

# The INDEPENDENT

Serving the upper Nehalem River valley. Published monthly on the last Wednesday 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 & Noni Andersen, (503) 429-9410

## Opinion

### Garbage may hide a great opportunity

In less than six months, Vernonia will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its incorporation as a city. Many plans are under way for special activities throughout the centennial year. Also, the new Banks-Vernonia Linear State Park will open officially this spring, bringing even more publicity to this area.

It's a great opportunity to attract visitors; it may even broaden our tax base by attracting new residents and businesses. The question is: What will visitors see when they come to Vernonia?

Some sights awaiting them are buildings that don't meet minimum health and safety codes; rust heaps of undrivable vehicles; garbage and other forms of litter strewn about; lots full of overgrown weeds and grasses...to name a few of the less savory vistas.

Disparate though they may seem, all of these public nuisances have one element in common: Under city ordinances they are all illegal.

The next question is: Why is there no enforcement of city ordinances governing these conditions?

The city's police chief has the authority to act as building official and enforce nuisance abatement ordinances. He and his officers should enforce the city's ordinances regularly and *consistently*...especially since that's what they're paid for.

The next question is: Why doesn't the city council insist on better performance by the enforcement arm of city government, and back up that insistence with periodic reviews of the chief's performance?

It's nice to be nice, it's even desirable to be nice, except when that isn't getting the job done.

### Pro or con, you have a say about property taxes

A mail election will be held in September on the question of an operating levy for the school district. Our school property tax rate falls just about in the middle of rates throughout the state, so while we're not low, we're not high either.

One thing is certain, however; only people who vote will have a voice in setting our tax rates and in determining the future of our educational system. There is nothing easier than voting by mail, so if you don't vote, please don't complain. You have the opportunity to make a difference.

## Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch  
Vernonia City Librarian

Have you ever felt you should read a certain book, but for one reason or another kept putting it aside in favor of others that more readily caught and held your attention? Then, when you finally decided to read it - now or never - found it to be so engrossing that you hated to put it down until you had read the final page. This has been my experience with M. K. Wren's novel, *A Gift Upon The Shore*. Martha Kay Renfro (M. K. Wren) is an Oregon author who lives at Roads End, near Lincoln City on the coast, and she uses the Pacific Northwest as the setting and the near future as the time frame for this spellbinding tale.

After nuclear war, earthquakes and tidal waves have ravaged the West Coast, violent looters and a horrifying fever have taken their toll on the remaining human population. Mary Hope, a writer, and her beloved friend, Rachel Ward, a painter, are two survivors. After searching into and beyond the Willamette Valley into the Cascades and finding no other survivors, these two determined women take

on the task of preserving all remaining books they can find as the only record of a world that has perished, but also in the hope that some spark of culture will survive.

Eventually, Mary and Rachel find they are not the only humans left and their farm becomes home to a small group of fanatics, led by Miriam, who views books as blasphemous. The conflict between Mary and Miriam divides the community in passion and terror as *A Gift Upon the Shore* reaches its thrilling climax.

When I first started reading the book, the theme really depressed me with its description of such destruction of life as we know it, caused by both man and nature. But, hope is the theme that is established and maintained throughout the book and if I were a survivor, and had to make decisions concerning which books were important to save for future generations, this would definitely be on the list.

**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

### A commendable job

To the Editor:

To all those people who worked hard on the Jamboree, I want to commend you on a job well done. I have been involved with the Jamboree, it seems like most of my life. There have always been problems, except this year. Everything, I thought, went very smoothly.

Also, the town, and especially the school grounds and parks, were in the best shape they've been in years. You have set the stage for a really great celebration for next year. I know that all of the baseball players associated with the softball games are looking forward to next year.

Once again, congratulations.

Bill Hawkins  
Portland

Thank you, Bill

To the Editor:

Hooray for Bill Hawkins! He really is a great ambassador for Vernonia. We have been coming to Vernonia every year for Bill's annual softball tournament and what a wonderful job he does. We have several of his hand-crafted trophies and cherish each one.

We also have a great appreciation for what all of you

"locals" put up with, with this great influx of tourists - we put up with "them" all year!

We play several tournaments each year, but rarely will any team member miss coming to Vernonia for a good, clean, fun time - all due to the hard work and unselfish efforts of Bill Hawkins. Thanks, Bill!

Larry & Claudia Peterson  
Seaside Merchants  
Women's Slowpitch  
Softball Team

### Thanks for the help

To the Editor:

We at Mist-Birkenfeld RFPD wish to say "Thank you!" to all those who helped with site preparation for our planned substation. Many, many people were involved in this project, and several businesses as well.

The site for the Peterson Substation is filled and nearly ready to build upon. Located just north of Apiary junction on Hwy. 47, seven miles south of Mist, this station is planned to shorten response times in that area and place needed equipment closer for emergency services.

While the individuals who volunteered their time are too numerous to list, we are very grateful for their help. Among the businesses who donated their time, materials and equipment were L.J. Christophersen (trucks, loaders, op-

erators, etc.), Cavenham Forest Products (rock and fill material), Oregon State Highway Division (rock and fill material), Bud Hemeon (dump truck and driver), Dan German (dump truck and driver), L. Jepson & Sons (dump truck and driver), Columbia County (dump truck), and Evenson Logging Company (expertise and materials).

Earlier this summer Cavenham Forest Products were inadvertently left off of a published list of those who helped with this project. The majority of the fill material was donated by them for our use as needed. We certainly appreciate their help and apologize for leaving them out earlier.

The land was donated by Richard Peterson, a life-time resident, who home is located just across the street from where the new station will be built.

Again, thanks from all of us.

Dave Crawford, Fire Chief  
Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire  
Protection District

### Crisis line moved

To the Editor:

As a result of the closure of St. Helen's Hospital, the Columbia County Women's Resource Center has moved its after hours diversion system to a new home base at

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