

# MANATEE COUNTY BAHÁ'Í NEWS

DECEMBER 2011 ~ SPEECH, QUESTIONS & HONOR 168 B.E.

## THE HEART OF COMMUNITY LIFE

This institution [the 19 Day Feast], established by Bahá'u'lláh, has been described by the Guardian as the foundation of the new World Order. The National Spiritual Assembly understands that it is incumbent upon every believer, unless ill or absent from the city, to attend each of these Feasts.

....

These meetings may be regarded as the very heart of our Bahá'í community life. When properly conducted, and attended by a Bahá'í community which fully appreciates their importance, the Nineteen Day Feasts serve to renew and deepen our spirit of faith, increase our capacity for united action, remove misunderstandings and keep us fully informed of all important Bahá'í activities, local, national and international in scope.

(Statement of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, published in "Bahá'í News" 75 (July 1933), p. 8)]

Some thoughts to ponder:

- ▶ Who established the institution of the 19 Day Feast?
- ▶ How did the Guardian describe it?
- ▶ What is incumbent\* upon every adult believer?  
\* incumbent = obligatory
- ▶ How are these meetings to be regarded?
- ▶ What are the functions of the heart?
- ▶ Notice that by fulfilling the the 2 conditions:
  - They must be properly conducted and
  - attended by and Bahá'í community which fully appreciates their importance
- ▶ then, the 19 Day Feasts will
  - serve to renew and deepen our spirit of faith
  - increase our capacity for united action,
  - remove misunderstandings and
  - keep us fully informed of all important Bahá'í activities, local, national, and international in scope.
  - Go over the above intended outcomes carefully so that you can come to Feast prepared to appreciate and receive them.
- ♥ What actions can you, personally, take and what attitude and outlook can you adopt every time you prepare for and attend Feast that will help to ensure that the heart of our community is strengthened every 19 days?

## DECEMBER ACTIVITIES & NEWS

### TWO FEASTS:

**Dec. 11, Sunday, 7:30pm: Masá'il/Questions** hosted by Jerry and Peggy York, 711 Oakview Drive, Wildewood Springs. Call 941-896-6407 for directions

**Dec. 30, Friday, 7:30pm: Sharaf/Honor** at the home of Marge Kellberg, 6402 95<sup>th</sup> St. E [941-751-4640], hosted by Peyt Dewar

### STUDY CIRCLES

Book 4 at Jim Lacara's on Tuesdays with Allan Wunsch and Joan Irwin. Every other Friday [on youth night] Book 4 at Allan's.

### DEVOTIONAL GATHERINGS

The Devotions for the month of December are the **4th, 11<sup>th</sup>[NOT on 18th]** They will be held at Janet and Richard Henne's home 808 Spring Lakes Blvd. at 10:30 a.m [call 941-755-2110.] Discussion and refreshments to follow (941-755-2110).

The **Last Sunday of each Month** Devotions are held at Diane Stinnett's ® 941-926-1976 3215 Glenna Rd Sarasota, FL 34239 [NOTE: **there will be NO devotions on Christmas Day**]

### CHILDREN'S CLASSES

Children's classes are being held at City Walk Sat. 11am. There are often between 13 and 21 children attending! Classes at the Linos' are held on Sundays at noon. Please participate! City Walk: Teresa Pettersen (cell: 941-779-3702); George Lino, (cell: 941-224-4201)

### YOUTH NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

The youth meet at Allan Wunsch's home every other Friday at 7:30pm [check calendar]. They are studying Book 2 with Joah Irwin.

**WELCOME!**

**Dr. Lisa Merritt** and her daughter **Amari** have recently moved into Manatee Co.

**Kenneth Shrimpton** declared on his 15<sup>th</sup> birthday!

**BIRTHDAYS**

Shirley Mather: Dec. 3;

David Watson, Dec. 29

**CLUSTER INFORMATION**

David Dean’s term as Auxiliary Board member is coming to a close and at this time we do not have anyone assigned to our cluster to take his place. **The goals for our cluster this IPG (intensive program of growth) is to start a Junior Youth class, add an additional children's class, and increase our home visits - in particular have one regularly scheduled home visit in the following areas, Lakewood Ranch, Anna Maria Island and City of Palmetto.** We do have people who live in these areas that may enjoy a home visit so please contact Joan Irwin [941-224-7358] for specifics. We have several Ruhi Books going on right now, if you would like to tutor or be tutored, please contact Maxine Watson [941-756-1381] for information. Regarding the children's classes, we have the two classes (city walk and Lino's) and if anyone would like to assist they can contact Maxine Watson.

~ Maxine Watson

**INDOOR YARD SALE FOR FUND**

Diane Stinnett is planning to hold a continuous indoor yard sale in her home. Please start to bring things that you would like to contribute - and when you come, please take a look to see if there are any items that you’d like to buy. All money will be sent to the National Fund.

Feel free to bring items to Devotions, Feasts or any other meeting at Diane’s. Diane Stinnett ® 941-926-1976 3215 Glenna Rd Sarasota, FL 34239

**HELP FOR THE HOMELESS**

The Bill Galvano, One Stop Center which provides services for the homeless in our county needs a variety of clothing for adults, children and infants. The center needs jeans, shoes, socks, mosquito repellent, underwear for children, men and women, children’s clothing and shoes, toothbrushes, tool, tool belts, work boots, wash cloths, towels, garbage bags and non-perishable foods. The medical center is in need of digital thermometers, gauze, antibiotic ointment, A& D ointment, sunscreen and bandages.

☞ Please coordinate with Allan Wunsch [941-746-0779] to plan and bring your items to the One Stop Center.

**SED CONFERENCE DEC. 17-20**

The Social and Economic Development Conference will take place in Orlando from Dec. 17-20. Contact Allan Wunsch or go to <http://www.rabbanitrust.org/pages/445-sed-conference> for more informtaion.

**BOOK 8 - THE COVENANT**

There will be 2 sessions on Book 8: The Covenant at Magdelene Carney Bahá’í Institute [MCBI]. Part 1: Dec. 10-11; Part 2: Jan. 14-15. \$55 for room, meals and materials.

Register by Weds. Dec. 7 for part 1. Call 561-684-9869 or email [mcbi@mcbiinstitute.com](mailto:mcbi@mcbiinstitute.com).

**BAHA’IS AND CHRISTMAS**

"As regards the celebration of the Christian Holidays by the believers; it is surely preferable and even highly advisable that the friends should in their relation to each other discontinue observing such holidays as Christmas and New Years, and to have their festal gatherings of this nature instead during the intercalary days and Naw-Ruz." ~ Shoghi Effendi in Lights of Guidance, p. 302

☞ Gifts for children in the children’s classes will be given during Ayyám-i-Há rather than at Christmas.

**LAURIE’S HAIKU**

Get up get going

Life awaits your arrival

Give yourself to it

~ Laurie Zimmerman

**Share news, information, corrections, suggestions and ideas for the Manatee County Bahá’í News by contacting Happy Dobbs [hapdobbs@gmail.com](mailto:hapdobbs@gmail.com) or 727-479-9243.**

## TREASURER'S REPORT

News for this month: we hit our goal for the feast of Qudrat/Power! Contributions were 1265.00: 18 out of 49 contributed for a percentage participating of 37% .

**Please send monthly contributions to Michele Hulbert, Treasurer 6610 67th St E, Palmetto, FL 34221 if you are unable to attend Feast.**

## ASSEMBLY NEWS

The next Assembly meeting will be 7:30pm Dec. 12 at Allan's.

### Report on a Special Meeting:

The Local Spiritual Assemblies, Area Teaching Committee members and Cluster Coordinators of the Sarasota/Manatee Cluster were invited to attend a luncheon and Community Building Workshop on November 5, 2011 at the Baha'i Center of St. Petersburg: 7 of 9 of our LSA attended and 3 of 4 ATC members. The invitation was extended to those Intensive Programs of Growth occurring in the surrounding Clusters. After a wonderful lunch, a beautiful Devotion prepared by Hoda Hosseini was shared using writings about arising to teach the Cause. Elizabeth Hert the National Statistics Officer gave a presentation to explain the importance of gathering statistics. The Bab began this process by waiting for news from Mulla Husayn about how many accepted and rejected the Bab as the newest manifestation of God before he would leave on His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. Allison Ashley, the Regional Statistics Officer, then had the attendees break into groups.

Overview I: The role that statistical information plays in Community Building

We studied parts of the Ridvan 2010 message and the December 28, 2010 message from the Universal House of Justice through the lens of data/information --Elizabeth Hert

Overview II: The Statistical Report Program & Cluster Growth Profile Data collection and sharing--Allison Ashley

Breakout 1: Peer Consultation-Resources and challenges in gathering and using data

Breakout 2: Cluster level consultation /Collaboration and information sharing

The first question was "How can each of us collect and share information the cluster agencies and institutions need in a systematic way?"

Answer: Report to the Secretary (Allan Wunsch) any core activities. Share this information in the Newsletter, at Feast,

and email

Systematically provide information to the Corresponding Secretary who then provides the CSO (Cluster Statistics Officer-Karen Dewar) who then provides to the ATC secretary (Area Teaching Committee-Maxine Watson) who then provides to the RSO (Regional Statistics Officer- Allison Ashley) who then provides to the NSO (National Statistics Officer-Elizabeth Hert) which is then finally provided to the Universal House of Justice who is eagerly awaiting this information.

Each Breakout Group came back and shared the information and one group put on a skit about Confidentiality that was so good that we may see it on video one of these days.

So much was learned that will be shared as those that attended review, reflect , digest and put into place the information that we were so fortunate to receive.

~ Joan Irwin

### Holy Day -Birth of Baha'u'llah November 12

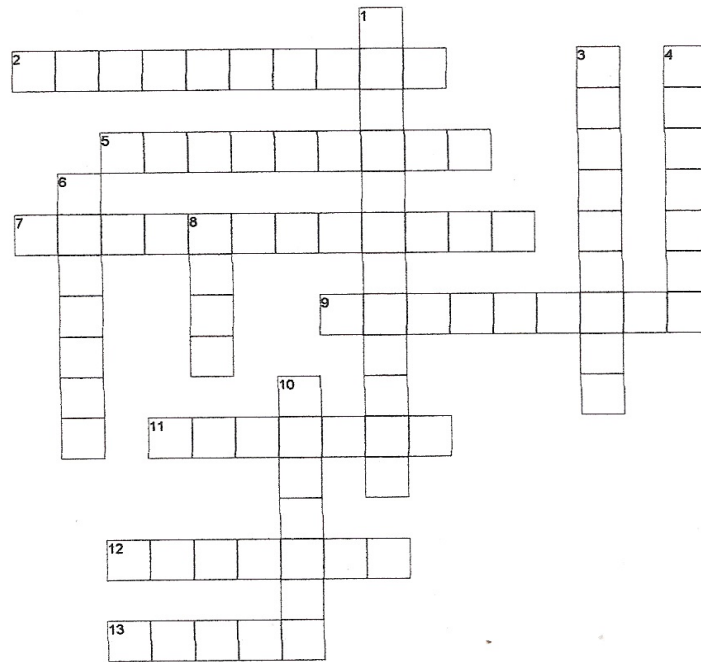
The Cluster gathered at South Gate Community Center along with Guests to commemorate the Holy Day of the birth of Baha'u'llah. There were close to 90 persons attending including members from the Women's Interfaith Network and the Center for Religious Tolerance. The program was a selection of writings from many Faiths and Abdu'l-Baha, pointing to the unification of religions, as well as, prayers from Baha'u'llah. These were beautifully read by Laurie Zimmerman and Jim Larcara. Wonderful music was provided by 5 members of Dawn Moth from the Tampa area. Scrumptious refreshments were served and a rose was presented to each person as they were leaving. A grand time was had by all!

~ Joan Irwin

**Please participate in regular home visits. Help fulfill one of the important goals of the Plan. For information, contact Joan Irwin [jirwin4@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:jirwin4@tampabay.rr.com) 941-756-8567[h], 941-224-7358 [c]**

A crossword puzzle review of the quotations found in Book 2 - if you can't figure them out, just open your book to the unit or pages noted in the heading

## Book 2: Unit 1 [Joy of Teaching]



### ACROSS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 2. ___ is as the sun...  | 12. the Word of God<br>may be likened<br>unto a ___                     |
| 5. Such and act<br>[guiding thy<br>neighbor to the law<br>of God], verily, ___<br>all other acts       | 13. My divinely<br>ordained<br>Revelation may be<br>likened unto an ___ |
| 7. with the hands of<br>___ draw forth<br>from its life-giving<br>waters                               |   |
| 9. until a being<br>setteth his foot in<br>the plane of ___, he<br>is bereft of every<br>favor & grace |   |
| 11. ... and open the<br>other [eye] to the<br>hallowed beauty of<br>the ___                            |   |

### DOWN

- |   |
|---|
| 1. be ___ as the wind<br>while carrying the<br>Message ...                            |
| 3. Swift as the ___ of<br>an eye, ye can ...<br>partake of this<br>imperishable favor |
| 4. ___ not thyself of<br>the things that lie<br>hidden in its depths                  |
| 6. Make ___ of Me on<br>My earth ...  |
| 8. This ... fathomless<br>ocean is ...<br>astonishingly ___<br>unto you               |
| 10. take thou thy ___<br>from the ocean of<br>His grace                               |

Puzzle created by Happy Dobbs