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# **Annual Report - 2002**

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# Annual General Meeting

**May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at 5:00 p.m.  
Central Heights MB Church, Abbotsford, B.C.**

## AGM Agenda

- 1) Welcome**
- 2) Minutes of the last AGM – May 11, 2002**
- 3) Director's Report**
- 4) Financial Statements for 2002**
- 5) Budget for 2003**
- 6) Election of Directors**

**Nominees:**     **Walter Bergen**  
                      **Edward Hildebrand**  
                      **Henry Neufeld**  
                      **John B. Toews**

**Mennonite Historical Society of B C**  
**Minutes of the 2001 AGM**

May 11, 2002 at 7:00 pm  
Garden Park Tower

1. Moved that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting be accepted as reported. (Henry Neufeld, Helen Rose Pauls) – Motion approved.
2. Moved that the financial statements for 2001 and the budget for 2002, as printed in the 2001 Annual Report, be accepted. (Ed Hildebrand, Henry Martens) - Motion approved.
3. Moved that the following directors be appointed for terms ending at the Annual General Meeting in the year indicated: (Richard Thiessen, Walter Bergen)

Henry Martens	2004
Peter Neudorf	2005
John Konrad	2005
Henry Rempel	2005
Louise Price	2005

- Motion approved.

**Board of Directors**

- Walter Bergen - Financial Consultant, Abbotsford
- David Giesbrecht - Librarian, Regent College, Abbotsford
- Edward Hildebrand - Retired Executive, Vancouver
- John Konrad - Management Consultant, West Vancouver
- Henry Martens - Businessman, Abbotsford
- Peter Neudorf - Retired IBM Technician, North Vancouver
- Henry Neufeld - Social Worker, Delta
- Helen Rose Pauls - Teacher, Chilliwack
- Louise Price - Library Technician & Writer, Abbotsford
- Henry Rempel - Retired School Administrator, Chilliwack
- Richard Thiessen - Librarian, Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford
- Dr. John B. Toews - Professor of Church History, Vancouver

## Officers

- President - John Konrad
- Vice President - Walter Bergen
- Secretary - Ed Hildebrand
- Treasurer - Henry Martens

## Directors' Report

We are pleased to report that 2002 has been another year of growth. In terms of public participation, we have increased the number of visitors to the archives and expanded the circulation of our newsletter to our members. We have sponsored three well-attended public events, and one genealogy workshop. Volunteer participation has increased and again we have received enough financial support to maintain our programs.

We have extended our lease for a second five-year period and added a research room giving us comfortable facilities in a convenient location to continue our work. This was a step of faith on our part because we will need your continued support to meet this commitment.

## Major Events

As has become a pattern, the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. held three major events this past year:

Feb. 16: **“Mennonites in Mexico”**. David Friesen, who represents MCC among the Mexican Mennonites, gave a lecture and slide show about our people there. Participants enjoyed an old fashioned faspas prepared by the ladies of Eben-Ezer church.

May 11: **“Women Without Men”**. Marlene Epp presented a lecture about the suffering and fortitude of our mothers during and in the aftermath of World War Two. Pictorial displays complimented the lecture.

Oct. 19: **Annual Banquet—“Mennonite Response to WW II”**. After a delicious dinner held in Eben-Ezer Church, Lawrence Klippenstein spoke about the whole armor of God. Wall displays honored many from our community who made difficult choices during the Second World War.

Events planned for 2003 include:

-**“Russian Mennonite Architecture”**, a lecture on Feb. 22 by Rudy Friesen

- **“Singing Along Life’s Road”** “Mennonite Music for Special Occasions”: a special Sunday afternoon on May 18, of music and stories from the forties, fifties and sixties celebrating the milestones of our faith and worship.

-**“Eighty Year Jubilee of Migration from Russia to Canada”**: Annual banquet Oct. 18 with featured speaker John B. Toews at Bakerview MB Church.

Events Committee: David Giesbrecht, Richard Thiessen, Hugo Friesen, John B. Toews, & Helen Rose Pauls.

## Special Projects

## **EWZ (Einwanderungszentrale)**

In 1942-44 ethnic Germans (including Mennonites) were invited to apply for German citizenship as they reached German soil. They were required to complete lengthy questionnaires to prove their racial purity and thus qualify for the offered citizenship. Since this was done under the auspices of the SS (not because there were Mennonites involved), the records were seized by the U.S. Army after the war and preserved in the National Archives in Washington D.C.

Richard Thiessen learned that these were now available to the public at \$60.00 per microfilm roll. Your Society together with other groups and individuals across North America have banded together in a cooperative venture to acquire these items, with Richard coordinating the purchases to avoid duplication. We have purchased 17 with designated donations and expect to obtain more. The parties are now indexing this information and are sharing the results via the internet as they progress. We will advise when this work is complete and copies of the microfilms and index will be available at the archives.

The questionnaires were quite detailed going back several generations and thus provide a treasure trove of genealogical information for families involved. This will be useful information for not only those that came to Canada, but also for relatives of those refugees sent back to Siberia after the German collapse. Please visit the Archives to find your family.

## **Zaporozhye Project**

Our Society has been a major contributor to the microfilming of some 120,000 pages of documents in the Zaporozhye Regional Archive and the Zaporozhye Communist Party Archive. This work was done under the supervision of Dr. Harvey Dyck and has required sensitive negotiations and much persistence over a four-year period. These records have now been received. An English-language inventory and users' guide is now available.

## **Odessa Project**

Together with four other Mennonite archives we are co-funders of a research project at the Odessa Archives being led by Dr. Paul Toews of Fresno. To date we have received some 30,000 pages on microfilm covering the years of 1848-1856. We are presently committed to co-fund the acquisition of a further 21,000 pages covering the years 1856-1863.

Dr. Tim Janzen of Portland has donated 20,000 pages from the same archives for the earlier part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Most of the above material is in the Russian language and some of this material is being translated on a coordinated basis by the participating archives. We are co-funding with CBC a Russian student from a Christian college to help us translate selected portions of these Russian records.

**The Archives**

The past year can be characterized as very active at our centre continuing a trend that began with our move to the present location. We continue to be thankful for our many excellent volunteers who, along with Mary Ann Quiring, our hard working secretary, keep things working efficiently from day to day. We also appreciate the fine work of the Board with the vision and direction they provide for the overall work of preserving our history and of helping our constituency remember and understand our past. Below are recorded some highlights:

#### **1. Administrative Assistant**

After 4 years of faithful service, Loretta Krueger resigned to take a position at Columbia Bible College. She was replaced by Mary Ann Quiring, a longtime volunteer, in May 2002.

#### **2. Visitors**

The number of visitors per month on average was about 150 plus numerous phone enquiries.

#### **3. Acquisitions**

##### **3.1 Microfilms**

- a) Odessa Archives – Fond 6 Inventory 1,3,4 – Several additions through the efforts of Paul Toews & Tim Janzen
- b) EWZ files – We have 17 rolls at present with more to come.
- c) Zaporozhye Region State Archives- Through Harvey Dyck we received 16 more rolls for a total of 125.

- 3.2 Genealogies and Family Histories – In the past year we have received another 12 to bring our total to almost 200. A complete inventory in at the archives.

#### **4. Books and CD Sales**

- 4.1 Our book and CD sales have increased to over \$18,000 for the past year

#### **5. Projects**

Volunteers and staff continue to work on numerous projects.

- 5.1 EWZ Microfilms – Richard Thiessen, Erica Suderman and Jean Neufeld
- 5.2 Photograph Collection – Jean Neufeld and Mary Ann Quiring.
- 5.3 Rundschau obituaries from 1940 - 2000 - Erica Suderman
- 5.4 Canadian Mennonite obituaries - Dolores Harder
- 5.5 Marriages listed in the MB Herald - Jake Geddert
- 5.6 Births and Obituaries of the MB Herald by CBC student volunteers
- 5.7 Der Bote Obituaries - translation - Lydia Isaak & Mary Willms  
- indexing - Duane Goertson & Marie Doerksen.
- 5.8 Chortitza Census 1920 - translation - Jacob Quiring  
- recording - Helen Nickel

#### **6. Genealogy Workshop**

This informative workshop took place on Nov. 9 and was attended by 28 persons. Dr. Tim Janzen of Portland, Oregon discussed Russian Mennonite genealogical sources and Dr. Glenn Penner, Ontario, presented the early Prussian history of Mennonite names and churches in their Frisian and Flemish contexts.

The newsletter continues to grow and develop to reflect the interests and histories of the members of the Society. Regular features have been: “The Way We Were” (A history of various Mennonite communities in BC), Board profiles, Book reviews, reports of archival acquisitions, Letters from the past, and Editorials. We have printed excerpts from several life stories, and have featured the work of several BC poets and short story writers on our back cover.

It is always a challenge to find a good balance between scholarly articles, life stories, and other news. We depend on our readers’ response to see how effective we are in finding this balance. Also, we would like to encourage more of our readers to submit letters, articles, stories, so we can reflect the interests and passions of our community.

The newsletter has become standardized over the past year into a quarterly 12-page format. We are still looking for someone with newsletter layout skills to help with ideas and suggestions on how to improve the look of our paper.

Each newsletter involves many days and hours of hard work. Thank you to all those who contributed articles, suggestions, and letters, and to those who folded, sorted and stuffed envelopes. Thanks to Hugo Friesen for tireless editing, and to Mary Ann Quiring for scanning photos and making sure the newsletter gets to the printers and out to the public. We hope our newsletter can continue to improve, and to be a valuable resource which reflects our faith and history.

Editorial committee – Louise Price, Henry Neufeld & Helen Rose Pauls

## Memorial Wall

We now have 37 wall plaques on display at our Archives office. This is a lasting and visible tribute to persons being honoured by their families. Come in to see the “wall”, and if you have not yet participated in this project, please consider making this a family project. A tax-deductible donation of \$500 will buy one plaque, with a major proportion of the funds going into our Endowment Fund and thus make a lasting contribution to the Society. A number of families have shared in these memorial donations, with separate receipts going to participating members.

## Membership Support

Once again we must thank our growing membership for contributing to the work of our Society. We believe that our work honours God as well as our forebears who served our community faithfully. We also acknowledge those members who made extraordinary donations last year and designated their gifts to special projects.

One donation merits special mention. Earlier this year we received a legacy from the estate of the late Agnes Neustaedter of Abbotsford. Her generosity provided a handsome addition to our Endowment Fund that will generate a continuing source of income for your Society.

We encourage those who are able, to remember the Society in their wills so that this work can continue after we have passed on. Alternatively, members may wish to make significant donations to special projects, such as EWZ, the Memorial Wall, or the Endowment Fund and thus help ensure the future operation of your Society.

As Chair of the board, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of individual board members to the work of the Society. This is a volunteer board whose members devote considerable time and effort on your behalf.

Special recognition must also be give to our Archivist; Hugo Friesen. He continues to work for the Society as a volunteer with tireless efficiency, as he has for many years.

- John Konrad

Financial Statements for 2002 (with comparative statements for 2001) and a Budget for 2003 are included in this Annual Report for your consideration.

COMMENTS:

Current Year

1. The current year's Income shows a significant reduction in book sales from the prior year. This resulted from the lack of a musical event which normally yields significant tape and video sales.
2. The Contract Wage cost increased because we now employ staff three days per week as compared to two days per week last year.
3. Long term Endowment is shown at cost (\$170,366). Market value as at December 31, 2002 was \$169,698. Increase in balance over the prior year is due to the Board's Decision to place \$30,000 in the fund noted above.
4. Net Income of \$27,941 included proceeds of \$24,794 from the Legacy Fund.

Budget

1. We expect a strengthening of ticket sales this year due to significant efforts of the Events Committee.
2. The current projects item in the 2003 Budget includes another phase of the Odessa document retrieval project.
3. We have added approximately 190 square feet of office space to allow our research department an efficient working environment.
4. The Board has introduced two scholarships of \$500 each to encourage high school and university students to become involved in Mennonite history and historical issues.

Note: We must again thank Gilbert Epp for the generous auditing service he has provided for another year.

To the Directors,  
The Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia,  
Abbotsford, B. C.

I have reviewed the balance sheet of the Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia as at December 31, 2002 and the Statement of Receipts and Expenditures and accumulated excess of receipts over expenditures for the year then ended. In so doing, I accepted the statements received from the Society's bank and the holder of its investments and did not conduct independent enquiries. The Society's accounting being conducted on a cash basis, I did not test for any liabilities outstanding as at year-end.

In common with many charitable organizations, the Society derives part of its revenue from the general public in the form of donations and membership fees which are not susceptible to complete verification. Accordingly, my verification of revenue from these sources was limited to a comparison on a test basis of recorded receipts and bank deposits by the Society and I was unable to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to donation revenues and membership fees and their impact on total revenues reported or the accumulated excess of receipts over expenditures.

In my opinion, except for the effect of adjustments, if any, as described above, these financial statements present fairly in all material respects the financial position of the Society as at December 31, 2002. The results of its operations for the year then ended, are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. In my opinion, these principles have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year and the bookkeeping and accounting records of the Society are in acceptable condition.

Abbotsford, BC  
April , 2003.

Sincerely,

Original signed by G.E. Epp

G. E. Epp  
Auditor