

Vernonia Cares needed more than ever Parade starts here.....

Economic conditions are affecting the number of people needing assistance from Vernonia Cares Food Bank. The number of clients served in 2002 totalled 2,883 (1,116 of whom were children), an increase of 42 percent over 2001.

Statistics for January and February, 2003, are showing spiraling client numbers, as well.

"We served 304 people in January and 298 in February of this year," food bank Director Sandy Welch reported. "That's another 25 percent increase over last year's numbers! Thus far we've had the groceries to help these hungry households, however, financial and food donations have decreased drastically since December."

Vernonia Cares has been informed that the availability of USDA food may decline soon, which will increase the amount of food the agency will have to purchase.

"I know everyone's finances are pretty tight right now," Welch said, "but imagine how much harder it is for those in the 130% federal poverty level,

(which is where most of Cares client income falls)."

Adding to the grim picture are an increasing number of unemployed who now require the food bank's assistance for the first time. "We've already served 94 new people in the past two months," Welch said.

Vernonia Cares Food Bank needs food and funds to continue meeting its responsibility to help the neediest in our community. Through the Oregon Food Bank, Cares is able to purchase groceries for eight to fourteen cents per pound, a wonderful value, Welch points out, but maintaining adequate supplies is still a problem.

"We need both financial and food contributions to keep food on our shelves and pay operating expenses," she explains. "We try to supply basic food items, but households also need things like laundry soap, toiletries and paper products. Sometimes contributors bring in these items, which is a wonderful bonus," Welch adds.

"I know Vernonia is a generous community, as verified by the successful holiday box project," Welch said. "I'm sure once

people hear of the food bank's need, many will step forth and contribute."

"As we pull together in these difficult times, we help encourage people by simply providing food for hungry households. After all, food is one of mankind's basic needs and one of the easiest needs to meet.

"I'm just one of the people allowed to be the contributors' hands extended to our community. What a wonderful way to show that Vernonia Cares!" Welch concluded.

Vernonia Cares Food Bank is a not-for-profit organization whose goal is to provide three days-worth of emergency groceries, once a month, to the hungry in and around Vernonia. The Food Bank is located at 627 Adams Avenue and is open Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. All contributions are tax-deductible.

The mailing address for Vernonia Cares Food Bank is P.O. Box 126, Vernonia, OR 97064. Questions may be directed to Care's Director Sandy Welch by calling 503-429-1414.



Above: Grand Marshall George Smith is driven by Frank Schrier.

Top, this page and page 15: Once again, the Polish entry was the crowd pleaser during Vernonia's St. Patrick's Day Parade. The pickup with signs reading Polish Max Line and Conductor's Car, was towing the vehicles in the two top photos on the next page; one is labeled Economy Car, another is Golf Car, after that is a Cowboy Car with a bedspring buckboard, followed by what looks suspiciously like a beer keg in a little red wagon...but it's labeled Conductor's Fuel.

Middle row, next page, includes a very young equestrian, a "powder monkey," Elvis, and parade leader Johnny B.

Bottom, next page, has a clown with several young bike riders.

Vernonia's St. Patrick's Day Parade was started by Pat Knight, former owner of Lew's Place and has remained a home grown parade that is always on March 17th, not on the nearest convenient weekend.

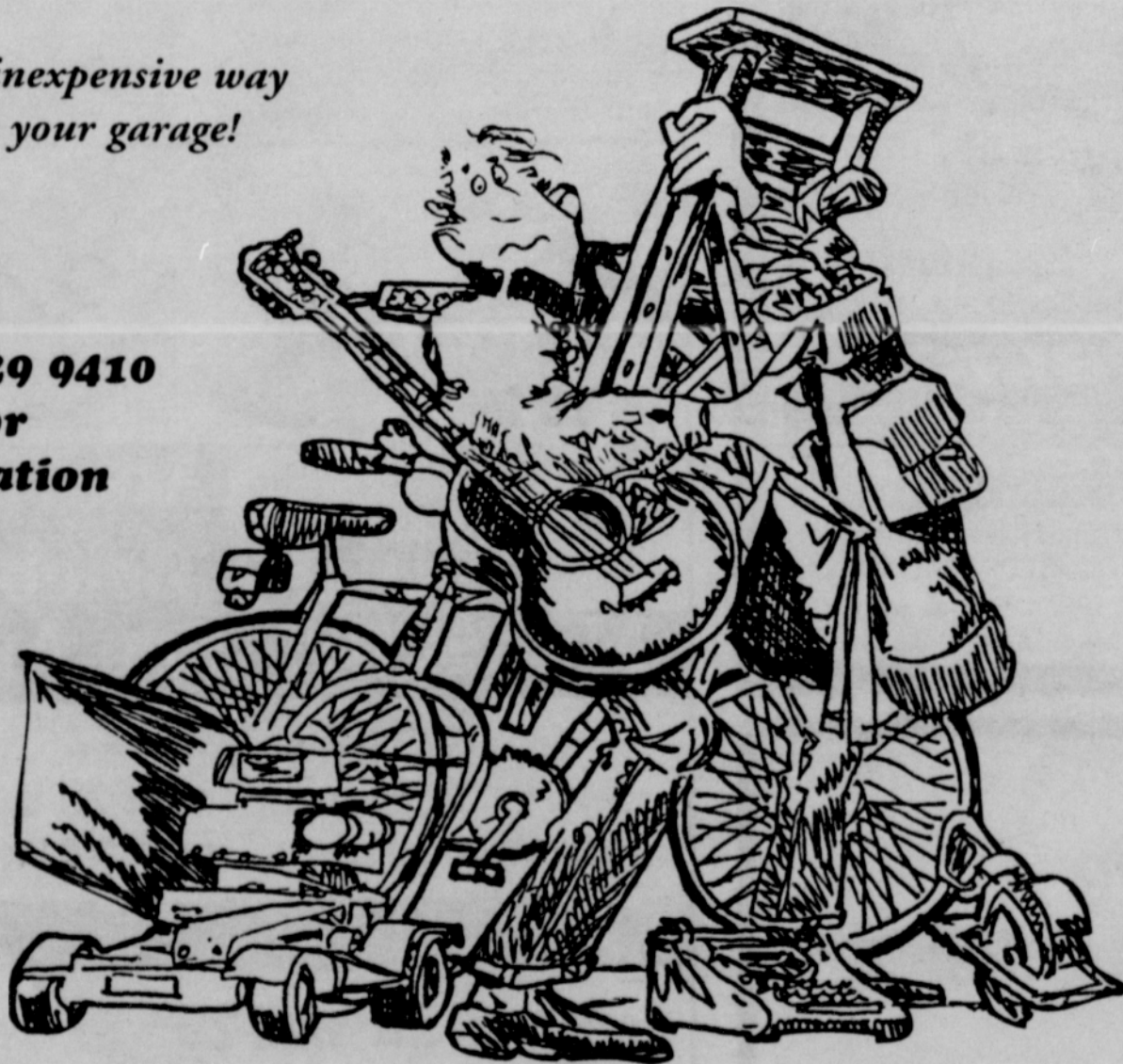
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