

Letters

From page 15
brary) will be the last opportunity for nominations to the next Booster Board. Voting will take place at the June 14 meeting. The newly elected officers will begin their terms on July 1. We look forward to seeing you at out next meeting.

Marla Rethwill
Booster Club Secretary
Vernonia

Our county has great volunteer responses

To the Editor:
Thanks to You.
What a great community we live in. United Way of Columbia County received a donation of

six pallets of assorted paper from Boise Cascade, LLC in St. Helens. This paper will be distributed to not-for-profit organization. We faced many logistical issues when it came to getting the paper from Boise to a storage and disbursement site in Rainier.

I would like to thank the volunteers for their support: First Mike Cecil of CaroSan Inc. agreed to let one of his drivers, Rich Redell, pickup and deliver the paper for us. Then Riverside Community Church gave us space to store the paper during disbursement. We had volunteers from Riverside Community Church, Clatskanie Kiwanis, Rainier First Methodist Church, Community House on

Broadway and of course our families. The volunteers set up two receiving lines and boxes just flew from the back of the truck and into the building. They worked very hard on a rainy day to unload the six pallets of paper from start to finish the whole project took less than two hours.

What had appeared to be a monumental task on Monday with the help of the many volunteers and community partners became a short but wet Saturday morning of teamwork, making new friends and helping our community.

So again thank you for all of your help.

We are Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

Sincerely,
Kathye Beck
Executive Director
United Way of Columbia
County

Delighted with new dog grooming salon

To the Editor:
I recently contacted Kimberly Pultz at Happy Grooming Dog Salon here in Vernonia about grooming my long haired cat. She does not do cats but agreed to contact her friend and neighbor, Tess Workman,

who does. Tess agreed to do my kitty so I took Monte Kor over to Happy Grooming where both Kimberly and Tess greeted us when we arrived. They were so friendly and nice. We had a nice long visit and Monte Kor came home "smellin' good and lookin' great!" He even got his "nails" clipped. I would certainly recommend Happy Grooming Dog Salon to anyone who is looking for a groomer. Just give Kimberly, the K-9 Stylist, a call at 429-0576.

Thank you Kimberly and Tess. It was so nice to meet you both.

Sue Wren
Vernonia

All high school students eligible to enter an essay

From page 10
going for or against the drug testing policy.

"This is an opportunity for students to examine how legal decision-making happens under our system, and to apply that research to their own persuasive writing skills," says ONLD Chair Josh Newton. "We hope it is fun, and also sheds some light on how the Rule of

Law functions in our justice system."

The high school essay contest carries a \$500 cash prize for first place, \$350 for second place and \$250 for third place. It is open to all high school students in Oregon. The deadline is Friday, April 28, 2006.

The Oregon New Lawyers Division promotes public awareness and access to the

legal system through programs that educate and inform the public about the law.

The contest topic, resource materials and rules are available through on the Oregon State Bar's website at www.osbar.org, or at the bar center: 5200 S.W. Meadows, Lake Oswego, OR 97035; 503-620-0222.

More on 47J Long Range Planning Committee ideas

From page 10
ways, accommodating different learning (and teaching) styles.

Another important consideration is the community's ability to support improvements. Such funds are usually raised by selling general obligation bonds which, in this case, would be paid with property taxes. The Vernonia School District currently has no bonded debt.

The ugly fact is that spending the limited available funds and ending up with the same building simply doesn't make sense. Based on engineering reports from 2001 and 2002 (and allowing for inflation and cost increases), major seismic rehabilitation could cost in excess of \$2.5 million at WGS and \$4.6 million at the high school. This is the estimated cost for making ONLY structural upgrades and does not include electrical, mechanical, and accessibility improvements. The expense of \$7.1 million would not solve any of the problems associated with minimal ventilation and plumbing, inefficient fixtures, as-

bestos, inadequate electrical wiring, ADA accessibility OR improve the educational capacity of the schools. Should the money be spent in this way, the district is left with essentially the same facility.

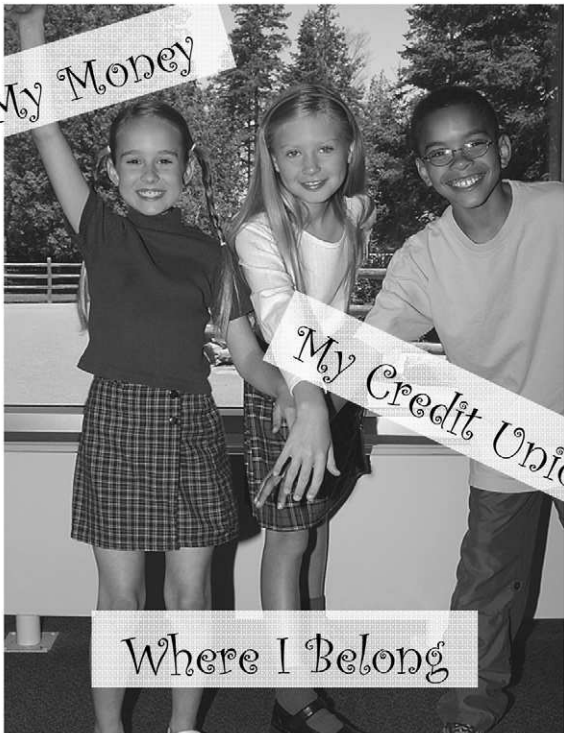
If the costs of upgrades to the mechanical and electrical systems are included, using the same methodology, the cost of renovation could increase by \$3.78 million at the high school and \$2.62 million at WGS. Previous reports include another \$3.9 million for additional structural renovation to bring WGS fully into compliance. In other words, by spending \$17.40 million, the buildings could be fully retrofitted to today's design code. But they would still be the same buildings.

If my property tax is going to increase significantly, I want that money to provide a safe space that facilitates learning, not simply to preserve an architectural treasure that does not meet student needs. Ways to include elements of the WGS design have been discussed, with an eye to preserving the

charm of the old grade school. While no design decisions have been made yet, it appears that significant improvements can be made for all students in the district for \$10 - \$15 million.

Remember that the bond in 1991 nearly passed and probably would have without the uncertainty imposed by the 9/11 tragedy. Bonded debt of \$10 - \$15 million would require additional property taxes ranging from \$1.54 to \$2.31 per thousand dollars of assessed value. On a property assessed at \$200,000, the tax levied would be between \$308 to \$462. (The 1991 bond would have been levied at \$2.80/thousand, or \$560/\$200,000.) The cost of seismic upgrades, alone, would present a bill to tax payers of \$5.1 million or \$150 of increased property tax...without improvements in heat, light, water or educational enhancement of the facility. According to Seattle Northwest Securities Corporation the district has a debt capacity of \$38,054 million and currently has zero bonded debt.

National Credit Union Youth Week
April 23rd to April 29th



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