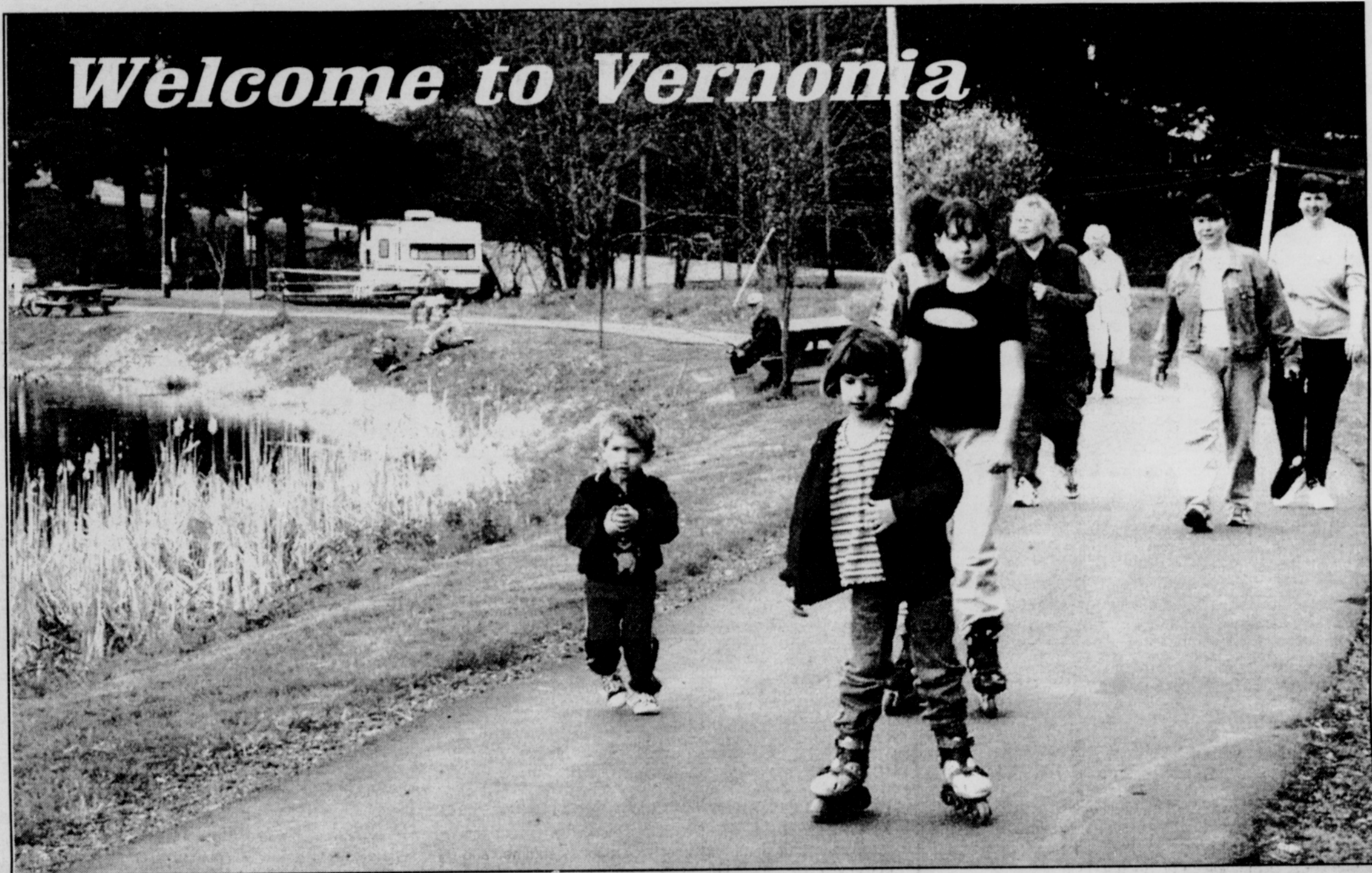




## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Grand Marshall.....           | 4     |
| Citizen of the Year.....      | 4     |
| Wilcox & Flegel.....          | 5     |
| 2001 Parade.....              | 6-7   |
| Logging Show.....             | 8-11  |
| Schedule of Events.....       | 12-13 |
| Cruisin' 2002.....            | 14    |
| Nehalem River Rendezvous      | 16    |
| Kids Fishing Derby.....       | 17    |
| Softball Tournaments.....     | 17    |
| Horse Gaming Show.....        | 18    |
| Synchro Swimming Demo.....    | 19    |
| Country Jubilee Concert.....  | 19    |
| Taekwon-Do Demo.....          | 19    |
| Kids Water Games.....         | 19    |
| Vernonia Pride Booth.....     | 19    |
| Friends of the Library        |       |
| Book Sale.....                | 19    |
| Dances.....                   | 22    |
| Arts & Crafts Shows.....      | 22    |
| Babysitting Service.....      | 23    |
| Christian Music Concerts..... | 23    |
| Alternative Stage.....        | 23    |
| Directory of Advertisers..... | 23    |

Officers for the 2002 Friendship Jamboree Committee:  
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 Secretary Katie Poetter  
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## ***"Proud to say, Vernonia, U.S.A."***

The Jamboree theme this year, "Proud to say, Vernonia, U.S.A.," acknowledges the terrorist attack on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001. Though that event occurred 3,000 miles away, the response in Vernonia was the same as if it had been only three miles. Differences were put aside, there was a renewed sense of purpose, and acknowledgement that being an "American" was both a privilege and an obligation.

Many sons and daughters of the community serve in the military and were deployed to distant sites around the world. Families did not know what to expect; some didn't even know where their loved ones were stationed or whether they were in harm's way. So, they waited.

There were things to do, obligations to fulfill, responsibilities to meet. There were births and deaths, there was happiness and sadness...because life is what happens while you're waiting.

A few people decided that they wouldn't let a funding shortfall eliminate noon meals for two days a week at the Vernonia Senior Center. Businesses donated cash and supplies, while individuals donated time and effort. They are still doing so, and will continue as long as is necessary.

Recognizing that many in the community have been badly hurt by the recession, others have stepped up to raise money for the local food bank. In Vernonia, nearly four times as many people need help this year

as needed help in prior years.

In spite of bad times—personal or national—everyday life requires attention. Extensive summer sports and reading programs for children require a lot of adult time and, fortunately, there are adults who care enough to provide that time.

There is much to be proud of...and to appreciate...in this small town. We know that many improvements are needed, but we don't need to concentrate on what we don't have because we are so blessed with what we have: We have friends and neighbors who care about us and whom we care about. We have beauty all around us, whether rollerblading and walking around Vernonia Lake in April, as in the photo above, running or biking the linear trail that stops in our town, relaxing in one of our parks or driving in the hills around us.

We see caring and pride in our downtown, shown by the improvements made by both business owners and city government. We see caring and pride in people's efforts to maintain beautiful and well-kept yards in every neighborhood.

Yes, being an American is both a privilege and an obligation, and the Jamboree theme is appropriate to both, because we are "Proud to say, Vernonia, U.S.A."

We can accept the obligation that our pride places upon us by being responsible, caring Americans. It is, indeed, a privilege.