

ARMSS

Association of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses or Survivors

Quarterly Newsletter

January, 2008 Volume 13, Issue 1

JUNE IN INDIANAPOLIS

Ella Banton, Convention Chair

Indiana may not rank as your favorite state. However, it is another of the states associated with Abraham Lincoln. It is appropriate that we meet there with our theme of *Peace: a Dream and a Reality!* Abe would approve our emphasis.

Thursday, June 12 through Sunday, June 15, 2008 is the 12th annual meeting of the Association of Retired Ministers, and Spouses, or Survivors. Our theme was chosen because it is truly the dream of all Christians to have a world at Peace.

Mark Koenig, the head of peacemaking for the General Assembly Council, will be bringing us up to date about the work of the PCUSA in the areas of peacemaking. As we all know peacemaking involves much more than treaties between opposing nations. He will remind us of what we can do in our families, churches, communities, nation, and the world to foster the peace of God. Mark will be our keynoter on Friday morning and will also be available for questions and discussion on Saturday afternoon during a workshop.

Julia Thorne is a lawyer with the Office of General Assembly whose specialty is immigration issues. She assists churches calling pastors who are not US citizens to be operating within the immigration laws. She also assists churches in knowing and working for the rights of immigrants. This is an issue of much conflict in our nation today and one where we can work to build a foundation for peace and understanding. She is a dynamic and caring speaker for Saturday morning and will also be available for a workshop on Saturday afternoon.

Nancy Cavalcante has been an employee of the General Assembly Council for a number of years. I first met her in 1997 when she helped process my husband Jack and I as international volunteers in Egypt. Since that time she has worked with national volunteers. In the new organization of GA she is responsible for volunteers working both nationally and internationally, short time and long term. She will be presenting a workshop on all of the varied possibilities for being a volunteer in church and community. Nancy is the wife of a Baptist minister who was a wonderful support by mail and email when we were far from home. Plan to attend her workshop to find ways to continue to use those talents you have and maybe develop some new ones.

I am personally pleased to have Sam Rizk to present one of our workshops. Sam, as you will read in his bio, is a well qualified Egyptian

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ARMSS Quarterly Newsletter

This Newsletter is distributed quarterly by the Association of Retired Ministers,
Their Spouses or Survivors.

For more information contact:

James Reese, President
139 Willow Brook Road
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
Email: j.f.reese@worldnet.att.net
or
Ginny Nyhuis, Support Staff
124 S. 2nd St.
Oostburg, WI 53070
Email: vnyhuis@wi.rr.com



A Message From the President of ARMSS

James F. Reese

God Within Us, At Any, and All Ages

There are four times during the recent Advent / Christmas Season, I read or heard the panoply of names in Isaiah 9:6. You heard them also.

The name "Everlasting Father" struck me with renewed meaning and continues as I write this message. Too often it is thought that "everlasting" has only a past tense. In that thought we make the "Everlasting Father" a prisoner of what has already happened. That is not true. Something new can always take place. Therefore there can be at every age, an expectancy, an anticipation, a promise that something new can take place.

God's power is not exhausted because sometimes we become exhausted. God can do what God used to do even though, as an eighty-two year old survivor said "I can't do what I used to do." God's gift of freedom is not stopped because our bones may harden, our mind sets may be fixed or our thought patterns may be firmed. Retirement and post-retirement can be full, wholesome and exciting.

The Psalmist said it:

The righteous will flourish like
a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of
Lebanon;
planted in the house of the Lord,

they will flourish in the courts
of our God.

They will bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,
proclaiming, "The Lord is up-
right; he is my Rock..."

Psalm 92:12-15 (NIV)

The poet wrote it:

There is an Eye that never sleeps
Beneath the wing of night;
There is an Ear that never shuts
When sinks the beams of light.
There is an Arm that never tires
When human strength gives way;
There is a Love that never fails
When earthly loves decay.
That Eye unseen o'er watches all;
That arm upholds the sky;
That Ear doth hear the sparrows call;
That Love is ever nigh.

James Cowden Wallace

The Gospel Song sings it:

"I want Jesus to walk with me,
All along life's perilous journey,
I want Jesus to walk with me."

So whether we meditate with the Psalmist, recite with the poet or sing with the song writer, the Everlasting Father is with us all the time and at every age.

There is another name in the plethora of names in Isaiah 9:6 - "Prince of Peace." The ARMSS Convention in Indianapolis on June 12-15, 2008 will focus on peace and the One who is peace and who brings peace. Plan now to join us in Indianapolis.

For now we look forward to whatever will be because it is always good with God.

James Foster Reese

THANKS!

When we went to press on January 11, we had:

- 544 Members for 2008
- \$5740 Special gifts for ARMSS
- \$570 John Rhea Scholarship Fund donations
- \$960 Cuba Connection donations

All of us are grateful for the support that we have received. It is heartening to know that before we arrived at 2008 we had fifty percent (50%) of our membership goal of 1000!

Again, thanks, and continue your support.

ARMSS Executive Committee

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Presbyterian preacher's kid who will share with us about the Middle East. Sam's parents, Gendi and Samiha, were our good friends in Alexandria, Egypt. One of my personal impressions of Sam came when we were in their home with our visiting 15 year old grandson. Matthew asked many questions and Sam was patient in his answers for this brash young American. He then told us the story of going as an observer of the Palestinian elections representing the Middle East Council of Churches. He told Matthew that because of his age (below 30) the Egyptian government did not want him to enter Israel/Palestine. So he walked across the desert from Jordan to Israel avoiding the official border crossings. As you can imagine his mother was horrified but Sam did the job he was supposed to do. You will have no trouble un-

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derstanding this young man. He started school in New Haven while his father was a student at Yale and he is a graduate of Hanover College, where he was a star soccer player.

Now that I have bragged a little on the people joining us in Indianapolis, let me tell you that we will be in a smaller hotel than in previous years. The staff will basically be serving our group. It should be a pleasant experience for all. Hope to see all of you there. If you have not come before to our convention come and discover the wonderful congeniality and friendship that will be a major highlight of our gathering.

2008 ARMSS Convention Workshops

Peacemaking: The Journey Continues - This workshop provides an opportunity for conversations about peacemaking ministries within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). How is the church on all levels responding to God's call in Christ to "seek peace and pursue it?" Participants will have the opportunity to share their peacemaking concerns and efforts.



Rev. W. Mark Koenig serves as the Coordinator for the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program of the

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). He preaches, provides workshops on public policy advocacy and various issues related to peace and justice, writes and edits publications and resources for the program, and

provides the content for the program's web page.

Mark has served as the Peacemaking Program's Associate for Resources and Education. Prior to joining the Peacemaking Program staff, he served as the Associate for Antiracism Training. He remains involved with antiracism ministry on behalf of the Peacemaking Program. He has served on the staff of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve, working in the areas of hunger, peacemaking and justice and has been co-pastor of churches in Iowa and Ohio.

Mark is a graduate of McCormick Theological Seminary and Westminster College (PA). He and his wife, the Rev. Tricia Dykers Koenig, have two sons, Sean (age 24) and Eric (age 20).



Julia Thorne, Manager for Immigration Issues, Immigration Counsel

Julia Thorne is an attorney in the Office of Immigration Issues in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This Office is located in Constitutional Services in the Office of the General Assembly. It is her privilege to resource and advise presbyteries and churches regarding immigration law and other immigration issues. This Office also works with presbyteries, churches and interfaith partners on education on immigration issues that effect our churches and our nation and advocacy for the reform of current immigration policies, procedures and laws in accordance with General Assembly policy. Since

graduating from college, Julia has worked with people from all over the world as a Foreign Student Advisor, College Instructor, Campus Minister and Private Immigration Attorney.

Christians and Muslims in the Middle East: Engaged Critically in the Dialogue of Life

- In this workshop Samuel Rizk will speak about interfaith relations between Muslims and Christians in the Middle East, giving examples from Egypt, Lebanon and other countries. Sam will engage with the participants in the workshop about the quality of these relations and the processes of dialogue that are reflected in these relations, their status and their future in light of the current tensions in the region.

Samuel Rizk is currently in his second year of PhD studies at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University



(VA). He is a graduate of Hanover College in Indiana and has been a member of Presbyterian peacemaking teams multiple times. He is currently on academic leave from his position as the Executive Director of the Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue (FDCD) - an NGO in Beirut which he helped establish, and which focuses on community empowerment, conflict resolution, and interfaith dialogue. Previously, he worked with the Middle East Council of Churches as program officer for the Justice, Peace and Human

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Rights program, and as Assistant to the General Secretary for International Linkage. He is the son of a Presbyterian Pastor in Alexandria, Egypt. Sam is married to May Elian, a Lebanese journalist, and is father to two girls, Yasmine (3 1/2) and Yara (7 months).

Make a New Year's Resolution To "Go Green" in 2008!

Some Easy Eco-Friendly New Year's Resolutions

- ❑ Save a Tree. Plant a pine tree seedling that will be big enough for decorating by next year's holiday season! It will be fun to watch it grow throughout the year and know it is taking carbon dioxide out of the environment!
- ❑ Get Involved. Find a local volunteer project and donate at least 10 hours of service this year.
- ❑ Gifting is not just for the holidays. Use dish towels, bandanas, cloth napkins, t-shirts or scarves to enclose a gift and secure with a reclaimed ribbon!
- ❑ Go vegetarian two days a month. Did you know that a pound of beef requires around 12,000 gallons of water to produce, compared to 60 gallons for a pound of potatoes?
- ❑ Supplement one organic item per shopping trip. Organic products are free of growth hormones, antibiotics and many chemicals, and are produced in a more eco-friendly manner.
- ❑ Buy local products when possible. Learn about where you live and buy local. Less fossil fuels is used transporting local goods and if it's closer, it's fresher!

❑ Boycott paper plates and plastic dishware. Limit the need for disposable utensils and dishware with proper planning. If disposable is the only way to go, invest in the environment with biodegradable and compost-able environmentally friendly dishware.

❑ Get fancy with cloth napkins. Cloth napkins can be purchased for very little or made from fabric remnants. If everyone in the US used an average of 1 fewer napkin per day, more than a billion pounds of napkins could be saved from landfills each year.

❑ BYOB - Bring your own bag (s). Did you know that the average American uses up to 700 plastic bags per year?

❑ Replace at least 25 square feet of lawn with a vegetable or herb garden. You will not only feed yourself, but save a little fuel required for gas mowers.

❑ Shut off the water while brushing your teeth, shaving or sudsing up your hands. Save hundreds of gallons of this valuable resource annually!

❑ Walk or bike places less than a mile away. Save nature and enjoy it at the same time and shed some unwanted pounds in the process.

❑ Bring your own chopsticks when dining out on Asian cuisine. Did you over 50 billion of chopsticks are disposed of annually? That's a lot of wood.

❑ Bring your own cup, bottle or mug. Depending on the beverage of your choice, bring a container and you may be pleasantly surprised with discounts offered by major companies.

Swap Shop

Harrison Taylor of Tennessee says that the 1st Presbyterian church in Elizabeth, TN found 150 hand written sermons and a book on slavery written by a Horace Cowles Atwater from the mid-1800's. He attended Yale College and Divinity schools. Was born in 1857 in Homer, NY. they are chasing down leads on his background and need hints or help.



Rev. Dr. Douglas Hix Honored

Pictured above is the presentation of the ARMSS 2007 Certificate of Merit Award to Coastal Carolina Presbytery's Dr. Douglas Hix by Bill Clark, ARMSS founding president. The occasion was the Annual Christmas Luncheon for retired ministers, spouses and survivors sponsored by the Committee on Ministry and hosted by Scotia Village Retirement Center of Laurinburg NC.

In addition to his outstanding service to and in the presbytery since retirement, Dr. Hix also served as Acting President of St. Andrews College and on the Board of Scotia Village where he and wife Pat have established a continuing endowment program.

Others honored at the gathering were ministers retiring in 2007.

12TH ANNUAL ARMSS CONVENTION

PEACE: A Dream and A Possibility

Schedule at a Glance

(subject to change)

Thursday, June 12

Registration (1:00 - 5:00 p.m.)
 Opening of Convention (7:00 p.m.)
 Worship Service

Friday, June 13

Breakfast, Presbytery Reps Meet
 Morning Worship
 Keynote Speaker: Rev. Mark Koenig
 Q & A
 Presbyterian Foundation Luncheon
 Tour Indianapolis missions
 Evening of Relaxation & Meditation

Saturday, June 14

Breakfast, Presbytery Reps Meet
 Morning Worship
 Keynote Speaker: Ms. Julia Thorne
 Q & A
 ARMSS Business Meeting
 Presbyterian BOP Luncheon
 Workshops
 Banquet

Sunday, June 15

Worship and Communion
 Closing of Convention (10:30 a.m.)

**LOOK FOR MORE CONVENTION INFORMATION IN THE APRIL ISSUE.
 REGISTER EARLY TO RECEIVE THE REGISTRATION DISCOUNT!**

****Please copy & complete one per person attending**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ **ZIP:** _____

Presbytery: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

*****Registration Fee includes all meals
 & tour of Indianapolis mission**

- Presbytery Rep first-timer (fee waived for first 11)
- Early Registration Fee \$125
- Registration received after May 16 \$150

Ck No: _____ **Date:** _____ **Amount:** _____

Please Mail To:
 ARMSS
 PO Box 700311
 Oostburg, WI 53070

Workshop Selection

Friday, June 13: During Breakfast

- Presbytery Representatives Meeting

Saturday, June 14: During Breakfast

- Presbytery Representatives Meeting (continued)

Saturday, June 14: Afternoon Workshop 1

- 1. Peacemaking: The Journey Continues - presenter Mark Koenig
- 2. Immigration - presenter Julia Thorne
- 3. Volunteering from A to Z - presenter Nancy Cavalcante
- 4. Christians and Muslims in the Middle East - presenter Samuel Rizk

Saturday, June 13: Afternoon Workshop 2

- 1. Peacemaking: The Journey Continues - presenter Mark Koenig
- 2. Immigration - presenter Julia Thorne
- 3. Volunteering from A to Z - presenter Nancy Cavalcante
- 4. Christians and Muslims in the Middle East - presenter Samuel Rizk

Transportation: Call Carey Limousine at 800-888-4639 to make your own travel arrangements from the airport.

Make your hotel reservations by calling Radisson Hotel North at 1-800-333-3333. Mention ARMSS to receive discounted rate of \$99 per night. Hotel reservations must be made by **May 16** to receive reduced rate.

CONTRIBUTIONS

We are grateful for the contributions which we have received in support of ARMSS.
It is your gifts that supports our broad ministry.

The following persons contributed in support of ARMSS since publishing the last newsletter:

David Aaronson	Alexander Dove	Fred Lupton	Paul Ross
Jean Adamson	Alma Drown	Donald & Ruth Anne MacPherson	Jean Rowan
Ralph & Naomi Adamson	Mary Louise Ellenberger	Joyce Manson	Albert Saunders
Paul & Aryls Aijian	Arlyce Farlough	Cora Lee Massey	Robert & Anna Schnucker
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Crea & Janet Clark	Richard Huggins	Willard & Virginia Rahn	Dee Van Ingen
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Catherine Davis	Clorine Joward	V. Bruce Rigdon	Virginia Wellman
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Thomas Denier	Don & Carol Keller	Barbara Roche	Davis & Doris Whitesides
Carmen DiRivera-Casasus	Kenneth Kettlewell	Joyse Hess Rodda	Michael Williams
Donald Dhonan	Jean Kiskaddon	Glenn & Lana Rogers	Reese Wills
Charles Doak	David Krehbiel		Edward & Nancy Wilson
Bruce & Carolyn Dodd	Jack Kyle		Ralph & Barbara Winter
James Donnell	David & Ann Lodge		Carroll & Ann Wooden
			Shirley Wooden
			John & Phyllis Yohe

THANK YOU!

For your generous assistance.

NOTE: If we have failed to recognize you as a contributor for this quarter,
please contact Ginny Nyhuis at: vnhyhuis@wi.rr.com or: 615-426-1545.

Your support is vital to our program. Please **mark your check ARMSS** and send contributions to:

Lois Siegel, Treasurer
37 Aspen Road
Latham, NY 12110

ARMSS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND PLEDGE FORM

Use this form to pay your membership fess for 2008, and to make extra contributions to the work of ARMSS. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and can be given for continuing the general mission of ARMSS, or can be designated to go to the Cuba Connection or the John Rhea fund. Interest from the John Rhea fund is used annually to award scholarships for attendance to the ARMSS Convention.

Dues of \$20 per person (\$40 per couple) are for the 2008 calendar year \$ _____

Pledge for continuing the mission of ARMSS (Tax Deductible) \$ _____

Current Mission Project: Cuba Connection (Tax Deductible) \$ _____

John Rhea Fund (Tax Deductible) \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please Print when completing the following information:

Name of Minister _____ Spouse _____ Survivor _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone numbers (home, work, cell) _____

E-mail address _____

Presbytery where you hold membership _____ Presbytery where you currently reside _____

Synod where you hold membership _____ Synod where you currently reside _____

Please make checks payable to ARMSS and mail to:

Lois Siegel, Treasurer
37 Aspen Road
Latham, NY 12110

PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

Holy God,
as we enter this new year,
we thank you for your presence with us
in all the years of our lives.
We have known joy, and also sorrow,
success and failure,
and through it all,
you have been with us –
the companion of all our journeys.
Much of life is fleeting
and so we thank you for things that endure:
the love of faithful friends,
wisdom gained from experience,
the reliability of nature,
and your steadfast love.
We thank you for this new year which awaits us.
Take us by the hand,
and lead us on.
Amen.

(Author Unknown)

Association of Retired Ministers,
Their Spouses or Survivors
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NEWSLETTER

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