

# VHS Band Takes On Disneyland

By Erika Paleck

When the Vernonia High School Band stepped off the Alaska Airlines jet onto the tarmac at PDX, they were sorely underdressed. They knew it was going to be cold, but few of the travelers wanted to acknowledge the fact that it was going to be cold and rainy when they landed. Normally, that would have been no big deal, but on the back end of having spent four glorious, sunny days at Disneyland Park in Anaheim, California, the reality met with greater impact.



The VHS Band performing on the Hollywood Back Lot Stage

The band, under the direction of Rob Izzett, spent Spring Break at Disneyland, where they performed in the park, as well as participating in a studio recording session. This trip was

basically three years in the planning. It began with the first band parent meeting in the late fall of 2006-- Mr. Izzett's first year as band teacher in Vernonia. The total cost of the trip was over \$26,000, but much of that was covered by fund-raising efforts of the band boosters. Individual donations, as well as a donation by the Vernonia School Boosters, helped to make the trip possible. "It was definitely a team effort to make this trip happen," said Izzett. "The kids have worked hard, and the band parents have been unbelievable in their efforts to make the trip a success."

Their first day began at 4:00 AM on the morning of March 25, where they stumbled onto the school bus for the trip to Portland International Airport. Needless to say, by the time 9:00 PM rolled around that evening, following a full day at Disneyland, the students put up no fight when Mr. Izzett called for "lights out."

The second day consisted of spending a few hours at the park, before going into the recording studio in Disneyland. During this workshop, the students were treated like professional recording studio musicians. They rehearsed three different selections that corresponded with a Disney animated movie clip. They then recorded the soundtrack for each of those movie clips. "This was an opportunity to impress upon the students the importance of learning how to be good sight-reading musicians," said Izzett. "They got to see how recording musicians do their jobs."

The next morning was spent in Disney's California Adventure. After lunch, the band performed on the Hollywood Back Lot Stage for a public performance.

The trip ended with the sun-soaked group returning to a rainy, cold, and generally dreary Oregon. But even the weather could not dampen the upbeat disposition of the band after this trip.

"We plan to take a large trip every two to three years, so we will choose our next trip by next fall, and begin the fundraising process all over again," stated Izzett. "I think that, besides the fun aspect of trips like this, the students learn to work as a team, often forming bonds with kids they might not have otherwise had the opportunity to. It's a good thing when kids learn to work together for a common goal with other students."

Vernonia can look for more from the band this year. The Spring Band and Choir Concert, originally scheduled for Thursday, May 7, has been rescheduled to Thursday, May 14, at 7:00 PM, at the WGS gymnasium.



The Vernonia High School Band went to Disneyland in April

# Vernonia Does Well at Columbia County Spelling Bee

Vernonia was well represented at this year's Columbia County Spelling Bee held in St. Helens on Wednesday, April 29. Vernonia schools sent six participants: Caton Watts and Emily Bergerson (both 5th graders) competed in Division I, Dylan Taylor and Madeline O'Leary (Grade 6 and 8) competed in Division II, while Souvanny Miller and Parker Roach (both in grade 11) competed in Division III. Caton Watts took home a first place medal, as did Souvanny Miller, while Parker Roach brought home a second place medal. Congratulations to all who competed to the Vernonia winners!

# International Club Re-forms

The VHS International Club has reformed and met in late April for an International Night celebration. The evening involved a number of foreign exchange students who have been studying and living in the community for all or part of this school year.

Mrs. Willard, who teaches Spanish and Folk Art, has organized the club this year, with the help of Donna Webb, as a way to share cultural experiences with local students and give them an opportunity to interact with the exchange students. "I'm excited about all the things we're planning for the future," said Willard. "I love travel, I love meeting people from other countries, and I love studying other cultures. So I was really glad to start this club."

At the International Night, students and guests enjoyed some international foods and the Italian film, "Life Is Beautiful."

Vernonia has had eleven foreign exchange students this year, from a number of different countries including the Czech Republic, Germany, Ecuador, South Korea, France, Denmark, Russia, China, and England.



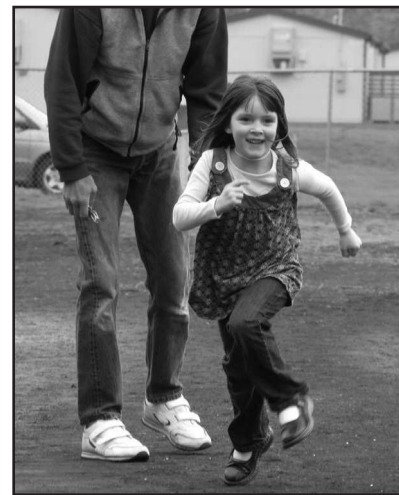
Members of the VHS international Club

# Run For The Arts A Success

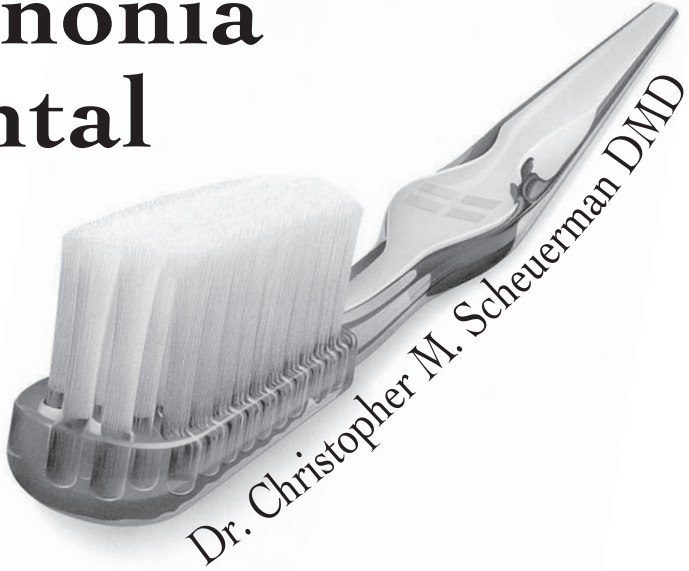
The Vernonia schools' fundraiser, Run For The Arts, was a success again this year. Students ran a total of 1,954 laps around the track, which equals 489 miles. Nice spring weather allowed the run to be held outdoors this year. The goal was to raise \$5000, and pledges were still being collected at press time.

Students had the ability to earn T-shirts for reaching certain levels of fundraising and the students with the highest and second highest scores in the school will earn additional prizes.

Money raised will be used for assemblies and field trips for students. "The true reward from the Run comes with all of the arts experiences next year," said run organizer and Washington Grade School Physical Education instructor, George Spaulding.



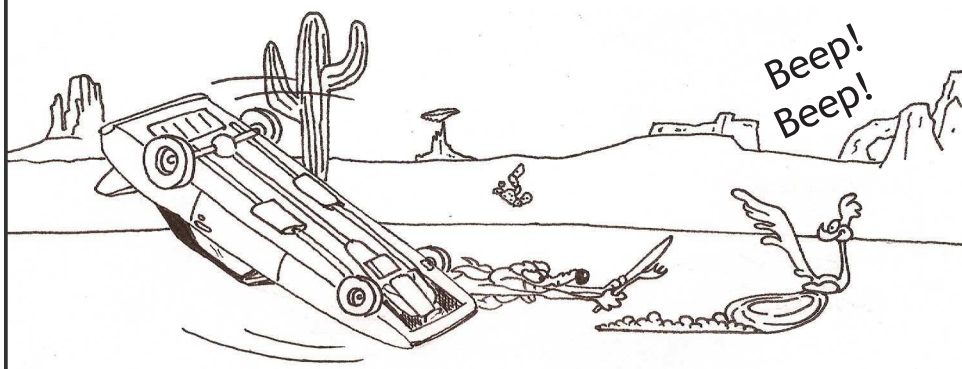
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