

¡Hola El Amigo Mexican Food and Bakery!

Food truck and new bakery are a family thing

By Scott Laird

This summer the addition of El Amigo food truck in the back of Black Iron Grill courtyard was a welcome addition to the Vernonia restaurant scene. The location quickly became a favorite for locals and visitors, offering to go food, a necessity as COVID restrictions stretched on and on. Customers were able to use the Black Iron Grill picnic tables for outdoor seating if they wished, and the partnership seemed to work well. Plus, Vernonians were again able to enjoy authentic Mexican food as La Cabaña continued to struggle to reopen following a fire almost two years ago.

Now El Amigo has expanded, opening a Mexican bakery in the space previously occupied by Jack's Hobo Bakery at 805 Bridge Street. Family members Teodoro Carreno, Olivia, Nancy, Deysey, Yare, and Emiliano are now operating the two businesses under the name El Amigo Mexican Food and Bakery.

Teodoro runs the food truck while his wife Olivia, who also owns a hair salon in Hillsboro, is the main baker. Olivia's daughter Nancy takes care of the accounting and business end of things, while her girlfriend Deysey helps out in both the bakery and the food truck. Olivia's other daughter Yare and teenage son Emiliano also pitch in when needed. The business has also been hiring a few locals to help out.

After closing a restaurant in Hillsboro about four years ago, Teodoro and Olivia saw an opportunity in Vernonia and negotiated for the space in the courtyard.



Deysy and Nancy at the El Amigo Bakery

The food truck was an instant success filling a void and offering tasty and authentic burritos, tamales, enchiladas, and more. Teodoro preps most of the food fresh each day. They offer house-made sauces, vegetarian options, and a variety of meats including steak, chicken, carnitas, asada, and chorizo. Taco Tuesdays have been popular and they also have offered special family platters that include a variety of items, or a taco feast to go.

When the bakery space came available at the end of November, the family talked with Black Iron Grill owner Dana Roach who owns the building, and then

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Logger Stadium Fundraising Moves Ahead

Community campaign has raised over \$57,000

By Scott Laird

A group of community volunteers is continuing their effort to raise funds to construct a new covered seating area at the Vernonia Schools sports complex, which would serve the Logger Field football and track and field facility.

The Vernonia Logger Stadium Steering Committee has met with representatives from a company that develops and builds grandstand facilities and has reviewed possible stadium designs. The committee plans to construct the 900 seat grandstand and cover from steel and aluminum to reduce costs and ensure longevity. The Steering Committee is also working with the Vernonia Boosters to build a centrally located snack shack and restroom that could serve the Logger Stadium, softball, and baseball fields.

A letter writing campaign to potential donors, headed up by Vernonia High School alumni Jim and Kathy Eckland, along with a digital Go Fund Me campaign, has received a positive response. The Ecklands were instrumental in the School District's fundraising campaigns following the 2007 flood, and helped secure the funds for both the Alumni Field softball and Holce Field baseball fields.

The Ecklands report that the campaign has received a total of \$32,415 in donations from over 120 separate donors – \$29,100

through the letter campaign; \$2,280 through Go Fund Me; and \$1,035 in In-Kind donations. Cash donations have ranged from \$25 to \$5,000. Several local businesses have contributed to the campaign. \$14,385 of the donations came from donors who currently live within the Vernonia School District. "We are very grateful for all the donations," said Jim Eckland.

In addition, the Vernonia Education Foundation recently voted to contribute \$25,000 to the project, bringing the total fundraising effort to \$57,415. The Steering Committee had hoped to receive any excess funds that were left over from the School District's most recent bond project, which paid for the new art room addition, major repairs and upgrades at the Mist School building, new playground equipment, and several other projects; the Committee recently learned there will not be any left over money from those bond funds.

The Steering Committee will continue to fundraise while also planning to use the money raised so far as seed money to approach potential large donors to complete the project. That strategy is now being developed.

The Steering Committee is planning to create a regular newsletter to send out to donors to keep them informed on the progress of the project.

If you would like to contribute to the Vernonia Logger Stadium project please see the ad on page 15.

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The Washington, D.C. Seige Has Western Roots and Consequences

History and the growing power of right-wing extremism point to a volatile future for the West during the Biden presidency

By Carl Segerstrom
High Country News

Five years and four days after armed militiamen took over the Malheur Wildlife Refuge, a remote federal wildlife preserve in eastern Oregon, for 41 days, supporters of President Donald Trump stormed and briefly occupied the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C., on January 6.

It's not hard to trace the links between Malheur and Washington; familiar insignia, instigators and ideologies fueled both anti-government actions. Extremist leaders and movement

regulars from the Western U.S., including former Washington State Rep. Matt Shea, who supported the efforts from afar in Spokane, and recent U.S. Senate candidate Jo Rae Perkins, R-Ore., who joined the crowd that laid siege to the Capitol, helped fuel the melee. Backing their message, if not their tactics, was a bevy of Western legislators, who lent the movement legitimacy by supporting Trump's baseless election-fraud claims.

Meanwhile, one of the most visible figures in the anti-federal government movement in the Western U.S., Cliven Bundy, expressed dismay that President Trump didn't stick to his guns after he issued a half-hearted message calling for a peaceful end to the occupation.

The anti-government occupa-



tions bookending the rise and fall of Trump's presidency show the mainstreaming of right-wing extremism in the United States. They also portend the potential for future conflicts here in the West. When President-elect Joseph Biden takes charge of the federal government and its vast Western landholdings, he will enter an already-delicate situation, where armed extremist groups stand ready to rise up against

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