

CITY

Craig Albrecht EDITOR 328-4411 • A Daily Window on Life in Lethbridge

Mennonites congregate in Lethbridge

Church business, community service on agenda of the 97th annual sessions of the Mennonite Church Canada

More than 700 Mennonites, representing 255 churches and 37,000 members from across Canada, are at the University of Lethbridge today.

It's all part of the 97th annual sessions of Mennonite Church Canada which began on Wednesday and will wrap up on Sunday.

"It's like a little community," said communications director Dan Dyck of Mennonite Church headquarters in Winnipeg. "We'll get to know people from across the country, process some business and give our youth an opportunity to do some service in the community."

Members are coming from as far away as Vancouver in the west and Montreal in the east to take part — 92 are youth delegates.

"I think sometimes we underestimate youth," said 23-year-old Marie Moyer, the conference's service co-ordinator.

Not this bunch.

The church's young people will spend their time volunteering at several Lethbridge area agencies including Chinook L'Arche Society, Mennonite Central Committee Thrift Store, Streets Alive shelter and drop-in and will spend time with First Nations people at the Blood Reserve and the Sik-Ooh-Kotoki Friendship Centre.

Singing groups will visit the hospital and seniors' homes around town while a drama troupe

and puppeteers perform early Friday and Saturday afternoons at Whoop-Up Days.

Fans of performance theatre should keep their eyes open for Dunk, a seven-foot-tall, bearded character whose nature is something of a mystery.

Curt Wiebe, the 25-year-old drama leader for the conference, said the puppet starts the shows as "The Horrible Dunk" and morphs into something a fair bit more cheerful by the end. Further details are not available.

"That would spoil the story," he explained.

It is known that a big, papier-mâché chicken riding cowboy is also on the play list.

But it isn't all fun and games. "The fun element is there," says Abe Bergen, youth event co-ordinator. "But service can be humbling and tedious."

So some of the volunteer activities will involve clean-up, maintenance, painting and similar tasks.

Mennonite Church Canada members are Anabaptist — they practice



TIME WITH DUNK: Curt Wiebe, bottom, and Marie Moyer ham it up with Dunk, a seven-foot-tall character in a play being performed by youth delegates to the annual sessions of Mennonite Church Canada. The presentation runs early Friday and Saturday afternoon at Whoop-Up Days.

adult baptism — Christians who strive to put their faith into action through peaceful relationships with others and helping those in need. Mennonites are spiritual descendants of Menno Simons, who broke away from the 16th-century European Catholic church during the Reformation and began practising adult baptism on confession of faith, pacifism, and stewardship of resources.

Residents of the area are invited to worship with attendees on Sunday at 10 a.m. in the U of L gymnasium. Dyck said an 80-voice choir will also take part.

For more information call the sessions' on-site telephone number: 380-7290.

The annual sessions of Mennonite Church Canada are just one of several conferences scheduled for the U of L this summer. In fact, summer 2000 will see more than 3,500 visitors to Lethbridge using university facilities. Guests will travel from across Canada, the United States and as far away as Uganda, El Salvador, Australia and Europe.

The Schizophrenia Society of Canada just wrapped up a national conference July 16 and the Global Mission and Conference of Canada's Lutheran Churches and events organized by the Prairie Baseball Academy are expected later this month.

"Considering the major conferences, workshops, retreats and various social events, we will host more than 3,000 people from April to August alone," said Heather Mirau, manager of hospitality services for the U of L. "This is an all-time record for us and a real boost to the local tourism economy."

There's more than meets the eye to setting up a carnival: manager

They move into town usually by the back roads and late at night.

And come next morning, a bright, colourful midway is up and waiting for the thousands of people who will visit Whoop-Up Days today through Saturday.

Rick Christian is a concession manager for West Coast Amusements, a travelling village all its own with close to 250 resident employees and about 90 vehicles, from giant semi-trailer units to half-tons. Then there's the swarm of motorhomes and trailers.

"We try not to travel on the highways together," Christian says with a laugh, explaining the convoy would probably stretch from Exhibition Park to Coaldale.

"We've got a lot of equipment and a lot of people going down the road."

Christian and West Coast owner Bob Hauser, with their all-Canadian crew, started moving into Exhibition Park Sunday in preparation for the Whoop-Up Days preview Tuesday and the grand opening of the fair Wednesday.

They drove all night from Lloydminster to get here ahead of the equipment and the two spent about eight hours laying out the midway on the Whoop-Up grounds. Christian, who has been part of a carnival life since age nine in Winnipeg when he used to help blow up balloons, says the crew tore down at Lloydminster Sunday,

drove all night, and were setting up here Monday.

If pressed, they can put up the entire midway, its rides, games and concessions, in about six hours.

They prefer to have a day or so, however, for maintenance and cleaning. West Coast prides itself on its clean midway and staff.

"The last seven to eight years we've taken a hard approach to our hiring," Christian said. "We've done away with the long hair and only women can wear ear rings and there are no nose rings and stuff. We all have uniforms. You have to conform to work for us."

"I've been around this business off and on for 35 years and this is one of the cleanest shows I've ever seen. In that time I've seen a lot of changes, the biggest being the loss of the sideshows and the great strides taken in the quality of equipment and the type of people we now have."

"My father used to think being a carnie was the lowest form of life and maybe it once was. Years ago, a carnie could dress and do as he wanted. That's just not so anymore."

"This is a good life; we make a good living. As they say, you just can't like it, you have to love it."

The Whoop-Up midway rides are all owned by Hauser and West Coast Amusements and five others combined to own the food and concessions.

The show is on the road seven months of the year and most of the workers stay in campers and motorhomes right on the lot. The show has two long trailers with eight and 10 separate compartments respectively, along with showers, so each person has his own space.

There are still a few, like Christian's wife, who like to rent a motel room occasionally for the bath, the large room and the pool.

Christian, who served in the Canadian navy for three years on the aircraft carrier Bonaventure, says West Coast Amusements takes a lot of pride in its presentation and its staff. Only about 30 per cent of the staff turns over each year, and some have been with the show eight to 10 years, beginning as early as age 16 and 17.

The crew is set up two to three per ride, but usually one man is on shift for about four hours before taking a break. For special events, like tonight's Midway Madness, the full crew will work on each ride to keep the lines moving.

The Whoop-Up midway is open 1 p.m. to midnight through Saturday. From 1-3 p.m. each day, kiddies can ride for a loonie and adults can ride for a toonie. Handicapped people get a real break with West Coast Amusements; they just have to visit the office for a pass and they can ride free.

Young stars sought for city video

By DAVE MABELL
Lethbridge Herald

Wanted: two Lethbridge kids who want to be seen around the world.

Video producers are looking for a girl in the 13-to-15 age group, and a boy aged nine or 10. Successful applicants will be the final ingredients in a promotional video being shot here for wide distribution.

The youngsters will star in Why? Lethbridge! Producer-director George Gallant says the video, eight to 10 minutes long, has been commissioned by the city's economic development department.

"We're looking for some kids who will represent Lethbridge right around the world," he says.

Aimed at attracting new business and industry to Lethbridge, the presentation is expected to showcase many of the city's "quality of life" attractions. Shooting is planned for mid-August, but Gallant hopes the two final cast members can be selected by Friday.

Parents of prospective perform-

ers can call him at 380-4439 to arrange an audition.

On the production side, Gallant says all bases are covered. Seven local creative business people are involved including Jim McNally at the Commercial Factory as director of photography, Morton Molyneux at K2 Productions as video editor, Art Macrimmon of Tonemsmith Studios for audio work, and Jason Knott at Framwork Animation for computer-generated effects.

"I'm glad we were able to use all local people," Gallant says.

The production's writer is Laura Hutchinson MacLean of Hutchinson MacLean Productions, and a CD-ROM version prepared by Digital Visions Inc. will be released along with the video.

Along with those media choices, Gallant says, it's expected the soundtrack will be dubbed in Japanese and German as well for promotional efforts overseas. The finished product is expected to be completed by September and then unveiled by city officials.

Garry Allison's Whoop-Up Days notebook

One of the people enjoying the Whoop-Up Days activities this week is Sheila Taylor, Miss Rodeo Canada. The former Miss Rodeo Airdrie won't rub you the wrong way. Her career centres on equine massage therapy, and she carries a certificate in therapeutic massage from the Alberta Institute of Massage. Taylor was an all-around high school athlete and says rodeo is one of the few sports which has stayed true to its traditional roots.



GARRY ALLISON

Herald staff

Kimberly Lyall, marketing and PR co-ordinator for Chinook Country Tourism and one of the Whoop-Up Days parade marshals, was talking about an 80-year-plus cowboy friend in Calgary.

But she didn't realize until she introduced Orville Burkinshaw at a Lions club event in Calgary, and he received a standing ovation, that he was a chuckwagon driving legend from the

Calgary Stampede's Rangeland Derby. Orville won the Calgary show in 1960 and again in 1961.

Bob and Shirley MacMillan of Coalhurst, operators of Badger Daylighting Inc. and sponsors of the calf roping at the Whoop-Up days Rodeo, part of the couple of hundred people enjoying the Exhibition Park's President's reception Tuesday night. Also on hand were Canadian professional rodeo hall of famer Harold Mandeville, and wife Pearl, a prominent barrel racer, and Harold was talking about the good old days of rodeo. The Mandevilles started the Canadian Rodeo News.

Visitors to Whoop-Up Days will be more than pleased and impressed with the newly paved vast north parking lot, the work sponsored by Wells

Construction Ltd. through an agreement with Exhibition Park.

Gordon Kish, husband of Whoop-Up Days Chairman Mabel Kish, telling stories of his trail ride this past summer along the old Whoop-Up Trail from Fort Benton to Sweetgrass, Montana. And he had the pictures to prove it.

Senator Joyce Fairbairn, fresh from 10 days at the Calgary Stampede, talking rodeo with Whoop-Up Days stock contractor Greg Kesler, and learning how to tell a three-year-old bronc from a four-year-old and why not to buy a bull whose ears are longer than his horns. The good senator probably knows more about the Kesler stock than anyone — except another Kesler.

The entries for this year's Whoop-Up Days business decorating contest were double last year.

Exhibition Park Vice-President Lynne Lengyel was more than pleased not only with the numbers, but the quality of the entries.

Parkinson's meetings resume in September

The Parkinson's Society will not be meeting in July and August as previously indicated. They will resume meetings in September.

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