

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch
Vernonia City Librarian

It's time to pull out the lawn chair, relax with a big glass of lemonade and read a good book, and the library is the place to come to choose that good book. Four very interesting, but quite different, books are recent acquisitions that meet the qualifications of "good" books.

Absolute Power, by David Baldacci, raises the question of whether the President of the United States can get away with murder. While hiding inside the walk-in safe of a billionaire's mansion, Luther Whitney witnesses a woman being brutalized. Luther also sees the President's most trusted aides alter the murder scene and shift the blame to him. How can Luther (a rare combination of thief and honorable man) convince the world that the President, and not he, committed this crime and others that occur as the cover-up becomes more and more complex? The reader will admire the resourcefulness of Luther as he devises a plan that will place the blame where it rightfully belongs. Can an ordinary man outwit the President and the Secret Service? Read this and see.

Craig Holden has also written a spellbinding novel, *The Last Sanctuary*, in which an innocent man is accused of murder. This, though, involves an international manhunt as hitchhiker Joe Curtis is caught in a nightmare of intrigue by armed militias and terrorist cults. From Boise to Seattle to Alaska, Curtis is chased by an ATF agent who stakes her reputation on the belief that Curtis is innocent and that he will lead her to the dangerous fanatics she is seeking. This novel is reminiscent of *The Fugitive* and combines potent factors such as Waco and Oklahoma City to create a suspenseful novel with a shocking climax.

In *Cruel Justice*, William Bernhardt's seventh legal thriller, Oklahoma lawyer Ben Kincaid returns. While struggling with the defense

of a black teenager, Leeman Hayes, accused of having brutally beaten a young woman with a golf club ten years before, Kincaid makes a discovery that links the case to the disappearance and potential sexual abuse of a young boy. The link between the missing boy and the seemingly hopeless case of Leeman Hayes ignites the fuse for an explosive courtroom case that utilizes Bernhardt's legal expertise to the fullest.

Of course, a good romance must not be excluded. Nora Roberts has a gift for combining passion and suspense in each of her novels and her latest, *Montana Sky*, is no exception. When Montana cattle baron Jack Mercy dies, his three daughters (each born of a different marriage) gather to hear the reading of the will. Willa, who has lived on and worked the ranch, is shocked to hear that before any of them can inherit, they must all live on the ranch for one year. Strangers to each other, and to each other's lifestyles, they unite to protect each other from an enemy that threatens to destroy them all and to weave three very different worlds in a beautiful and isolated place, Montana.

If your lifestyle dictates more physical activity, the local library contains books on remodeling, building decks, landscaping, plant propagation, etc. For those who choose manual projects as a form of relaxation, the library is your source for ideas.

For the youngsters, the Summer Reading Program will start on Thursday, June 27. Meet at the library at 1 p.m. for story and checkout, then proceed to Hawkins Park for "Water?" fun. Sessions are geared for youngsters four years old or older and parents should accompany younger children. Come join the summer fun at the library.

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.

Letters to the Editor

Vernonia community is second to none!

To the Editor:

I am not from the area, so I have not had the opportunity to monitor your articles concerning the Great Flood of 1996. I am more than confident that you had many stories, and probably many letters, to print. If you can possibly stand one more, I feel I have a tale that needs to be told.

My mother was forced from her home by the rising river and was then cut off from her home for two days. We all waited anxiously to hear, or to see how the homestead fared. There wasn't much us outsiders could do as the roads were impassable, as you all well know. When Mom finally got to her house, it was just her, and there was no one to help, however, it didn't stay that way long.

Like a breath of fresh air, like a shot of adrenalin, or like that insurance jingle about "good neighbors", Mr. and Mrs. Young showed up at Mother's door, along with their five children and asked, "How can we help?" The crew went right to work on cleaning and moving and organizing a plan to best deal with the situation. It wasn't too much longer when the Vandehey boys showed up, George and Blaine. They, too, tore into the flood-damaged home. What luck! There Mom was, no help, and the possibility [that] it would be a week or more before the family could get there; and then these helpers fell right into her lap! Who could ask for more?

But this is the rest of the story. Shortly thereafter, Robert Ray and his friend, Doug Riley, showed up. They wanted to help as well. Can you believe this? And a young man that I just think the world of, Don Benedict Jr., not to be outdone, brought his own tools and pitched right in, even though he had work on his own house to do. He figured, I guess, that Mom was really in need of some assistance. He was right. The outpouring from the community was really overwhelming, and the camaraderie as well as the emotional support was, indeed, just what the doctor ordered. The pain was then evenly distributed and we could all find some ways to laugh, for we knew that no matter how hard it gets, there was always someone to share your grief, someone to share the burden, and someone you could call your friend.

The community of Vernonia is second to none, and I am proud that my folks chose that area to live. Vernonia is a wonderful place, and I am convinced it is the people that make it that way.

And last, but certainly not least, when the flood waters came again, I received a call

that the river was creeping up to Mom's house once again. I packed up my family and headed straight up there to pick things up and try to save the work we had performed. I could not pull into the driveway, not because of the water, but because of all the people!! They were already strategizing as to how to save the house! I think the woman's name was Kim, her children?, and friends, lots of young people...high schoolers, filling sandbags, stacking sandbags, and using their own vehicles and gas! I stand here in awe.

Don and Debbie Benedict saw to it that Mom was taken care of. Always, their plans included Mom and just how could they help. And Mel Califf, well, you could set your watch by him, and as bad as things were, Mel will tell you they could have been worse. And whether or not they could have is not the point. Mel will make you feel better in spite of your troubles. Mel will always look out for you.

Thank you everyone. Your spirit and friendship is what we all aspire to. Really.

Daniel J. Shores
Vancouver, Wash.

Support was great for WRC Walkathon

To the Editor:

Many thanks to the community from the Columbia County Women's Resource Center board and staff for all the support given to our Walkathon.

The driving rains never dampened the spirit of the walkers — if anything, it just brought everyone closer together. Thank you for being there and carrying on!

We would also like to thank our corporate sponsors. Columbia County is fortunate to have businesses that are so willing to support the community. Among the largest corporate contributors were Lone Star, Scappoose Business & Tax, Columbia City Sports & Recreation Club, Tony's Shoes, Sunshine Pizza, McDonald's and Judy's Flowers. St. Helens Community Federal Credit Union made the printed tank tops a reality and also allowed Bertha the Bear to participate in the walk.

To each and every person, group and business that was involved in this project, our heartfelt thanks. It is through your hard work and awareness that we may be able to end violence in the homes of our friends and neighbors in Columbia County.

Sincerely,
Karin B. Kaczmarek
Co-Director
Women's Resource
Center
St. Helens

Dear Past Customers:

As many of you know, I've recently made a career change. I've jumped with both feet into automotive retailing. Picking Dick's Country Dodge was easy for me. Not only does my new employer encourage employee volunteerism, we also focus on building long-term relationships with our family of customers.

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I've always worked hard to be sure my customers had the best possible service and I plan to continue that practice here at Dick's Country Dodge. I hope to see you soon.

Sincerely,
Diane J. Martin

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