

# Changes in grad requirements and sixth grade coming next year

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boiler room roof needs to be replaced, as well. Lewis and Funderburg told the board that the

boiler room roof is not a high priority since it is a non-student area and moisture can do little damage there.

According to Ingram, the cost of the seismic improvements would be approximately \$35,000, plus \$150,000 -

\$165,000 to replace the roof.

## Change in graduation requirements

The board approved a change in the courses required for graduation, but not in the number of credits required (25.5). The major change is removing the senior project from senior English and adding a career-learning project. Students will receive one credit for career education and the project, for work accomplished throughout their high school career, primarily during advisory time.

Family Living will be removed from the curriculum because the course content is redundant, being covered in personal finance and health classes. The change will allow greater flexibility in student scheduling. The remainder of graduation requirements are unchanged.

## Middle School Changes

Sixth grade classes will be restructured next year, WGS Principal Nate Underwood reported. Currently, teachers share some duties, but the sixth grade is somewhat isolated from the rest of the school.

Best practices for this grade level, he explained, conclude that increasing electives, plus contact with a broader age

range of students and several teachers, allows children to make the transition from the self-contained elementary classroom to junior high and high school more easily. Underwood also told the board that a 6-7-8 grade mix is easier to manage and allows students and teachers better opportunities to resolve the inevitable personality conflicts.

Next year, sixth grade students will have a homeroom, where core classes will be taught, including physical education. The students will also be included in some of the elective classes taught at the junior high level. This limited integration of sixth grade will allow more electives for students and greater flexibility for teachers.

## Transportation

Funderburg reported that Vernonia Rural Fire District Chief Paul Epler has been instrumental in establishing radio contact between the schools and buses. When complete, the district will have a repeater on the Corey Hill emergency communications tower. The district and Curl Transportation are sharing costs related to the school district.

Negotiations on a new transportation contract will soon begin, Funderburg added.

## Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian  
Vernonia Public Library



April showers are said to bring May flowers, but they also have brought "April flowers." The daffodils and tulips at the library have been blooming, as have the forsythia and the ornamental plum trees. Next to come will be the rhododendrons, dogwood and mountain laurel. The mountain laurels (kalmia) are those three shrubs that resemble azalea plants, but maintain their leaves all year. When they first begin to bloom, the blossoms are bright red and as they open, they become pinkish and last for quite a long time. Many people have asked about these pretty little shrubs which were recently featured in an issue of Buds and Blooms (just one of the gardening magazines that may be found at the library). The beauty of the flowers and plants is especially noticeable this Spring, due to the weeding and general clean-up done by Carol and Andy Senn and the entire Huntington family. This was a wonderful contribution by these families to aid the library in a manner not covered in its budget. In another much appreciated effort to bring beauty to the library, Jo Ricker continued her tradition of giving the library a lovely Easter lily.

Contributions were also recently made in the form of donations to memorials for both Penny Michener and Chris Collins. The memory of these long-time residents and lovers of learning will be kept alive as appropriate books are added to the library's collection in their names.

Newest additions to the library's collection include *Glorious Appearing* by Tim Lahaye, *The Body of David Hayes* by Ridley Pearson, *Firestorm* by Iris Johansen, *It Had to Be You* by Jill Churchill, *Three Weeks with my Brother* by Nicholas Sparks, *Nighttime is My Time* by Mary Higgins Clark, *Sleeping Beauty* by Phillip Margolin, *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult and *The Cloud Atlas* by Liam Callanan.

I've just finished reading *My Sister's Keeper* and feel that it is Jodi Picoult's best novel yet. It introduces the concept of the right of a teenager to make decisions concerning her own body. Anna Fitzgerald was conceived as a bone marrow match for her sister, Kate, who has acute promyelocytic leukemia. It, of course does not end with Anna's giving blood and bone marrow one time, but many, many times to the point where Kate is now needing a kidney transplant—of course from the perfect match, Anna. This story has a completely (at least to me) unexpected ending, and is about so much more than just Anna's wishes. The effect that Kate's illness has on the sisters, their brother and their parents is really what this book is about. It's about what it means to be a good parent, a good sister, a good person and whether it's worth dis-

covering who you really are if that quest makes you like yourself less.

*The Cloud Atlas*, a debut novel by Liam Callanan, is the other book I've recently read. This is the story of a young soldier, Louis Belk, who was sent to Alaska during the final days of World War II. Louis' top-secret mission was to find and defuse the ingenious, deadly Japanese balloon bombs. As his superiors usher him into a world of dark secrets and an Eskimo woman introduces him to a disorienting world of spirits, Louis makes a discovery and a choice that changes the course of his life. The topic of these rice paper balloon bombs has become fascinating to me since Rick Francona's Chautauqua presentation last spring, and I couldn't resist purchasing and reading this novel.

The library's quota of Chautauqua programs for this period ended with Ed Edmo's presentation April 13th. The Friends of the Library and Library Board members would like to thank the public for their attendance and favorable comments regarding these programs and hope to continue to bring these educational, entertaining presentations to the community.

The next entertaining event to come will be Thursday, April 29 at 8 p.m. when Paul Linnman will be at the library. One of the most recognizable broadcasters in the Northwest, Paul began his career as a film editor with KATU. It was during this time, in 1970, when he was sent to Florence to cover the infamous "exploding whale" episode. Paul will be discussing this and other events he has covered as a newscaster and probably mentioning some of the remarkable stories he related in his "Spirit of the Northwest" segments. Copies of his book, *The Exploding Whale: And other Remarkable Stories from the Evening News*, will be available for purchase and signing by Paul. We're hoping for a large attendance at this presentation to show support for Paul and his book and because it should be very enjoyable.

Among the activities for National Library Week, April 18-24, we will have a coloring contest, guessing contest and library scavenger hunt. Check in the library for information about these events. That week will also be a week of amnesty for overdue library materials. Return overdue materials that week along with a donation of non-perishable food for Vernonia Cares and accrued fines on those materials will be forgiven. This is a week to benefit the library (materials returned), patrons (fines forgiven) and Vernonia Cares (donations).

**Vernonia Public Library:** 701 Weed Ave.  
**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.  
**Preschool Story Time:** Mondays, 10:30  
a.m., when school is in session.  
**Phone:** (503) 429-1818

## Letters

### Senior Spelling Bee was a great success

To the Editor:

Vernonia's fourth annual senior spelling bee was a huge success, with contestants from Vernonia, Clatskanie and Mist taking part in a very competitive contest.

Thank you to the Senior Center for their help and support, and to SENTRY Market for providing refreshments for the event. Thank you to Carolyn Keasey, who presided over the refreshment table.

Thanks to Tobie Finzel, who pronounced the words, and to Bob Wagner and Carol Sawyer for serving as judges. (Tobie and Carol are both previous local and state winners, and both brought home trophies from the national competition last year.)

**Audeen Wagner**  
Coordinator

### Thanks to all during Spring Charity Bazaar

To the Editor:

We wish to thank all who came out and supported the first annual Spring Charity Bazaar. With your help we were able to raise both money and canned food for Vernonia Cares.

We want to thank all the vendors, as well as the following for their help and donations: Pastor Grant Williams, The Independent, Mike Pihl Logging, Paul and Julie Ramsey, Derek Ramsey, the Portland Trail Blazers, Vernonia SENTRY, Shannon Dotter, Denal Wardell, Mike Ferguson, Pastor D. J. Dickey, Clayton Smith, and Chantel Trass.

Sincerely,  
**Corrie Smith**  
**Kristin Ramsey**  
**Sharon Ferguson**