



THE INDEPENDENT

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Vernonia Lake again looked like a picture postcard as Old Man Winter returned for a stay.

Enjoy Sunday breakfast with Banks Volunteer Firefighters

Don't forget, this Sunday, March 6, is the Banks Volunteer Firefighters' annual Breakfast. Breakfast will be served in the Banks High School cafeteria, 450 S. Main St. from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Ticket prices are \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors,

\$4 for children, and \$25 for a family (maximum of 6). Breakfast includes pancakes or biscuits, gravy, sausage or ham, eggs, fruit, coffee, milk, and/or juice.

As always, kids get rides on the firetruck, and Sparky will be on hand.



March came in like a polar bear and Vernonia Public Works helped dig out.

U.S. Supreme Court rules against Four Square Church

A fired pastor can keep the \$355,000 he was awarded in a defamation suit against the church that accused him of misappropriating \$3,000 and demonstrating a "willingness to lie and steal," the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Monday.

While serving as interim pastor of the Foursquare church in Vernonia, Tim Tubra allegedly accepted a gift of \$3,000 to help with health care premiums. Though the church council had approved the transaction, Tubra said, it questioned his motives when a new pastor took over. The church charged Tubra with misappropriation of funds and ordered him to leave.

Ron Swor, the district supervisor of the church, read a statement to the Vernonia congregation that stated, "It is now evident that there has been, to some extent, a financial misappropriation by former pastor [Tubra]."

ODFW to stock lake with trout in March

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has announced that trout stocking in Vernonia Lake will begin with 3,500 trout the week of March 7, and another 4,000 during the week of March 14.

Sheriff sets local monthly schedule

The Columbia County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) is now available to the public in Vernonia once a month. On the third Wednesday of every month, a representative from CCSO will be at the Vernonia Police Department, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., to process renewals and new concealed handgun license applications, fingerprint individuals (children for free), for prescription turn-ins, and to answer general questions.

Later, John Michael Cooke, the church's divisional superintendent, wrote in an e-mail to Swor's secretary that Tubra may have "want[ed] to stir up trouble." According to the court filings, Cooke wrote, "He has already demonstrated a willingness to lie and steal, and to purposely [sow] discord against the division".

Tubra sued Swor, Cooke and the church for defamation. The jury ruled for Tubra, but a judge overruled the verdict and agreed with the church that the First Amendment barred Tubra's complaint.

In January of last year, the Oregon Court of Appeals reinstated the verdict, finding that the case was not so religious in nature as to bar Tubra's claim and ruling that the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel was not protected from the verdict under the First Amendment.

"The alleged defamatory statements - that the pastor had misappropriated money and had demonstrated a willingness to lie - would not always and in every context be religious in nature," Judge Rex Armstrong wrote for the court. "Thus, even though the statements related to plaintiff's conduct as pastor of the church, that fact does not render those statements absolutely privileged as a matter of law."

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Join in St. Pat's Parade



Join Vernonia's 28th annual St. Patrick's Day Parade on Thursday, March 17, starting at 5:15 p.m. at State Ave. and Bridge St.

There are no entrance fees, and everyone is welcome to be part of the parade.