Mountain View Member Puts God Above a Baseball Championship

When the Mountain Ridge Miners High School baseball team prepared to compete in the 2012 state championship game, they knew one of their coaches would not make the trip. Gene Harden, the team’s assistant coach and an active member of Mountain View Conference’s Frostburg (Md.) church, would not be able participate because the championship game would be played on Sabbath.

At the beginning of the season, Coach Harden explained to the players that he made a commitment to always honor the Sabbath, and thus would not be present at games played on Saturday. Harden (pictured, left, with his team) has played baseball since age 7 and coached for many years. Along with other coaches, Harden frequently prays with the team at practices, and gives team members his cell phone number. “I care about these kids,” Harden says. But would he compromise his beliefs to coach the championship game?—Story by Scott Shafer

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Ohio Conference Appoints New Education Superintendent

After several months of searching, the Ohio Conference Executive Committee yesterday selected Alison Jobson (pictured) as the conference’s Education superintendent. Jobson has been serving as associate superintendent since last July. During her brief tenure with the conference, she performed the duties of both positions as well as developed and maintained educational social media for the department.

“It is my humble privilege to serve the Ohio Conference Seventh-day Adventist school system in this new capacity,” said Jobson. “With Christ’s guidance, I hope to continue the Office of Education’s legacy of excellence that supports our teachers, students and families in His local mission field.”

In a communication to conference teachers and school administrators, Raj Attiken, conference president, said, Jobson “has demonstrated her intense passion for Adventist Christian education, a high level of competency and skills and a strong commitment to excellence. Her deep desire to support our educators in their ministry and mission has been very evident. We are confident that you will find in Alison an effective leader, a caring mentor and a consummate professional.”

The associate superintendent position, which now becomes vacant, will not be filled at this time.—Story by Heidi Shoemaker

How a Potomac Member Found God While Facing a 91-year Prison Sentence

As the metal door clanged shut and the solitude of “the hole”—as it was known by the prisoners at the Staunton (Va.) Correctional Center—started to settle in, the warden’s words continued to ring in his ears: “I know you believe in God. Well, this is going to test your faith. We’ll see you in 60 days.”
He never expected his life to turn out like this. Born in 1957 to a hardworking family man, Lenroy Chapman, now a member of Potomac Conference’s Woodbridge (Va.) church and an active conference Prison Ministries member, watched his father work hard to care for him, his nine brothers and four sisters. As a teenager in the late 60s and early 70s, Chapman found himself surrounded by drugs. Temptations grew, and with prodding from his younger brother, Curt, the two soon started stealing from homes to help fund their drug habit. When those items failed to fully satisfy their growing addictions, Curt purchased a pistol, which they used to hold up grocery stores in neighboring towns.—Story by Dan Jensen

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Allegheny West Hispanic Church Gets Columbus Families Moving

As part of their efforts to minister to neighbors in the eastern part of Columbus, Ohio, Allegheny West Conference’s Central Hispanic church used an $8,000 grant from the National Latino Children Institute, to host a unique 10-week health program. Under the title “Salsa, Sabor & Salud (Music, Flavors & Health),” church members provided Hispanic children and their families with tips and insights on health and physical activity.

Every Sabbath afternoon for the 10 weeks, church members donned colorful T-shirts and started the adventure. The program was set up like Vacation Bible School with a twist of health and exercise, and included crafts, healthy snacks, physical activities and games. A total of 50 area families participated and experienced the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

“It was a blessing to see children and parents exercising together and encouraging one another to make a small change,” shared Katty Castro (pictured with her children), who helped
lead the initiative along with Pastor William Ovalle, Olivia Ramos and Aracelis Hernandez. “Every church member was fully involved in different functions, which resulted in a great triumph.”

La iglesia Central Hispanic hace que las familias de Columbus se movilicen

Como parte de sus esfuerzos por ministrar a los vecinos de la parte este de Columbus, Ohio, la iglesia Central Hispanic de Allegheny West Conference recientemente presentó un programa único de diez semanas usando una subvención de $8,000 de National Latino Children Institute [instituto nacional de niños latinos]. Bajo el título “Salsa, Sabor & Salud,” los miembros de la iglesia proveyeron a los niños hispanos y sus familias consejos e ideas sobre la salud y la actividad física.

Cada sábado de tarde durante diez semanas, los miembros de iglesia se pusieron camisetas coloridas y comenzaron la aventura. El programa se organizó como una escuela bíblica de vacaciones con un giro inesperado sobre la salud y el ejercicio, e incluyó manualidades, aperitivos saludables, actividades y juegos físicos. Un total de cincuenta familias del área participaron y experimentaron los beneficios de un estilo de vida saludable.

“Fue una bendición ver niños y padres haciendo ejercicio juntos y animarse unos a otros para lograr cambios pequeños”, compartió Katty Castro, que ayudó a dirigir la iniciativa con el pastor William Ovalle, Olivia Ramos, y Aracelis Hernández. “Cada miembro de la iglesia participó de lleno en diferentes funciones, lo que resultó en un gran triunfo”.

Columbia Union ASI Convention Themed “Closed for Sabbath”

Business owners and church members are invited to attend this year’s Columbia Union Adventist-laymen's Services & Industries (ASI) Convention at Pennsylvania Conference's Allentown church. Themed “Closed For Sabbath,” the event will feature Volker Schmidt.
Mountain View Member Puts God Above a Baseball Championship

(pictured) of Eastlex Machines. Schmidt, an ASI member from the Southern Union and his father, were the inventors of machines that helped the denim industry of New York to fasten the buttons and loops on their jeans.

There will also be seminars and presentations to help attendees better prepare for personal and church evangelism. The seminars include “Vocal Hygiene” with Edward Jackson, “Church Evangelism” with Lillian Torres and “Mental Health in Ministry” with Jennifer Schirzer. Attendees will also gain specific ideas for promoting their business and ministry. This year’s special feature includes the Musicians’ Guild and a premiere presentation from the Physicians’ Guild. To register, click here. The convention will be held March 8-9. The Allentown church is located at 2140 Tilghman Street.—Story by Natasha Iheme

New Jersey Members Host Blood Drive, Nutrition Class

“It is fascinating to me that Jesus gave His blood to save humanity,” said Delma Avila, the Health and Temperance leader at New Jersey Conference’s Wayne church, when asked why she helped organize and then participate in a blood drive at the church. “To have the opportunity—in cooperation with Christ—of somehow alleviating someone’s pain just blows my mind. This is an opportunity I didn’t want to miss!”

The recent blood drive, which the church has hosted twice a year since 2008, attracted 23 people and was a mix of community and church members. During the blood drive, the church also hosted a nutrition seminar and cooking class. Efrain Avila, who is a trained chef; Sunday Blum, a former restaurant owner; Susie Bayola, a registered nurse; and Delma, a nutrition and food science graduate student; led the seminar.

Seminar leaders spoke about the importance of a good breakfast, proper portion sizes and
Pennsylvania Church’s Toy Drive Blesses 36

Pennsylvania Conference’s Mon Valley church in Belle Vernon recently held their annual toy drive for families in the community. The fun began with the toy drive committee going shopping with monies donated by the congregation, and continued with making cookies and treats for the families who attended. Each child picked out a toy, while the older children received gift cards to Walmart. This is the third year for the toy drive, and 36 children, aged 3 months to 16, were blessed with gifts, treats and Christian literature. A couple of the parents even showed interest in the church and its services. There was one request for Bible studies.—Amy Williams/MiPaConference News

Chesapeake Member Shares Success Lessons in Joseph’s Memoirs

In March 2001, Hugh Rowe, who attends Chesapeake Conference’s Pikesville (Md.) church, found himself unemployed and way over his head in debt. “I had made bad financial decisions and thought having a job would have cushioned these decisions until I became the victim of downsizing,” he said. “Determined to be the victor, I went to the Lord in prayer: ‘Dear Father, I do not wish for You to continuously provide me with daily bread, but instead, teach me to manage Your bakery so I can help feed others.'”
After that prayer, the Lord led Rowe to the story of Joseph, the 11th son of Jacob. Inspired by the story, Rowe penned *Joseph’s Memoirs: Life Lessons for a Successful You*. The book share’s Joseph’s first-person account of what made him successful as he led Egypt through one of its worst recessions. Click here to read more about the book.

**Filmmakers Invited to Pitch Their Ideas for $10,000**

At the upcoming SONscreen Festival, filmmakers could win $10,000 in seed money to work with the North American Division’s Office of Communication in producing an outreach film. Filmmakers can share their ideas during the festival’s “Pitch Fest” session. Preselected festival attendees will have the opportunity to pitch a film idea to a panel of judges that will ultimately select...
a winner. Interested filmmakers should submit their film treatment no later than March 25 to the festival executive director to be considered for the Pitch Fest. Film treatments should follow the themes of the festival (redemption, tolerance, equality, truth and hope).

The Pitch Fest will be held Thursday, April 4, from 8:30 to 10 p.m., in connection with the SONscreen Film Festival, April 4-6, at the Adventist Media Center in Simi Valley, Calif. Watch this video invitation to SONscreen to learn more.—Story by NAD Newspoints

UPCOMING EVENTS

Click here for a complete listing of upcoming events around the Columbia Union Conference.

MARYLAND

March 3-9: The Emmanuel-Brinklow church presents "Bondages & Breakthroughs," a life transformation week (except Tuesday and Thursday). The program will help attendees confront the issues that cause bondage, addiction, resentment, depression, pain and personal suffering. Speakers will include Dexter Manley, former Super Bowl NFL defensive player for the Washington Redskins. For more information, visit emmanueladventist.org.

March 4: Sligo church is inviting women interested in supporting the Scholarshipping Our Sisters program to attend a discussion about starting a chapter at the church. Scholarshipping Our Sisters is a program of GC Women’s Ministries to help Adventist women attending colleges around the world. The program will be in Fellowship Room A and starts at 7 p.m. The church is located at 7700 Carroll Avenue in Takoma Park, Md.

March 8: The Frederick Adventist School (FAS) in Frederick, Md., is hosting a Pre-K and Kindergarten Experience Day from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Interested parents and their students will get to observe, firsthand, what FAS has to offer. To reserve a spot, call the school at (301) 663-0363 or send an email to FrederickAdventistSchool@gmail.com.

March 10: Nancy Link, a member of the Dupont Park church in Washington, D.C., will be at the Potomac Adventist Book Store from 2-4 p.m. to sign copies of her new book Aunt Nancy’s Road Called Faith: A Poetic Biography. The store is located at 12004 Cherry Hill Road in Silver Spring, Md.

OHIO

March 15: Committed, an Adventist a cappella singing group, will perform a free concert at the Kettering church. The group of six young men were the season 2 champions on NBC’s hit singing competition The Sing Off. The concert starts at 7:30 p.m. The church is located at 3939 Stonebridge Road in Kettering. Admission is free, and everyone is welcome.
A freewill offering will be collected.

March 23-24: At Ohio Ministry University, attendees will answer the question, “What kind of REPUTATION does your church have in your community?” During the two-day training, attendees will learn how to construct a reputation that rightly conveys the values Jesus wants His church to express. The program begins at 4 p.m. on Sabbath and ends at noon on Sunday. It will be held at the Embassy Suites Columbus Airport Hotel in Columbus. The registration deadline for commuters is March 11, so register with your pastor now. For more information, contact Heidi Shoemaker at (740) 397-4665, ext. 165.

PENNSYLVANIA
March 8-9: The Columbia Union ASI Spring/Convention—New Beginnings/Abundant Living Evangelism Training will be held at the Allentown (Pa.) church, which is located at 2140 West Tilghman Street. For more information and to register, visit www.Plusline.org, click on Event Registration, then click on Columbia Union ASI Chapter Convention.

WEST VIRGINIA
March 29-31: The Mountain View Conference is hosting its second annual Young Adult Prayer Conference at the Valley Vista Adventist Center in Huttonsville, W.Va. Attendees will have plenty of time for prayer, relaxation and growing closer to God. For more information and to register, contact Geoff Starr, conference Youth Ministries director, at (304) 834-2131 or mitchellstarr@gmail.com.

NEW YORK
March 13-17: The North American Division’s 2013 Health Summit especially for the Atlantic, Columbia and Lake unions will be held in Flushing, N.Y. There will be more than 20 seminars on topics from fitness and lifestyle to mental and emotional health. There will also be a special track for pastors and clergy, a track for nurses and seminars for healthcare leaders, all with practical help for outreach. Get some hands-on experience in health evangelism. Enjoy the great keynote speakers. Attend evening health sessions for the community. Click here to register now.

NATIONAL
September 1: Enter the 2014 "Forever Faithful" International Camporee theme songwriting contest by September 1. Click here to enter the contest. If your submission is chosen, you could win two free tickets to the camporee and the honor of having your music become the 2014 "Forever Faithful" International Camporee official theme song. For more information, contact Justin Yang or Stacy-Ann Thomas.

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To send us a news story or announcement, email us at visitor@columbiaunion.net. The deadline for all submissions is 12 p.m. each Tuesday.

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Frostburg (W.Va.) member Gene Harden (center) enjoys coaching a high school baseball team and teaching them about honoring personal commitments.

When the Mountain Ridge Miners High School baseball team from Frostburg, Md., prepared to compete in the 2012 state championship game, they knew one of their coaches would not make the trip. Gene Harden, the team’s assistant coach and an active member of Mountain View Conference’s Frostburg (Md.) church, would not be able participate because the championship game would be played on Sabbath. At the beginning of the season, “Coach Harden” explained to the players that he made a commitment to always honor the Sabbath, and thus would not be present at games played on Saturday.

Harden has played and coached baseball since age 7. More importantly, he says, “I care about these kids.” Along with other coaches, Harden frequently prays with the team at practices, and gives team members his cell phone number. Graduates from three years ago still call to “talk with coach.” Harden says, “Baseball has done so much for me, and I am glad I can do something to make a difference in the lives of these kids.”

After starting the season with a record of 6 and 5, the Miners only lost one more game in a 26-game season to qualify for postseason play. Defeating a strong pitcher in the semifinals, the team advanced to play the defending champions at Ripken Stadium in Aberdeen, Md. At a short practice on Friday afternoon, Coach Harden reminded the team, “I will not be with you, but I’ll pray for you.” Later team members told other coaches, “This must be awfully important to Coach Harden for him not to go with us.” Relating the experience, Coach Harden says, “It was a hard thing, but I wanted the kids to know that there are things a lot more important than baseball.”

The team went on to win 2–1 on a two-out double in the last inning to claim the state championship title. Coach Harden met the team after sundown as they celebrated in a
parade through downtown Frostburg, and described the experience as the “highlight of my life.”

When asked what he would say to others who are facing Sabbath challenges, Harden shares, “It is a very difficult thing. There can be no compromise. If you compromise one time, you compromise everything. You will be rewarded if you do not sway from what you know.”

COMMENTS POLICY: The Columbia Union Conference Visitor encourages quality conversation and welcomes your thoughtful comments. All comments are subject to approval but will not be edited.

Please limit your comments to 500 words or less. Only one comment per person will be published.
February 28, 2013

How a Potomac Member Found God During a 91-year Prison Sentence

Story by Dan Jensen
Published 2/26/13

As the metal door clanged shut and the solitude of “the hole”—as it was known by the prisoners at the Staunton (Va.) Correctional Center—started to settle in, the warden’s words continued to ring in his ears: “I know you believe in God. Well, this is going to test your faith. We’ll see you in 60 days.”

He never expected his life to turn out like this. Born in 1957 to a hard working family man, Lenroy Chapman, now a member of Potomac Conference’s Woodbridge (Va.) church and an active conference Prison Ministries member, watched his father work hard to care for him, his nine brothers and four sisters. His father was not only a custodian for the National Bank, a job he held for 30 years, he also owned Chapman’s Bicycle Shop in Fredericksburg, Va.

As a teenager in the late 60s and early 70s, Chapman found himself surrounded by drugs. Temptations grew, and with prodding from his younger brother, Curt, the two soon started stealing from homes to help fund their drug habit. When those items failed to fully satisfy their growing addictions, Curt purchased a pistol, which they used to hold up grocery stores in neighboring towns. One thing led to another, and before he could comprehend the level of his crimes, Lenroy and Curt started holding up banks up and down the Eastern Seaboard.

The FBI started watching Curt’s home in 1980, then finally arrested him in Dumfries, Va. Lenroy got away, however, and ran to Bowling Green, Va., where he continued his life of crime. His luck ran out one year later, caught by the police after holding up a bank in Triangle, Va. He can still remember the judge declaring, “I hereby sentence Lenroy Chapman to 91 years of confinement, to be served out in the state of Virginia!”

Life “on the inside,” as Lenroy calls it, was a life filled with fear. “You never knew when someone was going to come up from behind and stab or hurt you,” he explains. “The only
peace I found was in my prison cell, locked away from the other prisoners.”

After two or three years, Lenroy knew he couldn’t live the rest of his life with this fear. “I heard there was someone named Pastor Neil from the Triangle Lutheran Church who came to meet with the prisoners,” he recalls. “I felt something tell me to start studying with him. When I did, I finally found peace against the storms. I truly believe finding God saved me from committing suicide.”

In what Lenroy believes was a mistake by the prison system, he was granted parole in late February 1991, just 10 years after his sentencing. He was a week away from release, preparing for life “on the outside,” when his grandmother passed away. Lenroy received a day pass to attend the funeral, but “I knew something wasn’t right,” he said. “I felt it as I left the prison.” He would soon find out just how bad things were about to get.

CLICK HERE to read more of Chapman’s story at the Potomac Conference website.

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Upcoming Events Around the Columbia Union

MARYLAND
March 5-6: Do you need more energy in your life? Plan to attend Health Quest at 7:15 p.m. at the General Conference Auditorium (12501 Old Columbia Pike in Silver Spring) for two evenings of life-changing presentations on your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Admission is FREE, but tickets are required. To register and obtain tickets, call 1-800-957-7171.

March 10: Nancy Link, a member of the Dupont Park church in Washington, D.C., will be at the Potomac Adventist Book Store from 2-4 p.m. to sign copies of her new book Aunt Nancy’s Road Called Faith: A Poetic Biography. The store is located at 12004 Cherry Hill Rd in Silver Spring, Md.

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