

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Don't let \$100 rain on festive grad party

Some Vernonia High School seniors and their parents are upset because of VHS Principal Steve Giere's decision to disallow the use of \$100 in student body funds to help pay for the all night, alcohol and drug-free party following graduation.

According to Giere, he made that decision because other parents were upset about allowing the party to be held in the banquet room at Lew's Place, a restaurant and bar. "Several of them [the parents] complained to the school board" because they felt students were getting "a mixed message," Giere said.

What concerned some parents is teaching students about the serious problems associated with drug and alcohol abuse, while allowing them to have a party where alcohol is sold. The party is provided by parents and donors from throughout the community and is not a school-sponsored event, which, Giere said, further justified disallowing the expenditure of student body funds.

Superintendent Ellis Mason said that no parents complained to the school board and that only one parent had mentioned the possible conflict to him. A review of school board minutes also fails to show any parent complaints about the party's location.

This is a minor problem, no matter which view is held, and should not be blown out of proportion. Some feel Giere was dictatorial in deciding how students could use the money from their own student body fees, but it's likely that his decision falls within the scope of his responsibilities.

If parents feel strongly about the issue, they should take their reasons to the school board and ask that policy be developed on the use of student body funds. That is the proper way to handle the situation.

A few other thoughts are in order, though: No laws are being broken by having a teen party at Lew's Place, which is well and legally operated. There, no alcohol will be available to minors, which is more than can be said at many private parties. It's also the only place available in Vernonia that makes the event feel "special" to the graduates; no matter how well decorated it may be, a church hall or school gymnasium just isn't the same thing, because it's associated with every day life. On graduation night, they want to feel special.

It is far better to let the new graduates celebrate by dancing, playing games and eating the night away under the watchful eyes of parent chaperones, than to scrape them up off the highway after a few beers with "friends."

No one wants to do away with the event, including those who are unhappy with the location. Anyone in the community who wants to help make up the \$100 deficit, or who wants to contribute just because it's a positive activity, may call the high school to find out who is handling contributions for the drug and alcohol free graduation party.

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch
Vernonia City Librarian

Several months ago the suggestion was made that the library include video and audio cassettes in its collection. A few audio books were purchased and have been requested frequently. The *Ring of Fire* video has been in constant use by library patrons. The decision has now been made to make both audio and video tapes a permanent feature of the library's collection. Some of the audio books that are available at present are: *Odds Against*, by Dick Francis; *Terror Stalks the Class Reunion*, by Mary Higgins Clark; *Uh-Oh*, by Robert Fulghum; *Real Ponies Don't Go Oink*, by Patrick McManus; and *The Road to Gandolfo*, by Robert Ludlum.

The use of video cassettes by the library is intended to complement, rather than to compete with, the local video stores. Our goal will be to focus on family type classics, "how-to" kinds of things, health-oriented materials and standard children's fairy tales. In so doing, we hope to provide a needed service to the community, while increasing library circulation. The budget for this project is quite limited, of course, so any donations of suitable materials would be greatly appreciated. If your child has outgrown or become

tired of your copy of *Bambi*, or you have learned all you can, or want to, from your copy of *How to Golf*, consider donating them to the library.

At present, copies of *Little Women*, *Where the Red Fern Grows*, *The Vanishing Wilderness* and *Anne of Green Gables* are available at the library.

Upon hearing of our project to add videos to the public library, Gordon Smith offered to let us place orders through Sentry Market's video department, thus letting the library take advantage of discounted prices. This makes us doubly happy, not only to receive videos at reduced prices, but to know that we have the support of local business in this venture.

The library's policy for use of these audio or video materials will require a deposit of \$5.00 when checking out a tape. This deposit will be refunded when the cassette is returned. The tapes may be kept for one week, with a fine being charged if kept longer than the week.

We hope this will be a service that the community uses and enjoys.

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

Successful clean-up To the Editor:

We'd like to thank all who showed up to help with the city clean-up effort this month. About 24 people decided that, since they were already committed for the morning, why not show up in spite of the rain. Most of the families were either Chamber of Commerce members or Jaycees. Some high school students working for health credits also braved the elements and gave up their Saturday morning sleep-in.

Local merchants donated items for a raffle for participants, including video rentals from Vernonia Sentry, tanning sessions from Vernonia Variety and gift certificates from MiniMart. Each adult participant received a certificate for pie-a-la-mode from Crazy Charlie's, while the little ones earned root beer floats from Vernonia Cafe.

Refreshments of hot dogs and pop were provided by Vernonia Sentry, Keenon Land Services and the Booster Club.

Nehalem Valley Sanitary Service provided a drop box and Columbia County provided plastic bags for trash pick-up.

We picked up a lot of litter and, soon, we will try again — and hope for a sunny day.

Please, think before you drop litter; a receptacle is close enough, just look for it.

Dolly Keenon
Julie Prohaska

Thanks to all of you

To the Editor:

I am writing this thank you note on behalf of myself and Fred Forrest, both formerly employed by Gasoline Alley Auto Wrecking. We would like to thank Ron Wilcox and Sam Carter, our yardmen, for

all the help they gave us during the last few months [while] closing the wrecking yard. Both men were instrumental in helping us deal with all of the physical details and work in cleaning up the yard. We would also like to thank all of our customers and friends for their loyalty and patience with us while we attempted to deal with our boss's death and the strain it put on all of us.

The last two people we would like to thank are Edward A. Biros and his wife Elizabeth. Without the strength and support of these two exceptional people we couldn't have lasted a week after Edward's death. It was a difficult time for all of us but we couldn't quit on Ed and Elizabeth. We all felt a tremendous grief and sense of loss, but how could we give up the fight if the two people that suffered the most kept hanging in there. Every time circumstances conspired to overwhelm us, either Ed or Elizabeth would be there with a kind word or a hand on the shoulder to buck us up. Words do not do justice to what these two people came to mean to us, so all we can do is give them our love and a great big thank you from both of us. Gasoline Alley Auto Wrecking may be gone but, thanks to these two wonderful people and their son, it will never be forgotten by us.

Chris Collins,
formerly Manager
Alfred Forrest,
formerly Yard Foreman
Gasoline Alley

Volunteers honored

To the Editor:

The Oregon Department of Human Resources houses a Volunteer Program which recruits volunteers and develops local community re-

sources. These volunteers and resources are used to assist the clients of the department's various agencies acquire independence, maintain their health and develop strong families.

The DHR Volunteer Program of Columbia County currently has Big Brothers and Big Sisters placed throughout the county. We provide volunteer clerical assistance to the DHR agencies as needed. We provide transportation to assure medical services are available to the low and very low income of our county. We coordinate a summer camp program for children of very low income families and a back-to-school clothing project for these same children. We also locate personal care products, household needs, educational supplies, clothing, children's toys and young adults' items of entertainment. All of these activities are undertaken by volunteers from throughout Columbia County.

Last year, the DHR Volunteer Program of Columbia County provided 15,963 hours of volunteer time, drove 53,060 miles to connect folks to medical services and acquired \$18,900 of goods which were distributed to the low and very low income households of our county.

April is Volunteer Recognition Month and the week of April 27 through May 2 is Volunteer Recognition Week. The DHR Volunteer Program of Columbia County honored its volunteers at a luncheon yesterday, April 28.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt thank you to the very special volunteers who have served our community during the past year.

Al Jesse, Supervisor
DHR Volunteer Program
Columbia County