

Library Hosts Two Authors

Program was part of Columbia County Reads 2019

The Vernonia Public Library hosted a special event as part of Columbia County Reads 2019 on April 26.

Authors Gregory Nokes and Phillip Margolin discussed two books they wrote about a similar subject, slaves in the Oregon Territory in the 1800s.

Columbia County Reads is a yearly collaboration between Columbia County libraries to bring reading to the forefront of public discourse. If everyone reads the same book or author at the same time, it is hoped that it will inspire discussions, connections, and a shared perspective among Columbia County residents. The St. Helens Public Library was awarded a \$2,000 grant from the Columbia County Cultural Coalition to help fund Columbia County Reads 2019.

Nokes's book *Breaking Chains: Slavery on Trial in the Oregon Territory* is the true account of a former black slave in Polk County who sued his owner for the freedom of his children. Nokes wrote *Breaking Chains* after learning that one of his ancestors from Missouri brought a slave named Reuben Shipley to Oregon in 1853. Nokes, a born and raised Oregonian, discussed how he learned about his ancestors involvement with slavery and what led him to write about the

little-known history of black slaves in Oregon. His book helped inspire the Oregon Public Broadcasting program *Oregon's Black Pioneers* which can be accessed on OPB's Oregon Experience website.

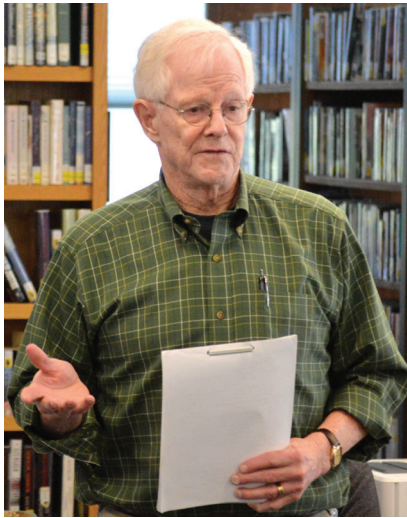
Nokes also discussed his other two historical non-fiction books. *The Troubled Life of Peter Burnett: Oregon Pioneer and First Governor of California* is the first, full-length biography of this western explorer and California's first governor. A

remote Willowa country. Even though the killers were known, and one confessed, no one was ever convicted of the crime. A cover-up followed and the crime was all but forgotten for the next 100 years, until a county clerk found hidden records in an unused safe. There will be a screening of the Oregon Experience documentary, *Massacre at Hells Canyon*, based on Nokes's book on Tuesday, May 21, 6:30 pm at the Library.

Phillip Margolin's book *Worthy Brown's Daughter* is a work of fiction based on the account described in Nokes's book *Breaking Chains*. Margolin spent over 20 years as an attorney, specializing in criminal defense. He served as an appellate attorney, appearing before the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, the Oregon Supreme Court, and the Oregon Court of Appeals. He began writing full time in 1996. His novels, many of which are legal thrillers, have received numerous awards and nominations. *The Last Innocent Man* was made into an HBO movie and *Gone, But Not Forgotten* was turned into a mini-series

At the Vernonia Library event Margolin discussed Stephen Johnson Fields, a notable lawyer and judge in the early days of the American west, who later served as a U.S. Supreme Court Justice.

Although there are no known instances of slave holding in Columbia County, the Columbia County Museum Association partnered with the Columbia County libraries to display images and descriptions of life in Columbia County around the same time period as these authors' accounts of life in Oregon.



Gregory Nokes



Phillip Margolin

former slaveholder, Burnett had a single-minded goal of banning blacks and other minorities from the West. *Massacred for Gold: The Chinese in Hells Canyon* is the first authoritative account of the long-forgotten 1887 massacre of as many as 34 Chinese gold miners in Oregon's Hells Canyon. The killers were an improbable gang of horse thieves and schoolboys in northeastern Oregon's

Thank You Volunteers!

A big thank you to volunteers Steve and Sue Whiteman, and Vernonia Mayor Rick Hobart for their work to make Spencer Park look great!

Steve Whiteman, a member of the Vernonia Parks Committee, has been instrumental in organizing the Memorial Tree program which has planted 20 trees in the park. Steve and Sue have been volunteering to make sure the new trees stay watered.

Mayor Hobart has headed up several volunteer clean-up projects as part of the Green Team he helped organize. We recently caught him trimming these rhododendrons on Bridge Street in Spencer Park.

Thank you to these great Vernonia volunteers!

Vernonia's Voice is published twice each month on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. Look for our next issue on June 6.




**Saturday
May 18th
from 12-4pm**

**Free Hot
Dogs!**

**Kissing
Booth!**

Door Prizes!


DASS DOG PARK GRAND OPENING!

Bring your leashed dog(s) and join us for the first official play date of the newly constructed Archie Dass Dog Park in celebration of the park's grand opening, from Noon to 4pm on Saturday, May 18th.

We will be grilling up some free hot dogs and handing out a few door prizes. Bottled water and a canine kissing booth will be available as well.


Come join the fun!

Archie Dass Dog Park is located at the corner of Ivy Street and Hwy 47/Mist Dr in Vernonia, Oregon



**Owned and Operated by
Don & Kim Wallace**

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