



## Mennonites Grapple with, Reflect on Peace Position

During the recent Gulf crisis and its aftermath, Mennonites have had occasion to grapple with the question of war in general and their historic peace position in particular. In articles, editorials and letters to the editors, it has become clear that Mennonites today do not think alike with regard to war and peace issues. They agree that peace-making is part of their Christian faith tradition, but they do not all agree on how the peace position is to be expressed or implemented or implemental in the complexities of modern life and politics.

To deal with these questions historically, theologically and ethically, a symposium was held at the University of Winnipeg on November 7 and 8. Under the general heading *Mennonites and Modern War*, Gerhard Ens, George Epp, Harry Huebner, Lawrence Klippenstein, Harry Loewen, Ken Reddig, Al Reimer and Bernie Wiebe presented papers and vignettes on Mennonites and the wars of the twentieth century (World War I, World

War II, the Gulf War).

Another conference took place at Canadian Mennonite Bible College on November 9 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Canadian Mennonite conscientious objectors.

At the conference Dr. William Janzen presented a paper on *World War Relations of the Canadian Mennonites with Government* and Dr. Ted Regehr dealt with the topic *Lost Sons: The Cana-*

*dian Mennonite Soldiers of World War II*. Short personal accounts were given by Betty Goosen, John C. Klassen, Jake Wiens and Larry Danielson. A talk on CO colleagues in Eastern Europe was presented by Lawrence Klippenstein. Dr. David Schroeder addressed a banquet audience on the topic: *2001: Will Mennonites Still Stand Peace?*

Several hundred people—mostly Manitoba COs of World War II - attended the 50th Conscientious Objector Anniversary Celebration at the Rhineland Pioneer Centre in Altona November 10. Following are several reports of that event.

## 300 attend Anniversary for former CO members

— by Dave Schellenberg

Over 300 people registered for the 50th anniversary CO meet at the Rhineland Pioneer Centre in Altona last Sunday, Nov. 10.

They heard speeches from two keynote speakers as well as reminiscing on experiences from alternative service days.

Menno Klassen, one of the speakers, likened alternative service in World War II as going the first mile. "But we need to go the second mile," he stated. Meaning that this second mile related to an on-going peace witness today. Here he mentioned the efforts of Mennonite Central Committee with its world outreach.

Lawrence Klippenstein of the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg posed a number of questions relating to what Mennonites did in World War II. "Why did we do what we did?" was one of the questions. One answer, he said, to take vengeance, is not our job. "Was it really worth the bother?"

One positive result was that the Mennonite com-

munity went public with a witness in a way that it may never have done before.

Another question was, "Can we keep this message growing?" He expressed the need of this story to be recorded. One effort has been made in the past with the book, *Let There be Peace*.

Elsie Kliever is the wife of alternative service worker Jake. While her husband was doing his service she went home to stay with her parents in Kleefeld. Having been married just a little over a year at the time, she related some of her feelings.

Then there were those who had been assigned to forestry camps. Three of these, Tony Dyck and John C. Klassen and Henry Heidebrecht told of their experiences.

Over the Hills, a musical group supplied instrumental music. John Eidse, Morris, had a quartet. Jake Redekopp led in congregational singing.

The meeting was chaired jointly by Jake Unrau of Winnipeg and John Kornelsen of Steinbach. The afternoon included a dinner banquet.

## COs mark 50th Anniversary of Alternative Service

— by Elmer Heinrichs

Manitoba COs marked the 50th anniversary of alternative service Nov. 10 in Altona.

Over 300 people participated in the anniversary celebration of informal visiting, a reunion program

and banquet.

As an alternative to joining the armed services, COs recalled how they worked in camps, in mines, in hospitals and on farms across the country. Some also spent some time in prison.

They fought fires and built roads, dams and

trails in Canada's national parks, including Riding Mountain in Manitoba. They also worked in hospitals, including St. Boniface Hospital and at the Portage la Prairie hospital for people with mental disabilities.

Over 20 million trees were planted in B.C. alone. They also served as fire fighters in England and in a medical unit in China.

Some of the first COs left in June, 1941 to work at Clear Lake in Riding Mountain, reunion treasurer John Eidse of the Morris area recalls, adding he remembers working with Altona-Gretna COs William Wiebe, Henry Sawatzky, Abram Doerksen and Abe Loewen.

"I spent four months at Clear Lake, came home for the summer, got married and spent the next winter at a lumber camp in Ontario," Eidse said. The following winter I worked at a Winnipeg supply coalyard."

The reunion program, chaired by former missionary Jake Unrau, included guest speakers Menno Klassen, a member of the MCD Manitoba Peace and Social Concerns Committee and Lawrence Klippenstein, an archivist at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Klassen talked about the COs on-going peacemaking task, while Klippenstein spoke about promoting peace and helping the underprivileged in Third World countries.

Anton Dyck of Lowe Farm, John C. Klassen of Morden and Elsie Kliewer, separated from her husband Jake by the war after 14 months of marriage, related their experiences from the war years.

#### COs and peacemaking

Klassen, who worked in Altona for his alternative service, told COs that they as seniors and conscientious objectors can get involved in peacemaking work through MCC. Support for MCC contributes to peace of mind and peace in the world.

"We went the first mile when we served in camps, on farms, in hospitals or even in prison



Special music was part of the 50th Conscientious Objector anniversary celebration held at the Rhineland Pioneer Centre in Altona on November 10.

during wartime. But as Christians, God expects us and human need compels us to go the second mile.

"When we were allowed to return to normal life at home, we soon latched onto MCC as our alternative service. MCC provided a much better alternative service vehicle than the program offered by the state. Both the COs and the MCC needed each other."

From food and material aid relief for other Mennonites, MCC broadened to benefit people of non-Mennonite faith, then assisting communities with economic development. Slowly constituents also mandated MCC to take on the problem of injustice.

A step in the development of peace thinking and acting, suggested Klassen is "to make peace with

the earth. We need to work to maintain the balance of nature, to save the environment now.

"To refuse to go to war was an important witness, an important start, but it was only the beginning of our ongoing peacemaking task."

Klassen recalled his alternative service years in Altona. After graduating from the agriculture studies at the University of Manitoba he started work for the Rhineland Agricultural Society.

Since agricultural production was considered important by the Canadian government, Klassen was allowed to perform his three years of CO service in Altona promoting special crops, animal health and 4-H clubs and organizing the annual agricultural fair.

## MMHS President's Report

— by Lawrence Klippenstein

The past year has been a year of "finishings" and, to some extent, "beginnings." Finished for the Society now is the publication of the four volumes of Arnold Dyck's *Complete Works*. As a footnote to this project, one could mention also the completion of an MA thesis by Catharine Froese Klassen dealing with an exploration of Dyck's letters. A few of the letters were published in Volume IV. Catharine completed her work at the University of Manitoba in October. All four *Complete Works* volumes are available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Finished too, is the preparation for publication of the third volume in the English language Echo Verlag series. This is the book on Crimean Mennonites by Henry Goerz. It will go to the press shortly. Earlier volumes completed were *The Kuban Mennonites* and *Mennonite Templers*. Publication of this 14-volume series is a project in which we are collaborating with CMBC Publications.

The Education Committee, headed by Abe Dueck, was a co-sponsor of a CO 50th Anniversary Conference which was held at CMBC on

November 9. Seventy-five to 80 persons attended. All the papers read at the conference are available at the Centre for MB Studies and the Mennonite Heritage Centre, both in Winnipeg.

We might mention again that the sale of Mennonite Books to a private owner (Brandt Family Enterprises) took place in 1991 also. All transactions for the changeover have been completed now. The business is doing well under its new management. Persons desiring the most recent catalogue may write to Mennonite Books, 67 Flett Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2K 3N3, or phone #668-7475.

As well, the final touches were put to the Jacob J. Shantz monument project. This memorial was placed on the Southwood School grounds at Schanzenfeld (near Winkler) in June, 1990. The suggestion of doing something similar near the old village of Schanzenburg (once located near Niverville) is being considered also.

What then is "beginning?" One thing is the planning for a popular one-volume work on the Mennonites of Manitoba. Another discussion deals with the possibility of a special genealogy page in the MMHS Newsletter. The Genealogy Committee is working on some new projects as well. Someone has raised the question of relating more closely

to projects such as the Altbergthol School Museum at Altona, or other similar projects developing in the (former) West Reserve area. The question of collaborating more closely with the Deutsche Sprachverein has come up also.

Your ideas and responses are welcome. We look for more participation as members too. Renewals for 1992 are beginning to come, but we invite more. Send renewals to Bill Schroeder, 434 Sutton Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2G 0T3.

Of course, we want to see you at our annual meeting and banquet as well. Notice the announcement elsewhere in this issue.

#### MMHS Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 25, 1992

Mennonite Brethren Bible College  
169 Riverton Ave., Wpg.

4:30 — business meeting  
6:30 — banquet with speaker  
Gerhard Ens

The MMHS Newsletter is published twice a year by the Publicity and Membership. Editor: Doris Penner. It welcomes letters and reports pertaining to the historical interests of society members. Correspondence should be mailed to the MMHS Newsletter, Box 3, Landmark, Manitoba R0A 0X0.

# Research and Scholarship Committee Report

by Harry Loewen, Chairman

The Committee is happy to report that with the publication of the fourth volume of the *Collected Works of Arnold Dyck* in 1990, the Arnold Dyck project, as it had been called, has come to a successful conclusion. At a reception in fall, kindly organized by Elizabeth Peters, one of the five editors of the project, Arnold Dyck and his family were honoured as contributors to and promoters of Mennonite writing.

In the meantime the Committee is overseeing the translation into English of the Echo-Verlag series, historical books originally published in the

1940s and '50s under the general editorship of Arnold Dyck. The translated books are being published by CMBC Publications. At the time of this writing two books (on the Kuban and the TEMPLERS) have appeared in print, another one is in press, and several others are well on the way to completion. The books are being published as the translations and funds become available. I might add that the Committee hopes that many readers and institutions interested in Mennonite history will purchase these valuable books.

The Committee is presently considering a suggestion by the executive of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society to write a history of

Mennonites in Manitoba. At a recent meeting of the Committee the suggestion was received positively and the Committee considered questions relating to authorship, scope, finances, date of publication and others. It was generally agreed such a history should be solidly researched and written as a scholarly work of a substantial size. Whether one or more authors will be involved in the project has not been decided. The Committee agreed that when plans for such a history have become more firm applications for funds to granting agencies would be made. Members of MMHS are welcome to make suggestions with regard to any questions related to this forthcoming history.

## Mennonite Heritage Village Highlights of 1991

— by Peter Goertsen, Executive Director

The success of MHV each year is the continued support of the community. In 1991 volunteers again provided thousands of hours of their time and expertise in activities ranging from interpretation to tour guiding to food preparation and

more.

Local businesses contributed generously to the community auction, held each year during Pioneer Days. All funds generated go toward the operation of MHV.

Donations in support of MHV were received throughout the entire year coming from various areas of Southern Manitoba.

New events for 1991 included a special 'Children's Day on Friday of Pioneer Days. Our newly acquired tent was filled with youngsters enjoying the entertainment provided by Rolin Penner.

A Fowl Dinner was enjoyed by a sell-out crowd in the Livery Barn Restaurant, in September.

Our first Doll and Craft Show took place in November. This brought vendors out from Brandon to Beausejour, and was enjoyed by the many visitors who came out to the event.

The Temporary Exhibition Gallery saw a range of exhibits this year. The first one, *Then and Now* presented our school tours with a comparison of items used by pioneers and by people today. Three art exhibits were presented: *A Group of Seven Mennonite Artists*, *Monarchs of the Wild*, by Clarence Tillenius, and *Peter Snyder; Limited Edition Reproductions 1991*. In November, *German Immigration; 325 Years in Canada* was shown while *The Good 'Ole Days Of Winter* is currently on display.

Our curriculum oriented Winter School Program, made possible by the Regional Museums Project of the Department of Culture, Heritage & Citizenship, was offered for the first time this year. From February to December, almost 1,000 students participated coming from Winkler, Morden, Emerson, Winnipeg and the Steinbach areas. It was well received by both students and teachers, and is now well on the way for the 1991/'92 season.

Collections continued to grow with some 170 items donated by December 1. Items range from a traditional homemade carpenters work bench, to an 1842 book of German sermons, to a 1798 traditional wall clock — which was brought from Yuma, Arizona, by a couple who felt "this is where it belongs."

Professional development is important for MHV and its future. This year Irvin Unrau, the grounds coordinator, and Daryl Friesen, lab technician trainee both attended conservation workshops offered by the Manitoba Heritage Conservation Service in Clear Lake and Morden. Evelyn Friesen, our volunteer coordinator, and I as executive director, presented a workshop on volunteerism at spring seminars coordinated by the Association of

Manitoba Museums (AMM). I also attended the annual meeting and conference of the Association For Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) held in Edmonton, Alberta, and, was co-presenter of a museum training program developed by the AMM.

Attendance was between 45,000 to 50,000, again bringing visitors from around the globe. This included school tour groups, adult tour groups, families, special groups such as the National Tour Association which brought tour organizers out to look at our facilities for possible future tour development to our site.

The Board of Directors has been kept busy looking at ways to eliminate our current capital debt. A feasibility study has been launched with a final report coming out in mid-December. The objective is to meet the current capital and operating needs, as well as those of the future.

## Education Committee Report

— by Abe Dueck, Chairman

On Saturday, November 9, the Education Committee of the MMHS co-sponsored the CO 50th Anniversary Conference together with the Mennonite Heritage Centre and the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. The sessions during the day were held at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the evening banquet was held at the Portage Avenue MB Church.

The event was well attended, with some guests from as far away as Ottawa in the east and Vancouver in the west. Two major papers were presented in the morning, the first by Dr. William Janzen from the MCC Office in Ottawa on the topic of "World War II Relations of Canadian Mennonites with Government."

The second, by Dr. Ted Regehr from the History Department at the University of Saskatchewan, focused on "Lost Sons: The Canadian Mennonite Soldiers of World War II."

In the afternoon a variety of shorter presentations included one by Bettie Goossen on the experiences of her late husband, Mr. John Goossen, as a CO, another by Larry Danielson (read by Elizabeth Falk) on "The Vietnam War and I," and one by Jake Wiens on "I was a CO in the Army."

Discussion both during the morning and the afternoon was lively. One person commented on his appreciation that the topic concerning those who enlisted was openly dealt with in the sessions.

Coverage of the event by the media was quite extensive and fair. Several articles in the Winnipeg Free Press dealt with the question of COs and thereby brought the attention of many readers to the issue. The television media also covered the event and featured some interviews with participants.

### MMHS Books for Sale

Dyck, Arnold. **Collected Works. Vol. IV.** Edited by George K. Epp and Elizabeth Peters. (1990) Hdc., 503 pp., \$25 (Vol. I-III are still available for \$25 each or all for \$90). A cassette of Low German readings from Vol. II and III by Gerhard and Henry Ens are available for \$8.

Reimer, Priscilla. **Mennonite Artist. Insider as Outsider.** (1990) Pb., 60 pp., \$10. Contains 15 color reproductions. Produced for Mennonite World Conference.

**These items are available at:**  
Mennonite Heritage Centre  
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3P 0M4

**Mailing and GST costs are extra.**

# Book Reviews

## Two New Books of Stories

Hofer, Samuel. **Born Hutterite**. (Saskatoon: Hofer Publishing, 1991), Pb., 134 pp., \$10.

Warkentin, Alan. **Cultivating Dreams**. (Morden, Manitoba: Willow Creek Publishing, 1990), Pb., 115 pp., \$6.95.

Reviewed by Harry Loewen

Hutterites have a venerable tradition of historical and devotional writing. The *Chronicles*, Hutterite songs, and the writings of Riedeman and other leaders, are well known. When it comes to creative literature of fiction however, Hutterites, like Mennonites until fairly recently, have been less productive. For both Hutterites and Mennonites literature like the arts in general had to edify and be useful in some practical way before it was considered acceptable. Mere entertainment was not reason enough to write and publish fiction.

*Born Hutterite* by Samuel Hofer is a collection of fictionalized stories about Canadian Hutterites. The author, who now lives in Saskatoon, writes as an insider/outsider about the experiences of a young person in a Hutterite colony in southwestern Saskatchewan. He tells stories about Hutterite marriage customs, various childhood pranks, how colony people view the outside world, including "English girls," the power and influence of the preachers and teachers, and buying such things as shoes and waterbeds in Moose Jaw.

Contrary to some people's beliefs about the ways of the Hutterites, these descendants of the strict sixteenth century Anabaptists have a lot of fun and they know how to enjoy life, including good food and alcoholic beverages. The Hutterite

world as portrayed in these stories does not seem drab or unattractive. The author's goodwill toward his people is easily conveyed to the reader of these stories.

The language used in the stories is close to how reasonably well-educated Hutterites would speak. Germanisms are used to good effect, adding charm and humour to the book. However, with regard to the dialect used by modern Hutterites, the author is mistaken in calling it Low German (Introduction, p.3), in contrast to High German used in the church services and German school. The Tyrolese German dialect spoken by Hutterites is Upper (or High) German, not Low German.

Alan Warkentin, the author of *Cultivating Dreams*, found in "a dusty old box" in the back of his closet several poems, letters, and other writings by an uncle of his he had never known. Uncle John Elias had lived near Haskett, Manitoba, during the 1920s and '30s, growing up and working on his father's farm. In his free time John dreamed dreams and wrote poems. As a "writer" he was often misunderstood and made fun of by his friends and others around him.

The poems of John Elias are certainly not great literary pieces (in fact they are reminiscent of Sarah Binks' "poetry," although they are serious in intent) but they do express a Mennonite young boy's aspirations and difficulties in growing up during the Depression. John not only wrote poems but he also sought to acquire an education, including journalism, through correspondence so as to improve his chances for the future.

Warkentin pieces together the poems with sto-

ries on how life might have been during the Depression years on the prairies. The headings of the chapters are taken from the titles of the poems, with the stories' content dealing with love, sadness, hope and death as experienced by the youthful poet.

Here are some of the chapter headings: "My Dream World," "Farewell," "Love," "A Mournful Wind," "Town of Morden," "The Promise of Spring," and "Wings of Music." The last stanza of the "Town of Morden" poem reads:

*Give me Morden for my home town  
Where we have fun on a Saturday night;  
And people wear a smile all day  
And the future to me seems so bright.*

The book is illustrated by Helen E. Froese, Art Friesen and Ben Fehr. Both young and old readers will no doubt enjoy this book as well as the *Born Hutterite* book and gain valuable insights into the lives of Mennonites and Hutterites alike. Church libraries would do well to place these stories on their shelves.

Professor Harry Loewen holds the chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

### Echo Historical Books

**The Kuban Settlement** by C.P. Toews, Heinrich Friesen and Arnold Dyck; translated by Herbert Giesbrecht. 1990; 91 pp., maps and photos; pb., \$9.

Describes the beginnings of the Mennonite Brethren movement in Russia. First in the translated Echo Historical Series.

**Mennonite Templers** by Heinrich Sawatzky; translated by Victor G. Doerksen. 1991; 103 pp., with photos and maps; pb. \$9.

Details the Templer movement from its beginnings in the Ukraine to its colonization in Palestine. Translated in the Echo Historical Series.

**Mennonites of the Crimea** by Heinrich Goertz; translated by Victor G. Doerksen. pb. Coming in spring. Third in the Echo Historical Series.

Available from local bookstores  
or from the publishers:  
CMBC Publications  
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.  
Winnipeg, MB. R3P 0M4  
Ph: (204) 888-6781

(\$1 per book for postage and handling and 7 percent GST is extra.)

Klassen, Mary and John Unrau. **The Balancing of the Clouds**. (Winnipeg, MB: Windflower Communications, 1991), Hdc., 70 pp., \$29.95.

Reimer, Priscilla. **Mennonite Artist. Insider as Outsider**. (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1990), Pb., 60 pp., \$10.

Reviewed by Rudy A. Regehr.

Mennonites have long held a solid reputation for their good music. In recent years they have also come into their own with a number of writers who have Mennonite connections as part of their background. Artistic endeavour has not been our forte except for those who are younger and have grown up in relative prosperity. It was usually supposed that art could not thrive among pioneers and their pioneering efforts at survival. So the publication of Mary Klassen's paintings done in the midst of difficult times is in itself, remarkable and noteworthy. *Balancing of the Clouds* is a worthwhile addition to any coffee table collection. It is a collection of landscape paintings made largely in early life and published now with commentary by her son John Unrau, a former Rhodes Scholar and now professor of English in Ontario.

Another book of Mennonite art work was published just prior to Assembly 12 in Winnipeg to showcase some of the artwork done by a number of persons attached in various ways to the Mennonite Community. The second title is *Mennonite*

*Artist: Insider as Outsider*.

The first book by John Unrau, himself not closely connected to the Mennonite community clearly reflects his mother's deep going loyalty to Mennonite faith and values. That is not as clear with the other book. One gets the sense that in *Mennonite Artist* many of the artists are busy distancing themselves from the centre of Mennonite Life while at the same time not denying the Mennonite influence on their lives. *Balancing of the Clouds* is clearly a spiritually oriented work while *Mennonite Artist* goes to some length to distance itself from at least the Mennonite Church as it existed for the artists.

One cannot come away from the second book without feeling a sense of loss, leaving the reader to ask the question of why the artist is not quite at home within the Mennonite community when a rereading of *Balancing* demonstrates with understated elegance that there is room for the artist among us.

Wiebe, Armin. **Murder in Gutenthal** (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1991).

Reviewed by Wilmer Penner

A sinister brood, in whose midst you have a brutal knifing, a vicious drowning in a scum-covered pond, a kidnapping *beschmaat* with hints of rape, a crazed hermit grinding human bones . . . let me *pluda* no more. Is this the first genuine Mennonite

Christie mystery?

What Armin Wiebe has given us in *Murder in Gutenthal* is certainly a mystery. String together the violence listed above with: a secret CO Nazi cell; the CIA jousting with the FBI bumping into the RCMP special squad tangling with the Band Police drozzling with Neil Bergen, Private Investigator; a van that crosses the border with cocaine-laced Bibles (will you ever trust the Gideons again?), an AIDS clinic in Uganda, the Diaspora in Paraguay. Here you have mystery enough to *febleff* even *Schneppa Kjnals* into the ultimate question itself — “Why me?” And the investigations of the puzzle takes us into a series of those Flat German stories told as only Armin can. For the sake of these stories we forgive the author the effort it takes to keep the multitudinous characters and threads of plot in some kind of continuity.

Let this be a little *kjitle*. An LTD car wearing a MILK sticker as a mysterious acronymis somehow tied into missionary benefits to Africa. The love-daughter of the beet-farmer on her Harley becomes the heroine. *Bulchi* Wiebe helps *Schneppa* overcome earthly limitations by leaving Volks-

wagen and bicycle and even the horse below to survey the guilty landscape of Gutenthal from his plane. So much Mennonite local colour that you hardly know yourself *rote*.

But the problem a writer faces in using this genre in a comic way is one of tone. You cannot turn the murder victim into a stuck boar, the shadiest lady into a feminist missionary absconding to Uganda, the root of evil into a guy named A. Dyck (vinegar, for the benefit of the great unwashed) without maintaining this tone of the *schpott*-heroic all the way through. And the ending (let no more be *pludad*) departs from that tone into a scene which will seem to most readers one of genuine pathos. Therefore, much of the lighthearted treatment of symbols important to most Mennonite readers (Bibles and church, sex and family) will be harder to overlook.

And so my question becomes: what audience is Wiebe aiming at? The rich use of the Flat German both in its own idiom and translated literally into English seems to suggest a target Mennonite audience (will it play in Plum Coulee?), but every writer must now look at an audience beyond this

shrinking constituency of speakers of *Plautdietsch*. So I had my Irish wife sample the novel. Her report was laudatory. The language gave the stories earthly gusto; the endless invention of nicknames was hilarious even where incomprehensible; the stories gave her a whole new insight into the Mennonite country communities.

Which gave me pause.

James Urry has warned us fervently about the dangers of History Triumphant. But when They shall Ask, do I really want Gutenthal to be the remnant portrait of our Menno ethos? The finest comedy will do for our Gutenthals what Jane Austen did for her English provincial life: hold up a mirror in which we may laugh at our foibles without distorting those symbols which form the basic fabric of our culture. And I hope that Armin Wiebe, with his marvellous eye and ear will be the one to give us that genuinely comic view. The bonus will come if it is done using our earthly vernacular in a way that goes beyond the *schpott*. Go for it, Armin. Give us that genuinely comic view.

## Recent Publications

Bassler, Gerhard P. **The German Canadian Mosaic. Today and Yesterday. Identities, Roots and Heritage.** (Ottawa, 1991), Pb., 206 pp., \$10.

Brandt, Ed, et.al. eds. **Research Guide to German American Genealogy.** (Minneapolis, MN, 1991), Pb., 215 pp., \$20.

Dollinger, Gerhard. **Ein Landarzt erzahlt.** (Stuttgart, 1991), Hdc., 144 pp., \$15.

Dyck, Harvey L., ed. **A Mennonite in Russia. The Diaries of Jacob D. Epp, 1851-1880.** (Toronto, ON, 1991), Hdc., 456 pp., \$50.

Kaethler, Marjorie and Susan D. Shantz. **Quilts of Waterloo County. A Sampling.** (Waterloo, ON., 1990), Pb., 64 pp., \$20.

Krueger, Katherina. **Schicksal einer RuBlanddeutschen. Erlebnisbericht.** (Goettingen, 1991), Pb., 195 pp., \$15.

Neufeld, Anne Hiebert, ed. **Gerhard Abram Teichroeb and His Descendants, 1841-1991.** (Winnipeg, 1991), Hdc., 418 pp., \$45.

Rempel, Peter H., ed. **Der Bote Index, Volume II.** (Winnipeg, 1991), Pb., 430 pp., Part A and B), \$30.

Tiessen, Hildi and Pauls, eds. **A Sunday Afternoon. The Paintings of Henry Pauls.** (Waterloo, ON, 1991), Hdc., 85 pp., \$45. Forty-two paintings reproduced (nine from the Mennonite Heritage Centre collection).

All books available for purchase at:  
**Mennonite Heritage Centre**  
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3P 0M4

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Regrettably there were a few errors in the article “Historical sketch of Pacifism and its Relevance today” (June, 1991).

Number 4 and number 9 of the endnotes should read as follows:

4. C.J. Dyck, Ed. *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1967) p. 106.

9. John B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets, and Mennonites* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1982) p. 90.

Also, there was a minor error in the second-last paragraph. The word should have been “pray” not “pay” so that the sentence would read, “Inasmuch as their conscience allows, they will support their government and will pray for their elected representatives but they simply *refuse to shed human blood.*”

I really appreciate the work you are doing on this Newsletter.

Sincerely,  
Stan Penner

## MMHS Members Develop Software

Bert Friesen, Richard Thiessen and Alf Redekopp, all of Winnipeg, have designed computer software for the purpose of developing a Mennonite Genealogical Database. The program is presently being tested and modified. The intentions are to work closely with other organizations such as the California Mennonite Historical Society (see below) so that data can be shared and the work divided to avoid duplication of efforts. Questions and comments should be directed to the persons above at (204) 669-6575.

*The following news comes from The California Mennonite Historical Society:*

Under the leadership of Jane Friesen, The Genealogical Project committee has begun working toward a computerized genealogical database of Prussian-Russian Mennonite and Hutterite families.

The committee's main concern at this point is the design and implementation of a software program capable of storing and managing the vast amounts of data that will be entered into it. The working name for this program is “Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry,” or “GRANDMA.” Given the magnitude of this project, the committee assumes that no commercially-available genealogical software can be utilized. It does, however, intend to design its program to perform many of the same functions — pedigree charts, family group sheets, tables of descendants — and to be compatible with these other programs. A set of general program specifications have been drawn up to guide the programmer in designing the software. Committee members plan in the near future to contact other national genealogical organizations who might have designed similar software. The committee may decide to utilize parts of any such existing programs if this seems appropriate.

Questions or comments regarding the Genealogical Project Committee's work should be directed to Jane Friesen at (209) 591-4154 or to the Center for MB Studies at (209) 453-2225.

### Family History Workshop

March 2, 1992  
7:30 p.m.

MBBC chapel  
169 Riverton Ave., Wpg.

Topic: Doing Genealogy: Meaningful Time with the Living and the Dead

Speaker: Anna Ens

For more information call Centre for M.B. Studies 669-6575

Sponsored by the Mennonite Genealogical Committee of MMHS.

# Seasons Greetings:

The following is a "Christmas excerpt" from Elsa Redekopp's book *Wish and Wonder: A Manitoba Village Child* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1982).

## Christmas Morning

Lisa entered the big kitchen. Was she still dreaming? On the kitchen table stood a little Christmas tree alight with flaming tongues of white candles, reflected in the silver tinsel and shiny ornaments. Lisa was so overcome with the wonder of it that she almost forgot to look for presents. Her plate was filled with nuts, apples and candy.

Then Mary gently pushed her forward. There was a little wooden cupboard with three drawers below and two glass doors on top. And behind the glass doors sat, oh wonder of wonders, two big dolls, one dressed in pink and one in blue, Lisa found herself reaching for the doll in pale blue. It had real clothes trimmed with real lace and a matching lace-trimmed blue bonnet. It had golden curls and blue eyes that opened and shut. As she turned it over Lisa almost jumped at the cry of "ma-ma-!" It was too wonderful!

Clutching her doll she hugged Mary and Margaret and mother. She pulled father over to the little cupboard to explore the drawers and shelves and to show him the little knobs on the glass doors. Father seemed to be quite familiar with it. For a moment Lisa tried to remember where she had smelled that strong odor of varnish before.

She did not tire of opening and shutting the little drawers, while never letting go of her doll. Leni had already completely undressed hers to see what she was like underneath. At breakfast Lisa seated the doll beside her on the bench. She could hardly eat for excitement. Then Mary nodded at her across the table. For a moment Lisa was worried because it was time to recite her *Weihnachts Wunsch* (Christmas Wish). It was a wish that young children memorized and recited for their parents on Christmas morning. She had recited it really well for Mary the day before. But the solemn occasion always brought a lump to her throat. Everybody was looking at her. What if she started to cry. Her big brothers would find that very amusing. Swallowing hard, she stood up beside father and recited bravely:

*Heut zu diesem Weihnachtsfeste  
Wünsch euch das Allerbeste;  
Glück, Gesundheit, langes Leben  
Mög der liebe Gott euch geben.*

*For this special Christmas day  
I wish for you the very best  
Of joy, good health and long years of life  
That the dear Lord may give to you!*

Father and mother were pleased and she had not cried. She felt good because she had not disappointed Mary. And suddenly she remembered what they must do today!

"Can we go now, Pa?" she asked.

"Where shall we go, owl?" Pa said.

"Well to Bethlehem, to see the new baby that was born!" Lisa exclaimed, her eyes shining.

Pa said: "But owl, that baby was born a long time ago!"

"But Pa, the minister said at the concert last night!" "Euch ist heute der Heiland geboren!" (Luke 1 vs. 11) (For unto you is born this day a Saviour and you shall find the babe lying in a manger!) That is now Pa, the minister said *today*. Can't we go and see the baby?" she asked anxiously.

"Lisa looked at the faces around the table. They were all watching her, looking surprised. Suddenly she felt very silly. She had never been so disappointed. She tried to swallow her tears. Suddenly she was on father's knee, hiding her face in his jacket, cry-

ing with disappointment.

She could not cry for very long. After all she had her lovely doll and her wonderful little cupboard. All afternoon Lisa and Leni arranged and rearranged their things in the shelves and drawers. Father read his favorite Fritz Reuter stories. Mother liked to browse through the *Gesangbuch* to hum wellknown melodies. Ever so often they were interrupted to admire the dolls and the cupboard. Margaret, Mary and the boys had gone to visit friends but they had to be back early for chores.

Jacob brought in three heaping baskets of straw and father fed the big brick oven until it glowed red-hot. It would keep the house warm all night. Then he shut the big black oven door and they all sat down to supper. Mother served big platters of baked sliced ham and a huge tureen of cold plumemoos (fruit soup). It was made of dried apples, plums, raisins and apricots and was delicious! Father had prepared his special mustard for the ham. After they said grace, Mary again lit the white candles on the Christmas tree. The sweet smell of the plumemoos, the tangy ham and mustard mingled with the fragrance of wax and evergreen.

Lisa closed her eyes. The whole house seemed to be filled with happiness. She wished Christmas would stay all year, every day.

It was time to blow out the candles to save them for the next day. Mother lit the lamp while Margaret and Mary cleared the table. They sat down on the bench that ran the length of the brick oven in the *Kleine Stube* (small room).

Mother put out a big bowl of peanuts. They ate peanuts till there was a big heap of shells on the yellow wooden floor. Jacob whittled away on a piece of wood with his new jackknife. George and Armin, down on the floor, played a game of dominoes. Margaret and Mary discussed the new embroidery designs they had received.

Father softly strummed the guitar to "*Stille Nacht*", and they all joined in, humming and singing. George always sang bass. They ate more peanuts as mother talked about Christmas in the old country. Holding their dolls, the children listened. Lisa was sure no Christmas could ever be as wonderful as this one.

