

Letters

Kid campers express thanks for lots of fun

To the Editor:

We, the Kindergarten boys and the first aid team of Echoing Evergreen Camp at Camp Wilkerson, would like to say thank you to all of our sponsors. Camp was so much fun and we can't wait to come back next year. We especially liked the B-B guns and archery. Bailey Morrison won a sharp shooter award. Tristan Adams and Blake Clark really enjoyed the meadow games. Daniel Fletcher enjoyed the snow cone snacks. Jacob Butcher liked learning to cook thumb print bread. Jack Doile really enjoyed the ambulance tour. Johnny Levinseller loved roasting and eating hot dogs. Sierra Roberts enjoyed the dipping candle station. Melissa Zavales

enjoyed teaching all the kids first aid. We would like to extend a special thank you to Kathy Ward and Katie Poetter and all the volunteers for a wonderful camp experience.

We love camp!

**Echoing Evergreen
campers
Vernonia**

(Ed. note: Even receiving this letter was fun; it came on a 3x4' sheet of orange paper.)

Waste Management loss unsubstantiated

To the Editor:

I went to last week's City Council meeting to understand why we might lose a valuable and necessary asset like our transfer station. We heard a representative of Waste Management claim the transfer station loses \$1,000 every day

it's open. We were told that to "stop the bleeding" our transfer station must close. The only alternative considered was to substantially raise the rates. You pay too little here in Vernonia, we were told.

Let me offer another view. It is worth noting the differences between our station and the St. Helens transfer station. The St. Helens station has a expensive compactor, vehicle scales, and an office with power, water, sewer and telephone services. They also have several pieces of heavy equipment, an acre of asphalt paving, at least four employees and an expensive piece of real estate across the street from Wal-Mart. Vernonia has none of that overhead. Maybe the extra cost comes from their habit of trucking the garbage to St. Helens before they drive it to McMinnville.

Don't get me wrong. If paying a little more is justified, I will gladly pay the cost. However, I would first like to know that someone has really looked into Waste Management's claim of losing \$1,000 per Saturday. After more than a hundred uses of the transfer station, I have never seen a single cash receipt prepared there. Any regular user of the transfer station is so used to long lines they are unlikely to believe Waste Management's other claim that they average only 100 vehicles per Saturday. I for one, am unhappy about a doubling of our rates with no questions asked.

I find the history leading to this discussion is particularly interesting. The conversation leading to the threat to close the transfer station came up when the City asked Waste Management why it did not collect a franchise fee for the business at the transfer station. To my ear, Waste Management's response sounds like a negotiation tactic. It would be useful for them to remember that they have a lot more to lose than the transfer station business. Waste Management should be on notice. Its customers up here in the valley are watching how this plays out, and the next time the garbage franchise comes up to bid, our voices will be heard.

**Casey Mitchell
Vernonia**

City should be more open to \$\$ increase

To the Editor:

I am not a person that is partial to parting with my "treasures", so I tend to recycle when managing my waste. On the few occasions that I have decided that "things must go", I have enjoyed the services of the city-owned Waste Management Transfer Station located in close proximity to my whims and caprice. I have also enjoyed the fees they charge and have always felt that they were "more" than fair and equitable.

It has come to my attention that Waste Management (WM) has notified the city that because of cost restraints they will be forced to drop their franchise. This leaves two options to the local community in a very

short time frame; truck your offal to Forest Grove or St. Helens. Since I have used Forest Grove's facility I will make comment that the garbage fees for a \leq ton pick-up load runs from \$45-\$65 (standard fee; not based on weight) and that one offloads their own trash into open bins. A run to Forest Grove takes up more of my time and utilizes more fuel than I care to burn.

Since I do not handle "conjecture" willingly, I stopped by city hall after reading the small post in The Independent to get some pertinent information with regards to "managing waste in the city of Vernonia." Upon asking a few simple questions about tonnage and transfer costs, I was told that this information was "privileged" because of "constraints by WM" about releasing this data. Somewhat baffled by this response I asked for [a contact person] at WM and was given the name of the Operations Manager for Columbia County. I e-mailed this person and asked:

1. How many tons of waste was hauled from the Vernonia site, and

2. What was the amount of dollars this site accrued/ton?

Within two days I had a response via e-mail: From April 2003 to March 2004 the Vernonia transfer station customer count was 2835 vehicles that brought in a total of 595.08 tons and produced \$36,826.50 of revenue; costs per customer an average of \$61.88/ton; WM's cost to dispose and transfer this garbage to McMinnville is \$65.18/ton.

Why this information was held "sub rosa" and kept in the dark from the community is beyond me. In order for WM to continue their excellent services and not carry on business "in the red" is a simple rate/vehicle increase of \$10, or \$20 for a month worth of usage – the price of 10 lattes. This is a no-brainer for me and I cannot for the life of me understand the city's position on nixing a rate increase and, to make matters worse, why they would put this community's access to this facility in jeopardy because of some policy that has only made things worse.

In conclusion, I just want to

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Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library



It's hard to believe summer has ended and another school year has begun. At the library, this means that pre-school story time will again be taking place on Monday mornings at 10:30 and that the Reading Enrichment after school programs will soon

be starting. Flyers will soon be available in the library, as well as at the school, announcing the dates and times for these activities for youngsters ages 6-12.

In the planning stages is yet another library program for youngsters. At least one evening a month, at around 7:00 p.m., youngsters will be able to listen to some stories just before bedtime. Since this will be likened to a bedtime story time, the children may come in their pajamas, then just go home and hop into bed. Times for this new program will also be announced shortly, with its continuation determined by attendance.

Adults may start clearing their schedules and marking their calendars for two Chautauqua programs scheduled for this fall. On Tuesday, October 19 at 7:00 p.m., Jeni Foster, of Grants Pass, will be entertaining with a program entitled, My Grandfather's Immigrant Eyes: Songs and History of the Irish Emigration to America. Foster will combine historical narrative with traditional Irish music to create a portrait of both the Irish who made new lives for themselves in America and those who stayed behind and struggled with the loss of their sons and daughters. Myron Lane, our wonderful library board member and maker of colorful, informative flyers, is currently at work publicizing this event.

The second Chautauqua program to keep in mind will be on Thursday, November 18, at 2:00

p.m. Mary Bywater Cross will present a program entitled, The Ties that Bind: Quilts of the Community. These free programs are sponsored by the Oregon Council for the Humanities, and the local Friends of the Library.

If you would like to be involved with promoting presentations such as these, with fund-raising events such as the annual book sale or gift wrapping books at Barnes & Noble, or if you would just like to see what the Friends of the Library is all about, you are encouraged to attend the next meeting on Tuesday, October 5, at 7:00 p.m. in the library.

The current display table features—Guess what! School! *Cam Jansen and the First Day of School Mystery*, *Back to School for Rotten Ralph*, *The School Skeleton*, *Arthur's Back-to-School Surprise*, *Back-to-School Belly Busters*, and *Amelia Bedelia Goes Back to School* are some of the new titles that youngsters will find on this table. Adults will also find some titles featuring school, or school teachers, on display.

New acquisitions look very promising. They include *Trace* by Patricia Cornwell, *The Dangerous Hour* by Marcia Muller, *Sammy's Hill* by Kristin Gore, *Strange But True* by John Searles, *Night Swimming* by Robin Schwarz, *Murder List* by Julie Garwood, *High Country Fall* by Margaret Maron, *An Unfinished Life* by Mark Spragg, *Amagansett* by Mark Mills, and *A Taint in the Blood* by Dana Stabenow. I am familiar with, and very fond of some of these authors; others are entirely new to me, but look very promising. I can hardly wait to choose and begin reading.

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