

Voices

THE VILLAGE

VOLUME 6 NO. 2 • OCTOBER 2018



NEW ACQUISITIONS ^{PG5}

2018 SEASONAL SPONSORS ^{PG8}



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* October - April
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* Village Centre only

ADMISSION RATES	
Adults	\$12.00
Seniors (65 & older)	\$10.00
Students (ages 13-22)	\$10.00
Children (ages 6-12)	\$6.00
Young Children (ages 5 & under)	FREE

MEMBERSHIP
** Membership entitles you to vote at our annual general meeting and gives you FREE or reduced admission to other Signature Museums in Manitoba:

Annual Individual Membership** (Season-long admission)	\$30.00
Annual Family* Membership** (Season-long admission)	\$50.00
Lifetime Membership**	\$500.00

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Austin, MB

New Iceland Heritage Museum
Gimli, MB

St. Boniface Museum
Winnipeg, MB

Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre
Morden, MB

Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada
Winnipeg, MB

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THE SUCCESSION PLAN

BY BARRY DYCK



My upcoming retirement from the role of Executive Director at Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) was made public at our Annual General Meeting in March 2018. At that time, a Succession Committee had already been appointed and charged with the responsibility of locating one or more

candidates to potentially fill this senior leadership role. A final decision regarding the choice of a successor will be made by MHV's Board of Directors.

The Succession Committee is made up of three current board members - Allan Kroeker, Jeremy Peters, Willie Peters - and two individuals recruited specifically for this work - Reg Toews and Bev Unger. Reg Toews serves as the chair of the committee.

The position has been advertised in a variety of media and has drawn a number of applications. Several of these applicants have been interviewed, but as of this writing, none has yet been invited to take the job. We are continuing conversations with a variety of people within our constituency in search of qualified individuals to consider.

The committee is looking for a person who values Mennonite history and culture, who has experience in a senior leadership role as well as in business management, and who will garner the respect of the constituency, the board and the staff team.

The committee's objective is to have this person in place for the beginning of 2019.

IN THE VILLAGE

BY JENNA KLASSEN

This summer two buildings in the village received a facelift! The Printery and the Reimer store got a new coat of paint and are looking very fresh. Thanks to our volunteer Bernie Hiebert for doing such an excellent job. We rely on volunteers and donations to keep our buildings in good repair and looking sharp year after year.



New coat of paint for Printery and Reimer store.



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THE IMPORTANCE OF A SCHOOL PROGRAM

BY JESSICA BULLER



When children hear about a scheduled museum visit, they often groan, and are less than enthused about visiting a place they imagine to be filled with glass covered artefacts that are so strange and old, and have no context in their world. As the children then step foot into our village it is always fantastic to hear the delighted expression of amazement at how the village "looks just like something out of a movie". This is why the school program at the Mennonite Heritage Village is important. It offers a look into what life used to be, while at the same time, forges connections to modern day life and people in the community.

A school program is so necessary to a museum because it gives children context of what the past was like. One can step into the village and feel like being part of something that is continuous, something that has a past and a present, something with relevance, no matter what culture the visitor comes from. Exploring *The Old Colony Worship House* emphasises the importance of staying true to ones values and beliefs, regardless the consequences. The *Private* and *Public* schools forge a little understanding as to how the past shaped the present and why our school system looks the way it does today. Making *Schnetje* or exploring the *Printery* help to bridge the gap between generations a little bit, showing the children why hard work and dedication was necessary for survival and not just a character trait needed to get a good job or something baby boomers lament the lack of in millennials.

Children sometimes ask our interpreters with big eyes, if someone really lived in the *Semlin* or in the *Housebarn*, or if the pioneers really did not have a TV or videogames. They express



delight when they actually get to make their own rings out of horseshoe nails, which again highlights the value of what we are passing on here. The school program allows children to make a connection to something that is not saturated by technology and media. It allows them to come to a place where they can imagine, create, and explore.

That is how the history displayed here at our Museum, offers the possibility to have a personal connection to the past, and therefore creates a valuable understanding of the present. It also gives children an opportunity to contextualise history and culture and fosters creativity. Most importantly it is a space where members of our community are able to pass on valuable information, so all of our stories live on and are not forgotten.



EXHIBIT PREVIEW

BY JENNA KLASSEN

Our current temporary exhibit *The Art of Mennonite Clocks* may be only four months into its year-long display, but we are already planning for the next exhibit! Our 2019 exhibit focuses on the material items brought to Canada by the Mennonites who migrated from Russia in the 1920s, known as the Russländer. By the 1920s, after years of war and revolution, the world they had known in the Mennonite colonies had collapsed and many Mennonites in the Soviet Union sought refuge in Canada. The items they brought with them were often very meaningful to their owners. They were reminders of their life in Russia and became physical

symbols of identity for the Russländer and their descendants. See the stories of these artefacts in Spring 2019!



Maria Heese (left) wearing the dress.



Dress belonging to Maria Heese. Maria came from a wealthy family and brought this dress with her to Canada when she migrated in the 1920s.



THE GENERAL STORE

BY JO-ANN FRIESEN

Stores were unusual in the early Mennonite villages. Mennonites were almost exclusively farmers and believed that making a living from the soil was most desirable since it required little contact with the outside world. Small general stores, however, began to make their appearance and often became flourishing businesses.

The MHV General Store is open seven days a week, May 1 to September 30. It is located on the main street of our outdoor village, and continues to be one of the most popular stops as folks from all over the globe journey back in time with us. The store is a two storey reproduction of a building that used to be in Steinbach. It houses a wide selection of Manitoba made merchandise created by local artisans, therefore giving guests an opportunity to purchase unique local wares. As you enter the building, you are immediately taken back to yesteryear. The sight of the long row of old fashioned candy makes the child in you come to life. The storekeeper greets you with a wide smile, and a hearty handshake, as he or she explains the history of the original Reimer Store (located next to the General Store), as well as points out the variety of unique artifacts on display. Visitors have the opportunity to purchase fresh flour milled onsite in Canada's only working wind powered flour mill.

Guests have expressed their delight as they purchased items made by local artisans such as: upcycled silver, crocheted products, an assortment of jams, watches, flax heating pads, hand-made hot pads, bear oil products, jewelry, decorations, rocking chairs, wood wall decorations, and birdhouses. The store is staffed on a daily basis by volunteers who work tirelessly to pro-

vide excellent customer service in a friendly environment. In days gone by, the General Store was seen as THE community gathering place where the recipes of life were shared, items for the home and farm were purchased, and neighbors caught up on the latest news. The artifacts on display have brought many a hearty discussion about how the visitor lived when they were young, or how a general store, like the one here at MHV, currently functions in their own homeland.

The General Store is currently accepting applications for the 2019 season. Please contact info@mhv.ca for more information. You can check out the artisans on our/their Facebook page.

Look for the following artisans:

- A Switch In Time - Bettylou Toews
- Amish Hot Pads - Adelina Wiebe
- Bear Naked Wonders - Nancy Doerksen
- L & S Woodworking (birdhouses, highchairs, step stools and more)
- Lorenz Wiebe
- Christmas Decorations - Eleanore Thiessen
- Infinity Scarves - Carroll Dyck
- K & RP - Fun, Funky, Functional - Kim Polten
- Night Owl Beading - Nancy Neufeld
- Relax With Flax - Lorna Harms
- Through Glass Images - Gail Penner
- Wood Wonders - Elmer Barkman
- The Barbie Dress Lady - Hilda Hiebert



PROJECTS, PROJECTS, AND MORE PROJECTS

BY BARRY DYCK

Given the size and complexity of the Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) facilities, there are always significant upkeep and repair projects cropping up. We don't expect this situation to change much in the future.

This summer, three rooftop furnaces were replaced in our Village Centre, completing a three-phase project of replacing all the furnaces and air conditioners in that building. And thanks to volunteer Bernie Hiebert, the Printery and the Reimer Store received fresh coats of paint.

Our iconic windmill required attention this summer, with more needed yet this fall. A windstorm did some significant damage to the fan tail, which is the small fan at the back of the windmill that keeps the main sails oriented to the wind. It was a major undertaking to bring the entire fan tail down, remove several gears, have them welded, have the fan itself rebuilt, and put everything back together. This fall we are planning to replace the deck of the windmill, which is experiencing some decay from seasons of exposure to the elements. The projected cost of this replacement is \$35,000.

Our sawmill has not been operational for two summers now. To restore it to working order, it first needs to be removed from the shelter that houses it so that the base and the foundation can be replaced. After some necessary repairs to the mill itself, it then needs to be reinstalled on the new footing. We expect this restoration could cost up to \$20,000.

Leaky roofs have been a prominent theme here this year. For this reason, we have been thankful for a dry summer. The barn in our baryard has had a leaky roof for several years now. The roof of the Hochfeld House, one of our original log houses, sprang several leaks this summer. Our Village Centre has four flat roofs, two of which have been plagued with leaks for a few years now and have been repaired repeatedly. Those two roofs have now reached the point of needing to be completely replaced. One of the other four needs some repairs that will hopefully extend its life by another five years. The fourth roof should be okay for the next five years. The total projected cost of all these roof repairs is \$150,000.

Beyond its roof situation, the Hochfeld House

should actually receive a major restoration similar to that which the Waldheim House underwent two years ago (but without the thatched roof). This project is likely to cost in the neighbourhood of \$100,000.

The same barn that needs a new roof also needs some siding and window repairs, as well as a fresh paint job. Similarly, the Livery Barn Restaurant requires some structural repairs and a new paint job. It seems our wood buildings, of which we have many, require new paint about every five years. So we should be painting three buildings annually to maintain this cycle.

While our outdoor village is already somewhat accessible to wheelchairs, there is considerable room for improvement in this area. A walk around the village would also reveal various other projects that will become more urgent in the next few years. We must continue to be diligent in addressing as many of these projects as possible each year.



NEW ACQUISITIONS

BY JENNA KLASSEN

Most of the donors from whom we receive artefacts have personal connections to the items they bring to us. They are often relics of family history, having been kept in a family for generations, and have become a way for their owners to connect to their past. Some artefacts hold these connections more deeply than others. We recently received a donation of a number of items that had once belonged to a woman whose short life ended in tragedy. Her wedding dress, a hooked rug, and embroidered pillow cases are some of her daughter's only connections to the mother she had lost at an early age.



Henry and Anna (Penner) Friesen

Anna (Penner) Friesen was married to Henry Friesen on July 21, 1918. They farmed and raised their children near Niverville, Manitoba. Around 1930, Anna developed tuberculosis and was placed in the St. Boniface Sanatorium (now known as the St. Amant Centre). She stayed there until 1931, when she moved in with her parents who cared for her until her death in December of the same year. She left a husband, three sons, and the youngest, a four-year-old daughter, Anne.



St. Boniface Sanatorium, date unknown

Construction of the St. Boniface Sanatorium was completed in 1931 as an unemployment relief project during the Great Depression. The facility held 250 beds and, according to Anna's daughter, her mother was one of the first patients to stay at the sanatorium. Patients infected with tuberculosis, a contagious disease affecting the lungs, were isolated in sanatoria where they could rest, and get fresh air and a good diet. Termed the "rest cure," this was the common treatment for TB until the 1950s, when antibiotic treatment was developed. With all the "resting" patients were supposed to do, there was an excess of free time. Isolated in a sanatorium, without family, Anna kept her hands and mind busy with needle and thread. The hooked rug and embroidered pillow cases were made by Anna during her time there.



Anna Friesen's wedding dress, likely purchased from Eaton's Department Store

Although this was not donated to the museum, the family also kept Anna's hair, braided into two plaits, until last year when they were donated to an organization that provides wigs to those who have experienced hair loss due to medical conditions. According to Anne, her mother's hair became very uncomfortable as she lay in bed for such long periods of time. At her request, Anna's husband Henry cut off her long braids. The braids were carefully stored for decades by Henry, and later his daughter.

These personal items show us how an object can act as a physical memory of something that has been lost. They have served as reminders of Anna for her family since her death in 1931. They have been particularly treasured by her daughter, who never had the chance to know her mother. Anne noted that over the years her father rarely spoke of her mother; however it is clear through his preservation of her belongings that he wanted to keep a physical memory of Anna for himself and for his children.



Hooked rug made by Anna while she was in the St. Boniface Sanatorium

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS, CHRISTMAS IN THE VILLAGE & NEW HOURS

BY JO-ANN FRIESEN

Village Books and Gifts (VBG), the gift shop at Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV), continues to be a significant consumer resource of Russian Mennonite literature, biographies, DVDs, CDs, gifts, and souvenirs that are unique and hard to find.

Customers who frequent our store are often delighted when they locate the one particular item that completes their historical collection or simply satisfies their shopping experience. Our Reception and Gift Shop staff are friendly, knowledgeable, and deliver excellent customer service.

Spring is one of my favorite times of the year, as I am often amazed at how new life sprouts in even the most barren of terrain. This is the time of year when many writers decide to launch their new book. Several of these new titles continue to fly off our shelves: *The Russian Mennonite Story* by Paul Toews; *Homespun* by Lorilee Craker; *Return to Odessa* by Harold N. Wiens; *Flight* by Harold Jantz, and the newly released DVD *Seven points on Earth* by Paul Plett and Royden Loewen, in association with the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies.

Village Books and Gifts was pleased to host an Author Reading event during Pioneer Days. Readings were held by authors, Harold N. Wiens (*Return to Odessa*) of Edmonton, and Harold Jantz (*Flight*) of Winnipeg, who transported us back to a time when intestinal fortitude was key to a person's survival. Between the readings, the audience was captivated by an outstanding piano performance executed by Steinbach's accomplished musician Kimberly Dyck.

Village Books and Gifts strives to be intentional with what graces our shelves. We intend to appeal to folks who want to bring home something that's a little bit "Steinbach" or a little bit "Mennonite".

We offer quality, unique, hard-to-find books, souvenirs and Menno-wear. Our staff are friendly, knowledgeable, and professional.

We recently had a customer in VBG who commented, "I am so excited that the gift shop and the indoor galleries are going to be open on Saturdays this winter. I will bring my family to see *The Art of Mennonite Clocks* exhibit as well as shop in your beautiful store."

Personally, I am excited to be part of the Mennonite Heritage Village, as we retell the incredible story of perseverance and intuition of the Russian Mennonites who immigrated to Canada. They made their way through difficult circumstances and they used their ingenuity to create beauty out of rough terrain. They were very innovative and excelled to be top producers in their "field of expertise." I have experienced their deep historical roots by listening to stories passed down from generation to generation, as well as by working alongside so many interesting people who persevere with a high level of integrity in spite of their current circumstances. Very inspiring indeed.

Mark your calendar for Village Books and Gifts annual *Christmas in the Village - Christmas Market*, being held on Saturday, November 10, 2018 from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. There will be activities planned for the whole family. Vendors have worked tirelessly to create items for that special someone on your gift giving list. A new feature this year will be a children's craft corner and horse drawn wagon rides (weather permitting).

Watch for new and upcoming events on our website www.mhv.ca. Village Books and Gifts and the Gerhard Ens Gallery will be open every Saturday throughout the winter months for your convenience.

AUXILIARY NEWS

BY EVELYN FRIESEN



...to Neuberghthal

Auxiliary members recently enjoyed a fascinating trip to *Yantzeid!* They stopped for a delightful noon lunch at Nora's Diner in Gretna. A few miles down the road, in Neuberghthal, they were greeted by Margruite Krahn who graciously guided them on tour of a very special homestead on the old village street.

Margruite is well known for her expertise in old Mennonite painted floor patterns (as pictured above in the restored Herdsman House). She is passionate about the living history that she is part of and actually makes her home in the Housebarn on the yard. The place has become a heritage site and, as such, is a popular destination.

The winner is....



Diana Sawatsky was pleased to hear that she was indeed the winner of a beautiful, colorful quilt which had been designed in Navajo detail, pieced and art-

fully stitched by our own Village Quilters.

The Quilting Room remains open throughout the winter months, and with needle and thread in hand, the quilters can often be found gathered around the next quilt that has been stretched out on the wooden frame. The room is always an interesting place to visit and, along with a unique display of vintage linens, you will usually find a few more lovely quilts that are for sale.



You are the Key!

Ray and Nicki Peters (right), along with Abe Friesen and Victor Loewen, are pictured teaming up with the Auxiliary at the Waffle Booth on Labour Day. Endless lineups were noted on September 3rd as people watched their golden brown waffle being baked to perfection on the cast iron, heart-shaped waffle irons.

We are grateful for all the volunteers who continue to lend their hand when we need that extra help. Fall on the Farm was such a day at the Waffle Booth, and we're pleased to report that it was our busiest day on record. To be sure, working in the company of friends has its rewards...certainly it makes for good times together!

PIONEER DAY CAMP

BY ALANA DONOHOE



Pioneer Day Camp has been one of my favourite things to be in charge of this summer. This camp is a way for kids to be able to connect to their roots, whether or not they are Mennonite, and to be able to see what life was like in the olden days. Each camp had seven kids and together they explored practically every inch of this yard. Jessica and I wanted to share as much knowledge as possible with the kids about our village, but didn't want the kids to have a week long history lesson. So we decided on having a theme for each day and piece by piece the kids would explore the yard. For fun we planned water activities and a variety of games that all the kids would enjoy. You would be surprised how much fun the kids had playing hide-and-go-seek in the housebarn.

The first day our theme was *Who are the Mennonites?* We started the day by doing scavenger hunts throughout our entire village and went to the church to learn a little bit more about what their lives were like when they came to Canada.

Another theme we had that week was *Life in the Village*, where we looked at the type of jobs that were around our village. This had the kids going to the windmill, blacksmith and print shop, and viewing things in a working perspective. We had a camper that was very excited to go to the windmill because his great-grandfather had worked in one. This day became a quick favourite for the kids as our camp lets them go behind-the-scenes and work in each of these different types of jobs.



Life at Home was also one of the topics that we covered. We started with the Mennonite's first home, the Semlin, and the kids were astonished that families would live in such small dwellings, and that sometimes their livestock had to stay inside the home with them. We carried on looking at our three houses in the village. We helped with some of the animal chores, and learned how to make schnetje, and even enjoyed it for snack that day. This day we also looked at gardening; how they didn't have grocery stores back then, and how important it was to take care of plants.

On our *Transportation Day* we planned to have every type of ride that we could possibly offer on our yard. Wagon and barrel train rides were some of the kids' favourite rides that day. We also looked at the variety of vehicles and tractors in our transportation sheds. We talked about steam power, horses, and wind, all being important power sources to the pioneers that settled here as they didn't have any type of electricity like we do now.



Friday was our wrap-up day. We completed the crafts that the children had created throughout the week and prepared treats and a presentation for the parents. Our August group wanted to present a play for the parents, so Jessica and I created a reader's theatre play for the kids to act out and the to parents enjoy.

Now, I know that it looks like a lot of things are happening here at camp, but when the kids are so interested in what we are doing the time goes by very quickly and the kids are sad that the week is over. Being able to spend the week with these kids, share some cool facts about our buildings, and having water balloon fights with everyone really makes it enjoyable to see the kids' smiles when they leave at the end of the week.



Mennonite Heritage Village

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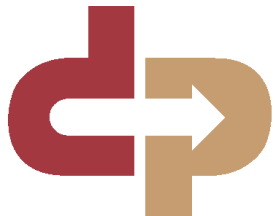
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