

# Senior Stars: Kathleen Tiffney

By Karen Miller

Who needs the History Channel when you have a chance to visit with another historian and long time Vernonian who was born the same year and not too far away from our last senior Star, Necia DeWitt. Weiser Idaho, is a small rural town in the western part of that state, which supports farm, orchard, and livestock, on the Weiser ("Wee-zer") and Snake Rivers, marking the border with Oregon. In this town was born the first of four girls to Ace and Iva Lolly—Kathleen. Lolly Tiffney, this month's Senior Star. Soon thereafter the, including sister Darrah, moved to Lime, Oregon where Ace worked as an electrician and the family lived in what Kathleen describes as a half tent with a wooden floor. Read on now, for a trip back in history and some nostalgic recollections from Kathleen Lolly Tiffney.

From the town of Vernonia, Oregon came a phone call for a job from an Elmer White, a mechanic in the Ford garage, (now the Sentry Market). Heeding the call to "come west," Mr. and Mrs. Lolly packed up their two girls and belongings, leaving the half tent home behind, and made the trip to their new adventures, where Ace took a job as a mechanic as well.

Tragedy struck this young native Idaho family not too far into their new lives here in Vernonia when young Darrah passed away at the tender age of five. Her parents lovingly made the decision to transport her body back to their native state of Idaho where she was laid to rest along with other beloved family members. Soon there after, happiness was on the horizon—along came two more sisters for Kathleen: Marjorie and Barbara. And the Lolly's were here to stay.

All three girls went through Vernonia schools, Kathleen graduating in

1942, Marjorie in 1945, and Barbara in 1948.

Let's take a trip down Memory Lane and hear some school memories:

Kathleen had no trouble remembering that day she, at the tender age of six, and in the first grade, sat trembling in her class seat, waiting...waiting...waiting...to hear the footsteps of the principal coming down the hall. All of the sudden, step, step, step—louder, louder, louder... and then a stern voice, "Kathleen Lolly, would you accompany me to my office?" Her crime? Kathleen was "throwing autumn leaves along with others at the bus stop." Kathleen has undoubtedly spent many nights since then counting autumn leaves, not sheep, to get to sleep.

Happy memories: "Chasing boys!" And boys chasing her! If they couldn't catch her on foot, one guy at least tried a motorcycle—chased her clear out of town while she rode on the back of another boy's bicycle, kicking up road dust all the way up Highway 47 North towards Mist. Going how fast, Kathleen?

Her school memories weren't all terrifying: Kathleen recalls clear fond memories of one teacher in particular, an Ethel Ray, her first grade teacher, who she recalls was very involved with the Christian Church and other civic affairs around town.

The Lolly's lived in her early years off Highway 47 near Grove Street, but when her Dad was offered a job as a Vernonia policeman, she remembers he felt obligated to be living in the city, so they packed up again and moved across town to A Street. Which Kathleen was happy to do, as she felt grown up and could now walk to school and participate in more school activities. The High School was close by her house and she has memories of leaning out the window watching the kids practice sports.

Whether it was Kathleen's good

looks, her charming personality, or her status as daughter of then Police Chief Lolly, Kathleen was elected May Day Queen in her senior year—a special honor in a small town. May Day was a big deal at the high school back then; kids danced around a May Day Pole, celebrating the beginning of spring. And yes, they had school dances even "back then." Kathleen remembers the great live bands that came from out of town to perform.

Somewhere, Kathleen still has her white sweater with "PEP" on it; her job, along with other Pep Club members, was to yell and scream at sports games, all donning their saddle shoes, never dreaming there would someday be a saddle shoe store (Muffy's) right here in town, selling retro style footwear like they wore back then.

Another source of entertainment that happily occupied Kathleen's time was the Joy Theater, which she wishes could be restored. There was a cry room upstairs where moms could take their babies and still watch the movie. Bill Wilson, Robb Wilson's dad was the projectionist.

Now comes the disclosure of Kathleen's real love affair—Roller Skates! And roller skating with her dad. Her Police Chief father was a real snazzy dancer on skates, and they would go together every chance they got, even if they had to sneak it in. Even sister Barbara remembers this. Her mom sent Daddy and Kathleen to the store, along with little

Barbara as a "chaperone" to make sure they went. Alas, that little trip detoured to the skating rink, (now Vernonia Cares).

Barbara was stuck sitting out in the car while Kathleen and Daddy went inside for "just awhile" with their skates. Finally, Kathleen "remembered" her sister out in the car. I never found out what happened when they got home—maybe just as well!

A few quick memories of downtown Vernonia:

Kathleen loved to browse around Peggy Hatfield's clothing store, (now the Black Bear). Her sister Barbara survived the skating incident and grew up to own and operate the Pal Shop, which hosted an old time soda shop and juke box, (now the Dentist Office and Pharmacy). Kathleen had a restaurant where the Grey Dawn Gallery is now. In recent years Kathleen had her own shop called KT's Klutter, where Cornerstone Naturals is today.

Kathleen's memories would not be complete without Vernonia's biggest event from 1961, the filming of Ring of Fire with David Janssen (The Fugitive) and Frank (the Riddler) Gorshin. She remembers how the Christian Church ladies, of which she was a part, slaved away making lunches and a main meal for the cast and crew, in what is now the laundromat.

About her father as the Police Chief: he never breathed a word

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Kathleen Tiffney at Kah-Nee-Ta.



## One World, Many Stories

### Summer Reading Program at the Vernonia Public Library

Tuesday, July 26th: Story & Craft/Activity Time 10-11 a.m.  
Thursday, July 28th: Knights of Veritas 6:00-7:00 p.m.  
Please check with library about location of this event  
Saturday, July 30th: Movie Matinee 2:00 p.m.

All programs are free of charge.

For more information call the Vernonia Library at 503-429-1818

## Spiralz Salon has moved!

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