

Christmas is coming!



By Robin Roberts

To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Editor's note: This week features the conclusion with parts three and four. Parts one and two were published last week.

The Trip

It was a four-day drive to Minneapolis. My mother didn't drive so we had to stay in motels along the way. Though my mother eagerly pointed out each interesting view or attraction we passed, and played word games with us, the days seemed interminable. My father joined in the conversation frequently but mostly concentrated on his driving. It was winter, and the roads could be treacherous. The best part was each morning we awoke in a new state, with new things to see and one day closer to Grandma's.

Each arriving family had a different place to sleep. We stayed at

Uncle Ken's house, an old Victorian with two floors, an attic and a basement. The house my brother and I grew up in was a ranch-style house in the middle of an apricot orchard so stairs fascinated us. The primary stairs were in the front of the house, but there was a small, narrow stairway that rose from the kitchen as well. We always spent our first few minutes in his house going up one and down the other.

Though each family had a different place to sleep, the gathering took place at my grandmother's house. Her house was nearly twice the size of Uncle Ken's, with a large living room and attached parlor. Since we came from so far away many of the relatives had already arrived. It was always a surprise, and no small sense of pride, to walk in the front door and see so many adults spread about the room chatting merrily and know they were all family. The children would be downstairs in the basement or in

the back yard. With only the briefest of hellos to the adults, my brother and I hurried off to join them.

I don't know if I ever knew the exact number of cousins we had, but there were dozens of them, of every age from toddler to teenager. Whatever activity one wanted to take part in, whether throwing the ball, playing card games or just reading, one or more of them was doing it.

Christmas Day

Despite all the excitement and conviviality the true purpose of our get-together, Christmas, was never forgotten. Thanks was given at the dinner table each night, and the miracle of the time was on everyone's lips. We all attended the same service that morning, then caravanned to Grandma's house. I remember all the cars parked in the driveway and down both sides of the street.

The tree stood in a corner of the living room, banked to its lower

branches with presents of every size, shape and color. I could only stare dumbly and wonder which ones might be mine. Slowly everyone crowded in. There were chairs for those who needed them, and the children were allowed to sit anywhere on the floor we wanted, but not too close to the tree.

After a brief prayer of thanks for our bounty, gift-giving began. This was done by the three oldest children, Roy, Helen and Max, all teenagers. As each person's turn came up, the elves, as they were called, would search the pile until they found a gift with that person's name. The adults came first and then the children by age. Being in the lower half of the children it seemed to take hours for my turn to come. Eagerly, I tore at the paper. An edition of the Hardy Boys I didn't have from Aunt Meg.

Hours later, it always surprised me when I looked up at the clock on the mantel and saw how much

time had passed. I sat buried to the waist in wrapping paper, ribbons and bows of every color imaginable. As was everyone else still sitting on the floor. Then came the big clean-up, everyone being extra careful not to throw away a gift with the wrappings.

After gifts, the women retired to the kitchen to cook dinner. It would be our last meal all together. Our last chance to say our goodbyes. My family and two others were leaving in the morning. Some of the families would stay for another two days. It was always magical there at Christmastime, and I envied those two extra days, but we had the farthest to travel.

We said our goodbyes that night and thanked everyone before returning to Uncle Ken's. The next morning, as we started off for home, I wondered if my cat had missed me.

Robin Roberts is a writer who lives in Canyon City.

Something to crow about

Blue Mountain Eagle

The city of Monument wrapped up its scarecrow contest earlier this month and announced the winners.

Out of six contestants, the Monument High School FFA won first place with a scarecrow decorated to look like an FFA member. The group won a trivia game for their classroom.

In second place was Pat

McCrary who won a candle for her creation.

Mary Cade, in third place, also received a candle.

"This was our first year holding the event, and we were happy with the turnout and hope for more participants next year," said city recorder Dorothy Jordan. "Having so many young and new council members, we are all learning new things to improve community involvement."

DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW



The Eagle/Rylan Boggs

Eighteen-month-old Mia goes for a ride in her homemade sled with her grandparents Jeff Carey and Ashley Allison Friday, Dec. 16, in John Day.

Foundation awards \$237,500 in Eastern Oregon grants

Blue Mountain Eagle

The Oregon Community Foundation Board of Directors approved \$237,500 in grants to Eastern Oregon nonprofits in November.

A variety of grants were awarded in Baker, Gilliam, Harney, Malheur, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa and Wasco counties, according to a press release from the foundation. The foundation awarded more than \$3.6 million statewide.

In previous years, the foundation has awarded grants in Grant County for the fairgrounds and the new John Day Fire Hall.

"The Oregon Community Foundation team of staff members and volunteers is excited to see the progress of these projects that work to improve health and hu-

man services for people of all ages in Eastern Oregon," said Cheryl Puddy, associate program officer/regional coordinator for the Oregon Community Foundation in Central and Eastern Oregon, in the release. "The valuable services these nonprofits provide in our communities is a true reflection of OCF's goal to improve lives across Oregon, and we are proud to partner with them."

The foundation hosts grant workshops throughout the state to help nonprofits with the application process and will be reviewing another round of grant applications in the spring.

For a full list of grants awarded or more information about donating or applying for a grant, visit oregoncf.org.

I will be broadcasting The Cowboy Chapel Hour on KJDY for the last time December 25th I am very sorry to say; no problems, KJDY has been wonderful, the Lord has just led me in a different direction. It has been a blessed 7 years; I had fun and met a lot of really beautiful people from Monument to Seneca. So thank you for listening and your wonderful comments along the way. Wishing you a merry Christmas and a blessed 2017.

Love in the Lord & Lovin' the Lord,
Cowboy Chapel
Chaplain Richie

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

BLUE MOUNTAIN EAGLE EARLY DEADLINES

for the January 4th edition

Classified, Legal & Display Deadline is Thursday, December 29th at Noon

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For more information or to place an ad:
Call Kim Kell at:
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OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED DEC. 26TH

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OBITUARIES

Joan Bowling

Joan Bowling, 84, of Canyon City passed away Wednesday, Dec. 14, at St. Luke's Medical Center in Boise. A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 21, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in John Day, followed by a procession to the Canyon City Cemetery. A reception will follow at the church.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Red Cross through Driskill Memorial Chapel, 241 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845. To leave a condolence, visit driskillmemorial-chapel.com.

Diana Lee Smith

Diana Lee Smith, 70, of John Day passed away Sunday, Dec. 18, at her home. No public services are planned. Arrangements are under the care of Driskill Memorial Chapel, 241 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845. To leave a condolence, visit driskillmemorialchapel.com.

A MAN WAKES UP in the morning after sleeping on... an advertised bed, in advertised pajamas.

He will bathe in an ADVERTISED TUB, shave with an ADVERTISED RAZOR, have a breakfast of ADVERTISED JUICE, cereal and toast, toasted in an ADVERTISED TOASTER, put on ADVERTISED CLOTHES and glance at his ADVERTISED WATCH. He'll ride to work in his ADVERTISED CAR, sit at an ADVERTISED DESK and write with an ADVERTISED PEN. Yet this person hesitates to advertise, saying that advertising doesn't pay. Finally, when his non-advertised business is going under, HE'LL ADVERTISE IT FOR SALE. *Then it's too late.*

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LAST WEEK'S TEMPS

JOHN DAY	H/I/O
TUESDAY	31/17
WEDNESDAY	43/22
THURSDAY	28/19
FRIDAY	22/4
SATURDAY	15/2
SUNDAY	25/10
MONDAY	32/15

24/7 FORECAST
AUTOMATED: 541-575-1122

ROAD CONDITIONS: 511; TRIPCHECK.COM
WWW.BLUEMOUNTAINEAGLE.COM/INFO

NOAA WEATHER RADIO FOR JOHN DAY
162.500 MHZ

WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK OF DEC. 21-27

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Sunny	Chance of snow and sleet	Chance of snow	Cloudy with flurries	Cold with sun	Cold with periods of sun	Mostly cloudy
33	36	36	32	28	27	36
21	25	28	23	18	24	23