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Visiting pastor brings back memories



Left to right: Pastors Dan Womack, Alfred Womack, Tim Van Cleave

It has been 43 years since he first arrived, but Alfred R. Womack remembers Heppner well. Womack came to Heppner in February of 1934 with his wife, Jean, and young son, David, then eight months old, to pastor Heppner's first Assembly of God church. Now 88, he was on hand once again March 23 at the Christian Life Center in Heppner to deliver the Palm Sunday sermon.

When Pastor Womack came to Heppner in 1934 he was only the second pastor to serve at the church, which was then called the Pentecostal Tabernacle and nicknamed "The Glory Barn". It became affiliated with the Assembly of God that year. His service at the church in Heppner was his first real pastorate. He and his family lived in the parsonage, which has since been torn down, located near Heppner Elementary School.

Current pastor Tim Van Cleave said that this year the church had planned a special offering and decided to invite Pastor Womack because of his special interest in Heppner. Pastor Womack's son, Dan, also a minister, had planned to be in the area, so, the two teamed up to share the pulpit for the first time ever on Palm Sunday, March 23. Alfred delivered the sermon on Sunday morning and Dan took over the pulpit on Sunday evening.

Alfred attended high school at Emmett, Idaho, and Bible college at the Glad Tidings Bible Institute at San Francisco. His first ministry was at Wilcox, AZ. He then moved to Trail, Oregon, and then to Heppner. The Womacks' arrival in Heppner was noted with a story in the

Gazette. During his time in Heppner, he remembers experiencing a flood. He put his son on his shoulders, climbed up on a hill and watched the flood below. But, then he got to worrying about his friends in Lone. "So, I out-ran the flood with the old Model T Ford," said Alfred. Fortunately, the flood had spread out quite a bit by the time it reached Lone and didn't do much damage there.

The Womacks were in Heppner four years, before moving on to Tenino for a year and a half, then to Bellingham, WA, and Eureka, MT. The family then returned to the Northwest and Alfred took on a Gospel mission in Spokane. After that, he left the ministry for a while. The only job he was able to get at the time was milking a herd of goats on "shares". He actually ended up with a small herd of goats himself. He then returned to the ministry as pastor of the North Hill Assembly of God in Spokane for around 10 years. He retired in 1972 and moved to Everett, WA, where he did odd jobs until moving into the Sunrise View Villa retirement center in Everett.

Alfred still preaches quite often at the retirement center for those who can't get to their places of worship. "It gives me a ministry," adds Alfred. He is also president of the resident council there.

Both of Alfred's sons have followed in his footsteps. Dan is an evangelist who travels full time in the ministry. He attended Northwest College of Assemblies of God and pastored at his first assignment at Republic, WA, for 14 years. He has had a traveling

ministry for 19 years, mostly this side of the Mississippi. He and his wife, Marty, travel most often in a Greyhound bus which has been converted into a mobile home. They have two grown children. Their son, Scott, who is a youth minister in Minnesota, is the third generation Assembly of God pastor in the family.

Alfred's son, David, also a minister, recently retired from the Assembly of God headquarters. Alfred has seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. His wife passed away in 1993.

Heppner was also current pastor Tim Van Cleave's first ministry. He came to Heppner in 1988 as a youth minister and the following year assumed the pastorate. He had served several other places as a youth minister prior to coming to Heppner. Pastor Van Cleave and his wife, Myrna, have five children.

"I learned a lot," said Tim of Alfred's visit. "Hearing part of our history first hand is much different than reading it from a book. I thought it would be neat to bring back a former pastor who kind of blazed the trail." The prospect of coming back to Heppner also gave Alfred a "shot in the arm", so to speak. Alfred, who has mild diabetes, said that his blood sugar went up when Tim called him with the invitation.

Spring ahead

It's that time again--time to spring ahead and turn clocks ahead one hour. Daylight saving's time begins in the wee hours this Sunday, April 6.



Chloe Delaney, two years old, stops to examine her goodies following the annual Heppner Elk's Club Easter Egg Hunt held Saturday, March 29, in Heppner. Chloe is the daughter of Natalie Delaney of Heppner.

It's full steam ahead for Corral-A-1000

A meeting of the Corral-a-1000 committee will be held this Friday, April 4, at Yaw's Restaurant in Heppner at 2 p.m. in the banquet room. Organizer Steve Yaw says that the meeting is a "vital" one and that everyone is invited to attend.

Yaw says that the Corral-a-1000 committee is moving full steam ahead, with farmers and ranchers committing over 100 parking locations for RVs, camp trailers and campers, in preparation for the 1997 Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo. Lodging will be coordinated by the Housing Committee, which will match and locate campers to campsites that will fit both the criteria of the campers as well as that of the landowners. A check-in spot will be located in the Lone area.

The Corral-a-1000 committee seeks to draw at least a thousand people from metropolitan areas to attend fair and rodeo activities.

According to a Corral-a-1000 newsletter, the group has obtained approval from the city of Heppner for stage shows and dances on the two parking lots behind Yaw's, Kate's Pizza and Bucknum's Tavern. In addition property behind the Elk's Lodge will be available for a beer garden, food booths, arts and crafts displays and sales, said the newsletter.

The committee will be direct mailing to a "selected group of RV owners" an "invitation to join the excitement". They will be invited to taste life on a ranch, enter the beef chili cook off, attend an outdoor invitational cowboy barbecue, a rodeo demonstration by the high school rodeo association, the Pro Rodeo Cowboys Association rodeo, the

Morrow County Rodeo and many exhibits of the fair, as well as 4-H and FFA animals, projects and auction, said Yaw. Invitations were handed out to RV visitors during the St. Patrick's Day Celebration. A ten percent discount will be given to those with paid registrations prior to June 1. Tickets will be available for local people wishing to attend the cowboy barbecue up to one week prior to the barbecue.

New activities will be added to the list of events this year, he said. But he stresses that the new activities will not conflict with any of the regularly scheduled activities. "One of the hottest and new this year is the pig races, the beef chili cook-off, sponsored by the fair board with prizes furnished by the Morrow County Livestock Growers, the food

circus and beer garden and entertainment center in town," said Yaw. He also suggested that the town might be open to gunfights, bank holdups, hay rides, wagon rides, square dances and, if enough people sign up, tours to wheat ranches, harvesting, haying and cattle ranches.

Free park and ride transportation will be offered from the edge of the city as well as transportation from the city to the fairgrounds on a continuous basis, said Yaw, since Heppner's Main Street will be torn up for the Main Street Renovation Project, scheduled to get underway soon. Yaw said that the Morrow County Court has granted permission for use of the Senior Citizens' Bus for park and ride service during the fair and rodeo.

Little League tryouts slated

Little League and major and senior softball tryouts have been scheduled.

Little League major tryouts for those not already on a major team will be held Friday, April 4 at 5 p.m., and Saturday, April 5 at 9 a.m. at the Little League field by the dam.

Girls' major and senior softball will hold tryouts for those girls not

already on a team on Friday, April 4 at 5 p.m. and Saturday, April 5 at 2 p.m. at the Heppner High School baseball field.

These dates will also be the last time that signup registrations can be accepted. Anyone who wishes to sign up their child for t-ball through senior softball should contact Rollie Marshall, 676-9125, immediately to get the signup forms.

Math contest scheduled

The annual Morrow County School District Elementary/Middle School math contest will be held on Thursday, April 10, at Heppner High School at 6:30 p.m.

Teacher Linda Dutcher is in charge of local arrangements at the high school.

Refreshments will be served at the end of the competition. The public is invited to observe the competition.

News Deadline: Mon. 5 p.m.



Gift of green

Debra Gutierrez, member of the People for the Pool committee, accepts a check for \$3,000 from a leprechaun of the St. Patrick's Day committee. The St. Pats committee made the donation last week towards the new Willow Creek Water Park fund raising effort.

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