



## MONTEAGLE SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

• A CHAUTAUQUA EST. 1882 •

May 16, 2020

Greetings from the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly! There is an ancient Chinese curse which roughly translates to “May you live in interesting times”, and certainly today we are living in interesting times. Our daily lives have been disrupted by inconveniences to tragedies.

Back on March 13<sup>th</sup>, I sent our first COVID-19 communication to the membership and to the extended community. Every day since, we have worked to prepare our Assembly for its 138<sup>th</sup> consecutive season. In addition to our normal routine of putting the final touches on the program book, preparing online workshop registrations, hiring summer staff, and squeezing one more family into a rental cottage, we were closely monitoring federal, state, and local reactions and restrictions as more medical data became available concerning the COVID-19 virus.

On Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, MSSA Board President Bill Cox convened a task force representing all facets of the summer program. The task force was given the following mission- *Create a responsible plan to safeguard our members, guests, and community during the summer of 2020, while being good stewards of MSSA financial resources.*

The meeting began with a report from the medical community and then we began a data based discussion about how our 138<sup>th</sup> season would look. It was a thorough and difficult discussion concluding with a set of recommendations presented to the Board of Trustees on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The Board of Trustees reviewed the recommendations at the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, and after a lengthy and thoughtful debate, passed a resolution to defer a decision until May 16<sup>th</sup> or May 30<sup>th</sup> in order to collect more information from which to make a decision.

Today, May 16<sup>th</sup>, the MSSA Board of Trustees received and approved a motion from the Executive Committee to cancel programming during the 2020 season. This decision was neither “an” easy solution nor “the” easy solution. Ultimately, the board placed the health and welfare of our Assembly family and community above the strong desire to provide a summer program.

Needless to say, the summer of 2020 will not look like the extraordinary program Ruth Cobb put together and published online on April 1<sup>st</sup>. While there are many operational details to work out, below in this document are broad details of how the summer will look.

Perhaps the 2020 Assembly summer will be one of prayerful reflection, giving thanks for the trustees who struggled mightily with this grave decision, reflecting on our past, and planning our future course.

In order to protect our Assembly Community, the following actions will be taken-

- There will be no programming or Assembly sponsored activities during the summer of 2020.
- The MSSA Office will be open with restricted access to observe social distancing guidelines.
- A decision on opening the pool will be made on May 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The playground, tennis courts, pickleball courts, and gym are closed and will not be maintained. If one chooses to use these facilities, one must observe social distancing protocol and use the facilities at their own risk. Tennis and pickleball play will be governed by the COVID-19 policy of their governing bodies.
- Harton Hall will be closed to in house dining and activities. Carryout food will be available.
- The Snack Shop will be closed.
- Limited public restrooms will be available, and they will be cleaned throughout the day.
- MSSA Staff will be required to wear masks while in contact with the public; members and their guests are strongly encouraged to do so.
- There will be no Independence Day activities, including the races, games, picnic on the Mall, and fireworks. All families are encouraged to hold their picnics on their front porches to foster a sense of community.
- The Woman's Association Cottage Tour & Bazaar is cancelled.
- MSSA will honor all existing cottage rentals and will limit new rentals to member families.
- Golf cart rentals will continue to be available through the Housing Office.
- There will be a gate ticket fee charged at 25% of the normal rate to help offset labor and supplies needed to keep the campus open.
- We will collect auto fees in the same manner as last season to reduce vehicular traffic.
- There will be no construction allowed except in the case of emergency repairs.

Last August, when we lowered the flag and sang *God Be With You Till We Meet Again*, who knew how meaningful those words would be.

I look forward to seeing you again and wish you God Speed, which as we all know is 14 MPH.

Stay Safe. Be Well.



W. Scott Parrish  
General Manager