

Off the Wall By Marilyn Robinson

Morrow County people recently lost a friend, a mentor, a healer, a coach and a leader in community affairs. During his lifetime, Dr. L.D. Tibbles touched many people's lives. He began practice here in 1934 and practiced continuously until his retirement in 1975. And he continued to befriend others long after he retired.

When "L.D." and his wife, Lota, came to Heppner, they chose to put down roots, rear a family and become a vital link in the community. As a struggling young physician during the depression days, he soon developed a large practice before the local hospital was built. Of the 800 or so babies he delivered, some of them were second generation newcomers whose mother or father had also been delivered by his hands. His extended family came to know and love their "Doc".

Tibbles exemplified the era of the country doctor who made house calls, day and night, to treat everyone from the young to the elderly. It was before the age of specialized medicine and the technology of modern diagnostic equipment that now helps to determine the existence and identity of many illnesses. Lacking that type of sophisticated help, this wise and caring physician faced alone the awesome decisions of when to treat the patient himself and when to send the person to a medical center in a large city.

Medicine wasn't the only focus in Tibbles' life. He helped the town grow by serving on the city council, one term as mayor. He was a leader of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce. His involvement led to developing a city swimming pool, the paving and lighting of city streets.

A sportsman who seldom missed a game, Tibbles became a physician for the schools. Aspiring athletes were given free physical examinations and, often, free treatment for athletic injuries. During summers he umpired Little League baseball games. Young minds as well as bodies felt his influence as a member of the local school board.

But when fishing or hunting seasons rolled around, he was one of the first to gear up for those sports. His wife recalls having to send word to his hunting camp so that he could return to assist with an impending birth. His many hunting and fishing stories would fill a book and those tales often reverberated throughout his office during business hours.

During the last two years of his life he was hospitalized in Heppner with Parkinson's Disease. This was a blow to those who had received his assistance during family illnesses and tragedies. His contribution to others as well as his immediate family is well versed in the following essay written by his granddaughter Barbra Tibbles, who is now a freshman at Stanford University. Her essay, written as a high school senior in 1990 is an outstanding tribute to the celebration of a great life.

HHS one of top Shriners schools

Heppner High School is one of the top schools, in the terms of the number of players chosen, in the 40-year history of the Oregon East-West Shriners Hospital benefit football game, according to A.K. "Lucky" Felt, ticket sales coordinator.

HHS has had 32 players in 40 years selected for the games. The players are seniors from Oregon's A, AA and AAA schools.

In commemoration of the 40th year of the games, a reunion has been planned for all alumni, coaches and their families Friday and Saturday, August 7 and 8, in Baker City. Besides the game and pageant Saturday, other special events have been planned.

All net proceeds from the game go to help the Shriners treat crippled and burned children free and without any government monies.

Helping the Shriners' cause and representing Heppner High

School over the past 40 years are: Marvin Conner and John Wagner, 1952; John Sumner 1953; Jim Green '54; Larry Groves and Ralph Marlatt '55; Edward Brosnan '56; Jerry Dougherty '57; Len Ray Schwarz '58; Ladd Henderson and Dick Ruhl '59; Tom Driscoll '60; John Porter '63; Tim Driscoll '66; Jim Doherty '67; Lee Huson '70; John Hall '71; Bernard Marshall '72; Bill Jepsen '73; John Boyer '74; Jerry Gentry '75; Carl Christman '77; Marty Smith '78; Bryon Marlin '79; Dale Holland '80; John Murray '82; Wes Marlatt '83; Duane Ball '88; Richard Devin '89; Russell Britt '90; Rick Osmin '91; and Jim Kindle '92.

A block of tickets at the Baker High stadium has been set aside for Heppner, Lexington and Ione boosters and a section is reserved for alumni and their families. Call 676-5574 for reserved seat tickets.

"Doc" remembered



'Doc' Tibbles and his family

By Barbra Tibbles, 1990

The air smells of sincerity as I make my way over the bridge, enjoying a walk in the peace and quiet of a small town in eastern Oregon. I see it when I reach the top of the bridge-its stone walls standing tall and steady, its clock tower keeping a protective watch over the town. A monument of strength, the Morrow County Courthouse is a majestic sight that controls the town in which my grandparents have lived since 1934. Beyond is Cross Hill, covered only with golden stalks of wheat; and Willow Creek, winding its way through the thin, bare trees on either bank. As I take in the sight before me I begin to wonder what this courthouse must have witnessed in its 88 years of existence, remaining the only constant in an ever-changing world. The courthouse has been standing proud and tall for almost a century while the town unceasingly changed shape around it. I can't imagine anything that could be as strong as this building made of stone.

For as long as I can remember, I have taken that walk during every visit to my grandparents' house. My grandfather and I step out to enjoy each other's company and talk about whatever is on our minds. He tells me about the trees, the flowers, the weather; and teaches me how to appreciate the beauty that surrounds us. We stop to talk to neighbors and friends and I hear discussions about the fishing and hunting seasons. As we continue our walk, we are greeted by people shouting, "Hi, Doc!" and telling me of the many times my grandfather visited their homes to treat an illness. I begin to feel very privileged to be walking alongside the man who has been so important to so many people. Everyone in town knows "the Doc", and they all have a special story about him to tell me. In their eyes, and increasingly in mine, he is a hero.

Last Christmas, my family went up to visit my grandparents again. This time, however, things had changed: I had to take my walk all by myself. You see, my grandfather has Parkinson's disease and was not able to accompany me. He has been getting progressively worse and worse and this summer he was hospitalized. He is still there today, needing 24 hour supervision and unable to walk without help. His wit is still sharper than ever, but he is frustrated with growing old.

As I took my walk all alone, I looked at the trees and flowers and sniffed the air to see what the weather was like. I remembered the things my grandfather had taught me and the stories he had told. I thought about how everything had changed and about how I could never regain those moments with my granddad. Then I reached the top of the bridge and I saw it-standing tall and beautiful before me. I stopped and looked at the courthouse, and all I could see was my grandfather's face. There he was, watching over the town and caring for it when it was not well. The building's strength could almost be compared to my grandfather's determination in giving others (and now, struggling to keep) the gift of life. My grandfather is the most well-known and well-loved person in the town, just as the courthouse is the most striking and memorable sight for miles around. It was true, I thought, I will never be able to go back to the way things used to be. But I realized that the courthouse holds, deep within its chambers, all my fond memories of my grandfather. And nothing can take them away from me.

Gentry takes first at Prineville

Jerry Gentry, Heppner, took the calf roping at Prineville on July 11 and 12 with a winning time of 9.3 seconds. "There's lots of action to report on the rodeo trail as the season advances," says a spokesperson for the Morrow County Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo.

The Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo committee is selling tickets on a half beef donated by Morrow County Livestock Growers. Tickets may be purchased from any committee member or from the Morrow County Fair and Oregon Pro Rodeo queen Jenni Ashbeck and her court.

The Morrow County All Around saddle made by Rich Boyer of Hermiston, will once again be donated by Gardner's Men's Wear. "We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo, August 22 and 23," said the spokesperson.

Bridal Registry
 Tonja Morrell & Howard Breidenback
 August 1, 1992
 Maryetta Connor & Pat Baker
 July 24, 1992






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