



# FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS

Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church

## Pastor's Corner

by Pastor Phil Vasseur

Sept./Oct. 2007

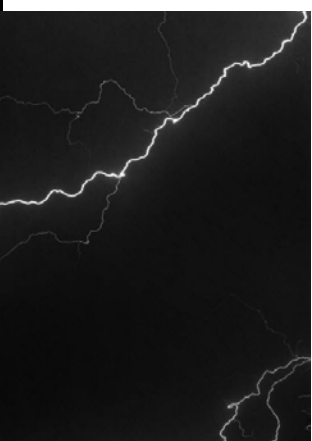
### Justification in a Plane—Part 1

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Justification in a Plane-Part 1	1
School Kits	2
Lord—Teach Me To Do Your Will	2
Anniversaries	2
MVC Calendar	3
Kids' Page—Mazes	4
Our Shared Values	5
Kids' Korner	5
Recipe	6
Edgewood/GBA	6
Birthdays	7
"100 Years Young"	7
Sabbath School News	8
Community Services	8
VBS	9
Church picture/address	10
Youth Rally	10
Editor's Desk	10
Recognition	10

I was returning from a Church Planting Convention (Seeds) at Andrews University. My flight got canceled due to stormy weather. It was an early morning flight out of South Bend, Indiana. Of course, I was disappointed to have my flight canceled, but I thought to myself that it was better to arrive late than not at all!

A couple of hours later my prop engine flight took off. When we reached our cruising altitude, rain was still pelting my window. I'm use to flying above the clouds not in them! Speaking of clouds, they were big and black and all around the plane. My anxiety was increasing by the minute. I tried to block it out by plunging my thought into Philip Yancey's book, "What's So Amazing about Grace?" It worked, but only temporarily. Lightning began to light up the clouds like a strobe light. To make matters worse, thunder began cracking around the plan.



Then it happened. The plane dropped straight down for about five seconds. My head hit the luggage rack above me, even though I had my seatbelt securely fastened. The tickets in my shirt pocket for my connecting flight flew about twenty feet into the isle. I thought I was going to die. My life flashed before my eyes. I thought I was never going to see my wife or kids again. I thought for sure that this was my exit! But was I ready for eternity?

Then the words, "by the works of the law no man shall be justified" popped into my head. That didn't help, but my mind kept running. So what did I have to recommend myself for eternity? All the Bible studies I gave couldn't do it. The baptism I had couldn't do it. The degrees I've earned couldn't do it. But Jesus could! He has all the right stuff to recommend me for heaven! He lived a sinless life. On the cross Jesus bore God's righteous judgment for my sins. Then He gives me His sinless life in place of my sinful life! So by faith in Him, I am justified-declared righteous. My salvation is secure. That's what's so amazing about grace!

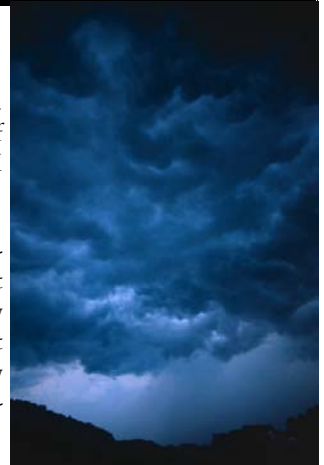
You probably already guessed that the plane didn't crash; I didn't die. When we landed, however, emergency vehicles greeted us on the tarmac. All the injured passengers were evacuated first. Then those who had no apparent injury were instructed on how to make an insurance claim if an injury surfaced later. Then the rest of us exited the plane.

Please let me clarify, I wasn't aware of all those thoughts I had during my "near death experience." It wasn't until I was sitting in the O'Hare Airport waiting for my connecting flight that I realized what had happened.

Speaking of connecting flights, you can imagine my excitement about getting into another plane! To be honest, I was determined not to. But that's another story.

Look for Part 2 in the next edition.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Phil



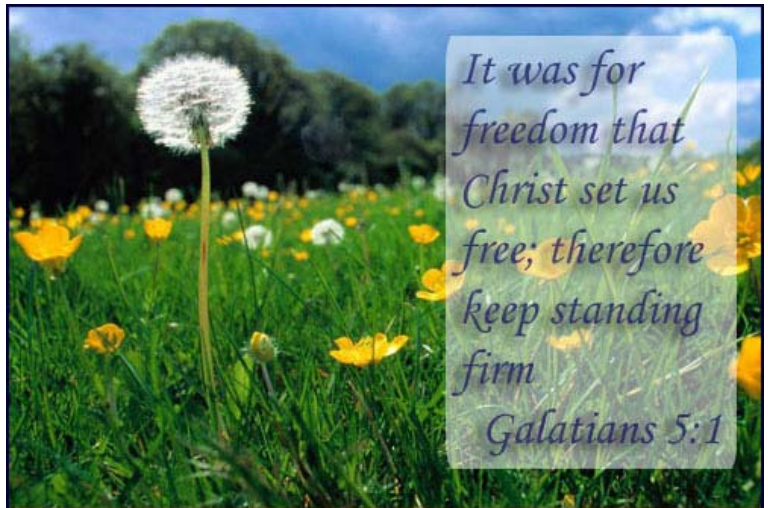


### School Kits



The Pathfinders will be participating in a Community Service Project at the Fall Camporee. School supplies are needed. A box or basket will be placed in the foyer starting August 11th for these donated items.

Thanks in advance for your support with this project.



*It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm Galatians 5:1*

### **LORD - Teach Me To Do Your Will**

My most holy LORD, teach me to serve You with love and obedience each day of my life. Teach me to give, and to not count the cost; to love and ask for nothing in return; to fight the good fight and to not heed my wounds; to labor in Your fields and to not seek rest; to give of myself even to those who can give nothing back; and to comfort those in need even without their asking; to visit the sick and the disabled; to share food with those who are hungry and to clothe those who are naked.

- Father - I know that when I do this for the least of Your brethren - I do it for You. Teach me to love You with my whole heart and soul and mind and strength and teach me to love my fellow man even as I love You and love myself. And this shall be my true reward - knowing that I am doing Your will.

**Halleluyah**

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#### September

25 – Diane & Monte Nelson

#### October

4 – Rita & Bob McCall  
20 – Dale & Bill Cady  
26 – Marge & Gary Patch

Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church

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Dracut, MA 01826

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September 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>						

October 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			

September Calendar of Events

- 7—9** SNEC Youth Rally
- 8** Fellowship Dinner  
2:00-6:00, Women’s Ministry Bible Study & special guest, Carol Covensky  
Men’s Ministry Study
- 9** 10:00, Pathfinder Meeting  
1:00-3:00, Corn Roast/Volleyball Game at church
- 11** 7:00, Church Board Meeting
- 14—16** SNEC Pathfinder Camporee
- 15** Deaconess Meeting  
1:00-4:30, Adventurer Meeting
- 22** 9:30, Prayer Breakfast  
Fellowship Dinner  
1:30, Nursing Home Ministry  
2:00, Depression Recovery Kick-Off  
ShareHim.com — Conference
- 23** 9:00, Adventurers Fun Day
- 27** 7:30, Elder’s Meeting
- 29** 1:00-4:30, Adventurer Meeting  
1:30, Nursing Home Ministry
- 30** 3:00-5:30, Pathfinder Meeting

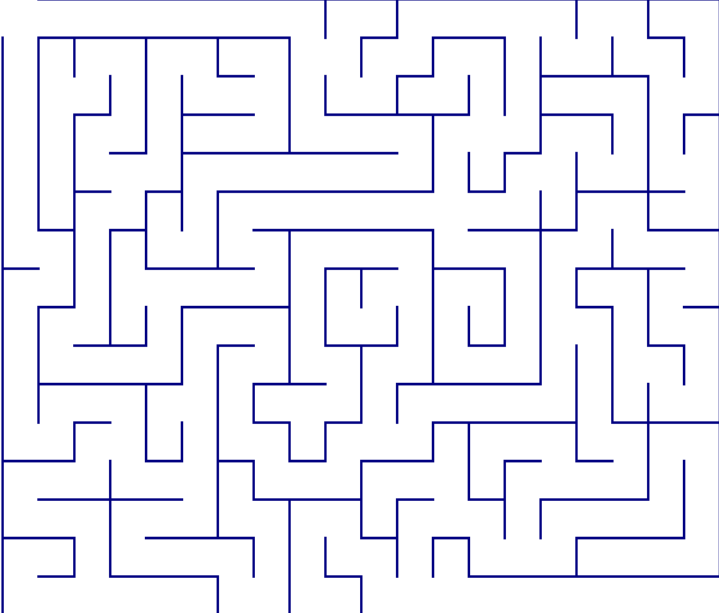
October Calendar of Events

- 5—7** SNEC Pathfinder & Adventurer Leadership Retreat
- 6** 1:00, Community Table Outreach (Homeless Project)
- 9** 7:00, Church Board Meeting
- 13** Fellowship Dinner  
2:00-6:00, Women’s Ministry Bible Study & Craft  
Launch of Secret Sisters (Oct. 13—Nov. 10)  
Men’s Ministry Study
- 14** 3:00-5:30, Pathfinder Meeting
- 16** 7:00, Depression Recovery Seminar (Wk. 1 of 8)
- 19** 6:00, Pathfinder/Adventurer Induction
- 20** 1:00-4:30, Adventurer Meeting  
1:30, Nursing Home Ministry
- 21** 3:00-5:30, Pathfinder Meeting
- 23** 7:00, Depression Recovery Seminar (Wk. 2 of 8)
- 25** 7:30, Elder’s Meeting
- 27** 1:00-5:00, Parenting Seminar (Dinner & Seminar)  
1:30, Nursing Home Ministry
- 28** Family Ministries — Heroes Party
- 30** 7:00, Depression Recovery Seminar (Wk. 3 of 8)

Please refer to the church website for current information,  
[www.mvsda.org/index.php3?section=Calendar](http://www.mvsda.org/index.php3?section=Calendar)

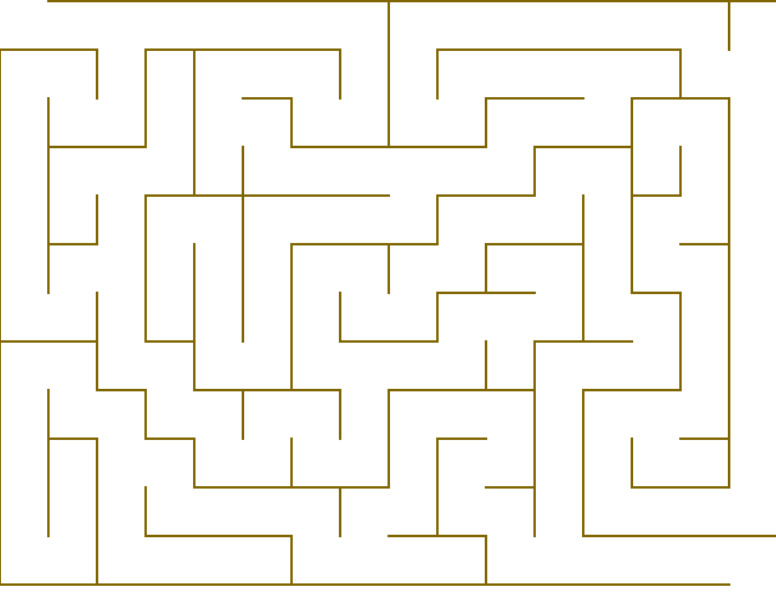


Help the hummingbird find the flower.



©abcteach.com

Help the bee fly to the flower.



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## Our Shared Values

### *Spiritual Integrity*

*As Christians we are committed to a growing reflection of God's character in our lives through a daily relationship with Jesus.*

**W**e have reminded each other for many years now that we aspire to be “Friends helping friends become fully devoted followers of Christ”. Most of our energy has been focused on the first part of this vision statement. We have emphasized the friendship aspect in our relationships, and talked about how it alters the way we ought to approach evangelism. But there is another aspect, which applies to each of us. The last part, which says, “become fully devoted followers of Christ,” directly challenges our spiritual integrity.

In the parable of the virgins, all ten were clearly invested in relationships. Only five spent time to ready themselves for the arrival of the bridegroom. The others set aside thoughts of preparation, and focused on the friendships and promise of good things to come. When the bridegroom came, those who had not prepared early found they were not ready. The parable of the two builders also speaks to the issue of integrity. The wise builder spent time ensuring the integrity of his foundation. And in contrast, the foolish man invested very little time thinking about how to preserve what he was building.

In these and other stories that Jesus told, He plainly warned that the future will bring tests and situations we need to prepare for. All ten virgins had accepted the bridegroom’s invitation. Only five were serious about their decision, and prepared for the celebration. Both men built their house and intended it to last, but only one made certain that it would stand against the elements. Each of us have accepted God’s grace, Jesus sacrifice for us, but how many of us invest in discipleship to be certain that our decisions will hold.

Spiritual integrity is about building our lives on a solid foundation, about preparing now for our Bridegroom’s arrival. We can only achieve that goal by relying on the Holy Spirit, and by looking to Jesus as an example. Then as time passes, our lives will begin to reflect God’s character. Ellen White writes in Steps to Christ that:

The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you.

Trusting less in ourselves; focusing more on Jesus; striving day by day to be more like Him; these are the signs of spiritual integrity. We need the wisdom to be more than a group of friends. We need to become true and committed disciples, so that we will be ready when He comes!

Submitted by Steven Dovich



## Kids' Korner



Here’s a challenge for the kids. In this newsletter is a hidden crayon. See if you can find it. It can be anywhere in this newsletter and could be in a different size and/or color.

This is the object that you will be looking for:

Happy Hunting!



## Vegan Snickerdoodles

(Submitted by Alice Jacobson)

### Cookie Dough:

- 1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 4 oz. Vegan margarine, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup vanilla soymilk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

### Cinnamon Sugar:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 Tbs. ground cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350° F.  
Coat baking sheet with cooking spray.



### To make Cookie Dough:

-Whisk together flour, cornstarch, and baking powder in bowl. Beat margarine in separate bowl with electric mixer until soft.

-Add sugar, and beat until fluffy. Beat in soymilk and vanilla extract 30 seconds or until smooth. Add flour mixture, and beat 30 seconds or until smooth.

### To make Cinnamon sugar:

-Combine sugar and cinnamon on large plate.

Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll each ball in Cinnamon Sugar, and place 1 1/2 inches apart on a prepared baking sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes, or until cookies look dry on tops and are lightly browned on bottoms. Transfer to wire rack to cool. Store in airtight container.

from "Vegetarian Times"

## Edgewood Elementary/Greater Boston Academy News

Submitted by Rondi Aastrup, Principal

### **Edgewood/GBA offer new classes for 2007-08 school year**

Students from ages 3 through 18 will fill the halls and swell the classrooms at Edgewood/Greater Boston Academy this school year. Inaugurating a new program in Southern New England, Rita Jackson brings her experience as an early childhood teacher to this new classroom of three year olds. Cheaper than day-care, this class offers a Bible-based curriculum, complete with music and P.E.

Lauren Rittenhouse, long a volunteer at Edgewood/GBA, is teaching a new academy class that emphasizes a combination of practical and fine arts. Students will be working with her to spruce up the school while learning such home-making and maintenance skills as fine cooking, sewing, painting, and tiling. They will also learn about art and music and take field trips to museums and concerts.

The school year got off to an inspiring start for the staff on the Friday prior to the first teaching day. Pastors from the Boston area, including Billerica/MVC's own Pastor Vasseur, met with the staff for breakfast and a dedication service. These pastors will be partnering with the school to support each other by praying for each other and providing quality worship experiences for each other. Congregations can expect to see groups from EW/GBA in their churches conducting the worship service starting in October.

Looking ahead, GBA's alumni weekend on September 28 and 29 will feature a reunion from the years Laurie Redmer directed the choir (1994-1998). A concert to benefit the current music department will take place at 5 p.m. on the 29<sup>th</sup> in the Stoneham Memorial Church. All are welcome to attend.

**Rondi Aastrup**  
**PreK-12 Principal/Senior English teacher**  
**Edgewood Elementary/Greater Boston Academy**  
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[www.greaterbostonacademy.com](http://www.greaterbostonacademy.com)

*Excellence for the Purpose of Service*  
*Educating for Eternity*



**September**

2 – Andreas Goelzer  
 2 – Eileen Robichaud  
 4 – JoAnn Artis  
 4 – Matt Heng  
 4 – Elena Iria  
 8 – Flor Portillo  
 11 – Ashley Reuther  
 12 – Jason Bryner  
 13 – Nancy Jacobson  
 15 – Jody Masotta  
 16 – Grace Yu  
 20 – Victor Berlus  
 20 – Rosalinda Candelario  
 24 – Mutsi Holiman  
 24 – Duk-Mee Lee  
 24 – Clarice Reiss (age 100)  
 25 – Bob McCall  
 25 – Margarita Santana  
 26 – Helene Gilman  
 28 – Young Oh  
 29 – William Carvajal  
 30 – Sue Reuther  
 30 – Jeanette Voltaire

# Happy Birthday

**October**

1 – Abigail Martinez  
 4 – Cindy Harris  
 5 – Carla Bonfirm  
 8 – Cheng Sieu Tang  
 10 – Sophone Tang  
 12 – Regina Yu  
 13 – Tom Sing, Jr.  
 13 – Marianne Wiacek  
 16 – Nancy Saxton  
 20 – Melissa Candelario  
 20 – Michael Frimpong  
 20 – Monte Nelson  
 22 – Abigail Santana  
 23 – Gail Boissoneault  
 23 – Marie Caggiano  
 23 – Jim Newell  
 26 – Andrew Lee  
 26 – Denise Vasseur  
 29 – Dale Cady  
 29 – Rick Wall

**“100 Years Young”**

On July 28<sup>th</sup> in Virgil, New York the family of Clarice Reiss gathered at the home of her proud grandson and his wife, Dan & Leslie Morrison, to celebrate her upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday. There were at least 55 members of the family in attendance as well as close friends.

Clarice, also affectionately known as Grammy Reiss, was born on September 24, 1907. She had eight children, John, Bob, Lorraine, Jim, Carolyn, Connie, Paul & Steve. John & Bob have predeceased her. She has 17 grandchildren, 34 great grandchildren, and 8 great, great grandchildren. At this time of her life she is in the care of her two loving daughter's Carolyn Jodlowski & Connie Stone. She still does the 6-month split between Titusville, Florida and Smithville Flats, New York.

She enjoys watching nature at its best. There isn't a bird or flower she still doesn't recognize. Trips to the beach are still part of her Florida fun.

She is happy to get the MVC newsletter that Cindy makes sure she has, so she can keep up with what is going on in her absence.

Clarice was baptized on September 2, 1944 at the Lowell Church. She has enjoyed many church positions since then but the one she enjoyed the most was being the Dorcas leader for many years. You cannot even begin to count the amount of clothing and food baskets that were distributed by her and her faithful assistants.

If she could share one thing with you at this point in time is that the signs of the times are all around us “Jesus is coming soon - so be faithful!”

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Lovingly submitted by her daughter-in-law,  
**Joanie Reiss**

## Sabbath School News

- Our next *Sabbath School Prayer Breakfast* will be held on September 22. It starts at 9:45 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall with a potluck breakfast. Be sure to bring your favorite breakfast food for your own family and a visiting family. We always have a lot of visitors. As in the previous two prayer breakfasts we will have a devotional presented while we eat, followed by a prayer time. There will be a joint adult Sabbath School lesson featuring a guest teacher. The breakfast and devotional are a family event. Following the devotional, the children will go to their divisions for their regular Sabbath School program. You should plan not to miss this very special service. The first two Prayer Breakfasts were enjoyed and well received by a large number of church members and visitors. We plan to have a Prayer Breakfast once each quarter for the coming year. The fourth quarter Prayer Breakfast is scheduled for November 17. If you have any suggestions of other programs to invigorate the Adult Sabbath School, please contact Ingrid Mergenthaler or Alice Jacobson. We appreciate your input and your support of this new Sabbath School initiative. It is our prayer that our Sabbath School will meet your needs. If you haven't been to Sabbath School recently please give it a try. Sabbath School is where the action is.
- Other special programs this quarter include the Primary Division presenting the Adult Sabbath School program on September 29th.
- Each Sabbath we have 5 children's divisions—Beginners, Kindergarten, Primary, Juniors and Teens. If you have any questions about where these divisions meet each Sabbath at 10 a.m. the greeter in the lobby will be more than happy to direct you to the correct meeting place. There are four Adult Sabbath School lessons—which also begin at 10 a.m. each Sabbath. They are—the Cambodian class that meets in the Library, a Young Adult Class that meets in the Fellowship Hall, a Discussion Class (that follows the topic of the quarterly) and a Traditional Class that meets in the Sanctuary.
- Many thanks to all who have noticed and heeded the '*quiet please*' signs as they have entered the Fellowship Hall. It has made an enjoyable difference in the noise level.
- If you have any suggestions for an additional Sabbath School class for the adults, please contact Ingrid Mergenthaler or Alice Jacobson.

Thank you for your continued support of the Sabbath School program.

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*Submitted by Alice Jacobson, Sabbath School Superintendent*

## Community Services

For community services, our church will be in a rotation with other area churches to feed the homeless at the girls YWCA in Lowell. We will be feeding them every seven weeks. October 13th is the first time we will be doing it. There will be more information coming and I am looking for volunteers to help serve and volunteers to help make the food. Please contact Karen McClendon for more information.

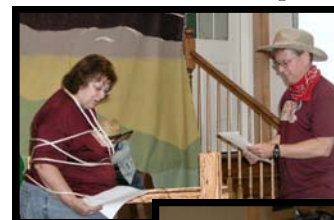
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Submitted by Karen McClendon





**Wahoo!!!** It's Vacation Bible School at Avalanche Ranch. The joyful voices of 35-40 children filled the church every night during the week of July 30 August 3. The Avalanche Ranch theme was launched as they arrived for VBS by the well-decorated lobby and fellowship hall. A breathtaking mural painted by Veronica Iria helped set the stage for the ranch.



Cowboy Phil was the Chief Cow Puncher (along with sidekick Rowdy Rita McCall) during the opening exercises where singing and storytelling were the main activity. Every evening provided the children with a learning point about God (i.e. God is Awesome! Wahoo!) that was threaded into each segment of the program.



There were four Cowhand crews with crew leaders in each one: Cowpokes, Rangers, Wranglers and Preschool Chipmunks. Many thanks to the crew leaders who did an awesome job corralling the children and assisting them in enjoying a momentous experience.



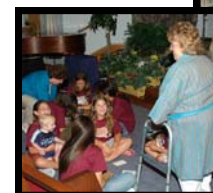
There was a special time for fun crafts where the cowgirl in charge was Lizbeth Martinez. The Bible point for the day came alive in Chadder's Wild West Theater where Bronco-buster Jean McKillop was the storyteller. Snacks were available at the Chuck Wagon Chow Station each evening where the cookie was Joanie Reiss who (along with many other cookies) made food items that went with the ranch/Bible theme. The Horse Play Games were headed up by Paul Iria and Greg Irrgang. Each game was a surprise and enjoyed by all cowhands. Wild Bible Adventures-lead by Ingrid Mergenthaler, the Jacobsons, Warren Saxton, Karen McClendon and Gilda Newell-made the Bible story of the day come to life each day through Christian drama. (Yes, those were tall walls!)



To close the evening the Showtime Roundup was headed by Rita McCall and her buckaroos. The singing and amazing hand actions that accompanied the songs were led by musical gaucho Sherri Dovich.



There are many people to thank for making VBS a success- food was provided, time and effort to decorate, preparation time for each segment of the program, organization, etc.- the list goes on! Special thanks go to our VBS leader this year; trail boss Vivian Irrgang and her team, for a job well done! The cowhands are looking forward to next year's VBS and all the delight it brings!



**Wahoo!!!**



Photos by:  
Dale Jacobson & Bob McCall



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### Youth Rally

Luis Biazotto and his team of Brazilian Literature Evangelists conducted a youth rally on August 18th.



### From the Editor's Desk



Please call Cindy Harris at:  
(978) 685-5905, or e-mail me at  
[cinlee4@comcast.net](mailto:cinlee4@comcast.net)  
to submit articles for the next newsletter.  
**NEXT DEADLINE: October 22, 2007**



Photos by Dale Jacobson

### RECOGNITION

Dale Jacobson, Photo Editor  
Bob McCall, Printer