

Between the Bookends

by Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library



It has probably been forgotten by all but a few that an "unofficial" Friends of the Library was active in the early 1990s. Money was raised by serving coffee at rest stops and from donations. These volunteers, including Marguerite Nice and Julie Milander, successfully guided summer reading activities

including entries in the Jamboree Parades. Of course, the library was still in the old building, with very limited space. I remember one particularly interesting afternoon when a performer was delayed due to road construction. There were probably 60 people crammed into that little space—waiting, waiting and waiting. Marguerite Nice was an absolute life saver as she told stories and led songs for over an hour until the program could begin. There was wonderful parent involvement in all of the activities. Does anyone remember the parade entry when the banner was written backwards because its creator thought that it was necessary to be read that way as the float proceeded through the route? That was also the year that youngsters dressed as loggers and animals, while the adults were paper trees. Photo albums in the library showing participants including those from the Knowlton, Bonora, Pelster, McGaugh, Fogel, Lee, Cutright and Deweber families are available for anyone who would like to relive these days of summer fun.

It was determined that, in order for the Friends group to be more effective, a 501(c)(3) designation was necessary. A highly motivated group persevered and, in 2002, achieved this status, allowing federal tax exemption of donations to nonprofit organizations.

The nucleus of this group (Jennifer Butcher, El Donna Williams, Claudine East, Joann Glass, and Linda Johnston) has been joined by other active members including Roxana Sherman-Heath and Jennifer Moloney, and these are the members who work so diligently to organize the twice yearly book sales. The proceeds from these sales, from membership dues, and from donations, have provided invaluable opportunities for additional programs, services and materials that would otherwise have not have been available. Purchases of books and equipment, cultural passes, movie licensing, carpet cleaning, snacks and supplies for youth programs, overnight stays for out of town authors, a new vacuum cleaner, and sponsorship of programs for both youth and adults are just some of the ways in which the money from the Friends has been used. Keep in mind that the next meeting of this group will take place on the second Tuesday of January with new members always welcome.

Stories involving ordinary people caught in extraordinary situations continue to intrigue me. How one's split-second decision can escalate until that person is caught in a web from which there seems no way to escape, is the story line in many novels. The unexpected discovery of large sums of money and the spiraling events is the theme of *Learning to Fly* by April Henry, *A Simple Plan* by Scott Smith, *Crux* by Julie Reece, and *The Pull Out Method* by Lucky Stevens. When a car accident leaves Free Meeker in possession of someone else's bag containing nearly a millions dollars, fate seems to be giving Free Meeker the chance to make her life over, but author April Henry creates a very different and complicated conclusion in *Learning to Fly*. Because a movie (not a very good one) was made from Smith's, *A Simple Plan*, many of you are probably familiar with the spiral of blackmail, betrayal and murder that take place when three men decide to keep the \$4.4 million they find in a wrecked plane.

When Julie Reece's protagonist in *Crux*, Birdie (eighteen years old and homeless) grabs some money thrown by a mysterious guy, she becomes the girl that thugs want to kill, money-guy wants to recruit, and very rich out-of-her-league hot guy wants to save. *The Pull Out Method* by Lucky Stevens finds former criminal and air-conditioning repairman, Reggie Stanchion, getting his life back on the right track, when, finding himself stuck in the crawl space of a bank during a violent robbery, he hears details of the robber's plan and decides to take over the robbery. That spur-of-the-moment decision leads to treacherous and unexpected challenges for Reggie and to a complex, sometimes humorous, can't-wait-to-turn-the-page story with an unpredictable conclusion.

The Long Rain by Peter Gadol and *Reservation Road* by John Burnham Schwartz are novels in which drivers cause fatal accidents and must live with the resulting spur-of-the-moment decisions they make. An interesting twist to this theme is a sequel to *Reservation Road* (*Northwest Corner*) in which Burnham revisits, twelve years later, both the family of Dwight Arno (the driver responsible in the fatality) and the Learner family (whose 10-year-old son died in the accident).

I guess this theme of impulsively made decisions fascinates me because it seems that any one of us could find ourselves in situations where we are mistaken for someone else, or happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, or maybe witness something we shouldn't, or just react to the body language or remark of someone in a way that sets unforeseen events in action. If this sparks your imagination, you might want to read one of the newest acquisitions, *The Three Day*

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Vernonia Public Library: 701 Weed Avenue
Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Tues., Thu. 1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Sat. 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Preschool Story Time: Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
Phone: 503-429-1818

Council looks at parking, zoning, RV's

A Public Hearing on Downtown rezoning and other zone changes was held at the Vernonia City Council's October 1 meeting. The rezoning would include changing 26 lots on Rose Ave. and Weed Ave. from Residential to Downtown zones, changing the flood buy-out properties from residential to either public or park zones, and changing a portion of California Ave. from residential to commercial zone. School Superintendent Ken Cox, and Casey Mitchell (who owns the parcel on California Ave.) spoke in favor of the changes. Four people spoke in opposition, primarily being opposed to the rezoning on Rose and Weed avenues. One person spoke as a neutral party. When all testimony and public input was complete, council decided to continue the hearing to November 19.

Council then held a public hearing on RV Habitation Amendments that were intended

to clean up the existing language regarding the habitation of RVs that was considered inflexible and unclear. After closing that hearing, council voted to adopt the changes. At the October 15 meeting, these changes were presented as Ordinance 885 and adopted by vote of the council.

With council consensus and the recommendation of the Public Works Committee, Mayor Josette Mitchell appointed Sally Harrison and Jacob Lee to the committee.

Council approved a motion for City Administrator Bill Haack to start the process of finding a consultant to do a Wastewater Rate Study to determine what the city should be charging, based on the true cost of providing wastewater treatment services. Discussion of the need for this study came up during the water rate study earlier this year.

At the October 15 council meeting, Haack told council

that winter park hosts for both Anderson Park and Vernonia Lake have been hired.

There was no public testimony at a hearing to change the building code fees. After council reviewed the proposal, they voted to adopt the new fees.

There was public testimony opposed to the idea of charging downtown businesses a \$10 per parking spot fee based on a chart listing the types of business, their "parking needs", and the businesses' square footage. Four people spoke against the parking code changes or made suggestions to amend the idea. Council asked staff to figure out how to determine the fees each business will pay and agreed that the fee will be included in the business license renewals in July 2013.

Council adopted Ordinance 884 Oregon Smoke Free Workplace Law, which states that

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