbie Snook
 Barb Ervin**

Still need help with tournament funds

To the Editor:
 Hello, this is Payton Wolf and for those of you who don't remember me, I am the girl who is fundraising for my tournament softball team. I play for the Oregon Red Heat Fastpitch Softball team. I was and still am collecting cans or any other donation you may have. Since starting my fundraising in October, I have raised almost \$500! It has helped me so much and I am so thankful to all of you that called me and donated your cans. I also want to thank those of you that gave me money and a big thanks to Sara Wold who donated her time and profits from a Scentsy Party that she held for me.

I still have a little over half my money that I need to raise. I will still be collecting cans through this spring, so you can call if you have any for me to pick-up. I have a couple of new fundraisers coming up and one of them is selling Krispy Kreme doughnuts by the dozen. They will cost \$10 per dozen and I am taking orders anytime. They will be available for pick-up on Friday, February 4th, at NAPA Auto Parts from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. If this turns out to be a successful fundraiser, I am hoping to do this on the 1st Friday of every month. The 2nd fundraiser I am doing is selling tickets to a Bunco Tournament. The tickets are \$15 each and it will be held on Sunday, March 13th, from 3-6 p.m. in Beaverton. Childcare

will be provided by the Red Heat team girls, including myself. If you are interested in either of these fundraisers or just want to donate your cans, please call me or my parents, Steve and Amanda Wolf at 503-429-0457 or e-mail (amandawo@msn.com).

Thanks so much for your support,

**Payton Wolf
 Vernonia**

Priorities for flood mitigation are wrong

To the Editor:
 This letter is probably a little late, but my pot has been boiling for so long, it finally boiled over. I'm talking about the new school.

I wanted a dam to be built, because then all of these homes in Vernonia would not have to be torn down or raised up. Look at the tax revenue we are going to lose. The people who are left here will be paying higher taxes for years to come.

When they built the middle school, I said, "What are they doing? If we have another flood, I'll get more water in my house," and I did, seven more inches. What kind of planning was that?

Now we are building a new school. I'm wondering about the planning about that, too. The old schools probably needed work done on them, but I'm sure they could have been fixed up. I live in an old house but I have to put on a new roof, paint it and make repairs every once in a while. I've probably got mold in my house also, but I'm 94 years old and I haven't died yet.

So, I'm very disappointed in the new school, it is costing way too much money.

**Eleanor Thompson
 Vernonia**

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.