

# The LCF Connection

October 2016

## Ryan's Story

by Theresa Hennis

It's October, and you might think this story is about Halloween costumes. It's not. It's about a young man who dares to be different and what that choice can mean in terms of acceptance in our community. (You may remember that Rob mentioned him in his recent sermon, "Love Shows No Partiality").

I met Ryan after hearing about him from Sheila Miller. She asked, "Have you seen the young man here in London who wears fox ears and a tail? Don't you think that would be an interesting story?" I love a good story, and this had all the earmarks of one.

I was intrigued. I hadn't seen him before, but not too long after that conversation I was on my way to Walmart, and I saw him walking. I knew it had to be him, because as I drove up behind him, I noticed he was wearing fox ears, paws, and a tail. I stopped, we talked, and I set up an interview time.

This is Ryan's story. You may wonder what the big deal is or why it even matters, but I think you'll come to understand it is a story to which we all can relate.

First, you need to know about people called Furrries. Ryan says, "A Furry is defined as being covered in fur. However, a Furry is a person that is part of a fandom which expresses a like for animals, or more specifically, anthropomorphic animals. Anthropomorphic means the object or animal has human characteristics. Think Looney Tunes. They stand upright, they walk and talk like people, and they act like people. That is what the Furry fandom is all about."

But why would someone choose to wear a fur tail and ears?



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## Marriage is Hard Work!

by Rob & Doris Swartz

We are looking forward to celebrating our 29th wedding anniversary in January, but we will be the first to tell you that marriage is hard work. We are both sinful, selfish people who often see things differently and want our own way. It's not always easy to communicate well and to love each other like we should, but we have found that the reward of doing so is well worth the effort. There is nothing like the feeling of joy and satisfaction of sharing life together—when all is "right" between us, and with God.

In our society today, it has become common to see many marriages fail, and many more marriages experiencing significant struggles. It's difficult for us to watch couples experience such pain and heartache. God has given us a passion to do everything we can to promote and encourage healthy marriage relationships.

We are excited about the upcoming marriage seminar that will be held at LCF November 11-12. Conrad and Lynette Showalter, who are from Goshen, Indiana, and have over 30 years of experience working with couples as a pastor and professional counselor, will be joining us to lead the seminar. They will be the speakers for the group sessions on Friday evening and Saturday morning and then will be available to meet with couples individually Saturday afternoon.

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London Christian Fellowship seeks to develop authentic and passionate followers of Jesus Christ.



## What's Your Vote?

### A Message from the Pastor

by Reuben Sairs

When politicians are running for office they make many promises. Especially during presidential elections, candidates promise things that are way beyond the reach of the presidency as if the candidate can just speak laws and realities into existence like kings of old, or even demigods. It's an old story. Politics have their place, but there are some things that politics will never be able to do. No candidate local, state or national can:

1. Save you from all your own bad choices. No matter what is outlawed or taxed or penalized, a person can always find a way to make self-defeating, self-destructive choices.
2. Keep you from being lonely. No matter what programs might be offered at a community center if it were better-funded, if a person is lonely no government or law can give them friends.
3. Keep you from being lazy, because most of us, some of the time, just are.
4. Make someone love you, including your spouse, your parents or anyone else.
5. Turn your children into civilized, polite, achievement-oriented adults for you.
6. Prevent you from throwing your money away on something.
7. Turn you into a kinder, more generous person.
8. Break your bad habits.
9. Make all your friends and neighbors Christians.
10. Make all your friends, neighbors, and all your fellow Americans live like Christians, even if they don't want to.
11. Make you invulnerable to crime, disease, or insulting remarks.
12. Get you or anyone else into heaven or out of hell.
13. Bring back a happier past.

So what can you do? You can turn to Jesus Christ and live spiritually! Jesus said, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10). Jesus described a life lived in him this way, "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14).

What's your vote?

## Farm Science Review

Thanks so much to the following people for giving of their time and helping out at this year's Farm Science Review: Clayton Carner, Marcus Freed, Sandy Gregg, Myron Hochstetler, Levi Miller, Abraham Ndungu, Tim Shay, Doris Swartz, Rob Swartz, and Cletus Yoder. They earned about \$300 which will be put toward some needed (non-budgeted) furnishings for the church.



## Elders' Notes

by Rob & Doris Swartz

Help! This could be a good summary statement of our last two elders' meetings (that were held on September 6 and September 28). Rob has been feeling very overloaded with the growing needs of the congregation, coupled with the difficulty of finding leaders. He asked the elders for help in determining a good path forward. One significant idea that emerged was to consider hiring another pastor to cover things such as youth pastor, administrative work, and children's ministry. The elders sent this proposal to the council for consideration in LCF's 2017 budget.

We also recognized the significant need for a full elders team and are continuing to pursue possibilities to add to the team. It was discussed that we need to be "ok" with discontinuing things for which we do not have staff or volunteers to cover. Please be praying as we seek God's direction in managing the ministry needs of the church.

We are very grateful for Abraham Ndungu volunteering to serve as our Small Group Coordinator and for Lyndon Miller accepting the Buildings and Grounds Coordinator position. Thanks so much, guys!

We are looking forward to our upcoming elders' retreat that will be held at the Proctor Center, November 4-5. We hope to come away with renewed vision for the ministry God has called us to at LCF, including a plan for what we feel God would have for us to teach and preach in the coming year. If you have suggestions for us to consider, we would love to hear from you.

## Council Update

by David Perkins

The end of the year is fast approaching, and the LCF council is hard at work to complete several tasks before the New Year. With the New Year comes a new budget proposal that will be brought to the congregation for a vote in the coming months. The council is preparing a meeting with all the leaders of the various committees and groups that make up our church to go over their individual budget plans for next year. Once everything is finalized, we will bring all the information to the congregation.

The council is discussing terms for each committee, group, and other services. We are looking to determine the suggested length of time each person will serve on their committee or group. We hope to establish this by the time we have our committee sign-ups next year.

There are plans to have a Marriage Workshop in November. All married couples are encouraged to plan to attend. Watch for more information that will be coming soon.

Please remember to keep the council in your prayers. We are considering hiring for another paid position in the church. We are researching the possibility of hiring someone to help fill in with areas where we are in need of help. Please pray for the council, elders, and LCF as a whole, to find a willing and suitable person(s) for this position. Keep an eye out for your next LCF council update for more news and information.



# Getting to know Jerry & Donna Sauder

An Interview with Donna by Theresa Hennis

We are happy to welcome Jerry and Donna to Central Ohio and are glad to have them as part of our LCF family. We hope you enjoy getting to know them through this interview and that you will introduce yourself to them, and help them get to know you, as well.

## Where are you from originally?

I (Donna) was born and raised in Baltimore, MD. Most of my family still lives there. Jerry was born and raised in Ellicott City, MD, which is between Baltimore and DC.



## How did you both meet?

Our churches and youth groups would do various activities together, so we pretty much knew each other our whole lives. When I was in high school, Jerry asked me to go to an Orioles game with him, and even though the game was exciting, I was bored. Despite this unfortunate start, we still fell in love—and got married on July 9, 1983.



**Do you come from a large or small family?** I have 4 siblings and Jerry has 3.

## How many children do you have and what are their names?

Our children are Jonathan, Andrew, Sarah, and Rebekah. Jonathan and Sarah live near our families in Maryland. Andrew and Rebekah live in Columbus.

## What is your dream/aspiration in life, and have you attained it?

One of my dreams was to have children and raise them to love the Lord my God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. I was blessed to be able to stay at home with them as children and homeschool them. We are still dreaming about grandchildren. 😊

## What was a favorite vacation?

When our children were younger, we loved going to Nags Head, NC, every two years with our extended family. We also got to be very close friends with three other families in NY. We started out camping together on the weekends. We had

so much fun that we decided to go for a week. We got flooded out one too many times, so it evolved into a week together in a big house in places such as: Cape Cod, Lake George, Acadia National Park, Nag's Head, and Cape May.

## What drew you to attend LCF?

Since we moved from NY, we had to find another church. Our son Andrew was attending LCF, and we were excited to be able to attend church with him again.

## What or who most impacted your life and influenced you to become a Christian?

I was raised in a Christian home. My Mom and Dad taught me how to know God and live my life serving and honoring Him. When I was 11, I made the decision to wholeheartedly give myself to God and serve Him all the days of my life. Jerry was also raised in a Christian home and became a believer at a young age. He has had numerous experiences that influenced his life for Christ. In high school, he was part of the Navigators Bible Study and Young Life. He studied at Rosedale Bible College and also spent some time at L'Abri in Switzerland studying under Francis Schaeffer.

**What is your favorite way to study the Word?** When the kids were home, we enjoyed memorizing Scripture together as a family.

## What is your favorite scripture?

My favorite chapter is Psalm 139. It's comforting to know that God made me, He knows me, and there is nothing that I can do that will hide me from Him. Jerry's favorite book is the Psalms, and his most common devotional is reading 5 Psalms each morning.

## Where do you work?

Jerry is enjoying his new job at Rosedale Mennonite Missions. He worked in the finance division of IBM for many years. Now he gets to use his passion for missions and his finance experience every day. I spent many years doing day care, my own and working for others. After moving to OH, I have gotten involved in IFI (International Friendships, Inc.). I find joy in hosting others and getting to know people from other cultures.

## What is one thing most people don't know about you that you think is interesting or unusual?

One of our most unusual experiences happened when we lived in Kenya. Some of our co-workers were thrown out of the country because they were accused of conspiring with the KKK to overthrow the Kenyan government. It was absurd and laughable, but it really did happen.

**Do you have any pets?** No, although we did have a beautiful Collie, Ginger, for 14 years in NY.

## New Members

On Sunday, September 11th, we were glad to welcome Zach Freer, Justin Scheffel, and Kelly Ward as members at LCF!



*Ryan's Story...continued*

"As cliché as it sounds," Ryan says, "it felt right. It could be because my childhood hero was Fox McCloud, from the Starfox series that still goes on to this day. He is an anthropomorphic fox that flies what is basically a jet in space to shoot down baddies. Even though wolves are my favorite animal, the fox just felt right."

So he dons his ears, paws, and tail, called Partials, because complete Fur-suits are highly expensive pieces of art that are often designed and drawn out by someone, commissioned for an average of \$1,500-3,000 or even more, and can take over a year to be made.

"My girlfriend, Kimberly, got me into it," he says. "I had no idea what it was at the time, and she got me interested by showing off her own Furry partials. Also, because it lets me feel closer to being an anthropomorphic fox, which makes me happier. I like animals, and I like to be different. So the change into being a Furry was pretty easy for me."

Kimberly wears cat ears, paws, and a tail, and together, she and Ryan wear their partials with pride.

Ryan says going out into public was hard, at first. "Strangers give me more problems than anything. An example is a local fast food chain's employees spreading rumors about me. Another person cussed me out for what I wear. No physical encounters yet, thankfully. After a while it died down, and now it's pretty uncommon."

He doesn't like the attention, but a part of him wants to learn to socialize more. Growing up, he disliked being around people, and wearing the partials is a way for him to get out and experience new things and new people.

Ryan says, "Like any so-called "strange" group, the Furry community is subject to misconceptions, to being picked on or generalized to the point that people, well—miss the point. The Furry community is about having fun and sharing interests. It's no different than someone who is enthusiastic about cars going to a car show, or someone who likes video games going to E3. It's just our interests are human-like animals and regular animals, too. The Conventions often hold charity events for local pounds and animal-related services."

We all know what it's like to feel "other than" and unaccepted, especially as Christians. It makes no difference if we wear a regular suit or a Fur-suit—Jesus loves us without bias.

Ryan chooses to take on a persona, or fursona, to open himself up to others. It might be difficult, but in the same token, he feels it frees him. I wonder what Jesus would have done, in His day, if he'd run across a Ryan?

I think He would have sat down, listened to his story, and loved him unconditionally.

*Marriage...continued*

More details about the conference and registration will be coming soon. But for now, if you are married, please mark these dates on your calendar, arrange childcare if necessary, and plan to join us. Don't miss this opportunity to invest in the priceless gift of your marriage!

## Upcoming Activities

Oct. 2 - Nov. 20—Adult Discipleship Class  
Oct. 15—Fall Workday at the church, 9 a.m. - noon  
Oct. 21-22—RMM's "Pray Boldly" Conference  
Nov. 4—Night of Worship, 7 - 8 p.m.  
Nov. 4-5—Elder's Retreat  
Nov. 11-12—Marriage Seminar at LCF



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*A monthly newsletter designed to enhance communication at London Christian Fellowship*

What did you think? If any of the stories in this Connection sparked an idea or opinion you'd like to share, email us at [secretary@lcfweb.org](mailto:secretary@lcfweb.org). Editors: Doris Swartz, Trish Eaton, Theresa Hennis, and Amie Smith  
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