May 17 Annual Meeting Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Join us on a lovely Saturday evening in May to mark the Society’s first half-century with our banquet and annual meeting. Barbershop quartet music and the bubbling aroma of a chocolate fountain will greet you in the foyer of the Lancaster Mennonite School dining room, where our meal will be catered this year.

This year we are delighted to have the Mennonite Children’s Choir of Lancaster as our special musical performance.

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Author Ervin Stutzman Speaks at June 2 Meeting on Writing a Family Story

On Monday, June 2, at 7 pm, the Society is pleased to host Ervin R. Stutzman speaking about his new book, Emma: a Widow among the Amish. This book tells the story of Ervin’s Amish-Mennonite mother, widowed at a young age with six children, one of them disabled. The title of Ervin’s illustrated presentation is, “Serendipity, Sweat, and the Sweet Taste of Telling a Family Story.” He will reflect on the joys and challenges of writing family history.

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John Ruth – author, pastor, tour guide and storyteller – will speak at the Society’s Annual Banquet meeting on May 17.

Mennonite Children’s Choir of Lancaster

Mennonite Church near Hutchinson, Kansas. A former moderator of Lancaster Mennonite Conference from 1991 to 2000, Ervin currently serves as vice president of Eastern Mennonite University and dean and professor of church ministries at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

This is Ervin’s second book of historical fiction about his family of origin, following the popular Tobias of the Amish, about his father who died when he was three. Emma sensitively traces his mother’s efforts to find her way to ever increasing strength and independence, in the aftermath of her entrepreneurial husband’s tragic death following significant business failures.

Ervin Stutzman
WHAT'S GOING ON

June 6-7 Pennsylvania German Conference. Plan now to attend the Pennsylvania German Society Annual Meeting in collaboration with the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies on June 6-7 at Elizabethtown College. The theme of this year's annual meeting is “History, Religion, Culture and Tradition among the Pennsylvania Germans,” with particular emphasis on the Church of the Brethren. Scholarly papers will be presented on topics related to Pennsylvania German Plain people as well as broader Pennsylvania German topics. More information available from pgs@kutztown.edu or (484) 646-4227. Check the PGS web site (www.pgs.org) for registration information closer to the date.

June 15 Call for Papers. The Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee invites students at the high school, college and university, or graduate school and seminary levels to submit research papers for cash prizes. Papers should be written during the 2007-2008 academic year on a theme related to Mennonite or Anabaptist history. Submit entries via email to archives@mennoniteusa.org o r on computer disk to 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. Deadline is June 15. More information is available at www.mennoniteusa.org/history

June 19 - 21, Palatines to America Conference. The Palatines to America – German Genealogy Society will hold its national conference and annual meeting in Columbus, Ohio, at the Ramada Plaza Hotel and Conference Center. June 19-21. Conference theme is “Tune Up Your German Speaking Research.” Keynote speakers include specialists in German genealogy. More information is available at www.palam.org

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guests. The younger children in grades 2-5 will be joining us for this performance. This versatile group, directed by Darlene Hein, sings music from around the world.

John Ruth – Mennonite minister, author, filmmaker and heritage tour leader – will be this year’s featured speaker on the topic, “Personalities and Perspectives in the Story of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.”

John has been connected with the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society through the years, most intensely during the writing of the Lancaster Conference Mennonite history, The Earth is the Lord’s. He also directed the award-winning PBS documentary, “The Amish: A People of Preservation.” Last year John authored, Forgiveness: A Legacy of the West Nickel Mines Amish School.

We hope that you will join us for this special anniversary celebration. Cost for the program and banquet is $16.50 per adult and begins at 6:15 pm on Saturday, May 17. All are welcome. Plan now to attend.

Author Ervin Stutzman Speaks - Continued from page 1

This free presentation will be held at Metzler Mennonite Church in Ephrata, PA (directions at right). All are welcome. More information is available from the Society. The Metzler congregation dates to 1728 and the present building, to 1897. The Metzler congregation has maintained a peace position in every U.S. war going back to the Revolution.

Former Staff Leave Lasting Legacy
The Society remembers two former staff members who passed away this spring.

Gladys Stoltzfus Graybill worked for the Society for five years as secretary/receptionist and then from 1976-2000 as the Society’s bookkeeper, long past official retirement age. She is remembered as generous, loyal, accurate and dedicated in her work, with keen intelligence beneath her self-effacing demeanor. An early riser, she often did a day’s work at home before coming in to the Society. Gladys loved to instigate birthday and anniversary parties and wedding showers. Every year on
Staff Transitions: Time Marches On

The month of March brought major staff changes to the Society. Regretfully we said goodbye to Lola Lehman, seated at right, who is moving into retirement after 23 years of service. Lola coordinated the Family History Conference, worked with the editor on manuscripts and organized filing in the archives. Seated beside her is Reuben Miller, who is leaving full-time employment to pursue research interests that include writing our 50th anniversary history.

We are delighted to welcome three incoming staff persons. David Sauder joins the Society as Used Book Manager. Look for David at the reference desk and at our quarterly rare and used book auctions. He will also be doing some book editing for Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage. David served for 20 years on the Society’s Education Committee and was previously employed as principal of Ephrata Mennonite School.

Peggy Erb, pictured at center, joins our staff as Administrative Assistant after several years as a library/archives volunteer. Peggy had worked previously as office manager for the School District of Lancaster and for Fulton Bank in customer service. We welcome her warmth, graciousness, and organizational skills.

Jonel Herr Ness, pictured top right, brings strong retail sales experience to the position of Gift Shop Manager. Look for Jonel at the front desk, where she will oversee new book sales, product display, and bookstore promotion. Proficient in German, Jonel comes with excellent experience in sales, management, and customer service. She served previously on the Society’s history committee. The Society is truly blessed to have such engaged and competent staff!

Staff Leave Legacy - Continued from page 2

her birthday she provided a full-course meal for the entire staff for lunch. For the annual Bookworm Frolic summer book sale, she baked apple dumplings to sell—even though it meant getting up at 4:30 am each day of the sale to bake them before work. For Gladys, food became her special way of sharing God’s love with those around her.

During the Society’s Romantic Period in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when at least four staff members met their spouses through the Historical Society (including herself), she instigated board and staff quilting parties to make wedding gifts. Gladys supported the Society with gift memberships to her extended family and friends.

Virginia Weaver was employed as secretary from 1967-1985 and volunteered for many years thereafter. She was assistant manager of Weaver Bookstore prior to working for the Society and authored a booklet about Weavers that was sold in our store and remains in the library. An outgoing and cheerful person, Virginia worked with the book auctions, assisted with library files, and typed many of our deed abstracts onto cards that genealogy researchers still use today. For many years she was involved in city missions through Crossroads (formerly South Christian Street) Mennonite Church in Lancaster.

Virginia became a Mennonite when she married her first husband, a native of Lancaster County who served in Civilian Public Service during World War II in Grottoes, Virginia, near where she lived. A good encourager, her co-workers remember her special Scotcheroo cookies; every Christmas she baked five-inch-wide cookies in the shape of a star and gave them to each staff person. And she is remembered for the fields of tulips that she and her second husband cultivated for their beauty, some of which still grace our property.

We are grateful for the gifts that Gladys and Virginia brought to the Society and honored by the contributions that we received this spring in their memory.

Original Board Members Share In Golden Anniversary Celebration

Lloyd Gingerich, left, and Earl Groff, right, each received certificates of appreciation during commemorative activities last month for their work 50 years ago as founding board members of the Society.

Library Volunteer Opportunity

Do you enjoy helping people find answers to their questions? The Society is looking for volunteers to assist visitors in the library on a regular basis. The work involves orienting patrons to the library and its resources, helping visitors to find information in the library and archives, and answering telephone calls at the reference desk.

This is a wonderful opportunity to learn while volunteering, especially for those with an interest in family, church, and local history. Help is needed on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons or Saturdays. Familiarity with computers and a willingness to learn would be most helpful. For more information, call 393-9745 or email Steve Ness at sness@lmhs.org.
**DIRECTOR’S REFLECTIONS**

“For the world is about to turn.”

_Lately I have been thinking about the turning of the seasons. As I drive in the countryside, Amish are plowing the rich, damp Lancaster County soil. With the time change and Easter early this year, it seems that spring raced toward us more quickly than usual.

And it has been a breathless month at the Society. We said goodbye to two departing staff members and hello to three new ones. We held the first celebration of our golden anniversary at our volunteer appreciation tea in March, and are planning more 50th anniversary events to come. Last month, we also commemorated the death of two former workers who were an integral part of this Society in years past. And as I write this, I am listening to the contented murmurings of two different Pennsylvania German classes, as students practice phrases like, “Ich bin am Lanne du Deitsch zu schwetze” (I am learning Pennsylvania Dutch) and “Heit is en scheener Daag” (Today is a beautiful day).

Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.” Here at the Historical Society, seasons turn, personnel change, holidays and anniversary celebrations come and go, all according to God’s purpose and timing.

Recently in my church we were singing a song that speaks to hope, change, and the shifting seasons, the words of whose chorus repeat, “the world is about to turn.” Several verses seemed to me to be particularly appropriate at this time in the life of the Society, when we look backward with gratitude and forward with anticipation to the new ventures toward which the Spirit may be calling us:

- God’s mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
- This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound, ‘til the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around.
- Our ancestors had faith and foresight. To face the future we need vision and insight, a fresh way of seeing things that will take us into our next half-century and beyond.

As we embark on a new season, and look forward to exciting opportunities like the upcoming 300th anniversary of settlement in Lancaster County, thank you for joining with us in the turning cycles of life.

**Commemorative Plaque Received**

The Stahls – board member Jacob, and his wife, Rachel (Landis), on behalf of the Landis family – presented us with a plaque in memory of Society founder Ira Landis. Look for it outside in front of a commemorative tree.

**Online Genealogy Resource Now Available in the Library**

_The ancestral fan chart pictured above is printed in distinctive red and black ink on ivory, acid-free paper. Record your ancestors back to the tenth generation. $7.95 in our bookstore._

Best known for its collection of U.S. Federal Census records from 1790 through 1930 – which you can search electronically by name, birthplace, age and ethnicity – HeritageQuest also includes numerous “non-history” books that have genealogy value, such as town and city directories, government reports, biographies, bank records, and much more.

In addition, HeritageQuest gives you access to more than 22,000 family and local histories. If anyone has ever published a book about your family name or a book about the history of your town or county, there is an excellent chance that you can search that book on HeritageQuest.

Finally, HeritageQuest provides information about people and places from PERSI (the PERiodical Source Index), a comprehensive subject index containing two million articles from more than 6,500 genealogy and local history periodicals written since 1800.

HeritageQuest Online does not sell subscriptions to individuals. Access to this database is only available through institutions like ours. As one patron told us recently, “This alone is worth the price of Society membership!” We agree, and hope that you will take advantage of this new computer resource in our library.
New Books

The first few months of 2008 have brought a variety of new books touching on historical periods from the 1700s to the 20th century. In New World Faiths, Jon Butler gives a description of the mix of religion in North America in the 18th century when traditional Native American and African religions came into contact with European Christianity. Faith and Flames in the Shenandoah Valley is Naomi Rosenberry’s fictionalized account of how the Sheridan’s Valley campaign affected Mennonites and their neighbors in Virginia during the Civil War. Read about young Lancaster County Mennonites leaving home for missions in abroad in All the Way to China. Ervin Stutzman wrote a biographical novel about his mother, Emma, and her challenge of raising a family after her husband was tragically killed. Emma: A Widow Among the Amish is a companion volume to Tobias of the Amish which Stutzman completed in 2001 about his father.

Book Details
Emma: A Widow Among the Amish. Herald Press, 2007. 406 pp. (paper). A true story woven by strands of faith, family, and community. Emma tells the story of a woman who rears six children in the aftermath of her entrepreneurial husband’s tragic death following significant business failures. Stutzman, author of the highly commended Tobias of the Amish, about the life of his father who died when he was three, now turns to his mother and rediscovers the strength of a woman whose early married life was defined by stress and tragedy. $17.00 each

All the Way to China: The Story of Isaac L Hess and his Landis cousins who went to South China as pioneer missionaries in the 1890s. Martha L. Charles Pepper. Author, 2007. An exciting historical account of faith and adventure for a group of young people from Landis Valley Mennonite Church who went with the Christian and Missionary Alliance to South China in the 1890s and early 1900s. $13.00

Faith and Flames in the Shenandoah Valley. Naomi Rosenberry. Eastern Mennonite Publications, 2007. 384 pp. (hard). The families of Daniel Wenger and Noah Brenneman face the horrors and hardships of civil war in the once-peaceful Shenandoah Valley. This fictionalized account opens a window into Mennonite life in Virginia in the mid-1800s. Read of the challenge to conviction and the suffering of hunger, human loss and the strength to rebuild during and after the Civil War. $13.00

New Amsterdam Tour
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Anabaptist/Mennonite/Baptist sites in the old city south of Wall Street, the boundary of the original New Amsterdam settlement. The afternoon will conclude with a ride on the Staten Island ferry past the Statue of Liberty. 

Cost is $99 for nonmembers, $89 for society members, and includes one meal. Call Dorothy at the Society to register.

Paid Summer Internships for College Students

Earn real wages and gain valuable experience working at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society this summer. If you attend a Pennsylvania state college, you may be eligible through the summer work-study and/or community service program of PHEAA (the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency). Internships are available in our archives, library, museum and book operations. For more information, call the Society at 393-9745 or email director@lmhs.org and check out the PHEAA web site at http://www.pheaa.org/workstudy/

New World Faiths: Religion in Colonial America. Jon Butler. Oxford University Press, 2008. 183 pp. (paper). Many people believe that the Pilgrims typified early American religion. However, by the 1730s Catholics, Jews and Africans had joined the Native Americans, Puritans and numerous Protestant denominations in the colonies. The meeting of these diverse groups and their varied use of music, dance and ritual produced an unprecedented evolution of religious practice, including the birth revivals. $13.00
Field Trip to New Amsterdam (New York City)

Come along on a journey of learning and adventure to retrace the colonial history of early Dutch Mennonites in present-day New York City, 1610 to 1775. As we review the settlement’s connections with other denominations and with local Indians, we will look at what original Dutch influences remain part of our culture today. And we will try to answer the question, what became of the Dutch Mennonites who settled in New Amsterdam in the 1600s?

Join us on Saturday, June 14, from 6 am to 10 pm. Travel in a comfortable coach bus with breakfast and supper stops en route. Experienced guide Daniel Ness, assisted by Hans Smucker, leads this successful tour, a repeat of the 2005 trip.

In the morning we’ll explore Anabaptist-Quaker connections, including site of the Flushing Remonstrance, an important predecessor to the Bill of Rights. We’ll visit preserved Dutch farmsteads in the historic area of Brooklyn where Debra Moody, known as a Mennonite, developed her community. In Manhattan, we’ll take a walking tour of historic