Win a FREE Week at Summer Camp!
(see p. 2)
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On the Cover
Do you know the difference between a rabbit and a hare? Might you have a guess as to how many species of rabbits there are in the world? Find out the answers to these and other questions in Bob Holbrook’s article on bunnies on page 8. And don’t forget to watch for rabbits while you’re at camp meeting or summer camp! You may see one or two hiding in this magazine, as well (see above for details)!

Win a Free Week at Summer Camp!

B unnies, bunnies everywhere! To celebrate the Summer Camp season, we have filled this issue of the Record with rabbits—a creature that is commonly seen at camp. You can read a lot of interesting information about rabbits and hares on pages 8-10. But this issue is about more than reading. We want you to find each and every bunny hidden on these 40 pages. Begin with the cute bunny on the cover and keep counting until you find them all. Then submit your answer to the question “How many bunnies are in the April 2013 Record?” along with your name, age, gender, phone number and/or e-mail address (please indicate contact preference), and the name and location of the local church you attend, and you could win a FREE week at summer camp (age restrictions apply; transportation to and from camp is not provided). One boy and one girl from each local conference will be randomly selected out of all the correct entries to receive a free week at summer camp. All entries must be received by May 15. Submit your entry online at www.swurecord.org/summercamp or e-mail your entry to summercampcontest@swuc.org. You may also mail your entry to Summer Camp Contest, Southwestern Union Record, P.O. Box 4000, Burleson, TX 76097. Winners will be notified individually before camp starts and will be announced in the July issue of the Record.
What Are You Doing This Summer?

As we think about the summer just before us, all kinds of ideas present themselves. School will be out, and maybe you’re considering a well-deserved vacation with family, or something else entirely. Let me give you a couple of ideas.

Many children enjoy our conference-sponsored summer camp programs. I didn’t get to enjoy being a camper, but I did have the opportunity to work as camp pastor at beautiful Camp Yorktown Bay for a couple of years. It was great! The food and fellowship were wonderful, and it provided an opportunity to grow spiritually.

Also, don’t forget about camp meeting. I have enjoyed many camp meetings over the years, and I know many people who have made camp meeting a habit. They take vacation time to be together as a family at camp meeting. Israel was instructed by God to gather for holy convocations where He was present in order for Him to instruct and bless the people. God will do the same for us at these precious seasons. Why not make camp meeting a habit for your family? Have a wonderful summer!

Larry Moore

Stepping Stone to Success

LM: Southwestern produces outstanding graduates who are knowledgeable in their fields and are also dedicated workers. Let me introduce you to two such individuals, Jonathan Seitz, ’03, and Kristina Pascual Lockhart, ’06:

JS: “Southwestern Adventist University wasn’t even a blip on my radar as a teenager from Arizona. But the Lord led me there, and has been leading ever since. Southwestern’s professors, with real business experience, prepared me for my future and current career. I manage the sales team for Cockrell Enovation, the largest family-owned commercial sheet-fed printing and marketing firm in Fort Worth, Texas. Southwestern is a fantastic university where people just seem to fit. If you feel the Lord is calling you to better your life, then call Southwestern. It will be the best investment in yourself you will ever make.”

KPL: “God chose Southwestern for me, and I was lucky enough to obey Him. At Southwestern, I studied communication, because that was a subject that I knew nothing about. Looking back, however, it’s clear that, as a fourth grader hosting a radio show on my karaoke machine and producing Oprah-style home videos with my brothers, God chose communication for me, too. “I wouldn’t exchange my time at Southwestern for anything. It was there that I took the first steps towards my career as an on-air host and promotions and PR director at the campus station. I was hired at the Texas Conference immediately out of college, and have been working there for more than seven years now. I praise God for the opportunity to serve in His ministry. I would not be where I am today if not for my time at Southwestern and each person that He allowed to cross my path while I was there.”

Jonathan Seitz
Class of ’03

Kristina Pascual Lockhart
Class of ’06
What Would Your Kids Say?

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

– Jesus (Matthew 19:14, NIV)

BEDTIME PRAYER

Every night before bedtime, I read my five-year-old son a story and have prayer. I thank God for His blessings, ask for His help to be more loving, and to please keep our family safe through the night.

Well, last night, as soon as I said “Amen,” my son started praying and said, “Dear Jesus, please be with Daddy and keep him safe at work. Amen.”

Now, even though my job isn’t dangerous by any stretch of the imagination, my heart melted at hearing those sweet, little words, and I glowed from the inside out; I hugged my son and didn’t want to let him go.

WHERE IS HEAVEN, ANYWAY?

Heaven is anywhere Jesus is. The Bible says that the Kingdom of God is within us through the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ through the ministry and power of the Holy Spirit.

I was in heaven when my son prayed for me last night, which is how I want him to feel when he is with me. But the only way for that to happen is for Jesus to abide in me. With Him in the heart, words are warm, actions are kind, and the spirit is gentle.

A SAD STORY

My family lives in Florida. Last weekend we were at the beach enjoying the radiant sunshine, fresh ocean breeze, and the waves—pure bliss. While I was snapping pictures of pelicans and dolphins, my son was building sand castles.

Just a few feet away, there was a young, angry family with a son about the same age as mine. The parents verbally abused their boy. They wouldn’t stop yelling at him; he couldn’t do anything right. I didn’t believe my ears when I heard them cursing him, using our Lord’s name in vain. My soul grieved for his tender, little heart, realizing the daily hell he must be enduring from living in such an anti-heavenly–environment. Oh, how the world needs us to be like Jesus!

A CHOICE

Summer is fast approaching. And this is the season when we probably spend the most time with our kids because of trips, summer camps, Vacation Bible Schools, and special programs.

So let’s choose to recommit ourselves to Jesus and invite Him into our lives so that our actions and words are heaven-filled.

May His joy and eternal grace radiate so brightly from our hearts that our kids feel that they are in the very presence of Christ...and decide that there isn’t any other place that they would ever want to be.

That’s CREATION Health!

Lynell LaMountain writes from Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida.
I’d been told that many of the Native American campers would have never heard about Jesus, and wouldn’t know the common Bible stories that I have known since I was a child. I made it my goal to pray with them every morning and every night, and teach them how much Jesus loves them.

During cabin worship on the second day of camp, I asked the girls if anyone wanted to pray. The youngest girl in the group raised her hand, and I told her to go ahead. She closed her eyes and said, “Dear Jesus, Amen.” I thanked her for praying and talking to Jesus.

On Wednesday night, the same girl got scared and couldn’t go to sleep. I told her she could come into the main room of the cabin so we could talk. I told her that Jesus would never leave her and He would keep her safe. I also told her the story of Jesus dying on the cross for her sins. She had never heard that story before. After we talked, I asked her if we could pray and ask Jesus to help her not feel scared. She agreed, and after we prayed, she went right to sleep.

The second-to-last day of camp, I asked the girls if anyone wanted to pray. The same girl raised her hand. She prayed a beautiful prayer, asking God to keep her safe and telling her how much she loved Him. It was really amazing to me, because I knew it was the first time she had ever really talked to God. When she finished praying, her face lit up with a smile, and mine did, too. I was really touched because she prayed exactly like me. This made me realize what an effect counselors really do have on their campers.

Seeing that young girl pray for the first time and have such faith in Him was really encouraging and eye-opening to me. Sharing Jesus with others is so rewarding. We must look for every opportunity to share Him with the people around us. You might be the only glimpse of Jesus they ever see.

Counseling may be hard at times, but it is such an opportunity. To me, counseling is all about showing campers that Jesus is real and that they are loved. Camp brings children to Christ, and if I can help one camper see Jesus by the way I act, it’s all worth it.

Brooke Bernhardt has changed her life in many different ways. Ever since I started attending camp there at the age of seven, it has been a huge blessing to me. I want to share an experience that happened last summer while counseling for Native American week.

Brooke Bernhardt says that Wewoka Woods has changed her life in many different ways.

Top: Brooke Bernhardt with her cabin members at Wewoka Woods’ “olympic” games.

Brooke Bernhardt (far right) with junior campers at Wewoka Woods.

Brooke Bernhardt attends Southern Adventist University.
Linda: I love camp meeting for many reasons. For the past 27 years I have not missed a single camp meeting. Camp meeting time is a time of spiritual revival. It is a time of mental stimulation and learning. It is a time of encouragement—a time to be recharged spiritually and physically. It is a time to be alone with God in a beautiful environment.

Each year, my husband and I make plans to attend camp meeting. I love the fellowship of believers. Friends, leaders, pastors, acquaintances, members, and potential new members meet together for ten days. We hear dynamic preachers, attend seminars, exercise together, hear testimonies of God’s blessings, and pray frequently together. There is a lake where the sun sparkles on the water and campers can reflect on the goodness and mercy of God.

I really enjoy the seminars at camp meeting. In the past years, I have attended seminars on family life, food preparation, vegetarian and vegan diets, health issues (such as how to lower your blood pressure), the book of Job, and the structure and services of the sanctuary. The sponsors bring in experts on the various subjects and the campers are able to ask questions on the topics. I owe my improved health, first, to God, then to the health and food preparation seminars taught at camp meeting.

The women’s ministries department plays an important role in camp meeting. On the first Friday night, the department sponsors the speaker. On the first Sunday, they sponsor a prayer breakfast. This is one of the high points of camp meeting. Hearing the testimonies of physical and emotional healing is an experience worth remembering. Women and men are blessed at this prayer breakfast. There is a daily seminar/workshop during the week that is also a blessing to attend.

At 6:00 a.m., some campers can be found in the aerobics class with Peggy and Bruce James. I will be one of these exercisers hiding on the back row. I look forward to this time every year, when I can restart my exercise program. Peggy also gives us tips on how to reduce our size and our food intake. It is awesome.

The dynamic sermons, song service with Oliver Moore, special music, special prayers and testimonies begin every morning at 6:45 a.m., and again in the evenings after 7:00 p.m. My husband and I try to get the sermons on CD or DVD to listen to all year. This way we can be reminded all year of this spiritual oasis. Did I mention that I love camp meeting? Now you know why.

Albert: The reason I like camp meeting is that I get a chance to meet with God. God gives all of us time to come aside and spend time with Him and our friends. The Lord knows that we have been beaten down by the devil and we need to come aside to be rehabilitated by the Lord. We can get new strength to go on for the rest of the year.

Preparing for camp meeting is like preparing for the Sabbath. To be ready for the Sabbath you must start at the close of the previous Sabbath. To get ready for camp meeting you must start as soon as camp meeting is over. You must get your finances, clothes, shoes, transportation, and all other preparations ready.

Another reason I like camp meeting is that I like to see all the campers who have made a sacrifice to come to camp meeting. I love hearing the campers’ testimonies, and seeing how God has blessed and kept them over the past year. I also love camp meeting for the following reasons: My wife and I celebrate our anniversary every year at camp meeting. At camp meeting I can leave my written prayer requests and all through the year I can see how God answered my prayers. At camp meeting, the Bible Institute teaches me how to give Bible studies and witness during the year. I love to hear all the blessings and sermons that God has given to the pastors. I hope that you will attend your conference’s camp meeting this year, wherever that may be.

Linda and Albert Bradley live in Tickfaw, Louisiana, and are faithful attenders of the Southwest Region Conference camp meeting.
VERANO 2003

En mi primer campamento de verano, recién salido de la facultad de teología y estaba entrando en un mundo que nunca olvidaré. Al llegar a Nameless Valley Ranch, me encontré con una realidad alterna al ministerio pastoral. Un mundo donde por un mes y medio, el jugar, esquiar en el agua, nadar, cabalgar a caballo, remar en canoas y otras actividades fueron tan importantes como los servicios vespertinos; donde las actividades al aire libre se mezclan con el compañerismo y con los mensajes de los pastores cada día para ministrar y presentar a Dios; donde en una semana, Dios obra a través de los consejeros y directores en los niños para transformarlos y cambiar su perspectiva de la vida; donde el propósito es presentar a Jesús.

En ese verano, conocí a una jovencita en la segunda semana del verano. Era una jovencita con una sonrisa que transmitía felicidad. No importaba la situación, esta jovencita siempre sonreía. Recuerdo que al conversar con ella, me comentó que este era su segundo campamento, y que le encantaba. Al final de la semana, se despidió y se fue. Me acuerdo de su sonrisa, y actitud positiva en cuanto a la vida y a Jesús que no eran común en una niña de menos de 10 años.

MAYO 2011

Fui invitado a ser el predicador de la graduación en una academia en el área de Dallas y al llegar y prepararme me comentaron que la graduación iba a ser no solamente para los graduandos de la academia, sino para otros alumnos que graduaron de escuelas públicas, los cuales habían decidido guardar el sábado y por eso no habían participado en la graduación en su escuela. Al observar a los graduandos, una joven sonrió y se acercó para saludarme. Me preguntó si no me acordaba de ella y en realidad, no estaba seguro. Al comentarme que ella había estado en el campamento de verano del 2003 y que ella se acordaba de mí, caí en cuenta que esa sonrisa yo la conocía. Ella era la misma jovencita del campamento de verano y aquí estaba 8 años después, graduando y siendo fiel a Dios en esta etapa de su vida.

HOY EN DÍA

Al meditar en esta historia, no puedo reclamar que fui yo el que la mantuve en el camino del Señor, pero sí puedo decir que el campamento de verano fue y será uno de los ministerios donde los niños y jovencitos podrán explorar su fe y donde para muchos de ellos, su fe será solidificada para el futuro. Esto no sustituye al hogar en importancia de influencia espiritual, ni a la iglesia, pero después de ver no sólo historias como la de esta jovencita, sino de muchos más y ver como el campamento de verano ha sido una influencia tremendamente positiva y donde su fe se ha despertado o solidificado, no cabe duda que Dios nos llama a continuar con este ministerio.

Al ver hacia el futuro, el campamento en Lake Whitney Ranch tiene ese propósito: Proveer un ambiente donde los niños, niñas y jovencitos puedan sentirse seguros y donde ellos puedan escuchar la voz de Dios a través de la naturaleza, de las actividades espirituales y sociales. Un lugar donde ellos puedan encontrar a Jesús!

Le invito a que envíen a sus hijos al campamento de verano más cercano a ustedes.

Armando Miranda Jr., director asociado de jóvenes de la Asociación de Texas.
Mammals of the World Checklist states there are 57 species in the family of rabbits and hares around the world, and that some are critically endangered.

Many people get confused about the difference between rabbits and hares. Some hares are called rabbits or jack rabbits, and some rabbits are called hares. But there are some basic differences between them. Hares are born with fur and with their eyes open; rabbits are born without fur and with their eyes closed. Hares are larger and have much longer legs and ears. They also often change the color of their fur in winter, but rabbits don’t.

In North America, we have 19 species of rabbits and hares, including an introduced species from Europe. The Alaskan hare (Lepus othus) is our largest,
weighing in at up to 16 pounds! Our smallest is the pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*) of the southern Idaho and Nevada deserts, which can weigh about one pound as an adult. Its name is almost bigger than it is!

The American Rabbit Breeders Association lists 47 breeds of domestic rabbits. Their Web site has pictures of all their officially recognized breeds. Other sources claim there are more than 60 breeds of rabbits. They range from the huge, floppy-eared English lop, whose ears seem to be bigger than the rabbit itself, to the satin angora, that looks like a huge, fur-ball slipper.

The Bible makes mention only once of rabbits, in Leviticus 11:6. The Hebrew word is arnevet, and most likely refers to the cape hare, which is a common resident of Palestine (some versions mistakenly translate it “hedgehog”). Since it is listed as one of the animals that is not to be used for food, it’s quite likely that Hebrew families would not try to raise them or have them as pets. Now, with springtime around the corner and Easter here, the world of commerce focuses its advertising on rabbits and eggs. Many folk decide it would be a really neat idea to give their child a nice rabbit for an Easter gift. There are many myths about rabbit care and you will do well to research owning a rabbit before you make your final decision. Find links about rabbit care and rabbits as pets on our Web site: www.swurecord.org.

What do rabbits and eggs have to do with Christ’s death and resurrection and Easter? Rabbit and egg festivals go a long way back to ancient pagan Babylon and Greek celebrations of their gods. They appear in many other cultures throughout history, as well. The Internet has many articles describing the origins of these practices. Since at least the Middle Ages, these pagan festivals have been “Christianized,” and then commercialized. We are not particularly interested in any of this right now. Rabbits have more to teach us than pagan legends and fairy tales. Ellen White writes that “Every animal is a lesson book,” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1089). So, what is there about rabbits worth learning today?

There are two features of all rabbits and hares that separate them from all other mammals and also make them among the easiest to identify as a group: their long ears and their long back legs. Perhaps it is from these two characteristics that we can learn something from them and apply the idea to ourselves. No, we don’t need to somehow get longer ears, nor train to do the running long jump for competition, but how rabbits use their ears and legs might teach us a lesson.

Rabbits prefer to spend their time quietly nibbling on fresh clover or grass blades (or some fresh lettuce from your garden). While they seem to be so calm and deep in their own thoughts, their ears are constantly listening for every potential sound, evaluating even the slightest noise from the most distant corners of their realm. They also have very good eyesight, with a wide field of vision to complement their hearing. And, their legs are always ready for instant ser-
Lessons From Nature (continued)

vice. Smaller rabbits have been clocked at 25 miles per hour, and hares up to 40 miles per hour. Their jumps likewise range from 10 to 20 feet, and they have the ability to maneuver in a style called jinking—sharp zigzagging at full speed to throw off a predator (fighter pilots use the same technique to fend off attacks by enemy planes).

The overall profile of a wild rabbit or hare is one that emphasizes high instant speed. But then I looked at all those cute pictures of domestic breeds. They are all so adorable and snuggly-looking. Big, huge, flopped-over ears tuned into nothing; fur so long that you can’t even see if they have any legs; extra “soft layers” under their skin from over-eating that flattens out so cute on the carpet. The funny look on their faces just makes you want to go out and buy a bunch of them and spend all your time cuddling them and sweet-talking them. (They don’t actually like to be snuggled or cuddled, I am told by the experts.) Whatever the case, they sure have lost that sense of urgency and need for instant high speed. They are at ease with their surroundings, they have no need to flee from anything, and everything is all right. Life is good; it’s fine to just be lazy.

Maybe therein lies a lesson. Paul writes, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you are able to bear it. Therefore, my beloved, flee,” (1 Corinthians 10:12-14). Perhaps we are not too fond of ants and so are not inclined to follow Solomon’s advice to “go to the ant, thou sluggard, and consider her ways and be wise,” so we can pick our own animal—the rabbit. Consider her ways and be wise!
Seminars:

**Dr. Miroslav Kis’**
As a 2nd grader in Yugoslavia he kept the Sabbath for which he was beaten. At 20 he was court-martialed for his beliefs. Dr. Kis’ is now teaching in the Seminary at Andrews University. His field of expertise is ethics, morality and standards.

**Cheri Peters**
Born to a life of abuse, she spent 10 years on the streets of Los Angeles. Converted during a suicide attempt, God has given her a powerful story. She will also be the speaker for the Youth.

**Michael & Lynn Ortel**
Are a partnership that is widely used in counseling of family matters. Michael Ortel is the president of the North New England Conference. They are a dynamic duo that is very much appreciated.

**Chef GW Chew**
Recently featured on 3ABN. He will be giving practical demonstrations on plant based foods. He is the producer of a product Better Than Meat, and currently the Pastor of the Fayetteville AR Church.

**Kenny Orr**
Music for camp meeting will feature Kenny, a 14 year old violinist, organist, pianist, from Denver CO. He will be accompanied by Jerry Lange.

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**Kids Camp Meeting Schedule**

**Our goal** is to further the relationship that children have with their Savior

**Nursery**
Available during evening meeting and Sabbath School

**Kindergarten**
Ages 4 – kindergarten (Pathfinder Building) ‘Round-Up with Jesus’

**Primary**
Grades 1 – 3 (tent) ‘Everyday with Jesus’

**Juniors**
Grades 4 – 6 (tent) ‘Steps to Jesus’

**Earliteens**
Grades 7 – 8 (tent) ‘Extreme’

Our morning and evening meetings are filled with Bible Story Time, Music, Arts and Crafts and Game time. **(No Fee Involved)**

**Activities will be off campus and require a fee**

**Activity Fees**

**Kindergarten** - $5 per registered child – no activities

**Primary, Juniors, Earliteens** - $15 per day or $40 for three days.

**Youth** - Activity fees Meals, transportation and activity - $20 per day or $50 for all three outings.

**Youth Division**

**High school and college** - Meet in the Pathfinder Building. There will be morning and evening meetings. Each day activities are planned and it might be said that it’s worth attending the meetings to participate in the activities.

**Housing**
Dorm rooms are available – call 479-736-2221 ext 1107 Laurie

**Meals**
Available in cafeteria and tickets for Sabbath meals - $6.00 per meal.

**Pathfinder Trailer**
Will also be selling food.

**RV and Camping**
Sites are available – call 479-736-8808 for information

Further information www.gentryadventist.org and on the top line you can click the link ‘Ozark Family Camp’
Summer Camp Schedule – 2013 –

Arkansas-Louisiana

Camp Yorktown Bay  Mountain Pine, Ark.

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<td>June 16-23</td>
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<td>Junior Camp</td>
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Information: www.campcyb.com, 501.767.2333

Oklahoma

Wewoka Woods  Wewoka, Okla.

"Batteries Not Needed—Plug into Jesus"

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<td>Teen Specialty Camp</td>
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<td>June 30 – July 7</td>
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Information: Carol Chadwick, 405.721.6110
Texas

Lake Whitney Ranch:
"The Journey"  Whitney, Tex.

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<td>Extreme Camp</td>
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Information: www.texasadventist.org/lakewhitneyranch

Southwest Region

Lone Star Camp  Athens, Tex.

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<td>June 23-30</td>
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Information: 214.943.4491, ext. 209
ARKANSAS LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

South Louisiana Camp Meeting
When: April 19–20
Where: South Louisiana Convention Center
44364 S Coburn Rd., Hammond, LA 70403
Main Speaker: Shawn Boonstra
Contact: Chris Simpson, 318.631.6240, ext. 207

South Louisiana Spanish Camp Meeting
When: April 26-27
Where: South Louisiana Convention Center
44364 S Coburn Rd., Hammond, LA 70403
Contact: Dalia Castellanos, 318.631.6240, ext. 109

Ozark Family Camp Meeting
When: May 28 - June 1
Where: Ozark Adventist Academy,
20997 Dawn Hill East Rd., Gentry, AR 72734
Weekend Speaker: Doug Batchelor,
Amazing Facts director
Weekday Speaker: Don Schneider
Contact: Gentry church secretary,
479.736.8808

NW Arkansas Spanish Camp Meeting
When: July 19-21,
Where: Ozark Adventist Academy,
20997 Dawn Hill East Rd, Gentry, AR 72734
Contact: Dalia Castellanos, 318.631.6240, ext. 109

Springtown Fall Round-up
When: Contact the church for the latest information.
Where: Springtown SDA Church,
12444 Fairmont Rd., Gentry, AR 72734
Contact: www.springtownchurch.org

Bonnerdale Cowboy Camp Meeting
When: October 4-6
Where: Bonnerdale SDA Church
709 Adventist Church Rd, Bonnerdale, AR 71933
Contact: Sylvia Weatherford, 870.356.3093

OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

Oklahoma Camp Meeting
When: July 12-20
Where: Wewoka Woods Adventist Center
36242 Oklahoma State Highway 59, Wewoka, OK
Main Speakers: Bill Kilgore, Robert Folkenberg, Sr., and Stephen Bohr
Contact: Oklahoma Conference, 405.721.6110

Oklahoma Spanish Camp Meeting
When: May 30 – June 2
Where: Wewoka Woods Adventist Center
36242 Oklahoma State Highway 59, Wewoka, OK
Contact: Oklahoma Conference, 405.721.6110
SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

Southwest Region Camp Meeting
When: June 7-16
Where: Lone Star Camp, Athens, TX
Main Speaker: Dick Barron

Southwest Region Spanish Camp Meeting
When: May 10-12
Where: Lone Star Camp, Athens, TX

Cowboy Camp Meeting
When: September 20-22
Where: Lone Star Camp, Athens, TX

TEXAS CONFERENCE

Houston Area Camp Meeting
When: April 5-6
Where: Stafford Center, Houston, TX

South Texas/Valley Area Camp Meeting
When: June 28-29
Where: McAllen Convention Center, McAllen, TX

East Texas/Ark-La-Tex Camp Meeting
When: July 24-27
Where: Jefferson Adventist Academy, Jefferson, TX
Contact: 903.665.3973

Dallas/Fort Worth Area (Cowboy Camp Meeting)
When: October 4-5
Where: Rustic Creek Ranch, Burleson, TX
Contact: Joshua Crossroads Fellowship, 817.517.7729

TEXICO CONFERENCE

Texico Convocation and Youth Festival
When: June 20-22
Where: Albuquerque Convention Center, 401 2nd Street NW, Albuquerque, NM
Main Speakers: Carlton P. Byrd, Ruben Bullón
Contact: 800.584.5058, or 505.247.3344
It is seldom that a young person has the chance to escape the technological frequencies that our modern society has to offer. Today, most of our interaction is done through Facebook, Google+, or some other social media outlet. In any case, it seems that this digital age has almost replaced human contact with a shallow form of relationships. Now, before you get up in arms, I do admit that some of these tools have their advantages, such as connecting with our friends and loved ones who live far away. My point, however, is that if we are not careful, our relationships not only can become superficial, but our social skills and adaptability can be weakened.

So how do we fight back against some of these social media traps? Go camping! Camping offers an escape from these technological pastimes and helps the individual return to what matters most—community. We were created to live in community with others, but more importantly with our Heavenly Father. God desires nothing more than to spend time with His creatures. He knows that we are busy with school, work, texting, Facebook, or some other activity, yet He longs for communion with us. Can you imagine?—the God of the universe actually wants to spend time with us. That’s how deep His love for us is!

Camp is also a place where kids of all sizes, shapes, and colors can come together to experience acceptance, love, self-worth, and value, all within the context of community. This year’s summer camp theme is “Starting a Revolution for Christ.” It is our prayer to encourage and engage each one of our campers in a closer walk with Christ, while at the same time instilling in them the boldness to stand for Jesus. This revolution for Christ can only start as we allow ourselves to experience God on a personal level. I hope you will hear the call and experience the community of summer camp this year. Yes, we will have lots of fun with various water sports, zip lining, camping on one of the islands, horseback riding, etc., but more importantly—come to have an encounter with God!

Jeff Villegas, youth ministries director and CYB director

**Children’s Ministry Workshop in Texarkana**

TEXARKANA, TEX.. » A ministry group in Texarkana recently held a children’s ministry certification workshop under the leadership of Joyce Fortner, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference children’s ministries leader. The group completed three out of ten topics from the first certification track. Debi Bush, Texarkana’s leader said, “The classes are very practical and I learned many new things. I was reminded about many important facts that children face today and how to reach them for Jesus. Mrs. Fortner presented cutting edge information on very specific topics to help our children.”

Fortner recommended books for the resource library, and shared very useful handouts for craft recipes, such as play dough, bubbles, budding paintings, and more. Everyone present agreed that every church leader would benefit greatly from learning how to work with children, the future of the church.

Loretta Johnson
Arkansas-Louisiana Conference
Arkansas-Louisiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists | 7025 Greenwood Rd., Shreveport, LA 71119 | 318.631.6240

Mena Church’s Healthy Soup Kitchen Ministry

**MENA, ARK.** The Mena church sits in an economically disadvantaged area of the Arkansas hills. There is much that is needed in the community, so I asked the Lord how our church could best serve Him here. His response was for us to open a soup kitchen. When God calls, He equips, and by His grace and provisions, we were able to open a healthy soup kitchen last summer.

A week before the grand opening, we hung a permanent, bright yellow sign with large black letters beneath the church sign. It reads: Free Soup Kitchen Every Tuesday, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. As the sign was being hung, the owner of a local McDonald’s restaurant drove past and felt a deep burden to be a part of our soup kitchen. She tried to ignore it, but finally contacted one of the soup kitchen committee members. She told them her burden and asked how she could help. When I heard that the owner of McDonalds wanted to help, I wondered how it would work. I wasn’t sure we wanted to serve hamburger, as we were going to try healthy, vegetarian foods. However, she has donated items such as fresh produce, canned goods, eating utensils, take-out containers, rice, pasta—almost everything we ask for in order to support the soup kitchen. She has continued to donate items week after week—it is so amazing that God calls anyone He wishes to help with His plans.

The kitchen has four dedicated cooks who, along with some faithful and cheerful volunteers, prepare a nutritious meal on each Tuesday. The meals are different every week and the main dishes are cholesterol-free. We feed everyone as much as they want and they can also take out food for their family. No one has asked, “Where is the meat?” We have many needy and lonely people who are coming to eat and everyone enjoys the fellowship. During the first three months, the kitchen served 1,013 meals.

This is our way of letting our community members know that we love them and care about them. It is our desire to show Jesus’ love through our actions. We have made so many wonderful new friends through this ministry. They come hungry, and leave satisfied and full with smiling faces.

Kyong Weathersby

Hot Springs’ New Members Committed to Community Service

**HOT SPRINGS, ARK.** The Hot Springs church recently gained several new members following a prophecy seminar. These new members’ enthusiasm and willingness to serve has been an inspiration to the church family.

Two of the new members, Patti Lee and Victoria Nuzzo, have been especially involved in the church’s community services ministry and have been a big blessing to the community service team. Since the dedication of the community service building in September 2011, the ministry has been very active. The new building has allowed the church to be much better prepared to serve the needs of the community with food, clothing, bedding, and spiritual support. Many Hot Springs residents come through the facility on community service days, and food boxes are prepared and delivered throughout the year.

Juanita Bissell
New Iberia Celebrates New Members

NEW IBERIA, LA. ➔ Last fall was a busy time for the New Iberia church. Emanuel Baek, Amazing Facts evangelist, was the speaker for an evangelism series. The series’ opening night had more than 40 guests, and over the next few weeks, about 20 of them began to connect with the truth and engage with the church's members. Nearly all of the church’s regularly attending church members also attended each night to support the endeavor.

Each night during the meetings, several people gathered in different spots to pray for those who were attending the meetings. There were also people praying outside the meeting times; these people prayed for any prayer requests that had been sent.

The devil is never happy when people are discovering truth. There were a few hassles with the first meeting location, and almost every night, child care had to be moved to a different room. Even the main presentation was moved to a different room. But what the devil desires for evil—God promises to work for good. Because of the location changes, it was decided to relocate to the church a week sooner than originally planned. After the fact, members felt that the timing of the move greatly contributed to the fact that there was not a dip in attendance after the switch.

Following the meetings, there was a district-wide church service, where members from the Lafayette church and the Lafayette Spanish group came together in New Iberia to celebrate baptisms and new members being added to each of the churches. At the service, eight people were baptized or rebaptized, and another four joined the churches by profession of faith. Several more who attended the meetings have expressed a desire to join the church and be baptized.

The church continues to thank God for allowing its members to be a light to these souls. They are still praying for those who attended but haven’t made a commitment. They can see that God is still working—they have even seen some who had attended only the first week of the meetings at church on Sabbath. They believe God is good, and look forward to continuing to grow in Him.

Elizabeth Fresse

Deridder Church Holds Wedding

DERIDDER, LA. ➔ On December 27, 2012, the Deridder church celebrated the marriage of Lanette Holy and James Janda as the two separate lives were joined together. Sorin Munteanu, pastor, shared a prayer of blessings on their marriage as the three of them knelt together. It was such a joyous occasion. The church members would like to congratulate the new couple and let them know that they are praying for God’s continued blessings on their lives together.

Nelderine Newhouse

Jim and Lanette Janda kneel with Sorin Munteanu, pastor.
Summer Camp: Journey to the Kingdom

Summer camp is an unforgettable experience for all who attend. It may be unforgettable because of the horses, archery, boating, or the friendships. It may be the food, fun, or camp family. As for my team and me, it will be an unforgettable camp time because we have given the camp and ourselves to their rightful Owner. Great and mighty things are going to happen as we promote our theme “Batteries Not Needed! Plug into Jesus!”

One thing we know in Oklahoma, our camp programs at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center (WWAC) are evangelistic tools for the kingdom. It is my goal this summer for your children, whether they come as campers or as staff, to experience daily the love and power of their Creator through work, fun, and family. Then, as each camper leaves the campus, he or she will return home with the “shine of Jesus” for all to see. Our staff, who will have walked with Jesus all summer long, will return to their homes and churches as effective tools of leadership in a variety of areas.

WWAC is gifted with a great equestrian program and a renowned Seventh-day Adventist naturalist in our nature center. The other activities that have been chosen for the campers are specific to meet individual needs, desires, and dreams.

The team at WWAC invites you to a summer of discovery—a summer to connect with others, discover one’s self, and to plug into Jesus. Please remember the lifetime experiences that will be had by all and contact your summer camp director.

Jung-Wook (Apple) Park, Oklahoma Conference youth director

Celebrating Christ at Southern Hills

The Southern Hills church recently celebrated Communion and an “Agape Feast,” that included fresh foods and fellowship.

The newest members of the Broken Arrow church, Paulina Tebes, left, and Melody McClain.

Baptisms in Broken Arrow

Recently, ten-year-old Paulina Tebes made the decision to accept Jesus as her personal Savior. After studying with her father, Pablo Tebes, she asked to be baptized and officially became a member of the church. The church is proud of Paulina for taking this courageous stand at her age. She has been, and will continue to be, an asset to the church.

Melody McClain attended an Adventist church in Miami, Oklahoma, several years ago, and left with brochures to study. Intrigued by what she read, she was anxious to attend an Adventist seminar when she received a brochure in the mail. She attended another seminar, and visited other area churches before requesting baptism and making Broken Arrow her home church. The church is delighted to welcome Melody and her family.
Bristow Focuses on Health Ministry

BRISTOW ➨ Sherry Fisher, R.N., the health ministries leader of the Bristow church, has presented several health-related seminars to the Bristow community. *The Full Plate Diet* was presented to a group of about 15 women. For four weeks, the group met to discuss a vegetarian diet, with an emphasis on a daily fiber intake of about 45 grams. The food plan also promises sustained energy, something most everyone benefits from. Church member and well-known local cook Debby Fisher made some delicious dishes from the recipes in *The Full Plate Diet*. At the end of the series, the ladies were very sad to stop meeting. A couple of them have requested we either have a Facebook page or Web site to share recipes or ideas. They not only enjoyed the diet, but also the fellowship and support.

The next program, using the book *Engine 2 Diet*, was presented to the community. It takes a vegetarian diet a step further—it is a completely plant-based diet. The DVD based on the book was presented to the group while everyone enjoyed vegetarian lasagna, cucumber salad, and cookies. The program was created by firefighter and triathlete Rip Esselstyn, whose physician father is a pioneer in the study of the connection between heart disease and diet. One woman was particularly interested in meeting Fisher after the class. The woman explained she had been a very healthy eater when she had lived in California in a community that focused on health. She related that where she worked, everyone brought a healthy lunch and there were health food stores all around the community. Expecting to hear a familiar name, Fisher asked the woman where she had lived and the guest replied, “Well, you probably haven’t heard of it, but it is called Loma Linda.” A local pharmacist also attended the program and requested another presentation.

Fisher has also presented her “distress” management techniques to the community. Employees of Bristow Social Services, church members, and non-Adventist friends also attended. Fisher invited a local licensed massage therapist to assist her, focusing on holistic medicine. A very similar program was held for the Bristow church at a well-attended vespers program. The church is grateful for opportunities to help our small town see the advantages of Christian living.

Caroline A. Fisher
Community Christmas Party Benefits Everyone!

CHOCTAW The Choctaw church held its second annual community Christmas party on Sunday, December 16, 2012. Each year, our church buys gifts for several families in the area who are struggling financially. In 2011 we decided to invite those who were receiving gifts to our children’s Christmas party. This was such a success that we decided to make it a yearly tradition!

Several of the families who were invited came to this year’s party and enjoyed a fun afternoon with a number of our church members. After a pizza lunch and a short devotional presented by Leighton Holley, pastor, everyone sang carols and the children participated in a lively scavenger hunt, filling bags with many small toys and goodies.

Several church families had volunteered to sponsor a family and buy gifts for the children. The children were delighted with their gifts of new clothes! At the end of the party, the guest families were urged to take home some of the leftover pizza, and small gifts for the adults. It was hard to tell who enjoyed the party the most—the guests or the church members!

Robin Sagel, children’s ministries coordinator, hopes these community children will come to the new Bible club that is being started at Choctaw church, and Vacation Bible School leader Linda Lambeth will invite the children to VBS this summer. We hope this outreach will encourage community members to see our church as a warm, inviting place, full of God’s love.

Robin Sagel
When I was a child, I remember that every year as soon as school was out, it was “that time again.” Yes—camp meeting time. A time when men, women, boys, and girls came together to be spiritually revived. There were tents and pavilions filled with good preaching and singing. The youth and children had their own tent, which had a worship style meant to help focus their spiritual walk with God. At the conclusion of camp meeting, there was summer camp just for kids.

One year, I worked as a counselor at summer camp. I was responsible for making sure my boys were in the right place at the right time. I felt a sense of responsibility and leadership in ensuring their safety.

Now, more than 15 years later, I am the conference’s youth and camp director, planning and preparing for camp meeting and summer camp every summer.

When I think of Lone Star Camp, the first thing I think of is that it is an evangelism center. I view the grounds as holy grounds, where God moves in awesome ways. Secondly, it’s an opportunity for the campers to be one with Christ in nature. With approximately 300 acres in East Texas, Lone Star Camp has pine trees, open fields, horses, and a lake where you can ski, canoe, or learn how to fish. Who wouldn’t want to come and explore the beauty of God?

Currently, Lone Star camp is under construction, with plans for a new welcome center, gate, sign, and eight new cabins to be dedicated to the Lord on June 8. Everyone is welcome to attend this opening ceremony. Our president, Samuel Green, and the entire administration staff, are working very hard to see these new projects come to completion. There is nothing like a spirit-filled camp experience, so we solicit your prayers and your financial support. Any donation is greatly appreciated. And remember, investment in camp meeting and summer camp is a spiritual investment!

We want to share that you are also invited to our “cowboy” camp meeting, September 20-22. This is an evangelism meeting that is geared toward bikers and cowboys. They are invited to come and learn about Christ. This year’s theme, “Jesus is Coming Again, Riding on a White Horse. Will you be ready?” Enjoy our guest speakers, Calvin Watkins, Bill Kilgore, and Jeff Villegas. Bring your cowboy friends, your motorcycle buddies, and invite your family and friends. Come one, come all!

For more information, text “lonestarcamp” to 70000.

Helvis Moody

**Intergenerational Walk/Run/Stroll for the Tenth Street Church**

**Oklahoma City, Okla.** In order to support the Tenth Street church’s building fund, Juanita Davis organized “Bridging the Gap: Intergenerational Walk/Run/Stroll” on Thanksgiving Day, 2012. There were categories for children, adults, young adults, and seniors for the event. Many participated and supported the activity by exercising early in the morning and then later enjoyed the day with family and friends, making the day a huge success.

Sheila Mejias-Shavers

Participants of the Thanksgiving Day “Bridging the Gap” intergenerational event.
**Answered Prayers**

**DALLAS, TEXAS** In September 2012, Eric Ampadu, his wife, Elta, and their three children, Faith, Mayiah, and Jeremiah, came to the Arlington, Texas, area as Eric had accepted the role of pastor at the All Nations Faith Temple there. The Ampadus have always been Adventist education advocates, and their children have attended Adventist schools. In addition to attending these schools, a great part of their ministry has included praying for other students to ride to school with them. In each school that they have attended, the Lord has answered their prayers.

In Berrien Springs, Michigan, the Ampadus were blessed with a fellow student to ride with. Then, when they were in Mississippi, the Lord allowed them to bless two students with daily rides. While living in Lexington, Kentucky, and attending Lexington Junior Academy, God initially took His time in answering their routine prayers to bring someone to school with them. Then, a new student enrolled and he began joining them daily.

Upon moving to Arlington and enrolling their children at Southwest Adventist Junior Academy in Dallas, they found themselves talking to the Lord as they had done before. This time, instead of the parents leading out with the prayer for a rider, the children asked, “Are we going to ask the Lord to send someone to ride with us to school?”

God hears the prayers of His people, and He did answer. A week or so later, they were blessed with someone to ride with. Selena Collins, whose family had also recently relocated from the Central States Conference, was the rider God sent.

“Prayer is the answer to every problem in life... whatever we need, if we trust God, He will supply it. If anything is causing worry or anxiety, let us stop rehearsing the difficulty and trust God for healing, love, and power” (Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, October 7, 1865).

**Berean Church Ordains Elders**

**BATON ROUGE, LA.** The Berean church’s pastor, Robert Davis, recently led out in the ordination of four deacons and also welcomed a transferred elder to the Berean church. He prefaced the event by sharing Acts 6. The recognition began with Davis inviting Jerry Proshee to the front of the church, where he was welcomed to the Berean church. He had previously spent ten years as first elder of the Smyrna church in Alexandria.

The introduction of the new deacons followed. Even though each had already been serving in his respective role, none had been ordained. “According to the *Church Manual*, deacons must be ordained,” said Davis. “It is a ‘sacred rite...performed in the presence of the church by an ordained minister,’” Davis continued. Patrick Caldwell, 34, is the youngest of the four, and has been at Berean since Hurricane Katrina.

“Being ordained after my five years of deacon service has made my commission official,” exclaims Caldwell. Keithroy Charles, 36, a two-year Berean member and newly-ordained elder, said, “It is a humbling experience to be entrusted with duty for the Lord. I am thankful to be His servant.” Walter Campbell, 38, has been a deacon for the last three of his six years at Berean. Campbell says that consecration to further the Lord’s work is what ordination means to him. For Ernest Laws, 51, who has been at Berean for three years and a deacon for a month, said, “Ordination is a spiritual awakening. I am humbled and privileged to be ordained to do God’s work.” Davis and the Berean congregation are grateful and looking forward to the continued service of these five men.

*Evelyn Edwards*

Elders, from left, Jerome Pondexter; Charles Wilson; Robert Davis, pastor; Henry Jones; and Margaret Lawrence lay hands on and welcome Jerry Proshee, center.
Berean Church Learns Financial Freedom

BATON ROUGE, LA. As part of its “Year of Completion” goal, the Berean church recently observed a “Financial Freedom” week. According to Robert Davis, pastor, the premise behind the week was that “the church cannot experience financial freedom until the church members experience financial freedom. Berean cannot be free until Berean members are free.”

The seminar started with Joseph McCoy, the director of the regional conference retirement plan in Huntsville, Alabama. Using Romans 13:11, 12, which says, “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time,” he directed participants to his handout, which stated that, “time spent getting to know Christ is far more important than any money given to advance His work on the earth.” The handout illustrated how we can actually tithe our time. Using 168 hours in a week as an example, participants were shown how the tithing aspect amounts to 16 hours and 48 minutes a week. This is possible if we were to begin each day with one hour of studying God’s Word and ending with 48 minutes of meditation.

Davis followed this program with evening workshops for the next three days. The workshops, “How to Develop a Family Budget,” “How to Get Out of Debt,” and “Dealing with Debt Collectors as We Become Financially Free,” were accompanied by handouts. In the process, participants learned how to clean up their own credit reports.

Former Southwest Region president and former stewardship director Robert Lister, ended the week on Friday with an evening message to the church’s elders, whom he reminded that they are “the cornerstone” of the congregation. On Sabbath, some were taken aback when he announced he was not going to preach a sermon, but administer a test instead, thus his sermon’s title, “Are You Passing the Test?”

Lister admonished, “God gave us tithe and offering to test us. He is testing our talents, our surplus possessions, the Sabbath, and our body temperance. Continuous giving starves covetousness to death. Stop giving to the church and give to God.”

The resulting covenant cards that were eagerly filled out were a testament to the effectivenss of his presentation as members turned in one card and kept an identical one for themselves as a tangible reminder of their commitment to God. Lister returned that evening for a presentation with 2013 church leaders. Thankful for McCoy’s and Lister’s presentations, Davis summed up the financial freedom seminar by reiterating, “Berean’s goal for this year is debt elimination and ministry activation,” which brought the week, but not the emphasis, to a close.

Annual Spelling Bee Completed

HOUSTON, TEXAS The Southwest Region Conference held its annual Scripps National Spelling Bee competition on January 26, 2013—a day when all highways and byways seemed to lead to the Fondren church. Contestants came from schools located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; New Orleans, Louisiana; Hammond, Louisiana; Marion, Louisiana; Texarkana, Louisiana; Round Rock, Texas; and Dallas, Texas.

Spelling bees are nerve-wracking events for our students. It’s intimidating to face judges armed with a five-inch-thick dictionary.

The competition went very late into the evening, but Onyedikachi Akwarandu, from Excel Adventist Academy in Houston, was declared the winner. Adahra Fedrick, from Applegate Adventist Junior Academy in Round Rock, was the second place winner, and Adithya Sunder, from New Orleans Adventist Academy, took third.

Each of the winners was awarded one month’s tuition, to be paid to their respective schools by the conference’s Office of Education.

Congratulations and thanks to all students who participated, parents, teachers, and well wishers who attended the spelling bee. Special appreciation is extended to the Fondren church for hosting this event.

Evelyn M. Edwards

Shakuntala Ramsarran, superintendent of education
God loves children! This is a proven fact throughout scripture. In Matthew 18:10, we learn that every child has their own guardian angel, who reports directly to God regarding how they are being treated! In the same chapter, God promises a blessing on those who treat children kindly and a terrible curse on those who mistreat them.

Yes, God loves children! Once, while Christ was preaching, several children interrupted His sermon and were eager for His smile and blessing. Amazingly, Jesus stopped in the middle of His talk, much to the chagrin of His disciples, and started paying attention to the kids. Jesus then spoke His now famous words “Suffer the little children to come to me and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14).

God loves children, and if He loves children, then I believe He looks forward to summer camp! After all, summer camp is all about kids having fun and learning about Him. Whether they are swimming, skiing, canoeing, or horseback riding, summer camp is a place to meet with God through the great outdoors and spiritual gatherings, as well as the influence of Spirit-filled camp staff.

The evening concluded with a vegetarian/vegan cooking class by Lily Cabansag. A few of our members even shared some of their favorite recipes for a healthy vegetarian meal.

It was a great opportunity for sharing, fellowship, and promotion of healthful living.

The Arlington church’s Revive Community Care program includes ministries for the homeless of Fort Worth. Recently, Revive Street Ministry handed out socks on a cold day.

We, too, are looking forward to having summer camp at Lake Whitney Ranch June 2–July 14. For more information and to register your child, please go to the Texas Conference Web site at www.TexasAdventist.org, and visit our youth department page. If you need more details, please don’t hesitate to call our office at 817.790.2255 ext. 2203. Be sure to ask us about our busing options from Houston and the Valley, as well as our discount for our South Texas campers.

Gary Blanchard, youth director

Lily Cabansag provided information on vegan and vegetarian food preparation for the DFW Filipino church’s health expo.

Revive Community Care Provides for the Homeless

Under the leadership of Michael Aquitania, the DFW Filipino church kicked off the new year by organizing a health expo and reaching out to the neighboring communities in Arlington. Carter Blood Care was on site and was pleased with the donor response. Several members who are in the medical profession offered their services to do free health screenings, blood pressure, blood sugar tests, and give advice on lifestyle changes.

The Arlington church’s Revive Community Care program includes ministries for the homeless of Fort Worth. Recently, Revive Street Ministry handed out socks on a cold day.

and friendship every fourth Saturday of the month. This past December 29th, the church, along with Younger Generation, donated more than 800 pairs of socks to homeless men, women, and children. Taking the socks with donated coffee from Starbucks and yummy cookies, our team of volunteers personally served and handed out the socks. Many smiles and hugs later, the mission was accomplished and those in need were a little warmer on a cold winter day. If you would like to get involved, or just learn more about Revive, please contact us at ashley@arlingtonadventist.com, or visit us at www.arlingtonadventist.com.

Ashley Ortiz
The members at Grandview are always looking for ways to take that extra step to meet community needs. “It’s what Jesus would have us do. We need to show the community that we care about them. We want them to see Christ in us, and treat them the way He would want us to treat them,” said Jonathan Armstrong, pastor.

A few years ago, the church felt isolated and disconnected from the local community. “We had to change that. We needed to grow into the community,” said Marcia Dyche, the church’s food bank director.

In the past year, the Grandview Area Food and Clothing Bank has doubled the number of families it serves on a monthly basis. As the end of year and holidays rolled around, Dyche and the food bank’s volunteers prepared extra meal baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas, setting their goal to give out as many as 100 of these special food baskets for each holiday.

But even that was not enough; they chose to go a step further and give more. As Dyche saw the children that would come with their families each week as they picked up food, she realized that these folks were struggling to put food on the table and, perhaps, there would not be any money (or very little) for children’s Christmas gifts on their limited budgets. So she created a “Christmas store” just for the children of the families who depended on the food donations.

The Christmas store was a success! Dyche managed to raise more than $5,000 in donations, which was used to purchase toys. Other toys were donated, as well. Families signed up for the “store” through the food bank. The “store” became a one-day event at the church where the parents could pick out toys for each child. After that, volunteers would wrap the gifts for them to take home. While the parents shopped, their children gathered in the fellowship hall to decorate Christmas stockings and fill them with stocking stuffers. A photographer donated some time and gave out free pictures as a keepsake. The adults had as much fun as the nearly 175 children that were served. One of the guests said, “I’ve never seen a church so engaged with the community.”

It was not about giving out toys as much as it was about showing the real meaning for the season. As Jesus gave the ultimate gift, we, in turn, give our time and love to others. As the Grandview church takes these extra steps into the community, it helps to make a difference in the hearts of the local township. The church feels like the recipients will be one step closer to seeing the love of Christ.

“We are the ones being blessed, with each hug and every thank you and smile,” Armstrong said.

Since the Christmas store, there have been some exciting new developments. The church had an on-site compliance inspection in January, and a representative from the Tarrant Area Food Bank was excited to see that the church had moved to “total choice” in its food distribution process. In fact, she was so impressed that she couldn’t wait to get back to the office to tell the administration all about what the church was doing. Dyche received a call on the following Monday from the representative, who told her that the Tarrant Area Food Bank administration wanted to visit the Grandview food bank. Dyche and Armstrong have also been invited to be on a discussion panel at a statewide event for all of the partner agencies in Texas. By sharing the Grandview church’s success, they hope to convince other agencies that “total choice” is the best way to serve communities.

Jhan Beaupre
A New Start for an Old Mission Program

DeSoto » The DeSoto Sabbath School council voted on a new start for an “old mission program”—Sabbath School Investment Program. Over the years, Investment had almost become a forgotten mission within the DeSoto church. To lead out in resurrecting the program, Marion James, Sabbath School superintendent, asked Natalie Burden to help revive DeSoto’s Sabbath School investment program. Thus far, the DeSoto church has been blessed by her and other members’ efforts.

Sabbath School Investment has been a part of mission work in the Adventist Church for more than 100 years and could rightly be called “a partnership with God.” As G. Edward Reid, former stewardship director for the North American Division, stated, “The Investment idea starts in the mind of a person who is challenged by the concept of a ‘partnership with God’—making an initial investment in a project that is dedicated to God through the Sabbath School Investment Program.” With this concept in mind, DeSoto’s Sabbath School Investment program was launched. After discussing ways to jump start the program, the council voted to hold a Christmas bazaar as a way to provide a venue for members to market their projects and reap the benefits for Investment.

Preparations for the Christmas bazaar included three presentations and an Investment party that consisted of members getting together and making crafts for the bazaar. Church families contributed their projects and were supportive of one another at the Christmas bazaar. Members’ talents, time, and efforts contributed greatly to the opportunity for many to seal their “partnership with God.” As a result, $379.50 was raised for DeSoto’s “new-old” Investment program.

DeSoto members are encouraged to start their own individual projects, and Sabbath School classes will be encouraged to launch class projects. Ideas for Investment projects have been submitted to the church members. These projects include: sales, savings, self-denial, services, and praise. We invite you to join in this “new-old” way to “partnership with God.” You will be blessed—we are!

Marion James

Crafts created by DeSoto church members for a Christmas bazaar to support the church’s Sabbath School Investment program.
I grew up on a farm near Concordia, Missouri, population 1,200, where everybody knew your name. Recently, people from Concordia started Internet postings that began "You know you're from Concordia if ..." My sister posted "If a letter from California can get to you with the following address 'Uncle Woodrow, Concordia, Missouri.'" That was our dad's middle name. He received the letter with no problem. That letter had no zip code, no last name, and no street address, yet it got to my dad because everybody knew his name.

Country living has its blessings. We all knew each other, about 2,000 of us, including the farm population. We had a community culture steeped with Christian values: honesty, integrity, and the golden rule. We had no lawyers, no judges, and no police officers—only a night watchman. For the most part, people treated each other as they wished to be treated. You see, everybody knew your dad, your mom, your aunts, uncles, and family. Everybody knew your name.

This summer and fall, hundreds of youth will participate in camp meeting, summer camp, and then church school. At times, I've heard people say our system is inferior because it is small, but they are wrong. That is our advantage. A culture where everybody knows each other and there is communal responsibility is much better than masses of people in large camps, schools, or universities.

Small is better. When I grew up, many thought the large city schools prepared people for a better future, but my experience has shown me that education with communal responsibility is a better preparation for success. Some said my hometown education and culture was inferior, but most of my high school class started college when most of the city high school graduates did not. Most of our class members were successful, honest, caring people who contributed to their communities and to their families. To a greater extent, this was not true in the city environment.

The beauty of our Adventist system is that everybody knows your name. They're invested in you. They are a part of your physical, mental, social, and spiritual development. They're interested in preparing you for success in life and preparing you to meet Jesus when He comes.

You see, we are a community of believers. We work together under God with a common sense of vision, direction, and interdependence. We are dedicated to nurture, train, equip, and empower faith in each other. We know each other's names.

You and I are privileged to place our youth in places steeped in Christian values. We may be small by earth's standards, but we are preparing a generation to meet Jesus when He comes. Get your children in our camps, schools and universities, for youth ought to go where everybody knows their names.

James L. Stevens, president

From Heart Attack to Baptism

**PORTALES, N. MEX.** On Easter Sunday last year, Matt Stewart went to the emergency room at Roosevelt Hospital in Portales, where the doctor said he’d had a heart attack. This event caused him to consider the direction of his life. The following Sabbath, he was in church. When our head elder asked him where he was from he replied, "Portales. I had a heart attack." The elder said, “You don’t have to have a heart attack to come to church!"

That was the beginning of his continued attendance and, following Bible studies with our elder and Bible studies online, Matt made the wonderful decision to be baptized and become a part of the Portales church family, where his mother and step-father were already members.

As a boy, Matt attended church school in Dalles, Oregon, from third through eighth grade, and then on to Columbia Adventist Academy at Battle Ground, Washington. But, as time went on, he drifted into a lifestyle that was not spiritual. Matt believes the Lord has His hand on him and allowed him to experience a frightening episode to bring him to the place where he would return to Him. Matt was baptized on January 12, 2013 by Nehemias Basit, pastor.

Malinda Danforth

Matt Stewart being baptized by Nehemias Basit, pastor.
2013 Texico Convocation & Youth Festival
June 20-22, 2013
“A Chosen People”

MAIN SPEAKERS

**English:**
Dr. Carlton P. Byrd,
Breath of Life Speaker/
Director

**Spanish:**
Ruben Bullón,
Texas Evangelist

Albuquerque Convention Center
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Hotel Accommodations at DoubleTree Hotel
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SVA Scores Blessings at University’s Annual Hoops Classic

CORRALES, N. MEX. “Girls get the new van!” This was the shout as Sandia View Academy (SVA) boys and girls basketball teams loaded up for their trip to Keene, Texas. God blessed SVA with a gently-used 2004 Ford 12-passenger van just in time for their trip to Southwestern Adventist University’s 18th Annual Hoops Classic. Twenty of our Knights and Lady Knights basketball students worked very hard academically and physically in the weeks and months leading up to this year’s basketball tournament and made the 1,300-mile round trip safely. Both teams excitedly returned home with a trophy, first place for the second year in a row for the girls and fourth place for the boys. Below is the account of the event from junior, Christopher Ornelas.

“Teams at the Hoops Classic all seemed very excited to be there. There were many teams from all over the country, and even a team from Puerto Rico. The basketball players and team staff members were happy and very energized by all the activities going on in the different gyms. When teams would play against each other, there was a high level of competition, but they kept Christ in mind. At the end of each game, the players would congratulate the opponent. It was a beautiful thing to see, because no matter how important the games were to each individual player and to their school’s team, they still put Christ first.

Before each game, both competing teams would gather into a circle, and pray that there would no injuries, no fights, nor anything that didn’t reflect God. Aside from everyone being a part of a team, when the students who participated in the tournament went to vespers on Friday night, it was an amazing sight to see that no matter what team they represented or where they were from, they still represented God. This whole experience allowed people from different schools and places to meet each other and get different points of view of God. All of this was truly a blessing.”

Christopher Ornelas
Every spring break since 1999, Southwestern Adventist University nursing students provide a health clinic in the Dominican Republic. This year, Southwestern’s Enactus team will join forces with them to make an even bigger impact. They plan to purify drinking water by installing water filters.

“We do a lot of projects in our community, but the students wanted to do something international, as well,” said Aaron Moses, business professor and Enactus sponsor. “In the Dominican Republic, clean water is sparse and there is much disease as a result. The team decided they could help by installing water filters. Now, it’s growing into a long-term project.”

Partnering with Rotary International and another non-profit organization called Project Las Americas, two groups that have been installing water filters around the world for many years, provides stability to the project. Enactus hopes to build this project to include education and orphanage assistance as well as small business startups.

The price of the filters averages $70 to $80, but they are sold to the community members at an affordable price, averaging around $8.

“We can’t just give away the filters because then people won’t value them as much,” said Moses. “The difference in the price is subsidized by funds that Enactus is raising.”

The nursing aspect of the trip is a week-long health clinic. Students get the chance to gain valuable experience in the medical field, as well as help those in need. Advanced students conduct physical assessments and beginner students take basic vital signs, blood pressure, and complete other similar tasks. There is also a lot of other work that takes place in a clinic, such as pharmacy or reception work.

“This is a life-changing experience,” says Lolita Valdez, nursing professor and trip sponsor. “Students come to help people, but it also helps them.”

Aside from health projects, the students also provide an evangelistic series and Vacation Bible School each evening.

“During the trip, students are less distracted than during school, so they are more receptive spiritually. We often have students attend the trip that are not Seventh-day Adventists. I’ve had students approach me after the trip interested in knowing more about our religion.”

Another student she taught shared an experience from Vacation Bible School. Every evening, the children would sit on the floor to hear a Bible story. This student brought a blanket with her so she wouldn’t have to sit in the dirt. One night, she forgot her blanket. A little boy took off his jacket and gave it to her to sit on.

“You come back from the trip with a greater value of what you have,” said Valdez. “You realize the blessings you have. Also, you learn the spirit of giving.”

“I attended the trip in 2011,” says Emily Laughlin, junior nursing major. “It was probably one of the best experiences of my life. It caused me to look at the big picture of things. I would advise anyone to go if at all possible.”

“We’re so excited to have Enactus coming with us,” said Valdez. “Their water filtering project will be a big help, and it will be nice to have their help in the clinics, as well.

“We’re all excited,” said Moses. “It’s one of the reasons we started this project. We love helping people.”

Makala Coleman, sophomore journalism major

Above left: Nursing student Amy Adlon assists with dental hygiene.

▲ Nursing student Camille Marquez takes inventory of a little boy’s health issues.

◆ The nursing students lead out in Vacation Bible School after a full day at the clinic.
Some would argue that camp meeting is synonymous with the Adventist experience. For as far back as our collective denominational memories take us, camp meeting has been a place where believers gather once a year to rekindle relationships, form new ones, and to partake in shared worship experiences. In fact, some of the most memorable Adventist messages have been heralded from camp meeting pulpits.

The Texas Conference has had a rich history of camp meeting over the years. Many long-time members recall the days when camp meeting attendees from around the conference would camp across the street from the Leiske-Pultar gymnasium on the campus of Southwestern Adventist University.

Of course, that was well over a decade ago. Since then, camp meeting in Texas has taken on a different flavor. The centralized approach gave way to area rallies. Tents and gymnasiums were replaced by convention centers. Arguably, the changes were quite necessary, due to the growing size of the conference and long travel distances involved.

Last October, however, conference leaders were faced with an opportunity. Two large events scheduled at Lake Whitney Ranch afforded the opportunity for an event in between. With a sizable tent, portable restrooms and showers, and organized camping areas available, the decision was made to bring back an old friend—camp meeting.

The weekend attracted about 2,000 attendees and featured back-to-back and combined programs for both Spanish- and English-speaking congregations. Ismael Castillo, Sr., president of the University of Montemorelos, served as the main speaker for the Spanish programs, while Gary Venden, senior pastor of the Glendale, Arizona church, shared messages for the English-speaking crowd. Participants enjoyed the multi-language approach. One attendee commented that he enjoyed it because it helped him practice his language skills. Brititte Frayle from Dallas was grateful that the event exposed her to so many nationalities. Araceli Robles from Austin counted the event as a double blessing as she was able to attend and understand both sets of meetings.

Numerous musical guests graced the stage, including choirs from Chisholm Trail Academy, Jefferson Academy, a hand bell choir from San Marcos, and musical artists Ysis Espana, T.R.U.T.H., New Day, HIMIG, and Alfredo and Pricilla Barriga. In addition to worship services, the weekend featured a special question and answer session on doctrinal topics. Questions from the audience were addressed by a panel, which included pastors Ed Cook, Paul Hunt, and Dan Serns, along with Jorge Rico, professor of religion at Southwestern Adventist University, and Carlos Craig, president of the Texas Conference.

Those who attended were blessed. “This has been an inspiring weekend. I wish more people could have seen and felt the Holy Spirit here,” said Bill Wetmore, from Cleburne, Texas. Ruth Lopez from the Austin Spanish First church added, “I was blessed by my experience here.”

The weekend also featured an array of programs and service opportunities for teens, led out by Keith Gray and a team from Southwestern Adventist University. Carlos Reyes, a member of T.R.U.T.H., commented that Gray’s messages were compelling and that there was a lot of energy in the room. Service opportunities abounded. Teens and sponsors flooded the community with free literature and a service project on Sabbath afternoon. North Dallas Adventist Academy provided more than 30 students to help with camp meeting logistics.

Multiple tents were also set up for children’s classes. Margaret Taglavore, Southwestern Union children’s ministry coordinator, directed children’s activities and Sabbath School classes. Kevin Smith from Burleson, Texas, boldly proclaimed that he enjoyed the snacks and the art classes the best, while Tyler Castania from Egan, Texas, found that spending time outdoors chasing butterflies was worth remembering.

Overall, the weekend proved to be a success and a tent that would have otherwise sat empty for a week was used to draw people from around Texas to the foot of the cross.

Conference leaders are working closely with pastors and ministry leaders from around the conference in deciding whether a central camp meeting or a local approach is more effective in Texas. For now, the smells of trampled grass and the feel of cool wind blowing through a canvas tent linger, reminding us that, every so often, it’s good to come away and to reconnect—with each other and with God.
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**EMPLOYMENT**

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**Southwestern Adventist University** seeks full-time nurse educators in the areas of mental health, community health, or pediatrics. Master’s degree required; doctoral degree preferred. Must have some teaching experience and an unencumbered Texas nursing license. Contact Dr. Lenora Follett at 817.202.6670, or lenora.follett@swau.edu.

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**Seventh-day Adventist Guam Clinic** is embarking on a major expansion and is seeking physicians in Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, General Surgery, Orthopedic Surgery, Cardiology, Rheumatology, Pulmonology, Gastroenterology, OB/GYN, Urology, Pediatrics, ENT, Optometry, and Dermatology. Contact us to learn about our benefits and opportunities by calling 1.671.646.8881, ext. 116; e-mailing hr@guamsda.com; or visiting our Web site at www.adventistclinic.com.

**Adventist University of Health Sciences** is seeking applicants for an accounting, finance or economics professor for their new Master of Healthcare Administration program. A doctoral degree is required. Submit CV to: Dr. Benita David, Chair of Healthcare Administration, Adventist University of Health Sciences, 671 Winyah Drive, Orlando, FL 32803; benita.david@adu.edu.

**Adventist University of Health Sciences** seeks a Chair for the Department of Communication. Qualified candidates should have an earned doctorate in Speech-Language Pathology, CCC-SLP is required. For more information and to apply visit: http://www.andrews.edu/HR/emp_jobs_faculty.cgi.

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Walla Walla University seeks applicants for full-time, tenure-track faculty positions in Art, Mathematics, and Nursing to begin September 2013. For more information and application process, please visit http://jobs.wallawalla.edu. The positions will remain open until filled.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

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striking parallel between Christ’s
how to prepare now, and the
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Narducci, alumni@lasierra.edu,
CA. More information: Julie
Riverwalk Parkway, Riverside,
19-21. La Sierra University, 4500

Announcements

Jefferson Christian Academy Homecoming: April 19-21, 2013. Honor Classes 2008, 2003 and each ‘3 and ‘8 year class preced-
ing. Please come share your
memories.

Broadview Academy Alumni Weekend: Mark your calen-
dars, Alumni Weekend is April 26-27, 2013 at the N. Aurora
SDA Church, N. Aurora, IL. All alumni are encouraged to at-
tend. Call your classmates and start planning for this weekend
now. There will be Friday night vespers, Sabbath School, and
ideas and information welcome. For communication purposes,
we need your e-mail addresses as postage is too expensive.
Send your email address to: Ed Gutierrez, edjulie1aatt.net, or
call, 630.232.9034. More Infor-
mation to come. Don’t miss it!

ACA Homecoming 2013: One University Changing the World, Celebrating 50 Years of Adventist Colleges Abroad. April 19-21. La Sierra University, 4500 Riverwalk Parkway, Riverside, CA. More information: Julie
Narducci, alunni@lasierra.edu,
951.785.2578, www.lasierra.edu/

Oklahoma Academy’s Acad-
emy Days: If you are a student
who is serious about your walk
with the Lord and His mission
for your life, Oklahoma Academy
may be just right for you. Come
visit April 19-21, 2013 for our
Academy Days Weekend and
find out! Call 405.454.6211 to
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versity: You are invited to at-
tend Washington Adventist Uni-
versity’s Alumni Weekend, April
edu/alumni, or call 301.891.4133
for more information. We look
forward to seeing you!

“Ye Olde” Cedar Lake Acad-
emy Reunion will take place June 7-9, 2013 for alumni and
warmly welcomed school-
mates of 1963 and earlier at
Great Lakes Adventist Academy.
Cedar Lake, Michigan. Honor
classes: 1933, 1943, 1953, and
1963. Details will be forthcoming
by postal service. Also, you may
contact GLAA Alumni Office at
989.427.5181, or visit http://www.
glaa.net/ for further information.
Please pass the good word.

Southwestern Adventist Uni-
versity’s Alumni Homecoming
is April 11-14, 2013 and will be
honoring years ending in 8 and 3. For the latest information,
contact Bev Mendenhall, alumni
director, at 817.202.6232, or e-
mall her at benvm@swau.edu.

ADAMS, Delores Jane, born
February 24, 1942 in Kansas
City, Mo., and died January 26,
2013 in Springdale, Ark. She
was a member of the Gentry
durch. Delores was a graduate
of Ozark Adventist Academy and
attended Union College. She
was active in local programs
and activities and was part of the Ad-
arms Truss Company in Gentry.
She was preceded in death by
her husband, Fred Adams. Sur-
vivors: brother and sister-in-law,
Dale and Pat Adams, of Gentry;
sister and brother-in-law,
Diana and Anthony Hartfield, of
Decatur, Ark.; two nieces, one
nephew, and many friends who
will miss her.

ATKINS, Ernest, born August
25, 1932 and died November 14,
2012 in Shreveport, La. He was
a member of the Shreveport First
church. Survivors: wife, Erma
Jeanne Atkins, of Shreveport.

BACKES, Joshua Joseph, born
February 3, 1992 and died Janu-
ary 8, 2013 in Shreveport, La. He
was a member of the Shreveport
First church. Joshua had many
diverse interests as well as gifts
and talents. Whatever he cared
about, he was passionate about
it. Most of all, he was filled with
love, kindness, compassion, and
loyalty. He knew how to put
family first but his friends were
not left behind. Joshua lived his
life like his Biblical namesake. He
was strong and courageous, and
he knew God was with him.
Joshua died after a long,
valiant struggle with Marfan syn-
drome. Joshua was preceded in
death by his father, Malcome Jo-
seph Backes. Survivors: mother,
Lisa Spivey Backes; aunt, Holly
Spivey; his father’s family, Mal-
colm and Deanna; grandparents,
dale and Pat Adams, of Gentry;
sister and brother-in-law,
Diana and Anthony Hartfield, of
Decatur, Ark.; two nieces, one
nephew, and many friends who
will miss her.

KRETZ, Richard Lee, born
June 4, 1924 in Shattuck, Okla.,
and died February 2, 2013 in
Temple, Tex. After graduating
from Southwestern Junior Col-
lege in Keene, Tex., in 1944 and
Union College in Lincoln, Neb.,
in 1946, he spent 40 years in
ministry working for the church
as a pastor, boys’ dean, Bible
teacher, and various conference
positions. He was a conference
ministerial director at the time
of his retirement in 1986. After
his retirement, he was an active
and sought-after guest speaker.
He was preceded in death by
divial struggle with Marfan syn-
drome. Joshua was preceded in
death by his father, Malcome Jo-
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Lisa Spivey Backes; aunt, Holly
Spivey; his father’s family, Mal-
colm and Deanna; grandparents,
dale and Pat Adams, of Gentry;
sister and brother-in-law,
Diana and Anthony Hartfield, of
Decatur, Ark.; two nieces, one
nephew, and many friends who
will miss her.

LAFFOON, Martha, born
August 20, 1927 in Mansfield,
La., and died January 11, 2013 in
Vivian, La. Martha worked as a
bookkeeper until her parents be-
came ill, then she cared for them
and other elderly friends. She
was a life-long member of the
Adventist Church. She spent
many happy hours with her
family and doing her hobbies
of sewing, knitting and painting
porcelain dolls. She was pre-
ceded in death by her parents;
sisters, Doris Williams and Betty
Dixon; husband, Roscoe Lafoon;
and best friend, Jim Rogers. Sur-
vivors: four nieces and nephews
and numerous cousins.

LIBERTO, Vinita Norris, born
August 2, 1916 in Success, Ark.,
and died September 26, 2012 in
Atlanta, Ga. She was a long-time
member of the Shreveport First
church. She married Joseph

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and one grandchild.  


**TAYLor, James Gerrain**, born November 26, 1927 in Rec- tor, Ark., and died January 6, 2013 in Springdale, Ark. He was a member of the Bentonville church. James had served as a pastor of the Bentonville church in the later years of his ministry. Frank Sherrill invited James into the gospel ministry in 1977, recognizing that God had placed a burden and a call into gospel work upon his life. James, known by many as Gerrain, had devoted many hours of his time holding meetings and giving Bible studies in the area surrounding Gentry, Ark. He was working as a builder, but the Lord laid a deep concern in his heart for sharing God’s messages with others. He and his wife, Ella Taylor, pastored many churches in Arkansas and Arizona during their years of ministry. He will be remembered for his gentle, soft-spoken manner and his love for sharing the gospel with others. Survivors: sons, Wesley Whitten, of Shreveport, La.; son and daughter-in-law, Paul Whitten, of Elysian Fields, La.; daughter, Stephanie Whitten, of La Center, Wash.; and Karen Minucci, of Grapevine, Tex.; son-in-law, Don Strecker, brother and sister-in-law, Ray, Jr., and Jean Horton, of Bethany, La.; sister and brother-in-law, Mary Lou and David Whisman, of Livingston; sister and brother-in-law, Patsy and Melvin Dobson, of Lawton, Okla.; sister-in-law, Sandra Horton, of Panola, brother-in-law, Greg Schulte, of Pickens, S.C.; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other relatives, a host of friends, and her very good clowning companion, Hattie.  

**WHITE, Dolores Elizabeth**, born October 17, 1931 in Washington, D.C. and died December 25, 2012 in Marshall, Tex. She was a member of the Shreveport First church. Dolores spent her life as a caregiver to others. Her clown persona brought happiness to countless people and filled her life with joy. She was a member of the Shreveport First Seventh-Day Adventist Church. She was preceded in death by her parents; husbands, Pablo Cabrero, Lippert, of Grapevine, Tex.; son, Steve Spears, of Denver, Colo.; daughters, Susan Loor, of La Center, Wash., and Karen Lippert, of Altamonte Springs, Fla.; brothers, Gary Spears, of Lebanon, Tenn., and Don Spears, of Collegeade, Tenn. and Hospital School of Nursing. Following graduation, she worked as a nurse and then became a director at Memorial Hospital of Southern Oklahoma. She remained as clinical director for 30 years until her retirement in 1985. She fully retired from nursing in 2001. She is survived by cousins, coworkers, and friends.  

**WHITTEN, hallie Tressie**, born February 24, 1914 and died December 19, 2012 in Shreveport, La. She was a member of the Shreveport First church. Survivors: sons, Wesley Whitten, L.J. Whitten, Paul Whitted, Lloyd Whitten and Kenneth Whitten; daughters, Helen Jenkins and Betty Matheny; 23 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren, and nine great-great-grandchildren.
It’s Time to Get Away!

HAVE YOU EVER FELT SO CAUGHT UP IN THE BUSYNESS AND STRESSES OF LIFE that you just longed to get away to a quiet place? Has it ever seemed that you were so busy serving God that you couldn’t focus on sensing His presence and just getting to know Him better? I certainly have felt that way, and if you’re honest, you’ve probably been there too. It’s for that reason—and more—that the Adventist Church makes provisions for every member to attend a yearly camp meeting. Though camp meetings come in various “flavors,” depending on which one you choose, they all have one purpose, which is to “lead all [members] to separate from business cares and burdens, and devote a few days exclusively to seeking the Lord” (Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 601).

I love camp meeting for many reasons—the preaching, the music, the fellowship, and (especially!) the camp meeting book sales. But one of my favorite things about camp meeting is the opportunity to get out into nature. Did you know that being in natural surroundings has been proven to have a restorative effect on our physical and mental health? Spending time in the sunlight and fresh air, and observing and appreciating the green plants and trees, as well as the animals that God made has been scientifically shown to elevate our mood and enhance our wellbeing. But the physical and psychological benefits of being out in nature are just a portion of the blessings we receive at camp meeting. Listen to this: “In retired places, where we are farthest from the corrupting maxims, customs, and excitements of the world, and nearest to the heart of nature, Christ makes His presence real to us, and speaks to our souls of His peace and love” (Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 424). If you haven’t already made plans to attend camp meeting this year, be sure to carve out a few days from your busy schedule to get away and spend some time seeking the Lord. And if you are a parent (or grandparent, aunt, or uncle) of children who are summer camp age, please do whatever it takes to get them to summer camp this year. You (and your loved ones) will be glad you did!
I enrolled at Southwestern after winning a music scholarship during Southwestern’s Music Festival 2011. Because of my experiences singing at the Meyerson, I’ve had many requests to sing for programs and church services. I’m also a member of the University Singers, traveling to places like Puerto Rico and performing for the U.S. Senate. Today, I’m a nursing major with a music ministry.

Elaine, Nursing Major