

the Mirror

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Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society • www.lmhs.org

Farm-Girl-Turned-Executive to Tell Why Memories Matter

Former Lancaster County farm girl and Goshen College president Shirley Showalter will address Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society's annual banquet at Yoder's Restaurant in New Holland, Saturday, April 16 at 6:15pm.

Her topic, "Why Memories Are Important," fits neatly with her current work: consulting, blogging, writing a memoir about her childhood in Lititz and Manheim and preparing to be a grandmother for the first time.

"I'm at the young-old stage of life," Showalter said on the phone from her home in Harrisonburg, Va. "I am blessed with health, vibrancy and time. I want to understand where I have been to prepare for the next stage: old age and death. I want to live each stage of life fully."

Showalter graduated from Eastern Mennonite University in 1970 and received a Ph.D. in American Civilization from the University of Texas at Austin in 1980.

In 1976, she joined the Goshen College (Ind.) faculty, becoming a professor of English in 1989, then serving as the college's 14th president from 1997-2004. From 2004-2010 she was Vice President of Programs at the Fetzer Institute in Kalamazoo, Mich.

Last year, she and her husband,

Stuart, launched Showalter Consulting Group and moved to Harrisonburg to be closer to family and friends.

"When I think about where I've been and what life has consisted of, I find it fascinating that it all began in a plain, Lancaster County, Mennonite, farming home," Showalter said.

She ticked off a handful of memories that throw her current life into stark contrast.



Showalter

bathroom and five kids. We took one bath weekly rather than a shower every day.

"Life revolved around church. My grandmother greeted her daughters with a holy kiss. Women and men sat separately."

"It's a disappearing world, at least in the Mennonite Church USA," she said. "By and large the Mennonite world of my childhood no longer exists."

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Strategic Planning Spurs New Mission Statement

On February 21, the Society board approved a modified mission statement, drawing from suggestions received during a strategic planning retreat on January 8.

"Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society preserves and interprets the culture and context of Mennonite-related faith communities connected to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania," the new statement reads.

Participants at the January 8 retreat agreed that the Society's work should represent the theological and ethnic diversity of Anabaptist groups in Lancaster County. They encouraged continued exploration of the European roots of Mennonite immigrants as well as new connections with Native People who represent Mennonites' first neighbors in the New World.

The updated statement describes the scope of the Society's current work more succinctly than the previous version, director Rolando Santiago said.

The previous statement, approved in 2004, read: "To educate and inspire Mennonite families and congregations and the broader community through promotion of the history, beliefs and lifestyle of the Mennonite expression of the Anabaptist tradition."

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Upcoming Lancaster Roots Events

Lancaster Roots is the combined programming of Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and the 1719 Hans Herr House. The complete calendar is online at www.LancasterRoots.org. Call (717) 393-9745 for a brochure.

April 1–16,

Monday–Saturday, 9:00 AM–4:00 PM

Exhibit: Decorated Hand Towels in the 1719 Herr House. **\$ HH**

Friday, April 8, 6:30 PM–8:30 PM

Rare and Used Book Auction, including the collection of former Eastern Mennonite University history professor Al Keim. **F LMHS**

Saturday, April 9

• 9:00 AM–4:00 PM

Girl Scout Badge Day: Brownies
\$ R HH

• 10:00 AM–2:00 PM

Folk Arts Class: Basket Weaving
Make oak-splint basket with Cindy Seaton. **\$ R LMHS**

Saturday, April 16, 6:15 PM

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society Annual Banquet at Yoder's Restaurant. Former Goshen College president Shirley Showalter tells

KEY TO CALENDAR SYMBOLS

F Free admission

\$ Fee charged

R Advance reservations required

LMHS Contact LMHS

HH Contact the 1719 Herr House: (717) 464-4438 or info@hansherr.org

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“Why Memories Are Important.”

Delicious dinner and dessert. Music by Stumptown Men's Quartet. **\$ R LMHS**

Monday, May 16, 7:00 PM

DNA: Opportunities and Dilemmas
Quarterly Educational Meeting with scientist Darvin Martin at Forest Hills Mennonite Church. **F LMHS**

Tuesday, May 17, 8:30 AM–5:00 PM

Field Trip: Celebrations & Flavors Learn about Lancaster City's communities and try its traditional and ethnic foods. **\$ R LMHS**

Friday, June 10, 6:30 PM–8:30 PM

Rare and Used Book Auction
F LMHS

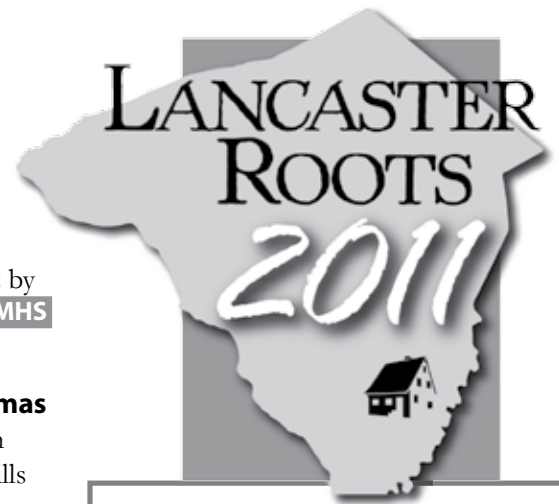
Saturday, June 18, 9:00 AM–3:00 PM

Folk Arts Class: Native American Crafts Weave a sea-grass mat, decorate a gourd, make a cornhusk doll, and try beadwork with Ruth Py and Lanie Buckwalter. **\$ R HH**

June 20–24,

Monday–Friday, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM

Walk into History: Grades 3-5
Campers dress in period clothing and experience the rigors and rewards of early American life. **\$ R HH**



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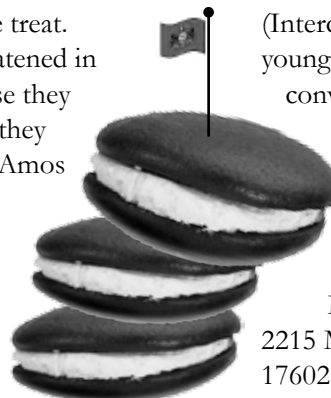
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Big Whoopie Research Contest

Pennsylvania's beloved dessert, the whoopie pie, bounced into national news this winter when the Maine state legislature introduced a bill to make it Maine's official state treat.

“They feel threatened in Pennsylvania because they think it's theirs, but they can't prove it,” said Amos Orcutt, founder of the Maine Whoopie Pie Association, who began lobbying for the law two years ago.



Can *you* prove it?

The Society will award two dozen home-made whoopie pies and a gift certificate for The Good Cooking Store (Intercourse, Pa.) to the researcher— young or old—who produces the most convincing evidence that the whoopie pie should be Pennsylvania's state treat.

Submissions must be submitted by May 9 to The Whoopie Monster, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster PA 17602, or e-mailed to Mirror@lmhs.org.

Community Events

Wenger Meetinghouse Preservation Association is restoring the 1871 Wenger Meetinghouse in Swatara Township for use by community organizations. Donations may be sent to P.O. Box 54, Jonestown, PA 17038.

Mennonite Heritage Center, 565 Yoder Road, Harleysville announces a Rug Hook-In and Clinic on Saturday, April 16 from 9:00–3:30 PM. Registration is required: \$40 (\$35 member) includes lunch. To register, contact info@mhep.org, 215-256-3020 or www.mhep.org.

Menno 2011. Three Dutch Mennonite organizations invite you to tour five historic Anabaptist sites in the Netherlands. A Reflection Path from Pingjum to Witmarsum commemorates five Mennonite anniversaries—from Menno Simons' accepting Anabaptist leadership 475 years ago to Anne Zernike's accepting the Mennonite pastorate as a woman 100 years ago. Open Saturdays, May 14 to September 10. Contact menno2011@mennosimonscentrum.nl.

Tour the Historic Chester County Amish Settlement of 1767-1834. Saturday, May 28, 6:00 AM. \$70. Call Jacob Fisher at (717) 768-0031.

John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest. The Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee invites student scholars at the high school, college/university and graduate school/seminary levels to submit research papers on topics related to Mennonite and Anabaptist history. Deadline: June 15. Contact (574) 523-3080, history@mennoniteusa.org or www.mennoniteusa.org/history.

William Penn, the Poets and More (England and Scotland). Join Mennonite historian and storyteller John Ruth for a TourMagination trip exploring the life of Pennsylvania's founder, William Penn. July 22–August 4, 2011. Contact 1-800-565-0541; office@tourmagination.com

To submit an item for The Mirror, write Mirror@lmhs.org a month before publication.

Why We Do What We Do: Michele Zook

In mid-January, 2011, Michele Zook placed an enthusiastic call to Steve Ness in the LMHS library. After months of searching, she had confirmed the name of her dad's biological mother and her only surviving grandparent.

Zook's father, a custodian, had never been particularly interested in finding his birth mother, she said. For him, his adoptive family was his family.

"But when I found her, to say that he was excited is putting it mildly," Zook laughed.

In February, Zook's family met her grandmother for the first time.

"It was amazing to witness a mother meeting her son after 60 years," she said. "People take that kind of connection for granted, but it's really amazing to sit in a room and see people that look like you."

Zook said she had several motivations for her search. Certainly, she was curious about her family, and she wanted to give her dad the gift of knowing where he came from.

"But also, the more I read articles and spoke with women who had babies out of wedlock during that time period, the more I wanted to find my grandmother and thank her for making the choices she did, and to tell her that we don't fault her in any way."

Zook's search led her to South Christian Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster (now Crossroads Mennonite Church) where her father grew up.

The congregation's archives, stored at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, contained surprising detail. They included the baptism of Zook's adoptive grandparents in March 1951 and her father's adoption later that year. A bulletin item about a Sewing Circle surprise party revealed her adoptive

grandmother's lost birth date. And another record showed she had been buried at Mellinger Mennonite Church.

Zook visited the caretaker at Mellinger Church cemetery, who was able to locate her adoptive grandmother's unmarked grave. The family is now talking about buying a headstone.

"The things I found didn't necessarily pertain to the reason I started my search," Zook said. "But I realized that I was searching not just for my biological family but also for my adoptive family."

"She was tenacious," Ness said. "She went through a lot of collections

document by document. She did all the right things from a research standpoint."

For Zook, the hard work paid off. She has now met her biological grandmother and four of seven surviving aunts and uncles.

"Their family

is huge, but they opened their arms and welcomed a few more," Zook said.

"Hopefully our story can inspire and motivate people who have been separated by adoption to search for their biological parents."

The Society's library is open for research Tuesday through Saturday, 8:30-4:30. Besides church records, it contains more than 3,000 published genealogies, 2,500 cemetery transcriptions, Lancaster County court and tax records, access to Ancestry.com and a card file with data on hundreds of thousands of families.

A growing number of library resources are also available online.

For more information about researching your family history, contact the library at (717) 393-9745.



Michele Zook with her daughter

Society Launches Facebook Page

Nearly 60 Facebook users have become fans of the Society since it launched its own Facebook page in February.

The page, located at www.facebook.com/lmhs.org, contains regular updates about the Society's work, event photos and a "wall" where participants can write comments or post pictures.

Facebook users can become fans by clicking the "Like" button to the right of the page title.

Current fans include Landis Homes president, Larry Zook and former Goshen College president, Shirley Showalter.

"It's a happening place . . . roots, great music, DNA testing, and a colorful museum exhibit," board member Mary Lou Weaver Houser posted in February, soon after the page appeared.

Facebook is the world's most popular social networking Web site, with over 550 million unique visitors monthly.



Do you use Facebook? Become a fan of Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society by clicking on the "Like" button at www.facebook.com/lmhs.org.

\$\$\$ Doing Good

Last year, LMHS stepped up to organize Lancaster Roots 300—more than two dozen events celebrating the 300th anniversary of the first permanent European settlement in Lancaster County. Thousands of people attended, but oddly, donations to the Society's annual fund declined.

This April, LMHS begins its 2011 Annual Fund Campaign. The fund supports everything the Society needs to thrive—a climate control system to preserve church records and rare books; computers to put genealogical resources online; knowledgeable employees to staff the bookstore, library, archives, museum—even the ink to print this newsletter.

The Society preserves Lancaster County history, Pennsylvania German culture, the genealogy of tens of thousands of families and the stories, ideas and materials of diverse Mennonite groups. Please give generously!

If you don't receive a written invitation, you're still welcome to contribute. Please contact the Society at (717) 393-9745 or e-mail manager@lmhs.org.

Showalter *Continued from page 1*

Since August 2008, Showalter has reflected on her experience and reviewed the memoirs of other authors by writing over 240 reflections on her blog—100memoirs.com.

"I'm interested in place, family, genealogy, history," she said. "My mother was a storyteller. I enjoy reading. And reflecting is something I want to do."

Tickets for the banquet are \$20. Dinner will include herbed roasted chicken, gourmet mashed potatoes and shoofly and blueberry crumb pie with ice cream. Stumptown Men's Quartet will sing. To reserve your seat, mail in the form at right or call (717) 393-9745.

REGISTRATION FOR ANNUAL BANQUET

Please send me _____ tickets at \$20 each Total \$ _____

My check is payable to Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society

Please charge to my: Visa MasterCard Discover

Card number _____

Expiration date _____ Security Code _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please return to: Annual Banquet Registration, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602.

Scientist to Discuss Dilemmas of DNA

Scientist Darvin Martin will discuss the opportunities and dilemmas of DNA research in a free presentation at Forest Hills Mennonite Church on Monday, May 16, 7:00 PM.

DNA, short for Deoxyribonucleic Acid, is the chemical found in the cells of every living organism on earth. It acts as a kind of chemical blueprint, governing how those cells reproduce.

“In other words,” said Martin, “your DNA contains the genetic instructions for making you.”

When animals, insects or people mate, DNA from both parents combines to make a new formula that contains part of the genetic instructions from each parent.

Being able to read a person’s unique DNA signature has become valuable for prosecuting criminals and diagnosing disease. Small portions of a person’s DNA that have been passed from generation to generation over hundreds of years can even establish the geographic origin of his or her ancient ancestors.

But as genetic research answers some questions, it creates others. Should a young couple not have kids after they discover they carry a serious genetic disease? What does society owe a man imprisoned for a crime he didn’t commit? What does it mean to be Mennonite if someone named Weaver has more in common with people in China than in Switzerland?

Director’s Reflections

by Rolando Santiago

The King will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

—Matthew 25:40

In the community at large and in the church we are fast becoming more diverse than ever before.

On Monday, March 14th, the *Intelligencer Journal-Lancaster New Era* reported a 68% increase in the Hispanic population of Lancaster County over the last decade. Hispanic residents now represent 8.6% of the county population. Within the Mennonite Church USA, sociologist Conrad Kanagy reported that from 2000-2005, one out of four new members were from “Racial/Ethnic” backgrounds.



An increase of ethnic and racial diversity sometimes can feel scary.

It also can be an opportunity for learning and for storytelling. Learning and storytelling can enrich our lives—both for those of us who “have” and those of us who “do not have.”

For those of us who have, we may learn something about justice from those who do not have. We may also find out that telling stories can be a form of advocating for those who are different or invisible or even neglected.

My spouse Raquel and I just came back from two weeks in Bolivia visiting with our daughter Karla who is in an 11-month Serving and Learning Together (SALT) assignment with Mennonite Central Committee.

As a music teacher, Karla is leading youth orchestras and choirs in the small town of Santiago de Chiquitos. She is helping to promote a tradition of baroque music introduced

by Jesuit missionaries in Chiquitania during the late 1600s and 1700s.

Bolivia is a multiethnic society that includes Amerindians, Mestizos, Europeans, Asians and Africans. It is rich in mineral deposits, yet the poverty rate stands at about 60%.

It rained a lot while Raquel and I were in Bolivia. I had a lot of time in my hands, so I read stories. The stories I have read, and the story that Karla is experiencing, will allow us to tell the story of the Bolivian people. I hope that by re-telling their story, Bolivians can be heard on the challenges they experience day-to-day. I hope others will learn about the beauty of their land and culture.

Learning and storytelling can be healing for all of us. What stories are you learning, and which stories will you tell?

Remembering Velma Landis

by Peggy Erb

When I think of Velma Landis, I smile. Wednesday mornings were always a bit cheerier when she came in to volunteer—which she did for 15 years. She was a beautiful lady who welcomed challenges, evident in the new projects she accepted. She was a very dependable, detail oriented worker.

As her family talked about her at the funeral, I realized that the Society saw

only one aspect of her life. We found out that she could drive like a New York cabbie when the occasion called for it. She liked to play card games and played to *win*, regardless of the age of her opponents.

Her time on earth was too short, but now she is alive eternally. We at the Society miss you Velma and appreciate all the significant contributions that you made over the past 15 years.



Velma M. Landis, 81, died February 4, 2011 at Heart of Lancaster Regional Medical Center. The funeral was held February 11 at Mellinger Mennonite Church.



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- **Tim McGraw**
- **Big Whoopie Contest**

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History Stinks

One day this winter, Society employees arrived at work to the unmistakable stench of skunk. The odor was especially strong in the front foyer and back stairs. Armed with a flashlight, librarian Steve Ness and curator Carolyn Wenger conducted a stealthy search of the basement, but found no striped cat. The cleaning crew lit a potpourri candle in the entryway that, according to one staff member, transformed the smell to “skunk with a raspberry vinaigrette.” Over several days, the odor dissipated. No archival materials were harmed.

Who Do We Think We Are?

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society helped country singer Tim McGraw trace his ancestry in the February 11 broadcast of NBC’s “Who Do You Think You Are?” The Society gave NBC permission to use an article by Andreas Mielke from the October 2008 issue of *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* magazine. Images, phrases and even Philip Otterness, a historian quoted in the article, are featured 31 minutes into the program. The entire episode can be



watched at www.nbc.com. Back issues of *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* are available from the Society bookstore: (717) 393-9745 or shop@lmhs.org.