

Evangel

Fierce Storm Tears thru Drift Creek Camp; Massive Trees Block Way to Caretaker Home

By Brenda Kauffman
Co-Director, Drift Creek Camp

The fierce storm along the Oregon coast in December 2007 made the month unforgettable for Drift Creek Camp. Winds that reached 125 mph in nearby Lincoln City not only knocked out phone and power lines in town but caused countless trees to fall, crossing the winding road towards Drift Creek Camp, blocking the way for rescuers to reach and evacuate a very pregnant Ann Ogg from the caretakers' residence, where she and husband, Steve, live. Steve was in Eugene when the storm hit.



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Development of New Nature Center Undeterred by Storm

By Anna Williams
With Susan McCarthy Palmer

While some of Drift Creek Camp's trees were felled by the fierce December storm, development of a new nature center on the DCC grounds continues to progress undeterred.

Drift Creek's November 3 meeting marked one year of progress for the budding Drift Creek Nature Center (DNCN). Since then, the DCNC advisory group has been working on ways to integrate nature and sustainability-related activities into existing camp programs, as well as create independent programming for the nature center itself.

Key accomplishments over the past year included publishing a new nature center website, (www.driftcreeknaturecenter.org), crafting mission and vision statements, writing a strategic plan and gathering initial resources. A new information center has been designed for one corner of the Drift Creek Camp Lodge, and the first phase of its construction, including cabinets and workspaces for housing generously donated guides, teaching materials, books, and equipment devoted to all aspects of nature learning, has been completed.

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A Word from Our Moderator

Celebrating Diversity of Worship

I am writing this from Livingston, TX, where Forrest and I have our RV parked at Rainbow's End RV park, near a Hurricane Rita MDS relief project site, which just began its work in January. We have spent the last two-and-a-half months at the MDS relief project site in Diamond, LA, where I served as office manager and Forrest clocked over 3500 miles hauling building materials and supplies to construction sites in the Louisiana Bayou.

It has been an education for me to interact on an intimate daily basis with members of the Conservative Conference, Amish, Old Order Mennonites and Mennonite Church Canada. Patterns of worship and prayer in the deep South were also unfamiliar to me. We attended three different churches while we were there, each of them unique in their own way.

Our "home" church was Lighthouse Fellowship in Buras pastored by interim pastor George Reno. This Mennonite church was pretty much destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and has been rebuilt by many volunteers. The number of core members who have returned to the Bayou is very small – between four and 12 people on a given Sunday. Sometimes the visiting volunteers easily outnumber the regulars. A tradition in this congregation as a result of Katrina is to feed lunch to everyone in attendance. For many months after its renovation, the church housed and fed returning evacuees who came back to Louisiana, only to find their homes destroyed. Musical accompaniment is rare, with the occasional accompaniment of a guitar or even a harmonica, but the singing is lusty and loud. One of the houses being built on eight-foot columns is for the Renos.

We also attended a large Baptist church in Belle Chasse where Lighthouse pastor Tony DuPlessis, who is on sabbatical, played for Sunday morning worship. The musical accompaniment and worship team at this church are of professional caliber and the congregation numbered in the hundreds. Every service included an altar call with at least 6-8 people coming down to the front for prayer and confession each Sunday.

Our third church experience was attendance at the River of Life Pentecostal Church just down the road from the MDS Unit. Their church is housed in a trailer after its total destruction by Katrina, but they have big plans to replace it. This is NOT a quiet church. The worship team consisted of the pastor's daughter and family, who were visiting from Hawaii for the holidays. Prayers were interspersed with coaching and comments from the other members and the sermon was constantly interrupted with loud vocal comments of praise and encouragement. "Come on, Pastor!" and "Preach it, Pastor!" This was also my first experience with people speaking in tongues.

No matter where the long-termers went on Sunday morning for worship, or who was with us, we came away with a sense of being in the presence of God. No matter which group or individual offered the prayers before meals or how they phrased their praise and petitions, you couldn't help but feel the sincerity of their desire to "be the hands and feet of Jesus."

Please continue to pray for our conference ministers, the Transition Team and the Operations Team, particularly as they work out the details of what God plans for PNMC to be.



Charlotte L. Hardt

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Year of Change

By Sheldon Burkhalter, Conference Minister

Transition into a new year always means change. It's not just replacing old calendars and date books. It's entering a time totally new; a time never lived before.

And with God, history is never repeating another cycle; it is movement toward something new, toward God's intended destination.

Our congregations have just celebrated the Advent season. Those who have used the lectionary readings from Luke and the Mennonite worship guide this season have been singing a new song from *Sing the Story* based on Mary's Magnificat with the repeated refrain, "The world is about to turn!"

While Scripture reveals the profound significance of turning that first Advent, God keeps moving history forward toward the consummation God wills. Because God is sovereign, all who live by faith can face whatever is ahead in another new year with confidence and hope. While "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8), God's mercies "are new every morning" (Lam. 3:23).

So we as followers of Jesus lean forward in anticipation of the new reality "about to turn." Even though change is sometimes fearful for us—because leaving the familiar is not always easy—we know God is faithful and his steadfast love endures forever. And we know turning and changing are essential human responses to God's invitation. The law given to Israel promises happiness and prosperity "because you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul (Deut. 30:10)." Likewise, in the New Testament, the action of turning and changing describe conversion to Christ.

Change is also occurring in the PNMC. After three years of diligent work—first in a task force, followed in congregational clusters, and approved in conference delegate sessions—the PNMC Board of Directors now gives oversight to structural implementation of the new vision. Already a new Operations Team, with almost all new faces, steps forward to lead the conference toward the vision.

As change enters our lives, our communities, and our world, God calls us to trust. Ultimately, this call is to trust in God. Because we are humans living in human communities, we are challenged to exercise trust in and for one another. Communication, consultation, partnership, wisdom, and humility are elements which build trust for fulfillment of God's mission. So may God lead us through this time of change!



“A Time for Every Matter under Heaven” Duncan Smith Announces Departure

By Duncan Smith, Conference Ministry Team Leader

“There is a season for everything, a time for every matter under heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, a time to pluck up what is planted... What gain have the workers from their toil?...He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds....” (From Ecclesiastes 3)

None of us like to receive surprising news out of the blue. Well, if this is surprising news for you, it will at least give you some warning. In roughly five months, at the end of June, I will be leaving my position as conference minister after ten years on staff with the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference (PNMC).

I began serving with the PNMC in July of 1998 as Missions Minister, moving into the Conference Minister position in July of 2001. Ten years is a long time, and yet in so many ways not long at all. I will leave with regrets for things not accomplished and satisfaction over growth in different areas of the conference.

For me it has been an intense, challenging, and joy-giving time. I would not want to trade it, nor might I want to re-create it. I have learned about myself, the gifts God has given me, the areas that are more challeng-

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Duncan Smith Departure (Continued from Page 3)

ing, and have grown in my relationship with God, and my understanding of what it means to build the Kingdom of God. I give thanks for God's ever faithful presence and source of strength.

A couple of reflections on my departure: One of the personal reasons is travel. Charlene and I recently figured, in general terms, that over the last 13 years we have been apart for over 4 ½ years, and this is a conservative estimate. Between Charlene traveling to finish her seminary education and our vocational responsibilities there has been a lot of separation.

It also just seems like the right time. In my years with the PNMC, I have been deeply involved in several different staff aspects of the conference, experiencing several job description changes. At this point, rather than moving into another new role, it would be a time for completely new blood to work with the new structure. Again ten years is a long time, but not very long.

I am excited about new developments in older congregations as well as new ministries and congregations which God is birthing among us. I believe the PNMC is poised for a new season of growth and vitality. This is what I will miss the most: being involved in what God is doing among us in such a direct and deep way. I do not have set plans yet, and welcome your prayers in this regard.

Ecclesiastes 3 is a good, familiar passage. These words remind us that life is a gift from God. Indeed, what God has given us to do, called us into, is a gift. For me as for you there will be new things ahead. It is this excitement of a new season which also goes along with the grief and uncertainty of change. You do not have to make a change of position location to ask yourself the question: "What new season of ministry is God calling me into?"

DCC Storm Damage (Continued from Page 1)

Board Chair Ken Snyder, incoming caretaker Seth Ediger, and camp directors Brenda and Tony Kauffman, made plans to "blaze a trail" into the camp after learning via an e-mail from Ann to their daughter in Eugene of the fallen trees which blocked her exit from the camp.

The scene along the road was worse than any on the rescue team had anticipated. The road was blocked by trees at every corner. As daylight diminished, the urgency with which they sawed through obstructing branches and trunks increased. Finally, the crew, including Steve Ogg, reached camp, gasping at the sight of massive trees lying across the camp entrance, crushing all three parked vehicles! However, the relief experienced when it was learned that the staff was safe far outweighed the shock from the storm!

In the weeks following, volunteers gathered to cut through the remaining trees, making the camp again accessible for guests. Mennonite Disaster Service organized a 24-person crew who split and moved wood, collected debris and helped clean the lodge. There is still cleaning up to do, but the efforts put forth by many volunteers and generous donors has made a huge difference.

With appreciated help from many hands, DCC was still able to host its Fourth Annual New Year's Youth Group Retreat. This year's speaker, Curt Weaver, helped participants determine their spirituality types and questioned what they would do if Brittany Spears came to their church. He brought a challenging message that caused lively discussion. It was a blessing to have a fun and responsible group of campers who not only played hard, but worked hard Monday afternoon when guests helped with cleaning up storm debris.



Worker slashes way through fallen timber to rescue pregnant caretaker from cottage.

What do we want? Change!

When do we want it? Um, soon?

By Dave Hockman-Wert, Moderator-Elect

I don't know about you, but after listening to some of the presidential campaigning recently, I am growing weary of hearing candidates tout their ability to bring change (with a capital "C")! They make it sound as if change is cool, desirable, easy; as if it's the popular kid on campus or the latest nifty gadget: iChange!

As a biologist, I know that "change is the only constant" in the natural world. But that doesn't make it easy! And as someone immersed in the changes that PNMC is going through right now, I can attest to the challenges caused by the inertia that can lead us to resist new ideas, new structures, new wineskins.

When we last left the PNMC Transition Team (TT), they were forming working subcommittees to engage in some specific tasks: writing new bylaws, hiring new staff, and defining passion-based ministries. They were also in the process of selecting a Finance Team and an Operations Team (which, pending delegate approval, will become the new Board in July).

The Bylaws Subcommittee is making great progress. Draft bylaws have been written and reviewed, way ahead of schedule! While the bylaws still need more refinement, I fully expect we will have a draft for delegates to consider at the Treasure Valley 2008 annual meeting.

The Personnel/Hiring Subcommittee is working prayerfully and creatively to balance the need to serve congregations adequately (via conference ministers) with available resources (i.e., congregational contributions). This can be a real challenge, as no one likes to reduce services or add to existing staff workloads. Yet we also remember the commitment we made at the annual meeting in Albany to use congregational contributions wisely and to develop a plan to bring our income and expenditures back into balance.

In a move to accomplish that goal, Treasurer Don Bacher now has a Finance Team to work with him on developing a new budget. I think he is glad to have other financial folks around to help share the load during this challenging time.

The Operations Team is also, um, operating, having met with the current Board in November and alone in January. Members of the team include myself, Charlotte Hardt (in her role as current Moderator), Linda Dibble, Audrey Lowen, Wendell Amstutz, Pedro Olvera, Jeanne Rempel, and Brad Roth. Planning to become more of a governance Board, as envisioned in the Structure Vision Task Force proposal, the Operations Team took its first steps in that direction by empowering Conference Minister Team Leader Duncan Smith to take on more of an executive role for the rest of his term. This will be a sort of "test run," allowing us to learn what it might be like to work with the new Conference Executive, what kinks we might run into along the way, et cetera.

If you're keeping score at home, you may have noticed that the list of Operations Team members does not include anyone from Idaho (or Montana or Alaska, for that matter). There is one open slot remaining, and we would like to fill it with someone from one of these states. If you think of a fine candidate (or feel a calling yourself!), please do let us know. We will also need to fill the Secretary and Treasurer positions in July, so be thinking about good people for those roles as well. Note that in the new struc-



Dave Hockman-Wert
Transition Team Chair

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MCC to Launch New Newsletter Focused on the Northwest

Mennonite Central Committee is getting ready to publish a quarterly newsletter focusing solely on the Northwest. This is to keep MCC friends, alumni, supporters and interested persons in our area informed. It will include information regarding the Idaho, Washington and Oregon relief sales; special events; new and returned workers; the latest updates on what MCC has been doing; opportunities to serve; areas of international critical need and how the Northwest is responding; stats and needs at the Northwest Material Resource Center in Hubbard, OR, and other items of interest. Currently the Northwest Center is in need of health, relief and AIDS kits. To subscribe to the newsletter: contact Bob Buxman (bux@mcc.org; 503-502-5402).

Students Live Anabaptist Church History

By Eric Ivanitsky

What would it be like to go back in time and retrace the footsteps of early Anabaptists as they sought to gather and worship in hiding? How would it feel to be questioned and interrogated about your faith?

These are just a few questions that students at Western Mennonite School pondered after participating in the Underground Church Experience put on by Bible teachers Dave Engle and Molly McCabe with the support of many Salem Mennonite Church volunteers. Set in the hills outside of West Salem just after nightfall, on Sarah Duemling's (a member of Salem Mennonite Church) forested property, students were put in groups and given ID badges with a map and the goal to make a one and a half mile journey to a secret worship service. On the way to the service the students experienced several different obstacles. Interrogators asked difficult questions about faith, groups were separated by the "Authorities," and dimly lit and unmarked trails added physical tension to the experience.

The purpose behind such an "out of the box" assignment was to give students a chance to process how they would respond if their religious freedoms were taken from them and to share in the experience of what persecuted believers go through. Following the activity, a rope was passed around for everyone to place a hand on as a symbol of connectedness, both to our Anabaptist ancestors who suffered and endured persecution for their faith, as well as to those who even now live their life in the face of suffering for their beliefs.

Transition Team Report (Continued from Page 6)

ture the Secretary and Treasurer will not be Board members, as they are in the current structure. This should reduce the workload of these positions.

The Passion-Based Ministries Subcommittee has been a little slow in forming, but is now up and running. This group will work with the existing committees (Outreach Development, Peace and Justice, Mexico Transition, Congregational Nurture) on how they can transition from the old to the new system, and will develop a process for how new groups can form and connect with PNMC.

Please keep everyone on the Transition Team, Operations Team, and current Board in your prayers as they serve the church in this way.

Transition Team documents, minutes, and updates are on the PNMC website (http://www.pnmc.org/Resources/Transition_Team). If you have questions, nominations, or suggestions about the transition process, please contact Dave Hockman-Wert, TT Chair. Phone: 541-752-0444, E-mail: dhwert@yahoo.com.

Drift Creek Nature Center (Continued from Page 1)

"We are hoping that 2008 brings new program development to the center geared toward children, adults, artists and students," commented Anna Williams, an advisory group member. Another goal is to start working on much needed energy-efficient improvements to the 1960s-era DCC Lodge.

"It is our desire for guests of Drift Creek Camp to experience a renewed reverence for God through learning about the diverse species and ecology in this beautiful setting," Anna added. "We hope this will lead to a deeper appreciation and commitment to care for God's awesome creation."

PNMC Workers Dismantle Walls, Build God's House in South Africa

By Lynda Hollinger-Janzen and Susan McCarthy Palmer

South African sunlight streamed through gaping holes in the plastered bricks of Grace Community Church haloing a black man with a wheelbarrow and a white woman with a shovel cleaning up debris from dismantled walls. The two came from communities separated by oceans, physical and political, to build the household of God, both literally and physically.

From October 7-19, a team of 16 North Americans, including Zion Mennonite's own Bob and Darlene Kauffman, Christian Amstutz and Tim Lapp, joined workers from Philipstown, South Africa, to renovate the Grace Community Church building, one of the oldest structures in this small town of 3,000 whose economy has plummeted after post-apartheid white flight to urban centers. "The town has only a few businesses in it now," Darlene Kauffman said in a recent interview with the *Evangel*. These include a small grocery store and a bank, the latter of which is open only three days a week.

Apartheid still casts a long shadow over this poor village. "One day, one of our white workers accompanied a black resident to a store," recalled Bob Kauffman. "The store owner reacted negatively to the Philipstown native because he, a black person, had all the money and the white person was simply accompanying him." In South Africa, Bob explained, people are still accustomed to viewing the white-black relationship very much as a boss-assistant one, rather than a cooperation among equals.

As a result, neighbors of all colors stopped to gawk at blacks and whites, shoulder to shoulder, stripping walls, putting up ceilings, installing electricity and painting the sanctuary. "Having our kin from North America with us was a huge value to our town that is still struggling to get out of apartheid," commented Aubrey Badule, foreman of the church's building project. "Our congregation and the town can't stop talking about it!"

"The day is coming when whites will enter into worship with us," Grace's pastor, Leon Pula, asserted. "Conversations about our building have been leading to spiritual conversations. We are putting aside traditional structures of apartheid. We are one community; one in the Lord."

The involvement of the Hubbard, OR, congregation, which included raising funds for repairing the building as well as supplying children with much needed school supplies, sprang from a call Bob received from his brother, Gordon, who had served for some years as a missionary in Zambia. "When Gordon was teaching in a mission school there, I always wanted to visit him," Bob recalled. "After he came back, I told him, 'Let me know if you ever go back to Africa. I want to come with you!'" Gordon remembered Bob's expression of interest, so when his congregation in Indiana began making plans for the trip to South Africa, he gave Bob a call. Bob almost had his bags packed in his heart as soon as he was invited. In October, his dream, held for nearly 30 years, became reality.

Adjusting to life in Philipstown wasn't easy. "The first night with our host family, I had to go out in the cold several times to use the latrine. I wasn't happy about this but then I thought, 'If this widow (who was hosting Bob and Darlene in her home) and her grandchildren can do this 365 days a year, I can do it for a few days.'" The African family gave up their bed to the Kauffmans and slept on the floor. "It was very humbling."

The Kauffmans were also excited that Tim and Christian, both professional construction workers, were able to join them for the service project. "It's a powerful thing when young people get the chance to help in something like this," Darlene commented. "They have so much of their lives ahead, so this kind of experience can really impact them at a time when they have so many years ahead to help in this way again and again."

Since the North Americans left in mid-October, the roof has been laid, the floors poured, the walls plastered, and the congregation has begun to meet in their new church home. "The renovation of Grace Community Church is a sign of hope," noted MMN missionary to South Africa Linda Detweiller.



Bob Kauffman, Zion Mennonite, right foreground, directs building of frames for church lighting.

Hurricane Damages Northwest Mexico Church

By Susan McCarthy Palmer

A hurricane which tore through Northwest Mexico in December 2007 did much damage to one of the churches served by PNMC's Mexico Transition Committee (MTC), Concilio de Iglesias Hispano Anabautistas del Noroeste (CIHAN), and Convencion Iglesia Evangelicas Menonitas del Noroeste de Mexico (CIEMNM).

According to MTC team member Curt Dorsing, the hurricane caused "considerable damage, mostly to the economy but also some physical structures." Among other things, Dorsing noted, "the church at San Lorenzo lost the roof of their outdoor church area...and need approximately \$2,500 to fill in where the poor economy has fallen short." In a non-hurricane matter, the church at Tabolejeca needs some repairs to their building at a cost of \$1,600.

Congregations willing to provide financial support for the work that needs to be done are asked to send their donations to Don Bacher, PNMC Treasurer, 1650 SE Main St., Albany, OR 97233. Please make checks payable to "Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference" and note on the check which Mexico project you wish to support, San Lorenzo or Tabolejeca.

Seeing Church thru Missional Lens Is Seminar Aim

By Susan McCarthy Palmer

"Seeing the Church through a Missional Lens" will be the focus of a seminar for local churches, co-sponsored by the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference and Mennonite Mission Network.

The seminar, to be held May 15-16, 2008, at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, OR, is geared to help congregations develop and sustain a culture of engaging in God's mission. Participants will explore how their congregations can become more involved in God's mission in their congregation, community and abroad. Working in congregational groups, they will examine all aspects of their church life from a missional perspective and begin to develop ways the congregation can respond to God's preferred future. Facilitators for the event will be John H. Powell, Mission Network Co-Director for U.S. Ministries, and Leo Hartshorn, Mission Network Minister of Peace and Justice.

Churches participating in the event are expected to send people from their elder/deacon board, worship committee and outreach/evangelism committee. Other interested individuals from participating churches are also welcome.

Cost for the event is \$100 per congregation (which, in part, will help defray costs of visiting speakers) or \$40 per individual, plus \$15 per person for Friday evening snack and Saturday lunch. The event will take place from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. on Friday, May 15, and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 16. Look for a registration brochure in the next few weeks. For more info or to register, contact Zion: 503-651-2274.

"Words of Life" is Pastor/Spouse Retreat Theme

"Words of Life" will be the theme of the Annual Pastor/Spouse Retreat to be held March 28-30, 2008, at Edgewater Inn, Long Beach, WA. English participants, contact Terry Rediger: 509-659-0926; Spanish participants, contact Brad Roth: 509-349-2444.

Camp Camrec Seeks Manager

Western Mennonite Fellowship is seeking a year-round camp manager. Details: www.camrec.mennonite.net.

Conference Calendar

Feb. 29– March 2. *Young Adult (18-31) Retreat*, Drift Creek Camp. Info: 503-390-2715.

March 1, 2008 - *Elder Training 2*, North OR Pastors Cluster, Calvary Mennonite, 9 a.m.-noon.

March 24-28, 2008 - *Art and Drama Camp* for Grades 5-7, Drift Creek Camp, Lincoln City, OR. Info: www.driftcreek.org.

March 28-30, 2008 - *Pastor/Spouse Retreat*, Edgewater Inn, Long Beach, WA. Info: English - 509-659-0926; Spanish - 509-349-2444.

April 6, 2008 - Mary Oyer speaks at *Oregon Mennonite Genealogical and Historical Society meeting*. Info: 541-926-5046.

May 15-16, 2008 - *Seeing the Church through a Missional Lens*, Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, OR. Info: 503-651-2274.

May 17, 2008 - DATE CHANGE: *Idaho Mennonite Relief Sale*, Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa, ID.

June 27-29, 2008 - *PNMC Annual Meeting*. Idaho.

October 4, 2008 - *Mennonite Country Auction*, Menno Mennonite Church grounds, Ritzville, WA.

October 11, 2008 - *Oregon Mennonite Festival for World Relief*, Albany, OR.