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Letters

Volunteers thankful for people's support

To the Editor:

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the citizens of Vernonia for their support during Jamboree. Our snow cone booth raised \$500 to be used locally toward the education of new EMTs. Special thanks to the Festival committee for an outstanding job in organizing, and to Vernonia Sentry and Bridge Street Mini Mart. Special thanks to Holly and Wayne Vaughn for their support and the use of their freezer. Our booth was a success because of everyone's continued support to the Volunteer Ambulance Association.

We will have our annual fudge and bread fundraiser at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Thank you, Vernonia, for your continued support!!

**Trish Smith, EMT
Vernonia Volunteer
Ambulance Association**

Answers not enough for WOEC member

To the Editor:

Stuck...in a Catch 22! How is that, electrically speaking? Well, pick up a copy of the latest *Ruralite*, or *The Independent* newspaper and Marc Farmer is explaining, again, why his hands are tied because of BPA rate increases; natural disasters; rising costs and, above all, "his new building has nothing to do with the increas-

es." The Catch 22 is this: when a WOEC Member has an "itch", attends a meeting, stands up and has a say, the same worn out treads of explanation are rolled out and life goes on. Nothing happens. However, if a Member(s) persists, resistance, noticeably, builds up a tad. The member is told "they are appreciated" or as in the last Board Meeting, "their financial, physical pain and stress from rising rates are felt"...but since the Member does not possess the experience, technical knowledge or management skills required to run WOEC, they don't know of what they are criticizing or asking about. If one presses past this line-in-the-sand, they are accused of causing trouble without evidence and not being aware of all the selfless hard work done. If that doesn't do it, as in one incident, they are shouted at. So "what's the problem?" Well, for one reason, in the last 6 months, we know the cost for BPA electricity was \$1,313,341. By the time it passed through our meters, the total was \$5,106,022.93. That is a chunk of change. There are a lot of members who would like to know about how that was spent other than a repeated mantra of explanation about natural disasters of which he is the biggest one.

If clarifying data is requested, in a meeting or at the main office, some is given and some is withheld, even if presented at a meeting open to the member-

ship, e.g. a Board Meeting. Since the By-Laws (available at the main office) permit such information to be given to Members (Article V, Section 7; and Section 9), the question arises, what is so secret? And why? It is this type of resistance by Marc Farmer and the Board, to Members questions, that makes it hard to trust what is being said in explanation of constantly rising rates. In other words, what is the real "skinny"? It bears looking into.

**Jack Phillips
Vernonia**

Citizen wants federal charges vacated

To the Editor:

I question the US Justice Department's behavior of late. Starting with their unwillingness to prosecute bullies (on video) wielding pipes at the polls in 2008 and extending to the lawsuits challenging voter ID requirements and immigration enforcement practices in Florida, Texas and Arizona I've concluded that Eric Holder, US Attorney General, is, well...one complicated guy.

But there's more reason to be alarmed. According to an article by the WSJ Aug. 20, 2012 (Gibson is off the hook. Who's next?) the feds just won a judgment and a promise not to talk about the case beyond the form 302 report; the "Statement of Fact", from Gibson Guitar. Though Gibson denied their culpability in the charge of im-

porting restricted wood from Madagascar in an earlier op-ed piece, they agreed to pay out \$350k and accept the fed's version of reality rather than fight a multi-million dollar court case.

The writer, Harvey Silverglate, goes on to explain that when interviewing suspects, the feds don't tape the interview like states and counties do. Two interview; one asks the questions, the other writes down the answers. This gives the feds complete latitude to edit the "Statement of Fact" in a narrative that favors the prosecutors. Should the suspect depart from the narrative at a later time in open court, he will be charged with making a false statement to a federal official, a 5 year prison offense.

Outrageous.

"Form 302" should be a video. Throw out the gag orders. Allow explanations in pursuit of the truth. Vacate charges against Gibson.

**Wayne Mayo
Scappoose**

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



I received some very nice comments about my series of town halls on the new Foreclosure Mediation legislation that passed last session. I especially want to thank the experts who took the time to travel the district with me. They were:

- Angela Martin, Economic Fairness Oregon
- Jermaine Brown, Department of Justice

- Cindy Peake and Beverly Danner, Community Action Team
- Carlos Garcia, Hacienda Community Development Corp
- Ricci Sohn, Open Door Counseling Center

I also want to thank those who attended. I know that several people were able to sign up for assistance right then and there. I learned a few things myself that I would like to pass along. Below are a few gems that I hope you will share with anyone that you think will benefit.

For those who are unemployed and struggling to make their house payment, there is the Mortgage Payment Assistance

Unemployment (MPAU) program. The program provides up to \$20,000 or 12 months of mortgage payments (whichever comes first) to the first 2,000 homeowners across the state who are found to be eligible. It is 5-year forgivable loan – if you stay in your house a minimum of 5 years, the loan is forgiven! Learn more at www.oregonhomeownerhelp.org.

Another program described at this same website is the Loan Preservation Assistance (LPA) program, available as of August 29th in both Clatsop and Columbia Counties. This program also provides \$20,000 for up to 2,000 eligible homeowners whose loan servicers have enrolled in the program. A servicer is the lender to whom you send your house payment. Some people have had more than one over the term of their loan.

For those who have already been foreclosed, there may be the possibility that you qualify for a payment of up to \$1800. These funds, and the funds described above were made possible by the class action suit brought against the "big five" lenders by 21 states, Oregon being one of them. Oregon received \$29 million to establish a fund to help homeowners who were directly impacted by the housing crisis.

Finally, for those who are still trying to negotiate a loan
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