

Voices In My Head: A Mental Fricassee

By P.J. O'Leary

It was a pleasure to receive so many positive responses regarding my January "Mother Nature" column. We as a community continue to battle back from the blow which she has dealt us, but I'm certain that the resilience shown by those affected and those who continue to aid in the recovery will make our town stronger than ever.

Among those who enjoyed the column, there were quite a few who were tickled by my metaphorical use of the word "turd." So there- now that I've gratuitously mentioned it again, there's no reason to think that this month's column should not be equally resplendent.

This month I think I need to clean out the refrigerator and serve up a cerebral casserole. I have little portions of thoughts which won't make a full meal but are too fresh to toss out. My Mom always said "use it up, or it'll go to waste." Good advice. Those Vernonians who are second and even first generation Southerners might prefer to think of this as a mental fricassee. Hey, don't get me wrong. I've always said that a possum on the grill beats one on Highway 47 anytime.

Since I mentioned my Mom, let me share with you what my Dad said recently. Both Mom and Dad are eighty-eight years old, and my siblings and I feel blessed that we can continue to benefit from their wisdom. I called them on New Year's Day and asked my Dad if they went out partying on New Year's Eve. He said "We were going to go to the tavern, but then we remembered that all our friends are dead." Apples apparently do not fall far from the tree.

Next item: Do any of you ever play Target Tag? My family and I frequently play this game at the Target store on 185th in Hillsboro. It could just as easily be played at Costco or Winco. According to the rules you get one point if you see someone you know from Vernonia and two points if you know their name. I scored twenty-two points one afternoon, and I seriously can't foresee that record being broken. As the Mailman, I can frequently provide their address as well, but my family doesn't give extra points for that. It may sound inane, but in the heat of the game seeing a clerk from the Mini-Mart picking out laundry detergent can be every bit as exciting as seeing Jon Bon Jovi at the airport.

Last item: As of this writing, Timber Road remains closed because of the December 29th slide. The ODLMLM (Oregon Department of Large Moving Land Masses) spokesman said recently that "The mountain that slid was quite old and really needed to be replaced anyway. Because the cost of replacing it with indigenous mountain materials would be cost prohibitive, we have decided to import a mountain from the Hengshan Range in the Hunan Province of China. It may not last forever, but you can't beat the price."

At least we fix our mountains. Columbia County residents have been forced to look at Mt. St. Helens, that trashy broken-down eyesore belonging to our neighbors to the north, for nearly 28 years. Granted, the cost of renovating a mountain like that would be pretty steep, but over here we have a way of taking care of problems like that. There's not much that can't be covered by one of those big blue plastic tarps. I have a neighbor who's had one over his unfinished garage for over fifteen years, so there's no reason why those Washingtonians couldn't do the same thing. "But it will blow off," they'd say. Not if you hang those water-filled gallon milk jugs on the edges. They also make green plastic tarps now. That might look more natural. That's probably the way to go.

THIS WINTER- IF YOU NEED LOCAL TOWING SERVICE IN THE VERNONIA AREA-

Make sure you request service from a local provider.

Police and County personnel are required to use a rotating pool of available providers, unless you specifically ask for a service by name.

For towing emergencies this winter in and around the Vernonia area, please ask for

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Safety Matters

By Chief Mathew Workman

The year of 2007 was unfortunately a record setting year for Columbia County. The county had sixteen fatal traffic accidents eclipsing the previous yearly high total of twelve. Over all, preliminary statistics show that the Oregon Traffic Death totals were down for the year. In 2006 there were 478 traffic deaths. As of midnight December 31st, there were 450 traffic deaths reported in Oregon for 2007. These of course are preliminary numbers and are subject to change pending cause of death determinations if a death occurs thirty days from the date of crash.

Many of the motor vehicle crashes in the county involved speed and some involved impaired driving. In talking to Sgt. Larry Lucas from the Oregon State Police, he feels the increase in motor vehicle crashes and fatalities is directly related to the lack of manpower to do regular road patrols by the State Police and County Sheriff's Office. Sgt. Lucas told me that when the State Police were conducting enhanced patrols on Hwy 47 around the bridge construction sites, they saw a seventy-five percent reduction in crashes while conversely seeing a rise on Hwy 30. Sgt. Lucas says the correlation is evident that increased presence has a positive influence on traffic crashes and other traffic-related incidents.

Several traffic-related laws changed in Oregon for 2008. You can find a list of these changes on the Vernonia Police website by clicking on the "New 2008 Laws" link. Some of the news laws enhanced DUII statutes, made new crimes for killing people while driving and restricted teen cell phone usage. If you go to the link, you will also find several other non-traffic laws discussed as well.

In an effort to increase traffic safety for Vernonia drivers, the Vernonia Police Department offers three informative brochures. The first brochure is called "Slow Down: Control the speed, control the damage" which addresses the dangers of speeding on Oregon roads. The second brochure is called "Space Out: Keep your distance, it's the law" which discusses the dangers of tailgating. The last brochure is called "Move Over: Protect those who protect you" which discusses the legal requirement to move over when passing emergency vehicles. All three of these brochures are available at the front counter of the police department.

The Rainbow Ends with a Pot O' Gold

Join us for this celebration of great food, many o' prizes, a credit union update and elections for our Board of Directors!

Wauna Federal Credit Union's 41st Annual Meeting

Where:
Westport Church at 49246 Hwy 30, Westport

When:
Saturday, March 1, 2008
Social 2:00 pm, Meeting at 3:30 pm
(no charge to attend the meeting)

Meal Tickets:
Limited to 200 Adult Tickets - \$5 each
30 Children Tickets (10 and under) - Free
Hurry - First Come, First Serve!

All tickets sold at the door will be \$10 each.



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