

Letters

Public needs facts to judge official actions

To The Editor:

While passing through your area looking for Bald Eagles, I stopped for coffee in Birkenfeld and read the March 6 edition. As a native Oregonian, I was displeased and concerned to read that any community newspaper would have difficulty obtaining an official audit of any public entity in a timely manner. The fact that a newspaper and a government agency are at odds does not bother me, however. I believe in a healthy dis-

tance and tension between the media that reports the news and the officials that make the news. This tension can be both adversarial and cordial. It should always be timely and legal. The truth and the facts are needed by the public. Opinions of editors, guest columns of public officials and other members of the community ought to be sought alongside the reporting of facts so that their respective perspectives can be added. Elections and recall votes should do the rest in our democracy. That is when individual disappointments or su-

perior candidacies can best be expressed.

Without reading a guest column from the City Administrator of Vernonia, Aldie Howard, I could not judge if he has legal reason to deny reporters any public records. Surely, if he has charge over the Chief of Police, he can direct that person to not use city time to write a guest column if it is not in that person's duties to do so. I went to graduate school with Aldie at PSU. I recall him to be both intelligent and personable. I see that when he ran for a Forest Grove city council position in

November of 2006, he wrote in the Voter's Guide, "The present City Council, with two exceptions, has failed to direct the City Manager to make Department Heads accountable, to be helpful, to offer realistic suggestions..." Perhaps Aldie should apply some of his intelligence and better nature and

aspire that his staff to do the same. The mayor and city council ought to comply with the law regarding timely audits and public records and require the same of all city staff to help their city's residents obtain lawful access to such documents.

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Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters that include personal attacks on private citizens. Because of space limitations, preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address and phone number.

Where to Find Them

US Senator Ron Wyden (Democrat-OR)

1220 SW 3rd Avenue, Suite 585 • Portland OR 97232
Phone: 503-326-7525
230 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg. • Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: 202-224-5244
Website: <http://wyden.senate.gov>

US Senator Gordon Smith (Republican-OR)

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US Representative David Wu (Democrat-01)

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Website: <http://house.gov/wu>

Senator Betsy Johnson (Democrat-16)

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Phone: 503-543-4046 • Fax: 503-543-5296
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Out of My Mind . . .

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oping community support, a result that a well-run city would appreciate.

Do elections make a differ-

ence? Yes. Those who defend closed doors in government should not have the opportunity to make decisions in the name of "the people". Why should they need to hide your business from you?

Between the Bookends

Editor's note: Interim City Administrator Aldie Howard has made it difficult to get this column. If you want to continue to see this column here, let Howard know. His phone number is 503-429-5291, ext. 102.



By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library

If you are looking for ways to have fun during Spring Break, keep in mind that the library has family passes to OMSI, the Children's Museum and the Japanese Gar-

dens that may be checked out. In addition to free admission, the OMSI pass offers discounts to OMNI-MAX, to the planetarium and for items purchased in the gift shop.

Book discussion of *Tallgrass* by Sandra Dallas will be on Monday, March 24th at 5:30 p.m.

Be sure and visit the library during National Library Week, April 14-19. A free book and a book bag will be given to each child using the library during the week. B.J. the Clown will be here to entertain Tuesday, April 15 at 7:00 p.m. Names may be entered during the week for drawings taking place on Saturday the 19th. The winner of the child's prize will receive a set of the *Spiderwick Chronicles* plus two tickets to the newly released movie of the same title. The adult winner will receive a basket of gardening items including seeds, bulbs, and gloves. Adult prizes and the clown program are sponsored by the Friends of the Library. Movie tickets and *Spiderwick* books were donated by a library board member.

Recently added to the library's collection is a great selection of music CDs made possible by funds from a State antitrust settlement grant of \$400.00. Music by The Kingston Trio, Three Dog Night, The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Bob Seger, and Neil Diamond are just some of these new CDs.

Jodi Picoult's newest novel, *Change of Heart* asks the questions, "Would you give up your vengeance against someone you hate if it meant saving someone you love? Would you want your dreams to come true if it meant granting your enemy's dying wish?" I've really enjoyed each of

Picoult's previous thought-provoking novels including *Nineteen Minutes*, *The Pact*, and *Plain Truth* and am looking forward to this one also.

Charley's Web by one of my favorite authors, Joy Fielding, (*The Deep End*, *Tell Me No Secrets*, *Puppet*) is another new acquisition. Charley, an ambitious journalist is offered the chance to write the biography of a young woman who has been convicted of killing her three small children. As she begins her journey into the mind of this troubled woman, she begins to receive anonymous letters threatening her son and daughter. In a race against time, she discovers that the neighbors, friends and relatives she had considered to be intrusive, might be her only hope of saving herself and her family.

Other new books include *Dead Time* by Stephen White, *Down River* by John Hart, *Whatever You Do, Don't Run* by Peter Allison, *Remember Me* by Sophie Kinsella, and *Betrayal* by John Lescroart.

The weekly pre-school story time continues at 10:30 a.m. on all Mondays when there is school. Linda Johnston continues to find stories and crafts to occupy the youngsters each week. The Monday after-school activity time also continues and youngsters are always welcomed at each of these times. Family movies will continue to be shown on Saturdays at 3:00 and 7:00 p.m. through the months of March and April.

I just want to include a little anecdote concerning B.J. the Clown and his visit to Vernonia during last year's library week. Because he arrived early and wanted to wait a while before coming directly to the library, he parked over by Wauna Credit Union. One of the employees, seeing someone dressed as a clown was concerned that it might be a disguise of a potential robber, and called the local police. Of course, an explanation was all it took to resolve the matter, but if you see a clown in town on April 15th, it will probably be B.J.

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