

It's about more than good

food (and hard work)

by Micah Miller

Does the term "CASP" mean anything to you? How about Conservative Anabaptist Service Program? I became quite familiar with this program in January 2010 when I became an active participant for four weeks. I was considering doing voluntary work of some kind and when I was informed of a need at CASP, I jumped on it!

I didn't really know what I was getting into when I showed up in Hutchinson, Kan., that day, but I was eager to find out. That first day the other six guys and I found out that CASP involves work! We also learned that working together can be lots of fun. Under Dan Miller's (an Amish Mennonite minister from Goshen, Ind.) supervision, we straightened floor joists, framed windows and walls, shingled roofs, put on siding, and did many other types of construction the next few weeks. Seeing how grateful the Interfaith Housing personnel were for our help was also very rewarding!

Something else I learned about CASP was that good food was included. The ladies cooked many delicious meals, and we did our best to do justice to all of them! Supper time was a highlight of each day.

Another aspect of CASP I soon learned is that it revolves around people. Getting along with people is a must! Not only do you work with them, you live with them. It didn't take us long to get acquainted and we spent most evenings playing various

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Journey towards peace

by Sylvie Gudin Koehn

I am a Mennonite from France. I grew up Catholic and when it was time for me to do my "communion solennelle" (12 years old) I took that commitment very seriously. I wanted to do something in the church right away, but the priest of the parish told me I was too young and did not take me seriously.

I was bitterly disappointed and I started questioning the church. Finding less and less meaning in it, I went to mass less and less. A year later, Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated (April 1968). It was a turning point in my life. It opened my eyes to another world. I started to discover racism and social injustice, not only in America but in France as well. In France, May 1968 was a time of "revolution," and the years that followed were years of unrest and troubles, especially in the schools and universities. Many students took part in demonstrations and I joined them. In my search for meaning, I became interested by their questioning of society. Violence did not frighten me. Somehow I felt that this world was unbearable as it was.

During these years, I met a girl in school whose family was Baptist and she invited me to their youth group. As it turned out, the pastor of that Baptist church had known Martin Luther King, Jr., translating for him when he came to Europe and spoke in France. This pastor talked a lot about Dr. King and about non-violence. I was growing disillusioned by student involvement, finding the same kind of "spirit" among these groups that I wanted to fight against. But, Christianity had disappointed me also and I perceived that the Christians were mostly interested in their own problems and well-being, and saving souls – they had little interest in the injustice and suffering of poor people.



"Friendship"

by Sylvie Gudin Koehn

I read and meditated on *The Strength to Love* by Martin Luther King, Jr., and Christian faith began to make sense. The way he showed the social relevance of faith and non-violence was new to me and I started to understand that in the Gospel lays the real revolution and change I desired so much. I understood that Jesus Christ was the truest revolutionary man who ever lived. All of Jesus' words touched me more and more deeply, I felt close to Him and ready to be His disciple.

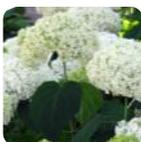
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Sylvie Gudin Koehn's cards, featuring her paintings, are available for purchase in the Menno-Hof gift shop.

In an attempt to save on postage and paper, we invite you to **consider receiving your Reunion newsletter via e-mail.** Send your change request to info@mennohof.org

Summer snapshots at Menno-Hof



“We visit lots of museums, and this ranks high on our list!”
—recent online review of Menno-Hof

A new friend when you least expect it

by Rita Wingard

We never expected anything to happen but you know how it is, anything can take place whether you expect it or not. It happened at recess one day during school. My friends and I were doing walking club (an optional recess activity through Fitness for Life) when two other girls walked up behind us and started making fun of my friend Katy’s* appearance. I know it hurt her feelings really bad but she tried not to show it. I don’t know if I could have done that because they said some pretty mean things to her. We tried to not let it bother us and it stopped – but only for a day.

Weeks passed and the taunting continued. Rumors were being spread about Katy by these two girls. They were stepping on the backs of her shoes and tripping her in front of others. I felt so bad for Katy. The rest of my friends and I almost couldn’t take it anymore but Katy didn’t want us to fight back.

Journey towards peace (cont.)

Still, it took me a few years of searching to get close to God. I was interested in art and studied paintings and history of arts and did some painting myself. I came to see Creator God as the only real artist. I realized that God created beauty, loves beauty. And so I loved Him. This God-artist was someone I could “identify” with and feel close to. And so, when I was eighteen, I decided to become a Christian and was re-baptized at my friend’s Baptist church.

I wanted to be a non-violent activist so I joined a group of Christian conscientious objectors. There I met Mennonites for the first time. During those years, it was not lawful in France to talk about the status of conscientious objection even though it existed. We made it our duty to inform and encourage Christians to become conscientious objectors. I became more and more interested by the witness of the Anabaptists of the 16th century and today.

I also joined a European interchurch peace organization of communities called Church & Peace and discovered that the Mennonites were the leading people, both in the area of theology and in practical ways. I started to meet regularly with Mennonites and when I moved

And then something else happened that we didn’t expect. One day the two girls walked up to us and we thought it was really going to be bad this time. But, guess what. They apologized! They said they were sorry and that they didn’t know why they had been unkind. I know they felt better after they apologized because the next few days they didn’t do anything and even sent a few smiles our way. Today those two girls are two of my best friends!

I’m glad we listened to Katy and that God helped us to not fight back. This experience has reminded me to be kinder to others and to be a better friend. Everyone needs to be forgiving and try to make peace with others. I hope this story encourages you too and who knows, you might make a new friend – or two!

Rita is 13 years old and lives in Shipshewana, Ind., with her parents, Michael and Wilma Wingard. They attend the Old Order Amish Church. This fall Rita will begin 7th grade at a local public school.

*Name has been changed.

to Strasbourg I joined the Mennonite Church of Strasbourg. They became my family and I continued as a member there for more than 20 years until I came to the United States in 2005.

I first visited the United States at the age of 26 as part of the International Volunteer Exchange Program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Many years later, I came back to Elkhart, Ind., to study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). Various life experiences had led me to understand that my vocation was to become a spiritual guide (director). In the spring of 2010, I received a masters degree in Christian Formation, Christian Spirituality concentration.

I have painted—off and on—since I was a child. During my studies at AMBS, I worked on the deep connection between art and spirituality. When I paint I always pray for God to lead me and speak to me. My hope is that my paintings will help others become closer to God.



“Free!” by Sylvie Gudin Koehn

Sylvie Gudin Koehn leads workshops and retreats (Visio Divina: Spiritual Direction through the Arts) and also works with Mennonite World Conference as a translator from English to French. She attends Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Ind., and is married to Brent Koehn. They have two children.

by the numbers

8,068

visitors during May, June and July

3,344

households currently receive the Reunion newsletter

859,477

visitors to-date

countless!

The number of beautiful blooms on the hydrangea bushes around our porch!

Plan to attend these upcoming events!

Annual Singspiration

September 11, 2011 | 5 p.m. on the Menno-Hof lawn



Come and enjoy a cappella singing, ice cream & pretzels and more singing inside following the worship service. **Bring** lawn chairs or blankets for seating. Rain location: Shore Mennonite, Shipshewana.

Anabaptists serving God and country: then & now

October 30, 2011 | 5 p.m. at Siloam Fellowship, Goshen, Ind.



Hear the faith stories of area Anabaptists that served in Civilian Public Service (CPS) during World War II and the Korean war because of their peace conviction. Also, hear more about current alternative service opportunities for draft-age men. **Bring** finger foods to share.

Why I give my time

I was first introduced to Menno-Hof in 1986 when I was asked to help with the barn raising. Several years later I was honored to be asked to serve on the board of directors. Serving on the Menno-Hof Board since 1993, I am very enthusiastic and supportive of Menno-Hof as one of the most effective and efficient mission programs in this community.



I learned the value of serving others at an early age. My parents always seemed willing to help whenever there was a need in the church or community. Growing up as the oldest of ten children (seven boys) on a dairy farm in Iowa, my father received frequent requests from neighboring farmers for an extra hand. At the age of 19, I signed up for a two year term of voluntary service at a nursing home in Harrison, Ark., to fulfill my I-W requirement (alternative service for conscientious objectors). This experience further developed my interest in giving of myself to other. -Wayne Schrock, Millersburg, Ind.

It's about more than good food... (cont.)

games. We also sang and shared together during Bible study.

Last, but not least, I learned what CASP really is! It was started to give conscientious objectors (CO) a place to serve but it's more than a program designed to keep men and boys from fighting in a war should there be a draft. Being in the program taught me to think about why I should deserve CO status in the first place. I also learned that non-resistance is a vital part of my life and faith, not just a crutch to lean on in time of war. CASP taught me the value of my forefathers' beliefs on these issues, and strengthened my stand on separation of church and state. It also challenged me to think about whether I will pass this on to others and be a peaceable, law-abiding citizen of God's country while living here on this earth.

So does the term CASP mean anything to you now? It's more than the satisfaction that a hard day's work brings. It's more than the smell of Mary Ann's cooking. It's more than learning to have good relationships with people. It's even more than the belief that war and fighting is wrong! It is the practical application of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5 to "love your enemies." It is the opportunity to express one's belief in love and nonresistance. It is the evidence of God's love filling our lives and spilling out to others.

Micah is a member of Lighthouse of Faith (an Amish Mennonite congregation) in Huntsville, Ark., and owns and operates Northwest Construction with three friends. The youngest of nine children, Micah is the son of Allan & Barbara Miller.

"Our visit to Menno-Hof encouraged me to be more mindful of others."

—recent visitor comment



Micah Miller
CASP participant

Beginnings and endings

hosts & hostesses:

Dan & Norma Grieser

Clarksville, Mich. | May—July 2011

Frank & Helen Nachtigal

North Newton, Kan. | July 9—Aug. 6, 2011

Don & Erma Taylor

Harrisonburg, Va. | Aug. 1—25, 2011

Charles & Leone Byer

Wallaceburg, Ontario, Canada | Sept. 1—30, 2011

Susan Rempel

Kitchener, Ontario, Canada | Sept. 1—Oct. 31, 2011

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

The vision for the Conservative Anabaptist Service Program (CASP)

grew out of a concern that the conviction for alternative service and Christian nonresistance not grow dim in what may seem as a prolonged absence of the military draft.

CASP is recognized by Selective Service as an Alternative Service Employer. In 2010, CASP coordinated ten different projects. A total of 125 draft-age men participated in 20,842 voluntary service hours. The Christian character, work ethic and manual skills of these volunteers have caused many expressions of appreciation.

At present there are 15 different groups who have become affiliated with CASP. There are also other groups within the conservative Anabaptist community who are in conversation with Selective Service without formal ties to CASP. For more information about CASP: Elmer Miller 574-642-3056.

Read an online article from the perspective of the *Hutchinson News* about the work of CASP: <http://www.hutchnews.com/print/interfaith-housing-1>.

DIRECTOR'S DESK

Earlier this year I asked a group of adults what our Anabaptist peace witness looks like in individuals today. How will you know if you encounter an individual that is committed to a peace witness? If you consider yourself one of these, how will others see it in you?

In the conversation that followed, most agreed that the individuals who actively participate in peace service initiatives, teaching and vocalizing their commitment to peace either verbally or in writing, are certainly more easily recognizable. But what about the rest of us? How do we develop and nurture our faith convictions to be a peace witness and then effectively weave this into the fabric of our daily lives? We all agreed it seems we are vulnerable to minimizing our efforts today since there is no military draft and, even though wars exist, they seem far removed from much of our daily life and activities.

The history of the Anabaptist movement is full of stories about individuals who endured persecution and even gave their lives as a result of standing strong in their peace witness. Menno-Hof visitors see and hear many of these stories. Maybe as modern Anabaptists we should continually ask ourselves if we're investing enough effort and energy in assisting our young people in developing their conviction to peace. Are we providing great examples for them to follow?

The Menno-Hof Board and staff have adopted peace and reconciliation as their theme for 2011 and 2012. We invite you to join us Oct. 30 at Siloam Fellowship (corner of SR 4/CR 35, Goshen, Ind.) to hear several area Anabaptists share their experiences of serving peacefully during World War II and the Korean War. We will also hear about initiatives that are currently available for young adults to engage in peace service. We are planning several more events for this winter to help raise awareness of how our peace witness can be lived out as we journey through life.



Jerry Beasley
executive director

Menno-Hof staff:

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Susan Miller, managing director
Charlotte Long, program and communication associate
Dana Sommers, grounds, plant and equipment manager

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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:

- ~laminator: \$100
- ~wireless mic system: \$550
- ~cash register system: \$2,000
- ~7 station phone system: \$2,500
- ~rototiller, rear tine: (new or used)

Thanks to our loyal supporters, we have received a hedge trimmer and digital camera!

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

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the Amish-Mennonite Story*

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