

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

Saturday, January 19, 2013, 8:30 a.m.
Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies,
1310 Taylor Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Archives Reading 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, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
Bert Friesen, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
Jon Isaak, Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches/MB Historical Commission
Alf Redekopp, MHSC Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada
Richard Lougheed, Société d'histoire mennonite du Québec
Linda Huebert Hecht, member of Canadian GAMEO Editorial Group, Mennonite Historical Society of
Ontario
David Rempel Smucker, recently moved to Winnipeg from Lancaster
Esther Epp-Tiessen, MCC History book project

1. President Lucille Marr called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and asked each person around the table to introduce themselves.
2. Opening devotional: Alf Redekopp shared a reflection on “re-membering” written by Henri Nouwen, reminding us of Biblical calls to remember (Exodus 13: 3) and offered a prayer.
3. Minutes of 21 January 2012 meeting: Lucille reviewed the minutes. **M/S/C (Lucille Marr/ Alf Redekopp).**
4. Approval of Agenda: Agenda was reviewed and accepted with minor adjustments and re-grouping of several items. Report of MCC History will be with the DVCM report (b & g of item 10).
5. Reports from Provincial Societies
 - a. Quebec: Richard Lougheed highlighted aspects from the distributed report from the SHMQ.
 - b. Ontario: Maurice Martin highlighted aspects from the distributed report from MHSO.

- c. Manitoba: Bert Friesen reported that the governance structure of MMHS is in transition due to a limited number of people who are willing and available to take leadership roles. In addition to items highlighted in the written report, the MMHS also had significant involvement in the setting up of two cairns in memory of Conscientious Objectors to War – one in Winkler and the other in Altona.
- d. Saskatchewan: Jake Buhler reported that MHSS has the problem of a nucleus of participants centred around Saskatoon and that not enough attention can be given to other centres of Mennonite concentration. They hope for better contact between the four museums located in Swift Current, Rosthern, Hague and Osler. Other aspects of the written report were also highlighted.
- e. Alberta: David Neufeldt highlighted aspects of the written report from the MHSA prepared by Bill Janzen. Their society has become a legal incorporated society this year.
- f. British Columbia: Richard Thiessen highlighted aspects from the distributed report from the MHSBC.
6. Report from the MHSC Chair: President Lucille Marr highlighted aspects from her written report that was distributed.
7. MHSC Incorporation Update: Richard Thiessen distributed copies of the constitution. **M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/ Sam Steiner)** that this constitution be accepted and signed.
8. MHSC 2013 Award of Excellence: Bill and Augusta Schroeder arrived at this point in the meeting. After introductions were made, Lucille Marr read the background to the nomination of Bill Schroeder as the recipient and presented him with the certificate. Photos were taken.
9. Project Reports
- a. Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites (DVCM): The committee consisting of Leonard Doell, Ken Reddig, Pam Peters-Pries, Royden Loewen and Lucille Marr convened a meeting at the University of Winnipeg yesterday with several members phoning in. Royden Loewen solicited feedback on the proposed study conferences especially the ones for 2013 and 2014 -- MCC Canada History (Dec. 2013) and X-Mennonites (2014). Significant interest and discussion followed. Esther Epp-Tiessen reported on the writing project on the MCC Canada History (or MCC in Canada). Her report included thanking Royden, Lucille, the archival centres and highlighting the challenges she had encountered and the moments of inspiration as she tried to describe MCC's search for a role and identity. Royden reported that the official book launch is planned for December 13, 2013 to coincide exactly 50 years to the day of the founding meeting in 1963. He is also proposing a study conference for Saturday December 14, where the morning would be dedicated to the more academic critiques and contextualization, and the afternoon be for the more popular stories from workers and administrators. A question was raised whether MHSC should consider having its AGM in December 2013 instead of January 2014, tagged onto this conference (immediately prior to). It was also reported that \$5,000 was still needed for the publishing of the book. The MHSC treasurer was confident that it could be raised this year.
- b. Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia On-line (GAMEO) project: Two printed reports were distributed by Bert Friesen, chair of the GAMEO Management and Canadian Regional Editorial group, which both had meetings just prior to this AGM. In addition to the written reports, Bert reviewed the history of the GAMEO project. Beginning with the 1987 database from Mennonites in Canada volume 2, to the introduction of the internet around 1992, to the start of the Canadian

Mennonite Encyclopedia On-line (CMEO) in 1996, the addition of more North American partners, changing the name, and now in 2012 becoming a sub-group under a global organization (Mennonite World Conference). The focus in the next while will be on testing new software which will handle multiple languages. An operating principal of encouraging local groups to write their own stories will continue. An attempt to encourage other Anabaptist groups to participate will be attempted this next year through adding information from the Hutterite published directories. The Management group also wants to make more use of the consulting editors group. Will there soon be a need to buy staff time versus relying on volunteers? Will it be possible to establish an endowment with a fund goal of \$1,000,000? These are items that will be explored this next year. The Canadian Regional editorial group has continued to play a significant role in setting up the structure, templates and editing of articles. They requested an annual budget of \$1,000 for the committee to meet.

- c. Genealogy Committee report: Bert Friesen distributed a report. The committee hopes to complete the content management system (CMS) for the web site this next year. Approximately \$22,000 in cash and pledges has been raised.
 - d. Archivists Committee: Lauren Harder Gissing reported on the work that the task group (Alf Redekopp, Conrad Stoesz and Lauren) did this year, exploring the creation of a web-based photograph database to improve management of photos, from acquisition to description, to improved search capability and accessibility for users, including e-commerce. The recommendation by PeaceWorks to develop such a system using open-source software is estimated to be \$18,700. The archives task group has been asked to continue to seek additional partners and commitments for this project based on a cost-sharing model. The Archives Committee requested \$1000 for this next year to continue to meet, plus \$6000 spread over two years, toward the software development.
 - e. Global Mennonite History Project: Royden Loewen and Steven Nolt were the authors of the final volume in the series (North American Volume). It was reported that it is currently being translated to Spanish and French.
 - f. Mennonites in Canada – one volume: Richard Thiessen reported that based on a survey he conducted, there is interest by teachers for a one volume history, but not in reprinting Volume 1 in the MIC series. **M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/Victor Wiebe) that MHSC explore making all 3 volumes available as e-books with the major academic databases and freely available from other Mennonites sites.**
M/S/C (Royden Loewen/Maurice Martin) that MHSC write to Mennonite book stores, thrift shops and archives offering them Volume 2 & 3 for free (instead of shredding books). Alf Redekopp agreed to write the letter.
 - g. Mennonites and Human Rights: Alf Redekopp reported that the committee's focus shifted to conference planning after the Just Food art exhibit began to tour. The committee has not dissolved but it also has not scheduled any major focus or activity for the future.
10. **Next meeting:** By consensus it was agreed to authorize the MHSC executive to explore and decide the date for the next AGM. A straw poll showed support (with the exception of two people), for holding the meetings in conjunction with the MCC History conference and book launch, December 12-14, 2013 at the University of Winnipeg.
11. Institutional Reports
- a. Evangelical Mennonite Conference Archives report: Glen Klassen reviewed aspects in the written report.

- b. Brethren in Christ Historical Society: No report was received from Leonard Chester this year.
 - c. Mennonite Archives of Ontario: Laureen Harder Gissing reviewed aspects of her written report. A correction is highlighted (Joseph M. Snyder's trip was in 1908 not 1980).
 - d. Chair in Mennonite Studies: Royden Loewen drew attention to his report that was distributed. Despite great interest at the University of Winnipeg in Mennonite Studies courses, the idea of a major in Mennonite Studies remains relatively inactive. There are some exciting graduate studies which also were highlighted in Royden's report.
 - e. Mennonite Heritage Village (Steinbach): Barry Dyck sent in a report which was distributed but not discussed.
 - f. Mennonite Heritage Centre – Mennonite Church Canada: Alf Redekopp reviewed aspects of his written report that was circulated.
 - g. Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies: Jon Isaak reported that this was his first year attending these meetings, although he wrote a report for last year's AGM. He highlighted parts of his written report.
12. Financial Statements: Richard Thiessen reviewed the Statement of Operations for fiscal year ending 31 October 2012 and the Statement of Financial Position as of 31 October 2012. **M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/Sam Steiner) to accept the financial reports for 2012.** A suggestion was made to somewhere show or report the gross expenses for the AGM.
13. Budget: Richard Thiessen distributed and reviewed the budget proposal for 2013. **M/S/C (Richard Thiessen/Royden Loewen) that the 2013 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 this past year's review.
15. Nominations Committee Report : Recommended that the current executive be re-appointed.
 AGREED by consensus.
 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 (Bert Friesen /Dave Neufeldt) that Sam Steiner and Laureen Harder Gissing be the nominating committee for next year.**
17. Other business: Jake Buhler shared ideas for capturing life today which will inform understanding in the future (ex. aerial photos, villages, buildings... documenting worship today in city and rural settings...) What should we do that would be helpful for the research? What about a travelling library of old Mennonite things...? There was encouragement voiced to make a proposal.
18. **M/S/C (Bert Friesen/Alf Redekopp) to adjourn the meeting.** Adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Recorded by Alf Redekopp