

# Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua (ECOC)

December 2006

Volume 1, Issue 1

Yesterday —>



<— Today

*Sending you wishes for a blessed, joyous and peaceful holiday season!*

## *Greetings from the Directors of the ECOC*

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Once again the Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua has experienced a busy season, with near-capacity occupancy. But, even more, once again the ECOC has provided a place for old friendships to be renewed, and new friendships to be forged. What better place than the community kitchens, or the line-up for the bathrooms, or the front porches, to get to know your neighbors? Changes and innovations this year have included moving the Sunday Social to an earlier time, immediately after lunch. This afforded folk the opportunity to meet each other, and then get to the afternoon's activities. Many of you indicated that you preferred this new time. As well, journals were placed on each table in the kitchens, so that guests could record their experiences. Tape recorders were also available for anyone to share stories of their past experiences at ECOC. These stories will assist the Ministers' Union committee to preserve the history of our beloved community.

Many of you also commented on the cleanliness, upkeep, and smooth running of the ECOC. This, of course, is in very large measure due to the committed work of Sandy and Bob Boehm, our managers, assisted by our hosts/hostesses and other staff. We thank Sandy and Bob for their untiring commitment to, and love for, the ECOC.

As President of the ECOC Board, it is my pleasure to chair the meetings of the board, but, more importantly, to work with this group of dedicated folk to oversee the many aspects of operation. The board is constituted by women and men, clergy and lay, who serve for a five-year period. Eleven members, ten elected, and one appointed by the Shaw family make up the board. We meet twice a year, in June and in August. The board is divided into committees—building campaign, finance, hospitality, nominating, personnel, programme, property. In addition the Ministers' Union committee meets to

foster the history of our community since its inception. Each committee meets before the board meetings, and makes a report with suggestions for changes which might enhance the life of our community. The spring meeting works to prepare for the upcoming season, while the August meeting (our AGM) assesses the season, and makes plans for the future. Much of our time and energy this year have rightly been directed to the Campaign Committee, supporting them in the ongoing programme of funding much-needed renovations and upgrades to our three buildings. We are grateful to those who have pledged their financial support, and we hope that many more will catch the vision as together we work to "Continue the Legacy..." which we hold in common.

Sincerely,

(The Reverend) Paul Kett

President

## Message from the Managers

### OLD FIRST NIGHT 2006 WALK/RUN

ECOC Guests - winners  
in their respective age  
categories

1st ~ Lauren Woodring  
2nd ~ Mark Woodring  
3rd ~ David Poist

"Here in the Westervelt  
kitchen, together, in  
preparing food and  
sharing in table  
conversations, we have  
experienced a closeness  
that has been very rich  
indeed!"

Jim & Harriet Weaver

We had a very full and busy season. We enjoyed seeing all of our regular guests and catching up on their news and we enjoyed meeting the 75 new people that stayed with us this year. Week 1 had a few rooms that were open but weeks 2 through 9 were fully booked. We had a wonderful group of hosts and hostesses to help us see to the needs of our guests and they were a pleasure to work with.

Our Thursday brown bag luncheon topics tried to follow Chautauqua's theme of the week. The presenters were people who stay at the ECOC or people from the Interfaith Group. They were held at the Hall of Missions and were well attended.

We had 21 volunteer workers come in from Sept. 8 thru Sept. 21 to help us with repairs, refurbishing, and close down. Some people came in for the day, some stayed for several days but every one of those volunteers was a blessing to the ECOC. In a survey we saw, it said that the average value for a volunteer's time was \$18.00 an hour. We could not afford to do all the refurbishing that we do without the help of our generous volunteers.

Here are some of the things that were accomplished in that time period. Rooms 7, 12, 17, and 20 in the Bird-Werner had the wall paper stripped, the walls repaired, one had a ceiling replaced, all the trim painted and the walls were either painted or wall papered. There were many shelves, tables and dresser tops that were sanded and painted or varnished. There was lots of cleaning to be done; furniture on porches had to be put inside, and outside cleanup to be done. There was also a lot of laundry to do and dresser scarves to be starched and ironed. Five new sink tops with base cabinets were put in rooms.

Everyone is very busy during these work times but you get to pick the jobs you feel comfortable doing. Whatever your physical or skill level is, we have a job for you. We also have a lot of fun together and we join together for meals. **The date for the spring work weekend is Thursday evening May 31 to Sunday afternoon June 3. Please come and join us.** If there are other times that would suit you better, please give us a call and we will see what we can work out.

The walkway between the Westervelt and the Mayflower needed major repairs and it also was very slippery when it was wet. A new walkway made out of a composite material that won't get slippery when it is wet was installed by a contractor this fall.

Reservation forms should arrive at your house the first week in Jan. If you don't get one around that time, please give us a call at 330-821-1872 and I will send you another one. All reservations will be processed starting **February 1st**. Reservations received before that date will be held and processed on February 1st. Please list a first week choice and a second week choice because it does make it much easier to fit you in. Also, I know all of you would like a room with a bathroom but since we have 54 rooms and only 18 rooms have a bathroom, a lot of you will be sharing a bathroom. We try to meet your requests as much as possible. Please send in your reservation promptly because the rooms and weeks fill up quickly. ~ Sandy & Bob

716 357-3814 (May 15-October 1)

716 821-1872 (Oct 1-May 15)

## Website Under Construction

The ECOC website is currently under construction. Robert Tupaj, a frequent guest of the ECOC stepped up to the task of creating our website. By logging onto the website, [www.ecoc-chautauqua.org](http://www.ecoc-chautauqua.org), you can see that preliminary work has begun. Be sure to check the sight from time to time to see how construction is progressing.

## Reflections From A Host ...

My wife Marge and I have hosted at the ECOC for 2 years now. Last year was our training year, when we continually bothered Sandy and Bob with annoying questions, but this year we felt more comfortable and in the rhythm of the place.

It is so much fun to watch people arrive, some with cars overflowing, and others with not much at all, but all enthusiastic about the week ahead. Very few guests are not friendly and flexible. No complaints about many steps, no elevator or lack of baths, just cheery greetings from all.

Before long it becomes obvious who the gourmet cooks are, as farmers market vegetables hit the cutting boards and frying pans and crock pots go into action.

As the week goes on, conversations abound, among friends who share tables, those who are re-acquainted from prior years, and new people who are obviously pleased with the sharing.

Babies in the kitchens have so much to look at and are very content with all the attention that they get.

Younger children discover endless paths between the Shaw kitchen tables. Older children, although light in weight, have a bounce in their walking and running that makes the old floor boards rumble. After lectures and programs, superlatives abound. Amazing, enlightening, touching, moving, unbelievable, uplifting, healing, refreshing. To be fair, we also hear words such as boring, "too loud", and a new one this year after a Friday night program, deplorable.

Many times people who have had a loss or trauma in the past year share it with another early in the week, and experience a touch of healing within the community.

People who are drained physically or emotionally speak of the renewal they feel as the week progresses.

Some people speak of the pleasure with the ECOC atmosphere of community. They could stay where elevators, air conditioning and private baths are available, but choose the blessing of sharing their Chautauqua experience with others.

~ Ed Johnston

## A Little Bit of History ...



In the beginning life was different at the Ministers' Union. You cleaned your own room when you arrived, and if you were one of the first guests that season, you washed all the dishes, pots, pans and silverware! No bathrooms were on the property! You guessed it—under each bed was a 'pot'!

It was wonderful to have the freedom of chasing up and down and in and out of the buildings (then the Columbia and Annex). Grandmother gave jobs to even the smallest. At age 6, I started cleaning silverware and put it in the tray while sitting on the table. I loved just looking at the lake, watching the fishermen. That peace and tranquility are true also today!

~ Nancy Shaw Kealey



## Educational Programming 2006

During the past Chautauqua season, The Ecumenical Community and the Interfaith Alliance co-sponsored nine educational events. Interfaith Alliance is a group consisting of the representatives from the Jewish Congregation, Universalist-Unitarians, Bahai, Quakers and Unity. The brown-bag programs were held at the Hall

of Missions each Thursday for an hour. The challenge was to take the Themes of the Week and discuss them using religious and spiritual perspectives and involve the participants in a discussion of the topics.

We had an average attendance of 25 and the attendees seemed engaged and active in the con-

versations.

Our plan is to continue this cooperation through the 2007 season. Themes have been selected by the various participants.

Deborah First, Rev. Sue Loper and Rev. Bill Brockman represent the ECOC on the Program Committee.

"A week of refreshment and renewal of the mind, body and spirit has flown by. Thanks for the fun, fellowship and refreshment found in the Shaw kitchen!"

Nels & Lois Sandberg

## *Continuing the Legacy .....*

As of the end of the 2006 Chautauqua season, the capital fund campaign of the Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua, Continuing the Legacy..., had \$220,145.00 in pledges and donations. This total amount would be fully realized over the three years of the campaign. To date \$71,760.00 has been received. The Board of ECOC was pleased with the level of pledging of those who have pledged, but there was disappointment that many in the ECOC/Ministers' Union constituency have not responded. This becomes critical when foundations look at supporting our renovation and restoration plan. Foundations desire that there be large percentage support of projects. The plan for the ECOC cannot be realized without foundation help.

It is not too late to respond.. The contact person is the campaign chair: Robert Boell. If you need a pledge card or want further information or want to write a check for your pledge, he can be reached at: 801 Yale Avenue, #408, Swarthmore, PA 19081, phone: 610-544-3789, [bob.boell@ecunet.org](mailto:bob.boell@ecunet.org).

The ECOC does have a brokerage account for those who chose to make their pledge via stock security donation. Again, contact with the above can help you with that process.

Many heart-warming stories have accompanied pledge cards, such as: *"I could not afford to come to Chautauqua were it not for ECOC/MU, and that is why I feel it important to make as generous a pledge as possible."* + *"We are making a pledge in memory of our father who loved this place."* + *"It is quite clear to me that if we are not successful with this campaign and do the things needed for the buildings, we will no longer have them available. What a tragedy."* + *"Affordable housing at Chautauqua is a rarity. This pledge will help keep it available."* + *"I am on minimal income, but Shan, Westervelt, Bird-Werner are so important to me I am pledging this amount \$xxxx (a very generous pledge for the circumstance!)"* + *"The Ministers' Union - Ecumenical Community is more than buildings, but the buildings provide the locus for wonderful community and growth. Here's to keeping it all available for us and generations to come. Yes, I want to continue the legacy."* Future issues of the newsletter will have updates on the campaign.

~ (The Reverend) Bob Boell

## *The Mission of Fund Raising*

When the Board of Directors created the fund raising program, it enabled each of us to make a concrete demonstration of our commitment to the mission of the ECOC. It turns out there are many in the wider Chautauqua community as well, who have never stayed with us but who consider our mission to be vital to the very mission of Chautauqua itself.

The Board of Directors also approved the creation of an Advisory Committee of prominent Chautauquans who are supportive of our mission to engage economically and religiously diverse people in a real-life ecumenical living of the Chautauqua experience. We are in the process of talking with a small number of people who are willing to help us and provide advice and help in getting our message out to the larger community

The State of New York may also have an interest in our mission, although it is only from the perspective of preserving the State's architectural history. In May, 2006 we filed an application for \$325,000 through the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Our request was for preservation of the Massey Cottage (Shaw House, and included request for funds to restore the porches of the west and south sides, create a common room on the first floor, strengthen the foundations and the installation of an elevator to make the building handicapped accessible. We received notice from the State a few weeks ago that our grant application was turned down. We have been encouraged by the grant's regional representative to reapply in 2007. She indicated that the evaluators were concerned that we did not have enough money to match the grant. Since our fund raising efforts have been so successful, it will be easier to demonstrate in the next application that if we are selected we will be able to match the grant money.

If you know of any foundation that may be interested in historic preservation, religious diversity and continuing education for clergy, please contact us.

~ (The Reverend) Bill Brockman and Deborah First

## *A Giving Option for Older Guests*

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows certain IRA owners to send their Required Minimum Distribution (or a portion of it) directly to a charitable organization (such as ECOC) as long as:

- + the owner is at least 70 1/2 years old the contribution would
- + otherwise be deductible the contribution does not exceed \$100,000 the
- + distribution is for the 2006 and /or 2007 required minimum
- + distribution amounts

If these provisions are met, the individual can exclude the amount of the charitable contribution from taxable income. A distribution that is excluded from gross income under this provision will not count toward the owner's charitable contribution deduction.

## Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua (ECOC)

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*Put Label Here*

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### *Pictures from the Ministers' Union past.....*

#### *Newsletter Editor's Message*

Modern technology is wonderful when it works! It is very frustrating when it does not! The delay in completing and sending the first issue was due to equipment failures.

Future issues will be sent the beginning of *March* and *June*. Articles should be received by **February 1st** and **May 1st**.

Thank you.

E. Carol



**Aunt Eunice's Birthday**



**Chuck and Mom—1983**



**Another family gathering**