

Now is home improvement time

As the days start to stretch out longer and the sun shows up more and more, homeowners often begin thinking about making improvements to their home.

Maybe it's a deck, a fence, reroofing or painting the house.

Even in a tough economy, many homeowners still want to make improvements to their best investment: their home. But a tough economy can mean more scams or better bargains.

On one hand, when money is tight, lots of people tend to look for bargains. On the other hand, prices for home improvements may be the best we've seen as contractors look for those spring customers. This can be a good thing, but the CCB realizes that it could also be a perfect storm for the unscrupulous "so-called" contractor.

"This is a good time to remind homeowners about the importance of taking a few minutes to check the contractor's license with the Construction Contractors Board (CCB)," says CCB Administrator Craig Smith. "The contractor's information is available on the CCB website or by calling the agency."

An active license ensures that the contractor is bonded. Contractors are also required to maintain liability insurance. The programs of the CCB serve to hold contractors accountable for their business practices.

The agency warns homeowners to be careful about using online services, like Craig's List, where many consumers report finding unlicensed contractors offering to perform low cost home improvements. Door-to-door solicitation is another red-flag area.

These "deals" may look good, but can lead to poor quality work, or worse. The CCB stresses to homeowners that the lowest price may not always be the best option. You may be getting lower quality materials, less skill and experience, "corners cut", or a scammer. And if an offer seems too good to be true (like left-over materials at a really low price), it usually is.

"It is important to do some homework," says Smith. "Compare pricing. Understand what you are getting and who you are getting for your hard-earned money. Don't be pressured into a quick deal. And check the contractor's license. After all, your home may be the biggest investment you have."

Though most projects are successful and homeowners are happy with the work, when problems occur with an unlicensed contractor, it usually means a homeowner is left with an incomplete job or a job poorly done. The few minutes it takes to look up a contractor beforehand can save a lot of grief later.

The CCB is a state agency licensing more than 44,000 contractors. Anyone who is paid to arrange, repair, improve or build a home must be licensed by the CCB. Consumers can verify a contractor's license and find information for successful projects by clicking on the Consumer Help Page at www.oregon.gov/CCB or by calling 503-378-4621.

Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



Page 1, Chapter 1 of my Goodbye to Vernonia. A lot has changed since my husband and I moved into Vernonia July 3rd, 1986. In setting our house upon spot 4 on Riverside Drive, one of our plate glass windows popped. But, on July 4th (I can't really recall who but I think it was) Dettmers Hardware worked and replaced the window. Wow – Thank you. I found every time I needed some small thing for the house or my crafts – I had to go out of town. That is some better now (I do have strange tastes). I always will want something no one has had for years. Old folks, old habits die hard.

I've met lots of folks. Some, even though they have moved on (one way or the other), I'll always remember. One phase of my time here I know I'll always remember starts with the 1996 Flood – all the happy (or not so happy) hours spent at the Senior Center – working in almost all corners, crooks and crannies of the goings-on. Nellie Tipton, Bob Wiley (in and out of the Golden Oldies). How many of you recall "The Rutabaga Band," Bill Yoe and his spoons? How far the center's come from being known as the Newspaper Folding Station and Flea Market? Do you recall all the folks that came and went (they "didn't feel just up to par today"), found out it was absorbing all that ink by smell and through their hands. A

group of us fought mighty hard to chuck the paper business after the flood. Recall the smelly old library in the dining room? Fighting for carpet on the floor of the thrift area – patching the roof – painting the roof of the dining area with water solvent.

Watch out for the next big snow. Shovel sooner than later. OK, so I sound like an old mother hen. I am. I was there and very active, along with a lot of other folks that some of you never really met, but we have the center in the center of our concern for what's going to happen in the months to come.

I was Treasurer/Bookkeeper before the computer moved in, but after the '96 flood, also I was Fair Princess. No, I didn't make it, but Etta Russell and Ruth Bell did. Tessie and I were just fill-ins but we had our day in the sun.

I left the Rat Race, moved over to Vernonia Cares for a couple of years. I enjoyed meeting new folks and hope they too will finally one day get the building they need to carry on a very important job in this community.

One day my doc's said, "Cut back, time to consider yourself." So, that is where I am and why I'm moving on to phase five of my life; 1) single, 2) married, 3) raising kids, 4) becoming a widow, 5) only God knows, so I'm going with the flow – wherever it leads.

I started Bits & Bites to pass away the time. I know some of you think I'm "off the Wall" or "outside the Box" but if I make you think, laugh, smile or guffaw, I've accomplished something. I'll see you, maybe one more time and then, I'm gone – Small town Gal gone City.

20 Years Ago This Month

The July 9, 1959, issue of the *Vernonia Eagle* included the following news story on the front page, under the headline, "Chipmunks' Draw Crowd At Frontier Village Show":

Vernonia was represented at the Oregon Centennial Exposition with entertainment presented Sunday afternoon at the Frontier Village by the Chipmunks (sic) ensemble which has attracted a lot of attention during the past month. The act is a pantomime of the popular "Alvin and His Harmonica" song with Ralph Anderegg acting as director and Lotus McMullen, Nancy Hamnett and Kathy Minger in chipmunk costumes carrying out the pantomime. They went over so good Sunday that they have been invited to return next Sunday. Time for their performance is 3:00 p.m.

Also at the Centennial Sunday were Mrs. Guy Thomas and Janelle and Mrs. Glen Hawkins who were manning the Columbia county booth. Others, including Mrs. Frank Serafin, Mrs. Sam Hearing Sr., Mrs. Claude Shaw,

Mrs. Alvah Swanson, Mrs. Lloyd Garlock and Carolyn had been there previously and others from here will man the booth this week end.

The July 23, 1959, issue of the *Vernonia Eagle* included the following news story on the front page:

The family day planned for Sunday at the city park which was to have been climaxed by the musical presented by the Little Theater group from Portland has had to be cancelled due to circumstances that have arisen. An attempt (sic) will be made to reschedule it later.

Clarke Anderson, park director, was called to Eugene Tuesday because of the serious illness of one of his children who are with their grandparents while their mother is in Texas. After he left, word came from Portland the Little Theater group was having trouble arranging for transportation.

Anderson announced before leaving that beginning swimming classes for high school age and adults will be given at 5:00 p.m. starting next week. About 80 were in the classes held Tuesday morning.

Five-man football games scheduled for Sunday are the Cardinals versus the Bears, 10:30 a.m. and the Eagles versus the Bums,

1:30 p.m.

Mariolino's

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&
JULY 23-25
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JULY 25th
2:00 PM matinee



Tickets
Adults \$12
Seniors \$10
Students \$8
Children \$8

ST. HELENS HIGH SCHOOL
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INFORMATION
www.sscpmusicals.com
olivermusical09.blogspot.com

This ShoeString Community Players production is presented by special arrangement with Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc. Directed by Caleb S. Thurston

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