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I. Season's Greetings
   1. Ed and Jan Higgins <ins@andrews.edu> 12/12/2012
   Dear Family & Friends around the World,
   It is time to say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year again. Seems we just told you that and here we are again. As Yogi Berra says, "De je Vous 'all over again' ", but we enjoy doing it anyway and meaning it. Thanks to all of you who already have sent newsy notes about your recent history; we always enjoy these also; so keep them coming.
   Well, I think it was about 20 years ago that we declared in our Christmas letter "The year of the Grandchildren". And we ended up counting
   9 of those little critters, and this year we are declaring it "The Year of the Great grandchildren"; and believe it or not we presently count 9 of those little critters. Note that this is of the present count; the gates are only temporarily closed but I am certain there could be another 9 before the flood gates close forever. Will we parents get to see some of the great-great grandchildren? Without question they will be smart, good looking, clever, but not likely millionaires. That's O.K; they are often difficult to live with anyway.
   Travel has not been a big item on our schedule this year; we substituted stay at home activities instead, you know the "honey-do" type of activities that sometimes can try the soul. Now I am talking about "big" activities that can consume about 6 months of time and lots of nervous energy as well.
   First was completely remodeling the master bathroom, replete with beautiful tile the Mrs. selected and granite countertops and shower stall seat. Did I say nervous energy" Roadblocks?" Just when it seemed everything was coordinated those famous words appeared: discontinued style, out of stock, trim not available, etc. Six months not quite enough time, but now it is being enjoyed. Did we have to try to do it ourselves? Second biggee was the kitchen with similar accoutrements. Time? About the same and now that is almost done, but being enjoyed anyway. What this all means is that we are anxious for you, our family and friends, to come visit us; this makes all the nervous energy rewarded.
   We were favored this past Andrews Alumni Homecoming with long-time schoolmates-Bob and Thelma Knutson (her 60th), Clayton and Alice Breakie, Mylas Martin. They helped us inaugurate the new kitchen. Andrews is a greet place to visit, and don’t worry about the number, if you don’t mind sleeping on the floor. Some Indonesian friends called and asked to stay a couple of nights with some of their family, which turned out to be a total of 13, including a couple of children. They cooked their own rice, which Jan and I enjoyed eating, and made themselves at home. So you see the number is not a hindrance, the door is open. We are looking forward to Alumni Weekend 2013, the 60th for us "1953-ers". Some rooms are already spoken for, but not all.
   In retrospect 2012 has been a year of God's precious blessings. We oldies are doing pretty well for oldies, of course bolstered with pills galore, ointments, stents, CPAP machine, etc. We look forward to 2013 to again be filled with God's blessings on His part, and lives committed to His service on our part. Have a wonderfully Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

2. Edwin & Connie Reynolds <reynolds@southern.edu>
Dear Family and Friends,
Another year has passed before we know it. It's time already to summarize our year once again and pass along our annual greetings to those we love but seem to have insufficient time to maintain regular correspondence with. We hope your year has been a blessing. . .

Connie switched from teaching fourth grade to teaching fifth- and sixth-grade boys this year at the Ooltewah Adventist Kindergarten and School (OAKS). She is finding it more challenging to work with the older children than it was with the younger children.

In January Edwin took on the role of Graduate Program Coordinator for the School of Religion at Southern Adventist University, along with his teaching. It had been a half-time job for the previous coordinator but it was given to Edwin as a quarter-time job. It still took up half time, but they didn't want to cut his teaching to half time, so they kept him teaching at three-quarters time. It has been a busy year.

During the summer, Connie and Edwin took niece Ann Reynolds, who also teaches at Southern, and went to Oklahoma to visit David, Tiffany, and Emily. We enjoyed a few days with them before we had to leave. Ann flew to Hawaii to work at a camp for the summer, and Edwin flew to Israel to attend a couple of conferences and do a tour of Israel and Jordan, while Connie drove back to Oklahoma to spend more time with Emily and family. After returning from Israel, Edwin had to teach a summer graduate intensive class.

Then Edwin and Connie drove up to Maryland for a brief stay with Beth and Jeremy.

In August, Edwin was assigned the position of interim dean for the School of Religion while the dean went on sabbatical. That was a half-time position, so he taught quarter time and continued with the graduate program for another "quarter time." It was a very busy semester. To top it off, he was assigned by the university in September to coordinate the accreditation by the Adventist Accrediting Association, which was to be completed by the end of October. After objecting to the sudden dumping of the whole thing on him at short notice, on top of everything else, he was permitted to manage only the School of Religion section, which was the largest section of the accreditation, and be responsible, with a team of three others, for editing the whole accreditation document. Things were really hectic for awhile. On top of everything else, Edwin had a contract to write a commentary on 2 Thessalonians before the end of December for the Andrews Bible Commentary, which is under development by Andrews University Press. And he has another commentary due next summer on the Johannine Epistles for the new SDA International Bible Commentary.

In October Edwin received a phone call inquiring if we would be willing to consider a call for him to serve as dean of the Theological Seminary of the Adventist University of Africa (AUA) in Kenya. AUA is a graduate institution, like AIIAS, operated by the General Conference of SDAs to train leaders for the three African divisions. We initially declined, but after some consultation with our children and prayer, we decided that we should not close the door entirely but try to be open to God's leading and see how things would go. A few days ago we received notice that the call had been officially voted for us to go to AUA. We have not been eager to leave our present situation, since we are happy and comfortable where we are, but we have decided to accept what seems from all indications to be God's will for us at this time. It will mean some adaptations and transitions in our lives at a time when we were settling in nicely and preparing to enjoy our new status as grandparents. But God is able to help us find solutions to the problems we will face, especially with what to do with our home and things we can't take with us while we are away. Please keep us in your prayers as we make this transition. We will continue in Collegedale/ Ooltewah until the end of this school year, since we are under contract through the end of May.

By June, if things go as anticipated, we should be doing our pre-embarkation month, then going in July to Kenya.

Edwin's primary responsibility at AUA will be helping to establish doctoral programs (DMin and PhD) and build the faculty for the Theological Seminary. He will supervise the program at the extension campuses around Africa where the courses are taught, in addition to the on-campus programs.

Connie has been offered work there also, but doesn't yet know exactly what it will turn out to be. With Edwin doing a lot of travelling, she is hoping to get a job that will permit her to do some travelling with Edwin.

The new year will no doubt bring many new challenges and responsibilities, but we look forward to being able to see God's leading in our lives and how He enriches our experiences by His grace. We know that time is short, and it is not the time to be settling in for the "long haul."

We see the signs of the times all around us and hope to see the work soon finished so that we can go home.

May God's richest blessings be with each one of you during this holiday season and the coming new year, and may we soon meet together around the tree of life in the Paradise of God. Have a wonderful new year!

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II. Letters
1. Barbara S. Wyman <barbwy26@gmail.com> December 28
Thanks for the report of Bairs' travels in Burma. Very interesting. They surely do need our prayers......and the Angels of God to accompany them. It seems like the young missionaries these days are more brave and courageous than we were when we were over there working. We worked in and for the established missions, and didn't do so much "pioneer" mission work as I read of nowadays. On the other hand, we had our share of challenges to meet and live with too, so it was not a bed of roses either!! Then 5 yr. terms of service; ONLY postal mail and telegrams for communications; and various other things that don't compare to these days now.

I have been blessed with a wonderful FAMILY CHRISTMAS, here in Walla Walla area; 4 generations having fun together. Blessings now for the next year.....uncertain as it can be, but with Jesus we can go forward in HIM.

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2. Alice Cunningham Spindler <clever_bacon@hotmail.com> Dec.15:

I received a call from Eileen Moores this week that Martin had died. He had kidney failure and was not able to be placed on dialysis due to a heart condition. We served together in Singapore. And please tell Bob Grady that the sooner he gets that knee done, the better! It was the best thing I had in August.

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III. Life Sketch of Valerie Myers Tolhurst

Leonard P. Tolhurst lptlhrst@bigpond.net.au Jan. 3:

Valerie was born on 2nd. July 1927 in Invercargill, New Zealand. She was the elder daughter of David and Elizabeth (Cameron) Myers. She had an older brother Cameron, a younger sister Helen Hicks, and another younger sibling, Bruce who died in infancy.

She attended the Waikouaiti Primary School north of Dunedin and later the Papanui S.D.A. High School in Christchurch, where her father had taken up work in the S.H.F. factory. In 1945 she attended Longburn College for a short time, but left when she was accepted by the Sydney San for nursing training. She needed to earn some money for her boat fare to Australia and other expenses. She graduated from the R.N course in 1949.

From 1950 - 53 she then sought to broaden her nursing knowledge and experience by working in the Waikato Hospital, in New Zealand to secure her N.Z. registration, then did Maternity training in Christchurch. She then returned to the Waikato Hospital where she worked as a night supervisor for 16 months. It was at this time that she met Len Tolhurst who was to become her future husband. However Len was planning to travel to the United States for further study and that complicated their future plans. Val too was interested in further study, and so enrolled in the Truby King Hospital in Dunedin to get her third nursing certificate, this one in Plunket Nursing, a course known in Australia as Drucillian Nursing.

Despite being thousands of miles apart their romance flourished and Len proposed marriage by mail, and Val accepted. However there were still barriers to be overcome. Len had obtained permanent residence status in the U.S.A. but Val was unable to do the same, so she migrated to Canada and took up a nursing position in the Rest Haven Sanitarium and Hospital, at Sidney on Vancouver Island. There on June 8, 1954 they were married. They spent their honey-moon on the shores of Lake Kalamalka, in British Columbia. Upon returning to Vancouver Val took up nursing work while Len had to return to the United States, and for the next three or more months they officially lived in different countries. However Len was now able to apply to the U.S.A Immigration authorities for a special visa for Val to join him in the States. This took several months before it granted. During this time Len had to get back into school or run the risk of being called into the American army and perhaps being sent to Korea as the Korean War was then being waged. This meant that he had to cross the States to enroll in the Theological Seminary and leave Val in Vancouver. When her visa was granted she joined him in Washington, D.C. There Val again used her nursing skills while Len studied. Upon graduation they answered a call to mission service in India where they spent the next five and a half years. For two and a half years she was the school nurse at the Roorkee Boarding School in Northern India., and when Len was engaged in evangelistic work she used her music talents to help advance the programs in which he was involved.

During these years 1956 to 1961, three children were born to them: Ewan, Anne and Sharon.

Upon return to the States, she again worked as a nurse for a short time at a local County Hospital in the Out Patients Department.

The next five and a half years (1962 -1968) were spent in the North New Zealand Conference where she cared for the growing children. When Len was called to teach at Avondale College, (1969 - 1980) she took up work in the S.H.F. factory, mainly in the canteen, to help with family expenses and church school fees.
The next three years, (1981-83) were spent at Fulton College, Fiji, where she again worked in the College Dispensary, in the College Store, and in Dorcas work. When Len was called to Pacific Adventist College - now University, Val again helped out in the College dispensary over the next 12 years. (1983-1996). After Len’s retirement they spent two school years at the Hong Kong Adventist College.

Three highlights of her life which she enjoyed were firstly the tour through the Bible Lands including the climb up Mount Sinai, the visits into Mainland China while living in Hong Kong, and the tour around the world after retirement. She also drew great satisfaction for the successes her three children achieved.

Before I sit down there are some extra personal things that I would like to say, and in a way bare my soul to you.

As you can see by the dates in Val’s life sketch we were married for about 58 and a half years. She was 85 years old. As all family members know I am not that old. I had my birthday on December 13 and turned 82. My daughter Anne and I share the same date for our birthdays, and I have often said that she is the best birthday present that my wife ever gave me! When as a young man contemplating marriage I was impressed by Val’s maturity and her achievements. When I began to court her she was a night supervisor in the Waikato Hospital in Hamilton New Zealand. She shared that responsibility with another nurse, and when the other nurse had her two nights a week off, Val had the responsibility of the whole hospital and all of the 600 patients. I considered myself most fortunate to win such an accomplished girl to be my wife, and her beauty was for me a real bonus. Val never developed wrinkles until late in life, and I used to tell her and others that it was because of all the love that I gave her. Val, of course, reciprocated my love and just a few days ago she told me that she just ’lived for me’. Her love for her children was just as great. Many authors have written books on how to bring up children. However one of the best formulas I have heard for child rearing is for their father to ’Love their mother’. I certainly did that.

During her life, Val had far more than her share of health problems as many of you know. I have a mental list of five very serious health concerns that she faced, three of them were life threatening, including cancer which required no radiation or chemotherapy. Some of these conditions lasted for many years. She was truly a ’survivor’! When the children were young they could not understand the problems of Val’s ill-health. I want to thank them for their understanding as they grew older. Their help was and is, much appreciated.

Not every wife would be willing to shift around the world as we did in connection with my work. She did this willingly. We lived in at least 21 houses in seven countries.

In her spiritual life she was a real example to her family and to others. She loved Jesus, and of one thing that I am very sure - when He returns to gather His people she will rise with the others that have made a similar commitment, and we will again be reunited. It was her hope that all of us would be ready for that great day.

So Darling, Goodbye, till I see you again.

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IV. New Mission Plane Reaches Philippines

Wendy Guptill Harris writes on Facebook, December 21:

After 71 flight hours, Gary Roberts landed our new Twin Comanche in Davao.
Dwayne met him there and they flew it to Clark today (outside of Manila).
Praise God for His protection! May it be a blessing in its new mission field here in the Philippines.

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V. Burma Vignettes-- Early Missionaries # 13

Mervin Myat Kyaw <mervinmk@yahoo.com.au> and his wife Nan are Karen Adventists who worked many years in Burma and Thailand and now live and work in Australia. He has written a manuscript covering Adventism in Burma from its very beginning to the present and of his work in Thailand.

13. A. H. Williams (1913-16)

A. H. Williams was an English businessman. He arrived Yangon as a merchant. He was doing business along Than-Lwin (Salween) river, and so he knew much about Karen people. A. H. Williams was baptized by Pastor H. H. Votaw. He was located at the Kamamaung mission station with Pr. Hamilton in 1914. He served the Myanmar Mission for a while. In 1915, he was in charge of Meiktila School for a year, relieving Pr. Robert Bruce Thurber who in turn relieved Pr. Votaw as the superintendent of Myanmar Mission, on account of the latter’s failing health.

From 1916, for many years, he served the mission in India as treasurer in the office and also in administrative work. After many years he attended medical college and became a doctor. He served as the president of Stanborough Hospital.
in England. A. H. Williams later visited Myanmar once; we are proud of him for being one of the missionaries in Myanmar.

VI. Week of Prayer in Taipei--Prayer Journal 12/12
Terence Maddocks terence.maddocks@gmail.com

This year has been a busy one for me (Tim) with a quarter of it spent outside of the country, with motivational speaking appointments, teaching, meetings, holiday, etc. There have been many highlights, and numerous times the joy of seeing God at work, has brought tears to my eyes.

As I reflect back, there is one event that tops the list, and that was the Week of Prayer at the Taipei Adventist Preparatory School, a high school in Taipei, Taiwan. The majority of the students are from wealthy Buddhist families who are at the school with the goal of going to university in the USA. The dedicated team of Adventist expatriate staff are working hard to plant the love of Jesus in these young peoples hearts. I had the privilege of being invited to speak for their well organized week of prayer. The theme chosen for me was "Unafraid". The topics I covered included 'Unafraid to Die', 'Unafraid of Poverty', 'Unafraid of Evil Spirits', 'Unafraid to Listen to God', and 'Unafraid of Satan'. Through out the week I also spent time in the different classrooms answering the students questions about spiritual things. Friday afternoon I invited the young people to take a stand for Jesus and to God's glory, 25 non-Christsians accepted Christ as their savior and a further 18 requested Bible studies, together with more than 30 Christians who either made a commitment or recommitment to Christ. The staff at TAPA are now busy following up the fruit of their labors and preparing these young people for the next step, baptism. While in Taipei, I also presented week of prayer stories for the Taipei Adventist American School, an international primary school. The enthusiasm and love of the children and staff was another spiritual highlight.

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