

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library



This time of year finds many of us reminiscing about holidays and family traditions. Current issues of most of the periodicals include many inspirational, humorous, and sometimes downright heartbreak experiences contributed by readers of these magazines. As you think about holidays in your past, I would like to share some events that our family will never forget. Gravy will forever be called "oil" after one grandson wanted more for his potatoes and asked for more of that "oil"; each family gets a roll of toilet tissue in memory of my mom who, in her later years, always gave each of us a giant pack of toilet paper; while Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, the wise men, shepherds, and angel, etc. of my nativity scene are called "grandma's guys" after they were dubbed that by a grandson years ago.

Probably my most touching holiday occurred in 1971, following the death of our special needs daughter, Janelle. Living in Lincoln County, we parents of handicapped youngsters had few resources to aid in helping these children develop to their potential. Not only that, but one seldom saw these children out in the community. Fairview was still in operation and many parents chose this for their youngsters. With help from students from the University of Oregon and the local support group (It was still called LARC—Lincoln County Association for Retarded Children), our daughter and five more youngsters attended "school" at a local church. We were grateful to recruit a fantastic group of local high school students as volunteers. Most of these young adults had never encountered any child who was "not normal", but quickly came to see them as regular children who just needed extra help in learning to function to the best of their capabilities. The most special and touching

evening of my life occurred as these beautiful young adults sang the Christmas songs as our special needs (also beautiful) youngsters were cast in the nativity scene. Everyone shed a tear that night.

Who of us living in Vernonia will forget the Christmas of 2007—as we celebrated following the flood? What a bittersweet holiday that was as we rejoiced in the unimaginable donations of strangers and friends, but had no place to put them as many homes were still unlivable. Living in their travel trailer parked in our driveway, Jeff and Heidi used a motorcycle boot for their tree stand. Then there was last year—snowed in with no electricity! That probably created memories of one kind or another for each of you.

Reading familiar books such as *The Night Before Christmas*, *The Polar Express*, and *The Cinnamon Bear* might be a tradition in your family. Maybe watching *The Christmas Story*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, or *Miracle on 34th Street* is something to which your family looks forward to each year. The library has all of these as well as numerous other holiday books and movies. Maybe this is the year you would like to start a family tradition of watching one of the movies that will be offered here during the holidays. Matinees will be shown at 2:00 p.m. on the following days: Saturday Dec. 21—*The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, Monday Dec. 21—*Annabelle's Wish*, Tuesday Dec. 22—*How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, Monday Dec. 28—*Dennis the Menace's Christmas*, Tuesday Dec. 29—*The Polar Express*.

The library staff wishes that each of you will take time to reminisce about your past holidays as you celebrate with family and friends and continue to make new memories and traditions.

Vernonia Public Library: 701 Weed Ave.

Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Tues., Thur. 1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
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Flu shot clinic, St. Helens, Dec. 29

Oregon Public Health officials started making the H1N1 vaccine available to everyone beginning December 14. Previously the vaccine had been prioritized to groups most at risk from H1N1 influenza.

Columbia Health District Public Health Authority has scheduled an H1N1 Vaccination Clinic for Tuesday, December 29, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the St. Helens High School cafeteria, 2375 Gable Road. There will be no cost for the vaccination. There are a limited number of vouchers for CCRider transportation. Call 503-397-4651 to request a voucher.

"We have been hearing for some time that people outside the target group are interested in getting vaccinated," said Mel Kohn, M.D., M.P.H., director of Oregon Public Health Division. "We've received a substantial amount of vaccine, and more is flowing into Oregon at a brisk pace, so it makes sense to open up it up to all."

While cases of H1N1 flu have dropped off over the past few weeks, there is a good possibility that additional waves of illness may occur over the next few months. Health officials continue to urge people to get vaccinated to prevent problems later this winter.

"County health departments will continue working to get vaccine directed to a variety of providers so that, as vaccine continues to be shipped, the public will be able to get immunized," said Kathleen O'Leary, administrator of Washington County Public Health Division and chair of the Conference of Local Health Officials. "Private healthcare providers, retail pharmacies and public health clinics will be receiving vaccine."

To find out where vaccine will be available in the coming weeks, go to the flu vaccine lo-

cator on the Oregon Public Health's flu web site (www.flu.oregon.gov).

"During the busy holiday season, finding time to get vaccinated can be challenging," Kohn said. "Now that everyone will be eligible, it will be more convenient for multiple family members to get vaccinated at once, and that can save time."

Kohn recommends that everyone get vaccinated, but that it's especially important that those at high risk do so. "H1N1 flu is not a gift any of us want to get or give this holiday season."

Columbia

County

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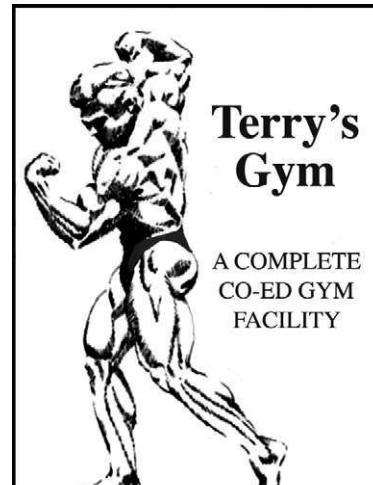
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