

COMMUNITIES of JOY

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MISSION CENTER

FEBRUARY 2009

We Share? We Share!

By Terry Read, SCMC President

"It's gonna get worse before it gets better." Who among us hasn't heard this comment from another or thought it ourselves as we've pondered the state of our global economy? True enough, we likely have only begun to see the effects of this recession/depression. It's hard to imagine anyone—save the ultra rich—who won't feel the results. For many of us, these effects will certainly be noticed—trips canceled, lifestyle changed, retirement plans compromised. For others of us, the effects may be devastating—lost jobs along with associated health care, lost homes, lost pensions, financial ruin. Still, for most of us (if we include the world's population as the big "us") this economic crisis will bring even more dire hunger, disease, and death. It is always the world's poor, who have scant few or no safeguards at all—and certainly no bailouts—who experience the greatest harm from economic disaster.

When the Israelites made their divinely-led exodus into the wilderness and suffered the effects of the long journey, God's deliverance did not waver. Despite the people's general lack of faith, God remained true to the purpose and promise of the journey. When the people became hungry (and made their feelings known to Moses and to God), the Lord's response plan revealed something of the divine vision—enough for everyone.

This is what the LORD has commanded: "Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents." The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed.

(Exodus 16:16-18 NRSV)

In the midst of this crisis of survival, God provided not only the food needed but a distribution plan. God insisted that each one be provided an equal portion. Yet, as it happened (and still happens), God's people failed to keep to God's plan, but God's desire did not change. After the people arrived in the "promised land", God sought the people's generosity in fulfilling the divine vision of economic justice.

If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your needy neighbor. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be.

(Deuteronomy 15:7-8)

The ancient Israelites' story has much to teach us. Repeatedly, their own greed and hard-heartedness led them to crisis—of fortune and faith. Yet the voice of the Lord sounded a consistent chorus. *Give. Enough for all.*

Giving with an "open hand" is contrary to the impulse of our times. When things are scarce, our hand naturally tightens, even closes. Yet as always, God's vision beckons with a different impulse: share. In the Community of Christ our identity is characterized by our response to God's continuing call to share¹: share the gospel . . . share our witness . . . share our gifts . . . share our lives. When we have been and are at our best, *we share*. So in these critical times, let us as Community of Christ—as individuals and congregations—be characterized again by our generosity, especially to those who are most vulnerable.

Gandhi's seven deadly social sins seem an accurate diagnosis for some of the causes of this crisis: "politics without principle, wealth without work, commerce without morality, pleasure without conscience, education without character, science without humanity, and worship without sacrifice."

If we learn nothing from this crisis, all the pain and suffering it is causing will be in vain. But we can learn new habits of the heart, perhaps that suffering can even turn out to be redemptive. If we can regain a moral compass and find new metrics by which to evaluate our success, this crisis could become our opportunity to change.

- Jim Wallis

¹Visit www.cofchristla.org/weshare.pdf to view the identity document, "We Share."

Only Connect*

By Michele McGrath, SCMC Financial Officer

**We are
members of
each other.**

- Ephesians 4:25 KJV

To land in Cartagena, Colombia is to jump into the deep end of image and sound. I had the incredible opportunity to do just that for three weeks this January when I accompanied three young men (my son Jesse Rincon, Mike Davis, and Jake Davis) there for a Graceland Winter Term. Our mission was to teach swimming to the local church youth, whose cultural fear of water has prevented them from fully enjoying God's incredible creation—the Caribbean Sea that the city is built overlooking.

We stayed with church members our entire time there, and had amazing opportunities to really immerse in the local culture. We had no car, so we walked, took public buses, *colectivos*, and the occasional taxi. We shopped at the local markets with our hosts, we ate wonderful Colombian food (coconut rice cannot be underrated!), we laughed, played, swam (a lot), vied for bathroom time, studied the scriptures together, worshipped together, and shared our stories. In short, we connected.

I shared a story about one of the boys we encountered there, Yancamilo, in the e-Bulletin last week. In this article I'd like to share the story of another boy we met in Colombia. During part of our visit we stayed at the home of Yaneth and Jairo. Yaneth is the local church pastor there. She receives a small stipend from the church and has perhaps five or six different church groups meeting in homes in various neighborhoods around Cartagena. When I was staying at Yaneth's house, I met a shy 14-year old boy named Luis. He appeared outside Yaneth's house a couple of years ago, day

after day, dribbling a soccer ball. As they began to get to know him, they discovered that he could neither read nor write. Everyone on their street called him *gordo*, which means "fat," and they were referring, in the unkindest terms, to both his body and his head.



His family lives a couple of blocks away—twelve people from three or four generations in a 10 x 10 dirt-floored space with one bed. He had never attended school until Yaneth and Jairo (and an anonymous contributor) helped him begin. Now he can read and write at a 2nd grade level. In swimming class, he was always the first to volunteer to carry our big water thermos, and was an enthusiastic learner. When I got a chance to chat with Luis one-on-one, he asked a lot of questions about the world beyond Colombia, and said how



much he'd like to travel someday. He shyly shared his testimony in worship one night, and at the MEADS class for local church leaders, Luis attended all of the class sessions, and took his turn in making presentations. The first time, Jairo came and stood behind him, not saying anything, just wanting Luis not to be alone. The second time, the whole class burst into applause when Luis finished.

Because of the education he is now receiving through the generosity of church members, (and because of the generosity of disciples around the world who give their World Mission Tithes to support starting churches like this around the world), Luis' life has been transformed.

How amazing is it to know that through the Community of Christ we are all connected, we who live in Los Angeles, Lamoni, or Kenya, to this boy, his family, and his congregation in Cartagena, Colombia?

*From *Howards End* by E.M. Forster.

Communities of Joy

Deadline for the next issue of *Communities of Joy* is March 15.

MAIL . . . PO Box 4077, Huntington Beach, CA 92605-4077

E-MAIL Tonia@cofchristla.org

Editor Terry Read

Typography & Layout Jean David

Technical Advisor & Publishing Tonia Cooper

Identity, Mission, Message: Congruence

With President Steve Veazey as the featured speaker, over 150 participants from the Southwest International and Southern California Mission Centers gathered at Buckhorn Camp, January 16-18, for inspiring interaction and challenging conversation on the mission and identity of the church.



Friday evening's program began with a keynote address from Brother Veazey in which he shared his personal testimony and experience with what became Section 163 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

On Saturday, President Veazey led the two morning sessions, one of which included a presentation of the new document *We Share*, an articulation of the



identity, mission, and message of the church (this document can be found at www.cofchristla.org/weshare.pdf). He used the word "congruence" as describing the ideal connection of each disciple to the mission and identity of the church. Participants clearly engaged the new statement, asking numerous probative questions and receiving thoughtful responses from



Brother Veazey. The afternoon and evening schedule included breakout sessions for congregational work and planning.

President Veazey delivered the sermon at Sunday's worship and Peace Center dedication service. He aptly summed up the weekend in the closing line of his sermon. Referring to the mission, identity and message of the church, he posed the question: "Are we congruent?"

-Photos by Sam Rose

LEADS to Kick Off

A new leadership development program sponsored by Southern California Mission Center will begin this month. Mark Scherer, Church Historian for Community of Christ will lead the first course in the LEADS series, *Community of Christ History*, at the Temple City facility, February 21 and 22. The course covers the church's history from the seminal grove experience of founder Joseph Smith, Jr. to the name change in 2001. Students will be challenged to discover an analytical approach to Latter Day Saint literature and research that replaces an unbelievable history with a believable one. We will explore, in its historical context, the nineteenth-century thoughts and actions of "a people with a prophet" who are ultimately challenged for the twenty-first century to become "a prophetic people."



The entire series will include 13 different courses on the basic subject areas of scripture, theology, history and ministry. LEADS will feature two certificate programs—a Leadership Track and a Ministry Track—plus a “potluck” option where participants can choose whatever classes they prefer. The two certificate programs will require 13 and 9 courses (with make-up options), respectively, and will represent the best of such training available in the church today. Cost for each



Mark Scherer
Church Historian
Community of Christ

of the classes will be \$10 (plus books, if required). Each session will be 10-15 hours and some will be offered online. The next session is May 16-17 on diversity, *Our Diverse Community*, and will be led by Terry and Linda Read. Please contact Carol Kostura kostura@socal.rr.com or 714-974-3726 to register for more information.

Hundreds “Pursue Peace”

Nearly five hundred worshippers gathered on January 11 to “Pursue Peace”. Where? All through the Southern California Mission Center, each congregation focused on the special theme with elements and activities especially planned for the worship experience. The idea came from the Church Growth Plan Implementation Team as a way to create more opportunities for congregations to be intentionally invitational. Linda Read led a team of resource people who developed a “menu” of materials to be used by congregational planners and presiders in leading this joint worship experience. Special thanks go to all those in our congregations who participated in this service, sharing your gifts in worship and in the pursuit of peace.



Feedback received suggests a desire for more of these special simultaneous worship services. We appreciate the comments we have received from participating congregations. We hope that these experiences strengthen the bond we have as sisters and brothers in the Community of Christ here in southern California. A mission center-wide service is now scheduled for Sunday, November 8 and will be integrated with the following weekend's conference. Stay tuned!

Children Youth Children Youth Children Youth Children Youth Children Youth Children Youth Children Youth

WITH SPRING COMES NEW ENERGY & NEW BEGINNINGS! WELCOME, KYLE!

Greetings,

I am very excited to start meeting all of you and to be a part of crazy adventures and activities. I just attended my first snow camp, and it was a blast. I am happy that I got a chance to meet all of the youth that came and to share in some snow fun and worship experiences.

I am looking forward to the Sr. High Snow Camp that is coming up on February 20th -22nd. I hope to see as many, if not more Sr. High as we had at the Jr. High camp. We had over 30 campers.



Don't worry if you missed snow camp; you can always come to the Hunger Challenge which is April 3rd-5th.



Along with camps and other activities scheduled for this year, monthly activities will be held for Jr/Jr.High/Sr.High. I hope your busy schedule will allow you to attend these activities.

Activity dates will be posted on a new website that I am creating called www.journeytakers.com. This will be a place for all youth to come and see pictures, videos, dates of upcoming events, and post comments. Remember, you are not alone in the journey.

Kyle

Kyle Logan, *SCMC Youth Minister*

UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 20-22** **Sr. High Snow Camp, Idyllwild, CA**
Our last snow camp was a blast don't miss this one!
- April 3-5** **Youth Hunger Challenge, Temple City**
Coming up soon! Please come if you are in 6th grade - 12th grade
Raise your Earth IQ & raise funds to help God's children in need!
Don't miss this great retreat! You too can change the world!
- April 18** **Mission Center Family Activity, "Unity in Our Community", Temple City**
Fun for the Family: Booths, Food (even Cotton Candy & Snow Cones), Jumper, Giant Slide, Prizes, and Fellowship! Join with the community as we create UNITY!
- May 24-30** **International Youth Forum, Bangkok**
- July 20-24** **International Youth Forum, Independence, MO**
If you've finished 9th grade thru 12th you are eligible. Plan now to attend!
- July 24-August 1** **SPEC, Lamoni, Iowa**

Riddle Answer 1: Because of the "Lord's Prayer": Our Father, whose art's in heaven!

Children Youth Children Youth Children Youth Children Youth Children Youth Children Youth Children Youth

A Note From Linda

Hello Dear Friends!

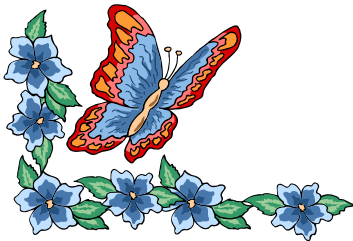
It is with much celebration and joy that we welcome our new Mission Center Youth Minister, Kyle Logan. So far, Kyle has attended several camps and ministered in some congregations.

Kyle and his wife, Erin, are from Overland Park, Kansas. Both hold degrees in education. Erin will soon be joining Kyle when she concludes her teaching position in Overland Park.

As an experienced, energetic, and creative youth worker, Kyle will build on the work I started of building and re-establishing camping programs and retreats. He will work with congregational youth ministers to continue growing our youth programs. One goal is to implement regular multi-congregational activities, and to encourage more youth involvement in the congregations.

We had a great time at the Jr. High Snow Camp with 30 youth and 10 staff. Special thanks to Kyle and Erin Logan, Tony Austin, Dale Welch, Jim and Jan Albin and Terry Read who came as staff.

While working with children and youth will always be my first love, I am looking forward to my new responsibilities on March 1st as a church planter and pastor. Please stay in touch.



Love and blessings from your old pal,

Congregational Support Minister & Children/Youth Minister
Home: 909-606-8636 / Cell: 909-631-0393

KYLE MATCHING GAME!

Draw a line from the Question to the Answer.

QUESTIONS/ITEMS ABOUT KYLE

1. Hair color
2. Eye color
3. Height
4. Wife's name
5. Does Kyle have children?
6. Kyle was born in...
7. Kyle has been to...
8. In his free time Kyle likes to...
9. Kyle feels really called to...
10. Kyle's "Dream Job" would be...
11. Kyle's favorite scripture
12. Kyle describes himself as...
13. Kyle's first camp SCMC
14. Favorite church hymn
15. Favorite camp song
16. Favorite place to walk
17. Favorite color
18. Favorite fast food restaurant
19. Favorite food
20. Favorite movie
21. Favorite musician
22. Favorite animal
23. Favorite X-Box game
24. Favorite sport
25. Who cuts Kyle's hair

ANSWERS ABOUT KYLE

- Erin Logan
"Backyard Burger"
Popsicles
Fusion Frenzy
Jack Johnson
Let There Be Peace On Earth
Hazel
Curious, fun-loving and easy going
On the beach
Six Feet One Inch
Great is Thy Faithfulness
Independence, Missouri in 1982
Section 162 (1b is his favorite part)
Blonde
Watch movies & play video games
"Join people on their journey"
Turtle
Being a youth minister
Not yet
6 countries and 4 continents
Hackey Sack Footy
Erin Logan
Christmas Day Camp
Green
Kung Fu Panda



EARTH KEEPING TIP

Use the minimum amount of soap and other chemicals when you shower or clean house. Less chemicals means less pollution! Use environmentally friendly products, when possible!

Spring Riddles

Answers are located in the newsletter.

1. Why did the little boy say God was an artist?
2. What kind of dog can jump higher than a church?
3. What did one fish say to the other fish in the tank?



Canoga Park celebrated in a beautiful service lead by our young disciples on December 21st. Barbara Jones made the costumes for the children's rendition of the nativity of Jesus. The children sang songs, rang bells and recited poems.

Four Generations—In Service

By Kathy McGuire

The Santa Barbara congregation has strong family ties, and that's part of the reason they've been able to keep its youth involved. In December, a goal was set to collect 100 pairs of socks and mittens for the needy of the community. The congregation's Christmas tree was decorated with candy canes and Christmas cards which contained a McDonald's gift certificate. Each Sunday, donated socks were hung on the tree. By the end of December, 86 pairs of socks were collected. Although short of our goal, we were proud of our accomplishment. Then, a generous member brought in the last 14 pairs of socks to fulfill our goal!



As a national week of service was designated in January in observance of Martin Luther King's message "I Have a Dream", our children took the socks to Unity Shoppe. Their sock bins had been empty since the holidays, and they could not fill current requests for socks. We felt so blessed to be there filling those bins at just the right time!

What was rewarding to me was to see the love of family demonstrated in this project. Great-grandmother Lillian Hersh contributed, as did her daughter Shirley Mitterer and her husband Tom. Shirley's daughter Denise, along with her husband John, supported the project, and their son, Nicholas,

came to understand the joy which comes from service. Four generations, working and worshipping together!

The Martindale family spans three generations starting with Grandparents Arla and Keith, daughters Kathy Giordano and Sherryl Harlow and grandchildren James, Michael, Shane and Katherine.

Pastor Denise Leichter joined the youngsters and their families at Unity Shoppe where all were given a tour of the operation. Those attending were so inspired by the opportunities for service which were presented that we walked away talking about how we could return and volunteer our time! We learned firsthand that making a difference in the life of someone in need is not WORK—it is sheer JOY!



Thank You, Not Goodbye

By Dean Crawford

In late December, the Hemet-San Jacinto Congregation honored J.R. and Judith Sutton for their outstanding service to the congregation and the community. J.R. served as our pastor for most of the last two years. He and Judith were awarded a plaque engraved with their names, service to their Lord, the year 2008 and blessings from the congregation.

Judith was given a bouquet of roses and they also had a large carrot cake decorated with their names. The congregation sang "God Be with You 'til We Meet Again", and Evangelist Cecil Robbins offered a prayer of Godspeed.



Dean Crawford publicly acknowledges J.R. and Judith Sutton.

Community of Christ
PACIFIC USA MISSION FIELD
MISSIONARY WOWEE*!

March 27-29, 2009

Happy Valley Conference Center
 2159 Branciforte Dr., Santa Cruz, California

Sponsored by Sierra Pacific USA Mission Center

Guest Ministry

Apostle **Susan Skoor**
Gina Norton: President, 5th Quorum of Seventy
Stephen Hatch: Seventy, Mission Center President to Southwest International Mission Center, and Apostolic Assistant to Susan Skoor
Sergio Juarez: Hispanic Minister, Southern California
Kris Judd: Seventy
Jack & Bonnie Sanders: Evangelism and Small Group Training
Dean Wight, Evangelist, and **Sean Langdon:** Young Adults and Envisioning the Future of the Church

Four In Faith: Music Ministry

Event Director: Henry Fultz
 hkfultz@yahoo.com
 (209) 357-8104

*An intentional mispronunciation of the word "Rally"

Cost for Event: \$50.00 per person

This retreat is intended for Seventy, Missionary Elders, Pastors, Young Adults, and everyone who is missionary-minded, interested and enthusiastic about the missionary work of the Church; and sharing our stories of God's enduring love and grace as lived out in our lives through Jesus Christ.

What to bring: Sleeping bag and pillow, or bedding for twin/full; toiletries, including towels; warm clothing, jacket (could be raining). For those traveling by air, bedding will be provided for you. Please indicate on your registration form if you will need bedding. Also, indicate if you will require pick-up/drop-off at airport. San Jose airport is recommended.

----- cut and mail -----

PLEASE REGISTER BY MARCH 15, 2009

Mail registration and check for \$50.00, made payable to "Community of Christ" to:
 Karen Fultz, Sierra Pacific Mission Center, 3700 N. El Dorado St., Stockton, CA 95204-2010

OR - you may register by e-mail, **including all of the below information**, and pay on arrival: elderkaren@yahoo.com

Name _____ E-Mail _____

Address _____

Phone (home/office) _____ Phone (cell) _____

Dietary Needs? (Circle) Diabetic Vegetarian Vegan Allergies: _____

Housing Needs? Handicap Adaptive Restroom (not accessible) ___ Cabin ___ Lodge Room ___

I can sleep on a top bunk ___ Other health concerns _____

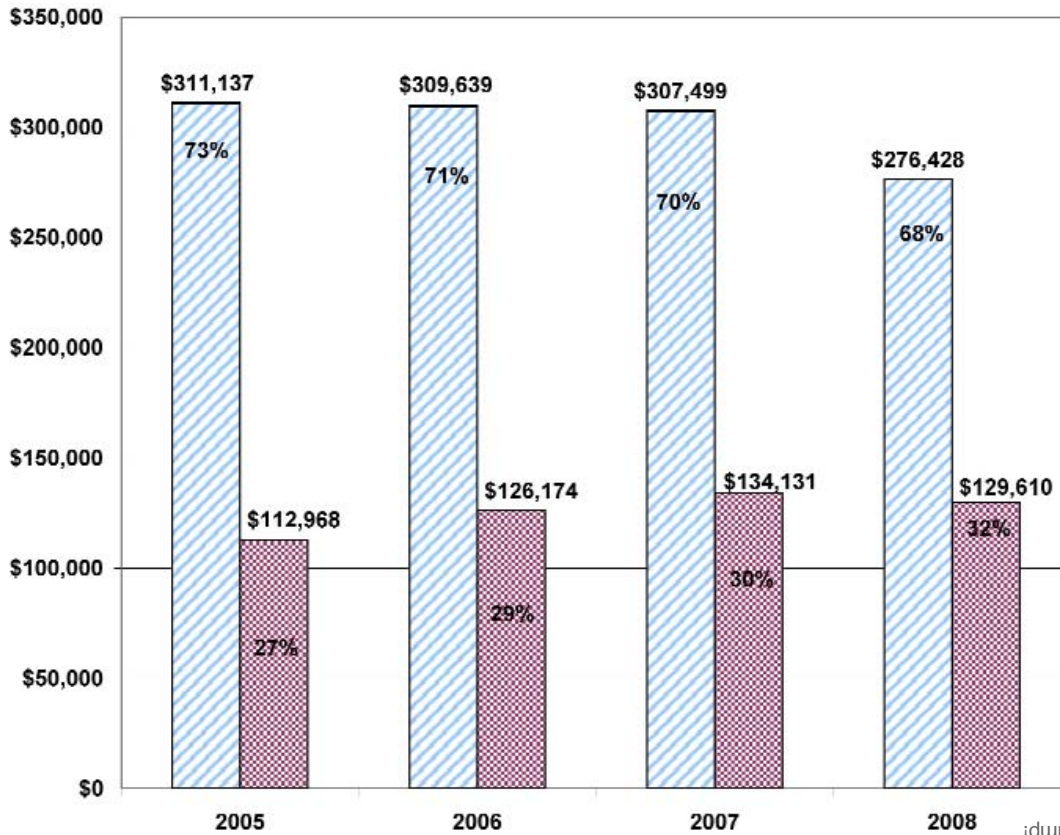
Roommate Preference _____ Will require bedding ___ Will require airport transportation ___

Please bill my congregation/mission center for campership funds in the amount of \$ _____ :

Where to send invoice: _____

My choice for class session is Track 1 ___ Track 2 ___ Track 3 ___

Southern California Mission Center's "Share Equally" Status



We are making steady progress toward our goal of Sharing Equally between local giving and world mission tithes. Thanks to our pastors, financial officers, and generous disciples for a great job! Let's reach for at least 65% - 35% in 2009.

Local Giving (100)
World Tithes (900)

Riddle Answer 2: Every Dog! Churches can't jump!

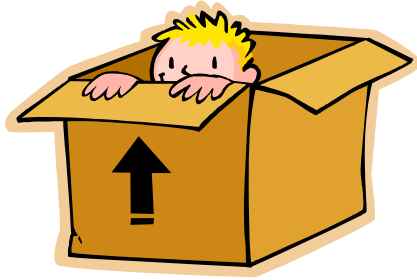
SCMC's 3rd Annual
Unity in Our Community
"God Bless the Earth"
Saturday, April 18, 2009
2:00 - 6:00 PM
Temple City
Opening Ceremony - 2:00 PM
Food Music Games Prizes

Community of Christ

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MAIL INFORMATION TO MISSION CENTER OFFICE
OR CALL 714•847•5731.

Do you have ability in:
Music Drama
Sound/Video Storytelling
Scripture Reading
Interpretive Dance
or just love to worship God?
**WE WANT YOU TO JOIN THE
2009 Reunion Worship Planning Team!**
(Reunion is July 11-17)
Contact Michele McGrath
mmcgrath@CofChristLA.org

E-Mail *Communities of Joy*?



If you would like to receive the *Communities of Joy* by e-mail only, or in addition to the hard copy version, please contact us:

E-MAIL: Tonia@cofchristla.org / TEL: 714-847-5731

MAIL: P.O. Box 4077, Huntington Beach CA 91709.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



FEBRUARY

- 16 Presidents' Day, Offices Closed
- 20-22 Snow Camp (Senior High), Buckhorn Camp
- 21-22 LEADS: Church History with Mark Scherer
- 25 Ash Wednesday
- 28 Temple School, *Ministry of Presence*, Anaheim

MARCH



- 7 Temple School, *New Testament*, Anaheim
- 8 Daylight Savings Begins
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 First Day of Spring
- 27-29 Missionary WOWEE, Happy Valley



APRIL

- 1 April Fool's Day
- 3-5 Youth Hunger Challenge
- 12 Easter
- 18 SCMC Special Event: "Unity in Our Community"
- 22 Earth Day
- 24 Arbor Day

Riddle Answer 3: Do you know how to drive this thing?