

From The Editor



As we passed the one-year anniversary of COVID shutdowns this month, it was obviously a time to reflect on what has transpired, to grieve the loss of life, along with disruptions to schools, jobs, businesses, and our economy. It's been an uncomfortable and scary year, filled with personal and financial uncertainty that required unplanned adjustments to our schedules and lives. We've missed our friends and family, missed routine and structure, and missed out on important events and activities.

As case counts continue to level off and vaccinations become more available, it looks like we'll be able to move towards some kind of normal, even though many things will probably never be quite the same again. Hopefully we can look forward to outside activities this summer, a return to regular business hours and openings, and small gatherings with those we've missed during this difficult year.

The spirit of this community has really shone through during this year, as all of us have done our best to support local businesses how and when we can, and helped sustain our local economy.

Here at *Vernonia's Voice* we had to make some adjustments during the last year. A drop in advertising revenue forced us to tighten our belt where we could. As you may have noticed, the lack of school and community activities we normally would cover allowed us to condense each issue by four pages, reducing the cost of our printing each month.

Another approach was a direct request to our readers for support. *Vernonia's Voice* is normally funded by our advertisers and is free to our readers, but at the end of 2020 we went ahead and asked our readers who could afford to do so to shoulder some of the responsibility of publishing a local newspaper. The response from you has been nothing short of amazing! From some large and unexpected checks to a few dollars added on here and there, every contribution was received here with warmth and appreciation. It has shown us that the Voice is valued by the community and has made this difficult year a touch easier for us.

While this year has been a challenge, not just because of COVID, but also because of political discord, it feels like we're going to get through this difficult time if we continue to support each other.

Scott Laird
Editor and Publisher

VHS Sports Report

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Knappa 3-2 and Neah-Kah-Nie 3-0, but struggled when they fell to Gaston 1-3 on March 6; in non-league contests they beat Rainier 3-1 and lost to Clatskanie 1-3. They have their rematch against Gaston scheduled on March 30. In the other division, competition at the league playoffs will come from Portland Christian and Columbia Christian.

Williams, who in 12 years of coaching the Lady Loggers has never finished lower than 3rd in the league standings, is taking this COVID season in stride, and says she's up for the challenge this year is presenting.

Cross Country – Head coach John Roady's squads have performed impressively in the first few meets this season. COVID has really messed with training routines and some athletes have struggled with motivation. With seven boys and four girls out, Roady has been pleased with the early season results, along with a few surprises.

For the boys, senior Nick Costley has been a pleasant surprise and the team's top finisher so far. Roady says Costley put in about 600 miles of training since September and it has been showing. Costley won the season's opening meet at home on March 2, finished 3rd at Knappa on March 6, and won the meet in Clatskanie on March 11, outkicking his Knappa counterpart to the finish line and winning the race with a personal best of 18:34. The boys have won all three meets as a team. Another pleasant surprise is sophomore Seth Scheuerman, who competed while in middle school but didn't run as a



Nick Costley took 1st place at the home meet on March 2.

freshman. Scheuerman has consistently been the 2nd finisher for the team and took 3rd at Clatskanie, also recording a PR in 18:42. Rounding out the top five are three sophomores Max Anderson, Peter Hahn, and Evan Miller, with exchange student Rafael Vizcarra quickly improving and pushing the top five.

For the girls, Roady knew he had something special in freshman Delany Dreager, but maybe not quite how special – she excelled as a middle school runner, but has jumped to the front of the pack as a high schooler, and gives Roady a strong one-two punch with junior Sadie Gump, who lead the team as a sophomore when she finished 16th in the state in 2019.

Dreager has been outstanding so far this season, while Gump is starting to find her form and now has a strong teammate to push her. At the opening meet Dreager and Gump

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