

Sign up now for Senior Spelling Bee

Many older adults enjoy playing with words and are good spellers, but did you know that there is an Oregon Senior Spelling Bee especially for people 50 years of age and up?

This year will mark Oregon's 15th annual senior spelling bee, which will be held on April 14. Although there is a national competition held each year in Cheyenne, Wyoming, there are few states that host such a contest, which may be one reason why Oregon competitors have done so well in the National Senior Spelling Bee. In the 16 years the national event has been in existence, four Oregon contestants, including two from Vernonia, have brought back first place trophies, plus several more for placing second or third.

This year's Oregon Senior Spelling Bee will be held at Mary's Woods in Lake Oswego. There will be a written competition consisting of 75 words, followed by an oral round. Trophies will be awarded to the top three spellers, and the winner is offered financial assistance if they wish to attend the AARP National Spelling Bee in Cheyenne, which will be held in August, 2012.

The all-volunteer Oregon Spelling Bee Board hosts this event, which has proven to be very entertaining, with an atmosphere that is relaxed, informal and nonthreatening. It's a great way for seniors to have fun while challenging themselves.

There is an entry fee of \$12.00. Registration forms are

available at The Independent, 725 Bridge St., Vernonia, or may be obtained from Julie Golden by calling her at 503-287-7831, or by email to jann.golden 39@gmail.com.



Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



Duke and Ellie are retiring from the Golden Oldies (the band that brightens the dinner of many a diner each Wednesday at the Vernonia Senior Center). I (or possibly every one else) want to know "What Will I do With Only a Photograph" "To Remind Me of You"? The heart happy times I've spent enjoying their company? So, here is their last Song Title Story of their last gig on March 7, 2012.

"A Little Bitty Tear Let Me Down" when I started wondering "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" As I saw "Little Girl" with her "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain", she and "San Antonio Rose" had been pondering the question of why "Life is Like a Mountain Railroad"? Meanwhile "Pistol Packin' Mama" and "The Lady of Spain" were worried about "Josephine" and the "Sheik of Araby" at "The Teddy Bears Picnic" dancing the "Blue Skirt Waltz" under the "Blue Moon of Kentucky". I enjoyed the "Waltz You Saved for Me" as "The Yellow Rose of Texas" hosted a "Jambalaya and Crawfish Pie" shindig along with her favorite "White Lightnin'". As we "Walk Across Texas", the "Cowboy's Sweetheart" with "Jack to a King" who "Wore a White Sport Coat" and sipped on "Mountain Dew" advised "Devil Woman" to "Don't Think Twice" "About Your Cheatin' Heart" "Just Because" down on "Blue Bayou" "Slow Poke" had "Tears on My Pillow" when she heard the "Cattle Call" and saw the herd rush by. Remember when you danced to the "Beer Barrel Polka" and "The Sugar Blues"? You'll find that "Just a Little Lovin'" will "Take These Chains from My Heart" and you will understand why "She Walks These Hills".

The highlight of the day though was when a challenge was thrown down. Dueling Banjos with Dillen Bloomer on banjo and Larry Lee on guitar (he answered the challenge). It was a joy to hear and see. Dillen also played "Cripple Creek" He's good. I do hope he comes back soon to join the band. I will close this part of the column with the regular closing, Necia might sing "Chime Bells" and then it's "Good Night Ladies Until We Meet Again". Thanks to Ellie and you, Duke, for many very happy hours of my memories of a younger time.

I must say it was quite a shock to get up to a half-inch of snow, high wind and rain, the other morning. The temperature dropped, the house got cold because a tree (helped by the wind) fell on a power line. I guess winter finally has come to the Concrete Jungle. Sooo...for now I'll close.

Hope you had a Happy St. Paddies Day.

24 Years Ago This Month

The March 31, 1988, issue of *The Independent* included the following news story on the front page:

Columbia County Communications Agency Director Penny Hafeman told the Vernonia City Council on March 7, that though she understands their concern over increased charges for C-Com service, she has no control over the rates. Vernonia paid \$41,726 to C-Com during the last fiscal year, and will be charged approximately \$52,000 for the 1988-89 fiscal year.

The fees for C-Com's handling of police, fire, ambulance and 911 communications are set by the User Committee and the Executive Board, Hafeman said, adding that union increases plus one additional communications specialist made the raise necessary. Hafeman also disputed Vernonia Recorder Don Dunaway's assertion that the increase for the next fiscal year is 25% saying the increase is closer to 16%.

(Ed. note: \$10,724, the difference between \$41,726 and \$52,000, is an increase of 24.6%.)

When asked why the agency is hiring another communications specialist, Hafeman said that user agencies are requiring more service, that the funding is based on usage, and that if Vernonia is con-

cerned about the process, it should attend C-Com's inter-governmental Council meetings.

Councilman Mario Leonetti said that since Vernonia's use is less than that of other cities, it should be rated differently. "We may be forced to look at other avenues," he added.

Councilman Bill Hansen, Vernonia's former representative to C-Com and one-time chairman of the Intergovernmental Council, commented that until the cities have control of the agency, the "fox is guarding the hen house," a reference to control of the user committee and executive board by law enforcement agencies rather than by taxing districts.

Hafeman also said that C-Com will try to become a separate taxing district for 911 service, and that the dollar amount to the public would "be very nominal" with a tax district.

On a more pleasant note, Marv Meyers, representing the Vernonia Rural Fire District, announced that the rural district had purchases a 1970 tank truck for the city and gave the title to Mayor Wally Vaughn.

In other business during March, the council:

Denied a request from the Jamboree committee to close Adams Avenue next to Shay Park, for a children's carnival during Jamboree. Fire Chief Lanny McDonald objected to


the closure because Adams is one of only two routes into Anderson Park.

Granted occupations licenses to Warner Brothers Construction Co. and Prpich Construction. An occupation license was also granted to Weight Control Institute, pending issuance of an off street parking variance.

Refuses two bids on construction of a portable dais and modesty panel for the Justice Court because one of the bids was opened prior to the meeting. New sealed bids were requested.



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