

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

New school finally open

We admit that when the bond measure for the new school was on the ballot, we didn't like it. The reason – we don't like gambling. But, the majority of the Vernonia community took that gamble, beat the odds, and now we have a new school. It's nice that it's built to LEED Platinum standards, but we're really glad our students no longer have to go from modular to modular to go to classes or the bathroom. We're glad they won't have to go out in the rain and snow to get to the cafeteria. We were especially thrilled to see the excitement on the faces of both children and school staff at the Grand Opening.

The school looks nice, but that's not really what makes a school the heart of a community. It's the kids, and it's the activities that are held at the school. The stage in the new school is beautiful and we look forward to seeing the Christmas programs, community theatre presentations and other events that bring the community together. As was stated at the grand opening, "this is not just a school, it's a community center", and it feels really nice to have a space for get-togethers that is out of the way of the water around here.

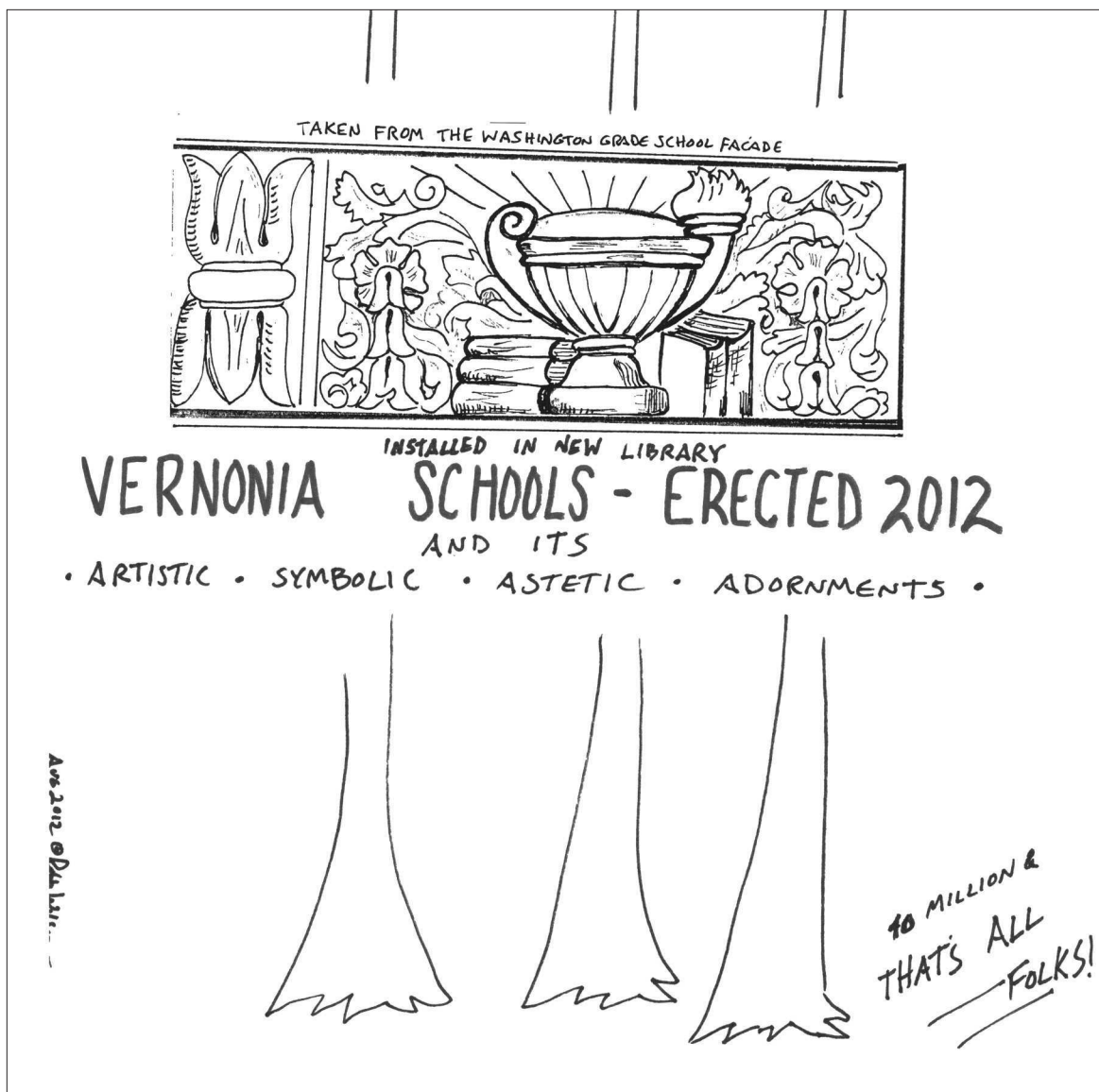
Walking by the old schools yesterday morning was bittersweet without bell tones signaling the class period changes. On the other hand, it's sure a relief to have that new building open and operating.

No new council members

Unless there is a surprise write-in campaign, there will be no new faces on city councils, in either Vernonia or Banks. The filing deadline for the November election is over and the only people who filed for those positions were the incumbents. There have been plenty of people bringing up issues in both communities, but apparently the people with the issues are not willing to serve on the council and help solve the problems that face any city; water, sewer, zoning, etc. That's too bad, but the good people who are willing to serve deserve your thanks and your support. And, while you're at it, tell them what you think about the issues that affect us.

Update on Vernonia Police car use

The last thing Vernonia Police Chief Conner said regarding police cars going home with officers was that the practice would end after Jamboree. And it did. Thanks, Chief.



Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



The hot temperatures we had over Jamboree weekend, ended our two-year run with sub-lethal temperatures in local streams. On Monday, August 6th, I recorded a stream temperature of 75.7 degrees, which exceeds the upper lethal limit for salmonids. With the elevated stream flows that we are seeing this year, the lethal stream temperatures most likely did not extend upstream above Vernonia as far as in previous years. Still, when the river turns hot like this, it excludes a tremendous amount of the main stem Nehalem River from rearing habitat and kills a lot of the fish that get trapped by these hot water events. Hot weather in the second full week in August also pushed stream temperatures beyond the upper lethal limit of 75 degrees. The main stem at the Green Steel Bridge was 76.0 degrees, the Nehalem at the confluence with Rock Creek was 75.0 degrees and Rock Creek was 69.8 degrees. Again, good stream flow, as shown with Rock Creek, is a saving grace and Rock Creek most likely did not suffer significant mortalities.

Many people would think with the recent hot, dry weather spell, that we may be close to a water curtailment, but actually we are not. Looking at the USGS stream gauge pages, it is readily apparent, despite the recent hot weather, that

coastal streams all across Oregon are running at normal or slightly above normal flows. Currently, the upper Nehalem gauge is experiencing some problems, the stream flow data is not being given. Having watched this gauge from time to time, I can see that USGS is trying to "ground truth" the station with actual conditions, but is having some sort of issue. Driving by the station the other day it appeared that a new gravel bar has appeared and divided the channel right in front of the station, maybe this is the issue. Don't be alarmed though, none of these issues should have any effect on our flood warning information from this gauge.

My hunting buddy, Jim King, and I made a trip over to eastern Oregon to hunt coyotes a few weeks ago. Jim had a good idea where to look for the song dogs since he had hunted the same area a few times for antelope. The first dog of the trip was observed from the two-track road we were driving, and Jim made an off-hand shot on him. We made our first calling set-up after walking through a saddle in a ridgeline paralleling the road we were on. The Foxpro caller screamed of a rabbit in distress across the large expanse of sage and junipers that laid before us. Within eight minutes a coyote appeared off to my right, Jim let him come on in and I nudged up the sound on the now silent caller. My sights were already on the coyote, when he stepped up on a rock and cocked his head to listen to the dying rabbit. That was the last thing he heard. Jim and I looked at each other, both thinking, "Wow, two dogs within an hour." We walked back past the

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