



English Christmas

OGS
member

By Doris Hensel
Free-lance writer

Illustrations toward the end of the story "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens usually show the happy Cratchit family sitting around the festive table which holds an appetizing roast goose and a steaming plum pudding with a sprig of holly stuck in the top for decoration.

It's enough to make anyone's mouth water for traditional English recipes and Jean Laws has books full of them. Laws, who works in the reference section of the Olympia Timberland Library has learned to cook many of the English recipes because they are favored by her husband Keith.

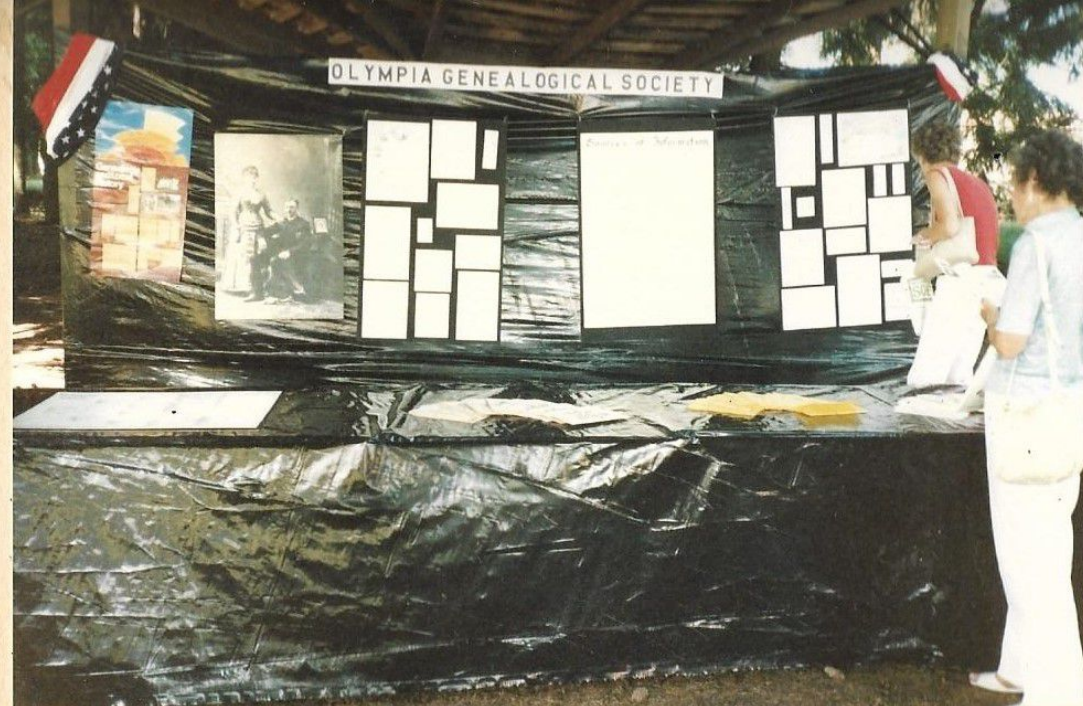
"I grew up on good Western fare: pot roast, fried chicken — good plain cooking," said Laws, remembering her childhood in Walla Walla. Keith, on the other hand, was raised by English grandparents and when he married Jean he soon began bringing home English cookbooks with the suggestion, "Try this."

Through the years, Laws has collected her own notebook of his favorite recipes such as fish and chips and steak and kidney pie, sometimes called steak and kidney pudding. She has Americanized many of the recipes, substituting package crusts for suet crusts and always using lamb kidneys because they are milder.

In years past, when son Don was home, she frequently cooked his favorite roast beef with Yorkshire pudding. She uses a recipe that Keith brought home from a restaurant in Victoria. Now she doesn't cook big meals but she has kept a copy of a traditional English Christmas meal that is straight out of Dickens: Roast goose, sage stuffing, giblet gravy, rosy apples, roast potatoes, baked onions, red cabbage, turnips, plum pudding, Stilton cheese and oranges and apples to finish.

"I do make plum pudding," Laws said, but again, she has changed a few things. For one, she has never owned a pudding-basin, an English bowl that is shaped deeper than our bowls, specifically designed for steamed puddings. Laws uses a regular jello mold, covers it with





Seasoned Citizens

OCS charter member

Ayer recalls farm life in the 1900's =



Elizabeth Ayer

By Dorris Hensel

The most valuable legacies older people can leave their descendants are written remembrances.

Elizabeth Ayer was the first woman to graduate from the University of Washington School of Architecture in 1920, and the first woman architect to receive a license in Washington state. She will leave stories of her unusual experiences for her nieces and nephews, and more than recollections of her many accomplishments, at 87, she also has valuable stories to tell about what life was like in Thurston County in the early days of this century.

Elizabeth, who has lived in Panorama City since 1970, is one of the few living natives who remember what the land looked like when huge virgin trees still covered most of the area. And, she remembers the descendants of the famous black pioneer George Bush because they were her nearest neighbors when she was growing up at Saybrook, the farm south of Tumwater near Bush Prairie and the Deschutes River.

An admitted "bug" on genealogy, Elizabeth has known seven generations of her family, even vaguely remembering a great grandmother who died when she was three. As most settlers who had the stamina to arrive early and create a life in a new land, her family became important people in the area.

"My great grandfather Joseph Conner homesteaded on the other side of Long Lake," she said. One of the houses that he built for a Chambers brother survived until the late 1960's when it was torn down to build the Chalet apartment building on Panorama City grounds.

Elizabeth Ayer's father was an early judge who died shortly after he and his wife Cora Ellis Ayer bought their farm near what is now East Olympia.

"The farm became a family pro-

four boys and one girl. Elizabeth grew up with an extended family, and was especially fond of Louise Ayer, her Aunt Tam, who was secretary to the Supreme Court.

Isolated as they were on the farm, the now retired architect believes their lifestyle was probably more like the previous generation, than the lifestyle of those in Olympia. The Ayer children went to a "bush" school on Bush Prairie, where the enrollment was never higher than 15 students.

"The teachers were doddering or just out of high school," said Elizabeth, smiling at the recollection of the hard time they had keeping a teacher. None of them lasted long, she said, and the younger children, hearing the older ones recite, were always "about 2 grades ahead."

One stretch of the Deschutes ran through their farm meadow and in flood season the Ayer children had to keep a close eye on the river and be ready to dash for home or they would be stranded at the school.

"We had different memories," Elizabeth said, comparing her school days with other children at that time. With less diversions than children in town, country kids developed their own, a few of them dangerous.

One unusual pastime was to cut a gash in one of the big fir trees, let the pitch run out until there was a good amount pouring from the wound and then set it on fire.

Their game was not to start a forest fire, but to put a fire out, so after it was lit, the children spent the day plastering mud on the tree to accomplish that.

"We never had a single complaint from our long-suffering friends, the Bushes," said Elizabeth, remembering a time when attitudes were different, and trees more expendable.

The Ayer children were in and out of the Bush household in the years they were growing up, and she said of the older descendants of the patriarch George, "We adored Lewis, we called him Uncle Bush. The Bushes were our advisors and benefactors."

Later, when Elizabeth was associated with Ayer and Lamping, her architectural firm in Seattle, she would attend a yearly reunion with the Bush family members living in the city.

Too busy with her career, the architect never married, and she was too involved with doing her own

University honors local retiree

Esther Raymond Knox, former president of the Olympia School Board and a board member for 31 years, will receive Washington State University's Alumni Achievement Award October 10 in Olympia.

She will be honored at the Westwater Inn during a 7-9 p.m. welcoming reception for new Washington State University president Samuel H. Smith.

Knox is being recognized by her alma mater for "dedicated service to education in the State of Washington and devotion to her community as a volunteer."

She holds two degrees from W.S.U.: a B.A. in history and a master of arts in education.

Following graduation, she taught at schools in Oregon and Wyoming and was a principal in Montana.

In 1952 Knox became the second woman ever elected to the Olympia School Board. Thirty-one years later, in 1983, she announced she would not seek another term.

When she moved to Olympia, Knox left teaching, but not education. She was active in the PTA and worked to inform lawmakers about the needs of education. Several years ago she compiled "A Diary of the Olympia School District, 1952-1976."

Before retiring she was employed as a case worker for the Department of Social and Health Services where she made foster care placements. She also worked with the Salvation Army.

065

Historian



Vance Horne The Olympian

Examining award: Esther Knox, longtime Olympia School Board member examines her WSU alumni award with Olympia School District Superintendent Dick Hunter.

Award winner isn't just a 'common, ordinary person'

By Vance Horne
Olympian staff writer

Esther Knox, for 31 years a member of the Olympia School Board, got off a one-liner Thursday night when Washington State University gave her its Alumni Achievement Award — which it rarely gives.

"I thought they reserved these awards for the heads of big corporations and not for common, ordinary people," she said, grinning at those who stood around her at a reception at the Westwater Inn.

Knox's one-liners, and sometimes her 12-liners, were famous during her years on the board. Sometimes she was the only light-hearted item on the agenda. She retired in 1983 at age 76.

Despite her love of a laugh, she was always dead serious about education, and still is.

"I haven't given up my interest in the schools one bit. I want those schools to be as good as they can be," she said Thursday.

Good schools, she said, are one way of assuring that young people will want to live here after graduation. Youths who have a good experience in Olympia's schools are likely to stay here, she said.

Knox got her bachelor's degree in education from WSU in 1928 and her master's degree in 1932. She clerked in a store to earn her way through.

She taught in Oregon and Wyoming, and became a high school principal in Montana. She scorns the idea that there was anything

odd about a woman high school principal so long ago in Montana.

"They didn't look at us as freaks back there," she said. "They had girls' basketball back there, too. When I came to Olympia, they said basketball was too strenuous for girls. Now we have it."

Shelley Carr of Olympia, the first vice president of the WSU alumni association, gave out the award Thursday. She called Knox "the consummate volunteer."

Knox also received congratulations and hugs from Dr. Samuel Smith, the new president of WSU. The reception was primarily to let local alumni meet Smith, but the award to Knox was a highlight of the evening.

In addition to serving 31 years on the school board, including time being president of the board, Knox long has worked as a volunteer for the Salvation Army. She has worked with the PTA, the Thurston Regional Planning Council, and as a citizen lobbyist informing legislators of education needs.

She also had a paid job as a foster care caseworker with the Department of Social and Health Services.

Her friends at the reception Thursday agreed that once again, WSU had in fact failed to give it's alumni award to a common, ordinary person.

For 31 years she helped make Olympia schools what they are. "The schools here are as good as anywhere," she said when she retired. "It's not New York or Chicago. It's just good Olympia area stuff."

Olympian

October 13, 1985

OGS
Historia



OGS
members

Wes & Betty Williams
Grand Mound Cemetery
- Rochester -



Lewis & Edna Hawthorne
Grand Mound Cemetery
- Rochester -

PROFILE

Olympian Ann Olson Named to Highest State PTA Office

Ann Olson of Olympia recently was elected president of the Washington State Parent Teacher Association for 1985-86.

A graduate of Colorado Women's College, Olson moved to Olympia 15 years ago. Her son is a junior at Olympia High



Ann Olson

School and her daughter is in seventh grade at Washington Middle School.

Her rise to the PTA's highest state office comes as no surprise to those who have observed Olson's commitment to PTA and to education over the past 13 years.

"I joined PTA when I was a room mother at Pioneer Elementary. Later, I served as the volunteer coordinator for three years and the local unit PTA president for two years," Olson said.

From there, Olson went on to hold numerous positions at the national, state and local levels of PTA, to present various leadership classes and to receive numerous awards for her dedication.

In 1982 and 1983 she directed the levy campaign for the Olympia School District. For her efforts, she received an appreciation award from the Olympia Board of Directors.

Asked why her commitment to education is so strong, Olson responded, "We need to give quality education to kids today, because the kids of today will be the leaders of tomorrow and they are the ones who will take care of us when we are old.

"It's important that kids have opportunities in order to reduce the crime rate and the number of people in prison. Everyone is worth something. Parents and the home must be involved in their children's education; it's vital.

"As a volunteer coordinator, I saw that it's important to kids that their parents or guardians be involved in their school. It showed kids their parents were interested in them as a person. Schools and homes need to work together; parents are the first teachers."

During her tenure with the organization at all levels, Olson has seen PTA adapt to changes in society.

"I am increasingly seeing men presidents of local PTA units; some of them aren't even parents. Sometimes husbands and wives are co-presidents. Men are more involved in school activities. I am seeing more single parents, many of whom are making time to participate in school activities. I am seeing more two-parent working couples. I find that mothers are not the only parent interested in their kids, especially now with so many working women," she said.

Olson also has observed a change in emphasis.

"We are not cookies and carnivals anymore," she said.

"In my last five years with PTA, I have found the membership to be more interested in issues. They want to play a role in their kids' education and in the community; they want to have more input.

"Issues over the past five years have dealt with selection and discussion of curriculum materials, full funding for basic education, drug and alcohol abuse, child

abuse and tax reform," she added.

When she took office on June 1, Olson presided over 94,500 members statewide. She hopes to increase the membership to more than 100,000. PTA is regulated by federal, state and local laws and is affiliated with state and national organizations.

"Each local unit has bylaws from the state association, but local units decide everything else; each local unit is autonomous," she said.

In the Olympia district, Olson says more than half the elementary schools have PTA units and two out of three middle schools. The two high schools do not have PTAs.

In a nutshell, Olson says PTAs are "educating adults for better awareness so they can do more for their kids and be better parents."