

The ARC-ives

The Newsletter of the Association Retreat Center

Have you made plans to attend The Carol yet?

Performance Dates are:

December 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17 @ 7:00 PM

A matinee performance will be held December 17 @ 3:00 PM

For more information:

www.thecarol.org or

call The ARC @

800-294-2877

ARC Benefit Dinner

Over 150 persons have signed up for the ARC benefit dinner and silent auction. A special matinee performance of 'The Carol' will also be a part of the activities.

We have had an exciting response from local businesses and individuals in support of the ARC.

The Carol: Bringing Christmas to the ARC



In 1981 The Alliance Church of the Valley in St. Croix Falls, WI, presented a Christmas program which included a short play titled "A Christian Christmas Carol". The play was adapted from Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" by Donald R. Howard. With minimal staging and less than 10 rehearsals, drama director Kevin Carlson directed the 30 minute play.

The play was so well received that it was presented again in December of 1983 as a stand-alone production and titled 'The Carol'. 'Borrowed' music was added to 'The Carol', which ran approximately one hour and included an intermission. A free will offering was taken to cover expenses. It was performed four times over two weekends and drew over 1,000 people to the performances.

After the success of the 1983 performances, Carlson began to reflect on the meaning of the original Dickens' story and how the message of this classic still applied to the daily lives of people in our society. Inspired by conversations with his grandmother Ruth Carlson and others, Carlson studied the original text of the Dickens classic. As he did so, an idea began to form in his mind.

"It was during this time that I realized "The Carol" should be presented as a gift to the community with no strings attached. There could be no advanced ticket sales. There could be no "free will" offerings. There must be absolutely nothing that could deter people from coming and nothing that could detract from the analogy that just as the play was free to all who chose to come, the gift of Jesus Christ is free to all who choose to believe."

Carlson has added original

music and special effects to the production over the years. Since 1983, and over the course of 49 performances, over 14,000 people have experienced the 'gift' of "The Carol." During that time, many have grown with 'The Carol'. Children, who were once carolers or townchildren, now play the parts their parents played years ago. Others have held the same part for virtually every production.

When asked to what he attributes the popularity of 'The Carol' Carlson will smile and say, "Thanks be unto God for His Unspeakable Gift!"

The Carol will be performed seven times at the ARC during the month of December. In keeping with tradition, there will be no admission charged for the performances. For more information on The Carol, visit the website: www.thecarol.org. There is also a link on The ARC site: www.arc-aflc.com.

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ARC hosts National Conference on Development

The ARC hosted a very special conference with national implications in October.

As a recipient of a grant from the St. Croix Valley Community Foundation, the ARC was able to bring in Development Expert Jerry Twombly for a three day conference.

Jerry is founder and President of Development Marketing Associates based in Indian-



apolis, Indiana. Jerry has had over 30 years of experience in Development.

Participants at the conference were part of organizations ranging from home and foreign missions groups, to churches and

Christian schools. Some traveled to the ARC from as far away as California and Georgia.

Through information gathered at the conference, the ARC and others who attended learned ways in which we can grow our ministries stronger to meet the needs of the people we serve.



AFLC winter retreats

Now is the time to think about attending the various AFLC retreats scheduled for the ARC.

January starts the AFLC winter retreat season with the Annual **AFLC Pastor's Conference**. In the past this has been a great time for our spiritual leaders to take time to rest and fellowship with other pastors. Make sure to remember this time in your prayers as your pastor takes this very important time from his schedule for rest.

The **AFLC SIDE X SIDE** retreat will be held **February 2-4** at the ARC. Speakers for the retreat will be Pastor Jim Ritter, Ryan Chase & Jason Gudim.

SNO DAZE will also be held **February 2-4**. Pastor Wade and Michele Mobley will be the teachers for this group.

Last year we saw record attendance and the Spirit of the Lord was evident in the lives of those who attended. Parents, please encourage your youth to attend and register early. Then, pray that God will use this time of fun and fellowship to guide our youth to spiritual growth. Everyone who registers for these retreats by January 2 will receive a free "Rock Solid" T-shirt.

Couple's Retreat is the weekend of **February 16-18**. Pastor Jerry and Kristi Nelson will be

our teachers this year. This is a great time for couples to get a time of rest after a busy holiday season. If you know a couple that would love to attend, but has young children, volunteer to be 'weekend grandparents' so they can come and enjoy each other and the company of other couples.

Classics Retreat has been rescheduled for **September 24-26**. This is a Monday-Wednesday Retreat.

Please continue to check our website (www.arc-aflc.com) for more information as it becomes available.



Upcoming AFLC Events:

AFLC Pastors Retreat *January*

SIDE X SIDE

*Grades 7-12
February 2-4*

Sno Daze

*Grades 4-7
February 2-4*

Couples Retreat

February 16-18

Volunteers Make it Happen at The ARC

We would like to take this time to thank the many volunteers who faithfully give of their time and talents to make the ARC ministry successful. We are trying to keep better track of who you are!! If we have missed you, we apologize.

Thank you to the youth groups from **Amery Free Lutheran Church** and **East Lincoln Alliance Church**. These kids took off an hour or two of their weekend to help stack wood,

help organize some supplies, and other much needed projects.

Special thanks also to:

- ◇ **Roger Timm and our friends from Wilson, WI**
- ◇ **All of our 'invitation staffers'** that helped with mailings for the benefit dinner.
- ◇ **Ron Engen** for his help with supplies and suggestions on renovations.

- ◇ **Al and Becky Behm** for always looking for a bargain.
- ◇ **Cliff Seldal** for his all his support

As the ARC grows its ministry, there are always tasks that need to be done that our staff isn't able to get to.

No matter what your skill level is, if you are interested in volunteering, please contact us at 800-294-2877 or email us



Don't miss out on the fun of



The ARC has a new bus! Expert painter Bob Bantz enlisted the help of some friends to tape and sand the bus for painting. When the ARC is on the roll, people will definitely know we



The Tabernacle project began phase II. Walls in the back of the auditorium are being insulated, and eventually a small kitchenette will be available for use by our guests.



Spotlight on the ARC: Brad and Mary Howard

If the room you slept in, and the building you met in was neat and clean, you have Mary Howard and her housekeeping crew to thank.

Mary and her husband, Brad, moved to the area in November of 1994. Former Director Bob Dietzsche showed them one of the rental houses. When Bob found out they were believers, he 'knew' this was the place for them.

A few short months later, Mary was asked by new director, Eric Westlake if she would be willing to work part-time in housekeeping. At the time, their youngest was only a year old and Mary was unsure she wanted to work. However, she took the job and that was the beginning of Mary's 'career' at the ARC. As the camp grew and became busier, so did Mary's responsibilities.

Brad and Mary were married 30 years ago in Germantown, Wisconsin, where Mary grew up. Brad and Mary began their married life in Milwaukee. Shortly after their marriage, wanting to raise their children in the city, the couple moved to northern Wisconsin where Brad had his roots.

Both Brad and Mary began searching for something more from life at about the same time that they left the city. They felt that their lives were empty and without meaning. Brad began by reading a Bible that He'd given Mary as a Christmas present. As a result of this searching, both came to real-

ize that without Christ there could be no meaning.

Brad and Mary got involved in their local Assembly of God church where they received strong grounding in their new faith. As they grew in Christ, they became increasingly involved in the local church.

Eventually, God led the family to the Osceola area where Mary began working at the ARC.

Mary has been totally blessed by being a part of the ministry of the ARC.

"The staff is like a small church body in itself. We grow, laugh and cry together," says Mary.

Mary also counts it a blessing that each of her children have worked at the ARC. Her son Gabe was the previous guest services director.

"What a blessing to have a Christ-centered place such as the ARC for your children to learn a good work ethic"

Brad and Mary still live in the house they moved into 12 years ago. They have five children and three grandchildren.

Brad works in the Twin Cities and has also been involved in several missions trips to the Middle East.

While Mary counts it a blessing to be part of the ARC, somehow we feel we are the ones blessed.

Thanks Mary for all you and your family do for the ARC and those who use our facilities.

As first timers to Grace Family camp we were pleasantly surprised with the well-maintained and clean accommodations. It was obvious that a lot of preparation and planning went into our week of worship and fellowship.

Feeding a large group of campers is not an easy task. The tastefulness and variety of the food was beyond our expectations. We could tell that the serving hands that prepared it cared about nutrition, quality and presentation. Daily we looked forward to meals with our family and friends.

Most importantly we enjoyed the delightful, positive attitudes of the ARC Staff. Each member was willing to go above and beyond to make our week rewarding and relaxing. It was a joy to get to know your friendly staff.

Thank you for being such a good steward of God's resources. It truly was a blessing to have your staff serve us. God's light certainly shines through the ARC and its staff.

-'family camper'



Mary Howard (on the right), with the help of Jody Halvorson, are the mainstays of the ARC housekeeping crew.

"Somehow I hope that each person that lays their heads on these beds will know this place was prepared with love"

ARC notes:

Praise God...

- For 25 first time decisions for Christ at a recent Maranatha encounter at the ARC!
- A great outpouring of community support for the upcoming 'The Carol' production and benefit.
- For donations of wood, and other equipment from a

local camp which closed. (PS. Wait until you see what we have for the Lake!)

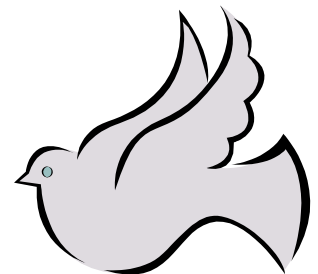
- For our new ARC bus.

Please be in prayer for:

- ⇒ Annual fundraising efforts to reduce our debt and boost the budget shortfall.
- ⇒ 'The Carol' performances, that those who attend will

find the true meaning of Christmas.

- ⇒ For the health and safety of our staff and their families.
- ⇒ For continued growth of our ministry to serve the multitudes of people who need to find Jesus.



Owned and Operated By the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations



The Newsletter of the Association Retreat Center

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As a non-profit ministry, owned and operated by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, The ARC is open to both religious and secular organizations and groups. Established as a camp and retreat center in 1979, the ARC has lodging facilities for groups of 25-600 persons.

The ARC is the perfect setting for your group to leave the chaos of society and find a quiet place to rest, reflect and re-energize. We welcome you to 'Come away, and rest awhile.' For information on booking the ARC for your next group event contact us at: the_arc@centurytel.net or call us at 800-294-2877. You can also visit us on the web at www.arc-aflc.com.

"Come away and rest awhile"-Mark 6:31

KEEP UP TO DATE ON
THE ARC.
VISIT US ON THE WEB.
WWW.ARC-AFLC.COM

December/January Groups and Events at The ARC

December Groups

1-3 New Life Church

8,9,10 The Carol being performed @ 7:00 PM

9 ARC Benefit Dinner (includes silent auction, gourmet meal and matinee performance of 'The Carol'.

15,16,17 The Carol being performed @ 7:00 PM

17 The Carol matinee performance @ 3:00

25 **Merry Christmas!!**

28-30 Johnson Family reunion
Ricker Family reunion

January Groups

5-7 St. Stanishus
Apostolic Church
Sunday Night Mens BS

12-14 Friendship Church
Emmanuel Christian Center
St. Croix Valley Boys Choir
Creative Memories-Deb
Creative Memories-Annette
AFLC Youth Workers
Lord of Life Church

19-21 Peace Lutheran
Emmanuel Christian Center
Maranatha
Epiphany Church H. S.
Creative Memories-Amy
Creative Memories-Sharon

26-28 Angelica Cantanti
Leaderquest
Emmanuel Christian Center
Creative Memories-Jean
Creative Memories-Donna



For more information:
www.thecarol.org



"Wise Men still seek Him"