

THE MESSENGER

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October 2004

Running For Alicia

Betsy Coffman

Observing the third anniversary of the "9-11" tragedy, John Titus is in training to run in the November 7th New York City Marathon in loving memory of his daughter, Alicia, who lost her life at age 28 as a flight attendant aboard United Airline Flight 175 which crashed into the second New York City Trade Tower. Although John feels that running this race in the city where his daughter was killed by terrorists, "will be an emotional as well as physical challenge of overwhelming proportions," he hopes that others will be moved to support his effort by contributing to the Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund. The fund was established at Urbana University to support programs that will educate and train students and the community about peace, nonviolent conflict resolution, compassion, prejudice, injustice, tolerance and related issues. John states, "My hope as a graduate, former employee and now, board member {of Urbana University} is to develop courses in Peace Studies and Nonviolent Conflict Resolution, and eventually even greater things, in Alicia's name and spirit."

Alicia grew up with her family in the Urbana and St. Paris area, graduating from Graham High School and later from Miami University. The family also has strong ties to Urbana University, from which both her parents, John and Bev graduated. Alicia, her brother Zach, and sister Shanoa also attended Urbana University and John was the Dean of Students at U.U. for 12 years before taking a position at Schoolcraft College near Detroit, Michigan.

John describes Alicia as having been "a very astute and deeply compassionate young lady who believed she could make a difference. When she was four years old, she saw a homeless man in San Francisco. She reached into her pocket and pulled out all the money she had, one dollar. She walked over to the homeless man and gave him her dollar. Her whole life was about helping

others with love and compassion. She believed that by striving to understand the reasons why poverty existed, or hunger was so prevalent, or injustice was tolerated, or wars were fought, she could work to right the wrongs and bring peace instead of war. An idealist? Absolutely! But she believed this from a depth of knowing and from the bottom of her heart. And she did make and still is making a difference." After her death her friends set up a Website in her memory, www.SweetAlicia.org, which receives responses from people all over the world. Many have worked to raise money for her memorial peace fund including church members, friends in San Francisco who held a fashion show, and another friend who ran the NYC marathon last year. Both raised over \$1,000 which they contributed to her fund. Since Alicia's death, John and Bev Titus have joined the

organization, "9-11 Families for a Peaceful Tomorrow" founded by families of victims. This group seeks to raise the awareness of all of us to the tragedy of death, injury and devastation experienced by innocent victims of war and terrorism – people all over the world who want nothing more than any of us here in the U.S.A. – to simply work, raise our families, enjoy our communities and strive toward the best possible quality of life.

In an essay reflecting upon the effect of losing his daughter so tragically, John has written, "I realized immediately after Alicia's death that I must learn to forgive those responsible, or the anger would consume me like a cancer...and it would not bring my Alicia back. It would only destroy me in the end. Throughout my journey of grief, true compassion has come into my heart with a longing for expression. Through compassion I have a renewed sense of purpose toward peace; a peace that recognizes the oneness of life. Working for peace and justice in a world that seems so inept in both has given new meaning to my life."

For those residing in this area, the Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund provides an opportunity to join the cause of working toward peace in the world right here in our own back yard. The initial goal, to raise \$25,000 in principal, would provide income from the fund that could support at least one peace program a year. In just over two

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Julian Diary

Driving Miss Dorsa

She's 93, mentally sharp, but nearly blind with macular degeneration. You can tell she was once pretty, but one eye is now closed completely and she looks like a feisty little white-haired pirate. She's also mostly deaf. Her hearing aids never work the way they should. She goes downtown to the hearing center about once a month to complain and get them adjusted. Her father lived to be 103, so, she jokes, she likely has ten more good years. She claims to be an atheist, but hangs out with people who believe in God. Her house, beautifully positioned in an old orchard, is an architecturally revisioned apple-packing shed with mullioned windows, thick adobe walls, beamed ceilings, hardwood floors, and hundreds of books lining the living room which she can no longer read. She's a retired New York book editor and the widow of a famous author of children's books. Until a few months ago, she lived with three old dogs. Two of the dogs died last spring.

Of course, she hasn't owned or driven a car for some time, and I have become her chief chauffeur. Her last remaining dog, Wolf, a large Bouvier with soulful eyes, was over 14 years old when he was diagnosed with a tumor, likely cancerous, that the local vet couldn't completely remove. More tumors later showed up. He was on pain pills and much of the time wouldn't eat.

I get the call on a hot Saturday morning in late August—could I take her and Wolf to the vet. The vet isn't open on Saturday. No, she wants to take him to a 24-hour emergency animal hospital that's way downtown in a part of San Diego I'm not familiar with. Her friend recommended it. Ok, I'll be right over. There goes my day, I'm thinking. She pays me to drive her, but still, I would much rather be doing something else today. I call the animal hospital to get directions. When I arrive at Dorsa's house, Wolf is lying under some bushes by the front walk and doesn't want to get into the car. "Come on, dear," she tries to coax him out with a dog biscuit,

but he doesn't want it. He's gazing sadly out from under the blue-gray fringe that partly covers his eyes. I sense, and on some level I think Dorsa senses, that he's trying to die, that he wants the efforts to cease. Finally we manage to get him into the car. On the way down, we chat about various changes happening in the community since the fires last year. I ask Dorsa about a local woman who was a mutual acquaintance, I haven't seen her for over a year and wonder if she's moved. Dorsa looks puzzled. "The name sounds familiar, but I don't remember who she is." I remind her that she used to come to Dorsa's parties, was the town librarian for several years, had parrots, and her husband played the didgeridoo. Dorsa shakes her head in exasperation. "Good night! I've just completely forgotten somebody I must have known for years. *That's* never happened before!"

"How do you know?" I tease her.

"You're rotten," she chuckles.

Wolf's gait is tired as we enter the vet's waiting room; I notice a piece of weed is dangling off the end of his tail. I don't try to dislodge it. Image is no longer important to any of us. Dorsa leaves him with me while she visits the restroom. I put my hand on his head, poor old boy, you're tired, I know. He sighs and lays his head on my knee. The vet's assistant brings him into a small room, and the vet explains to Dorsa that they're going to do some blood work and x-rays, it will take a while, and they may want to keep him overnight.

We go out to find a place for lunch. I try to remember to walk on her left side; she explained once that her left ear is better, so that's the side I talk into. "I want a big sandwich," she says. She's a vegetarian, so we manage to find a place in a nearby food court that serves a cheese and avocado sandwich with the full array of tomatoes, onion, olives, pickles. The sandwich is huge, and she eats every crumb. "That's the best sandwich I ever had," she says. I call the vet's office on my cell phone to see if they're ready for us to take Wolf home. Yes, we can go back now; the vet wants to talk to Dorsa.

Wolf's new tumors are malignant,

he explains, and he might be able to struggle on for another month or so with pain medication, but if he won't eat he can't take the pain medication. The vet gently suggests that it would be more humane to put him down. Dorsa's face crumples, but she nods in agreement. I hug her and return to the waiting room while she sits with Wolf as he's given the injection. About 20 minutes later she has to decide whether he is to be cremated there or she will take him home and bury him on the property. She asks me if I would be comfortable taking him home in a bag on the back seat. I tell her I'm ok with whatever she wants to do. But she realizes it would be evening by the time we got back and she probably couldn't get hold of anybody to bury him before morning. There's been no rain for weeks and the ground is hard. She decides to have him cremated there.

She writes them a check for \$500 and we walk out into the late afternoon sunlight; silent tears are running down her cheeks. It feels strange to be leaving without Wolf. I'm hit with the stark finality of having walked in a few hours ago with a living being and now walking out without him.

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THE MESSENGER

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Surviving Hurricane Charley

Nadine Cotton-Durgin

Welcome to Florida! I have certainly heard that a lot since Hurricane Charley passed our way on Friday the 13th of August.

My husband, Jeff, and I had been trying to get a bit settled in our new home that we had moved into on the first of the month. We have lived in Southwest Florida for almost a full year—now, we were quickly learning how to put up hurricane shutters. We moved everything inside that was possible to move inside. We bought lots of canned goods and water, filled the bathtub with water and watched the TV for news of Charley's path.

I soon discovered I was not alone in having my first experience of a hurricane. Many people have moved to Southwest Florida fairly recently, and the last hurricane that did significant damage to this area was 44 years ago. It's hard to find someone who was here during that storm.

The community of Fort Myers Beach made their preparations of boarding up windows and sandbagging doors. I looked to the community to find out what to expect and was not surprised to find the people had varying reactions to the approaching hurricane. I talked with people who were excited by the event, some were sure that it would miss us, and some were nervous or upset. I was surprised to learn that many people were not following the mandatory evacuation orders for Fort Myers Beach.

After making our own preparations, we heard the news report that Charley was taking its time arriving and would be off the coast around 2 p.m. instead of the original 2 a.m. The weather teams also felt sure that their sophisticated Doppler radar and other technologies predicted Charley's path for the Tampa area, which is an hour north of us. I on the other hand felt alone in my premonitions that we were in for it.

I could not sleep and watched as the very edge of Charley's force hit us with a violent tropical thunderstorm in the middle of the night. This was enough to make me want to abandon our home. My husband, however, slept through most of this initial storm and was not ready to leave unless mandatory evacuations were announced for our area.

The calm after this initial storm and just before the actual full force of Charley hit was eerie. It was another beautiful sunny day in Florida. I was on the phone for hours with people concerned for us, and talking to the many people I was concerned for here in our community.

The news had been broadcast about storm surges and the flooding that

They suggested going to an inner room of your home which has no windows and to place a mattress over you and your loved ones. We followed these instructions and had the mattress leaned up against the wall ready to go on top of us.

The wind started to pick up, and then the rains began and the power went out, and Jeff and I camped out in our little space with our flashlights, battery-powered radio, pillows, mattress and the Bible. (I even brought a deck of cards in case of boredom.) We sat there listening to the winds and the howling and then the crashes outside. The noise and anxiety about what was happening was very intense. But, I was now the calmest I had been in two days listening to the wrath of the storm outside. I prayed to the Lord, talked with the angels, and quoted the 23rd psalm and the Lord's

Prayer out loud. There was nothing left to do but sit and wait—what would be, would be.

When the storm calmed for a short while, we took a chance at looking out the only uncovered windows of our home to see what we could see. When the winds started back up again for the last round of this storm, we were transfixed. We foolishly watched the might and power through the windows as trees were bent in half. We then got on the cell phone to let our loved ones know we had survived and that we were now waiting to find out about

flooding. Looking back at it, this feeling of safety was premature. We later found out that the tail winds of the hurricane can cause the most damage, and tornados often lie in the outer edges of the storm.

We had hunkered down at 2 pm and by 7 pm the storm was over and we were outside with the neighbors surveying the damages. Trees were down everywhere, shingles had flown off the rooftops, huge pools of water filled yards and sidewalks, and we were all fascinated to see a small tree branch imbedded in a Corvette fiberglass fender. But overall, our

The focus of most here is on helping each other to get their lives back together. There is a wonderful sense of community that people are seeing come from Charley's wrath... please pray with us for the strength and resources to meet the incredible challenges ahead of us. Hurricane Charley was here and gone in a matter of hours. The restoration from this disaster will take many, many months.

would result from that for days. We had placed all our valuable papers and photos in the attic to try and avoid water damage. As we were talking with the neighbors outside, one lady stated something about the roof flying off in this storm. Now I didn't know where (if anywhere) my things might be safe.

Then, on TV news came the awful announcement that Hurricane Charley had gone from a category 2 storm to a category 4, with wind speeds in excess of 140mph, and was headed straight for us! Since Charley would be with us shortly, they advised people to stay wherever they were so as not to get caught on the roads when the storm hit.

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Surviving Hurricane Charley

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street was extremely fortunate to have very little damage. The blessing that I felt to be alive and safe was intense. Many shingles had blown off our roof and trees had come down that by all calculations should have hit our new home, but they didn't!

The cleanup continues on two weeks later as I write this. Fort Myers Beach was hit much harder than where my home lies just eight miles inland. The huge amounts of damage to property and the length of the power outages have disrupted the lives of all who live and work here. Most everyone lost refrigerators and freezers full of food. Ice was hard to get and as the island was not safe, the people who had evacuated were not allowed back on the island for five days. The stench from some of the garbage where rotting food has not been picked up yet is incredibly foul. Organic debris and furniture line the streets waiting for pickup. There is so much human need here.

People are in crisis. Many have lost their homes and places of employment. Many of the poor who work on the island have lost their apartments from storm damage and flooding. One of the Red Cross shelters is housing 33 people on this island. I help out where I can and I listen to those who need to tell their survival stories from this storm. I listen to the survivors at the shelter, in the neighborhoods, at homes and apartments, in the stores and in the taverns. I have helped them clean up their homes, toss out their damaged furniture, watched their children while they mop up and deal with FEMA and insurance agents, passed out clothing, bedding and other needed articles, as well as continuing our daily ministry of passing out bread and canned goods.

Our thrift store (where we house the emergency food pantry and church office) was mercifully spared damages other than a small amount of perishable goods that we lost. Our store manager leaves the store all day long now to help the Red Cross deliver meals and drinks to the homebound and the many relief and reconstruction workers.

The Kids' VIP after-school program has also been disrupted. The kids had only their first three days of the school year before the storm hit. After more than a week off, they are back in their damaged school this week. The playgrounds were damaged and filled with debris. We will have to wait for the cleanup to happen there before our kids again have a place to run and play outside. Please pray for my *patience* with these very active youngsters as we wait. I have 24 children between the ages of 5-10 inside the school cafeteria for three and a half hours daily.

There is another side to all this disaster and disruption. I have heard many people talking about the good that has come out of this storm already. There are so many instances of neighbor helping neighbor. The focus of most here is on helping each other to get their lives back together. There is a wonderful sense of community that people are seeing come from Charley's wrath. And I am learning to live with the survivor guilt of having had my home life restored to normalcy quite quickly compared with those around me here. I thank God every morning and evening and many times during the day for the home that I get to go back to. I get to go *home* and restore my fuel cells in my earthly heaven, so that I may continue being useful to those who need my help here.

Please pray with us for the strength and resources to meet the incredible challenges ahead of us. Hurricane Charley was here and gone in a matter of hours. The restoration from this disaster will take many, many months.

The Rev. Nadine Cotton-Durgin is pastor of the Church of Southwest Florida.

Editor's Note: On September 2, 2004, we received the following from Rev. Deborah Winter, in DeLand, Florida. Since then, Hurricane Frances apparently lost momentum in the Bahamas, but at this writing Hurricane Ivan was on its way. Let us continue to keep our Florida folks in our prayers.

Hello everyone,

It's time once again to keep Florida in your prayers with Hurricane Frances on her way. It's a stronger hurricane than Charley, so big it is expected to cover the whole state. It is 140 mph now and projected to hit us dead on at a minimum of a category 4. Also, when it hits the Bahamas, it is supposed to slow which isn't a happy thought for us as it can gain speed. We're preparing for what the Hurricane Center is saying is the worst hurricane in Florida's history. What is worse is that I have quite a few clients from the counseling center who still have roofs gone or nearly gone from Charley two weeks ago. Some just got their power back. Now they are saying to expect to be without power for at least two weeks. What a crazy ride it has been.

Still, nothing like a whole lot of wonderful Swedenborgians sending prayer our way...who knows, maybe they will be wrong and that Swedenborgian energy will knock Frances out. That has my vote. Take care and be well.

Deborah



IMPORTANT CHURCH DATES, 2004-2005

October 29-31, 2004: COMSU @ Patte LeVan's home in Julian, CA

October 30, 2004: Investment Committee @ Central Office, Newtonville, MA

November 4-7, 2004: General Council @ Wayfarers Chapel, Palos Verdes, CA

November 12-14, 2004: EDSU @ Missy Sommer's home in Potomac or Gaithersburg, Maryland (TBA).

May 7, 2005: Investment Committee @ Central Office, Newtonville, MA

July 5-8, 2005: Council of Ministers @ Berkeley, CA

July 10, 2005: General Council @ Berkeley, CA

July 13, 2005: General Council @ Berkeley, CA

July 9-13, 2005: Convention 2005 @ Berkeley, CA

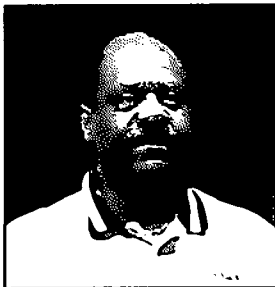
Editor's Note: Dr. Robert Head, president of Urbana University in Urbana, Ohio, delivered the following address at the 180th Swedenborgian General Convention at St. Jerome's College in Waterloo, Ontario, July 12, 2004.

A Record Year

Mission, Service, Accessibility,
Productivity, Success

Robert Head

Good morning to all. I bring you greetings from the students, Board of Trustees, faculty and staff of Urbana University. It is hard to fathom, but this marks the fourth summer that I have had the privilege of updating you on the progress of your university. As I have said in each of my previous briefings, this past year was another great year for Urbana University.



Robert Head

On May 1st we held our 104th Commencement ceremony where we conferred degrees upon 274 graduates. There were two points of significance that made this event extraordinarily meaningful. The first point of significance is that it was exactly 150 years ago that Urbana University held its very first commencement. The second point of note is that this historic anniversary ceremony included a wonderful keynote address delivered by President-Elect and now Honorary Doctor Christine Laitner.

Last year was a year of a record enrollment for Urbana University. We had over 1500 students and were scrambling to accommodate 450 students in residence halls built for 350.

Never before was I more aware of the old saying, "Be careful what you ask and pray for."

A great story about prayers being answered begins with a missionary who was walking across the desert to save some souls. He saw a lion rapidly approaching him and when the lion was but a few

steps away, the missionary dropped to his knees to pray for his life. His plea began, "Dear Lord, please fill this Lion with a Christian spirit." Sure enough, the lion stopped in its tracks, sat down and pressed its paws together in a holy display and said, "Oh Lord, please bless this food for the nourishment of my body!"

I am often asked about what makes Urbana University different and what makes it the treasure that it is. Allow me briefly to tell you the story that I always share in response, the story of your University. We still are a small, private liberal arts institution that owes its mission, vision and philosophy of learning to the Swedenborgian Church.

We are a caring institution that is proud of the fact that we enroll average students and make them better. Sixty percent of our students are the first in their families to attend college.

One-half of our traditional students are education majors and will become teachers when they complete their studies. I recently spoke to a group in a neighboring community, Springfield, and in preparing for it learned that 12% of the teachers in their district held either a bachelors or masters degree from Urbana University.

Our student enrollment has grown by over 50 % in the past six years making us one of the fastest growing universities in the state. Some of the growth is attributed to new programs in Nursing, an MBA, an active program of Service Learning, and even new activities such as a band. Growth can also be attributed to the growing and positive reputation of our institution promoted by excellence in teaching and learning.

The Ohio Board of Regents recently published a report, by university, identifying the percentage of graduates working in the state. We are proud to have 83% of our graduates involved in the social and economic fabric of our state. This result places our University in the top fifteen percent of all universities in Ohio and recognizes our focus of positively impacting this region.

Mission. Service. Accessibility. Productivity. Success. These are the points of distinction that make me extremely proud to represent the institution founded by this body some 154 years ago.

I want to take the next few moments

and share with you accomplishments from the past year and our challenges and goals for the upcoming year. In the area of academic programs, we hosted two accreditation visits. One reviewing our Teacher Education Program and the second reviewing our Athletic Training Program. I am pleased to say that we received full accreditation in both which underscores the great job being done by our faculty and our graduates.

In the fall of 2004, our Nursing program will undergo a similar review and we expect similar results. This past year was the first full year of our MBA Program and our Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Beyond the work involved in those two start-ups, the University partnered with several members of the Church in designing the Center of Applied Ethics, which has three purposes.

The first purpose of the Center for Applied Ethics is to provide an interdisciplinary opportunity for students to explore ethics and values critical to being an outstanding member of our society regardless of their chosen professions.

The second purpose is create a summer institute open not only to students but also to churches and related organizations whereby leadership, ethics and world events can be studied. The third purpose is to create the Office of Campus Ministry, which will work to better connect our students with their faith and the religious community.

If you were not at the re-dedication of Bailey and Barclay Halls last fall, you missed a very significant moment. Completing the renovation of those two historic buildings was extremely important in connecting our past to our future. I hope that you will have an opportunity to tour the buildings soon.

In the past three years, there is no greater area of development for Urbana University than that of technology. We are light years ahead of where we have been. In 2002, we completed the connection of our buildings and to the outside world through fiber optics. This past year we added a classroom management software package to enhance teaching and learning through technology and installed a new state-of-the-art telephone system. We are anxiously awaiting an end of July response to a

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Editor's Note: Continuing the graduates' comments that weren't included in the September *Messenger*, the following are the induction speech given by the Rev. Richard Leonard Tafel and the speech presented by Rev. Alison Lane at the July convention in Kitchener, Ontario.

Salt and Light

Richard Leonard Tafel

The gospel lesson I've chosen has Jesus telling his disciples that they are the salt of the earth. (Matthew 5:13) "You are the salt of the earth.

But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men." As some of you know, I'm a strategist. We strategists love mission statements. You heard Chris [Laitner] refer to her mission statement yesterday.* Well, I believe Jesus is offering the Christian church a sort of mission statement. He's saying to us that our faith must have taste and be salty and powerful.

Now, it took me a long time to get here for this ordination. The journey has given me opportunity to "taste" other faiths. So, let me tell you why I decided to be ordained in this denomination. Because when you've tasted other Christian teachings after you've studied Swedenborg, they all come off a bit bland. I'm here because no matter what challenges we face as a denomination, our teachings retain powerful taste.

Over the past few days we've got insights into what makes our faith so salty. Paul told us about our unique message for a world seeking it. Wilma told us about our unique journey with God. Ron, in his story about a day in London, reminded us how we see deeper meanings in everyday occurrences. We see the spiritual in our material life —



Richard Leonard Tafel

correspondences and connections.

In my own life I've been a bit slow. When I look back at the call in my own life the spiritual messages are pretty obvious. When it just happened that my cousin Rev. Richard Tafel and my Uncle Richard Tafel and I all just happened to be in the area when my grandmother transitioned to the next life, and we all did the funeral for her. Well maybe then I should have paid attention.

Or maybe years later when I arrived at Harvard Divinity School. I looked for the old Swedenborg School of Religion on Oxford St. only to find the Harvard School of Architecture. I wanted to see where my grandparents had lived in the early 1900s. Eventually, I ended up living at Sparks House, which is the Minister's house for Harvard University. I put my grandfather Dr. Leonard Tafel's green thirty on to a book shelf and they fit perfectly. One day the minister, Peter Gomes, told me that this house was, in fact, the Swedenborg School of Religion and had been moved across the street in 1968. For the next eight years I lived in what was the Swedenborg School of Religion. Maybe, just maybe I should have gotten the message.

Then there was my first ordination into the American Baptist Church. My cousin Dick Tafel just happened to be in town and was able to come forward and lay hands on me. And then there was the time that I was visiting Los Angeles and coaxed a friend to visit Wayfarers Chapel with me. We finally got there late in the afternoon. As we walked up to the chapel there were clearly festivities going on. I recognized my cousin Harvey and our president Ron. Everyone welcomed me to the fiftieth anniversary celebration for the church. And there was a photo of my grandfather laying the cornerstone. I had no idea it was the fiftieth anniversary. Now, maybe I should have gotten the spiritual message at this point, but as I told you I'm a bit slow on the uptake.

The spiritual messages keep coming. Last night I went to dinner with my parents and my brother who had driven up from Pennsylvania. During dinner my dad pointed out that my grandfather was elected president of the denomina-

tion of this church and that my great-grandfather pastored this congregation. Okay, okay I get it. I'm here, it took me awhile but I'm here. And I think you'll agree I picked a good group to be ordained with.

Let me say thank you to all of you in this denomination who keep insuring that our salt retains its flavor. You've suffered through boring meetings, difficult controversies and you've kept this church available for those who would be lost without it. Thank you.

I was recently in a meeting with the Bishop in the Episcopal denomination. At some point, my ordination came into the discussion. I became defensive about our small size as I explained my decision to be inducted into our church. His response humbled me. He said, "Jesus had only twelve disciples. Don't worry about the size of your church, focus on your message."

*See September 2004 *Messenger*

The Rev. Richard L. Tafel is president of the Swedenborgian Church of the Holy City in Washington, D.C.

The Warmth You Cannot Buy

Alison Lane

Several months ago, I was looking for a book in the library at the Pacific School of Religion. While doing so, I came

across another book, a printing of the journal of Henry David Thoreau. Many of you may know Thoreau as a 19th century transcendentalist who moved into the woods for a time so that he could work at living an intentional life, and this particular journal

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Alison Lane

The Warmth You Cannot Buy

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that I had found contained his thoughts and experiences from this time in his life.

As I began to through the pages, an entry about collecting wood caught my eye. In the year 1855, he wrote the following, he said, "I was so warmed in spirit in getting my wood, that the heat it finally yielded when burnt was coldness in comparison. That first is a warmth you cannot buy."

As I was thinking about this evening's graduation service, this journal entry came to mind—because the idea of rounding up wood for a fire reminded me of my experience at seminary. For three years, we have made it our task to prepare for ministry, to gain, collect, pick up those tools we would need to become good ministers.

This evening, we were asked to consider sharing with you one of those tools. And specifically, we were asked to consider sharing something we learned, but hadn't expected to learn. I can easily say that for me, I learned much that I hadn't anticipated. For when I entered seminary, I carried with me really only a vision of what I saw my grandpa, Rev. Eric Zacharias, doing on a Sunday morning, as well as the feelings of love and care that I experienced not only from his presence, but from the other ministers I had met at Almont Summer School as well.

My learning feels like it has been immense. Though I could offer a brief lesson about sermon preparation or theology or worship, the unexpected lesson for me was also something of a reminder—and that is the power and beauty of people in relationship.

For me, it was the people who made the experience. The lesson may seem an obvious one, but it came home to me in ways I could never have planned for. It was in the way class participation and relationships affected the class; it was in the times Jim Lawrence or Kim Hinrichs would invite SHS students over for dinner and the sense of community it created. I saw the beauty of relationships

while serving as a chaplain at San Francisco General Hospital, and the relief people felt in being able to share their experience with another. I saw this power in prayer groups and coffee dates. Images come to mind that could take hours of description—suffice it to say that I learned in new, unexpected ways the power of relationships and their transformational quality. And I feel extremely blessed.

In our Swedenborgian tradition, we know that interaction and community is essential to our regeneration—this includes our relationships to one another and with God. And as Wilma Wake reminded us in her sermon, it is important to remember that we as a church are walking this path together.

When Thoreau described collecting the wood—he said it brought him a warmth he could not buy—this is exactly how I feel about my three years at PSR, and in particular it is how I feel about this precious reminder of how much we can learn from one another. I pray the Lord helps me to continue to carry this first kind of warmth with me in the coming years. Thank you.

The Rev. Alison Lane was ordained as a Swedenborgian minister July 12, 2004, at the annual convention in Kitchener, Ontario, and is continuing postgraduate studies at the Swedenborgian House of Studies and Pacific School of Religion. ☩

Johnny Appleseed Museum

Editor's Note: The following is condensed from a report sent by Joe Besecker, director of the Johnny Appleseed Society/Museum.

As of this past June, the Johnny Appleseed Society and Museum has completed its first year back in the newly renovated Historic Bailey Hall at Urbana University, Urbana, Ohio. Over 1000 people have visited the museum, ranging from Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to World War II veterans. All who visit seem uplifted with the experience of getting closer to Johnny and his gentle goodness.

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Driving Miss Dorsa

(Continued from page 106)

"I had a feeling this morning that we'd come to the end," she says.

On the way back she wants to stop at the market to get orange juice. She gives me the money and settles back in the seat with her eyes closed. "I'm going to go to the pound next week and look for a puppy that needs a home." Good, I tell her. That's good.

I stop at the deli section to get something for dinner. I'm too tired to cook. I'm exhausted. I feel as if I'm melting down and sinking through the floor. I get some meatloaf for Steve, and some stuffed eggplant for me, and then I realize that it would be dreadful to let Dorsa go home and sit in an empty house all evening after she's put her dog to sleep. I should ask her over for dinner. But I'm so tired, I mentally reject the effort, all I want to do is fall into bed. I take a deep breath, and order extra portions of stuffed eggplant and a pint of Mexican coleslaw. A package of instant Indian spinach with tofu, and berries with whipped cream should complete the menu. With that decision, the tiredness lifts. I return to the car and ask her if she'd like to come to my house for a pickup deli supper and some company before she goes home. "I'd love it," she says. "Thank you."

We're completing dinner by candlelight on the screened porch when I realize that there was, after all, no better way to have spent the day than to be with a friend through her pain.

Two weeks later she calls me to drive her to Ramona to pick up a three-year old Jack Russell terrier named Bailey who needs to be adopted. "Ok, I'll be right over." Yeah, there goes my day, but the look on her face with Bailey on her lap as we drive home is reward enough.

—Patte LeVan



Editor's Note: Early this year, the Turleys received an invitation to attend the British Conference in England to share the kinds of music and worship they've been creating and presenting within Convention (See March 2004 Messenger). They hoped to return home with new ideas and resources, as well as further strengthen the growing relationship between our two denominations. The British Conference, which took place in late July, offered them room and board and travel within England, and most of their remaining expenses were covered by donations from various sources within our denomination.

Ken, Laurie, Emily and Ethan's Excellent Adventure

Ken Turley

What a wonderful summer it has been! . . . It was just after 6:00 PM local time July 25th when we arrived at Heathrow Airport in London. There were a few uncomfortable questions at Customs when we did not know where we were going, only that we were being met by someone named Nigel! The Customs Agent looked at the four of us holding our luggage and guitars and simply said, "You Americans! Go on, before I change my mind." We hurried on and sure enough, around a couple of corners we saw a slight man holding a sign that said "The Turleys." It was not Nigel, but Michael Hindley, Secretary of the British Conference. Nigel had had car trouble and so the four of us, eleven pieces of luggage and two guitars, fit into one of the smallest cars I've ever seen! The ride to our destination, High Leigh Conference Center, was just over two hours in length and was a little more exciting that we might have asked for, but we made it safely.

We stowed our luggage in our rooms and joined a group of about twenty or so for the evening's gathering. After

chatting with three or four groups, I met Nigel, the Conference Treasurer and several other ministers. We found ourselves comparing the ways in which our respective organizations employed their ministers. The way ministers and societies establish and change positions is relatively similar, but with one major difference. Within the British Conference, a number of years ago, the ministers initiated a policy in which each minister receives from the Conference exactly the same salary, with minor adjustments for cost of living, depending on where they live. They *all* receive a salary which amounts to about \$38,000. The other major difference is that each society makes a sizable contribution to Conference, as much as \$30,000.00 in some cases. This comes from the personal giving and fund raising efforts of each individual society. I went to bed with my mind turning over the many implications of this 'most civilized' practice.

The Turleys spent Monday morning practicing and preparing for our presentation. By the noon meal the numbers had grown noticeably. The weather was beautiful, and the Conference Center was simple, comfortable, and situated

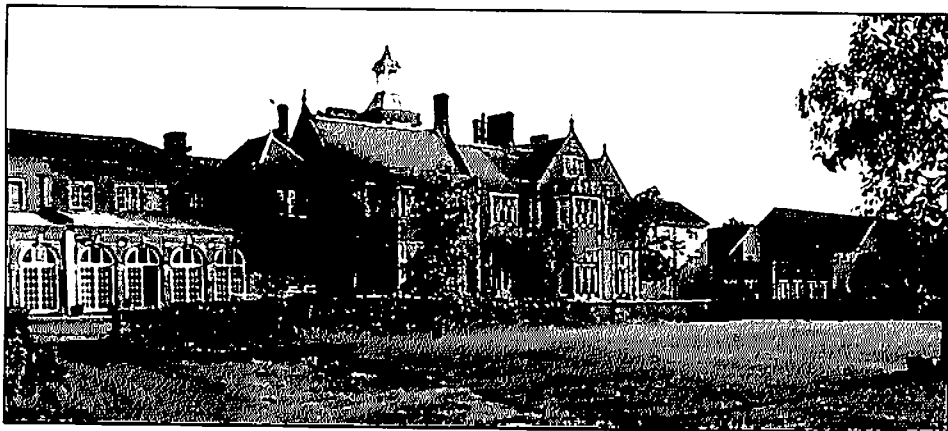
with walking access to a small town on one side and charming English countryside on the other. Numerous rabbits nibbling the grass and magpies everywhere.

As we made our way to the cafeteria, we were greeted by person after person. Any notion of the British being cool and reserved was quickly dispelled by their warmth, openness, and good humor. We attended their opening services and, following a break for tea, their first business session where we were officially introduced and welcomed. Dinner was followed by another session, a closing vesper service and evening drinks. At this point, about 9:30 PM, nearly everyone gathers in the common room, and the shop is opened where snacks, soft drinks, tea, coffee, wine and beer are available. People chatted well into the evening.

The next morning we were quickly recruited for the Conference Choir. It was being led by Becky Jarvis, the completely charming daughter of Rev. Bruce Jarvis. She is a high school music teacher and has taken over directing the choir from her father who was instrumental in establishing the choir as a regular part of the program. It felt so familiar, but this time, Laurie and I got to be in the choir and simply enjoy the singing. It was just like Convention: lots of beautiful music, a completely volunteer choir and too little time to get everything properly prepared! But there was an army of piano players who took turns accompanying, and quite a number of singers with skill and experience who helped us all along. The music was well chosen with a wide variety of styles and very moving without being overly difficult to learn. And Becky took us through our paces, not only with a practiced skill, but with a most enjoyable good humor.

Meanwhile, I recruited Becky on violin, Marion Kufeld on flute, and four singers to help us on some of the pieces we had planned for later that afternoon. Again we squeezed in rehearsals here and there, wherever we could, before and after meals, at coffee breaks.

The afternoon business session took place and then at four o'clock, following tea time, we did our two hour presenta-



High Leigh, site of British Conference.

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Ken, Laurie, Emily and Ethan's Excellent Adventure

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tion on Music and Worship. David Gaffney, one of the ordinands, who also has a background in rock music, provided us with a bass, two electric guitars, amps and a PA system. We were given the chancel space and so, with Emily on bass and vocals, Ethan on guitar and vocals, Laurie on piano, guitar and hand drums, and me on guitar, we presented a wide array of the kinds and styles of music that we have used in worship, both at Convention and at our home church in Fryeburg. We explained how and why we would use each piece of music in different parts of the worship service. We included jazz, many of our own compositions and settings of scripture, blues and country gospel, hymns and chants. We involved them in singing on several pieces and included Becky on violin on a jazz piece, the flute player on my setting of Psalm 92, and the four singers on one of our pieces that we recently did at Convention. The response was very positive.

At each mealtime, we tried to sit with someone new and the conversations flowed freely as questions about our respective churches and countries flew back and forth. It was interesting to see the many parallels between Convention and Conference.

In the evening session, a kind of 'mini-course,' Laurie and I met with about thirty-five people for some intense conversation about how to enliven the music and worship of their individual churches. As always the questions of limited resources and instigating innovation while respecting tradition arose. We talked about how to work with what you have and develop the strengths and loves of a specific group. We emphasized the need for reaching out with new styles of music, yet not losing touch with the traditions that have brought us to the present. The evening ended with a beautiful vesper service followed by a lively social gathering that only began to slow as the clock approached midnight.

Wednesday began with choir at 7:45 AM, breakfast, and morning service.

The business session included presentations on youth work, outreach, and the financial state of the church. Many, I'd even say most, of the issues that they are dealing with are very familiar. They have just recently brought women into the ministry and all ministers to equal status. Youth are hard to come by, but those who are involved are very enthusiastic, and they are developing a good base to work from. Outreach is a primary focus for a small but committed group. I was especially impressed with the work they are doing in cyberspace. The website they are developing is first rate.

That afternoon, there was another business session where a presentation was given on a study group on the Book of Revelation and some beautiful artwork they had used to guide their explorations. Following the break for tea, there came a formal and very moving Ordination Service. Four new ministers were ordained into service. Each spoke movingly about their journey into ministry and their hopes for the future of the church. The hymns in this service, as well as all the rest of the services, were sung with a familiar enthusiasm, and voices on the alto, tenor, and bass lines were numerous.

Following this came the evening business session, vespers followed by evening drinks.

Thursday morning began with choir rehearsal and breakfast and another business session. The afternoon presentation centered on Purley Chase New Church Conference Center, located about two hours from London. As the long time managers of the center are retiring soon, and new people coming on board, including one of the recent ordinands, plans are in place for closing the center in order to make some extensive renovations that will greatly enlarge



Rev. Rita Russell (left), recently at the Women's Conference, "Gathering Leaves," at Temenos, with Esther Byrne, who will be ordained into a special caring ministry in a community in Scotland in September this year.

and enhance the versatility of the site. The retreat center has been part of the church for many years and now is poised to be one of the primary focuses for outreach in the future. That afternoon, mini-courses took place and all four of us took part in the Sacred Circle Dancing led by Rev. Rita Russell. It was a gentle and soothing spiritual oasis of easy to learn but uplifting dances designed to facilitate non-verbal interaction. It was quiet, wonderful, and even Emily and Ethan enjoyed it immensely.

That evening the schedule read: Social Experience. We had been asked to offer a couple of songs and came with expectations of tea and cookies and a rather reserved evening of quiet conversation. Boy, were we off the mark! This was their annual talent show and what an array of hilarity, poetry, music and dancing and theater, they brought forth. Everything from sailor songs, to letters from a mother to her son that began "Dear Son, I am writing very slowly for I know you don't read too good..." There were offerings of original poetry, a melodrama with ministers and lay people filling the roles of Pretty Polly, the beautiful heroine, Dastardly Dan, the cold-hearted villain, Young Tom, the simple but strong-hearted constable and three men of uncertain persuasion as the

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Ken, Laurie, Emily and Ethan's Excellent Adventure

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choo-choo train. There was also a classical violin duet and a selection from Mendelssohn's oratorio on Isaiah. Laurie and I offered two of our original songs. It was quite an evening and again the myth of English reserve was put to flight in gales of laughter, spontaneous cheers, and all-around good-natured silliness.

Following this, Laurie and I led the vesper service in which we led hymns, I gave a short message, and Laurie and I performed two anthems. There was a short choir rehearsal, and then we joined the group for the evening social hour. Knowing that this would be the last night we would have together, everyone was loath to retire and the conversation stretched on late into the evening.

Friday morning dawned bright and clear, and while we all felt tired and happy, there was an undercurrent of melancholy, as we knew we would all be separating to return to our respective homes. The business session was short, and ended with motions made, seconded, and passed to officially give thanks to all who had helped make the conference week as wonderful as it had been. The Turleys were included.

The conference broke up after lunch with many long and prolonged goodbyes. We left in the company of Rev. Rita and drove through the English countryside to Purley Chase. They were holding a General Church Youth Retreat with around thirty kids from the USA, Sweden and England. We shared dinner with them, and while Emily and Ethan joined in the activities, Laurie, Rita and I talked with the ministers who were running the retreat. Our kids were so thankful to be around kids their own age, they ended up spending the night! We three adults traveled on to Rita's where we settled in for the weekend.

The next morning, Saturday, we drove back to Purley Chase after breakfast and picked up the kids, who had made a wonderful connection with the young people from General Church. Again with many thanks and good-byes, we departed. We spent the rest of the day at Warwick Castle, a kind of permanent renaissance fair in a real castle. We



The Turley Ensemble in session, showing the General Conference what can be done in words and music to bring the Word to young people.

saw jousting, fencing, archery, troubadours, all in authentic traditional dress using instruments of the time. I ate 'bangers and mash' (sausage and mashed potatoes with gravy) for lunch. On the way home, we stopped to view the Lichfield Cathedral where I put my hands on a stone wall that was a thousand years old! We met some people who were having a neighborhood party, many of them lived in homes built in the 1300s. The fellow we talked to lived in one of the newer homes on the block: it was built in the 1700s. We finally arrived home late in the evening and made preparations for the next day's worship service.

Sunday morning we traveled for an hour to the Birmingham church where Rita serves as minister. At our request, their organist, well into his eighties, played jazz for the prelude and Rita led the liturgy. Laurie, Emily, and Ethan and I provided several anthems, and I gave the sermon, followed by the sacrament of Communion. It was a beautiful service, made all the more meaningful by the fact that it was Rita's first service as a full minister, having been elevated from her previous status as assistant minister. Following the service we shared in a potluck dinner and were engaged in conversation with many of the parishioners who were most interested in our musical family and sharing their experiences in, and impressions of, 'the States.'

From here, we drove to the home of some local folk musicians who were having a musical garden party. We spent the better part of the afternoon playing tra-

ditional fiddle music, getting to know one another and sharing in the beautiful weather. As the afternoon wore on and it was time to go, Rita insisted that we see the Darbyshire hills.

As we entered the hill country from the rolling plains, it felt very much like the Green Mountains of Vermont. We stopped and the four of us climbed a small but dramatic peak called Thorpe Cloud. The sides were covered with sheep grazing peacefully, and the peak was small and stony. The view was inspiring as the sun was setting and the cool of evening was settling over the countryside. After a short walk along the stream in a vale, a refreshing drink at a local "pub" we drove home, tired but very much at peace.

The next morning was Monday, and it was time to catch the train to London. Rev. Rita came to see us off, and forgot to leave the train! So we enjoyed her company to the next stop where she got off and caught the next train back to Darby. We were met in London by Kathy and Peter, whom we had met at Conference. They gave us a tour of central London, and then we got a bird's eye view from "The Eye," the world's largest ferris wheel. After lunch at a restaurant we never would have found, we rested for a while in a small but pretty park where there were a number of musicians and street performers who were quite entertaining. That evening we went to the Globe Theater, restored just as it was in Shakespeare's time, and saw "Measure For Measure."


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Ken, Laurie, Emily and Ethan's Excellent Adventure

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On our last day, while Emily and Laurie did some shopping at the open air market, Ethan and I walked through central London past Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, saw the Horse Guards, and then, after a bit of shopping of our own, made our way to Leicester Square in the Soho district. We stopped at a number of pubs looking for live music. At our last stop at the 12 Bar Club, we met some local musicians who invited us to an Open Mike that was taking place that evening. So after dinner we gathered our guitars and took the bus across London to Camden Town where we met up with our British musicians and, ducking the age limit of twenty-one and over only, played a set of our music including some blues, some jazz, and sneaking in one gospel tune. We were received quite enthusiastically by the locals, most of whom were musicians themselves. Then, not wanting to get ourselves or the manager in trouble, we took our leave. We had dinner in a small club and heard a Latin guitarist and singer. After walking around Soho unsuccessful in our search for local rock music—even in London, they close up early at the beginning of the week—we headed back to our hotel. The next morning we were on a plane back to the States. It was good to be back, even good to hear the heavy Boston accent of the lady at the toll booth! By late afternoon we were back in Fryeburg. The past ten days had been a whirlwind of meetings, worship, workshops, performances, parties, quiet dinners, countryside and city traffic. The many new people we met were all so friendly and welcoming, and we have come away with such a strong feeling of connection and affection with our new friends in the British Conference. It was a trip that was worthwhile and rewarding in so many different ways that it is truly beyond words to express.

In closing, our deepest gratitude goes out to our British hosts and Martha Bauer and all those who helped make this trip possible.

The Rev. Ken Turley is pastor of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg. 

Johnny Appleseed Museum

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Mark Pompilio, a Dayton, Ohio newscaster states, "The Johnny Appleseed Museum is a hidden gem in the Miami Valley that deserves more acclaim. One enters with familiar childhood reflections of this rich history...and leaves with so much more..."

For many, it offers a real family outing where parents learn about the history of John Chapman, and children can participate in games and even dress up like Johnny and get a souvenir picture.

The museum and education center also has a regional and national aspect to it. Sandy Rikoon, Ph.D., a rural sociologist and professor from the University

of Missouri, spent four days combing the "Murdock" collection. After his visit he wrote back, "...words cannot express my appreciation to Urbana University and the individuals who have worked to establish and organize the source materials at the Johnny Appleseed Society/Museum. The collection of materials assembled in historic Bailey Hall are a significant part of American history and culture. I will never forget my time in Urbana."

Another exciting development during the past year is that two separate organizations have made plans to produce movies on John Chapman, aka Johnny Appleseed, and see us as being central to

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Frances Fisher (left) with Margaret Preslend (center) widow of the late Claud Preslend, at the age of 91, the oldest person at the meeting. With her, standing is her eldest daughter Judith Wilson, a member of the Governing Council of the General Conference.



Alexander Gorbenko, a muscovite who was ordained for service in the Federation of Independent States based in Moscow.



Rev. Clifford Curry and his wife Marion, who have been visitors to various New Church centers in the U.S.A.

TO THE EDITOR

Editor's Note: The following letter was written to Christine Laitner, the president of General Convention, and forwarded by the Central Office to the editor of *The Messenger*. Ms. Laitner's response is published here.

Dear Ms. Laitner,

I'm writing in response to your article in the September 2004 *Messenger*. You wrote about the need to create an organization to serve geographically isolated Swedenborgians. I would recommend that as a model, you study the Unitarian Universalists' "Church of the Larger Fellowship" (CLF).

CLF began as a missionary through the mail and has evolved into a kind of dispersed congregation with a membership of over 3,000. Members support CLF through voluntary dues, which pay for CLF's self-supporting ministries. These services include

- a) a monthly magazine of printed sermons (Swedenborgians could use the already existent *Our Daily Bread*)
- b) a lending library of books, videos, audio tapes, and CDs
- c) an annual retreat for fellowship between the isolated (could rotate between Swedenborgian camp/conference centers)
- d) access to education materials for young children
- e) invitations to regional teen retreats
- f) a pastor who can be reached by phone or e-mail for spiritual guidance and pastoral counseling

A key factor for Swedenborgians to work out is how to handle confirmation and faith formation in a dispersed model. Would there also need to be some kind of minimum dues? There may also be a need for fellowship via some kind of online chat, through an online study group facilitated by a pastor and/or a magazine with essays and correspondence by members.

The Quakers have a similar program called *The Wider Quaker Fellowship*, but it focuses on quarterly mailings of Quaker literature. I offer this as food for thought.

Yours in Faith,
Derek Parker
Greenfield, Indiana



Reply

Dear Derek Parker,

Thank you for taking the time to read through the president-elect's address in *The Messenger* and to offer some excellent information in regard to the concept of creating a fellowship of isolated members. I am truly grateful for your input!

It's a time of renewal for us, and every piece of information that can positively impact some of our needs is most welcome. Yours is of primary importance because we are so separated and so many of us are isolated from a Swedenborgian center.

I'll be investigating your ideas—especially the CLF, and every step of the way, I'll be thanking you for your letter!

Faithfully yours,

Christine Laitner, president

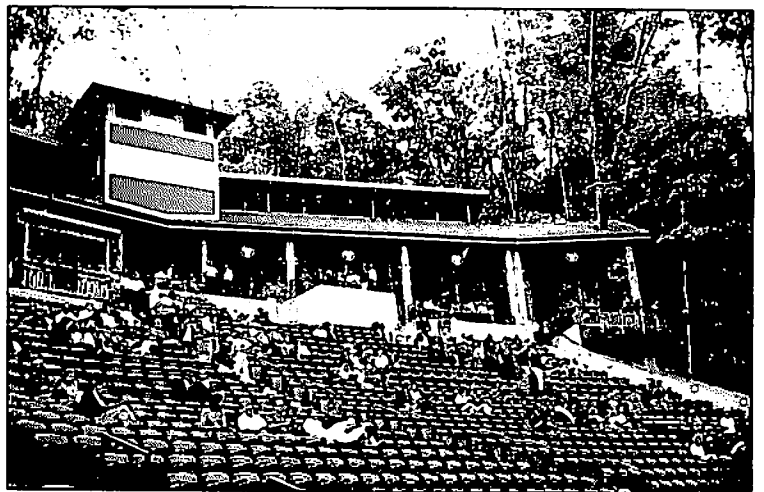
General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches in North America



More photos on Johnny Appleseed Drama . . .



The finale on the lighted stage, with character of John Chapman front and center.



Opening night audience members begin to fill the hillside amphitheater.

A Record Year

(Continued from page 109)

\$1.8 million grant proposal for the purchase and installation of a new administrative software system.

The record fall enrollment created a need for a new residence hall. Sycamore Hall is scheduled to open prior to the beginning of fall classes and will be dedicated on September 1st. It will house 116 men, includes ample lounge and laundry spaces, and will include the largest conference room on campus.

In addition to the items already mentioned as challenges for the upcoming year, there are two things that we will be concentrating on. The first is to enhance programs that lead to student success. Orientation, the freshman experience, tutoring, study tables, introductory courses, campus facilities, financial aid structures and mentoring are all targets for review and improvement.

Historically, Urbana University has struggled with retention given the profile of students admitted. However, there is no better time than the present to explore improvements needed to give students an even better chance of earning a college degree.

The second challenge for the upcoming year is to continue progress on our capital campaign. As I shared with you one year ago, our Board of Trustees approved a five-year campaign to raise \$4.7 million. The centerpiece of the campaign is a \$3.2 million student center. In recent years, our competitor institutions in Ohio have constructed and opened some wonderful places for residential and commuter students, and faculty and staff to meet and relax. Our current facility is antiquated and represents a competitive disadvantage to recruiting and retention.

The following slides depict student centers constructed in the last two years at the nearby campuses of Cedarville University, Defiance College, Walsh University and Ohio Dominican University (planned, but not constructed).

Our proposed center includes lounge spaces, a snack bar, offices for student organizations, conference spaces, a multipurpose room for guest speakers, plays and concerts, and a wellness center.

The campaign includes objectives and

goals for campus infrastructure, endowment, annual fund contributions and an on-campus football field. To date we have reached the \$2.2 million mark, just one year into our campaign. This show of early support says a great deal about what our Board of Trustees, our employees and our growing base of friends think about us. On September 17th, we will announce the public phase of our campaign.

We have asked for support from General Council and over the next year, will also be asking for support from the various associations. I thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of financial support to your University.

Allow me to share one final story with you. A family was driving home from church and the father asked his young son about that morning's Sunday school lesson. The youngster said, "Oh, Dad, it was great! It was a war story. Moses and the Israelites were leaving Egypt, but Pharaoh's army was coming after them. The Israelites were blocked by the Red Sea, so Moses got on his walkie-talkie and called for air support and the planes came zooming in and totaled the Egyptian army."

The father responded to this with, "Whoa! Wait a minute! Is that the way the teacher told the story?" "Well, no, Dad, not really," said the son. "But if I told it like she did, you'd *never* believe it."

I wonder what the young man would say if I told him, just a few short years ago, that Urbana University would have successive years of record enrollments; would complete nearly one-half of a capital campaign objective in one year; be a force in the educational, social and economic fabric of our communities; and be so financially viable that banks are making cold calls in hopes of doing business with us.

I am grateful for being included in your program and look forward to continuing to strengthen the connection between the church and Urbana University. Thank you for support and for allowing me to share in this annual event.



Johnny Appleseed Museum

(Continued from page 115)

helping them accomplish it. They both plan to use our archives to research information for their projects and need our expertise as consultants. We are grateful that both have also indicated they will provide financial support in return.

Our first annual fund drive last year resulted in approximately \$7,000 in gifts. Our goal this year is \$10,000. Gifts to the museum support the following activities:

- Promoting character education
- Providing teachers and researchers with valuable resources.
- Upgrading the Johnny Appleseed Museum
- Promoting the ideals of integrity, honesty, generosity, self-reliance, respect for others and community service, that Johnny lived by.



Running For Alicia

(Continued from page 105)

years, the fund amount now stands at approximately \$24,000. John and Bev hope that pledges for his marathon run will provide the final amount needed to successfully reach the \$25,000 mark. Plans are already underway at Urbana University to provide the first "Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Program" later this fall. In John's pledge request letter, he asks, "*Please help me to finish what Alicia has started and the challenge of 26.2 miles through the heart of New York City. Contribute from your heart and let's make a difference in this war-torn world of ours. Let there be peace on earth and goodwill toward all.*"

Donations can be mailed to:
Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund
Urbana University
579 College Way
Urbana, OH 43078

Betsy Coffman is the lay leader of the Urbana Swedenborgian Church in Urbana, Ohio. She and John Titus are both on the board of Urbana University. An abridged version of the above article was published in the Urbana Daily Citizen prior to September 11, 2004.



Johnny Appleseed, Sower of Seeds and Swedenborg

(Continued from back)

At the appointed time, we were ushered to our reserved seats and began the final moments of anticipation as we watched the 1,600-seat theater on the hillside fill to capacity with its first-ever audience. Officials made welcoming remarks, those instrumental in all phases of the project were recognized, and to our surprise and pleasure, a large bouquet of flowers was presented on behalf of the Swedenborg Foundation as the ribbon cutting ceremony took place. Even though the acknowledgment of the flowers was accompanied by the master of ceremonies' comment that "You'll hear more about those Swedenborgs later on...", we figured we'd take whatever we could get, and hope for some further enlightenment on the subject of Chapman's religion as the play unfolded. Though we weren't actually keeping score, we both knew we were on the lookout for accurate references to Swedenborgianism as an integral part of this Johnny Appleseed event.

As the barefoot Indians padded onto the stage, and the pioneers took their places in the log cabin set, we were


drawn into the story that was wonderfully told and didn't disappoint us in its appeal, historical authenticity, and forthright statements about Johnny Appleseed as a missionary of the New Church. Whether he was passing out the pages of Swedenborg's writings to isolated settlers, speaking of "good news fresh from heaven," courting his unrequited love (a Betsy Rice - could this be yet another Swedenborgian connection... we think we recalled a Betsy from the Rice family known to us in Convention in our youth!), or contemplating the presence of angels as he neared the end of his life, John Chapman's character provided a strong portrayal of a man with a greater mission than just the literal sowing of seeds. We left the performance well-satisfied that those around us who had heard and seen the story which seems such an elemental part of our faith tradition would at least have had some notion of the powerful and useful teachings of that religion planted within them.

B.J. Neuenfeldt samples the sparkling cider at the rooftop entrance to the amphitheater.

(more photos on page 116)

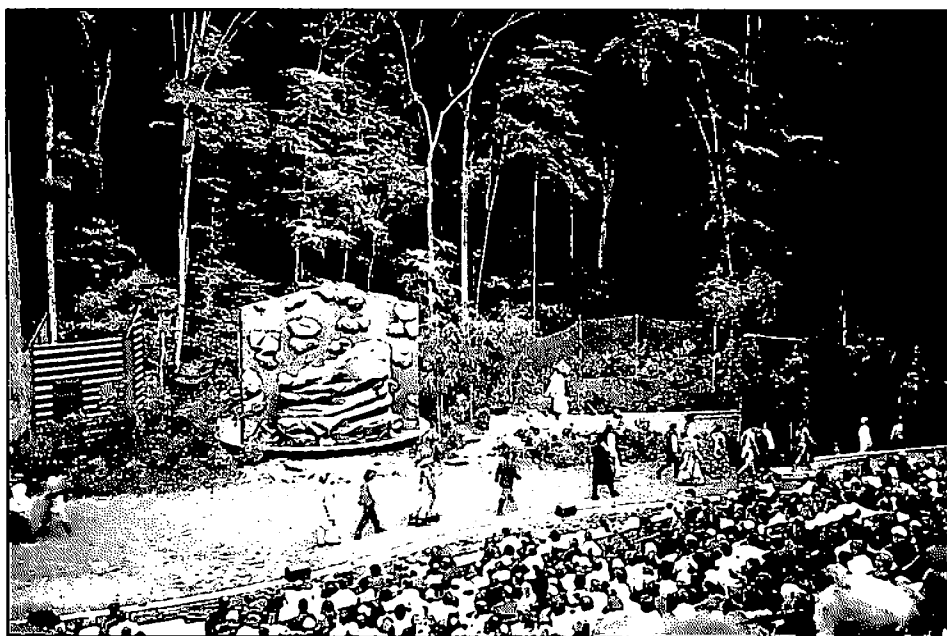
Even if central Ohio isn't within road trip distance for you, check out the informative website for the Johnny Appleseed Historical Outdoor Drama and Heritage Center www.appleseedoutdoordrama.org. And if you're planning to attend Convention at Urbana in 2006, there's talk of a field trip to a certain play about a man, his faith, and some appleseeds...

B.J. Neuenfeldt is a Michigan Association officer and Almont New Church Assembly treasurer. Marjie Leas is a Michigan Association and Almont New Church Assembly member.

Note: B.J. and Marjie, along with their husbands Tom and Bob, have led the worship service at the annual Johnny Appleseed Festival in Fort Wayne for the past six years, sharing the religious heritage of John Chapman through readings from the Word and from Swedenborg. 



A miniature Johnny Appleseed among the trees and the inaugural season playbill provided a photo moment for Marjie.



Ohio wilderness comes alive with Johnny's story on the woodland stage.

From the National Council of Churches

"LPFM: The People's Choice," a new documentary that premiered on NBC-TV stations September 26, chronicles how low power FM radio is bringing diverse peoples closer together and giving new life to declining communities, new strength to neighborhoods and new voices in the marketplace of ideas.

Initiated by former Federal Communication Commission Chairman William E. Kennard in January 2000, LPFM is a low-cost service designed to promote diversity and localism and to encourage voices from the margins. Despite LPFM's promise, there have been powerful forces seeking to halt its presence. The National Association of Broadcasters and others have mounted significant challenges to LPFM, claiming that low power stations interfere with their larger signals. An independent study ordered by Congress has concluded that this is patently untrue.

In "LPFM: The People's Choice," viewers will meet the people who helped launch this extraordinary public service and see LPFM stations in action from Florida to Maine, California to Washington, D.C., and in the heartland. They will hear the extraordinary story of a low power radio service that withstood the rigors of Capitol Hill and special interest attacks.

"LPFM: The People's Choice" includes interviews with:

- former FCC Chairman William E. Kennard;
- Executive Director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Wade Henderson;
- Media Advocates Michael Bracy and Cheryl Leanza;
- Congressional Members Senator John McCain and Representative Ed Markey;
- LPFM Organizers Pete Tridish and Andrea Cano;
- FCC Commissioner Michael Copps;
- Former FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani;
- National Council of Churches General Secretary Rev. Dr. Robert Edgar, and
- NCC Washington, D.C., Communication Officer Rev. Leslie Tune.

"LPFM: The People's Choice" is produced by the United Church of Christ Office of Communication - which is promoting a bill in Congress that would enable the licensing of thousands of new LPFM radio stations - and presented by the National Council of Churches. It will air on NBC-TV owned and affiliated stations beginning September 26. Closed captioned. (Check local listings.)

This program is part of the 2004 "Horizons of the Spirit" series of the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission, a partnership among The Jewish Theological Seminary, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, National Council of Churches USA, and the Southern Baptist Broadcast Communications Group.

National Council of Churches USA

475 Riverside Dr, New York

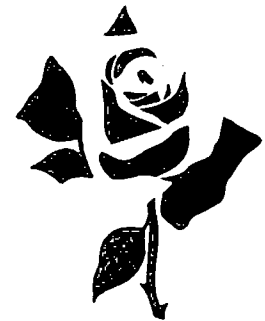
New York 10115-0050

www.nccusa.org <http://www.nccusa.org>



Deaths

Turley—Cathy Turley, wife of retired Swedenborgian minister Owen Turley, died peacefully in her sleep August 15, 2004, following a five-year struggle with Alzheimer's disease. Her ashes will be spread in the San Francisco Bay, as was her wish. Her memorial service took place September 5, 2004, in Danville, California. Owen is the uncle of present-day Swedenborgian ministers Ken Turley and Susan Turley. Cathy was their aunt.



Woofenden Swedenborgian Library Donated to SHS

What I have often referred to as "the best personal Swedenborgian library on Planet Earth" was shipped from Sharon, Massachusetts to Berkeley, California at the end of summer and is now being cataloged into the Library and Archives located at Pacific School of Religion. On behalf of all future students and scholars using our school's special research collection, the Swedenborgian House of Studies wishes to express its immense gratitude to the Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden and his wife, Louise Woofenden, for this gift.

—Rev. Dr. James Lawrence, Dean



Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's own spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church today exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions. Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of Scripture as a story of inner-life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg would conclude, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

Johnny Appleseed, Sower of Seeds and Swedenborg

On Stage in New Outdoor Drama

Margie Leas and B.J. Neuenfeldt

"1,680 people filled the gorgeous new Appleseed Amphitheater June 26 for the first-ever performance of Johnny Appleseed. Following a reception and a ribbon cutting ceremony, the first show thrilled audiences with song, dance and a gripping plot. Based on the true story of John 'Appleseed' Chapman, the show illustrates the challenges of life in North Central Ohio during the early 1800s." (Quoted from the website www.appleseedoutdoordrama.org)

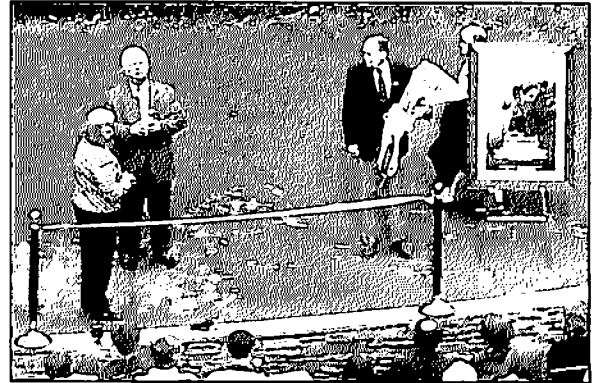
Several years ago during Convention at Pepperdine University, Swedenborgians were given the opportunity to provide input into the early planning stages of an outdoor historical drama, helping to sow the seeds of a project that bore fruit this summer in north central Ohio. It was the premier of the play "Johnny Appleseed," a musical production depicting the life and works of John Chapman, known in the U.S. as the folk hero Johnny Appleseed.

When news of the premier season of this drama reached two Swedenborgian Johnny Appleseed buffs, B.J. Neuenfeldt and Marjie Leas, who were on a quest for a summer road trip from their respective homes in Ithaca, Michigan and Fort Wayne, Indiana (coincidentally the final resting place of John Chapman and host city to a 30-year-old Johnny Appleseed Festival which draws over 60,000 people in September each year), they decided to take in the opening night performance and celebration. Years of research, planning, fund raising and rehearsing had gone into the development of this production. Bill Jones, executive director and founder of the project,

editor of the Chrysalis Books title *Johnny Appleseed: A Voice in the Wilderness* published by the Swedenborg Foundation, and the person who had sought our church members' suggestions at the Pepperdine Convention, was dedicated to an accurate portrayal of Chapman's faith in the telling of his story. As subjective audience members, we were delighted to see that he fulfilled his mission.

Our experience began as we drove up the winding gravel road cut through the heart of the 118-acre Johnny Appleseed Forest in a relatively untouched corner of Ashland County, near Mansfield. The setting was chosen to reflect the Ohio wilderness of Chapman's time, and the effect is complete, from the lanes of parking spaces that wend their way through the trees, to the amazing amphitheater with towering hardwoods as a backdrop to the dirt-floored, boulder-strewn stage. Dignitaries, patrons, volunteers, guests, and probably even a few paying customers like us gathered for the opening reception of hors-d'oeuvres, wine and sparkling apple juice (what else?) served on the wooded grounds which also house a museum, library and classrooms - all part of the larger Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center.

(Continued on page 118)



Heritage Center Founder and President Bill Jones holds the bouquet presented by the Swedenborg Foundation at the ribbon cutting ceremony preceding the performance.

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