

# WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO

**August 23, 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](http://www.mennowdc.org) (Conference Life / Publications)*

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## **Two Suitcases**

Dr. Jan (Yah-n) Kamler, wildlife biologist, can fit all of his possessions into two suitcases. The fact that he's constantly traveling requires this, but he seems to be satisfied with what he has—why would he need more? His diet consists of rice and canned sardines while in the field studying canids (critters like wolves and foxes). It's a simple life. It's a lifestyle that I envy, sardines notwithstanding.

We mimic a simple life at Camp Mennoscah, asking campers and counselors to shed all their electronic devices and ties to the “outside” world. The point of doing this is to create an environment in which to build relationships. Face-to-face relationships, not those made through a cell phone or computer screen. We want face-to-face relationships with other youth and young adults, but also a “face-to-face” relationship with God.

But now we've shipped everyone back home into the midst of an electronic war zone. Both our campers and our staff are back in the not-so-simple, not-so-peaceful world. How quickly will we forget the friendships built in the midst of a constant barrage of distractions and incoming texts? How quickly will we forget how to draw close to God when we are not under a star-filled sky with howling coyotes and the clunk-clunk of oil wells in the background?

It's easy to forget, but fairly simple to regain. Find a bit of time to wander in creation and look at the stars. Put the cell phone down and spend some time talking and playing with friends. You'll know best what takes you back to that camp experience and what draws you close to God.

If nothing else, be assured that we'll be waiting to see you again at Camp Mennoscah. --*Olivia Bartel, Camp Mennoscah Director*

### **Incorporation News**

We're incorporating! Camp Mennoscah is working (still) to become a non-profit organization. At the Western District Conference Assembly, the next step in this process was taken. Western District Conference bylaws were amended to allow for Camp Mennoscah to be a separate entity. Some things we think are important for you to know are below.

1. It's a little scary, but we are excited about this new beginning and becoming a non-profit organization.
2. Essentially, this is a change on paper. The biggest change will be that Camp Mennoscah will be its own non-profit organization instead of being owned by Western District Conference (WDC). WDC will retain ownership of Camp Mennoscah until the camp is officially a non-profit organization.
3. Camp Mennoscah will continue to faithfully serve our Mennonite churches and constituents.
4. Camp Mennoscah will continue to faithfully serve our churches and constituents who are not Mennonite/Anabaptist.
5. It is undeniable that Camp Mennoscah will have to discover new ways to fund programming, staff salaries, and maintenance of the camp grounds. Churches and individuals will need to include Camp Mennoscah in their charitable giving.
6. It was unavoidable that Camp Mennoscah was going to have to find more resources for funding even if Camp Mennoscah did not become its own non-profit organization.
7. The direction of Camp Mennoscah will be shaped by those who support us. We will continue to take direction for programming and facilities from our constituents. Our constituents include those who send their kids to camp, who give financial support, who give of their time and skills as volunteers, and many others.
8. The Retreat Commission and Western District Conference are doing everything possible and feasible to ensure that Camp Mennoscah continues and thrives for another 60 years and then another 60 years and then the next....

Give us a call if you have questions ([620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290)) and spread the word about this new and exciting opportunity! --*Olivia Bartel, Camp Mennoscah Director*

### **Upcoming Events at Camp Mennoscah**

September 4-5—Mental Health Spiritual Retreat

September 9-11—Women & Girls Retreat

September 18-22—Work & Play Camp (all ages invited)

## **WDC Announcements**

1. WDC Pastors' Day Apart will be September 20 at West Zion Mennonite Church in Moundridge, KS. Topic: Feedback Loops and Fruitful Reviews. Its purpose is to encourage pastors to be self-initiating in creating and utilizing both informal and formal feedback loops to sharpen their awareness of context and to engage in more fruitful ministry. Registration fee: \$25. Pastors - Watch for further details and registration information coming later this week.

2. We've got miracles! The **Mental Health Spiritual Retreat** at Camp Mennoscah will be "Finding the Miraculous in the Ordinary" in just a couple of weeks. Everyone affected by mental illness, and family, friends, and others are invited to join us for fellowship, music, and worship. A nurse is on site for this retreat. Registrations accepted until full, but please let us know as soon as possible. Contact us at [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290) or [campmno@mennowdc.org](mailto:campmno@mennowdc.org) for more information.

3. A Grand Old Time—It's fun for all ages! Everyone is invited to come to Camp Mennoscah's annual **Work & Play Camp**, September 18-22! Work & Play Camp is a service-oriented retreat for anyone with a few free days and willing hands. Come for one day, come for two days, or come for all the days. We offer you the chance to enjoy fellowship with others and participate in various service projects around the camp. Tasks for all skills and activity levels will be available. If we run out of work, there will be even more time for fun! (There's no guilt in having fun, folks. It's camp.) No camp fees; suggested donation of \$4 per person/meal. Contact us at [campmno@mennowdc.org](mailto:campmno@mennowdc.org) or [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290).

4. Check out WDC's website for lots of information and resources about immigration-  
<http://mennowdc.org/conference-life/ministries/task-forces/>

## **MC USA Announcements**

1. Attached are the prayer requests from the member schools of Mennonite Schools Council, and the colleges, universities, seminaries and educational programs of Mennonite Church USA for September. MEA also posts these prayer requests on its website. The prayer request for the day is displayed on our home page and the document is available at [www.MennoniteEducation.org/PRAYERS](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/PRAYERS). **We encourage you to share *Prayers for Faith and Learning* with others.** The document is set up so it can be a bulletin insert or distributed in church mail boxes. Some churches choose specific prayer requests to include in their weekly bulletins. Congregations or individuals who are interested in a free subscription to *Prayers for Faith and Learning* (or other MEA publications) may subscribe online at [www.MennoniteEducation.org/Subscribe](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/Subscribe).  
**Thank you for the many ways you support Mennonite education!**

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