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A happy wanderer

Wadsworth traveled Oregon Trail for fun

by SHARON NESBIT
Staff writer

The dust had barely settled on the Oregon Trail when people began traveling it just for fun.

Ethel Sprague Wadsworth was 6 when she and her family climbed into a horse-drawn covered wagon in Boise, Idaho, and set off on a vacation over the famous immigrant road to the world's fair in Portland, the Lewis and Clark Exposition.

Wadsworth's father, Ernest Sprague, was one of those fellows with a serious case of itchy feet. He came by it naturally.

"They said that his dad, my grandfather, traveled all over to South America and to Central America. He'd come home and stay a while and then leave again. After he was gone, there'd be another baby. They had nine children," Wadsworth says.

As a child, Wadsworth was swept along on her parents' adventures. These days she is as firmly rooted to the ground as the plants she loves to tend. A resident of Darletta Amburn's foster care home in Boring, Wadsworth, now nearly 89, is a victim of rheumatoid arthritis.

The fingers of her left hand curl up on themselves like the petals of a rosebud. The illness ties her to a wheelchair most of the time, but it has not snared a rambunctious spirit.

"It takes stubbornness, guts and persistence for anybody to live with this stuff," she declares. "And that's the word with the bark on it too."

Just as she forces her fingers to respond by doing crafts and needlework, Wadsworth exercises her brain by remembering the past. She says it keeps her mind open.

"My dad was quite a person to travel," she starts out, remembering the day in 1905 that she, her mother, Jessie, and her brother, Glenn, all set out with "Papa" to go to Portland to the fair, a 430-mile trip. They hitched their covered wagon to two horses, one sorrel and one white, and left in June to cross the hot, dry reaches of Eastern Oregon.

"I remember one time we camped in a school yard under a tree and a bird whirled in my plate," Wadsworth recalls with a whoop of surprise and disgust.

When the family arrived in Portland, they camped at Oaks Park and took the trolley car to the fair. She best remembers the trick carnival mirrors where she and her brother would stand laughing at their images, now fat, now thin.

Not yet content, the Spragues pushed on to Tillamook where they knew a fellow who made cheese and Wadsworth gasped, "Oh phew," at the stench of limburger.

The diaries of those trips are gone, destroyed by Wadsworth's mother. Too young then to remember precise details, Wadsworth can only guess that the trip took several months. To the best of her recollection, they returned to Boise before winter fell.

The journey home was slightly different. They



Staff photo by Steve Gibbons

Arthritis forces Ethel Sprague Wadsworth of Boring to stay close to home these days.

put their wagon aboard a sternwheeler in Portland and traveled up the Columbia as far as Cascade Locks to avoid the mountain roads.

In 1907, the family hitched up the wagon and took off again, this time north to Sandpoint, across Washington's Okanogan River and all the way to Skagit County where they bought a farm in Bay View, a small community on the edge of the Puget Sound.

It was on that trip that Wadsworth saw her first car. "The horses were so scared it took two men to hold them," she remembers.

If Wadsworth had a home during her growing-up years, it was at Bay View. But living there was a hit and miss affair interspersed with a 1910 trip to Florida to grow vegetables and a six-month stint in Havre, Mont., to run a restaurant. The trip to Florida was made on the train and

took 13 days and 13 nights.

Wadsworth paid a price for her footloose existence. Her schooling suffered, she says. The year she was in the seventh grade, she moved three times.

She married her husband, Harry Wadsworth, a descendent of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in 1919 in Montana. The pair settled in Oregon in 1942. Shortly after the war they opened Stark Street Gardens at Southeast 157th Avenue and Stark Street. Harry Wadsworth died in 1975.

Ethel Wadsworth has three children. Two sons, possibly victims of the family wanderlust, live in Texas and California. A daughter, Eldah Nelson, lives in Boring.

"Roots. Well, my roots is this arthritis," Wadsworth says, kicking an impatient foot from her wheelchair. "It's got me tied down."

Logging slated near ski area

Forest service plans sale of timber south of Multoppor

A timber sale, with 16 acres to be clear cut and another 76 acres to be thinned, is planned between the Multoppor ski area and Still Creek Road.

Logging in the the U.S. Forest Service's "backside planning area" will have a "slight visual impact" for skiers who look to the south from the top of the ski area.

'Someone who knows what to look for will probably notice it.'

— Kate Halleran

"Someone who knows what to look for will probably notice it," said Kate Halleran, forester for the Zigzag and Columbia Gorge ranger districts.

"Most people probably can't tell when a forest has been commercially thinned," she added.

One clearcut will be about five acres in size, another about 11 acres. The preferred alternative — recommended by a team made up of a forester, fisheries biologist, hydrologist and other specialists — recommends that two stands of old-growth timber, less than 30 acres each in size, be left intact.

Halleran said most of the area is made up of second-growth timber that grew after a fire 60 years ago.

The entire planning unit is 500 acres in size and is south of the Multoppor ski resort.

The area is designated as "roaded recreation" by the forest service, which means it will be managed for

timber production and to retain or partially retain landscape character and scenic quality while maintaining watershed quality.

Some rehabilitation to the area next to Still Creek will occur. A 160-acre segment of the backside planning area was in private ownership but is being acquired by the forest service through a land trade. Some logging has occurred there, resulting in erosion problems, especially on some of the skid roads, Halleran said. Skid roads and other areas that have erosion problems will be reforested.

Still Creek is a major anadromous fish stream. The rehabilitation should contribute to the productivity of the creek, she said.

The environmental assessment does note that logs will have to be hauled past summer homes on Still Creek Road and past people participating in recreational activities at Trillium Lake. There "is a concern because of the potential disruption and safety concerns in areas with high levels of use by the public," the assessment states.

A decision notice concerning the sale has been signed, which means the forest service plans to proceed with the timber sale, Halleran said. The decision is subject to administrative review. People who want to file a notice of appeal to Donna Lamb, Zigzag District ranger, need to do so by the first week of November.

Implementation of the project is dependent on the completion of the land exchange. Halleran said she does not expect any problems completing the land exchange.

Woman satisfactory after auto-pedestrian accident

A Sandy woman was in satisfactory condition Wednesday following an automobile-pedestrian accident Saturday at 5:45 p.m.

Vera Helena Ayers received a broken leg, facial lacerations and other injuries, according to a spokeswoman at Mount Hood Medical Center.

Ayers was walking across Meinig

Avenue when a vehicle driven by Clayton Allen Stoner, 34547 Kelso Road, turned from Pioneer Boulevard onto Meinig Avenue and struck her. Ayers was not in the crosswalk, according to the police report.

No citations have been issued. An investigation is pending.

Information sought following arson fire

The Sandy Fire District had planned to burn a house at 38262 Hood Street on Saturday, but arsonists beat the district to the punch.

The fire on Saturday may have been the third set by juveniles in Sandy in recent weeks.

The district had planned to burn the house for purposes of training firefighters. A hole had been cut in the roof to increase ventilation.

On the way to another call, the Sandy fire chief noticed smoke coming from the building and stopped to investigate. Fire damaged a bedroom and burned the roof before firefighters could extinguish it, said Jim Gallagher, Sandy fire marshal.

Gallagher said juveniles were seen leaving the scene. Anyone with information is asked to call the district at 668-8093.

People with information may be eligible for up to a \$5,000 reward from the Oregon arson fund, Gallagher said. The arson fund, sponsored by insurance companies, pays for tips that lead to the arrest and conviction of people who start fires.

Gallagher said the fire district investigated a fire that was set in bushes off Pioneer Boulevard last week, and learned of another fire five or six weeks earlier on Scales Avenue.

Gallagher said Oregon law holds parents liable for damages of up to \$5,000 per child per incident in arson fires.

State won't let city add 'Mountain Festival' to signs

The Sandy City Council is not satisfied with the response it received from the state on its request to add a greeting to the "Welcome to Sandy" signs.

The City Council would like to add, "Home of the Sandy Mountain Festival" to the bottom of its signs, but the state said the message would not be allowed because of administrative rules.

Don Wilson, acting city manager, told the council that he worked for two years to convince the state to allow Sandy to put the city seal on welcome signs.

The City Council directed the staff to keep working for approval of the "Home of the Mountain Festival" signs.

Man found guilty of arson

Michael D. Miller, 20, of 38200 Nettie Connett Drive, was found guilty of second-degree arson and burglary by a 12-person jury in Clackamas County Circuit Court on Friday.

Miller was the person who reported the fire on Jan. 12 that damaged the

Sandy High School barn.

The fire caused about \$6,000 in damage to the structure with the roof of the barn destroyed. No one was injured in the fire.

Miller has not been sentenced.

The learning center

Teachers hope individual help can reduce dropout rate

by SCOTT NEWTON
Staff writer

David Johnson, an English teacher, was once skeptical about whether the prescription learning center at Sandy High School could help students improve their language and vocabulary skills.

"Do we want a computer-run English course?" he wondered.

But Johnson has since been convinced.

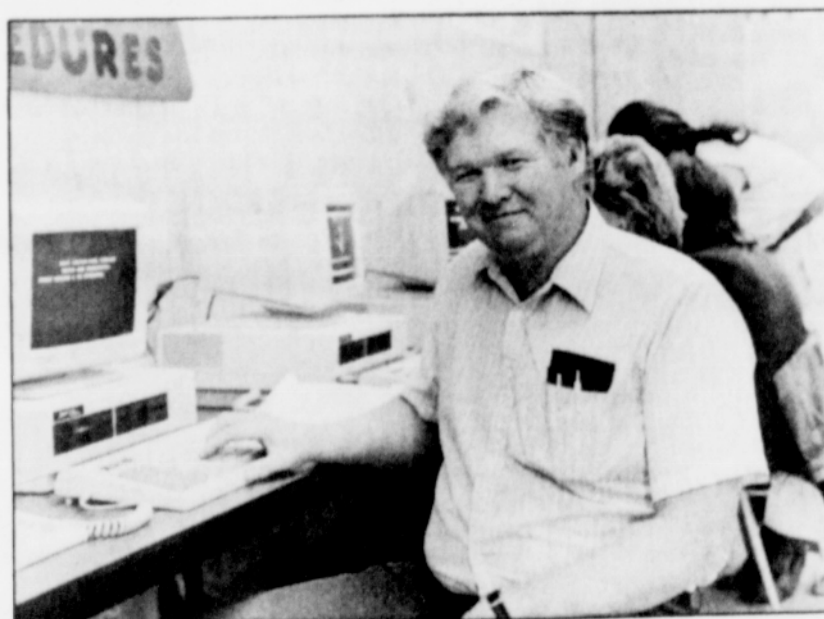
'I'm tired, but it's very satisfying. I'm enthusiastic about this program.'

— Gary Curtis

"I'm seeing it work. I've seen a lot of progress already."

Johnson works with 35 students in two English classes, and Gary Curtis works with 56 students in five mathematics classes as part of the prescription learning center. The center provides students with individual instruction in mathematics and English to correct deficiencies.

Superintendent Kent Heaton told the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce last month that 33 percent of Sandy High School's students drop out over a four-year period. The prescription learning center is a program designed to address that high dropout rate.



Gary Curtis said he thinks the individualized program generated by a computer is an effective way of teaching.

Curtis said members of the high school's mathematics staff met with math teachers in the feeder schools and received help in identifying students who might have problems.

When they finish the course work, fying students who might have problems.

Those students, and others who already were attending Sandy High School, were referred to the prescription learning center.

Once at the center, they took tests that helped identify areas they needed help in. Each day, the students, either working on a computer or filling out a notebook, follow a prescribed lesson plan.

they take a test on the material. If they receive a score of 80 percent or better, they begin working on the next lesson.

The computer tells students and the teacher exactly where a student stands. It also can generate a written evaluation for parents at the touch of a button.

Although most of the math students test below the ninth-grade level, Curtis said some of the students just need individual attention in specific areas.

For example, one girl continued in a geometry class while she received special instruction in the use of fractions.

It is Curtis's opinion that some of the students at the learning center have never received much individual help. "We're finding that the kids, if they can get some help, want to learn," Curtis said.

Neither Curtis nor Johnson feels threatened by the individualized programs generated by the computers. Neither thinks that he will be replaced anytime soon by a keyboard and screen that holds 20 million bits of information.

The computer takes the frustration out of the teaching process, Curtis said. "They know a computer is not going to yell at them."

The computer is just a workbook, in Johnson's opinion. "But this turns it into a video game," he added.

Curtis still teaches groups when class members run into similar kinds of problems. And he sometimes allows them to play a card game that requires them to understand fractions.

The learning center's English program has fewer students than the math program because other English programs already address the problem of helping unskilled students.

Curtis is sold on the program's effectiveness in mathematics.

Students sit in a circle of computer screens and raise their hands when they have questions.

"I'm tired at the end of the day," Curtis said. "I'm just going in circles. I'm tired, but it's very satisfying. I'm enthusiastic about this program."