

## Attorney General provides useful tips for wise charitable giving

There are nearly 16,000 charities registered with the Oregon Department of Justice, and many of them are actively seeking donations. The state cannot dictate how charities spend your money, but Attorney General John Kroger is providing some basic advice to ensure that your gifts go to a worthy cause.

The Oregon Department of Justice Charitable Activities Section is responsible for ensuring that organizations soliciting funds in Oregon register and file periodic financial reports showing how donations are spent. The section also protects the public against organizations that attempt to mislead Oregon donors. This year they took action against several charities that claimed to benefit local search and rescue teams, schools, and veterans.

### CHARITABLE GIVING TIPS

**Don't give to unregistered charities.** Before donating, make sure the organization is registered with the Attorney General's Office by searching the online database at [www.doj.state.or.us](http://www.doj.state.or.us) or by calling 971-673-1880. You can also visit [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org), a national clearinghouse of information on charities and how they spend your money. Make sure your gift goes to groups that will use your donation in a manner that matches your goals.

**Do your research.** There are more than 1.2 million charities registered with the IRS. Ask yourself: "What is important to me?" Focus on your own priorities when deciding where your contribution should go. In addition to [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org), there are other groups that rate and provide information about charities and their performance, such as the Better Business Bureau ([www.give.org](http://www.give.org)), Charity Navigator ([www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org)), and the American Institute of Philanthropy ([www.charitywatch.org](http://www.charitywatch.org)).

**Resist impulse decisions to donate.** Beware of callers who want your money fast. If you are interested, ask the caller to send written materials about the charity; no legitimate organization will insist that you donate immediately. And watch out for solicitors who use dra-

matic, heart-tugging stories.

**Do not donate cash.** Legitimate charities will be pleased to receive a contribution by check. Don't send contributions by wire or with an overnight parcel pick-up service.

**If you don't remember a pledge, you probably didn't make one.** Watch out for solicitors who begin by thanking you for your previous support if the organization is unfamiliar to you. Some organizations will also send an invoice claiming you made a recent pledge when you didn't. These methods are intended to confuse and intimidate you into giving money.

**Contact the charity directly.** Call the organization directly to learn if it exists and make sure the charity is aware of any fundraising efforts on its behalf. Bogus charities often use names or logos that resemble those of reputable organizations.

**Don't give personal or financial information over the phone.** Be wary of requests for payment over-the-phone. Legitimate charities are pleased to receive a contribution by check.

**Beware of sweepstakes for charity.** Legitimate charities may conduct raffles as fundraising events. In contrast, questionable charities may try to entice you to contribute by implying that you are a guaranteed winner in a sweepstakes. The "guaranteed" prize may be as little as 10 cents. In some cases, the solicitor represents that you are the grand prize winner if only you will make a substantial contribution. The values of such prizes are exaggerated and the required "contribution" means that the "sweepstakes" is likely to be an illegal lottery. Reputable charities do not employ such devices to gain contributions.

**Reduce solicitations by registering your phone on the Do-Not-Call List.** Under Oregon law, if your number is on the No-call list, charities may not solicit donations over the phone unless you are a past donor or expressed a previous interest in giving. Oregon residents may register by calling 1-888-382-1222 toll free, or online at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov).

## Can You Dig It

By Schann Nelson  
OSU Master Gardener



Brrrr! No question now – plants destined to succumb to the cold have done succumbed, what with the ground frozen solid for a week! As I write, the clouds have moved in and we are approaching a balmy 28 degrees. It really bugs me that TV weatherman routinely report the expected wind and ice storms in the Gorge where severe weather conditions are normal. The Coast Range, and Vernonia, generally has weather within a few points of that in Washington County. But sometimes, like last week, there's a pretty dramatic difference. It *thawed* during the day in Hillsboro!

It's nice to see more people putting up lights this year – I even got some up out here. Now if I could just get timers installed so that I didn't have to remember to plug and unplug the darn things. It *is* good to have adequate lighting to get in and out of the house in the dark days ahead. A Great Mystery, worthy of winters contemplation, that when the days get longer, they seem shorter as clouds will be our near companions more often than not until summer.

Which is not to imply that there's no gardening to be done. After weatherizing the lawn mower, etc. take a look at your hand tools. There is no finer rake than one with a long, well-oiled smooth handle. I think this would be a great Christmas present (hint, hint). I know that tools work best when clean and sharp, but I have a terrible time finding the time or energy to file the hoes and shovels, oil the handles, clean and sharpen the pruners and loppers. Definitely a job for the Christmas Garden Fairy!

Meanwhile, my attempt to turn my office win-

dow into a Zone 10 environment is so far successful. The geraniums are blooming! My 3 x 5 foot window faces south and gets direct sun from about 11 a.m. to 4ish at this time of year. It can get positively sultry in the middle of the day when we capture direct radiant heat from the sun, mm-mmm! I'm trying to find a way to keep 'Kent Beauty' ornamental oregano, *Origanum rotundifolium*, alive. My preserved tag says they are hardy zones 9 –11, so I originally thought I only had to provide one additional zone of protection, which shouldn't be too difficult outside. The last two years I have had these spendy babies survive until mid-winter, but just not be able to hang on until the weather really warms up. Part of the problem is that a few warmish days seem to make it think it needs to start growing. The new growth is immediately slammed by the next frost. I'm willing to keep trying because mature specimens in hanging baskets are amazing and good bee plants. I have post-top planters I am hoping will become homes for huge cascades of pink and green flower foliage. I potted my 'Kent Beauty' in the fall after frost and I cut all of last year's stems off close to the crown. The darn things have such brittle stems that I can't seem to handle them without breaking several large stems. So far, it's thriving in the window though it's hard to keep it watered.

Water is the life and death of indoor plants, they often get too much or too little. Being observant and attentive to these indoor gardens will sooth your gardener's soul and improve your indoor air quality.

Happy Holidays!  
Keep warm! Be safe!



## Church Directory

### NEHALEM VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH

Gary Taylor, Pastor  
Grant & North Streets, Vernonia  
503 429-5378  
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.  
Nursery available  
Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.

### VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH

Carl Pense, Pastor  
850 Madison Avenue, Vernonia  
503 429-1103  
Sunday Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.  
Children's Sunday School

### CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

Marc Farmer, Branch President  
1350 E. Knott Street, Vernonia  
503 429-7151  
Sacrament Meeting, Sunday 10 a.m.  
Sunday School & Primary 11:20 a.m.  
Relief Society, Priesthood and Young Women, Sunday 12:10 p.m.

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Gary S. Walter, Pastor  
2nd Ave. and Nehalem St., Vernonia  
503 429-8301  
Morning Worship, 11:00 a.m.  
Sabbath School 9:30 a.m.

### ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Wayne and Maureen Marr  
662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia,  
503 429-0373  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

### VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sam Hough, Minister  
410 North Street, Vernonia  
503 429-6522  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.  
(meets in Youth & Family Center)  
Home Group Meeting throughout the week at various locations

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

359 "A" Street, Vernonia  
503 429-4027  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Worship Service 11:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.

### ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Luan Tran, Administrator  
960 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia  
503 429-8841  
Mass Sunday 12:00 Noon  
Religious Educ. Sunday 10:30 a.m.

### VERNONIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

Grant Williams, Pastor  
957 State Avenue, Vernonia  
503 429-6790  
Sunday Breakfast 9:00 a.m.  
Morning Worship 9:45 a.m.  
Children and Nursery 10:00 a.m.  
Youth Group 6:00 p.m.  
Preschool Mon. & Wed. 9:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer 6:00 p.m.  
Tues. & Fri. Adult Volleyball 7:00 p.m.