



The Menno-Hof Newsletter

reunion



Menno-Hof moments

by **Judy & Chuck Dabbs**,
formerly of Port Huron, Mich.
Menno-Hof hosts, Dec. '13-May '14

~ What would it be like to be imprisoned for your faith? The leadership group from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, (Elkhart, Ind.) visiting Menno-Hof in Feb., wanted to re-create it as close as possible in the Menno-Hof dungeon area. The lighting was low but shadowy images of the instruments of torture could be seen in the room. Since prisoners would not have had hymn books or Bibles, the group encouraged each other—as the early martyrs did—by reciting Bible passages, praying, sharing personal stories and singing well-known hymns. It was a very moving experience.

~A group of young men took the tour and said they were inspired by the things they learned. When they reached the Meeting House at the end of the tour, the entire group broke out in spontaneous song. Deep, rich, harmonious a cappella hymns filled Menno-Hof.

~A young man from Chicago visited one day. He seemed to be very interested in the displays and stayed a long time. When he came back to the gift shop at the end of his tour, he went straight to the books and selected several Anabaptist history books. Turning to the register to make his purchase, he exclaimed, "I am a history major but I have never heard this part of history. I am going to come back and bring my friends. I am stunned!"

These are just *some* of our memorable Menno-Hof experiences. We thank God we were able to come and share our faith, the Anabaptist viewpoint, and moments like these with others.

How I met the Mennonites

by **Beverly Schmitt, Michigan**

How I met the Mennonites is a story of stories which began in the early seventies. One glorious May Wednesday, my husband and I drove from our southwest Michigan home to the rural Shippshewana, Ind., community with three hundred some residents, for the weekly flea market and auction we'd heard so much about. On Wednesdays, however, an extra twenty thousand people, from all over the Midwest and beyond, showed up for the festivities: for the fruit and vegetable market, home-baked goods, and auctions of livestock, household goods and tools; acres of wares for sale and... the local community of Amish and Mennonites.

Yes, as we shared the road with horse-drawn buggies, we'd noticed the simple, white farm houses, no power lines, cheerful gardens, colorful laundry, teams plowing the fields, children at the one room schoolhouses, and bake sales of cookies, pies, breads, egg noodles and angel food cakes, tended by gentle people whose dress and language reflected another place and time. We stopped and sampled the quiet hospitality of folks living their faith with simplicity, in harmony with the land and others, not for show, but clearly in a way that set them apart. We were smitten, and wanted our Catholic grade-school children to experience this culture and its values—a spirit caught, not taught.

Each summer we returned with our family to Shippshewana. In flea market flurry one Wednesday morning, I spotted an obscure sheet of notebook paper tacked to a fence post, and on it a hand-written invitation to the Shore Mennonite Church down the road for a program titled "Who Are These People?" We went and were greeted by Pastor Harvey Chupp. My parents, our children and one other couple joined us in that church basement for Harvey's slide presentation about the Amish and Mennonites. He began in a most powerful and disarming way by expressing respect for other faith traditions present and said this was about telling the Anabaptist story, not judging anyone - and hopefully answering some questions.

I was struck that not only did the Catholics and Anabaptists have common roots, but, the desire to return the church to the Word of God and the simplicity of Benedict's 6th century monastic reform were at the heart of the breakup. With a love for Benedictines since childhood, I was drawn to Michael Sattler's story. Prior of a German Benedictine Abbey, Sattler joined the Anabaptists in 1526 and, though brutally martyred a year later, is said to have influenced the shape of Anabaptism more than any single individual. Sadly, his wife Margaretha, a former Beguine, was martyred with him—one of many women to work and die for Anabaptist beliefs.

Harvey's talk touched our hearts for peace, and my Catholic father, an engineer and organic gardener, appreciated the skills and integrity with which the Amish and Mennonites leaned into life. We left with much to ponder.

For more information about the history of Menno-Hof, visit our web site to read the Spring, Summer and Fall 2013 *Reunion* newsletters: mennohof.org

How I met the Mennonites (cont. from front)

From the early 1980s on, I'd phone Harvey to schedule a Wednesday when I could bring a dozen or so international human services workers attending a three-month summer program at Western Michigan University (WMU): social workers, family therapists, psychologists, etc., from South Africa, Japan, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland, for the slide-show history at his church. Harvey's gracious "yes" and respect for other faith traditions as he told the Anabaptist story stirred hearts and inspired questions. It was a treasured dimension of their U.S. experience. Respect flowed each way.

Harvey's healing touch and faithfulness to his dream for an interpretive center welcoming all visitors to Shippshewana bore fruit with the opening of the Menno-Hof Amish-Mennonite Visitors Center in May of 1988. Along with the director of the WMU summer program, my husband and I were invited to the Menno-Hof dedication service. Seated in the front row of that awesome tent with hundreds behind us, we faced the platform, risers and speakers' podium. I was certain we were the only Catholics in a sea of Mennonites! Suddenly, I experienced the Eighth Sacrament: Mennonite Song. The rafters shook with the opening strains of "Come, Christians, Come to Sing" led by Topeka Mennonite Church. There also, for the first time, I heard that version of the Doxology lovingly known as "606." Tears filled my eyes throughout the service.

"I'm convinced Menno-Hof exists as a significant piece in a movement propelled by the grace of the Holy Spirit for the restoration of unity among all Christians."

Imagine my surprise when Holy Cross Father Andre Leveille was introduced to speak! A French-Canadian priest, Father Andre had a relationship with the Mennonites, and often brought his Notre Dame architecture students to experience barn raisings by experts in building from the ground up. He told of his deep friendship over the years and, suddenly, said something I'd never heard before from a priest. He humbly asked forgiveness for the wrongs committed by the Catholic Church against Anabaptists those centuries ago. Mennonite

keynote speaker Marion Bontrager, in his talk "Were You There: Remember To Remember," received Father Andre's apology with humility and hospitality, and from his heart of hearts, spoke of a wholeness he experienced through worship once a year in a Catholic church. A burden of centuries lifted in that moment of grace for the healing of memories.

My involvement with Mennonites since then has been rich and consistent, each example a chapter in itself; from work in the 90's with Gene and

Mary Herr at their Mennonite retreat, The Hermitage, near Three Rivers, Mich.; to travels with Mennonites on Marlene Kropf and Willard Roth's "Celtic Pilgrimage 2010" during which I sang heartily with Mennonites, learned more of our common heritage and experienced the present-day peace and justice work going on with both traditions in the United Kingdom. At the same time I'm part of Bridgefolk, a grassroots movement of Catholics and Mennonites since 2002. Proceeding in friendship, we share our stories of spirituality and peacemaking, pray, sing and wash each other's feet. We study the document "Called Together To Be Peacemakers: Report of the International Dialogue between the Catholic Church and Mennonite World Conference 1998-2003," aimed at the healing of historical memory.

I'm convinced Menno-Hof exists as a significant piece in a movement propelled by the grace of the Holy Spirit for the restoration of unity among all Christians. And why am I, a Catholic at the opposite end of the Christian spectrum from Anabaptists, so deeply engaged in conversation with Mennonites? Because of Harvey Chupp's handwritten invitation at the flea market to come and learn "Who Are These People?"



Thanks to the **LaGrange County Community Foundation, Inc.**, for the annual Menno-Hof Endowment Fund grant which helped cover several unanticipated expenses.

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

Beginnings & endings

hosts & hostesses

Rob & Rosie Claassen

Lawrence, Kan. | June 2014

Tillie Yoder | Harrisonburg, Va. | June 2014

Dorothy Logan | Harrisonburg, Va. | June 2014

Ora & Rhoda Mast | Lancaster, Pa. | July 2014

Fred Tillery | July - Sept. 2014

Larry & Maxine Miller

Macon, Miss. | Aug. - Sept. 2014

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

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!

Remembering Leabell

1931- 2014

by Susan Miller, managing director

When I began working at Menno-Hof in 2010, I soon became acquainted with the names "Wayne and Leabell Miller" on the local volunteer schedule. Every Thursday they would come breezing into Menno-Hof with their cheery smiles, anticipation radiating from their faces: who were they going to meet at Menno-Hof today? Someone from China? Or maybe someone from England, which was always a treat for them since they did a stint of voluntary service there. No matter who the visitors, locally or from the uttermost part of the world, they were greeted and welcomed warmly by these two dear people.

All doctor appointments were carefully made so as not to interfere with their scheduled day at Menno-Hof. Wayne & Leabell would come rain or shine, snow or sleet, every Thursday with only a few exceptions when they went to visit one of their children at the west or east coast. I also need to mention that they lived at Menno-Hof for 2 ½ years as full-time hosts for the tours.

Late last summer we all noticed that Leabell was slowly losing her strength. I suggested she cut her hours to half days and eventually I suggested she stay home and rest—it was our slow season. She sent me a note of "thanks" for my perception. Periodically, I received notes of

appreciation from her for various things. She is the one that should have been receiving those notes from me weekly!

January 2014 Leabell passed on to be with her Lord. I remember saying to Wayne & Leabell last spring "I really wish you were a couple that could be here at Menno-Hof forever." In reality, I would not wish for anyone to remain on earth forever and we know that Leabell is enjoying her glorious new home, moving about and breathing freely again!

Wayne continues to come in on Thursdays and volunteer for which we are very grateful. By the end of 2013, Wayne & Leabell had donated a combined total of 5,823 hours (since they began as volunteers in 2000 and 2002)!



Menno-Hof wish list:

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

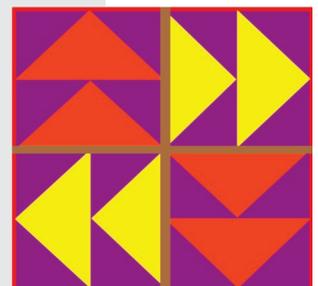
If you are interested in donating any of these items, contact Jerry or Susan (260.768.4117)

by the numbers

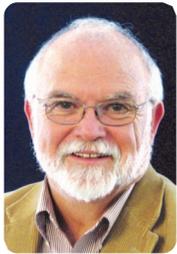
- 3,747** volunteer hours were donated in 2013.
- 220** was the total attendance for the Menno-Hof winter series, "Coffee, Cookies and Community: part II."
- 17** out-of-state hosts and hostesses are returning in 2014 for their second or more periods of service at Menno-Hof.

- 4,512** flowers planted in the 2014 Menno-Hof quilt garden, Dutchman's Puzzle:
 - 960 orange marigolds
 - 960 yellow marigolds
 - 1,920 blue/purple petunias
 - 672 red begonias.

Dutchman's Puzzle



DIRECTOR'S DESK



Jerry Beasley
executive director

In April we completed our 2014 winter series with a presentation by Paul Kurtz "When the ordinary becomes the extraordinary: Jesus and coffee." The Coffee, Cookies and Community series was well received and attendance met or exceeded our expectations.

We were pleased to honor our volunteers on April 29 with a breakfast and presentation by John Ruth, Mennonite storyteller. Over 50 individuals attended the event. John's presentation was focused on his newly released book, *Branch: a Memoir with Pictures*. We continually give thanks to God for our great volunteers and this is but one way we express

our appreciation for the work they do.

These days I find myself impatient for warm weather. Here it is approaching mid-May and temperatures have been below 60 degrees most of the time and at least to me it seems we have had more of a relentless wind than usual. Now that I have my little bellyaching out of the way, let's think about the good things that are to come, Lord willing! The trees are leafing out and flowers will soon be in full bloom. On May 19 we are scheduled to receive our quilt garden plants and we hope to get them in the ground as soon as possible that same week. This is no small task as we will be receiving approximately 4,500 individual flowers to plant. We expect the Dutchman's Puzzle quilt design to be very appealing to the many visitors that come to (*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

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

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.

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.

Daniel B. Miller, Goshen, Ind.

Wayne Schrock, Millersburg, Ind.

Don Stauffer, Union, Mich.

Alvin J. Yoder, Shipshewana, Ind.

Fern Yoder, Millersburg, Ind.

Director's Desk (cont. from above)

appreciate the beauty this garden provides during the summer months. There are now 20 quilt garden sites along the Heritage Trail in seven communities. For more info: www.amishcountry.org/things-to-do/quilt-gardens.

Even though jackets have been required, we have already begun mowing, trimming and cleaning the Menno-Hof grounds. Inside, we are busy with visitors, preparing for summer hours to begin June through August (Mon.—Fri. 10 a.m.—7 p.m. and Sat. 10 a.m.—5 p.m.). We are also finalizing plans for the 2014 Singspiration to be held Sunday, September 14, on the Menno-Hof grounds. We ask for your prayers as we continue sharing the Anabaptist story with individuals from various countries and all walks of life around the world.