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**Photos for sale**  
Heidi and Harry Wojahn have photos for sale on fineartamerica.com. Once on the website, search for Harry Wojahn to locate the gallery of photos for sale. All transactions are conducted through PayPal for safety.  
Fineartamerica.com has a large number of different sized prints including canvas and the new style of metal prints. Check out our photos and let us know what you think.

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**Confusing isn't it...**  
This information provided by:  
**First Congregational Church of Fruitport**  
3212 E. Pontaluna Road  
Church & Sunday School at 10:30 AM

## Desert steeds

By Al Schneider

During my stay in Japan some years after World War II, a local artist approached me. He wanted to paint a picture with a Christian theme, a religion about which he knew little or nothing. It being the Christmas season, I suggested a desert scene showing the wise men. I described the scene as three Oriental men in royal attire, riding across the desert on camels toward a shining star. "Ah, so," he said. He understood. All except the part about the camels.

"Horses?" he asked.

"No, camels."

He mulled that over. "Horses?"

I tried to sketch a camel.

"Horse?"

"Well yes, horses."

So it came about that I became the benefactor of Earth's only scene of the wise men riding horses across the desert. "Hi ho, Silver!"

Actually, it was a beautiful painting. I might wish now that I had taken better care of it. The frequent moves we made along with much handling, resulted in the artwork's now being only a memory.

The Japanese painter, probably a Buddhist, isn't the only one to get the Christmas message wrong. A painter born and raised in our country, might do far worse. He might, for instance, depict the wise men as donning red suits, laughing all the way across the desert. The skyline could be a silhouette of department stores with "Happy Holiday" markings. There could be a bar room along the way with sounds of "He's a Jolly Good Fellow." While we're at it, let's have a pear tree with a partridge clinging to a branch. Champagne corks could pop at the birth scene. The somber setting so commonly imaged, could be transformed into a rousing celebratory occasion.

I have thought of that Japanese painter. Surely he wondered, "What kind of a religion is this?" He's not alone. I'm convinced that many who occupy pews on Sunday mornings have little understanding of the meaning of Christmas.

Let me put it this way. There is less difference between a horse and a camel than there is between the babe born that night and every other child ever born! That which entered our world that night was God incarnate. Very God of very God. King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Our Creator God, no less. There he lay, newly born into a world that offered not so much as a crib for his bed, as Luther points out.

Who is able to express what happened that night? Artists have tried. Hymn writers have touched us with heartfelt words. *It Came Upon A Midnight Clear*, *Silent Night*, and *O Little Town of Bethlehem* are among these. One of the most moving of all songs is a contemporary one by loveable clown, Mark Lowry and his friend Buddy Greene, *Mary Did You Know*. Have you heard it? "When you kiss your little baby, you kiss the face of God." Make it a priority to hear that song. Just lay back and listen. Don't worry about dry eyes. Let the tears flow.

What a night that was. Angels sang to shepherds. How often does that happen? You and I can still enjoy the blessings, you know. They were for us, too. We need only recall that there was born unto us that night, a Savior which is Christ the Lord. •

## Christmas series at Word of Hope Church

By Pastor John Koedyker

During the month of December, Word of Hope Church, 284 N. Third Avenue, will be following a series called "The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem." Each Sunday at 10 a.m. a different part of the journey to Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus will be featured. Aided by video presentations from a number of locations in the Holy Land, Pastor John Koedyker will lead all who desire to move closer into a relationship with the God who sent Jesus to be the Savior. December 9 will consider "Joseph of Bethlehem," December 16 will feature "Mary's Visit to Elizabeth," and December 23 will be the story of "Nazareth to Bethlehem." On Christmas Eve at 5 p.m., a special Candlelight Service will be held. The subject will be "The Manger."

The public is invited to any and all of the special Christmas events.

## Christmas Eve service at Word of Hope Church

(Submitted by Word of Hope Church)

At 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve (Monday, December 24), a special candlelight service will be held at the Word of Hope Church, 284 N. Third Avenue in Fruitport. Everyone is invited to share the singing of Christmas carols in candlelight. Pastor John Koedyker will share a message on "The Manger," and there will be special music and refreshments afterwards.

Don't let Christmas happen without celebrating the true meaning of the holiday and the coming of the Savior Jesus Christ to earth. •

## Still adoring Abby

By Clif Martin

It was a few decades ago that my story, "Adoring Abby" showed up here in the FAN. A nine-year-old Fruitport girl, Abigail France, and I went to the same church. I had six grandsons (another one has been added) but no little girl to love and spoil. Miss Abby appeared on Sunday in a purple dress and I fell in love.

I asked Abby's mom if the child could use another grandfather. I do not recommend trying that these days. I'm forever grateful that mom did not call the cops, or tell me to leave the kid alone.

Anyway, Abby approached me the next Sunday and shyly handed me a school picture. She didn't say much, but before long she was next to me in the pew, her head on my shoulder, talking a mile a minute. Heaven must be something like that.

Men need little girls to adore, and little girls need men they can safely adore. It's part of growing up. When I listen to my old recording of Maurice Chevalier singing "Thank Heaven for Little Girls," I think of Abby, now Wonder Woman Abby Welch, owner of the Sweet Tooth Cakery in beautiful downtown Fruitport. Thank heaven for little girls. They grow up and do big things. •



**Dean Snider, Eleanor Sanka, and Dan Crothers discuss the packed boxes.**

## 'Packing Party' held at Bethel Baptist Church

By Mary Weimer

Bethel Baptist Church of Fruitport held a "packing party" to fill boxes with gifts in support of Operation Christmas Child on Wednesday, November 7, 2012. The congregation surpassed a goal offered by Pastor Lamber-

## Community leaders recognized as Agents of Change

(Submitted by the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce)

Ten community leaders and initiatives have been recognized as the 2012 Agents of Change. Each year, the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce's Inclusion and Community Awareness Committee selects individuals or projects that have made a positive contribution to the Muskegon Lakeshore and awards them as Agents of Change.

This year's Agents of Change were recognized at the Fifth Annual Agents of Change Business After Hours celebration November 8 at Hennessey's Irish Pub. Nearly 150 business and community leaders gathered to celebrate.

"Each year we are amazed by the amount of passion this community has and the hard work, dedication and activities these 'Agents of Change' bring to our community," said Cindy Larsen, president of the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce.

"So many great things are happening in our community that go unnoticed," said Michael Hagen, general manager at The Lakes Mall and chairman of the board for the Muskegon Chamber. "It's the work of these great community members that makes Muskegon such a great place to live, work and play."

Each year the Chamber partners with WGVU to host this event. Each of this year's Agents of Change was interviewed by morning show host, Shelly Irwin.

This year's Agents of Change include: Amanda Shunta, for bringing cash mobs to Muskegon; Ed Garner, for economic development initiatives and promoting unity along the Lakeshore; West Michigan Underwater Preserve Organization; Jera Cook and Brett Gilbert for Fatty Lumpkins Investment and the "Fat Garden Project"; Jennifer Cross, for development, beautification and promotion of the Third Street corridor in downtown Muskegon; Kathy Evans, for the Muskegon Lake shoreline restoration and clean-up initiative; 1 in 23 Steering Committee to make Muskegon the healthiest county in the state by 2021; Andrew Haan, for downtown Muskegon development and beautification; Michele and Eric Ringleberg, for their e-Cycle for Charity Initiative; and Anne and Allan Dake, for the revitalization of the Muskegon Heritage Museum. •

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