

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch

The most exciting news from the library this month is that the decisions have finally been made concerning the software for automating the library's materials and the hardware to support this program...and that these items are presently being ordered. The chosen software is called Athena and is a product of a company called Sagebrush, which is based in Texas. This is a program that has been used in libraries long enough to have established a good reputation, is affordable and is very user friendly. Those of us who have used the sample of this software are very excited about its implementation in our library. Of course, it's going to take quite some time to get all the materials input into the system and both the present method of searching and checking out, as well as the computerized method, will be used until the process is completed.

If you've driven past the library this last week, you will have seen that some of the landscaping has been done. As with nearly everything in connection with the new buildings, volunteers have played a key role, and this is no exception. Dale Webb spent an afternoon laying down some ground cover material which helped keep mud from the building and which will be used in some areas to prevent the growth of weeds, the Thiringers selected and delivered the plants, Jeff and Heidi Burch did the planting and a very nice man working through community service spread the bark dust. Two donations were also made to help defray the costs. These came from Edna Hailey and from Don and Rose Dunaway (One of the golden rain trees is a memorial to Mark Busch, their son-in-law and will be so designated). The ferns and other plants along the sides of the creek have been planted by the Youth Corps and they are also responsible for scattering the chips to deter weed growth along the creek.

Sometimes it is hard to keep focused on reading with all of these other items that need attention, but I would like to recommend two authors this month. The first, Diane Mott Davidson, writes tales of culinary suspense involving her protagonist, chef turned sleuth Goldy Schulz. *Tough Cookie* is Davidson's newest mystery.

The titles of some of her previous books are *Dying for Chocolate*, *The Cereal Murders*, *Killer Pancake*, *The Grilling Season*, and *Prime Cut*. Goldy is the owner of *Goldilock's Catering*, *Where Everything Is Just Right!* As you can well imagine from these titles, Goldy leads a very interesting life as she solves mysteries, while operating her catering business. Davidson includes recipes for each of "Goldy's" special menus and has been called "a cross between Mary Higgins Clark and Betty Crocker" by the *Baltimore Sun*. Look for these on your next library visit. The tempting recipes and elaborate plots add up to a literary feast!

The other author with whom I have recently become acquainted is Jo Dereske. She writes mysteries involving a librarian, Helma Zukas, which include such titles as *Miss Zukas and the Library Murders*, *Final Notice*, *Out of Circulation* and *Miss Zukas In Death's Shadow*. Dereske lives in the northwest corner of Washington state, which she uses for the setting of these novels. Helma Zukas, a librarian in fictional Bellehaven, Washington, leads a life that is anything but boring. Helma checks out books, answers reference questions, reminds library patrons of Internet rules, finds dead bodies, solves crimes, and finds time for a little romance. Of course, she researches everything thoroughly before embarking on any new undertaking (as does any good librarian). If you have enjoyed the Mrs. Polifax mysteries, I think you will like these.

And...finally in honor of St. Patrick's Day, an Irish blessing by Robin C. Burns:

*May your feet never sweat,
Your neighbor give you ne'er a threat
May your car be full of gas
And you owe nothing to the IRS
When flowers bloom, I hope you'll not sneeze
And may you always have someone to squeeze.*

Vernonia Library 701 Weed Avenue
Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tues., Thur. 2 p.m.-7 p.m.
Sat. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Preschool Story Time, Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
Phone: (503) 429-1818

Letters to the Editor

Councilor takes a different approach

To the Editor:

The letter stating the opinion of Vernonia's mayor and two city councilors regarding complaints about the police department, does not express my view.

I respect all the citizens of Vernonia and appreciate their input. Although I was unable to attend the March 6th council meeting, I will continue working to see that all citizens are represented.

Shirlee Daughtry
Vernonia City Councilor

Thanks for trip to Washington, D.C.

To the community and businesses of Vernonia:

We, the students and chaperones attending the trip to Washington, D.C., on March 20, would like to thank you for all your support. Your commitment to helping us was the main contributor to our achieving our goal. You opened your doors to our seemingly never-ending knocks with smiles on your faces, donated at our car washes, even on rainy days, and brought your children to

our carnival, buying just one more round of tickets. Without you, there wouldn't have been money in the cash box, and the result of that would have been no trip to Washington, D.C.

So...when you bought that candy bar, or that ticket to participate in our log float, you may not have thought you were making a very big difference...but really, if you think about it, we couldn't have done it without you. A special thank you to Vernonia 76 and Sentry for the pop can support and the many businesses who helped us with our sales by providing counter space.

Thank you Vernonia! When we see the president, we'll be sure and tell him how lucky we are to have you to call home.

**D.C. 2000 students,
Chaperones and Parents**

Miss Teen contestant appreciates the help

To the Editor:

I would like to acknowledge members of the Vernonia Community who have helped my efforts in the Miss Teen Portland Pageant with their sponsorship. Thank you to Cindy Smejkal, NAPA Auto Parts, Creative Impulse, and The Hair Parlour.

Marilyn Schmidlin
Vernonia

Open letter to Chief of Police Jim Walters

Dear Jim:

For a long time now, I have wanted to express my gratitude for all the work you and your staff do as partners of Vernonia High School. Your excellent work does not go unnoticed. When we ask you or your staff for assistance, advice or expertise on various behavioral issues or legal matters, you are always cordial, helpful, prompt and pleasant in your response. We very much appreciate that attitude because of the myriad of issues of student management we deal with throughout the day. The school and home/family and police must work together as partners to successfully prevent and resolve behavioral management problems.

In addition, I appreciate your enthusiasm to work with us to develop a Critical Incident Response plan for the Vernonia School District. Your knowledge and training of how to deal with incidents, coupled with our management and organizing of a plan in the building will provide the key to developing an emergency response plan with the capability of addressing any emergency issue that may arise.

Letters to the Editor

Again, thank you for your "good ideas" and your support for our program goals and the true desire to help the youngsters of our community grow to be productive citizens.

Sincerely,
Mike Durbin, Principal
Vernonia High School

We can clean up, now let's beautify!

To the Editor:

Clean up day is rewarding: one becomes a part of the community. Vernonia rose like the Phoenix, but out of a terrible flood instead of ashes. We really worked together to get our homes and town cleaned up. We do know how! Last year we had "Vernonians Only" at the dump. (Remember the people needing to check drivers licenses?)

This year we want to beautify...we need people to help plant and renew. Specifically, we need project leaders, work crews and donations.

Vernonia now has it's new sidewalks and street lights. Let's keep going—beautify! Mark your calendars for April 29th - Vernonia Pride Clean Up Day!

Isabelle McDaniel
Member
Vernonia Pride

Opposes new bridge as unnecessary

To The Editor:

At the public town hall meeting on March 2 at the Rainier Intermediate School, we were told by Rosemary Brinson-Sipola of the Cowlitz-Wahkikum Council of Governments, that the current Lewis and Clark Bridge could be made completely safe through updating procedures to last at least another 50 to 100 years.

The reason that the local governments want to replace the current bridge is strictly a capacity issue. Since the states won't pay for new bridges for "over capacity" issues, the local governments are trying to get what they "want" and make the general public, namely North Columbia County citizens, pay for it!!

Ms. Brinson-Sipola went on to explain that every bridge that crosses the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington is over capacity!! Our bridge is

less over capacity than the Portland area interstate bridges, but yet the local governments want to convince us that we "need" a new bridge, but a toll is the only way to pay for it. This tells me that the new bridge is a "want" and not a "need." The current bridge is and will be made to remain perfectly safe according to the state's Department of Transportation agencies!!

The "want" for the new bridge is coming from the local economic development agencies and the governmental transportation agencies to further their transportation agendas. The local citizens did not and have not asked for this bridge. There were 2,400 local signatures on a grass-roots "no toll" petition turned in to officials at the meeting.

There is no bridge safety "need"!! If tolls are the only way that the Lewis and Clark Bridge can be replaced, then I say "NO NEW BRIDGE" and it would appear that 2,400 local citizens agree. What part of "no" don't they understand??

Carole Kelley
Rainier

Enjoys seeing police exposure in town

To The Editor:

We support our police department.

I personally enjoy driving through our community and seeing the amount of police exposure we have for the size of our community.

In today's society, the police departments and other law enforcement agencies are losing more and more of their authority and tools which they need to perform their duties to help provide a safe and livable community for the law abiding citizens.

In response to businesses in our town being slow after 9:00 pm, maybe people in our community are finding better things to do than support these types of business.

It is also nice to think people are becoming more responsible with their drinking and driving, which is also being strictly enforced by our local police department.

Vernonia is a safe place to raise and enjoy our families — let's keep it that way.

Thanks for doing your job.

Brian Bassett
Vernonia

POLICY ON LETTERS

The INDEPENDENT welcomes readers' letters and will publish as many as possible. All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address and telephone number, although the address and phone number will not be printed except at the writer's request. The INDEPENDENT reserves the right to edit submissions for brevity or clarity.

— NOTICE —

The INDEPENDENT is published on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. There are five Wednesdays in March, so there will be three weeks between this issue and the first issue in April.

Deadlines for the April 5, 2000, issue will be March 31 for both news items and display advertising, and March 3 for classified ads.