

VISITOR

A black silhouette of a person's head and shoulders is centered against a white background. A large, light purple question mark is superimposed over the face area. The word 'VISITOR' is printed in large, bold, light purple capital letters at the top of the page, partially overlapping the top of the silhouette.

CONNECTING COLUMBIA UNION SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

JULY 2014 • VOLUME 119 • ISSUE 7

Is Your Church Ready for a Mystery Guest?

Plus: 4 Practices That Show Compassion to the LGBT Community

Contents



- 4 | Newslines**
- 6 | Noticias**
- 8 | Underscore**
- 10 | Feature**

Taking the Mystery Out of Guest Visits

Elizabeth Anderson

The Pennsylvania and Chesapeake conferences regularly deploy secret visitors to their congregations to better understand how they experience church. See how they use visitor feedback to increase their guest-friendliness.

- 15 | Newsletters**
- 44 | Bulletin Board**

ON THE WEB

WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH?

Do you know how to assess your church's ability to make a visitor feel welcome? "Feeling welcome isn't just about a handshake or warm hug. It's also about taking your time to connect," wrote Quantrilla Ard, a member of Potomac Conference's Restoration Praise Center in Lanham, Md., on our Facebook page.

Visit columbiaunionvisitor.com to see a list of things the Pennsylvania and Chesapeake conferences use to evaluate their churches from a visitor's point of view.

HAYSTACKS 101

You know you're a Seventh-day Adventist if you've ever argued over the proper way to build a haystack. Visitors, however, will no doubt wonder why your church is so excited about eating dried grass. Visit columbiaunionvisitor.com/adventese for a guide to "Adventist lingo" and phrases only an "es-dee-ay" would understand.



A HOLLYWOOD CONNECTION

Dustin Hoffman, a big-name Hollywood actor, recently gave the Pocono Grace church in East Stroudsburg, Pa., a gift worth more than \$10,000. Visit columbiaunionvisitor.com/guesswho to discover what made him think of this Pennsylvania Conference church, and what he gave them.

CASH DASH FOR CAMPOREE

It will cost campers an average of \$500 each to attend the "Forever Faithful" International Pathfinder Camporee in OshKosh, Wis., next month. What are some creative ways your club raised the funds to attend? Share stories at facebook.com/columbianionvisitor.

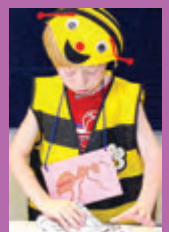


SHOW OFF YOUR CHURCH

Be in the first 25 to tweet a church photo to @visitornews to get a \$10 gift certificate from TEACH Services, Inc.

MAKE CAMP MEETING MEMORIES

We want to see highlights from your time at camp meeting this summer! Tag us on facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor and we'll add your photos to our slideshow!



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The *Visitor* is a monthly publication reaching approximately 55,500 Seventh-day Adventist homes in the mid-Atlantic area.

The *Visitor* provides news and information, inspiration for effective ministry, and insight on issues with a spiritual focus to help engage members in experiencing the mission.

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Listening is an Art

Many books have been written on the art of listening. And, truly, it is an art. Many of us seem to be good at talking, at sharing our opinions—hence the popularity of platforms like blogs, Facebook and Twitter. But, to be quiet and hear what others are saying—what ideas they are expressing, what experiences they are sharing—is when we can actually learn something about life, love, friendship and how to get along with others.



Although we know that communication is a “two-way street,” it’s been said that it happens better when there is more listening involved. The late famed psychologist Carl Rogers even once said, “Man’s inability to communicate is a result of his failure to listen effectively.” People want to be heard. They want to know that their ideas, their feelings matter.

Not surprisingly, the Bible isn’t mum about this skill. It conveys the importance of listening through verses like, “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak” (James 1:19, NIV), and “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15, NIV).

More importantly, it shares that God is listening to us. We see this in the story of poor, unloved Leah. The Bible states, “And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son” (Gen. 30:17, NKJV). When the Israelites whined about their journey into the wilderness, it says, “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel!’” (Ex. 16:11-12, NKJV).

My personal favorite is, “The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous” (Prov. 15:29, NIV). What a comfort knowing that my God cares about what I have to say; He chooses to listen to my pleas.



WE HEAR YOU

Here at the *Visitor*, listening has become a large portion of our job. Not only do we keep our ears (and eyes) piqued for stories that we hope will inspire, engage and connect you, our members, with the larger church family, but we also continue to seek ways to get your feedback. We want to hear what you like and don’t like about the stories we share. We want to know your opinions on issues and news that affect our church family. And, we want to know what is going on in your lives and how we can pray for you.

Connect with us on Facebook to answer questions we pose; to share your opinions; and to post your pictures, prayers and praise. Respond to posts and questions we post on Twitter, or simply share daily inspiration. Share your comments and ideas when we conduct Facebook and Twitter chats on topics that impact you. And, give us feedback when we post stories on our newly dedicated website (columbiaunionvisitor.com). Truly, we are listening.

Beth Michaels (bmichaels@columbiaunion.org) is Visitor magazine editor and associate director of communication for the Columbia Union Conference.

Newsline

TAASHI ROWE



Church Overhauls Publishing Operations

At joint constituency meetings last month at the world headquarters in Silver Spring, Md., the Review and Herald and the Pacific Press publishing houses voted 153-66 (Review) and 42-1 (Pacific Press) in favor of the biggest restructuring in Seventh-day Adventist publishing's 153-year history.

As a result, the Review will unwind operations at its facility in Hagerstown, Md., during the next several months, and will transfer some employees and assets to the Pacific Press facility in Nampa, Idaho. Pacific Press will become a North American Division (NAD) institution.

Dave Weigley, Columbia Union Conference president, responded to the closure, saying, "It's the right thing for the NAD to have their own printing houses as determined in the voting; however, as we go forward with these assets, I hope we continually evaluate which asset is most effective in efficiently supporting the mission."

Others noted challenges. "For East Coast ABCs, closure of the Review will raise costs due to shipping, create inventory challenges and result in fewer new titles each year," says Lisa Myaing, general manager at the Potomac Adventist Book & Health Food Store in Silver Spring, Md. Read more at columbiaunionvisitor.com/review.
—Adventist Review and Visitor Staff

ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE EARNS EXCELLENCE AWARD

For a second consecutive year, Adventist HealthCare (AHC), based in Gaithersburg, Md., received the Workplace Excellence Seal of Approval Award from the Alliance for Workplace Excellence (AWE), a nonprofit committed to helping employers build excellent

workplaces. The award honors national and local organizations that display outstanding commitment to an exceptional workplace environment.

"The [AWE] award recognizes our organization's dedication to the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of not only our patients, but [also] our dedicated employees," says Terry Forde, AHC president and CEO.—*Laura Cook*

140,000 The number of baptized members belonging to the Columbia Union

UNION FUNDS 2014 HOMELAND MISSION PROJECTS

The Columbia Union Conference recently allocated \$212,000 to 13 local outreach programs as part of its Homeland Mission Projects. The funds are distributed annually as a three-way partnership between the union, a conference and a local church to encourage community outreach. Below are three of the newest projects:

■ Allegheny East Conference's (AEC) Collegiate Summer Outreach Project in West Philadelphia will offer inner-city kids fun activities that promote critical thinking and help them develop hands-on skills.

■ Through AEC's Open Arms Ministry, Bethany (N.J.) church members will minister to the nearby Cumberland community, which is affected by high rates of HIV/AIDS and substance abuse. They will build a resource center on the church premises and distribute literature to residents.

■ Members of Allegheny West Conference's Ephesus church in Columbus, Ohio, will start Driven, a church plant on the campus of The Ohio State University, which has 63,000 students.



Pastor Howard W. Duncan, Winsome Lawrence, Joyce Lane-Brewer, Aynne Hesterand and Jon Gray, all from the Bethany church, take to the streets to distribute HIV/AIDS prevention literature.

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO RECEIVE THE OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD?

The Columbia Union Conference Office of Education recently presented three teachers with their annual Outstanding Educator Award. Below, the educators share their reactions. Read more at columbiaunionvisitor.com/oustanding14.



It was a privilege to get the award for something I feel so passionate about. I do feel that other people share this award with me, especially my husband, who helps me with all the ideas I come up with. I feel that being able to share Jesus every day is the most integral part of being a Seventh-day Adventist educator. —Rebecca Durichek, a first- thru fourth-grade teacher at the Tree of Life Christian Preparatory School in Fredericksburg, Va.



I am super excited to receive this award. I guess it's evident that I have a love of teaching and students. People can generally see how committed I am to Christian education. I always feel like it is my responsibility as a teacher to make sure to set expectations and standards for the parents and students and then willingly work with them. —Myrna James, a third- and fourth-grade teacher at the George E. Peters Adventist School in Hyattsville, Md.



Ultimately, I'm very honored about winning the award. I also take it as a challenge to live up to the award. I always tell my [students], anything good in me comes from the Lord. I think it's true for all of us. ... I just want every one of my students to have a passion about Jesus, and if I can do that even while teaching history, that's what's most important to me. —Gabrielle Griffin, history and government teacher at Shenandoah Valley Academy in New Market, Va.




Help break the cycle of abuse

The North American Division recognizes that children, women, and men are victims of abuse. God abhors abuse of every kind, and you can help prevent it by launching an **enditnow** campaign in your church and community on **enditnow** Day, Sabbath, August 23, 2014.

A free **enditnow** implementation kit is available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org and 402.486.8800.

Visit www.EndItNowNorthAmerica.org for more information.

FREE
Kit Available
Now

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DESPUÉS DE 30 AÑOS, UN HOMBRE SE UNE A PENNSYLVANIA CHURCH

El pastor Gabriel Montalvo (en el centro) abraza al alegre Guillermo Ayala en el bautisterio, mientras la esposa de Ayala, Mercedes, lo contempla. Cuando Ayala salió de El Salvador, su madre, miembro de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día, oro por él para que se uniera a la iglesia. Cuando se casó con Mercedes hace alrededor de 30 años, también oró para que entregara su corazón a Dios y se uniera a la iglesia. Fue necesario que perdiera su trabajo para que él viniera al Señor. Lea su historia en columbiaunionvisitor.com/ayala.

EL GRUPO CHESAPEAKE PASA A SER COMPAÑÍA

El grupo Columbia Spanish, una congregación en crecimiento de Chesapeake Conference en Columbia, Md., pasó a ser compañía hace poco. Sus miembros y 15 visitas recientemente se reunieron

en un servicio sabático de celebración. En su sermón, Rick Remmers, el presidente de la asociación, desafió a la congregación a concentrarse en adoración, compañerismo, servicio y misión.

“Como un nuevo grupo, han experimentado un gran crecimiento

y están bien posicionados para evangelizar la población hispana en la comunidad de Columbia”, dice Remmers.

“Estoy agradecido al Señor por sus muchas bendiciones aquí en Columbia. Comenzamos con solo cuatro miembros en octubre del 2010, y ahora somos 35”, dice el pastor Orlando Rosales, el director de los ministerios multilingües de la asociación. “Con la dirección del Señor estamos seguros que en el año 2015 nos convertiremos en una iglesia organizada. ¡Qué grande es nuestro Dios!”—*Samantha Young*

SE NOMBRAN LOS PROYECTOS MISIONEROS NACIONALES 2014

Columbia Union Conference otorgó recientemente \$212,000 a unos 13 proyectos de evangelización locales. Cada año la unión financia lo que le llaman “Homeland Mission Projects” [proyectos misioneros nacionales], una triple alianza de la unión, la asociación y la iglesia local para financiar y promover la evangelización en la comunidad. A continuación algunos de los proyectos:

- En Allegheny West Conference, hay dos Iglesias hispanas nuevas concentradas en miembros de segunda y tercera generación. Las iglesias plantadas en Columbus y Cincinnati, Ohio, están ayudando a los jóvenes adultos hispanos que aún no están listos para asistir a las iglesias de habla inglesa, a hacer la transición fuera de las iglesias de sus padres. También hay una nueva iglesia hispana en Pittsburgh que es el grupo de mayor crecimiento en el condado Allegheny.

- En Chesapeake Conference, hay dos iglesias hispanas nuevas—una en Reisterstown con 20 personas y la otra en Pikesville con 30. Ambas fuera de Baltimore, y esperan tener un pastor para facilitar el crecimiento.

- En New Jersey, la nueva iglesia Bayonne Hispanic es parte de la iniciativa de la asociación Misión Caleb, la cual se enfoca en comunidades que no tienen presencia adventista.



El pastor Orlando Rosales afirma a Ana Galdamez antes de bautizarla durante el sábado en que se inauguró la congregación Columbia Spanish como compañía.

“Firmes” Edición de Casa

Primer campamento bilingüe familiar y de jóvenes de New Jersey Conference:

Del 29 de agosto al 1ro de septiembre
Tranquil Valley Retreat Center
1 Campus Drive Andover, NJ 07821

Para más información,
visite familycamping.eventbrite.com,
correo electrónico njyouth@njcsda.org
o llamada (609) 802-0873

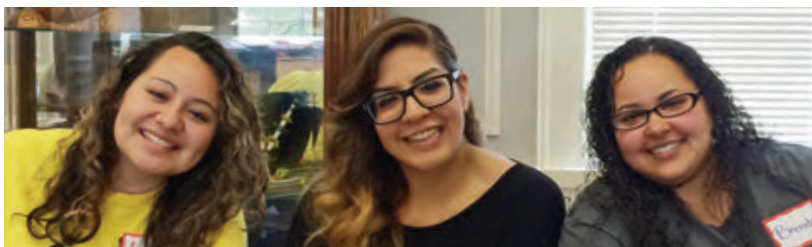
LOS MIEMBROS DE ARISE PASAN UN SÁBADO EN PANTALONES VAQUEROS

Los miembros de la iglesia Arise de Potomac Conference en Silver Spring, Md., recientemente cambiaron su ropa de sábado por pantalones vaqueros (jeans). Siguiendo las instrucciones de Cristo después de su resurrección—id y haced discípulos— los miembros jóvenes, hispano-americanos dedicaron su sábado a ayudar a otros.

Seis miembros de Arise se reunieron en CASA de Maryland en Hyattsville, Md., donde pasaron varias horas ayudando a los miembros de la comunidad inmigrante a llenar sus formas de ciudadanía (en

la foto). Otros doce miembros de Arise se reunieron en el estacionamiento del centro de Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington (ACSGW) en Silver Spring y participaron en un devocional corto antes de salir a servir. Empezaron por limpiar los terrenos del edificio ACSGW. Entonces, con guantes y bolsas de basura en mano, se dirigieron al cercano Sligo Creek, donde recogieron varias bolsas de basura.

Víctor Martínez, un anciano de Arise, resumió el significado de “Sábado en vaqueros”: “El sábado es para hacer buenas obras, grandes o pequeñas. No es solamente para sentarse en la iglesia por varias horas, sino para extender una mano en cuidar la Tierra y a nuestros semejantes”.—*Sylvia Urrutia*



Arise: Brenda Martinez, Jacqueline Ventouris y Jennifer Gutierrez

POR NÚMEROS

Visitas a columbiaunionvisitor.com

La revista *Visitor* lanzó oficialmente su propio sitio Web en enero. He aquí algunas estadísticas del sitio (del 28 de mayo):

57,619

El número de personas que han visitado el sitio hasta ahora

3,607

El número de veces que el sitio ha sido visitado a través de un iPhone

10

El número de países representado por los visitantes (*Estados Unidos, Reino Unido, Canadá, Brasil, Australia, Barbados, Trinidad y Tobago, Sudáfrica, Bermuda y Puerto Rico*)

13,013

El número de visitantes por primera vez

ARTÍCULO ESPECIAL DE VISITOR: Eliminando el misterio de las visitas

En la edición de julio de la revista *Visitor*, la reportera Elizabeth Anderson analiza a fondo una nueva práctica en la cual dos asociaciones toman parte. Ambas Chesapeake Conference y Pennsylvania Conference envían visitantes secretos “no-miembros” a sus congregaciones para los servicios sabáticos. El objetivo de ambos programas es crear conciencia sobre la experiencia en la iglesia desde el punto de vista de un visitante. Después de leer reportes de los huéspedes misteriosos, los miembros aprenden lo que pueden hacer para hacer de la iglesia una experiencia más amena para sus visitantes.

Gary Gibbs, el director ministerial de Chesapeake, dice que lo que aprendió del programa fue: “Hay personas que entran por nuestras puertas, nos observan, y tenemos la gran oportunidad de mantenernos centrados en la misión. ... Dios nos envía personas y necesitamos estar alerta y listos para acogerlos. ... Ya sea un día de mal tiempo o buen tiempo, pase lo que pase, debemos tener un corazón dispuesto a recibir al forastero en nuestro medio”.

¿Cómo puede su iglesia hacer que los visitantes se sientan bienvenidos? Díganos visitándonos en facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor. Lea más sobre esta historia en inglés en la pág. 10.



Underscore

LATASHA BETTS HEWITT

How Can Members Extend Compassion to the LGBT Community Without Abandoning Conviction?

According to recent data, more than 9 million people—roughly the same number of residents in the state of New Jersey—identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual, referred to as the LGBT community (the Williams Institute, 2011). This increasing number, along with the growing approval rate of same-sex marriage in the United States, which has grown from 35 to 50 percent since 2001 (Pew Research, March 2014), is pushing many denominations to determine a stance on the issue.

Earlier this year, Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders initiated the conversation with a three-day summit in Cape Town, South Africa, titled “In God’s Image: Scripture, Sexuality, Society.” About 40 leaders, including General Conference president Ted Wilson, vice presidents and directors, administrators and academics from Adventist universities, theology experts, legal counsel and doctors, converged “to gain a greater understanding of the issues surrounding alternative sexualities, and to counsel together regarding the challenges the church is facing in this area.”

One of the conclusions the leaders reached was that “the church affirms its right to describe some behaviors, ways of living and the organizations that promote them as contrary to the Word of God. The church is also responsible, however, to differentiate clearly between its critique of those beliefs and behaviors, and its respect for the persons expressing those beliefs and behaviors.”

In essence, the church confirmed its long-held belief that members should approach all people with



*How does your church meet the needs of the LGBT community?
Let us know at [facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor](https://www.facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor).*

redemptive love while remaining obedient to the teachings of the Scriptures. For some, however, the lingering question is, how should members live out that charge? What does it look like?

Although concrete examples have not been given, some church leaders say there are at least four actions and mindsets members can adopt in an effort to show compassion toward LGBT individuals:

1. CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Paul Graham, pastor of Potomac Conference’s Restoration Praise Center in Lanham, Md., is a proponent of increasing the dialogue with the LGBT community at the local level. “I am not referring to an AY service either, but during the 11 o’clock service, where individuals can be reminded that God’s grace covers all,” he shares.

Andrews University (Mich.), the church’s flagship school, has already spurred conversations on

the topic—twice. A few months ago, they hosted a panel discussion where LGBT students were able to share with more than 600 attendees their experiences and challenges as members of the Adventist Church.

From the moderated discussion, a few themes surfaced: a) LGBT students’ desire to be referred to as individuals instead of part of a demographic, b) their hope for the church to find ways to be an ally by listening, and c) their need for the church to build bridges and change its sometimes hurtful language. At its conclusion, many participants and attendees voiced relief that members were interested in making an effort to break down barriers.¹

Pastor Graham suggests that increasing communication with LGBT members also increases awareness and understanding of the LGBT community and dispels the myths that exist. For instance, “all homosexuals do not have AIDS; all homosexuals are not practicing,” he notes.

2. BE AN ALLY

Acting as an ally to an LGBT individual does not require one to abandon their biblical beliefs, says Pastor Graham. He feels that is where many in the church get confused. He says that when we look at how Christ lived His life, we will see that He was “no respecter of persons.” He accepted all people where they were, loved them equally and then died to make them whole.

When LGBT students at Andrews were asked if they believed that a person could disagree with homosexuality and still be an ally, the response was affirmative. One student described an ally as “someone who is willing to walk with me on this journey.”

Graham also suggests starting support groups where LGBT members can have an outlet, which will keep them engaged in their local churches. Because so many haven’t yet found an accepting congregation, they can only turn to groups like Kinship International, which provides a safe space for LGBT members to “ask questions, discuss research relevant to their situation and live out the convictions they come to.”

3. ROLL OUT THE WELCOME MAT

A Pew Research survey of 1,297 LGBT Americans revealed that 29 percent feel unwelcome in a place of worship. Loren Seibold, a district pastor in the Ohio Conference, says he understands why. In one of his former congregations, Seibold recalls a guest speaker who, during his sermon, singled out a perceived lesbian in the congregation, stood directly in front of her and proceeded to educate her on the “depravity of her sin.” The speaker believed he was doing the righteous thing to address the individual and not “her sin.” Nevertheless, she never returned to the church. Seibold notes that, unfortunately, this isn’t an isolated incident.

Pastor Graham, on the other hand, upon learning that a lesbian was visiting his church, made sure to include her in his welcome to all

of the day’s visitors. Afterward, she made her way up front to express how much she appreciated the gesture. She subsequently returned for future services.

“If they’re at your church, it’s because they are seeking a relationship with God,” stated one LGBT student during the Andrews discussion.

For congregations that do not have an issue welcoming LGBTs into their church but do not necessarily feel the need to interact with them, Roy Gane, PhD, professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Languages at Andrews, believes the life of Jesus refutes this attitude. “Would Jesus ignore or shun people who are the way they are through no fault of their own? Absolutely not!” he says, supporting the arguable point that LGBT individuals are born with that orientation. “He did not even shun people who had caused their own problems by their own poor choices, like the paralytic in Mark 2. ...”

Gane feels that we as a church need to give all people the “hope of a new, healthier and happier life, a hope that draws people to Christ, the Source of healing and life.”

4. REMEMBER: WE ALL FALL SHORT

Pastor Seibold suggests that we stay away from the philosophy “hate the sin, love the sinner.” When it comes to an LGBT individual, he explains, “First, it is impossible to hate something in someone as intrinsic as sexual

orientation and still treat that person as a loved and valued part of the community. Secondly, we need to be willing to apply the same principle to sin of every sort in the congregation—which will assuredly implicate the rest of us.” He then quotes Psalm 130:3 (NIV): “If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?”

Gane agrees. He argues that putting people in categories can affect our thoughts even when we attempt to be inclusive. “We should not have the attitude that by allowing people to interact with us, as Jesus did, we are doing them a ‘favor’ in a way that will somehow earn us merit before God. We are only doing the least of our duty in passing on the gift of grace that we have received from God,” says Gane.

Pastor Seibold proposes that if we want to make sure we follow in Jesus’ footsteps, then we need to know where He walked and remember how He died. He says, “I cannot forget the words of Scottish clergyman George Macleod of the Iona Community: ‘Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves; on the town garbage heap; at a crossroads so cosmopolitan that they had to write his title in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek ... at the kind of place where cynics talk smut and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble.’ Because that is where He died, and that is what He died about.”

¹ “A Conversation With LGBT Students at Andrews University,” *spectrummagazine.org*, April 20, 2014

Why I’m no Longer a Lesbian

When the Holy Spirit visited me one Saturday evening in June 2011, I had been living the lesbian lifestyle for eight years and all of my friends were lesbian; the places I went were events with lesbians. I knew He was calling me to a different life, but my response was not an immediate yes. It was weeks of wrestling with the decision before I acted.

Read the rest of Leah’s* story at columbiaunionvisitor.com.

*A pseudonym



taking the
MYSTERY
out of
GUEST VISITS

Two conferences
deploy secret visitors
to learn how they
experience church

Elizabeth Anderson

The clock in my car reads 9:30 as I drive into the church parking lot. There are plenty of spaces, so I park with the other vehicles clustered in slots closest to the only visible entrance. I've never visited a Seventh-day Adventist church, so I'm not sure what to expect.

I open the door to find that it leads to the vestibule. "Happy Sabbath," says a smiling lady wearing a black and white suit. Her pin says "greeter." She hands me a bulletin. Another woman wearing black and white practically skips up behind her and greets me with a hug and kiss on the cheek, which is a little awkward.

"Welcome. We're so glad you're here," the skipper says. "Sabbath School is in the sanctuary," she adds, putting her arm around my shoulder. She then guides me through a quick tour of the Bible classrooms and restrooms, which are clearly marked.

"Oh, there's also a potluck after service today, so stop by. The food is delicious, filling—and healthy," she adds.

After our pleasantries, I wander into the sanctuary, down the middle aisle and sit in the pews on the right. I peruse the bulletin, which shows the order of Sabbath School and church services and gives songbook numbers.

I look up and notice more people in the sanctuary now, but they're all sitting on the left side. A few people smile at me, including the person standing in front that starts talking about the Bible, but no one invites me over. It feels awkward, but I just sit and listen as best as I can.

After the class, I visit the restroom and stop by a visitor's table in the lobby. It has a few brochures about what happens when you die, having faith in Jesus and healthful eating. There are also some contact cards. Many smiling faces continue to say hello.

"There's a sweet, sweet spirit in this place ..." I hear a harmonious group singing when I walk back into the sanctuary. I like this tune, and the songbook words are also projected onto the wall—an added plus for a newbie like me.

The platform participants enter and begin the service—which is easy to follow because the bulletin tells me when to stand, sit, kneel and the like. The pastor stands (I think it's the pastor) and gives the welcome. Then, I'm surprised when he asks visitors to stand and introduce themselves. His warm tone and kind smile keep me from running, but what a way to put someone on the spot! I share my name and city of residence.

The pastor then says, "Let's greet our neighbors with a hug and holy kiss." The musicians start playing a lively tune and everyone stands and starts hugging, shaking hands and singing. There's a deluge of smiling Adventists telling me, "Nice to see you today!" "Happy Sabbath!" and "Be sure to stop by the visitor's potluck after church!"

Then they collect offering—again! Why are they sending adorable kids to gather dollar bills on their way to Kids' Corner? Why do they need two offerings? Maybe it's to replace a roof, but I still think it's a little tacky to use kids.

I'm shocked that I enjoy the sermon since I'm not really religious. It's a solid, scriptural presentation about living like Jesus and the importance of studying the whole Bible.

After church, at least three more families invite me to the potluck. I go and the food is good. This church does seem to value healthful living, but that's something I already knew about this denomination. One drawback, though: I'm surrounded by people yet eating alone.

To be frank, the people at this church seem sincerely friendly, but it seems like they only say hello because it's either their job as a greeter or because the pastor tells them to. To be fair, they were more talkative after service. Will I come back to this church? Maybe.

By the way, the name's Jane. I'm a mystery church visitor.

A (TRUE) TALE OF TWO CONFERENCES

"Jane" doesn't exist, but her experiences represent countless unexpected visitors that file in and out of Columbia Union church sanctuaries each week. In fact, Jane is a composite based on actual secret visitor experiences in Pennsylvania and Chesapeake conference churches.

Their active mystery guest programs are meant to raise awareness about the church experience from a visitor's viewpoint. Aside from slight differences in implementation, the end goals of both programs are to illuminate the effective ways visitors are engaged from the moment they start looking for the church, and to shine light on the areas that may need improvement.

In Chesapeake, individual churches can opt in to Partners for Growth, the conference's church expansion

program. It started with nine churches last year, and the mystery guest reports are one component of the training.

Board members from participating churches attend lectures during a weekend practicum and look at the components of growing churches, like how they nurture and baptize community members. Near the end of the practicum, they're also told about the mystery guest visit. When those results are revealed, board members review strong and weak points and vote on which areas to improve.

"The whole emphasis is on what it means to be God's church in this world. It means to be salt and light," says Gary Gibbs, Chesapeake's ministerial director. "It means to give the message of the Good News of Jesus to our communities, and not just to turn the lights on on Sabbath and take care of ourselves."

PENNSYLVANIA CHURCHES: THE GOOD AND THE BAD

Feedback from mystery guests is giving the Pennsylvania Conference a clearer picture of how their congregations compare to other denominations in visitor friendliness and where they can improve:

Areas of Strength	Pennsylvania Conference Churches	Churches of Similar Size	All Churches Visited
1. Greeting Upon Arrival	9.00	8.09	7.80
2. Friendliness	8.00	8.07	7.69
3. Pre-Service Atmosphere	7.67	7.51	7.28
Areas of Improvement	Pennsylvania Conference Churches	Churches of Similar Size	All Churches Visited
1. Signage	6.67	6.72	7.22
2. Seating	6.58	7.53	7.82
3. Community Awareness	6.33	6.59	6.65



SELECTING VISITORS

Gibbs handpicks Chesapeake's mystery guests at local Christian colleges and universities in the Washington, D.C., area, or at local secular colleges with religion and humanities programs. The Pennsylvania Conference contracts with Faith Perceptions, a Missouri-based company that helps churches evaluate the first-time guest experience.

Pennsylvania's goal is slightly different. "What we'd like to do is ... not necessarily change an individual church, but a perception over the entire conference," explains Tim Madding, Pennsylvania's ministerial director.

For example, he discovered most church members think their congregation is very friendly. "Some would even say that it is the friendliest church in town. What they don't realize is they're really just friendly to themselves. When they come to church, they're coming to see their friends, their family, the people they know, and they unintentionally ... ignore the guests," Madding says.

Individual churches usually contract with Faith Perceptions for a predetermined number of unique, secret visits. The company's minimum package consists of 12 "unchurched" visitors, who are staggered over three to six months, depending on the plan a church chooses.

According to Melanie Smollen, Faith Perceptions president, each paid guest will attend a service, complete a survey and submit the bulletin, "which is kind of like a receipt showing that they went," she says. "Once we've gotten all 12 visits in, we will aggregate that data using those responses from each survey, and we'll put together a comprehensive report for the church." She says this helps pinpoint strengths and areas where visitors may fall through the cracks.

Smollen says that what they are doing for Pennsylvania, however, is very different. For the past two years, Pennsylvania has commissioned single visits to various churches throughout the conference.

The conference then condenses Faith Perceptions' extensive report into a one-page summary, minus information identifying the individual church. "We [publish] that on the back page of the conference newsletter that gets sent out every month," Madding explains.

LEARNING FROM THE "STINGS"

The reports are certainly getting a lot of buzz in Pennsylvania. Madding reports that when he visits churches now, members often want to know if they've hosted a mystery guest. "Some of the reviews have been a little good, some of them have not been so good," Madding notes.

In Chesapeake, Diego Boquer, who pastors the Glen Burnie and Brooklyn churches in Maryland, says his members learned a great deal from their mystery guest reports. "Some things were confirmation [that] there were things that were dysfunctional and they just needed to be addressed in a very nice and loving way," Boquer says.

Boquer says he understands those who feel a mystery guest's report seems a bit unfair. "This is just one person's opinion," he says. But, he reminds members, "What about the hundreds of people that come only once and never come back? Maybe this one report represents a lot of those numbers," he explains.

Facing uncomfortable realities through someone else's eyes might be a blessing in disguise, Boquer says. It can alert members that "maybe we've been here for such a long time that we cannot see anymore through the eyes of a new person coming in. It's our blind spot," he says.

When the secret visitor evaluation was revealed at the Glen Burnie church, member Susan Newman said the report got her thinking: "Everyone is really a secret visitor coming in, because they're making their evaluation even though ... they're not writing it out for us."

Since Glen Burnie's participation in Chesapeake's weekend practicum, Newman has delved into the

greeting program. She wasn't comfortable standing at the church doors handing out bulletins and striking conversation out of thin air, but she learned about second-level greeting, which she says is more in line with her personality. Second-level greeters collect completed visitor information cards, which gives her information to begin conversations. She also works with the potluck ministry, dining with the new visitors or making sure they get linked with other members.

Newman also reaches out to visitors via text message during the week and invites some visitors for meals outside of church. Newman also found good friends along the way, including some who are now baptized members.

KEEP THEM COMING BACK

"You can't determine when your visitors are going to come," says Gibbs. "You get one shot." And, it can occur when members least expect it, but there are obvious signs: a new face in the congregation, someone furtively glancing around wondering where the hymnals are located, or someone looking out of place during familiar rituals.

While churches in both conferences tended to rank high in friendliness, some visitors didn't see it until after the church service, while some reports indicated

What else makes a church welcoming?
Share your experiences at
[facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor](https://www.facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor).

guests, like Jane, felt members only greeted them at the front door because it was their job.

Madding says he hopes churches will remember that, even if a worship service doesn't go particularly well, "If those church members are friendly and connect with the guests, they will be willing to come back for another visit," he says.

Gibbs says the visitor program helps churches realize "that we have a very good opportunity through what we do every Sabbath to actually reach out and win souls." He adds, "There are people coming through our doors, checking us out, and we have a great opportunity to keep focused on mission. ... God sends people and we need to be alert to that and be ready to embrace them. ... Bad weather days, good weather days, whatever's happening, we have to have heart for the stranger in our midst."

Elizabeth Anderson writes from Laurel, Md.

5 Tips for Creating a Visitor-Friendly Church

✓ SPRUCE UP YOUR WEBSITE

"A church's website is the new 'first impression' that visitors receive," says Gibbs. "Therefore, it is vital that the website be attractive, easy to navigate and have current information."

✓ PROVIDE CLEAR AND AMPLE SIGNAGE

Not only should guests be able to easily locate your building from the street, but make sure they also know where to park and how to find restrooms, water fountains, sanctuary entrances, the mother's room and classrooms.

✓ EXPLAIN RITUALS

Note activities that involve standing or kneeling. "Just make sure that you're sensitive to the guest—that they understand what's going on," notes Madding. Also, explain how collected funds will be used. For example, "Please explain ... why the children are picking it up and what this offering is for," suggests Madding.

✓ MAKE YOUR MESSAGE CLEAR

Pastor Boquer says it's a good idea to "design our worship services in a way that we can encourage nonbelievers or people that are visiting for the very first time" so that they can easily understand the message.

✓ BE FRIENDLY

"You can have a worship service that just bombs ... but if church members are friendly and connect with the guests, they will be willing to come back for another visit," Madding explains. Also, assign first- and second-tier greeters to connect with guests during their visit—and beyond.

SLIGO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

5TH ANNUAL

homecoming weekend 2014

AUGUST 1-3

WE ARE NEARING HOME



FEATURING SPECIAL GUEST

Pastor Dave Weigley

President, Columbia Union Conference

FRIDAY EVENING

AUGUST 1

Welcome & Family Worship

6:30 & 7:30 pm

SABBATH MORNING

AUGUST 2

The Church at Worship

8:45 & 11:00 am

with Pastor Dave Weigley

SABBATH AFTERNOON

International Luncheon

1:30 pm

Sabbath Evening Concert

7:00 pm

by the Sensational "Sisters" Trio

SUNDAY MORNING

AUGUST 3

Tennis Tournament, University of Maryland

8 am – 12 pm

join us...

LIVE IN CONCERT



TO REGISTER for Sligo Homecoming Weekend visit www.sligochurch.org

First Adventist Church Celebrates 125 Years

Current members of the oldest Seventh-day Adventist congregation in metropolitan Washington, D.C., recently celebrated a milestone—the 125th anniversary since the church’s founding. Often referred to as the mother church of the metropolitan area, the church was organized with 26 charter members and resisted the tide of segregation in the nation and denomination through the transforming power of the gospel. Members celebrated their staying power and trailblazing history.

With obvious hearts of gladness and thanksgiving, members kicked off the celebration with a spirited Friday evening service that included prayer; a welcome by Lisa Reid-Smith, associate pastor; special music; reflections and a sermon by Ivan Williams,



Pastor Roland J. Hill surprises Betty F. Gillis with flowers and a plaque to honor her 77-year membership.



Ministerial director for the North American Division.

The next morning featured an early service with prayer, music and a sermon from Roland J. Hill, senior pastor. The second service featured music by an orchestra, a mass choir (pictured above) and a sermon from former senior pastor Mark A. McCleary, PhD (right). In his sermon he reminded attendees, “Don’t worry because God is for you.”



During the divine worship service, church leaders honored and presented a plaque and flowers to Betty F. Gillis, who recently celebrated her 89th birthday and holds the longest membership of 77 years. Over the years, she served as the organist, assistant choir director, minister of music and assistant Sabbath School leader.

Henry J. Fordham, president of the Allegheny East Conference, spoke during the Sabbath evening rededication of the sanctuary. He told the congregation, “You must be obedient in order to produce seed, and we must protect the remnant of the church.”

Members ended the Sabbath by learning about and participating in a signing of the recently released book *Miracle of Courage, Color and Christ—The History of the First Church of Seventh-day Adventists*. Douglas Morgan, PhD, a history professor at Washington Adventist University in nearby Takoma Park, Md., wrote the limited edition, coffee table book. There is a suggested donation amount for the book, which will go toward the planned renovations. For copies, contact the church secretary at secretary@fcsda.org.—Rhonda M. Covington

Dupont Park Adventist School Celebrates Scholars

Family, friends, teachers and special guests recently gathered to salute Principal's List and Honor Roll students of Dupont Park Adventist School



PHOTO BY CASSANDRA ARNOLD

Evans Chambers, guest speaker, presents Lincoln Liburd, class valedictorian, with an award for his academic achievements.

in Washington, D.C., for the 2013-14 school year. Approximately 55 students from grades 3 to 8 were celebrated for their academic excellence and diligence in maintaining GPAs of 3.0 (Honor Roll) and 3.7 and above (Principal's List) throughout the year.

The program included participation from students and an inspiring message from guest speaker Evans Chambers. Chambers, an elder from the Breath of Life church in Fort Washington, Md., challenged the honorees to be steadfast and resolved in their race toward academic excellence.

Following the keynote speaker's presentation, each honoree received an engraved trophy to commemorate his/her hard work. The awards for the eighth-grade Honor Roll and Principal's List students proved to be somewhat bittersweet because of the students' pending graduation ceremonies.

Lincoln Liburd, class valedictorian, says, "I felt very thankful to be honored one last time at Dupont Park's Honors Banquet. I've learned that, with God, nothing is impossible, and He still answers our prayers."—*Tanya McInnis*

Community Church Baptizes Diverse Group

After a two-week evangelism series led by evangelist Deron Hill, members of the Community church in Englewood, N.J., welcomed 12 new members (pictured below with others). Adding members was an appropriate way for the church to celebrate their 30th anniversary.

Pastor Richard Campbell says that the church holds an evangelism meeting every year, but they usually only meet on weekends. This year's "Keys to Kingdom," series was held each evening except for Thursdays.

He says he was especially thrilled by the rich diversity of the newly baptized. The group included Americans, Kenyans, Puerto Ricans, Caribbeans and one Honduran.

All came with unique conversion stories. For instance, Rosemarie Colantino grew up in an Adventist church in Puerto Rico. When her mother—who still lives

there—learned that the services would be live streamed, she planned to go to a neighbor's house to watch. However, on the day of her baptism, Colantino was thrilled to see her mother in the congregation. Her mother said she was so happy that Colantino was returning home to the Lord that she had to witness the baptism in person.

Another new member, Jeanne Hopewell, is 92 years old. She is a well-recognized community activist, so members believe her decision to join the church could have long-lasting results in the community.

PHOTO BY ROY DANIEL



36 Graduate From Pine Forge

Valedictorian Noreena Ogidan addresses her classmates during Commencement exercises.



PHOTO BY JOSHUA MARTIN

Ephesus Church Hosts Second Disabilities Sabbath

Donald L. Burden, senior pastor at the Ephesus church in Columbus, Ohio, and Sharon L. Bowen, director of Disabilities Ministries for the Allegheny West Conference and the Ephesus church, recently hosted their second annual Disabilities Awareness Sabbath. The theme was “All God’s Children are Fearfully and Wonderfully Made.”

Anil Lewis, deputy executive director of the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute, was back by “popular demand” as the featured speaker for the event. Lewis’ message to the congregation included his favorite verse, Exodus 4:11. He stated, “This verse is now sort of my trademark. When I lost my sight in 1989, I had to redefine who I really am. You know, you start to question ... God’s purpose and why this happened. ... I had to simply recognize that, although I am blind, I am still the same man, I just see things differently now. I am a child of God who hath made me fearfully and wonderfully. So, I can’t sit back and complain because I have work to do, and God has blessed me with His Spirit to get that work done.”

Yvette Cooper, superintendent of schools, and Catherine Burks, from the Shiloh church in Cincinnati, signed the day’s message for those persons with hearing challenges. Cooper also signed the children’s story with a special message through the song “I Almost Let Go.” She told the children that whenever they are going



Sharon L. Bowen, director of Disabilities Ministries for the conference and Ephesus church, happily invited back Anil Lewis from the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute, for the church’s Disabilities Awareness Sabbath.

through problems in life, they should just hold on and give it to Jesus.

Pastor Burden re-emphasized his commitment as the leader at Ephesus, saying, “We will continue to make every effort to ensure that anyone with a special need will be accommodated and made to feel a part of our church family.”—*Sharon L. Bowen*

Central Church Welcomes New Pastor

The Allegheny West Conference recently welcomed John T. Boston, II, as one of its newest pastors. He is now shepherding the Central church in Columbus, Ohio.

Pastor Boston is a proud alumnus of Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy (Ga.) and Oakwood University (Ala.), where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Ministerial Theology. He started his ministry as a district pastor in South Carolina in the South Atlantic Conference. During his four-year tenure there, he baptized 167 persons and significantly grew his congregations. An innovator, he also began simulcasting so that he could be in both of his churches at the same time via the Internet. In the summer of 2008, Pastor Boston led an evangelistic effort in Georgetown, S.C., which resulted in the town’s first Seventh-day Adventist congregation. The Center for Hope opened with 50 believers.

Pastor Boston has been the recipient of the Mosley-Warren Homiletical Award and the North American Division (NAD) Award for Outstanding Community Service. He currently serves on the NAD Pastoral Advisory Committee. He has also served as a guest speaker throughout the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Europe, South America, Bermuda and East Africa.

Pastor Boston is happily married to his best friend, the former Karla Nesmith.



400 Worship Together at Multicultural Camp Meeting

For three days, about 400 members from “the four corners” of the Allegheny West Conference territory, representing many cultures and ethnicities, united, apart from the noisy world, for Multicultural Camp Meeting. Under the theme “More Than Conquerors,” the weekend was full of relaxation, restoration and time to rejoice with nature, God, and brothers and sisters in Christ. Here are some highlights:



At the main pavilion, Manny Cruz, associate youth director for the North American Division, shares the Word of God with attendees.



During an afternoon concert, guest musicians Lisbeth Melgar and Sarah Capeles come together for a duet.



Above and left: Sabbath morning a parade of nations brought color to the weekend with church members from many countries proudly donning their national attire and displaying flags.



Children worship in their own space under the theme “God Cares, God Guides, God Provides.” They had a full Sabbath with music, stories, fun and crafts.



As a representation of life in biblical times, young attendees exhibit small prayer rugs they loomed.

Classes Donate Memorable Gift at Alumni Weekend

A landscaped campus, cleaned class and dorm rooms, and polished floors greeted current and returning students for Blue Mountain Academy's (BMA) alumni weekend. Thanks to the hard work of alumni board members, class agents and BMA liaison Karyl Kramer—the language and drama teacher—the weekend gave attendees the chance to make new, precious memories with classmates and friends.

On Sabbath afternoon, past and present students, visitors and BMA staff joined in the highlight of the weekend: the dedication of a bronze eagle sculpture (pictured) gifted and presented by the classes of '62 and '63.

"As we thought about how much the school meant to us, the idea of a permanent gift to the school came up. Something of admiration, gratitude and appreciation, an example of the impact BMA made in our lives," says Leroy Haas ('63), from Brinklow, Md.



BMA alumni greet each as they register for the weekend. The 13 honor classes this year, along with Lake Ariel and Philadelphia Academy former faculty and staff, were 1944, 1949, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994 and 2004.



Class donors say it is their hope that the eagle will inspire all students that attend BMA to reach their full potential, no matter the adversities and hardships they face as students and adults.

Sculpture and painter Royneal "Neal" Millis, also from the Class of '63, says he was honored to be part of the project. Without formal training, Millis accidentally discovered his talent when he saw a piece of artwork and thought, "I could do a better job." Today his body of work resides in Central and South America, several European countries, North Africa, China, Vietnam and across the United States.

Perched on the artfully constructed stone pillar, the eagle's seven-foot wingspan shades its talons, which include a broken claw that represents the lingering effect polio had on Millis' childhood.

Millis' advice for students? "Find something you really like and you have a natural aptitude for; ask for God's leading in your life; keep an open mind; listen to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit and then pursue your dreams," he said.

Aerial Aires Home Show Headlines Academy Days

Sixty-six perspective students and 48 adults from six states attended the recent Academy Days. The weekend launched Friday afternoon with visitors touring classrooms, making ice cream and participating in two Q-and-A forums—one for parents and one for students. During the Sabbath service, the Bel Canto and La Sonnette music groups treated guests to concerts. Sabbath afternoon visiting students painted landscapes, learned origami and participated in a talent show.

“We are looking forward to a healthy enrollment,”



Academy Days visitors get treated to an Aerial Aires acrobatics performance.

says Tracy Enochs, recruiter.

The weekend highlight was the Aerial Aires home show Saturday night, where the gymnastics team of 38 students, including 13 seniors, and four coaches entertained attendees with highflying stunts, tumbling and skits.

“The biggest reason for gymnastics is movement with a mission,” explains Coach Alex Bolanos. He says he speaks from experience; he was changed through gymnastics because of his high school coach. He says, “I saw comradery, spiritual support and spiritual focus through the accountability my coach held for team members. I wanted to do the same.”

Wherever Aerial Aires travel, from elementary schools to churches, Bolanos says the two comments they hear most are an appreciation for the Christian music they perform to and their modest costumes.

Bolanos shares two life-changing experiences of team members from this school year: “A female gymnast didn’t know how she could be useful. She found her role at an elementary school when she helped a student cope with issues similar to hers.” He adds of another team member, “After a guy listened to ‘The Healer’ song during vespers [at home show], he began to cry. He told one of the coaches that he realized how important the team’s mission was and that his role was important.”

Maranatha Volunteers Help Improve Campus

Twenty-three people with Maranatha Volunteers International came to Blue Mountain Academy this spring for two weeks of improvement projects. Representing 11 states and Canada, the volunteer team included both skilled and essential helpers.

“Each person that showed up had a skill we needed: an electrician from Indiana, a heating and air conditioning [professional] from Kansas and the project leader from Florida,” says Tom Sizemore, volunteer coordinator for the academy.

The volunteers helped install new hardwood floors in a section of the boys dorm and a ceiling in the cafeteria, painted dorm rooms and the exterior of two buildings, remodeled an office slated for coordinating future volunteers, landscaped the campus, wired and installed lighting, demolished and rebuilt a porch, and built a one-day church, which is a frame and roof primarily used in developing countries.

“What an inspiration it was to have the volunteers come and lend a hand improving our campus. Their dedication and willingness created a sense among students and staff that we are truly part of the body of Christ,” says Dave Morgan, principal.



Maranatha volunteers Lee Achenback (back) from Takoma Park, Md., works with Louann Kratzer and her son, Jeff, from Georgia, to build a porch for a staff house.

THE CHALLENGE

chesapeake conference newsletter

JULY 2014

What Madison Avenue Won't Tell You

When is enough, enough? We live in a world filled with advertising and media designed to make us want more and be discontent with what we have. Although there is always more to be had, we have limited resources.

Surveys of Americans have shown that those with incomes under \$25,000 would need \$54,000 to fulfill their dreams. Those who make \$100,000 crave an average of \$192,000. In other words, we usually want about twice what we currently have. Benjamin Franklin famously quipped, "Content makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor."

We look in a lot of places for contentment, but profit, possessions and pleasure are never able to bring lasting satisfaction. Solomon tried all of these and more and concluded they were all meaningless.

There is, though, a source of true and lasting contentment. Paul lived in various situations and wrote, "Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little" (Phil. 4:11-12, NLT).

At times, Paul was honored as a god, but other times he was beaten, imprisoned or stoned. He shares the secret to his contentment in verse 13, "For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength."

Jesus is the source of true and complete fulfillment in life. Madison Avenue will never promote Him, but repeatedly, those who trusted in Him found a constant source of satisfaction.



Rick Remmers
President

Chesapeake Group Gains Company Status

The Columbia Spanish group, a growing congregation in Columbia, Md., was recently promoted to company status. Members and some 15 visitors recently gathered for a celebratory Sabbath worship service. In his sermon, Rick Remmers, conference president, challenged the congregation to focus on worship, fellowship, service and mission.



Musicians lead song service in the company's newly rented space in Columbia, Md.



PHOTOS BY OMAR IBANEZ

During the Columbia Spanish congregation's inaugural Sabbath as a company, Pastor Orlando Rosales affirms Ana Galdamez before baptizing her.

"As a new group, they have experienced great growth and are well positioned to reach out to the Hispanic population in the Columbia community," says Remmers.

"I am grateful to the Lord for His many blessings here in Columbia. We started with only four members in October 2010, and now we are 35," says Pastor Orlando Rosales, the conference's Multilingual Ministries leader. "With the Lord's guidance, we are confident that, in 2015, we can become an organized church. How great is our God!"

NFL Team, County Recognizes Crossroads School

Two community organizations recently recognized the Crossroads Adventist Preparatory School in Ellicott City, Md., and its principal, Karohn Young, for a job well done. First, the Baltimore Ravens presented Principal Young with the 2014 Touchdown for Teachers Award. This prestigious honor recognizes local teachers for their leadership, dedication and commitment to education.

Second, the entire school was recognized as a 2014 Healthy Howard School Silver Winner. Out of 65 nominated schools in Howard County, Maryland, Crossroads was one of seven private schools and the only Seventh-day Adventist school to receive the certified healthy school award. Crossroads was recognized for their extraordinary commitment to nutrition and physical activity.

“Our goal and total commitment at Crossroads has always been to offer consistent programs to our students, faculty and community that enrich physical activity and promote healthy nutritional options. Our school is honored to be recognized as a Healthy Howard School,” Young said.—*Jackie Farquharson*



Karohn Young (second row, second from the right) and Stacy Junior, school board chair (behind Young), accept the Certified Healthy School award from their local county.

Mount Aetna Middle School Students Place in National Robotics Competition

Five members of Mount Aetna Adventist Elementary School’s robotics team recently traveled to Sacramento, Calif., for the Adventist Robotics League’s (ARL) FIRST LEGO League national competition. After placing third at the regional level

(held at Pennsylvania Conference’s Blue Mountain Academy in Hamburg, Pa.), team members Aubrey Benton, Langston Crawford, Eric Hessler, Waverly Reginato, Brandon Starr, Robbie Walter and Chase Williams were excited to work hard and improve their robot programing and design. Through fundraisers, the middle school students received more than \$5,000 in donations to cover travel expenses.

Led by science teacher Michelle White and volunteer coach Monte Benton—and accompanied by parents who also served as coaches—team members flew to California, where they spent an afternoon exploring San Francisco, worshipped on Sabbath with other robotics teams then competed Sunday before their overnight flight home. The team earned second place in the category of robot design and placed fifth in the robot competition.

“I loved seeing the other teams from different areas,” said Reginato, a sixth-grader. Aubrey Benton, also in the sixth grade, said the whole year of robotics was helpful because “robotics teaches kids important engineering skills and teaches them how to work together to solve problems.”

Learn more about ARL at adventistroboticsleague.net.

PHOTO BY RENEE WILLIAMS



The team celebrates their third-place win at the regional competition that qualified them for the national event.

MOUNTAIN VIEWPOINT

JULY 2014

Glennville Youth Take Over the Pulpit

When the Glennville (W.Va.) church held evangelistic meetings and a follow-up Daniel seminar a couple of years ago, no one predicted that it would pave a pathway to get the youth actively involved in evangelism. The young people valiantly led some of the less complex lessons. Church members said they did a good job and enjoyed it. Lena Giltner (13) had done quite a bit of research and included interesting historical information beyond what was in the seminar materials. And, after her first presentation, David Meyer, head elder, planned to ask her to teach a future lesson. He was thrilled when she asked to do it. The young people actually ended up leading a lot of the sessions.

Shortly after that, Chemutai Shio (14) asked for a Youth Sabbath where the young people would be responsible for the entire church service. "That seemed like a good idea in light of the excellent job they had done on the Daniel seminar," Meyer said.

Since then, the church has had a number of youth Sabbaths involving almost all children and youth. The last one involved a 3- and 5-year-old with their mother. Other presentations came from those aged 7 to 17 who prepared and presented their own talks on the fruits of the Spirit. A 14-year-old Discover Bible School student, who had just started to attend church, was also included. Eight visitors attended the special program.

Rick Cutright, Glennville's pastor, was so impressed that he asked them to take the program to Buckhannon, W.Va., where he also pastors. The following Sabbath, the youth shared at the Buckhannon church and involved the youth there. The result? The youthful



Youth from the Glennville and Buckhannon churches hold the fruit they used to illustrate the fruits of the Spirit in their sermons.

enthusiasm is proving contagious. Now the Buckhannon youth want to put together a program and share it at the Glennville church.

Peres Sambu, one of the Glennville parents, commented, "I was excited to see the Buckhannon youth inspired to come to Glennville and share. And, they weren't depending on us to help, but were confident to do the sermon part themselves."

To see Glennville youth present a program on the Beatitudes, visit thywordcreations.com and go to the video page.



Q: How has God's Love Impacted You?

"His love for me is so personal, so intimate and so real. [I enjoy] those moments that I can turn the world off and contemplate that love. How has it impacted my life? I am not the person I used to be. I am more sympathetic, more gentle, less prejudiced and judgmental, more trusting, and I'm still developing."

—Phyllis Jeffers, a member of the Moorefield (W.Va.) church



Woman of God

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Why I Love Cities

Although I like country living, I also feel a great passion for cities. I must admit this has nothing to do with towering skyscrapers nor impressive architecture. The world of finance and business is not the reason; nor do I feel drawn to the grand attractions of stage and theater. My interest in great cities has everything to do with the people for whom Jesus died. There are millions upon millions of candidates for eternal life living in those concentrated centers. Yes, of course, our hearts also beat for those who live in smaller cities, towns and rural areas. However, it is the entire human population that is so important in God's sight and for whom He formed the plan of salvation.

The social and spiritual needs in those enormous conglomerates, where so many people live, are beyond all reckoning. For this reason, the small group ministry is so well received. All these good people need a circle of friends with whom they can relate, and who can provide them that sense of belonging that every human being longs for. Small groups create community, and that is very important for isolated postmoderns living as they do in a fragmented society. These people are not anxiously searching for a church, a priest or a pastor—those things have so far failed to minister to them. What appeals to their needs is something more akin to a family circle, which all too often is missing. Jesus left behind a template for us, and so, I challenge you to follow the way He did it. Go to these wonderful people and offer them your friendship and the opportunity to come closer to Jesus and salvation!



José H. Cortés
President

Wayne Church Hosts Homeless Families

Each year Wayne church members host an Easter program—but not this year. This year members threw open the church doors and welcomed four adults and nine children without a home to call their own. The church worked for many months with Family Promise, an organization that places homeless families at local churches for seven days at a time.

During the church's first week hosting the program, members pitched in to provide supplies, cook food and support the families in whatever way needed. The Adventurers even pitched in one morning to serve breakfast! "We were thrilled to show compassion

in a tangible way to families that need and will [still] need our help in the future," shares Delma Avila, the church's Health Ministries director.

"It was a wonderful, tangible way to help others in need while at the same time receiving a tremendous blessing. The [children] can't wait to help out again," says Larra Millner, Children Ministries director.

Angela Ducan, the church clerk, also adds, "I spent time with a family on Sunday. It is always rewarding doing something for someone else, while taking time from self. My best moments were with the children. They are my passion."—*Efrain Avila*



Adventurers and volunteers from the Wayne church prepare to serve breakfast to local homeless families.

Two Hispanic Churches Welcome Eight Members

Gabriel Morales, a theology student from the Antillian University in Puerto Rico, recently led a weeklong meeting at the Perth Amboy and La Victoria Spanish churches, both in Perth Amboy, which were themed “Yo Soy” (“I Am”). At the end of the week, eight people were baptized.

Morales spoke about the “I am” statements that Jesus communicates in the gospel of John. He says the simple yet powerful message could be summed up like this: Jesus calls those living in a dark and painful life, where they are constantly reminded of their mistakes and their shortcomings, to a life filled with light, joy and peace.

Morales says, “The greatest thing that I saw during this week was the way the young people aligned their efforts with God’s in making this week of spiritual emphasis a reality, not just for them, but also the community of Perth Amboy.”

During the last minutes of the baptism, Mario Thorp, pastor of both churches, made three appeals to the congregation. After the third appeal, a man named Juan stepped forward in tears, ready to give his life to Jesus.

Another young man named Ezequiel visited church for



Pastor Mario Thorp and Gabriel Morales get ready to baptize Juan at the end of a week of evangelism meetings.

a few Sabbaths to make his mother happy. But, when he showed up for the final meeting on Sabbath, he was moved to leave his past behind. As he stood for the altar call, his mother embraced him and they both began to cry.—*Bianca Morales*

A graphic for a youth and family event. The background is a dark red field with tall grasses. In the center, two hands are shown holding a cross. The text "STAND FIRM" is written in large, white, block letters, with the hands and cross integrated into the letters. Below this, "Home Edition" is written in a white, cursive font. Underneath that, "1ST YOUTH & FAMILY BILINGUAL CAMPING" is written in white, block letters. At the bottom, "AUG. 29-SEP. 1, 2014 @TVRC" is written in white, block letters. The bottom of the graphic features a stylized, low-poly landscape in shades of brown and orange.

STAND FIRM
Home Edition
1ST YOUTH & FAMILY BILINGUAL CAMPING
AUG. 29-SEP. 1, 2014 @TVRC

Kettering Church Celebrates 50th Anniversary

The Kettering church recently marked their 50th anniversary with a two-day celebration that highlighted the church's history and reunited past and present senior pastors. The two-day event began with a Friday night organ concert that featured Grant Wareham, church organist. Sabbath was packed with music that included a Festival of Praise and a performance of *Symphony of Prayer* by the Kettering Praise Orchestra and directed by Donald Huff.

During the divine service, Peter Bath, senior pastor from 1986 to 1990, shared church milestones and memories, and reminded people that those memories are important. "Not because of the building, but because of what you bring to God together, what we share in community," he said.

Leaders Through the Years

When new employees moved to Dayton in 1963 to help set up Kettering Medical Center, they soon realized the nearest church, located on Far Hills Avenue, could not comfortably hold this new influx of people. George Nelson, then-hospital administrator, led the 150 member group to charter the Kettering church December 14, 1963. By January 4, 1964, members held their first Sabbath School and worship services in the auditorium in the hospital basement.

Today the Kettering church is located at 3939 Stonebridge Road, and has a membership of nearly 1,300.

Six former and current senior pastors and their wives attended the spring event. Here is a snapshot of the senior leadership over the years:

Ed Motschieder (1982-1986) came to Kettering from Frederick, Md. He left after being elected Ohio Conference president.

Peter Bath (1980-1990) came to Kettering as a youth pastor. In 1986 he was promoted to senior pastor, then in 1990 he left to serve as president of the nearby Kettering College.

Willmore Eva (1990-1995) served as senior pastor until he was asked to be the editor of *Ministry* magazine, where he served until 2005.

David VanDenburgh (1996-2006) moved to Kettering from the Campus Hill church in Loma Linda, Calif., before transferring to Kettering College to teach.



PHOTOS BY JOE SARVER

Current and past Kettering senior pastors and their families join the congregation in Sabbath worship during the anniversary celebration.



Senior Pastoral Couples—Past and Present: *Chris and David VanDenburgh* (1996-2006); *Valeetah and Ed Motschieder* (1982-1986); *Dorothy and Donald Bostian* (1972-1977); *Cherie' and Karl Haffner* (2007-present); *Clarie and Will Eva* (1990-1995); and *Cathy and Peter Bath* (1986-1990)

Senior pastor and well-known author **Karl Haffner** (2007-present) moved to Kettering from the Walla Walla University church in Walla Walla, Wash.

To watch the Sabbath service on Kettering's Vimeo channel, visit vimeo.com/ketsda.

School Easter Program Draws Community to Church

Months of hard work by the Clarksfield Elementary School teachers and students, especially combined with God's blessing, paid off when they put on an effective Easter program at the Clarksfield church. It also turned out to be a wonderful witnessing opportunity.

On Sabbath morning, students told the gospel story of Jesus through band and handbell choir performances and narrated choir pieces. Nearly 80 people, including 15 community members, packed the sanctuary of the Clarksfield church, which has a regular attendance of 15-17.

"The students invited their non-Adventist friends, neighbors and families," says Leona Bange, head teacher. "The students are learning to welcome all of God's children to their church, not just the usual families they are used to worshipping with."

It was also the first time one of the student's family had visited the church. "We weren't sure about your church, and the younger girls had lots of questions," said the student's mother. "But, it was beautiful and



PHOTO BY RUSS GASKILL

Jeanne Sinka, music teacher, and Leona Bange, head teacher, flank their students.

the children are so musically talented. We want all three of our children in your school next year."
—Heidi Kremic

Music Festival Sets Faith on Fire

More than 120 fifth- through eighth-graders from Seventh-day Adventist schools across the state recently attended the 2014 Ohio Conference Elementary Musical Festival themed "Faith on Fire."

The event was held on the campus of Mount Vernon Academy in Mount Vernon and offered activities to help students grow musically, and in their faith.

Kimberly Bulgin, choir director from Spring Valley Academy in Centerville, led the mass choir that powerfully performed five songs. Her brother Jason Bulgin, music teacher and athletic director from Ramah Jr.



PHOTO BY COURTNEY STRAUB

Academy, an Allegheny West Conference school in Cleveland, was the featured speaker. The siblings shared their innate ability to connect with their students and audiences in an authentic and Christ-centered way.

A highlight of the weekend was when more than 25 typically quiet and shy students volunteered to share their faith through skits, piano and vocal performances during the Friday open mic night.

Mark Mirek, head teacher of the Piqua Elementary School in Piqua, says his students enjoyed being part of the large group and are more involved in their local church because of events like this. "Seeing that they are part of something bigger makes them want to participate in worship activities back at home," he says. "You take something home with you."—Alison Jobson



Pennsylvania Pen

JULY 2014

80 Princesses Have Tea With Jesus

I know why they have the princess tea," a little girl said to her grandmother as they headed to Pennsylvania Conference's annual Princess Tea for little girls under age 12.

"Why?" the grandmother asked.

"Because they want us to know that we are Jesus' princesses," she responded.

That's the message conference leaders want little girls, their moms and grandmothers to hear when they attend this event filled with stories, crafts, activities and finger sandwiches. More than 80 "princesses" attended this year's event (some pictured), which featured a new theme song written by Tamyra Horst, conference Women's Ministries director. "My hope is that they go home singing about Jesus calling them His princesses and designing them perfectly for His plan for them," she says.

Horst and her 7-year-old niece, Kaleigh Horst, created a princess booklet filled with questions and activities for the little girls to do at home. They drew a variety of princesses—some with glasses, all with different colored hair and skin—a reminder that princesses come in all shapes, sizes and interests.

On the way home from the event, one little princess stopped at a store with her mom. At the checkout, she told the cashier, "I just went to a princess tea party."

By the end of the conversation, "the lady was smiling and Sara was not shy about sharing about Jesus—it was great!" shares the princess's mom.

Horst's resource outlining ideas for a princess tea is available as a free download at adventsource.com.



The Blind to Learn "Can Do" Spirit at Laurel Lake Camp

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." This verse from Philippians 4:13 is especially meaningful for the organizers of a camp for the blind and visually impaired. They know that the campers regularly overcome obstacles as a part of their daily living. They also know that, given the opportunity, the blind and visually

impaired can do most things that sighted people can. Keeping this in mind as they launch the third year of this camp ministry, members of the Laurel Lake church have changed the name of the camp from Laurel Lake Blind Camp to Laurel Lake Camp Can Do. The spiritual theme for the camp, which will be held August 18-22 at the Laurel Lake Camp in Rossiter, is "Overcoming in Christ."

Church members are praying for campers who will best benefit from this physical, social and spiritual experience. Planned activities this year include horseback riding, beeper ball, adaptive archery, swimming, canoeing, paddle boating, fishing, indoor Olympic games, crafts and the use of the nature center. There will also be morning devotions and a campfire message each evening.

Who can attend? Anyone 18 years or older who is blind or visually impaired. The only charge to attend is a \$40 registration fee that must accompany the application. Get applications and more information about the camp by calling (814) 938-9300 or visiting laurellakecamp.org.—Randy Mallory



Clair Limrick helps a blind camper with archery.

Blue Mountain Academy Offers Discount

For the 2014-15 school year, Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) is offering a \$1,000 discount for dorm students and a \$500 discount for village students when they agree to use the Automatic Clearing House (ACH) system for monthly payments through FACTS Tuition Management.

“We are constantly looking for ways to make Blue Mountain Academy more affordable,” says Stephen Reese, vice principal of finance. “Maximizing our assets is crucial for BMA’s future.”

The school is focused on containing costs without compromising their standards. They are involved in an ongoing investigation of ways to reduce costs. Because of some cost-cutting initiatives, BMA has been able to prevent an increase in tuition costs for three years.

BMA contracts with FACTS to collect the financial intent portion of the student(s) account. Due to the nature of this system, all families must be enrolled in FACTS in order to attend BMA.

Implementing the ACH plan is another way to cut



costs. To save money via the ACH incentive plan:

- Families must sign up for ACH payments in FACTS
- Families must keep current with their financial intent without any deviation

The incentive is paid quarterly after financial payments are verified. *This incentive is not available for international students.* For more information, call Reese at (484) 662-7000 or email him at sreese@bma.us.

—Caron Oswald

Join the celebration!









August 29-September 1, 2014
 Speaker: Wendy Eberhardt
 Worship Leaders: Richard Bianco and Jason Foster

Join Laurel Lake Camp for a free weekend of “summer camp” as we celebrate 60 years of fun, friends and faith-building experiences!

Lodging, activities and meals for the weekend are free, but you must register in advance by calling 814.938.9300.

Potomac People

JULY 2014

CPC-Dulles Members Join Community to Address Hunger

Within about two hours, members from Community Praise Center-Dulles (Va.) worked with the community to pack 11,200 meals. Working in small teams, the group of 45 packed enough food to save nearly 1,200 lives. Their efforts were a response to learning that one person dies from starvation every three seconds, 20 per minute, 1,200 per hour and 28,800 per day.

With financial support from the Potomac Conference evangelism fund, the Dulles congregation partnered with Stop Hunger Now, a nonprofit organization focused on ending hunger, to pay for the bulk supplies needed for each meal bag. They then bagged the raw materials and sealed, packaged and stacked them on a pallet ready for shipment. During May and June, the meals were sent around the world to save others from starvation. With proper care, each bag can last more than two years and be ready to feed six people when opened and reconstituted.

Church members invited the community to participate in the packing. After the event, one participant, a homeless man who has been attending the church, said, "The church has given so much to help me out; I wanted to do this to give back."



Church members and residents place dehydrated vegetables, soy and rice into bags before they get sealed.

Elaine Kapetanakis, a member of the church's outreach team, explains, "Our goal here is that 51 percent of everything we do will be community outreach based. When we have a program for our members, we have a program for the community."

Takoma Park Church Pastor Ordained

I am humbled to stand in this pulpit and to have been called to serve!" exclaimed Fred Warfield, executive pastor for the Takoma Park (Md.) church, during his ordination into the gospel ministry. "Although at times

I ran from the calling, wherever God may lead, may my reply now and forever be as Mary, 'I am Thy humble servant, may it be as you have said!'" he said, reciting words Mary said to the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:35.

On Warfield's special day, church members, family and friends gathered to celebrate with him. His daughter, Phoebe, also surprised him with a special solo during the children's choir performance.

Although Warfield went to college to pursue a life in the medical field, he began to feel God calling him in a different direction. After much prayer, he transferred to Oakwood University (Ala.). There he completed his theological training, and is the place where he says his life "came alive!" After graduating and spending a year as a full-time literature evangelist, Warfield headed to the seminary at Andrews University (Mich.), where he completed a master's degree.

Since beginning in the ministry, Warfield has served as a Bible teacher, chaplain, children and youth pastor, and campus church pastor. "I believe there are no limits with God," he says. "I am thankful for the way He has led me. I consider it the highest privilege to be used in the service of the Lord."



Fred Warfield is joined in ministry by his wife, Lindzie, and their two daughters, Phoebe and Michaela.

Potomac People

Schools' Real-World Solutions Help Win Robotics Contest

Because of their innovative solutions to dealing with “Nature’s Fury,” students from C.F. Richards Junior Academy in Staunton, Va., and Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary (SVAE) in New Market, Va., won first and second place respectively in the Southern Union Region’s Adventist Robotics League (ARL) Tournament.

The goal of the competition, which drew 27 teams to Southern Adventist University in Tennessee, was to encourage Seventh-day Adventist students to work in teams to provide real-world solutions for people dealing with natural disasters.

As members of the *FIRST LEGO League*, ARL participants, whose competitions are held on Sundays instead of Saturdays, belong to a worldwide program that helps young people develop technology, science, problem-solving and research skills while they build and program autonomous robots to achieve discrete tasks.

C.F. Richards’ LEGO Lightning Squad team of six won the champion’s award for designing a robot that can project LED lane markers on the highway to allow



Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary School’s System Overload robotics team designs a device with real-world applications.

for safer driving in inclement weather. Grant Wolters, C.F. Richards principal at the time, says their win was due to teamwork and leadership. “Once we got back to school, it was neat watching them work with each other inside of their classes,” he said. “Their attitude was different as they realized they were just scraping the surface of their potential abilities.”

The SVAE System Overload team came in second for designing iFlood, a flood-monitoring device that can be used to warn people of approaching flooding. When the team showed it to Richard Funkhauser, chief of the Shenandoah County flood rescue team, he saw how it could be used immediately. “The iFlood can be used right now at low water bridges to set off a warning light to alert oncoming traffic that flooding is occurring,” he said. He wants the robotics team to show their invention to Shenandoah County administrators for possible purchase for use in the county.

Gordon Miller, an SVAE teacher and one of the coaches, said, “It was great to see the excitement of the students as they realized that their invention had real-world uses here in Shenandoah County.”

—Potomac and Visitor Staff



C.F. Richards Junior Academy’s LEGO Lightning Squad robotics team wins first-place at the Southern Union Region’s Adventist Robotics League (ARL) Tournament.

PHOTOS BY KELLY SANCHEZ

Spotlight on Spencerville

JULY 2014



PHOTO BY OKSANA WETMORE

I Learned “Less” Leads to Joy

On this year’s mission trip to Panama, I was shocked and amazed at the same time. Can people really live like this and be happy? They have no floors, they live in huts and have no transportation. Where does this happiness come from?

Then I asked myself, where does my happiness come from? Does it come disguised in a new pair of shoes, a smartphone or from the right clothes? All those things produce temporary happiness, not long-lasting joy. With all they seem to be lacking, why are they in a better mental, physical and maybe even spiritual condition than we are?

The answer, in one word, is “less.” They’ve experienced life with less and we’ve experienced it with more than enough. The utter joy and delight screaming from their eyes exemplified true joy, the kind nobody can take away.

During that trip, I learned that true satisfaction is not

found in brand name clothing or the latest music. The people of Panama taught me that life is fulfilled with less of the world and more of the Fulfiller we call Jesus Christ. So, I ask you today, does your joy come from the more you have, or is it found in the “less” of your life?—Nayeli Moretta (’15)

First-Grade Teacher Bids Farewell After 22 Years

Bev Boyer has been a blessing to many students at Spencerville Adventist Academy (SAA) over the past 22 years as a pre-first and first-grade teacher. As the past school year came to a close, Boyer announced her retirement.

When asked what she will miss most about teaching, Boyer replies, “Interacting with the kids ... Seeing life through the eyes of children is a gift. I know I am loved!”

Brian Kittleson, principal, comments, “SAA is grateful for Mrs. Boyer’s service to our school. We wish her a wonderful retirement!”

When asked what she liked about her teacher, first-grader Abby Pangborn said, “Mrs. Boyer is always nice to us. She takes us on very fun field trips.”

Boyer will maintain her connection with SAA through her husband DeWayne, who will continue as one of the high school Bible teachers. She hopes to volunteer at SAA in the future.



Retiring teacher Bev Boyer is surrounded by her last group of first-grade students.

Spotlight

NEWS

Middle, High School Scholars Recognized

Spencerville Adventist Academy recently hosted its third annual academic awards banquet. Forty-four percent of the middle school and high school students were invited to attend, along with their teachers, parents and siblings.

To be invited, middle school students must earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher in each quarter. High school banquet invitees must earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for the first semester.

“This special evening gives our school community a chance to celebrate high academic achievement,” says Dawn Thompson, registrar. “We are proud to honor them in this way.”

PHOTO BY AMBER MAYER



Eloise Tran, Cameron Mayer and Angie Rosa proudly display their certificates and medals.

Current, Former Students Return to Reconnect

Spencerville Adventist Academy welcomed back former students and graduates of SAA/Spencerville Junior Academy to its recent alumni celebration. Since SAA added a 12th grade in 1999, there have been 399 high school graduates.

Brad Durby, former vice principal, was the featured speaker for Friday night vespers and the Sabbath church service. For the divine service, an alumni bell choir performed, and alumni joined SAA’s choir and orchestra to provide beautiful music that ministered to the congregation. “What a blessing that was,” said Durby. “Sometimes we take for granted the talents that this school and church have. I am so grateful to be a part of this!”

Following church, SAA hosted an alumni lunch at the school. In the evening, alumni and current students enjoyed playing volleyball and basketball.



PHOTO BY TOM WETMORE

Alumni and students bless the congregation with their musical talents during alumni Sabbath.

Adventist Children’s Choir Wins Competition

The Adventist Children’s Chorus (ACC) recently took first place in their category at the Music Festival Competition at Hershey Park (Pa.). This is the third, first-place win for the group, which was formed in 2010.

One of the judges commented that when ACC began singing Mendelssohn’s “Lift Thine Eyes to the Mountains,” he was both motionless and moved by their angelic tone.

“The sole purpose for their singing is to sing to the glory of God,” says director Jane Lanning.

The ACC is comprised of 78 students, most of whom attend Spencerville Adventist Academy, along with home-schooled children aged 9-14.



PHOTO BY BEATE RICHLI

Jane Lanning (center), choir director, joins students Aleannies Salinas, Karissa Smith, Megan Eisele and Alessia Richli with their first-place trophy.

SHENANDOAH VALLEY ACADEMY

HAPPENINGS



JULY 2014

www.shenandoahvalleyacademy.org

Alumnus Returns to Campus as Principal

Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA) has seen its changes during the past two years. Students who have walked its halls for one, two, three and four years have graduated and moved on to begin the next exciting chapter of their lives. Others have begun their newest journey as high school students, navigating through late nights of studying, building lifelong friendships, honing skills that will prepare them for adult life and, most importantly, allowing themselves to be molded by Christ into vessels for His service.

There have even been school-wide improvements such as a 1-to-1 computer initiative; new programs to increase academic performance, such as Princeton Review training; dedicated career and college guidance counseling; increased spiritual and character-building programming in the dorms; and a professional student counseling program slated to begin this fall.

However, there is one change that is bittersweet. Principal Travis Johnson, who has been an instrumental piece to the positive changes the academy has seen, accepted a call to serve as principal at Hawaii Mission Academy in Honolulu.

“During these two years as principal, there have been so many inspiring God-moments, and I have been incredibly blessed to serve here at SVA,” said Johnson. “It has been a pleasure to work with the amazing students and staff at SVA.”

God has seen fit to now place at SVA’s helm John Wagner (pictured), former president of Union College (Neb.) and SVA alumnus from the Class of 1957. Wagner will continue to drive the school’s dedication to excellence. Wagner has served in some capacity at more than five institutions, and overseen 26 schools as superintendent for the Rocky Mountain Conference.

“I am excited to once again be part of this very special institution, initially as an alum and now as principal,” says Wagner. “Like those who led before me, I am dedicated to enriching the lives of our students as the leaders of tomorrow.”



Seniors Celebrate Completion, Juniors Take the Torch

During graduation weekend, the 53 members of the Class of 2014 (pictured) walked the campus for the last time as SVA seniors. After receiving their diplomas, awards and scholarships, they cheered as staff introduced the junior students as the senior Class of 2015.

“We, as individuals and as a class, are destined for greatness,” said Austin Plank, junior class president. “This coming school year will be another step in achieving that greatness. And, our class looks forward to taking that step together.”



Graduates Beat Scholarship Record

The recent accomplishments of Takoma Academy's (TA) Class of 2014 added to an already impressive year of achievements for the school. The graduating class made history by receiving \$3,381,340 in scholarship offers—more than any class in the history of the school. In addition, 85 percent of the 52 graduates completed early admissions to 200 colleges and universities.

The graduates got a boost of encouragement from their graduation speakers, Barry Black, U.S. Senate Chaplain, and David Daniels, former TA principal. On Sabbath, Black delivered a sermon titled “Simply the Best” where he encouraged students to always prepare themselves to be excellent in whatever they chose to do.

In the Commencement address, Daniels, now the head of the boarding and day school program for the Commonweal Foundation, told the seniors that no one can take away the promise God has for them as long as they wait patiently on Him and stay faithful.

The seniors' record scholarships culminated a year of accomplishments for TA including:

1. SAT scores higher than the national average



PHOTO BY RICHARD GORDON

2. The Camerata choir winning the I-Sing Choral Competition
4. The boys varsity, girls varsity and girls freshmen basketball teams winning first-place titles at the 19th annual Southwestern University Hoops Classic
5. The boys soccer team winning the first Maryland Independent School Athletic League Championship title
6. The girls varsity basketball team winning the Maryland Independent School Athletic League Girls Championship title.

Parents Wrap School in Prayer

For the past three years, Takoma Academy has been blessed with parent prayer warriors. Every Monday morning of the school year, a faithful trio, who call



Yvette Weir Gladstone and Carol Cogen meet for a Parents in Prayer session.

themselves PIP (Parents in Prayer), gather to petition the throne of grace on behalf of students and staff.

PIP is the brainchild of parent Yvette Weir Gladstone, who proposed starting the group when her child enrolled at TA. PIP has been a regular fixture since 2011. Gladstone is normally joined by fellow parent Carol Cogen, an original PIP member, and another parent via speakerphone.

“[Cogen] has a similar heart and burden for the kids and we’ve become close friends,” says Gladstone.

Although both ladies regularly have to rush off to work after their PIP sessions, neither have missed a Monday meeting. Gladstone runs a dental practice in Riverdale and Cogen works at nearby Washington Adventist University.

“Let the circle remain unbroken,” shares Gladstone enthusiastically. Her broader desire is that PIP will live on beyond her tenure and that prayer and the Holy Spirit will always encircle the students and school.

Partnering for Fruitfulness

Over the past three decades, interest on the part of external stakeholders in the actual academic performance of colleges and universities has steadily risen. The current literature has consistently identified three primary reasons for the growing interest: (1) the rising call for accountability, (2) increased competition in the higher education marketplace and (3) a shift toward evidence-based management.

At Washington Adventist University (WAU), we are building a sustainable institution by continuously evaluating current patterns of enrollment, retention and completion; assessment results; and job or graduate school placement data. The outcomes of such evaluations can reveal whether the institution's current academic program offerings are optimal. This is the new reality in higher education. Increasingly, the traditional concept of students completing an identified number of courses and credit hours is now shifting toward an approach that focuses on evidence of student performance, and what students actually know and can do with what they have learned.

Excellence is what we strive for at WAU. One of the texts that guides us as we work toward excellence comes from John 15:1-4, where Jesus says, "I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. He takes away every branch that does not bear fruit in Me" (NET). We must be more than faithful; we must be fruitful. Jesus gives only one condition to all this: we must obey God. We are to remain in Him, receive from Him and produce for Him.

This is Washington Adventist University!



Weymouth Spence
President

Students Receive Regional Awards for Community Service

The Sullivan awards were recently presented for the first time to two WAU students in recognition of their demonstrated passion for community service. WAU is

the first college or university in the state of Maryland to be approved by the Algernon Sydney Foundation to present the awards.

Since 1890 the highly prized Sullivan awards have been presented on the campuses of colleges and universities across the American south. These institutions all reflect the interest of prominent lawyer, businessman and philanthropist Algernon Sydney Sullivan and his wife, Mary Mildred Sullivan, to educate and honor deserving students. The awards are named for the Sullivans to honor their lives of service. Award recipients receive bronze medallions, each accompanied by a framed certificate and a biography of either Sullivan.

Nikole Donovan, an undergraduate who is majoring in social work, received the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award. Louise Griffin, a student in the School of Graduate and Professional Studies who is earning her master's degree in healthcare administration, received the Mary Mildred Sullivan Award.

"The WAU community is excited to pause and recognize outstanding members of our community," said Ralph Johnson, PhD, dean of WAU's Betty Howard Center for Student Success.

PHOTO BY RANDOLPH ROBIN



Award Presentation: *Stephan L. McDavid, Esq., president of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Foundation; Nikole Donovan, student winner; and Weymouth Spence, WAU president*

359 Students Graduate With Big Plans

Recent Washington Adventist University graduate Oksana Skrypkar already has a new job lined up in Moscow as a project developer for ADRA. A native of Kiev, Ukraine, she came to the United States in pursuit of an education and was attracted to WAU's music program and the school's proximity to Washington, D.C. She stayed seven years, first earning a bachelor's degree in music with a minor in international relations, and then earning a master's degree in public administration.

Skrypkar, who dreams of one day working at the United Nations, is one of the 359 students to whom WAU recently awarded degrees. Of those graduates, a total of 106 received master's degrees at the Commencement ceremonies. They include 23 degrees in counseling psychology, 20 in healthcare administration, 17 in nursing education, 15 in business administration, 12 in professional counseling psychology, nine in nursing and business leadership, eight in public administration and two in religion.

Skrypkar isn't the only new graduate with big plans. Shawn Fordham, who received a master's degree in public administration, is a federal worker. He looks forward to using his new knowledge and skills as he continues his public service pursuits and supports the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He comes from a long line of Adventist ministers and teachers and plans to apply to law school in 2015.

Samr Binsaif, who earned a master's degree in counseling psychology, will return to her native Saudi Arabia to counsel women who, she says, are more comfortable confiding in other women from her culture. She notes that

the new generation in Saudi Arabia recognizes the need for counseling and mental health services, and she is looking forward to helping with those needs.

Timothy Hatfield, a Prince George's County police lieutenant, received his bachelor's degree in organizational management. He plans to remain in public service, with a goal of possibly becoming a federal prosecutor. He has already been accepted into the fall class at George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C.

New and transfer students who are interested in following these graduates through the "Gateway to Service" on the WAU campus are encouraged to sign up for one of the early enrollment registration events. The next one is scheduled for July 17. To sign up, or to view a photo gallery of the recent graduation events, visit wau.edu.



Pinning Ceremonies Reflect Graduates' Professional Readiness

WAU recently held pinning ceremonies for 53 nursing students and nine respiratory care students. The ceremonies traditionally recognize students that are prepared to embark on their professional careers. Each student is presented with a customized lapel pin that signifies that the wearer is educated, trained and experienced in their field.

Khadene Taffe, a member of the nursing faculty, pins Soon Imsong, RN-BSN.



A Founders Journey

Midway through my administrative residency at Florida Hospital, I sent my resume to George Nelson, who was overseeing construction of a new hospital in Kettering, Ohio. Mr. Nelson invited me to come right away for an interview. After a one hour meeting, Mr. Nelson indicated he had a position for me, but first he wanted us to go on a tour. We drove to the construction site in pouring rain and gingerly stepped through the mud into a partially constructed building with walls, but no roof or windows.

We toured all the floors, including the basement where the future auditorium was filled with water from several days of torrential rain. Through the tour, Mr. Nelson proudly explained everything from the pneumatic tube system to the three pipe water system for patient rooms. After a full day of activities, Mr. Nelson finally explained the position he envisioned for me—director of patient business. This entailed admitting, patient billing and collections, the switchboard and information desk...and other duties as assigned.

As Employee #29, I reported for work on September 3, 1963 and began a 31-year career at Kettering Medical Center that ultimately led to the position of president. I was fortunate to have George Nelson and Marlowe Schaffner as mentors. Both were giants in the areas of leadership and finance, and their ability to evaluate and develop talent was extraordinary. Above all, they were men of faith who trusted God and cared deeply about employees at every level of the organization.

My years at Kettering Medical Center brought opportunities, challenges, and rewards. A personal reward came from watching many individuals launch their careers at Kettering Medical Center and remain to reach their full potential, including Roy Chew, current president.

Crystal and I were blessed to be part of the Kettering community for many years. We fondly remember the Kettering Adventist Church, where we were among the first to sign the roster when the church organized. Our sons grew up in Kettering, graduating from Spring Valley Academy. It gives me great pleasure to know that Kettering Medical Center continues to flourish and the legacy of the founders lives on.

Robert and Crystal Willett live in The Villages, Florida and are members of the Forrest Lake Seventh-day Adventist Church in Orlando.



Robert L. Willett
Kettering Medical Center
President 1979-1993

"My years at Kettering Medical Center brought opportunities, challenges, and rewards."



your healing MINISTRY

A Vision of Growth

By Christina Keresoma

1979-1993

Charles F. Kettering once said "High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation," and Robert Willett couldn't have agreed more. As president of Kettering Medical Center, Willett was ready to continue expanding the hospitals reach in the community. Willett knew he needed to expand outpatient services and bring in state-of-the-art technology to the hospital.

Some of the services included a Sleep Disorder Center, Center for Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, and Kettering Breast Evaluation Center (KBEC) to help cater to the surrounding area. In addition, an outpatient retail

pharmacy, The Apothecary, was opened in the hospital, adding convenience to patients needing to pick up a prescription before heading home from their hospital visit.

Sycamore Glen Retirement Community opened up a high rise of 135 apartments for an assisted living complex that allowed for a wider range of retirement living options. This enabled the elderly with a place that allowed freedom, but assistance with everyday routines that might be challenging for them.



1979

1981

1983

1985



Kettering Breast Evaluation Center team



Apothecary pharmacist filling orders





The medical director at Kettering Medical Center, Dr. Joseph Mantil, vigorously worked with Wright State University School of Medicine in a joint venture to bring the area's first Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Center to Kettering Medical Center. The MRI machine provided physicians with a unique view into the interior of the human body and has become an essential tool of modern medical imaging and disease diagnosis.

The first Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scanner in the Dayton area was brought to Kettering Medical Center, helping doctors see how the organs and tissues inside the body actually functioned. State-of-the-art

technology was, and has been, an important part of Kettering Medical Center's growth. Throughout the years God has guided the leaders, giving them knowledge to help grow and build an organization that heals and witnesses to the community it serves.

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” – Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NIV)

1987 1989 1991 1993

1987



Sycamore Glen resident

1989



1991



Dr. Joseph Mantil reading MRI scans

1993



Patient getting PET scan



From left: Dr. Mantil, Mr. Willett, Mrs. Virginia Kettering, and Mr. Goronzy at P.E.T. Groundbreaking

NEWS



JULY 2014

Improving the Quality of Life by Land and Air

Kettering Adventist HealthCare is now partnering with MedFlight for medical helicopter transportation services.



MedFlight provides routine transportation of patients between Kettering Adventist HealthCare hospitals and other hospitals as necessary. It also responds to accident scenes and transports patients to the most appropriate hospital for critical care. In the event of serious injuries, patients can be transported to one of the three network hospitals that are verified as trauma centers, including Kettering Medical Center (Level II), and Greene Memorial Hospital and Soin Medical Center (Level III).

"MedFlight is a first-class aeromedical services provider with an extensive record of safety and outstanding care delivery," says Douglas Paul, DO, trauma medical director for Kettering Adventist HealthCare. "This affiliation with MedFlight provides our patients and the community with the finest care available anywhere in the country."

New Home for EMS Squads

The Southview Medical Center emergency department celebrated the opening of an expanded emergency medical services (EMS) squad room featuring computer work stations, office space, private bathroom, shower, storage, and



lounge area with a 42 inch TV. The new squad room increased in size from approximately 128 to 684 square feet. "We now have space for multiple squads to simultaneously be present, without impacting their ability to perform their work," says Russ Wetherell, administrator for Southview Medical Center.

Soin Responding to Growth in Emergency Volume

Soin is expanding its emergency facilities a few years sooner than anticipated because of increased patient volume. "Our ED has more than doubled its monthly volume since the first month it opened in February 2012," says Matt Freyhof, MD, medical director of Soin's emergency department. "The rapid rise in our patient volume attests to the quality care that we are providing to Greene County's population. We provide comprehensive emergency services, including Level III trauma care."



Soin's emergency addition will be about 22,000 square feet. The expansion will add 12 exam rooms, one nurse's station, and supply areas. The emergency department is doubling in size to help serve even more of our neighbors in Beavercreek, Fairborn, and surrounding areas.

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EMPLOYMENT

ADVENTIST PASTOR needed to help grow an outreach-driven church plant in the Silver Spring, Md., area. Stipend provided. Guest pastor/speakers are also invited. For more details, email astoron99@yahoo.com.

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES, located in Orlando, Fla., is seeking full-time faculty members for its developing Doctor of Physical Therapy program. The ideal candidate will have an advanced level doctorate or a DPT with clinical specialty certification; contemporary expertise in assigned teaching areas; effective teaching and student evaluation skills; a well-defined, ongoing scholarly agenda; a record of professional and community service and eligibility for PT licensure in Florida. For more information, email scott.bennie@adu.edu or visit our website at adu.edu/pt.

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ATLANTIC UNION COLLEGE: Job posting for president. Atlantic Union College is seeking candidates for the position of president. The detailed posting is available on the college's website, auc.edu. Send nominations and résumés to the email address of the administrative secretary for Dr. Donald King, chairman of the Search Committee, at pwillemott@atlanticunion.org.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Lumberton; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

MARSHALL, Walter Armstrong, born May 25, 1929, in Nashua, N.H.; died June 17, 2012, in Purvis, Miss. He was a member of the Bass Memorial church in Lumberton, Miss. He accepted the Adventist message in 1956 and entered the ministry in 1964, pastoring in the Georgia-Cumberland, Gulf States and New Jersey conferences. He also worked in the Wills & Trusts Department in both the New Jersey and Ohio conference offices. He was survived by his wife, Mildred Inez, of Purvis, Miss., who is now deceased (see her obituary posted above); his daughter, Linda Small of Indiana, Pa.; his son, Glenn Marshall of Lumberton; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

PERRY, Pearl R., born April 9, 1917, in Webster, Mass.; died March 7, 2014, in Indiana, Pa. She was a member of the Indiana church. She is survived by her son, David R. Perry of Enumclaw, Wash.; her daughter, Linda Murphy of North Attleboro, Mass.; her grandsons, David Perry, Jr., of Brookville, Ohio, and Kristen O'Brian; and granddaughters: Kristina Elliot of Germany, Melissa Shirley of Clymer, Pa., and Heath Murphy.

WATTS, Peter M., born June 2, 1938, in Brooklyn, N.Y.; died March 21, 2014, in Richmond, Va. He was a member of the Petersburg (Va.) church. Pete was a minister in the Potomac Conference for 20 years. He served the Powell Valley, Meadowbridge, Roanoke and Williamsburg churches, and Petersburg district. He was the beloved "Professor Potts" at Potomac Conference camp meeting. He became a pastor after leaving a successful career as founder and CEO of his own hotel company. He built and operated the Quality Inn in New Market, Va., and Johnny Appleseed Restaurant. He is survived by his wife, Dianne Knight Watts of Petersburg; his daughters: Julie Rodgers of High Point, N.C., Della Taylor of Climax, N.C., Laura Watts of Petersburg, and Kelly Rebbin of Sedro Woolley, Wash.; his son, Benjamin Watts of Shanghai, China; five grandchildren; and a brother and sister in Brooklyn, N.Y.

CORRECTION

In the May 2014 feature "After the Earthquake," it was stated that others helped raise funds for the purchase of Restore a Child Academie in Bois Pin, Haiti. In fact, Restore a Child raised the funds alone.

Sunset Calendar

	Jul 4	Jul 11	Jul 18	Jul 25	Aug 1
Baltimore	8:37	8:35	8:31	8:26	8:20
Cincinnati	9:08	9:06	9:02	8:57	8:51
Cleveland	9:04	9:02	8:58	8:52	8:45
Columbus	9:04	9:02	8:59	8:53	8:47
Jersey City	8:31	8:29	8:25	8:20	8:13
Norfolk	8:28	8:26	8:23	8:19	8:13
Parkersburg	8:56	8:54	8:51	8:46	8:39
Philadelphia	8:33	8:31	8:27	8:22	8:15
Pittsburgh	8:54	8:52	8:48	8:42	8:36
Reading	8:37	8:35	8:31	8:26	8:19
Richmond	8:35	8:33	8:30	8:25	8:19
Roanoke	8:44	8:42	8:39	8:34	8:28
Toledo	9:12	9:10	9:06	9:00	8:53
Trenton	8:32	8:30	8:26	8:21	8:14
Wash., D.C.	8:37	8:35	8:32	8:27	8:20

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OBITUARIES

MARSHALL, Mildred Inez, born December 3, 1933, in Maultrie, Ga.; died March 30, 2014, in Lumberton, Miss. She was a member of the Bass Memorial church in Lumberton. She accepted the Adventist message in 1956 and served with her husband in his ministry. She also served as a secretary in both the New Jersey and Ohio conference offices and a nurse in the states of Mississippi and Alabama. She is survived by her daughter, Linda Small of Indiana, Pa.; her son, Glenn Marshall of

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August 2	Larry Evans
August 9	Mark Sigue
August 16	Terry Johnsson
August 23	Chuck Scriven
August 30	Heather Quintana
September 6	Al Reece
September 13	Bonita Shields
September 20	Nathan Krause
September 27	Steve Chavez

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*For further information on speakers and contact information, please visit our Web page at sligochurch.org/sligothesea

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