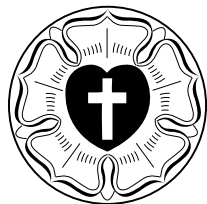


OUR INTERNATIONAL

Call to be Family



Spring 1999

Volume 23 Number 1

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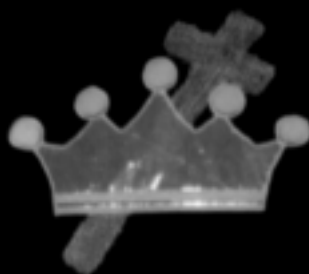
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Our
God
is an
AWE-
SOME
God!

Psalms 47:2a
How awesome is the
LORD Most High.



International Lutheran Marriage Encounter

NAR EXEC. COUPLES

NAR LAY EXEC.
Jim & Pam Bush
905 Linz Ave.
Blue Springs, MO 63014
816-229-8333
bush905@aol.com

NAR CLERGY EXEC.
Dan & Judy Teuscher
9832 Emil Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63126
314-849-1086 Fax 314-842-4553
DanJudy@aol.com

NAR DISTRICT I LAY
David & Jean Fell
32915 Charmwood Oval
Solon, OH 44139
440-349-4107 Fax 440-349-4108
davidjeanfell@hotmail.com

NAR DISTRICT I CLERGY
Fred & Marilyn Illick
7382 Glen Albin Road
La Plata, MD 20646
301-932-6578 Fax 301-934-2930
FMillick@juno.com

NAR DISTRICT II LAY
Arnie & Sue Kaestner
931 Moss Spring Lane
Houston, TX 77024
713-464-6703
Email: ArnieSueK@compuserve.com

NAR DISTRICT II CLERGY
Jerry & Lyn Brownlee
809 Swifts Highway
Jefferson City, MO 65109
573-635-5969
Email: jlbrownlee@aol.com

NAR DISTRICT III LAY
Jim & Anita Tollefson
1004 Elm St.
Alex, MN 56308
612-762-2700

NAR DISTRICT III CLERGY
Dave & Elsa Larson
Rt. 1 Box 60A
Pickrell, NE 68422
402-673-3134
dande_larson@juno.com

NAR DISTRICT IV LAY
Bruce & Cynthia Darling
14492 Deerfield Avenue
Tustin, CA 92780
714-730-1986 Fax 310-834-0871
darlingc@cui.edu

NAR DISTRICT IV CLERGY
John & Nancy Orwig
511 E. Mescalero Road
Roswell, NM 88201
505-625-9216 Fax: call first
jworwig1@dfn.com

NAR DISTRICT V LAY
Ron & Nancy Hawke
P.O. Box 1001
Mi Wuk Village, CA 95346-1001
209-586-4528 Fax: call first
hawke@sonnet.com

NAR DISTRICT V CLERGY
Manfred & Jutta Berndt
1396 Lavine
Pocatello, ID 83201
208-237-5945 Fax 208-237-4931
mjbberndt@aol.com

NAR STAFF COUPLES

PRESENTING COUPLE COORD.
Jake & June Rabatin
9131 North Grant Ave.
Manassas, VA 20110
703-361-1287
jakerabatin@erols.com

SECRETARY COUPLE
Carl & Dallas Presley
4219 32nd Ave. CT N.W.
Gig Harbor, WA 98335
253-851-6652 Fax:253-942-0326
carlp@wdni.com

FINANCE COUPLE
John & Irene Schmehl
3194 Etter Rd.
Chambersburg, PA 17201
717-709-0453

SUPPLY COUPLE
Bruce & Ila Zellmer
2009 Peachtree Ct.
Sioux City, IA 51104
712-255-9262 Fax 712-255-0617
zellmerb@mail.stluikes.org

RESOURCE COUPLE
Duffy & Nancy Guthrie
549 Janet Dr.
Conneaut, OH 44030
440-599-9090
nguthrie@suite224.net

DEEPER COORD. COUPLE
Chuck & Ruth Harder
742 Los Alamos
Livermore, CA 94550
925-443-0188
charuth@aol.com

AD HOC HISTORIAN COUPLE
John & Sally Duenow
1002 Salnave Rd.
Cheney, WA 99004
509-235-5163
JohnSallyD@aol.com

TELECOMMUNICATIONS Chair.
Dale & Carol Ure
East 1818 37th
Spokane, WA 99203
509-747-7964, FAX 509-456-7994
hdclure@juno.com

OUTLINE REVISION Chair.
Larry & Coke Guilfoile
30975 Minnesota Ave.
Lindstrom, MN 55045
612-257-6960

EDITOR COUPLE
Hal & Marilyn Printup
3608 Ashwood Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90066
310-398-7137 Fax 310-391-2122
hprintup@gte.net

INTERNATIONAL LIAISON COUPLE
Anna Christine and Tor Pytte
Bakke S 44
2040 KLOFTA, Norway
47 88 00 36 44
email: torpy@online.no

EUROPEAN REGION

EUR. REGION LAY EXEC.
Matti & Anna Liisa Viitanen
Ahvenkoskenkuja 2
00950 Helsinki
Finland
Voice & Fax 011 +358 9 3281669
Email: matti.viitanen@pp.inet.fi

EUR. REGION CLERGY EXEC.
Ebba & Carl Eric Svensäter
Madesjö 1001
38294 Nybro, Sweden
011 +46 481 17100
FAX 011 +46 481 12079
svensater@mailbox.swipnet.se

NORWAY LAY
Per & Randi Ronsen
Tveter Gaard
2009 Nordby, Norway
Phone 011 +47 6383 1461
Email: proensen@online.no

NORWAY CLERGY
Ulf & Torill Asp
Åleveijen 3,
1322 Tonsberg, Norway
011+47 3334 7786

FINLAND LAY
Kari & Anna Ålander
Aholaidantie 1
40300 Jyväskylä, Finland
Voice/Fax 011 358 14 449 9920
Email: alander@solutions.fi

FINLAND CLERGY
Sakari & Seija Leppänen
Vapaudenkatu 24
28100 Pori, Finland
011 +358 2 6415161

ICELAND LAY
Ragnheidur Ankelsdóttir & Willy Petersen
Hátúni 15
105 Reykjavik, Iceland
Voice & Fax 011+354 5528201
Email: hatun@itn.is

ICELAND CO LAY
Audur Gisladóttir & Halldór V. Halldórsson
Vallarbarði 19
220 Hafnarfjörður, Iceland
011 +354 5654161
Fax: 011+354 5654535
Email:boggi@islandia.is

SWEDEN LAY
Gunilla & Anders Nolemo
Bladavägen 22
69148 Karlskoga, Sweden
011+46 586 51857
FAX 011 46 586 610 23 or 620 60
Email: nolemo@swipnet.se

SWEDEN CLERGY
Carl Eric & Ebba Svensäter
Madesjö 1001
38294 Nybro, Sweden
011 +46 481 17100
FAX 011 +46 481 12079
Email: svensater@mailbox.swipnet.se

DENMARK LAY
Niels Jorgen & Inge Bogel Lassen
Rödageren 11
9280 Storvorde, Denmark
Voice & Fax 011+ 45 98326030
Email: njlassen@inet.uni2.dk

DENMARK LAY (ASSIST.)
Ejnar & Jeannette Larsen
Mejrup Skolevej 40
7500 Holstebro, Denmark
Voice & fax: 011+45 97 422975

SO. AMERICAN REGION
S.A. REGION CO-LAY EXEC.
Ibarir & Ilka Cordeiro
Rua Omilio Monteiro Soares
1613 - Vila Fanny;
81030.001 Curitiba, PR, Brazil
011-44-41-277-4968
email: ibarir@bsi.com.br

S.A. REGION CO-LAY EXEC.
Ottokar & Karin Bruhmüller
Rua Presidente Prudente de Moraes,
315
89218-000 Joinville, SC, Brazil
email: ottokar@netville.com.br

AUSTRALASIAN REGION

AUSTRALIA LAY
Werner & Annette Wirz
10 Lightning Street
Raby, 2566 New South Wales
Australia
011 61-2-9820-1238

AUSTRALIA CLERGY
Mike & Narelle Fulwood
1 Louisa Lawson Crescent
Gilmore ACT 2905
Australia
011 61-6-292-2159

CANADIAN FACILITATORS
Gordon & Grace Hendrickson
RR#1
Starbuck, Manitoba R0G 2P0
Canada
204-735-2776 Fax: 204-735-2380

Our New World Is About To Become Newer.

You may sense the anticipation in the air. We are about to enter an exciting time. No, it's not Y2K. Our presenting couples are all busy rewriting their talks to the "new outline." The Worldwide Marriage Encounter magazine *Matrimony* says of the new outline, "... a new life and energy has been breathed into our Weekend..." and that the new Weekend is dynamic and is being received with enthusiasm by everyone! Lutheran Marriage Encounter is affiliated with Worldwide Marriage Encounter

As we are going to press we received an email from Al & Cinda Williamson (of Appalachian hiking fame) that the Carolinas Area in District I will be presenting a weekend to the new outline on April 16-18. Our prayers are for the Carolinas weekend as well as for all NAR presenting couples who are in the rewriting process.

CHANGE. This is reminiscent of events in our own congregation. Last

September an accidental electrical fire destroyed our chancel and roof which rendered our sanctuary unusable. We know that we were blessed because it could have been much more serious. In making plans for repairing the damage, the congregation has decided to make some improvements as well. This will require making some changes. Some desire to keep it as it was. Others see exciting new possibilities and an opportunity for expanded ministry to reach more people with the love of Christ.

The new outline probably elicits similar responses. We may fondly recall memories of our original weekend. It was perfect. So why change? Or we can see this as our opportunity to reach more couples with a dynamic new approach. We trust that the Lord will use this change to bring new life and energy to the Weekend for the couples of today. Pray that it will.


Speaking of new things, the European Region has been sharing a

newsletter by email within the European Region and with the other ILME regions. On page 16, we have a sample of the electronic newsletter published by Anna Kristine and Tor Pytte. Their hope is that our worldwide family of lovers will use this vehicle to share their facts, dreams, visions, victories and struggles.

Along those same lines, the NAR Board has decided to post an electronic version of *Call to be Family* on the ILME homepage. (User name: ILME Couples Password: 1010) We believe this will make *Call to be Family* more accessible, especially to other regions. As always, we will continue to print and mail to new couples and to our loyal subscribers.

In reflecting on the transformation taking place, we have a question for you: WAMF about change? DFILD.

We love you,
Hal and Marilyn



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EDITOR COUPLE
Hal & Marilyn Printup
 3608 Ashwood Ave.
 Los Angeles, CA 90066
 310-398-7137 FAX 310-391-2122
NEW EMAIL: hprintup@gte.net
Send board changes, comments, articles, sharing, leads for stories and requests for extra copies to the Printups.

SUBSCRIPTION COUPLE
Don & Barb Howard
 259 Countryside Circle
 New Hope, PA 18938
 215-598-8919
Send subscriptions to the Howards. Do not send weekend lists.

Send weekend lists to
 STATS & RECORDS COUPLE
Dan & Tammi Hoeger
 9702 221st SE
 Snohomish, WA 98296
 email: danhoe@microsoft.com

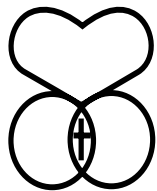
DIST. I ASSOC. CTBF EDITOR
David & Jean Fell

DIST. II ASSOC. CTBF EDITOR
 Couple needed

DIST. III ASSOC. CTBF EDITOR
 Couple needed

DIST. IV ASSOC. CTBF EDITOR
Dick & Jane Knecht
 2443 Applewood Circle
 Fullerton, CA 92833-1241
 714-680-9722

DIST. V ASSOC. CTBF EDITOR
Bruce & Shirley Mullikin
 196 Sunset Place
 Sequim, WA 98382
 360-681-4933



Dan & Judy Teuscher, NAR Executive Clergy Couple Pam & Jim Bush, NAR Executive Lay Couple

From Your
NAR Execs

**“How
awesome is
the LORD
Most High...”**

Psalms 47:2a

Loving thanks to Jim & Brownie Soukup of “Shades of Expression” in Independence, Missouri who designed and made the AWESOME banner on the front cover.

Dear Lovers,

We have just returned from the North American Region Board Meeting in Ontario, California. It was an AWESOME experience. We prayed together, we cried, we hugged, we relearned about what “consensus is” and how it needs to work for all of Lutheran Marriage Encounter. We were challenged to “Dream Big Dreams” by our AWESOME God.

We also had the privilege to have in attendance our International Lutheran Marriage Encounter Lay & Clergy Contact Couples - Matti & Anna Lissa Viitanen, and Carl Eric & Ebba Swensater. They shared with us about new outreach area possibilities in Japan (2,000,000 Lutherans there), India (1,500,000 Lutheran there). These are couples who want what we have, a “Dream” of a deeper, more intimate love affair with their Lord and each other.

Yes, we learned to open our eyes as Jesus says, in John 4:35b “I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”

That “Weekend” harvest is right around you. Lets all invite, lets all be workers in the field of love.

It was an AWESOME experience!

May God continue to bless this ministry and your relationships.

Lots of hugs,

Jim & Pam Bush
NAR Lay Contact Couple

Dan & Judy Teuscher
NAR Clergy Contact Couple

The beginning of a series

OUR AWESOME DREAMS

By Jim & Pam Bush and Dan & Judy Tuescher

What an AWESOME God we serve!

(We) are humbled and yet excited about the opportunity that God has called us to in our position as the North American Region Executive Couples. During the next three years, we see our dream and ministry as four fold. The dream is as follows:

- I. Invited by God**
- L. Leading through relationships**
- M. Maximizing weekends**
- E. Encouraging one another**

Over the next several editions of "Call to be Family," we will explore these four essential points. We want to share with you what our vision is for Lutheran Marriage Encounter. We want all of us to rediscover who we are, and why we are involved in this dynamic ministry. A Ministry that can and will change the world for Christ!

I. All of us are Invited by God to a new ministry of Love. We can best express our ministry of love by living a dialoguing life-style. Dialogue is part of the gift we were

"We all need to invite other couples to their Weekend. They need and deserve the opportunity to experience what you have experienced on your Weekend."

given on our Weekend. It is a gift we use and cherish each day of our marriages. It is the gift that we want the entire world to share with us after they have been on their Weekend.

For many of us, our Weekend was sometime ago. Moreover, it is very easy to fall back into the world's plan for our marriage. We need to rediscover the glory and majesty of just what dialogue can do to revitalize not only our marriages but also the marriage of all couples. To help all of us to rediscover the wonders of a revitalized dialogue, we have a brand new Weekend that will soon

be offered in your area. Maybe its time to consider attending your anniversary Weekend. You deserve it!

We all need to invite other couples to their Weekend. They need and deserve the opportunity to experience what you have experienced on your Weekend. That is how we can change the world—one couple, one weekend, one area, one district, one region, and our world—for Christ. It's gonna take all of us living a new dialoguing life-style to change the world. By the way, how is your dialogue life-style?

Who have you invited recently? Who have you shared your couple relationship with recently? Who do you know that deserves a Weekend? Why not pick up the telephone right now and INVITE that special couple to a new loving and intimate life-style. The type of life-style you are striving to live every day of your marriage.

Remember our AWESOME God invited and called us first, now it is our turn to invite others.

LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER MISSION STATEMENT

Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a ministry dedicated to assisting married couples to live 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.

Proposed at the August, 1998 NAR Board Meeting



NAR Districts Recognized By European Counterparts

From Sweden, Carl Eric and Ebba Svensaeater presented a banner from their community to District V couples, Ron & Nancy Hawkes and Manfred and Jutta Berndt.

Representing Finland, Matti & Anna Liisa Viitanen presented a banner from Finland to District IV, represented by Bruce & Cynthia Darling and John & Nancy Orwig.

This relationship was established several years ago to encourage mutual support within ILME. The banners were presented at the February 1999 NAR Board meeting.



District III Reunion— *Tribute to Marlon & Mary Lou Meyer*

The District III 1999 Family Reunion is planned for July 9-11, 1999. This reunion is being held as a tribute to Marlon and Mary Lou Meyer (God called Marlon home in August of 1997.)

To borrow excerpts from an article written by Elton and Vi Walth, Clergy Presenters, and printed in the Fall 1997 *Call To Be Family* “We looked upon Marlon and Mary Lou as ME father and mother of this area.” They recruited large numbers of couples, they gave informationals. In 1997 they began their new role as presenters. Marlon and Mary Lou “not only kept weekends viable, but even more, they won the love, admiration, and gratitude of hundreds of couples who accepted their invitation to come to a weekend.”

In the winter of 1997, Marlon expressed great desire to once again have the Grand Island ME Community host the District III Family Reunion. With this memory close to our hearts, “The Dream Goes On.” We welcome all, near and far, to join us in Grand Island, NE July 9th-11th, 1999.

Doug & Leanne Fox - Joel & Ellen Janik, Co-Chair Couples

“... And The
The Dream
Goes On”

DISTRICT III 1999 FAMILY REUNION

“...AND THE DREAM GOES ON”

REGISTRATION FORM July 9-11, 1999 – Best Western Riverside Inn, Grand Island, Nebraska

The Nebraska/Western Iowa Lutheran Marriage Encounter Community invites you to attend the 1999 District III Family Reunion

Please register us for the 1999 District III Family Reunion

(print or type all information)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone: (____) _____

Special Needs: (i.e. handicapped, diet, etc.)

_____ Willing to give one of the Presentations

_____ Clergy willing to assist with Communion

	<i>Postmarked on/before May 1, 1999</i>	<i>Postmarked after May 1, 1999</i>
REGISTRATION, MEALS (5) & LODGING	\$200	\$215
____smoking ____non-smoking		
REGISTRATION & MEALS ONLY	\$100	\$115
CHILDREN’S PACKAGE:		
Lodging-Same Room With Parents	No Charge	No Charge
Meals (5) age 11 & under (per child)	\$25	\$25
Meals (5) age 12 & up (per child)	\$40	\$40
Baby-sitting, Entertainment per child	No Charge	No Charge
Add all previous items listed:		
Total amount due with this form	\$ _____	\$ _____

(Make checks payable to Lutheran Marriage Encounter)

Method of arrival (circle one): Car Plane Bus (Arrow Stage Lines)

_____ Will need lodging info for early or late departure

_____ Will need info for RV parking/camping

Please mail your registration to:

Elwyn & Linda Fitzke
Rt 1, Box 61
Glenvil, NE 68941
(402) 726-2559

Any questions, please feel free to contact one of the Co-chair couples:

Joel & Ellen Jank, (402) 461-3734 or

Doug & Leanne Fox, (402) 684-2379

You will receive your confirmation/directions approximately three weeks prior to the Reunion.

For information about vacationing in Nebraska, contact the NE Travel & Tourism Department - (880) 228-4307.

REFLECTIONS ON THE NAR BOARD MEETING

By Carl Eric & Ebba Svenskaeter
ILME Executive Clergy Couple

Some thoughts of one ILME family member couple from Sweden visiting a NAR Board Meeting for the first time.

“It was a wonderful meeting!” We sometimes express ourselves like that when we have been to a service filled with love and the spirit of God.

The NAR Board Meeting in Ontario, California, February 4-6 was a wonderful meeting. From the very beginning we had the feeling that we were a part of the family, not just someone coming from outside to observe. Some of the members of the board we knew from before but that didn't make any difference. It was the wonderful warmth between the couples that really made us happy.

We were touched by the open sharing at the very beginning of the meeting. The question that was passed around was, “What do you want to be prayed for during the meeting?” That question says more about our hearts than when we usually share: what do you feel just now? And in addition to that, every couple got a special, but unknown, prayer couple for the time of the meeting. The identity of that prayer couple was revealed as the last item of the agenda.

We got an excellent teaching of what it means to make a decision through consensus. And that was put into practice in the way the board solved a difficult issue about the use of communion at weekends.

Everyone was able to express their opinion and was listened to. There was enough time – no hurry.

And at the end of the discussion, every district gave their decision. By then, the atmosphere was almost holy. No one wanted to hurt anyone. There was so much love in the talks and when at last consensus seemed close, someone suggested, “Let us pray”. We all raised, prayed and sung “Praise God from whom all blessings flow” standing in a big circle holding hands. Afterwards someone said something that brought us to tears: “I feel joy but there is pain in my heart”. That is the way a good family acts. Jesus' words were close: “As I have loved you...”

We would like to say a few words about what is called “The Charter”.

That document was presented at the meeting. The Charter to be is there to promote the ME work in a world wide context. It's necessary, even in a family, to have rules for how to cooperate together. The existing rules, the Bylaws, has up to now been the guidelines for this. But they are very detailed and not quite applicable in all parts of our

international family. Therefore it would perhaps be better to create a framework, a foundation or an agreement, that describes the basics for the ME-family. This Charter shall be applicable everywhere in the Lutheran world. Every region is then supposed to write their own bylaws saying how to operate the things according to regulations, needs and demands in our different ME-countries. The Charter is describing the principals and promoting the family feeling. In what ways this is implemented can differ a bit from country to country.

The Charter is now to be handed over to the Regions for discussions and reactions.

We would like to express our thanks to the NAR Exec's, the Teuschers and the Bushes!

May God bless you all and all good deeds!

Your servants,

Ebba and Carl Eric Svenskaeter,
ILME Executive Clergy Couple

District V Plans Fall Weekend Using New Weekend Format

1999 is going to be the year of big changes in Lutheran Marriage Encounter. In late 1997-1998 Worldwide Marriage Encounter changed the format of the weekend and has met with great success using the updated weekend format. Your presenting couples are in the process of writing new talks to the new Lutheran outline. The new outline will include three-ring binders workbooks to take home along with the usual notebooks. The

updated talks are less “teachy” and more “example oriented.” There will be more examples of how to dialogue than previously.

If you haven't been on a weekend for some time or even have recently attended a weekend, you will be pleasantly surprised when you experience the new, updated weekend format. The District V weekend will be in Salem, OR on November 12-14, 1999.

**Tear out this page as a reminder.
Place it where you will see it often.**

Make plans to attend.



**ILME 25th BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION**

**July 21-23, 2000
Concordia University
St. Paul, Minnesota**

**Plan to celebrate the Gifts of Love
in the next millenium!**



The gift of Kindness
The gift of Caring
The gift of Forgiveness
The gift of Hope
The gift of Commitment
The gift of Humility
The gift of Spirit.

New Beginnings For LME In Alaska

By Michael and Barbara Pier

The story we are about to share with you is not a fairy tale or a great novel. It will not be on the nation's best seller list, nor will it receive prestigious awards or achieve great fame. It is, on the other hand, a story worth telling. A story to inspire, lift spirits and motivate. It is a slice of human drama with all the elements found in a best seller or a beloved novel. It is a story of faith, struggle, determination, perseverance and success. It is also a story that reveals once again how God uses his people to accomplish his purposes and his work.

Let start at the beginning in Alaska, way back in the 80s. The Alaska Marriage Encounter Community had achieved the ultimate. All board positions filled on a regular basis, full weekends being held almost every month, a large team of presenters, and a thriving and extremely active community. If that wasn't enough, the Alaska LME community was also involved on a national scale including representation in national meetings and hosting one of the LME Family Reunions. It was likely as strong as any community in LME at that time.

Alas, like most things in life, there are ups and downs and so it was with the Alaska LME community. It was on top of the world and operating like a finely tuned piano when unforeseen and unwelcome circumstances began. From lack of potential couples for the weekend, to decreased numbers on weekends, to burnout in the community and rigid rules that began to create tension and concern, the community began to



breakdown. The last LME weekend held in the late 80s. boasted the largest number of participants ever in the final weekend sing off. It was truly a grand and appropriate ending to the once thriving and successful LME community.

We feel privileged and honored to share, first hand, the continued story as it unfolded some ten years later. Yes, ten years had gone by without any LME weekends, without Love Circles and without the community fellowship and love that was once so freely shared and experienced in Alaska. All the many involved and committed community couples had moved on in their lives to other ministries and goals, still holding their special and real memories of LME days gone by. Meanwhile, somewhere in California, the seeds for God's new plan for the Alaska LME community were being planted. Michael & Barbara Pier and their 17-year old daughter, living in Benicia, California were about to embark on an unexpected adventure that would literally turn their world around. Once again God's plan involved using ordinary people for his extraordinary plans. Michael's company sent him to Alaska on a "temporary" assignment. Without warning this "temporary" assignment became a "permanent"

assignment. When Michael and Barbara discovered LME hadn't been active for ten years in Alaska it was devastating news. LME had become such an important part of their lives. How could they give up a ministry that had become such a blessing? How could they pull their teenage daughter out of high school and force her to "start over" making friends and being accepted? Heartfelt prayers were lifted regarding the decision to accept the position in Alaska or remain in California. It wasn't until Michael and Barbara were approached with the idea to consider trying to revive the LME community in Alaska that they were able to decide. With tremendous encouragement from the ME communities in District V, Michael and Barbara answered "yes" to Alaska, despite major objection from their teenage daughter.

Shortly after the move, Michael and Barbara were given a few names of previously involved and active couples. No one even knew if the numbers were current or if these couples still loved in Alaska, except God, of course. Those few numbers proved to be the foundation that was needed to begin rebuilding the LME community. Yes, there were many factors and actions that contributed to the rebuilding process. Once initial telephone contacts and introductions were made, the first Love Circle was held with five couples. It was important to restore fellowship and sharing between the couples. After several Love Circle meetings, Michael and Barbara presented the idea of bringing LME weekends back to Alaska. As the majority of the couples had

experienced “burn out” and dissatisfaction with some of the rigid rules that had been in place, they were very cautious and hesitant. They were relieved to learn some of the “rigid” rules had been changed and that the new LME Alaska community had tremendous encouragement and support from the entire District V. Ron & Nancy Hawke, the District V Area Lay Contact Couple, came up for a Board Meeting/Love Circle to encourage and provide direction. The Seattle/Washington areas also provided verbal encouragement and prayers for the revival of the Alaska LME community. Michael and Barbara did their best to assure the couples there would be a true “sharing” of the responsibilities to avoid all the work load and loving tasks falling on just a few couples. Michael and Barbara also attended several Interfaith Love Circles with the Catholic and Episcopal communities who offered their love, prayers and support for the return of Lutheran weekends to Alaska.

It seemed ambitious, but the now excited and bonded LME Alaska community scheduled two ME weekends in 1999. That was approximately 8 months away. It seemed almost miraculous how things began to fall into place after that. It was obvious God was behind their efforts and he was in charge.

What a joy to see God’s plan unfolding. Couples began to accept Board positions and a hotel was secured at an extremely reasonable rate. Board

Meetings and Love Circles were held regularly. After Michael and Barbara held many church & home information talks and church mailings went out, registrations

began to come in. Michael and Barbara worked with the Seattle/Washington areas to secure three presenting couples to join them as the first Alaska presenting team. (Clergy: Ted & Marty Hartman; Admin: Ron & Pat Olson; Mid: Michael and Barbara Pier; and Rookie: Mark & Kari Hooper). Ron & Pat Olson from the Washington/Seattle Area brought wall banners with them. These were the same banners previously made and used in Alaska some ten year prior. What a delight to have the original banners back. A work session was held prior to the first weekend date to make rooms signs and finalize all

***It was obvious God
was behind their
efforts and he was in
charge.***

weekend details. Everything was in place to hold the first LME weekend in ten years.

Yes, this is a “success” story. All the prayers, meetings, love circles, work sessions, telephone calls, organizing, information talks, & dinners (wining, dining & signing) culminated into a fantastic weekend and a reunited community. Twenty six (26) couples were encountered. Yes, there were a few glitches on the weekend. The clergy couple arrived late Friday night, so their first talks were faxed to the hotel and read by the Admin. & Mid couples. Couples woke up Saturday morning to discover there was almost no hot water for showers. Food lines were extremely slow until a new line arrangement was put in place. The hotel lounge had a very “loud” party Saturday evening. Despite these minor “bumps” on the weekend, it was truly a “mountain-

top” experience for everyone involved. From the luggage carriers Friday evening, the couples handling board positions and loving tasks, the presenting team, the prayer couples, and the couples all over the world who participated in the prayer vigil, it was truly a weekend of healing, revival and joy.

When the doors opened and the multitude of community & prayer couples literally poured into the sing-off, there wasn’t a dry eye in the room. For most of the previous community, it was like a family “reunion”. Some hadn’t seen each other for almost ten years. The international response of couples for the massive prayer vigil and the many community couples who participated in the weekend was incredible.

This was indeed God’s weekend, and all felt tremendous pride and joy in being a part of it. Yes, the Alaska LME community is again alive and well. What Michael and Barbara once feared could be an “impossible task” had become “possible” with God leading every step of the way. To ensure “new blood” will continually be flowing in the community, the community is working hard to recruit/invite the newly encountered couples to join the community and consider board positions/loving tasks. We are also implementing a “mentorship” program to help new couples accepting board positions get a firm grasp on their responsibilities. Yet, this is not the “end of the story, but just the beginning. The new Alaska LME community stands strong and committed as they work together toward the next Alaska weekend and, God willing, many more to follow. This story is indeed living proof that “WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD”.

We Are Excited about the Future.



Jake & June Rabatin,

We are Jake and June Rabatin, NAR Presenting Couple Coordinators. We were encountered in February 1981, and our lives have never been the same!

We have lived in Manassas, Virginia, outside Washington D.C. for 25 years. Our three boys are scattered throughout the US—the oldest in Alexandria, Virginia; the second in Los Angeles; and the youngest in Maine. We must admit that “empty nesting” is kinda fun, though we do enjoy it when our boys come home to visit. Our oldest was married last April, so June finally has another woman in the

“...we see so many new and improved approaches to the same truths we’ve believed and practiced for many years.”

family.

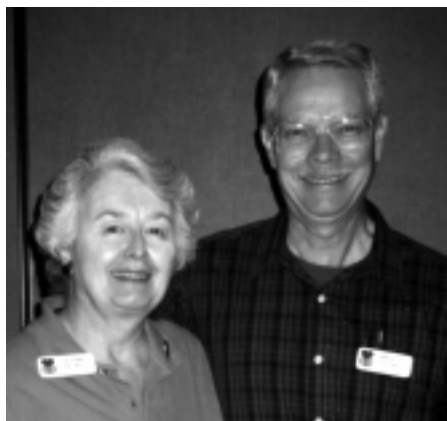
Our life as an encountered couple has covered many loving tasks, many locations and many Weekends. But the joy of trying to live God’s desire for our marriage has remained a constant. In fact, we recently dialogued on, “How have we changed since our Weekend?” We both agreed that we simply couldn’t imagine what we’d have been if not for our Marriage Encounter involvement. We still struggle with living God’s plan for our marriage, but when we look back at who we were, we can see how much closer to the Impossible Dream we have grown since that day in 1981.

We both retired in 1996, Jake from the Department of Defense, June from teaching 8th grade. And it’s a good thing because ever since then, we’ve found a great deal to do, much of it involving LME.

We begin our job as NAR PCC at an exciting time in the history of Lutheran Marriage Encounter. The new outlines represent some big changes to the weekends we all remember. And although we will miss our old friends, Don Quixote and Aldonza, we see so many new and improved approaches to the same truths we’ve believed and practiced for many years. It’s a privilege to us to be closely involved with the many dedicated presenting couples who will be writing their presentations to the new outline, and it’s energizing and motivating as we anticipate the many couples who will be just as blessed by Garth Brooks and Celine Dion as we were by the Man of La Mancha.

We still “dream the Impossible Dream” and we remain deeply grateful to the ME family who so enrich our lives with their love. Onward to glory we go!

Two, Too-tall, Transplanted Texans



Arnie & Sue Kaestner

Hello lovers! We are Arnie and Sue Kaestner, the new District II Lay Contact couple, from Houston, Texas, where we have lived for 32 years.

The BEST thing we ever did for ourselves and our marriage relationship was to attend a Lutheran Marriage Encounter on Valentine’s Day weekend in 1986. It was life changing and life giving.

(And our prayer couple must have been praying extra hard because after the feelings talk Sue

went home, to pick up her forgotten items...but she was so mad about Arnie’s lack of understanding of that talk she wondered if it would be worth it to come back! Praise God for miracles!)

We accepted the invitation to become a presenting couple and have helped give 25 weekends. We were the Houston Area Lay Contact for six years beginning in 1987. We have held many loving tasks in the area and most recently have been the workshop couple for lay and clergy and the Weekend Coordination couple. We are charter

We Received Much More Than We Hoped For.

Dear Lovers Around the World!

We are Jim and Anita Tollefson, the new District III Lay Contact Couple. We live in Alexandria, Minnesota (transplanted from the Twin Cities). This is our second go-around at this position, having served approximately 8-10 years ago. We are lucky to serve two times with great friends, Dave & Elsa Larson, Clergy Contact from Nebraska.

We were encountered in the Twin Cities in April of 1981 and attended our Deeper Weekend in St. Louis, MO, in March of 1982.

Over the years, we have held such Loving Tasks as Area Lay Contact Couple, District Lay Contact Couple, NAR Resource Couple, NAR Secretary Couple, back to District Lay Contact and we are also a Deeper Presenting Couple.

We are truly grateful for all the friendships we've made through LME over the years, and all over the world. So many people have

"...we've received so much more than we ever hoped for when we reluctantly set out that Friday night..."

touched our lives—we've received so much more than we ever hoped for when we reluctantly set out that Friday night for our original weekend.

On a personal note, we have five children and eight grandchildren. In 1992 we left the Twin Cities to follow one of our dreams. We're now here in Alexandria where we renovated a turn-of-the-century home and opened The Pillars Bed and Breakfast in the summer of 1994. We are in the heart of the lakes area, so on occasion we are able to enjoy our other favorite pastimes of boating and fishing. We are avid gardeners so consequently numerous flower gardens add to the ambience of our B&B.



Jim & Anita Tollefson

Marriage Encounter in this area had gone dormant in the mid 80s. Since moving here, we have organized and held several weekends in Alexandria, have a good Love Circle established and we hosted the 1998 District III Family Reunion.

We are currently busy with writing and workshoping talks to the new outline. We are ready for the pleasant and refreshing changes we see in these new talks. We wish you fellow writers best wishes of encouragement and discovery as you write to the new talks.

"The best thing we ever did for ourselves ... It was life changing and life giving."

members of the Faith Full Lovers Circle, which was formed after our weekend with major help from Bruce and Ila Zellmer, then clergy at our church.

Sue was born and raised in Morristown, Minnesota and Arnie in St. Louis, Missouri. We met at the

University of Missouri on a blind date (Arnie at 6'7" was "as tall as promised" for Sue, 6') and we were married in August '57 after a four-month courtship. We have been blessed with three children, all married, and eight grandchildren. Four of the grandchildren live right across the street! (Two of those were adopted from Russia.) Arnie, a chemical engineer, retired from Exxon in 1992 and says "I didn't retire, just stopped working for pay".

We feel richly blest by the many couples who have touched our lives during our thirteen years in LME.

We are looking forward to working with the wonderful loving couples on the NAR board and in District II.

We recently attended a Catholic Team Enrichment weekend based on the new outline and we came away excited and eager to write on and experience the new format. We encourage all rewriting couples to go for it!

Love and tall hugs,

Arnie & Sue Kaestner
931 Moss Spring Lane
Houston, TX 77024-2613
713-464-6703

ArnieSueK@compuserve.com

WE STEPPED OUT IN FAITH



Jerry & Lyn Brownlee

Hello, Everyone. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves and let you know a little bit about us. We are Jerry and Lyn Brownlee. We are the new District II Clergy Contact Couple. We were encountered in February 1991 in St. Louis. (On a 32 couple weekend) As a result of that weekend we realized that the Lord was calling us to this ministry. When asked to consider being a Presenting Couple we stepped out in faith (there was also fear there too) and began preparing for our part in this ministry. Our Deeper Weekend was in Toledo, OH. (Did you know that

“...we consider it a privilege to be involved in Marriage Encounter...”

there is really a baseball team called the Toledo Mudhens?) We have done 16 weekends and encountered over 200 couples in the time we have been a presenting couple. Our time as a presenting couple has been a blessing to us and we consider it a privilege to be involved in Marriage Encounter in this capacity. We have held several loving tasks in Marriage Encounter including everything from Supply Couple, Newsletter Couple, Registration Couple and Prayer Couple Coordinator to Area Clergy Contact Couple. When we moved to Mid Missouri four years ago we were in an area that had very few M.E. couples so we put on the first Lake Ozark Outreach Weekend pretty much on our own.

Jerry is Senior Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Jefferson City. We have a very large church and a

K-8 school. Our Staff and Faculty is also very large. All of this keeps Jerry busy to say the least. (He keeps saying “Golf? What’s that? Do I know how to do that?”)

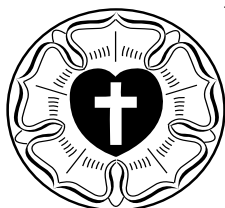
Lyn works at home where she has her own small fledgling business. A lot of her extra time (?) is spent on Marriage Encounter, housework, meetings and doing her favorite thing - crafting. (She says, “So many crafts and never enough time!”)

The Brownlee’s have two children. Daughter, Carissa, is a Sophomore at the University of Missouri - Columbia majoring in English and Communications. Son, J.J. or Jerome Jr., is a Senior at Jefferson City High School and has been accepted at the University of Missouri - Columbia for next year to major in Journalism. These two children are our greatest joy and our greatest pride.

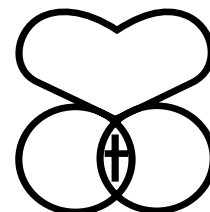
We are very excited to have been elected to serve our district and Marriage Encounter as District II Clergy Contact Couple. If you have a few minutes the next time you are on E-mail, drop us a note. Our E-mail address is JLBROWNLEE@ aol.com.

YOUR GIFTS TO THE ENDOWMENT-DREAM FUND WILL HELP KEEP ILME ALIVE

*There are many ways to give: Life Insurance, Real Estate, Securities,
Memorial Gifts, Wills, IRAs, Personal property.*



For details contact: Endowment Dream Fund
Lutheran Marriage Encounter
P.O. Box 510-335
St. Louis, MO 63151
314-846-2490



Discovery Weekend Highly Recommended

Dear Lovers,

On the last weekend of January, 1999, 16 couples from Minnesota and Wisconsin joined two presenting couples, one from Minnesota and one from Virginia, for a Discovery Weekend in Shakopee, Minnesota.

We heard presentations, followed by open sharing and 10/10s. The open sharing seemed to come easier as each sharing time came. We again got to know our spouses better and also had the opportunity to realize that we have a lot in common with the other couples. It was a Weekend as wonderful in it's own way as our original M.E. Weekend.

We'd highly recommend that each area sponsor a Discovery Weekend and encourage all encountered couples to attend the weekend. We know sixteen couples who are glad they did.

Love to you all,
Tom and Sheila Cochran



More help for your daily (or occasional) dialogue— Order Your ILME Dialogue Calendar

Dear Lovers,

Almost all of the things we do, the places we go, the people we know and meet, and the situations we encounter cause us to have feelings. These are some of the reasons that we started making the LME Dialogue Calendar. We want you to have the tools to reinforce your daily dialogue for better relationship between you and your spouse.

For 1999 we have a series of questions to give us all the chance to dig a little deeper into new or difficult areas.

Our wish is that you will all order and enjoy the calendar. Then tell everyone in your community about the calendar.

YOUR RESPONSE NEEDED

Tell us what you think of the calendar—good or bad, so we can make the calendar better for you.

Don't forget to order extra calendars for those special friends and for those couples on your

weekends. They make wonderful prayer couple gifts.

As always you are all constantly in our prayers. Let your love shine for all to see and fill our weekends.

In His love and ours,
John and Anne Borgelt
947 E. 1st. ST.
Peculiar, MO 64078
816-779-5186
jaborgelt@freewwweb.com

Please make all checks payable to Lutheran Marriage Encounter. Order from:

Gary & Cheryl Smither
2004 Parkwood Dr.
Harrisonville, MO 64701
816-380-4904
E Mail GCS2004@solve.net



Only \$5, Limited Supply, Order now!

Please send _____ copies of the 1999 Lutheran Marriage Encounter Calendar. Enclosed is \$5.00 donation for each.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

You support Lutheran Marriage Encounter when you buy these calendars,

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



Anna Kristine & Tor Pytte, International Liaison Couple, have been asked by the European LME Board to help bring our family closer together through better communication. What a concept! They are making use of technology and are sending international news by email on a monthly basis. This is a test that will be evaluated at the summer European Board meeting. They believe that by sharing of community news in this way we can become a closer international family in a way similar to how our dialogue strengthens our marriage relationship. This is the February ILME electronic newsletter.

Family Feeling I

The North American Region (NAR) had their board meeting close to Los Angeles the first weekend in February, and the two European Executive couples, Ebba and Carl Eric Svensater and Anna-Liisa and Matti Viitaanen, were there. They are full of enthusiasm and very grateful for what they have experienced.

Carl Eric: "The meeting was

held in a very loving and caring atmosphere. The first item on the agenda was to give every couple a prayer couple - one of the other couples at the meeting- to pray specifically for them during the meeting. We didn't get to know who our prayer couple was until we came to the last item on the agenda the last day. It was a good experience. We are very thankful for having been able to take part in the meeting"

The meeting also discussed the new ILME Charter, which is proposed to emphasize family values that all regions have to comply with. The purpose is to focus on non-negotiables and to strengthen the ILME family while giving each region opportunity in practical matters to adapt to local culture and tradition. Every region is supposed to write their own bylaws to formalize their operations. Discussions will continue at the next NAR board meeting as well as at the European regional meeting in Sweden this summer.

The NAR Executives have been invited to the European meeting, and we are happy that they have already accepted. Many of us are looking forward to seeing Dan and Judy Teuscher and Jim and Pam Bush in Scandinavia in July.

To keep the international family together, it is important that our leader couples occasionally can experience similarities and differences in the way we are organized in different parts of the world. We appreciate these opportunities as important elements in our efforts to strengthen the ILME family. Hopefully these contacts will also open new doors for other interested couples.

Family Feeling II

Our dream is to open up to let more encountered couples experience the blessing of being family members.

One possibility is to plan to participate at a Family Reunion. Normally there will be one country reunion in Finland every second year, and the next big opportunity in the US is the International Family Reunion, July 21 - 23, year 2000, in St. Paul, Minnesota. We hope to be there. Please come back to us if you are interested in a foreign family reunion experience. We have been richly blessed by our visits to family reunions, and in most cases we have also enjoyed visits to ME homes before or after the reunion.

Another possibility, of course, is Internet. Most of the receivers of this message are already on the ILME prayer list. If not, contact Dave and Ada Dorn, Davedorn@aol.com. We also enjoy being on the WWME mail server, where we particularly appreciate receiving the daily dialogue questions.

The ILME home page (<http://www.ilme.org/>) has updated information on weekends around the world and opportunities to download post weekend resources. New ILME home pages are:

Sweden:

<http://hem1.passagen.se/dialog>

Norway:

<http://www.ekteskapsdialog.no>

Organization

Short background for those with organizer personality style (new outline).

NAR covers both USA and Canada, and there are five districts, No 1 from North to South on the East Coast, two districts in the middle and two on the West Coast, the northernmost districts also include Canada. The executive couples and the district contact couples meet in the NAR board two times per year. NAR organize roughly 100 weekends per year with around 1600 couples.

The European Region comprises four countries (districts) plus Denmark as an outreach. Due to high travelling costs the board convenes only once a year, next time in Sweden in July. Europe does approximately 25 weekends per year with a total of 600 couples.

Sweden

ME in Sweden is growing. For the first time there are two active clergy couples: Hans Joachim and Agneta Franze (agneta.franze@gislaved.se) presented their first full weekend February 5-7. They are now also acting as Clergy Contact couple for Sweden. Ebba and Carl Eric Svensater will continue as Regional Clergy Execs another 1.5 year.

Norway

The Norwegian board has set up a committee to work on post weekend activities. The emphasis will be on personal relations right after the weekend. But we also want to evaluate post weekend programs. We have access to a number of different Bridge programs. They play an important part in the Catholic ME, but we have never actually run them here in Scandinavia.

It would have been interesting if any of you have concrete experience from Bridge programs. We

remember from a family reunion talking to a couple who told us that the Bridge Program was an integrated part of the ME offer in their area. Can anybody help us to get in touch? We are also looking forward to the new Bridging Hearts program announced at the NAR meeting last summer.

Iceland

Late Sunday night Feb 14, we had an excited Willy on the phone from Iceland (Ragnheidur and Willy Petersen, lay contact couple):

“We are just back from singoff after a fantastic weekend. Thirty-six couples attended, and we were 500 people at the singoff. On Friday night 100 people showed up to help, of which 65 also took part in the restaurant dinner after the weekend had started. On Saturday night 200 people were gathered in three different churches to pray for the weekend, one so close that the people attending could see the weekend site, one outside the city and one church on the northern coast.”

This is Iceland in a nutshell: 270.000 inhabitants totally, and Lutheran Marriage Encounter now approaching 2% of the population when you count the ones who have been to weekends and the 800 people on the waiting list.

We once had the opportunity to celebrate a weekend with the Icelandic community, and we will never forget. We hope to get a second chance.

But success creates work more than anything. Please, remember the Icelandic community in your prayers.

The new weekend

All the couples in North America already preparing for the new weekend talks impress us. In Europe so far, four couples are writing, and we will have our first pilot weekend April 23. It seems to be close race, as we understand the first NAR weekend will be at about the same time.

The European weekend will be held in Norwegian/Swedish, and we hope to get the message across also to the couples coming from the other countries and who have other mother tongues. The weekend follows the NAR outline. We call it a pilot since we have to evaluate after the weekend whether minor cultural adjustments will be necessary.

Alaska

We are happy also to tell about the recent Alaska weekend. Two couples have shared this event with us. When Ron and Pat Olson lived up there, some ten years ago, there was a thriving community in Alaska, but then it vanished.

But the Olsons continued to have a dream of breathing life back into the Alaska community, and a couple of years ago, a presenting couple moved up to Anchorage. The Olsons worked with them, and Jan 8 - 10 they presented on a 30 couple weekend.

“It just takes the dedication and hard work of one or two couples, armed with faith and prayer, to make things happen. We hope this may be an inspiration also for others”

KEEPING THE ILME DREAM ALIVE...

Marriage Encounter communities seem to go through the same phases as do couple relationships. Remember the Romance, Disillusionment, Joy cycle?

In the past year, the Lord has blessed the Los Angeles Lutheran Marriage Encounter community with FIVE FULL WEEKENDS! This has been the joyful answer to many prayers since in previous years we felt disillusionment as we struggled to recruit couples for even minimal weekends.

It began when the Lord used a couple, Chad & Jill Kominek, to romance a rather dormant Ventura County community (part of the Los Angeles Area) into holding their first weekend in several years. It was a FULL-weekend! With their contagious enthusiasm, they visited pastors, faxed information to churches, gave temple-talks and began the momentum that the community now enjoys.

As a result of those five full weekends, there are now many excited, newly-encountered couples in the Los Angeles area. Being excited about their renewed marriage is wonderful, as long as they don't forget about the sacrifice and involvement of many couples who made their weekend possible.

If you are new to Marriage Encounter maybe you are unaware of the couples who worked for weeks and perhaps months prior to your weekend, making sure that all the details were covered, so that your weekend experience would flow smoothly.

We are well aware of how busy your lives are now, but it is

important for the dream to continue that you make it a priority to be available to be part of the voluntary support for the next weekend in your area.

It is quite probable that in your local area, too few couples are having to do too much of the work. This happens when couples fail to understand that for the dream to be realized, we must lovingly respond to the blessing that the Lord has given to each of us.

So are you ready to serve the Lord? This may be the call you have been waiting for to get involved in a ministry as a couple, to be a part of this wonderful, exciting and awesome adventure.

The following is an example of loving tasks for you to consider. Pray about sharing your couple love in this way and then call your local Contact Couple. If you don't know who that is, check pages 20 and 21.

LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER AREA AND WEEKEND LOVING TASKS

Adapted from *Focus on Feelings* newsletter, North Central Ohio Area of LME

AREA LOVING TASKS

Community Activities Coordinator - Coordinates couple and family events to strengthen local Marriage Encounter community.

Finance Couple - Handles all financial transactions for the Area.

Gift Shop Coordinator (Memorabilia Couple) - Handles the sale of Marriage Encounter gifts such as LME jewelry, stickers, calendars, magnets, key chains, etc. at all community events.

Inviting (and Publicity) Coordinator - Coordinates all inviting activities - publicity, Temple Talks, church mailings, etc.

Label Couple - Produces labels for LME mailings

Love Circle Coordinator - Maintains updated list of active Love Circles

Mailing couple - Labels and sorts copies for mailing

Newsletter Couple - Prints and assembles items for quarterly newsletter

Post Weekend Coordinator - Coordinates all post weekend activities, Encounter Evenings, Community Nights etc.

Prayer Chain Coordinators - Make sure prayer concerns are communicated to all board members

Reservation Couple (Scheduling Couple) - Handles all registrations for weekends, LME information.

Secretary Couple - Prepares minutes of board meetings and sends copies to the board members

WEEKEND LOVING TASKS

Banner Couple - Stores and maintains banners used on the weekend. (Hangs door banners on Friday night of the weekend).

Facilities Couple - Contacts and visits hotels, motels etc., to determine suitability for weekends, meets with sales person to negotiate contracts, submits contract to District Lay Contact Couple for approval, (acts as liaison between facility and presenters on weekend.) This may be done by W/E Coord.

Greeter Couple Coordinator (Hosting Couple) - Coordinates

hotel check-in on Friday night. Needs many helpers on Friday night to escort couples to their rooms.

Map Couple - Prepares maps to weekend facility, potlucks, renewals etc. and distributes copies for weekend packets, presenters, prayer couples and community.

Name Tag and Placecard Couple - Prepares name tags and placecards for each weekend, making any corrections necessary on Friday night of weekend

Potluck Coordinator Couple - Handles setup of potluck on Sunday, maintains supplies for coffee, etc., stays at the church to warm food, set out food etc. (Could also be responsible for finding church and making arrangements).

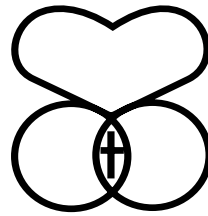
Prayer Couple Coordinators - Find prayer couples for all couples on the weekend. Prepares the love letters to go into the packets.

Renewal Couple - Coordinates date with W/E Coord., locates and reserves church for Renewal, makes arrangements for opening of church, hosts (or arranges for hosts) to make coffee, etc. and takes care of refreshment table.

Room Banner couple (Joy Banners) - Finds groups or individuals to make banners for each Weekend, arranges for delivery to Weekend. May also prepare designs and patterns for banners.

Scheduling Couple - Receives 800# referrals, makes contact with those who are on a "prospect list", schedules couples for Weekend of their choice, receives applications and checks, forwards checks to Dist. Finance Couple.

Setup and Take-down Couple - Handles setup and take-down of conference room, first aid table etc.



*Journey
Together to the
Father*

1999 Worldwide M.E. Convention in Los Angeles July 29-Aug. 1

Los Angeles is the place to be next summer, as we come together for another convention. Boy what a time we have planned for you!

The dreams we envision are endless! We dream of moving "beyond NICE" to challenge and enthuse; to expand our horizons and open our eyes to what could be for our relationships. We dream of you going forth on Sunday on fire in your relationship with your spouse, your family, our Church, and God! Through it all, we will celebrate who we are as a movement, and where we are headed in the new millenium. AND, have FUN in the process!

We hope this has aroused your curiosity enough to start making plans to join us in Los Angeles. The "City of The Angels" will welcome you with open arms. The road to get here may be long, yet it is a journey of love to be one as an M.E. family. And so the theme of the convention, "Journey Together to the Father" will be true, both for your relationship with your spouse and your Marriage Encounter family.

Know that you are loved and cherished

Dan & Teresa Quam
*Worldwide Marriage
Encounter Convention
Coordinator Couple*

You can download a registration form on the internet at
www.wvme.org/conv99/appw

For questions you can call 909-494-4097

Mailing address: WWME Convention 1999,
P.O. Box 722711, San Diego, CA 92172-2711

Supply Couple - Handles notebooks, videos, handouts, Clergy supplies, administrative supplies, first-aid supplies and other weekend supplies; places orders from NAR Supply couple or makes purchases as needed.

Weekend Coordinator Couple - Coordinates all details of the Weekend. May also be liason between facility management and presenters on Weekend.

Weekend photographer - Photographs couples as they arrive to check in on Friday night.

Lutheran Marriage Encounter Contact Couples

District I

CANADA

* Tom & Joanne Cosstick
535 Albert Street
Stratford ONT N5A 3L6
519-273-1280

and

* Klaus & Linda Springer
597 Albert Street
Stratford ONT N5A 3L6
519-273-2093 also fax

** Richard & Linda Holm
188 Edgewood Dr.
Woodstock,
ONT N4S 7P3
519-537-8948
rechholm@execulink.com

FLORIDA

* Doug & Katie Diehl
11 Tappan Zee Lane
Longwood, FL 32750
407-332-7720
doug_diehl@classic.msn.com

** Robert & Grace Schmeelcke
600 SW 48th Street Rd.
Ocala, FL 34474
352-237-8264
PrBob1@aol.com

MICHIGAN

* Fred & Barb Roush
7366 Oneida
Charlotte, MI 48813
517-645-2266
Fax: 517-645-0191

** Bill & Janis Hessler
Box 242
4235 Williamson Rd.
Bridgeport MI 48722-0242
517-777-2648
faithlc@concentric.net

MID ATLANTIC

* Skip & Vicky Schempp
4237 Stirling St.
Philadelphia, PA 19135
215-333-0428

and

* Mike & Debbie Maxwell
2514 McKinley Avenue
West Lawn, PA 19609
610-678-6221
mmaxw77494@aol.com

NATIONAL CAPITAL

* Jake & June Rabatin
9131 North Grant Avenue
Manassas, VA 20110
703-361-1287
jakerabatin@erols.com

** Mark & Char Walters
51 E. Water St.
Smithsburg, MD 21783
801-824-3394
LvtheOs@aol.com

CAROLINAS

* Dennis & Kay Weaver
2380 Glennola Lane
Vale, NC 28168
828-326-9836
dreamer@abts.net

** Tom & Robin Cogan
3920 Spring Road
Conover, NC 28613
828-256-5118 call for fax
Email: tomrobin@twave.net

TRI-STATE

(N.E.OH, W. PA, W. VA)

* Marlin & Karen Boltz
215 Hannahstown Road
Cabot, PA 16023
724-352-4621
Email: mkboltz@zbzoom.net

OHIO - NORTH CENTRAL

* Bob & Renae Schondel
Box 42
Seville, OH 44273
330-769-9030
Email: schondel@ohio.net

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* John & Lynn Lehnert
5131 Eber Rd.
Monclova, OH 43542
419-877-0043
llsoc@aol.com

** Jon & Bonnie Bell
2040 Albon Road
Holland, OH 43538
419-868-8040

CINCINNATI OUTREACH

* Glen & Vicki Brueggemeier
2250 Francis Lane
Cincinnati, OH 45206
513-221-6505
gbrueggem@aol.com

NEW YORK/NEW ENGLAND

* Harold & Sandy Wheeler
83 Oswego St.
Baldwinsville, NY 13027
315-638-8668
pgetaway@worldnet.att.net

and

* Jeff & Karen Jackson
6 Rowledge Pond
Sandy Hook CT 04682
203-426-3837
NOSKJS@aol.com

** Ted & Jane Guthrie
331 First Avenue
Brockville, ONT K6V 3B8
613-498-2942
weeluvewe@recorder.ca

District II

ILLINOIS

Chicago

* Alan & Ruth Anne Wheeler
9636 South Brandt Ave.
Oak Lawn, IL 60453-3025
708-424-0537
email: da2ofus@couple.com

** Roger & Carole Willer
537 S. Ardmore
Villa Park, IL 60181-2929
630-834-2047
cpwiller@aol.com

Rockford

** John & Connie Heins
12117 Whispering Winds Dr.
Roscoe IL 61073
815-623-8323
JCHEINS@aol.com

Central Illinois

* Richard & Bev Foels
2519 St. James Road
Springfield, IL 62707-9736
217-544-6095
rich.bev.foels@cwix.com

INDIANA / KENTUCKY

* Dick & Marilyn Glossett
P.O. Box 71, 103 East Elm
Middle Point, OH 45863
419-968-2047
DMGLOSSETT@juno.com

** Ralph & Bev Easterhaus
7914 W. Cook
Ft. Wayne, IN 46818
219-489-3425

IN/KY OUTREACH

Louisville

* Terry & Linda Tewell
8302 Autumnwood Way
Louisville, KY 40291
502-231-1527
ttewell@worldnet.att.net

Bedford

* Erv & Nancy Otte
R# 17 Box 365
Bedford, IN 47421
812-279-5144

LOUISIANA (Dallas Outreach)

* Bryan & Saturday Landry
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Denham Springs, LA 70706
504--791-9124
Saturday@bellsouth.net

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OKLAHOMA

Kansas City

* Jim & Cookie Black
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Kansas City, MO 64137
816-763-1894

Wichita

* Verlan & Kathy Jarvis
413 Apple Ct.
Haysville, KS 67060
316-522-7571
Victoryent@aol.com

St. Louis

* LeRoy & Fran Ettlting
5872 Rabbit Run Drive
St. Louis, MO 63129-4729
314-846-2498

** Kevin & Colleen Parviz
6603 Wise Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63139
314-647-8214

TEXAS

Austin

* Richard & Sandra Giro
1107 Apollo Dr.
Austin, TX 78758
512-339-1903
rsgiro@freewwweb.com

Dallas/Fort Worth

* Allen & Jeannine Gray
614 Bush Dr.
Allen, TX 75013
972-727-3532
jeannine.gray@unistudios.com

** Tom & Yolanda Thierfelder
7109 Wills
Garland, TX 75043
972-226-4532

Houston

* Dick & Ruth Osburn
17 Harbor Lane
Kemah, TX 77565
281-334-2476
osburnrk@gbtech.net

** Laird & Winnie Engle
410 Depot
El Campo, TX 77437
409-578-0292

District III

CANADA

Saskatchewan-Manitoba

- ** Gordon & Grace Hendrickson
RR 1
Starbuck, MB, Canada
R0G 2P0
204-735-2776
Fax: 204-735-2380

MINNESOTA/TWIN CITIES

- * Dick & Judy Dehnel
14310 Genesee Ave.
Apple Valley, MN 55124
612-432-3105
Email: jdehnel@hamline.edu
- ** Chan & Midge Pauling
7445 4th Ave So
Richfield, MN 55423
612-861-3802
Email: chanmidge@aol.com

NEBRASKA/WEST IOWA

- * Bill & Lorna Wehrman
1023 Skyline Dr.
Fremont, NE 68025
402-721-5931
- ** Bruce & Ila Zellmer
2009 Peachtree Ct
Sioux City, IA 51104
712-255-9262
Fax: 712-255-0617
zellmerb@mail.stlukes.org

EASTERN IOWA

- * Mark & Norma Allen
3940 Scenic Drive
Waterloo, IA 50701
319-235-1504
mallen@iowalaser.com

NORTH DAKOTA

- * Erik & Vicki Sand
1022 Thomas Ave. NE
Jamestown, ND 58401
701-251-2571
vsand@acc.jc.edu

SOUTH DAKOTA

- * Milton & Donna Kaufman
RR 2, Box 55
Wilmot, SD 57279
605-938-4236
miltkauf@juno.com

WISCONSIN/UPPER PENIN.

- * Steve & Carol Spieker
2129 Inverness Dr.
Waukesha, WI 53186
414-574-7557
spieker@execpc.com
- ** Ted & Joan Johanson
1016 Wisconsin St.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-344-1387

District IV

ARIZONA

- * Dennis & Gayle Grant
Phoenix, AZ
602-648-1237 temporary
Email: dennis2727@aol.com

SO. CALIFORNIA

- Los Angeles
- * Rick & Anne-Marie Andrews
107 W. Forest Ave.
Arcadia, CA 91066
626-574-9644
Fax: 213-489-3712
phoneman@gateway.net

Tri-County(Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino)

- * Dick & Jane Knecht
1500 W. Oak Ave.
Fullerton, CA 92833-3933
714-680-9722
Fax: 714-992-1870
dick_knecht@peter.biola.edu

San Diego

- * Don & Shari Larson
9560 Whellock Wy.
San Diego, CA 92129
619-538-2701
- ** Gary & Mary Ann Harms
1145 Barham Drive #68
San Marcos, CA 92069
760-747-4784

MID ROCKIES

- * Clark & Norma Rodney
P.O. Box 390593
Denver, CO 80239-1593
303-373-4078
Fax 303-371-1206
clarkandnorma@worldnet.att.net
- ** Lowell & Carol Hemken
1836 Marlborough Ct.
Fort Collins, CO 80526
970-482-1183
spin@lamar.colostate.edu

NEW MEXICO

- * Richard & Nancy Brunson
5831 Lost Dutchman NE
Albuquerque, NM 87111
505-293-1787
nancykb@aol.com

For advice and assistance if you have sight impaired couples going on a weekend - contact:
Alan & Ruth Anne Wheeler
9636 South Brandt Ave.
Oak Lawn, IL 60453-3025
708-424-0537
email: da2ofus@couple.com

District V

NO. CALIF/NO. NEV. UNIT

- * Dave & Ada Dorn
3896 MacGregor Common
Livermore, CA 94550-2270
925-449-1205
DaveDorn@aol.com

- ** Jay & Julie Ford
18 Creekridge Ct.
San Mateo, CA 94402-3753
650-573-1958
Jul58@aol.com

SO. IDAHO/NO. UTAH UNIT

- * Fred & Gale Birch
2906 Estates Dr.
Park City, UT 84060
434-649-8813 (June-Sept)
or
6871 E. Amber Sun Dr.
Scottsdale, AZ 85262
602-595-9302 (Oct to May)
flybirch@aol.com

** Manfred & Jutta Berndt

- 1396 Lavine
Pocatello, ID 83201
208-237-5945
Fax 208-237-4931
mnojberndt@aol.com

OREGON UNIT

- * Hal & B.J. Malecha
140 Lindner Lane
Eugene, OR 97404
541-461-2731
bjmale@concentric.net

** Ron & Mavis Barth

- 2532 Terrace View Dr.
Eugene, OR 97405
541-686-0870
rmbarth@earthlink.net

WEST. WASHINGTON

BRITISH COLUMBIA UNIT

- * Ron & Pat Olson
23707 48th Ave. W.
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043
425-774-3094
Fax: 425-778-2444
Email: oskaro@aol.com

** Dick & Roxanne Grinstad

- 1504 Peterson Rd.
Burlington, WA 98233
360-757-6821
Fax 360-755-9831 (Church)

SPOKANE & INLAND NW UNIT

- * John & Arlene Bittrick
E 23822 Euclid
Otis Orchards, WA 99027
509-226-3823
Fax: 509-226-2307
jrbitts@sisna.com

** Gary & Suzanne Rohde

- 914 Miller Lane
Grandview, WA 98930
509-882-5172
srohde@wolfenet.com

BIG SKY UNIT

- * Mike & Sharon Farnsworth
3021 2nd Ave. N
Great Falls, MT 59401
406-761-7381
sfndfarnsworth@prodigy.net

ALBERTA UNIT

- * Don & Kornie Tupper
3912 42B Ave.
Leduc, Alberta
T9E 4W8
403-986-5065

ALASKA AREA

- * Michael & Barbara Pier
PO Box 110588
Anchorage, AK 99511-0588
907-345-6195
CheapMB127@aol.com

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509-747-7964
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Dan & Tammi Hoeger
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NAR Finance Couple

John & Irene Schmehl
3194 Etter Rd., Chambersburg, PA 17201
717-709-0453

District I

Al & Cinda Williamson
P.O. Box 395, Sugar Grove, NC 28679
828-297-5242
cindanal@boone.net

District II

Will & Mary Sauermilch
P.O. Box 826, Yorktown, TX 78164
512-564-2966
wmsauer@ibm.net

District III

Harlan & Bobbie Attema
P.O. Box 153, Inwood, IA 51240-0153
712-753-4473 Fax 712-753-2094

District IV

Al & Betty Schallmuller
6924 S. Clarkson St., Littleton, CO 80122
303-795-0697 Fax 303-794-9686
al.betty.schall@worldnet.att.net

District V

Clarence & Darlene Ochsner
P.O. Box 2127, Ferndale, WA 98248
360-384-8003

AUSTRALIA

Noel & Sharon Reid
53 Shannon Street
Seven Hills NSW 2147
Australia
011 61-2-674 5432

CANADA

Ken & Trudy Deichen
#86-14135-104 Ave.
Surrey, BC, V3T 1X6 Canada
604-930-0213 Fax: 604-930-4231

DENMARK

Anne & Verner Maagaard
Gjerager 27, DK-6880 Tarm, Denmark
45 97 41 48 07

FINLAND

Outi & Harri Helle
Heikinkuja 4
44500 Viitasaari, Finland
+358 14 572654 Email: hekhelle@freenet.hut.fi

ICELAND

Magnús Dadason & Svala Pálsdóttir
Heidarbraut 10
230 Keflavik, Iceland
+354 4213434

NORWAY

Inga Marie & Robert Mynors
Bjørnstadbakken 6e
0672 Oslo, Norway
+47 2226 3566

SWEDEN

Raymond & Vivian Johnsson
s.t Sigridsv. 58
382 38 Nybro, Sweden
+46 481 10305

International CPA

Edward W. Small
318 W. Hillsboro
Edwardsville, IL 62025
618-656-6645

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Al & Ellen Gee
328 Fenton Ave.
Conneaut, OH 44030
440-593-2914

District II

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Larry & Coke Guilfoile
30975 Minnesota Ave.
Lindstrom, MN 55045
612-257-6960

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John & Jackie Kimball
1606 N. Juniper
Canby, OR 97013
503-266-1805
JFKimball@juno.com

N.A.R. RESOURCE COUPLE

Duffy & Nancy Guthrie

549 Janet Dr.

Conneaut, OH 44030

440-599-9090

nguthrie@suite224.net

Hey Lord, Pick Another Lasagna Maker

Devotion given by Kevin and Raye Guynn at the September 13, 1998 Northeast Ohio Board Meeting. Kevin reads parts of the devotion not italicized. Raye reads parts that are in italics. [Bracketed information is there for reference, but not read aloud].

Since our weekend, our social calendar has revolved around Marriage Encounter events. Everything from the Geauga County Fair booth to romantic dinners to printing the next Focus newsletter have helped fill our time. Yesterday we were making lasagna together. I never thought I would ever make lasagna. Is this what you have us do as a ministry Lord?

Brown the sausage, add the ground beef...*prepare you heart for the Lord.* The grease splatters and I stir a bit of the meat onto the stove top. I put the meat back in the pan - they will never know. I reach over and give Raye a quick squeeze.

A layer of sauce for spice...*just like the Word - [1st Timothy 4:6] nourished in the word of faith...* add the lasagna noodles, now hard, but soon to become edible in the cooking process *[Mark 3:5] and Jesus grieved for the hardness of their hearts.*

Ricotta cheese mixture - what a bunch of sloppy goo. Are we really going to eat this? *Like sin, that destroyed the beauty of God's world, we need to follow the scripture found in 1 Peter [4:13] partake of the sufferings of Christ. That was not a time of beauty, but God had a plan in which to work - Out of the suffering and death of Jesus, came the glory of grace and salvation.*

Add a cup of meat

[1 Corinthians 5:13]...Food for the stomach and the stomach for food - but God will destroy them both. . . Do you not know that our bodies are members of Christ himself?...sprinkle on a cup or so of Mozzarella Cheese [Isaiah 13:7]...and every man's heart shall melt.

Repeat the process until the entire conglomeration is ready to go and bake it *[Exodus 16:23]...So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.*

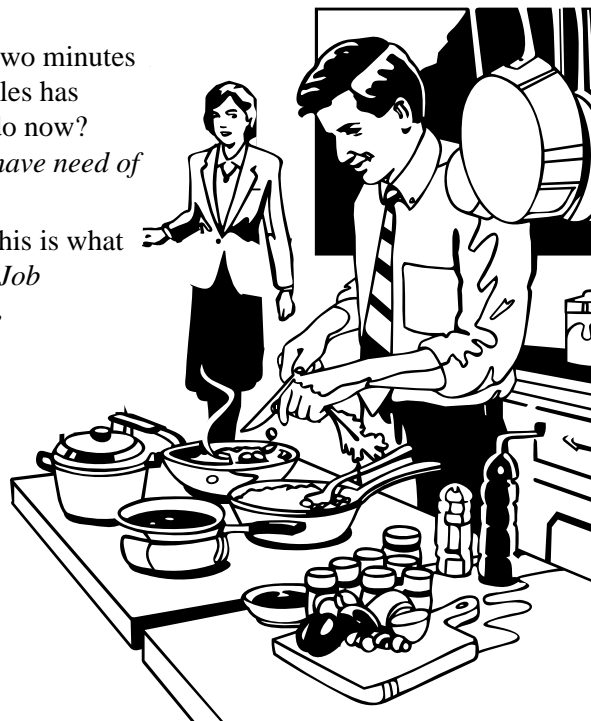
We load up the van (with our Marriage Encounter sticker of course) and haul all this stuff to the church. Couples begin taking down tables and setting up card tables and before long the room has been transformed into a make shift romantic atmosphere ready for the loving couples. The questions begin about who we will serve *[Jeremiah 5:19]...so shall you serve strangers [Galations 5:13]... by love serve one another*

The dinner starts in two minutes and only one of the couples has arrived. What should I do now? *[Hebrews 10:36]...You have need of patience*

Father are you sure this is what you would have us do? *[Job 24:13]...There are those who rebel against the light, who do not know its ways or stay in its paths...[Hebrews 13:1] Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*


The numbers are important to us Lord, but you have the total direction of this ministry under your guidance. I pray that if we are to be instruments of your hand, we need to be willing to spread the message to one or to one hundred. Thank you Lord for your love which has allowed us to find, marry and love our spouse. May we stay focused on doing your will and not trying to take over and set expectations which you do not have. Lord may we never use this as a reason not to be actively recruiting for weekends. I pray that you place those couples that need to hear about your saving grace or about Marriage Encounter in our paths, and that we be attuned to the need to share the message with them.

A question for open sharing:
How do I feel knowing that I need to let go and allow God to take over the direction of my life and this ministry?



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