

## Letters

### Thanks for publicity

To the Editor:

We at St. Mary's would like to thank you very much for finding the space to put the article about our Rummage Sale in two editions of the paper. We feel it helped to make the sale a success.

**Judy Budge**  
Business Manager  
St. Mary's

### Preparation time for local summer camp

To the Editor:

Summer is fast approaching and it is time for Echoing Evergreens Day Camp (located at Camp Wilkerson) to begin preparing for this year's fun.

Our first volunteer meeting

will be held May 15, 3:00 p.m., in Room 1 at the Vernonia Middle School. Babysitting will be available during the meeting.

General camp and volunteer information will be available at this time. Volunteer opportunities include working with age specific groups and activity stations. We are also interested in hearing positive input that people from our community have in order to continue this camp's success.

Camp will be held August 6-10. Volunteers are needed for the week, the day, or just a few hours.

Sincerely,

**Kathy Ward**  
**Katie Poetter**  
**Robin Dennis**  
Co-Directors

### "Great Food Drive" is greatly appreciated

To the Editor:

Vernonia Cares thanks US Bank for their participation, along with KGW television, in The Great Food Drive. Vernonia Cares Food Bank appreciates your efforts and the product it yielded. It's nice to add these groceries to the food boxes. We also appreciate the fact that the food drive helps keep people aware of the grocery need in our area.

Cares works to provide three days worth of emergency groceries, once a month, for our low income clients. An average month shows we assist about 100 families containing 250-300 people. It's interesting that

about one third of our client base is children; with senior citizens representing another 11 percent. So, we help many ages. You are a part of that answer to these needs.

Vernonia Cares Food Bank is not supported by any government agency, other than the USDA foods supplied through the Oregon Food Bank. The United Way of Columbia County provides about one-third of our financial support. The other two-thirds of our financial support is raised through direct donations or fundraisers. We just completed two fundraisers already this year, with six more planned in 2007.

We reach out to donors to help meet the needs of hungry people. We live in a supportive

community and we are thankful for food and financial donations from all sources.

Thank you, again, for running The Great Food Drive in March. US Bank helps this food bank in many ways, including foundation grant money. It is all greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

**Sandy Welch**  
Executive Director  
Vernonia Cares Food Bank

### Volunteers really did make Vernonia Shine

To the Editor:

Vernonia Pride would like to thank all of you who participated in Saturday's Clean-up Day. You really did make "Vernonia Shine."

Thanks to Katie Poetter for arranging the lunch, with a lot of help from her dad and other food suppliers.

A big thank you to Gretchen

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## Opinion

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*The Independent* is still waiting to be provided with the minutes, or an agenda, from the January meeting (another Public Meeting violation, as all minutes from committees must be readily available for up to one year).

For months, *The Independent* has been trying to get definitive figures on VCLC to see how much the construction cost the community and whether VCLC can stand on its own without cash infusions from the city (and thus, the community). The information has not been forthcoming. Though it's been known since the auditors' report last fall, that the Economic Development Fund had been, shall we say, overdrawn to the tune of \$374,000+, *The Independent* has still been unable to get Kline to provide specifics. Kline even told us that the \$50,000 budget for the VCLC was too small a part of the city's \$7 million total budget for him to spend any time figuring it out. See related article on page 1 for results of our latest attempt.

Now, in addition to the defamatory charges by the VCLC committee in February, Kline has sent a letter to *The Independent's* publisher stating that he "should only make requests to City of Vernonia staff and their volunteers via public information requests submitted to City Recorder Kate Conley" until he can "demonstrate a consistent and sustainable ability to maintain a calm and civil demeanor while interacting with the City staff or volunteers." I guess that means the publisher can't 'talk' to his wife or mother as they both volunteer on city committees. Kline, in writing, stated his opinion that our publisher's "repeated argumentative, confrontational, and abusive behavior has caused significant distress" and goes on to say, "I am extremely concerned for the emotional and physical well being of City employees and volunteers." No specific incidents of such behavior were provided. Yep, more defamation of character.

Kline seems to think that the staff of *The Independent* are his employees and that he can dictate how and who we can or can't speak to. *The Independent* sees this as a tactic to try to discredit us. But it's not about us. It's not even about the VCLC, though there are certainly still questions about it. It is about transparency in government.

Public meetings laws and regulations are set up so that the work of the public is to be done in public. It's our money (via taxes, property and otherwise, plus use fees on water, sewer, etc.) that's primarily used to operate city government and we all should be able to understand and have a say in how it's being used. Kline's answer to any question that involved money (and they all do, don't they?) before October 2006 was that he had to wait for the audit report; from October 2006 to March 2007 he was too hard at work on the supplemental budget. As soon as the supplemental budget was done, his answer changed to wait until the next budget is done. Time and again, he gives the 'right' answer (like the "there'll be a retraction to the bias statement") in private and then, when he hasn't followed through, doesn't seem to remember the conversation.

What is going on at City Hall that they need to discredit *The Independent* and even threaten "legal recourse" instead of just providing public information that anyone in the public, yes, even the media, is entitled to? Why don't you ask your city administrator or city councilor? *The Independent* will continue to beat on the doors of City Hall and call out in a loud voice (or as Kline chastised us for, a raised voice) for information that the public has, by law, a right to know. *The Independent* will tell you what we find.

In the meantime, we request the City to respond to this editorial in writing by June 1. We will print their response, word for word, in our June 7 issue.

### Ike Says . . .

From page 2

not seen before is deer with significantly worse hair loss on only one side of their body. I'm not sure what to make of this, other than the deer might be laying in the bed of another infected deer and then develop hair loss first on the exposed side of their body.

The most significant development, though, in the HLS arena is that mule deer on the east side of the Cascades have been spotted and photographed with HLS. The infected deer have been seen around The Dalles and the White River wildlife area. This is really bad news, since it was believed that the louse that is causing HLS would not survive in the colder and dryer climate east of the Cascades.

HLS has also been observed in eastern Washington State. This time it is a different louse but, again, it is an exotic, one found on fallow deer. This development is reinforcing the theory that these new syndromes may be coming from the import of exotic species from overseas.

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