

# WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO April 17, 2012

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.*

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### **Volunteers and Violence**

*by Olivia Bartel, Director, Camp Mennoscah*

This is the time of year that I think a lot about volunteers. Camp Mennoscah manages to do all that we do because of the number of volunteers who support our ministry. We need counselors, program directors, and kitchen staff for each week of camp during the summer. Our summer staff, nurses, and head cooks are all paid, but it's a volunteer stipend, not the sort of wages you would receive if you worked any other summer job. Other volunteers help us paint, clean, shingle, mow, and do office work throughout the year. We have a lot of volunteers.

And, with all the storms this past weekend, I thought even more about volunteering. I heard about the first violent tornadoes on the news and my first thoughts were to see if I could figure out my workload so that I could spend some days with Mennonite Disaster Service or with those needing help cleaning up after storms. I like volunteering. I like helping out and doing things and keeping busy while feeling useful. (I also like reading books, playing games, and sitting mindlessly watching movies.)

But why does it take violence for me to be so passionate about volunteering? There are organizations and people who could use my time and willing hands year-round, especially when there hasn't been some weather-related or tragic upheaval of some sorts. If I can rearrange my schedule now as Camp Mennoscah is gearing up for summer, why can't I rearrange my schedule in the middle of winter when things have slowed down? Why can't I give of my time and skills for those everyday things that I ask others to do for me every summer? I'm feeling somewhat hypocritical in my actions right now.

Camp Mennoscah was built on the dreams of volunteers who had a passion and a belief in youth ministry. These folks gave their time and energy to build a program

and a vision of creating a space to learn about and find God. Some of them helped in building the dining hall. Some of them cooked in tents and wagons before there was a kitchen. There were counselors and directors who gave a week or more of their summer to sharing the Camp Mennoscah experience with others. Lots of us have Camp Mennoscah memories that we wouldn't trade for anything and I want everyone to have their own camp memories.

This is my statement of gratitude for all those "non-violent" volunteers who have given days and weeks of their lives to Camp Mennoscah and to other organizations that depend on volunteers to offer the great things that they do. Thank you for counseling year after year. Thank you for being a program director for more years than our oldest youth campers have been alive. And thank you to everyone who has swept a floor, scrubbed a toilet, shingled a roof, or even just inquired about or prayed for Camp Mennoscah.

We hope, too, that all of you made it safely through the storms.

### **WDC Announcements**

1. Plan now to help children, youth, and adults make new connections with one another, and with Bible stories and themes this summer. Summer Gather 'Round materials invite all ages to learn more about what it means to Seek Peace and Pursue It. Each week, children and their leaders will add a new "peace treasure" to a peace tree or bulletin board. The summer issue of Leader magazine will include worship resources related to the same theme. The resources include a call to worship, Scripture reading, confession or affirmation of faith, sermon tip, children's time plan, prayer, and blessing for each Sunday. And...you can get resourced directly by Joanna Harader, pastor of Peace Mennonite, Lawrence, KS and writer of these materials by attending the Summer Worship Planner at New Creation Fellowship in Newton, KS on Sat., May 12 from 9 - 11 AM. Call Nancy at [316-283-6300](tel:316-283-6300) to reserve your space!

2. Deadline approaching! No, it's not your taxes; it's the Early Registration Discount. May 1 is the last day for the Early Registration Discount. Summer Youth Camp registration forms must be postmarked by May 1st and full camp fees must be paid to receive this \$10 discount. Contact Camp Mennoscah at [campmno@mennowdc.org](mailto:campmno@mennowdc.org) or [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290)

3. Umm...volunteers? So, after that diatribe about volunteers, Olivia finds herself in the position of kindly alerting folks that there are still some kitchen volunteer positions open. These openings are for the weeks of June 10-16, June 24-30, July 15-21, and July 22-28. Those interested in counseling can also contact Camp Mennoscah at [campmno@mennowdc.org](mailto:campmno@mennowdc.org) or [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290).

4. Date Change--Camp Mennoscah's Fall Scrapbooking Retreat is now scheduled for November 2-4, 2012. The "please register by" date is now October 19, but the rest of the information is still accurate. Feel free to contact us with any questions at [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290).

5. Second Annual Camp Sing! Everyone and all their friends are invited to the Camp Mennoscah Camp Sing at Faith Mennonite Church in Newton (2100 N Anderson Ave) at 7pm on May 6th. This year we're calling it "Mattress Melodies" and raising funds for new mattresses for the cabins and bunk houses. We'll have the most generic and cheapest pop ever and tasty popcorn made in a huge kettle to go with it--just like at camp! We'll see you there!

### **Kansas Announcements**

1. Raymond McGovern, born in 1939, is a retired CIA officer turned political/peace activist. He was a Federal employee under 7 U.S. presidents over 27 years, presenting the morning intelligence briefings at the White House for many of them including President Reagan from 1981-1985. He was born and raised in the Bronx and graduated summa cum laude of Fordham University. A "Distinguished Military Graduate", he served in the US Army from 1962-64 as an intelligence officer. McGovern also received an M.A. in Russian Studies from Fordham University; a certificate in Theological Studies from Georgetown University; and was a graduate of Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program.

McGovern was a Army infantry/intelligence officer and then served in the CIA in the 1960's where his focus was analysis of Soviet policy toward Vietnam. He chaired the National Intelligence Estimates; was in charge of preparing daily security briefs for Reagan, Vice President George H.W. Bush, the National Security Advisor, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Cabinet. Later, he was one of several senior CIA analysts who prepared the President's Daily Brief during the first Bush administration.

Upon retirement, McGovern was awarded the Intelligence Commendation Medallion from Bush for "especially meritorious service." As an act of conscience, on March 2, 2006, Ray returned the medal, explaining, "I do not want to be associated, however remotely, with an agency engaged in torture." On May 4, 2006, in Atlanta, Ray made national news by confronting Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on live TV. Currently McGovern leads the "Speaking Truth to Power" section of Tell the Word, an expression of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in inner-city Washington D.C. He also teaches at its Servant Leadership School.

Ray will be in Wichita and Newton! His itinerary is as follows:

Wednesday, April 25, 7:00 p.m. at Wichita State University, Hubbard Hall, Room 211

Thursday, April 26, 8:00 a.m. at University Friends Church (1840 W. University) "Not since the 30's have there been so many issues for religious leaders to be silent about" – Wichita clergy and religious leaders breakfast (all welcome).

Thursday, April 26, 7:00 p.m. at KIPCOR (Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution) 2515 College Avenue, N. Newton – "Is Iran a Nuclear Threat?"

Friday, April 27, 11:30 a.m. at Larkspur Bistro and Bar (904 E. Douglas), lunch/presentation at the monthly Warner Moore Luncheon, hosted by the Sedgwick County Democratic Party – “Propaganda or Intelligence?”; 11:30 arrival, 11:45 lunch, 12:15 program. Reservations requested by 4/24. Call 262-7534, \$11/person

Friday, April 27, 7:00 p.m. at Metropolitan Community Church (156 S. Kansas St.) – “Why are we in Iraq? Afghanistan? Iran? I mean, REALLY!”

Saturday, April 28, 9:00 a.m. at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church sanctuary (655 S. Lorraine) – “Why is the media drumming for war...again?”

2. The fifty-voice Chancel Choir of Bethel College Mennonite Church will present Part I of Mendelssohn's oratorio, The Conversion of St. Paul on Sunday, April 29, at 7:30 p.m. Singing the solo portions are Diane Fast, soprano, Ron Garber, tenor, and Chris Kliever, baritone. Also assisting in the performance will be Rebecca Schloneger on violin. Marles Preheim will conduct the choir and Eleanor Kaufman will accompany on the piano. This event is free and open to the public. You are cordially invited to attend this dramatic unfolding of the life of St. Paul.

### **MC USA Announcements**

1. 2012 Day of Prayer: May 18: On May 18, Mennonite Mission Network invites you to pray for mission. As we work at developing leaders, equipping local congregations, empowering global ministries, and training people for peace and justice...your prayers are needed! Also, you know the unique ways that your own church is engaged in local mission and other than Mission Network ministries. What is your church doing? What are ways that you can pray for your church's mission as well as the mission of the church around the world? How can you pray? You can use Mission Mosaic or Prayer Vine to help guide you as you pray. Please check the website for additional information. <http://www.mennonitemission.net/dayofprayer/Pages/Home.aspx>

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