

Communities of Joy!

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MISSION CENTER

AUGUST 2005

SCMC Reunion

by Mike Hewitt, *Reunion Director*

All who attended this year's Reunion at Buckhorn Camp from June 18-24 had a memorable experience. Guest ministers included Apostle Jim Slauter and his wife Jan; Susan Skoor-the new Apostle for our area was able to visit for three days; and Carlos Enrique Mejia, an enthusiastic missionary from Honduras. The quality of the Reunion experience was very high, and a spirit of peace was present throughout the reunion.

The Reunion experience can't be duplicated at any other church or secular event. We all have time to participate in worship and to share experiences with others in a great family-oriented atmosphere. This is a place where our children, youth and young adults form relationships that will often last a lifetime and sustain them in their church life.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to everyone who assisted in the program and services provided at Reunion and through their attendance.

I strongly encourage you to mark the dates on your calendar for August 12-18, 2006 and plan to attend Reunion if at all possible. Taking a week away from the busyness of life and deliberately planning to share with fellow church members and friends in a beautiful setting such as Buckhorn has the potential to strengthen each person in physical, emotional and spiritual ways. Others need your support and presence, just as you need theirs. I hope to see you there! ■



Peaceful surroundings, worship, learning, crafts, games, food and fellowship prevailed throughout the week at the SCMC Reunion.

Reunion photos by Tom Cooper



SCMC Interim Mission President Denise Leichter, visits with Apostles Jim Slauter and Susan Skoor.



Outgoing SCMC President Paul Davis and wife Jeannie were honored with a reception at the reunion. Paul has been called to be a member of the Presiding Bishopric.



A Message from the Apostle

by Susan Skoor, *Apostle*

Greetings to the Saints of Southern California Mission Center! I was privileged to meet many of you at reunion. Together we shared with each other in scripture, song, and testimony. Your individual stories of discipleship and struggle, triumph and despair, repentance and renewal, touched my heart deeply and created powerful memories of faith and commitment that will now be a lasting and strengthening part of my own life's journey and story. Together we explored the past with openness and honesty. We were fully present to one another, establishing links of friendship that, with nurturing, will carry us forward into a future of vision and hope. How can I thank you adequately for such sacred moments? How is it possible for connections such as these to occur in the space of four short days?

I believe it was possible only because we belong to a larger community of faith that provided a foundation for understanding—a larger “story” in which we all participate. It's the story of the Son of God, and the peaceable Kingdom He preached and taught 2000 years ago. It's the story Jesus told us about ourselves—the story of a broken humanity healed by the grace of God. It's the story of a people misunderstood and persecuted, who triumphed and failed, kept the faith and denied it, but still clung to the truth of a loving, self-revealing God glimpsed in the struggle of daily existence. That story continues to live in us, and in it we find our place as faithful followers. We recognize one another as companions and disciples, and so we risk opening our hearts to listen, hear, and share as brothers and sisters.

In a few short weeks, Jim Slauter and I will be back among you, to share further in our search for a permanent Mission Center President. Although it is a specific task that draws us together once again, the larger story undergirds our endeavor and provides the context. We are seeking a disciple faithful to Jesus Christ, empowered with vision and compassion. We are seeking a servant leader who can both articulate the Gospel and hear the longings of the people. We are seeking a citizen of the peaceable Kingdom with time to give in personal, pastoral ministry as well as effective organizational leadership. It's a difficult task, with far-reaching ramifications, but we have already embarked on it together and made progress.

I look forward to renewing acquaintance with those of you I met at reunion and extending my circle of connections with new friends and faces. I ask that you would approach our meetings prayerfully, in the spirit of discernment and hope. I join you in seeking God's will, praying it may shine through the human thought and action, as we share together in August. May God's Spirit be with each of you, leading and inspiring you, until we meet again. Blessings to you all. ■



Apostolic Ministry

It was a true blessing to have Susan Skoor and Jim Slauter with us at Reunion. They spent two afternoons with the members and leadership team “listening, learning and planning” for a shared vision with the SCMC. They are returning for another visit, and will provide an update on the progress to identify a new SCMC President along with doing some focus visiting, and providing ministry within this part of our World Church. **Please mark your calendars to attend one of the following sessions:**

August 15 Visit to La Nueva Esperanza Congregation
 August 15 7:00PM at the Simi Valley Congregation
 August 16 12:00PM at Hemet Congregation & Lunch
 (RSVP to Betty Ryan for lunch count)
 August 16 7:00PM at the Anaheim Congregation
 August 17 Depart for Home

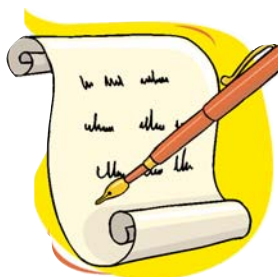
Two visits in two months is a special opportunity... join us in sharing in the GOOD NEWS! ■

Interim SCMC President

Denise Leichter was appointed as the Interim President for the Mission Center with the hopes of having a full time minister identified by the 4th quarter. The entire SCMC Leadership is working hard together to be responsive to the needs and celebrations of the Mission Center.

Notes from SCMC President

by Denise Leichter



- The NEW Church Administrators Handbook will be released this month. The Mission Center has ordered and paid for two manuals for each congregation to be used by the Leadership. Tonia will arrange for the distribution.
- John Hatton from the Canoga Park Congregation is available to help facilitate Music Ministry in your home congregations, and is working with Norm Gunsolley for potential scheduling of talent as part of the 4th Quarter Guest Ministry schedule.
- Keep your eyes and ears open for the testimonies of some of the 100+ "Calizonia" youth that attended IYF/SPEC with 1200 others at the end of July. We will feature their stories and pictures next month.

Camp ROCKS!!

Jr. High Camp (leaving 6th to leaving 8th grades) is August 7-11. Camper cost is \$100. Camperships are available. Bring hiking clothes, swim suits, tie dye and funky threads! Come hike, play capture the flag, dance and feel the spirit move! Please send in your registration today or for additional information, e-mail Debi Norton at youthmin@myway.com. Invite a friend and come join us.



Camp Rocks!

Junior Camp (leaving 3rd to leaving 5th grades) will be held August 11-14. Camper cost is \$80. Camperships are available. Bring hiking clothes & swim suits. We will discover the rocks of Camp Buckhorn, play capture the flag, make crafts, and get to know the spirit within you! Please send in your registration today or e-mail Debi Norton at youthmin@myway.com. Invite a friend and come join us.

Bridge Builders

by Charlotte Jones



Need a Lift? Want a High?

SOAR with the Bridge Builders

Let the Spirit Breathe

September 26-27, 2005

Southern California Mission Center

Evangelist Gail Biller will share from her background of studies and experience in ways we can *Let the Spirit Breathe* on Monday morning. After lunch and sharing, she will continue her presentation. A banquet will be held during the evening, and interim Mission Center President Denise Leichter will share her testimony and experiences on how the Holy Spirit is breathing on our International members, congregation, and Mission Centers.

Tuesday morning will bring worship and additional sharing. After lunch, there will be opportunities for an afternoon outing.

If you need overnight accommodations, contact Best Western Pasadena Royale, 626-793-0905. Reservations: 800-528-1234. Group rates available if ten reservations are made. For further information, contact:

Charlotte Jones, 818-789-3625 / cejstart@earthlink.net

Mary Farley 562-697-2428 / mlfarley@adelphia.net

Happy 102nd Birthday, Ken!



Ken Morford recently celebrated his 102nd birthday with friends and family at the Simi Valley church. Born on July 19, 1903 in Gordon, Nebraska, Ken was baptized into the RLDS church in Tigris, Missouri in 1911. He was ordained to the office of elder by F. Henry Edwards in 1937. Ken was a long-time resident of Independence, Missouri and moved to Simi Valley in 1984. He attends

church regularly, and is the oldest active member of the Lion's Club in California. Ken knows what he likes, and vegetables and water are low on his list of favorite foods! ■

Hispanic Retreat

by Linda Espiritu-Santo

The 10th annual Hispanic Retreat will be held at Buckhorn Camp on Labor Day weekend, September 3-5. The theme is *Compartan la Historia Sagrada* (Share the Sacred Story).

Registration is from 1:00-5:00PM on Saturday and the retreat ends at noon on Monday. Geri Macias from Dallas will be sharing ministry with us. We will be sure there is translation (much of what we do is bilingual) so speaking Spanish is not a prerequisite. Everyone is invited. Cost is \$60 for adults; \$45 for youth and \$35 for children. Call me if there are any questions, 805-527-8641. ■

Upcoming Events

AUGUST

JULY

- 31- 5 Congregational Leaders Meeting at Graceland
- 7-11 Jr. High Camp at Buckhorn
- 11-14 Junior Camp at Buckhorn
- 15-16 Apostles Susan Skoor and Jim Slauter Visit

SEPTEMBER

- 3- 5 Hispanic Retreat at Buckhorn
- 19-23 World Church Meetings for Mike & Denise
- 23-25 Women's Retreat at Buckhorn
- 26-27 Bridge Builders Fall Fiesta at SCMC

OCTOBER

- 3- 7 Western Field Leaders Mtg for all SCMC Leaders
- 15 SCMC Aaronic Ministry Event
- 29 SCMC Missionary Event

NOVEMBER

- 13 SCMC Fall Conference



Northwest Singles Reunion

August 14-20, 2005

Calling all singles to fellowship in *The Wonder of God* with ministry provided by President Ken Robinson and Elder Debbie Blackwell. Cost is \$190 for a week at the Samish Island Campground. For further information contact Ken & Betty Fernandes, PO Box 1305, Puyallup, WA 98371 or e-mail: BettyKen2@aol.com. ■

Children and Youth Advocate

We are pleased to announce that Jim Seeley from the Costa Mesa Congregation, and a member of the SMC Council, has accepted the appointment to Children and Youth Advocate. He will be working with us in the promotion of events and ministry for our youth, and beginning the work on the process to hire a full time Youth Minister for SMC. ■

Aaronic Ministries Event

by Bishop Mike Hewitt, *SCMC Financial Officer*

Please plan to attend the Aaronic Ministries educational session to be held at Temple City, October 15, 2:00PM-5:00PM. The presentation topic is *The Angry Christian. A Theology For Care and Counseling*. A catered dinner will follow at 5:00PM. This presentation is designed for Aaronic ministers, but is open to all who wish to attend. The cost is \$10 per person. Registration forms will be available soon

Some of the topics covered will be *Thinking About Emotion, Understanding Anger, A Constructive Pastoral Theology of Anger, and Dealing With Anger: Christian Care and Counseling*. The emphasis in this short presentation will be on practical techniques that may be used by Aaronic ministers in ministerial situations they encounter.

The next Aaronic Ministries education session will be April 29, 2006. Save the date as you plan your 2006 calendar.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Aaronic Ministries events. ■

Communities of Joy

What's happening in your congregation or personal discipleship? Deadline for the next issue of *Community of Joy* submissions is August 15. Send items to Denise Leichter for review and inclusion to:

MAIL: 17125 Hart Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406
E-MAIL: DeniseLeichter@cofchristla.org

EditorDenise Leichter
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Calling All Divas 2005
WOMEN'S RETREAT

Diva Prep Academy September 23
Diva Retreat September 24-25

Learn the *Diva Principle!*
See application insert in this newsletter

Ministry of the Evangelist

by James Albin

Evangelist are servant ministers of spiritual vigor having deep faith in God, serving with unreserved consecration and love for people. They are ordained to be ministers of blessing, responsive to the reconciling and redeeming influence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of persons, serving in multiple ministries according to the unique gifts and callings of each evangelist as:

- ◆ Spiritual Companion
- ◆ Apostolic Witness
- ◆ Teacher/Learner
- ◆ Pastoral Presence

Evangelists, as Ministers of Blessing, have a unique privilege and stewardship to bless God's children in a sacramental way through the sacrament of the Evangelist's Blessing. Doctrine and Covenants 125:3 briefly elaborates on this ministry by saying the Evangelist, *Lays on hands for the conferment of spiritual blessing*.

It is not a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It can and should be your personal time with God on different occasions in your life journey.

- ◆ It is a first personal life blessing
- ◆ It is a second, third or more
- ◆ It is a family life blessing
- ◆ It is a congregational blessing

The sacrament of the Evangelist's Blessing is a time when God says, "I invite you to come and meet with me." It is the promise we experience in Jesus as, "God with us." ■



Peggy Boe of the Covina Congregation, walked the "Relay for Life" for the American Cancer Society. Peggy is a three-year survivor of breast cancer.