February 4, 2015

Weekly News From Around the Columbia Union Conference

February Feature: The Prayer Frequency

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“We have been taught over the years that music is filler or happens before the good sermon. We are working to change that mindset,” says Krueger, who took the controls two years ago after 25 years at a sister station in Washington state.

Several members of the WGTS team talk about the ministries they lead and share some of their favorite listener stories. It’s clear the common thread that ties this community together is the wonder-working power of prayer.—Taashi Rowe

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Underscore: What do Young Adults say About
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The Visitor wanted to bring the discussion home to the Columbia Union. Staff posed versions of the summit questions to four young adults from churches around the mid-Atlantic. Click to the next page for their answers.—Debra McKinney Banks

Editorial: Music Can Change the World
Those who know my musical background find it ironic that I now serve as chairman of the board of Washington Adventist University's (WAU) contemporary Christian radio station, WGTS 91.9 FM, based in Takoma Park, Md. But, please, keep things in perspective. WGTS is not for me. Neither is it for some of you. Rather, it is for the half-a-million listeners who tune in each week, 40 percent of whom are disenchanted with traditional religion and have no formal connection to a local congregation. They tune in to hear their favorite Christian artists, and, through them, they find encouragement, hope and peace. Sometimes they don't even tune in to hear the music.

Instead, they listen because the station provides the closest thing they have to a Christian family.—Rob Vandeman

5 Ways to Prepare for Evangelism

Frank Bondurant, vice president for Ministries Development at the Columbia Union Conference, shared these five tips to help start preparing your heart and church for "Living With Hope," the April Allegheny East, Chesapeake and Potomac conference evangelism effort.—V. Michelle Bernard

Read the entire February Visitor online here!
More Stories

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The Prayer Frequency

Web Editor

The Prayer Frequency

Story by Taashi Rowe, Photos by Paul Morigi/AP Images

Just an hour ago, one of our listeners called in and gave his life to Jesus," exclaims Kevin Krueger, the general manager of WGTS 91.9 FM. This leader of one of the most successful Seventh-day Adventist ministries in the country is referring to a call the station recently received during their annual Friendraiser.

The day before the man called in, Krueger and station staff prayed that God would lead a listener to Christ. "Obviously we needed funding, but we knew we also needed to be focused on God and what He is doing," he shares.

He says the man wanted to speak with a pastor. When they put him through to Chaplain Pete Garza, the caller explained that the music playing on the radio convicted him. He wanted to know what he needed to do next to become a Christian. Chaplain Garza prayed with him and led him to Christ.

Although prayer has become the frequency that WGTS operates on, Krueger is still amazed at how God answers their requests. Every day of each week, from their studios on the campus of Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., WGTS staff connects some half-a-million listeners to Christ. They do it, not only through upbeat and encouraging contemporary Christian music, but also through an increasing number of off-the-air programs to minister to their needs.

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Below, several members of the WGTS team talk about the ministries they lead and share some of their favorite listener stories. It's clear the common thread that ties this community together is the wonder-working power of
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Romero: Al comparar nuestros problemas con los de ellos, los lectores pueden encontrar varias formas de crecer y madurar a través de las historias, meditar en las preguntas y actuar de acuerdo a los desafíos que el libro ofrece.

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Underscore: What do Young Adults say About Millennials Leaving the Church? Do They Have Solutions?

Web Editor

Underscore: What do Young Adults say About Millennials Leaving the Church? Do They Have Solutions?
Story by Debra McKinney Banks, Feature Image via iStock

In a 2012 study by the Pew Research Center’s Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 32 percent of Millennials were found to have no religious affiliation. Sadly, these numbers are also reflected in our ranks.

Student campus ministry leaders at Union College in Lincoln, Neb., worked with Rich Carlson, their vice president of spiritual life, to organize the 2014 Summit for Young Adult Retention and Involvement to discuss the issue. Backed by the North American Division (NAD) and joined by Debra Brill, NAD vice president for Ministries, 19 student representatives from Seventh-day Adventist universities and colleges met last October and deliberated over four related questions. (Visit weareausa.org/summit to read the summit summary.)

“The biggest outcome was the impression our church leadership left on the students,” Carlson says of the event. “[Debra] was in every session, took notes and talked to students in between sessions. By backing the whole event, the church showed that our young adults are a good investment.”

Join our February 24 Facebook chat on this topic!

Danielle Barnard (at right) represented Washington Adventist University, based in Takoma Park, Md., where she serves as prayer ministries leader. “The young adults were supported so well by the church,” she says of the summit.

“I left with good expectations that we were taken seriously.”

Carlson and Barnard report strides are being made on their campuses to incorporate the ideas and suggestions shared, especially with regard to what young adults can add to the church’s appeal and mission. “I was eager to come back and share the information I got … with the other people I work with in campus ministry,” explains Barnard. “I felt impressed to be more intentional about praying for everyone on my campus.”

Carlson says he especially appreciated the student leaders who came forward at the end of the three days to share: “Here are our gifts. Here is what we can bring to the table.’ [The church] may look a little different when they get done with it, but it will still be God’s church and His mission.”

UNION MILLENNIALS SPEAK
The Visitor wanted to bring the discussion home to the Columbia Union. Staff posed versions of the summit questions to four young adults from churches around the mid-Atlantic. Click to the next page for their answers:
Editorial: Music Can Change the World

My wife plays the harp, my daughter the violin and my son the bassoon. They all play the piano and sing. I, on the other hand, can't carry a tune inside the proverbial bucket. Yet, I spent a significant portion of my pastoral ministry promoting high-quality music programs in my churches. I may not be musically inclined, but I do understand music’s amazing power to soften and sensitize and produce compassion and caring. Music can change the world.

Those who know my musical background find it ironic that I now serve as chairman of the board of Washington Adventist University’s (WAU) contemporary Christian radio station, WGTS 91.9 FM, based in Takoma Park, Md. But, please, keep things in perspective. WGTS is not for me. Neither is it for some of you. Rather, it is for the half-a-million listeners who tune in each week, 40 percent of whom are disenchanted with traditional religion and have no formal connection to a local congregation. They tune in to hear their favorite Christian artists, and through them they find encouragement, hope and peace. Sometimes they don’t even tune in to hear the music.

Instead, they listen because the station provides the closest thing they have to a Christian family.

Commuters all over the Washington metropolitan area listen as they travel to and from work each day. Young people listen to it on their smart-phones. It plays in offices in the White House, and in Senate and congressional offices on Capitol Hill. Its presence is felt on military bases. It provides the backdrop to some of the area’s most influential business centers, as well as doctor’s offices and restaurants. And, people around the world listen on wgts919.com.

NUDGING PEOPLE TOWARD THE KINGDOM

In its early years, the station focused on my musical taste and that of a few thousand other classical music buffs. It was largely a Seventh-day Adventist audience, but it simply could not compete in the D.C. market. Year after year it struggled to raise its meager budget. Today, however, its contemporary Christian format places WGTS in the top 10 of all station formats in our market area. Their operating budget is now more than $2.5 million.

Impressively, WGTS receives no subsidies from the church or WAU. On the contrary, it provides $175,000 in labor opportunities for WAU students and returns more than $325,000 to the university for rent and other services. And, from operating reserves, it loaned WAU $2 million to help with the construction of the new music building.

Please don’t think that the story of WGTS is simply about the music or the numbers. It is not. It is about ministry. It is about the listeners and what God is doing in their lives (as you’ll read in this month’s feature). Nothing is more rewarding than hearing how the station has nudged them closer to Christ and His kingdom. WGTS music is changing the world—one heart at a time.

Rob Vandeman is the executive secretary for the Columbia Union Conference.

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Adventist Communication, Technology Conference Set for Feb 11-15

Michelle Bernard

Adventist Communication, Technology Conference Set for Feb 11-15
Story by ANN Staff

Seventh-day Adventists participating in this year’s Global Adventist Internet Network will meet in a new location—online.

The annual conference in which participants examine emerging trends of ministry and technology will be held February 11 to 15 at gain.adventist.org. Each presentation, followed by live discussions, will be broadcast three times a day in order to accommodate participants in time zones worldwide.

Organizers said the move to the online format—which is expected to draw the conference’s highest-ever attendance—came about because of the denomination’s General Conference Session, a 10-day global spiritual gathering and business meeting scheduled for July.

“Many people will use their resources to travel to San Antonio in the U.S. state of Texas for General Conference Session, so it was reasonable for us to think of other options for the GAiN meeting,” said Williams Costa Jr., Communication director for the Adventist world church. “This is a new way to engage people in the conversation about technology, ministry and evangelism.”

This year’s conference will be offered in English and live translated into French, Portuguese and Spanish.

Costa said participants are encouraged to participate in groups hosted at churches, offices or homes.

Scheduled presentation topics include cyber security, cryptocurrency, app development, distance education, branding, using games to spread the gospel, and operating an information technology department on a budget.

Several Church Communication and Information Technology leaders said the annual GAiN conference is a key meeting for collaborating on projects and sharing tips for ministry.

“The sharing of ideas, projects and news has always galvanized those working in the field of communication and tech, a field in continuous development,” said Corrado Cozzi, Communication director for the Adventist Church’s Inter-European Division, based in Berne, Switzerland. “I personally have benefited from each annual conference I attended, especially in terms of innovations shared with the intent to create synergy and networking.”

Tech specialist Kirk Nugent said, “GAiN is one of the highlights of my year because in order for IT to be truly relevant we must find a way to directly tie into the overall mission of the Church. Nugent, who serves as Information Technology director for the denomination’s Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, based in Pretoria, South Africa, said, “Our goals are the same, and it’s only by getting everyone involved can we truly be effective for the cause of Christ.”

To register for free and see the conference schedule, visit gain.adventist.org.

The event hashtag is #GAiN15.

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Adventist Communication, Technology Conference Set for Feb 11-15

http://www.columbiaunionvisitor.com/adventist-communication-technol...
Artist Inspires Spring Valley Academy Students With Stories of Faith

Michelle Bernard

Nathan Greene, a contemporary Seventh-day Adventist artist, recently spoke at a Spring Valley Academy assembly and shared how the Lord inspired his work throughout the years.

Greene works in the tradition of the golden era of American illustrators, such as Harry Anderson, whom he personally knew and looked to for creative insight. In 1990 Anderson was asked to do two sizable commissions, “The Family of God” and “Chief of the Medical Staff.” Anderson recommended Greene for the job. Greene, pictured with his wife, Patty, shared how those now iconic Adventist paintings were instrumental in his transition to full-time corporate commissions and prints.

“SVA is proud to have several of his paintings displayed in our halls, which now hold a special meaning in knowing the story behind each one,” says Darren Wilkins, principal.

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Hope Channel Upgrades Broadcast System

Michelle Bernard

Hope Channel has transitioned its broadcast services of eleven years in Simi Valley, California to now broadcast directly from its headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Story by Fylvia Fowler Kline

To effectively manage this change and its future broadcasting needs, Hope Channel has made an investment of 2.8 million dollars in a broadcast system that is highly automated, customizable, and one that requires less in staff resources and labor cost than the option used thus far. Currently five of the thirty-three satellite channels in Hope Channel’s global network are being broadcast from the new system in Silver Spring, which has the capacity to broadcast a total of thirteen channels.

“The benefits of this new system will be seen and experienced in several ways,” says Gabriel Begle, Vice President of Programming, Production, and Broadcast. “We now have the ability to easily insert relevant spots, ensure high quality images, offer closed captioning, and broadcast in high-definition.”

Hope Channel is excited about bringing its broadcast service in-house and all its benefits to the many Seventh-day Adventist organizations with which it partners to share God’s good news for a better life today and for eternity.

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Let’s Keep Talkin’: Join the Visitor Chat With Young Adults Feb. 24

Michelle Bernard

Better engaging young adults in the church mission work is one of the six priorities of the Columbia Union Conference under the direction of Dave Weigley, president. To that end, the union established a Young Adult Advisory Subcommittee and, last spring, the union executive committee voted to approve the subcommittee’s recommendation that all eight conferences have at least one young adult on their executive committee. The union also created the REACH Columbia Union School of Evangelism, which opens in Philadelphia this spring, where young adults will learn how to become active disciples of Christ.

Join members of the union subcommittee, some of the young adults included in our February Underscore and other Young Adult and Youth Ministries leaders around the division to further chat about Millennials in the church. Go to facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor, February 24, at noon.

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See Exclusive Early Showings of Old Fashioned

Michelle Bernard

**Romance film created by Washington Adventist University Alumni to open nationwide on Valentine’s Weekend**

*Story by Donna Bigler*

Washington Adventist University has named Rik Swartzwelder as its “2015 Alumnus of the Year.” Swartzwelder has just written, produced, directed and acted in the romantic film *Old Fashioned* that will open nationwide on Valentine’s weekend. He will be recognized during the university’s Alumni Weekend, April 9-12.

“We are very proud of Rik, who is extremely talented,” says Ellie Barker, director of Alumni Relations. “He has created a refreshing view of old fashioned values in contemporary times that is bringing a faith-based perspective to romance. He is an outstanding example of how WAU alumni are taking their service beyond the gateway.”

*Old Fashioned* takes place in a small Midwestern college town, where former frat boy Clay runs an antique shop. Swartzwelder makes his feature film acting debut as Clay, and Elizabeth Ann Roberts plays Amber, the woman he courts in this love story.

Swartzwelder grew up in rural Ohio. He earned his bachelor’s degree at Washington Adventist University and then earned an M.F.A. in Motion Picture Production from The Florida State University. He now lives in Los Angeles, Ca.

*Previews of Swartzwelder’s new film will be offered in exclusive showings at the Majestic 20 in downtown Silver Spring on Friday, February 6. Show times include 1:15 p.m., 4:15 p.m., 7:15 p.m. and 10:15 p.m. The theater is located at 900 Ellsworth Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Tickets can be purchased in advance at [http://www.oldfashionedmovie.com/theaters](http://www.oldfashionedmovie.com/theaters).*

Washington Adventist University alumni who would like to meet Swartzwelder are encouraged to come to the Alumni Banquet, which will be held during Alumni Weekend. For more information, email alumni@wau.edu, or call 301-891-4133.

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