

Betty Kaiser's Chatterbox

It's tradition! For nearly 20 years it has been my pleasure to tell an old-fashioned Christmas story in the month of December. It brings joy to my heart to share how generations past celebrated this sacred holiday. Money was usually scarce, gifts were homemade and there were no glitzy shopping centers to buy "stuff." It was all about family and church—and the birth of Jesus was the reason for the celebration.

I vividly remember the inspiration for one of those first columns. Her name was Marvel Stephen. She wrote me a note asking if I would be interested in one of her stories that had just been published in a Christmas edition of Country Woman magazine. Of course, I was interested and an appointment was made.

Sitting quietly in her tidy living room, Marvel Stephen, then 82 years old, exuded a serene peace and dignity that is often absent in today's world. She was born in Montana, but grew up in Sandpoint, Idaho. She married Sandy Stephen and they moved to the Cottage Grove area in

1943. Her voice reflected a past that had seen both joy and pain. She had fond childhood memories of riding into town on her bicycle to get groceries in the 1920s. She loved being a mother but later she suffered through years of being treated for lymphoma with massive doses of chemo and prednisone. Sandy then began a downward slide into what she described as "a nightmare disease—Alzheimer's." He passed on and she was living alone but said, "This is a nice time."

So how did she get to be a writer? Well, as an only child living way out in the country, Marvel loved to read, and hoped to be a writer. But when a high school teacher asked her to be editor of the school paper, she "couldn't be bothered." She was too busy. Later, as a wife and mother of two she was still too busy.

She was the leader of her daughter's Brownie Troop when she learned that the mother of her daughter's best friend had won \$5,000 in a cake-naming contest. "So," she said, "I called her and she told me how she did it." It turns out that there was money to be made in contests that extolled the attributes of a

name brand product in 25 words or less.

Marvel thought it sounded easy, and she started entering contests. "It was a long time before I won anything. Local contests were the easiest. A group of us got together and encouraged one another. It was a lot of fun. The biggest prize that I ever won was a statement about a mattress. I won a trip for two to Miami Beach!"

When we met, she was long retired as a weekly columnist for the Dead Mountain Echo newspaper in Oakridge. Farm Life News had published her first story and she was still writing for magazines. Here's one of her favorite heartfelt Christmas stories that happened about 90 years ago:

"The year Papa decided I should learn to ski, deep snows covered the land, the buildings, even the towering trees on our small farm.

Our rustic house was bursting with excitement and activity. Christmas was only a few weeks away.

"December's early sunsets urged us to finish our chores and supper fast so we could get to work on our Christmas gifts. Having recently mastered the art of making French knots, I chose to embroider dish towels cut from flour sacks. Mother was tating lovely lace to trim her presents and Papa was creating a pair of skis for me. Working

close together in our cozy kitchen made it impossible not to be aware of what each other was making — but we were clever at pretending we didn't know what they were doing.

"No one mentioned anything about Papa crafting skis for me, but I knew what he was doing."

Her story goes on to describe the excitement of Christmas morning. New skis! She was so excited. Sadly, the homemade skis were a failure! Somehow, the tips of the skis had straightened out and instead of gliding down the slopes Marvel tumbled down the slopes. Her Papa was embarrassed and he apologized profusely.

Marvel remembered sighing, "Oh, Papa. This is the best Christmas I've ever had. I wanted to say more as I put my small mittened hand in his large gloved one, but I couldn't find the words to tell him he'd already given the greatest gift of all...his love."

After all these years, love, gratitude and understanding are the best gifts of the season. May they bless your heart, mind and soul.

Merry Christmas to one and all!

Betty Kaiser's Chatterbox is about people, places, family, and other matters of the heart. Contact her at 942-1317 or via e-mail — bchatty@bettykaiser.com.



See's CANDIES
Famous Old Time Candies Since 1921

The Cottage Grove Lions Club will be offering wonderful See's products to benefit their sight & hearing projects in our community.

Our sales trailer will be located in the Pinnocchio's Pizza parking lot on Main Street.
Our hours will be 11:00 A.M. until 5:30 P.M. through Christmas Eve. NOW ACCEPTING Credit & Debit Cards Shop early.....stock will be limited!

If your business would like to place a large order, please contact Jessica Baker of the Cottage Grove Lions Club at 541-221-7685.

Thank You in advance for your support!!!!

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Smoked \$8 per pound
Honey \$10 per pound

Pick up Sunday, December 24th by 12 pm

Big Stuff Barbecue 942-3999
733 East Main

Teacher arrested for sex crimes



Andrea Nicole Baber

By Caitlyn May
cmay@cgsentinel.com

Andrea Nicole Baber, 29 of Cottage Grove, was arrested on charges of sodomy II, rape III, contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor, online sexual corruption of a child and unlawful delivery of marijuana to a person under 18 years of age.

On Dec. 12, the Douglas County Sheriff's office received a report of a female teacher who had been engaging in a sexually intimate relationship with a former student, a minor.

Baber is a former teacher at Logos Christian Academy in Springfield.

"Deputies began their investigation and discovered evidence to substantiate the report," a press release on the arrest read. "It was learned Barber began the relationship

with the then 15-year-old student in 2016 and had engaged in a sexual relationship on a regular basis with the minor and provided him with marijuana."

Law enforcement obtained a search warrant for Baber's residence on Dec. 15 on the 1200-block of Territorial Hwy.

Detectives reportedly discovered additional evidence at the residence.

Baber later returned home and was contacted by deputies after reporting a burglary. She was taken into custody.

Detectives are asking anyone with information to contact them at (541) 440-4458 or at dco.pio@co.douglas.or.us.

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CHRISTMAS services

<p>OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP December 24, 2017 1025 N. 19th St Cottage Grove Family Christmas Eve Mass: 6pm Christmas Eve Mass: 10pm Christmas Day Mass: 10:30am</p>	<p>ST. PHILIP BENIZI MISSION 552 Holbrook Ln, Creswell Christmas Day Mass: 8:30am</p>
<p>COTTAGE GROVE FAITH CENTER 33761 Row River Rd Christmas Eve Service: 10am Candlelight service: 5pm</p>	<p>DELIGHT VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST 33087 Saginaw Rd East Christmas Eve breakfast: 9am Service: 10:30am Candlelight service: 7pm</p>
<p>LIVING FAITH ASSEMBLY 467 10th St Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: 9am & 11am</p>	<p>UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 334 Washington St Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: 5pm</p>
<p>FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 3rd & Adams St Christmas Eve Service: 10am Candlelight Service: 7pm</p>	<p>TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH 6th & Quincy Christmas Eve: 10:30am Great Christmas Mystery Candlelight Service: 6:30pm Wonder of Christmas Christmas Day: 10am • Word & Wonder</p>
<p>HOPE FELLOWSHIP 100 S Gateway Blvd Dec. 17th Christmas Program: 11am</p>	<p>CALVARY CHAPEL COTTAGE GROVE 1447 Hwy 99 (Village Plaza) Christmas Eve Candlelight service: 7pm</p>

COTTAGE GROVE BIBLE CHURCH
1200 East Quincy Ave
Christmas Eve
10:30am • Christmas Drama & Music
Candlelight service: 6pm

CHRISTMAS services

Cottage Grove Area
Habitat for Humanity®

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- The ReStore will be closed December 28-30 - Happy New Year!
- The ReStore will be open for sales and drop offs ONLY on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays 10am-4pm
- For Drop Off appointments after hours, call the office - 541.767.0358

Habitat Office and Warehouse
2155 Getty Circle ~ Unit #1
in the Cottage Grove Industrial Park
South on Hwy 99 past the High School

DONATIONS ALWAYS WELCOME!

Call 541.767.0358 for more information
Email info@habitatcg.org