

Community

Museum Pieces

By Robb Wilson, Curator
Columbia County Historical Society Museum

With the past few days of sunny, summer-like weather, the children of our town have been out in full force, playing and forgetting the long winter we had. In the old days of Vernonia, when the weather wasn't good enough to be out, one of the dry places to play was the roller skating rink. Not only did we have one skating rink, but several over the years.

I am not sure of the years each of these places were used for skating, but will start with the building on the corner of Bridge and Washington Streets. Before the "Pine Cone," what we call "Country Kitchen" today, was a wooden structure built for the sole purpose of recreational skating during the 1930s. It was in direct competition with the Joy Theater for the kids' pennies and nickles.

In the Riverview area, on the corner of Hwy. 47 and Cherry Street, there was a large wooden building that was used for a while as a skating rink. This was before it became an auto repair and wrecking yard in the late thirties.

On Capitol Hill, off what we call Noakes Road today, still stands an old chicken barn the owner converted into a rink when egg production wasn't profitable. This, I think, was in the 1950s.

The old Vernonia High School gym, on Washington and A Streets, was used for many things after the new school was built in the early 1950s. One such use was rollerskating.

I have heard that the old Legion Hall, twice as big as the one there now, was used for rollerskating too.

I know there are readers out there, long-time Vernonians, who know some of the details about the old roller rinks. I would like to get that information and set the record straight. Give me a buzz, please, and let me know!

When the weather was good, I remember, we had strap-on type roller skates. Up and down the sidewalks we would go, struggling along, leaving many a knee sore and bleeding. But today, with the modern in-line rollerblades, I see kids going up and down the streets and sidewalks and around the millpond, at speeds we didn't dare try on those old metal clunkers.

Check this out, if you haven't already seen it on the Internet.

April 4th, 3-4 miles north of Vernonia, a cattle farmer found one of his animals dead, and another missing. The dead cow had been mutilated by satanists, he thought, as the eyes were cut out, he saw fang marks on the neck, and it had been drained of blood. The farmer thought it curious that there were no footprints visible in the damp ground. That evening he went out, looking for his missing cow. His vehicle had two powerful search lights which illuminated a creature 25-30 feet away. It turned and hissed at him and he saw it had reptilian-looking eyes, like a snake, only they didn't reflect the light, like mammals. Badly shaken, he said the small gargoyle-like, green creature was only about four feet high and had wings on its back which it didn't unfurl. After about 15 seconds it ran off into the trees. The creature has not been seen since, and there have been no further problems with the cattle.

Those in the field of collecting weird phenomenon classify this mysterious creature as a Chupacabra.

If you have any weird fact or history to share, give me a call.

Museum Winter Hours (Oct. thru May):
Friday and Saturday noon to 4:00 p.m.
Sundays, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
By appointment. Phone: (503) 429-3713
Address: 511 E. Bridge St., Vernonia

Nehalem Valley Pioneer meeting slated

The Nehalem Valley Pioneer Association will meet Sunday, June 8 at 11:00 a.m. in the Natal Grange Hall. This year's honorees will be school teachers, past and present.

Nehalem Valley Pioneers and their descendants are encouraged to attend and bring class pictures, school memories, and tributes to teachers. Pictures of the old schools at

Natal, Fishhawk, Vine Maple, Sunnyside, Elsie, Vesper, Deep Creek, Spruce Run, Keasey, Timber, or the old school on the Burn are especially welcome.

Personal invitations will be mailed to as many teachers as possible, or their descendants. Send the names and addresses of teachers who should be honored to: Verne Ferguson, Nehalem Valley Pioneer Association, 14563

Highway 202, Mist, OR 97016 as soon as possible.

Schwabs' 50th anniversary feted

Former Vernonia residents Melvin and Jean Schwab will be honored on their 50th wedding anniversary with a buffet reception on Sunday, June 1 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., in the Parish Hall of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Vernonia.

Their four children — Kathy Leatherwood of Alaska, Karen Wilder of New Mexico, Rick Schwab of Hillsboro and Marty Schwab of Portland, — invite all friends and family to join in a celebration of toasting, roasting and stories. No gifts, please.

Melvin Schwab and Jean Peasnell were married in 1947 at her parents' home on Capitol Hill (now Noakes Road).

Melvin was born and raised in Vernonia. Following his discharge from the U.S. Navy in 1946, he worked for the *Vernonia Eagle* as a linotype operator until it closed its doors in 1975. They then moved to Aloha, where he worked as a typographer at the *Valley Times* until retiring in 1982.

Jean graduated from Vernonia High School and after marriage she remained a homemaker until 1966, when she went to work at Tektronix. She retired in 1985.

The Schwabs now reside in McMinnville, except for "snowbirding" in California during the winter.

VHS spring sports potluck slated

Vernonia High School's Annual Spring Sports Potluck will be held Tuesday, May 27, at 6:30 p.m. in the Washington Grade School cafeteria. All baseball, golf, track and softball athletes and parents are invited.

Bring a main dish, salad or dessert. This event is sponsored by the Vernonia Booster Club.

For additional information, call Debbie at 429-2180, or Randy at 429-1093.



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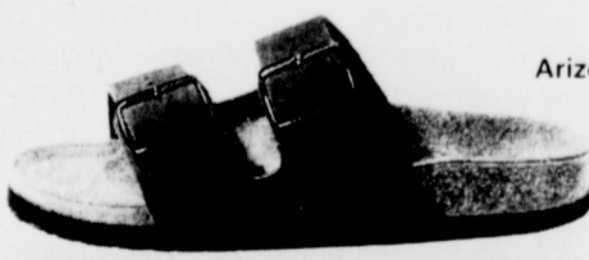
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