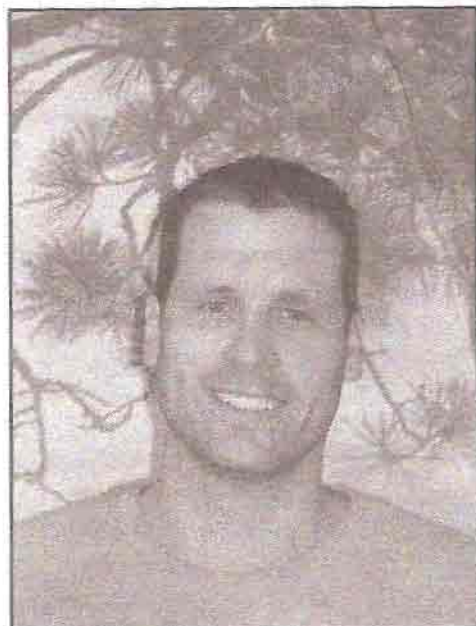


New reporters join the staff of the *SUN*



Rocky Hessler

You might have noticed the bylines of two new writers for the *East County SUN* over the previous few weeks. Rocky Hessler and Christy Pessemier have joined the staff.

Rocky and his wife Catherine moved to Orting just over a year ago from Seattle. They were seeking a small town life and chose Orting. Rocky is passionate about the struggles of small towns pressured to grow and give in to development and congestion.

Rocky is a freelance creative director and website developer when he is not writing for the *SUN*. He studied broadcasting and news writing at W.S.U. before switching to fine arts.

Christy Pessemier, her husband and two young children live in Puyallup now, but Christy grew up in Graham



Christy Pessemier

and attended Bethel schools. She wrote for the *Bethel Brave Talk* and has since written for a Puget Sound magazine, was editor for the Pierce College at Puyallup newspaper and a church newsletter. She particularly enjoys getting to know the people she interviews.

Hessler and Pessemier will both cover stories in the *SUN*'s readership area as well as for *The Dispatch*. Rocky will cover Orting news and Christy will write more about outlying areas, but there are no hard boundaries.

You can contact either of the new writers, or long-timer Francee Taylor-Haff who specializes in Graham news, at eastcountysun@yahoo.com.

Your comments and ideas are very welcome.

Fatal shooting hits home for local officers

by Christy Pessemier

On Saturday, Aug. 2, Federal Way Police Officer Patrick Maher was killed while breaking up a fight in front of a convenience store. Maher's .45 caliber handgun was snatched by one of the men involved in the fight, 28-year-old Jason Scott Roberts. Roberts fatally shot Maher in the abdomen.

Upon hearing the news, many local officers couldn't help but take it personally.

"Anytime we lose an officer, it's devastating to us all," Eatonville Police Chief Jim Lewis said.

According to Lewis, the first fear of many officers when they hear that another officer has been killed, is concern whether they knew the officer personally.

"Federal way is close," Lewis said. "Many of us think, 'Oh my God, did I know that police officer? Did I go to training with him?'"

Though Lewis says he has trained with other King County police officers, he did not know Patrick Maher.

Still, he expressed sorrow at the knowledge of the tragedy last week.

"We are all brothers in what we do. When we lose a brother, it's not easy on us," he said.

To help heal, and act out their grief, officers from police departments in Federal Way's surrounding cities visited the site where the shooting occurred.

Many left flowers and flags as a way of paying their respect to the fallen officer.

Also, last Thursday, more than 2,500 attended the funeral service for Officer Maher at Christian Faith Center in Seatac. Police officers and friends from as far away as New York, Florida, and Hawaii attended.

Monetary donations for the slain Officer Patrick Maher's family can be dropped off at local KeyBank branches. Letters, gifts, and flowers for the Maher family are being accepted by the Federal Way Police Department.

Graham Fire Station offers CPR classes each month

Participants practice and perfect many life-saving techniques



Spanaway resident Lori Rochefort practices CPR on an infant mannequin.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

by Christy Pessemier

The chance to save a life is a few minutes' drive away. The Graham Fire Station holds CPR classes on the third Saturday of every month. Classes are free of charge to all residents who live within the Fire District.

Participants practice techniques and are tested for accuracy. Upon completion, they receive a Heartsaver CPR card. This shows that they are certified and have successfully completed the CPR course.

For more information, contact the Graham Fire Department at 253-847-8811.

Overambitious teenagers, distracted parents, can cause drownings

by Christy Pessemier

It's nearly ninety degrees outside. A mother watches as her two sons play in the water nearby. The lake water is cool and inviting.

"Watch me!" they yell to her. She smiles and waves. Suddenly, her cell phone rings next to her. Distracted, she picks up the call. It's her friend, asking her to look up a phone number. She sifts through her purse for her address book...and that's when she hears her son's scream pierce the silence...

"Mom! Help! I can't find Billy! I think he's somewhere under the water! A big wave came and he never came back up! Where is he? Help!"

Tragically, common sense and water safety sometimes hit people when it's too late. Summertime brings a rise in deaths from drownings due to the increase of people wanting to spend time in the nearby lakes, rivers, pools, and the ocean.

Last week's Lake Tapps drowning was the most recent incident. Battalion Fire Chief Barry Barquest of East Pierce Fire and Rescue responded to the call at Lake Tapps after the drowning of an Emerald Ridge High school student.

"The biggest challenge we have is when fourteen to twenty-year-old kids don't realize how far they are before they get too tired to come back," Barquest

said. "In this case, about seven kids attempted to swim a four to five hundred foot channel, and one of them didn't make it. It gets very tiring, they go under, and they don't come back up."

Public Prevention Education Officer for Graham Fire Department, Myra Merdian, says people know water safety, they just get distracted.

"That one second it takes a parent to answer the phone when a child is in the bath can mean the death of a child," Merdian said. "We all know we're not supposed to take our eyes off our children, but carelessness and not thinking are what get people into trouble."

Merdian adds that everyday things can be water safety hazards. A bucket or container left outside after a rainy day can, and has, caused curious young children to drown in just inches of water. Parents relying on improper equipment like water wings, inner tubes, and boat cushions to keep children afloat sometimes find out the hard way that these items are not made to save a child from drowning.

To do their part in preventing tragedies, and clearing up misinformation, the Graham Fire Department goes to local schools and teaches children the importance of water safety.

"We teach kids to ask their parents if they can go in the water three times. By the third

time, they should have gotten the adult's attention," Merdian said.

"And we also teach them to ask their parents if they are watching them when they are in the water. Parents need to be reminded to be alert."

Graham Fire Department Operations chief Gary Franz remembers being a teenager and thinking "only old people die," as he believes many young people feel today.

"I've worked in Pierce County for ten years, and I have experienced a number of recoveries of bodies that were once vibrant youths," Franz said. "And the tragedy, is that it was all preventable."

Franz, Barquest, and Merdian all advise parents and children to be alert, wear wet suits if the water is cold to prevent life threatening hypothermia, and to be educated on water safety.

"The first thing to remember is call 911 if something happens!" Merdian said. "And then, learn CPR. It only takes four hours of your life, and it could prevent someone you love from dying."

CPR classes are regularly offered free of charge at the Graham Fire Department off of Meridian. East Pierce Fire Department in Bonney Lake (253-863-1800) sells flotation vests for \$12, and also gives out free loaner vests.

Women at the Soldiers Home

by Christy Pessemier

Nestled at the bottom of the hill off of Orting Kapowsin highway in Orting sits the familiar Washington State Soldier's Home and Colony. What might be a surprise to many is that the one hundred eight-year-old soldiers' home houses women veterans as well as men.

Approximately thirteen women veterans reside in the colony. They range in age from fifty-one to eighty years old and older. Though only a few experienced war firsthand, they all share a common pride in the knowledge that they were able to serve their country.

Martha McClammy, 72, was a hospital apprentice during the second World War. Her dream was to be a nurse, but she did not have the money to pay for the schooling.

McClammy helped women deliver babies in military hospitals.

"I really liked working with the newborn babies. That was nice," she said.

Though helping to deliver babies was enjoyable to her, some experiences were painful and bring back haunting memories. McClammy remembers watching the ships come in from

the war, and witnessing the injuries the soldier's had. "I watched a lot of surgeries being performed. There were a lot of burn cases. My heart just went out to all those men," she said.

McClammy spends her spare time decorating ceramics and has a collection of oil paintings she did herself proudly displayed on the wall above her bed.

Another veteran, Faye Jackson, was a switchboard operator during the second World War. Originally from Tennessee, she moved here because her son wanted her to live closer to him in Washington state.

She is thankful for the soldiers' home and enjoys living in Washington. "I like it here much better than Tennessee," she said.

Jackson shares her breakfasts and lunches with William Donald, Former P.O.W. and Vietnam Veteran. The two laugh and talk together often.

"I like to spend most of my time relaxing," Jackson said. "I do a lot of that."

She is grateful to have served in the military and feels empathy for the soldiers serving our country overseas today.

"I know what it is like to serve your country," she said.



Faye Jackson (the only woman interviewed who allowed her picture to be taken) is thankful for the Soldiers Home.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

"I feel very proud. I just wish we didn't lose any soldiers and that they could all come home."

Libby Rothstein, 84, was a private first class in the Army Air Command. She says she "didn't do much," though she served in Africa on the Gold Coast doing clerical work during the second World War.

Originally from Brooklyn, New York, she moved to Washington state when the army shipped her here.

"I liked being in the service. It was a great job," she said.

Her spare time is spent playing rummy with friends at the soldiers home. "I think it is great for women to be in the service," she said. "I am very proud."

Mary Jarvis, 78, is a former World War Two army medic. She is positive about her experience in the war.

"I enjoyed taking care of the boys," she said. "It was



Firefighter/Paramedic Dana Tissue checks 6-year-old Rebecca Block's blood pressure at the Spana-Park Senior Center pancake breakfast. *Photo by Christy Pessemier*

Pancakes and more for seniors and friends

by Christy Pessemier

Flapjacks flipped, and people met together to munch last Saturday at the Spana-Park Senior Center.

The pancake breakfast took place from 8:30 to 11 a.m., and smiling faces stood in line to get first class service and support the senior center.

Not only were pancakes served, but so were blood pressure checks and ten-minute facials from Mary-Kay.

Opal Maron, Spana-Park Senior Center Board Secretary,

paused to allow Jeannette Normandin the opportunity to apply skincare to her face, while her granddaughter Rebecca Block got her blood pressure checked.

"It looks like her blood pressure's good," Central Pierce Firefighter/Paramedic Dana Tissue said.

As her picture was taken, Block smiled. "She's very photogenic," her grandmother said, laughing. For more information on the next pancake breakfast, call 253-537-4854.



The Wasson family enjoys the pancake breakfast at the Spana-Park Senior Center. From right to left: Grandpa Jim Wasson, Natalia Wasson, Dad Damon Wasson holding Seamus Wasson, Arthur Wasson (in high chair), and Mom Jalene Wasson. "We've come here for quite awhile now. The breakfasts are great, and I get a kick out of the older folks!" Jim Wasson said. *Photo by Christy Pessemier*



Andrea Ward-Fordice shows off some of her glassware.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

Bonney Lake glass artist paints her way to success

by Christy Pessemier

Magnolias, roses, and daffodils are just some of the floral designs that decorate the glassware on the shelves of the Andrea Ward Design studio.

The studio is located in the house next-door to Andrea Ward-Fordice's own home in the outskirts of Bonney Lake. There she paints stemware, glass bowls, trays, platters, and many other things. Ward-Fordice's items are currently featured in the Coldwater Creek catalog, Barron's catalog, and at the gift shop in Sea World San Diego. She services over 680 clients between gift shops and catalogs.

Ward-Fordice started her glass painting as a hobby after a car accident. Before that she did mural and faux finish painting for clients in their homes.

Because of the car accident, she was forced to cut back on the mural and faux finishing. So, she began "playing around with glass."

"Pretty soon, the entire

Robin Campbell, she runs a profitable business.

Tanya Whitaker, an employee of Andrea Ward Designs, is happy to be working for the business.

"This job gives me a chance to do the things I'm good at," Whitaker said. "I like organizing things and doing inventory."

Prices of Andrea Ward Design's product vary from \$20 to \$85 apiece. She feels her products are popular because of their superior quality.

"People don't want junk anymore," Ward-Fordice said. "We give them good products and we employ people in the United States to keep the jobs here."

Ward-Fordice works about forty hours a week and paints up to three hundred pieces a day.

"It sounds like a lot of work," Ward-Fordice said. "But I love it. It is therapy for me."

Holiday Issue



Buyer's Guide

November 26, 2003

110TH YEAR • THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON, SINCE 1893

Graham's Health Stop nourishes shoppers

by Christy Pessemier

Though they each work 60 hours a week, and don't get as much sleep as they'd like, Graham's Health Stop owners Dwight and Linda Walsh feel they are really making a difference. The Graham residents pride themselves on the knowledge that they are helping people live better, healthier lives everyday. What may seem like a simple health food shop to many, is really so much more to them.

"I was raised with health food," Dwight said. "I believe in what it can do for people."

Wife Linda, who is an ex-Boeing employee, believes in it too, though it took her a little while longer to realize it's benefits.

"I wasn't really into health food before I met Dwight," Linda said. "Now, of course, I am."

The two cooperate together in running the store on a daily basis. They often alternate responsibilities such as opening the store, or ordering products. According to Dwight, Graham's Health Stop has the biggest selection of dried and powdered herbs in the South Sound. Other items that attract



Graham's Health Stop owners Dwight and Linda Walsh (behind counter) ring up an order for regular customer and Puyallup resident Gerry Thompson.

the health conscious include juices, extracts, soy and rice milk, meatless foods, and many others.

Though the business "isn't easy" as Dwight says, the reward is in the feedback they get from customers.

"We have one lady who has lost over 100 pounds in a year using one of our products," he said. "To see her come in looking leaner and healthier every time the visits is such a great feeling."

Though Dwight is quick to caution about "miracle cures" and products with lofty claims,

he does believe health food, and a healthy lifestyle is imperative in this day and age.

"Most of the people who come in here are just flat-out tired," he said. "We see that so much now. Fast food, lack of exercise, and poor lifestyle choices are seriously harming their health."

As one who attempts to follow the "healthy" lifestyle, Dwight can't imagine living any other way.

"When I was younger, I ran in the Olympic trials," he said. "I eat health food, and take the best

care of my health that I can."

Though he no longer runs for exercise, Dwight does something else he feels is very important in maintaining his health: juicing organic vegetables.

"Most of the time, I juice carrots. But I also juice beets and celery and other things too," he said. "It's the greatest thing in the world. I believe it has a big

part in healing."

Though a healthy lifestyle is what they promote, and try to live by, both Dwight and Linda know the hours they work may never go down as long as they own the business.

"We love it even though it's a lot of responsibility," Linda said. "But we're looking forward to retirement."

New clinic open in Graham

by Christy Pessemier

Weekend help for injuries, the flu and sports physicals are possible in Graham now, thanks to the addition of two doctors at Graham Convenient Care. Dr. Pilecki and Dr. Kwan started seeing patients on Saturdays and Sundays starting Sept. 6. The two work in the same office as Dr. Raouf Maoud, though they are entirely separate in their specialties.

"Dr. Maoud practices internal medicine, mostly working with elderly patients," Dr. Pilecki said, "while Dr. Kwan and I are available on a walk-in basis. Her specialty is family practice, and mine is general practice."

Dr. Kwan finished medical school in 1994 and completed her residency in 1997 at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Kwan averages about 40 hours a week between Graham

Convenient Care and Pacific Walk-in Clinic in Lacey. Despite her hours, Kwan still manages to spend time with her husband and two children ages 6 and 9 years.

"I am very fortunate to have a lot of support from family and friends," Kwan said.

Dr. Pilecki graduated from Loyola Stritch Medical School in Chicago in 1984. She was brought to Washington State as a military physician. Since then, she has worked in several medical clinics, including Evergreen Medical Group in Redmond, where she currently treats patients along with Graham Convenient Care. Pilecki works three days a week and spends the rest of her days with her four children. Though it is challenging at times, Pilecki says she feels fulfilled by her job as a physician.

"I like my job. It is intellectually stimulating, and I really

enjoy the social interaction," she said.

According to Pilecki and Kwan, the most common complaint they have seen at Graham Convenient Care lately is respiratory illnesses.

"Since the start of school, we have seen a lot of patients with the cold and flu," Kwan said.

Though germs run rampant in doctors' offices, Pilecki says the threat of catching a virus doesn't worry her.

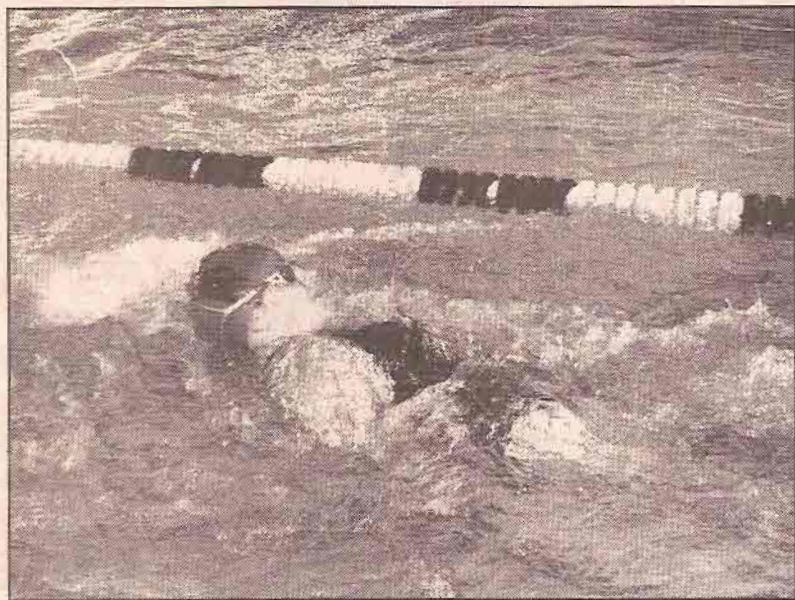
"I don't get sick very often,"

she said.

Both Pilecki and Kwan agree that a walk-in clinic available on the weekends is a necessity for the Graham area.

"There aren't any other clinics in the Graham area that are open on weekends," Pilecki said. "There really seems to be a need for convenient care that is only a short drive away," Kwan added.

Graham Convenient Care is open Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The clinic is located off of Meridian in Dr. Raouf Maoud's building, just before the fairgrounds in Graham.



Bethel Braves senior and swim team Captain Kerri Starkel swimming the backstroke in the 200 meter Individual Medley race at PLU last Tuesday. Starkel competed against Tacoma's Thomas Jefferson High school.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

Braves swimmers give it their best, hope to win next time

by Christy Pessemier

"We are the Braves!" they chanted while splashing water into the circle they had formed. "The mighty, mighty Braves!" They were outnumbered by Thomas Jefferson, by about 30-18. To them, it didn't matter.

"We may not win every time, but a lot of the girls have improved their personal records since the beginning of the season. That's a big deal," Coach Michelle Lemons said.

Lindsey Gelinias stood out by taking home a first place time of 2:23:12 in the 200 meter Individual Medley.

"It wasn't my fastest time," Gelinias said, "but it's the best I've done this season."

Gelinias also swims for the South Sound Titans at the Federal Way Aquatic Center. According to Lemons, Gelinias has already qualified for Districts which will take place at Rogers on October 31 and November 1.

Mad cow disease still a local concern

by Christy Pessemier

It all started when a heifer from Washington State was stricken with a dreaded malady. Now, beef sellers and consumers across the country are taking extreme caution. No one wants to be affected by the rare fatal condition called mad cow disease.

Though more than 10,000 pounds of meat connected to the infected cow have been recalled, public concern brews among local Graham residents.

"I feel afraid to go out and buy a burger now, because of the news that's out there," a Graham resident said.

Another resident added, "People die from this kind of thing, I don't think I will eat beef for awhile. I'm pretty

skeptical about what's safe and what's not."

Though some consumers show concern, companies like McDonalds and Wendy's sales have not been affected. Local businesses hope that residents will follow this trend, and don't feel there's a need to be concerned about the disease.

"We get our cattle from a Midwest supplier," Puyallup Butcher Boys owner Robert Rolewicz said. "All of our meat is USDA inspected. We didn't have any part of the meat from that downer cow in from Washington state."

Please see **MAD COW** page A-2.

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The Dispatch (USPS 166-540, ISSN 0740-4618) is published weekly in Pierce County, Washington, by Raintree Publishing Corp., 133 Mashell Ave. N., Eatonville, WA 98328. Annual subscription prices: \$24 in advance for Pierce County residents; \$30 outside Pierce County; \$35 out of state; seniors \$15 in county. Periodical postage paid in Eatonville, WA, and additional mailing offices. Address changes to *The Dispatch*, P.O. Box 248, Eatonville, WA 98328.

Continued from **MAD
COW** page A-1.

Rolewicz says that his sales have not been affected since the news of the diseased mad cow hit the airwaves.

"I get a lot of questions," he said. "But once I explain to people that our meat was from a completely different source, they're relieved."

Harris Statema, owner of Graham Feed and Fodder, says the panic over contaminated feed is unfounded.

"Back in 1997, when we had the first mad cow scare, feed with meat and bone meal in them were prohibited," Statema said. "Since then, there haven't been any problems of animals contracting the disease from feed."

According to Statema, a study conducted by George Venters in the 2001 British Medical Journal states that the prion that is responsible for spreading Mad Cow Disease is "unable to get across to humans so far."

Statema continues to get a steady supply of customers, and is irritated, though not worried, about the broadcasted concern over tainted feed.

"It's important, when things like this happen, that people don't panic and jump to conclusions," he said

Rolewicz agrees. "As long as meat suppliers and retailers like me watch what we're doing, I think we'll get people to have faith in the meat industry again," he said.

Library says 'Ole!' to new members

by Christy Pessemier

Zesty aromas of fresh Mexican food, festive Spanish melodies, and a specially selected bilingual puppet theatre performance await both old and new members of the Parkland/ Spanaway Library on Saturday, January 31.

The "Fiesta" event was planned in response to the library's goal to reach communities that are currently not using the library system. According to Youth Services Librarian Lorianne Callison, the Latino community is the biggest "unreached" group in the area.

"There are a lot of Latinos in this area," Callison said. "But we're not seeing them come into the library very much."

Callison was concerned about the lack of involvement and exposure to library resources for the local Latinos. When her fiesta idea was proposed to the Friends members, she was happy to see their supportive and excited reactions.

After the proposal was accepted, the Friends of the Parkland/ Spanaway Library agreed to fund the event.

The original budget was set at \$500, but, due to the scarcity of bilingual puppet theatres, projected expenses had to be stretched.

"The only bilingual puppet theatre I could find was from Seattle," Callison said. "That, together with El Toro's Mexican food and craft supplies for the pinatas, put us over."

To Callison's relief, the Pierce County Library Foundation was able to make up the difference.

Now, all the fun is in the planning. "I think this is going to be a great experience for both kids and their parents," Callison said. "We're hoping a lot of people will show up."

The fiesta will take place on Saturday, Jan. 31, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Parkland/ Spanaway Library. The puppet show will be performed by the Cry of the Rooster Theatre from Seattle. An interpreter will translate for everyone to comprehend and follow the puppet show. Refreshments will be presented by the Spanaway El Toro Mexican Restaurant. A pinata-making craft, including goodies to put inside the finished product, will be available to elementary school-aged children.

Applications for library cards will be set out and questions answered for those wishing to become new members. The event is free and open to the public. Registration is not required.

All animals need is loving care

by Christie Pessemier

Dr. Tammie Russell loves animals. That's why she spends just about every day with them.

Russell sees it as more than a job, but as something she looks forward to and enjoys every day.

"I love all the animals that come in," Russell said.

Russell, who is the full-time veterinarian at Loving Care Pet Clinic in Graham, says it wasn't hard for her to determine where the future would lead her as a child.

"When I was nine years old, I saw a veterinarian for the first time," Russell said. "After that, I knew that was what I wanted to do when I grew up."

Despite the clinic's busy pace, Russell doesn't mind the influx of animals waiting patiently to get their regular checkups. According to Russell, most of the time is spent on keeping animals up-to-date on vaccines, and flea treatments.

One of the perks of her

vocation is seeing the different personalities of animals that come into her office every day. Each animal is different in their own personalities, she says, and some of them, in a surprising way.

"Sometimes certain breeds of animals have a reputation for being a certain way, when really, they are not," Russell said. "Like pit-bulls, for example. Every pit-bull that I have seen in my office

has been kind and gentle, not threatening and dangerous as they are stereotyped to be."

A pet owner herself, Russell says the importance of treating animals properly is vital. She reminds people that animals are "living, breathing creatures who deserve to be treated with respect. Animals are a lot like children," she said. "They rely on us to treat them with constant care."



Occasional *Dispatch* columnist Toby enjoys some loving care on his rug by Rebecca Weaver.

Photo by Judith East

Home Schooling is right for some

by Christy Pessemier

Jeanne Anderson is a school teacher, but not in public or private school. Anderson teaches language arts and math to home school students once a week out of her home in McMillin. She also has an assistant teacher who helps by teaching Spanish.

Anderson's background is in private school education. In the past, she was a teacher at Tacoma Baptist School. Because of her interest in home schooling, she decided this school year to help out by offering core classes to students who are schooled at home the rest of the week.

Anderson believes that home schooling is important due to many challenges in the public school system.

"Lately, parents tend to turn over all the responsibility of educating their kids to an authority," Anderson said. "In a lot of cases it is unfortunate, because the relationship between the parent and child is broken down, and a distance sometimes develops."

Anderson also points out that many parents today are not satisfied with the quality of education offered in the public schools, and that is why they are choosing to home school.

Most of the students who attend the once-a-week classes are at junior high level, though Anderson says the classes are open to all ages.

"We even have a few preschoolers," she said. The preschoolers are involved through field trips which offer learning opportunities.

Anderson helps by coordi-

nating the field trips for the preschoolers and their parents.

Though many who aren't familiar with home schooling do not see its benefits, Anderson says the children involved in her classes are quick to express their gratitude and enjoyment.

"I asked a seventh grader the other day what she like the best about being home schooled," she said, "and she smiled and said that she liked having a warm lunch at home, and she loved spending time and learning with her mom and sister every day."

According to Anderson, those comments are the reward for her efforts to promote home school education.

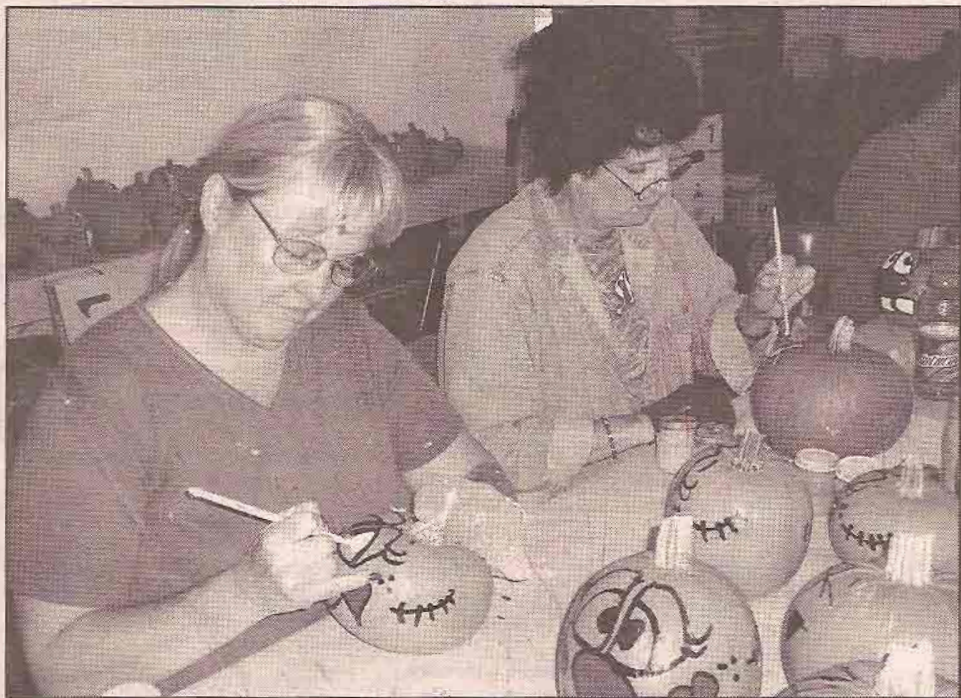
"I thought that was really neat to hear someone her age say that they liked being with their mom and sister," she said.

Students are tested regularly in order to meet state requirements for home schooling. At the end of the year, a Stanford Achievement Test is given. Also, Anderson tests the students in her class through projects and research papers, and grades writing skills according to criteria she learned as a private school teacher.

Washington state law also requires that parents with children over age eight take certain classes, and that they file an 'intent to home school' with the state. It is also necessary for parents to keep track of records and tests for their children who are schooled at home.

Classes are held on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Those wishing more information can contact Jeanne Anderson at 253-891-1554.

Pumpkin Painting Party



Scholz Farm employees Adriane Scholz, left, and Faye Niswanger met last Thursday to paint pumpkins in the back room of the Scholz Farm store in McMillin. Prices for the pumpkins vary from \$3 for the small ones, and up to \$15 for the large ones.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

Prevent trick or treating nightmares with these safety tips

by Christy Pessemier

Halloween is a fun time of year, but it can also be a safety risk for children. Fire Departments and safety officials across the United States are quick to warn parents of the common hazards kids face on this holiday.

Bright and reflective costumes are advised, as well as properly fitted shoes. Many times, Trick-or-Treaters are caught up in the excitement and are not aware that their costume is too long. Dragging outfits coupled with costume masks are a recipe for trouble. Children could be injured from falls in these situations. Keep shoes snugly tied, and costumes short enough to prevent tripping. A flashlight is also a great asset to the candy collecting experience.

It is recommended that parents accompany their little princesses and Spiderman look-alikes in the Trick-or-Treating adventure. This keeps the risk of child abductions down, and gives the parents the opportunity to meet new neighbors....and snatch a little candy when the kids aren't looking.

If parents are not able to trick-or-treat with their older kids, groups with flashlights are encouraged. Remind them to stick together, and return home at a specified time. Entering a stranger's home is never advised. Walking, not running, from house to house cannot be emphasized enough. And of course, watching for cars. Even if visible costumes are worn, drivers may not see kids walking across the street. Parents should also warn neighbors to drive slowly on Halloween.

Eating a healthy meal before trick-or-treating is a great idea.

Children are less likely to gobble up their entire candy collection. This means kids are more likely to go to bed on time, and parents get the sleep they need. Kids are also less likely to be whiney if they had a solid meal before dining on candy for dessert. Also, it is important that parents inspect all the treats for any unwrapped or suspicious items.

Aside from all these precautions, remember to have fun. Halloween only comes once a year, and it's best to remember it with happy memories, not preventable tragedies.

Spanaway Lake Sentinels glide into victory against Bethel Braves

by Christy Pessemier

"Good job, Ashley," Spanaway Lake Sentinels Assistant Coach Lowell Johnson said. "That was your best time ever."

Sentinels swimmer and district qualifier Ashley Comitale had just finished the 100 yard freestyle. Out of breath and thankful to find a seat on the poolside bleachers, Comitale commented:

"I think I did well. It was my best time."

Last Tuesday, the Spanaway Lake Sentinel girls' high school swim team took on the Bethel Braves at PLU in Parkland. The Braves earned 55 points, while Spanaway Lake took home a 113 point victory.

Sentinels coach Rondi White had good things to say about the Sentinels and the Braves.

"Both teams have great swimmers who work very hard," White said. "They have a wonderful coach who all the girls just love."

Though Braves coach Michelle Lemons admitted disappointment, she was quick to say that she knew her girls gave it their best shot. The two teams appeared to share a friendly competition, and, as a result, Bethel didn't take it as a big loss.

Braves Sophomore Lindsay Gelinis placed first in the 100 yard breaststroke with a time of 1:19:82. Gelinis also earned first place in the 200 yard Individual Medley with a time of 2:26:90. She is the only district qualifier on the Braves team.

According to White, five Spanaway Lake swimmers qualified for districts this year. They are senior Malorie Junkert, junior Kristine Petersen, senior Candice Dutcher, sophomore Morgan Richards and sopho-

more Ashley Comitale.

Along with the hard work of their teammates, these district qualifiers helped the Sentinels achieve their winning score last Tuesday.

Petersen dashed first to the finish in the 200 yard freestyle with a time of 2:23.34. Richards flew though the 100 Butterfly race with a first place time of 1:13.70. Also earning first place awards were Junkert and Dutcher. And Comitale splashed in first in both the 50 yard freestyle in 28.39 seconds, and the 100 yard freestyle at 1:04.55.

After the event concluded, swimmers from both teams celebrated by jumping into the diving pool and wolfing down junk food.

"Do you want a fruit roll?" one of the Braves asked coach Lemons.

"Sure," Lemons answered, smiling.

"They can't have any of this stuff before they compete," Lemons said, "so that's why they're eating it now."

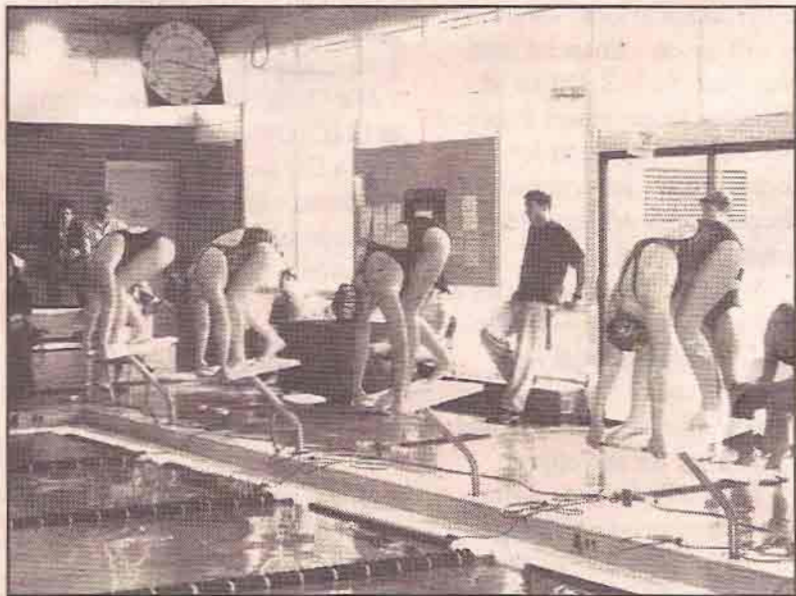
Both White and Assistant Coach Johnson are tremendously proud of their swimmers.

"We have had a great group of girls this season," White said. "It's been our best year."

Lemons shares the sentiment.

"Even though we didn't win, all of our swimmers swam hard," Lemons said. "Three of them beat their own personal records. Karrie Starkel, Danielle Hodge and Sarah Wright all dropped seconds off of their times in different events."

Junior Wright commented on shaving six seconds off her 200 yard freestyle time. "It felt good to cut off all that time," she said.



Bethel Braves and Spanaway Lake Sentinels prepare for takeoff in the 100 yard breaststroke race. From left to right: Sophomore Brave Erica Donohue, Sentinel Senior Abbey Stewart, Sophomore Brave Lindsey Gelinis, and Senior Sentinal Kristine Petersen. Gelinis came in first place with a time of 1:19.82.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

Buyer's Gu

110TH YEAR • THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF PIERCE COUNTY, WAS

New floral shop blooms in Graham

by Christy Pessemier

Barb Danberg can do a lot of things. She can help people build the home of their dreams, get their taxes all figured out, and she can also help people sell or purchase a home. That's not all. Danberg also is a wedding planner, sells health products, and runs her own floral and gift shop in Graham.

"I do it all," Danberg says with a smile.

Though she admits being overwhelmed at times, Danberg is very goal oriented. Since she was nineteen years old, she has written down her goals, and has never stopped the habit.

"When I was nineteen, I said I wanted to live on a lake in the future," Danberg said, "and now, I am living on Ohop Lake."

Owning a floral shop, among other things, has always been one of her goals. Graham Country Florist opened September 20, 2003 off of Meridian St. in Graham.

"This is a dream come true for me," Danberg said. Her shop

is filled with colorful wreaths and eye-catching flower bouquets. The aroma of roses, carnations and lilies fills the air of the cozy shop as the sun pours in through the windows in the autumn afternoon.

After purchasing the store, Danberg enlisted her friend Jennifer Femenella to help her remodel. The two repainted both inside and outside of the building, which was previously known as "The Flower Pot."

Today, Femenella and Danberg work together in the floral shop. The two friends have found that their work styles and ethics are compatible. After Danberg expressed her desire to open up Graham Country Florist in Graham, Femenella decided to follow suit.

"I love working with Barb," Femenella said. When she's not working her thirty or so hours in the floral shop, Femenella spends her time on her Night Train Soft Tail Harley motorcycle. She and her husband enjoy traveling "everywhere" with it. Femenella rides on the back and her husband drives. Aside from that, she gains relaxation from her hobby of regularly working in her yard. When Danberg finds spare time between her many activities, she looks forward to



Jennifer Femenella poses with owner Barb Danberg

snowboarding.

"There's nothing like being out there in the white woods and smelling the fresh air," she said. As Danberg reminisced, a young male customer shyly walked up to the counter. "Can I get some roses?" he asked. "Sure, how many would you like, and what color?" Barb answered.

"Nine pink ones," he said. "And do you have one of those 'I'm sorry' cards? I made her mad and I need to fix it."

Amused, Femenella and Danberg smiled. After the customer left, Danberg commented, "We see it all the time. Men come in and tell us they're in big trouble. But that's what we're here for, and we know how to help them."

Both Danberg and Femenella look forward to the future, and hope for a strong success for their business.

"I think a lot of people don't

realize we're here," Danberg said. "They're so used to zipping by on Meridian. But we're going to get one of those signs with an arrow so people can see where we are a little better."

When asked why flowers are so important in people's lives, Danberg didn't skip a beat.

"Smelling fresh cut flowers make you smarter," she said laughing. "I know. I heard it on the history channel."

Graham Country Florist is open Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For any questions or to order gifts and flowers, the phone number is 253- 846-2205.

Opinion

Too young to die

by Christy Pessemier

When people die, it's always rough. Memories and grief cloud the mind, and it takes an incredible amount of time to adjust to the empty feelings, the realization that someone you love is no longer there. My grandmother died almost five years ago, and I still have the urge to pick up the phone and call her, or drive by her house and visit her. When I lost her, it hurt. But the pain was different than the pain some people experience when a young person dies. I knew my grandmother lived her life, and she gave it all she had.

But, when the little six-year-old boy at my church didn't make it through his heart surgery a few years back, that ached. And since two casual friends of mine from high school were hit by a bus while skateboarding about twelve years ago, I'm still haunted by their young eyes, their hopes and dreams unspoken, and not yet lived.

And now, I'm facing the same feeling. Yesterday, I found out a friend of my parents, someone I hadn't even met, but felt like I knew through the stories I heard, died. He was in his early thirties. It was an accident that didn't have to happen. While lacquering his floor, he had a few beers and suffered a stroke.

A young life with so much potential, stunted by tragedy. My mom called me crying. The news was a shock to her. Like a son, he used to call her for advice every so often. He looked out for his girlfriend's kids, and took them places with him, even though they weren't his own.

My mom wondered what happened when he didn't answer his phone. She and my dad even went by his house. They left a note on his door, and couldn't help noticing the weeds, overgrown in his yard. He had said something about moving back to California, and they wondered why he would have left without saying goodbye. But yesterday, they found out he did leave without saying goodbye—but not to California.

It happens in an instant. Nobody really knows when someone they love will be gone. We're not all destined to live to a ripe old age. The last time my mom and dad saw their friend, he gave them the biggest hug, my mom told me. His family had been through drugs and alcohol abuse, and he told her he'd seen it all, and he didn't want to live like that, or have his family live like that. And he didn't, for the short time he lived.

The memory of that hug both haunts her and gives my mom strength. His unblossomed life still hangs in the air. How can he be gone when he was just calling her on the phone what seems like moments ago?

As I listened to my mom question and try to make sense of the senseless, I remembered her friend and what he meant to her. I also remembered the little boy from my church, and my friends from high school. There is no denying they hurt us deeply when they died. Life will never be the same again. But, each one of these departed souls left us with a priceless gift: the awareness of how fragile life is, and how important it is to really live in the moment, as the young are so famous for doing. We can't have them back, and that really stings.

But we can remember their spirit, and keep it alive. Every time my mom thinks of her friend, she can keep him alive by hugging the people she loves. By looking out for single mothers, and children who don't have regular fathers in their lives, she can continue the good deeds he worked so hard to do. She can remember not to judge people for their past, but to love them where they're at. When children like that little six-year-old boy I knew leave us, it helps mothers like me to realize what's important. It reminds us to give kisses and loving words of encouragement instead of yelling, threatening and criticizing. And when I remember my friends from high school, the flashbacks of their smiles and laughter remind me to be there for my friends, and to help them have a good time when life's stress might be pulling them down.

Life seems so harmless sometimes, but there's no way to get through it without pain. When we can take that pain and use it to keep alive the spirits of the ones we miss the most, then they really aren't dead; in a neat kind of way, they're still alive.

OF PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON, SINCE 1893

Fashion Accessories and More opens unique shop in Graham

by Christy Pessemier

Late in August, a new type of store moved into the Graham Towne Center. Not your run-of-the-mill strip mall store, "Fashion Accessories and More" has found its niche in what used to be a travel agency. Posters of white sand beaches have been replaced with endless amounts of necklaces, earrings, hats and, as the name says, a whole lot "more."

Owner Chris Henesy is excited about the new business, and says he's witnessed a welcoming response to its arrival.

"Everyone who goes into our store loves the place," Henesy said.

Henesy shares ownership of Fashion Accessories with his wife and business partner, Catrina Behrle.

The two also own a daycare, a dollar store, and do business on eBay selling excess merchandise from their stores. To say the least, they are busy.

"We live in Dash-point. Our dollar store is in North Bend, the daycare is in Lakewood, and then we have this store in Graham," Henesy said. "We also have one son."

Henesy estimates that he and Behrle each work approximately 60 hours a week.

"People think we're crazy," Henesy said.

Crazy or not, Henesy couldn't see living any other way. Before becoming a busi-



Fashion Accessories and More employee Sarah Gore catches up on paperwork in between customers.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

ness owner, Henesy used to be the manager of a car dealership in West Seattle. Not happy with the infamously "cutthroat" tactics of automotive sales, Henesy was ready to work for himself.

"There are so many good points of owning your own business," Henesy said. "Just knowing that we started everything from scratch ourselves, and that we can get up when we want makes a big difference."

Though Fashion Accessories is open seven days a week, Henesy has trained his employees to handle things when he is

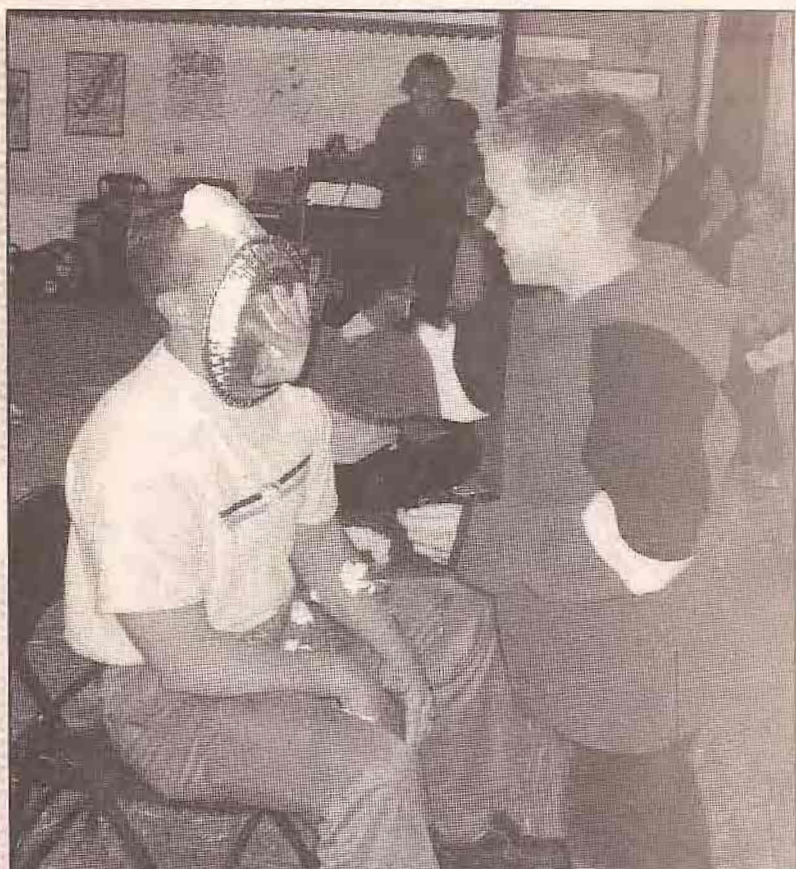
not available. "Our employees mean the world to us," he said.

Amid the long hours and hectic schedules, Henesy and Behrle see a light at the end of the tunnel. The success of their businesses allows them a special opportunity...to travel.

"This January we are taking a trip to Thailand," Henesy said. "We are really looking forward to that."

Until then, Henesy and Behrle will keep on keeping on, hopefully, at a slower pace.

"We do plan to slow down a little," Henesy said.



Graham Elementary School fourth grader Sean Shinnars eagerly slams a whipped cream pie into Principal Kelley Boynton's face last Wednesday night.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

Pie throwers inspire literacy at Graham Elementary

by Christy Pessemier

Graham Elementary School Principal Kelley Boynton will go to any lengths to inspire students to read.

He's even been known to make bets with students. Last week, he promised his students that if 400 parents arrived at the "Partners in Literacy" event scheduled for November 5, he would let students draw names to throw a pie in his and Vice Principal Joe Barrett's faces.

"I'll do whatever it takes to get kids excited about learning at Graham Elementary," Boynton said.

And last Wednesday night, Boynton kept his promise. Though a few hundred short of four hundred gatherers arrived, Boynton played along and allowed the pie throwing ceremonies to begin.

Amid hoots and hollers and in front of a crowd of students, Boynton braced himself as he received a heaping pie plate of whipped cream in his face...and on his shirt...and his pants and shoes. Vice-Principal Joe Barrett and Boynton took turns as names were drawn and kids stood in line to smear the cold, wet, sticky stuff.

Playfully vengeful and excited students yelled to the throwers, "Get it in his hair!"

And that's what they did.

When it was all over, a giant chocolate whipped cream pie was auctioned off by the PTA as Barrett and Boynton sat in the background, barely recognizable under their white whipped cream masks.

As he tried in vain to wipe it off, Boynton commented on the experience, "This stuff is cold!"

The event, which was coined as "Pie Night," was the first in a series of learning "slices." The first slice of the pie is reading; the second slice, math; and the third, science.

Boynton, Barrett, the school's Reading Specialist Claudia Ball, and school Librarian Andrea Hynes came up with the idea for Wednesday night's attraction.

According to Boynton, reading is the first bite of the whole pie.

"Reading is critical to the success of our students, because all of the subjects require it," Boynton said. "And that is why it is the main focus of this school."

So important is that success that Boynton is willing to consider the possibility of "eating humble pie" again.

"No matter what happens, I feel great when the kids are smiling," he said.

Dirt, digging and sharing vegetables empower Spanaway Elementary students

by Christy Pessemier

Sitting at a desk and writing all day doesn't sound appealing to most students, but the idea of planting and harvesting a garden does. That's precisely why Spanaway Elementary School started its "Square Foot Gardening" program approximately four years ago.

"At one time there was a teacher who had a dream for us to have a gardening program here for the students," Spanaway Elementary Community Liaison Director Karen Marchesini said. "Not too long after, we received grant money to fund a special program. All the teachers agreed that a gardening program would be a great asset to our school, so that's what we decided to do."

According to Marchesini, the grant money helped pay for tools and garden supplies, and for Marchesini's time invested into the program. Ideas for the format and layout of the garden were inspired by the book *Square Foot Gardening* by Mel Bartholomew.

"We're still learning as we go along," Marchesini said.



Fifth grade students Kayla Taylor (left) and Tiffany Dempsey (right) show an overhead display of square foot gardening techniques to Allison Horak's fourth grade class at Spanaway Elementary. Photo by Christy Pessemier

"Each time we harvest a crop, we learn to do something differently."

Marchesini assists third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade students in the learning process. The program is set up as a mentorship where the fifth and sixth graders teach the third and fourth graders. Students involved in the program are handpicked from the classrooms.

"We look for responsible students, independent workers, and those who follow the four agreements," Marchesini said.

The four agreements, Marchesini says, are a system the entire school follows which include mutual respect, attentive listening, appreciation and no put-downs.

"Most of the kids are very aware of what is expected of them to be in this leadership program," Marchesini said. "I get kids coming up to me all the time asking to be involved. They're excited about it, and

they really want to learn about gardening."

Many times, the children who are picked tend to be hands-on learners, or "kids who can't sit still." As one who likes to see, hear, touch, and taste, Marchesini says she can relate.

"I'm one of those people who likes to keep moving all the time," she said. "And I like to learn by doing things."

To display what they learned, some of the school's garden leadership students had the opportunity to present and display their knowledge at the Puyallup Fair.

"When people walked by us, we said hi, and then we told them about square foot gardening," Garden Leadership Program fifth grader Kayla Taylor said.

After the experience of presenting at the fair, all the garden program students gathered together a few weeks later to dig up potatoes and carrots

and pick tomatoes and lettuce. Spanaway Elementary had a "Family Fun Night" planned for Oct. 2. Students worked through the entire day harvesting, washing and preparing vegetables for the event.

"We had recipes all picked out to use for the vegetables," Marchesini said. "I thought it might be kinda hard for the kids to do all that preparation, but I turned out great. The kids were moving so fast, I couldn't catch up to them!"

When the Family Fun Night arrived, Marchesini said 260 parents showed up, ready to eat. Mouths watered and they indulged in firehouse salsa, zucchini snack pizzas, garlic roasted potatoes, fried green tomatoes, zucchini bread and cake.

Now, Marchesini and her students are preparing for their next adventure.

"We are planning a winter garden," she said.

Northwest Pizza offers creative menu

by Christy Pessemier

"Pizza junkie" Mike Roberts loves his job. As part owner/general manager of Northwest Pizza in Graham, Roberts says he could eat pizza every day and never get tired of it.

"There are so many varieties of pizza," Roberts said. "Some days, I admit, I can work here all day, eat pizza for lunch, and then I go home and eat pizza again for dinner. I am totally happy with that."

Roberts grew up as a "military brat." Despite the drawbacks of moving around a lot, he enjoyed trying all the different versions of pizza he encountered in different places. Today, he's taken that experience and used it to satisfy the pizza addicts that flock to his store.

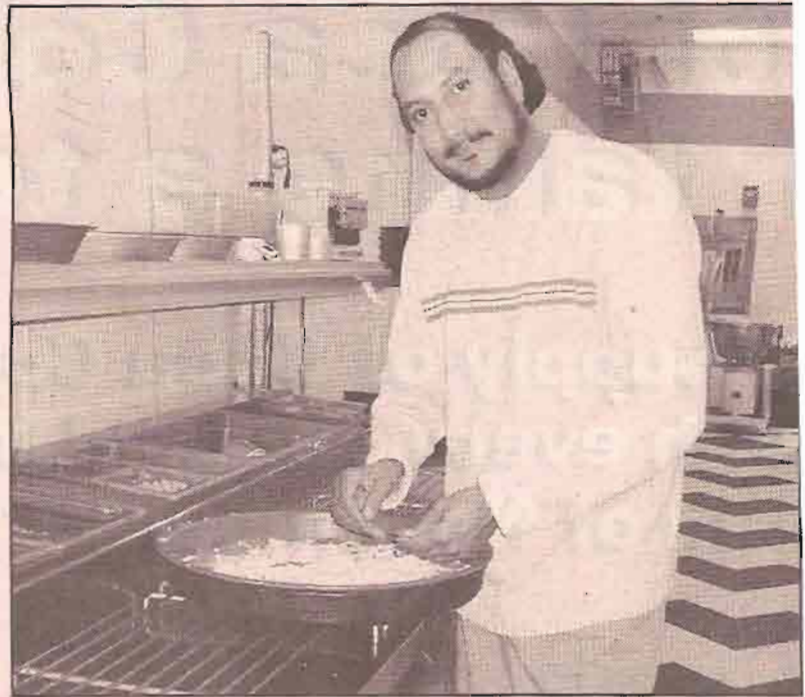
Once a Little Caesar's pizza

franchise that didn't pan out, Northwest Pizza came about after the ex-Little Caesar's owner Dennis Norton decided to start it up with Roberts. Northwest Pizza has been in business for four years. A local company who does all their own advertising, Northwest Pizza prides itself on its service, quality, variety and value.

Recipes are creative and vary from Thai Chicken with peanut sauce, chicken, cheese, green onions, shredded carrots, and bean sprouts to Greek style with feta cheese and calamata olives.

"All the pizzas are so good!" Roberts says with enthusiasm. "They're just bursting with flavor!"

Other than the meat, which is brought in frozen, Roberts



Owner Mike Roberts in the kitchen.

insists on using only fresh ingredients...even down to the pizza dough itself.

"We make our pizza dough by hand every day," he said. "If it's not finished by the day's end, we donate it to a food bank or homeless shelter."

The most popular pizza is the "Creamy Garlic Chicken." Real garlic and cream wins over taste testers, Roberts says, as opposed to garlic powder and instant soy cream sauce mixes.

Some of the recipes have a personal touch, like "Big Mike's" pizza with ground beef, special sauce, cheese and onions on top of a sesame seed crust. Roberts made up the recipe himself.

According to day opener Tabitha Long, a confessed pizza addict herself, it's a pleasure to work with Roberts and the other employees of Northwest Pizza.

"The people here are like family," Long said. "It's not a stressful experience at all. It's a lot of fun."

On their busiest day, the pizza parlor cooked up 396 pizzas. A normal day yields about 200.

No matter what amount they put out, though, Roberts looks forward to seeing regular customers come in to order their "usual," and even to serve up out-of-the-ordinary requests such as a "pineapple salad."

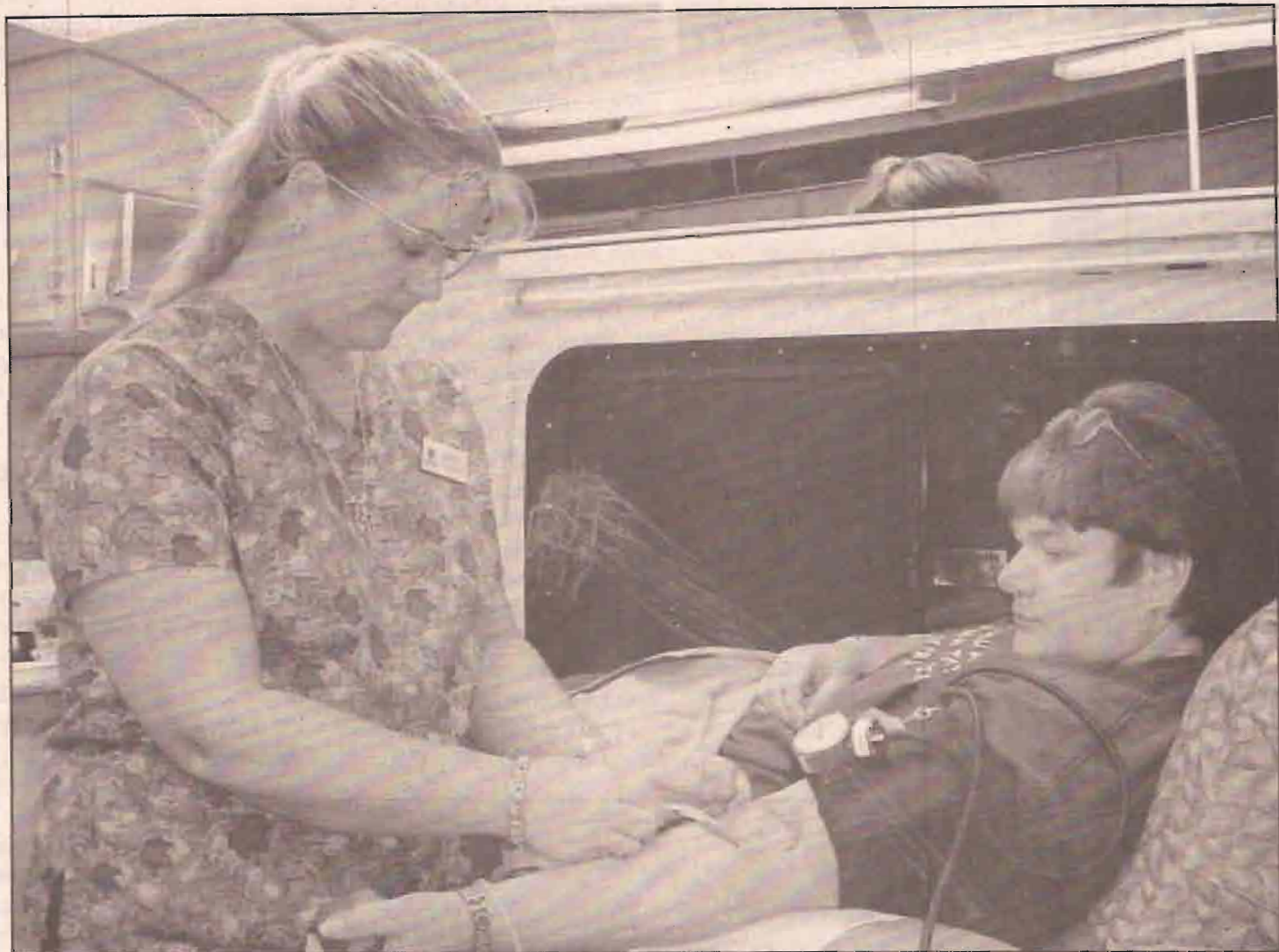
"When I was a kid, I thought it would be so neat to have my own pizza place," Roberts said. "And now here I am. What more could a guy want?"

For more information, or to order, call 253-846-5844.



THE DISPATCH

NOVEMBER 49 • THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON, SINCE 1893 • Dec



Donor specialist Tammy Montalvo begins to draw blood from donor Sally Laib at Graham Fire Dept. last week. Laib has now donated two gallons of blood—16 pints—enough to help 48 people. Photo by Judith East

Blood is in short supply locally

by Christy Pessemier
and Judith East

Mary Beth Ingersoll literally got down on her knees and begged for blood at a recent meeting of the Eatonville Daybreak Lions Club. The Cascade Regional Blood Services representative was in town to spread the word about local opportunities to donate blood.

"Ninety-five percent of us will need blood by the time we reach age 72," she said. "It takes 200 pints a day to meet the need for this region. And," she added, "each pint you donate will help three other people." She said that 30 percent of donated blood goes to cancer patients, and leukemia patients have a huge need.

Ingersoll explained that blood donations are actually down since 9-11. Many previous donors are now stationed overseas, and those who return cannot donate for at least a year due to risks of infections. AIDS is another factor in reduced donations.

Giving blood is easier than ever, now that the Cascade Blood Bank is available once a month at Fire Station #21 in Graham.

"There is always a demand for blood," Graham Fire Department Public Prevention Education Officer Myra Merdian said. "But this time of year, during the holidays, there is even more of a pressing need."

According to Merdian, many injured soldiers overseas, and those returning to the United States, are some of the candidates for blood transfusions.

"Anytime our servicemen are overseas, there is a great demand for blood to be donated," Merdian said. "Also, during the holidays, a lot of accidents happen, which means we need blood all the time."

Donated blood goes to the Cascade Blood Bank, which in turn distributes it according to need. Those wishing to donate are advised by Merdian to "act normally" and not to wear themselves out. Type "O" blood is in the highest demand, because it can be used for anyone, regardless of their blood type. Still, any blood given is greatly appreciated.

To donate, you must be 16 to 76 years old and weigh at least 110 lbs., unless you have a doctor's permit.

"There will always be someone who can use the blood you donate," Merdian said.

The next local blood drive is Dec. 9 at Eatonville High School from 8:30 to 1:30 p.m. Another will be at the Eatonville Fire Dept. on Dec. 30 from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. The next Graham blood drive is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 27 from 4:30 to 7 p.m. For other opportunities to donate, contact Cascade Regional Blood Services at 253-383-2553 or 253-841-4236.

Toys for Tots time

The annual Marine Corps Toys for Tots holiday collection time is here. All toys will be distributed to children in Eatonville, Elbe, and Ashford area through the Eatonville Family Agency.

Mashell Chiropractic and Thompson's Licensing Agency will again be collecting gifts. All toys must be unwrapped.

Graham supports new learning center

by Christy Pessemier

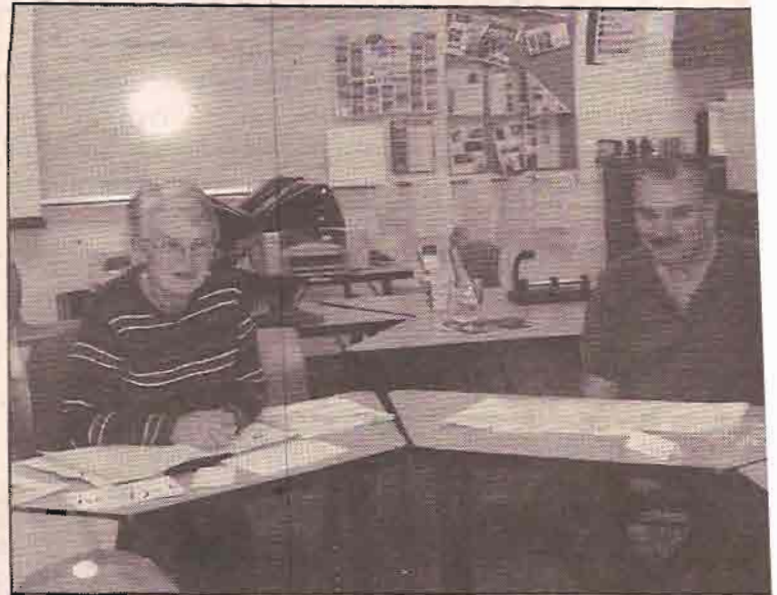
Former PLU computer science instructor Carol Wright didn't know if she wanted to live in the town of Graham any longer. Negative news about growing infestation of meth labs and questions on the direction of her future caused her to wonder. But one day, after talking with her brother, she was inspired not only for her future, but for the future of Graham.

"My brother, who lives in Fremont, told me that there was a community learning center

there," Wright said. "He suggested that it was possible to start one up in Graham."

Driven by concern for the Graham community, Carol Wright made a decision. She formed a program called "Muscle Out Meth Labs" and offered the town a choice: Give in to decay, or "muscle it out."

A year later, Graham is looking pretty buff. And, as Wright can proudly see, her concepts are working. In June of 2003, the Graham Community Learning Center, or GCLC, was



Spanish instructor Lynn Parnell asks a student "Como estas?" which means, "how are you?" in Spanish. Right of Parnell is Jerry Weaver, member of the GCLC board.

born.

To help with planning and development of the learning center, Wright formed a board of directors for the GCLC, of which she is CEO. Among other things, the group discusses future intentions, goals, course proposals and grant potential.

"We meet every Tuesday at 7 a.m. at my house," Wright said. "I serve tea, and we go over our plans and our mission statement."

Although she was the driving force behind the initiation of the Graham Learning Center, Wright was enthusiastically supported by many members of the Bethel School District. According to Wright, Frontier Junior High Principal Tom Mitchell encouraged her, saying that the Graham community was in need of a learning center, and offered Frontier Junior High as a location for the center. Also, Bethel School District Administrator Steve Brown helped by "putting the word out to everyone in the Graham area" to expose the classes, and to attract instructors for the learning center.

"A list of our classes was sent out to 33,000 homes in the Bethel Pride," Wright said. "When people saw that, they were excited and wanted to take the classes."

Currently, about 15-20 classes such as Tai chi, health,

scrap booking, computer, and even country line dancing are being offered. The most popular though, according to Wright, is the Spanish class.

"People are seeing that the Spanish language is needed more and more in society today," Wright said. "A lot of business owners have Spanish-only speaking customers coming into their shop, and they don't know how to help them."

Now, because this class is offered, the opportunity to converse in Spanish is a possibility.

Though there is still much to develop, and "details to be exacted," Wright can see why the Graham Learning Center has received a lot of support.

"People are thrilled that they don't have to drive out of town and commute to Puyallup or Tacoma to further their learning," she said. "The classes are right here in our neighborhood."

Aside from the location, Wright feels the closeness in community is another plus.

"This is a great way for the community to come together," she said. "It's a thrill to see the friendships that are being made."

For more information on the Graham Learning Center, check out the website:

www.solarseasons.com/gclc.

Fast, fresh, and prickly

Christmas trees are selling fast

by Christy Pessemier

As rain poured down from the sky, Ronda and Mike Lefrancois braved the elements and carefully selected their Christmas tree. The Spanaway couple watched with excitement as Snowshoe Evergreen Farm employee Pedro Zuniga carried the seven foot noble fir tree to the front cash register.

"We came here last year, but it was later in the season, and we didn't have any luck finding a tree," Ronda said. "So this year, we came early, and we found what we were looking for."

Both the Lefrancoises agreed that the noble firs are their favorite of the four species of trees the Snowshoe Farm

offers. "They're nice looking trees," Ronda said.

The farm, which is located off of Highway 162 between McMillin and Sumner, boasts 55 acres of trees, and a generous selection of grand fir, Douglas fir, Frasier fir, and noble fir. Manager Joan Chaplik, who also happens to be the sister-in-law of owner Ken Sholz, has supervised at the farm for four years. The farm itself has been around for more than twenty years.

With the Christmas season in full swing and local residents itching to land the perfect tree, Chaplik doesn't spend much time sitting around.

"Just last weekend, we sold 800-1000 trees. This weekend,



Snowshoe Evergreen employee Pedro Zuniga delivers a freshly cut Noble Fir tree.

we'll probably do even more," Chaplik said.

Chaplik oversees up to 30 employees the weekend preceding Christmas. Tractors move around the farm constantly, hauling trees for customers. Questions must be answered. Holes need to be drilled in trees for special stands to be installed. She admits to being occasionally affected by the chaos.

"It can get pretty hectic," she said.

Employee Pedro Zuniga agrees.

"It's a lot of work, especially when people are buying the 14- and 16-footers. Those are the hardest days," Zuniga said, catching his breath after sawing a customer's newly chosen grand fir.

On the upside, employees can find comfort in the fact that the Christmas season is short, and that they're generally dealing with a happy crowd.

"Everyone is usually in good spirits, and that makes it fun," Chaplik said.

Prices for the trees range from \$28 for the Douglas firs up to \$76 for the 9-10 foot nobles. Six- to 7-foot Frasier and nobles are \$43. The farm also sells garlands, swags, wreaths, and poinsettias. For more information or directions, call 253-845-5199.

Food bank serves up toys, love and food

by Christy Pessemier

One Sunday morning, Cedar Springs Community Church Sunday school teacher Judy Sanchez asked the first and second graders in her class a question: "What would you think if we saved out pennies and quarters until we had enough money to buy a turkey for hungry people?"

The reaction Sanchez received was excitement. And today, that excitement has developed into a whole lot more than just one turkey.

Thanks to Sanchez' idea eight years ago, Cedar Springs is now host to the Community Care Food Bank, which is housed next door to the church off of 224th St. and Orting Kapowsin Highway in Graham. During the holiday season, the food bank works in partnership with Bethel Schools such as Pioneer Valley, Graham Elementary, and Camas Prairie Elementary to donate canned and packaged foods, bread and toys for families in need.

According to Pioneer Valley Elementary School social worker Lorri Watkins, the canned food drive is a big

success.

"This year, we donated about 4,000 items," Watkins said. "The neighborhood next to our school is very tight-knit, and people around here are very caring."

The food collected at Pioneer Valley and the other participating schools is taken to Cedar Springs Community Church, where it is handed out to local needy residents. Also, toys donated to the church are presented to parents struggling to make ends meet.

"We have about 100 families that we're working with right now for the Christmas holiday," Sanchez said. "They are given bags of food and toys to give as gifts for their children."

To preserve dignity, each toy is left unwrapped so that the parents can pick the items that best suit their choice for Christmas gifts for their children.

Though the toys are only handed out once a year, the food bank is open year-round. Every Friday morning, Cedar Springs' helping hands are ready to give items out by 10 a.m. To lighten the load, volunteers from neighboring churches partake in



Community Care Food Bank Volunteer Bob Taurino helps to set up boxes of donated bread before the Friday morning rush arrives.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

the regular event.

"We have people come from the Nazarene church in Graham, Graham Evangelical Covenant Church, and the Lutheran Church of St. Paul," Sanchez said.

For Sanchez, the food bank

is not just a ministry of giving and charity, but a dream come true. "I always wanted to see the Graham community come together like this and help people out," she said.

According to Sanchez, the people who frequent the food bank are "just like anyone else." She is quick to point out that observers wouldn't guess that they are struggling financially looking at them. Times of economic hardship require them to search for humble ways of taking care of themselves and their families.

"We've all been there at one point," Sanchez said. "Everyone goes through times when they can't make ends meet, and that's what we're here for."

Knowing that 400 local Graham area residents are fed every month gives her comfort.

"Some people might think that this drains my life, but it does the opposite," Sanchez said, her voice filled with emotion. "Being in charge of the Community Care Food Bank and knowing that I can assist people to better their lives infuses me with joy and energy."

Health Department ready to kick butts for good

Smoking-ban makes local restaurant managers nervous

by Christy Pessemier

Smokey bars and cigarette butts sitting in ashtrays at the end of the day may no longer be a reality for restaurants in Pierce County. Due to health concerns of second hand smoke, the Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health is moving ahead on a proposed smoking ban. The ban could take place in as little as 30 days.

Without much notice or warning, restaurant managers and frequent smokers feel the Board of Health is twisting the arm of local businesses and forcing them to make sudden changes that have the potential to dampen their cash flow.

"When I heard about the ban, all I could think is that I better go look for another job," The Exchange Tavern Manager Jan Sequin said. "Its scary. Seventy per cent of our clientele are smokers."

Scot Galvin, night manager of the Country Rose Cafe in Spanaway, agrees.

"I've worked as a manager in restaurants in California and Nevada before they enacted smoking bans there," Galvin said. "And in every case, I saw how it really hurt the businesses."

Customers who patronize pro-smoking establishments have mixed reactions. Some want to fight the change, but others just shrug their shoulders.

"This is ridiculous," Cindy Johnston, a "social" smoker and customer of The Exchange Tavern in Spanaway said. "I'm an adult, who are they to decide what my freedoms are?"

The Exchange Tavern customer and regular smoker Dave Rundhaug doesn't appear worried.

"If this passes, I'll still go into taverns. I just won't smoke," Rundhaug said. "I don't think it's going to matter that much."

But managers like Sequin and Galvin have their reservations.

"If this goes through, a lot of jobs will be lost in Pierce County," Sequin said.

A smoker of 39 years himself, Galvin says it isn't right.

"I know the health department is looking out for our good," he said. "But really, I don't think it should be up to them. The Pierce County voters should decide, not them."

What do you think? Send your opinion to Letters to the Editor.

Camas Prairie collects toys for needy families

by Christy Pessemier

Camas Prairie Elementary School is hosting a toy drive for needy children from Dec. 1 through Dec. 5. The purpose of the drive is to donate fun and inexpensive non-violent items to

children ranging in age from 1-17 years old. Members of the community, and Camas Prairie Elementary School families are invited to participate.

"Our core quality this month is kindness," Camas Prairie School Counselor Helen Aichner said. "And the Toy Drive is a great opportunity for our students to understand what kindness is really all about."

According to Aichner, this is Camas Prairie's third year hosting the event. Together with local community organizations like Community Care Ministries of Graham and Clover Creek Bible Fellowship Ministries of Spanaway, the school is able to affect a lot of lives.

Aichner contacts potential donor recipients through refer-

als. After that, an extensive process of screening and applying takes place. When a family is approved by Aichner to receive donations from the school, she then gives the names to the ministry organizations, who distribute the toys.

Due to financial challenges and low income realities, Aichner believes Camas Prairie's help is essential to the needy members of the Spanaway/Graham area community.

"We have a lot of struggling people out there who are working very hard to stretch themselves to their next paycheck," Aichner said. "There is a definite need out there."

Though she hasn't actually seen anyone receive the gifts the

school has supplied, Aichner has benefited in the past from thank-you cards and kind words of appreciation. Those expressions of gratitude are very meaningful to her.

"It's not about what we get in return. That's not why we give," she said. "But it always makes me glad to know we could help in some way."

Community members may donate new, unwrapped toys with a \$5 value appropriate to ages 1-17 years old. Nonviolent toys are requested. Donations of Scotch tape and wrapping paper are also needed. Contributions will be accepted from Dec. 1 to Dec. 5. For more information, contact Camas Prairie Elementary at 253-683-7400.

Fire safety is made fun in Bethel schools

by Christy Pessemier

Lately, for Bethel district students, fire safety is as much a part of their day as reading, spelling, and arithmetic. Each week, students from kindergarten up to the fifth grade are learning to prevent tragedy and have fun at the same time.

"Right now we're in the middle of the Great Escape Contest," Graham Fire Department Public Education Officer Myra Merdian said. "The kids are having a blast."

The contest requires all fifth grade students to show two exits to their home, location of smoke detectors, and to point out where a safe family meeting place is. The kids are encouraged to be creative, and to make their escape plans stand out. A winner is then selected to ride on a fire engine in the Daffodil Parade.

Though the prize is a strong motivator for many students, the learning has its

own reward.

"It's exciting for young people to know that they are taking part in preventing possible tragedies," Merdian said. "They are very eager to learn, and want to make a difference."

Merdian, a 20 year veteran firefighter, uses her knowledge and skills to pass lifesaving benefits to the students. Every week her schedule is booked with appointments to teach in different schools. Aside from that, Merdian also works with day cares and scout troops. To say the least, she is busy. But Merdian doesn't mind.

"I have a really good rapport with these kids," she said. "I treat them just like adults, and as a result, they trust me."

At the same time fifth grade students are competing in the Great Escape Contest, Bethel grade schoolers are learning to "stop, drop, and roll," to recognize potential fire hazards, and to call 911 in emergencies. Fourth graders are learning basic first aid and CPR.

When concern arises as



Myra Merdian

to whether or not kids will be able to retain and utilize these important skills, Merdian says she has no doubt that they will.

"We come back every year and re-teach the same things," she said. "And every time, it amazes me, because they remember what they are supposed to do to keep themselves and others safe."

Unfortunately, a heartbreaking community tragedy five years ago was what spurred Merdian and Central Pierce Public Educator Stephanie Glass to take action. A father and his grade-school-aged son perished in a fire.

The Graham Fire Department, together with Central Pierce and Puyallup got together and decided to make fire safety a priority in local public school education.

"We decided that we were going to do everything in our power to diminish the chances of something like that ever occurring again."

Recently Merdian found out just how much her com-

munity involvement makes a difference. She was notified that a local fifth grader involved in the Great Escape Program quickly and efficiently put her fire safety skills into action a few months ago.

"She was home alone, and the smoke alarm went off," Merdian said. "The fire was in the laundry room. And even though her exit was blocked, she had another one mapped out."

In a matter of minutes, the student shut the door to the laundry room to choke the fire, took a different exit, phoned 911 from a neighbor's home, and waited in her planned meeting place for family to come."

Damage was estimated at a mere \$5000 in comparison to catastrophic home damage and possible loss of life. Merdian was very proud and encouraged to hear the news.

"That was awesome!" she said. "It makes me feel so good to know I taught her!"

Aside from helping save lives, Merdian was also recognized for her efforts on behalf of the community last December, 2003. The Graham Business Association awarded her the "Outstanding Citizen's Award."

Bethel schools to charge athletic fee

by Christy Pessemier

This year, students within the Bethel School District will have to pay a fee to participate in sports events.

The fees are necessary due to a \$4.7 million deficit encountered in the 2003/2004 school year. Junior high students are slated to pay a \$25 per sport fee, and high school students, \$25.

The last year student athletes had to pay for sports activity involvement was in 1998/99. Back then, fees were \$105 per athlete annually.

How did you celebrate Fathers ' Day?

by Christy Pessemier



Pamela Williams-Graham, "I bought my fiancee something for the house, and we went out to dinner in Seattle to celebrate."



Andy Bouzinekis-Graham, "I spent the day with my beautiful children and grandchildren. I was very thankful to be with them."



Tyler Barr-Wilkeson, "I made my Dad a gift and drew a picture for him of us playing baseball together."



David Papandrew-Puyallup, "I called my Dad to wish him a happy Father's Day. He lives in Phoenix, Arizona."

At Maggie-Lynn's, beauty is more than skin deep

by Christie Pessemier

For Maggie Wright, cutting hair is not just a job, it's the fulfillment of a dream. As part owner of Maggie-Lynn's Salon in Graham, Wright relishes her day-to-day life.

"I get tired like everybody else does," Wright said. "But I love what I do. I love the people."

Wright loves what she does so much that she has even been known to visit clients in their homes.

"One of my clients had a stroke, and she has no way to get out to get her hair done," Wright said. "I'm just glad I can do something to help her feel better about herself."

Lynn Betzer, who co-owns the salon with Wright, shares the same type of devotion to her clients.

"You get so used to all the regulars coming in," Betzer said. "They become like family."

Years ago, before she began doing shampoo sets, foils, and trims, Wright used to drive school buses and also worked as a bank teller. Needless to say, she likes the beauty business much more.

After completing her training at BJ's Beauty and Barber College in Puyallup, Wright started out working in small salons. But after awhile, she found herself growing disenchanted with the common standards of the hair care industry.

"I noticed that the customer's needs and wants

were not the top priority," she said. "That bothered me."

Hurried appointments, and a "take a number" type of philosophy proved to be too much for Wright. Four and a half years ago, she made up her mind that she would open a beauty salon.

For this salon, Wright visualized a whole lot more than the everyday, run-of-the-mill hair cutting facility. Her dreams included plans for a variety of different options to attract and complement the hectic lifestyle of today's Graham area residents. Those included such things as a tanning bed, massage services, body sugaring, nail care and a whole lot more.

Thankfully, it wasn't long before Wright's dreams came true. A space became available in Graham Village, conveniently located in the northeastern corner of the intersection of 224th and Meridian Street. Wright set up shop, and brought all of her regular clients with her.

"Once I made up the decision to go into business on my own, everything fell into place," Wright said. "It's amazing what happens when you make up your mind to do something."

And to top it off, Wright

brought Betzer, her close friend and fellow beautician along with her. Today, the two wouldn't trade where they are for anything.

"We're our own bosses," Betzer said. "And we can go on vacation when we want to go, not when someone else says we have to."

Both Betzer and Wright pride themselves on the fact that their customers feel at home at Maggie-Lynn's Salon. Not only do their clients receive full service pampering with the many options the salon has to offer, but they also get a few little extras.

"We'd like to grow just a little bit more," she said. "But not too much more because things are hopping pretty regularly."

Kapowsin kids at new school

by Christy Pessemier

After two years of planning and construction, the new Kapowsin Elementary school is open to students for school this week.

Though the building is complete, dirt, bulldozers, and tractors still surround the new school. According to Principal Brad Graham, the parking lot and bus loop are scheduled to be finished by November first of this year. Until then, "It will be necessary to do a little juggling around of the students," Graham said.

Kapowsin's construction, along with the demolishing of the old school

building, has been an emotional experience for Kapowsin area residents and alumni.

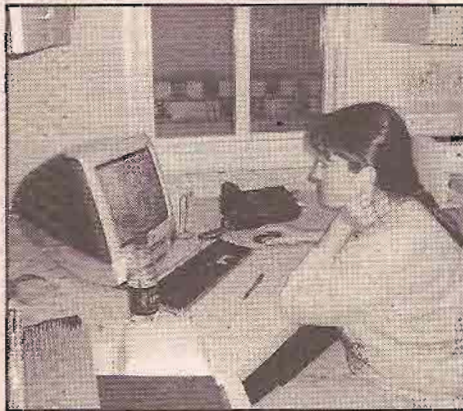
"It will take time for people to get over the fact that the old school is gone," Graham said. "There are multi-generations that have attended, and it is very personal for them."

"People in the community that are connected to Kapowsin have made a big deal of saying goodbye to the old

school," Bethel Communications Director Mark Wenzel added.

The old Kapowsin School was opened in 1949 and had to be demolished because expenses for renovation exceeded those of constructing an entirely new school building.

"I'm thrilled with the new building," Graham said. "It's a dream come true, and well deserved for the children and people of this community."



Kapowsin Elementary Health Clerk Tiffany Morris prepares for students arrival by doing some last minute work on the Macintosh computer in her office last week.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

Bethel schools to charge athletic fee

by Christy Pessemier

Santa Claus is coming...to Graham

by Christy Pessemier

To kick off the holiday season, Graham Fire Station #21 is bringing Santa to school children, shoppers and their own fire station.

"Every year, our Santa visits people all over the community," Graham Fire Department Public Prevention Education Officer Myra Merdian said. "We've been doing this for more than twenty-four years."

According to Merdian, "Santa used to go up and down all the roads in the community, all night long."

But after awhile, the community grew, and a few changes had to be made.

"We decided to bring Santa to the schools, and to have a few community events so everyone could have a chance to meet him," Merdian said.

This year, Santa will be visiting Kapowsin, Graham, North Star, Brouillet, Centennial and Rocky Ridge Elementary schools. During school "program nights," Santa arrives on a fire engine sporting a red suit, black boots, and his trademark potbelly.

Aside from visiting the schools, Santa's busy schedule has also made time for a big celebration at the Graham Safeway on Dec. 6 from 6 to

7:30 p.m. The North Star Elementary school choir and Frontier Junior High dance team will be performing at the entrance to the store.

To top it all off, the jolly old St. Nick will be at Graham Fire Station #21 on Dec. 17, handing out candy canes to eager children waiting to spout off their Christmas lists. Cake, cookies and Christmas carols promise to entertain and delight "good girls and boys." Pictures are also available for delighted youngsters as they pose on Santa's lap.

The station's Local Union #2175 is sponsoring the Santa

tour of Graham for the month of December. The union supports the events by funding entertainment supplies such as film and candy.

"We are so thankful to the union for helping out with these events," Merdian said.

As holiday excitement sweeps through the chilled winter air, Merdian expresses joy and anticipation for the coming festivities.

"This time of year is a lot of fun," she says. "It's great to see the people and the citizens of the community join together to celebrate Christmas....and what better way to do it than with a fat man on a fire engine?"

Local coffee addicts meet at the Sugar Shack for a morning jolt

by Christy Pessemier

Vicki Waters loves everything about coffee and people. So, six years ago, after spending her days working at an espresso stand in Spanaway, she decided to pair her two loves and take a risk. Waters opened up the Sugar Shack Espresso stand in Graham, and the community has been drinking it up ever since.

"It was kinda scary at first to open up a business of my own," Waters said. "But I felt fairly confident that I could make it work."

Waters' husband Tim, an electrician for Puget Sound Energy in Snoqualmie, helped to start the business up from scratch. Tim installed the plumbing and all the electrical work that was needed. He also helped to lay the flooring, insulation and siding.

Along with the encouragement of her husband and family, Waters says the support of the community has been very helpful in the success of her business.

"We have had customers who have been with us from the very start," she said. "They are

all very faithful."

That faithfulness is no doubt helped along with the fact that Waters insists on using only the best products. Before she opened up the Sugar Shack, Waters researched books and various sources for the brand of coffee she wanted to use. After reading a book by David Schomer, a Seattle coffee connoisseur and owner of Espresso Vivace Roastery in Seattle, Waters decided to use the Vivace brand coffee. According to Waters, the taste of the dark, flavorful beverage is addicting and highly enjoyable to Graham residents.

"A lot of them tell me that they go somewhere else and try their coffee," she said. "But they always end up coming back here and telling me that they miss the taste of the Vivace coffee."

Dedicated customers predictably sit waiting every morning as early as 5 a.m., unaffected by the cold, dark winter surroundings. Sometimes weekend backups pile up to five cars in the parking lot.

Waters has six employees alternating shifts in the cozy and inviting 10 ft. by 12 ft. building.

Though she doesn't actually work shifts herself, Waters does the bookkeeping, ordering and supervising. She also stops by daily to get her "boost," an 8 oz. Breve with two shots of espresso.

"I'm a genuine coffee fan," she said, a smile breaking through in her voice.

Apparently, she's not the only coffee fan in these parts. To date, the Sugar Shack has soared in business and doesn't show signs of stopping anytime soon. Hot steaming mochas and mocha shakes, the most popular items, are selling like hotcakes. Even rare and unusual items like white coffee, which has twice the amount of caffeine as regular coffee, are attracting customers fresh out of bed in the morning.

"I think people around here just love to have a treat," Waters said. "And that's what espresso and coffee gives them. It makes life a little more fun."

Sports



Caitlyn Young, 12, an Untalan's Tae Kwon Do student in a forward stance position. *Photo by Christy Pessemier*

Kick into shape, gain self confidence with Tae Kwon Do

by Christy Pessemier

Husbands and wives, teenagers and children gather daily at the Tae Kwon Do studio in Graham. "Tae Kwon Do is the art of the foot and hand," said owner George Untalan. "The emphasis is on the legs, with a lot of kicking moves."

George Untalan began learning Tae Kwon Do when he was twelve years old. He was inspired by a martial arts movie and from then on was hooked.

George managed a Tae Kwon school in Virginia before

"Tae Kwon Do is a lifesaving sport," Maria said. "All sports are wonderful, but this is something that gives parents the knowledge that their kids can defend themselves."

George regularly tests the students for the next belt level. Part of the testing is breaking boards or concrete blocks for the higher belts.

"Breaking boards or concrete blocks helps you develop your precision and accuracy," George said. "It is used to test your power."

moving here to Graham and starting his own business with his wife, Maria. The Untalan's Tae Kwon Do studio opened in 2000 and now has between one hundred fifty to one hundred sixty members of all ages.

"We have entire families come in to learn Tae Kwon Do together," Maria said. "There is even a couple in their fifties who take the classes."

George and Maria have four children. The two-year-old, Gabriel, "lives" at the studio. He takes naps in their office, does warm-ups and can even break a few boards.

Children involved in the classes are enthusiastic. "It's fun breaking boards!" said student Freddy Siguenza, 13. Other children find it has helped them with confidence.

One mother, Jocelyn Young, has both Caitlyn and a younger sister involved in classes. She has noticed positive changes.

"Caitlyn was a little shy at first," Jocelyn said. "But now she is much more confident, and she looks forward to earning her black belt and teaching Tae Kwon Do when she is a teenager."

As opposed to Karate or sports like soccer and football, Maria feels Tae Kwon Do is much easier to learn and apply, and it is more helpful to kids.

As someone who practices what he preaches, George can do the splits and break concrete blocks himself. He is a fifth degree black belt. Pictures on the wall in the studio show the evidence of George's accomplishments.

Maria will be testing for her black belt on June 14. She is also a student of George's and says he requires as much from her as anyone else in the classes.

"George doesn't pull any punches," she said. "He treats me like the other students. I don't get any special treatment."

The Untalans are pleased that the students are eager to learn more and come back to classes energized. Another benefit is that they are more disciplined about doing their chores at home.

"We give out rewards to kids when they do their chores," Maria said. "Now the parents say it's not a problem having to ask their kids to do things at home."

Students show their enthusiasm and gratitude in different ways. A decorative sign by the door with their name on it is handcrafted by one of their students. Also, a black wooden shoe cubby was purchased by another student and given as a gift to Master George.

"It just goes to show," Maria said, "the kids are very happy here."

Yesterday they were babies, today they're in school

by Christy Pessemier

Her hand clutches onto mine as I guide her to her classroom. The big blue eyes that only yesterday seemed to be looking up at me from her bassinet, are now looking up at me from her little five-year-old body. I can't believe it is here already. My baby is going to school.

Even though she wore diapers and I rocked her to sleep years ago, it hasn't occurred to me so suddenly that it's all stopped. I feel a strange mix of heartbreak for the old days, and anticipation for the new. Flashbacks of her little chubby legs walking their first wobbly determined steps play repeatedly in my mind. The day she was born, so new and fresh ...wasn't that just a little bit ago?

My daughter Eleni is so excited for school. I toss and turn at night. Will the other kids be nice to her? Will some renegade kindergarten offer her drugs from his seemingly harmless Spiderman backpack? Everyone says I worry too much, and that she'll be fine. But I wonder...will I be fine? Can I survive the two and a half hours a day she'll be in school? Sure I can, I tell myself.

So, I step into the classroom, ever aware of the little hand clasped inside of mine. Parents are buzzing about, racing their kids through the halls. I feel like I'm in slow motion. It's only kindergarten open house day, but I'm in denial that it's already here.

I extend my hand to meet her teacher, my eyes scanning her face for anything suspicious. She seems nice. We talk a little. Eleni looks unamused and afraid. Again, I worry. But the teacher talks with her, and she smiles shyly. I'm a little relieved.

Overwhelmed by the masses of parents stuffing their kids into the classroom, I sit down on a miniature couch and sigh as my daughter plays with a train set in front of us.

"Is she your oldest?" Another mom asks me.

"Yes," I say.

She pats her son on the head and says, "This is Daniel. He's my oldest, too."

Before we can say anything else, our eyes both start watering. Oh, for goodness sakes, I think to myself. Have some control! I'm about to break down in sobs with this lady, and everyone else around me seems to be laughing and having a great time.

But as I look around at the line of parents waiting to talk to the teacher, I see that not all are laughing. Some look lost, and some look afraid, too. Many are sorting through those first five precious years, in these last few days before they hand their children off to someone they don't really know, but have to trust and have faith in. The hardest test of all.

As we walk back to the car, I ask Eleni what she thought of the whole thing.

"Loved it," she says. Then she reaches her arms up to me and smiles, "Mommy will you hold me?"

More than happy to, I take her in my arms and shower her with kisses. I might as well enjoy it, because at this rate, college feels like it's only a moment away.

Holy Trinity celebrates its annual Pentecost Feast

by Christy Pessemier

Chicken sizzles on the grill as church members and their friends fill their plates at the Sunday of Holy Pentecost Barbeque at Holy Trinity Orthodox Chapel in Wilkesson. Rain or shine, the gathering has taken place at the 102-year-old church at about the same time annually for seventeen years.

Church members pitch in and pool their energies to prepare for the event. Starting the Friday before the feast, up to six people arrive at Holy Resurrection Church in Tacoma at 10 a.m. to make potato salad and clean and prepare chickens.

After the salad is made and the chicken is cleaned, a special, traditional family recipe by member Irene Matar is used to marinate the chickens for 48 hours. The recipe, it appears, is very popular.

"This year 250 dinners were planned, because we ran out last year," Matar said.

Over eighty families are members of Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church in Tacoma, which also holds services once a month in Wilkesson. Because of its name, Holy Trinity, the service of "Holy Pentecost" is held at that church instead of the Tacoma one.

"Every consecrated Orthodox church celebrates its 'Altar Feast Day' as a special holiday," the Very Reverend Father John Pierce said. "The altar Feast at Holy Trinity Church is Pentecost; the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ's Disciples in Jerusalem."

At 10 a.m. the service for the Feast day begins. Pierce conducts the Festal Divine Liturgy for hundreds of parishioners, many of them overflowing onto the steps and into the yard of the church.

Prayers are chanted, and special hymns for the feast are sung by the church's choir:

"When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, He divided the nations. But when he distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity." - Carpatho-Rusyn Kontakion

At about 1p.m., people begin to mill out of the church, though not without kissing the Pentecost icon displaying the tongues of fire.

As a sign of respect and reverence to God, each member does the sign of the Orthodox cross as they exit the sanctuary.

Then, at 1:30, the barbeque begins, and those attending make themselves at home and eat to their heart's content. Many arrive for the first time to witness the historic chapel and



The Very Reverend Father John Pierce gives the final blessing to those attending the Pentecost service at Holy Trinity chapel in Wilkesson.
Photos by Christy Pessemier

"Every year new members of our community who have never been to Wilkesson experience our historic chapel there and are surprised that we are stewards over such a beautiful church. It's as if they are discovering this treasure for the first time, and that brings a lot of joy to my heart," Pierce said. Hopes are that eventually there will be

enough members in the Wilkesson area to have regular services there every Sunday.

"Sometime in the future, we may have enough people to attend," Kathy Pierce, Wife of the Very Reverend Father John said. "Until then, we will continue to hold regular services at Holy Resurrection in Tacoma."



Kathy Pierce, Roberta Rediske and Joan McCollum clean and prepare chickens for the Pentecost celebration.

Photos by Christy Pessemier

Spanaway elementary students make summer plans

by Christy Pessemier

Open doors greet Spanaway Elementary students for a few more days until they close for the summer this year. On June 19, after 11:20 am, 359 students and teachers will be off to enjoy vacations, waterslide parks, and even sleepovers with friends.

"I don't know what my parents want to do, but what I want to do is take a trip to Disneyland this summer," 6-year-old first grader Marjorie Rasmussen said.

Other students look forward to different adventures.

"I'm going to a horse camp because I love horses," said 9-year-old third grader Salish Slater. "Also, I have a season pass to Wild Waves. I want to go there a lot!"


Nine-year-old third grader Victoria Chaplinski added, "I'm going to visit my grandparents in Missouri, and have lots of friends over, and have sleepovers, too."

Though vacations and fun times beckon, third grade teacher Erika Juntunen will be leaving Spanaway Elementary and not returning for the next school year.

"I am going to spend the summer researching colleges to attend," Juntunen said. "I will be going back to school to specialize in child development."

Juntunen admits she will miss teaching, and is thankful for the experience.

"It is really hard to leave," she said. "Spanaway Elementary has an amazing staff and the kids are incredible."



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Children's summer programs take flight at Graham Library

by Christy Pessemier

The Three Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, and The Gingerbread Boy will come alive for children in the Graham area this summer. Puppet shows, storytime crafts, and even a sandwich party are on the schedule. Bored kids now have a place to go...the Graham Library.

"The school age kids get shorted out on library activities during the school year. So we plan a lot of things for them in the summer," said Ashland Thornton, Youth Services Librarian for the Graham and South Hill Pierce County Library branches. Most of the programs are geared for children ages five and up.

The theme at the library this summer is "Take Flight, Read!" The program encourages and rewards children for reading on a regular basis. For every twenty minutes a child reads, they will earn a sticker. There are also T-shirt contests, and kids can enter a drawing to win a T-shirt.

The first program scheduled is "Catch the Wind," where kids

ages six and up will learn to make and fly a kite on June 28. Programs continue until the end of August and vary from puppet shows to learning about winged hunters like owls and eagles.

"One of our most popular events is on August 8," Thornton said. "We are having a sandwich party for all ages. The kids can make open face sandwiches with whatever they want, like peanut butter and jelly beans instead of peanut butter and jelly."

Thornton says the turnout for many of these children's programs is tremendous. As many as one hundred and twenty have been known to show up at the sandwich party.

Thornton loves her job and says the highlights are seeing the young faces all the time. She has even received thank-you cards from parents of the children who are involved in library events.

"It is very fulfilling to work with the children," she said.

Library programs are supported and funded by the Friends of the Graham Library. "Friends" are a group of people who help by donating funds which are used



Librarians in the children's department of the Graham Library wear T-shirts advertising their summer reading program. From left top: Linda Clark, Michael Scarfo, Juanita Bennett (Supervisor) and Christi Ray. From right bottom: Ashland Thornton and Muriel Tosh.

to improve the library and to benefit children's programs.

"When school is out, it's our busiest time," said Kathleen Wolf, Managing Librarian for the South Hill and Graham Library branches. "The Graham Library really has a great staff, and we enjoy all the young

families that come in with their children."

For further information on the library and the upcoming summer events, brochures are available at the Graham Pierce County Library branch off 224th Street in Graham, or look up the website at www.pcl.lib.wa.us.

Same restaurant, same menu, new owners



Country Rose Cafe Servers from left: Natasha Law, Marie Mastberg, and Linda Jones.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

by Christy Pessemier

Once the talk of the town in Graham as the place to go to get 'good food,' the Country Rose Cafe is now in Spanaway.

Located on the east side of Pacific Avenue, just north of the intersection of 159th and Pacific Avenues, the cafe serves up its famous breakfasts, lunches and dinners daily.

Owner Gary Warter bought the business in 1994. Prior to that it was located in Graham at what is now the Arco station at 224th St. and Meridian St.

"The people who bought the restaurant from the Graham owners moved it to our location in Spanaway," Warter said.

"They owned it for a short time, and then my wife and I bought it."

Though the cafe is under different ownership than the original Country Rose, Warter still operates the business under the same principles, and basically the same menu.

"One of the most popular dishes the Country Rose has is

the Hobo Hash," he said. "We still have that, only now we have five different versions of it."

Warter, who works six days a week and "a lot of hours," enjoys the restaurant business despite the demand it puts on him.

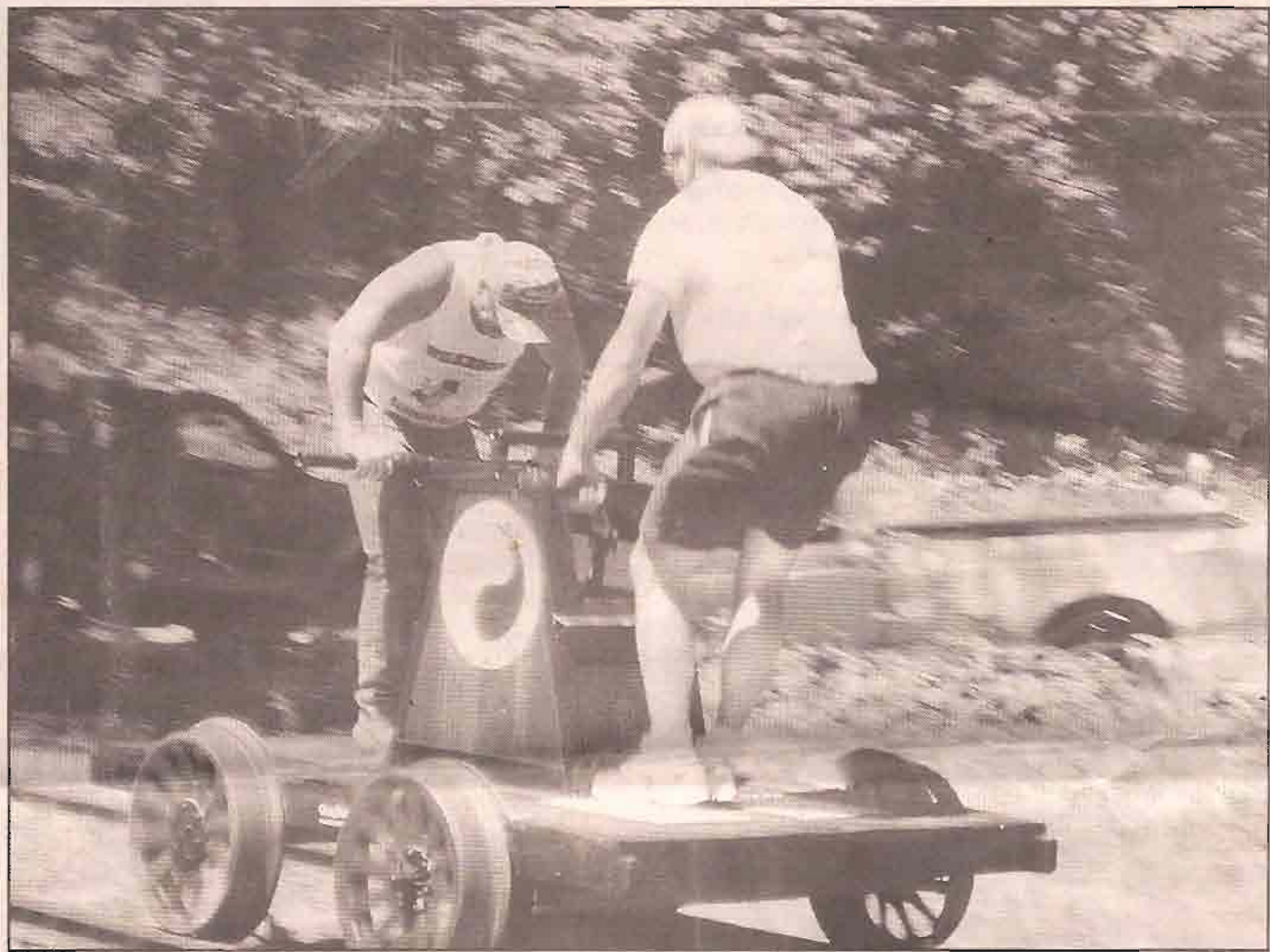
Aside from owning and managing the Country Rose Cafe, he and his brother both own Grandy's in University Place on 16th St. and Mildred, and Grandy's on 99th St. and Pacific Avenue.

He spends his time going back and forth between the restaurants, helping out wherever he is needed.

As far as his best customers go, Warter says most are families and seniors. He prides himself on the comfortable atmosphere and friendly service.

"We aren't high class or fine dining," he said. "We're just known around town by word of mouth as a place where people feel welcome and get good value for their money. I think we fit the community very well."

Handcar races in Wilkeson



Dean Steinmetz and Aaron Haulet compete in the 28th annual Wilkeson Handcar races on Saturday, July 19.

Photo by Christy Pessemier

Sprinker Skate Park is a go

by Christy Pessemier

Sprinker Recreation Center will have a new addition to its facility in the near future: a skate park. A \$275,000 grant was awarded last week by the state Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, and \$95,000 in matching funds was raised by the Spanapark Committee.

The plan for the skate park has been in the works for a little over three years. After meeting with local skateboarders, and contractors, Landscape Architect Jon Ortgiesen, together with the Spanapark committee, came up with an outline for the park.

"The drawings are completed, and now that we have the funding, it's just a matter of working out the details," Ortgiesen said. "The next step is for me to go through the details with the contractors, and then everything depends on the permit process."

According to Ortgiesen, the skatepark is a current trend that many cities and communities are catching on to.

"About ten percent of high school students in the Bethel and surrounding area are skaters," Ortgiesen said. "That's over 20,000 students from ages 12 to 17 who don't do organized sports



From left: Committee members Sherry Haviland, Nancy Eaton, Marianne Lincoln, Sandy Friesheim, Nancy LeMay, Gini Dryer-Dow, Karen Ansteth [Rosalie Johnson & Lou Spencer not present] celebrate the skate park grant.

Photo courtesy of Skate Park committee

and who need a place to go to skate. I think this park will be good for them."

The park is slated to be 25,000 square feet which is twice as big as any skatepark in the county.

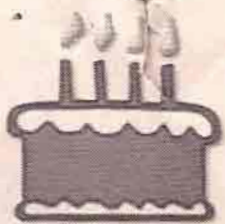
The location will be at 148th and C Street in Spanaway at the Sprinker Recreation Center on the border of two school districts.

Fundraising events will be held in the near future to raise money and fulfill the skate park's pledges.

On July 25, from 5:30-8 p.m. there will be a 100th birthday party for Spanaway Park, and on Aug. 2 and Aug. 3, the Spanaway Street Fair will take place. Also included is the Lemay Car show on Aug. 30.

It's my party...

Creative ways to celebrate summer birthdays



by Christy Pessemier

Screaming kids running around the house, high on sugar from the pinata goodies. Sound familiar? Birthday party planning can frazzle even the most prepared of parents. The tragedy of it all is that many parents try to do the party all on their own, or that they drive too far from home to celebrate what is supposed to be a fun occasion.

Many parents in the area are not aware that there are options to relieve the stress that usually accompanies birthday celebrations. Internet sites are available to assist parents in organizing their own personal party.

A variety of ideas such as recipes and cake styles are available, as well as party game suggestions. Some websites even offer a printable list of step by step "things to do before the party." For more information check out:

- www.birthdaypartyideas.com,
- www.expressbirthdayplanning.com, or
- www.birthdaypartydirectory.com.

Often, for parents who work full-time, or who don't have the

energy to plan their own party, fast-food restaurants come to the rescue.

"We have twelve or more parties here every month," Parkland McDonald's Manager Leslie Hunt said. "They are very popular."

Orting and Spanaway McDonald's do not offer birthday parties due to lack of facilities for the parties to take place. Spanaway Burger King on Mountain Highway does offer birthday party packages, though many parents are not aware of this.

"We do offer birthday parties, but we have not had one yet," Burger King Manager Angela Wells said.

The Burger King parties are \$60 per group. This includes a chaperone party guide, kids' meals for ten children, ten drinks, ten gift bags, and ten frozen ice cream shakes. Each additional child is \$6.

At McDonalds there are three different choices of parties: the basic dessert birthday party, the Happy Meal party, and the Snack Party. The prices range from \$50 to \$65. A \$25 deposit is included toward the price of

the party.

For parents who don't mind spending a little extra money, some novel ideas are handy.

Sprinker Recreation Center in Spanaway has a "Birthday Skating Party" available from June 1-August 20.

The cost is \$100 for ten children. This includes skate rental, party room, and a food package. Parties must be booked Monday-Friday between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

An hour of pony rides beckons some parents looking for variety. Verbera Pony Rides are located in Spanaway, but Pablo Verbera and his horses will travel as well.

Prices range from \$100-\$180 depending on the location of the birthday party. Verbera can be reached at (253) 875-0420.

If all else fails, hire a maid to clean the house, and a babysitter to watch the kids for a week while party plans are made. Then, sit back, relax and snap pictures while the kids eat cake and ice cream, ride on ponies, or skate at Sprinker Recreation Center.

Spanaway Park celebrates its 100th birthday with many

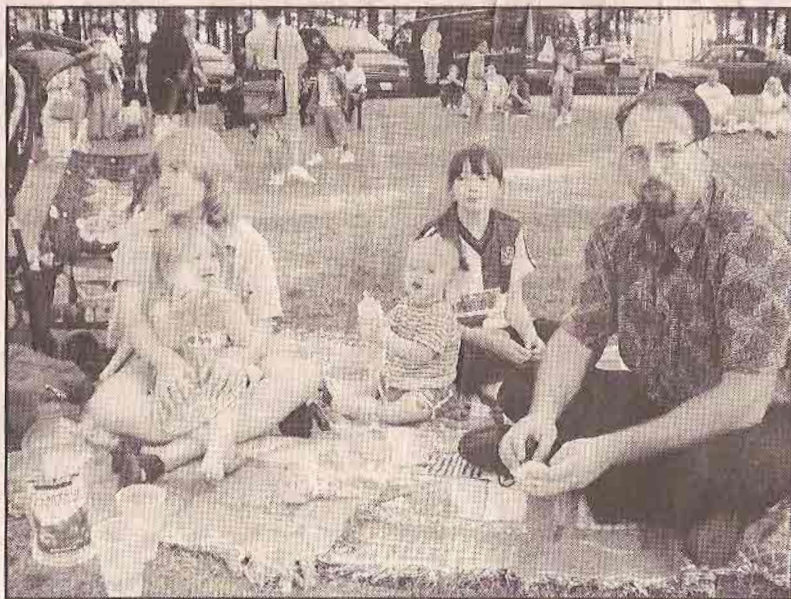
By Christy Pessemier

Last Friday, July 25, Spanaway Park celebrated its 100th year anniversary. Flocks of people gathered to eat food, enjoy the entertainment, and to support the event, which donates most of its proceeds to the newly approved Sprinker Skateboard Park.

Spanaway Park began as a sawmill, general store, and blacksmith shop in 1873. Over time, the park became more and more popular after the Tacoma Street Railway and Power Company had streetcar lines running from Tacoma to Spanaway in 1902.

An outdoor dance pavilion of the turn of the century was also a big attraction at Spanaway Park. The pavilion was famously known as the "biggest open air dancing pavilion in Washington state."

Today, the streetcars are no longer running, and the dance pavilion has been removed. Still, Spanaway Park has much to offer with two swimming beaches, covered picnic areas, and boat launches



The Jaber family enjoys watching the sights and sounds of Spanaway Park's 100th birthday celebration. From left to right: Pam, Hannah, Luke, Holly, and Erich Jaber. The Jaber's other son Evan is not in the picture because he was in line for the bounce arena.

and rentals. There are also many open play areas, clusters of play equipment, and walking trails.

During the 100th year celebration of the park's history, Mary Bridge Hospital offered life jackets and helmet fittings from 6-8 p.m., The "Dance

Factory" performed dance hits of the 1970s through the 1990s, and the Lemay classic car show showcased the "largest private auto collection on earth."

Some other events were the LipSync contests, Karaoke, and the children's Bounce Arena.

Spanaway Street Fair coming soon

By Christy Pessemier

Watermelon seed spitting contests, pet parades, and an enormous variety of activities will be on display this weekend at the Celebrate Spanaway Historical Street Fair.

The fair's entrance will be at 162nd and Park Avenue South,

two blocks west of Pacific Avenue in Spanaway. Events will take place on Saturday, Aug. 2, from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and Sunday, Aug. 3, from noon-4 p.m.

Check out www.celebratespanaway.com for more information.

Spana-Park seniors keep busy



Seniors enjoy a meal in the Spana-Park mealsite dining room. From left to right: Claudia Strickland, Della Fowler, and Eleanor Farris.

by Christy Pessemier

Caught between a rock and a hard spot, the Spana-Park Senior Center struggles to maintain its activities and benefits to local seniors.

The Senior Center has a disadvantage of not being within city limits of Parkland or Spanaway, so they have to apply for grants from "various places."

"We get grants every so

often from Aging and Long-term care in Lakewood," Spana-Park Senior Center Director Hazel Giddings said. "But we don't have enough funds to hire people to do work for the senior Center, and volunteers who are willing to commit for more than a week are hard to find."

Giddings says she has tried repeatedly to get funding for the senior center from the Washington state government, but to no avail.

"I've talked to state representatives who told me they will not fund us because we are not in the city," Giddings said.

All 200 members of the center are required to pay membership dues. This helps to pay for the insurance costs mostly, but does not support the center financially, as many might think, Giddings says.

"It is hard because we never know how much we are going to get from the grants. So, we rely on volunteer help, and donations," Giddings said. "We also do our own fundraising on a regular basis."

Fundraising includes pan-

cake breakfasts and quilt raffle. The quilts are handmade by a special group of seniors, and then raffled off. This is the center's biggest fundraiser.

According to Giddings, the Spanaway/Parkland area is "one of the lowest income areas for seniors, along with Eatonville and Buckley." The goal of the Spana-Park Senior Center is to "do everything possible to help seniors in the area."

The center has a mealsite for low income seniors, along with a food and clothing bank.

"It is important that seniors are not isolated," Giddings said. "Many are dealing with depression or have lost a spouse recently, and it is very important that they get out occasionally, and have some social activities."

Despite the center's struggles, member Rosie Ingle expressed the desire to expand their local group.

"I would like it if more would come," Ingle said.

For more information, or volunteer, call the Spana-Park Senior Center at (253) 537-485

ay Park celebrates birthday with many

Pierce County Fair is fun for everyone

by Christy Pessemier

Ahh...that familiar smell... cotton candy mixed with manure. Last Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, people came from all over to take in the comforting aromatherapy the Pierce County Fair in Graham offered. The sounds of children screaming for thrills on amusement rides, and people laughing and talking filled the air. Smiles were everywhere.

"I love going to the fair," 12-year-old Puyallup 4-H member Courtney Tribble said. "I always meet a lot of nice people."

Tribble has two heifers, Susie and Sweet Stuff, which she showed for competition at the fair.

According to Tribble, showing heifers is not an easy task.

"It's hard work, because you have to bathe them and then blow-dry them," she said. "Then you have to make sure they are healthy and give them lots of food and water."

In the stall next to Sweet Stuff and Susie, 14-year-old Orting 4-H member Melissa Knowlton wrapped an arm around her polled Hereford, Jessica:

"I've been showing Jessica for six months," Knowlton said. "It's new to me, but I enjoy doing it. I've learned a lot."

According to Knowlton, the heifers are judged on appearance, health and muscle tone. She looks forward to showing Jessica at the fair next year.

Kaleigh Krantz, 13-year-old Sumner 4-H member, showed two Alpine goats. The mother goat, Abby, was the recipient of the Reserve Grand Champion award, which Krantz proudly hung on the gate of the goat's stall.

Friendly and outgoing to observers, Krantz asks people as they walk by, "Can I answer any questions?"

She says she enjoys having the tables turned.

"I love this," she said. "For once, it's a kid giving an adult information about something."

Nearby, in the Home Economics area, Julie Kennedy carefully presented how a knitting machine called a "White" works.

"It's supposed to be a lot faster than knitting by hand," Kennedy said. "This morning, I knitted four dishcloths with the machine in the same amount of time it would have taken someone to knit one dishcloth by hand."

Kennedy smiled brightly. As a Clothing Textile Advisor for the Washington State University Extension in Tacoma, she admits she loves what she does. That is why she is at the fair.

"Knitting, sewing and stitchery are like a dying art," she said. "I like to know I am helping people learn more by being at the fair and showing them what I do."

Kennedy also knits afghans, sweaters and hats. Often, she donates her creations to the Battered Women's Shelter and to people on the street.

A few steps away, two teenage boys teasingly made faces as they put on colorful jokers' hats.

"I'm here helping my little sister," Joey Price said. "She's showing her horse for 4-H."

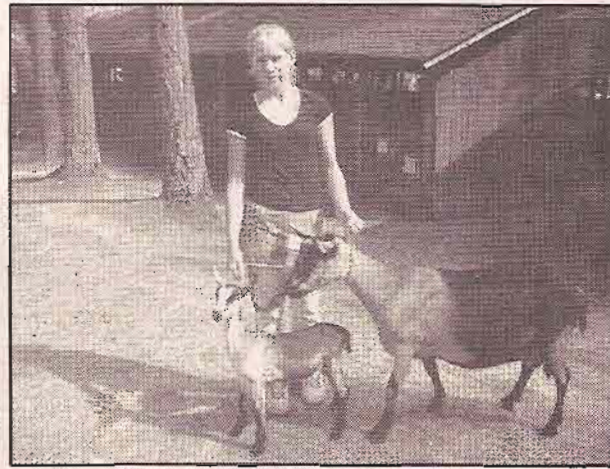
Friend Kyle McMichael added, "I'm doing demonstrations for Untalan's Tae Kwon Do. I get to break four boards, which is equal to one brick."

Graham Fire and Rescue gave balloons and had kids take their picture in fire trucks. Children painted in the "Fun Painting" booth. People sat and watched in amusement as the "Let's Pretend Circus" performed.

All over, the evidence was clear: adults, children and animals alike were at the fair to have a good time.



Above: Kids enjoy lollipops they earned from a scavenger hunt at the fair. From bottom left to right: Johnny Egan, Katie Johnson,



Madison Winfrey, Jade Egan. Top left to right: Hannah Winfrey, and Alex Johnson. Right: Sumner 4-H member Kaleigh Krantz pauses while taking her Alpine goats Abby and Tootsie for a walk around the Fairgrounds.

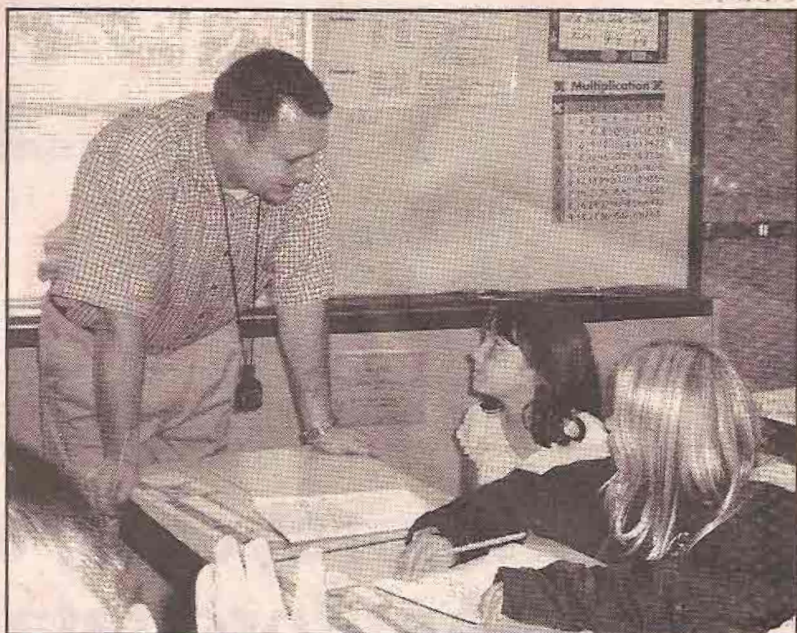


Julie Kennedy uses a "White" knitting machine to make a dishcloth in the Home Economics booth at the Fair.

Photos by Christy Pessemier



Orting 4-H member Melissa Knowlton shows off her Polled Hereford, Jessica.



Fourth Grade Elk Plain Elementary School Teacher Jim Warnke answers the questions of Nicole Lees, 9 (left) and Raechelle Steele, 9 (right) on the first day of school last Thursday.

Elk Plain school receives Gates grant

by Christy Pessemier

Opportunity for better 'Integration' programs just increased at Elk Plain Elementary. The Bethel School District's School of Choice was just notified this past summer that it will be the recipient of a \$16,000 grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant will be distributed throughout a three year period.

"I am thrilled!" Elk Plain Elementary School Principal Machelle Bielke said. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

According to Bielke, the money will be used for staff development and for research, training, and purchasing of the proper technology. The first year will be a planning year; the second year will be implementing the plan for the school; and the third year, assessing, evaluating, and filling in any gaps.

Integration, Bielke says, is a program that follows the methods from Howard Gardner's book titled "Multiple Intelligences," which encourages and welcomes various learning styles. Children learn through music, dance, theater, visual arts and science.

"We are a school that emphasizes the arts," Bielke said. "Kids who don't do well sitting down with a paper and pencil at a desk have the chance to learn things by attaching them to a song or a type of dance."

The new grant, Bielke says, gives Elk Plain the chance to 'meet the needs of all the students.'

This is Elk Plain's eleventh year following the Integration format, and currently there is a waiting list for those students wishing to be a part of the program.

Flu bug is ready to pounce

by Christy Pessemier

"Nasty" is the word being used to describe this year's flu season. Dr. Ron Morehouse at the Quick Care Family Practice Medical Clinic in Graham and Eatonville says there are five different strains expected to impact the local area.

"The other part of the world has the flu season before we do," Morehouse said. "And from watching what has happened there, we can see that it is going to be a very bad season."

As a result, Morehouse, along with the Centers for

Disease Control, recommends getting a flu shot as soon as possible.

"We rarely see the CDC advocating that kids have flu shots," Morehouse said. "This year they are advocating that kids have the shot before they begin school."

According to Morehouse, some infants are even being vaccinated with the flu shot. Though some parents may not be eager to get flu shots for their infant, Morehouse says it is important to at least have school age children and adults get the shot.

"We are already seeing people for the flu now," Morehouse said. "This flu vaccination is necessary to keep the school populated with healthy kids."

The Quick Care Medical Clinic offers the flu shot for \$15 per person. The clinic is available on a walk-in basis, and there is no office visit charge for those getting the shot. A booster shot can also be obtained after four months of having the original flu shot for \$10.

Side effects of the flu shot may include fever or chills for 24-48 hours after receiving it.

Graham Fire Department seeks past members for celebration

by Christy Pessemier

A big celebration is planned for Saturday, Sept. 20, at the Graham Fire Station in Graham. The fire station will be commemorating their 40th anniversary.

"We want to make it both a celebration and a reunion," Myra Merdian, Public Prevention Education Officer for the Graham Fire Department, said. "We are really encouraging past firefighters and chiefs to come and attend. It's a great opportunity for the department to reunite with its previous members."

The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

According to Merdian, a lot of activities are planned.

It is important for us to teach people about fire safety.
-- Myra Merdian

"We will have Smokey Bear there, and Sparky, our dalmation fire dog," Merdian said.

"Also, there will be bike helmets and all-wheel sport

helmets for sale. We will have cake and refreshments, and lots of activities for kids as well," she said.

The purpose, Merdian says, is not only to reunite firefighters, but to educate the public.

"It is important for us to teach people about fire safety," Merdian said. "So, we will have information available on wildfires and how to prevent them."

For those who are wishing to be part of the reunion, or for those who have been members of the Graham Fire Department in the past, please contact Myra Merdian as soon as possible at 253-847-8811.

Material Girl writing children's books

by Christy Pessemier

What is the world coming to?

Skimpy clothes and bikinis beckon to girls young enough to still be in car seats, porn pushers are running for governor, and now...Madonna is writing children's books? God help us.

A few weeks ago she was exchanging "open mouthed kisses" with Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera on television for everyone to see, and now all of a sudden she's supposed to be this role model for kids. I don't know about you, but the thought of my kid asking me, "Mommy, who's Madonna?" is not a pleasant one. How would I explain it?

I could say, "Well, honey, she's a 45-year-old author and performer who has also written other books like *SEX* and she's given us all kinds of images of sadomasochism and sexuality that we never knew before her." Or I could say, "She likes to wear cone-shaped bras and twirl men around her finger. She's had two or three abortions from one of the fourteen or so different men she's slept with, but she really likes kids, and so now I want you to read her book."

Nah, I don't think so. Her book is one I would rather pass on by. And when my kid is old enough, I'm sure she'll hear about Madonna when the time comes. Somehow the idea of giving her a book by the "Like a Virgin" singer doesn't seem to go with the whole childhood, happiness and innocence idea. Yeah, so she doesn't write about that stuff in her book, but why would I want to pay for something that someone who doesn't value the innocence of childhood wrote?

Madonna and other celebrities who use their fame to sway children are not on my list of great people to follow. I'm sure she means well, and she probably does love kids, but I can't see myself cozying up to my little ones and saying: "Let's find out what Madonna has to say in her book." I think I'll stick to *Peter Rabbit* and *Little House on the Prairie*. Those were the days.

Bethel Jr. High Schools on double shifts for fall

by Christy Pessemier

Five hundred sixty-nine Cougar Mountain Junior High students will be double-shifted with nine hundred seventy-three Bethel Junior High students at Bethel Junior High this week. This will continue until November or December due to delays in the construction of Cougar Mountain Junior High.

"Planning has been done very carefully and we have been on budget with everything," Bethel Communications Director Mark Wenzel said. "But safety is a priority, and there are still some things that need to be finished in that area."

According to Wenzel, there will be two separate schools operating within one building.

"We feel that building school unity is very important," Wenzel said. "That is why the Cougar Mountain kids will all have the same teachers, and the whole school will move together as one when Cougar Mountain Junior High is finished."

Until then, Bethel Junior High students will split shifts and attend in the morning, while Cougar Mountain students will attend in the afternoon. As far as school schedules go, a little improvisation is necessary.

"In order to fit both shifts into one day, the Bethel Junior High students are getting up really early, like 6:30 a.m.," Wenzel said.

It will require considerable patience on behalf of students, parents, teachers and administrators to get through the fall.