



Gretna Good News

MT. GRETTNA BIBLE FESTIVAL NEWS

SPRING 2013

Now That We're Registered

By Tom Meredith

No, we did not have to wait in line at the courthouse, nor at the PenDot office—but we did wait, actually since 2006 for some of us. But that part of the wait is over—now we're waiting for Spring, for Memorial Day weekend, and specifically for May 26.

That's the date picked for the festivities surrounding the presentation of the official certificate of listing in the National Register of Historic Places. April Frantz, the Bureau for Historic Preservation specialist who guided the entire project, will present the certificate to Campmeeting board president Bruce Gettle, and there will be speeches and refreshment and music by Mt. Gretna's own *Wing and a Prayer*.

Plans are being made to have available for sale a number of mementos of the occasion: the Application Committee hopes to have the complete text and photos from the application document ready for purchase in a souvenir "coffee table" format. Also copies of a portion of the original development plan of the Campmeeting will be available. There may even be a surprise item if the committee gets lucky.

The recognition of the historical integrity of the Campmeeting provided by the National Register listing has provided a theme for many of this year's programs. It is not only the physical integrity of the Campmeeting—it's well preserved cottages, it's unique Tabernacle, it's compressed residential area, and the towering, shading trees—but also the spiritual integrity of the

summer worship programs that have been held without interruption, that qualified the district to meet the exacting criteria of the National Park Service.

As part of the celebration, the Massed Choir concert on July 28 will feature music from the past that

was written especially for Mt Gretna,

along with the newly commis-

sioned anthem written by

Lloyd Larson, who will

be the Choir's guest

conductor this year.

Mr. Larson is well

known as an out-

standing compos-

er, conductor, and

choirmaster and is

eagerly anticipating

his visit in July.

Sunday, August 4,

will be reminiscent of

"Campmeeting Sunday,"

when so many local congrega-

tions came en mass to Gretna,

frequently to hear their bishop (it

was often Rev. Batdorf) preach. The morning

worship service will have the Rev. Joe DiPaolo as guest

preacher from the Wayne United Methodist Church.

Details have not been established as yet, but he may

appear in the guise of a 19th century Campmeeting

preacher. And the evening program will feature a return

engagement by "Silver, Wood, and Ivory," the duo that so

enthralled listeners in 2010.

Not quite like the old Campmeeting Sunday? Well,

no, but the ebooks you read today aren't quite like the

old case bound volumes of yesterday either, but they are

clearly derived from their predecessors. (In this context,

derivative is not a dirty word.)



Mt. Gretna Campmeeting

LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

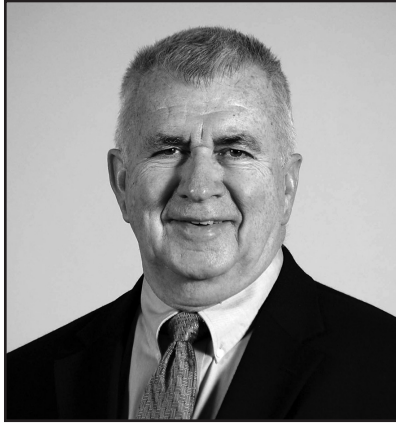
Thank You, Don

One of the impressive characteristics of the Campmeeting group that assembled in Mt. Gretna after leaving Stoverdale is the persistence of family names and the durability of individuals in positions of responsibility. Mr. S. N. Eby from Mount Joy was the only treasurer the group had until 1911. Constantly re-elected, he served at least twenty years. Maggie Baltzell followed her father as musician and book-seller to the Campmeeting, supervising the Children's Hour and presiding over the Ladies Auxiliary for nearly forty years. But not all the examples of extended years of service are from the early days of the Campmeeting. One streak of familial commitment that began in 1939 diminished significantly at year's end, 2012, when the Rev. Don Zechman retired from active participation in Bible Festival activities, with the exception of organizing the annual Massed Choir concert.

It was on August 4, 1939 that the name "Zechman" first appeared on a Mt. Gretna Bible Conference program. On that day, the Rev. Harry Zechman, Don's father, led the 9:00am devotional hour in the Tabernacle with an address on the theme, "In the Presence of the Lord." Ever since then, whether out front at the lectern or at the console of the organ or behind the scenes with the planning committee, either Rev. Harry or Rev. Don has been a vital force in bringing the Bible Conference to life.

In the 1930s the Campmeeting Board of Managers was still functioning as it had forty years earlier. The same board managed the secular affairs of the Campmeeting community as well as the spiritual affairs of the Bible Conference, as the summer programs were then called. (The spinoff of Bible Festival affairs is another story, though; perhaps it will be told some day.)

Born in 1938, Don was probably not in attendance when his father pondered publicly about the Presence of the Lord. Growing up in Harrisburg, where his father was pastor of the Derry Street church from 1937 to 1967, Don was introduced to music early on, being instructed in the art of piano playing by his mother.



In high school his musical interests expanded to the extent of playing trumpet in the school band.

Summer vacations brought Don to Camp Mt. Gretna, first as a camper and then as a counselor, a post he filled the transition year when, enrollment having outgrown the space available, Gretna Glen replaced Mt. Gretna as the site of one of the church's summer programs.

Perhaps our best remembered view of Don is at the console of an organ on the Tabernacle platform. Organs came and went yearly, but Don was there for nineteen years, 1980 to 1999, playing for visiting choirs, for pre-program song periods, and in counterpoint to Rodney Shearer's piano magic during evening hymn sings with Darrell Woomer.

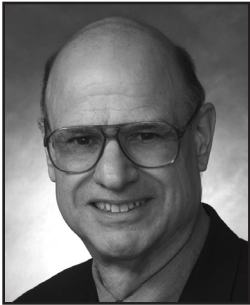
For some of us the most vibrant picture of Don is one the Tabernacle audiences never see: Don opening each meeting of the program planning committee (now well separated from the Board of Managers) with a devotional reading and a prayer; Don reviewing the statistics of the summer just past and inquiring about more and new techniques for reaching out into the local communities with new and different programs of music and preaching; Don pushing for exciting programs for next year; Don keeping the planning moving forward and ending deliberations at a decent hour, frequently by saying, "Well, I'll look into that."

For those who need to know such things, Don is a graduate of Lebanon Valley College and of Union Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. As a pastor, he developed a significant interest in techniques of communication, earning a Master's degree from the University of Michigan. Don and his wife, Faye, have two children and six grandchildren, with whom they plan to spend as much time as possible.

We shall miss Don greatly, but we know that he will remain engaged in the world around him, which will be the fortunate beneficiary of his talent and his constant drive for quality.

Looking Ahead – Thinking Back

For many of us the successful application for listing in the National Register of Historic Places was in itself an historic event. May 26 at 7 p.m. is the time and place for that celebration, but there is a great deal of other activity planned for the Summer at the Tabernacle programs this year, including some great preaching from Leonard Sweet and Tony Campolo – on different nights, (not a preaching duet).



Tony Campolo



Dr. Leonard Sweet



Rev. Joe DiPaolo

Another of our preachers, the Rev. Joe DiPaolo, is another student of history with a special interest in the American Campmeeting. He will be preaching at the morning worship service on August 4. That should be an inspiring service, conducted in the building that is most symbolic of the spiritual significance, not only of the Mt. Gretna Campmeeting, but of American campmeetings in general. It will be a fitting addition to the campmeeting's early

Tony Campolo is a frequent visitor to the Tabernacle, and his inspirational messages are delivered with such enthusiasm that listeners are stirred to the utmost.

Leonard Sweet is an outstanding choice for a year that has recognized the cultural integrity of the Campmeeting; he is currently Professor of Evangelism in the Theological School of Drew University and is President Emeritus of United Theological Seminary, two United Methodist schools with significant connections to the Bible Festival, dating back to when it was simply a ten-day August Campmeeting. He is a prolific author and has recently been studying and writing about the American campmeeting movement.

Another of our preachers, the Rev. Joe DiPaolo, is another student of history with a special



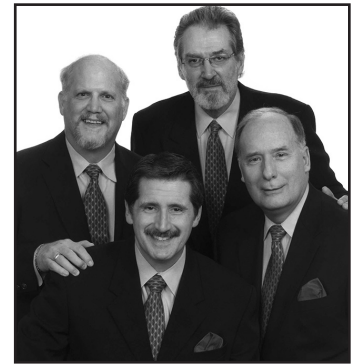
Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster

celebration on May 26 of its acceptance in the National Register.

It would be hard to find a more varied lineup of vocal music than that offered this summer at the Tabernacle. Consider the male chorus Men in Harmony, the Ministers of Music, the Brothers in Grace gospel group and then the much admired Susquehanna Chorale and then the famous Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster. Now that's variety in music: male voices in large and small groups with vastly different styles of singing. And then two outstanding mixed choral groups with a significant age differential.

Instrumental music is just as varied, ranging from Andy Roberts' jazz group to the accomplished personnel of the New Holland Concert Band. Then there's the annual Handbell Festival on August 3, and the Pennsylvania Flute Choir the very next evening. And for the diehard fans of Dixieland, we remind you that the New Black Eagle Jazz Band will conduct a jazz worship service in the Chautauqua Playhouse on July 7.

And even with that review of what is almost a "music cafeteria," the main dish—the Massed Choir concert—has not even been mentioned. That was done purposely—to put a spotlight on the 2013 choir and its visiting director, Lloyd Larson. As mentioned



Brothers in Grace

Looking Ahead – Thinking Back

continued from page 3

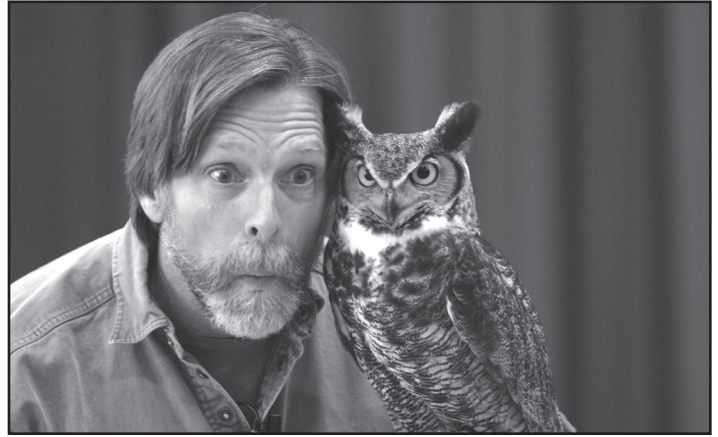
elsewhere in this issue, Mr. Larson is at work on a newly commissioned anthem in recognition of the Campmeeting’s National Register listing.



Lloyd Larson

Lloyd Larson earned his Master of Church Music from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is now a freelance composer, having served a number of Indiana and Ohio churches as Minister of Music. His

compositions have been published by Hope Publishing Company and by Lorenz Publishing, among others. (Attentive readers will note that Mr. Larson continues the “Lorenz connection” with Mt. Gretna. Admittedly, the connection is tenuous, but Edmund Lorenz, founder of the music house, was president of Lebanon Valley College at a time when the college and the Campmeeting



Jack Hubley

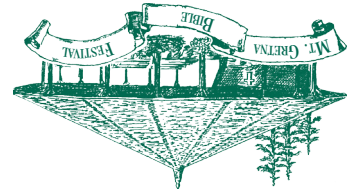
were closely related, and Karl, Edmund’s son, served for two summers as music director for the camp.)

Two Saturday morning programs are being planned in cooperation with the Chautauqua. A return visit by Jack Hubley and some of his animal friends will happen on June 29. Puppet and Story Works, a children’s puppet show, is planned for August 10.

Return Service Requested

Mt. Gretna, PA 17064
P.O. Box 408
Tabernacle Association

MT. GRETNA CAMPMEETING
LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lebanon, PA
Permit No. 200