

Letters to the Editor

Writer can't see while wearing blinders

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to an article by Foster Church in *The Oregonian* travel section on June 2, 2002.

Dear Mr. Foster Church:

Your Oregonian article of June 2nd unjustly attacked my home of Vernonia. It's clear to me your visit to Vernonia was observed through darkened blinders. Vernonia is so much

more than moldering remains of solid working-peoples' businesses, parks gone to seed, ghostly abandoned movie theater, decrepit Masonic Temple, bars and taverns, taverns and bars, all surrounded by dismal terrain rent with patches of clear cuts.

Without blinders, one sees... A Community with a 15-mile driveway north of Hwy 26 lined with the most picturesque countryside the coast range has to offer. It's a community

which, during the '96 flood, demonstrated "love thy neighbor" in its truest form. Many a warm home opened doors wide to those in need. I remember watching this community, as a whole, pitch in to clean both neighbors' homes and surrounding areas. I tasted the great cooking from many neighbors who chose to help by keeping everyone's stomachs full. I watched Vernonia's Scout Cabin, destroyed by the flood, rebuilt, and NOT with FEMA

dollars. The vision of a few became contagious; it didn't take long for the word to get out. Students applied for and received grants. Neighborhood fundraisers began. And, once the money started coming in, kudos to those townfolk who gave of themselves to build such a magnificent building.

What Vernonia is...is not being able to find a parking spot at home games because everyone else already got the best parking spots...It's eating to your heart's content at the 4th of July Bar-B-Q on the high school field, followed by a brilliant display of fireworks...It's watching neighbors compete in Vernonia's logging show...It's watching the kids grow up to be fine adults. It's hearing kids address adults as Mr. or Mrs. It's seeing them open doors for others and saying "please" and "thank you"...It's taking a walk around the lake on a warm summer evening...It's taking a bike ride on the Banks/Vernonia Linear Trail or a dip in Rock Creek's summer pool on a hot day...It's rafting down the Nehalem River to the county park...It's walking in to a store and being addressed with a smile and your name...And, finally, it's the deep desire of our Volunteer Fire and EMS Department, who unselfishly give of their time, day or night, to help their fellow neighbors.

Trust me, this author is in no way dispirited when I walk down Bridge Street. What I see is a new City Hall and Library. I see a street lined with trees and lit with old-fashioned lights at night. I see a flower shop, real estate offices, art gallery, antique shop, pet store, mini mart, gas stations, a mini mall with various little shops, hardware store with nursery, bank, credit

union, dental office and medical center, restaurants, Western Auto, Napa, *The Independent*, auto body shop, senior center, deli serving great gourmet coffee, laundromat, and, a block off Bridge Street, a Sentry grocery store. Imagine, all this within walking distance.

My community might not meet your standards, but it certainly meets mine. Vernonia is a community who loves God first and foremost, as demonstrated by the 13 or so churches posted on the sign at the entrance to town, and they love their neighbors as themselves. What more could you ask of a community?

To answer your question as to why Vernonia has not become an upper-middle-class refuge for prosperous families: Maybe it's their definition of what a community really is. I sense that a community, by your definition, is composed of upper-middle-class people with large homes and manicured lawns, but noticeably very cold to the touch. Thank you, but no thank you. These days, when disaster can strike at any given moment, my money is on Vernonia. And, we won't need help from the National Guard, either.

In conclusion, I think it's unfortunate that a good portion of your article was centered around the bars and taverns. I see you even made a mental note to return to one of them. Mr. Church, take off your blinders. Judge more than the cover of the book. Read the first page and you might, as I did, just fall in love with a small town remotely pocketed in the woods.

Mr. Church, for tour reservations, please contact:

Debbie Brown
Vernonia

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library

Dear Paul Newman

After all these years it's over between you and me.

There's a younger man.

I get to see him five times a week and he tries to bring me the world.

I worried a lot about your racing in them fast cars, your beer drinking, the fact that the color of your eyes is fading a little with age.

Them eyes always reminded me of Ed Kozelka

who sat next to me in American history.

When you and Ed turned them blues on me, it sure made my pilot light blaze up.

When reporters asked why you was faithful to Joanne, you once said,

"Why should I go out for hamburger when I can have steak at home?"

Now that Joanne is looking so plain, I wonder if you are going to Wendy's.

Paul baby, it was fun, and I'll never forget your spaghetti sauce.

I gotta move on.

I'm the same age as you, but in the dark Peter Jennings will never notice.

—Marie Kennedy Robins

This is just one selection from the book, *When I Am An Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple*, recently added to the library's collection in memory of Ora Bolmeier. It makes me smile when I look at the words that "spell check" highlighted as this was written. Ora, who spent many years as a teacher of high school English classes, would have been fast to make the corrections (or at least to point them out). Choosing books to reflect Ora's interests and personality was a pleasant task and gave me the opportunity to think about Ora—how she always wore cardigan sweaters, how she was reserved yet always friendly, how she remembered names of former students, how independent she was, and how she loved Vernonia and was so glad to have her Vernonia friends visit her in Forest Grove. Each of the books purchased includes an appropriate nameplate. They include *Modern English Misusage*, *What Teachers Do When No One Is Looking*, *The Secret School*, *Helen Hath No Fury*, and *Irregardless of Murder*. Be sure to look for these and other selections that were recently added to the library's collection in memory of Ora Bolmeier.



Other new acquisitions include *The Wailing Wind* by Tony Hillerman, *Mortal Prey* by John Sandford, *A Thousand Country Roads* by Robert James Waller, *Courting Trouble* by Lisa Scottoline, *A Fine and Bitter Snow* by Dana Stabenow, *In This Mountain* by Jan Karon, and *The Survivors' Club* by Lisa Gardner.

Schedules and registration forms for the "Don't Bug Me, I'm Reading" summer reading program are available in the library. The fun-filled activities will begin Monday, June 24th at 7:00 p.m. with a presentation by B.J. the Clown, and will end Monday, July 29th at 7:00 p.m. with Steve Taylor, the magical ventriloquist. The other activities will take place throughout the month of July and will also be on Mondays, but in the morning, at 10:30 a.m. These activities will include stories, crafts, a presentation on bicycle safety, a display of exotic bugs, and an interactive musical program. Register for the "buggy" fun at the library this summer and try to win the "buggy" container by guessing the number of items it contains.

The Friends of the Library will be holding their next meeting at 7:00 p.m. on July 2nd. New members are always welcome. Donations of books for the Jamboree Book Sale may be left at the library during library hours or dropped off at Glen Purvee's building (998 Bridge Street) next to miniature golf on Saturday, July 27th from 10 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Last week's hot weather found me returning to the library to give the outside plants a much-needed drink of water. Upon entering the building and feeling the air-conditioned coolness, I began thinking that residents of the community might welcome a place in which to cool off on unbearably hot evenings—a place to read, watch a movie on the VCR, visit, play checkers, work a jig saw puzzle, or play a computer game. If this sounds like something of which you would like to take advantage, please contact the library and we'll try to arrange some "cool" evenings. It seems a shame to not take full advantage of this wonderful facility.

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.
Phone: (503) 429-1818

Banks is noting centennial of name, not city

To the Editor:

On June 6, a letter from the Banks Historical Society appeared in your paper clarifying that "Centennial of Banks" is not correct, and that the "incorporated seal" will not be celebrated until 2021. Whereby the fact is Banks is celebrating 100 years of the official community name of Banks, not the city's official seal of incorporation, and of which is evidenced by ties to property owner John & Nancy Banks, the first officially established (January 21, 1902) post office named "Banks", and the railroad which spurred abil-

ity to make the timber industry boom. Such being, the Portland, Nehalem & Tillamook Railway Company, built by the Pacific Railway & Navigation Company, for the rich railroad tycoons to get at the virgin timber which extended in almost every direction. In 1901, the area the railroad would pass through was surveyed and by 1903, tracks were being laid in Banks.

The book titled *Portrait & Biographical Record of Portland & Vicinity Oregon*, published in 1903, sets forth John L. Banks, Please see page 14