

Senior Stars: Ruth Mae Bell *continued from page 5*

around Thanksgiving. Ruth has traveled with them to Singapore in 1997, 1999 and 2002. She got to go to Beijing, China and climb a ways up the Great Wall of China. She was 80 years old at the time. In 2009 Ruth went with her son's family on a trip to New Zealand. She has many stories about her travels abroad.

After staying in the Tehachapi canyon for ten years after her husband passed away, Ruth was persuaded to move to Vernonia by her youngest brother George. Vernonia was just an out-of-the way small town in Oregon but close enough to her surviving family members and friends in Washington. Ruth also had friends in the Willamette Valley.

So to Vernonia Ruth came in 2001 and found a house to rent. She quickly became involved in the Vernonia Senior Center and continued to instruct the 55 Alive Driving Classes there. In 2002 she was elected as President of the Senior Center and was selected as Queen of the "My Fair Lady" Court for the Columbia County Fair & Rodeo that same year. Ruth eventually had to limit her volunteer time at the Vernonia Senior Center for health reasons but still continues to visit from time to time visiting with friends, dancing and listening to the band. Spending most of her time at home, Ruth studies archaeology and ancient civilizations. She loves gardening and tends to her yard as best she can but it is getting harder each passing year. Vernonia has become an expensive place to live for our low income citizens and seniors. Ruth's utility bills are now surpassing her monthly rent and she is on a very limited income.

Still she scrapes together enough money to care for 12 cats that have been left abandoned by their owners. Many of these are wild and Ruth has become a member of the Feral Cat Coalition and has all of her cats spayed or neutered. She has a sanctuary outside to contain them and keep the cats safe. Ruth has also found homes for displaced cats and has adopted some from neighbors who have moved or passed away. Ruth's special friend, Sylvia, has helped her a lot by picking up affordable cat food from out of town and transporting the animals to the vet. Ruth is an animal lover for sure and the cats are great company for her.

So, what are the chances, that a woman who has made peace with the confusion and tragedies of her past, that always has a smile on her face, would make her home in a small rural community like Vernonia? It is because Ruth Bell reaches out to people and the communities she lives in and devotes her time and efforts to filling the needs found there. She is a strong Christian, at one time Catholic, Nazarene, Lutheran but mostly a devoted believer. Her memories are vivid and Ruth can spout off the ham radio call numbers like she was just operating the radio yesterday. Ruth's home is as full as her life has been with heirlooms from her husband's family, old family quilts, dog and cat figurines, gifts from friends and collectibles from her travels with her son. She keeps safe her daughter's baby clothes, her wedding dress and veil, the wedding couple off her cake, that special girl scout flag, and the trumpet that has

Welcome to the World...



Kinley Ann Busch

Jared and Katie Busch of Mist, along with big brother Kelan, are pleased to announce the arrival of Kinley Ann Busch on December 18, 2012. Kinley was born at St. Vincent's Hospital and weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce and measured 19 inches. Grandparents are Jim and Barb Prpich (Vernonia) and Clarissa Kistic (Jackson, NC). Great Grandparents are Fred Busch (Mist) and Rose Dunaway (Beaverton).

come full circle. Ruth doesn't need a photo album to reminisce, she only needs to look around her home, memories are everywhere.

Ruth Maxine Mae Kehrer Smith Bell came to Vernonia, Oregon not knowing what to expect. What she found was her baby brother George Gans, who was 18 months old when she left her family home, new best friends Stevie Taylor and Bernice Frey, Stevie's husband Russell Taylor (another great dancer, by the way) who served in Anzio, Italy at the same time as Ruth's husband Dale, and a new life. So what *were* the chances of Ruth Mae Bell finding her family and her roots in our "Pocket of the Woods?" I guess it is *a small world after all...* and the story is not over yet ...

Schools Update: Building Safety *continued from page 10*

everyone in the building has a name tag on. So if you have a need to come to the school, please make sure that you check in at the Main Office and get a Visitor's Badge, even if you are only going to be in the building for a short while.

In addition, to help with managing the building during sporting events, we are going to install gates so that the commons and gym areas of the building will be separated from the offices and classroom wings. This means that during sporting events the gym entrance or the east side commons entrance will have to be used as the front doors will not be open.

We have only been in our new building a few months and are still making

minor changes to fire drills and other procedures to ensure we know what to do in an emergency. Before students arrived in September the staff spent an entire day discussing and practicing fire and lockdown drills. We will be having another lockdown drill in January, and we will repeatedly announce that it is a drill over the intercom. The principals and I have reviewed our security procedures and feel that they are providing for a safe environment for our students.

If you have suggestions or concerns please feel free to share them with me at (503)429-5891 or ken.cox@vernonia.k12.or.us or one of our principals, Mr. Miller or Mr. Underwood at (503)429-1333.

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