

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

Saturday, January 17, 2015, 8:30 a.m.
Community Education Room
Conrad Grebel University College
Waterloo, Ontario

Present:

Lucille Marr, MHSC President, Société d'histoire mennonite du Québec
Royden Loewen, MHSC Vice President, Chair of Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg
Richard Thiessen, MHSC Treasurer, Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia
Alf Redekopp, MHSC Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada
Maurice Martin, MHSC Member at large, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario
Don Fehr, Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia
David Neufeldt, Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta
Wes Berg, Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta
Jake Buhler, Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan
Bert Friesen, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
Barb Draper (Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario)
Richard Lougheed, Société d'histoire mennonite du Québec
Laureen Harder-Gissing, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
Conrad Stoesz, Mennonite Church Canada
Jon Isaak, Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches/MB Historical Commission
Barry Dyck, Mennonite Heritage Village (Steinbach, Manitoba)
Marlene Epp, Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies (Waterloo, Ontario)
Jeremy Wiebe, (Ontario) (Youth representative, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada)
Linda Hecht, member of Canadian GAMEO Editorial Group, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario
Leonard Chester, Brethren in Christ (guest)
Timothy Epp, Ontario (guest)
Andrea Dyck, (Manitoba) Plett Foundation & MHV staff (guest)
Sam Steiner (guest)

REGRETS and greetings : Regrets from Vic Wiebe, Korey Dyck and Glen Klassen were received.
Greetings from Lawrence Klippenstein and Ted Friesen were conveyed.

1. President Lucille Marr called the meeting to order, welcomed the group to Grebel's new facilities, and invited everyone to introduce themselves.
2. **Opening devotional:** Laureen Harder-Gissing spoke about how Edward Ball (descendant of a wealthy American family) approached writing a family history of the Ball family, in which he included the history of the Ball slaves. She read an excerpt from his book entitled, *Slaves in the family* (Ballantine Books, 1998), consisting of a "not-perfect" conversation which dealt with both looking back at history and moving forward using the image of crossing a bridge without knowing what's on the other side. Only God knows what's on the other end (of the bridge and of history).

3. **Minutes** of 18 January 2014 meeting: Alf reviewed the minutes. Acceptance **M/S/C (Alf Redekopp/Bert Friesen)**.

4. **Business Arising**

a. Ratification of Committees: M/S/C (Alf Redekopp / Bert Friesen)

- i. Canadian GAMEO editorial committee: Bert Friesen (chair), Wes Berg, Victor Wiebe, Alf Redekopp, Linda Huebert Hecht, Richard Lougheed, Richard Thiessen (managing editor), Sam Steiner (associate managing editor), Zacharie Leclair, French editor
- ii. Archives Committee: Conrad Stoesz, Richard Thiessen, Dave Neufeldt, Jake Buhler, Laureen Harder-Gissing, Jon Isaak, Richard Lougheed
- iii. Mennonite Archival Image Database Management (MAID) group: Conrad Stoesz, Korey Dyck, Alf Redekopp, Laureen Harder-Gissing
- iv. DVCM committee: Royden Loewen, (chair), Marlene Epp, Lucille Marr, Pam Peters-Pries, Leonard Doell, Ken Reddig
- v. Genealogy (task force): Bert Friesen, Sam Steiner, Cary Sweet

b. Mennonite Heritage Village – new member of MHSC website: Sam & Richard have yet to explore potential updates.

5. **Approval of Agenda:** Agenda was reviewed and accepted with a minor addition

a. Motion to dissolve MHSC Inc.

Background

On 24 January 2009 the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Incorporated, passed a motion to begin proceedings to transfer the operations of the Society to an unincorporated entity of the same name. The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada approved a new constitution and by-laws on 19 January 2013. The Charities Directorate has been notified of the above actions by the Society, and is awaiting documentation verifying that the Society has surrendered its charter.

With this motion the Society agrees to surrender the charter of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Incorporated. Any assets held by the Corporation will be transferred to the unincorporated Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. Any debts, liabilities, or obligations in the name of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Inc. have been provided for.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada acknowledges that no public or private interest will be prejudicially affected by surrendering its charter.

A noticed will be published in the Canada Gazette indicating that the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Inc. will be applying to the Minister of Industry for leave to surrender its charter pursuant to subsection 32(1) of the *Canada Corporations Act*.

Motion to dissolve Mennonite Historical Society of Canada Incorporated. **M/S/C (Richard Thiessen /Jon Isaak)**.

b. Richard Thiessen agrees to follow up on the appropriate level of liability insurance for MSHC.

6. **Reports from Provincial Societies**

a. British Columbia: Richard Thiessen highlighted aspects from the distributed report from the MHSBC.

b. Alberta: David Neufeldt highlighted aspects of the written report from the MHSA.

c. Saskatchewan: Jake Buhler highlighted aspects from his written report.

d. Manitoba: Bert Friesen reported that a new governance structure for MMHS has been implemented and is still in transition as a society that is moving to become more of a federation of interest groups.

e. Ontario: Maurice Martin highlighted aspects from the distributed report from MHSO and contrasted several aspects with Manitoba's report. MHSO fosters links with other groups like the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Society, the Essex-Kent Historical Association and others. Sometimes MHSO speaks for a group of Mennonites, other times it speaks with a Mennonite groups (i.e. is in conversation with). The Mennonite scene is very diverse in Ontario.

f. Quebec: Richard Lougheed highlighted aspects from the distributed report from the SHMQ. Question: How many Mennonite congregations are there in Quebec? Answer: Church of God in Christ (Mennonite) – 2 congregations; MCEC -- 3 congregations; MB—10 congregations. Membership in these congregations is usually very small; only one congregation has a membership over 100.

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

8. **MHSC 2015 Award of Excellence:**

Barb Draper read the citation which nominated Sam Steiner as the 2015 recipient of the Award. Lucille Marr presented Sam Steiner with the certificate signed by the president and secretary of the MHSC. Sam responded with thanks to the society and acknowledging some of his mentors such as Lorna Bergey and Lorraine Roth, both now deceased, also recipients of the MHSC Award of Excellence. (Photos were taken at before the lunch break in the Lorraine Roth Reading Room.)

9. **Project Reports**

- a. Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites (DVCM): Royden Loewen described the background and history of DVCM sub-committee and its relationship to MCC Canada and highlighted upcoming proposed conferences. A question was raised about the 100th anniversary of the First World War and Mennonites. We were reminded how powerful the use of history can be to change the view of our past. Discussion followed and various resources and projects in process were mentioned. Suggested resources included: a) *Mennonites in Canada* (Vol. 1) by Frank Epp b) *Nonresistance under Test* by E.J. Swalm c) "In Nation Building, decision to avoid war should outweigh single battle" by Scott Taylor in *Embassy Magazine* (Apr. 17, 2013) d) "Worth Fighting For: Canada's Tradition of War Resistance from 1812 to the war on Terror," edited by Lora Campbell, Michael Dawson and Catherine Gidney in *Between the Lines* (Toronto, Spring 2015) e) *The Record* (Kitchener-Waterloo daily newspaper) feature article on Jan. 4, 2015 f) peacequest.ca g) *Canadian Churches and World War I* (Wipf & Stock, 2014), specifically "Quakers & Mennonite C.O.s" by Robynne Heeley and "Mennonite and Anglican Women" by Lucille Marr.
- b. Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia On-line (GAMEO) project: Bert Friesen reported that the GAMEO Canadian Editorial group had met on Thursday. The main role of this group has become to write and endorse templates. They welcomed Zacharie Leclair to their group this year and are delighted that he will work at translating the templates into French. This group also fosters regional groups in Canada that generate content for GAMEO. Bert also reported on behalf

of the GAMEO Management Board. GAMEO is becoming global, multi-language, and multi-regional. The need for paid staff time and a public face / general editor has been identified by the Management Board as a priority as this project grows. The sponsor fees were increased from \$250 to \$300. Lastly, a relationship with the Mennonite Lexikon group in Germany is being fostered. For example, as they receive longer theological articles, if originally written in English and then translated to German for their project, we have been able to get the original English version for use in GAMEO. The governance under Mennonite World Conference is also facilitating new potential ways for becoming global.

- c. Genealogy Task Force : Bert Friesen reported that the the task force had met on Thursday afternoon. The project came to a halt this past year because funding ran out Bert is still hopeful as more funding comes, the work will be completed, and they will have a beta site up and running by 2016.
- d. Archivists Committee: Conrad Stoesz reported that the archives group had reviewed and approved the work of the photograph database task group who met 9 times this past year. A test site was demonstrated at a training session on Friday and received good feedback. The name “Mennonite Archival Image Database” (MAID) was chosen as the name for the project. The task group will be the management group for the project during 2015. The management group will work closely with the archival partners (7 at this time), and be a sub-committee of the Archives Committee. The archival partners are Mennonite Archives of Ontario, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Centre for M.B. Studies, Plett Foundation, MHSS, MHSA and MHSBC.
- e. Mennonites in Canada series: Richard Thiessen reported that Volume 3 is available as an e-book via Scholar’s portal and Internet Archives. Hard copy sales have dried up for all volumes. It was suggested that an e-book of Volume 1 & 2 be created. Laureen Harder-Gissing and Jon Isaak are willing to explore the e-book option for Volumes 1 & 2. **M/S/C (Jon Isaak/Maurice Martin)** that we relinquish copyright for the volumes for which we hold copyright in order to facilitate the creation and dissemination of these volumes as e-books.
- f. New Projects:
 - a) Jake Buhler reported on his traveling exhibit idea.
 - b) Richard Thiessen reported that there was a meeting with Paul Heidebrecht at Conrad Grebel University College about traveling exhibits.
 - c) Founding leaders of MHSC video project. Conrad reported that the Manitoba people are willing to interview Ted Friesen & John J. Friesen of Manitoba, but hope that someone in Alberta would interview Ted Regehr. Conrad was encouraged to be conversation with Dave Neufeldt.
- g. Mennonite Newcomers in Canada project: The MHSC board endorsed this as an official project of the society at its recent meeting on Friday evening.

11. Institutional Reports

- a. Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies: Marlene Epp reported on the history and activities of IAMS and its relationships within the college, university and community. She expressed a

desire for a more formal relationship (i.e. membership in) with MHSC. Several questions were asked and answered. **M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/Conrad Stoesz)** that IAMS be accepted as member of MHSC.

- b. Brethren in Christ Historical Society: Leonard Chester (volunteer archivist) highlighted the work that Tim Epp has been doing in the BIC archives on the topic of race relations. He also highlighted that a book entitled *Worthy of the Calling* by Morris Sider has several chapters of Canadian significance in it.
 - c. Mennonite Archives of Ontario: Laureen Harder-Gissing highlighted the number of events that have been hosted related to the new facility.
 - d. Chair in Mennonite Studies: Royden Loewen reported on the history and activities of the Chair in Mennonite Studies, highlighting several aspects from his distributed report.
 - e. Mennonite Heritage Village (Steinbach): Barry Dyck reported on the activities of the MHV, highlighting aspects from his distributed report.
 - f. Mennonite Heritage Centre (MHC) – Mennonite Church Canada: Conrad Stoesz highlighted aspects from Korey Dyck’s written report. The Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) library has moved to a new building and the MHC will be acquiring additional space in the former CMU library stacks.
 - g. Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies: Jon Isaak highlighted aspects from his written report.
12. **Financial Statements:** Richard Thiessen reviewed the Statement of Operations and the Statement of Financial Position as of 31 October 2014. **M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/Bert Friesen) to accept the financial reports for 2014.**
13. **Budget:** Richard Thiessen distributed a revised budget for 2015. **M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/David Neufeldt) that the 2015 budget be accepted.**
14. **Appointment of an auditor:** **M/S/C (Richard Thiessen /Bert Friesen) that Rodney Ewert be appointed as the auditor for next year.** Richard was asked to write a letter of thanks for the services that Rodney has provided.
15. **Nominations Committee Report :** The following slate of officers was presented for 2015.
Accepted by consensus.
Lucille Marr, President
Royden Loewen, Vice President
Richard Thiessen, Treasurer
Alf Redekopp, Secretary:
Barb Draper, Member at Large

16. **Appointment of a Nominations Committee: M/S/C (Bert Friesen /Conrad Stoesz) that Jon Isaak and Richard Lougheed be the nominating committee for 2015.**
17. **Other business:** There was a sharing from Saskatchewan. Jake Buhler mused about Old Colony Mennonites and St. Andrew's College history of Saskatchewan.
18. **Next meetings:** The schedule for meeting dates and locations from 2016-2019 were discussed.
B.C. 15-16 Jan 2016 (confirmed)
Manitoba: 20-21 Jan 2017 (most likely)
Alberta: 19-20 Jan. 1918? (to be confirmed)
Manitoba: 2019??
19. Thanks was expressed to Laureen Harder-Gissing for hosting arrangements, and to Maurice Martin, especially for the tour to an Old Order Mennonite Church and parochial school.
18. **Lucille Marr adjourned the meeting.**

Adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Recorded by Alf Redekopp