

The INDEPENDENT

Vol. 21, No. 8

"Voice of the Upper Nehalem River Valley"

April 20, 2006

Cancer takes life of Dirk Andersen

H.M. "Dirk" Andersen, co-founder of *The INDEPENDENT*, died April 13, 2006, of cancer. He was 87 years old.

When Holger Muller "Dirk" Andersen came to Vernonia in 1983, he had already completed two careers, with 15 years as a minister in the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, then teaching until his first retirement at the age of 64. In 1985, when he and his wife, Noni, started *The INDEPENDENT*, he embarked on yet another career, until retiring for the second time at 83.

Dirk could do many things, but there was one thing he couldn't do well – that was sit still.

When he was 13, his energy caught the attention of his hometown newspaper, the *Elk Horn-Kimballton Review*, which noted: "That young Andersen boy is quite a hustler. He is up every morning long before most people, and helping the milk man deliver

milk. He is also janitor at the opera house, assistant dishwasher at the cafe, newspaper salesman and poultry buyer."

What the reporter missed were multiple jobs Dirk held at a much younger age, among them "candling" eggs at his uncle's store, and firing up the bakery ovens at 4:00 a.m.

That energy and drive served him well, graduating from high school at the age of 16 (and just 5'1" tall), then leaving his small town home for Chicago, where he worked until he could afford to enroll at Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa. He also worked there, washing dishes to help earn his way.

Although Dirk's use of English was impeccable, it was his second language. Danish was the every-day language in Kimballton, Iowa, a community of immigrants, where children learned English when they started to school. Learning the

language, and using it well, were goals to Dirk. For many years, he worked to add one new word to his vocabulary every day.

In spite of all the study and all the work, Dirk never forgot to have fun. He would happily dance and sing all night long, two activities he continued into his 80s. And he had fun with language, whether quoting Shakespeare or Omar Khayyam...or composing a risqué limerick.

His skills also included carpentry, metal work (He made magnificent chandeliers for his church in Wilbur, Wash., with copper he obtained from a brewery.) and cooking.

What he loved most of all, was being with family and friends while living a full life.

There will be a reception to celebrate Dirk's life on Sunday, April 23, from 2-4:00 p.m. at the Scout Cabin in Hawkins Park.

An obituary is on page 21.



Dirk Andersen with a typical smile in photo taken last August before he and his wife were honored as Citizens of the Year.

Work begins to replace 2 bridges

Work has started on a project to replace the Lyons Creek Bridge and the Ford Creek Bridge on Oregon 202. The two bridges are located near Mist, approximately 15 miles north of Vernonia.

Considering the close proximity of the two bridges, there will be a single work zone between mileposts 45.17 and 45.93 on OR 202. Traffic will be reduced to one lane 24 hours a day for the duration of the project. Work will take place week-

days and traffic will generally be controlled by flaggers during work hours. A traffic signal system will be installed to control traffic in the work zone when flaggers are not present. The signal system will allow traffic to safely alternate use of the single travel lane. Motorists should expect up to 20 minute delays during work hours.

The \$5.5 million bridge replacement project should be completed by the end of August 2006.

Rally returns to Vernonia, April 23

It's time again for Oregon Trail Rally to visit Vernonia. This year's rally event starts Thursday, April 20, and comes to Vernonia on Sunday, April 23.

The day's Vernonia events begin at 8:00 a.m. with the start on the Vernonia school

grounds, there will be service stops at the schools from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. These service stops are a great way to see the cars and their crews in action, getting the cars patched up for the next stages.

At 1:40 p.m. the cars will
Please see page 5

He is Risen...



The Vernonia Community Choir again presented a beautiful performance in recognition of the most holy day in the Christian calendar.

Make Vernonia Shine — Saturday, April 22, 9-1
Sign up at Providence Vernonia Clinic