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because every senior is looking forward to the coming Commencement Weekend, it is important just now to make certain that their house is in order. If they plan to graduate, they need to be assured that they are enrolled for everything necessary for them to march at the end of May. If they should have any questions regarding whether they are meeting the requirements necessary for the diploma they are working toward, they need to see either Mr. White or Mrs. Butler for confirmation. Believe me, we want them to graduate just as much as they wish to graduate.

On Sunday the 26th of December, just one day after Christmas, a group of 35 Andrews Academy students and 12 adults went to build a church in LaBarra in the state of Chiapas, Mexico. Prior to their departure, they assembled in the RTO chapel at the academy to pray with their parents and loved ones before their journey. Mrs. Sari Butler, director of SOW Safari, challenged the students to take up their arms and fight the good fight. She gave each of the students a journal and asked them to record some meaningful experience each day that they were on the trip. As a conclusion to her presentation, we sang together the song “The Battle Belongs to the Lord.”

LaBarra is about 12 miles from the Pacific Ocean and about 50 miles from Guatemala. It is said to be a very beautiful place in a location that approaches jungle-like conditions. Online sources suggest that “It is agreed upon by many Mexicans that Chiapas has the best weather conditions in all of Mexico. This is probably due to the high elevation, which diminishes some of the overwhelming heat that is present in the lower tropical regions. The jungle comes to life during the rainy season, many flowers bloom and leaves expand to catch the precipitation.” They have a variety of birds and temperatures near 70 degrees year around.

In the limited amount of communication that we have been able to receive from them, it seems as though the project is going along on schedule and that they hope to complete their work on Tuesday, the 4th of January. The SOW Safari participants were scheduled to return on Sunday the 9th, but because of some cancelled flights after travel arrangements were completed, it was decided that the group should return on Friday. So, in theory, this will get them into O’Hare in time that they should arrive back in Berrien Springs about sundown, just in time to rest and have a blessed Sabbath worship experience. When these trips occur, there is always the potential that lives of those that we visited in the mission field have changed along with the lives of students and adults participating on the trip. According to the information published on the back of the Adult Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly for the fall quarter 2010, there is a ratio of 1 SDA member to 32.5 people in the district served by the Upper Chiapas Mission. This is a very new territory having been organized in 2005.

During the fall semester, we had both flagball and volleyball intramurals. The flagball intramurals occurred first and the winners were published earlier this school year in the AAWeekly. During the final days of the semester, there was a best of five-game conclusion to the volleyball intramurals. At that time there were two teams that were set up to compete against each other. Those teams were formed from the highest scoring players during the season. The members of the winning team were Drake Dowell, Eric Bates, Knut Lovhoiden, Andrew Simpson, Won Ho Lee, and Ray Ulrich. The winning team won the first game, lost the second game and won the next two games. All of the games were tightly fought with each of them having fairly even scores. Members of the second greatest volleyball team of the first semester were Jared Clayburn, David Regal, Ashley Reichert, Brenden Mutz, Brandon von Dorpowski, and David Church. Our congratulations goes to all who participated in the intramural season and in particular to those who had the privilege of playing in the final series.

There are five topics that are referenced in the information below. They are (1) Encourage your teen to think about consequences of decisions; (2) Screen Time; (3) Substance Abuse; (4) Respect; and (5) Spending time together. The information referenced here comes from Parents Still Make the Difference. In (1) it is suggested that you can role play a situation that you dream up or that you might have seen in the news. Then it is up to the parent to ask the teen how that could have turned out differently or what would you have done in place of how it was demonstrated. Another method useful in making decisions is to map it. Divide the paper into two parts and on one side indicate the likely outcomes if you do the activity and on the other side indicate the outcome if you do not do the activity. Remember though some of the biggest value in these methods is the fact that as a parent you are spending valuable time with the child.
In (2) the facts are that limited time is spent with parents or teachers or even with friends. According to research done in December 2008 there were 45 hours per week on the average that was spent on the screen—either computer or television or both. Only 17 hours were spent with parents and 30 hours were spent in school. There was a direct correlation between screen time and childhood obesity, smoking, early sexual behavior, drinking, drug use and poor school performance. And this ties into (3) because as parents we must understand our God-given responsibility to speak to our child about drinking and drugs. We must tell our children explicitly that drug use is not acceptable and neither is drinking. They need to know that we will never condone them. Do not expect your child to experiment with these things because one time of experimentation for some people will hook them for life. And finally do not approve of “friends” who drink or use drugs.

Respect is so important because if you can gain their respect, their behavior may change radically as well. So some things that you can do is to brag on your husband or wife in front of your kids. Let them know that you are in love. Be careful about your phone manners. Remember others are listening to what you are saying and they may have just a little bit different take on it than you do. Also remember to choose your battles carefully. If you think that your spouse is unfair, talk to him/her in private by listening first and talking last. Psalm 141:3 says, “Set a guard over my mouth Oh Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.” Finally, spend time together. That is why at least one meal a day where you are not interruptible by phone, TV, or other distractions is so important. You can use that time to debrief and tell what happened during the previous 24 hours or less. You can enjoy the company of each other and bond together. In fact, having family meals together makes a huge difference. According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, “kids who eat dinner with their families five or more nights a week were less likely to try cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana. They’re also twice as likely to get all A’s”.

On Wednesday, the 29th of December, a large truck hauling 8,000 pounds of material pulled up to the front entrance of the school and came to the closed campus to unload about 3,200 square feet of padded flooring for the mezzanine in the gymnasium. The flooring is black with red speckles throughout and comes in 4’ X 4’ interlocking sheets on four pallets. Each of those pallets will be moved from the auto tech lab to the gymnasium where they will be carried up to the mezzanine for distribution. It has been a dream of ours to floor that area of the school in a manner that would be suitable for body building. At last that dream has been fulfilled—well not quite—the flooring still needs to be carefully laid. There will be a couple of weeks set aside at the beginning of this second semester while the equipment is being moved and the flooring is being laid. A special thank you goes to Phil and Lynn Brantley for the major role that they played in making this possible.

Santa Claus also delivered a brand new mattress for the cot in the sick room over the holidays. It has already duly replaced the 30-year old mattress and should provide additional comfort to those having special needs during the regular school day. Students, please don’t feign sick just to find out how it feels!

Not to be outdone, Mr. Baker has been asking Santa Claus for a new white marker board for several years now. I am not sure if Mr. Baker was especially nice this year, but it seems that his wish has now come true. The board arrived on Monday, the 3rd of January and will be set in place as soon as possible. So, Mr. Baker, get prepared for this—you will no longer have to deal with chalk dust. You will change your tools of writing to the dry erase marker after all of these chalk filled days with dusty clothes. Congratulations, Mr. Baker!!

The Student Association Talent Nite is set for Sunday, the 13th of February. We want to encourage your sons/daughters to participate in that event by auditioning for it during the middle of January. Auditions are set for Tuesday, January 11 and Thursday, January 13 from 3:30 to 5:30 in the afternoon. They need to contact one of the SA officers to set up a time for auditioning. I want to plead with you (parents and students) to find talent that correlates with the principles of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Talent Nite screening committee has been asked to closely look at that concept as they are selecting the talent to be presented at the program this year. Please avoid raps, music that is “lovesick,” rock and roll bands, and things that go hand in hand with night club scenes. Remember, we are here to promote the gospel of salvation to the world. We want to have a fun and enjoyable evening in a manner that will elevate our principles. Thank you so much for planning your talent accordingly and for planning to attend our Talent Nite.

“In matters of principle, stand like a rock; in matters of taste, swim with the current.” Thomas Jefferson

☆ On Friday, the 7th of January we will have our monthly class meeting time with devotions.

☆ The assembly for next week will take place on Thursday, January 13 rather than Tuesday because it is the International Appreciation Week. At that assembly time we will feature the International Food Festival when students will be encouraged to bring a favorite dish from their cultural background. Classes will be adjusted on day so as to accommodate the festival in the hour leading up to regular hot lunch.

☆ Those with a desire to participate in the Bible Camp experience this year must submit an application with the $100 payment prior to 12:00 pm on Friday, the 14th of January. No applications will be accepted after that time.