

# OMA TO Z



***A GUIDE TO THE OUTDOOR MINISTRIES ASSOCIATION  
OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN***

*Compiled by the OMA Steering Committee and Partner Organizations*

*2012 Edition*

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Connecting, enlivening and supporting the dynamic ministry of Church of the Brethren camps.

# HISTORY

## ***Kum Ba Yah***

For the “complete” history of the beginnings of Brethren camping and the origin of the Outdoor Ministries Association, please refer to the book *KUM BA YAH*, written by Linda Logan with the Outdoor Ministries Association and published in 2005.

## ***The Early Years***

The Outdoor Ministries Association of the Church of the Brethren was affirmed at Annual Conference in 1977. This affirmation ended six long years of work by Walt Bowman, the first Outdoor Education Staff of the Parish Ministries Commission (PMC) of the General Board and Associate District Executive of the Southern Ohio District, and Bob Jones, Associate District Executive of the Virginia District. Several actions and situations occurred during those six years that made this organization possible. This included spearheading formative requests to the PMC through the Council of District Executives, a fortunate time of budget surpluses in the denomination, and a request that farming issues and camping be put together into a single staff position. Walt Bowman was the person selected for the camping portion of this position.

Other formative events were taking place in the camping world while these actions were being formulated and birthed. The first was a 1973 fall gathering of a group that called itself the Eastern Area Brethren Camping Committee. This event was so successful that the committee called for another meeting the next year when it gathered as the Northeastern Camp Committee and agreed to invite folks from other sections the next year. In 1975 this group that had morphed into the Eastern Church of the Brethren Camp Fellowship gathered at Camp Bethel and took on the vision of a volunteer network in camps across the denomination. Out of this event a questionnaire was developed for information that would lead to a public presence at Annual Conference.

Through the work of Bob Tully and Walt Bowman the Brethren Camps Committee (BCC) was called out to begin putting a structure together. The individuals in this first group were Arden Ball (Camp Mack), Anita Buckwalter (Camp Brethren Heights), Bob Jones (Camp Bethel), Joel Knepper (Camp Eder), Rex Miller (Camp Ithiel), and Graydon Snyder (Bethany Seminary). The BCC’s first action was planning for a Consultation on Church of the Brethren Outdoor Ministries that occurred in March 1977 at the Grailville Retreat Center near Cincinnati, OH. This gathering of fifty-nine camp leaders, camp board members, Brethren leaders, educators and pastors worked through concepts and ideas presented by Walt Bowman, Eugene Roop, Bob Jones, and Graydon Snyder. Out of this event came the logo of the organization and the current structure for OMA. The BCC became the Steering Committee for the Outdoor Ministries Association.

Walt Bowman continued his work as national staff person for Outdoor Ministries until 1988. At this time budget pressures were mounting in the denomination to begin to decrease

funding for some of the current ministries being supported by the denomination. Nancy Knepper was hired with a one year contract during this time of refocus for the denomination. Through pressure from several fronts the funding for this position was continued. With Nancy's leadership OMA began training events on sexual abuse, working with the National Council of Churches on the development of the "Sow the Seeds, Trust the Promise" curriculum, and the creation of the Youth Peace Travel Teams in cooperation with On Earth Peace, Youth Office, and Brethren Witness/Peace Office. It was also during this time that the recognition awards for staff and volunteers were begun.

Once again budget concern in the denomination raised its ugly head. OMA decided to work on faith and agreed to more than quadruple its budget support for Nancy's position. But this was also the beginning of the end for General Board support for the OMA staff position. The goals for the 90's signified the budget shift and Nancy's position was terminated in 1997.

The leadership of Bob Jones, Walter Bowman, and Nancy Knepper placed OMA on solid footing as it began the next leg of its journey without a paid staff person. We will be forever indebted to all of the leaders that played a role during this first 20 years of the association.

### ***Recent History of Brethren Camping (2000-2011)***

The Outdoor Ministries Association Steering Committee approached Linda Logan in the late 1990's about compiling a history of Church of the Brethren camping. Ms. Logan's 2005 book, *KUM BAH YAH*, focused on the development of Brethren camping from its beginnings in the 1920's through the end of the 20th century. The following article examines how Brethren camping has progressed during the first decade of the 21st century. In those ten years, Brethren camping and the OMA completed a difficult transition from paid national leadership to an all-volunteer force.

Ms. Logan detailed the beginning of this transition period (1997-1999) in the final few pages of her book. Without having Nancy Knepper directing the operations of OMA and its volunteers, it was necessary for OMA's Steering Committee to evaluate its activity and simplify tasks that were crucial to the Brethren camping ministry.

Two of these tasks were the OMA National Conference, held every other year, and the annual Directors & Managers Retreat. Beginning in 1997 the OMA National Conference became a tri-annual event. The 2003 OMA National Conference was held at Camp Blue Diamond in Pennsylvania. Johann Anderson, the author and compiler of the Songs and Creation music books series was the special guest. Johann shared his theories on group dynamics, management and singing. The 2006 National Conference was held at Camp Bethel in Virginia. A variety of Church of the Brethren General Office staff were the guests. Relationships and opportunities between camps and the Church of the Brethren Youth and Young Adult Ministries office, the Missions & Ministries office and the Congregational Life office, were explored. In 2009 the OMA National Conference was held at Woodland Altars in Ohio. Richard Dawson, a leader in United Methodist camping was the guest. Mr. Dawson focused on camp revitalization and the seven foundations of Christian camping. In 2011 it was decided to discontinue the National Conference. The annual Director & Manager Retreat had evolved from 2000 to 2010 into a national style conference with speakers and activities

designed to interest not only camp directors, but secondary staff and volunteers. Attendance doubled as more staff and volunteers attended the event. With this change the National Conference seemed redundant and unnecessary. In 2010 the annual Director & Manager Retreat was renamed the Annual OMA Retreat.

The OMA newsletter became a semi-annual publication in 2001 after a few years of hit-and-miss attempts in the late '90's. The newsletter, which is sent to member camps and individuals, details camping news in the Church of the Brethren, upcoming events, and camp staffing changes and needs.

For a year or two in the late '90's, OMA's annual camp and individual membership drives lagged. But beginning in 2000, concerted efforts were made to get annual membership renewal letters to camps and members. An increase in the number of member camps and their membership fees has allowed OMA to increase its budget and activities.

The Environmental Grant program has continued into the 21st century with grants given annually to a variety of Brethren camps. In 2011 an Environmental Grant program to churches was approved. As with camps, the church would need to match the grant. The maximum grant for member churches would be \$1000, \$500 for non-member churches

The Staff and Volunteers awards continue to be given annually. These special awards honor the men and women who have made long-term commitments and sacrifices to benefit the summer camp ministry programs in their districts.

Though the traditional Annual Conference Run/Walk and the national summer camp offering project it supported were discontinued in the late '90's, OMA participation at Annual Conference continued with the traditional OMA luncheon, booth and insight session.

As Rex Miller, OMA Steering Committee member during the transition period, expressed "Many changes happened as we downsized, but we were not in despair. It was still very upbeat as we faced the realities we were dealing with. We were in a time of re-visioning our purpose and efforts."

A few of the OMA responsibilities became the special ministries of volunteers, who were willing to donate their time and talents to ensure continued participation by the Brethren. Marlin Houff, Camp Administrator at Camp Swatara, joined the board of ACMNP (A Christian Ministry in the National Parks) as the denominational representative of the Church of the Brethren. This organization oversees recruitment of people to serve summers in the National Parks in ministerial roles. Jerri Heiser Wenger, Executive Co-Director at Camp Blue Diamond, oversaw OMA's vital role in sponsoring the Youth Peace Travel Team until 2009, with Steering Committee member Margo Royer Miller assuming the responsibility thereafter. This ministry team of four young people travels among Brethren camps during the summer camping season leading biblically based sessions on peace and conflict resolution. Rex Miller, Executive Director at Camp Mack, represents the Church of the Brethren on the National Council of Christian Churches Committee on Outdoor Ministries, the group of denominations that share responsibility for creating New Earth summer

camp Bible curriculum. In 2006, the Church of the Brethren provided several writers for the curriculum entitled Peace Talks.

Brethren camping, with the help of countless volunteers, staff members, and the Outdoor Ministries Association, has come a long way in the last ninety years:

- From a few locally sponsored weeks of camp for high school youth to year round district and national programming for children, youth and adults of all ages,
- From rented or privately owned wilderness sites to multi-million dollar incorporated ministries with retreat centers, winterized facilities, certified staff and accredited programs.

However, in a sense, Church of the Brethren camping really has not changed at all. It's still about:

- Helping children and youth discover God, and the world God created,
- Teaching young people how to live in peace and understanding with God, others and themselves,
- Training young men and women to be leaders in their churches, communities and the denomination,
- The three "F's" - Fun, Friendship and Faith

Brethren camping has evolved as dedicated leaders come and go, and the OMA adjusted to a changed denominational structure. Barry LeNoir, the Camp Director at Camp Bethel, summed it up well when he said, "We are focused on the future, on what we, as camps, can offer to build the denomination, and the church as a whole. Our camps are strong, vibrant ministries with thousands of faithful supporters and patrons. In the years and decades ahead, look for the Brethren camps to be leaders in the camping/conference industry as issues of peace, simplicity, environmental stewardship and Christian service come full circle."

## CAMP AND THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

"Our camps and retreat centers are a key part of the whole ministry of the church." - Ken Hawkey, assistant director of discipling ministry for the Office of Congregational Life of the Executive Board of the Mennonite Church USA.

The above quote begs the question for the Church of the Brethren, "What is our understanding of our camps relationship to the ministry of the church?" Are they there to provide just another summer option for the entertainment of our children or is it something much deeper and life impacting? For years we have heard it said that many of our church leaders can look back to a summer camp experience as a life changing time for them. Several years ago a survey was given to incoming freshmen at Christian college campuses that affirmed that the camping experience was far more effective than youth programs, Sunday school, or church programs in pointing lives to the way of Jesus.

What is this relationship between camps and congregations that fosters this impact for the whole ministry of the church? It can best be described as a partnership. There are several aspects to this partnership to explore.

- Faith Formation - The numbers of hours of exposure to faith formation experiences in a week of camp exceeds the number of hours experienced in a year of Sunday school. The impact grows exponentially when you consider the exposure is without interruption of normal daily living issues. The partnership comes alive through local congregations providing mature Christian leadership as volunteers for the summer camping events. What better way to teach than to have leaders that live out the message that they are teaching. It is not so unusual that leaders who offer themselves also have their own faith strengthened through their experience at a week of camp. Faith formation also occurs at events for adults that congregations can hold at our camps. There is something that adds to the impact of an event if you can get away for a while from the daily interruptions of life to work on issues of faith.
- Creation Awareness - We read in John 3:16-17 that God sent his son into the "world" not only for those who should believe in him but that the "whole world" would be saved. All too often we have focused only on the human condition and have failed to acknowledge that as believers in Christ we carry responsibility for all of the creation that God pronounced as "good." What better place to get reacquainted with the world that God created for his pleasure than at camp. This rekindling of a relationship with creation is even more critical as we begin to hear evidence of the ability of exposures to nature beginning to reverse behavioral issues of children. (See Richard Louv's "The Last Child in the Woods.")
- Leadership Development - Camp is a place where children and youth are given the opportunities to take leadership responsibilities, often for the first time. In some camps

there are formal programs on camp leadership training, but in all camps that are times when leadership is encouraged and mistakes are accepted as part of the risk-taking that is necessary for learning.

- A Place Set Apart - In Mark 6:31 Jesus invites the disciples to "come away" with him to seek rest. This is one of the ministries that our camps offer to members of the church. They are special places set apart where people experience the presence of God. In a world in which the pace continues to increase, our camps serve as a place of refreshment, regeneration, and renewal. Some camps offer opportunities for Sabbath times as support to pastors and other church leadership.
- Ecumenical Involvement - One of the ministries that keep our camps as healthy ministries is the providing of hospitality to groups of many faiths. Is it possible that we have overlooked this ecumenical ministry as a vital ministry of the church? Being able to offer this ministry is often the very thing that makes it possible for us to have our camps available for our use in the summer. At a time when the numbers reported for membership in the church is cause for concern, the use of many of our facilities is continuing to increase as we serve others in the name of Christ.

It is essential for the church that we come to a place where we understand the importance of this commitment to a partnership in ministry. If we reach that point then both the congregation and the camps can continue to grow in health. "As part of the body, camps and retreat centers are healthiest when the connections with congregations are strong. Together we can build each other up and reach out to those in need." - Ken Hawkey

# ARCHIVES

OMA has established an archive collection at the Brethren Historical Library and Archives in Elgin, IL. The purpose of this collection is to keep historical documents together, in a safe environment, and accessible for denominational use and research. Some of the items of interest for this growing collection include:

- Flyers, programs, minutes, and photos of National Conferences and Annual Retreats (formally Director/Manager Retreats)
- Environmental Grant project write-ups and photos
- Annual Conference insight sessions descriptions and program outlines
- Photos and citations of Staff and Volunteer Award recipients
- Steering Committee minutes

Items should be sent to the current OMA Steering Committee vice-chairperson who will serve as the archivist during their term. At the end of their term (approximately every three years), the collected materials will be forwarded on to Elgin

# MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Church of the Brethren Outdoor Ministries Association is open to current and past camp staff, volunteers, camp board members, congregations, and other individuals and families interested in supporting camping and outdoor ministries. Both annual and lifetime memberships are available to individuals. Memberships for camps and congregations are paid on an annual basis. A spring mailing to all current individual, camp, and congregation members is sent out by the Steering Committee to solicit membership renewals for that calendar year. Checks should be made out to the Outdoor Ministries Association and sent to: Outdoor Ministries Association, PO Box 229, Bethel, PA 19507.

Members receive the semi-annual OMA newsletter and information about events sponsored by OMA. They are also assured that their support helps to provide:

- a strong support network for camp manager/directors and other camp staff,
- representation of camps and retreat centers to the entire denomination through our presence at Annual Conference and with Messenger ads,
- the ministry of the Youth Peace Travel Team (in partnership with OEP and YYA),
- denominational representation in the ecumenical community through the National Council of Churches Committee on Outdoor Ministries and A Christian Ministry in the National Parks,
- environmental grant opportunities for camps and congregations,
- recognition for outstanding staff and volunteers through our awards program.

## Outdoor Ministries Association Church of the Brethren



# STEERING COMMITTEE

The OMA Steering Committee is a board of ten persons who oversee the responsibilities of the Church of the Brethren's Outdoor Ministries Association. They are accountable to the OMA affiliated camps staff and the OMA membership.

## ***Membership***

1. There are ten members of the OMA Steering Committee.
  - a. Seven members shall serve terms of office of not more than three years. There shall be no limit to how many terms a member may serve, with the exception that no member may serve more than two consecutive terms. These seven members will be comprised of three camp directors/managers, one camp associate/second staff person, one Church of the Brethren pastor or theologian, and two camp volunteers.
  - b. One member shall serve a one year term as the Representative for the District Executives. This member will be appointed by the Council of District Executives. There shall be no limit to the number of terms this member may serve, except that no Council of District Executives' Representative's term shall expire until a successor member has been appointed by the Council of District Executives.
  - c. One member shall serve as the Denominational Representative. This member will be appointed by the Congregational Life Teams office.
  - d. The Committee's treasurer shall serve as an ex officio member of the OMA Steering Committee. There shall be no limit to the number of terms the treasurer may serve.
2. The members of the OMA Steering Committee shall be adult individuals who have individual or camp membership in OMA.
3. The OMA Steering Committee will create a slate for upcoming vacancies in the staff, theologian, or treasurer positions. They will also recommend persons for the volunteer positions but additional nominations will be sought out from the OMA membership. This slate and recommendations will be distributed to the membership (via email, fall newsletter, postcard, etc.) as determined by the Steering Committee prior to the fall Membership Meeting. Additional volunteer nominations will be considered and a ballot will be created, if necessary. At the fall Membership Meeting, the slate will be presented and affirmed or rejected by a majority vote. If a ballot was created, members will vote and the person who receives the majority of the votes will fill each of the positions. If the slate is rejected, a new slate will be created and voting will continue until a slate is approved.
4. In the event an OMA Steering Committee member resigns, is unable to serve, or otherwise vacates the position prior to the expiration of his or her term, the remaining members of the OMA Steering Committee shall appoint a successor to serve the unexpired term. This provision does not apply to the Steering Committee position appointed by the Council of District Executives.

## ***Officers/Positions***

Positions shall be appointed annually by the OMA Steering Committee for a term of one year.

1. Chairperson - The Chairperson shall preside at the OMA Steering Committee meetings, the annual OMA Membership Meeting held during the Annual Retreat, and at any specially called meetings. They will also oversee the Mentoring Program.
2. Vice-Chairperson - The Vice-Chairperson shall serve in the place of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence. They will also serve as the archivist during their term.
3. Secretary - The Secretary shall keep the minutes and records of all OMA meetings, and shall perform generally all duties incidental to the office of Secretary. They will also coordinate publicity for the association including the newsletter and website.
4. Treasurer - The Treasurer shall supervise the accounting for all monies received and disbursed by the OMA Steering Committee, and shall supervise the preparation of reports with respect to the same, which reports shall be presented at the OMA Steering Committee spring and fall meetings and the annual OMA Business Meeting held during the Annual Retreat.
5. Membership Coordinator – The Membership Coordinator will receive and confirm all new and renewed memberships. They will also maintain the membership database list.
6. Grants and Awards Coordinator – The Grants and Awards Coordinator will solicit and receive applications and nominations for the Environmental Grants and Staff and Volunteer Awards. They will also secure plaques and citations for the awards.
7. Youth Peace Travel Team Co-Coordinator – The Youth Peace Travel Team Co-Coordinator will work with the other partner organizations to administrate the ministry of the Youth Peace Travel Team.

## ***Meetings***

Regular meetings of the OMA Steering Committee shall be held no less frequently than three times a year. One meeting will be held in the spring, one in the fall, and one at the Annual Retreat. The location, and or manner, of the meeting will be selected by the Steering Committee. A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute the quorum needed to conduct business. The conduct of all meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order or such alternative rules as may from time to time be adopted by the Committee.

## ***Responsibilities***

The OMA Steering Committee shall conduct business on behalf of the Outdoor Ministries Association. Responsibilities of the Steering Committee include, but are not limited to:

- Providing OMA financial reports
- Conducting annual membership and camp membership drives

- Appointing representatives to ACMNP (A Christian Ministry in the National Parks), YPPT (Youth Peace Travel Team), and the NCCC-OM (National Council of Churches Committee on Outdoor Ministries), and receiving reports from these representatives
- Arranging and conducting the Annual Conference OMA Luncheon and the OMA Display
- Overseeing and updating content on the OMA webpage
- Soliciting requests for OMA Environmental Grants from member camps and selecting the recipients
- Soliciting nominations for OMA Staff and Volunteer Recognition Awards and selecting the recipients
- Overseeing the publication and disbursement of a semi-annual OMA newsletter
- Appointing mentors for new staff members of OMA member camps
- Granting scholarships for leadership development, including individuals pursuing studies in Outdoor Ministries at accredited institutions or to attend the Annual Retreat or National Conference
- Oversee the Annual Retreat Planning Team
- Oversee the National Conference Planning Team

# MENTORING PROGRAM

## ***Purpose***

To provide support and encouragement, accountability, and training to persons serving for the first time in an outdoor ministry position within the Church of the Brethren during their first three years.

## ***Program Structure***

1. A Mentor/Mentee relationship can be initiated in two ways. First, a camp or outdoor ministry center can request a Mentor to be assigned to new staff persons when they begin their duties. Second, the OMA Steering Committee (OMASC), after becoming aware of a new staff member, can make contact with a camp or outdoor ministry center and offer to assign a Mentor to them.
2. Once a request is received or the offer accepted, the OMASC will discern who a good Mentor might be and invite that person to serve. The OMASC will continue to work until a suitable Mentor agrees to serve.
3. The OMASC Chairperson will contact the Mentee to let them know who their Mentor will be and that they will be in touch soon. A copy of this Mentoring Program information sheet and the current OMA to Z document will be sent to both the Mentor and Mentee by the Chairperson.
4. After accepting the position, Mentors will carry the majority of the responsibilities for the program.
5. The OMA Steering Committee Chairperson will connect with Mentors and Mentees approximately six months after beginning the program to ensure that the relationship has been established and to identify any issues that need to be addressed.
6. Mentors and Mentees will be requested to complete an evaluation form at the 1 ½ year and 3 year marks to help assess the mentoring relationship and program.

## ***Mentor Qualifications***

1. Be a current, active member of the Outdoor Ministry Association.
2. Have served in a position similar to that of the Mentee for at least 3 years.
3. Willing to commit to a 3-year Mentor term and accept the Mentor Responsibilities.

### ***Mentor Responsibilities***

1. Within two weeks of agreeing to serve as a Mentor, make an initial contact with the Mentee to make introductions, provide an overview of the program, share contact information, and begin the relationship.
2. Maintain regular contact with the Mentee by phone, e-mail, or mail. (Regular contact is understood to be, minimally, monthly during the first year, every other month during the second year, and quarterly for the third year.)
3. Arrange an in-person visit with the Mentee during the first year, as feasibility allows. (This visit should, ideally, take place at the Mentee's camp; however, it could also happen at the OMA Annual Retreat, Annual Conference, the Mentor's camp, or another designated location.)
4. Be available and open to discuss questions, concerns, or issues from the Mentee related to outdoor ministry.
5. Encourage OMA membership for both the Mentee and their camp.
6. Invite Mentee to attend OMA events including the Annual Retreat, Luncheon and Insight Sessions at Annual Conference, and National Conference (every 3 years).
7. Share about professional growth opportunities available through OMA, including financial assistance from the Four Horseman Fund.
8. Promote participation in OMA programs including nominating persons for Staff and Volunteer Awards, submitting proposals for the Environmental Grant program, and recruiting young adults to apply for the Youth Peace Travel Team.
9. Assist in other areas of the OMA Mentoring Program as needed.

# THE FOUR HORSEMAN

## ***Leadership Development and Funding “Brethren-Style”***

In the late 1920s a team of roving camp leaders (Perry Rohrer, Dan West, Chauncey Shamberger, and Alvin Brightbill) jokingly called themselves “The Four Horsemen.” Chauncey Shamberger was the national young people’s director for the Church of the Brethren and the others were secured with funding by the Board of Religious Education.

The four team members traveled together in Shamberger’s old Studebaker, dubbed “Sweet Chariot”. This quartet carried the camping vision across the country to camps each summer during these early formative years. One report called the four the “Traveling Salesman” for Brethren camping. The work these men did for Brethren camping was amazing! These “Four Horsemen” set the stage for Outdoor Ministries in the church. Their leadership set a pattern not only for camping but also a pattern of leadership development for the church.

In honor of these youth leaders and those who followed in their footsteps, the Four Horsemen Fund was set up to provide for leadership development opportunities for camp leaders. These funds help provide scholarships for events and training, for professional growth, and other opportunities to help strengthen leadership. This endowment fund is funded with gifts from camps, churches, and individuals. Other support comes through auctions at OMA gatherings and offering projects. Membership fees at the level of Half Annual and Lifetime Membership also support this fund.

## ***Four Horseman Award***

The Four Horseman Award is given to persons who have dedicated a significant portion of their lives to the work of outdoor ministry and who exemplify the character of the original Four Horseman by promoting outdoor ministries within the Church of the Brethren. This award is given on an occasional basis as determined by the OMA Steering Committee.

1994 – Chauncey Shamberger

1997 – Walter D. Bowman

2002 – Arden Ball, Bob Tully, and Raymond Peters

2006 – Nancy Knepper

# ANNUAL RETREAT

## ***Purpose***

A dedicated time for Brethren camping leaders of all levels to gather for professional growth, faith formation, and Outdoor Ministry community development

## ***Key Components***

- Spiritual Growth – local or denominational leader(s); daily worship including at least one devotion and one worship each day
- Professional Growth - focus on a current issue; keynote presenter
- Workshops - leadership and/or roundtable discussions for various areas of operation
- Recreation – local opportunities on-site and off-site; field trip
- Annual OMA membership meeting
- Camp Sharing
- Family Friendly - events/activities for family members who attend; space and supervision for children as needed
- Schedule – mid-November; three or four days in length (evening first day to noon on last day)

## ***Location***

The retreat is held at a Church of the Brethren camp on a rotational basis. Every six years, the retreat is held at a camp on the West coast.

## ***Planning Committee***

There will be a planning committee made up of four members:

1. Representative of the host camp (“host”)
2. Representative of the previous host camp (“sofa”)
3. Representative of the upcoming host camp (“chair”)
4. One representative selected by the OMA membership meeting (3-year term)

## ***Responsibilities***

- Chairperson
  1. Organize planning committee and oversee the planning process
  2. Provide OMA Steering Committee (OMASC) with initial event information (dates, theme, keynote speaker, and major components) by the March meeting
  3. Provide event evaluations to the next planning committee and to the OMASC by the March meeting
  
- Host Camp
  1. Mail out publicity materials to OMA camps, steering committee members, and denominational liaisons
  2. Receive and process registrations
  3. Confirm registrations with participants
  4. Receive registration and/or lodging fees
  5. Distribute stipends and reimbursements to leaders and others, as necessary
  6. Assign housing and provide linens, as necessary
  7. Assist with transportation needs, as necessary
  8. Provide space for all aspects of the event
  9. Provide food service
  
- Planning Committee
  1. Arrange for keynote speaker, spiritual leader, workshop presenters, and roundtable facilitators
  2. Plan recreational opportunities and field trip
  3. Establish event schedule
  4. Set registration fee and/or lodging fee to cover all housing, food service, leadership, activity, and publicity costs
  5. Prepare marketing/publicity materials
  6. Arrange for childcare, as needed
  7. Gather supplies
  8. Create retreat program with schedule, camp map, leadership information, etc.
  9. Provide leadership during the event including coordinating camp sharing, welcoming and introducing keynote, spiritual, and workshop leaders, coordinating recreation opportunities, etc.
  10. Arrange for and distribute thank you gifts for leaders
  11. Create evaluation form and allow time for completion
  12. Distribute contact lists for attendees to all participants
  
- Publicity
  1. April 1<sup>st</sup> - Initial event announcement with dates, theme, keynote speaker, and major components sent via mail and e-mail

2. July 1<sup>st</sup> – Full event brochure, including schedule and educational offerings, and registration form available at Annual Conference
3. July 15<sup>th</sup> – Full event brochure, including schedule and educational offerings, and registration form sent via mail and e-mail (encourage camps to invite key summer staff and volunteers while they are still actively serving at camp!)
4. Make phone calls to all member camps by September 15<sup>th</sup>
5. Utilize OMA and denominational webpages, as well as social networking sites, to advertise the event

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE

For many years a National Conference was sponsored and organized every three years by the National Conference Planning Team. This team was composed of a camp employee from the facility where the conference will be held and three other OMA members. The members of the team and the location of the National Conference were chosen at the Membership Meeting held during the Annual Retreat (then Director/Manager Retreat). The members held their position on the team until the conclusion of the National Outdoor Ministry Conference.

The event was typically held during the second or third weekend of November, often in conjunction or close proximity to the Annual Retreat (then Director/Manager Retreat). Activities were concentrated around a guest speaker(s) and a central topic of universal interest to professionals, staff, board members, volunteers, and others in the wider church and outdoor ministries community. Topic concentrations focused on stimulating music in our camps, recruitment and usage of volunteers, facilitating youth in their exploration of ministry, and hearing from outdoor ministry professionals from the ecumenical community. During the conference an auction is held to raise funds for either the Four Horseman Endowment Fund or some other designated OMA Steering Committee approved project.

Unlike the annual OMA Director/Manager Retreat the OMA National Conference was open to anyone who has an interest in Outdoor Ministries or the particular topic for that conference.

In 2010, the former Director/Manager Retreat was renamed the Annual Retreat and expanded to include a wider range of persons involved and interested in outdoor ministries. This changed prompted the termination of the cycle of National Conferences until a need for this event resurfaces.

# PRESENCE AT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN EVENTS

## *Annual Conference*

OMA participates at the denomination's Annual Conference with a booth, luncheon, and insight session(s).

Each year, OMA purchases a double-booth space in the exhibit hall. The centerpiece of the display is a map with the locations of all OMA sites. Many persons enjoy locating their camp or finding the camp nearest to their home. Display activities, games, and worksheet provide opportunities for interaction and exploration about OMA. These items vary from year to year based on themes and locations. Tables at the booth include the following information:

- OMA brochures, including membership information
- Four Horseman brochures
- Environmental Grant brochures and submission forms
- Staff and Volunteer Award submission forms
- Summer Curriculum Material
- OMA stickers

Space is also available for OMA member camps to bring brochures about their camp facilities and programs.

The OMA luncheon is an exciting part of each Annual Conference. It's like a national camp reunion! The luncheon begins with a "roll call" of camps where participants are able to excitedly cheer for their home camp. After a prayer and/or sung grace, a delicious meal is enjoyed. The program for the luncheon always includes the presentation of Staff and Volunteer Awards. Someone from the camp, camp board, or district staff read the citation and presents the framed citation and wooden plaque to the winner. The winners often share a few words and photos are taken. Winners, one guest, and the award presenters receive complementary tickets to the luncheon. An association update on various OMA programs and events is also given. Group singing, presentation of Lifetime Achievement Awards or Four Horsemen Awards, and reports from the Youth Peace Travel Team are sometimes part of the luncheon. The luncheon is closed in prayer.

In cooperation with the denomination's Congregational Life Ministries office, OMA offers an insight session each year. This session is centered around a topic of interest to the denomination and outdoor ministry. The topic may be connected with the Annual Conference theme, summer curriculum, or denomination emphasis. Usually this session is led by a camp professional who is a specialist on the selected topic but it may also be a panel of speakers. OMA's insight sessions are known for their lively discussions, helpful interactions, and fun games or activities.

### ***National Jr. High Conference***

OMA strives to have a presence at National Jr. High Conference with a booth in the exhibit area and by providing leadership for workshops, large group sessions, recreational activities, or other areas as asked by the planning team. The emphasis at this conference is on camper recruitment. The Youth Peace Travel Team also represents OMA throughout NJHC as they lead.

### ***National Youth Conference***

OMA strives to have a presence at National Youth Conference with a booth in the exhibit area and by providing leadership for workshops, large group sessions, recreational activities, or other areas as asked by the planning team. Areas of emphasis at this conference include youth camps and opportunities to serve as a staff member or volunteer. The Youth Peace Travel Team also represents OMA throughout NYC as they lead.

### ***Young Adult Conference and National Young Adult Conference***

OMA has a presence at Young Adult Conference and National Young Adult Conference with a booth in the exhibit area and by providing leadership for workshops, large group sessions, recreational activities, or other areas as asked by the planning team. An emphasis at these conferences is for staff and volunteer recruitment. The Youth Peace Travel Team also represents OMA throughout YAC and NYAC as they lead.

### ***National Older Adult Conference***

OMA seeks to have a presence at National Older Adult Conference with a booth in the exhibit area and by providing leadership for workshops, large group sessions, recreational activities, or other areas as asked by the planning team. Areas of emphasis at this conference include camping memories, volunteer opportunities, outdoor ministry programs for older adults, and financial commitments to OMA and local camps.

### ***District Conferences***

OMA is represented at individual District Conferences through the camp(s), retreat center(s), or outdoor ministry center(s) that are part of that District.

## ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTS

In 1991 the Church of the Brethren adopted a position paper on the environment entitled: "Creation: Called to Care." In that paper all members of the church were invited to:

1. Affirm the goodness and beauty of God's creation.
2. Acknowledge our special responsibility for stewardship of the Creator's good earth.
3. Learn of the environmental damages facing the planet.
4. Recognize that our practices and styles of life have had an effect on the environment.
5. Pursue a lifestyle that is wise and responsible in light of our understanding of the problems.
6. Exert our influence in shaping public policy and insisting that industries, businesses, farmers, and consumers relate to the environment in ways that are sensible, healthy, and protective of its integrity.
7. Become involved in organizations and actions to protect and restore the environment and the people in our communities.

Congregations and Districts were also challenged to participation by these actions:

1. Become ecologically sensitive in the conduct of their programs and to bring all under the control of a caring stewardship.
2. Pursue courses of action that promote environmental protection and social justice.
3. Investigate the adequacy of environmental policy and protection at the state and local levels of government
4. Encourage environmental awareness programs in Brethren camps that do not have such programs.

In response to this call to action the Outdoor Ministries Association set up a new program to assist camps in meeting this challenge. This program was intended to encourage Brethren camps throughout the denomination to develop new and innovative programs in the field of environmental education. Funding for the grants comes from gifts from camps and individuals as well as proceeds from auctions at OMA events. The OMA Steering Committee awards grants on an annual basis toward projects to camps who request funding and meet the criteria for the projects. The area of environmental education is broadly defined as the application of Christian principles and ethics to environmental issues and stewardship development in a camp or outdoor setting. The maximum available to a camp for a single project is \$1,000. Although matching funds are not

criteria for the initial grant approval, it is encouraged that the environmental grant be used as leverage in seeking other funding support.

At the 2011 spring meeting of the OMA steering committee a program to support congregations in the pursuit of programs to promote environmentally friendly practices and/or educational programs was approved. As with camps, the churches are encouraged to match the grant. Congregational membership in OMA determines the amount of the grant available with a maximum of \$1000 for member churches and \$500 for non-member churches.

The objective of the Environmental Grant Program is to provide incentive to camps and congregations to undertake projects and activities that provide interactive and experiential activities to camps and guests to help them become more acquainted with this wonderful creation that we all live in. This grows out of the greater understanding of the "Creation: Called to Care" where we are reminded that "the Creator-Redeemer seeks the renewal of the creation and calls the people of God to participate in saving acts of renewal. We are called to cooperate with God in the transformation of a world that has not fulfilled its divinely given potential or beauty, peace, health, harmony, justice, and joy (Isa.11:6-9, Mic. 4:3-4, Eph. 2:10, Rev. 21:1-5). Our task is nothing less than to join God in preserving, renewing and fulfilling the creation. It is to relate to nature in ways that sustain life on the planet, provide for the essential material and physical needs of all humankind, and increase justice and well-being for all life in a peaceful world."

From the beginning of the Environmental Grant program twenty (20) camps have received grants for a wide variety of projects. Projects have included a variety of nature walks and boardwalks, pond, pond observation deck, bird blinds, outdoor education equipment and supplies, butterfly garden, open air greenhouse, environmental building design, hybrid power system, Wildlife Development Project, Environmental Stewardship Project, lighting upgrades, and a go green program with organic vegetables and rain water collection.

Environmental Grant applications can be located on the OMA website or by contacting the Grants and Awards Member of the OMA Steering Committee.

### ***Grant Recipients and Projects***

Brethren Woods – Environmental Study Trail, Rain Barrels, and Weather Station

Camp Alexander Mack – Butterfly Garden, Hybrid Power System for Nature Center

Camp Bethel – Pond Observation Deck, Adventure Village Platforms

Camp Blue Diamond – Outdoor Education Materials, Compost System

Camp Carmel – Erosion Control

Camp Eder – Rain Barrels

Camp Harmony – Goose Pond

Camp Ithiel – Environmental Design for Dining Hall

Camp La Verne – Nature Center

Camp Mardela – Board Walk, Interpretive Guide Stations, Wood-Burning Water Heater

Camp Myrtlewood – Environmental Stewardship Project

Camp Placid – Energy Efficient Light Bulbs

Camp Swatara – Bird Blind

Inspiration Hills – Wildlife Development Project

Shepherd's Spring – Open Air Greenhouse

Woodland Altars – Bird Blind

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The Outdoor Ministries Association initiated a new leadership awards program in 1987. Beginning at the Outdoor Ministries luncheon at Annual Conference that year, an award was presented to a camp staff person and another to a camp volunteer. The awards give special recognition to persons providing outstanding leadership in the camping ministry and honor the men and women who have made long-term commitments and sacrifices to benefit the Church of the Brethren camping ministry.

### ***Staff Award***

The nomination form for camp staff person reads, “qualified nominees for this award are persons employed in a Church of the Brethren Camp on a part-time or full-time basis. The nominees will be judged on long-term commitment to outdoor ministry, significant contribution to the development of a district outdoor ministries program, visionary leadership and consistent service.”

### ***Volunteer Award***

The nomination form for camp volunteer reads, “nominees for such recognition may be members of district camp boards/committees, district board, counselors, directors or individuals committed to outdoor ministries. The nominees will be judged on long-term commitment, creativity, vision, service and leadership in the area of outdoor ministries and service to the total church.”

### ***Nomination and Selection Process***

The nomination forms are mailed out each fall, and at its spring meeting the Outdoor Ministries Association Steering Committee chooses a person from the nominations. Staff and Volunteer Award Nomination Forms can be located on the OMA website or by contacting the Grants and Awards Member of the OMA Steering Committee.

### ***Award Recipients***

1987 – Staff: William “Bill” Hare, Emmaus; Volunteer: Hazel Heisey, Brethren Woods

1988 – Staff: Charlene Clark, Woodland Altars; Volunteer: Lefty Hoal, Bethel and Clay Sheets, Carmel

1989 – Staff: Bob Jones, Bethel; Volunteer: Carl Williams, Shiloh

1990 – Staff: Arden Ball, Mack; Volunteer: Ray Verbeck, Koinonia

1991 – Staff: Tom Ness, Blue Diamond; Volunteer: Cassel Mammau, Swatara

1992 – Staff: Roger Crusier, Woodland Altars; Volunteer: Lucille Reber, Ithiel and Wayne Buckle, Mid-Atlantic District Camps

1993 – Staff: Patty Shoemaker, Woodland Altars; Volunteer: Orlin Lett, Myrtlewood

1994 – Staff: Kathy Snyder, Placid and Curt Rowland, Eder; Volunteer: Roy Frysinger, Swatara and Rufus Petre, Blue Diamond

1995 – Staff: Myrtle Conner, Bethel; Volunteer: Julia Laprade, Bethel

1996 – Staff: John and Margaret Jones, Myrtlewood; Volunteer: Hazel Hoover, Peaceful Pines and Virginia DuBois, Peaceful Pines, and Donna Kesler, Mack

1997 – Staff: Doug Phillips, Brethren Woods; Volunteer: Paul Bowman, Brethren Woods

1998 – Staff: Kathryn Oltman, Ithiel; Volunteer: Al Brubaker, Ithiel

1999 – Staff: Neal Harvey, Harmony; Volunteer: Linda McMurray, Swatara and Aaron Martin, Swatara

2000 – Staff: Rex Miller, Shepherd's Spring; Volunteer: Milton Ewert, Peaceful Pines and Eugene Miller, Blue Diamond

2001 – Staff: Ken Kline Smeltzer, Peaceful Pines; Volunteer: Jan Hurst, Shepherd's Spring

2002 – Staff: Marlin Houff, Swatara; Volunteer: Elaine Herty, Peaceful Pines

2003 – Staff: None; Volunteer: Martha Cole, Placid and Sandy Kopp, Swatara

2004 – Staff: Deb Glenny, Blue Diamond; Volunteer: Morris Firebaugh, Emmaus

2005 – Staff: Dean and Jerri Heiser Wenger, Blue Diamond; Volunteer: Shari Hoopingartner, Mack

2006 – Staff: None; Volunteer: Alvin Walbridge, Mardela and Arthur & Shirley Crane, Peaceful Pines and Betty Kreider, Mack; Lifetime Achievement: Bill Hare, Emmaus

2007 – Staff: Andy Levin, Myrtlewood; Volunteer: Joe Henderson, Carmel and Frank & Barbara Hart, Peaceful Pines

2008 – Staff: Lloyd Moyer, Swatara; Volunteer: Clifton Smith, Shepherd's Spring and Norris & Gary Martin, Bethel; Lifetime Achievement: Clay Sheets, Carmel

2009 – Staff: Lloyd & Leroy Lapp, La Verne and Bob Patalano, Inspiration Hills; Volunteer: None

2010 – Staff: Michael Kauffman, Mack; Volunteer: Alfred & Patricia Wiley, Peaceful Pines

2011 – Staff: Barry LeNoir, Bethel; Volunteer: Steve Frazier, Mardela

# YOUTH PEACE TRAVEL TEAM (YPTT)

The first Youth Peace Travel Team (YPTT) was formed in the summer of 1991 as a cooperative effort of a number of General Board programs and Outdoor Ministries. Since that year a team has been fielded every summer. The members of the Youth Peace Travel Team travel to camps throughout the Church of the Brethren. The goal of the team's work is to talk with other young people about the Christian message and the Brethren tradition of peacemaking.

The Youth Peace Travel Team is sponsored by On Earth Peace, Outdoor Ministries Association, the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board's Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office, and Brethren Volunteer Service.

Four college students between the ages of 18-22 are selected each summer by representatives of each sponsoring organization. The team members are part of the Ministry Summer Service (MSS) program and therefore take part in the orientation led by Youth and Young Adult ministry. Prior to the MSS orientation, the team spends several days in an orientation geared specifically toward their ministry as YPTT. Topics covered include, but are not limited to: the Biblical basis of peacemaking, Brethren tradition as peacemakers, presentation skills, boundaries and expectations of camps, and leading worship in an outdoor setting. They also work at what it means to be a team which includes training in conducting family meetings, traveling to camps, communicating with camp leaders, financial details, etc...

Each summer a geographical area is chosen and camps are contacted to learn of their desire in hosting the team for one week during the camping season. Expectations are that the team will be given room and board and supplied with laundry facilities. To help cover the extensive transportation costs, a \$250 donation is requested from the host camp. In return, the team will provide sessions and workshops around the topic of living together peacefully, Christ's call to be peacemakers, and learning to communicate with each other in a peaceful and constructive manner. While it is best that the team not be used as counselors, they are available to be used in the many facets of summer camp including campfire leading, Bible study, recreation, small group leaders, and as those extra adults often needed in various settings.

Applications for young adults interested in serving on the YPTT can be obtained from the Church of the Brethren or On Earth Peace websites. The YPTT application is a joint application with MSS. Members receive the MSS college scholarship stipend of \$2500 (see Ministry Summer Service information).

## ***Team History***

1991 - ANDY LOOMIS, CHRIS BROWN, JOY KRAYBILL, AUDREY OSBORNE

Camps: Bethel, Brethren Woods, Carmel, Ithiel, Swatara

Training: Bethel

Transportation: Rental Car

1992 - CHRIS FORNEY, DARIN KEITH BOWMAN, ERIN KRAMER, DEMETRA HECKMAN

Camps: Eder, Mon-Dak, Shepherd's Spring, Inspiration Hills, Emmanuel, Harmony

Training: Woodland Altars

Transportation: Air & Rental Car

1993 - JENN UNGEMACH, JESSICA ELLER, JEFF CARTER, ANDREW BRUNK

Camps: Mack, Stover, La Verne, Peaceful Pines, Myrtlewood

Training: Mack

Transportation: Train

1994 - BRIAN KRUSCHWITZ, RHONDA MELLINGER, BECKI WHITTAKER, MATT GUYNN

Camps: Emmanuel (1 week of training, 2 weeks of camp), Pine Lake, Colorado (2 weeks of camp), National Youth Conference, Annual Conference (Wichita, KS)

Training: Emmanuel

Transportation: Air?

1995 - STEVE BRADY, SARAH STAFFORD, MELISSA BENNETT, MATTHEW MILLER

Camps: Inspiration Hills, Blue Diamond, Bethel, Shepherd's Spring, Ithiel

Training: Inspiration Hills

Transportation: Air & Volunteer Shuttles

1996 - HEIDI BECK, REBEKAH HELSEL, SARAH MARIE HENDRICKS, J.J. WHITE (HALF OF SUMMER)

Camps: Woodland Altars, Carmel, Mack, Emmaus, Emmanuel, Bethel

Training: Woodland Altars

Transportation: Air & Volunteer Shuttles

1997 - JACKI HARTLEY, JESSICA LEHMAN, NATHAN MUSSELMAN, MIKE BRINKMEYER

Camps: Inspiration Hills, Harmony, Shepherd's Spring, Mardela, Brethren Woods, Ithiel, Hammond's Mill, Swatara

Training: Brethren Woods

Transportation: Volunteer Shuttles

1998 - LORI VAN ORDER, LINETTA ALLEY, RACHEL CARROLL, LIZ GEISEWITE

Camps: LaVerne, Stover, Pine Lake, Peaceful Pines, National Youth Conference, CA churches (LaVerne, San Diego, Shalom Ministries/Tijuana, Modesto, Live Oak)

Training: Mack

Transportation: Air & Volunteer Shuttles

1999 - CHANDA EDWARDS, AMY RHOADES, ERICA SWEITZER, WENDY MATHENY

Camps: Brethren Woods, Mack, Blue Diamond, Emmaus, Emmanuel

Training: Brethren Woods

2000 - MYRA MARTIN-ADKINS, PETER DOBBERSTEIN, DAN ROYER, MARSHALL CAMDEN, MEGHAN SELLER

Camps: Swatara, Shepherd's Spring, Annual Conference (Kansas City), Brethren Woods, Bethel, Eder, Brethren Heights

Training: Swatara

Debriefing: Brethren Heights

2001 - KATIE BEST, SUSAN CHAPMAN, RACHEL LONG

Camps: Shepherd's Spring, Song and Story Fest (Shepherd's Spring), Annual Conference (Baltimore), Blue Diamond, Galilee, Emmaus, Eder, Mack

Training: Shepherd's Spring

Debriefing: Mack

2002 - CARLE GAIER, BEN KREIDER, CHRIS PALSGROVE, DANIEL RADCLIFF

Camps: Inspiration Hills, Annual Conference (Louisville, KY), Stover, National Youth Conference (Ft. Collins, CO), LaVerne, Myrtlewood, Peaceful Pines, Koinonia

Training: Inspiration Hills

Debriefing: Elgin (David Radcliff)

Transportation: Air, Bus, Volunteers

2003 - ERICA SCHATZ, LAURA SWEITZER, MANDY WAMPLER

Camps: Woodland Altars, Brethren Heights, Annual Conference (Boise, ID), Mack, Pine Lake, Emmaus, Hammond's Mill

Training: Woodland Altars

Debriefing: Elgin (Kim Stuckey)

Transportation: Rental car, bus, air, volunteers

2004 - TIFFANY CARTY, CARRIE FRY-MILLER, JEFF MCAVOY, MATT WITKOVSKY

Camps: National Young Adult Conference (Snow Mountain Ranch, CO), Shepherd's Spring (twice), Brethren Woods, Annual Conference (Charleston, WV), Blue Diamond, Bethel, Harmony, Swatara, Waynesboro Church of the Brethren

Training: Ministry Summer Service Orientation in Richmond, IN and YPTT training at the Northview COB, Indianapolis, IN

Debriefing: New Windsor, MD - Brethren Service Center (Phil Jones, Karen Roberts, Kim Stuckey, Jerri Heiser Wenger)

Transportation: Volunteers, air, bus

2005 - BENJAMIN BEAR, NICOLE FOWLER, BENJAMIN RITCHEY MARTIN, RACHEL MCFADDEN

Camps: Inspiration Hills, Brethren Heights, Ithiel, Annual Conference (Peoria, IL), Mack, Woodland Altars, Emmaus, Blue Diamond, Shepherd's Spring

Training: Ministry Summer Service Orientation in Richmond, IN, and YPTT training at the Inspiration Hills in Northern Ohio

Debriefing: New Windsor, MD

Transportation: Volunteers, air, bus

2006 - KAREN DUHAI, CHRISTINA MCPHERSON, CORRINE LIPSCOMB

Camps: Mack, Mt. Hermon, Pine Lake, Annual Conference (Boise, ID), Wilbur Stover, Myrtlewood, National Youth Conference, LaVerne, Peaceful Pines, Koinonia

Training: Ministry Summer Service Orientation in Richmond, IN, and YPTT training at Mack

Transportation: Air, bus, volunteers

2007 - AUDREY HOLLENBERG, AMANDA GLOVER, EMILY LAPRADE

Camps: Woodland Altars, Eder, Harmony, Annual Conference (Cleveland, OH), Shepherd's Spring, Mardela, Blue Diamond, Swatara, LaVerne CoB Peace Camp.

Training: Ministry Summer Service in Elgin, IL and YPTT Training at Woodland Altars

Transportation: Bus and volunteers

2008 - GABRIEL DODD, SAMANTHA CARWILE, MELISA GRANDISON, JOHN-MICHAEL PICKENS

Camps: Pine Lake, Bethel, Ithiel, Mack, Blue Diamond, Annual Conference (Richmond, VA), Brethren Heights, Emmaus, Peaceful Pines, Young Adult Conference (Estes Park, CO)

Training: Ministry Summer Service in Elgin, IL and YPTT training also in Elgin

Transportation: Plane, bus, and volunteers

2009 - MARIANNE HOUFF, CHELSEA GOSS, JESSICA FLORY STEURY, BETHANY FUNKHOUSER

Camps: Mack, Mardela, Inspiration Hills, Swatara, Galilee, Eder, Blue Diamond

Other: Work Camp in New Windsor, Annual Conference (San Diego, CA), Jr. High National Conference (Harrisonburg, VA)

Training: YPTT Orientation at Blue Diamond (1st time to be held prior to MSS) and Ministry Summer Service Training in Elgin, IL

Transportation: CBD van to Elgin and Mack, used On Earth Peace vehicle for most of summer (first time), flew to Annual Conference

2010- MARCUS HARDEN, TIMOTHY SOLLENBERGER-HEISHMAN, CAMBRIA TETER, HANNAH WYSONG

Camps: Mt. Hermon, Stover, Peaceful Pines, Annual Conference (Pittsburg), Pine Lake, National Youth Conference, La Verne, Hammond's Mill

Training: YPTT Training at Blue Diamond and Ministry Summer Service Orientation in Elgin

Transportation: Air, local rides

Debriefing: Schrock Farm, Missouri

2011- MARK DOWDY, TYLER GOSS, KAY GUYER, SARAH MARIE NEHER

Camps: Woodland Altars, National Junior High Conference (Elizabethtown, PA), Shepherd's Spring, Bethel, Annual Conference (Grand Rapids, MI), Emmaus, Galilee, Brethren Woods, National Workcamp at Camp Mardela

Debriefing: Camp Mardela

Training: YPTT Orientation at Inspiration Hills and Ministry Summer Service Orientation in Elgin

Travel: Planes, trains, and automobiles

# A CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN THE NATIONAL PARKS (ACMNP)

ACMNP is A Christian Ministry in the National Parks. This organization is an interdenominational non-profit ecumenical ministry that provides worship services in many of the national parks throughout the country. The organization is overseen by a volunteer Board of Trustees and a volunteer National Board. The National Board consists of denominational representatives, other invited contributing volunteers, alumni of the program, and representatives from the hosting parks and concessionaires. The Church of the Brethren has had a volunteer National Board member since the 1970's. Rev. Robert Houff was the COB representative until 1998. Marlin Houff (Administrator at Camp Swatara) succeeded his father on the National Board beginning in 1999 to present. Participation on this board is supported by a budgeted expense item in the OMA budget and by a contribution to OMA for this participation by an individual member. The remaining expense of participation is the responsibility of the volunteer. The Church of the Brethren denomination does not provide any financial support or contribution to ACMNP, but has continually supported the board member's continued participation as a representative of the Church of Brethren through the Outdoor Ministries Association. The board member provides an annual report to the OMA steering committee of his/her participation.

Persons interested in learning more about ACMNP should visit their website at: [www.acmnp.com](http://www.acmnp.com) or contact Marlin Houff at [mhouff@campswatara.org](mailto:mhouff@campswatara.org).

## BRETHREN VOLUNTEER SERVICE (BVS)

Brethren Volunteer Service ([www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org](http://www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org)) was founded in 1948 and has close to 7,000 alumni. BVSers serve in one or two year volunteer assignments with the project site providing housing, food, a small monthly stipend (\$100 for a first year volunteer), and medical insurance if needed. Most volunteers do not know their assignments before attending a three week orientation with BVS. At the orientation the volunteer will work with staff in selecting and getting to an assignment. There are about 100 positions in the United States and around the world.

BVS connects with OMA in many ways and has done so for many years. The most visible is the relationship BVS has with OMA camps as project sites where the Church of the Brethren camp receives volunteers from BVS for one year assignments. Current camps that are project sites include Brethren Woods, Camp Bethel, Camp Mack, Camp Mardela, Camp Myrtlewood, and Camp Swatara. Many other camps have hosted BVSers over the years. In the last 16 years those have included Camp Harmony, Camp Ithiel and Camp La Verne. BVS is always open to camps coming on board as project sites and will work closely with staff in the placement of volunteers.

Over the past 15 years BVS has also invited current volunteers to serve as counselors at summer camps where counselors come in for one week periods of time (not hired for the summer by the camp.) This varies year to year depending on the volunteers interest and availability and the camps need.

In the Church of the Brethren, one of our core values is service. BVS recognizes that young people will often get their first exposure to the outside world at camp. Where it's possible, BVS tries to have information available to campers about BVS. We also hope that camp leaders look at BVS as a step in a person's life as they develop their faith journey.

## MINISTRY SUMMER SERVICE (MSS)

Ministry Summer Service is a leadership development program for college students in the Church of the Brethren, provided through the Youth/Young Adult Ministry office and the Ministry office. Students, or interns, involved in MSS spend 10 weeks during the summer working in a local congregation or church related organizations such as: district offices, camps, and denominational programs.

MSS provides an excellent opportunity for young adults to explore ministry as a vocation, or to simply learn what ministry is all about in a particular setting. The Bible is a record of God calling people to challenging tasks. MSS is no exception. Through MSS, God calls congregations and other ministry settings to reach out in the ministry of teaching and receiving. Likewise, God calls young adults to explore the possibility of church work as their vocation.

Interns are required to spend one week in orientation at the beginning of the summer. This usually takes place at the Church of the Brethren offices in Elgin, IL. Interns then spend nine weeks working in their placement site, developing leadership skills and exploring a call to ministry. Interns receive the following in exchange for their participation:

- \$2,500 tuition grant
- food and housing for ten weeks
- \$100 per month spending money
- transportation from orientation to their placement
- transportation from their placement to home

Each intern is linked with a mentor from the ministry site. Mentors are required to attend part of the orientation in Elgin, as well as meet regularly with the intern during the summer through meetings, devotions, prayer, study, etc...

Camps can be a part of MSS by hosting an intern. It is expected that the intern serve in as many facets of camping as possible, such as: counseling, leading camp programs, office work, training opportunities, time spent in the kitchen and on maintenance, board meetings, and visiting congregations.

Youth Peace Travel Team members are also participants in MSS. The orientation experience is an excellent opportunity for team members to understand their job as a vital ministry. It is a wonderful partnership shared with OMA, the Youth and Young Adult Office, Brethren Volunteer Service, and On Earth Peace.

## CAMP AND RETREAT LEADERS' NETWORK (CRLN)

This e-mail network is a free resource organized by Kevin Witt, the camp/conference staff person for the United Methodist Church and formerly the Religiously Affiliated Camps coordinator for the American Camp Association. All denominations and camps may participate. Kevin gleans and posts articles, links and resources, including job openings at camps around the country. You receive the information as an e-mail. To join the network, visit <http://www.gbod.org/camping> and find the link for the "Camp/Retreat Leader E-mail Network."

# FACILITY ADMINISTRATION MANUAL

Sometimes there are resources that are developed that we miss that can provide a wealth of information for us as we operate our camps. One such resource is the Outdoor Ministries Facility Administration Manual. This manual in CD format was produced by the Committee on Outdoor Ministries of the National Council of Churches in 2004. This resource was designed to provide basic information for persons new in the industry as well as new information for those who have been in the industry for a while. There are four major areas covered with many topics under each of those areas. These four areas include Mission, Governance, Daily Operations and Long Range Planning.

A copy of this resource is available to each camp in the denomination who would like a copy. The Outdoor Ministries Association will pay for this resource as a way to provide support to each of the camps in the denomination. This gift is being funded through the Four Horseman Endowment Fund that is designed to support leadership development in Outdoor Ministries. All you will need to do is take the action to order the resource. Don't miss this great opportunity! For direct information about the Manual, contact Rex Miller at [rex@campmack.org](mailto:rex@campmack.org).

# GREEN CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER COVENANT

At the spring 2009 meeting of the Steering Committee of the Outdoor Ministries Association a covenant statement drafted by the Committee on Outdoor Ministries and the Eco-justice Program, both part of the National Council of Churches, was presented and reviewed. The covenant recognizes that camps and conference centers have a special responsibility to play in protecting God's creation and maintaining places where people of faith come to experience God. The covenant can be read and signed at [www.nccecojustice.org/campcovenant.html](http://www.nccecojustice.org/campcovenant.html).

"Camp and conference centers have a unique role to play in the protection of, and education about, God's Creation", said Jordan Blevins, Assistant Director of the Eco-Justice Program of the National Council of Churches and a Church of the Brethren camper who came through Shepherd's Spring. "This covenant gives them the opportunity to put words and commitments to the values many of them have been living out for generations, and to be recognized for and supported in doing so."

The Committee on Outdoor Ministries has long maintained Creation Care as one of their main priorities, writing in their Theological Mission Statement, "Outdoor ministry settings provide space and time to encounter God, others, and creation. The sacred place apart, intentional programs of study, recreation, worship, and sustained time together, offer opportunities for Christian community. The natural environment reminds campers of the richness and variety God creates, the call to praise God, and the charge to care for all creation."

Jeff Puhlmann-Becker, chair of the Committee on Outdoor Ministries, explained, "This covenant was developed with the hopes that a wide variety of participants, leaders, camps and denominations will sign on as individuals and collective groups."

Camps across the denomination are encouraged to review this document and sign on as a supporter of this covenant. This covenant is available from the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice website at <http://ncccojustice.org/outdoor/campcovenant.php>. Text of the covenant is as follows:

*God created the Earth and all that is in it, and declared it good. God's creation is marked by wondrous complexity, interdependence, and beauty. Human beings are called to the task of stewardship – to care for the Earth as created by God, and to maintain this blessing for future generations to enjoy. Furthermore, the protection of Creation is an issue of justice, as its degradation of the Earth often disproportionately affects the "least of these".*

*Places of wilderness and solitude are places where we often experience the sacredness of Creation most clearly, and are places where God meets us, sometimes most powerfully. Whether as the site of Moses' call, the Israelites' freedom and consecration, the inspiration of prophets, the testing of Jesus, or our own experiences today, the solitude of being with God in the midst of Creation often reacquaints us with our interdependence with that Creation. Specifically, we commit ourselves to the following:*

1. *When making decisions about how to use the lands we have been blessed with, consider the sacred nature of land and wilderness as a part of God's Creation*
2. *To conserve energy in as many ways as possible, recognizing that our use of energy is a justice issue, as the impacts of energy's overuse falls on those living in poverty first, and relates to our call to care for all of God's children, especially the most vulnerable, and to protect and restore God's creation.*
3. *To practice conservation in our use of water, recognizing that good water management plays a vital role in realizing the importance of water for all communities around God's Earth.*
4. *To recycle our waste in as many ways as possible, seeking to achieve sustainability. Recycling is a tangible action that reminds us of the interdependence of the world, and seeks to sustain the ongoing capacity of natural and social system to thrive together.*
5. *To purchase environmentally sustainable products (products made seeking the sustainability defined above), as recognition that how we live our lives and make purchasing decisions have profound environmental and justice impacts on God's creation.*
6. *To continue to educate those who use our camp and conference centers to the sacred nature of the Creation they are experiencing, and to teach them how to lead lives in recognition of this sacredness.*

*We recognize that as a camp and conference center of the faith community, we have a unique role and responsibility to play in protecting God's creation and maintaining places where people of faith come to experience God.*