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## Letters

### Appalled, shocked at Council actions

To the Editor:

I have just returned home after attending City Council meeting. I am appalled, stunned, mortified, and shocked at the unprecedented malicious behavior of three of our council

members - our city representatives! I am ashamed to have them represent our community. A community that is in horrific need of the services of our present Interim City Administrator. Bill Haack has stepped up to the plate to help Vernonia recover its equilibrium after the previous City Administrator

lacked the ability to manage our city.

How the three culpable council members can turn city meetings into a three-ring circus by manipulating and postponing important issues to slow up city proceedings for their own benefit and personal issues is unconscionable.

I applaud Sharon Bernal for being "The Voice of Reason" by stating personal issues should not enter city business. She was patient, adult, and reasonable in her presentation.

As it turned out, the three city council people in question chose not to listen to Sharon or the audience for that matter. One of our newest council people stated she did not have time to read the 300 page packet nor could she walk across the street to read the packet at City Hall. Why is she continuing on as a city council person if she does not have the time????

These three council people should not serve on council if they let personal issues cloud the greater picture. That picture being the greater welfare of Vernonia and its citizens.

After all, these council members are supposed to be working for us! Our entire community is going to suffer as a result of their attitudes and decisions.

We voted them into office to represent the populace of our community - not themselves! If anyone should be fired from their jobs for non-performance, it should be them and not Bill Haack!

I suggest we begin the "Recall" process to rid City Council of these three members.

Sincerely,  
**Janelle Thomas Cedergreen**  
 Vernonia

## Oregon Perspective

By Senator Jeff Merkley



For most families, summer means little league games, 4th of July parades, and backyard barbecues. But in recent years, America has added a new, unwelcome summer tradition: rising gas prices. Prices in Ore-

gon have jumped a dollar in the last year and political turmoil in the Middle East continues to drive them even higher. Further turmoil, such as a natural disaster like Hurricane Katrina or a man-made disaster like the BP gulf oil spill, would push prices higher still.

Skyrocketing gas prices are like a tax on working families. And it is the worst possible tax in the sense that it ships our energy dollars overseas, enriching the Middle East while hurting job creation here at home. We need to take concrete steps both to lower costs at the pump now and to gradually reduce the grip oil companies and petro-dictators have on our economy.

We should tap into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during this period of uncertainty as we did during the first Gulf War. We should use the revenue raised when the government sells oil

from the Reserve to fund measures to reduce oil demand. We should also crack down on Wall Street speculators who are buying up oil to drive prices higher and end massive subsidies to big oil and gas companies that just announced billions in new profits. Big oil is doing just fine - they don't need extra help from taxpayers.

The key to keeping fuel costs down over the longer term is to steer America toward oil independence. We can reduce our need for foreign oil by promoting the use of homegrown energy, like the second-generation biofuels being developed from woody biomass here in Oregon; by increasing fuel efficiency; by making homes and businesses more energy efficient; by promoting alternative modes of transportation, like rail, mass transit, and cycling; and by investing in new technologies like electric vehicles. And to keep attention focused on the issue, we need to create a National Energy Security Council.

These steps could eliminate our dependence on non-North American oil in 20 years, not with drastic changes to our lifestyle or by assuming magic new technologies, but just by making smart choices. Kicking our addiction to foreign oil means lower fuel costs for families and businesses, cleaner air and water, and a more secure nation. By counting on American ingenuity, we will strengthen the economy and create jobs right here in America.

## Out of My Mind . . .

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- COUNCIL/COMMITTEES – goal setting, annual budget process, roles and responsibilities
- PARKS – hire part time temp position/s, secure new housing at airport, review each park host's job, coordinate with school district on Spencer Park, update Parks master plan, secure \$25K park planning grant, write ODFW R&E grant for docks
- BROWNFIELDS – review opportunities for funding at OBDD, DEQ, EPA; implement EPA Brownfield if awarded; coordinate with DEQ on buyout properties that have soil contamination issues
- OPEN SPACE – work with council to establish a open space policy
- FEMA COMPLIANCE – work with council to establish a FEMA flood plain management and code enforcement policy and hire a code enforcement official

That's a long and complicated list of projects that, with the exception of City Systems and Council/Committees, all require the cooperation and assistance, both technical and financial, of other agencies. The lack of adequate local man-

agement has caused years of delay for the older projects, and may well result in worse results for many of the post-flood projects.

FEMA compliance, for instance, doesn't sound complicated; after all, the city passed the required ordinances. The problem is that an ordinance that isn't enforced is hard to distinguish from an ordinance that doesn't exist.

Without a functional flood plain management policy and enforcement, FEMA could well decide that it would be a fiscal boondoggle to help us relocate our senior center, food bank and health clinic. Time is running out, and we could lose all federal assistance in any future floods, and even lose flood insurance coverage.

Every one of those long-neglected projects involves potentially serious financial ramifications. But Kevin Hudson, Willow Burch and Marilyn Nicks either never thought about that, or they don't care. Apparently they skipped that little bit about council members serving the citizens of Vernonia. They deserve to be recalled.

\*Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition, 2011 revision.

## Economic inequality hurts core suppliers

To the Editor:

Economists have traditionally listed what they refer to as the "four factors of production," meaning Land, Labor, Capital and Legal Underpinnings. Primitive stages of economic development are marked primarily by "labor-intensive" activity of the sort that tends crops, raises livestock and digs

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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.