

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Credit Union helped neighbors succeed

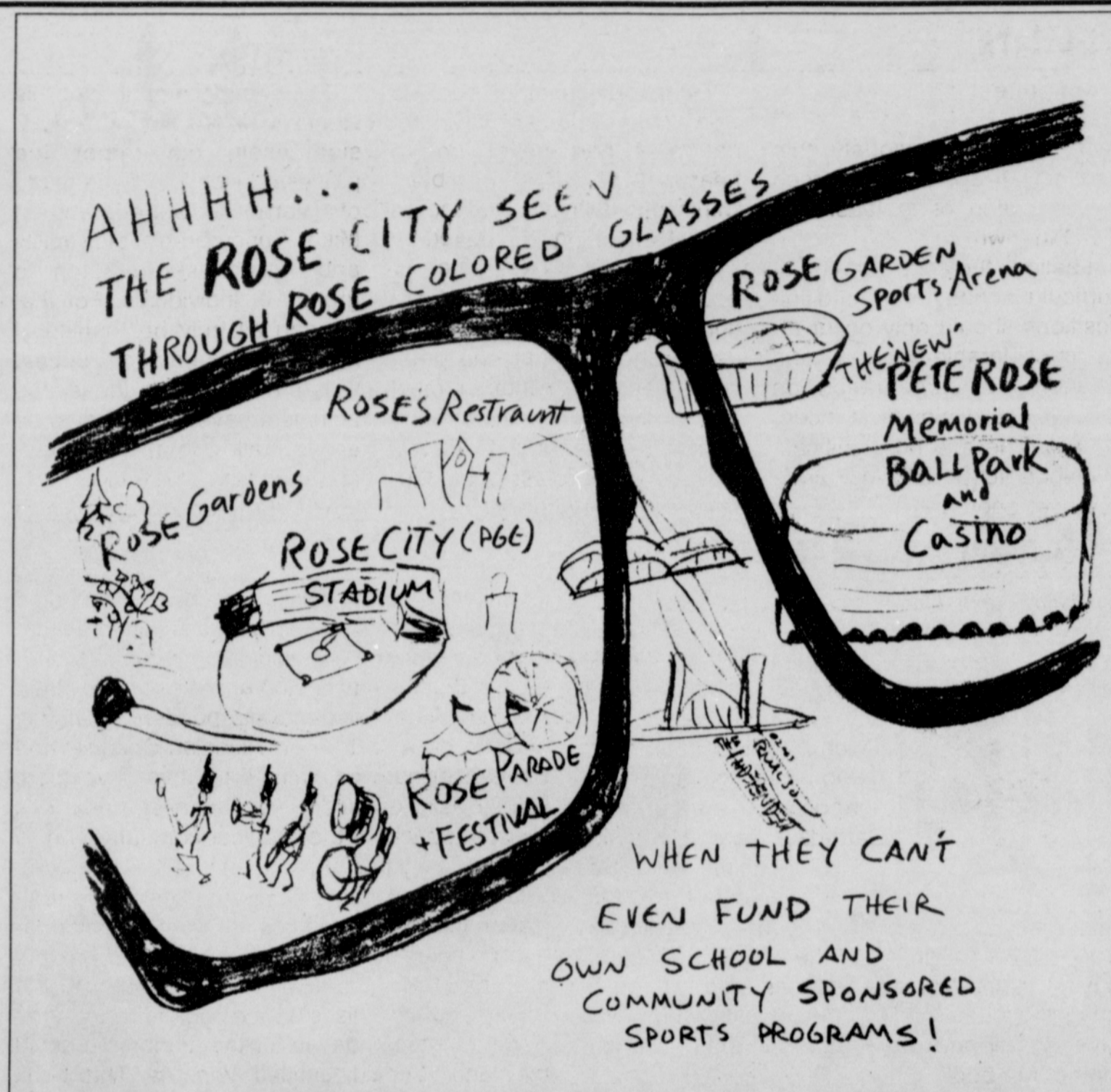
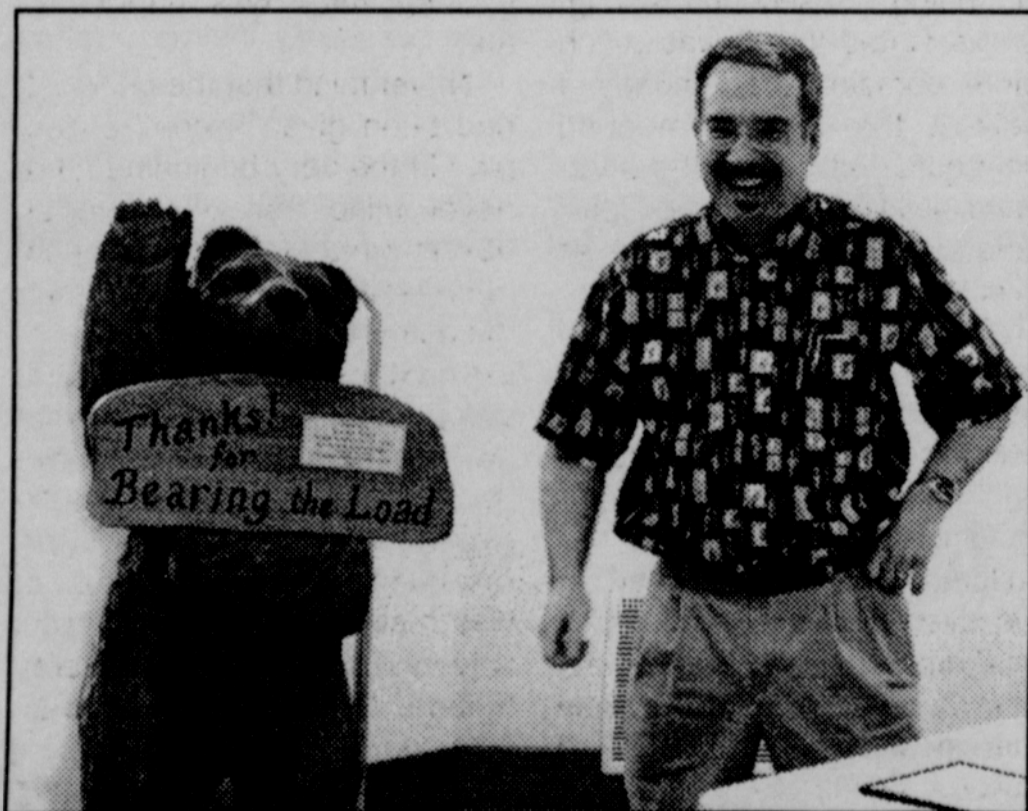
Most small town people are familiar with credit unions, but may not know how they differ from profit-making financial institutions. About the easiest way to explain the difference is to say that credit unions are, basically, co-ops. In other words, they are owned by the people they serve and decisions are made by volunteers on the board of directors and the various committees. Credit unions have employees, certainly, but volunteers still determine policy.

A lot of those volunteers were recognized at the final annual meeting of the Vernonia Federal Credit Union, but they deserve more recognition. Here they are:

- Sam Hearing, too many years and committees to specify
- Gary Davis, 21 years, Board of Directors
- Mary Tolonen, 19 years, Loan Committee
- Ken Bateman, 15 years, Board of Directors
- Darlene McLeod, 14 years, Loan Committee
- Arnie Tolonen, 12 years, Board of Directors
- Melissa Hunt, 7 years, committee not specified
- Carol Davis, 7 years, Supervisory Committee
- Pat Schrier, 7 years, Supervisory Committee
- Betty Holsey, 4 years, Supervisory Committee
- Rick Gwin, 4 years, committee not specified
- Gunny Cox, 4 years, committee not specified

To all the others who weren't at that meeting, the rest of us can only say "Thank you for helping."

As for VFCU's only manager, see below:



Letters

Board decision on Mist is not adequate

To the Editor:

The Vernonia School Board at their May 6th special meeting voted to keep Mist Grade School open next year as a single room, single teacher (with aide), K-5 grade level. This is to serve local students and up to 10 students from Vernonia. The decision seemed to appease most area residents.

I hope that the administration does not see this as merely a compromise to a small group and fail to support it in every way possible. I trust they will, and believe that parents and community members will step up to assist.

I am deeply saddened that a long-standing mutual agreement between two communities has been broken. This agreement, which was honored for over forty years, was made in an era where a man's word was indeed his word. Maybe the ideals of that era no longer exist. It may also typify what people will do when they do not have roots or a vested interest in a community. This second premise could easily be accepted, as the action is consistent

with others within the last week. This decision does not respect the spirit of unity and may have seriously jeopardized some levels of trust. Mist Grade School is a true gem. It should not be written off.

What began long ago as a small community school became district wide five years back to address issues of smaller class sizes out at Mist. A prior superintendent experimented with placing a teacher and her straight 3rd grade class in Mist. He did this to promote it; to sell parents on the idea of a small rural school. It worked. Parents liked it and the following year Mist became a K-6 blend with three teachers. Busing students from Vernonia to Mist was, and is, voluntary.

Since that time enrollment has steadily increased. Mist currently serves 65 students from throughout the district. There are students and parents who want this quiet, rural education for their children.

The reason did include money at first. Send more kids to a rural school and collect more money for them. One could debate the ethics issue, but on the other hand we are providing children with an alternative for

their education.

I am not knocking Vernonia area schools or staff as they are highly qualified and care for the kids equally. The Mist option, however, provides an environment and social experience unlike others in the district. Many excel in Mist's small environment that might not in the larger Vernonia schools. Most districts have no choice. We do and we should continue to maximize options for all of our children.

At the May 1 special board meeting, three cost analysis scenarios were presented concerning Mist. This was followed by a discussion of blended classrooms versus single grade classes. There are now three blends at Mist and one split in Vernonia. Under the scenarios studied, blends work into the picture as a means to match enrollment with educational staff. Blends do not work well for some children and some teachers don't like them, but the converse can be true as well. Mist elementary is a perfect example. They had hoped to sacrifice only one position to Vernonia. What remained might be one class of K-3 and one class of 4-5. This better aligned the

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