

The INDEPENDENT

Serving the upper Nehalem River valley. Published monthly on the last Thursday of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 1206 State Avenue, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. All material protected under U.S. Copyright laws. Editors and Publishers, Dirk and Noni Andersen, (503) 429-9410.

Opinion

Positive leadership honors volunteer work

We are fortunate to have concerned and well-trained emergency crews throughout the upper Nehalem valley. People who have been assisted by these crews for any reason - fire, accident or medical emergency - speak gratefully not only of their skills, but also of their compassion. Those of us who have watched them at work are impressed by their professionalism and have to remind ourselves that these are volunteers, not paid personnel.

Our comments apply equally to both the Vernonia and Mist-Birkenfeld emergency crews.

There is a problem, though. While the crews work very well together, some on the leadership level in each district spend a lot of time complaining about the actions or motives of the other district.

In a perceived need to protect their turf, they tend to lose sight of their only purpose: To provide emergency services to the people of the community. The backbiting and sniping by these few is at best distracting, at worst destructive. Total cooperation between the two districts will serve the community - and the taxpayers - far better than animosity.

The volunteers in both districts are hard working and dedicated. Their efforts would be best recognized by the same positive, upbeat attitudes on the part of their leaders.

Bond paper recyclable, can we start program?

Press releases by the dozens come to The INDEPENDENT, as they do to all newspapers. We use only those that have local application, a very small percentage of the total; the rest we throw away.

That paper, combined with the reams of bond paper we use for other purposes is recyclable, yet we don't recycle it because it's not enough for a special trip to a recycling center that will take it.

There are others here who also use a lot of bond paper - City Hall, the schools, WOEC, the banks, etc. - and most of that paper ends up in the landfill.

Is there anyone who will develop a recycling program for this sort of paper, as volunteers here have done with plastics? It may not seem important, but if it saves our landfill space, it will also save our money. Transporting trash is both expensive and wasteful.

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch
Vernonia City Librarian

Upon comparing the best seller list in the Sunday Oregonian to our collection in the library, I find that we have fourteen of the twenty fiction selections (some in paperback, some hard cover). Check out our local library first before searching elsewhere for that desired reading material.

Some books that we have in addition to previously mentioned best sellers, are "Black Sand" by William Cauditz, "Billy Bathgate" by E.L. Doctorow, "The Drawing of the Three" by Stephen King, and "Web of Dreams" by V.C. Andrews.

The newest novel of suspense by Dean Koontz, "The Bad Place," is a recent acquisition that has all the elements of good versus evil. A husband and wife detective team is hired by Frank Pollard to watch over him, to discover where he goes and what he does when he falls asleep. As they attempt to find the answers to such puzzlements as Frank's physical disappearance and reappearance with blood covered hands, bags of money, and some strange frightening objects, their lives also become threatened by the ominous figure that is stalking Frank. This eerie tale will grip the reader and keep him

guessing until the very end.

We have recently received some very welcome donations. The first was two big boxes of books from Rian Ragsdale. These children's books are being read and enjoyed by young readers as fast as we can get them processed and on the shelves. We all want Rian to know how much we appreciate his having given these books to the library for other children to enjoy as he did. The second donation came from The Vernonia Study Club in memory of Mathilde Bergerson and is a beautiful addition to the library. Entitled, "Western Images", it is a lovely collection of photographs of the western states by Ray Atkeson.

We, the friends and co-workers of Ora Bolmeier, would like to extend an open invitation to all to attend an informal gathering in honor of her retirement. This will be Tuesday, February 27, from 2-4 p.m. in the library. Come and have some refreshments, visit and help us show our appreciation to this lady who has contributed so much to the community.

Library Hours: Monday and Friday 1-5 p.m., Wednesday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Preschool Story Time is every Wednesday from 10:30-11 a.m.

Letters to the Editor

The town's a mess

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter to the children, residents and business people of Vernonia.

As a resident of Vernonia for fifty years, I have become very concerned with all the litter and general unkempt appearance of our community.

This last summer I traveled over 10,000 miles and never did I see a town with as much litter in their business district as Vernonia. If you have walked through town you will see there is paper and debris from one end to the other.

If students would either leave their papers at school or make sure they get home, instead of somewhere along the way; if those of you who purchase snacks and fast foods would take your containers home or place them in the trash facilities up town, instead of tossing them on the street; if residents would take a few minutes each week or two to pick up their yards, what a difference this could make.

I also feel that all business people should be responsible for keeping the sidewalk in

front of their business swept and picked up. In most cases this could be accomplished in ten minutes once a week. I don't feel that this is too much to ask.

If we would educate our children at home and at school, they might some day turn into responsible adults, and the problem of littering could be much improved.

The State spends thousands of dollars each year to hire people to clean up our roadways. I find this a waste of money; already debris is apparent over top hill, which was picked up over Christmas. I feel this money could be better spent on education. We should not have to hire people to pick up after others. We need to learn to be responsible for ourselves and our actions.

Vernonia has a lot going for it - a lake, a river running through our downtown, and several nice parks. The trees and flowers along our main street have been a real asset, and several new businesses are real eye-catchers for people traveling through.

So I ask all of you to take some pride in your community and make it the pretty little town it could be.

Our high school has a motto: "Vernonia High School, A School to be Proud Of." I wish I could say the same about our town. As it is, I say, "Vernonia, a Town to be Ashamed Of."

DeLoris Webb
Vernonia

A costly witch hunt

To the Editor:

Two Vernonia High School graduates wrote (Letters, January INDEPENDENT) about how uninformed they feel I am regarding the drug problem at VHS, and how unfair I am for criticizing the written statements of VHS teacher Ward Nelson. I received a similar letter, personally, from another VHS teacher.

Except for minor details, all three letters are so similar that they could have been written by one person.

Jill Budge, Craig Dailey and their former teacher agree with Mr. Nelson's pessimistic assessment of education and the "need" for mandatory, random drug testing for extracurricular student

More Letters on Page 15