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Doing it for the Laughs

Dianna Potter's stand up comedy routine is winning contents and making her dreams come true

By Scott Laird

Vernonia resident Dianna Potter has always been funny. Early in life she used her sense of humor to make friends. Now, as she enters retirement after working at the Dairy Queen in Manning for 20 years, she's living out a life-long dream and taking the stage as one of the Portland area's funniest stand up comics.

In 2019 Potter entered the Portland's Funniest Person contest, sponsored by Helium Comedy Club, and made it to the final round against over 250 competitors. She repeated that feat in 2021 in a field of 150 after the contest was cancelled in 2020. This past December she entered and won the Western Oregon Comedy Competition against 50 other comics.

Now that she's become an established name on the regional comedy circuit, Potter is regularly receiving offers to perform as a professional.

"It's gone so much better and bigger than I ever could have imagined," says Potter. "I'm really looking forward to retiring and spending my full time writing and performing."

Potter says she used comedy as a way to overcome a difficult childhood. "I've always, pretty much, been funny. We weren't rich, we were closer to poor than anything else and there was never a lot of money. My parents were on drugs and my dad was a biker and it was just a

crappy life. I wasn't the most beautiful child and we didn't have nice clothes, but I liked people and I liked having friends and I was pretty social. And I found very early on that people overlooked those things I didn't have if I was very funny and fun to be around. My mom was funny, but she was funny in a kind of nasty way, so I got in trouble a lot for being inappropriate. But people liked hanging out with me because I'm funny."



Her twenties and thirties were a rough time in her life, and Potter is honest and blunt about that troubled time. "I was living in San Diego and I got a job at the Improve Comedy Theater because I wanted to try and do comedy – I've always known I wanted to do stand up," says Potter. "But I couldn't stay sober long enough to put a set together. And then I just got worse. I was getting drunk, running around doing crazy stuff, and in and out of jail. I got arrested for a lot of felonies, but I was never convicted so I could always truthfully answer that question on a job application that I was never convicted of a felony. Through all that I learned that when you have a crappy life, if you can't find something funny and try to make

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A Snowy Vernonia Holiday



Vernonians had the pleasure of celebrating the proverbial "White Christmas" this year when they awoke to a light dusting of snow on December 25. The snow continued intermittently the rest of the day, and then got serious, dumping around 8 inches of snow over the next few days. Frigid temperatures and more snow showers kept the snow pack around all week and into the New Year, making for a very snowy holiday season this year.

Superintendent Explains School COVID Closure

The decision by the Vernonia School District on December 16 to close the schools three days prior to the scheduled start of the Winter Break because of a COVID exposure had some members of the community perplexed.

Why were classes cancelled for Friday, December 17, and Monday and Tuesday, December 20, and 21 instead of having students and instructors move to Distance Learning? And why were sports activities allowed to continue?

Superintendent Aaron Miller explained the District's decision on January 3, 2022, the first day students were scheduled to return to school following the holiday, although school was once again canceled that day due to lingering

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Local Political Races Taking Shape

Candidates already lining up to fill open State Senate and House seats

For the first time in many years, Vernonia and the rest of Columbia County will have a chance to elect not just one, but two new legislators to represent us in Salem.

On December 14 Oregon gubernatorial candidate Betsy Johnson announced she was resigning from her state senate seat representing Senate District 16. Johnson is running as an independent candidate with no party affiliation.

"As most of you know, working for you in Salem has never been a part-time job for me. But neither is running for Governor," said Johnson in her resignation announcement. "Oregon is a huge state and I have a lot of work to do to bring us all together."

On January 4 Democratic Precinct Committee Persons from Clatsop,

Columbia, Multnomah, Tillamook, and Washington counties nominated Melissa Busch (Warren), Rachel Armitage (Warren), and Nadia Gardner (Arch Cape) to complete the remainder of Johnson's term in Salem.

Clatsop, Columbia, Multnomah, Tillamook, Washington, and Yamhill County Commissions will hold a joint meeting on January 14 to select Johnson's replacement. The term for that Senate seat runs through 2022.

Busch is a home health nurse who previously announced she would be a candidate for the Senate District 16 seat in the November election. Busch has described herself as a working mother and advocate for working families. "I know the challenges our community faces, because I see my patients navigating those challenges every day. There is a lack of affordable childcare options, schools that don't have the resources they need, and families that are confronted with impos-

sible choices, like buying groceries or paying for prescription medications," says Busch.

Armitage previously worked as a Legislative Assistant in the 2016 and 2017 legislative sessions, focusing on constituent service and issues such as education, and rights for foster youth.

"Our community needs a leader in Salem who brings us together even when we have strong disagreements – who will be an independent voice for rural Oregonians," says Armitage.

Nadia Gardner is a 20-year North Coast resident, who has always been very active in local politics. She lives in the unincorporated Clatsop County community of Arch Cape, and is the Chair of the Clatsop County Planning Commission. She is an elected Director on the Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District Board.

"I am a scientist with expertise

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