



*May the birth of our Lord and Savior lead us to  
...Come Away and be refreshed  
this Holiday Season.*



**December 2009**

## Pleasantville Camp Oak Leaf

Dear Friends,

As we approach the end of another year it is appropriate that we both review our progress of the past year and assess our needs for the future. A year and a half ago I outlined 5 goals for Pleasantville Camp. We continue to work toward:

- (1) Effective educational and life changing programming.
- (2) Financial stability (which includes updating facilities to improve rent ability)
- (3) Ownership by members
- (4) Effective communications
- (5) Providing a safe and legal environment to protect our investments

Some areas have seen great progress; others - not so much. Lack of finances continues to be a huge challenge and a small percentage of members bear most of the burden.

We have been working with insurance agents in an attempt to keep our premiums at a minimum, yet protect all our assets. We have also been in dialogue with the conference regarding their desire that we operate independently and self sufficiently. Discussions with their administrative leadership and legal representatives are going to shape our current and future actions. Redefining our structure and role in this changing environment and slow economy will be a challenge that requires all of our prayers, concerns and participation. Those who have invested in camp properties should be interested in proper leases, accurate record keeping, legal transactions, financial stability, etc. Those who treasure our past history and future ministry will likewise be concerned. It is important that in this coming year we have fewer "silent partners" and more involved personnel.

The board is discussing ways to redefine our membership to include those who have an active expressed interest in the camp and convey a willingness to support the camp and its ministries. In the past, every church member in the Northwest District (a distinction that is no longer accurate) has been granted membership in the camp association.

A few dedicated workers are making great progress on building upgrades. After installation of the Zahniser and Thomas Hall roofs, we will have 3 fairly minor dorm renovations (Pearce, John, McGeary) to bring most of our residential facilities up to par. Besides the finances needed for the bathhouse and roof loan repayment, we need significant capital to begin drainage and road and sidewalk improvements as well as addressing our dining and cooking facility. Because of our current financial structure, we also need about \$18,000 between now and June 30 to meet our regular budget expenses. We are hoping that our diligence in repairing gas leaks and a new heating system in the caretakers residence will net savings this winter.

It has been years since there has been any evaluation of camp costs and cottage assessments. Many cottages have seen significant modernization and expansion without appropriate reassessment. Leases appear to have "fallen by the wayside." Recently, new "foot print" measurements of all cottages were taken and we will be looking at an appropriate formula for meeting our financial obligations. Many of our chores are not

pleasurable endeavors, but are necessary if we are to carry on for future generations.

In "Man's Search for Meaning" Viktor Frankle tells of his life in four different Nazi concentration camps and his observations regarding the human will to live or go on. He found that those who gave up hope or became disengaged were less likely to survive than those who continued to find meaning even in their deepest suffering and against seemingly insurmountable odds. Frankle ends his book by revealing that the meaning in his life was to help others find the meaning in theirs. When we share that desire to see others find the hope we have in Christ Jesus, then hopefully, we actively support those entities that provide hope and encouragement to those seeking meaning.

As you celebrate the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010, I would ask that you remember the role that Pleasantville camp has played in your life and the potential it maintains for reaching others in the future.

**Happy & Blessed Holidays!**

*Dennis Anderson*

Executive Director

**Please use the enclosed envelope for your year end gifts.**



BISHOP MYRON F. BOYD  
Conference President



REV. G. P. OGLESBY  
Western Area Superintendent



Bishop Donald Bastion

## Announcements

Mark your calendar for Family Camp 2010– Sat., July 24-Aug. 1. Bishop David Roller and Rev. Bryce Greiko will be our speakers.

Volunteers are needed to plan afternoon and afterglow activities at all age levels. Contact Ron Sittig. The February Newsletter will have details for Family Camp 2010. Start saving for your pre-registration.

Anyone like to **work with wood?** We would like to replace some of the old broken spring beds in McGeary with some solid wood frames. We have lots of good single mattresses we can utilize with the right size frame. We also need a couple of double or queen mattress and box springs (in good condition)

The board will be holding a retreat in Feb. or March with our consultant, Joe Klinehammer.

All cottages should be properly winterized and a key left with the caretaker in case of an emergency.

**Memorials to the camp this year include remembrances for, Guy and Grace Danielson, Betty Anderson and Michael Johnson.**

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Evelyn Rupert Heath



Dale and Elva Rhome



Howard and Mary  
Loretta Rose

## Good Friends

Since 1985 I have enjoyed attending Pleasantville Camp. I first came to camp with my Mom, Jane Yonkie, and my twin brother, Jim. Some of my favorite memories of camp are the afterglows and the Roberts and Spring Arbor groups. "d'Soul desire" was one such memorable group. I also enjoyed the afternoon softball games and getting on the old school bus with Pastor Jerry Sutton from Sugar Grove and going to the park and different places to swim. Spending time with friends I saw only once a year was a big highlight of the summer.

One of my funniest memories was in 1990 when Ed McConnell had his pet rats at camp and they got out of their cage. Lisa Shreffler, Jamie Wygant, Gary and Tom Pursell, Jim Frazier and I were chasing them around the dorm trying to catch them.

In 1989 and 90 I helped in the nursery and in Horning Hall. I also worked some in the dining hall.

Pleasantville Camp has been a great place to gather with friends over the years.

**Denise Frazier-Miller**

## Praying Through

I do not know what year it was but the evangelist had preached a God honoring message. When the altar call was given, people lined the front of the tabernacle, kneeling in fervent prayer. There was not room for others so persons knelt where they were in the tabernacle and friends gathered around, also kneeling in prayer. Soon there were little clusters of praying people all over the large sanctuary. The whole place seemed to be full of a sense of God's presence.

I do not know how many were saved that night, or sanctified, reclaimed or commissioned. God was present. The Holy Spirit was honored and obeyed.

My prayer is for similar victories to take place in present years.

**Mary Loretta Rose**

To say that Pleasantville Free Methodist Camp did not have a part in the person that I've become would be like saying that salt did not provide enhancement to food. My parents, Harold and Helen Carr Wilson, met on the Pleasantville Campgrounds, giving Camp Meeting as special place in their hearts. The love of the grounds and Camp Meeting was passed on to their children (Marie, Arlene, and Mark). From the age of 4 months until I was 21 years of age, I never missed a Camp meeting and attended many Annual Conferences and C.Y.C. camps at Pleasantville as well.

My earliest memory of camp is of an old travel trailer my Dad had placed near the Women's bathroom, between the tabernacle and the Sheffer's cottage. Long after going to bed we could hear the moans and shouts coming from the tabernacle as someone "prayed through". During these early years I experienced bits of history. I can recall Mr. Anthony delivering blocks of ice surrounded with sawdust to be used in the old wooden iceboxes and also some older women stuffing straw into big cloth bags (ticks) to be used for mattresses. We moved from the trailer to a tent on a wooden platform beside the Spencer's log cabin. It didn't take us long to learn not to touch the canvas during a rain storm if we didn't want a wet bed. The playground was to the back, and Rev. and Mrs. Kerns and Mr. Oliver Conway used to have play time with us. It wasn't too many years until God made it possible for the Wilson family to have a small cottage built on the same location that had held the tent. Our furniture no longer had to be stored in the back of the tabernacle at the end of camp, and we even had our own bathroom. My Dad still enjoys sitting on his front porch, and my sister owns the log cabin that Mark now uses.

Bible School with Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Gibson, and Mrs. Crawford was always filled with excitement as well as religious training. I loved to run to the back of Horning Hall to say hello to Mrs. Call and look at her beautiful flowers before the last bell rang. I can still remember marching from Horning Hall to the tabernacle to present our closing program, while our crafts were on display at the back. The songs "Do you know oh Christian you're a sermon in boots" and the "B-I-B-L-E" still sound clear in my mind. I often wonder if the songs we teach in VBS today will remain in minds 50+ years from now.

In addition to spiritual lessons, many of us also learned work ethics. My first job, at age 8, was to carry the dried silverware from the wash area to the dining area. Rev. Spencer made a step stool so I could place the pieces in separate wooden bins. I got paid \$5.00 for working the entire 10 days. An older man in bib overalls (Mr. Boils?) ran the old time dishwasher. Over the years I progressed from this job to drying dishes and finally to waiting on tables. As waiters and waitresses we got a set amount of pay in addition to the tips we were able to earn. There were always more waitresses than waiters, but Wilson, Joe, Gene, Frank, Dave, and Glenn tried hard to compete with us girls. I'll never forget waiting on the Guest table and one of Evangelist Daw's children spilled a drink. I quickly got a handful of extra napkins and handed them to his wife. She quietly whispered, "in Canada we call them serviettes. A napkin is a baby's panty." We learned about other cultures and also that people really did eat stewed prunes and drink Postum. During this period, all of the food was served family style, with drinks being served at the tables.

The cook I remember best was Sis. Carlson, along with Sis. Roberts, Mrs. Gilson, Mrs. Banam(?), and others whose names I cannot recall.

Another unforgotten memory is the large American flag that graced the back wall of the tabernacle platform where all of the preachers were expected to sit during the evening service. John and Virginia Babcock had the little cabin across from ours, and she was the keeper of the flag. At the close of Camp she would fold the flag and take it home for storage. In 1959 there was a change. We watched with excitement as our Dad helped hang the flag that now displayed 50 stars. Virginia had cut and sewed 2 new stars on the flag to represent Alaska and Hawaii.

Amongst the "greats" of Pleasantville Camp, it is with honor that I remember Rev. Lindsey, Rev.(Dr.) Blews, Rev. Barger, Rev. D.N. Thomas, Rev. Julia Shellhammer, Rev. Stimer, Rev. Jacobs, Rev. Rose, Rev. Haskins, Rev. Spencer, Rev. Steed, Rev. Bob Williams, Rev. Mable Hicks, Rev. Van Valin and so many more that "have gone on to Glory" However, Rev. Hicks is the only one that could hit a stick on the ground and make a play snake appear, and Rev. Van Valin taught us so much about nature.. At a very young age I could never quite figure out how Rev. Lindsey and Rev. Thomas got those hard collars of their shirts on backwards or why Rev. Bob Williams always forgot his neck tie. The Evangelists that stand out the most in my memory are Rev. Boileau, Rev. Stetler, Rev. Teal, Rev. Walsh, and Rev. Daw. The missionaries also taught us so much. Evelyn Rupert, Wilma Cogley, Mildred Norbeck, Maxine Riddle, Barbara Russell, and Billy Mc Chesney were "home grown" missionaries. I had the honor of waiting on the table of Billy Mc Chesney and shortly after returning to the Congo he was killed during a revolt. Several years later Mildred Norbeck was

found murdered in Haiti. **From my early life encounters with these Godly persons, I learned the importance of living a life dedicated to Christ and serving Him wherever we are - "it may not be on a mountain top or over the stormy sea.... I'll be go where you want me to go.....I'll do what you want me to do.....I'll be what you want to be."**

We learned about the importance of "Quiet Time" when all activity ceased across the grounds for people to pray. Sometimes a group of children would go to the Mc Murdy's tent where Mrs. Mc Murdy would read us Bible Stories during quiet time. I can also remember being allowed to go with some of the older teens to the Garden of Prayer. It was an area they had cleared off down in the woods behind the Youth Tabernacle. There was a circle made with large stones and there were wooden logs to sit on or kneel by. The Ring Meetings on Sunday before the evening service were a time of learning how to praise God. Many of the old choruses were also sung at this time.

We always had time for fun as well as just enjoying spending time with friends. There were some pretty exciting soft ball games in the afternoons. I can even remember Rev. Mark Williams playing ball and taking a fall. That's when we learned he had an artificial leg. We weren't always as angelic as the adults thought us to be. We short sheeted beds and snuck around after curfew without Barney Culver catching us. Then there were the numerous trips to the little store. Those Long Johns and sloppy joes after the evening service always tasted so good.

Musical instruments are great, but I cannot forget the beautiful singing that echoed across the camp grounds long before a piano or organ ever had a place in the tabernacle.

Nor can I forget the "Holy Dancing" of Lottie Hendrikson and the loud shouts throughout the tabernacle. If my memory serves me right I think I even remember seeing Rev. Oglesby taking some little runs across the front of the tabernacle. Some, like my mother, only sat with faces aglow and silent tears flowing as they experienced a touch from the Master. There was not a Nursery for babies and toddlers. If they got tired, they would fall asleep on the benches. If they got fussy there was always a teenage girl willing to take them for a walk or stroller ride. If you didn't have a good excuse to be walking on the grounds during evening service, Barney Culver or one of his assistance (my Dad included) would be happy to escort all youth back into the tabernacle.

Times have brought about many changes to Pleasantville Camp grounds. Over the years my family has sent me pictures and videos. I must say that I did a little gasp the first time I saw pictures of girls wearing shorts, thinking back to my teen years when the girls couldn't even wear sleeveless dresses or blouses. I am just thankful that as dress codes change, God remains the same. His love never changes, but conditions do have to change to reach people that need to find Him. I know that God continues to use Pleasantville Camp to nourish and recharge His faithful followers as well to be a lighthouse to bring lost souls to Him.

My Dad's grandmother, Maggie Wilson, was a charter member of the Oil City District of the Free Methodist Church. I thank God for this legacy and for parents that brought us to Camp as well as the many wonderful role models we had at Pleasantville Camp. There are so many names and experiences that keep running through my mind - too numerous to mention. I am thankful that Pleasantville Camp Meeting, so like salt, became an enhancement to my life and has served as a preservative in my Christian Walk with God. Every July, even though I have lived in San Antonio, Texas for nearly 37 years, my heart has always "gone home" to Pleasantville Camp Meeting. I had been planning to attend the 2009 Homecoming but due to my husband's health problems, I will not be able to attend. I am sending a small monetary donation along with my prayers. You may pass my address along to anyone that wishes to contact me. I would love to hear from friends who have never been forgotten. I am an active member of Bethel United Methodist Church and serve as volunteer Parish Nurse as well as manager of a Thrift Store on our church grounds.

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