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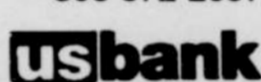
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 \$175,00 — Seller will pay \$3,000 towards buyer's closing costs. L-shaped lot. Huge shop or studio on back lot. 1502 SE 84th Ave. Don't delay!



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NORTHWEST news

SECOND NATURE

Retreat returns elders to the great outdoors by Nancy Walseth

Mark your calendar, grab your gay granny, and hit the highway Aug. 17. She won't want to miss the first-ever Gay and Lesbian Day at Weavers Tale Retreat Center!

The Portland grassroots nonprofit group has been providing one-day nature outings for seniors since 1993. At a woodland facility between Sandy and Eagle Creek, Weavers Tale does its work through a diverse group of professionals including naturalists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and massage and music therapists. They lavish seniors with friendship, fun, care and assistance as needed. Oh, and lunch, too!

The goal of Weavers Tale is to honor and enrich the souls of our elders by the gentle and nurturing stimulation of sensory contact with nature. This is not a religious or spiritually based enterprise. There is no agenda other than empowering elders to be fully alive; to experience renewal of their connection to nature, their pasts and others; and to express themselves through storytelling. The group activities have been noted to have a near-magical effect on those whose physical impairments or other circumstances have kept them from contact with the natural world.

It all started with a young woman's dream. About 25 years ago, Edie Seyl was a young activities director for a nursing home. She could see that the sensory deprivation of institutional living tends to cause residents to lose interest in themselves and in the life around them. She wanted to do something to help counteract this ubiquitous problem but was not sure exactly what.

Seyl soon purchased five wooded acres on a creek and pond in Molalla with only a vague sense of what she would create there. During a summer when she lived on the land in a tent, her idea began to take shape.

She started to dream of a retreat center where seniors from institutions and private homes could spend a day immersed in arts and leisure. The idea of freeing elders from the sterile boredom of facility living so they could spend an occasional day on a pond among frogs, ducks, fish, beavers and great blue herons set Seyl on a trajectory of slow and steady accomplishment to fulfillment of her vision.

She took care of nuts and bolts through the years, building the structure to support a successful effort. She first obtained her occupational therapist license. Then she committed to the ongoing paperwork chore of incorporating as a nonprofit.

There was no weaver in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, but in naming her project, Seyl took

inspiration from the medieval tome. She knew that memories are triggered by sights, sounds, smells and feel of the natural world. She considers it one of Weavers Tale's most important jobs to encourage participants to tell their stories.

Activities are interwoven with hands-on personal attention designed to enliven and




Edie Seyl is reaching out to gay and lesbian seniors

reconnect elders to their past. Participants often begin to retrieve memories of childhood and personal experiences when they feel the antlers of a deer or sit in a circle and sing old songs that were popular in their youth.

Weavers Tale is up to doing about eight half-day retreats each summer. Work on the Molalla property has been awaiting the substantial funds necessary for permits and building. The land has been cleared, and an architect's drawings are finished. Until the project is completed, retreats will continue to take place at the Alton L. Collins facility on Highway 211.

Through its two primary fund-raising events each year and through grants Seyl is able to obtain, Weavers Tale will continue to maintain its summer schedule, pay staff and reach out to include more populations, such as the upcoming Gay and Lesbian Day.

Sounds nice, but you're not in a rest home yet? And neither is your granny? Good news: Weavers Tale considers gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans community members and their loved ones who have reached the ripe old age of 50 to be the elders of our community. Group size will be limited to about 25, so make your reservations early. 

To take part in the WEAVERS TALE GAY AND LESBIAN DAY retreat, call 503-234-4202. Cost is only \$18.50 (\$13.50 for brown-baggers).

NANCY WALSETH is a Portland free-lance writer.