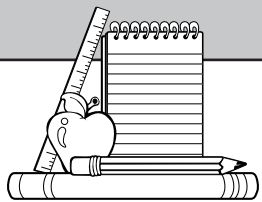


Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk is a column of information about Vernonia schools. This column was provided by Superintendent Dr. Ken Cox.



Summer has finally arrived! With children at home rather than in school, summertime can be challenging to keep them occupied, so here are some helpful hints to keep them busy.

1. Due to the cooperation of many different community groups, all children from age 1 to 18 can get free breakfast and lunch every weekday at the cafeteria. They have also organized a number of different activities to fill the time between 8:30 a.m. (when breakfast is served) and 11:30 a.m. (when lunch begins). Adults are welcome to come along. My wife and I had breakfast the other day for \$1.25 each and lunch is only a little bit more. Many thanks to the organizations and volunteers who make this valuable community service possible.

2. The Vernonia Library is also a great source for books and videos. I read an article last week that indicated that one's ability to read influences their ability in all other cognitive areas. They based their conclusions on a research study done in Brazil (where public education is not mandatory) which found that even adults who learned to read later in life showed increased 'brain power' after they learned to read fluently. So I would encourage you to take the time to read to your little children, and when they can read on their own, perhaps set aside some time in the evening to encourage them to read. You might even find that twenty minutes of quiet reading time would help settle them in preparation for bed. And don't forget that example is the best teacher, so let your children see you reading too.

Since I am giving out so much good advice this week, I might as well get a little personal. Summertime is a time of memories, so take the time to make some memories with your family and take plenty of pictures. I would encourage you parents (and grandparents) to tell your children how much you love them. Do it often. Don't just assume that they know, they need to hear it from you. Please make a point to tell each of them, no matter how old they are, that you love them.

Finally, Carol and I would like to personally thank so many of you for your prayers, your kind words, thoughtful cards, and your contributions since the loss of our son. We have truly felt your prayers and support. So PLEASE, take some time today to tell those you love just how much you love them and do it often, because we never know what each day will bring.

Vernonia school board seeks member

At the Vernonia School District 47J board meeting on July 21, the board of directors accepted the resignation of board member Kim Wallace. Wallace's letter of resignation states, "...it comes down to the philosophical parting of ways between myself and some of the powers that be. I cannot personally or professionally reconcile with this year's budget process and the cuts that are being made." The board will take applications for a new board member until August 19 and will interview prospective board members on

August 25, with the goal of appointing a new member at the first September meeting.

Newly re-elected board members Tim Bamburg and Greg Kintz were sworn in. Bill Langmaid was not in attendance and will be sworn in at a later date.

The board returned Jim Krahn to the position of chair of the board and Cari Levenseller to the vice-chair position.

Superintendent Dr. Ken Cox was authorized to coordinate with the City of Vernonia on design work for demolition and the new Spencer Park plan that

will replace the existing schools.

In other business, the board:

- Approved 2011-2012 substitute teacher pay at the current level of \$170 per day;
- approved student fees at the 2010-2011 level, with the exception of lunch fees which will increase by \$.10. The board discussed implementing student fees for band members for all ages, but decided to discuss further at the next board meeting.

The next board meeting is scheduled for August 11, at 6:00 p.m., at the district office.

Pygmy rabbits being returned to wild

For the first time in more than 10 years, the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit has bred and successfully given birth in the endangered animals' original historic range. A litter of kits has been confirmed in a six-acre pre-release enclosure at the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area in central Washington, where conservationists are releasing rabbits bred at the Oregon Zoo and other sites back into the wild — and hoping that they multiply like rabbits.

Despite rabbits' reputation for reproducing quickly, disease, inbreeding, loss of habitat and other factors nearly wiped out the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit, and only 16 remained by 2002. America's smallest native rabbit, weighing less than one pound when fully grown, the pygmy (*Brachylagus idahoensis*) is also the country's only burrow-digging, and sagebrush-climbing rabbit.

So far, 93 pygmy rabbits have been reintroduced to the



A conservationist holds a pygmy rabbit kit at the Oregon Zoo. Photo by Michael Durham, courtesy of the Oregon Zoo.

Sagebrush Flat area this spring and summer, including 29 kits from the Oregon Zoo. With another month still left in the breeding season, the total number of rabbits released from all facilities includes 52 kits born this year and 41 adults (all adults from Washington State University). The animals released include those bred from the original 16

remaining Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits as well as wild pygmy rabbits from Oregon. Conservationists plan to release more this fall or next year.

To protect them from predators, encourage breeding and help them transition to their new surroundings, the rabbits are initially being kept in wire

See Pygmy on page 14

Grill Hours:
Sun. - Thurs. - 8 AM - 9 PM
Fri. & Sat. - 8 AM - 10 PM

Serving Forest Grove's
Finest Ice Cream!

503-357-7786

2001 Main Street
Forest Grove

A CONSIGNMENT & RETAIL STORE

Resale & Gently Pre-Owned
Clothing for Men, Women and
Children & Much More!
Consignments Accepted!

Come By & Visit Us Today!

503-357-8385

2003 Main Street • Forest Grove
Mon. - Sat. - 10 AM - 7:30 PM

State Farm®
Providing Insurance and Financial Services
Home Office, Bloomington, Illinois 61710

Bunny Girt, Agent

1229 N. Adair
PO Box 543
Cornelius, OR 97113-0543
Bus 503-357-3131 Fax 503-357-9667
bunny.girt.b71g@statefarm.com

Terry's Gym

A COMPLETE
CO-ED GYM
FACILITY

503-901-1705
16720 Noakes Rd Vernonia, OR

Col. County Rodeo Court seated

On July 16, in front of packed grandstands, the 2012 Columbia County Fair and Rodeo Court was announced at the Saturday night rodeo. Emily Nodland, 17, of St. Helens, won the categories of Horsemanship and Appearance and was crowned the 2012 Queen. Princess Makayla Bennett, 15, of Deer Island, won the categories of Speech and Personality and the Sales award. Winning the Knowledge category and the

Congeniality and Photogenic awards was Princess Jordyn Deaville, 17, of Woodland. Noelani Acker, 16, of St. Helens, was named First Runner-Up and Flag Team Captain. She also won the Herdsmanship and MRO Spirit awards.

The new court's reign will begin January 1, 2012, and their official coronation ceremony will be in early January. The court will work on fundraising and sponsorship activities throughout the coming months.