



# Hampden Heights Sentinel

## Highlights:

- Take in a little bit of Laney's joy and love today. Laugh. Smile. Love. You'll be so much better off because of it. *Page 1.*
- Throughout the seminar, 143 people came, and 50 of these people were visitors. *Page 4.*
- I'll continue to put my faith in the God who created and maintains the universe to handle even the things I don't have the capacity to fully comprehend. *Page 5*

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*If anyone then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them. James 4:17*

## Grace's Outpost

By Ashley Richards

So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. (John 16:22, ESV)

She was my light.

I've been trying to think of the right words to say, to give the most fitting tribute to what she was in her short life, but my brain gets tongue-tied, just trying to figure it out. And in my desire to honor who she was, how good she was, my heart seizes up. Despite the gift I believe God has given me for writing, I can't honor her properly, honor her well, not even with my words, not when my heart cracks in two when I see a little girl in a parking lot who looks *just like her* when she was three, or when I see her little sister come running up to me each Sabbath, or when I see a poster hanging at work for a fundraiser in her honor. Feeble as these words are, they are all I can think of to say.

Delaney Brown was my light.

I met her—*really* met her—on a Sabbath in October, 2008, when she was three and when my heart was frozen in depression. I was passing by, and she just latched on, refusing to let her grandma put on her coat and shoes. "No, Grandma, *she* has to do it!!!!" She's had me wrapped around her little finger ever since.

I think, in her own way, Laney

saved me from myself. She let me into her little world for five precious years. I loved every minute of it.

I remember, when she was going through treatment, that a lot of people talked about how her faith was strong, and that she was a witness for so many people. I'm sure that's true. But for me, she was my light. She amplified joy. Which I needed so much more than someone who believed in God—I needed someone who could crack the thick shell of depressed ambivalence, win my heart, and smuggle joy into my world when I was least expecting it, with little giggles and silly stories about icky boys who liked her and how cows *really* could ("I promise!!!") sound like ducks if she wanted them to badly enough, and how much she loved Baby Bella.

Little girls have the uncanny ability to fill the world with laughter and joy, and Laney had that gift in spades.

In about three weeks now, we'll remember the day of Laney's passing. I don't even want to think about the fact that it's nearly been a year now. There shouldn't be a world without Laney in it. It grieves me to think of all the people in the world whose lives weren't made better by her joy, who will never have the honor of their hearts being full from Laney's love.

But in order to get this into the newsletter on time, I'm writing this

a couple days before Thanksgiving, and my mind is centered on giving thanks. And if I'm thankful for anything this year, I'm thankful for Laney. Profoundly grateful.

Yes. When my mind turns to Laney, my favorite little lady, my heart seizes up in grief. I miss her more than words could ever say. I'm even tempted to become bitter and angry at her passing. But how can I, when I realize what a truly unmerited gift she was to me in the first place? How can I, when all I can hear is her laughter, when all I can see is her joy, when all I can feel is her little arms wrapped around my neck in a vice grip that I'd give just about anything to feel again? When I *still* can't get her whispered words out of my head from five years ago? ("Ashley, pray for my daddy and Jacob. I don't like it when they say bad words.") Oh, Laney had perfected the gift of loving others, and she always wanted the very best for them.

Delaney Brown taught me many things, but I would be remiss if I didn't take this one lesson to heart.

No matter how deeply you're grieving or mourning today—whether it's still Laney's passing or a much fresher wound—don't let it turn your heart cold. Take in a little bit of Laney's joy and love today. Laugh. Smile. Love. You'll be so much better off because of it.

## Meet a Member

By Bob Kondracki

At the risk of being accused of nepotism, I have selected Colleen Kondracki as this month's guest for our Meet a Member column.

As most of you know, Colleen is my daughter, and so I found this article easier to write than most because of my accessibility and obvious close familiarity with our guest.

Colleen is 14 years old and currently a student in 9th grade at Reading Junior Academy. This is the only school she knows, as she has been at RJA her entire academic life. Her extracurricular activities at school include the chess club and the drama club. Colleen also has one of the leading roles in the upcoming RJA Christmas play.

Since RJA currently only provides education up to 10th grade, Colleen plans to attend there until she has to transition to Wilson for her final two years of high school.

Colleen was born and raised in the Adventist faith, and officially became a member of our Hampden Heights family when she was baptized on November 6th, 2010. But the way was paved for her long before that when she was dedicated to the Lord by her parents when she was only 3

weeks old. Colleen explains that she is currently in a stage where she is trying to find her identity in her church and also in her faith. As is the case with many young adults her age, Colleen is still questioning where she fits into God's plans for her and the kind of relationship she is developing with Him. "I think my relationship is constantly evolving, and I continue to pray for God's guidance and direction," she explains.

Colleen receives plenty of support in her walk with the Lord, because in addition to her church family, she also has her mother Dena, father Bob, brother Robert, grandmother Elizabeth Hill, and cousin Chantique (Tique) Kondracki joining her in attendance at Hampden Heights.

Colleen is also fairly active in her church. "I used to be in Pathfinders," she says. "But it got kind of boring. I still like to participate in helping them with the bag handout and collection though." She misses seeing her friends from Pathfinders the most. She is also part of the praise team with Mrs. Stahl and is currently a deaconess in training. She enjoys helping out her mother in cradle roll by telling the children's story and entertaining the children. Colleen has also been very willing and very

capable of telling the children's story during the sanctuary service when asked. She definitely has a flair for the dramatic, and she seems to be one of the most popular storytellers with the kids, judging from the crowds she gets when scheduled. "I really am a drama queen," she admits. Her family and friends can certainly attest to that, and she definitely seems to revel in that title.

As a matter of fact, one of Colleen's favorite activities is "social networking" on her iPod. "It really allows me to express my creativity" she exclaims. Other activities she enjoys include acting in school plays, singing, reading and writing stories and poems, collecting clothes, and swimming when she has the opportunity. "I also have a stronger interest in WWII than most kids my age" she says. "Thanks mostly to my dad." She also has an interest in Jack the Ripper, and other similar topics of mystery.

Admittedly, some of her other interests are probably because of my influence, be it good or bad. One of her interests that she grudgingly engages in is chess. She reveals, "I don't really enjoy the game as much as I should, but I play because of my dad. And he did teach me the King's Gambit, and the Fried Liver Attack, which are great to use on unsuspecting players," she smiles.

Colleen's favorite memory verse is Galatians 1:10 "Am I now trying to win the approval of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ." Incidentally, that is also my favorite verse, so at least some good has rubbed off on her.

Colleen's favorite Bible story is Jonah. Especially the Veggie Tales version. "It makes it funny and memorable when it's animated," she laughs.

Colleen plans on attending college after high school, and would like to study the performing arts and journalism. "I realize that an acting career is a long shot," she admits. "But I also really enjoy writing, so journalism is also a strong possibility."

Whatever Colleen decides, she knows that there will be many people that love her and will be praying for her to make the right choices. And she also knows that the Lord will also be there to guide her in the decisions she makes and the direction she chooses, as long as she seeks His will for her life.

## RJA News Corner

By Lee Stahl, Principal

### RJA Students visit Pennsylvania State Capitol

Last month students in grades 7-10 from Reading Junior Academy visited the state capitol building and state museum. This was a fun and educational trip for each one as we were able to learn some interesting facts about our state capitol.

Did you know that our state capitol building is considered one of the most ornate of all state capitols if not the most ornate? Dedicated in 1906, it was built and furnished at a cost of 13 million dollars. However, today it is considered priceless, because the cost to replace it is virtually impossible. While I have frequently visited the US Capitol in Washington, DC and

many of its beautiful buildings, this was my first time to see Pennsylvania's State Capitol even though I lived in the Harrisburg area for seven years. Whether it's looking at the dome, the house chamber, the senate chamber, or all the gold leaf throughout, this is probably the most remarkable and beautifully architectured buildings I have ever seen. Best of all the tour is free!

#### Here are some additional fun facts that we learned about our state:

**Nickname:** Keystone State - During colonial times Pennsylvania was the middle colony of the original 13 colonies. It held the colonies together like the "keystone" in a window or door arch.

**Background:** Pennsylvania was settled in 1643. Philadelphia was our state

capital during the Revolutionary War and York was the first capital of the United States.

**State name's meaning:** Penn's Woods (after Admiral William Penn's father)

**Motto:** Virtue, Liberty and Independence

**Flower:** Mountain Laurel

**Tree:** Hemlock

**Bird:** Ruffed Grouse

**Animal:** Whitetail Deer

**Insect:** Firefly

**Dog:** Great Dane

**Beverage:** Milk

**Fish:** Brook Trout

**Fossil:** Phacops Rana

**Ship:** United States Brig Niagara

#### **Geography:**

**Area:** 45,888 square miles

**Rank:** 32nd in nation

**Width:** 310 miles (east to west) 180 miles (N to S)

### Geographic center:

Centre County, home of Penn State University

**Highest point:** Mt. Davis, Somerset County 3,213 feet. Somerset

County was also the site of the September 11, 2001 crash of Flight 93.

**Lowest point:** Delaware River



## Recipe of the Month

By Elizabeth Hill

### Grandmom's Chocolate Cake

Here is my grandson's favorite dessert! He calls it "Grandmom's Chocolate Cake!" We make sure to have it for most holidays and always on his birthday!

1/4 lb butter  
2 cups sugar  
2 cups flour  
2 eggs  
2 teasp. baking soda  
3 squares melted chocolate  
1/4 teasp. salt  
1/2 cup sour milk  
1 cup hot water

Cream together first eight ingredients. Gradually add hot water. Pour into two 8 or 9 inch buttered and floured baking pans and bake at 350 degrees until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean or with a few moist crumbs on it. Frost with the following frosting.

1 and 1/2 sticks butter  
1 and 1/2 lbs. 10 X sugar  
1/8 teasp. salt  
evaporated milk

Cream together butter, sugar, and salt. Add enough evaporated milk to make it spreading consistency. Spread between layers and on top of and around the sides of the cake.

This is the simplest chocolate cake and always comes out well. The friend who gave me the recipe said you simply cannot wreck this cake and, believe me, I have made many mistakes with it and it has never let me down!

## Card Ministry In Action

By Chris Gelsinger

### Thank You & Invitation Cards

The Card Ministry launched on a new mission. On November 18, we sent out 42 **Thank You** cards to those who came to our Evangelistic Meetings we had October -- whether they came once or throughout the whole series. We also invited them to come to our special Thanksgiving Program that was held on November 22. We wanted to keep in touch with

them, let them know that we haven't forgotten them, and that we're thinking of them.

### CHRISTmas Cards

In December, the Card Ministry will be sending them CHRISTmas cards. We will keep you posted on what the Card Ministry will/are doing to reach out into the hearts and homes of those who we are ministering to.

### Newsletters to the Shut-ins

Starting December 2014, the Card Ministry will also initiate another new mission: send out this Sentinel newsletter to shut-ins and those who are unable to come to church on a regular basis. We would like to not only send cards to each church family member, but to also share the news of what's happening in church with them. They are our family.

YOU have an essential part in this: keep the Card Ministry updated! Keep our records current. Contact Chris Gelsinger. Call him @ 610-374-9406 or send him an e-mail @ chrisgel@aol.com.

Your ideas and suggestions are welcome. Thank you!

## Evangelism at Hampden Heights

By Nancy Stump

The Hampden Heights Church held a Discover Prophecy Seminar that ran from October 3-25 (four days a week). The speakers included our own Pastor Pete Maldonado; head elder, Wayne Johns; and a newly-baptized member, Bradley Sherker.

Throughout the seminar, 143 people came, and 50 of these people were visitors. About 18 Bibles were given away to visitors who attended for eight nights.

The seminar consisted of music, the presentation, and questions. The opening night dealt with the topic "On the Eve of

Armageddon". The seminar based the majority of topics on the book of *Steps to Christ*. Overall, the seminar was well-attended, and many of the visitors expressed an interest in attending another seminar when offered.

The evangelistic team would like to thank all the volunteers for helping with this series. From van drivers to greeters to record keepers to singers to AV ministry to childcare help and prayer warriors, it is all greatly appreciated, and the series would not have been a success without them.

## Global Membership Decline

Submitted by Chris Gelsinger

Out of 1,191,436 members (N. American Division)--- about 15% of them (177,724) are considered youth.

And out the 177,724 youth, approximately 56% (99,134) are young adults.

And if the latest statistic on our young adult attrition is correct, we're losing about 70% of that 99,134, which accounts

for 69,393 young adults.

That's about 2.5% of the membership.

Which leaves us with the remaining 30% — which comes out to 29,741.

More information can be found on this disturbing trend at this website:

Now to give you a perspective — out of 1,191,436 members in NAD — we only have 29,741 members that are between the ages 18–30.

Full article:  
<https://medium.com/@JinJJa/reflection-and-response-to-ya-retention-summit-and-nad-year-end-meetings-74a46eb9a008>

## Observation Post

By Bob Kondracki

### Faith Healing?

I just recently read another story in the news about a child that had died because their parents refused to seek medical help on the grounds it conflicted with their religious beliefs. The article went on to further explain that although our government protects the rights of individuals to freedom of religious expression and practice, it is also responsible for child welfare laws. In reality, it's a fine line the government has to walk between the two. The parents are now being prosecuted because this was in fact the second child that they had that died, both of very similar symptoms, and because medical intervention would have prevented the children's deaths.

Stories like this are very disturbing when we hear about them, and have a tendency to illicit some very uncomfortable feelings among Christians. Non-Christians have no problem condemning the parents for their beliefs, and proposing that they are unfit and should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law for their negligence, carelessness, and blind narrow-mindedness.

But for Christians, it is not so cut and dried. We hate to hear about tragedies like this as much as anybody. But we also

hate to consider the idea that God didn't want to be bothered to intervene, or simply doesn't have the capacity to do so, as so many others are wont to hint at. And at this time of year, with the approaching anniversary of Delaney Brown's passing so fresh in our minds, it makes this issue that much more poignant.

If we take a pragmatic viewpoint, looking at this objectively and purely from a statistical perspective, it is an alarming fact that people who rely on faith healing and prayer without any medical help to resolve their serious health issues quite often suffer dramatic results because of their beliefs. It frequently has the effect of not only shaking the faith of those involved, but countless times destroying their faith completely, and leaving many bitter and disillusioned toward God. The obvious question then becomes, "If God is so caring, loving, and omnipotent, how is it then that the people who put their faith in Him the most, usually end up dying in situations like this?" It's a very painful question, but also a very valid one. And, as usual, I don't agree with the philosophy many people adapt in situations like this; that let's bury our heads in the sand and simply not think about it or discuss it and hope it doesn't come up again.

The question still remains whether we want to think about it or not. Why does God allow this to happen over and over again? A example of this in our own church family was Delaney Brown. Although her case differed significantly in that she did indeed have the best medical care to go along with thousands of people earnestly and sincerely praying for her, still God seemed unwilling to intervene. To my logical mind, it seems to have been the perfect scenario for God to make a profound statement to His sovereign power and control, and produce a miracle while literally the whole world was in attendance to witness. What a faith builder that would have been for the many people following Delaney so closely!

To be honest, to reconcile a definitive answer that keeps our faith intact and at the same time also explains why the Lord apparently allows these situations to happen is almost near impossible, at least to our understanding.

But here are a few things to consider nonetheless.

1. Our logic is not God's logic. Our wisdom is not God's wisdom. And to relate it to something that at least I can understand, in a game of chess, the move that appears foolproof to the average player is not even considered by the master.

The master sees things that the average player doesn't even have an idea exist! We can't even entertain the idea of understanding God's wisdom and reasons. We are lucky if we even have the foresight to see the next few moves ahead in our own lives. But lest we forget, God sees the end from the beginning. We must trust that He has something in mind that's better. Especially in cases like Delaney's.

2. We also never hear about the successes in cases like these. We only ever hear when someone dies. The people of these faiths are not in the habit of boasting and bragging when the Lord does in fact intervene. So it would appear that God has failed constantly when all we read about is the deaths. My wife Dena came from a faith that didn't believe in doctors. And she can testify to examples from her youth of unexplained healing and miracles without modern medical intervention.

3. Much to the dismay of the few who refuse to accept personal responsibility, we all have our part to play in everything involving our relationship with God. He expects us to be an active participant, and not just sit back and expect Him to do everything while we do nothing. God is not some puppeteer simply pulling the strings and controlling everything in our lives. It can't be found in the Bible, but we all have often heard it said that God helps those who help themselves. The Bible doesn't say it in those words, but it certainly suggests that throughout. In my own life, I've discovered that it's not the Lord's job to make my life easy. That's what heaven is for. But He has been there at the most critical times, when I was completely helpless and had to depend solely on Him. (continued page 6)

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See us at:

[www.HampdenHeightsChurch  
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## The Children's Page

By Ashley Richards

Did you know that children all over the world celebrate Christmas, and learn the story of Jesus? When they learn the story of Jesus, they don't just learn it in English—they learn it in their very own language! In the puzzle below, you'll find the word "shepherds" in many different languages. Do you remember the shepherds? They visited Jesus after He was born in Bethlehem, after a host of angels sang to them of Jesus' birth. They were very excited to meet Jesus and told everyone they knew! Do you share Jesus with the people you meet? (Also, this puzzle's a bit on the harder side, so you might want to see if your mom or dad want to help you with this one!)

P	A	E	E	A	C	A	L	T	E	I	L	E	R	I	E	G	O	V	W
O	X	E	R	C	E	A	R	A	A	L	E	N	O	E	D	I	I	L	C
I	E	R	D	S	R	R	I	M	H	L	M	V	N	B	A	R	I	N	J
M	O	G	J	A	I	H	A	E	N	E	A	F	L	E	B	G	I	R	E
E	A	A	P	A	I	I	Y	S	C	H	A	F	E	R	E	E	A	L	U
N	S	L	A	O	I	R	I	A	R	M	D	P	R	G	L	M	P	E	I
E	N	E	S	E	A	A	O	P	E	D	B	I	Q	E	U	B	A	M	A
S	A	E	T	G	W	D	A	A	H	Y	R	D	E	R	S	A	S	U	L
M	T	E	O	I	E	H	L	L	A	O	R	I	L	S	I	L	Z	Y	I
E	P	S	R	V	T	I	N	A	P	R	M	G	R	E	C	A	T	A	L
Z	A	O	E	P	R	J	L	K	K	A	R	J	A	S	E	D	O	N	H
H	I	T	S	U	J	I	K	A	I	U	S	E	D	E	E	L	R	G	H
O	M	P	O	I	E	R	L	D	P	A	S	T	U	S	H	I	O	R	L
V	E	A	N	E	F	R	A	E	O	I	K	E	I	M	Y	T	K	E	E
C	N	E	E	L	S	A	C	R	E	S	I	C	A	R	I	C	E	N	F
A	E	T	T	N	H	D	R	A	I	O	N	A	L	R	J	L	A	E	I
R	T	C	S	C	A	U	W	A	C	H	U	N	G	A	J	I	L	I	N
I	Y	I	E	V	A	N	D	O	Y	P	O	Y	S	P	N	E	P	V	A
L	H	E	P	A	R	A	N	A	R	T	Z	A	I	N	A	K	Z	N	L
C	A	R	A	V	A	H	O	M	J	C	O	B	A	N	L	A	R	U	B

### Word Bank:

Abelusi (Zulu)

Hitsujikai (Japanese)

Pastushi (Russian)

Adhijirraduna (Somali)

Hyrder(Danish/Norwegian)

Pasztorok (Hungarian)

Aoiri (Irish)

Karjased (Estonian)

Poimenes (Greek)

Artzainak (Basque)

Mesapalakadera (Bengali)

Schafer (German)

Barinj (Albanian)

Mogja (Korean)

Wachungaji (Swahili)

Bergers (French)

Muyang ren (Mandarin Chinese)

Caravahom (Hindi)

Ovcari (Macedonian)

Cobanlar (Azerbaijani/Turkish)

Paimenet (Finnish)

Gembala (Indonesian/Malay)

Pastirji (Slovenian)

Hepara (Maori)

Pastores (Spanish and Portuguese)

## Observation Post

(continued from page 5)

4. God doesn't need us to defend His actions or make excuses for Him. Regardless of what happens, there will always be naysayers. There will always be Satan to attempt to undermine our faith and instill doubt in our minds. But because God doesn't always respond the

way my flawed logic thinks He should, it doesn't mean that He is no longer in control. I'll continue to put my faith in the God who created and maintains the universe to handle even the things I don't have the capacity to fully comprehend.