

Easter Concert is Back, With Some Changes

The Vernonia Easter Concert is back! What many of us know as the Easter Cantata is returning after a short hiatus-- with a new name.

Vernonia Community Choir Director Linda Cahill has revived the annual event and is calling it the Easter Concert-- the title of the production this year is “Bow The Knee.”

Cahill started the musical and dramatic presentation that has become a Vernonia tradition as a Christmas concert about twenty-five years ago. She changed it to an Easter event after she was asked if she would be willing to direct a community choir in Vernonia.

An injury two years ago, and flood recovery last spring, forced Cahill to cancel the production for the last two years. This year, Cahill says she has pared down to sixteen singers with no acting, just some narration.

Performances this year will be held at the Washington Grade School Gym on Friday and Saturday evenings, April 3 and 4 at 7:30 PM, and on Sunday at 3:00 PM. There is no charge for the performances.

Senior Stars: Violet “Cookie” Polos

By Necia DeWitt

Violet (Cookie) Polos was born December 12, 1916, near Cambridge, Ohio. She was the only child of Benjamin and Bessie (Marule) Grindstaff. She attended all twelve years at City School in Cambridge, taking sewing classes while in 7th and 8th grade. Having gained that skill, she sewed skirts and dresses to help her family’s finances during the hard times of The Great Depression.

During this Prohibition time, her Dad made home brew. Her Dad hung a quart down their cistern so it would be cold for her family’s Happy Hour the next evening. While the adults talked about the events of the day, Violet (sworn to secrecy about the forbidden liquid) would be given some juice, cheese and crackers.

When Violet was sixteen, the family sold their small farm and moved to town. She graduated from high school in 1935 and planned to attend Business College the next year. About this time, Violet acquired the nickname of “Cookie” by which she is better known.



Cookie Polos with her friend, Rosie McCoy, at the Vernonia Senior Center

Cookie’s life changed completely in early 1936. She was invited to a social in a nearby town where some young men were also present. Her future husband, Anthony (Tony) Polos, was among them. He had just completed college from California-Berkley, obtaining an Engineering Degree. He began his career with the Soil Conservation Service as a river forecaster for the Federal Weather Bureau. Tony and Cookie soon became engaged.

In March, 1936, Tony was transferred to Waco, TX. Soon after, Cookie packed her bags to begin a new and exciting life. She followed Tony to Texas and, upon her arrival, they were married. Among Tony’s skills was cooking, which he taught Cookie as the newlyweds thrived. This young couple became friends with two or three other couples. One weekend, the ladies put on their long dresses, the men donned their fancy clothes, and the group went to Galveston and Dallas to dine and dance to several well-known orchestras like Paul Whitman, Ray Noble, and The Ted Lewis Band.

The young couple traveled during the next few years. When World War II began, they moved to San Francisco, CA, where Cookie became an aircraft observer for the Fourth Fighter Command. Their first child, John, was born during their California days. Their second child, David, was born after their relocation to Atlanta, GA. Their third child, Barbara (Missy), was born when they were transferred to Portland, OR, in 1950.

It was while in Oregon that Cookie acquired her first horse. They raised Arabian horses as they lived in Aloha, OR. When they retired, they looked for a nice place in the country where they could still have horses, and found their beautiful home on Keasey Road, Vernonia. They truly enjoyed country living and settled in to become long-time Vernonia residents.

Cookie has been a member of the Vernonia Extension for many years. She has attended the Vernonia Christian Church since 1975, being active in the Christian Women’s Fellowship. One of the Fellowship’s activities was to assemble toiletry articles which were given to foster children and those people imprisoned. Cookie enjoys challenges and found it necessary to learn to drive at the age of 65, when Tony passed away. Cookie is an avid Bridge player. One time, when the transport bus thought Keasey Road was too treacherous to drive, she stood in the snow by her mailbox until a young man came along and gave her a ride to her game. There are many activities Cookie enjoys, but the highlight of her week is Music Day on Wednesday at the Vernonia Senior Center.

As is the case with all Vernonia’s Senior Stars, Cookie has lived a life of fun, challenges, and shown herself to be a positive, overcoming person. As the picture shows, Cookie knows how to have a good time!

Senior Center Activities For April 2009

By Brandy Fosdick

Five Area Luncheon: Held in Clatskanie this month on April 27. Join other Seniors from throughout Columbia County at this monthly gathering hosted by a different community each month.

Connie’s Fabulous Breakfasts: Fabulous breakfasts are available to the public on Fridays for a cost of only \$3. The event happens at the Senior Center (446 Bridge Street) from 7:00 to 9:00 AM each Friday. Meal price includes a beverage, too. Enter through the side, parking lot door. What a deal!

Week Day Lunches: The Vernonia Senior Center offers nutritious and tasty lunches each weekday for only \$3. These are available to the public, not just Senior Citizens. (Mealtime is noon; late arrivals may not be served.) You can reserve your lunch by calling by 11:15 AM, or further in advance if possible, to assist the cooks as they prepare the day’s meals.

Maple Bars available locally!: Connie King, the cook at the Senior Center, is making maple bars each day. The maple bars are available to the public, too, and only cost \$1 each. Availability is subject to quantity on hand. You can assure yourself of a good supply by pre-ordering them directly from Connie by calling the Senior Center (503-429-3912) any week day, from 7:00 AM-3:00 PM. Please allow one day lead time for larger orders. The Center’s front door opens at 9:00, but the side parking lot door opens at 7:00. Ah, sweet treats!

Thrift Store: Bargain prices can be found in Vernonia’s Senior Center in their Thrift Store. The retail store is open Monday through Friday, from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM. It is also open most Saturdays mornings from 9:00 to noon. The Thrift Store provides funds for he Senior Center’s facility and its many activities. Donations can also be dropped off during those same hours, and donated clothes need to be clean and in good condition so they are “sales ready.” Buy locally and support your local Senior Center.

Membership Dues: Another way to support Vernonia’s Senior Center is to pay the \$10 annual membership dues. Checks may be mailed or dropped off at the Senior Center.



Interim Vernonia Police chief Mike Kay during the weekly Senior Citizen Police Academy held at the Vernonia Senior Center.

Banks Community Auction: Big Event--Big Fundraiser

Now In Its Thirty-sixth Year, the Auction is Still Going Strong

The Banks Community Auction, an annual event that raises money to support school programs and scholarships for Banks students will be held on May 2, 2009, at the Banks High School.

This year will be the thirty-sixth year the event has been held, and Co-Chairs Stephanie Smith and Becky Pauly are hoping it will be as successful as their past auctions. “Even with the slow economy, we are still getting lots of donations. Companies we thought might need to cut back are still coming through, and we will have lots of great items up for bid,” said Smith.

The theme this year is “A Night Among the Stars,” and, according to Smith, was chosen to help people take a break from their worries about the economy. “We want the community to leave behind the stress and come out and have fun with their neighbors for an evening.”

The Banks Community Auction is an all-day event that includes a large garage sale that starts at 8:00 AM (for \$5 you can be an early bird and get in at 7:00 AM), followed by a Silent Auction from 4:00 PM to 7:15. A Spaghetti Dinner is put on by the Future Farmers of America alumni, and then comes the big event-- the Oral Auction.

Some of the items up for bid this year may include: gift certificates for restaurants, golf lessons, art work, trees, flowers, shrubs, and weekend getaways.

All the money raised goes to the Parents Association which sponsors the auction, helping all three Banks schools in support of academic and athletic programs. “The Banks High School Parents Association provides numerous scholarships for graduating seniors every year, funded by the auction,” said Smith.

Smith, along with co-chair Pauly, are first-time chairs for the event. They are continuing the tradition and bringing the community together for “A Night Among the Stars” and supporting the Banks Community. Volunteering to Co-Chair the auction this year, both are enjoying meeting new people in the Banks School District and Community.

Jenny Hidalgo, current president of the BHS Parents Association, grew up in Banks and remembers attending the Auction. Her parents helped out at the auction for many years. “Think about all the people who have participated in one way or another over the years. There are people who have seen the auction benefit their children and are now seeing their grandchildren benefit from the proceeds.” Hidalgo stressed the many ways that the auction funds are used to help. “The majority of the funds go towards scholarships and athletics; but, we also support the classrooms, the band, the FFA, Banks Public Library, and Banks Fire Department-- lots of things.”

For more information about the Banks Community Auction, you can contact Stephanie Smith at 503-324-0545.

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