

Volume XIV

A Quarterly Newsletter of Shalom Mission communities

Number 2

www.shalomconnections.org

June 2010: Celebrations

The Community that Parties Together, Stays Together

By Analí Gatlin

If community has taught me one thing, it is to never underestimate the importance of a good party. I have been told I am capable of overstatement, but I truly believe that celebrating together is one of the sincerest forms of worship and most profound theological practices we live as community. Jesus modeled this for us, frequently revealing important lessons to his disciples during the middle of a party or over a shared meal.

There are, of course, evenings when it would be more comfortable just to stay home than muster the energy to go to another community event full of children hyped-up on sugar and adults whom we have just seen at a committee meeting, service, or work project. At times like these we have to remind each other why our communities make time to celebrate together.

In Community and Growth Jean Vanier put it this way, "Celebration expresses the true meaning of community in a concrete and tangible way. So it is an essential element in

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Renata's 30th Group: Sojourners gear up for Renata's whipped cream birthday celebration.

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community life” (p 312). We chose to live life together as a body, and celebrations help remind us why we make that choice. When we relate to each other in this way, we not only thank God for the gifts we have been given, we also acknowledge and proclaim the power of the resurrection. Learning to party well should be one of our spiritual disciplines.



Hope Fellowship folks strategize and stretch before a competitive series of birthday games.

Even though we find joy in our shared life and have many obvious reasons to celebrate, we are overwhelmed sometimes by our inevitable disagreements, the stresses of daily life, or catastrophic events. During such challenging times in community it is even more important to celebrate, not as a means for

escaping our problems but as an expression of hope. By the grace of God celebrations can renew a community, and the arguments and stresses of normal life seem to diminish when we laugh, eat, and dance together.

One thing I especially like about community celebrations is that our children, who

usually do not have prominent responsibilities in our community services and meetings and may feel excluded, have a noticeably important role in our festivities. When it’s party time, the energy and enthusiasm of children serve as important models for the rest of us. As I watch the Hope Fellowship children collectively demolishing a piñata or Evan Alexander leading the adults in a goofy dance, I can imagine the joy God must feel as She watches her children enjoying one another.

Church of the Sojourners even has a yearly Kid’s Week celebration honoring the children in the community. Celebrations like this help shape our identity as a people and incorporate →→→

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Shalom Connections

Shalom Connections seeks to glorify God and provide a means of fellowship and inspiration among sisters and brothers of the member churches of Shalom Missions Communities and the wider network of intentional Christian Communities. *Shalom Connections* is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. Subscriptions are free. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official position of *Shalom Connections*, Shalom Mission Communities, or its member churches.

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adults and children into the story we are writing as a community and remembering as part of the larger body of Christ. Just as a biological family creates its own rituals and customs, the ways we celebrate help form us as a family over time.

Growing up in Hope Fellowship, one of my favorite times of the year was the Easter retreat. For a variety of reasons there were years we thought we might not organize the event. Now, though, it would be unimaginable to not have an Easter retreat because the celebration is part of who we are as a community.

Each of our communities have these unique celebrations that make us a little weird and form us as a people. Plow Creek has an annual fish breakfast to remember and celebrate Jesus' resurrection

appearance to the disciples. Reba Place has a unique way of celebrating weddings complete with a community-made quilt and wedding shirt for the groom. And I can't begin to describe what Sojourners can do with a birthday party.

Our celebrations are not always elaborate events. I've seen a red wagon and a moderately steep hill turn into an evening of rowdy fun at Jubilee Partners. A meal in Valle Nuevo that, after a few hours of eating, talking, and laughter, turns into a music jam session. Whether our celebrations are well planned parties or merely spontaneous festivities, God just really wants us to enjoy each other's company. So carry on, party animals! ☐



The Cana small group clowning around during their retreat at Reba's Emmanuel Lodge.

Celebrations

Signs and ~~Wonders~~ Charts

By David Janzen

In a Church of the Sojourners bathroom I noticed a schedule of the Shalom coordinators' gathering, posted for community leaders who might be sitting and waiting a minute with nothing better to do. . . . A mind is an awful thing to waste, you know.



In the Castanea Community in Nashville, next to the chore chart are some special reminders like "Clean the top floor of the chicken coop all the way to the wood and add fresh hay," and "Please remove your personal food items from the fridge when they become inedible." Some of us might have expressed that gentle advice with expletives added.



I've visited more than a dozen communities this year, sometimes with a few teammates. We've conducted a series of "visitations"-- a way for intentional communities to get health checkups, as it were. We give counsel when asked and try to learn all we can about what God is "up to" in the Christian intentional community movement these days. The Simple Way, Rutba House, and other communities have given us encouragement and some financial support. Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove named this venture the "Nurturing Communities Project." So, it's been my privilege to witness the growth of many new communities and the maturation of others that have been around for decades.

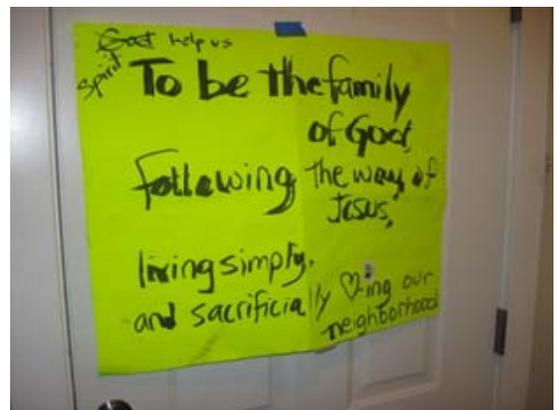
One common feature of Christian community that has fascinated me is the creative signs, charts and schedules that groups use for countless purposes. As I go, I try to collect "best practices" to share with other communities, so here are some more community charts you might want to know about . . . or not.

In the Knappsta household at Spring Water Community in Portland OR , I saw a whiteboard with the schedule of hospitality for me, their guest, along with a list that included "Mars Attack," "Strange Brew," "Axe Murderer," "Dr. Strangelove," "Young Frankenstein," and "History of the World." I imagine these were



movie options for folks who had been as good as they could, for as long as they could, until their guest went back home.

Another favorite from Spring Water was a scribbled version of the mission statement they were working on which read, "Spirit help us to be the family of God, following the way of Jesus, living simply and sacrificially loving our neighborhood."



Jubilee Partners in Comer GA has charts for multiple purposes like kitchen duty, car sign-out, and teacher's schedule for ESL classes at their refugee welcome center. But the one I like most is the chart of keys, dozens of them in fact, that open all the doors of the kingdom--at Jubilee, that is.

→→→

At the Simple Way in Philadelphia, on a very troubled street corner, their door displays a plea and a prayer, "Heal all that is broken . . . in our hearts, in our streets, in our world. Amen"



Koinonia Partners displays a beautiful new multicolored map or diagram of their farm with several transparent colored overlays, created by a permaculture design seminar that the community hosted last year. The comprehensive plan describes how the land will feed the Koinonia community while preserving the balance of plants and animal life for years to come with minimal plowing or other invasive practices. The chart represents a long-term vision of restoring the land to a Garden of Eat'n, a food forest that will care for the humans, soil, plants, animals in their corner of creation to the glory of God.

"Time is nature's way of making sure that everything does not happen all at once.

And space is nature's way of making sure it does not all happen to us." But schedules are a community's way of making sure that we all intentionally come together at the same time and space--for meals, work, prayer, celebrations, or just for hanging out.

Ancient monasteries structured time around the hours of prayer when the bell would ring and all would gather to pray and sing the psalms. Peasants in the field and lords in their manor would pause at the sound of the campanile to remember God along with the monks. Koinonia Partners has begun to ring their chapel bell for morning and evening prayers to gather the community, and to remind those who cannot gather that their lives are linked in prayer. The monastic wisdom understands that if you faithfully show up for the prayers, the work, the meals, the ministry of hospitality, in time you will acquire the character and the virtues of a follower of Jesus.

For newcomers to community in the honey-moon phase, it can be a time of signs and wonders. But after a few months the wonders turn into sign-up sheets, weekly schedules, responsibilities--in other words that nasty "S" word, "STRUCTURES."

I like to ask communities for the story behind a particular chart. It often goes like this:



"The dishes will be washed by whoever has time to do them." Yeah, sure! By the third day it is obvious that no one has had the time except for one disgruntled dutiful person of the female persuasion. Someone suggests a sign-up chart. After a week of reminders and nagging, everyone who remains is willing and relieved to see a chart on the wall. Then when people do not fill in all the slots, a coordinator is named to see that everyone signs up in something like a fair rotation, leaders included. The dishes get done with a minimum of fuss and the community can turn its attention to more important

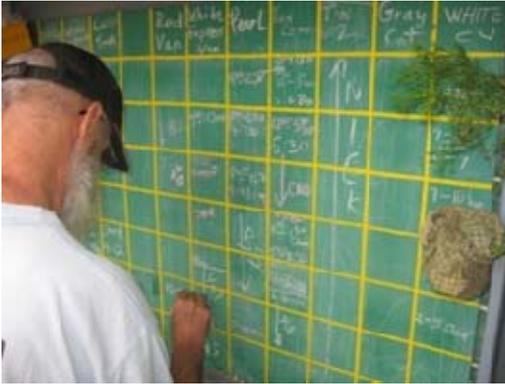
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Celebrations

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matters. When I see such community charts they represent unity, visible evidence a community has come together to do things a common way out of love for one another.



Structures that someone else has created do not automatically convey the reasons for their existence. But if you were part of the discussion that created the charts, it is no longer “they” who are imposing structures, but something “we” have agreed to do, and we understand the “why” that makes sense of the “how it works.” This is indeed anarchism at its best--the agreement of free people to do things a common way by voluntary association. Christian anarchism is freely agreeing to do what we do together because of Jesus.

Jesus said that new wine needs new wineskins. The kingdom of God will have structures, but they will be fitting for the new wine they are to hold. The old structures will probably not work. So it is appropriate for new communities to reflect on the needs they want to care for together because of the love of Jesus that has brought them together for

mutual service and witness. The results will be creative and life-giving. And as the Spirit gives new wine, the Spirit also inspires new structures, or leads us to adapt the old ones for new purposes. The structures create new habits and the new habits create disciples of Jesus.

Charts are helpful to visitors as well since they are visible signs of some social structures that might otherwise be invisible to a newcomer. When I see them as a visitor in a new community, I feel welcomed, oriented, and know a little more how to belong.

Of course, each of us in community also needs time that is “off the charts,” freedom to do the things that balance out our different needs. I need to read books, someone else needs to make music. Introverts need time alone, others go out for coffee. As the structures of our life become habitual, they take less effort, with the result that we become more like Jesus in our virtues, but also more like ourselves in uniquely eccentric and wonderful ways. Anyone who knows the inhabitants of the Clearing, our oldest continuous household at Reba, would agree. Over time we

learn how to be flexible with expectations, supporting gifts and accepting limitations that come with being human.

“The virtues which Paul encourages the Colossians to develop are the virtues of community: mutual kindness, truth-telling, forgiveness, acceptance across traditional barriers of race, culture and class. It isn’t just that building up and fostering such community is itself one of the virtues. Since ‘love’ is the primary virtue (3:14), community is the primary context. And . . . it is of the very essence of this kind of community that we are not clones of one another. All Christians are to exhibit the Christian virtues, but each one is called to a different set of tasks.” (N.T.Wright, After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters, p. 144.)

So when you see community charts, remember that they were probably created out of a shared sense of frustration. And their existence often represents a common creation, a Spirit-led consensus, a victory of peace--which is a wonder after all. □



Gracias a La Vida:
News from
Hope Fellowship
By Gabriela Gatlin

As I'm preparing to write our church news for the spring, Analí has sent me a link to a Habitat fundraiser for reconstruction after the Chilean earthquakes (www.vocesunidasporchile.com). The link takes you to a new version of the song *Gracias a La Vida* originally composed by Violeta Parra and first released in 1966. The song is now an anthem for many Chileans and Latin Americans. In many ways, *Gracias a La Vida*, "Thanks to Life who has given us so much" has also been our song this spring at Hope Fellowship.

We are eagerly awaiting the births of two babies! Susana and Justin are expecting their second child in June, and Bethany and J.B. are expecting their first child in October.

We also give thanks for the miracle dog, Brazos, that Bethany and J.B. adopted from the local shelter a couple months ago. At Brazos' first vet appointment, she was diagnosed with diphtheria, a 95% fatal disease. Tears were shed, but Brazos was allowed her life while she could enjoy it. And miraculously, it turns out that Brazos is the 5%! The vet says she fought her illness and won. Brazos now enjoys long walks with her growing family along the river for which she was named.

In April we enjoyed our annual and largest ever Easter retreat out in the country. It was a cool, sunny weekend with much laughter and games, five birthdays to celebrate and a resurrection. In the opening act of our Saturday night variety show, the Fellowship and Communications Committee introduced a Practice Dating Rotation (because we don't have enough rotations and lists already!). The committee reported that due to the unfortunate imbalance between single men and single women in the church, our single men will need to have about six dates a month, and the single women will be allowed one date every six weeks. Perhaps your communities have some single men to share with us?



Jesse, Michelle, Gwendolyn, and Emanuel perform Jesse's original composition at the Hope Fellowship Easter Retreat.

Granma Allene is delighting in the 162 Ranger baseball games that begin this spring. Phillip, Clare and Evan often drop by to watch a game with her.

Earlier this spring Michelle and Matt initiated the only active eating disorder support group in Waco.

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An intense Birthday Bubble Blowing contest during the Easter retreat.

Celebrations

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Slowly the group is growing, and Michelle and Matt are thankful for the opportunity to offer this service to the wider community.

Luis, Gwendolyn, Paloma, and Gerson will be spending the summer in Oaxaca and are preparing to lead an ecumenical conference on nonviolence with local religious leaders. Fernando will travel to Oaxaca to lead a workshop during the conference. Several others families from Hope Fellowship will also visit during and after the conference. We are praying together for God's leadership during the conference this summer and also for guidance as Luis considers what future projects and community might grow out of these endeavors.

We are thankful for the desire of several individuals, couples and young families who are choosing to stay in Waco and



Water balloon toss during the Easter retreat.

make their home at Hope Fellowship. In May, Michelle and Matt moved to a house on Sanger Avenue a few blocks up from the Meeting House, and Bethany, J.B. and Brazos moved into another house on Sanger in early June. We are praying with other people in the church who are still in search of good living arrangements and employment.

At the end of May we celebrated Aranza's baptism.

In preparation for her baptism, Aranza shared her testimony with the congregation. Aranza recounted the narrative of her life, the journey from Mexico to the United States that as a young child she did not choose for herself and the ways in which she has built a place to call home that includes both cultures. Aranza admitted that as a child she thought everyone else must also be part of a "quirky church like ours," an extended family. But as she grew up, she realized that wasn't true. Because of Hope Fellowship, Aranza views church as a family. Aranza shared about some decisions and choices she needs to make in the future, and she ended her testimony by stating, "I know that baptism is about making a declaration, and I want to declare today that God is my savior. God is taking care of me, and there is nothing I can do without God."

Gracias a la Vida. Thanks to Life and to God! ☐



Hope Fellowship parades through the neighborhood on Palm Sunday.

News from Reba Place Fellowship

By Heather Clark

The chorus of a 1970s song that we still sing occasionally during RPF worship begins "For our life together we celebrate" and ends with "Ah! There's the celebration! Celebrate the whole of it."

Through celebrating we grow in joy and unity as God's people. This takes work (for anticipation and preparation) as well as rest (for recollection and reflection). And, if the celebration involves a bunch of 11 year old boys, a bonfire, and a beach (complete with sharp sticks and large sandpit), it takes *recovery*. Hence this weary post-birthday-party mom offers a brief and humble listing of celebrations in our recent past and near future:

Celebrations we're anticipating:

- Our annual retreat (May 21-23), where we will unpack



The Patch household hosting Josh McCallister's birthday celebration.

and admire "Treasures Old and New." We're looking forward to hearing stories from some of our senior members and to sampling workshop options ranging from woodworking and pottery making to the disappearing art of crafting the handwritten letter.

- Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day cookouts at Emmanuel Lodge, where

the burgers (beef *and* Boca) will taste all the better because we've spent the morning working together to care for our lovely retreat spot.

- Celina Varela and Peter Velthuizen's upcoming (July 10) wedding. What a joy to have them hand deliver their lovely invitations (original artwork by Anne Gavitt).

- The arrival (sometime in September) of a baby brother for Seth Vaughan, who has recently gone from crawling to walking. Lilia McCallister, a marathon stair climber, has been hot on his heels!

Celebrations we're gratefully recalling:

- A pajama party potluck where lullabies and a Winnie the Pooh story (read in a proper British accent, no less) proved a feast for the ears.



The Doran-Moriarty family enjoying the pajama party potluck.

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Celebrations

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- Our leader Sally Youngquist's May 11 birthday, when we enjoyed ice cream and a slide show of the life of her father, Cyrus Bryson Schreiner, who passed from earth to glory this past year. We anticipate joining him at the heavenly feast, where we expect the ice cream will be "out of this world."
- The annual banquet of Good News Partners (May 7), where Ronn Frantz was introduced as the new director of the organization, replacing longtime leader Bud Ogle. We bless Ronn in this new role and are grateful to all those taking over aspects of his work at Reunion Property Management.
- A "Friends of Koinonia" evening (March 27) when



Reba folks celebrating life together at the pajama potluck party.

Koinonia's director, Bren Dubai and co-worker Amanda Moore were with us, along with other Koinonia friends from the Chicago area. We heard about Koinonia's inspiring return to a communal model of ministry, saw "Briars in the Cotton Patch" recalling the community's history of

persecution and perseverance, and then went halfway to heaven sampling the varieties of Koinonia chocolate-covered nuts. Check the Koinonia web-site, if you wish, and help them "ship the nuts out of Georgia."

- A recent Sunday morning worship time when Jedidiah McCallister sat proudly next to his drumming daddy and played a toddler-size "high hat", praising the LORD with clanging cymbals!

Thanks be to God for the gift of gathering to celebrate, to feed our souls, through good times and hard times, at all times.

*For his body broken, we celebrate.
For the word he's spoken, we celebrate.
For the feasting at His table,
by His grace we are able to celebrate.*

Ahhhhhh. ☐



Warming up by the fire in the Patch backyard.

News from Plow Creek

By Heather Munn

Around five o'clock on Saturday April 10th, I dumped a can of tomatoes into the pot and glanced out of the kitchen window. It was the loveliest spring day, the air soft and warm, the bluebells open. The leaves were still opening on the trees, so from our kitchen window in the Common Building basement you could still glimpse the corner of the Prairie House.

Bright flames were leaping from the house.

"Fire! The Prairie House!" I shouted as I ran out the door and up the stairs to the Common Building kitchen, where I could get a clear view. The entire back of the house was in flames.

"It's doomed," I whispered. I made a motion toward the phone in the freezer room, thinking, *"If it's gotten this far, someone's already called 911, but I should call just in case."*



Separating charred photographs.



The remains of the Prairie House.

David Stahnke barreled in the door and dashed past me to the phone. I left it to him. A second thought had just come to me: *"What if someone's still in there."*

Not knowing what I might need to do, I ran downstairs and put a pair of shoes on; then ran as hard as I could toward the house.

Boo, Martin, Justin, and Yohanna were out front with the dogs. Boo had a huge bucket and Martin carried a fire extinguisher. "Is everybody out?" I asked. They said yes. They had been fighting the fire but were realizing it was too far gone to fight with what they had. Boo was telling Martin to move the van, which was close to the house. He moved it, and Boo and Yohanna moved the other vehicles.

Other people were arriving, hearing the news. The family members were all accounted for. Steve was picking up Charissa from a track meet, Gabriel was at the Moores' house, and the pets were safe except for four cats. The fire department was on its way.

We all stood and watched the house burn.

We watched Steve's car pull in. He stopped in the middle of the driveway and we hurried toward him, shouting not to park there, the fire department was coming, assuring him that all his children were out of the house. He pulled up into a parking space, and he and Charissa got out, and watched the flames with us. We saw one of the cats streak away from the house.

Finally the fire department arrived, one fire truck and a tank truck; like most country places, we have no fire hydrant. As the firemen struggled with logistics, we stood there desperate to help. Pete asked a fireman and was told that we could unfold and set up a "dump," a portable reservoir that the tanker truck would pour its water into for the other fire truck to draw from when it ran out. We unloaded it off the side of the tanker, and about ten or twelve of us carried it to where they wanted it, pulled on its folded metal frame till it unfolded like a tent, joints

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Celebrations

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clicking into place. I looked around at the others, thinking what we must look like to the firemen, this odd motley crew working together, wanting to do anything to help.

In the country, houses burn down; that's just how it is. It is just not possible to get there in time with enough water. They sprayed and sprayed that house with water, and later with foam, but the flames kept coming back. We heard later that this fire was harder to fight than most because the house was so well-built the water was not able to get to the flames.

The fire went on and on. Jim, Mark, Paul and Matthew went into the woods behind the house with shovels, to make sure no flames spread into the woods and from there to the Common Building. One tree was smoldering inside, smoke rising from around its roots and from the end of a dead branch. Other than that, fire was kept out of the woods.



The devastating fire does not stop Plow Creek from celebrating the resurrection with a fish breakfast.

Boo sat under the maple trees on the meadow with the few things she'd been able to save as she dashed out of the house: a handful of scrapbooks, the guinea pig in its cage. Evening was falling, but parts of the house still burned. The firemen continued working till well past full dark. A few of us still stood near, watching smoke rise from the ruins.

I hope you'll pardon me for telling this story from my own point of view. It is still all so vivid to me. Here are the other things I know.

Nobody knows how the fire started; the investigator ruled it "cause unknown." It started near the back of the house. When the children inside realized what was happening, they reacted very well: they shouted "Fire! Everybody get out!" and got out the front of the house. Boo and Martin tried to fight the fire which had by then engulfed the porch, and Boo suffered a first-degree burn from trying to push a burning box off the porch. But the porch roof had already caught on fire, and they could not stop the onslaught; so they grabbed what they could and got out as well.

The Grahams lost everything they had, with a few exceptions-- things grabbed from the house or sifted out of the rubble afterward. They lost all the family's desktop computers, all their furniture and clothing and house wares, passports and documents, and most of all books, scrapbooks, photo albums of their life together, and family heirlooms. These things were precious and are a terrible loss to Boo and Steve.

The Prairie House was the most beautiful, solidly built, energy-efficient house at Plow Creek, and its loss is a terrible blow to the Fellowship, not only financially. It was the work of their hands. The house was built by Rick Reha, David Gale, and many others, with a unique post-and-beam construction and a passive solar design needing only wood heat to supplement it. Several Plow Creek families have raised their children in it. It was a well-loved house. The remains of the house, which was left partly standing after the fire, will be demolished and hauled away by the time this is printed, by a local contractor, for approximately \$6,500 dollars.

The Grahams lived temporarily in the guestrooms in the Common Building basement after the fire, and have now moved to a partially repaired farmhouse a couple of miles down the road, which they are renting. It is not big enough to suit their needs nor in excellent repair, but does have land for their animals. They still hope to buy land somewhere and establish a farm and guesthouse for the poor. The Grahams are very grateful both to the Plow Creek community and to many in the surrounding community for the many kinds of help they have received. Friends, please pray for us all.

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In other Plow Creek news:

- The weather has turned warm early this year, and the strawberries are coming on fast!
- The farm has welcomed three

interns so far this summer: Bruce Schoenbein, April Kunieda, and Oscar Mendez, who liked his internship last year so much he came back. We are also happy to welcome Kate Bierma, from Reba, who began her farm internship in early June.

- David Gale suffered a minor stroke in mid-February. He has been recovering, working on physical therapy, and has begun driving again.
- Christiana Peterson is expecting her second child this fall! □

News from Sojourners

By Katie Piché & Rick DiMicco

Dear Rick,
 I wonder if you would be up for writing the SMC news. It is due this Saturday by midnight. I could do it, but I would prefer things not be told from my perspective this time. I have included some things that I know can be reported on. Can you let me know either way if you think you are up for this. Thanks in advance for considering.
 Love,
 Katie

Topics:

- Adam and Amanda Wynant's baby is due in May.
- Matt and Krista Creeger's baby is also due in May.
- Tessa Richardson is engaged to Tim Fortescue- getting married in July.
- Decade Birthdays Celebrations (Ruben and Mateo -10, Zoe-50, Renata-30, Teri-60)
- Say something about Easter.
- Pichés going to work with Jaime and Marvin Trapnell, who run MCC's SWAP program in Isom, KY. They're just going for the summer.
- Kids Week/SMC Youth week Preparations

- Church Study on non-violence

Prayer Requests:

- Lily Martinez lost the job she has had for the last 6 years.
- Christi Beutler is struggling with cancer.
- Zoe and her new daughter Gigi are doing well- pray for them as they continue to learn how to bond with each other.
- Gish Family health- the four of them have been fighting various sicknesses. Debbie has been diagnosed with walking pneumonia.
- Tim Otto as he works on his book.
- Lots of transitions for many Sojourners coming up

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 Katie, Katie,

You have to know by now that I adore you, and as much as I hate to say it, you should also know that I am the most socially inept person you'll ever want to meet.

Whenever I think about new born babies all I can think about is please don't leave me alone with them, in fact I only feel safe if I'm on the other side of the room.

As for Tessa's or anybody else's engagement all I feel is "oh brother" you're in for it now". And as far as birthdays are concerned I just see them as an excuse to

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Sojourner apprentices. Bottom L to R: Levi, Renata, Amanda, and Adam. Top L to R: Allan and Rob.

Celebrations

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get drunk and maybe even mourn a little.

Easter is an occasion of awe and confusion for me, and I'm very selfish about you and Dan leaving for 3 months to go anywhere - I don't want you to go.

Kids have become Idols.

And most people are never willing to even see their own violence which makes being personally non violent a taboo subject.

Forgiveness for myself and others is about the only thing I ever pray for.

I have a very skewed way of arriving at any sort of perspective, it's just the way I'm wired (too many short circuits).

As I said, I really do love you, but I am too much of a misfit to be able to say the nice things that the SMC newsletter needs.

Please forgive me ~ rick

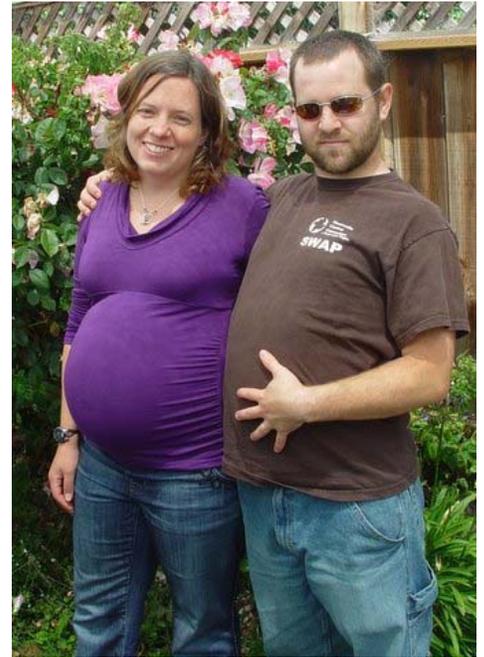
◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Dear Rick,

Can I submit that to be printed anonymously in the SMC newsletter? I don't think you are the only one that feels that way and people like to read things that they can relate to. Because ultimately people only love themselves and things that remind them of themselves.

Love,
Katie

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆



The pregnant Matt and Krista.

Hey,

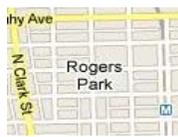
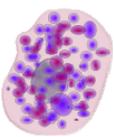
It don't have to be anonymous, the only reason I've learned to control my tongue at all is because some people take me wrong, they think I'm just trying to hurt them- And No, I'm not just trying to hurt them, most of the time I'm just trying to get them to stop hurting themselves. Katie I think people really kid themselves about their holiness, and it makes me feel so terribly lonely sometimes, I honestly believe that when we constantly seek each other's approval it gets to be all that matters, and we build a prison around ourselves that shields out God. We can't be saints unless we admit to each other that our feet are dirty, how the hell can you want a pedicure when your feet stink?

Aw, I know I'm just a grumpy old man, but I used to be a grumpy young one.

Love you,
rick ☐



Jenny Prosa consoles housemate Caedmon as they watch Renata's birthday whipped cream game from the sideline.

The  **from**  (done in Pictlish by  ~ ~ <past tense>  +F)

 +**T** is  to  again. He's  this  named Paul Alex-

ander  a  on  and  by doing  s with  he

knows there. He's also  to a  -no-  about their

 s. He's very , so he is  for your  s. ---- By the

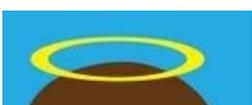
 you  this,  -G  will be  a nearby organization

called **Good News Partners** . We are all very .

We recently went to it's    and there must have been between

 and  there.  which you  about in the last

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the  got. A  was  by 

If you need a translation of the above news from Reba Living Water, please contact Doug Selph.

Meditation

By Anne Cavitt

The grass I crossed to get here
is miraculously green
From where I now stand harmless in right
field

I shade my eyes from the sunset blazing
level across newly raked dirt with its
curved ridges spiraling out from the
pitcher's mound—
a mystic labyrinth interrupted by pits our
cleats have dug in

My friends are playing softball drenched in
light

which fills the infield and anoints each head
each arm, back, shoulder
with an oil of flame

They stir a haze of dust by their moving meditation
their liturgy of bend, gather, throw
the ringing call of the bat
and the glove's antiphon



Photograph by Abby Nafziger

I am grateful for the time I have
to stand and let the sunset haze reveal them to me
while I wait for the ball to come
while I wait to join the dance

Shalom Connections
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