

THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

May 2005

The Little Temple of the Trees

San Francisco Swedenborgian Church Receives National Honor

Nancy Freestone-Foegelle

On the corner of Lyon and Washington Streets, in San Francisco, sits an authentic National treasure. It is our own Swedenborgian Church, whose doors opened March 17, 1895, with Rev. Joseph Worcester as pastor. Our beloved church, built on land purchased by Rev. Worcester, has been declared a National Historic Landmark. We are the first and only house of worship in San Francisco to be granted this honor.

I have been a member of this congregation for 30 years. It is my pleasure to tell the story of how this architectural gem came to national attention. More than ten years ago, a distinguished and delightful gentleman by the name of John Gaul began attending our Sunday services. John tells me that he was initially led to the church as a favor to Jacomena Maybeck. She had asked him to show the church to an aspiring young student of architectural history. John had a long and devoted friendship with Mrs. Maybeck, who was the daughter-in-law of Bernard Maybeck, one of the celebrated architects who was pivotal in the design and creation of our sanctuary and its surrounding buildings.

John is no stranger to beautiful architecture himself. He has a long and rich history of working at some of the most beautiful and historic buildings in San Francisco, among them the Palace of Fine Arts, also a Maybeck creation. Additionally, John has gained local celebrity status by appearing in two episodes of *Bay Area Backroads*, one featuring "Sacred Spaces" and the other the Palace of Fine Arts.

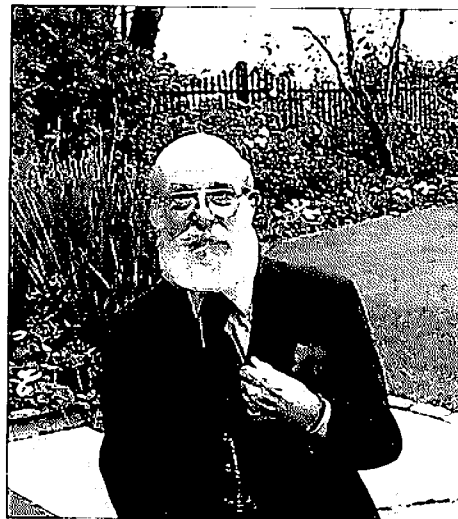
Our congregation began building a familial rapport with John. The Rev. Jim Lawrence was with us then. He and John developed a warm friendship while sharing appreciation of our church building's history. Their common interests launched an informal (yet extensive) history-gathering project, detailing the many artistic points of our entire property. John's knowledge and extraordinary sense of what's important led him to the position of "unofficial" historian of our church. His devotion to discovery enhanced the congregation's interest in our past, as well as our future. With Jim's encouragement, John developed a fascinating slide show and history presentation. The show was presented to the congregation and we all loved it. Soon, we had groups of visitors (historians, architectural students and the like) coming to the church to see the show and be charmed by John's stories. We could all see that something wonderful was evolving, and John in particular was ready to take it to another level. Most of us didn't know what the next step should be, but John did. He had a dream and became passionately devoted to seeing it through.

Soon thereafter Jim Lawrence left us to become Dean of the Swedenborgian House of Studies, and we needed someone else to share John's passion. It turned out that another parishioner (and neighbor to the church), Michael Santimauro, was keenly interested in John and Jim's vision for the church. We began to hear the word "landmark" being spoken. Could it be that our little church would be considered a "landmark"? My, oh my!

Many doors were opened, largely due to John's natural charisma and uncanny ability to be at the right place at just the right time. Coupled with Michael's astute mind for business and his professional yet personable manner, we had all the elements needed for success. Soon, the Heritage Foundation of San Francisco became involved. Notables from this organization came to our church council meetings and helped us understand the historical significance of our church complex. Architectural Resources Groups (ARG), a prestigious firm also in San Francisco, did an extensive historical study of our premises. As John is fond of saying, "It came together like a hand in a glove."

As we came to find out, landmarking is a long process but a deeply satisfying one. John and Michael began to circulate in new arenas, coming to know a number of highly-regarded historians, professors, and all variety of experts in historical building preservation. Their experiences were wide and varied, culminating in a trip to historic Mt. Vernon and

(Continued on page 51)



John Gaul seated in garden of the San Francisco church.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- On Becoming a Mom • Convention Registration
- Meet the Nominees • Support Units • Did Swedenborg Disobey the Lord?

Ron Brugler

"As they left the tomb, Jesus met them and said, 'Peace be with you. Do not be afraid.'" From Matthew 28:8-9

For many weeks the evening news has been filled with stories about a woman in Florida whose parents and husband have fought legal battles over disconnecting her feeding tube. The courts have spoken, the tube has been removed, and soon this woman will die.

I must admit that each and every time I have listened to one of these updates, I have felt deeply saddened. I say this because I have been there. Just three years ago Val, her sister, and I had to make such a decision twice within a thirty-day period—once for their father, and then again for their mother. And although we did the right thing, it was still a difficult and painful experience—even though we were in complete agreement as to what needed to be done.

But as a Swedenborgian, I want to offer two insights that guided our decisions, yet are woefully lacking in the current media coverage. And I do so, thanking God that these truths are part of our faith.

The current debate revolves around the sanctity of all life. Basically, I agree with that premise. But, when the "experts" on television address it, their defi-

nition of life is so inadequate. Life to them seems to end at death. This is not so within our New Church way of thinking. We believe that first we live, and then we die, and then we live forever.

The following words from our Memorial Service explain "all life" this way:

When our body is no longer able to perform its functions in the natural world and is separated from our spirit, we still continue to be ourselves and to live. Thus, when we die, we but pass from the consciousness of this world into that of the world of heaven. For as the Apostle Paul has said, "There is a natural body and a spiritual body. The one is put off, and the other is put on."

When this happens, we take with us everything that truly makes us a person—all of the loves and qualities that make us who we are. And we awaken amid the company of those who have gone on before us, and they delight in teaching us of the wonders of heaven. We know them, and rejoice in their company, and we relate to one another according to the depth and reality of the love and friendship that we have shared in this earthly life.

I truly wish that the Schiavo family knew of our teachings. Terri will be just fine.

The second insight that I want to interject is that it is futile for the courts,

or a spouse's decision, or the parent's desires to guide this debate. A better guide would be the power and presence of God's love. And although God's love can lead us to comprehend and respond to situations in different ways, if it had been the basis of their discussions, I can't help but believe that the legal battles would not have needed to be fought. The focus would not have been on politics, religion, or even a person's right to die. With God's love as the focus, the primary concern would have been how that power could be used, called upon and made real. It just has not seemed to me that this has been the case. I hope that I am wrong.

The most difficult decision that a spouse and family can make comes during such dark times. I've been there. But, thankfully, so was a faith that lifts up the reality of heavenly life and the presence of God's love at all times. And during this Easter season, this seems to be an important thing to say.

The Rev. Ron Brugler is pastor of the New York New Church.

Reprinted from the New York church's April newsletter.



Recognition

Traversing the land and the seas with the light of the stars
Always present, present always—here, did you know?
Yes, and visible only when we put away the surface
stuff of day: the business of the apples stored in the barrel.
Journeying, we reach the river and stop at the bank gauging
The strength of the currents, surveying the shape of the rocks
And what they portend.
Deep underneath—what, what?

The light of a star torches the place you must enter
To part the surface and reach down to the bedrock to draw up
The gold, and hold it raw cupped in your two palms.
What will you do as you look at it?
Look at it and know it again
Your precious ore, mined from the bedrock.

Bette McDonnell



THE MESSENGER

Publisher: The Communications Support Unit
Published monthly, except July and August, by
the Swedenborgian Church of North America
(founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General
Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United
States of America).

May 2005
Volume 226 No. 5
Whole Number 5300

Typesetting & Layout
Town & Country
Press, Plymouth, IN

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

The opinions of the contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the Communications Support Unit, or represent the position of the church. Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; non-members, \$12.00 a year; foreign \$15.00 a year; gift subscription from a member, \$5.00 a year; single copies \$1.00.

Deadline for material: Six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

The Little Temple of the Trees

(Continued from cover)

Washington D.C. On a trip financed by Michael Santimauro, John, Michael, and Michael's young son, Gianmichael, made an appearance before the Landmarks Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board. This meeting was held on September 10th and 11th, 2003, in the Ann Pamela Cunningham Building, Historic Mt. Vernon, Virginia. One of the country's leading architectural historians, Richard Guy Wilson, Commonwealth Professor and Chair of the Dept. of Architectural History, School of Architecture at the University of Virginia, was in attendance at this meeting. He called our church "one of the great creations in any age or place. It is a landmark in the history of America." The result of this meeting was conclusive in our favor. After several years of very detailed work, John and Michael would celebrate with the congregation.

Our membership is honored to have this consideration bestowed upon our beautiful church. "It will hopefully become an important bond that will tie us and future generations to recognizing an important trend in American history and provide an anchor of stability in our fast-changing world," says Michael Santimauro.

Additionally, we are very pleased that our landmarking is the first privately owned building so designated since the

Bank of Italy in 1978 and the first National Historic Landmark within the City and County of San Francisco in more than 15 years.

Our membership is also delighted to recognize members of the families of those whose talents came together to create "poetry in architecture." Members of the Maybeck family remain closely associated, largely through their ongoing friendship with John Gaul.

We are proud and humbled to quote the commentary of the National Landmark Committee, as follows:

"A critically important example of the American contribution to the Arts and Crafts Movement as exemplified in new architectural imagery, integration with the site, garden design, and use of natural materials. The interior shows the employment of the decorative arts to create a special atmosphere, and also the first examples of the 'mission chairs.' Among the designers were A. C. Schweinfurth, A. Page Brown, Bernard Maybeck, William Keith, Bruce Porter, and the Rev. Joseph Worcester. The Church is important as an example of the Swedenborgian contribution to American religious, social theory and intellectual life."

Our "level four" status (the highest available) was designated on August 18th, 2004, and signed by Secretary of the Interior, Gale A. Norton.

Perhaps you are wondering how our congregation feels about all of this, so I'd like to offer some observations:

"The federal government has decided to place our little church in a distinguished status, that of a National Historic Landmark. We who are members here have always known that our church was an extraordinary place. The formality of the landmark designation simply confirms our internal respect for our sanctuary complex to the national level. We are happy and proud to share our treasure with the national posterity."—Bob Harren, co-chair SF Church Council. "I add my appreciation to everyone who helped make it happen—the parishioners of our church, the advisors and consultants, the historical society members and all the community support we got that



helped make landmark status happen."

— Marcy Fraser

co-chair SF Church Council

"The landmarking of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church will continue to enshrine the important story of the spiritual masterpiece in architecture that Joseph Worcester midwifed into being 110 years ago. The unassuming jewel at Lyon and Washington has become known around the world, and I feel the landmarking status will bring its importance to the notice of an even larger public. At the seminary in Berkeley, it seems that almost everyone has heard of the Swedenborgian Church building in San Francisco. I'm so pleased the congregation found the vision and the resolve to see the challenging process of landmarking through to this fruitful conclusion."

—Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence
Dean of SHS

(Continued on page 52)



The Little Temple of the Trees *(Continued from page 51)*

"Long appreciated by Swedenborgians as an important architectural expression of natural theological correspondences, Joseph Worcester's modest and self-effacing 1895 sanctuary in San Francisco is now recognized as having national importance by the Federal government. This does not surprise those who have felt the building's power to transport worshipers to spiritual planes, but may incite those who expect that a National Historic Landmark must be, by definition, monumental and richly appointed. Along with the honor of landmark designation comes a responsibility, though, not only to do our best to maintain the structure's integrity, but to properly interpret its importance. The humble materials and straightforward design of the Lyon Street Church feel significant to me not so much because they produced a beautiful place, but also because they have inspired generations of artists, architects, designers, and other creative souls to imbue their work with the same degree of simple passion for unostentatious art and craft. This was Worcester's message, and the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church and its campus is the outward expression of that message, from which future generations will benefit as much as those that have come before..."

—Ted Bosley

Director of Gamble House in Pasadena, California, and longtime member of the San Francisco Church

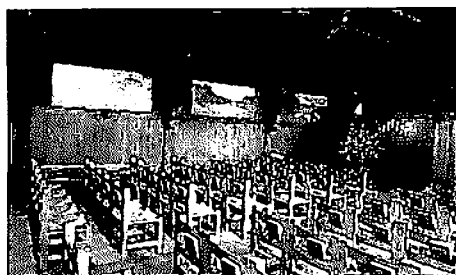
"A promise fulfilled and a longtime dream come true. Never give up on what is possible and what you believe in."

—John Gaul

I hope you all plan on coming to Berkeley for Convention in July. Perhaps your plans will allow for a visit to a National Historic Landmark on the other side of the San Francisco Bay.

Please come and see us with renewed appreciation.

Nancy Freestone-Foegelle is a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church and a member of the Education Support Unit.



Who, Me? On Becoming a Mom

Kim Hinrichs

It was the breasts that really started it. My breasts. These pleasant but useless appendages that had been attached to my body for 30-some years were the first clue that I might have a unique role to play in parenting my daughter. I was not prepared for this. Having come of age immersed in modern notions of gender equality and feminism, I naively crashed into motherhood with the assumption that my husband and I would be interchangeable parents. I was a parent, he was a parent, we had the same skills and experience (zero), and there was our baby. She could have her pick of parent #1 or parent #2. We had thus far successfully approached everything else in our partnership this way, and there was no reason to believe that parenting would be any different.

But then there was the matter of our precious little newborn needing to eat at seemingly every hour of the day and night. This need had a direct correlation to the breasts which were continuously and miraculously producing rich and inimitable human nutrition. Consequently there was the reckoning that the breasts were attached to me. The Mom.

So I nursed her. We spent hours upon hours together locked in this ancient human embrace. It gave me time to study every hair on her head and watch the bald spot fill in with soft blond down day by day. I smiled at the way she covered her ears with her fists while she sucked, looking like the figure in Edvard Munch's painting *The Scream*. I stared out the window. I stared at the wall. I looked into her simple, clear blue eyes and wondered what we had in store for ourselves, she and I.

Mostly, I was beset with huge feelings of frustration. I was aghast at the enormity of what my husband and I had done—this little being needed constant care, and she was going to live in our house for the next eighteen years. With supreme irritation, I found that simple stretches of time to concentrate had evaporated. I didn't seem able to complete anything, never mind whether it was writing a sermon or folding the laundry. Every day my mind spewed a litany of all the things I could no longer do: I couldn't leave the house alone whenever I wanted to (childless people, please note: I couldn't leave the house alone whenever I wanted to); I couldn't drink a cup of coffee (she put her hand in it); I couldn't read the newspaper (she would eat it); I couldn't talk on the phone (she made too much noise for me to hear the callers); I couldn't have a relationship with my husband (her constant demands prevented us from even having conversations); I couldn't nap (we were invariably on opposite energy curves); I couldn't sit through a church service (she had no appreciation for meditation or theology); I couldn't watch TV (she demanded being the center of attention); I couldn't wear nice clothes (spit-up).

And then there were the more pernicious prohibitions: my responsibility to mother this child seemed to come into direct and crushing conflict with my career. The elder members of our family seemed to advise me to enter fully into the idyllic garden of motherhood and leave my meddling work behind. I wanted to scream in response, "Would *you* do this?! Would you give up every ounce of personal freedom and professional agency in order to spend more time with an incoherent, illogical, demanding and messy baby?" They smiled in their neat, clean clothes and, independently, traveled home. I was incredulous that in this day and age it was still the same old story: it fell to women to raise the children. Our society showed the proof that women bore the sacrifice of child-rearing with their lower wages, diminished career opportunities and abandoned dreams.

I hired a nanny and went back to work. I threw myself into my demanding job and found relief at the return to the familiar: stretches of time to concentrate...important work to do...adults for colleagues...a sense of mission. I had survived having my first child and was back in the world that worked. Our nanny was everything one could ask for, and our daughter was fine. She was probably even better off, I reasoned. On one level, it was proof that she hadn't actually needed me that much. Perhaps I

(Continued on page 53)

Who, Me? On Becoming a Mom

(Continued from page 52)

had been right all along—I could be parent #1, parent #2, or now with the nanny in the mix, even parent #3.

Time went on. Our toddler started preschool. To my surprise, I found that I was not, in fact, interchangeable with her nanny or with her dad. In the afternoons, when she caught sight of me in the preschool yard, she would squeal “Mommy!” with total delight and run full-speed into my arms. It was almost embarrassing. For weeks upon weeks every piece of artwork she brought home was inscribed in freshly-discovered letters, “To Mom From Claire.” One day she asked me if my work was my home, and I realized I needed to re-orient my priorities. She needed me. She needed my body to hug her and kiss her and read her stories at night. She needed me to fasten her seat belt and make up dances with her on top of the coffee table.

One dark night near Christmas when she was two, I had a brainstorm while giving her a bath. I turned out the lights in the bathroom, lit candles on the ledge of the tub, and poured fragrant bath salts into the water. I inflated the bath pillow and invited her to get in. Then, to her surprise, I got into the bath with her. Her eyes opened wide and her whole face lit up. Delight wiggled out of every one of her perfectly porcelain limbs. Her white-blond pageboy haircut turned dark as I poured warm, comforting water over her head. We played games; I bounced her on my slippery legs. And then she sang to me. “O Hanukkah, O Hanukkah, come light the menorah/ Let’s have a party/ We’ll all dance the hora.” Never mind that we’re not Jewish. Unbeknownst to me, she had learned it at preschool. She knew the melody and all the words (to my amazement), and sang with both chutzpah and hesitation, the way only two-year-olds can. It would be hard to say which one of us was more delighted with the other that night.

My second daughter, Marielle, was born last year, and with her has come a tide of grace and peace. Over time, and with discomfort, I came to see that my daughters need me desperately. They need me to reflect their own brilliance and potential, giving them a strong sense of self from which to act in the world. They need me to watch the unfolding of their lives, and to encourage the development of each new step. They need me to know them with words and without, to be able to respond to them on the strength of my intuition. They need my steadfast, overflowing, tireless, creative love.

And they need to know who I am. They need to know what I care passionately about, what I do during the day and what choices I make. They need to know who my friends are and how I think about my body and what I think of the movies we watch together. They need to know how I greet strangers, what I do when I’m angry, how I nurture relationships and how I apologize. They need to know what I stand for. Even if I can

scarcely bear the thought of it, they will look to me first for an answer to the question, “How do I act as a woman in this world?”

I have never been loved like I am by these two girls. It is the greatest romance of my life. Two human beings are doing cartwheels over me, lighting up when I enter the room, missing me when I’m gone, aching to touch me, writing me love poems. What? Who, me? Mom?

In the days following the births of my daughters, all I wanted to do was to fall to my knees and kiss the ground to express my utter humility and gratitude for the miracle that had been placed in my hands. Being a mom has called me into my most wholesome self. Parenting has taught me that true health lies in being awake to the present moment; that our lives are filled with opportunities to give, and that what we give away is never exhausted. It has taught me that the importance of sleep and good nutrition cannot be underestimated; that we must always carry humor and joy in our hearts. It has shown me that I can be patient beyond the outer limits of what I thought I was capable of.

It has opened my consciousness to the inter-connectedness of all of life and with it, the suffering of the world. The pollution of the earth, the excessive consumerism of our country, the violence of racism and poverty, the inadequacy of our edu-

cational system, the pervasiveness of hierarchical systems of power and greed as a cultural norm—all of these take on new levels of atrocity when one feels one’s children subject to them, and in the same instant understands the countless millions of human beings whose health and wholeness are sacrificed for reasons that are so far opposed to what Divine Providence would have for us.

I see now that my job is to mother the whole world. I can no longer keep the suffering from entering my heart, and I can no longer deny that I have the ability to alleviate it. Just as I shied away from my daughter’s frightening dependence on me, so we refrain from seeing how dependent the world is on us. This world needs us desperately. We are called, specifically and by name, to be fabulously loved and to give abundantly in return. Much as we might wish to, we cannot shrink

from our importance in the unfolding of divine providence.

This is how God has designed it. This mothering is a microcosm of divine activity. Swedenborg teaches that divine love created us and set for us the possibility of becoming conscious, relational, loving angels. In an astonishing act, mothers bring creation itself into their bodies, and then release it into the world. The love that creates, creates a creation in the form of a human being which loves in return. Love, paired with wisdom, is the animating force, the source and goal of all of life. We fulfill our destiny, so to speak, by practicing love. It’s a love that seeks only the good of the other and encourages the unfolding of truth and goodness in the individual, the community, and the world. To the degree we open ourselves to fully loving this world, we discover new heights to which we are called in spiritual

*This world needs
us desperately.
We are called,
specifically and
by name, to be
fabulously loved
and to give
abundantly in
return.*

(Continued on page 54)

Did Swedenborg Disobey the Lord?

Stephen Koke

In his Introduction to *Doctrine of the Lord* Swedenborg announces that he had been commanded by the Lord to publish on nine topics (n.1). It's normal to think of these as separate books, for he mentions five "works" already published (*Heaven and Hell*, *Doctrine of the New Jerusalem*, etc.) in 1758. The new list of nine doesn't tell what they are—books, works, or even major topics that might be inserted perhaps in other books. Most of them eventually were published, each under separate cover, but two were not. The missing works were *Angelic Wisdom Concerning Life* and *Angelic Wisdom Concerning Divine Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Infinity, and Eternity*—a gorgeous title I would love to have!

Sometime later, Swedenborg's close friend, Dr. Beyer, wrote to him wondering what had happened to the book on the divine attributes. Swedenborg replied that he felt the ideas in it required too much of an elevation of the mind, so he had decided to write about them with "the assistance of something to support them...which falls within the understanding." They were inserted in other, simpler books. Beyer didn't reply, at least as far as we know. I suspect that he understood.

Nevertheless, many of us didn't understand and had to raise the question, Did Swedenborg disobey the Lord? After all, a command to publish is a command to publish, and there was nothing in his instructions about inserting that supposed book in other books. Why does Swedenborg think that he can take liberties with a command from Wisdom Itself?

We could argue that a book on each topic, as such, was not clearly mandated, and there does seem to be some room for that defense. In fact, Swedenborg saw a book in the spiritual world that consisted of both *Divine Love and Wisdom* and *Divine Providence* (*Apocalypse Revealed* n. 875[15]). *Divine Providence* is the practical continu-

ation of *Divine Love and Wisdom* and was published right after *Divine Love and Wisdom*. So the difference between one book and another, from the spiritual world's point of view, would appear to depend on the use a book or broad concept would serve; not necessarily would there be one topic per book. A book in the spiritual world is a well-rounded or comprehensive thought seen visibly, not a material object; spiritual instructions to Swedenborg, who knew the spiritual world and its language very well, would very likely presuppose that kind of understanding: Concepts, not physical books, were the essence of the command.

Another theory is that there are innate difficulties with God-man communication; Swedenborg had to improvise on the original command. Since his theological system came to him in the same way, this theory would put the entire system in serious trouble, especially if even a short list of simply worded topics cannot come through clearly.

There is a more general solution to the problem. It takes us back to Swedenborg's fundamentals, his understanding of the spiritual world and its relationship to the natural world.

Especially in *Heaven and Hell* and *Divine Love and Wisdom*, he points out that the spiritual world is the world of "ends" and "causes," two words from Greek philosophy that translate in more modern terms to "visions" and "intentions." We envision something that is desirable and intend to somehow bring it into our lives, cause it to occur. The natural world is the world of "effects" from ends and causes. That is, the natural world is where vision and intention are fulfilled, or brought into effect, in some action that makes the vision a reality down here.

In our own lives we customarily get some high vision of what needs to be done while not getting instructions about how to do it. What we get is a project assignment, and we have to figure out just what would make it work. Working it out then becomes an exercise in spiritual growth, tying us more closely to the Lord as he leads us through the thinking process.

Things get complicated in our world because it receives energies from both heaven and hell. The result is often severe complications when bringing any especially challenging ideas to people. Swedenborg, God's man in the realm of effects, had to guide these ideas around forbidding obstacles that characterized his darkened world. He would always have been free to change his publishing strategy in the light of some prudent considerations, though not the content of a new idea. If this were not the case, difficult ideas could be lost by simple, straightforward publishing with no care for the problems that could frustrate the effort. The revelator—or even the Church on earth—is expected to exercise a thoughtful guardianship rather than follow through mechanically without thought. This is precisely the thrust of Swedenborg's response to Beyer; it involved a creative change of publishing strategy only.

Stephen Koke is Senior Editor under COMSU, a frequent contributor to *The Messenger* and *Studia Swedenborgiana*, and author of *Hidden Millennium*, the *Doomsday Fallacy*, published in 1999 by the Swedenborg Foundation.



Who, Me? On Becoming a Mom

(Continued from page 53)

growth. Often, it is not comfortable, but it is always good.

I had no idea that becoming a Mom would take so long or be so very challenging. Now I see that mothering gives me a singular vantage point into the nature of God and the meaning of human life. God has called me into the deepest and most challenging work that I could do for my daughters and for the world, and it will take my lifetime to fulfill. It's taken me years to contemplate this announcement. And if I could send a message back to God, as if all creation were awaiting my response, it would be this: I accept.

The Rev. Kim Hinrichs is the assistant dean and program director at the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California.



MEET THE NOMINEES

Editor's Note: The biographical statements of the remaining candidates will, hopefully, be printed in the June *Messenger*, assuming that they send them in. We print these statements in order to help members and *Messenger* readers get better acquainted with persons who are running for office in our denomination.

MEET THE NOMINEES

Recording Secretary

Susan Wood
Florida

I grew up in the Presbyterian Church and found my way to the Swedenborgian Church in Cincinnati in 1971. In reading the literature, I found that my religion was not a Sunday morning exclusive...wow, what a concept!!! In further talking to people and reading about the denomination, I was convinced that I had always been a Swedenborgian, but had just taken a long time to realize it. I was hooked.

I joined Kemper Road Center in Cincinnati in 1972 and while there served many terms on the Board of Directors, including two years as president. I moved to Florida in 1985, where I am now a member of the New Church of Southwest Florida. I have also been active in the Ohio Association, including serving as president the year that the Cincinnati Church hosted convention in Wilmington, Ohio. I am currently the treasurer of the Southeast Association.

On a national level, I have been on General Council twice, served two terms on FPRSU and AFC and two terms on the Retirement Committee. I am currently the Chair of the Augmentation Fund Committee and was privileged to have been included in Summit I, the recent multi-faceted financial planning session for the denomination. I am honored to have been suggested as a nominee for Secretary to Convention, and if elected, will do all that I can to live up to the high standards set by the current secretary.

General Council

Kathy Speas
California

As one of the first "crop" of ministers graduated from the Swedenborgian House of Studies, I am honored and delighted to be asked to run for General Council. I joined the San Francisco church in 1998 as a marketing research executive seeking a spiritual life. My involvement with the church transformed me; I ended up pursuing (and finally catching!) ordina-

tion in 2004. I'm entering the second year of full-time chaplaincy at Hospice of Marin in Northern California. I can't think of anything more Swedenborgian than ministering to people of all faiths as they enter the spiritual world. Each day brings new opportunities to see divine love and wisdom made visible in the diverse spiritual journeys that bring us all to God in the end.

Our denomination is in transformation. It is changing by the shape it takes in our communities, even as we debate the best direction, try to formulate the right strategy, and imagine new beginnings as we seek to preserve the traditions that define who we are. Many of our church communities are enlivened by Swedenborgian ministers along with leaders of other faith traditions. Swedenborgian ministers who have sustained us as a denomination over the past decades inspire SHS students in fledgling ministries inside and outside of church life. Swedenborgian ministers like myself are actively engaged in outreach that brings them in community with diverse traditions. It is exciting to see the actualization of Swedenborg's once radical idea that regeneration can radiate beyond denominational walls, that no one church denomination is the sole location of Truth.

If I had any easy ideas about how to overcome all challenges to the potential for our denomination, I would have told you about them already. But I am excited about the prospect of joining others on General Council who are part of the church's leadership at this transformational time.

Herb Zeigler
Massachusetts

Having found and joined the Swedenborgian Church during a year-long hiatus in San Francisco, I was drawn to the accessibility of its regional and bi-national governance and the people who constituted it. Returning to my longtime home in Cambridge, I joined the Cambridge Society and became involved in the pressing issues there and began participating in the annual convention.

Some eight years later I find myself both receiving and giving more than I thought possible. I have been honored to serve on the boards of both the Massachusetts Association and the Massachusetts New Church Union, of which I am, at present, president. I have served as treasurer of my society and serve currently as its president.

When the Swedenborg School of Religion moved from Massachusetts to Berkeley, California, and became the Swedenborgian

House of Studies, I followed with keen interest the perilous but exciting process of starting anew. I was pleased to be elected to a seat on the board of SHS and have been an active participant in supporting its growth and renewal.

For the past two years I have been the SHS representative to the fall meeting of General Council. Participating in these meetings has enabled me to be more closely involved with governance issues at a critical time.

My professional experience and education are varied, but I bring a wealth of knowledge and experience that enables me to contribute wise counsel to issues of financial, legal, programmatic, and spiritual importance. I offer thoughtful, informed, balanced views with a constant search for ways to grow the church and spread the doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg to Christians and non-Christians alike while maintaining fiscal viability and useful service to the societies and their members.

Communications Support Unit (COMSU)

Carol Lawson
Virginia

I served as Associate Editor of *The Messenger* for twelve years. I next became a managing editor for Harper & Row, then a publications officer for the U.S. Public Health Service, and later chief of EPA's public-information program on hazardous wastes, in charge of educational programs for nonprofit groups. I now chair the Swedenborg Foundation's committee on Education and Outreach, am Art Director of *Needle Arts* magazine, and Editor-in-Chief of *The Chrysalis Reader*, an anthology published yearly by the Swedenborg Foundation. If I am elected, it will be a privilege to continue serving on the Communications Support Unit.

Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU)

Betsy Lau
Michigan

I was born in Lansing Michigan and grew up going to Almont New Church Assembly. I didn't really have a local church so Almont was my church. I was baptized and confirmed at Almont in 1989. I graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in Finance in 1995 and right around that time joined the Almont Board as a trustee. I have been on the board in various

(Continued on page 56)

(Continued from page 55)

positions ever since and was elected president in 2001 and re-elected in 2004. I am also the vice president of the Michigan Association, which I have been for about three years. I also continue to serve on Convention's Building Fund which I was asked to be a part of in 1998. After Steve Pults left as youth director I took over those duties for about two years before it was decided that they wanted a full-time youth director. So as you can see, I have served the church in many different ways and at different levels. The past three years was my first time serving on FPRSU and I feel I learned a tremendous amount about how the church works and how all the different support units fit together. Now I feel as if I can really contribute more if I am elected to serve another three years.

Nominating Committee

Patte LeVan

California

I have been editor of *The Messenger* for sixteen years, and have attended every annual convention since 1988. This position has afforded me a unique opportunity to become acquainted with and work with fellow Swedenborgians all over the U.S. and Canada. As editor, I've made efforts to get to know both old and new members. I served on the Swedenborg Foundation Board for five years and am currently secretary on the Pacific Coast Association Board. In the course of my job as *Messenger* editor, I've been able to visit most of our church centers. I believe that this background would prove very helpful in serving on the Nominating Committee, and it would be a privilege to serve in that capacity.

Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM)

Pat Tukos

Indiana

I am pleased to have been nominated to again serve on CAM, after having taken a three-year 'break' from Convention work. My previous CAM experience was one of many changes; first working with Rev. Edwin Capon as Convention president, and then Rev. Ron Brugler through most of his presidency. The first meetings I attended were held at the Swedenborg School of Religion on Sergeant St.; then at SSR's Andover Newton location, followed by two years of meeting with students at the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific

School of Religion in Berkeley. Before serving on CAM I chaired the Education Support Unit for nearly six years.

I am a longtime member of the LaPorte New Church, located in LaPorte, Indiana. I am currently vice president of our church, treasurer of our Women's Alliance, and wedding coordinator.

My husband and I are small business owners (our company sells, installs and services business telephone systems), a fact that allows me the flexibility to attend meetings and Convention.

If elected, I will commit my energies to doing all that I can to help CAM make wise decisions regarding our theological students, sharing my 'parish perspective' whenever it appears that it would be helpful.

SHS Board

Jane Siebert

Kansas

I appreciated the call from the nominating committee asking if I would be interested in serving again on the Board of Trustees for our Swedenborgian House of Studies. Previously I served from 1997 - 2003 and enjoyed the opportunity to work with an outstanding group of trustees as we re-structured the school and moved to partner with the Pacific School of Religion.

I have taken classes at the School via internet, directed study and cassette tapes of the classes to fulfill my requirements for a Certificate in Swedenborgian Studies. I was ordained as a Swedenborgian minister last year at our convention after three years of study. Currently I serve the Pretty Prairie New Jerusalem Church as part time minister and frequently lead worship at the Pawnee Rock Church of the New Jerusalem.

I believe in the new House of Studies model for our seminary for several reasons. Our future ministers are learning from PSR professors with specialties in the areas they teach, while our SHS professors concentrate on the Swedenborgian classes. SHS students are integrated with seminary students from various religious backgrounds which results in a broadening of their religious training while opening Swedenborgian thought to the rest of the student body. And it is a model of seminary training that we can afford.

I would welcome the opportunity to return to the Board of Trustees, if elected.

The Varied Aspects of EDSU

Missy Sommer

What do belly dancing, bats and mission work have in common? All three were integral parts of programs sponsored by the Education Support Unit (or EDSU) in the 2003-2004 year.

In 2004, EDSU adopted the following mission: "The Education Support Unit of the Swedenborgian Church exists to foster educational activities that promote the spiritual well being of people of all ages by providing resources, personnel and programming." In a nutshell, EDSU supervises or sponsors programs that nurture the spiritual communities of children, youth and adults of the New Church, in a variety of settings and forms.

At a national level, we support communities of children through the Convention Children's Program and past collaborations with the Sunday School Association to train Sunday School teachers. EDSU supports our youth at national, regional and local levels with both staffing and resources. National Youth Director Kurt Fekete coordinates a comprehensive lineup of retreats, events and programs for 13-18 year olds. A major EDSU celebration of 2004 was the first Youth Worker Conference held in April and led by Kurt and UCC Youth Leader Carl McDonald. Ten youth leaders were trained in a variety of topics aimed at planning safe and meaningful youth activities at the local or regional level. Look for another large scale training to come in 2006—until then, if you would like more training or start up ideas, contact Youth Director Kurt Fekete.

Adult programming is provided through EDSU in a variety of ways. We have three existing means to deliver programs to adults—through pre-Convention programs and Convention minicourses; Transitions retreats and activities; and the SCEC, or Social Concerns Education Committee. Also, church groups with unique programming visions who seek start-up funding may apply to EDSU for discretionary grants. For example, the planning committee for the interdenominational women's retreat Gathering of Leaves, held last May at Temenos, successfully obtained seed

(Continued on page 57)



The Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit

Larry Conant

The Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit ("FPRSUS") is currently comprised of three members plus the Treasurer of General Convention who, by mandate of Convention's constitution, serves as the chair of FPRSUS. The current members are Larry Conant (Treasurer), Betsy Lau, Jennifer Lindsay, and Leo Serrano. FPRSUS is charged with overseeing the use and development of resources directly under General Convention's control. These resources include, but are not limited to, invested funds such as the Augmentation Fund and the Philadelphia Library Fund, and properties such as the National Church in Washington, DC. FPRSUS is not charged with overseeing resources controlled by the Associations, Societies, Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS), Urbana University, or Wayfarers Chapel.

Each year FPRSUS receives budget requests from General Council, the Council of Ministers, the Cabinet, and all the Support Units. FPRSUS compiles these requests and prepares a preliminary budget for submission to Cabinet and

General Council, as outlined by the constitution, for consideration and approval. FPRSUS takes into account priorities and limitations on the use of our denomination's financial resources during this process.

The Augmentation Fund Committee (AFC) is appointed annually by FPRSUS. AFC is currently chaired by Susan Wood and includes the elected members of FPRSUS, Rev. Susannah Currie, the appointed representative of the Council of Ministers, and Chris Laitner, as the President of General Convention. AFC receives requests for financial support from various Societies to fund minister salaries. These requests are vetted by MINSU prior to submission to AFC. In addition, SHS submits requests to financially support current seminary students in the field work components required for Swedenborgian ordination, and for travel to two required Conventions and Council of Ministers meetings. AFC considers the financial resources available in the Augmentation Fund and the competing demands for these funds during this decision-making process.

Currently, FPRSUS is creating an up-

dated strategy vision to assist in its prioritization of how our financial and physical resources are to be used for the current and long-term betterment of our denomination. In addition, FPRSUS is identifying additional sources of financial support for the denomination. We have a wonderful legacy from our many generous donors – both past and present. As such, we have a duty to use their contributions in a most useful and beneficial manner.



The Varied Aspects of EDSU

(Continued from page 56)

money for some planning and travel costs associated with this event.

As a committee, EDSU is currently refining its organizational structure and creating updated handbooks for committee members, as well as evaluating current programs for relevance and effectiveness. Our areas of focus include maintaining quality programs that have the greatest impact for the least expense, considering the specific needs of college-

(Continued on page 58)

Alliance of New Church Women: Annual Appeal

We hope we will see you at our annual get-together at Convention this year at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, and we invite you to respond to our annual appeal. To support our Alliance goals Thank you!

From: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

EMAIL _____

Membership \$5.00 _____ Mite Box \$ _____ General Fund

Giving \$ _____ Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make check to:

North American Alliance of Swedenborgian Women
(or N. Am. Alliance). Thank you!

MAIL TO: Margaret Kraus
Box 264
Pretty Prairie, KS 67570

Please return by June 15, 2005

A History of the Alliance of New-Church Women

Order the beautiful History of the Alliance now for the

special Centennial price of \$7 (postage/handling included.)

Send me the form below with your check made out to N. Am. Alliance. Thanks for your order!

Nan Paget, Publication Chair, Women's Alliance

Please send.....histories to me at \$7 each. My check to N. Am. Alliance for _____ is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Send to:

Nan Paget, 155 Elm Ave., Mill Valley CA 94941.

Ph 415-388-4823 (email fredrick@well.com)

Mite Box donations this year go to the Bob Kirven Memorial Fund supporting Swedenborgian House of Studies students. Total collected at 2004 Convention was \$913.46 (U.S. dollars). General Fund giving goes to our summer camps, youth travels to retreats, Western Canada groups, Kei Torita (our woman minister in Japan), and also for our Alliance president's travel to Convention.

Thank you for your gifts.

Margaret Kraus, Treasurer



BAPTISM

Flynn - Eric Bronson Flynn, infant son of Chris and Andrea Flynn, was baptized into the Christian faith April 3, 2005, at the New Jerusalem Church in Bridgewater, Mass., the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating. The godparents are Susan Lima and Stephen A. Yannone.

MARRIAGE

Allison and Cole—The Rev. Eric Allison, pastor of the Puget Sound church (aka Heaven on Earth) and Lisa Cole were united in marriage March 18, 2005, the Revs. Erni and Paul Martin officiating. At the March 18 "Spirit Party," folks were all gathered around the backyard firepit holding lit candles, celebrating the Equinox, when Val Jon Ferris announced a surprise...and out came the gorgeous bride and groom.

To everyone from Lisa and Eric: "Lisa and Eric Allison wish to express their thanks for the many good wishes and

congratulations on their marriage. To all who were there, we're sure that you felt the innocence that was created by the 'surprise' wedding. We didn't want to give anyone a heart attack, but we did enjoy the collective gasp when we walked out to the fireside. To the many who were not there but also offer us your best wishes, we ask you to understand that this was just the way we had to do it. It was a wonderful evening that we couldn't announce ahead of time. Thank you especially to Lisa's family for their help, and to Paul and Erni Martin who performed the ceremony."



Lisa and Eric Allison

CALL FOR NOMINEES

The American New Church Sunday School Association is seeking qualified candidates for the offices listed below. Each office is elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association, held during Convention, for a term of one year. If you have any suggestions or questions, please notify your minister or a member of the ANCSSA Executive Board immediately. Job descriptions can be viewed at <http://www.swedenborgianresources.org/ancssa/constitution.html>. Please know that the ANCSSA encourages you to consider individuals who have talent and abilities in the areas of Sunday School teaching, curriculum development, and management, but have not served within the ANCSSA previously.

This is an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our youngest church members as we prepare our children for a life of use to the neighbor, the church and the Lord.

President: elected for one-year term

Vice-president: elected for one-year term

Treasurer: elected for one-year term

Secretary: elected for one-year term

Teaching Aids Chair: elected for one-year term

Teacher Training Chair: elected for one-year term

Publication Chair: elected for one-year term

Outreach Committee Chair: elected for one-year term

Nominating Committee Chair: elected for one-year term

Webmaster: appointed for a one-year term

Everett Scholfield, Vice-president
525 West Main Street
Hummelstown, PA 17036
(717) 566-4250
EScholfield@Comcast.Net

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

President: Jim Erikson

Vice President: Everett Scholfield

Treasurer: Deane Currie

Teaching Aids: Eric Hoffman

Secretary: F. Bob Tafel

Publications Chair: Ken Turley

Outreach Committee: Lee Woofenden

Nominating Committee: Vacant

The Varied Aspects of EDSU

(Continued from page 57)

aged people in the Church and continuing our successful youth programming. If you have ideas, questions or concerns regarding any of EDSU's programs, or if you wish to serve in any capacity, please contact one of the current EDSU members listed below. As for belly dancing, bats and mission work? Belly dancing was a topic of a popular minicourse at Convention 2004, bats were a subject of a discussion led by Rev. Sarah Buteux at a Transitions retreat in fall 2003, and mission work was a module at the Youth Worker Conference 2004. When three such seemingly disparate subjects can affect our understanding so profoundly, surely the spiritual significance of all aspects of our lives may be celebrated together in useful ways. This is EDSU's purpose, as we see it, to foster a connection between our daily work and experiences and our spiritual understanding.

Missy Sommer, EDSU chair
18755 Pier Point Place
Montgomery Village, MD 20886
(301) 869-2331
abra99@yahoo.com

Katie Shelley, Minicourse Coordinator
6678 Lincoln Drive
Philadelphia, PA 19119
(267) 625-9470
kts Shelley@yahoo.com

Nancy Freestone, member
5748 Lathrop Drive
San Jose, CA 95123-2052
(408) 225-2364
honneebear@sbcglobal.net

Carla Friedrich, SHS representative
1798 Scenic Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94709-1323
(510) 548-6644
augi6555@aol.com

Kurt Fekete, National Youth Director
38 Great Falls Road
Gorham, ME 04038-2409
(207) 892-4390
kfe kete@hotmail.com

Michelle Huffman Vincent, secretary
115 Roswell Farms Court
Roswell, GA 30075-4309
(770) 993-9834
mjhjr@umich.edu

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Names _____

Names & ages of children accompanying you _____

Street address _____

City & Province/State _____ Postal Code/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Arrival _____ Departure _____

Home Church (for your name tag): _____

<> I would like to contribute poetry, prose or an illustration to the Arts Festival chapbook.

<> I would like to show and/or sell my visual arts or crafts at the Arts Festival.

| | | | | |
|---|----------|------------------|---|----------|
| Adult Registration | \$95.00 | x _____ adults | = | \$ _____ |
| Teen Registration (13-17) | \$85.00 | x _____ teens | = | \$ _____ |
| Child Registration (5-12) | \$75.00 | x _____ children | = | \$ _____ |
| Family Maximum Registration | \$275.00 | _____ | = | \$ _____ |
| Late fee if mailed after June 1 st | \$75.00 | _____ | = | \$ _____ |
| SUBTOTAL A | _____ | _____ | = | \$ _____ |

| Pre-Convention Workshop (please see description above) | | | | |
|--|---------|----------------|---|----------|
| Per day | \$10.00 | x _____ adults | = | \$ _____ |
| SUBTOTAL B | _____ | _____ | = | \$ _____ |

Please choose only ONE Room and Board option

| Room and Board: FOUR DAY OPTION | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---|----------|
| Saturday, July 9 – Wednesday, July 13 | Double: \$220.00 | x _____ persons | = | \$ _____ |
| Saturday, July 9 – Wednesday, July 13 | Single: \$300.00 | x _____ persons | = | \$ _____ |
| SUBTOTAL C1 | _____ | _____ | = | \$ _____ |

| Room and Board: EIGHT DAY OPTION (Recommended for ministers and those attending pre-convention workshops) | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|---|----------|
| Tuesday, July 5 – Wednesday, July 13 | Double: \$440.00 | x _____ persons | = | \$ _____ |
| Tuesday, July 5 – Wednesday, July 13 | Single: \$600.00 | x _____ persons | = | \$ _____ |
| SUBTOTAL C2 | _____ | _____ | = | \$ _____ |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------|--------------|
| SUBTOTAL A | + SUBTOTAL B | + SUBTOTAL C1/C2 | = | TOTAL |
| \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ |

Please note: All prices are in US currency. If you wish to pay in Canadian currency, please add 20% and a handling charge of \$4.00 for each Canadian check. All bills must be paid in full by June 15. No registration refunds after June 1.

Bills may be paid by VISA or MasterCard. Provide credit card number and four-digit expiration date. Or if you wish, you may call in your registration with credit card payment: (617) 969-4240.

Visa <> MasterCard <> Number _____ Expiration _____

Please make check payable to: **The Swedenborgian Church.** Send completed form with check to:
The Swedenborgian Church, c/o Central Office, 11 Highland Ave., Newtonville, MA 02460

Special needs (dietary, handicapped access, roommate requests, etc.):

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.

University of California at Berkeley Foothill Campus

**"Spirituality & the Arts:
Inspiring the Divine Creator Within"**
Saturday, July 9 to Wednesday, July 13, 2005

This year's convention sessions are being hosted by the Swedenborgian House of Studies and the Pacific Coast Association. Convention is a special time for us to come together as a denomination, to take stock of where we have been and where we are going, and to reflect on how our faith tradition can be of use in today's world. We hope you will come and be a part of this conversation.

The convention theme will focus on creativity as an expression of the divine working within and among us. There will be many artistic creations throughout the week and a gala arts festival on Tuesday with live outdoor music, barbeque, art displays, performances and games. This is the convention you must attend!

Pre-Convention Workshop: Interplay

You are invited to come to convention early to attend a special two-day workshop led by Cynthia Winton-Henry, co-founder of Interplay (www.interplay.com) and the recipient of the 2005 Pacific School of Religion Distinguished Alumni award. InterPlay is easy, fun, and life changing. It is based on a series of incremental "forms" that lead

participants to movement and stories, silence and song, ease and amusement. In the process, we unlock the wisdom of our bodies and the wisdom in our communities. Interplay brings body, mind, heart and spirit together again at last. It is an invitation to see that life can be easier, less stressful, fuller, more satisfying and more fun. InterPlay is devoted to fun. It teaches the language and ethic of play in a deep and powerful way. Come and see how these practices can transform your life and your community!

Our rooms at UC Berkeley are apartment-style in two to eleven-bedroom suites featuring comfortable living rooms, shared bathrooms (two for the larger suites), and partial views. Spacious single or double occupancy bedrooms have large windows overlooking courtyards and patios. No need for air conditioning in this mild climate! The furnishings are solid oak, and each room has wall-to-wall carpeting. There is a telephone in each bedroom. Ethernet connections will be arranged for our group. Laundry rooms and vending machines are available. To see more, go to www.housing.berkeley.edu/conference/accommodations/foothills.

For those driving to Berkeley, maps will be provided to you once your registration form has been received. Parking at the University is \$7 per day or \$45 per week if purchased in advance. For those of you who choose to fly, we suggest that you arrive at either Oakland or San Francisco. More information about airport transportation will be sent after registration as will information regarding child care and the children and teen programs.

(Continued on page 59)

The Swedenborgian Church
of North America
The Messenger
11 Highland Ave.
Newtonville, MA 02460

Address Service
Requested

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Plymouth, IN
Permit No. 105