

Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



No bites today, just a very big concern on my mind. I attended a special meeting called by Vernonia Cares on Aug. 18. It was an alarming call for help. They are in peril of having to shut down. Not because they won't have USDA food stuffs and your donated foods. Consider this – they have to pay hard cash for lights, water, rent, insurances (fire, flood and injury), plus telephone and one person's wages. Those \$'s are not coming in like they used to. Don't get me wrong, what comes in they use to buy food bank groceries for the ever-increasing number of folks who, through no fault of theirs, have no form of adequate income, and some with nowhere to live.

During United Way Campaigns, Sept. – Nov., Vernonia Cares dares not try to raise money in any form for themselves. My suggestion to all who care: If you can afford it, instead of that extra case of pop or beer, carton of cigarettes or even a night out, give the cost or take it to Cares. Did you know your cash can buy more food at the food bank (thru Cares) than if you buy canned goods and give it to them?? I think they pay 19¢ a can when we pay from 50¢ to 90¢ or better and, if needed, the cash pays the bills and upkeep to keep the doors open. Become a volunteer, join the group, be a member on the Board with input on how to keep helping Vernonia be a town that cares for its own. One more thing, don't ever think you will never need them – some of your friends need you now.

Meeting scheduled on illegal dumping

The Columbia County Reduce Illegal Dumping (RID) Task Force will hold a public meeting Wednesday, September 15 at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting will be held at the Port of St. Helens office, 100 E St., Columbia City.

O.K., I've seen the vanguard of four Canadian geese checking out the lake the past week. I think it's early but maybe they know something we don't. Oh, by the way, I didn't kill my cat, but I'm still trying to figure out how he caught the hummingbird.

Our streets are looking up and it seems all roads out of Vernonia are getting some much needed help – Clatskanie has new patches – big ones, Rainier has a 3-mile stretch being working on – even Scappoose is getting a work-over at the light. I hope it makes it easier to turn left on Hwy 30.

I went peach picking this past week in Banks. Ahh, tree ripened peach pie, jam or just over ice cream. Hungry, yet? Don't be mad, Randy.

I just had another excellent idea of how to use the parking lot at the lake – top off the sawdust burner with floor and gazebo for an outdoor stage for Bar-B-Qs and other gatherings. Yes??

And Now – Guilty Person, you have "ticked" me off again. There are many animal walkers at the lake, yes. About 3 years ago someone took the pet watering pan. Why? Who knows, anyhow, Shadow gave up her outdoor pan for the benefit of all her friends that used the watering pan. Well, it has now disappeared, in the heat of the summer, also. Why? Do you know why you needed it so bad?? Shadow is now giving up her "rattiest" out door pan for her friends.

Why act so small? What can you use it for? Surely not for cooking? To bathe in? There is the river. If you have a shameful bone in your body please just return it to the lake. Now I have to scrounge around and find Shadow another outdoor water pan – couldn't you have done that in the first place?? Stop taking from others – it will make you a bigger person.

Subgroup criteria affect determination

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(LEP), disabilities, and racial/ethnic subgroups of the total student population. Data is reported for subgroups only when sufficient numbers of students are tested to preserve anonymity. The criterion for determining membership in the economically disadvantaged group was changed, so the results are not comparable to prior years. For 2003-2004 this subgroup is based on student eligibility for Free and Reduced Lunch. In prior years, it was based on student access to a computer connected to the Internet at home.

Your School's Results

As reported in the last issue, only elementary students successfully met AYP targets in Banks and Vernonia.

Jewell

In Jewell, because of the small number of students, the school is rated as a whole. Jewell students met academic targets in ELA and math but fewer than 95 percent of students took the state tests, resulting in the school receiving a "Not Met" AYP designation.

Banks

Something rather extraordinary is happening at Banks Elementary (BES) according to the reported data. Both this year and last year BES students met targets in all categories for which they were rated. The percentage of students meeting targets in ELA increased 16 percent overall in 2002 and increased slightly again last year. For students with disabilities the improvements are dramatic: for 2002-2003 over two times the target percentage increase and in 2003-2004 almost three times the target percentage. Similar results occurred for this group in math.

At the junior high level, economically disadvantaged students appeared to be less suc-

cessful at meeting federal targets in ELA and math. Students with disabilities were more successful last year, meeting federal targets in ELA and math. However, the school received a "Not Met" designation.

Banks High School has a similar situation, though students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students met the target in math, neither group did so in ELA. Therefore, though the group of all students met targets in all areas, BHS received a "Not Met" rating.

Vernonia

AYP results for Vernonia school district are more complicated for 2002-2003 because third and fifth grades are scattered among three schools; Lincoln and Mist Grade Schools and Washington Elementary. Next year, with the closure of Lincoln, nearly all elementary students will be at WGS. A small number of students will remain in Mist. However, all three grade schools met AYP targets last year.

Because Vernonia High School did not meet NCLB targets for the second year, it will be identified as needing improvement. However, whether or not a school is subject to the escalating sanctions outlined in NCLB is dependent on receiving Title I federal funds. This federal money is available to schools under the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for improving academic achievement of the disadvantaged. Because

Title I status is determined by the numbers of students that qualify for free and reduced lunch programs, and high school students are notorious for not participating in school lunch programs, many high schools, including VHS and BHS, are not subject to sanctions, even though the schools may continue to miss the NCLB targets.

Gender Differences

Female students in Banks and Vernonia are more likely to meet the state standard in both ELA and math at grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. That applies in Jewell, too though the number of students is small.

Special education students in Banks successfully meet standards at the same or higher percentages as throughout the state; in Vernonia and Jewell the number of students is too small for evaluation.

Economically disadvantaged students (those qualifying for Title I) meet AYP targets at only WGS and BES.

Answers?

More information than you ever wanted is available on the Internet. The Oregon Department of Education website <www.ode.state.or.us> is easy to get to, beyond that it's awkward. Go to "Most Requested Items" on the left side of the home page and use the drop-down list to navigate about specific schools. NCLB information is available at <www.nochildleftbehind.gov>, another site for parents and others.



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