

Evangel



By 8:30, most of the homeless have packed up and moved to other areas. Street level commuters simply step over and around those still sleeping.

City's Homeless Find Help, Support at Seattle Mennonite

Finding a place to rest one's head for a few winks, without being asked to move on, proves to be a challenge for the homeless in Lake City, a neighborhood in Seattle, WA. Many days, Seattle Mennonite's friends who live on the streets can be found outside the local post office selling the alternative paper "Real Change". That's as easy as "shooting fish in a barrel", joked a homeless community member of Lake City.

Another wheelchair-bound homeless man lamented that, when he does collect some money, it is difficult to keep it secure and he is too frequently robbed.

Jonathan and Melanie Neufeld are just beginning to make observations like this about people on the street. They moved to Lake City recently from Winnipeg, Manitoba, with their six-year-old daughter, Thalia, to share the community minister position at Seattle Mennonite Church.

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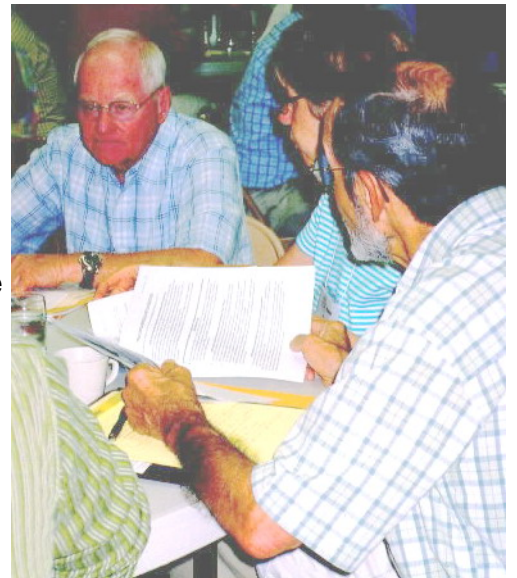
Delegates Approve Significant Changes in PNMC Philosophy and Operations

A plan which will restructure the way the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference operates in the wake of the 21st century was approved by delegates assembled for Albany-Corvallis 2007 from June 22-24, 2007 at Albany Mennonite Church in Oregon.

Over 88 percent of delegates approved the plan proposed by the Structure and Vision Task Force. The committee was formed in January 2005 to examine the current structure and operation of the Conference and, with dialogue and input from local congregations and delegates, propose a future designed to improve communications throughout the Conference and place ministry in the hands of the people in a new and innovative way.

Four philosophical shifts will take place as a result of the new direction approved by the delegates in June:

- A movement from program planning to connecting and equipping



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A Word from Our Moderator

WOW!



It is not often that I find myself saying, "Wow!", but I've been doing it a lot these last few weeks.

The first "Wow!" was at the Venetian Theatre in Albany the Thursday evening before PNMC's annual assembly. Anthony Brown's benefit concert was incredible. The theatre is a beautifully restored building with wonderful acoustics. Along with his accompanist, Harold Nussbaum (I had no idea that Harold was such a talented pianist), Tony presented a wonderful evening of music to kick off our new fund for uninsured pastors health insurance coverage. The concert was an idea that PNMC Treasurer Don Bacher conceived and had a passion for. After seeking Board input, he invited Tony; arranged for the use of the theatre (thank you, Plainview Mennonite Church) and a grand piano (thank you, Lois Kenagy); found the accompanist; printed and sold tickets and did the necessary publicity and advertising. Phil Rempel was an outstanding MC for the evening while Rod Stafford, pastor at Portland Mennonite Church, and Victor Vargas, PNMC Hispanic Conference Minister, gave an impassioned appeal at intermission for the new health insurance assistance fund. Tony and Harold also did a seminar at the assembly and special music for the Friday evening worship service.

My second "Wow!" was during the first worship session at the annual meeting when the Board and the Structure and Vision Task Force (SVTF) sang together – we really sounded pretty good! At our Board meetings this past year, we have been singing and praying together as we do our governance work. Audrey Lowen, chair of the SVTF, was adamant that we needed to sing at Assembly. Now I must admit that some of us are considerably more musically talented than others, but it doesn't seem to matter as we worship and praise God.

Another "Wow!" came during the delegate sessions while we processed the work the SVTF had done over the past two years. My "wow" wasn't so much for the actual proposal (after all, the Board and Executive Committee have been seeing and approving drafts along the way), as it was for the thoughtful, careful work the table groups did as they brought their concerns and ideas forward. My awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit as we deliberated was palpable. I am very grateful that the delegate body validated the proposal that the PNMC Board brought forward from the work of the SVTF.

"Wow!" was also my reaction as I counted the number of Hispanic brothers and sisters who were part of the delegate body this year. I was also amazed at Wendell Amstutz's amazing work translating the proceedings into Spanish for those whose first language is not English. These included Pastor Agustin Suarez, the visiting moderator from the NW Mexico Conference.

At the last delegate session on Saturday afternoon, we thanked those who have worked for and helped to lead PNMC during the past year and commissioned those who have so graciously extended their terms for another year and those who have agreed to serve on the Transition Team with Moderator elect Dave Hockman-Wert. Chair of the Pastoral Leadership Committee Lynn Miller led us in prayers of thanksgiving and blessing for our conference ministers and staff as well as all PNMC pastors.

Sunday evening, my husband, Forrest, and I visited the evening worship service at Iglesia Menonita Pentecostes in Woodburn. I couldn't help but think "Wow!" again as I listened to the music and singing of so many young families. The enthusiasm and joy was obvious in the music and testimonies of both young and old. I'm still not sure where Pastor Victor Vargas got all the energy to give such a rousing sermon after having been at Assembly all weekend plus having officiated at a funeral service on Friday night!

Last week I was privileged to be one of PNMC's delegates to the biennial Assembly of Mennonite Church USA in San Jose, California. You can't help but say "Wow!" when you gather with 4000+ teenagers and a couple of thousand adults to worship God together. Listening to several thousand voices joined together in a hymn sing on a very hot July day is awesome. There is no way anyone can tell me that four-part singing is a "quaint Mennonite artifact", not when a good portion of the lustily singing crowd is under twenty! I think we need to plan a hymn sing for our 2008 PNMC Assembly in Nampa, Idaho.

Charlotte L. Hardt

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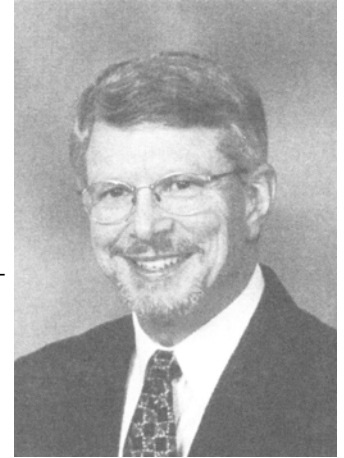
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Church Conferences: How Important?

By Sheldon Burkhalter



While not everyone jumps with enthusiasm at the thought of attending church conferences, there is no doubt that they are essential for faithful mission and growth of the church.

Acts 15 and progress in the church's outreach throughout the remainder of the New Testament demonstrate the central importance of the early church's clarity about the Jewish mission to Gentiles. Had Paul and Barnabas—after “no small dissention and debate” in Antioch—not been commissioned “to go to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and elders” Christ's mission of dismantling ethnic walls would have perilously stalled the church's calling. It's not that the Jerusalem conference immediately solved all the theological questions about the Gentile mission, because it certainly did not as evidenced in the Epistles, but its witness to the movement of God among Gentiles, much debate, silent reflection, compromise, agreement, and great rejoicing kept the church on course unto “all the nations [*enthnos*].” The will of God was clarified and the church moved forward beyond the enclave of Judaism.

In 1527, two years after the launching of the Anabaptists reformation in Switzerland and South Germany, something similar occurred. The year began on a particularly dark note: founding leader from Zurich Conrad Grebel, weakened from months in prison, died from the Plague; Felix Manz was executed by the Reformed government in Zurich; spiritual extremism and disheartenment threatened the movement from within. Other Anabaptist leaders, however, including former priest Georg Blaurock and Wilhelm Reublin, responded to the call of emerging Anabaptist leader Michael Sattler, a former monastery prior, to gather in the tiny Swiss village at Schleitheim. The outcome of their conference (which they called the “brotherly union,” and we know as the Schleitheim Confession of Faith) reached agreement on seven distinctive convictions on what it means to follow Jesus. These included baptism, the Lord's Supper, church leadership, relation to secular government, and non-violence. Vigorously suppressed throughout Europe for centuries, the movement survived as a witness to all Christians to live out New Testament faith.

Conferences today are called to discern the mission of the church for our times. Elsewhere in this issue of the *Evangel* there is reporting about the decision making of the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference at Albany/Corvallis. The highlight for me personally, as usual, was the worship: music that spans cultural boundaries and lifts our spirits, stories of local communities hearing God's call, and the proclamation of God's word to us today in the sermons of Mennonite Mission Network speaker James Krabill. Worship—an encounter with God—is the added benefit when the church gathers to discern the will of God.

A week later I was off to San Jose for Mennonite Church USA convention. After nearly 20 years of serving as a delegate or staff person at these gatherings, I had no “official” responsibility this time, so I was free to concentrate on the times of worship, a full banquet of electives, and visiting with people.

At the top of my list was seeing significant progress on several fronts in the life of the Mennonite church, especially the age shift among the delegates. In past assemblies, I rarely saw delegates under 30-40 years of age. What a delight to see the significant percentage of 20-somethings at the delegate mikes.

The presence of youth was also manifest as 4,000 rambunctious youth sat in rapt silence on July 4 listening to soft-spoken, humble college professor John Roth tell stories of brokenness and youthful pastor Jennifer Davis Sensenig expound on the gospel of peace and what it means to “put on the whole armor of God” in a nation consumed by fear, deception and violence.

Finally there was the sermon of an Assembly of God preacher. In Pentecostal style, Paul Alexander made two simple points: “thank you” and “please.” Then he told his story. Growing up in a small Missouri town he learned how they worship and preach in his church and how to “play” with guns. He thought the two belonged together. His dad always told him, “Just follow Jesus!” He went to Bible college and seminary. Then in his mid-20's, working on a doctorate in theology he lost his faith. In despair, he examined his family and church roots and discovered the late 19th century founders preached Jesus and were pacifists. In a course at Notre Dame, he discovered Mennonites and theologian John Howard Yoder. He returned to his church and taught in their college. But when 9/11 hit, as church leaders waved the flag of patriotism and called for retaliation, he asked of his students what would Jesus do, and lost his job. Now on the faculty of another Pentecostal college and leader of the denomination's peace group, he came to say to 6,000 Mennonites, “Just like Paul thanked God for the Ephesians, I thank God for you Mennonites.” Then he pled “please, please,” do not leave your faith and your church; the world needs desperately to hear your message of Jesus and the example you have set in service and peacemaking!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sheldon Burkhalter".

Homeless - Continued from Page 1

Jonathan has worked for 10 years as pastor in both Canada and the United States. Social work and ministry through MCC have drawn Melanie to this work. Together, through studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, they discerned a call that involved community development ministry with people on the margins. They have a passion for developing relationships and working collaboratively with others in seeking transformation for both individuals and communities.

Through the years, Seattle Mennonite Church has come into relationship with folks on the street providing community meals and developing programs such as "Stop, Drop, and Roll" where services like breakfast, bus tickets and storage are offered. "Stop, Drop, and Roll" makes it possible for people who don't have homes to get a break from the stigma of carrying all their possessions with them throughout the day," the Neufelds say. As new facilitators of the community ministry at Seattle Mennonite, they hope that wrap-around support services might be provided for people who do not have a place to live.

Melanie and Jonathan have only begun to realize the challenges ahead as some businesses and organizations would prefer that Seattle Mennonite Church put up a "For Sale" sign than reach the street people of Lake City. The church's programs for the homeless are viewed by the community as a "magnet" for all kinds of characters that defecate, sell drugs, or become involved in sexual activity as they loiter in the area. In contrast, the Neufelds have experienced the greatest welcome from those they call their "outside neighbors." The street folks even showered daughter Thalia with gifts on her birthday.

The men and women (who the Neufelds are growing to love) have much to say about the God who provides and helps them survive on the streets of Lake City. "Surely obstacles of alcoholism, unemployment, mental health, and disability all become factors in finding solutions for homelessness," the Neufelds say. "Yet the Church can have hope, for we know that God is on the side of the poor, is angered by injustice and has given people gifts of creativity and resilience that enable humanity to move forward, seeking to further the reign of Christ in our communities and live in God's way."

Jonathan and Melanie ask for your continued prayers and support as Seattle Mennonite Church finds ways to end homelessness in Lake City.

Annual Meeting - Continued from Page 1

- A movement from issue and process to celebration, witness and discernment
- A movement from a board that reviews and directs staff to one that focuses on oversight and policy setting
- A movement from overlapping staff/board roles toward increased staff clarity of their roles, purposes and responsibilities and empowerment to carry out the purposes and objectives of the board.

Under the new plan, which is estimated to be fully in place in 2009, the conference's new structure will include the board, conference ministers, a conference executive (to oversee and carry out denomination - and conference office-related business) and administrative assistant, a pastoral leadership team, a vision and planning team (which would continue to assess the present and future of the Confer

ence, as the SVTF has been doing), a personnel assessment team, a finance team, a technical communications support team (to assist the Conference in implementing projects involving these areas of expertise)

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Sheldon Burkhalter, far left, receives Emmaus Christian Fellowship congregation into membership.



Domestic violence damages the lives of over 500,000 people every year in the United States, 95 percent of whom are women.

Small Church, BIG Outreach! How One Small Group of People Is Touching Their Community in a Big Way

Evergreen Heights Mennonite Church in Caldwell, ID, isn't very big. At last official count their attendance was just 40 people. Yet that didn't stop them from dreaming big and having faith in a God who could do much with the little loaves they had to offer.

"When this congregation formed," commented member Jana Oesch, "it was very important to everyone that they not be 'just another church down the road.' We wanted to impact our community in a positive way. But where did one start? There were so many needs.

"Since our group was small, there was not a lot of volunteer time that could be given," Jana explained, "so we focused on supporting existing community services through money and food resources."

About the time that Evergreen Heights was starting, a shelter opened nearby that housed women and children who were victims of domestic violence. Since healthy relationships and non-violent living were impor-

tant to the congregation, they wanted to support this outreach.

Their first project with the shelter involved EHMC's children's Sunday school, who collected personal goods and money for the residence. Next, the youth organized the entire church in helping to provide Christmas gifts for the women and children. Other interaction included visiting the families at the shelter and providing a summer barbeque and games for the kids. "All this time," Jana related, "we were asking, 'God do you have something more for us? Are we following your leading?'"

Because of Evergreen Heights' involvement with them, the shelter asked the congregation if they would be interested in applying for a faith-based grant that would fund a program of its choosing to help victims of domestic violence. "Wow! What did that mean?!" Jana and the church wondered. "Lots of prayer, discussion, question asking, reservations, excitement, fear, and trust in a powerful God, is what it meant!"

After deciding as a church to apply for the grant, "everything took off like a whirlwind," Jana reported. "The grant was pretty much written in a day and then submitted with the prayer, 'God, if this is your direction, may we be accepted for this grant.'"

Evidently, it was in the Lord's plan. The church received a grant of \$49,962 to start Bridge to Hope, Inc., a non-profit, faith-based advocacy program for victims of domestic violence, housed in the church.

In January, EHMC hired Aymee Michels as their advocate with the victims. Full of vision and excitement for the program, Aymee received several months of training and is now receiving clients. She has helped several of the women with needs for groceries, gas, and baby items, as well as to connect with community resources. She also conducts intake interviews with each client to determine the needs of the person. She prays with them if they would like and provides support in whatever way she can. Aymee also goes with the clients as a support person to different agencies to find assistance, and, as needed, can also accompany the victim on their court dates. Aymee also educates local churches and the community regarding domestic violence and the services Bridge to Hope provides.

Still very much in the birthing and development stages of this ministry, the church is now in the process of finding more volunteers and setting up life skill classes and Bible studies for the women. "We are so excited to see God leading (in this way)," Jana commented, "and are so thankful for His strength and power to help us."

Annual Meeting - Continued from Page 4

a gift discernment committee plus other specialized groups, currently termed "passion-based ministries", developed out of the visions and motivation of individuals and congregations to meet specific needs. These ministries would exist as long as the reason for their formation exists.

Details of how this new structure would work (including further definition of the role and responsibilities of the Conference Executive) still need to be ironed out. For this purpose, a transitional committee has been established to work with the Board in this process and in the eventual implementation of the plan. The first meeting of the Board and the Transitional Committee will be Saturday, September 7, 2007.

Until the transition is completed, chairpersons and members of the current Board and committees will continue to operate as they have been doing. No changes in personnel were made at the meeting, but approval to "freeze" the committees as they have been during the past year was given by the delegates.

Conference Treasurer Don Bacher also reminded delegates that the fiscal year was going to switch from its current July 1-June 30 to February 1-January 31, beginning in 2008. This new fiscal year would allow the Board to operate more in conjunction with the fiscal years of most PNMC congregations, which operate for the most part from Jan. 1-December 31. To aid in the transfer, a budget of \$267,551 to cover operation expenses from July 1, 2007 to Jan. 31, 2009 was approved by the delegates.

In other matters, Emmaus Christian Fellowship was received into membership and John Gingerich was given the 2007 Gard Hanks Peace and Justice Award for his work in this arena.



2006-2007 Peace & Justice Committee Chair Matt Friesen, left, presents Gard Hanks Peace and Justice Award to John Gingerich.

Theft Paves Way for Tribute to Ailing Mennonite Artist

by Janet Toews Berg

The thief had good taste. Some time during the month of August 2006, eleven tiles by artist Sandra Zeiset Richardson were stolen from the prayer room of Seattle Mennonite Church.

The incident unfortunately had little impact in the church life of SMC. Many of the recent members of the congregation do not know Sandy, who also attends the church, as an artist. She is the person who comes almost every Sunday and quietly drives her electric wheelchair to the left front section of the sanctuary. Sometimes she makes announcements about congregational meetings when she was Congregational Chair, and sometimes she leads the children's time. But probably most of the SMC children are unaware that the life-size nativity cut-outs used every Christmas were made by Sandy, and even fewer know the story of the tiles in the prayer room.

Sandy Richardson got her B.A. in Art Education at the University of Washington in 1985 and almost immediately started producing and showing her art in exhibitions and galleries. Between 1987 and 2004, she had 15 solo shows, some of them in the prestigious Foster-White Gallery in Pioneer Square, Seattle.

Beside solo shows, Sandy has shown her art in numerous group shows, some of them as far away as Pennsylvania, Illinois and Texas.



Sandra Richardson in 1997 with memorial she created at the request of Seattle University to honor martyrs slain in El Salvador in 1989.

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Stolen Art Work - Continued from Page 6

Although most of her artwork is in clay (sculpture, teapots, tiles), she has also made prints and steel garden sculptures. She has also created (with the collaboration of her husband Stan Richardson) at least two pieces of public art – two steel gate panels at the Bertschi School and the El Salvador Martyrs Memorial at Seattle University.

In 1990 Sandy was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, motivating her to alter the way she did her art – using different media and collaborating with another artist to carry out her ideas – but not diminishing her creativity. Even though she had to close her studio permanently two years ago, Sandy has found other avenues of productivity. She was Congregational Chair of Seattle Mennonite Church in 2005 and 2006. Seven years ago she and the author formed a writing group that met every month in her home.

In 2003 Sandra had a showing at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. of a collection of tiles depicting Biblical stories. When the show was finished she suggested that some of the tiles be hung in the newly renovated wing of Seattle Mennonite Church, the prayer room. The tiles remained there until the theft in 2006.

Those at SMC who do know Sandy as an artist have witnessed her creativity, both in her art and her participation in worship and the life of the church. They have gone to her art show openings and have bought pieces of her art. They have grieved with her and Stan the diagnosis of MS and the progressive disability of her illness; and they have marveled and been inspired by her acceptance of her illness with grace and continued creativity. They were saddened and outraged that someone would steal those tiles.

One SMC member, Ann Marchand, found a way to change those feelings into something positive. She came up with the idea of reproducing the image of one of the tiles into a commemorative stamp. The tile she chose was the one entitled "She pondered these things".

The stamps, which the church hopes will be used to ponder over and transform both the robbery of the tiles themselves and the MS which has stolen Sandy's original artistic expression, may be purchased from SMC: (206) 361-4630. Two-cent stamps will be provided, along with the 39-cent ones, for first class use.



Stamps created by Seattle Mennonite Church following the 2006 theft to honor Sandy Richardson's work. The stamps feature one of the stolen pieces of art, "She Pondered These Things".

Two PNMC Churches Prepare to Celebrate 50th Anniversaries

This fall, two PNMC congregations — Lebanon Mennonite and Warden Mennonite — will mark 50 years of ministry and service as local bodies of believers. Warden will celebrate its anniversary from September 15-16, 2007, while Lebanon will mark theirs from October 5 to 7, 2007.

Hope Kauffman Lind, author of the history, "Apart and Together: Mennonites in Oregon and Neighboring States" will be the featured speaker at Warden's Sunday service, to be followed by a potluck meal. The celebration will also include a night of remembrances and ice cream social on Saturday evening, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Lebanon's celebration will begin with a light dinner and program, beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, October 5. Saturday will feature a continental breakfast at the church, a "50-Year Journey/Fun Walk", display tables, snacks and children's activities, open mic time and a BBQ dinner/block party. The celebration will conclude with the Sunday morning service and a potluck meal.

Hope Kauffman Lind will be the speaker at Warden Mennonite's 50th anniversary celebration. This picture is from the jacket cover of her 1990 book, "Apart & Together"



Oregon Festival Appoints New Leadership; Plans for 24th Annual October Gathering Underway

Thanks to an influx of new leadership, the Oregon Mennonite Festival for World Relief is gearing up for its 24th annual event on Oct. 13.

Ron Litwiller, president and CEO of Mennonite Village, has become the new chairperson for the festival. He, along with outgoing chairperson Jerry Friesen, will lead organizational efforts for this fall's event. Also included in new appointments to the Festival team are Barbara Buxman, Dianna Eshleman and Richard Haggen.

Former co-director with her husband, Bob, of West Coast MCC, Barbara will serve as a new member of the Board. She brings with her six years of experience with MCC, the recipients of proceeds from each year's sale.

Dianna returns to the board, having served in 1987 as the Festival's public person. A nurse practitioner at Kaiser Permanente, Dianna is also on the Mennonite Village board.

Richard Haggen will serve as the festival's new webmaster. His initial involvement with MCC was through PAX, for whom he developed public health programs in Bolivia. He and his wife, Carolyn, later spent some years in Nepal, where he taught engineering.

An event gaining a reputation for great kids' activities, the one-day Oregon Festival, held at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center in Albany, starts with pancakes and wild blackberry syrup at 7:30 a.m.

This year's auction will include a 1935 Singer Featherweight sewing machine; dream big vacation packages, antiques, collectibles, fishing trips and more. To make a donation of an item for auction contact Lynn Miller at (541) 926-3493, lynnjanicemiller@aol.com. Children's auction items — especially those suitable for boys — are also wanted. Volunteers to assist at the festival are also needed. Tasks range from setting up tables to serving food to organizing books and more. To explore the options, contact Ron Litwiller: (541) 967-8890, ron@mennonitevillage.org.



Ron Litwiller, president and CEO of Mennonite Village, has been named new chairperson for the Oregon Festival for World Relief.

Washington Relief Sale Marks 30th Anniversary

Excitement is growing among the Washington PMNC churches as plans are made to host the 30th Annual Mennonite Country Auction & Relief Sale, on Saturday, October 6. The celebration will take place on the Menno Mennonite Church grounds between Ritzville and Moses Lake in eastern Washington. Special 30th anniversary memorabilia items will be sold, including coffee mugs, travel mugs and T-shirts.

Besides all the lovely quilts, comforters and other items that will be sold at the auction and the many booths, there will be a special fundraising raffle. Dennis Swinger, Jr. of Lind is refurbishing a 1972 Harley Davidson XLH Sportster Chopper that will be won by some lucky ticket holder.

Live demonstrations of an antique stone mill grinding wheat and corn into flour, apple butter being made in a copper caldron over an open fire, and apples being pressed into cider, will be given, along with a 1920's era McCormick-Deering single-cylinder power plant and belt, modified to work an ice cream maker!

For a flyer of schedule and activities, contact Pastor Terry Rediger: menno@centurytel.net or (509) 659-0926. For more info, contact MCA Chair Howard Reimer: reimermt@ritzcom.net or (509)659-0564.



Rustlin' up some vittles at MCA .



David Augsburg at Portland Mennonite Oct. 26-27, 2007

Conference Calendar

September 8, 2007 - PNMC Board and Transition Committee Meeting, Peace Mennonite Church, Portland, OR

September 15-16, 2007 - Warden Mennonite 50th Anniversary Celebration, Warden, WA

October 5-7, 2007 - Lebanon Mennonite 50th Anniversary Celebration, Lebanon, OR.

October 6, 2007 - 30th Annual Mennonite Country Auction and Relief Sale, Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville, WA Flyer: 509-659-0926

October 13, 2007 - Oregon Mennonite Festival for World Relief, Albany, OR Auction Donations: 541-926-3493; Other info: 509-659-0564

October 26-27, 2007 - David Augsburg to speak at Portland Mennonite Church. Info: 503-234-0559.

November 12-16, 2007 - Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders, sponsored by Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, St.

Timothy Lutheran Church, Portland, OR More info: 630-627-0507, admin@LMPeaceCenter.org, www.LMPeaceCenter.org

June 20-22, 2008 - PNMC Annual Meeting, Nampa, ID

Have an event to list in our coming events calendar? Send info to Sue Palmer at office@pnmc.org Submission deadlines on Page 2.