

Letters to the Editor

Retain present 47J board members

To the Editor:

Having attended the forum for School Board candidates last week, I was impressed by the caliber of all those who are running. But it seems a shame not to allow the present board, with their new appointees, to have the opportunity for success.

The appointees each have their strengths and interests to bring to the table. Leslie O'Leary brings valuable financial background, Cari Levenseller is actively seeking additional grant money for the district, Schann Nelson is monitoring and lobbying in Salem, and Jeff Blum brings valuable construction experience important for long range facility planning. These incumbents should certainly be elected so they can continue their efforts.

**Kathy Denckla
Vernonia**

O'Leary good choice for school board

To the Editor:

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage Vernonia School District residents to vote for Leslie O'Leary for school board. Over the past five years, I've had the pleasure of getting to know Leslie and her family. She is an individual who always goes the extra mile to support family, friends and community members in need. She continually demonstrates a genuine commitment to all that she believes in.

Leslie was appointed to the board last fall and has just started to get the momentum going. I feel that Leslie's energy and enthusiasm, coupled with her analytical ability, give her the skills to be an excellent board member. I am certain that, if she is given the opportunity to continue on the school board, the district will be well served.

Please join me in voting for

Leslie O'Leary for Vernonia School Board Position 4 and ensure a positive future for our educational district.

**Dana Hyde
Vernonia**

Nelson, incumbents serve schools well

To the Editor:

In the upcoming school board election, we would like to recommend Schann Nelson for Vernonia School board Position #1. Schann was recently appointed to the school board and with her past experience with different school activities and committees, we would recommend that she continue to fill that position.

Having three daughters in the school system, Schann has been active with the site council, PCC advisory committee, the district budget committee and has become familiar with a broad range of school operations.

She has no axes to grind with the school district and her concern is maintaining and improving educational opportunities for all the students.

We would also like to recommend, along with the school board members returning, the following candidates: Leslie O'Leary, Jeff Blum and Cari Levenseller. This would be a well balanced group of people who can serve this community well, with open minds and hard work, to make our school district the best it can be.

**Ralph & Carolyn Keasey
Vernonia**

Current school board is doing a good job

To the Editor:

As a Vernonia School Board member who is not seeking reelection, I am asking you to vote for four current school board members - Jeff Blum, Cari Levenseller, Leslie O'Leary and Schann Nelson.

The current school board members are dedicated and committed. In the last four years I have learned what it

takes to become a contributing school board member. I have chosen not to run again because it is exhausting and time consuming. For most of us, it includes a board meeting and a workshop each month, some weekend trainings, additional research, preparation for board meetings and weekly budget committee meetings during May and June. In addition, there is work on special committees. Being a dedicated school board member requires this kind of commitment.

Jeff Blum is a proven leader. He has chaired the school board twice in the last five years. He facilitates fairness and teamwork. He brings financial and construction expertise. He has played an active role in bargaining and contracts. He is committed to long range planning and improving district operations. He is also an active sports father, regularly driving the cheerleading bus to and from games.

Cari Levenseller was appointed to the board this fall. She is co-chair of the grade school site council and a classroom volunteer. She has been doing outside research to find grants and increase funding for our school. Her other key areas of interest and expertise are special education and classroom improvement.

Leslie O'Leary is also a classroom volunteer. She has a strong budget and technology background. Since moving to the district, she worked for the city as the financial director. Before being appointed to the school board this fall, Leslie dedicated over 50 hours to auditing district financial records and implementing accounting systems. Her special interests are technology and classroom size and management.

Schann Nelson has been active on the school site councils for seven years. She has been involved in developing the school improvement plan and teacher in-service trainings. She is on the PCC advisory committee and has been working to develop more activities between PCC and the Ver-

nonia School District. She has now taken on the awesome task of Legislative representative for our school district. She has been meeting with legislators and keeping up on legislation affecting our schools.

The current school board is diverse and doesn't always agree, but we do believe in setting a positive direction toward academic excellence. We are focused on meeting the needs of our children, facilities improvement, improving special education services and communication with the community.

Continuity and commitment are important. Please join me in voting for Jeff Blum, Cari Levenseller, Leslie O'Leary and Schann Nelson for school board.

**Kim Tierney
Vernonia School Board**

Owners must control dogs at the lake

To the Editor:

The day the new docks arrived for Vernonia Lake, my son, husband and myself went down to watch them being unloaded. While we were there, we observed a lot of dog feces on the blacktop and the ground adjacent to the path.

Later, when walking from one dock to the other, 80 piles of dog feces were counted.

There is a leash law, and if people observed the law, they could control where their dog went, better yet, clean it up.

In another couple of months, they will be stocking the lake with fish and many families will be using the lake and spreading their blankets out to picnic.

Please take your dog out away from the path and not turn our wonderful lake into a doggie restroom, "and if you think your dog's doesn't stink, just try stepping in it."

Hopefully this situation can be corrected, making a walk around the lake a pleasant experience for everyone.

**DeLoris Webb
Vernonia**

Brock seeks seat on 47J school board

To the Editor:

I am Peter Brock, and I am running for Position 5 on the Vernonia School Board. I am doing this for several reasons. First, I have three children in the school district. I have attended many board meetings over the past few years and have been continually disappointed in the lack of leadership demonstrated by the board and by the Administration. I realize that we are facing funding problems, but so is every other district in Oregon. I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I know that answers only come when the right questions are asked. For instance, if the teachers were willing to forego part of their raise in order to buy text books, why were the administrators given their raises?

Another major problem in this district is the lack of communication between the board and administration with the public. Letters are sent by parents that are ignored and never responded to by the board of administration. Problems are brought up at board meetings that are never discussed or addressed. It has become an intolerable situation.

Many of the same issues facing Vernonia are being dealt with by districts all over the country with varying degrees of success. Alternatives need to be seriously explored and not discarded out of hand just because they are different. The safety and well-being of students and staff must be the top priority. We need an environment where the public feels it can ask questions and offer suggestions without being ignored. The staff should feel it can bring concerns before the board and administration without fear of retribution.

Communication is the key to all relationships, including the school board, the administration and the community. If elected, I will strive to improve this communication. Certainly, people are elected or appointed to positions based on their expertise and abilities. However, no one is infallible. Our government works under a system of checks and balances. It is time to return these checks and balances to our school district.

**Peter Brock
Vernonia**

O'Leary for Vernonia School Board

To the Editor:

For the past three years, Gwin and Sons Logging Co. has had the pleasure of having Leslie O'Leary working in our office. While her financial accounting background included graduating from college with honors and excellent recommendations, she exceeded all expectations and we have benefited greatly from her unparalleled capability, thoughtfulness and efficiency. Continuously, she has proven her ability in handling complex issues in all manners of business including payroll, accounting, benefits and insurance.

Leslie has the rare ability not to just shoot from the hip, even on topics she is well versed in, but will listen and evaluate different viewpoints and respond with well-thought-out opinions in a non-confrontational manner. I know that our company, subcontractors and vendors have been lucky to have someone with such dedication and skill working in our business.

I strongly urge you to support Leslie O'Leary in her run for the Vernonia School Board. Her ability, financial experience and commitment as a parent make her an outstanding school board candidate as the Vernonia School District faces tough funding issues ahead.

Sincerely,
**Matt Chesley
Vernonia**

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library

Do you know Oregon's state song, bird, dance, insect, and tree?

Can you remember the date of the first Tillamook Burn, the eruption of Mount St. Helens, Oregon's admission as a state, or the introduction of the bottle bill?

Are you aware that six-time national rodeo champion Larry Mahan is a native of Brooks; that Oregon's largest vineyard is in Dilley; that the movie "Mr. Holland's Opus" was filmed at Grant High School, or that five Oregonians won gold medals at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta?

Do you know the story behind the ghost in the Umatilla County Library, the haunted lighthouse in Yaquina Bay State Park, the Conser Lake Monster, or the Ghost Ship at Bayocean?

Have you heard the tales of Oregon's early lawbreakers, such as train robbers Hugh, Roy and Ray DeAutremont; gunfighters Hank Vaughan and Jack Dalton; and of Oregon's vigilante days?

Have you explored such unique events as the annual Chemult invitational Sled Dog Races or Rock Creek's draft-horse plowing exhibition? Have you read novels by Jean Auel, April Henry, Philip Margolin, Beverly Cleary, Ursula Le Guin, or Kate Wilhelm?

Books answering these questions and written by these and more Oregon authors may be found in the Oregon/Northwest section in the library. The theme chosen by Oregon Public Library Directors for 2001 is "Literature and Publishing," particularly about the Pacific Northwest and written by Pacific Northwest authors, especially those from Oregon. With that in mind, watch for materials from Oregon/Northwest authors and about the Pacific Northwest to be highlighted throughout the year.

Vernonia Library 701 Weed Avenue
Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tues., Thur. 2 p.m.-7 p.m.
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