

Readers Lend Their Voices...

To the Editor,

My first reaction to the article "Superintendent Explains..." on August 21st was satisfaction. I read it carefully a couple times to make sure it said what I thought it said. Bill Langmaid and Aaron Miller seemed to have a sincere interest in the potential of Vernonia kinders. A lot of thought appeared to have gone into changing the K-2 structure. Parents were encouraged to bring forward their concerns.

I'm a retired teacher in Forest Grove, and I've been doing research on reading instruction for 10 years now. I was trained in "explicit phonics" (EP) in 2004, and 5 years later, I made it my retirement dream to bring the beauty and cost-effectiveness of EP to America's children. EP, a catch-all term for Riggs, Spalding and Orton-Gillingham, is based on the groundbreaking work of Dr. Samuel T. Orton and his wife in the 20's. A multi-sensory, comprehensive and FREE program (after teacher-training), it was developed to help children with dyslexia. It was quickly squelched by the powerful Department of Education, which started a 95-year love affair with publishers selling the latest and greatest (and ever more expensive) "sight-reading/whole language" programs. Thanks to a \$600,000 Pearson program purchased in 2010, 2/3 of our third-graders in three elementaries failed reading in 2012-13..

We've watched over the decades as America has sunk lower and lower in our ability to read and write.

Americans in general and Oregonians in particular haven't even winced as statewide reading scores show about 30% of our children can't read. I'm wincing now.

Oregon's oldest EP schools (MITCH Charter School in Tigard and Cascade Heights Public Charter School in Tigard) have routinely scored above the 90th percentile in statewide tests over the last six years. Hungry for more proof, I participated in The 18th Annual Riggs Spelling and Reading Camp in Richland, WA this summer. I was amazed to see students raise their spelling grade levels between a year and two years in 60 hours of instruction. The secret ingredient was having an adult coach by the student's side for the whole camp.

I compared Vernonia's spelling scores in 2004-5 with last year's scores. There was less than 5% difference: a third of the students failed then and a quarter are failing now. That's typical of Oregon, but I think we can do a lot better. Let's go on field trip to the EP schools to see how they reach an 85-95% success a rate.

I'd love to observe Vernonia's reading programs, including the unique Mist School. I also developed a game to help students learn basic grammar—I call it Sentence Blaster. I can put on a demo anytime.

Thanks again, Vernonia Voice, for giving this important issue so much attention.

Mary Whitmore
Forest Grove, OR

To the Editor,

Thank you to the following folks for their help in making the purchase and the installation of Phase 1 of the new playground possible: Eddie Gleason, Bridger Steward, Jared Whitton, Jacob Stevens, Sean Draeger, Brian Fennel, Tony Krieger, Joe Hammons, Mike & Laci Rylands, Allen McBride, Greg Schult, Joe Suppes, Jeff & Susan Ely, Robert Haverland, Laura Blacker, Stacy Adams, Camrin Eyrrick, The Black Iron Grill, Parr Lumber, Aaron Miller and Melissa Zavales as well as the students of Vernonia Elementary school who participated in many fundraisers.

The Vernonia PTA

HOW TO SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Vernonia's Voice welcomes and requests your thoughts, opinions and ideas. Please include your name, address and phone number, limit your letters to 300 words or less. Vernonia's Voice reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted. We will print letters space permitting. Deadline is the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month. Email: scott@vernoniasvoice.com or mail to: Letters, PO Box 55, Vernonia, OR 97064.

Upcoming Events

St. Mary's Quilt Fair and Craft Bazaar Thrs-Sun, September 18-21, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 960 Missouri Avenue. Soups, pies and rolls served daily at 11:00 AM. Admission \$1.

Bike-a-thon - Saturday, September 20, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM at Vernonia Lake. Obstacle course and free bike helmets. 1st prize is a brand new bike! Pick up registration/pledge forms at: Sentry, True Value and Black Bear. Benefits the School Play Structure.

PTA Fall Carnival - Saturday, September 27, 5:30-8:30 PM at Vernonia Schools Commons.

Salmon Festival - Saturday, October 4, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM at Hawkins Park.

Nob Hill Nature Park Volunteer Work Party - Saturday, November 1, 1:00-4:00 PM at Nob Hill Nature Park in St. Helens. Preregistration is requested, call 503-397-7904.



Nature
HISTORY
Discovery

Vernonia Weather August 2014

DATE	HIGH	LOW	PRECIP
1	88	51	0
2	84	49	0
3	88	49	0
4	90	48	0
5	79	49	0
6	79	45	0
7	77	44	0
8	74	42	0
9	81	41	0
10	91	54	0
11	101	60	0
12	78	58	0
13	68	59	0
14	75	59	0
15	74	53	0
16	81	53	0
17	83	47	0
18	86	54	0
19	77	52	0
20	73	40	0
21	78	43	0
22	77	44	0
23	84	42	0
24	74	43	0
25	85	46	0
26	89	47	0
27	86	54	0
28	80	59	0
29	73	53	.06
30	70	49	.03
31	74	48	0
Ave/Tot	80.5	49.5	.09

Weather data is collected at the U.S. Weather station at the Vernonia Water Plant

Events at L.L. Stub Stewart State Park

Thursday, September 18th

Close Encounters of the Douglas Fir Kind

It's kind of wild to think that the fir trees around us were all planted by people for a very specific reason. Those reasons have changed now that Oregon State Parks is in charge of them and us park rangers would like to tell ya why...

Meet at Dairy Creek Amphitheater at 11:00am

Newt Walk

Join camp hosts for a trek down to our beaver pond for Rough-skinned newt spotting. Is a newt a reptile or amphibian? What do newts at Stub Stewart eat? What eats them? Come away with some "newt" facts from this scenic hike. Please wear sturdy shoes, bring a flashlight and a water bottle.

Meet at the Welcome Center at 6:30 pm

Friday, September 19th

Disc Golfing - Stub-Style

It's the game of golf only with flying discs. Come give a throw on an 18-hole shaded course tucked inside our patch of the magnificent Coast Range. We'll tee off for some driving, approaching and putting as we aim for the "pole hole." As in traditional golf, low scores equal big winners. Discs and tranquil forest provided. Please wear sturdy shoes and bring a water bottle. Foooooore!

Hilltop Day-use Area at 11:00 am

Junior Ranger Rover

Look for the roving ranger as she travels the camp loops in search of... YOU! She'll have fun things to share about what to do at Stub Stewart State Park, the local wildlife, and the Oregon State Parks Junior Ranger program.

Between 1:00-3:00 p.m.

L. L. "Stub" Stewart State Park: A History

OK, so your first thought might be, "ah c'mon, this isn't history class—we're camping" right? Fear not, this camp host led history of your Oregon State Park is sure to be lively as well as informative. No mandatory date memorization, Scantrons, or pop quiz- we promise!

Meet at Dairy Creek Amphitheater at 7:00 pm

Saturday, September 20th

Find a Bird On It!

Come learn the basics of birding from a park ranger while we explore the trails of Stub Stewart State Park in search of wildlife. No experience? No problem. We provide the binoculars and practice to get started. Bring sturdy shoes, a water bottle, and trail snacks.

Meet at Hilltop Day-Use Area at 11:00 am

Beaver Believers!

At this Junior Ranger program (ages 6-12) we'll talk about how these

engineer rodents of unusual size make dams, lodges, and ponds. Then we'll take a short hike to their home at Stub Stewart State Park. Wear sturdy shoes, clothes for evening temperatures, and don't forget a water bottle.

Meet at the Dairy Creek Amphitheater at 6:30 pm

OMSI Star Party: Autumnal Equinox Celebration

It's that time of month for another OMSI Star Party at Stub Stewart! OMSI, Rose City Astronomers, and Vancouver Sidewalk Astronomers will be on hand with telescopic equipment and knowledge to share. All ages and levels of experience welcome. Bring your blanket, flashlight, and wear warm clothing. It'll be a thermos-of-hot-cocoa kind of night under the stars!

Meet at the Hilltop Day-Use Area at 7:00 pm

Sunday, September 21st

I Spy... Scavenger Hunt - Junior Ranger Program

I spy...a feather! A snail shell! A wildflower! At this JR Ranger Program (ages 6-12) young naturalists will open their senses and "spy" nature's treasures on a Stub Stewart trail. Younger naturalists must be accompanied by an adult. Wear sunscreen and sturdy shoes. Don't forget a water bottle.

Meet at the Welcome Center at 11:00 am