

## Vernonia Youth Basketball Hosts Tournament

A total of 14 teams-- eight girls' teams and six boys' teams-- took part in a regional youth basketball tournament in Vernonia in February. The tournament was organized by Jerry Butcher and had a total of about 140 kids participating from Astoria, Warrenton, Seaside, and Vernonia. Results of the tournament were as follows:

Seaside 6th grade girls-- 1st place  
Seaside 5th grade girls-- 2nd place  
Vernonia 5th & 6th grade girls-- 3rd place

Seaside 6th grade boys-- 1st place  
Warrenton 5th grade boys-- 2nd place  
Warrenton 3rd & 4th grade boys-- 3rd place

Butcher expressed thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the 1st annual tournament a great success and to all the coaches and referees that made the day go so smoothly. He also extended a special thanks to Mr. Jarmen, Mr. Cox, Mr. Miller, Mr. Underwood, Mrs. Fetch, and Grant Williams, for use of local gyms.

The tournament was the first opportunity for the Vernonia youth players to play in front of a home crowd, as they have been playing as part of a league in Forest Grove, and have had to travel each week to compete.



The Vernonia 5th and 6th grade girls show off their 3rd place trophy from the First Annual Vernonia Youth Basketball Tournament, which featured teams from Astoria, Warrenton, Seaside and Vernonia.

## Oregon Solutions

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Johnson reiterated that the final decision on site selection rests with the school board but noted that the school board would need to request from the city and county that the site be brought into the urban growth boundary and annexed into the city limits. Johnson stated that that process would probably involve bringing together the Columbia County Commissioners and County Planning Commission, and the Vernonia City Council and Planning Commission for a joint meeting. "One night, one hearing, all in a room together," said Johnson. "That's called fast-tracking it."

The Boot Site was studied, along with a site at the top of Bridge Street, called the Northwest Corner Site, as well as rebuilding on the current site. The TGM study took into account costs for acquisition of property, installation of roads and utilities, building design and construction, flood proofing and insurance, and the land use process.

Brown expressed thanks for the approximately \$225,000 in grants from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) that allowed the study of the three sites to be conducted. "This was a really critical part of the foundation, which will allow the rest of the work to proceed," said Brown. "The assistance with funding, staff time and cooperation from DLCD was so important in helping us make an educated decision about the sites we were considering."

Getting a new school project shovel-ready, and eligible for stimulus funding will have to happen very quickly, which was mentioned often and prominently during the Oregon Solutions meeting. "This has to happen immediately," said Hyde. "From the beginning, we have had a very aggressive timeline in terms of getting our kids into new schools, and that timeline now becomes paramount. It becomes not only a wish but a requirement of meeting the terms of this stimulus package."

## Governor's Short List of Projects

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"This means the full weight of the Governor's office is being put behind these projects in Vernonia. I believe the Governor wants to use Vernonia as a demonstration project for green construction and an example of how to revitalize rural Oregon communities." Hyde said that in addition to the Vernonia Schools Project, which is already designated by Kulongoski as an Oregon Solutions Project-- and in which Hyde is a co-convenor-- that updated wastewater treatment facilities and a bio-mass production facility are being considered as possible projects that could receive federal funding assistance for Vernonia. "The Governor named a preferred list of three projects for stimulus package funds, and Vernonia was one of those three," said Hyde. "I am very optimistic about what this means."

State agencies competing for a federal grant under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRP) will notify the Governor, who may advance the proposal to the Oregon Way Advisory Group for advice and assistance on developing the proposal. The Governor will then advance signature proposals to the appropriate federal agency for consideration.

The Oregon Way Group will also work to identify signature projects across the state that will showcase Oregon's green expertise to the nation, which will help create jobs in the long term as others look to Oregon to tap this knowledge base. Signature projects will be innovative, meet a real community need and create economic opportunity through both the supply side as well as job creation.

## Watch Where You Step, Vernonia!

By Dede Webb

Vernonians seem to have a love affair with their dogs. You see them everywhere, not just little household pets, but great big ones-- and not just one, but several. I recently saw four large dogs pulling a man along the street. Now, dogs can be great-- after all, they are man's best friend-- but the problem with a dog is they pee and poop everywhere they take a notion.

There is a gentleman who walks his dog by our house most mornings, and I observe him through my kitchen window. One morning, I told my husband, "Here comes that man with his dog. Oh, there he goes peeing on my shrubs." Another ten feet and he goes again, getting the first light pole, at which point he crosses the street and takes a poop in the neighbor's yard. Now, I've heard of being full of piss and vinegar, but 3 times in 75 feet?

I mentioned to my husband, "How come it's okay for a dog to relieve themselves whenever and wherever, but we can't?"

When we would go camping, and we had a vintage camper from before bathrooms and holding tanks, we couldn't even drain the sink water on the ground-- it had to drain in a sealed container. It seemed we always camp in the far end of the park, leaving me with a half-mile hike to the nearest bathroom. As you know, this can be a challenge the first thing in the morning, but no trouble for the two big dogs in the next camp spot. They are out there peeing and pooping and didn't even have to leave their campsite. The only problem comes when they leave and the next camper that pulls into that spot has a couple of little kids. I knew right away what was coming, and, sure enough, it wasn't long before I heard, "Mom, I just stepped in some dog poop!"

Here in Vernonia, we haven't designated Hawkins Park as a dog park, but it seems that is where a lot of people like to take their dogs to run and play, because you see a lot of sticks they have thrown for them to fetch, and, of course, there is a lot of poop.

Now, if you want to win the grand prize on America's Funniest Videos, just bring your camera to the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt. Those little kids can hardly stand up, they are slipping and sliding and falling down all over the place and then there is the occasional one that you see that takes a flying leap and just jumps over a mess.

Sometimes that poop can work to your advantage, such as the time I was watching one of the baseball games, and a kid was stealing second base, hit a pile of poop, and slid an extra five feet. He just whizzed by the kid that was trying to tag him out.

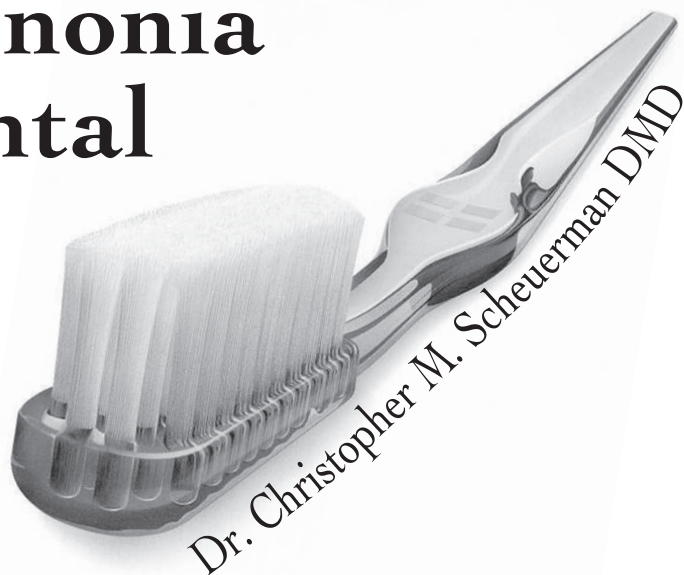
If people had equal rights with dogs, look at the money we could save. We wouldn't have to provide public bathrooms and our sewer lagoons would last another ten years.

So the next time you walk the lake, do as the dogs do-- just step to the side or even right there on the trail, and do your thing. If you're uptown and the urge overtakes you, the best place to go is in the bark around the trees because that's where the dogs go and we can blame it on them.

I think it is time we stand up for our rights and march on the White House. We need to let Obama know he has another serious problem on his hands-- this country really is "going to the dogs."

In all seriousness, it is not the dogs' fault, but their inconsiderate owners who don't clean up after their dogs. Easter and baseball season will soon be here. Let's see if we can't do a better job of keeping our parks, streets and paths POOP FREE!

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