

Society of St. Vincent de Paul - Rogue Valley District Council

Letter from the President -
Page 2

Don Lamb -
Page 2

Who's New -
Page 2 - 3

Western Regional
Page 3

Running the Shelter -
Page 4



CPR Class -
Page 4

Food Recalls - Urban Rest Stop -
Page 5

Social Services Grant - Giving Back -
Page 6

Meet Gin Lambert -
Page 7

Students Lend a Helping Hand -
Page 7



Casey Strikling

The Collectibles Queen and Mr. Fix-It -
Page 8

Scheduled Events

School Supplies (p 4)	Aug. 11-15
Volunteer Picnic (p 4)	Sept. 14
Collectibles Show	Oct. 5

Social Services: The Crisis Spreads

"We are seeing many people today who have never had to ask for help. They have always been able to pay their way. You can tell by their manner that asking for assistance is very hard for them. Embarrassment is a common reaction," says Nola Geaney, President of the Social Services Conference.

Because of these hard times we are having families come to us for help where the breadwinners were successful selling cars and real estate. "These are people who never imagined they would be in this position. Whatever safety net they had is gone and they have nowhere else to go," Nola continues. "Many of the people coming to us are between fifty and sixty, some older, and have

lost out to younger people entering the job market who don't expect salaries as high as those who are mid-career in their lives...Probably some of the after affects of age discrimination."

Besides looking for rental and utility assistance, requests for money for gasoline and apartment deposits are not uncommon. Some people have lost their home due to the mortgage crisis and are looking for help moving to cheaper apartments. I ask Nola how they respond to our help. She replies, "While they often don't say much, you can see the relief in their faces when they realize we can provide some help. I remember one man, whose apartment we were able to save, who simply gave a deep sigh and said thank you when I told him we would help. Sometimes, they ask, can't you do more...Clearly, an indication of their desperation."

Comparing rental and utility assistance, there has been a 100% increase from June 2007 to June 2008. Expectations for the future look like more of the same. "Things will probably get tougher," says Nola. "If people can't find jobs and pay their rent, demands will increase. Some may have to give up their insurance, and we will see more requests for medication assistance. And even more folks coming in for groceries and meals."

"Thankfully, we have wonderful counselors," Nola reminds me. "Because of conditions, we see fewer people who are rude, but the days are long and tiring. It is particularly hard on our counselors who work more than one day a week."

It's great that Saint Vincent de Paul is able to help in these hard times. ♦

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear fellow volunteers and supporters of our St. Vincent de Paul Council,

Without exception, we are experiencing higher demands in all the many service areas we provide to poor and needy. It appears that some of the people in our community who formerly might have been classified as lower middle class are slipping into the working poor category. A growing number of people who formerly were able to make ends meet, are confronted today with sorting through what real life needs can they do without because they simply can no longer afford everything that is required to sustain a way of living. Some of these people seem to have no financial buffer left due the higher costs for the necessities of life and therefore cannot accommodate the increased medical, housing, utility, food, transportation, prescription drug, clothing and household item costs. The impact to our Council is an increased in demand for our services between 20 and 35% depending on the type of service.

To keep up with all this we are always in need of additional volunteers from all backgrounds and a continuing stream of donated items to our Thrift Store. In turn, there is a need for a continuing stream of purchases from our Thrift Store as well as a continuing stream of other financial support.

I thank all of our volunteers and supporters who make possible our meeting this demand. If you can help us please contact Cheryle Tatman, our volunteer coordinator, or me at 772-3828.

Sincerely and God Bless you,

Len Hebert

Who's New at St. Vincent de Paul?

Meet Audrey Talbott



Besides working as a cashier in the Thrift Store on Tuesdays Audrey is also our new Treasurer and part of the younger generation we are seeking to attract as volunteers to Saint Vincent de Paul. Both her mom and dad, Bill and Yoshi Pehl, were volunteers and her mom still spend much energy assisting in the Thrift Store. Mom and dad encouraged her to volunteer so she joined SVDP in 2002. She really likes the other great people although she sometimes wonders about why a few complain so much.

Audrey formerly worked for United Airlines in Medford as a customer representative and owned and managed the TouVelle Lodge. Her husband, Mike owns a construction business in Medford and has 3 sons, one a 25 year old starving artist, and the other two, 21 and 22, both serving in the Navy. You might see her sometimes scooting around proudly sporting her Navy sweatshirt. We certainly welcome Audrey into the organization and hope she can entice some of her peers to join us.

Greetings to Mario Laprova

Mario, our new CPA, is originally from Teano, Italy near Naples. I think Mario should receive an award as "most persistent prospective

volunteer" at our 2008 Volunteer Awards Dinner. He originally became interested in working as a volunteer here over five years ago. But, either because we had not perfected our recruiting system or because it wasn't meant to be, it was just a few months ago that a match was finally made. And are we so lucky it was. Mario says, "Most non-profits struggle because of a lack of skilled financial professionals to assist them," says Mario. "I would like to see other retired CPAs take on these kinds of positions." Of special interest to Mario is to making our financial reporting more appealing to foundations thereby paving the way for more successful grant applications.



When Mario discovered we had completed all the new building over the past several

years without acquiring any debt, he was very impressed. Likewise, he was struck by the quality of the volunteers he has met here and said, "You are really lucky to such a fine gentleman as Len Hebert as your President."

Prior to coming to Medford Mario was a CPA in Rhode Island for 35 years where he met and married his wife. He began visiting his brother-in-law Frank Philips in Medford and liked the community. (Frank is a principle at Saint Marys.) Mario lives with his wife Catherine in Medford. They met while she was his office manager at his Rhode Island business. ♦

NEXT MONTH: Meet Shawn Roberts, our Special Events Coordinator, and Dianne Erickson, our Publicity and Communications Manager.

Invitation to Serve

Beginning in September our council will undertake the Invitation to Serve Drive. The objective will be to assist and encourage interested people in our parishes to join in our ministry of service to the poor. In turn our conferences will be strengthened with new members dedicated to the mission of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The programs format has been used successfully by other councils for recruiting new Vincentians.

The drive will involve all three parishes in the Rogue Valley simultaneously. The cooperation and encouragement of the pastors will be enlisted. Also, the aide of all conference Presidents and members is essential to our success. Awareness of the drive will be accomplished through a series of parish bulletin announcements. This will be followed by a pulpit presentation after each Sunday Mass. Sign up after each Mass will be followed within a few days by an orientation meeting of all interested parties at which the works of the society here in the Rogue Valley will be explained. New members will then be encouraged to select the area or areas of service to which they feel attracted.

"The programs format has been used successfully by other councils for recruiting new Vincentians."

The drive will end with an Ozenam School for all Vincentians conducted by Father Pedro on November 8.

Please note: Help from current active Vincentians will be needed the weekend of October 11-12 after all the Masses to assist with sign-ups. ♦

Don Lamb St. Vincent de Paul Society loses one of its leaders...

Don Lamb, our Oregon Archdiocesan Chair and Voice of the Poor Advocate passed away on May 16 in his sleep, he was 71 years old. Don was a volunteer with the Society for over 20 years, and held virtually every position in the Society in Oregon. Don, a trained lawyer, was instrumental in helping those in need, from handing out food boxes on home visits to dealing with the State of Oregon legislature on predatory lending. He is survived by his wife Mary Ann, two grown children and two grandchildren.

With profound sadness and gratitude we, the Rogue Valley District Council, remember Don and his dedication to the poor and needy that was the best. Those of you who attended the dedication ceremony last year celebrating the completion of our Capital Improvement Project might remember his attendance at the event. This quiet, humble and dedicated Vincentian tirelessly helped our Society in many ways. We will all miss him.

Please remember Don and his surviving family in your prayers. ♦

School Supplies Give-Away

August 11-15 from 9 am to 2 pm are the dates for the School Supplies giveaway. This year there will be additional evening hours on **August 12 and 14 only, from 5 pm to 8 pm.**

We need volunteers for screening and/or bagging during these hours. Can you help out? There is a sign up sheet in the office. Thanks! ♦

Western Regional Held in Boise, Idaho

The Gem State was host to this year's St. Vincent de Paul Western Regional meeting. Our Medford SVDP representative was Kathy Morgan and here's her report:

"The theme of the event was Where your treasure lies there too lies your heart. More than 200 Vincentians from the Western United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, joined in prayer and fellowship in Boise, Idaho, June 24-28.

This year marked the 175th Anniversary of the Society's mission in the United States. Father Pedro, spiritual advisor for the Western Region, was on hand to provide uplifting and constructive words about living the Vincentian life. His main message being that God will provide.

Terry Wilson, Vice President of National St. Vincent de Paul, gave a keynote address. The best news out of the conference is that Joe Flanagan, President of National St. Vincent de Paul, is now cancer free.

The conferences give Vincentians a chance to relax, pray together and return to the focus of our mission: Seeing the face of Christ in those we serve. It is always time well spent." ♦

"Where your treasure lies there too lies your heart."



Running the Shelter Keeps Nick Running

When I asked Nick Koutsouros what brought him to Saint Vincent de Paul, his response was, "The food." Continuing on he said, "I dropped in for a meal and ran into Kathy Morgan, whom I had worked with at the Mail Tribune. She told me about an opening for a manager to run the Homeless Shelter which sounded interesting. The rest is history."

According to Al Zon, President of the Shelter Conference, "Nick is very professional about how he runs the Shelter, not always an easy job." Folks in the shelter live in close quarters with strangers, must keep the facility clean and neat and have to be out of the facility during the day. Nick says, "We want people to be out looking for work and not to see the shelter as a hang out." These conditions can cause some tempers to flare. "Nick has the rare balance of empathy, courtesy and firmness when needed," says Al.

Besides running the shelter 24/7 and maintaining a small apartment there, Nick goes out of his way to assist in many other ways. He is often here when nobody else is available to take deliveries and check security. As if that wasn't enough, Nick helps repair electronics for the Thrift Store, assists with pickups at stores and homes, provides assistance keeping our computers running and pitches in with the setup and cleanup for dinner auctions. "There are many ways we depend on Nick," says Kathy Morgan.

Nick says, "I love the diversity of people who volunteer here. We have our own little neighborhood. While it can be a struggle when people in the shelter are difficult, I continually strive to be empathetic. And I love the comments I get on the difference I make. The other day somebody said I was a Godsend...sent here to run the Shelter." Well deserved praise for a job well done. Thanks for your dedicated service Nick! ♦

Photo: Nick working at his desk.



Preparing for the Unexpected

Volunteers at Saint Vincent de Paul are focused on helping others, even in emergency situations. With that in mind Dennis Mihocko, our Vice President of Facilities, held CPR Training Class in May for eleven of our staff and volunteers.

The Medford Fire Department firefighters instructed volunteers in the standard mouth-to-mouth technique used when someone is in danger. Special instructions, demonstrations, and practice for the students was provided, and included special instructions for using CPR on pregnant women and people who are obese.

"We had great involvement, said Dennis. "And even though half of the attendees took training class as a refresher, everyone found the time spent worthwhile and enjoyable." ♦

Photo: Instructor giving CPR directions to Lucille Nichols, Thrift Store volunteer, using a dummy.

Volunteer Picnic September 14

Join your fellow volunteers in the St. Vincent de Paul Volunteers Picnic at Hawthorne Park.

Bring a dish to share, the chicken is supplied by SVDP. ♦



Volunteer Retreat

Plan to attend the Volunteer Retreat in November. Father Pedro will conduct the retreat. Look for more information in the fall newsletter. ♦



Kitchen Food Recalls

Problems of food recalls are compounded when serving several hundred people daily and provide groceries to several hundred families each month. Charlie and Betty Burgess, who keep our Pantry running smoothly, cited several ongoing problems. "Some of the donations we receive, usually from individuals, include rusty, dented and expired items. These are a no, no. We have to toss them," says Charlie.

"Twice we have had recalls on canned stew and chili," adds Betty. "Sorting out recalls adds much work for our crew."

Price increases are causing difficulty for both the Pantry and the Kitchen. "Hot dogs, tuna fish and many of our mainstays have increased as much as 30%," says Charlie. We have had to increase our allocation \$1000.00 each month to cover expenses. The Pantry supports over 600 households a month versus around 400 a year earlier and we serve 200+ people hot meals daily, more than the average of 160 a year ago.

Several local groceries are helping, Safeway, Foodland, and Darigold in particular. The Gleaners also continue to be invaluable. In spite of this support, there are days we have no bread supplies to hand out. We are getting great support from Access to include free USDA products.

New "Urban Rest Stop" Opens Soon

Some of you may have noticed the two story cinderblock addition rising up next to the rear of main building. No, this is not our version of the Tower of London. This facility, due to open in around August 1, will provide a waiting room for the shower and laundry capability to people who are homeless. Obviously, these are services badly needed because there aren't many other practical options available. Similar projects in Seattle have dubbed them an "Urban Rest Stop."

The new facility is a reception area, that will serve as a waiting room for the two showers, a washer and two dryers that are available for use several days a week. Recipients receive soap, a towel, shampoo, and coveralls to put on while they wash their clothes. There is also a bulletin board with job listings. Actual hours of operation will depend on the number of new volunteers we can entice to step forward to manage the

"Just last week we received USDA salmon for the first time in a long time," says Mary Hogue, Kitchen President. "Although we certainly aren't seeing any tomatoes." ♦



operation. So, if you have friends looking for meaningful ways to spend their time, send them to our Volunteer Coordinator Cheryle Tatman. We will need a male and female volunteer for each shift that we remain open. The idea is that somebody living on the street or in their car can shower as well as use the laundry for their clothes, possibly the only ones they have. The Thrift Store, in case you didn't know, continually stocks the tables in the Dining Room with donated clothes and shoes. The only time it will not be available is when the Dental Van is at our facility. The waiting room will be used exclusively for the dental patients on that day.

The idea for creating this facility was the product of Dave Moosman's seeing a similar facility in Seattle. This Urban Rest Stop and the Dental Program reception room is part of an ongoing effort to search for ways to better serve the less privileged in Jackson County.

The General Contractor for the addition is Vitus Construction at a cost of \$90,000. In addition, we are receiving a significant amount of in-kind donations of materials and labor by Vitus and the subcontractors they are using. Thanks to all for their generosity. ♦



Social Services Receives Grant

On May 28th Nola Geaney, President of our Social Services Conference, received a \$50,000 Grant from the Reed and Carolee Walker Fund that is within the Oregon Community Foundation. These grant funds, as in past years, will be used over the next 12 months as part of the over \$250,000 used for rent, utility and prescription cost relief for those in need through the Social Services Conference. Specifically, these Reed and Carolee Walker funds will be applied to emergency rent and utility assistance for the needy in Jackson County.

\$50,000 Grant received from the Reed and Carolee Walker Fund

It goes without saying, that this part of the St. Vincent de Paul mission... to help those who can't meet all of their needs...would not be as well served without the generosity of the Reed and Carolee Walker Fund.

Our thanks and congratulations to Rich Hansen and Ms. Geaney who were the volunteers primarily responsible for assembling the Grant request associated with this important level of granted funds. ♦

Giving Back by Patrick Wilson

My initial assignment was working in the kitchen helping to prepare meals. My years of experience as a kid working in restaurants finally added heft to my resume. Soon however, it became obvious that there were times I would have to step in and do grunge work...greasy pans and slimy dishes. Going all the way back to my youthful experience of spending long, hot hours with my hands submerged in tubs of nasty looking water was, at first, a struggle. It didn't help any when some street person would announce, in a less than gracious manner, that the toilet paper in the rest room needed to be replaced. Or some drying out alcoholic shouting at me, "Hey cookie, what's for lunch." Years of success in the corporate world had not prepared me for such treatment.

The people who come to us for help are a cross section of personalities and attitudes. Some people stop each day to say thanks for the great food or we appreciate your work volunteering. Others demand the best and are more inclined to growl and snap, continually expecting more for themselves.

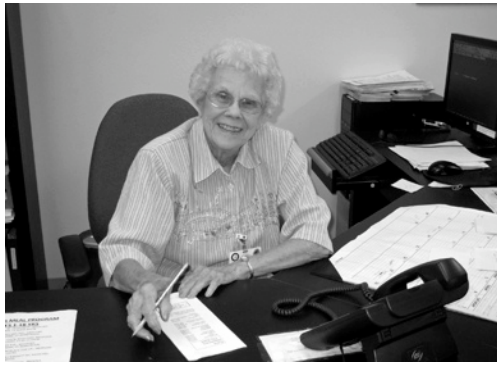
It surprised me how graciously I shifted into my new lot. I began to



accept the often humbling roles I needed to assume. Actually, I saw it as my job to take the lead in doing the less desirable jobs so others might be more willing to pitch in when needed. Getting things done in a nonprofit totally staffed by volunteers is tricky. It seems there are some folks who only do what is their "job" and ignore other work needing to be done. But it is not a good idea to order people around or seek to induce good behavior with negative looks. Since nobody is getting paid and you are also a volunteer, being a nonprofit Nazi wins no friends. Even though a few volunteers use this method, I think humor works best. However, most of our volunteers are dedicated, caring, efficient and loving in their devotion and service to the poor and needy and to St. Vincent de Paul.

One day my wife, Dianne, asked me if I enjoyed working that day. I said, "Not particularly." And she responded, "Why do you continue then?" My answer, "I owe it to the community. I have done well in my life and many of these people have not. This can be hard and often trying work. Besides, maybe God will give me extra credit reducing the years of demerits I've accumulated in my crazy youth." ♦

Photo: Casey Strikling from Hanby Middle School with Patrick Wilson.



Meet Virginia “Gin” Lambert

Gin is originally from Newburyport, Massachusetts, a port town where they used to make Clipper Ships. She and her husband moved to this area about 40 years ago. They owned a Mom and Pop store in Provolt, selling a little bit of everything. About 10 years ago they sold the store and moved to Medford at the request of their kids, so they could be closer to their family.

Eighty-eight years young, Gin started at St. Vincent de Paul “a long time ago” when it was still in the old historical house next to the Sacred Heart church, where the hall now stands. Gin works in the office answering phones, filing, copying, and “making an all around nuisance of herself” says office partner Pat Dumas jokingly.

She even talked her friend Velma Pippinger into volunteering at SVDP. Velma now works three days a week in the sorting area of the Thrift Store. She and Gin both live at the Miller Estates in Central Point which

they love for the friendly family atmosphere. “Gin really enjoys Wine Tasting tours,” says Velma, “and she is kind and generous to everyone.” Gin also is an avid sports fan. She religiously follows the Blazers basketball team, the Mariners and Red Sox baseball teams, the Seahawks and the N. E. Patriots football teams. Her daughter Ginger lives in Central Point and a son who lives in Menifre, California.

She and her grandson and his wife have certainly been very generous to SVDP. Besides the large contribution to the capitol building fund, they also donated the industrial floor cleaning machine and, when the new kitchen floor tiles went in, they donated the extra tiles to match the new floor. “If you’re going to do something, do it right,” says Gin. “The old tiles didn’t match and it looks so much better with all new ones.”

Thank you Gin, for all your hours of volunteer service, and to you and your family for making St. Vincent de Paul the recipient of so many wonderful gifts from the heart! ♦

*“If you’re going to do something, do it right!”
says Virginia Lambert.*



Students Lend a Helping Hand

Teacher Teresa Mitchell brought her students from Hanby Middle School in Gold Hill to St. Vincent de Paul for a day of community service.

The Talented and Gifted Program students from ages 11 to 14 scrubbed walls and cleaned shelves in the kitchen and dining room. “Part of their education is to understand the importance of community service,” Theresa stated. Student Jennifer Lippe said she “liked being helpful.”

The students were also given a tour of the SVDP pantry, shelter and thrift store. Volunteer Patrick Wilson explained how the all-volunteer organization works and who it serves. “It’s fun and it’s good to help other people,” said student Casey Strikling as he scrubbed a kitchen wall.

Other students have volunteered in the past as well. High school students from St. Mary’s, and Crater Lake High have all helped in the kitchen and food pantry. South Medford High took a tour of the facility as a Senior Project.

A big Thank You to all our young community service volunteers. ♦

Photo: Emma Sutphin and Kendall Glenn from Hanby Middle School help clean up in the kitchen.

Meet the *Collectibles Queen* and *Mr. Fix It*

Don Walterick dated Dorothy starting way back in high school and they seemed to hit it off well. But then they went off and married other people and didn't see each other for years. Later in life their mates died and Don decided to go looking for Dorothy, just showing up on her doorstep one bright day 35 years later. So, after a rather long waiting period, they were married and have remained happily joined for the past 14 years.

In the meantime Dottie, as we call her at the Thrift Store, became a Registered Nurse, lived in Iowa and Los Angeles and raised 3 boys and 2 girls. Don built his own family of 2 girls and 2 adopted

sons. While Dottie pursued her nursing, Don ran a small computer company in L.A. When they moved to Medford they had a desire to give back to their community so they volunteered at Saint Vincent de Paul. Dottie has been at Thrift Store for over 12 years and became the *Collectibles Queen* shortly after that. She is constantly on the prowl for those rare gems that are for sale each September. Don has been an invaluable *Mr. Fix It* often building things needed out of available scraps and creating the signage so badly needed in the store.

One of the stranger experiences Dottie had working here occurred at the old Thrift Store. "We were really short of help that day and this guy comes in wanting something to eat. Seeing what was

being worked on, he offered to work for a meal. He worked the rest of the day and was quite a bit of fun. Interestingly enough we never saw him again." Makes one wonder, "Who was that hungry man...?"

Dottie's son Patrick, spouse to our Thrift Store Manager Karen, also lives here in Medford. He and Karen spend many long hours looking for ways to make the store ever more successful. Dottie says, "We really enjoy the people here at Saint Vincent de Paul." According to Dottie, "A day is a success if she has been able to help somebody in some way."

Don wasn't just quiet during the interview, he wasn't there. All the smoke in the valley kept him at home, and Dorothy wouldn't have a photograph taken without her man. ♦

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul
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Medford, Oregon 97501**

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