

Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk is a monthly column of information about Vernonia schools. It is written by various staff members. This column was written by Superintendent Kenneth W. Cox, PhD, and is a copy of the statement Dr. Cox read at the last school board meeting.

Patrons of the Vernonia School District:

When I first learned of the incident with Mr. Miller, I was heartsick – not only out of concern for Mr. Miller and his family, but for the impact this would have on our community. I've met with Mr. Miller to express my disappointment. What he did was wrong and I do not in any way condone his actions. On the other hand, Mr. Miller is an excellent administrator. He has also been a successful teacher, coach and building principal and works well with students and staff.

To make the best decision possible, I've spent a great deal of time reviewing District policy and discussing the matter with our attorney and others from

both inside and outside our community. Since this is a District personnel issue, its resolution lands squarely on my shoulders and not the School Board. Their only responsibility in hiring and/or dismissing personnel in the District starts and stops with the superintendent. They have hired me to administer district business.

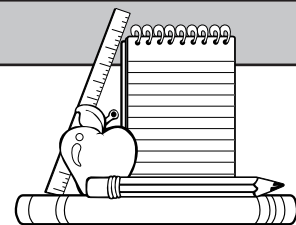
My ultimate responsibility however, even more than answering to the Board of Directors, is to the safety, welfare, and educational betterment of our students. Whenever I come to a difficult decision I reflect upon this and, after consultation with others, base my decision on what I feel would be best for our children. It is for their long-term benefit that I have decided to retain Mr. Miller in his current position as principal.

Because this is a personnel matter and in light of our current policy and potential legal implications, I cannot share with you all I would like to – nor reveal any of the consequences that will take place concern-

ing this matter. However, I can assure you there will be consequences.

I have been accused of setting a double standard in taking this action. I believe, however, that I have set a higher standard for Vernonia administrators than for other staff members. Mr. Miller will be dealt with in a fashion similar to, but more severe than, that which we deal with students. If a student is caught using drugs they face consequences – but being summarily expelled from school is not one of them.

I recognize that my actions and those of Mr. Miller are causing concern in our community. The extent to which this comes true will depend on each community member's ability to support this decision and move forward, making the best we can of a difficult situation.



Free classes for kids start July 25

Parents! Check this out! The Vernonia Community Learning Center is hosting free classes this summer. Taught by a licensed teacher, these classes will strive to encourage healthy interaction and stimulate creative thinking through art activities, cooking and theatrics.

This pilot program is looking for children ages 9-12, who like a motivational atmosphere with exciting projects for them to explore. Registration is encouraged but not necessary, so just show up. Week one (Monday, July 25 and Wednesday, July 25), Paper Maiché Creations. Week two (Monday, July 30 and Wednesday, August 1) Cooking and Eating! Week three (Monday, August 13 and Wednesday, August 15) Puppets and Drama. All classes are from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Call VCLC for more details, or to register, at 503-429-1030.

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library



Community volunteers can so easily be overlooked and taken for granted. It always amazes me that activities (Jamboree, Fishing Derby, and Salmon Festival), city government (council members), city beautification (Vernonia Pride & Ford

Family leadership graduates), fire protection, services for the not-so-fortunate (Vernonia Cares), organizations (Lions Club & Chamber of Commerce), and all of the advisory committees, commissions and boards (budget, airport, cemetery, public works, parks, community learning center, planning, and library) would not be in existence if not for volunteers. Until one lives in a town such as Vernonia, I don't think the fact that so many residents are continually giving of themselves to better their community becomes apparent. Although these volunteers are not looking for recognition, it never hurts to let them know they are appreciated and I would like to express my gratitude to one of these (actually two) dedicated volunteers. Barbara Sturdevant has just completed her second full term (4 years each) on the library board. During this time Barbara has missed only two meetings; has attended all but one of the programs offered for adults; has offered invaluable advice; and has become someone to know and to admire. In addition to Barbara's support of the library, Ralph Sturdevant has also attended the library programs and delivered flyers publicizing library events. Because Barbara is an avid reader, she will still be a familiar face in the library. Two new books have been added to the library's collection in recognition of Barbara's dedication to the library and its programs. One of these books, *The Garden-fresh Vegetable Cookbook*, reflects Barbara's interest in gardening and cooking and the other, *The Most Scenic Drives in America* is a tribute to this lady who did not drive until her later years, when she got her license and drove across the United States several times to visit her four chil-

dren. Thank you, Barbara and Ralph!

Summer Reading programs continue on Tuesdays through the end of July and will end with an entry in the Jamboree Parade. The Get a Clue @ Your Library activities still include another Scary and Not-So-Scary bedtime story time and showing of *The Goonies* in the evenings and a scavenger hunt. Prizes for meeting reading goals are also available. These include gift certificates to local businesses as well as a variety of prizes from which to choose.

New acquisitions include *Lean, Mean Thirteen* by Janet Evanovich, *Animal Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver, *The Maytrees* by Annie Dillard, *Thunder Bay* by William Kent Krueger, *Killer Weekend* by Ridley Pearson, *High Noon* by Nora Roberts and, of course, two copies of the new Harry Potter book.

Book discussion will take place Monday, July 23rd at 5:30, with the writings of Patrick McManus being the subject of the evening.

Remember that (thanks to the Friends of the Library) family passes are available to the Children's Museum, the Japanese Gardens, and OMSI. The OMSI pass will admit two adults and four youngsters. Be sure to take advantage of these passes and enjoy some quality time with your family.

The summer book sale sponsored by The Friends of the Library will once again be held Saturday of Jamboree (August 4th at the library from 9-4.) Books, videos and audio cds will be included in this sale—all at very reasonable prices. Donated items for this sale may be dropped off at the library during regular hours.

Preschool story time is not held during the summer. Youngsters are encouraged to attend the summer reading activities instead.

Don't forget to express your gratitude to one of the many community volunteers.

Vernonia Public Library: 701 Weed Ave.
Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Tues., Thur. 1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Sat. 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Preschool Story Time: Mondays, 10:30 a.m., when school is in session.
Phone: 503-429-1818

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