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Letters

Coal exports are bad for Columbia County

To the Editor:
I live in Columbia County, Oregon, where the two dirty coal export projects are being proposed to go through our port. Having over 30 years as an educator I have strong concerns about the health and safety for my community. I stand in applause for Gov. Kitzhaber, the EPA for their concern over the effects on the environment, health and safety issues with both of the proposed coal projects (Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber calls for sweeping review of coal exports from the Northwest ports – Oregonian, April 25). In St. Helens the trains would cut the community in half affecting the ambulance, fire trucks, parents from getting across town and people can't get to the small businesses. It would increase pollution from coal dust, the diesel fuels from the trains and barges plus noise and traffic congestion. I do NOT want this in my community as it is wrong on so many levels.

Sincerely,
**Marjorie Kundiger
St. Helens**

Thanks for help with Ryan Roberts fund

To the Editor:
Many thanks go out to the people who came and spent their money at the Lincoln Grade School Sale.

The donation to the Ryan Roberts Kidney Fund is an important fundraiser.

I spent all my time up there in memory of Black Hawk Pilot Erik C. Kesterson, killed in action in Mosul, Iraq, in November of 2003. We still miss him greatly. He was a good friend to all those his age, older and younger, too. He always jumped in and helped when anyone needed an extra hand. We all loved him very much. He spent the last year of young adulthood going into adult hood camping with my son, Joe J. Hammons, and by the river on Timber Road property. The Free Wheelers do everything we do in his honor.

I want to thank those who brought in donations for the sale: Robert and Kathy Leach and Family, Synda Allen, Jack Randall, Gregg Schaumburg,

Andrew and Amy Quaring, Papa Joe (and I donated). There were a couple of others whose names I didn't get. You know who you are and I appreciate everything that made it easier to make money on the small sale.

I made \$602.00, in all, donated at the U.S. Bank.

I'm proud of those who came out to support the Ryan Roberts Kidney Fund and you all know who you are, so give yourselves a great big pat on the back.

All my love,
**Sunny Suppes and
The Vernonia Free
Wheelers**

Do elected officials know what's best?

To the Editor:
Anyone out there feel that we are being punished for just being American, besides me?!

I can no longer sit back and say nothing about the fear I have for this country. I must speak out and remind people: the citizens of this great nation did not cause the problems we are facing.

Since the formation of our country, "we the people" have been led by elected leaders. Lately our leaders have the notion that they and they alone, have all the answers to our problems. Some of our elected officials believe that they know what is best for all of us. We can all see how well that notion is working, now can't we?

What we have is a government that believes passing 2000+ page bills, which no one has even read, is the wise thing to do. As one of our brilliant government officials put it: "But we must pass the bill so we can see what is in it." It seems to me there is something wrong with that approach, don't you agree?

It is beyond my comprehension why more people are not speaking out about the loss of their constitutional liberties. Freedoms which are being threatened today, among others, were written by our founding fathers in a document we now know as the First Amendment.

Our government is asking us to tighten our belts and have a budget to run our households. But the current administration hasn't been able to put a budg-

et together for over three years. They say they don't need a budget. Much less abide by the constitution; after all it's just an old piece of parchment. "We the people" just need to trust them. Just turn a blind eye toward the corruption, fraud and out-right blatant wasteful spending. One example of this is the government shelling out taxpayers' money to their political supporters and friends.

Now, I ask you: Do our elected officials really know what is best for us? Are their policies reflecting an honest concern for the good of the people, or are they displaying greed? Are their actions showing more decisions that serve the good of the Republic? I don't know about you, but this bureaucratic mess our officials have created hasn't earned my trust! Therefore, I'm just a bit cynical about the "trust me" philosophy.

Our kids, grandkids, and even our great-grandkids, are being saddled with the greatest debt put on any generation in the history of America. It will take decades to honor this debt. If "we the people" don't get a handle on this self-serving, out of control, out of touch government soon, I'm sorry to say that this great nation of ours is headed towards becoming a fallen nation. We are following in the footsteps of Jeri-

cho, Babylon, Rome, and the U.S.S.R., to list a few of the greats.

Wake up America! This country was established by the people, for the people. Our Pledge of Allegiance says, "One nation under God." not one divided nation under the government. Our money says, "IN GOD WE TRUST," not in our government we trust! Speak out loud and clear America! Make sure your voice is heard!

**Don Sandrich
Vernonia**

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.

NOTICE

The INDEPENDENT publishes on the first and third Wednesday of each month. Because May has five Wednesdays, there will be three weeks before the next issue, on June 6, 2012.

The deadline for the June 6 issue is Friday, June 1.

Vernonia City Update

by Bill Haack, City Administrator

Why we flush water from fire hydrants

It may seem strange to see utility workers letting thousands of gallons of water flow freely from a hydrant, particularly during the hot summer months or even a drought. So why do we do this? There are several reasons, but to put it simply, we

don't have a choice.

Line Breaks – Whenever a water line breaks, a repair or replacement must be made. That section of pipe must then be "super-chlorinated" for disinfection. The disinfected section must then, in turn, be flushed from a hydrant to prevent the highly-chlorinated water from entering the rest of the system.

Chlorine Residual – Sec-
Please see page 4

Out of My Mind . . .

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those, too.

Now it's *our* head-in-the-sand approach to fiscal responsibility. We pay for weapons systems that the military doesn't want, and we subsidize the oil industry so Exxon-Mobil can produce heart-warming ads about the importance of educa-

tion. But we don't want to pay for education.

Good public schools have done more to create a healthy American society than any other element of public life. Why are we crippling our nation's future, and why *aren't* we angry about that?