

THE OLYMPIC NEWS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren
tel. 206-525-8900 • www.olympicchurch.org e-mail: info@olympicchurch.org

May 2007

Living the Word

By Ken Miller Rieman

As a pastor, I spend a lot of time thinking about how to increase the visibility of our church on our community's cultural radar screen. While it's clear that most people in the neighborhood know where our building is, far fewer seem interested in who we are or what we're doing.

There was a day when most Americans' social life revolved around the church. There are communities where this is still the case, yet increasingly, Americans invest their time and energy (not to mention resources) in other places. But it's not just churches that are suffering. Americans invest less of their social capital in social organizations of all kinds, from sororities to bowling leagues to service organizations.

So where are they spending their time? Mostly at home and mostly in front of the television. That said, some things get people out more. Folks spend more time shopping, and more time eating out. But in the last 50 years, fewer people are living in the communities where most socializing happens. Rural/small town communities and urban cen-

ters have tended to be most social. The move to the suburbs coincided with the decline in social engagement.

Many of you already know that I am an NPR junkie. I found a recent interview on Steve Scher's *Weekday* radio program (KUOW, April 18) quite provocative. Steve's guest was Benjamin Barber, author of *CONSUMED, How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*. His analysis added depth to my understanding of the factors that are changing our country.

In brief, Barber notes that the core virtue of our economic system is that it marries altruism with self-interest. "In producing goods and services that answer real consumer needs, it secures a profit for producers. Doing good for others turns out to entail doing well for yourself."

Unfortunately, capitalism's success has meant that core wants in the developed world are now mostly met and that too many goods are now chasing too few needs. But capitalism requires us to 'need' all that it produces in order to survive. "So it busies itself manufacturing needs for the wealthy while ignoring the wants of the truly needy."

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Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren
425 NE 95th Street
Seattle, WA 98115

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The latest figures show that American advertisers are spending around \$270 billion a year on advertising. \$40 billion of that is spent on advertising to children. Marketing gurus have learned that marketing a brand to children is the most valuable way to secure future sales. Children can recognize brand logos even before they learn to speak. And more than ever before, children are controlling spending. The average American child now controls the spending of more than \$90 a week.

Ironically, even as children are being empowered as consumers, advertisers are trying to 'dumb down' adult consumers, shaping their wants, encouraging impulse buying, and shopping on credit. The sub-prime loan crisis is just one example of how the market's pursuit of profit at the expense of fiscal responsibility can jeopardize the whole economy, to say nothing of homeowners who lose their homes. All around, Americans are giving less to churches and other non-profits and spending more on themselves. And the appetites which advertisers feed are not for more meaningful social interactions or civic involvement, but rather for more things which cost money.

"When we see politics permeate every sector of life, we call it totalitarianism. When religion rules, we call it theocracy. But when commerce dominates everything, we call it liberty." It's time for us to rethink the consequences of our lifestyle.

Today, our world needs institutions like the church more than ever. The costs of deepening global inequality are too great. Environmental degradation, the wasting of resources, and the waging of war are the results. For capitalism to serve us in this age, it must be guided by policies that reward companies and investors who defer some of their profits to serve real needs. It must protect our children from unchecked predatory consumerism. It must level the playing field for producers who invest in safeguards for the environment and their workers' well-being.

Around the world, we see people of faith empowering socially-responsible entrepreneurialism. Whether it be micro-loan programs, or *Heifer* livestock partnerships, or *Trees for Life* community development initiatives, Christians are showing others that giving people a hand up yields the most

impressive returns.

As for putting the church on the radar screen, I suspect that the greatest hurdle is not so much learning how to 'package' our identity or purpose in a way that appeals to the appetites or fashions of the day. Rather, it is to demonstrate that we are a people who hunger and thirst for justice, righteousness, and peace, and we will partner with people of any faith or no faith at all who want their children to belong to a different kind of world and are willing to invest their time, passion, and resources to make it so.

That message will not appeal to everyone. It doesn't need to. As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."





Living Peace Church News & Notes

Focusing on the
peace & reconciliation
ministries of the church.
Greetings from On Earth Peace!

On Earth Peace Website – A Resource for You!

We want to invite you to explore our website (www.onearthpeace.org) to learn more about On Earth Peace, expand your thinking about being a living peace church, and find great resources for your congregation. Here are just a few of the resources you'll find:

- **Engaging a Difficult Issue** – Looking to Christ as a model, how can we talk about difficult things? This resource provides scriptural thoughts on how to engage a difficult issue: www.onearthpeace.org/EngagingaDifficultIssuebasic.
- **Peace and Justice Films** – Want to explore creative nonviolent solutions to the issues we face daily? Check out these films created to speak out against violence and injustice: www.onearthpeace.org/peacefilms.html!
- **Tips for Witness Commissions and Peace Advocates** – Do you want to motivate your congregation for ministries of peace and justice? Here are some suggestions you may find helpful: www.onearthpeace.org/tips-for-witness.
- **Meditative Bible Study** – Are you looking for a way to discern what God is speaking to us through scripture? Here is a group Bible study based upon the contemplative practice of Lectio Divina: www.onearthpeace.org/MeditativeBibleStudy.
- **Peace Curricula for Youth and Young Adults** – Want some new ideas for Sunday school classes and youth groups? This resource includes ideas from Brethren Press, as well as other denominations: www.onearthpeace.org/suggested-curricula.
- **Getting Connected with Encountering Recruitment** – Are you concerned about military recruitment for young people? Here are some ways to develop a ministry of positive futures for youth: www.onearthpeace.org/get-connected.

We are constantly updating and adding new resources to our website so we hope that you'll visit the site regularly. And if you have any ideas for other resources we might include, let us know.

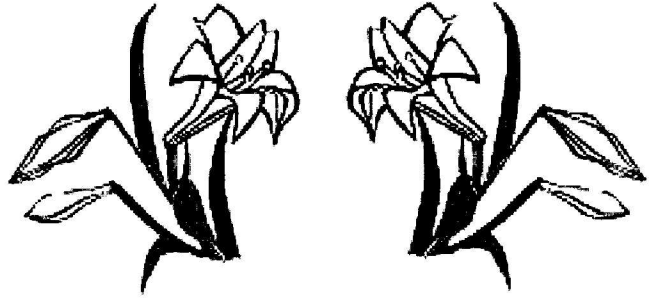
*On Earth Peace: An agency of the
Church of the Brethren helping people discern
the things that make for peace*

P. O. Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776
410-635-8704 • www.brethren.org/oepa
oepa_oepa@brethren.org

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Attention! Graduates of 2007

If you are to graduate from High School, University, or another phase of your educational career this Spring, please let the office know: we'd like to celebrate with and congratulate you on the first Sunday in June. Did you graduate from a program mid-year? Tell us, so we can congratulate and celebrate you, too!



Christine Wilkinson, Featured Soloist

Christine Wilkinson will be the featured soloist for the May 19th Skagit Symphony concert, playing Beethoven's Violin Concerto, at 7:30 pm, McIntyre Hall, Mount Vernon, WA. If you'd like to attend, talk to Frosty, Nancy, or Christine Wilkinson; for tickets, (360) 848-1827.

Deacon News

The monthly Deacon training session is scheduled for May 22, 2007 at 7:00 pm.

GUILD: Wear your pearls!

Guild's next breakfast and program will take place **Wednesday, May 16th, at 7:30 am**. You are requested to wear pearls (real or fake, either will do) to this meeting. Call the church office—206 525-8900—for information.

Ready or Not, Spring is Here

By Kim Thomas

Each month this spring a new surprise has emerged from the grounds and trees surrounding the Church building. Just a few weeks ago it was the cherry trees becoming white and pink and full outside the office window. What a carpet now they've shaken off onto the street and into the grass. Now, take a moment to walk behind the church and around the side of the building to see the lilacs.

You might have some growing in your yard. They are budding throughout our neighborhoods, so these are not rare plants by any stretch, yet they're on show for so short a time that I (and perhaps you) experience their arrival with a mix of surprise and familiarity and pleasure few other growing things provoke.

In Japan the blossoming cherry is welcomed with a famous reverence. One of my Japanese students has explained that distinct emotions accompany the cherry's multiple stages of growth and decay in her country. Do we have anything like this in our gardens? A recognized symbol of growth and change that raises itself from the ground so that we too, witnessing the emergence of color, feel raised from the dark of our ground level winter lives? And returned once more to the breathable world, the photosynthesizing world that puts the sun to use in the stems and the cells of our gardens and farms. For me, the lilac introduces this renewal.

I do not always live or work within view of lilacs. There are years when they arrive, bloom, and depart while I am off somewhere else, and I can feel what is missing from my season. We had one at our house when I was in high school; it grew tall and narrow beside the garage. The trunk was just a pole, a balancing act; the leaves unfolded on the air. Then, from the endpoint of each limb, came the blossoms that were tightly packed before opening into stars.

What does describing these trees do? Why try to explain an already apparent beauty, something which speaks for itself? Because they

grow at close proximity yet remain hidden: shielded by the garage, an abundant rhododendron, or, less tangibly, hidden by the unyielding concrete of routine, the solid, thick, and steady momentum in which I, for one, often unwittingly move. Stars break through the coarse schedule of appointments, meals, sleep, and travel when we ask ourselves: what am I seeing, what does that smell remind me of, is this color more red than blue? Warm or cool? When I say it is beautiful don't I also see the ugly potential of going brown, the light perfume breaking down into ammonia? What do you see?

Springtime can feel truncated, too swift. Our limbs need more time to stretch, become ready, open. Open like a hand, like a leaf. To catch the season that is passing. Go see.



June Forums Focus on Annual Conference Business

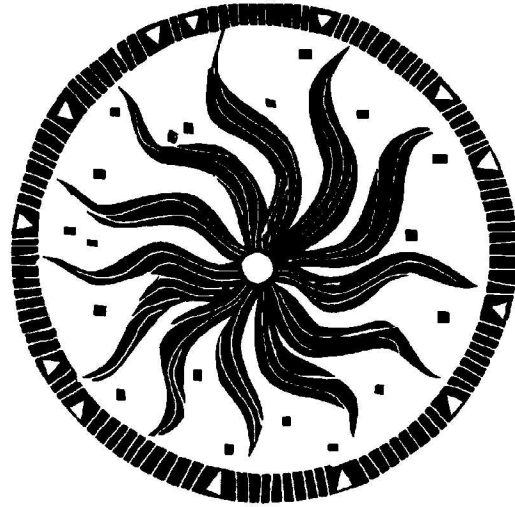
by Stephanie Herkelrath

We hope you'll plan to attend the all-congregation forums scheduled on two Sundays, June 3rd and June 10th, during the Sunday school hour. Outgoing Conference delegate JoAnn Shoemaker, and current delegate Stephanie Herkelrath will join with Pastor Ken to lead a conversation on the conference items of greatest interest to our congregation.

This year's Annual Conference will be meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, from June 30th to July 4th. Among a wide range of issues, delegates will consider:

1. Recommendations for how the denomination might better deal with its most controversial issues,
2. How we can overcome the obstacles to becoming culturally diverse,
3. Where our denominational structure is and is not serving us well,
4. How we can help prevent child abuse,
5. Whether we should lengthen the schedule of Annual Conference, and
6. How we might work to counter trend of declining membership.

Your input on these issues is important. It will help to guide our delegate as she represents our congregation at Conference. Study materials will be made available in the weeks prior to the forums. If you'd like to study these further on your own, you can visit the Annual Conference page on the denominational site, www.brethren.org.



Red Hatter News

By JoAnn Shoemaker

Spring and summer are on the way - so it's time to plan Red Hatter events.

On April 19th, we received a last minute invitation from the Yessler Way Community Center Red Hatters' group to join Red Hatters from all over Seattle for a luncheon celebration of the "National Red Hat Society April Birthday Recognition."

Peggy Cochran, Geraldine Campbell, and JoAnn Shoemaker were among the over 200 Red Hatters who attended this fabulous luncheon. Peggy won a wonderful door prize and the *Seattle Times* took pictures of she and Geraldine for an upcoming article. Watch the papers for pictures of our purple and red Olympic View ladies.

Upcoming Events:

- On **Saturday, May 5th** dress in red hat attire for our May event at the Friends May Away.
- **June 28th**—TBA
- **July 14th**—join over 300 other Red Hatters for a day at Emerald Downs with fun and prizes.
- **August 23rd**—ride the Duckmobile! If you wish you can also wear Red Hat attire at the Bowers' barbecue.
- **September 15th**—lunch at Camano Island and, if time, outlet shopping.

Contact JoAnn Shoemaker or Geraldine Campbell for additional information.

Prayer Requests

In our community...

For Goldie Barnes' nephew, **Tom Snyder**, recovering from a serious motorcycle accident.

For **Olive White**, recently struggling with an inflamed sciatic nerve.

For **Frosty Wilkinson**, receiving treatment for sarcoidosis.

For **Sanjaya Malakar**, as he faces a time of transition and the potential for personal growth.

For the ongoing funding of community health clinics.

For a long term transportation plan that will help reduce Seattle's oil consumption and CO2 emissions.

Ongoing prayer requests:

Barbara Anderson; Elaine Rankin;

Mike Titus; Russell Jarboe; Jeff Keuss Sr.;

Dick Nash; Gene Harnden; Ernie Ricketts;

Richard Shoemaker, Bill Shoemaker's brother;

Bill Case's daughter, Carol Kamada;

Charles Walker; Eileen Birkey's mother;

Tim Bisterfeldt's aunt, Diane Peters;

Lew Fortin's nephew, Michael Rogers;

Mike Helmuth's father, Bill,

and nephew, Ryan Halifax; Alvida Fite;

Sharon Haley's brother, Mark; Adam Ford

Ongoing prayer requests:

That we offer a vision of justice, peace, and healing which will form the basis of a bi-partisan commitment in our nation to work together for the common good.

For victims of the Virginia Tech shootings & their families.

For an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; and for the safety and return of all combatants, and for the difficulties which their families face in their absence.

For a revitalization of our District churches and a deepening sense of our unity in Christ.

For safe, peaceful conditions for people of the Middle East.

For the growing humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan and refugees settling in Chad.

For the Smith-Derksen family, working with MCC in Chad.

For the people of Zimbabwe seeking democratic change in their government.

Drama Overturns HS Stereotypes

"High School Musical" – The Broadway Bound Children's Musical - Fri., June 8th at the Moore Theater, 7pm. Meet at the church at 6:00 pm to carpool. Ticket prices are \$12. Refreshments served afterward at the Helmuths' house, 8237 2nd Ave NE. Please call Jana to reserve a seat. (206) 930-9608.

Storyline: Gabriella Montez (Amy Helmuth), a math and science brainiac, is the new girl in school. During her summer vacation she met Troy Bolton, the captain of her new school's basketball team. So, according to the rules of high school clique-dom, they must act aloof toward one another. Certainly neither one should be having anything to do with drama club types. However, both Troy and Gabriella love to sing so when they audition as a "couple" for the school musical, the school becomes chaotic. The president and vice-president of the drama program (Sharpay Evans and her brother Ryan) are furious. Sharpay tries to do all she can to stop them from completing the callbacks and stealing her spotlight (she usually has the lead role). Sharpay tries to get the school back to its old ways, before jocks and geeks tried out for drama, but finds out that sticking to the status quo may not be so wonderful after all.

Olympic View Book Club

Time: the club will meet at 10:30 am

Date: Friday, May 25, 2007

Place: Jean Erickson's

Book to read *The Way I Found Her*, by Rose Tremain.

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By The Olympic View Community
Church of the Brethren

425 NE 95th Street, Seattle, WA 98115

Phone: 206-525-8900 Fax: 206-525-1574

www.olympicchurch.org

e-mail: info@olympicchurch.org

We welcome you to our services.