

Raffle Baskets and Christmas Trees-- plus more to come...



At the Vernonia Christmas Bazaar on December 5 & 6, 2009, the 8th grade CLOSE-UP kids will have Christmas trees for sale.

Instead of making a trip out of town for a tree, stop by and purchase a fresh cut tree and support a great group of kids for an opportunity of a lifetime trip to Washington DC. Trees will also be pre-sold by the group-- if you are interested, you can contact CLOSEUP advisor Ashley Rogers at the Vernonia Middle School at arogers@vernonia.k12.or.us. Place your order today as Christmas is just around the corner!

The week-long CLOSEUP program gives students the opportunity to experience their government in action

and gain the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to be informed, engaged citizens.

This innovative educational program is run by the Close Up Foundation, the nation's leading nonprofit, nonpartisan, civic education organization. Since 1972, Close Up has brought over 665,000 students and teachers from across the country to Washington, D.C., to experience firsthand the history, politics, and culture of the nation's capital. While on the program, students will participate in a variety of hands-on activities such as small-group workshops; seminars with Washington, D.C., journalists; lobbyists; embassy officials; and meetings with members of Congress and their staffs. Furthermore, students will learn from and debate with their peers from across the country, exposing them to differing attitudes and perspectives.

Recently, the University of Virginia validated the program's curriculum, giving students the opportunity to earn college credit for their participation.

Not only does the CLOSEUP program offer valuable citizenship and leadership skills, but it also includes separate professional development activities for teachers, giving them the chance to share best practices with educational professionals from across the country. Educators attend seminars and workshops of their choice, and have the option of receiving graduate credit or continuing education units for participation. This year, two teachers from Vernonia Middle School will be accompanying students on the program.

The all-inclusive program cost for each student, including instruction, travel, expenses, meals, and lodging is approximately \$1800.

The kids will also have beautiful themed baskets to raffle off-- "Movie/ Game Night," "Food & Dining" and "Gardening/Spa." If you have a new item you might like to donate to a basket, please contact Susan Wagner at 503-805-6886 or smwagner@pcisys.net. The raffle tickets will be selling for \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00.

Coming up in January, the group will be hosting a FAMILY FUN NIGHT that will include a spaghetti feed & BINGO for the entire family! We are accepting "new" donated items appropriate for BINGO prizes & cash donations as well. If you would like to make a donation for either event, you can contact one of the following: Ashley, Susan or Kinnell Steward at 503- 819-0143 or mtskys@verizon.net. Stay tuned for more details of this fun event coming up!

Intruder Alert – Safe Computing Practices: Holiday Wireless Computing Etiquette

By Burt Tschache

With the holiday season rapidly approaching, Intel released the results of a survey undertaken by the Harris Polling Group as to what is deemed proper etiquette for wireless communication, of all manner, at family gatherings. I present the results as a general rule of thumb as all holiday gatherings will have a wide variance in geekiness from all communication taking place upon wireless devices to the Luddite view of beating offending parties with turkey drumsticks and stuffing candied yams in their ears.

Far and away the vast majority of respon-

dents feel there exists an unwritten code of rules that emailing, texting and making calls while in company is rather bad form, especially when your great uncle Hector is explaining how in his day phones actually had rotary dials and were attached by cords not only from the wall to the phone, but the phone to the handset.

The greatest taboo was futzing (a highly technical term) with your wireless device at any type of religious ceremony. The very thought of the *O Holy Night* solo interrupted by a *Bad To The Bone* ringtone chills me to the marrow. It simply is not done, so please turn off your phones while in sacred spaces.

If one is in the throes of wireless withdrawal, the one location agreed upon as a proper venue for relieving oneself of the DT's (Dataless Tremors) is the bathroom. Now this presents another layer of complexity to the issue. How long can one hang out in the loo to satisfy their twittering urges? How many trips to the toilet are socially acceptable in your unique familial environment? How many bathrooms are in the house?

Do you wait until someone starts pounding on the door or is your wireless addiction under control so you can merely do a tweet or two and move on? Can

you bear the guilt of your dear mother wondering if it is something you ate? All of these are considerations that must be taken into account for proper holiday wireless connectivity, else it's entirely possible that you may be whisked away to some sort of intervention process by well-meaning relatives that do not understand you were only tweeting Ashton. By all means, do not accidentally drop your phone if surprised.

Just so you don't think I'm being totally flip-pant, I do have some suggestions for making your computer happier this holiday season. I can think of no better Christmas present to your computer than a good, thorough cleaning. I just had to go through that process with mine and the results are astounding.

With computer technicians, our computers can sort of become the cobbler's son, if you know what I mean. Mine was acting up a bit and getting somewhat noisy, hence I felt a good cleaning was in order. I have an assortment of mini-attachments that fit on a small shop vac so I do not suck up anything I do not want to.

At least vacuum the outside vents and assure the airflow is good. If you choose to vacuum the inside, be careful not to bump anything out of place and remember where any removed wires reconnect. However, if there is a niggling concern in the back of your brain about; "what if I screw up," give me a call. This is a short process that can extend the life of your computer and your own sanity in the process. Be safe out there.

Burt Tschache is the owner of B&B Computing in Vernonia. He can be reached at bnb998@msn.com or 503-429-0817.



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