

Grand Marshalls for 2000 parade: Santa Claus and the Halloween witch

Bob and Betty Curl, who moved to Vernonia two years before the first Friendship Jamboree, will be honored as co-Grand Marshalls at its 44th showcase.

The Curls have had long, happy and successful lives in our community. Born and raised in Paris, Illinois, they pulled up stakes with the encouragement of Vernonia relative Peter Brunsman, and moved to Vernonia at age 19 to work and raise a family.

Their first home was a two bedroom house and within the first six years, while Bob worked for Brunsman Hardware, their family of two became a family of six. Cramped quarters caused them to relocate, building a larger home on the banks of Vernonia's Rock Creek, overlooking the city's natural swimming pool.

Though times were often hard, the Curls succeeded in raising nine children, all of whom graduated from Vernonia High School. One daughter, Debbie Johnston, now serves on the school district's board of directors.

Over the years, the Curls became best known, locally, for the roles they played in the community; Bob, as Santa Claus to children in Vernonia and Mist Schools for 42 years, and Betty as the Wicked Witch at Halloween - complete with costume, steaming cauldron, eerie, scary sound effects and a generous supply of tasty

treats - over a period of ten years.

In the meantime, they have

states.

In 1960, he sold his van and bought a grocery store on

Curl's Transportation, contracting with School District 47J to operate their fleet of buses.

selves and four sons as directors and is an agency for United Van Lines.

The corporation provides transport services to high-tech companies, hauling equipment for trade shows nation-wide, and has competently handled jobs that required as many as 72 trailer loads for one show. Curl's Hi-Tech also provides warehousing for materials that must be stored between shows. The corporation has five vans and contracts with 15 independent truckers. A second office, in So. San Francisco, is also an agency for United Van Lines.

Betty spent a lot of busy years as a homemaker, but after the children were all grown and gone, she went to school to become a travel agent. "The kids kept telling Dad that 'Mom will go crazy if she doesn't have something to do,' and I wanted to see if I could still talk to people," she says with a laugh. Just as she was ready for her first interview with a prospective employer, she and Bob decided to start the new corporation. So she chucked the travel industry and helped in the establishment of Curl's Hi-Tech.

Sadly, Santa Claus and the wicked witch have retired - but they will be fondly remembered for many more years by most of the children and parents in Vernonia.



Bob and Betty Curl on the deck of their home overlooking the Rock Creek swimming pool.

had years of hard work and many rewarding adventures. When Bob left Brunsman he developed an entrepreneurial spirit - looking for opportunities to build a successful career, he worked as a logger, as a livestock trucker, as a bus driver, and as a Mayflower Van independent driver covering the 48

Bridge Street (where Oregon Realty now is located). In 1963, he sold the store to Dean's Market, which moved to where Sentry Market now is. He worked at the market as assistant manager for another year, then bought another Mayflower van and returned to interstate hauling. In 1977 he founded

This venture he sold to his son Joe, who still holds that contract.

In 1985, Bob and Betty formed a new corporation, Curl's Hi-Tech Service Corporation, which is headquartered in Hillsboro. The family corporation includes them-

What'll I say?



Santa Claus waits for Peyton Chesley to decide what she wants for Christmas.

The photo and caption above appeared on the front page of the Dec. 17, 1997, issue of *The INDEPENDENT*, capturing Bob Curl's last celebration of the spirit of Christmas as community Santa Claus.

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