

On the Shelves

By Shannon Romtvedt

While there have been many new faces working at the Library over the past several years, most patrons and community members recognize Nancy Burch. Nancy Burch became the new Librarian at the Vernonia Public Library back in late Summer of 1988. Congratulations, Nancy, to 30 years of service!



Looking back through Library Board minutes, there was a special meeting called on July 20, 1988.

"A special meeting was called to order at 1:09 pm by Karen Jaques at the Library. The reason for this meeting was because of the resignation of Sandy Nimz as Librarian. The board will need a new chairman to supervise the hiring of a new Librarian. Sandy will be moving to Gladstone at the end of August. She would like to stop working on August 15th. The new chairwoman will be Claudine East. We will hire early in August to allow a training period. September will be set as a goal setting meeting with the new Librarian. Meeting adjourned at 2:15"

A regular article in *The Independent* called "Between the Bookends" in October 1988 highlights Nancy Burch as the new Vernonia City Librarian.

"Nancy Burch, Vernonia's new Librarian, is also a new resident of Vernonia, moving here from Newport with husband Errold who, for some time, has worked as butcher department head at Sentry Market. Burch had worked as media aid

in the school library in Newport before taking on the present assignment. She is spending most of her time getting acquainted with the library's inventory and is planning to complete that before she makes any decisions concerning directions her management will take."

Since her appointment as Librarian, Nancy steered the Library through two major floods and the construction of a new building (our current location at 701 Weed Avenue). She has worked hard over the years to secure a strong place for the Library in the community.

So please, raise a book in honor of Nancy Burch and her 30 years with the Library! Now take a seat and read.

Upcoming Events

Family Movie Night

Thursday, August 23, 6 pm
Featuring *Mr. Popper's Penguins* (PG, 1 hr. 34 min.)
Relax and get out of the heat for a free movie and popcorn at the Library.

Ongoing Programs

Writer's Group

No meeting in August. Next meeting Thursday, September 20, 6-7:30 pm. 3rd Thursday of every month. For writers with all levels of experience.

Book Discussion Group

Last Monday of every month, 5:30 pm. Discussion for August 27: *The Oregon Trail* by Rinker Buck

Storytimes

Summer Family Storytime

Wednesdays, 10:45 am, June 20 – August 22.
Snack served at 10:45 am provided by the Summer Meals Program. Followed by stories and a craft at 11 am. **Monday and Friday 10:30 am Storytimes will resume September 10th**

Did You Know?

Vernonia Newspaper Project

For the past year, the Library and volunteers have been working on a grant project to make historic and current newspapers available on the Historic Oregon Newspapers site. The initial grant was awarded by the Columbia County Cultural Coalition, with matching funds contributed by R&S Market, Fall Creek Woodworking, *Vernonia's*

Voice, Vernonia Pioneer Museum, Cedar Ridge Retreat Center, and individual donors. We are finally starting to see results! Preview some issues of *The Independent* on the website <https://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/>.

Once we have more issues of *The Independent* and *Vernonia's Voice* on the site, the Library and the Museum will be looking to publicize and fundraise for the next phase of the project, starting with the earliest issues of *The Eagle*. If interested in donating or would like more information about this project, contact Shannon Romtvedt (503) 429-1818 or shannonr@vernonia-or.gov.

Featured Titles:

Refreshing Youth Collections Grant

The Vernonia Library received a \$3,000 grant to purchase new, notable or award winning books (and audiobooks) for children and teens. Books are coming in and slowly being added to the collection. So far, favorites from staff have been... *Princess Cora and the Crocodile* by Laura Amy Schlitz, illustrated by Brian Floca. Hilarious early chapter book.

Spirit Hunters by Ellen Oh. Haunted story and the beginning of a series for upper elementary and middle school.

I Don't Want to Be a Frog by Dev Petty, illustrated by Mike Boldt. Humorous early reader/picture book and a first book in a series.

My Kite is Stuck! And Other Stories by Salina Yoon. Early reader for fans of the *Elephant and Piggie Series*.

Deadliest! 20 Dangerous Animals by Steve Jenkins. Great non-fiction series for young children.

Also available at the Library: *Trickiest!, Stinkiest!, and Speediest!*

Library Closures

Monday, September 3 for Labor Day

Hours & Contact Info

Mon, Wed, Fri 10 am - 5 pm

Tues & Thurs 1 pm - 7pm

Sat 10 am - 4 pm

Closed Sundays

Phone: (503) 429-1818

E-mail: library@vernonia-or.gov

Understanding How WOEC Operates *continued from page 3*

budgeted to pay each year. Having these funds set aside assures payment in the event of a bad year for the co-op. Those loans are how the co-op is able to build and maintain the infrastructure required to operate the utility. A bad year for the co-op might include weather related events like, snow, wind or flooding, or even an especially warm winter like occurred in 2015-16, which led to a decrease in expected revenues.

The margin acts as insurance against those unexpected weather related incidents that can cost the utility extra money when they occur and are difficult to budget for. "As stewards of the company, we try to forecast on a year-to-year basis and make sure we have reserves to help us cover those unexpected occurrences," says Finance Manager Huggett

Perry notes that WOEC currently shows a capital investment of approximately \$40 million, minus depreciation. "What would it cost to put in this infrastructure today if we had to start from scratch? Probably in the hundreds of millions of dollars. The membership put in the infrastructure and the service ter-

ritory protects that investment so we can continue to serve it."

Maintaining the wide ranging WOEC service territory and all that infrastructure is time consuming and expensive. Since Perry became General Manager about four years ago, his goal, along with Operations Manager Don Rose, has been to improve reliability of the system by keeping trees trimmed along power lines, replacing aging power poles, and replacing overhead lines with underground infrastructure.

"It's been our focus to reduce outages and improve service for our members," says Perry.

Along with replacing several of the trucks in WOEC's fleet, and upgrading tools ("You can't do the job if you don't have the tools," says Rose), WOEC added a small Peterson CAT excavator to their fleet, in addition to the larger backhoe they already owned. "The mini excavator is good because it has hard traction on slopes and hillsides, which we have a lot of around here," says Rose.

Tree exposure is always the ene-

my of power lines and is especially prevalent in our service territory. Rose says WOEC has increased their tree trimming budget and now has two to three crews of tree trimmers working year round, continually visiting different areas and, "...making a big difference."

All the work WOEC crews have been doing is having a real and measurable impact. Rose says tree related outages within WOEC's right of way have decreased by 67% in the last three years.

"It's been a team effort by all of us involved in the co-op," says Perry. "The Board of Directors, management, and our staff and crew have all made reliability a priority."

With increased reliability comes increased costs to members. The WOEC Board recently passed a rate increase, effective in August 2018, with the Base Charge for Class 1 Residential increasing by \$3.00 to \$42.00 a month. The Distribution charge will also increase by ¼ cent per kWh (0.0025/kWh). There will be an additional increase of ¼ cent per kWh to all classes with the revenues generated by this general increase used

to fund a Patronage Capital Retirement Fund, allowing WOEC to retire and pay the patronage capital going back to 1970. The total increase to residential members will be \$0.005 per kWh.

Capital credits, also known as "patronage capital," reflects each member's ownership in WOEC. According to the co-ops bylaws, WOEC is required to keep track of each member's contributions, "in excess of operating costs and expenses," in a capital account that clearly reflects the amount of capital furnished by each member at the end of each fiscal year.

"We receive the income, we pay the bills, and if we have anything left over, that margin is then allocated to the members, based upon what they purchased," explains Finance Manager Huggett.

According to the bylaws, if the Board of Directors determines that the financial condition of the co-op would not be impaired, then those accumulated capital credits can be "retired" in full or partially, and are returned to the

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