

Beechwood Hills

WESTERN MICHIGAN CHRISTIAN ENCAMPMENT

www.beechwoodhills.org

Winter 2008

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days...

Deuteronomy 30:19-20

President's Message Linda Wadsworth



The 33rd Annual Membership Dinner held on October 4th has come and gone. We were blessed with good weather for the evening. The Board of Directors was able to share with all who attended plans for the next 10 years at the campground. Two hundred eighty eight green and white balloons fell from the rafters onto the participants after the elections were announced. It was hilarious to see Bob Coffman holding up balloon after balloon; instead of popping them he was looking through them for the door prize ticket and then tossing them back in with the others. Meanwhile, everyone else around him was busy popping as fast as they could. The laughter and fun was contagious with all enjoying the evening.

Three new Board Members were elected at the Membership Dinner and we look forward to having them join in the planning and service of the youth camp. We would like to welcome Corby Merriman, Lora Boroff, and Deb Scholten to the Board.

As President of the Board I placed a challenge in front of the Membership and the Board of Directors to begin the search for a full time camp Administrator with the goal of having someone in place by the fall of 2009. Having a home for the family to live in will be one of the first steps in getting someone to fill that position.

With that in mind, we have requested the Sojourner's assistance in the spring to ready the recently purchased 3 bedroom home for use. If they are unable to assist us we will establish a local work crew to do the renovations that are necessary.

I look forward to the next year and the progress in the spiritual services as well as improvements in the physical aspect of the campground. If you are willing to assist in any way we would look forward to working with you.

FOND FAREWELL...

We would like to offer a fond farewell to Mike James, Wendy Hoekstra and Tammie Olds who have completed their four year terms on the Board. Mike has served the board in the role of Spiritual Vice President for the past four years. He and his wife, Shannon recently adopted three young children and, Lord willing, he will have many camping years in his future. Wendy has worked as both Director and Camp Administrator in her years of service on the Board. Tammie has spent many years on the Board and many more years being involved with the youth camp. She continues to be a real camp supporter and has even agreed to help with some projects that need completion in the near future. We will miss Mike, Wendy and Tammie on the Board. Thank you for your willingness to help Beechwood Hills!

Beechwood Hills Website

www.beechwoodhills.org

The camp is proud of all that it can offer to campers and family through the website. *Please, take a look!*

Watch For



Two good friends search the clues found in the Old Testament that lead them to Jesus and His Church in the New Testament.

A series of flash slide presentations which prove the writers of the Old Testament were inspired by God.

1st Vice President Mike Scholten

I want to begin by thanking Mike James, my predecessor, for the great job that he has done in this position. He is a very caring man that has a great desire to see the camp move forward and maintain its spiritual heritage. He will be missed greatly in the Board meetings as well as the emphasis that he has placed on the spiritual aspect of our camp. Mike has written the curriculum for the camp the last few years also and has done a great job. Thanks, Mike James!

When we look at Beechwood Hills we need to understand that it is more than a beautiful place to camp and attend youth camp during the summer. It is more than the buildings, the land, the water, or the beauty of God's creation. It is a very special place when it comes to the spiritual side of the camp. It is literally a place where people come and share God's word with those who are there. We have the awesome responsibility to shape lives for an eternity. We can share God's word in the context of God's creation all around us. We are able to close off the world outside and remain inside the camp and be concerned about spiritual matters. When it comes to Summer Camp we teach the Bible 10 times during the week in Bible classes, prayers are said before every meal, nightly devotionals in the chapel and

around a campfire are held, and counselors and campers share in a time of devotion before they go to sleep for the night. There really is no place in our children's lives where they receive this much Bible and spiritual emphasis in a week. So, you can see the great impact that camp can have in everyone's lives who attend during our summer youth camps. These things will not change and will continue in the great heritage of the spiritual emphasis at camp.








Spiritual emphasis continues with the camp's website. Jack Crofoot and Russ Kruizenga have done a tremendous job putting this website together. There are many opportunities for everyone who has access to the internet to study the Bible through this website. Please, take the time to not only look at this site, but mark it in your favorites and refer to it often! Thanks Jack and Russ for your labor of love on our website!

I consider it a great responsibility to fulfill this role at the camp. Please pray that we will continue this spiritual heritage at camp until the Lord comes back! Pray that we can continue to reach lives with the Gospel of Christ through Beechwood Hills. Pray for me as I look at this vital part of the camp and the curriculum.

CAMPER FEE INCREASE:

The Board of Directors has chosen to increase camper fees this year to \$175.00 for early registration and continue with the \$10 fee for late registration. This was not an easy decision for many on the board as they have children and grandchildren who are camper age. However, it was determined that the increase is a necessity.

Some of the reasons include:

-  Increase in the cost of electricity and gas
-  Increase in the cost of food
-  Increase in the cost of T-shirts
-  Increase in the cost of insurance
-  Payment for lifeguards and/or their training
-  Necessary campground repairs (chapel, dining hall, bunkhouses, brown trailer)
-  And the current cash balance includes money that was donated specifically for the property purchase and must be used that way

I would like to mention that even with the increase, Beechwood Hills is still very reasonably priced

compared to one week of overnight camp at YMCA for \$500 and YMCA day camp for more than \$250. Other camps vary from \$225 and higher.

The Board is committed to helping campers and parents obtain the camper fee by offering many fundraisers which are planned for this purpose. The sale of Younker's coupon books in February and the candy sales in January and February are some of the ways campers can earn money towards their individual camping fees. Individuals who still have difficulty with the fee should discuss it with their local congregations to determine if a local fundraiser would be appropriate.

We believe all members are aware of the challenges that are confronting all businesses in this economy. We appreciate the continued support of the camp in any way possible so that we may continue to provide this retreat for our youth.

If you have any fundraising ideas for Beechwood Hills, please contact Susan Cogburn.

2nd Vice President Todd DeVries

Thank you to all who turned out for the Harvest Celebration weekend and helped with closing down the camp for the winter. We had a good number of people coming and going throughout the weekend and we were able to get everything done at one time. The mattresses are all stored and the benches, boats and canoes have been put away. The water was turned off and drained and the buildings are closed up for the cold weather.

We also managed to replace the door on the garage of the house we purchased this summer so it can be used as a workshop and storage area in the immediate future. The utilities have been transferred to our name so as time permits over the off season we will begin to go through the house and get it into a condition to be occupied again. This property addition gives us new possibilities and along with that, new items to be added to the list of projects and repairs that we can work on.

I will be scheduling a meeting in the near future to discuss Buildings and Grounds items and work on a plan to divide some of these responsibilities up among people who are qualified and willing to concentrate on a specific area or project. Please let me know if you want to be informed of the date and

time so that I include you on the mailing and the agenda for the meeting. I hope to have certain things that are ongoing needs be funneled through the same individual or group to help manage these areas so that consistencies and priorities are maintained as we work to get these things accomplished. For instance, we have lots of areas that need painting both inside and out, many buildings that need attention to the roofs, either patch work or replacing and a constant list for electricians or plumbers. When we start replacing buildings the projects will get bigger and require permits and inspections. I am not looking only for people to be able to do the work, but to help coordinate and manage these areas as we move from one project to another. We have a lot of talented and willing folks involved with camp but a few individuals can not do everything we need to have done.

I know some folks have certain times of the year when they are able to assist and other times when they will not be available. If we spread out the tasks in an organized manner we can pick away at these items year round and get a lot of things done before they become necessities. Call or email me with any questions. Thanks again for all your assistance.

HARVEST WEEKEND:

The Harvest Weekend was a soggy weekend that the Lord blessed with approximately 75-100 folks attending throughout the weekend! Families began arriving on Friday evening around 5 pm. All were welcomed with a "Hot Potato" and all the fixings! Donuts were a yummy snack for anyone with a sweet-tooth through-out the entire weekend!!

Pancakes, sausage, American fries and orange juice were for breakfast on Saturday! Games that were donated to the camp were played in the chapel. All were thankful for the "Big Old Building" during the on and off rain that was endured throughout the day!

After lunch everyone bobbed for apples, which were later covered in caramel and nuts for a sweet treat! Next the kids painted pumpkins and each other's faces preparing



for costumes and trick-or-treating later in the evening! All the families decorated their cabins. Kathy Baugn from the Hastings congregation and

Audrey Merriman from the Grandville congregation were the judges who determined the winning cabin. Sam Sentellan (Lakeshore Congregation) and his family were selected as the winners!!!!

Chili dogs were supper on Saturday, followed by the Haunted House which was created by Amanda Stinnett and her assistant, Ashley Reed. Everyone received a sugar cookie after being haunted in the basement of the dining hall! Amanda's grandmother, Dina Stinnett, made sugar cookies shaped as bones and were so YUMMY!

Kids trick-or-treated from cabin to cabin and then all retired to the dining hall for a movie, popcorn and pop before playing a game of "YATZEE!" before bedtime and lights out!

Sunday was ushered in with pouring rain for most of the morning. Then we sat down for church service and the sun came out for the rest of the afternoon while we all closed down the camp! The Lord blessed us with exactly what we needed!

3rd Vice President Sheryl Porter

We are starting a new year at camp! Welcome to our new and returning board members that were voted into office at our annual membership meeting. As Third Vice President I am looking forward to their insight and contributions throughout the year.

We are already busy preparing for 2009 Youth Camp. Mark your calendars:

Senior Week is July 5th-11th
Intermediate Week is July 12th-18th
Junior Week is July 19th-25th

We hope that moving Senior week to the first week of camp will make it easier for high school students to enjoy the entire week of camp and still be able to attend sports events in preparation for the new school year.

Please continue to check the Beechwood Hills website for information about volunteering as staff. The new camper applications will soon be available online– please submit them as soon as you can to secure a spot at camp for your kids. Last year several people expressed interest in the Camp Director positions for 2009. If you are ready, willing and able to commit to a demanding, wonderful job that will bless you like few others, please email me as soon as possible.

ANNUAL DINNER:

The Annual Dinner was held on October 4th, 2008. The committee, along with other committees such as Membership and Fundraising were involved in preparing the event. The volunteers who helped in the kitchen, set-up, decorations, speaking, and cleanup also made the night possible. A special thank you to Brianna Vaughn and the teens that volunteered! The event included a delicious family style pig roast meal, a "Moving Forward" PowerPoint presentation by Jack Crofoot, brief speeches by the executive board, election of new Board Members, exciting balloon drop & pop, door prizes, auction, and

COMMITTEES:

Beechwood Hills is run by a Board of Directors. However, the camp is in need of support from everyone that has an interest in the campground. Not only do Board Members volunteer for the meetings but each one volunteer and works on at least two different committees. These committee members are dedicated to planning each of the activities that are offered at the campground.

We are in the process of choosing a theme from the New Testament for this year's youth camp. I would love to hear your ideas – especially from our campers. You can email me at sporter@hammer.net.

Cabin and campsite rentals continue to increase. We are in negotiations with a civil war reenactment club that is interested in renting the entire camp for a weekend each month (including winter months). There are schools that are interested in renting part of the camp to host a day camp for several weeks in the summer. If you are interested in renting a cabin, RV or campsite, or the entire camp, please call our caretakers, Brian and Carla Helmus. They can be reached at the Beechwood Hills phone number (269)793-7565.

Thank you so much for your continued encouragement and comments. I appreciate hearing from our campers, parents and staff members. Feel free to email me with questions, comments, and ideas.

I look forward to celebrating a new year at Beechwood Hills!

more! Thank you to ALL for the participation in donations of supplies, food, time, funds, and support!

The Annual Dinner was a success raising \$2,450 between the dinner and auction. Membership renewals also brought in additional funds. Don't forget to renew your annual membership or maintenance fee for lifetime members. If you are not yet a member, and are interested in becoming a Friend of the Camp, Annual Member, or Lifetime Member contact the Corporate Secretary, Sarah Milks for more information at (269) 760-0981.

The Board members cannot do it alone. We are in need of your support. If you would like to participate on a committee, please contact a Board member. If your time is not available, please remember to continue your prayers for the success of the camp.

For a full listing and description of the Committees, please check out website!

WHAT IS W.M.C.E.?

I have been involved with W.M.C.E. for almost 8 years now, six of them serving on the Board of Directors and it never ceases to amaze me at the differing perspectives I encounter regarding what the camp is about and how it is perceived amongst current and former members. Some only know it as the piece of property on a small lake between Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo where they vacationed or attended a function. Others only know of the programs we offer through Beechwood Hills Youth Camp and the experiences they or their kids had during our camp weeks. Both are valid perspectives but the whole picture and possibilities of the camp are so much more than them alone! A few years back the board spent considerable time establishing a Purpose and Mission statement to adequately summarize what this organization is all about. This year we incorporated that statement into the Bylaws to solidify the importance of these statements and guarantee a consistent direction moving forward. The statements read as follows:

PURPOSE & MISSION

Purpose of Western Michigan Christian Encampment is to maintain a retreat for all people to enjoy the wonders of creation in a Christian environment.

The mission of Beechwood Hills Christian Camp is to provide a present day retreat for all followers of Christ to be able to witness and fellowship free from worldly distractions. It is committed to the instruction of youth in the principles of a holy life as taught and modeled in the Word of God. It serves as an extension of Christ's church to reach out, teach, edify and give praise to the one true, almighty God through his creation.

The responsibility of the Board is to continue, maintain and grow this facility to be able to best serve this Purpose and Mission statement that we have adopted. A couple of years ago we approached the membership with the idea of evaluating the options of selling the camp and conducting youth camp in a different manner. This was not an easy challenge to make or the preferred direction to take but it was a necessary wake up call to stimulate new thought processes and involvement in the organization. I do not know of one person that really wanted to go down that path but it needed to be honestly put out front as a possibility to solidify our determination and commitment to make the camp succeed and move forward with renewed growth.

I am proud of all the past and current board members I have served with and the sacrifices they have made to help get us moving in the direction we are today. From time to time I get discouraged when

talking to an individual and they refer to the camp as a "dump" or the board meetings as just a "bunch of long winded arguments". I guess beauty is really in the eye of the beholder because I know our family and many others love the camp the way it is and we will appreciate it even more in the future with all the improvements we have planned. As for the board meetings, I feel if we all get together as a 21 person board and no one ever disagrees on anything that something must be wrong. Simple human nature dictates that you can not please everyone all the time. Do some people think we get together once a month to hold hands, sing Kum Ba Ya and hug? (That's not such a bad thing, maybe we can end the meetings that way) People have differing ideas, opinions and perspectives and we need to do the work in committee and board meetings to air them out and decide as an organization what we are going to do. Once this happens, it is the responsibility of each and every board member to support the decision of the Board and move forward.

The first year I worked at camp I served as a cabin counselor during Junior week. The experience and atmosphere of camp had such an impact on me that I actually cried driving home after being immersed completely in the environment continuously for seven days straight. The rest of the weekend was the same way; there would be times when I would simply get choked up thinking about the past week. What I was experiencing was not physical or mental exhaustion but effects due to withdrawals from the atmosphere of camp that was caused by being freed from worldly influences and spending an entire week singing, praying, teaching and playing with the kids in the innocent and Godly environment of our youth camp. If you need to have a reason to support this organization, spend some time with the youth in our congregations and see what it means to them. Whether it is a weekend in the spring or fall, the Lock-In or the weeks of camp, they can not get enough of the time together and it is something we should be providing as much as we possibly can. They are the future of the Lord's church and your congregation. The camp should also be viewed as a tool for each and every congregation to make use of in similar ways for picnics, retreats and community outreach events.

Beechwood Hills is not a private playground for members of the West Michigan churches of Christ, it is 23 acres of beautiful property on a small private and quiet lake that is being maintained and operated under the auspices of members of the churches of Christ in West Michigan. It is in existence to provide that place that you can use to expand your influence and outreach as the body of Christ in ways that are not possible in your buildings of worship. Please make use of it whenever you can!

2009 NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

Every year at the Annual Dinner/Membership meeting new board members are nominated and elected to the Board. This year the Board had seven open positions. After nominations six of those positions were filled. The positions were filled as follows:

Corby Merriman for term ending 2012
 Linda Wadsworth for term ending 2012
 Rick Wadsworth for term ending 2012
 Rhonda Jordan for term ending 2012
 Deb Scholten for term ending 2012
 Lora Boroff for term ending 2011

At the following October 10th board meeting the officers are elected by the Board. These positions are filled by an election every year.

President: Linda Wadsworth
 The president chairs the Board meetings when present. They also act as a spokesperson to any outside agency or membership.

1st Vice President: Mike Scholten
 This vice president is in charge of spiritual affairs. They review and approve any written material as well as oversee the summer camp weeks.

2nd Vice President: Todd DeVries
 This vice president is in charge of buildings and grounds. They also oversee the caretakers' responsibilities and well-being.

3rd Vice President: Sheryl Porter
 This vice president is in charge of coordinating all activities at the campground. They are also responsible for assigning an Administrator.

Recording Secretary: Melissa Hymer
 The recording secretary is responsible for providing notice of all Board meetings, preparing an agenda, taking minutes and keeping a record of such. They are also responsible for informing the membership through mailings and newsletters.

Corporate Secretary: Sarah Milks
 The corporate secretary keeps the seal of the corporation. They are also responsible for maintaining the membership roles of the corporations and keeping the general membership informed.

Treasure: Cindy Ott
 The treasure oversees the finances of the campground and must provide accurate accounting of the financial transactions.

Contact information is provided in each newsletter for the full Board. Winter Board meetings are not held at the campground. If you are interested in attending a meeting, please contact a board member for more information. Questions or concerns should be directed to Linda Wadsworth or Mike Scholten. For the complete Bylaws of the camp go to www.beechwoodhills.org/directors.html

2008 CAMP CONTRIBUTORS:

From the Treasurer

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Beechwood Hills Camp, we want thank you for your continued generous support of this organization. This camp could not function without your financial help. With this in mind, we are establishing a plaque to recognize those of you that have given significant monetary gifts. This plaque will be displayed in the dining hall of the camp. These are the contributors for the current year:

Bronze \$500-\$1,000	Silver \$1,001-\$5,000	Gold \$5,001-\$10,000	Platinum \$10,001+
Diana Gephart Plainwell Church of Christ Portage Church of Christ Holland Church of Christ Grandville Church of Christ Rick and Linda Wadsworth	Andy and Lennie Hinson Mike and Beverly Scholten		Melvin and Dorothy Barnes

If you would like to donate please make your contributions payable to Western Michigan Christian Encampment and mail to Cindy Ott, Treasurer, 93310 Sibert Drive, Marcellus, Michigan 49067

Beechwood Hills Camp is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. Your gift is tax deductible.

2009 CALENDAR:

Mark your calendar for the many activities that are planned for this year!!!

January 9th
Board of Directors Meeting

January 18-March 1st
Candy Bar & Cookie Mix Sale

February 6th
Lock-In at YMCA in Grand Rapids

February 12th
Board of Directors Meeting

March 13th
Board of Directors Meeting

March 29th
Phone-A-Thon

April 10th
Board of Directors Meeting

April TBA
Work Day to Open Camp

May 8th
Board of Directors Meeting

May 15-16th
Teen Retreat & Work Day

May 25th
Memorial Day Celebration

June 12th
Board of Directors Meeting

June 13th
Steak Fry & Membership Meeting

July 5-11th
Senior Week of Camp

July 12-18th
Intermediate Week of Camp

July 19-25th
Junior Week of Camp

August 14th
Board of Directors Meeting

August 21-22nd
Men's Retreat

September 11th
Board of Directors Meeting

September 12th
Annual Dinner & Membership Meeting

September 18-19th
Women's Retreat

October 9th
Board of Directors Meeting

October 23-25th
Harvest Party Weekend

November 13th
Board of Directors Meeting

December 11th
Board of Directors Meeting

2009 BOARD MEMBERS

Linda Wadsworth (President):
lswadsworth@yahoo.com (269) 372-8365

Mike Scholten (1st V.P.):
lakeshorecoc@yahoo.com (616) 218-2057

Todd DeVries (2nd V.P.):
tdevries@cokecce.com (616) 777-0513

Sheryl Porter (3rd V.P.):
sporter@hammer.net (269) 290-3825

Melissa Hymer (Rec. Secretary):
melissa.hymer@gmail.com (269) 547-8963

Sarah Milks (Corp. Secretary):
samilks@yahoo.com (269) 760-0981

Cindy Ott (Treasurer):
paulmelrunner@aol.com (269) 646-9828

Scott Alkema:
sralkema@comcast.net (616) 662-6253

Lora Boroff:
Lora.boroff@bronson-health.org (231) 788-2412

Susan Cogburn:
cogs4him@netzero.net (231) 865-6891

Jack Crofoot:
jackcrofoot@att.net (269) 375-4457

Deb DeVries:
debsbras@comcast.net (616) 777-0513

E.J. Johnson:
E.J.Johnson@kentcountymi.org (616) 293-2741

Rhonda Jordan:
a.jordanii@att.net (231) 744-2702

Russ Kruizenga:
ruttbuster@yahoo.com (616) 784-0272

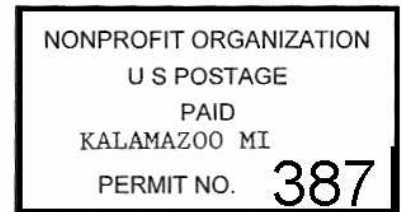
Corby Merriman:
audandcorb03@aol.com (616) 745-6468

Dan Scholten:
danielscholten@sbcglobal.net (616) 682-1720

Deb Scholten :
Dscholtenx5@att.net (616) 392-2436

Rick Wadsworth:
rhwadsworth@yahoo.com (269) 372-8365

Western Michigan Christian Encampment
Beechwood Hills
3144 22nd Street
Hopkins, MI 49328



Return Service Requested

2009 Lock-In

Who? Why, you of course! Everyone is invited to attend. Come join the fun!*

What? Lots of games, pizza, fun, sports, swimming, friends and fellowship.

When? The Beechwood Hills Annual Lock-In is **February 6th, 2008!** More information will follow.

Where? The David D. Hunting YMCA, downtown Grand Rapids.

Why? Because at Beechwood Hills we are all friends; come, reunite with us.

A minimum donation of \$25 is necessary. For more questions, contact E.J. Johnson.