

THE PRESENTER HOTLINE

North American Lutheran Marriage Encounter Presenter Newsletter

August, 2009

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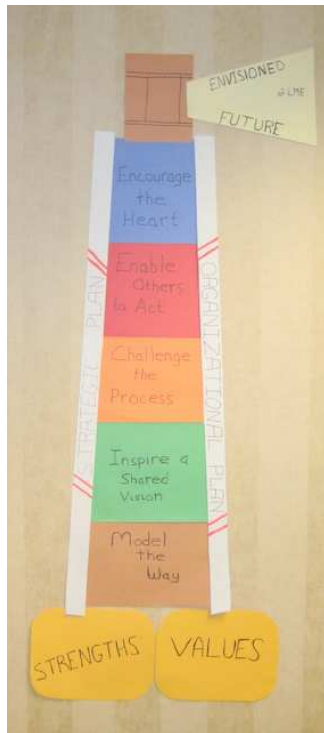
Phone: 724-325-3166



Shown leading the August NAR meeting are (from left) : Secretary Couple: Jake & June Rabatin, NAR Clergy Exec.: Ann & Russ Hillman, and NAR Lay Exec.: Dallas & Carl Presley

WEEKEND NUMBERS UP 26%

From the data reported at the August 14-16 North America Region Board Meeting in Chicago, our Weekend numbers are up 26%! According to the treasurer's report, in the fiscal year July, 2007 – July, 2008, 430 couples were encountered, while in July 2008 – July 2009, 542 couples were encountered. It's not possible to tell exactly what things are responsible for this rise in numbers, but some possible key factors noted are: increased publicity, including email notifications to churches, online registration available at the www.GodLovesMarriage.org website, the decision to hold weekends even if numbers are low, outreach weekends, new and exciting locations, and economy causing stress on relationships. Of course, most importantly, we FULLY RELY ON GOD, and God has blessed our efforts. So keep working, and keep praying!



Leadership Roles Chart



Todd Sorensen & Kristin Janke

The major emphasis for the last 2 NAR Board Meetings has been a program called StrengthsFinder. Watch for the upcoming report from NAR Execs or the NAR minutes which will again be posted on the www.ilme.org website for details. Following is just a brief summary of the NAR activity. During the past 2 meetings, the NAR Board has been led through a StrengthsFinder program by LME presenting couple, Todd Sorensen and Kristin Janke, who teach leadership in the school of pharmacy at the University of Minnesota. The essence of the program is that each of us has key strengths, and that individual and organizational effectiveness is maximized when those strengths are recognized, developed and utilized. Many districts have piggybacked on this and done StrengthsFinder programs at their meetings. The process began with an online strength assessment which was then analyzed, and each person's top 5 strengths out of the possible 34 categories were identified. The August meeting then went into setting goals for Lutheran Marriage Encounter and developing strategies for meeting those goals. After much brainstorming and prioritizing, 3 key tasks were identified as goals for immediate attention of LME. Many of you have already been informed of by your District leadership couples, but, in general, the areas that the board chose to have Lutheran Marriage Encounter concentrate on are:

- **Community Development** – What ideas in addition to Circles might there be for keeping couples connected post-weekend?
- **Encourage & Reward service and innovation** – Planning ways to recognize service and innovation at all levels
- **PR & Marketing** – Planning new ways to reach out, including contemporary media.

Volunteers were solicited to shepherd each of these goals and set up task forces to come up with strategies. An additional committee was set up to explore financial options to support these initiatives. Watch for further information on this.

OTHER ITEMS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO PRESENTERS THAT WERE COVERED IN THE REPORTS TO NAR:

From the Marriage Encounter Outline Committee:

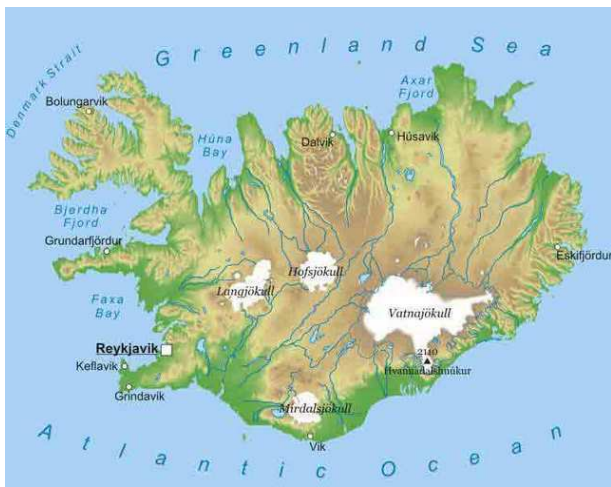
The word from the WorldWide outline committee is that by early fall they plan to have the outline distributed for “2nd tier review.” This means it will go to the protestant denominations for review and feedback. We (Schambers) have been asked to be the consolidators of feedback for Lutheran Marriage Encounter, so if you have strong opinions, let your District Leadership Couples know as they will be contacted for review. Remember that we are only one of 10 faith expressions that will be weighing in, so certainly it will be impossible to please everyone. **The good news is that personal sharings will likely not change, so most of the changes will be editing as opposed to heavy writing.** Some things we are told to expect are:

- A more colorful and helpful Weekend notebook that is intended to be a resource guide that can also be used after the Weekend
- Friday and Sunday are to be shortened, reducing repetition
- Keeping our Relationship a Priority may be taken out of the Weekend and left for Renewals
- A sample dialogue on a tough subject could be added for Saturday night
- “The Prince and the Rose” is out; music will change
- Better clarity in the mentality for the healing dialogue
- More suggested texts, i.e. “read as is”
- Exercises will be “meatier”-- description of the room may be replaced
- PowerPoints are generally ok but will not be mandated.

From the European Board Meeting:

- Finland is encountering about 500 couples per year
- Finland has a goal to have at least one presenting couple on the Weekend that can read their talks “without glasses.” [an age thing]
- Finland is getting some referrals from blogs and discussion groups sponsored by family magazines
- Iceland’s waiting list is currently 189 couples. Many registered couples postpone to a later Weekend, so they like to have a large backlog.
- Iceland finds that their most productive inviters currently are couples who have attended a Weekend 2-4 years previously.
- Iceland is planning a very short TV commercial—a flash of the logo and the website.
- Norway has found that feedback forms have been positive and very helpful to them.
- Norway gathers community couples on Saturday night for prayers during a Weekend.

From the 2010 Family Reunion Organizers:



Iceland



Edda ML Laugarvatn Hotel

The 2010 LME Family Reunion will be held in Iceland June 25-27 starting about 3 p.m. on Friday. The website www.ilme-iceland2010.com is up but still under construction. Other websites of interest are the Laugarvatn site: <http://www.nat.is/travelguideeng/laugarvatn.htm>, and the Iceland Tourism Board site: <http://www.icelandtouristboard.com>. The location is Laugarvatn, 57 miles / 1½ hours out of the capital city, Reykjavik. Kids are welcome. Transportation from Reykjavik will be provided. The organizers of the event are: Gunnar & Thora at gunnarthora@simnet.is. Presently they believe the per couple cost for the reunion will be approximately \$510.

According to the website: the hotel is situated in Laugarvatn, a small village with a population of approximately 200. The hotel has 99 rooms -- 32 with en-suite bathrooms and 67 with in-room washbasins, so those who register early will have the better accommodations.

It is in the heart of the countryside of South Iceland and is a good base for touring the “Golden Circle” -- a triad of Iceland’s most popular natural wonders: Mighty Gullfoss Waterfall (18 miles away), Geysir hot springs (12 miles), and Thingvellir National Park, ancient site of the world’s first parliament (15 miles).

Current plans are for the NAR summer meeting to be held in Iceland the 3 days following the Reunion, June 27-29, 2010.

Looking into the future, it will probably be up to NAR to host the 2012 Family Reunion, so we are asked to be thinking of possibilities.

From the Interfaith Report:

- A new 6” X 6” WWME brochure is now available
- A “secure Wiki” which allows for dynamic collaboration is in the works
- Facebook has been successfully used as a networking tool for some.
- Increased interfaith cooperation is encouraged
- The WWME Hispanic community has tested a 2-day Weekend eliminating Friday night and the cost of Saturday breakfast. No times were shortened, and the fidelity of the weekend was maintained.
- The Mennonite/Brethren expression has hosted a romantic dinner for couples—this year attended by about 525 people! They showed the movie “Fireproof.”

From the Presenting Couple Coordinator Report:

Presenter Couple Strength:

	Clergy	3 rd Set	2 nd Set	1 st Set	Total
District 1	7 + 2 writing	11+ 0 writing	8 + 3 writing	5 + 2 writing	38
District II	3 + 0 writing	7 + 1 writing	1 + 4 writing	0 + 0 writing	16
District III	4 + 0 writing	6 + 1 writing	6 + 0 writing	4 + 2 writing	23
District IV-V	5 + 0 writing	7 + 1 writing	4 + 0 writing	6 +3 writing	26
Total	21	34	26	22	103

From the Deeper Coordinator’s Report:

Current Deeper presenters:

<u>LAY</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>CLERGY</u>	<u>District</u>
Jim ♥ Anita Tollefson	III	Russ ♥ Ann Hillman	IV/V
Jim ♥ Detra Swenson	IV/V	Ted ♥ Marty Hartman	IV/V
Dick ♥ Judy Dehnel	III(writing)	Bob ♥ Linda McGurn	I
		Dave ♥ Elsa Larson	III

From the Publicity/Media/Communications Report:

Inventory currently contains: 5900 tri-fold and 14,000 bi-fold brochures and 750 business cards which can be ordered from the supply couple: Dean & Katie Senne at: kddesigner@charter.net

9 COUPLES REGISTERED FOR UPCOMING DEEPER

We're excited to report that 9 couples are now registered for the upcoming Deeper to be held in Houston, TX, **September 18-21, 2009**. This is the largest Deeper LME has had since June, 2003. For those areas who have couples attending, be sure that they have sent their Deeper Homework to their APCC who has then sent it on to Larsons, and that they have written the Self talk III: A, B,C, and D and have had it workshopped before they go. Deeper Coordinators, Dave & Elsa Larson, said in their email that the mentor couples will be the prayer couples. Most of you have already received an email that originated from Dave & Elsa (delarson@windstream.net) requesting caring notes, but in case not, following are the couples and where the caring notes should be sent. All prayer letters can be mailed to either of the presenters whose addresses are listed on the registration list or to our Deeper Supply Couple:

Arnie & Sue Kaestner
931 Moss Spring Lane
Houston, TX 77024
2arniesuek@sbcglobal.net

LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOOUNTER DEEPER WEEKEND September 18-21, 2009

Presenting Couples:

Dave & Elsa Larson (Clergy)
6039 Cullen Drive
Lincoln, NE 68506
404/483-5404
delarson@windstream.net

Jim & Anita Tollefson
8733 Darlington, Ave
Monticello, MN 55362
763/464-3206
anitandjim@charter.net

District I

Tom & Kristyn Trealout
13042 Tigers Eye Drive
Venice, FL 34292
941/497-0912
kristynthomas@verizon.net

Paul & Kathryn Stanis
6063 Libory Rd. Duplex 1
Bethel Park, PA 15102
412/595-7576
stanis1228@verizon.net

District II

John & Kate Thaelke
76 Spring Trail Ct.
St. Charles, MO 63303
636/447-0025
aeomom2003@yahoo.com

Jim & Suzie Koch
3888 S. Pleasant Hill St.
Elizabeth, IL 61028
815/858-3517
kochj76@yahoo.com

John & Cindy Meyerhofer
12134 Duan's Dr.
Galena, IL 61036
815/219-9817
cmeyerhofer@jcwifi.com

Gary & Carol Morgan-Gohlke (Clergy)
PO Box 296
Seabrook, TX 77586
713/446-9161
Carolmg1@ymail.com or GaryMG123@yahoo.com

Daniel & Theresa Duteil
248 Cotton Wood Ct.
Rockwall, TX 75032
972/722-7891
gasket@yahoo.com

District III

Byron & Jodi Bunnell
1799 23rd Ave.
Rice Lake, WI 54868
715/234-3487
byron.bunnell@gmail.com

District IV/V

David & Judy Peterson (Clergy)
344 NE 120th St.
Seattle, WA 98125
206/365-6061
preachnpaint@comcast.net

Our Circle, Weekend, or Marriage Encounter Activity

Please consider submitting a story (and picture if possible) of YOUR Circle, a M.E. Weekend, or any Marriage Encounter Activity. We'd love to share them with the Presenting group.

On Thursday, August 20 through Saturday, August 22 a non-Weekend, all clergy, interfaith Weekend was held in Houston, TX, with Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Methodist presenters. The weekend was sponsored by the Presbyterians and endorsed by WorldWide to entice Clergy of all denominations to attend a Weekend.

Each denomination had a team of presenters (one clergy and one lay) on the Weekend. Arnie & Sue Kaestner and Laird & Winnie Engle presented the first set talks, while a Methodist lay and clergy presented the second set, and a Presbyterian Lay and Clergy presented the third set.

We asked Laird and Winnie to submit some of their reflections regarding the Weekend. Following is their note:

Dear lovers,

In their extra love letter, Russ and Ann Hillman said that they were praying for a regenerative spark for Marriage Encounter in the Houston area. We think that the fact that we have 32 people who are planning to come to the reunion this Saturday is evidence that God is answering that prayer. This is a Renewal for the Presbyterian Weekend as well as the clergy and spouse Weekend.

For us, the clergy and spouse Weekend was a wonderful Weekend! We were excited that six clergy couples were encountered, and that included some Black and some Hispanic. We had one couple in their first parish, and one that had just retired. One couple has already asked about the possibility of becoming presenters.

This was truly a special Weekend for those clergy who presented. Although we know that it is not practical, we wish that all clergy could have the privilege of presenting on a Weekend like this. It was a luxury to present only one set. We were able to spend more time actually writing and dialoging. We were able to share in some new areas. It was exciting to get to know other presenters and listen to new talks. Because of inviting efforts, we became aware of prayer concerns of some ME couples.

We were blessed by prayers and love letters not only from our own expression, but from many expressions. We used the Lutheran list of couples praying around the world, and the Presbyterian prayer scroll which listed couples praying for that weekend. The Presbyterians still require the prayer sponsors to be present at the end of the Weekend, and it was touching to see the responses of the participating couples as the prayer sponsors arrived at the sing-off.

Some of the things we enjoyed were:

- Gary and Ann did a very effective job of using the PowerPoint presentation.
- Arnie and Sue used the "tool box" which they first saw on another Lutheran weekend.
- We had tables for all the couples which made writing easier.
- Before the Cana sharing, couples were given time to ask questions about dialog. This seemed to help them open up at sharing time. We were pleased to have all six couples share at the end of "Continuing our Journey."

We were pleased that the couples actually discussed the table questions after the meals and did not get hung up on preacher stuff. However, we did receive a lot of good feedback from couples who said that they could really relate to things in our talks that were about being in a parish.

Overall the flow of the weekend went smoothly, thanks to the good job that Gary and Ann Long did of helping us mesh our talks. Really, the changes were very minor. We really did not have many problems except for an elevator that stuck and frightened one of the participating couples.

We were disappointed to have 3 last-minute cancellations. We also were disappointed that we did not have any Lutheran couples register. The Lutheran clergy couple who will be going on the next Deeper was one of the prayer sponsors. We know that some clergy couples could not come because their spouses had to be in in-service training for school. One couple did say that they really liked the Thursday-Saturday Weekend, and they would have probably never have come on a Weekend if it involved a Sunday.

We believe that it would have been better to have publicity out sooner and that we probably need to target publicity to spouses. A number of the Methodist couples had gotten their information from a spouses' table at a conference.

We were very thankful for the grant money given to us by the Catholics and Presbyterians. Without it, we would have lost money on the Weekend.

We would like to have more Weekends like the one we just did. We are concerned about how to fund them. Perhaps expressions who have extra funds could help. Maybe people would be willing to donate extra funds for these Weekends.

We really wish that we could do combined-expression Weekends on a regular basis. If we could do that, we believe it would be much easier for the Houston community to thrive.

Thanks again to all who supported the clergy and spouse Weekend.

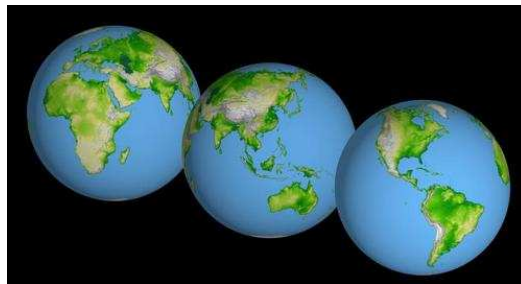
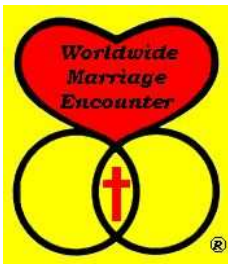
Love,
Winnie and Laird Engle

SUPPLIES FOR 2009-2010



Has your area purchased notebooks, workbooks, and folders for the upcoming weekends during back-to-school sales? Often office supply stores, drug stores, and discount retailers have very good sales during this time. We haven't heard of any good sales on red notebooks this fall. (Tell us if

you have.) However, Walmart has a fairly nice 3-ring binder (black only) that is selling for 92 cents in PA. They also featured the spiral notebooks and the 2-pocket folders that some areas use for take-home packets last week for 15 cents each. Remember you want your supply couple to purchase one per person of both the 3-ring binders and the spirals for all your weekends that will be happening before next fall. Some sales may still be happening. Check them out!



2009 PRESENTER HOTLINES NOW ON ILME WEBSITE

The four 2009 editions of "The Presenter Hotline" are now posted on the ilme website www.ilme.org for your convenience. Also recently posted is the Lutheran Marriage Encounter statement "Progression and Deselection Guidelines for Presenters." Go to: "Resources for Couples who have been on a Marriage Encounter," then click on "Presenting Couples" and enter the password: "LME/pc" for lots of great presenter information besides the Hotlines including: the NAR

minutes, the talk outlines, the current workbook & replacement pages, the NAR, District, & Presenter Rosters, Admin documents, and Deeper and Kickoff materials.

