

Mennonite Historical Society  
of British Columbia



# 2019 Annual Report

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**Mennonite Historical Society of BC**  
**Agenda of the 2019 Annual General Meeting**  
**Held virtually with ZOOM**  
**October 28, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. PST**

1. Welcome: Richard Thiessen, President
2. Minutes of 2018 AGM
3. Financial Reports: Rod Ewert, Treasurer
  - (a) Financial Statements - 2019
  - (b) Budget - 2020
4. Election of Directors

Current terms:

Ending in 2020: Cheryl Isaac, Laura Unger, Elmer Wiens

Ending in 2021: Linda Klassen and Robert Martens

Ending in 2022: Ingrid Epp, Rod Ewert, Maryann Jantzen & Richard

The Board is nominating Cheryl Isaac and Elmer Wiens for three year terms, ending in 2023 and nominating Laura Unger for a one year term, ending in 2021.

We will be left with three vacancies on our Board. We have actively sought additional members throughout the past few months, and will continue to do so. If there are individuals who come forward, they will be appointed by the Board in the interim, and formally approved at the next AGM.

5. Questions / Further Business
6. Adjournment

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting  
Mennonite Historical Society of BC  
Friday, April 5, 2019  
Ricky's Country Restaurant  
32080 Marshall Road, Abbotsford, BC**

**Present:** Members of MHSBC

1) Call to Order: Richard Thiessen opened the meeting at 1:30 pm.

Approval of Agenda: Moved: Laura Unger, Second: Dora Becker that we accept the agenda for the 2017 AGM as presented. **CARRIED.**

2) Minutes: Moved: Hilda Rempel, Second: Maryann Jantzen that we accept the minutes of April 7, 2017 as presented. **CARRIED.**

3) Financial Report: Rod Ewert

Rod reported on the financial statements for 2018 and highlighted some changes from previous years which are described in his report.

Moved: Henry Wiens, Second: Robert Martens that we accept the 2018 financial statements as presented. **CARRIED.**

A) Budget for 2019: Rod Ewert

Rod presented the budget for 2019 and highlighted a few key points.

Moved: Richard Thiessen, Second: Henry Wiens that we accept the budget for 2019. **CARRIED.**

B) Investments: Rod Ewert

Rod reported that MHSBC has hired Aiden Reed of Edward Jones Investments as our new financial planner. The markets struggled during the second half of 2018, resulting in losses, but the plan is to diversify our investments in order to create more stability.

4) Election of Directors

The three years terms for Richard Thiessen, Maryann Jantzen & Rod Ewert came to an end in 2019 but they have let their names stand for another three-year term, ending in 2022. Elma Paul's three-year term also ended in 2019 and she is stepping down from the board at this time. We are grateful for her contribution over these past three years.

Ingrid Epp has been nominated for a three-year term, also ending in 2022.

There are two vacancies on the board and Richard asked for nominations from the floor. There were no nominations made so it was moved by Cheryl Isaak and seconded by Robert Martens that we cease nominations. **CARRIED.**

Election of four officers: **CARRIED.**

5. Reports:

Richard Thiessen, Jennifer Martens, Linda Klassen, Robert Martens & Maryann Jantzen gave reports for their respective committees. Moved: Elma Pauls, Second: Dora Becker that we accept the reports. **CARRIED.**

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Submitted by Linda Klassen

## **Board of Directors**

Rod Ewert	- Retired Chartered Accountant – Envision Credit Union - Abbotsford
Don Fehr	- Retired Telus Technician – Port Coquitlam
Cheryl Isaac	- Retired Director, Continuing Education, UFV – Yarrow
Maryann Jantzen	- Assistant Professor; Writing Centre Co-Director Trinity Western University – Abbotsford
Linda Klassen	- Former Business Owner - Abbotsford
Robert Martens	- Poet, Writer & Editor – Abbotsford
Elma Pauls	- Retired Health Care Administrator - Chilliwack
Richard Thiessen	- Executive Director Mennonite Museum– Abbotsford
Laura Unger	- Retired Library Technician – Abbotsford
Elmer G. Wiens	- Economist/Webmaster – Vancouver

## **Officers**

President	-	Richard Thiessen
Vice President	-	Elma Pauls
Secretary	-	Linda Klassen
Treasurer	-	Rod Ewert

## President's Report

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present my 2019 report for our Society.

We have now completed our fourth year in our location at the Mennonite Heritage Museum. The Society occupies the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Museum, approximately 4,500 square feet, where our offices and library are located. The Society also occupies approximately 50% of the basement – a total of approximately 2,125 square feet. The basement includes a project room, the vault, and a storage room for non-archival items.

There is a healthy synergy between the Historical Society and the Museum that has allowed both organizations to be more efficient in terms costs and human resources. We continue to experience an increase in those who are interested in volunteering for us.

### Staffing and Personnel

Together, the Society and the Museum employ two full-time persons: Jennifer Martens serves as Office and Volunteer Manager and Mary Ann Quiring serves as Office Administration Assistant. Each are employed half-time by the Society and half-time by the Museum.

The Society has approximately 60 volunteers that provide staffing for the Society and work on a variety of indexing, filing, translation, and scanning projects. Our volunteer structure includes several volunteer coordinators who work alongside our Office and Volunteer Manager. These coordinators maintain weekly contact with our volunteers and provide direct supervision and resourcing. This allows our Office and Volunteer Manager to focus more attention on volunteer policies and procedures and in-take procedures for new volunteers.

A significant loss for us in 2019 was the passing of Don Fehr, who lost his battle with cancer. Don looked after many of our IT needs, and also coordinated several of our digitization projects. We have gradually worked to replace him with others volunteers, including Ernie Quiring, who has helped out on a number of occasions. However, Don's absence has also forced us as a Society to rely more on professional services provided by NextHop.

### Communications

*Roots and Branches*, our periodical newsletter, is our primary means of communication with our supporting members. This year we published three 32-page issues and a smaller final issue for the year. We send out approximately 400 copies of the newsletter to members, churches, and sister organizations.

Further, we rely on our website [<http://www.mhsbc.com>] and our Facebook page to broadcast important developments in our Society and also as a means of sharing information. Near the end of the year, we worked on a redesign of our website with the help of several website design students from MEI in Abbotsford.

### Public Events

MHSBC tries to host 4-5 public events each year. Below is a summary of our events for 2019:

Date	Speaker/Event
17 March 2019	<i>"From Planting Crops to Church Planting: Mennonite Faith, Identity, &amp; Economic Prosperity in Post-War British Columbia."</i> Brian Froese
5 April 2019	<i>Annual General Meeting</i>

14 April 2019	<p><i>"Searching for Identity: Mennonites in Revolutionary Russia."</i> Aileen Friesen</p>
2 June 2019	<p><i>"Living with Loss and Finding Belonging: The Stories of Postwar Mennonite Refugees."</i> Marlene Epp and Paul Born</p>
5 October 2019	<p><i>MennoComedyNite</i> Matt Falk</p>
8-9 November 2019	<p>Genealogy Conference:</p> <p>Glenn Penner:</p> <p><i>"Traditional Mennonite Surnames: Their Meanings and Origins."</i> <i>"Mennonite Naming Traditions."</i></p> <p>Tim Janzen:</p> <p><i>"An Introduction to Genealogical DNA Research."</i> <i>"The Mennonite Autosomal DNA Project."</i> <i>"Mennonite Genealogical Resources Update."</i></p>

## Projects

### 1. Digitizing the Mennonitsche Rundschau and Der Bote

Volunteers from the society have been digitizing issues of *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* and *Der Bote* for several years. At this point in time the scans are only available on the society's internal server. In 2020 we will explore uploading these scans to the Internet Archive (archive.org), where a number of other Mennonite periodicals and publications are available in various digital formats.

The following issues of *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* have been scanned: 1880 (partial), 1881-1886, 1887 (partial), 1888-1891, 1892 (partial), 1893-1896, 1903-1896, 1898-1913, 1914-1915 (partial), 1923 (partial), 1924-1925, 1926-1932 (partial), 1938 (partial), 1939-1943, 1944 (partial), 1945-1947, 1949-1950, 1951 (partial), 1952-1955, 1956 (partial), 1957, 1958-1959 (partial), 1960-1965, 1966 (partial), 1967-1971, 1972-1974 (partial), 1975-1977, 1978-1979 (partial), 1980, 1981-1982 (partial), 1983-1991, 1992 (partial), 1993-2002, 2003 (partial), 2004, 2005-2006 (partial), 2007.

For 2020 we will prioritize the scanning of issues from the 1920s in order to assist those indexing those volumes.

The following issues of *Der Bote* have been scanned: 1924-1934, 1935 (partial), 1936, 1961 (partial), 1962, 1963-1964 (partial), 1966 (partial), 1969-1970, 1971 (partial), 1972-1978, 1979 (partial), 1980-1990, 1991-1992 (partial), 1993-2003, 2004 (partial), 2005-2008. These numbers remain unchanged from 2017.

### 2. Archival Holdings

Linda Klassen heads up our volunteer group that works with processing our archival holdings.

### **3. AtoM / MAID**

In 2017 we moved our archival description database from InMagic to AtoM. PeaceWorks handled the migration of the data and continue to be pleased with the decision. Our archival description database is integrated with the MAID database and searchable over the Internet. Many of our volunteers were already familiar with AtoM because of their work with the MAID project, and so the transition was fairly smooth.

Several of our volunteers are engaged with the MAID project.

### **4. EWZ Digitization Project**

The primary focus of our digitization work in 2019 continued to be the digitization of the Einwandererzentralstelle (EWZ-50) microfilm collection, which we began in September 2009. MHSBC purchased a second microfilm digitizer with better features to allow for more efficient scans of the microfilms. This sped up the project considerably. We were able to scan many of the microfilms in 45 minutes, with no or minimal follow-up. This was a vast improvement from the past, where approximately 10% of the frames were not scanned and had to be scanned manually. This also required renaming all approximately 3,000 files for each microfilm. As you can imagine, doing this for each microfilm would require several hours of volunteer labour.

The project was completed in February of this year. Of the 843 microfilms, we were able to digitize 831 (the remaining 12 are no longer able to be purchased from the US National Archives). All of the scans of these films are in PDF format and have been distributed to the partners on external hard drives.

The following partners supported the project financially and have received copies of the digital files:

- American Historical Society of Germans from Russia
- California Mennonite Historical Society
- Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies: Hillsboro, KS
- Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies: Winnipeg, MB
- Conrad Grebel University College
- Germans from Russia Historical Society
- Mennonite Heritage Archives
- Mennonite Historical Society of BC
- David Obee
- Hermann Schirmacher

We should note that the Black Sea German Research Group has incorporated all of the names indexed from the EWZ-50 series of microfilms into their online database, available at <http://www.blackseagr.org/>.

### **5. Indexing Projects**

We are constantly creating and upgrading indexes to various periodicals, church registers, and other primary and secondary sources, and entering data into searchable databases.

### **6. Genealogy**

Most of the visitors to our Archives have an interest in genealogy. Our volunteers assist visitors in compiling their family histories and they also respond to emails and letters.



Volunteers have also been quite busy scanning unpublished family histories and newspaper obituaries. One of our volunteers is copying and pasting obituaries from the digital scans of the MB Herald into the Biographical Wiki database ([https://mla.bethelks.edu/mediawiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](https://mla.bethelks.edu/mediawiki/index.php/Main_Page)) maintained by John Thiesen at the Mennonite Library & Archives at Bethel College. This database includes the full text of obituaries from a number of Mennonite periodicals, including Mennonite Weekly Review, The Mennonite, and a number of geographical newspapers. Our volunteer, Cheryl Isaac, has entered 1,297 obituaries from the MB Herald, covering the years 1962 to 1976.

Several of our volunteers also do a significant amount of work with the GRANDMA database. Members of the public submit corrections and additions to their family information that is in GRANDMA, and our volunteers are able to log into the database in California and make the necessary changes. Several volunteers are also working at creating a Legacy database of individuals in the EWZ records. Once completed, this database will be merged with GRANDMA.

## 7. Translation Projects

Volunteers are involved with several other projects, including the translation letters and diaries from German to English. Many of these projects begin as requests from individuals who make a donation to have something translated. Once the project is completed, a copy of the translation is made available to MHSBC.

## Conclusion

Our Society is so thankful to the many volunteers who have devoted hours of service to MHSBC. While we can be thankful for the financial wealth that our Society enjoys, it is the wealth of our volunteers that makes us truly rich. The Society is also thankful to the many members and donors who sacrificially give so that our Society can continue the work of preserving the Mennonite story in British Columbia for future generations.

Submitted by Richard D. Thiessen, President  
20 October 2020

## Office & Volunteer Manager

Hello, my name is Jennifer Martens and as Office and Volunteer Manager, I am pleased to present the report for the office.

According to this website <https://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2020/>, the average value of a volunteer hour is \$36.59 Canadian Dollars (converted from their USD amount on the link). When you total up our volunteer hours served this year that amounts to \$323,601.96. Can we actually put a dollar value on an invaluable service? I hesitate to do so, seeing the magnitude of the impact the volunteer service hours bring to our society and the community we serve.

*“Yesterday, I didn’t know anything about my dad’s side of the family, and today, because of all the data collecting and preservation you have all done, I know about this ancestry going back several generations! I can’t wait to share this information with my family! Thank you!”* –Ross H., visitor to the MHSBC.

I would like to be able to share more of the high impact stories with our members and the public, but as in many cases, these stories are very personal and often have to do with confidential and very “touchy” situations. You can appreciate our care to be sensitive to their privacy and how this creates a barrier in being able to celebrate publicly so many of our successes. As soon as a family grants permission to share one of the latest we will certainly pass along their amazing story to everyone, because it is such an encouragement to those involved and a quantitative measure of the value of all the work of our teams.

If you have a genealogy success story to share, please send it to us!

Having begun my placement as Office and Volunteer Manager on July 26<sup>th</sup> of 2016, I have now completed my third year at the Historical Society. I have really appreciated working with the wonderful staff and volunteers to serve our board, members and community. I've continued to be very impressed with the caliber of expertise and the passion & intensity with which everyone applies to their work, all in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. It is this kind of atmosphere which breeds the kind of response from the quote I noted above: the excitement, astonishment and delight of our patrons.

The really challenging and exciting thing about being the Office and Volunteer Manager is the wide variety and scope of responsibilities. Our focus in 2019 was to continue to highlight "gift memberships" which we started in 2017, and that has continued to be very popular especially before Christmas. You might consider gifting someone with an MHSBC Membership for their birthday, too! We are now able to more accurately assign members to current vs. former members on our email distribution lists for those members with emails. Our goal is to surpass 500 members that receive Roots & Branches by mail. One reason for this number is so that we no longer have to sort the mail in-house (very labour intensive); once we surpass 500, the post office will do all the sorting for us. We are still requesting members to send us a one or two sentence endorsement of our newsletter to help us expand our social media campaign for more memberships. Since everyone has something so positive to say about our wonderful newsletter, we would like to spread the word and have ever more people enjoying it! The most powerful form of advertising is person to person, so I really encourage everyone to choose one or two people in their circle this year that don't know about our publication, and entreat them personally to become members.

Another role has been to expand our publicity and marketing. We began tracking in 2017 when we reached over 400 followers on our Facebook page, almost making a goal of 500 by Christmas. In 2018 we reached that goal and now have 595 followers, in 2019 we reached 650 followers. The MHSBC hosted a number of events in 2019 (see the President's Report) and hosted booths at 3 events: FVRL Literacy Fair, Heritage Fair at UFV and the MCC Festival. At the MCC Festival, our focus was promoting our Roots and Branches publication and highlighting our Editorial Team. Advertising for our events was done through the Roots & Branches publication, event programme inserts, direct emails, social media, our MHSBC website, church bulletins and distributions, posters, word of mouth, The Canadian Mennonite, MB Herald and free calendars online. Doug Johnson, who came on board in 2018, delivers 70-80 posters to churches for us on a monthly basis in Abbotsford and Chilliwack. This year, Roy Francis came on board and delivers our posters to various venues in the Fraser Valley including coffee shops and community boards. Hilda de Haan began distributing posters for us at Northview as well. In 2019, we continued to create and print our posters in-house. We are looking for volunteers who will deliver posters for us between Surrey and Vancouver.

Another one of my roles is to recruit new volunteers and update and maintain each person's profile. We are continually updating information in our files. Elma Pauls has been a significant help with these projects along with our team of dedicated office support volunteers. We are continually looking for volunteers to bring on board. We have a number of roles available. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer, please ask them to contact me. We work hard and we enjoy our time together! Generally people come in to volunteer for 2 to 4 hours or more at a time. Some volunteers come twice a week, most just one day per week. We would like to have all our computers in use each day, and we have many openings available. We need more help with IT, publicity and marketing, digitizing, scanning and working with our used books for sale. More volunteers are needed in the Project Room to work with documents and photos, digitizing older technology, and on the second floor to help visitors with patron assistance, reference and family tree searches. [Since Covid-19 has affected us in 2020, many of the volunteer roles have pivoted to "virtual" volunteering with projects that can be done at home.]

In 2019, we have had the following MHSBC Volunteers come on board: IVEPer (International Volunteer Exchange Program through MCC) Sohetra Soeun from Cambodia for a 10 month term, Eva Doerksen

(Translations Team), Ingrid Epp (Board of Directors, Evelyn Peters (Church Records on Vancouver Island), Lyndell Richert (Photos Team), Shawn Siemens (Digitizing), Terry Veer (Used Books, Genealogy), Roy Francis (Printed Poster Distribution), Brian Knoll (Slides), Peter Giesbrecht (Translations Team), Victoria An (Translations Team).

We also lost one of our valued, long time volunteers: Don Fehr passed away on July 25, 2019.

Volunteers that have moved on to other endeavors: Heather Tekavec, Elizabeth Laternus, Agnes Loewen.

Our Long Term Service Recognitions (check out these remarkable terms of service from our volunteers!):

5 Years: Irene Adkin

10 Years: Hildegard Baerg

10 Years: Wilf Penner

15 Years: Helen Nickel

In 2019, we continued to have a dedicated and faithful team of volunteers. Recorded volunteer hours for 2019 were 8,844. (2018: 8,373; 2017: 8,125). Ella Born diligently continues to record our logged hours each week.

Our genealogy research services continue to be very active. In 2019, 188 emails were responded to. (In 2018, 116 responses to requests went out from the genealogy email. I don't have 2016/7 numbers for comparison because our email server went down and our statistics data was lost). Sandi Massie handles these requests on and off site, working throughout the week on our backlog of requests, getting through 3 to 5 a day. Many of our requests are for ancestry charts, requests to make corrections and add updates in the Grandma database, EWZ records, obituaries and more. Paypal continues to be an efficient way to invoice for look-ups online and payments are usually made fairly quickly after billing. In 2019, 89 PayPal invoices went out. Recorded on-site genealogy requests totaled 438.

Recorded on-site visitors for 2019 were 1,737. Recorded on-site visitors for 2018 was 740 (January to May 2018 was not recorded), (2017: 852) with 504 (2017: 372) visiting for a face to face genealogy look-up. Visitors include site tours, drop-ins, event ticket purchases, donations (monetary, photos, documents, books) and memberships, meetings and information requests. Robert Martens and Janet Brock accessioned 468 items for the archives in 2019 (2018: 702; 2017: 304). Visitors also come for personal research and to buy books, receive translation help, read books and magazines in the reference libraries, say hi, drop off translation work, and/or use our public GRANDMA station for research. Another request we receive every so often is for "Christmas Trees"; some parents wish to give their children a family tree for Christmas and so will come in for a look-up and a print out.

My OVM correspondence via email for the MHSBC has totaled 1,543, 2018: 1,135 (2017: 900). This included communications with churches, community, volunteers, potential volunteers, staff, members and visitors. Most of communication outside the office is done via email. A number of reference questions come in by phone, for 2019 there were 52 that came to my extension. Our members with email address receive emails with calendar, membership and information regarding upcoming event details and registration. Our volunteers with email addresses receive emails with event volunteer help requests, calendar information, event details, and more. One important focus continues to be effective communication with our current members and our past members. This is ongoing and something I've been working on since I came on board to help this communication be valuable, efficient and up to date. I really enjoy it when members come to the MHSBC offices and say 'Hi' and when our out of town members send me an email and keep me posted about where they're at. I've continued to find that our members are of the most positive, kindest and sweetest people! So often I'm at an event and someone who hasn't met me says, "Are you the Jennifer that sends me emails?" I really enjoy the aspect of connecting with my MHSBC "pen pals" and sometimes find out we are related. It is great to have your support at the MHSBC and for myself personally. All the words of encouragement and affirmation that come my way have been wonderful and appreciated.

One focus in 2018 was to provide brochures for visitors on the following topics which we continued into 2019: Genealogy, EWZ, GRANDMA, MAID, and more. These brochures provide information such as emails, descriptions, definitions, FAQ and useful access details for users. We have also updated our MHSBC Research Centre brochure which visitors keep or pass along to family and friends. The brochures provide a way for our volunteers to give patrons standardized, readily available information to questions about our policies, services and databases. In the age of digitization, it is good to be able to send visitors home with something in hand to use or pass along to a friend or relative.

For the MHSBC, some of our goals for 2020 include enhancing and expanding our training both on and off site for our volunteers, greater outreach for recruiting members, visitors and ongoing volunteers; fine-tuning our policies and procedures as best we can in each area; seeking and implementing more effective fundraising, utilizing the new digitizer to complete the EWZ digitizing project (completed in March 2020), defining and extending greater support for our volunteer coordinators and updating our volunteer job roles as we continue to expand into the future and more technologies become available to us.

As the Office and Volunteer Manager, I have this unique vantage point to observe all the ways that, through our programs, the volunteers faithfully keep the society running smoothly. The significant way that their work affects those people and their families connecting with us for information continues to be a very exciting aspect of working for the MHSBC. One special privilege I have is to work with Mary Ann who powerfully assists, grapples, and tirelessly works alongside me to ensure the MHSBC continues to thrive. To say that we all appreciate her is a great understatement! Another special privilege is to work closely with our very active Board of Directors and each volunteer that serves with us. In addition, because of our proximity with the Mennonite Heritage Museum, I consider it an advantage to work closely with museum staff members and volunteers who lend their expertise and knowledge when needed and collaborate on mutual projects.

I am really looking forward to continuing to serve in the capacity of Office and Volunteer Manager for the Mennonite Historical Society of BC in the next year. Thank you!

Jennifer Martens, April 2020

## **Archives Report 2019**

If I were to summarize our year in the project room in one word, it would be change. We welcomed some new volunteers this year: Eleanore Klassen is working with Julia & Linda sorting and organizing textual records, Lyndell Richert is working with Helen scanning photos and Brian Knoll has joined us to work with our large and untouched slide collection, which includes developing systems from the ground up. He is also working on purchasing a new scanner that will allow us to scan slides. Al Wall began working with MAID this year, first with maps and now with photos. We're so thankful for the enthusiasm each of these people brings to our department!

A highlight this year was welcoming Sylvia Stopforth and Tracey Krause, former and current archivists at Trinity Western University, to provide some additional training for our department. It turned out to be a very valuable and productive time. Some things that we gleaned from this time are:

- 1) We need to take a closer look at our mandate to clearly determine what we do or don't do. We did this and it was helpful and confirmed that we are working within our mandate
- 2) We need to re-evaluate our intake procedures and update our forms and policies with regard to what we will accept. We end up with a lot of things we can't use and so we need to find a way to be more selective in what we accept while remaining sensitive to our donors. More work is required in this area.

- 3) Privacy issues were raised, particularly regarding schools. Janet Brock, who has some experience in this area, has been very valuable in helping us navigate through this. It has been a learning experience! It became clear this year that our photo storage systems needed updating so Joan, Helen & Linda spent time analysing the situation and making some significant changes. This has been a very positive move. Our collection of John B. Toews material also grew this year and Laura is working diligently at organizing this wealth of material.

Our plans for the coming year include adding another computer station with a high-quality scanner. We want to work on jobs that have been waiting in the storage room while we worked on larger ones. We will be training additional people on MAID (Mennonite Archival Image Database)

It's a privilege to work with an amazing and dedicated group of people. It's a thrill to uncover real pieces of history and to preserve and tell the story to future generations.

Submitted by Linda Klassen  
Director

## **Library Committee Report**

The library committee has been meeting regularly over the last year. Currently, its members are Bonnie Brauer, Helen Ho, Jennifer Martens, Robert Martens, Elma Pauls, and Arlene Peters, with Richard Thiessen ex officio. The major discussion has turned around the topic of the MHSBC library operating system. At this time, ResourceMate is being used, but it has certain inadequacies, especially pertaining to inventory. The committee was visited by Columbia Bible College (CBC) head librarian Anne Andres, who delivered an excellent report on the issues involved in moving to another operating system. CBC uses Evergreen, an open source library system. CBC's library catalogue is hosted by Sitka, a consortium based in Vancouver which has over one hundred non-profit and publicly funded libraries as members.

The possibility of MHSBC's library becoming a branch of CBC's library was discussed. There would be difficulties. Bar codes would have to be applied to every book. If Sitka's help is needed to migrate the MHSBC library into Evergreen, fees would be applied, and they could be considerable. If migration of the MHSBC library is performed by a CBC employee(s), that would also entail expense. On the other hand, ResourceMate is felt by MHSBC librarians to be inadequate. The library committee submitted a motion to the MHSBC board: that board chair Richard Thiessen, Rod Ewert and any other board members that should be included meet with CBC's head librarian Anne Andres and members of the library committee to draw up a costed proposal to the board regarding establishing our reference libraries as a branch of the CBC library. The motion was accepted by the board and a proposal will be drawn up.

The library committee has also discussed the MHSBC digital library. Family histories in particular have been digitized. A gift agreement letter has been created which will request permission from donors of family histories, and possibly other volumes, to digitize donated books. Problems of privacy and copyright are crucial here.

Other matters under discussion: the incorporation of rare books and songbooks, and church conference yearbooks, into the MHSBC library catalogue. Currently these listings are kept on separate Word files. Discrete sections in the library for geographical books and for cookbooks have been considered.

Terms of reference for the library committee were written up by Elma Pauls, and approved by committee members after minor amendments were suggested.

The library committee is excited about the various directions the MHSBC library may take.

Submitted by Robert Martens

## **Newsletter - *Roots and Branches***

In 2019, the periodical editorial committee produced three full-length issues of *Roots and Branches* as well as a shorter special Christmas edition. The February issue featured articles highlighting women's experiences within a traditionally male-dominated historical context; the May issue examined the assimilation of Mennonites into mainstream society as well as their nostalgia for a communal past; and the September issue explored varied facets of Mennonite humour, both historical and contemporary. In addition, each issue included additional articles on diverse historical topics and artwork by local artists, along with book reviews, event reports, a genealogy column, relevant news releases, and announcements of upcoming events. The shorter Christmas issue featured narratives and poetry examining Mennonite experiences of Christmas during times of both dislocation and new beginnings. Special thanks to Julia Toews and Louise Price for taking the initiative to produce the special Christmas issue.

Currently, , Robert Martens, Maryann Tjart Jantzen, Julia Toews and Louise Price share editorial responsibilities as well as contributing articles, while Heather Pauls Murray continues to do an excellent job of layout. Other members of the larger *Roots and Branches* committee continue to provide feedback on potential articles. We seek to feature a variety of writers in each issue, from diverse segments of our constituency. And the office staff works hard to see that each issue is printed and mailed in a timely fashion. Without the contributions of all these individuals, *Roots and Branches* would not exist.

Our policy is to try to provide a broad range of material so that all readers will find something of interest. We welcome receiving any of the following: letters and photos from the past; "mystery" pictures that need identification; short personal narratives; book reviews; biographical sketches; articles of historical interest. Contributions can be in English or German (we will translate). All contributions are subject to editorial approval and revision, as needed.

Please direct any letters, comments or questions to the Newsletter Committee c/o the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C., or email [archives@mhsbc.com](mailto:archives@mhsbc.com)

Maryann Tjart Jantzen  
MHSBC director and *Roots and Branches* co-editor.

## **Website and Computer Technical Committee**

Members: Elmer Wiens (Chair), Jennifer Martens, Richard Thiessen (ex officio)

Objectives: The committee was formed to discuss and implement improvements to the [www.MHSBC.com](http://www.MHSBC.com) website, and changes to the MHSBC computer facilities, scanners, software, etc.

Jennifer Martens and Richard Thiessen handle the computer facilities at the MHSBC's offices. The following report deals with the [www.MHSBC.com](http://www.MHSBC.com) website.

Elmer Wiens works with Jennifer Martens and other members of the MHSBC Board and Staff to handle changes, updates, revisions, and troubleshooting on the [www.MHSBC.com](http://www.MHSBC.com) website as events unfold. This changes, etc. occur frequently throughout the year requiring hands-on attention by the webmaster.

Our website has been substantially changed and upgraded from last year.

Webpages on our old website had a narrow format with a width of 768 pixels. This format worked well when computer screens were relatively narrow. It was also OK in the new era of cell phones, tablets, ipads, and laptops as the narrow format fit the displays of these devices.

However, the narrow format limited the design and content of a webpage. In December, 2019 the webpages were switched to a wider, full screen width format. This permits more information to be displayed on a given web page.

See for example our entry web page <http://www.mhsbc.com/index.php>

Internet users tend to be impatient and often just look at the entry web page of a website. Our new entry web page permits users to identify MHSBC as an organization, see our requests for donations, sponsors, and membership fees, and to receive information on upcoming events at one grasp.

The twenty links on the side navigation bar (Family Histories, Roots & Branches, etc.) permit users (with just one mouse click) to find quickly other important information ... unlike dropdown menus which have a "hide and seek" trait.

Browsers (Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, etc.) permit the presentation of web pages with the technology of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). The new website combines CSS with existing HTML code, PHP, and Javascript so that the web pages display in a readable format on all devices. Note: most webpages now have a .php URL ending instead of an .html URL ending.

Important new developments for the website:

1. Robert Martens substantially rewrote the Family Histories file, listing the family histories available at the MHSBC offices. This required a complete overhaul of the <http://www.mhsbc.com/famhistories.php> web page. Users can now find histories filed by the history's title and cross-referenced by family's name. This file is available as a downloadable .PDF document, and also as a web page with an entry accessed by its alphabetical location.
2. Webpages now have a .php URL ending instead of an .html URL ending. PHP is a general-purpose programming language that permits a web programmer to include real time features. For example, MHSBC events now indicate the number of days until the event occurs, and the number of days left until advance ticket sales close.

The following list itemizes some features that available on the [www.MHSBC.com](http://www.MHSBC.com) website.

1. Members of the Society can pay their membership dues online with PayPal. Alternatively, they can submit their membership information on an online form and then be invoiced by MHSBC. (<http://www.mhsbc.com/memberships.php>)
2. Donations to MHSBC can be made by way of PayPal (<http://www.mhsbc.com/donations.php>) Sponsors can view and print a .PDF document with sponsorship details ([http://www.mhsbc.com/pdfs/mhsbc\\_sponsor\\_event.pdf](http://www.mhsbc.com/pdfs/mhsbc_sponsor_event.pdf) ).
3. Potential volunteers can complete and submit our online membership and volunteer form. (<http://www.mhsbc.com/volunteers.php>)
4. Tickets to events like our Annual Fundraising Event can be purchased online through PayPal on the ([http://www.mhsbc.com/futureevents/purchase\\_event.php](http://www.mhsbc.com/futureevents/purchase_event.php)) webpage.
5. MHSBC events and meeting are posted on the website entry page and the Future Events web page [http://www.mhsbc.com/futureevents/mhsbc\\_events.php](http://www.mhsbc.com/futureevents/mhsbc_events.php)
6. Once the event is over, the event details are transferred to the Past Events web page. (<http://www.mhsbc.com/pastevents.php>) This web page provides a list of past events, accessible by year, going back over a decade to November 2004.

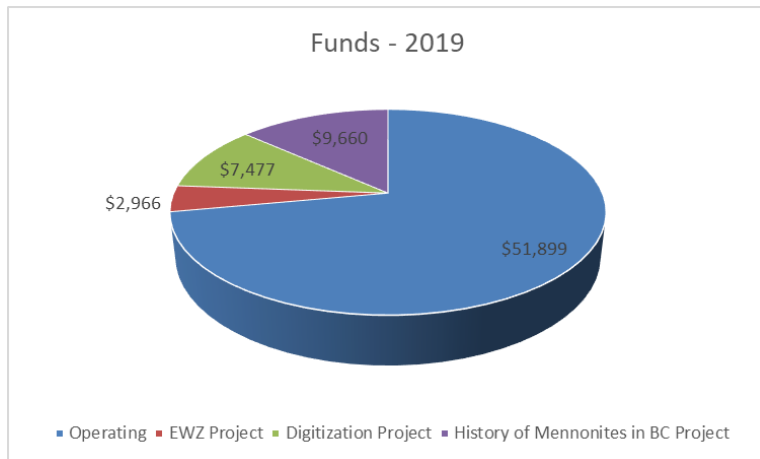
It has been my pleasure to continue working on these tasks this year.

Respectfully submitted  
by Elmer G. Wiens, Webmaster

# Mennonite Historical Society of BC – 2019 Financial Reports

Attached are the financial reports for 2019 including the proposed budget for 2020. You will find included the Statement of Funds and Equity and the Statement of Receipts and Disbursements. I would like to firstly focus on the Statement of Funds and Equity which for Not-For-Profit organizations is an important part of understanding the activities.

## Statement of Funds and Equity



The Mennonite Historical Society of BC holds several separate funds which each have a specific purpose. To be viewed as a fund it is required that amounts must be encumbered and must be maintained beyond the current year. The image to the left shows the 2019 year-end balances in each of the funds. Note that the Endowment Fund is not included as the principle balance of the fund is expected to be protected.

### EWZ Fund – Einwanderungszentralstelle Antrage

This fund was established with partners from other interested organizations for the purpose of digitizing microfilmed information from the national archives. It is a rich source of information on approximately 2.9 million ethnic Germans who were processed by the German center for immigration during World War II. This project is expected to be fully completed by the end of 2020 and any remaining funds will be distributed back to the partners.

### Digitization Project

This fund was established specifically to raise funds to purchase equipment to be used for transferring documents from microfilm to digital media. This is important so that all information will be readily available and preserved for the future. Donations to this project will allow additional equipment to be purchased *when* funds become available.

### Mennonites in BC History Project

This fund was established in 2019 by transfer of legacy funds from the Anabaptist Foundation with the purpose of creating a Mennonites in BC Book. \$9,660 was received in 2019 and an additional \$110,577 is expected to be received in 2020. The Mennonites in BC Book is expected to be a 3 year project with the final book to be released in *Fall 2023*.

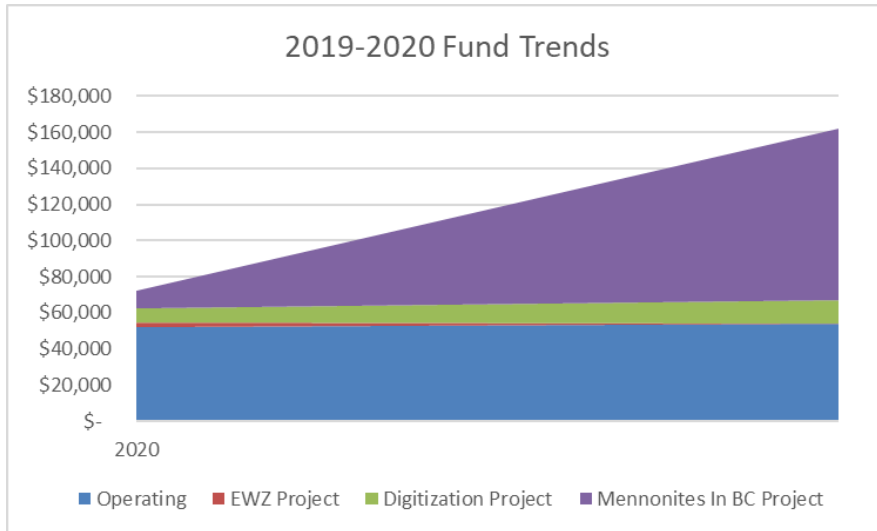
### Operating Fund

This is simply the balance of accounts that are available for any costs incurred for the daily operation of the Society.



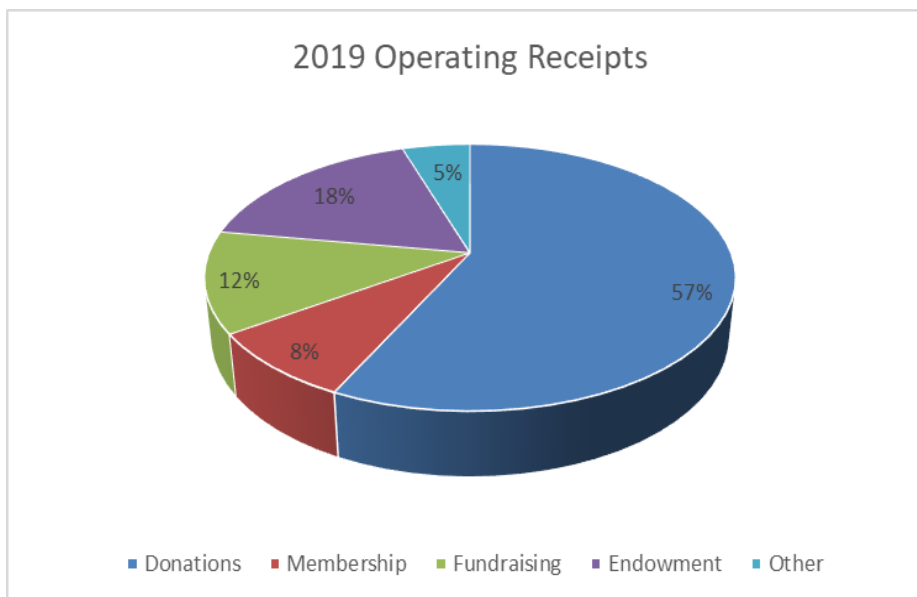
## Endowment Fund

As indicated above this fund was not included in the image above, however, these are funds are also owned by MHSBC. These funds were established by individuals giving legacy donations to the Society with the purpose that interest from the funds be used to generate income for the annual operations of the Society. In 2019 18% of the operating receipts were generated from the Endowment Fund. The expectations are that in addition to providing a source of income the fund will continue modest growth and it is that hope that the Society will continue to receive legacy gifts to enable more income to be available. On Mar 22, 2019 we transferred the management of the Endowment Fund from CIBC to Edward Jones. This enabled us to have more hands-on management of the fund and to reduce the volatility risk of the investment. From Jan 1, 2019 to Mar 22, 2019 we realized a net return of 1.4%. From Mar 22, 2019 to Dec 31, 2019 we realized a net return of 10.3% with a total annual return of 9.4%.



The image to the left shows the expected changes in balances of these funds. You will note that the balance of the Mennonites in BC Fund will grow significantly with the additional transfer from the Anabaptist Foundation. The EWZ fund will be closed out and the other funds will change modestly.

## Statement of Receipts and Disbursements



This report highlights the activities that occurred in the fiscal period of 2019. Contained are Receipts and Disbursements that related to both special projects (specific funds) and general operations. The image to the left shows the portion of operating receipts that are from various sources. You will notice that the MHSBC relies mostly on donations (57%) and income from the Endowment Fund (18%). The other significant source of funds is from fundraising events which in 2019 were the Matt Falk event and MCC Faspas Fundraiser. In 2020 there are planned fundraising events of a Pier 21 event in April and a Faspas event in fall 2020.

In 2019, MHSBC reported an operating surplus of \$16,563 which is the net receipts and disbursements outside of any project costs or unrealized market gains to the Endowment Fund. In 2020 we are budgeting a \$17,366 operating surplus.

		2018	2019	2019	2020
	<b>Mennonite Historical Society of BC</b>				
	<b>Statement of Funds and Equity as at Dec 31, 2019</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Budget</b>
	<b>Cash &amp; Investments</b>				
	<b>Funds</b>				
01-1090	Petty Cash	200	200	-	200
01-1100	Chequing, Envision	10,376	10,101	(275)	27,268
01-1110	Savings, ENVISION	22,689	33,179	10,489	33,179
01-1111	US \$, ENVISION	330	572	241	572
01-1113	EWZ Project	2,976	2,966	(10)	-
01-1114	Digitization Project	26,750	7,477	(19,274)	12,477
01-1115	Mennonites in BC Project	-	9,660	9,660	95,237
01-1810	Shares	1,047	1,081	34	1,081
	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>64,369</b>	<b>65,235</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>170,012</b>
	<b>Accounts Receivable and Prepaid</b>				
01-1250	GST Receivable	2	44	42	-
01-1260	Accounts Receivable MMS	1,734	7,023	5,289	7,766
01-1300	Prepaid Expenses	-	500	500	-
	<b>Total Accounts Receivable</b>	<b>1,736</b>	<b>7,566</b>	<b>5,830</b>	<b>7,766</b>
	<b>Endowment</b>				
01-1410	Endowment, Cash	6,081	-	(6,081)	-
01-1420	Endowment, Book Value	452,368	546,131	93,763	568,042
01-1432	Endowment, Mark to Market (non realized)	26,655	21,911	(4,744)	6,000
	<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>485,104</b>	<b>568,042</b>	<b>82,938</b>	<b>574,042</b>
	<b>Total Cash &amp; Investments</b>	<b>551,208</b>	<b>640,843</b>	<b>89,635</b>	<b>751,820</b>
	<b>Accounts Payable and Equity</b>				
01-2525	Equity	632,584	551,208	(81,376)	640,843
	Interim Equity	(81,376)	89,635	171,011	110,977
	<b>Total Accounts Payable and Equity</b>	<b>551,208</b>	<b>640,843</b>	<b>89,635</b>	<b>751,820</b>

Mennonite Historical Society of BC, Dec 31, 2019	2018	2019	2019	2019	2020
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements	Actual	Actual	Variance	Budget	Budget
<b>Receipts</b>					
<b>Donations &amp; Membership</b>					
Donations, General	50,177	72,247	21,247	51,000	80,000
Donations, Digitalization Project	14,000	5,000	(15,000)	20,000	5,000
Mennonites in BC Project	-	9,660	9,660	-	110,577
Membership	9,671	10,480	(1,520)	12,000	12,000
Fund Raising Events	4,090	15,518	3,518	12,000	15,000
<b>Total Donations and Membership</b>	<b>77,938</b>	<b>112,905</b>	<b>17,905</b>	<b>95,000</b>	<b>222,577</b>
<b>Investments</b>					
Interest	515	156	(244)	400	200
Investment Income	23,511	22,000	-	22,000	22,000
Mark to Market Gain (loss)	(74,527)	82,938	67,518	15,420	6,000
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>(50,501)</b>	<b>105,094</b>	<b>67,274</b>	<b>37,820</b>	<b>28,200</b>
<b>Other Income</b>					
Book Sales	2,312	2,325	325	2,000	2,000
DVD/CD/Tape Sales	2,198	1,919	(581)	2,500	2,500
Genealogy Research	969	1,344	344	1,000	1,000
Miscellaneous Income	1,032	484	(516)	1,000	1,000
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>6,511</b>	<b>6,072</b>	<b>(428)</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>6,500</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>33,948</b>	<b>224,070</b>	<b>84,750</b>	<b>139,320</b>	<b>257,277</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>					
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>					
Wages & Benefits	46,557	91,822	2,778	94,600	95,000
Training	-	200	4,800	5,000	1,000
Travel	820	424	3,076	3,500	1,000
<b>Total Personnel Expenses</b>	<b>47,377</b>	<b>92,446</b>	<b>10,654</b>	<b>103,100</b>	<b>97,000</b>
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>					
Office	5,357	1,952	3,048	5,000	2,500
Photocopy Expense	952	1,677	123	1,800	2,500
Phones	2,845	1,868	(368)	1,500	2,000

Technology	3,640	3,178	(778)	2,400	3,500
Postage	1,284	1,255	145	1,400	1,400
Insurance	500	500	20	520	600
Legal	40	40	60	100	100
Fees	961	1,394	(394)	1,000	1,500
<b>Total Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>15,580</b>	<b>11,864</b>	<b>1,856</b>	<b>13,720</b>	<b>14,100</b>
<b>Operations Expenses</b>					
Annual General Meeting	1,952	1,645	355	2,000	2,000
Archival/Library Supplies	1,180	947	353	1,300	1,500
Dues and Subscriptions	2,815	1,491	1,459	2,950	2,000
DVD/CD/Tape Purchases	1,194	1,020	480	1,500	1,500
Equipment	782	25	975	1,000	1,000
Digitalization Project Expense	16	24,511	(4,511)	20,000	-
EWZ Project Expense	-	14	(14)	-	2,966
Mennonites in BC History Book Project	-	-	-	-	25,000
Lectures and Events	2,978	2,726	1,274	4,000	2,500
Newsletter	2,003	2,579	421	3,000	3,000
Publicity	661	70	1,230	1,300	500
Banquet Costs	3,274	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Expense	521	445	555	1,000	1,000
<b>Total Operations Expenses</b>	<b>17,375</b>	<b>35,474</b>	<b>2,576</b>	<b>38,050</b>	<b>42,966</b>
<b>Cost Sharing</b>					
Facility Cost Sharing	34,991	36,041	(1)	36,040	36,834
Payroll Cost Sharing	-	(40,109)	(2,991)	(43,100)	(43,400)
Technology & Office Sharing	-	(1,280)	2,905	1,625	(1,200)
<b>Net MMS Cost Sharing Expense</b>	<b>34,991</b>	<b>(5,348)</b>	<b>(87)</b>	<b>(5,435)</b>	<b>(7,766)</b>
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>115,324</b>	<b>134,435</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>149,435</b>	<b>146,300</b>
<b>Net Receipts and Disbursements</b>	<b>(81,376)</b>	<b>89,635</b>	<b>99,750</b>	<b>(10,115)</b>	<b>110,977</b>
<b>Operational Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(20,833)</b>	<b>16,563</b>	<b>(42,098)</b>	<b>(25,535)</b>	<b>17,366</b>

Submitted,

Rod Ewert, Treasurer