

# Save the date for St. Mary's Quilt Fair

The quilting tradition that helped build Vernonia's Catholic Church continues, so mark your calendars! September 16 – 19 will be the 40th Annual St. Mary's Quilt Fair. The event is the largest fundraiser for the parish.

Each year, old friends and new visit the Fair, which boasts unique quilting designs and includes a Craft and Gift Bazaar as well as delicious homemade lunches. The array of colors on quilts amazes people who, perhaps, have a stereotype in mind before attending the fair – there is something to suit and entice everyone. Bazaar products have included floral arrangements, wall hangings, knitted and crocheted items.

When the congregation outgrew its small country church many years ago, donations were collected to purchase the current property on Missouri Avenue in Vernonia. There was

no money to actually construct the church – this was where the quilt fair tradition started. A parishioner, Louise Smekjal, began gathering scraps of material and enlisted the help of fellow quilters to make quilts that could be sold to raise funds. Over time, enough money was collected to start construction and parishioners pitched in and literally built the church that is used today. At a later stage, a hall was added, which is where the quilt fair is now housed.

The floods of 1996 and 2007 made great use of the parish hall – the church is located on higher ground – as an emergency Red Cross shelter, and also housed the 3rd grade class from Washington Grade School until the school was ready to receive students again. St. Mary's parishioners are active within the greater Vernonia community with indi-

vidual and group activities such as regularly serving lunches at the local Senior Center, serving as the local St. Vincent de Paul outreach, and with Vernonia Kiwanis, members of the parish are active in and through the Ford Institute Leadership Program working on Vernonia's Community Garden.

Each year, the St. Mary's quilters make a "Star of Bethlehem" quilt to raffle.

So, what should one expect of this year's event? Lots of quilts, blankets, crafts and gifts, a choice of homemade soups, gooey cinnamon rolls and pies and most of all a warm and friendly welcome. Doors are open 10:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m. September 16 through 19. A \$1 donation is accepted in lieu of an 'entry fee'.

For more information, contact St. Mary's parish office at 503-429-8841.

## Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



Hello. Did you figure out the answer to my question? When is a rose not a rose? Answer: A Rose is a Rose when it is a flower, but when a rose isn't a rose is when you get up out of bed. OK, so we would say, "I got up out of bed," "He rose or arose from the grove."

Flash: My hanging garden - I've tomatoes and, yes, three small yellow zucchini.

My wrist is complaining some but my writing skill is getting better, but I still feel like I am drawing the letters (I have to grip the pen a little tighter to keep it steady).

I know I've asked this question before also, but did you know the world "is" getting smaller? In attending a meeting the other evening a fellow came up to me and said, "Excuse me ma'am but I know you." Me, looking him in the face with no recognition, said, "Oh, I don't believe so, what is your name?" He gave his name, "I don't know from where but I do know your face." Me, "Where are you from?" "Oh, gee, lots of places." We both puzzled. I finally said, "The only place I can think of, but I'm sure it isn't, is Vernonia, OR." He, "Yes, that's it, you worked at the front desk at the Vernonia Cares Food Bank," I gaped. To shorten the story, the year of the Big Flood he lived in Blue Heron Apartments, young fellow, no steady work, so we met once a month on his "Food Day." He now works for one of the contractors vying for the new schools project. Small, small world.

An add on: I went to my Doc this A.M. (8-10-10). He turned me loose. All I need now is to do my hand exercises... Whoopie!!! Only five weeks in the hand brace – broken June 21 to August 10.

I hope you all survived the Jamboree.

Cool now but more Hot is coming.

My condolences to the families of old acquaintances that have passed this last month.

## 50 Years Ago This Month

The August 11, 1960, issue of the *Vernonia Eagle* included the following news story on the front page:

A sentimental journey clear across the United States was rewarding for Mr. and Mrs. Voyle Dawson of Bena, Virginia when they reached the sign telling them they were entering Vernonia, the town which was named for his mother who never had the privilege of seeing her namesake.

In 1875, Ozias Cherrington, grandfather of Mr. Dawson, and Judson Weed, father of Oscar Weed and Mrs. E. E. Garner, left Ohio to come to Oregon, the land of adventure where they had heard there was land for the taking which was rich in timber and natural resources. Previous to that, the two men had served in the Union army together in Company I of the 35th Ohio regiment.

They came from Ohio to San Francisco by train, and then from San Francisco to Portland by boat. They came into the Nehalem Valley in the spring of 1876 and each took a 160-acre homestead. Mr. Weed homesteaded the place on which his son, Oscar, now lives and Mr. Cherrington took the adjoining 160 acres to the north.

The two men built their first cabin of split cedar boards, on the line between the two places and lived there together while proving

up on their claims.

Both men had been teachers in Ohio and were among those to donate labor for the building of the first school house and Ozias Cherrington taught the first term of school in it during the winter of 1876-77. The second term was taught by Mr. Weed.

By 1876, many settlers had taken land in the upper Nehalem Valley and a town site was laid out. Then arose the need for a name. A meeting was called at the schoolhouse and settlers suggested names they desired. Many wanted names of places from which they had come but Ozias Cherrington suggested the name of his daughter, Vernona. The girl's mother had died when she was born and she was raised by her maternal grandparents. She was just a child when her father came to Oregon.

When the vote for a name for the town was taken, nine of the 17

votes cast were for the name Vernona and many who cast their votes did so because of their liking for Mr. Cherrington who had suggested it. Later, the additional letter crept into the name, just how is not really known, but the name of the town became Vernonia and it is the only town in the United States to bear that name.

Mr. Cherrington left the valley after a number of years and went to Sauvies Island where a fall from a hey-tedder in 1894 caused injuries which resulted in his death. He had never returned to Ohio to see his daughter and she had never been able to visit him and the town which was her namesake.

She had corresponded with Omar Spencer until recent years and had learned much about this area and instilled in her children and grandchildren an intense interest in it. She passed away in 1952. Mr. Dawson is the first member of

the family to visit here and fulfill the desire of his mother. He and his wife visited the old homestead on Timber road and took home with them wood from a stump near the site of his grandfather's first home. They also went to St. Helens last Saturday and located Mr. Cherrington's grave in an old Masonic cemetery now overgrown with weeds and visited Sauvies Island and determined the approximate location of the Cherrington place there.

They remained here from Friday until Tuesday of this week and talked to as many of the old timers as possible to gain information about the history of the town. They also took many pictures to show to other family members.

Sunday, they enjoyed a trip down the Nehalem river to Astoria to see the Astor column, Fort Clatsop and on to Seaside to see the end of the Lewis and Clark trail and the salt cairn.

Mr. and Mrs. Dawson had spent a month on the trip from Virginia to Oregon seeing places of interest in the northern states and Canada and plan to be two months on the way home but while here they acclaimed their visit to Vernonia, the town named for his mother, as the highlight of their trip. The information they gained here about his grandfather, Ozias Cherrington, whom he was never privileged to know, gave them much to take home to other family members, also.

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