

THE JONES FAMILY

by Joseph Yoder

In 2001 I moved to Northern Indiana to begin my tenure as Director of Menno-Hof. This was very refreshing to move from an area where I basically knew every Amish/Mennonite/English (Amish call anyone who does not speak Pennsylvania Dutch English) person in the area to where I knew a limited number of people. I liked the idea that with every person I met I could begin with a clean slate. I had no preconceived ideas from having known family histories and the local gossip mill.

Two older persons I met were Amelia Jones and her brother, Levi Jones. Both of these folks served as volunteers. Tourists especially enjoyed having them as tour guides. They were both Old Order Amish and were faithful to their religious faith and traditions. They could tell our visitors first hand that the Amish in spite of the romanticized view that many tourists have of them, have the same problems as the rest of society. The value and discipline of a Christian community makes a very significant difference.

I soon discovered there were many more members of the Jones family. They are woven into the fabric of the Anabaptist community of Northern Indiana. You will find members of this family in the Old Order Amish,
...Continued on page 3

Growing Up With The Joneses

by Dorothy Hostetler

I grew up the oldest granddaughter of a large extended Amish family. I enjoyed our large family reunions, playing with cousins and being entertained by our youngest aunts and uncles. We lived a mile down the road from Grandpas and didn't need much of an excuse for a big family gathering at Grandpa's house.

Several times a year we'd get together on weekends or holidays and play games, eat a big meal cooked by Grandma and the aunts, and snack on Grandma's homemade peanut brittle. During the summer, our youngest aunts and uncles, still living at home with Grandpas, would take us on overnight camping adventures.

Once a month, the ladies met to quilt, sew, butcher chickens, or do some gardening project. We relished the summer days when there was no school and we could play with our cousins. We'd go hiking in Grandpa's back forty; our homemade backpacks loaded with marshmallows and hot dogs, and a couple of matches to build a little fire. A pocketknife went along to cut twigs for roasting sticks.

Our extended family is large by any standard. Grandpa's twelve living children, their spouses and more than fifty grandchildren are an energetic bunch. These days, there are more than 100 great-grandchildren in the mix too. There are too many for impromptu family gatherings like we had back in the 70's, but once every summer we gather for a day-long Saturday picnic plus everyone is welcome at our monthly "singings."

Twelve years ago was Grandpa Joneses' 50th wedding anniversary. Several of us thought it would be fun to perform the play, "Cheaper by the Dozen," in honor of Grandpa Jones and their 12 living children. After several months of hard work, we gave two performances for family and close friends. Other people heard about it and wanted to come see it. After some discussion, we gave a number of performances at the old Honeyville school; donating the proceeds to a local family with large medical expenses. This was the beginning of Jones Family Productions.

Since that time, we've performed numerous plays supporting local fundraising efforts. Over the years, these performances have drawn our family together in deeper ways than just a traditional family gathering. Cousins 30 years my junior have become my friends; and I've come to know many of my cousin's children.

It is not our intention to be entertainers. We love the excuse of raising funds for a cause, because it allows us to spend enjoyable family times together. My children are now involved and becoming better acquainted with the ever-growing family circle. I believe the history of working and playing together as a family many years ago serves for family togetherness.

New Managing Director

The newest member of the Menno-Hof staff is Susan Miller of Middlebury, Indiana. Susan grew up in an Amish home in the Shippshewana area and served as a bookkeeper for Lambright's, Inc. for many years. In 1988 she became a Missions assistant in a church plant in Bad Pymont, Germany, sponsored by Rosedale Mennonite Missions. She returned from Germany in 2004 to marry David Miller. Since her marriage she has worked as a teacher and bookkeeper. Susan is proficient in many things and quick to learn the many different aspects of her job. As Susan comes to be our new office manager and the person people will associate with Menno-Hof we are made aware of the tremendous contribution of Miriam Yutzy. Miriam helped Menno-Hof to grow and become what it is today. Over the last almost 20 years and five directors she has been the steadying force that charted the Menno-Hof ship through many waters. Thank-you Miriam and happy retirement!

Long Term Volunteers

by Joseph Yoder

One of the joys of being associated with Menno-Hof is our relationship with our volunteers, both long-term and daily volunteers. Long-term volunteers during the spring months are as follows:

- Bill and Elsie Siemens, (March and April) Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, first term
- Richard and Annie Boshart, (May) from Lebanon, Pennsylvania return for their 4th stint with us
- Dan and Norma Greaser from Clarksville, Michigan, (May and June) first term
- Ora and Rhoda Mast, Lancaster, Pennsylvania 2nd term (June)

We had two visits from former volunteers in May. They were Sue Bontreger and Fred Tillery. Fred will be joining us again in July and August. Every one of these volunteers brings special gifts. We attempt to give them the freedom to exercise those gifts. It would be impossible to continue our ministry without our volunteers. We thank all our volunteers for your generosity and service.

SPRING CELEBRATION What's New at the Hof?

On Friday evening May 21 we had our first Spring Celebration at Menno-Hof.

Our Board and staff invited our members, donors and volunteers. These are the people who have faithfully supported our mission and goals of sharing Jesus and the radical nature of the Anabaptist movement to our community and many visitors. Here's what new for the 2010 season.

- **Gift Shop**— our shop now carries all hand crafted items from the local Amish/Mennonite/Anabaptist Community. Our vendors all have their stories on display with their products. Their stories are fascinating and life giving.

- **Quilt Garden**— the week of May 24 saw our new Quilt Garden entitled "**Paths of Peace**" planted. A volunteer group from Marion Mennonite under the direction of Dana Sommers planted the garden and will maintain it for the thousands of Quilt Garden Tour visitors.



- **Jones Family Play**— "**The Same Amazing Water that the Cows**

Drink" written by screen writer Joel Kauffmann will be presented in June. You will want to see this premiere showing. See announcement.

- **New Sign**— plans are for a brand new sign to replace our faded and outdated sign. The new sign will have an area for announcements and be more visitor friendly.
- **Quilting Group**— we will have local Anabaptist women on site and quilting in our Amish room during the Shippshewana Quilt Festival June 23-26. This group will be spearheaded by Quilter Dena Mullet from Townline Mennonite Church.
- **Singspiration**— since we had many requests to repeat our 2009 Singspiration we are planning for this to be an annual event. This will happen again on Sunday, September 12 at 5:00 p.m. at the Menno-Hof. There will be group singing and special music groups from our extended Anabaptist family. Bring your lawn chairs and voices to sing praises to God.

THE JONES FAMILY ...cont. from page 1

Beachy Amish, Conservative Mennonite and Mennonite Church USA. I suspect they are in other churches as well.

I learned that this family is dynamic and "very little grass grows under their feet." Their fascination with performing plays was truly amazing. They have performed six major plays in the area and all of them have been for charity. In 2008 Menno-Hof celebrated its 20th anniversary. We asked the Jones family to perform a play on the life of Dirk Willems. That was no small feat. Joanna King wrote and directed "The Moment of Truth." The community was

challenged with the radical nature of following Jesus. We had four performances with a total attendance of almost 2400.

Now, we want to do it again. Our theme for 2010 is baptism. In June the Jones family will be back with another play. "The Same Amazing Water the Cows Drink" written by screenwriter Joel Kauffmann and directed by Jones family member Merlin Miller. We trust this will have a similar affect on many people as we reconsider our core values as Anabaptist Christians and what it means to follow Jesus.

**The Jones Family & Menno-Hof Present
An Original New Play On Believers Baptism:**



**THE SAME AMAZING
WATER THAT THE
COWS DRINK**

When the exhibits at an Anabaptist museum come to life, a modern youth, trapped inside for the night, faces the real commitment and cost that comes by saying "yes" to following in Christ's footsteps.

WHEN: June 23 (for youth)
June 25 & 26 at 7 p.m.
June 27 at 3 p.m.

WHERE: Under tent at Menno-Hof, Shipshewana, Indiana

TO RESERVE TICKETS: (260) 768-417 or info@mennohof.org

Tickets are free, but an offering will be taken to support Menno-Hof.

DIRECTOR'S DESK

The decade of the 50s and 60s were prominent for their revival meetings. I recall as a youth how we would arrange our day around the evening revival meeting. There were both Mennonite and Evangelical revival preachers. I recall the big tent in Akron, Ohio, where I went with my father to hear the Humbert family or Kathryn Kuhlman, who was also a faith healer. In the sixties we went to stadiums to hear Billy Graham, probably the most prolific revival preacher in America. My father even attended a Billy Sunday revival in Canton, Ohio.

Our Mennonite revivalists frequenting our community were George Brunk, Andrew Jantzi, Howard Hammer, Myron Augsburg and other less well known preachers. As I attended night after night as a young lad of twelve, and being so shy that I couldn't get out of my seat and walk the sawdust trail, it truly became a long summer for me in 1954. I lived in misery much of that summer thinking Jesus could be returning almost any day.

I finally got relief from my misery when it was announced that a class for baptism would be formed in my home church, Maple Grove Mennonite. It didn't take me very long to contact one of our ministers and tell him I wanted to join. When he asked if I had accepted Christ at our revival meetings I said no. I couldn't wait until he asked me if I wanted to. Yes, was my shy squeaky answer. We prayed the sinner's prayer and I went home a new person, greatly relieved that I was ready for Jesus whenever God would send Him. Later that year I was baptized. In retrospect, I was quite young, but I was totally serious. My baptism meant I was now a member of the Body of Christ in a new way. As a minister I attempted to move the baptismal age higher and help provide nurture for young persons that would lead them toward making a choice for Christ that would lead to baptism.

For me baptism is a beautiful ritual that speaks to our relationship with Christ and the church. But one can not live on ritual alone. A concern I have is that many persons who were baptized have left their "first love" and drifted away. In the Mennonite church we have thousands of college educated young people who have moved to the cities and no longer have a church that they can call their own. They are ethnic Mennonites without a spiritual home. For all of us, regardless of denomination, how can we in a loving and accountable manner call our children to remember in a serious fashion their covenant baptism to follow Jesus?

—Joseph Yoder



MENNO-HOF

AMISH-MENNONITE VISITORS' CENTER

P.O. Box 701

Shipshewana, Indiana 46565

*See and Hear
the Amish-Mennonite Story*

AN INVITATION

We invite you to help in the ministry of Menno-Hof with your tax-deductible contribution. Menno-Hof works at telling the story of how God works in people's lives, past, present and future. Your help in telling that story is greatly appreciated.

Visitors:

January–April 2010: 3,715

May 1988–April 2010: 829,400

Reunion is published quarterly to keep our friends informed of happenings at Menno-Hof. Direct questions or comments to Joseph Yoder, director, at jjyoder@mennohof.org

Menno-Hof Amish-Mennonite Visitors' Center

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