

## Letters

### Art is too important for board to cut back

To the Editor:

For the last 27 years I've given my time, my money and my heart to develop what I feel is one of the best art programs in the state, if not the country. Our kids get a wider variety of mediums than most schools. The program is designed for everyone, the artist and non-artist alike.

Everyone is successful in the art room. It's the one class where they leave with a physical project that can either be hung on a wall or displayed on a shelf. How many of you out there have spoon holders on your stoves that came out of the art room? They are a product of the 8th grade sculpture unit. 7th and 8th graders also learn graphic design, calligraphy and black and white pho-

tography.

The school district has proposed to cut the Jr. High Art program next year. The program services all the 7th and 8th grade students. It's a progression that gets them ready for more advanced art techniques and media in high school. The IEP students can also come into art and be on the same level as everyone else. They are not tagged or labeled in the art room. If anything, they excel beyond anyone's expectations.

I came here in 1977 and was told by Darrell Proehl, the Superintendent at the time, that they wanted to build an art program that would teach all kids to appreciate the arts. Since then, every administration and school board has supported the art classes, up until now. This is the first time it's ever been considered for a budget cut. I don't

want to hear the excuse there is no money. We've gone through several bad times in my 27 years and the program is stronger than ever.

Next year they plan on developing a new middle school that will include the 6th grade class. It's even more important that art becomes part of this middle school curriculum. The 1990 Oregon Education Reform Act put the Arts into the core curricula, meaning that students must meet learning benchmarks in third, fifth, eighth and tenth grades in support of meeting educational standards in all content areas, including the arts.

I have had 60 students in my HS Art 1 classes this year, and 40 of them are freshman. Because of Jr. high art, these students have a solid foundation to begin their high school arts. You cannot teach higher math

without students knowing basic addition, and the same applies for the arts.

I'm sending out this invitation to the community to please help us stop the elimination of a program that is so important to the instruction of our children. Jr. high art needs to stay in our curriculum. Art teaches the appreciation of work done to the best of one's ability. Art is a language of visual images that everyone must learn to read. You cannot create art without touching on values; values about home and family, work and play, the individual and society, nature and environment, war and peace, beauty and ugliness, violence and love.

All students should have the opportunity to express themselves through visual means. Communication through art is a powerful thing. Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words.

Write to the school board and let them know your concerns. Call the district office. Attend the next school board meeting on May 13th and budget meeting May 27th.

To the district, it's about numbers. To the students, it's about missing an important segment of their lives.

**Doug Tesdal**  
District Art Instructor  
Vernonia

### Is your family worth \$54 in an emergency?

To the Editor:

The Operating Levy for the Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District failed last year. This wasn't because the majority voted against it. Seventy percent of the voters who bothered to vote were in favor of the bond measure. The measure failed because some of you just didn't vote. The votes fell one percent short of the required 51 percent of voters necessary.

[9-1-1's] Dispatch volume has more than doubled in the past decade. If this bond levy fails, the next time you need assistance, the response may not be as effective. The cost of this service is reasonable. The 9-1-1 Levy for a \$100,000 home is \$54.00 per year. The bottom line is, is the health and safety of your family worth \$54.00 per year? Mine is, and I will vote to support this levy again.

The five-year Operating Fund supports all ongoing functions of the 9-1-1 call center, such as 24-hour staffing, training and coordination with local and state emergency operations. Renewal of the funding will maintain the level of efficient, responsive service citizens now receive. The existing levy expires on June 30th. All this ballot measure does is keep it going AT A LOWER RATE THAN WE ARE PAYING NOW.

Take 5 minutes out of your day, fill out your ballot and mail it in. Your life is worth more than the cost of a postage stamp, isn't it?

**Cindy Ball**  
Mayor  
City of Vernonia

### Are you certain you will never need 9-1-1?

To the Editor:

Ponder this scenario. A loved one is stung by a bee and develops difficulty breathing. Without thinking you call 9-1-1... and you're put on hold. With the phone receiver in hand you attempt to help your loved one. FACT: Living in rural Columbia County emergency vehicle transport time is double or even triple that of the valley.

As a former volunteer emergency medical technician (EMT), wife of a volunteer fire fighter and mother of a volunteer EMT paramedic, I understand both the need and the tragic result of an ineffective 9-1-1.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- This operating levy supports 24-hour staffing, training and co-ordination with local and state emergency operations.

- Columbia 9-1-1 dispatches for 16 public safety agencies.

- The average call volume of 240 calls per day and dispatch volume of 175 incidents per day is double that of 10 years ago.

Still not convinced? Well, this is my last ditch effort. A great man once said, "Thou shall love (help) thy neighbor." I can't think of a better way to help your neighbor than the assurance that in the event of a medical, fire or police emergency their call is answered and acted upon immediately.

**Please see page 23**

## Between the Bookends

By Ann Krutsinger, Library Assistant  
Banks Public Library



Finally, the Oregon presidential primary election is upon us. Ballots should be in the voter's hands by the time this article is printed.

Among the ballot measures is Washington County Measure 34-77, a five-year local option levy that would restore and maintain public library services in Washington County. Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) provides funding for county-wide library operations, outreach programs, and central services that link together the county's public libraries. Funds from this levy can be used only for library operations (staff, utilities, and materials.) On an average, county-wide, 67 percent of library operating funding comes from WCCLS.

Measure 34-77, if passed, will cost a fixed rate of 26 cents per \$1000.00 of assessed value (not market value). The average homeowner would pay an additional \$43 in property taxes in 2004 (average home assessed at \$165,000). An estimated \$48 million would be levied county-wide over a five-year period.

#### What would Measure 34-77 mean to the Banks Public Library if it passes?

- Restore budget for books and other materials:

A 20 percent reduction in the book budget was made after the defeat of the November, 2002, Washington County Library Levy. The book budget would be restored to its former level.

- Restore and maintain service levels to respond to increases in population and use:

Add one full day per week of open hours: Monday 11 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

- Repair and replace computer equipment, offer word processing capabilities and more Internet access.

- Maintain staffing levels to serve the growing population.

- Reinstate programs eliminated this year, such as the Club Newbery and Family Cultural programs.

#### What Banks Public Library Services would be reduced if Measure 34-77 fails?

- Reduced budget for books and materials: Further reduction in available materials. Longer waiting times for best sellers, books on tape and other frequently checked out items.

- Reduced library hours and service levels.
- Reduced library staff to provide assistance in-person or by phone:

- Longer lines at the check out desk. Reduced open hours.

- Reduced funding for public access computer equipment:

Shorter session times for use of Internet on public access terminals. Longer waiting time for public computer use. Elimination of computer equipment repairs, replacements or purchases.

For more information about Measure 34-77, go to [www.WILInet.wccls.lib.or.us](http://www.WILInet.wccls.lib.or.us)

**REMEMBER:** the Banks Public Library is an official Washington County Ballot Drop Site. You may drop off your ballots during open hours inside the library. Do not put ballots in the outside drop box.

**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

**Internet:** [www.WILInet.wccls.lib.or.us](http://www.WILInet.wccls.lib.or.us)  
to browse library resources or to reserve materials electronically.