



Dovetales, a newsletter of
Gladwyne Presbyterian Church,
1321 Beaumont Drive 19035 610-649-2235 www.gladwynepres.org
P. Todd Stavrakos, Pastor
March, 2009 edition
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March

- 1 11 a.m. Communion Sunday
- 3 11 a.m. Bible Study (every Tues.)
7 p.m. Deacons' meeting
- 5 7 p.m. Women's Book Group*
(NOTE: Earlier date)
- 6 **World Day of Prayer***
10 a.m. Coffee hour and Fellowship
11 a.m. Worship
- 7 **Daylight Savings Time begins*** – Turn your
clocks forward before going to bed
- 10 11 a.m. Bible Study
- 11 7:30 p.m. Session meeting
- 17 11 a.m. Bible Study
7 p.m. Knit or Knot*
- 19 7:30 p.m. Men's Group*
- 22 5 p.m. **VOX** concert – Voice, flute, oboe and organ*
- 24 11 a.m. Bible Study
- 31 11 a.m. Bible Study

* More fully described elsewhere in Dovetales

“Forty Days”

Well so much for a new era, it lasted what, about five minutes? Many looked forward to the beginning of the Obama administration, those who voted for him and those who honestly had just gotten tired of the same old, same old coming out of Washington. Sure, it began well enough, both sides talking about bi-partisanship but it really didn't take long for Democrats and Republicans to shift to their status quo way of doing things. First the Democrats decide they would rather pass legislation supporting pet projects without input from the other side of the aisle, and then the Republicans decided to just be reactionary and dig in their heels. The clock is ticking on the one hundred days and it doesn't seem like this is going to end well.

One hundred days is now the magic number that we use to determine if an administration is going to be successful, completely ignoring the reality that influence and popularity ebbs and flows depending on the events of the day. Yet, we seem to think that if the first one hundred days are not successful, well then the four years will not be successful. While conventional wisdom utilizes 100 days, scripture prefers forty days, forty days have become the barometer in scripture. Important things happen in forty day, a measure of success is what happens in those forty days.

It would seem that the number forty began with the number of days it rained to create the Flood. Then it appears again as the number of years that Israel was forced to live in the Wilderness because of their lack of obedience to God. Perhaps God did not want forty years to be the requirement for testing, too long, so God got rid of the years and once again used days. We have the forty days that Elijah fled into the Wilderness to hid from King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel. Then we have the forty days that Jesus was tempted in the Wilderness following his baptism. Forty has come to signify a time of testing, a time of danger, even death. The faithful are required to endure these forty days, to stand strong in the face of trials and tribulations. At the end, the faithful are stronger, as if forged by fire.

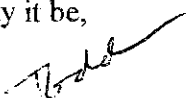
But just because the forty days are over, it does not mean the trials and tribulations are over, the forty are just a sign of what will come against the faithful, one does not really emerge from the forty knowing that they are over, more likely they become more prepared on how to deal with hardships in daily life. Elijah was tempted after his forty days, Jesus continued to be tempted through out this life.

Reality is that we are constantly faced with adversity. Being a Christian does not exempt us from struggles, hardship and grief, but being a Christian gives us a unique outlook on these hardships. It means we can look beyond any present suffering, knowing that something greater lies ahead. It means that even in the midst of our own suffering, we can reach out to others and others can reach out to us in the hope of Christ. This is one of the ways that we deal with our present suffering; we feel the love and support of those around us.

In Lent we “suffer” for forty days, yet we know that Easter is around the corner and joy awaits us. Lent prepares us for our hardships; it makes us aware of the reality that for many, and perhaps ourselves, each day is a struggle. Yet even within these struggles, God is working to bring our resurrection and renewal. This is one of the reasons that the church should and must be a source of light in the present struggles of our nation and the world in this challenging economic time. This is our time of testing, this is the time in which we face hardship as individuals and as a community. So we look to Elijah and we look to Jesus and see how they remained faithful, even in the midst of their struggles.

Let us be guided in our trials and tribulations by the same Spirit that cared for Elijah and Jesus. Let us face our hardships with the confidence of ones who know the Hope that is in Christ. The “forty days” will come to an end. Let us look towards resurrection and renewal and know that a brighter day awaits us, all of us. And let us allow that light to shine on others, to allow them to know that they are not alone, but that we walk beside them.


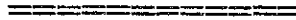
So may it be,




sin can no longer keep us from God. The Gospel of John views sin as the denial of the work of God in the world. Athanasius, another early leader of the church, spoke of how Adam and Eve were created as unique beings who had been granted the ability to partake in the life of God. The fall, or disobedience, had removed Adam and Eve from this role. Karl Barth would sum up sin and original sin by saying sin is the human no to God.

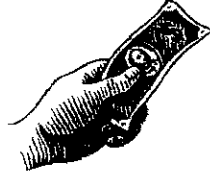
A modern understanding of original sin realizes that within us forces are at work, whether pride, egoism, addictions, etc, whatever it might be that keeps us from saying yes to the call of God. We all suffer from this brokenness, but it is less of a statement of value than we portray. In other words, to say one is broken is not to say they are bad or evil or less than another, it is a statement that we are not that which God created us to be. To say one is broken or a sinner is to say that one needs God in their life. It is a realization that we are finite, that we are limited, that we aspire to greater things but cannot get there by ourselves.

In coming to understand our brokenness, in whatever fashion it is, we see God for who God is, a loving Creator who looks past our brokenness and loves us as we are. The greatest reality we live in is summed up by Karl Barth, who states the Jesus Christ is God's yes to our no; God's willingness to look past our brokenness to say yes to us. To me original sin and even sin says less about us and more about God, for God has not allowed our no to God to be the last word, instead we hear time and again, the great Yes of God.



Bach Birthday Bash
Valentin Radu and Guests
March 22
5:00 p.m.
GPC sanctuary





THANK YOU

Growing our ministry both in our community and throughout the world is an important mission inherited from those who have come before us. Now it is our responsibility to be good stewards of this ministry as well as to provide for the future generations to come. Over the last several years we have drawn heavily on the Building Fund to achieve our goals. The Building Fund cannot support the programs of GPC in perpetuity, and we must move quickly to balance our budget.

Last month, at the congregational meeting, I mentioned that if each of us increased our giving by just two dollars a day, the budget deficit could be eliminated. I wish to thank those who responded to this suggestion and have already given an extra contribution beyond their planned giving in the amount of two dollars per day for the entire year.

I realize that not all are able to increase their financial support to GPC at this time. For those who are able, I do ask that you consider the possibility of giving an extra contribution that would enable GPC to continue our ministry. Perhaps you may want to try setting aside two dollars a day for a month and find out if you really could increase your support of our church by this amount. I know just last Saturday, my daughter Veronica stopped at a Dunkin' Donuts to get food that she was supposed to bring to a play rehearsal. She came out with a cup of coffee for herself as well. When I asked how much it cost, she told me \$1.79. For little more than the cost of a cup of coffee a day, we could go a long way to balancing our budget.

Thank you again to those of you who have taken a leadership roll in helping maintain and grow the ministry of GPC.

Ralph Hall

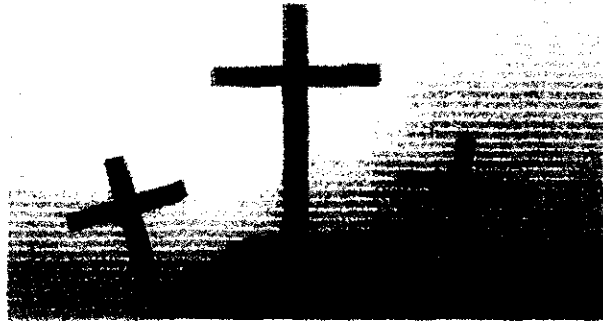
We **WELCOME** our new members

On Wednesday, February 18th, the session welcomed two new members to GPC, **Donna Guile** and **Carrie Kanzinger**. Donna joins us through a transfer of membership from Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church in Delaware. Since joining us in worship, she has greatly enjoyed COALESCE as well as the mission opportunities in which GPC participates. Carrie joins us through a profession of faith. Last January, her youngest son, Joe, was baptized and since then Carrie has joined us for worship as well as been involved with many of our family events. Her oldest son, Jack, was also baptized at GPC and Chad, her husband, was raised here. She is looking forward to getting more involved in elderly care as well as the programs for the youth. We rejoice at the addition of Donna and Carrie and wish them the best as they continue their spiritual journeys with us.



Do we get to have Lebanon bologna?

The answer is yes, if you plan on attending the GPC's annual church wide retreat. After two very successful retreats at Ocean Grove, NJ, we have decided to "head to the hills" and hold the retreat at Kenbrook Retreat Center outside of Lebanon, PA from **May 29th through 31st**. The theme this year will be "Building Community". Plan to arrive around 7 pm on Friday and then spend the weekend enjoying the trails and scenery of lovely Pennsylvania hills. The accommodations at Kenbrook are hotel style, meaning that each room holds four people with bathrooms in the rooms; all linens are provided. In addition meals are also included and those provided will be Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner and breakfast on Sunday. You will be responsible for Friday dinner and Sunday lunch. Costs are based upon occupancy of a room. If you wish to have your own room, the cost is \$169, for two people in a room \$148 and triple or quad occupancy is \$117. These rates apply for those over the age of 13. Children less than a year old are free. Other children up to 12 cost \$9 for each year old the child is, for instance a 5 year old would be \$45. **If you are interested in attending, you must inform the church office no later than May 15.** No one will be able to go if you are not signed up by then. For those who wish to come for the day, the costs are \$7 for grounds fee and then the cost of the meal you participate in, breakfast is \$6.50, lunch \$9, dinner \$10.50. Please sign up as soon as possible so that we can begin to plan the event.



Lenten Retreat: Being Real with God

Gerald May, a noted psychiatrist and spiritual director, speaks of the need to free ourselves from the image we have created for ourselves as well as the image we have created for God and allow our "real" selves to meet the mysterious presence of God. This is the sacred exchange that many of us seek. On **Saturday, March 21st**, the Deacons are sponsoring a **Lenten Retreat entitled "Being Real with God"** in which we will explore our real selves and begin to free ourselves to meet the "real" God. The retreat will **begin at 9 am and end at 1 pm, lunch will be provided**. Please sign up if you wish to attend.

Spring is coming, Easter cannot be far behind

If we are talking about Lent, then Easter must be soon. Holy Week begins with **Palm Sunday on April 5th** and we have several events planned to prepare for Easter Sunday. On **April 9th**, we will **celebrate Maundy Thursday by holding a Seder dinner**. It is appropriate that on the first night of Passover, we join together and remember the sort of meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. On **Saturday, April 11th** we will **hold the Easter Vigil beginning at 8 am** and ask that you sign up for an hour slot to sit vigil through **Easter Sunday's Sunrise service at 7:30 am in the Chapel in the Woods**. Following the Sunrise service stay and enjoy breakfast and share in the Easter joy. At **9:30 am on Easter Sunday, we will host an Easter egg hunt** for the youth and then **at 11 am we will celebrate Easter**. Be sure to get these events on your calendar so you do not miss out on any of these wonderful experiences.



March Birthdays

- 8 Hank Holmes
Barbara Kanzinger
Donna McGowan
- 11 Karla Holmes
Alexa Denicola
- 12 Margaret McHugh
- 17 Linda Gerstein
- 19 Helen Holmes
- 20 Jen Stavrakos
- 25 Douglas Pratt
- 29 Sandra Drayer

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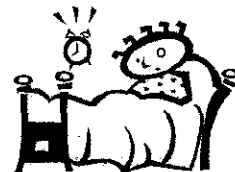


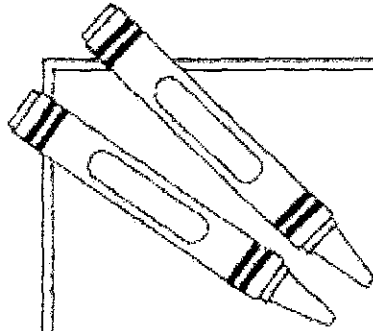
Women's Book Group

The March Women's Book Group meeting will be **March 5**, 7 p.m. - **note change of date for the meeting!!** We will be reading The Lace Reader by Brunonia Barry. The books must be returned to the library 3/11 necessitating the earlier book group date.

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March 7 – Before you go to bed, turn your clocks **FORWARD** (Spring up ↗) as Daylight Savings Time begins. Yippee, longer days with more sunlight!! That's got to make us feel better!



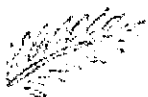


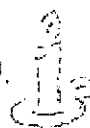


Just for **KIDS**


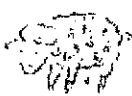



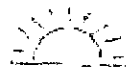

Springtime Messages

We see many Christian symbols and signs during Lent and Easter. Write the name of each picture in the boxes. Unscramble the letters that are circled to find the message that these symbols and signs bring us each spring.

ACROSS

- 2. 
- 5. 
- 7. 
- 9. 

DOWN

- 1. 
- 3. 
- 4. 
- 6. 
- 7. 
- 8. 
- 10. 

“J
 I
 !”



Holy Week Schedule

- April 5 Palm Sunday
- April 9 Maundy Thursday Seder dinner
- April 11 Easter Vigil
- April 12 Easter Sunday

7:30 a.m. Sunrise service in the Chapel in the Woods.
Follow the Sunrise service stay and enjoy breakfast
and share in the Easter joy.

9:30 a.m. Easter egg hunt for the youth

11:00 a.m. Worship - Easter Celebration



With the advent of spring and Daylight Savings time comes Easter and time to think about filling the sanctuary with spring flowers. If you would like to celebrate spring, honoring a loved one, we will be ordering flowers for the sanctuary for Easter soon. If you would like to contribute to the Flower Fund, please use the order blank below:

Name _____

Amount _____

Dedication _____

Please note on your check to GPC - 'Flower fund'. Any donation will be appreciated. Flowers should cost \$15-18 each. Thank you.



OUTREACH REPORT

The Outreach budget is nearly finished and, as promised, we are giving more significant amounts to fewer organizations, those with whom we want to maintain and emphasize more hands-on participation. We also want to support the youth's mission by having some funds available for the churches they work with on mission trips.

We have revamped our contributions to Peoples Emergency Center by reviving an old practise of providing donations to supply their rooms with toiletries. The list and requests will be available soon. Also their current needs are described below.

Central Presbyterian Church in Norristown remains high on our hands-on list and five or six folks are going every month to prepare and serve meals. If you haven't done this yet, please volunteer or talk to someone who does. We leave from the lower parking lot at 3:30 on the last Saturday of the month and are usually back by 7 or so. Their Saturday Night Dinners will celebrate their tenth anniversary this April, serving, on average of 89 people each time. This was begun by two women who continue this project. Most nights they have help from churches and Baptist College students but are sometimes totally on their own. It is amazing what two good people can accomplish. They do a wonderful good for the community and also to those of us who are given the opportunity to contribute money, food and hands.

We need a way to continue the **JUST ONE MORE** project. Contributions have been dwindling down. I'm certain that is mainly a "memory" problem. Can we enlist our young kids in helping us to remember by making a paper bag with the JUST ONE MORE hand written on it and left in the car, very visibly?

OR – There will be a donations jug on the Community Room coffee bar. If you come to church and have forgotten to pick something up at the grocery store, please drop a few dollars or your pocket change in the JUG and the 'mystery shopper' will see that groceries are bought.

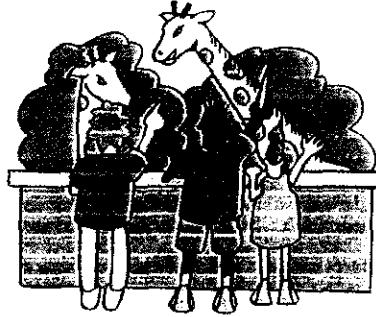
But please help us continue to provide non-perishables by participating one way or the other. THANK YOU!

NEEDED:

PEC can use old computers, Pentium III or better, PC or laptop. Staff can erase them clean, the youngsters can refurbish and they are then given to residents and the community. See Pat if you have one available.

Bright Lights needs sewing machines, in good working condition for a quilting project. Pat or Ann need to transport them so they can't be too heavy. See either of us if you have one to give, or even to lend for a semester.

Pat McCole, Outreach Elder



Spring *IS* Coming!!!

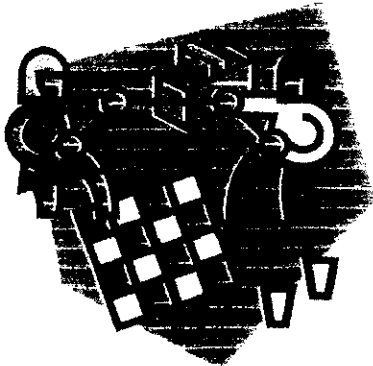
The Family Fun Day/Picnic for Nurse Family Partnership clients and their infants which was postponed due to Hurricane Hanna has been rescheduled for Saturday, May 2nd. It will be held at Elmwood Park Zoo in Norristown from 1 - 4 P.M.

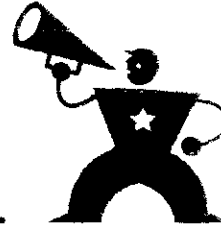
Last September, many of you offered to provide either finger foods or help at the event (or both!) I hope you'll save the afternoon or some baking time to support this program which Jen Stavrakos works so effectively to expand.

It would be wonderful if two or three of us could come with digital cameras to take photographs of the moms, dads (I hope) and their kids which we could print out and give to them. My hope is that this will be the beginning of a connection with these young neighbors.

Let me know how you can help! And thank you for all the ways you've already helped me and each other. We really are an astounding group of caring people!

Sandra Drayer





Calling all men – GPC and beyond.....

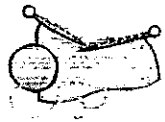
A group of five men from GPC felt the calling to start a Men's group and met January 22nd.

We are spiritual seekers that wish to share and nurture our journey in community together. We are committed to action as well as sharing our faith and will volunteer four times each year at Habitat for Humanity in Norristown. We hope that these events will provide an opportunity to make mentoring connections. We will also look for and support other opportunities to serve.

The group is open to all men who feel that they would like to enrich their spiritual lives. We actively invite other men of all ages, not just from GPC, to join. Our regular monthly meetings will be on Thursday evenings at the church, with the next on Mar. 19th. The meetings will include discussion of a topic and a reverent time of sharing. We are targeting a Saturday in March for Habitat.

We are grateful to the Lord for guiding our time together.

Larry Cozzens, Elder



KNIT OR KNOT

Do you know what the ladies are currently working on? The mouse doesn't – Come and find out - March 17 from 7 – 8:30 at Sandy Drayer's house.



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Our church is hosting World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 6 from 11 – 12 with a time for fellowship and refreshments from 10 – 11. This service was begun in 1923 by the women in Christian Churches around the world. 18 local churches are invited to plan and attend this service. All are invited and urged to come. For more information, call Sally Stevenson, 610-649-3421.

Social justice

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has underscored the importance of pursuing social justice worldwide, lamenting that far too many people today are denied this right, which is at the heart of the United Nations' mission to advance development and human dignity.

"Tragically, social justice still remains an elusive dream for an appallingly large portion of humanity," Mr. Ban said in a message to mark the first-ever World Day of Social Justice.

In Presbyterian statements on peace and justice, we find these two statements

Justice

Micah 6:8 "God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God?"

Peace

The Confession of 1967 "The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of (humankind) in cooperation with powers and authorities in politics, culture, and economics. But they have to fight against pretensions and injustices when the same powers endanger human welfare ..."

The Session has approved a Task Force on social justice. We hope to raise issues and a call to action. We want this Task force to include many from the congregation. Please call Ann Guise or Pat McCole to be part of this process.





Christianity 101: Original Sin

If there is one theological principle that most people in our society have difficulty understanding or even agreeing to, it is the principle of original sin. The basic understanding of original sin is that there is a brokenness within each of us that is part of our being. In the bible we trace this back to the Fall, the temptation and sin in Eden when Adam and Eve eat of the forbidden fruit. As the progenitors of humanity, the fall of Adam and Eve is then ingrained within all of humanity.

“Original Sin” was first termed in the 3rd century by Tertullian who used it to describe how humanity’s “sinful soul” is passed from generation to generation. Even the earliest of church fathers could not agree on whether infants were susceptible to original sin. Some believed that we were disposed towards sinning, but we had free will to choose, thereby exempting infants. Still others such as Augustine believed that original sin was passed on through procreation and therefore, even infants are affected.

For some it became a question of how damaged was humanity in this sin. If we were created in the image of God, then how much did sin damage this image? Augustine thought that this image was destroyed, that the goodness that God created in us had been tainted and corrupted by the sin. Pelagius, on the other hand, believed that inner created good was still present within us, but that sin tends to obscure it. Pelagius held to a more liberal view in which humanity had more of an ability to choose to sin or not, but Augustine held a more conservative view in which without the grace of God, we cannot help but sin. Our tradition, of Reformed theology, began with the view of the original sin in which the totality of our beings was affected by original sin, this view became known as total depravity.

Over time this understanding of original sin and sin in general has been challenged by the Enlightenment ideas of human progress and the rational abilities of humanity. Surely, free will is evident within each of us and we can choose to sin or not. But even if we do sin, we can improve ourselves and progress so that we need not sin, we can be better. By this time, sin had taken on more of a moral action, doing something wrong, than it had previously. To this day, the majority of Christians still view sin, even original sin, as a moral issue, perhaps this is why the number one sin in most minds are tied to sex. But this is not the understanding of the early church, nor is it the predominant understanding among theologians today.

Sin and original sin and the fall that created them, are more a relational issue in the early church, how does one live with God. To live in sin was to be alienated from God, separated from God. Hence the language of reconciliation we read in the gospels when we talk about the work of Jesus. To defeat sin, Jesus reconciles us to God so that

Continued ---

Gladwyne Church Teams for Refreshments

April: Team 4

May: Team 5

June: Team 1

July : Team 3

August: Team 6

September: Team 2

* designates elder or deacon who serve as coordinators for THE TEAM

Work as a team to provide simple refreshments after Sunday services in community room.

SUE	ALTHOUSE*	2	CHARLES	LAMBDIN	2
DENIS	ANDRUCHOVICI	2	GREG	LOUX	3
ILEANA	ANDRUCHOVICI	2	PALMER	LOUX	3
JOYCE	BAKER	3	ADAM	LOUX	3
LYNN	BALLARD	4	BISSIE	LOUX	3
LAURA	COZZENS	6	JASON	LOUX	3
LARRY	COZZENS*	6	BRUCE	MAC CULLOUGH	1
SANDY	DAY	1	NOREEN	MAC CULLOUGH	1
BOBBIE	DAY	1	BRUCE	MACCULLOUGH	5
WICKY	DAYTON*	4	CAROLYN	MACK	2
SANDRA	DRAYER	3	CHRISTOPHER	MACK	2
PETE	DRAYER	3	VALERIE	MACK	2
Family	PRATT	2	ETHAN	MARKMAN	5
BETH	FEATHERMAN	2	CHASE	MARKMAN	5
MARK	FIFER	4	JOANNE	MARKMAN*	5
GINGER	FIFER	4	PAT	MCCOLE*	4
LIBBY	FIFER	4	DONNA	MCGOWAN	1
BARBARA	FRAZIER	5	WILLA	MCGOWAN	1
LINDA	GERSTEIN	5	JANA	MOSSEY*	5
BRIAN	GIBSON	6	BETTY	REEVES	6
EVAN	GIBSON*	6	ALFRED	REEVES	6
DONNA	GUILE	2	SANDRA	STASHIK	6
ANN	GUISE*	2	JEN	STAVRAKOS	4
VERONICA	HALL	3	SALLY	STEVENSON	6
RALPH	HALL*	3	LINDA	STEVENSON*	6
LIN	HALL*	3	KATHLEEN	TRONCELLITI*	1
MARTHA ANN	HANSON	4	BRIANA	WEISGERBER	6
PAUL	HOLLAND	1	MEAGAN	WEISGERBER	6
HANK	HOLMES	5	JOHN	WEISGERBER*	6
JACK	HOLMES	5	RUTH	WILLIAMS	2
KARLA	HOLMES	5	MORRIS	WILLIAMS	2
BARBARA	HOLMES*	5	CHRIS	ZARIFIOU	5
CARRIE	KANZINGER	1	JESSICA	ZARIFIOU	5
BARBARA	KANZINGER*	1			