

My time at Menno-Hof: it's been good!

by Dana Sommers

Dana began at Menno-Hof in 2006 as grounds, plant and equipment manager. He retired from that position April 26, 2012.

As I look back over the past 6 ½ years at Menno-Hof, much has changed. I came in as the newest staff member and I leave as the longest term staff member. There has been much change and much of it has been good.

I would never have dreamt of applying at Menno-Hof, but when Joe Yoder, then executive director, called and asked to talk to me about a potential job, I felt that I needed to at least listen to him. I thought I was off the hook when the job description called for a bookkeeper and I was not one. I told Joe that if he would change "bookkeeper" to "grounds keeper" I would think about it. I didn't know at that point that the grounds keeper was leaving also. Joe changed the job description and I took the job.

I knew very little about the ministry of Menno-Hof at that time even though I had the privilege of helping with the Menno-Hof barn raising in 1986. I knew that Menno-Hof was an Amish-Mennonite information center, but now I realize it is so much more than that. Menno-Hof ministers to over 20,000 visitors per year from all over the world. It is not uncommon in the summer to have persons from 3-5 different countries in a given day. Last year we had visitors from all 50 United States and 73 different countries. Menno-Hof's ministry is so broad!

I challenge all Anabaptists to visit Menno-Hof to gain a greater understanding for (cont. on page 3)

Brothers and [now] friends

by Tyler Eash

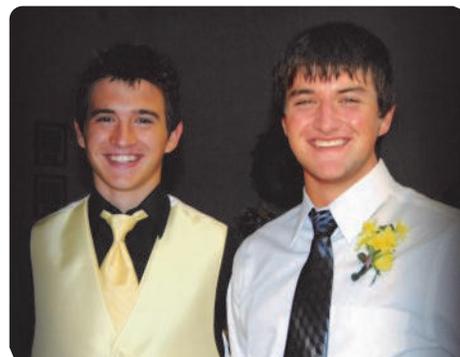
Silence. My relationship to my older brother, Aaron, consisted of little else. We would of course feel free to insert insults, put-downs, and snide remarks where we saw fit though. Our interaction was quite volatile, and it is even possible that we hated each other. The two of us did our best to hide it in public so that others did not see how much we couldn't stand one another, but in reality a wall had been built between us and I didn't know if it would ever be torn down.

As young kids we got along with each other and had a lot of fun. Our two-year age difference didn't matter to us. We enjoyed using our imaginations and pushing the limit when it came to mom and dad's patience. I doubt we will ever forget playing cards together nearly every night after we were supposed to be in bed, and we even picked on our little brothers to make sure that they remembered who was really in charge.

As Aaron hit junior high, we began to see more and more areas where our personalities clashed. He was somewhat of a rebel and I fronted as the "good kid." They started to become glaring differences that were hard to just ignore. Instead of working out our issues with a punch on the arm or an apology, we harbored it within us. When conflict came up, he tended to get angry and close off to anyone. I, on the other hand, was the bossy, know-it-all younger brother. I felt like I had to take responsibility for everyone, so tattling became a strong point for me. This definitely didn't help things. This went on for at least three years until we could hardly even look at each other. We didn't interact and honestly had no desire to do so.

One day after school all our bitterness and anger came bubbling to the surface all at once. An argument that began with who was supposed to have the TV remote led to an all-out brawl. It was the first and only time that we fought without even caring about the consequences. A lot of built up frustration came out that afternoon. Even though I wish it had never happened, our relationship began to slowly get better after that incident. He soon got a car and was able to get out of the house, which kept us from butting heads all the time. We began talking again, but it was still hard for me to even laugh at his jokes for fear of giving him too much satisfaction. I couldn't quite let go of my pride.

During the summer of 2009, our church youth group travelled to Costa Rica on a mission trip. I was sixteen at the time and Aaron was eighteen having just graduated from high school. One night, now known as The Monday Night, our



Tyler (right) with his brother Aaron. "God deserves all the credit as I look back and see how different things are today."

(cont. on page 2)

“Inspiring and informative! We want to come back.”

-April 2012 visitor comment

Beginnings and endings

hosts & hostesses:

Dan & Norma Grieser

Sebring, Fl. | May—Sept.

Dick & Annie Boshart

Lebanon, Pa. | May

Fred Tillery | July

Jim & Bonnie Beachy

Paoli, Ind. | July 18-25

Jerry & Allene Kaiser

Aberdeen, Idaho | Aug.

Thank you for giving your time and care to Menno-Hof. May you be blessed as you have blessed us and the Menno-Hof visitors!

Remembering Rosa

1936-2012



Rosa Borntreger had a way of making everyone feel special—even if she was just meeting you for the first time. Rosa passed away unexpectedly on April 15 at her home in Middlebury, Ind.

Her warm and friendly presence at Menno-Hof as a tour guide and cashier every Friday will be missed. Rosa truly had the gift of hospitality, allowing God to use this gift in ways that most of us might be uncomfortable with. Just prior to her death, we were working with Rosa to write about one such experience directly related to Menno-Hof. We hope to be able to publish it in a future *Reunion* newsletter. Rosa and her husband, Calvin began volunteering at Menno-Hof in 2010.

Why we give



The **David Lee Miller** memorial CD is available for purchase in our gift shop or by calling Menno-Hof. The CD features Mennonite a cappella male quartet singing. Cost: \$12.

“We at Yoder’s Meat & Cheese Co. (Shipshewana, Ind.) support Menno-Hof because we feel it is one of the most effective mission programs in northern Indiana. We believe Menno-Hof is an important asset to the community in sharing the Mennonite and Amish way of life as well as the gospel message to the visitors and guests that visit the area. We also feel that Menno-Hof offers an important educational tool in sharing and explaining Anabaptist beliefs. Bring your family, friends, classmates, Sunday school classes or small groups and spend an afternoon at Menno-Hof. We continue to pray for God’s direction and blessing on the ministry at Menno-Hof.”

Brothers and [now] friends (cont. from front) group had its own personal worship service. The Holy Spirit was so evident that night, and afterward our leaders felt led to have a prayer circle. People stepped into the center and opened up about their struggles and need for prayer. Before I knew it, Aaron stepped in and said three words that I will never forget. “Tyler, I’m sorry.” I was blown away. The fact that he would open up like that for me completely humbled every part of me. I stepped into the circle with him and we hugged each other with tears in our eyes for the first time in our lives. Our friends prayed over us, and the wall between us came crashing down.

God deserves all the credit as I look back and see how different things are today. I don’t know where we would be had Aaron not laid down his pride that evening, and quite frankly I don’t want to know. We still do not always see eye to eye on everything, but the difference is that we are able to accept and appreciate these distinctions. I feel more than free to laugh at his jokes now because we are close friends, but more importantly we are brothers.

Tyler Eash and his brother, Aaron, live in Middlebury, Ind., with their parents. They attend Siloam Fellowship, a Conservative Mennonite Conference congregation.

by the numbers

Menno-Hof Peace & Popcorn winter series

- 70** people made it through the blowing and drifting snow to attend “Healing of Memories: apology and forgiveness in our relationship with Lutherans and Catholics” on Jan. 20. Read more about this event in the Winter 2012 *Reunion*.
- 90** were in attendance for “Is the Gospel of peace still relevant?” on Feb. 19
- 110** attendees heard “Forgiveness in an unforgiving world?” on Mar. 25.
- 250** persons heard stories from the post World War II Seagoing Cowboys on April 29 at Siloam Fellowship.
- 50** pounds of popcorn was popped and served during these events.

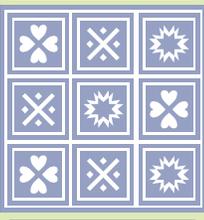
Upcoming events at Menno-Hof

RSVP:

info@mennohof.org

260-768-4117

www.mennohof.org



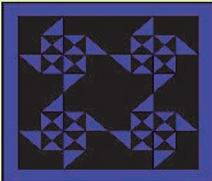
Kids at Menno-Hof: “knot” an ordinary night (for ages 8-12)

Thurs. June 21 or Fri. June 22; 6:30—8:30 p.m. at Menno-Hof

Drop off your children at Menno-Hof to experience a hands-on evening of fun led by Menno-Hof staff and volunteers. They'll learn how to knot comforters, hear early Anabaptist stories re-enacted by a local storyteller in period dress, try their hand at a quilt-related craft and enjoy 16th century style snacks.

Cost: \$2.50 per child ages 8-12 (payable that evening)

RSVP to Menno-Hof by June 14 to reserve your spot



Peace & Plenty quilt class | 24.5" X 24.5" wall hanging (for all skill levels)

Sat. July 28 or Sat. Aug. 18; 8:30 a.m.—4 p.m. at Menno-Hof

Instructor Carol Honderich, a local Mennonite, will be teaching this class that is based on the 2012 Menno-Hof quilt garden pattern, Peace & Plenty. Hear the history of Amish quilts as you sew in the Menno-Hof Amish room. A typical Amish church lunch will be served at noon on-site. This project uses the quilt piecing technique called “paper foundation piecing” – a technique which provides a very accurately pieced block and simplifies the piecing process. Class is appropriate for all skill levels but limited to 8 participants.

Cost: \$40 per participant (includes pattern, instruction and lunch)

The pattern is available for purchase in the Menno-Hof gift shop separate from the class.

RSVP to Menno-Hof to reserve your spot.



4th Annual Singspiration

Sun. Sept. 9; 5 p.m.

Come and enjoy a cappella singing on the Menno-Hof lawn in the traditions of the Amish Church, Amish Mennonite Church, Conservative Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church USA. There will be ice cream and pretzels and more singing inside following the worship service. Bring lawn chairs for seating. Rain location: Farmstead Inn pavilion, Shipshewana (just north of Menno-Hof).

Connecting faith and quilting

For Instructor Carol Honderich, quilting and her faith in God have been important to her for many years. Carol began connecting the two more intentionally when she asked God to use her gifts for His purpose.

For Wendy Yoder Nice, a stay at home mom and sign language interpreter, this combining of faith and community centered around quilting is what attracted her to attend the 2011 Menno-Hof quilt class. Read more about her experience at http://www.bethanycs.net/faithandquilting_1110

Thank you, John!

John Rempel, Goshen, Ind., ended Feb. 28 as a member of the Menno-Hof Program Committee. Prior to that he served as a Menno-Hof board member from 2007 to 2010. The experience and expertise John brought to the committee in the areas of Anabaptist history and theology will be greatly missed. John will be moving to Waterloo, Ontario, this fall when he will begin as director of Toronto Mennonite Theological Center.

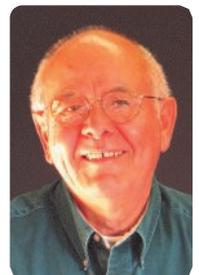
My time at Menno-Hof (cont. from front)

understanding for what they really believe. It saddens me to see so many Anabaptists walking away from their roots while many other Christians are coming and wanting to know more about our faith and wanting to be a part of it. The book “The Naked Anabaptist” helped me understand this better. When we grow up with something, we often take it for granted. I think we do this all too often.

During my time at Menno-Hof I have been privileged to be part of many different areas of this

ministry. I started out taking minutes at the board meetings and other committee meetings. Because of this I got to see the inner workings of the ministry. I helped out with hosting when we were short handed. I helped to build the Amish Room during one winter. I did lawn maintenance, flower bed maintenance, garden planting and also had the privilege of planting several quilt gardens.

I have enjoyed working with all of the local and long-term volunteers. I praise God for the privilege of being a part of the ministry at Menno-Hof.



Dana Sommers
grounds, plant and equipment manager

Dana and his wife, Donna, live in Sturgis, Mich., and attend Locust Grove Mennonite. They are looking forward to volunteering at Highland Retreat in Bergton, Va., this summer. Notes of appreciation and blessing can be sent to dsommers@net-link.net.

DIRECTOR'S DESK

We have just completed the first Menno-Hof winter series "Peace & Popcorn" and considering the feedback from attendees of each event it seems clear the topics were relevant and important. Attendance for all four events in the series totaled approximately 500. I was very pleased to see all of the area's major Anabaptist faith communities represented among the attendees. What a great opportunity for fellowship and discernment!

Throughout the series we heard expressions of interest and desire for more initiatives aimed at helping our adults and young folks develop and strengthen their commitments to peace and reconciliation. We listened to thoughts of why peace is still relevant and how we promote peace in our world today. We heard an inspiring story of the Amish community in Nickel Mines, Pa. offering love and forgiveness to the individual that took the lives of several young girls and to his family. The stories of initiatives between Anabaptists and the Lutheran and Catholic churches were also great examples of how individuals and groups can live out their desire to achieve forgiveness and reconciliation. Finally, we heard about individuals who committed time and energy in helping deliver animal resources to restore countries that experienced incredible destruction from war.

While the stories we heard during the series were major events, I pray that we will not miss real opportunities that exist right in our own lives. I believe our children will most effectively learn how to forgive or not forgive by watching us deal with challenges we face among friends, families, churches and communities. As believers, if we have relationship issues that require forgiveness, we know Jesus expects us to love and forgive. Don't minimize the need to resolve damaged relationships, it will be life changing to more than just you!



Jerry Beasley
executive director

Menno-Hof staff:

Jerry Beasley, executive director
Susan Miller, managing director
Charlotte Long, program and communication associate

Board of Directors:

Larry Chupp, president, Shipshewana, Ind.
Lovina Rutt, vice-president, Goshen, Ind.
Andrew Eversole, Goshen, Ind.
Rachel Nafziger Hartzler, Goshen, Ind.
Dorothy Hostetler, Shipshewana, Ind.
Donna Jones, Shipshewana, Ind.
Orie E. Lehman, Shipshewana, Ind.
Wayne Schrock, Millersburg, Ind.
Don Stauffer, Union, Mich.
Alvin J. Yoder, Shipshewana, Ind.
Fern Yoder, Millersburg, Ind.



Reunion is published quarterly to keep our friends informed of happenings at Menno-Hof. Direct questions or comments to info@mennohof.org

Menno-Hof Amish-Mennonite Visitors' Center

PO Box 701
510 S Van Buren St, SR 5
Shipshewana, IN 46565
Tele: (260) 768-4117
Fax: (260) 768-4118
E-mail: info@mennohof.org
Web site: www.mennohof.org

Menno-Hof wish list:

- ~7 station phone system: \$2,500
- ~rototiller, rear tine: (new or used)
- ~sofas for volunteer apartments
- ~picnic table
- ~6X8 trailer with hitch

Thanks to our loyal supporters, we have received song books for the annual Singspiration!

If you are interested in donating any of the listed items, contact Jerry or Susan at (260) 768-4117. Monetary contributions can be sent to **Menno-Hof, PO Box 701, Shipshewana, Ind. 46565**



MENNO-HOF

AMISH-MENNONITE VISITORS' CENTER

P.O. Box 701

Shipshewana, Indiana 46565

*See and Hear
the Amish-Mennonite Story*