Christchurch gardens bloom again

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

The internationally renowned gardens of the Christchurch, New Zealand, Sanitarium factory are once again blooming, thanks to the vision and work of gardener Alexander Silverado.

Warren Ashby, engineering manager for the Christchurch branch of Sanitarium, commended Mr Silverado’s for his work in renovating and improving the gardens, and restocking the ponds.

“He put in some generous time, especially before the competitions,” says Mr Ashby. “Being on the city’s tourist route, they’re visited by busloads of people every day. They can only marvel at the wonders our Creator has provided and credit the company.”

The gardens, designed by the city’s founding landscape architect, Edgar Taylor, in 1932, won six awards over the summer, and have proved a hot destination for garden lovers, with 11 couples celebrating their nuptials in them this year.

In a full-page report in the gardening section of The Star, a Christchurch broadsheet, reporter Cynthia Keppele described the gardens as “stars in their own right.”

They feature a fountain imported from the Isle of Wight in 2003, and which is now the focal point of the gardens.

(Continued on page 4)
ACAST to change

WAHROONGA, NEW SOUTH WALES

The Australasian Conference Association Superannuation Trust (ACAST), the church’s superannuation fund for its employees, will be transferred into Mercer Super Trust at the end of this financial year, a change aimed at improving benefits to members.

From July 1, 2006, Mercer will provide the trustee and administrative services for the ACAST fund.

According to Paul Rubessa, the fund’s administration manager and corporate trustee secretary, members can expect greater investment flexibility, post-retirement income products, member-education programs and access to personal financial advice under the new regime.

“This is a very exciting change that will bring with it more benefits for our members,” says Mr Rubessa.

Mr Rubessa says the decision was initiated by changing superannuation legislation, which threatened to impact the costs of operating ACAST on a stand-alone basis. “As a trustee, we have a duty to act in the best interests of members,” says Mr Rubessa. “This includes taking time to evaluate ourselves to ensure that we continue to be competitive.”

He said the necessity for change became apparent during a recent review, in which it could be seen that the industry had advanced to where ACAST members could access more benefits with another fund without losing the competitive fee arrangements for which ACAST is known.

ACAST was established by the church in 1988 to provide superannuation for employees. The fund has some 14,000 members with assets of $A280 million. Its members will be advised of developments over the next few months. —Melody Tan

More @ <www.acast.info> or by phoning 1300 422 278.

Goliath slays David in battle of the bottle

COORANBONG, NEW SOUTH WALES

Citizens’ objections to a planned bottle shop in Cooranbong, NSW, have been upheld by the New South Wales Licensing Court in a hearing held in February.

Three magistrates hearing the matter refused an application by David Owens to open an off-licence in the A Vondale Shopping Village. They based their decision on objections about the need for a liquor store and the store’s close proximity to a place of worship—A vondale Memorial Seventh-day Adventist church.

The magistrates deemed the necessity to travel to nearby Dora Creek or Morisset to purchase liquor as “a minor inconvenience.” They accepted that about 40 per cent of the public in the Cooranbong area would have no need for such store and that it would, in fact, cause offence to worshippers.

“It isn’t a case of David taking on Goliath . . . but more that Goliath is offended by the proposed actions of David,” said the magistrates.

The Memorial church joined with other local churches and A vondale College to gain legal representation.

“Most of the people we surveyed were happy to sign, indicating they would be offended by the liquor store,” says Jim Williams, an elder at Memorial.

Mr Williams proudly acknowledges the Adventist Church’s fundamental belief regarding alcohol. “Our bodies are the temple of God,” he says.

Craig Vogel, former director of student services at A vondale College, gave witness to the court in relation to the college’s drug-free policy and the adverse affects of selling liquor near the campus. He says one of the reasons Cooranbong is admired is because of its unique nature. —Stephane Millien
Christchurch gardens bloom again

(Continued from page 1)

The gardens won in six categories across three competitions, including four in the Canterbury Horticultural Society competition. Among them was the Academy Funeral Services Trophy for "Outstanding Feature in a Commercial Garden," for the fountain on the garden's street frontage.

But there is more to the story than just a green thumb, reports Mrs Collette Brown, a Christchurch local who is also Mr Silverado's mother. She, like Mr A shby, attributes much of the beauty and consequent success to divine intervention.

"When the previous gardener resigned just before planting-out time, I was talking with my sister and we decided to make the gardens a topic of special prayer. The plants were about a month late, and there were a lot of substandard plants as well.

"We both prayed specifically that the plants would survive and that Alex would be rewarded for the extra effort. When bad weather threatened, we would pray for a hedge of protection around the gardens. Then, last year, a belt of hail went through and wiped out one section.

"Well, our prayers were nevertheless answered by the most beautiful result. But the praise has gone to God for His beautiful creation."—Lee Dunstan

As the winner of six prizes in Christchurch's annual round of gardening competitions, the grounds of the Christchurch Sanitarium are a credit to both their gardener, Alex Silverado, and the Creator.

New SPD department to develop leaders

WAHROONGA, NEW SOUTH WALES

A department aimed at identifying, growing and nurturing church leaders has been established at the South Pacific Division (SPD). The Leadership and Professional Development Department was established by the 2006 SPD session.

The director of the new department, Dr Barry Gane, says that whereas in the past leadership has merely "arisen," it will now be intentionally identified and nurtured.

"We hope to be able to seriously look at developing leaders and the leadership ability of those who work for the church," he says.

According to Dr Gane, the department will initially focus on the island fields of the division. Three leadership cohorts in PNG, Solomon Islands and Fiji will go through six weeks of training and formal education over the next four months.

"The basic psyche of the church will be changed as we begin the concept of grooming leadership instead of relying solely on a system where people are called into leadership positions," says Dr Gane.

He says the benefit of the new system would be "higher levels of proficiency and leaders who are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, working to enhance their leadership skills and ability."—Melody Tan

The annual interdenomina-
tional World Day of Prayer service was held in the Murray Bridge Seventh-day Adventist church, SA, on March 3. This year’s event focused on South Africa. A group of South African singers from an Adelaide Adventist church presented several items in English and African dialects. The more than 80 people who attended gave an offering to assist South Africa and also enjoyed a supper of South African dishes.—Ron and Nita Clarke

Wallsend, NSW, church has a helping ministry for overseas students attending Newcastle University. Countries of origin include Sudan, Thailand, Korea, China, Taiwan, PNG and Indonesia. Church members find accommodation or locate outlets selling the food of a culture. In 2005 several Wallsend members toured Africa, meeting university students they had previously helped and delivering helpful items, including pens and pencils, books, seeds, musical instruments, tools, clothing, first aid and teaching resources. The group visited an orphanage in Zimbabwe, and erected some buildings in Botswana.—Ray Boyce/Lanelle Hawkins

Pastor Henry Miller, veteran collector for the ADRA Appeal, who turned 85 this year, has collected more than $A10,000 in the past three years alone. Pastor Miller has seen a number of baptisms from Appeal contacts. Since he was introduced to the Appeal for Missions as a child, watching his invalid grandmother in her wheelchair collect, he hasn’t missed an appeal.—Focus

SEARCH THOUGH THE SIGNS ARTICLE ARCHIVE @ WWW.SIGNSOFTHETIMES.ORG.AU
Big-vehicle pit stop

NEROLIE DEVER, NSW

I was disappointed to read the editorial “What would Jesus drive?” (February 25). A provocative article for alienating those of us who drive larger vehicles! While I agree with the principle of being good stewards in all aspects of our life, the suggestions made in the editorial aren’t always practical. A small vehicle wouldn’t survive on my farm and would be unable to go where I go for my holidays, and not everyone can catch public transport to work.

Many of the times I’ve felt closest to God have been in my four-wheel drive, driving through the breathtaking beauty of the Simpson Desert carpeted in flowers, enjoying the stillness of the early morning on the Canning Stock Route or driving among the gigantic gums in Victoria’s high country.

Praise God we serve a God who is versatile, able to touch people who not only drive a mini but also a sports car, a 4x4 or school bus.

DANIEL GOLENIA, NSW

I have chosen to live in the country, in keeping with Ellen White’s counsel, and that mandates my ownership of a four-wheel drive motor car. A good friend has seven children (in keeping with God’s command) and therefore needs a large four-wheel drive to accommodate them. I can only imagine his quandary in reading your editorial.

But beyond that, this is a poor choice of editorial content for the official church publication. Rather, I think the editorial should encourage and strengthen one’s faith.

The bird flu

BRAD RALPH, NSW

With many of the world’s experts heralding an impending avian flu pandemic, we should be dusting off the Revelation and prophecy seminar materials to proclaim the first angel’s message: Fear God and give Him glory! The hour of His judgment has come.

We seem to expend much effort planning for the operation of the corporate church. Hopefully these plans will put us in a strong position to preach the word of God to the survivors.

Details in full, please

BERYL TURNER, SA

I enjoy learning from the many and varied articles in Record. Thank you to those who include a phone number or address so I can have the joy of sending them an encouraging note or even some financial assistance. But to those who include a website only, as not all of us own a computer, regrettily, I cannot help.

Note: Views in Letters do not necessarily represent those of the editors or the denomination. Letters should be less than 250 words, and writers must include their name, address and phone number. All letters are edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author’s original meaning will not be changed. Not all letters received are published. See masthead (page 3) for contact details.
**Advertisements**

**Note:** Neither the editor, Signs Publishing Company, nor the Seventh-day Adventist Church is responsible for the quality of goods or services advertised. Publication does not indicate endorsement of a product or service. Advertisements approved by the editor will be inserted at the following rates: first 30 words or less, $A4.50; each additional word, $A0.20. For your advertisement to appear, payment must be enclosed. Classified advertisements in Record are available to Seventh-day Adventists members, churches and institutions only. See masthead (page 2) for contact details.

**Central Coast holiday accommodation (NSW)**—self-contained 4-bedroom home on Lake Munnorah. Sleeps 11 people. 20 minutes to Avoca College. 5 minutes to beach. (02) 4358 8612, email: <lakesofnortherncove@hotmail.com>.

**Final Events** DVD sand other Amazing Facts products are now available from their Australian distributor The Sasty Factory. Contact Darren or Robyn Peakall on (08) 9374 6777 or <info@thestatoryfactory.com.au>.

**Cooranbong, NSW**—“Elenborough” Park, a superb new private residential estate set among 45 acres of secured gated parkland. With its huge blocks, it's the perfect place to build your new dream home. For further info phone John Johnson and Britten Real Estate on (02) 4973 6888.

**Data projectors, screens, DVD VCRs, PA systems etc.** SDA's committed to lower prices for SDA churches, schools etc. Ask for Trish at Rural Electronics (02) 6363 3636 or <greenfield@netconnect.com.au>.

**It’s this weekend—Warburton centenary**—April 7-9, 2006. Program includes historical celebrations, worship led by former Record editor, Pastor Jim Coffin, school reunion and fair, variety concert, Signs open day on Sunday, 9.30 am—11.30 am, and 2.00—3.30 pm, and more. Visit <www.WarburtonAdventists.com> for more details. Inquiries: Pastor Eric Kingdon on (03) 5966 5093, or Carole Brown on 0418 590 622.

**Receive the Hope Channel and SARN NOW!** Complete satellite kit for just $265 + freight. Full instructions for DIY installation or installers available. Rural Electronics (02) 6363 3636, or <curaleile@bigpond.net.au>.

**Finally**

Some people are funny. They spend money they don't have, to buy things they don't need, to impress people they don't like.