Committee Studies North American Publishing Work

Two historic Adventist publishing houses in North America, Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Md., and Pacific Press Publishing Association in Nampa, Idaho, are an important focus of a world church committee formed to study issues of mission and efficiency. Dan Jackson (pictured here), North American Division president, says the committee will be looking at ways the NAD can strengthen the publishing operations of the church and encourage better efficiency. An additional part of the discussion will be looking at North America’s relationship with the world-church-owned publishing houses. Read more from the Adventist News Network HERE.

Add Your Comments to the Latest GLEANER Blogs

Mike Jones, former Insight editor, and Cheri Corder, Oregon Conference family ministries director, are the newest additions to the GLEANER online blog. This month, Mike tackles the absence of a regular devotional life for many Adventists, and Cheri asks the question: “What do you do when you can’t get along with the ‘saints’ in church?” Read their thoughts and add your comments at the GLEANER Blog HERE.

New Regulations for Church Nursery Cribs

New regulations from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission will impact nurseries operated by churches and schools. The sweeping new safety rules outlaw drop-side cribs and require stronger hardware and supports. Facilities must comply with these rules by the end of 2012. Read more HERE.

Are Adventists Still Conscientious Objectors?

Looking Ahead

April
21: June Ad/Article Deadline
21–24: WWU Homecoming Weekend
30: OAMC Concert
28-May 1: ASI Northwest Convention

May
8: Mother’s Day
19: July Ad/Article Deadline
22: Idaho Constituency Session
30: Memorial Day

June
14–18: Idaho Camp Meeting
15–18: Mont. Camp Meeting
15–18: UCC Camp Meeting
16: Aug. Ad/Article Deadline
16–25: Wash. Camp Meeting
19: UCC Constituency Session
19: Father’s Day

July
4: Independence Day
12–16: Ore. Gladstone Camp Meeting
14: Sept. Ad/Article Deadline

GLEANER Blogs
- Cheri Corder
- Cindy’s Garden Blog
- Let’s Talk
- Mike Jones
- Monthly Archival Photo
“The voice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, historically such an outspoken proponent of conscientious objection, has grown less clear and less certain on the issue over recent decades,” says Barry Bussey, Adventist Church United Nations liaison. "We've, by and large, preferred to look the other way or simply skirt around the edges of the issues. What should the church’s current stance be on this topic which has long held Desmond Doss’s World War II experience to be an iconic example?" Read the rest of Bussey’s thoughts HERE.

A First for Pasco Takoda Eagles

The Pasco (Wash.) Church was treated to the sight of Adventurer’s in the Pasco Takoda Eagles do a Grand March through the sanctuary with flags and smiles. They then wished the church a "Happy Sabbath" with a full salute. The theme for the day was "Adventurers and Their Church." Club members and leaders, along with parents, presented the church service from start to finish. Read more in the May issue of the GLEANER and on the Upper Columbia Conference website HERE.

New Church Plant Approved

The Washington Conference executive committee recently approved a new church plant in the Lynnwood, Wash., area. This church, which will be called Lynnwood Seventh-day Adventist Church, has group status. The church actually began a couple of years ago as an independent Sabbath-keeping church with Adventist roots. Through a process over the last six months, they have expressed a desire to become part of the larger church body and have met with conference leaders to process some issues. A pastor will be assigned at a future executive committee meeting.

Gigabytes Take the Win at LEGO Challenge

The Gigabytes from Stanwood, Wash., were named champions of the sixth-annual FIRST LEGO League Regional Robotics Challenge at Walla Walla University on Sunday, April 10. This year’s theme, “Body Forward,” focused on technology used to enhance health and improve quality of life. Students, ages 6–14, from Idaho, Montana and Washington, participated in the challenge. "It’s great that WWU is so involved in something like this," says Victor Shepherd, senior electrical engineering major. "Not only does it give kids the opportunity to have an understanding of what engineering is all about, but it’s also a great way to show them engineering isn’t boring." The Gigabytes are now invited to represent the region at the national event on May 8 at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tenn. To read more, see photos and obtain more information on next year’s challenge, click HERE.
Spam
Not spam
Forget previous vote
New committee continues review of Adventist publishing work in North America

Pacific Press, Review and Herald focus of study; denomination's world HQ buys property from R&H

15 Apr 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Arin Gencer

The Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to examine its publishing operations in North America, with a new committee meeting last month to study the issue.

Last month’s launch of a General Conference subcommittee comes nearly two years after another publishing commission examined the efficiency of the world church’s two historic publishing houses: the Nampa, Idaho-based Pacific Press Publishing Association and the Hagerstown, Maryland-based Review and Herald Publishing Association.

The subcommittee is part of the General Conference-North America Division Publishing Strategic Planning Committee -- led by General Conference President Ted N. C. Wilson and North American Division President Daniel R. Jackson, and formed late last summer at Wilson’s request.

"The group was essentially commissioned... to look at the publishing houses -- how they’re making it financially -- and then looking at ways and means whereby the North American Division could assist them," Jackson said. "There are major issues confronting both presses in terms of the future. ...How much can the North American Division do to strengthen and help them grow? I think probably a great deal."

Indeed, said Mark Thomas, Review and Herald’s president and a committee member, "if we work together, we can maximize our efficiencies. ...Since we have the same goals, we shouldn’t be working crossways with each other but in tandem."

The new committee represents an effort to do just that. It also seeks to include the associations in the North American region’s ongoing strategic planning process. The committee first met late last year and consists of General Conference and North American Division administrators, publishing professionals and other world church officers, Jackson said.

One of its subgroups, which convened in March, is specifically looking at the North American region’s relationship with the world-church-owned publishing houses. The group is expected to share its recommendations for facilitating that relationship at the committee’s next meeting, said Ken Denslow, Jackson’s assistant.

"I do believe that this latest committee -- one of the great strengths that it’s already bringing out -- is a positive renewal of thinking and planning in North America for more utilization of literature in the churches," said Pacific Press President Dale Galusha, who serves on the committee.

"This new spark and energy of more people talking about the role that literature plays in the life of the local church is very positive," he said.

Thomas had a similarly optimistic outlook.

"When this group is done, we think that they will be helping us move forward in a better way," he said. "This will allow us to maybe do some new marketing techniques, some newer ways to promote our products in more efficient ways to reach the world in today’s digital format."

Future of publishing

For the North American region, the discussion stems in part from a desire to involve lay church members more in literature ministry, without returning to "the publishing ministry of yesteryear," Jackson said.

Electronic publishing is also an area of interest for the future, he said.

"We’re wanting to intensify the connection with the work of the Gospel. ...We want to pursue that in collaboration with the press," he said. "We have wonderful materials and materials that could give people hope."

"From our perspective, that’s what it’s about. It’s not about, ‘Let’s go out and do a bunch of orders with the presses so that they can survive,’” Jackson said. "The press must be the servant of the mission. The mission must never be the servant of the press."

The publishing commission that preceded the new strategic planning committee reported its findings to the world church’s Executive Committee two years ago this month, during the 2009 Spring Meeting. At the time, the report indicated that the two houses faced several financial challenges, including a surplus printing capacity in North America and a declining door-to-door Literature Evangelism program in the United States.

The commission went on to highlight several issues for further study, including the cost of producing in-house versus the external printing market; the current marketing and distribution system, which primarily involves Adventist bookstores; and the question of how many publishing entities are needed in the life of the church, Jackson said. "This group was essentially commissioned... to look at the publishing houses -- how they’re making it financially -- and then looking at ways and means whereby the North American Division could assist them," Cooper said. "The press must be the servant of the mission. The mission must never be the servant of the press."

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The commission went on to highlight several issues for further study, including the cost of producing in-house versus the external printing market; the current marketing and distribution system, which primarily involves Adventist bookstores; and the question of how many publishing entities are needed in the life of the church, said Lowell Cooper, a General Conference vice president and Pacific Press board president. Cooper, who co-chaired the commission, is now a committee member.

Cooper said the issues the commission identified were passed on to the boards of both publishing houses.

In response, the Pacific Press board “has been dealing with certain aspects of the report at each board meeting,” Cooper said. The publishing house also invited Review and Herald to a joint meeting. Review and Herald has not officially responded to the invitation.

Although that invitation was issued two years ago, Thomas said, before he became president in June 2010, leadership from both organizations already meet annually -- most recently in February -- to discuss marketing. Additionally, vice presidents already meet for editorial, marketing and manufacturing from both houses were already meeting, he said.

"We welcome any type of working together," Thomas said.
One joint effort -- inspired by a commission recommendation to pursue the convergence of media to advertise their products, Galusha said -- involved a first-time, camp-meeting-like sale in 2010 that brought together the use of print, television and the Internet. They plan to repeat the event, Galusha said.

Incorporated in 1861, Review and Herald is the church's oldest publishing house, printing books and magazines, including Adventist Review and Adventist World. Pacific Press, founded in 1875, also prints books and magazines and is the lead printer for the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide, the church's lesson quarterly.

The historic publishers are two of the now 63 publishing houses in the denomination worldwide.

While Pacific Press has seen its net worth increase over the past decade -- along with a consistent operating gain of 5 to 6 percent for the past two decades, according to Galusha -- Review and Herald has struggled in recent years. In September, the association underwent a major reorganization and staff cuts in an effort to stem its losses, which were projected at $2.4 million in 2010 and have been a problem for several years.

**Selling assets**

In December, the association sold nearly 47 acres of its Hagerstown campus to the General Conference world headquarters for $11.6 million to help pay off a bank loan, said Robert E. Lemon, world church treasurer. The purchase served in part to avoid losing money on valuable land, Lemon said.

"We have no intention of keeping the land," Lemon said. "We just were not willing to have a fire sale from one of our institutions and sell it at less than market value. It's a raw piece of land in a spot that's very desirable, next to a shopping center that has a wish to expand."

He added that the General Conference could hold on to the land for two to three years, until it finds a better time to sell.

Review and Herald has received 80 percent of the money, Lemon said, with the rest to follow once the title is transferred over to the world headquarters. The association also must have the land subdivided, he said, a process that could take four to eight months.

Thomas said the "drastic" changes the organization made last September to correct the years of loss "are starting to make an impact on our bottom line."

"Our first markers are looking good," he said, while also cautioning that it's early yet. "We're budgeting to come from quite a big loss to a positive bottom line in 2011 and then grow in 2012 and 2013 -- and keep on growing."
Welcome to the GLEANER blog site. Browse the topics, add your comments, and join the growing discussion among members in the Northwest and beyond. More topics and blog authors will be added in the weeks ahead, so visit often.

Cindy's Garden Blog
04/15/11: Stephen Covey (Read More...)
03/31/11: The Power of Ten (Read More...)
03/17/11: God’s Mathematics (Read More...)
03/03/11: Mary Kay Ash: You Just Can’t Out Give God (Read More...)
02/17/11: Tithing Hope (Read More...)

Mike Jones
04/21/11: Mike Jones ... My Daily Checklist (Read More...)

Cheri Corder
04/21/11: Cheri Corder ... Christianity at Church (Read More...)

Let's Talk
04/21/11: The Wall (Read More...)
03/14/11: Wake Up (Read More...)
03/14/11: Revival (Read More...)
01/18/11: Beyond Regret (Read More...)
01/18/11: Imitation (Read More...)

Monthly Archival Photo
04/21/11: May Archival Photo (Read More...)
03/24/11: NEW! ... April Archival Photo (Read More...)
02/28/11: March Archival Photo (Read More...)
01/31/11: February Archival Photo (Read More...)

General
02/17/11: Tithing Hope (Read More...)
09/09/10: Young Girl Helps Buy a Multimillion-Dollar Camp for One Dollar (Read More...)
07/03/10: Heritage Singers 40th Year Perspective (Read More...)
07/03/10: McCarthy's Perspective (Read More...)
07/01/10: God-Appointed Moments (Read More...)

Tip Sheet
11/18/09: Holiday Stories: Timing is Everything (Read More...)
10/20/09: We are FAMILY (Read More...)
08/26/09: Add Some Spice to Your Shots (Read More...)
08/26/09: Attribution: What’s Your Claim to Fame? (Read More...)
New regulations mean church nurseries must replace cribs
By Erin Roach
Apr 6, 2011

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In order to comply with new safety regulations taking effect in June, churches need to replace their nursery cribs, which could already pose a danger to children and leave churches open to liability lawsuits.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission unanimously approved sweeping new safety rules, which outlaw drop-side cribs and require stronger hardware and supports. The commission said it is unlikely that existing cribs will meet the new standards.

Jim Swedenburg of the Alabama State Board of Missions served more than 10 years as a state missionary for church administration and said churches that have weekday ministries or daycares especially need to heed the new safety standards.

"If a parent had a child that was injured and the daycare was in that sense negligent in not having changed that bed, that's going to put them at greater risk for any kind of liability judgment," Swedenburg told Baptist Press. "In other words, nobody's going to come around and inspect the cribs and force the church to comply, but if they don't they're still going to be taking a risk."

For years, parents favored drop-side cribs because they could lower the rails on one side to more easily lift their children from the cribs.

Since 2000, drop-side cribs have been blamed in the deaths of 32 infants and toddlers and suspected in another 14 fatalities. In the past five years, more than 9 million drop-side cribs have been recalled, and Congress has pushed for stronger crib safety rules.

At issue is malfunctioning hardware, including cheaper plastics or assembly problems that can lead to the drop-side rail partially detaching from the crib. A dangerous "V"-like gap between the mattress and side rail can trap a baby, causing it to suffocate or strangle.

Also, as children grow, they can apply more force to the crib by shaking it, running around in it or jumping up and down, the Associated Press said. To address this, the new safety standards affect far more than the drop side.

"A crib's mattress support, slats and hardware are now required to be more durable and manufacturers will have to test to new more stringent requirements to prove compliance," the commission said.

Beginning June 28, all cribs manufactured and sold must comply with the new federal standards. Some manufacturers, such as Church Interiors, which supplies cribs purchased through LifeWay Christian Stores, already are selling cribs that comply with the new standards.
"The manufacturers were working closely with the board that was making the changes, so they knew the changes were coming. They just weren't sure when," Stacie Reeves, a sales representative with Church Interiors, told BP. "So we were able to in January introduce the new line and all the cribs that are coming out now are compliant."

Child care centers and places of public accommodation, which include churches, must use only compliant cribs that meet the new standards by Dec. 28, 2012, the commission said. Until the cribs are replaced, owners are encouraged to check the cribs frequently to make sure that all hardware is secured tightly and that there are no loose, missing or broken parts.

"A consumer should not resell, donate or give away a crib that does not meet the new crib standards, such as trying to resell the product through an online auction site or donating to a local thrift store," the commission said. "CPSC recommends disassembling the crib before discarding it."

Consumers can check the safety commission's website at cpsc.gov for companies that have recalled their cribs and are providing immobilizers to secure the drop-side on cribs. But a drop-side crib, even with an immobilizer installed, will not meet the new standards.

If a crib was purchased recently, the owner can ask the retailer or manufacturer whether the crib complies with 16 CFR 1219, the new federal standard for full-size cribs, or with 16 CFR 1220, the new federal standard for non-full-size cribs.

Swedeburg said churches should comply with the law, and beyond the safety and litigation risks, incompliant churches could send a negative message to parents who may be visiting for the first time.

"For guests to come to our churches looking for a place to attend, if the patterns of the past hold true, a lot of those people are going to be young adults with preschoolers," he said. "If they come into a preschool facility and they see a drop-side crib, they're going to say, 'These folks are not taking care of my kids.'

"They may be wrong about that assumption, but any time churches fail to do something that even the parents are aware of, they're going to think the church is not safe," Swedenburg said. "So churches really need to take care of this. It's the kind of thing that these young parents probably would not call to the attention of the church. They would just not come back."

Gaelen Cole, a property and casualty program manager with GuideStone Financial Resources, said standard insurance policies will have coverage for the liability coming from defective products.

"As long as the church has made reasonable efforts to remove known defective cribs, there should be little problem with the church bearing the brunt of the negligence," Cole said.

"However, if the church has not done so, there can be negligence attaching to the church for failure to follow up on known, well-publicized product recalls. Even in that case the church's insurer should defend it, but then the limits of liability carried by the church could come into question. Standard General Liability policies have a $1 million per-claim limit.

"If that limit is exhausted -- which could easily happen with a serious claim, especially if life-long disabilities are involved -- the church would be protected by also having an 'umbrella' or 'excess liability' policy with
additional limits of coverage," Cole said. "These policies can have limits from an additional $1 million to $5 or even $10 million for premiums that may cost up to a few thousand dollars, depending on the specific insurer and church."

Swedenburg said churches need to have a plan in place to convert to compliant cribs by the end of 2012.

"They might be able to set aside some funds on a monthly basis or just purchase one at a time as they're able," he said.

Ron Chandler, manager of the direct sales section of LifeWay Christian Resources, said LifeWay is aware of the new regulations and wants to assist churches in making the transition.

"We realize the burden this might put on churches, especially in these times, so we are working on some special financing and pricing for churches," Chandler said.

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Erin Roach is an assistant editor of Baptist Press.

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Original copy of this story can be found at http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=34997
The issue of conscientious objection has become more complex - Adventi...

Barry Bussey

If we as Christians are called to take up arms on behalf of our country, should we fight?

It's too late to try to engage with the moral dilemmas of war and conscientious objection once we actually face a personal moment of decision. We need to take up the question while we still have the opportunity to carefully weigh ethics, morality, and, most importantly, principles of scripture.

Unfortunately, this is also a question that most of us would prefer to leave alone. It's messy, it arouses an uncomfortable assortment of feelings involving our sense of national identity and pride, and it has far too many ambiguities and shades of gray.

And so we've put it off. Even the voice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church -- historically such an outspoken proponent of conscientious objection -- has grown less clear and less certain on the issue over recent decades. We've, by and large, preferred to look the other way or simply skirt around the edges of the issues.

I believe now more than ever we need to once again undertake a clear-eyed examination of the moral and theological questions raised by military service. A generation of young people face a politically unstable and unpredictable world. If their church can't provide clear principles to guide them in the choices that may confront them, who will?

My two sons are joint Canadian-U.S. citizens, and from the day they received their Certificates of Naturalization in early 2001, they were quick to assimilate U.S. nationalist pride. They came to revel in their American heritage, so much so that they began insisting on our celebrating Americana such as Thanksgiving in November. Hockey games took on a new meaning with both Canadian and American anthems being sung.

September 11, 2001, was a day of infamy that brought home the realization that war was about to erupt yet again. We were in the kitchen discussing the new war in Afghanistan when suddenly the fact that one day our twin boys may be eligible for a possible military draft hit us with full force.

"What would you do, fellas," I asked my boys as they sat at the counter. Four large blue eyes looked at me as their minds with 10 years of experience began processing the concept of serving as a soldier.

"Dad, I have no problem giving my life for the United States," one said. I was dumbfounded. Here this kid, not even one year as an American citizen and he is willing to die for the "land of the free!" Now I know in Scripture the Lord said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (John 15:13 NKJV) My son appeared to be willing to give his life for those he hardly knew, except his cousins in Michigan.

That experience caused me to search my own soul and revisit the teachings of the Adventist Church on the issue of war. I had read the story of conscientious objector Desmond Doss, but little else. Further study revealed our historical position not to take up the rifle. "Save life, not take life" was the general sentiment; bearing arms was seen as violating the non-violent teachings of Christ.

When speaking in churches or attending church gatherings around the country it became my practice to take a tape recorder and record the stories of those men who were conscientious objectors during World War II. One interview led to another.

Graduate study gave me an opportunity to write a paper on Earl Coupland, a Canadian Adventist conscientious objector. Coupland and a number of the other men I interviewed in my study have since passed away. Earl told me that what I was doing was "important." He did not want his story to die with him -- he wanted it to continue as a witness of what he and the others went through to be faithful to their conscience.

I have a duty to discharge to these men and others like them -- men who suffered scorn, imprisonment, and cruel treatment at the hand of fellow servicemen.

It is hard for me to believe but almost 10 years have passed since that autumn morning when I talked with my sons about what it means to be a follower of Christ and yet a citizen of our country. I've studied our Adventist history in depth, and began a serious analysis of the theological underpinnings. I met men of incredible courage who, when the test came, were not afraid to give an account of what they believed -- even if it meant imprisonment or hard labor with pick and shovel. I also met people in such places as Lebanon who were forced as young people to join a militia against their will and struggled with the internal battle of having to take a rifle. I have not had to make such a decision. My life has been easy in that respect.

Where has my journey taken me? It's brought me to a realization that in today's world of increased militarism, patriotic rhetoric, and fear of terrorism, the question of conscientious objection has become more -- not less -- complex. It's also given me tremendous sympathy for those who must personally contend with the often competing pull of national loyalty, personal conviction and faithfulness to God.

War, peace and conscientious objection require a response. We can't ignore these issues; they're not going
away. As a church and as individuals, we have no choice but to grapple with the basic moral questions they raise. Jesus said, "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

When the time comes, we must be prepared -- like so many who have gone before us -- to give an account of whether our lives are in accordance with the spirit and intent of His words.

A First for Pasco Takoda Eagles

by Valarie Young

Adventurer's in the Pasco Takoda Eagles are proud to salute and sing their theme song.

Pasco, Wash., March 24, 2011 -

It's not every Sabbath that church members can watch their Adventurers do a Grand March through the sanctuary with flags and smiles. Children then wished the church a "Happy Sabbath" with a full salute and sang the Adventurer theme song. This was the first Sabbath the Pasco Takoda Eagles participated in Adventurer Sabbath. The theme for the day was "Adventurers and Their Church" and club members and leaders along with parents presented the entire church service from start to finish! Members were pleasantly surprised to see the children use sign language. The Adventurer Worship Team along with Lisa Ortiz led the congregation in seven children's songs for the opening song service and were accompanied by the Pasco Ukulele Choir directed by Bonnie Becraft and pianist Kemunto Kakumba.

"I'm in the Lord's Army" and "Only a Boy Named David" delighted the congregation as the club provided the morning special music. Adventurer Drill Instructor Phil VanLanen provided a wonderful children's sermon to the congregation by role playing the Apostle Peter sharing what it was like to be a friend of Jesus to his "nephew" Adventurer Caleb Shirinzadeh. Adventurer Club members and leaders appreciated the presence of Richland Orcas Club Director Lori Hinger and UCC Southern Regional Director Anita Lebold and her husband Tom at the service and the numerous positive affirmations following the service.
Gigabytes Take the Win at LEGO Challenge

Annual engineering event held April 10

By: Becky St. Clair

Walla Walla University’s School of Engineering hosted the annual FIRST LEGO League Regional Robotics Challenge for the sixth time on Sunday, April 10. This year’s theme was “Body Forward,” focused on technology used to enhance health and improve quality of life. Students aged 6-14 from across Idaho, Montana, and Washington State participated in the challenge. The night before the event, students and their sponsors were invited to tour the School of Engineering and explore the laboratories.

“LEGO robotics provides a great opportunity for younger students to work creatively on a technical challenge with a team,” says Doug Logan, dean of WWU’s School of Engineering. “This kind of experience is an important part of the education of the people who will be running everything in 25-30 years, in a world that will likely be even more technologically dependent than ours is now.”

Junior FIRST LEGO League (first and second grades) students presented posters and LEGO models depicting ways we could use technology to enhance our lives, and were given 15 minutes to use LEGOs to create a way for a WWU student to get around with two broken legs.

FIRST LEGO League (fifth through ninth grades) students built and programmed LEGO robots for timed table competitions, during which the robots delivered items to a specific place, pressed buttons, moved levers, and maneuvered around obstacles. Teams gave presentations on their robot’s design, the event’s theme, and their level of teamwork on the project.

The School of Engineering and Health & Physical Education department also provided interactive displays at the challenge to demonstrate how our bodies can interact with technology. These displays included a thermal imaging camera, an emotive EEG headset, a hand-eye activity to measure coordination, and an activity to measure reaction time.

“I like to see how the different teams try to solve the challenges,” says Victor Shepherd, senior electrical engineering major. The 2011 event was his third year being involved with the event. “Some of the approaches the students take are incredibly interesting because they are so outside the box.”

As a referee, Shepherd is expected to help judge the event, help with setup before the event, and ensure that all rules are followed, that any broken pieces are replaced, repaired or removed quickly, and that team members are the only individuals near the tables.

“This event is not about the teachers, the parents, or the sponsors,” he says. “This event is about the kids. We make sure the environment stays calm and student-focused, but the best part of our job is just having fun alongside the
Fourteen FLL teams participated this year:

- Awesome Onions (Rogers Adventist School, College Place, Wash.)
- Beaconaters (Lewiston, Idaho)
- Flaming Hawks (Buena Vista SDA School, Auburn, Wash.)
- Generation “X” Ponentials (Beacon Christian School, Lewiston, Idaho)
- Gigabytes (Stanwood, Wash.)
- Heart Attacks (Palisades Christian Academy, Spokane, Wash.)
- Heart Improvers (Sager Middle School, College Place, Wash.)
- iRobots (Palisades Christian Academy, Spokane, Wash.)
- Koocanusa Kooks (Libby Adventist Christian School, Libby, Mont.)
- MEE Techno Bears (Mt. Ellis Elementary School, Bozeman, Mont.)
- Nanobots (Rogers Adventist School, College Place, Wash.)
- Shock (Spokane Valley Adventist School, Spokane, Wash.)
- Smart Bots (Olympia Christian School, Olympia, Wash.)
- Techno Legos (Buena Vista SDA School, Auburn, Wash.)

This year’s FLL champions were the Gigabytes from Stanwood, Wash., a group of students who are home-schooled. They are invited to participate in the Adventist Robotics League’s National Championship held at Southern Adventist University (Collegedale, Tenn.) on May 8.

In addition, Curtis Genstler, a 1981 WWU graduate who is both an electrical engineer and a medical doctor, presented on prosthetics and robotic surgery. Genstler is currently the director of systems integration for EKOS Corporation, a company that designs and sells a system used by interventional radiologists, cardiologists and vascular surgeons to treat blood clots.

Next year’s LEGO challenge will take place at WWU on April 8. The theme, “Food Factor,” will ask teams to imagine how we can use technology to improve the quality of food.

“It’s great that WWU is so involved in something like this,” says Shepherd enthusiastically. “Not only does it give kids the opportunity to have an understanding of what engineering is all about, but it’s also a great way to show them engineering isn’t boring at all. A lot of what they do in this event relates to engineering, and I think it’s a fantastic opportunity for these students.”

For more information on the 2012 FIRST LEGO League Robotics Challenge, click and bookmark the link below. For photos, visit the WWU Facebook page by clicking the link below.