



Lifelong friends Diane Collier (left) and Charlotte Bergerson today and in a similar pose from the early 1950s.

Below: Collier's childhood home goes down in a controlled burn while Bergerson's home, to the left, will be next.



A friendship on fire

Warrenton's premier historians have been close friends for seven decades and seen many life and community changes

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

Not every friendship can stand the test of time. Marriages, families, jobs.

Fewer friends still get to watch together as the neighborhood that brought them together 70 years earlier is burned to the ground in the name of progress.

"We first met each other when I was 9 or 10" and living on Skipanon Drive, said Diane Collier, who was Diane Falconer at the time. "Charlotte lived next door and we've been close friends ever since."

Charlotte Bergerson, who was Charlotte Hale when they met, said she and Diane were tomboys.

She describes how they

met in her 1998 book, "I Remember When."

"I was new to the neighborhood. I sat on my back steps ... daydreaming like young girls do, when a little girl with blonde hair and brilliant blue eyes walked up. 'Wanna go over to swing at the Tarzan swings,' she asked. And with hardly time to breathe, she added, 'I'm Diane, I live next door.'"

The rope swings were a block away on Northeast First Street near the present-day Baptist church and the neighborhood kids enjoyed swinging across a stream, proclaiming their bravery with a Tarzan yell. Eventually, the girlfriends

See 'Friends' on Page 4

Drought may have hurt local forests, farms

Oregon Department of Forestry

Tree and forest owners are being urged to watch for drought symptoms such as dead tops, dead branches, thinning canopies and stressed cone crops.

Given the warm end to last summer and drier than normal winter, the Oregon Department of Forestry expects more trees will die from drought or secondary attack by bark beetles this summer.

"Above-average temperatures this spring mean beetles may come out sooner than normal," said Christine Buhl, an ODF entomologist. "If this happens, beetles may attack trees sooner than usual."

Drought has long-term consequences.

Plants and animals still are experiencing the effects of the 2012-15 drought. Drought-damaged trees can have collapsed vascular tissues and fine-root dieback. The tissues and roots absorb much of the water a tree needs and the damage takes time to repair so trees may not fully recover.

Following the drought, Oregon had one good year of rain. But, it takes more than that for trees to rebound.

Last summer ended with a long stretch of high temperatures and days without rain. There has been less rain and snow this winter as well, so the soil isn't as saturated as expected.

"Trees will likely be drought-stressed this season - unless precipitation boosts back to normal levels," Buhl said. "What we need is a longer, lighter rain to allow trees time to soak up the water."

Bark beetles are considered part of a healthy ecosystem as they pick off sick or less vigorous trees that compete

See 'Drought' on Page 5

Drug take-back event garners 200 pounds for disposal

The Columbia Press

More than 200 pounds of unused prescription medications were collected during Warrenton's recent annual drug take-back event.

The four-hour event offered curbside service along Second Street outside Warrenton City Hall, a bonus for the elderly and others who may have difficulty walking the drugs to the lobby outside the police station, where there is a lock box.

"That's an amazing amount of unused prescriptions," Mayor Henry

Balensifer said Tuesday, after Police Chief Matt Workman gave a brief report. "Thankfully, that didn't go into our water supply."

As many as 45 people participated.

The take-back event is held nationwide as a way of keeping opioids and other dangerous drugs out of the hands of children, teens, family members and visitors who may be tempted to pilfer things found in medicine cabinets.

Medications flushed down the toilet can make their way into the

groundwater and into local fish.

Warrenton's event was sponsored by Warrenton Police Department and Clatsop County Health Department.

The collected medications were turned over to an incinerator company in Brooks that's approved by the Department of Environmental Quality.

There were 60 collection sites in Oregon, which collected 7.3 tons this spring, a record for the state. Nationwide, nearly 475 tons were taken off the street.