

Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



Looking at a fruit basket I received as a Christmas gift, it brought the kids' grandma to mind, so I'm

I'm in a nostalgic mood at the moment. Having a breakfast she fixed for the kids when we'd visit her. Fresh sliced oranges with a sugar coat, toasted home baked bread and hot chocolate with marshmallows. She's gone but the memories linger on at the sight and smell of the collected items.

Bing Crosby sang of a White Christmas. Elvis sang of a Blue Christmas., but we folks were blessed with a foggy, soggy

Christmas. Not a very merry sounding song title, is it?

People can survive most anything, but poor Shadow almost became a basket-case, trying to stay away from 12 sets of feet and six sets of grabbing hands wanting to play with her for about 10 hours Christmas day. She is used to peace and quiet 24-7. When we got home she went to her bed and stayed there, asleep, for four hours.

What about the New Year ahead? I'm of the mind set that "What comes, comes" and we all have to do our utmost to keep the boat afloat. No matter how small our effort. It all counts, good or bad. Think before you jump in with both feet. Nothing to do and nowhere to go on January 13, 2007, at 1:00 p.m.? Audeen Wagner hopes to see you at the Vernonia Senior Center for the

Spelling Bee. To enter – it's easy, be 50 years or older. No entry fee – refreshments for all and trophies for 1, 2, and 3 place. Yes, it is a Saturday – don't stay home alone, come join in the fun. January 13, 1:00 p.m., Vernonia Senior Center.

Oh yes, remember February 14th also, someone would love to hear from you, even if by mail. See you in the New Year.

Still using nicotine? Kicking the nicotine habit ranks as one of top resolutions for 2007

Kicking the nicotine habit ranks as one of the top New Year's resolutions for smokers. Most smokers – at least 75 percent – want to quit. But 2007 will most likely not be the first

time they've tried.

Experts say that previous attempts to quit smoking shouldn't discourage smokers from trying again.

Dr. Mel Kohn, Oregon epi-

demologist at the Public Health Division of the Department of Human Services noted that because most people don't quit smoking overnight, it's a good idea to devise a quit plan that will best meet individual needs and preferences.

Plan to quit: Experts suggest setting a quit date within 10 days to several weeks to allow for time to get ready and implement changes that will make it easier to quit. Get rid of smoking-related items such as ash

trays and lighters in your home, car and workplace. Tell people you're quitting and ask for support. Identify barriers to quitting such as places where you're inclined to smoke and any specific concerns you may have.

Eliminate triggers: Smokers should figure out what "triggers" cause them to crave nicotine and then find ways to avoid or overcome them. Many smokers manage cravings by changing daily routines, avoiding situations and keeping oc-

cupied. It is also important to find other ways to manage stress, such as exercising.

Help helps: "Many smokers try to quit "cold turkey," and some succeed, but a combination of counseling and nicotine replacement therapy works best for most people," said Kohn.

According to Kohn, quit rates double for those tobacco users who receive coaching support. When tobacco users combine nicotine replacement therapy with counseling, quit rates double again.

Smokers looking for individualized support can take advantage of free "Quit Coaches" at the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line (1-800-QUIT-NOW).

A relatively new approach to aiding smokers who want to quit is providing information and counseling via the Internet. Free & Clear, the operators of the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line, offer tips, advice and success stories at www.freeclear.com. Another new site is www.becomeanex.org that provides access to interactive counseling services and a virtual library. Many other web sites are also available.

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Attendance was good at the Town Hall meeting on December 20 at Vernonia Middle School. See Chalk Talk on page 9 for more information on the meeting. Photo courtesy of Donna Webb.

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