

May/June 2010

Spring Delegate Session at Blough

Though the snow was still nearly 24" deep along most of Laurel Ridge and around Blough Mennonite Church, the sky was clear and over 90 delegates gathered expectantly on March 6, 2010 for the semi-annual delegate session.

Eric Lasure, Pastor at Blough, welcomed the delegates after each had had a chance to warm up over steamy cups of coffee. He shared a devotion based on Proverbs 27:17, encouraging us be spiritually "sharpened" while also helping others to have their faith sharpened, too, in order to grow stronger in our walks with God. Conrad Mast followed this by leading a time of singing and praise.

The business session began as Enos Tice completed the role call, had the minutes approved from November's meeting, and conducted the delegate vote of various nominees for commission posts. (Results can be reviewed on page 2.)

The delegates were updated about the current situation of Hyattsville Mennonite Church and two recent letters were shared regarding Hyattsville's request to transfer their conference membership to Atlantic Coast Conference. With the encouragement of Atlantic Coast and Denominational Executive Leadership, Allegheny Conference will continue to dialogue through its representatives on Faith, Life, and Procedures Commission with Hyattsville Mennonite Church leadership, with the hope of achieving a change in the present status.

Interim Conference Minister Donna Mast shared that seven churches in Allegheny Conference are currently in various stages of pastoral transition. Former Conference Minister Kurt Horst has accepted a pastoral position at Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston, Kansas. Also, Sam and Mary Ann Yoder were

introduced as new regional ministers for the Casselman Valley area.

The Conference continues to explore new ways to restructure, though Donna clarified that the committee (Donna Mast, Torin Eikler, Karen Howard, and John Denlinger) would rather use the term "remodeling," which intimates more gradual and less drastic measures. The committee is suggesting that Conference divide into four geographic regions, with each having their own service commissions. Leaders from all regions would aim to meet at least once a year with each other and Conference leadership. They also would like to employ concepts from *Appreciative Inquiry* as a tool in the "remodeling" process. (Read more about this method on page 2.)

Nurture and Education Commission Chair, Marsha Carr, read from Psalm 78:4-7 and noted how vital it is for adults to pass on their wisdom from generation to generation. Nurture and Education is eager to respond to education-related questions from constituents via *AC News*. What are the educational needs among teachers and other mentors of our children?

As Conference Agencies Advocate, Cathy Spory offered information to delegates on various agency resources. From Mennonite Publishing Network, she noted *Meeting God on the Mountain* as a new summer Bible School resource book, *Under Construction* as an excellent study for men's small groups, and *Jesus Matters*, a new book which emphasizes the relevance of Jesus in our contemporary culture.



Above: Blough Pastor Eric Lasure welcomed the delegates to the spring session with a devotion based on Proverbs 27:17

Below: Co-pastors Carrie and Torin Eikler of the Morgantown Church of the Brethren joined other delegates in a time of worship during the morning session.



Spring Delegate Session (continued)



Above: Akron Mennonite Pastor Jim Amstutz introduced the concept of Appreciative Inquiry.

Conference Youth Minister, Joy Cotchen, told about upcoming youth activities, including the junior high retreat, youth college visits, and summer camps. As a member of the 2011 Youth Convention Planning Team, she is very excited about developments thus far. Three more planning sessions are scheduled. As the hosting conference, AMC members will have many opportunities to contribute their skills and time at Convention 2011.

Connecting with Joy's pitch for summer camp participation, Brian Paff, Director of Development at Laurelville, noted the theme for this summer's camps, "Climbing the Mountain, Reaching for Wholeness." He had brochures present for congregations to take home to church members.

Lawrence Brenneman continues to visit churches to get a feel for what congregations are doing and ways we can work together to better understand our roles as "missional people." He is working with Atlantic North East Conferences (ANEC), which is a group of eight conferences, on the topic of church planting. This group will meet in Somerset on April 27, 2010.

Finance and Stewardship Commission Chair, Dave Mishler, presented the budget. Delegates opted to reduce the mission and service line item from \$1,000 to \$500, with the difference of \$500 going to the Philippi Service Adventure Unit. The budget was then passed. Dave brought up the question for thought and prayer whether AMC should continue to own property, i.e., Conference Office Building. It was decided to schedule this for discussion at the next meeting.

After lunch, served by the Blough Daycare, Dave Garber was nominated to take Don Hamsher's place on Leadership Commission for the next two and a half years, with the stipulation that his voting privileges will not begin until he completes his term as Moderator of Allegheny Conference at the end of July.

Jim Amstutz, senior pastor at Akron Mennonite Church, led the afternoon seminar, explaining the process and merits of *Appreciative Inquiry (AI)*. The pivotal verse around which this concept is derived is Philippians 4:8:

"Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

Jim noted that when we focus our thoughts on this verse, we form new positive attitudes and habits. Churches can be recreated by these types of conversations. What we focus on becomes our reality. Henry Nouwen once said that gratitude is a spiritual discipline. Jim added that gratitude is essential to our well-being. *AI* uses the process of asking members of a group or congregation to share stories about times when the church was most exciting and engaging, to observe good things which are happening at present and should be held onto, and what dreams and goals they have for the future life of that group. The collective answers can be very insightful and can help shape the future direction of a church. The hope is that leaders in all AMC churches will learn to employ this process with their congregations.

—Jane Eanes, Scottsdale

Attendance:

Delegates 91
Delegate-at-large 1
Members from congregations 8
Visitors 0
Total present 100
Congregations present 25

Voting Results

<u>Moderator-Elect</u> J. Lorne Peachey	<u>Missions and Service Comm</u> Carrie Eikler	<u>Finance and Stewardship</u> Ken Litwiller, Chair	<u>Leadership Commission</u> Wayne Yoder, Chair Thinnagar Sittler
<u>Nominating Comm.</u> Roveen Yoder Dorothy Speigle	<u>Nurture and Education Comm.</u> Marsha Carr, Chair Anna Sauder	<u>Faith, Life, and Procedures</u> Karen Howard	

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Junior High Kids Fit Life's "Puzzles" Together



On the weekend of March 12-14, seventy junior high youth and sponsors converged on Laurelville for a weekend of fun, worship, fellowship and learning. Wes and Jaime Horst, members

of Pittsburgh Mennonite led our weekend with four input sessions:

"What's the Big Picture?" focused on Joseph's life and the idea that the "pieces" of one's life are not placed randomly. God ordains and uses each piece or situation for His purposes, even if they seem useless or disconnected at the time.

In "Putting the Pieces Together" they talked about discerning God's plans for each one's life by identifying some "pieces" (gifts, skills, interests, experiences). They portrayed David's life and Joseph's life as examples of how God used early experiences (teen years) later in their lives, and how even the negative experiences were valuable. Wes and Jaime shared stories from their youth, and even though some moments were difficult at the time, God was using these



situations to ultimately lead them on the path He had designed for them. They encouraged the youth to listen to God and take a close at things that have already happened in their lives which are helping to shape them.

"My Precious!" emphasized God's love for all as His precious creations. He does not want to control our lives just because He is so powerful, but He directs our paths because He loves us so much. We can try to shape or control our own lives, but the result is much less beautiful than when the Master does it. (They used amateur and professional pottery as illustrations.)

"Puzzle within the Puzzle" was about how each one (with their own life's puzzle) is part of the larger puzzle make-up of the Church, and if a piece is missing, the church body is not complete. They used the story of Moses holding up his staff during a battle, and how the two "unknown" men who helped him hold his hands up when he got tired were crucial pieces to the victory. Even "small" pieces of the Church's puzzle are significant to the complete picture.

The junior high group and sponsors had a lot of fun together singing, crafting, and playing fun games like "bunk beds" and "slaughter." There were many opportunities for connecting with old friends and meeting new ones. Saturday evening was a highlight, as they were treated to a lot of laughs by comedian and actor, Tim Hartman from Pittsburgh. It was a wonderful weekend of fun, getting to know others, and learning about God.

—Joy Cotchen, Stahl



Wes and Jaime Horst gave spiritual input during the junior high retreat in March.



Retreaters put the Horst's message into practice as they assembled puzzle pieces on photo frames.

Left: Musicians DJ Sharp, Elizabeth Thomas, and Emily Spory lead the singing time.

<p><i>An invitation from</i> Gortner Union Mennonite Church 4391 Mason School Rd. Sunday, June 13, 2010 for a homecoming and a dedication of the addition to the church.</p>	<p>Schedule of events and information: Sunday School: 9:30 am Worship: 10:30 am Lunch: 1:00 pm Dedication Service: 2:00 pm More information: Mary Ellen Lichty at 301-334-2866</p>
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ALLEGHENY MENNONITE CONFERENCE 135th ANNUAL MEETING

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, August 6-8, 2010

Theme: *Compelled by Christ's Love*

Friday, August 6

- 3:00-6:00 Check-in and Registration
(in front of the small dining hall)
- 5:00 Light meal served
◦ (**not** included in meal packages)
-
- ORDER OF WORSHIP
- 7:00 Welcome Address and Announcements
Worship/Singing/Offering
Message: *J. Nelson Kraybill*
Closing
- 9:00 Snack
(Each household: please bring a snack item
to share either Friday or Saturday evening.)



J. Nelson Kraybill is Lead Pastor at Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Indiana. Previously, he served as President of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, as Programme Director at the London Mennonite Centre in England, as a pastor in Vermont, and as a high school teacher in Puerto Rico.

A frequent speaker in congregational and conference settings, Nelson has taught

widely on issues of mission, allegiance, early church, Anabaptism, and the book of Revelation. An alumnus of Goshen College (Goshen, Indiana), he received a master's degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. in New Testament from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.

In addition to articles or chapters in various publications, he is author of *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); *On the Pilgrims' Way: Conversations on Christian Discipleship During a Twelve-Day Walk Across England* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1999); and *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation* (Brazos Press, 2010). He is a sailor, woodworker, and amateur astronomer; his wife Ellen is a physical therapist and church musician. They are parents of Laura and Andrea.

Saturday, August 7

- 7:15-8:15 Open cash continental breakfast bar
- Conference Session**
- 8:30 Spiritual time
Moderator's address – S. David Garber
Conf. Youth Minister Report— Joy Cotchen
- 10:00 Brunch
- 11:15 Reporting
Executive Board Report
Mennonite Publishing Network: Russ Eanes
◦ Int. Conference Minister Report – Donna Mast
◦ Finance & Stewardship Comm. – Dave Mishler
- 12:45 Conference Reporting Sessions End
- 1:00-1:55 Seminars
- 2:05-3:00 Seminars
- 3:00 Free time for recreation, fellowship & relaxation
- 5:00 Dinner
- ORDER OF WORSHIP
- 7:00 Announcements
Worship/Singing/Offering
Message: *J. Nelson Kraybill*
Closing
- 9:00 Snack
- 9:15 Special entertainment

Sunday, August 8

- 8:00 Breakfast (included in meal packaging)
- ORDER OF WORSHIP
- 9:00 Prelude
Worship/Singing/Offering
Message- *J. Nelson Kraybill*
Children join for Closing Worship
- 11:30 Benediction
- 12:00 Lunch and Goodbyes

Next year's annual conference will be August 5-7, 2011

ALLEGHENY MENNONITE CONFERENCE: REGISTRATION FORM
135th ANNUAL MEETING – AUGUST 6-8, 2010

NAME: _____ CONGREGATION/AGENCY: _____
 ADDRESS: _____ PHONE: _____
 (NO phone reservations, please note: the conference office will close at noon Wed., Aug. 4th until after this event)

List **everyone's name (for NAMETAG purposes)** and the ages of children (*for better planning of children's activities*)

Name of those attending	Children's ages	Name of those attending	Children's ages
1. _____	_____	4. _____	_____
2. _____	_____	5. _____	_____
3. _____	_____	6. _____	_____

YOUTH REGISTRATION (completed grade 9 - grade 12) (staying in the Lodge, remember to bring your own linens)

Name(s): _____ Phone: _____
 Total Cost \$85.00 (which includes meals, lodging, and conference fee) Total youth \$ _____

CONFERENCE FEE

Whether registering for all or any part of conference: the fee is \$6.00 per person and \$3.00 per child ages 3-11

Number of adults _____ x \$6.00 = _____
 Number of children (ages 3-11) _____ x \$3.00 = _____

Total Conference Fee \$ _____

LODGING (The rooms/sites are charged with one/two persons per room per night: *for each additional adult it will be \$10 per person per night*. Children up to age 11, lodging is free)

Rates per night are: Solarhouse/Guesthouse \$ 99 Cottage room \$75 (Linens are not provided for the cottages)

Camp Site with hookups (please designate which hookups are needed) \$25.00 (water___/electric___/sewer___)

Camping site with only water or no hookups \$15.00 (water___ no hookup___)

Indicate lodging preference _____

Check which night/nights you will be staying: Friday _____ Saturday _____

Lodging requests will be on a first come first serve basis

Of nights _____ X rate _____ = Total Lodging \$ _____

MEALS must be PRE-REGISTERED for by JULY 16 (Children 2 and under are free)

Meal Packages (Saturday brunch through Sunday
 noon- does NOT included Friday evening)

	# of people	cost	total
3-11 years	_____ x	\$17.50	_____
12-yrs-adult	_____ x	\$35.00	_____

Total Cost of Packages \$ _____

Individual meals

MEALS: 3-11 YRS. 12-ADULTS

(not included in pkg.) Fri Supper _____

Sat. Brunch	_____	_____
Sat. Supper	_____	_____
Sun. Breakfast	_____	_____
Sun. Lunch	_____	_____

MAIL TO:

Allegheny Mennonite Conference
 PO Box 12
 Somerset, PA 15501

Or email as a PDF to: office@amc-mcusa.org

Individual meals are \$10.00 per adult and \$5.00 per child per meal with the exception of Sunday Breakfast which is \$7.50 per adult/\$3.75 per child
 All meals must be paid upon registration or upon check-in

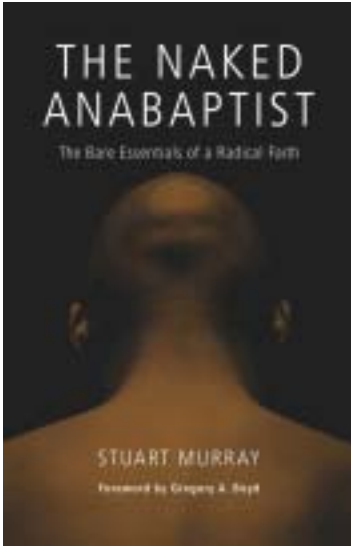
ALL MEALS NEED TO BE REGISTERED BY JULY 16 with no refunds

TOTALS	Conference Fee	Youth	Lodging/ Camp Site	Meals	Grand Total	Deposit (please pay at least ¼ of total)	Balance Due

REGISTRATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED OR DATED BY JULY 16TH. Any registrations postmarked after July 16th will be charged a \$15 (per person) or \$30 (per family) late fee with no meals available!

Book Review: The Naked Anabaptist

by Stuart Murray



“Anabaptism has been around for almost 500 years, and for much of that time it has been clothed in Mennonite, Hutterite and Amish traditions and culture,” says author Stuart Murray, who helps direct the Anabaptist Network in Great Britain and Ireland.

“But what does Anabaptism look like without that clothing? And do people have to become Mennonite to be an Anabaptist?” His quest for answers to those and other questions led him to write *The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith* (Herald Press).

“More and more people in Great Britain are seeing Anabaptism as an exciting way to live out their faith,” he says. “They want to know: ‘Where did Anabaptism come from? What are its core convictions?’ And, ‘Do I have to give up my own church tradition to become one?’ *The Naked Anabaptist* is my effort to provide some answers.”

For Murray, there are seven bare essentials, or core convictions, that make up Anabaptism.

“The first and foremost conviction is about following Jesus,” he says. “He is our example, teacher, friend, redeemer and Lord.” Other core

convictions include seeing Jesus as the focal point of God’s revelation; belief in the separation of church and state; being committed to finding ways to be “good news to the poor, powerless and persecuted”; a commitment to discipleship and mission; and seeking to live more simply.

Seeing peace as central to the gospel is also a bare essential, he says, but it is not “the center of the gospel—Jesus is the center. However, as followers of Jesus, we are committed to finding nonviolent alternatives to violence in our world.”

In the end, his goal is not to “promote Anabaptism for its own sake. My interest is in promoting a way of living that helps people to become more faithful followers of Jesus . . . I am interested in the Anabaptist tradition only as a means to an end, and that end is to point us to Jesus as the one we are to follow and worship.”

—John Longhurst, MPN

The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials Of A Radical Faith, is available from Mennonite Publishing Network at www.mpn.net/nakedanabaptist or by calling 1-800-245-7894

Nurture & Education: Organizing Sunday School Classes Which Vary in Size from One Week to the Next

This can be a summer problem when attendance is irregular because of vacations, or it can be a problem all year because the parents of our children come irregularly. There can be many reasons for irregular attendance: new Christians who aren’t used to this weekly discipline, seekers just beginning to explore the meaning of faith, children who spend every other weekend with the parent who attends our church, the myriad of activities that may conflict directly with Sunday school — or just make parents feel a need for a day when they don’t have to get the kids up and going somewhere.

We can get discouraged and frustrated that parents aren’t committed enough to bring their children to Sunday school regularly. Or we can look at the reasons more carefully. If one sinner who repents is cause for rejoicing in heaven, then why would five such sinners cause such consternation in the education committee? Let’s make sure we rejoice whenever God is rejoicing.

That said, we still have a question about how to organize Sunday school for such a

variable set of students. Our Sunday school program needs to make sure that children who come have a positive experience and want to come back, whether it is a big attendance day or a small one. It is also important to acknowledge that preparing to teach and then having no students is not a surprise vacation day for the teacher; it is increasingly difficult to find energy and enthusiasm for class preparation if you are not sure of having students to teach.

These are the problems. The training and education of children is God’s work to which we recommit ourselves every time there is a child dedication in our congregation. What is your congregation doing with the challenge? Do you have an idea, program, anecdote or encouragement to offer the other congregations in Allegheny Mennonite Conference? Please send comments to education@amc-mcusa.org. We will put your comments together and send them to everyone on our address list. New questions will be saved for an article in the next issue of *AC News*.

Reflections on a Year of Service at IGH ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦



Hattie Jo Lehman, surrounded by cherry trees

My father likes to remind me that life is about choices. Although I often disagree with him (sometimes just for the sake of disagreeing), I know his words to be true. In October 2008 I made a choice to enter a one year voluntary service position at The International Guest House (IGH) in the District of Columbia, owned and operated by Allegheny Mennonite Conference. I believe this to be one of the very best decisions I have ever made for a variety of reasons: from the significant improvement it made in my cooking and cleaning abilities, to social interaction with folks of all faiths, nationalities and backgrounds, and most importantly, understanding how my relationship with God fits into the broader picture of Mennonites and Anabaptists.

Did I think it was the greatest choice four months, six months, or even ten months into it? Not every day. Did I ever want to pack my bags and run away? From time to time, yes. But my parents did not raise a quitter and so I pushed through... all the muffin baking, devotion leading, table clearing, laundry and bed making, floor scrubbing, e-mail answering, reservation making, guest welcoming and tea time entertaining to find the amazing adventures God blessed me with.

The International Guest House is a bed and breakfast with shared rooms and shared baths at 1441 Kennedy St. NW in Washington, D.C. It is located three houses from Rock Creek National Park and only 4-½ miles north of The White House. IGH truly is a home-away-from-home for many visitors from all over the globe. Ever had the pleasure of eating breakfast with someone from Trinidad and Tobago? Volunteer at the guest house. Do you desire to meet a person from every continent (including a German scientist who researches in Antarctica)? Spend a week or a month at IGH.

The guests were by far the best part of my time at IGH. I am sure that other former volunteers will agree. So many friendships started with stories shared over breakfast, tea or relaxing on the porch swings. Despite the heavy workload, there were real opportunities to connect with people and in turn form life-long friendships. This type of bridge-building is one of the missions of IGH.

IGH is run entirely by volunteer staff who work six days a week with one weekend off per month. Days and workloads are divided into two groups working 7-3 and one group on from 3-11. All shifts carry certain responsibilities. The AM shifts are more focused on cleaning and meal preparation while the later shift concentrates on office management, guests and tea time. Nine o'clock tea time has been served every night since 1967 and keeps guests coming back again and again.

Now that I live in DC, I, too, will return to IGH for tea or to help when I can because it is such a wonderful experience. And though I could write on and on about my time there, I will end with this: It was a children's time at Hyattsville Mennonite Church led by LeAnn Zook that really gave me a better perspective of my time at IGH. I was feeling overwhelmed by all the work there and wondering why God had brought me to this place. LeAnn asked the congregation to turn toward the center aisle so we were all facing one another. The children lined the aisle; some held mirrors and some held paper cut-out images of people. As we stood there looking at each other, she reminded us that we are all images of God, reflected onto one another. Our interactions should be in accordance with that — serving one another and helping each other. Volunteer service at IGH is much more than serving through cleaning and cooking. It is acknowledging God in the stranger and being a reflection of Christ's love to that person.

—Hattie Jo Lehman, Stahl

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Conference Calendar ▼

May 1

Relief Sale Bike-a-Thon Begins and ends at Maple Grove, Belleville

May 24-27

Minister's Spring Seminar, Laura Brenneman on New Testament Study

June 4

AC News deadline for July/Aug. issue

June 20-25

Explorers Camp, ages 8-10 Laurelville

June 27-July 2

Navigators Camp, ages 10-12 Laurelville

June 27-July 2

Adventure Camp, ages 14-17 Laurelville

July 4-9

Seekers Camp, ages 12-14 Laurelville

July 11-16

Disciples Camp, ages 14-17 Laurelville

July 16-17

Tri-State Relief Sale McHenry, MD

July 18-20

Mini Camp, ages 6-8 Laurelville

August 3

AC News deadline for Sept./Oct. issue

August 6-8

Annual AMC Conference Laurelville

Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to *Allegheny Conference News*, 1001 Arthur Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683

12th Annual Tri-State Relief Sale July 16 & 17, 2010



Members from Gortner Union's choir performed at Cherry Glade Mennonite Church on Sunday, April 11, during "Singing to Make a Difference," a fundraiser for MCC and sponsored by Tri-State Relief Sale.

The TriState Relief Sale will be held Friday and Saturday at the Garrett County Fairgrounds, McHenry, MD. Volunteers have been busy raising additional funds for Mennonite Central Committee throughout the year with a workday at Kaufman and Springs Mennonite churches, a music program at Kaufman and Cherry Glade and a walk/bike event at Maple Grove.

There are always new items of interest on the Silent Auction and the Main Auction, including benches shortened from church pews from Scottdale. Also included will be collectibles, children's handcrafted furniture, chain saws and silver coins donated by a collector.

Penny Power has been rolling along and is a fun and easy way for everyone to become involved by saving your small change to make a big change. Bring your coin to the Relief Sale or send a check in the amount of your coin donation.

Adults and children alike will be entertained with hayrides and carriage rides. A children's

activity center on Saturday will host lots of hands-on fun and opportunities to make a difference by creating items to be sent where needed most. Auto enthusiasts will love the classic and antique car display. If you have a vehicle you would like to display, bring it along on Saturday.

Collectibles and one-of-a-kind items, handcrafts, quilts, baked goods, books and craft supplies are all needed to make a successful event. If you or your group would like to give a few hours of your time, willing hands are needed as well.

MCC will be celebrating its 90th Anniversary in June of this year with the theme, "Table of Sharing." Tri-State Relief Sale invites you to join us "at our table" on July 16 and 17.

—Harriet Berg, Springs

For further information, go to www.mcc.org or call 814-445-6945, 724-864-2037 or 814-479-4827.

Tri-State Relief Sale Schedule of Events Free Parking and Admission

Friday July 16, 2010

4:30 PM	Food Booths Open Market Place – bakery, crafts, plants, books Preview Quilts & Auction Items
5:30-8:30	Silent Auction - <i>over 200 unique items</i>

Saturday July 17, 2010

7:30 AM	Gates open with Pancake & Sausage Breakfast
8:30	Market Place - bakery, crafts, plants, books
9:00	Classic Car Cruise-In Children's Activities Begin
10:00 - 3:30	Auction - Quilts, Art, Furniture, Vacations
11:00 - Noon	Children's Auction
11:30 AM	Chicken Barbecue