

Public Family History Center opens in new LDS Church addition

On the outside, a recent addition to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Vernonia doesn't look new. In fact, with the landscaping and the effort made to match the brick front, it doesn't even look like an addition.

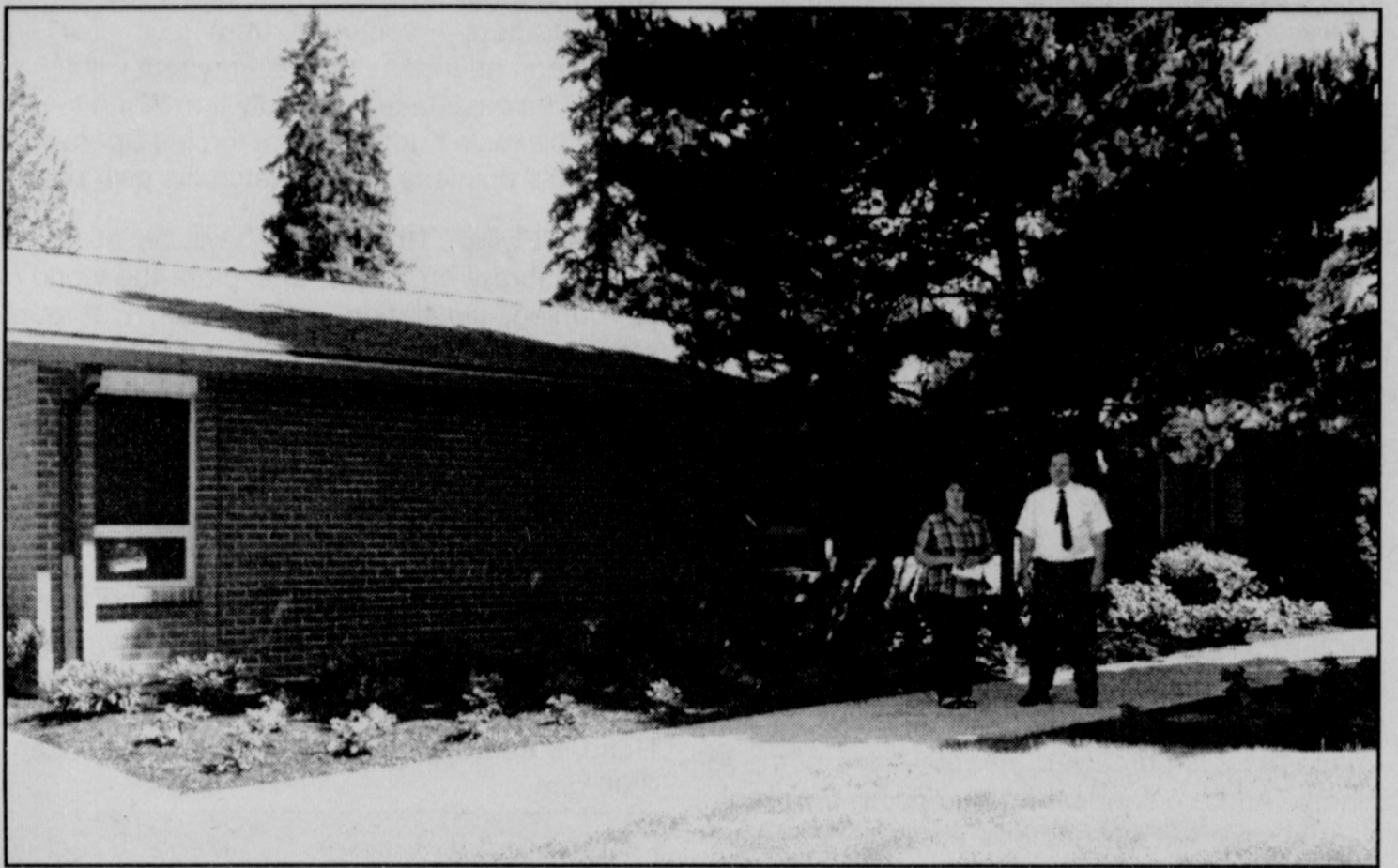
On the inside, it's an entirely different story.

The four additional rooms will provide two more classrooms, a room for mothers and

infants, and allow for expansion of the existing library. But it also has an exciting benefit for people who are not members of the church.

One room will house the new Family History Center, where people can go to search the records for their ancestors.

Alison Dinger, who is director of the Family History Center, and Marion Johnston, 2nd Counselor to the Branch Presi-



Alison Dinger and Marion Johnston outside the recently completed four-room addition to the LDS Church in Vernonia.



Alison Dinger, director of the Family History Center, with some of the hardware and software needed for genealogical research.

dent, are both visibly excited as they talk about the potential for people in this area to search genealogical records without having to make a trip to a large center.

Only one computer is ready at this time, but there will be four before long. The extensive software includes an Ancestral File with records from many countries; a Genealogy Index

of records within the LDS church; U.S. Social Security Death Index from 1937 to 1997, though it is mostly from 1962 forward; a U.S. Military index; the Scottish (early Presbyterian) Church records and a Family History Library catalog that includes over three-million book titles, plus microfilm and microfiche sources, maps and more.

In order to obtain approval from church headquarters to have the history center in Vernonia, the local congregation of about 20 families had to agree to keep the center open to the

public at least ten hours per week. And, since most people will be unfamiliar with the software, eight local members are ready to assist the public. Dinger, who claims to be "computer illiterate," said there will be help for those who are not comfortable with computers.

Much of the material can be downloaded onto floppy disks so those who want to, can continue research in their own homes.

Public hours for the center haven't yet been decided. For more information on the project, call Dinger at home, 429-7835.

Change for 24-Hour Relay from summer to autumn

Dates for the annual Columbia County Prevention Relay-Around-the-Clock have been set back to Saturday, Sept. 30, and Sunday, Oct. 1.

Relay coordinator Diane Croisant said that the committee had originally scheduled

the fundraiser for August 11-12, to take advantage of summer weather, but conflicts with vacation schedules resulted in fewer team sign-ups than expected.

Relay-Around-the-Clock will still be held at the Rainier High

School track, and there will be entertainment, food, swimming, mural painting and a memorial ceremony to honor people whose lives have been impacted by drug, alcohol or tobacco use.

For more information on the Relay, contact Croisant at Columbia Community Mental Health, (503) 366-5989, ext. 25. Students wishing to participate may contact the Prevention/Intervention counselor in their schools or call Croisant.

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