

## Letters

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murder. Most of these crimes have been tied directly to escalated drug use and availability, (in particular methamphetamine.)

In just a few weeks we will be asked to pass a sheriff's levy that request County taxpayers to pay 39.5 cents per \$1000 of the assessed value of our homes. For an owner of a \$150,000 property, this amounts to less than \$60 per year. To put that into perspective; if you purchase a latte on your way to work each morning, it will cost you about \$400 per year. The sheriff's levy will cost you less than one-sixth of that.

The money generated from this levy will go directly to employing more deputies to cover

the 600-plus square miles the Columbia County Sheriff's Department must now scramble to cover. Presently, we have no more than 2 deputies on duty during the day and zero on duty in the evening. Yes, there are no funds available to have deputies on night duty. If I were a bad guy—and there are probably bad guys reading this right now—I would focus on doing all my criminal activity—in particular the cooking and selling of methamphetamine—during these evening hours.

Another important benefit of the sheriff's levy will be the availability of deputies in areas of the county that enable them to respond to calls quicker. For example: An officer stationed in Vernonia can answer calls quicker, concentrating solely on

any emergency approximate to that area.

Keep in mind, this is simply a humble, bare-bones request to hire additional, well-qualified officers to maintain a safer community.

For those living inside cities like Scappoose and St. Helens, and already paying taxes to a police department, please consider this: Unlike huge bureaucratic federal police organizations, our local city and county police actually work very closely with one other, sharing information as one efficient law-enforcement organization. It's also important to remember that criminals incarcerated for crimes committed inside county cities are actually housed at the Columbia County jail. In the end, we are actually saving

money by not incurring additional property taxes to build and maintain separate city facilities to detain and house criminals.

Not only will supporting the levy enable the citizens of our community to enjoy a safer community, but it is also in the interest of keeping our hard-working deputies safer as well: Expecting our deputies to answer calls without proper backup and support is not only dangerous for them, but as you might imagine, very stressful for their families. I am grateful to have a police organization that is hard-working and virtually corruption free. Over the years I've lived here, I cannot recall one incident of police corruption, while our neighbors in Portland harbor a long and sordid history.

No matter what your occupation is, we can all agree that it's important to have the tools at hand to perform our duties competently. Sheriff Derby's request for additional officers to maintain his department is more than reasonable and fair. Please vote "yes" for the sheriff's levy and give them the tools to do their job effectively.

**Randy Sanders**  
St. Helens

### Join the annual fun & Make Vernonia Shine

To the Editor:

This years "Make Vernonia Shine" day, sponsored by Vernonia Pride, will be held April 22.

Registration will start at 9:00 a.m. at Providence Health Center.

Groups and organizations are asked to pre-register by calling Genny Fisher at 503-429-4019. If you have a project or area you wish to do, please tell her at this time.

If you have the following tools, hoes, rakes, weed eaters, please bring them along.

Take advantage of Waste Management's free Dump Day, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There is a two-load limit and you must show that you are a Vernonia resident. Dad's Recycling will also be providing free disposal; accepting appliances, batteries, etc. Vernonia Pride will be doing curbside pickup of yard debris (no household garbage please).

They will be taking tires that day, also, just south of the Library. A charge of \$1.12 for tires off the rims and additional charges for those on the rim or for truck tires.

This is the Jamboree's 50th year and plans are being made for a great celebration. As our Mayor said, "We want our town looking its best, we want to be wearing our prom dress." Cleanup Day can be a start towards that goal.

Lunch will be provided at 1:00 p.m. at the Scout Cabin for all those that participated in the cleanup.

Here is hoping all you citizens will pitch in to "Make Vernonia Shine."

**DeLoris Webb**  
Vernonia Pride

### Dismayed by loss of home mail delivery

To the Editor:

I am puzzled and somewhat dismayed by the recent decision of the US Post Office that the mail truck cannot park on the 'bike path' on E. Bridge St between the museum and the lake to deliver the mail to our homes. There has been a dedicated bike path on that street for many years and having a mail truck or delivery van parked there never stopped or hindered anyone from using the bike path. And it will be even less of a problem when we get sidewalks since we have very few bikes that use the path. We mostly have people on foot that will use the sidewalk.

My largest problem however is that the Post Office now tells us that we must get our mail from a group of boxes down by the lake. I am a senior citizen who has difficulty walking any distance and have no car or drive to pick up my mail for me. I wonder how I am supposed to get my mail.

There are a lot of changes being made in Vernonia now and some of them are necessary. But some of them are not. And it is my belief that this one from the Post Office will cause some of us more hardship than it will help.

**Jeanette Searles**  
Vernonia

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## Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian  
Vernonia Public Library



For me, the highlight of the month was the visit by Portland author, April Henry on the 8th of April. Ms. Henry was very down-to-earth as she told about the ways in which she gets her ideas for books and the approach she takes in

research and plot development. She is presently formulating ideas for her next book and toying with the theme of a blind teenager who is kidnapped while waiting in a car that is stolen. After choosing a main theme, Ms. Henry uses a "what if?" approach and then researches these ideas. Ms. Henry also reviews a book each week for *The Oregonian*. These reviews may be found in Sunday's Entertainment section. (The library does have a copy of Thomas Perry's, *Nightlife*, a novel set in Portland about a female serial killer, which was reviewed last Sunday.)

Former clinical psychologists turned authors, Stephen White and Jonathan Kellerman, have each recently published new books. White's suspenseful novel, *Kill Me*, is based on the statement many have made... "If that ever happens to me, I wish someone would just...kill me." Psychologist Alan Gregory faces one of the most challenging cases of his career when a patient slowly reveals a progression of deadly secrets while trying to influence the outcome of circumstances which he has set in motion and cannot seemingly change. In Kellerman's 20th of the Alex Delaware series, *Gone*, psychologist Delaware and detective Milo Sturgis once again team together as they pursue an investigative trail of corpses leading to an unconventional acting school and the family of the eccentric woman who runs it. I especially enjoy these two authors because their backgrounds give them the ability to convey psychological insights in their charac-

ters, adding to the suspense and giving the reader more empathy with these characters.

The most intriguing work of nonfiction that I've come across lately is *Miracles on the Water*. Written by Tom Nagorski (a senior producer at ABC's *World News Tonight*), this is a riveting account of the sinking of a British passenger liner by a German submarine in World War II. The S.S. *City of Benares*, with 406 passengers and crew, was 630 miles out in the North Atlantic on September 17, 1940, when it was torpedoed by a German U-boat. As the *Benares* sank, passengers and crew abandoned ship in the stormy waters. Those who made it into lifeboats faced gale winds and icy waters and were three hundred miles from the nearest rescue vessel. Many drowned or died of overexposure before the HMS *Hurricane* arrived and rescued 108 survivors. In its search, the *Hurricane* missed Lifeboat 12 and its 46 passengers endured eight days with minimal food and water. The situation that makes this event especially memorable is that ninety of the passengers were children (only 13 survived) who were on their way to Canada to escape the German blitz over England. They were considered lucky because they were, supposedly, leaving World War II behind and heading for safety. Nagorski, whose great-uncle was among the survivors, bases this vivid narrative mostly on firsthand accounts, with many examples of courage and endurance of both the children and adults.

Upcoming events in the library include Family Movie Night on Friday, April 21st, at 6:30 p.m., and Book Discussion on Monday, April 24th, at 5:30 p.m.

**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. - 4 p.m.

**Preschool Story Time:** Mondays, 10:30 a.m., when school is in session.

**Phone:** (503) 429-1818