

from the editor....

Vernonia's Voice is approaching its second full year of operations. And this seemed like a good time to recognize all the people who have helped make us successful. Because, in my mind, we have been successful. And it's because so many people have taken an interest in what we are doing and have offered encouragement and support. And most of all, rolled up their sleeves and worked on the publication.

The response to *Vernonia's Voice* continues to be amazing. The positive comments and feedback continue to pour in. I am constantly stopped and told how much people enjoy the paper, especially some of the articles and stories that are contributed by our other writers. I constantly hear how much people enjoy and look forward to P.J. O'Leary's monthly column, "Voices In My Head." P.J. (or he's Pete as he's affectionately known in real life) has been with us almost from the very beginning, joining our staff for our second issue in July of 2007 and never looking back. Every month, he finds a new way to make us chuckle, and usually laugh out loud while we enjoy his random thoughts on life in Vernonia. He has been a real trouper, churning out his column month after month, because... well, I 'm not exactly sure why he does it. I'm not even sure if he knows why he does it. Maybe it's a need to be heard that he developed during all that time he spent in solitary confinement in the Columbia County Jail that one year for... Well, I'll let him tell you that story sometime. Or maybe it was those weeks he spent marooned on that deserted island in the middle of the Columbia-- the result of a fishing trip gone terribly wrong, where he was forced to eat his hat, and his shorts, before finally being rescued. All I know is, those voices in his head sure have some interesting things to say, and I, and you, are pretty lucky that they find a way out each month in *Vernonia's Voice*. One other thing I know---P.J. is much funnier than me. Thank you, P.J., for your words of ... for being the voice of... Oh, just thanks!

But it's not just P.J.'s contributions that are appreciated. To me, what is amazing is the interest shown by so many other members of the community in getting involved and helping shape the message that *Vernonia's Voice* puts out. From technical support with computer technology, to writing, to proof reading, volunteers have stepped forward and helped make this happen each month. Many people believe in our message-- telling positive stories about people in our community who are doing good work and reflecting the spirit of our community. *Vernonia's Voice* would not be where it is today without their contributions. Many people have given significantly to our success and I thank each and every one of you for your help, your support, your encouragement, and most of all, your time and energy.

I also want to acknowledge our readers and our supporters who receive this publication through subscriptions. And those of you who send letters to the editor, who offer ideas for stories, who call us up and tell us there's a great photo opportunity upcoming, who share photos of events we missed, or just stop me on the street and tell me you enjoyed a certain story. Your encouragement and endorsement continue to be my inspiration and I thank you for helping make this worthwhile.

I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to thank our many advertisers. As many of you have probably figured out, since *Vernonia's Voice* is a free publication to pick up and read and printing probably costs us something, we cover our expenses with advertising revenue. We have had a loyal and supportive group of advertisers who continue to sponsor this publication with their hard-earned dollars. Their belief in our message is what keeps this going each month, and in these tough economic times that is something I don't take lightly. Their support is vital and appreciated.

That being said, I would like to ask a small favor of our readers. If you appreciate and enjoy *Vernonia's Voice* each month, please consider doing business with the advertisers from this paper. If you already use services you see listed here, please take a moment to tell the owners of those businesses that you notice that they advertise in *Vernonia's Voice*, and that you appreciate their support of this publication. Their continued support is crucial to our existence and your support of them is also crucial in these tough times. We all have to keep looking out for each other.

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