

An Opinion: Where's the Spirit?

By Scott Laird

Something special is happening on the hardwood in the Vernonia School gymnasium again this year. Last year the community was fortunate to witness a spectacular season from a special group of players from the Vernonia Loggers boys varsity team. This year it looks like it's the Lady Loggers' turn.

Girls head coach Steve Whiteman returned this year after one season in retirement. And what a difference a year makes!

Whiteman has assembled a special group of players who find themselves atop the standings in the Northwest League just past the half way mark of the season. The Lady Loggers had an 8-1 league record at the end of the week. The team avenged their only league loss after defeating Portland Christian 52-47. Earlier in the week they beat second place Riverdale 44-40. Whiteman has his team playing exciting, fast paced basketball. The Lady Loggers look to be a lock to make the league playoffs with a shot at becoming the first girls team ever to make it into the State Tournament in Pendleton. This is a great team!

The boys team is also having a good season and find themselves right in the middle of the pack and in the hunt for a spot in the league playoffs with a 5-4 record.

You would think the folks in

Vernonia would be pretty excited about these two teams, wouldn't you?

Here in Vernonia there isn't a lot to do on winter evenings when it's cold and rainy and the roads get slick at night. High school basketball is a great and affordable form of entertainment and a great way for the community to come together and show their support for our youth.

Unfortunately the high level of intensity that we witnessed last season is missing from the crowd at Logger home games this season. Don't get me wrong, folks definitely are turning out to watch the teams. It's just that they aren't all that enthused.

Maybe it's the size of the new gymnasium that swallows up the sound of the crowd? Maybe the crowd doesn't feel comfortable enough in their new digs to scream at the top of their lungs? Maybe the team supporters don't feel like they have something worth yelling about? Maybe the Vernonia girls are making it look too easy?

Whatever it is, the Vernonia crowd seems too quiet.

Against Gaston, the Lady Loggers cruised to an easy victory; the outcome was never really in doubt. In the boys game, the crowd came alive when the boys came from behind in the fourth quarter and almost tied the game, but that was about it.

At a recent home game, the

Lady Loggers returned to the court from the half time intermission to silence from the crowd. The opposing team's fans stood and cheered their girls back onto the court, even though their team was behind by a considerable margin.

I am not the only one to notice this lack of noise in the Vernonia gym. I have heard several people comment on the dearth of enthusiasm. My guess is that the players notice it as well.

Excitement at high school sporting events is contagious. The crowd catches it from each other and then the players catch it too. Soon the whole place can be rocking and that's what creates a home court advantage. The Lady Loggers certainly deserve our appreciation for their high level of play this year and the boys need our support as they head into a stretch of games that will make or break their season. There are upcoming home games for both squads on February 1st against Faith Bible, February 2nd against Riverdale and February 8th against Nestucca. And then come the league playoffs.

Our Logger student athletes work hard, both in practice and on the court during competitions. They strive to perform to the best of their abilities. They are giving us a good performance, and we should do the same. I think we, as their fans, owe it to our players to make a better effort.

Let's Go Loggers!

VERNONIA'S
voice
reflecting the spirit of our community

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“Low Maintenance Plants” is Focus of Presentation

Kym Pokorny is a garden writer and editor of great talent for the Oregonian. She will be giving a public talk on Thursday, January 24th, 2013 at 6:30 PM in the Loo-Wit room of St. Helens High School. The talk is being sponsored by the OSU Extension office and the Columbia County Master Gardeners Association. It is free and open to the public.

Pokorny's talk will focus on low maintenance plants, describing ornamental plants that can survive with

little attention and low summer watering in this region's sometimes challenging soils. Pokorny is an outstanding speaker and an enthusiastic gardener.

Pokorny grew up on her father's wholesale nursery in Northern California. She studied journalism and environmental science in college and graduated with a degree in journalism. She's been a journalist for 23 years, the last 10 as garden writer for The Oregonian in Portland, Oregon. She has served as a regional director for the Garden Writers

Association and as chairman of the GWA Foundation Board. She's won a Quill & Trowel Award, two Garden Globes and the Herald Award from the American Nursery & Landscape Association. She lives happily with her dog, Sadie, in Portland where her garden threatens to engulf her 1922 house.

For more information about the program contact the Columbia County Extension office, located at 505 N. Columbia River Highway in St. Helens or call 503-397-3462.

It's Time to Start Planning the 2013 Vernonia Festivals!

Committee Meetings for Jamboree, 4th of July and Salmon Festival begin on Thursday January 31, 2013 at 6:00 PM at the VCLC. We want and need you! Anyone interested in helping make these events happen is welcome!

Vernonia's Voice is changing publication dates! Starting in February we will publish twice each month on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. Our next issues will be February 7 & 21.

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