

Readers Lend Their Voices...

To the Editor,

I'm a little numb today (11/9/16), like many Americans. As the Treasurer of the Bond Committee, past Chair of the School Board, and current Chair of the Education Foundation, I'm keenly aware of how Salem decisions have handcuffed small districts into making some hard choices. We are doubly unlucky in Vernonia, having had to also mostly self-fund the construction of new schools following the flooding 9 years ago. As part of that process, in order to gain access to \$12 million in FEMA funding, we accelerated the school construction beyond our ability to pay for it with cash. We gambled that the beautiful new building and the investment being made in rebuilding Vernonia (health center, electric co-op, etc.) would translate into more students as families moved back to Vernonia. The cost of that gamble has come due. We authorized the Superintendent to obtain construction loans so that building would be opened on time in August of 2012. In total, we borrowed \$5 million, and those FEMA funds were safely ours.

Through fundraising, grants, and other efforts, some of that \$5 million has been repaid, but now it is apparent that the bulk of the loan payments will have to be made by the district, which has one source of revenue, its student enrollment. Since the money is owed to the state, and the state holds our funding, there is no hope of ducking the payment. They'll just take it. So, now is when the strength of Vernonia must really show.

Starting shortly there will have

to be cuts made at the school in order to provide for a balanced budget in the next school year. I imagine that any unspent classroom money will be frozen. Every staff member is wondering if their job is safe. They'll be wondering about the impact on the students. They'll wonder how colleges will consider the absences of language classes, or band, art, sports and other extra-curricular activities on the Vernonia transcripts. We had an opportunity, as a community, to complete our obligation to the school district, to pay for our share of the new schools, and we failed.

I failed. Over 1,000 people voted against the ballot measure. That is the direct result of me not adequately explaining the costs and benefits of the ballot measure. But, it is also a failure of the electorate to be educated. Only 60 people felt that they were not prepared to vote. Everyone else did. We had well over 2,000 voters returning their ballot from within the school district, which has around 2,900 registered voters. I'm not going to quit though. I'll keep on fighting for schools that provide a good education for the kids in Vernonia. And, you'll help.

Why? The alternative is distinctly un-Vernonian. We help neighbors. When disaster strikes, we put aside our differences and work until the mess is cleaned up and a solution is in place. We've all heard of the blame game, and it has hit the school and our kids extremely hard. "They waste money" is my favorite, since they don't have it, and seats on the Budget Committee have sat

empty for years. How can there be more than a handful of no votes when no one is willing to take the time to see where the money is spent?

In the end, the school will just be a little worse, with fewer options and fewer people will move to Vernonia as many who want to see their kids succeed will move away. Homes will sit on the market for months rather than weeks, and jobs will disappear. Life will go on, but with a little less hope in it. And, I think that is what hits the hardest. The voter decision to not finish paying for the construction debt, and instead make the schools operating budget bear that burden, was a vote of hopelessness. And that just sucks the life out of a community.

Bill Langmaid
Vernonia

Dear Citizens of Columbia County,

Thank you for the support you have shown me during my campaign. It is an honor that you have elected me to serve as Columbia County Commissioner. I am prepared to move forward to work with my fellow commissioners and with the citizens of the County toward our common goals of a productive and prosperous county, utilizing our natural resources and our citizen resources.

The last year of campaigning has been a great experience; making new friends and renewing old friendships. I have been overwhelmed and humbled by the outpouring of support, without

Upcoming Events

OSU Forestry Presentation - Thursday, November 17, 7:00 pm at the Vernonia Grange. Sponsored by the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council, Professor Doug Maguire presents the latest research relating to clear cutting and its impact on watersheds in Oregon.

The Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia - Saturday, December 3. For more info go to their Facebook page "The Spirit of Christmas in Vernonia Oregon."

Christmas in the Country Bazaar - Saturday & Sunday, December 3 & 4 at the Vernonia Schools Commons.

which I would not have been able to run this campaign.

I am truly looking forward to building a positive working relationship with my fellow Commissioners, along with the other elected county officials and employees, to run the business of Columbia County and to have a role in moving Columbia County forward in achieving a balance between livability and prosperity.

I have been, and will continue to be, fair, accessible and responsive; making sure that all county residents are represented, responded to and respected. I welcome your thoughts and ideas.

Margaret Magruder
Clatskanie

Letters continued on page 8

Vernonia Weather October 2016

DATE	HIGH	LOW	PRECIP
1	57	46	.47
2	59	46	.23
3	59	46	.20
4	61	45	.36
5	59	48	.15
6	58	49	.57
7	57	53	.13
8	63	52	.21
9	55	41	1.15
10	60	34	.01
11	63	31	0
12	64	51	.17
13	59	51	1.83
14	60	48	1.70
15	57	48	1.57
16	53	48	.59
17	59	44	.36
18	59	40	T
19	56	38	.31
20	60	47	.24
21	59	44	.04
22	60	46	.11
23	61	45	T
24	57	46	.15
25	59	46	.38
26	61	49	.28
27	54	46	.02
28	64	45	.03
29	60	38	T
30	52	38	.45
31	53	45	.11
Ave/Tot	58.6	45.0	11.82

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

Columbia Humane Society Featured Pet



Hi, my name is Archie and I am a neutered male Pit mix. I'm black & white, weigh about 60 lbs., and I'm crate trained. I prefer to be the only dog but may be okay with proper introduction. I can be body sensitive but getting better. I have high energy and need to be run everyday. I was reactive in kennel but will stop if exercised daily. I LOVE to play with a tennis ball and would do well at nose work, maybe agility, or fly ball! I ride well in the car and I have a fun loving personality! Please call and ask to meet me!

Web: www.columbiahumane.org

Phone: 503-397-4353

Email: animalwelfare@columbiahumane.org

2084 Oregon Street

St. Helens, OR 97051

Friends of the Vernonia Public Library

Membership Dues:

Family: \$10.00 Individual: \$5.00

Minimum: \$1.00 plus 2 hours minimum of work in the library

Make checks payable to: Friends of the Vernonia Public Library

Mailing Address: 701 Weed Avenue, Vernonia, OR 97064

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Date _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

I am interested in helping with the following committees (optional):

Please Circle • Membership • Endowments • Book Sales • Publicity & Public Relations • Fund Raising • Library Services • Finance-Budget-Legal Matters

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

Saturday,
November 19, 10 am
Grace Family Fellowship

If you have lost a family member or loved one to suicide please come to help heal and to find support.

