



NATURAL LINKS

MENNONITE CAMPING ASSOCIATION

JOB OPENINGS

Laurelville, Mt. Pleasant, PA, seeks a new team member - Asst. Maintenance Director. See the posting on www.laurelville.org/ employment. For info or to email resume: Robby@laurelville.org.

CAMP UPDATES

Hidden Acres, New Hamburg, ON, www.hiddenacres.ca

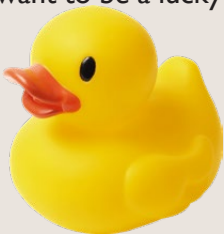
I normally don't pay much attention to the night sky. But recently Jupiter was passing closer to earth than it has in my lifetime. So, one night I trained my binoculars on the bright, silvery white dot above the eastern horizon. To my astonishment, two more little dots appeared just beside it. Jupiter's very own moons! Excitedly, I informed my family and upgraded from 8x magnification binoculars to the 20x & then 60x magnification of my spotting scope. Sure enough, now I could see 4 moons. I was in awe, looking out into a part of the world so distant and yet visible and connected to me. Thanks to astronomers, telescopes and technology-laden science labs rocketing through the solar system, we know Jupiter is a massive and unfriendly ball of gas, but from the grounds of Hidden Acres that cluster of five specks of light against the black canvas of deep space was simple, elegant and beautiful. I have recently been using Google Maps to document the camp's underground infrastructure. Zoom out all the way and you would never know Hidden Acres exists. As you zoom in, a pin appears naming the camp but all you see is a triangle of splotchy green with a dark green forest behind it and an expanse of agricultural fields. Move closer and you see Lake Laverne as a dark blue oval and the parking lots as white patches. Soon you see buildings, walkways, trees, sports courts, the (old) climbing wall, picnic tables - all the features that the community who enjoys and supports Hidden Acres knows and loves. These are the facilities we are responsible to care for. But these things alone are not Hidden Acres. Hidden Acres is a web of relationships that includes people, soil, water, wind, insects, birds, squirrels, buildings, and even the surrounding countryside, cities, planets, stars and galaxies. We often claim Hidden Acres is sacred space. The full meaning of such a statement, I am discovering, is necessarily elusive. But, what I will say today is that the sacredness of Hidden Acres is its connectedness. Sit a while by Lake Laverne on a sunny summer afternoon and you see the dragonflies that emerged as nymphs from the depths. They perch on the vegetation that is nourished by the water and soil and sun. A painted turtle slips from its log into the safety of the water as curious children edge a bit too close. Parents sit on the beach and chat about life. The breeze blows, clouds gather and rain falls, greening the landscape. Retreat participants find shelter indoors from the coming storm, feeding their bodies in the dining room and nourishing their souls in the gathering spaces with prayer, education, earnest conversation, game-playing - the countless ways we share life. On summer evenings campers encircle the fire, laughing at the skits, singing joyfully and then looking up as they amble back to their cabins for the night. What they see in the sky is far away. Yet, somehow, they are connected to everything else and in those connections, we glimpse God, the God in whom all things hold together. ~ Brent Musser, Facilities and Environmental Stewardship Director

TRANSITIONS

Hidden Acres, New Hamburg, ON, is excited to share that after a number of months of conversation, prayer and discernment, Josh Penfold was hired in the part-time capacity as the new Outdoor Education Director. Hidden Acres looks forward to Josh joining the team and further developing and growing this part of the ministry.

MCA BOARD

Hey MCA Peeps, it's your lucky day! **The MCA board role of Secretary/Treasurer is open!** Join the other lucky ducks on the board to make Mennonite Camping Association a great professional network for all of us. Simply email, "I want to be a lucky duck!" to Jeanette: jlahm@laurelville.org, and we'll connect.



MCA GATHERINGS

**SAVE THE DATE
for the 2023 Regional
Gatherings**

March 20-23, 2023

Eastern Regional
at Camp Hebron,
Halifax, PA

West/Midwest Regional
at Pine Lake Fellowship Camp,
Meridian, MS



Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, Divide, CO