

Grace to You

November 2009
Volume 2009, Issue 10

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GRACE CHURCH VESTRY & OFFICERS

Carol Rickey, Senior Warden–
396-3734 – Church Family, Outreach
Cal Boer, Junior Warden–399-2725–
Buildings and Grounds, Evangelism
& Communication
John Shea–Treasurer–399-2123
Kristie Phillips, Clerk–494-9511–
Church Family

Chris Broersma–399-5701–Pastoral
Care
Clara Brower–688-7356– Outreach
Jay Bylsma–399-5721–Stewardship
Suzanne Cloutier - 396-3034,
Fellowship
David Hawley-Lowry–616-915-
6188, Buildings & Grounds
Carrie Hodson–396-7744–Worship
David Meier– 335-5184 Christian
Education & Formation
Chuck Murray - 335-3690 GCCC
Jerry Roper, Treasurer Emeritus

STAFF

Robert R. Gepert., Bishop
Jennifer Adams, Rector
Henry Idema, Pastoral Support
Steve Jenkins, Director of Music
Jennifer Wolfe, Children’s Choir
Director
Debbie Coyle, Director of Children’s
& Youth Ministries, Communications
Secretary
Thom Samuelson, Sexton
Gail Westerhof, Secretary
Mary Battaglia, Financial Secretary

From The Rector

Keep Grace Growin’

Grace Church is experiencing growth in many different ways and because of that growth we face a wonderful challenge. To keep up! And to provide the time, talent and treasure needed to be the Amazing Grace that God has called us to be. Last year in the midst of the economic downturn our parish responded very generously at pledge drive time. Some needed to cut their pledge due to reductions in or loss of employment. Others, who were able, increased their giving, recognizing that we are in this together. Vestry faithfully trimmed our budget and made cuts where cuts could be made. And, to this point, we have done well with giving slightly exceeding our expenses as we close out the third quarter of 2009.

So now, as we plan for 2010, we challenge the parish to continue our growth through giving, building a budget reflective of all that Grace Church is and can be. Soon you will receive a pledge card in the mail (extras are always available in the Commons!) and throughout November you’ll be hearing about the important role that pledging plays in spiritual and communal well being.

Our current goals for 2010 are to increase total amount pledged by 7% and to add 15 new pledging “units” to the ranks. These increases will allow us to continue renovation efforts, restore cost of living increases to our staff, support our food distribution project, keep up with utility costs, and address areas targeted by the strategic planning process such as focusing on our contribution to the Millennium Development Goals through our education and outreach efforts.

We realize many are still struggling; but we also believe that that’s why we need to stretch ourselves and one another into these goals. On November 22nd “Ingathering Sunday” we ask you to bring your pledge cards to Church or have mailed them in so that they can be received at the time of the Offertory.

Your gifts and the Spirit’s presence in them are why we are growing in the ways we spread the good news of Christ to a hungry and hurting world. Please prayerfully consider how you can keep Grace growin’ with your contributions of time, talent and treasure.

With thanks,

Jen

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All Saints' Day Provides a time of Welcome To Our Community with Baptisms, Eucharist, and Newcomer Welcome Sunday, November 1st

It has become the tradition here at Grace to welcome those who have begun worshipping with us over the last year (or two!) at a luncheon following the 10:30 service on All Saints' Sunday. We have many newcomers in our system already, but we don't want to miss anyone! SO if you are new to Grace or know of someone who is new to Grace, please contact the office and make sure we've included all. We encourage newcomers and old timers and everyone in-between to join us for our All Saints' Day Service of Holy Baptism and Eucharist at 10:30am and Newcomer Welcome with brunch in the Undercroft following the service.

All Souls' Celebration of Remembrance Monday, November 2nd at 7:00pm

On All Saints' Sunday, November 1st we celebrate the "heroes" of faith, or the capital "S" Saints who have throughout history, famously touched the church and the world with God's grace. Beginning in the tenth century it also became custom to set aside another day of remembrance – as a sort of extension of All Saints' – to acknowledge the many small "s" saints in our lives. This is the day on which we remember those whom we have loved who have died, our family members and friends whom we carry with us always. At Grace we hold a simple service of Remembrance and Holy Eucharist. We light candles for those whom "we love but see no longer" and we pray and remember and celebrate their lives together as community of faith. So join us, whether you have lost someone in the last year or in years past on November 2nd at 7:00pm in the sanctuary.

Sunday Forum Fall Offerings 9:15am Sundays in The Formation Room, Lower Level

Nov 1st All Saints Sunday

Join us for an informal Bible study and fellowship time with coffee and bagels. A Newcomer Welcome brunch follows the 10:30 service.

Nov 8th & 15th Prophetic Themes in Popular Music

Artists are often our modern prophets, and they speak out when organized religion is too often silent. Artists, for instance, cried out against Nazism in Germany and the war in Vietnam when academics, clergy, and politicians did not. These forums will focus on musical artists and the music that made profound strides in articulating a prophetic response to the events of their time.

Nov 22nd

C.S. Lewis, led by Professor Emeritus, Charles Huttar

On November 22, the 46th anniversary of C. S. Lewis's death and the date assigned him in the Episcopal Church's Calendar of Lesser Feasts and Fasts, the topic will be "Why C.S. Lewis Hoped to meet Socrates in Heaven". The presenter is Charles Huttar, a Hope College professor emeritus, who is currently working on a book on Lewis's writings.

Nov 29th

Advent Intergenerational

Adults and Children of all ages are encouraged to gather in the Undercroft for a lesson and activity focused on preparation for the Advent Season. Come, prepare yourselves and your family, and enjoy an activity created for all ages!

Dec 6th & 13th Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, The Resurrection and the Mission of the Church

Advent is the beginning of the Church year and in this season we are called to be a hopeful people. But what does that mean? What is it that we are looking forward to? What are we looking forward to? Dr. Bob Venvoorst, Professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary presents N.T. Wright's book, "Surprised by Hope" in which Wright talks about two dimensions of Christian hope, the first kind related to what we can expect, in this incarnation, before bodily death. The second kind of hope dealing with "the hereafter", and what we can expect on the other side of that chasm. Understanding Christian hope in its fullness, Wright argues, helps us to reframe our very mission as followers of Christ.

The deadline for submissions to the December 2009 issue of Grace to You is November 18, 2009.

Vestry Notes : October 19, 2009

Submitted by Carol Rickey, Senior Warden

Present:: Jen Adams, Jim Barry, Cal Boer, Chris Broersma, Sue Cloutier, Carrie Hodson, David Meier, Chuck Murray, Kristie Phillips, and Carol Rickey. John Shea, Treasurer.

September Financial Reports: Gratefully the revenues to date are at 104% of budget while expenses are at 98.7%! While John Shea, Treasurer, reported that there was a monthly shortage of \$2,372 there was an actual year to date surplus of \$7,553.

The G4C account is still open due to shortages of \$10,119 (which primarily comes from scholarships and rent relief provided by Grace) and with some past due tuition payments. The efforts to have tuition payments collected by an agency failed and the G4C board elected not to pursue further action. Chuck Murray reported that books will be closed on G4C very soon. Vestry action was taken to officially close the G4C center and to disband the G4C Board and gratitude was expressed to Barb Anderson, Karen Bylsma, and Chuck Murray for their extraordinary efforts to oversee the Center and the transition.

There is good news in the rental house balance is now at \$11, 141 due to the regular rental income through the Community Partnership and the Michigan program. We are starting to make regular payments to reduce the Grace line of credit which is at \$24,500 with an interest rate of 4.25%.

The Moor Fund and the Endowment Fund balances show respective current market values of \$256,647 and 188,875 which are a significant improvement over twelve months ago.

Strategic Planning report: The final meeting of the Strategic Planning task force was October 7th and a plan that is both workable and exciting has been developed. Commissions have been invited to explore ways to implement ideas that have been developed, **The parish is invited to review the plan at either of two sessions, Wednesday evening, December 2 at 6:00 p.m. following a soup supper or Sunday, December 6 following the 10:30 service.**

Action taken from recommendations from Commissions

Building and Grounds – four projects which were included in the 2009 budget were approved and include: \$1,000 to completely re-key the church building, \$1,000 to install a new window in the nursery replacing a temporary window where air-conditioners were, up to \$5,000 to repair the elusive leaks in the roof, and a payment of \$2,500 on the line of credit for the purchase of the new heating system.

Evangelism and Communication - approval of a fifteen minute weekly radio program on WHTC - 15 promotional spots throughout the week at a cost of \$100/week if a team can be recruited to produce the programs for a year. Project to be funded as a new ministry through the Moor Fund.

Worship – approval of the purchase of a set of tone chimes, (three octaves) to be used by youth and adults and to be funded at \$1,800 from the Dekker memorial fund.

Next meetings of Vestry : November 16 and December 21 at 6:30 and January 11 at 7:00 pm

Wednesday Evening Classes in November

Wednesday, November 4th at 5:30 pm :

Movie Series led by Henry Idema- “Being There”

Don't miss this very unusual film, BEING THERE, with Peter Sellers and Shirley MacLaine. The film will lead us into a discussion of the mass media and politics. The comedy came out in 1979 and had rave reviews. We start with fellowship and refreshments at 5:30, with the film and pizza following. Please bring \$5 for pizza and your own beverage. We are now meeting in the Forum Room across from the offices.



Wednesdays, November 11 and 18 at 7:00-8:30pm

“Welcome to the Episcopal Church” - led by Rev. Jen Adams

Newcomers eager to learn about the Episcopal Church and old-timers with lingering questions about this particular denomination are encouraged to come to this two-week introduction to Episcopal history, liturgy and the structures of our Church. Please sign up and pick up the book for the course in the Commons.

The Little Goldfinch

by Bill Mendenhall of the Taking Grace Green Committee

Last year I was watching one of our birdfeeders after an early snowstorm and noticed one of the Goldfinches that was different from the others.

It was smaller, had a shorter tail, was lighter and more colorful than the others. It didn't fly as well and didn't move around as much as the others did when they swooped on and off of the feeder in their frenzy looking for Sunflower seed kernels.

Later I saw that the little Goldfinch often sat on the ground alone below the feeder or on the branches above it. It seemed to like the company of the other birds when they arrived and wasn't shy if I went out to fill the feeder.

On several occasions I reached down and it stood in the palm of my hand. I checked to see if it had been injured by the Coopers Hawk that visited the feeder or if it had flown into a window on our house. It would sit in my hand for a few moments and then fly straight up like a Hummingbird . . . but didn't try horizontal flight like the others.

I worried about it sitting in the open by itself and possibly becoming a meal for the Hawk. I began to watch for this little bird when I walked through the house or worked on my laptop computer in our sun room. It was usually the first to the feeder in the morning and seemed to wait for the others. It stayed near the feeder when the others were away, sitting just below it or moving next to the Maple tree trunk.

When the other birds came to feed it sat on the ground among them slowly pecking at the Sunflower seeds and occasionally would fly straight up to get a place on the ring perch on the vertical feeder. It didn't fly strongly and sometimes made the ring and other times fell back to the ground in its flight.

As I watched I saw that the other Goldfinches, Sparrows, Juncos, House Finches, Chickadees, Creepers, and Downey Woodpeckers would bump and move each other around but they seemed to give little Goldfinch its space.

One morning after I shoveled the snow under the feeder so the birds could see and eat the seeds . . . I looked over and saw the little Goldfinch sitting on the perch watching me. The others had flown away for the moment but it stayed and watched as I shoveled the back patio. I greeted it with a friendly "hello", as I had been doing and it stayed and watched, curious but not afraid.

As days went by the little Goldfinch seemed to grow stronger and fly better. It usually was first to the feeder in the morning, and when I was outside it still watched me with curiosity. It would still come and wait for the other birds and would linger after they left. My concerns about its health and strength gradually went away and I expected that we would spend the winter season, and beyond, watching and enjoying each other.

If you take the time to look and listen, you could begin to see and hear the life (beyond human life) around you . . . and realize that you are in the midst of something amazing . . . something to be enjoyed . . . every day.

Announcements and Notices

Strategic Plan Report To Be Presented

Come hear the Vestry presentation of the final version of the plan that will guide us through the next five years. Over 80 people from Grace contributed to this vision. Come and hear where we are headed!

Wednesday, December 2nd at 6 pm
(supper provided)

Sunday, December 6th at noon.

**Childcare is provided for both presentations.*

Arise! Cry Out! - November 14, 2009

National Day of Prayer for "Moms in Touch" hosted by Central Wesleyan. Visit the website for more info - www.MomsInTouch.org.

Thank you to our wonderful Coffee Hour Hosts for November!

Krista & Guy Packard
Jim & Liza Barry & Andrew Barry & Anna Batistello
Jean, Sophie & Claire Adams
Todd, Geri and Matthew Guyer
From Laurie Van Ark, Coffee Hour Coordinator

Seeing The Forest for the Trees.

By Jay Bylsma of the Stewardship Commission

It's an old saying that, and one that applies to not being able to see the "big picture" because of being focused on little things. As the Vestry member on the Stewardship Commission, I am charged with seeing the forest – the big picture – as it applies to the financial condition of Grace.

And the Grace forest is healthy – a condition for which we can be grateful in these difficult economic times. Our debt is very small, we do have some endowment funds, and we are heading into the last quarter of the year with our pledges and offerings slightly in excess of our expenses.

While that's the forest, I am reminded that the forest is made up of trees – you and I, the giving units of Grace. We are approaching the Stewardship season when we – the trees - determine the ongoing and future health of the forest. It's up to us! While the emphasis will be on what we call the "elements of stewardship" – time, treasure, and talents, I can't help but reflect on the other elements of the health of Grace.

The number of interesting program opportunities available at Grace – including opportunities for outreach and service.

The amount of time members contribute to Grace.
The growth in membership we are experiencing at Grace.

The increase in attendance on Sunday mornings here at Grace.

The breadth of giving that we witness at Grace.

The excitement I feel at Grace (have you noticed the buzz in the Commons after the 10:30 service?).

I am a tree that is excited about the health of all the elements of the forest I see that is Grace. And it is the time, treasure, and talents of all the leaders and every last member that contribute to make this wonderful, healthy forest that is Grace Church.

Grace to Receive Award from Good Samaritan

Good Samaritan Ministries is celebrating its 40th Anniversary by presenting Church Partner, Volunteer and Visionary Awards in the months of October and November. On November 29, Grace Episcopal Church is being honored for partnership in the Community Housing Partnership (CHP). CHP provides housing, mentoring and case management to homeless families who struggle and have little hope. Mentoring teams from Grace Episcopal Church have provided encouragement, support and resources as families learn to move from homelessness to permanent, affordable housing.

Good Samaritan Ministries expresses its sincere gratitude for the faithful financial, volunteer, and prayer support received from Grace Episcopal Church. It is an honor to work together in helping the poor, building relationships and strengthening the community as the "hands and feet of Christ."



Acolytes Attend the National Acolyte Festival!

On October 11th, Grace Acolytes : *Claire & Sophie Adams, Paul Richmond, Alyssa Wright, John & Jennie Shea* attended the 30th National Acolyte Festival at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. It was a great experience for all and gave them an opportunity to learn about the many roles of acolytes in worship in addition to having an opportunity to meet other acolytes from our Diocese and around the country. Watch the celebration online at <http://www.nationalcathedral.org/events/acolyte2009.shtml> and click "watch video".

Financial Stewardship Report - Total Gifts

September Budget	\$ 26,925	Year-to-Date Budget	\$ 240,400
September Received	\$ 24,457	Year-to-Date Received	\$ 249,054
Sept Surplus (Shortage)	\$ (2,468)	Year-to-Date Surplus (Shortage)	\$ 8,654

Thank you!

Fellowship Commission

Sue Cloutier, Fellowship Commission

Despite the rain and the 32nd street detour, 40 Grace members, family and friends had a wonderful time at Teusink's Pony Farm on October 2nd, our Annual October Teusink's Hayride & Chili Cook-off. We enjoyed the hayride in covered wagons, the hay maze inside the barn, feeding and petting all the animals, pumpkin painting, s'mores over the fireplace and of course the wonderful chili. Congratulations to Jay & Karen Bylsma who won the Best Chili Award! Thank you to Eve Shetterly for coordinating this event.

There are many more opportunities to connect with your Grace family throughout the coming weeks. First, the **Holiday Cookie Exchange and Bake Sale** returns after a great turnout last year, this year's cookie exchange takes place Sunday, December 6th after the 2nd service. For the exchange to work, all you do is bring in the number of cookies that you want to trade for, i.e. bring 1 dozen and choose 1 dozen to take home, bring 2 dozen and take 2 dozen. This year we are asking those who bake to also donate an extra ½ to 1 dozen cookies to the bake sale side. There are members who don't bake or simply don't have time to bake and have expressed a desire to buy cookies last year.

Then, join us for the **Christmas Madrigal Dinner**, an evening of holiday music and fun at the Hope College Saturday, December 12th at 6:30 pm. The signup sheet is posted in the Commons. Tickets are \$25 each. We currently have 16 tickets, if there is greater demand we will try to get more.

Finally, Fellowship Commission is offering a new event, a **New Year's Eve get together**. Would you be interested in attending a New Year's Eve get together here at church in the undercroft, probably a potluck and leftover Christmas goodies, with movies and games for the children and cards games for the adults with an approximate starting time of 5:30 - 6 pm until 10 pm? If so, make your voice heard. We will be posting an "Interest Only" sign-up sheet at this time which will help us determine if this is an idea to pursue!

Our next meeting is Tuesday, November 3rd, 6:00 pm in the Commons.

Youth Choir Continues Programming Opportunities Throughout Fall!

From Jennifer Wolfe, Youth Choir Director

The Grace Youth Choir has an active program year planned, and we would love for **ALL YOUTH** to be part of it! Whether or not you've sung before, whether you're 5 or 15, we have a spot for you!

Singers are welcome to join us when they can read words a little bit and sit at the back with the choir through the service—generally around age 5 or 6. I do expect timely and regular attendance.

The choir will rehearse on Sundays after church. Grab a snack, visit with your friends for a few minutes, and then join us up in the choir room until 12:30. Parents, you can enjoy coffee hour a little extra long, or we can arrange car-pooling to get your kids home.

Below is the fall service schedule. If you have any questions, just call me at 395-8387 or e-mail wolfe@hope.edu. I strive to make choir a fun, educational and spiritual experience, and I would love to welcome your child to our group.

Sunday, November 1: 10 AM rehearsal, 10:30 service (with adult choir)
Sunday, November 22: 10 AM rehearsal, 10:30 service (with adult choir)
Sunday, December 13: 10 AM rehearsal, 10:30 service
Sunday, December 20: 3 PM concert at Warm Friend Seniors' Residence
... likely one or two special Christmas choir rehearsals TBA this week ...
Thursday, December 24: 5:15 PM rehearsal, 6 PM Christmas Eve service

All Youth are encouraged to join us at any point during the program year!

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change
The courage to change the things I can
And the wisdom to know the difference*

By Reinhold Niebuhr

We've been praying the serenity prayer more than usual these days. Just when we think the worst is over, we learn that the economy may get worse before it gets better. And with no clear solutions and no clear way out, it is easy to fall into despair.

It's impossible to be immune from the fear that is ever present, but it is possible to seek out God's invitation and discern a faithful response in the firm knowledge that God's steadfast love, God's faithfulness in and through Christ can be trusted.

God is in the midst of this crisis and calling us to more deeply integrate our spiritual lives with our financial lives. During this time of great uncertainty, we remain certain that we are called and led by the Holy Spirit to be stewards of God's gifts and God's grace to one another. We pray that the Holy Spirit leads us to change the things we can.

The following is the sixth of seven articles from the National Church: "Finding Hope in Hard Times, Seven Spiritual Practices: A Faithful Steward's Guide" which offers practical steps and prayerful reflections in how we can individually and as a faith community adapt to the troubling reality of our fragile and weakened economy. Ideal for personal contemplation, small group studies, or even adult forum classes, the seven practices offer a way to ground us in the deepest reality of God's abundant grace—despite trying times.

Step Six Rebuild Generous Communities

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (*Acts 2:44-47*)

Times of recession bring people together – those with physical, spiritual, and emotional needs meeting those with a willingness to share. Today many neighborhoods are less strong than they used to be; residents barely know the names of their neighbors, recognizing them only by the car they drive. We may have a stronger sense of community at work, church, or the gym – or even in the virtual world. A sign of commitment to a community is our willingness to sacrifice something to meet the needs of others. As the body of Christ, our faith communities can demonstrate Christ's love in practical ways.

Action: Spend some time getting to know the needs of your neighbors, your colleagues, and the people you encounter every day. Where do you see need? What can you do to help?

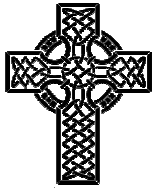
Pause for Reflection: In what ways can we share as a faith community? How does the sharing in the early Church shape how we give today?

You may find the following prayer helpful :

O God who is Three in One, living in perfect community; grant us the desire to transform our communities, that we might reflect your love, grace, and generosity as we minister to others in your name. Amen.

Watch the December issue of Grace to You for the final article in this series: "A Financial Downturn Can Be A Spiritual Upturn". You can also see this in full on our website at www.graceepiscopalholland.org/stewardship as well as find printed copies in the Church Commons.

From Guy Packard, Stewardship Commission



Prayer List as of October 18, 2009

PRAYER REQUESTED FOR: Sharon King, Karla Meeks, Rebecca Rannow, Diane, Janet Huyser, Bobbie Deitenbeck, Chris, Deborah Grieves, Ralph, Judy Zylstra, Erin Walker, Dolores & Earl, Katherine McNamar, Judy Ching, Andrew, Beth McFarland-Wilson, Tom Boyd, Aaron Schillaci, Ethel, Gordon Gladden, Nancy Lathem, Mike, Brooks, Alex; for the unemployed or under-employed, for the people of the Middle East and other areas of war and unrest, for the women and men of the Armed Forces, especially loved ones of our parish family, Yvonne Logan, Karen Trap, Tim and Jordyn and family, Bruce Browning (brother of Jean Adams), George Julius, the Mourot family, Marian Schultz, Bob Borgman, Gilmore Lawrence, Charlie March, Alice Hertel, Harriett Edwards (mother of Stephanie), Dave Masselink, Barb & Gordon, Richard Bailey, Kellye Martin, Carl & Karen Holkeboer, Isaac Montgomery, Samuel Moody, Eric Heiberg, Sue Bentley, Susan & Tacho Sanchez family, Loretta Fisher (mother of John Kustron), Anna DeKraker, Bradley Erickson, Aaron Miller, Betty Sova, Arty Ropa, Gloria Stegenga, Ann McKnight, Max Kurowski, Jerry Mount, Ruth Hill, Betty & Jerry, Bob & Donna, Marge Homan (mother of Carol Homan), Mary Rieckmann, Curt Keegin, Vivian Kingsley, John Keegin, Jackie Van Duren, Lisa Leland, Patrice Mourot, Ben Roper, Jim Roper.

- | | | | |
|----|------------------|----|---------------------|
| 1 | Patty Tabachuk | 20 | Eskill Corneliussen |
| | Cynthia Light | | Steven Hansen |
| | Samuel Ropa | 21 | Brianna Jones |
| 3 | Samantha Talley | | Maxine Shetterly |
| 4 | Morley Byxbe | | Catalina Garcia |
| 5 | Alice Hertel | 22 | Jennifer Adams |
| | Elliot Tucker | | Katherine Slee |
| | Linda Mourot | | Donald Veenhoven |
| 6 | Dawn Van Ark | 23 | Tom Finkbiner |
| 8 | Tracy Bocks | 25 | Chris Broersma |
| 10 | Andrew Linn | | Greta Finkbiner |
| | Kyle Shinabarger | 26 | Mac Kenzie Coyle |
| 14 | Robert Borgman | | Hannah Schmidt |
| 15 | Zachary Smalldon | 28 | Peter Keegin |
| 16 | Kenneth Scholten | | Tatyanna Bowman |
| 17 | Mark Servinsky | 30 | Emily Knoll |
| 18 | Donna Rieckmann | | Miki Methric |



Birthdays & Anniversaries in November

- | | |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 7 | Donna & John Kustron |
| 18 | Peggy & Stafford Keegin |
| 23 | Sally & Eskill Corneliussen |
| 25 | Virginia & Jack Wilson |
| 27 | Chris & Charlie Broersma |
| | Susan Bentley & Tacho Sanchez |
| 28 | Phyllis & Jerry Roper |
| | Lisa & Jon Shears |
| 30 | Jean & John Adams |