

Neighborhood Center busy with Christmas basket preparations



(L-R) Volunteers Betty Tanner, Sandi Arntt, director Joyce Breeding and Cory Breeding help fix Christmas baskets.

Sixty-one families will receive Christmas baskets this year, "up a little bit from last year," says Joyce Breeding, Heppner Neighborhood Center director. The baskets will include everything from cereal to turkey to snacks--everything for Christmas dinner and all the trimmings as well as food for Christmas day breakfast and lunch. The baskets were delivered Monday, Dec. 23.

Breeding says that the center purchases the food for the baskets from donations to the center.

"We always take donations," she added. Families also receive Christmas gifts with their food baskets. This year the classes at Heppner Elementary "adopted" seven area families and provided them with gifts. "The community has really been behind us this year," said Betty Tanner, a volunteer.

The center has been wrapping gifts since July. A regular volunteer crew of about 11 helps Breeding with her preparations and additional volunteers turn out to help at Christmas time.

Precaution tips offered for Extension cords

If you use several extension cords in your home, doing away with as many of them as possible can make your dwelling safer. You will use fewer cords if you take the simple step of relocating floor lamps, television sets, clock and other electrical equipment closer to wall outlets, points out Mary Ann Sward, Oregon State University Extension housing specialist.

According to Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates, about 4,600 residential fires in this country each year are associated with extension cords. Such fires kill 70 people and injure 230 each year. Extension cords cause another 2,200 shock-

related injuries annually. The commission offers the following hints for using extension cords safely:

Use an extension cord only when it's absolutely necessary; Use cords marked #16 or lower (the lower the number, the larger the wire and the more current the cord can carry safely);

Do not use #18 cords that were used previously for floor lamps and other low-wattage items; Check to see that a cord bears a certification label of an independent testing laboratory;

Always use three wire extension cords for appliances with three prong plugs. Never remove the third prong. It is a safety

feature designed to reduce chances of shock or electrocution; When disconnecting cord from outlets, always pull on the plug rather than the cord itself; Discard any old, cracked, worn or damaged extension cords; Don't plug in appliances that draw more watts than the rating of the cord. Check this by examining the cord to see what its wattage rating is. Use heavy-duty cords for high-wattage appliances; Use cords labeled for outdoor use when using tools and garden products outside the home; Plug into an outlet protected by a ground-fault circuit interrupter, which shuts down power in milliseconds if a person is exposed to a hazard capable of causing electrocution or electrical burn; Don't run cords under carpets or rugs because they keep cords from releasing heat.

Coloring contest winners



Photo by Joyce Hughes

Winners of the Soroptimist Christmas coloring contest are: back row right to left: third & fourth grade first-Ashley Ropp, second-Jenny Williams, third-Kimberly Hansen; first & second grade first-Olivia Sagely, second-Samuel VanLiew, third-(front l-r) Trevor Rhea; pre-school kindergarten third-Krystal Nairns, second-Kien Nairns, first-Richard Wick.

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Off the Wall

By Merlyn Robinson

Ho, ho, ho! It's time to count your blessings, especially before inventory and income tax computation times. My blessings are indeed overflowing as I try to weed out a 40 year old collection of worthless valuables.

The older generation is preparing to evacuate the house for a double-wide manufactured home that now has a resting spot thanks to the hard-working Miller family gophers.

It's time for the next generation to split wood and fall down the stairs. Even though I'm sacrificing disposables that were supposed to be thrown away in the first place. But it's hard to part with things, even if they haven't been used for 20 years.

A large costume party could have been outfitted with clothing saved from the 50s and 60s. But some of those articles don't seem as ridiculous as some of today's fashions.

If baggy clothing had been the style way back when, I wouldn't have to give up on dresses that fit like a second skin. And it wasn't just a female fashion. I remember when our oldest son had to have his pants tapered in--even though tight pants prevented him from tying his shoes. Maybe that's why bell-bottom pants became fashionable again, so men wouldn't end up singing soprano.

Oh yes, I saved the church-going perky little hats with funky fur, feathers or flowers; each with matching gloves. However, I did away with the saddle shoes that have been replaced by Nikes. Now that short skirts are back in style, my old ones seem to have shrunk around the waistband, (from lack of use, I'm sure). But there's no shortage of material here as I saved every scrap from everything I ever fashioned. Bags of material and trim put Santa's load to shame.

I really thought I got rid of excess kitchen ware when our kids moved into apartments during their college years. But when that vigilance relaxed which prevented a favorite skillet from walking out the door, unused kettles in a deep cupboard seemed to have multiplied.

Now you take my junk drawers--and I wish someone would. It's time to trash things that can't be identified or the parts for an old appliance that long ago met its demise. I've occasionally been surprised by things hidden in the back of a refrigerator, but that doesn't hold a candle to the contents of a well-stuffed deep closet.

I'm told that we come into the world with nothing. And I'm sure I'll have half of it left after this move. I've also acknowledged that many brain cells have been lost or I wouldn't have acquired so much junk.

But the one thing that is going to make me smile a lot is the opportunity to leave behind the collection of stored items by our offspring.

Have a good holiday. And if Santa doesn't give you everything you are hoping for, stop by, I'm sure I can find a white elephant gift just for you.

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