

Time to start preparations for the annual 4-H pioneer wagon trek

19 years ago, Lyle Spiesschaert had a dream. The extension agent and history lover dreamed about getting together a group of people to relive the past by forming a wagon train.

With the efforts of Spiesschaert, his father and a few other hardy souls, the Washington County 4H Wagon Train became a reality. They have made annual treks throughout Oregon, much as the pioneers of yesteryear did. These "new pioneers" followed parts of the original Barlow Road, traveled along the MacKenzie River, cir-

cled Mt. Hood and traveled to Kah-Nee-Tah and the beach.

This year, 2001, is the 20th anniversary of that dream and will be special because several of the original "new pioneers" are still leading the way. Spiesschaert, Morris Elverud and some of his family, who have been in on this adventure since the beginning, will help plan the reunion. Elverud is one of the approximately eight "teamsters" who bring draft horses (or mules) and covered wagons. Other participants bring saddle horses, walk or ride in the wagons.

This year's trek will be from

July 6 to July 14 and will accommodate approximately 125 participants. Due to the overwhelming response, it has sometimes been necessary to hold a lottery to determine who will join the wagon train.

Participants will attend mandatory monthly meetings every fourth Wednesday of the month, starting in January. These meetings are designed to help the participants prepare for the journey by showing them what to expect and what to pack. A mandatory practice weekend in June also provides a reality check before the

week-long trek in July. There are also horse tryouts for those who plan on bringing their favorite steeds.

The hardy souls who participate will put up their own shelters, help serve and clean up meals, help make lunches for the next day, keep the "biffys" clean and gather wood for the evening camp fire. They don't have to cook the meals as the world's best camp cook, John Fellas, handles that. The participation fee is \$150 for adults and \$125 for children 18 and

under; there is a \$30 fee for saddle horses.

The 2001 trek will culminate in a big reunion celebration to be held at the Washington County Fairplex during the county fair in the last week of July. The wagons will be circled all week and there will be a reunion get-together on July 28 at 4:00 p.m.

For more information, call Washington County Extension, 503-725-2110, Joan Lattner at 503-324-8703, or Joan Plummer at 503-324-7586.

Banks Parents Club schedules Bingo fun

The whole family can play at Family Bingo Night in Banks on Friday, January 26, in the Banks Junior High School cafeteria. Sponsored by the Banks Junior High School Parents Club, the event will start at 6:30 p.m. and continue until 9:30 p.m. Banks Junior High School is located at, 450 S. Main Street.

Bingo cards will be \$1.00 each, with free exchange throughout the evening. There will also be four "Goodie Walks" at \$.50 each. A snack bar will be open with pizza being sold by the slice.

Proceeds will be used for Banks Junior High School extracurricular activities. For more information, call Banks Junior High School at 503-324-3111.

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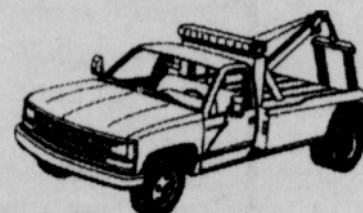
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