

The Journal

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1 John 4:18

Aug. 31, 2007

Overton-Dean ceremony unites Big Sandy churches

By Melodee Overton
BIG SANDY, Texas—On July 7, 2007 (7-7-07), at 7 p.m. Meagan Renee Overton and Aaron Keith “A.J.” Dean Jr. united in marriage at the Church of God Big Sandy.

Meagan is the daughter of Melodee Overton of Hawkins, Texas, who attends the Church of God Big Sandy, and Mac Overton of Gilmer, Texas, who attends various Church of God congregations.

A.J. is the son of Aaron and Michelle Dean of Gladewater, Texas.

Joint ceremony

Jointly performing the ceremony were Aaron Dean, father of the groom and a member of the United Church of God’s council of elders, and Dave Havir, pastor of the bride’s congregation, the Church of God Big Sandy.

Friends had given several bridal and wedding showers for the engaged couple. Aunt Michele Mischnick of Big Sandy presented the first shower, in March, featuring household and bedroom necessities.

In May the local UCG congregation, which the groom attends, gave a couple’s shower featuring kitchenware and Pampered Chef products.

The newlyweds thank all who helped furnish their new home in Lubbock, Texas.

Friends and family

The wedding was an evening candlelit affair attended by about 250 close friends and family members.

The bride wore a pearl-and-sequin embellishment of ivory satin with gold embroidery on the fitted bodice and front offset inset.

Beautiful embroidery embellished the elegant six-foot train. The bride and her mother had made the veil, following the bride’s design.

The bridesmaids, Crystal Dean of Gladewater, Jessica Killingley of Big Sandy and Brittany Martin of Lindale, wore emerald-green satin full-length dresses.

The groomsmen, Anthony Brown of Waxahachie, Texas, Joe Trone of Gilmer, Texas, and Melodee Overton of Hawkins, Texas, wore black tuxes with matching emerald-green ties and vests to match the wedding party.

The pastel arrangement of orchids, roses and hydrangeas that the bride carried were made by her mother.

On to Lubbock

The gorgeous four-tiered ivory wedding cake featuring pink D’s was made by Julie Wilkins of Hawkins. The groom’s cake was in reality small fruit tarts with a cream-cheese-and-whipped-cream filling.

The bridal dinner featured blueberry-mustard-glazed chicken breast with wild-rice pilaf and long-green-bean and carrot-lemon bundles.

The evening finished off with toasting and then dancing.

The bride and groom left for their honeymoon amid the light of sparklers against the evening sky.

They took a cruise for their honeymoon and have taken up residence in Lubbock, where A.J. will pursue a degree from Texas Tech in business administration of energy commerce and Meagan will continue her education and seek employment in banking.

See a photo of the bride and groom on this page of *THE JOURNAL*.



WEDDING BELLS—Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Keith “A.J.” Dean Jr. and the two ministers who married them pose for a picture on their wedding day, July 7, in Big Sandy, Texas. The wedding brought together, at least temporarily, well-wishers from several Church of God congregations for the ceremony in the building owned by the Church of God Big Sandy. Mr. Dean is the son of Aaron and Michele Dean of Gladewater, Texas. Mrs. Dean, the former Meagan Overton, is the daughter of Mac Overton of Gilmer, Texas, and Melodee Overton of Hawkins, Texas. Performing the ceremony were Aaron Dean of Gladewater (left), father of the groom, and Dave Havir of Big Sandy (right), pastor of the bride. See the article about the wedding beginning on this page of *THE JOURNAL*. [Photo by Stacey Black]

The Journal’s Feast list wraps it up for 2007

For the latest listing of Feast of Tabernacles observances for 2007 sponsored by Church of God ministries and individual members, go to www.thejournal.org.

Almost 200 Feast sites in several countries made this year’s roster, which appeared in the print edition up until the June-July issue. If your site didn’t make the listing, *THE JOURNAL* encourages you to be sure to plan to send in your information for next year.

Speaking of the Feast, don’t forget to send in your Feast report immediately after your 2007 observance. As in the past, *THE JOURNAL* will publish the reports for at least four issues after the festival.

You may E-mail, fax or snail-mail your information, including a good-quality photograph or two, to info@thejournal.org, (903) 636-9097 or P.O. Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755, U.S.A.

Church of God 7th Day Meridian’s 2007 Camp Meeting carries on half-century family tradition

By Dixon Cartwright
Members of the Church of God 7th Day based in Meridian, Idaho, have met for the church’s weeklong Camp Meeting just about every summer for 57 years.

The annual family-oriented gathering might remind some other Church of God members of the yearly Feast of Tabernacles.

The warm-weather get-togethers started around 1950, with church services every day in a big tent. The tent is long gone, but the brethren can still camp out on the grounds.

THE JOURNAL talked with a longtime Meridian CG7 member, Jennie Sienknecht, about the Camp Meeting and a little about the history of the Meridian group.

“About 1958 we [Mrs. Sienknecht and her late husband, Robert] came here to the Camp Meeting, and they had a big tent. Now we have a big building.”

“We furnish meals on a free-will-offering basis, breakfast, lunch and dinner. We have a dining room and kitchen on the grounds.”

Sometimes shortly before the first Meridian Camp Meeting, said Mrs. Sienknecht, a split occurred in the church, which before the separation was affiliated with the

CG7 that is presently headquartered in Denver, Colo.

“The separation from the [original group] was over pork,” Mrs. Sienknecht said. “The people here believed it was all right to eat it, and the other people didn’t.”

Attendance was slightly lower than normal this year, she said, with 150 participating.

“We don’t have big ones like the [Denver] conference. They have thousands,” she said.

This year’s Camp Meeting began June 29 and ran through July 7.

Mrs. Sienknecht remembers some Church of God old-timers, including the Andrew Dugger family. Mr. Dugger, with Clarence O. Dodd, wrote a See **MRS. SIENKNECHT**, page 5



Jennie Sienknecht

Dr. Bacchiocchi says ‘case closed’ after partial apology

BERRIEN SPRINGS, Mich.—The rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, has apologized for some of the accusations a university official had leveled at Seventh-day Adventist scholar and author Samuele Bacchiocchi.

As reported in an article on page 1 of the June-July 2007 issue of *THE JOURNAL*, a university official had accused Dr. Bacchiocchi of making false statements about his studies at the university in the 1970s and his doctoral dissertation, a version of which he published in 1977 as the book *From Sabbath to Sunday*.

Gianfranco Ghirlanda, the university’s rector, in June “rectif[ied] some of the false allegations,” Dr. Bacchiocchi announced, though some “remain unresolved.” However, “in the spirit of Christian forgiveness I consider the case closed.”

For more information about the apology see tinyurl.com/29rbq3 and tinyurl.com/32wsxd.



Samuele Bacchiocchi

Unexpected resignation alters UCG’s council

MILFORD, Ohio—Joel Meeker, an elder in the United Church of God and member of the UCG’s governing body, the council of elders, resigned his seat on the 12-man board in a letter to church president Clyde Kilough dated July 25, 2007.

Filling the vacancy is Leon Walker of Big Sandy, Texas, who in May had lost his bid for reelection to the council. Mr. Walker is back as a councilor because he was next in line in the tally of votes cast by the general conference of elders to fill one of the three “international” seats on the council.

Mr. Meeker, although an American and resident of the Cincinnati, Ohio, area, was considered one of three international council members because of his “editorial and membership oversight responsibilities in the French-speaking areas,” Mr. Kilough said.

Mr. Walker handles similar responsibilities for Spanish-speaking areas.



Joel Meeker

Lamp Fire positions as grassroots effort to get people’s attention

DECKER, Minn.—Three longtime Church of God members are collaborating on a project called Lamp Fire Films to produce “professional, nondenominational, biblically based documentaries” and distribute them for viewing on cable television and DVDs.

The three members are Steven Collins of Sioux Falls, S.D., a writer and author of several books on the lost tribes of Israel; James Difrancio of Hamlin, N.Y., who already works in the Christian-video business; and Tim Lindholm of Decker, Minn., producer.

Mr. Difrancio and Mr. Lindholm approached Mr. Collins to encourage him to participate in the project to create a nonprofit Christian publishing company.

“Many brethren are sick and tired of the typical we-are-the-one-and-only-Church of God approach,” Mr. Difrancio said. “The COG organiza-

tions have not made any major effort utilizing video technology to inform the nations of the modern house of Israel about their heritage and warm them about the prophecies affecting them.”

Lamp Fire Films will be a “grassroots effort that will act as a watchman to get valuable truths out to the world through video media,” Mr. Difrancio continued.

The Lamp Fire nonprofit corporation intends to cooperate with people from other groups, Mr. Lindholm said, including evangelicals, Jews, Messianic Christians and Hebrew-roots believers.

“It will be a vehicle through which members of any churches or organizations can cooperate for common purposes.”

Production of the first Lamp Fire video will proceed “as funding allows,” he said.

Speaking of funding, Mr. Lindholm invited *JOURNAL* readers and others to consider making tax-deductible (in the U.S.A.) donations to help kick off the project.

For more information visit www.LampFireFilms.org, or write Mr. Lindholm at 5170 165th Ave. SE, Decker, Minn. 55308, U.S.A.



Tim Lindholm

YEA report: Tales from Wewoka Woods

The writer served as an associate counselor at this year's YEA summer camp. He is a college student majoring in mathematics and plans a career as a high-school math teacher.

By R. Gerald Saul

WEWOKA, Okla.—The 2007 edition of Christian Educational Ministries' YEA (Youth Educational Activities) summer camp kicked off June 24 at the Wewoka Woods Adventist Center near here.

The 46 campers had traveled from 12 states, from California to Georgia, to be a part of the yearly event. Nearly half of them were there for the first time.

After an active week, campers began heading home on July 1, with camp written into the history books as a great success.

This year's camp's Bible-study lessons focused on relationships.

Romantic relationships

The whirlwind of studies, written by a team led by Paula Hughes of Arp, Texas, and Erin Moore of Rogersville, Mo., dealt with relationships with God, family, friends and community and the ever-popular subject of romantic relationships.

The small group studies that took place each morning were part of a week-long effort devoted to regular Bible study in small and large groups.

The most interactive part of the week's studies involved pairing off the campers and giving them a "baby" Ping-Pong ball to take care of for 24-hours, compliments of Beth Meese of Catlin, Ill.

Creative solutions were hatched as the campers were forced to make arrangements while they were "working" at their various activities.

And a partridge in a pear tree?

Each day of camp consisted of four activity periods, three square meals, two Bible studies and one different camp activity each night.

Campers had to be flexible because rain nearly every day of the week forced some activities indoors and canceled others.

The weather was, however, a welcome change from years past when temperatures climbed into the high 90s and made afternoon outdoor activities uncomfortable.

The much-needed rain also made skiing and tubing on the lake a lot more fun. Lake levels were nearly



CEM CAMP—Above: Campers participate in an outdoor YEA activity. Below: Campers gather around a table for a meal. [Photos courtesy Gerald Saul]



eight feet higher than last year's historic low.

That was a good thing because camp director and boat captain Larry Watkins of Big Sandy, Texas, needed all of the lake to commission the first two generals into the air force. Stephine Tarrant of Crescent, Okla., and Alyssa Pence of Oklahoma City launched high into the air while tubing, shattering the previous record, held by Max Packard of Leavenworth, Kan., and Patrick Monahan of Tonganoxie, Kan.

The world? Deal with it

Camp is a time when teens share experiences and learn from each other about how to deal with the world around them.

For many, camp is the one time of year spent with other teens of like faith, a cherished opportunity.

Through the Internet and cell phones, keeping in touch is easier than ever, and most take advantage of those technologies.

Groups have formed on social-networking sites including Facebook and MySpace, enabling campers to stay connected throughout the year.

Just search for "YEA Summer Camp" to get in touch with us!

This year Christian Educational

Ministries also has plans to keep in touch with campers, promoting programs like Pray21 and providing a "huddle" at this year's Feast in Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

Feast site

For more information about events at the Feast, call Christian Educational Ministries, or go to CEM's Web site, www.borntown.net.

Another favorite activity of this year's camp was the multiple dances held throughout the week.

Participation is always encouraged, but little motivation is usually needed to get everyone on the dance floor.

Some of the campers who enjoyed this activity the most had never been to a proper dance before, and it was lots of fun watching them cut a rug.

So many memories but too little space to write about them all!

But if you like what you've read and heard and want to be a part next year, let us know.

We are still working out the 2008 schedule and may be forced to use a new facility, so we need to know if you're interested.

You can drop Larry Watkins a line at ls@cemnetwork.com, or call him at 1-888-BIBLE-44.

Notes and quotes

Carl Ponder dies

ATLANTA, Ga.—Carl Ponder, 67, an area pastor for the Living Church of God, headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., died Aug. 12 of an apparent heart attack. He succumbed while singing and walking out of a cave



Carl Ponder

after exploring it with a group of young people.

In recent years Mr. Ponder had pastored congregations in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi.

He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Lorene; a son, Ray Ponder; a daughter, Susie Burch; and three grandchildren.

Thailand Feast 2007

CHIANG MAI, Thailand—Leon Sexton of Legacy Institute invites fellow Church of God members to attend the Feast of Tabernacles at the four-star Empress Hotel in Chiang Mai.

For more information write Anita Showers of Dundee, Ohio, at mshowers@wiltshire.net, or phone her at (330) 852-2709.

Barn Party Weekend

HELENVILLE, Wis.—The Geiger family—Hal, Scarlet and Ammy—invites you to the



Ammy Geiger

Geigers' 13th annual Barn Party Weekend, set for Friday through Sunday, Oct. 19-21, 2007.

"Come join us for a weekend of fun and fellowship," Mr. Geiger said. "Bring along your homemade chili and cornbread or apple cider and favorite desserts. Or enter the dessert contest."

While you're at it, participate in the displays of talent and dancing or go for a hayride, Mr. Geiger encouraged. The meal begins Saturday about 6 p.m.

For more information, including a map, write the Geigers at N5396 Highway 0, Helenville, Wis. 53137, U.S.A., or halgeiger@hotmail.com. Or call (262) 593-5637.

Silly question?

LINCOLN, England—*Outreach* newsletter, edited by James McBride, is out with the September-October 2007 issue, which includes an article titled "Is There One True Church?"

"The question sounds a bit silly," notes Mr. McBride of the Churches of God UK, affiliated with the Churches of God Outreach Ministries.

"Surely there must be one such Christian church. Isn't God

consistent, unchanging? Would He set up a church and be comfortable with many conflicting interpretations of His guidelines for it?"

"What, indeed, are His standards?"

To find out, subscribe to *Outreach* by writing Mr. McBride at coguk@aol.com or P.O. Box 2525, Lincoln LN4 4EG, England. See also www.cgom.org.

Homeschool Helpers

HARTVILLE, Mo.—Dan and Margie White of Homeschool Helpers and Pass It On Ministries announce issue No. 1 of *HS7*, a publication for Sabbatarian homeschool students and alumni.

To subscribe write mail@homeschool-helpers.info or 5017 McDaris Dr., Hartville, Mo. 65667.

Listen to Mr. White's sermons at www.homeschool-helpers.info.

CCG violated

AMARILLO, Texas—Jeff Booth, pastor of the Christian Church of God (CCG), reports a burglary of the church's building the evening of Aug. 12, 2007.

"Burglars disabled our security alarm at the church, smashed out a window in the back and ransacked the Lord's house," Mr. Booth wrote in a newsletter.

"They made off with our audio-video system, including our sound-system console, speakers, VCR and DVD recording equipment. They broke into desks and a filing cabinet, and they stole a small amount of tithe-and-offering cash."

Mr. Booth contacted the alarm-monitoring company to report the break-in, because, he said, the burglar-alarm system "failed."

A woman at the company told Mr. Booth that "the Lord would take care of those thieves."

"I know she meant it to comfort," he said, "but it led to a question I asked as to why, then, did we need their alarm service?"

Mr. Booth said he was "thankful to God that we only suffered material loss."

Chicago Feast

ITASCA, Ill.—The Church of God United of Itasca and Herald Ministries will sponsor a Feast of Tabernacles site in the Chicago area, with services each day Sept. 27 through Oct. 4.

Feastgoers will qualify for special room rates when making reservations with the Quality Inn at (630) 279-0700.

For more information contact Mr. Wiese at (630) 289-1863 or momanddadwiese@comcast.net. Or contact Jeff Cormany at (815) 498-3510 or jjcormany@comcast.net.

Services will be at the Quality Inn of Elmhurst, 933 S. Riverside Dr., east off Route 83 between Roosevelt Road and St. Charles Road.

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