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## Letters

### Thanks for your help

To the Editor:

I wish to thank the following people for transporting my mother back and forth to dialysis: Eldonna and Grant Williams, Sharon and Pat Rockwood, Andrea and John Price, Barbara Rainbolt, Carol Senn, Carl Holsey, and also all of our church family and friends for prayers. We are now doing home dialysis.

**Tina Brewington  
Vernonia**

### Mother's pride shines for serviceman son

To the Editor:

AB Timmerman, John "Levi", graduated from nine weeks of basic training in the United States Air Force, on February 3, at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB), San Antonio, Texas.

During a 12-month period, nearly 36,000 airmen will graduate from basic military training at Lackland AFB. It's the sole

entry point for all enlisted ranks into the U.S. Air Force and is called the "Gateway to the Air Force." Each graduation of these fine young airmen renews the faith in the future of the Air Force and the security of our great nation.

Following graduation, each airman is enrolled into a training program to learn the technical skills needed. The Air Force offers each airman the opportunity to grow in a profession and as a person, through education, training and service to our country.

It's amazing to think that only 1% of the United States is even eligible to join the military.

John "Levi" Timmerman graduated from Vernonia High School in 2010, at the age of 17. He moved here the day he turned one year old and the family has lived in the same house since. Before joining the Air Force, he was bucking hay and roofing houses. He dedicated himself to work out

everyday. He even taught himself to swim and made Ironman time during basic training.

He coached high school football in 2010, then jr. high football in 2011. He enjoyed coaching very much and hopes to be able to coach again someday.

Levi tells us he loves the Air Force and wants to see the world while he is an airman. On May 14, he will graduate from Air Force training and be back in Vernonia for a couple of weeks. Many are looking forward to seeing him. After his visit here, he will be deployed to Japan. Since his grandpa was in Japan in the Army, his other grandpa was in Japan in the Navy (during his 20 years of service) and he has an uncle who served in Japan with the Marines. With all branches of the services being represented in his family and all of them having gone to Japan, Levi considered his deployment very special.

Levi is very loved and supported by his father, Rick Timmerman, his brother Rocky Jones (he's very close to him) and his sister, Casey Jones. He also has three other sisters who support him; Jolynn Cox, Somer Lielbe, and Richelle Nuefer. His eight nieces and nephews all adore him. He has always been very gentle and loving with small children – one nephew calls him "The Big Guy" as he is six foot tall.

As family and friends, we would like to thank all our military members for their service.  
**Please see page 19**

## 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.

## Salem Scene

*By Representative Brad Witt  
Oregon District 31*



The Legislature's 34-day session came to an end on Monday night, March 5, shortly before 9 p.m., and I think it will go down as one of the most productive sessions in recent history. Going into this session, we knew that our most important task would be to rebalance the budget, down another \$35 million from the end of last session. We did that and more. Perhaps most remarkable was passage of the Governor's package of health care and educational reform bills.

This would have been an aggressive agenda under ordinary circumstances, but to have accomplished this in just over a month, with a House split 30-30...well, no one thought it could be done. I'm proud to say that the budget bills, as well as the health and education reform bills, all passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. In addition, we addressed a wide range of issues affecting both short and long term policies in Oregon.

Here is just a sampling of the legislation that passed:

SB 1510 Creates three marine reserves at Cape Falcon, Cascade Head and Cape Perpetua.

HB 4039 Extends the Senior Property Tax Deferral for about 1,700 previously discontinued homeowners with reverse mortgages.

HB 4016 Adds to the list of those required to report child sex abuse.

HB 4045 Treats concealed handgun license information as a privacy issue except for criminal justice purposes.

SB 1555 Requires school employees to report harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying.

SB 1575 Increases penalties for disorderly conduct within 200 feet of a funeral site.

HB 4131 Requires agencies to reduce the ratio of managers to front-line workers to create greater efficiency.

HB 4048 Allows police to obtain financial and medical records

in connection with abuse investigations; extends the statute of limitations for prosecution of financial crimes committed against people 65 and over.

SB 1527 Buy America. Allows a contracting agency to give preference to a bidder that exceeds the federal Buy America requirements.

In my last newsletter I described the problems that we were having getting foreclosure legislation passed. I'm pleased to tell you that, after lengthy negotiations, SB 1552, which I co-sponsored, passed by a 59-1 vote! This bill will be effective upon the Governor's signature. Homeowners in jeopardy of losing their homes will now be able to meet with a HUD approved housing counselor prior to their face-to-face meeting with the bank. The bill will also prohibit the dual-track process in which banks appear to be working on loan modifications while simultaneously proceeding with foreclosure.

I can't end this newsletter without telling you about another accomplishment for District 31. As you know, the people of Vernonia have been rebuilding their schools, which were devastated by two 500-year floods in 11 years. The loss of their schools would have meant the death of this beautiful little town and they were not about to let that happen. So build they did, but as construction neared completion, they found themselves \$6 million short. We could not let the project come to a halt with the end so near. Senator Johnson and I knew that the only thing we could do was ask the Ways and Means Committee to consider funding this shortfall, but what a time to ask, right in the middle of a budget shortfall. I assumed a leadership role on the House side, spoke to the issue several times on the floor and held discussions with the Co-Chairs. Due to our joint efforts, we were able to obtain funding in the amount of \$4 million. They will still need to fund-raise the rest, but we were so pleased to have obtained as much as we did for this worthy cause.

Finally, thank you to everyone who called or wrote me during the session. Your comments are important to me and help inform my decisions as we consider the legislation that comes before us. I look forward to continuing this exchange as we finish out this year and anticipate the next session in 2013.