

GREटना GOOD NEWS



MT. GREटना BIBLE FESTIVAL NEWS

SPRING 2011

Summer at the Tabernacle

MT. GREटना
BIBLE FESTIVAL
2011

Twenty programs have been arranged for this Summer at the Tabernacle series, nine of them between the last Sunday in July and the 17th of August – the “core weeks” that remind us of the time when the word “campmeeting” meant the period of ten days in August when everybody gathered in the Grove (or in the Tabernacle after 1899) for day-long services of prayer, praise, exhortation, evangelism, singing, and Bible study. Those things still happen in the Tabernacle; perhaps the saturation level is lower now – we don’t do eight hours a day for ten days – but the same goal of providing Christian spiritual renewal is still the guiding principle. And it must be working, because there has not been one single summer since August of 1892, when there was not a “campmeeting,” or a Bible Conference, or a Bible Festival held on these grounds, in exactly the same spot, the Tabernacle, of course, having been erected in the open grove where services were held for the first seven years. That seems like a pretty substantial record, and this year we are honoring it with the presence of our **Conference Bishop, Peggy Johnson**, on July 3. For more on Bishop Johnson, see the story, “New for 2011.”

Music has always been an important part of the campmeeting programs, and even when the board of managers asked the Conference bishop to plan and arrange a summer program at Mt. Greटना, the selection of “music director” was made the responsibility of a single board member. Today music is just as important, accounting for thirteen of the twenty programs.

The season opens with the **Andy Roberts Jazz Quartet** leading us in a jazz service featuring Andy’s interpretations of campmeeting standards along with some of his gentle original compositions, an evening of spiritual renewal harmoniously blending the old with the current – an evening not to be missed.

The **New Holland Band** will be playing their outstanding mix of patriotic, classical, and popular tunes on the last Sunday evening in June. A dramatic production by the highly esteemed **Maranatha Productions** will be presented on July 10. In succeeding weeks the popular **Men in Harmony**, the talented **Marie Barlow Martin**, and the always exciting **Handbell Festival** will follow and take us up to the core weeks.

The **Massed Choir Concert**, historically often the closing camp program, this year will be presented on Sunday evening, July 31. Directed by the nationally known composer and director, Mary McDonald, the nearly two hundred volunteer singers will continue the long tradition of outstanding choral concerts that have marked the Mt. Greटना Campmeeting almost from its beginning. (Perhaps a little more research in the old records will reveal the date of the first “massed choir” program; if so, readers of *Greटना Good News* will be among the first to know about it.) A last minute schedule change prevents our listing the leader for the July 31 morning service.

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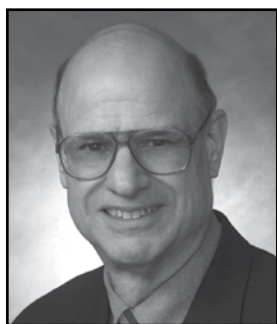
Men In Harmony; above right: Marie Barlow Martin

Summer at the Tabernacle

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We will again have an opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the talent of **Christyan Seay**, who will present a program of "Folk Songs, Hymns, and Spirituals." We look forward with anticipation to an evening of Christyan's sensitive interpretations of the words and music.

More music follows, this time with the **Bob Troxell's Big, Big Jazz Band** leading the service.



Tony Campolo

The preaching and evangelism, mentioned at the top of the story, have not been forgotten, and **Tony Campolo**, a favorite of Bible Festival congregations, will be with us again.

A relatively new feature, our **Children's Program**, co-sponsored with the Pennsylvania Chautauqua is planned. Crackers the Clown and Jack Hubley will be featured this year.

For many years our neighbors across Pinch Road have sponsored a Sunday morning jazz service, led by the New Black Eagle Dixieland band. This year, the **Black Eagles** will be leading the morning worship on August 14 in the Chautauqua Playhouse. While not a part of the Summer at the Tabernacle series, this service has a great history of its own and offers all worshippers an opportunity to sing praises in a traditional New Orleans and Mt. Gretna style. Then, for a change of musical pace that evening, come to the Tabernacle. The 12 member harp ensemble from Chester County, the **Brandywine Harps**, will be back on the evening of the 14th, entralling us



Jack Hubley

once again with the soothing vibrancy that only a harp can produce. It is a sound that is perfectly in tune with the Gretna environment. If you have heard them before, you'll surely want to hear them again, and if you haven't heard them, don't let another summer get away without enjoying their special, ethereal sound.

And speaking of tradition, one of the newer, best loved, and saddest traditions (because it's the end of the season) is the combination of the unequalled **Susquehanna Chorale** on the next to last Sunday evening and the warmth and charm of the talented musicians known as **Quintessentially Brass**, who traditionally close the season. Applauding their last encore leaves you feeling a little empty – just the way you felt when your favorite uncle had to end his visit and say goodbye.



From top: Quintessentially Brass; Brandywine Harps; Susquehanna Chorale



New for 2011

MT. GRETNA
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Bishop Peggy Johnson

A recent excursion through some of the old records revealed that in the “old days”—the 1890s to be precise—the responsibility for each summer’s campmeeting program rested with a committee, usually three members of the Board of Managers. Normally, these appointments were made a year in advance, but

there were times when the Board, overwhelmed by concerns that were more municipal than spiritual might not make the appointment until April for an August program.

Of course, Mt. Gretna was then the official campmeeting of the East Pennsylvania Conference of the

United Brethren Church, and the Presiding Elder of the conference was also president of the Campmeeting Association, thus giving him a good deal of authority and prestige to back up any “short notice” calls for program leaders for the summer’s session at Gretna.

In that early period, bishops of the church were frequently called upon to visit the “camp” or to participate in the services, a custom that will be revived this year with the participation of Bishop Peggy Johnson of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. Bishop Johnson came to us from Baltimore, where she had established a fine reputation for her work with seriously hearing impaired people. Over the years, and for a variety of reasons, the presence of bishops at campmeeting was no longer as common as it had been. So, in a revival of an earlier custom, we are delighted to welcome our current bishop to our grounds and to the Tabernacle for the July 3 evening program.

Partners in Ministry

To all 187 names on the accompanying list, *Partners in Ministry*, the members of the Program Committee and of the Tabernacle Association extend a warm and heartfelt “Thank you.” You are the folks who have taken that extra step with a monetary contribution to help assure the continuation of the Summer at the Tabernacle series sponsored by the Bible Festival. You and the willing but anonymous donors who help fill the contribution baskets at each Tabernacle program are the only source of income we have, and we are completely dependent on your contributions to pay for the programs we present and to help with the maintenance of the valuable, century-old Tabernacle.

We are deeply grateful to the 187 contributors we know by name. And we would certainly like to be able to thank every single one of the contributors who have partnered with us in our mission to bring you programs that provide opportunities for **Christian spiritual renewal in a unique Victorian setting**. And we

will do that, of course, when we know who you are. You can tell us who you are by putting a check in the enclosed envelope and mailing it to us, or better yet, bringing it with you when you come to the Tabernacle this summer.

You have probably noticed the funny little marks following the names on the Partners in Ministry list and the explanation for them is very simple. Our ministry has two requirements: programs to present to the public, and a place in which to present them. Because of the complexity of the Internal Revenue Code governing ministries such as the Bible Festival, we must have two funds, one to pay for the programs and one to pay our share of the upkeep and maintenance costs of the Tabernacle. There is only one other building like it in existence today, and we don’t want to lose this Campmeeting-Bible Festival icon, so we share with the Campmeeting Association the costs of the excellent care given to the Tabernacle.

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Partners in Ministry

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Many contributors like to help out with both requirements, which can be done by writing a check for each fund. Or you can write just one check and mark on it how you would like it divided between the funds. For a time we were using separate contribution envelopes for each fund, but it was decided recently to eliminate the expense of the second envelope.

We would like very much to add your name to the list of Partners. All you need to do is to put a check in the envelope enclosed with this Newsletter and mail it to PO Box 408, Mt. Gretna or bring it with you to the Tabernacle this summer. You will automatically be added to the mailing list and enrolled as a Partner in Ministry.

Partner's List 2010

*- Bible Festival

^-Friends of Tabernacle

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Partner's List 2010 continued

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|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
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An Historical Mystery of Little Note

In the 120 years since the beginning of the Mt. Gretna Campmeeting Association – yes, the decision was made in 1891 but not legally confirmed until February of 1892 and the Bible Festival is the direct descendant of those first campmeeting seasons – the nature of the programs has necessarily changed, although their purpose has not. There is no evidence that the campmeeting season (or session) was ever called anything but “campmeeting” in the early years. The Board of Managers in the first year or two was inundated with demands on their time that were unrelated to providing a program of praise and worship and preaching and music activities for ten days, but they always appointed several of their members to take care of that responsibility. No matter how overworked they were, the music component of the programs was always given very close attention.

For the very first season at Gretna, the music program was under the direction of two professors from Lebanon Valley College, H. Clay Deaner and John E. Lehman. They were both professors of mathematics and astronomy. Perhaps the managers were hoping

to hear the “music of the spheres” at their new camp grounds.

For the second year, they arranged for a “Professor Lowe and wife” to be the “musical conductors”; posts they held for the next six years, and this creates something of a mystery. The authors of the centennial history of the Campmeeting Association identified Professor Lowe as a member of the Lebanon Valley College faculty. However, more recent research reveals that no “Professor Lowe” was ever a member of that body. This is scarcely an earth shaking mistake, but the surviving author of the history would like to identify the professor correctly. Who was he? Was he on the faculty of Albright College? Of some other area school? Or was he possibly an independent music teacher somewhere in Lebanon or Dauphin county? Perhaps one of our readers with a long association with the Bible Festival or the Campmeeting, may have some dim recollection of a story told by an elderly relative about these professors. Unlikely, but still, any thoughts or recollections of stories, or information on this topic will be much appreciated.



Mt. Gretna Bible Festival
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