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United's Big Sandy church votes to transfer ownership

By Dixon Cartwright
BIG SANDY, Texas—Members of the United Church of God East Texas (UCGET) voted Nov. 12, 2008, to transfer ownership of its new building in Big Sandy to the congregation's parent organization, the United Church of God an International Association (UCGIA), based near Cincinnati, Ohio.

United Church of God East Texas is the formal name of the UCG's Big Sandy congregation, which conducted its first Sabbath service in its new building in December 2007.

The vote, a show of hands with 42 adult members of the congregation present, was almost unanimous. Pastor Ken Treybig announced that the vote was unanimous, although that was not quite accurate. At least one adult member of the congregation abstained from voting, although no one voted against the move.

Mr. Treybig had called the meeting on short notice by E-mail, so many of the congregation's members were not present. Recent average Sabbath-service attendance is said to be 157.

The congregation, during the years of construction of the building, had always planned eventually to turn the ownership over to the church's headquarters. But the former treasurer of the UCGIA, Tom Kirkpatrick of the Cincinnati area, had directed that as long as the building was being financed it be owned locally, by mem-

bers of the East Texas congregation, with the group making promissory-note payments to a local bank or banks.

Now that Dr. Kirkpatrick is no longer treasurer and Jason Lovelady has assumed that responsibility, the opinion of who should own the building during the interim has changed, Mr. Treybig said.

Three documents

During the Big Sandy meeting the members present reviewed three documents, which Mr. Treybig said were modeled after the papers that govern the ownership of the building that houses the Houston North congregation of the United Church of God.

The Big Sandy congregation owes \$350,000 in interim financing. That debt will be assumed by the UCGIA and financed at a bank of the UCGIA's choosing.

Mr. Treybig said he does not foresee the UCGIA making many payments on the new note. Rather, he thinks the church will decide to retire the note in one lump sum, thus freeing up the building, which could be worth



Ken Treybig

See UCG PARENT, page 21



HARRY AND BOBBY—Harry Sneider visits with chess champion Bobby Fischer (right) in Mr. Sneider's home in Pasadena, Calif., in the 1970s. Mr. Fischer is wearing a hat that belonged to one of Mr. Sneider's children. Mr. Sneider was a weight-lifting and body-building trainer for Mr. Fischer and several other famous and not-as-famous people over the years in Pasadena. See page 22 for a photo of Mr. Sneider and California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, another of his trainees in the 1970s. Read the article beginning on this page for more about Harry Sneider's life on the Pasadena campus of Ambassador College. [Photo by John F. Sneider]

Former Ambassador faculty member recalls how a disability led to a career of a lifetime

By Darlene Warren
Every now and then *THE JOURNAL* comes across a story that is too inspirational to overlook.

Many of you are already acquainted with Harry Sneider, who was employed by Ambassador College on the Pasadena campus for 23 years as head of the weight-lifting area of the physical-fitness department. But you may not know how he came to be there.

THE JOURNAL recently spoke with Mr. Sneider about his life, including the interesting events that led up to his employment with AC.

Harry Sneider was born in 1941 in Riga, Latvia, but when the Russians arrived in 1944 he and his family escaped into Poland, then into Czechoslovakia and later Germany.

In Germany he contracted osteomyelitis in his leg and almost died in 1947 at age 6.

"Basically I became handicapped for the rest of my life because the German doctors didn't understand that the disease required penicillin to stop it," he said.

"My parents, who were pretty religious, decided against amputation, and instead the doctors put my leg in a cast, and the bone basically grew together at the hip, and the ball-socket joint was completely ruined."

In 1949 the Sneiders came to the United States and settled in Minneapolis, Minn.

It was there that Harry underwent another surgery, this one requiring a nine-inch plate near his hip joint.

The Journal invites readers' Feast reports

THE JOURNAL invites readers to send in reports of their 2008 Feast of Tabernacles observances.

Members of the Churches of God and other Sabbatarian fellowships met at several hundred Feast sites in 2008, with most observances beginning the evening of Oct. 13.

You still have time to get your report into the next issue of *THE JOURNAL*. Mail your information to Festival Reports, P.O. Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755, U.S.A. Or E-mail it to info@thejournal.org. Or you can fax it to (903) 636-9097.

Photographs as prints or medium- to high-resolution E-mail attachments are also welcomed.

Please mention the dates of your observance and the name of the church fellowship or affiliation, if any, or other sponsors of the site.

The reports begin on page 4 of this issue of *THE JOURNAL*.

Prepare now for March 2009 East Texas Women's Conference

The writer attends the Church of God Big Sandy.

By Melodee Overton
HAWKINS, Texas—The Church of God Big Sandy is gearing up for a great East Texas Women's Conference next year. The theme will be "Preparing the Bride." The conference, which will take place in the Church of God Big Sandy's building on Highway 80 west of Big Sandy, will begin March 13, 2009.

The women of the Churches of God prepare themselves by seeking to be clothed in the fine linen of righteousness and adorned with the jewels of a meek and quiet spirit.

Our focus scripture this year will be Revelation 19:7-8: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

We encourage ladies who plan to attend to bring their (or their daughter's or mother's) wedding gown, wedding photo album and other

wedding mementos to decorate the hall and share with others. Please E-mail us (see the address at the end of this article) and let us know if you will bring something to display so we can have a place ready for your items.

Friday-evening activities will center on the theme of a wedding shower, with appropriate food and attendees dressed for a shower.

If you would like to bring a gift, please make it inexpensive and suitable for donating to a local women's shelter. It could be glasses, washcloths, flatware, etc. Place donated items in a gift bag or leave them unwrapped. Please do not gift-wrap them.

You may also want to bring used business suits or dresses appropriate for women who are interviewing to return to the workforce. Please make sure the clothes are cleaned, pressed and on hangers.

The evening activities will focus on an instructional and then an interactive breakout session drawing on *The Five Love Languages*, the book by Gary Chapman. The evening's activities and fellowship will end about 9 o'clock.

The next morning, on the Sabbath, doors will open at 8:30 for coffee and tea, and we will start off with a bit of music, then brunch and a few speakers.

The afternoon will hold several possibilities. One option is that we go to nearby church ladies' homes

See ARE YOU A COG WOMAN, page 23



Melodee Overton

ABR to open first of 25 schools in December

GERMANTOWN, Md.—The Association for Biblical Research (ABR), operated by Al Carrozo of Escondido, Calif., Art Mokarow of Conroe, Texas, and others, announced in November plans to open 25 campuses affiliated with the American Institute for Advanced Biblical Studies, North Little Rock, Ark.



Lennox Abrigo

The first campus will open in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Dec. 7, 2008, announced general registrar Lennox Abrigo of Germantown.

The first school will meet temporarily at Mount Zion Church of God (7th Day), pastored by Gilford Monroe, at 203 E. 37th St., Brooklyn.

"The Association for Biblical Research intends to open these schools in several cities across America and around the world," Mr. Abrigo told *THE JOURNAL*.

Students can earn a certificate and diploma in ministry and bachelor's and master's degrees in biblical studies. The director of the schools will be Ron Moseley of North Little Rock.

"For information on accreditation, prospective students may contact me," Mr. Abrigo said.

Write him at P.O. Box 1968, Germantown, Md. 20875, U.S.A., or phone him at (240) 367-2381.

CGBS offers Bible-study MP3 CDs in Spanish

By Dixon Cartwright
GLADEWATER, Texas—A collection of Bible studies in Spanish by a longtime Church of God member who died earlier this year is available through the Church of God Big Sandy (CGBS).

Seventy-nine-year-old Dionisio Velasco, who worked for the Spanish department of the Worldwide Church of God in Pasadena, Calif., in the 1980s, recorded some 40 studies in Spanish while attending the CGBS for about 13 years from the mid-1990s.

He later worked for the United Church of God as a freelance translator.

In years past the CGBS made them available on cassette tapes. Now they're out on MP3 CDs for free to anyone who requests them.

Mr. Velasco, who lived in Gladewater in his later years, began each study with "¡Saludos, queridos hermanos y amigos!" (Greetings, beloved

See LEGACY OF BIBLE STUDIES, page 23



Dionisio Velasco

Congregation's scout program grows

By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—Cub Scout Pack 393 and Boy Scout Troop 393, both chartered by the Church of God Big Sandy, continue to serve boys from Church of God congregations and from the community at large.

The Cub Scout pack began in 2006, and the Boy Scout troop began last year.

The Cubs began with 15 scouts two years ago and have 23 scouts signed up

for this year. The Boy Scout troop had nine scouts last year and has nine scouts again this year.

Leadership positions for the Cub Scouts are filled by the following people:

Karl Wilson of Tyler is the cubmaster, George Strub of Big Sandy is the



John Bearse

Tiger (first grade) den leader, Penny Harris of Liberty City is the Wolf (second grade) den leader, Daron Walls of Tyler is the Bear (third grade) den leader, and Jim Bald of Gladewater and Sandra Loftis of Tyler are the Webelos (fourth and fifth grades) den leaders.

The troop leader for the Boy Scouts is John Bearse of Hawkins, with assistance from Rex Ulmer of Gladewater.

BibleStudy.org attracts 10,000 daily

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich.—Alan Ruth's Bible Study Web site, at BibleStudy.org, has begun attracting more than 10,000 visitors in a single day, reports Mr. Ruth.

"I'm still amazed at what God is doing with the site," he said. "The first time it reached the 10K milestone was April 16, 2008, when 10,228 people took advantage of its materials. The site again went beyond 10,000 daily visitors once in May and twice in late September.

"Then, from October to early November, BibleStudy.org served 10K or more visitors a day 16 times. God's blessing of the site's popularity has been remarkable, to say the least."

Mr. Ruth also reports that his site has already drawn more visitors and served more Web pages for the year than it attracted and served for all of 2007.

Mr. Ruth projects BibleStudy.org to reach 2.9 million visitors by the end of



Alan Ruth

2008 who will page-view its study materials a total of 6.9 million times.

These figures are 21 percent and 17 percent, respectively, above last year's totals and represent the 13th consecutive year the site's popularity has increased. BibleStudy.org stats as of Nov. 14, 2008:

■ Visitors served: 2,512,310.

■ Study materials (pages) viewed: 6,000,482.

■ Busiest site traffic days: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

■ Number of times site has attracted more than 10,000 daily visitors: 20.

■ Busiest day in site history: Nov. 5, 2008 (11,004 daily visitors).

■ Busiest month in site history: October 2008 (278,597 visitors, 663,602 pages viewed).

Projected 2008 totals:

■ 2.93 million visitors served (21 percent above 2007).

■ 6.93 million articles (Web pages) viewed (17 percent above 2007).

Alexa.com is an independent traffic-tracking company that collects data on more than 25 million Web sites. It ranks BibleStudy.org as the 122,650th busiest site out of all sites it tracks. This places BibleStudy.org within the top 1 percent of sites most visited on the entire Internet.

Mr. Ruth also maintains *THE JOURNAL's* Web site, at www.thejournal.org.

Notes and quotes

Winter Family Weekend

LOUISVILLE, Ky.—The United Church of God's Winter Family Weekend will happen Dec. 23-27, 2008, in Louisville at the Galt House Hotel and Suites.

The five days, Tuesday through Saturday, will include seminars, a writing workshop, sports competitions and other games, Sabbath services, music, dancing, food, fellowship and indoor rock climbing.

For more information visit www.ucg.org/familyweekend or call (800) 843-4258. Or E-mail John Dean at jdEANPE@yahoo.com.

Winter Family Tournament

LEXINGTON, Ky.—Billed on its Web site as the Original Winter Family Tournament, the Church of God Cincinnati and Church of God Lexington will sponsor their big winter event Dec. 24-28, 2008.

One of the organizers, Jim O'Brien of Liberty Township, Ohio, explained to *THE JOURNAL* a year or two ago that the Winter Family Tournament is not actually a tournament. It does, however, feature sports competition. It's just that there are no playoff games and, therefore, no winner.

But there is fun for everybody, says Mr. O'Brien.

The location is the Griffin Gate Marriott. Events will include basketball, seminars for adults and teens, a meeting of homeschoolers, a dance, food, fellowship and Sabbath services.

For information write Church of God, P.O. Box 1811, West Chester, Ohio 45071, U.S.A., or info@cogcincinnati.org. Or phone (513) 755-0040.

Consistency of belief

MILFORD, Ohio—In a meeting Aug. 13, 2008, at the United Church of God's home office near Cincinnati, the 12 men on the council of elders discussed, among other topics, the question of "fundamental-belief consistency."

The subject was brought up by council member Paul Kieffer of Troisdorf, Germany. He noted that as he was translating the church's

Fundamental Beliefs booklet into German he noticed an inconsistency with the church's statement about the feast days in Article 2.1.12 of the constitution and what he found in the booklet.

As noted by council reporter John Foster, Mr. Kieffer noticed that the booklet states that the feast days "will be observed by all mankind during Christ's millennial reign."

Former council member Jim Franks of Cincinnati, operations manager in the ministerial-services department, commented, in effect, that the two documents

do not have to say the same thing as long as they do not contradict each other.

Church president and council member Clyde Kilough of the Cincinnati area suggested that somebody edit the booklet to make it conform more to the official belief statements.

THE JOURNAL tops poll at Ambassador Watch

BIG SANDY, Texas—Gavin Rumney of Auckland, New Zealand, recently conducted a poll of visitors to his blog at ambassadorwatch.blogspot.com to see what they're reading.

THE JOURNAL came out on top among visitors who answered the question: Which COG publications do you read, at least occasionally?



Gavin Rumney

A *JOURNAL* staffer reluctantly admitted he encouraged family and friends to visit Mr. Rumney's site and vote (or ballot, as some of the Churches of

God might say) for *THE JOURNAL*. "Therefore the results could be slightly unscientific," the staffer explained.

Whatever. Here are the results, with 213 Internet users participating:

■ *THE JOURNAL*, published by JMC Associates, 30 percent, 66 votes.

■ *The Good news*, published by the United Church of God, 14 percent, 32 votes.

■ *Tomorrow's World*, published by the Living Church of God, 12 percent, 26 votes.

■ *The Trumpet*, published by the Philadelphia Church of God, 7 percent, 16 votes.

■ *The Plain Truth*, published by Plain Truth Ministries, 5 percent, 12 votes.

Also making a respectable showing, coming in a strong second:

■ None of the above, 23 percent, 52 votes.

In another poll conducted by Mr. Rumney, *THE JOURNAL* came in second among specifically named Web sites in the poll, although third overall because of the inclusive wording of the question.

The question: Apart from AW [Ambassador Watch], what other sources of COG news do you check at least once a month?

The results:

■ COGwriter.com, a site operated by Living Church of God member Robert Thiel of Arroyo Grande, Calif., 30 percent, 53 votes.

■ Official church Web sites, 28 percent, 49 votes.

■ *THE JOURNAL*, 27 percent, 47 votes.

■ Other, 6 percent, 10 votes. *THE JOURNAL* congratulates Dr. Thiel on his superior standing in this Ambassador Watch poll.

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