

Salem Scene

By Rep. Elaine M. Hopson
Second District

It appears the Major League Baseball issue is dead, even though HB2941 authorizing \$150 million in lottery bonds to provide a grant to an Oregon city for construction of a stadium, passed out of the House last week. The latest word is that it won't be going any place and that is fine with me. We have too many other unmet needs for those funds.

The purpose of the lottery bonding is to help rural areas build infrastructure and pursue a strong and meaningful family wage jobs to support our communities. I could not be convinced that this was a way to do that, even though having a baseball team in Oregon would be nice. The lobbying on this issue was the strongest I have ever experienced, both in terms of personal contact by professional lobbyists and by written comments, via mail or email. Almost all were supportive of the project.

The big issue continues to be energy deregulation. Several bills dealing with the subject are awaiting a thorough debate. This extremely complex issue engenders strong opinions and a great deal of confusion. Although the current increases in energy costs are not attributable to deregulation, there continue to be fears and second thoughts as to the potential advantages and disadvantages of deregulation.

It is a big issue on both the substantive side and the political side. The choices on the merits of deregulation are whether to implement it now, postpone it, or repeal it altogether. It is an extremely complicated issue on the merits and it is also a critical chess player on the political side. It appears there will at least be some postponement of the Oregon plan, which does differ substantially from that being used in California.

In House Education we continue to try to find ways to refine the education process and become accountable. A strong push to add Health to the Certificate of Mastery requirements was defeated in committee. Although I agree that health is a very important subject for our youth, it isn't time to add more recordkeeping requirements to the CIM as we work toward implementation.

We, in Education Ways and Means, continue to await the May 14 revenue forecast before we move forward with funding for K-12, community colleges and higher education as well as the many other areas in the budgeting process. Inherent in the forecast will be a determination as to whether or not the "kicker" kicks. In other words, are the revenues high enough to trigger the return of monies in excess of what was projected to be received?

As always, the balance is between money needed and services provided. In all of this

budgeting process, we play a guessing game as to what the economy will be like two years in the future. We budget according to our "best guess" and then wait to see what happens at the end of that two-year period. There never seems to be enough money to do everything we want; therefore, what do we cut? Education, health, transportation, community improvements, social services? I'd welcome your thoughts on this.

The second bill regarding the right of local entities to allow restrictions on smoking passed the House this week. HB 3874 prohibits the use of tobacco tax money for advocating smoking bans. Even though research very clearly states that local bans have proven to be the most effective way to curb smoking, there are efforts to prevent local jurisdictions from using the money to push for such limits. In other words, the money goes to public entities to prevent smoking but we can't use the money to promote the most effective tool available? We will see what happens in the Senate and when it hits the Governor's desk.

HB 3451, which insists that DLCD work closely with counties and cities in a concerted effort to identify ways we can look at flood mitigation, passed the House this week. Hopefully, this will allow us to use information we currently have and what we will soon be gaining from computer simulation to identify ways to prevent future damage such as we have seen on the North Coast. This bill does not allow dredging.

It was close, but the designation of swans as predators was derailed by having it sent back to committee where, it is assumed, it will die. The bill allowing the killing of wolf-hybrids as predators did pass out of the House and moved to the Senate.

HJR 16 allowing 18 year olds to serve in the legislature passed out and over to the Senate. Although I voted against it because I believe life experience of a few more years would provide a better background for a legislator, I was not dismayed that it passed. This is one of those issues about which I could comfortably argue either side.

I did vote against the Employees Retirement System Budget because it cut five counselor positions. It seems to me that all of us need as much help as possible to make decisions regarding retirement and the money earned through various manners. It passed out anyway and I just hope people can still access appropriate assistance when facing some of these decisions.

Please keep in touch.

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Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library

Plans are being finalized for an exciting summer of reading at the Vernonia Public Library, revolving around the theme of "Read a Wild Tale." Activities including stories, crafts, games and presentations will take place on Thursdays, beginning in late June and ending with an entry in the Jamboree parade in early August. Reading will be stressed with prizes awarded for hourly reading. Pre-registration is encouraged and adult volunteers are always welcomed. Join us this summer for fun with the "wild west."

The goal of having 10,000 items electronically accessible to library patrons is fast approaching. Since June, 9752 copies have been entered by the use of over 350 volunteer hours. If these volunteers had been paid minimum wage the cost would have been \$2,275.00 and if these items had been sent to a company for retrospective conversion, the cost would have been \$4,485.92. These volunteers certainly deserve credit and we are going to celebrate when the 10,000th item has been entered.

New acquisitions include Jane Kirkpatrick's, *All Together in One Place* and *No Eye Can See*. Based on an incident recorded by Ezra Meeker, of having met eleven wagons, returning on the Oregon Trail, with not a man left in the entire train, Kirkpatrick explores the possible fates of the twelve surviving women. By interweaving stories of love tried, challenges met and faith tested, with historical facts, Kirkpatrick's characters are brought to light with clarity, and a feeling of reality exists in the events which challenge them. The third and final installment in this series is due to be released in the Fall of 2001.

The Courage Tree, by Diane Chamberlain, combines many ingredients for a fantastic read—a lost sick child, distraught family, ex-husband and his new girlfriend, a hidden shack in the woods with another mother and daughter who are hiding out for their own reasons, and a mother who is determined against all odds to find her missing child. Chamberlain has the abil-

ity to create tense drama and then to reveal secrets a little at a time—just enough to keep the reader satisfied while turning the pages at a frantic pace. I recommend this novel for anyone looking for a fast-paced, enjoyable read this summer.

My other current recommendation is *The Persian Pickle Club* by Sandra Dallas. This is not a new release, as it was published in 1996, but it was brought to my attention by a library patron. The Persian Pickle Club is made up of a group of women who meet weekly to "improve their minds" while quilting and gossiping. The setting is Harveyville, Kansas, in the 1930s, when a drought has stretched on for years and farmers are losing their farms and unemployed families drift in and out of town. The "Pickles" have become true friends during their quilting sessions and have formed an informal support group to help each other during both good and bad times. Other than depression related problems, life seems pretty good until the newest member starts to unearth a dark secret. Thank you to the patron who made this recommendation. I loved the book and others are saying the same thing after reading it.

Other new acquisitions include *On the Street Where You Live* by Mary Higgins Clark, *Silent Joe* by T. Jefferson Parker, and *Dream of Wolves* by Michael White.

A demonstration of pen and ink wash will be presented by Tony Hyde at the Society of Arts and Crafts on Thursday, May 17, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the library's Thiele-Petti meeting room.

The next meeting of the Friends of the Library will be June 12, at 1:00 p.m. in the library. Members and potential members are invited to attend.

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

Cartoon appeared to be blatant racism

To the Editor:

I was sadly disheartened by your last issue after seeing the cartoon in that issue. I searched all over page 2 and 3 for anything this cartoon could apply to other than blatant racism. I was at a loss. I would hope that this cartoonist does not feel that we all feel this way. I do not. If this cartoon was meant differently than that, I would think you would look closer at the implications.

Chad Sulloway
Vernonia

Ed. note: Please see Robb Wilson's column on page two. Thank you for expressing concern; it is appreciated.

Citizens' generosity will feed the needy

To the Editor:

I would like to express my appreciation to the many Postal patrons on the city route who contributed food to this year's Letter Carrier Food Drive. Thanks to your generosity, nearly 1000 pounds of food was collected. It was taken to Vernonia Cares and, from there, it will be distributed to members of our community who are in need.

Peter O'Leary
Postal Carrier
Vernonia

Blessed to know a special friend

To the Editor:

New friends, even for a short time, know right from the start, that both of them have a special person to rely on, to tell their problems to, to laugh with and even a shoulder to lean and cry on.

Even though Mrs. Florence Hines was much older than I, we knew from the start that a true friendship had begun.

The first time I met Mrs. Hines, several months ago, we hit it right off. [We] knew that we had someone to talk to for a little bit, to share our lives with. One of the things she liked was that her son was named Dennis, and mine was too. We both had a few things in common. Even though I had never met him, I was just as close to him as his own mother was, and very proud of him. It seemed like she adopted me into the family and I was very proud to be called the other Dennis.

I could only see her on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and when I came over, I couldn't hardly wait to get there for our short, but special, talks. Oh, I forgot to say I deliver the meals on wheels from the Vernonia Senior Center. And, let me tell you, if there were things that were too hard for her frail body and stomach, I would put everyone on hold to see if I could fix her something to eat

that would be easier on her stomach.

This frail, but strong-willed woman was the best thing to happen to me ever since I lost my father, grandpa, grandma and two aunts back in Kentucky in the mid 90s.

I cherished every moment I got to spend with her, if only for a few months, she changed my life forever.

I just pray that I will be able to see her when my time comes to move on into that promised land.

And to Dennis and his daughter, and Donna, who I have met, meeting their mother was the happiest time of my life.

God bless you all and I know she is very proud of every one of you all. I hope I can be half the person she was the rest of my life.

Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Carter
Vernonia

— NOTICE —

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

Deadlines for the issue of June 6, 2001, will be June 1 for both news items and display advertising, and June 4 for classified ads.