

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO March 20, 2012

*A weekly communication for:
WDC Churches and Pastors
WDC Executive Board, Commission, Committee and Task Force members*

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forwarded to congregational leaders and members.
WDC E-Memo is also available at: www.mennowdc.org (Conference Life / Publications)*

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Conferences, Communities and other things that start with C

by Olivia Bartel, Director, Camp Mennoscah

The Mennonite Camping Association has their regional and bi-national (USA and Canada) conferences in March every year. Regional conferences are one year and the bi-national conferences are the other years. These conferences are for anyone and everyone interested in or associated with camping ministry. There are sessions by speakers and there are times for networking and sharing information.

But when the Mennonite Camping Association board did a survey asking what the best part of these conferences were, a large percentage of responses said they were the community-building times. Actually, those who responded said curling at the bi-national conference in Canada two years ago was the best part, but it could be any of the optional activities these conferences offer. (Curling is a sport involving large, heavy puck-like rocks, slippery ice, and much laughter.) It boils down to community building. Those afternoon and evening activities are times when camp directors and program directors and maintenance and kitchen folks join together, talk about what things they are dealing with, what they're rejoicing about, and hear the stories of other camps. These times are for just hanging out together. No one lecturing, no one telling you what you should be doing, no one making you sit through yet one more meeting.

It's not your sit down and take notes sort of learning, but it's a time of learning just the same. The camping folks from across the country (and countries) are building camping ministry communities that support one another, offer kindly advice or solutions, and share stories of joy and experiences of God.

This type of learning is the same learning that we try to mimic at our summer youth camps. We create fun times in which campers can share stories (or tall tales of fish caught), learn how to interact and be with each other in peace, and be in the midst of creation and God. We say it over and over but it's easy to hear the same words over and over and not recognize how true these words are. Fun experiences are some of the best learning times because it's easier to remember fun things. So when we create fun times for campers, we create the best times for learning about God, creation, and community.

The mission of Camp Mennoscah is essentially that—to build upon the rock but play in the sand. We like to think it's a simple but worthy goal. We'll keep the sand warm for you and see you this summer!

WDC Announcements

1. Our "trip" to Paraguay is getting closer! The Retirees' Relaxation Retreat is April 23-25 and we'd love to have you join us. There will be sessions on a variety of Paraguayan topics and all sorts of other topics as well. And we haven't forgotten our coffee breaks with plenty of time to chat with others--these breaks may be the best part! If you would like more information, contact Camp Mennoscah at [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290) or campmno@mennowdc.org--we're looking forward to having you join us!

2. It's time for summer! Now that Spring Break is upon us (or sadly over), it's time to start thinking about summer. Camp Mennoscah will be the "hot" place to be with our new pool and lots of fun times. We're looking for campers, kitchen staff (parents receive a camper discount), and counselors. Have a gift or skill we haven't mentioned? Give us a call at [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290) to let us know or for more information. Our theme is Secrets of the Kingdom: The Parables of Jesus. It's going to be a great summer!

3. The WDC Basketball Tournament was held at Bethel College March 15-17. There were eight teams, representing nine churches (including one South Central Conference church) that participated: Hope (Wichita), Alexanderwohl (Goessel), Eden (Moundridge), Zion & Grace Hill (Elbing & Whitewater), South Hutch, Hoffnungsau (Inman), Tabor (Goessel), Bethel College Mennonite (North Newton). Congratulations to the tournament champions: Hope Mennonite!

4. Looking Ahead to Summer Worship! A wonderful way to link worship with Christian nurture is to use the summer worship resources offered in the Leader magazine. This summer the theme of Seek Peace and Pursue it will be studied by our children and youth who are using the Gather 'Round curriculum, and the Leader will provide coordinating worship materials, using the same Bible stories and focus. Joanna Harader, pastor of Peace Mennonite, Lawrence, KS wrote these creative resources and will lead a workshop on Sat. May 12 from 9 - 11am at New Creation Fellowship in Newton, KS. Bring the Summer issue of Leader magazine and your worship planning team. Call / email your RSVP to Nancy at [316-283-6300](tel:316-283-6300) or wdc@mennowdc.org by May 8.

MC USA Announcements

1. Attention High School Seniors: Want to take some time off from school to focus on service and learning? Service Adventure gives you the opportunity to live in community with other young adults and a unit leader or couple while you learn more about what it means to serve God and each other. Visit Service.MennoniteMission.net for more information or an application.

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