

A CLOSER LOOK . . .

It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Since your Area Leadership Teams have received the “official” minutes to share with you, our intent here is to give you a few “inside peaks” at the off-the-record activities during the most recent NAR Board meeting. Yes, here’s what you always wanted to know but were afraid to ask about what REALLY happens at these important and VERY solemn meetings . . .



A “snake dance” became part of the Saturday morning devotions. Everyone piously bowed their heads for an opening prayer. Then, the “Celebrate” song made popular by Kool and the Gang came blasting forth. The dance was an impromptu reaction to the surprise of it all!

The Prestons and Fells break from a warm hug just long enough for a quickie for the photographer. They resumed their hug the second this was shot! Feels great, huh!



(left to right: Mick Preston, Jean and David Fell, Sandy Preston.)

*“What miracle(s) have I experienced as a result of our involvement in Marriage Encounter?
What feeling do I have about this? DFILD*

Ron and Pat Olson grab a few winks during an especially important presentation. Or, were they finally



dreaming up the skit they presented later to get our juices going about the next Family Reunion being held in District V at Pacific Lutheran University???



Jake and June Rabatin share a pensive moment as they wonder if there will be yet another REWRITE an-

nounced during the North American Region Board meeting. As servants in the staff support position of National Presenting Couple Coordinators, Jake and June shouldered a tremendous load of responsibility as they inspired, cajoled, nudged (oops. . .more like SHOVED) and most of all lovingly NURTURED presenting couples and their District Presenting Couple Coordinators all over North America during the past three and a half years in the rewriting process. Many of us are of the opinion that if it were not for their dynamic and tireless example and leadership, the job would never have been accomplished. A heartfelt thanks, June and Jake, for all you have done for ILME in support of presenting couples everywhere.

When no rewrites were announced (well, not major ones, anyway...) Jake’s atypical “thinker” reaction was enough to make “helper” June say, “He’s BEYOND help, folks!” Bruce Breslin (as in Bruce and MaryAnn Breslin) is in the background trying to stay abreast of the happenings.





YES! They did it! **Ron and Pat** “dreamed up” a wonderful skit about the District V hosted International Lutheran Marriage Encounter Family Reunion and really got us dreaming big with the theme of “Dreams Have No Boundaries.” Their t-shirts have that theme displayed along with the flags of the countries where LME has given weekends. Let’s all “lean” toward going to Tacoma! [see ad pg. 11]



Jim gestures for us to stay calm and tells us not to worry. He claimed that “Pam just saw a little mouse and she’ll come back down when she’s sure it’s shooed away.” At least this was his explanation for **Pam** being perched nearly on top of the presenting table!?!?! **Dan and Judy** urge us on asking for more... (P.S. Nice legs, Pam!)



P.S.

“How do I feel when you make me the brunt of a joke?” DFIFLD. (ie. Describe Feeling In Full Loving Detail.)

What Others had to say . . .

(. . . about the NAR Board Meeting!)



“Serving on the North American Region Board has been a blessing. We have been enriched and encouraged in special ways by each of the six NAR Board meetings we have attended. We were especially blessed by the first one we attended when we experienced concerned love and true consensus on the difficult communion issue. We met spirit filled, compassionate, empathetic couples like Fred & Marilyn Illick. Their light of Christ shined for us, as have the love lights of so many of the NAR couples that we have been blest to know. The last meeting filled us with a spirit of celebration and thankfulness for the warm memories we have and the confidence LME is in loving hands. We feel happy for Richard & Sandy Giro and Laird & Winnie Engle in the belief that they also will find NAR meetings to be real blessings as they serve for the next three years in leadership of District II.”

—Arnie and Sue Kaestner



“The meeting was refreshing to us—we have been so very occupied with our own concerns that ME has been on hold lately. So we were very glad to reunite not only with so many dear brothers and sisters but also to reunite with maybe the best part of each other. I think a high point was when we ‘celebrated good times.’ I still chuckle at the image of us all sitting with bowed heads and pious expressions when that good rock ‘n roll beat suddenly flooded the room. What a great reminder that we are JOYFUL Christians! It doesn’t matter whether we WANT to go to NAR Board meetings; we are always glad we did go.”

—Jake and June Rabatin



“We prepared for and arrived at the NAR Board meeting feeling somewhat nostalgic. Our term as District III Lay Contact was coming to an end. We had worked with a wonderful group of people for three years on the NAR Board, sometimes on difficult issues.

This meeting was productive, pleasant and full of surprises and celebrations. We had not expected to leave the meeting as the newly elected NAR Executive Lay Couple, but we did. WOW! The shock is beginning to wear off now and we feel honored to have this opportunity to serve the ILME Family with the Hartmans.

—Jim and Anita Tollefson



Thanks for the Memories . . .

. . . and sharing "the Dream!"

Dear Lovers,

Dan, Judy, Pam and I have had the wonderful privilege of journeying to Finland and leading the International Council meeting of Lutheran Marriage Encounter. Our meeting was held in Ryttylä, Finland, on July 25-26, 2001. The weather was wonderful. The meeting was very Christ centered as we focused on being a part of "The Lutheran Marriage Encounter Family."

We heard reports from each district and region in the world. We had the privilege of having in attendance Mike and Narelle Fulwood from Australia. They have just held their first Weekend in two years. Praise God! It was a small weekend but a great deal was accomplished. Australia is a very large country, having a small but mighty group of Lutherans. The Australian Lutheran Marriage Encounter Community wants to reach out to Queensland in Australia with the weekend. There are more Lutherans there than in the region that is currently active. *They ask that we all pray for their renewed efforts to change the world with God's love and vision for marriage in Australia.*

We also had the wonderful privilege of meeting with European Leadership couples, Kari and Anna Alander of Finland, Ebba and Carl Eric Svensäter and Agneta and Hans-Joachim Franze both of Sweden. This was Carl Eric and Ebba's last international meeting. Agneta and Hans-Joachim Franze are the newly elected Clergy Contact Couple for the European Region of Lutheran Marriage Encounter.

We sat in awe as the Europeans shared the following results in the year 2000, twenty-nine weekends were held and 877 couples were encountered. Finland and Iceland continue to have a waiting list—Finland with 550 couples and Iceland with 400 couples. Finland also has 160 active "love circles." As you can see, Lutheran Marriage Encounter is alive and moving in the European Region.

The International Council also approved the newly updated North American Region Bylaws. It is the International Council's responsibility to approve any and all changes to any regional bylaws.

We also reviewed international outreach potentials. We heard some exciting news about the possibilities of bringing Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends to Puerto Rico, Germany and even South Africa. We also identified new opportunities in expanding M.E. in Brazil.

One of the final pieces of business we discussed is how do we share the leadership of the International Council? Currently, the regional executives rotate the leadership between North American Region and the European Region. The problem is that it is very difficult to lead in both areas (region and international) concurrently. We will be revisiting this issue next summer at our next International Council meeting right before the International Family Reunion in Tacoma, Washington.

May God continue to bless your lives, your love and this wonderful ministry.

How quickly the time has gone. Three years have truly flown by. It has been an exciting journey that has included adopting the New Charter, updating the Bylaws, two wonderful trips to Europe and introducing the new and exciting updated Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend. We want to thank you for your prayers, support and hugs.

One of the things we will miss the most is our contacts and relationships with the Interfaith Board members. As the North American Executives we have had the honor of attending two meetings a year with twelve other denominations all dedicated to strengthening marriages. All encountered couples should have this opportunity at least once. The acceptance and willingness to work together as a "family" through the new revised outlines was inspiring. We not only made new friends but covered much ground as we began to share ideas and enthusiasm to rebuild as we all struggle to "get back to the basics." We will truly miss these meetings, the loving couples and the fellowship.

We could not have done our jobs without the help of the District Leadership Couples as well as the "super staff" that the NAR Board is privileged to have. The time and effort seems at times to be never ending. We never felt alone in our goals and knew from the beginning that we had support from the board and staff. *What a way to spend the last three years!* We can't begin to thank you all and for all that you do and will continue to do for the new leadership.

As we go into our last year as Lay and Clergy Contact for the International Council of Lutheran Marriage Encounter, we hope to see all of you next summer in Tacoma, Washington. We will again gather to celebrate marriage at Pacific Lutheran University and to celebrate another exciting International Family Reunion.

And finally, we ask for continued prayers and support for our new leadership, Ted and Marty and Jim and Anita. They will need your prayers and the support that we had in leadership.

God bless your marriages, your families and your dialogue.

In His AWESOME Name,



Jim & Pam Bush — Judy & Dan Teuscher
Ps 47:2a "How awesome is the LORD Most High"



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ILME Donations

Lutheran Marriage Encounter welcomes and needs your additional donations. ILME Weekend donations alone are not enough. Send a ME love donation often to your District Finance Couple to be used for the ongoing expenses of ILME.



*Dreams
Have
No
Boundaries*

*You are cordially invited to attend the
Lutheran Marriage Encounter
North American Region's*

Family Reunion

*On the campus of beautiful
Pacific Lutheran University
Tacoma, Washington*

August 9 to 11, 2002

Registration information will be coming soon.

*The coordinating couple, Mark and Ginny Sims can be reached at
SimsKortes@aol.com*



**A Wedding
is a Day . . .
A Marriage is a
Lifetime**

**DO YOU KNOW OF A
COUPLE PLANNING
MARRIAGE?**

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Community Presentations

One of the key parts in growing the ministry of Marriage Encounter is supporting the continuing vitality of the monthly gathering of encountered couples. Frequently, couples who are inexperienced or who have presented so often, find it difficult to find a presentation to give.

We are blessed in Lutheran Marriage Encounter in that we have a set of resources available to us through the ILME web site. But like everything, it is always in need of new material. This portion of *Call To Be Family* will feature a community presentation that you can lovingly lift and give at your community meeting, love circle or whatever name you use in your locality when encountered couples come together to share and renew their relationships. We invite anyone who gives a Community presentation that they would like to share with the broader ILME family, to please send them to the Editors and we will publicize them here. We hope that we have so many coming in that we can't possibly print them all. If that happens we will provide a synopsis and be sure they are available through the resource portal on our web site.

We want to create a place to share new ideas and resources that keep continuing encounter in Lutheran Marriage Encounter fresh and new. We believe these monthly meetings are life giving to the couples who attend and a vital part of our ministry. Please help us by sending your community presentations and ideas to us so that others can be blessed by the gift God gave you to share.

—Editors' note

This portion of Call To Be Family will feature a community presentation that you can lovingly lift and give at your community meeting, love circle or whatever name you use in your locality when encountered couples come together to share and renew their relationships.

The following is for your use. Please send us more than we can print so all of us are blessed by your blessing.

Lazarus

A Community Presentation

*Created and Presented by Rich and Jan Schleier
at the District IV Board meeting, August 3-4, 2001
in Ontario, CA*

✦ Begin with prayer . . .

Spouse 1:

Imagine that you are sitting in a room and in that room sits a chest that looks strangely like a treasure chest. Think about the feelings that would course through your body as you ponder what might be inside. Could this be the answer to your prayers for enough money to pay off the house? Or maybe there is a necklace worn by some royalty unknown to you but the things inside are treasures of great value. What feelings run through you now? Write them down.

Spouse 2:

Wait a minute—suppose that chest really contains several snakes or spiders that are anxiously seeking an escape and raging at being held hostage. Surely they will strike at anyone who opens the chest. What feelings are coming alive now? What if this is really a bomb left by some weird deranged person who only wants to wreak havoc on unseen people from this country? What feelings are alive now if you imagine all this is really the truth? Write those feelings down.

Spouse 1:

So here we sit in this place with a chest that might be filled with treasures or might hold untold dangers. Suddenly you see a key laying on a stool next to the table where this chest sits. What will you do? Do you go and see if it is a key that just happens to be laying there? Do you pick up the key and see if it fits the lock? What if it



does? Will you unlock the chest? What feelings come alive as you think about this decision? Write them down.

Spouse 2:

How will you decide what to do? What steps will you take to reach a decision? What reactions are you having about being in this situation? What are your attitudes about it? Write them down.

What feelings come alive as you think about those attitudes? Write them down now.

Spouse 1:

Life and our marriages are like the chest in the room. It looks like it could be filled with treasures, but wait—it could be filled with something else—something deadly and dangerous. There seems to be a key, but what if it doesn't fit the lock? Who put the key there anyway? Why should I take the risk of opening it at all? As you think about this story I want you to decide what the chest in the room represents for you today. What unopened, unexplored, unknown issue is sitting right in front of you? If you cannot think of anything happening right now, think back to a time when you had a situation where you had an unknown treasure chest in front of you and had to decide whether or not to open it. Take a minute to think about it and write it down now. What feelings are alive right now as you think about that incident in your life? Describe them now.

Spouse 2:

I was reading in the Gospel of John recently and came across the story of Lazarus. There are so many elements to that miracle that simply fascinate me. Jesus gets an urgent message to come to assist Martha and Mary because Lazarus is seriously ill. But Jesus doesn't jump, nor does he even send a word of healing. HE LETS HIM DIE! What do you mean, lets him die? I mean he doesn't just fall asleep. We're talking heart stopping', blue-faced, wrap him up in cloth and spices, stick him in the cave DEAD. When Jesus shows up, Martha and Mary say, "If you only . . ." and Jesus says, "Do you believe? Who do you think I am?" "We believe you are the Messiah!"

With that said, Jesus weeps. Then he says to the same people who just said, "You're the Messiah," you know, the Son of God. The one who can do anything—anything at all. And get this, he says to them, "Roll away the stone." Hmmm...here's the guy who is the key to unlocking something that Mary and Martha want. He weeps. Then he tells them to roll away the stone, or open up and let him out. Now what do you think Mary and Martha are saying? Yahoo! Let's get after it! No, the response is, "Are you

kidding? He's been in there for four days. It's going to *stink!*"

A treasure is there just waiting to be opened. Jesus, the key to it all, is right there with them. There's no reason for question or fear, but Mary and Martha draw a conclusion about what is waiting for them behind the stone. Something stinks here, but it ain't Lazarus. Why is it that we see God, we testify to his presence and control, but when he puts a chest in front of us we look for the most curious reasons why we can't respond to what lays in front of us.

What did Jesus say to their doubt? Anybody know? He said, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believed?" Then guess what—they rolled away the stone and Jesus in a loud voice said, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he did. "Take the wrappings off my friend and let him go." What kind of feelings do you think were coursing through his body? What about Martha and Mary? What feelings are running wild in you right now? Write them down.

Spouse 1:

You have all responded to a lot of questions and written down a lot of different feelings so we now have a dialogue question for you. Once you have written your letter and dialogued on the question, we'd like to get everyone back together for a sharing question and a closing prayer.

The dialogue question is:

"What observation, feeling, or feelings are most vivid for me right now and how do I feel sharing this with you?"

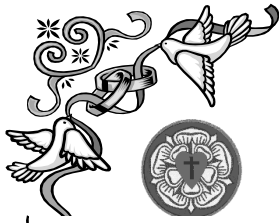
Spouse 2:

We gave a presentation that would hopefully get us focused on a variety of issues and related feelings. If you take this talk and related issues surrounding it, you have enough dialogue material for the next several weeks. Making the decision to acknowledge that there are things we have not opened, understanding why we haven't opened them and what drives those decisions provides us a large crop of opportunities to grow as a couple.

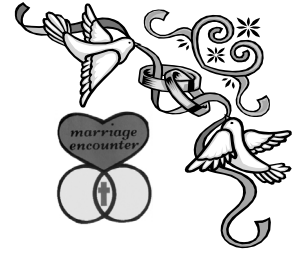
Our open sharing question is:

"How did our dialogue just now speak to me and how do I feel as I reflect on it?"

Close with Prayer, Singing and EATING!



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*Thank you so much,
Roger and Chris Williams
for serving as our National Supply
Couple for the past three years. Your time
and efforts were greatly appreciated.*

*A Warm WELCOME
Is extended to the new
National Supply Couple
Tom and Sheila Cochran*

*"How do I feel about volunteering for a
Loving Task for the sake of encountering
the world, one couple at a time? DFILD.*

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*(Districts II and IV need some
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Also, feel free to contact your
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(see NAR Staff)

**Have you checked out the
extensive source of materials
designed for a multitude of
Community uses to be found
on the ILME website?**

<http://www.ilme.org/lme.html>

**User name: ILME Couples
Password: 1010**





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LOVING INVITATION . . .

(Requires a LOVING response!)

Send **POST WEEKEND LISTS** and
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Lutheran Marriage Encounter Mission Statement

Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a ministry dedicated to assisting married couples to live fully intimate and responsible relationships by providing an Encounter Weekend experience as well as ongoing community support.

Vision Statement

The Lutheran Church renewed and our world changed through strengthened couple relationships and stronger personal relationships with Christ.

**ANY WORLDWIDE
MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND
CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET**

at this Interfaith Address:

<http://208.130.185.51/interfaith/interfaith.htm>

also

“Call To Be Family”

is available on the Internet
for ALL encountered couples:

1. Go to the ILME Home Page: www.ilme.org
2. Click on “Resources for Couples who have been on a ME weekend”
3. Click on “ILME Post Weekend material”
4. Click on “Download some Documents, get dialogue helps”
(User name: ILME Couples, password: 1010)
5. On the second page, go to “Misc. stuff that didn’t quite fit other categories,” and you will see “Call To Be Family”
6. After downloading, you will need the Adobe Acrobat Reader to open it. The Acrobat Reader can be downloaded from the Resource page or from www.adobe.com

Cruise to Alaska

with your Marriage Encounter Friends!

A cruise to Alaska is being planned for immediately following the Family Reunion at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, held in August 9-11, 2002.

For full details and all information, contact:

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LOOKING FORWARD TO THE SPRING ISSUE . . .

- Lutheran Couple Presents on a Presbyterian Weekend.
- NAR Board Meets for the first time with New Leadership Team.
- SPOTLIGHT on another thriving AREA.
- Summer 2002 FAMILY REUNION details.
- Scenes from a Deeper Weekend in Houston.
- First writings of Trinity Lewis, author and sage.

“Our International Call to be Family” is published by International Lutheran Marriage Encounter. This newsletter does not set policy or determine practices for ILME. It is the community of couples sharing itself to increase awareness, stimulate discussion and insight. It is mailed bulk rate and is not able to be forwarded. If you are planning to move, please send your change of address as soon as possible to the Editor Couple (see National Staff listings). The newsletter is sent to all who wish to receive it. A donation of \$10.00 for the publication year (September through August) is requested. Names and addresses listed in this publication shall not be used for solicitation by any person or organization for personal or organizational gain or profit. We invite the readers to share information, thoughts and comments with the ILME Community.



And the Lord God said...

"I, myself will dream a dream within you.

*Good things come from me, you know.
My dreams seem impossible, not too practical...
Not for the cautious man or woman,
a little risky sometimes, a trifle brash perhaps.
Some of my friends prefer to rest more comfortably,
in sounder sleep with visionless eyes.*



But from those who share my dreams I ask a little patience, a little humor, some small courage, and a listening heart.

I will do the rest.

*Then. . . they will risk and wonder at their daring;
run and marvel at their speed;
build and stand in awe of their building.*

*You will meet me often as you work...
in your companions who share your risk,
in your friends who believe in you enough to lend their own
dreams, their own hands, their own hearts to your building;
in the people who find your doorway, stay awhile and walk
away knowing they, too, can find a dream.*

*There will be sun filled days and sometimes it will rain.
A little variety!
Both come from me.
So, come now, be content.
It is my dream you dream; my house you build;
my caring you witness; my love you share;*

And this is the heart  of the matter.

Author Anonymous

This poem was lovingly shared by Carl and Dallas Presley at the August NAR Board Gathering.

HOW ABOUT IT? DO YOU WANT TO CONTINUE RECEIVING YOUR CALL TO BE FAMILY MAGAZINE???

When you attend a Marriage Encounter Weekend you receive this magazine for one year at no extra cost to you. After that time, in order to continue receiving *Call to be Family* you will need to send in this subscription form with a minimum donation of \$10 (US) EACH YEAR. Your donation is needed to help pay for printing, labels and mailing costs. This donation will also help to continue providing copies for all newly encountered couples.

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