

Carolers give song, gifts, holiday cheer

Members of the Holiday Project are gearing up for the Christmas season.

They're making gifts and readying a gift-wrapping booth for the next two Saturday Markets downtown. And more than 100 volunteer carolers may share festive feelings Christmas afternoon with nursing home residents and hospitalized children.

The Holiday Project, born more than a decade ago in San Francisco, sends people into nursing homes to sing carols, pass out presents made by other volunteers and chat with the residents.

Last Christmas, the Project's first in Eugene, volunteers visited Sacred Heart Hospital and 12 nursing homes.

The group's cheerful presentations brightened the spirits of the recipients and "made us realize the spirit is still definitely alive in those old worn-out bodies," says Jim Porter, financial manager for the local chapter.

"It was one of the most moving things I've ever taken part in. Visiting those people and singing to them is like giving away warm puppies," he says.

The Project has blossomed from a few caring San Francisco citizens to 38,000 people visiting less fortunate folks in 76 cities throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and Costa Rica, Porter says.

Last year, the non-profit organization staffed only by volunteers netted \$600,000 in donations of cash, goods and services, he says.

Porter encourages any individual, family or group to participate in the visitations or help with groundwork. People with special talents, such as musicians, are urged to join the festivities.

The group will meet in front of the Eugene Public Library at noon on Christmas day.

To obtain additional information, call Porter or project director Ann Seidel at 345-3277.



Photo by Bob Baker

Christmas fair tottering along

As these dolls — and their craft sellers — can tell you, business is down at the Christmas Craft Fair this year.

"People just don't have the money," says Mary Aubrey, a seller.

Fewer booths in Room 167, EMU, may account for less crowding. A spokesperson for

the Craft Center, which is co-sponsoring the event with the Cultural Forum, says fewer booths were accepted this year to allow for more space.

The fair continues through Friday. The fair will be open Thursday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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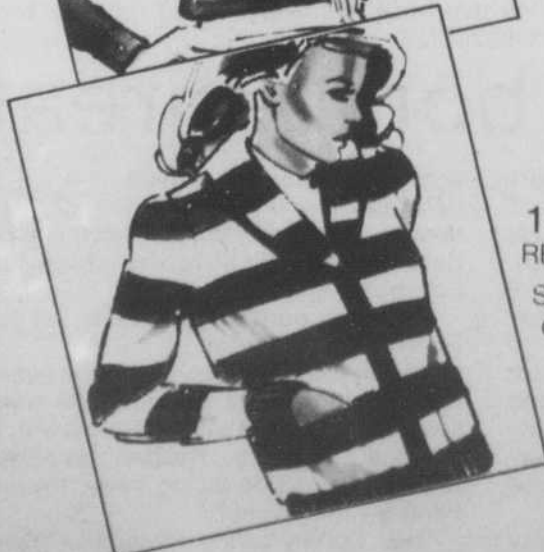
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