

I'm not Scrooge, four presents are plenty

I've always loved the holiday season. However, I don't know if I'm just jaded, but it seems society has turned Christmas into a big gift grab. Honestly, I'm no Scrooge — ask any of my friends. I love to give.

Of course, like any kid, I enjoyed getting Christmas presents. Although, I admit requesting a big ticket item one year.

As a freshman in college I asked my parents for a car. I really thought they were gonna give me the keys to my mom's car



Tammy Malgesini
INSIDE MY SHOES

A decade old red Toyota Corona, we affectionately called it Little Beep Beep after the Randy Newman song, "Short People." I figured my mom didn't need it because my pops drove her around the majority of time.

I wondered how they would present it to me.

Would they put a big bow on the car or would they give me a new key chain? Maybe, I thought, they'd make it even more fun by doing a nesting box package with each box opened revealing a slightly smaller box until I got

down to the key.

Nope, it was none of those things.

They gave me a wooden car Christmas ornament.

Recently I've seen something floating around the Internet called the 4 Gift Christmas Challenge. Some kids might be appalled with only getting four gifts. But if you think about it, that's one more than the gold, frankincense and myrrh the wise men brought when Jesus was born.

The 4 Gift Christmas Challenge encourages parents to limit gift-giving to four items for their children:

1. Something they want
2. Something they need
3. Something to wear
4. Something to read

Looking back, my parents could have wrapped the 4 Gift Christmas Challenge all into one with handing over the keys to Little Beep Beep. Seriously, I wanted it and needed it — remember I was a college student without wheels. Driving gloves would have covered something to wear. And something to read, well the driver's manual would sufficient take care of that.

And, just in case my husband needs some shopping ideas this

year:

Want: A Derek Jeter commemorative baseball;
Need: A box of black Pilot G-2 07 gel pens;
Wear: Altra Lone Peak trail shoes;
Read: "Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes Unofficial Guidebook: Rail-Trail & Community Guide" by Estar Holmes (the 2015 version).

Tammy Malgesini is the community editor. Her column, *Inside My Shoes*, includes general musings about life. Contact her at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539.



FILE PHOTO

Al Sells leads the way as motorcyclists participate in a past Echo Toy Run to deliver toys from downtown Echo to Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston.

Toy Run kick starts holiday season giving

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
Community Editor

The thundering sound of motorcycles will fill the air between Echo and Hermiston during the upcoming Echo Toy Run.

A group of enthusiastic bikers, led by Al Sells, will rev up holiday spirit as they gather Saturday, Dec. 5 in downtown Echo. Bearing stuffed animals, children's games and toys, the riders will depart from the small town at noon to ride the 12 miles to Good Shepherd Medical Center.

The event, which is in its 12th year, provides toys for young patients at the hospital, including those visiting the emergency room.

"It's the one good thing I do every year," Sells said with a laugh.

The idea for the toy run started when former owners of the Echo Saloon wanted to help brighten the spirits of hospital-bound children. Donning his black leathers and a Santa hat Sells, who straddles his 2004 Harley Wide Glide, has carried on the tradition in coordinating the yearly event.

Nick Bejarano, the new marketing and communication director at Good Shepherd, said the effort goes beyond merely giving children gifts.

"It's a great way to boost their spirits and make them a little happier and healthier, because that's tied together," he said. Regardless of the weather, Sells is committed to helping kids. He wants to ensure kids that are hospitalized or end up in the emergency room during the holidays have a merry Christmas.

Rain, snow, sleet or hail, Sells said he'll continue to lead the pack as long as bikers still come out to support the event. In addition to the immediate area, participants have come from John Day, the Tri-Cities and Yakima, he said.

Upwards of 140 motorcyclists have participated when the weather is good. Twenty-seven bikers braved freezing temperatures and two inches of snow to participate during the 2007 event, Sells said.

In case of inclement weather or for those who don't ride motorcycles, passenger vehicles are invited to take up the tail of the procession between Echo and Hermiston.

Bejarano is impressed with the commitment of Sells and other area bikers. "I think it's awesome to

organize this for the kids in our community," he said.

In addition to distributing toys at the hospital, Bejarano said items are shared with the Hermiston Police Department and Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services.

"When we have extras, we give them to the police department and fire department so they can pass out toys," Bejarano said. "So the toys go beyond our doors as well, which is nice."

Anyone wishing to donate a gift who can't attend the Echo Toy Run can take them to the administrative offices at Good Shepherd Medical Center, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. For more information, call Sells at 541-571-1820 or Bejarano at 541-667-3460.

IN BRIEF

Unique performance set at Walla Walla museum

A holiday event features a musical adaption of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" at the Kirkman House Museum.

The intimate setting in the 1880s Victorian Italianate home, along with the unique musical performance provides a holiday celebration from yesterday.

Cellist Sally Singer Tuttle, Celtic harper Noah Brenner and Monica Griffin Hunter, a soprano opera singer will share season's greetings during two shows. An hors d'oeuvres and wine show is Saturday, Dec. 5 with a social time at 6:45 p.m. and the performance at 7:30 p.m. in the museum's parlor, 214 N. Colville St., Walla Walla. Tickets are \$45 each. The regular matinee show, which is \$20, is Sunday, Dec. 6 at 2 p.m., with

To purchase tickets, visit www.kirkmanhouse-museum.org. For more information, contact 509-529-4373 or khm@kirkmanhousemuseum.org.

Health clinic accepts winter clothes

Columbia River Community Health Services is hosting a winter apparel drive to provide warm clothes for those in need.

People are asked to drop off new or gently used coats, sweaters, gloves and hats at 450 Tattone St., Boardman.

For more information, call 541-481-7212, extension 214.

American Legion announces flag program

American Legion Post No. 37 is promoting its flag program.

People are invited to purchase an American flag to be displayed at Desert Lawn Memorial Cemetery in Irrigon. The flags are in appreciation of friends or loved ones who have provided dedicated service to

the country or community.

The commemorative flags are \$150, which includes a flag pole and concrete stand at the cemetery.

For more information call Joe Cox at 541-922-1310 or Tammy Reid at 541-922-2833.

Casino Night benefits Irrigon chamber

Texas hold 'em and blackjack, along with a silent auction, door prizes and live music are featured during a Casino Night fundraiser.

Hosted by the Irrigon Chamber of Commerce, the event is Saturday, Dec. 5 from 6-10 p.m. at Sub Zero Restaurant & Lounge, 100 W. Highway 730, Irrigon.

For more information, contact Phyllis Danielson at 541-922-3857 or irrigonchamber@irrigonchamber.com.

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