

G.R.I.T. note: This opinion letter was submitted to us "anonymously," mailed from Everett, WA Jan. 3, 2007. After a posting on our front page requesting "Dave" call us to verify his identity, he did so the next day. He lives in Startup, and I know him. He also has valid reasons for wishing to protect his identity, thus, I have posted this letter. (L. Storm)

In response to the unsigned article titled "Sultan residents troubled over increasing local crime". I find this article to be filled with nothing but finger pointing and blame placing on a public entity that has no way of defending itself to such criticism.

Perhaps the council should take a step back from casting blame and take a step forward by assuming some responsibility for their actions over the past few years? It is the council that cut staffing at the Police Department by not allowing hiring of vacated positions (police officer and clerical). It is the council that refuses to fund even the basic needs of the department. Was it not the council that eliminated the ordinance that specified a ratio of police officers per 1,000 citizens?

The department didn't want to turn to the public and ask for help, they were forced to because their own council abandoned them, both financially and publicly (as demonstrated by recent comments). I doubt it was the public's dissatisfaction with our police department that caused the police levy to fail, rather it was the high tax and fee burden levied by the city already.

The council and citizens complain about "kids running around all hours of the night unsupervised, destroying property" but yet it was the council that never replaced the curfew ordinance that was repealed in 2003. How can the people expect the police to "do something" if the police do not have the laws in place to back them up? Vagrancy is also an ever increasing problem in town. Again, it is up to the council to pass laws to give the police the tools needed to address this dilemma.

Maxine Purbaugh stated that our officers are nothing but "boy scouts with guns". Well Maxine, it takes a real special person to put on a gun, a badge, a few millimeters of Kevlar and to go out onto the streets and put their own life on the line to protect yours, mine and everyone else's in this town. We're not only asking our officers to do this, but were also asking them to go out and work alone, knowing that when a call for help is needed it could be more then 10 minutes away in Monroe. Someone that would put themselves willingly thru this night after night is far from a boy scout Maxine, they are HERO'S.

As for the comments of slow response times or lack of patrol activity, these individuals' remarks are extremely exaggerated or completely unfounded. For example, the allegations of a married couple that are "long term residents of Sultan", stating that the police didn't show up to a burglary in progress call for nine hours is ludicrous, and to even make such a claim in completely irresponsible with only a malicious goal in mind.

If the community does not step up and show this department some constructive support we are going to loose some fine officers. Please do your part, tell our local government that they need to give the police the tools and funding they need to get the job done safely and efficiently.

Dave

Sky Valley Resident (STARTUP)