

## Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian  
Vernonia City Library

Readquest, has gotten off to a good start at Vernonia's library. Each session has included a special presentation, a dragon story, and a theme-related craft. Orissa Burghard has entranced youngsters with tales of *Custard the Dragon*, *The Library Dragon* and *The Popcorn Dragon*; Lauri Longoria has had us singing along to *Puff the Magic Dragon* and other interactive songs; Shelley Clines has demonstrated and aided us in making medieval scent pouches, stained glass windows, and castle hats. These activities have been in addition to Mr. Bob and his music party and Radical Rose the Mad Scientist

More fun is in store with the chalk drawing and ventriloquism presentation on July 22, 1:00 p.m.; an interactive juggling presentation on July 27, 3:00 p.m.; an exciting Medieval Party on August 5, 1:00 p.m., as well as participation in the Jamboree Parade. Along with this fun, don't forget the "quest for reading" and the certificates that will be awarded at the Medieval Party for reading at least 10 books this summer. The "party" will include entering the maze to get to the castle, going on a dragon hunt, participating in a jousting contest, finding the king's treasure, building a sandcastle to take home, being dubbed a king, queen, knight, prince or princess and making a hat to match your new title, and "feasting" on song and dance and maybe something more substantial. Hawkins Park is the place for this medieval fun. Sir Read-a-lot's joke of the day is posted in the library and today's is, "Why is it a bad idea to grab a dragon by the tail? Maybe it's his tail, but it could be your end."

Work on the new library is progressing. It is looking wonderful inside as well as out. Shelving for under the windows, a video storage unit, and a magazine display unit will soon be built; discussion is being held on the best way to decorate the children's area and also on how to showcase items made by local craftspeople and artists, and items relating to Vernonia's unique history.

Information about the Oregon-American Lumber Company and about the train that brought the logs to the mill was requested just this month. The writer of this request has some interesting memories that I would like to share. His letter reads:

"After WWII I came to Vernonia and worked at the Oregon-American Lumber Co. until the following fall when I returned to college. After graduation I worked for the old Long-Bell Lumber Co.....I have fond memories of Vernonia. I lived at the Nehalem Hotel which was actually two old frame hotels sitting on opposite sides of the street. Mr. & Mrs. Oveson ran it. Of Norwegian ancestry and with a priceless accent to

match she was one of the best cooks that ever lived. The clientele was all loggers and sawmillers, all hefty eaters and all enthused by what was set before us.....I'm sitting here picturing the town and the friends I worked with. It was a real adventure to me. That was over 50 years ago. At the time, as we would ride to Portland, we would see the huge old stumps of 'old growth, yellow Douglas Fir' that were about 10 feet tall and about that across that had been 'jump butted' about the time I was born.....look about you and enjoy the marvelous green. It's a beautiful place. And I'm thinking about Mrs. Oveson's pot roast with potatoes, onions, long quartered carrots and thick brown gravy. French cookery be durned!"

The mill, the train, the logging camps, and the people who lived and worked here are Vernonia's history. Those of us who are here today are what Vernonia has become. The new city buildings are representative of the past, the present and the future and we hope to have ongoing displays combining Vernonia's past with contributions by today's citizens. It is truly a unique place to live and I hope we don't need to be reminded of its marvelous green and of its beauty.

The library has in its collection a number of books on logging, sawmilling, and the trains associated with these activities. They include pictures of logging camps at Keasey, Camp McGregor, and Rock Creek, of Long-Bell No. 102, Oregon-American's No. 11 speeder, and of Oregon-American No. 104 after it got away and wrecked on a spur above Camp Olson. They also include articles about the end of the era of railroad logging in 1957 for International Paper Company in the hills overlooking Keasey, about Anton Lausmann's East Side Logging Company and Rock Creek Logging Company. Sam Churchill's *Don't Call Me Ma* and *Big Sam* are available, as are books about the Tillamook Burn. *Fire on the Wind*, by Linda Crew, is a book of fiction written for young adults. It takes place in August, 1933, and relates the thoughts of Storie, a logger's daughter, as the forest she loves erupts in flames. We also have the video, *Sometimes a Great Notion*. This may not show a completely factual logging operation, but it does give a good idea of the process.

New novels include Danielle Steel's *Granny Dan*, Ridley Pearson's *The First Victim*, Jack Higgins' *The White House Connection* and Elizabeth Lowell's *Pearl Cove*.

Enjoy the summer, read, and appreciate this beautiful area in which we live.

**Vernonia Library 919 Bridge Street.**  
**Hours:** Mon. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Wed. 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Fri. 1-5 p.m. Sat. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
**Phone:** (503) 429-1818

## Letters to the Editor

### Needs of rural fire districts important

Open letter to Gov. Kitzhaber and the Oregon legislature:

I write as an individual, and not as a representative of any organization. I write to try and protect the local fire service. As are the rest of the men and women who volunteer, Vernonia's are the best of the best—completely willing to risk their lives to protect their neighbors from fire, to assist the medics in case of wreck or illness. Yet these people have lives to lead. Their lawns have to be cut, they have to work for a living, they would like to go to their kids' school activities. When the state demands ever more time to comply with well-meant laws and directives about safety and certification, there comes a point when trying to help, to volunteer, just loses out.

Each required inoculation, each class on wildland fires, each re-certification, each test of the self-contained breathing apparatus, each form or questionnaire to fill out, takes time. Each, individually, is a well-meant attempt by the state to promote safety, etc. But cumulatively, the effect is to prevent people from volunteering, and to chase them out if they do join. This is not a local problem. Across the country, all volunteer associations are having trouble. One of Vernonia's neighboring districts is down to one volunteer, and he couldn't respond if there was a fire, because the law says one man may not.

When my house is on fire, am I better off with a few guys who show up with a truck and a hose, or with Certified, Guaranteed, State-Approved Nobody? And Nobody...no response...is the other option. Vernonia can't afford a million dollars annually for paid, professional fire service.

Are people today less caring, less concerned than they were a generation ago? I don't think so. The well-intentioned, counterproductive bureaucracy, the state's requirements of safety and standard procedures go hand-in-hand with the lack of volunteers. It isn't as if we were in bad shape, safety-wise. I believe the insurance statistics show Oregon to be the best in the country for volunteer safety.

Nevertheless, we do need to resist creeping demands on the time of our volunteers.

Frazier Rohm  
Vernonia

### 4th of July parade, fireworks were great

To the Editor:

The 4th of July in Oregon.

We were glad the weather cooperated quite well that day. We hope everyone enjoyed the 4th as much as we did.

We would like to thank Pat and Darlene Knight and their crew at Lew's Place for sponsoring the Spaghetti Feed with all proceeds going to the Fireworks Fund. It was a huge success.

A thank-you to each and every one who donated money for the fireworks. Some came in checks through the mail, some collected in jars downtown. A thank-you to Ray Pelster and Don Bruers for collecting at the fireworks after the parade.

The parade: It's always good to see so many dressed up in their red, white and blue, coming out to be in the parade. Thank all of you for your time and effort.

Kathy Brekken, Tim Bamberg and your crew for setting up and setting off our fireworks display. The fire department, the police department and the ambulance crews for being there with your support and help. A big thank you to all of you.

Thank you to the boys of Cub Scout Pack #201 and their leader, Shelly Clines, for picking up litter at the school grounds the morning after our 4th of July celebration.

A big thank-you to everyone who in some way helped make our Fourth of July a success.

We have only one negative thing to say...Please leave your own fireworks at home next year. Thank you.

Enid Parrow, Member  
Vernonia Pride

### Golf tournament a big help for shelter

To the Editor:

A great big THANK YOU to everyone who helped make our First Annual Golf Tournament a success! The Starting Place, our brand new shelter for victims of domestic violence, is definitely off to a great start because of all the concerned people and businesses in the county who gave of their time, money and services.

Our heartfelt thanks also go to the terrific people at the Victim Assistance Office and the Courthouse. Their shower for The Starting Place was a great idea, and all the gifts were very much needed and appreciated!

We could not have gotten to the point of soon opening our shelter without all the help that is continuing to pour in from the community. Thank you to a whole bunch of wonderful people.

Cathy McClanahan  
Executive Director  
Columbia County  
Women's Resource Center

## Ike Says . . .

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

Yes, vacation time has arrived again. My father and I took our annual trip to the Snake River at Oxbow Reservoir. Fishing was our primary goal and we did a lot of it. We fish for crappie, catfish and small mouth bass, which must be turned back at this time of year. The crappie weren't as numerous or as big as we have seen them in years past, yet we consistently filled a five-gallon bucket by mid-morning. Crappie is one of the best eating fish that we find in this state. Bass are usually caught incidentally while fishing for crappie and you definitely know when you have a nice one on. We regularly caught bass in the 2-1/2 pound category.

While cleaning our crappie we save their guts, which we use for catfish. Rigging up as if we were fishing for sturgeon, but using lighter poles, we thread the crappie guts on a single 1-0 hook, then wrap them with stretchy string. Catfish strike very aggressively but are hard to hook. The action was fairly fast paced with double hook-ups common. Catfish ranged in size from one pound up to a ten pounder that I caught. I wasn't sure who was going to win that

struggle but I finally managed to get the catfish to the net. Dad tried smoking some of the catfish we caught this year and they turned out really good.

Oxbow reservoir is a fairly calm waterway with one exception; up at the Brownlee Dam it can be vicious when they are dumping water over the spillway. The weather is usually very warm and can get downright hot. The scenery is beautiful, with luscious, velvety green hillsides broken up by brown rims and cliffs. Wildlife is abundant, with mule deer and mountain sheep being common. One of the biggest thrills of the trip is watching the sheep run around on the cliffs or defy traffic on the road. A first for us this year was when one of our neighbors sighted a cougar on the Idaho side of the river from our camp area. So, if you have a yearning for warm weather and good fishing try the Snake River.

The Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife employees involved in the canceled hunt debacle have received their punishment. Employees who were determined to have known their actions were questionable, lost their preference points gained from last year and their opportunity to draw a tag this year. Employees who held

Please see page 11

## POLICY ON LETTERS

The INDEPENDENT welcomes readers' letters, but all letters must be signed and include a verifiable address and telephone number, though the address and phone number will not be printed.