

Wood Man Art

A new business has opened in Vernonia featuring functional art created from exotic and local woods

By Scott Laird

Pertti Laine has been working with wood almost his entire life. From Minnesota to Southern California, and now in Vernonia, Laine has a real appreciation for the natural beauty of wood and the functional and artistic ways it can be used to create real and lasting pieces of work that will be treasured by his customers.

"My father was carpenter, so I was sort of born into this," said Laine during a recent visit to his shop on Bridge Street in downtown Vernonia; he is currently set up on one side of the old Lew's/Buckhorn building that is in the process of being renovated by its new owners. "My dad did a lot of fancy woodworking in Catholic churches. He also ran two huge jobs over in Saudi Arabia. So I grew up around this kind of work."

Laine started out as a carpenter and general contractor. "I've done everything from pouring footings to putting a roof on," he says. Now in his early 60s, he still has his contractor's license, but he's more interested in fine woodworking projects. "It's nice to be able to pick and choose the jobs I want to do now."

Laine started his own business in 2006 in Minnesota. His wife re-

ceived a job opportunity in Los Angeles so they moved there. That job didn't work out so they moved to Hillsboro and Laine set up shop in Vancouver.



Pertti Laine with a slab of black walnut from the Pacific Northwest

The commute got to be too much, so they relocated to Vernonia this past April, purchasing a home here and setting up the shop on Bridge Street in May.

"It's been interesting this year, trying to get the shop set up here and keep my jobs going," says Laine.

"Basically from January to September of this year, I've been working seven days a week. I took one day off in June for my anniversary. Now things are starting to settle in a little bit."

When asked what kinds of things he makes, Laine responds, "When it comes to wood, I can make it." He says he makes jewelry boxes, custom cabinets, vanities, fireplace mantels, entertainment centers, bookshelves, counter tops, and more, all from solid wood. "As a general contractor I make a lot of things for my jobs," he explains. "Now I'm trying to transition out of construction and make the things I want to make. I'll still make tables and benches and those kinds of things, but I'll put my artistic twist on it. The reason a lot of people hire me is because I do things a little bit differently."

Laine says he wants to create pieces that will last a lifetime... and longer. "My main goal when I make something is that people will be able to hand it down," he says. "Just like antiques, things were made out of solid woods and they survived and people handed them down. Then there's a story that goes with it. It just adds such a flavor to your home. That's the kind of thing I like to do."

Laine currently has a varied

continued on page 9

Vernonia Council Will See Changes

The City of Vernonia will have a new Mayor and two new City Councilors following the November 6 election.

Rick Hobart was elected as Mayor with 563 votes. He defeated current City Councilor Jill Hult, who chose to run for Mayor instead of her Council seat, who received 283 votes, and David Sterner who received 107.

Dale Webb and J.R. Allen were elected to the City Council, receiving 608 and 564 votes. Trailing Webb and Allen were Richard Traver with 262 votes and current Councilor Mike Seager with 214.

In Columbia County elections, current Columbia County Sheriff's Deputy Brian Pixley was elected as the new Sheriff with 10,049 votes, defeating Dave Brown who received 8,761 votes and Jim Gibson who received 2,525 votes.

Henry Heimuller was re-elected as Columbia County Commissioner, after he ran unopposed in the November election.

Columbia County voters approved the Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance with 12,699 yes votes to 10,438 no votes.

Voter turnout was high in Columbia County with 66.4% of eligible voters returning ballots. Turnout was even higher across all of Oregon, with 69.1% of eligible voters participating.

In State elections, Representative Brad Witt was re-elected to the State House in District 31 with 53.5% of the vote. State Senator Betsy Johnson was re-elected in the District 16 with 82.1% of the vote.

Council Approves Amending Zoning Code

Cottage Home Cluster developments now allowed in City

By Scott Laird

The Vernonia City Council voted 4-0 to adopt Resolution 918, amending Title 9 at their meeting on November 5, 2018. The amendments do several things, including allowing tiny homes

(cottage homes) as well as Cottage Home Clusters, adding street vacation criteria to the City codes, and making several other small changes to zoning code language. The Council's decision followed a Public Hearing, held as part of the regular City Council meeting.

The Resolution containing various changes to zoning regulations was brought forward to the City Council by the Vernonia Planning Commission. City Planner Matt Straite presented the proposed changes to the Council, and explained the purpose was to help address affordable housing needs and further the City's tourism.

The biggest change to local zoning code involved the addition of standards and regulations for tiny homes. In his presentation Planner Straite told the Council that the Planning Commission held several public workshops to discuss the issues and proposed changes to be brought forward. During their work the Planning Commission decided to remove a 950 sq. ft. minimum for mobile homes; there is no minimum size requirement for stick built homes. The adopted ordinance adds provisions to allow Cottage Home Clusters, tiny home village-style developments. "Cottage Homes are basically tiny

homes but arranged in a way where they are clustered around amenities," explained Straite. "The idea is, if you have one larger site and master plan a tiny home community on that site, you can take more advantage of open spaces, landscaping, parking, and community amenities."

Straite went on to explain that housing density would not change in Cottage Home Clusters, as the same number of housing units already allowed on a certain size property would remain the same. "But, you could now make a group of tiny homes with a lot more flexibility and take advantage of hillsides and other elements of the property," said Straite.

The Resolution creates a "Cottage Cluster Planned Unit Development" (PUD) section in the City zoning code, which includes specific standards for tiny home development, including things like how much space needs to be between structures, how much open space is required, how parking is arranged, and how fencing can be installed.

Other changes to the zoning code included the addition of porch, patio and deck standards, parking standards for homes, clarification on set-back standards for detached accessory structures, established criteria and process for street

vacations, removed minimum lot dimensions in residential zones, changed code to no longer allow the display of vehicles for sale in permitted parking areas, creates a maximum of two permit extensions (two years each), and clarifies how buildings over lot lines will be handled.

During the Public Testimony portion of the Public Hearing, Steve Calhoun spoke in favor of the proposed changes, stating the changes would now allow the sale of a property that was facing challenges due to the old code.

No one spoke in opposition to the Ordinance.

During neutral testimony, several members of the audience offered comments. Dale Webb said he didn't feel the public was informed about the proposed changes and asked about how the changes might impact density and whether there were occupancy limits on tiny homes. Webb was told density would not be affected and that the City can not place occupancy limits on private residences. Waylon Easley asked what incentives the City would offer to developers to create Cottage Cluster Homes. J.R. Allen also raised concerns about communication by the City to inform the public about the hearing and said he is against clusters of homes. He said people who want to live in tiny

continued on page 5

inside

8 vernonia ballet

10 spirit of christmas in vernonia schedule

15 halloween parade

