

THE ATLANTIC UNION

NOVEMBER 2014

# GLEANER



## EVANGELISM

in Western New York

Three Cities ♦ More Than 300 Baptisms

**New Administrators Voted at Bermuda Conference Session**



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**Cover:** The cover photo of skyscrapers next to the river in Rochester, New York, is from iStockphoto.com.

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## One of the **Biggest Sins**

**D**uring this Thanksgiving season, it is appropriate to highlight an anonymous quote that goes like this: “If you can’t find anything for which to be thankful, then make up your mind that there is something wrong with you.”

Ingratitude is considered one of the biggest sins, not because it's bigger, really, but because it's so fundamentally basic to the sinfulness of our human nature. It goes to the core of our selfishness and pride.

Henry Ward Beecher is quoted as saying: “Pride slays thanksgiving, but a humble mind is the soil out of which thanks naturally grow. A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves.”

Everyone has reason to give thanks and say thanks. We should never be hesitant to say thanks to God many times a day. God never gets bored with our thankfulness and praises.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV) we're told: “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

It was Cicero, the first-century Roman philosopher who said: “A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all the other virtues.”

In Acts 27:35 (NIV), the Scripture says: “After he said this, he (Paul) took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all.” This

text is talking about Paul’s experience when the ship on which he was being taken to Rome was about to run aground and be broken into pieces. The ship’s crew hadn’t eaten for a period of time and Paul urged them to eat, but before they ate, Paul offered a prayer of thanks to God in front of everyone.

Do you give thanks in the presence of other people? Do you hesitate to give thanks for your meal in public places, including a restaurant?

While you need not make a big deal out of praying in public, it is a big deal to God any time you give thanks to Him. We must be thankful, whether people notice us or not, because God will notice us whenever and wherever we are thankful to Him. And God blesses those who are humble and thankful.

Finally, in the midst of a world that is always asking for things, we must possess a spirit of giving thanks. Philippians 4:6 (NIV) says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

There is nothing wrong with asking, but there is something definitely wrong with not giving thanks. Allow thankfulness to slay the sin of ingratitude. ☩

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*Donald G. King is president of the Atlantic Union Conference and chairman of the Atlantic Union College Board of Trustees.*



*“If you can’t find anything for which to be thankful, then make up your mind that there is something wrong with you.”*



# More Than 300 Baptized

## in Western New York Evangelistic Meetings

**E**vangelistic campaigns were held in July and August in the cities of Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse in Western New York. Following on the heels of the NY13 evangelistic initiative that focused on New York City, the Northeastern Conference administrators launched an area-wide initiative in 2014 to strengthen the work in Western New York. More than 300 people have joined churches in Western New York as a result of the meetings.

### 112 Baptized During Breath of Life Evangelistic Campaign

The Breath of Life Summer Evangelistic Campaign in Buffalo ended on Sabbath, August 2, and the Lord

blessed with 107 baptisms. The evangelistic fires were still burning as additional baptisms were held on Sabbath, August 9. In all, 112 people were baptized as a result of this campaign.

Carlton Byrd, Breath of Life Ministries speaker/director, was the speaker for this campaign. "What a powerful experience it was to see singles, families, persons of all racial backgrounds, [people with disabilities], and young and old alike attend and listen nightly as the Word of God was preached for three weeks; and then to witness them going down in the watery grave of baptism was spiritually exhilarating," Byrd said.

Tears of joy and victory were clearly visible as seven candidates were

simultaneously baptized until all the candidates engaged in this spiritual rite of new birth. Buffalo will never be the same again. Please, remember these individuals in prayer as they begin their new walk with God.

### 77 Baptized at Rochester Evangelistic Campaign

From July 12 through August 2 members and guests at the Wilson Magnet High School in Rochester, New York, were treated to a spiritual experience presented by Calvin L. Watkins, South Atlantic Conference Evangelism Ministries director. Watkins led old and young, Adventists and non-Adventists, on an informative and Bible-based nightly revival.



Carlton Byrd, Breath of Life Ministries speaker/director, speaks at the Breath of Life Summer Evangelistic Campaign in Buffalo, New York.



Pastors baptize several candidates simultaneously following the Breath of Life Summer Evangelistic meetings in Buffalo.

They were led in worship through music by Lolo Harris, Jason McDonald, the Western New York Praise Team, as well as Angela Hill and a host of other local musicians.

Watkins preached the whole truth and nothing but the truth. His nightly saying was, “If the Bible says it, I will always declare it, and let the chips fall where they may.” The nightly program was held from 7:00-8:00 p.m., with Monday and Thursday nights off. The crowd grew each night.

Watkins covered such topics as “Remember the Sabbath,” “What a Mighty Good Man,” and “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” Whether the listeners were Bible scholars or average members of the community, these messages were right on time for Rochester.

The meetings led to 77 people being baptized, and those who attended were treated to a life-changing experience.



Pastors baptize several candidates simultaneously following the evangelistic meetings in Rochester.

### 96 Added to the Church in Syracuse, New York

This year two major events happened at the Mount Carmel church in Syracuse. The first was in February, when the church moved into a new facility in another section of town. The

second was a major evangelistic effort, which resulted in 96 people being added to the church—78 through baptism and 18 by profession of faith.

Stanley Dixon, the church’s pastor, said that at first, he wondered if it was too soon to run a meeting. He had recently assumed leadership of the congregation and the church had just purchased a new building. “We had to navigate some difficult waters to attempt to achieve some unity through a stormy process,” Dixon said. “Though Northeastern Conference president Daniel Honoré’s vision for Western New York included a major campaign for Syracuse, I sensed that the church may have needed some time for healing. But by summer, I was surprised to see how eager a core group of local Bible workers were to gladly enter the community and canvas the people with surveys to determine what their major needs were.”

Ranking highest on a list of concerns were family issues, such as family disintegration, youth and teen delinquency, and absentee fathers.



Church members conduct a health fair in the mall in Rochester.

Relationships were built, Bible studies were solicited, and the teams' enthusiasm for soul winning seemed to infect the larger church body.

Then the church began to pray for the right evangelist to meet the challenge—someone who was familiar with the people and the city, and someone who understands families and human dysfunction in the inner city. The date was set, but no evangelist had been confirmed. With just two months before the effort and without an evangelist, Dixon said he began to feel nervous.

While watching Hope Channel, he saw Ron Smith, Southern Union Conference president, being interviewed by Connie Vandeman. "I was so impressed with how a union president could speak so naturally and humbly about evangelism with such unaffected passion, and [he] not only talked about it, but actually spent a lot of time doing it. After feeling impressed to invite him to be our speaker, I was overjoyed that he would accept after such short notice."

The meetings began with pre-work by local and visiting Bible workers and a spirited singing evangelist, Kimberly Palmer Washington. And on July 19, "A System for Survival" meetings began with full attendance most evenings. There was a nightly graduation ceremony for those who completed the Bible course. Each received a certificate, a free Bible, and a portrait with the evangelist.

Smith, with great skill and care, addressed real family and relational issues in the context of portraying Jesus as the answer for all of our problems in the last days of earth's history. Several anointing services were held, resulting in testimonies of physical and emotional healing.

The Mount Carmel church has seen a change. This was unexpected, but

God knew best what the church needed. Now the church has come closer together as a result of these meetings. Dixon said, "We have no time to be divided or to fuss and fight; we've got new believers to take care of—all 96 of them."

Cornice Williams, president of the Western New York Personal Ministries Federation, posted this on the Western New York Personal Ministries Federation's Facebook page, "Western New York



Ron Smith, Southern Union Conference president, makes an appeal during the evangelistic meetings in Syracuse.



Candidates are ready for baptism as a result of the evangelistic meeting in Syracuse.

is on the soul-winning move. Three cities and 300-plus souls were baptized or [joined on] profession of faith. God is an awesome God. We can see the mighty works of the Holy Spirit when we let Him take control." ④

Contributors to this article are Carlton Byrd through the Breath of Life eNewsletter; Jeff Hill, Jefferson church men's ministries leader; and Stanley Dixon, Mount Carmel church pastor.



By Bradley Booth

## New York Conference Hosts Outdoor School

The concept of outdoor school is one that many school systems have adopted in recent years. We love the idea of spending time outdoors with our students, especially when we read about the schools of the prophets and Ellen White's counsel regarding such venues for education. Outdoor school is perhaps one of the greatest gifts we can give our students to help them appreciate nature, God's second book, and most importantly, the Creator, who has made all things in the great outdoors.

The New York Conference (NYC) has been operating a dynamic outdoor school program for many years now. Every year in early September for five days, grade 5-9 students, teachers, volunteers, and the conference administrators meet at Camp Cherokee in northern New York to conduct the outdoor school.

This year the program ran September 8-12, and was directed by Bradley Booth, superintendent of schools, and Dan Whitlow, youth director for New York Conference. A total of 82 students from seven schools and two homeschoolers attended the outdoor school. Eight teachers, 18 volunteers, and two conference administrators served as instructors for classes, recreational directors, evening leadership activities, counselors in cabins, food service preparation, maintenance, and supervisors for seventh- and eighth-grade off-campus excursions.

Bob Holbrook was the guest speaker for the outdoor school, and he also taught a class to the fifth- and sixth-graders. Holbrook has served as a youth director at many levels, and as Pathfinder director at the General Conference level (1997-2005). Currently, he is the director



Students, homeschoolers, teachers, and volunteers pose for a group photo during the New York Conference outdoor school at Camp Cherokee.

and curator of the Oklahoma Conference Camp Nature Center. His spiritual devotionals during outdoor school reflected his wealth of experience in nature and leadership training.

The New York Conference outdoor school program is unique because of its tandem education tracks designed for children in fifth through eighth grade. Fifth- and sixth-graders stay in camp to learn outdoor skills that teach them about nature and help them to survive in the wilderness. All activities emphasize techniques in cooperative learning in the context of an outdoor classroom.

Seventh- and eighth-graders take excursions into the wilderness to learn skills that sharpen their leadership skills, athletic abilities, and sense of team work. Wilderness activities this year included a canoe trip, backpacking, wilderness survival, mountain biking, caving, and horseback riding. All excursions into the wilderness this year were overnight trips that lasted three days, except for a horseback group that took day trips instead.

Three classes were taught by special instructors: Orienteering by Sue

Hayford, Nature Drawing/Journaling by Monica Sargeant, and Exploring Forest Habitat by Bob Holbrook. A craft activity was directed each day by Debbie Livergood. The ninth-graders from our conference junior academy program worked in the kitchen, helping with food preparation for the week. A special "thank you" to all the volunteers for their service at camp, and to Dan Whitlow for the use of Camp Cherokee's facilities.

Students look forward every year to the annual outdoor school program. Younger students enjoy seeing each other for these conference-led outings, and seventh- and eighth-graders enjoy the rites of passage that come with being part of the off-campus wilderness activities. As always, the New York Conference outdoor school program enhances the education curriculum in the conference, and God is honored in the process.®



Bradley Booth is the New York Conference superintendent of schools.

# New Administrators Voted at Bermuda Conference Session



Photos: Ricardo Clarke

The new administrators voted by the delegates to serve for the next quadrennium pause for a photo with administrators from the Atlantic Union and General Conference. From left are DeJaun Tull, executive secretary, W. Aaron Spencer, treasurer, with his wife, Marcia; Kenneth Manders, president, with his wife, Claudette; Donald King, Atlantic Union Conference president; Leon Thomassian, Atlantic Union Conference treasurer; Ella Simmons, General Conference vice president; and Carlyle Simmons, Atlantic Union Conference executive secretary.

**T**he Bermuda Conference held its first regular quadrennial constituency session on Sunday, September 28, at Hamilton church. Ella Simmons, vice president for the General Conference, who presented the devotion, focused on the conference's theme "It's Our Time Now." Simmons encouraged the delegates to let God "advance His purpose through you. . . . That's why He brought you here for this moment, for this purpose, for this time."

The delegates voted three new administrators to serve the conference for the next quadrennium: Kenneth Manders, president; DeJaun Tull, executive secretary; and W. Aaron Spencer, treasurer.

Manders, served as pastor of the Hamilton church and as ministerial director for the conference. He previously served the conference as executive secretary (2005-2010). "Even though we inherit our responsibilities during tough economic conditions, we know that there is no challenge too great, for there is nothing too hard for the Lord. It is our belief that God's biddings are His enablings and that we have come to the Kingdom to serve Him for such a time as this.

Therefore, we accept this new administrative challenge and believe that God's grace, the prayerful support of His people, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit will [enable] the people of God to do great and marvelous things for our Lord," Manders says.

DeJaun Tull serves as pastor of the Somerset church and teaches Bible at Bermuda Institute, the same grade level where he answered his call just 15 years ago. "It is with great humility [that] I accept the call by God to serve as executive secretary of the Bermuda Conference. It is my desire to administer this office faithfully. I thank God for this opportunity to have placed me in this sacred responsibility, for He knows me better than I know myself," Tull says.

Spencer, who comes to the position with a wealth of experience, says, "As faithful stewards, we are totally dependent upon God for every blessing. He provides everything we need for life—time, talents, and possessions. It is our duty to be faithful stewards of God resources. . . . My plan is to get and keep our finances under control."

Restoration Ministries, the eleventh Adventist church in Bermuda, which was organized on





**José Cortés, Jr., Atlantic Union Adventist Youth Ministries director, and Cyril Millett, Bermuda Conference Adventist Youth Ministries director, present Johnny Barnes, center, with a plaque and the Johnny Barnes Award.**

January 22, 2011, was voted into the conference's sisterhood of churches.

The outgoing administrators and departmental directors were acknowledged by the delegates for their service to the conference and the constituents for the past four years. Jeffrey Brown, who served the conference for 10 years as president and family ministries director and faced term limits, has accepted a call to serve as director of the Bradford Cleveland Brooks Leadership Center at Oakwood University. He and his wife, Pattiejean, thanked the church members in Bermuda for the honor of serving them. Sydney Gibbons was voted to serve the conference as ministerial director, and Pamela Greyson will return to the public sector.

Representatives from the Atlantic Union Conference were present and participated in various aspects of the meeting. Donald G. King, Atlantic Union Conference president, served as the chair of the organizing and nominating committees; Carlyle Simmons, Atlantic Union Conference executive secretary, was invited to serve as the parliamentarian and assist as chair of the meeting; Leon Thomassian, Atlantic Union Conference treasurer, was in charge of ballot counting and served as parliamentarian when Simmons was serving as chair. Todd Mayer from the General Conference Auditing Service presented the auditor's report.

Two special presentations were made at the beginning of the session. Retired pastor Eugene Virgil and his wife, Muriel Ann, were recognized by the Bermuda Conference administrators and presented with a plaque for their dedicated service to the conference and the larger Adventist Church field.

Johnny Barnes was recognized by the Atlantic Union Conference Adventist Youth Ministries



**Retired pastor Eugene Virgil, third from left, and his wife, Muriel Ann, second from left, are recognized by the Bermuda Conference administrators and presented with a plaque for their dedicated service to the conference.**

Department and presented with a plaque and the Johnny Barnes Award. This new award, created in honor of Johnny Barnes, will be presented annually to one youth in each conference who exemplifies compassion. José Cortés, Jr., Atlantic Union Adventist Youth Ministries director, and Cyril Millett, Bermuda Conference Adventist Youth Ministries director, presented the award and plaque to Barnes.

During the session, the delegates voted the conference's departmental directors, associates, and assistants, the new executive committee, trustee committee, and the constitution and bylaws committee. They also received reports from the administrators and various departments.

The delegates voted to recess the constituency session and meet again to deal with the suggested changes to the constitution and bylaws and any other item that was not completed during the session.

The Atlantic Union Conference administrators and staff pray for God's guidance for the Bermuda Conference administrators, departmental directors, and the various committees as they begin their work for the new quadrennium, serving the more than 3,800 members who worship in 11 churches and one company, Bermuda Institute, the ATV cable channel, the ABC, and several community service centers and other ministries in the conference's territory. ①

*Ednor A. P. Davison, GLEANER editor*

*To read more about the new administrators, visit <http://goo.gl/CSmwgk> or scan the QR code.*



## Update Regarding AUC's Accreditation Application – September 19, 2014

On August 13, 2014, AUC received news in the form of a positive Audited Financial Statement that was submitted to the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) team. On September 9, 2014, TRACS responded with an acceptance of the financial statement, as well as next steps in the application process, inclusive of taking the application to the October 2014 TRACS Commission for clarity and acceptance of the final application. AUC is continuing to submit documents to TRACS as requested and is moving forward in the process as delineated by TRACS. The college is also concurrently moving through the certificate program application with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. AUC continues to solicit your prayers, as both processes are



Founders Hall

daunting but necessary for the growth and development of the college.

—The Administration, Atlantic Union College

## Adventist Community Services Volunteers Attend Training Session in Connecticut



Platform personnel at the Adventist Community Services Convention include, from left, Luis Biazotto, Greater New York Conference ACS director; Pierre Omeler, Atlantic Union Conference ACS director; Donald King, Atlantic Union Conference president; Fitzgerald Kerr, Northeastern Conference ACS director; Harry Sabnani, Northern New England Conference ACS director; and Janice da Silva, Greater New York Conference Planned Giving and Development associate director.

Adventist Community Services (ACS) workers, leaders, and officers from churches in the Atlantic Union attended the Atlantic Union Conference Adventist Community Services Convention from September 19 through 21. The event, sponsored by the

Atlantic Union Conference and North American Division (NAD) Adventist Community Services departments, was held in Stamford, Connecticut.

Donald G. King, Atlantic Union Conference president, was the Sabbath worship service speaker. His sermon was entitled “When Love Comes to Town.”

The weekend presenters included Sung Kwon, North American Division ACS director, who covered urban min-



Presenters at the Adventist Community Services Convention include Sung Kwon, North American Division ACS director; Kevin Santucci, Bermuda Conference Prison Ministries director; Sean Robinson, North American Division Adventist Community Services Disaster Response director; and Wynelle Stevens North American Division ACS assistant director.

Photos: Roham Wellington

istries and community development; Wynelle Stevens, NAD ACS assistant director, who covered elder care; Sean Robinson, NAD ACS associate director, who covered disaster relief; and Michael Lombardo, a pastor, who covered crisis care intervention.

“The purpose of the convention was to train ACS workers, leaders, and officers from the local churches. Participants came from six confer-

ences in the Atlantic Union. We also had a special ‘Training the Trainers’ seminar for donations operations management presented by Derri and Gaylord Hanson from the Mid-America Union,” said Pierre Omeler, Atlantic Union Conference Adventist Community Services director.

The Friday night opening message was presented by Howard Ebbin, pastor of the St. George’s church in

Bermuda. Omeler gave the final challenge to the group on Sunday morning. He called on everyone to go and share God’s love and the message of the second coming of Christ.

Participants learned that ACS is more than serving food and clothing. It’s about total involvement of the church in the community.

—Information provided by Pierre Omeler, Adventist Community Services director, Atlantic Union

## Adventist Single Adults Convention Held in Connecticut

Single adults from around the Atlantic Union Conference had a chance to meet and get to know one another at the Adventist Single Adult Ministries Convention on September 19 through 21. The event, sponsored by the North American Division and Atlantic Union Conference Adventist Single Adults Ministries departments, was held at the Stamford Marriott Hotel & Spa in Connecticut.

The keynote speaker for the weekend was Carlton Byrd, speaker/director for Breath of Life Ministries. “I’m finding this demographic reaches a large population across multiple lines. If we can empower this demographic in our church to reach others within the same demographic, it will hasten the soon return of Jesus,” Byrd said. The overall focus of Byrd’s sermon, which was based on Matthew 13:1-11, 18, centered around the topic “Keep your fork! The best is yet to come!”

During the weekend, seminars were presented by Andrea Hicks, founder



Participants at the Adventist Single Adult Ministries Convention pause during the meetings to take a group photo.



Carlton Byrd, Breath of Life Ministries speaker/director, speaks to the participants at the Adventist Single Adult Ministries Convention.



On the last day of the convention Adventist single adults head to Mill River Park to participate in the annual Let’s Move Day.

of F.O.C.U.S. Ministries (Fellowship of Christians Unique and Single); Jasmine Johnson, who currently serves as a U. S. Army active duty chaplain; and Michael Carducci, director of EXCEED Ministry and co-founder of Coming Out Ministries. Providing music was the group PRAIZE from the Greater New York Conference, and soloists Amanda Clark from Greater New York Conference and Lovener Walcott from the Northeastern Conference.

“I feel this is a place where I can get tools on how to have better relationships,” said Fantasia Pearson from The Wamark church in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

On Sunday morning the group participated in Let’s Move Day activities at Mill River Park.

In his messages, Byrd told the group that God is calling them to a productive ministry that involves evangelism and that they will always get back more than they can give.

—Information provided by Andrea Hicks, ASAM volunteer assistant, Atlantic Union Conference

## Beulah Temple Hosts Grand Opening Ceremony at New Location

“We had a major setback, but God worked it for our own good,” said a church member who joined in celebration at the opening Sabbath service held at the church’s new location. Saturday, September 6, marked a great day for the Beulah Temple church. Members and visitors alike joined together to thank God for His gift of a new worship location since the devastation of their church building on the night of Hurricane Sandy.

The influx brought by the hurricane breached the foundation of the building. Salt water filled more than five feet of the basement, damaging hundreds of books, Bibles, and nursery items. On the outside of the building a visible crack runs through the wall on the left side of the building and the building has since been condemned under restrictive usage.

Since the night of the damage to the building on Seaview Avenue and East

102nd Street, the church has held weekly meetings across the street at P.S. 272 school. Concerns for rebuilding or relocation came to an end when one of the members spotted a building for sale. However, long negotiations with the seller and reports of environmental issues continued to try the patience of the church family.

Through much prayer, fasting, and donations to the cause, three years later, the new building, three-and-a-half times the size of the now-damaged building, is finally in their possession. “I am happy that we can finally chat and chill till the night breaks at our own spot,” says one of the youth members. “There’s no place like home,” was the general feeling expressed by those in attendance.

Prior to the opening service, the church’s new location at 95-20 Seaview Avenue (a few blocks from its previous location), was under repair. Some church members and even volun-



Participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremony, from left, are Corben Crew, Beulah Temple church’s pastor, his wife, Erica; the first elder, Delroy Dally; and the second elder, Lawson Burge.

teers spent many long nights fixing up and preparing the sanctuary for the opening service.

“Every work done on the building was a voluntary effort of members and the community,” says Delroy Dally, the first elder at Beulah Temple, “and I am extremely happy, because we could not pay for outside workmanship. The painting, the ceiling, the plastering, and sheet rock were done

by members and friends. Everyone played their part and I give God thanks.”

The service began with a prayer of consecration and it emphasized the theme “We Have Come this Far by Faith.” Corben Crew, the church’s pastor, charged the congregation with a sermon entitled “Not Yet Home.” More than 200 people attended, including New York State Senator John Sampson and Greater New York Conference representatives G. Earl Knight, president, and Lloyd Scharffenberg, corporation secretary.

The service concluded with the baptism of two people and elderly members were honored. For the Beulah Temple church members, September 6 is one day that history can never wipe away. The church will continue to host its weekly Saturday services beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the new building location. For more information regarding upcoming events and services, visit [beulah22.adventistchurchconnect.org](http://beulah22.adventistchurchconnect.org).

—Oluomachukwu Agwai, communication director, Beulah Temple church



Beulah Temple honors its elderly members during the church’s opening ceremony. Standing behind them, from left, are Erica Crew, the pastor’s wife; Corben Crew, Beulah Temple church’s pastor, and Lloyd Scharffenberg, Greater New York Conference corporation secretary.

## Whispering Pines Teaching Principal Receives National Award

Shirley Ann Thomas-Laurencin, teaching principal at Whispering Pines Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School, was presented with a national award on Saturday, September 13. Thomas-Laurencin is among 10 teachers selected this spring by the Alumni Awards Foundation (AAF) to receive a 2014 Excellence in Teaching Award.

The award ceremony was held during camp meeting at Camp Berkshire in Wingdale, New York. The award includes a medallion and a \$2,000 gift.

In 2012, Thomas-Laurencin was selected by the Whispering Pines elementary school board to become the teaching principal because they believed she had the capability to turn the school around and take it to “the next level.”

They were not disappointed. Thomas-Laurencin created a new vision for the school, and after one year of her leadership, enrollment jumped from 35 students to 96 students, with a projection of 115-125 for the following school year.

“During my 46-year tenure in the Seventh-day Adventist school system, I have never observed such a dramatic turnaround in any institution,” said David Cadavero, Greater New York Conference special assistant to the superintendent of schools. “[She] has made the school the fastest-growing in the Atlantic Union Conference.”

Thomas-Laurencin’s vision included the implementation of the “Portfolio System,” a partnership between students, teachers, and parents that

enabled them to track student progress and create an individualized action plan. Her vision also included the introduction of more effective learning strategies and study skills, which has improved the students’ scores on national standardized tests and mandated tests



From left are David Cadavero, Greater New York Conference special assistant for development and marketing; Shirley Ann Thomas-Laurencin, 2014 Excellence in Teaching award recipient; and Marlene Romeo, Greater New York Conference superintendent of schools.

from the New York State Department of Education.

“Shirley Ann Thomas-Laurencin is committed to educational excellence and will do whatever it takes to assure that students are receiving a top-notch education at the Whispering Pines SDA Elementary School,” Cadavero said.

Though she has worked hard to improve academics, Thomas-Laurencin has also ensured that students receive a top-notch spiritual education. Students are trained to be spiritual leaders by leading out in worship services and by learning from visiting pastors. Those who are interested or struggling to make tuition payments are also welcome to join the Literature

Evangelism Club, where students not only receive financial help, but acquire life-long testimonies, as well.

“I am a firm believer in cultivating in my students the love for service and personal growth,” Thomas-Laurencin said. “For if we are not encouraging our students to discover their true purpose

purpose in imparting to the youth a knowledge of God, and [to mold] the character into harmony with His,” said Kemly McGregor, chairperson on the Whispering Pines school board. “Mrs. Laurencin’s aim has been to help Whispering Pines school become a place where this purpose is enacted daily.”

Every year, AAF partners with Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities to make the Excellence in Teaching awards possible. Thomas-Laurencin’s award was sponsored by her alma mater, Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

AAF is a nonprofit organization that has awarded grants to Seventh-day Adventist schools and teachers totaling more than \$2 million. Since its establishment in 1995, the organization has recognized 125 exceptional teachers with an Excellence in Teaching Award. Learn more at [AlumniAwards.org](http://AlumniAwards.org).

—Myron Madden, freelance writer, Alumni Awards Foundation

for life, what would their educational experience be?”

“Christian educators seek to ‘cooperate with the divine

**GNYC**  
ADVENTIST NEWS

GNYC Adventist News is a quarterly news program featuring stories from around the Greater New York Conference, as well as special human interest/evangelistic highlights.

To view archived videos of the news program, visit [www.gnyc.org/news](http://www.gnyc.org/news).

## Combined Farewell and Retirement Dinner Held for Conference Workers

On the evening of Sunday, August 31, Bermuda Conference members and workers had the honor and privilege of celebrating the contributions of Jeffrey Brown, outgoing Bermuda Conference president, and Sheila Holder, retiring Bermuda Conference superintendent of schools and communication director, with a farewell and retirement dinner.

The evening was hosted by Richard Smith, host of *Issues*, a local ATV program, and Rosemary Tyrrell, member of the Somerset church, and consisted of dinner, musical selections, and farewell remarks by Carlyle Simmons, Atlantic Union Conference executive secretary, and Kenneth Manders, Bermuda Conference newly-elected president.

Brown and his wife, Pattiejean, will be leaving after serving as president and first lady of the Bermuda Conference. They have given 10 years of dedicated service and have made innumerable contributions to the Bermuda Conference.



From right, Jeffrey Brown, outgoing Bermuda Conference president, with his wife, Pattiejean, and Sheila Holder, retiring superintendent of schools and communication director, with her husband, Leslie, show the cakes prepared for them at the farewell and retirement dinner.

Brown has accepted a call to Oakwood University, where he will serve as director of the Bradford Cleveland Brooks Leadership Center. In remarks given by Kenneth Manders, he said that Brown will be remembered for three C's: Camaraderie, Compassion, and Compulsion. He will be greatly missed.

Sheila Holder is truly committed to Christian education, having served more than 45 years in the Bermuda Conference. She has served as a classroom teacher, a counselor, principal of Bermuda Institute, and superintendent of schools and communication director for the Bermuda Conference.

Now that she has retired, Holder plans to pursue

new experiences, including writing children's books, educational consulting, and becoming a life coach. Holder will also be remembered for three C's: Communication, Commitment, and Concern. She, too, will be greatly missed.

—Cynthia McKenzie, teacher, Bermuda Institute



The Bermuda Institute auditorium is well decorated for the retirement and farewell dinner held in honor of conference workers Jeffrey Brown and Sheila Holder.



Roxanne Eve, Sonia Stevens Holdipp, and Alvin Wilson sing at the farewell and retirement dinner.

## Camp Parkview Comes Full Circle

In the winter of 2014, Parkview Junior Academy (PJA) embarked on a journey to launch a full-scale summer day camp that would empower its students in the area of evangelism. With support from a praying school board, members of the Westvale church, and PJA faculty, by spring of 2014 Camp Parkview was born.

Like most first-year programs, it came with many challenges. 1 Peter 5:8 describes the devil walking around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. We knew we would need to continue to “trust God wholeheartedly” (Proverbs 3:5), and turn everything over to Him. A core value at PJA is empowering students for leadership and service. As students build a real relationship with Jesus, they begin to see themselves as active, authentic evangelists in the Great Commission as Seventh-day Adventists.

In the hiring process for Camp Parkview, we searched for young people with compassion for others. With much prayer and support, we assembled a staff of 21 current and former students from PJA and Union Springs Academy. Although we needed commitments from staff members ahead of time, there was a risk of not getting the 60 campers needed to support the entire program. The older teen and young adult staff members, who came from out of state, took the leap of faith, trusting that God was leading them to Camp Parkview.

Every staff member was counting on wages to help pay academy or college

tuition. As the camp director, I was moved by their faith, but also felt overwhelmed by the responsibility. I turned to God on my knees, claiming the promises of Proverbs 3:5-6, Philippians 4:19, and Romans 8:28.

Staff training at Camp Cherokee built bonds of trust among our staff, with an emphasis on camper safety and counseling skills. At the end of staff training we were clear on our purpose to change lives for eternity.



**These young people with passion for others led Camp Parkview's summer camp program for six weeks.**

For weeks we had been advertising and promoting Camp Parkview in the community. Our camp staff worked long hours walking door to door and posting flyers in all the local businesses. Our online registration indicated that we were still short on campers. How would we pay for the staff? Again, we turned matters over to God.

On June 27, the staff participated in prayers of dedication and a 24-hour fast, seeking God's blessing on the campus, activities, campers, and staff. We prayed specifically for more

campers, but God answered our prayers in other ways. Just a few days before we had launched a social media campaign to “Sponsor a Camper for \$100.” More than \$2000.00 was raised.

Although this blessed 20 campers, we still had too few campers to pay all the staff members. On Sunday, June 29, I had to make the agonizing phone calls to staff and parents informing them of the situation. After all the hard work, training, promotion, and prayers, I was very discouraged.

On Monday, June 30, we opened Camp Parkview with 24 campers. You can imagine my surprise when all my staff members arrived, planning to work the full six weeks of camp. They said, “It's not about us, it's about the kids.” I was humbled by their commitment to Camp Parkview's success. As one staff member put it, “This is not just about swimming, golfing, and games. We're talking about eternal life here!” God used my young staff to teach me a lesson about service and trust.

Camp Parkview ran for six weeks as the young

people of the New York Conference ministered to 156 young campers, 70 percent of whom were not Adventist! On Sabbath, August 9, campers and their families were invited to the Westvale church for our Passion Play program. More than 30 campers and family members visited a Seventh-day Adventist church for the first time.

The campers sang, prayed, and worshiped God as we had done all summer long. There were many tears as the congregation witnessed the story of Jesus' life and death on the cross for our sins. During the final song and appeal, the congregation shed tears of joy as a father, mother, and three campers came forward to give their lives to Jesus. An entire family had been won for the kingdom of heaven!

The father of the family that came forward has started Bible studies and has registered a child in our school. We have six new students registered at PJA. Every Camp Parkview staff member who worked or volunteered at camp is in an Adventist school, despite the financial obstacles.

Camp Parkview was a six-week evangelistic series led by 12- to 22-year-olds. For the first time in my life, I had the privilege of watching young people come full circle. Students who gave their hearts to Jesus as recently as last year were actively leading people to Him. The Seventh-day Adventist school system is a training ground for our young people in spreading the gospel.

—Mark Tamaleaa, principal,  
Parkview Junior Academy



## Deborah's Mission to Maine

God is moving in Northern New England, and He is using those who listen to His calling and respond with open hearts. When Deborah Charbonnier of the Portsmouth church in New Hampshire felt an astonishingly strong mission call from the Lord while in her kitchen one day, she shouted out, "I'll go for you, Jesus!" Twice now, she has done just that.

When Deborah was just 18 she left her Boston home under difficult circumstances and was compelled to make her way in the world. She ended up, for a time, in the blueberry fields of Northern Maine, working with migrant workers to rake berries. "It was an amazing experience for someone from glitzy Boston, to end up living in one of the worker shacks, with no electricity or plumbing. It was an eye-opening experience to see how hard the mostly Hispanic migrants worked for their pay." Deborah moved on after a month in the fields and eventually forged a life for herself.

Deborah came to Christ in 2004, and after she did, she found herself thinking occasionally about the Hispanic migrant workers she had once worked beside. As more time went by, her thoughts turned to the berry pickers of Northern Maine more and more often until one day, she overpoweringly felt God calling her to minister to them. She shouted out her affirmation and so it happened that, in 2009, Deborah contacted Wilbert and Jennifer Hernandez,



Deborah Charbonnier of the Portsmouth church in New Hampshire, sits in her truck surrounded by tracts, Bibles, and dental hygiene packs that she handed out to migrant workers in northern Maine.

active Hispanic evangelizers, to ask for their help in locating Spanish-language Bible tracts. "The migrant workers represent such an amazing opportunity," Deborah said. "They don't have distractions there like they do in the city, and they don't have anything to read. If they are given something to read, they probably will!"

Tracts and Bibles in hand, Deborah made the trip from her home in Kittery, Maine, up to the berry fields. She thought she was done. She wasn't. "Over time it seemed the call of the Lord kept getting stronger and stronger. I had to go again." Problem was, there were hurdles to overcome—child care, job demands, money to cover the costs of the trip, and more. But God kept calling and in August of this year, Deborah again contacted Wilbert

Hernandez—now pastor of the Portland Hispanic church—and asked if she could get some Spanish-language tracts. Wilbert and Jennifer Hernandez were delighted to again help. Deborah loaded up a borrowed pickup truck with the Spanish literature, at the same time loading a box of literature in French.

Deborah was more than an hour into her trip when Satan attacked, and the late-model Ford truck simply gave out and had to be pulled to the side of the road. "I had a bare-bones AAA plan, which limited me to a five-mile tow. Wouldn't you know it, the closest Ford dealer was exactly five miles away." Deborah paid out \$234.70 for a repair she couldn't afford and got back on the road, arriving at worker housing in the early evening

and giving away numerous books as well as almost 50 basic dental hygiene packs that a Portsmouth, New Hampshire, dentist had donated to her.

That night, Deborah found a remote area in the woods and set up a tent, camping for the night to save costs. The next morning—Sabbath morning—Deborah went to the Ellsworth church. "I didn't know that they had a bilingual congregation, and I certainly didn't know that they had planned to do outreach and Bible studies at the blueberry camps that afternoon!" Deborah worked with a church elder to divide her remaining books so that the teams from the church would be well supplied.

Then came the biggest surprise of the trip. The church elder was overjoyed to see the box of French books that Deborah had



brought. It turned out that there was a large group of Haitians—who speak French—working in the fields that year, and the church had no French literature on hand for them.

With her books gone and her mission fulfilled,

Deborah headed for home, overjoyed with the success the Lord had brought. “I really saw the Holy Spirit leading throughout the whole outreach,” Deborah said. “I call it my Mission to Maine. “I just keep walking more and more closely with

the Lord, and He keeps calling to me to do His work.”

A borrowed truck, donated toothbrushes, books, and Bibles—obviously, it was a modest effort. What difference can one woman’s trip to the berry fields of Northern Maine make?

We’ll find out in heaven. But this much we know for sure: When God calls, we must listen and do His will, confident that He does not call us to unimportant tasks.

—Scott Christiansen, communication director, Northern New England Conference

## Hunter Buchanan of Estabrook Christian School Wins New Hampshire State Essay Contest

On the evening of September 4, an award banquet was held at Estabrook Christian School in recognition of Hunter Matthew Buchanan’s essay, “What the American Flag Means to Me.” The writing contest was sponsored by the Lion’s Club of New Hampshire as a state-wide competition for students in grades 5-8 in both public and private schools.

The Lion’s Club divides New Hampshire into two regions; Buchanan’s essay was chosen as the winning entry for the Western Region of the state. The award is a great honor for both Buchanan and Estabrook Christian School.

A medal for patriotism and citizenship was awarded to Buchanan by Harry Armstrong, chairman of Lion’s Club Youth Services of New Hampshire. The award banquet was well-attended and included a patriotic sing-along led by music teacher Glee Charlestream. The meal was catered by Chef Eddy Travis and served by the students of Estabrook Christian School. Below is Hunter Buchanan’s winning essay.

### What the United States Flag Means to Me

By Hunter Buchanan

What the United States Flag means to me, is freedom, which is one of the most expensive things ever. You really can’t replace the feeling of being free after you look at and understand what people go through



Harry Armstrong, chairman of Lion’s Club Youth Services of New Hampshire, left, presents a Certificate of Achievement to Hunter Buchanan for winning the state-wide writing competition.

in war-torn countries. It is just irreplaceable. We, the people of the U.S. should cherish and enjoy being able to lie in bed at night, go to sleep, and wake up the next morning hearing birds chirping, and not gunfire. I like to think that the reason why terrorists can’t sleep peacefully at night is the same reason why we can.

The soldiers overseas cannot get enough respect for their courage, their dedication, their strength, and most of all, their bravery. I personally don’t know many people who would be courageous or brave enough to sleep through the sound of gunfire and not know what they’ll wake up to. However, there are brave men and women out there

who are willing to live for something, rather than die for nothing.

The red on the flag should be very meaningful to others, like it is to me. I’ve heard people say it means or stands for different things. However, in my opinion, it stands for the blood of the brave men who gave everything for us today. They stood up for what they believed in, with every ounce of strength they possibly could. Though the men who fought in the Civil War, in wars before, and in wars after, and even in present-day wars, may be gone, they are not, and will never be, forgotten.

—Ellen Busl, principal, Estabrook school



## Lebanon Health Ministries Department Hosts Basic Life Support Class

The Lebanon church in Laurelton, Queens, held two classes in Basic Life Support on Sunday, June 1. Hosted by the church's Health Ministries department, under the direction of Aryel Nicoleau, M.D., the course was taught by The Regional Emergency Medical Services Council of New York City, Inc., an organization licensed by the American Heart Association to teach Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) courses and provide participant certification. There were 16 participants, including church members and their friends.

The class utilized 14 BLS video lessons and two video tutorials with a live instruc-



A participant of Lebanon church's Basic Life Support class practices how to perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on an infant manikin.

tor and taught how to recognize and respond to several life-threatening emergencies involving infants, children, and adults, including heart attack, stroke, and respiratory distress. The training covered how to perform

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), rescue breathing technique (bag-mask), the Heimlich maneuver for choking victims, how to respond to drowning victims, and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Proper use of protective masks to perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation was also taught. Calling 911 was emphasized as a critical part of the response process.

After each video lesson was viewed, the teacher demonstrated the technique

on CPR manikins. All of the participants then performed the maneuvers and life-saving techniques on the manikins. At the end of the class, each participant took an exam and received a BLS certification card that is valid for two years.

Lebanon church's Health Ministries department also purchased an AED device that is kept on the church premises in the event it is ever needed. It is the intent of the Health Ministries department to provide the BLS course at least twice a year and to invite the community to attend.

—Rosalie van Putten, community outreach coordinator, Lebanon church

## 11 Baptized During Evangelistic Meetings at Trinity Temple

The Trinity Temple church in Poughkeepsie, New York, under the leadership of Vernon Jordan, hosted three evangelistic meetings during the spring and summer of 2014. As a result of the three meetings, 11 people were baptized.

The first meeting, entitled "Life at its Best," was led by evangelist Philemon Corrodus from May 24 to June 14. The meetings, held outside in a tent next to Trinity Temple's Community Services Center, included health spotlights and inspiring music.

The goal of the meetings was to invite the community, involve them in evangelism, and meet their needs. At the end of the meetings five people were baptized.

The second evangelistic meeting, entitled "Revelation of Hope," was held at Trinity Temple July 11-12. The "Revelation of Hope" meeting was a project spearheaded by Fritze Honoré, spouse of Northeastern Conference president Daniel Honoré. Pastoral

spouses are empowered to preach and share the gospel.

The speakers during the July meetings at Trinity Temple were: Fritze Honoré, Rosemarie Coleman, Mirlande Jordan, and Jacqueline Laguerre. As a result of the stirring and inspiring presentations, two people were baptized. Contributing to the meeting were dietitian Daphne Jordan Joseph and health educators Anna Rodriguez-Jamel and Jerry Jamel.

The third meeting, "Three Weeks to Wellness Revival," was held at Camp Victory Lake in Hyde Park, New York, August 3-23. The speaker for the last meeting was evangelist Lew Keith, director of the Butler Creek Health Education Center in Tennessee. The audience was captivated by recording artists baritone Steve Darmody and soprano Christine Sinclair from Morning Star Music, who sang during the meeting. As a result of these meetings one person was baptized.



Vernon Jordan, Trinity Temple church pastor, prepares to baptize Ryan Waite in the pool at Camp Victory Lake.

The focus of this revival is to plant a church in the Hyde Park, New York, area, which has been a dream of the members for many years. The Trinity Temple church also baptized three more people on September 20, following the evangelistic meetings. All in all, 11 people were baptized as a result of the meetings.

—Mirlande Jordan, member and pastor's spouse, Trinity Temple church

## First Springfield Church Reaches Out to the Community

Under a beautiful blue morning sky and after praying and asking God for His blessing on their community endeavor, members assembled the tables and booths in preparation for the First Springfield church's annual Community Day. The event, sponsored by the church's Adventist Community Services/ Disaster Response Team, was held on Sunday, September 7.



The First Springfield church Adventist Community Services/Disaster Response Team are the sponsors of the Community Day event.



A resident from the community around First Springfield church gets her blood pressure checked.

The successful church team was headed by director Brenda St. George, and she was assisted by Carol Elliott. Their booth, with displayed information, informed visitors about the services the church offers in the event of disaster and extenuating circumstances. It is estimated that about 100 guests attended the day-long program.

Other booths offered health information and the opportunity for people to have their blood pressure checked. There was a table of religious literature where the goal was to put STEPS TO CHRIST into the hand of every person in attendance.

At a table featuring the Warren school and the

blessing of Christian education, volunteers gave away back-to-school items for the children. The Pathfinders and Adventurers were represented, along with Children's Ministries. A table was provided for new or almost new household items and clothing—all given free to the community along with a reminder of the community spaghetti dinner at the church the last Wednesday of every month.

The children enjoyed a bounce house, face painting, and there was popcorn and food for everyone. The Forest Park Zoo petting animals arrived in the afternoon to the delight of the children.

In addition, a prayer tent was placed on the front lawn

of the church for those who wanted a private moment to pray. Church members were thrilled as they watched how many from the community welcomed the opportunity to have prayer with Mihail Baciu, the church's pastor.

The overall goal of each team member is to represent Christ and make known to

all His soon return. While members wait for that day, their service to the community is an endeavor to do all they can to relieve suffering and give support when people face adversity and unanticipated tragedies.

—Belinda Maree Behnava, member,  
First Springfield church

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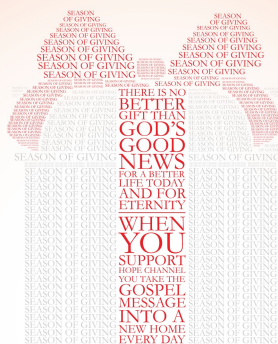
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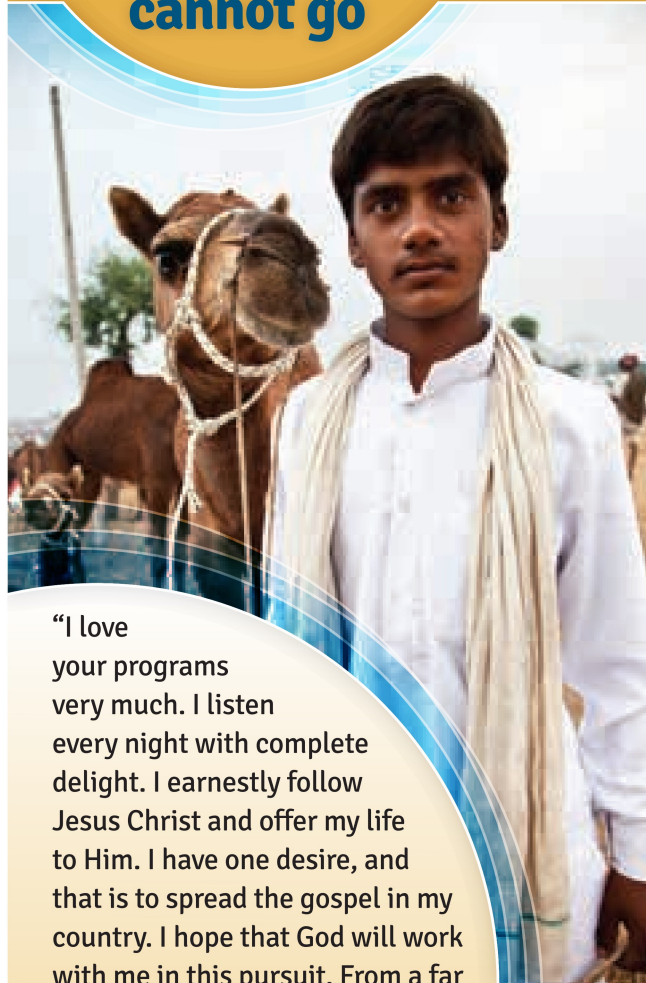
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## Sunset Table

December 2014	Eastern Standard Time			
	5	12	19	26
Bangor, ME	3:54	3:54	3:56	4:00
Portland, ME	4:04	4:04	4:06	4:10
Boston, MA	4:11	4:12	4:14	4:18
South Lancaster, MA	4:13	4:14	4:16	4:20
Pittsfield, MA	4:20	4:20	4:22	4:26
Hartford, CT	4:19	4:20	4:22	4:26
New York, NY	4:28	4:28	4:31	4:35
Albany, NY	4:19	4:20	4:22	4:26
Utica, NY	4:25	4:26	4:28	4:32
Syracuse, NY	4:29	4:29	4:32	4:36
Rochester, NY	4:35	4:35	4:37	4:41
Buffalo, NY	4:41	4:41	4:43	4:47
Hamilton, Bda	5:12	5:14	5:16	5:20

## OBITUARIES

**GREENE, Elizabeth M. Hurd Greene**—87; b. Jan. 18, 1927, in Stratton, Vt.; d. May 25, 2014, in Shaftsbury, Vt. She was a member of the Bennington church in Vt. She attended South Lancaster Academy in South Lancaster, Mass. Survivors include five sons, Peter A. Greene of Pawlet, Vt., T. Gary E. Greene of Stuyvesant Falls, N.Y., Anthony D. Greene of Bennington, Vt., David A. Greene of Arlington, Vt., and Samuel P. Greene of North Hebron, N.Y.; a daughter, Patricia L. Greene of Sandgate, Vt.; 25 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; three sisters, Doris Paquette of Cornwall, Vt., Marion Beaver of Ore., and Dorothy Johnson of South Lancaster, Mass.; three brothers, Charles Hurd of West

Paris, Maine, Howard Hurd of Athol, Mass., and Floyd Hurd Jr. of Bryant Pond, Maine.

**MITROWSKI, Ronald W. (Ronski)**—70; b. Sept. 22, 1943, in East Hartford, Conn.; d. Aug. 9, 2014, in Tolland, Conn. He was a member of the Rockville-Tolland church in Tolland, Conn., and previously a member of the Middletown-Portland (Conn.), Middletown (Conn.), West Palm Beach (Fla.), and Attleboro (Mass.) churches. He was also a member of the Golden Eagles Pathfinder Club. He served in the Navy on the USS Boston. He worked as a maintenance engineer at Fuller Memorial Hospital (1986-1988) and Union Springs Academy (summer 1988). Survivors include his wife, Gail Hjalmeer Oldham Mitrowski; his children, Ron (Patty) Mitrowski, Jr., and Robbie and Jim Harmount; grandchildren Danny (Cayla) Mitrowski, John R. Mitrowski, Pamela Payne, and Alex and Beth Harmount.

**THOMPSON, Maxwell L.**—92; b. Feb. 11, 1922; d. Sept. 19, 2014, in Somerset, Bermuda. He served in many areas of the Somerset church, including as head elder. He was among the group that left the Southampton church in 1969 to start a church in Somerset. He also served two terms on the Bermuda Conference executive committee. Survivors include, his wife, Barbara Thompson; daughter, Elizabeth Knight; granddaughter, Delrae Knight; grandson, George Hassell; brother-in-law, David (Mary) Burchall, and sister-in-law, Dollene Ray.

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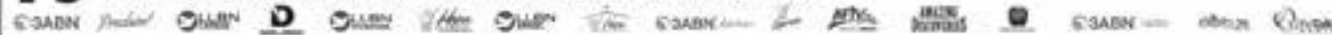
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