

# Living On a Lake in the Country: History

By Gayle Rich-Boxman

If I could pick one word that currently represents what I know about my “niche”, Fishhawk Lake, it would be history.

The history of the birth of Fishhawk Lake. The history of the homes I’ve had the pleasure of selling and re-selling. The history of the people who’ve lived here and the sense of community. The history of events, great fun ones and life changing emotional ones. The history of the seasons. The history of wildlife at Fishhawk Lake, who’ve come and gone.

All of it circles in upon itself, is intertwined, as is my history, with being here.

I’ve learned about the history before Fishhawk Lake even existed.

How it has been re-birthed a few times. From land to railroads, to farmland, to a man-made lake to a thriving resort community, the ultimate dream of the original developer.



I know the history of people who have been born or died here. A baby

was delivered in the bathroom of a home I have for sale.

There are those people who’ve died right here whose pets have gone on to become loved by someone else in this tight knit place called Fishhawk Lake.

There’s a history of stories, lore, parties, craziness, and sisterhood and brotherhood. All of which are layered, one upon another in the years that fold over one by one. We have had shared storytelling; laughter and tears over those same stories.

People come and people go, some reluctantly, some with signs pointing towards future goals that must be met. I represent homes as listings where I’m on my second or third owner who started out as my buyer, then became my seller.



The history of my niche continues as I have new neighbors to carry on the torch of this continually changing community. And I am blessed that this niche is a part of my own history as well.

If this feels like the type of community you could live in, give me a call. Gayle Rich-Boxman, Realtor with Vernonia Realty. (503)755-2905.

## The Senior Center is Not Just for Seniors

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tele. “I want this to be a place that feels happy and relaxed,” she says. “A place where people can feel comfortable and creative.”

Harrison has enjoyed using her own creativity to display items in the store in a more imaginative way. She says she sometimes takes home broken items and fixes them or dresses up items,

“And donating to the Senior Center is like banking at Wauna Credit Union-it goes back to the community. Not only is it funding the seniors, but my goal is to get more people using this store, so we can keep the prices really low. I want people to think of it as a resource, especially when they are struggling. It’s a way for families to make ends meet.”



Sheila Kruger is the new cook at the Senior Center.

bringing them back for sale cleaned up or with a new coat of paint. “I’m a huge fan of Pinterest and I like to set things up so people can see the possibilities.”

For the six volunteers who help out in the store, Harrison has allowed them to be innovative as well, encouraging them to share their ideas, move items around, use their organizational or other talents, and have fun. “I want them to feel like they can come in and really contribute,” says Harrison. “We have a great bunch of volunteers who are dedicated, resourceful and hard working.”

Another change Harrison says she is considering is some kind of outdoor market in the summer time. She already has a Facebook page where she is posting items that are for sale, as well as other information about activities at the Senior Center. She also says they are red marking items after a month; those items are 50% off. “It’s kind of like a treasure hunt,” says Harrison.

Harrison is a big proponent of donating and reusing items. “For me, it’s the most exciting part of thrift stores,” she says about seeing items reused.

years as the cook at the Rainier Senior Center. She has lived in Vernonia for the last three years.

Kruger likes to cook from scratch and tries to stay away from canned and processed ingredients. She says her specialties are her sauces and desserts and that she tries to make a homemade dessert, like rice pudding, bread pudding or fresh fruit crisps and crumbles, three or four times a week.

For Kruger, it’s all about comfort food - rib sticking food that will warm and fill you up. The day we visited she was cooking up some biscuits and gravy; homemade hamburger gravy and fresh baked biscuits. Her biscuits were flaky, buttery, salty, and delicious!

Kruger is encouraging the general public to stop by for lunch and try her down-home cooking. The cost for a meal is just five dollars; if you’re over sixty it’s a suggested donation of four dollars, but no seniors are turned away. “If you want, you can come in and get a home cooked, hot meal,” says Kruger. “We want people to know that this isn’t just for seniors; this is here for everyone

in the community.”

Kruger says some of her other crowd favorites are lasagna, roast chicken, pot roast and meat loaf. Kruger says she can whip up a burger, grilled cheese or egg salad if what’s on the menu isn’t to your liking. Wednesday’s are usually a meat and potatoes dish. Lunch is served at noon and are also available to-go. If you don’t feel like cooking after work Kruger will make you up a dinner you can pick up in the afternoon and take home.

She also makes maple bars every day and hopes to add scones and muffins. Kruger says to call ahead to order a quantity of maple bars for your next event, they are a dollar each or a dozen for ten dollars.

As you can see, there is a lot happening at the Vernonia Senior Center that just about anyone can enjoy. And any money you spend goes towards a good cause.



### Vital Vernonia

Community Forum

Saturday April 5, 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. / Vernonia School Library



Come together with your fellow community members for good food, great ideas and important dialog about the future of Vernonia!

Join us for this exciting opportunity! At the Vital Vernonia Community Forum, we will:

- Learn about the Vital Vernonia Indicator Project results in 5 dimensions of vitality: economy, health & well-being, youth & education, livability & community engagement, environment & natural resources
- Network and dialog with fellow community members to build a shared understanding of what the results mean for Vernonia
- Identify individual and collective opportunities to strengthen Vernonia’s vitality

**Register now**  
and spread the word!

*please register by Mar 31*

The more folks participating - from various sectors, organizations and backgrounds - the richer the dialog and more powerful outcomes for all!

Questions?  
Contact Alexis at [amillett@nonprofitoregon.org](mailto:amillett@nonprofitoregon.org)  
503-239-4001 ext. 115.



Register online:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VitalVernonia>