

*D R A F T*

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Mennonite Historical Society of Canada  
Mennonite Heritage Centre  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Saturday, 6 December 2003, 10:40 a.m.**

**Present:** Royden Loewen (President; Hanover Steinbach Historical Society),  
Sam Steiner (Vice-President; Mennonite Church Eastern Canada),  
Victor Wiebe (Secretary; Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan),  
Laureen Harder-Gissing (Treasurer; Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario),  
Marlene Epp (Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario)  
Ted Regehr (Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta),  
Leonard Doell (Mennonite Central Committee Canada),  
Richard Thiessen (Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia),  
Abe Dueck (Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches),  
Alf Redekopp ( Mennonite Church Canada),  
Walter Franz (Mennonite Central Committee)  
Heinrich Loewen (Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies)  
Bert Friesen ( Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society),  
Jake Peters ( Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society),  
Ted Friesen ( Mennonite Church Canada),  
Judith Rempel (Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta)  
David Giesbrecht (Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia)

Guests:

Peter Penner (Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta)  
Conrad Stoesz ( Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society)  
Linda Huebert Hecht (Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario)  
Delbert Plett (Flemish Mennonite Historical Society)  
Lawrence Klippenstein

**1 Opening and Devotional :**

Royden Loewen welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. Richard Thiessen led the opening devotional based on II Chronicles 34:14-21; the rediscovery in the house of the Lord of the Book of the Law given by Moses. The emphasis was on the idea that if there was no archive then we would not even have a Bible. Richard closed with prayer.

**2. Introductions**

a) Two new Board members introduced themselves: **Heinrich Loewen**, Director of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies; born in Kyrgyzstan with a long interest in church history and

with considerable experience in ministry and working with church leaders. **Judith Rempel** who is a demographer by profession and is the archivist of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta.

b) Guests: Roy introduced a number of guests: Peter Penner; Conrad Stoesz; Lind Huebert Hecht; Delbert Plett; Lawrence Klippenstein; David Giesbrecht.

### **3. Minutes: 6 December 2003, Abbotsford AGM :**

Victor Wiebe reviewed the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting of 6 December 2003. A number of corrections were noted.

**Moved/Seconded/Carried (M/S/C) (V. Wiebe/S. Steiner) - To approve the minutes as circulated and corrected.**

### **4. Business Arising from Minutes**

Item 8(b). Ted Regehr reported that the designated funding is still available.

Item 10(a). Leonard Doell reported that the \$500.00 funding was not used as the hoped for conference for 2003 was held.

### **5. Approval of Agenda**

A number of additions were made to the agenda, including 9(b) and 9(c), which was then approved.

### **6. Reports from Provincial Societies**

**a) Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta** – Judith Rempel reviewed the professional nature of the Alberta Society's archives, its existing and planned new facilities, recent development including cataloguing of existing collections, and its growing collections. The Society is holding monthly genealogy meetings and has plan for a new publication. Judith described here work on the National Transcription Project that is working on the 1906 Canadian Census records of the Prairies. 200 of the 800,000 records are transcribed. Ted Regehr reported on the very interesting excursion to La Crete and that the community is now prosperous and concerned about preserving its past and has both a very active senior centre and a good pioneer museum .

**b) Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia** – Richard Thiessen reviewed the B.C. annual report written by Hugo Friesen noting that B.C. is issuing three issues of their successful and popular newsletter, Roots and Branches each year. About 56,000 Mennonite type names are already noted in analyzing and indexing the EWZ microfilms. Many enthusiastic volunteers work on this project. B.C. has added a third room for microfilm and workers are active with the medium as well. A scholarship programme have been started to encourage student interest in Mennonite history. They had a special fund raiser in which they sold tickets for \$10.00 and quickly sold out 750 tickets. Roy commented on the Yarrow conference and the considerable interest in the Mennonite history of Yarrow.

**c) Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society** - Jake L. Peters reviewed his report. He highlighted Henry Fast's contribution at their Kleefeld meeting. In an effort to raise awareness, the Society has more widely distributed information from their Board meetings this year. A publication on Mennonites in Manitoba is still projected and a manuscript has been prepared. Jake elaborated on the oral history project which is active in recording the stories many of which are from women. West Reserve Gemeinde Buch is in development as is work on a number of English translations from the German language including works such as those by Benjamin H. Unruh and Horst Penner. The Manitoba Society was partners in Mennonite Heritage Family Roots Day and active in tours, story telling, oral history and genealogy. Roland Sawatzky, curator of Mennonite Heritage Museum, Steinbach, is willing to co-sponsor the Lean Mennonite Church memorial. Richard Thiessen indicated that his archives hold English translations of Horst Penner's works and will locate the name of the translator so that there will be less duplication. Laureen noted the National Historic designation given to the village of Neuberghthal by Parks Canada. A small Métis historical society associated with the St. Francis Xavier church would like to meet with the MMHS to discuss early contacts between the two groups.

**d) Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario** - Sam Steiner reviewed his report. He highlighted the recent efforts to gather comments and stories from newer Mennonite congregations formed by refugee immigrants. There is interest in that the new members have struggles with language, culture, and youth issues that many Mennonites faced in earlier decades. Sam highlighted their web site development. For the CMEO project Linda Hueber Hecht contacted each congregation to update and correct their entries. Twenty-nine congregations have already responded and more are coming in.

**e) Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan** - Leonard Doell referred members to his report and highlighted several features of the past successful year. Victor reported on the 1867 Chortitza Atlas publication project worked on by Heinz Bergen of Regina. Leonard asked members about sharing resources. He further asked if other members had plans to respond to the changes in Federal Government's new privacy legislation. A couple of organizations are starting to look at their electronic records. He indicated that there seems to be a desire by governments to recognize the historical significance of Mennonites in the Canadian context.

## **7. President's Report and Board Report**

Roy Loewen reviewed his report and complemented the provincial societies on their contributions and diligent work

### **a) Update on Global Mennonite History Project conference for October 2004**

Roy, who is on sabbatical in B. C. this year, reported on his visit to the Mennonite Word Conference and meeting with Mennonite historians from other parts of the world and who are not of the Pennsylvania or Russian Mennonite stock. These were fellow professional historians who are now telling their stories. We will have to write about North America in a parallel way to those of African and other continents with the story of living as Mennonites in the North American environment. Roy reported on his discussions with John Lapp about funding and a planned budget of \$5,000.00 set for this conference.

Abe discussed funding and thought Walter Sawatzky could be relied on for some help. Abe also suggested that there should be an appeal to the provincial societies requesting funding of help in funding. Sam indicated some letters have gone out and wondered if this is enough or could we do more. The funds are needed before the end of next year. Sam thought the MHSC has received a direct request.

#### **b) Fund raising campaign.**

Ted Friesen reported on his letter campaign to solicit funds for the MHSC. The results were very disappointing for only \$1,000.00 was raised.

Ted Friesen reviewed his report and noted that his letter writing fundraising campaign surprisingly raised the sale of the books Mennonites in Canada. Total sales amounted to \$553.00. The unsold books are all in storage at Friesen Publishers and Ted encouraged members to promote the sale of these books. There followed some discussion on the change from print to electronic resources and in future we may have to put more planning into promoting electronic copies of future works.

Lunch break and Sam Steiner Takes over as Chair.

#### **8. Constitutional Revisions**

Ted Regehr and Victor Wiebereported on the changes requested by Industry Canada and previously circulated. There was not unanimous agreement that these changes were of minor nature. Thus, this report is considered a notice of motion to change the Constitution. Voting on the change will occur at the next AGM.

#### **9. Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (CMEO) Report**

Sam reviewed his statistical report on the CMEO. Bert Friesen's report highlighted that about 100 articles per year are now being added. Bert added an addendum to his report with five points for discussion.

1. CMEO asked that it be permitted to have its own domain name. There was little discussion on this point for it was felt that the Editorial Board of the CMEO was authorized to make its own arrangements like this to meets its needs.

2. CMEO stated that fund raising possibilities exist and asked if they could proceed. Again the membership felt that CMEO could and should do its own fund raising. There was considerable support for fundraising. A concern was raised that the CMEO is the only publication that has an annual call on MHSC funds. In times when there is little income to the MHSC this can pose a budget strain.

3. Is it acceptable for CMEO to sell advertising space on its site or sponsor page and enter into some commercial ventures to raise funds? Marlene Epp indicated that such action may have an impact to lessen the academic impact and worthiness of the encyclopedia. Judith asked whether there should be a policy outlining what type of advertisements would be appropriate.

Laureen pointed out that in the current budgeting practices funds generated in any project would first go to MHSC and that they would be counted against the annual budget allocation.

4. Request for funding of \$5,000.00 for this coming year. There was general agreement with this funding.

Roy asked about terms of membership on the CMEO committee and the meeting affirmed the reappointment of the Editorial Board.

## **10. Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites (DVCM) Report**

### **a) Chair's report and "Mennonites and the Boat People - 2005 " [Attachment 1]**

Ken Reddig gave an oral report on the project and distributed a News Release. DVCM was founded in an effort to seek funding from Mennonite Central Committee by asking where are the connections in the work of MCC and that of MHSC? To date three conferences have been held; one on Canadian Mennonite Women, a second on Aboriginal – Mennonite relations and a third on Kanadier, that is on Low German – Latin American Mennonites in Canada. In October 2005 a conference on refugees will be sponsored that will focus specifically on Boat People. This conference will be a retrospective focus on interactions between Asian refugees and Mennonites. Starting in 1979 MCC worked to bring Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian refugees to Canada in significant numbers. The thesis of the conference is that in 1979 a change in thinking about refugees occurred. Refugees were not only our own people but Mennonites stated to include all other dispossessed as refugees needing help. Then the story becomes; what happened to our congregations as a consequence of this change in thinking and acting? Ken posed a number of questions: Who do you know who were the sponsors of these refugees? Who do you know who are these refugees? How has these events changed our conferences and our mission programmes? What is the impact on the fine arts and literature connected with refugees? Finally Reddig indicated that Ray Dirks is willing to mount an exhibit of art connected with refugees.

This conference will be in the sixth year of this joint DVCM project and the MCC funding will be at an end. The question of where to go from here was raised. Reddig indicated that we could move on to a new round of projects like a conference on the environment to enable us to connect with the vision of MCC as well as continuing to focus on topics relating our history. Reddig pointed out that MCC vision is on peace related issues. Walter Franz responded that MCC view point is that we need to find areas of future mutual directions in many of the directions already indicated by Reddig. MCC has a real appreciation for the events that have taken place. The bottom line is that good things have taken place and new things will happen.

### **b) "History of Canadian Mennonite Women" [Attachment 2]**

Marlene Epp reported on progress with this writing project. Unfortunately pressure of her other work has delayed progress in writing but major portions of each chapter have been completed but none is yet completed. A portion of this project was reported at the Yarrow conference. Marlene is researching the role of Mennonite midwives – also working on a

convergence of the midwife and funeral workers as well – part of the more fundamental questions of life and death. In this study she is finding a very diverse group of Mennonite women and also noting differences between Swiss and Russian Mennonite women. There is more information on pioneer Russian Mennonite women but less on Swiss Mennonites.

Considerable discussion followed. Ted Friesen highlighted the importance of the role of midwives. Abe Dueck asked about the notable role of women in Mennonite hospitals. Walter Franz asked about including in DVCM women's issues for Mennonites outside of the Swiss – Russian Mennonite experience. Marlene indicated that she has looked at MCC women's issues and is actively looking for these stories but as yet found little resources. On a wider concern Dave Giesbrecht encouraged the proposed refugee conference on Boat People to include all women's stories of all recent refugee groups including those of Yugoslavia and now of Iraq. The use of the phrase "Boat People" will have to be used carefully and Ken Reddig suggested a phrase like "newcomers" may be less loaded and more appropriate. Ken also asked for more "newcomer" stories.

## **11. MIC: "Mennonites in Canada"**

### **a) Sales report**

*[See 7(b) above: Ted Friesen gave this report as a follow up to his Fundraising Campaign report.]*

### **b) The "overarching volume"**

Now that his extensive research and writing work on the North West Conference is completed Ted Regehr is again taking up the task of preparing an "overarching volume" describing Mennonites in Canada. What is the "overarching" theme? This is the question posed by Ted. There are many contrasting ideas and focuses; for example evangelism or Anabaptism. In volume III of Mennonites in Canada he also had concern for the underlying theme. Ted requested the Society think about the issue of theme and give him any advice or suggestions on this fundamental question of theme.

### **c) Conscientious Objectors Conference [Attachment 3]**

Conrad Stoesz described the project he is working on that is planned for 2006. Conrad's purpose is to make the role and service of Mennonite Conscientious Objectors known to both the Mennonite community and larger Canadian Society. Roy reported that this project is one that could fit under the DVCM and could be presented in Cooperation with the Chair of Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg. Ted Regehr suggested that the registers and other materials associated with the Mobilization Boards be investigated for they hold considerable information on COs. Leonard remarked that Memorial Day services evolved from remembering fallen soldiers and if something like that for CO's could be considered. A comment was made that we must be sensitive to the families of soldiers for their sacrifice and who should not be may feel unvalued. Society today now valued peace service more highly and the contribution by Mennonites and other COs is more highly valued. There was much support and enthusiasm by members for this CO project initiated by Conrad.

**M/S/C (J.Peters/L.Doell) That funding for this project be included in the budget for next year.**

**d) Proposal for a Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg [Attachment 4]**

Jake Peters distributed his report and reviewed the background of this proposal which would result in the building of a Canadian Museum for Human Rights to be located at the Forks in Winnipeg. This is a project with a proposed budget of \$200 million for Phase A. The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society supports the proposal and there is cooperation between the Mennonite Human Rights Museum Inc. (MHRMI) and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Jake indicated that at this stage he feels the sponsors of the Canadian Museum want broad Canadian support for the project and would like Mennonite support.

The proposal generated considerable discussion. Because this is an initiative lead by the Dr. Israel Asper and the Asper foundation with its support for the State of Israel it was felt that the museum may have a biased vision of rights. Abe raised the issue that human rights lie with MCC and could they help provide information and opinion. However, there was wide support for the idea of such a museum. Roy indicated that this is a complex proposal in which we don't have enough answers. The members of MHSC were encouraged to take a strong interest in the project, raise issues with their provincial societies and bring feedback to the MHSC.

Royden Loewen again takes the Chair.

**12 Reports from Institutional Members**

**a) Mennonite Archives of Ontario and MCEC** - Sam Steiner referred members to his report circulated and highlighted the increase in storage space. He also mentioned potential problem that there is no national archives committee yet for Mennonite Church Canada.

**b) Mennonite Heritage Centre and MC Canada** – Alf Redekopp also highlighted his circulated report and commented on the fact that they are now 25 years in their new building and hoped for new archival space in the range of 4-5,000 sq.ft. They have plans for installing compact storage. Some change is dependent on the Canadian Mennonite University building a new library.

**c) Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies and MB Historical Commission** – Heinrich Loewen noted the bi-national nature of the Commission and the cooperation with his American counterparts. Recently Paul Taves, of the Fresno, California, archives has resigned and a replacement is being sought.

**d) EMC Archives and EMC** – Henry Fast reported briefly on the Conference archives located in Steinbach.

**e) Chair in Mennonite Studies** - Roy Loewen commented on a federal SSHRC grant to write a history of Low German Mennonites over the next 4 to 5 years and this will enable him the hire researchers.

### **13 Other Reports**

**a) Frank H. Epp Memorial Scholarship Fund** - Marlene Epp reported that the Scholarship fund will be granted in February most likely to a peace theology project.

**M/S/C (M.Epp/A.Dueck) That Laureen serve as the MHSC representative on the Frank H. Epp Fund.**

**b) Mennonite Heritage Village** – no report.

**c) Flemish Mennonite Historical Society** - Delbert Plett reported on the changes in this new Society. The very successful publication Preservings is continuing but will now be an annual.

**d) Chair in German Canadian Studies** Roy introduced Prof. Alexander Freund, who holds the Chair in German-Canadian Studies at the University of Winnipeg. Alexander is working on a oral history project and would like to interview German speakers about their pre 1939 experiences in Canada.

Sam Steiner again assumed the Chair.

### **14 Financial Statement [Attachment 5]**

**M/S/C (L.Harder-Gissing/A.Dueck) That the audited financial statement be accepted .**

### **15 Appointment of Auditor**

**M/S/C (L.Harder-Gissing/A.Redekopp) That MHSC appoint Robert V. Bender as our auditor.**

### **16 Budget 2003/2004**

Laureen Harder-Gissing presented the budget reviewed the items line by line. Some items that were clarified included: \$1,000.00 donation was again received from Mennonite Church Canada; the sizable GST rebate is applied for and received only once every three years.

**M/S/C (L.Harder-Gissing/J.Peters) That the budget be accepted**

Royden Loewen again takes the Chair.

### **17 Report from Nominations Committee and Elections**

Roy reported that in this past year David Giesbrecht resigned as Vice-President because of his Church assignment took him out of Canada. Sam Steiner was asked to fill in as Vice-President in the interim. After consultation with the executive Roy asked Leonard Doell and Sam Steiner to serve as the Nominations Committee this year.

Leonard reported for the Nominations Committee. In its deliberations the Committee sought to find a balance in nominations. The Committee presented this slate of candidates:

President Royden Loewen; nominated  
Vice-President Sam Steiner; nominated  
Secretary Victor Wiebe; nominated  
Treasurer Laureen Harder-Gissing; nominated  
Member-at-large Richard Thiessen; nominated

More nominations were requested but none were forthcoming. **Ted Friesen moved that nominations close. Agreed.** The executive is acclaimed.

Laureen who has served as Treasurer for a number of years stated this will be the last time she could serve on the executive for she will be entering university in a Librarianship programme of study.

Roy asked for volunteers to form the nominating committee for next year. Abe Dueck and David Giesbrecht volunteered. Ted Friesen offered to help search for nominees if needed.

#### **18 New Business**

There was no new business brought to the meeting.

#### **19. Next Meeting**

4 December 2004 at Conrad Grebel College

#### **20 Adjournment at 4:30 pm.**

## **[Attachment I]**

News Release

### **Refugee Conference**

Twenty-five years ago a crisis in Vietnam set in motion a massive migration of refugees that transformed the Mennonite church communities in Canada. Tens of thousands of southeast Asia refugees, who came to be known as ***Boat People***, fled the ravages of war and sought refuge in Canada. Mennonite church responded enthusiastically. With the response came a cultural shift. A new to non-Europeans developed. Refugee sponsorship now became an ongoing concern for many Mennonite churches. Closer working relationships with government agencies developed. Then, too, the ethnic composition of Mennonite churches began changing, as Chinese and Vietnamese Mennonite churches were born and more non-Europeans began attending Mennonite churches. Just what was the nature of these changes? How did they occur? Who were the major players? What were the relationships that were formed? Which other ethnic groups were assisted? What was the legacy of this moment in time?

These are some of the questions that a history conference planned for October 2005 will seek to answer. The conference, supported by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada and Mennonite Central Committee Canada, and hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the university of Winnipeg, will be a weekend of analysis and celebration.

The conference is looking for story-tellers and presenters. It is especially looking for people who were involved in the settlement of the ***Boat People*** to tell their stories at the conference. A special appeal is made for host and sponsored families who have maintained relationships over time who would be willing to tell their stories together. Deacons and pastors are encouraged to present their congregations' experience with non-European refugees. And, any academic interested in investigating this story from an historical, sociological, theological perspective is encouraged to participate.

Anyone interested in participating should-contact either Royden Loewen at the University of Winnipeg (r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca) or Ken Reddig at Mennonite Central Committee Canada (kreddig@mennonitecc.ca).

**[Attachment II]**

December 6, 2003

Report to DVCM and MHSC

From Marlene Epp

**Re. *Women, Families & Gender in Canadian Mennonite History: A Survey***

*Working Outline*

1. Leaders & Followers

This chapter will serve as an introductory overview of the topic of Canadian Mennonite women's history and will offer a framework for the topics and themes to be covered in subsequent chapters.

*why write a women's history; historiography; myths and symbols - gemeinschaft, gelassenheit, separation, quiet in the land; equality and patriarchy; 16th' century models; biblical literalism; fundamentalism; feminism; sources*

2. Pioneers & Refugees

This chapter will explore the migration and settlement experiences of Mennonite women, with stories of women pioneering in 19th century Ontario and Manitoba, refugee migrations from Russia in the 20th century, as well as the transnational movement of Mennonites from Mexico.

*theories of diaspora; impact of migration on gender roles; early rural pioneers; mid-century migrants to the city; post war refugees; late 20th century newcomers; transnationals from Mexico*

3. Wives & Mothers

This chapter will look at women's lives in the context of their roles within families. A life-cycle approach will follow women through childhood and adolescence (as much as possible with limited sources), courtship and marriage, childbirth and childrearing, singleness, widowhood.

*courtship; weddings; marriage; widows; childbirth; family size; birth control; unmarried mothers; child rearing; childlessness; family violence; divorce; singleness; diversity of family forms*

4. Quilters & Canners:

This chapter will explore what I call women's 'material' or productive lives. It will address ways in which women worked with their hands and minds to express creativity and artistic impulses and also to exercise vocational aspirations and generate household income.

*art and creativity; quilting; women as hosts; homemaking; women as writers; workers and professionals; debates over women in the workforce; education*

## 5. Preachers & Prophets

This chapter will examine the history of women in Mennonite churches and related institutions. It will trace the gradual evolution of women's participation in formal church life, from backroom auxiliary status to ordination as ministers, including such topics as the role of ministers' wives, and debates over the female franchise.

*women in formal church life; as ministers; as ministers wives; decision-making in church; missions; women in church vocations; women's organizations; female religious life; other church institutions*

## 6. Nonconformists & Nonresistors

This chapter will explore how particular Mennonite theological concepts are imposed upon or expressed by women in gendered ways. Ideals of nonconformity and nonresistance in particular have been central aspects of Mennonite religious belief and practice and have served to differentiate them from societies in which they have lived.

*women and church ideology; nonconformity in dress, hair, jewelry, etc.; nonresistance and pacifism*

## 7. Mennonite Women at the beginning of the 21 st century

A final short chapter will bring the survey up the present. It will address the dramatic changes for Mennonite women and challenges facing Mennonite churches in light of the feminist movement of the 1970s onwards.

## Conclusion

### ***[Attachment III]***

Proposal to MHSC from MMHS Dec 6, 2003

Two years ago (2001) the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society (MMHS) forwarded a recommendation to the MHSC to establish a monument to conscientious objectors (COs) in WWII. A feasibility study committee was struck to study the idea. Members included Jake Peters, David Schroeder, J .M. Klassen, Esther Epp- Thiessen, Leonard Doell, and me. The committee reported back the following year in Abbotsford with a number of recommendations, which included creating a web site, establishing a monument, and holding a symposium dealing with COs of WWII. None of the recommendations were acted upon at that time by the national Society. Since then MMHS has a committee working on a provincial monument, the Mennonite Heritage Centre is working on an educational web site for public school children, and the HPCCC (Historic Peace Church Continuing Committee) has been contacted to consider erecting a national monument to Canada's COs.

I believe that the actions of our predecessors can continue to impact people today if we are educated about them. The story of Canada's COs is one of faith, determination, and standing up for what is right in the face of adversity. Their story can influence us today. For example the actions of the COs in WWII have been an influence for some members of the CPT (Christian Peacemaker teams) in Baghdad. But this story cannot have an impact if the story is not told.

Last summer I visited Clear Lake in Riding Mountain National Park where my grandfather spent time as a CO in 1941. I took a guided historic tour of the area. The tour guide pointed out many points of interest about Clear Lake and its development from the 1920s to the present. I asked him where the CO camps were. He looked at me with a puzzled look on his face and asked what a CO was. I felt sheepish; I shouldn't be using abbreviations in a context like this. I asked again - where were the camps where the conscientious objectors worked during WWII. The guide asked what a conscientious objector was. I explained to him that COs were people who objected to the war on religious grounds and worked in labour camps or other industries during the war. There was no awareness of the COs work or even what they were.

The COs are now in their late 70s to mid 80s and they are disappearing. Aspects of the CO story will be lost if research is not done soon. Did you know that CO teachers taught Japanese internees? Did you know that COs help build a top secrete war ship made of ice? (see handout for research topic suggestions)

The Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg has agreed that this topic is one Of importance and is willing to be involved in planning a symposium about COs. Because the CO experience was on a national scale involvements of the provincial and national societies is important.

Therefore I move that:

1. A symposium on Canadian Conscientious objectors in WWII be supported by MHSC.

2. That provincial societies encourage and promote this symposium and topic in their constituencies.
3. That funds of \$1000.00 be made available for the planning and carrying out of such a symposium.

Conrad Stoesz Dec 6, 2003

**Topic idea for research dealing with Canadian Conscientious Objectors.**

**Conrad Stoesz June 5, 2003.**

William Lyon Mackenzie King, Alternative Service and the Mennonites

B.B. Janz negotiating on his own terms

Kanadier and Russlaender differences leading up to WWII

CO work in the National Parks

Societies responses to Mennonite COs

2 churches burned in Vaxhall, Alberta

Rev. Jacob Janzen's house in Vineland searched by RCMP Mennonitische Rundschau printing front and back in English (1940) Vineland United Church ransacked

Niagra United Mennonite church searched for munitions and Nazi youth materials.

German teacher in Drake forcibly removed by legionaries.

Teaching certificates revoked eg. Gerhard Ens, John Bergen.

Search of the Hershel Mennonite Church for munitions.

Defending the peace position before a judge.

CO work in hospitals.

CO work with native peoples.

- There is information at the United Church (Winnipeg) archives

CO work in factories.

COs in prison.

CO work in mines.

Ramifications of young men being away from home.

- They only got 25 cents a day, those in the military got \$1.25

Women without men

How the church supported the COs advocating before the judge visiting the COs

Writing letters

Help to the CO families

The Habakkuk project and the COs.

- there is some material on this but very little about how the COs were involved in building this ice battle ship in Jasper National Park in 1943.

Lasting legacy

Native Ministries

Health care

Bible Camps

Lumber - Menno Wiebe

It has been suggested that one of the reasons 50% joined the military is because Mennonites no longer controlled the education of their young people (Were the Old Colony that wrong in moving to Mexico?). True or false.

The Ontario Peace Committee.

Swiss Mennonite churches in Ontario seem to have much more information and on top of things more than in western Canada

CO Reunions and the ongoing teaching of Peace

Relationship between different COs. Mennonite denominations, Jehovah's Witnesses, Hutterites, Doukhabours, "Main line" people, Irish, English German, Russian etc.

Rev. J.B. Martin and Erb Street Mennonite Church's support of their COs.

Herman Rempel war vet, later in life turned CO.

Peter Loewen war vet, brother Abe Loewen CO.

Peter Brandt war vet, brother Ed Brandt CO teacher in Northern Manitoba.

Panel discussion. Have a CO from the camps, farm, health care, non combatant all on one panel give background, audience ask questions.

Compare Canadian COs and USA CPS.

Theological basis for pacifism - Harry Huebner, Helmut Harder, J. Denny Weaver.

Conscientious objection today - Matt Schaff, Lisa Martens

Did Kanadier and Russlaender have proportionally the same number men with CO status.

Peace teachings since WWII.

***[Attachment IV]***

**Report on Mennonite Human Rights Museum Inc. to MHSC, December 6, 2003**

By Jake Peters, interim MMHS and MHSC representative

Royden asked me to represent MHSC on the committee exploring the participation of the Mennonite community ( I also represented MMHS) in the Asper Foundation's proposal to build the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) at the Forks. "Dr. Asper's vision is to create a distinctive, architectural exceptional museum that will inspire and project the Canadian commitment to human rights, freedom, democracy and diversity to the world." (Promotional Brochure) This is viewed as a partnership of the Asper Foundation, the Forks, and three levels of government

**Vision :** ( quoted from Promotional Brochure)

"In the current vision, the theme of "light versus dark" will resonate throughout the museum, beginning in the atrium awash with light of Canada's sunniest province. The intention is to have the visitor experience complete transformation from leaving the outside world to being completely surrounded by ideas and insights the museum embodies. "

"To that end the visitor will enter through a sculpture plaza, among works of art that evoke tolerance and intolerance, light and darkness and then be plunged into a sequence of interactive galleries where he or she will be challenged to confront inhumanity and its causes. After going through the sculpture plaza, the visitor will enter the Museum's 920 square meter (10,000 square foot) grand Hall."

"The Museum will offer the visitor a number of options including the Electronic Forum, the Destination Film, permanent galleries, temporary exhibitions and other program spaces such as lecture theatres, cinemas, TV studios, gift shops and cafes."

"Among the Permanent Galleries proposed will be: The Causes or Introduction, The Hall of Fame/Walk of shame, The Holocaust gallery, The Canadian Stories, human Rights Crises and Responses and the Canadian Commitment." "Two of the proposed highlights of the Museum will be the Garden of Contemplation, which will allow visitors to temporarily step out of the intensity of the permanent galleries and other facilities of the Museum. The second is the Tower of Hope, where visitors will have the opportunity to express their opinions about human rights, what they have learned and what the subject means to them."

"In the Tower, visitors will also be able to visit the Hall of Constitutions where they can study the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms including replicas of different charters and constitutions from around the world."

"They can ascend to an even higher level in the Tower and directly see the Beacon of Justice, which is a central display that explains that the light of justice burns brighter with every person who commits to its cause. On the visitor's touch, the light of justice will burn a little brighter."

The vision also includes a National Student Program that will sponsor 100,000 high school students and their chaperones from across Canada. Programs will also be used to educate and sensitize our military personnel, police officers and teachers.

#### **TIME FRAME :**

The project was announced on April 17, 2003. A sod turning ceremony was held on October 25 along with the initiation of the architectural competition. It is anticipated that the selection of the architect will be announced on July 1, 2004, with construction to start in 2005.

#### **COMMITMENTS OF SUPPORT :**

The promotional packet contains endorsement letters from 16 religions, ethnic and cultural organizations, most addressed to The Honourable John Chretien, encouraging the federal government to support this project. "So far, the Aboriginal, Japanese, Jewish, Ukrainian, Chinese, Franco Manitoba, Canadian Francophone and Acadian, Women's Rights, and Gay and Lesbian communities, have unanimously, after careful study, endorsed the Museum plans." Ken Reddig wrote a letter (May 27, 2003) to Gail Asper expressing personal support for the project, and informing her about Mennonite Human Rights Museum Inc. committee interest, and their wish to make a presentation on the Mennonite experiences at a future date.

#### **PROPOSED CAPITAL FINANCING :**

Phase A \$200.0 million  
Government of Canada 50%  
Province of Manitoba 10%  
City of Winnipeg 10%  
Private sector 30%

#### **MENNONITE HUMAN RIGHTS MUSEUM INC. (MHRMI)**

Several members from the 50th Anniversary Committee (celebrated the arrival of post WWII Mennonite refugees), namely, John and Elsie Funk, Henry Bergen, Wanda Andres, and Nettie Dueck, decided to pursue CMHR proposal. Ken Reddig also liked the proposal and has joined the group. To date this group has met for four formal meetings. This group saw themselves as acting largely as facilitators to enable participation of the Mennonite community in this venture. Their goals are to generate interest and publicity in the Mennonite community, to seek as wide a representation from this community as possible, and to search for persons who have special gifts that could be harnessed. Their initial mission statement states "the committee is established to promote understanding of the unjust suffering of innocent people because of the

callousness, prejudice and inhumanity of governing authorities, to commemorate and celebrate the triumph of the human soul over adversity, of love over hate, of hope over despair, of forgiveness over wrong. to this end we want to participate in the development of the Hun13ll rights Museum to be established at The Forks in Winnipeg." This is now being refined.

At the August 7th meeting the group selected Mennonite Human Rights Museum Inc. as the official name for the organization, and elected a slate of officers. This basic structure is necessary for registering the organization, establishing a bank account, seeking charitable status, and generating an identity in the community. At the Nov 6th meeting it was reported that registration is complete, and that a bank account had been set up at the Crosstown Credit Union on Henderson Hwy. Charitable status must still be secured.

I have attended the last three meetings as a representative of the MMHS and the MHSC. Other organizations such as Mennonite Heritage Centre, and Mennonite Heritage Village have also been contacted. Efforts are being made to increase the coordinating committee to about ten persons, with specialized subcommittees to be added later to provide museum content and presentation input

#### **MHSC ACTION PROPOSAL:**

1. There is a need to provide a national Mennonite endorsement, and I would propose that the executive of MHSC write two letters. First, a letter supporting the proposal for The Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and offering to share the Mennonite story, should be sent to Gail Asper, managing director of the Asper Foundation, with copy to Henry Bergen. Second, a letter should be sent to Henry Bergen, chair of MHRMI, acknowledging our support of the initiatives taken by the committee, and offering further support to the group.
2. Given that the MHRMI wishes to have national representation, I would propose that we appoint the chair of MHSC, or his designate, to serve on this committee, or act as a consultant
3. To raise the awareness of this project in the Mennonite community, I would propose that each provincial historical society publicize this project, and forward any local stories of Mennonite experiences deemed appropriate to MHRMI. Identifying gifted persons who could serve as consultants would also be a valuable contribution.

***[Attachment V]***

MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2003

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

*Robert V . Bender, B.Math. , CA .*

*Chartered Accountant*

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AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors of Mennonite Historical Society of Canada:

I have audited the statement of receipts and disbursements of Mennonite Historical Society of Canada for the year ended October 31, 2003. This statement is the responsibility of the Society's directors. My responsibility is to express an opinion on this statement based on my audit.

Except as explained in the following paragraph, I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the statement is free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall statement presentation.

In common with many non-profit organizations, the Society derives part of its revenue from the general public in the form of contributions which are not susceptible to complete audit verification. Accordingly, my examination of revenue was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the organization and I was not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to receipts and cash balances.

In my opinion, except for the effect of adjustments, if any, which I might have determined to be necessary had I been able to satisfy myself concerning the revenue referred to in the preceding paragraph, the accompanying statement of receipts and disbursements presents fairly, in all material respects, the cash transactions of the organization for the year in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

Baden , Ontario .

December 4, 2003

Chartered Accountant

**MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA**  
**STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS - Note 1**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2003**

|   | 2003 - Actual    | 2003 - Budget    | 2002 - Actual    |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Receipts - Undesignated</b>                            |                  |                  |                  |
| Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada                    | \$ 500           | \$ 500           | \$ -             |
| Evangelical Mennonite Conference                          | 200              | 200              | 200              |
| Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren                 | -                | 500              | 500              |
| MHS British Columbia                                      | -                | 500              | 500              |
| MHS Alberta   | 500              | 500              |                  |
| MHS Saskatchewan  | -                | 500              | 1,000            |
| MHS Manitoba  | 1,000            | 500              | 500              |
| MHS Ontario   | 1,000            | 500              | 500              |
| Chair of Mennonite Studies                                | 250              | 250              |                  |
| <del>Hanover-Steinbach Historical Society</del>           | -                | -                | 200              |
| Donations   | 2,150            | 500              | 500              |
|   | <u>5,100</u>     | <u>4,450</u>     | <u>3,900</u>     |
| <b>Receipts - Designated</b>                              |                  |                  |                  |
| Mennonites in Canada, Book sales                          | 1,113            | 1,000            | 2,022            |
| Mennonite Church Canada, Donation <i>(lost year)</i>      | 1,000            | 1,000            | 1,500            |
| Donations - CMEO  | 500              | 500              |                  |
| GST Rebate  | 1,537            | 1,000            | -                |
| Royalty / Interest  | 538              | 600              | 641              |
| Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites                   | 8,000            | 8,000            | 10,000           |
| Annual meeting expenses                                   | 725              | 1,000            | 713              |
|   | <u>13,413</u>    | <u>13,100</u>    | <u>14,876</u>    |
| <b>Total Receipts for the year</b>                        | <u>18,513</u>    | <u>17,550</u>    | <u>18,776</u>    |
| <b>Disbursements - Operating</b>                          |                  |                  |                  |
| Board expenses  | 2,936            | 5,000            | 3,568            |
| Office supplies & expenses                                | 467              | 500              | 147              |
| Auditor / Miscellaneous                                   | 709              | 600              | 660              |
| Reprint of MIC Volume I                                   | -                | -                | 6,807            |
|   | <u>4,112</u>     | <u>6,100</u>     | <u>11,182</u>    |
| <b>Disbursements - Designated</b>                         |                  |                  |                  |
| Mennonites in Canada - Comprehensive volume               | 1,105            | 1,000            | -                |
| Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites                   | 2,000            | 8,500            | 13,547           |
|   | <u>3,105</u>     | <u>9,500</u>     | <u>13,547</u>    |
| <b>Disbursements - Committees</b>                         |                  |                  |                  |
| Archives & CMEO   | -                | 5,000            | 4,581            |
| Canadian World History Conference                         | -                | 5,000            | -                |
| Symposia  | -                | 500              | -                |
|   | <u>-</u>         | <u>10,500</u>    | <u>4,581</u>     |
| <b>Total Disbursements for the year</b>                   | <u>7,217</u>     | <u>26,100</u>    | <u>29,310</u>    |
| <b>Excess (Deficiency) of Receipts over Disbursements</b> | <b>11,296</b>    | <b>(8,550)</b>   | <b>(10,534)</b>  |
| <b>Cash &amp; investments beginning of year</b>           | <u>31,997</u>    | <u>31,997</u>    | <u>42,531</u>    |
| <b>Cash &amp; investments end of year - Note 2</b>        | <u>\$ 43,293</u> | <u>\$ 23,447</u> | <u>\$ 31,997</u> |

**MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA  
 NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS  
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2003**

**1. Basis of Accounting:**

This financial statement has been prepared on the cash basis. This is consistent with the basis employed in prior years. As a result, a balance sheet or statement of financial position is not presented. Details of the Society's more material assets, its investments and inventory, are provided in Notes 2 and 3.

No accounts receivable or payable are accrued and reflected on the statement. Any revenue or expenses relating to the October 31, 2003 fiscal year which were received or paid after the end of the year, will be included with the next year's transactions. Since the unrecorded receivables and payables are relatively immaterial when compared with the other assets, the cash basis results approximate those determined with the generally accepted accrual method in all material respects.

The value of donated products and services are not included in revenue or expenses.

**2. Cash and investments**

The cash and investments are deposited with Mennonite Savings & Credit Union Ontario as follows:

|  | 2003          | 2002          |
|--|---------------|---------------|
|  | \$            | \$            |
| Chequing account                                   | 16,530        | 5,473         |
| Member shares & ownership benefit account          | 945           | 924           |
| Term deposit - 12 months @ 2.6 % - due April, 2004 | 5,000         | 5,000         |
| Term deposit - 30 days                             | <u>20,817</u> | <u>20,601</u> |
|  | <u>43,292</u> | <u>31,998</u> |

Note: \$7,500 of the Cash and investments has been designated by the Board of Directors as a subvention for the Mennonites in Canada Comprehensive Volume.

**3. Inventory of books for resale**

The Society has an inventory of books in the "Mennonites in Canada" series available for sale. The inventory's caretaker states that the unaudited cost of inventory on hand was the following as at October 31:

|  | 2003            | 2002            |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
|  | <u>\$31,300</u> | <u>\$32,874</u> |