

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Mennonite Historical Society of Canada
Saturday, January 18, 2014, 8:30 a.m.
Mennonite Heritage Centre
600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba
2nd Level Multi-purpose presentation room

Present:

Lucille Marr, MHSC President, Société d'histoire mennonite du Québec
Royden Loewen, MHSC Vice President, Chair of Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg
Glenn Klassen, Evangelical Mennonite Conference
David Neufeldt, Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta
Wes Berg, Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta
Richard Thiessen, MHSC Treasurer, Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia
Don Fehr, Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia
Jake Buhler, Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan
Victor Wiebe, Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan
Laureen Harder-Gissing, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
Maurice Martin, MHSC Member at large, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario
Sam Steiner, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario
Conrad Stoesz, Mennonite Church Canada
Bert Friesen, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
Jon Isaak, Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches/MB Historical Commission
Alf Redekopp, MHSC Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada
Korey Dyck, Mennonite Church Canada
Richard Lougheed, Société d'histoire mennonite du Québec
Eleanor Chornoboy, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
Linda Huebert Hecht, GAMEO Ontario rep
Barry Dyck, Mennonite Heritage Village
Esther Epp-Tiessen, writer of MCC in Canada book
Kate Woltmann, staff, CMBS
Emily Thornton, MHC practicum
Roger Toews, MHC practicum
Wolf-Dietrich Sahr, guest, U. of Parana, Brazil
Cicilian L. Loewen Sahr, guest, U. of Ponta Grossa, Brazil

1. President Lucille Marr called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and invited each person to introduce themselves.
2. Opening devotional: Maurice Martin entitled his devotional "Looking back in hope." Hope is often tied to faith, born out of despair. We, of all people, who look back as we do historical work, are invited to look back in hope. Maurice invited us to a period of silent reflection on the lives of recently deceased Mennonite historians Lorraine Roth, Bill Schroeder and Cornelius "C.J." Dyck. With a harmonica musical interludes Maurice enhanced this time of devotional reflection.
3. M/S/C (Alf Redekopp/Conrad Stoesz) to accept minutes of 19 January 2013 meeting as printed and distributed.

4. Approval of Agenda:

Agreed to discuss the traveling exhibit proposal under other new projects. Agreed to review how committees are constituted and ratified before the committee reports are given. Agenda was approved by consensus with these additions.

5. Reports from Provincial Societies

- a. Quebec: Richard Lougheed highlighted and expanded on several aspects from the distributed report, specifically the role of MCC and SHMQ in Truth & Reconciliation Commission and the discussions on the Quebec Charter.
- b. Ontario: Maurice Martin highlighted aspects from the distributed report from MHSO (Anabaptists / Black intersection, shoe-box historians, Sam Steinter's book on Mennonites in Ontario).
- c. Manitoba: Eleanor Chornoboy reviewed the printed report highlighting the new structure – a federation of like-minded groups. Glenn Klassen added that there is also the EastMenn Historical Committee that is active in Manitoba working on an East Reserve Historical Atlas.
- d. Saskatchewan: Jake Buhler reported on meetings and public events highlighting a featured evening on the “White caps” Mennonites (Plains Conservative Mennonite Church), several book launches, publications, and the expansion of the archives. “Walking the path” is another activity. This activity includes documenting relations with First Nations peoples.
- e. Alberta: David Neufeldt highlighted items from the printed report. Connecting with schools was affirmed by several MHSC board members.
- f. British Columbia: Richard Thiessen highlighted items from the printed report.

6. Report from the MHSC Chair: President Lucille Marr highlighted aspects from her written report that was distributed.

7. MHSC Award of Excellence. Royden Loewen reported that the executive accepted and affirmed the nomination of Dr. Harry Loewen, former Chair of Mennonite Studies, and founder of the Journal of Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, now living in BC. Due to a serious illness, this award was made earlier in 2013 and was ratified by the board last night. The certificate will be delivered by our BC reps in the near future.

8. Committee Reports.

- a. Ratification of committees annually: Alf Redekopp reviewed paragraph 7 from the MHSC by-laws which requires committee members to be confirmed at the annual general meeting. M/S/C (Maurice Martin/Don Fehr) to affirm the following (and give power to draw in additional people as needed):

Archives: Conrad Stoesz chair

Photo database taskforce: Conrad Stoesz, Korey Dyck, Laureen Harder-Gissing, Alf Redekopp

DVDC: Lucille Marr, Ken Reddig, Royden Loewen, Leonard Doell, Marlene Epp

Genealogy (task force): Bert Friesen, Sam Steiner, Cary Sweet

Canadian GAMEO committee: Bert Friesen

Additional members added during the year would be affirmed at the next AGM.

- b. DVCM (Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites) Report
 Royden spoke about the DVCM conferences. Esther Epp-Tiessen expressed thanks for the opportunity the MHSC had given her to research and write the MCC in Canada story. Royden highlighted that we now have a number of "...in Canada..." books – the 3 volume history, Marlene Epp's Mennonite Women in Canada, and now MCC in Canada.
 Royden spoke about the "Ex/near Mennonites" conference being planned which will be a study of movements away from the center, mentioning a number of confirmed speakers and potential speakers and topics.
- c. GAMEO -- Bert reported about the major changes of this past year. 1) first year of operating the finances under Mennonite World Conference 2) migration to wiki software. He also reported about the work of the Canadian GAMEO editorial group that has developed and approved additional templates for writers and editors. They have requested \$1,500 for committee expenses.
- d. Genealogy Committee report: Bert Friesen reported that another \$7,500 needs to be raised to bring the database to beta testing level. Concern is raised about having funding in place before proceeding too far. Caution about depending on MHSC for bridge funding was also expressed. Don Fehr added an encouragement to use the Google Drive for sharing about projects in progress to avoid duplicate efforts.
- e. Archivist Committee Report
 Alf Redekopp distributed the committee's most recent minutes (17 Jan 2014). The Photo database task force has raised \$27,000 in cash and pledges toward the On-line Photo Database. The Archives committee recommended that MHSC contract with Peaceworks to build the system at a price of \$22,825 (plus taxes). The Archives committee also requested \$1,000 for its expenses for the coming year. It was also assumed that there will be annual hosting and maintenance costs. These will initially be covered by the funds raised (i.e. the first year).
- f. Mennonites in Canada Volume 1, 2, 3
 A letter offering these books for free to book stores and thrift stores was not written and sent this past year. Agree that this effort was not necessary since Thrift stores (at least in Winnipeg) bring all their Mennonite books to the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Each Mennonite historical society should request and acquire as many books as they feel they can use at no cost beyond postage and handling.
 Richard reported on his investigation regarding making the MIC Volume 1-3 available as e-books. He will continue to explore.
- g. One-volume MIC book: The original vision of a one-volume summary of the 3 volume series seems to be dead. One person expressed that there is a need for an updated one-volume history of Mennonites in Canada. Agreed to discuss this topic further under new projects in the agenda.

9. Institutional Reports

- a. Evangelical Mennonite Church: Glenn Klassen reported that their archives will be moved from Steinbach to the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg in 2014.
- b. Mennonite Heritage Centre: Corey Dyck began his work as the director, replacing Alf Redekopp in August 2013. See distributed report for details of activities of the past 5 months.
- c. Mennonite Archives of Ontario: Lauren Harder-Gissing highlighted aspects from the printed report. She also reported that she has been accepted to present a paper to the Archives Association of Ontario on Ontario Mennonites and their experience in World War I.
- d. Chair in Mennonite Studies: Royden Loewen highlighted aspects from his printed report.

- e. Mennonite Heritage Village: Barry Dyck spoke about the challenge to maintain a balance between preserving the history of Russian Mennonite Story and working in tourism to remain financial viable. The MHV operates a significant school program and several festival days which attracts 1000s of people each year. **M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/Sam Steiner) that MHV be invited to become a member of MHSC.**
- f. CMBS/MB Historical Project: Jon Isaak reported (see printed report).

10. MHSC Website: Sam reported that the MHSC website, designed in 1996, needs updating, including the software that he used. An estimate was received from Peaceworks that would cost \$1000 to \$2000 to migrate the site to a WordPress software. Some concern was raised about the cost. Sam and Richard agreed to explore additional options.

11. New Projects

- a. Agreed to lodge a project with the DVCM which would explore the changing face of Mennonites in Canada (1970-2000) including the collection of oral histories from new immigrant groups. Additional committee members affirmed for this project: Laureen Harder-Gissing, Conrad Stoesz, Emily Thornton and Kate Woltmann. They are asked to report back next year.
- b. Traveling exhibit proposal by Jake Buhler: After significant discussion, Jake Buhler agreed to contact the Mennonite Heritage Village who have expertise in creating exhibits. Several archivists expressed support in providing research assistance.

12. Finances: Richard Thiessen presented the 2013 actual figures and the statement of financial position. M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/Bert Friesen) to accept the reports. Richard reviewed the 2014 budget. M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/Bert Friesen) to accept the budget. M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/Sam Steiner) to appoint Rodney Ewert as our auditor for the next year.

15. Nominations Committee Report: Recommended that the current executive be re-appointed. M/S/C (Jake Buhler/Dave Neufeldt) that nominations seize.

Lucille Marr – President
Royden Loewen - Vice President
Richard Thiessen – Treasurer
Alf Redekopp – Secretary
Maurice Martin – Member at Large

16. Appointment of a Nominations Committee: M/S/C (Royden Loewen/Don Fehr) that Richard Loughheed and Jon Isaak be the nominating committee for next year.

17. Next meetings:

Date: Jan16-17, 2015
Locations: 2015-Waterloo
2016-Abbotsford
2017-Winnipeg
2018-Calgary

Adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Recorded by Alf Redekopp