

REPORT on 1977 NORTHWEST GET-TOGETHER at Wenatchee, Washington

After a soggy week the morning of October 1 dawned bright and sunny and not even the wind came to mar perfect autumn weather for the weekend, although we did get the first frost of the season on Friday night which made the group camping on our outer lawn pretty chilly.

Our group of leaders met at the hall on Saturday morning and went over the plans for the weekend. These included, in addition to our crew of seven Wenatcheites, Vern Grimsley, Bettina Gray, and Marvin and Francyl Gawryn of San Francisco, Dr. Meredith Sprunger from Fort Wayne, Steve Johnson and Janice Goben from Seattle area, Fran Huntington from Portland, Gordon Bellamy from Victoria, Nathen Zadden from White Rock (Vancouver, B.C. area), and other interested URANTIA Book readers.

Highlight of the early afternoon was the keynote address by Bettina. After the mid-afternoon coffee break twelve small discussion groups were formed. Led by previously chosen leaders they scattered to various places inside and outside in the sunshine. At 4:30 we all gathered back in the hall to present the reports. For this session we used the questions, with his permission, that Chick Montgomery had used for his seminar at Grants Pass during the Oregon Conference in May.

For the supper break everyone was invited to stay for hot dogs at the hall.

The evening session included an address by Marvin Gawryn, special music, and an inspirational message by Vern. Following this the group adjourned to Clark's pasture where our campers from Canada had worked to set up seats around a rock-ringed fire pit. Campfire entertainment turned out to be mostly visiting and get-acquainted conversation while roasting marshmallows and hot dogs but the participants enjoyed this touch of "country" under the starry sky and mellow moon.

Sunday morning worship time got a late start but the group enjoyed group singing, including a new song presented by Joanne Iverson and her violin, a special chant presented by Francyl and Bettina, and the closing prayer by Marvin. * (A blown projector lamp prevented the showing of the special slides of Vince Ventola at this time; they were shown in the afternoon instead.)

The real highlight of the morning came after the coffee break. Dr. Sprunger gave an informal talk on the headquarters at 533 Diversey using Lew's slides as a basis, and finished with some reminiscing about the history of the URANTIA Brotherhood. A question and answer period followed until we were forced to stop at about 12:30 because our far-away guests had to leave to meet plane and ferry boat schedules.

The picnic at Clark's was enjoyed in haste by some, but more leisurely by the rest who could get home in shorter time or had another day for traveling. The last guests were gone before midnight.

We owe special thanks to Francyl for her delightful shepherding of the musical presentations. In addition to the presentations already mentioned we were entertained by Don Sullivan (Seattle) singing an original song and accompanying himself on the guitar. Francyl took charge of the pre-conference music between 1:00 and 1:30 and contributed at various times during the conference. Her talents provided meaningful interludes at many points during the conference, always beautiful and lovingly presented.

We feel it was a successful conference. Our largest delegation came from Canada, and they were an inspiration to the others who have vowed to work harder in their areas. A tentative date for a mini-conference in Seattle area has been set for April, 1978. We are going to be working with them to help make it come about.

For the first time we had representatives from the Spokane area, and a later report is that they have a study group started there. (Readers in this area have been very transient--mostly college students evidently.)

We took a lot of pictures and they turned out well. The big background mural painted by Chick Montgomery put all the speakers in a celestial setting, appropriate to the occasion.

* We had asked Gordon Bellamy to read the selections again which he had done at the Victoria conference, from The URANTIA Book and he did. Many people contributed to the success of this conference, as we have mentioned. We rejoice that it is truly becoming a northwest production so that in the future we will not have to borrow so heavily from our wonderful friends to the south, although we still hope to entice as many as possible as special visitors whenever they can come.

Included in one of the letters expressing appreciation after attending the conference was this little poem:

Joy is sneaky,
Hiding in handshakes,
Peering out from thickets of words.

Joy is sly,
Just out of sight,
Calling up tears against my will.

Joy is cunning,
Plotting in secret,
Tempting me onward with whispers of Love.

--Ginny McElwain (Seattle)