

Letters

Review of efforts to build a Senior Center

To the Editor: I have received several calls to verify rumors surrounding the planned new senior center. Clearly it is time to review progress on the project.

Our work over the last several years has been aimed at identifying and obtaining a feasible site for the new Center. After much research, we concluded that a site just west of Vernonia Lake was the best place for the project. The site is set back from the path around the lake because of city plans to add parking at the lake and adjacent property in the city's park system. An access road and sewer facilities required by the new Senior Center will use part of that property. At this point, we needed to determine who would be the owner of the project.

and former County Commissioner and State Representative Bruce Hugo. Community Action Team staff acts as staff to the Self Help board. In addition to CAT's offices, Self Help purchased and owned the Columbia Pacific Food Bank building in St. Helens for more than ten years until the food bank asked to purchase it.

During the last several months important questions and reservations held by our board, City Council and the Self Help board have been answered. An option agreement is being prepared for review by all concerned. We expect to have it approved and executed early in August. At that point, we can begin raising funds.

Because our project also includes a new home for Vernonia Cares, it is larger than most new senior centers. We expect it to cost close to \$1 million. The city can request \$600,000 from the state in the form of a Community Development Block Grant. That means we will need to raise approximately \$400,000 in other funds to complete the project. That is very ambitious, but we are optimistic that we will eventually be successful.

A few weeks ago, Jim Tierney, who has been staffing the project for us, was approached by members of the Hands on Art board with the possibility that they might also find a home in this new building. Jim listened and explained that our board would have to approve such a change, and that our fund plan was already aggressive. He also said that Vernonia Cares should be consulted. Jim tells me that the issue was expected to be raised at the Hands on Art board meeting and that they would get back to us. Later that day he provided the same information to the City Council. Although we continue to field rumors on the subject, the Senior Board has not yet heard from Hands on Art and we consider it just speculation at this point.

I hope this report will help alleviate the many rumors that are circulating about the new Center. Anyone who is concerned or curious is welcome to call me at 503-429-3912 or Tierney at 503-366-6575.

**Bill James, President
Vernonia Senior Center**

I am told that projects funded using a Community Development Block Grant, like the new Senior Center, are typically owned by a city or county. As budgets have become tighter in recent years, many municipalities have preferred that ownership of such projects be vested in the user organization or an intermediary. This is said to bring a sense of fiscal responsibility to these organizations, encouraging volunteer maintenance along with reasonable contributions to sinking funds for future repairs. It also takes the cities off the hook if a problem occurs. The downside to this strategy is that many small organizations have limited financial capacity to respond to unforeseen events.

As we began arranging ownership documents, city staff conveyed their preference for the Seniors to be the owner of the new building. After reviewing their options, the Senior Center board voted to ask Columbia County Self Help, Inc. to act as its intermediary, accepting ownership of the project until a sufficient cash reserve has been accumulated and both can be transferred to the seniors.

Self Help is a charitable non-profit that Rocky Johnson, Community Action Team's executive director, formed 20 years ago specifically as a real estate holding company. Self Help's mission is to assist area non-profits by reducing their space costs. In addition to Johnson, the Self Help board includes Circuit Court Judge Ted Grove, former Columbia River PUD General Manager Fergus Pilon, former Columbia County Assessor Tom Linhares

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library



Summer reading will be continuing through Jamboree weekend with the library's entry in the annual parade bringing the programs to a conclusion. Youngsters are encouraged to complete their reading goals with prizes being awarded until August 18th. Yet to come are sessions at 10 a.m. on July 21, July 28 and August 4 as well as the special visit by Aunt Lena (Anne-Louise Sterry) at 7:00 p.m. on July 21. Ms. Sterry is an extraordinary performer whose joy in storytelling and singing is contagious. Young and old alike are encouraged to attend this "untold story of Lena, the Italian girl, and her part in the Lewis and Clark expedition." The event will be sponsored by The Friends of the Library.

Saturday, July 31, from 9-12 will be the final chance to drop off books for the annual book sale sponsored by The Friends of the Library. The sale and book drop will take place at Glen Purvee's building (the old bowling alley). The

sale will take place on Saturday of Jamboree weekend from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., with the last hour being a bag sale (all you can get in a bag for a \$1.00). Winning tickets for the four raffle prizes will be drawn at 5:00 p.m. This is the main money-raising event of this organization. Your continued support is appreciated and you're sure to find some great books at only 25 cents each.

Recently donated to The Friends of the Library and designated for children's education, anything to encourage young people to develop their reading skills or desire to read, was a generous check from the Mark & Helena Greathouse Family Fund. Mark Greathouse is a son of Kathryn Malmsten, a longtime Vernonia resident. This much appreciated gift will be used for children's nonfiction materials, audio books and additional beginning reader books.

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

By Ann Krutsinger, Library Assistant
Banks Public Library



The Banks Public Library has had to readjust our hours because of fiscal concerns. The Washington County Library Levy passed, but ultimately failed because of light voter turnout. Because of this, our open hours have been reduced by one hour per day. Starting July 1, we will be opening at 12 noon instead of 11 a.m. on our regular open days. We will still be open Tuesday through Saturday. We will continue to be closed on Sundays and Mondays. We are sorry for any inconvenience this might cause.

Summer Reading Programming is underway! Join us Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. Your child can enter a weekly drawing and win a beautiful hard-back book! Just fill out one of the entry forms at the library with the name of a recently read book and drop it in the box! Drawings are held weekly before the start of the program, but you don't need to be present to win.

If you missed the first two programs, you can still join us for the remainder of the stimulating Summer Reading Program. Summer Reading Sign-ups continue through July 17th.

July 22 – BJ The Clown: He's back! Summer wouldn't be summer at the library without BJ's latest fun-filled show!

July 29 – Angel Ocasio: A very funny and high-energy one-man act. His performances combine physical comedy, jokes, magic and more!

August 5 – Creature Feature: Steve Lattanzi is a well-traveled reptile naturalist. He will share a wide variety of live reptiles from all over the world.

Participants can choose their own reading goal for the summer. Starting August 1st you can bring in your completed reading record and choose a brand new book from our supply of reward books. Verizon, State Farm Insurance Co. and Wells Fargo Bank sponsor the purchase of the reward books.

In addition to the Summer Programs, Preschool Story time will continue every Wednesday at 10:15 a.m. through July. Preschool Story time will remain at 10:15 a.m.

Attention all adult readers! New books are in! The Bill Clinton autobiography *My Life* should provide hours of entertainment. Other new books include D.W. Buffa's newest, *Breach of Trust*, Larry McMurtry's final book in the Berrybender Saga series *Folly and Glory*, and a new Ann B. Ross book, *Miss Julia Meets Her Match*. Be sure to get on the waiting list for the newest Janet Evanovich *Ten Big Ones*. Happy summer reading!

Banks Public Library: 111 Market Street.
Hours: Tues., Wed., Thurs., 12 - 7 p.m.;
Fri. and Sat. 12 - 5 p.m.
Preschool Story Time: Wednesdays, 10:15 a.m., through July.
Phone: (503) 324-1382
Internet: www.WILLnet.wccls.lib.or.us.
to browse library resources or to reserve materials electronically.