

What is Vernonia Hands on Art?

Whether you're new to Vernonia or have lived here for years, you might have noticed Hands on Art (HOA) at work in the community. HOA is a non-profit organization established in the spring of 1996. Its original mission was to provide local children with creative outlets to help them deal with the emotional aftermath of the devastating flood of that year. Twenty-two years later, although we don't have a physical home, HOA is still an active participant in support of arts in the school and community.

Hands on Art's mission is to sponsor, organize, and raise funds for activities and projects in Vernonia that enhance community spirit, celebrate the creative arts, and honor our unique heritage.

Current Endeavors!

So, what does HOA do? Current endeavors in Vernonia include the Junior Salmon Auction which raises funds for Arts Education at Vernonia High School. Over the years, the auction of student art has raised over \$10,000, a boon to a struggling arts budget. This year's auction is scheduled for Thursday evening, May 24. Check out the flier in this issue and join in the fun.

HOA also contributes to ongoing arts education in the form of an annual arts scholarship to a graduating senior, as well as scholarships for summer learning opportunities for Vernonia's developmentally disabled youth, a program coordinated by Hands on Development.

The commitment to children continues with free activities at the Salmon Festi-

val, including photo boards and a scavenger hunt; cookie and gingerbread house contests during Christmas in Vernonia; and opportunities to enjoy and participate in theater with Vernonia Community Theater - Cinderella is coming to the elementary school in June!

Last but not least, HOA adds its support to the Vernonia Pioneer Museum Association, the Vernonia Community Garden, and Vernonia Community Solutions which focuses on our heritage, arts, and natural beauty.

Our Vision

- To provide a high-quality learning environment for children and adults that celebrates the creative spirit within each of us.
- To create bridges between children, teens, adults, and elders in the community and share skills, resources, and wisdom.
- To expose the community to visual and performing arts by way of classes, workshops, exhibitions, and performances.
- To help students collaborate with the community in educational and social programs such as library reading, school programs, and civic involvement.
- To foster community spirit and pride.
- To encourage appreciation for and preservation of the historical heritage of our community.

Volunteers, enthusiasm, energy, and ideas are always welcome!

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Roots of Resilience Event to Benefit SAFE

SAFE (Support, Advocacy, Freedom, & Empowerment) of Columbia County is hosting the Roots of Resilience fundraising event May 11 to draw attention to the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault while simultaneously promoting the notion of fortifying personal resilience. With a new venue, a compelling keynote speaker, a four-piece jazz band, and expanded auction offerings, the evening promises to be fun, entertaining and meaningful.

The keynote speaker will be Vanessa Timmons, Executive Director of Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence (OCADSV). As the primary organization representing Oregon's domestic and sexual violence advocacy programs, OCADSV engages diverse voices, supports the self-determination of survivors, and provides leadership for advocacy efforts. Their support is critical to efforts of Columbia County's domestic violence and sexual assault agency, SAFE of Columbia County. Ms. Timmons has been a champion for survivors in Oregon for many years and is a well-known speaker with a powerful message to share.

The event is called Roots of Resilience because resilience is that

power rooted deep within that helps us recover from life's challenges. It must be nurtured so it can grow. SAFE empowers survivors with support and services that help them live safe, healthy, non-violent lives. Therefore, the auctions and raffle are filled with goods and services that build resilience for everyone. There will still be gorgeous plants for bid as in previous years, but offerings have been expanded to include many options for self-care and enjoyment – pamper, play, adventure, relax, and more.

Individual tickets are \$35 and may be purchased at any Columbia County Wauna Credit Union location or online at www.safeofcolumbiacounty.org/events. A light dinner and soft drinks are included; there will be a cash bar. This event will not be appropriate for children.

SAFE of Columbia County is a 501(c)3 organization based in St. Helens and serves all Columbia County residents. SAFE offers a 24-hour help line (503-397-6161), survivor advocacy and education services, healthy relationship curriculum in local schools, and provides safe and confidential temporary housing at its The Starting Place Shelter.

Johnson/Witt Town Hall *continued from front page*

and operating so water could be pumped into the lake. Johnson and Witt both promised to look into the issue and Senator Johnson followed up the next week with a phone call to say that she had spoken to department heads at ODFW, as well as Vernonia City Administrator Josette Mitchell, and that ODFW staff would be out working on the project during the first week in May to get the pump operational.

When asked about gun violence and what the State of Oregon might be considering, Witt said it was important to look at who are the perpetrators of mass shootings, particularly school shootings. "What does the typical person look like?" asked Witt. "Usually they are male, young, have some kind of connection to that school and have a fascination with guns. Often times these people are either in a crisis or are facing some sort of major challenge in their life. All these factors are suggestive of some action that we need to take." Witt said he thinks there needs to be consideration for minimum age requirements to purchase certain types of weapons and high capacity magazines. "We should be looking at what we can do as a society and as a state when we know an individual is troubled. How can government intervene without violating constitutional rights?" Johnson agreed with Witt, stating, "People tend to focus myopically on 'the gun' but it is a mosaic of issues." Johnson added that she is concerned about violence in general, not just gun violence. She noted that she is happy to know the Center for Disease Control (CDC) will finally begin researching causes of gun violence at the national level.

Johnson was asked why she did not vote in February to support a law that closed a loophole in Oregon's gun laws that allow convicted domestic abusers and stalkers to legally buy and own firearms if they aren't married to, or living with, the victim, and they don't have

children together. Johnson said she disagreed with the wording of the "Boyfriend Law" in the Senate version she was asked to vote on. "I think there needed to be a certain degree of due process and that was my rational." Witt said he voted for the bill in the House after the wording was changed. "I was also opposed to the Senate version for the same reasons Senator Johnson was."

Johnson and Witt closed the meeting with a brief discussion about the need for citizens to engage in politics, for schools to teach the basics of civics to young students, and for citizens to be able to openly discuss current issues with each other without so much polarization. "There's no ability anymore to disagree and have a civil discourse," said Witt. "It also troubles me how forces from outside our state are coming into Oregon and polarizing us," added Johnson. "Oregon has become a petri dish for testing national themes. It used to be that Oregon's politics were our own and they weren't for sale to outside influences."

"Chat with Your Commissioners" Event in Vernonia

Informal gathering offers residents chance to talk about county-related matters

Columbia County Commissioners are reaching out to residents again with another "Chat with the Commissioners" on Tuesday, June 12 in Vernonia following the County's 5:30 pm hearing on the FY18-19 County Budget. The hearing will take place at Vernonia City Hall. The "Chat with the Commissioners" event will be held at The Blue House Café following the public hearing.

These informal events, which take place throughout the County, give residents, business owners, and others interested in local government the opportunity

to talk with county leaders about any subject they feel is important.

"Chat with the Commissioners" sessions take place at local restaurants and coffee houses, and provide residents the chance to learn more about county services, activities, funding, and upcoming projects.

"There's no agenda at these events," said County Chair Margaret Magruder. "We want to hear from our constituents and talk about the issues and concerns they have."

For more information about "Chat with the Commissioners," call Karen Kane at (503) 397-7228 or email her at kane@co.columbia.or.us.

Remember to Vote!



Brad Witt
for State
Representative
May 15th

(Paid for by Friends of Brad Witt)

Vernonia Veterinary Clinic

Small and Large Animals



Open

Mon, Wed & Saturday
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Call for Appointments
(503) 429-1612

Or 24 hr. Emergency Number (503) 397-6470
700 Weed Ave. Vernonia, OR