

Senior Stars: Larry and Gail Snethen

By Karen Miller

Have any of you had the pleasure of enjoying Vernonia Lake in the nice weather?

If you have, I'm sure, like me, you have enjoyed the scenery. You have also probably had the opportunity to enjoy the company of Larry and Gail Snethen.

The Snethens are a couple of our honored senior citizens in this quiet and friendly town and the owner/operators of the concession stand at the lake. Most days between April and October you will find Larry and Gail there, greeting visitors and friends and enjoying some conversation on the covered deck.

Larry and Gail came from far away—from the cold winter of South Dakota—to be amongst us here in our little logging town of Vernonia.

Larry hails originally from Hastings, Nebraska where he was born in 1937. Larry's dad was a railroad main depot agent and a telegraph operator. He learned that trade from his father—Larry's grandfather also worked for the railroad. Larry's mother cooked for the railroad workers. While raising her four children, Larry says her cookbook was her bible.

Larry moved to South Dakota, where he was working delivering magazines. He met Gail in her hometown of Groton. Gail fondly remembers her parents taking her to a church function at a restaurant, the Omar Cafe. She remembers her girlfriend pouring sugar into the cup of a handsome dude whom Gail decided she wanted to linger around herself for a sweet time. Long story short, they have been married now for fifty-two years.

After Larry and Gail became Mr. and Mrs. they lived on a chicken farm where Larry worked as the maintenance man and Gail worked as a LPN at St. Luke's Hospital in Aberdeen, a forty mile trip from Conde where they lived. Gail earned her Nursing degree at St. Mary's School of Nursing in Pierre, SD. Back then it was one year of training with tuition of \$150. She loved being

a nurse, Gail says, because back then Nurses as a rule had the opportunity to have a more personal bedside manner, whereas today there is too much interference with the addition of ever increasing technology that take up a nurses time.

Larry must have exhibited a warm bedside manner as well, working as a hospital orderly in Aberdeen. His job consisted of tending to patients, giving baths and other necessary care.

Larry and Gail made their humble abode in the upstairs of a farmhouse with no running water and outdoor facilities.



The Snethens also lived in Britain for one year—Britain, South Dakota that is—where Larry was the assistant to the hospital administrator and Gail continued her job she loved as an LPN.

Gail's parents were poor farmers and Gail acquired her love of sewing from her mother, which earned her recognition in 4-H; she also learned to cook and enjoys both hobbies unto this day.

Gail's early farm life consisted of milking cows by hand until automated machines came a long, raising pigs for meat, and gathering and selling eggs. For simple, self-made entertainment she

enjoyed playing among the tall sunflowers, making mudpies, playing with dolls and canning. For transportation, all the kids in the family shared one bicycle.

Larry says his uncle drove a gasoline truck for the people who were carving Mt. Rushmore, one of South Dakota's, and our nations, most famous and recognizable landmarks.

Gail had a brother who lived in Portland, Oregon and for Gail and Larry, the sound of an old steam passenger train started calling. They hopped aboard with their three kids and 175 pound limit of belongings, paid their hard earned eighty dollars and headed west. But not without Gail's heavy Singer sewing machine, which they carried on with them because of the baggage limit—emphasize on heavy, they recall!

Relocated in Portland, Larry worked for a foundry—the now defunct Pacific Light and Metal. Larry worked making castings that served Freightliner, Peterbilt and Kenworth. The foundry closed down in 1967 and Larry moved on to work at Com-Met at Rivergate, working on castings and metal treating.

Gail worked at Bess Kaiser Hospital serving people in need. Gail says her favorite spot was in Orthopedics and she worked at the Health West Center on Interstate.

The Snethen family lived for thirty-three years on Allegheny in the same house they bought for a grand total of \$6,000—with furniture—when they first moved to Portland. The Snethen's three children—Tim, born in 1960, Lori Ann, born in 1962 and Sara Jane born in 1963—all graduated from Roosevelt High School. Larry and Gail, along with Sara Jane's three children lovingly know they will see their beloved daughter and mother again—Sara Jane passed away in 2006 and is missed by all.

Larry and Gail both retired in 1999. A note about their Portland life—they both loved flea markets. They

bought and sold Hot Wheels, among other collectibles. Vernonia resident Dan Brown often patronized their booth in Portland before they even moved to Vernonia.

So what brought the Snethen's to Vernonia? Camping with friends at Anderson Park, they say. They discovered this cute town with friendly people and fabulous fireworks. One of the first homes they looked at had a red toilet, bathtub and sink—guess that was a bit much so they kept looking until they settled on their house on A Street.

Luckily the Snethens missed out on the 1996 flood in Vernonia but in 2007 Larry and Gail were snowbirding in Arizona when they were notified of the disaster to the town and their home. Larry made Gail stay behind as he hopped the next plane back. He returned to find that his old friend Dan Brown and a crew from the Nehalem Valley Bible Church were taking care of his home and had already started on the repairs.

In present day Vernonia, Larry and Gail's friendly faces will be missed around here as they once again prepare to head to Brookings, OR for a few winter months. Their card playing friends will miss them as well. Gail will take along her nonfiction western books to keep herself entertained as they enjoy the majestic beauty of the coast from Riverside RV park.

Larry and Gail seem to be enjoying life right now—I would say they deserve some rest after hearing about their hard work as well as the hardships and trials wrapped around the good times they have shared together.

On their bucket list: Gail says she would like to travel all across the US in a travel trailer, while playing the accordion that she learned in third grade. Larry...he just likes life the way it is.

So make sure to stop by Vernonia Lake when Larry and Gail Snethen return next spring. They would love to hear your stories as well.

Have fun in Brookings you two and thanks for sharing your story with our *Vernonia's Voice* readers!

Better Parenting: 7 Refusal Tactics To Help Our Kids Stay Out Of Trouble

By Sonia Spackman MA, MFT

Consider Developing Family Guidelines

If your family has made rules about making good choices regarding any illegal activities, including drugs, alcohol, and tobacco this will increase the likelihood that your kids will make healthy choices.

But knowing what's expected doesn't mean our kids will make the right choices in a risky situation. We must make sure they know what to do when it gets harder for them to say no.

A Risk Factor Are Friends That Use Drugs

When our kids are little, we protect them from strangers. As they get older, it is more likely that their friends will be the first to offer them sex, tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. One of the strongest risk factors that can lead to drug use is a friend that is using drugs. Since friends are very important in the lives of teenagers, how can we protect our kids when they are with kids who might get them in trouble?

When Kids Want To Say No They Need Strategies To Help Them

We can teach our kids strategies on how to deal with friends that want them to do something wrong. This could be going against family or school rules or breaking the law by stealing or trying a cigarette or a beer. When kids want to say no to a friend, they really need refusal strategies to help them. As adults we might

need to say no to a friend ourselves. So let's have some fun learning refusal strategies together as a family.

EIGHT REFUSAL TACTICS AND WHAT TO SAY
Teach your kids how it will help them stay out of trouble if they ask questions ahead of time.

TACTIC #1 ASK QUESTIONS

"Where are we going?" "What are we going to do?" "Why would we do that?"

Teach your kids that they can avoid a problem completely if they know there is going to be trouble. Let your teenager understand how it helps to name the problem.

TACTIC #2 CALL IT WHAT IT IS - NAME THE TROUBLE

"That is stealing." That is vandalism." That is wrong."

Teach your teenager to tell their friend what could happen. They may realize the consequences and it could keep you both from getting into big trouble.

TACTIC #3 IDENTIFY THE CONSEQUENCES

"If we do that we can get suspended from school." Or "If my parents find out they will ground me."

Whatever you say stick to it, if it is staying out too late, or hanging out where problems could come up.

TACTIC #4 MAKE AN EXCUSE

"That sounds like it would be fun but I'm going to pass I have something else I have to do."

"I can't do it, I have to be somewhere on time."
Sometimes humor is the best way to react when you're caught off guard.

TACTIC #5 MAKE A JOKE

(Laugh) "You really think I will want to do that?" "Thanks, but no thanks, that is not something I am into."

Follow up after you have named the problem.

TACTIC #6 SUGGEST DOING SOMETHING ELSE

"I have an idea, why don't we go shoot hoops instead?"

"Let's go get something to eat."

If there are other kids involved you could invite one or two by name to join you. There may be others that don't want to participate.

TACTIC #7 TRY TO SELL THEM ON YOUR IDEA, MOVE ON, AND LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN FOR THEM TO JOIN YOU.

"If you change your mind I'll or we'll be....."

Have Fun Learning Refusal Tactics Together As A Family

Get the family together and have the kids imagine that a friend comes up to them and asks them to do something that is wrong. Let them know you understand that it can be hard to say no to a friend.

Instruct them to write down some things that
continued on page 19