

# The INDEPENDENT

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## Opinion

### Council picks Kay over Haack

Sergeant Mike Kay has been on paid administrative leave since March 21, leaving Vernonia one officer short. On May 2, a majority of city councilors appeared to prefer Kay to Interim City Administrator Bill Haack, when they suppressed a public record that was in the council packet about state investigations of Kay, then fired Haack. Tuesday, Interim Chief of Police Mike Conner, next in line to run the city, sent in his notice to leave the chief position and return to his Sergeant position. (See full article on page 4.) That was effective today.

The three councilors composing the majority to suppress the record and fire Haack were Willow Burch, Kevin Hudson and Marilyn Nicks. They left the room that night seemingly without giving a thought to what would happen after Haack is gone, not bothering to name a temporary administrator. And, it seems to us, and many others who have spoken to us, that they threw Haack out to save Kay. Since Burch, for one, hasn't found time in two months to review the State case against Kay, we surmise she doesn't want to know, though she keeps claiming Haack won't tell her. Perhaps if she doesn't read the charges against Kay they will go away?

In October 2010, we investigated Kay's K9 certifications and suspected they were fake. We shared this information with DPSST (the state agency that trains and certifies police officers), and with Kay's employer, the City of Vernonia. It appears DPSST concurs, but that is one of the charges Burch refuses to read.

Kay's K9 has not been a real police dog since at least 2005, basically the dog is simply Kay's pet. Meanwhile, though we've been told the dog costs the city only \$1.00/year for his lease, Kay has been getting a salary boost of an extra \$220 a month as a K9 officer. If that rate has been consistent since 2005, Kay has defrauded the city for over \$15,000.

DPSST also found Kay was "untruthful" on his pre-employment application. Knowing that Kay had a criminal conviction for violating a restraining order relating to a domestic abuse charge, we asked then city administrator Bob Young for that application in October 2009. Young declared Kay did not lie on it. Because the city wouldn't let us see it unless we coughed up \$423 for the record, we never saw it. Nevertheless, that is now included as another of the reasons DPSST is asking Kay to turn in his certification and no longer be a police officer. Young covered it up.

Interim City Administrator Bill Haack, on the other hand, didn't try to cover up Kay's actions and followed the professional process that has caused Kay's three buddies (Burch,



Super Kay with his pet monkeys

### Opinion, cont.

Hudson and Nicks) on council to fire him. This action will have extreme consequences for Vernonia. Haack, with his areas of expertise and his commitment to Vernonia, has done quality work on a number of large projects that had languished for years before he took over, and on others that wouldn't even have been started without skillful guidance.

We, and council, know there is no money to hire a full-time, fully qualified, experienced city administrator. Hudson's idea that a part-time administrator is sufficient is ludicrous given the current city work load.

We call on those three councilors to reconsider their very ill-advised decision and call for a special meeting to re-deliberate on the matter. Preferably after they all read the charges against Kay.

### Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member  
Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



I enjoyed the local sportsmen banquet this year; you have to be quick to get a ticket though. I heard they sold out in 2.5 days. Like last year, there were lots of antlers hanging off the walls, this really does show off what we have in Oregon. The food was great and the speaker was the father of Blacktailed deer calling, Larry D. Jones. This is a great event and I hope a continued annual event.

The final results from the hair loss study out of Washington State are out. The four-year study came in with a lower survival rate, 33% on average over all, for Blacktailed deer in the study area. Also it was noted that the winter of '08-'09 did indeed have effects upon the fawn crop. We also experienced the heavy and long lasting snows that winter. What the researchers observed during their fawn capture in '09 was a 57% decrease in the number of Does who had twin fawns (72% to 31%). This has significant management implications for managers. The study noted, too, that a dry hot summer is also detrimental to fawn survival, which is contrary to conventional wisdom. It seems to me that any variance from normal is starting to show effects that we not have been able to quantify before. This study just showed that the effects are present, but further research will need to be conducted to quantify the effects in relationship to the deviations from norms, themselves. A great example right now is the late spring we are having. According to the last report I saw from the National Weather Service, this is the latest spring on record. Lower than normal temperatures and heavier than normal rainfall will most likely have an effect, not only on fawn survival, but also on fawns born and their weight. Mother Nature has a built-in mecha-

Please see page 20