

Letters

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don't want to give bottles.

Thank you very much for your support! I look forward to learning about how our government works as well as important political figures like past presidents and Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as seeing Arlington National Cemetery and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I can't wait to take the trip and experience a ton of new and interesting things. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

**Bradley Ely
Vernonia**

Thanks for helping make trip possible

To the Editor:

I would like to thank all of the people in the community for their support and sponsoring of my student ambassadorship with the People to People organization. Because of your help I was able to go to Europe and spend 14 days travelling in England and France. While I was there I kept a travel journal of every day's adventures and I bought pins almost everywhere I went as keepsakes! I would absolutely do all of the work again because I had an amazing time there and made so many new friends while experiencing tons of new things.

On the trip we had 3 leaders and a delegation manager that spoke French and English and each of them guided us through our journey. But before the trip had even started, our flight got cancelled! When we finally got on the plane it was smooth "sailing" from there on out. After 20 hours of traveling it felt good to finally get to France. However it took my luggage another 4 days to arrive! In France we went to Versailles, climbed the Eiffel tower, and visited Notre Dame. I visited The Louvre (art museum) where I took an art workshop and saw the Mona Lisa. I played at Disneyland Paris, and saw the church where Joan of Arc was burned. On the last day in France we went to the beaches of Normandy and the American cemetery. I was able to lay down a wreath to honor the fallen soldiers there and at that moment I felt very proud but also very sad. It was a very touching moment for me. What I learned in France

was mostly a lot of respect for the war that took place there but also lots about art, in all of its forms, both big and small.

From France we went on an overnight ferry to England. We then went to the lovely city of Bath and saw the Roman baths. While in Bath we did a team building activity where we made rafts and climbed 20 foot poles and went punting (boating with a pole). We also visited Warwick castle, one of my favorite stops, where we saw a catapult throw a huge fire ball and fought as knights with real swords. I got to see Stonehenge and the weather was fantastic. Then, as a service project, we went to a grade school and spent the day with 7 year olds and asked and answered questions about school, family, food, pets and sports, to learn firsthand how our cultures were the same and different. We spent the day with these children working on their reading skills and finding out that they were just like us. Another day I had a drama workshop and saw the play *39 Steps* in Shakespeare's famous West End Theater. We then went to Buckingham Palace, rode the London Eye Ferris wheel (and learned that you can pay to have a wedding on it), and talked to a member of Parliament. And then, just like that, I was homeward bound and back on a plane for 9 and half hours with more memories than I can count! What I learned in Great Britain was that people there really feel like it's their responsibility to preserve old buildings and churches so they can protect their culture and history.

Fundraising for this trip taught me a lot about responsibility, money handling and how I can achieve my goals. I'm looking forward to my next adventure and want to say "thank you" to all of the people that supported me! I couldn't have done it without your support and encouragement.

**Megan Ely
Vernonia**

Is this the culture we want for a good life?

To the Editor:

I have some thoughts regarding Michael Botchie's proposed additions to Columbia County ordinances, which ap-

peared in the September 21 issue of *The Independent*.

One in particular concerns me: "The right to use deadly force to prevent the criminal that is fleeing immediately after committing the crimes listed above or when it is reasonably believed the property cannot be protected or recovered by any other means."

I support Robert Heinlein's concept of "An armed society is a polite society. Manners are good when one may have to back up his acts with his life." But this knife cuts both ways. I'd like to consider this all the way through.

An example: You look out your upstairs window one night and see a figure running from your house toward a vehicle carrying your television set. Since you are an armed citizen well versed in this new law, you shout for the thief to stop. When the robber continues toward the vehicle you open fire bringing them down.

Triumphantly, you run outside to discover you've just blown out the brains of a homeless woman who lives in her car with her two children – children who just witnessed their unarmed mother being gunned down.

When your six-year-old sees brains and guts on the driveway, you calmly explain that it is all right because it was legal for you to do this. One human life for one television. If it had been a wall-sized set, would two lives have been justified? Too bad the set was smashed when she dropped it. Too bad your kid is friends with the homeless kids.

Really? Is this the culture that we are living in now? Is this the slope we want to go down?

Really?

**Erika Paleck
Vernonia**

Lack of deputies can hurt 1st responders

To the Editor:

As a citizen of Columbia County I believe the actions and decisions made by our Sheriff's Office and our County Commissioners could create some serious ramifications that may affect many in this county.

The Sheriff's office cut the patrol deputies down to one deputy to respond to 9-1-1

calls. Commissioner Fisher made a public statement in a letter to the editor, published in the Spotlight on September 21, stating that "the issue of the number of deputies in the CCSO have been an issue for years and in 2006 we had six road deputies, the same number projected for this year. What is new is the way Sheriff Dickerson is using his deputies to deal with crime". This statement tells me that Commissioner Fisher approves of this new use of the deputies.

Here is an example of how it could affect EMS First Responders: When a call comes into the Columbia County Communications Center for any of the following incidents; assault, domestic violence with abuse, a shooting, or a suicide, what currently happens is EMS Personnel are dispatched to respond to provide medical treatment to the victims. They respond and stage to a known safe location within the area of the call until law enforcement can clear the scene and determine that the scene is safe for the EMS Personnel to enter.

Now, with one deputy to respond to all 9-1-1 calls, how long are these first responders going to sit along the side of a road waiting for him or her to respond? How long will someone that could be in serious or critical condition have to wait for medical attention? Has anyone thought about this because a lot can happen in a very short amount of time to victims waiting for help?

Are we now going to ask our first responders to risk their lives to save another life and proceed into an unsafe scene because our "Lone Ranger" is in the other end of the county? What happens if the deputy is involved in a crime scene and cannot leave it or has a prisoner in the back seat? According to what I have been reading in the media, no other deputies will respond. There are going to be some 9-1-1 calls that go unanswered. Our Fire Departments show up every time they

are summoned county-wide. How is one deputy on or no deputy available to respond to these types of calls going to affect them? Will our Fire/Medical Responders now have to leave the scene when another call drops, or will they be considered unavailable for the next call while they continue to stage?

The current response time for a deputy on these types of calls can sometimes be as long as 30 minutes. What will they be come October 1st? 60 minutes? 90 minutes? Two hours?

What happens if the lone deputy responds to a disturbance call in rural county that turns bad and his nearest help is where? Is it going to be 20, 30, 40 miles away? Is it worth risking the lives of our deputies, our EMS Personnel, and our citizens because our federal timber dollars were cut?

My desire is to see the priorities on spending changed in the other seventeen county departments. Not the CCSO. Are the county roads more important than public safety? I am sure the criminals that frequent this county because of the lack of law enforcement presence will appreciate the newly paved roads that make it easier and faster for them to come and go.

I am not ok with five deputies on payroll and only one is going to respond to 9-1-1 calls, but apparently our Commissioners and our Sheriff are. It is now time for the citizens of Columbia County to get a voice. Our Commissioners meet every Wednesday, at 10:00 a.m., in room 309 at the County Courthouse. I will be there to find out the facts of what is seemingly insanity. It is time to stop the insanity.

**Michael Botchie
Rainier**

