

Village Review



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From the President

A people who have not the pride to record their own history will not long have the virtues to make their history worth recording; and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great". – Jan Gleysteen

This past season of volunteering at the museum has again offered many opportunities to meet and visit with people who came from many different areas of Canada, United States and from around the world. On a number of occasions, the above quotation came to mind as visitors would express their thoughts about our museum and their reason for their visit. The following are just three examples.

A couple from Coaldale, AB had finished reading the history and the displays of Mennonites in the gallery, had gone through the various heritage buildings that make up the village, seen the old sawmill and other antique machinery on the yard, and were just finishing their afternoon at MHV when I met them in the tractor shed

which houses numerous restored classic tractors. As frequently happens, they asked some questions, shared their own memories, and obviously proud of their Mennonite roots left with the comment, "What a heritage."

Our local radio station sponsored an evening event that included a guided tour by our curator, participating in *Schnetji*-making, horses-drawn wagon rides around the village and ending up with a meal on the deck of the windmill with live entertainment. In order to qualify, listeners were invited to call in and comment about what they liked about MHV. About 20 people were chosen. They offered various reasons why they appreciated the museum, but, significantly, a number of them also said that they were proud of their heritage, and MHV was a symbol of that heritage.

On another occasion I met a man in our gift and book store. He was looking for a suitable book to buy for his friend back home, and he asked me for my opinion. He explained he had

often talked to his friend about his own Mennonite background and who the Mennonites were. Although he was proud of his heritage, he felt that a book would do a better job of explaining than he could. He was impressed with the selection of books that we carried, and ended up buying two books—*Who are the Anabaptists* by Donald B. Kraybill and *An Introduction to Mennonite History* by Cornelius J. Dyck.

MHV is more than just a collection of artifacts. For many, it is a community meeting place, for some a place of contemplation and reflection, and for others a place to observe demonstrations of pioneer activities. But above all, it is a place where we are reminded of our unique Mennonite heritage, and how Mennonites have contributed to Manitoba's rich history. It is a place which also represents the heritage of many Manitoba Mennonites who have successfully gone on to live in different parts of the country, and indeed the world. MHV represents a heritage of which we can be justly proud.

Al Hamm

We came here 135 years ago

In 1874 Mennonite families began to settle in Manitoba—in Steinbach, Gruenfeld, Blumenort and elsewhere. At first it was only 65 families, mostly from the *Kleine Gemeinde* congregation in south Russia (later Ukraine). Having landed in Quebec City some weeks earlier, they had, in the last lap of their trip, traveled on the S.S. International down the Red River from Fargo, N. D. to arrive in Winnipeg on July 31. After a day's shopping in that town—still small at the time—they returned to land on Aug. 2 on the east shore of the Red River at a fork with the Rat River. Here they would look for their promised land and new homes in Canada. It was a Sunday. We are sure they took time to gather and thank God for protecting them on this long journey.

For most families their new villages, eventually 50 or more, would be on the Rat River (later East Reserve). Some of the families decided to go with leader David Klaassen to settle in two villages on the Scratching River Reserve northwest of Morris. On this morning, Aug. 2 (or did they wait until Monday?) they were helped to load their goods on ox carts and make their way to some temporary immigrant housing about five miles inland.

These dormitories had been built under the direction of Jacob Y Shantz who used Metis helpers of the area to find this place and settle in for the first weeks here. Shantzenburg would grow

up in the immediate vicinity during the next 20 years. Another government agent, William Hespeler, also helped in many ways to get the settlement underway.

To the east and south many other communities would be established as the families kept coming, more than 3000 children, young people, mothers and fathers, for six more years. There is discussion now about setting up a cairn in honour of Shantz somewhere in the area. A memorial plaque for Hespeler was recently unveiled at the Heritage Park in Niverville.

The Russian Mennonite story which we keep on sharing with others at Mennonite Heritage Village begins in Manitoba about like we have retold it here. In Russia, their former homeland, that story began nearly a hundred years earlier when more than two hundred families moved from Danzig and West Prussia to New Russia in 1788-1789. Two men, Jacob Hoepfner and Johann Bartsch had gone ahead to "spy out the land" and arrange for that move to take place. That was 220 years ago. The monuments for Hoepfner and Bartsch currently stand at the MHV.

Get more details about these stories. Read about them in books. Attend special events which highlight significant

persons and scenes. Pass them on to others where you have your homes now. Celebrate a "birthday"—220th or 135th or those of your grandparents and great grandparents who were part of these beginnings. Erect memorials. Search out the spiritual meanings of these moves and beginnings, and meditate on them in your hearts.

A car caravan leaving the Mennonite Heritage Village on Oct. 29 will do some of these things. Call Marigold at 326-9661 to get more details and help you join in. The 135th is our anniversary. We invite you to remember, celebrate and pass on our people's story as you are able.

Lawrence Klippenstein
Historian and Volunteer at MHV



PHOTO BY MICHELLE LABELLE | COURTESY OF THE CARILLON
Provencher MP Vic Toews, Niverville mayor Greg Fehr, Steinbach MLA Kelvin Goertzen, Councillors John Funk and John Falk and Morris MLA Mavis Tailieu brave a brisk Sunday afternoon wind to unveil the National Historic Sites of Canada plaque that pays tribute to William Hespeler.

From the Executive Director

The mission of Mennonite Heritage Village is “to preserve and exhibit, for present and future generations, the experience and the story of the Russian Mennonites and their contributions to Manitoba.” This is a good mission in that it is clear and focused, and it seeks to bring value to its constituency.

Interestingly, the pure pursuit of this mission is not an economically viable endeavor. It cannot generate sufficient income to sustain MHV in the long term. As a result, we expanded the focus to include additional opportunities such as tourism and facility rentals. Not only do efforts in tourism and facility rentals provide us with additional income, they also bring people into the Village so that they can experience the story embedded in the mission.

Presently the challenges on our plate include the process of becoming a world-class tourist destination and first-class banquet/meeting facility without contradicting or compromising the mission in any way. This involves the provision of attractive and functional facilities as well as significant exposure to the public, especially our target market. In order to achieve this, we will need to be invest in building and equipment improvements, hire and train staff and advertise MHV aggressively and broadly.

There are two aspects to the required facilities improvements. First, the auditorium, meeting rooms and kitchen in the Village Center all need upgrades to qualify the Center as a first-class banquet/meeting facility. The auditorium needs air-conditioning, new blinds and a new stage; the meeting rooms need white boards and projection screens; the

kitchen needs commercial-grade equipment, to name just a few necessities.

Secondly, there are 25 buildings in the Village itself. Many of these buildings are in need of repairs, new shingles and paint. Some of the heritage buildings, like the Peters barn, still need considerable restoration work. In order for tourists to have a world-class experience, they need to experience a facility that is well-maintained and tidy. All of these renovations and repairs require the investment of vision, planning, time and money.

Another element of our vision is education. For years we have delivered an education program aimed at grades three and six students. It has been very successful in attracting students and in providing MHV with exposure to younger people. We believe there are additional opportunities to partner with schools and thereby engage our future generations in our mission and vision.

It would be interesting to know how members feel about these elements of vision. Do tourism and facilities rentals offer sustainable sources of income for MHV? Will partnering with educational institutions help ensure us of future staff, volunteers, clients and supporters? Is there any conflict between these activities and our mission? What other income sources might be considered? Where might MHV look for investors to fund these initiatives? If you have perspectives on any of these questions, please come and visit me, call me at 326-9661 or email me at barryd@mhv.ca.

Barry Dyck

From the Program Director

The peak season at MHV has come to a close. The outdoor buildings are locked for the season, the restaurant has closed, and the farm animals have gone back to their original homes. It is always with mixed emotions when things start to wind down for the winter.

We have had a successful year in the school program. Coordinator Myra Brandt Reimer did a marvelous job of scheduling and organizing the groups. Myra, thanks for all your hard work! The further success is also attributed to the countless hours of our amazing team of volunteers. Without their help, we would be unable to offer this program. Over 4000 students came through the doors this summer for interpretive, guided or self-guided tours, hands-on program, and day camp pro-

grams. The majority of these students also enjoyed horse-drawn wagon rides. We also had several bookings for the fall Structures Program in October. Schools are already busy booking programs for next summer. Thank you to the donors who have contributed financially to help supplement these programs.

Attendance numbers for all events this year totaled approximately 11,000 people. We started off the season with Spring on the Farm and Tractor Show on the May long weekend, Canada Day on July 1, Pioneer Days on the August long weekend, and Fall on the Farm on September 7. Volunteers are the power behind our events, festivals, and celebrations. We would not be able to have these events if it were not for the hundreds of volunteers that helped make these events a success.

We are in the final planning stages for the last event of the year, Touch of Christmas/The Living Nativity. It is scheduled for December 4, 5, and 6 evening performances. Witness the production of the living nativity where the real reason for the season is revealed in a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The Living Nativity is a living outdoor nativity, a portrayal of the Christmas story featuring live animals, actors of all ages drawn from Steinbach and surrounding communities. After the performance there will be coffee, hot chocolate, and homemade cookies in the village centre. Buy Christmas baking from the bake sale on Friday and Saturday during the day sponsored by the MHV Auxiliary. Listen to local school choirs performing in the village auditorium on Friday and various talents on Saturday. Enjoy sleigh rides, fire pit, and roasting marshmallows. Please come join us!

Mennonite Heritage Village celebrated the successful completion of the 2009 summer season with a volunteer appreciation dessert evening on Thursday, Oct. 8. Approximately 160 people attended this event. The theme for this year's event was “The hands that make a difference are the hands of a volunteer.” Volunteers were thanked by staff and board of directors for their dedication to the museum and their many hours of volunteer work. Every year over 10,000 hours of time is accumulated by hundreds of volunteers. Many hours are dedicated to the school program, tours, quilting, auxiliary, and other tasks as needed. Thank you volunteers for your helping hands.

Event planning is already in its early stages for the 2010 season.

Anne Toews

Mennonite Heritage Village Review

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Notes from MHV Auxiliary

Rhubarb Platz!

Just returned from the rhubarb patch, this group of volunteers has plucked piles of tender rhubarb stems to accommodate the demand for rhubarb Platz in the Livery Barn Restaurant. This popular dessert accompanies many a Mennonite meal in the Village. It is a tedious job to cut and bag the year's supply of rhubarb and helping hands are sincerely appreciated.



Summer in the City

Amongst the buzz on Main Street—June 19th and 20th—we set up our waffle irons during the recent Summer Fest in Steinbach. Volunteers scrambled to keep up with the orders as people lined up to get a taste of the traditional heart-shaped waffles and vanilla sauce.

This was a new and challenging venture for the Auxiliary which, in the end, enabled us to provide funds for a welcome upgrade in the Village Centre auditorium. Besides renovating the electrical system, large, modern light fixtures now grace the room—an attraction for those who rent this facility for private receptions.



Gardeners at MHV

Special thanks is due to many members of the local Garden Club who have worked diligently at keeping the flower beds well tended and looking simply spectacular all summer long. Karen Loewen (centre) is president of the club and is pictured, under the canopy at the *Wauflle Wenckel*, with Ann Peters, Elsie Kathler and Peter and Lenora Kehler as they take a moment to savor golden brown waffles and sauce.

Pine Burrs

Hues of turquoise and beige dominate the color scheme of this stunning quilt which is destined to grace the home of the Eldon Penners.

As always, the Village Quilters are dedicated to expert design and stitching—obviously the reason for the ongoing custom orders that come their way.

Mary Friesen and Irma Friesen are two of numerous quilters who volunteer countless hours to work on projects throughout the year.



Field lunches

As part of a promotion—offered by AM1250—the Auxiliary prepared noon lunches to qualifying farm crews working in the Steinbach area. Roasted chicken, potato salad, fresh baked bread and rhubarb Platz were picked up by radio personalities and then delivered to work sites on the fields. Needless to say, the lunches—enjoyed in the open air—were much appreciated and allowed for welcome reprieve from the business of the fall harvest.



3 molplaut

Volunteers at the *Wauflle Wenckel* were pleasantly surprised when members of *3 molplaut* appeared unexpectedly to treat them to a Low German serenade. Their musical selections further delighted the afternoon crowd that had gathered under the canopy to enjoy their performance.

Upcoming

- a film night with a focus on the Mennonites in Belize is slated for Oct. 27 at MHV at 7 p.m.
- Soup luncheon during the annual craft sale on Nov. 7
- Grey Cup-Sunday dinner - noon to 2 p.m. on Nov. 29

The Auxiliary is committed to providing monies for the purchase of a much-needed walk-in freezer for the Livery Barn Restaurant. Besides a few smaller obligations this fall, our efforts for the remainder of this year will be concentrated on raising funds for the freezer project.

*Story and photos by Evelyn Friesen
President of MHV Auxiliary*

From the Curator

Exhibits

The temporary gallery featured two exhibits this summer. *Through the Flowers* featured art by Edith Krause exploring the experience of Mennonites in Stalin's Soviet Union (May 1 to July 5).

How Did That Get Here? is an exhibition of artifacts from the MHV collection that do not seem to fit into a Mennonite museum. Each artifact, however, has a story and reason for being here. This exhibit is ongoing throughout the winter. Art by Jean Wiens, Peter van Kampen and Leona Carnegie, as well as photographs by Dennis Fast, were featured in the auditorium and art hall over the summer.

The Manitoba Council for International Cooperation had their temporary exhibit featured in the auditorium in the second week of September. This unique exhibit highlighted the work of MCIC, which helps coordinate the activities of Manitoban development organizations, such as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

The MCC portion of the Permanent Gallery has been updated with new full colour panels sharing the history and activities of this important Mennonite organization. The MHV is grateful to MCC for coordinating and producing this update.

The H.W. Reimer general store legacy is featured in the auditorium. This recently completed case explores the history and importance of the H.W. Reimer store (1886-1964) in Steinbach and southern Manitoba.



Visitors to the exhibit for *How Did That Get Here?*

Upcoming Exhibits

How Did That Get Here? Curiosities from the Collection
July 3, 2009 – Winter 2010

Archaeology of the Plett Household, Blumenhof
Nov. 30, 2009 – Fall, 2010
Auditorium

This exhibit will showcase the artifacts recovered from two years of excavations at the Plett Household (1875-1906) at the former village of Blumenhof, three miles north of Steinbach. Artifact fragments from the site such as ceramics, stove pieces, buttons, figurines, bells, shoes and



Child's shoe from Blumenhof excavation

agricultural implements will be matched with whole artifacts from our collection to give a better idea of what life was like for the Pletts over one hundred years ago. Included in the exhibit will be maps of the site and a special Plett Household family tree. Come and see what archaeology can tell us about history!

Just Food? The Right to Food from a Faith Perspective
May 1 – July 3, 2010
Temporary Gallery

The Mennonite Heritage Village is pleased to be the first venue to host this large exhibit produced by the Mennonite Committee for Human Rights. This exhibit will include art and artifacts from all over the world, and engage the visitor in issues about the Right to Food, Human Rights and Mennonite Faith.

Music and Song: Mysticism of the Anabaptists
July 5 – Oct. 30, 2010

This innovative "exhibit" will explore the importance of music in Mennonite life and worship from the 1520s to the present. Besides a physical exhibit in our gallery, *Music and Song* will feature a concert series from July to October. Look for it next year!



Granary roof is repaired

Restoration

As always, the historic buildings at the museum require constant care and in some cases restoration work to keep them in good condition and open for visitors. The following buildings received care this season:

- 1892 Friesen Granary (new roof)
- Chortitz Housebarn (repair of rotten walls and siding)
- Peters Barn (new siding, windows, and door on west and north walls)
- Hochfeld House (cleaned and sealed interior log walls)

The granary, housebarn and Hochfeld house work was funded in part by the Community Places Program, Manitoba Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport.

More restoration is planned this fall and winter for a number of buildings. The award-winning Steamer Shelter will have its cedar shingle roof replaced, thanks to a \$15,000 donation from the Martin Bergen family; volunteer Tristan Hiebert plans to restore parts of the printery (he is the great-grandson of J.S. Friesen, the first printer); the summer kitchen will be totally rebuilt by volunteers; the barn of the Chortitz housebarn is having its timberframe re-aligned to repair years of slippage and movement; and the Reimer Store will receive new wiring and lights.



Peters barn before and after

Recent Donations

To date the museum has accepted over 120 artifacts from 33 different donors in 2009. We would like to thank all our donors for thinking of the museum as the final repository for their special heirlooms.

Treadle Dental Drill

This dental drill was used by Jacob F. Kroeker (1892-1969) following the emigration of his family from Russia to Canada in 1926. (Donated by Florence Kroeker. Acc. No. 2009.14.1)

Jacob served in the Russian Army in the medical department as a dentist. After six years of service in the army he set up a dental service in

Karasan in the Crimea. Due to his uncertain future as a dentist in government service and the increasingly dangerous conditions of the civil war, Jacob and his family emigrated to Rosstern, Sask. In Canada his Russian papers were insufficient and he was allowed to practice dentistry only in dire situations. His practice was eventually curtailed by the RCMP.



Jacob Kroeker and dental drill, circa 1913

INVITATION TO MEMBERS

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE PLETT HOUSEHOLD EXHIBIT

during Touch of Christmas – Dec. 4, 5 and 6

All members are invited to opening night of the “Archaeology of the Plett Household” Exhibit. On display will be artifacts from the last two summers of excavations at the Blumenhof Village site. Artifact fragments from the site, such as ceramics, stove pieces, buttons, figurines, bells, shoes and agricultural implements will be matched with whole artifacts from our collection to give a better idea of what life was like for the Pletts over one hundred years ago. Learn about the Plett family, and come and see what archaeology can tell us about history.

Measuring Stick (“Ael”)

This measuring stick has three sides, each utilizing a different unit of linear measurement marked with lines, not numbers. It was created by the donor’s maternal great-grandfather Abraham Reimer, of Russia, in the mid-1800s. It is called and “Ael”.

(Donated by Elma Brandt Rempel. Acc. No. 2009.21.10)

*Roland Sawatzky
Senior Curator*



Measuring stick, circa 1850

News from the Village

Despite a variety of challenges, Mennonite Heritage Village has enjoyed a successful summer season in 2009. Both the attendance and revenues from festival days have increased significantly from last year. We speculate there may be at least three factors contributing to the increase in attendance. Certainly the fine weather God gave us on most festival days encouraged people to come out and enjoy the museum. Secondly, intentional efforts to attract families with young children have paid off in that we saw many children enjoying the petting zoo, stories in the Semlin, rides on the barrel train and the horse-drawn wagons, face painting and the inflatable play structures. Having children attend and engage in our events is one way of securing support for the future. The third factor that may be contributing to increased attendance this year is the economy. We've heard much in the news about people spending vacation time closer to home. Perhaps the slumping economy has been beneficial to MHV.

As attendance increases, so do revenues. At the end of September income for the year is 14 percent higher than last year at the same time. We are seeing revenue increases in donations, admissions, restaurant sales, gift shop sales and facilities rentals. Donations this year are 12 percent ahead of 2008 donations for the same time period. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could finish the year with 12 percent more donations than last year?

Along with increased revenues, the managers have worked hard to run their departments as economically as possible and maintain costs. We are pleased to report that at the end of August costs are only 2 percent higher than they were last year at the same time. This bodes well for closing the year with black ink on the bottom line.

Galleries have seen changes

The galleries have seen changes and improvements in the past months. MCC has updated their section of the permanent gallery with new colored panels. The current display in the temporary gallery is *How Did That Get Here: Curiosities from the Collections*. It contains various unusual pieces from MHV collections, some of which may be difficult for the untrained eye to identify. A new exhibit remembering the H. W. Re-

imer Store in Steinbach has recently been displayed in the auditorium.

Senior curator, Dr. Roland Sawatzky, is working on several new exhibits for the galleries. Later this year an exhibit of artifacts found in the archeological excavation on the Blumenhof site, just north of Steinbach will be opened. Next year we expect to see an exhibit called *Just Food* being developed by the Mennonite Committee for Human Rights. Roland has also begun work on a Mennonites and music exhibit for display next summer. This exhibit will lend itself to a variety of activities outside of the gallery as well.

Thanks to a group of faithful volunteers, restoration of the Peters Barn continued this summer. New siding has been applied on the west and north walls and new windows were installed along the west side. We also replaced the shingles on the granary roof in spring and did some repairs and touched up the paint on the Chortitz housebarn. Very recently we received a donation to replace the shingles on the roof of the steamer shelter.

We are grateful to our board, our volunteers and to our constituency for the support coming our way. We are grateful to God and for the rich story displayed at MHV.

Barry Dyck
executive director

Your gift makes a difference

For more than half a century, the Mennonite Heritage Village has preserved and exhibited the rich history of Mennonites who emigrated from Russia to Canada.

The willingness of our donors will be influenced by the board of directors' ability to demonstrate a strong assurance that the organization will be keeping its financial books in balance in the future. If this is not achieved, MHV will break the patience and confidence of their supporters.

This year there have been four showcase events held at the Village with each event being profitable. The financial success of these events was a combination of increased gate admissions, cautious purchasing and sponsorship donations received from numerous firms and individuals. Donations included cash, products, equipment and services. To date, for 2009, the sponsorships received are double the amount that was budgeted for at the beginning of the year. Thank you to all boosters of the 2009 annual showcase events.

With the generated profits, improvements were made to our assets and our line of credit balance at our financial institution has been reduced. Surveys have proven that donors make an "investment" expecting to see results that are tangible and good. Your positive support towards the Village has improved our financial position and reaffirmed the Board of Directors as stable leaders.

Retired financial advisor, Art Kroeker, has volunteered to assist us in raising endowment funds for the MHV. I thank Art for his creativity and pleasant upbeat style. At times it is easy to lose sight of things that matter—Mennonite Heritage Village matters because it is a living history of our Mennonite forefathers.

Contributions to the MHV provide essential support for the outstanding programs, exhibits, and research. With your gift to the MHV, you are helping to preserve, protect and perpetuate the heritage and culture of Russian Mennonites for generations to come.

Thank you for your ongoing support towards Mennonite Heritage Village.

John Milinkovic
Fundraising Manager

A Touch of Christmas
Dec 4, 5 & 6
at the Mennonite Heritage Village
Live nativity performances
Sleigh Rides * Concerts * Baking
Marshmallow Roasts * Lunch
Come help us launch the Christmas Season!

Books sell briskly at the gift store

There is seldom a dull moment at the admissions counter and the gift store. In May and June the foyer rings with the chatter and laughter and occasional shouts of the thousands of school kids that come through the village on field trips, many of them clutching the bags of candy they procured in the General Store. The gift store till is active throughout the summer as tourists pick up a variety of souvenirs and gifts, ranging from teapots to sponge balls to games, pocket knives, shirts, aprons, shawls and magnetic rocks. And apparently, books are still competitive with the Internet, as they remain a large part of our sales in the store. If a lull in the action occurs, it is seen as an opportunity to run for a cup of coffee to sustain energy for the rest of the day.

Volunteers and weekend staff who attend the front admissions desk get to meet people, exchange stories and sometimes even addresses and recipes with people coming from all over Manitoba and from around the world. Looking back over the last months, all the continents, with the possible exception of Antarctica (not surprisingly) have been represented. It is always deeply gratifying to hear visitors' positive comments about the village and all it offers through information about our history, the excellent food and service in the Livery Barn Restaurant, the crafts and candy available in the General Store and of course the friendly and helpful volunteers and staff.

Admittedly, the mosquitoes that made their grand debut in September of all times, generated a few comments about the possibility of offering blood donor cards and other negative reactions, but few people argued with the gorgeous weather that came along with those very mosquitoes. All in all, being at the hub of the MHV, greeting guests, giving out information, directing tourists and tending the store adds a great deal of spice and color to our lives.

Our bookstore features many titles written by or about Mennonites with a specialty in Mennonite history and fiction. Some new ones that arrived this summer are listed and described below.

When War Came to Kleindarp and more Kleindarp stories by Al Reimer, \$16.95

(190 pages, paperback) Most of the short stories in this collection focus on the Mennonite town of Kleindarp during the mid-century, World War II decades. It is a staid Mennonite community that tries to ignore the war as much as possible while pursuing its rigorous religious practices and passion for "born again" spirituality. These

stories illustrate that even a small, isolated Mennonite world has both dark and bright sides where human nature can flare above oppression and prejudice, and envision life in new and creative forms.

The Flying Troutmans, by Miriam Toews, Vintage Canada, \$22

(275 pages, paperback) The impetuous Hattie has just been dumped by her Paris boyfriend; her sister, Min, is going through a particularly dark period, and Min's two kids, Logan and Thebes, are not talking, and talking way too much, respectively. So when Hattie receives an SOS call from eleven-year-old Thebes, she grabs the first plane home. There she discovers that Min is on her way to a psychiatric ward, and Hattie assumes responsibility for the kids. She quickly realizes she is way out of her league and hatches a hare-brained plan to find the kids' long-lost father. With only the most tenuous lead to go on, she piles Logan and Thebes into their Ford Aerostar, and armed with some art supplies, a mondo pair of headphones, a cooler full of food and a hope and a prayer, they hit the road and head south.

The Steppes are the Colour of Sepia, by Connie Braun, Ronsdale Press, \$21.95

(245 pages, paperback) Connie Braun's narrative continues where Sandra Birdsell's historical fiction *The Russlaender* has left off—back to the catastrophic events of twentieth-century Eastern Europe. Braun intimately ushers us into the life of one extended Mennonite family, and in particular the life of her father and grandfather, living under the terror of Stalin, and later, under the military expansion of Hitler's Nazi regime in the Ukraine. In a memoir that is historically faithful to documents, letters, old photographs and personal testimony, Braun offers a second-generation witness to all those who have suffered displacement in history's disasters, and whose obscure stories must be told. In doing so, she honours the spirit of resilience embodied by the refugees who have created and transformed Canadian society.

Everyone is always welcome to come and browse through our book selection anytime during business hours. As well, we are open to suggestions regarding expanding our book selection. We encourage you to come and visit.

Marigold Peters
Office Manager

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Pioneer demos draw crowds

The Pioneer Days parade kicked off the festival weekend in Steinbach with its usual flair. Several thousand people lined Main Street to watch the floats go by and catch the goodies being distributed. From there the action moved to the grounds of Mennonite Heritage Village.

"Considering the weather, I can say we are very pleased with the crowds at the museum over the weekend," says executive director, Barry Dyck, suggesting that rain on Friday dampened enthusiasm, but the crowds—numbering 6,000 when the final tally came in—bounced back for the remainder of the weekend. Saturday and Monday turned out to be a banner days with a good attendance and strong interest in pioneer demonstrations and a flea market.

Dyck noted the concerts were well received and Russian Mennonite meals at the Livery Barn, *Schnetzi* and stoneground brown bread with jam at the summer kitchen and old-fashioned waffles at the *Wauflle Vinkel* resulted in line-ups all weekend.

"Staff, board members, volunteers and guests no doubt would all say it was a huge success," he said. "Food services, admissions and the gift store all reported revenues at levels exceeding last year's."

Milling of wheat

The pioneer demonstrations which carry on in various venues are a reason why many people attend the festival. Dyck notes they never seem to tire of watching the milling of wheat at the

windmill, butter churning, rope making and threshing. Other demonstrations are woodworking, spinning, bread baking in the outdoor oven, printing in the old-time print shop and log sawing at the sawmill. For "oldtimers" it is a way to relive "the good old days" while others want to show their children and grandchildren what life was like back then.

"The Mennonite Heritage Village is all about history," says Dyck. "The story told here focuses on the experience of the Mennonites who came from Russia to Manitoba, beginning in the 1870s."

He noted both the galleries and the village itself with its buildings, monuments and artifacts bring life and reality to history. Curator Roland Sawatzky and board member Lawrence Klippenstein led guided tours through the village and galleries to tell the Mennonite story.

The weekend featured a wide variety of musical entertainment under the big tent. Kicking off the weekend's concerts Friday noon was well-known kids' entertainer Fred Penner who proved as much a delight to adults as children. The Workshop Boys were in concert two times with crowds nearly filling the venue while 3 Mol Plaut, Elvis, Stone River Band, The Jake Brakes and The Basement Boys each had their own following. Also performing were Caleb Whiteside, the "fiddle kid," O Mother Where Art Thou (a family group), Hank and Anne Neufeld, Peter Letkemann and David Hiebert Gospel Highway.

Wandering minstrel

Dyck noted "wandering minstrel" Calvin Dyck from Vancouver Island Symphony Orchestra who played violin in both churches as well as on the horse-drawn wagons, proved to be very popular.

The service in the Old Colony Church Sunday morning was attended by a full house, while the old-fashioned *Saengerfest* (song festival) by the Vespers choir under the direction of Rudy Schellenberg proved to be a drawing card.

The flea market (formerly Rusty's) which featured more than 100 vendors—at Pioneer Days for the second time—saw hundreds of visitors Monday. Shoppers were pleased with antiques, collectibles, books and toys that were displayed on the tables and marketers reported brisk sales.

Museum staff is deliberate in planning plenty of activities for children. Once again, horse-drawn wagon rides, barrel train rides, the candy store, petting zoo and inflatable play structures drew large numbers of youngsters.

"MHV is intentional in securing its future by involving children in special events," says Dyck. "When these young folk are engaged we have hope for the future."

The executive director was overwhelmed with the hard work and support of the hundreds of volunteers who gave their time to keep the festival going.

"Without our volunteers, there would be no Pioneer Days," he says.

Doris Penner

Benefits and Privileges of a Membership

- * Free subscription to the *Village Review*, MHV's newsletter (several times a year) to keep you in touch with events and friends of the museum
- * A vote at the annual meeting of Mennonite Heritage Village (Canada) if membership has been in place 60 days prior to the meeting.
- * Two extra complimentary tickets to allow you to bring friends or relatives to the museum (to be used in the year of your membership).
- * 10 percent discount on all gift store items
- * Invitation to special membership events
- * Free admission to MHV and special museum days:
 - Spring on the Farm
 - Canada Day
 - Pioneer Days
 - Fall on the Farm
 - A Touch of Christmas
- * Free admission to the following museums:
 - Manitoba Agricultural Museum (Austin)
 - Costume Museum of Canada (Dugald)
 - New Iceland Heritage Museum (Gimli)
 - Western Canada Aviation Museum (Winnipeg)
 - Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum (Brandon)
 - St. Boniface (Winnipeg)

Yes, I reviewed the membership categories. Please enroll me as a member and supporter of the Mennonite Heritage Village in the following category:

- \$70 Annual Family Membership (includes children 18 and under)
 \$35 Annual Single Membership \$500 Life Membership (\$300 is tax deductible)

I would also like to make a special donation. (tax deductible)

- \$1000 \$500 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other _____

I am enclosing a cheque or money order for a total of \$ _____

Please charge my membership and/or donation to my

Visa Mastercard in the amount of \$ _____

Account # _____ Expiry Date _____

Signature _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please make cheques payable to Mennonite Heritage Village Registered Charitable Number 10363-393-RR0001



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