

connection.

The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 32 No. 6 – August 2008



It's the people that make Kinship

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WHO WE ARE...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is a nonprofit 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 an organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people.

Founded in 1976 the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non profit 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.

SDA 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

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 SDA 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.)

SDA Kinship, PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, USA
 or visit SDA Kinship's website at:
www.sdakinship.org.





From the Editor

Some of us are just returning from Kampmeeting in Reston, Virginia. Some of us are getting ready to leave for European Kinship Meeting in Bremen, Germany. Some of us are getting our schedules ready to head for "Rejuvenation" Kampmeeting Australia, some of us are weeding our gardens, some

of us are getting through the middle of winter, some of us are wishing for rain and some of us are wishing it would stop long enough for the mold to dry up. Wherever you are part of our Kinship Community, we hope that you are doing well.

Normally this particular issue is filled only with news and events from Kampmeeting. Our community and its members have been so busy that we may have to spread out the Kampmeeting reports and photographs in order to get all the news and reviews into our pages. For those of you who actually read page 2, you'll notice some changes. First of all, we have instituted the by-laws and new offices described to you in previous issues of the Connection. We have elected new officers. We have instituted new committees. If you receive the electronic Kinship Board newsletter, you will have had a chance to "meet" our officers. If you have not received it, please feel free to contact me at Connection@sdakinship.org and I will work to get a paper copy of that missive to you. In this issue and in the next one we are going to share some of the talks we heard in Reston. We will continue to give you a chance to "meet" some of our members. We're beginning an almost monthly series by one of our editors emeritus Rom Wilder called "A String Too Short to Save." We want to use our space to let you know about the remarkable work being done by the Human Rights Campaign and how their expertise can train us to work better in our churches. Mike Lewis reports that their training at Kampmeeting was a very useful workshop. He is going to share some of those principles in Bremen but we want to give all of you a chance to learn from the experience of this wonderful organization. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in California is supporting a measure being brought to the vote in November to keep lesbian and gay people from having the right to marry. We plan to share some ways to deal with times when the church takes this stance. And, of course, we will share news of the activities and projects our members and our community are pursuing, books they are reading and movies they recommend. Take good care of yourself for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine





Kampmeeting 2008

Reston Virginia - July 13 - 20



Kampmeeting 2008

Reports & Pictures



The event this year was an awesome one filled with God-glorifying music, workshops, worship services, exercise classes, crafts and stories for the children and time to play. Our theme was based on the text from the Prayer of Jabez, "Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my territory." Kampmeeting attendees collected valuable tools on how they could contribute to building our community. Representatives from the Human Rights Campaign taught us advocacy skills. We learned how to use technology to reach youth. We had two sessions that gave people a chance to share our stories and our journeys. Saturday night's talent show was great fun. By the end of the week over one hundred members had joined us. I would like to offer my special appreciations to Dave Ferguson for organizing speakers, Fred Casey for all his support from the office, Jacquie Hegarty and Linda Wright who were my "right hands" with all Kampmeeting planning and Yolanda Elliott for all the work and energy she put into the event on the ground level in Region 2. I hope that you will talk to your friends who attended Kampmeeting and hear from them how wonderful the event was. If you missed out, do not worry! Make your plans now to attend Kampmeeting 2009 in Seattle, WA, July 12-19, 2009 at the Talaris Conference Center. To visit the site, please follow the link to: <http://www.talarisconferencecenter.com/>. Watch for more announcements each month on the enews! Hope to see you all in Seattle, WA in July '09!

– Naveen Jonathan

The approximately 25 guests at "Family and Friends Day" on the Sabbath of Kampmeeting were delighted to receive copies of *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives*, courtesy of Region 2 members. They appreciated seeing the documentary, *The Bible Tells Me So*, during the special meeting Sabbath afternoon and several took the HRC study guide to go with the film.



One mother, Sharlett Reinke of Lincoln, Nebraska, ordered 12 more copies of the book to give to various people in her church, Union College, and the community. Another mother mentioned that the chapters on theology in the book were difficult to understand, but she is glad that they will appeal to those who are well-educated. Juliane Fugloe, who attended "Family and Friends Day" at last year's Kampmeeting, sent books to two church leaders in Denmark.

John and Carolyn Wilt, an Adventist couple on the board of the Inter-faith Marriage Encounter program, told us "We currently have 12 faiths working together in WorldWide Marriage Encounter. At the end of a discussion regarding interest in a program like Marriage Encounter for gay and lesbian couples, I told them about that wonderful new book. Carolyn and I spoke of how we shared about Aric [their gay son] on ➤➤

➤➤ our Marriage Encounter weekends – about his coming out and illnesses and how this impacted our marriage and family relationships. The reactions were very interesting. Some were quiet, but others were very supportive. Then a pastoral wife tearfully shared about their gay son. They are a popular couple and many were ‘surprised’. We knew; when we returned to the Board in January, they came over immediately and asked, ‘Aren’t you the couple with a gay son?’ We said yes, and then they shared how their son had come out about three years ago. They said our lovingly sharing about Aric at every board meeting had influenced their acceptance of their son. Ah, God is good! We didn’t even know we were ministering.



We gave them a copy of the book...I also made 20 copies of a handout of the website where the books and DVD can be ordered, and they all disappeared. I’m sure more books will be sold and read. We told them that it was an outstanding collection of professional information intended to educate, not advocate any particular position. I tell folks it is an ‘encyclopedia of pertinent information, well prepared and very well written’. At the end of our board meeting, two other pastoral couples came to us and shared about their gay children and another couple also briefly mentioned a gay child. Interesting – out of 12 faiths, five of us have gay children.” - Carrol Grady ▽



Just Right

Victor Brown

Kampmeeting – Friday morning

Last night our speaker talked about Mr. Rogers. I chuckled because this morning I want to talk about Goldilocks. She is tired. She is lost. She is hungry. She stumbles on the bears' house. She tries Papa Bear's porridge but it is too hot. She tries Mama Bear's porridge but it is too cold. She tries Baby Bear's porridge and it is JUST RIGHT.

As I grow in my Seventh-day Adventist journey I continue to long for just the right experience. In our theology there are all kinds of tension. We become argumentative because we "are right!" I wish for Goldilocks' theology where we are just right. We can be too hard or too soft. We can be wishy-washy when it comes to talking about law and grace. Don't you long to figure out how to get it just right? How about Sabbath keeping? How about diet? I find it difficult to explain to others and to myself why tragedy happens. It seems that some people have a better life than others, less sorrow. It seems some people put their lives together more easily than others. This bothers me. I don't understand. I want everything to be "just right." Goldilocks is such a good story because we can all identify with this desire. The best conclusion I have come to is illustrated by three kinds of holding hands.

Jeremy can remember the first kind very well. In our family we had a rule not to have any more children than we had hands to hold them. We had two babies because both parents weren't around all the time. We had a rule: "When you cross the street you



hold on to Mom's hand or Dad's hand." Both boys wanted to hold onto the watch hand. I never could figure out why. I also don't know why I didn't just buy two watches. Parents hold onto their children's hands for safety, to keep track of them and because it feels good. One of the most frightening experiences of my life was hearing screeching tires, looking up and seeing Jeremy in the middle of the road. I decided right then "I am NEVER letting go of their hands!"

The next kind of hand holding is probably obvious. How many of us have held the hand of someone who needed to be steadied, who might have fallen if we did not hold them up? For older people, falling can be the difference between independence and dependence. We hold the hands of older family members to protect them in a different way. People have traced Ellen White's death to a fall at Elmshaven from which she never recovered. I am comforted when I can get my mother-in-law to hold my arm.

The last kind of hand holding I want to discuss is romantic handholding. Do you remember the times in academy that they made rules against hand holding? They must have thought it was the cause of pregnancy. I do know that when I

wanted to hold hands in that context it was not to be steadied or to be safe in the street. I remember the sweaty palms, the anticipation. I remember the racing heartbeat – all of this from a small but hugely symbolic act.

I have been thinking about the ways that God

"holds our hands." As the plank of life on which I walk gets higher and higher, when I am in unsafe places, I have an increasingly need to have my hand held, to be steadied. God has got me, no matter what. The complexities, sorrows and difficulties of my life are helped by the understanding that my hand is being held by my heavenly Father. God also holds my hand in a romantic way. In the Bible our relationship with God is compared to a loving marriage. I believe that God is proud to be with me, that He likes staying with me, that He gets butterflies from being with me.

In Psalm 37:23, David writes "If the Lord delights in our way, He makes our steps firm; though we stumble, we will not fall, for the Lord upholds us with his hand." We can walk with surety. The just-right experience for me doesn't answer all the difficult questions of life. For me the answer is that God is holding my hand. It is a privilege all of us can experience.

Psalm 40 says "I waited patiently for the Lord. He turned and heard my cry...and gave me a firm place to stand." I love the image of having my hand held: as a child's hand is held by their parent, as an older person is helped by a younger one, as we reach out to a romantic partner. I am grateful that God will never forsake us or leave us. ▽

We Would Like to Introduce You to...



Denise Samen was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and says, except for joining the army and being stationed in Alabama, she has lived there most of her sixty

years. She worked in New York's City Hall with Mayors Beam and Koch in the 1970s. Despite being in an accident where she was hit by a train and eventually needed her arm amputated, Denise has continued to enjoy life and her community. After the accident, Denise says she spent many years when she did not feel comfortable being in personal relationships. She did some traveling, ran into and joined the Seventh-day Adventist church and recently found Kinship. Denise says she is in the process of putting away the dresses she wore for years and getting back to the clothing that "feels more like a second skin to me." She says she is dating and is "overall in great spirits." She does stand-up comedy at a local women's establishment in her neighborhood and describes herself as down-to-earth and good natured. She has one cat named Honey and enjoys creating newsletters as a hobby. Denise described her experience with Kinship in Virginia as a "breath of spiritual fresh air." We look forward to seeing her at future Kampmeetings. ▽

You shall go out with joy and be led forth in peace. The mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

-Isaiah 55:12

Our Religious Liberty at Stake

Carrol Grady

The Pacific Union Conference and North Pacific Union Conference religious liberty leaders of the North American Religious Liberty Association (NARLA-West) are promoting and encouraging church members in California to vote for Proposition 8, the initiative to amend the state Constitution in order to take away the rights granted this year by the California Supreme Court to same-sex couples to marry. NARLA-West plans to hold meetings and organize action groups in Arizona, San Diego, Los Angeles, the Riverside, Fresno, and Sacramento to urge members to vote for this Marriage Amendment. As part of its campaign, NARLA-West has provided a set of "Talking Points" to be used in getting as many people as possible to support Proposition 8.

Although Adventists have traditionally believed in religious liberty for all, including those with whom they disagree, it appears that prejudice against homosexuals is so great they are willing to reverse this stand. They have tried to frame their position in secular language, but it is obvious that their motivation is religious. Below you can see NARLA's "Talking Points" and the responses prepared by Kinship.

If you live in California, Arizona or Florida where similar propositions are on the ballot this fall, you can use this information in talking to your friends, business associates and church members. If you live in other areas this article provides good information for you to use in helping explain why the Adventist belief in religious liberty should lead us to support LGBTI individuals having the same rights as everyone else. Groups of Kinship members will plan to attend the events planned by NARLA in California to quietly share the material that has been prepared in a non-confrontational way.

The exact location and time of these events will be provided as soon as they are known. We will have printed material for you to share, including answers to the talking points and information about our book which encourages church members to support gay marriage. The more people you can encourage to read the book between now and November, the better chance they will have an open mind regarding this issue. Also, please feel free to make your own copies of "Talking Points" and share them as widely as possible.

We are being told that the vote will be close in November. Even if you aren't planning to get married, remember this is really a fight to uphold religious liberty and protect the guarantees of the constitution for all of us. What will **you** do to help?

NARLA Talking Points and Kinship Responses

Talking Point 1: Marriage is a fundamental institution of society, transcending time, culture ethnicity or religion. We tinker with it at our peril.

Response: Marriage has had many different forms throughout history. In Old Testament times marriage, apparently with God's blessings, often consisted of one man and several wives. Women were "owned" by men and had no rights of their own. Moses commanded Levirate

marriage. In more recent times marriage was a civil arrangement meant to establish blood lines and property ownership. Our concept of family as father, mother and children is both modern and Western. (See Gen. 16:3/24:1, Ex. 21:10, Deut. 21:15, Deut. 25:5)

Talking Point 2: The emotional well-being and development of children depends on having the active involvement of both a loving father and a loving mother. It's about the kids! Of course social policy must promote marriage!

Response: Then why hasn't the church protested divorce as vehemently as it has gay marriage? Isn't being shuttled between two parents more damaging than having two parents of the same sex? While it's true that having two parents is the ideal, there have certainly been many single parents, either widowed or

divorced, who have successfully raised well-adjusted children. There is absolutely no evidence to show that children raised by gay or lesbian couples are any more disadvantaged than other children; in fact, recent research indicates that gay and lesbian parents often raise children who are more emotionally balanced and psychologically healthy, perhaps because their parents tend to take more time explaining things to them. Frequently, gay couples have adopted special needs children who would otherwise likely be unadoptable and provided a loving, stable home for them, and lesbian couples often raise their own children from a previous heterosexual marriage. (*Gay dads: a celebration of gay fatherhood* by David Strah)

Talking Point 3: The Marriage Amendment is needed to begin to restore a legal balance that respects religious freedom.

Response: The Adventist Church's official statement on Religious Freedom says, "We will continue to cooperate and network with others to defend the religious liberty of all people, including those with whom we may disagree." The Marriage Amendment is about imposing the religious beliefs of certain Christian groups on everyone; it actually favors the beliefs of some religious groups over others, thus instituting discrimination and unbalancing individual freedoms guaranteed by the constitution but long denied to some citizens in our society. This amendment does not respect religious freedom, but restricts the religious freedom of certain religious groups of people who believe that God can bless homosexual unions and forces non-religious people who favor equal rights to observe the religious beliefs of certain groups.

Talking Point 4: Biology itself makes a basic distinction between marriage and same-sex relationships. It is not discrimination for the law to recognize this basic fact.

Response: *Biological Exuberance* by Bruce Bagemihl documents over 450 species of mammals, birds, fish and insects that exhibit some form of same-sex behavior. (Also see http://someone-to-talk-to.net/new_page_115.htm & http://someone-to-talk-to.net/new_page_114.htm).

Talking Point 5: If marriage is redefined in terms of personal choice, and emotional and sexual fulfillment, there is no logical place to draw legal boundaries excluding polygamy, or other group forms of "marriage."

Response: The "slippery slope" fallacy is invoked to produce fear, but there is no logic to support it. There is more than ample scientific research demonstrating that homosexual orientation is not a choice. It is simply the way some people's brains are wired. People with a ➤➤



Religious Liberty at Stake

➤➤ homosexual orientation are not attracted to those of the opposite sex, so heterosexual marriage is not a good answer for them or for a heterosexual partner.

(See http://someone-to-talk-to.net/new_page_108.htm & http://someone-to-talk-to.net/new_page_119.htm.

Born Gay: The Psychobiology of Sex Orientation by Glenn Wilson and Qazi Rahman brings together and summarizes the tremendous amount of current research into what causes homosexuality.)

Talking Point 6: Advocating for marriage need not violate the separation of church and state. The Marriage Amendment upholds a universal human relationship as a secular institution, not as a religious doctrine. It would be improper for the state to determine that marriage should be restricted because “God ordained it so.”

Response: This is tortured reasoning! If civil marriage is being targeted by the Marriage Amendment, why are Christians the ones behind it? The Marriage Amendment obviously is promoting the religious beliefs of certain Christian groups and thus establishes a very dangerous precedent against religious freedom. The recent California Supreme Court ruling on civil marriage in no way diminishes the standing of heterosexual marriage, nor does it force believers in one man/one woman marriage to change their mind or legal standing. It does not force the church to recognize or perform marriages it does not believe in. Stable family units, whether heterosexual or homosexual, are a benefit to society.

Talking Point 7: Just as the constitutional basis for the state to restrict marriage to a man and a woman is based on secular policy concerns – i.e., the public welfare of families and children, arguments in favor of marriage need to be made in secular language that all can understand.

Response: This is an effort to deceive people as to the true intent and purposes behind promoting the Marriage Amendment and is not worthy of Christians of integrity. In secular language, family units and unions recognized by the state provide a stable basis for a strong society and are preferable to promiscuity. The Marriage Amendment works against such recognition and instead destabilizes society.

Consistency

Religious liberty means that no religion should impose its beliefs on another person, and everyone should have the right to worship as their conscience dictates. Seventh-day Adventists have long been advocates of religious liberty, in large part because our eschatological theology leads us to believe that our own religious

freedoms will be threatened someday. We also believe that freedom of choice is a gift from God. It is inherent in His character that He does not coerce anyone into following Him; He draws us by love. Satan is the one who uses any means he can to force us to follow his way.

Adventist support of religious liberty has led us to champion some seemingly strange positions, such as opposition to prayer in public schools and even the right of Native Americans to use peyote in their religious rituals. Although our church may officially understand God’s will to be opposed to gay marriage, do we have the right to try to legislate our beliefs as binding for others? In many cases, these are Christian people, both heterosexual and homosexual, who believe that God can bless committed same-sex monogamous relationships. Whether or not we share their belief, if we vote to deny them this right are we not imposing our belief on them? Do we have the right to tell all gay and lesbian people, Adventist or not, that they must remain celibate all their lives? Do we want to take the responsibility of pushing them toward promiscuity if they are not able to be a lifetime celibate, because we refuse to allow them to live together as committed couples?

Rights of conscience are God’s precious gift to all. We who truly believe in religious liberty are privileged to support the free exercise of those rights by everyone, even when we do not agree with their beliefs for whatever reason. Whenever we make exceptions to this rule, we lose our own credibility and moral power. ▽





During the last four years, Kinship has been developing a relationship with the Religion and Faith department of the Human Rights Campaign. This important department was started by HRC in the fall of 2005. Within the first couple of months, Director Harry Knox and I started conversations about how HRC and Kinship might partner in some areas of mutual interest.

Dave Ferguson

Harry attended the Workshop that was presented in Ontario, California that eventually resulted in the publishing of our book. It was Harry's suggestion that the complimentary copies of the book that were to be sent to denominational leaders be tied to a phone conversation prior to the delivery of the book along with a subsequent follow-up call to be sure the book had been received and to give encouragement to read the book and give us their reaction to the book. He also arranged a meeting in Denver to see about additional grant funding for Kinship. During the following months, we explored ways that Kinship might begin doing more advocacy work in the church. I was invited to become

part of a group of clergy from across the country from various denominations that was a network for sharing ideas and promoting GLBT issues. This group has a conference call each quarter to share ideas and move agendas forward. Harry agreed to attend Kampmeeting in 2006 to help us start the process of helping Kinship members become comfortable in working in their local churches. Those who attended felt that they gained significant new insights on how to begin doing something in their local churches. At that point we determined that we wanted to have a second presentation by HRC the following summer. In the spring of 2007 two members of the Kinship Advisory Council attended a Clergy Call in Washington, DC which was coordinated by HRC to meet with members of Congress promoting GLBT issues. At Kampmeeting 2007, Dr. Sharon Groves, the Deputy Director of the Religion and Faith program, presented the second in our series of information sessions on how to work in the local church to develop acceptance. Many members went away from this session with a greater understanding and more confidence on ways to work in their congregations.

Next month: Ideas from 2006 and 2007 that may work in your congregation and a report on the third session at Kampmeeting 2008 with panelists from three different denominations sharing what has worked on the denominational level and what hasn't. ▽

BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY



SOA KINSHIP KAMPMEETING 2008

"Oh, that you would bless me & enlarge my territory."—Prayer of Jabez



Wedding Announcement!

- Rodney Donald Lee Polte and
Douglas Valentine Napoles



We are pleased to announce our marriage that took place on a gondola in the Naples Canals of Long Beach, California in the early evening of July 27, 2008. Our guests included ten close friends and the reverend who married us. Janet Gillette of Loveland, Colorado provided our music. She sang "There is Love" during the Holy Communion which was our first act as a married couple. Our reverend pronounced us "husbands, one to the other" and presented us for the first time as Mr. and Mr. Napoltes (a combination of our former last names). We had our reception at Na Traj, an Indian restaurant. We want to thank those of you who attended our wedding and our reception and who have written or called to congratulate us. We are thankful to the Lord who brought us together and made this moment possible.

Kenya – Mwole Chavula

I wanted to let *Connection* readers know that in our country there are some traditional cultural practices that allow women to marry other women. Among the Kikuyu people an elderly woman is allowed to marry a young woman so she can raise a family. This tribe has found the practice to be good for the harmony of the community.

Swimming for Life – Pearl Pangkey

It's that time of year – *Swim a Mile for Women with Cancer* is an event sponsored by the Women's Cancer Resource Center (www.wcrc.org). WCRC provides resources to help women with limited resources get treatment services. They especially target women of minority groups. It seems like we all have been touched by cancer or know someone who has been touched by it. In my case, I lost my stepmother and it is in her

memory that I swim. This year I thought of not doing the swim because of finances. But then I decided to do it as long as I'm able to. Just because the economy is bad doesn't mean women aren't being diagnosed with cancer. They need our help. As long as I can help, I'll continue to do so. I'm scheduled to swim on Sunday, October 5, 2008 at 12:30 p.m. PST. This will be my seventh year. I know you'll give me emotional support during the swim. If you're able to support me financially, go to www.swimamile.org/donate/sponsor. The nickname is flipper08.

Australia – Noel Thorpe

We have had our first contact with a gentleman from Papua New Guinea. He told me he had purchased Carol Grady's book *My Son, Beloved Stranger* at the Adventist Book Center in Port Moresby. Because of the book he found us.

We would like to invite you to come "Down Under" to Rejuvenation, Kinship Australia's Kampmeeting October 3-6, 2008. Invercauld House Conference & Function Centre is a unique facility of Southern Cross University Lismore, set within 2.5 hectares of tranquil rainforest gardens and secluded from the hustle and bustle of the surrounding area. The centre has 27 motel-style suites within a short walk from the main facility. We have invited wonderful speakers and planned enjoyable activities. For more information, you can check out the Events page on our website <http://www.sdakinshipaustralia.org/>. ▽



Register now at

<http://www.sdakinshipaustralia.org/registration.php>

You are enthusiastically invited to the European Kinship Meeting 2008!



We have created a weekend that will introduce you to our city, our accepting Seventh-day Adventist Congregation Finsdorf, to more Kinship members from different continents and to the meetings that will help us change the conversations we have with our families, our communities and our churches.

We have developed several ways to make our gathering affordable to all. Finsdorf Church has opened its doors, meeting rooms and kitchen to us. There are three options and price ranges of places to stay. If you choose our very comfortable and beautifully located youth hostel cost will be € 115 (\$ 182) for the weekend. We also have the possibility of a nearby hotel (double occupancy only: € 320 (\$ 504) for two persons). Both within walking distance of our meetings. If either of those options is too expensive, you are most welcome to bring your sleeping bag and stay in the church (€ 25 (\$ 40) for the meals).

And if the meeting is too short to come to Germany we offer you a wonderful week at the shores of the German North Sea. We have rented a spacious former barn with open fireplace (which we hopefully don't have to use!), several bedrooms and can fit eight or more people. Bed linens and towels are provided. We have the options of cooking our own meals, having Friesian breakfasts in the open air and dining out. Beaches, biking, horseback riding and beautiful walking trails are nearby.

You can register by contacting Ruud Kieboom at kinshipnederland@sdakinship.org or by accessing the Kinship website at <http://sdakinship.org/mapEurope.htm>. We are looking forward to seeing you!

Herzlich Willkommen!!

Dreaming Dreams & Building Visions

Bremen, Germany

September 5-8, 2008

Guest speaker: Klaus Schmitz



Painting on the wall, SDA Church Finsdorf, Bremen

Kampmeeting

Impressions



CHEESECAKE



It all started back in January of 1983. Wait. It was probably the summer of 1970. That's when we first got acquainted. She knew back then, but didn't realize there was a name for it. I was in complete denial. After all, I liked ruffles and lace.

Fast forward (aren't DVDs great!?) to January of 1983. What was meant to be a one-week visit turned into 25 years. By July of that year we realized we wanted it to be forever, so we planned a wedding. Only two people in attendance. Cake with chocolate icing. Sparkling cider. Handwritten vows. Twenty-five years later, we are still surprised by each other (nope, you never know someone completely - ever), finishing each other's sentences, and sounding enough alike on the phone that people don't know which of us has answered.

We've rejoiced at the birth of nieces and nephews, great nieces and great nephews (she calls them simply The Greats). We've been to weddings and funerals, graduations and recitals. We've gotten mail addressed to both of us with one last name, two last names, and even no last name - just The Aunties.

When California said YES, we considered flying out and making our union legal on July 15 - our 25th anniversary. But we didn't have the money and the Federal Government still wouldn't recognize us as a married couple, so we decided to just continue living in sin.

For our 25th we decided to go to the Cheesecake Factory. *Mmm.* But that afternoon we were both just too tired to go out to eat. I went to BJ's to pick up a couple of items, and there it was inside the glass door of the freezer. A cheesecake staring at me. And not any old cheesecake, but a Cheesecake Factory cheesecake. It wasn't exactly the same cheesecake we'd had at our wedding, but we enjoyed it - almost as much!

- Rom Wilder ▼

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