

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Good news is more fun than bad news

Today's issue of *The INDEPENDENT* starts out with good news all over page one.

The coming partnership of Vernonia Health Center with Providence Health System will continue the reliable management VHC has enjoyed under Tuality Health Care, but will also add much more. The old pharmacy building will be repaired and remodeled for a larger clinic and there will again be a pharmacy in town. This partnership will fill a huge need while it also fills prescriptions.

The photo on page one shows members of a film production crew who are fine-tuning locations for "Physical Graffiti", a movie that will be shot partly in Vernonia. (This isn't another "Vernonia Incident", which was fun to watch being filmed but painful to view when finished.) It is gratifying to talk with people from other areas who think that Vernonia is as beautiful as we think it is. And when the movie is finished, it will be fun to see our schools, streets, parks and buildings as integral parts of a make-believe story.

The lead story on page one is about a remarkable program (and a remarkable opportunity) for a small town. Storyteller Thomas Doty is nationally known and highly sought after. So where is he going to teach a six-week course this summer? Right here. The Hands On Art Center found funding for the program and, though participation is not free, HOAC will be able to provide some scholarships. One exciting thing about the program is that Doty teaches others to find and tell (or write) their own stories, something that is so often neglected. Fifty-dollars for this six-week course will be a bargain.

Another article on page one relates how the Vernonia Senior Center will get a new van. Though word of the opportunity came almost too late, cooperative efforts by Columbia County and the City of Vernonia came together quickly to take advantage of the offer. It's hard to beat making an expenditure of only \$8,000 for a \$55,000 van. What is outstanding is that the county and city didn't let the seniors down even though it meant spending general fund money that was allocated for other purposes.

Whether the final article on page one is good or bad news won't be known for a while, but we will learn whether Vernonia will become part of the Portland extended area phone service. The homework has been done; lots of people testified orally or in writing; even more signed petitions and provided demographic data. We should know soon whether the effort was successful.

Some other good news—that is not elsewhere in the paper—is that the Friends of the Scout Cabin will receive a donation of \$25,000 if they can raise a matching \$25,000. This is an opportunity that should not be missed. Fifty-thousand dollars would provide a big chunk of the funds needed to refurbish the scout cabin and make it available again for use as a youth/community center. Anybody who can help with this project would certainly be welcome. For more information, call Shirlee Daughtrey at 429-9002.



SENIOR CITIZENS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES THAT WILL BE AFFECTED BY THESE UNREAL PRICE HIKES.

Ike Says...

By Dale Webb, member
Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter

I hope everybody had a good fourth of July celebration. The fireworks show was put in question by a pair of osprey that are building a nest on one of the football field light poles at Vernonia High School, where the fireworks are usually set up. I don't have all of the details yet, but I have heard a few rumors that relocating the Osprey nest might be a good project for our chapter. We'll see; first we will have to consult with the experts.

A question that pops into my mind is, "What happened to the Osprey's original nest?" For many years, I have seen the birds flying toward the southwest after catching fish in Lake Vernonia. For some reason they are not nesting in the same place. Observing their behavior, starting a late nest on top of the light pole, I suspect they lost their original nest during nesting season and are now trying for a second hatch.

I hope all of you hunters have been reading the newspaper and are aware that you will have to go through an instant check when purchasing a rifle, shotgun or pistol come December. I don't usually write about gun issues, but felt compelled to in this case.

I guess what bothers me most is that we will all be treated as if we were felons and have to prove that we are not. I feel this whole procedure is going to be a waste of time and money. Thousands of innocent people have been denied gun ownership due to computer foul-ups and similarities in names. Does anybody really expect this law to keep a gun out of the hands of a criminal who truly wants one? He will either steal it or buy it on the black market. Oh, by the way, we law-abiding citizens will have to pay a fee to make sure we are clean.

The people pushing for this legislation say that we are the user group, so we should pay for the check. If this theory holds true, anybody who is stopped by the police should also pay a fee when their driver's license is run. Can you imagine the millions of dollars that program could raise? I believe this is just another chip out of our right to bear arms. Many people believe that gun ownership can be controlled. They also must believe that illegal drugs can be abolished. We all know how successful that has been.

I guess what really sets me off is the total lack of understanding that many people have. They fail to realize that many crimes have been thwarted by the mere presence of a gun, let alone the use of one. The other day I was reading *The Oregonian* and, tucked way in the back,

there was a very small clip about a woman in Lebanon who successfully defended herself against four bat-wielding men who had broken into her home. She had to fire three shots through her bedroom door to persuade them to leave. One of them left some of his blood. Now, if that woman had been killed the story would have been on the front page.

Many people are under the misconception that we have police to deal with the criminal element. I used to be a reserve officer for the Vernonia Police Department and, let me assure you, that if a criminal is breaking down your front door, you are on your own for at least a couple of minutes. A couple of minutes is a long, long time. If somebody is going to get hurt or killed it will most likely occur before the police arrive. Don't get me wrong, we have a very good police force in Vernonia, but the logistics—calling the dispatcher, the dispatcher calling the police officer and the officer getting to your home—take time.

As an example, a friend of mine who lives about three miles out of town, got into a scrape with a couple of drunks who followed him into his driveway late one night. I was awakened by a frantic phone call from his wife. Before I could get dressed, she called back and said she had heard gun shots. She had called the police first. I was no longer a reserve officer, but I grabbed my pistol and sped through town. I passed the city officer sitting in his patrol car about three hundred yards from the scene (The officer was following correct procedure by waiting for back-up.). As I pulled up to the scene, I'll admit I was almost more concerned about carrying my pistol concealed than confronting the bad guys.

As it turned out, one bad guy was laying on the ground with a split in his head from the barrel of a shotgun and the other guy was pretty much played-out from wrestling around on the ground with my friend. The police showed up in force (three patrol cars) almost an hour after the start of the incident. The point is, my friend was on his own and who knows what would have happened if he had not had a weapon. In his case a big club would have worked just as well but, when he stepped out on his front porch, he didn't know what he would have to contend with.

Back to the topic of fees, some organizations are rallying in protest against the trail fees imposed by the Forest Service. I do not support this program either. I believe that the citizens of the United States should not have to pay to walk on their own land. I'm sure it will only be a matter of time before they start charging hunters to

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