Worth the Trip!

By Evangeline Doyle

Due to our rural location, many of us often travel to Portland, the beach and beyond, so we thought it would be fun to start a column to talk about places outside Vernonia that are "worth the trip." Tried-and-true establishments that have been tested and submitted by local residents. We hope you find this column both enjoyable and useful!

To start this off, we're heading to Cannon Beach. For many of us this is a favorite beach town as it is both quaint, pedestrian-friendly, and one of the closest to Vernonia.

If you are a crab cake connoisseur, love seafood, or just like a good story, stop by "**Cranky Sue's.**" Coming West on Hwy 26, take the first Cannon Beach exit, it will drop you in the right location. Cranky Sue's is located at 308 Fir Street (at the corner of Fir and Third). They are open everyday except Wednesday; their hours are 11 a.m. to about 7 p.m.

Cranky Sue's tagline is "Furiously good food to improve your mood." I would have to agree with that statement. The crab cakes are too-die-for. West coast, East coast, I've yet to taste a better crab cake. And the amazing thing is they freeze extremely well, which is a benefit to those of us who live an hour away.

Another bonus at Cranky Sue's is the variety. You know every family has one...the picky eater, or the one that doesn't like seafood. Their menu has something for everyone making it easy to get your seafood fix while the kids chomp a dog or sandwich. Sue also has several gluten-free menu items.

The story behind the name is also entertaining. Owners Sue Neuwirth and Rick Schlingmann once owned a restaurant at a popular New Jersey marina. As the story goes, they were a new and popular spot, open six days a week. With the Fourth of July holiday approaching, the marina asked they be open seven days a week. "We were so overwhelmed that by Sunday," Sue said "we ran out of food and couldn't open Monday." Sue posted a sign that read "thank you for your patronage, but I really get cranky without a day off, and signed it Cranky Sue." The name stuck. She knew if she ever had another restaurant she would name it "Cranky Sue's."

"Sometimes we get customers in who want me to be cranky, so I oblige them," laughed Sue. "It's all in fun!"

Prior to opening, Sue and Rick had been coming to Oregon often to visit her sister. One day they decided to take a leap of faith. They packed up their dogs, pans, Cuisinart and recipes and made a go of it. They've been at their Cannon Beach location for nearly two years.

If you haven't tried Cranky Sue's then you're missing out on one of the best kept secrets on the coast! Stop by during your next visit to the beach, and let them know you read about them in Vernonia's Voice. You can also visit their website at www.crankysues.com.

Do you have a favorite haunt that's "Worth the Trip?" Let us hear from you! E-mail your entry to evangeline@vernoniasvoice.com or mail to Vernonia's Voice, attn: Worth the Trip, P.O. Box 55, Vernonia, Oregon 97064.

CRANKY SUES
Furiously Good Food To Improve Your Mood

Another Round: More Words of Wisdom About Beer

By Scott Laird

Get a dog up ya! - An Australian expression which really doesn't mean anything much at all. Often said while drinking, meaning "cheers," and yelled at high volume at soccer matches.

Hooray for "Beer Northwest" - At the recent Spring Beer and Wine Fest in Portland, I came across a new publication called Beer Northwest. This is a new quarterly magazine dedicated to beer culture in the great Pacific Northwest. Published by Megan Flynn, the magazine is a beautiful tribute to all things beer related including new openings, recipes and food pairings, cool places to hang out, and seasonally themed articles. It features fantastic photography, quality writing and all kinds of interesting ideas about how to better enjoy quality beer. You can check out what Megan is up to at www.beernw.com. Subscriptions are $16. This is my kind of magazine!

For the Love of Beer Mats - Some people collect coins. Some collect rare books. Some people collect animal skulls. Me, I collect beer mats, also known as coasters. I have found this to be a very satisfying hobby, because it means that whenever I have a new addition to my collection, I probably had the opportunity to try a new beer at a new brewpub. Not only is beer mat collecting fun, it's also really inexpensive- usually the beer server brings me one for free when I sit down at their table or bar. When I get up to leave, I just pocket my new prize, and I have a great souvenir from my visit and a new addition to my collection. Beer festivals are a great place to add to my collection- many of the brewers give them away to encourage... well I'm not sure what it encourages, but I like it! New Belgium Brewing always has the most interesting beer mats, cleverly designed and interestingly shaped. A new recent addition: Laurelwood Brewing Company. I finally paid my first visit to this fine establishment. Had an excellent seasonal Espresso Stout placed on my new beer mat. Thanks Laurelwood!

In search of the Perfect Porter or Stout - My search continued this past month for the best Porters and Stouts. I came across Highwater Porter brewed by Skagit River Brewery (Mount Vernon, Washington). Couldn't pass by that name - being from Vernonia and all- good beer, very tasty. I also came across Black Bear XX Stout from Alameda Brewhouse (4765 NE Fremont, Portland). This was a robust, flavorful stout with just the right touch of fruit and a hint of espresso. Excellent! Check this one out. Hey Dana, you should get some of this for the Black Bear in Vernonia!

Something New I Learned About Beer - A friend (thanks Bob!) recently informed me that Bock Beer is traditionally released in celebration of the arrival of spring. So to honor this tradition we got together and tried an Anchor Brewing Bock (San Francisco) and a Doppel-Hirsch , a Bavarian Doppelbock. According to the Anchor label, "bock" has come to mean a beer that is darker and stronger than a brewer's regular beer. Both were very enjoyable, the Doppelbock, or double bock, was excellent. Welcome Spring! Join me next time - for *another round.*