

# from the editor....

Welcome to another edition of Vernonia's Voice. We are looking forward to Salmon Festival this month - our annual tribute to the Fall Harvest and the return of our friends, the Salmon. It is also the time of year when we all must start thinking about getting prepared for winter, and that means the possibility of winter floods. This month we begin a series of articles to help you be better prepared this year, just in case we experience more severe weather. School is back in session, and we have two pages of activities and stories taking place in our schools. This is also the season of change, and one interesting story we have this month is about a stream restoration project that the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council has undertaken--a transformation that has been incredible to witness over the past month.

Last month in this space I commented on the change of seasons, and how I felt the end of summer in the air. We of course immediately received three and a half more weeks of eighty-five degree afternoons, blue skies and one of the most glorious Septembers I remember in a while. Finally, on the weekend of September 20th, the seasons changed and autumn arrived in Vernonia. I think. This got me thinking about changes - how unpredictable change can be, how uncomfortable change makes us and what change means in our lives.

Change: to shift, alter, modify, catalyze, refashion, convert, evolve, modernize, revolutionize, transform.

Sometimes change just happens; like the shift of the seasons, or growing older - and there is nothing we can do about it. Other changes occur because we make them happen, like the evolution of new technologies or the transformation in popular fashions. Some changes are easier, and some changes just make sense. Some changes are hard and we resist them, because when it comes right down to it, we are not comfortable with change. We like what we know, we like things the way they are. Sometimes change comes at us fast, and we just want to duck and let it pass us by, or hide our heads in the sand.

In Vernonia we are going through a period of drastic and necessary change. A refashioning of our city staff and administration. Modifications in budgeting, rates and fees. A reassessment of how we view our community. Transformations in how safe we feel where we live. Changes at our schools.

Sometimes change is just plain necessary, like lifting your home or moving your schools so they don't get flooded again. Or finding alternatives to fossil fuels so we aren't so dependent on one technology. Why do we resist something that will so obviously be better for us in the long run?

Take for example the one dollar coin, one of the catalysts for this rumination on change. The US Treasury is planning a big push to get more Americans to embrace and use dollar coins, with the hope of eliminating the one dollar bill. The life span of a dollar coin is over thirty years. The life span of a dollar bill is less than thirty months. The Treasury department estimates it could save \$600 million a year in printing and disposal costs by switching to the coin - a revolution that makes sense to me. But some people don't want to give up their paper dollar bills; it's what they know and are used to. And so on we go, resisting change and wasting time and money.

We all resist change everyday, some of us more than others. Anyone out there still using that same old brand of toothpaste you used as a kid?

Why won't we exercise on a regular basis or eat less meat -even though we know it's better for us? Why won't we switch to driving a foreign import, knowing it gets better gas mileage than the Ford truck? Why don't we just ride a bicycle for short trips around town, or carpool with our neighbor who also commutes fifty miles to work everyday? Why do we resist electing anyone but a white male as our President? Why don't we believe global climate change is real and do something about it before it's too late? Why can't we implement election reform and make changes to the way our democracy functions, encouraging more citizens to participate?

These are all very complicated issues without easy solutions. Why we resist change is a complex issue. So what's my point with all this? Just that, like the evolution of the seasons or growing old...change is inevitable.

-- Scott Laird, Editor

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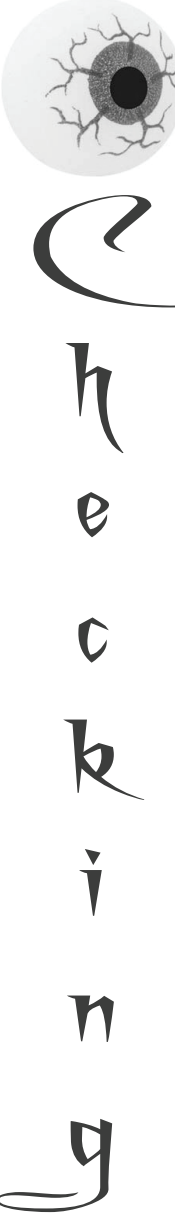
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