

THE WESTBY BORDER NEWS

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Westby vs. Vegas Reunion Becomes a Reality



A total of 23 Westby alumni and many of their spouses met in late March to reminisce, renew acquaintances and enjoy the bright lights of Las Vegas. The group came together Friday evening at the Monte Carlo for a social hour(s). It was a great visit and enjoyed by ALL. Saturday Les & Sue Leininger hosted a social at their beautiful hotel room and the group visited the Fremont Street light show after dark.

Event coordinator Monte Solberg stated, "All agreed it was a super time and promised to gather again soon." Les & Sue Leininger tentatively volunteered to host the next gathering in 2012 in San Diego.

(Continued on Page 11)



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A Day in the Life

By: Sandy Elm

On March 22 Karen Meyer hosted Jolly Twelve at the Westby Community Center. In whist, Anita Bjorgen took first and Doreen Johnson second. Marlent Vogel got low.

On March 25th Anita Bjorgen hosted the Senior Citizen Club at the community center. Taking first place in whist was Marvin Nelson and second place was Shirlely Quam. Cindy Stenehem and Mark Nordhagen were guests.

Rose Frickson was the guest of honor at a birthday party held at Teresa and Clifford Johnson's on March 21st. Many friends and relatives were in attendance.

Cheryl and Michael Anderson, Alec, Natalie, Samantha, and Abby spent four days at the Howard and Irene Nielsen home during spring break. The Andersons are from South Dakota.

Karen and Vance Meyer recently spent time at Great Falls, visiting their daughter Tiffany and grandsons Blake and Benjamin.

Chel , Heather, and Colton Moore were here from Visalia, California during the Easter week. They stayed with Chel's parents, Danny and Val Moore. On Good Friday Val and Danny entertained friends and family to a great supper.

Alyssa Elm from Billings was here during spring break . She stayed with her Dad, Casey and Marilyn Elm. While here, she and Tess Bjorgen spent one night at Grandma Sandy and Grandpa Slugger's home. She also visited Great-grandma Vera Elm and Great-grandma Rose Frickson when she was here and many other friends and relatives.

Sandy and Slugger Elm, Rose Frickson, Teresa and Clifford Johnson, Shannon and Mike Gebhardt and Cole and Rylie and Ruth Brown all went out for Easter dinner at the Prairie Kitchen.

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Danny Moore
Westby Manager

**Westby School
WILL NOT be holding
a Special Levy
Or Trustee election
this year.
Therefore, there will
be NO VOTING on
May 4, 2010.**

WDC MINUTES

March 15, 2010

The regular meeting of the Westby Development Corporation was held March 15th, 2010, at the community center. President Al Joyes called the meeting to order at 6:00 with board members Jody Lagerquist, Brenda Ryals, Leann Westgard, Suzi Ekness and Val Moore present.

Upon Cyndie's resignation of the secretary's position, Val agreed to finish out her term.

The February minutes were not available. The Treasurer's financial report was presented. Previous balance was \$8,460.38 with a new balance of \$8,460.38. No new bills. Brenda reported \$204.00 taken in from the smear tournament which has not been figured in these balances.

Old Business:

MUSEUM:

Suzi reported having talked to Bill Dodge about WDC acquiring the Wirtzberger place. She told him Cenex in Plentywood was willing to buy the propane tank and remaining propane in the tank for the going rate. Suzi felt once this transaction has been done we will be in a better position to negotiate with Dodge for the building. Jody will talk to Cenex about getting this taken care of. Suzi will have a decision from Dodge, one or another, by the next meeting.

SHOOTING RANGE:

No report until spring.

WEB SITE

No report.

PRAIRIE FEST

July 10, 2010, is scheduled date of Prairie Fest. Two separate class reunions are being organized for PF weekend, the Westby and Comertown classes of 1946-1949 and the WHS classes of 1958-1962. Val reported 92 have registered for the 1946-49 reunion and 75 for the sixties reunion. After some discussion about the lunch situation for Prairie Fest, Jody will contact Laurel Clawson of Plentywood about bringing her lunch wagon for the day. We would still like to hear what the bar's intentions are for the day before we commit for sure. Karla C. is willing to head up the "Dress-your-pet" contest if the board is interested this year. It was decided this event is enjoyed by all ages and to go ahead with it. The WDC is willing to pay for any prizes and treats Karla deems necessary. Val noted Sheridan Electric could not commit at this time due to the number of centennials this year. If possible, they will have representation for a customer appreciation day during Prairie Fest attempting to keep a rotating schedule with Nemont.

The city tours aboard the SC shuttle were discussed. Jody will take care of getting as much information of past resident sites, as possible, for the city tours. It was suggested putting stakes with names on, in yards, designating where people lived. Also, suggested asking Jim Weiler to MC the tour aboard the shuttle. Val will talk to him.

Suzi talked to some of the businesses about input and asking for their help at the time of the PF. Jeff of Al's Meat will help prior and after with set-up and take-down. Suzi still needed to touch base with Mike Kittelson and Charlie's Place.

Discussion was held on the pie baking contest. It was decided to stick with the pie contest and add a chocolate category that was open to all ages. Twelve and under, and 13-adult would be the division. This category could include anything from cookies, cakes, candies, breads-anything containing chocolate.

Confirmed PF Events:

LION'S BREAKFAST
COMMUNITY CHOCOLATE/PIE CONTEST
JUMP-N-FUN INFLATABLES
FACE PAINTING
DRESS-YOUR-PET CONTEST
STEPHANIE SODERQUIST/KETTLE KORN
QUILT SHOW
CITY TOUR/SHUTTLE RIDE
NATE OLSON CHAIN SAW CARVING
NEW CENTURY AG TERMINAL TOUR
LION'S BINGO
SHOOTING RANGE DEMO
BBQ
ULTIMATE KARAOKE
HELLEGARD TRIO

Tentative Events: Sheridan Electric, Falcon Demo

CRYSTAL BAR

No update from the commissioners since the meeting about their intentions with the building.

New Business:

Aldy and Val worked on the idea of getting the guest speakers (the head of the Border Patrol speak on their relationship with the community and the new Fish, Wildlife and Parks employee who resides in Westby) this month, but because of conflicts it could not be scheduled. They will try again for the April meeting.

Meeting adjourned 7:00pm
Valerie Moore, Secretary



Talk about a whirlwind week. It has been almost two years since the kids have been home so we had lots of ground to cover in a week. Chel, Heather and Colton arrived from California on Saturday, the 27th, and we worked in as much and saw as many people as possible in that short time. We had just as much fun as Colton did, seeing things anew through his 2 year-old- eyes. He is all boy, and loves anything with wheels and a motor. Poppa loved indulging him with a ride in the big train engine, on the John Deere tractor (lawn mower), and on the 4-wheeler. He sat in the fire engine and wore Poppa's fire hat. He got a little ride on a school bus and even rode in a big International tractor. Colton and Poppa got a lot of fixing done around here with Colton's new "Black & Decker Tool Kit". Not enough time, but never a dull moment, nor, a minute wasted.

But.....now it is back to reality and a couple things I need to touch on before the recipes. The benefit for Pastor Barb is set for April 14th at 5:30 in the school cafeteria. It will be run pretty much like the past benefits held by the Lion's Club. A meal will be served in the school cafeteria and the auction will be held in the gym. An area will be designated for the children and will be handled by the LYO. Karen Sparks from Crosby will have a Pampered Chef display set up for those interested in placing an order. A portion of the proceeds from the sales will go to Pastor Barb's account. If possible, we would like to have a count for the meal so we are asking those who can to sign up at Al's Meat, Immanuel Lutheran, St John's Church or with any committee member.

Those who have a history with the paper and me may find it surprising that I took the Artisan Bread class offered by Sheridan County Extension Agent Sheila Friedrich.



I was drawn in by the fact that "anyone can do it", "no kneading is involved" and I love Sheila and everything she does. Well, for once, all the adages seem to ring true and if I do have to say so myself; the bread was delicious. My family and our guests were so impressed. I'm not sure I've convinced them yet that I actually made it, but they truly enjoyed it. Sheila gave me permission to share these recipes from ... *ARTISAN BREAD IN FIVE MINUTES A DAY* which taught busy people how to make great bread at home, with only five minutes of active preparation time. Also, *HEALTHY BREAD IN FIVE MINUTES A DAY* whips up fabulous breads made with more whole grains, fruits and vegetables. The secret? Mix up a lightning-fast batch of moist no-knead dough, save it in your refrigerator, tear off portions over the next week or more, shape, and bake it with steam. More recipes, videos and tips are available at www.artisanbreadinfive.com. And I am here to say if I can do it, anyone truly can do it. And it's worth doing!

Artisan Bread

The Master Recipe: Boule (Artisan Free-Form Loaf)

Makes four 1-pound loaves. The recipe is easily doubled or halved.

3 cups lukewarm water
1 ½ tablespoons granulated yeast (2 packets)
1 ½ tablespoons kosher or other coarse salt
6 – 6 ¼ cups unsifted, unbleached, all-purpose white flour (use the scoop-and-sweep method to measure dry ingredients)

Cornmeal for pizza peel or parchment paper

Mixing and Storing the Dough

Warm the water slightly: It should feel just a little warmer than body temperature, about 100° F.

Add yeast and salt to the water in a 5-quart bowl or, preferably, in a resealable, lidded plastic food container or food-grade bucket. Don't worry about getting it all to dissolve. **Mix in the flour-**

kneading is unnecessary: Add all of the flour at once, measuring it in with dry-ingredient measuring cups, by gently scooping up flour, then sweeping the top level with a knife or spatula; don't press down into the flour as you scoop or you'll throw off the measurement by compressing. Mix with a wooden spoon, a stand mixer fitted with the dough attachment. If you're hand-mixing and it becomes too difficult to incorporate all the flour with the spoon, you can reach into your mixing vessel with very wet hands and press the mixture together. Don't knead! It isn't necessary. You're finished when everything is uniformly moist, without dry patches. This step is done in a matter of minutes, and will yield a dough that is wet and loose enough to conform to the shape of its container. **Allow to**

rise: Cover with a lid (not airtight) that fits well to the container you're using. Allow the mixture to rise at room temperature until it begins to collapse (or at least flattens on the top), approximately 2 hours, depending on the room's temperature and the initial water temperature. Longer rising times, up to about 5 hours, will not harm the result. You can use a portion of the dough any time after this period. Fully refrigerated wet dough is less sticky and is easier to work with than dough at room temperature. So, the first time you try our method, it's best to refrigerate the dough overnight (or at least 3 hours), before shaping a loaf.

Light Whole Wheat Bread

Makes four 1-pound loaves. The recipe is easily doubled or halved.

3 cups lukewarm water
1 ½ tablespoons granulated yeast (2 packets)
1 ½ tablespoons salt
1 cup whole wheat flour
5 ½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
Whole wheat flour for the pizza peel

Mix same as the Master Recipe.

On Baking Day

First, prepare a pizza peel (large spatula) by sprinkling it liberally with cornmeal (or whatever your recipe calls for) to prevent your loaf from sticking to it when you slide it into the oven (parchment paper is a good substitute for a pizza peel). Sprinkle the surface of your refrigerated dough with flour. Pull up and cut off a 1-pound (grapefruit-size) piece of dough, using a serrated knife. The dough should have some stretch. If it breaks off instead of stretching your dough is probably too dry and you can just add a few tablespoons of water and let it sit again until the dough absorbs the additional water. Hold the mass of dough in your hands and add a little more flour as needed so it won't stick to your hands. Gently stretch the surface of the dough around to the bottom on all four sides, rotating the ball a quarter-turn as you go. Most of the dusting flour will fall off; it's not intended to be incorporated into the dough. The bottom of the loaf may appear to be a collection of bunched ends, but it will flatten out and adhere during resting and baking. The correctly shaped final product will be smooth and cohesive. The entire process should take no more than 30 to 60 seconds.

Rest the loaf and let it rise on a pizza peel: Place the shaped ball on the cornmeal-covered pizza peel. Allow the loaf to rest on the peel for about 40 minutes (it doesn't need to be covered during the rest period). Depending on the age of the dough, you may not see much rise during this period; more rising will occur during baking. *(Continued on Page 6)*



Twenty minutes before baking, preheat the oven to 450°F, with a baking stone placed on the middle rack. Place an empty broiler tray or other pan for holding water on any other shelf that won't interfere with the rising bread.

Dust and slash: Dust the top of the loaf liberally with flour, which will allow the slashing knife to pass without sticking. Slash a ¼-inch deep cross, "scallop," or tic-tac-toe pattern into the top, using a serrated bread knife.

BAKING- Slide dough off pizza peel on to the baking stone. Pour one inch of very hot water into other pan. Bake about 30 minutes, until crust is nicely browned and firm to the touch.

Light Whole Wheat- Dust pizza peel with cornmeal, shape dough into ball. Bake 35 minutes.

Dough lasts 14 days in refrigerator. The dough can also be frozen in 1 pound portions in airtight container. Bread may be par-baked for ¾ time and frozen. Thaw at room temperature, preheat oven to 400 degrees and bake 10-15 minutes or until golden brown.

Variation: Herb Bread

Follow the directions for mixing the Boule dough and add 1 tsp dried thyme leaves (2 tsp fresh) and ½ tsp dried rosemary leaves (1 tsp fresh) to the water mixture.

Baquette- Use wheat flour on pizza peel and bake 25 minutes at 450°F.

Ciabatta- Using wet hands, shape the dough into a ball by stretching the surface of the dough around to the bottom on all 4 sides. With wet fingers, flatten the ball into an elongated oval about ¾" thick. Put on flour covered pizza peel. Bake about 20 minutes.

May you ENJOY!
for
LIFE IS GOOD



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Our Spotlight

In keeping with thoughts of upcoming reunions and Westby's centennial may we present snippets from the halls of WHS and days gone by:

CLASS OF 1950

Bazil Anderson, Delores Elm, Eugene Espeland, Orlene Hanson, Vonnie Leininger, Nathleen Lindell, Clarice Mangel, Hugh Meyer, Glenn Moore, Phyllis Stageberg, Norman Tangedal

Bazil- "I Don't Want To Set the World on Fire"

Delores- "Yi Yi Dolores"

Eugene- "Life Gets Tegious"

Orlene "Ain't Misbehaving"

Vonnie "Charley My Boy"

Nathleen- "I Can Dream, Can't I?"

Clarice- "There's Going To Be Some Changes Made"

Hugh- "Doing' What Comes Naturally"

Glenn- "Dreamer With A Penny"

Jennie- "I Dream of Jimmy"

Phyllis- "Six Times a Week and Twice on Sunday"

Norman- "Somebody Stole My Gal"

WESTBY RANGERS

Demiles Pederson (Pete), Dennis Wirtberger (Swede), Hugh Meyer (Fisher), Delmar Ekness (Delly), Junior Lininger (Junior), Ronell Raaum ((Gabby) , Norman Tangedal (Tang), Marvin Nelson (Bull) , Bazil Anderson (Andy), Darrell Lininger (Shy), manager- Gordon Lund

Record 15-7

The Rangers, who placed 2nd behind Medicine Lake at the District Tournament, were coached by Mr. Bulmer.

CHEERLEADERS: Merna Hanson, Orlene Hanson, Marilyn Anderson, Phyllis Stageberg, Twila Wirtzberger

SENIOR ACTIVITIES: Skip day included Scarth Street and the Parliament Building in Regina and the Weyburn Mental Hospital in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. Senior class play "Sixteen is Spring" was presented in the spring of 1950.

YEARBOOK STAFF

Editor-Orlene Hanson

Seniors-Phyllis Stageberg

Undergraduates-Jennie Nelson, Nathleen Lindell

Athletics-High Meyer, Norman Tangedal

Activities-Clarice Mangel

Advertising-Dolores Mangel, Bazil Anderson, Glenn Moore, Eugene Espeland

Business Manager-Vonnie Leininger

Advisor-Miss Marlys Chinander

REUNION TIME APPROACHES

It's soon time for the Comertown, all classes, and Westby, Classes 1946-1050, Reunion which will be held in conjunction with the Westby Prairie Fest. The dates are July 9th, 10th, and 11th, 2010.

The Westby-Comertown Reunion will begin on Friday afternoon with registration in the school cafeteria. This will be followed by a get-acquainted time, a program, and a buffet dinner. Complete details of all events will be mailed to participants the last part of April.

The Westby School has made available spaces for campers and motor homes. Bathroom and shower facilities may be accessed at the school, as well.

The reunion promises to be a time of reminiscing, renewing acquaintances, and re-visiting our hometown of Westby and its residents. We look forward to seeing all of you.

Any questions concerning the reunion or help with housing may be directed to Audrey Anderson at 1-701-572-6773.

HJELM



Eunice Violet Hjelm died Wednesday night, March 31, at Sheridan Memorial Nursing Home in Plentywood, she was 78. Born on the family farm at Kronthal, North Dakota April 27, 1931, Eunice was one of 8 children of the late Earnest and Otilia (Hermann) Hafner. She attended Kronthal school for the first 8 grades, and later attended Beulah High School for four years, graduating with the class of 1948.

In 1948 and 49 she attended Minot State College (which later became Minot State University) earning a Standard Teaching Degree. She taught in the Westby and Plentywood, Montana school systems for many years, and often took extension and other classes from Minot State.

Eunice married Olaf Leslie Hjelm of Westby, Montana in 1953; they were divorced in 1981. To this union were born two sons, Brock and Brad.

After retirement from full-time classroom work in the early 1970's, Eunice filled in for some years as a substitute teacher and became the "boss" of the family ranching operation, doing the bookwork and loved helping with the livestock.

She is survived by her two sons and their families: Brock and his wife Vicki, of Plentywood; and Brad and his wife Donna, of Billings; by grandchildren Matthew (Nicole) Hjelm, of Billings, Brooke Hjelm, of Mesa, Arizona; Corey Hjelm, at MSU in Bozeman; and Conner Domonoske, of Plentywood. She is also survived by a great-granddaughter, Matthew and Nicole's daughter, Kelsey; and by two sisters:

Marjorie Wiedrich, of Beulah, North Dakota and Arlene Grenz (Herb) of Linton, North Dakota, as well as two brothers, Marvin and Hilmer Hafner, both of Beulah. Many nephews and nieces also survive. Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by two sisters and a brother.

Memorial Services took place at 11:00 AM Monday, April 5. Pastor Barry Fritts officiated the service at Plentywood Lutheran Church, with interment of cremated remains in Plentywood Memorial Cemetery.

All of Eunice's former students were recognized as Honorary Bearers.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to the Sheridan Health Care Foundation.

Fulkerson Funeral Home of Plentywood had charge of arrangements.

WEE BEE QUILTERS MEET

The April 6, 2010, meeting of the Wee Bee Quilters was called to order by President Arlene Hove. There were nine members present.

No report from the Secretary-Treasurer

OLD BUSINESS:

Our charity quilt for this year will be donated to the Sheridan Memorial Hospital Foundation for their annual fund raiser in December. It was discussed and decided the blocks for the quilt need to be completed by the May meeting. If more material is needed for your blocks, contact Arlene. We will discuss and decide when to assemble the quilt at our September meeting. The quilt, including the quilting, should be completed by our October meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

The quilting class, "Fire Escape", will be held on April 10 at the Community Center from 9:00-4:00.

Our May meeting will be the last for this year and they will resume in September. To wrap up our year, Arlene suggested we have a picnic at Writing Rock. Faye will check to see if the facility is ready for our group. If the weather doesn't cooperate, we will picnic at the Community Center.

(Continued on Page 9)

WESTBY AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

The American Legion Auxiliary met on April 5th at the home of Doris Gunderson. Christine Schmidt conducted the meeting and Adeline Lagerquist led devotions.

Those in attendance remembered their country by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and sang the National Anthem. We followed this with a silent prayer for our veterans and repeated the Auxiliary Preamble.

Adeline Lagerquist called the roll with 4 in attendance and presented the minutes of the last meeting. Treasurer Ethel Harshbarger gave her report

Communications for this month included many letters and ideas.

The District will hold their Spring Convention in Poplar on April 17th. One member from our unit will plan to attend.

The Memorial Day Program will be held at the Westby School Gymnasium on May 31st at 10:30 AM with a potluck dinner to follow. The public is invited to attend.

It was noted there would be an increase in the price of the poppies and they will be available in May.

A reminder: Pop tabs are being collected for the Ronald Mc Donald House. They may be dropped at the Westby Community Center.

The May meeting is set for the 10th with the meeting to begin at 1 o'clock. Ethel Harshbarger is the hostess.

The meeting closed with the Auxiliary song followed by giving the "peace prayer" and ended with singing "America". The meeting was adjourned and Doris served lunch.

Secretary, Adeline Lagerquist

WEE BEE QUILTERS MEET (Continued)

We discussed the use of the Assembly God Church for our quilt show, white elephant sale and quilt raffle to be held during the Prairie Fest (July 10th). It's a great place to display the quilts, but not for the white elephant sale and quilt raffle due to the limited space. The School was suggested and that would be good, too, but a place on Main Street is preferred. Any suggestions bring to the May meeting.

The Glendive Quilt show is April 23 and 24. Cheryl Wittmayer is the featured quilter.

Marsha Meyer brought to the groups attention a quilt store located in the Heights. The Mountain View Quilt Shop is closed on Mondays.

Marti Simonson won the monthly drawing provided by Cindy Nielsen.

Arlene served lunch.

Meeting adjourned.

Elaine Onstad, acting secretary



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BREAD MAKERS COME IN ALL SIZES

Sheila Friedrich, MSU Extension Agent, spent two afternoons in Westby teaching the fine art (and science behind) of *Great Artisan Bread in Five minutes a Day*.



On March 17th Wade Drew's fourth and fifth grade class had first-hand experience with bread making. Sheila had this to say about the class, "I did things a little differently with the kids than I do with adults. We talked about yeast, that it's a living organism and sugar and water are need for it to grow and form gas that makes the bread rise. I had the dough already made up and the kids each made two mini-loaves of bread. While the bread was resting prior to baking, they did an experiment about yeast. The kids put water, sugar and yeast in a 16 oz. water bottle and shook it together and then put a balloon on top of the bottle. The balloons, of course, inflated as the mixture released gas. Then each took about ½ cup of cream and shook it in a canning jar to make butter. The bread went in the oven and I showed them how to bake the artisan bread with steam. While the bread baked we made peanut butter and they tasted samples of the bread I had previously baked spread with the homemade butter and peanut butter. During the afternoon, we touched on nutrition, knife safety and blender safety, also." Mr. Drew said, "This was one of the best spent class periods we have had in a long time. The kids both learned and enjoyed the experience a lot."



On Sunday, the 21st, Sheila returned to Westby to present the class to a group of enthusiastic women in the school cafeteria. The bread recipes are included in this edition of *VAL'S RECIPE CORNER*.





Those attending were:

Stan & Robin Sorenson Chicago, IL

Steve Hellegaard Missoula

Alan & Carol Mangel Westby

Donald, Jana, Ann and Wyatt Meyer Riverton, WY

Kevin Kelly Merced, CA

Wade & Lori Bjorgen Westby

Bill Morris Williston

Les & Sue Leininger Bonida, CA

Russell Mangel Las Vegas

Monte & Starla Solberg Lewistown, MT

Ken & Marjie Ubben Kotzebue, Alaska

Mike & Lorrie Schultz Castellano Billings

Terry & Kolby Ruggles Westby

Jeff & Vera Shourds La Mirada, CA

Neil Peterson Helena

Jim Peterson Boise

Shawn Oksa Las Vegas

Sherman Ekness Havre

Lynn, Gina, Lisa, Mary Shourds Southern California

March Book Club

Hostess: Renetta Westgard

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

Author: Mary Ann Shaffer & Annie Barrows

By Arlene Hove

The first twenty-five pages or so of *The GLAPPPS* will leave you wondering if you should continue but hang in there and you will be *very* glad you did! Paula was even thinking “Just *who* picked this book?” (that would be me), but she loved it and so did the rest of us. We were charmed and by the final pages we were ready to book a trip to the island of Guernsey!

The year is 1946. Juliet Ashton is an aspiring author, already published, and looking for material to start a new novel. A thirty-something single Londoner whose home has been annihilated by the bombing during WWII, Juliet begins corresponding with a group of diverse people, inhabitants of the British Island of Guernsey. Their mutual love for literature eventually brings them together face-to-face when Juliet visits the island. She stays on, getting to know them. She learns how the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society got its’ name (you’ll have to read the book to find out!). These Guernsey islanders used books and the fellowship they found discussing them to help them get through the hideous occupation of their island by the Germans.

We learn of unspeakable horrors of the occupation and the indelible effect it had on the innocent residents. But we also learn of kindnesses bestowed by some of the Germans upon the Guernsey islanders. Then there’s the love affair between a German officer and one of the residents, Elizabeth McKenna. Although Elizabeth never “appears” in the novel she is portrayed as a remarkable figure, dearly loved and respected amongst the islanders.

Although Juliet and Elizabeth are the main characters, there are over 20 different “voices” in this novel, too many to list here. Written with warmth and humor as a series of letters, this novel is a celebration of the resilience of the human spirit. Although dealing with a dark period in history, it is essentially a sunny, refreshing read that affirms the power of books to unite and nourish people who are enduring hard times. Predictable at times, we nevertheless consider this first work a “must read”.



Westby Border News
P.O. Box 36
Westby, MT 59275

Westby Border News
Contact Information

Editor:

Val Moore
P.O. Box 36
Westby, MT 59275
E-mail: dvmoore@nemontel.net

Publisher:

Tracy Johanson
P.O. Box 124
Westby, MT 59275
E-mail: loopy_fruits@hotmail.com

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ARE WELCOME BUT MUST BE SIGNED.