

Grand Marshal Bill Hawkins stays close to his home town's needs

When Bill Hawkins says he's a Vernonia native, he means that he was born in Vernonia, not simply that his family lived here at the time he was born. And, though he no longer lives here, in many ways, he's never left.

Bill lived in Vernonia from 1951, when he was born, until 1960, when his father was transferred to Tillamook. He graduated from Tillamook High School in 1989, then earned two Bachelor of Science degrees, in business administration and in economics.

He returned to Vernonia in

1975, when he bought Ralph Keasey's saw shop. He continued to operate the saw shop and added the NAPA Auto Parts store, which he operated until selling it 1988.

During all of those years, he played softball and worked for better facilities for local softball players. Hawkins was one of the first volunteers to work on Spencer Field and, over the years, he has contributed what he calls "some" equipment. What he doesn't say is that he has really contributed a lot of time, effort, materials and money for local softball players.

Most recently, he supplied the



Bill Hawkins

new backstops at Spencer Field.

He also started the Jamboree softball tournament 28 years ago, with four men's teams. By 1981, the tournament had expanded to include eight men's teams and eight women's teams. What pleases Bill most, though, is that of the 16 teams playing in 1981, only four of them are not still in the tournament.

"We've grown up together," Bill says, "and watched our families grow. Now our kids are playing and we are playing less." How much longer will he keep playing? He thinks he'll probably quit in two more

years, when the tournament is 30.

Helping the community is something Bill learned at home. Hawkins Park is named for his father, Glen, in appreciation for his many efforts on behalf of the community. Glen Hawkins worked for Crown Zellerbach.

Bill is now in business with his brother, Glenn, in North Plains. Another brother, Byron, lives in Wisconsin. He and Mary, his wife of 28 years, have three grown children. Niki teaches high school in Beaverton, Stan has a specialty automotive business, and Lindsay is studying broadcast journalism in London, England.

Citizen of the Year Barney Phillips



Barney Phillips

Barney Phillips retired in 1971, at least he sort of semi-retired. He spent many of his working years as a contractor specializing in residential subdivisions, where he was responsible for design, bidding and building.

A widower, Barney was exposed to Vernonia in 1994, when he came out to help a

niece who had bought a home here.

"I liked what I saw," he said, so he moved to Vernonia and started a cabinet shop in a rented building. Then, in 1996, he bought the building where Sam Hearing had operated a grocery store for several decades, and started remodeling it into a mini-mall, an endeavor that never stops.

He also started an annual visit from Santa Claus, with treats for every child, an event he continues to enjoy, along with the children.

He maintains an office in the mall, one without doors, and also sells candy and office supplies. You can find him most days at the Bridge Street Mall and, as he says, people stop by all the time. He still isn't retired, but really doesn't care.

"I have no regrets," Barney says of his decision to start a major project after the age of retirement.

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