**By Marti Mumford**

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"How much spending money will we need?" "Can I bring my radio?" "Do we need our bathing suits?" These and similar questions were posed by members of the youth fellowship of Good Shepherd United Methodist Church, 305 E. Smallwood Drive, St. Charles, as they prepared recently for their fifth bi-annual Mystery Ramble.

A Mystery Ramble is a trip planned for the young people with all destinations unknown to the youthful travelers. Cloaked in secrecy, planning began behind closed doors in January. A careful attempt was made to have a balance between spiritual, educational, cultural, and recreational activities for the eight- day adventure. The planning team included Judy Brosky, youth advisor, Dr. Tom Kaylor, pastor, and youth leaders. Sandy Donaghue and Don Rhine.

On June 19, 38 young people in grades 7-12 accompanied by nine adults, excitedly loaded their gear, bade farewell to their parents, boarded a yellow school bus, and departed for parts unknown to all but the planning team. Sealed envelopes with a letter and complete itinerary were passed out to the curious parents as the bus pulled away. Parents were cautioned not to reveal future destinations, should their offspring decide to call home. As speculation mounted, the St. Mary's County Bus, leased to us by the Kessler Bus Company, headed north toward Baltimore. It was ably driven by veteran Mystery Ramble Bus Driver, Don Rhine.

The first destination was the Louis Foxwell Memorial Community for the Deaf. It also houses handicapped and elderly people (It was here that the kids learned why they had been given sign-language alphabet cards earlier to practice.) The Foxwell Community was in a high-rise complex with an 8th floor balcony which overlooks Baltimore. Following a lesson in finger spelling, the group toured the facility attempting to communicate and make new friends. After lunch, the group went to nearby Druid Park and played volleyball, visited a reptile house, and just generally relaxed.

Late in the afternoon, they traveled to Lebanon Valley College in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country where they spent the night in a dormitory and enjoyed delicious food. They took a tour of the beautiful college campus the next day, then traveled on to Watkins Glen, N.Y., home of the grand prix race and the famous gorge known as the Grand Canyon of the East.

They visited the gorge that night and watched a L.A.S.E.R. show on the walls of the canyon which depicted the history of the falls and gorge. While in Watkins Glen, they had a picnic in a park with all sorts of sandwiches, cookies and drinks, and later slept on the wooden floor of a very old church. The next morning was spend hiking down the beautiful gorge, souvenir shopping, and having old-fashioned treats in an authentic ice cream parlor.

The Ramble continued north through gorgeous finger lakes country. It began to be chilly and snow was seen on a few roof tops as the group drove on, passing a beautiful kaleidoscope of scenery. It soon became apparent that the ultimate destination was Canada! The air was crisp as they crossed the Thousand Island Bridge over the St. Lawrence River. The sight was breathtaking. Below could be seen tiny, privately-owned islands accessible only by crossing clear, blue water. Money was exchanged excitedly at the border where 20 American dollars equaled about $26.50 in Canadian money.

The next stop to visit a stone church built in 1865 which had recently been purchased by the sister of one of the youth leaders. She had converted the church into her home, leaving the outside structure in its original stained glass windows and all. Following a treat of homemade cookies and lemonade, the group departed for Camp Quin-Mo-Lac in Tweed, Ontario, Canada. The name was derived in part from Quinte, the surrounding area, Moira for the lake it bordered, and lag the French word for lake.

Besides the beautiful scenery, what will undoubtedly be remembered longest will be the friendly mouse population in the lodge. Some stayed awake a long time, too afraid to sleep, watching the playful mice scamper about the floor and across sleeping bags! A mission work, the group broke into teams and washed hundreds of dishes, glasses, and pieces of silver- ware in preparation for the upcoming camping season. Afterwards, they dove, jumped, pushed, and splashed in the lake.

The best was yet to be as the young travelers headed out unaware that they were going to Niagara Falls, Here they were hosted in individual homes where they enjoyed warm and generous Canadian hospitality. The Falls were as majestic as anyone had imagined. A trip on the boat, Maid of the Mist, brought everyone as close as they dared venture to the thundering, plummeting waterfall. The walking trip in the tunnel had everyone looking like yellow ducks as they donned raincoats for the walk behind the famous Canadian Horseshoe Falls.

Rides on a gigantic Ferris wheel gave a bird's-eye-view of the Falls, American and Canadian. Pizza eating and souvenir shopping rounded out a perfect day. Traveling along the Niagara River, the group went on to the border where they sang the national anthem as the bus crossed into the United States.

The evening and part of the next day were spent at the Dunkirk Camp on Lake Erie. A devotional program and pow-wow took place here that set the tone for more serious contemplations as the trip began winding down.

However, there wasn't time to get homesick yet, because the next day was spent at Kennywood Park, a great old-fashioned amusement park near Pittsburgh, Penn. Known as "the roller coaster capital of the world," Kennywood is the home of the famous Thunderbolt roller coaster listed as the No. 1 roller coaster in the world by Esquire Magazine and others. Roller coaster connoisseurs in this group wholeheartedly agreed!

The final evening was spent at Laurelville Mennonite Conference Center where the group enjoyed the lovely, plush surroundings, hot showers, pool, and good food.