

Boys State Basketball Title a Tribute to our Community

By Aaron Miller

Finishing the season as State Champions was a great accomplishment by our Vernonia Loggers boys basketball team. They brought home the state title from Pendleton, soundly beating Regis and demonstrating that hard work, perseverance, attitude and caring do matter! It's our boys and our kids that won the title, but I think our school and community deserve some credit, too.

While the boys achieved their goal to become State Champions, their accomplishments off the court at the tournament, spurred by the teachings of their coaches, parents, teachers, mentors and community, are what impressed me most.

Because of their high seed, and the continuation of their winning ways, the Loggers played the last game of each day, finishing their game and locker room activities close to 10:00 pm each night. Most teenagers would be clamoring to get dinner and make their way back to the hotel, but not our team. As they left the gym after that first win over Burns, they noticed the stands being cleaned by only two custodians. On their own, they decided there was something wrong with that scene and remained in the gym cleaning until the job was done. Our boys did this after each of their three wins, including after winning the championship. What a wonderful icing on the State Title cake...responsible students who care about others and do something unselfish to make a difference in someone else's life.

In addition to their acts of kindness each night, the basketball team also received kudos from the entire staff at the Pendleton tournament for their attitudes. They noted their cleaning assistance, but also noted our student athletes as being far and away the most polite and well-behaved team at the tournament.

We heard of similar acts of kindness from our wrestlers and fans who attended a match in Monroe and donated their meal money to help a Monroe student who had been injured and whose family was in need.

These are our students and our teenagers making these decisions, and we should all be extremely proud

of the attitude and behaviors they are exhibiting!

Having such a huge crowd of supporters from the community and the VHS Band performing at each game were also evidence of commitment and support that was noticed by others. "You must have the whole town here," was a common sentiment. Yes we did.

These types of comments have been coming my way for years from people putting on assemblies in our schools and from restaurant workers who have served our athletes several times over on regular road trip dinner stops.

These positive comments about Vernonia students' attitude and their higher level of respect from restaurant workers and managers, as well as other people not associated with the team or school, are music to our ears. These are people who were looking at our students' behavior in relation to other high school teams and students they have observed, and found our students to measure up better than most! That is what we are striving for and they need to be commended.

Does this mean our students are perfect? No. They are people and they are kids, and they will make mistakes as we all have and do. What it does mean is that we as a community are making a difference.

They have been taught to be accepting and welcoming to new people and new families, and to be compassionate for those in need. Whether they are helping students from foreign countries feel welcome, helping out another student or school in need, or helping a janitor with their overwhelming evening of work, our students are demonstrating a high level of responsibility and respect for others.

This welcoming, accepting attitude is taught to them by you, our community. You, too should be commended! We as a community are setting an example for other cities that are looking at how to recover from a natural disaster or how to improve as they continue to develop their community.

The entire community deserves to celebrate this championship not only for supporting our team and students to win and succeed, but also to always do so with caring, compassion and class.

Schools Update: Strategic Planning

By Aaron Miller

The Vernonia School District would like to invite you to participate in the gathering of information to develop a strategic plan for the future of our education system.

Staff and parent surveys have been distributed, with returns coming in at a very high rate.

These surveys can be accessed on the District webpage by clicking the Parent button and the Vernonia School District PARENT SURVEY link, or on the District Facebook page.

In addition to these surveys, we

will gather information at focus group meetings. The final meeting date is:

- April 2 – Parent/Community Forum at Vernonia Schools Commons (10:00 am – 12:00 pm)

In short, this is an exciting process that will create a pathway to success for our District. We hope you will join us, whether that involves completing one of our surveys, or join us at the community forum. Your input is invaluable.

If you have any questions regarding the process or meeting times and locations, please don't hesitate to call the VSD office at 503-429-5891.

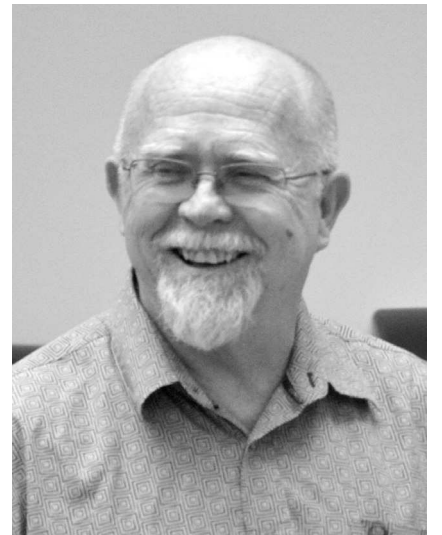
Whiteman Recipient of EOU Inspirational Teacher Award

First-year honor students at Eastern Oregon University (EOU) have nominated 26 educators from Oregon, Washington, California and Nevada to receive Inspirational Teacher Awards.

Students who maintained dean's list standing during fall term in 2015 were given the opportunity to nominate a teacher who influenced them on their road to higher education and academic excellence.

Makayla Adams, a 2015 graduate of Vernonia High School and daughter of Larry and Stacy Adams, nominated Mr. Steve Whiteman, a member of the chemistry and physics staff at VHS.

EOU presents these awards annually in recognition of outstanding high school teachers who encourage and represent the importance of higher education to their students.



Vernonia Students of the Month

February 2016



Charolette Schlegel
Kindergarten

Charolette is an enthusiastic learner who follows the rules and is respectful and responsible. She says math and reading are her favorite subjects. She is going to play T-ball and she also likes to play with, and take care of, her four cats, Moose, Jack, Roxy and Felix.

Lauren Ely Grade 8

Lauren is a very good student who is also very active in school and other activities. She plays volleyball, basketball, and track and field. She is also part of the robotics program and is in the middle school leadership class. She raises rabbits and sheep for 4-H and says she enjoys reading and running in her spare time.



Tristan Adams Grade 11

Tristan is a good student who says math is his favorite subject. He plays basketball and was part of the VHS state championship team, winning Player of the Game honors in the second game at Pendleton. Tristan also plays baseball.

Sponsored by State Senator Betsy Johnson

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