Weekly News From Around the Columbia Union Conference

March 12, 2014

WAU Men Win National Basketball Championship

For the first time in the school’s history, the Washington Adventist University (WAU) Shock won the United States Collegiate Athletics Association (USCAA) Men’s Basketball Division I National Championship. The game took place this past weekend in Uniontown, Pa. The Takoma Park, Md., university scored 61 points to Tennessee Temple University’s 38 points.

Senior Anthony Berry and freshman Tyrus Fleetwood both scored 15 points in the winning effort, and each landed a spot on the all-tournament team. “This team not only did well on the court, but also off the court. They displayed the core values of Washington Adventist University all throughout the season,” says Weymouth Spence, university president. “In my eyes they are not only basketball champions but they are WAU champions.”—Story by USCAA and WAU Staff
Interim President Named to Adventist HealthCare

Terry Forde, the executive vice president and chief operating officer for Adventist HealthCare (AHC), has been named the organization’s interim president and CEO. Forde begins his new role next month when current president and CEO William G. “Bill” Robertson will take on a new position in Washington state.

Forde joined AHC, based in Gaithersburg, Md., in July 2011. Since then, he has overseen the organization’s Maryland entities and operations, recruited several top executives and helped AHC successfully adapt to the many changes that have occurred at both the state and national levels. Forde previously served as an executive for eight years with Centura Health, the largest health system in Colorado.—Story by Tom Grant

Spring Valley Breaks Fundraising Records
Because of the generosity of some 270 attendees to Spring Valley Academy’s gala on Sunday, the school board was able to raise a record-breaking $230,000. The funds will go to support the development of the chapel and the worth student fund that makes an Adventist education possible for some 35 percent of the students who attend the day school in Centerville, Ohio. Frank Perez, school board chair, reported that even after their Emerald City Gala event, they received an additional $10,000 in unsolicited gifts.

“I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart … What an incredible Blessing you all are,” Perez wrote to supporters, before signing off as “proud and humbled.” Pictured are Zach Macomber (Scarecrow), Dan Stevens (Tin Man), Greta Shull (Dorothy) and Jarrod McNaughton (Cowardly Lion).

Potomac Church Recognizes Filmmaker Martin Doblmeier

Last Sabbath members of Potomac Conference’s Community Praise Center (CPC) in Alexandria, Va., presented the 2014 Henry M. Wright Education Innovation Award to filmmaker Martin Doblmeier. Doblmeier has made three films about Seventh-day Adventists, most recently The BLUEPRINT: The Story of Adventist Education, which will begin airing on PBS stations next month.
According to Ronnie Mills, leader of the church’s Home and School Department and chair of the Adventist Education Day Committee, the award, sponsored by CPC, is “given to an individual or institution that has had a significant positive impact on Adventist education.”

Doblmeier said it was a great honor to receive the award. “Adventist education has a wonderfully rich tradition, and I am grateful to have played a small part in letting that story be more widely known,” he said.—Story by CPC and Visitor Staff

5 Questions for Larry Blackmer

It was Larry Blackmer, vice president for education for the North American Division, who pitched the idea for Martin Doblmeier’s third documentary about Seventh-day Adventists—The BLUEPRINT: The Story of Adventist Education. In an online interview, Celeste Ryan Blyden, Visitor publisher, asked him why he did so, why he still believes our schools are worth attending, who his favorite teacher was and what he’s praying about right now:

Celeste Ryan Blyden: Why are you excited about Martin Doblmeier’s latest film about Adventist education? Why did you want that story told?

Larry Blackmer: We spend a great deal of time talking to ourselves, sharing the good things about Adventist education and doing an autopsy on things we don’t like. But. seldom do we get the opportunity to share our story with the general public in the kind of format The BLUEPRINT: offers. Martin Doblmeier is a master storyteller, and I knew that if he spent time in our schools, with our teachers and students that he would share a compelling story, which he has!

READ MORE

Chesapeake Pathfinders “Blow it” at Rain Gutter Regatta
Pathfinders converged from all across the Chesapeake Conference to participate in the first, conference-wide Rain Gutter Regatta, held recently at the Atholton church in Columbia, Md. More than 150 boats—an armada—competed in the timed races. There were up to 20 lanes per race, adding to the competitive tension.

"We always encourage our Pathfinders not to blow it," laughs Carl Rodriguez, Youth Ministries director. "But, this time around we did. [We encouraged them] to blow, blow and blow their sail boats to the finish line."

The regatta joins the pinewood derby—and possibly radio controlled monster truck mound racing—in a rotation of creative Pathfinder pursuits. Pictured is Brianna Valmond, 14, of the West Wilmington church's Wolverines Pathfinder Club in Wilmington, Del., breathing wind into the sail of her little boat to push it toward the finish line.—Story by Samantha Young; Photo by Charles Koerting

George E. Peters Students Sweep Science Fair

This year students at the George E. Peters Adventist School in Hyattsville, Md., came in first place in three out of four categories in Allegheny East Conference’s annual science fair. Participants were selected to represent their school at the
regionals based on their placement in a local science fair. To prepare for the conference-wide fair, they received science, technology, engineering and math journals to sojourn through a 90-day process of exploration and discovery.

The first-place winners for the following categories are: kindergarten, Mikal Witherspoon from G.E. Peters; primary, Gwen Straker from G.E. Peters; elementary, Siegfried Howell from the Sharon Temple Adventist School in Wilmington, Del.; and middle, Jennae Whitted from G.E. Peters. The fair was held at the Wilbert F. Mays Adventist School in Teaneck, N.J. Pictured is primary winner Gwen Straker with G.E. Peters' Karen McKinnie, science teacher, and John Alberty, principal.—Story by Shayla-René Little

Kettering Celebrates 50 Years of Medical Ministry

Monday, March 3 marked the 50th anniversary of when Kettering Medical Center first opened its doors as a 300-bed medical facility in Kettering, Ohio. The lone hospital has since expanded to include Kettering College, seven hospitals, eight emergency rooms and more than 75 outpatient facilities in greater Dayton and northern Cincinnati.

One of founder George B. Nelson's goals was to awaken a spirit of inquiry in visitors. He wanted all visitors to the hospital to wonder, "What is different about this place?" 'Why is Saturday a quiet day here?' 'Why do you recommend that I modify my diet?' 'What do you recommend that I do to be safe?' " Read more about the hospital in this month's issue of the Visitor magazine.

Is the End Near for Brick-and-Mortar ABCs?
When two ABCs in the Columbia Union closed at the end of last year, one in Mount Vernon, Ohio, the other in Hamburg, Pa., some members say they felt the loss keenly. Bob Hoyt, a retired pastor and member of Ohio’s Mount Vernon City church, says, “I spent over 25 years in the publishing work, followed by 25 years in the ministry. I see [a] tragic mistake taking place. … The ABC is a strong evangelistic tool for witnessing to [the community].”

Keeping open a physical outlet for the Seventh-day Adventist message was the main reason the Pacific Press Publishing Association in Nampa, Idaho, eventually took over the management of as many as 26 North American ABCs.

“About 15 years ago, some local conferences were ready to close their stores. The stores were just too expensive to operate, and they were taking precious funds away from the conference’s evangelism programs,” explains Jerry Thomas, a vice president at Pacific Press. “Rather than see that happen, Pacific Press entered into management agreements with these conferences … hoping that time would lead to a way to operate the ABCs efficiently.”—Story by Taashi Rowe

READ MORE

NAD Responds to Reality Show Featuring Adventist Family
The Lifetime reality show, *Preacher’s Daughters*, which features a Seventh-day Adventist pastor’s family, elicited a response from the North American Division (NAD). In one episode, Tori Elliott, the daughter of the Adventist pastor, shows up to church on Sabbath nursing a hangover.

Here is an excerpt from the NAD statement, “Although we were unaware of the family’s involvement in this program, and it misrepresents some of the standards and principles of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we care deeply about the issues raised. It sheds light on the challenges that are unique to pastors and their families, and we empathize with their experience.” The statement also included resources for the families of pastors.

On NAD’s Facebook page, there is already some discussion about the show. One commenter said, “[the family] thought it was a good way to share the message throughout the world … No other [Adventist] has taken on this opportunity as such … Tori … is not ashamed to be transparent.” Visit our Facebook page and let us know what you think about the show.

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**World Leaders to Discuss “Alternative Sexualities” in South Africa**

World church leaders are headed to South Africa next week for the “In God’s Image: Scripture, Sexuality and Society Summit.” According to a statement on the conference’s website, the purpose of the summit is “to have a conversation with key people in the global leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, to gain a greater understanding of the issues surrounding alternative sexualities, and to counsel together regarding the challenges the church is facing in this area, in order to find a way to be redemptive as well as obedient to the teachings of Scripture in a more consistent manner around the world.”

Presenters include Ted Wilson, General Conference president; Bill Knott, editor of the *Adventist Review*; Nick Miller, director of the International Religious Liberty Institute; William Murdoch, MD, chair of psychiatry at Loma Linda University (Calif.); Willie Oliver, director of General Conference Family Ministries; as well as
Is Adventist Education Worth the Investment?

After talking with educators, parents and students for the March Visitor, many say 'yes.' Join the Visitor’s panel of education experts Tuesday, March 18, at noon, to discuss why Seventh-day Adventist education is still worth the investment. We will also share tips on how to help your child succeed, no matter what school they attend.

Panelists include:

- Gene Brewer, PhD, who recently retired as the Southern Union’s development specialist
- Vaughn Jennings, MAT, former vice president for education in the Pennsylvania Conference
- Larry Marsh, vice president for education in the Upper Columbia Conference in Washington state
- Annie Raney, MA, (pictured) assistant professor of education at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md.,
- Larry Rich, MEd, principal at Escondido Adventist Academy in California

Weigh in at facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor.

Columbia Union Members in the News

Black clergy protest elimination of ‘Souls to the Polls’ and evening early voting in 2014 (VIDEO)

'I watched a man be executed': Football heals scars of Liberia's civil war

Burglary Reported at Winchester Food Pantry
UPCOMING EVENTS

MARYLAND

March 14: Andrews University’s Deliverance Mass Choir (Mich.), and praise teams from the Metropolitan, Bladensburg and Emmanuel-Brinklow churches invite you to an evening of prayer and worship, themed “RE:CLAIM.” Reclaim your relationships, identity and freedom! The event begins at 7 p.m. at 6307 Riggs Road in Hyattsville, Md. For more information, visit metrosda.org.

March 15: The Baltimore Extended Area Youth Federation presents the group, “UNRESTRAINED” with the Deliverance Mass Choir from Andrews University (Mich.). This concert will take place at 4 p.m., at Berea Temple, which is located at 1901 Madison Avenue in Baltimore. Drama teams, sign choirs and more will share their ministry.

March 15: The Frederick church’s Infusion worship service, which happens every third Sabbath of the month, takes place this Sabbath in the church’s chapel. The theme will be “Infusion of God the Father” and will feature speaker Phillip Singh and musical guest Jessica Snyder. The church is located at 6437 Jefferson Pike.

March 15: Chesapeake Adventist Single Adult Ministries, hosts a film night, Saturday, 6:30 p.m., at the Chesapeake Conference office in 6600 Martin Road, Columbia, Md. Pizza and a beverage will be provided. For more information, visit asamchesapeake.com, or contact Fred Thomas at fthomas1950@yahoo.com or (410) 992-9731.

March 16: Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Md., is hosting cancer screenings from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in their Short Stay Unit. Free screenings include oral, prostate (PSA and DRE), skin, thyroid, colorectal and clinical breast exams (CBE). Register by calling (800) 542-5096.

March 21-22: Join the Middletown Valley church for a two-day study on “Death in the Ancient World” kicking off Friday, 7 p.m. Regardless of race, religion, geographical area or time period, every human has wondered about the one fact of life that unifies us all: What is death? Pastor Josh Voigt will explore the concept of death in the ancient world through the lens of archaeology, social history and the Bible. On Friday Voigt will focus on death in Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek and Roman civilizations. On Sabbath morning, starting at 11 a.m., the speaker will discuss Jewish and Christian views on death. The church is located at 1811 Arnold Road in Jefferson, Md.

VIRGINIA

March 14-14: The Potomac Conference is sponsoring this year’s Richmond Area Youth Fest at the Richmond Academy. For more information visit aysrva.com or call (828) 246-2545.

WEST VIRGINIA

March 18: The monthly supper club at the Berkeley Springs (W.Va.) church will feature healthy vegan/vegetarian Asian foods. The group meets at 6 p.m. Following the free meal in the fellowship hall, the discussion topic will be organic gardening. Community friends also receive recipes and health tips. The church is located at 3606 Valley Drive (Highway 522 South). For more information, contact Lisa Shingleton at (304) 258-2739 in the evenings.
VIRTUAL

February 17-April 14: Oakwood University is competing again in the “Retool Your School” Contest. With the support of Adventists worldwide, the university won a $50,000 prize that allowed them to construct an outdoor pavilion. Once again, Oakwood is the only Adventist institution in this competition. You can help Oakwood to win again by visiting https://www.retoolyourschool.com/vote-now/ and voting daily and on every computer and device you own. You can vote more than once as long as it is on a different your own computer and device.

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Visitor News Bulletin is an electronic newsletter published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Columbia Union Conference. You are free to reprint any portion of the bulletin, however, please identify Visitor News Bulletin as the source.
Washington Adventist University Men Win National Basketball Championship

March 10, 2014 · by Taashi Rowe · in Education, Uncategorized, Washington Adventist University

With a score of 61 points in the United States Collegiate Athletics Association’s final game, Washington Adventist University’s Men’s Basketball team took home the national championship title.

Story by USCAA and WAU Staff

For the first time in school’s history, the Washington Adventist University (WAU) Shock won the United States Collegiate Athletics Association (USCAA) Men’s Basketball Division I National Championship. The game took place March 9 in Uniontown, Pa. In one of the lowest scoring Men’s Division I finals in recent memory, the Takoma Park, Md., university scored 61 points to Tennessee Temple University’s 38 points.

Senior Anthony Berry and freshman Tyrus Fleetwood both scored 15 points in the winning effort, and each landed a spot on the all-tournament team. Berry was named tournament MVP after averaging 13.0 points and 9.6 rebounds per game, and amassing a season high 15 boards in an upset of #1 seed Daemen College in the semifinals. WAU closes out the 2013-14 campaign with a final record of 22-8, a 10-game win streak, and as the 2014 USCAA Men’s Division I National champions. Each milestone is a first in the program’s history.

“This team not only did well on the court, but also off the court. They displayed the core values of Washington Adventist University all throughout the season,” said Weymouth Spence, university president. “In my eyes they are not only basketball champions but they are WAU champions.”
Adventist HealthCare Names Interim President and CEO

Terry Forde will serve as interim president and chief executive officer at Adventist HealthCare.

March 11, 2014 · by Taashi Rowe · in Adventist HealthCare, Health Systems, Uncategorized

Terry Forde, chief operating officer and executive vice president, to lead organization during transition.

Story by Tom Grant

Terry Forde, currently the executive vice president and chief operating officer for Adventist HealthCare, has been named the organization’s interim president and CEO. Forde will officially begin his new role in early April, after current president and CEO William G. “Bill” Robertson leaves for a new position in Washington state.

Forde joined Adventist HealthCare, based in Gaithersburg, Md., in July 2011. Since then, he has overseen the organization’s Maryland entities and operations, and recruited several top executives. His work has been instrumental in helping Adventist HealthCare, Montgomery County’s first and largest health system, adapt successfully to the many changes that have occurred at both the state and national levels. Forde previously served as an executive for eight years with Centura Health, the largest health system in Colorado.

“The board members and I are confident that during this interim period, Terry will ensure Adventist HealthCare moves forward with the great work and initiatives already underway throughout the organization,” said Dave Weigley, chairman of the Adventist HealthCare Board of Trustees. “Terry will continue to collaborate with leaders, physicians and employees to ensure we are fulfilling our mission and meeting the needs of the community.”

At Centura Health, Forde served as the president and CEO of Parker Adventist Hospital and as the chief operating officer and chief financial officer of Porter Adventist Hospital. In these roles, Forde led a rapidly growing community health system while also delivering extraordinary clinical, patient experience and financial performance.

Weigley told the some 6,200 AHC employees this week that the selection process has begun for the organization’s new president and CEO. There is no specific timeframe for the selection. “We are working as carefully and as quickly as we can to select a leader who will continue to enhance the great work that Adventist HealthCare has achieved to provide higher quality and safer care for our patients, plus expand access to care for our community,” Weigley said.

Forde is a member of Chesapeake Conference’s Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md.
5 Questions for Larry Blackmer

columbiaunionvisitor.com/5-questions-for-larry-blackmer/

March 11, 2014 · by Michelle Bernard · in Chesapeake Conference, Education, This Month's Issue

It was Larry Blackmer, vice president for education for the North American Division, who pitched the idea for The Blueprint: The Story of Adventist education, Martin Doblmeier’s third documentary about Adventist education. In an online interview, Celeste Ryan Blyden asked him why he did so, why he still believes our schools are worth attending, who his favorite teacher was and what he’s praying about right now:

By Celeste Ryan Blyden

Chesapeake Conference’s Spencerville Adventist Academy is one of six schools featured in Martin Doblmeier’s third documentary about Seventh-day Adventists. The Blueprint: The Story of Adventist Education, shares why our schools have become an integral part of our church’s mission and ministry.

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Blyden: Why are you excited about Martin Doblmeier’s latest film about Adventist Education? Why did you want that story told?

Blackmer: We spend a great deal of time talking to ourselves, sharing the good things about Adventist Education and doing an autopsy on things we don’t like. But seldom do we get the opportunity to share our story with the general public in the kind of format The Blueprint offers. Martin Doblemeier is a master storyteller, and I knew that if he spent time in our schools, with our teachers and students that he would share a compelling story, which he has!

Blyden: What do you wish people knew and understood about our educational system?

Blackmer: I wish people could see our system through the eyes of the other private school systems in the United States. I am currently the president of an international private school accrediting agency that includes 17 organizations that are Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, Hebrew, etc. I am friends with the leaders of these organizations. I wish people could hear them talk about their perceptions of the Adventist system. We are the only religious private school system in the world in which 100 percent of our schools are accredited. We are the only system that can create our curriculum and standards and specify that they be followed in all of our schools. This creates a shared narrative and a cohesive vision for the academic, spiritual and character development of our children. They ask me what percentage of Adventists go to our schools, I tell them that about 30 percent of our children attend an Adventist school. They ask me to come to their conventions, share with their leadership about how they can attract that many of their children to Baptist or Catholic schools. They see our system as the most technologically advanced private school system in the world, and we are asked regularly to help them, as a leader said recently, “to be like us.” I wish people could see the caring, loving teachers in our classrooms who pray for and love children into the Kingdom.

Join our panel of education experts Tuesday, March 18, at noon, to discuss why Adventist education is still worth the investment, and for tips on how to help your child succeed, no matter what school they attend. Weigh in
I guess I wish we could always live up to who we know we could be and that people could see that vision in every school!

**Blyden: Who was or is your favorite teacher and why?**

Blackmer: I grew up in a home that did not value Adventist education and so went 12 years to public school. I do not remember, at least fondly, many of my teachers. But in college I remember, Dr. Asa Thoresen, my major professor. I remember how caring he was, how Godly in his presentation of Biology and its creator. I remember he would have us over to his home, often, to sit around the fire and share spiritual values, not from a book, but from his heart. Christ lived in his classroom, and we saw Him in Dr. Thoresen’s life. Spiritually is not taught; it is caught.

**Blyden: My daughter is 5 and starts school in the fall. Why should we consider sending her to an Adventist school?**

A number of years ago, the public schools decided to teach “character development” in schools. After a few years the program was assessed to find out that there had been no changes, the achievement was not better, the citizenship was the same, the behavior was the same. It was determined that the reason they felt the program was not successful was that no one could agree on what values were important or who’s values would be shared.

Barna, in his book *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, states that a child’s morals and values are pretty well set by age 13. In Adventist education, we believe in a shared value system from the home, the church and the school. No, we do not always hit it out of the park, but the basics are universal. The most important thing we can develop in our children is a Christ-like character. I believe that Adventist education reinforces what we as parents have been told to instill in our children—God’s love for us and our responsibility to be like Him.

**Blyden: What’s on your prayer list for our schools?**

Blackmer: Adventist education is not cheap, nor is it easy. But the dividends are eternal. I pray for our teachers, principals, parents and pastors, that they might catch the vision of a soon returning Savior and do everything in their power to get our children ready. Just as Daniel’s mother knew that Babylon was coming and so she prepared Daniel to stand in that day, I pray we can do the same today!

**Watch the Trailer**

**Learn more about The Blueprint documentary at journeyfilms.com.**
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Building on Purpose

George B. Nelson came to Kettering, Ohio during the fall of 1959 to build a hospital that would combine medical science with compassion, exceptional care with love, and skill with understanding and sympathy. He was chosen by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be the administrator and CEO of Kettering Medical Center, enabled by the creative vision and financial resources of the Kettering family.

Nelson centered his medical ministry around four purposes of the church which he borrowed from his friend Harley Rice, a philosopher, poet, world traveler, and author. Nelson saw the first purpose clearly, "to relieve the sick and the afflicted." The second purpose, though puzzling at first, later appeared valuable and wise. It was "to awaken a spirit of inquiry," that is, a curiosity of the spiritual realm, spread through the medical care providers to the patients, arising not through words, but through action, and not through what is said, but what is not said. "What richness there might be to our influence if all could be engulfed in an atmosphere of Christian love and dignity, and in that pervading atmosphere work with quiet, cheerful, dignified efficiency. In such circumstances our words, our actions, our work, our attitudes and the atmosphere surrounding us may cause others to ask: 'What causes the influence I am experiencing here?'; 'What is different about this place?'; 'Why is Saturday a quiet day here?'; 'Why do you recommend that I modify my diet?' Perhaps some might even be inclined to ask, 'What shall I do to be saved?'"

The third purpose, according to Nelson, is for the hospital and its people to disseminate light. Nelson said "when a spirit of inquiry has been awakened in the minds of those who see or receive the ministry of healing, it should be possible to answer their questions in a way that will properly cause light to shine where darkness existed."

Finally, the fourth great purpose is to advance reform, or "to change into a new form, to amend, to improve... It is the opposite of stagnation. In the sense in which it is used here, it means to retain what is good from the past, and accept what is proved to be good from the new."

Nelson used these four purposes to build a strong foundation for the hospital, engrossed in faith that has flourished for 50 years and will continue to grow until our Heavenly Father returns.
The Start of a Long Journey

When George Nelson first came to Kettering, there was only a field and right away he began working with the architect to finalize the blueprints, which were changed from a 100 to a 300 bed facility. He worked with the newly hired executive team to develop corporate bylaws and to establish a board of directors. Since there were no job descriptions for facility management or staff, Nelson also worked with the leadership team to roles in the organization. From the early 1960s until the doors opened on March 3, 1964 they worked tirelessly around the clock to be ready to welcome Mr. William Deschant as the first of many patients.

The hospital was not the only new building. Eugene and Virginia Kettering, the philanthropic force driving the projects, were determined that attention should also be given to preparing a hospital based school of nursing. Plans were developed to construct an educational building concurrently with the hospital. In the fall of 1967, more than 100 freshman students enrolled in the college, among them those destined to become the first graduates in 1969. Another component of the Kettering legacy had been established.

A Place to Worship

After a few weeks of getting acquainted and working out a plan for the development of the hospital, Nelson returned home to Glendale, California to prepare to move across the country. He decided to go hear his friend Arthur Bietz, pastor of the White Memorial Church, which is connected to White Memorial Hospital, one last time before leaving California. The organist was playing softly as people entered the sanctuary to find a seat. Nelson leaned over to his wife and said, “Elsa there will come a day when this same thing will happen in a new church in Kettering. It will be necessary to build a church in connection with the hospital. Great music will be part of the program.”
After moving to Ohio, Nelson sat down with Eugene and Victoria Kettering over dinner and explained to them how important it would be to have a church near the hospital. He explained that it would foster the mission and faith-based purpose of the hospital. Mr. Kettering was hesitant about selling land to the Ohio SDA conference for a church, but Nelson shared his vision for the church to become well known in the community for beautiful music programs. Eugene was drawn by Nelson's vision and agreed to sell the land and so began the development of the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Fifty years later the community knows the Kettering church as one of the best places for musical programs.

Join Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church for a 50th celebration on May 10th with special guest speaker Peter Bath.
Saying Goodbye to a Dear Friend

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to one of our key founders, Dr. Vernon Luthas, passed away at the age of 85 in December.

Dr. Luthas was a pioneer of God’s work for our network and community. He was one of Kettering Medical Center’s first physicians and founder of Kettering Anesthesia Associates. With wisdom and resources, he helped lay the foundation for Kettering Medical Center, Spring Valley Academy, and churches in the Dayton area and overseas.

He was a missionary wherever he went. His love for God and others showed on his face and flowed from his heart to everyone he met. He selflessly spent years in mission work even after he retired from the KMC Medical Staff in 1990, always giving of himself to strengthen others. His medical practice, full of unselfish ministry, blessed patient after patient. One of his proudest accomplishments was establishing a prayer team ministry at Kettering that prayed for each pre-operative patient.

Kettering College Welcomes Nathan Brandstater

Kettering College’s Board of Directors has named Nate Brandstater, PhD, as the college’s seventh president, effective February 3, 2014. He replaces Alex Bryan, who will leave Kettering College at the end of the 2013-2014 school year to become senior pastor of the Walla Walla University Church.

Dr. Brandstater comes to Kettering College from La Sierra University in Riverside, Calif., where he served as associate professor of chemistry, and accreditation liaison officer. He also was an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Radiation Medicine at Loma Linda University.

“We are pleased to welcome Nate Brandstater to Kettering College,” says Roy Chew, chair of the Kettering College board of directors and president of Kettering Medical Center. “Under Nate’s leadership, Kettering College will continue to develop outstanding curriculum and programs to help our graduates meet the needs of today’s health care environment. Nate understands and embraces the Kettering tradition of innovation. This is the beginning of an exciting era in the history of Kettering College.”
Is the End Near for Brick-and-Mortar ABCs?

by Taashi Rowe

It’s been years since the Mountain View Conference had a physical Adventist Book Center (ABC). It was housed at the conference office in Parkersburg, W.Va., where, in addition to books, locals could pick up vegetarian foods. The store was eventually closed because only one or two persons would shop there each month. However, “We still have some folks, either passing through or living in the community, that stop by the office from time to time, still expecting that we have an ABC operating here,” shares Valerie Morikone, an administrative assistant at the conference office.

When two ABCs in the Columbia Union closed at the end of last year, one in Mount Vernon, Ohio, the other in Hamburg, Pa., some members say they felt the loss keenly. Bob Hoyt, a retired pastor and member of Ohio’s Mount Vernon City church, says, “I spent over 25 years in the publishing work, followed by 25 years in the ministry. I see [a] tragic mistake taking place. … The ABC is a strong evangelistic tool for witnessing to [the community].”

Although his local ABC was not affected, Charles Battles, a member of Allegheny East Conference’s Capitol Hill church in Washington, D.C., suggests, “We should be opening more ABCs, not closing them! Closing them will limit our outreach to [community members].”

A Changing Marketplace

Keeping open a physical outlet for the Seventh-day Adventist message was the main reason the Pacific Press Publishing Association in Nampa, Idaho, eventually took over the management of as many as 26 North American ABCs.

“About 15 years ago, some local conferences were ready to close their stores. The stores were just too expensive to operate, and they were taking precious funds away from the conference’s evangelism programs,” explains Jerry Thomas, a vice president at Pacific Press. “Rather than see that happen, Pacific Press entered into management agreements with these conferences … hoping that time would lead to a way to operate the ABCs efficiently.”

However, the Pacific Press may have only delayed the inevitable. The changing marketplace has not only affected mainstream bookstores but Christian booksellers too. In the 2008 report “Christian Retail Research,” Cathedral Consulting Group, LLC, studied how a market change trifecta impacted members of the Christian Booksellers Association, a group of independent Christian booksellers and publishers. While religious consumers were once limited to finding their favorite music or books at niche Christian bookstores, a changing marketplace gives them options. They can now find goods at a deeper discount at mega bookstore chains, their local “big box” retailer and online.

The writing on the wall started early for Jay Cole, a former manager of the Hamburg ABC and now manager of trade sales at the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Md., but it was not from lack of effort. Cole noted that while he managed the Pennsylvania ABC, he developed a wholesale food program, took the bookmobile all over the Pennsylvania territory, escalated advertising and, as a result, saw some success. Cole says he never figured out why sales dropped in Hamburg and found the closure to be “especially painful.” He adds, “We put 14 years of blood, sweat and tears into that store.”

If Jim Greene, New Jersey Conference’s executive secretary, is any indication of today’s typical consumer, Cole may have his answer. Greene says he shops at the ABC for food and health products, “but not a lot for books. I carry all my new books on the iPad, including various Bible translations and the app that has all of Ellen G. White’s writings. So I’m not buying much in hard copy from anybody.”
Matthew Berry, who manages the ABC at Highland View Academy (HVA) in Hagerstown, Md., can attest to the decline in book sales. Although that ABC is officially a charity with proceeds funding scholarships for students at HVA and the nearby Mount Aetna Elementary School, “Our books don’t sell well,” Berry says. “In general, book sales have been difficult, even when reduced in price.”

Even so, the Association of American Publishers reports that between 2012 and 2013, hardcover book sales jumped by 11.5 percent while ebook sales increased 4.5 percent.

Another issue could be that the stores are not often easily accessible to the public, which several ABC managers admit limits their customer base. Unlike the Potomac ABC, which is nestled among secular stores in a shopping center, most ABCs are located at our conference offices and schools, where the average community member would not happen to walk by and stop in. Greene also believes that since many of our stores only sell books by Adventist authors, that further limits the base.

When the Pacific Press severed their management contracts with 17 ABCs last year, the two Columbia Union conferences impacted were left with a big decision. After reviewing their finances, they realized they could not afford to return to managing the stores, so they closed last December.

Still, conference leaders are trying to fill the resulting gap. While members can get some items online at adventistbookcenter.com or at camp meeting, some members are fond of walking into a store. Ohio Conference announced this month that they will provide vegetarian products at the old ABC site while the Southern New England ABC is planning to open a smaller store in April at the old Pennsylvania ABC.

Still Reaching the Community

Those managing the remaining ABCs have hope. Mattias and Carolina De Paoli, managers at New Jersey Conference’s two Revive ABC stores in Lawrenceville and Tranquility, are working to revive their client base. “We are doing our best and praying,” De Paoli says. Sometimes people may think the results are not great, but we see it here every day. We have witnessed to pastors from other denominations, and one of our vendors who is not Adventist is now buying vegetarian products. I’ve also shared with him one of our books, so who knows what will happen next.”

When they moved to a shopping plaza in Silver Spring, Md., in April 2000, the Potomac Conference ABC store started out as the world’s largest Christian bookstore. However, a short time later, the store was forced to reduce its size. Lisa Myaing, manager, says some 110 years after the store first opened in Takoma Park, Md., the Potomac ABC remains true to their mission of reaching the community. The staff host health classes and Bible studies, and the store is even a place of worship for one local congregation. Myaing notes that while sales of books and music are down, food is 57 percent of their sales. “Interest in food and health continues to grow, especially with the popularity of The China Study (a book touting the benefits of vegetarianism). People are interested in finding out how to get rid of diabetes and lower their blood pressure,” she says.

The Potomac ABC has active food demonstrations throughout the store on Sundays and Fridays. This year they hope to add a deli into their store. “Our focus is ministry and community outreach and, so, we are realigning our efforts to reach out to our community,” Myaing says.

UPDATE: Since, the article has been published, Ohio Conference leaders announced on March 1 that they will be re-opening their ABC to provide uniquely, Adventist foodstuff to their members. The Pennsylvania Conference is doing something similar. They are working with the Southern New England ABC to re-open a smaller ABC, minus books, in mid-April.

Read these other articles from the March Visitor:
• Custom-Made Education
• Differentiation Sparks Enthusiasm in Young Learners
• What is Your Child’s Learning Style?
• 3 Ways to Support the ABCs
• What’s in a Name? (Could our Adventist Book Centers be going through a name change?)
Black clergy protest elimination of 'Souls to the Polls' and evening early voting in 2014 (VIDEO)


Loading Photo Gallery
Early voting protest A group of black clergy and supporters gather outside the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections to protest the elimination of in-person Sunday voting in recently-set early voting hours.

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Invoking the Civil Rights Era of the 1960s, a group of black clergy and supporters on Thursday protested a recent decision from Ohio Secretary Jon Husted that rules out early, in-person voting on the Sundays and evenings leading up to this November’s gubernatorial election.

A group of roughly 20 met outside the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections on Thursday afternoon. Some members of the group – which called themselves the United Clergy of Greater Cleveland and said they represented 100 different congregations – signed a letter asking Husted to reinstate Sunday and weekday voting back to 2012 levels and grant greater autonomy to local boards of elections.

Husted's 2014 hours -- which he announced last week -- rule out a popular practice known as “Souls to the Polls,” in which African-American churches organize transportation for groups of congregants on Sunday to the board of election to vote early.

"As you are fully aware, these voting hours have proven to be most convenient for many minorities, workers, students, elderly persons and persons with little resources. We see little justification in your act and it easily allows many to paint this as partisan jockeying and an effort to suppress the minority vote," the letter reads.

Husted, a Republican, also set uniform early voting hours for all Ohio counties that include no evenings and two Saturdays*.

During the 2010 gubernatorial election, when counties set their own early-voting hours, the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections was also open the two Sundays before Election Day, as well as the Monday before the election.

Husted has pushed for identical voting procedures for all of Ohio's 88 counties, and said the hours were the result of a bipartisan compromise from elections officials.

Husted will respond to the clergy group's letter, said Matt McClellan, a spokesman.

"We will take the opportunity to explain how easy it is to vote in Ohio," McClellan said. “You can vote 24 hours a day, seven days a week for 30 days, including Sundays.”

McClellan was referring to the option voters have in Ohio to request absentee ballots and fill them out at home.

Bishop Tony Minor, the senior pastor at Community of Faith Assembly in Cleveland, said United Clergy of Greater Cleveland will mobilize to continue challenging the voting changes. Pastors pledged to promote voter registration in their congregations.

“So many have died and so many have made sacrifices for the right to vote,” Minor said. “Voting rights are an important symbol for the progress African-Americans have made. Any retreat from that is going to agitate.”

Jerome Hurst, a pastor at Southeast Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Cleveland, said churches have used “Souls to the Polls” to increase voter participation.

“In 2014, it hurts my heart to think that here in Ohio a battleground state where decisions are made … that we would not be opening doors for more voters but suppressing and closing opportunities,” Hurst said.

Other recent Republican voting-related decisions have drawn fire from Democrats and others. Ohio Gov. John Kasich earlier this month signed a pair of voting reform bills; one eliminates “Golden Week” – the five-day period in which voters can register and cast an early vote in the same day – and the other forbids counties from mailing out unsolicited absentee ballot applications to voters.

Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald, a Democrat who is running for governor, has vowed to fight the changes, and recently introduced a county resolution asserting the county's right to mail out unsolicited absentee ballot applications, in defiance of one of the new laws.

*an earlier version of this article incorrectly stated that early in-person voting is only available for one Saturday leading up to the November 2014.
LACES is a charity using football to help Liberian children learn life skills.

American Seren Fryatt founded the organization in 2007, having previously worked in Liberia for six months aboard a floating hospital ship.
LACES aims to "Develop positive role models in communities in a manner that is fun and challenging."

"The children are the future of this country", says Pastor Louis Roberts, mentoring manager of LACES. "We teach the kids how to have fun, but also how to be better people. On and off the pitch."
"It is my job to make sure they learn basic social skills like respect for their families, their team mates and their coaches," says Pastor Roberts.

It is a faith-based organization and recruits its coaches from local churches, before training them in coaching and mentoring.
"The war may be over but the scars still remain," says LACES national director, James Moore. He was recently stabbed in his own home in Monrovia. "It brought back horrific memories of the war," he says.

After each match, LACES also provides the kids with a free meal.

The story of LACES is being told as part of "The World Cup Project" -- a documentary TV show featuring 11 countries and 11
organizations that are using soccer for social change in the build up to this year's tournament.

**STORY HIGHLIGHTS**

- LACES helps poor children in Liberia to change their lives through football
- The organization promotes positive role models and aims to fight corruption
- Its feeding program assures a free meal for every child after a game
- The scheme helps children and their coaches to overcome the trauma of civil war

Every week, *Inside Africa* takes its viewers on a journey across Africa, exploring the true diversity and depth of different cultures, countries and regions. Follow host Errol Barnett on Twitter and Facebook.

(CNN) -- Somber and brow beaten, Kolubah piles potato greens on top of his head and walks to the nearest market at 5am. Barefoot. He has to sell all of his greens to make money so his family can eat. His parents and siblings are unable to provide for themselves, so everyday Kolubah is forced to skip school and earn a living. His only solace: football.

Later that same day Coach Tio kneels down to tie Kolubah's shoelaces. Kolubah is 10-years-old and the breadwinner for his family. But so rarely does he wear shoes, he doesn't even know how to tie his own laces.

**Tough childhoods**

Tough childhoods are not uncommon in Liberia, West Africa. In January, I was there with a documentary team shooting an episode of "The World Cup Project" -- a documentary TV show featuring 11 countries and 11 organizations around the world that are using football for social change and development in the build up to this year's tournament. We found a country still recovering from a civil war that ended a decade ago, and resulted in around 250,000 people dying and thousands more being displaced.

During the conflict, children as young as eight were handed machetes and machine guns and told to massacre their families. Child soldiers were the weapon of choice in this brutal war and the scars are still very raw.

But there is a glowing red sunset at the end of this story as an heroic organization of local football coaches is changing the face of Liberia. One football game at a time.

The woman behind this organization -- LACES, Life and Change Experienced Thru Sport -- is Seren Fryatt, 34, from Muncie, Indiana.

*A tour on Liberia motorcycle taxis*

*Can Liberia's tourism industry recover?*

*Liberia's first commercial gold mine*

After she spent several months volunteering on board a floating hospital ship in Liberia, and playing for Liberia's Professional Women's Soccer Division, LACES was born. Fryatt dreamed of promoting social change and development through her favorite sport -- football -- and her dream became a reality in 2007 when LACES set up its first program in Liberia.

LACES' mission is simple: "To develop positive role models in communities in a manner that is fun and challenging." LACES currently has three programs in Liberia in Kona, Cotton Tree and Duport Road and has worked with 80 coaches and 700 kids.

It is a faith-based organization and recruits its coaches from local churches, they then attend a workshop on coaching and mentor training and are given equipment to register children ages 10-14. According to Fryatt, "this age group was chosen because it is within this range that children are in the formative stages of learning and comprehension of personal decision making.

As well as mentoring the children and training the coaches, LACES also has a feeding program. Weekly, after each game, the kids are provided with a free
meal to enjoy with their coach. Sometimes this is the only meal the children get on this day.

Before the end of the year LACES plans to roll out a new "Kick Out Corruption" campaign to tackle the problem of corruption in Liberia. "It's vital the children of the future know their rights, and know what is right and wrong when it comes to corruption," Fryatt claims. "Unfortunately corruption is a very real everyday problem here and we want to try and address that."

Many of the Laces coaches themselves grew up during the civil war. They are now teaching children social skills through football, ensuring the children of this generation do not become new victims of the conflict they lived through.

And through their work the coaches are coming to terms with their own pasts, their own losses and sometimes their own brutal actions.

**Horrific memories**

LACES' national director, James Moore, was brutally attacked and stabbed in his own home in Monrovia recently as his children slept in the next room. He reveals: "It brought back horrific memories of the war. The war may be over but the scars still remain."

We teach the kids how to have fun, but also how to be better people.

James Moore, LACES National Director

Some of his memories are truly terrifying. James says that at just 13 years old he walked for four days with his 80-year-old grandmother, through the jungle, to a neighboring village for safety. He went to fetch food for his family and heard a ruckus. As any curious teenager would, James went towards the noise. But he wishes to this day that he had not. He watched as a man executed another man, ripped his heart out of his chest and ate it. "It is the worst thing I have ever seen and causes me nightmares to this day," James admits.

Pastor Louis Roberts, Mentoring Manager of LACES, has his own harrowing tales to tell. He lost his entire family under Charles Taylor's regime. His mother, his father, his brothers and sisters all died, leaving him to fend for himself. But instead of picking up a gun, Pastor Roberts found the church and LACES and is determined to educate the children so Liberia never sees another Civil War.

"The children are the future of this country," he says. "It is my job to make sure they learn basic social skills like respect for their families, their team mates and their coaches. These skills are what LACES is all about. We teach the kids how to have fun, but also how to be better people. On and off the pitch."

*The "The World Cup Project" TV series will debut in June through Snag Films. Follow on Twitter and Facebook. Find out more about LACES at www.lacesport.org.*
WINCHESTER, Va. - Officers with the Winchester Police Department are investigating a burglary at a local food pantry, where they say multiple food items were stolen.

On Monday, just before 1 p.m., officers responded to the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in the 1500 block of Valley Avenue.

When police arrived on the scene, they discovered someone had damaged three doors at the food pantry, and gained entry through one of the doors. Officers say non-perishable and perishable food items were taken, as well as wrapping paper.

Anyone with information on this incident is asked to call the Crime Solvers Hotline at (540)-665-TIPS. According to police, information leading to the arrest of a suspect could results in a reward.