

OMA-UCC
November 6, 2012 Board Meeting
Cleveland – UCC Church House

Meeting was called to order by President Jeremy Force.

Members Present: Bill Bourdon, Jeremy Force, Ryan Gackenheimer, Kim Harris, Anne Hughes, Mollie Landers, Joyce Oyler, Kaila Russell, Glenn Svetnicka, Neil Washburn, and Waltrina Middleton (national staff liaison)

Meeting with UCC Collegium:

The OMA Board had the privilege of meeting with the UCC Collegium on Monday, November 5th. We spent time reflecting on our time together.

Here are some key points that were raised:

- Perhaps the Collegium is looking to us for leadership
- Potential of meeting with conference of conference ministers
- What do we do about failing sites that are costing conferences too much money? How do we help our dying sites die with grace **and** how do we keep their programs connected?
- How do we build lasting relationships with local churches?
- How does OMA position themselves to strengthen local, regional, and national relationships?
- Is OMA interested in creating a national strategic plan that can work across the conferences?

OMA is deeply grateful to Waltrina for helping make this meeting happen, as it is something we have hoped for for a long time. It was a great starting point!

Site Reports: An update was given by board members of each of their sites that they are liaisons to. The overall sense is that the majority of our member sites are in pretty good shape. While the summer program numbers may be down a bit, the retreat/conference business seems to be going strong. We have camps that are facing some financial difficulties, and we will continue to stay connected and offer support. Some suggestions that came out of these site reports include:

- Best practices for capital campaigns

- How to include programs such as Nature's Classroom, band camps, Camp AweSum and other specialty programs at our sites.
- Preventative Care and Response Strategies
- Scholarships for camps to attend programs such as PG and Consult

We have 3 new OMA member sites! Talahi, White Memorial, and Iron Homestead. Thanks Bill Bourdon!

Mollie Landers will now be the OMA Board rep for Horton Center, Joyce Oyler for Talahi, Anne Huges for Iron Homestead, Jeremy Force for White Memorial. Kim Harris will contact Jack Belsom regarding partnering with North Dakota.

Report from Waltrina Middleton, our national staff liaison:

- Waltrina expressed her excitement about the healthy, positive relationship and partnership with OMA, as well as her gratitude for the way OMA blessed the National Youth Event this past summer. The Outdoor Ministry video has made a huge impact on many!
- She encouraged all of us to check out the official OM Facebook page and like it! Encourage your youth and campers to check it out as well.
- If there are ways the wider church can partner with OMA, please let her know!

Budget Report:

Report was presented by Treasurer, Bill Bourdon. Discussion was centered around fiduciary responsibility as we look to the future of OMA. It was moved, seconded, and passed that OMA keep \$20,000 available in reserves.

Expense items that are not budgeted:

- \$906 for Family Camp at Moon Beach for Randy and Linda Crowe. This was a gift given for Randy's retirement at 2011 Consult. It was M/S/P to reimburse Moon Beach \$500 for this expense. Future plan for retirement gifts to site managers is \$250 individual and \$500 for couple. It was also suggested that OMA look into the possibility of Lily Grants to help with honoring retirement of site managers.
- \$320 for travel expenses to NYE for Tim Hughes. M/S/P to reimburse this expense with gratitude for the work Tim did on behalf of OMA at this event.

OMA-PG update: Glenn Svetnicka presented update and event schedule. He also expressed gratitude for working with National Staff to make this event run smoothly.

Consult XIX: November 4-7, 2013 at Blowing Rock Camp and Conference Center. OMA board will arrive November 3, flying into Charlotte by 3 PM for 5 PM dinner, and depart on November 8. Planning committee consists of Bill, Curly, Glenn, Kim, Kaila, and Joyce.

Deering Grants: Jeremy reported that we have received 14 grants this year. 9 of the requests were from sites that did not receive grants last year. Jeremy will get someone from last year's grants recipients to work through the process with him.

Mission 4/1 Earth:

OMA is in partnership with the National Church on this one. It was decided that we would seek 100% participation from our member sites. We would ask each site to choose a project for this mission and create a one-minute video to help promote it. Kim Harris will collect these videos and pass them on to Waltrina. Board members were strongly encouraged to get their videos in by January 1, and rest by January 31. This project is a wonderful opportunity for Outdoor Ministries to be in the forefront.

Relationship with RAC – Religiously Affiliated Camps

It was reported that RAC is looking for a voice from our denomination to work with them on planning workshops and future events.

- The intent is to have a representative from an ACA accredited camp to participate.
- If there is any financial cost for this partnership, it needs to be brought to the OMA board for consideration.
- This request will be brought both to the general membership meeting on November 7th and also a written letter to the OMA membership.

National Council of Churches:

A written report was presented by Leah Atkinson Bilinski, who is serving as our liaison to the NCC. She mentioned the merge with Chalice Press and the transitions happening. There have been conference call meetings as they work through the transition. The next in person gathering will be held

at Camp Mack in Milford, Indiana on April 8-11, 2013. NCC is looking for 2-3 additional people to accompany Leah to this event. This request will also be taken to the November 7th meeting and also included in a written letter to the OMA membership.

OMA Board Officers:

After conversation with Jeremy Force, current board president, and taking a look at the OMA bylaws, we discussed future board leadership. It was M/S/P that the following people will serve: Glenn Svetnicka as President, Kim Harris as Program Chair, Bill Bourdon as Treasurer, and Kaila Russell as Secretary. Bill and Kaila will continue their current roles, Glenn and Kim will begin their roles on January 1, 2013.

OMA Website:

After much discussion, the board agreed to switch from an OMA specific website to an integrated site with the National Church. Neil Washburn will serve as the media liaison to the national office. Neil will call Charles Stark, our current Webmaster, and talk about this change. We will discuss it at our December conference call.

General Synod Resolution:

Anne Hughes reported on the momentum that this resolution is taking. DaVita Callister helped with the editing and offered great suggestions. Anne is looking for updated history and statistics. She also reminded us of the purpose of this resolution:

- It lifts awareness of Outdoor Ministries
- It suggest pathways of moving into the future
- It gets folks excited and claim that this is an important part of our ministry

The OMA Board empowers Anne to make changes based on suggestions raised at the General Membership meeting on November 7. It was also mentioned that since the intent of the resolution is not being changed, it is not necessary to take it back to sponsoring conferences.

The Board wholeheartedly thanks Anne for her passion and dedication to this resolution process!

Monthly Conference Calls: The OMA Board has agreed to continue with these calls to be held on the first Thursday of each month at 9PM EST.

Next call is scheduled for Thursday, December 6th, 2012.

M/S/P to adjourn meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaila Russell, OMA Board Secretary

**General OMA Gathering
November 7, 2012
Cleveland, UCC Church House**

Consult XIX: November 4-7, 2013 at Blowing Rock Conference Center in North Carolina. Bill Bourdon, site manager of Blowing Rock is looking forward to partnering with John's River Valley on this event.

- Bill gave an explanation of Consult for new members at our meeting.
- Suggestions for the event included: Inviting Christopher Grundy for music, Developing national strategic plan for Outdoor Ministries, a Facilities management program, worship focused on NCC curriculum

Budget Report: Financial Report was given by Treasurer, Bill Bourdon. He also gave an explanation of Deering Funds and how they are distributed. Sites who have received the Deering Grant in the past year reported on how they used their grant money.

National Council of Churches Representation:

Leah Atkinson Bilinski reported on the new partnership with Chalice Press as well as future plans for the group. Leah would love to receive input from OMA regarding the curriculum. There will be a meeting regarding the curriculum at Camp Mack in Midford, Indiana April 8-11, 2013. She is looking for 2-3 others to attend this gathering with her. Please contact Leah if interested. This request will also be added in a letter to the OMA general membership.

Religious Affiliated Camps:

RAC is seeking representation from the OMA community to help with planning of workshops and events. It is requested that this person is from an ACA accredited camp. Let Jeremy know if you are interested in serving in this role. This request will also be included in written letter to OMA general membership.

ACA Accredited Camps:

The following UCC camps have ACA Accreditation:

Mensch Mill, Living Waters, Johns River Valley, Covenant Hills, Pilgrim Lodge, Tempel Hills, Tower Hills, Pilgrim Park, Pilgrim Pines. It was noted that there is an insurance savings if ACA accredited. We are all encouraged to become part of the wider ACA community.

Mission 4/1 Earth:

- OMA needs to keep Waltrina Middleton informed and updated as to what sites are doing as part of this mission.
- Kim Harris is the contact person between OMA membership and National Church.
- Ben Guess joined us as we entered into this exciting partnership. Together we brainstormed possible projects individual sites could be involved in, as well as the partnership between OMA and National.
- OMA is looking for 100% participation from OMA member sites! Each site is encouraged to come up with a project, and create a one-minute video that tells about it. (video created at camp site and including youth).

Report from Meeting with Collegium:

OMA board presented the general membership with insights from our meeting. Highlights from the discussion included:

- Looking for relevance and how we can partner
- Recognition of OMA as a ministry within the UCC
- They asked us some tough questions, some of which we could not answer...Do we have a national strategic plan? We are wondering if that is our purpose as OMA.
- Collegium stated that there similarity between what is happening in the local churches and our Outdoor Ministry sites. OMA is curious if this is an accurate statement.
- Suggestion of doing a survey regarding how many called clergy receive their call at summer camp.
- Work on covenantal relationship between camps, conferences and local churches.
- Blurring boundaries – shared camps and ministries – collaboration to serve our people, reaching out to other camps.
- Geoffrey Black would like to try to get OMA a seat at the table of Conference of Conference Ministers.
- We need to make distinction between Outdoor Ministry and our sites. Looking down the road, where do we stand?
- We are an extension of the local church, so we need to find ways to get into the local church and establish relationships.
- We are all fighting for the same resources that are dwindling.

- An incredible amount of trust is put on our camp managers. Even when they are doing their very best job, they are a huge liability to the conferences.
- Our camps can grow our youth programs and local churches.

This meeting was an exciting first step!

National Youth Event Report:

General membership was informed about the impact OMA had on the event. Many thanks to Tim Hughes and Kim Harris for their leadership at NYE.

General Synod Resolution:

Anne Hughes presented the revised resolution. She gave background of the resolution process and reminded us that one of the main goals was to raise awareness on the national level - As we gather together as a body, we want to be acknowledged as part of the ministry.

There was rich discussion about the tone and intent of the resolution. It was suggested that if anyone had further input they should contact Anne in the next couple of days.

A comment that was shared at the end of our gathering created a moment for pause...

We are not just in the business of changing lives, but rather, saving lives. It is our responsibility to minister to the church of today and the church of tomorrow.

Notes taken by Kaila Russell, OMA Secretary