
FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS



Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church Newsletter
January/February 2004

Casting Vision

Practice Punctuality

By Pastor Dan Martella



My friend Mark Woodruff comes from a prominent Mormon family. One day as we sat together for a meeting at BYU's Marriott Center we watched thousands of Latter Day Saints pour into the stadium well after the announced starting time. "It drives me nuts," Mark sighed, "how Mormons are late for everything." I grinned at my friend saying, "You guys aren't the only ones that have that problem." I think it is part of human nature to run a bit late, and as a result we miss many valuable opportunities for growth, fellowship and service.

Our Sabbath morning church services provide a particularly important opportunity to practice punctuality. When we are on time there is sufficient opportunity for foyer fellowship and ministry. When we are on time our children are fully nurtured by the entire Sabbath School program. When we are on time our hearts are united by the song service, prayer fellowship, mission report, and group Bible study. When we are on time we show our respect for God and for each other.

Here are some tips to help improve your Sabbath morning punctuality:

- ✍ Prepare the night before--Lay out the Sabbath clothes, set the breakfast table, go to bed early, and set the alarm early enough to allow ample time for the entire family to get ready for church.
- ✍ Get moving on Sabbath morning--Get out of bed on time. Keep everyone moving through the bathroom. Enjoy a wholesome breakfast together. Put some happy, peppy music on the sound system. Help each other get ready for church.
- ✍ Arrive at church early--Leave home at a predetermined time so that there will be enough time to put your food in

the kitchen, practice your musical numbers, set up your classroom programs, and fellowship with fellow believers. Then slip into your seat a few minutes early to quiet your heart and prepare for a worshipful encounter with God.

When we faithfully practice punctuality each Sabbath morning, the quality of our time with God and with each other will move to a whole new level. I'll be looking for you at 10:00 for Sabbath School and 11:30 for the Worship Celebration each Sabbath morning.

Sabbath School - Kindergarten

By Joan Reiss

4th Quarter Kindergarten - see our picture on page 10

Let me introduce you to our class: Bella, Jessica, Pedro, Isaiah and Braighan who visits on occasion.

This quarter our theme was "Community, Service & Grace" We learned that -- we treat each other with love, we serve by giving to others and God's grace is His gift to us.

We love to make things in our Sabbath school. Our most fun project was the week we learned about Saul becoming blind and his eventual conversion to Christianity. We talked about being blind and actually made a Braille card so we had a feeling of how blind people read. It was a very "eye opening" experience. We are thankful for our sight.

We love to hear the weekly mission story and create our beautifully colored mission murals that go along with the theme of the quarter. Learning about people from all over the world and Jesus is there for them too.

We made "Welcome Friends" door hangers to give away.

The most important thing we learn is to "Do what is right." 2 Corinthians. 8:21

The Prayers of Paul

by *Gustav Mergenthaler*

In the last issue we talked about being specific when we pray. What a good New Year's resolution – be more specific in all things. A good example is the apostle Paul. You see many times when we pray for our fellow believers we say, “God bless sister so and so” and, “God bless brother so and so”. Yet we don't find where Paul ever prayed that way. That kind of praying really doesn't do much good, it only soothes our conscience and makes us feel we have prayed. Paul was specific when he said, in Philippians 1:9 “I pray that your love will grow more and more...”. That's a good way to pray for fellow believers. Please read Philippians 1:3-11, then flip over a few pages to Colossians 1:9. Instead of saying, “God bless them”, he said “my desire is that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will and have great wisdom and understanding in spiritual things”. That's what most Christians need, isn't it? Paul wrote his prayers under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It would be a great prayer for you to pray for yourself. You can say “Lord Jesus I'm going to pray this prayer for myself. It is my desire and prayer that I might be filled with the knowledge of your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” I think the prayers Paul prayed for these churches will give us insight on how to pray for other believers as well. We are selfish many times in our praying. Really, we should put others first in our prayer life. Most of the time all we do is pray for our own little group and ourselves or family—our own needs. We are much like the farmer who said “God bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more”. We wouldn't say it that way, but if you analyze it that's about the extent of many of our prayers! Or we call the prayer team and let them do it and we feel we've done our part.

For an individual to grow spiritually he is going to have to reach out and help others. You can't put yourself first. For a church to grow and develop, it's going to have to do the same thing. Please read 2 Thessalonians. 1:11,12. I particularly like where Paul said...“fulfill all the good pleasures of His goodness, and the work of faith with power”. I think that's what God wants to fulfill in us. Also I like when Paul says “that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you...”. Whoever thought of praying for a whole church that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified in them?

Are you praying that way? This is a clue for us. I am convinced we need to be specific in our praying for one another. If we take Paul as an example (which we should) we

can see he was very specific and very definite in his praying. So, if we take our Mission Statement seriously then one way of helping our friends (not just fellow believers) is to be specific in our prayers for them. Only when we ask God, can He intervene. Let's make this New Year a year of spiritual success. Read these prayers from Paul and make them your own and you will see how blessed we are going to be as individuals and as a church. Isn't that what we want?

Watch for the next segment in the next issue of the newsletter.

2004 Church Goals

The MVC Board is developing growth goals for the church in the matters of spiritual nurture, fellowship, youth/young adult ministries, leadership and ministry development, and evangelism. Below is a list of the goals that have been developed thus far.

Spiritual Nurture

- ? Spiritual Renewal Retreat at Winnekeag
- ? Mining the Word Bible Study Seminar
- ? The Purpose Driven Life series

Evangelism

- ? Bible Study Groups
- ? Video Bible School
- ? Cooking School
- ? Vacation Bible School
- ? Reaping evangelistic meetings
- ? Place It Is Written on two local cable TV stations
- ? Media interest card follow-up
- ? Youth evangelism event

Pathfinders

The Pathfinder schedule for January and February is not available yet, and will be distributed at a later date. Watch the MVC bulletin for further information. Or you can visit our web site through the church web site <http://www.mvsda.org/> and click on Pathfinders and then Bob McCall's Pathfinder page or go directly to www.geocities.com/kingskidspathfinder

If you have any questions regarding Pathfinders please contact Rita McCall (978) 667-6670

Growing in God's Grace

by Heidi Martella

I knew where I wanted to attend college even before I knew where I was going to academy. My decision was influenced by two people I admired: Jolene Smith and Johanna (Reeves) Pewitt.

Jolene attended Southern Adventist University where she studied nursing and then music. One summer at a picnic she talked with me about college and what it was like. I still remember her saying, "Southern would be a good school for you." My summer camp counselor, Johanna, also attended Southern. Jolene's recommendation, Johanna's influence and my sophomore year visit to Southern confirmed my decision.

Since then I've found many role models. I learned to care about people and prayer from Pastor Tilstra. I learned about setting objectives and following through with them from Dr. Scott-Ennis. I learned to be passionate about life and academics from Dr. Williams Morris. I learned diplomacy and people skills from Mr. Nkana. I learned how to analyze literature and then write about it from Dr. Byrd. I learned to look at the details in my writing and in my life from Mrs. Pyke. I am learning the importance of saying "no" from Mrs. Ball. In the process of interacting with professors and classmates, they teach me something or I learn something about myself. The support from family, friends and church members has also been crucial in my life and for that I thank you.

One of the best parts of my college career is all the opportunities that I can tap in to – concerts, lectures, seminars, events, clubs and especially career opportunities. I've had good experiences through my jobs on campus. It's been exciting to see how God has opened doors for me. I've learned so much about my career choice through my current job and my passion for public relations has deepened.

It's hard to sum up college life. There are so many components, so many opportunities, so many signs of God's leading. Thanks to my college experiences, I've become a better person. It's fun to interact with my faculty friends, to talk with my contacts in the community and to be involved in student activities, clubs and study groups. College is helping me grow up. Every year is an adjustment but every adjustment is worthwhile.

Fund Raising Made Easy

by Ingrid Mergenthaler

We all want to help pay off our church building loan as soon as possible, but extra funds are not always available. Did you know that you could help without contributing money out of your pocket? Let me tell you how.

There is a fundraising program called *SCRIP*. Over 8,000 schools, churches and non-profit organizations in 46 states are involved in this proven program. Many of these organizations are raising \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year with *NSC SCRIP*. We hope to achieve this success and be able to eliminate the low-return, time-consuming fundraisers we are now doing.

SCRIP is gift certificates issued by many stores in our community where we shop regularly. Our church is able to buy these certificates at a negotiated discount and resell them to you at full face value. The discount, which averages 5% is the net contribution retained by our non-profit organization.

Your participation in this program doesn't cost you anything. If, for example, you buy \$100 worth of JC Penny gift certificates, you still have your full \$100 in *SCRIP* to spend at JC Penny on whatever you want, just like cash. Since our organization bought the gift certificates for \$95.00, JC Penny has in essence, donated \$5 to our church. Other stores like Sears, Home Depot, Stop & Shop and even many restaurants participate in giving discounts through the *SCRIP* program. For a complete listing of stores please visit the following website, www.NationalScripCenter.com. The list of stores is constantly growing.

SCRIP is easy to use, and in most cases there are no restrictions. Use it just like cash, combine it with coupons, apply it to items on sale, and unless otherwise noted, you can use it for all store merchandise. There is no difference between *SCRIP* and cash when you go shopping, except that you are using gift certificates for that store.

There's even a solution for those of you who can't plan your purchases ahead of time. Instead of purchasing gift certificates ahead of time, you can apply for a *SCRIP* MasterCard that may be used at any time at any store. Whatever you purchase will always net at least a 1% return to the church, and many stores may give 4% to 11%. For applications, please contact Ingrid Mergenthaler at 603-894-7295 or imergen@aol.com

Let's work together to reduce our debt load as quickly as possible. How much easier can it get?

Picture Gallery

PATHFINDERS: STIRRING UP WORSHIP



Pictured from left: Sary Neang, Carine Garozzo, Danielle Mortimer, Celina Uy

A LITTLE RECREATION



Pictured from left: Rutendo Gomwe, Taylor Masotta, Jose Mortimer, Michael Casadine, Frankie Sok

WOOD HANDICRAFT HONOR



Pictured: Matt Heng

CAN COLLECTING



BABY DEDICATIONS: ISABELLA DiBERNARDO



Pictured from left: Pastor & Linda Martella, Bruce, Amy & Isabella DiBernardo, Pauline & Henry Beaulieu

MADISON ESMEAL



Pictured from left: David, Madison, Kellie & Benjamin Esmeal, Linda & Pastor Dan Martella

Picture Gallery

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS:



Pictured: Ruth Crispo & Pastor Dan Martella



Pictured: Cheng Sien Tang & Pastor Dan Martella



Pictured: Alloys Gomwe, Pastor Dan Martella



Pictured: Vannara Chou & Pastor Dan Martella

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM



Pictured from left: Lillianne Bazdanes, Eileen Robichard, Pastor Dan Martella, Steven Dovich



Meet Him at the Manger

Kids - get your crayons and color this picture



Jesus Is Born

Luke 2

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December

- 20 Christmas Program
Fellowship Dinner
- 31 6 p.m. Agape supper

January

- 3 Nursing home ministry
YES
- 4 9:00 a.m. Breakfast
10:00 a.m. Church Business Meeting
- 6 Fruit order deadline
- 10 Fellowship dinner
Nursing home ministry
- 15 7:30 p.m Church Board Meeting
- 16 SNEC Teen Ski Weekend
- 17 SNEC Teen Ski Weekend
- 18 SNEC Teen Ski Weekend
10 - 12 a.m. Fruit pickup
- 23 SNEC Women's Ministry Retreat
- 24 SNEC Women's Ministry Retreat
- 25 SNEC Women's Ministry Retreat
- 29 7:30 p.m. Elder meeting
- 30 Camp Winnekeag Spiritual Retreat
- 31 Camp Winnekeag Spiritual Retreat

February

- 1 Camp Winnekeag Spiritual Retreat
- 2 Fruit order deadline
- 6 SNEC Family Ministries Weekend - Willie Oliver
- 7 SNEC Family Ministries Weekend - Willie Oliver
Nursing home ministry
YES
Newsletter submissions due
6 - 9 p.m. Game Night
- 8 SNEC Family Ministries Weekend - Willie Oliver
- 12 7:30 p.m. Church Board Meeting
- 14 Fellowship dinner
Nursing home ministry
- 15 10 - 12 a.m. Fruit pickup
- 20 Mining the Word Seminar - Lee Gugliotto
- 21 Mining the Word Seminar - Lee Gugliotto
Fellowship dinner
- 22 Mining the Word Seminar - Lee Gugliotto
- 26 7:30 p.m. Elder meeting
- 28 Day of Healing Prayer

****Watch the MVC bulletin or MVSDA.org for further information regarding up coming events****



Church Business Meeting

Sunday, January 4, 2004
9:00 a.m. Breakfast
10:00 a.m. Business Meeting
Merrimack Valley SDA Church

Agape Supper and Communion Celebration

Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church



6:00 p.m. Wednesday
December 31, 2003

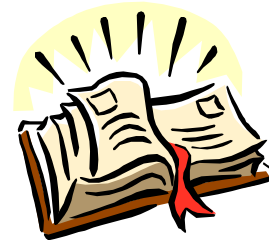
Start the New Year by
renewing your commitment
to Jesus

Winter Weekend Retreat



Rest and Relaxation for the whole family
January 31 - February 2, 2004
Camp Winnekeag, Ashburnham, MA

Learn how to read your Bible in Mining the Word



A weekend seminar with Dr. Lee Gugliotto
February 20-22, 2004
Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church

In this seminar you will learn

- ? The 8 habits of highly effective Bible students
- ? The principles for Bible interpretation/study
- ? The motivation for Bible study
- ? The skills and procedures for Bible study
- ? How Bible study develops relationships
- ? How to put Bible at the center of your life
- ? How to get a Bible study group going

Study Materials Cost: \$35.00 per individual
\$50.00 per couple

In the Kitchen

Hummus

By: Juanita Ortiz

1 large can of garbanzo beans(chickpeas)
 2 cloves of garlic
 1/4 cup of tahini (sesame seeds)
 1 lemon squeezed
 salt, onion powder to taste

Put everything in the blender for 2 minutes. Serve with chips or pita bread

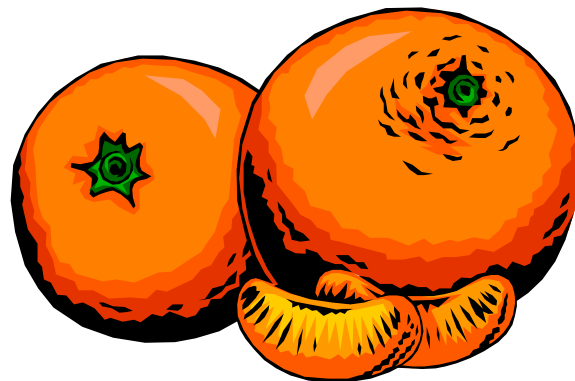


Nature's Whey

Merrimack Valley SDA Church health food store is open for business. The order forms are located on the Community Service cabinet in the fellowship hall, and should be returned to Joan Reiss with your payment. Payment for bulk orders of herbs and grains may be paid after delivery. ****Don't forget, the church building fund receives a % of your purchases****

Steve Green in concert

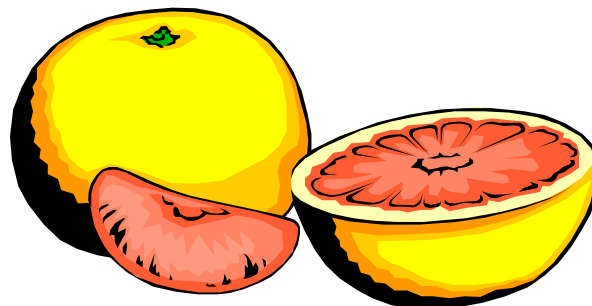
7:00 p.m. April 3, 2004 at the Capitol Center for the Arts in Concord, NH. For ticket information call 603-225-1111.



Florida Citrus Fruit

Remember all proceeds go towards the church building fund.

Order Deadline	Delivery	Pickup
January 6	January 17	January 18
February 2	February 14	February 15



BIRTHDAYS

JANUARY

3 William Lee
 4 Madison Esmeal
 4 Brenton Forrester
 4 Frankie Sok
 5 Kelly Kan
 6 Jim Newell
 7 Rejoice Asomugha
 10 Angel Clare
 11 Niki Clare
 16 Jose Portillo
 18 Kellie Esmeal
 18 Greg Irrgang
 18 Youda Neang
 19 Reggie Watson
 20 John Hodson
 20 Navy Lim Kan
 23 Solomon Asomugha
 27 Jereme Holiman
 29 Evelyn Santana

FEBRUARY

1 Nalyne Kan
 5 Markus Guevara
 7 Krista Dembroski
 7 Kim Saxton
 8 Gary Patch
 11 Joan Reiss
 13 Rita McCall
 13 Junior Candelario
 19 Chelsea Reuther
 19 Jennifer Voight
 19 Johanna Sosa
 20 Eric Patch
 22 Gabriella Rocha
 23 Christian Guevara
 25 Warren Saxton
 26 Norma Tatone
 26 Rob Voight
 27 Ayzlynn Crowley

Address Updates

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 978-452-3898

Maxine Sears
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 978-453-2165

Cheng Sien Tang
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 Lowell, MA 01851

Eileen Robichaud
 16 Newhill Road
 Methuen, MA 01844
 978-682-2061

Exciting Opportunities

By *Andreas Goelzer*

When we moved into our new church building two years ago, we had one goal in mind - making friends for Jesus Christ! Having one place in Dracut, where people can see the Word of God uplifted and to have a place where the community can meet our Savior! Since this time we started slowly with evangelism after several years of "silence" until we went in full swing about one year ago. What happened during this time? What were the exciting and challenging parts we faced? What can we learn? Where do we go from here in the future?

In February 2003 we started with the Video Bible School. We sent out 10,000 handbills for free Video Bible studies into the neighborhood and we got 53 responses back. On one hand we were disappointed, because we reached only 50% of the national average - but on the other hand we got very excited, because it was several times more than the average response of New England. When working with the Video Bible School students, I learned several lessons.

1. Never get discouraged. Especially at the beginning we got several responses that people are not interested and discontinued the Studies. Most of them were friendly and we are trusting God that he has another opportunity for them to hear his word. I also have seen several cases where our work didn't seem to show fruits and a few years later several of my friends committed their life to the Lord.
2. Love people. I never understood what this really means, until I had to practice it during these studies. Even though the videos were important, it was not the most important thing. Becoming friends with each other was the main goal - and that takes time and a lot of commitment. It also means to address their needs and not our goals.
3. Pray. During several occasions we prayed for the individual needs of the students or asked God for advice on certain situations, which even went to fasting as well. It was actually the most important piece in this ministry.
4. Get Excited. Every time I rang the doorbell of a student, I was really nervous. I didn't know what to say and the words didn't come out right. Every time I left the place, I had butterflies in my stomach - I got really excited in serving and spending time with them and about the friendship they develop with our God! Every time I see

someone making a decision for Christ, all the hard work and time commitment seems to be very small compared to the excitement going along!

During the evangelism weekend in Oct/Nov and the week after, we could see several making their official commitment to God in baptism. More than a dozen wanted to get baptized at a later date.

For 2004 we will have several opportunities to reach out to our community. We will use proven methods (like the Video Bible School, Vacation Bible School and other ministries) and we will work on new areas like local television and others. We will have several spiritual training events during the year as well.

Even though we have made plans for 2004, the most important part is the outreach every one of us does individually. Whether it is bible studies, building up friendship to lay a foundation for spiritual topics, assisting in outreach ministries or sharing the gospel in a different way - all are important in order to reach the world!

I'm looking forward to another year of exciting opportunities to bring the gospel to Dracut and the surrounding towns in 2004!



**Start saving your Dollars
For the Church Sign**

Donations may be sent to Merrimack Valley SDA
Church, marked "Church Sign"

You can view this newsletter on-line at
<http://www.mvsda.org/?section=newsletter>

MVC Library

The library here at the Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist church is looking for books published in the past 15 years. If you have some you would like to donate please contact Nancy Saxton at 603-893-5809.



For unto Us
a Child is
Born

KINDERGARTEN DIVISION



Pictured from left: Rachael, Jenna Crowley, Alexia, Jessica Masotta, Joanie Reiss

Web Resources

<http://www.mvsda.org> - Merrimack Valley SDA Church
<http://www.mvsda.org/?section=newsletter> - MVC online newsletter
<http://www.adventist.org> - SDA World Church
<http://www.sneconline.org> - Southern New England Conference
<http://www.plusline.org> - Adventist resources
<http://www.pathfindersonline.org> - NAD Pathfinders

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****If you do NOT wish to receive this newsletter in the future
please contact Sherrri Dovich****

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To: