

## from the editor....

I'm an early riser, and I often get up and walk my dogs at 4:30 or 5:00 AM. It's a nice time to get out and about, as the town is just stirring-- some commuters and loggers are heading off to work-- but generally, it's fairly quiet and peaceful. Sometimes we'll hear the coyotes, or the birds just beginning to stir. In the winter, it's still very dark, in the summer it's just starting to get light.

On February 9, I got up and headed outside to find that overnight a light dusting of snow had fallen-- what looked like about five minutes worth of flakes. Not even enough to completely cover the road-- but enough to give the streets, sidewalks and grass a light sprinkle. It was cold and a little icy and slick. A very light fog was hanging over the town, leaving a misty glow you could just about inhale. To top it off, a full moon was completely out and visible and it must have been the reflection from all the ice crystals in the air and on the ground, but it was one of the brightest full moons I've seen in a while. As I walked with my dogs, the ground underneath us sparkled and shimmered, the streetlights and moon reflecting off the frozen crystals on the ground. It was beautiful.

This was not some amazing natural phenomenon-- some spectacular display of Mother Nature's beauty. It was a fairly ordinary, yet unusual combination of occurrences, which reminded me of how lucky we are to live where we do. The variety of weather patterns and the chance that something unusual or spectacular might happen are possible every day. You just never know what you're going to wake up to around here. Some days you never know what the next hour might bring. The wind blowing the leaves of a tree; a spectacular sunrise or sunset; a crisp, sunny day in winter; a rainy and stormy afternoon; the stars in the night sky; or the reflections of a full moon on an icy sidewalk. It reminds me that every day has its own special beauty-- sometimes more unique than others-- and is a gift to be enjoyed, to be appreciated, and to be noticed.

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Moving Vernonia's schools is a hot topic of conversation around here right now. As you will read in various places throughout this issue, our community is getting closer to making some major decisions about the future-- not just for our students and school staff, but for our community as a whole.

I have spent the last four months writing a series of stories about the Flood of December 2007-- about its impact on Vernonia, and how we've been trying to rebuild. Last year's flood has forced many changes, caused us to evaluate many aspects of our lives, and make some big decisions. But none is more important to our community-- and to our future-- than our decision about whether to move our schools. Yes, it involves a huge price tag. Yes, it will involve sacrifice and hard work. Yes, it will involve compromise. But I believe the future of this community rests on our ability to turn the disaster of December 3, 2007, into Vernonia's Great Opportunity. If we build new schools, we show that we believe in the future of this community. If we make this investment in our future, then others will see us as a good investment, too. And that means more opportunity for all of us.

The way I see it, Vernonia is at a crossroads. We have a chance to build a new school campus that will last us a lifetime, and maybe get some help to fix our other essential services that we could only dream of fixing ourselves. We have a chance to work together and improve our community, ensuring a long and prosperous future for us and our children.

The future has started looking a little brighter here in Vernonia this past month, and although it's not time to break out the sunglasses just yet, it looks like spring is on the way.

-- Scott Laird  
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## corrections...

Last month we made a correction to a Letter to the Editor from Tim and Tammy Sook. Unfortunately we got the correction wrong! First of all we misspelled Tim Bero's name as "Barrow" We also got the name and website wrong for Mr. Bero's Company. The correct name is TNW Firearms, and their website is www.tnwfirearms.com. Vernonia's Voice apologizes to both the Sooks and Mr. Bero for any inconvenience this error may have caused.

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