

HEPPNER



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Marjorie Worden celebrates 100th

Surrounded by family and friends, Marjorie Worden celebrated her 100th birthday by cutting her own slice of birthday cake at a party in her honor at the Pioneer Memorial Hospital Nursing Home.

Marjorie Ebbert was born Sept. 23, 1895 at Condon, where her family farmed during the era of horse-drawn machinery and pioneer lifestyles. She attended school there and went on to teach at the Mikkalo county school between Condon and Arlington.

Marjorie married Floyd Worden on Dec. 31, 1919. The Wordens farmed on a place now owned by the Potters. In 1926, they moved to the Eightmile area. That farm is now being operated by a grandson, Bob, and his wife, Pam and their family.

In addition to wheat farming, the Wordens developed a herd of purebred Polled Hereford cattle.

Like other seedstock breeders, the Wordens participated in cattle shows and sales throughout the northwest and in California. They won many ribbons and championships and became well-known for their select herd of breeding stock. She was always on hand to help groom their cattle and once quipped that snuggling up to an amiable animal was one way to warm up during those chilly wintertime shows.

The Wordens had three children: Wilbur Worden, Heppner, and Doris Knighten and Dorothy Gernhard, both of the Portland area.

Mrs. Worden's room has pictures of her large, extended family that includes six grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren. Family members pay frequent visits, especially the daily visits from her son Wilbur and his wife Rita.

Health Dept. flu shot clinics

The Morrow County Health Dept. has scheduled flu shot clinics at the following locations:

Irrigon Senior Center, Oct. 18, 1-7 p.m.; Heppner Health Office, Oct. 19, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Ione City Hall, Oct. 23, 4-7 p.m.; Boardman Health Office, Oct. 24, 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Heppner Senior Center, Oct. 25, 10 a.m.-noon.

Seniors are reminded to bring their medicare cards. Cost for the shot is \$9.



Marjorie Worden

The Worden children attended the Eightmile county school near their home during their primary years. By living in a rented apartment in the Chaffee house, all three children graduated from Heppner High School. It was not feasible to

bus children long distances in those days.

Family life has always been Mrs. Worden's focus. She also enjoyed flower gardening, sewing and helping others. She became involved with 4-H when her own youngsters were at home.

The Wordens moved to Heppner before Floyd passed away in 1963. Up until recent years, she has maintained her own house near the Heppner Elementary School. She also became active in Eastern Star, where she held offices and became Worthy Matron. She belonged to the Degree of Honor, the Rebekahs and the Morrow County CattleWomen.

Her lifestyle of 100 years depicts the hardiness of women who reared families and maintained ranch households before there were any of today's conveniences.

Voter turnout below normal

Morrow County Clerk Barbara Bloodsworth said that the total turnout for the Sept. 19 mail-in election concerning funding for the Morrow County Unified Recreation District was 58.7 percent. "It was not as good as normal for a vote by mail," said Bloodsworth.

A breakdown of precinct percentages is as follows: no. 1, North Boardman, 54.7 percent; no. 2, South Boardman, 48.5

percent; no. 3, Hardman, 50 percent; no. 4, Ione, 75.7 percent; no. 5, North Irrigon, 55.8 percent; no. 6, South Irrigon, 41.1 percent; no. 7, Lexington, 68.9 percent; no. 8, Northeast Heppner, 71 percent; no. 9, Northwest Heppner, 70.2 percent; no. 10, Southeast Heppner, 71.2 percent; and no. 11, Southwest Heppner, 60.1 percent.

Elizabeth Allen honored



Elizabeth Allen

Elizabeth Allen of Ione was selected as a winner in the 1995 Kids' Hall of Fame by Pizza Hut and National Geographic

World. Elizabeth, a seventh grader at the Ione Schools, won a \$50 U.S. Savings Bond for her work with the homeless. In the summer of 1994 she organized a diaper drive, collecting over one million disposable diapers. In August 1995, she collected 375 pairs of socks.

Elizabeth, the daughter of Jannie and Dick Allen, is in the process of conducting a coat drive and will continue collecting coats for the homeless until the end of October. Anyone wishing to donate a coat may contact her at 422-7563.

She was nominated for the award by Dave Gunderson and Linda Shaw, Heppner school teachers.

Veteran's service office closed

Veterans' Service officer Rita Hedman will be attending a veterans' conference in

Waldport Oct. 17-20. She will not be in the Heppner office Oct. 19.

Gingerbread House fills community need



L-R: Ginger Perez, Ramona Franke, Adam Perez and Alex Usenko

By April Hilton-Sykes

There's a gingerbread house in Heppner. But it's not the kind you eat and definitely not the one with the wicked witch. This gingerbread house is dedicated to enriching the lives of a group of people who don't always have a home, much less a loving one.

Ginger and Adam Perez' Gingerbread House has provided a home for seniors and mentally or physically disabled adults since August of 1994.

Ginger started her career working in a nursing home in Bellingham, Wash. "I enjoyed the job," said Ginger, "but the stress level was too much. Things were different in the whole industry back then. I think they (the residents) got good care, but at that time nursing homes were a place to die." After she moved to Oregon, Ginger worked for a program funded through the Salem office, working one-on-one with mentally retarded people in nursing homes. From there she was hired by Mental Health as a case manager. She had been working with a patient who she got very attached to. She wanted to do more for her patient—she wanted to provide her with a loving home.

Adam had been working at Kinzua Corporation, but when the company shut down during the change of ownership, he figured that it was the perfect time for them to start doing what they loved. So, when Kinzua Resources called him back after the sale, he told them 'no', he was just too busy. By then, the couple had already jumped head first into their new enterprise. "We had to get this going," said Adam. "It was a necessity."

Ginger then began working with a vengeance at the Gingerbread House. At first she got up at 4:30 or 5 a.m. and worked until the Gingerbread residents went to bed—all this in addition to her job as a mental health case worker and taking care of her family, which includes Jamie, now a freshman, and A.J., a seventh grader. But, she and Adam love the job. "You have to care," said Ginger. "If you didn't you couldn't do it. It's too demanding."

"Caring is a number one priority," added Adam. "It's an around the clock job, but the reward is almost instantaneous. To see someone in jeopardy of being placed in an institution and then put them in a home setting, the glow is almost instant."

The residents at the Gingerbread House are all placed

Merchants to meet

The Heppner Merchants' Committee will meet next Tuesday, Oct. 10, at 6 p.m. at Kate's Pizza.

Holiday promotions will be discussed.

All Heppner merchants are invited to attend.

there on a contract basis with Senior and Disabled Services or Mental Health. Mental Health serves people from 18 to 62 years old. Senior and Disabled Services assists people over age 62 or those with physical or mental disabilities. The Perezes provide total care for the people who live there, which includes laundry, hygiene, grooming, cooking, house-keeping and, if the patient requires it, feeding.

Adam and Ginger get referrals from all over the state, but don't accept everyone. They say they look for that perfect match. "Most of our people here don't have families," said Ginger. "We are pretty much their families. That's really the best part of it. Once they've been here for awhile, they become your family."

Ginger and Adam agree that they don't get away very often, since they not only work at the Gingerbread House, but also live downstairs. But that's just fine with them. "We eat, sleep and breathe this," adds Ginger. "Now we're used to it. We're more comfortable. When we're not here, we worry about them," adds Ginger. "They become your grandfather or grandmother or child." The Perezes say that the recent purchase of a cellular phone adds to their peace of mind and "paid for itself" the first day they purchased it.

Adam and Ginger say that sometimes problems arise because of the misconceptions people have about mentally ill and retarded people. "We're really concerned about the community," says Ginger. "We don't want to bring anyone in who will harm the community...and we won't. But everyone in this house has the same rights as everyone else. We want people with enough respect and dignity that they can go by the rules," says Adam.

"It's all a matter of trust," says Ginger. "I think a lot of the people who have lived in institutions have a mistrust of caretakers. If you can get their trust and love them, it's okay. At first it's very traumatic for them, because mentally retarded people like things to be ordered. Once you get that established, then they feel secure. They've gone through so much trauma in their lives, I think they deserve to be taken care of with the same respect that everyone else does."

The Perezes develop programs for their residents, based on their behaviors. In addition to establishing a regular routine, they plan individual activities, Bingo games and have a home bowling set. They also take the residents on an occasional outing. They say the men residents especially enjoy going for drives in the Perezes' 1954 Hudson Hornet.

The Gingerbread House is very serious about the house rules on sanitation and other

issues, "which protect the employees as well as the people who live here."

Ginger and Adam credit the local medical personnel with much of their success. "We couldn't do this without the support we have from Dr. Ed (Berretta), Dr. Jeanne (Berretta), Dr. (Ernie) Atkins and John and Ann Murray (pharmacists)," says Ginger. Ginger says that Ann Murray worked "diligently" to be able to provide a Gingerbread resident with a special restricted medicine. "They have been very supportive," adds Adam. "We've probably got some of the best medical facilities in the state."

Gingerbread House resident manager is Ramona Franke, who assists with operation of the home, caregiving and cooking meals. "She's wonderful," says Ginger. "She is excellent help. She's our right arm. We're really dependent on her." Other employees are Tami Howey, Matt Larive and Stacie Cline.


Mental Health and Senior and Disabled Services (SDS) also provide support. Alex Usenko, SDS district manager for Umatilla, Morrow and Grant counties, is often in contact with the Perezes. "Places like this are rare, extremely rare in rural communities," says Usenko. "This offers people out here a real choice for the first time. Before people either had to go to a nursing home or move out of the area. The good news now is that they can stay right in their own community if they want."

The Perezes now have two locations in Heppner, one on Gale Street and one near the Sheriff's Office.

The Perezes first moved to Morrow County from Bellingham in 1985 looking for a change in careers and environment. The Bellingham area was growing "too big, too fast" and, adds Ginger, "We've never been big city people."

Adam wanted to try his hand at ranching and got a job working for the Dave Cheney ranch. The family moved to Ione in 1987 when Adam was hired by Kinzua Corp. In 1992 they moved to Heppner. Adam is a lieutenant with the Heppner Volunteer Fire Department and also drives ambulance. He is also on the Morrow County Mental Health Advisory Board and helps out at the local school with a monolingual Spanish speaking student. Ginger has been a member of the Morrow County Commission for Children and Families, but had to give it up because of a lack of time. Their family also includes daughter, Shannon Anderson, who lives at the Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho with her husband, who is in the Air Force, and their daughter, Mercedes. Ginger used one of her precious days off recently helping Mercedes celebrate her third birthday.

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