

open hearts
open minds
open doors



Communicator

an edition of

The United Methodist Reporter

The people of The United Methodist Church

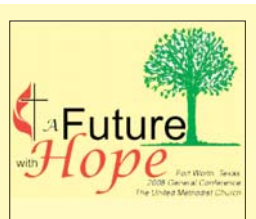
Two Sections, Section A

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JUNE 20, 2008

**The Healthy Church Initiative
A Pathway to Healthy Disciples involved in Healthy Ministry Leading to Healthy Churches**



Reviewing the "Lighter" Moments
Page 4



Camping & Retreat Ministries
Page 8



**July 13-18 —
Jurisdictional Conference in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania**

Reflections from People Who Have Been Ministering as Part of the Committee on Clergy and Lay Leadership

Truly we have a connective spirit within the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. I've felt the hospitality of Igniting Ministries of Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors. Both small churches and large churches welcomed me in and shared their stories. The worship experience of nine members with a Bi-lingual pastor and a pianist was as explosive and exciting as the 200 member church with a pastor, assistant pastor and multiple instruments. The Holy Spirit is within us, and round about us as we use the gifts that we have on the pathway to abounding health. There have been conversations on the challenges of evangelism, particularly in our youth ministries. We are "Gearing Up" to meet the challenges as we continue relations in a sweet Holy Communion of God's exceptional servants. We honor the covenant of the Healthy Church Initiative and in so doing, honor the covenant with the Lord Almighty. God said, "I am Holy; you be holy." I Peter 1:16

— Sandra Neal

The Epworth Charge welcomed me with open arms and was very willing to share information. I was surprised to see how beautiful the church was and how beautiful the people of the church were to me. The amount that they give to the community in so many ways is amazing. God is blessing that church in so many ways.

— Michael Lassiter

I have enjoyed meeting different people from the different charges, finding out what exciting things they are doing and what dreams they have.

For some years, I have heard God calling with the word "Unity." I have not always known what to do with that because I have not heard any specifics besides from that word. I have felt it was for the churches and God's people. As I began with this committee last fall and started to visit with the churches assigned to me, I began to see how we can connect our churches for specific common needs, bring people together with common interests and passions and share their successes, failures and needs. I see mini conferences and small support groups for specific areas. As an example, I can see an early spring conference on

Sunday school where there are various materials to look at, suggestions on how to structure things, teaching-the-teacher classes, and time to share special WOW moments that may help others. I see this also for Vacation Bible School, youth ministries, music, evangelism, missions, building projects, and caring ministries. I see us supporting each other in order to make our local churches more dynamic and outreaching. Usually the larger churches may be more naturally the "givers" and small struggling churches may be the "takers" but even the "givers" may get ideas that work in their churches. I also think that some churches may be more interested in serving in a capacity that is more of "works" than of "organization."

As I have met with the churches in our initial meeting and explained what we were doing and what the possibilities are with this new direction we are taking, I have found myself up on my toes and have had to tone down my excitement level. I think being a part of God's plan is awesome.

— Art Kendall

Almost all of my visits were positive, and I was gratified to hear of the excitement that some folks had for the life of their churches.

— David Kreek

Every meeting that I have had with my churches was unique and a blessing. My favorite is still my first visit, however. I brought a jar candle, small cross and a linen cloth to remind us that Jesus was our honored guest and I believe "He" took over the meeting. As I shared HCI the emphasis was on covenant though, to be honest, I had no real plan in mind. We closed with a prayer circle with each praying for the person on their right. One lady commented that this was the first time that she ever prayed out loud and that

she would do it again. Another said she learned a new word, covenant. "I promise to do my best and you promise to do your best . . . I like that!" She said.

Now I believe when you do just that, covenant, "healthy church" just happens. I saw it that night in a small but dedicated congregation.

— Carol Carlson

It has been somewhat of a challenge to work out the schedule.

The visits have been interesting and informative. I have enjoyed hearing the stories of how God is calling His people to ministry in their local communities. It was very exciting to hear how three churches of one charge are coming together — more united as one — to make disciples for Jesus Christ. One charge, for the first time in its history, has put together a charge-wide choir and having great success sharing through music. The churches I have visited say that they are glad to know there is a local connection for them to the Annual Conference.

— Bonnie Shively

I do want to mention several blessings I have received during my visits. I saw dedication to the camp meetings at Bethel in Gumboro and Carey's. I promised them that the District/Conference would do all we could to promote and support their events. I was encouraged by the revival at Hickory Hill and would like to see more churches do similar events in the future. Finally I was particularly impressed with the pre-school program put on by Hartly UMC. I met with the leaders of the program and got information on how the program works. I will be trying to find other churches which can use this model as a portal into their Sunday schools and congregations. Overall my first visits and the relationships I have developed have been successful and enlightening. I look for-

ward to working with these churches for the next two years. On a side note, I was blessed today with a call from Bethel. Sonny said the people at our first meeting liked the way I talked (no accounting for taste) and wanted me to preach on June 22nd.

Your Brother in Christ,
— Levin VanSant

In my experience with the Mt. Pleasant/Quindocqua charge, I have been challenged by the needs of these two small churches. Both of these churches have strengths and strong willed people.

However, they both want to grow and are searching for ways to grow themselves. Please keep this charge in your prayers.

— Jim Lecates

The Easton District is alive, well, and willing to help other churches and the Peninsula-Delaware Conference meet their goals. Life has a boomerang effect, of blessing others and you receive a blessing.

By visiting various churches we were able to meet new people, new pastors, and drove to new locations on the Easton District. In so doing, we realized many churches were not aware of the ministries already in place. While visiting church leaders, awareness took place in the meetings making it apparent that this is not only church work, but much more.

By visiting I learned many things. I discovered churches working together and traveling together. Some faith communities had developed forums every second Saturday each month for 10 to 12 persons. Other congregations participated in the "Blessing of the Bikes," in car shows, music ministries, praise and deliverance services to address the needs of the unchurched, the unsaved, and those who had lost their purpose for living, and celebrate recovery — where members are in training for how to reach out to all persons with all types of issues.

In other places, churches were helping to train other churches on how to better meet the needs of the community. Some congregations were building additions for Sunday schools, sponsoring cabins at Camp Pecomet, having Christmas in April to help fix up homes, doing mime ministry, oper-



See Reflections on page 4

Welcome to Our Sacred Space

Wisdom Is A Spiritual Gift From God

Blessed be the man, blessed the woman, who listens to me, (Wisdom) awake and ready for me each morning, alert and responsive as I start my day's work. When you find me, you will find life, to say nothing of God's good pleasure.

*Proverbs 8:32-35

Greetings,

I've always believed that the entire book of Proverbs is God's divine spiritual psychology for daily living. I'm convinced as we read Proverbs 8:32-35 that we need to acknowledge now how important it is to have Godly wisdom in our life. God sent his Son, Jesus, to live among us, to be God with us, that we know God through him. After the ascension of Christ Jesus, God sent the Holy Spirit to be with us to continue to remind us of all the things Jesus did and said while he was in the world with us. Wisdom is one of the gifts God has given to us that we might discern the will of God through prayer meditation, bible study and reflection, holy conversation with others, etc. Wisdom leads to knowledge and understanding. Wisdom is indeed a special gift from God.

Wisdom, according to Solomon, was the architect at God's side when all things were created. These are the precepts of what is good, right, just and fair in the world. To have God's gift of wisdom, men and women and all creation will have an abundant life of freedom, prosperity, peace and joy. To ignore wisdom men and women and all creation will experience poverty, war, and sorrow, distress and death. "For whoever finds me (Wisdom) finds life and draws forth and obtains favor from the Lord." **Proverbs 8:35. Most of us have experienced enough to understand that some things that



Rev. Elaine B. Ayres

look and feel good to us haven't always been good for us.

We are challenged everyday with making decisions for or about our personal life, our family members, our governmental leaders, our church, our community and our relationships and responsibility to those in need in this country and throughout. Indeed we are challenged to make hard decisions for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Some decisions will be greeted with much joy but with harsh criticisms and some will require deep sacrifices. "Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, and God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't worry today about what may or may not happen tomorrow. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met." *Matthew 6:33-34.

Wisdom is given to those who seek God's face and discern God's direction for all things. Yet, Jesus reminds us that we must be more than hearers of God's word and direction, we must be doers too. God's Holy advice must be lived today if we are to receive God's divine purpose for our life and the circumstances we face each day. Yes, wisdom is a spiritual gift from God. Therefore, remember that every day is a Gift from God. Live it wisely.

This will be my final article for the "Communicator" because I'm taking a pastoral appointment in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. Therefore, I want to thank all the persons who have read and helped me throughout the years through your prayers, your phenomenal ministries, words and cards of personal encouragement and insightful, constructive criticism. I want to thank the conference staff who have proofed, edited each article, shared their ideas and made my writing so much better than I could ever do alone. This has been a wonderful opportunity for me and pure joy to my soul. All of you are special to me. Be blessed!!!

Shalom,
Elaine

*EUGENE PETERSON: THE MESSAGE
**AMPLIFIED BIBLE

Long Assembly Welcomes Lighthearted Moments

By Marta W. Aldrich*

In show business, they warn that you should never share the stage with a child if you don't want to get upstaged.

Such was the case for Bishop John Hopkins when he presented 7-year-old Katherine Commale to delegates and visitors on the second day of the 2008 United Methodist General Conference. Introducing Katherine as a sign of hope in the church for raising more than \$40,000 for the Nothing But Nets anti-malaria campaign, the bishop asked the brown-haired youngster, "What can I do to help?"

"Buy a bed net!" Katherine deadpanned as the crowd laughed and applauded.

Hopkins then reached into his pocket and handed her a wad of bills that Katherine later said added up to \$100—enough to buy 10 bed nets to help protect families in Africa from the mosquito-borne disease.

The scene was among the lighter moments during the denomination's 10-day legislative meeting, where occasional humor was a welcome diversion from the more than 1,500 petitions that General Conference had to wade through—many on complex and emotional issues—under intense deadline pressure.

Finding humor in the process

General Conference meets once every four years to set policy for the 11.5 million-member worldwide United Methodist Church. This year's gathering, attended by 992 delegates and thousands of visitors at the Fort Worth Convention Center, ended May 2.

For the second General Con-

ference in a row, legislative activity coordinator John Brawn amused delegates each morning with his daily status reports on how many petitions awaited them in order for him to get to return home to California.

"You hold my bedtime in your hands," Brawn told the delegates on the final scheduled day of the assembly, with approximately 68 petitions left to review. He also flashed a snapshot of the Fort Worth Zoo, noting that he would like to visit the attraction if only business could be finished.

A Hewlett-Packard network security architect who volunteers for the job each General Conference, Brawn used his digital skills and extensive software catalog to create daily videos that helped the delegates understand how to pace their work.

For one, he lined up all of the legislative committee chairpersons, gave each a Super Soaker squirt gun and instructed them to shoot straight ahead while he shot video. (Of course, several renegade chairpersons shot Brawn instead. "They nailed me," he said later.) Then he used that footage to develop a carnival-like graphic showing how much legislation each committee had processed.

Brawn has tracked legislation for General Conference since 1988 but started making the presentations beginning at the 2004 assembly "because there was a perception that they were behind."

His personal mission: presenting the much-needed information in a fun way. "When you're telling people something they don't want to hear, if you can make it fun, it goes down a lot better than if you do it in a monotone way," Brawn said.

In one low-tech presentation on the eighth day of General Conference, Brawn brought 11 bishops



(A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose) Bishop John Hopkins laughs as 7-year-old Katherine Commale invites him to buy a net to help the Nothing But Nets anti-malaria campaign following her introduction to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference.

on stage wearing numbers and holding a long white and green banner—a "bishop-o-graph," he explained—to help the delegates see that their work was 76 percent complete.

At the end, the bishops draped the banner around Brawn, who then announced his candidacy for lay bishop. (Hint: No such thing.)

"I think we will lay him on the table, is what we will do," retorted Bishop Peter Weaver, the morning's presiding officer.

Brawn said his years in the 1980s as a youth director at a United Methodist church in San Jose, Calif. prepared him well for his General Conference role. "I've been treating the delegates like high school kids, and they've responded well," he quipped.

Show tunes

Mark Miller, who served as co-worship director throughout the assembly, used the power of adapted show tunes to bring delegates back to their seats occasionally following much-needed breaks from

See Lighthearted on page 8

Reflections Continued from page 1

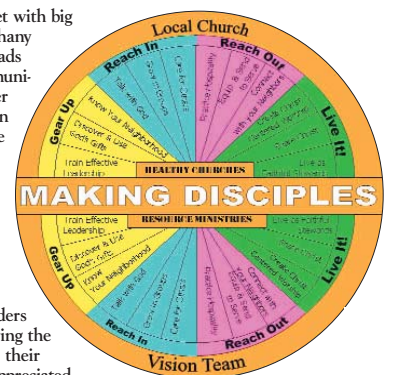
ation Christmas Child, Bible studies, using their lay speakers to bring the word, tape ministry, wheel chair hospitality, and van service. I even visited a church where they were adopting a three year plan to improve the ministries of the church.

All churches visited received information and were made aware of an important tool for ministry... that of gifts assessment. My fear of speaking in public has disappeared. All praise is to God. I have the wonderful feeling of knowing that the intended purpose of the Committee on Clergy and Lay Leadership, to invite people to come on board and participate together in ministry, was mission accomplished and not mission impossible. Thanks be to God for all that God has done. God blesses those who bless others.

— Delores Pinder

Serving on the Conference Committee on Clergy and Lay Leadership has been a very rewarding experience for me... I was truly in awe of the little churches of

fewer active members, yet with big hearts. For example, Bethany UMC at Lowe's Crossroads raised \$2500 for a community youngster who lost her sight in one eye due to an air rifle accident. On the Bethel Charge, a group of ladies crochet prayer shawls. St. Paul's music ministry remains very strong. Through Concord's Food Closet 36 families were served and cared for. I enjoyed meeting with the Lay Elders of Mt. Olivet and observing the church's participation in their Place Workshop. I also appreciated the outreach and evangelism at Centenary and the enthusiasm for "balling for God" sponsored by New Zion. I had the opportunity to worship at St. John's Hearts Afire service, and learned of the good news of the expanding youth ministry on the Mt. Pleasant Charge. Many churches have very strong prayer ministries. I was encouraged to see the strong support for our



service men and women... observed so many ministries and wonderful gifts and talents... and yes, we do have welcoming churches. During one Sunday morning visit, as I was getting out of the car and closing the door, a gentleman said, "Welcome to Concord UMC, would you like a peppermint?"...

— Luray McClung

Communicator

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Interfaith Resource Center

New Wave of Christian Education Resources

Five years ago when I began my tenure at the Interfaith Resource Center, I challenged myself to preview videos daily until I had a broad understanding of the types of resources on our shelves. At that time, it was typical for video segments to be 25-30 minutes in length with one presenter in a lecture setting or occasionally a setting more casual. Wow! Have things changed! As I preview new resources produced in the last few years, several new trends stand out. And these trends will impact how you lead your groups. Here are some of the changes:

- The segments are shorter, often broken with man-on-the-street interviews or other elements that keep a tempo more reminiscent of television than traditional educational programs. Often the breaks display a discussion question so that the group can tackle one aspect of the lesson before they move on. This new pacing is designed to keep participants engaged. It has the small group model in mind — a model that emphasizes relationship building as a key focus of its rationale. *Just Walk Across the Room* with Bill Hybels is designed on this plan.
- Video segments exhibit the



Paula Hartzell

influence of the commercial media. Outdoor settings for lectures predominate, often with dynamic camera angles and special effects meant to evoke an edgier, post-modern look. It is not unusual to see such visual tricks as solarized images or grayscale scenes (black & white) with one object colored. While these visual conventions appeal to younger participants, you may want to keep in mind that they might also prove disturbing to older viewers, especially those dealing with vision issues such as cataracts. The *Nooma* series with Rob Bell owes much of its look to such visual cues.

- Dramatic vignettes are increasingly more frequent. These mini-dramas often continue through several segments of a series, posing contemporary twists on ancient themes and moral dilemmas. Often these vignettes are well acted, rivaling the quality of commercial

television (or often exceeding it). Examples of this style include *Liquid*, five-episode Bible study series or *Modern Parables*, contemporary reenactments of 6 parables.

- For the younger set, Christian celebrities are featured. (No, not Billy Graham. Think Christian pro-skateboarding champ, Brian Sumner!) These young celebrities talk about the challenges of contemporary life, using topics like temptation or mean-spirited words. *Green* hosted by Ben Cerulla is an example of a series that uses celebrities in this manner.

Keep in mind, the more traditional styles of programs are still produced and many classic programs continue to be available. The IRC has committed to upgrading many of those classic programs to DVD too. So whether you are leading a group that requires an edgier look, a shortened format or you are looking for a more traditional configuration for your group study, the IRC has what you are looking for. Contact us at resource.ctr@dol.net or phone 302.477.0910, toll-free 800.336.6152. And don't forget to visit us on the web at www.interfaithresourcecenter.com.

Summer hours begin June 23. Visit us from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Monday through Thursday. Closed July 7, 8.

From Your Wesley College Chaplain

In the last two articles I discussed Wesley College and Wesley College. So, how do the two go together?

The best way is to start with "ethereal fire." This was John Wesley's term for electricity. Like many of his contemporaries (including Benjamin Franklin) in the age of Enlightenment, he was fascinated by electricity. He even prescribed it as a medicinal remedy! I hope people survived the treatment! For him it was a mysterious force that was right on the boundary of the physical world and the spiritual. It reminds me of the "thin places" such as Iona in Scotland and Santa Fe in New Mexico where the boundary between the physical and spiritual dimensions is negligible.

I think that Wesley can be such a "thin place," living on the boundary of the physical and spiritual. State supported schools can't live there because of constitutional limitations. However, Wesley is a liberal arts college related to The United Methodist Church through the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference. It is free of such restrictions. Its students and teachers can look at the world and ask such questions as the writer of Psalm 8 asked: "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?" (NRSV) A UCLA study on the spirituality of college students indicates that nationally, students want to know about the significance of what they study, what it means; and for teachers to help them do this, they have to be free to share what a particular subject means to them.

This does not give anyone the right to define the conclusions of students and teachers. Daniel Boorstin in his book *The Discoverers* noted that the medieval church had imposed theological concepts on map-making, leading to inaccurate caricatures instead of maps.



Rev. Mark Pruett-Barnett

Creation is for exploration and it is accessible to all human beings who are created to explore it, whoever they may be. It can be understood by us all as part of that creation, but its significance and meaning comes from a spiritual dimension. Without that spiritual dimension we might as well follow the admonition in I Corinthians 15:32 — "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die." Now is this a quote from the fourth century BC Greek poet Menander? (NRSV) I never would have known that if some scholar hadn't dug it up and put it in my study bible! Scholarship and spirituality can go well together!

People find a variety of perspectives when it comes to spirituality. That is OK. As Christians, we believe all of this transpires under the Lordship of Christ; that the world is in his hands; and that someday everyone will confess Jesus as Lord. However, in the meantime, we can live and learn and explore the world with everyone in both of its dimensions; and Wesley College can be a place to learn to do just that.

Your brother in Christ,
Mark
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CARE Team Concerns — Sexual Harassment Undermines Opportunity and Respect

By Rev. Sally Dolch
sdolch@comcast.net

Sexual harassment undermines the social goal of equal opportunity and the climate of mutual respect between men and women. Unwanted sexual attention is wrong and discriminatory. Sexual harassment interferes with the moral mission of the church. (Book of Discipline 2004 ¶1161)

Wow! Our Book of Discipline addresses sexual harassment? You bet!

Did you know that sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual comment, advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive? (Book of Discipline 2004 ¶1161)

While it is true that most people who sexually harass other people will claim, "I didn't mean anything by it . . ." it is also true that: sexual harassment can be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship; sexual harassment

includes the creation of a hostile work environment; and sexual harassment is a chargeable offense for clergy persons and for professing members of local churches. (Book of Discipline 2004 ¶12702)

So is sexual harassment really an issue for the church? You bet it is!

A recent survey by Susan Olson, a Presbyterian pastor employed by Yale Divinity School and Yale University Chaplain's Office, makes the point. Young clergy women and young clergy men (under 40) and a group of clergy women over 40 were asked questions regarding harassment such as "Have you experienced unwelcome comments about your appearance since becoming commissioned?" Other questions addressed unwelcome sexual innuendo, advances, touching, threats, coercion, assault or other uncomfortable circumstances. The sad truth about their responses is that sexual harassment appears to be as prevalent in the church as it is

in other workplaces. "Just shy of 90% of young ordained women are reporting some form of sexual harassment, together with 80% of ordained women over 40 and 65.5% of younger ordained men... And 60-80% of pastors report that they are leaving seminary unprepared to handle harassment."

As Ms. Olson says, "If it's happening to the clergy, you can bet it's happening to the laity." So what can we do?

Clergy and laity can educate themselves about the definitions of sexual harassment and we can learn what the *Book of Discipline* has to say.

We can expect our conference CARE Team to expand our training in the areas of ethical analyses of sexual behavior and how to respond to harassment.

We must pay attention to harassment, name it when we witness or experience it, and establish boundaries around the behavior.

And, we can talk about it so that we are better prepared to respond when it happens!

Summer Hours at the BFEM Resource Center

Each summer the Bishop Felton Edwin May Resource Center closes its doors on Fridays in July and August. This year we will be closed for the 4th of July holiday (Friday) and then our hours for the rest of July and August will be Monday-Thursday, 8:00-5:00 p.m. The office will also be closed for Labor Day on Monday, September 1st and will be open Tuesday-Friday that week. The office will resume its Monday-Friday schedule beginning with September 8, 2008.

Should you need to speak with someone during this time, it is always a good idea to call ahead before stopping by to ensure the person you wish to see is working that day. Like many of us, the conference staff may take vacation days in July and August so please call before you stop by.

If you need to bring something to the conference office and the office is closed, there is a slot in the front door (on State Street) that you may use for envelopes and other small items.

Camping And Retreat

Ministry



Staff Alumni Fund Pier Renovation

The initial concept for the Camp Pecometh Staff Alumni Association (CPSAA) was to provide a way for former staff to stay connected to Pecometh and each other. Little did we know that one of their first major initiatives was to raise the money to fund the badly needed re-decking of the Wally Smith Pier. To date, the CPSAA is just a few hundred dollars short of what it needs to cover the \$16,000 cost.

In the meantime, the work has begun and should be completed by the time this issue goes to press. Thanks to all the faithful staff alumni who have made this possible. Did you work at Pecometh? If you did and you haven't heard from us, we need to update our database. Call Dave Buchanan at 410.556.6900, x102 or email him at dave@pecometh.org.

Monastic Day Apart: A Time of Reflection and Serenity

Pecometh, in partnership with the Conference Spiritual Formation Team, offered its first ever Monastic Day Apart this past April. Sixteen persons spent a cool, damp day in worship and prayer around a fire in Rec Hall, as well as spending time in silent reflection working or walking on the beautiful Pecometh property. A simple lunch of soup and fresh bread was shared at a fireside fellowship table while spiritual writings were read, as is done in the monastic tradition. The day ended with an

anointing service using fragrant oil from the Holy Land.

Many said what a blessing it was to spend a day apart in this way. As one can imagine, it's often difficult to leave the demands of busy lives for a day of "nothing." Yet, for those who did, God provided relaxation and renewal. As one person wrote later, "*The Day Apart was very powerful and has had lasting effects – just like Jesus to linger on. The fragrance has also lingered – I did not want to wash my forehead last night. Praise God the blessing lasts way after the fragrance disappears.*"

Thanks to the day's organizers Ann Ashe and Rev. Karen Covey Moore. A special thanks to Revs. Jay & Carolyn Bunting who, like Rev. Moore, are members of a protestant monastic order, and who provided leadership for part of the day. Pecometh intends for the Monastic Day Apart to be a semi-annual event. The next one is scheduled for September 22, 2008. For more information, please contact Ann Ashe at annashe@pecometh.org or 410.556.6900, x100 or check out the upcoming events section at www.pecometh.org.

It's Not Too Late for Summer Camp

While Camp Pecometh has received over 1300 registrations and some programs have filled, there are still spaces available in our most popular programs such as Splashdown, Horseback and Leaps of Faith, as well as new programs like Girls II Greatness and That's Not Camp! Can't decide what's best for your camper? Give Julie a call at 410.556.6900, x128 or email her at julie@pecometh.org. Or you can go online at www.pecometh.org.



Lighthearted

Continued from page 4

floor business – particularly during the tiring final days.

An accomplished musician, Miller played piano and came up with his own General Conference-related lyrics to the music from such toe-tappers as "New York, New York" and "Oklahoma!" including the following words set to the melody from "Oklahoma!"

"Geeeeeeeeener Conference, every night my delegates and I stay up nice and late with continuous debate until morning light draws nigh!"

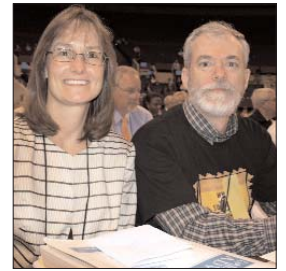
More tidbits

Here are a few other light moments observed:

Following the on-stage presentation of 7-year-old Katherine to the assembly, Katherine and her mother, Lynda, were taken to the General Conference newsroom to take part in a brief press conference. Running barefoot between the rows of chairs, an excited Katherine eventually was seated behind a table and beside a smiling Hopkins—himself a dotting grandfather—who declared, "This is the first time I've been in a press conference with somebody who's barefoot!"

Although the spring temperatures climbed into the 70s in downtown Fort Worth, the mercury dropped significantly inside the convention center, particularly on the floor of General Conference, where even Bishop Hans Växby—who hails from frosty Finland and lives in Moscow—was seen bundled up in a heavy parka. "It's colder than Fargo in the winter back here," complained Iowa Conference delegate Ed Kail at one point in the proceedings. Coyner assured him that "more hot air" would be created during the course of the legislative meeting.

In the waning hours of General Conference, it's easy to forget who you're talking to, as was demonstrated by lay delegate Frederick K. Brewington of the New York Conference as he introduced petitions and addressed



Delegation Co-Chairs, Rev. Dr. Sandra Steiner Ball and Kevin Goodwin, share a light moment before an afternoon session

Bishop Weaver. "The first petition that we'll deal with at this time, judge—excuse me, judge? You can tell I'm a lawyer, right?" Weaver didn't miss a beat. "It's all right, counselor," the bishop said.

Since General Conference has a tendency to go on into the late hours of closing day, journalists who cover the event on behalf of their annual conferences and other church publications have conducted a press pool since 2000 to guess the exact time the final gavel will fall. The winner receives the coveted "rusty spigot" award, named for the cast-iron water spigot handle that was found by Florida Conference communicator Erik Alsgaard on the newsroom floor at the 2000 gathering in Cleveland. This year's winner: Woody Woodrick, editor of the Mississippi Christian Advocate. Of about 30 people who participated in this year's pool, Woodrick guessed the down-to-the-minute time of 11:49 p.m., when closing worship adjourned. Alsgaard will present the rusty spigot to Woodrick "on behalf of all bleary-eyed communicators who covered General Conference 2008" during the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference meeting this July at Lake Junaluska, N.C.

*Aldrich is news editor of United Methodist News Service.

Conference

Calendar of Events

June 2008

- 24 **Conference United Methodist Men Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:15 p.m.
- 26 **Advocacy Resource Team Meeting**, Dover: Whatcoat UMC, 2:00 p.m.
- Health Ministries Committee Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 10:00 a.m.
- Outreach/Evangelism Committee Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 5:00 p.m.
- 28 **Stewardship Workshop**, Wilmington: Simpson UMC, 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

July 2008

- 4 **Happy 4th**. BFEM Resource Center Closed
- 8 **Conference Board of Lay Ministries Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.
- 11 **Summer Schedule** – BFEM Resource Center Closed
- 14-18 **Jurisdictional Delegation Meeting**, Harrisburg, PA
- 18 **Summer Schedule**-BFEM Resource Center Closed
- 23 **CARE Team Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 10:00 a.m.
- Communications Commission Planning Retreat**, Rehoboth: Epworth UMC, 9:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.
- 25 **Summer Schedule** – BFEM Resource

Center Closed

- 27 **Mission Possible Camp**, Middletown: Meredith Middle School
- 29 **Personnel Committee Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 1:00 p.m.
- Insurance Committee Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 3:00 p.m.
- Investments Committee Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 3:00 p.m.
- Board of Pensions Committee Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 5:00 p.m.
- 30 **School of Christian Mission**, Dover: Wesley College

August 2008

- 1 **Summer Schedule** – BFEM Resource Center Closed
- 1-2 **Mission Possible Camp**, Middletown, DE: Meredith Middle School
- School of Christian Mission**, Dover, DE: Wesley College
- 7 **Resource Development & Management Team Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 9:30 a.m.
- Board of Stewards Meeting**, Centreville, MD: Camp Pecometh, 6:00 p.m.
- 8 **Summer Schedule** – BFEM Resource Center Closed

Communicator Price Increase

The *Communicator*, the newspaper for the Peninsula-Delaware Conference, has been a staple communications resource for many years. It continues to bring subscribers information on upcoming events as well as highlights of past ones.

Beginning July 1st the yearly subscription will be \$12.00. An increase was brought to the table of the Communications Commission this spring due to the steadily increased costs of paper and mailing venues. For several years the price has continued to be at the \$9.50 rate and the Commission decided it was time to offset some of the costs of these prices with an increase of \$2.50 from the current price of \$9.50.

If you currently subscribe to the *Communicator*, you will see the increase in your subscription the next time you are up for renewal. Should you wish to subscribe to the newspaper, please contact Linette Warren at the BFEM Resource Center, 1.877.736.3351, ext. 13 or send a check for \$12.00 made out to the Peninsula-Delaware Conference and mail it to 139 N. State Street, Dover, DE, 19901. Please be sure to put on the check what the money is for and *Communicator* Subscription on the outside of the envelope with the address.

The *Communicator* will have one more issue (July 4, 2008) to wrap-up the 2008 Annual Conference and then take a short break. The next issue of the *Communicator* is scheduled to be on your doorstep (in your mailbox) on Friday, September 12, 2008.