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Letters

Join in evening of fun for M-B Helping Circle

To the Editor:

The Mist-Birkenfeld Helping Circle will have it's annual Fall Festival on November 7, starting at 6:00 p.m. There will be hot dogs, sandwiches, pie, cookies, coffee and juice available. Also at that time the silent auction, quilt tickets, door prize tickets, baked foods, grab bags, and white elephants are available. At approximately 7:00 p.m. local talent will perform. Then we will hold our oral auction.

Since 1935, we have taken care of the Mist Cemetery, the street lights, and put on meals for families after a funeral. We have added a scholarship for a graduating senior from our area, Share the Spirit and supplies for Mist Grade School when needed. This is our only fundraiser of the year. Hope you will join us.

**Shirley Kyser
Mist**

Thanks for helping a successful benefit

To the Editor:

I would like to personally thank the Vernonia Community Church for hosting the benefit

concert for Darrold Mushatt. And all of the artists and people who helped make it a wonderful evening and a success. Vernonia, you are awesome!

**Mark Brown
Vernonia**

Food bank preparing for Christmas boxes

To the Editor:

Dear Vernonians: Thanks to the generous gardeners of Vernonia who have contributed fresh produce from their gardens to the clients of Vernonia Cares Food Bank. These fresh vegetables and fruits add a healthy food to the menus of our families. There's nothing like crunchy, fresh veggies! Thanks for sharing!

Just a reminder, too, that the food bank will not be giving out Thanksgiving food boxes. Because this type of project is so expensive, we concentrate on supplying Christmas meal food boxes only. We began accepting applications for the Christmas boxes on November 3, to allow us time to order groceries. Let's hope the weather cooperates this year so we can successfully disperse these boxes about a week before Christmas. I'll be publishing more on how you can donate to

this project and the dispersal date (in December) in the next publication.

Please call the food bank (503-429-1414), if you have any questions. We are located within the Legion Hall at 627 Adams Avenue and open Tuesday and Thursday, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Our mailing address is PO Box 126, Vernonia, OR 97064.

Vernonia Cares Food Bank assists about 400 people every month with emergency groceries. Thanks to generous donors, we are your hands extended to the hungry within our community.

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

Prepare for Lighted Christmas Parade

To the Editor:

Vernonia Pride's annual Christmas Tree Lighting and Lighted Parade will be held December 5, at 6:00 p.m.

The parade will form on Weed Ave., proceed through town and then return through town, ending back on Weed Ave. Since so much effort is spent decorating some of the entries, we thought it would be nice to see them twice.

We ask that all participants

refrain from throwing anything to the spectators, such as candy, toys etc. Because of the parade being at night, we feel it is too dangerous for the kids to be darting out into the street.

Santa will be giving out candy at City Hall after the parade.

There will be no ATVs allowed in the parade.

One trophy for the best entry will be awarded.

Please dig out your Christmas lights and make this the best Christmas Parade ever.

If you have any questions, contact me at 503-429-7193.

**DeLoris Webb
Vernonia Pride**

Let peace reign now. Why wait for it?

To the Editor:

When it's all over and time is of no essence all the bickering will not exist, misjudgments will not occur. There will always be love, happiness, peace and harmony. But why must we wait until it's all over? Why can't it happen now? We are good natured human beings. Let's not go out of our way to be otherwise. Be good, be respectful and be happy. It's our choice to have paradise on earth. Working together to achieve this dream strengthens societies, thereby building that path for the rest to follow. Cherish life now, it's not too much, too little or too late. Oregon is heavenly, but Vernonia is paradise.

**Virginia Kepner
Vernonia**

Student seeks cans, bottles for D.C. trip

To the Editor:

Do you have plastic or glass bottles and aluminum cans stacked up in your garage? Well you could donate them to a worthy cause! You can help me, Bridger Steward, earn money.

Please see page 14

An Oregon Perspective

By Senator Jeff Merkley



Creating Jobs Through Health Care Reform

Over the summer, we heard about the tragic losses many American families have endured as a result of our broken health care system.

There are too many stories of folks who lost a loved one because their insurance didn't cover a life-saving treatment, or lost their homes because they were socked with huge medical bills.

Health care reform will help end these terrible losses, but it also provides us with something to gain. By lowering costs and increasing choice, we'll stimulate job growth, restore our economy, and keep wages with working families instead of handing them over to insurance companies.

Just last month, I spoke with a small business owner in Medford who told me that rising health care costs were forcing his company to choose between providing health coverage or laying off employees. Businesses around the country are experiencing the same squeeze, and it means fewer jobs and lower wages for working Ameri-

cans. In the last decade, health care premiums for the average Oregon family rose by 101 percent, while median earnings rose by only 23.8 percent. It's no coincidence: employers are spending more and more on compensation for their employees, it's just going towards higher insurance premiums instead of higher wages.

Health costs are not only siphoning away money that could go towards higher wages or new hires, they're also making our companies less competitive globally. If you build a car in America, you spend \$1,500 on health care benefits. If you build it across the border in Canada, the cost is zero. Indeed, GM spent more on health care last year than it did on steel. That's bad for American business and bad for American jobs.

Working families in Oregon can't afford to sacrifice their jobs and their incomes to the health insurance beast anymore. It's time we get our priorities back in place.

By improving care, increasing choices, and lowering health costs, we can put our businesses and families in the position to thrive.

There's still more work to do as health care reform winds its way through the legislative process, but each step that moves a bill closer to President Obama's desk is a step towards a brighter economic future for Oregon families.

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 or phone number.