

DIRECTOR'S DESK

If you were to look for Menno-Hof in the yellow pages of a phone book you would need to look under museums. Museums reflect the past. As I walk through them I often think about "how it might have been back then." What might it have been like to live in an era when there were no cars, only horses or bicycles or walking?

Museums tell us about the past but usually do little to lead us to think about today or tomorrow. It may cause me to be grateful that I have the conveniences of today, copy machine vs. hand copying information.

At times Menno-Hof is perceived as a museum. Looking at the past, where Anabaptists have come from, what they experienced, their ability to remain faithful in spite of tongue screws, pitch forks, and fires fueled by human flash is meaningless unless... unless it causes us to reflect on our current faith journey.

The Anabaptist reading of scripture and following Jesus has and continues to call us to see the world through a different lens. In just my first three weeks on the job a person made the statement, "This causes me to rethink how I treat my enemies."

Menno-Hof has and continues to want to "engage the church and the world in meaningful conversation, encouraging faith in and faithfulness to Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective." This is the vision that leads us today.

Our mission is "to creatively interpret and present the history and values of the Anabaptists, building on the foundation of Jesus Christ. Menno-Hof provides a variety of opportunities to experience:

- Stories of God's work in Amish, Hutterite and Mennonite communities,
- An invitation to consider becoming a follower of Jesus, and
- Encouragement for Anabaptists and other Christians in practicing faith discipleship in our world today."

As the new director, this vision and mission is what drew me to Menno-Hof. Not only does it tell the story of old but invites us to the present and future in our journey with Jesus.

—LeRoy Mast



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 – October '08
21,084**

**May '88 – October '08
801,136**

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

Menno-Hof Amish-Mennonite Visitors' Center

P.O. Box 701
510 S. Van Buren Street / S.R. 5
Shipshewana, IN 46565
Tele (260) 768-4117
Fax (260) 768-4118
E-mail: info@mennohof.org
Website: www.mennohof.org

NON-PROFIT ORG

U S POSTAGE

PAID

SHIPSHEWANA IN

46565

PERMIT NO 17

Vol. 18—No. 1 Fall 2008

The Menno-Hof Newsletter

reunion

REFLECTIONS AND THANK YOU

By Joseph Yoder



On October 1, 2001, shortly after the "9/11 event," I began my tenure as director of Menno-Hof.

On October 1, 2008, I handed over the reins of leadership to LeRoy Mast, the new director. I believe the board of Menno-Hof has chosen the right person to lead this organization into the future. When he asked me to write an article reflecting on my time as director I had to say "yes." It is a bittersweet day to think about the wonderful seven years I have been privileged to serve here, but at the same time to look forward to some other projects and activities I want to be involved in. To the many people who have asked me the question of what will I do, let me set the record straight on a few things I know about that question. My wife Jan and I will continue to live in Middlebury. She plans on continuing her position with Hospice of Goshen Hospital with her three day a week schedule. She has found a tremendous amount of satisfaction working and serving hospice patients. At the present time I do not have another commitment related to work. I hope to work on a few projects, one of which is a writing project related to people and stories of the past.

I consider myself a very blessed and fortunate person. I have often stated that I follow a call. The four major calls of my life have been:

- Serving in Costa Rica as a volunteer under Rosedale Missions; here I was privileged to work with Mennonites, Methodists and Catholics and learn a new world view and language.
- Teaching for parts of 22 years: two years in a public high school and 20 as a Junior High teacher at a Mennonite School.
- 17 years as Pastor of a Mennonite Church.
- Director of Menno-Hof for seven years.

If I were to mention all the ways that I came into these assignments of service you would also agree that it was a calling from God. For those of you who know me well you would have to say that God works with flawed human beings. As a student of history and the Bible this has been an ongoing record of God intervening in the lives of people. For that I am totally grateful that God has chosen to not allow us to "our own devices."

What is it that I will carry away from this place? There is a culture that surrounds this organization of Menno-Hof. In capsule form here are a number of things that made this culture both rich and rewarding.

- The message that is presented is Christ-centered.
- We tell the story of the Amish and Mennonites which is my heritage and I love it even with all its flaws.
- There is a strong emphasis on peacemaking. Our message here is one of personal peace with God and also humans making peace with each other. Menno-Hof is a refuge where thousands of people

...Continued on page 2

TRANSITIONS

By LeRoy Mast

Transitions are always, even at best, a bit unnerving. Transitions affect all of us at various times in our lives. Currently we're at the beginning of one as a country. We know we'll have a new president in January, the make up of their staff and cabinet is an unknown, as well as policies and changes for the future.

Menno-Hof is in transition as well. As of October 1, 2008, Joe Yoder, Executive Director for the past seven years, said good bye to Menno-Hof (MH). Joe was and continues to be deeply committed to the mission, vision, and work of MH. As you read his "thank-you" you will begin to sense as he describes, "a call" to the work he has been doing. In spending time with Joe it became clear it was not "work" as it is often perceived or described, getting a pay check. Coming to MH for Joe was an extension of who he was and what he believed.

It is directors such as Joe over the past 20 years that have made MH a "world class destination." It is not only a place to find answers to common questions as to why Amish don't have electricity and Mennonites do, rather to explore areas of faith relating to peace and justice, and loving one's enemy, attempting to make sense of such "blind" faithfulness. It is a place to reflect on one's own faith journey while others relate theirs. Volunteers and staff persons often have the opportunity to respond to questions of faith while inviting others to share their journey.

Transitions are not new for MH. Four persons have served as directors along with many staff, board members and volunteers over the past twenty years. In spite of those changes the challenge to follow the radical call of Christ has remained. That after all is the core of the Anabaptist stories at MH.

VOLUNTEERS are an important part of the story at Menno-Hof. We invite you to consider donating four hours or more per month. You will meet persons from around the world as well as interesting people from close to home. Contact us at **(260) 768-4117** or **info@mennohof.org** for more information.

MEET OUR NEW DIRECTOR



October 1 found a new face at Menno-Hof as we welcomed LeRoy Mast as the next director of Menno-Hof. LeRoy grew up in the Goshen-Middlebury, Indiana, area. Both parents were Amish at his birth but for most of his life he has been involved in Mennonite churches. He attended Bethany Christian High School where he met his wife Sherry. He served in volunteer service, attended Northwest Bible College, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and Fort Wayne Bible, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Sherry is a registered nurse and has worked in public health and as a school nurse. They served as youth directors at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana. LeRoy served as executive director at Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Michigan, 1982-1992. Since Amigo he served as pastor in Grand Marais, Michigan, Hammondspport, New York, and conference minister for New York Mennonite Conference as well as Justice & Peace Advocate for Catholic Charities of Steuben County, New York. They have two married sons: Jeremy, Nikki and three granddaughters in Goshen, Indiana, and Justin, Jessica, and two grandsons in Aurora, Colorado. LeRoy and Sherry are living in the Shippshewana area.

A GREAT PLACE TO SHOP FOR GIFTS!



Menno-Hof has Ten Thousand Villages items and a good selection of Anabaptist books. A great place to shop for gifts!

Ten Thousand Villages items—
10% discount until December 20th.
Menno-Hof members
15% with membership card.

Reflections and Thank You

...cont. from page 1

hear this story. It beats the evening news: a message that there's a better way for us to live.

- A message for Anabaptists and other churches to take seriously the call of Christ to follow Him in a radical manner. What a joy it is to tell the Christian story to baptismal and confirmation students.
- Volunteers and staff that are truly committed to this mission. Every one of these persons has enriched my life in significant ways.
- A beautiful and serene setting: this past September Menno-Hof was given the number one award of "world class destination" of Northern Indiana.
- Meeting people from all over the world. Here we have the opportunity to share our story and the message of Christ in a non-threatening manner. We never tell other groups they are wrong, we simply share our message.
- The skillful manner in which the program shares our story is totally engaging to a 4th grade class or a PhD.
- This culture has allowed me to work with many different facets of society. Here we partner with Anabaptists, the tourist community, local merchants, and anybody else who happens into our location.
- The wonderful community of Shippshewana: where else would you find a sleepy town of 640 residents that can swell to 25,000 on a summer flea-market day?
- A community of donors, churches, members, volunteers, and staff who believe in the mission and vision of Menno-Hof.

And so it is. I leave with a "tear in my eye" and a "heart full of memories" for the wonderful experience of serving in this worthwhile endeavor. To God, and all my friends and associates who were part of this journey, I say gracias, danke, and thank-you.

You can now get the current issue of *Reunion* on line at www.mennohof.org. Also get our *Ponderings from the Hof*, (short meditations) and up-to-date happenings under "*What's Happening*" on our website. We welcome your response by E-mail or regular mail.

BOOK REVIEW

By Sherry Mast

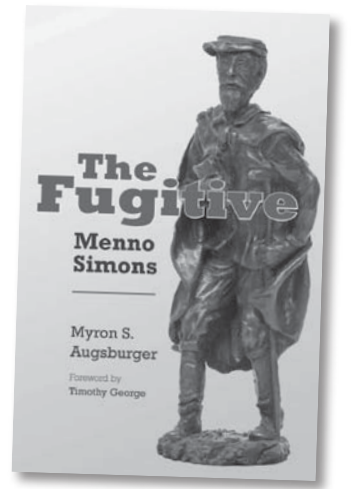
Available at Menno-Hof Bookshop

The Fugitive: Menno Simons by Myron S. Augsburger. Herald Press, 2008, 395 pp., \$14.99.

Many of us have heard the name Menno Simons and know that he has something to do with the Mennonite Church. Myron Augsburger in his historical novel, *The Fugitive*, has made Menno Simon's life come alive from priesthood to a wanted man for his faith. Take a journey with Menno and his family as they search the scripture and live out their faith. Menno often shared his faith and encouraged others in his writings. One day his wife Gertrude shared with him these words of wisdom, "It isn't by putting others down that you have found your greatest strength, it's by simply lifting Jesus higher." In

1560, the final year of Menno Simon's life, he shared with his daughter Bettjie, "...We are just at the dayspring. He is visiting our land. The day will come when there will be freedom and tolerance for differences of faith. You must prepare to live in the changes that will come."

I encourage you to read *The Fugitive*; it is not a boring history book! May it be a challenge to our faith walk now and in the coming new year.



REMINDER: 2008-09 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Each year Menno-Hof offers you the opportunity to become a Menno-Hof member. The drive is now in full swing and many of you have already renewed your memberships or become members for the first time. Your membership card offers you the following benefits:

- Free admission to Menno-Hof
- 15% discount on all books and gift items
- *REUNION*, our quarterly newsletter
- Entry to special events and exhibits

If you haven't already done so, please return the membership form and enjoy the above benefits through 9/30/09. Your membership card will be mailed when your membership form is received.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please enroll me as a 2008-09 member of Menno-Hof as indicated below:

Annual (October 1 renewal for all members)

Individual \$25.00

Family \$40.00 (Parents plus children 16 and under)

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____

Enclosed is my check to Menno-Hof for \$ _____

MAIL TO:

Menno-Hof
PO Box 701
Shippshewana IN 46565