

ECUMENICAL COMMUNITY OF CHAUTAUQUA



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024

Volume 18, Issue 1

Wayne's Words

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



My Mom and Dad first brought me to Chautauqua when I was three. In those days, we stayed in the Mary Willis House, where children were expected to be seen but not ever heard. After a couple of years of that, our family transitioned to the Ministers' Union (now the Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua), a welcome change! Since then, I've been at Chautauqua for at least a week almost every year of my life.

Since Dad was a Presbyterian pastor, we moved around with some regularity while I was growing up, and Chautauqua became a constant, a place I knew well, a place where I belonged. After Mom and Dad died, the ECOC became the closest thing I could call my family home. I have so many wonderful memories of times at the ECOC with them!

Some years ago, when Carole and I arrived at the ECOC, the manager at the time met us in front of the Shaw building, greeting us with the words, "Welcome home!" Perfect! I glowed inside, for I was indeed... home, sweet home!

I'm certain many of you identify with Chautauqua and the ECOC the same way I do. The annual return is a home-

coming, and it's a family reunion to see so many friends on the porches and in the kitchen.

I've now served nearly five years on the ECOC Board of Directors. My term on the board, and my tenure as president of the board, both end this August. It has been a gift to serve a place I call home, a place I love so very much!

As my term ends, I thank all of you who have made the ECOC the wonderful community that it is. We have served in many different ways: as board members, managers, registrars, and guests. We **all** have made a contribution, and we all are to be commended!

Thank you, ECOC family and friends! I'll look forward to seeing you every summer, when we're once again home together, back in the community we love. ■

History Trivia Quiz

Celebrating Chautauqua's 150th Birthday

Have fun with Chautauqua History Trivia from Kathy Singer!

Questions

1. What was Chautauqua's original name?
2. What year was this original name changed to the "Chautauqua Institution"?
3. What is the present location of the very first Chautauqua outdoor auditorium in 1874?
4. Which famous American poet wrote this in a letter to founder John H. Vincent in 1882? *"I have been watching the progress of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle inaugurated by thyself,... I wish it abundant success, and that its circles, like those from the agitated center of the Lake, may widen out, until our entire country shall feel their beneficent influences. I am very truly thy friend..."*
5. Which U.S. President gave the "I Hate War" speech at Chautauqua?

Answers: 1. Fair Point, 2. 1902, 3. Miller Park, 4. John G. Whittier, 5. Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 14, 1946.



Managers' Message

Kathy and Walter Singer and Aimee Doershuk

Chautauqua Sesquicentennial Edition

Reflection by Chautauqua Founder Dr. John H. Vincent after the first Chautauqua opening evening assembly on August 4, 1874:

"The stars were out, and looked down through the trembling leaves upon a goodly, well-wrapped company who sat in the grove filled with wonder and hope. No electric light brought platform and people face-to-face that night. The old-fashioned pine fires on rude four-legged stands covered with earth, burned with unsteady, flickering flame, now and then breaking into brilliancy by the contact of a resinous stick of the rustic fireman, who knew how to snuff candles and how to turn light on the crowd of campers-out. The white tents around the enclosure were very beautiful in that evening light."

The ECOC managers are enthusiastically anticipating welcoming you to the historic 2024 season and Chautauqua's 150th birthday celebrations! ECOC is an important part of Chautauqua's history, and we are proud to be entrusted by the ECOC community with the management of our historic three buildings.

All of this season's hosts are ECOC veterans returning to share their talents and their love with you.

Shaw

Montford (1-2), Stukel (3-4), Johnston (5-6), Toto (7-8), Hise (9)

Bird-Werner

Mann & Bagshaw (1-2), Propst (3-6), Bass (7-8), Martin & Miron (9)

Westervelt

Knepp (1-3), Woods (4-5), Martin & Miron (6), Hise (7-8), Terkel (9)

We all thank them for their continuing service.

In order to continue the long and historic ECOC tradition of nurturing our community and offering affordable CHQ

housing, **it is vitally important** that we have enough volunteers to open and close our buildings for the season. We have never needed to pay for these labor-intensive jobs because of the joy our ECOC "family" finds in providing cost-free labor as a service to all. For the past several years, our greatest need is for help with closing.

There is appropriate work for all ages and levels of ability and skill. If you have the time to volunteer for our opening and closing work days, please contact our registrars (ecocregistrar@gmail.com) and make a decision to do so in this historic season of 2024.

Work Day Dates:

Spring: May 30-June 2, June 17-21; **Fall:** August 26-30 ■

What's Your Why? Tell Us!

Jayne Cabigas, Development Committee Chair

Why do you come back to the ECOC again and again? Is it the community you find in the kitchens? The friends you've made over the years? Is it a family tradition established decades ago? Is it because it's an affordable place to stay? Or is it something else?

My parents found the ECOC over 30 years ago. They talked about it and showed me pictures for decades, but I just joined them about 10 years ago on my first trip to Chautauqua. I fell in love immediately with the stimulation from the programming, but I also loved the nightly popcorn in the Bird-Werner kitchen, provided by Bob Dargel, as we discussed the day.

I love the simple accommodations that made it feel like a trip to grandma's summer house. I love the porches, where I sit listening to the practice session for the night's performance. I love how central it is to everything at Chautauqua.

But most of all, I love the people who stay at the ECOC. Everyone I've met here is a fellow seeker, interested in new perspectives, knowledge and the arts. We're guided by faith to make the world more inclusive and just. We are curious and respectful with others. I like the ECOC so much that I volunteered to serve on the ECOC Board and am the chair of the Development Committee.

Tell us your why! In 200 words or less, tell us why you love the ECOC. Send us a picture of yourself, too. We'd like to post them around the houses this summer as a way to get to know each other and help us promote the ECOC more broadly. Send your "Why" to jemcabigas@gmail.com and look for your star story this summer. See you soon! ■

Registrars' Update

Beth Brockman Miller and Aimee Doershuk

Thank you for your patience while we rolled out our new online reservation system! **HUGE thanks to Ed Johnston** for creating it and integrating it with our current system (which he continues to upgrade as well)! The ECOC community is so fortunate to have Ed's technical support keeping us going year-round.

We have several rooms still available for Weeks 1-4 and a couple of rooms for Week 5. Please be in touch ASAP if you're interested! If you have already submitted a reservation request, we sent you an email (from ecocregistrar@gmail.com) confirming your week and room in late February or early March. By mid-April, you will receive a PDF confirmation which includes your balance due.

Gate pass prices, which now vary depending on which week you come, will increase again on June 7. You can purchase either a Traditional Gate Pass (TGP) or a Grounds Access Pass (GAP). The GAP is significantly cheaper, but it doesn't give you access to the Amphitheater for the 10:45 lectures or evening performances. You can upgrade a GAP to include particular evening performances or lectures.

When purchasing your Gate Pass, we suggest you have it sent to you digitally; this will help you avoid the long wait time at the Gate when you arrive. To contact Chautauqua ticketing, go to tickets.chq.org, email ticketoffice@chq.org, or call 716-357-6250. ■

Give a Talk!

Carol Mollohan

All residents of the ECOC are invited to submit an application to present a topic at one of our Monday programs. An hour is allotted at noon time for the presentation and questions.

Weeks 1, 5, and 7 are filled. If you will be staying at ECOC any of the other weeks, I would be glad to hear from you regarding a presentation. This might be about your profession, travel, hobby, interest, etc. The ECOC has a digital projector you can use.

Carol J Mollohan, imhcmj@outlook.com
304-346-8157 or 304-546-8157. ■

Protecting Our Buildings

Mark Parobeck, Property Committee Chair

Building seasons are short at Chautauqua, with restrictions during the summer season. Waiting for a good window of winter weather to tackle a roof replacement requires patience and dedication. Nevertheless, this winter we successfully replaced the Westervelt roof, including a complete rebuild of the rotted soffits and fascia. The attic has been improved with ventilation and fans as well. This new roof will shelter us for another generation.

The Shaw family will soon gather for their yearly work effort, with managers, volunteers, and guests joining to open our three historic buildings. Whatever your skills, please join the team effort in maintaining our buildings. ■



The new Westervelt roof will protect the building for decades.

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) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation which provides affordable accommodations, hospitality, and fellowship during the 9-week summer season at Chautauqua Institution. Open to all, the ECOC offers a positive experience of community living which promotes dialogue, growth, and renewal.

Ecumenical Community of Chautauqua

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ECOC Calendar

May 30 to June 2, June 17 to 21	Spring Work Days (any time during period)
June 20	Spring board meeting
June 22	Season begins
August 25	Season ends
August 26	Annual board meeting
August 26 to 30	Fall Work Days (any time during period)

Early History of the MU

Linda Shaw

In 1922, E. C. Westervelt of Corpus Christi, Texas, after the death of his wife, Florence, returned to a place associated with his honeymoon trip 40 years earlier. Inspired by the Chautauqua environment, he gradually developed the vision of a self-service hostel for ministers and their wives to have a refreshing vacation at minimum expense.

The next year, he invited his nieces, Eunice Sherman Shaw and Mrs. Bess Shanafelt Waller, to Chautauqua for a brief visit. It is possible that they discussed the idea of providing a place for ministers and their wives to stay. Mrs. Shaw's husband was a minister and Mr. Westervelt's father was also a minister, but at that time he owned only the property at 28 S. Terrace (the Westervelt), which he had bought to host friends and members of his family.

In 1924, he invited his grandniece, Eunice Bacon Shaw, and his wife's niece, Jennie Sweetland, to Chautauqua. While they were visiting, Mr. Westervelt suggested to Eunice that, if she were willing to be responsible for the

laundry, she could earn some money by renting out some spare rooms to ministers who were attending the Chautauqua events. Later, he indicated that the idea for the Ministers' Union came to him when he learned that she had not charged the ministers for their lodging on the premise that, being a minister's daughter, she knew that the ministers would have limited financial resources.

In 1925, he purchased the buildings which would later become known as the Columbia and the Annex, and another building (neighbor to the Columbia and the Westervelt) which became the Mayflower, in a cooperative venture with the Congregationalists, for \$17,000, with a view to establishing this "retreat" he envisioned.

During the 1927 and 1928 seasons, Mrs. Eunice Sherman Shaw was the first manager of the Ministers' Union, and Mrs. Hall was employed as hostess of these buildings. Her primary responsibility was assigning rooms; the visitors were expected to maintain their own rooms, leaving them in a neat condition for the next tenants. Maintenance of the buildings, including gas and electricity, was provided as a philanthropic gesture by Mr. Westervelt.

The MU was a forerunner of the ECOC, which was founded in 2003. ■