

Between the Bookends

By Cindy Stanley, Library Assistant
Banks Public Library

Did you know that reading during the summer helps kids bridge the learning gap between school years? Last year over 11,000 children of all ages – preschool through high school – participated in Washington County's summer reading program. The theme for the upcoming 2001 Summer Reading Program is "Read a Wild Tale." Registration begins on June 1st and our first free special program will be held Thursday, June 21st at 2:00 p.m. at the library. BJ the Clown will join us that day with circus tricks and magic. More fun will follow each Thursday at 2 p.m. Let us help you make reading fun for your child!

Saturday June 9th is Recycle Saturday at the SWATCO Service Yard on Sellers Road, between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Friendly library volunteers will be there to assist you. Items accepted include newspapers, cardboard, magazines, aluminum and tin, glass and plastic containers with necks (sorry no plastic tubs, lids or caps).

You may think that the "new" reading material is isolated to just a few of our shelves. But the beauty of our library is the fact that our shelves are brimming with titles – characters, stories and far-away places – that are new to YOU! Use your imagination. Pick a theme, an author, authors' first novels, or even the color of the book jackets! It can be so much fun discovering the hidden treasures that line our shelves. They are just waiting for an eager reader like you.

Connie May Fowler's words read like music in her moving novel *Remembering Blue*. This book won't be found on our "new books" shelf but warrants special mention. *Remembering Blue* is a

story narrated by Mattie O'Rourke, a woman who spent her first 22 years drifting through life with a singular purpose: never to draw attention to herself because she feared both judgment and recognition. Then Nick Blue came into her life in what seemed to be a chance meeting. Thus begins a relationship that evokes a life-altering change in Mattie, one which allows her to become more than a flicker in the world's peripheral vision. She learns to respect and value family and to approach the future with both anticipation and forgiveness. You will practically smell the salt air coming off the Gulf coast of Florida as *Remembering Blue* weaves the story of Mattie and Nick's return to his island home. As if beckoned back by the sea, Nick returns to become a third generation fisherman on the island from which a family legend had caused him to run away.

John J. Nance, "master of the aviation thriller," brings us his new title, *Headwind*. Hang on as Nance leads you on a whirlwind chase halfway around the globe aboard a hijacked jet, as former United States President John Harris evades would-be kidnappers.

A new title for our juvenile readers is *Castaways of the Flying Dutchman*. Master storyteller Brian Jacques brings us this new fantasy adventure about the legend of a ghost ship and its mad sea captain. Find out what has become of the boy and his dog who were trapped aboard the ship and sent off on an eternal journey.

Banks Public Library: 111 Market Street.
Hours: Tues., Wed., Thurs., 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.;
Fri. and Sat. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Preschool Story Time, Weds., 10:15 a.m.
Phone: (503) 324-1382
Internet: www.WILnet.wcccls.lib.or.us.

Letters to the Editor

Thanks for the help

To the Editor:

I would like to thank the good Christians of Vernonia for their support after my misfortune.

Your generosity and kindness helped me get through.

Thank you all.

Randall McLaughlin
Vernonia

Budget is proposed, not yet final

To the Editor:

The following is in regard to the recent article, "Vernonia budget balanced, at the time", from the May 16 issue of *the Independent*.

I feel that there was a key word missing in many parts of the article that left myself, and many other citizens I have spoken with, thinking the new budget is a done deal.

The word that is missing is "PROPOSED".

Therefore, there is a clarification to this article I would like to make to the readers of your publication.

The PROPOSED budget, recommended by the city administrator, that was approved by the budget committee and members of the city council at the recent Budget committee workshop was just that, PROPOSED.

We still have a public hearing to carry out and other issues to address before a final vote will be made on the PROPOSED budget that was recently approved.

If you are one of the many who was confused by the way the article was written, please be advised there is still time for input from the public regarding the PROPOSED budget.

Glen Purvee
City Councilor
Vernonia

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.

Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member
Nehalem Valley Chapter Izaak Walton League

So, how far do you have to travel from Vernonia to find Class III water? Let's see, the falls on the Nehalem River below the Salmonberry River and the falls at Nehalem Falls campground on the lower Nehalem are all Class III, but they are at least an hour away. The Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers all have some Class III waters, but are even farther away. Would you be surprised if I told you we have one piece of Class III water in our backyard, and it is only a fifteen minute drive from Vernonia? It's on Rock Creek, around river mile seven.

So, what is Class III water? First, we must learn how water is rated. The most widely used scale for rating river difficulty is the International scale. This scale consists of a range from I through VI, with Class I waters consisting of easy water, not much gradient, with riffles, small waves and a wide channel. Class II waters have regular waves, with relatively clear channels that may require occasional maneuvering. Class III waters include rapids of intermediate difficulty and moderate, irregular waves that may be difficult to avoid. These waters may require complex maneuvering and scouting is advisable. Class IV waters are for advanced paddlers; the rapids have big waves with many obstacles that require precise maneuvering. Class V waters are for experts only, have long, violent rapids with dangerous obstructions. The consequences of an upset are likely to be dire, with long, dangerous swims and poor prospects for rescue. Class VI waters are for the crazy, lucky and magical people of the world. Death or injury are very likely.

Generally, the Nehalem River around Vernonia is a Class I river, although it could easily be argued that some of the rapids would rate a II under certain water levels. The rapids at Mist are certainly Class II and another little rapids just above the bridge over the Nehalem at Flora Road is Class II, due to its need for some maneuvering and side bank sweepers. It could also be argued that the waters above Vernonia in both the Nehalem and Rock Creek should be rated Class II because of the maneuvering needed in the confined channel and the presence of lots of wood hazards. Yet, even with the confined channel and wood hazards, our local waters are fairly mellow compared to most, except for the Class III falls on Rock Creek. Yes, I said falls. Apparently, during the flood of 1996, Rock

Creek cut a new channel through a large oxbow in the river. While the gradient around the oxbow, about five hundred yards, is only slightly noticeable, the gradient of the new river shortcut is breathtaking.

I was kayaking with a new-found partner, Matt Giles, who is relatively new to the sport, when we found Rock Creek falls. Actually, we heard it before we saw it and we both were wondering what we were getting into before we saw what was going on. We both decided to take the easy route around the falls via the old river channel, which still flows adequate amounts of water to float. We stopped at the bottom of the falls as the river flows back past its base and both of us deemed it do-able, with a little more water flow.

A few weeks later, my other kayak partner, Troy Horton, and I were able to get back on Rock Creek after a good rain. We started our trip at the concrete bridge near Keasey. This is a very neat stretch of stream and should be rated Class II waters because of the excessive amount of maneuvering that is required to avoid log hazards in the narrow corners. We could have used another six inches of water, which would translate into the water being just on the staff gauge at the Vernonia swimming pool on Rock Creek. There were numerous ledge drops of only a foot or so and numerous blind corner rapids that required last minute peeks around the corner before committing to a line. The gradient on upper Rock Creek is moderate and makes for a fun paddle.

Finally, we approached the Rock Creek falls and we both disembarked to take a good look. The falls is a drop of only about six feet in a distance of about forty yards. The mouth is about thirty yards wide and drops about three feet into a small pool on river right. There appears to be a rock or ledge on the right side of the pool entrance which could be a potential for a vertical pin (where the nose of the kayak gets stuck, leaving the kayaker stranded in a vertical position with water pouring over him). The pool is a short fifteen yards, then the river bottom drops another three feet at about a fifty degree angle into the plunge pool at the bottom. A strainer about sixty yards downstream makes a mandatory portage, but poses little hazard if a kayaker does take a swim. The most dangerous aspect of Rock Creek falls is that there isn't a lot of water depth and an upset could result in some hard knocks.

I would regard Rock Creek Falls as a giant slip-and-slide with a three foot drop at the start. The

stream bottom is all soapstone and relatively smooth in the Falls.

Finally, after giving the Falls a good looking over, I decided to give it a try. Troy decided to watch me and be my safety man in case I got in trouble. I handed him my throw rope and he departed via the old channel. Soon, he was standing at the bottom of the falls. I hit my line and plunged into the pool on the first drop, with my kayak completely submerging. I made a quick decision not to eddy out in the pool, since my kayak had darted left and toward my line for the descent of the last drop, which was less than spectacular due to low water flow and dragging my bottom on the soapstone. With more water, this is really going to be fun. I can't wait till next winter.

There are several places where portages are mandatory on Rock Creek due to full length trees spanning the river. Most are in calm stretches of the river, pose little risk and give a kayaker the opportunity to try a seal launch (where a kayaker gets in the kayak and slides or plunges off the bank and into the water). A couple of the seal launch sites are four to five foot drops and a whole lot of fun on a hot day.

One warning I would offer to anybody wanting to try Rock Creek is that you need good maneuvering skills and a short boat. In other words, you should be able to maneuver crucial eddy turns and cross stream ferries in two foot waves. If you tackle Rock Creek, make sure you have throw ropes and an experienced person along.

Kayaking Rock Creek is fun and is a beautiful experience. In some places, high banks are covered with moss and green plants, while small rivulets of water pour out amongst the greenery and cascade into the stream. There are several small waterfalls that tumble into the stream from hanging stream beds of side creeks. We saw several steelhead, both alive and dead, and ducks are constant companions as you paddle in this local wonder.

Please help protect this natural wonder, keep it clean and respect private property.

See you in the water!

Izaak Walton League Nehalem Valley Chapter meetings are on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome. For meeting location, call (503) 429-7193.