

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

No good taxes, but try to get something useful

Three measures on the May ballot deal with money issues that directly affect this area - a tax base for the new emergency communications district, and increased tax bases for both the Vernonia School District and the Columbia Education Service District.

Ideally, they could all be approved by the voters, but this isn't an ideal world and too many taxpayers' pockets aren't deep enough to handle additional property taxes.

District 47J has done some good budgeting, but has also allocated an unseemly amount for extracurricular sports - not physical education, but *extracurricular* sports - the PE budget is elsewhere.

An increase of \$22,887 takes the high school extracurricular sports budget to \$92,687...for fewer than 200 students. That doesn't include \$5,000 for drug testing; that's budgeted in non-athletic student activities.

Non-athletic activities were reduced by \$1,776 (but who needs things like music, drama and art?), and when the drug testing \$5,000 is subtracted, there is only \$10,248 for non-athletic extracurricular activity.

\$2,000 was deleted from tuition money for Portland Community College's vocational education and advanced courses; the library budget was reduced by \$1,800. The budget for legal costs was doubled to \$15,000 for a possible lawsuit over drug testing.

On the elementary level there is a total of \$28,620 for extracurricular student activities. \$25,770 of that amount is for sports and \$2,500 for drug testing, leaving a total of \$350 for participation in spelling bees, science fairs and other ridiculous activities.

Anyone concerned about property taxes would be well advised to approve the communications district tax base. That will eliminate a \$40-50,000 a year burden to the City of Vernonia....and we're more likely to need an emergency medical technician than a defensive lineman.

Publication day changed

Starting with today's edition, The INDEPENDENT will go to Wednesday delivery instead of Thursday.

All local outlets will now receive the paper in the afternoon on the last Wednesday of each month. Local mail customers will still get the newspaper delivered on Thursdays.

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch
City Librarian

If you're anxious to read a best seller but haven't the money or the storage space for books, come in and see if our library has what you're looking for. We have the newest novels by Janet Dailey, Rosamunde Pilcher, Phyllis Whitney, Robert Ludlum, Arthur Hailey, M.K. Wren, Robin Cook, Judith Michael and LaVyrle Spencer. At least one of these authors must have written something that you've enjoyed enough to want to read another by him/her.

Phyllis Whitney has been a favorite of mine for years with her tales of romance and suspense and her latest novel, "The Singing Stones," combines these elements while challenging our views of life and death, destiny and love. When Lynn McLeod, a clinical psychologist, is asked to try and help the troubled child of her former husband, she accepts, with misgivings, and is drawn into old passions and new mysteries. If you enjoy Phyllis Whitney, put this on your list of books to read.

An author I have recently discovered and enjoyed is LaVyrle Spencer. "Bitter Sweet," her latest tale of love and postponed passion...of a forbidden reunion, with choices both bitter and sweet...has returned Ms. Spencer to the bestseller list. We also have two of her former books, "Vows" and "Morning Glory," in paperback. "Morning Glory" was my first encounter with Spencer's works and after reading it, I added her to my list of favorite authors. This is the story of a love strong enough to endure the traumas of a war and true enough to survive a terrible crime. It is one of those stories that makes you cry even while you're enjoying every minute of it.

There is never enough space to elaborate on more than a few books, and the ones that I choose to write about may not be your choice, so come in and look around. You'll find something that suits your reading taste.

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

911 funding needed

To the Editor:

Funding for the Columbia County Emergency Communications District is one of the largest problems that the Vernonia City Council and I have had to face.

Last year C-Com charged the City \$44,000 for 911 services. If the tax base election fails, the new Communications District may charge the City as much as \$50,000.

Last year, to form the 1989 budget without asking for a levy, we had to strip every spare dollar from the equipment budgets in the general fund. There is no spare money left this year in any of the Police, Fire or Ambulance budgets to help pay for the increasing costs of providing 911 services.

If the tax base for the Communications District does not pass, the budget for the General Fund will face some very hard times. The Council would have to consider asking for a levy or laying off some of our employees from the Police or Fire Departments.

I feel that voting for the tax base is going to provide some stability for the City's future budget as well as pro-

vide an excellent 911 service for the county.

Thank you for your time.

**Scott Sword, Mayor
City of Vernonia
Fireworks on 4th?**

To Venonia Citizens:

Will there be a fireworks display this July 4th?

The Chamber of Commerce is not going to sponsor the fireworks display this year unless there is money to prepay the fireworks.

The reason is very simple - lack of funds. In the past, the Chamber has had donated firewood to sell, which, with individual business donations and collections after the show, paid for the display and provided enough money to assure the following year's display.

Last year firewood was not easily obtained or delivered, and for the second consecutive year, many of the donation cans were stolen. As a result, there is a balance of \$9 toward the \$2,000 needed for the display.

I personally asked another organization if it was willing to sponsor this function and was turned down.

My question to you as citizens is, do you want a fire-

works display, and are you willing to pay for it? If the answer is "yes," stop by either U.S. Bank or Farmers & Merchants Bank to make a contribution, or mail your check to the chamber at P.O. Box 7, Vernonia, OR 97064.

Will we have a fireworks display in July? The answer is up to you.

**Fred Kilinger, President
Vernonia Area Chamber
of Commerce**

911 affects all

To the Editor:

I am writing in regard to a subject that affects all Columbia County residents: emergency communications.

The Inter-Governmental Council and Management Team in November, 1989, asked voters to change the way 9-1-1 (C-COM) was managed. You, the voter, responded and formed a communication special district.

The next big step is to obtain stable funding for Columbia County's 9-1-1 center.

The former management team recommended that the new District Directors ask voters for a tax base which is projected to last for five years

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