

ECUMENICAL COMMUNITY OF CHAUTAUQUA



NEWSLETTER

Fall 2023

Volume 17, Issue 2

Wayne's Words

*The Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk,
ECOC Board President*



In the past several years, the ECOC has been through some tough times. Covid was bad enough all by itself, causing financial shortfalls, and then the kitchen flooded. Throughout, inflation has caused the cost of just about everything to go up and up, including our operating costs. The ECOC Board of Directors was forced to significantly raise room rental rates in both 2022 and 2023, at the same time that Chautauqua Institution has similarly increased the cost of a Gate Pass.

The ECOC Board of Directors has discussed our financial situation in great detail, and has unanimously concluded that, despite the ongoing financial struggle, we will **not** raise room rates for the 2024 season. This, of course, is good news for all of us, including my wife and me, who must budget carefully in order to afford our annual trip to Chautauqua.

With that good news, however, comes word of what will follow: Beginning with the **2025** Chautauqua season, the ECOC Board plans to annually raise room rental costs in the range of three to five percent, keeping up, at a minimum, with inflation. In the past, there have been times when that hasn't happened, which then eventually causes larger percentage increases such as those we've seen these last two years.

We ask several things from you who are the ECOC community: (a) Know that we're doing our very best to keep costs down while nevertheless being fiscally responsible in ECOC financial matters. (b) As you're able, contributions to the ECOC that are above the cost of your room will help us to keep room rates as low as possible. (c) Keep us in your prayers, as we do you and yours! ■

Registrars' Report

Beth Brockman Miller and Aimee Doershuk

Important Changes to Registration for 2024

- Soon you will have the opportunity to submit your Reservation Request online!
- **Mark your calendar for new Reservation Request dates:**
 - Online (and paper) Reservation Requests for **Clergy and Volunteers** will be accepted beginning on **December 1**.
 - Online (and paper) Reservation Requests for **Returning Guests** will be accepted beginning on **January 1**.
 - Online (and paper) Reservation Requests for **New Guests** will be accepted beginning **February 1**.

Watch your email in the coming weeks for the link to submit your Reservation Request for the 2024 season.

You will also be able to find the link (and downloadable Reservation Request forms) on our website: www.ecoc-chautauqua.org. ■



Managers' Report

Kathy and Walter Singer and Aimee Doershuk

We are the Philanthropists: Volunteering to Keep Mr. Westervelt's Vision Alive

"There are many ways to use material things, but the finest way...is to convert the material into spiritual values. Blessed with material things, he (Mr. E.C. Westervelt) has not been satisfied to use these...upon himself alone, but with a noble desire to help and bless other lives, he has most generously opened these buildings to others." — *The Chautauquan*, July 30, 1931

The ECOC was born and is sustained through philanthropy, a word meaning "love of humanity" in Greek. Each summer we are the beneficiaries of many past "lovers of humanity" who came to Chautauqua before us and have given to ECOC their philanthropic gifts of time, talent and treasure. The first gift of philanthropy toward what has become the ECOC came from Edward C. Westervelt in 1928. He established The Ministers' Union, Inc. and donated our present three buildings to be an affordable place of retreat for clergy of all denominations.

In 2003, Westervelt's heirs, the Shaw family, donated all three buildings of the Ministers' Union to our newly incorporated non-profit organization, the Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua (ECOC). Our ministry has widened from Mr. Westervelt's vision of welcoming clergy to welcoming everyone who appreciates the fellowship and affordability ECOC offers. We have inherited the benefits of Mr. Westervelt's vision of retreat and affordable Chautauqua housing, and we need to continue to embrace the accompanying philanthropic responsibilities of donating our time, talent and treasure.

The formerly robust group of volunteers who opened and closed the ECOC buildings has dwindled in recent years. This year, our ranks of closing volunteers was especially small which left an extraordinary amount of work to a very small group of people. This is unsustainable. We want the ECOC to continue into the future, therefore, we

need to expand our commitment to the long-standing philanthropic tradition of volunteering time and talent to the opening and closing of the 48 rooms, two apartments and three communal kitchens that comprise the ECOC.

Volunteering to open and/or close is a cost-free way everyone, including families and young people, can experience Chautauqua in the spring or fall, the most beautiful times of the year. We have jobs for all skill levels. Plus, it is not all work! Volunteers can spend their evenings enjoying kitchen fellowship for meals, games, talent shows or anything else they want to contribute. Trying to engage our young people in the work that keeps the ECOC vision alive is another important aspect of volunteering to open and close. The youth we involve today become the ECOC leadership of tomorrow, as demonstrated by the following thank-you note to the managers of the ECOC during a summer long past from our current board President.

"Dear Miss Shaw and Aunt Mary,

I appreciated you asking mother to be the hostess since I could come along. I enjoyed the bell tower, the evening concerts, the worship services, Robert Kennedy, senior athletic club and my paper route. I deeply appreciate your getting me the paper route and allowing me to carry luggage also. Thanks for all your advice.

Yours truly, Wayne Gnatuk" (*September 2, 1965*)

Please consider volunteering to keep Mr. Westervelt's vision and ministry alive.

Opening work dates: May 30 to June 2, June 17 to 21

Closing work dates: August 26 through August 30

If you are inspired to volunteer and/or have questions, email: ECOCManagers@gmail.com, or call Kathy Singer, 215-490-2595 or Aimee Doershuk, 716-949-0548.

— *Kathy Singer, Manager* ■

Remember the ECOC in Your Year-End Giving!

Jayne Cabigas, Development Committee Chair

Chautauqua is an amazing place, and the ECOC makes it possible for so many people to be refreshed and renewed each summer. The community, the hospitality, the inclusive environment are what draw us together. Your gifts help us maintain our nearly 100-year-old buildings and keep room rates low so more people can experience our inviting community and the Chautauqua experience. Give generously! ■

Meet Your New ECOC Board Members

The newest members to the ECOC Board of Directors are Jayne Cabigas, Rev. Beth Head, Coleen Kealey, Rev. John Propst, and Rev. Mike Reed. They join board members David Abrams, Renee Andrews (Treasurer), Rev. Marcia Free, Debra Gentry (Secretary), Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk (President), Pastor Jeff Kane (Vice President), Mark Parobeck, and Rev. David Wood. We thank retiring board members Rev. Dr. Mary Kitchen, Rev. David Matthews, Linda Shaw, and Beth Bucher Woolever for their years of service.

Jayne Cabigas



Jayne worked for national nonprofits in Washington DC for 25 years, leading political advocacy and lobbying efforts. She and her husband live in St.

Petersburg, Florida, where she enjoys hockey, museums, restaurants, and the beach.

Jayne has been coming to Chautauqua for years, and has served as a hostess twice. As chair of the Development Committee, Jayne is planning the upcoming capital campaign. She's excited to reach out about our 100-year legacy and put the ECOC on a solid foundation for the future.

"I value the community and diversity at ECOC. Every year, I meet a few new people that warm my heart and make me more committed to its mission of hospitality."

Beth Head



Rev. Beth is an ordained Unity Minister. In 2019 she retired as minister of Unity of Melbourne in Melbourne, Florida, where she served

20 years. She currently serves the Southeast Region Unity Ministries as Regional Representative and Church Consultant. She hosts a weekly Zoom meeting for ministers and does board training and consults with various churches.

Before ministry, Beth was a CPA. She was the Chief Financial Officer of the Triangle Community Foundation and before that the Controller of the *Anchorage Daily News*.

Beth lives in Melbourne and loves traveling, reading, playing games (poker, bridge, mah jongg and others) and chocolate.

Coleen Kealey



Coleen's great grandmother Eunice was the first manager of the Ministers' Union and her mother Nancy Kealey served

on the ECOC Board. Coleen organizes the Shaw family members to help prepare the houses every year for the season. During her tenure on the board, she commits to "supporting the tradition and mission of ECOC, providing low-cost housing and community environment for participants."

Coleen serves on the Finance and Scholarship Committees. She lives in Chicago, and has worked for Microsoft for 18 years. She enjoys travel, songwriting and photography. She has two adult children, Carl and Grace.

John Propst



A retired Lutheran pastor, Rev. John Propst lives in Asheville, NC. He was a mission developer for two new congregations in Arizona

and North Carolina, then he became interim pastor for 12 congregations.

He has been married to his high school sweetheart Liz for 52 years; they have three children and four grandchildren. They lived for the last 20 years at a Lutheran Camp and Conference Center and have just moved to a Methodist retirement community. He loves walking, jogging, hiking, beach bocce ball, cruising, skiing, and spoiling the grandchildren.

"I love ECOC's view of God & God's children — inclusive, welcoming, and affirming."

Mike Reed



Rev. Mike Reed is a retired United Methodist pastor who lives in Fishers, Indiana. He serves as a mentor for a student at a local high school,

is a member of a small group at St. Luke's UMC, and belongs to several clergy groups.

Mike has stayed at ECOC six times since 2013 and really likes the experience there. "I want to see the ECOC continue to provide hospitality and have an impact on those who stay there."

Mike likes to swim, exercise, read, spend time with family and friends, and dabble a bit in family history. He was married to Jacquie for 47 years until her death two years ago. He has two daughters and two grandchildren. ■

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.

Editor and layout: Marcella Klein
To submit articles or photos, or notify us of an address change, email 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.

Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua

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ECOC Calendar

December 1	Registration starts for clergy and volunteers
January 1	Registration starts for returning guests
February and March	Confirmations processed
May 30 to June 2, June 17 to 21	Spring Work Days (any time during period)
June 22	Season begins
August 25	Season ends
August 26 to 30	Fall Work Week

Looking Up

Mark Parobeck, Property Committee Chair

Most guests visit Chautauqua to enjoy the events going on all around, including the live afternoon Amphitheater practices filling the ECOC kitchens, porches and hallways with music, joy and sound. And yet some of our guests choose to volunteer during their vacation. This summer, a few made time to help sheetrock, paint, and renovate a guest room in the Shaw building.

But all the work that our buildings deserve can't be accomplished by volunteer effort alone. This off-season, the ECOC Property Committee sought bids to replace the Westervelt roof, which was highlighted as an essential fix in the 2022 Bero Assessment. The roof has increasingly shown its age, with leaks during summer storms and winter snow. Although this is not a visible project that many guests will immediately notice, the new roof is a crucial fix that will last for many decades to come. We hope that the new Westervelt roof, attic ventilation and gutters will be finished either in the spring or fall of 2024. ■

Volunteer to Give a Talk

Carol Mollohan

The Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua has been pleased to offer educational programs on Mondays at lunch time. These programs are offered by volunteers who are staying at the ECOC. Perhaps some of the past topics will stimulate you to consider sending me a proposal: "Take Back Your Health", "The Church and the Civil Rights Movement", "Police Misconduct Litigation", "The Women's Christian Temperance Union at Chautauqua", "Shape Singing", "Art and Health", "Reflective Photography", and descriptions of travels to various countries.

When you know which week(s) you will be at Chautauqua, email me a brief description of your proposed program to be printed in *The Chautauquan Daily* and brief biographical information to be used to introduce you. ECOC can provide a digital projector. Hope to see you this summer.

Carol Mollohan • imhcmj@outlook.com • (304) 546-8157 ■