

Library Student Art Gallery

By Scott Laird

If you've visited the Vernonia Library during the past six months you may have noticed a nice addition – featured art work from some Vernonia school students.

The Library Student Art Gallery is a new collaboration between the City of Vernonia and the Vernonia School District, but really between the Vernonia Library and the school art program.

"The Vernonia Library Board of Directors was trying find ways to make young people, and specifically teens, feel more comfortable in the Library," says Library Director Shannon Romtvedt. Romtvedt says Board member Haley Ayers, who has volunteered to paint some walls in the library and bring more color to the space, also wanted to see more artwork displayed on the walls. Romtvedt says the Board has also been looking at ways to make the Library more inviting to the public. "It just made sense to tie in another organization in the community in a collaboration."

Romtvedt adds that the Student Art Gallery is just one more recent collaboration with the School District – there have been several after school programs, and they've worked together on the School District sponsored Summer Meals Program. "These programs have really opened up some lines of communication between us, and that's been really good."



"It Costs Nothing" Anisoara Crilic, 18

The artwork is being rotated twice each year – at the end of the first semester of school, and in the late spring at the end of the school year. For each exhibit the Library Board is reviewing

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VRFPD to Seek Levy in May Election

At their February 11, 2020 Board of Directors meeting, the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District (VRFPD) Board approved a request from Chief Dean Smith to apply for a ballot title for a local option levy of \$1.24 per thousand of assessed value for the upcoming May 19, 2020 election.

After rejecting a levy to fund Fire District operations in 2015, voters approved a five-year \$0.32 per thousand levy in 2016, which was used to hire and pay for the salary and benefits package for Training Captain Will Steinweg, who in addition to being responsible for training programs for the District, also responds to incidents while on duty, thereby increasing daytime response personnel availability. That five-year levy is scheduled to

end next year and would be replaced with the new \$1.24 levy.

Chief Smith and Captain Steinweg are the only paid emergency responders on the staff at the VRFPD; all other personnel are volunteers. The additional funding from the new levy would be used to fund one additional full-time responder, allow the District to build on their Out of District Volunteer Firefighter Program, and fund a Resident Volunteer program for college students to live in the fire station – all with the goal of increasing staffing across the board and give the District the ability to continue to provide a high level of service to the community.

It's a Busy Time in Salem

Legislators, constituents wrestle with Cap and Trade, forestry reform during short session

By Scott Laird

On February 6, 2020 a caravan of log trucks, farm vehicles, and others, organized and led by Timber Unity, descended on Oregon's capital in a show of solidarity. Rural workers from around Oregon were gathering together to let their elected officials know they do not want to see SB 1530, this session's Cap and Trade bill designed to reduce carbon emissions and slow climate change, get passed. Drivers clogged highways leading to Salem and then circled the Capital building blasting their horns before thousands rallied outside the building. Members of Timber Unity met with Oregon Governor Kate Brown to suggest alternatives to the bill they believe would hurt jobs.

If this feels like déjà vu – like you've seen this all before – you're not alone; last summer saw a similar rally,

a tough and partisan fight in the Capital chambers, and a walkout by a group of Republicans. Democrats finally gave up the battle when they found they didn't have enough votes to pass the convoluted HB 2020, an effort to reduce Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions.

Timber Unity and rural Oregonians weren't the only citizens to show up to protest in Salem. On February 11, about 1,000 supporters of Cap and Trade, including school students, held a rally outside the Capital Building.

Senate Democrats have brought back a similar bill for this short, six week session, that ends March 9, with a few modifications. Meanwhile a companion bill, HB 4159, with basically the same legislation, is moving through the House. Last year Columbia County's two elected officials, Representative Brad Witt and Senator Betsy Johnson, both Democrats, declined to support HB 2020, and both appear unwilling to support the current version as it's been presented. Johnson was shown rallying

with Timber Unity outside the Capital on February 6, and Witt has expressed his reservations publicly.

Representative Witt has concerns about the content of the legislation this session, about Cap and Trade in general, as well as the process Democrats are using to push the bill forward. "It's a faulty model and the focus is not well placed," said Witt in a phone interview on February 17. He criticized the idea that with Cap and Trade, industries can continue to pollute if they are able to buy credits. He also doesn't believe Oregon is capable of creating the bureaucratic infrastructure to regulate a Cap and Trade, securities and exchange program. "It would not only be cumbersome, but it would be inefficient. We're looking at a program that's going to cost Oregonians a significant amount of money, in some instances render some low margin industries noncompetitive globally, and might result in job loses, and I can't support that as a way

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VHS Wrestlers Win District for 4th Time!

Head coach Chris Barnes named Coach of the Year

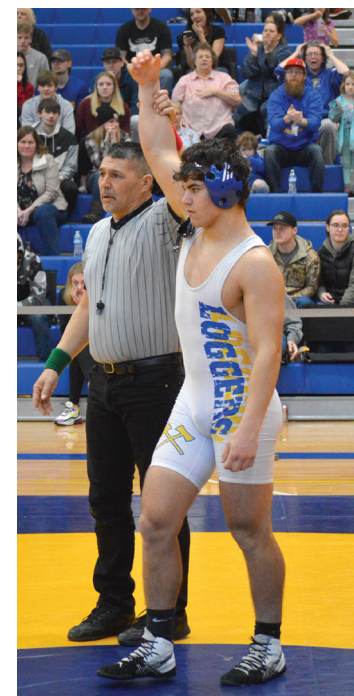
The Vernonia Loggers are the Special District 1 champions for the 4th year in row, after securing the team title on February 14-15 at their home gym.

Vernonia hosted the two day tournament that saw two Loggers win individual District Titles and book spots at the State Tournament on February 28-29, while two other Loggers locked up a trip to State with 2nd place finishes. Two additional Logger wrestlers may receive an invitation to the State meet based on their third place finish at Districts.

The Loggers won the team title after scoring 162 points, but it was a bit closer this year than in the past; Nestucca finished close behind with 143.5 points, followed by Neah-Kah-Nie with 130.

Following the tournament, Vernonia head coach Chris Barnes and his staff of Chuck Calhoun and Hepner Forster were named Coach of the Year – it was the 4th year in a row Barnes received the honor, which is voted on by the other coaches at the tournament.

Senior Patrick Fletcher, a District champion last year at 106 pounds, was the first Logger to book a trip to state, winning the



Eli Thompson

113 pound bracket, defeating teammate Brandon Depue by fall in 5:32 in the finals. Fletcher won his only other match of the tournament in the semi finals by fall in 0:32 and heads to State with a 21-3 record on the season.

Senior Austin Sicard (29-4 for the season) was the other District winner for the Loggers at 145 pounds, winning his quarterfinal match by fall, his semifinal match by technical fall by a score of 16-0, and the championship match in an exciting 10-7 decision; the match was tied with just a few seconds left when Sicard scored the winning points with a reversal. Sicard finished 2nd in the District last year at 138 pounds.

Junior Wyatt Jones
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