

Move helped Wasson Bros. Winery

by LINDA LEONARD

A bet with their wine-making sister from Illinois prompted Jim and John Wasson to try their hand at running a winery.

The brothers "gave her a hard time" about the samples of wine she brought with her on a visit one year, Jim Wasson said. "She told us 'if you think it's so easy, why don't you try it yourself,'" Wasson said.

They did. "We just got a book and started," Jim Wasson said. Now they co-own Wasson Brother's Winery in Sandy.

Their winery offers tours, wine-tasting and beer and wine-making supplies.

Last winter the Wasson brothers took another gamble; they moved, along with Janz Berryland, about two miles east of Sandy to make way for a new Safeway store. They reopened in February.

"We're happy with the move," Wasson said. "Sales have gone up in the tasting room especially this summer."

Their new location has a larger wine-tasting room with a bar that seats 12 people. That makes it the longest wine-tasting bar in the state, Wasson said. Other improvements include extensive equipment for amateur beer and wine-makers.

Tourists come to taste the Wasson's wine and tour the backroom of the winery with its 1,000 gallon stainless steel tanks, oak barrels and Italian wine press.

Locals come in all the time for beer and wine-making supplies. "Often as not, they buy a bottle of wine as well," said Wasson.

"You can tell the tourists, because they come in looking somewhat frazzled in shorts and sunglasses," he said.

The Wassons sell nearly 6,000 gallons of wine each year. The busiest time of year is from Memorial Day to Labor Day, Wasson said. During the slow part of the year, January to March, the brothers prune their seven-acre vineyard in Oregon City.



Jim Wasson with old Italian press used at Wasson Brothers Winery.

Photo by Scott Newton

The five-year-old winery is one of only three in Oregon that specialize in berry wines. "Berry wines are becoming almost extinct because of the price of raw material," Wasson said.

It costs more than \$1,500 for a ton of raspberries compared with \$400 a ton for white Riesling grapes. He buys local berries.

"Right now we are buying wild blackberries for our wild blackberry wine," Wasson said.

Since the Wasson brothers began entering their wines at the Oregon

State Fair in 1982 they have won a governor's sweepstakes trophy, three gold, five silver and six bronze awards. The ribbons "showed us we were on the right track," Wasson said.

Jim Wasson took a two-year commercial wine production course at Clackamas Community College to further refine his wine-making skills.

The Wasson's award-winning wine is sold at local Safeway, Fred Meyer, Thriftway, and independent grocers, Wasson said. It's tough for

a small winery to market its wines, Wasson said. Grocers who aren't local "don't know who Wasson Brothers is," Wasson said.

Janz Berryland and the Wasson Brother's Winery make good neighbors because "our businesses are similar — both fruit processing," Wasson said.

The businesses are "trying to make the area as attractive as possible," Wasson said. The winery has an old-fashioned storefront, bright marigolds planted in wooden barrels, and hanging fuschias to

greet visitors. A new outside restroom on the property between the two business, the only one from Sandy to Mount Hood, is "a big attraction and getting to be more so all the time," Wasson said.

"The only thing I'd wish for," Wasson said, "is another winery up in this part of the country." Right now it's 60 miles to the nearest winery. People who want to sample from different wineries might be more attracted to Portland where they can hit six wineries in an afternoon, Wasson said.

Puppets perform at church

Puppets For the Lord, a puppet troupe that performed during Mountain Festival, will perform nightly at a vacation Bible school to be conducted by the Sandy Church of Christ from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 10 through Thursday, Aug. 14 in their building at 39640 Pioneer Blvd.

The theme for the vacation Bible school is "Jesus Shows God's Wisdom." The school will employ "station teaching," which Dan Wheeler, minister of the church and director of vacation Bible school, has called "a stimulating and effective alternative to traditional classroom teaching."

There will be singing, Bible lessons, games, refreshments and crafts.

Highlighting the activities will be the performances of "Puppets For the Lord" to make learning even more exciting and fun.

In addition to the station teaching for children 3-years-old through junior high, there will be a special class for teens and adults. The climax of the school will be Thursday at 8 p.m. when the children will display their achievements in a special closing program.

Vacation Bible school is free of charge and the public is invited. For more information call 668-6116.

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American Heart Association in Oregon

Sandy High class of 1976 schedules 10-year reunion

The Sandy High School class of 1976 will hold its 10-year reunion soon.

The reunion will be kicked off with an hors d'oeuvre buffet on Saturday, Aug. 23 at 7 p.m. at the Portland Airport Sheraton Inn. A family picnic

will be held Sunday, Aug. 24 at noon at Rooster Rock State Park.

For more information write Debbie (Brook) Strickler, 3740 S.E. 167th Ave., Portland, 97236, or call 661-3204. Or, call Julie Nelson at 760-1508.

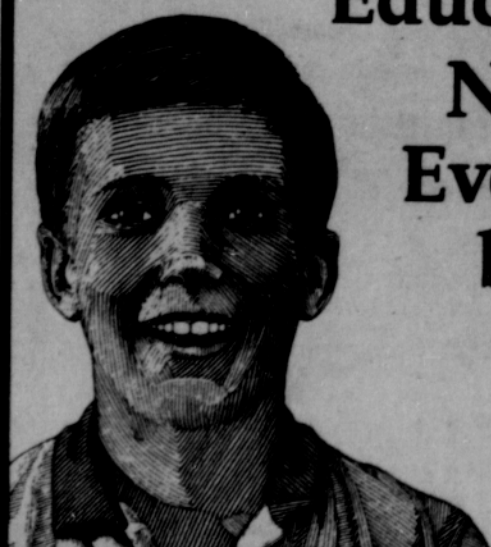
Man on WOSC honor roll

Jerry Lawson of Sandy was named to the honor roll for the Spring quarter at Western Oregon State College for achieving a grade point

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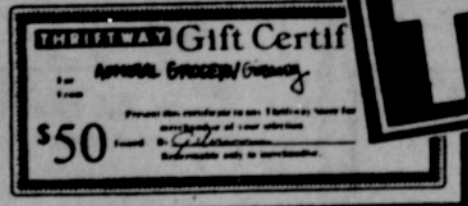
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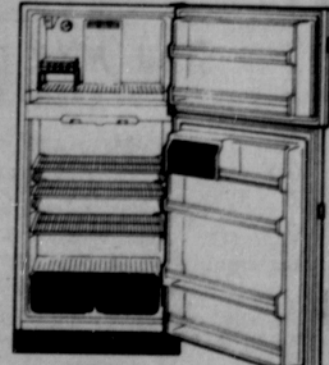
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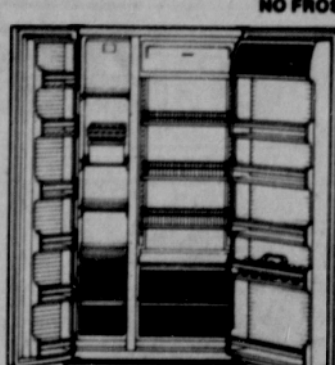
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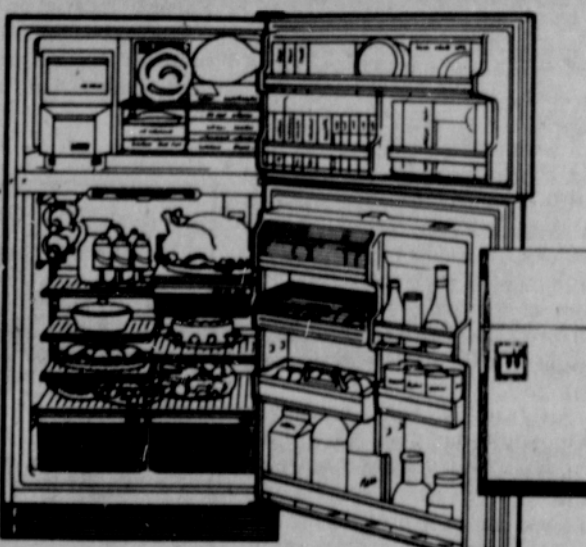


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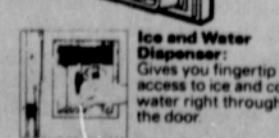


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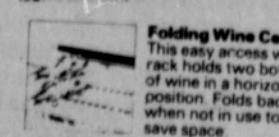
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