

Letters to the Editor

Author is pleasantly surprised by library

To the Editor:

Last month, I was invited by Mrs. Nancy Burch to come and speak about writing and the writer's life at your library there in Vernonia. I am not a public speaker, I explained, but am rather a story teller. But I do feel passionately about my work and about writing in general, and so I accepted.

I arrived on Saturday, April 6, expecting to find the typical little country library. In general, they are drab and ill-funded, if not downright depressing. But what a surprise I had waiting for

me. Your Vernonia Public Library is without question the finest library of its size that I've ever visited. Such a facility says a great deal about a community.

Anyway, I would like to thank the library staff (Nancy Burch and Eldonna Williams are just two of the names which come to mind), as well as the crowd of fifty or so local citizens who came to listen, for the kind and generous spirits they shared with me that day. It was one of the most pleasant and yet intelligently interactive afternoons that I've spent in years.

I will not forget the adventurous stories and photos that

Mrs. Francis Lentz shared with me depicting the days when her husband gillnetted for salmon in the swift tideland waters of Alaska's Bristol Bay, working out of a boat powered by nothing more than a pair of wooden oars and a canvas sail.

Most gratefully yours,
Spike Walker
 Castle Rock, Washington

Positive approach is better for signage

To the Editor:

Hello Vernonia

I'm sure we have all noticed the park signs are up again.

Not much has changed since the first time around. They're still big, they have nice paint. The graphics are real sharp and they are definitely noticeable. I think surely one visiting our town and our parks would be better off knowing what to do and where to go rather than what not to do and where not to go. The signs are abrasive and not inviting. "Welcome" to our parks would be a great start.

Sincerely,

Ron Wright
 Vernonia

Candidate questions county government

To the Editor:

As a US Marine, I was taught that just because everyone is doing something doesn't make it right. But, just because no one is doing something doesn't make it wrong.

First, I would ask you, the citizen, the voter, the employer, to read and compare letters to the editor in each county paper before forming an opinion, in the future. Everyone is not printing everything. And, as an employer, you have the right to hear the whole truth.

Paid employees of county health have attacked me in recent months because of my stance and that of the Constitution party, concerning parental rights. Last week, I was asked by the opposition, if in my candidacy, I have brought anything else to the table. Funny you should ask.

Why are County budget meetings being held between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays, and not between 6 and 9 in the evening when you, the working public, the employers who pay the bills, might attend?

While attending a county budget meeting, I was charged twenty-five dollars for a copy of the non-adopted County budget; a 59-page document, unbound and unwrapped. And this, after being told that only the press could obtain a copy. Why?

For a document costing \$25, why is the county budget so hard to understand for you, the employer?

Our county commissioners salary/benefits exceeded \$80,000.00 last year, but they felt they needed a raise. After saying that PERS may bankrupt the county, they got one.

Why?

Columbia county's largest non-renewable natural resource is gravel. It is estimated that aggregate gravel leaves our county to the tune of nine hundred truckloads per day to the tri-county area. Why aren't our commissioners looking to increase the gravel fees to gravel buyers rather than our property taxes again next fall?

Why don't you, 'the employer', see property tax measures for raising the commissioner's pay, or any one of the other increases in the budget other than fire, police or schools? In other words, how do they get funding for pay raises if you don't vote for them?

And why were we not informed when we voted to build a new county jail that the cost would not include the cost of running the jail?

Our county law enforcement needs our backing, but why are they the ones held before us when the general funds wants funding? It's not fair to law enforcement or to the citizens.

You, the voter, are the employer. I am a businessman who has had enough of fiscal foolishness. You will be hiring and firing next fall. I am applying for the job of your County Commissioner.

Thank you for your time.

Joe Cason
 St. Helens

Ed. note: The budget is a public document and is available to anyone, but agencies may charge for duplication.

Thanks for support of carrier food drive

To the Editor:

The Vernonia Post Office would like to thank all of the Vernonia residents who contributed to the Letter Carrier Food Drive on May 11, 2002. All of the food and money collected went to the local Vernonia Cares Food Bank. That was over 789 pounds of food with a dollar value of over \$2,000.

I want to recognize employee Joann Glass for collecting donations and especially Peter O'Leary. Peter has done an extraordinary job of organizing the food drive every year, and collected almost all of the 789 pounds of can goods while walking most of his delivery route.

Sally Phillips
 Vernonia Postmaster

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
 Vernonia Public Library

More than one person has commented that the new library must be a real pleasure to me. That is a statement that is so true, but, not only for me, but for library volunteers, for members of organizations using the meeting room, for youngsters using the computers, attending library programs, and doing homework; and for adults reading, using the computers, and visiting. The number of people using the library for these purposes is not counted exactly, but is estimated. This past week a call was received from Oregon State Library Development seeking to confirm that the number reported on last year's library statistics was correct. The caller wanted to confirm that the number of library visits had increased from 3,000 in 1999-2000 to 7,000 in 2000-2001. That is not only true, but is a conservative estimate. These figures show how much the library is being used and what an asset it is to the community.

The number of materials circulated is recorded precisely and is a figure that is often used to determine funding for libraries. Circulation for these same two years increased from 12,420 to 16,099. It's exciting to report that the month of April, 2002, had the highest recorded circulation that the library has seen to date. An amazing number of 1,725 articles were checked out last month. A library board member has offered to graph the circulation of the past several years and this will shortly be on display on the library's message board.

An activity that has been suggested for adults in the community is a reading/discussion group. The first book, *The Pact*, by Jodi Picoult, has been chosen and will be discussed in late June. Anyone interested in taking part in this book discussion group should contact the library and additional copies of the book will be obtained.

Summer Reading plans are progressing for a fun-filled series of activities revolving around the theme of "Don't Bug me. I'm Reading!" Schedules of programs are now available in the library. Volunteers are still being recruited for Monday mornings at 10:30. If you would like to help the youth of the community while having some fun yourself, please contact the library.

Jamboree weekend, with the Friends of the

Library Book Sale, is approaching. With that in mind; the Friends will be accepting donations of books on June 1, from 10-12 in the big building next to Purvee's Miniature Golf. Glenn Purvee has generously granted the use of this building for the book sale. Another date in July will be designated for leaving books in this location. If this is inconvenient, books may also be left at the library during library hours.

New acquisitions include *Fatal* by Michael Palmer, *The Short Forever* by Stuart Woods, *City of Bones* by Michael Connelly, *Sea Glass* by Anita Shreve, *Dying to Please* by Linda Howard, *Daddy's Little Girl* by Mary Higgins Clark, and of course—*The Shelters of Stone* by Jean Auel.

The author that I would like to recommend this month is Stephen White. White is a clinical psychologist who lives in Denver, Colorado. His protagonist is Alan Gregory, who just happens to be a clinical psychologist who also lives in Colorado. White's latest novel, *Warning Signs*, is a suspenseful psychological thriller that keeps the reader involved and will keep him/her thinking, even after finishing the book. When Royal Peterson, Boulder County District Attorney, is brutally murdered by a bomb exploding in his home, it soon becomes apparent to Gregory that his new patient, Naomi Bigg, has information regarding the bomb that killed Peterson. As Naomi further reveals information regarding the individual responsible for this killing and potentially others, Gregory wrestles with his responsibility regarding doctor/patient confidentiality. Is his ethical duty to his patient, or his moral obligation to the community of more importance? I think you will enjoy this new novel by Stephen White, as well as his nine previous books with clinical psychologist Alan Gregory.

Remember to mark your calendars with the following dates and times:

Pre-school story time, Monday 10:30 a.m.

After school reading enrichment, Monday 3:30 p.m.

Friends of the Library, Tuesday, June 4, 7:00 p.m.

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.

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