

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Scott Sword has earned re-election as mayor

People filling the positions of Vernonia Mayor and Council spend long hours, without pay, trying to find ways to enhance the quality of this small town. Unlike other volunteers, they must keep an under-funded city solvent while coping with an extremely broad spectrum of problems and situations.

These positions are important.

The only person whose name is on the ballot, Joe Batty, has said he will be moving away from Vernonia. Dennis Davenport, a write-in candidate, says he went into the race only to provide a choice, and would prefer that his supporters vote for Scott Sword, another write-in candidate. Sword is currently the mayor.

Wally Vaughn, a former mayor and councilor is also a write-in candidate, as is Kathy Brekken, a volunteer firefighter who is working on qualifying as an EMT.

During Vaughn's and Batty's tenure, Vernonia celebrated construction of the new water plant. The city also lost law suits (and \$\$\$) because of incidents that would never have happened with appropriate leadership and it failed to apply in time for designation as an Enterprise Zone, which could have improved the economic situation.

Brekken is an energetic go-getter with excellent credentials in all areas except one: She has looked at the office only from a distance. A person with no background in municipal operations should, at the very least, attend council meetings to learn more about the situations that must be dealt with and what limitations exist in reaching solutions.

Sword has spent four years working hard as a councilor, then as mayor. He does his homework, studying ordinances and statutes, seeking funding sources and trying to make improvements that will help Vernonia pull out of its long-standing economic doldrums. He has also worked hard to eliminate the "old boy network" that governed here for years and, judging from the people he has angered, he must be doing a good job of it. Impatience is Sword's biggest problem; he needs to learn how to develop consensus, but he will not be apathetic about the city's condition.

We urge you to write-in Scott Sword as mayor.

Buckner, Leonetti for city council vacancies

Ed Buckner, Mario Leonetti and Emil Rode are all candidates for two seats on the Vernonia City Council.

Rode, who often attends city council meetings, frequently suggests "more time" as a problem solving method—a delay here and a delay there. Unfortunately, that would only take the council back to where it used to be, postponing decisions, tabling needed changes and accomplishing nothing.

Buckner is a newcomer to city government, but has been involved for many years with a family-owned business in Vernonia. He is thoughtful and considerate, but intelligent enough to know that hard decisions must be made, even when they are uncomfortable.

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch
Vernonia City Librarian

For those who love suspense, Joy Fielding's latest paperback, *Run Jane Run*, is for you. From the beginning, when Jane finds herself walking down a street, having no memory of who she is, wearing a blood-stained dress and a coat with \$10,000 stuffed in the pockets, to the very last page, the reader will be completely absorbed. As soon as one situation seems to be resolved, another arises. This is a real thriller.

Sidney Sheldon's newest novel, *The Stars Shine Down*, is set in the glamorous world of international business and features the startling shocks and amazing surprises that his readers have come to expect and love. Combining romance with cliff-hanging suspense is Sheldon's trademark and this, his twelfth novel, meets these reader expectations.

The title of Sheldon's latest book, *The Stars Shine Down*, is also an appropriate thought for us at this time at the library as we remember Darrold Proehl. Darrold used and supported the library as much or more than anyone in the community. He always said to be sure and let him know if the library was in need of something. Through his association with the Lions' Club, the library has a set of books for diabetics, new book shelves, donations throughout the years, and a very recent donation to enhance the video collection. It was through his encouragement that the library's video collection was established. We thank you and miss you, Darrold.

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:** every Wednesday from 10:30-11 a.m.

Leonetti served on the council previously, with mixed results. He cares passionately about improving Vernonia, but sometimes took inappropriate shortcuts in an attempt to achieve goals. If he tempers his enthusiasm with thoughtfulness, he will be a great asset for the City of Vernonia.

We endorse Ed Buckner and Mario Leonetti for Vernonia City Council.

Important measures on General Election ballot

Measure 1: Bond issue to fund state parks

Passage of this measure would authorize the state to issue up to \$250 million in general obligation bonds for a State Park and Recreation Fund for purchase and development of camping and recreational facilities such as campgrounds, picnic areas, hiking trails, etc. The Legislature would have to approve any expenditures from the fund.

In the aftermath of Measure 5, funding for development of the Banks-Vernonia Linear Park has nearly disappeared, a situation that pertains throughout the state's park system because general fund monies must go where the need is more urgent. The issuance of bonds is a good way to fund park development and the economic development that accompanies parks.

Vote "Yes" on Measure 1.

Measure 2: Fuel taxes for parks

This measure would authorize a tax of two cents per gallon of motor vehicle fuel, every two years, for the purchase, development and maintenance of state parks and recreation sites. It would not affect motor fuel taxes used for highway maintenance and construction, but would be in addition to that levy.

While there is nothing "wrong" with this measure, it has a far greater impact on people in rural areas than those in urban areas. Rural residents must drive because they don't have the option of using inter-city buses.

It appears that motor fuel taxes will be increasingly used for many purposes. This one doesn't seem particularly necessary. Vote "No" on Measure 2.

Measure 3: Institute term limits

When incumbent politicians are re-elected time after time, some voters are lured into thinking term limits are needed — but mandatory term limits won't lead to better government.

Incumbents are re-elected because the voters want them returned to office or, at the very least, prefer them over the challengers.

With mandatory term limits, inexperienced legislators would necessarily rely heavily on staff and lobbyists, who are not responsible to the voters, because there would be no experienced legislators. Additionally, a good legislator, doing the job his constituents want done, would have to be replaced by someone who was not the voters' first choice.

Term limits are available any time voters want to use them, you simply vote for another candidate. Vote "No" on Measure 3.

Measure 4: Ban triple trailers

The rhetoric keeps traveling in circles around this measure. Some professional truck drivers say triple trailer combinations are dangerous, others say they're not. Opponents contend that more doubles would be worse than the triples; proponents say it would create more jobs for truckers.

Some facts are not in doubt: Triples are difficult to pass un-

Letters

Communication is a part of good planning

To the Editor:

I have gone on the record as a supporter of the zoning change at the airport to light industrial. My gut feeling is that this project will benefit our community in ways that we cannot now imagine. With careful planning, we may create a new way for our community to participate in what many are calling "the new Global market."

The key word is planning. The planning of any such project should reflect the shared vision of all of our citizens. Unfortunately in this case, some of our citizens feel that their concerns have not been addressed and therefore, it is difficult for them to support this project. That the architects of the project had little time to involve these people is a fact, but it is not an excuse.

Successful economic development is not accomplished by stampede, but by measured steps which allow each of us to consider the effects of such projects on our personal values, those of our neighbors and those of the greater community.

While I feel that this project is a good one, and one that will benefit our community in many ways, it is imperative that we communicate in order that this (and future) projects will reflect our shared vision.

Bob Ragsdale
Vernonia

Objects to re-zoning

To the Editor:

As the chief petitioner in a drive to consolidate citizen interest regarding airport redevelopment, I wish to personally extend my heartfelt gratitude to the nearly 200 Vernonia citizens who feel, very much as I do, that a moratorium on the city's effort to rezone the airport property was

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