

# Pages Keep Turning at the Vernonia Library *continued from front page*

for toddlers in addition to the Preschool Storytime. “My love for story time programs started when I was working at Washington County,” she says. “When I started working in Vernonia I wanted to expand that and it’s been fun because I like to incorporate music and movement and more involvement with the kids.”

Those story time activities have been one way that Romtvedt has seen the Library help build community. “The ongoing weekly programing has been very fulfilling,” says Romtvedt. “It’s what keeps the families coming in regularly and also checking out materials. Just having people come in regularly gives them a chance to meet each other. We’ve had a lot of little kid friendships and parent friendships that have developed here at the Library.”

She says she has seen significant increases in participation in programs like the annual Summer Reading Program and the Dr. Seuss Celebration. She has also greatly increased the number of activities for children and youth, like adding a craft party prior to the annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade, and has made a specific effort to welcome homeschool families in the community to visit and make use of the Library.

Romtvedt notes that she gets a lot of help from her staff and from volunteers to keep programs and the rest of the Library running smoothly. “Nancy and Brandy have a lot to do with keep-

ing our regular programs going,” says Romtvedt. “We have to work together to figure out where our limitations are as a staff and where we need to direct our volunteer resources, and I really appreciate everything that they do.”

Romtvedt has also made col-

laborations with the community a priority. She helped organize a Beginning Knitting for Kids class, taught by local Caitlin Hunter (who is also introducing a knitting class for adults). In April the Library organized and hosted *Get Rhythm at the Library*, a musical program series sponsored by the Columbia County Cultural Coalition, the Friends of the Vernonia Library, the Vernonia Lions Club, and Jack and Randal Harvey. The program featured Oregon Symphony Storytime with percussionist Gordon Rencher, a visit by puppeteer Red Yard, and the Rutabaga Rhythm Workshops

with local musician Joe Seamons which included workshops and a concert at the Vernonia Schools and a community concert at the Vernonia Grange. Romtvedt notes that she is currently looking to expand her staff with a very part-time position that will focus on developing children’s programing for K-5 aged students.

Expanded programs for children are not the only thing Romtvedt has developed since she became Library Director. She has been adding more programs for adults as well, which have also seen a continuing increase in attendance and participation.

Romtvedt says her time working in the larger Washington County Library system helped her develop ideas that might be a good fit in Vernonia. The Writers Group she initiated has been popular and was something she organized in Forest Grove. She has also initiated a Grow It series, which makes use of local Master Gardeners to explore gardening techniques, and she has seen attendance at other adult oriented programs rise.

Recent programs have included a visit by Scappoose author and musician Willy Vlautin, a presentation by local Jim Buxton on the upcoming solar eclipse, more Oregon Humanities Conversation Projects, whose programs have made regular appearances at the Vernonia Library during Romtvedt’s tenure, and an upcoming Homesteading

in Vernonia program presented by OSU Columbia County Extension agent Chip Publ. A Community Conversation held in early May at the Library with local timbermen Don Webb of Vernonia and Fred Heller from Chapman was presented by the Oregon Folklife Network, and provided another opportunity for outside collaboration with Romtvedt and the Library.

“Programing is what I had the most experience with, and I have a bunch more now,” says Romtvedt.

Romtvedt says a lot of ideas for programs come directly from the community. “Often things start with an individual or a group suggesting something they would like to see happening at the Library, and then we talk about it together to see what might be possible,” explains Romtvedt. She says she is willing to try new things, but, because staff and funding is limited, those types of new programs will often require an interested volunteer to drive them. “It’s often trial and error and trying things out that someone said they were interested in, and then seeing how it works. We just have to have the volunteers, but I’m always looking for ways to make the Library more accessible to everyone.”

Some examples of community driven programs that Romtvedt has tried and were somewhat successful, but then lost traction for various reasons include a Stamp Club, Chess Club, and Game Nights and other game events; the Game Nights actually led to the Library starting a board game collection which is available for check out, rather than being

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