

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This past year our Oregon family lost two very dear members. Bill Henkle, one of the first pioneers of our neighborhood's renewal 30 years ago, was a founding member of this society. It would be difficult to overstate Bill's contributions to Oregon. He was a dear friend and neighbor to many here, and he is truly missed.

Another neighbor who passed on this year was Mrs. Meade Poindexter. A quite and dignified lady, Mrs. Poindexter lived on Tecumseh Street for 47 years.

Let us have a moment of silence to honor them, the other Oregon Family members who are no longer with us.

Thank You.

As part of being president of this society, one gets to make a speech at the annual dinner. So, about a week ago I asked myself what in the world am I going to say in this speech. So, I contacted each of the Trustees and asked them for ideas. And, you know, not one of them *had* any ideas. Thanks a lot, you guys!

Last year, President Russ reviewed **the goals** that the Board had set forth for the previous year. That seemed like a good idea, so I looked up the list of goals that we put together last spring for this year. At that time, Christy was President of the Board, and she polled each trustee for our ideas. We each provided our input, and then Christy and I sat down and picked the ones that we thought were important and achievable. Then the board approved the final list of 5 goals.

They were:

Goal #1: Honor the district's 30th anniversary with a gala celebration. If the goal was to throw ourselves one hell of a party, then it was definitely achieved. The gala was truly a smashing success, and a great thanks goes out to all of you who

worked so hard to put it together, especially Sandy & Doug, and Andrea, Stephanie, and Lynn. (Applause)

Speaking of smashing, there was another smashing occurrence on the very night of the Gala. By total coincidence, the exquisite wooden sculpture that graced our southwest entrance was unfortunately toppled by a freak occurrence. Details are sketchy as to how it happened, but witnesses say that it involved a group of very sharply dressed perpetrators, including at least 2 former presidents of an unnamed neighborhood society. It also involved a large quantity of alcohol, and a huge diesel powered bumblebee. But in all seriousness, some people liked that piece of art. But its permit *had* expired, and what better occasion could there have been for its demise?

Goal #2: To get a handle on the traffic patterns and analyze tools available to minimize the impact of increased density, congestion, and subsequent problems. The last I recall was that the city deployed some traffic counters, and then some misguided souls came in and vandalized them. So the city removed the gear and that was the end of that.

Goal #3: Update the events calendar and committee continuity files and descriptions of each committee's responsibilities. Christy distributed forms for each trustee to fill out after meeting with each committee. The trustees responded, and most of the forms were filled out, but nothing has become of the forms up to this point. Probably because Christy's successor cannot locate them.

Goal #4: Finalize move to the downtown priority board by having a public hearing to discuss it. The move to the Downtown Priority Board has been an ongoing goal over the last few years, and Doug had been heading up that effort. This goal was not achieved this year, but we cannot blame Doug for that. Doug worked on so many other things such as the spring planting at entranceways, planning the

Gala, the holiday tour, on planning this dinner, and on mixing those cute colorful drinks whenever he can.

Goal #5: Finalize the OHDS historical video project by July of 2003. The project is still being worked, with many hours of interviews completed and many slides and archival photos digitized and ready to be used in the video. However, in keeping pace with the other goals, the project is a bit behind schedule. I would like to put a call out for volunteers to help with the project. We are still looking to interview more folks who have been in the District a long time. And we also need help to finish logging all the footage of the interviews. This would require watching the raw footage and typing a log of what is being said in the interview. If you would like to volunteer, please get in touch with me.

So, those were the 5 goals that we set forth for this past year. In preparing for this speech, I looked at the list of goals, and seeing that we really only accomplished *one* of them (the gala), I thought well, maybe I just won't mention the goals tonight.

So, the question is, what *did* we accomplish? What, besides the Gala, was special about this past year? Before we get to the answer, I want to tell you a story.

Back when I was in high school, (I went to Catholic school by the way, and am still recovering from that, as many of you probably are). We had this gym teacher, Mr. Spearl, who also taught the boys health class. Mr. Spearl also was the varsity football coach and a military veteran, and so he was this very strict drill sergeant kind of guy. He was a strict disciplinarian, but he also was a motivator and a teacher of life lessons. One day in health class he asked us a question, "What makes a great person?" Of course in those days we did not know, or care, what made a great person. All we could think about was going out behind the 7-11 after school and hanging out. So, Mr. Spearl told us his answer:

A great person is one who completes the ordinary task of the day well. We where like “*whatever*”. But looking back, on it, as one gets older, we realize, with all the responsibilities of family, job, community service, and recreation, completing the ordinary task of the day is indeed a great achievement. So when we consider that list of goals that mostly went unachieved, we do not need to be ashamed of that, because when you look at all the “ordinary” events that we did pull off, you have to admit that we had an extraordinary year. Those events included the following:

The **spring park planting**, where Monica, Doug, Steve, Todd and Mark and a host of other volunteers spent many hours beautifying the park and entranceways. And which will happen again on Saturday MAY 17th of this year. And, new this year, we will have a monthly effort to spruce up the park on the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM, meet in the park.

The **summer picnics** in the park were organized by Tom Holland, and were hosted and attended by many good neighbors.

That **annual garage sale** was coordinated by Kane last year, and will happen again this year, on May 10th, two weeks from today. Please don't forget to let Janelle know if you plan to participate in selling at this year's sale.

The **4th of July parade**, which continues as an Oregon tradition. Thanks goes to (insert names here) for helping make the parade happen this past year. The parade will happen again this year on July ... 4th.

The **baseball outing**, organized by Debbie, and the **Derby Day Bus Trip** by Debbie and Andrea, were loads of fun for all who attended.

The **alley cleanup and bulk-waste pickups**, set up by Monica. Many cleanup volunteers discover all the wonderful sights and smells of discarded Oregon trash & treasures.

The **newsletter** was put out again this year by Todd and Betty & Ted. We thank them for their all their hard work on that.

The **repair of the streetlights**: Greg Smith and Andrew Steele spent hours repairing many of the lights this past fall.

The **holiday decorating** of the lampposts and park gazebo: Thanks to Ted & Betty, Ray, Tim, George and Kit, and others who froze their butts off decorating on a painfully bitter cold December morning.

The **annual holiday tour** was a great success this year, showcasing another stunning set of homes, and raising over \$4000 for the OHDS. An immense thank you goes to the homeowners who graciously opened their beautiful homes. We also thank the Dodds for hosting the neighborhood party, and Monica for the desert house. Special thanks go to Eileen and Doug for heading up the tour committee, and all the volunteers who worked in the desert house and as tour guides. And a special thanks goes to our resident poet laureate, Miss. Sally W. Talley, who wrote a moving tribute to all those involved in the tour.

We need to thank those who organized **tonight's event**, Sandy and Doug, Mary Marshal for handling the membership renewals and Christy and Andrea for handling the trustee election.

So ... accomplishing the goals we set forth last spring would have been great. But just knowing that we completed all the "ordinary tasks of the day" should be enough to call the year a great success. So let's thank all the volunteers for all their hard work this past year. (Applause)

(Pause)

This crazy world is ever changing. A poor economy, war, and disease dominate the headlines. As we gather here in this beautiful setting, enjoying a meal that to most of the world would be an immense feast, let us be thankful for what we have. And let us continue to try to make some kind of a difference. Maybe we cannot make much of a difference in this world, but we certainly can in our neighborhood and in this city. Let us keep up the high level of volunteerism, let us work together to resolve any disputes that arise, and most importantly, let us continue to watch out for one another, and maintain the ties that bind us together, and that make Oregon the special place that it is.

The place we call home.