

GREटना GOOD NEWS



Mt. Gretna Bible Festival News

Spring 2012

Campmeeting 2012 - A Preview

MT. GREटना
BIBLE FESTIVAL
2012

For the one hundred twenty first time since August of 1892, the Campmeeting grove will resound this summer with music and preaching and singing in praise of the God who makes it all possible. The 2012 "Summer at the Tabernacle" will provide all the joy, reverence, and praise of the early campmeeting experience, beginning with a Celebration of the life of Tom Herald, whose contributions to the Bible Festival and the Mt. Gretna still resonate. Tom's family is planning a special memorial service to be held in the Tabernacle at 4 p.m. on June 10.



QuintEssentially Brass

Many old favorites are returning for another "Summer at the Tabernacle." **Andy Roberts** and the quartet will be back to get things started, and the **New Holland Band** will play their annual Independence weekend concert. **Dave Stahl** and the **Sacred Orchestra** open the "Core Weeks" on Sunday, July 29 at the 10 a.m. worship service.

The Susquehanna Chorale and **QuintEssentially Brass** will round out the season in August.

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Tom Herald - 1938-2011



Reflecting on the life and career of Tom Herald one is struck by the consistency of two themes: music and service to others. Despite lacking a piano at home, Tom was nevertheless delivering newspapers in Highspire to pay for lessons he was determined to have. Recognizing his determination and his faithfulness as a member of the Highspire United Brethren (now United Methodist) Church Sunday School, the staff invited Tom to practice on their piano, a permission that was more than repaid by his devoted service as church organist after his return from twenty years' service as a Navy hospital corpsman.

The Highspire church was undoubtedly the foundation for his love of Mt. Gretna -- one has only to read his recollections of Camp Mt. Gretna to realize how important the Sunday School, the



Tom with Elisabeth von Trapp

church, and Gretna were to him even while he was still in school. Friends of the Bible Festival see **Tom Herald** page 2



Campmeeting 2012–A Preview

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While music was always an important part of the campmeeting services from the very first year at Gretna, preaching was the real core of the ten-day meeting. The preaching of **Phil Carlos Archbold** on August 12 and **Shane Claiborne** on August 15, with **Ken Medema's** "piano preaching" at the evening service on August 12 will bring some new and modern voices with a compelling message to our venerable pulpit.



Shane Claiborne

As has become customary, there will be several Saturday morning programs sponsored jointly with the Pennsylvania Chautauqua. Details have not been finalized as of this writing, but the annual spring brochure will have all the information.



Ken Medema

The last two Sundays in August will bring the season to a close, with the **Susquehann Chorale** singing for us on the 19th and **QuintEssentially Brass** playing on the 26th.



Tom Herald - 1938-2011



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are well aware of Tom's musical talent and of his commitment to service. His long relationship with the Program Committee of the Bible Festival brought many outstanding musical programs to the Tabernacle platform. It was Tom who introduced Elisabeth von Trapp ten years ago for the first of her four Bible Festival appearances. And it was Tom's suggestion that brought Harrisburg tenor Christyan Seay to the Tabernacle for repeat performances..

Many Mt. Gretnans remember Tom for his informal Sunday afternoon programs on the steps of the Hall of Philosophy in the Chautauqua. These programs, featuring Tom's Celtic harp and various vocalists always drew enthusiastic crowds of listeners. While Tom was an accomplished organist and pianist, it was the Celtic harp that fascinated him. In 1989 he met a harpist in Harrisburg's Market Square Presbyterian church who built harps as well as playing them. That summer the

harp builder produced two instruments, one with a frame of oak, the other of cherry.

"The sound quality from the cherry framed harp was much better than the other," Tom said later of his choice. And it was the cherry wood harp on which he accompanied Elisabeth von Trapp for one of her numbers at the Tabernacle in 2004.

For these achievements, and for his constant concern for the welfare of the Mt. Gretna community – to say nothing of his contributions to his home town of Highspire which named him Citizen of the Year in 2010 – Tom Herald will be remembered for his dedication to his communities and for his constant efforts to improve them through his music or through his active participation in their affairs. Tom will be missed by a great many people, but mostly by his family. Those of us fortunate enough to have worked with him and enjoyed his music are thankful for the time we had together.



Winter in October

It happened quickly and it was repaired quickly – so quickly that even some residents were unaware that the sturdy old Tabernacle had suffered significant roof damage during the freak snow, ice, rain, and windstorm that brought us an early taste of the worst of winter’s woes. A large branch of a tree near Second and Glossbrenner could not sustain the extra weight of the snow and ice and swirling wind – it broke off and fell directly onto the Tabernacle roof, smashing through the shingles and plywood sheathing of one entire segment, creating what was probably the worst damage to the structure in 112 years.

Roofing specialists, the same ones who installed the new roof earlier in the year, were called at once and were on the scene within a day or two. Repairs

began immediately and to look at that section now, one cannot see any evidence of the most traumatic event in the life of the Tabernacle.

It is certainly comforting to those of us to whom the Tabernacle means so much to know that the Association, in the person of Merv Lentz, is making sure that the old building is given every possible care. The roofing repair, by Ames Services, was carefully examined by the structural engineer who does the annual inspection of the entire Tabernacle; he was completely satisfied with the quality of the repair. The insurance adjuster fully agreed and signed off on the \$6000 claim settlement. (In an Economics 101 footnote, that’s more than three times the original cost of the entire Tabernacle.)

A Message from the Treasurer

This time the message has more to do with simplifying things than with asking for more money (of course, he’d be glad to get more money—our operating expenses in 2011 were \$10,000 more than our income, and reserves have their limits). You have probably already noticed that there is only one contribution envelope included with this issue of Gretna’s Good News. This envelope has a slightly different design—it allows you to indicate the amount you would like to contribute to each of the two major functions of the Bible Festival. One function is to provide the top quality artists and speakers you have been accustomed to hearing. The other function is to share with the Campmeeting Association in maintaining and preserving the Tabernacle. (See the story “Winter in October” for an example.)

Using two envelopes for the two functions seemed like a good idea years ago, but of course not everybody figured out ways to make a dual contribution using only one stamp. And our astute treasurer figured out that not only would one envelope be simpler for you—it would also be more efficient for him because he would have to buy only half as many envelopes as formerly. That

sounded like one of those fabulous “win-win” situations, so the decision was made: one envelope, with clear indicators for how you want us to use your contribution.

Back in the 1890s—when the Campmeeting was new—providing programs for the campers was done differently. The presiding elder, who was also president of the Association, politely requested some bishops attend camp and then asked one of the Lebanon Valley College faculty to come to camp and direct the music program. Sometimes the bishops wanted traveling money (from Dayton, Ohio) and sometimes the music director was paid \$25 or \$30. Well, you know that approach doesn’t work so easily any more. Fees charged by the kind of artists and speakers we want are much higher, even after allowing for the historic inflation rate.

So, this is a suggestion that you make our treasurer (and all the rest of the Program Committee) happy by using the new, simplified, single envelope to make a generous contribution that will help us maintain program quality and maintain the historic Tabernacle.



Connections

From the Editor: This article appeared in a recent Mt Gretna UIM Church Newsletter, and we thought it might be of interest to our readers.

When pastors and organists get together (if they do) to select the hymns for the Sunday worship service little do they know what reactions they may trigger for members of the congregation.

A certain hymn selected for a recent Sunday morning service set off a rather unusual connection for one member while it was being sung.

The hymn was Fanny Crosby's "Rescue the Perishing," not exactly the writer's favorite. (It's hard to sing and the sentiment seems a bit much for today.) But nevertheless, the words created some vivid mental images for one singer. One was the picture of an urban slum, with hungry, dirty, tired people looking for help. One was the passengers and sailors on a sinking ship being tossed about by a stormy, tumultuous ocean. And one image was

a real recollection of a small stage in our very own Tabernacle, with the Maranatha Players reenacting Fanny Crosby's creation of the words to "Rescue the Perishing" while William Doane hummed the tune for her.

Surely, when that hymn was selected the pastor had no idea of what visions it might conjure up. The recollection of a scene from one of last summer's Bible Festival programs carried with it thoughts about the discipleship of the hymn writer, her call to provide assistance to those in need,

The Mission Statement of our church, the significance and durability of the Mt Gretna Tabernacle, and the combined ministry of the Maranatha Players and of the men and women who brought the campmeeting experience to Mt Gretna and have kept it spiritually alive, in the Bible Festival and in our own United Methodist congregation.

What an amazing thing is the simple selection of a hymn for a Sunday morning!

Just the Way it Always Was

Rumors have been floating around for the past several years about somebody working to get the Mt Gretna Campmeeting listed on the National Register of Historic Places. After all, Mount Gretna is pretty much the way it always was – in appearance and in function; so why should it not be listed? Well, the rumors turned out to be true and it is now possible to report that some actual progress has been made.

The National Register is maintained by the National Park Service, but the path to a listing runs through the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, specifically its Bureau of Historic Preservation. The personnel of the Bureau have been very helpful, but as might be expected with two major governments involved, the process is not the simplest

in the world.

However, during this past December a complete application (8 NPS forms, 26 pages of text, 6 maps, 26 photographs, and a detailed inventory of all 235 buildings and structures on the grounds) was submitted to the Bureau in Harrisburg. The Application has recently been returned "with comments and questions," which need to be addressed. March 15 has been selected for a meeting to discuss those questions. The people involved refuse to make any predictions, but all indications seem to point to satisfactory answers to the comments and questions, and ultimately a listing on the National Register, possibly even before Labor Day.



Partner's List 2011

*- Bible Festival

^ - Friends of Tabernacle

Included with this issue of Gretna's Good News is an interim list of contributors to the Bible Festival Ministry. These contributions to the Bible Festival or to the Tabernacle Association were received after the publication of the Fall Newsletter, in which we acknowledge and gratefully thank all those who support our programs. As the Newsletter is published only twice a year, there is a substantial lag between the receipt and the acknowledgement of some contributions. It is hoped that this earlier recognition

will reduce the lag time between the gift and the public "Thank you." You may be sure that any such delay does not reflect a lack of appreciation. The Bible Festival – as indeed the entire campmeeting program ever since 1891 – had been blessed with strong and willing supporters.

The list below includes all contributions received between October 17, 2011 and February 28, 2012. Contributions to the Bible Festival are indicated by *; to the Friends of the Tabernacle by ^.

James & Carol Adams*^	Karl & Linda Gettle*	Ted & Esther Mefferd*
Mt Gretna Art Show^	Milton & SaraAnn Gingrich*	Richard S Miller*^
Bp George & Carolyn Bashore*	Shirley E Grill*^	David & Elaine Pierce*
Robert & Jane Bauer*^	Joel D Henery^	Evelyn Reese*^
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James & Sandra Brown*	Kathy Hetrick*^	Larry Roush^
Mary Jo Brown*^	Rev Bruce & Phyllis Hinderliter*	William & Gladys Sailer*
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Dolores Forsyth*	Rev Jere Martin*	M Scott & Jane Zellers^
David & Edna Garver*	Tom & Carol Mayer*	



The Rev. Bruce Souders - 1920-2012



The Rev. Bruce Souders, graduate of Lebanon High School, Lebanon Valley College, and United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, died at his home in Winchester, VA on February 12. Rev. Souders had a deep interest in the Mt. Gretna Bible Conference (as it was then called), especially while he served as Director of Public Relations at Lebanon Valley College, a position he left in 1961 to head the Humanities, English, and Philosophy Departments at Shenandoah College in Winchester. When he retired in 1989 he could look back

on a career that won him many loyal students and friends as well as helping to bring the college to university status. His contributions to education were fittingly recognized when the University bestowed on him an honorary doctorate degree. Some of our readers may remember Dr. Souders' contribution to the centennial celebration of the Campmeeting, for which he wrote, produced, and directed a historical pageant portraying the problems the Association had with the Stoverdale camp ground and their move to Mt. Gretna.

Stoverdale Roots

Some excursions into the past may yield definite answers to specific questions. Others may produce only a tantalizing hint. The story of the Gretna group's decision to leave Stoverdale because of the "nefarious activities" there is well known. There are numerous newspaper stories from the 1880s and '90s about the wild and reckless driving and racing of wagons and buggies on the campgrounds making walking the streets a rather dangerous activity. Not only was there danger from the vehicles, but the trampling hooves of the horses stirred up such a cloud of dust that one reporter commented that it was scarcely possible to breathe. No wonder some folks wanted to leave!

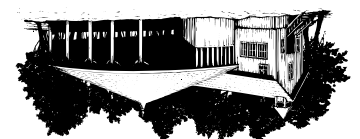
The Stoverdale campgrounds opened for commercial operation in 1866, and there are hints in various records that many of the United Brethren congregations in Dauphin county began holding an annual campmeeting there immediately or soon thereafter. These hints can probably be developed a little more fully with additional research. After all, twenty seven of the families who

moved to Mt. Gretna owned cottages at Stoverdale, and they wanted to move them to Mt. Gretna. But Stoverdale was a commercial campground: Edward Stover, who owned the land, had cleared it and provided water and building sites. Apparently the legal question of who owned the cottages after they were built had not been seriously considered. Of course, we don't even know under what conditions they were built. But in the event, Ed Stover claimed ownership because they were on his land. It was at this point that Robert Coleman reentered the scene and offered to pay the deprived owners the value of the cottages they couldn't move. And so, with Coleman money, Rockledge was built, and so was Rev. J. R. Meredith's cottage at 3rd and Otterbein, along with twenty five others.

And that story reminds us that the effect of Robert Coleman's philanthropy lives on, long after his self-imposed exile and ultimate demise. Jack Bitner had it absolutely right when he called Mt. Gretna "a Coleman legacy."

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