

**PSD Annual Conference Program Planning Committee**  
**Minutes ~ October 8, 2011**  
**Iowa State Forest Nursery, Ames, IA**

**Attending:**

The Rev. Brian Eslinger (subbing for Rev. Lisa Schwartz), Travis Hess (LAC 2013 Co-Chair), Ginny Malcomson, Robin Taylor, Chair, Roger Upham (LAC 2012 Chair), Ben Wallace, Sam Wormley, Program Area Coordinator

**Welcome & Introductions.** A beautiful drive was had by all, with no falling semi-trucks to report! The Committee extended their extreme gratitude to Brian for subbing for Lisa for this important meeting.

The Minutes of July 23 were *finally* approved.

Robin announced that Xenda had resigned from the committee for personal reasons. She has asked Nancy Heege to recruit two more members for the Program Planning Committee, with the expectation that they attend 4 meetings a year plus two at the PSD Annual Conference in addition to sharing the work of the committee.

**Program Area Coordinator Update**

Sam reported that the four standing committees (Archives, Annual Conference Awards Committee, Site Selection and Program Planning) are in good shape. A hotel contract has been signed for Cedar Rapids (Central Region), and a hotel has been found for 2014 in Topeka, KS (South Region), where the conference will be put on jointly with Lawrence & Manhattan. The rotation for 2015 would be for the North Region, possibly Rochester, if the PSD wants to continue annual conferences. There is the possibility of moving to every other year conferences.

Sam said there are roughly 9,000 members in the PSD, and approximately 300 have attended conferences each year, so our efforts are serving the district well.

**Conference 2013 – Cedar Rapids, IA – April 5-7, 2013 – Marriott Cedar Rapids**

**Theme: Inspiring the Future We Hope to Live In**

Travis reported that the LAC decided not to go with the new convention center, since they couldn't guarantee it would be finished in time. The hotel contract has been signed by the Rev. Tom Capo.

**Keynote/Judy speakers** were discussed. Who could talk about building community and inspiring the future? **Sam agreed to pursue Bill McKibben, and Ben agreed to pursue Eboo Patel**—either or both would be great. We felt it would be best to find out if the speakers were interested and available, and then see what further resources we might need to pay their speaker fees. Sam and Brian thought that the University of Iowa might be interested in sharing either of those speakers with us.

**Eboo Patel | IFYC**

[www.ifyc.org/about-us/eboo-patel](http://www.ifyc.org/about-us/eboo-patel)

About **Eboo Patel**, IFYC Founder and President. Eboo's core belief is that religion is a bridge of cooperation rather than a barrier of division.

**Official site for Bill McKibben: Author - Educator - Environmentalist**

[www.billmckibben.com/](http://www.billmckibben.com/)

Official website for **Bill McKibben** - author, educator, and environmentalist; includes full information on all his books including Eearth, The End of Nature, Deep

If those speakers don't work out for us, Travis suggested Tim deChristopher, a UU from Utah, currently in jail for protesting the illegal sale of federal land to oil companies:

**Climate Activist Tim DeChristopher Given Two-Year Sentence For ...**

[thinkprogress.org/.../climate-activist-tim-dechristopher-given-two-ye...](http://thinkprogress.org/.../climate-activist-tim-dechristopher-given-two-ye...)

Jul 27, 2011 – The auction was disrupted by climate activist **Tim DeChristopher**, then a 27-year-old economics student, who successfully bid for \$1.7 million in

Failing those, other possibilities might be:

- Rev. Nancy MacDonnald from Manassas, VA, who did a great job at Camp Star Trail--may have ideas.
- Dr. Rebecca Parker, President of Star King Theological School in Berkeley, CA, who wrote, "A House for Hope" with John Burens.
- Sharon Welsh, who used to be at Meadville Lombard, who does a thing about connecting community to jazz music.
- Rev. Naomi King (daughter of Stephen king), from Florida
- Dali Lama
- Archbishop Desmond Tutu. (This committee is not afraid to THINK BIG!)

### **Conference 2012**

Roger passed out the latest draft schedule for discussion. His team is doing a wonderful job. Registration for the conference will be in the lobby, with all meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> floor. Roger thought the 22<sup>nd</sup> floor would be a great place for the youth to hang out. Victoria Safford will do the opening welcome on Friday night. The committee suggested we check with Jim Eller to see who he would like to introduce him. (Robin has emailed him, Ginny will check with Mark Stringer to see if he is willing to do the honor.)

LAC has been looking into the costs of live-streaming vs. recording and being able to post on website afterwards. A call to Sarah Green determined that live-streaming would not cost anything, as the PSD would provide Ben Stallings, his equipment and video cameras. Roger proposed a meeting with his tech experts, Ben and Sarah Greene for the following week. Ben suggested having some students from local universities help with the production to keep the costs down. Roger thought the quality would be much higher if they use their professionals. Roger will meet with Sarah and his techies in conversation with Ben Stallings.

Back-up speakers: Robin has talked to Ben Stallings about the possibility of streaming the person live if they are unable to get to Mpls due to snow or other circumstances. If something happens to the speaker, Brian said it would be awful to hear someone read somebody else's speech. He suggested finding someone who was passionate about the topic of war and peace, who would be able to have an outline in their pocket and speak off the cuff if the circumstances called for it. Ben Stallings felt people would not be happy being shown a video instead of a speaker, but the committee felt it would be a possibility if it were introduced by a live speaker, with some thoughtful discussion at each table. Robin will find out from Ben Stallings what needs to be in place for live streaming from our speakers, and will try to find someone who would be able to speak off the cuff. Ask if there is a UU military chaplain in Mpls?

Roger asked what his responsibility was for the Social Justice Workshop; Ginny said they would only require help organizing it. The LAC is responsible for providing food for the board meeting, which will probably be at the church.

The extremely talented folks at WBUUC will be providing the entertainment on Friday and Saturday nights. They are still working on a plan for how to do the youth-led workshop. Dinner will be plated on Saturday night, not buffet. They may hold the dessert until after the entertainment to get people to stay for the youth-led worship.

Not expecting many people for breakfast, which will be held by the pool.

LUNCH BREAK ~ Brian's squash and apple soup brought rave reviews!

### **Budget 2012**

Roger has acquired all sorts of great deals and discounts, and is saving a bundle on entertainment by providing it locally. There was some discussion about how to handle walk-ins and how to let people know they couldn't get a meal if they walk in. Ginny said there would be several people who would want to come for lunch, such as the award winners & family, but not stay for anything else.

Brian had a revolutionary idea for breakfast: offer hot breakfast from 7-8 am, and then a cold buffet from 8-9 a.m.! This would encourage people to get up early for the business meeting, and not let food congeal for too long...

Last year Ben Stallings live-streamed the conference, he brought in microphones etc owned by the district. Nancy Heege adamantly wants live streaming. Sarah doesn't have an issue paying the \$8500 for the professional recording if the LAC can afford it. The committee asked how many people actually used it; **Roger will find out from Ben.**

Sarah asked for the budget to be sent to her as soon as possible—she will be on vacation October 21st to 25th. Can crunch to send it to her now. She needs to send it to the PSD Board on Oct. 26 for their review. Sarah pointed out that there should be a \$1400 expense for the costs of the Conference Planning Committee. This covers the travel expenses of the site selection committee and the program planning committee, and should be paid to the PSD from conference income. Sam wondered what happened to the extra money that wasn't charged to this account? **Roger will send Sarah the budget as soon as his committee revises it.**

Childcare will be on floor below in plaza 3 and 4. Jill is insisting on professional paid childcare for the conference.

Banners – Roger thought they put them in the central ballroom on stands around the outside of the room.

### **Workshops 2012**

The committee evaluated 33 workshops and decided it would be possible to offer a slightly shorter 4<sup>th</sup> track, if we squeezed in a Workshop D from 4:45-5:45 p.m. Robin insisted that there be a full 15 minutes between workshops to give people time to get to the bathroom or peek at the exhibits. Although this makes for a long day, we thought this would give some presenters a chance to attend workshops they might not have a chance to otherwise. We eliminated three workshops: one that the district staff did not feel should be included; one that had requested a double-session, which might be a challenge to sit through, and a third, Stonetree, which we felt could reach just as many people as an exhibit. We also tried to accept all the youth and young adult proposals in an effort to attract a more multigenerational audience this year. **Robin will ask Ben Stallings to include an option on the registration form that says something to the effect of, "I would prefer to use this time to see the exhibits, relax, or explore," so people don't sign up for a spot they have no intention of taking, and they know it is OK to do so! (done, 10/17/11)**

**Robin will draft the acceptance/rejection letters. (done, 10/15/11)**

**Ginny will email the acceptance/rejection letters. (done, 10/17/11)**

Ben W. talked about the importance of having a formal marketing effort to promote this conference. He suggested that we use Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, and a 4-Square Space to do so. This was like hearing 10/18/11 10/18/11 the Klingon language to the rest of us.

**Ben will set up a facebook page for the conference. (done, 10/8/11!!)**

At 3:30 p.m., we had a phone conversation with Nancy Combs-Morgan –Coordinator of Emerging Youth & Young Adult Ministries, who Ben W. has been consulting with in getting the youth involved in this conference. It is great to have her energy and support! Thanks to Ben, Nancy, Jill Schwendeman, and Ruth Appleton for their efforts in getting youth excited about presenting at this conference.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

We discussed the importance of a winter meeting and decided to meet in Bloomington at the conference hotel on **Saturday, February 4, 2012 at 3 p.m.** This will hopefully give us a chance to evaluate logos for AC 2013 and write our Survey Monkey questions in advance, so people could fill them out at the conference if they wished!

Although we chose a snow date for the following Saturday, I just discovered that won't work for me! **Robin will send out a request for snow dates and a May meeting date.**

I offer my thanks and heartfelt appreciation for this fine and energetic committee, and the creative addition of our guest, Brian.

Respectfully submitted,

*Robin Taylor, Chair*  
October 17, 2011