

## Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian  
Vernonia Public Library

This month's article is a difficult one to write. While hoping that the peacefulness and happiness of the holiday season is being felt by all in the community, this same community needs to be aware of some somber facts regarding overdue library materials. At present, (December 16) there are 77 patrons with a total of 145 overdue materials. The alarming news is that this represents a loss of \$1,749 for the library if these materials are not returned. Most of these patrons have been notified, at least by phone, while some have been sent two notices regarding the situation. This represents use of staff time and expense, both of which could be put to much better use. Although many of these materials will be returned eventually, others will not. The previously quoted figures represent only computer generated information for this year and do not include materials checked out manually this past year and over previous years. One can assume those non-returned library materials over the years represent a very substantial loss.

Failing to return library materials amounts to, in plain language, **stealing**, and in this case, stealing from the public—your friends and neighbors. It is probable that those parties most guilty of this offense will not read this article. However, those of you who have overdue materials and are reading it are urged to **return them**. No penalties or fines will be in effect if they are returned during the month of December, but with the initiation of the fine system beginning in January, fines will accrue from the original due date and may amount to a large amount by January. The fines for overdue materials will be \$.50 a day for videos and \$.10 a day for all other materials. Patrons with overdue materials will not be allowed to check out further materials until fines

are paid. It is best to be aware of this new policy and either return or renew borrowed library materials to avoid fines and the loss of library privileges.

Our computerized cataloging is progressing, with 6,395 materials having been entered to date. Very dedicated volunteers can be credited with having done most of this work.

Organization of "The Friends of the Library" is also progressing. Rough drafts of by-laws and a mission statement are being revised and the tax-exempt status of the organization has been verified. Members are being accepted and donations may be made before the end of the year by those looking for a worthy organization for tax exempt purposes.

Orissa Burghard's Monday afternoon story/craft sessions continue to be well attended. Remember that they will not be held on days when there is no school.

New books include James Patterson's *Roses are Red*, David Baldacci's *Wish You Well*, Danielle Steel's *Journey*, and Padgett Powell's *Mrs. Hollingsworth's Men*. If you're looking for the holiday theme in your reading material, don't overlook *'Tis the Season to be Murdered* by Valerie Wolzien, *Deck the Halls* by Mary Higgins and Carol Clark, *Aunt Dimity's Christmas* by Nancy Atherton, and *Mistletoe Murder* by Leslie Meier.

Keep reading, return those library materials on time and enjoy the holiday season.

**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

### New councilor asks for involved citizens

To the Editor:

I would like to thank the citizens of Vernonia, who exercised their constitutional right to vote this past November 7th, and, in addition, my thanks to those who cast a vote for me.

As I stated at candidate night, I look forward to the challenge of continuing and enhancing the progress that has been made in the City of Vernonia by the past and present council members, mayor and city officials.

My personal observations over the past year from my seat in "the gallery", and the results you can see all over town, reflect the fact that Vernonia has a top notch city staff that works extremely hard for the city. They deserve a huge thank you.

As there are a lot of projects that are in the works and planned for the next few years, and many of those projects will require community involvement, I ask you, as the citizens I work for, to attend council meetings as much as possible. Based on the voter turnout this past election, it seems that there are a lot of citizens who want to be involved. Any assistance is gratefully appreciated.

Also, it is quite enlightening to hear what is REALLY going on in this wonderful city of ours.

I look forward to seeing those I know and the many I have yet to meet.

Happy holidays to all.

Glen Purvee  
Vernonia

### Business will close, then soon re-open

To the Editor:

For all my customers who blessed me with their friendship, THANK YOU! For all that I have given to you through Serenity Gardens, you have given back threefold through your loyal support, but most of all with your hearts. Vernonia is filled with special people! Two years ago I was fortunate to meet one very special gentleman whom I've come to love deeply. Mr. Barney Phillips enabled me to see my dream become a reality. He provided me, as well as many others, with an affordable space in his

Bridge Street Mall, along with a wonderful family environment. Barney, you're the Cream of the Crop. Thank you.

Very recently I made the decision to close my shop on Dec. 29th, so I could have the opportunity to help the most important person in my life, my husband, who faithfully supported our family for 22 years; so I could stay at home and raise our children. This I have done without hesitation.

However, I am once again blessed by another of Vernonia's special citizens. One of our community's businessmen has offered me a job as well as space in his building to keep Serenity Gardens alive in our town. Small businesses are the heart of Vernonia. As well as trying to provide services locally, we support our students, our Fire Department, and many other fund-raisers as much as we can.

Vernonia is fortunate to have people who care enough about their town to help it grow.

Thank you to Councilman-elect Glen Purvee and your wonderful wife, Christine, for helping to "keep this small business alive" in our community. But more importantly, thank you for caring to make a difference in Our Vernonia.

So until we Merry Meet Again at my new location, Keep the Spirit Alive.

Peace,

Linda Grace Spry  
Serenity Gardens Herbals  
Vernonia

### Greetings from former Vernonia residents

To the Editor:

Greetings and best wishes during this Blessed season and beyond. We are enjoying our new home and friends and very grateful for all the new blessings we have received. But we will not forget the 26 happy years we had in Vernonia and all the good friends we had and still have there.

We want to send special good wishes to the gang at the Senior Center, the Habitat Committee members, the Assembly of God Church and our neighbors on East Bridge Street.

Hope some of you have made a special effort to meet Tanya, who now lives at the address we once had. She is a very nice person and new to your town. Make her feel as welcome and special as you once did for us.

All the best God has for all of you. We love you and think of you all with kind thoughts. Merry Christmas and a special New Year.

Eric & Pat Olson  
Merlin, Oregon

## Vernonia schools revise, coordinate K-12 counseling and guidance program

A year-long effort by teachers, counselors and administrators has resulted in a comprehensive counseling and guidance program for Vernonia students that is designed to meet the needs of children from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Program details are contained in an 80 page manual that was presented to each of the Vernonia School Board members at their Dec. 14 meeting.

Tammy McDonald presented the elementary school component which, she explained, emphasizes school and family, because that is the most important area for younger children, and provides more attention to children who are struggling. In addition to taking counseling and guidance efforts into classrooms and homes, McDonald will be training the staff in violence prevention. Additional programs designed to provide students with a foundation for the future include the "Lunch Buddies," which will start in January, and an emphasis throughout the school on volunteering.

Lunch Buddies teams an adult in an informal mentoring relationship with a student who can benefit from a weekly one-on-one lunch meeting. More adults will be needed for the program in January. For more information, call McDonald at Washington Grade School, 503-429-7941.

Student needs start chang-

ing in the 10-14 year-old age group, explained Robin Stein, who is handling the middle school/junior high elements of the program. At this stage students are becoming peer oriented and start on a "hormone-driven roller coaster ride," Stein said, so counseling emphasizes life management skills.

Three priorities are involved in the junior high level:

1. Classroom emphasis on conflict resolution and empathy training.
2. Small group counseling with emphasis on general support and social skills.
3. Individual counseling in problem solving.

Students with severe problems will be referred to specialists, Stein explained, for the help they need. Additionally, the district is now using an intensive drug and alcohol pro-

gram in the sixth grade with follow-up components in seventh and eighth grades.

Like McDonald, Stein will also help in training other staff members.

Taking over at the high school level, Jill Griffin discussed further changes in student counseling and guidance needs. "What do I want to do? What do I want to be?" become major concerns in high school, she said, so counseling becomes goal-oriented, generally involving academics, work goals and social skill. Griffin's responsibility also includes classroom guidance, small groups and work with individuals.

In addition to the staff counselors, two counselors from Columbia Community Mental Health keep regular schedules in Vernonia schools.

## School board, Fire board elections will be in March

Five Vernonia school board positions will be on the March 13 ballot, plus two Vernonia Fire District positions and three in the Mist-Birkenfeld Fire District.

School district directors whose terms will be up include chairman Jeff Blum, Kim Tierney and three recently-appointed members — Leslie O'Leary, Schann Nelson and Cari Levenseller.

The appointees filled vacancies created when Susann Ragsdale and April Whitworth moved out of the district, and

by the death of Debbie Johnston.

Open positions on the Vernonia Fire District Board of Directors are currently held by Don Webb and Lyle Barker.

The Mist-Birkenfeld Fire District openings will be for three positions presently filled by Randy Hansen, Ray Kyser and Paul Ramsay. Ramsay has announced that he will not run for re-election because of a conflict with his job.

Candidates for these offices must file a declaration of candidacy accompanied by either a

filing fee of \$10.00, or a petition for nomination signed by at least 25 registered voters who live in the district where the candidate is running. Nomination forms may be picked up in the Columbia County Elections Division at the Courthouse in St. Helens.

## POLICY ON LETTERS

The INDEPENDENT welcomes readers' letters and will publish as many as possible. All letters must be signed, including those sent by fax, and include a verifiable address and telephone number, which will not be printed except at the writer's request. Unsigned letters will not be published.