

894 (Third interview – Ann Dondero)

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896 Interviewer: Linda Stiles-Taylor (LT)

897 Interviewee: Ann Dondero (AD)

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900 (Now showing several different pictures)

901 LT: ...Actually it's 1976, story time of some sort going on after the movie, painted the walls, and
902 made it back in her standard institutional color. But we're here to talk about the '90's, with Ann
903 Dondero, and the new age of children's services. Here's Ann in her puppeteer mode, and this
904 was in '89 after we'd moved to the new library. Lots of changes occurred after that. Here's Ann
905 in the loft where Children's Services has always been housed since we've moved to the building
906 on Pacific Avenue. And I think excited to be finally planning a real live children's services office
907 on the main floor for the new expansion that's going to begin in the spring of 2001. 'Cause
908 storage is such a problem.

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910 AD: Yes, definitely. That's about 22 years of, uh, yes, almost exactly 22 years of being upstairs
911 as of now. Hope I'll be around to have a new office and see some different kind of storage space
912 that is hidden from the public but on the main floor of the library. And into the '90's bears and,
913 bear month has continued and we continue to have bear displays, either Dondero bears, or bears
914 from people in the city. The ones in that picture happen to be, the ones sitting in the chairs
915 happen to be our director Coleen Winters' bears and they didn't have, one of them didn't have a
916 name so the big brown one is named "Winters' Bear". And this is one of the more recent teddy

917 bear parades. I think it was in fact the most recent one with me looking like a person rather than
918 a bear.

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920 LT: 'Cause now you wear a costume, right?

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922 AD: Yes, I have. This year I wore have part of the costume, but not the entire one. So I have the
923 face of a person, but a...yes.

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925 LT: And these have become quite big in the '90's. There are 3 of them every year, for the 3
926 preschool story times, right? With big crowds at every one.

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928 AD: And also people from Portland have... We've gotten publicity into the Oregonian and A&E
929 and so people come from even downtown, or wherever they live in Portland come to our teddy
930 bear parades.

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932 LT: So this is an unfortunate casualty of the '90's with you on the left and Barbara on the right.

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934 AD: That's correct. We used to plan and have great fun doing it. I used to write the scripts, or
935 sometimes Barbara wrote them too, for our going out to the school adventure, and we did our
936 "Ann and Barbara Dog and Pony Show" and the teachers got so they looked forward to it too.

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938 LT: It was a promotion for Summer Reading, right?

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940 AD: A promotion for Summer Reading every May or early June toward the end of the school
941 year. And the children looked forward to it too.

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943 LT: You would go to all the elementary schools.

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945 AD: We went to all the Elementary Schools, each classroom, about 5 to 10 minutes per classroom
946 and told about the program, what the theme was, did a little skit, and explained if they read
947 books, set a goal, and read their books they would receive a free paperback book at the end of the
948 summer to keep for their own personal libraries. That seemed to encourage them to read, and we
949 had programs out in the main part of the library where we had more than 200 people, where now
950 we have to limit it to a session of school aged children to 100. And now we've added "Read to
951 Me" programs, which we did not have before.

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953 LT: Which are for the preschool aged summer reading.

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955 AD: Right. And that's just been in the last few years of the '90's that we've been able to do that.

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957 LT: This basically ended because when Barbara left the library the city didn't...

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959 AD: Actually, no. Summer reading ended, going out to the schools for summer reading probably
960 ended, I don't have a date in mind, pre Barbara's departure because we had so much to do
961 without going out to the schools that it was decided that we didn't have time to do this any more
962 and take the time, because it usually took 3 full days or parts of several days which added up to 3

963 whole days of work. And at this time of year we just didn't have time anymore and we were
964 hoping to get more staff hours so we could continue this but that didn't happen either.

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966 LT: We got less staff hours instead.

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968 AD: Exactly.

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970 LT: This is another casualty of ballot measures in the '90's that...

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972 AD: Well, we still participate nominally in the "Young Reader's Choice Award" which is an
973 award where children get to help nominate the books that are read. Usually, now there are two
974 divisions. One is the Junior Division, grades 4 thru 8, and the Senior Division, grades 9 thru 12.
975 And the Junior Division has always been since early in the '70's the way to promote different
976 kinds of reading in the schools from what they would ordinarily be reading and teachers started
977 getting enthused about it, and some teachers read the entire ten to twelve nominees per year to
978 their classes. Or children would get excited and challenge themselves to read each book. If they
979 had two or had two of them read to them they'd get to vote in April of each year to choose the
980 book. This started in the Northwest and now lots of libraries across the country and schools
981 participate in some kind of children's award with the Pacific Northwest Library Association as
982 the first one to instigate this kind of award.

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984 LT: You've been going it for about 50 years, roughly?

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986 AD: Yes, since the '40's.

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988 LT: Each year when the kids vote, then the selected title end up...the author get's an award at an
989 annual awards banquet at the PNLA.

990
991 AD: Correct.

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993 LT: The young readers' choice instead of the librarian's choice.

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995 AD: Right. Teachers, parents, and children can make nominations but it's based a lot on what the
996 children feel is a good book, and they get to do the deciding.

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998 LT: So you still participate but you no longer go to the schools to book talk the nominees?

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1000 AD: I used to book talk fourth, fifth, and sixth graders and give them a little insight into each of
1001 the books and they would get excited about the kind of book...there was a variety so we would,
1002 some children would get excited about some kind of book on the list. And more recently we have
1003 just had the lists available and children can vote in the library or we have sent ballots around to
1004 the classrooms and the teachers help, because they don't have school libraries where that used to
1005 be done anymore either. And that, because of funding.

1006
1007 LT: So today you're wearing your special...

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1009 AD: "Celebrate Reading" t-shirt. Actually I needed something for under the jammies I wore to
1010 work this morning because we had a good-night story time, and passed out little huchins, which
1011 has been somewhat of a tradition.

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1013 LT: For many, many years.

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1015 AD: Yes.

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1017 LT: Getting to wear those PJs and slippers to the library.

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1019 AD: Yes, and of course I wore a bear nightgown, a bear bathrobe, with bear slippers.

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1021 LT: So we talked about a couple of casualties in the '90's, also some growth and great things
1022 going on in the '90's, and the young adult collection would be one.

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1024 AD: When we moved to the new library we decided that the young adult collection was actually
1025 nonexistent and worked on it sporadically through the years, through the '80's. But by the time
1026 the '90's rolled around we decided we should pay specific attention to this group because they
1027 were definitely an underserved age group. And so, and we'd done some surveys too. And so part
1028 of my job became collection development specifically for young adults and that's selecting and
1029 ordering the books for middle and high school students that are written specifically for that age
1030 group. And I do fiction, nonfiction, now audiotapes and some CD-ROM for those age groups as
1031 well as I also do the AV ordering actually for all the age groups through high school, except for
1032 the music.

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1034 LT: And there are also videos and magazines in the young adult collection that had certainly
1035 been a successful addition. It creates a nice space and an excellent collection.

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1037 AD: Right. The main thing for the '90's was getting a space that was actually dedicated to young
1038 adults and with the help of Robin Cram who has an uncanny ability to see spatially that many of
1039 us don't have, created a young adult area and I'm pretty proud of it actually, because of it's size.
1040 In some bigger libraries, including big city libraries, don't have much of a young adult
1041 collection, but that's partly because of where they are.

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1043 LT: But both in content and location because the content is extremely interesting and very
1044 intriguing to young adults here and is a draw, as well and having their own space where they're
1045 not just crammed in the children's section or somewhere their not...

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1047 AD: Right, and they're distanced from the children's area which I think the young adults
1048 appreciate and that they don't like to be lumped in as children. So there is seating and a table,
1049 and even a plant!

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1051 LT: Besides your own children were young adults, the young adult area was growing and you
1052 had a chance to...

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1054 AD: Well one of them probably preceded the young adult area but the other one actually was
1055 supposed to be making use of it, and I think on occasion did.
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1057 LT: Summer reading has continued to grow and you said that some of the performers you had
1058 come during the summers have gone on to become nationally famous.
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1060 AD: Actually, some of them you might say got their start, one of their starts, at our library
1061 because some of them had reputations before we were able to get them but some of them were
1062 just starting out and sending out fliers to libraries. You know, 'we have this to offer you, and
1063 would you please book us'. So Barbara did a lot of the booking in the earlier years and I've done
1064 it in the later years. So we've had some people coming back for almost 20 years.
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1066 LT: And some of those names who have become basically big names in children's programming
1067 over the years would be?
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1069 AD: I think probably one of the biggest ones is Reese Thomas, who is a juggler and does
1070 comedy, does pattern routine threw his whole 45 minutes to an hour that he performed. We were
1071 one of the earlier people to hire him in the Portland area and now we can hardly hire him in the
1072 Portland area very often because he does the bigger libraries. He stays in the Northwest pretty
1073 much because of his family but he has done the King County library system in Seattle and gets
1074 paid well to go there, so...
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1076 LT: So who can afford him around here anymore?
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1078 AD: So we can't afford him anymore so he doesn't come. But this year we are having him back
1079 again so that's exciting. And BJ the Clown started out as BJ and Scampy and BJ is now doing a
1080 solo act but again he does work for corporations and is spreading out where he does his work.
1081 Dave Barrett was one of our earlier performers. He's a storyteller known throughout the
1082 Northwest and has performed nationally and for a long time for us. And Celeste Rose is another
1083 person who does something different from what most people have done in that she does
1084 marionettes and she is actually visible on stage and afterwards shows the children all the
1085 marionettes, takes down her screens and shows them how she operates the puppets. And that's a
1086 learning experience in itself, as well as enjoying the programs. And she usually writes a new
1087 script each year for whatever the summer reading theme is.
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1089 LT: And today, let's see, tomorrow is the first day of registration for summer reading 2000.
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1091 AD: That's right.
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1093 LT: And the theme this year is...?
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1095 AD: "Reading: A Ticket to Tomorrow" and there's another black t-shirt with a spaceship on it
1096 full of people on their way to tomorrow.
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1098 LT: Which seems to apropos with the new millennium and the new building in the works and the
1099 new technology that's been the hallmark of the '90's.

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AD: Right.

LT: Certainly another one I guess that's going to be...???????????... having the variety of media including the internet access and how that's impacted youth services.

AD: That's right. We can do reference in various ways. There are still a lot of books with a lot of information, but if people want the up to date today information you can always look at the internet. And it's sort of encouraging to show people, you know, how to find things in books as well as the new technology. And I never thought I would be actually cruising the net looking for things, but I'm always, even when I'm not working I'm usually looking out for things to be able to answer the next reference question and be aware of what's going on. So technology certainly has grown and I guess I've gotten to grow along with it because that is not a field I thought I would ever take part in.

LT: And I think with the youth that we see today and that one of the things they come to the library for is free computer access that, you know, as being kind of an underserved population that they may not have access to the net in another way. Or at school they may have very limited access. They see us as a place they can come and utilize it more fully.

AD: Yes, and they know a lot about it and they learn very quickly. And one person who was actually a story time child spent some volunteer time helping people learn about the internet. I think it was last fall, last summer. And at first I didn't recognize him, but then I have somebody who I was encouraging to read teaching me how to do things on the internet that I didn't know.

LT: Ann, do you have any particular children's literature phenomenon of the 90's. Well the obvious one would be JK Rowling's Harry Potter series has gone off the charts, but can you think of other books from the 90's, characters from the 90's, either in the early childhood materials you order or in young adult that really are a part of this decade?

AD: Well, I think there are books like those by Rob Thomas who wrote *Rats Saw God*, it's actually an acronym, and, it's about students today and that's been on the young reader's choice booklist. And he has some others like *Satellite Down* where they have TV in the schools and they watch it for Channel 1, I guess it's called, and he did something, he was a former teacher and he did something similar to that. And what's interesting about him is that he's a popular young adult author who is now working in TV, he had wrote for Dawson's Creek which was another popular teen phenomenon, show.

LT: For Johnson's Creek?

AD: Dawson's Creek.

LT: Oh, Dawson's Creek.

AD: And it happens that I actually went to school with and was a Campfire Girl with his mother. And I didn't know that connection until my mother told me that. And he's written, his books

1146 seem to be ones that make the senior high list for the Young Readers Choice Award. And lots of
1147 young adults read adult authors but there are young adult authors, some of whom are in Oregon,
1148 Linda Crew, Virginia Euwer Wolff, are popular young adult authors. And these books also make
1149 the young adult part of the Young Reader's Choice list, and are read nationwide too. But... then
1150 there are ones that everybody has read for ages. And for children, young children, the picture
1151 books I think just keep getting bigger, brighter, better, and more interesting. And there are more
1152 and more variety that serve special needs of different ages of children which they didn't have
1153 before. There are board books which have big bright pictures and pages don't tear and that's
1154 always good for the younger children. And then just the regular picture books seem to have, still
1155 retain some innocence about them and some of my favorites are Leo Lionni and Eric Carle and
1156 Brian Wildsmith and Frank Asch. They were around in the 70's, and the 80's, and they still,
1157 most of them are still producing great books in the 90's.

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1159 LT: And I think, I know one phenomenon I've noticed picking up for elementary grades is kind
1160 of a resurgence of interest in the 90's in historical fiction. Those books like the *American Girls*
1161 series and the Scholastic's *Dear America* and *My Name is America*, the diaries of these fictional
1162 young people have become very popular and I think it might be part of the same, the converse.
1163 This fascination with technology in the future, there's also kind of a resurgence of interest in the
1164 past.

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1166 AD: I think there is and I think also every 4th grader in Oregon usually studies Oregon history,
1167 and that's part of the Oregon Trail. So there is always something to the history of going back and
1168 looking at Oregon's history because Oregon has the Oregon Trail and they have the Oregon Trail
1169 Center and students actually, usually in their classrooms are sort of living it and so that interests
1170 them, I think it sparks an interest. But the series' that you mention, several series, are a
1171 nationwide phenomenon too. But the Oregon Trail, I think, is part of what made Oregon famous
1172 and unique and that people came along this trail and were pioneers.

1173
1174 LT: And I think something else we've seen in the 90's that sort of, kind of flip side of the same
1175 coin, the kind of sensational things for young people that... The things like *The Animorphs* and
1176 the various scary stories for young people that.... RL Stine *Goosebumps*, phenomenon....

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1178 AD: Children seem to... they're, I guess, sort of the 3rd, 4th, 5th grade stage of sort of enjoying
1179 being scared but not too scared. Seems to be a popular thing and that was a resurgence in the
1180 90's also. But the, and the young adults go to Stephen King. Some of the writers actually have
1181 written through the 70's and the 80's but the series of books in various formations have come in
1182 the 90's. And there was a resurgence of Star Wars too.

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1184 LT: Because they did a new remake of the original Star Wars and that sort of...

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1186 AD: A 1977 movie and now it's a popular thing again. And we.....

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1188 LT: For this generation of children it's a 90's movie because they weren't even born (AD: right,
1189 right) when we first saw it. (laughs)

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1191 AD: And so they're excited about it. And some of our Summer Reading awards this last year, in
1192 fact a lot of them were from Star Wars books because they would be ones children would be
1193 excited about and want to read. And that's part of the purpose of our Summer Reading Program
1194 is getting children interested in reading and wanting read something they really want to read.
1195 And there are a number of children who are sort of hesitant about really reading and they're
1196 reading because their parents want them to. If there's some sort of a hook, sometimes that helps.

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1198 LT: And when you look at the winners, the recent winners of the Young Readers Choice Awards
1199 you tend to see a movement away from, 40-50 years ago there were often nature books or themes
1200 of kind of outdoor adventure. Now they tend to be things, funny things about schools or scary
1201 books seem to win and so you see people like Louis Sachar, and ??? Prindle, was last year's
1202 winner, was it Martha Clements and you kind of seen that and witness a change and...

1203
1204 AD: Right. I think, I've noticed especially since I've been doing the young adult ordering, even
1205 in slightly younger, there's an interest in what they're going through at the time and sort of the
1206 feeling of not, maybe not, maybe it's a kind of bibliotherapy in that you're not alone and this is
1207 what happens to other people too. But they also can, in the book can also live out some fantasy
1208 of things that happen to other people that happen to them. But, and their glad they don't happen
1209 to them, but they're funny or their scary.

1210
1211 LT: Well. You've certainly had the opportunity to view over two decades, more than two
1212 decades, the developments in children's literature. Is there anything else you'd like to share about
1213 where you see youth services going, and library service? Do you have a sense of what might be
1214 different when we have a new building, or...?

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1216 AD: In general I think the sky's the limit, but in our new building I see, depending on the
1217 staffing I see, I would like to tune in and do some of the things we have not been able to do but
1218 that would take a reorganization of how we have been doing things. Seems like every decade we
1219 do this. Or, we actually do it yearly, but, take a look at how things are done, how things can be
1220 done better, who needs to be served, and I would like to provide service to care providers, I'd
1221 like to provide better service to, and that come from some of our "Ready To Read" grants too.

1222
1223 LT: That's a new '90s phenomenon, being able to have bean bags for care providers.

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1225 AD: We have bean bags for care providers. My last year's project was to provide resources,
1226 paper resources like lists of things where care providers could go on the internet, or books lists
1227 that had lists of books that they could use for their own story telling and...

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1229 LT: So the long hours that parent's spend at work that there's more and more effort to kind of
1230 professionalize the kind of childcare that children are getting because they spend so much time
1231 with those people.

1232
1233 AD: Right, a lot of them spend as much time, in waking hours, if not more with their care
1234 providers than they do their parents. And so educating the care providers to, because the early
1235 education of children and the stimulation of vocabulary and reading is, I feel, is important to
1236 their later years. So that's one area that's being worked on. And again the young adults are, still,

1237 even though they're better served now in our library, are still somewhat underserved and we're
1238 working on that. And so learning a lot from them as well as hoping to provide for the needs of
1239 young people of Forest Grove in all age groups and equally. I would like to do some
1240 programming for young adults. I know their always busy, but I think there is still an element of
1241 young people out there where the library could be a source of information, entertainment as we
1242 do for the young children. And inspiration, hopefully.

1243

1244 LT: Well thank you for your vision as well as your wonderful service in the past. It's made a
1245 huge...

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1248 (Fourth interview – Angela Brown)

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1250 Interviewer: Linda Stiles-Taylor (LT)

1251 Interviewee: Angela Brown (AB)

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1253 (Now showing several pictures of the building with Linda Taylor narrating)

1254

1255 Filming the crowded storage space and work area...

1256

1257 LT: ...happened in our storage space and work room, and this is certainly a good example of
1258 what the upstairs left looks like these days. (Change to a picture of the young adult stacks)
1259 Here's a picture from the loft area showing just how crowded the stacks have become in recent
1260 years, the growth of our collection. We've exceeded the ability to grow our collection without
1261 additional space. (Showing different stacks) This shows some of the nonfiction stacks. (From
1262 behind desk) Here's a view from our circulation desk to the wall that will be removed in the
1263 spring of 2001. (Showing the business Jim's Automotive) For years Jim's Automotive occupied
1264 the space next to The Forest Grove City Library on Pacific Avenue. In 1999 there was a change.
1265 (Another photo of the area) Demolition occurred. And this is the process of demolition occurring
1266 right here. (Another photo of equipment in a pile of rubble). It's completed in this picture right
1267 here. You can see the amount of debris that had to be removed from the site. (picture of cleaner
1268 area). Now with demolition completed there's the wall...

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1271 (Showing a picture of two people sitting on a couch with instruments)

1272

1273 LT: And here she is in an early picture. What were you up to in this particular one?

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1275 AB: This was a staff Christmas, or holiday party. We're playing bells.

1276

1277 LT: So you were performing a little musical entertainment?

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1279 AB: Yes, we were going Christmas songs, Christmas carols on the hand bells. The kids always
1280 liked it.

1281