

24 Years Ago This Month

The January 28, 1988, issue of *The Independent* included the following news story on the front page:

A plan for dealing with the city's stalled nuisance abatement program was presented to the Vernonia City Council at their January 4, 1988, meeting, by Building Official Jim Tierney.

The proposal, which would create a point system for prioritizing abatement targets, also calls for an ordinance that would allow fines of up to \$1,000 for violations, then channel those fines into a revolving fund to finance the program.

The point system for determining abatement priorities would be based on five criteria:

1. Immediate health hazards, as determined by the county health officer, would be 10 points.
2. Health and safety risks determined by the city building official would range from 1 to 10 points.
3. Future health and safety

risks, for situations deemed repairable by the building official, would be 1 to 5 points.

4. Crime hazard, for instance an unsecured vacant building used for illegal purposes, 1 to 5 points.
5. Visibility, whether the property reflects negatively on the town, would be another 1 to 5 points.

Tierney also requested \$3,000 for the program in the 1988-89 fiscal year. That amount wouldn't result in an increase in the budget, Tierney said, because of a decrease in the building official's hours and salary.

The council referred the plan to City Attorney Tom Kohl for review.

In other action during January the council agreed there would be no charge for water leaking from a pipe at the residence of Mike Pihl after installation of a new water meter there. Public Works Director Mike Smith explained that even though the pipe was broken on the Pihl's side of the meter, it

could have been caused by the installation of the new meter.

Council member Mario Leonetti asked Smith to purchase all of the materials needed to complete the fencing at Spencer Park, per agreement with Larry Bair, the adjacent landowner. Smith said he was waiting for a list of supplies, and would obtain the materials as soon as possible.

Two ordinances were unanimously approved: one changes the composition of the planning commission so that one member can reside outside the city limits.

The other ordinance approved was to set a sixty day limit for homeowners to comply, after notification by the city that their curbs or sidewalks need to be repaired.

The council also set a workshop with the airport commission for February 15, following a council meeting, to discuss insurance, hangar rental agreements and maintenance.

Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



Happy New Year. Santa and Frosty no longer reign under the Hinoki tree, they are now passed out on the front room floor, drying from all the fog and rain we had over the last three days. Oh, we had some sunshine too, but there wasn't much heat in it, just glare. This you are missing, Moxie (the cat) is attacking Frosty and his broom. It must be the green fringe on the scarf that caught her attention. Ah, the

New Year has made its appearance; cold, gray night, plus fireworks that raised Gee Whiz with Shadow who thought another war had broken out.

Today, the 1st, we have sun, wind and no rain. Shadow and I took our first walk of 2012 and found 13 new Forsythia blooms along the way. January 2nd, my Shadow for the last 10 years has gone to her final rest.

Memory of a True Pal. In 2002, I met a pup named Baby. She was a two-year-old nobody needed, but she needed someone of her own and she chose me. I, Jacqueline, was visiting the pet store in Vernonia. Baby was being chased by a couple of BIG DOGS, when making the third pass around the room she dove onto my lap and there she has been ever since. We had one disagreement on the way home as to who would be Alpha and who would be Omega. She accepted the name Shadow and we became (almost) one. While trying to become an escape artist by climbing fences she cracked her tail bone. Then she changed to digging out and heading for the lake to visit Big Bill. She soon found out she didn't like being chained. So we walked to the lake to herd the ducks into the water, put the rabbits in the briar patch, weathered all kinds of weather, played in knee deep autumn leaves, picked tons of wild blackberries. Been nose to nose with raccoons and possums in her own backyard. We made a team. When I started using a walker on our long walks she became Alpha and I became Omega. Then fate stepped in, she lost the sight in her right eye and things starting going down hill. Things only BIG BUCKS could (maybe) help. This I have faced before. Accept your rest, Shadow, you have earned it.

County libraries saddle up for trip to wild west

Columbia County public libraries are joining forces for the 2012 Our Community Reads program running from January through March 2012. Local libraries will take readers on a journey to the Wild West through a selection of Western-themed books and events.

Participating libraries include the St. Helens Public Library, Clatskanie Library District, Columbia City Community Library, Rainier City Library, Scappoose Public Library and Vernonia Public Library.

Three books have been selected to cover a range of reading ages. The adult selection is "The Hearts of Horses" by renowned Portland author Molly Gloss. "The Devil's Paintbox" by Victoria McKernan is the teen selection, and older elementary students will enjoy "The Captain's Dog" by Oregon author Roland Smith.

A variety of Western-themed events are planned at participating libraries. Author Molly Gloss will be at the Vernonia Public Library on February 27 at 5:30 p.m. to discuss her book. She will visit the St. Helens Public Library on March 1 at 7:00 p.m.

Adult and teen readers inter-

ested in discussing their reading selection from the comfort of home can visit two book blog spots: <http://thediavilspaintboxdiscussion.blogspot.com/> and <http://theheartsofhorsesdiscussion.blogspot.com/>.

Other events include a Western Film Series at Scappoose and Vernonia Public Libraries; Sing Like a Cowboy night at St. Helens Public Library; leather carving for students; an antique quilt show; cowboy-themed preschool storytime with individualized, old fashioned WANTED posters; presentations on saddle making and Custer's last stand; and a book sale at Columbia City Community Hall.

Community members interested in participating are en-

couraged to visit a participating library to check out the Our Community Reads selections and start reading. A complete list of events and dates are also available at participating libraries.

Our Community Reads is a program designed to bring reading to the forefront of public discourse. By reading the same book at the same time, it is hoped that Columbia County residents will be inspired to discuss, connect and share their perspectives.

For further information regarding the 2012 Our Community Reads program, please contact St. Helens Public Library Director Margaret Jeffries at 503-397-4544, ext. 104.

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