Weekly News From Around the Columbia Union Conference

April 9, 2014

A Smaller Publishing House Voted for Review and Herald

The Review and Herald Publishing Association (RHPA) Board of Directors moved swiftly on Sunday to stabilize the financial health of the 165-year-old publishing house in Hagerstown, Md. They called a special executive session after year-end reports showed a nearly $943,000 loss for 2013 and continued weakness in the first quarter of the current year.

Key items voted by the RHPA board included eliminating redundancies in several departments of the publishing house, reducing the number of book titles slated for release in 2015 and trimming the editorial and production staff of some RHPA-produced journals. A reduction-in-force of 26 current employees was also authorized, with nearly half of the total being achieved through collaborative retirement agreements with eligible employees. The savings to the publishing house from the workforce reductions are anticipated to reach $1 million in 2014, and more than $1.5 million in 2015. RHPA leadership also plan to lease up to
Allegheny West Members Minister in the Aftermath of Communism

Although Albania is still a largely secular, Muslim country, the Holy Spirit is definitely working through the Albanian Mission and ADRA Albania. About two years ago, Sergio Romero, director of Multicultural Ministries for the Allegheny West Conference (AWC), heard of the need in Albania. “I started to pray for the people in Albania, specifically for the Roma [Gypsy] people,” he says. “… This people, out of prejudice, don’t have access to medical services or education. I have in my heart to serve those that nobody else wants to serve.”

Just recently Romero led a group of around 50 volunteers, including 11 from the Allegheny West Conference, to minister in this formerly Communist Southeastern European country.—Story by Christopher Thompson and Visitor Staff

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The second annual Campus Revival at Washington Adventist University (WAU) in Takoma Park, Md., featured a week of worship and culminated with the baptism of 53 young adults. The event started Sunday, March 30, and culminated with the call to baptism Friday, April 4.

“We had about 14 people who planned to participate in the baptism, and then the Holy Spirit fell upon the campus and touched hearts in ways only God can do,” said Regina Johnson, WAU chaplain. “Saying God is good would be an understatement! He never fails to exceed my expectations. Another baptism will be happening April 26, and I’m beyond excited that the students are making their decisions together as a campus family!”—Story by WAU Staff

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Political Leaders, Community Fete Former Adventist HealthCare CEO

March 26 several community leaders, along with fellow Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee members, honored William G. “Bill” Robertson (pictured, right), Adventist HealthCare's (AHC) former president and chief executive officer at a farewell reception and dinner in Rockville, Md. Mid-Atlantic Adventist
HealthCare, AHC’s parent company, hosted the event to thank Robertson for his service. Those in attendance included Thomas Perez (pictured, left), U.S. Secretary of Labor; Harold Lee, former Columbia Union president who recruited Robertson to Maryland; and community leaders of several boards that Robertson served on.

“Bill is leaving Adventist HealthCare with a legacy of strong, responsible leadership,” said Dave Weigley, president of the Columbia Union, at the event. “Bill’s a legend not just for the length of time he served, but also because he was so passionate about leading the organization to intentionally embrace the Adventist Church’s mission. I will miss him as a friend and leader.”—Story by Adventist HealthCare; Photos by Tracey Brown

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Potomac Church’s Vegetarian Food Fair Draws 150

Heavy rain and unexpected snow did not thwart the interest and passion of approximately 150 eager food enthusiasts who attended Sligo church’s “Vegetarian Food From Around the World” in Takoma Park, Md. Community guests made up more than half of the attendees. Organizers at the Potomac Conference church had in mind a three-pronged objective for this March 30 event: build relationship with the community, provide attendees with the knowhow to prepare healthful and tasty meat-free meals and introduce a new health course to members of the community.

The Sligo church fellowship space was transformed into what some described as a "top class restaurant" for the event. The tasty offerings represented dishes from Asia, the Caribbean, India (pictured above), Italy, Latin America, the Middle East and the United States of America, which were eagerly gobbled up by gastronomically discerning guests.—Story by Don W. McFarlane; Photos by Paolo Esposito

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Mountain View Conference Young Adults Get Acquainted With "The Man"

Approximately 30 young adults and youth from the Mountain View Conference recently discussed why prayer is such an important part of having a relationship with God. The discussion took place on the last weekend of the month during the conference’s third annual Mountain View Young Adult Prayer Conference, themed "He’s the Man," held in Huttonsville, W.Va.

Joel “Joey” Nino, a 23-year-old theology major at Southern Adventist University (Tenn.), spoke to attendees during the general sessions about God and why He is "the Man." Through personal testimony and several stories from Scripture, Nino demonstrated how God is a God of love who reaches out to us and never leaves our side. Nino testified about how God took his life, once filled with violence, drugs, gangs and more, and made him a new creation.—Story by Angelina Dickson

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Black Vegetarians at Lower Risk for Heart Disease, According to Loma Linda Study
Among more than 26,000 black Seventh-day Adventists, those who are vegetarians are at lower risk for heart disease, compared with their meat-eating counterparts, according to results of a new Loma Linda University (Calif.) health study.

The study, available online now in the journal Public Health Nutrition, compared the cardiovascular risk factors between black vegetarians and non-vegetarians who are part of the ongoing Loma Linda University Adventist Health Study-2 (AHS-2).

AHS-2, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is a long-running study of members throughout North American Division focusing on nutrition, lifestyle and health outcomes. Adventists are a unique study subject because they have a wide variety of dietary habits, but in general have a very low percentage of alcohol consumption or cigarette smoking, non-dietary factors that may otherwise impact the study.

READ MORE at Digital Journal

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**Body of Missing Adventist Doctor Found in a Lake**
The body of Teleka Patrick, an Adventist doctor who has been missing since December, was found in an Indian lake on Sunday.

According to an Indiana State Police press release, "While the autopsy was able to confirm identity, investigation continues to determine the cause of death," the press release said. "Pending toxicology results may provide additional information as to the cause of death."

Patrick was a graduate of Oakwood University (Ala.) and the Loma Linda University School of Medicine (Calif.).

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5 Questions for Sam Neves, Creator of a Bible Trivia Game App

Sam Neves, youth pastor of the Stanborough Park church in Watford, England, just North of London, created Heroes, the Game, a trivia app that's testing the Bible knowledge of a growing cadre of online aficionados—23,000 in 120 countries since its August 2013 release. Players seek to earn "manna" by answering questions about Jesus, Abraham, Paul, Mary and other "heroes" of the Word in English, Danish, Portuguese and Spanish. In an email interview, he shared more:
Q. Why does our church need to produce video games?

A: There are three main reasons to enter the video game world: First, games are the most engaging way to tell a story. Second, this generation will play, on average, 10,000 hours by age 21. Third, costs of production have become accessible.

I call this "sacred gaming," which I define as "games that are dedicated to telling the only story truly worth telling.—Interview by Celeste Ryan Blyden

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Love Your Church? Tell us About It

"Like" us on Facebook, then tell us why you love your church. You could win The Gospel of John DVD from AdventSource!

Your Helping Could be Hurting

5 Things Not to Say to Someone with a Mental Illness
Have you ever told someone with a mental illness “You just need to pray harder?” You could be doing more harm than good. Read 5 Things Not to Say to Someone with a Mental Illness.

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**Columbia Union Members in the Media**

- **Washington Adventist University Celebrates 110th Anniversary During 2014 Alumni Weekend**
- **Adventist HealthCare ramps up Montgomery County competition with urgent care centers**
- **9th Annual Family Aid Fund Benefit Concert to be Held, May 3**
- **Those New Year’s resolutions are paying off for some**

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**End Quote: What’s Missing From the Same-Sex Attraction Discussion?**

"Last month my church [the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church] held a summit called "In His Image: Sexuality, Scripture and Society" in South Africa. The purpose of the event was to grapple with homosexuality in the context of church life and wrestle with the question: “How can we as a body value people with same-sex attraction while still living in harmony with what we believe the Bible teaches about the homosexual lifestyle?”

It seems [to me that] the whole issue revolves around longings—relational, romantic and sexual longings that God has placed in each soul. ... We all long to love and be loved; God has organized human life such that we get some of our love needs met horizontally. Inborn longings drive this give-and-take without which we’d descend into jungle mode. … Longings and the relationships they build, in turn help build society, marriage by marriage, family by family, community by community and nation by nation.”—Jennifer Jill Schrizer is a member of Pennsylvania Conference’s Chestnut Hill church in Philadelphia. The article was...
UPCOMING EVENTS

MARYLAND

April 11-13: Chesapeake Conference's single adults are invited to attend a spring retreat at the Mount Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md. Come hear keynote speaker Lorraine Edwards’ inspiring presentations and make some new friends in a peaceful, woodland setting. For more information or to register, visit asamchesapeake.com, or contact Fred Thomas by email at fthomas1950@yahoo.com, or by phone at (410) 992-9731.

April 13: Washington Adventist University hosts its first Missions 5K Fun Run. Your donations and participation will support students that have committed to volunteer and for relief efforts throughout the year. To sponsor a group or runner, see the donation form on the Alumni Weekend page at http://www.wau.edu/alumni-weekend-sponsorship. Single-runner entry is $35. Same day sign-up will be available. For details, contact missions@wau.edu.

April 13: WAU along with WGTS 91.9 FM are hosting their annual Family Fun Festival featuring food from local restaurants, live music from recording artist Josh Wilson, children's entertainment and local businesses. WAU's Family Fun Festival is a locally established tradition, and has provided wholesome entertainment to the community for over a decade. The festival will take place on Sunday, 12 to 5 p.m. For more information, visit wgts.org/familyfunfest/.

April 26: The Dupont Park Church Home and School Association is sponsoring a black tie gala. The gala will be held at the Camelot banquet facilities in Upper Marlboro, MD. The theme for the evening is “An Evening in Paris” and will be hosted by Christian Comedian Jonathan Slocumb. Former students, faculty, parents, members and supporters of Christian education are invited. For more information about tickets and advertising in the souvenir journal, visit dupontgala.eventbrite.com.

OHIO

April 13: Ohio Conference's first Health Ministries Conference will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Worthington church. Topics will include CHIP, Full Plate Diet, health fairs, cooking classes, Red Cross blood drives, exercise classes and more. Registration is required, and a free networking lunch is included. Email Dan Thorward, Health Ministries director, for details or to register at rthorward@gmail.com. More details are also available here.

PENNSYLVANIA

April 14: Pine Forge Academy is holding an open house for students in grades 7 to 11. Overnight accommodations are available for Sunday, April 13 but space is limited. A registration form is available at pineforgeacademy.org.
VIRGINIA

April 12: Around 30 Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Northern Virginia area are hosting an all-day worship and training event. It will be held at the Hylton Memorial chapel in Woodbridge, Va. The worship hour speaker is Chaplin Barry Black, followed by an afternoon of training seminars. WGTS 91.9FM will be offering a free gospel concert that night at 6:30 pm. For more information, visit novaoneevent.com.

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 computer and device.

April 9-May 15: Adventist photographers from across the North American Division are invited to participate in inSpire’s 2014 Facebook Photo Contest. Both amateur and professional photographers may enter. The idea is to spotlight God's creative power and to provide opportunities for His people to share their gifts. Prizes range from $100 to an iPad Mini. Winners will be selected based on a combination of how many people like the photos on Facebook, and the rankings that will be given by inSpire's photography judges. The contest ends at midnight on May 15. MORE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

April 12: Sermon in Song at Capital Memorial church. Andrews Academy’s (Mich.) Concert Band and Handbell Ensemble will present “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me” at the 11 a.m. worship Service. The church is located at 3150 Chesapeake Street, Northwest in Washington, D.C. More details at capitalmemorial.org.

Click here for a complete list of events happening around the Columbia Union.
RHPA Board Votes Smaller, Leaner Profile for Publishing House

Workflow and personnel changes to save $1.5 million within a year.

Posted April 8, 2014

BY ADVENTIST REVIEW STAFF

The Board of Directors of the Review and Herald Publishing Association moved swiftly Sunday, April 6, to stabilize the financial health of the 165-year old publishing house at a specially-called Executive session after year-end reports showed a nearly $943,000 dollar loss for 2013 and continued weakness in the first quarter of the current year. RHPA Board chair Delbert Baker said that the directors were responding to recommendations from management, executive and finance committees, calling for quick and efficient action to turn around the finances of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's oldest institution.

In a series of coordinated steps, Board members voted to affirm a "solvency plan," authorizing RHPA leadership to take immediate steps to control costs and lay the foundation for stronger sales performance in the second half of 2014. The special session occurred less than three weeks ahead of the regularly scheduled meeting of the 30-member Board on April 24. That meeting will focus on broader strategic directions for the publishing house, including a potential role for the North American Division in shaping literature ministry in the U.S., Canada, and Bermuda.

Key items voted by the RHPA Board included streamlining production processes to eliminate redundancies in several departments of the publishing house; reducing the number of book titles planned for release in 2015; and trimming the editorial and production staff of some RHPA-produced journals. A reduction-in-force (RIF) of 26 current employees was also authorized by the Board of Directors, with nearly half of the total being achieved through collaborative retirement agreements with eligible employees. The savings to the publishing house from the workforce reductions are anticipated to reach $1 million in 2014, and more than $1.5 million in 2015.

Review and Herald leadership also sought and received permission from the Board of Directors to lease up to 60,000 square feet of the large Hagerstown, Maryland facility in order to decrease the operational footprint of the publishing house and achieve needed rental income.

Board members listened to several policy change requests formulated by the administration and the executive and finance committees, and referred those actions on to General Conference and NAD committees. RHPA administrators are hoping to build a vigorous online sales portal for products produced by the publishing house. A request was also forwarded to reduce RHPA funding of the church's retirement program to match the level required of the Church's educational institutions.

"Right-sizing the RHPA has been a difficult but necessary process," said RHPA president Mark Thomas following the Sunday afternoon meeting. "No faith-based employer ever wants to lose even one employee, but we have a greater mission to continue serving the publishing and printing needs of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. Keeping that mission in focus required us to take these hard steps to secure this organization and reposition it for renewed growth."
Because of ADRA Albania, 12-year-old Alda is finally starting school.

Young people surround Pastor Jason Ridley.

Because of ADRA Albania, 12-year-old Alda is finally starting school.

Young people surround Pastor Jason Ridley.

Allegheny West Members Minister in the Aftermath of Communism

columbiaunionvisitor.com/awcinalbania/

April 9, 2014 · by Taashi Rowe · in Allegheny West Conference, Uncategorized

In Albania, a country rebounding from Communism and a largely secular Muslim population, the Roma people struggle to find adequate employment, education and healthcare. A group from Allegheny West Conference recently traveled to this Southeastern European country to help.

Story by Christopher Thompson and Visitor Staff

The stamp of Communism is still visible in Albania. Yes, they have modern vehicles and cell phones, but in many ways the country is stuck. As a matter of fact, until about 20 years ago Communism kept Albania a closed country. No one was allowed in and no one was allowed out. This also meant no religious freedom. But there are no locked doors where God's Spirit is involved.

Although Albania is still a largely secular Muslim country, the Holy Spirit is definitely working through the Albanian Mission and ADRA Albania. Beatrice Kastrati, director of ADRA Albania, talked passionately about the needs of the people: "There's a great disparity between the rich and the poor… The police are corrupt … there is so much work to do here."

About two years ago, Sergio Romero, director of Multicultural Ministries for the Allegheny West Conference (AWC), heard of the need in Albania. "I started to pray for the people in Albania, specifically for the Roma (Gypsy) people," he says. "They are the underprivileged people in Albania. This people, out of prejudice, don't have access to medical services or education. I have in my heart to serve those that nobody else wants to serve."

He then got in touch with ADRA Albania to find out how he could help. They invited him to bring members of his New Experience mission group along with 11 AWC members. A total of 50 pastors, children ministry leaders, general contractors and medical professionals from four countries and 10 states visited the country for mission work. The group spent a week in the Albanian capital of Tirana and surrounding cities preaching revivals, providing free health clinics, health fairs and Vacation Bible School (VBS). Approximately 75 children poured into the ADRA compound daily for VBS. More than 500 medical cases were treated. And amongst the five revivals, approximately 30 people made decisions to be baptized.

"While in Albania, God showed me how awesome it is to
serve others,” said Amneris Martinez, a member of the Manantial de Vida Spanish group in Columbus, Ohio.

Shirley Benton, the conference’s Women’s Ministries leader, agreed, “This mission trip was an amazing ministry of love. We went to minister to those who have so little, and saw the joy and gratitude on their faces as we gave them medical assistance, food, toys and clothing. We saw hope come alive as love and the Word of Jesus Christ was shared with them. It is a country waiting for the good news of the gospel.”

Jason Ridley, pastor of the Hilltop church in Columbus says this was his sixth international mission trip. “It was refreshing because the Seventh-day Adventist Church in that country is fairly new. I was the first Adventist to preach in the city of Fieri where 90 percent of the people in the church were very young,” he recalled.

Romero said he would never forget meeting 12-year-old Alda. “She is in first grade,” he said. “She is finally attending school because of the amazing job that ADRA is doing there. She was proud that she was able to write her name. For a whole week, she attended our VBS program and she was an incredible girl.”

He hopes that this is only the beginning of a long partnership with the Albanian mission. Kastrati dreams of building a community center for girls, a home for senior citizens and much more. And Allegheny West has already been invited to come back next year.

Click here to watch a video from the trip.
53 Baptized During Second Annual Campus Revival at WAU

columbiaunionvisitor.com /53-baptized-during-second-annual-campus-revival-at-wau/

April 8, 2014 · by Michelle Bernard · in Education , Washington Adventist University

Initially only 14 had planned for baptism, but then the Holy Spirit fell on the campus and touched another 39 hearts.

Story by WAU Staff

The second Annual Campus Revival at Washington Adventist University (WAU) in Takoma Park, Md., featured a week of worship and culminated with the baptism of 53 young adults. The event started on Sunday, March 30, and culminated with the call to baptism on Friday, April 4.

Each evening at 7 p.m., hundreds of students, faculty and staff, and visitors from nearby churches filled the outdoor tent on campus to worship and to hear guest speaker Myron Edmonds, senior pastor from the Allegheny West Conference’s Glenville church in Cleveland. He spoke to the revival theme, “I’m Weak,” based on 2 Corinthians 12:9, which says, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

The revival concluded April 5 with a Sabbath worship service that featured speaker Ronnie Vanderhorst, a member of Allegheny East Conference’s Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md.

“We had about 14 people who planned to participate in the baptism, and then the Holy Spirit fell upon the campus and touched hearts in ways only God can do,” said Regina Johnson, WAU chaplain. “Saying God is good would be an understatement! He never fails to exceed my expectations. Another baptism will be happening April 26, and I’m beyond excited that the students are making their decisions together as a campus family!”

Shaniel Francis, a graduating senior who was among those baptized, said, “To me, the revival confirmed everything about my spiritual life that I was afraid to acknowledge. I realized the importance of starting over spiritually.”

Tyrus Fleetwood, a freshman who was baptized, said, “The revival gave me a chance to sit back and take the word of God, and look at what I was doing wrong in my life. It led me to surrender my life to him. It also showed me how God can really work, and how strong the Holy Spirit moves throughout people.”

Participants seemed to agree that the revival came at the perfect time. Vincent Wilson, a junior religion student, said, “I saw the baptism of the Holy Spirit, literally!”
Students raise their hands to God in praise.
Numerous Maryland politicians and community leaders joined Adventist HealthCare (AHC) executives and employees in March and April to honor William G. “Bill’ Robertson, AHC’s former president and chief executive officer. Robertson ended his 14-year tenure at the helm of AHC on April 4, to take a similar role with a health system in Tacoma, Washington.

On March 26 several community leaders, along with fellow Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee members, feted Robertson at a farewell reception and dinner in Rockville, Md. Mid-Atlantic Adventist HealthCare, AHC’s parent company, hosted the event to thank Robertson for his service. Those in attendance included Thomas Perez, U.S. Secretary of Labor; Harold Lee, former Columbia Union president who recruited Robertson to Maryland; and community leaders of several boards that Robertson served on.

“Bill is leaving Adventist HealthCare with a legacy of strong, responsible leadership,” said Dave Weigley, president of the Columbia Union, at the event. “Bill’s a legend not just for the length of time he served, but also because he was so passionate about leading the organization to intentionally embrace the Adventist Church’s mission. I will miss him as a friend and leader.”

The final event, featuring AHC employees and Montgomery County political leaders, was held April 2 at AHC’s corporate offices in Gaithersburg, Md. Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive, thanked Robertson for his leadership on both health and business issues and provided him with a proclamation for his service to the community.

George Leventhal, a Montgomery County councilmember, remarked how Robertson had helped AHC become the largest health-care provider of charity and uncompensated care in the county. Uma Ahluwalia, director of Montgomery County’s Department of Health and Human Services, credited Robertson for helping the county and state create job strategies, knowing that employment is a key part of a person’s health.

Finally, Gaithersburg Mayor Sidney Katz declared April 2 “William G. ‘Bill’ Robertson Day” in the city. He thanked Bill for his compassion, leadership and friendship.
Potomac Church’s ‘Vegetarian Food Fair’ Draws 150 Members, Community

April 8, 2014 · by Michelle Bernard · in Health & Lifestyle, Potomac Conference

What happened when Sligo church turned its fellowship space into first-class vegetarian restaurant?

Story by Don W. McFarlane; Photos by Paolo Esposito

Heavy rain and unexpected snow did not thwart the interest and passion of approximately 150 eager food enthusiasts who attended Sligo church’s International Vegetarian Food Fayre, dubbed “Vegetarian Food From Around The World” in Takoma Park, Md. Community guests, who made up more than half of the attendees, came from as far afield as Columbia, Md., and Charlestown, West Virginia, having responded to personal invitations, social media, posters and radio ads. Organizers at the Potomac Conference church had in mind a three-pronged objective for this March 30 event: building relationship with the community, providing attendees with the know how to prepare healthful and tasty meat-free meals and introducing a new health course to members of the community.

The Sligo church fellowship space was transformed into what some described as a ‘top class restaurant’ for the event. The tasty offerings, representing dishes from Asia, the Caribbean, India (an Asian category on its own), Italy, Latin America, the Middle East and the United States of America, were eagerly gobbled up by gastronomically-discerning guests. Portions were taste size, but by the time guests had repeatedly been to every food station, they had had the equivalent of a full meal, complimented by a variety of lip-licking smoothies.

Not only were guests able to sample the mouth-watering dishes, they were also treated to several demonstrations of how those dishes were prepared as they were taken on a sizzling, bubbling and aroma-filled journey by seven ‘chefs’ and a smoothie connoisseur. Appreciative applause filled the atrium after each demonstration. One guest later requested the addresses of the restaurants that prepared the food for the occasion, expressing enormous surprise when he was told that the dishes were all prepared by ‘ordinary’ members and friends of Sligo church and that none of the demonstrators worked as a professional chef.

Some of the statements and comments heard from attendees included:

“I have driven past this building for years but this is the first time I have come inside.” “I plan to visit again.”

“When do your services begin?”

“How often do you have an event like this?”

Guests left at the end of the afternoon with an enhanced appreciation of vegetarian food and how it is prepared, as well as an understanding of what Sligo church is able to offer in the area of health and other areas of interest. In addition, several left laden with gifts, which they had received and prizes won, ranging from books, gift baskets and a Magic Bullet blender.

The glow on the faces of the organizers as they packed up and cleaned up at the end, suggested that they were already thinking of a repeat performance next year and how to continue making Sligo church a place that the public choose to enter and a house of prayer and praise for all people.

“A 10 out of 10 event,” exclaimed one impressed attendee.
Mountain View Young Adults Get Acquainted With ‘The Man’

April 9, 2014 · by Taashi Rowe · in Mountain View Conference , Spiritual Health , Uncategorized

Story by Angelina Dickson

Approximately 30 young adults and youth from the Mountain View Conference recently discussed why prayer is such an important part of having a relationship with God. The discussion took place on the last weekend of the month during the conference’s third Annual Mountain View Young Adult Prayer Conference themed “He’s the Man,” held in Huttonsville, W.Va.

Joel “Joey” Nino, a 23-year-old theology major at Southern Adventist University (Tenn.), spoke to attendees during the general sessions about God and why He is ‘the Man.’ Through personal testimony and several stories from Scripture, Nino demonstrated how God is a God of love who reaches out to us and never leaves our side. Nino testified about how God took his life, once filled with violence, drugs, gangs and more, and made him a new creation.

He shared the story of the man with leprosy (Mark 1:40-42) who risked it all to reach out to Jesus to be healed not knowing for sure if He would be healed or rejected like he had so many times before. “He reached out in faith,” Nino said. “That is one reason why God is the Man because He reaches out to us in our affliction and heals us where we are.”

Throughout the weekend, attendees were invited to write prayer requests on the prayer wall and participate in workshops discussing prayer and having expectancy and prayer in times of desperation and urgency.

“How many times do we pray to God and when He answers us, we don’t believe it?” asked Kathy Pepper, conference prayer coordinator who led a group discussion on Acts 12, the story of Peter’s deliverance from jail.

“It is OK to wrestle with God in prayer,” she continued. “Sometimes, we need to draw a circle in the sand and tell God we are not moving until He blesses us and sometimes we need to be the answers to our own prayers.”
Black Vegetarians at Lower Risk for Heart Disease, Says Loma Linda University Health Study

Loma Linda, CA (PRWEB) April 09, 2014

Among more than 26,000 black Seventh-day Adventists, those who are vegetarians are at lower risk for heart disease, compared with their meat-eating counterparts, according to results of a new Loma Linda University Health study.

The study, available online now in the journal Public Health Nutrition, compared the cardiovascular risk factors between black vegetarians and non-vegetarians who are part of the ongoing Loma Linda University Adventist Health Study-2 (AHS-2).

AHS-2, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is a long-running study of members throughout North America of the Seventh-day Adventist Church focusing on nutrition, lifestyle, and health outcomes. The Seventh-day Adventists are a unique study subject because they have a wide variety of dietary habits, but in general have a very low percentage of alcohol consumption or cigarette smoking, non-dietary factors that may otherwise impact the study.

The new results show a hierarchy of protection received by black participants in the study based on their eating habits: Vegans (those who completely abstain from meat and meat products) and lacto-ovo vegetarians (those who consume eggs and dairy) were the least at risk for cardiovascular disease; followed by semi-vegetarians (those who infrequently eat meat); pesco-vegetarians (those who eat fish); and lastly, non-vegetarians.

The study results show that compared with their non-vegetarian counterparts, black vegetarian Adventists were at less risk for hypertension, diabetes, high blood pressure, total cholesterol, and high blood-LDL cholesterol. The study was a cross-sectional analysis of the data, and does not conclusively establish cause. In the future, the study involving black subjects also plans to look directly at heart disease experience rather than risk factors for heart disease.

Patti Herring, PhD, MA, RN, associate professor at Loma Linda University School of Public Health and one of the study's co-investigators, said "some findings for black Adventists are promising and we are anxious to compare black Adventist health with the general population of blacks. In so doing, we suspect that black Adventists' health will prove better in many regards, than those in the general population, particularly for the vegetarians."

"There's a growing body of evidence that vegetarian diets lower the risk for cardiovascular diseases and other diseases," she said, noting that AHS-2 is one of the few that has such a large number of black participants, which is important since they generally have some of the worst health outcomes among minority populations.

The abstract of the study is available by going to this link: http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=9205599&fulltextType=RA&fileId=S1368980014000263.

About Loma Linda University Health (LLUH) Loma Linda University Health includes Loma Linda University's eight professional schools, Loma Linda University Medical Center's six hospitals and more than 800 faculty physicians located in the Inland Empire of Southern California. Established in 1905, LLUH is a global leader in education, research and clinical care. It offers over 100 academic programs and provides quality health care to 40,000 inpatients and 1.5 million outpatients each year. A Seventh-day Adventist organization, LLUH is a faith-based health system with a mission "to continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ."

Contact: Herbert Atienza, Loma Linda University Health, 909-558-8419, hatienza(at)llu(dot)edu
Read the full story at http://www.prweb.com/releases/2014/04/prweb11745690.htm
5 Questions for Sam Neves, Creator of a Bible Trivia Game App

April 9, 2014 · by Taashi Rowe · in Potluck, This Month's Issue

Interview by Celeste Ryan Blyden

Sam Neves, youth pastor of the Stanborough Park church in Watford, England, just North of London, created Heroes, the Game, a trivia app that’s testing the Bible knowledge of a growing cadre of online aficionados—23,000 in 120 countries since its August 2013 release. Players seek to earn “manna” by answering questions about Jesus, Abraham, Paul, Mary and other “heroes” of the Word in English, Danish, Portuguese and Spanish. Neves, who senses a growing disconnect between young people and the Bible, hopes the game will help reverse this trend. In an email interview, he shared more:

1. Where did you get the idea for Heroes, the Game?

I was called to deliver a talk at the Global Adventist Internet Network conference held in Hong Kong in 2013. My title was “What the Church Could Learn From Steve Jobs.” In researching that I discovered a part of Steve’s life, which was relevant to our current situation. When he returned to Apple after having been kicked out, he described the company in the following words: “Apple is a company without identity; we are 2,000 employees making computers without knowing why we are making computers.”

Given the differences, I thought he was describing the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We too have largely failed to pass on a clear identity to new generations.

However, Apple today is thriving and seemed to have found its identity. What happened? Well, Steve happened. He started a campaign which transformed Apple from within itself and propelled it to what it is today. He summed up his underlying thought process in this way: “Instilling identity is easy. You just have to remind people of who their heroes are.”

From the moment I read that sentence, my work was cut out for me—to remind this generation of who the real Heroes are. Not the child-like, sanitized stories we present in children’s Sabbath School, but the raw biblical stories with all of their rich and powerful details.

2. Before Heroes, what was your favorite Bible game?

Before Heroes I did not have a favorite Bible game, something that highlighted the problem.

3. Who’s got the highest score for your game thus far?

It’s a girl called Priscilla who lives in New Zealand.
4. Why does our church need to produce video games?

There are three main reasons to enter the video game world: First, games are the most engaging way to tell a story. Second, this generation will play, on average, 10,000 hours by age 21. Third, costs of production have become accessible.

I call this “sacred gaming,” which I define as “games that are dedicated to telling the only story truly worth telling.”

5. Who’s your favorite Bible hero?

Jesus. Sorry for the cliché, but He was incredible at every level. After that it is Paul, who managed to speak people’s language and be comfortable going where other good Christians were not comfortable going.
5 Things Not to Say to Someone With a Mental Illness

Even well-meaning people can sometimes place additional burdens on those dealing with mental health issues. Many Christians even have an “illusion of safety” that they feel inoculates them against troubles like mental illness, writes Amy Simpson in her book Troubled Minds: Mental Illness and the Church’s Mission.

Don’t be part of the problem, avoid saying these five things to someone with a mental illness:

- You just need to pray harder.
- Is there sin in your life that you aren’t dealing with?
- Have you tried the (insert XYZ) natural remedy or program?
- Just change your attitude.
- Stop feeling sorry for yourself.
Washington Adventist University Celebrates 110th Anniversary During 2014 Alumni Weekend

Washington D.C. (PRWEB) April 04, 2014

Washington Adventist University will celebrate its 110th anniversary during the 2014 Alumni Weekend to be held April 10-13, 2014. WAU's annual alumni weekends are a time for celebration and reflection of past graduates, departmental or program anniversaries, and the University's history as a faith-based liberal arts institution. The weekend will include socials gatherings for honor classes, anniversary celebrations for departments and programs, the Alumni Awards ceremony, outings in downtown Washington, D.C., and the annual WAU Family Fun Festival.


Schedule Highlights: Kick-Off Social - Thursday 40th Anniversary Banquet for the Respiratory Care - Thursday D.C. Cherry Blossom Tour - Friday Reflections Vespers - Friday Edyth T. James Department of Nursing Alumni Breakfast - Saturday Worship Service - Saturday Worship in the Park - Saturday Academic Department Open Houses - Saturday Alumni Awards Banquet - Saturday WAU Missions 5K - Sunday Family Fun Festival - Sunday (featuring Josh Wilson)

The Office of Alumni Relations, along with partners such as Eventos Management, are excited to welcome all alumni and guests to campus during this exciting and growing event.

Washington Adventist University is a private liberal arts institution located in scenic Takoma Park, MD. Founded in 1904, it is owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and offers a Christian education to nearly 1,500 students of all faiths, through eight graduate and 32 undergraduate programs. Its vision is to produce graduates who bring competence and moral leadership to their communities. The 2011 edition of U.S. News & World Report ranked the University among the best regional colleges in the northern region and as one of the most diverse institutions of higher learning in the US.

Eventos Management was founded to fill a need in providing a complete event service tool to both event planners and attendees. By combining event registration, hotel bookings and flight reservations all in the same platform, Eventos provides the most complete and comprehensive event management tool available. Not only does Eventos operate on robust technology, we make sure that we work with each client to maintain that level of customer service that you expect and deserve. We dedicate ourselves from beginning to end to do all in our power to ensure that your event happens smoothly, that we provide the necessary services, and that you and your attendees are happy with the outcome.

For more information on the weekend and to purchase tickets to events please visit WAU Alumni

Read the full story at http://www.prweb.com/releases/2014/04/prweb11735481.htm
Adventist HealthCare ramps up Montgomery County competition with urgent care centers

The competition for Montgomery County health care patient business appears to be heating up.

Adventist HealthCare plans to partner with Florida-based Centra Care to create open three urgent care centers there in the next year. The new centers, announced Tuesday, will be located in Germantown, Rockville and Laurel.

To be called "Centra Care, Adventist HealthCare Urgent Care," the centers will be in freestanding buildings in easily accessible areas, with plenty of parking, officials said. They will also offer occupational health services for area businesses. The Germantown and Rockville locations are expected to open late this year, and the Laurel location will open in early 2015.

"It certainly fits into our mission and vision at Adventist to build an integrated care system in a changing health care environment," said Terry Forde, Adventist's interim president and CEO. "The important element is really that connection back to our health care system."

The connection Forde is describing is the ability for communication and coordination between urgent care centers and primary care providers or specialists. One goal of health reform is to reduce health care costs by steering patients away from emergency room visits and inpatient stays toward lower-cost preventative care.

It could also help Adventist in the competition for market share in the area, particularly with Holy Cross Hospital.

Silver Spring-based Holy Cross is part of CHE Trinity Health, created last year when Trinity Health merged with Catholic Health East, creating a $13.3 billion company. Holy Cross also has health centers in Silver Spring, Gaithersburg and and Aspen Hill.
Construction started on Holy Cross Germantown Hospital in July 2012 and it is projected to open in October. Holy Cross received permission to build the 93-bed hospital in Germantown while Adventist’s bid to build an 86-bed hospital in Clarksburg was rejected back in 2010.

Forde said Adventist was looking to put urgent care where the hospital saw need. Adventist has The Aquilino Cancer Center in Rockville and the Shady Grove Adventist Emergency Center in Germantown.

“Our emergency department [in Germantown] already sees 30,000 patients a year, not to mention our other services in that area,” Forde said. “While we can’t put inpatient beds in that community, we do think we can meet specific health care needs there.”

Last fall, Adventist signed a lease for a new medical office in the Clarksburg Village Center where it planned to install a primary care, pediatric, obstetrics, gynecology and rehabilitation office inside the 109,000-square-foot "neighborhood center" at the corner of Newcut Road and Snowden Farm Parkway.

Patients will be able to use the new urgent care centers on a walk-in basis or through online appointment scheduling. On-site lab work and radiology along with EKGs, physicals and immunizations will also be available, Adventist said.

They also plan to offer a variety of health services to local businesses — workers’ compensation exams, drug testing services, health risk appraisals, occupational health exams, on-side lab screenings and Department of Transportation exams.

More Centra urgent care sites are planned for 2015, Adventist said.

Tina Reed covers health care.
By Press Release

MARMORA - The Family Aid Fund Benefit Concert was established in 2006 by the Parkway South Seventh-day Adventist Church in Marmora, NJ.

Each year, Karla Rivera Bucklew joins Ingrid Forss in performing at the Parkway South Seventh-day Adventist Church for The Family Aid Fund Benefit Concert. Karla has a Masters degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Maryland. She has toured as soprano soloist with the New England Symphonic Ensemble, Pro Musica and Columbia Collegiate Chorale to places such as Ely Cathedral and St. Martin-in-the-Fields, South Africa, Russia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Australia and many European Countries. Ingrid is professionally certified as a piano instructor by Westminster Conservatory of Music in Princeton, NJ and has a private part-time Piano Studio. We enjoy performing together and are glad we can use our musical talents to help others in need.

We, at Parkway South Seventh-Day Adventist Church have established the Family Aid Fund to help others. There are times when people need a hand up, and we want to be that hand. In Matthew 25 Jesus asks us, as members of the family of God, to feed those who are hungry, give something to drink to those who are thirsty, to take in those who need shelter, to care for those who are sick, and visit those who are in prison. We want to fulfill that mission one person at a time, as Jesus did. The Family Aid Fund strives to do just that. Please give generously to help someone who needs a hand up right now.

When: May 3, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.
Where: Parkway South Seventh-day Adventist Church - Roosevelt Blvd. & Route 9, Marmora, NJ 08223
Admission: Admission is free, but donations towards the Family Aid Fund are greatly appreciated!

For more information, visit https://www.facebook.com/familyaidconcert
Those New Year’s resolutions are paying off for some

Irma Clark is a veteran of the Smith Mountain Lake Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “Eight Weeks to Better Health.”

Healthy and Lean in 2014 was the theme of the program, which ended its seventh year on Feb. 24. Clark has participated in all of them, but this year was different, according to the Bedford resident.

“I kind of made up my mind this time,” said Clark. “One of the speakers told us to start drinking water, and only water, so I did that. I also stopped eating the junk foods, like chips and doughnuts.”

By the end, the 58-year-old had lost 26 pounds, or 13 percent of her body weight. Her goal is to lose 4 more pounds.

“The entire group lost 3 percent of their body weight over the eight weeks, and Irma was our biggest loser,” said Rhonda Poff, organizer of the course. “Our runner-up lost more than 6 percent of her body weight.

“We go by the New Start program, which is an acronym for Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest and Trust in a higher power,” Poff explained. “That is actually eight topics, and each class, we cover one of those topics.”

Health care professionals from the community came to the classes and talked about heart disease, diabetes and foot health, among other topics. Each class included health screenings, weigh-ins, a 20-minute workout, healthy food tastings and games.

“We had 47 participants from the community,” Poff said. “Our focus every year is to make healthy the whole person. Yes, weight loss is an added benefit. … It is a total lifestyle change; it is not a diet.”

“I like the camaraderie, the speakers, and I look forward to it every year,” said Clark.

Prizes help serve as an incentive. Among them were a bag filled with water bottles, a Persian rug, a Dick’s Sporting Goods gift certificate and a certificate for reflexology.

Clark has advice for those who want to lose weight: “Don’t give up and keep at it,” she said.

Another program to help people get healthy that began in the new year is the Smith Mountain Lake YMCA’s “Y Weight, Be Healthy Franklin County.” The weight-loss contest, similar to television’s “The Biggest Loser,” will wrap up Monday.

According to YMCA Director Andrea Fansler, two dozen people are sticking with it and making healthy changes.

Participants earn points for healthy behaviors. For example, weigh-ins are worth 200 points; participants can weigh in up to three times. They can add 200 bonus points to the number of pounds they lost.

Participants can get their body fat measured up to three times. Each measurement earns 200 points, and 2,000 bonus points are awarded when there is an improvement.

Another 200 points are awarded for attending an exercise class, and 300 points are given for attending an approved educational class and personal workout or swimming exercise.

So far, the 24 participants have earned more than 200,000 points, Fansler said.
“On our Facebook [page] and at the front desk, participants can find out how to earn extra points by, for example, walking an extra five flights of stairs. We had people come out and run our WinterFest events to earn extra points. People walked it, too, and that’s alright,” Fansler said. “It’s all about getting active.”

Prizes for the Y’s biggest loser include a $100 gift certificate to Dick’s, a year’s supply of multi-vitamins from VitaZen and dinner for two.

“Obviously, it’s nice to lose weight, but we want them to be active,” Fansler said. “Once they get into the habit of going to the facility every day and doing something every day, even if it is minor, instead of going home and laying on the couch, they are going to go home and think about ‘What do I need to do before I get on the couch?’ ”

For those who want to get active, the Y has several fun events on the calendar, including the Sundown Classic 5k on May 24.

“It’s going to be a glow run, and we are also going to have Smith Mountain Lake’s first-ever sky lantern ceremony. That’s where people are going to be able to commemorate loved ones and their accomplishments. Lanterns will be available for purchase in the next week,” she said.
Perspectives: What's Missing From the Same-Sex Attraction Discussion?

April 8, 2014 · by Taashi Rowe · in Editorials, More, Pennsylvania Conference

God placed relational, romantic and sexual longings in each soul. But longings can be problematic.

Story by Jennifer Schwirzer

Last month my church [the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church] held a summit called "In His Image: Sexuality, Scripture and Society" in South Africa. The purpose of the event was to grapple with homosexuality in the context of church life and wrestle with the question: "How can we as a body value people with same-sex attraction while still living in harmony with what we believe the Bible teaches about the homosexual lifestyle?" Some called the conference "anti-gay," but that's an unfair characterization of it. While our church's official position at this point does not support the homosexual lifestyle, those involved with the conference affirmed and re-affirmed the value of those living it and a desire for relationship with them.

Miles of blogs, articles, films, posts and threads on this matter stretch out in often-fruitless debate. I prayed earnestly about how to make a contribution that will perhaps at least simplify the discussion and maybe, prayerfully, lead us all closer to Jesus' side. Here's what I believe God gave me:

It seems the whole issue revolves around longings—relational, romantic and sexual longings that God has placed in each soul. These longings predate sin, for God said it was, "not good for man to be alone," and Adam was, after all, with God, so alone only in human sense. We all long to love and be loved; God has organized human life such that we get some of our love needs met horizontally. Inborn longings drive this give-and-take without which we'd descend into jungle mode. Imagine a world where, rather than seeing each other as potential sources of fulfillment and pleasure, we'd see only resource competitors and irritants? Longings and the relationships they build, in turn help build society, marriage by marriage, family by family, community by community and nation by nation.

The Problem With Longings

But longings can be problematic. The person who expects each longing to be fulfilled, who exercises no tolerance for the stretched-out empty hand of desire, ends up in a mad chase for an unachievable goal. The idolatry of longing has fueled our astronomical divorce rate. Extramarital affairs imbibe of its spirit, as well as the wild, slobbering casual sex in our world. Consenting adults obey the "follow your heart" siren song of the age, eventually following their hearts right out of God's will. Exalting our human longings to a place where they must be honored and fulfilled binds us in powerful chains to an insatiable, false god.

But keeping them within the design of the One who instilled the desire for love in the first place, creates a space for Him to work. They will at times lead to fulfilling marriages, friendships and communities. Other times a spouse in an emotionally dead marriage will ache for true intimacy, and a single person will long for the embrace of a lover they can't find. But even in those less-happy times, longings will do something miraculous. They will drive us to the river of God's love. There is nothing like the soft water of agape on the dry cracks of a lovelorn heart. I've hated my disappointments in love, but later loved them because of how God loved me through them.

Viewing the issue of homosexuality through the lens of longing makes the discussion much more fair than it has been. Those who argue against the homosexual lifestyle because they believe the Bible forbids it would also argue against longing-driven divorce and remarriage and heterosexual extramarital hookups. If homosexuals must deny their basic longings to stay within God's design, so must everyone. If, on the other hand, longings constitute a justification for the formation of a sexual relationship, we must be consistent and give a pass to, for instance, the man
who leaves his aging wife for a trophy half his age or the middle-aged single who, prospect less and frustrated, goes hunting for the night.

Before you conclude that my God coldly disregards our deepest desires for human connection, recall that He created and instilled those desires in the first place. And yes, He allowed for the frustration of them as a result of our planet’s slide into sin and brokenness, but only so that that emptiness could receive Him. If instead of fighting for our rights to the human objects of our longings, we would divert that longing heavenward, we’d enjoy a connection to Jesus like none other. There are benefits to unfulfilled longings. Don’t despise them. They may be your best friend in the quest for communion with the God whose love is “better than life” (Ps. 63:3). “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God,” (Ps. 42:1, 2).

Come. Drink. Let your unfulfilled longings guide you to the water.

*Jennifer Jill Schwirzer (pictured above) is a member of Pennsylvania Conference’s Chestnut Hill church in Philadelphia. The article was first published April 3 on her blog at jennpen.com.*