



GRETTNA'S GOOD NEWS

*“Once again our hills will be alive
with the sound of music.”*

ELISABETH VON TRAPP

Yes, it is true; the stories you've heard about a return engagement are correct. The beautiful voice of Elisabeth von Trapp will soar through the Tabernacle once again, on Saturday, July 24. It is the only program of the year for which tickets will be required. They are priced at \$15 and an application form is enclosed with this Newsletter. They will also be available at Remember When in Mt. Gretna, across from the Jigger Shop.

Those of you who heard Elisabeth two years ago when she first sang in the Tabernacle will remember the clarity and controlled emotion of her singing. We tend to think that her von Trapp name means that she needs no other introduction, which is only partly true. Elisabeth is a singer blessed with many gifts who is determined to be her own person. If that sounds trite, consider that the only concession she makes to the family saga of fleeing over the Alps from Nazi dominated Austria is to end her concerts with a haunting rendition of Edelweis. Her feeling is that she is connected to her family, but is stepping out of their shadow.



Elisabeth's father is Werner von Trapp (portrayed as Kurt in *The Sound of Music*); her mother, Erika, is also Austrian and came to the United States in 1948. Elisabeth studied classical piano and violin in Austria (as well as dressmaking, a skill she has used to design Austrian style clothing to be sold through specialty shops), but she is persistent in pointing out that she has also been influenced by musicians like the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and Pete Seeger. She is presently engaged in setting to music and recording a number of Robert Frost's poems.

Elisabeth and her husband of 17 years are active members of St. Dunstan's, an unusual Episcopal church in Waitsville, VT. When she sang at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, nearly the entire congregation of St. Dunstan's was in attendance. She sang Gounod's Ave Maria without accompaniment, a very difficult task in that huge space. But then, Elisabeth has also sung in Grand Central Station in New York and in various New York subways.

She thinks our Tabernacle is a wonderful venue and is very pleased to have another opportunity to perform here. We couldn't agree with her more.

What's New?

Several things are new; probably the most important (and least visible at the moment) is the new spirit of looking ahead that is evident in the discussions and planning of the Program Committee. Many of the ideas and suggestions that were developed during an all day "brainstorming" session at Cornwall UMC in November are being explored in depth, and some ideas have already been adopted.

Clearly, our first century was a successful one, but the Second Century cannot be a repetition of the first. Many things have changed since our grandparents and great-grandparents left Stoverdale and took advantage of Robert Coleman's generous offer of land near his park in Mt. Gretna. What we have called the Bible Conference and, later, the Bible Festival, had no name other than "Campmeeting" in the 1890s. It was 1942 when the name "Bible Conference" first appeared on a printed program (although the Rev. Schuyler Enck used the term officially in 1917). In 1995 the name was changed to "Bible Festival."

Programs, as well as the name, have changed. We no longer have day long services beginning at 6:30 in the morning and continuing through prayer services, youth services, hymn services, and preaching services until seven or eight o'clock in the evening. Music, always an important part of the Campmeeting programs, has come to be the most popular of the Bible Festival programs.

So when you ask, "What's new?" the answer depends on the answer to "New since when?" New since last year will be a Friday night concert on June 18 by the a capella choir from Westminster



Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Virginia; also new since last year will be a Sunday evening concert on August 1 by a popular local orchestra, Bob Troxell's Big Jazz Band.

And the Sunday morning worship service on August 1 will be new to those of you who have not yet heard the Wing and a Prayer ensemble, a group of talented and dedicated musicians and singers from the Mt. Gretna UMC Church, under the direction of Rob Marquette. They participate regularly in Sunday worship at the Mt. Gretna church. They also take their program

"on the road," performing at retirement homes, nursing homes, hospitals, and churches.

They will conduct the full worship service in the Tabernacle that Sunday morning (August 1). Come and worship with us; bring your whole congregation and experience a Sunday service just as your grandparents did in the very same Tabernacle.



Our new mission statement: "Christian spiritual renewal in a unique Victorian setting." Our new name: Over the next two years we will be transitioning to become "Summer at the Tabernacle" instead of the "Mt. Gretna Bible Festival." This is not to downgrade our emphasis on a Christian witness, but rather to acknowledge our present strengths in terms of attendance and support. Our new website (soon to be online): www.MtGretnaTabernacle.org (Check us out.) Our correct address is P.O. Box 408, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064.

SOMETHING OLD - SOMETHING NEW

A (new) Historical Society with a museum for (old) Gretna area records and memorabilia??? Something long talked about by residents and visitors alike has a chance to become a reality, so stay alert! This may be Gretna's most important year since 1892!

Opportunity

The Program Committee has established a committee system of responsibility for the various aspects of presenting a summer's worth of outstanding musical and spiritual programs. This is a major change in our way of doing things. Among other things it provides an opportunity for those of you who would like to help out in some way to do so. The six committees are listed below, along with a brief description of their functions. If you would like to help ensure the success of the Second Century by joining one of these working groups, contact Don Zechman (653-8588) or Tom Meredith (964-3813).

Programming - Responsible for planning all Sunday evening and Core Week programs, deciding what to have, making contacts, confirming arrangements, negotiating cost; planning several years in advance.

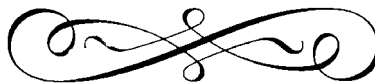
Finance- Both short- and long-term; how to raise money to pay the bills; arranging for money counters and depositors following programs.

Hospitality - Arrange and staff a hospitality center; see that people are greeted as they arrive at the Tabernacle and made to feel at home; arrange for feeding of special program groups, etc.

Prayer Ministry- Gird what we do with prayer, year-round and during summer schedule, including contacts with network churches (and elsewhere) for prayer support.

Publicity & Networking- Preparation and dissemination of printed material; radio/TV and other advertising; develop relationships with the Mt. Gretna community and Network churches.

Ushering & Arrangements - arrange for ushers, sound system operators, special lighting, etc.; work with hospitality team and greeters; make sure Tabernacle is ready for each program.



A Moment in Time

Having sheltered many thousands of people over more than a century of years, the Tabernacle must have been the site of many memorable happenings. A series of Tabernacle Moments was presented in 1999 as part of the centennial celebration for the building, and some memorable moments have already been recorded in the *Centennial History*. But there must be many more such experiences, perhaps not as memorable as Tom Herald's chipmunk soup, but still times that you look back on with pleasure. Pat Hartranft still likes to remember the porch parties her parents took her to.

The Program Committee hopes to make a moment or two of nostalgia a part of each evening's program this summer, taking just two or three minutes to recall some activity, some event, some experience, some association with the Bible Festival - or Christian Endeavor - or Summer Assembly - or Camp Mt. Gretna - or whatever. But we need your help! Jot down your memory contribution on a piece of paper; mail it to PO Box 408, Mt. Gretna. Or e-mail it to Don Zechman at fezdez@infionline.net.

In Memory of . . .

Some of our valued and faithful contributors have developed the very thoughtful habit of dedicating their financial contributions to someone who was very dear and important to them when alive. We are happy to acknowledge all such dedications when we prepare the list of financial supporters -- Partners in Ministry -- for inclusion with the program for the traditional closing Massed Choir concert.

There is no limit on who might be so recognized in your gifts to the Bible Festival or the Friends of the Tabernacle -- it might be a parent or grandparent who first brought you to the Tabernacle programs; it might be a friend who comes with you; it might be one of the ministers you remember from the Summer Assembly or Christian Endeavor or Camp Mt. Gretna.

And of course, if you want to recognize someone with a dedicatory contribution, just mark your gift, "In honor of . . ." and it will be so recognized.

Remember the Lancaster Brass asked us last year to help them plan this year's program, which is on Sunday, August 29th at 7:30 p.m. If you have a favorite number from one of their previous concerts at the tabernacle that you would like them to play this summer, contact them at Kalbert1@comcast.net or write them at 876 Skyline Drive, Gap, PA 17527 by August 10th.

