

## from the editor...

Here it is September already, and September, of course, means back to school. Back to school holds special significance for those of us in Vernonia, as we are sending our children back to what many feel are inadequate facilities.

High school and middle school students will again attend the majority of their classes in modular classrooms. Students will again have to carry all their books with them all day, as they do not have lockers. Lunch for everyone will still be served in a cafeteria that was designed for the middle school only. The campus is spread out-- the gymnasium stands alone at one end, the mods at the other, far end-- a long walk during the rainy winter season. And Washington Grade School remains... well, in many people's minds, just plain old and unsafe.

Which, of course, brings us to the possibility of building a new school campus. A school bond measure on the November 3 ballot is now a reality, and Vernonians will get a chance to approve or decline to make the down payment on a new \$37 million campus that would be built out of the flood zone. If everything goes right, the balance of the funds needed to complete the project will be secured through state, federal and private sources, meaning Vernonians will get a lot of assistance towards assuring the future of our school district for years to come. Pay for one-third of the costs and not have to worry about schools for the next one hundred to two hundred years? An opportunity of a lifetime, if we choose to take it.

A yes vote for a new school campus means better morale for students and teachers, a better learning environment, and a safe place to send our children into the foreseeable future.

A no vote probably means an end to Vernonia schools, at least in their cur-

rent form. The buildings we have are uninsurable, FEMA assistance to pay for the modular classrooms dries up next year, Washington Grade School is not seismically safe, and according to FEMA guidelines, the gymnasium needs to be demolished in the next few years. Vernonia cannot afford to rebuild the campus where it is, and the school district will most likely fold. Students would have to be bussed out of town, or some other option would have to be developed.

Schools are often the life-blood of rural communities. They provide entertainment and social activities. They create a sense of pride and help establish community traditions and history. They help tell the story of the generations that have come before and are a part of the very fabric of who we are.

It's hard to imagine a Vernonia without Friday night football games. It's hard to imagine a Vernonia without our Loggers. Please vote YES for Vernonia schools in November.

*Scott Laird*  
*Editor and Publisher*

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reflecting the spirit of our community

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# DON'T MISS THE 7th annual



## Festival Schedule All Day:

Salmon Viewing

Kids' Trout Pond

Scarecrow Building

Pumpkin Carving

Artists/Craft Vendors

Great Food

Salmon Education &

Claudia the Chinook

11:00-3:00 Hay Rides

11:00-2:00 Music in the Gazebo

2:00 "Knee Deep in Salmon" Auction

4:00 Original Melodrama by Sally Harrison

"The Sweet Violette of Vernonia"

# SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3rd