



2013 SCYL Winter Retreat: Polar Opposites

The theme of this year's SCYL (Swedenborgian Church Youth League) Winter Retreat for teens was "Polar Opposites." We are bombarded daily with extreme polarities in the world, like war vs. peace, pro-life vs. pro-choice, evolution vs. creation, etc. At this retreat we looked at some of these big polar opposites. Rev. Nadine Cotton led sessions on God vs. no God and angry God vs. loving God. Rev. Jenn Tafel discussed



Fun in the snow: (l to r) Mariel, Bekka, Andrew, Frosty the Snowman, Celie, Abby, and Skylor

gender issues and how to handle polar opposites respectfully and safely.

But also at this retreat, we explored the polar opposites inside ourselves. Rev. Renée Machiniak talked to us about what it means to be strong and what it means to be weak. Rev. Dagmar Bollinger taught us the importance of balancing inner fitness and outer fitness. We learned about mindfulness and how to mindfully attend to routine tasks, like washing dishes, walking, and eating. Polarities will always be with us, polarities in the world and

polarities within ourselves. But we can

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SCYL Officers Elected for 2014

The elections for the officers and chaplain of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) for 2014 took place at the Almont Winter Retreat this past December.

Election Results

- **President:** Rebekka Lange
- **East Coast and Activities Officer:** Skylor Daisy
- **Midwest and Fundraising & Finance Officer:** Tony Kalinowski
- **Canada and Service Officer:**

- Xavier Mercier
- **West Coast and Public Relations Officer:** Riley Tishma
- **Editor, *Clear Blue Sky* (CBS) and Communication Officers:** Savannah Ellsworth and Natalia Castillo
- **League Chaplain:** Rev. Renée Machiniak

Three SCYL officers return to another year of service, and we welcome four new teens to the Youth League. We say goodbye to 2013 president Celie Bauer, who has aged out of SCYL.

Celie has been an active, insightful, and talented leader. She is excited to be moving on to join her friends in the young-adult Transitions group but is sad to have attended her last SCYL teen retreat. We also say farewell to Liz Dyer, who also has aged out of SCYL. Liz has been very active in retreats, annual conventions, and FNCA summer camp. I'm looking forward to seeing these wonderful young adult ladies at camp in Fryeburg this summer. We thank both Celie and Liz for their service and will miss seeing them at teen retreats. We wish them good luck.

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The Editor's Desk



Youth

An exceedingly bright spot in the work of our denomination is the outreach to young people through the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) that Kurt Fekete, youth director for the Swedenborgian Church, and many dedicated volunteers have accomplished over the last several years. The Youth League has continued vigorously in good times and bad, and SPLATz, the tween group, has been established and has received an enthusiastic response.

Transitions is a loosely-structured group for young adults. It provides opportunities for SCYL graduates and other young adults interested in the Swedenborgian Church to stay in touch and, on occasion, to get together for a retreat.

Young adults often tend to leave their churches and organized religious activities when they leave home, so it is heartening to see this small group coming together to share their friendship and common concerns in the context of spiritual and religious seeking ([article page 28](#)).

These young people deserve appreciation for interrupting their busy schedules and digging into their often near-empty wallets to create this special weekend. In an economy where job recovery is painfully slow, education is incredibly expensive, and future prospects appear permanently hobbled by the accident of generational timing, finding the time, money, and hopefulness grounded in belief in goodness and truth is to be admired.

These are adults, in charge of continuing and growing this activity, but perhaps the rest of us can find more ways to help them organizationally, monetarily, and spiritually.

—Herb Ziegler

**Old Testament Course Taught by Rev. Dr. David J. Fekete
March 3–April 20, 2013, Tuition: \$75**

A historical survey, examining the essential contours of the Old Testament. As we will see, the theology in the Old Testament usually relates to the historical events in each book: new perspectives for those well acquainted with the Old Testament and a manageable introduction for those just coming to it. Please email Rev. Fekete at: revdrfekete@gmail.com.

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Correction

The video featuring an interview with president Ken Turley, produced by the Puget Sound Swedenborgian Church, that was mentioned in the January *Messenger* is now available at <http://tinyurl.com/m6b78rr>.

Church Calendar

- April 12: General Council Spring conference-call meeting
- April 25–26: SHS Board of Trustees meeting • Burlingame, CA
- July 2–6: 2014 Annual Convention St. Louis, MO

2014 Mite Box

The Women's Alliance voted at the 2013 Annual Convention to once again donate the proceeds of the Mite Box to the Swedenborgian Church, designated for the benefit of SCYL teen and tween retreats.

If you are attending the annual convention, you can save a small dish of money for this cause or write a check when you get there. If you are not attending the convention or are ready to donate, feel free to mail a check to Gloria Toot, 10280 Gentlewind Dr., Montgomery, OH 45242. Make the check to the Swedenborgian Church and designate it for the Mite Box. ☪

the Messenger

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Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

Groundhog Day is fast approaching, probably already come and gone by the time you read this. But having a fondness for woodchucks (i.e. groundhogs) I wanted to look at this annual event from a correspondential point of view.

Animals, of all kinds, correspond to affections, feelings, and emotions of different kinds. This correspondence can be anything from love to lust, from joy to hatred, from laughter to tears. The beauty of correspondence is that the characteristics, personality, and qualities of things at the natural level portray the spiritual qualities to which each corresponds. In this case, we have a rather gentle and timid creature, vegetarian by nature, but quite persistent and creative when it comes to gaining access to the vegetables in one's garden! It lives underground, which means that it corresponds to an inner, and mostly hidden, but persistent affection of some kind. Not a "killer instinct" of any kind, or even anything very passionate, just kind of cute and feeding on healthy stuff.

Now the Groundhog Day event has the creature emerging, and if it sees its own shadow it retreats and winter continues. However, if it does not see its shadow it emerges and spring commences. It takes little imagination to understand the sun, the source of life giving warmth and light, representing God, the source of Divine Love and Wisdom. But why this reaction?

I am by nature a shy reclusive creature myself. Now some of you who know my public and professional persona may find this hard to believe. But my ability to function in "the spotlight" is a learned

capacity and not at all my natural inclination. I am happiest at home, playing guitar, or even more inwardly focused deep in the process of composing a new piece of music. So I can understand the impulse to run and hide when confronted with the heat of a glaring light. If I recall, the people gathered at the foot of Mt. Sinai wanted nothing to do with a "face to face" with God and were more than happy to send Moses in their stead. So I am not alone in the impulse to shy away from exposure.

Nonetheless, these inner feelings, these impulses of affection, do persist in the will to live. However long they may remain hidden and hibernating, they do live on within us. And, at some point, eventually emerge from within to the venture out on the surface—to take in and digest the life giving sustenance that God provides (often with the unwitting help of us gardeners!), to, albeit shyly, bask in the warmth and light which sustain all life and play their role in the verdant diversity of creation. It brings to mind Emanuel Swedenborg's concept of *remains*: those positive feelings generated by experiences of our past and preserved by the Lord within us. They serve as a source of love and goodness that often remain, hibernating within us only to emerge outwardly and often unexpectedly much later in life. These tender feelings and affections are shy and delicate, yet surprisingly persistent. They serve as a source of goodness, even when hidden and seemingly inaccessible, during the hard and cold times of our lives. Protected within, they emerge when the seasons change and life is warming again.

Here in the midst of winter, I invite you to keep a close eye out for those gentle feelings of love and joy from your past that you may not have experienced for a while. Even for quite a while. If you catch a glimpse of something you once loved, or once was a source of happiness and joy in your past, poking its head out, don't move too quickly or stare too intently or shine too bright a light on it. Just quietly observe and let it emerge and get comfort-

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SCYL Retreat

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learn how to face challenging differences with compassion, compromise, and care, without destruction and vengeful wrath.

Rev. Jenn closed the SCYL Winter Retreat, leading us in a moving Communion worship service. Along with the beautiful music played by our talented teens, Riley read a poem she wrote about polar opposites and what she discovered about them at this retreat ([sidebar](#)).

In addition to the learning and sharing experiences, the teens had some fun time in the snow, at the roller rink, and catching up with one another. Elections were held for new officers and a chaplain for 2014 ([article page 17](#)). ☩



The SCYL Winter Retreat gang at Almont Retreat Center in Michigan

Polar Opposites

Polars are opposites
Positives and negatives
Pluses and minuses
Good and bad

There are social polars
The polars of communities
The polars of each other
And the polars of ourselves

Communal polars can be good or bad
Ranging from emotions and feeling sad
To physical and social complication
Either way to be or feel mad or glad

You may meet someone the polar opposite of you
And you may feel a bit confused as if, "how can someone
be so different than me?"

But you're absolutely FASCINATED by them, too
And last, there's the internal polars of course
And that is the part that people get most confused
Because your insides contain good and bad
And contradiction confuses people more than anything

Polars are opposites
Positives and negatives
Pluses and minuses
Good and bad

—Riley



BFFs (l to r) Celie, Skylor and Abby



(l to r) Natalia, Heather, Tony, and Liv at the roller rink

SCYL Elections

Continued from page 17

We have a great group of officers elected to serve in 2014. Skylor Daisy and Tony Kalinowski return as officers, and Bekka Lange was elected president. She worked hard over the past two years on the *Clear Blue Sky* blog and is now ready to direct our teen group. Bekka has fantastic organizational skills and is a natural leader. I am excited to work with her to move the SCYL down exciting and innovative paths.

We welcome Riley Tishma as our new Midwest officer. Riley, elected at her first winter retreat, is no stranger to the church. She has been going to Almont summer camp since she was born and has been a regular at almost all of our tween SPLATz retreats. We wel-

come her intelligence and outgoing spirit to our leadership team. Xavier Mercier is our new Canadian officer. Xavier is the first Western Canadian teen in a long time to attend a retreat in the United States. Xavier has attended Paulhaven Summer Camp and also attended the recent youth retreat at the Edmonton, Alberta, Church of the Holy City. Xavier is very outgoing, makes friends easily, and fits in im-

mediately with our retreat group. We are so happy to have him join us as an officer. Savannah Ellsworth and Natalia Castillo are our *Clear Blue Sky* (CBS) co-officers. Savannah attends Almont Summer Camp and has recently been more active in SCYL activities. Natalia is new to SCYL but has been very active in the pre-teen SPLATz group, attending nearly every retreat as a tween. Savannah and Natalia are a very strong team for CBS, as Savannah is very good at building and organizing social media and Natalia loves photography and sharing her pictures with everyone. We are excited to see what they come up with for CBS and SCYL communication to the rest of the Church and outside world.

We welcome Rev. Renée Machiniak back for her second year as League chaplain. Renee joined us for most of the Winter

Retreat and led two sessions with the teens. Renée is a wonderful and wise chaplain and has visited with and talked with many of the teens at Almont Summer Camp, winter retreats, and annual conventions. She relates well to teens and understands their struggles. We are blessed to have Renée as our compassionate teen spiritual leader and guide.

Please join me in congratulating all of our 2014 SCYL officers and our League chaplain. We have a young but energetic and thoughtful group of teens leading the League this year. Their love for their church community and their care for each other will help make the SCYL vigorous and vibrant. I am blessed to be working with this group and I hope that you get a chance to get to know them all.

—Kurt Fekete
Youth Director



SCYL Officers (l to r) Skylor (East), Xavier (Canada), Bekka (president), Tony (Midwest), Savannah (CBS Co-Editor), Riley (West), Natalia (CBS Co-Editor)

Message from the 2014 SCYL President

I am thrilled to introduce myself as 2014's president of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL). My name is Rebekka, and this is my first year as president. I have been a part of SCYL since I was thirteen, and I haven't missed one teen retreat yet!

Being able to see my friends every few months for a long weekend is what I look forward to during days of boredom. Making memories, inside jokes, and songs that I will remember is a treasure that I love to have.

When not at retreats I enjoy losing myself in another world that books hold. Listening to music on *Pandora* or the radio helps me focus. School helps me stay busy, and turning sixteen in February is on my mind as well.

This year as president I hope to welcome the new teens into the program. There are many newcomers who I hope will love SCYL as much as I have in these few years. I can't wait to start this year on a high note, meeting new people and learning more about our faith and about ourselves while making new friends and memories and having fun!

—Rebekka Lange



Call for Nominations to Elected Positions

Candidates for positions in the Swedenborgian Church are elected at the annual convention. The following positions will be filled at the 2014 Annual Convention in St. Louis:

- **Vice-president** (one-year term)
- **Secretary** (one-year term)
- **Treasurer** (one-year term)
- **General Council** (one minister and two lay members for three-year terms):

General Council is the governing body of the Swedenborgian Church. It meets face to face at the annual convention and in the fall (travel, room, and board provided). All other business is conducted by conference call and email.

- **Communication Support Unit** (three-year term):

COMSU promotes communications both within and outside of the denomination across various media, and also oversees the production of *the Messenger*. Meetings are by email and conference call.

- **Education Support Unit** (three-year term):

EDSU facilitates activities that enhance the understanding and the skills needed for the realization of the Swedenborgian Church's purpose. This unit is concerned with resources, personnel, and programming (specifically, annual convention mini-courses). Meetings are by email and conference call.

- **Information Management Support Unit** (three-year term):

IMSU's focus is on gathering, storing and distributing data pertinent to the fulfillment of the Swedenborgian Church's purpose. Its primary focus has been the denomination's website. Business is conducted by email and conference call.

- **Financial and Physical Resources**

Support Unit (three-year term):

The central focus of FPRSU is on the wise use and development of such resources as are directly under the Swedenborgian Church's control. FPRSU oversees the management of the Swedenborgian Church's properties and investments, seeks new sources of material support, and provides consultants for the Swedenborgian Church's collective bodies and the best-coordinated use and development of the body's financial and physical resources. Meetings are usually by email and conference call.

- **Ministries Support Unit** (two for three-year terms):

MinSU is charged with facilitating ministries within the Swedenborgian Church and activities that increase the number of individuals and groups consciously committed to the realization of the Church's purpose. It meets face-to-face once a year (expenses paid) and by email and conference call otherwise.

- **Nominating Committee** (two to be nominated, one elected for a five-year term):

It is the duty of NomCom to present at the annual convention nominees for the officers of the Swedenborgian Church and vacancies in the elected members of the General Council and all other elected boards, support units and committees. The nominating committee proposes a slate representative of the Swedenborgian Church's overall constituency. Meetings are by email and conference call.

- **Committee on Admission into the Ministry** (one clergy member for a three-year term):

CAM meets with ministerial candidates to review and recommend qualified candidates for ordination.

Meetings are by conference call and face-to-face (travel, room and board provided).

- **The Board of Trustees of the Swedenborgian House of Studies** (four to be elected, two to the representative class and two to the at-large class (elected at the SHS Annual Meeting) for three-year terms):

The SHS board manages the business and affairs of SHS (the New Church Theological School). Meetings are face-to-face (travel, room and board provided).

Please contact chairperson Karen Conger, one of the other members of the Nominating Committee, or Renée Hellenbrecht at Central Office, if you are interested in serving: manager@swedenborg.org. ☩

Annual Convention 2014 News

It's not too soon to start planning for The 2014 Annual Convention in St. Louis. The schedule is

- Sunday, 6/29: Council of Ministers arrival
- Tuesday, 7/1: General Council arrival
- Wednesday, 7/2, 7 PM: opening session of Convention 2014
- Sunday, July 6: departure

Your group or ministry is invited to sponsor a reception or coffee break at Convention 2014. You'll get to pick the menu, and you'll have the opportunity to put your group's name, a short tag-line, and a link to your website in the program and on the Convention Facebook page.

Contact Renée Hellenbrecht, operations manager, at Central Office for more details: P: 617-969-4240 or manager@swedenborg.org.

Update on the Louis C. Iungerich Fund



BY CHRIS LAITNER

Louis C. Iungerich had a passionate desire to make the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg available

without cost to Protestant clergy, theology students, and professors of theology throughout the United States and Canada. The Louis C. Iungerich Fund was established in 1874 to allow its income to be used “in the publication or printing and gratuitous distribution of the theological writings for the New Church given by Emanuel Swedenborg, servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, among the Protestant clergy of the United States and Canada including theological students and instructors in theology.” Mr. Iungerich further established a body of trustees to make appropriate application of (primarily) the available income of the fund. It’s quite a legacy that a fund established 140 years ago continues to be able to support work that is as important today as it was at the beginning.

At present, any person or body seeking funding for a project that meets the criteria of the Iungerich Fund submits a letter of request by the end of September that includes an explanation of the project and its funding needs. The Trustees review submissions initially in October, which allows time to request any further information necessary, and the final grant-determination meeting is held during November. Letters are sent out to the requesting bodies in December. Grants are distributed during the following year.

The Iungerich Fund is one of many General Convention-held funds. The Iungerich Fund’s annual grantable income is based on the percentage es-

tablished annually by General Convention’s Investment Committee. An annual maintenance fee goes to the General Convention, with the remaining amount available for the Trustees of the Iungerich Fund to use to fulfill funding requests that meet the criteria of the Fund. As an example, the payout of the Iungerich Fund for 2013 was \$35,987. The maintenance fee was \$8,234, so the amount actually available for 2014 funding requests was \$27,753.

The Trustees of the Iungerich Fund met in November, 2013, to make funding determinations for 2014. The Trustees had received several requests and the total monetary amount of the requests was significantly more than the usable income from the Fund could support. After careful deliberation, the following grants were made:

- The Swedenborg Foundation, for continued work on gratuitous electronic and physical book dissemination and continuing work on the New Century Edition
- Rev. Erni Martin, for reprinting and gratuitous distribution of his pamphlet, *Children in Heaven*
- The Sunrise Chapel in Tucson, Arizona, for gratuitous distribution of Swedenborg’s works and some approved explications on the topic of life after death
- The General Convention for use with the printing and distribution of *Our Daily Bread*
- The General Convention’s Information Management Support Unit for work on its continuing project for a resource-sharing website.

The Trustees have begun the process of better clarification of the use of the Iungerich Fund as technology has advanced the capabilities of printing and gratuitous dissemination. The Trustees also see a need for a more systematic

funding-request process. Both parties, the fund-seeker and the Trustees, need to be clear on who can apply for funding and what information is needed to connect the project and the tenets of the Fund. The time-frame for application, grant determinations, and distribution needs to be firmly established. The Trustees have communicated their intention to work on these clarifications to the Executive Committee of the General Council, asking for and receiving input from that body on the matter. The Trustees of the Iungerich Fund will submit the finalized process to the General Council for its next meeting. The information, when approved, will be disseminated via various means to the public.

Lastly, the Trustees offered their deep thanks to Herb Ziegler for his many years of service as a Trustee of the Iungerich Fund. We will miss his excellent insights. ☩

The Trustees of the Iungerich Fund:
Barbara Cullen, Matthew Fleming,
Christine Laitner (chair), David Vigés

In Search of Hosannas

Almost New Church Assembly singers love to raise their voices in song straight from the old green *Hosanna*. The number of singers, however, is greater than our number of *Hosannas* (even sharing two per book).

We are looking for some help as these are out of publication. If your church has some of these boxed away and you would like to loan or give them to us, we would be thrilled. We will pay postage if no one is driving our way. Contact BJ Neuenfeldt at 850 N. US 23, East Tawas, Michigan, 48730 or neuenfeldt@chartermi.net. ☩

Outreach at Fryeburg New Church Assembly

BY TREVOR

If you've seen the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) display that invites participation in the annual summer camp in Maine at your local church or at an annual convention, or read any articles about the FNCA in *the Messenger* in recent years, it's the work of a rather new entity. In August, 2011, the Fryeburg New Church Assembly's Board

of Directors accepted a formal proposal to form a committee aimed at outreach for our beloved Swedenborgian family camp. A fairly large group of people had been working on an informal basis for a few years already, and now it was time to make it official.

The FNCA Outreach Committee has two tiers of membership: seven voting members appointed by the Board to staggered four year terms and an unlimited number of self-appointed non-voting members who serve at will. Like most committees, there's a chair, vice-chair, and secretary. The committee is required to meet at least once a year during the camp session in August.

The committee's official by-laws state, "The FNCA Outreach Committee shall be in charge of promoting the FNCA to the membership, the Church, the greater FNCA community at-large, etc. Its functions shall include the FNCA bulletin, FNCA website, FNCA Facebook page, articles in *the Messenger* and other Church publications, the FNCA traveling display, and—at their discretion—other appropriate means of reaching out and letting potentially interested people know what the FNCA has to offer."

The Bulletin

The *FNCA Camp Bulletin* is the camp's annual announcement and reg-



The Main Building is the hub of activity at camp. The first floor holds the lecture hall, adult lounge, two accessible bedrooms, dining hall, kitchen, and children's rec hall. Upstairs are six bedrooms, the single women's quarters (SWaQ!), the cook's quarters, and the teen girls dorm.

istration manual. It contains everything prospective attendees need to know about camp, including dates, lecture themes, camp activities, rates, registration forms, and other relevant information. Under the very able editorship of committee member and graphic designer Beki Greenwood, the *Bulletin* became a full-color publication in 2008. It is available in print form or digitally to anyone who is interested.

The Website

As the camp's webmaster, it is a joy to see the FNCA website being so heavily used. Since our new website debuted in June of 2010, the number of visitors to the site has gone from 2,605 visits in 2009 to 6,010 in 2013, a 130 percent increase! The website contains a wealth of information about camp including the religious program, camp activities, registration, lodging, meals, administration, committees, history, an interactive map of the Assembly, off-session use of the facilities (yes, it's available!), and a ton of photos.

The Facebook Page

This is one place where we are easily able to reach out to members and friends of the Assembly throughout the year. With five members of the Outreach Committee working as administrators, there's a wide variety of posts

throughout the year, sometimes as many as two or three a week. Posts may contain important announcements, website updates, recent or historic photos, short videos, news about various members, and just plain fun stuff about camp. In January of this year, rising to a posted challenge, we hit our goal of 200 likes.

The Articles

Various committee members and other campers have written articles for *the Messenger* on a wide variety of subjects, from personal camp experiences to meeting reports. The committee's aim is to have three or four articles in *the Messenger* each year. For a camp that's only two weeks long, that may seem like a tall order, but we're a long, long way from running out of subject matter, folks! Evidently, a wide variety of people have been enjoying these articles, too, since we've gotten a lot of really nice feedback about them over the past three years. And not only have the articles brought a bit of the FNCA to the people, but the articles have also brought new people to the FNCA.

The Display

Many readers and annual convention attendees may have seen our display, which is now on its third annual tour. First, we created a colorful stand-alone display "banner" under the direction of committee member Jon Crowe (whose company produces that kind of thing). Then, Jon arranged for a series of local churches to host the banner for about a month each from January through July, with a brief stopover at the annual convention. Each site has a local person in charge of setting up and maintaining the display and send-

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Swedenborgian Online Community News

BY WILMA WAKE

With the incredibly bad winter of 2014, consider accessing SwedenborgianCommunity.org—available 24/7 from the warmth and comfort of your own home! We



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ing it along to the next site on the list at the end of the month. And, the FNCA Display Tour has not only brought a bit of the Assembly to many East Coast churches and General Convention, but has also brought several new people from East Coast churches and Convention to the Assembly.

The Future

- Some exciting up-coming FNCA Outreach Committee projects include
- 1) An official FNCA logo contest with the grand prize being a free week at camp(!)
 - 2) The first annual Rev. Dr. George F. Dole 5K Road Race, to be held on the rail trail that begins directly across the street from the Assembly grounds
 - 3) A biannual newsletter
 - 4) Brainstorming ideas for FNCA's 100th Anniversary celebration in 2021.

Check out [Fryeburg New Church Assembly](https://www.facebook.com/fryeburgnewchurchassembly) on Facebook, and the FNCA website at fryeburg.org.

Trevor is the chair of the FNCA Outreach Committee, a long-standing member of the Board of Directors and a life-long attendee at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly.



are starting out on a very positive note for 2014. With our successful pledge drive and receipt of grants, we plan to upgrade equipment and redesign the website to be more accessible by mobile devices, and experiment with different connection methods for our traditional chats.

In 2013, we grew by forty-two new registrants. About half of them are isolated Swedenborgians or isolated readers of Swedenborg. About ten percent are international registrants—from the Russian Federation, Netherlands, Turkey, Kenya, and the UK. So far in 2014, we've had two new registrants: one from Australia and one from Russia.

Our pledge drive for 2014 has been highly successful. Our goal for 2014 pledges is \$6500; we now have pledges for \$5710. We only need another \$790. It's not too late to pledge!

We *thank* those who enabled us to reach the \$4000 milestone, which enabled us to receive a \$500 challenge donation.

We are grateful to have received three grants that will enable us to continue our work in 2014: an Augmentation Fund grant to assist with the minister's salary, a grant from the Gray Fund to help us improve our internet technology capabilities, and one from the Rotch Fund which will assist in the minister's retirement contribution.

We are continuing to focus on the annual theme of the Swedenborgian Church for 2013–2014: Providence. Every first Thursday, we are reading and discussing parts of Emanuel Swedenborg's *Divine Providence* in our 9 PM EST chat. In our messages, chats, and discussion boards, we're exploring how God actually works in our lives. This month we're looking at God's role in our health and in our finances.

Visit our new topics in the Discussion Forum and watch for a facelift on our website in the coming weeks at swedenborgiancommunity.org.

The Rev. Wilma Wake is minister of the Swedenborgian online community.

Bringing the New Jerusalem Down to Earth

Join George Dole in a Swedenborgian House of Studies

Online Study Group this Spring

A quarter-millennium after the founding of the institutional "Church of the New Jerusalem," we'll take a close look at the only extended description of "the New Church" that Emanuel Swedenborg offers (*Revelation Unveiled/Apocalypse Revealed* §896–925). We have paid little attention to that description, probably because it seems so abstract. The "concrete" content of its abstractions, though, focuses on the way we understand and treat each other and ourselves. We will participate in an effort to bring that apparently abstract description down to earth—which is where it really belongs.

A 7-Week Online Course led by Rev. George F. Dole, Ph.D.

March 3–April 18

Course Fee: \$50 Enrollment Limit: 12

Register at: www.shs.psr.edu

Transitions

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sion this group possesses. Talking with these wonderful individuals reminds me that the church truly is my second family, and whenever I leave these retreats I always feel more fulfilled and whole than when I arrived, usually just



Janice Earls

days before. And with that I'd like to say thank you to the group for creating such a loving, harmonious environment during this retreat. I'd also like to thank Tam, Kit, Elizabeth, Alice, Holly, Kristina, Kurt, and the Swedenborgian Church for making this retreat happen. Now, let's hear from some of our other transitioners!

The retreat was a lot of fun and provided some interesting insight into a few stories in the Bible.

—Naomi Anderson

The retreat experience this December was one of the best to date for me. The sessions were engaging and brought up fruitful discussions not only on the planned topics, but on gender roles in general in addition to the purpose and value of church. For



Alexis Wright, Dustin Wright, Audrey Gray



TJ Thornburg, Rev. Kit Billings, Audrey Gray

me, it was a chance to reconnect with old friends and meet a few new ones as well. I feel we achieved a perfect balance of intellectual stimulation, emotional unpacking, physical and mental relaxation and recharging. I definitely plan to attend again next year.

—Alice Henderson



Alice Henderson

During this past weekend, I enjoyed a delightful visit from some of the people that I have come to know over the past five years through Almont. We even had visitors come that I haven't seen in years. We enjoyed delicious meals made by Tam Mounce, each of

which had meat as a side dish for our non-vegetarian friends. I enjoyed each of the sessions with both Rev. Kit Billings and Elizabeth Blair in which we discussed the gender roles in the Bible, relationships, and life. I also learned so much more about Swedenborgian theology. What I loved the most about this retreat was opening up to the group instead of only listening and providing insight to everyone else. I did not realize until now that my friends at Almont really do care about me, and I will never forget that. Thanks to the Transitions retreat, I have become closer to my friends and will be anxious for Almont this summer. Thank you to all who came and thank you especially to Tam Mounce, Kit



Jessie Trimble and TJ Thornburg

Billings, Elizabeth Blair, Nina Sasser, Alice Henderson, and everyone else who helped put this retreat together. Thank you and God bless!

—Adam Wiatrowski

President's Letter

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able again out in the world. Let it feel comfortable out in the open without making it feel self-conscious. And in time, who knows, it could become a source of happiness and joy that you might be able to share with someone else, maybe someone who needs a comforting, heart-warming experience or a little person, who may simply store the moment away deep within, and only much later, draw upon that simple joy in a time of personal desolation and darkness.

The qualities of heaven are often subtle and shy, yet amazingly persistent. Rarely are they loud and demanding of attention. Yet those of us who are committed to serving God, and to being a contributing part of the Second Coming here on earth, have our parts to play. Keep an eye out for the remains within you, which just might be emerging this Groundhog Day.

—Blessings, Rev. Ken

Passages

Deaths

James Tourangeau, beloved husband of Barbara Penabaker Tourangeau, entered peacefully into the spiritual world on January 20, 2013, due to Parkinson's Disease. In addition to Barbara, he is survived by his children John Tourangeau, Ellen Doppke and James Tourangeau; grandchildren Lauren, McKenna, and Derek; and his brother, Alfred. Jim will be remembered for his gentleness and keen intellect. He loved attending the Almont Summer School, and was a beloved friend to all at the Royal Oak (Michigan) Church of the Holy City. We keep Barb as well as Jim's children and grandchildren in our prayers. A memorial service was held for Jim on January 24, officiated by the Rev. Renée Machiniak.

James N. Perry of Dacula, Georgia, passed away peacefully December 31, 2013, at the age of 80. He leaves his wife of nearly thirty years, Barbara F. Perry, son Bob Perry, daughters Jane Perry and Amy Blackman, former wife Patricia Perry, granddaughter Ruby Blackman, step-children Cara, Neal, and Noelle Guri, and step-grandchildren Charlie and Stella Guri and Adrian Remington.

Jim grew up in Winthrop, Massachusetts, with his parents Stewart and Alice Perry. After graduating from Cornell University in 1955, he served in the US Air Force and then embarked on a forty-year career in manufacturing management that began at Microwave in New Hampshire and ended at Lockheed-Martin in Silicon Valley. At the vanguard of what we now call globalization, his work took him from New Hampshire to Massachusetts, California, Hong Kong, Okinawa, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and the Philippines, then to Connecticut, Tennessee, and back to California. He saw

the world, including the Pyramids, the Acropolis, the Great Wall, the Great Barrier Reef, Angkor Wat, and the Taj Mahal.

Jim retired in 1999 to become who he jokingly referred to as "Mr. Margaret Thatcher," supporting Barbara's two-year professional assignment in the UK. A highlight of that experience was befriending a World War II British fighter pilot who owned an airplane in which they would fly over the Cliffs of Dover to France for lunch!

A committed professional for his entire career, he took his retirement just as seriously. He spent the last nearly decade and a half of his life focused on tending conscientiously and lovingly to all the important relationships in his life: with his wife, children, grandchildren, and more distant relatives, with his friends, his body, and God.

Jim Perry was—among other things—an Eagle Scout, an actor (peaking as a well-reviewed George in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*), an athlete (After completing the San Francisco Marathon, he declared that one marathon was enough!), a walker (a speed-walker for a time, much to the entertainment of those who were lucky enough to see him do it), a hiker, (including at age 77 scaling New Hampshire's Mount Chocorua with his children), a golfer, a tennis player, a skier (water, downhill, and cross-country), a sailor, a scuba diver, a pilot (of jets in the Air Force and gliders in the 1980s, for which he also qualified and moonlighted as an instructor), a public servant (town meeting member), a business leader (Chamber of Commerce president), and a Swedenborgian Christian. Most recently, "Mr. Jim" very much enjoyed being a regular in



Jim Perry atop Mount Chocorua in New Hampshire's White Mountains in 2010

the Very Important Parent (VIP) room at Adrian's school, helping teachers and staff members with tasks ranging from laminating to creating special projects for students.

Finally, Jim was a sentimental man. He was moved by

music (of all kinds, but Sinatra tops the list), by performance, by history (the more personal, the better), and by relationships. A gifted raconteur, he was what one might call an "occasionalist"—so good at elevating celebrations of all kinds, especially at marking personal milestones. He always found ways to sprinkle a little emotional stardust over people at important events of their lives by sharing memories and pointing out in often surprising ways the good that others have done and the impact and difference they've made in the world, always well-supported by humorous, pithy, and poignant stories, images, and songs. A talented man, it was those tailored, personal gifts to others that may have been the greatest of his gifts.

Jim Perry was a life-long Swedenborgian, a member of the Boston Church through his young adult life, and a lifelong attendee of Fryeburg New Church Assembly, especially during his teen and golden years when he also resumed attending annual conventions, most recently in Bridgewater with his son, Bob, and then Urbana with his granddaughter Ruby.

A memorial service celebrating Jim's life will be held on Saturday, June 7, 2014, at Swedenborg Chapel, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Rev. Dr. George F. Dole officiating. Donations in Jim's memory may be made to the Swedenborgian camp that he loved and attended from 1947 through 2013: Fryeburg New Church Assembly, c/o 61 Clark Lane, Waltham, MA 02451. ☪

About the Swedenborgian Church

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 fifteen years after his death.

American groups eventually founded the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church 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 said, "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.

Transitioners Meet at Manna House

BY NINA SASSER

On the weekend of December 27–29, 2013, eleven transitioners (young adults who comprise the Transitions group of the Swedenborgian Church) met up at Manna House in LaPorte, Indiana, for a weekend of prayer, laughter, music, lively discussion, excessive peppermint tea drinking (at least on my part), and spiritual growth and restoration. The topic of the retreat was "Gender Roles in the Bible." Throughout the weekend we



Nina Sasser, Raquel Strange

tackled this controversial topic with the help and guidance of Rev. Kit Billings and seminary student Elizabeth Blair, reading stories from the Bible that dealt specifically with gender, and exploring their relevance to our lives today.

I must admit that despite my twenty-one years of involvement the church, I actually had read very few Bible stories before this retreat, and of the handful I knew, even fewer dealt with the female experience. The passages presented

by Elizabeth, such as the story of Naomi and Ruth, truly were a joy to read and discuss, and I'm very happy I had the opportunity to do so.

When we weren't busy discussing religion we spent our time cooking, playing music, knitting, and filling each other in on the various happenings in our

lives since Almost summer camp. We even got to do a bit of thrift shopping! For me, the two highlights of the retreat were 1) holding a session in this really cool, funky sort of hipster-y coffee

shop with guitars hanging from the wall and \$1 books for sale in the corner and 2) getting to partake in our much-cherished life talks with Tam where we all sit in a circle and talk about whatever's on our minds, whether it's unloading something that's been weighing us down lately or sharing the joys we've experienced since we last were together. During these talks I am always amazed at the level of insight, honesty, respect, and compas-

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