

June 4-5, 2010 Pioneer Queen and Grand Marshal

Queen Beverly Mathwich



At the old St. Mary's Hospital in Walla Walla, Washington on September 4, 1932, I started my life. I was blessed with many wonderful relatives living in the Weston/Athena area including my parents – Irvin and Lorena Schubert Tucker.

My father graduated from the Weston High School in 1924. My father's parents – Ralph and Ivy O'Harra Tucker were both born in 1883 in Weston. Ivy O'Harra Tucker's mother – Annie Brassfield O'Harra was born in Weston in 1858; and in 1874 married Albert O'Harra who came from a family of ten children.

My mother was born in 1908 in Athena on the old Schubert homestead where her father – Amiel Schubert -- was also born in 1875. My grandparents – Amiel Schubert and Rosa Zerba Schubert – were married in 1900. Rosa Schubert also came from a family of ten children. Rosa's father, Orrin Washington Blanchard Zerba, was a Union soldier in the Civil War. Amiel Schubert's father, Charles, was in the German army for 3 years then stowed away on a sailing vessel to come to America. It took 59 days to cross the Atlantic. Upon arriving he ended up working on

a farm in Wisconsin for 8 years; then came west to the Weston/Athena area and bought a claim of 160 acres.

I grew up in Athena attending the same school my mother had attended. I graduated from the new McEwen High School with the first graduating class.

My first job was at the Athena Fountain for Ray and Harriet Blaylock. In 1948 I started working for the US National Bank which was located where the "Somewhere in Time Antique Shop" is now. On the first day working for the bank I set off the alarm. The belt on my dress had round wooden balls on the ends which I must have gotten caught in the bracket to set the alarm off. Brad Miller, police chief, came and figured out what had happened. I thought I'd get fired but they kept me until November 1953 when I married Merle.

We moved to San Diego, California after getting married so Merle could finish his time in the Navy. Merle had duty our first Christmas but I drove to the ship for lunch and watched a movie. He got off duty and we opened our presents of a Monopoly game and hand lotion. The trees were too expensive in San Diego so no Christmas tree.

Merle and I have three children: Jean, John, and Jan. They have given us 12 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. They are all a joy to our life!

While raising our three kids, I was mainly a stay-at-home Mom which today I hear they call a "Domestic Engineer." I also taught Sunday School for many years, worked on the election board, was a Camp Fire leader and was a member of the Rebekah Lodge.

I am currently a lifetime member of the Weston-McEwen Booster Club, American Legion Auxiliary, Seowain Club and Paradise Sams RV Chapter. My husband and I enjoy community work and helping others whenever we can.

My relatives have been a large part of the Pioneer Days and its history starting in 1937 with Queen Ella O'Harra, my father as Grand Marshal in 1979, and approximately 10 other past Grand Marshals and Queens. My parents and I never missed the Pioneer Picnic and greatly enjoyed the time to get together with famil and friends.

It is a great honor to be selected as this year's Queen.

Grand Marshal Merle Mathwich

In December of 1950, I enlisted in the US Navy during the Korean War.

Beverly Tucker and I were married on November 28, 1953, and returned to San Diego, California to finish my tour in the Navy by the end of 1955. Beverly, our daughter Jean, and I returned to Athena where I continued working for US National Bank. In the following years, our son, John, and daughter, Jan, were born.

Living in the Athena-Weston area has been a blessing to us because of all the friends and relatives we have.

I have been honored to be involved in so many organizations and projects: presenting awards for school projects; working to establish the middle income housing project; working with the livestock program; helping to raise money to send our Weston-McEwen Band and Pipes and Drums to Washington, DC; participating in the Boy Scout program; and being involved with the Christian Church in Athena for many projects and reconditioning.

Working with the City of Athena as a volunteer fireman; caring for the rose garden; improving the park; and in 1974, organizing the purchase of a used fire truck from Hood River to help improve our capacity; plus being the Treasurer for the Umatilla County March of Dimes. I was also a board member for Harris Park for Umatilla County.

In 1976, following several years of meetings, we were able to receive a new ambulance for the Weston/Athena community. Former Weston Mayor Hugh Gilliland and Athena Public Work Superintendent Bud Miller drove the new unit from Lima, Ohio. Also, we received a grant of \$3,700 in community equipment by Farm Chemicals of Athena. There were several people from Weston and Athena involved in the ambulance service.

My wife and I have been involved with the Paradise Good Sam Chapter which has provided many projects and improvements of our area in the last few years. Cleaning the highway and side raods as well as helping people and organizations. I am a member of the American Legaion, Milton-Freewater Elks, and a life member of the Booster Club. As well as acting as one of the trustees for the Watts Fund that helps so many students with scholarships.

Our participating and memory goes back to the early Pioneer Days and Potato shows. Our relatives have been part of the Pioneer Days making this honor more special to us.

Thank you to Melanie Hall and Valley Herald Newspaper for the photo and biographies!