



FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS

Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church

Pastor's Corner

by Pastor Phil Vasseur

March/April 2008

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"It Starts With You"

A Message to Leadership

It starts with you. Well, not really. When I say it starts with you, I mean it starts with God, then you. The drive to achieve a better God-given future for the church, whatever that looks like, starts with God, then you. By you, as the title indicates, I mean church leaders.

Sometimes, especially as leaders-also known as agents of change-we try to change people or circumstances around us to achieve our goals and dreams for the church. But that's the wrong place to start. I'm not saying you don't try to change things around you; I'm saying you don't *start* there. You start with God, then you. I think that's a life principle; I think that's a church growth principle. Notice I said God, then you, not you, then God. God's first, not you. That's key. Here's why: If it's God given, then it must be God driven!

Let me illustrate how this applies to us. The Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church has a vision statement that says: "friends helping friends become fully devoted followers of Christ." We know that's a God-given vision. How do we know? Jesus commands it in the Great Commission. He said, "Go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:18-20). I believe God can do that *without* us. I believe He can do that in *spite* of us. But I also believe, and this is important, that God would prefer to do it *with* us. In fact, it's His plan to do it *with* us!

But here's the rub; this is where we need to stretch. If the principle is true, that change and growth in the lives of people in the church starts with God, then you, then how can we expect the church to become more fully devoted to Christ than we are? Spiritually, we can't lead people to a place we haven't been. Consequently, if we want MVC to become fully devoted to Christ, we need to be fully devoted to Christ!

Achieving our God-given vision for the church doesn't *start* with changing others or things around us. It starts with God changing us! Ellen White said, "The Lord is willing to do great things for us," (*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 279).

Jesus loves you and I do, too.



Sincerely yours in Christ,
Pastor Phil

*Little Lights Adventurer Club
New England Aquarium Outing
February 19, 2008*



Anniversaries

March

10th – Nancy & Warren Saxton

24th – Denise & Phil Vasseur



April

24th – Young & Kwang Oh

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March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

March Calendar of Events

- 8** Adventure Sabbath
2:00, Women's Ministry Bible Study
2:30, Men's Ministry Study
- 9** 3:00, Pathfinder Meeting
- 11** 7:00, Church Board Meeting
- 15** 1:30, Nursing Home Ministry
1:30, Adventurer Fellowship Lunch
2:30, Adventurer Club Meeting
- 16** Maple Sugaring Tour
- 18** 7:00, Worship Committee Meeting
- 27** 7:30, Elder's Board Meeting
- 29** 11:00, Communion
5:00, Adventurers Sleep Over

April 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

April Calendar of Events

- 5** 1:30, Adventurer Fellowship Lunch
2:30, Adventurer Club Meeting
- 6** 3:00, Pathfinder Meeting
5:30, Staff Meeting
- 8** 7:00, Church Board Meeting
- 11-19** 7:00, New Beginnings Seminar
- 12** 2:00, Women's Ministry Bible Study
2:30, Men's Ministry Study
- 13** 3:00, Pathfinder Meeting
- 19** 9:45, Prayer Breakfast
- 24** 7:30, Elder's Board Meeting
- 26** 1:30, Nursing Home Ministry
6:00, Pathfinder Investiture Potluck Supper
7:00, Pathfinder Investiture

Please refer to the church website for current information,
www.mvsda.org/index.php3?section=Calendar

Kids' Korner



In this big picture find the wedge of cheese, broom, letter A, ring, gavel, tack, baseball, bird, key, paintbrush, sock, crescent moon, spoon and comb.



letter A



paintbrush



bird



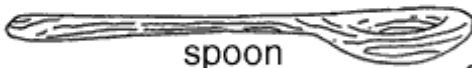
tack



crescent moon



ring



spoon



wedge of cheese



sock



key



broom



baseball



gavel



comb

Our Shared Values

We believe that those who do not have a saving relationship with Christ matter to God, and therefore, matter to the church. Evangelistic growth in our church requires an outward focus that reaches everyone for Christ within the context of caring relationships.

A recent major study of churches in North America found that many people are exchanging their religious affiliations, trading into new denominations. Looking at the study, Monte Sahlin (an Adventist church growth specialist) observed that "The fastest-growing segments are made up of these who opt for no religion and those who join congregations not affiliated with any denomination." He also observed that "there is little real evangelism occurring, in terms of winning significant portions of nonbelievers and/or the unaffiliated into Bible-based Protestant faith."

At Merrimack Valley, we have aspired to evangelism more than we have actually lived it. We have struggled to make it a natural part of who we are. In the Natural Church Development survey last year, a cross section of our own members rated evangelism as one of the weakest of 8 characteristics covered by the survey. Clearly we need to find a different formula for accomplishing our Great Commission.

In April our *New Beginnings* seminar will provide outreach to the community, and a fresh start for evangelism at Merrimack Valley. We cannot leave it there. We need a new perspective, a new point of view that helps us make evangelism a way of living, and not just a program that we offer to an indifferent public.

The Share Him team, under Warren Saxton's leadership, is preparing to try local evangelism under the model that Jesus used. As Ellen White described it, Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."

It is easy to repeat that quote with feeling, and many people have. But it is much more difficult to let it change your life. For the health of our church, and the integrity of our discipleship, we have to ask the Holy Spirit for a life-changing experience. Merrimack Valley needs its own Pentecost experience. We need members on fire for the gospel, mingling with those in our community and ministering to their needs. Then when we have won their trust, we can then introduce them to Jesus and invite them to "Follow Him." Pray for the *New Beginnings* seminar in April. And pray for a Pentecost experience in your life too.

Submitted by Steven Dovich

March

3 – Eliana Rocha
 3 – Richard St. Louis
 8 – Marge Patch
 17 – Melissa Trepanier
 18 – Sue Markin
 19 – Kyn-Ree Lee
 21 – Tyler Lewandowski
 21 – Cindy Cepulinski
 23 – Jonathan Gonzalez
 25 – Linda Neang
 26 – Maxine Sears
 31 – Shayla Crowley
 31 – Maxwell Whyte



April

2 – Wanda Candelario
 7 – Dan Martella
 9 – Elizabeth Dovich
 9 – Emily Gonzalez
 10 – Blanche Castle
 10 – Sherri Dovich
 16 – Ingrid Mergenthaler
 18 – Joyce LaRochelle
 21 – Taylor Masotta
 22 – Gloria Candelario
 23 – Catherine Grigore
 24 – Kwang Oh
 24 – Celina Uy
 25 – Stephanie Wall
 29 – Dale Jacobson
 29 – Diana Newell

Recipe

Potato Chip Cookies

Makes 48 cookies

From the kitchen of Anonymous

Ingredients:

1-pound butter (softened)
 1-cup sugar
 2-teaspoons vanilla
 1-cup crushed potato chips
 3-cups flour
 powdered sugar as needed



Directions:

Cream butter and sugar together, and then add vanilla and potato chips. Gradually add flour. Drop from a teaspoon onto an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes until edges just turn brown. While cookies are still warm, dust lightly with powdered sugar.

Edgewood Elementary/Greater Boston Academy News

More Than Before

Submitted by Rondi Aastrup, Principal

At Edgewood/Greater Boston Academy, our school theme for the year has been “Be more . . .” and we have found many interesting and innovative ways to complete that phrase: Be more . . . respectful, more . . . creative, more . . . responsible, more . . . Christ like, etc. Now, more than half way through the school year, students and staff are discovering ways they have been “More than Before.” Here are a few of them:

- More involved than before:
 - More academy involvement in elementary classrooms
 - More student involvement in school leadership
 - More participation in extracurricular events
- More innovative than before:
 - Creative Arts class
 - Life skills class
 - Mental Math program
 - Basketball clinics
 - PreK-3 program (now accepting vouchers)
 - Summer Camps (reading, math, and basketball)
- More academic than before:
 - More high-profile scholars (our first National Merit finalist in James Harper)
 - More on Principal’s List and Honor Roll
 - More confidence in math from 6th-12th grade
 - More success on standardized tests (performing well about grade level in most subjects and all grades but two (which are *at* grade level))
- More optimistic than before:
 - More full-time staff (added Bible, Kindergarten, and another elementary teacher)
 - More contract staff (added music, computer, PreK-3)
 - More church support (SNEC and Northeastern churches)
 - More Alumni support (starting up two new Alumni chapters in TN and FL)
 - More mid-term students (at least three academy and nine elementary)
- More support needed than before:
 - More parents (volunteers, Home & School participation)
 - More churches from our school district
 - More inter-conference cooperation
 - More students
- More recruiting/marketing events than before:
 - Join us for the following events:
 - March 2—Parents meeting (10 a.m.)
 - March 6—Academy Day (8:45 a.m. to 2 p.m.)
 - March 16—Open House for PreK-3, PreK-4 and Kindergarten (10-11:30)

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 Educating for Eternity*



Sabbath School News

February 2nd, Sabbath School members were treated to a very special Sabbath School program. The guest teacher for



the winter quarter prayer breakfast was Andre' Waller. Andre' is a theology graduate of Oakwood College, and is currently organizing the literature evangelism program for Atlantic Union College. His approach to the Lesson was unique and intriguing. He displayed a magnetic combination of educator and "Oakwood Style" preaching. His



lesson was preceded by the usual potluck breakfast, devotional and prayer groups. If you have never attended Prayer Breakfast you should plan to attend the spring quarter event scheduled for April 19th. John Grayson, an AUC graduate and professor of religion at Mt. Holyoke College, will be the guest teacher. John is an excellent teacher; you don't want to miss this prayer breakfast.

If you don't have children in Sabbath School you likely have not seen the new lighting in the Sabbath School rooms. It certainly makes the rooms more comfortable for both the students and teachers. You should pop into one of these classrooms to see the improvement. Thank you Gary Patch!!

God is certainly blessing our Sabbath School; we have increased attendance in both the adult and children's divisions. It is our prayer that Sabbath School will continue to meet the needs of our members and guests.

Women's Ministry Highlights

The Women's Ministries meets after potluck on the second Sabbath of the month. Currently they are studying the book, *To Know Him*, by Lee Vendon. Those who attend gain a spiritual blessing as well as Christian fellowship and support. It is amazing to see how God works in such wonderful ways in the lives of these dedicated women.

Beginning in April, the study group will use the book *3:16* written by the well-known Christian author, Max Lucado. As you would guess from the title it is based on the most often quoted verse in the bible, John 3:16. The ladies will study in depth about the unequalled and immeasurable love of God. This series of Bible Studies promises to be both inspirational and practical. If you choose to make time in your life to experience this, you will not regret it. Plan now to grow spiritually this spring through Women's Ministries.

May 31st has been designated Women's Sabbath at the MVSDA Church. There will be a special church service that day organized by the Women's Ministry Department. Following the worship service there will be a fellowship dinner hosted by the men of the church. Watch for more information in the coming weeks concerning the details of this special weekend.

Photos by Dale Jacobson

Submitted by Alice Jacobson, Sabbath School Superintendent

Pathfinders' Corner

King's Kids Pathfinder Club

Submitted by Rita McCall

The Pathfinders have been busy for the last two months. On January 26, 2008 we celebrated Pathfinder Sabbath and presented God's message during the worship service. The



message was titled, "The Box of Stones." It was a simple message that touched the young and old alike. The Pathfinders have a copy of the service if you missed it and would like to see it. After sharing a spaghetti and veggie meatball lunch we headed out to the Museum of Science. (Thank you to all the parents who prepared and set up the lunch and the Adventurer staff and parents who stayed behind and cleaned up after us.)



At the Museum of Science we watched the 3-D Digital movie on sharks. You could reach out and touch them or so it seemed. We also saw Mummies at the Mugar Omni Theatre on the IMAX screen. The Pathfinders reviewed ultrasounds and x-rays of animals and human body parts. They also took a ride on a bike that had a skeleton on another bike imitating what they were doing. The bike rider was able to observe how his/her joints work as they peddled away and watched the skeleton doing the same.



On February 2 we headed to Edgewood School/Greater Boston Academy to participate in the area level of Pathfinder Bible Achievement. We were the smallest group and it appeared that we were probably the youngest in age again this year. Ayzlynn, Nathalie, Asher and Raquel were ready to go. After almost 100 questions the answers were tallied and we placed third (same as last year). The Pathfinders are already talking about how to study and be ready for next year after listening to advice from the coach of the winning team for last year and this year.



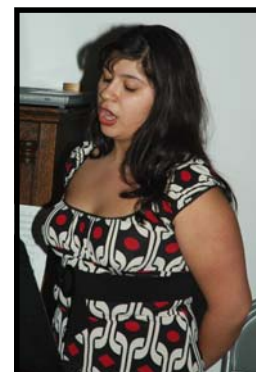
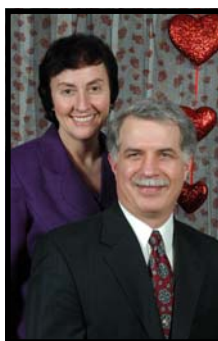
We are looking forward to a tour and breakfast at Parker's Maple Barn hopefully on March 16 (it's on our schedule for March 9 but it just isn't warm enough yet so we are pushing it out a week).

Keep us in your prayers and thank you for your encouragement and support.

Photos by Bob McCall

Valentine's Banquet February 10th

On Sunday evening, February 10th, the Fellowship Hall was transformed into a romantic little restaurant for the evening. The little round tables, the beautiful centerpieces, the linen napkins, the balloons, the cityscape backdrop and candle light all added to the romance of the evening. As the guests arrived, their portraits were taken in the *photo studio*. The meal under the direction of Karen McClendon in the words of one of the couples was 'better than gourmet dining'. The program hosted by Warren Saxton in tux and top hat had everyone laughing. The *Oldie Weds* game was great fun for the audience; we hope it was as much fun for the 'lucky' couples who were in the hot seat. We trust the pastor is still married. Congratulations to the McCalls for "winning." A great big thank you to all who made it a success and to all who came.



Photos by Dale Jacobson

STOP MAKING SCENTS

The Hidden Hazards Of Synthetic Fragrances

Excerpted from Alternative Medicine April 2007 article by Jill Sverdlove

What's That Smell?

You can't watch TV today without catching commercials peddling fragranced products. In theory that's not such a bad thing. After all, cultures throughout history perfumed their homes and persons, if only out of necessity given the state of their hygiene and sanitation systems. Think of the potpourris, sachets and nosegays so much in favor not all that long ago. Perhaps we all have an innate desire to smell like a breath of spring, and what harm could there be in that?

Well, none until you industrialize the process. Before the early 20th century, the fragrances in high demand were derived directly from plants or animals, but after World War II companies turned to petrochemicals as the source of manufactured scents and expanded the uses of fragrances exponentially.

With our spritzed, sprayed and slathered-on 21st century barely underway, virtually every conventional cleaning and body care product on the market contains chemically manufactured fragrances. Obvious products include perfumes, deodorants, soaps, shampoos, laundry detergents, candles and cleaning products. The not so obvious range from shirts to sports drinks. And new products keep coming. Last year more than one thousand new air fresheners appeared on US store shelves. This phenomenon means more exposure for everyone. Unfortunately, most of the companies behind these marketing schemes never consider the dangers lurking in their fragranced products, and we consumers have little choice about whether or not we'll be exposed to them.

Fragrance formulas are considered "trade secrets" a designation that gives companies the legal right not to disclose product ingredients, even to the FDA. Hundreds of chemical may make up one formulation. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) reports that "95% of the ingredients used to create fragrances today are synthetic compounds derived from petroleum, including benzene derivatives, aldehydes and many other known toxins and sensitizers. Many of these substances have been linked to cancer, birth defects, central nervous system disorders and allergic reactions."

NAS targets fragrances as one of six categories of chemicals that should be tested for neurotoxicity. This puts synthetic fragrances in the company of insecticides, heavy metals, solvents, food additives, and air pollutants.

But despite the high level of concern, the trade-secret laws have ensured that fragrance chemicals remain completely unregulated. The result? The same chemicals that must be disclosed and tested when used in gasoline and cigarettes go unregulated when put into a bottle of shampoo.

According to the Environmental Health Coalition of Western Massachusetts, approximately 20% of the population reacts adversely to synthetic fragrance, with anywhere from 3.5 to 6.5 experiencing debilitating or even life-threatening reactions. Infants, children, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems are particularly vulnerable.

"Even for people who have lost their sense of smell," Betty Bridges from Fragrance Products Information Network points out "symptoms still appear when they are around synthetic fragrances, since it's not the smell but the toxicants comprising the scent that are dangerous." She further explains that while an allergic reaction might cause congestion or sneezing, reactions to synthetic fragrances often consist of a poisoning response, which may include migraines, difficulty breathing, fatigue, hormonal imbalances, and digestive problems.

"But sensitive people," Bridges emphasizes, "aren't the only ones affected by synthetic scents." Fragrances pose a health issue for everyone. Although most people believe small amounts of chemicals are harmless, studies show that the adage "the dose makes the poison" no longer holds true. Researchers have shown that even low-level exposure causes serious health effects, as our bodies absorb and accumulate the chemicals we get exposed to daily. The EPA discovered that indoor air contains two to five times more toxic chemicals than outdoor air, with fragrance chemicals contributing heavily.

You might be wondering, somewhat skeptically, "Why do I feel fine after years of applying lotions and perfumes?"

Most people who now feel sick around fragrance chemicals had many prior exposures and appeared immune to the dangers until their bodies broke down. Fragrance toxins silently add stress to our natural detoxification systems, and this impact might take longer to show up in a healthy adult or may manifest in a seemingly unrelated condition like reproductive problems or cancer. Our bodily defenses don't process and store petrochemicals and wrestling with these toxins keeps our bodies from doing their real jobs. Furthermore, people may not even realize a product causes their symptoms. They may suffer chronic headaches or hives, completely unaware of the connection to their perfume or their favorite detergent's aroma.



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Many work places have adopted a "No Scents" policy for the comfort of all employees.

As we strive to make our church welcoming and comfortable to all who come to worship,

"No Scents" makes sense.

Although most people associate fragrances with smell, the chemical components don't merely enter the body through the nose. Wearing scented products or even being near others who use them leads to the absorption of fragrance chemicals through the skin (a direct link to the bloodstream), the respiratory system, digestive system and the eyes. Modern fragrances are also extremely persistent, designed to cling to fabric, hair, and walls. Some fragrance constituents, like those in softener sheets can never be fully removed from clothes. And like plug-ins and perfumes, dryer sheets contain nerve-deadening chemicals, narcotics, and known carcinogens.

A recent Mayo Clinic study placed synthetic fragrances in the 10 most common causes of allergic contact dermatitis and The Institute of Medicine categorized fragrances as equal to second-hand smoke for triggering asthma. Other conditions brought on by fragrances include allergic reactions, chronic sinusitis, and migraines.

Before you spritz yourself or clothes with fragrance, consider that others are at the mercy of your product choices. The fragrance-intolerant often find it awkward to ask for consideration. With experts estimating that 60% of the population will suffer from sensitivities by 2020, isn't it about time we cleared the air? *Alternative Medicine* April 2007



For more information:

www.ehnca.org Environmental Health Network of California

www.fpinva.org Fragrance Products Information Network

Submitted by Marge Patch

Please call Cindy Harris at:
(978) 685-5905, or e-mail at
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to submit articles for the next newsletter.

NEXT DEADLINE: [April 25th](#)

RECOGNITION

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From the Editor's Desk

