

47J Board okays plan to tear down part of VHS and fix gymnasium

The 47J School Board (with Ernie Smith, Tim Bamburg, Greg Kintz, Jim Krahn, Tammy Jennings, and Cari Levenseller in attendance) were told by Superintendent Ken Cox that the City of Vernonia has now declared Vernonia High School to have been substantially damaged in the flood of 2007. Dr. Cox recommended, and the

board approved, removal of the east wing of VHS and repair or remodel of the gym as soon as possible.

A Construction Project Manager will be chosen for the following contracts for work to be performed over the summer: demolition of modular classroom behind the middle school, siting the new donated modular

classroom, demolition of east wing of VHS, repair of the VHS gym and surrounding classrooms, paving behind Washington Grade School and installation of wainscot in the middle school building.

The board approved a contract with DOWA to provide architectural services for the work to be done on the high school.

In other business, the board:

- unanimously approved the budget and tax rate. The tax rate is unchanged from last year.

- accepted resignations from Middle School Councilor Sarah Dahlstrom, Kindergarten Teacher Evie Morgan and Elementary Special Ed. Tamera Somers.

- approved the Superintendent contract and memorandum of agreements for administration staff and confidential/supervisory staff.

- approved a number of routine policy revisions.

The next board meeting will be July 10, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the district office.

Farewell by German exchange student explains differences here

The following is the farewell address given by foreign exchange student Matthias Kreuter from Neuss, Germany, at the Vernonia High School commencement on June 7, 2008:

In April '07, my exchange program first told me that I was going to spend the next school year in a state named Oregon. A state I had never heard of before. The first thing the helpful internet later told me about Oregon was that it usually rained here 200 days a year. Later I would say it felt more like 300 days of rain per year. But first, of course, I thought it was just some exaggerated number, because I just couldn't imagine a place with more rain than Germany.

It turned out, I had no idea. About a month later my exchange program told me they had found a family in a nice town named Vernonia. A town I never had heard of before either. But at first I was very glad because it was close to the Pacific and relatively close to

Seattle, both places I really wanted to visit. My excitement stopped about when I realized that the town looked extremely tiny on the map.

But in the end, what first seemed to be a huge bummer, ended up to be the best thing that could have ever happened to me.

The first thing that overwhelmed me in different ways was my host family, who couldn't have been kinder, more welcoming and funnier. Their support and love would be the base for the wonderful 10 months to come. They showed me their amazing home state, they introduced me to a number of great people, and they spent fun weekends with me and laughed a countless number of times with me. Without them I clearly couldn't have had a time so awesome like the one I had. I think every host family, but especially the Stewards, deserve a huge applause.

But Vernonia was an amazing place in a lot of different ways, even because it is so

small. The school was smaller, so I didn't get lost and could easily find new friends. The teachers were nicer to the students, which made school fun for me and not boring torture, like it used to be. And the town itself was so small I dealt with the same people almost every day, which made it all feel more like a big family. Everybody accepted and involved me as a part of their life already after a few months.

When I look back I can see an enormous amount of experiences, ones that made me laugh, and ones that amazed me, ones that shocked me and also ones that made me cry. But every one of them I will never forget and I want to thank everyone that was a part of it. I experienced the unbelievable force of water, 200 to 300 days of rain, homecoming, prom, an unusual Christmas, my host family in an IKEA, I went to the beach, Seattle, Montana, the place where dreams come true, I stepped in one or the other language trap, I got an amazing new nickname, I found self-confidence, I almost died doing white water rafting and then doing Cross Country, I experienced how long 3 miles are, I spend a month getting up at 10

o'clock to go to school, I started hating bus rides and I started loving church, I got bombed with sarcasm 24/7 by my host mom, I consumed a ton of hash browns, brownies and tater tots, I made new friends, I missed my family, I had cats for the first time, but hopefully not the last, I didn't have to wash dishes by hand for almost a year, I found out how helpful garbage disposals were, I got the proof that somebody can live for ten months on muffins and McDonalds without exploding, I learned the real meaning of the word Dork, I fell in love

with a beautiful girl, I got kicked out of Mr. Brown's class, I missed out on experiencing a lock-down, I lived in a purple painted room for 10 months, I went skiing and snowboarding and had to get rescued by the snow patrol, I went paintballing and got shot in the butt, I had to listen to lame jokes in Psychology and Film Studies, I got a thousand new reasons why soccer is still the best sport in the world, I lost an old accent and got a new one and had the best time of my life.

For all that I can only say: Thank you very much Vernonia!

Art camp now taking registration

Vernonia youth will have the opportunity to take part in a five day music, drama, and art camp sponsored by Vernonia Hands on Art.

"Art in the Woods" will be offered from July 28 to August 1 at two locations, the Scout Cabin in Hawkins Park, and the Vernonia Grange. There will be classes for students from those who have finished first grade to those who finished high school this year.

Classes will be offered in singing, drama, musical instrument ensembles, folk dancing, and arts and crafts. There will be a special line-up of advanced classes for teens, including Shakespeare performance and chamber music en-

sembles.

The week will conclude with a performance on Friday evening. The teachers are experienced musicians, actors, and artists.

The cost is \$68 for the week with lower rates for additional children in the family. Anyone wishing to help with scholarships may send a donation to Vernonia Hands On Art, P.O. Box 195, Vernonia, OR 97064.

Early registration is requested; a late fee will apply for applications received after July 10. Registration forms are available at the Vernonia Public Library, or by calling 503-429-0437, 503-329-5895 or 503-543-8662.

2008 scholarships announced

The following 2008 Vernonia High School graduates received local scholarships:

Century 21 All Professional (\$500); Rebekahanne Pearson.

Clatsop County Safety Council (\$1,000); Cody Davis.

Columbia County 4-H (\$500); Mackenzie Carr.

Equestrian Scholarship

(\$500); Marissa Clement, Mackenzie Carr.

Gene Weller Memorial (\$500); Caleb Stevens.

Hancock Forest Management (\$500); Matthew Baldwin.

Holce Logging (\$1,000); Sahrina Smith, Lauren Lason-Dyer. (\$1500); Mackenzie Carr, Kelsey King, Ashton Yontz,

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