

# 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

### REA adds to fiscal problems at WOEC

That there are problems at West Oregon Electric Cooperative isn't news. What *is* news is that, after years of either mismanagement or no management at WOEC, the Rural Electrification Administration is finally concerned. Unfortunately, the way they express their concern tends to usurp the responsibility and authority of the directors elected by Coop members, just about eliminating the designation "Cooperative."

WOEC operated without a written budget for about 45 years; that didn't bother REA. There was no oversight on the use of credit cards; that didn't bother REA. Checks were drawn and payments made without supporting documentation; that didn't bother REA. Maintenance was irregular and brushing wasn't scheduled at all; that didn't bother REA.

That WOEC was in debt far beyond its worth and its ability to pay didn't bother REA, either. They encouraged more borrowing, providing "low cost" loans of course, rather than encouraging fiscally responsible planning. No matter how "low" an interest rate may be, when money is borrowed it costs the borrower more than the face value of the loan. Ordinary loan brokers should be envious of REA's ability to con people into borrowing more money than they can afford to repay, keeping them in debt, and in control, forever.

After ignoring decades of mismanagement and inattention, the current posturing by REA is unimpressive. All of a sudden, it seems they know what's wrong with the Coop and imply that general manager David Seuss is the Messiah who will lead us out of the wilderness.

We disagree, not with the belated attention to problems, but with an approach that ignores intelligent consideration of local conditions.

Without regard to the dispute over prior costs of brushing and line clearing, one fact is crystal clear: In northwest Oregon, cutting off tree tops a few feet below power transmission or distribution lines is an imbecilic waste of rate payers' money because the tree tops will grow back in a year.

While the board of directors implied that the manager's credibility was at stake in the issue (credibility be damned, money is the issue), they gave in to pressure being applied by Seuss and REA to accept not just qualified contractors, but a method of "pre-qualification" designed to eliminate most small businesses—including members of this Coop—and send ratepayers' money to big businesses that have no interest in, or concern about WOEC.

Neither overmanagement nor mismanagement can replace common sense but, then, that's been gone since WOEC decided it could save money by borrowing money. At this point, only a machete wielded on a tangled and overgrown budget will help us out of the wilderness.

## Welcome to Jamboree

## Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch  
Vernonia City Librarian

The summer reading program, "Get Hooked on Books," has already encouraged 17 youngsters to read 50 or more books in the past two months. An additional 19 young readers have at least 10 books to their reading credit in this summer's program. Isn't this something to be really pleased about! The Friends of the Library are to be congratulated for implementing this program and they will be seeing you in the Jamboree Parade with their special entry honoring these young readers. August will also be a month to continue reading, with the program culminating in a watermelon feed for these youngsters.

New books for *your* summer reading enjoyment include novels by Judith McNaught, Jeffrey Archer, Jennifer Blake and John Grisham. *Paradise*, by McNaught, is a novel about the reunion of former lovers as they join forces to save a family business while uncovering secrets of the past and rediscovering their love. John Grisham's, *The Firm*, is a novel about the secret and possibly illegal activities of the firm of a young lawyer. These

are both authors that I hadn't read before and I enjoyed the works of both very much and would highly recommend them.

There are a couple of people that I especially want to recognize and thank this month. First, thank you, Bob Spencer, for donating a video-cassette of Vernonia's Centennial Pageant to the library. The other person is DeLoris Webb who has recently completed two terms, 8 years, of service on the library board. Dee Dee has encouraged, organized and supported numerous activities in the 3 years that I have been librarian, and I want to thank her publicly for this involvement. This past spring she spent many hours compiling a history of the local library from the newspaper microfilm. She assures me she will continue this project even though she no longer is a current board member. Thank you, Dee Dee!

**Library Hours:** Monday and Friday 1-5 p.m., Wednesday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Preschool Story Time is every Wednesday from 10:30-11 a.m.

## Letters to the Editor

### Where is the pride?

To the Editor:

As Citizen of the Century and lifelong resident for over 100 years, it gives me great pleasure to be and have been active in things to better our fine city. We are celebrating our centennial and those people who founded and built our city.

Many of these folks were fine people and I had the privilege of knowing and working with most of them in different projects in and for this town over the years. We were proud and took pride in these so-called service projects. Then something happened and I don't know what, except that some of our pride has left us.

On Memorial Day past I went up to the pioneer cemetery to place flowers on my parents' grave. They, like the others buried there, were proud people. I could not navigate in the tall grass and I had a hard time trying to manage to get to my folks' grave. As I struggled along and finally got to it, I was thinking about the people buried here and how they might feel if they knew the condition of the grounds where they are laid to rest.

I think it is a disgrace for the shape of things, too. It deeply hurts me to see it in that kind of condition. This is where the pioneers of Vernonia rest and it should be a monument to these proud and hard working people. I inquired about its condition and received reasons and excuses. I believe there is no excuse for it.

We are celebrating our centennial and these people were a part of it and they deserve better! I was by there last week and it still has not been cared for.

I would like to see it cleaned up and have the flags on the graves of the veterans who are buried there;

they are from the Civil War, Spanish War, World War I, World War II and maybe the Korean War, too. These men are what made this country and town great and need to be recognized as well for their deeds.

Thank you,

Bob Spencer  
Vernonia

### Our youth are great

To the Youth of Vernonia:

Thank you for being there for our son after the death of his girlfriend.

We always hear about the bad things the youth of Vernonia do; I think it's time we say something about the good they do.

The young men and women of this town who came by to see how he was doing or took him swimming or cruising, or just to sit and talk with him or listen when he wanted to talk; it meant a great deal to him to know you were there for him. It also meant a great deal to us. You all helped him more than you will ever know. One even took the day off work to spend it with him.

I don't have to mention names, you all know who you are.

This is a town of young men and women we are proud to know.

Thank you all.

Ron & Judy Wolf  
Vernonia

### Colco for kids, too

To the Editor:

During the '90-91 school year, Vernonia Colco transported 11 preschool and kindergarten children on a regular basis, during a time of day the regular school bus did not operate. We also transported a couple of first

graders who weren't on a bus route.

Because we believe there is a need for this service we will once again be transporting school children who otherwise would have a difficult time getting to or from school.

If you feel this program would be of help to you and would like more information, please call 429-3912. Leave a message for me and I'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,  
Patricia R. Conover,  
Division Manager  
Vernonia Colco

### Likes newspaper

To the Editor:

I would very much like to start receiving The INDEPENDENT newspaper which you publish. Your local Chamber of Commerce sent a copy to me as I had requested information about the local area.

I was impressed with it and would like to have it come on a regular basis.

If there are any charges please let me know and I'll be glad to remit the proper amount. Until then I'll be awaiting your next issue with bated breath.

With kindest regards,

David M. Loffer  
Marietta, Texas

### Let's try again

To the Editor:

Last month, I agreed with the editor that Vernonia (the City) is in bad shape. The letter I sent sounded somewhat sarcastic so I want to apologize to anyone who took it as sarcasm, by telling you how I feel about the Vernonia area — not the city, it's still bad in my opinion, which never really impressed anyone.

I moved to the Vernonia area in 1932 and I never re-

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