

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO

July 19, 2011

A weekly communication for:

WDC Churches and Pastors

WDC Executive Board, Commission, Committee and Task Force members

Any content may be used in bulletins and newsletters and forwarded to congregational leaders and members.

WDC E-Memo is also available at: www.mennowdc.org (Conference Life / Publications)

IN THIS ISSUE:

*Going Backwards / A Feast For All (from Camp Mennoscah)

*Coming Events at Camp Mennoscah

*Announcements

Going Backwards

The other day I looked out the office window and not only was the Gator zipping in an unprescribed path across the softball field, but the golf cart was zooming up the road. Backwards. As in “one hand on the steering wheel, body twisted, and neck craned to see where you’re going” backwards. “Good grief,” I thought and then I giggled. The golf cart, I was informed later, goes faster in reverse.

It seems like there ought to be a lesson in that. That in going backwards you move forwards faster. But I’m not sure how that applies to camp. We’re moving forwards at warp speed. The bell rings for wake-up, dash to the shower (maybe), head to the shelter for devotions. Breakfast, then chores. Singing, Input/Bible Study, then interest groups with the counselors and staff. Quick run to clean up and then lunch. Pretend to rest during cabin time while the counselor collapses on her bunk. Wait anxiously for the bell for swimming or crafts. Swimming or crafts. Pop Break. Crafts or swimming. Free time for the campers, staff meeting for the counselors. Supper. Recreation. Snack. Singing and cool-down. Campfire. Midnight swim? Absolutely yes in this weather.

So I’m not sure how we’re going backwards. But whatever we’re doing, we’re sure having fun doing it.

Amanda Regehr, our crafts person, and Lizzie Shelly, our office guru, have written up the following camp story. Both Lizzie and Amanda are returning summer staffers. We are always amazed and blessed when folks are excited and enthused to come back to Camp Mennoscah as staff. –*Olivia Bartel*

A Feast for All

While we were relaxing in the air conditioned director's house this weekend, Aaron ran in, gasping for breath, yelling "Man, have I got a story for you!" He continued with wide eyes and wild hair, "We left the freshly-popped popcorn for LITERALLY a second, and when we came back...you'll never guess what was there!"

Long pause.

"What was there, Aaron?"

"Guess!"

"Just tell us."

"GUESS!"

"Uh..."

"IT WAS A RACCOON!!! EATING THE POPCORN!!!!!"

Here at Camp Mennoscah we sing a song that warns against turning down an invitation to the banquet. We have invited many to the banquet at Camp and haven't been turned down yet! We have 30 more campers registered this year than last year. We welcome weekend groups and family reunions. The summer staff LITERALLY serves the campers and counselors on spaghetti night. And we didn't forget the raccoons.

As the camp song reminds us, "He's preparing a banquet for that great and glorious day. When the Lord and Master calls you, be certain not to say 'I CANNOT COME!'"

--Amanda Regehr and Lizzie Shelly

Coming Events at Camp Mennoscah

August 6-7--Young Adult Retreat

September 4-5--Mental Health Spiritual Retreat

September 9-11--Women and Girls Retreat

WDC Announcements

1. Make no excuses, simply come to the banquet/No pongan Excusas:

Simplemente ven al Banquete, based on Luke 14:15-24. The countdown to the WDC Annual Assembly is about over. The program will begin Friday, July 29 at 2 p.m. with an opening session featuring the state of the conference, a 75th birthday party for the Conference Resource Library, a supper meeting for pastors and spouses, and the opening worship service featuring Sara Wenger Shenk, President of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

2. Young Adult Retreat at Camp Mennoscah! It's August 6-7 and it's going to be a hootin' good time. The plan is to have a laid-back, relaxing sort of weekend with time to participate in your favorite camp activity and hang out with new and old folks. Young adults (college age to approx. 35-ish) are formally invited to this informal gathering. Cost: \$45 for tent/cabin, \$50 for bunk house; includes meals. Contact Camp Mennoscah at [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290) for more information.

3. Lids and buckets needed! Remember how earlier this spring we bemoaned how we weren't going to get our pool chemicals in 5 gallon buckets any more and would need more at some point? Well, we've hit that point. Contact Camp Mennoscah at [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290) if you have buckets and/or lids to share!
4. Square feet needed! We know that some of you have two left feet, but what we really need are those of you with square feet. We need to fund these last square feet of the new swimming pool. Each square foot costs \$150. Give us a call at [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290) and we'll tell you what you can do with those square feet of yours.
5. The Camp Mennoscah Bluestem house needs furniture! There are so many happy campers during our senior high camp week that we will be using the Bluestem house for some of our staff. We especially need dressers or chests of drawers, but welcome all sorts of furniture. Contact us at [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290).

MC USA Announcements

1. Hesston College will host its 12th annual Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series conference Oct. 28 to 30 with the theme Getting Beyond Them and Us – to We. The conference will explore the tension of the church's call from an Anabaptist perspective to be both distinctive and open to others. "In becoming more invitational, we don't want to drop who we are as an Anabaptist church – we have something to offer – but the elephant in the room is we are in a deep decline," said conference organizer and Hesston College Bible and Ministry faculty Michele Hershberger. "We need to look at the theological reasons people don't want to come in the doors." Conference speakers are Hal Shrader, lead pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church, an urban, missional, Anabaptist community in Phoenix, Ariz.; Joanna Shenk, an associate for Interchurch Relations and Communication with Mennonite Church USA; and Anton Flores-Maisonet, co-founder of Alterna in LaGrange, Ga., a missional community of U.S. citizens and Latin American immigrants. A complete schedule, registration information and speaker information are available at www.hesston.edu/avds. Cost for registration before Oct. 1 is \$110 for individuals or \$85 per person if registered in groups of three or more. After Oct. 1, individual registration is \$130, and the group rate is \$95 per person. For more information, contact Elaine Schmidt at elaines@hesston.edu or [620-327-8290](tel:620-327-8290).

2. Shaping Your Family's Future, a curriculum helping individuals take stock of the influence of their families of origin on their parenting styles, is testing whether to create a DVD format. The curriculum targets newly expectant parents. "This demographic seems to be more at home with DVD rather than print curriculum," says Burton Buller, producer of a new pilot that explores how the content of the curriculum may be represented in DVD form. Philhaven, a Mt. Gretna, Pa. based non-profit behavioral health services agency that created the original curriculum, has contracted with Buller to create the pilot. Philhaven is affiliated with the Mennonite Church. MennoMedia will serve as an eventual distributor for Shaping Your Family's Future curriculum.

People can view the 18-minute pilot online at http://www.shapingyourfamily.org/SYFF_video and take a survey that will help decide the viability of the project. "This survey is essential to this project moving forward," says Buller.

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