

# ECOC News

Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua

Fall  
2015

Volume 9 Issue 2

*A community of religious inclusion and compassion, providing hospitality and affordable accommodations, promoting dialogue, fellowship and growth.*

## New Managers Hired



*Kathy and John Woods*

The ECOC Board has unanimously approved the hiring of John and Kathy Woods as new managers beginning in 2016. They will open the buildings in spring, and will manage during the first five weeks of the season. The Woods' daughters, Olivia, 19, and Victoria, 17, will be helping.

Working at the ECOC has been a family tradition. The family served as

hosts in the Westervelt last summer, and volunteered almost every year at a Work Week since they first came ten years ago, when awarded a Chautauqua Institution Family Scholarship for first-time guests.

When urged to apply for the managers' position last spring, the family discussed it and quickly agreed. The parents say they will enjoy meeting new people, sharing hospitality, taking care of the historic buildings, and attending the Chautauqua events. Their daughters are very excited to have five wonderful weeks at the ECOC and on the grounds.

The family lives in Warren, Ohio, where John is an insurance agent, specializing in health care, and Kathy is a work-at-home mom with a degree in education, who home-schooled their daughters during their younger years. ■

## Campaign Update

*Bill Brockman and Bob Boell, Capital Campaign Committee*

The ECOC community is amazing. Generosity abounds. The goal of the "Securing the Future" campaign over the three years (2014–16) is \$300,000. As of November 1, 2015, gifts and pledges total \$291,084. You will find updates posted on the web site: [www.ecoc-chautauqua.org](http://www.ecoc-chautauqua.org). Many thanks to those who made pledges, and have been very faithful keeping up-to-date.

Guests this past summer saw work completed on improvements. The Bird-Werner porch replacement and new fire escape are underway this fall. This is part of the campaign to improve safety, comfort and building soundness, all the while maintaining the simple life style of ECOC, affordable housing and unmatched community living. You'll find more details on renovations on page 3.

Since the Spring newsletter's listing, these additional gifts/pledges were given in memory or honor: **In Memory of:** George Dillingham, Gary Gephart, Clara Rader, Patrick Sellers, Roger Sledd; **In Honor of:** Carolyn Volk (85th birthday).

Enclosed is a return envelope for those who wish to make an additional gift or a payment on their pledge. Charitable gift acknowledgments for tax purposes will be sent at year end. ■

## Managers Sought for 2017

*Bill Brockman, Personnel Committee Chair*

The ECOC needs a couple to join our leadership team. Lois and Nels Sandberg will retire at the end of the 2016 season and we need a couple to share the managerial responsibilities with John and Kathy Woods. The ECOC is known for its great hospitality, and that starts at the top, with managers dedicated to making all feel welcome.

Qualifications include: Feel called to the ministry of hospitality; enjoy working with people; have some experience with managing; flexible and open to surprises; and basically love creating a welcoming, warm and safe environment for guests. If interested and/or would like more complete information, please contact Bill Brockman, Personnel Chair, at 561-395-4402 or at [wbrockman@usa.net](mailto:wbrockman@usa.net). ■

# Managers' Report

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Nels and Lois Sandberg, Marge and Ed Johnston

**H**ello, ECOC guests and friends. We are glad to report another excellent summer at the ECOC in 2015. We have had no accidents for three years, and we were basically full except for late cancellations.

Major improvements to our facility continue, thanks to contributions of many to the current capital campaign. We had many good comments about last year's renovations, and work has already started on this winter's projects.

Our volunteers continue to be a major reason for affordability at the ECOC. During this year's pre and post seasons they not only accomplished the many tasks required to open and close the buildings, but completed over 100

"fix-it" items that improve our facilities. We can't thank them enough for their efforts. If you haven't been a volunteer, look for the sign-up sheet with the registration materials you will

receive in January. We need as many of you as possible to volunteer for pre-season Work Weekends to help clean up the mess.

The Brown Bag Lunches were successful and well attended in 2015, with average attendance of about 40 people. Thanks to our guests who volunteered to present for this important program. Look for a form again this year with your reservation confirmation if you want to volunteer to present a topic.

We want to thank all of our outstanding hosts again this year. Our surveys gave high praise to their ability to create a hospitable, caring, and loving atmosphere in our buildings.

Ed and Marge have retired follow-

ing the 2015 season, and the ECOC Board has hired John and Kathy Woods as their replacements next season. Lois and Nels have announced their plans to retire at the end of the 2016 season. The Board is looking for a replacement for them for 2017. We continuing, retired, and new managers hope to see you next summer. ■

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## Johnstons Retire

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**E**d and Marge Johnston have retired after five years as co-managers and eight years as kitchen hosts. The couple spent some time reminiscing about their experiences:

*"We first stayed at the Ministers Union about 35 years ago. We stopped in the office and asked Eunice Bull if she had a room for us and our two young children, Jim and Amy. With a twinkle in her eye she replied, 'I think I can find something.' That started our family staying two weeks each year until 13 years ago, when we began hosting for the first five weeks in the Shaw kitchen. Then for the last five years we have managed for half the season, with 2015 our last.*

*"We thank Nels and Lois, registrar E. Carol, hosts and hostesses, ECOC Board, and the many volunteers who work to make the ECOC so special. We are especially thankful that John and Kathy Woods have agreed to manage in 2016.*

*"Reflecting on our years at the ECOC, we think of the joy it has brought to us and our family. We plan to continue coming work weeks and several weeks during the season. Next year we'll be with our two grandchildren, Grace and Eddie, and sharing a family room just as we did with Jim and Amy 35 years ago. Life is good. We hope to see you then." ■*

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## From the Registrar

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E. Carol Maxwell



**THANK YOU** for honoring the **NEW** check-in time this past summer! The **2:30 pm** check-in allowed our hosts to have time to complete needed tasks between the departure and arrival of guests! Check-in time will continue to be **2:30 pm** throughout the 2016 Season.

The 2016 *Accommodations' Information Packets* have been prepared and will be mailed from Chautauqua the last working day of December 2015 to all

guests who have stayed with us during the past five years (2011–2015). **PLEASE** be sure to read the **YELLOW** information sheet, as there have been changes.

If the last time you stayed with us was 2010 or earlier and you would like to receive the 2016 lodging information, select one of the following methods: 1) E-mail the Registrar: [ecoregistrar@gmail.com](mailto:ecoregistrar@gmail.com); 2) Call the Registrar (716) 581-3659; or 3) Beginning January 5, 2016, access the information on our website, [www.ecoc-chautauqua.org](http://www.ecoc-chautauqua.org).

Enjoy the off-season, and take care. ■

# Property Improvements Continue

David Matthews, Property Committee

Thanks to the generosity of those of you who have contributed to our 2014–2016 Capital Campaign, we are continuing to make significant upgrades to our buildings.

The fire escape egress from the third floor of the Shaw was completed before the beginning of the 2015 Season. Additional improvements are now underway:

- The foundation work for the new Bird-Werner porch and fire escape has been completed.
- The front porches of the Bird-Werner, along with the old wooden fire escape stairs, have been removed.

- The steel fabrication for the new outside fire stairs on the north (medical building) side of the Bird-Werner is underway.
- Steel fabrication for the new Bird-Werner and Shaw porch railings will be started during the coming winter months.
- While the Shaw porch will not be widened at this time, the columns and porch railings of the Shaw and Bird-Werner will match.
- The project to place fire doors which will shut off each kitchen has begun. The doors will be placed to allow safe egress from the fire stairs to the

outside of the building, and will close only in the event of a kitchen fire.

- Included in this winter's project will be the upgrading of two of the Westervelt bathrooms.

You can view some of the initial steps in the project by going to the ECOC website, [ecoc-chautauqua.org](http://ecoc-chautauqua.org), and clicking on "ECOC UPDATES." Be sure to scroll down.

Your gracious gifts are continuing to help us reach our goals of upgrading the safety and quality of our buildings. The funding campaign, **Securing the Future**, continues until the end of 2016. Thank you, friends of ECOC! ■

## Three Join ECOC Board

We welcome three newly-elected members to the ECOC Board of Directors: Rev. Don Burgard, Ellen Neches and Alyson Cook Stage. They join Board members Rev. Bill Brockman, James Cook, Rev. Ed Hann (President), Jack Knepp (Treasurer), Rev. David Matthews (Vice President), Michele Montford, Pastor Dora J. Odarenko, Harriette Royer (Secretary), Jeff Vreeland and Rev. Paul Womack. We thank retiring Board members Toni Goldfarb and Rev. Ellie Stock for their service.

### Don Burgard



Don was a United Methodist pastor, retiring last year after 44 years in pastoral ministry. He and his wife, Linda, have been coming to the ECOC

for about thirteen years, and served as hosts for the last three years.

They say, "Since our first experience at the ECOC we have not thought of staying anywhere else. We love the kitchen fellowship—one of the highlights for us each year. We have made friends and always look forward to seeing them and making new friends."

The Burgards live in Columbia, Maryland, and celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last year. Linda is a retired vocal music teacher and former life insurance manager. The couple has two children and five grandchildren, and love spending time with them.

### Ellen Neches



A long-time Chautauquan, Ellen and her husband, William, own a house on the grounds, where they stay all season. During the off-season,

the couple lives in a suburb of DC.

Ellen first learned about ECOC through Susan Helm and Toni Goldfarb, who told her how wonderful and important the organization is. Ellen agrees, "In the past 23 years I have watched Chautauqua change from an affordable family vacation community to a very expensive one. I worry that soon only the rich will be able to enjoy it, which is why I value the work ECOC does."

Now retired, Ellen spent her career teaching young children. She enjoys lifelong learning classes and book groups. The Neches have two adult children and three grandchildren.

### Alyson Stage



A member of the Shaw family, Alyson visited Chautauqua as a child, then worked there for two summers while in college. She has been coming

to the ECOC with her extended family and friends for 15 years. One of her brothers, James Cook, also serves on the Board.

"I value the way the ECOC brings strangers together in a way that makes them feel like extended family. My vision for the future is keeping the outreach programs of the ECOC a reality," Alyson says.

Alyson is a Certified Public Accountant with her own tax practice in Seattle, Washington, and she holds numerous volunteer positions there. She enjoys softball, reading, and travel. She and her husband, Dan, a civil engineer, have two grown children. ■

# Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua

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716-581-3659 (Winter)  
[www.ecoc-chautauqua.org](http://www.ecoc-chautauqua.org)

## ECOC Calendar

December/January	Registration forms sent
March	Confirmations processed
June 3 to 6 & June 18 to 24	Spring Work Weeks (anytime during period)
June 22	Spring Board meeting
June 25	Season begins
August 28	Season ends
August 29	Annual Board meeting
August 28 to September 2	Fall Work Week (anytime during period)

## Scholarships Available

*James Cook, Scholarship Committee*

One of Chautauqua's oldest residences, the Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua, offers free lodging and gate passes to selected first-time Chautauqua visitors who couldn't otherwise afford to come.

ECOC, formerly known as the Minister's Union, awards up to three scholarships a year, selected from applications. The Minister's Union was created in 1928 to provide affordable lodging for ministers and missionaries and their families. Gradually the circle has widened to include people of all beliefs.

The most recent scholarship was created to honor long-time ECOC benefactors and just-retired ECOC managers, Ed and Marge Johnston. The Ed and Marge Johnston Scholarship was created

to carry on their tradition of preserving the Chautauqua experience for new generations.

Recipients must provide their own transportation but receive lodging, gate passes, and for those with children, fees for children's activities.

To request an application, please go to [www.ecoc-chautauqua.org](http://www.ecoc-chautauqua.org), or write ECOC Registrar, PO Box 208, Warren, Ohio 44482-0208. Applicants provide a brief essay on why an ECOC scholarship would be important to them. Those selected are required to pay a \$100 non-refundable reservation fee.

ECOC friends who want to give gifts to help support ECOC scholarships are welcome to send them to the Registrar at the address above. ■

The Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua Newsletter is published twice a year, in spring and fall, and mailed to interested guests. It is also available on the ECOC web site: [www.ecoc-chautauqua.org](http://www.ecoc-chautauqua.org).

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To submit articles or photos, or notify us of an address change, email [mklein5@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mklein5@rochester.rr.com)

The Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua (ECOC), a not-for-profit corporation with a 501(c)(3) designation, was founded in 2003 to provide low-cost housing for clergy, religious workers and lay people of all faiths.

The Ministers' Union (MU) was founded in 1928 to provide low-cost housing to clergy, clergy families and religious workers attending Chautauqua Institution.

The MU and ECOC share many values, but are separate corporations with separate boards of directors.