

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Mennonite Historical Society of Canada**

Saturday, January 21, 2017 9:00 a.m.

Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Present:

1. Alf Redekopp, Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada
2. Alice Unrau, Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta
3. Barb Draper, Member-at-Large, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario
4. Barry Dyck, Mennonite Heritage Village
5. Bert Friesen, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
6. Bethany Leis, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario
7. Conrad Stoesz, Treasurer, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
8. David Neufeldt, Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta
9. Hans Werner, Mennonite Church Canada
10. Jake Buhler, Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan
11. Jon Isaak, Centre for MB Studies, Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
12. Karl Koop, Mennonite Church Canada
13. Korey Dyck, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Mennonite Church Canada
14. Laura Unger, Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia
15. Laureen Harder-Gissing, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies
16. Richard Lougheed, Société d'histoire mennonite du Québec
17. Royden Loewen, Vice President, Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies
18. Don Kroeker, Evangelical Mennonite Conference
19. Lawrence Klippenstein, guest

Regrets: Richard Thiessen, president; Lucille Marr, Société d'histoire mennonite du Québec

1. Welcome and Introductions:
Royden Loewen called the meeting to order. He introduced the meeting as a time for listening to each other, as a family gathering, as a place to be inspired and receive counsel from each other. MHSC is federation of institutions represented by historians and archivists around the table, all with stories to share.
Everyone was asked to introduce themselves.
2. Devotional:
Jon Isaak presented a devotional that described the role of the historian as one that reminds (about the past) and imagines (about the future). He reminded us about the changing times particularly with in the church denominational structures, and made a comparison to other changes in the history of the church. "When you're in the middle of a reformation it can feel unsettling," he said. "Israel turned to the Psalter in uncertain times. The NT church also turned to the psalter." Jon then read Psalm 121 (I lift up mine eyes to the hills. From where does my help come...) and offered a prayer to God for guidance in our meeting.
3. Minutes: M/S/C (Alf Redekopp/ Bert Friesen) to accept the minutes of the annual meeting of 16 January 2016 as distributed and reviewed.
4. Business arising from the minutes
a) MHSC website: Nothing further to report.
5. Agenda: M/S/C (Barry Dyck/Barb Draper) that the agenda be accepted as distributed.

6. Ratification of committees: M/S/C (Alf Redekopp/Bert Friesen) that the Committee roster for 2016-2017 be accepted as follows:
 - a. Canadian GAMEO editorial committee: Bert Friesen (chair), Alice Unrau (Alberta), Victor Wiebe (Saskatchewan), Alf Redekopp (Manitoba), Richard Thiessen (managing editor & representing British Columbia), Sam Steiner (associate managing editor and representing Ontario), Zacharie Leclair (Quebec).
 - a. Archives Committee: Laureen Harder-Gissing (chair) (Ontario), Conrad Stoesz, Laura Unger (B.C.), Alice Unrau, (Alberta), Jake Buhler (Saskatchewan), Jon Isaak (CMBS), Korey Dyck (MHC).
 - b. Mennonite Archival Image Database Management (MAID) group: Conrad Stoesz (chair), Alf Redekopp, Laureen Harder-Gissing, Alice Unrau.
 - c. DVCM committee: Royden Loewen (chair), Marlene Epp, Lucille Marr, Pam, Peters-Pries, Leonard Doell, Brian Froese and Laureen Harder-Gissing.
 - d. Genealogy (task force): Bert Friesen (chair), Sam Steiner, Cary Sweet.
 - e. A People of Diversity (APOD) Project: Royden Loewen (chair), Lucille Marr, Laureen Harder-Gissing, Conrad Stoesz, Brian Froese, Bruce Guenther, Pam Peters-Pries and Marlene Epp.

7. Dissolution of Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Inc.: The final step in this process happened in 2016. The Society is no longer incorporated. It continues as a registered charity in Canada.

8. MHSC Constitution and By-Laws: It was reported that the board received a notice of motion of some wording changes which would allow for a category of membership for associate **institutional** membership. An electronic vote will be taken in 60 days.

9. Reports from the Provincial Societies
 - a) Quebec: Richard Lougheed shared regrets from past president Lucille Marr, who became ill shortly before travelling. He reviewed the written report.
 - b) Ontario: Barb Draper presented the report. Laureen Harder-Gissing added that Josh and Laura Enns have been appointed as the new hosts of the Brubaker house.
 - c) Manitoba: Hans Werner reported and highlighted aspects from the written report. A correction was noted -- the Mennonite Village Museum had not received the award mentioned in the written report. There were some comments and questions about the history of the migration of people of Mennonite descent from the former Soviet Union via Germany to Manitoba in the last 20 years.

Coffee Break: During the morning break, the MHSC Award of Excellence was presented to Dr. Helmut t. Huebert (post-humously) and Dr. Lawrence Klippenstein.

Announcement: It was announced that a one-year post-doctoral fellowship in honor of George K. Epp had been established at the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies through a gift from Dr. Peter Letkemann. Dr. Peter Letkemann announced that Dr. Aileen Dyck will be the recipient of the **George K. Epp Post Doctoral Fellowship**.
 - d) Saskatchewan: Jake Buhler reported on behalf of the MHSS. In addition to the written report, he shared stories about the use of music, art and drama in telling the Saskatchewan Mennonite story.
 - e) Alberta: David Neufeldt highlighted aspects of the written report. Alice Unraus added comments about work on GAMEO and MAID.

- f) British Columbia: Laura Unger reported that their society president Richard Thiessen was very sorry to miss these meetings. Question was asked about Don Fehr who has also often been around the table at the MHSC meetings and greetings conveyed.
10. President's Report: Royden Loewen read Richard Thiessen's report.
11. MHSC Award of Excellence was awarded during the morning refreshment break.
12. Project Reports
- a) Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites (DVCM): Royden Loewen reminded us of the long-time relationship with MCC Canada with regards to support and funding. He highlighted aspects of his report and upcoming conferences.
- b) Mennonite, War, and Newcomer Project: Royden Loewen clarified that the funding which had originally been expected was non-existent, but that this project was still alive, in the light of the upcoming 100th anniversary of the migration from Russia that began in 1923. The projects remains on the books.
- c) A People of Diversity (APOD) Project: Royden Loewen reported that this project will include a conference in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of MHSC which will focus on Mennonites in Canada since 1970. He reported on the committee's recent conference call and invited suggestions for potential speakers and topics.
- d) Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO) report: Bert Friesen reported on behalf of the GAMEO Management board that Richard Thiessen would be distributing a managing editor's report. He shared that there is good cooperation with similar projects such as the *Mennonitisches Lexicon* in Germany. He also shared that having the project lodged with Mennonite World Conference was also resulting in further positive relationships. For example, congregational entries from Kenya may soon be included. The Canadian GAMEO Editorial Committee did not meet this year, but the provincial sub-committees have submitted reports to the managing editor.
13. Genealogy Committee (Task Force) Report: Bert Friesen reported that the new website will soon be ready for testing. Glenn Penner has agreed to maintain the old site in the mean time.
14. Archivists Committee Report: Laureen Harder-Gissing reported that archivists had met 3 times in the days just prior to this annual meeting. They had received a report about periodical holdings at the various centres and agreed to consult with each other before culling and discarding items. They also had talked about a review of collection mandates. The major decision was to accept a proposal from MHSBC to expand MAID to included archival descriptions of all archival holdings and changed the name from Mennonite Archival Image Database to Mennonite Archival Information Database. It was also reported that the Evangelical Mennonite Conference had been accepted as a 9th partner in MAID.
15. MAID Management Group: Conrad Stoesz highlighted aspects from the written report.
16. *Mennonites in Canada*, Vols. 1-3: Jon Isaak presented a proposal and offer which he had received from Jeremy Wiebe which involved the creation of a website from which the 3-volume set could be ordered for \$35.00 (including postage & handling), and that the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies would store the books at no cost, and would facilitate the shipping of the orders. M/S/C (Alf Redekopp/Barb Draper) to accept proposal.

17. Travelling Exhibits: Korey Dyck reported that the idea he had earlier described has been tabled.
18. Founding Leaders of MHSC video project: Korey Dyck reported that Andrew Wall has offered to interview J.J. Friesen this year, finishing the last of the three interviews of founding members of the Society.
19. Institutional Reports
 - a) Evangelical Mennonite Church Archives: Don Kroeker reviewed the history of the archives which were housed at conference office and moved to the Mennonite Heritage Centre last year. He also mentioned the plan to hire a contract archivist to process their collection. The EMC are also working at updating GAMEO articles and have joined the MAID project. There was no written report.
 - b) Mennonite Archives of Ontario & MCEC: Laureen Harder-Gissing spoke about upcoming exhibits and presentations, and their presence on social media Instagram.
 - c) Chair in Mennonite Studies / D.F. Plett Research Foundation: Royden reported on the creation of the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies which brought together these two institutions, as well as the creation of an endowed professorship in Russian Mennonite Studies in honor of Dr. Paul Toews.
 - d) Mennonite Heritage Village: Barry Dyck reported on highlights from this past year. With the help of Mennonite World Conference they have created an interactive world map showing where Mennonites live today. A monument honouring Conscientious Objectors has been installed this past year. Their Genealogy Day has been a highlight for many.
 - e) Mennonite Heritage Centre of Mennonite Church Canada. Korey Dyck highlighted aspects from his written report. Korey also shared that the MC Canada Future Direction Task Force and restructuring had resulted in the recent notice of termination of his employment. Hans Werner explained that a three-party proposal which included Mennonite Church Canada, Canadian Mennonite University and Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies had been developed to provide a sustainable ongoing archival function through Mennonite Heritage Centre and these partners. Words of appreciation to Korey were expressed by several members on behalf of MHSC.
 - f) Centre for MB Studies/MB Historical Commission: Conrad Stoesz distributed a coloured print copy of Jon Isaak's report and highlighted aspects from it. (Jon was on an air port run, as co-host of the meeting.)
 - g) Mennonite Central Committee Canada: No report.
 - h) Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies: Laureen Harder-Gissing reported on the creation of a Global Anabaptist Mennonite Historian Network on Facebook which had grown out of the meeting during the Mennonite World Conference sessions in 2015.
20. General Discussion Regarding Future Goals for MHSC.
Korey Dyck identified three items:
 - a) increased connections with individuals and congregations on a intentional basis.
 - b) increased digital convergence -- "putting stuff out there will drive interest to history."
 - c) networking globally.
 Other ideas and topics mentioned: project funding versus sustainable funding; 500-year anniversaries (2017, 2025, 2027); historian/archivist network meeting in 2021 at MWC
21. Institutional Membership Request: It was reported that the board had received and accepted two new members: Humanitas and Mennonite Heritage Museum, both from BC.

22. Financial Statements for 2015-16: The statements received that had been e-mailed were reviewed. M/S/C (Barry Dyck and Bert Friesen) to accept these financial statements.
23. Budget for 2016-17: Conrad Stoesz presented the Budget for 2016-17 and highlighted the items that had changed since the board meeting. M/S/C (Alice Unrau and Barry Dyck) to accept the budget presented.
24. Appointment of an auditor: M/S/C (Korey Dyck/Laura Unger) to appoint Rod Ewert to be auditor for the coming year.
25. Report of the Nominations Committee: M/S/C (Jon Isaak / Richard Lougheed) to accept the report.
26. Appointment of a Nominations Committee: M/S/C (Dave Neufeldt /Bethany Leise) that Jon Isaak and Richard Lougheed serve for the coming year.
27. New business – none
28. Next meetings
 - a. Alberta 19-20 January 2018
 - b. Manitoba – November 2018 (MHSC 50th anniversary Conference) (date to be confirmed)
 - c. Quebec (Jan. 2020) (invitation received - to be confirmed)
29. Adjournment 3:40 p.m.

Recorded by Alf Redekopp