

Letters to the Editor

Voters should watch what county is doing

To the Editor:

Does anyone wonder why only basic road repairs are being done? Is anyone concerned about the future condition of our roads and bridges?

Over the past couple of years, aggregate mining depletion fee revenues (for the Road Department) have been dropping, while aggregate mining depletion fee revenues (for the Land Development Services Department) have gone up. The County Commissioners are catering to the wishes of the miners – to the detriment of the county coffers. This is evidenced by the levy measures presented to the public for approval in both 1996 (passed) and 2000 (failed).

This May, the County Commissioners are again presenting a measure requesting your approval to waive the reclamation fee on fill material, which is currently required by the Surface Mining Ordinance for reclamation plans in the hopes miners will fill the holes they've

created. As I see it, there are three problems with this plan. One, the county coffers lose revenues by waiving the fees; two, there's no guarantee the miners will fill the holes, even if they do get the fee waiver; and three, why are the County Commissioners ignoring the adopted Surface Mining Ordinance reclamation plan? Maybe our County Commissioners are becoming addicted by the big bucks presented by more mining companies coming into the county creating more mines – as the schools have become addicted to Coca-Cola big bucks.

In 1996, the people approved a 2-year Road Levy for \$500,000 annually to maintain our roads and bridges. Because of Measure 50, the levy became permanent. Something is rotten in Denmark somewhere? The Road Department has never received the full \$500,000 annual revenue. It's been \$450,000 or below each year. Now, the Road Department has been informed the levy money could stop at the whim of the County Com-

missioners and go directly to the General Fund. According to the levy AND STATE ORS, these funds are dedicated only to our County Roads, not the General Fund or anything else. If one wants to view the 1996 Road Levy, you may obtain a copy at the County Elections Office located in the Courthouse.

Voters: Demand to know what your County Commissioners are doing. Read proposed levy measures and make sure the requirements of the levy passed are carried out.

**Thelma Bonar
Warren**

Street work is good, but not in all ways

To the Editor:

In addition to the two questions in the recent citizen survey that I mentioned at the City Council meeting March 13, one other question bothered me. Paraphrased, it asked if we approve and/or appreciate the street work done in Vernonia. (Yes. Streets downtown look

great.)

I have a complaint against one contractor. A couple of years ago when paving in my area on Rose Avenue and they were putting in culverts, I questioned this gentleman as to whether there would still be good drainage in front of my home, for it didn't appear so to me. I have underground drainage tile and ditches to drain my property into the ditch by the road. He assured me there would be good drainage.

Several weeks later, I appeared before the City Council to complain he was wrong, that water flowed into the ditch, but not out of it. Shortly after that, I discovered when this contractor installed the adjacent neighbor's culvert, the 4-inch pipe used by this neighbor for a culvert was not removed. The contractor simply laid the culvert on top of the pipe. This pipe can still be seen. Had this pipe been removed and had the area been scooped out prior to putting in the new culvert, it certainly would have better drainage than what it has now. This is inferior work.

I believe this contractor felt he had only to please the administration of Vernonia. I felt, and feel, he "humored" me and then ignored the situation. Vernonia is a family community and in Vernonia, every citizen is important.

Dare I suggest another citizen survey at some point in the future? With space for, and consideration thereafter, of added comments?

**Jetta Gomes
Vernonia**

Thanks, regrets at leaving position

To the Editor:

It is with a mix of regret and anticipation that I write this letter. I have accepted another position as Director of the Connections Project for Astoria School District. I will begin this position, full time, in early May. This is a newly funded position charged with designing and implementing a summer and after school program for all students in the Astoria School District.

I have worked hard over the past 5 years to make Caring Options program services meet the needs of our communities. This time period has seen many important changes in the way Oregon regulates childcare and the need for childcare by working families. Caring Options has been effective in meeting these changing needs. I am proud of the supports currently available to providers and the quality referral process now in place through our toll free access number. Over the past three months, we have expanded awareness by businesses and community partners through increased Rotary and Chamber of Commerce presentations.

These services are helping us to raise awareness in our communities about the critical need for quality, affordable and accessible childcare. Community Action Team, the lead agency for Caring Options program, is committed to maintaining program integrity through this transition.

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Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library

Library patrons—Beware! All accrued fines must be paid before further library materials may be checked out. These fines did not disappear, nor were they forgotten just because the materials were returned, so do not be surprised, if, when preparing to check out further materials, you are told that your debt to the library must first be paid.

Patrons have been enjoying the lovely Easter Lily on the circulation counter. This was a recent gift from Jo Ricker, whose husband, John, passed away this last year. John was an avid reader whose name can be found on many book cards, as he used the library with regularity. John was a member of the 41st Infantry Division of the U.S. Army Sunset Division, which was honored when U.S. Hwy. 26 was dedicated as The Sunset Highway. He was also an enthusiastic collector and restorer of gas-powered engines, saws, etc. It was always an occasion for a pleasant conversation when John visited the library and having this lovely lily in the library reminds me daily of my friend, John, and the thoughtfulness of his wife, Jo.

The library is lucky to have some very nice books recently donated by Diane Varner of Yamhill. Surprise, surprise—one of these entitled, *Peace at Heart*, captures the ordinary joys and blessings of country life in Oregon's Yamhill Valley. Another, *Gem Trails of Oregon*, lists sites for rockhounding in Oregon. It gives travel descriptions to sites, describes points of geological interest and includes maps of the surrounding areas. Another is *Dungeness Crabs and Blueberry Cobblers*. Along with recipes for foods indigenous to the area, author Janie Hibler has interwoven fascinating pieces of lore, history, geography and personal reminiscences of some of the delights that the Pacific Northwest has to offer. These and the other donations by Ms. Varner are very welcome additions to the library.

If you are looking for something just a little different from the "happily ever after" or the "perfect people" or the "predictable" in your next book, try reading Anita Shreve or Jodi Picoult. Shreve's novels include *The Pilot's Wife*, *Strange Fits of Passion*, *Resistance*, *The Weight of Water*, and *Eden Close*. In *The Weight of Water*, the question, "If you take a woman and push her to the edge, how will she behave?" is posed. Two separate, but similar plots are combined in this novel to answer the question, but each reader might have a different opinion of just how,

when pushed to the edge, she might react.

Eden Close was Andrew's next-door neighbor and best childhood friend. Seventeen years after the tragic night in which Mr. Close is killed and Eden is blinded, Andrew returns to his hometown to attend his mother's funeral, and is drawn into the tragic legacy of Eden. As the truth of Eden's past comes to light, the grisly truth of thwarted family love is revealed and Andrew's attraction to Eden is reawakened. This novel also poses some intriguing questions of how each of us, as individuals, would react in similar situations.

Jody Picoult's novels include *Plain Truth*, *Saving Grace* and *The Pact*. I think you will find these equally enjoyable and thought provoking.

New acquisitions include *Lone Eagle* by Danielle Steel, *Murder One* by William Bernhardt, *A Common Life: The Wedding Story*, by Jan Karon and *Witness for the Defense* by Jonnie Jacobs.

The newly initiated display area has been a remarkably successful project. Currently on display are items relating to mothers and Mother's Day. These are items from the stacks pertaining to mothers and, yes, they certainly may be checked out.

To date, 8,802 titles and 9,132 copies are ready to be searched and checked out electronically; there are now 913 active library patrons.

The Friends of the Library organization is actively recruiting members and ideas for fund-raising projects. The next meeting will be Tuesday, May 8th, at 1:00 p.m. in the library. Everyone is welcome. Anyone interested in helping with any aspect of Summer Reading is especially encouraged to attend or to contact the library.

Orissa will continue conducting story/craft sessions on Monday afternoons at 3:30 through the end of the school year.

Plans for a question/answer computer class are taking shape. A sign-up sheet is on the counter in the library for anyone interested. Date and time will be arranged shortly.

The library's circulation continues to increase with this past March's record-breaking 1,692 pieces of material circulated.

The library continues to be a busy, exciting place. Come and check it out.

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

Salem Scene

By Rep. Elaine M. Hopson
Second District

On Thursday, April 5, the House considered House Joint Memorial (HJM) 13. HJM 13 summary statement says: "Urges President of United States, Senate and House of Representatives of U.S. and Administrator of United States Environmental Protection Agency to enforce environmental laws equally between government bodies and those in private sector." The essence is to ask the federal government to balance its imposition of penalties as they are assessed to public entities (for example: cities and counties) and private entities (for example: businesses and ranchers).

The HJM focuses on Portland and mentions our largest city by name over five (5) times; no other public entity is mentioned. I voted against this Memorial for several reasons. First, such memorials are a waste of time and money. They pass on our opinion and may be helpful occasionally but most often are put in the wastebasket.

Second, I felt this was another rural/urban fight. Although I realize the challenges we rural folks face as we challenge the dominance of the urban areas, I don't believe this

type of a fight is productive.

Third, when we send such statements to the federal government from Oregon, I believe they should be representing the state as a whole and not showing divisiveness among our various constituents. We are ALL Oregonians; we may fight within our "family" but we are still family. We need to have the world see us as that and not hold up a member of our family as the "bad child."

A "minority report" was developed that eliminated the specific Portland accusations but still contained the same message to the federal lawmakers. I supported that as I do believe there needs to be fair and consistent implementation of the rules and there may be a need to reconsider some of the rules in place. That was voted down on the floor and the original Memorial was passed out. As we work to appreciate and acknowledge the need for additional rural/urban cooperation, I feel it was neither beneficial nor appropriate to support and send this Memorial.

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