

Mothers and Daughters Share Tea Time

By Jeanie Senior

It is a longtime, cherished tradition at White Salmon Church of the Nazarene: an annual Mother-Daughter Tea, a social gathering that this year brought about 65 women together.

There were aunts and cousins, nieces and friends, but mothers and daughters were well represented: Vickie Kindler of White Salmon had a table with her family and Sanger Schwarz of Cooks had three generations present: daughter Dorothy Stearns of Mount Hood, who prepared most of the food on the buffet table, and Dorothy's daughters, Tascha Stolhand and Wendy Stearns.

The tea is a chance "for the ladies to come and



sit and enjoy themselves," Dorothy says. "They don't have anything to do but just sit down and be ladies."

Sonia Beattie, whose husband, James, is church pastor, was responsible for transforming the church fellowship hall into an invitingly cozy tea room.

When guests walked in, they found tables set with lovely tablecloths, delicate china cups and saucers, and teapots.

Each table had a different centerpiece, which Sonia designed from Dorothy's collection of blue cobalt glass, china, silver and other tea-related items. Also among the decorations: beautifully dressed china dolls from Sonia's collection, and clothing and



Dorothy Stearns and Vickie Kindler prepare the buffet table for Mother-Daughter Tea at White Salmon Church of the Nazarene.

photographs from Dorothy's 1993 Victorian frontier-themed wedding to Rick Stearns, held in the ghost town of Shaniko.

Adjusting a flower arrangement on the Saturday before guests started arriving, Sonia says, "I just started it Thursday, for about three hours, and I worked yesterday for a few hours."

The table decorations are a great conversation starter, Dorothy says.

"You're sitting next to someone you don't really know and it doesn't really matter—there's so much stuff lying around, even if you're looking at the tablecloths," she says, laughing. "We're women, so we'll babble with each other for hours."

The buffet table at the tea is crowded with platters of chicken salad croissants, crab-shrimp melts, turkey bacon club sandwiches, tomato basil tarts, six different salads and several desserts.

"It's worth the trip just for the food, to be honest with you," Dorothy says.

The invited speaker, Becky Beals, pointed to the food and joked, "This really reminds me of what I would have been eating in my own house today."

A contingent of 18 women, including Becky, came to the tea this year from Hood River Church of the Nazarene, but some of the guests are not members of either church, says Dorothy.

"I just tell everybody to invite someone," she says. "We're not proselytizing. It's just totally relaxed and laid back."

When she attended White Salmon Church of the Nazarene in the early 1990s, Dorothy worked on the tea with Rose Grove and other church members. She wanted to carry on the tradition of the tea when she returned to the church five or six years ago.

"I just kicked it up a little," she says.

This year, Rose and other members of the church women's group decided everyone should help pay for the tea, that Dorothy shouldn't bear the cost for the food. She brooked no argument when she told Dorothy about the decision, and started a list where women could sign up to purchase ingredients, such as turkey and bacon for the club sandwiches.

"This year, I didn't have to buy anything," Dorothy says. "This has been an effort where everyone has really pitched in."

Several women came early to do last-minute preparations.

Dorothy says she is happy to put in all of the hours the tea requires.

"I don't know how to explain it," she says. "You know how you just like to do something for somebody? It's kind of my way to say thank you to the ladies. It doesn't matter who those ladies are." ■



The buffet table offers plenty of choices of homemade treats.



White Salmon Church of the Nazarene member Andrea Welvaert holds hands with daughter Alexis.