



New York Mennonite Conference

An area conference of Mennonite Church USA

LIFE

In New York Mennonite Conference

Women's Retreat News from Conference Congregations

Michelle Thomas

Saturday, Oct 13, 2007
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Seneca Falls Community Center

Come enjoy fellowship with other women of all ages and expect to be blessed!

Growing in God's Grace

EMBRACING GRACE

How do we move from seeking performance and people approval to the truth of God's grace lavished on us?

EXTENDING GRACE

How do we respond to difficult people and circumstances in our lives?

Barbara Borntreger from Harrisonburg, VA will be our speaker.

Bring a sack lunch and healthy snack to share.

A prize will be given to the church with the most new attendees.

A love offering will be taken to cover expenses.



Editor: Kirk House

Lowville: MCUSA Youth Convention and Mennonite Heritage Tour

Eight youth and their sponsors, Darren and Kathy Jantzi, and one child attended the Youth Convention in San José on July 2-7. They got to visit the San Francisco 49ers football field thanks to the equipment manager, a former Lewis County resident. On July 29, the youth were in charge of a program highlighting their trip. Marvin Zehr spoke on "Living the Call". [Editor's Note: For more about the convention, visit <www.sanjose2007.org/mpress/>]

The following from our congregation enjoyed a Mennonite Heritage tour to Europe: Perry and Beth Steria, Lois Zehr, Shirley Widrick, Milton and Dorothy Zehr and Nelson and Bernadine Schwartzentruber. Paul and Mary Zehr of Lancaster, PA hosted the July 11-24 trip.

Corning: Soup and Bread

After a summer off, the Corning congregation has resumed having simple communal meals Wednesday evenings at 6pm. Highlighted in the church bulletin as "Soup and Bread," these simple meals are made up of, yes, soup and bread! Different individuals have provided the meals. They have tasted great, and when the colder weather

arrives, we'll be glad they warm both body and soul. The simple meal provides a great opportunity for much spontaneous sharing around the table.

The high school youth, the MCC sewing/quilting group (aka Scraps-R-Us), and a care group meet afterwards. Participants in these groups have especially enjoyed being able to gather around a warm bowl of soup before they begin their activities. There may be no such a thing as a free lunch, but there is a free, warm and tasty bowl of soup and bread Wednesday evenings at the Corning congregation!

New Bremen: Service Work

Jackie Shaw of the New Bremen Church worked this summer in reconstruction or new construction of hurricane-damaged homes in Pass Christian, Mississippi. "In certain situations," Jackie says, "I had to talk to people about uncomfortable things. It strengthened me as a person and made me a better crew leader. They are people whom I still keep in touch with."

Jackie and five other Hesston College students earned three Summer Field Experi-

ence credits as part of Hesston's Disaster Management program, a cooperative effort with Mennonite Disaster Service.



Jackie works intently on demolishing a house so MDS can rebuild it.

Photo by Lois Nickel, MDS

MCC High School Essay Contest

Jenny Harland

It is time for the annual MCC high school essay contest! You could win up to \$500 and the topics are interesting enough to invoke passion and motivation. We encourage you to participate and let your voice be heard. Please log onto <www.mcc.org/us/washington> for more information.

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LIFE in New York Mennonite Conference is published monthly.

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Deadline for next issue: Monday, October 22nd

Celebration Had Many High Points!

Harold Miller

Attendance increased dramatically at this year's annual "Celebration" held September 7-9 in the picturesque setting of Camp Casowasco, a facility on Owasco Lake built around the ornate former Case family summer mansion. Last year 80-90 persons from our upstate Mennonite churches attended; this year well over 120 came! The very day the planners and camp staff were struggling with where to put everyone, another group who had reserved one of the camp's buildings for the weekend called and canceled.

A high point for every Celebration is singing, this year led by a worship team from our Alden congregation complete with guitar, drums, keyboard and singers. We also joined in many *a cappella* numbers, including "Guide My Feet" led by John Powell and "Praise God from Whom," the 3-page anthem often heard in Mennonite church-wide gatherings.

On Saturday afternoon, after the morning delegate session (see accompanying article), persons could swim, canoe, nap, enjoy conversation, and/or take in one of the seminars offered.

Karl and Nita Landis were with us the whole weekend from Lancaster PA, speaking on "Mission in Our Own Culture." Often when two persons present a talk as a team it comes across scripted and stilted. Not this couple! Their nourishing, biblical input included an acted-out drama of praying for an angry neighbor and two clips from Sister Act!

New Directions Started At Fall Delegate Assembly

Harold Miller

Delegate Assembly for NY Mennonite Conference on September 8 at beautiful Camp Casowasco began like many recent assemblies: an impromptu *a cappella* hymn led by Victor Klassen, a time of "dwelling in the Word," hearing reports from various commissions.

Then we veered into new terrain. We as delegates adopted a balanced budget for our fiscal year that begins in October. Somehow for many years we have been able to survive with deficit budgets, thanks perhaps to healthy reserves and congregations responding with over-budget giving. Last year we promised ourselves that the 2007-2008 budget would be balanced. We made good on that promise, though at the cost of a cut to our oversight staffing. Our three Overseers—Don Siegrist, Gene Miller, LeRoy Mast—had been sharing a 5/8th position but it will now drop to them sharing a half-time position (4/8ths).

The biggest way we set out into the new unknown was our authorization to Coordinating Council to, with

consultants, do some data collection to help them bring a more specific proposal to the Spring Delegate Assembly for a "Course of Action for the Health and Well-Being of our Conference." Terry Zehr, our conference Moderator, shared his faith that "God has a preferred future for NYMC" but also his concern that "we have several 'stuck' places that are unhealthy and keeping us from entering into this future." He worked through a four page proposal calling for "a multi-year, deliberate, strategic process" so we can move toward becoming "a Missional people who know and extend God's Healing and Hope to a broken world." We formed into groups of 6-8 persons and wrote down affirmations for the proposal as well as questions that we need to have addressed in order for us to support it. Delegates affirmed use of the interest income from a fund left over from the former Sharing Plan as conference leaders further explore and refine the proposed direction.

Save the Dates:

Women's Retreat ☞ October 13th

Deadline for next issue ☞ October 22nd

MCC H.S. Essay Deadline ☞ November 30th



Photo by Jewel Buckwalter



Photo by John Buckwalter



Photo by John Powell



Photo by Sue Klassen



Photo by Sue Klassen

Scenes from Celebration

1. Youth play "The Cup Game" in free time. ☞ 2. Karl and Nita Landis speak on "Mission in Our Own Culture" ☞ 3. Sally McLean, Esther and Jewel Buckwalter—finalists in the "sword drills" competition. ☞ 4. Sonya Stauffer Kurtz talks about her work in Ethiopia last year. ☞ 5. The next generation of barn raisers at work. ☞ 6. Victor Klassen and LeRoy Mast deep in conversation.