

# Vernonia man arrested on multiple charges

Joseph P. Greenawald, 34, Vernonia, was taken into custody at 5:47 a.m., on February 7, and arrested for menacing and an outstanding probation violation warrant out of Washington County for Assault Fourth Degree.

Deputies responded to a residence on Nehalem Highway North, between Apiary Rd. and Hwy 202, after Columbia 911 Dispatch received a plea for help from the female resident, saying the suspect had

fired a shotgun in the house and was threatening to shoot her dogs. When the Sheriff's Office responded to the scene, the victim was removed from the scene, but the suspect refused to surrender. A nearly three-hour standoff ended with the use of a stun grenade and the deployment of a taser.

Highway 47, between Apiary Rd. and Highway 202, was closed from 2:30 a.m. to just before 6:00 a.m.

After taking Greenawald into

custody, deputies began to put together a string of domestic violence charges against the suspect for incidents going back two weeks.

Greenawald has been lodged in the Columbia County Jail on an outstanding Washington County Probation violation and 10 counts of various charges, including Menacing, Animal Abuse, Coercion, Kidnapping, Strangulation and Assault.

## 24 Years Ago This Month

The February 26, 1987, issue of *The Independent* included the following news story on the front page under the heading, "Police car purchases legal but method needs change":

After months of rumor and unofficial grumbings, questions regarding the use, purchase and sale of some Vernonia Police Department vehicles were officially raised at city council meeting on December 1, 1986 and February 2, 1987.

In December Vernonia Police Chief Phil Jacobus explained that he had purchased a car from Oregon State Police, with \$600 of his own money, for use as a patrol car. He transferred the car's title to the city, he said; then when the city was able to get a better car, title was transferred back to Jacobus who sold it to Act II Automotive to get his money back.

At the February meeting questions arose about Officer Steve Poetter using his patrol car for personal transportation and, again, about the city selling a car without asking for bids.

Because of these, and other questions, The INDEPENDENT has tried to clarify the situation regarding the purchase, ownership, use and disposition of several police cars owned by the City of Vernonia.

Vernonia had five patrol cars and now has four, one of which is wrecked. Following is an explanation of when, how, and by whom they were purchased, and how they are now being used. All were bought from OSP.

1983 Chevrolet Impala (Lic. E155896) purchases April 24, 1986 for \$600 plus \$35 for a

prisoner cage, with City of Vernonia check No. 3053. Now being used by police Sgt. Jim Walters.

1983 Chevrolet Impala (Lic. E153788) bought July 16, 1986, for \$600 plus \$75 for prisoner cage and 2 light bars, with city check No. 3291. Title was transferred to Chief Jacobus who sold it to Act II Automotive for \$600.

Two 1983 Chevrolet Malibus (Lic. E155359 and E155350) bought December 20, 1985, with certified checks from Farmers & Merchants Bank, Vernonia branch. Jacobus purchased cashier's check No. 13855 in the amount of \$600 which he used to pay for one car. Poetter used cashier's check No. 13856 in the amount of \$500, then bought another cashier's check for \$100 (No. missing) to pay for the other car. These cars were bought at OSP Portland District Headquarters, not at Salem. Jacobus is using one car, Poetter's is wrecked.

Jacobus put title for the car he bought in his own name, subsequently transferring it to the City of Vernonia. Title to the car bought by Poetter was put in the city's name immediately.

1984 Chevrolet Impala (Lic. E158497) bought by Jacobus on Sept. 3, 1986, for \$600 plus \$20 prisoner cage, using Farmers & Merchants Bank certified check No. 15522, purchased by Jacobus. This car is now being used by Officer Marty Ray. Money for this car came from the sale of a 1982 Dodge Diplomat patrol car owned by the city. Jacobus sold the Dodge to Kelvin Wright of Auto Exchange, Portland, for \$600.

Asked why they used their

own money to purchase cars for the city, Jacobus and Poetter said they felt it was important for each police officer to have a patrol car because of 24-hour call duty. Jacobus Jacobus said he planned to be reimbursed when the city had the money and assumed Poetter would be also, but Poetter said he never planned to be reimbursed.

"I know the city doesn't have much money," Poetter said, "It was a straight gift, and I never expected reimbursement."

The responses of Jacobus and Poetter also differed on the question of personal use.

Poetter was accused of using the patrol car to take his children to church, but he denies any such usage. When he is on call, he said, and gets called out while his wife is at work, he uses the patrol car to take his sons to their grandmother. He insists that is the only way he has used the car personally.

Jacobus, on the other hand, freely admits to letting his teenage stepson use the patrol car to drive to and from school. "It was registered in my name," he said, "and I didn't see anything wrong with it." The city was paying the insurance premiums for the car while it was in Jacobus' name.

The INDEPENDENT has asked who authorized the officers to buy and sell property of the city. Poetter says he was authorized to do so by Jacobus. Jacobus says he was authorized by former councilman and police commissioner Bill Hansen, and by former councilman Joe Batty. The INDEPENDENT has not been able to reach Hansen for com-

## Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



Good morning. February 1, 2011, 7:30 a.m. and it is 30° in the Concrete Jungle. February 3, it's twilight and 50°.

Chapter ?? "Saga in the Concrete Jungle" – After having spent some time and mucho bucks, Doctor #3, after reviewing many paper charts and watching my heart beat on a screen, informs me my heart is whole, healthy and running like a well-oiled machine. Says he, "You don't need me, goodbye, have a nice day." Final results: The x-ray found pneumonia, the sneaky, sleeper, walking type. Antibiotics killed it, so, getting my strength back is my aim, then I can vacuum the carpet, do the dishes, laundry, make my bed, walk Shadow, go shopping and stay up late – all in the same day. Back to normal.

Poor ol' groundhog froze his nose, but he did see his shadow. Valentine's Day just flashed by. Do you have your order in for corned beef, cabbage and boiled potatoes yet? Don't blink, Summer is around the corner. When you leave home in the morning do you carry one or two sets of clothes with you for the day? Winter, Spring and Summer. I just love trying to outsmart the weather.

ment, but Batty said he remembered it as a council action that occurred around the time Jacobus was hired in 1985.

"Before Phil took over," Batty said, "our vehicle cost and maintenance were pathetic. Nobody made any money on it, and it's been good for the city."

City Recorder Don Dunaway said he "assumed" the council gave authorization. He also said "it is not unusual" that the purchases and sales didn't go through the city's books.

Sgt. Rodger Jincks, Fleet Manager for OSP, told The INDEPENDENT that he doesn't sell cars to police officers for their own use, but when he sells to a police chief he assumes that person is authorized to make the purchase. Jincks also said that it's unusual for a police officer to buy a car for his employer, and that he knows of only one other case.

Jacobus has maintained that it's common practice for officers to "buy" their own patrol cars, then be reimbursed at a later time.

The fact that the City of Vernonia profited from this game of "musical titles" was a matter of good faith, not good sense. Buying and selling for the city should be guided by firm policy and should be handled through the city's books, not through cashier's checks bought by employees. It's obvious that if the city's employees went out and bought everything they feel the city needs, then expected reimbursement, the city couldn't afford it.

It is also obvious that a police car should not be used for personal transportation, and the city council should take a hard look at Chief Jacobus' attitude. Many citizens are upset that a police car was wrecked during a high speed chase...just think how upset they would be at having a police car wrecked while being driven by a student for school transportation.

It's time for the City of Vernonia to opt for good sense, not good faith or good luck.

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