



## FMCA --- Lewis & Clark *Thousand Trails* Busy Bee Newsletter - Volume 19 December 2015

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**A SPECIAL WELCOME to our newest members:**

**John Hansen & Donna Anello from Florence, OR**

Below is a Christmas Message from our NW Area President to All members.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**

**To Northwest Area FMCA Members**

It is that wonderful time of year again! Please remember in your prayers those that we have lost and all those that are abroad and cannot be with their families. Give thanks to all those that have given up so much so that we can all enjoy the freedoms that we have.

The Northwest Area Team is working diligently on our 2016 Rally “**All Aboard For Albany**” to be held at the Linn County Fair & Expo in Albany, Oregon from June 23 – 26, 2016. I would like to thank our Rally Master Dennis Martin, Assistant Rally Master Don Schleuse and all the Captains and Volunteers for all their hard work in preparing for the June event. As you know, without volunteers, our rallies would not be successful.

Visit the Northwest Area website, [www.fmcanw.org](http://www.fmcanw.org) for all the rally information. It will be updated as new information becomes available. Please put us on your calendar! Bring your chapter members, friends, and family along for a wonderful time.

I want to once again thank our webmaster Sandie Blakley for ensuring our website is one of the best. A very big Thank you to the Northwest Area Team, Don & Barbara Schleuse, Kent & Karen Pratt, Judie & Jerry Lehenbauer, and our Past President Andy Balogh for all their help in attending chapter rallies that I was unable to attend but most of all, keeping me in line. To all of you that I have spoken to during our visits, thank you for your kind words and support, **you** are what make your Northwest Area the best Area.

It looks like this winter will be a very busy one for us! We will be attending the Western Area Rally in Indio, January 6 -11, 2016. We will be having a Northwest Area Gathering on Thursday, January 7, 2016, look for the signs around the fairgrounds and join us!!! From Indio, it is off to Quartzite for the Big Tent & RV Show. Please stop by the FMCA booth and say HI! Please let us know if your chapter will be holding a get together in the Quartzsite or Yuma Areas this winter. The next event for us will be FMCA's 93rd Family Reunion to be held in Perry, GA from March 17 -20, 2016.

After the Perry Family Reunion, it is back to the beautiful Northwest for the Business & Planning Meetings that will be held at the Linn County Fair & Expo in Albany from April 19 -21, 2016.

In closing, I want to again thank all of you for putting your trust in me to represent you at the Area and National level. I look forward to all of your suggestions and kind words to help me bring your comments and ideas to the forefront to keep this great organization on the right path to prosperity. We have all accomplished so much over the past years and with your continued input I know the Northwest Area will continue to lead at all levels of FMCA.

On behalf of the entire Northwest Area Executive Board, we hope your holidays are safe and enjoyable no matter where you may be. Travel safe and happy!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to

all!

Kathie & Andy

## **Mike & Sheila May**

Greeting Everyone, 2015 has been a whirl wind for us. We did the usual trip south for last winter, then a Panama Canal Cruise, followed by Spring and Summer rallies, gardening and Sheila has been stamping and card making during our short breaks between events. Hunting season was next on the list then immediately into holiday mode and prepping for our return to Palm Springs to get out of the rainy wintery weather.

On a Lewis & Clark note, please check out our new website [www.landctt.com](http://www.landctt.com) If you would like your photo added to the members photos area please email me your photo with how you wish your name(s) to appear. Sheila and I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We hope to see you down south.

Mike & Sheila

## **Penny Williams - Young**

We are finally leaving Eugene today after a month and 3 days waiting for parts that had to be manufactured. We cannot enjoy the 395 route that looked so interesting as some parts are high and it's too late in the fall now, so we will do the I-5 foxtrot till we get further south. Bob continues to walk farther and better w/out crutches but will not throw them away yet.

## **Betty Graffis**

Merry Christmas friends. For those of you who somehow missed our recent life changing event, October 30th Joe was diagnosed with Stage 3 Colon Cancer. He had a bowel resection with end to end anastomosis on Nov. 13. He has had issues with the incision healing properly so has been on a hefty dose of antibiotics. He had a port placement procedure done yesterday (Monday Nov. 30th) which as he said was "easy peasy" (although we were there from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM) He is getting a little rest before starting chemo on Dec 16th. He has lost weight (from 189 to 172) but is slowly getting his appetite back.

We were so disappointed we didn't get to go to the desert for the winter but having goals during this time is so important and Joe's goal is to be well enough to be best man at his son's wedding next Sept 16th. We want to thank all of you who have visited by phone or in person, by email, facebook and those who have sent cards and for all your prayers and well wishes.

## **Scott and Lois Siler**

MERRY CHRISTMAS to one and all Lewis and Clark friends.  
We have finished our journey around the USA and are looking for some rest.  
We are spending the winter in Southern California instead of Texas as previously planned. So we're looking forward to seeing some of our fellow snowbirds here and there.  
We're glad to be home.

## **Russ & Kay Watkins**

Shortly after the rally at Seaside in October, we took our RV to Arizona again this fall and spent a few weeks in the Phoenix area where Russ played in 7 horseshoe tourneys (2 wins and 2 second place finishes).

Our son Brad from Bend, Oregon, with wife Debbie and granddaughter Missy joined us for a nice Thanksgiving in Phoenix. Then we left the RV in storage in Phoenix and returned home by car for Christmas with the whole family. Right after Christmas, we will head back south and pick up our RV and spend a little time in Apache Junction and Quartzsite. Then about mid-January we will head to TT-Palm Springs and then to TT- Wilderness Lakes for the rest of the winter. We plan to get home by early April.

Our son Jeff & wife Andrea recently sold their home and moved in with us so they will be house-sitting for us while we are travelling for the next year or so.

If you haven't already paid your 2016 L&C dues, it's that time of year. You can pay your dues by mailing me a \$10 check made out to L&C-TT. Please send it to my home address at: Russ Watkins, 362 NE 15th Ct, Hillsboro, Or 97124. Or you can plan to just pay me your dues in person if we cross paths this winter. We do plan to be at the Seaside Rally in April, so if you want to pay me there that is fine too. If you are not sure if your dues for 2016 are already paid, just give me a call at 503-804-1929.

We look forward to seeing those of you who will be touring the Southwest this winter! And to our members who are dealing with serious health issues, we have you all in our thoughts and prayers for improved health and happiness/ Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to all!!!!  
Russ & Kay Watkins

## **Roger & Nancy Beausoleil**

Can you believe it, 2015 is almost over. Where did it go?? We spent a lot of time this summer going on hikes. As you all know, Roger had 3 stents put in his heart in November of 2014. That went very well. However, on Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> 2015, Roger was diagnosed with Atrial Fibrillation. This means the Roger is on Coumadin and has to be tested routinely (it started out at 2 times a week at this time Roger is on a one time a week testing).. Through all of this, Roger has been feeling fine. Nancy had surgery on her eye last week at OHSU and is recovering well.

Our son is now living in Portland and we get to visit with him often. Our granddaughter (who graduated from college in May) is living in Salem now and we are enjoying that. We had our entire family here for Thanksgiving, and we will all be together at Christmas.

We hope to be able to head South by Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>. Here's wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and hoping that 2016 will be a good one for you.

Roger & Nancy

## **Larry and Diane Parsons**

'Tis the season to wish everyone Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We are still at home but plan to leave New Years day heading to AZ and eventually on to CA. Hope to run into some of you along the way!

We had the cool temps here in Tacoma for a week, and now the rain is upon us big time. This is our year to stay home until after Christmas and we got a reminder of what it is like here in the winter time. For those of you who are fighting illness and are not traveling this year, you are in our Prayers, and we wish you a speedy recovery.

Larry and Diane

## **Billera, Jusme & zoo**

L'aurie and I are still RV'ing & roaming Oregon & Washington while waiting for the hospital to extend the time between treatments to give us enough time to head south to warm up and dry off. Moving has always been a pain but being constantly on the move is a logistical nightmare. It's amazing how complicated our lives have become.

Otherwise the RV is holding up and we're getting the hang of living in a small space and not sitting or stepping on the dog or the cats nor each other.

## **Becky's Corner**

Is it really almost Christmas? This year has gone by much to fast for my liking! We hope all of our L&C friends have had a spectacular year enjoying life and getting to do the things that matter most, with those that matter most!

We have had a few glitches in our ability to travel once again, but do hope this next year may bring better things. I will say that I spent much time with my girls and their families helping as moms do and Randy many times coming with me to do 'muscle work'!

The canning, drying and freezing is done for the year thank goodness. Did anyone have an abundance of tomatoes that would not stop producing? I finally tore them out in mid November! The garden and fruit trees produced nicely this year so in between trips to the girls we managed to harvest most everything.

So to all of you from Randy and I a few Gaelic wishes....

**Nollaig Shona Dhaoibh, agus Athbhlain faoi mhaise dhuit!!!**

Happy Christmas to you and a Happy New Year!!!

I would like to share this story as it really makes the joy of giving come to life!

**A Christmas Story you won't forget**

**Pa never had much compassion** for the lazy or those who squandered their means and then never had enough for the necessities. But for those who were genuinely in need, his heart was as big as all outdoors. It was from him that I learned the greatest joy in life comes from giving, not from receiving.

**It was Christmas Eve 1881.** I was fifteen years old and feeling like the world had caved in on me because there just hadn't been enough money to buy me the rifle that I'd wanted for Christmas. We did the chores early that night for some reason. I just figured Pa wanted a little extra time so we could read in the Bible.

**After supper was over** I took my boots off and stretched out in front of the fireplace and waited for Pa to get down the old Bible. I was still feeling sorry for myself and, to be honest, I wasn't in much of a mood to read Scriptures. But Pa didn't get the Bible, instead he bundled up again and went outside. I couldn't figure it out because we had already done all the chores. I didn't worry about it long though, I was too busy wallowing in self-pity.

**Soon Pa came back in.** It was a cold clear night out and there was ice in his beard. "Come on, Matt," he said. "Bundle up good, it's cold out tonight." I was really upset then. Not only wasn't I getting the rifle for Christmas, now Pa was dragging me out in the cold, and for no earthly reason that I could see. We'd already done all the chores, and I couldn't think of anything else that needed doing, especially not on a night like this. But I knew Pa was not very patient at one dragging one's feet when he'd told them to do something, so I got up and put my boots back on and got my cap, coat, and mittens.

**Ma gave me a mysterious smile** as I opened the door to leave the house. Something was up, but I didn't know what. Outside, I became even more dismayed. There in front of the house was the work team, already hitched to the big sled. Whatever it was we were going to do wasn't going to be a short, quick, little job. I could tell. We never hitched up this sled unless we were going to haul a big load.

**Pa was already up on the seat,** reins in hand. I reluctantly climbed up beside him. The cold was already biting at me. I wasn't happy. When I was on, Pa pulled the sled around the house and stopped in front of the woodshed. He got off and I followed. "I think we'll put on the high sideboards," he said. "Here, help me." The high sideboards! It had been a bigger job than I wanted to do with just the low sideboards on, but whatever it was we were going to do would be a lot bigger with the high sideboards on.

**After we had exchanged the sideboards,** Pa went into the woodshed and came out with an armload of wood -- the wood I'd spent all summer hauling down from the mountain, and then all Fall sawing into blocks and splitting.

**What was he doing?** Finally I said something. "Pa," I asked, "what are you doing?" "You been by the Widow Jensen's lately?" he asked. The Widow Jensen lived about two miles down the road. Her husband had died a year or so before and left her with three children, the oldest being eight. Sure, I'd been by, but so what? "Yeah," I said, "Why?" "I rode by just today," Pa said. "Little Jake was out digging around in the woodpile trying to find a few chips. They're out of wood, Matt."

**That was all he said** and then he turned and went back into the wood-shed for another armload of wood. I followed him. We loaded the sled so high that I began to wonder if the horses would be able to pull it. Finally, Pa called a halt to our loading, then we went to the smoke house and Pa took down a big ham and a side of bacon. He handed them to me and told me to put them in the sled and wait. When he returned he was carrying a sack of flour over his right shoulder and a smaller sack of something in his left hand. "What's in the little sack?" I asked. "Shoes boy" They're out of shoes".

**Little Jake just had gunny sacks** wrapped around his feet when he was out in the woodpile this morning. I got the children a little candy too. It just wouldn't be Christmas without a little candy."

**We rode the two miles** to the Widow Jensen's pretty much in silence. I tried to think through what Pa was doing. We didn't have much by worldly standards. Of course, we did have a big woodpile, though most of what was left now was still in the form of logs that I would have to saw into blocks and split before we could use it. We also had meat and flour, so we could spare that, but I knew we didn't have any money, so why was Pa buying them shoes and candy? Really, why was he doing any of this? The Widow Jensen had closer neighbors than us; it shouldn't have been our concern.

**We came in from the blind side** of the Jensen house and unloaded the wood as quietly as possible. Then we took the meat and flour and shoes to the door. We knocked. The door opened a crack and a timid voice said, "Who is it?" "Lucas Miles, Ma'am, and my son, Matt. Could we come in for a bit?" The Widow Jensen opened the door to let us in. She had a blanket wrapped around her shoulders. The children were wrapped in another and were sitting in front of the fireplace by a very small fire that hardly gave off any heat at all. The Widow Jensen fumbled with a match and finally lit the lamp.

**"We brought you a few things,** Ma'am," Pa said and set down the sack of flour. I put the meat on the table. Then Pa handed her the sack that had the shoes in it. She opened it hesitantly and took the shoes out one pair at a time. There was a pair for her and one for each of the children sturdy shoes, the best, shoes that would last.

**I watched her carefully.** She bit her lower lip to keep it from trembling and then tears filled her eyes and started running down her cheeks. She looked up at Pa like she wanted to say something, but it wouldn't come out. "We brought a load of wood too, Ma'am," Pa said. He turned to me and said, "Matt, go bring in enough to last awhile. Let's get that fire up to size and heat this place up."

**I wasn't the same person** when I went back out to bring in the wood. I had a big lump in my throat, and as much as I hate to admit it, there were tears in my eyes too. In my mind I kept seeing those three kids huddled around the fireplace and their mother standing there with tears running down her cheeks with so much gratitude in her heart that she couldn't speak.

**My heart swelled within me** and a joy that I'd never known before filled my soul. I had given at Christmas many times before, but never when it had made so much difference. I could see we were literally saving the lives of these people.

**I soon had the fire blazing** and everyone's spirits soared. The kids started giggling when Pa handed them each a piece of candy and the Widow Jensen looked on with a smile that probably hadn't crossed her face for a long time. She finally turned to us. "God bless you," she said. "I know the Lord has sent

you. The children and I have been praying that he would send one of his angels to spare us." In spite of myself, the lump returned to my throat and the tears welled up in my eyes again.

**I'd never thought of Pa** in those exact terms before, but after the Widow Jensen mentioned it I could see that it was probably true. I was sure that a better man than Pa had never walked the earth. I started remembering all the times he had gone out of his way for Ma and me, and many others. The list seemed endless as I thought on it.

**Pa insisted that everyone try** on the shoes before we left. I was amazed when they all fit and I wondered how he had known what sizes to get. Then I guessed that if he was on an errand for the Lord that the Lord would make sure he got the right sizes. Tears were running down the Widow Jensen's face again when we stood up to leave. Pa took each of the kids in his big arms and gave them a hug. They clung to him and didn't want us to go. I could see that they missed their Pa, and I was glad that I still had mine.

**At the door Pa turned** to Widow Jensen and said, "The Mrs. wanted me to invite you and the children over for Christmas dinner tomorrow. The turkey will be more than the three of us can eat, and a man can get cantankerous if he has to eat turkey for too many meals. We'll be by to get you about eleven. It'll be nice to have some little ones around again. Matt, here, hasn't been little for quite a spell." I was the youngest. My two brothers and two sisters had all married and had moved away.

**Widow Jensen nodded** and said, "Thank you, Brother Miles. I don't have to say, 'May the Lord bless you,' I know for certain that He will."

**Out on the sled** I felt a warmth that came from deep within and I didn't even notice the cold. When we had gone a ways, Pa turned to me and said, "Matt, I want you to know something. Your ma and me have been tucking a little money away here and there all year so we could buy that rifle for you, but we didn't have quite enough. Then yesterday a man who owed me a little money from years back came by to make things square. Your ma and me were real excited, thinking that now we could get you that rifle, and I started into town this morning to do just that. But on the way I saw little Jake out scratching I the woodpile with his feet wrapped in those gunny sacks and I knew what I had to do.

**"Son, I spent the money** for shoes and a little candy for those children. I hope you understand.

**I understood,** and my eyes became wet with tears again. I understood very well, and I was so glad Pa had done it. Now the rifle seemed very low on my list of priorities. Pa had given me a lot more. He had given me the look on the Widow Jensen's face and the radiant smiles of her three children.

**For the rest of my life,** whenever I saw any of the Jensens, or split a block of wood, I remembered. And remembering brought back that same joy I felt riding home beside Pa that night. Pa had given me much more than a rifle that night, he had given me the best Christmas of my life.