

NEWSupdate

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Register Now:

YOUTH RETREAT

WINTER REUNION

JANUARY 26—FEBRUARY 1

**Guest Ministers:
Karin & Ray Peter**

**“Signal Communities...
Live Christ’s Mission”**

Come to Deerhaven for a week of fellowship and fun! Bask in the ministry of Seventy Karin Peter and her Evangelist husband Ray. Activities will include the annual Talent Show, chats with Field Ministers, games, campfire, lots of music, worship, good food and friends, and classes such as glass etching, tole painting, quilting, woodcarving, church history, jewelry making, and more! Register and pay online or contact your pastor or the registrar below for a registration form.

For more information
Registrars Charlie & Jeanie
Brown:

(321) 259-3284 or
cbrowniii@cfl.rr.com

All youth in grades 6 through 12 are invited to the annual Youth Retreat at Deerhaven, February 1-3. Stacy Bermudez, daughter of Bob and Jane Watkins, will be leading this weekend of fun and fellowship. Many of your favorite staff from summer youth camps will be serving as staff at this event.

Bring your friends and come share in campfires, classes, games, good food, worship, movies and recreation. Reconnect with summer camp friends or make new friends for the coming camping season.

Space is limited so pre-register and pay online today to reserve your bunk!

February 1-3, 2013
“God’s Shalom”
\$50

Register and pay
online now:
www.cofchristfmc.org

DELEGATE TRAINING



On Saturday, February 16th, at the Orlando church, Apostle Linda Booth will be leading a training session for the USA National Conference. Participation is expected for National Conference delegates and alternates. Please plan on attending from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Lunch and snacks will be provided. A \$12 donation is suggested to cover the expense of food and materials.

If you are unable to attend, please notify the mission center right away. You may need to attend a training session in another mission center or release your seat to an alternate.

World Conference delegates do not need to attend this training, but are welcome to join in if interested. Training will cover preparation for the National Conference as well as use of the new voting system. Family members of delegates and alternates may also attend.

Please register online now, so that adequate food and materials may be prepared:
www.cofchristfmc.org.



Jordan Bermudez

LOST!

BY JANE WATKINS, FINANCIAL OFFICER

january

- 1 NEW YEAR'S— Office closed
- 21 MLK DAY— Office closed
- 26-Feb 1 Winter Reunion

february

- 1-3 Youth Retreat
- 8-10 LCM Retreat
- 16 Delegate Training
- 18 PRESIDENT'S DAY— Office closed

march

- 15-17 Young Adult Retreat
- 29 GOOD FRIDAY— Office closed
- 30 EASTER

When the Ocala Congregation sponsored the Peace Mobile at the local Oakcrest School Carnival, I was curious. I was curious about the Peace Mobile, directed by Jim and Andrea Melham of Acworth, Georgia. I was curious about the congregational Peace Festival that would occur the next day. I was especially curious about the congregation and how they undertook and executed such an ambitious project. As I planned the details of my trip, I decided a good gauge of the success of the events would be to look at it through the eyes of a child. As it happens, a four year old was living in my house! So I packed up a change of clothes and my grandson Jordan and off we went for a two-day adventure in Ocala.

The carnival was a huge success. I understand that about 1,000 people were in attendance. There were lots of games of chance, inflatable bounce houses, and no-lose games like the traditional fish pond. Jordan was in nirvana with all this activity, great prizes worth at least one-cent each, and all those happy children. After about an hour, Jordan's grandmother (me) was worn to the proverbial nub. And I still had a handful of tickets to burn. The concessions looked like a quick and easy way to spend out our coupons, so I steered Jordan over to the snack stands and let him pick out his choice of goodies. No great surprise that he selected cotton candy. After all, it was an irresistible purple color and more than ample in quantity. As he hovered behind me, I got in line. After getting the prized treat, I turned around to lean down and give him the goods, but he was gone. I scanned the crowd, recalling every detail of his clothing: red shirt, grey shorts, and the requisite Star Wars sneakers. No red shirt . . . no little lost boy . . . no Jordan in sight.

No other way to put this: I panicked. I imagined everything from child molesters to alien abduction, and that was just the first three seconds. Remembering that a table was just down the way with the Ocala police selling lottery tickets for a spaghetti dinner, I rushed to them and reported my missing boy. They got on walkie-talkies and put the word out. Within minutes we found Jordan with another child and his mother. The mother laughingly told me that when she saw him, standing alone and looking quite forlorn, she approached him and asked, "Are you lost?" "No," he said. "But my Gigi is."

Fast forward to two weeks ago. Our family was the recipient of a day at Busch Gardens, thanks to the Ralston family. We rode the tram to the front gates and disembarked. After we entered the gates and prepared to tackle the park, I recalled the incident at the school carnival. In my most authoritative voice, I lectured Jordan about staying close, holding our hands, and not running off. I reminded him of the carnival and that we certainly didn't want a replay of that experience. His mother, Stacy, and Popi Bob waited patiently while I exorcised my demons of his possible disappearance. With that out of the way, off we went for a busy day exploring the park.

When we all felt our energy was sapped, we decided to head back to the gates. We consulted the park map, which I confess I had a difficult time reading and interpreting. We all agreed that the gates were "that-a-way," pointing to our front-left. We struck out with me in the lead, traversing the crowded sidewalk in a single line. I was determined to make good time, so was striding quite purposefully toward my "front-left." After about two minutes of hustle, I stopped and turned around. I didn't see one single familiar face! I began to walk back the way I had come, looking for my family. After five minutes of searching I had to admit the humiliatingly obvious: I was lost. The reasonable thing to do was to continue to the

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LOST!

Continued from page 2

gates, hoping that the family was doing the same thing . . . but I could no longer remember where the “front-left” was by that time after twisting and turning sidewalks.

I spied a park employee in his crisp uniform. I will say he was an “older man” . . . about my age! I said, “I feel a little silly about this, but I’ve lost my family.” He sized me up, laughed and said, “We call people like you *little lost parents*.” He pointed me in the direction of the front gate. How I ended up in the lion compound is another story. Someone took mercy on me and gave me their map and I finally made it to the front gate. My daughter was there with a mildly smug expression, no doubt recalling my stern lecture on “heads up.” A few feet away stood Bob and Jordan who loudly proclaimed, “Gigi! You got lost, too!”

Since these articles are sup-

posed to have some kind of a moral, please stay with me. I will confess (but only once) that I felt something akin to panic during this experience. I KNEW I would find my “peeps,” I KNEW I had the skills (even with my ADD) to get to the gate, I KNEW it would turn out all right in the end. (I also KNEW I would get plenty of ribbing and good-natured chiding from my family.) But here’s the kicker: I know what it feels like to be lost. I haven’t experienced that in a long time. The entire experience has caused me to think about people who feel lost.

What about the person who just got an unfavorable diagnosis from the doctor and realizes that she hasn’t said a prayer in years? What about the person whose wife just slammed the door and walked off a fifteen year marriage, knowing that he has no support system? What about the student that just failed an all-important exam and

has no idea how her future will be affected? What about the family who just lost their home? Jobs? Car? Our world is full of people in despair, people who are lost and don’t know about that “amazing grace” that tells us that we “once were lost, but now [are] found?” How horribly lost can a person be without a faith community (like ours!), without knowing Jesus, and never knowing the God that “even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for [God] is with me?”

Who do you know who is lost, alone, scared, disenfranchised, left out, or marginalized? INVITE! INVITE! INVITE! You might be that friendly face that directs someone to the front gates: the doors of community, fellowship, and a knowledge of the constant friendship and companionship of the Christ.

DGR HIGHLIGHT

BY DAVID MEHLISCH, DDS, PRESIDENT ASSISTANCE INTERNATIONAL, INC.

The R. J. Scheffel Memorial Toy Project is a not-for-profit agency in Lansing, MI whose mission is to make wooden gifts for children in local hospitals. For the last 4-5 years as their workload permits, they have provided 500 handcrafted trucks for distribution to the elementary pupils in rural Honduras that have dental sealants placed on permanent teeth by Project Happy Teeth. Elder Ed Heaviland is one of the many volunteers involved in such a worthy project. I never know if/when any trucks are going to be available. And when the word is received, moving this many trucks from Lansing to Fort Myers and then on to the boat docks in Miami becomes a big hassle. This year

was no different. But somehow, volunteers stepped forward and the job was miraculously accomplished.

The call for help went out via Florida Mission Center email. David and Sharyn Wiley (Portage, MI) borrowed a truck, picked up the trucks and delivered them just after Christmas to Indianapolis, IN to a location designated by Susan Blanchard (Jacksonville, FL). She graciously took all 500 trucks home with her just after New Year’s Day. Andrea Cooper contacted Ken Chlebina - a relative in Osprey, FL. He delivered his son back to college/university in Jacksonville on Sunday, January 6th and then stopped by Susan’s house and loaded the toy trucks into his truck. Finally, I made the 171

mile round-trip to Osprey on Monday, January 7th and brought them back to Fort Myers.

And not leaving anything to the last minute, I spent most of January 8th repacking the trucks for international shipment by boat and truck to a mine about 40 miles from the base camp at La Buena Fe. What seems most outstanding to me, is that none of the volunteers (including myself) will witness the distribution of these toy trucks to pupils in some of the poorest areas of Honduras. Talk about teamwork by Christian volunteers! This has got to be one of the finest examples that I can remember!

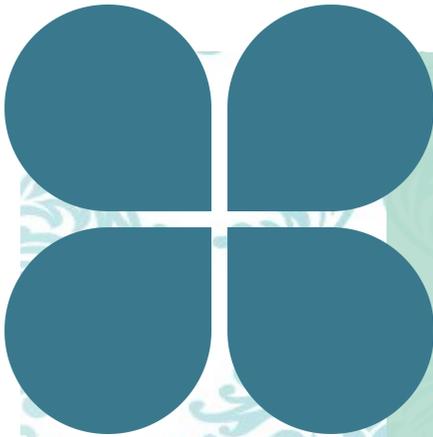


DEERHAVEN PHOTO CONTEST

Special thanks to everyone who took the time to submit photos of the beauty at Deerhaven. Deciding on 12 photos was not an easy task because of all the great entries from which there was to choose (over 100 submitted!). The 12 photos below were selected as the contest winners to enlarge and frame for the Peace rooms. Also, additional photos may be framed as money allows, with permission from the photographers. Congratulations to the photographers of the winning photos below and to Rick Schwartz whose name was drawn to win \$50 toward a Deerhaven event this coming year!



PHOTOGRAPHERS:
R-1: Dave Bartlett, Bob Hazelwood, Bob Hazelwood
R-2: Bob Hazelwood, Bob Hazelwood, Bob Hazelwood, Rick Schwartz
R-3: Amy & Dave Cleveland, Rick Schwartz, Ruth Costello Armstrong
R-4: Rick Schwartz, Sally Moates



UPCOMING EVENTS

Deerhaven Events

PRE-REGISTER AT WWW.COFCHRISTFMC.ORG

- January 26-February 1—**Winter Reunion**, “Signal Communities...Live Christ’s Mission,” Guest Ministers: Karin and Ray Peter
- February 1-3—**Youth Retreat**, “God’s Shalom,” youth in 6th-12 grades are invited
- February 8-10—**LCM Training**, training event for leaders of LCM congregations
- March 15-17—**Young Adult Retreat**, “Seize the Day,” Guest Minister: Blake Smith

REGISTERING EARLY AS WELL AS CANCELLING EARLY, IF NEEDED, HELPS US KEEP THE COST OF EVENTS DOWN AND HELPS DIRECTORS AND STAFF PREPARE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Other FMC Events

- February 16—**National Conference Delegate Training** at the Orlando church—9am to 5pm; Linda Booth training USA National Conference delegates on new voting system

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Conference Registration and Information

- April 13-18—**World Conference** in Independence, MO: <http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2013/>
- April 19-21—**USA National Conference** in Independence, MO: <http://www.cofchrist.org/usaconf/default.asp>

We proclaim Jesus Christ
and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace