

By Any Other Name . . .

It is hard to talk about a thing if it doesn't have a name, isn't it? You need to provide so much description of what you want to talk about that by the time you're done, you've forgotten what the thing was that you were considering. For the first few years the meetings during the summer in Mt Gretna were simply "Campmeeting," just as they had been at Stoverdale.

But within a dozen years or so, Rev H B Dohner, on behalf of the East Penn Conference, was urging the Campmeeting managers to plan for a summer Bible Conference, focusing more on Bible study than on evangelism. It did not happen right away, but eventually the term "Bible Conference" came into use, and there was more Bible study and a little less evangelism "in the grove" and auditorium. (It is not clear when the name Tabernacle came into use; the early managers consistently referred to it as an auditorium, and there probably was never any official change.)

And having gone from "Bible Conference" to "Bible Festival," another change seems in order. Just as many churches have adopted a "contemporary" service to keep in step with their congregations, so the Program Committee that arranges the wonderful programs that are presented each summer in the Tabernacle tries to maintain a traditional program that is adjusted for changing social patterns. One of those adjustments will be obvious this year: the name is changing, and the programs will be known as **Summer at the Tabernacle**.

Looking at the lineup and the schedule, it will not seem like a momentous change: a good many favorite Sunday evening musical groups will be returning. And Bishop Michael Sigman, who was so well recieved two years ago, has accepted an invitation to return and will be the featured preacher for 2005.

The two central weeks of preaching and music will start on July 31; the **Sacred Orchestra with Dave Stahl** will perform at the morning worship service, and that



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evening the **Rev Bob Kettering** will hold a service of praise in word and song, with his wife Lib assisting (in song).

Rev Darrell Woomer will lead **Singing the Scriptures**, one of his very popular Hymn Festivals, on Wednesday, August 3. On Saturday, August 6 the tradition of holding a **Handbell Festival** will continue.



Old favorites will return also. **The New Holland Band, Susquehanna Chorale** and **The Lancaster Brass** will fill out our 2005 program.

Full details of the 2005 **Summer at the Tabernacle** programs are given in the program brochure which you will be receiving within a few weeks.

Some of the new artists who will be featured at the Tabernacle this summer are:



Andy Roberts and the **Four Piece Quartet** with the Rev John Roberts doing commentary; **FaithX**, a group of musicians from Trinity Lutheran Church in Camp Hill presenting "Expressions of Faith;" **John Read** presenting a program on our United Brethren/Methodist background; and **Connie Pombo**, founder of Women's Mentoring Ministries now living in Maytown, presenting a **Women's Seminar**, to which men are also invited.



The **Rev Michael Sigman**, a bishop in the Evangelical Congregational Church, will have the morning and evening services on August 7 and will also conduct the Wednesday evening service on August 10.



The morning worship on Sunday, August 14 will be led by the **Rev Bill Garrett** and will include a Memorial Time when those friends of the Bible

Festival summer programs who have died during the year will be remembered. The **Bob Troxell Orchestra** will provide some "Lively Goin' to Church Music" for the service as well as for a fifteen minute hymn sing prior to the service. And on the evening of the 14th the **Massed Choir** concert will bring the two central weeks to their traditional close.



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The summer schedule looks like a good mix of new programs and old favorites. We'll be looking for you all at each of them.





Do You Remember . . . ?

Sooner or later, whenever a group assembles in the Tabernacle, whether it's for a wedding, or a Bible Festival program, or a Campmeeting program, someone is bound to say, "Do you remember the time . . ." There may be some affirmative answers to that question, but as time goes on, there is more and more likelihood of hearing negative answers.

There are still lots of people around who come to Tabernacle programs, and one of the reasons they come is that they remember some good times, some reflective times, some spiritual times, and they want to repeat experiences like that.

From the numbers and the dispersion of our Partners in Ministry (contributors to either the Bible Festival or the Friends of the Tabernacle) the Tabernacle experience, and for many the Camp Mt Gretna experience, must have left indelible memories along with the desire to con-

tinue to support the programs. A number of couples have met their spouses either at a Tabernacle program or at Camp Mt Gretna, and they certainly have good reason to cherish those memories.

We would like to hear about these and any other memories of the Mt Gretna experience. It has been said that there is a "spirit of Mt Gretna" that makes it different from most places where people live. It's that spirit that comes alive when the old stories are recalled and told again to someone who hasn't heard them before.

For this Summer at the Tabernacle we'd like to be able to add some of your personal memories to the collective memory of what we called the Mt Gretna Bible Festival. Our address is PO Box 408, Mt Gretna; it would be great to find it stuffed with recollections of significant moments you enjoyed at Mt Gretna.



You Are Invited . . .

. . . to sing with the massed choir at Mt. Gretna on Sunday evening, August 14, at 7:30 pm

Rehearsals will be held on Sunday afternoons from 2-4 p.m. at Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church (the white church off the parking lot behind the tabernacle) on these dates:

July 17, 24, 31 and August 7 and 14



We know summer time is vacation time, and you may not be able to be at every rehearsal. Please attend as many as you can and SING

WITH US. We'd love to have your church/organization represented this year. Help us fill the choir loft with 100 or more singers.

For more information, contact the director:
Fred Rice, fmr632@paonline.com
(717) 367-5606 OR
Don Zechman, fezdez@infionline.net
(717) 653-8588

ATTENTION MUSIC DIRECTORS

A large collection of choral music used in recent massed choir concerts is available for lending free of charge to area churches. The only requirement is that it be collated and returned after use.

Contact Esther Mefferd at 964-3123 (e-mail: vicar@paonline.com) or call Pastor Janet Steger at 964-3241.



MGAHS

Some of you may know what MGAHS stands for, but no doubt many of you are mystified. These initials identify the MT GRETN A AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, which, after many years of talking and wishing, actually came into existence during the summer of 2004.

Membership in the Society is open to anyone with an interest in the history and culture of the Mt Gretna area, which includes the Campmeeting, Chautauqua, Mt Gretna Heights, Stoberdale, Timber Hills, Conewago Hill, Cornwall, and those areas between Gretna and Colebrook once occupied by the Pennsylvania National Guard.

The purpose of the Society is to find, preserve, and display artifacts relating to those areas and to provide public educational programs based on them.

Developing an Oral History program is high on the list of activities for the Society. Society members will be interviewing long-time residents and recording their memories of earlier days in the area. Recollections of daily life, of special programs, and of more spectacular events are all equally important.

The Society is actively looking for people to volunteer to be interviewed so that their particular piece of Mt Gretna history can be preserved. If you would like to have your Campmeeting or Bible Conference/Festival memories recorded and preserved, contact Jack Anderson at 964-1975.

Of particular interest to "Summer at the Tabernacle" audiences is the program co-sponsored by the Historical Society and the Campmeeting's Heritage Festival on Saturday evening, July 16, when Tom Meredith will talk about "Early Days in the Campmeeting." Of course, the "early days" are really the days when churches closed their doors for two weeks and entire congregations came to Mt Gretna for Campmeeting, ten days or more of preaching, teaching, singing, and worship.

"Campmeeting" and "Bible Festival" (although that term was not then used) were one and the same in those "early days." But it didn't take long for things to start changing; they're still changing, even in our own time, and that is why preservation of the past is so important: to give us understanding and perspective on today's events, as well as to let us enjoy the simple pleasures of nostalgia.



Time to Remember

It has been customary at one of the Sunday morning worship services during the central weeks of the Bible Festival to pause for a moment to remember those who have in one way or another been associated with the Bible Festival and have died in the interval since the preceding summer.

The Program Committee has designated the morning worship hour on August 14 as the time for this Remembrance Service. The Rev Bill Garrett will lead the worship that day with

the Bob Troxell orchestra providing the music, something they have done for many local church services.

If you know of someone who participated in Bible Festival programs, supported them in some way, or simply liked to attend them and has died during the past year, please contact Don Zechman at 653-8588 or e-mail him at fezdez@infionline.net. You can also reach us by mail, of course, at PO Box 408, Mt Gretna.



Entering the 21st Century

For those of you who have been longing for the advantage of tapping some keys on your computer and reading on your screen the schedule of Summer at the Tabernacle programs, it is time to rejoice and start tapping those keys.

Yes, after a couple of years of discussion and questioning whether it would be worth the cost, the Program Committee, through the efforts of chairperson Don Zechman, has established a web site, and at this writing it is "up and running." Logging on requires tapping the keys: www.MtGretnaTabernacle.org.

For its initiation, the web site carried the 2004 schedule. (The technical matter of designing and setting up the site made it appropriate to use a typical schedule; it will be updated with 2005 information as soon as the programs for this season are all confirmed.)

There are several reasons why it took the committee so long to decide to enter the 21st century communications world. Sponsoring a

non-profit organization that depends exclusively on contributions from its friends for its financial needs requires careful management; there are costs involved in establishing and maintaining a web site, costs which the committee now thinks will be repaid by having information about the programs more widely accessible. As there is no way to know in advance how much additional income the increased accessibility will produce, the committee needed some time to "think it over."

And historically, speedy decisions were seldom made except under such circumstances as absolutely required fast action (as when the sewage disposal situation became critical). For example, in 1899 the Association appointed a committee to study the possibility of changing the programs and holding what they called a "Bible Conference." Two years later, they agreed to hold a Bible Conference in July, 1902, but it was not until 1915 that a program classed as a "Bible Conference" was actually held! At least it didn't take the current management that long to establish their web site.

New Faces

Among the performers scheduled to make their first appearance at the Tabernacle this summer are the Four Piece Quartet, and two inspiring speakers, John Read and Connie Pombo (for more on Connie, see the article on "Women's Seminar" on page 6).

The Four Piece Quartet originated in 1997 when Campmeeting resident Andy Roberts was asked to bring a group to Grandview UM Church in Lancaster for a jazz worship service. He called on three friends, and the Quartet, consisting of Steve Meashey, trumpet, brother Bob Meashey on



bass, Dave Lazorcik on drums, and Andy on keyboard and piano, was born.

Andy is currently music leader for the contemporary worship service at Good Shepherd UM Church in Lebanon, and has been music director/pianist since 1985 for the Timbers Dinner Theatre.

Another new face is that of John Read, who currently resides in Philadelphia. However, John is no stranger to our denomination, whose history he has studied for many years. Using amusing anecdotes and hymn singing, John gives an overview of Methodism, noting especially the United Brethren strand in our own Campmeeting heritage.



Our Heritage

Did you know there is another Festival on the Campmeeting grounds and in the Tabernacle besides our **Summer at the Tabernacle-Bible Festival**? It is the annual Heritage Festival, sponsored by the Campmeeting Board of Managers to celebrate the Mt Gretna heritage with musical and informational programs on selected Saturday evenings.

The entire Mt Gretna community is welcome at any and all of these programs, and all the supporters of the **Summer at the Tabernacle** programs and **Friends of the Tabernacle** are counted as members of the Mt Gretna community.

These Heritage Festival programs offer another excuse for visiting Mt Gretna, enjoying its unique atmosphere, and being entertained in the Tabernacle. The programs this year include **The Pastimes** Doo Wop group on June 18, the **Shuey Brothers** bluegrass music on July 3, a talk on "Early Days in the Campmeeting" by

Tom Meredith on July 16, and an afternoon **Community Picnic** with a concert in the evening by the **Lebanon Big Swing Band** on July 30.



The Bible Conference-Bible Festival has come a long way from the time when preachers stood on a small platform, sheltered from the August sun by a muslin canopy and the congregation sat on backless benches for hours at a time, and so has the Campmeeting Association. But both are branches of the same tree and we all enjoy opportunities to get together and reminisce and be entertained.

Today, the number of cottages is more than double the original number, and tents are no longer to be seen on the grounds. But as beneficiaries of Robert Coleman's generosity and social consciousness we like to look back and share our common experiences as well as reflect on God's Glory at Gretna.

Women's Seminar

In a move that recalled Bible Conference programs of a decade or more ago, the Program Committee elected to reinstitute a program especially for women, recalling the days when "Women's Missionary Day" was an integral part of the summer program.

Connie Pombo, a resident of Maytown, missionary, published author, and founder of *Women's Mentoring Ministries*, has accepted an invitation to speak at the Tabernacle on Sunday evening, July 17.

She is co-author of the book *Conversations on Faith* with Dr Robert Schuler, Dave Dravecky, and Ann Jillian. Connie is a breast cancer survivor and says that the experience with cancer actually increased her faith and allowed her to

do things she never thought possible.

One of the first things she did was to establish the Women's Mentoring Ministries and to begin giving seminars on "When Someone You Know Has Cancer." Since then she has considerably expanded her range of topics, and this summer will be speaking to "Living the Passionate Life." Connie emphasizes that men are welcome to attend what will surely be a stimulating and inspiring program. Full details will be found in the 2005 Summer at the Tabernacle brochure which will be mailed to you in the near future.





Special Opportunities

You have heard it announced many times over the Tabernacle public address system that "The programs you enjoy here are not free, so we're asking for your generous donations to help pay for them."

It is true that some of the programs you most enjoy--the **Handbell Festival** and the **Massed Choir** concert, for example--are among those whose expenses exceed the generous contributions of their audiences. The performers are volunteers, but the music they need for the performance, the food they need during their all-day rehearsals, and the special instrumentalists are not free.

There are many ways to deal with these situations: various groups or network churches could contribute food for the meals. Or some individual or group could provide money to cover the expense of one of the performances. In other words, someone or some group could partially or completely underwrite a particular program.

The Cottages Are Talking

Sunday July 10 looks like a special day on this year's Summer at the Tabernacle schedule. It should be of special interest to all of you who like to talk about how things used to be here in the Campmeeting.

Irene Rollman is planning an informal afternoon gathering in the Tabernacle of owners of cottages which have interesting histories (and don't they all?). They will share stories about the cottages with all the rest of us.

This informal gathering is planned for 3:00 pm, conveniently after church and Sunday dinner and well in advance of the evening program.

Irene's goal is for it to be unrehearsed, somewhat like a conversation among a group of friends with a common interest--in this case, the individual stories of some of the Mt Gretna cottages, providing a personal micro view of the way things used to be.

Underwriting is a simple solution and is appropriate for any or all of the programs that have associated performance costs. These may be the fee charged by the performer or the costs involved in providing meals or music or other support for the program.

Underwriting a program, of course, qualifies the underwriter as a Partner in Ministry; the support will be specially acknowledged in the printed program for the Massed Choir concert and in the Fall newsletter. And, of course, the amount of the underwriting contribution is an income tax deduction to the full extent permitted by IRS regulations.

For further details or to discuss the underwriting opportunities more fully, contact Rev Don Zechman at 653-8588 or by e-mail at fezdez@infionline.net.



Coincidentally, the evening program also focuses on the way things used to be, although on a larger scale. John Read, of Philadelphia, who has made a specialty of learning and talking about the development of the United Methodist church, beginning with its United Brethren roots, will be sharing his enthusiasm and his knowledge with the Tabernacle audience that evening.



So if you are a cottage owner or renter, or if you just enjoy the experience of Mt Gretna when you come out for Summer at the Tabernacle programs, or if you want to know more about the parent groups of our Campmeeting, come to Gretna on July 10. Be part of the 3:00 cottage conversation, have supper here, and come back to the Tabernacle for a macro view of our beginnings. See you there!



R. S. V. P.

Here's a set of initials that has two great meanings. When you read them, did you think first of the modern Retired Senior Volunteer Program, or did you think of the traditional wedding invitation asking for a "Reply, if you please"?

Here we are using the initials in the wedding invitation sense. The Program Committee would like to know how you feel about past programs and what sort of programs you would like to attend in the future.

If the committee had replies from all of you to these four questions, that would help committee members considerably as they plan future programs:

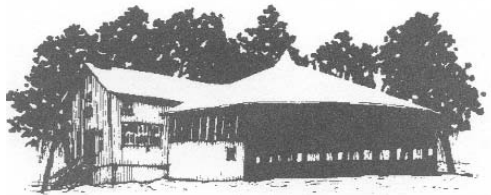
- *What kinds of programs do you most enjoy?*
- *Which two or three programs are most distinct in your memory?*

- *What kinds of programs would you like to see presented during the two Core Weeks?*
- *What about the Sunday evening programs?*

These are the questions dealt with by the Program Committee at every one of their meetings. Having some sense of what will appeal to our constituents would facilitate those meetings, but getting this kind of response is not as easy as printing "RSVP."

Perhaps some of you will feel impelled to use one of the following addresses to send in your short answers to the questions:

For e-mail, use fezdez@infionline.net
For regular mail, use PO Box 408,
Mt Gretna, PA 17064



Summer at the Tabernacle

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