

# reunion

## From spectator to participant

by **Lawrence Greaser**, Goshen, Ind.

I stood in the crowd in 1986 as a spectator watching Amish and Mennonite carpenters assemble individual pieces of lumber into sections. Pitting united strength against the forces of gravity, they lifted the sections into the places designated by the architect. Like a time lapsed photograph of a blooming flower, the Menno-Hof barn came into focus before me. Watching the mortise and tendon large beams placed, each at it's location in the structure, at a particular time in the building process, fitting together perfectly was and still is amazing to me. They stand as a testimony of skill and unity of strength and purpose.

When Menno-Hof opened it's doors to the public, being a spectator was not an option for me because I was and am a strong supporter of the purpose and mission it provides. Being an on-call-as-needed volunteer for the past 25 years has been a privilege and a blessing. Having spent my pre-retirement years in mission in Latin America, I especially enjoyed serving as a tour guide for Spanish speaking visitors at Menno-Hof.

Interacting with the visitors has been an enjoyable and enriching experience. I am grateful for those who had the original vision for the ministry and mission of Menno-Hof and for the board, staff and other volunteers who are carrying on this significant mission. I am thankful for having been given the opportunity to move from being a spectator to a participant in this important ministry.

In June 2014, Lawrence ended his time as a volunteer at Menno-Hof. We are grateful for the many hours he so graciously gave through the years.

## Why the 600-mile trip is worth it

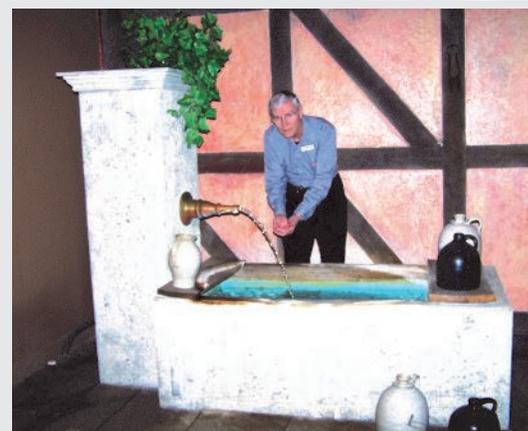
**Richard & Annie Boshart, Lebanon, Pa.**

In 2008 Richard and Annie Boshart came to Menno-Hof for three months as live-in host and hostess and have returned every year since—except in 2011 when they went to Switzerland for one month as a gesture of reconciliation with the Reformed Church in Bäretswil outside of Zurich. It was here that Richard rehearsed and sang with the choir for a worship service.

Richard states the following as one of the reasons he is excited to return to Menno-Hof. "The Courtyard room has a replica of a fountain that still stands today in Zollikon outside the first home where the early Anabaptists met at the invitation of Rudi Thomann, to hear the news about the new preacher Ulrich Zwingli and his followers, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and George Blaurock. Rudi's son-in-law, Marx Boshart, is moved by the expounding of the scriptures by Felix and the strong invitation to follow Christ by the very direct George Blaurock. Marx is baptized by George and travels with Conrad Grebel to spread the good news to many places, including Bäretswil, his home congregation." This is a compelling and inspirational experience in Richard's personal faith journey as he realizes that the commitment Marx Boshart (a possible relative) had to face in his faith journey with life threatening times of imprisonment and persecution. Richard readily shares this with Menno-Hof visitors.

"Meeting visitors from many different faith groups and nationalities is another reason for coming back to Menno-Hof with the rich exchanges that happen." Also, the personal sharing that takes place as Richard relates his conscientious objector experiences in the Mennonite Central Committee PAX program where he helped build homes for World War II refugees and also helped one

*cont. on page 2*



Top: The fountain that stands in Zollikon, Switzerland, outside the house where one of the earliest meetings of the Anabaptists was held in 1525.

Bottom: Richard Boshart stands beside the fountain replica in the Menno-Hof Courtyard that visitors view as part of the tour.

*photos provided by: Richard & Annie Boshart*

## Why the 600-mile trip is worth it

(cont. from front)

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year in the seven year restoration of a Lutheran School, the Karls Schule, in downtown Vienna. He also helped start a project of laying foundations for six homes and a church south of Salzburg for the Nazarener Gemeinde (the Apostolic Christians). All of these experiences he can relate in the barn area of Menno-Hof where the peace position raises many opportunities for discussions of faith beliefs.

Annie loves to greet visitors that come to Menno-Hof and often works as cashier. She provides a very good orientation as to why and how Menno-Hof came to reality and informs the visitors about the importance of the quilts and about the Northern Indiana Quilt Garden tour. She encourages visitors to ask questions that open many doors for interesting conversations and even deep theological discussions and stories. She comes with openness to hear others' faith journeys and is enlightened and challenged in her own faith walk with Jesus. It is the "open door" policy and the reunion with other volunteers and staff that makes the 600-mile trip from Lebanon, Pa., so worthwhile along with practicing speaking Pennsylvania Dutch. Annie says "while in Shipshewana it takes us back in time and we feel we can choose to live a simpler lifestyle. The living arrangements are provided and we are treated as family. Visiting Mennonite churches in the area teaches us various worshiping styles and singing patterns. We take ideas back to our own church."

Annie shares an encounter with a proclaimed Agnostic visitor at Menno-Hof. "He and his family came for a tour just after we



Richard and Annie Boshart, Lebanon, Pa., in the Menno-Hof gift shop.

opened. The family became weary and wanted to leave and get lunch. He was not ready to leave as it seemed he was spending time reading everything he could during the tour. While the other family members insisted on leaving, he negotiated coming back after lunch to finish his tour. The others reluctantly agreed to

do something else in Shipshewana and come back to get him around 3 p.m." When this man came to the Meetinghouse at the end of the tour, he wanted to talk with Annie. He said "You have it right. You practice what you believe and it makes sense." Annie said she would pray for him and that he should allow God to reveal to him what He intends for him to believe. She then invited the man into the Meetinghouse to listen to the program. In the

meantime, she began praying. At the end of the Meetinghouse presentation, listeners are invited to stop and ask themselves "what do I believe and how do I live out those beliefs?" After he returned to the gift shop, the visitor thanked Annie and said, "I will take all that I have learned to heart as I go back to Germany."

Richard reports a recent Menno-Hof encounter with a gentleman from Grand Rapids, Michigan, who engaged in conversation. Since Richard and Annie had served at Hillcrest School in Nigeria, Africa, they were familiar with Christian Reformed Church missionaries, many who were from Grand Rapids. While he was reading the Anabaptist Timeline in the display area, Richard inquired of the gentleman whether he was from the Christian Reformed Church and indeed he was. Richard inquired further "would you happen to be a clergyman?" "Yes" was the response and the conversation continued with much positive sharing. The final comment expressed by the Christian Reformed Church pastor: "One of my biggest regrets is the way our early church persecuted you Anabaptists. Today it is wonderful to have moments of reconciliation such as we feel coming here to Menno-Hof and working together with Mennonites in the world today."

Richard and Annie live in Lebanon, Pa., and most recently served as host and hostess at Menno-Hof the month of April 2014. They have two children and four grandchildren and are members of Akron Mennonite Church, Pa. They enjoy singing together in church and with a Hospice group, as well as photography and birdwatching. Richard and Annie love being grandparents and mentoring their grandchildren in their interests (tennis and sewing).

### Beginnings & endings

hosts & hostesses

#### Fred Tillery

October 2014 - December 2014

#### James and Doreen Houston

Penticton, British Columbia, Canada | October 2014

#### J. Laurence and Marilyn Martin

Kitchener, Ontario, Canada | November 2014

**Thank you!** May you be blessed for your willingness to serve in this way!

### Menno-Hof wish list:

- ~37"- 42" flat screen TV
- ~8'X12' garden shed
- ~ sweeper for apartments

If you are interested in donating any of these items, contact Jerry or Susan (260.768.4117)

**Thank you** to various friends of Menno-Hof for donating the following items: washer and dryer, refrigerator, sofas and love seat, coffee maker.

## 6th Annual Singspiration

Sunday, September 14, 5 p.m.

Come and enjoy a cappella singing of familiar hymns 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).



Plan to attend!

Very informative!

We enjoyed learning about the different religious groups. It was one of the highlights of our trip!

-July 2014 online visitor review

## A welcome and a good-bye

Carrie Miller began as housekeeper at Menno-Hof the beginning of July 2014. Carrie and her husband, Perry, live in Shipshewana, Ind., and are members of the Old Order Amish Church. They have five children ages 7-14 who help with the cleaning. The family owns Countryroad Carriage where they manufacture and repair new and used buggies. Carrie is a busy mom who enjoys sewing, gardening (especially flowers), making cards and scrapbooking. The family enjoys reading by their fire pit in the evening or the woodstove during the winter. Welcome, Carrie and family!

**Thank you** to Ruby Knepp and her family, Shipshewana, for faithfully cleaning the Menno-Hof facility almost daily for 5+ years!

## by the numbers

- 3,445** local volunteer hours were donated in 2013!
- 2,821** visitors were at Menno-Hof in June and
- 3,006** visitors in July 2014.
- 915,543** visitors to-date (since Menno-Hof opened in 1988).
- 17** —the total number of driveway lights that were upgraded at Menno-Hof with PVC post sleeves and new light fixtures.
- 319** butter caramels were sold from the gift shop in July. Yummy!

## Loyalty, generosity and talent

It never ceases to amaze us how God blesses Menno-Hof with such loyal, generous and talented volunteers. Such is the case with Dan and Norma Grieser from Sebring, Fl. We were pleasantly surprised when Dan and Norma arrived in the area this summer and informed us that they were interested in covering the expense and doing the work involved to upgrade our lighting systems to new energy efficient products. Not only will this improve the appearance of the facility and displays but it will also reduce ongoing energy consumption here at Menno-Hof. This, coupled with our recent audiovisual equipment upgrades, will result in significant improvements and position us to be better stewards of energy and resource utilization.

Dan and Norma are nearing the end of their time here this summer and will likely not be able to complete the entire project but will leave products to be installed by staff or other volunteers.

Dan experienced firsthand yet another act of generosity several weeks ago when a Menno-Hof visitor observed Dan installing some lights and in the ensuing

conversation expressed a desire to donate towards the effort. The man is a distributor of lighting products in a large Midwest community. This is not the first time a visitor has expressed interest in supporting Menno-Hof and some have done so in the form of financial donations.

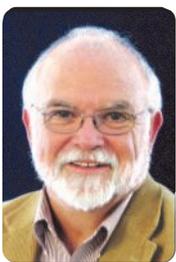
All of us at Menno-Hof are grateful for the wonderful volunteers, visitors and other supporters that help make Menno-Hof more effective in sharing the Anabaptist story and encouraging individuals to strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ.



Dan Greiser works on upgrading one of the driveway lights beside the Menno-Hof lane.



## DIRECTOR'S DESK



**Jerry Beasley**  
executive director

What was I thinking? It is with some reluctance I'm sharing a recent experience here at Menno-Hof that in the end had a positive impact on me and my level of appreciation for team work. In the short run it made me ask "what was I thinking?" Our housekeeper here at Menno-Hof, who has done a great job for us for many years, resigned from her role the beginning of June. Without careful thought to what I was saying and doing, I volunteered to do the cleaning until we could find someone to fill the position. Many of you are aware that our facility is quite large and includes a gift shop and two very large restrooms. I still vividly remember coming in on

the first day of my new task and counting the four sinks, two stalls and five latrines in the men's room and six sinks and 10 stalls in the women's room—each of which require individual attention. To say the least, it took me several days to get the routine down and organized so that I could finish the task in the established time frame. I also found myself sometimes distracted and delayed by other discoveries I made during the course of completing the work (blown light bulbs, loose fixtures, squeaking doors, etc.). As I approached the third week of my new experience, we were very fortunate to contract with Carrie Miller as our new housekeeper. (Read more about Carrie on page 3). With a whole new appreciation of this role and with some weariness, I was very ready to hand off the duties! (continued below)



# MENNO-HOF

AMISH-MENNONITE VISITORS' CENTER

P.O. Box 701

Shipshewana, Indiana 46565

*See and Hear  
the Amish-Mennonite Story*

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Reunion is published quarterly to keep our friends informed of happenings at Menno-Hof. Send questions or comments to director at [info@mennohof.org](mailto:info@mennohof.org)

### Menno-Hof Amish-Mennonite Visitors' Center

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E-mail: [info@mennohof.org](mailto:info@mennohof.org)

Web site: [www.mennohof.org](http://www.mennohof.org)

### Hours:

Monday—Saturday: 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

*Summer hours (June, July, August)*

Monday—Friday: 10 a.m.—7 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

### Menno-Hof staff:

**Jerry Beasley**, executive director  
**Susan Miller**, managing director  
**Charlotte Long**, program and communication associate  
**Don Miller**, facility and grounds associate  
**Ruth Miller**, guest services associate

### Board of Directors:

**Larry Chupp**, president, Shipshewana, Ind.  
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**Orie E. Lehman**, Shipshewana, Ind.  
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**Wayne Schrock**, Millersburg, Ind.  
**Don Stauffer**, Union, Mich.  
**Alvin J. Yoder**, Shipshewana, Ind.  
**Fern Yoder**, Millersburg, Ind.

### Director's Desk (continued from above)

I share this little experience not to boast but to communicate the high level of sincere appreciation I have for each of the team members here at Menno-Hof and what they contribute to the team as a whole as we accomplish our objective of effectively presenting the Anabaptist story to our guests. In our troubled world we feel blessed to be able to reach thousands of individuals in a pleasant, well-kept facility. Thanks be to God for each volunteer, staff and board member!

