

CONESTOGA Connections



October 2014
Vol. XXV
No. 10

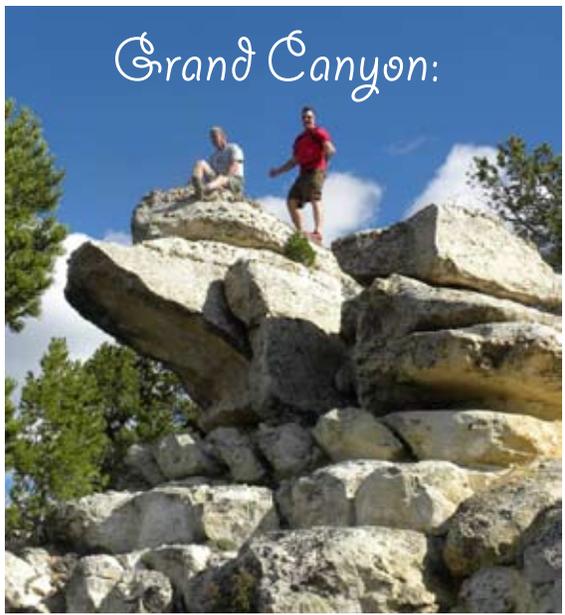
Sunday Morning at Conestoga Mennonite



Combined Sunday School class on September 7 when Kevin King shared about the work of Mennonite Disaster Service. Above, Kevin is showing a short video about the Staten Island (N.Y.) Project where for the past two years, over 1,400 MDS volunteers cleaned up debris, mucked out homes, and rebuilt homes and hope after the devastating winds and water of Hurricane Sandy pounded Staten Island.

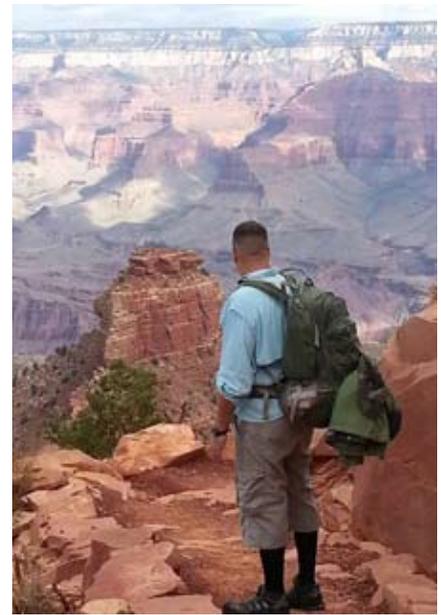
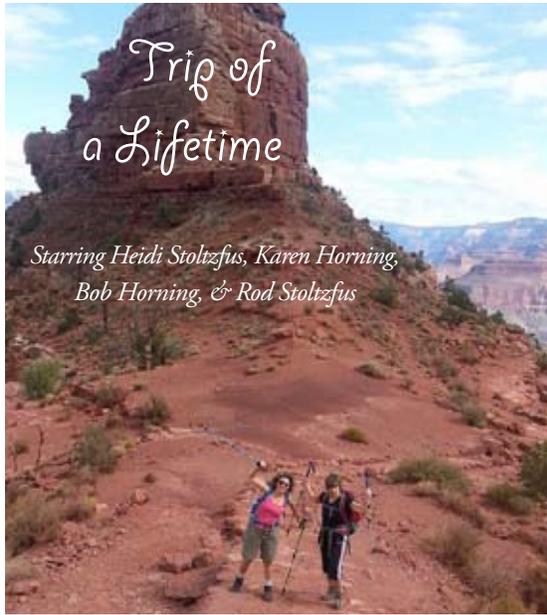


Grand Canyon:



Trip of a Lifetime

*Starring Heidi Stoltzfus, Karen Horning,
Bob Horning, & Rod Stoltzfus*



I had planned this trip in my mind for many years—dreamed of how utterly awesome it would be to hike something I had heard about all my life—the Brady Bunch even did it as a family vacation. Well it was pretty much as I expected with incredible views, dry heat, tourists, mule trains, mule droppings (ask Karen if she loved the smell).

Day 1. We started the climb down in the morning between 8:00 and 9:00 (because of the different time zones and the fact that Arizona does not observe daylight savings time and Nevada—where we flew into does—we never knew what time it was the whole trip. We basically looked at our smart phones to check and they did not even agree with each other. The trip down was amazing, I kept thinking how God had made this and I wondered what tools He used—water? wind? upheaval? I could see evidence of all three as far as I was concerned. We saw interesting wild life, squirrels, chipmunks, deer tracks, and condors (these are endangered scavengers that have a wing span of up to nine feet). Heidi and Karen chattered all the way down and we all felt the joy of exploring the unknown with great company. The packs that we carried felt great going down the slope of the canyon. Mine included everything that an explorer might need plus rocks that I picked up along the way.

Day 2. My pack felt like something else going back up

the next day. We had made calculations about the temperature at the bottom for our overnight camping and had overheard several estimates before our descent (50 degrees), but the reality was 96 at sundown and something above 80 most of the night. Heidi actually left the tent to sit in the creek that ran by our tent and ended up sleeping on the picnic table because she claims I generate heat or something. I listened to Bob or quite possibly Karen snore all night and could not figure out how they were sleeping! People started packing up to hike out as early as 3:00 am. They must know something we do not! They did. It gets hot very quickly in the morning. We left somewhere around 7:00, again that is a guess. The hike up was amazing as well. The trail had an oasis-like area about half way up that reminded me that there is life even in a place of dust and rock. As the day wore on and the temperatures rose, I could look behind me and see the oasis that we left behind. Hydration and calorie intake is always on your mind when you are in these conditions and we tried to stop and take care of both as we worked our way up the slope. Every time we looked back we could still see the oasis that we left hours ago. The heat continued to rise and I actually prayed for a little rain to cool down. Dark clouds formed on the Southern Rim and turned into quite a downpour for maybe a half an hour. We took a break under a cliff face and had a chance to talk to some people from Chicago. I was shocked at how many newlyweds we talked to. Many young couples seemed to be hiking the canyon. I guess that we should have done it years earlier when sore backs and muscles were a thing of the future. The rain finally slowed and we slogged the last hour to the top. I could still see the oasis four hours down below us.

Day 3. We spent this day on the Northern Rim and Heidi and I walked the rim and spent some quality time together not hiking. Bob and Karen took a day hike into the canyon again and had some amazing views. We shared a good dinner together at a lodge with a magnificent view of the canyon.

Day 4. Bryce Canyon

Day 5. Zion Canyon

I believe Bob and Karen put on 47 miles in five days. Heidi and I took it easy and did 42 miles.

God created the heavens and the earth. He created some beautiful lands and I appreciate the grandeur, opportunity, and health to be able to experience all these things. What makes it really special is being able to be there with my beautiful wife and good friends.

- Rod Stoltzfus, Conestoga Elder



CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH

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Monthly newsletter for Conestoga Mennonite Church published since 1988. Deadline for articles and photos is the 20th of the preceding month of publication.

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NEIGHBORS
caring & sharing

Neighbors meets on Tuesday mornings during the academic school year in our church fellowship hall from 9:15 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome for this time of fellowship!



Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle met on Wednesday, September 3, 2014. We had 16 ladies present. Donated items included: 9 comforter tops, 2 comforters, 76 kit bags, and 12 school kits. Completed items included: 3 comforters and 54 school kits.

For devotions, we sang “Bringing in the Sheaves” which was followed by the reading of Galatians 6:10-10 and a devotional entitled “Harvest Day.”

The special offering amounted to \$66.00 to be used for hygiene kits. We sang “Showers of Blessing” before adjourning.

- Betty Cannell, Secretary

— October 7 —

YWAM Experience

Michele Brubaker will share how God used her family in their six-month YWAM experience earlier this year.

— October 14 —

“Life Through a Different Lens”

by Sharon Charles

— October 21 —

If Your Quilts Could Talk

Bring your pre-1950s quilts and listen to Barbara Garrett tell it's story.

— October 28 —

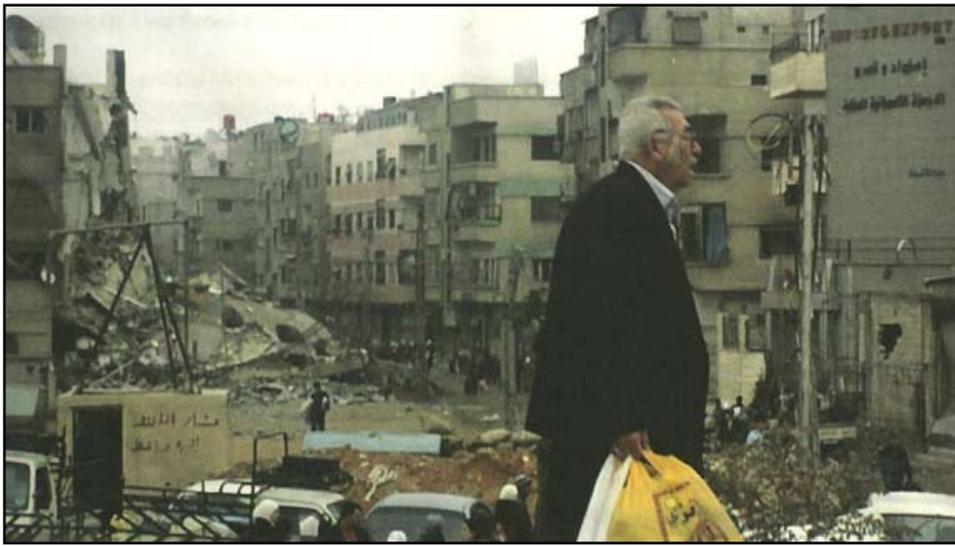
“Giving Our Kids a Solid BASE— Raising Kids with Confidence”

by Tami Horst



Senior Connections will meet on Thursday, Oct. 9, in our church parking lot at 8:00 a.m. to carpool to MCC's Material Resource Center, 517 W Trout Run, Ephrata, for a service project of quilting, packing items, bailing cardboard—sewers are especially needed. Hours to serve are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., bring your own bag lunch, and drinks and snack will be provided.

(Photos above are from last year's service project.)



A man walks near buildings damaged after shelling by forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar Assad, at Harasta, a suburb of Damascus.

A Bit of Good in a Bad World

Do you ever feel like if only you had this one thing you'd be happy? Or do you hear yourself say "This just isn't my day"? Well I do. Then one day I read this article about an "ordinary" day in Syria.

"It was barely dawn, just a short while after the morning call to prayer, when a jet roared overhead and bombarded the outskirts of Damascus. I was still in bed, my cat Gremlin nestled in my arms. The booming sound invoked the image of a gigantic sledgehammer smashing the ground. Sometimes the bombs have a strange aftersound, as if a truck is being dragged on a metallic surface.

The Syrian government has been using a variety of ammunition, each with a distinctive soundtrack. Many Syrians, including children, knew nothing about the weapons of war before the Syrian uprising began in the spring of 2011. Now they differentiate them by sound alone.

That morning I also heard the familiar thumping of shells fired from government tanks. They sit perched on Mount Qasioun, the series of hills that surround the capital, and fire at rebel strongholds in the neighborhoods below.

The worst part of that morning wasn't the thunder from the battle unfolding about a 40-minute drive from my house. Rather, it was the knowledge that most every time I heard an explosion, civilians were hurt or maimed. Or that a home was destroyed, or a livelihood lost.

Waiting is the word that best describes everyday life of a Syrian. Waiting to learn who was killed today. Waiting in a park for food and shelter after a home is destroyed. Waiting at checkpoints, The most frightening encounter I've had occurred at a checkpoint beneath an overpass, where my

car was the only one around. A half dozen armed shabiha who support the government, gauged and glared at me. Tall and muscular, they approached me at a deliberate pace. Without warning, one pushed himself halfway into the car and searched the glove compartment. Syrians speak of terrible things that can happen at checkpoints, like random detentions or kidnappings. But this time, after a few menacing moments, the shabiha waved us through.

Another day as I drove to the outskirts of the city, I encountered Syrian government soldiers who had a very different attitude. Thin-bodied and baby-faced, the conscripts tend to come from the countryside and are away from home for the first time.

They called me 'sister' and smiled, greeting me the way they might address a stranger passing through their village.

"May God protect you" one told me, pointing out that it was getting dark soon. He waved me through. At the next checkpoint, not knowing what to expect, I waited 25 minutes for my turn. I noticed the driver in the car ahead of me give the armed guard a couple of CD's before being waved on. When I pulled up, the same soldier glanced through my car.

Then he surprised me. 'Sister do you like to listen to music?' he asked, trying to crack a smile.

'Yes' I answered, not sure what to think.

'Here you go. Take these,' he said, and handed me the CD's he had just received.

I then drove home, nervous that it was already dark, and aware of the shelling and fighter jets that I could hear in the neighboring suburb.

I slipped one of the CD's into the car stereo and found myself singing along to the folk songs that played.

Just another day in Damascus."

~ Author unknown, submitted by Anna Martin



Photos by Rachel Mast

Conestoga's youth enjoyed attending the ACC Fall Youth Retreat at Refreshing Mountain Retreat on September 12-14. A coffee house/ talent show, a variety of tournaments, small group and mixer times, and worship sessions with speaker Rachel Swartzendruber Miller from Hesston College, provided good memories for everyone. The theme was "Decisions . . . Decisions . . . Decisions!" We were encouraged to consider the nature of life decisions and how they impact our lives.



Conestoga Youth Enjoying Disc Golf on August 24



Conestoga Happenings



Many **volunteers** make it possible for us to enjoy our monthly fellowship meals each month. Thank you **Cindy Petersheim** and all your helpers who coordinate the delicious meals and provide wonderful fellowship!

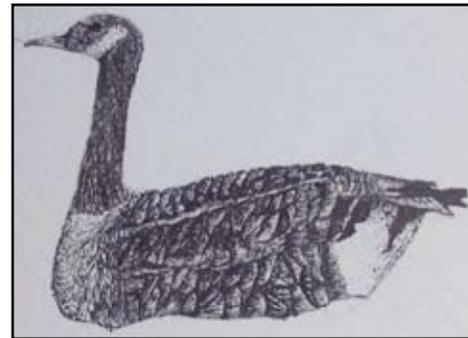


After the August fellowship meal, **Lillian Stoltzfus** was blessed by **Conestoga helpers** who confidently helped start her car. All it took was **Rod Stoltzfus** pulling out his cell phone, looking up Lillian's Prius car on the internet to figure out how to re-charge her battery! A piece of cake with today's technology!



Sam Waters took this photo of the beautiful evening skies while vacationing in Florida last month. Have you stopped at Morgantown Market to see Sam's art for sale supporting Still Waters?

Mindy Beam sketched this on her first week of school this fall! Thanks, Mindy, for giving permission for us to enjoy another of your gifts! We would love to see another one next month!



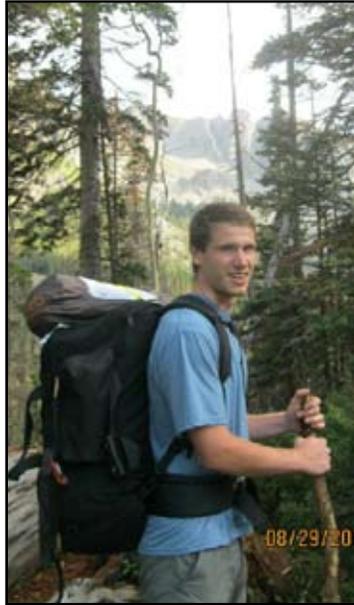
Ruth Beam (left) and **Ruth Essick** (right) came to church on a Sunday morning recently wearing the same style of dress. How often do you see two Ruths dressed alike?



Robin Beam's sister, **Susan**, blessed us on Sunday morning, August 24, with beautiful music from her marimba—a percussion instrument consisting of a set of wooden bars struck with mallets to produce musical tones.



Bronson Fox with the bear he got in Maine the end of August!



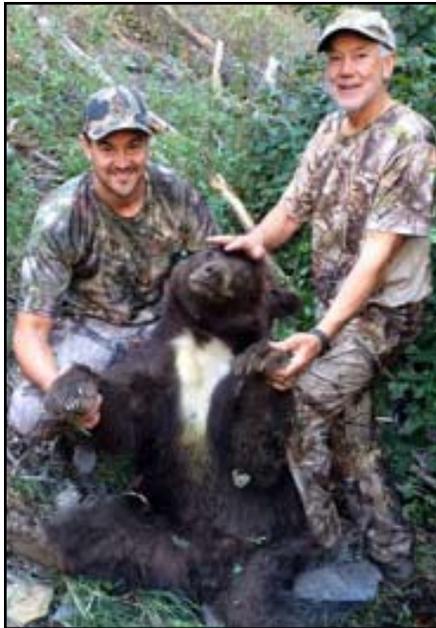
Austin and Kristy Unruh in Molina, Colorado.



Johnson Family Moving Day



Remote car starters are so handy in the cold winter so that one can start one's car while inside, but **Julia Yoder** has learned that it is even handy in the hot summer. Thanks to Julia's nieces who recently purchased her this remote, she has a new toy to play with—no, she has not yet started the car when someone was walking by her car and scared them, but she is thinking about it!



Two brown bears, two mule deer, and a large bull elk were brought back to Pa. from Sawtooth National Forest in Idaho by **Lester Stoltzfus** and his sons after a successful hunt the first week of September. What a blessing for **Martha**, or was it a blessing with all that meat? Pictured is Lester with son Keith.

Remember **Pastor Bob and Cindy Petersheim** sometime during October as we observe "Pastor Appreciation Month." Let them know in some way that we appreciate their many acts of kindness and wise leadership in our midst. Yes, we are truly blessed as they use their God-given talents! Thank you, **Pastor Bob and Cindy!** May God richly bless you as you serve Him here at Conestoga!



Meet Trisha Dechert . . .

Trisha and her two-year-old daughter Emma have been attending Conestoga for over a year now. Recently, I enjoyed spending time chatting with her on her job site and was excited to hear how enthused and knowledgeable she is while working on the Tim Kurtz farm. Growing up on a dairy farm and then receiving a Dairy Science college degree certainly gave her the needed passion, so it was easy for her to accept this job four years ago near Elverson.



She is the day manager for the new robot barn that houses 220 cows—erected in March 2013. Photos on this page give just a brief picture of what she does—and it does not all happen at the robot barn. She is responsible for all the recordkeeping on three different farms (400 cows total)—yes, there is a sophisticated computer in the barn office and she even networks that computer using her cell phone! And, she also enjoys breeding cows and caring for the calves knowing that they are the future because in two year's time they too will likely be in this robot barn! You see, the life span of a cow giving milk is only about 5-6 years. God's blessings to you, Trisha! Keep up the good work!!! ~ Lois Ann Mast

