

connection



The Speakers —p6

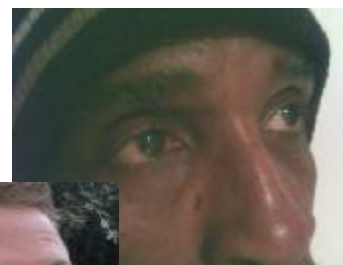


The Candidates —p8



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CHAPLAIN

Marcos Apolonio, chaplain@sdakinship.org

WHO WE ARE...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is a non-profit support organization. We minister to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being of current and former Seventh-day Adventists who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals and their families and friends. Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of LGBTI Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community through education, advocacy, and reconciliation. Kinship is a global organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people worldwide.

Founded in 1976 the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the United States. Kinship has a board made up of thirteen officers. There are also regional and population coordinators in specific areas. The current list of members and friends includes approximately 1,550 people in more than forty-three countries.

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship believes the Bible does not condemn or even mention homosexuality as a sexual orientation. Ellen G. White does not parallel any of the Bible texts that are used to condemn homosexuals. Most of the anguish imposed upon God's children who grow up as LGBTI has its roots in the misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

SUPPORT KINSHIP

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship operates primarily on contributions from its members and friends. Help us reach out to more LGBTI Adventists by making a tax-deductible donation to Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to the address below or donate securely online at sdakinship.org. (You can also donate using your Visa or MasterCard by contacting treasurer@sdakinship.org. You will be phoned so that you can give your credit card information in a safe manner.)



PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, USA

or visit Kinship's website at: www.sdakinship.org



From the Editor

Have I not commanded you, be strong and of a good courage. Be not afraid, nor be thou dismayed for the Lord your God is with you.

Joshua 1:9

I write these "From the Editors" just as I finish editing and get ready to ship the copy off to the proof readers. Often my remarks here are inspired by what I have read in the pages you are about to peruse. As I type during Gay Pride month, I am thinking about all those who have, by their courage, made possible my ability to live life safely and with joy. As I read the articles in this issue, I am struck again by the courage of the people represented here. Victor's poem inspires me. The courage of the Dutch Union of Seventh-day Adventists to think about, write, and share their proclamation inspires me. Knowing that choosing to be a leader and working to accomplish goals opens one up to the complaints and castigations of others, I am inspired by the people who are running for Kinship office. I am well aware of the price Michele paid for choosing to live honestly as a transsexual woman and a city of Los Angeles fire captain. She inspires me. Oh my, what Daneen and Steven have gone through as Kinship allies and producers of *Seventh-Gay Adventists*! What an inspiring gift they are to his community. As I read the bios of Natalie, Breanna, Travis, and Victor, I think about the ways aging gracefully, building a life after the death of a beloved partner, being open about opinions and alliances, and living the struggle to find an honest spirituality takes courage, and I am inspired. Thanks to you all for keeping me reflective and working to live an honest and graceful life. Take good care of yourselves, for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine

July

- 1 Region 2 Vespers*
- 17-19 Women & Children First
- 19-24 Kampmeeting USA

August

- 5 Region 2 Vespers*
- 19-21 Region 8 Retreat

September

- 2 Region 2 Vespers*
- 9-12 European Kinship Meeting Paris**
- 12-18 EKM Holiday week France**
- 30 Board Meeting, Nags Head NC

October

- 1-2 Boad Meeting Nags Head NC
- 7 Region 2 Vespers*
- 20-23 The Book & The Beach

November

- 4 Region 2 Vespers*
- 3-6 Vermont Mini-Kampmeeting

December

- 2 Region 2 Vespers*
- 17 Boston's Gay Men's Chorus Holiday Concert
- 30 First Night in Williamsburg, VA

January
2012

- 1 First Night in Williamsburg, VA

* For more information about the Region 2 Vespers, write to YSElliott@aol.com.

** Early Bird registration for EKM before August 1 at www.sdakinship.org.

*When you put your hand to the plow
You can't put it down
Until you get to the end of the row.*

—Alice Paul

Statement on Violence Against Homosexuals

I am
I'm in the midst of a people that
judge me
cage me,
discount me,
discuss me,
denounce me
anything but love me
a people who wrap their bigotry
in the pages of a Bible
they've read many times
but never discovered
a people who live to pacify
the criminal deity they invented
who preach a love
they've temporarily rented
yes, I'm the midst
of sanctified rage
skinless and abhorrent
ornamented with hymns
masking monstrous
under currents.

Yet despite jagged looks
probationary inclusion
and metallic embraces
I walk with my shadow,
inseparable as one
proof certain
I was imagined by God
spoken into existence
by the Word of His mouth....

I am!

Victor R. Pond

The Executive Committee of the Netherlands Union of Seventh-day Adventists, on May 17, unanimously pronounced itself against violence towards homosexuals. This decision is in harmony with the Statement on Human Relations by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church World Headquarters.

Violence against homosexual men and women – subtle or less subtle – occurs regularly in this country. They are beaten up, harassed, bullied or called names. On occasions their cars are damaged or their houses plastered with hate language. In many places they dare not to be open about being homosexual.

On the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO), the members of the committee, as representatives of churches in the Netherlands, declare as follows:

'We do not all have the same views on homosexuality, but we are one in the belief that all human beings are created in God's image and are precious in His eyes. Therefore people should treat each other with dignity – respectfully, peacefully and affectionately – and violence against homosexuals, in any form, is completely unacceptable.'

We believe any type of violation of human rights is wrong. Today we particularly emphasize the violation of the human rights of homosexuals. This includes all forms of physical, psychological and verbal violence against homosexuals, as well as inciting these expressions of violence. Those who use violence against fellow human beings, made in the image of God, ignore Christ's appeal to love God and their neighbor. In our own communities of faith the human dignity of homosexuals has been damaged by uncharitable and unsympathetic behaviour.

We dedicate ourselves to defend, in every way, the dignity of all people. We call on worshippers in our congregations to refrain from promoting any form of violence against homosexuals. Churches desire, after the example of Christ, to be places of openness and understanding, a safe haven for all, including homosexuals.

We call on everyone, whatever their place in society, to contribute to a healthier social climate by offering an environment in which homosexuals know they are safe.

We will endeavour, in our international ecclesiastical contacts and in our contacts with representatives of other faiths, to oppose homophobia, hatred and violence against homosexuals. ▽

**Nearly all LGBTI Adventists have one thing in common:
the need to connect with other LGBTI Adventists.**

You can change this

**by starting a Kinship Chapter in your own area.
Contact the Kinship Office for more information at
memberinfo@sdakinship.org.**



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

A film about love, sex, and eternal life.

So When Is This Film Going to Be Done Anyway?

A fan of the film on Facebook recently sent me a message teasing me about when he's going to be able to see the film, "I'm excited to see the movie finished. Everybody says it will be done soon, but there is no date announced...sounds to me like the Coming of Jesus—it will be soon, but we don't know the date!"

I hear you! And I feel the same way. It really is coming along, but it's just a lot of work, most of it difficult to make visible to the film fans unless you want to come sit in front of our computer monitors as we go through footage and work on the script.

I wanted to give you all a spring update on just what's been happening with the film.



The Big News First

First, the really, really good news is that we just found out that almost half of the funding we need for post-production is in the mail! Wow. If I tell you that I was actually playing the *Hallelujah Chorus* on my computer when the email came in saying that a significant contribution was in the mail to the San Francisco Film Society, you'll think I'm exaggerating. But remember, I'm a documentarian, so I only tell the truth! (Lily likes big, grand pieces of music right now, hence the melodrama.)

I cried with relief and joy. It was the first moment when I felt like I could honestly know that this film will get done. We will need definitely need more funds—this final phase of the film is actually the most expensive because it's no longer a phase where we can do pretty much all the work ourselves, but I think we've reached the critical mass we needed to build momentum, both for ourselves and with the other supporters who support the vision of the film.

So thanks to the donors who step in big ways, but an equally big thanks to the many, many of

you who continue to support the film in your own capacity. Truly, it wouldn't be happening without all of you. We have a friend from college who contributes \$20 a month, and her encouragement and support is just as vital to preserving the momentum and vision of the film. I'm absolutely amazed beyond belief when I think of how many people have contributed to this film. I continue to live by Margaret Mead's words, *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

It Gets Better (for Adventists Too)

As many of you know, I also produced a short project as part of the "It Gets Better" campaign with the help of Traveling Muse Pictures and New Name Pictures in Hollywood. Especially after the suicide of Holly Drum in the Kinship family at Christmas, it felt like an appropriate response to try to get the message out to Adventist LGBT youth that it can get better—sometimes even in the church. (We featured people who have stayed in the church and

those who have left to find spiritual wholeness). It was an incredible shoot, and I'll be meeting with the editor next week to trim the first cut down.

What's Next

For the SGA film, the timing always depends on funding, which is why I tend to say "soon" instead of give a real date. My personal goal is to be screening the film by this fall, and after the good funding news that we got this week, I am starting to feel pretty strongly that that is going to happen.

Our next step is to find an editor (we'll still direct and produce—and write—through the editing process). If we can't find the right editor with availability this summer, then Stephen will edit the first cut, and we'll bring another editor in for a consult and polish after that. And then we'll have music, sound mix, color correction, website design (I want the website to be a place where people can continue to share stories), and, one day not-too-far-off, screenings and discussions! We still are planning some production travel—we're not done shooting, but we're just a lot more focused on what we need. I'm ➤

Seventh-Gay Adventists - Movie

very excited to report that we'll be filming an Adventist gay wedding at the end of July!

We do continue to get great encouragement from the SF Film Society who really believe in this project, but grant money in this economy for documentaries has gotten incredibly scarce, so I'm feeling like we might have to continue to get the majority of funding from individuals, especially since so far most foundations have seen this film as just a little too religious for their tastes. I'm sure I'll be in touch more about this later, but for this newsletter, I want to focus on the really good news that we have almost half of our post-production funding on the way.

Thank you so much for your support and ongoing encouragement. Your feedback and thoughts are always welcome.

Back to that small group of committed people...

I attended a workshop two weeks ago on emotional intelligence at our church, and the presenter (a widely respected brain function expert), said that it only takes five percent of the population having a consciousness shift to have a ripple effect on the rest of the population. She was actually referring to the Middle East, but I suddenly felt really positive about the potential for this film to start a movement not just within the Adventist church but also in other conservative religious circles. Based on the conversations I've had with Adventists around the country, I feel really positive about finding that five percent. As Stephen likes to say about Apple computer users, "We may only be five percent of the market, but we're the top five percent!"

Here's to the five!

Fondly,

Daneen Akers, Producer ▼

www.SGAmovie.com



We want to give you a sense of just a few of the speakers who will be present. Remember, it is not too late to register.



Ryan Bell has been a pastor since 1994, and served three congregations before becoming senior pastor of Hollywood Seventh-day Adventist Church in June, 2005. In 2000, he received his Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University and in 2010 his Doctor of Ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary. He currently serves on the Board of

Directors of the Interreligious Council of Southern California, the advisory board of the Guibord Center: Religion Inside Out, and as a member of the Abrahamic Faiths Peacemaking Initiative. Bell is a clergy leader with LA Voice/PICO, and writes for a wide range of publications, including *The Huffington Post* and *The Hillhurst Review* as well as his personal blog called *Intersections*. Ryan lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two daughters.

Davina Kotulski, received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University and completed her coach training at the Coaches Training Institute in San Rafael, CA. She presently has a private therapy and coaching practice and is a sought after public speaker and consultant.

Davina Kotulski is an activist for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equal rights and a nationally recognized leader, speaker, and writer within the marriage equality movement,



dating back to her efforts to pass a pro-marriage equality initiative with Californians for Same Sex Marriage (CASSM) in 1999 and in her work to defeat Prop 22, the Knight Initiative.

In November, 2004, she became the Deputy Director of Marriage Equality USA and co-organized a LIFT THE BAN rally in Oakland, CA. In June, 2005, she became the Executive Director of Marriage Equality USA.

Davina Kotulski is the author of *"Why You Should Give A Damn About Gay Marriage"* (Advocate Books, 2004) and *"Love Warriors: The Rise of the Marriage Equality Movement and Why It Will Prevail"* (Create Space, 2010).



Marcos Apolonio, MSW, BA, who formerly served as an Adventist pastor and now resides in northern California, is the Membership Chaplain for SDA Kinship.

Marcos is an ordained pastor who worked as a youth pastor in large Seventh-day Adventist Church congregations in Brazil. He is also an associate clinical social worker within the framework of strengths-based approach, cognitive behavioral therapy, family systems, and supporting GLBTIQ persons who are dealing with sexual

orientation and gender issues in the context of conservative faith-based communities.

Marcos speaks English, Portuguese, and Spanish. He will be available for individual counseling throughout Kampmeeting and his counseling services are available at *no charge* to Kinship members and those attending Kampmeeting. ▽

▽ Kinship ▽ News ▽ Kinship ▽

Region 9: Palm Springs Chapter – Joc Anderson

At noon on May 22 it was already 90 degrees in Rancho Mirage, California. Good thing we had planned a desert pool party. We enjoyed Chinese food, barbecued hamburgers, vegaburgers, hot dogs, vegelinks, and corn in the husk. The huge cake at the center of the dessert table was inscribed with the names of May and June birthday celebrants. In case that was not enough sugar, we had our choice of every imaginable flavor of ice cream, fresh cherries, melons, apricots, pineapple, cheesecake, chocolate chip cookies, brownies, and cream puffs.

Our group of LGBTI folk and gay friendly guests seemed to enjoy meeting new friends and getting reacquainted with Kinship members. The crowd of about seventy-eight people swam, played volleyball and basketball and tried the Jacuzzi. We are already looking forward to our next gathering. ▽

Thoughts on Gender



Michele Kammerer
The Center for Gender Sanity

On nearly every continent, and for all of recorded history, thriving cultures have recognized, revered, and integrated more than two genders. Terms such as transgender and gay are strictly new constructs that assume three things: that there are only two sexes (male/female), as many as two sexualities (gay/straight), and only two genders (man/woman). Yet hundreds of distinct societies around the globe have their own long-established traditions for third, fourth, fifth, or more genders. Fred Martinez, for example, was not a boy who wanted to be a girl, but both a boy and a girl — an identity his Navajo culture recognized and revered as *nádleehí*. Most Western societies have no direct correlation for this Native "two-spirit" tradition, nor for the many other communities without strict either/or conceptions of sex, sexuality, and gender. Worldwide, the sheer variety of gender expression is almost limitless. Take a tour and learn how other cultures see gender diversity. ▽

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/two-spirits/map.html>

PARIS				2011
Liberté	♥	Egalité	♥	Kinship
Réunion Européenne de Kinship Septembre 9-12 European Kinship Meeting				

Don't forget to register before August 1 to profit from our early bird registration € 225 (\$ 315). After July registration fee will rise to € 275 (\$ 385) per person if there are still places available.

Vacance ♥ Kinship Europe ♥ Holiday

For our EKM holiday week, which is following our meeting, we have found a stunning place in the countryside about 45 km from Paris. This lovely place has a beautiful view, a wonderful garden with a little swimming pool, and is nicely decorated. Only for the happy few who register in time! Price for the week approx. € 175 (room only).

More information on www.sdakinship.org.



Kinship Elections



An integral part of our yearly work is to give you the opportunity to get to know the people who run for office and to vote. We are now using electronic voting so that Kinship members in every country have access to our process. You will be getting more information via our electronic newsletter in the next month. For now, here is the final slate of people running for office.



President – Yolanda Elliott

Bio: Yolanda Elliott is a 16-year Kinship member, seeking re-election to the office of President. She has served Kinship in various capacities over the years and is experienced as a Region Coordinator, Women's Coordinator, Vice President, and Kampmeeting Site Facilitator. She is the owner and manager of Yolanda's Home Assisted Living. She writes, "I believe that my success at running my

own business, which includes daily interacting and dealing with people with different beliefs and worldviews than mine, plus a successful tenure as Region 2 Coordinator, Women's Coordinator, Vice President, and President, qualifies me to continue executing the duties of President for a new term."

Position Statement: "I am fully committed to Kinship, its mission, and its members, and have the professional leadership experience to meet the requirements of this position. I envision Kinship as a place where every member feels they belong regardless of where they may be on their spiritual journey, wherever in the world they may reside, and whomever they may love. I see such beauty in the diversity of all our Kinship members."

Interests: Reading, traveling, good friends.



Vice-president – Naveen Jonathan

Bio: Naveen Jonathan lives in Orange County, California. He is a licensed Marriage & Family Therapist in the state of California. He is a full-time faculty member in the Department of Psychology at Chapman University and the Clinical Director of the Frances Smith Center for Individual & Family Therapy in Orange, California. During Naveen's 10 years in Kinship, he has

served in the roles of IMRU? Coordinator (2004-2007), Inland Empire Chapter Co-leader (2006-2007), and Kampmeeting Coordinator (2007-2009). He has been the current Vice President since 2009 and chairs the Member Services Committee.

Position Statement: "I would like to run for re-election for the position of Vice President. If re-elected, I intend to continue chairing the Member Services Committee and be a support to the president. My vision for Kinship is for it to be an active, safe, and supportive group for all current/former Seventh-day Adventist LGBTIs. I intend to explore ways that the organization can attract/retain members from all age groups. Kinship is very near to my heart, and I would be honored to serve in this leadership capacity again."

Interests: Traveling, reading, movies, shopping, theatre, museums, music, baseball, soccer, mentoring.



Director of Church Relations – Terence Rice

Bio: Terence Rice, a Kinship member of two years, graduated with a Master of Divinity from Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. He came to California (> p.9)

Position Statement: "If I am elected to the Director of Church Relations position, I will initiate strategies to foster further dialog between (> p.9)

➤ Bio Terence Rice

to fulfill his dream to be a Bible teacher at an Adventist academy in Fresno. As he faced the challenges of remaining in the closet, God called him back to San Francisco, his birthplace, to embrace who he was created to be, in a nurturing gay-friendly environment during his chaplaincy residency at UCSF Medical Center. Terry writes, "Second Wind and Berkeley Adventist Church were valuable faith communities that helped me take these steps of faith. And again, by faith, God returned me to an Adventist college community, but now as a chaplain in a non-discriminating Catholic hospital, with my membership currently held in W. "I'm comforted knowing that the pastoral leadership is aware of what 'safe places' are for LGBTI people. Here in Walla Walla, I've been blessed by the Kinship chapter I co-started and continue to enjoy fellowship with friends of Kinship, church friends, and friends of other faiths and cultures," says Terry



Director of Women's Interests – Julie Beach

Bio: Julie Beach, a member of Kinship for 14 years, writes, "I was born and raised Seventh-day Adventist and have gone through the Seventh-day Adventist school system through high school. My three children have all gone to Adventist schools, and I've gone through many emotional struggles in dealing with the acceptance and support of the Seventh-day Adventist community. My walk in coming to peace between my sexuality and religious beliefs has not been easy, and I have a deep compassion for those who struggle down that very same path. I've worked in the tech industry for over 30 years with the majority of my time being in project/program management. I have served as president, treasurer, and captain in other non-profit organizations."



Director of Women's Interests – Karen Wetherell

Bio: Karen Wetherell, a 10-year member of Kinship, is a lifetime Adventist who grew up in the back yard of the General Conference. She went to Seventh-day Adventist schools from first grade through college and has worked both in the church institutions and outside the church. Karen says, "I have four daughters, two grandsons, two dogs, and a cat. I am the wife of one woman and learn every day how important it is to treasure your friends and (➤ p.10)

➤ Position Statement Terence Rice

LGBTI people and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I envision Kinship chapters all over the world being able to invite 'safe' pastors of chapter members to periodic dialogue and fellowship with Kinship chapter members. My plan is to hold periodic sit-down meals together with accepting pastors and seek for ways our group can get involved in a non-threatening way with the local churches that we represent in our chapter. I will continue the efforts of Dave Ferguson to foster dialogue that makes the Seventh-day Adventist Church a safer place than it ever was before. I will also search for ways we can foster safety for pastors who desire to support the LGBTI population without jeopardizing their positions in leadership. My position will demonstrate these initiatives in my own chapter with the pastors that support us on different levels."

Interests: Hiking, following God's leading in where He calls me to be in ministry.

Position Statement: "My goal is to provide support to other women who are facing both everyday life and tough challenges by providing a safe place to express their feelings, connecting them to appropriate resources, and arranging for any support structure that they may needed."

Interests: Animal lover of horses, dogs, cats, and goats; active member of a Western Equestrian drill team; passionate about fundraising for Relay for Life in honor of my late partner; love for photography, scrapbooking, and reading.

Position Statement: "I have enjoyed this position for the last two years. It has been fun for me to get to know so many more of the women in Kinship. I love the interest and activity in the women's chats and also the Facebook page. I think we have become much more connected and that is (➤ p.10)

➤ **Bio KarenWetherell**

family and especially your spouse. I am employed as an accountant and enjoy making the numbers come out." Karen has previously served as treasurer and helper to Region 1 coordinator, as well as Director of Women's Interests.



➤ **Position Statement K. Wetherell**

my goal. I want chats and also the Facebook page. I think we have become much more connected and that is my goal. I want us to be a community for both support and celebration."

Interests: Washington Redskins, Democrats, photography, painting, woodworking, snorkeling, family, and pets. ▽

We would like to introduce you to...



Victor R. Pond

I was born into a Seventh-day Adventist family in the Republic of Panama. I'm the oldest of five. We are all independent college graduates who mostly live here in the U.S. One lives in Costa Rica.

I obtained my degree in psychology from the National University of Panama and immigrated to the US. in 1981. Currently my title is Director of Policy, Research, and Community Health at the GRIOT Circle, Inc. a community-based organization that provides psycho-social services to LGBT seniors of African descent. We're located in Brooklyn, NY.

I have several interests outside of work: music, art (painting), writing (both fiction and non-fiction), traveling, cooking, interior design, science fiction (Samuel Delaney, Octavia Butler), Black studies, Bible research, health research updates, meeting new and interesting people.

Red is my favorite color. I like Gospel, jazz, classical and rhythm-and-blues music. My favorite movies are *The Color Purple*, *Dune*, *The Associate*, *Madea goes to Jail*, and *Crouching Tiger-Hidden Dragon* My favorite books are *The Bible*, *Beloved*, *Wildseed*, *The Great Controversy*, and *Go Tell It on The Mountain*. I enjoy eating Afro/Caribbean, Chinese, Indian, Mediterranean and southern US cuisines.

I learned about Kinship back in the early '90s. This organization has been very good for me. It provides a reliable source of support and encourage-

ment to cope with the institutionalized homophobia in the SDA Church.

I am single at the moment and hoping for "him" to stop by... he's stuck in traffic!

My spiritual journey has me learning to trust God completely through whatever trial, tribulation, loss, disappointment, or detour. I work to see life and myself through His eyes; recognizing my utter inability to get it right without Him!

I'm very involved with the aging movement, specifically LGBT POC (People of Color) elders. I recently attended the American Society on Aging Conference held in San Francisco (3,400 attendees!). I was one of 26 professionals selected from a national pool of 86 applicants to participate in their New Venture in Leadership (NVL) This project is a one-year-long coaching/mentoring program for leadership development working in the Aging field.



Natalie Duarte de Escalante

I was raised in the Seventh-day Adventist community. My father was a teacher in the Adventist schools, who later became a principal. He also served as a deacon and a Sabbath School teacher. I was raised in New Orleans and in Florida. I still reside in Miami. I have a master's degree in Visual Disabilities from Florida State University, with a certificate in gerontology. I would very much like to pursue either an MBA or a doctorate degree in the future.

I work as a Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT). I teach people who are blind and visually impaired how to adapt daily living skills. This can be anything from learning methods, to labeling clothing so that it can be identified by color, adapted methods of safe cooking, personal grooming tasks such as applying cosmetics when you cannot see well (or at all) the make-up that you are applying, pouring hot and cold drinks, etc. These are all tasks that sighted people often take

for granted because we have always had the vision to perform these tasks without having to give them much thought. Think about how you would perform the above tasks if you woke up in the morning with limited or no vision. That is where I would come in as a CVRT. I teach people how to adapt these tasks so that they can continue to perform them independently.

I love reading, swimming in the ocean, spending time with my husband and my kitty, Soxx. I also enjoy any activity that gets me out into nature. I love attending festivals, plays, and spending time with my friends whether we are having a serious discussion or just goofing around!

My favorite color is pink. Ever since I got married, through loving me my husband has shown me that I no longer have to be the tough girl that I was used to trying too hard to portray. I learned that it was okay for me to show my soft side and even my vulnerabilities. That was when I began to feel feminine for the first time in my life and when I started to enjoy the color pink.

My favorite music is Dixieland Jazz...I grew up in New Orleans, so Dixieland is the only form of Jazz that I like. I also love some good gospel music (not the slow stuff). Gimme some old-fashioned Kirk Franklin STOMP! Now *that* is what I call church music; something that makes people feel happy and like celebrating, not this hundred-year-old stuff that puts me to sleep.

I think my favorite movies are *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Wall-E*. I only recently discovered *Fiddler on the Roof*. I have always been interested in Jewish culture, but actually have very little knowledge of it. I find this movie to be very down-to-earth, uplifting,

and just fun! *Wall-E* has got to be one of the most adorable animated characters I have seen in ages. He reminds me of my kitty. I believe that the movie also sends a good message that we really need to start taking care of our planet before it is too late.

I can't think of any particular book that is my favorite. I do not generally re-read books.

I love Thai and Italian food. You can bribe me to do anything with a good salad!

I learned about Kinship when I was searching the internet for sites for former Adventists. I wanted to see if I could join one of their sites when I bumped into Kinship among the list of results. I clicked on it and realized that this is a group where many of the people who are members of this site may feel like outsiders when they attend church. I kept revisiting and looking at the website for several weeks before I sent a request to join the group.

I am married to my husband, Art, who has been my soul mate for the last five-and-a-half years. I attend the Miami Springs SDA church because I have found a pastor there who truly cares about people and is taking time out of his own personal schedule to do individual Bible studies with me.

My own spiritual journey? I always say half-joking that "I'm going to hell anyway, so what does it matter if I do XYZ?" Honestly, I do believe that God does not want me in heaven because I don't believe that He loves me. What I need most is people who will allow me to express my frustrations, anger, and my depression without judgment, but who will help guide me in the right direction where I can discover how to learn that God is *love*, that He really does care about me, and that He is not the evil Father who has abandoned His child (me).

Travis Roe

I was born a sixth-generation Seventh-day Adventist on a small farm in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada in 1976. We moved with my maternal grandmother to Oregon when I was 2. I lived with my parents and grandmother until I was 7, when my parents divorced. My first 6 years of school were spent in the public school system. From 7th grade through college I went to Adventist schools. I graduated from Portland Adventist Academy and earned my BA in English from Andrews University. Andrews is also the place where I came out.

Currently I'm a quality assurance analyst for a web development company. I am transitioning to project management.

One of the sources of great joy in my life is my work with The Boston Sisters, a Mission House of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. It is an all-volunteer organization that was founded on Easter Sunday in 1979. Its main goal is to spread universal joy and expiate stigmatic guilt (or in simpler terms we want



you to do whatever makes you happy as long as you're not hurting anyone else). I met the Sisters around the time that I was truly understanding that I am an SDA-born agnostic Christian. As such I no longer feel it is necessary for me to debate the "facts" of religion and instead focus on the "message" that most religions share: Love for a higher power and Love for humanity. Everything else doesn't matter after that. So once I'd had this per- ➤

sonal revelation, the Sisters were a perfect way for me to express my ability to serve my community. Thus, Sandra Musique (aka Sondra Music) was born. Having a physical manifestation of my beliefs allows me to reaffirm my faith without having a religious dogma involved. It's perfect for me, though I realize other people have their own paths that work for them. I feel if God could create the universe in seven days, He/She/They are more than capable of having us come to Him/Her/Them from a multitude of directions.

The list of "favorites". My favorite color depends on the day. Lately it's been purple/lavender. My favorite music is Pink Martini. My favorite movie is *Steel Magnolias* (I couldn't be gayer, I know). My favorite book is *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh. When it comes to food, I haven't met an ethnicity I didn't like. If I were forced at gunpoint to choose only one food to eat for the rest of my life, it'd probably be Mexican.

I learned about Kinship from the GaySDA room on IRC chat (this was just before IMRU? was started and *long* before Facebook). Floyd was actually one of the first people I met online and was there during my tumultuous coming-out period.

I'm not currently in a relationship, but who knows what'll happen? My family still lives on the West

Coast while I live in Boston. I have a great group of friends (both Sisterly and secular) and have built my life here. Who knows if I'll ever return to Oregon for good, but thanks to airplanes and the internet, it's not a decision I need to make right now.

Before I begin to answer the question of "what is the most important thing about my spiritual journey," I want to stress that my beliefs are purely mine. I do not pass judgment on anyone else for their beliefs. For me, the most important thing is to let go of all the certainty with which I was raised. I no longer care if the world was created in seven days or in a Big Bang. I *believe* it was created in seven days, but if it *wasn't* it doesn't really matter because I wasn't there at the beginning and neither was anyone else. It also really doesn't matter to me if Jesus was truly the son of God or just a good man. I *believe* he is the Son of God, but if he turned out to just be a good man would that make his teachings any less lovely? Would following his example of loving others be less valid? No. I wasn't there when he walked the earth, so how can I express certainty? I *know* I don't know everything and I'm okay with that. I believe what I believe until I am proven, without a shadow of a doubt, that I am wrong. Until then I try to live a good life helping others and attempting to make the world a little bit brighter.



Hi my name is Deanna Betar

I was born in Los Angeles, California in 1937. None of my family are Adventists. Even so, I went to Glendale Union Academy in Glendale, California, from first thru twelfth grade. I graduated in 1956. I got married right out of high school because that was what I was supposed to do. I have one son, Johnny 49.

I lived in Louisiana, Florida, Germany and then Arizona. I worked various jobs and then went to college at age 45. Now I work for Home Depot at the Special Services Desk. I've been with the Depot for 19½ years in Mesa, Arizona. I work so much I don't really have any hobbies at the moment. I do like to travel and watch T.V. Of course I also like my son.

My favorite color is pink, because I think it is pretty. I enjoy classical and easy listening music. Movies: it's *Pretty Woman*. My favorite book is *Gone With The Wind*. My favorite food is Mexican.

I learned about Kinship twenty-five years ago from a friend who was working for the Loma Linda church. I have not been able to participate in anything because of my work schedule but I would love to see some activity here in Arizona.

I lost my partner of twenty-eight years on June 14, 2010. This has been a very tough year. She was a delightful person and wonderful friend, as well as my beloved partner. She has a daughter, son, three granddaughters and three great-grandchildren with whom I am close. I have only been able to survive this last year because I have a strong relationship with my heavenly Father. I thank my Adventist schooling for this.

I am just finally embracing the idea that I do not

All I really need is love, but a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt!

—Lucy, Peanuts

want to live my life alone. B. J. always told me she didn't want me to be alone but I never thought I would get to the point that I could even entertain the idea. One of the important things missing in my life now is having someone to love: corny, but true.

Would love to be able to make Kampmeeting, but it's not possible this year. I do hope to meet some of you and share our experiences. ▽



The Connection Angels

Several people "hang out in the back rooms" of our production process. We'd like you to get to know about their contributions.

Joachim Deuerling —You may have read Joachim's story last year as the *Connection* covered his Compostella pilgrimage. Joachim is one of our European photographers. He and his partner Stefan live in Bremen, Germany, and have hosted a European Kinship Meeting.

Ivan van Putten —Ivan is a computer consultant whose interest in photography and prodigious amount of work has graced many pages of our issues. He also helps Ruud set up some of the programs that help him do the *Connection* layout. Ivan lives in The Netherlands.

Karen Wetherell —Karen has taken *Connection* pictures in the US and Europe for Kampmeetings, European Kinship meetings, mini-Kampmeetings, board meetings and Kinship field trips. She was a *Connection* proofreader from 2003 to 2007. She has spent many, many hours stuffing, labeling and stamping the mailings. She has also spent many hours helping Ruud and Catherine find a specific photo or head shot that we simply must have and, generally, must have in about one day. She lives with her partner Catherine in Virginia.

Pearl Pangkey —Pearl has spent many Kampmeeting hours taking head shots of attendees, making those of us look good who want to hide our faces. She is also known for her beautiful art shots. Pearl lives with her partner Brenda in Tennessee.

Doolittle's PrintServe —Debbie and the elves Until we work with print publications, we often do not realize how important the printers can be. Debbie has worked with Catherine and two *Connection* layout editors for the last nine years. She has stopped the presses to correct a mistake. She has helped us find and price the right kind of paper, printing process, packing and labeling. She has hired wonderful helpers to get *Connections* stuffed into their envelopes and mailed to Catherine. They work out of Claremont, New Hampshire.

Floyd Pönitz —Floyd does so many things for Kinship that if we took the time to list and describe them all, we would have to dedicate an entire issue to his contributions. Come to think of it, that's not a bad idea. For the *Connection*, Floyd resides on the proof reading team. He makes sure our international languages are spelled correctly, keeps an eye out for good stories, helps keep us safe from political gaffes, and nudges us about introducing new and important topics. He lives with his partner Jeff in Dallas, Texas.

Yolanda Elliott —We all know Yolanda as a stellar Region 2 Coordinator, Women's Interests founder

and Kinship President. She also takes the time to proofread our articles and make sure we are addressing topics that are valuable.

Jacquie Hegarty —Catherine has gently banged her head against the desk when dealing with Jacquie's meticulous proof reading and system development. At the same time, Catherine panics at the thought of having Jacquie ever retire from her volunteer role as *Connection* support. Jacquie is a proof reader. She has designed our media release forms to make sure we are in compliance with privacy ethics and publication law. She has "encouraged" us to set up our policies and procedures. She has worked against deadlines with migraines. She has worked from vacation spots and grandchild visitations. She helped us set up our system for how we proof. She lives with her partner Linda in San Francisco.

Carrol Grady —In snow storms and family gatherings, while writing her own articles and trying to take a break from life's stressors, Carrol has consistently tandemed with Jacquie to make sure our clauses, semi-colons, sentences, spelling, comas, and paragraphs are professional and well thought out. She lives in Snohomish, Washington, with her husband Bob.

Ruben López —"Here he comes to save the day!" When one of our proofreaders needs a break to attend to life, Ruben has graciously stepped in to share his eyes and his skill to pick up the details of our copy. Ruben lives in Southern California and also is the secretary for Kinship.

Ruud Kieboom —All things beautiful about this publication in the last several years have been because of Ruud's artistry, creativity, and vision for our layout. He has almost unceasing energy and commitment to the work. He has worked through sickness, aching teeth, holidays and injury to meet publication deadlines. He makes doing the job of editor a gift and a pleasure. ▽

Health Tips of the Month

In a study, adults who had high cholesterol but were otherwise healthy were able to lower their LDL levels simply by eating lycopene-rich tomato products every day. In the study, both men and women consumed at least 25 milligrams of lycopene every day for several weeks. That's about as much lycopene as you'd find in a mere half-cup serving of tomato sauce. By the end of the study period, most people had knocked their LDL levels down about 10 percent -- which is the kind of improvement you'd expect to see in someone taking a statin medication for a similar amount of time. Researchers think that lycopene reduces cholesterol in a couple of different ways - both by inhibiting the production of LDL and by breaking down this artery-clogging blood fat.



Watermelon is loaded with an amino acid called L-citrulline. And in a small study of prehypertensive people, this compound helped improve circulation and lowered people's systolic blood pressure by as much as 9 points. Pretty sweet! Nine points may sound like a small drop. But it's enough of a



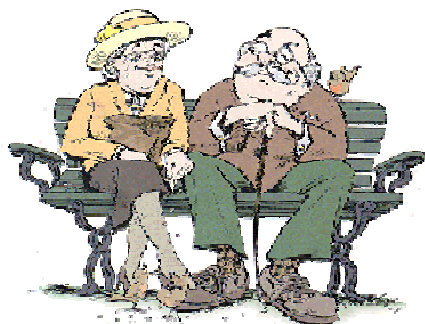
drop to prevent prehypertension from progressing to full-blown hypertension. And a drop in aortic systolic blood pressure is thought to be especially important in mitigating cardiovascular disease risk. In the study, not only did people's systolic blood pressure drop when they took a watermelon extract of L-citrulline and L-arginine, but also their blood flow arterial function improved compared with the placebo group. The watermelon extract used in the study contained approximately 2.7 grams of L-citrulline, which is the same amount you'd get from about 7 cups of watermelon juice. That's a lot of juice. But other studies have shown blood pressure benefits with smaller amounts, so don't feel like you have to eat the whole melon.

Turn back the clock a whopping 12 years with just four simple but super-important habits: Kick butts, booze, junk food, and couch surfing to the curb. Many of us probably have at least two of these unhealthy habits knocked out. But nix the other two and you could live significantly longer. In fact, a large 20-year study showed that engaging in even *one* of these Major Agers - smoking, drinking too much alcohol, eating a poor diet, or skipping exercise - can boost the risk of early death by 80 percent. Of these four Major Agers, smoking was the worst culprit in the bunch. And that was followed closely by getting little to no exercise. But indulging in all four bad habits was *super* bad - and not in a cool teen-movie kind of way. In the study, having all four bad habits tripled people's odds of dying from heart disease and cancer. It also raised the risk of dying early from any cause nearly fourfold compared with the folks who had kicked all of these age-accelerating habits out of their lives. If you have a lot of changes to make, don't fret. Here's some really good news: Simply cutting back on most of these habits will turn back the clock. For example, people in the study grew younger just by getting 30 minutes of exercise each day, munching on at least four servings of fruits and vegetables daily, and getting their number of cocktails down to a moderate level. Mortality rates were below average for this group. So don't feel overwhelmed by the need to be perfect. Change may be easier than you think if you tell yourself it is and you just take baby steps. ▽



Kinship Older Adults

—Virginia Reynolds, coordinator



Research: Happiness Increases after 50

Closely related to the topic of marital conflict is a recent study of happiness over the life-span. In 2008 a phone survey was performed by the Gallup Organization with over 340,000 randomly selected adults aged 18-85 in the U. S. The respondents were average folks, with 29% holding a college degree and a median monthly household income between \$3,000 and \$4,000. The participants were asked to rate how they currently felt their life stood on a scale of 0 ("the worst possible life for you") to 10 ("The best possible life for you"). They were also asked if they had felt various different emotions, such as happiness, enjoyment, stress, sadness, anger, and worry, a lot on the previous day. Lead researcher Dr. Arthur Stone, of Stony Brook University, reports that stress peaked between the ages of 22-25, and decreased drastically after age 50. Worry was relatively constant from 20-40, then declined in the mid-50s. Anger began tapering off after 18; Sadness increased for those in their 40s, and then declined for those in their mid- to late 50's. It increased slightly for those in their mid-70s. (One might well imagine that sadness at those times could be attributed to the loss of parents and partners through death.) The best news was that both happiness and enjoyment peaked at two points in the life-cycle, when people were 20 and again when they were 70. These findings support the frequently found difference between younger and older people, that older people are more able to regulate negative emotions, and recall fewer of them in their lives. Interestingly, between the genders, women throughout the life-span tend to report more stress, sadness and worry than men. Here is a topic worthy of further investigation. ▽

From: *It's getting better all the time: Happiness, well-being increase after 50*, by Katherine Harmon, Scientific American, May 17, 2010.



connection

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