

Art, music become part of Vernonia's mainstream

As Vernonia's population continues to grow, a large percentage of the newer residents are part of what, for lack of a better description, can be called the arts community. Vernonia has become home to many artists because of it's quiet, the sparkling fresh air, and the feeling of "community" While it is close to the metropolitan area, the stress level is much lower, with less traffic, little crime, and supportive neighbors.

Vernonia's home-grown artists interface comfortably with those who were drawn here for various reasons. Some of both groups are full-time artists, others augment their income with outside work.

Last year, when we introduced our readers to Vernonia as a

rapidly developing center for the arts, we included articles about a nature photographer, a wrought iron artisan, author brothers, a painter and a painter/sculptor.

There are many others we intend to profile in the future, including both professionals and credible "amateurs" in the fields of paper making, calligraphy, pottery, graphic arts, photography, writing, painting and fabric arts. There are also a number of fine artisans in fields such as basketry, wood carving, weaving, etc.

This year, we would like to introduce you to a potter, a musician who is developing opportunities for other musicians, and an artist/cartoonist. We will also profile the development of the first fine arts gallery in Vernonia.

Stage band under formation provides opportunity for musicians

Can a town of two-thousand people field enough musicians to form a stage band of at least 14-pieces? In Vernonia the answer is "Yes!"

When Bob Ragsdale, a rural Vernonia resident and life-long musician, decided to try and organize a stage band, he turned to Vernonia High School music teacher Bob Isted and students in the VHS band.

Ragsdale and Isted had already formed a Dixieland combo with other local musicians and it was during one of their rehearsals that Ragsdale brought up the possibility of a stage band.

In addition to developing an outlet for musicians who earn their living in other

ways, he wants to create an opportunity for student musicians who are interested in learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

Ragsdale, who started playing bass in junior high school in Salem, has extensive experience with classical, jazz, swing and all kinds of musical genre.

Isted thought the idea was worthwhile and arranged for permission to use the high school music room for Thursday night practices, as soon as school is back in session.

Practices are irregular during the summer, but along with a core of adult musicians, several students have shown up regularly for

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Local musicians, from left, are Molly Skidmore, Josh Landers, Dave Herndon, Chad DeWitt and Bob Ragsdale. In front is Madeline Glandon.

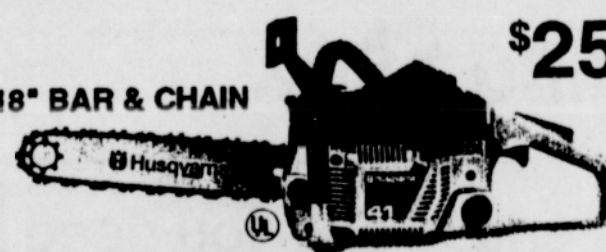
HUSKY

A CUT ABOVE.

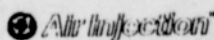
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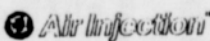
MODEL 51

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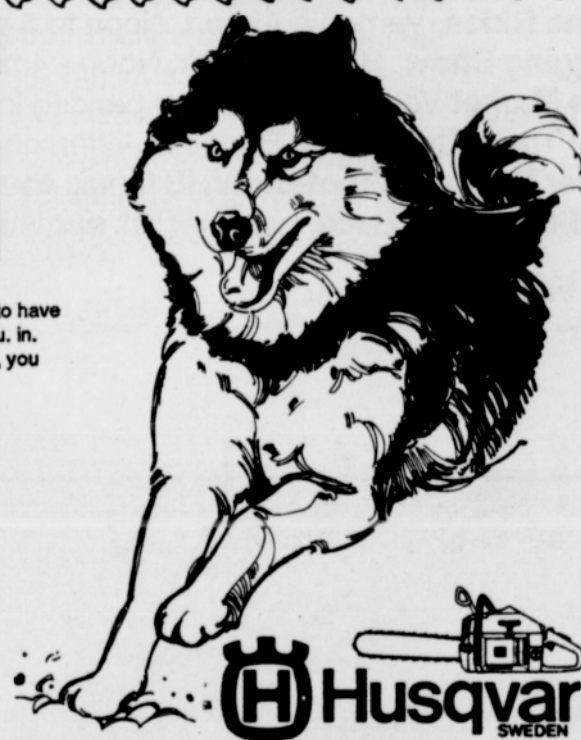
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