

Letters

Music program loses in budget decisions

To the Editor:

As a student at Vernonia High School, I have a few complaints regarding the focus of the school's attention.

For the past few years, I have been in band and I planned to attend college, hopefully through a music scholarship. I have invested a lot of time into the music program and have gotten a lot out of it, too.

This year, due to budget cuts, our highly qualified music instructor left and the school district hired a new instructor. The new teacher is fresh out of college and doesn't have the depth of knowledge and experience the former instructor had. Half the band quit because of that, but I'm sticking with it because I really want to go to col-

lege.

I realize sports build character and discipline, but so does the music program. It deserves the same attention and somewhere close to the same budget. For the sake of every former and potential music student, please take these comments seriously.

Chris Richardson
Vernonia

An ugly side shown of some VHS teens

To the Editor:

On November 19, Vernonia High School held an assembly to honor the students who raised their GPA. At the end of the assembly our English and Leadership teacher Mrs. Dickens asked for a moment of silence to honor the young man from Vernonia who died in a helicopter crash in Iraq. The ac-

tions of some of my fellow students during that assembly were appalling, to not only myself but to many others as well. During the honoring of the dead soldier there was laughing, talking, comments such as "I didn't know him why should I care?" And, "Proud to be an anarchist" was sung in place of "Proud to be an American."

I would like to take this time to tell those students who showed so much disrespect that it is because of that dead soldier they have the right to be disrespectful, and to sing their own versions of "Proud to be an American." I personally know some students who spit on and disgrace the flag, and I want them to know they have that right because of what that soldier and many others like him have sacrificed. I know that our country isn't perfect, that the government has its faults,

and some believe that our troops should be brought home. But, the soldiers are not fighting for the government alone; they are fighting for their fellow Americans and their family and friends as well.

At that assembly I saw an ugly side of several of my peers. A man who day after day put his life on the line for our freedom and was from our town died! Several people at that assembly knew the fallen soldier and were devastated to hear and see the way people reacted while his memory was being honored, and at times like this I am embarrassed for my generation. What type of people are being raised today where they can sit there and be so disrespectful? My generation needs to take a look at themselves and ask if they want to be remembered as the spoiled generation that dishonored their fallen countrymen and this country? Let that display of disrespect be the exception not the example of which we follow.

I personally would like to thank the soldiers of our country, for their service, sacrifice, and dedication.

Sincerely,
Larinda Botchie
Sophomore
Vernonia High School

Road to "Nowhere" is new park entrance

To the Editor:

Boy, was I surprised to see this month's (Nov. 20, 2003) cartoon in The Independent! I would hope that is not the image all Vernonia area residents have of the new developments along the highway just south of Tophill.

In reality, this is just the first step for the entrance for the upcoming new State Park to be located on 1600 acres from Buxton to Tophill east of Highway 47. The reason it leads to "nowhere" is that ODOT and the Oregon State Parks & Recreation Department are not the same and must each do their jobs to complete the project. Further developments for the new park (Hares Canyon State Park) will be forthcoming as funds set aside by the State's budget process and Federal monies earmarked for this project are made available.

People should get used to the fact that when the entrance is finally open, passing on that stretch will become a thing of

the past! This is due to the new "escape" lane that will be marked on the northbound (east) side of the highway, and the left turn lane that will be marked in the southbound lane (center of the highway). A new sign telling us all of the new park and it's companion Banks-Vernonia Linear Trail will be seen soon near this entry.

I have been involved with the public information meetings on this project for the past two years and helped to pick the name for the park. If anyone knows more about the park's namesake I would appreciate hearing from you. I believe the canyon and the creek to be named for William Davenport Hare.

For more information on this project contact Kathy Schutt (Planning Manager OPRD) at <Kathy.Schutt@state.or.us> or Dennis Wiley (Area Manager OPRD), <Dennis.Wiley@state.or.us>.

Greg Kintz
Vernonia

Responsible public behavior is needed

To the Editor:

It has become increasingly clear to many of us that our elected public officials need to understand when they make statements to the public they should indicate whether it is their own opinion or representative of the body to which they belong. Examples of late have come from our Scappoose city Council, County Board of Commissioners, or Port of St. Helens to name a few.

I believe it would behoove all of our public elected bodies to have a policy in place which states it is certainly permissible to make public your own position on issues BUT if it is your own opinion you need to say so. In other words, when the public hears or reads an elected official's opinion there should be a disclaimer if what has been said is NOT the stance of the public body.

In Scappoose, we have had a city councilor who has written letters to the editor regarding what someone else has said about city council actions. I never saw a disclaimer in his letters indicating he was representing his own opinion on the issue being discussed. Another example is a member of the Port of St. Helens. Again there

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Between the Bookends

By Ann Krutsinger, Library Assistant
Banks Public Library



Banks Public Library will be closed for the Christmas holiday from Wednesday, December 24, through Friday, December 26. We will reopen on Saturday, December 27, from 11 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., as usual. Library hours will be 11 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday,

December 31 (New Year's Eve.). The library will be closed on New Year's Day, but will reopen Friday, January 2 with regular hours, 11 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Boxes of glossy books are arriving daily for the Friends of the Banks Library Holiday Book Fest. Come shop in a relaxed, stress-free environment and help benefit the programs sponsored by the Friends. The Holiday Book Fest will be held on Thursday, December 4, from 3:00 - 7:00 p.m.

During the busy holiday season it always seems like I spend far more time than usual in the car, driving to procure the necessary items for Thanksgiving or Christmas - presents, food, etc. While fighting traffic, or just hitting the road for a long day of errands, I've found that instead of listening to music or news, I can "read" a book by checking out a book on either tape or CD from the library! Now that I have gotten used to actually having to listen to the tape (as opposed to blocking out the commercials on the radio), I really love having someone read me a story. It is very soothing. Now I look for excuses to get into the car so I can find out what happens next in my book!

I just finished *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. I just loved the story, a tale about a young woman in the South who had lost her mother in a terrible way...but I won't give away the story. As the tale unfolds, the girl finds out the truth about who her mother really was, and finds

a new "family" of sorts to love her. The best part about listening to the CD as opposed to reading it, is that the narrator, Jenna Lamia, uses Southern accents that enhanced my internal vision of the story.

Now I am listening to the second book in Larry McMurtry's newest trilogy, "The Berrybender" trilogy, called *The Wandering Hill*. The first book tells the story of the Berrybender family, a wealthy English family whose father has decided that they should experience the American West. The Berrybenders start out traveling up the Missouri River. Book two opens where book one left off. The oldest daughter, Tasmine, has married a mountain man they call the Sinkiller, and now she is about to give birth to his child. The Berrybenders left the boat because winter has frozen the river. They later find out that everyone left on the boat has been killed. This is a classic tale about the clash of the civilized world and the natural world. Tasmine can read and speak Latin better than her mountain man husband, Jim Snow, but she can't kill dinner or skin it either. The twists and turns in McMurtry's plots are endless - people quite often are walking along one minute and dead the next, with no warning. There is danger in every step. But the seriousness of living and traveling with a baby in the wilderness is balanced by colorful conversation and lively imaginings by the many characters that come and go along their path, to where, we aren't yet sure. McMurtry lets us see into the minds of many of his characters, not just Tasmine or Jim Snow.

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., through July.
Phone: (503) 324-1382
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to browse library resources or to
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