

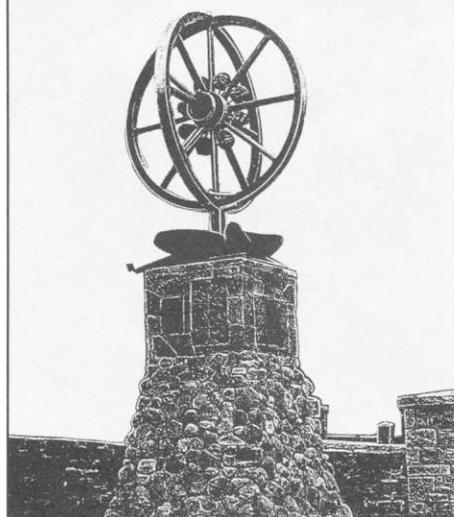
Ontario Mennonite History

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Sam Steiner retires as archivist of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario

By Barb Draper

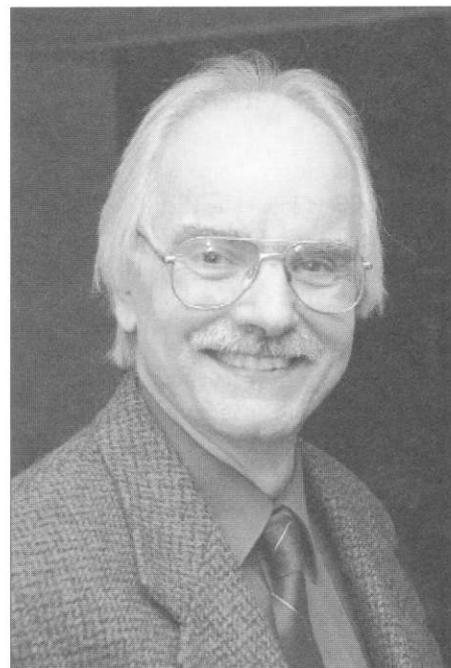
Sam Steiner retired from his position as Librarian and Archivist at Conrad Grebel University College in December, 2008 after 34 years. He was born and raised in Ohio, but forty years ago he refused to register for the draft (as required by the U.S. military) and fled to Canada. Sam graduated from the University of Waterloo in 1973 and began working at Conrad Grebel College as the archivist in 1974. Two years later he also served as librarian and he completed his Masters of Library Science degree from the University of Western Ontario in 1978.

During Sam's tenure, the Mennonite Archives of Ontario have seen significant growth and development. When he began, the library and archives were housed in a small area which is now the student games room. In 1976, after the new academic building was constructed, the collections were moved into their present location and at that time Sam was appointed full-time librarian/archivist. In those early years especially, Sam received a great deal of support and advice from Lorna Bergey who had served as a volunteer archivist.

Over the years Sam has contributed greatly to the preservation of the history of the Mennonites of Ontario and has assisted many historians access information about that history. During most of his tenure he served on both the Ontario and the Canadian Historical societies and has served on various conference boards and committees. He continues to serve as president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada and serves on the executive committee of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario.

As archivist, Sam was instrumental in bringing copies of Canadian family and church-related collections from the Mennonite Archives at Goshen College to the archives at Conrad Grebel. He also began collecting genealogical information in the archives because that was the information that most people asked for.

Sam was the first editor of this newsletter, when it went under the title *Mennogespräch* (Menno-conversation) and served in that



Sam Steiner

capacity from 1983 to 1991. As well as many other projects, Sam researched and published two major books, *Vicarious Pioneer: The Life of Jacob Y. Shantz* (1988) and *Lean Us On: A History of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, 1945-1995* (1995). His first retirement project is to complete a survey history of Mennonites in Ontario from the initial immigration of Mennonites to Upper Canada to the year 2000.

Through the years, Sam has kept abreast of the latest technological advances and the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada credits him with having the vision of developing an electronic Mennonite encyclopedia that is available on the worldwide web. Sam has provided ongoing leadership and is the primary editor of the very successful Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO).

The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario has benefited greatly from Sam's interest in Mennonite history and his tireless efforts in preserving material and making it available to others. Thank you, Sam! We are delighted that you have made Ontario your home and we hope that you will work with our historical society for many years to come! *

Lorna (Shantz) Bergey

May 29, 1921 – March 22, 2009

By Barb Draper

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada presented the Award of Excellence to Lorna Bergey in 2007 to recognize the many years of service she gave to helping the Mennonite community remember its history. Lorna was a charter member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario and served on the board from its beginning in 1965 until the year 2000. For 32 of those years (1968-2000) she served as secretary and played a key role in keeping the society functioning. She organized and led numerous bus tours and volunteered countless hours making historical



Lorna (Shantz) Bergey

presentations and chatting with visitors at exhibits. She collected many of the artefacts for the Brubacher House museum and did significant work in preserving the Detweiler Meetinghouse in Roseville.

Lorna was the oldest daughter of Walter (Cassel) and Selina (Shirk) Shantz. She

attended a rural school outside Kitchener, but her help was needed at home when she finished the eighth grade at age 12 in 1933, and that was the end of her formal education.

On May 29, 1940, at the age of 19, she married David Bergey; they had two sons, Edward and Robert. David and Lorna began farming and selling cheese and apples at the Galt Farmers Market. After David's health suffered after a farm injury in 1954, Lorna developed Bergey's Cheese as a business.

Because of her interest in local history, Lorna joined the Waterloo County Historical Society and the Pennsylvania Folklore Society of Ontario. She was also a charter member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario and from 1967 to 1974 she served as the acting archivist of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel College.

Lorna was generous with her time and many academic researchers came to her for information about the Swiss Mennonites of Ontario. She was part of the reading committees for the three-volume *Mennonites in Canada* series written by Frank H. Epp and Ted Regehr. In his tribute at her funeral, Sam Steiner stated that her greatest impact was "her influence on the academic historical interpretation of Ontario Mennonite history," and that "Frank Epp's understanding of Ontario Swiss Mennonites demonstrated in volumes 1 and 2 of [the *Mennonites in Canada*] series was only possible because Lorna ensured that he understood the differences between 'her' people and his world of Russian Mennonites."

Although Lorna Bergey never had an impressive formal education, her role in preserving and telling the story of Mennonites in Ontario has been very impressive. She was very generous in giving her time and energy to the work of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. *

New Archivist-Librarian

From Conrad Grebel
University College release

Laureen Harder-Gissing began as the new Archivist-librarian at Conrad Grebel University College in January, following the retirement of Sam Steiner. She is a history graduate from the University of Waterloo; she has a master's degree in religion and culture and is finishing her Master of Information Studies degree at the University of Toronto. Since 2003 she has been working as the manager/librarian at the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Resource Centre, an audiovisual library in Kitchener. She has also published three books of local history: *Their Richest Inheritance: A Celebration of the First Mennonite Church, Vineland* (2001), *Risk and Endurance: A History of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church* (2003) and *We Bear the Loss Together: The Mennonite Aid Union* (2008). As archivist-librarian, Laureen manages the Mennonite Archives of Ontario and the Conrad Grebel University Library. *



Laureen Harder-Gissing

Thirty years of soap recycling by the Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite Church

By Marion Roes

*"Bear ye one another's burden's
and so fulfill the Law of Christ."*

Galatians 6:2

*"Blessed is he that considereth
the poor." Psalms 41:1*

*(From the soap recycling
warehouse sign)*

On a bus tour in June, 2008, organized by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, we passed a warehouse with the sign "Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite Church Recycling Division" at the corner of Berlett's and Nafziger Roads, Wilmot Township. Earl Koch, pastor of Grace Mennonite Fellowship and our tour guide, said that it was led by Art Gerber. My interest was piqued as I know Art and his wife Laurene. On July 11, I called and spoke with Laurene and asked if I could interview her and Art about the soap recycling operation. He wasn't home but she said, "we process the soap one day a year and that day is *next Friday, July 18*. You could come and help!" That was the weekend that I and my cousin, Linda Marthen, had planned family history and genealogy research, but when I told her about the opportunity to help with soap sorting, she too wanted to be part of the project.

To learn background information, I called Art a few days later. He told me about the process and how it started. His uncle and aunt, Ezra and Katie Steckly got the idea to recycle soap when they saw it being done in a community in the United States in the late 1970s. They and Art's parents, Emanuel and Elizabeth Gerber, made "cold calls" at motels in the Grand Bend and Collingwood areas.

If the motel manager or owner agreed to save soap and shampoo for pickup, the name was recorded in a bill book. Art still has that first record book. Now, each driver keeps track of the motels on his route.

That first collection, a disappointing three barrels, was processed in Art and Laurene's garage. Recycling wasn't mainstream as it is now, and as the quantity increased, there was opposition from people living nearby who thought the process wasn't sanitary. The Gerbers live in Perth County and applied to that health unit for approval. After a visit to view the operations, a letter of approval was given.

From that slow start, 30 years ago, the number of pickups grew steadily and now approximately 200 motels participate,

including hotel chains such as Best Western and Sheraton. As motel associations became involved they informed members about the opportunity to recycle, and it became easier to convince owners and staff to save soap, shampoo and other items.

If ownership or staff change, a new administrator may or may not continue recycling because it does take space and staff time. Management may decide to recycle, but it's usually up to cleaning staff to sort or not. Some carry several bags on their carts and divide items as they work from room to room; others put everything in one bag.

Soap bars and shampoo bottles are placed in plastic or cardboard barrels for regular pickup. If there are additional items



~ Continued on page 4 ~

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~ Continued from page 3 ~ "Thirty Years..."

such as sheets and mattresses, motel staff will call their driver who then make an extra trip for a large load which could include bedding, towels, shower curtains, wash cloths, mattresses, clothes, shoes and even a wheelchair one time.

"The number of sheets is endless," said Art.

One company heard about Cedar Grove's recycling through word of mouth and offered them a tractor-trailer-load of 24 tons of rejected soap! It was a bonus because it didn't need to be cleaned but simply placed in barrels for shipping.

Friday, July 18, was soap sorting day and I went for a brief time in the morning to see what was involved. It sounded like hard work and I doubted that I could follow through on Laurene's suggestion that I help. The warehouse was filled with rows of long tables loaded with tiny bottles and small soap bars. Men and women sat on both sides of the tables working and chatting. I was welcomed by Linda Jantzi, a member of the organizing committee, who told me some of the history of this project and showed me through the building. She has been helping since she was a youngster.

When the New Prussia school² closed in 1966, Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite Church bought it to use as its first parochial school. Their second school, in use today, is at Kingwood on Streicher Line, Wellesley Township. In 1985, when Linda was in grade one, New Prussia/ Cedar Grove school closed the second and last time. By then soap-sorting day had outgrown the available garage space and more storage was needed for items picked up during the year. The school building was put to use for bandage-making while a church member's farm equipment shed continued to be used for storing and sorting.

In 2000, the size of the operation had outgrown the

school and there was enough property to build a warehouse. A sign was proposed for the building and after a few wording changes it conformed to Wilmot Township guidelines and was approved by council. A floor heating system was installed in the old and new buildings. In the former school, one room was heated to keep the soap at an even temperature. The other room has two uses. Sheets are sorted and bandages made there but it is also an ideal space to be rented for special occasion meals and family gatherings. There is a small kitchen and numerous tables and chairs.

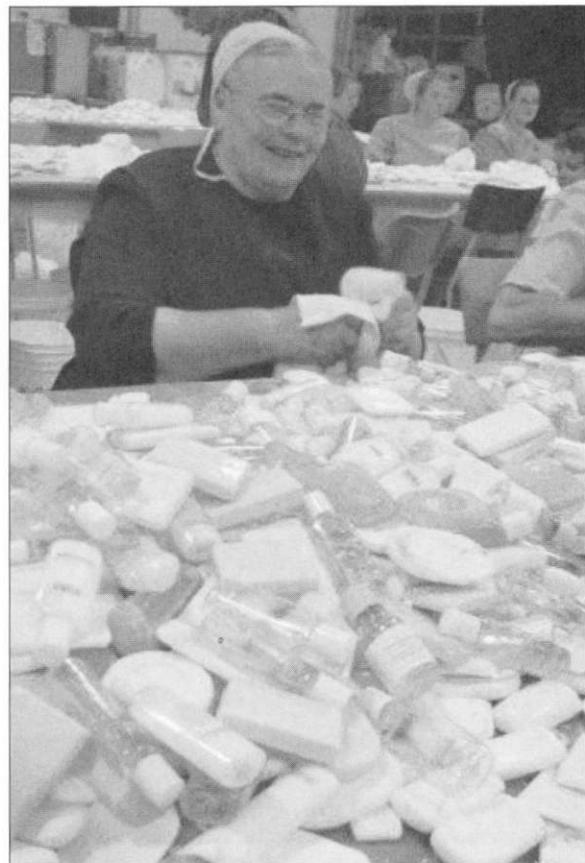
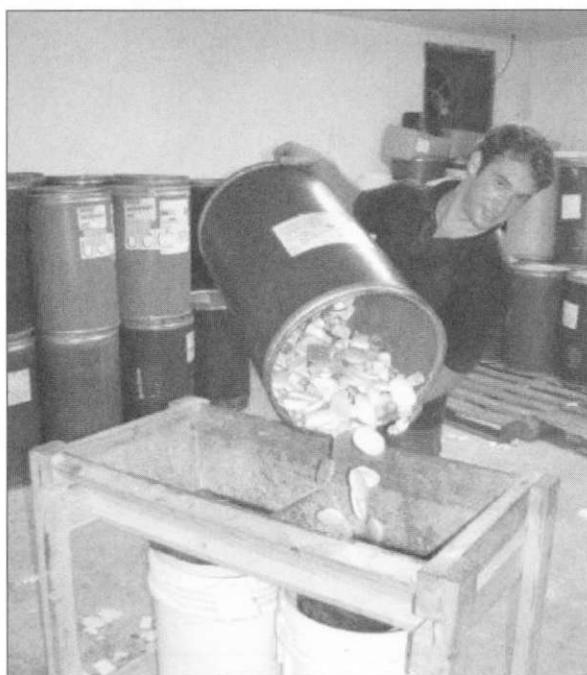
Part of the warehouse is used occasionally for volleyball games by the youth, but otherwise it is storage space and not heated during winter. Drivers bring items here which they pick up on their route—unsorted sheets, blankets, clothes, etc, as well as various items used in the project.

Ella Mae Schmidt, working at a table explained the work: "We scrape some bars and wipe all of them so they are clean and dry. We separate bottles of shampoo from bottles of conditioner and lotion and mouthwash and put them in barrels." Ella Mae has been volunteering in several aspects of the process since the beginning. Throughout the year she receives towels from the route drivers and divides them into those that need no work and large towels with stains. She cuts out stains, and hems what is left to make wash cloths and small towels. She had dedicated one of

the rooms in her home to this work.

I could see it was work that I and Linda Marthen could easily help with. I returned to the warehouse with Linda Marthen in the early evening and it was even busier than in the morning. There were young adults, teenagers, children and babies inside and outside. Teenage girls looked after the babies while mothers sorted or served drinks. Young adults had their own space to work and talk together, standing at a long wagon outside the warehouse. Children were given small tasks but also wanted to play outside.

Marlene Wagler (daughter-in-law of Ella Mae), a committee member along with her husband Daniel, showed Linda and me the storage and work rooms in the former school and the work being done outside. She told us that one of the projects for groups who come in winter months is sorting and dividing sheets, blankets and mattress covers. Most of the bedding is cleaned by motel staff, but some blankets are stained. If the sorter thinks the stain will come out, she'll take the blankets home to be washed. Those with stains are given to several groups of Old Colony Mennonites.³ Those groups also get pillows and mattress pads to use "as is" or for quilt batting.





Bandage Winder

Sheets are sorted in six categories. About five to ten per cent of the sheets are good and shipped "as is." If there is a tear or stain along one side, the sheets will be remade into smaller ones. If they are thin or the usable area is too small for a crib sheet, they become material for bandages. Mexican Mennonites are given ones with small stains throughout. Remnants which are too small for making bandages go to Mennonite Central Committee⁴ to be sold as wipes. The last category is garbage—threadbare sheets and those stained beyond use. Material for bandages is torn into four-inch-wide strips which are sewn together and rolled onto a winder until there is a roll of bandages about five inches in diameter. One elderly church member, who was in poor health but wanted to help, was able to sew strips together and he finished several rolls each week.

Linda Marthen and I took some pictures and then sat at the table across from Laurene



Soap Grinder

Gerber and Mary Ellen Steckly. They told us to sort bars and bottles and waste into four large pails on the floor between us. One pail is for shampoo and conditioning shampoo while the second is one for garbage such as wrappers, mouthwash and lotions. The third pail is for still-good bars, wiped dry and maybe scraped clean and the fourth gets the broken and thin bars which are taken outside to be ground into powder for laundry soap.

While we worked and tried to keep straight which items go into which pail, we learned more about the project. Laurene said it is difficult to determine the number of volunteers because people are coming and going all day, but a best guess is between 200 and 250. Some stay for three hours, others six hours awhile others (including with the organizing committee) are there from the start at 9 a.m. to the finish. "Finish" can mean the early hours of the next day by the time everything has been cleaned.

As we wiped soap bars and sorted bottles, young men brought more pails and emptied the contents onto the table. It seemed that just as we could see the table top, another load was dumped. The same young men came regularly to take away our full or partially full containers. Those with shampoo bottles were taken to the back room to be stored. They will be emptied and the liquid rebottled in the winter. The contents of other pails were taken to the appropriate places for garbage, grinding and weighing. That part is strenuous work and we could see why four young men and women had been added to the committee.

Linda and I worked for two hours and accomplished (to us) a surprising amount. Multiply my or Linda's output times several hundred people times 14 - 16 hours and the result is 35 tons of soap processed!

Why is soap sorting done in July?

Originally the work had to be done in July in order to transport the barrels to Lancaster, Pennsylvania in time for it to be shipped in mid-August. Shipping methods and locations have changed, but the work date has continued to be in July. The committee tried to pick a time in the year when people were less busy, but there was no such time! Area

Amish and Mennonite churches—Maple View, Fairhaven, Morningview, Moncton, Faith Mennonite—are notified by a fax or phone call and the date is announced at Sunday services. Church members, neighbours and anyone from the community come throughout the day and evening. Old Order Amish help mostly in their homes during the year.

Outside, Allen Jantzi emptied barrels of broken and thin soap bars into the hopper for grinding. When the hopper is full, the grinder is turned on and the soap bars are pulled through a motor-driven auger. At the end, powder from another auger pours into a plastic barrel. The young children are drawn from their tasks and their play to watch the grinder while it is running.

Plastic barrels filled with bars and powder are weighed, loaded on skids, tallied, plastic-wrapped and labelled. A tally is kept of the pounds of soap ready to be shipped and every hour or so a progress report with the time of day and total pounds weighed is written on a board for all to see. The skids are usually loaded with all powder or all bars but some will have both, depending on what each mission orders.

Coffee, water, and juice were brought to workers at the tables and outside. This is one "bee" where providing food isn't part of the day's activities. Volunteers bring their lunch and if they are staying all day, go home for supper to get a break.

In the almost 30 years that soap and shampoo, linens and clothing have been collected and recycled, inventive innovations have been tried and tested for various processes. I asked Art if the system has been perfected. He laughed and said that they always find something to make it work better. For example the soap grinder with its motors, auger and hopper was trial and error for a few years and now they work well. The bandage winder was a joint effort; one man made the crank and another made the wooden frame. Improvements have been made to it over the years too.

Most work is accomplished one Friday in July, but it doesn't end that day. "Winter work" begins at the end of September or beginning of October. Committee members sort, pack, ship and organize day and evening work bees for groups of all ages.

~ Continued from page 5 ~ "Thirty Years..."

A job for children is placing the thousands of tiny shampoo bottles upside down on a metal rack to drain into a half barrel that has been cut lengthwise. When a variety of shampoos drip together the result is unattractive, but after the liquid is stirred it changes to a uniform brownish colour. It is poured into 500-ml plastic bottles. In the early years when soap sorting day wasn't as busy, shampoo could be drained and rebottled that same day, but it took a long time to empty those tiny bottles and so now it's part of winter work. The committee is grateful to John and Mary Ellen Steckly for organizing the shampoo rebottling for the last several years.

Where does the product go and how does it get there?

Most items are shipped through Christian Aid Ministries⁵ to Haiti, Ukraine, Philippines and missions in countries throughout the world. Since 1998, the Cedar Grove congregation has worked with Master's International Ministries (MM)⁶ to start three churches in Ukraine. Those congregations now receive some of the soap and bedding and clothes. Art Gerber is on the board of directors of Master's International Ministries and has visited the Ukraine churches several times. He was glad to notice that some of the barrels were being reused for storage and as tables. Art said that hospitals in the areas do not have sheets for beds, sometimes no mattresses and never enough bandages. They are grateful for the recycled materials sent from Wilmot and Wellesley Townships.

The committee includes letters with the shipments to give information about the process and Cedar Grove's work. The letter asks recipients to contact the congregation providing information of how the items are used. It is impossible to put value on all the goods that are shipped as it would take too much time to estimate, but in the 1980s an estimation was made of the value of soap using the retail price of a bar of hand soap. It came to \$3,500/ton.

In 2007 the project shipped 36,863 pounds of soap, 35,397 pounds of laundry soap, 5,350 bottles of shampoo (250 ml and 500 ml), 3,249 bandage rolls, 203 blankets, 833 pillow cases, 1,850 sheets, and 760 garbage bags of unsorted sheets.⁷

"That sounds like an enormous amount, but it's so small in comparison to what gets thrown out," Art said.

Who makes this happen every year?

Route drivers are volunteers who pay their own expenses. Marlene told me that there are 16 - 18 soap runs, three or four times a year with approximately 10 - 20 hotels/motels on each route. There are approximately 200 hotels/motels across southern Ontario from Niagara Falls, Windsor, Collingwood, Barrie, Georgian Bay to Brockville and Cornwall. In the Kitchener-Waterloo area, a Mennonite Central Committee volunteer does some of the pickups and leaves his containers at the MCC office for the Cedar Grove driver. There is a similar arrangement between a Windsor volunteer and Cedar Grove driver. It takes a full day to drive most routes. In 2008, 30 years since the project started, drivers are the second and third generation of their family to have routes. That includes Art and Laurene's son Paul who is the third generation driver in their family.

The organizing committee consists of 12 members who serve for two years each: four couples, two single young women and two single young men. Four youth were recruited a few years ago when the work load increased substantially. One committee member is the secretary and he keeps track of what is packed. Containers and skids are labelled for shipping

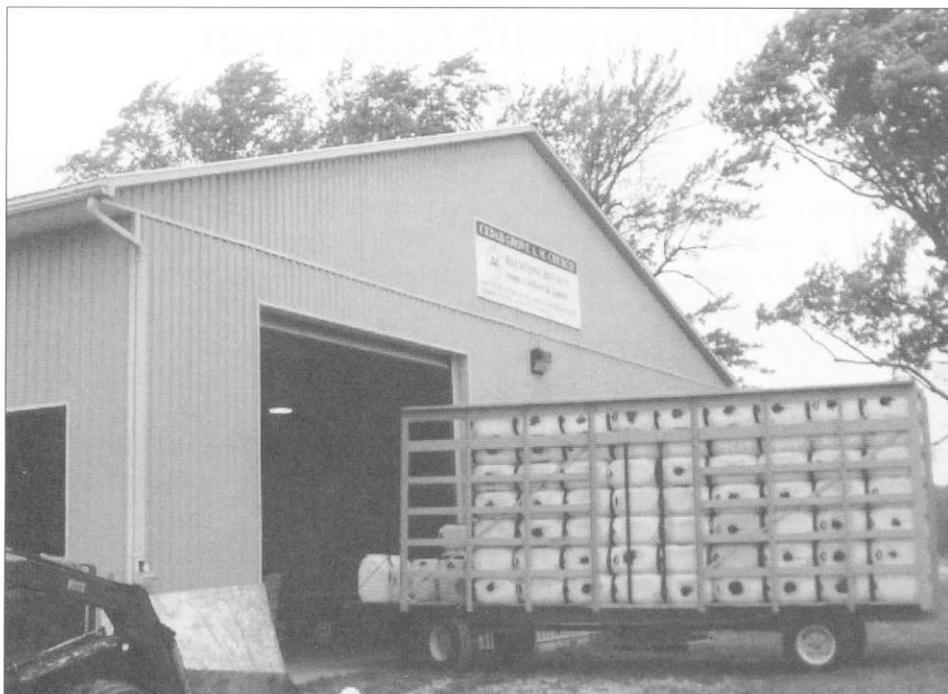
and the amounts are recorded. Keeping records enables the group to give progress reports to the congregation and motels. Annual reports are included with thank you letters to each motel so staff and owners can see the result of their efforts to recycle.

How is everything paid for?

Weber's Sugar Bush Supplies, an Old Order Mennonite business, donates 500-ml plastic bottles. In 2000, a Guelph company provided hundreds of plastic barrel-shape containers they couldn't reuse. This a substantial donation and an enormous amount diverted from landfill. Hybrid Turkeys gave cardboard turkey hatching boxes and A. W. Jantzi & Sons, Wellesley, donated cider mill boxes, both of which are ideal for shipping.

Everything that isn't donated—the cost of the building, equipment, tables, floor scale, pump carts to move pallets, bins for sheets, supplies, shipping—is considered outreach and paid for by the Cedar Grove congregation. If necessary, a special offering is lifted. Art estimated that the average expenses per year are \$2,000. The group is responsible for transportation and costs only to the Christian Aid Ministries warehouse in nearby Hawkesville. CAM covers the cost of shipping containers to overseas destinations. About 90 percent of the product is shipped this way.





Plastic barrels ready for shipping

Can others collect soap or help with sorting or winter work?

The short answer is “yes.” Pickups could be arranged if a group wants to collect soap. Individuals and groups are welcome to help on the July soap sorting day and to schedule a time to help with winter work. For scheduling, contact Allen and Linda Jantzi, 519 656-9078. For general information about the project, contact Paul and Nancy Jantzi, 519 595-8769.

This work is part of what Cedar Grove members do as stewards of the earth. As a Mennonite who has lived all my life in Waterloo County/German/Lutheran/Mennonite communities, I understand that stewardship. I know that in volunteering to help others, one receives as much or more than one gives. For me, being part of the sorting and recycling group at the warehouse—and sharing the experience with a friend—emphasized those truths and will remain a highlight of the year.

Notes

Information for this article was gathered on soap sorting day July 18, 2008, and during personal and telephone interviews throughout July, August, September 2008 and March 2009. Thank you to Art and Laurene Gerber, Linda Jantzi, Marlene Wagler and Ella Mae Schmidt for graciously answering many questions.

¹ Cedar Grove Mennonite Church, 4831 Deborah Glaister Line, Wellesley, Ontario

was formerly Lichti Amish Mennonite and originally an Old Order Amish congregation. In 1947 the congregation became affiliated with the Beachy Amish Mennonite Fellowship. The language of worship is German and English. In 2004, Bishop Arthur Gerber served as the congregational leader and there were 127 members. ¹Excerpted from Fretz, Joseph C. and Marlene Epp “Cedar Grove Mennonite Church (Wellesley, Ontario, Canada). Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. 2004. Retrieved 22 September 2008. <<http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/C4582.html>>

² Situated at the intersection of present day Berletts Road and Nafziger Road in the north west portion of Wilmot Township, New Prussia was a small settlement of Roman Catholic immigrants from the Rhine Province of Prussia; what is today West Germany. Many immigrants in that area moved further west to purchase Crown lands near Lake Huron, and New Prussia declined in the late 19th century. Wilmot Township S.S. No. 18, the New Prussia Public School remained active until 1966. www.region.waterloo.on.ca >Historic Place Names >Wilmot Township

³ Old Colony Mennonites from Mexico are colloquially called Mexican Mennonites. In the 1920s, a substantial number of Old Colony Mennonites left Manitoba for Mexico and Paraguay. In the past few decades, thousands have returned from Mexico, settling mainly in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta. Reimer,

Margaret Loewen, *One Quilt Many Pieces: A Guide to Mennonite Groups in Canada*, (Waterloo ON, Fourth Edition 2008), pp. 75-76.

⁴ Mennonite Central Committee is a relief, development and peace agency of the North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. <http://mcc.org>

⁵ Christian Aid Ministries (CAM) was established in 1981 and provides a trustworthy, efficient channel for Amish and conservative Mennonite churches and individuals to minister to physical and spiritual needs around the world. Annually CAM distributes approximately 15 million pounds of food, clothing, medicines, seeds and Christian literature to Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Haiti, Nicaragua, Liberia and other countries. Fields of activity are: disaster relief, food provision, health and nutrition. <<http://www.globalhand.org/dataorganisation.2005-12-17.7406191886/>>

⁶ Master’s International Ministries, 2039 Line 56, RR 2, Wellesley, ON, N0B 2T0, 519 656-2330. Delmer Erb, Director. MIM’s objective is to establish Biblical Anabaptist Churches in the Commonwealth of Independent States, providing Bibles, personnel, literature and humanitarian aid. From MIM brochure.

⁷ “Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite Recycling Division Progress Report, April 2007 - March 2008.” Items were shipped to and/or picked up by: Blueridge International / Sonlight Missions, Haiti; Careforce International; Christian Aid Ministries; Faith Orphanage, Zambia via personal delivery; Mexican Mennonites; Master’s International Ministries, Ukraine; House of Friendship, Kitchener.

*Marion Roes is a member at Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo ON. She is president, newsletter editor and publication committee member of Waterloo [Region] Historical Society; a member of Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario and other historical societies. She is interested in researching and preserving local, family, Mennonite and Amish history. **

Willowgrove, Glenbrook Camp 40th Anniversary

By George Reesor

On June 21, 2008, about 200 people gathered at Willowgrove Farm, near Stouffville, Ontario, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Willowgrove and Glenbrook Day Camp. Many people travelled from Kitchener-Waterloo and as far as Owen Sound.

Some of the early projects, carried out mainly by family members, included the establishing of a group home in 1974 under the direction of Glen Brubacher, and the removal of one hundred dead elm trees by John Klassen. The broader community became

Harrison who served faithfully for many years as camp secretary.

Staff perspectives were given by Kyle Barber and Sara Dougald. Kyle was appointed to the board of directors in 1991 and to the office of Executive Director in 1993, a position

which he held until 2005. He noted that his two-year leave of absence from the YMCA stretched out to a full twelve years. He spoke with deep feeling about the challenges and rewards of the day camp and later a residential wilderness camp when Fraser Lake Camp joined the Willowgrove organization.

Sara, who serves as Day Camp Director, noted that a significant number of current staff are children of former staff members. Both

Kyle and Sara expressed sincere appreciation for the dedicated staff whose commitment and hard work have created wonderful memories for so many children over the past forty years.*



Three founding members of the Willowgrove-Glenbrook Day Camp shared memories at a 40th anniversary celebration on June 21, 2008. (Photo by Scott Eyre)

Following a late afternoon barbecue, a formal program provided an introspective review of the history and development of Willowgrove as three founding board members shared memories and personal experiences.

During a York Region ministerial meeting, Nicholas Dick was approached by Emerson McDowell who put forward the idea of purchasing a 97-acre farm in the Stouffville area. Emerson dreamed of developing a day camp which would provide an outdoor experience for inner-city children. A third person, Glen Brubacher, was brought inside. Thus, in 1968, three Mennonite ministers became the original shareholders of Willowgrove Farm Limited.

Following a tiresome, protracted series of negotiations, not-for-profit status was granted by Revenue Canada which made it possible to solicit donations for program development. Joe Nighswander and John Klassen, along with Emerson, Nick and Glen, became the first officers of the corporation.

involved in several larger projects including a barn-raising, replacement of a bridge, and a fall harvest festival.

Special recognition was given to Salome

Recent Additions to the Archives

From a Conrad Grebel University College release

The Mennonite Archives of Ontario recently received three significant donations. Among the donations from J. Harold Sherk are legal and business papers of Benjamin Eby and Joseph Schneider. More recent papers and personal documents belonging to Mennonite lay leader Isadore Snyder and farmer Ephraim Cressman were donated by Helen and Jim Reusser, along with diaries and letters from Florence Cressman Snyder which offer insight into 20th century Kitchener-Waterloo. Additional papers and

correspondence of Earle Snyder (1893-1973), longtime professor at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph, and Helen Reusser's father, will be added to the existing Earle S. Snyder collection.

Paul Burkholder donated the diaries of his father, Lewis J. Burkholder, a longtime Mennonite minister in the Markham area and the author of *A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario*, published in 1935. The diaries cover the years of his research and writing of this foundational history.*

The 1966 Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario Board of Directors



L-R: Dorothy Swartzentruber, Barbara Coffman, Herbert Enns, Elven Shantz, J.W. Fretz, Wilson Hunsberger, Lorna Bergey, Harold Nigh, Orland Gingerich.

The Comparative Uniqueness of Pilgram Marpeck

By Walter Klaassen

The following is from Walter Klaassen's comments at a launch for his new book Marpeck: A Life of Dissent and Conformity, written with William Klassen and published by Herald Press.

William Klassen and I discovered early in our research on Pilgram Marpeck, civil engineer and theologian, that there was a uniqueness about him. Although several of his central convictions on Christian ethics and

theology in the 16th century are today regarded as self-evident, we must resist presenting him as a modern man. He has to be compared to his own contemporaries during whose time he was regarded by other Christians as schismatic and anarchist, and by other Anabaptists as being soft on sin.

It seems to me that Marpeck's combining of engineering and theology into a single career was probably unique in the 16th century. Caspar Schwenkfeld (1489-1561), Marpeck's main theological opponent was

a lay theologian who produced an immense corpus of writings, but he was a nobleman with private means and he did not need to work for a living. David Joris (1501-1556), Anabaptist leader in the Netherlands, was by profession a glass painter, but he abandoned that career when he became a leader and writer in 1537. Menno Simons (1496-1561) was a former priest. He too wrote a lot, but had no secular profession to protect him during his turbulent life. After 1536 he was

~ Continued on page 10 ~

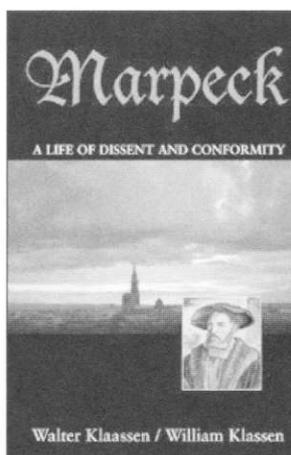
a fugitive on the move.

Marpeck's profession determined his places of residence. He became a mining engineer in his home town, Rattenberg. When he left there as a fugitive, he headed for Bohemia to work in the silver mines. When that failed because Archduke Ferdinand was on his trail, he moved to Strasbourg where he worked in mining, forestry, and hydrology. Expelled from Strasbourg he relocated in the canton of Appenzell in Switzerland. His move to Augsburg in 1542 was certainly determined by opportunity for employment, first in forestry, then in hydrology and city administration until his death in 1556. Marpeck was saved for Anabaptism by his engineering skill.

Marpeck agreed with the rest of Anabaptism that government, even Christian government, could have no function in the life of the church. In the church the steel sword of justice was replaced by the mild sword of the Spirit. But within the Anabaptist community, Marpeck was unique in his view of government, with the possible exception of Balthasar Hubmaier. Marpeck's experience as city councillor and mayor in Rattenberg as well as in his work as mining superintendent, made him much more moderate in his writing about government than other Anabaptist leaders.

Marpeck had to negotiate with governments and as a civic employee he swore an oath required for his appointments. Particularly in Augsburg he adapted himself and his followers to the political realities by observing the restrictions passed by the Council on the size and frequency of Anabaptist meetings. He counselled his followers not to antagonize governments.

Marpeck was engaged in controversy with other religious leaders most of his life. Despite his occasional strong condemnation of his opponent's views, he was comparatively more tolerant than Menno or Hutter or even Michael Sattler. He was open to learning from his opponents. He acknowledged to Martin Bucer that, although he, Marpeck, rejected the baptism of infants, those infants were nevertheless part of the communion of the church. He developed



what he called "hasty judgements." God's Spirit, Marpeck insisted, works in his children to make them more Christlike, but the human material is plastic and variable. Room has to be made for learning and growth and development. He argued that excommunication should be resorted to only if there was an outright turning away from Christian faith.

Marpeck was more positive in his theology and ethics than Menno or Jakob Hutter. Unlike them, he was not afraid of failure because he believed he was not called by God to be morally perfect under the threat of damnation. The outcome of his work was in God's hands. Marpeck deliberately held on to the traditional statements of belief, the Apostolic and Nicene Creeds, unlike for instance, Menno or Denck. He also held to the traditional view that God reveals himself spiritually through the material world. Hence he argued that the bread and wine of the communion and the water of baptism were not optional, but absolutely necessary. He was the only Anabaptist who used the word, "sacrament."

Marpeck is a fitting ancestor for today's believers' church; a believers' church thoroughly committed to the traditional core of Christian faith as found in the ancient creeds, faith in God as holy Trinity, Jesus as the Incarnation of God, and the Holy Spirit as the unifier and sanctifier of the church; a believers' church that rejects the unitarianism that afflicts today's church and which is, lamentably, found too often even in Mennonite churches today. *

a ritual for their inclusion.

The Schleithem Confession had taught a highly polarized spiritual reality. A person was either with Christ or with the devil. Marpeck took a much more nuanced position and would have no part in

"Reesor" Play Coming to the Church Theatre in St. Jacobs

The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario is sponsoring Erin Brandenburg's play, "Reesor," which will be performed at the Church Theatre in St. Jacobs, September 18-20. The play tells the story of the difficulties faced by Mennonite immigrants from Russia who tried to establish a new community in northern Ontario, west of Kapuskasing. Performances will be Friday (Sept. 18) and Saturday (Sept. 19) evening and Saturday and Sunday (Sept. 20) afternoon. *

Waterloo Historical Society Volume 96 – 2008

The 2008 edition of the Waterloo Historical Society has a variety of Mennonite connections. An article by Marion Roes tells the story of Emanuel G. Martin, a contractor and bridge builder who lived with his wife, Lovina (Martin) and family in Elmira before they moved to Toronto during the 1930s. Emanuel chronicled his work by taking pictures of "his" bridges in Waterloo and Wellington counties. There is also a story of Orpheus Schantz and his Pennsylvania-German poem which was translated by Barb Draper and Maurice Martin and a history of the Riser/Reschly burial ground in Wellesley Township by Lorraine Roth. The feature article is a history of the St. Agatha orphanage by Sharalynn Krahn. Volumes are \$20 and available from Marion Roes at 519-883-1448 or mlroes@sympatico.ca or from local libraries. *

GAMEO completes project to put Mennonite Encyclopedia online

From a GAMEO release

Richard Thiessen reached an important milestone late one night in February when he posted the final article of *Mennonite Encyclopedia* onto the website of the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (gameo.org). Thiessen is the associate managing editor of GAMEO. In the last 12 years, Canadian and American volunteers

have scanned, edited and put on the GAMEO website the entire five-volume Mennonite Encyclopedia so that it can be accessed from anywhere by anyone with an Internet connection.

GAMEO was started in 1996 by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada as a project to put Canadian Mennonite information online. The Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission soon joined as the project expanded to make the entire encyclopedia available.

Now that it is completed, GAMEO is moving into a new phase. The first four volumes of Mennonite Encyclopedia were published in the 1950s and a supplement came out in 1990. Now the push is to update existing articles and add new ones. In Canada

that is being done through the provincial Mennonite historical societies.

Another new initiative in process is to make the encyclopedia available on DVD, particularly for Amish, Hutterite, and conservative Mennonite groups that use computers but not the internet.

The Ontario committee is working on adding biographies of deceased persons who made important contributions in leadership in Mennonite churches in Ontario. There is a list of 61 biographies to be written and 73 persons for whom biographies have been posted or are in the final stages of editing. Anyone interested in contributing as a writer is welcome to contact Linda Huebert Hecht, chair of the Ontario committee or Sam Steiner, managing editor for GAMEO. *

Mennonite Heritage Portrait

Mennonite Heritage Portrait release

The Mennonite Heritage Portrait is about you; your connection with Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren heritage and culture. It's about you if you are a student of history—international history, Canadian history, or the detailed history of Waterloo Region. It's about you if you are a visitor or tourist in southwestern Ontario. It's about you if you are engaged in genealogy, cuisine, or music. It's about you if you are interested in architecture and historical buildings. It's about you if you are interested in helping to create one of the most interactive and exciting online heritage archives.

Visit the Mennonite Heritage Portrait website to get hands-on with history; sign up for a free account and share your photos, stories and memories of Waterloo Region. The Mennonite Heritage Portrait is created with a life of its own—it will grow continually as new collections and archives are added to the fully searchable data base, and as individuals contribute stories, digital artifacts, and photographs.

Explore the Mennonite Heritage Portrait. Use it. Learn from it. Contribute to it. Help build this accessible, authoritative, flexible heritage model. **Launching May 31, 2009**
www.MennoniteHeritagePortrait.ca
<<http://www.mennoniteheritageportrait.ca/>>

The concept of “the meeting place” has long been at the heart of communication, education and cooperation among the groups known as “Mennonite.” The Mennonite Heritage Portrait (MHP) is an on-line extension of that idea—a unique site where the diverse cultures of our region meet and work together, from conservative Mennonites to the tech experts of Waterloo Region.

Through the Mennonite Heritage Portrait, individuals and groups can explore every aspect of the unique spectrum of Mennonite settlement, growth, and experience. MHP offers its own impressive technological spectrum, opening doors to cultural and architectural heritage through historic photo collections and important archives, using features such as GPS and environmental applications, and blogs.

The Mennonite Heritage Portrait is created with a life of its own—it will grow continually, as new collections and

archives are added to the fully searchable database and as individuals contribute stories, digital artifacts, and photographs. Students using MHP can then contribute their research; tourists visiting Waterloo are invited to provide their digital photos; church congregations can use the application to enhance the spiritual life of their congregations and take their sermon discussions into cyberspace.

Through this kind of ultimate interactivity, MHP will live and breathe; at the same time, the distinguished academic experts and technological experts that are part of this project will ensure that data available on the site will be identified as to academic trustworthiness, from anecdotal to authoritative, an invaluable asset for historical researchers.

The Mennonite Heritage Portrait was created through a partnership between the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, and the Centre for Community Mapping; and through generous funding from Canadian Heritage and their Canadian Culture Online strategy. *

Brubacher House Museum Celebrates 30 Years

By Bethany Leis

Built in 1850, the Brubacher House has been preserved as a memorial to the Pennsylvania German Mennonite settlers who pioneered the land upon which the University of Waterloo campus was developed. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Brubacher House as a historic museum in Waterloo.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, along with Conrad Grebel College, played a significant role in encouraging the university to preserve and restore the Brubacher House as a historical landmark. Gerry Hagey, university president at the time, along with his planning committee, agreed to designate one farmhouse on the university's campus for conservation purposes. They chose Brubacher House because of its fine stone masonry and its appropriate location. In September 1977, the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario Board of Directors accepted an invitation from the Conrad Grebel College Board to assist in establishing a museum and operating a program at the Brubacher House as a Centre of Historic Interest. J. Winfield Fretz and Lorna Bergey

both played a prominent role in preserving the former Mennonite farm home as an historical and cultural symbol.

After the fire that gutted the Brubacher House in 1968, all that remained from the



original farmhouse were its exterior walls. A large restructuring of the house was undertaken to include a museum on the main floor and an upper level apartment for the live-in hosts and museum curators. The University of Waterloo, with the co-operation of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, received a grant from the Ontario Heritage Foundation to restore the exterior

of the house and a grant from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation to rebuild the interior. To reconstruct the interior of the house, the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario requested the help of Simeon

Martin, a local Mennonite and experienced builder. After the house was reconstructed, artifacts were purchased at auctions sales and donated by local Mennonite families. Lorna Bergey, a member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, hoped that the museum would be a place where artifacts, crafts, and cookery of the 1850-1890 period would be represented and where a host would give relevant history and social commentary to visitors. In 1975 the city of Waterloo designated the farmhouse as having

“historic value and interest”. The Brubacher House opened to the public as a museum on June 28, 1979.

Over the years there have been several different curators/live-in hosts of the museum. Their jobs were to provide tours to the public, book tours and meetings in the basement and physically maintain the house. The first live-in custodian was Nancy Ellen Saunders who began in September 1977. At this time Conrad Grebel College was responsible for administering the house and tours were given by appointment only.

In the early 1980s, the museum established regular hours when it is open to the public (May 1-October 31, Wednesday-Saturday from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm) in addition to appointments. At this time it was decided that the live-in custodians would adopt the role of primary host and tour guides. Other live-in custodians and hosts of the museum were: the Maitlands (1981-82), Ida Habermehl and Dorothy Bean (1982-86), Paul and Edna Hunsberger (1986-1991), Howard and Carol Gimbel (1991-94), Arlyn and Judith Friesen-Epp (1994-2000), Colin and Jennie Wiebe (2000-04), Chris Steingart and Jillian Burkhardt (2004-06), and Brandon and Bethany Leis 2006-present.

Come to the Brubacher House and share in this piece of our rich history. *

