



First Pres Pays Tribute to Organ Donors March 12th by Connie Ellenberger



Chelsea Chin

Organ donors? Kidneys, livers, lungs? No. Pipes, chests, and leathers.

First Pres is paying tribute to two of our members, the late Lois Dalzell and the late Dorothy Hamilton for their generous donations given in 1998 and 2009 to improve our *pipe* organ.

This tribute comes in the form of a celebratory organ concert displaying our organ through the talents of internationally-renowned organist, Chelsea Chen and will be occurring at First Pres on Friday, March 12, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. Chelsea will be joined by Dr. Lewis Wong, violinist, for a portion of the concert.

The program will include favorites such as J. S. Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor" as well as Ms. Chen's own "Super Mario Fantasia," an amusing piece based on the video game of that name and sure to please the video-games crowd.

Who was Lois Dalzell and what did she contribute? Lois, an active member of First Pres for many years, and a pianist who frequently played piano duets at church, valued church

music in general, and organ music in particular. In 1998, First Pres was given the opportunity to purchase a pipe organ being sold by a Southern Californian church. At that time, the church's organ (the pipes and parts behind the louvres) was inadequate to musically support a large, worshipping congregation, so Lois provided the needed funds, the purchase was made, and the new pipes with their wind chests were installed, doubling the pipe count.

Who was Dorothy Hamilton and how did her contribution help the organ? As a long-time Fresno-area musician, music educator, and organist, Dorothy was greatly interested and involved in the music program at First Pres.

Like Lois, she also valued the role of the organ in worship, and understood that as an instrument with moving parts such as the leather wind bellows needed to blow air into the pipes, the organ would occasionally require replacement of those parts—an expensive project.

So she included First Pres as a beneficiary in her estate, specifying a generous sum for the organ. In 2009, just over a decade after Lois Dalzell's gift of pipes was installed, all the worn-out, moving parts of the organ were replaced and/or refurbished with a portion of the funds given by Dorothy Hamilton.

Why was Chelsea Chen chosen to demonstrate the result of the gifts of these two women? Chelsea, a devout Christian, uses her musical gifts to honor and glorify the Lord, and is the granddaughter of First Pres member Honni Smith and her late husband, Bob.

Moreover, she is also one very talented young woman. Chelsea re-

ceived her bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School of Music and the Artist Diploma from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. She has performed in such national and international venues as New York's Lincoln Center, Los Angeles' Disney Hall, San Diego's Spreckels Organ Pavilion, Hong Kong's Cultural Centre, and Singapore's Esplanade. Since September she has been serving as Artist-in-Residence at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Manhattan. If you would like to know more about her, visit her website at www.chelseachen.com.

As a gift to our congregation and to the community, there is no admission charge, and a Meet-the-Artists Reception will immediately follow the concert in the Fellowship Hall.

Come hear the results of the gifts of Lois Dalzell and Dorothy Hamilton played from the organ console you, the members of First Pres purchased as part of the Mission Possible Campaign. Come, hear, and celebrate the goodness of the Lord, the Giver of all good things.



Dr. Lewis Wong

God's Economy by Skin Mead, Executive Producer of *Finding Hope Now*

How does a film get made in God's economy, for God's purpose? Not as you might think.

I'm a person who has many strengths and tons of weaknesses, a person like you, who likes to have a certain amount of control over life and a feeling for where things are going. But that wasn't God's plan for me with the film *Finding Hope Now*.

About me . . . I have degrees in math, science, and business. Not English. Not writing. In school I hated writing. As a matter of fact, I would do anything to avoid an essay test. Give me a good old multiple-guess test anytime.

Yet, I felt a passion to write this story, a yearning inside of me that said this story can change a lot of lives. I felt God calling me to do something I had never done before, so I stepped outside my comfort zone to take a step into God's economy.

The beginning of a good film always starts with a fabulous story. The story is key. I knew there was a great story to be told about Rev. Minassian, a pastor in Fresno, California, who at the age of 52 founded the faith-based organization called *Hope Now for Youth*.

Hope Now for Youth has an amazing success story of its own. To date it has taken over 1,700 gang youth off the streets of Fresno. But I was interested primarily in the story about Roger Minassian, the organization's founder. He knew nothing about gangs, had no training in gang protocol, and he could have coasted to retirement as the senior pastor of a large church, but instead he resigned his position to do something extraordinary.

Talk about a fish out of water! He was a white middle-aged middle-class Armenian pastor, not exactly the kind of guy you would picture to help gang youth who had no hope and were

poor Hispanic, Asian, and Black kids. What a story!

I had lunch with Rev. Minassian every other Friday for almost two years, digging for insights. He set up interviews for me with gang youth who had straightened out their lives through God and the *Hope Now for Youth* program. It



MICHAEL BADALUCCO

Michael received an Emmy Award for his portrayal of Jimmy Berluti on *The Practice*. He was also in *Raging Bull*, *Broadway Danny Rose*, *Jungle Fever*, *The Professional*, *Summer of Sam*, *O Brother Where Art Thou*, and *The Man Who Wasn't There*.

was during this time that I wrote the screenplay *Finding Hope Now*.

I knew when I finished the screenplay that it was a good story, so I entered the script into screenplay competitions. I needed encouragement and good, honest, straightforward critique from people who didn't know me. My wife loved the screenplay, but that wasn't enough!

I took the advice of the many critiques and proceeded to revise, rewrite, and rework the script again and again. This was a total walk of faith. I had no training in writing a screenplay and no experience to fall back on. Yet, I knew I was doing what I needed to do.

Encouragingly, the screenplay won first place in a small screen-

writing contest, then it won first place in a bigger contest, and then it was a semi-finalist in the John Templeton Foundation Kairos Prize Contest. That's when I knew the screenplay was ready, but now what? How does a screenplay get made into a movie?

Various producers showed an interest in optioning the script, but they all wanted to obtain total rights "in perpetuity." This meant that they could change anything in the screenplay that they wanted. I couldn't have that. This screenplay is based on a true story.

I knew nothing about producing a film. I had never been on a film set, and didn't know anyone in the film business, but I had heard about a church in Albany, Georgia, that produced its own movie, "Facing the Giants."

The church didn't sell the story rights to anyone, so the script could never be changed. In this way they controlled the total content of their film. They sold only the rights to distribute their film.

I decided to follow their production model. They hired a limited number of professionals and used mostly volunteers, people with a passion for telling a story of God, in order to keep their production costs down.

In God's economy you are not the leader. God's economy is best summed up in 2 Corinthians 12:9 when Jesus said, "My gracious favor is all you need. My power works best in your weakness."

God opened doors to places I could never have imagined. It all started when I went skiing with some dear friends. I told them about winning the screenplay contests and that I wanted this great story to become a film. My friend said, "I wonder if Michael would like to be in your movie?"

I had no idea. Here's the connection. My friend's daughter married Michael Badalucco's best friend's



NICK REY ANGELUS

Nick was featured in Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center* and the hit *Ladron Que Roba a Ladron*. He recently played the lead role of Beto Hernandez in the 2009 release *Primos*.

son. Read that sentence again slowly!

This connection led to Michael Badalucco (Emmy Award winner from the series *The Practice*) playing the role of Rev. Minassian in our film. This wasn't a coincidence. It was part of God's economy.

When Michael Badalucco came on board he gave credibility to our film, and the production train started rolling. As he said, "The train is leaving the station." He wasn't kidding.

From interviewing gang kids who had changed their lives, I created the "real-life" character of "Santos." In our movie Santos must decide between getting help from Rev. Minassian, or joining the local gang. Avan Jogia (Nickelodeon movies *Gym Teacher*, and *Spectacular!*) came on board to play this key role.

The character of the gang leader, Reynaldo, needed someone intimidating. Nick Rey Angeles (*World Trade Center*, *Ladron Que Roba a Ladron*) fit the role.

I was now the engineer of a film production project going down tracks

that I had never been on before. The one thing I did know was the importance of surrounding myself with knowledgeable people. Our director, an award winner from the Houston International Film Festival, came on board with a great passion for our story. So did the Director of Photography, and also our Post-Production Supervisor, himself an Emmy Award nominee.

I wrote the screenplay as I saw it in my head, not thinking about the production costs involved with making it into a movie. My close circle of knowledgeable associates quickly told me that this wasn't a typical low-budget independent film. It had hundreds of actors and because of its thirty-two locations it could not be filmed in the usual eighteen days it took to produce an independent film. This was going to be a costly production.

The only way we could produce this film was through the Screen Actors Guild Ultra-Low Budget contract. This meant that everyone involved had to work for reduced wages, deferrals, and film participation, or completely volunteer their time and talents. And this they enthusiastically did. Everybody.

In God's economy, when you know that you don't have the resources for the production, you have to let go and let God do His work. And marvelous things begin to happen.

- 30 out of the 32 locations were donated.
 - A 6,000 square foot production office was donated.
 - Four penthouse apartments were donated for key actors.
 - A 10-ton grip truck arrived instead of the 3-ton ordered.
 - All of the food for production was donated.
 - The wardrobe was donated.
 - Most of the props were donated.
 - Production RV's were donated.
- Isn't God's economy awesome? The Fresno community caught the passion for our film project: to

help take gang kids off our streets, and heighten the awareness of the organization *Hope Now for Youth*. And God provided:

- 761 Actors
- 228 Food Donors
- 109 Crew Members
- 26 Full Shoot Days
- 32 Locations

And now it's up to us to edit this film to the highest quality possible, with God's help, because we signed a contract with the producer's representative who handled the distribution for "Facing the Giants" and "Fireproof." He will handle our distribution. God is good.

God's economy. Isn't it something? He has blessed us tremendously, above our wildest expectations, with His abounding resources.

Do you have a screenplay that glorifies God, a screenplay which can change lives? Let Him lead your film project. He wants to do the same for you.



AVAN JOGIA

Avan has been in two Lifetime movies: *The Diary* and *The Gwen Araujo Story*, three Nickelodeon movies: *Gym Teacher*, *Spectacular!*, and *Victoria Justice*, and three feature films: *Choices*, *Caprica*, and *Triple Dog*.

Family Service Ministry By Terry Jaurena

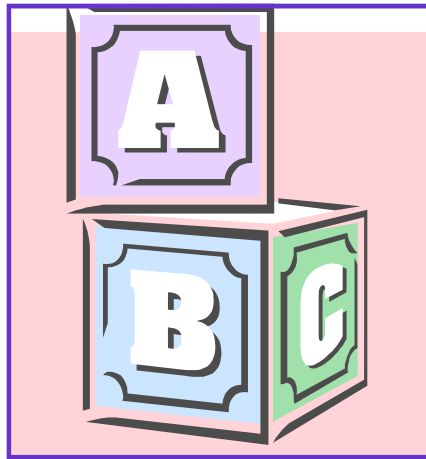
Very quietly for a number of months now some folks have been gathering and talking and thinking and praying about how to be intentional and help one another do something they deeply desired. It's been my joy and privilege to meet and talk and pray with them and to do all I could to fan their flame.

The deeply desired something is to instill a care and concern for others in their children and a willingness to serve joyfully. They wanted to find ways to serve the community together as a family that would be meaningful for both the adults and children. Imperceptibly and in a rather grass roots sort of way, it's been happening.

In August several families spent a Friday and a Saturday preparing and painting the downstairs CE rooms. In September and October some families made it a point to help with the Neighbors aRe Us dinner the fourth Thursday of those months.

One family took it upon themselves to make scarves and give them out to families as they picked up food boxes in December. They were at the church staffing the refreshment area where they were greeting folks and giving out their hand-made gifts.

Another family spent a Saturday evening in January at the Craycroft Center playing board games and just hanging out with kids. Several other ideas have been pursued and researched.



What is the fruit of their efforts? Catherine Alkire remembers that as they left the Craycroft Center Brad said, "That was nice. I really enjoyed it. Can we do this once a month?"

She further said, "The other kids then chimed in that they had a good time; which was so nice since I really didn't know what to expect and gave them little information about what they would be doing. I think they went out of obedience to me, yet the Lord melted their hearts and they were blessed by the experience!"

The Abajian family tells Ann, "it's fun and we're all together as a family serving God."

I'm not sure which one said what, but this is what Sarah heard from the Crantz girls: "We got to spend more time together while serving God at the same time!" "It is fun!" "We liked being with our church friends more."

You're invited and encouraged to jump in as the Lord leads you and as you and your family are able. The hope is to provide something each month, and there are opportunities being organized from now until July.

February's activity was to serve at Neighbors aRe Us, and that's an opportunity open to families every month.

For March there is a plan to serve at the Evangel Home, going in from 4:30 to 7:30 to help serve dinner and do story/play time with kids and families.

In April it's Smiles and Snickerdoodles to the California Armenian Home. Families will bake cookies, choose their favorite verse, then meet on Saturday (time to be determined) to deliver Snickerdoodles and Smiles.

In May they're looking at a project with Bob Ditmar of FUND in this neighborhood or a project at a church member's home with Mark May.

In June there's an opportunity at the Poverello House that's still in the works.

Any of the women in this coordinating and supportive group would love to tell you more about it. They are Ann Abajian, Catherine Alkire, Kendra Barcelos, Sarah Crantz, or Kelli Samuelian. I call them the ABC'S (note the first letters of the last names) and I love the foundational blocks they are laying for their children of care and service for others. Please contact Ann at abajianfamily@sbcglobal.net if you want to join in any specific month's activity.



February in Erseke, Albania By Bob and Linda Osborne

“January goes out like a lamb, while February comes in like a lion.” Is that how the saying goes? Well, maybe not but at least that’s how it’s been here in Erseke! The winter snow storms have finally arrived in full force, the mountains are covered with snow and the waterfalls are frozen with icicles hanging down about 25 feet long. Last night two of our students slept in the snow cave they had built the day before!

We’ve just returned from our travel weekend to Durres, Kruja and Tirana. All of these cities are north of us so the students got a bigger view of Albania.

Durres is a port town on the Adriatic Sea and probably the second largest city in Albania. Kruja is perched on the side of mountains and it takes quite a bit of curves to get to the top where there is a museum honoring Skanderbeg, the national hero who liberated the Albanians from the Turks in 1912.

Tirana is the capital city of Albania and home to many embassies, the major university and bowling — yes, bowling. Once again Bob hosted the school’s annual party. What fun we had! Traveling home on Sunday evening was a long, slow process as it was snowing on all the mountain passes, but we made it just fine and in great spirits!

We’ve been blessed with wonderful teaching

this month. We have enjoyed two weeks of Romans from Kurt Shneck who’s from the Torchbearers School, SchlosKlaus, as well as one week of Philipians with Tobi Kley who’s from the Torchbearers School, Tauernhof. Both are in Austria.

Next week we host Vasile Filat who is ministering in Moldova. So from around the world teachers are coming and the Lord is blessing our students in amazing way. Of course, this includes our dear friend and colleague, Terry Jaurena, who both blessed and challenged the students to see God’s work in the world and join the mighty chorus.

From February 27 through March 6 we sponsored an Outreach Week. We had the students stay here and join the church in outreach to Erseke.

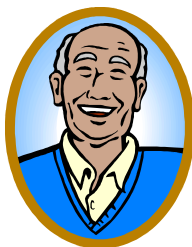
Normally the students go to another town and minister with the local evangelical church. But this year through God’s leading and because of the encouraging teaching we proclaimed Christ in our own town — in homes, in shops, at the weekly market place, on the soccer field, or over a coffee with friends and with the local teachers.

Thank you for the many ways you touch our lives with blessings and encouragements. Many times yours is the note, the e-mail, or the phone call that boosts our spirits and brings immediate joy to our hearts.



Life Adjustment Seminar By Roger Taylor

A great opportunity for our church and community, the second bi-annual Life Adjustment Seminar, will happen in our church fellowship hall on Saturday, March 20, 8:30 to noon.



The goal of this seminar, organized by the Deacons’ Board, is to assist folks with quality of life and meeting the common challenges, which oc-

cur in almost everyone’s life.

A sampling of some potential presentations includes the following:

- * *Developing Healthy Boundaries and Preventing Co-dependency*, by Rev. Nancy Jen
- * *Frauds, Scams, and Elder Abuse*, by Cory Scholtes and Detective David Case
- * *Creative Retirement* by Honni Smith, Eleanor and Roland Bergthold, and Paul Arm-

- strong
- * *Understanding Your Grieving Heart* by Kathy Cromwell, LCSW



You are encouraged to pre-register at the church on March 7 and 14, but this is not required. There is no fee for the seminar but a \$5 donation would be appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Karon Chambers or Pauline Kliever.

Deadline Information

The deadline for the April Challenger is Friday, March 19 at 5

p.m. Please contact Daphne Saul at 252-4064 or you may e-mail her at daphne4926@sbcglobal.net. You may also leave articles in the newsletter box in the church office.

The deadline for “A Place for You” is each Monday at 5 p.m.

Please submit announcements to: Cheryl Eaker at 485-6460 or staff@fpcfresno.org and put Cheryl Eaker’s name in the subject box.

First Pres Challenger

March 2010

(USPS 572-240)

Published monthly by
First Presbyterian Church
1540 M Street
Fresno, CA 93721-1277



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For Your Information

A Letter from Our Pastors and Elders

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms...I am going there to prepare a place for you...” John 14:1-3

There are no words that can truly express our grief in the sudden passing of our dear friend and pastor, Jamie Evans.

So many have asked, “What can I do to help?” As our Executive Pastor David Abdo and our leaders on Session work on practical support for the family, there will be opportunities to offer assistance.

In the meantime, the most powerful help we can offer is joining together in praying for Kristy and the children who are surrounded by their family, friends, and our pastors. Kristy and the family confirm the strength and comfort they have been experiencing through your prayers.

A memorial service is scheduled for Saturday, March 6, 2010 at 10 a.m. here at First Pres.

May God comfort and bless you and all of us as we celebrate Jamie’s life and continue to love God and each other more deeply during this difficult time.

Yours in Christ,

The Pastors and Session of First Presbyterian Church

Cars for Networkers

The Networker Team is looking for three to four cars for the summer. If you are thinking about a new car, and would like to donate your old car to the church, we are able to give contribution credit for the value of the gift in kind. At the end of summer, any cars received as donations will be donated on to someone else in need of reliable transportation. If you would like to loan a car for the summer, that would also be appreciated. Either way, please contact Susan Glover.



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