

THE MESSENGER

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Swedenborgian Eliza Lovell Tibbets, Founder of the California Citrus Industry

Patricia Parker Ortlieb and Jane Lawrence

Eliza Lovell Tibbets is well known in California as the founder of the state's orange industry.

Eliza procured Bahia oranges from William Saunders, head of the Experimental Gardens at the Department of Agriculture in 1873. She had remained with her step-children in Washington D.C. after the Civil War while her husband, son, and nephew built homes in Riverside, California. They were part of a small band of pioneers led by Judge J. W. North and Dr. James Porter Greves who began a colony at the barren Jurupa Rancho in 1870.

Oranges were a planned source of income, but they did not thrive in the rough desert climate until Eliza brought in the new sweet, seedless navel oranges from Brazil. With the help of local horticulturalist G. W. Garcelon, Eliza planted the trees and nurtured them, watering them with her dishwater in the water-poor district. As the trees matured, she and her husband, Luther Tibbets, sold the tree buds to neighboring nurserymen, and the California citrus industry was born. By the time Riverside County was

formed in 1893, the orange industry had made Riverside the wealthiest city per capita in the country. The Washington Navel Orange proved to be the most successful experiment of William Saunders' tenure at the Experimental Gardens.

Eliza's connection to the Church of New Jerusalem, however, has consistently been ignored by historians, even though the church was the meaningful center of life that shaped her decisions and actions. Eliza's parents, Oliver and Clarissa Downes Lovell, were members of the Cincinnati New Jerusalem Church

Eliza grew up in a Swedenborgian environment where females and their minds were respected and nurtured, and she expected the same throughout her life.

homes. Their focus was on understanding the Bible and the works of Emanuel Swedenborg and discussing how to apply them to their daily lives.

History's omission of the New Church in Eliza's story is particularly odd considering the obvious comparisons to be drawn

between her and Johnny Appleseed. One would expect her to have been dubbed "Eliza Orange Blossom" long ago. There is no evidence that Eliza consciously patterned her horticultural efforts on Chapman's. However, she could hardly have been unaware of his legend. Chapman traveled through Ohio from 1800 on creating apple orchards and distributing the works of Emanuel Swedenborg to eager settlers. He was quite familiar to the Ohio Society. As early as 1817 he was so famous that the Swedenborg Society in Manchester, England, published an account of his mission.

Eliza attended church and worshiped regularly during her entire life. Because she was a New Churchwoman, her actions reflected her faith and devotion. Despite her own asthma and other physical limitations, she was well-known for her good work and her charity to the poor and disabled her entire life. Eliza's early training in charity and usefulness shaped her advice to later generations as well. In 1890 she

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*Parent Navel orange in park
Riverside, California*

at its incorporation in 1818. When Eliza was born in 1823, her father was the minister who led the evening services. At that time the society worshiped three times on Sunday, led by three part-time ministers, church founder Adam Hurdus, Oliver Lovell, and Daniel Roc.

Members of this close-knit Society also gathered less formally during the week at each other's

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Yo!

It started last spring, with the *Reader's Digest*. I grew up with the *Reader's Digest*. My uncle gave my mother a subscription every year for Christmas. I sat in the large wing chair in the living room—alone in our house that was so silent I could hear the electric clock grunting—reading *Laughter is the Best Medicine*, *Life in These United States*, and the vocabulary builder, *Test Your Word Power*. By the time I was 13, I got 100 % on the *Word Power* test. I continued to get 100% every time I picked it up, from then on. So as an adult I couldn't honestly join the literary snobs who spurned the *Digest*. The *Digest* was a familiar, warm part of my childhood. I didn't subscribe to it as an adult, but once in awhile I pick up a copy at the market and feel good with the old, the familiar, the reliable.

I don't know where the *Digest* copy came from that day—it seemed to emerge from a pile on my night table, and I realized I still hadn't read the article that first caught my attention when I bought it. But when I turned to that page, what drew my attention was a picture of a wistful-eyed child. "You don't have to leave your own country to find third-world poverty...in Appalachia, sad faces of little children...will haunt you. There are so many children like her—children who are deprived of the basic necessities right here in America...You can sponsor a boy or girl in need through Children, Inc. Just \$24 a month will help provide clothing, shoes, school supplies and food as well as a feeling that there is someone who cares. And we'll send you the picture and story of the child you will be helping..."

There wasn't anything startlingly different about the appeal. But it got to me at a point when the awareness that I would never be a grandmother was feeling bleak. And I was tired of writing a check for some organization that had impeccable do-good credentials, returned a form letter acknowledgment with yet another appeal, and left me to assume that my token contribution helped some anonymous person some-

where. What if, I wondered, what if I sponsored a child and actually had some correspondence with a real kid and made a tangible difference in his or her life?

Those of you who saw the movie *About Schmidt*, with Jack Nicholson, may chuckle at this point. No, I didn't want to pour out my life story and personal problems to some hapless five-year-old who couldn't read, but I had to admit that I wanted to experience a connection with a small human being who was having a difficult time.

So I called the 800 number. A warmly pleasant sounding woman answered the phone. On the first ring. I didn't get voicemail informing me that so-and-so was away from her desk, or a recording advising me of my choices on their "menu." She answered the phone, and we had a real conversation. I learned that Children, Inc. is based in Richmond, Virginia, has been in operation since 1964, and is currently helping some 16 thousand children in 21 countries all over the world. I also learned that the entire administrative staff was still based in founder Jeanne Clarke Wood's large home, and that I was talking with Marian Cummins, the president and CEO.

There was other impressive information about what they were doing and how they were doing it, but the fact that the president answers the phone and we connect, with a conversation that isn't interrupted by a call on another line, was the convincing factor for me that I had called the right place and was doing the right thing.

I was drawn to choosing a child in Appalachia partly because I suspect that some of my roots may be in Appalachia, and partly because I'm aware, disturbed, and ashamed, that such dismal poverty conditions exist in our own back yard, in the richest country in the world. Within those parameters, I simply asked them to pick the child on their waiting list who seemed to have the greatest need.

I was assigned to sponsor a nine-year-old boy, and within a week or so I received his vital information, background, special interests...and his picture. Slight build, heart-shaped face, shy smile,

a cowlick, and large wistful eyes that have likely seen too much, but still radiate hope. I discover that he had a recent birthday, so I call Marian Cummins and authorize some extra funds for a belated birthday present.

Everything is coordinated through the child's school, through project directors, including correspondence. I write a letter introducing myself, Steve, our cats, describe where we live, and send a photo of one of our cats.. (I remind myself to keep the letter fairly short and simple.) Within a few weeks I receive a short, hand-printed letter on lined paper. The spelling, of course, is deliciously inventive. But the real gem is the sheet of red construction paper with drawings on it, headed "To Ms Levan." A round house with smoke rising from the chimney and a picket fence, a quarter moon above it, a rabbit on its hind legs (this is only my interpretation), a teepee? A pumpkin face, and a flying ghost attached to a cartoon bubble that says "Yo." And of course he's signed his name. I'm again reminded of the last scene in *About Schmidt*, when Jack

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Patte LeVan, Editor
Editorial Address:
The Messenger
P.O. Box 985
Julian, CA 92036

TEL: (760) 765-2915

E-MAIL: messenger@julianweb.com

Business & Subscription Address:
Central Office
11 Highland Ave.
Newtonville, MA 02460
E-Mail: manager@swedenborg.org

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My Grandfather's Voice

Chris Laitner

When I was a young child, my grandfather lived with us in Michigan for about half of each year. The other half of the year he spent with my uncle's family in California. My grandfather was old—seventy-nine when I was born—and pretty ancient within the framework of my elementary-age remembering. He died when I was ten, but he left me indelible, special, important memories. He left me his voice.

His name was Benjamin George Alois Laitner. People called him Ben. My

younger sister and I called him "Grandpa." He was our only grandparent; his wife and our mother's parents had passed on.

My grandfather was significantly older than my father, and my parents were in the older parents' echelon among my friends' families. My grandpa, then, was very old in relation to all that I knew, but he took us for walks, pulled us in the wagon, played games with us, and read to us. My grandfather's voice is part of my beginnings.

My grandfather also talked pretty regularly to my grandmother who had gone on to heaven. With relative ease I can recreate the sound of his voice speaking quietly to my grandmother, Mary, as he sat in his bedroom. As a very young child I learned that this wasn't odd or spooky; it was exactly right. My grandfather's voice taught me that although we can miss our loved ones after death, we still have the connection and the love.

We attended the Church of the Holy City in Detroit. Even as a very young child, I loved to listen to my grandfather sing during the services either sitting next to me or from the

choir loft. He had a bass voice and sang very well. My grandfather's voice is part of the first music that lodged itself in my soul. My grandfather's voice taught me to love singing.

It was my grandfather, Ben Laitner, who learned about the Swedenborgian Church at the beginning of the twentieth century. After the outlying roads were paved, he drove his family from a Detroit suburb into the downtown church each Sunday. My grandfather became an active participant in the life of the Church of the Holy City, and today I can find his work listed in the church

archives. My grandfather's voice informed the shape and the work of the church that nurtured my family.

When we went to our

church camp at Almont, my grandfather would greet and be greeted heartily by many folks from around Michigan and from other states. My grandfather's voice sings for me still in the chapel at Almont. Years later, in my late adolescence and early adulthood in the Church, Rev. Andre Diaconoff never failed to see me out to tell me what a good man my grandfather was. He called him a "solid voice of the Church."

My grandfather's voice remains with me today as a foundation block of family, music, and church. It is the voice of memory, of support, of belief, and of love.

Chris Laitner is president of the denomination. "My Grandfather's Voice" is reprinted with the author's permission, from *Giving Voice*, a Collection of Poetry & Prose, the chapbook given out at the Arts Festival during the 2005 Convention of the Swedenborgian Church in Berkeley, California. ☩

Frank Rose Joins SHS Community

Rev. Frank Rose, recently retired minister of the highly successful Swedenborgian ministry in Tucson, has



accepted an invitation to live in community for the Spring semester at the Swedenborgian House of Studies. He will be joined by his wife,

Louise, and they will live in an on-campus apartment.

Frank is a minister of the General Church who has become quite popular with many in General Convention for his skill as a workshop leader on Swedenborgian spirituality. The Council of Ministers engaged Frank several years ago to lead a winter retreat for clergy, and he has also been a weekend retreat leader for the San Francisco church. Frank is well-known as a spiritual growth facilitator for small groups and is the co-author of the recent book published by the Swedenborg Foundation, *The Joy of Spiritual Growth: Real Encounters*.

Frank will be teaching a course entitled, "Living Spiritually," which he conceives to be on the whole process of regeneration as it relates to the personal experience of the participants. The course process will call for students to write a series of brief autobiographical stories relating their own spiritual development to selected stories from the Bible, passages from Swedenborg and other sources.

Seven major topics (such as freedom and responsibility, ruling loves and usefulness, spiritual struggles and conscience) will shape "the rooms" in which the work will be done.

SHS is delighted to welcome such a talented and successful parish minister, teacher and Swedenborgian theologian to our program.

Jim Lawrence, Dean ☩

How the Angels Put Me on the Path to the New Church

Jim Erickson

I have had many experiences that can be called metaphysical, supernatural, mystical, or providential, depending on one's point of view. Often when these unusual events take place I immediately leap into an analytic mode, questioning and examining what actually happened. I question whether the experience was simply a matter of some misperception, illusion, or if I was adding in details in my retrospection. I do believe that there are times when angels tap each of us on the shoulder to get our attention. However, there are times when it seems necessary for the angels to take more drastic action with me, to grab me, and lead me into the light so I can see the Lord's truth. This is how it happened when the angels took my hand and led me to Swedenborg's teachings and the New Church which left me "Surprised by Joy," as C.S. Lewis put it in the title of his book.

Prior to my discovery of the Swedenborgian theology I went through a long period of vastation after many attempts to find a satisfying spiritual path. You name it and I tried it. I tried several Christian churches, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, American Indian religions, pantheism, deism, shamanism, and many others. Eventually, I declared *humbug!* and became an atheist.

Then I moved into a house very close to the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church in St. Paul. Each day on my way to the bus stop I walked by the church, filled with curiosity. I had a brief acquaintance with the name Swedenborg from learning of his scientific works in college courses, but knew nothing of his mystical, or revelatory and theological achievements. It was never a part of my studies. I was intrigued by what a scientist would have to do with Christianity. On each of my daily walks I looked at the name of the church and vowed someday to go in and find out about it. There was something inside encouraging me – filling me with the impulse to go in and satisfy my curiosity. I resisted as though shrugging off a tap on the shoulder. During my years of

living almost next door to the church I never opened the door.

After I moved away from the neighborhood of the church I forgot about it. At the same time I was going through another phase of dabbling in religions. I was still disappointed and just took to sitting in churches to meditate. I was longing for something spiritual but couldn't find it. I know now that the angels were again tapping me on the shoulder. I was ignoring their signal.

I can imagine an angel conference in which they decided what to do to let me know that the path was right in front of me.

Then they took more direct methods. I can imagine an angel conference in which they decided what to do to let me know that the path was right in front of me. "Well," one might have said, "this is a tough case. Perhaps if we are more direct he will get the idea."

I am convinced they arranged for what happened next to come completely out of the blue just the way it did when I finally got the message. I remember looking in the Yellow Pages of the phone book for the name of a particular firm to order some equipment for the company in which I was then a partner. I found the name of the firm and read their captioned ad for the E&W Optical Company. I put my finger on the phone number while I looked away at my desk to find a pencil to write it on a notepad.

When my eyes returned to the phone number I was baffled. The ad was not at all what I had just read. It was an advertisement that stood out boldly. With a stunned feeling rushing over me I read the name on the ad: "Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church." After minutes of trying to unravel how I could have spent time reading an ad for optical

equipment, and without moving my finger placed it on the phone number that suddenly changed to the name of the church.

I then looked again through the Yellow Pages and found the name of the optical company I had located. It was on a page not even close to the page with the name of the church and the ad was not at all what I had read. How could this have happened? I thought perhaps it was just some trick of my mind, thinking about something I had seen at one time.

Then I remembered my intention from years before to visit the church. I found my hand reaching for the phone and called the number listed. Perhaps at this point there was a collective sigh from a group of patient angels. I was invited by the person who answered the phone to attend the next Sunday worship service.

The next Sunday I walked into the church and was immediately overwhelmed by a feeling of being at my spiritual home. After the service the Rev. Edwin Capon answered my questions about Swedenborg and the New Church and I read pamphlets offered free to visitors. "This is it" was my response. "This is what I've been looking for."

Finding the Virginia Street Church was for me a life-changing event. Over the years I have eagerly studied, discussed, and explored the wonders of Swedenborgian teachings and New Church theology. I sometimes reflect on how much I would have missed had I not found the church which I now love. I would be today a less fulfilled, less happy person, with less knowledge and ability to know and feel the meaning of a spiritual, charitable and useful life.

I trust the angels know they have accomplished a great deal by putting a recalcitrant seeker on his proper path to spiritual happiness. With each encounter of Swedenborg's and New Church teachings I am "surprised by joy."

Jim Erickson is a member of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the vice-president of the denomination. ☪

Another Funny Christmas Story

Al Geddes

This story takes place on Christmas Day of 1950. I was 3 1/2 years old. My mother had just turned 24 the month before. My father was 26. We had just passed the halfway mark of the last century.

A lot of the story was told to me by the other participants. This is the way that most great legends are passed on, but I do remember parts of it, and it is a true story.

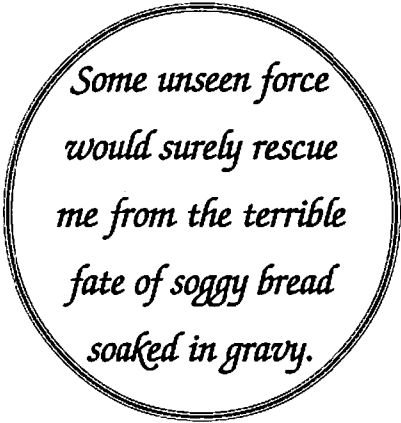
A dramatic intro is needed. This isn't some lame story about how Uncle Ned spilled gravy on his lap and jumped up and pulled the dishes off the table. Or how Frisky the dog stole and ate the Christmas turkey and choked to death on the wishbone in some divine retribution. No, this story has elements of drama and comedy and suspense and danger and most of all, since this is my family—*insanity!*

Present that day were my father Al Geddes, my mother Jean Kendall Geddes, my paternal grandmother Clara (Claire) Conners, Geddes Rodmaker, and her second husband John (Rod) Rodmaker, and me Alfred John (Al). Also, a dog named Sandy, who did not steal the turkey or choke. My paternal grandfather, Frank, had died two years before. My grandparents had been divorced for a long time, following a tradition observed on both sides of my family. In fact, my parents' marriage had about six more months left.

A word about my father. Unfortunately, that's about all I have. For all of my boasting about my powers of recall, I have few, but pleasant memories of him. I saw him frequently after my parents' breakup in the summer of '51, but something happened in the mid-fifties, and I never saw my grandmother again and my father only twice. He died at age 47 of cancer.

At the time of my story, we were living in a three-room railroad flat in Irvington, New Jersey, a suburb of Newark. I was in the living room, being baby-sat by my best friend, a seven-inch Admiral TV set. My mother was in the kitchen, going about the business of

preparing her first Christmas dinner, with the help (thankfully) of my grandmother. My mother had been able to avoid cooking the last four years, alternating between my two grandmothers and friends. Now it was her turn in the barrel! The two men were seated at the kitchen table drinking (beer in my father's case, Scotch in Rodmaker's case, since that was all he was allowed as a diabetic) and conversing tersely. Neither one could stand the other. The tension in the room could almost be tasted.



*Some unseen force
would surely rescue
me from the terrible
fate of soggy bread
soaked in gravy.*

One HUGE source of tension was my mother's lack of domestic skills. From 1965 on, she told the world in her best Sergeant Schultz (of *Hogan's Heroes*) voice that she had entered this marriage and she "knew nussing" about sex, about housework, about child rearing and most especially "nussing" about COOKING!

My maternal grandmother, Cecile Calligy Kendall Hartung, was what the Jews call a *balabusta*, a domestic goddess, one who especially knows her way around a kitchen. Grandma Ceil was an excellent cook but taught my mother nothing. It was my mom's contention that she was never abused but grossly neglected. She often said she wouldn't have minded being Cinderella, since at least Cinderella had learned to cook and clean for her wicked step-kin. When Prince Charming finally took Cinderella away from her misery, she didn't have to listen to him kvetch and moan about eating out of cans every night of the week and whining about dust balls under

the bed. According to my mom, my father was no Prince Charming to begin with.

Now if my mother was gonna go to all this trouble and work and misery to cook for these potentially ungrateful and critical freeloaders, they were gonna EAT what she cooked *and* this was gonna be the best d——d Christmas ever, even if she had to kill every last @%\$& one of these picky @%\$#s and the original Cheerios Kid (me). I was gonna eat Christmas dinner like a NORMAL HUMAN BEING and *not* a bowl of Cheerios or Wheaties or anything that floats in milk. I was gonna eat turkey and stuffing and potatoes and turnips even if she had to shove them down my throat.

How festive.

What she was referring to was that I basically existed on cold cereal. When I was weaned, it was suggested by Dr. Spock that the child's own natural curiosity about new experiences would lead the child to proper eating habits. Beyond trying the new sweetened cereals, that was as far as my curiosity went. Like most humans, I found what I liked and stuck to it. (Remember the kid in high school who ate two tuna sandwiches every day for four years?) I recall that I did eat other things besides cereal. I ate pretzels. My father used to take me when he went to the bar, and there was usually a basket of pretzels on the bar. I ate candy and cake and cookies. I'm sure I must have satisfied my "natural curiosity" and tried other foods. Nothing did it for me like Cheerios.

But, I didn't let this worry me. Like most children, I indulged in "magical thinking." Some unseen force would surely rescue me from the terrible fate of soggy bread soaked in gravy.

Little did I know that a major part of my salvation squatted there right in my living room. If my father, like Ralph Kramden's sidekick, Ed Norton, could buy something on installments, he did. As a result, we had a Stromberg-Carlson radio-phonograph, the seven-inch TV, which was top of the line at the time—and in the kitchen the washing machine

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Bad Leadership and Field Notes on the Compassionate Life

Bad Leadership

by Barbara Kellerman

Field Notes on the Compassionate Life

by Marc Barasch

Reviewed by Paul Zacharias

In the past couple of weeks I've read two fascinating books and would like to share these reviews with *Messenger* readers.

The first one is *Bad Leadership* by Barbara Kellerman, who serves on the faculty of the Harvard Business School, published last year. She begins by saying there have been hundreds of books published on good leadership in recent decades, but very little is available on bad leadership, which niche she addresses. And she does this very successfully. She maintains there is bad leadership in every sector of life: the business world, governments, religious organizations, charitable groups—everywhere people come together in groupings, there will be

examples of both good and bad leadership.

She defines leadership as one who chooses a certain course of action, and then in various ways gets others to go along. There is no leadership without followership, and in every case the bad leader depends upon a coterie of faithful followers; people willing to carry out his/her plans. Leaders are wielders of power. (Consider the book/movie *Lord of the Flies*, where within hours leaders emerged. This also tells us that leadership always must be understood within its current context.) Why do decent people follow bad leaders, as in Nazi Germany? The leader promised a better future, security, prosperity, a sense of purpose and direction. Think of the context! The promise of a brighter future.

In every case, for both the leader and the follower, there is always some measure of self-interest. There is always some element of: What's in it for me? It

may be just a speck, but it is there. (Assuming that there are no celestial angels in our midst!) And in every instance of bad leadership, without exception, there is always some measure of Greed and Power/Control. They tend to feed on each other. And isn't this Swedenborgian! Emanuel Swedenborg tells us that greed and power are at the root of all evil.

Kellerman then goes on to describe seven different kinds of bad leadership, with vivid, current examples making it all very real: Incompetent; Rigid; Intemperate; Callous; Corrupt; Insular; Evil. She describes, for example, the downfall of Enron, where 30 or 40 people at the top echelons of the company were aware of the corrupt practices of Lay, Skillings and Fastow for months before the collapse, but said and did nothing—their self-interest overrode their moral values. The pressure to "not

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Heaven Sent

by Alison Longstaff

Reviewed by Nancy Apple



My curiosity was piqued after visiting at our Convention in Berkeley this past July with Alison Longstaff, the author of *Heaven Sent*. Hearing her story and the story of this first novel in the

"Cliffside Chapel Series," I was excited to read the book. I was not disappointed. It is a well written story about love of God and family with realistic characters, human turmoil, romance, insightful group dynamics, and mystery, all in a well rendered setting. "Jon stood, breathing in the clean, fresh air and marveling again at the gentle beauty of this community. The homes varied in style and placement on the large lots, and the whole scene slept

under its blanket of winter-white. Frothy smoke drifted up lazily from a few of the chimneys." The story unfolds in vivid, effortless detail. It's refreshingly free of foul language and shows that love can be written about without explicit details.

There is personal growth, where the main characters rely on their faith and the support of family and friends to rise above the pain and conflicts that might otherwise disrupt their lives. Reverend Jonathan Pearson Haley, who comes with a past, has been called from South Africa to assist Pastor Stephen Shantz at Cliffside Chapel in Ontario. He is also to be the new music director. Jon is to replace young widow Susan Rennie, who has been directing the choir. The choir and her young twins are possibly all that have kept Sue going since her husband's sudden, accidental death four years before.

The characters are real people with real issues who become your friends:

Steve slammed the trunk shut. "Okay," he said. "Jon, why don't you ride in the front. We'll put Sue in the back with her girls."

The ride to Sue's house was quick, and spent in introductions. Jon swiveled in his seat to see the back occupants.

The brown-haired girl, whose name was Andrea, was intrigued to learn that Pastor Haley would be living just next door, at Rachel's house.

"So it will be like Rachel has two daddies," she observed.

The blonde girl, whose name was Alyssa, simply regarded Jon soberly from the circle of Sue's arm.

Andrea said, "Our daddy is in heaven. We only have a mommy. Rachel only has a daddy because her mommy is gone." She explained all of this as if it were the most natural thing in the world. "But she's not in heaven. She is in Hellifax."

Jon kept his face sober. "I see," he said.

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Do What You Love . . .

Editor's Note: When I asked Central Office Assistant Kimbette Fenol, who has been laboring for us with such efficiency and good cheer these last few years, to provide her profile for *Messenger* readers, little did I know that Central Office had been harboring a hard-working, drop-dead gorgeous Hollywood hopeful. Up to now, she had just been this nice voice on the phone. We wish her the best of luck and blessings!

Kimbette Fenol



Laurel Thatcher Ulrich was right, "Well-behaved women rarely make history." Four years ago I rebelled against everyone's expectations

in the hope of finding my own voice, so I did the unthinkable... I switched my major from pre-med to theater at Smith College. Two weeks shy of completing my pre-med requirements, I dropped all aspirations of being a doctor in hopes of breaking into Hollywood one day.

Whatever possessed me to do such an erratic thing? My pre-major advisor (a math professor) asked why I wanted to be a doctor. Coming from a family of nurses, physicians and engineers, studying medicine seemed like the right (and only) thing to do. This wasn't a good enough reason for my advisor, and, in the end, I couldn't remember why.

Theater was nothing new to me. I dabbled in the arts at an early age, performing in elementary school pageants and picking it up once more as an extracurricular activity in high school. Guitar lessons were scheduled every Saturday morning followed by an hour of voice lessons. However, strumming a few chords and carrying a pretty tune were merely passionate hobbies to bide my time, not a lifelong career...or at least I thought so.

I delivered the news gently to my opinionated family, explaining that I

would rather be on stage 24 hours a day, seven days a week, than be in a chemistry lab for two hours. Like any normal family, they worried over what I could possibly do with a BA degree in theater and tried to convince me to study law or even business, both respectable and stable professions. It took some time, but I eventually won them over.

So comes the question...how did a Smith College theater graduate wind up as the Swedenborgian Central Office assistant? A Smith College Alum Newsletter, featuring Martha Bauer's help wanted ad, landed at my front doorstep. I wasted no time in applying for the position—after all, I needed a "day" job to support the starving artist in me.

But what was only supposed to be a temporary three months turned out to be a wild two and a half years. During that time, I managed to broaden my acting experience and still put food on the table, as well as publish the annual *Journal of the Swedenborgian Church*. I attended auditions during lunch breaks and spent vacation days filming in Las Vegas, Los Angeles and New York. My hard work paid off and I was rubbing shoulders with Sarah Jessica Parker, Will Smith, Danny DeVito and Sum 41.

More recently, I pulled an all-nighter for three days straight just to be a glorified extra in an upcoming Martin Scorsese film. I walked into the office at 8:30 a.m. and headed straight onto set after 5 p.m. only to wrap production at 6 o'clock the next morning, but it was worth it to shake hands with Martin Sheen and catch a glimpse of Leonardo DiCaprio. What made it even better was Martha's readiness to catch me if I collapsed from sleep deprivation... luckily it never happened, but she was ready.

My time at the Swedenborgian Central Office has been unforgettable, especially when I am surrounded by the most supportive and understanding people, such as Martha and Gina. As I set my sights on Los Angeles, I realize that all good things must come to an end. I'm just so incredibly lucky to have been here and done that...Hollywood here I come! ☘

Pacific School of Religion's Earl Lectures to focus on Progressive Christianity

On January 24-26, 2006, Pacific School of Religion (site of the Swedenborgian House of Studies) will provide a forum for exploring and challenging the meaning of progressive Christianity during the school's Earl Lectures and Pastoral Conference. Held annually since 1902, the lectures this year carry the title, "Gathering the Beloved Community: Voices of Faith for the Public Square."

Public lectures and sermons will be given by five prominent scholars whose work focuses on religion in public life: Senior Minister James Forbes of New York's Riverside Church, media and religion scholar Diane Winston, Holocaust scholar Hubert Locke, feminist theologian Kwok Pui Lan, and PSR Dean Emeritus Delwin Brown. In addition, 30 Pastoral Conference workshops spread across three days will allow smaller groups to explore a variety of theological topics.

One of the featured events during the 2006 Earl Lectures will be the launch reception on January 24 for *The Progressive Christian Witness: A Ministry of Pacific School of Religion*. This Internet-based resource will support the creation of a clear and compelling progressive Christian voice in public discussion, especially in communities in the United States where the most powerful "Christian" voice is that of the right wing.

Admission to the lectures and the launch reception is free; the Pastoral Conference workshop fee is \$95. For information about the Earl Lectures, visit www.psr.edu or call 510/849-8274 or 800/999-0528.

PACIFIC SCHOOL of RELIGION
1798 Scenic Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94709
www.psr.edu ☘

My Life as a Therapy Dog

By Gizmo, T.D.

I am a dog with a ministry in life; to cheer up people who are recovering from brain injuries or strokes. Actually I am a "pastoral care dog." Every week, I go with my Mom [Rev. Wilma Wake] to River Ridge Rehabilitation Center in Kennebunk, Maine. Mom is a volunteer chaplain there, and we work as a team.

I was highly trained for my work. Here is a photo of me on graduation night, after four grueling evenings of letting residents pet me at River Ridge. I had to pass basic obedience and then let people pet me with supervisors there. I had a great big final exam, where I had to do really hard stuff like "sit" and "stay." I had to cram all night for that one. My tester was approved with Therapy Dogs, Inc. to test dogs so that we get a certificate and insurance. With my certificate, Mom and I can go into any facility that allows Therapy Dogs. I have liability insurance in case anyone ever gets hurt with me, which we know could never happen. There are also other therapy dog organizations that certify my colleagues. Even dumb cats and other animals can become pet therapists.

I have even become a lecturer about my work. Here is a photo of me with my colleague, Daisy, as we are lecturing at the Brain Injury Association of Maine. Mom wrote out notes for us, but we just sat on top of them.

Many ask about what therapy and pastoral care techniques I use most. There are two. The first is a Ministry of

Presence. I just am there. Because I'm a little guy, I can sit on the laps of folks in wheel chairs. I even crawl into beds next to residents. Oh, it was so nice during the hot summer. Some of the rooms had

air conditioners, and I crawled into bed and snuggled next to my assigned person, and took a nap. I have been highly trained for this work. So much healing happens from letting a dog sleep on your bed.

Then my other technique is "paws-on-healing." I just put my little paws anywhere there is pain, and people start to

feel better.

Some of the residents can barely move their hands, but when I sit on their laps, they manage to pet me!

Some can't move their arms at all, so I just curl up on the pillow next to their head.

Of course it helps to have a faith community who blesses me. Here are some photos of me and

Daisy at the Blessing of the Animals service on St. Francis Day. We both consider ourselves members of the Portland Swedenborgian Church, even though we aren't allowed to vote. Or even to put our paw prints in the

membership book. We often go with Mom to visit people. Now that I'm an official Therapy Dog, I can visit people in hospitals and nursing homes, as long as they allow therapy dogs.

You may wonder how I achieved such status in my life. First, I am cute. That goes a long way in the Pet Therapy world. Then, I have been adopted by two Mommy ministers! Rev. Nadine (Cotton-Durgin, now minister at the Church of Southwest Florida) rescued me from a small dog rescue society and gave me a loving home with her and her daughter Kelly for five years. The last few months, they adopted a hyperactive dog named Daisy. Then they moved to a place that didn't allow dogs. Imagine that! So Daisy and I went to live with Momma Wilma.

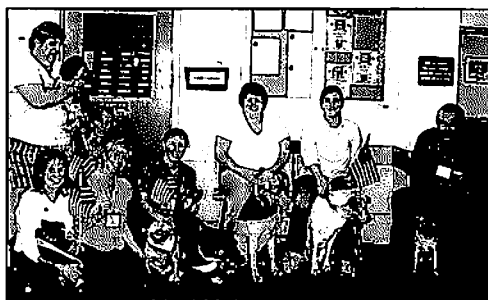
Daisy and I bark at her a lot for leaving us at home sometimes when she goes to work. She says we are spoiled Pastor's K-nines. P.K's.

I think that I am doing a fine Swedenborgian ministry. In fact, I wonder about getting ordained now. I don't know what CAM requires to be a minister, but I would think that a Therapy

Dog certificate would be sufficient, along with my vast experience, and my active participation in a Swedenborgian Church. I am starting work now on my application to CAM, and hope to make it to a Convention soon for my ordination as the first Swedenborgian doggie minister! ☩



Gizmo Graduates



Gizmo with his graduating class (with his mom, Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake, far left).

National Council of Churches Celebrates the Life and Legacy of Rosa Parks

Washington, D.C., October 25, 2005—The National Council of Churches USA has released the following statement about the passing of civil rights champion Rosa Parks:

It is with sadness and a deep sense of loss that we receive the news about the death of Rosa Parks. She was a heroine in our midst—one who taught our nation about courage and determination. She

will truly be missed.

Rosa Parks, who was known as the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement," was a trailblazer and a pioneer. She was a powerful witness to all of us who believe that one person can make a difference and she will forever be remembered for her quiet resolve. Although her physical life has ended, her work lives on even as we continue to fight for justice and

equality in this nation. We hope that America will one day fully honor her sacrifice by ending poverty and racial disparities, having adequate and affordable housing and health care, and making sure that workers are paid a living wage for their labor.

We will forever be grateful for the gift of her life and the legacy she leaves us all to hold fast to our beliefs. ☩


TO THE EDITOR

Project Link Lauded

I read with interest Rev. Erni Martin's September 2005 *Messenger* article, "Swedenborgian Ministry in the Northwest." Readers will recall this short review on the ministry of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Bellevue, Washington, highlighting Project Link. This innovative outreach ministry Project Link instituted in the form of small groups is one of today's methods that have proven successful for parish ministry in many faith communities.

Decades later after the end of Project Link, stories about Project Link from parishioners in the Northwest as well as California were shared, again in small groups. These memories were told with love and gratitude toward the team ministry, for they brought life-transforming experiences through in-depth pastoral care and counseling in the small group interaction. One wonders what the long term outcome of this profound ministry could have been on the church-at-large if it had been continued into today, where in-depth personal work in small groups is sought after by many believers and seekers.

Still, prior to this radical change in ministry at the Bellevue Church, the lively and fully participating members enjoyed many years of successful traditional parish ministry, which included an active Sunday School, summer church school, youth group and many programs including service to the larger neighbor. Project Link was one part of the powerful and wonderful ministry that touched many lives at the beautiful glass Church of the Good Shepherd.

Rev. Susan G. Turley,
M.Div., M.Ed., LCSW, BCC
San Francisco, California 

Department of Peace Initiative It Began with Peace Pilgrim

During her first pilgrimage in 1953, Peace Pilgrim carried three petitions. One of those called for the creation of a cabinet-level Department of Peace in the federal government. It read: *"This is the way of peace, overcome evil with good and falsehood with truth and hatred with love. We plead for the establishment of a Peace Department, with a Secretary of Peace who accepts these principles—and with all conflicts at home and abroad to be referred to this Peace Department."*

On September 14, 2005, a bill to create an executive branch Department of Peace was introduced by Congressman Dennis Kucinich of Ohio with 56 cosponsors.


The primary function of a United States Department of Peace will be to research, articulate and facilitate nonviolent solutions to domestic and international conflict.

The Department of Peace will facilitate the most cutting edge ways to wage peace. From nonviolent communication skills, to conflict resolution techniques and cultural relationship building, the Department of Peace will employ proven and effective strategies for diminishing violence in our country and in our world. As a member of the President's cabinet, the Secretary of Peace will provide the President, the


State Department, the Departments of Defense, Education and Justice with greatly expanded problem-solving options. The Department of Peace will also provide support for state and local government to address issues of domestic violence.

Some of the functions of the new department would be:

- To reduce domestic and international violence
- To gather and coordinate information and recommendations from America's peace community
- To teach violence prevention and mediation to America's school children
- To effectively treat and dismantle gang psychology
- To rehabilitate the prison population
- To build peace-making efforts among conflicting cultures both here and abroad
- To support our military with complementary approaches to ending violence
- To establish a "Peace Academy" to train future leaders in the theory and practice of peace making.

For additional information visit:
www.thepeacealliance.org 

Don't Miss Out! Highlights of *The Messenger* are Available Online

Going away for awhile? Or do you want to recommend *The Messenger* to a friend? Highlights—feature articles, commentaries, photos—from our magazine are available to everyone on the denomination's website at Swedenborg.org. 

Swedenborgian Eliza Lovell Tibbetts, Founder of the California Citrus Industry

(Continued from page 133)



Young Eliza

confided to her granddaughter Clara, "When Grandma was as old as you she would want to run out to play *all the time* when out of school, but the great-grandma would say, 'No! Eliza, sit down and sew a little while, then take a play!'"

So I learned to be industrious, and you know Grandma is never idle too much...."

This conscientiousness in Eliza's later years reflects her family's Yankee work ethic. Oliver and Clarissa Lovell moved their family from Boston to Cincinnati by wagon and flat boat in 1812, when the city was no more than a dirt road with a tavern on it. Clarissa cared for a home and large family without shops or modern conveniences. Oliver, a painter by trade, was also a minister, a city councilman, a fire warden, a board of education member, and a director of the Ohio Mechanic's Institute. Eliza learned early the value of hard work.

As a member of the Society that worked so hard to transform a tiny military outpost into the "Athens of the West," Eliza absorbed a great deal about community building. The other New Church people of the Cincinnati Society were also extremely hardworking people who respected and fostered creative and spiritual growth. These intelligent and influential citizens, who loved good literature, music, painting, and the theater, contributed to virtually every civic and cultural institution of the early city.

As Swedenborg would have it, church members were useful according to their individual talents. Charles Sontag was a chemist whose son William became a famous painter. Lawyer and newspaper editor Benjamin Power's brother Hiram sculpted several presidents. The sons of

organ-maker and minister Adam Hurdus worked at the Shellbark Theater. Educator Frederic Eckstein also founded the Academy of Fine Arts. Solomon Smith, the famous western actor, played organ in the church, led the New Jerusalem Singing Society, and published the *Independent Press*.

With these New Church members as her model, it is no surprise that Eliza built a community around herself in Cincinnati. As in Cincinnati, her family attended and participated in theatrical and music performances and educational gatherings. A noted hostess, she gathered a circle of the more intellectual settlers to attend Lyceum and discuss current issues. These friendships with town settlers and religious leaders endured her entire life. She filled her home with her neighbors and her son's huge extended family. Eliza's tenderness and affection for this family is clear in her letters. In 1890 she wrote about the death of her granddaughter Daisy to her other granddaughter Clara:

"...the Good Man knew (as He knows everything) that I was left with empty arms when he took my only grandchild to live in His beautiful home in heaven, to play with little angel children, among flowers, and birds, so the dear God gave me another dear granddaughter, and I named her Clara, because she had a good, lovely, great-grandma, who was an angel in the Good

Man's home, and I wanted the angel Grandma to watch over her little namesake and help her to be lovely and good as she was when she lived on earth..."



Eliza in her Queen Victoria Stage

The New Church imbued Eliza with another core value—the

importance of education. From the time they arrived in the dusty town that would become the Queen City, Cincinnati New Church members focused on establishing and improving schools. David Cathcart was teaching in Cincinnati as early as 1810, the year that Milo

G. Williams and Ogden Ross helped establish Miami University. Eliza's father Oliver was a driving force behind the establishment of the Theosophic Society for the intensive study of Swedenborg and the Bible in 1825 and also the New Church School in 1840. Luman Watson and J. Bonsall were founders of the Ohio Mechanics Institute in 1828. Four years later Alexander Kinmont and Milo Williams were founders of the Western Literary Society and College of Professional Teachers. Later church members, including several women, established Urbana University in 1850. Predictably, Eliza worked very hard to ensure the best education possible for her family. Her son James attended the prestigious Professor Herrod's Seminary in Cincinnati. As soon as the Immaculate Heart Academy opened in Los Angeles in 1890, she sent her granddaughter Clara there.

Eliza herself probably attended the Bailey sisters' boarding school in Cincinnati. Schools in early Cincinnati came and went, but New Church people always had excellent schools available for their children because so many outstanding local educators were Swedenborgian. The Misses Bailey, whose father Francis had published the first Swedenborgian works in America, added their brother-in-law Frederick Eckstein to the faculty in 1824. The curriculum was quite ahead of its time. Eckstein advocated "learning by rote" only "so far as ...necessary for the cultivation of memory;" his primary object was "to elicit ideas, and to improve the understanding by explanation, illustration, questions and conversation."

Eliza grew up in a Swedenborgian environment where females and their minds were respected and nurtured, and she expected the same throughout her life. Women had not been subordinated in the New Church as they had in many others. Married and unmarried women had always been members of the Cincinnati Society, and Urbana University was coeducational throughout all levels from its inception. To an educated, intelligent, and socially conscious woman like Eliza, suffrage was an important issue. In 1871 she

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Swedenborgian Eliza Lovell Tibbetts, Founder of the California Citrus Industry

(Continued from page 142)

marched with 70 other women in Washington D.C. and demanded the right to register to vote. The group of 70 women included Belva Lockwood, the first woman admitted to the Supreme Court Bar, Dr. Caroline Winslow, physician to President Garfield, and many other exceptional women. They fought their case to the United States Supreme Court in *Spencer v. Board of Registration*, 1 McA.

Eliza's church was surrounded by the

struggle over slavery. Cincinnati was a major ideological battleground between North and South. Slaves escaped from Kentucky just across the river and fled through the city to freedom in the North. Harriet Beecher Stowe was inspired to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by her experiences there.

Salmon Chase, the "Attorney General of Fugitive Slaves" whom Abraham Lincoln appointed as Secretary of the Treasury and then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, first came to national fame defending John Van Zandt, a conductor on the Underground Railroad in Cincinnati. Ohio New Churchmen were predominantly abolitionist. Their opposition to slavery was based in part on Swedenborg's remarks about central Africans in *Continuation of the Last Judgment*.

As early as 1837 Alexander Kinmont applied those remarks to American politics in *The Natural History of Man* lectures. He predicted an epoch of African civilization with theology "more perfect and endearing than that which the intellects of the Caucasian race" had ever exhibited.

The Lovells were abolitionists. Several family members, including Eliza's 17-year-old son James, enlisted immediately in the Union army. Like Riverside founders North and Greves, Eliza moved into the South during Reconstruction, with dreams of building a more racially tolerant society there, and was driven out by unwelcoming locals. While in

Virginia she adopted a black child, Nicey Robison. After the war there were many displaced black children who were orphaned or who had been separated from their parents. Nicey came with the family to Riverside and was among the first African Americans in the area. She was a family member who played with Daisy, Eliza's granddaughter, and the other children in the town. This may have been shocking in another town not

founded by staunch Republican abolitionists.

Perhaps the most significant quality that Eliza was imbued with in the Cincinnati Society was strength of mind. Her Swedenborgian education had emphasized thinking for oneself, deciding for oneself how to be useful and what was right. The New Church in Cincinnati was regularly besieged by other religious leaders from the pulpit and in print, but church members never let that interfere with their work. Neither did Eliza. She decided what was

useful and she did it, no matter what others had to say about negroes or women's place or spoiling children or her husband Luther. That was the legacy of the Cincinnati Society of the Church of the New Jerusalem to Eliza, to Riverside, and to California.

A park was created for the Parent Navel Orange at the corner of Arlington and Magnolia in Riverside in 1902. On September 3, 1914 Eliza's contribution was recorded in the Congressional Record of the United States. Eliza Lovell Tibbetts was officially recognized by the State of California as the founder of the California navel orange industry in 1933. This spring a statue of Eliza Lovell Tibbetts will be unveiled in Riverside in conjunction with an exhibition at the Riverside Municipal Museum.

Jane Lawrence is a researcher and a former attorney who has investigated Eliza, her family, and her connection to the Swedenborgian church for the last three years. Patricia Parker Ortlieb is an artist and a retired therapist whose grandmother Clara Tibbetts Summons Olmsted told her about watering the orange trees with her own grandmother, Eliza Lovell Tibbetts. Patricia and Jane have traveled throughout the U.S. and visited many Swedenborgian Churches in the course of their research. They live in San Diego, California. ☩



Patricia Ortlieb (center, holding miniature statue of Eliza) with Katherine and Art Gage: Four people have been the most instrumental in keeping Eliza Lovell Tibbetts alive: Dicky DeLoss, who portrayed Eliza in the schools and at civic events; Dr. Vincent Moses, Director of the Riverside Municipal Museum; Katherine Gage, Chair of the Statue Committee; and Art Gage, her husband, who has promoted the statue project as a City Council member. (The real statue is approximately twelve feet tall).

YO!

(Continued from page 134)

Nicholson receives the first drawing from his sponsored child, and starts to cry. I'm close to tears again, looking at these pictures as I write this. But it feels good. Steve says he especially likes the ghost saying "Yo." Me too.

There's more to tell, but that's enough for now. If you feel moved to sponsor a child, the contact information for Children, Inc. is: (800) 538-5381, or www.children-inc.org

Wishing you all a peace-filled and blessed Christmas.

—Patte LeVan ☩

Another Funny Christmas Story

(Continued from page 137)

and refrigerator all came from the same place as the items in the living room—Prince Range and Appliance in Newark. All this on \$39 a week. (Not a great salary, even in those times.) God Bless America (And Charlie Prince.)

As I gazed at the rosewood veneer box, little did I know of the forces that were at work. How changes in entertainment would precipitate events and how a situation could change so rapidly because of a child's faith in a new technology. What I'm getting at is that I was a true believer in TV—a pioneer, the first of a new generation to have all this knowledge available to me. Edward R. Murrow at that time believed TV could be a great tool for human understanding and education, bringing the world together.

What I was watching was not what Mr. Murrow had in mind.

Vaudeville had died sometime in the thirties, killed by the movies, especially the talkies. But to fill hour after empty hour of the new medium, TV programmers dug up these acts that had not seen a stage since FDR's second term. *The New York Daily News* columnist Ed Sullivan was largely responsible for getting the ball rolling, having to fill up one hour's worth of air time every Sunday night on his variety show, which was broadcast live. Unlike some of the radio stars who had trouble making the transition, these old war horses were used to audiences; they craved them like addicts. This was a seller's market. They couldn't work long enough or hard enough to satisfy the more numerous addicts—the audience!

Every great story has multiple elements which, when they all come together, result in the climax, the denouement, the socko finish. Fiction writers have to fabricate these elements. In this case, all the elements just fell into place, so I don't have to rack my brain making this stuff up.

The first element was a harmonica act. I have no recollection what this guy's name was or even where I could find out. All I know is that he was all over the place, day and night, it seemed; his act

consisted of playing one or more tunes with a variety of harmonicas of all different sizes. Also, he could play the harmonicas in many "unusual" ways such as swallowing a 12-inch harmonica without missing a beat; and my favorite, placing a standard size harmonica INSIDE his mouth and blowing out the tune. To my nearly four-year-old mind he was right up there with Arturo Toscanini, who shared the airwaves with this musical genius.

The second element was the harmonica itself. In the forties and fifties, harmonicas were given to children as gifts. Why? Perhaps they were thought to be "educational," that the child would develop a musical sense. My theory is that relatives gave their grandchildren, nieces, nephews, younger siblings, etc. harmonicas as a form of revenge. Whatever the reason, there was always one around. They had a tendency to disappear ("How would I know what happened to your precious harmonica?") But, not to worry, there were plenty more where that came from. In fact, about seven or eight years later, one of the local movie theaters in Jersey City had a free Christmas kiddie show on a Saturday morning. There were free gifts for the kiddies. They were handed out BEFORE the show started by some sadist/masochist. Then when we were good and cranked up, we went home with them. Harmonicas.

The third element was that we, the first of the TV generation, believed EVERYTHING that we saw on TV. I mean EVERYTHING!! I don't remember hearing the phrase, "Don't try this at home, kids" until the late 70s, early 80s. A quick example:

Child actor in short pants, striped shirt and beanie is crayoning on a wall.

Child's mother: "Bobby!"

Homeowner (chuckling): "Don't worry Sue, Spic 'n Span will clean that right up!"

Cut to pail of soapy water and sponge. Stains disappear from wall as if by magic. I couldn't read, but I knew we had Spic 'n Span from looking at the graphics on the box. Cut to my mother whaling on me with a hairbrush. I have committed the unpardonable sin of crayoning the walls. I tried to explain that we had Spic 'n Span, so that it was

no big deal. Later it was explained to me that it works on PAINTED walls, not WALLPAPER.

Now that we have all the elements in place, the tumblers click in the lock, the pieces of the puzzle fit together, ENTER is pushed and we proceed.

On that late morning/early afternoon, my old friend was wheezing away on the screen while I tried to follow him as best I could on my harmonica.

Whether I had gotten it as a present that morning, or whether I had gotten it some time before, I don't remember. I do remember that I was told to "knock it off" at least twice as I produced these hideous squawks, trying to duplicate the moves of my hero. I do remember gagging as I tried to put the harmonica all the way down my throat, as he had. I do remember getting the standard size harmonica entirely in my mouth. I remember trying to whip it out of my mouth as he had. It didn't move. I pushed on the right and then the left. I pushed with both hands. Nothing. I looked to the screen for guidance. My mentor had been replaced by a dog walking on its hind legs. Fright. I try spitting it out. I try pushing it with my tongue. Nothing. PANIC!!! I start to hyperventilate, probably sucking it in deeper. I start making small squeaking sounds—*fwweep, fwweep, fwweep*. No other recourse. I start the long walk to the kitchen.

The scene I encounter resembles one of the middle circles of Hell. My mother is dripping sweat as she tries to juggle three or four different dishes cooking, even with my grandmother's help. She is out of her depth. The kitchen is about 100 degrees. My father and Grandpa Rod, as I called him, were of no help, probably half drunk and sullen. To add the match to the gasoline, I walk into the kitchen and go *fwweep*.

I was told later on that my mouth was distended like the character that advertised the Coney Island Steeplechase, or the Joker from *Batman*. My mother turned when she heard the *fwweep*, and wiped the sweat from her forehead on her forearm. "Very funny," she said. "Stop fooling around and get ready to eat."

(Continued on page 145)

Another Funny Christmas Story

(Continued from page 144)

Fweep!

"Did you hear what I said? Take that thing out of your mouth and go wash your hands."

Fweep!

"I don't think he *can*," said my grandmother. "Let me help you, toots."

Fweep, fweep, I said gratefully.

Gently, she tried to stick one of her fingers in my mouth and pry it loose. No good. "Try some butter," she suggested. My mother, harassed beyond all human endurance all morning, finally lost it. "Oh, fahchrissake, you would have to pick this time to do this! I have no time for your nonsense," she yelled; "Come Here!" pulling me toward the bathroom. Extreme panic:

FWEEP! FWEEP! FWEEP!

"And shut the h— UP!"

What happened next would have been met with disapproving looks from the

followers of Dr. Spock, in that time and place. If it had happened in this present time and place, she would be sitting in a cell, if the authorities ever found out about it. All the anger and frustration came to a flash point, and she gave me an open handed smack across the face.

That's what it took. The harmonica popped out of my mouth with a kind of SPLORT sound and clattered onto the bathroom floor. My mother grabbed it up, flung it into the toilet and tried to flush it down. It didn't go. (I don't remember what happened to it after that.) More in shock and relief than in pain, I let out a wail and kept it up for about five minutes. Upon inspection, it was found that I had sustained a small scratch in my mouth.

"Maybe he should eat his cereal," suggested my grandmother, "It would be less irritating."

"I wish *he* were less irritating" said my mother, downing a shot of Rodmaker's Scotch, and adding in a breathless voice,

"Who gives a d—!"

I don't remember how the rest of the meal went. This was the last time all five of us would sit down together. But, I got to eat my Cheerios and not have to face the dreadful unknown of turkey and stuffing and the like.

Is this an uplifting story about how a little boy's faith got him his Christmas wish? No. It's a story about one of the last times that I got over on adults. You want uplifting, I guess you'll have to switch to the Family Channel.

Al Geddes is a member of the New York New Church. His first "A Funny Christmas Story" was published in the December 2001 Messenger. It is our sincere wish that this produces the same hearty and healing laughter that the first one did—it did for the editor, and we hope for the reader as well. We also published Al Geddes's personal experience as a PATH railway conductor following 9/11. He lives in Hoboken, New Jersey. ☒

Focus on Youth

The 2005 SCYL Almont Survivor Teen Winter Retreat December 27–30



**Retreat
Theme: The
Five Senses**

From
Emanuel
Swedenborg's
Heavenly Secrets
Index, n. 19 we
read, "There is no

life without the senses. Spirits are indignant that men suppose them to have no use for the senses. A spirit excels a great deal in more exquisite senses than a man in the body."

Nearly all of the information that we gather in this life is through our five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. We experience the delightful smell of freshly baked bread, the taste of a crisp apple, the sound of crickets on a summer night, the feel of a soft, warm blanket on a cool morning, and the beautiful view from a mountaintop. Most of the wonders of creation, both pleasant and unpleasant, you discover through your senses.

At this retreat we'll be exploring our

five physical senses and relating them to God and spirit, through the insights of Emanuel Swedenborg. We'll learn how spirits perceive their senses and what each one corresponds to. On the practical side, we'll look at how our senses serve us, how they fool us, how they clarify the world around us and how they help us discover our own unique, individual talents, use, and heavenly path.

From *Conjugal Love* 210 we read, "Each love has its own special sense. It is apparent from the delights of the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch—that delights accompany the use they serve and are delightful to a person in accordance with the love he has for it."

The cost of this retreat is \$50. There are scholarship funds available for help with teen travel and the cost of attendance. If you need financial help to attend contact Kurt and we can easily and confidentially help to cover costs.

—Kurt Fekete
Youth Director

Questions About the SCYL and Our Retreats

The SCYL is the Swedenborgian Church Youth League. Our retreats are open to teenagers ages 13-18 of all faiths and beliefs. At our retreats we offer life skills and spiritual sessions based on the principles of the Swedenborgian church. We offer a safe, secure and inclusive environment to discuss and share relevant and meaningful ideas and challenges facing today's teens. We work, play and learn together as a community. We have fun! Those of you teens and parents new to SCYL retreats please don't hesitate to contact Kurt with any and all questions and concerns (email: kfkete@hotmail.com or call Kurt toll free at (866) 333-SCYL (7295). Kurt will answer your questions or, if appropriate, put you in contact with a League officer in your region to help give you as much information and encouragement as you need. ☒

Bad Leadership and Field Notes on the Compassionate Life

(Continued from page 138)

rock the boat" in those situations is incredible. Finally Sherron Watkins blew the whistle.

What would help to ensure good leadership? Limit tenure. Share power. Stay balanced. Have an honest support system—avoid Groupthink. Be open to change. Know and control your appetites. Be reflective. Be open to diversity and dissent. Have a system of checks and balances.

What about followers? Empower yourself. Be loyal to the whole group, not just the leader. Be skeptical. Take a stand. Pay attention. Get accurate information. Take collective action. Hold leaders to account.

Altogether a fascinating study of human nature, and very much in keeping with Swedenborgian thought.


The second book I heartily recommend is: *Field Notes on the Compassionate Life*, by Marc Barasch. This is one of the best books I have ever read on the nature and cultivation of the spiritual life. Barasch has the happy ability to describe the most profound, thoughtful spiritual insights in everyday words—and this is a rare gift. The book is filled with ordinary mundane situations and events which somehow come alive and shine like diamond facets. The book breathes incredible beauty, kindness and goodness; you feel better just reading the book.

Some of the chapter headings give you a little idea of his musings: The Debt of Love; The Circle of Compassion; Empathy; Forgiveness; Loving the Monster; The Beloved Community; All My Relations. He describes how compassion operates in ordinary people and transforms them; always the power of love working through and transforming every imaginable type of situation. He makes a powerful case for creating a world of kindness, generosity and love; always love shows us the way. When you don't know what to do: just love! He helps us to put ourselves in the shoes of those around us who are hurting. Perhaps we can't do very much to help, but we can at least walk with them. His insights help us to be more aware of

what is going on at a deeper level, and we are motivated to want to help. And the book's style is so warm, winsome and filled with wonderment. It's a true joy to read.

Bernie Siegal writes on the book jacket: *I have read this book twice—once from an intellectual perspective, and the second time from my heart—and I was doubly rewarded by its wisdom. I heartily recommend it to anyone who wants to understand why the compassionate life is the answer—and who wants to learn how to live it.*

I enthusiastically second Bernie's endorsement.

The Rev. Paul Zacharias is an active retired Swedenborgian minister living in Kitchener, Ontario. 

Heaven Sent

(Continued from page 138)

Sue's eyes were wide, and her lips twitched.

"Maybe you can fix my dollhouse for me," concluded Andrea.

As Jon and Susan spend more time together, Sue has difficulty resisting Jon's winning smile and quirky sense of humor.

She struggles with her belief that a truly strong and spiritual woman would never remarry and so has difficulty with Jon's increasing attentions and her growing feelings for him.

The behind the scene workings of a church community that is sometimes less than harmonious ring true. The Cliffside Christian Community, where people act like people and life happens, has strained group dynamics, trying to balance modern and traditional ways.

"Let's try item eight: do we stay with two separate church services each Sunday, one contemporary and one traditional, or can we try one service, combining both styles?" An outbreak of comment was quickly quieted when Stephen pointed to the pregnant Ruth's uplifted hand. "I've felt sad for a long time that we don't all worship together," she said. "It feels like we have become two different congregations now, and there are some church members I never see anymore. I don't like my kids

growing up in a divided church, and I'd really like to see us all back together. I love the idea of a combined service."

Steve indicated Heinrich Knapp.

"If there are guitars in the chancel, I won't go to church," said the old man in a basso profundo. "It's not proper."

Michael Kinloch snorted and tossed his pencil in disgust.

"I think T-shirts and running shoes are a sign of disrespect to God," Heinrich continued doggedly. "The young people aren't learning proper respect these days."

"What does it matter what they're wearing as long as they're there?" demanded Michael. "I don't think God cares what we are wearing. The contemporary service is bringing people to church who would not otherwise be there!"

"You dress in your very best to be presented to the Queen. Can't you show the same respect for God?" declared Miss Inquist.

"God created us naked. Maybe we should attend church naked!" snorted Michael.

Another wedge is a surprise will that seriously jeopardizes the future survival of the church. The congregation is called to act together to solve an intricate mystery set up by a recently deceased church member, a mystery that threatens the very existence of the community.

Puzzle Number One:

Nobody Knows Jesus' Voice.

Mind And Repent, Kinsmen!

One God.

Two (at least) in every relationship:

Two responses (negative or affirmative) to everything

Nine lepers never thanked Jesus for healing them -

Three men thrown into the fiery furnace for their God

One answer

There are many characters and subthemes conveying intimate looks at human feelings and interactions. There are prayer, grief, joy, love and the celebration of everyday living in families and community. At the beginning of the book Sue's mom prays that Sue will "find peace and healing." Later, when the twins hear the new pastors name, they feel certain that he is the answer to Nana's

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Heaven Sent

(Continued from page 146)

prayer. The Christmas Eve service is touching and the Joseph service gives the story new meaning to characters and readers alike.

The book contains a *Glossary of South African Slang*, *Musical References* and a *Bibliography or Reading List* of books that influenced the author. *Heaven Sent* by Alison Longstaff is touching, moving, refreshing and real. It is full of humor and real people using witty dialog. I look forward to reading the next book in the series, *To Rule Britannia*, to find out what happens to these characters who have become my friends.

Nancy Apple is a member of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound (aka, Heaven on Earth, A Spiritual Community) in Kirkland, Washington. She is also a member of the Communications Support Unit, the oversight body for the denomination's publications.

From the book: *Alison Smith Longstaff grew up in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania - an International Christian community outside of Philadelphia. She graduated cum laude in 1985 with a B.Sc. in Psychology and Religion. She lives with her husband and three children in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. Alison can be contacted by e-mail at cadistributor@cliffsidechapel.com. The paperback book is available from Ms. Longstaff and at Amazon.com. If you purchase online through www.swedenborg.org/bookstore/howithelps.cfm then click from there to Amazon, a percentage of your purchase will be donated to the Church.*



Chapel Architect Lloyd Wright in 1974.

Wayfarers Chapel Named National Landmark

(Continued from page 148)

and grounds in perpetuity as the Wright family envisioned it.

"In terms of preservation, we have probably one of the top 'Wrightian' structures in North America, probably Lloyd Wright's most famous," said Tafel. "And I think we have a commitment to maintain the chapel, buildings, and grounds . . . to reflect the glory of God and to welcome the Wayfarers on their spiritual journey."

Tafel said the additional notoriety will help bring recognition to the church's many annual community events, from jazz bands to art shows to annual pet blessings. The church is famed worldwide as a place for weddings—up to 800 a year were performed in the past—but, said Mitchell, it has recently hosted more baptisms and memorial services.

"In many ways, I call it a sacramental ministry because we relate to people's life journeys at significant points," said Tafel. "It's a nice fit in the community, and the events we hold are all part of our concept of giving back."

On November 15, Wayfarers Chapel welcomed author/singer/songwriter Stephen Smoke.

Reprinted with permission from the Palos Verdes Peninsula News, October 27, 2005. ☩

PASSAGES

CONFIRMATIONS

Perry, Thurston—Lawrence Perry and Robin Carlson-Thurston were confirmed into the life and faith of the Swedenborgian Church October 30, 2005, in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Ken Turley, officiating.

ENGAGEMENT

Baxter, Goodwin—the Rev. Kevin Baxter and Leah Goodwin sanctified their engagement with a Rite of Betrothal November 5, 2005, at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Mass. Members and friends were in attendance.

DEATHS

Mull—Marian Elaine Schmitt Mull, age 82, active member of the Pawnee Rock Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world October 19, 2005, at home in Pawnee Rock, Kansas. A memorial service, crowded with those who loved her, was conducted October 24 at the Pawnee Rock Church, the Rev. Jane Siebert officiating, assisted by lay leader Vivian Bright. She is survived by her husband Keith and two children, Glen and Jeanine, and five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Ranger—Shepard Guy Ranger entered the spiritual world March 19, 2005, at Fryeburg Health Care Center in East Fryeburg, Maine. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Sylvia (Smith) Ranger, and two sons, Perley Ranger and Thomas Ranger. ☩

Wayfarers Chapel 2006 Calendar Available

The 8 1/2 by 11 inch calendar features beautiful colored pictures of various Chapel views for each month. For instance, November features a gorgeous sunset, May has architect Lloyd Wright in the Chapel; October features early pictures of the Chapel when it first opened. The calendar is designed to be easily hung on the wall, and the pictures are suitable for framing. Each month features a quote from Swedenborg.

The calendars are \$12.50 each including tax and shipping. If two calendars are purchased the third one is free. To order, please call the Chapel Visitors Center at 310-377-7919, ext. 6, any day between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. PST. Orders can be taken over the phone and paid by VISA/MasterCard. Calendars may also be ordered by mail and paid by check (payable to Wayfarers Chapel).

Wayfarers Chapel
5755 Palos Verdes Drive South
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275 ☩

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.

Wayfarers Chapel Named National Landmark

Josh Cohen, Peninsula News

Ask Peninsulans how to get from just about anywhere in Palos Verdes to Trump National Golf Club, and there's a good chance they'll respond, "head straight down the coast, past Wayfarers Chapel, go over the landslide..."



Chapel ministers Rev. Harvey Tafel and Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell.
Photo by Tom Underhill, Palos Verdes Peninsula News

Ask someone the location of one of the area's nicest secluded beaches, and they might respond, "Oh, you're talking about Abalone Cove, right across the street from Wayfarers Chapel."

For locals, the Swedenborgian

"Glass Church" in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, is an easily recognizable landmark and has been for 54 years. But last July 11, 2005, the prospect of maintaining Wayfarers Chapel and its unique architecture took on even greater significance when it was officially named to the National Register of Historic Places, a sub-office of the Department of the Interior. "We certainly want people to know that this date, July 11, 2005, is now one of many marks, an anniversary, a celebration for our church," said Rev. Harvey Tafel, administrator of the Wayfarers Chapel.

Church leaders struggled for nearly two years to gain the status. Working through the State Historical Preservation Office, they filled out copious application forms,

presented photos and color slides and wrote essays depicting the special character of their Peninsula chapel.

The church has a long history in the community. In the 1920s, Palos Verdes residents Elizabeth Schellenberg and Narcissa Cox Vanderlip first conceived of the idea to build the chapel for fellow members of the Swedenborgian Church. Twenty years later, designer Lloyd Wright—son of Frank Lloyd Wright—and his son, Eric Lloyd Wright, pictured a chapel that correlated with its surroundings, complete with a tower and colonnade to add to the beauty.

Constructed in 1951, with its angled glass design blending into a landscape of rose gardens, ferns, and pine trees, the chapel was built so that weary travelers along this winding section of Southern California coastline could relax, reflect, and meditate on their journeys.

"It's a place for people to rest their souls, so to speak," said the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell, who came from Washington DC in 2003 to Wayfarers Chapel. "There is beauty here, but underlying that is a sense of spirit. I'm struck by the way people come here and immediately understand what it's about...that the chapel is opening up to the beauty of God's creations.

To earn its spot in the National Historic Register, the chapel had to prove that it was "a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance." It also had to be at least 50 years old.

Tafel said that once the state saw the application, "they told us it was a no-brainer." He added that religious institutions are more carefully scrutinized during the registry process than other buildings.

Most importantly, by gaining the recognition, the church can apply for grants to maintain the chapel

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