

## Letters

### Program on Iraq was thought-provoking

To the Editor:

Thank you to the Vernonia Library, the Friends of the Library and the Oregon Council for the Humanities for making possible the Oregon Chautauqua Program in the community of Vernonia. On March 12th Vernonia was privileged to host Joel Preston Smith, a photo-journalist who has spent considerable time living and working in Iraq with civilian families and among U.S. soldiers deployed there. Smith has documented Iraq during the U.S. occupation and recently published a book, telling intimate stories and showing photos of an Iraq very few of us have an opportunity to see or hear

about, an Iraq where citizens live in a constant state of fear and terror while struggling daily to survive. We heard stories about families trying to find work, feed themselves, and entertain their children, while a civil war rages all around them. He told us about the tremendous hospitality and generosity the Iraqi people showed towards him, welcoming him and sharing meals even though they had almost nothing themselves. Smith also talked about working embedded with U.S. military units, living with the soldiers, and the experience of firefights and patrols that make up their daily assignments.

Joel Preston Smith clearly expressed his opinion that he is against U.S. involvement in Iraq, but tried to show all sides

of the story. Whether you are for or against our involvement in Iraq, this was an amazing opportunity to see and hear about the real lives of real people. The daily horror, fear, and destruction that these people live with is unimaginable, and I for one, think we should all know more about the hardships of trying to live in a war zone. Smith asks difficult questions during his presentation, "Were Iraqis better off before the U.S. invasion, living under a terrible dictatorship with limited freedoms? Living in a society where you could go to jail for questioning the government publicly, but also had most modern conveniences like regular electric service and clean water? Where women could hold professional positions as teachers and lawyers and children were not afraid to go to school or out in public?" Smith asked, "When the United States chooses to go to war, what responsibility does our government and its citizens have for the results of that war – for the starvation, the destruction, the rape, and the mutilation that are sure to occur in any war zone?" And, "What has been the ultimate result of United Nations sanctions against Iraq after the first Gulf War, sanctions that have been directly attributable to United States pressure, and have led to the estimated deaths of 400,000 Iraqi citizens due to poor health care and malnutrition." These are hard and difficult questions, questions I think most of us would prefer not to have to think about.

I am thankful for The Chautauqua Program and the chance it offers us to consider other cultures, our relationships with other countries, and the world around us. And thank you to Joel Preston Smith for an amazing and disturbing, yet thought provoking evening of photos, stories and discussion.

**Scott Laird  
Vernonia**

### Students seek funds for Washington trip

To the Editor:

We would like to tell everyone in our town how great it is to have the support of everyone. There are nine students going to Washington, D.C.,

from Vernonia Middle School, in April with two teachers. This is not just a sight-seeing trip but we will be taking classes and learning how our government really works. We want to thank the Lions Club of Vernonia for their generous gift to us to help pay for our trip. We also want to thank the school and the teachers that are going with us for their support and all of our family and friends that have helped us out with money and good wishes. We have a rummage sale planned for April 7th at Vernonia Middle School, and a blanket raffle. We hope to see you at the rummage sale between 10:00-5:00. When we return in May we will be happy to share our experiences with you. Just ask.

**Kayleigh Johnston  
Chelsea Johnson  
Parker Roach  
Kristina Halverson  
Ariel Rock  
Elizabeth Poulin  
McKenzie Tarkalson  
Rachel Brown  
Nora Hieronimus**

### Interested in haiku? Join the workshop

To the Editor:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Vernonia Community Learning Center for the opportunity to offer a Haiku workshop. Most importantly, I would like to give special thanks to the director, Jesse Jones, for approaching me with the idea and for being a tremendous source of inspiration and support. The Vernonia Community Learning Center is such a great asset to town. Jesse and her staff of volunteers have done a wonderful job developing and expanding what is offered to the community! The best way to support the Center is to take a class. This will ensure its doors stay open for many years to come. I encourage all to take the time to stop in, look around, and sign up!

I am looking forward to meeting all who are interested in taking the Haiku workshop. I will be providing a brief synopsis of the class to the Vernonia Community Learning Center and distributing flyers around town for all of you. If you are considering the workshop but are unsure about scheduling or

would just simply like a little more information before making the decision please feel free to contact the Vernonia Community Learning Center at 503-429-1030 or Jill Hult at 503-928-1800. If I am unavailable, you can leave a message with questions or comments and will return your call.

There was an error in the spring schedule regarding the dates for the Haiku workshop. The workshop will be Wednesday, May 2; Wednesday, May 9; and Wednesday, May 16.

**Jill Hult, instructor  
Haiku Workshop  
Vernonia**

### Fresh farm egg sales are moved to Fridays

To the Editor:

Farm Egg Buyers: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my faithful customers. Having a more organized and central way to sell the eggs our chickens produce has made my life much simpler.

Since I started selling eggs this way, last July, I've experimented with different times and places. I am still in the vicinity of Black Bear Coffee, but inside or outside in the pocket park depends on the weather.

I am changing the day of week to FRIDAY, beginning April 6th. I'm hoping this will disrupt my schedule less, sliding this little market closer to the weekend. I will be there every Friday, from about 10:00 until the eggs run out, or 1:00 p.m., just after the lunch rush.

I'm interested in adding farm products during the summer. Call me if you are interested, 503-49-8930.

Egg cartons always gleefully accepted...

**Schann Nelson  
Vernonia**

### Help make Vernonia Shine on April 28th

To the Editor:

Vernonia Pride is once again inviting the community to come out on April 28th and "Make Vernonia Shine."

Registration will be at 9 a.m.

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## Ike Says . . .

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produce automatic fire with one pull of the trigger. Weapons with this type of fire mode are called assault weapons. What is very important to remember is that civilian variants of the ARs and AKs can fire only one shot per pull of the trigger, which is no different than other semi-automatic rifles currently used by hunters across America.

What was most interesting about this episode, though, was the reaction of outdoor writers across the country. Simply put, they seemed confused and alarmed at how fast and vicious the reactions of sports people were toward Mr. Zumbo's remarks. Maybe this is because they are out of touch with the people that they write articles for. To gain some clarity they need to remember that many sportsmen and women today feel under attack from the public at large. There are the animal rights groups that want nothing better than to ban hunting. Then there are the anti-gun groups that want to ban the tools that sportsmen use for hunting. So when one of their own is viewed as turning against a segment of the sports hunting community, it should be no surprise that they left no prisoners. Yet, there persists a certain tone in the sports writers' community that this public tar and feathering was not justified. Bill Monroe recently wrote a column that

was basically slanted against the AR type of rifles. The headline told it all, "Oregon hunters mostly back writers (Zumbo) stance against AR-15s". Most people will take this headline as the truth and assume that most hunters don't support the use of AR-15s for hunting. They would be dead wrong.

I conducted a poll on one of Oregon's premiere hunting forums and asked if the hunters supported Mr. Zumbo's stance on the use of AR-15s in hunting. Of the 129 hunters responding, 45 supported Mr. Zumbo's position and 84 did not. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents did not support Mr. Zumbo's position. I asked Bill Monroe about the headline for his article and he stated that he had no control over the wording. So how was it that the Oregonian got it so wrong? Who knows, maybe they wanted to slant the story too, but one thing is for sure, they didn't ask the people who they claimed they were representing. What is most interesting, is that Mr. Zumbo realized that he made a mistake and is now learning more about ARs and AKs and their role in hunting so he can defend their use.

**Izaak Walton League,  
Nehalem Valley Chapter**  
meets monthly on the 3rd  
Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Call  
503-428-7193 for location.

**Between the Bookends,**  
the Library column, may  
be found on page 12 .