

Around About

By Justine Weatherford

Last Tuesday, during the noon hour just two days before turkey day, when I picked up Irene Swanson and we headed northeast we felt more like we were going off on a Christmas trip than for a Thanksgiving weekend.

With the big soft snowflakes falling and the ground quite white in Heppner, we were both apprehensive. We were each carrying along Christmas gifts for our northernmost children and grandchildren and Irene's great-grandchild, too.

Soon we learned again how foolish it was to worry, to attempt to cross bridges before we got to them. By the time we reached the Bombing Range Road we were out of snow country. Our drive on went nicely—including a quick stop at the North County Courthouse where we found a substitute Justice of Peace, Charles O'Connor, sitting in for Justice Charlotte Gray, and where I got a blood pressure check from County Nurse, Pat Wright. Irene had not visited the Annex Building before.

However, Irene has been to the Pasco Airport many times and this was my very first experience there, an attractive and efficiently operated facility. This Port of Pasco serves three airlines, Republic, Cascade and Horizon, which fly to major cities of Washington, Oregon and Idaho and which can easily provide travelers with connections to major airlines that fly everywhere in the world. It was pleasing to find large, well-gravelled, free-parking areas where I could easily park the car for, evidently, as long as I wished.

Flying from Pasco over the Washington Cascades to Sea-Tac was exciting. We left the ground about 4:15 p.m., had a grand view of many lesser snow-covered peaks and of the great Mt. Adams, Mt. Rainier and their now diminished sister St. Helens which were silhouetted in the fading sunlight, and as we rounded Mt. Rainier, we could look down and see the sparkling lights of Seattle and Sea-Tac where we landed at 5:10 p.m.

Irene's daughter-in-law, Joanne Swanson and my daughter Karla Weaver with thirteen-month-old Abiah were waiting for us and soon whisked us off to their homes—Irene to Auburn and me to Port Orchard. Although I am sold on ground travel, this one-hour flight was just great; driving to Port Orchard takes most of a day as does train or bus travel, and they mean various transfers, too.

It seems that the Port Orchard-Bremerton area, in fact, the Puget Sound country generally has not had snow yet, but they have had more rain and ice than they care about. Occupational Therapist Karla works about half-time now that she has a husband and their little girl. Wednesday morning she took Abiah to her baby-sitter when she went to work, and my oldest son, Ross Haberlach, came to the Weaver home and took me with him for most of the day—to his insurance office, to lunch and about town on various errands.

I telephoned a woman who had taken the 36-day bus tour that Helen Currin and I recently enjoyed and who lives very close to Karla. This new friend looks remarkably like Washington's ex-governor Dixie Ray and for much of our travel time together, folks were calling her Dixie instead of using her name, Alice. When we parted in October at Biggs Junction, Alice had said she really wanted to see me when I came to Port Orchard for Thanksgiving. Now she insisted that Karla and Abiah and I come to her home on Friday morning. There we took brief looks at some of the pictures we both had developed of our tour, before the four of us drove to the Port Orchard seaway to welcome Santa Claus who was scheduled to arrive there by boat at 11 a.m.

The South Kitsap High School band played Christmas music and the crowd of children and parents cheered as he arrived. After the crowd thinned we reached Santa's lounge chair, and he held Abiah on his lap and I took pictures and then I sat on his lap, too, which I never would have done except that my son Ross was again playing this role in his adopted community.

The sun shone on the crowd which was also busily looking over the wares displayed at the tables along the same blocked-off street where a regular Saturday Market is held, except last weekend it was on Friday. The main street of the old, downtown section of this town directly across from Bremerton's big Navy Yard was festooned with Christmas garlands and its merchants had really decorated their shops as they invited everyone to begin, or continue, Christmas buying. We ventured into several stores and found free coffee and tables of holiday cookies being presented to all. I surely like that community where two of our second generation have made their homes.

After a lovely, traditional Thanksgiving Day in the Weaver's Sunnyslope Road home, my full Friday finished with attendance at a presentation of the Performing Arts Guild of South Kitsap. My son, Santa Claus, is also the current president of this group, and he arranged for Alice and me to come to the Bay Street Playhouse, which is a restored former lodge hall that interested citizens are operating as a little theater. This citizen-generated activity thrills me. It offers live theater five or six times each year and affords those who enjoy performing on a stage an opportunity to do so.

On Friday and Saturday Nov. 20, 21 and 27, 28, the production was a Gershwin-Porter Show. It was simply staged, carefully arranged and much enjoyed by the 60 some who attended with us. A five-piece band composed of two workers from the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, several business men and the Ackley-like music teacher of the South Kitsap School District furnished the background music for seven amateur singers and four dance students who gave delightful performances.

When the show ended and we left the playhouse, I felt as pleased as I had felt seeing a New York stage show. My son assures me that there is no chance for the PAG (Performing Arts Guild) to make any money, they are delighted to even break even, but the guild exists for the pleasure members have in presenting shows that please some of their friends and neighbors.

They have several more productions coming along soon after the new year, including four nights of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" and four nights of Rossini's "Barber of Seville." The board members really think big and aim to present quality productions. I hope that maybe I can attend their shows again.

My flight back to Pasco was from 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. on Saturday, and I hope the snapshots I took through the plane window of the three great mountains in Washington with Oregon's Mt. Hood off in the distance turn out good. I am anxious, too, to see the pictures of little Abiah and of this mom and grandma on our favorite Santa's lap.

When I reached Heppner it was pleasing to see the Christmas lights shining against the scattered snow. I know that Albert Connor did a fine job of being the Santa Claus here. Although I always have fun traveling and visiting, it is great to come home to good friends and helpful neighbors where I want to stay until I find another good excuse to travel.

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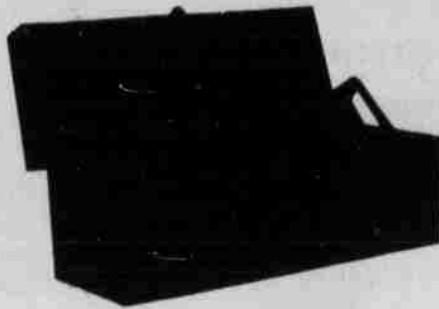
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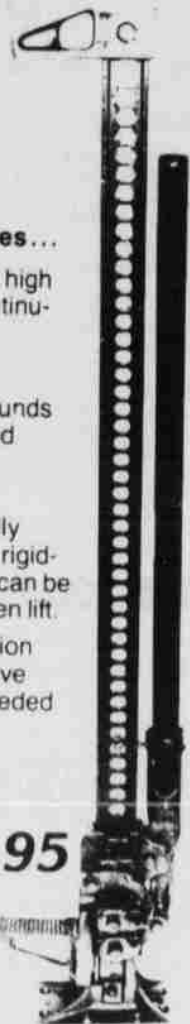


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