

Letters to the Editor

As individuals, we can make a difference

To the Editor:

It has been a most difficult year for many individuals and families in Columbia County. Our Federal and State funding shortages have stripped many jobs and opportunities from local residents. For many, times are not the best.

What might separate our county from other impacted areas of the country is the high level of local concern that is exemplified this holiday season by many of our residents, community leaders and service clubs. It did, indeed, make the season bright for many less fortunate than ourselves. But, the work has just begun.

The downturn in our state and local economies is far from over. Our resolve, as citizens, must continue in seasons yet to

come. There is not a time in memory when caring and sharing has been more necessary. We must continue our commitment to our fellow man. If you have never donated your time or helped in a time of need, please ask to work and serve in any way possible. It is said that adversity introduces us to ourselves. You may find the joy of volunteerism and giving does the heart good.

Debi and I want to thank you for all you do. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

Joe Corsiglia
Columbia County
Commissioner

Name change reflects group's services

To the Editor:

For many years The Retired Officers Association (TROA) has represented the interests of all military personnel (active

duty, reserve, and retired) regardless of grade or rank. Membership in TROA has been open to active duty, retired, and former military officers and warrant officers.

It has been recognized for some time that the name of the organization has given the impression that only retired military officers could belong to the organization. This has created a problem in recruiting new members. And recruitment has become more important as World War II and Korean War personnel get older and eventually pass away.

For that reason members decided to change the name of the organization to one which more accurately reflects the eligibility for membership in this group. The new name, effective on January 1st, is the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). The mission and the services of the organization will

not change as a result of the name change.

Should anyone be interested in learning more about MOAA, membership, or services offered, they are encouraged to call the national office at (800) 245-8762 or go to its web site which is currently www.troa.org. (I assume that the web site address will change in the not too distant future.) Or, they may contact e-mail me at mcdaniel@pacifi.com or call me at (503) 325-8933.

Don McDaniel, VicePresident
Lower Columbia Chapter
MOAA (TROA)
Astoria

New schools, yes, but more is needed

To the Editor:

I agree with The Independent and Michelle Blum when they call for new schools. Just as the buildings are destined for failure, during times of physical stress; the district itself is vulnerable to failure because of an outmoded design. When the physical buildings were designed, post and beam construction with masonry sheathing was reflective of the best public building architecture. Now we have seen this style tested and it fails. Would we rebuild the exact same physical structure? Of course not, that would be foolish.

Consider the public school district system we have that uses this building. It is reflective of a past era. Schoolchildren no longer bring in the harvest with their families and yet we have the time off from learning that was established to accommodate that bygone period. Summer vacation is the shutdown of learning for a quarter of the year; fall is a relearning of lessons forgotten during the summer. Students are either not learning or relearning for at least one third of the year. Does your company shutdown for three months and then spend another three starting back up? That would not be efficient and you would be put out of business by someone willing to work smarter and harder.

In a year-around school, a facility can educate a larger number of students by rotating student vacations so that 75 to 80 percent of students are in school at one time. Shorter vacations would mean less re-

learning time. If student time off was decreased from current levels, the rate at which they graduated from grade to grade would increase. Students would graduate earlier and enrollment would drop. Students could begin college classes at an earlier age, including PCC extension classes supported by PCC funding here in Vernonia. Students may also develop better study habits and work ethics with a more constant and stable school year format.

The teachers bring a more malignant vestige to our school's future. The Public Employees Retirement System is 15 BILLION dollars in debt and will attempt to make up that debt by pulling money from every public budget in the State, including school district 47J. The teachers' Union has resisted every effort to consider modifications that reflect the changes in the real world. Summer vacations for teachers are an abominable perk that the rest of us would never consider demanding of our employers. As previously stated, summers off do more than tan teachers. Summer vacations set back students academically. With the liability of PERS, and the unwillingness of the Teachers' unions to be a part of the solution, the public school system seems like a bad investment.

If the school was locally controlled and not union controlled, and if the mission of the schools was to educate according to a modern business blueprint and not in the style of decades past, then a new building would be a good investment. The district only uses the current buildings three quarters of the year, they give their employees three months of summer vacations and every single holiday, they operate during the winter when utilities are highest, and they spend another quarter of the year catching up on forgotten curriculum.

Blum and other concerned parents would be advised to consider that the relic that needs replacing isn't just brick and mortar. There are home, charter, and private school options. Students must pass a Certificate of Initial Mastery to graduate, and if these alternative options can educate students to achieve that level, then they should be considered valid. The Federal government

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Between the Bookends

By Ann Krutsinger, Library Assistant
Banks Public Library



Nothing is Impossible, by Christopher Reeve, is one of many new books available at the library. Written in a very conversational style, Mr. Reeve relates the tragedy of his accident that severed his spinal cord and how he felt

afterward. Ultimately he made a promise to his wife that he would try life as a quadriplegic for 2 years before deciding whether to continue living. Different than an autobiography, *Nothing is Impossible* tells the story of just how Reeve adjusted to his new life. He credits humor as the best tool for dealing with the deep anger and despondency that followed his spinal cord injury. He also relates the development of new therapies for quadriplegics that gives hope for regenera-

tion of spinal nerve tissue. Mr. Reeve never makes the reader feel as though his lot in life is worse than any of our own struggles. He creates a basis for understanding, a bond between the author and the reader. This is a compelling book of hope about rejuvenation, both physically and spiritually.

Don't forget Recycle Saturday, sponsored by the Friends of the Banks Library on the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the Swatco service yard on Sellers Road.

Banks Public Library: 111 Market Street.
Hours: Tues., Wed., Thurs., 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.;
Fri. and Sat. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Preschool Story Time: Wednesdays, 10:15
a.m., when school is in session.
Phone: (503) 324-1382
Internet: www.WILnet.wccis.lib.or.us.
to browse library resources or to
reserve materials electronically.

Ike Says . . .

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age, behind the old Ellson's Cedar Mill site. The obstruction at Fred Skidmore's has had the North side cut out and is easily passed with a kayak, but might be interesting in a drift boat. I had a new toy on this trip—a helmet camera. This is a video camera that hooks to a camcorder. I had to buy a waterproof case to keep the camcorder dry, but the camera is water proof and mounts on the side of my helmet. It shot good pictures and I can't wait to take it on a good run with big waves.

What's new for hunting and fishing this year? Not a lot. There are very few changes for hunters and it will be the usual routine for fishermen. One hunting change that caught my eye is allowing landowners to purchase one leftover tag in units that have spike-only hunts.

The catch here is that landowners don't have

to go by the same rules as the general public — their tags are for any bull, while the general public has to draw for very limited any-bull tags or the liberal spike-only tag. What this is doing, essentially, is giving the landowners another high dollar tag to sell, which furthers the commercialization of public resources. This is just another example of why ODF&W commissioners should be selected by the hunters that support the agency, not the bureaucrats who are capitalizing on it. Slowly, but steadily, we are being converted into another Texas, where the wildlife belongs to the landowners and the public pays.

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.