

# The INDEPENDENT

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## Opinion

### Thinking thankful thoughts

It's that time again. Thanksgiving is next week and our thoughts turn to those things for which we are thankful.

We are thankful that Vernonia will have a new city council come January and that there was such a good turnout of candidates and of voters.

We are thankful Banks will have the same council that has been serving them well for the past few years.

Kim Oblack-Morrison has a reason to be thankful after her car left the highway and went down an embankment. Three West Oregon Electric Cooperative (WOEC) employees found her, got help, kept her car from falling further, and kept her calm (and in her car) until help arrived. See picture of those three 'helpers' on page 1 and see the full story on page 15 in the Power of the People column. This is just the latest in a long list of stories in our community of people helping and watching out for others.

Speaking of WOEC, we are thankful the first winter weather power outage lasted only a few hours early Tuesday morning. The outage was caused by a tree down on Bonneville lines, not our local lines. WOEC was able to switch to the Chapman line and get it back up pretty quick.

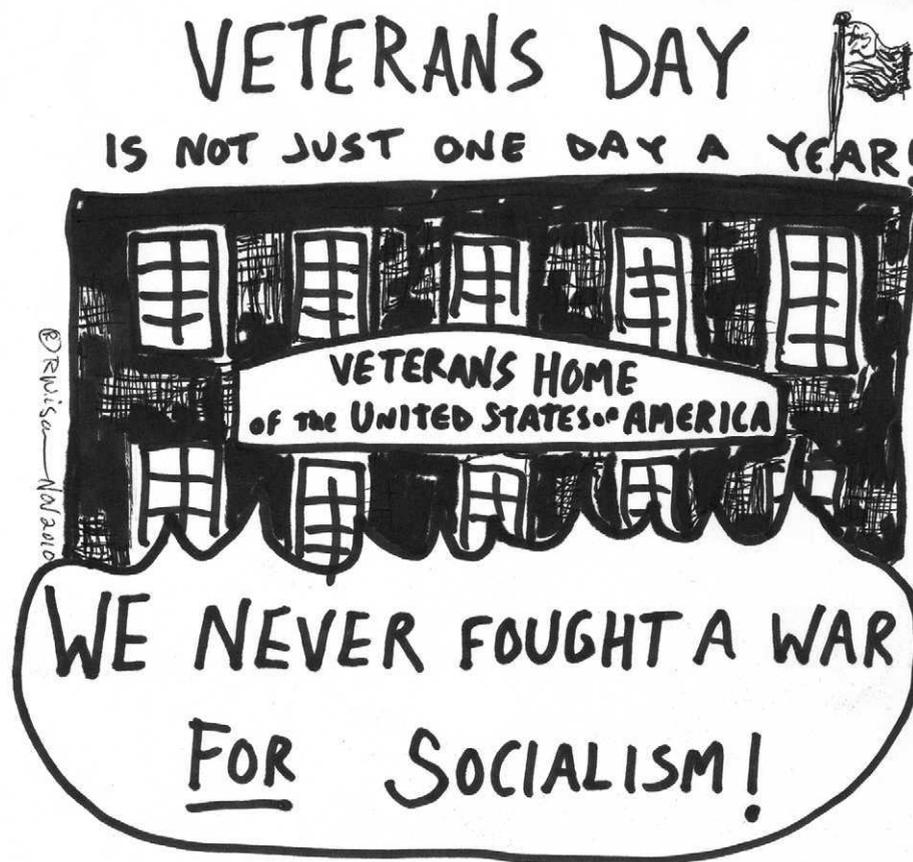
We are always thankful for the number of, and kindness of, volunteers. We won't try to list them because the names would fill up this entire volume of *The Independent*. Without volunteers in our community, so many things wouldn't get done or done as well. There are many volunteers on committees, commissions, councils and community organizations; it is truly amazing. There are many more volunteers none of us ever hear about, out there doing the little things that make us all thankful – like taking food to a family in times of trouble, or checking on an elderly neighbor, or the gentlemen who cleared the piles of leaves off the Rock Creek Bridge last week.

We are thankful for the new donations made, this week, to the Vernonia new schools project; the Oregon Community Foundation grant of \$50,000 and the Ford Family Foundation challenge grant of \$1 million. It will be a wonderful day for the Vernonia community on December 2 when the official groundbreaking takes place. That's a big step towards making the new schools a reality.

We are thankful Benjamin Franklin, one of this country's founding fathers, did not get his wish to have the turkey be the national bird. In 1784, after the Eagle had been chosen, he wrote to his daughter, "For my own part I wish the Eagle had not been chosen the representative of our country...the Turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America."

And, we are thankful for all of the volunteers, contributors, advertisers, readers and everyone else who makes this paper possible.

Have a happy Thanksgiving.



### Out of My Mind . . .

by Noni Andersen



Thanksgiving won't be here for another week, but big retailers haven't waited until the Friday after Thanksgiving to start pushing "All the JOY Made Easy", "Set the Perfect Table," "Prices Never Lower," etc. This excessive commercialism of Christmas has always annoyed me, but this year I'm not going to object. In fact, I'm joining in the push for early shopping — with a difference.

How about buying American-made goods? If you plan to buy gifts or other items for Christmas, it would make sense to start supporting our own economy by buying American-made goods. Yes, it used to be hard to do, but no longer, at least for those who know how to place an order on the Internet.

The web site [www.madeinusaforever.com](http://www.madeinusaforever.com) has a remarkably comprehensive list of merchandise that is made in America. It includes toys and games, sports equipment, outdoor, sportsmen and hunting equipment, clothing for everyone in the family including Big and Tall, furniture, tools and automotive equipment, art supplies, office supplies, rugs, skin and hair care items, linens, home items, lawn and garden care, pet supplies, books and cards, health related items, luggage, gift cards, and flags and patriotic items. Imagine, an American flag that is made in America!

As of 2008, 65% of the goods we buy from China used to be made in America. From 2000 through 2008, 43,000 American factories and three million jobs were "offshored", taken to another country. So, how about buying American?

If you are among those who rather eliminate using "Christmas" and "commercial" in the same sentence, there are many ways to emphasize the spiritual value of generosity and good will. While there are national and international charitable organizations such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, there are also many organizations in the local area that would greatly appreciate donations of any size.

Our attention is drawn regularly and appropriately to food banks in Vernonia and Banks, but there are other important organizations. All of the following provide invaluable services, and use donations to help local citizens:

- Mist-Birkenfeld Helping Circle does whatever is needed;
- fire districts, and their volunteer firefighters and volunteer emergency medical technicians;
- public libraries provide much more than new books...preschool, after school and summer programs for youth; movies, computers, special presentations, etc.;
- senior centers work hard to keep our older citizens active and involved;
- the WOEC fund to help keep the heat and lights on for folks hurt by this recession.

A charitable donation made in a loved one's name is in keeping with the spirit of Christmas... and provides another reason for Thanksgiving.