

March 2010

ECHO

Newsletter of the
Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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## **From the Pastor**

Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure to report what appears to have been a very successful school open house last month – with an excellent introduction by our principal to “hands on learning and strong interest from at least 5 new families. Of special interest is the fact that inquiries ran the gamut from junior kindergarten all the way to grade 9. One parent who attended had been home schooling and another, herself

a PhD in educational psychology, has her child in a day care and is now looking for just what we are offering. It was an invigorating, inspirational evening!

### Other Promotions

Many of you have now bought the magnetic decals of the church logo with our name and website on them, for mark-free application to your vehicles. Some have hesitated because of the size of these decals (they are 9” in diameter), and so we now have some on order at 6” for those who may like something a little less exuberant. They should be here at the church soon after you read this.



I'd like to remind you that this is neither a fundraiser (we are selling them at cost) nor a cheap stunt. It is part of a deliberate and thoughtful plan to help bring the Washington New Church out of seclusion and into the public eye. Advertising is expensive and we don't have money to burn. But if you get one of these magnetic stickers and display it with confidence you will help people everywhere you drive to become familiar at least with our logo and maybe even our beliefs if they follow up by remembering and looking up our new easy-to-remember website. In any case, it will be one more point of recognition when they see *other* advertising, and it may reinforce their curiosity.

### Answering Questions

So... what will you *say* if someone stops you in the parking lot and asks about the church? Obviously everyone will have his or her own best personal approach – and that is a critical point: it is no good trying to recite someone else's explanations! The best thing you can do is speak from the heart about what the church means or does *for you*. If it's the school, talk about that; if it's the community, talk about that. If it's the doctrine, talk about that – *but be sure to pick something that means a lot to you*.

I personally find it easiest to talk about the symbolism in the Scriptures. I often remind people of how difficult the Bible can be to

understand; there are so many dark and confusing passages! But when we realize that whether true as history or not they all contain a symbolic meaning that relates to our *spiritual* lives they can make perfect sense and guide us in our daily walk.

Then I give an example. It might be the story of creation or Noah's ark, the conquest of the land of Canaan or the description of the holy city in the book of Revelation (made of solid gold and in the form of a cube some 900 miles high!). How improbable are all these stories when read as literal descriptions! But you only need to know a few basic "correspondences" and you can show how the symbolism works.

You might even start with the logo itself, pointing out that the Alpha and Omega, Greek letters that represent the first and the last, the beginning and the end, represent the Lord as described in the book of Revelation. Or you might say that the white horse represents the affection for understanding the truth of the Scriptures, and note that your church puts a special emphasis on understanding the symbolism of the Word, not just the literal sense.

Again, the main thing is to choose a topic you feel comfortable talking about, and just let fly. Every time you try to explain it you will go away thinking about a better way – for you – to do it next time, ***and you will get better and better at doing it!***

For what it's worth, my wife likes to start right out with the second coming of the Lord! Others like to share how important the teachings about life after death or Divine providence have been to them. Then again, if you pay attention to the sermon listings in the ECHO you can be prepared to invite someone to come along and hear a sermon on a particular topic of their interest – on such and such a date – *being sure to remind them that you will be there to help them feel welcome on that day!* As a courtesy you might even get their phone number and ask if they would like a call to remind them during the week before that service – not to pressure them but to show them you are serious, and that you do care.

Perhaps we can have an evening in the spring dedicated to some simple methods of answering questions and summarizing our beliefs. I'd enjoy doing that and I'll bet we could *all* learn from it.

### Easter Preparation

Meanwhile, take heart! Spring *is* coming and will be here soon. And with it will come Easter. So just in case you get your ECHO a little late next month, please note that the traditional evening Holy Supper will be held on the Thursday before Easter this year, that is, April 1<sup>st</sup>, and not on Good Friday as in the past. Thursday was,



after all, the day of the Lord's last supper. But if anyone would like to commemorate Good Friday also with a solemn evening service, perhaps with sacred music and readings for reflection, I would be glad to provide that for you. Just speak to me or to a pastor's council member before the next meeting – which, by the way was postponed from February 15<sup>th</sup> to March 11<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, I'd like to extend a warm, enthusiastic welcome to Kristl Webb and three of her four children, Julia, Katelynn and Jackson, all of whom were baptized into the New Church in a private ceremony on Tuesday morning, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, in the sanctuary. Kristl immediately signed up for General Church membership so she could also be a member of the Washington Society.

*Mike Gladish*

### From the Assistant

As springtime approaches I'd like to encourage us to welcome the Easter season. Palm Sunday is on March 28 this year. We will celebrate Easter on April 5. Easter festivities can symbolize fresh starts, second chances, and new life.

While in the world the Lord said, "All sins will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men" and

“whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him” Matthew 12:31-32). From the literal sense it seems the Lord speaks inconsistencies. Either “all sins will be forgiven” or not. However, He is teaching us about how barriers of our own making can hinder His work of salvation.

The Heavenly Doctrines are clear that forgiveness of sin is removal of sin (TCR 611, 614). Our sin may be gradually removed if we engage in the process of repentance that the Lord has prescribed in TCR 528: self examination; seeing a sin; acknowledging the reality of sin in our life; seeking the Lord’s help to shun the sin; and then living a new life. Now consider what the Lord says in AE 778:3, that “sin and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit means to deny the Word, and to adulterate its essential goods and falsify its essential truths”.

By practicing repentance we make it possible for the Lord to forgive our sin, which is its removal. But we must keep in mind that we must learn truths from the Word, shun evils as sins, and then do the good that truth teaches. On the other hand, should a person deny the Lord’s Word and the power of the Lord to reform and regenerate by means of truths, sins cannot be removed. Should a person disobey the truths in the Lord’s Word and refuse to practice repentance sin cannot be removed. In that case sin stays or sticks to the person like glue. This is why the Lord says sin against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven. Opposition to the Lord hinders His wonderful work of salvation in our lives.

The Lord’s resurrection is a wonderful image of our regeneration or rebirth. Our regeneration by the Lord is new life. Each new day offers an opportunity to not repeat mistakes. Each new day presents an opportunity for a fresh start. Each new day is a day that the Lord has made.

The Lord rose from the dead and as a consequence fully united His Human and Divine. The Lord said “all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28: 18). As we enter the Easter season I’d like to encourage us to soften our hearts, open our minds, and (with the Lord’s help) live a heavenly life. Then

we make it possible for the Lord to join us to Himself. We can allow Him to exercise His power within our souls (His heaven He is building in us) and in our life on earth.

Let's allow the Lord to awaken within us renewed commitment to Him, His church and one another. The celebration of Palm Sunday and Easter can be our thanks to the Lord that He has made all things new, that from being spiritually dead we may live.

#### Friday Classes for March

12<sup>th</sup> **Review of Clergy Meetings.** Both pastors attended annual professional meetings in February. This is your opportunity to find out what doctrinal and organizational issues were discussed and why, and to what end. – MDG

19<sup>th</sup> **Preparation for Palm Sunday & Easter.** This is the only class before these important dates, and it will feature both literal and spiritual aspects of the context of the stories. – MEF

26<sup>th</sup> **No Friday Class.** See below.

27<sup>th</sup> **Theta Alpha Guild Annual BANQUET** for both men and women, featuring a special guest speaker Noel Klippenstein speaking on being a New Church teacher in a public school. This is a highlight of the year both socially and for inspiration. Be sure to save the date!

#### *The Lord who Is and who Was and who Is to Come*

One of the inspiring worship services at the clergy meetings this year was presented by the Rev. Kurt Hy. Asplundh on the subject of what the Lord has done, what He is doing and what He will do in the future. In making his point he referred to the work, True Christian Religion #26 where the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as

the one “who is the Lord Jehovah, from eternity the Creator, in time the Redeemer, and to eternity the Regenerator.”

This and many other related passages in the doctrines beautifully define all of the Lord’s work in the context of time – even though He Himself is outside of the limitations of time. He has created all things, including each one of us with our unique traits and potentials; He does redeem us from our sins, both hereditary and acquired (and this is a daily, ongoing process); and He will forever continue to regenerate us (i.e., work for our regeneration) if, as or when we co-operate with Him.

These are three wonderfully simple concepts that can help us to focus on the Lord’s work in all of our lives, including the whole “business” of influx, the glorification, Divine Providence, the process of receiving Conjugal Love, and just about every other aspect of what we do on the path to heaven. As well, they plainly define the distinct features of the Trinity, as described in the Gospels, for it is the Father who creates and inspires all that is good, it is the Son who embodies and teaches about that good, freeing us from the grip of the hells, and it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, that will provide for us the power to persevere in His love and wisdom.

To hear more about the topics discussed at the Council of the Clergy meetings this year don’t forget to attend the Friday supper and class on Friday evening, March 12<sup>th</sup>. (~ MDG)



### **Bryn Athyn High School and College DEADLINES**

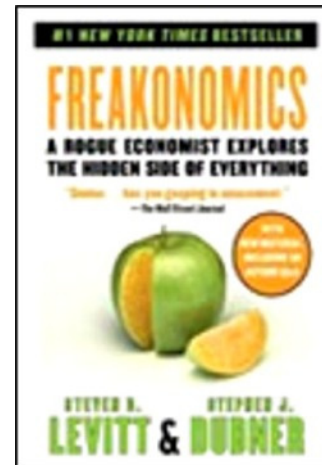
Any students hoping or intending to enroll at the Academy of the New Church or the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church should be mindful of some VERY IMPORTANT DEADLINES - enrollment and tuition assistance. You can get this

info from: [www.brynathyn.edu/admissions](http://www.brynathyn.edu/admissions) or [www.ancss.org/admissions](http://www.ancss.org/admissions) Please note, the terms and conditions

for financial aid at the college vary considerably from those at the high school and require your careful attention. Also, financial aid MAY be awarded on a first come, first served basis, so the sooner you apply the better. Finally, there is a local fund here in Washington that provides limited financial aid to students attending either institution, and applications for funding from that source should be in to the pastor, Rev. Mike Gladish, as soon as the student is accepted by the school of choice (see page 13 of the Echo for more details).

### Saturday Breakfast Men's Discussion Group

Well, we had another excellent session in February, and we are looking forward to the next one – at T. J. Elliott's Restaurant, at 8:30 am on March 20<sup>th</sup>. This time we have agreed to read and re-



view the book, *Freakonomics*, by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner, first published in 2005 and now available in paperback at (for example) Walmart for about \$9.00. The subtitle of the book is “A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything,” such as *What Schoolteachers and Sumo Wrestlers Have in Common*, and *Why Drug Dealers Still Live with their Moms...*

If you haven't been able to join us yet, please, men, give it some thought.

Bring a friend! High school and up are most welcome. We often relate what we read to our church teachings, but the main point is to get together and chew the fat over something of general interest. Breakfast usually runs around \$12.00, all in.



### Sermon Topics for March

**Please note:** the “Journey Program” concludes this month with the services on the 14<sup>th</sup>, and on the 21<sup>st</sup> there will be a special “celebration” event after church with a soup and salad lunch for all interested. See the announcement elsewhere in this ECHO.

7<sup>th</sup>      **Naboth’s Vineyard: Ahab Condemned:** 1 Kings 21. When Elijah condemns King Ahab for his sins Ahab seems to repent. But it was clearly “death-bed repentance.” What can we make of this, and what lessons does it hold for us? – MEF

14<sup>th</sup>      9:30 am FAMILY SERVICE – **Elijah’s Mantle Passed on to Elisha:** 2 Kings 2. What “mantle” of responsibility does this story reveal? And what are the horses and chariot of fire that took Elijah to heaven? Come and see. – MEF

14<sup>th</sup>      11:00 am TRADITIONAL SERVICE – **Same as the early service**, now in the traditional format adapted to adults (but still including a short children’s talk). – MDG

21<sup>st</sup>      11:00 am **Living Courageously – Our Responsibility to the World.** What are we willing to suffer for our faith? What burdens are we willing to bear? The teachings on this are challenging ~ and important! Come and see why. – MDG

28<sup>th</sup>      11:00 am **PALM SUNDAY: Please Note**, we would like to try having a real procession this year with our palm branches, so *if you would like to participate please gather in the supper room at 10:55 to get your palms and then follow the minister down the hallway and back up the center aisle to the chancel to present them before taking your seats.* We will have **TWO** processional hymns for this process. Otherwise it will be a regular service day *with Sunday School for the kids.* – MDG

## **The School Report**

Due to the unprecedented amount of snow (I can barely write the word for fear of any more) during the month of February, parents got to spend more time with their children than the teachers did. Do not be concerned; we will make sure that the students have not missed anything they need to know. We do not anticipate adding any extra days to the calendar. Unless, dare I say, we have another blizzard that closes us down for a week.

WNCS managed to hold its annual Open House a week later than it was scheduled, but with great success. Mike Gladish welcomed our parents and visitors with some basic information about our religious beliefs in relation to what most people believe. The presentation on Hands-on Learning: what it involves, its history and benefits, and how we use this method successfully at our school followed. There were grade level displays to show the variety of impressive hands-on projects our students get to create. Parents provided delicious themed refreshments to go with each grade. We also had Scott Daum visiting from the General Church Office of Education to observe how we do an open house. Having been the principal at the Academy Boys' School for ten years, he was able to chat with our visitors and answer questions about sending our children "away" after sophomore year. The faculty sincerely thanks the multitude of helpers who made our open house a successful event.

If you attended the open house or even if not, you know what a great school we have to share with the greater community. March and April are the months for applications to be made, so there is plenty of time for you to help us spread the word. Please stop by the office to pick up fliers to post at any local venue. We would like to fill some empty spaces in the classrooms and of course this will help with the "empty spaces" in the budget as well.

The WNCS Spring Break is February 27 -- Mar. 7, 2010. At the end of the month, March 29 – April 1, 2010, we welcome you to visit during an open classroom week. If you'd like to see the school in session, call the secretary to arrange a visit. Next month ...April flowers!

### **From the Board of Trustees:**

Notes from the Joint Board of Trustees and School Board Meeting on January 5, 2010

- Trustees in attendance were Steve Ball, Sharon Cooper, Brent Hyatt, Keith Hyatt, Wynne Hyatt, Bill Kunkle, Dean Smith, and Stewart Smith. School Board Members in attendance were Annette Baltz, John Croft, Matt Smith, Patti Smith, and Pat Sweeney. Also in attendance were Rev. Mike Gladish, Rev. Michael Ferrell, and Principal Kathy Johns.
- Rev. Gladish gave a Pastor's report, discussing the request to park 2 Jehovah Christian Ministries vans in our lot for about 6 months for a neighbor in Enterprise Estates, for a nominal fee. With certain stipulations, such as proof of insurance, names of drivers, etc, the Board had no objection. Rev. Gladish reported that he has received a letter of retirement from David and Amy Glenn as the building Janitors. Since this meeting, the Board has hired Lisa Martin as the new Janitor. The Board wishes to thank David and Amy for their many years of dedicated service to the Church and School, and to welcome Lisa in her new role.
- Brent Hyatt reported briefly on the WCNJ's status in the Healthy Church Match program. The Board voted on how to split the matching funds, and Brent will proceed with finalizing the paperwork.
- The Board of Trustees and School Board held a long discussion on various school issues such as policies for non-payment; tuition amounts for next year; tuition assistance programs; roles and responsibilities for hiring and firing of staff; Open House; and school computer system maintenance.
- After discussing agenda items for the upcoming January 15 Society Winter Meeting, the Board determined that there are no urgent topics for discussion, and a motion was approved to cancel the meeting for this year.

*The next Board of Trustees Meeting will be on Tuesday, February 2 at 8:00pm. Please contact Board Chair Dean Smith if you have any topics to discuss.*

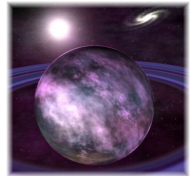
## Announcements

**Enrolled and Numbered:** On Tuesday morning, February 2, 2010 **Kristl Webb** and three of her four children, **Julia, Katelynn and Jackson** were baptized into the New Church in a private ceremony in our church. Rev. Michael D. Gladish officiated. Congratulations Webbs!



**Celebration Sunday:** The Living Courageously program will close with our Celebration Sunday on March 21st. We will have a potluck soup/salad lunch to which everyone in the congregation is invited, after church that Sunday. Further details will be published in the Weekly Whispers in March.

**Astronomy Lecture:** The monthly Astronomy lecture given by Chuck Quintero will be held on Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM. The Topic for this lecture will be the search for exo-planets [An **extrasolar planet**, or **exoplanet**, is a planet outside the Solar System.]



**Student CARE Packages:** We have 14 wonderful students from our society at the Academy schools. It is time to start collecting for their traditional and much appreciated CARE packages. Please donate whatever you can in the box on the glass case (in the supper room) by March 19<sup>th</sup>. See the school door for donation suggestions and the names of the students. Any questions, contact Angela Bond or Monica Hyatt. Thank you!



**Annual Dessert & Hors d'oeuvre contest:** Please come on **March 14th, 8:00 PM** to Chuck and Candy Quintero's home for this annual fund raiser/social event. Enter your favorite dessert or hors d'oeuvre for a chance to win a prize, or just come to enjoy the culinary expertise and good company of others. We will collect donations to the Building Fund in lieu of an admission fee. College age and up are welcome. Please bring a beverage of your choice. St. Patrick's Day theme... how about a green dessert!

**Theta Alpha Banquet:** On Saturday, **March 27<sup>th</sup>** the Theta Alpha Guild will hold their annual banquet. Our speaker this year is Noel Klip-

penstein. Her topic is “How a New Church teacher can apply the principles of New Church Education in a public school”. Noel Klippenstein, ANC class of '87, spent one year at the Academy college then received a degree in education from Virginia Tech later receiving her masters in education there. Noel began her teaching career at Bryn Athyn Church School working with Bob Eidse and remained there for a little over five years. She coached field hockey, lacrosse and basketball at the middle school and then Head Varsity Coach at ANC for 3 years. Looking for a change Noel moved to Virginia, and now works as a PE Teacher at George C. Marshall High School, Falls Church, VA and is currently head girls basketball coach and department chair.

This promises to be a most interesting talk! All welcome (high school and up). Reserve your tickets in advance \$8 for adults and \$4 for students if you call and reserve before Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Next TAG Meeting:** The next meeting of the Theta Alpha Guild will be held, April 21<sup>st</sup> at the home of Dorothy Radcliffe 8:00 PM. A nominating committee has been formed to look for new officers. If you are interested in serving this use, please contact Janet Ferrell.

**Echo Subscription Renewal:** You probably didn't notice, but I forgot to attach a renewal notice for your yearly Echo Subscription last month. No worries, I'm sure that you value this newsletter so much that you have already sent in your check for \$15 (the annual subscription rate, payable to WCNJ). If not you can use the enclosed envelope.

**SE District Scholarship Fund:** Southeastern District Scholarship Funds are available to anyone who lives in the district who would like assistance with paying for education at the Academy High School, the Bryn Athyn College or the Theological School.

Applications should include the name(s) of the student. Their home address, the names of the parents if they are applying on behalf of their child and the school that they hope to attend. Applications are due no later than April 30, 2010, for those hoping to attend in the 2010/2011 school year.

Please send your application to: Attn.: Southeastern District Scholarship Fund - Washington Church of the New Jerusalem, 11914 Chantilly Lane, Mitchellville, Md. 2072.

## News Notes

**Snow News!** – An historic snow storm blasted Maryland and surrounding areas this February! Three successive snows buried us all in 54” of snow. Friday Supper for the 12<sup>th</sup> and church services for the 14<sup>th</sup> were cancelled, for despite the heroic efforts of the **Brickman crews** to get the church drive and parking lot plowed out in time for services, even those living right in Acton Park would have struggled in the high-deep snow.

Good news: Although there were downed trees everywhere, the *new ma-roon church awning* at the “bell door” stood the test and stayed up!

**Mike Gladish** was in Florida as the flakes began to fall, and couldn't get a flight home to Mitchellville and Ginny, so he creatively flew into Atlanta then to Newport News where he rented a car with which to drive home! **Alan Cowley** found himself in a similar position of cancelled flights from Atlanta to BA. He too rented a car instead and so took the time to stop in and visit his family here. The snow provided fodder for all kinds of acts of neighborliness too, as the plows slowly made their rounds liberating many of us for work and escapist shopping trips by Tuesday, (Just in time for the second blizzard on Wednesday), many others were still unplowed as the week dragged on – **Joel and Didi Trimble** found themselves worse off *after* the plow, which further buried them at the back of their cul-de-sac on Progress Lane. Neighbors came out to help unbury **Heather Radcliffe** and kids, on their unplowed section of Enterprise Road, and **Dean and Cathy Smith's** driveway later in the week. **Beata Kinsey** jokes that her street *never* gets plowed – or any other kind of county attention actually -- and **Jimmy Needer** solved this problem by parking at the church lot. **Janna Zuber** got meals over to her mom via snow shoes, until a kind neighbor sneaked over and shoveled her a path. **Tante Vera Kluss's** next door neighbor, the plumber Cipriano, kindly plowed her driveway out, so that her usual angels of mercy could bring her groceries. Officer **Ed Sprinkle** rose from his sick bed to make his way through the tunnel in his back yard to the main road, kindly shoveled by his wife and son, in order to get to work (neither the dark of night, nor snowstorm's fight!...). He spent the next three days living at the police station house before he could get back home again. **Ryan Allen** went out 12 times to keep his driveway clear, finally rising in the middle of the night to keep up with the *downflake* (like downpour, only for snow).

Some of us *enjoyed* the snow however – **Erin and Barry Stillman** report charging around gleefully in their four wheeler ATV to visit friends – until they got stuck in a three foot snow bank and had to stop for tea and excavating with **Lincoln and Becca**.

**Baltimore Church:** our friends up in Baltimore want to thank **Rita McCallister and Miryam Yardumian** for making sure the Baltimore Church parking lot was plowed out for church services and local community meetings. Bravo ladies! Baltimoreans **Bill and Julia Buick** figure they put in twenty hours between them shoveling themselves out of record 36” snows. (They let seven month old Jack off this time—but watch out next year Jack!) Bill reports that he was generally impressed with the response of city of Baltimore plows to the situation, *except* when they buried his wife’s car for the third time in a wave of ice...then, it was her turn to shovel. (Looks like PG County and Washington DC could learn a few things from Baltimore!)

**Trauma** of another type afflicted **Charles Radcliffe**, who at the height of the snow found water bubbling up in his front yard. Assisted by **Avi Hernandez**, and after several days of trench- digging, he located the problem *six feet down*. The water main had broken due to cheap plastic pipe used by the original builder. Thankfully, all is now repaired.

**Travelers:** Just before the snows hit, **Deena Odhner, Ginny Gladish, Jean Allen, and Elaine Lee** spent a week in Hilton Head for an informal Academy of the New Church class of ‘65 get-together. They returned just ahead of the falling flakes Friday night. **Bill and Dorothy Radcliffe**, even more wisely, had the foresight to plan a trip that took them away for to warmer climes for the whole event. **Court Lee**, returning from his annual gem show in Tucson, AZ, found a huge mound at the base of his driveway, left by snow plows. He sighed, threw his suitcases over it, and climbed up...

**Council of the Clergy:** **Mike and Ginny, and Michael Ferrell** are now in Bryn Athyn for the minister’s meetings. So far, Ginny remarks, the meetings seem to be going well, except that *more snow* is descending upon Pennsylvania as these notes go to press. We’ll have to pump them for gossip when they return...

**ANC and BACNC news:** Our students up at the Bryn Athyn dorms also enjoyed their (far fewer) inches, spending snow days building a full-sized igloo on back campus (see Glenn Hall blog spot for photos). **Kathleen Smith and Erika Hyatt** came home during the snow weeks, to help

shovel their folks out no doubt. Charity begins at home, right?! **Nora Roscoe** sang a funny solo in last week's Winter Arts Night, as Lucy in a number from "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown." **Bronwyn**, junior floor seamstress, was busy recreating the junior dorm girls' dresses for the Sadie Hawkins Dance over President's Weekend. And we don't have any idea *what* **Derek Hyatt** is doing, (enjoying himself immensely?) since he doesn't tell his mother *anything*.

**At WNCS** the students' biggest news is missing a whole week of school due to the snows, possibly except for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, who are in the midst of sweating away on their state reports. The faculty's big news however is a good turn-out for the Open House on February 17<sup>th</sup>, *despite* the snow. Five or six new families came by to look at the school, flouting gloomy predictions, and more came the following Saturday!

**Military report:** **David Radcliffe**, who has some snow shoveling to catch up on anyway, is expected back imminently from his tour in Afghanistan, stuck in Qatar while his family waits on tenterhooks.

**From Iraq:** **Aaron and Nathan Smith's** Chinook unit in Iraq has been very busy. In two months they carried over 2,000,000 pounds of cargo and 9,000 soldiers which is close to a Chinook record with only 8 aircraft. The Colonel commanding the combat unit they are supporting praised Aaron's task force *Freight Train* as "... the best Chinook unit he has seen in 25 years." The Colonel also presented an award to the crew of a Chinook Aaron was piloting. They were on a mission when they had a hydraulic pump failure. The condition normally requires the pilot to put the aircraft on the ground immediately. However, they were over a bad area where setting it down would endanger the crew, so they turned around and proceeded back to the base they left, nursing the crippled aircraft to safety.

Facebook reports that Nathan Smith and Aaron Smith are also expected home from their tours overseas sometime in March for R&R with their families. Hope for happy reunions all around!

**Well-wishes** to those suffering ill health this month! **Savanna Smith** has at last a diagnosis for what has been troubling her since fall. **Amy Glenn** spent some time in the hospital with pains down her arm. And we hear that **Valerie Smith** is feeling poorly. Feel better soon please all!

For next month...maybe, more snow? Enjoy your Spring Breaks, your travels, and ...shoveling!