



# LIFE WITH US

## At Niagara United Mennonite Church

**When we entered this world as tiny babies,  
you gave us caregivers,  
who watched and waited on us,  
who fed and clothed us,  
who taught us how to live.  
We pause in this moment of silence  
to give our own thanks  
for one special person who has changed our life:  
For their work, and their love which has shaped us,  
we give you thanks!**

**We pray today for caregivers;  
mothers, fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers,  
aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters and cousins,  
neighbours and family friends,  
all who care for children.  
Give us the wisdom we need to do this work!  
Open our ears and eyes to the real needs of those in  
our charge;  
open our hearts and hands to meet these needs.**

**Our prayers are also directed today for caregivers around the world who face special challenges; for those many caregivers who are caring for orphans from the tragedy of AIDS; for caregivers who are without food, walking long distances with children in their arms; for caregivers in war-torn countries who are trying desperately to protect their children from bombs and guns.**

**So many dangers in this world, Lord,  
and you know them all.  
Bring peace to our troubled times,  
justice for those who are oppressed,  
hope to those who are hopeless.**

**God, you love us with a father's love,  
you care for us more tenderly than any mother,  
you are the Great Caregiver.  
Help us today to be aware of your love,  
your gaze upon us,  
encouraging us, sustaining us,  
directing us.  
Amen.**

~ Carol Penner





# MEMORIES

## Memories of my Mama and Papa

I will never forget the surprise 13<sup>th</sup> birthday party that my Mama threw for me. It truly was a complete surprise! I was working (yes, we started young back then) at a little tearoom in Niagara-on-the-Lake on my birthday and I remember being somewhat annoyed when my manager asked me to work a bit longer after my shift was over (of course I found out later that it was all part of Mama's plan!). Little did I know what was awaiting me when I got home! All of my friends were there – which wasn't an easy feat because it was still summer vacation – and I was so thrilled! We had homemade pizza, a salad made from my parents' vegetable garden, a delicious chocolate birthday cake that Mama also baked, and a gorgeous vase of fresh cut roses from the garden - all done in secret! Thinking back now to that special birthday, I don't know how Mama pulled it all off, especially keeping it a surprise, but that was just the kind of Mama she was – always going above and beyond out of love for her children. She made me so happy that day!

I remember the day back in 1989 when my Papa and I drove to the Dominey's Toyota dealership on Lake Street to pick up the new Toyota Corolla I had bought. It had finally come in that day and I was so excited! I was a bit nervous though, because it was a manual car, not automatic, and I'd never driven a manual car before. But Papa told me not to worry, that he would teach me. I'll never forget when Papa took me out to the huge, empty back parking lot of the dealership with my new car and right then and there, he taught me how to drive standard so that I could drive my new car home. I still remember stalling the car I don't know how many times! Papa was SO patient with me and kept telling me not to worry, that I was getting the hang of it. Papa had more confidence in me than I had! He was the best teacher (he was always showing me how to do so many practical things), and sure enough, after only about 15 minutes, Papa was following me home down Lakeshore Road in his station wagon and I was proudly driving my new car. When we got home, Papa said, "See? I knew you could do it!" I was thrilled!

~ submitted by Christie Esau

## My mom, Lori Dyck, asked me to send you what she wrote re her last memories of her father.

'It was the first warm, sunny day in May in our village in Russia. My father and I went to check on the garden. I was five years old and felt delighted to be taken along on this task and to be allowed to run in bare feet. After Dad had worked for a while in the garden, he put down his spade, took off his shirt and leaned against the warm wall of the house. He watched me play for a while and then closed his eyes and turned his face to the sun. He was so relaxed as he soaked up the warm rays of the sun. As I grew older, I often wondered what was going through his mind. That is the last memory I have of my father before he was taken by the NKVD. He spent the rest of his life in Siberia and I never saw him again.'

~ submitted by Brenda Dyck

## A memory to share about my Mother.

My Mother, Ilse Thiessen passed away on January 1st of this year. She was a wonderful baker, but Christmas was the only time she made her famous Chocolate Hazelnut Bundt Cake. On Christmas Eve we eagerly anticipated our first slice; after the Christmas story had been read, carols sung and presents opened. It was always worth the wait and you couldn't eat just one piece! After her stroke she was not able to bake anymore so my wife, Anne and my sister Ingrid are happily continuing this Christmas tradition.

~ submitted by John Thiessen

## Birthdays are special

I have cherished, childhood memories of birthdays. Growing up in a family of 9 kids was never dull, but there was, realistically, not much time for personal, one-on-one attention from our parents. My dear mother made us feel very special on our birthdays: by letting us choose what kind of birthday cake we'd like, not having to do our chores for the day, and we could invite a friend over. Birthdays have become special to me too.

~ submitted by Laurene Nickel

## My Mom & Carrots

*Carrots. As a young child I remember a time when they began appearing at every dinner meal. Cooked or raw, cut into rounds or sliced into wedges, or sometimes shredded and sweetened like candy. Of course, our mom (Natalie) was adamant that we eat them... all of them. "They're good for you", she would say, "and they will give you good eyesight." She was naturally concerned because dad had to wear glasses since he was a child. As the years went by, it became the family tradition. No meal at mom's was complete until the carrots were on the table. The grandchildren, too, experienced (and were made to eat) carrots at every one of Oma's dinners.*

*As an adult, I asked mom one day why she served carrots so often. Were they her favorite vegetable? Would they really help to improve our eyesight? She said quite simply it was because there was an over-abundance of them in her garden one year, and she had to come up with so many ways and means to get us to eat them all...! That "abundance" seemed to have lasted for decades!*

*Our parents are no longer with us, but we continue to serve carrots at every family meal... with a smile and a giggle at our mother's ingenuity. And not one of us had to wear glasses as a child.*

*~ submitted by Ruth Lamarre for the Lammert Family*

*(THANK YOU Kathy for the wonderful job that you and Lani do! It is such a pleasure to read the fascinating stories you manage to find of our church family members.)*

## A little memory of mine

When I was young, my parents' service station was right in our back yard. From our back door window I could see my dad, after a long day of work, walking across the field and then through our back yard to the door. Many, many times I would see my dad coming and wait at the back door with my hand on the door knob. When I heard the screen door open, and figured my dad's hand was on the door knob, I would suddenly twist the handle and yank the door open to 'welcome him home'.

As an adult, I realize how annoying this must have been. But my dad never looked annoyed. In my memory he always looked happy to see me.

## Thanks Dad!

*~ submitted by Joannie (Harder) Penner*

## An unexpected twist

I could fill a book with literally hundreds of happy memories as the child of two outstanding parents! But, here's one short story with an unexpected twist:

When we were on vacation in Florida in the early years of travel there, we often went to a buffet restaurant located close to our motel. All the desserts were right there at the beginning of the food service line - so that you would see them first - when you were the hungriest! My parents, being disciplined and nutrition conscious, told us we could have dessert AFTER we finished our meal. Our tummies were small then, so we usually didn't have dessert. When we arrived on that one memorable visit, my Dad noticed my brother and me looking longingly at the luscious parfaits with generous mounds of whip cream on top. He then spoke the most unbelievable words! "Go ahead. Have anything you want!!!" In stunned disbelief we had to clarify. "Anything? Now?" Again we heard, "Go ahead"! That day (and only that day) Ben and I had 3 desserts each - for supper!

*~ submitted by Marlene Heidebrecht*





## Remembrance Of My Dad On Father's Day

My parents, Abram and Elizabeth Harder, with four sons (Abe, Jake, Pete and George) left Michelsheim, (Memrik Colony) Ukraine on August 5, 1924. My father had been a teacher in Ukraine, and because the cost of raising a family on a teacher's salary was difficult he became a bookkeeper in a flour mill. The income was a great improvement and eventually he and three colleagues rented a steam-driven mill with the option to buy. Things were going well when the Russian Revolution started and the Communists took over.

Dad and his partners were put in jail, because they were considered owners of a mill. Conditions in jail were terrible and one of dad's colleagues died there. A second became ill and had to be released before he died, and Dad and the fourth partner were set free to reopen the mill because the region had run out of bread. My oldest brother Abe, who was twelve at the time, remembers Dad going into the orchard to pray, and when he returned telling my mother, "Now I have had enough of Russia, we must try to get out of this country."

Many others from the colony of Memrik wanted to leave for Canada and several men were chosen to go to Moscow to get passports and arrange transportation. Dad was one of them. These people, including my parents, had enough cash to pay for the trip. When they got to Moscow, the authorities asked them to come back the following day. The men from the villages went out for supper and when they returned, their hotel was on fire. The cash they had brought was in a safety deposit box in the hotel and everything had burned. The men returned to their homes and had to start over. My parents sold some of their last belongings which provided enough money to pay for transportation for the family of six to the border of Russia. Dad had already arranged with a Mr. Janz, who was working with refugees, for credit with the Canadian Pacific Railway. The CPR was granting credit because they needed settlers for the prairie provinces.

When my parents with four boys landed in Saskatchewan they had virtually nothing but their clothes. Since Dad was not familiar with the new language, his skills of teaching and bookkeeping were of no use, and to feed a family of six he had to work as a labourer on the railway. The following year, 1925, Dad and about a dozen Mennonite refugee men pooled their resources and bought a small tract of land around Osborne, Manitoba. Thus they became farmers and that's where the fifth brother, Herb was born in 1929 and four years later I, John, became the sixth and final brother.

I have always been immensely grateful to my father for his decision to come to Canada so many years ago. Although he and Mother both came from large families, none of their siblings left Russia. When my parents were planning to leave, their brothers and sisters said, "Why are you going, things are improving here." That's why I have never known any uncles, aunts or cousins. We know now how circumstances turned out in Russia and Ukraine; of the tragedy that befell our people, causing another mass migration after the Second World War.

In 1943 my four oldest brothers were all married and gone from home and my dad was getting too old to carry on farming since the youngest boys were still in school. My parents then bought a small five-acre farm in Niagara on the Lake at the corner of East & West Line and Hwy 55, less than a kilometer from the Niagara United Mennonite Church. They joined this church and walked there every Sunday when the weather was pleasant.

When my mother died in 1975, I found among her papers a statement for the transportation charges for the family of six from Russia to Canada in 1924. With hard work and the two oldest brothers working they had paid off a sizable part of the debt by 1929. Then the Great Depression happened, and the compounding interest on the charges kept mounting up so that by 1938 the debt was almost back to the original amount. After that the North American economy improved and by the time my parents moved to Ontario the entire debt was paid.



~ submitted by John Harder

## Memories of Mutti

Our Mutti left us two years ago, and I keep thinking of her more and more. I think about what she had to go through—war, fleeing, so many new beginnings in strange countries, arrival of child after child, and then to make something from nothing, either in food or in clothing. In spite of all these hardships, Mutti was always good humoured, and had a happy nature. She did not accept worries, or at least would not show them to others. She left everything in God's hands. Often, I was angry about this—it was too simple. However, now as I am getting older, I realize more and more that Mutti handled things correctly. At age 92, in Heritage Place, she could still laugh about her own weaknesses. Even though we often felt like crying about these afflictions, Mutti accepted everything calmly and serenely. May God give me this calmness, peace and happiness in the ladder of my old age which I still have to climb.

Loving memories of our Mutti from all of her 8 living children.

~ submitted by Tina Runge

(It is very hard to choose something): **When your heart is full of memories of love.**

When Hans and I got married, our finances were very scarce. I had just worked for a very short time and just now and then could buy something for starting a household. So I ended up being a bit short to pay for my wedding dress, and one of my brothers lent me some money. Self-centered as a bride might be, I didn't realize that my mother didn't have a dress to wear for our wedding day. Then a package arrived from some relative and there was just the right dress in it. I noticed that my mother was very happy. Only years later did it dawn on me how important this dress had been to her, and she hadn't said a word about it. That was my mother, always thinking of herself at the very last, and caring for everybody else in her large family first.

~ submitted by Ingrid Dau

(Thank you Lani & Kathy for your hard work to produce such an interesting newsletter. I am waiting for the next one right after reading through the last.  
All the best of God's blessings to you.)



*\*When I think back on my life and being raised by my parents, the memories are too numerous to do justice to in a short article. However, I think that what sticks out to me most now that I am older and moved out of the house is the way my parents lived their values and beliefs, particularly surrounding family relationships. I think of the hours my mom sat beside me on the piano bench, helping me with each and every practice. I think of Saturday mornings joining Dad on errands and usually getting a special treat along the way. I think of family bike rides, watching our cousin's baseball games, family lunches and dinners with my grandparents, family trips to the cottage, and journeys to places like PEI, Guatemala, Florida, and the West Coast. All of their choices, I've realized, were intentionally focused on putting family first. I've grown up feeling the incredible love and constant support of my parents, something I have realized is a real gift in life. I'm incredibly grateful for their ongoing influence, love, and support, and for a childhood so filled with memories that it is impossible to focus on just one.*

~ submitted by Ellery Penner Rauwerda





### A Visit to the Symphony

I have a favourite memory of my dad taking me to a symphony when I was a little girl, one on one. Although I probably fell asleep, this was special for me since I grew up in a family of six children!

~submitted by Marlene (Rempel) Borzychowski

### A favourite memory of my special mom Helga Wiens

Every Christmas Eve my mom would not let my sister Angela and me ( my brother Siegy wasn't born yet) see the Christmas tree and all the presents until after we came back from Christmas Eve service at NUMC. She would work all day in secrecy behind a door. When we got home after church, the tree was lit with real candles and we were in awe! My mom worked so hard to make Christmas so spiritual and beautiful for us! Love you Mutti!

### A favourite memory of my dad Siegfried Wiens

My Papa would never ever say no when I wanted to go water skiing at the cottage as a child or even as an adult. He would happily get up from relaxing, finishing dinner or whatever he was doing to take me skiing. As a parent now myself it means even more to me !! Love you Paps!!

~ submitted by Petra (Wiens) Browning

### The Best Mom

"When I was in college up in Barrie, I attended a community church. Even though I came home often, my mom insisted on traveling up north to spend a weekend with me and my dad and go to the church I was attending. This was a good example of how she has taken a great interest in my faith and why she is the best mom."

Thanks!

Stefan Riediger

### The Adventurous Dad

My father, Karl Sr., was the adventurous type -- rode his bicycle 257 km from Katzweiler to Cologne (without accommodations!) to visit his twin brother's grave, bought a full-sized van soon after arriving in Canada to take the family (7 kids) to Algonquin Park, loved to drive so took MANY road trips, especially with his small Trillium camper (gave him great pleasure). This adventurous spirit, his easy-going nature, and his sense of humour have given me many treasured memories.

~submitted by Karl Nickel, Jr.

### Beautiful Dreams & Memories

I was 5 years old when my parents showed me an atlas, pointed out Ghana, West Africa and told us we were moving there for 2 years. That turned into 3 years and although that's almost 48 years ago, I have many wonderful memories and I am very grateful to dad and mom for taking us on a 3 year adventure. Memories of Sundays on the beach with other

Canadian families, road trips all over Ghana, Nigeria and other African countries, having a monkey as a pet, dad saving my brother from drowning, being tricked into eating fish-head soup and so many more cool adventures were great, but one little memory that I cherish is having my mom read to us each night. My brother, Gary and sister, Joanne and I shared a bedroom and mom would sit in front of the window to our hallway and the light would shine behind her.... I can still close my eyes and see her silhouette, reading to us and I would fall asleep with dreams of the adventures of 4 young kids in Enid Blyton novels. So cool!

**Thanks Mom & Dad for the memories!**

~submitted by Kizzy (Kathy) Epp



## I stand in awe of YOU

Dave and I spoke at the Women in Service Valentines get together a few weeks ago. We had been asked to share our story. Afterwards I was asked if I would write some of what I shared that night for the newsletter. I trust God will use it as an encouragement to your hearts.

Just quickly, - Dave and I were married September 4, 1971 in Hamilton, Ontario. I had finished Nurses' Training by then and he was already working as a youth pastor in Portsmouth, Virginia. Our oldest son, David, was born in Portsmouth in 1973. When he was just 6 weeks old, we moved to Nyack, NY where Dave had accepted another Youth Pastor position. Our second son, Mark, was born in Nyack in June of 1975. We left Nyack when he was only 2 weeks old. I remember the senior pastor at his Dedication service saying that at the rate we were going you would know how many churches we had served by how many children we had. Thankfully that didn't turn out to be true!



From New York, we moved to Regina, Saskatchewan. After staying with my parents for 3 ½ months in Hamilton, and moving into a rental house in Regina for another 2 months before we finally settled in our own home, we ended up moving 4 times before Mark was 5 months old. Due to all the unsettledness, he didn't sleep much for those 5 months!

The rented house we stayed in had no furniture really. There were two mattresses on the floor, one for Dave & me, and one for David. Mark slept in his buggy. There was a kitchen table & chairs, a leatherette loveseat and a lamp in the living room. I knew no one in Regina. When Dave left for the church each morning, I was alone with a very busy 2 yr old and a baby who had been up crying most of the night. It was a difficult time. God provided a woman from the church who became "God with skin on" to me. She was more than busy herself, but she would call, would stop in, would take the kids once in awhile so I could rest. I don't know how I would have managed through those months without her. But God did much more than that.

We so often get our sense of worth through what we do, what we can contribute. I could put my uniform on, go to the hospital and enjoy caring for the patients assigned to me. It felt good. I felt needed. Through this time however, God stripped away everything that I formerly did. I couldn't work, I couldn't be involved with anything at the church, I was home, alone. I felt like a failure as a mom and certainly as a pastor's wife but God knew exactly where I was and through various ways including my time reading His Word and pouring out my heart to Him, He showed me that He loved me. He loved me not for anything I did. He loved me because He made me and I was His child. He also helped me to understand that no matter how hard things seemed, He was good and He was Sovereign. I think it's pretty hard to accept God's sovereignty if we can't accept His goodness. It's pretty hard to trust someone we don't know is good.

I knew that I loved God, but through this time in my life, God's love for me, so undeserved, became so real that my heart responded in a way it never had before. I was overwhelmed by it. We had two more children while living in Regina. In fact, by the time we moved into our own house and Mark slept through the night for the first time I was already pregnant with our 3<sup>rd</sup> son Jonathan! Michelle came a couple of years later. There were many wonderful days after that - and other days that didn't feel so wonderful, but I can honestly say, I lived in the awe of God's love for me for the next over 30 years.

God reaffirmed His love and commitment to me through another time of stripping things away 10 years ago. We don't like those times in our lives. We certainly don't ask for them. But God in His wisdom knows that it is often in our pain, our hurt, our deep disappointment that He can work the deepest miracles of healing in our hearts. I wouldn't trade those difficult times for anything. I am so grateful to God for what He has taught both of us through those times. The prophet Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations 3:19-24 - "I remember my affliction...I well remember them and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."

*"You are beautiful beyond description, too marvelous for words,  
Too wonderful for comprehension, like nothing ever seen or heard.  
Who can grasp Your infinite wisdom, Who can fathom the depth of Your love?  
You are beautiful beyond description, Majesty enthroned above.  
And I stand, I stand in awe of You.  
I stand, I stand in awe of You.  
Holy God to whom all praise is due, I stand in awe of You."*

*~ submitted by Janie Lewis*



## My first day of school in Canada (1948)

We had arrived in Aylsham, Saskatchewan last week and today, my parents have decided, will be my first day of school. I'm ten years old and I don't feel very brave. I know where the school is and that my great-uncle "Onkel Heinrich" has told the teacher that I'm coming today.

On the way to school, (and I have insisted on walking on my own), I practice "How do you do! How do you do!" When I arrive I see other children playing in the school yard, but I'm suddenly much too shy (probably the only time) to join.

When the bell rings I follow the others into the classroom. As the other children find their seats, the teacher suddenly notices me. She smiles and comes toward me and says something that I do not understand. I answer "How do you do!" and offer my hand. She says something else and I again offer my hand and say "How do you do!" The other children are all looking at me and begin to giggle. I panic, turn and run home, vowing never to return.



My mother, Frieda Wiebe, me, my grandfather Gerhard Driedger



My father refuses to let me stay home and hand in hand we set off for the school again.

He talks of other daunting obstacles we have faced and surely together we'll manage to survive this one. By the time we arrive at school again, I'm almost smiling.

My father speaks to the teacher, I'm given a scribbler and a pencil and shamefully moved in with the smaller children in Grade One!!

At recess I'm included, even though I don't understand what's being said. Hopscotch is universal and I know how.

At the end of the school day I trudge home. Eventually I begin to wonder what my father said to the teacher. After all he has even less English than I and he doesn't even know how to say "How do you do!" Or does he?

### Toronto, April 30, 1948

We had arrived in Canada on April 23rd, and much to our surprise, were sent to Toronto for a week to 10 days, and then off to Saskatchewan. My father's cousin (or second cousin) was the pastor at the Toronto Mennonite Church, and Albert and Katharina Classen were our hosts. The clothes we are wearing in the pictures were donated by MCC, and I received a ball—the first toy since 1945.

~ submitted by Mary Pompetzki

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY "HOT DOG"

*It was "Hot Dog" day at school It was also my birthday, which was unknown to pretty well everyone, I thought! At lunch another teacher gave me a ready- for- me hot dog, with all the trimmings, just as I liked them. Yum! As I took my first bite - nothing happened.! I chomped down harder this time- the dog kind of slipped around! H-m-m! Eager and really wanting that dog I bit down very hard. It actually hurt my teeth a little. As I kept chewing and pulling, the two parts of the bun plus all the fixings slid into my mouth - but there was only the triumphant bare wiener still looking at me! As I glanced up, puzzled, I caught a glimpse of the other teachers snickering at the combat I was having, finally laughing out loud, and I recognized my dog was a rubber dog! Happy Birthday!*

~ submitted by Mary Pries



## Painting and Prayer

*"Of all the arts, abstract painting is the most difficult. It demands that you know how to draw well, that you have a heightened sensitivity for composition and for colours, and that you be a true poet. This last is essential."*

In the spring of 2016 I was inspired to participate in a unique worldwide event called the 100 Day Project. I committed to painting one abstract painting a day for 100 days and sharing the result on Instagram. Although it was difficult some days to find the time to work, I managed to complete the project on time with one hundred 6" x 6" abstract paintings. I found the challenge and the process extremely rewarding. Through daily practice my creativity was strengthened and I slowly started to develop a language of shapes and colours that became my own.

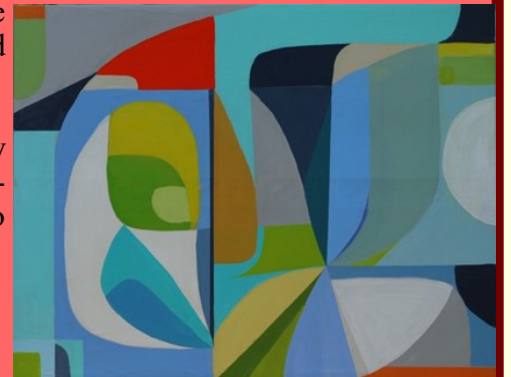


I have always been fascinated by artists whose work is based not on what is seen, but rather what is felt; where a composition of colours, forms and patterns are applied by instinct rather than rules. This is not always easy, as it requires one to suspend judgement and wade into uncertainty, while trusting one's skills and instincts. In a way, art-making is, by its nature, very much like prayer. Both acts require us to get quiet, trust and rest in the power from which creativity arises. It is when we reach this inner silent state that we find we are in conversation with God.

My current body of work stems directly from my 100 Day Project. I have continued down the path of creating almost every day and taking leaps of faith onto the canvas.

*~ submitted by Marion Griese*

(To view more of Marion's artwork, visit the downstairs Art Gallery Hallway.)



## BOOK CORNER ~ Debbie Fast

### **Dawn at Emberwilde**

Treasure of Surrey Novels  
By Sarah E. Ladd

"For as long as she can remember, beautiful & free spirited Isabel has strained against the rules & rigidity of the Fellsworth School in the rolling English countryside. No longer a student, Isabel sets her sights on a steady role as teacher at the school, a safe yet stifling establishment that would enable her to care for her younger sister Lizzie, who was left in her care after her father's death.

The unexpected arrival of a stranger with news of unknown relatives turns Isabel's small, predictable world upside down, sweeping her & her young charge into a labyrinth of intrigue & hidden motives.

At Emberwilde Isabel will discover that the key to unlocking the mystery of her past may also open the door to her future & security. But first she must find it – in the depths of the Emberwilde Forest."

### **Evening Star**

Sam Keaton: Legends of Laramie  
By Sigmund Brouwer

"Sam Keaton wasn't looking for trouble when he rode into Laramie. Like so many cowhands of the 1870's, having a good time on payday was uppermost in his trail-weary mind. But trouble had a way of finding him, & he was soon back in the saddle – with a posse in hot pursuit & the nagging sense that there had to be more to file ..."

### **The Sign Painter**

By Davis Bunn

"Amy Dowell had always considered herself a very good mother. But when she loses her husband to illness & her home to debt, she finds herself & her young daughter, Kimberly, homeless as she struggles to find a job that will get them back on their feet. When she's offered a break, can Amy subject herself to the possibility of disappointment & hurt by hoping again.

Inspired by a true story, The Sign Painter is a tale of desperation, taking chances & ultimately, redemption. This heartwarming novel blends mystery & romance with characters you'll root for & will leave you wondering – is home really where the heart is?"

## Eric Froese – Greater Europe Mission, Germany

Hi! I recently returned from an amazing missions trip in Kandern, Germany. This was made possible with help from NUMC, and I am pleased to share some of my experiences with you.

I worked with the GEM eDOT organization in Kandern, Germany from January 9, 2017 to March 9, 2017. I would like to start off by saying that going to Germany was an excellent decision. I trusted in the Lord, and He did not let me down. From my living situation, to my work environment, to my weekend activities, everything was an excellent experience! My primary job while I was with eDOT was to rewrite one of their existing mobile apps, the *C2C Story App*. The *C2C Story App* is the most popular app by eDOT. It is used in front-line evangelism efforts and includes a 20-part summary of the gospel in many different languages. The old version of the app was written with the *Sencha Touch Hybrid Framework*, which was slow and outdated, to the point where it was no longer working properly on many new smart phones. During the time I was with eDOT, I was able to completely rewrite the app into a modern framework (*Ionic 2 Hybrid Framework*) which greatly improved the performance and made it compatible with all modern smart phones. This was an excellent learning experience for me, as I was able to collaborate with a team of designers and testers while improving my own programming skills. One of the weeks included a trip to the Netherlands to attend the ICCM Europe Conference, which was organized specifically for technology oriented mission's organizations like eDOT. My work with the eDOT team in their office consumed every Monday – Friday from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm for the entire trip, except while I was in Holland.



*"Herzlich Willkommen Eric" – A warm welcome at the eDOT office upon my arrival!*



*Beautiful view from a lookout point outside of Kandern.*

During my stay, I rented a basement apartment (Ferienwohnung) which included all of the amenities that I needed, and was a 5-minute walk away from the eDOT office, as well as a 2-minute walk to the grocery store. There were many walking trails around the city, as well as an International School (Black Forest Academy) where I was able to meet with a group every Sunday to play Soccer.

On weekends, I was able to take Germany's excellent train system all over Southern Germany to meet all of my Father's relatives that live in the area. I went to Constance, Munich, Essen, Baden Baden, Lucerne, Zurich (Switzerland) and my Uncle Oliver was nice enough to take me and my cousin Nicolai to Rome, Italy for my final weekend!



*While I was in Essen, I attended a Bundesliga soccer match*

## Ever wonder how/when the Education Wing was built?

From the June 12, 1966 Bulletin: "Tonight -8:15p.m. Membership Meeting. - Presentation of building plans for the Educational Wing. Recommendations by the Building and the Finance Committees."

Then, a week later, the June 19, 1966 Bulletin announced: "At the June 12 Membership meeting, it was decided to hire Leonard Huget as Architect to look after all the details of the building plans for the addition. It could cost a total of \$130,000.00 even if we coordinate volunteer labour. A committee of 20 people was formed to contact individual families and coordinate visitations to them."

Finally, on June 11, 1967 at 3:00p.m., exactly a year after the initial decision was made to build the Education Wing, the dedication of that newly completed addition was held. Programme details included the greeting of Psalm 84:4: "Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you." There was a presentation of the keys which involved Peter Dirks (Building Supervisor), Jacob Neufeld (Chairman of the Building Committee) and Arno Bartel (Chairman of Church Council). Coffee was served after the service in the new auditorium and the Junior Choir sang, conducted by Elvin Penner. And then, this signoff: "A great amount of voluntary labour has been done by members of our church. Special recognition must be given to Eleanore Bartel who was in charge of painting and to Olga Rempel who sewed the curtains."

*And now you know the rest of the story...*

~ submitted by Harold Neufeld



## MDS Greenbrier West Virginia 2017

Some years ago, my good friend from childhood, Ralf Hamm, invited Esther and me to join him on an MDS (Mennonite Disaster Service) trip to a tornado destroyed site in Oklahoma. Ralf made all the MDS arrangements for us. All we had to do was book the time off work, and go. Ralf liked to go during the week of the American Thanksgiving in November as typical MDS sites were thin on volunteers that week, so it seemed as if our participation that week was extra helpful. If you don't know MDS, google it. In short it is a volunteer service, open to anyone, run in Canada and the US, that provides free labour – not materials – to rebuild houses destroyed or damaged in natural disasters, where insurance is not available, and repair is beyond the home owners means.

It was on that 1<sup>st</sup> MDS trip of ours that we met Gordon and Maria Martens of Winkler Manitoba. They were both born in Canada, but spoke better Low German (Plautdietsch) than English. Maria was the cook and Gordon a team leader (even with all the physical MDS work – with Maria's cooking you cannot count on losing any weight and you can be happy if you don't put any on). It turned out that Gordon, Ralf and I were all born in 1955, and all spoke some measure of Plautdietsch. On a subsequent trip, the 3 of us were the extent of a crew rebuilding a tornado wrecked barn. We spent the week throwing insults at each other (each of us is adept at giving and receiving), in Plautdietsch. If someone got in your way you could expect to hear – "Pauss op Jung, oda etj vedrasch die!" (watch out son or I'll have to lay a beating on you), or if someone nailed a board up wrong, "Na Oo-la, waut fehlt die?? (well old timer what's wrong with you).

Some of you will recall the King's Cake article I wrote earlier this year, and will remember my several work-related trips to Mexico. In the middle of all this work related activity, I received a text from Gord (he does not do email), asking if Esther and I would like to join him and Maria in West Virginia. They were going to be there for 2 months, rebuilding flood damaged housing. We checked our calendar, found a week that worked and quickly said "SURE".

Ralf could not make it this time (he was MDSed out after 5 MDS trips in 2016). So now I had to do all the MDS paper work – which turned out to be pretty straight forward, as the MDS support staff know what they're doing and have a good system worked out. Canadian MDS trips are VERY easy to organize. US trips are a little more difficult as there is the issue of crossing the border and what do you tell customs. Of course, an easy answer is "I'm going on vacation". This however is not the Mennonite way and so MDS has figured out the proper procedure, which is to be paroled into the US.

This involves letters of introduction written by MDS and sent to the border crossing you will be using, in our case

*Erv and Esther outside Roger's house with the flood line marked on the hydro post.*



Fort Erie, as well as copies of the same letter to us, which we would present as well.

It was a Sunday morning in late February, that we found ourselves in a conversation with a young border agent, at the offices in Fort Erie. We explained that letters had been sent, we were volunteering, not working and that we would be happy if he just let us through. He explained that no letters had been received (we are not sure where they go, as we've never had a border agent say – "yes I saw that letter"), and that he would have to discuss this with his boss. We were used to this, and already knew that bosses needed to be asked. This is why we did not leave early. We've heard of Canadian MDSers arriving at the border nice and early – say 5:00am, only to have to wait until 8:00am when the boss comes in.

"Well the boss says I have to parole you into the country" we were told. This was of course what we were expecting as it is possible, but rare, for an MDSer to be just waved into the country. So our agent found the parole procedure, warmed up the special finger print machine, and started asking questions. "Where were you born, what's your mom's maiden name, where are your parents born" etc etc. Although we've done this a number of times, this trip had an interesting new twist, at least in Esther's case.

When asked where was your father born, Esther's answer was "Detroit, Michigan". Those of you who thought that her dad Harry Janzen was born in Danzig would of course be mistaken. Her grandfather, Heinrich Janzen, thinking America was the land of opportunity, moved to the US in the late 1920s. After finding work at the Ford car factory in Detroit, he sent for his fiancée, whom he married in the US, and their 1<sup>st</sup> child Harry, and his sister were born to them there. The depression of the 1930's came along and they moved back to Danzig.

(see next pg.)

Well for our, by the book border agent, this was a huge problem. Upon hearing Detroit Michigan, he asked. "So Mrs. Willms that makes you an American Citizen. I'm not paroling no American citizen". Esther became a Canadian Citizen shortly before she married me. Until then, Esther was, as far as we knew a German citizen as were her parents. We looked at each other in confusion. You're an American? We asked ourselves. Do you even want to be an American?

With that put to bed, the paroling process lumbered on. An FBI background check was ordered and delivered. Mug shots were taken, we were finger printed, and 2 hours later we were on our way to Greenbrier, West Virginia arriving there just at dark. The trip followed 6 hours of road, that we had traveled many times on March trips to Florida. The last hour was twisty back country roads putting us in Greenbrier, West Virginia.

Well as confused as we were, our border agent was even more confused as the rules about US citizenship are constantly changing, and what would have applied in 1930? So, he disappeared for 40 minutes while he consulted his BIG immigration policy book. It turned out that in 1930, if you were born in the US, to a non-citizen you were a US citizen if your parents applied on your behalf. If you remained in the country 10 years you were automatically a citizen regardless of what your parents did. Esther's grand parents moved back to Europe long before her dad was 10, he was not American, and Esther was NOT a citizen either. And so it was that Esther escaped the clutches of Mr. Trump!

Before leaving I had checked the MDS web site and read....

*Greenbrier County received historic rainfall with more than 10 inches of rain falling in 24 hours in June of 2016. As a result, parts of the county experienced unprecedented flooding, causing major destruction and damage in the town of White Sulphur Springs, where more than a dozen people died and 200 homes were damaged or destroyed. State emergency officials estimate that more than 5,000 homes were destroyed or damaged by the storm across the state. Twenty-three people were killed by the flood including those in White Sulphur Springs. The Associated Press later reported that Greenbrier was the hardest hit county in West Virginia.*

We quickly found Maria and Gordon, and rejoiced in each other's company again. Since we had inside support so to speak, we were given our own 2 bunk bed room, as opposed to the being in the general dorm for men or women.

That night, all the week's new volunteers gathered and were debriefed on the details of this site. The team leaders reviewed the volunteers and by the next morn-

ing the day's tasks as well as most of the week's tasks were laid out. The familiar routine of up at 6:30, make your lunch, breakfast at 7:00, devotions at 7:30, job site review at 7:45, off to site at 8:00am, all came back.

The week we were there, the volunteers worked on 3 different sites all in progress. Esther spent all week at Roger's house which was a repair. Roger was recovering from a heart attack, but was so impressed by MDS, that he was planning to become an MDS volunteer himself, once he was back to good health.

I started the week at Bill's house, an entirely new house, and helped with framing and roofing. About mid week, I was transferred to Esther's or Roger's house, and we together worked on hanging drywall and followed that with a bit of mudding (others were better at it than us), then painting – which after working for our kids all fall, we've become pretty good at.

Our Site Leaders were David and Linda Sticknie, who were in their early 60s. They are cash crop and cattle farmers, in the middle of transitioning their farm to 2 of their 3 sons. The sons are not quite ready to take over, but doing well enough that the husband/wife team can leave the farm for the winter months and do MDS volunteer work.

David was quite adamant that as much as our Mennonite "get things done" attitude, would allow us, we should ALWAYS take time to drop what we were doing, and talk with our flood victim clients and listen to their stories. This is highly encouraged by MDS, and I've heard this from many of our Site Leaders in the past.

On this trip, I had a wonderful opportunity to do exactly that with Bill, a widower, who was in his early 70s. We were building him a new very modest, standard MDS design 2 bedroom, 900 square foot house. Bill's house used to stand about 100ft from a creek much like our Four Mile Creek in Virgil, except that being West Virginia, it was in a bit more of a ravine. Bill had lived in the house since being a child, as had his father before him. He married his high school sweetheart when he was 20 and she was 15. It was a bit of an early start and was not given much hope of lasting by his friends and family of the day. One year into their marriage his wife was expecting their 1<sup>st</sup> child and he moved back into his fathers house, who then moved elsewhere.

Bill had a reasonably good job with a paper company, making carbon filters, somehow a byproduct of the paper industry. He retired with a full pension at age 60 and thought he had done well, and would be fine in retirement. He had grandchildren and was enjoying his retirement (yes still happily married) and lived well enough as he headed towards his 70s. Then in the space of about 3 years several things changed in his life.



His wife suffered a stroke and was in need of high levels of care. So he built an addition to the house with a larger bathroom and special shower, that allowed him to look after her needs in a wheel chair. At one point however, he broke his arm trying to help her and had to put her into a full help care facility. This was expensive, (\$10,000 US per month) and turned out to be not very good care. He moved her a couple of times to other facilities, but always found issues that left him very frustrated. At one point he was angry enough that in his words he had to confront management with guns. He was a little sheepish in admitting to this but wanted to point out the seriousness of the problem. Bill considered himself to be a church going Christian, a D. Trump supporter, and thought that solving a problem with a gun might be a little extreme, but not unreasonable in some circumstances.

After 3 tries he did find a care home he trusted, and his wife stayed there for some time till she passed away of a heart attack about 6 months before the flood. In the meantime, his own health was not the best either. At some point, he had injured his back, and needed a vertebra in his lower back, and one in his neck to be replaced (they use bone material from volunteer donations, or human cadavers). This set him back and restricted his activities for some time.

Then last summer he received a phone call from his daughter who lived about an hour's drive away upstream from him. She was warning him about and impending flood. He looked out the window at his creek. It looked a little high but no reason for concern he thought. "No dad you don't understand – there is a wall of water coming – get out of the house" his daughter said. In the end, he had about 30 minutes' time, during which he saved 2 cars, some family pictures, and some paper records. He watched from about 30 feet up and 100 feet away as a 10 foot high wall of water washed through the valley at 50 miles an hour. It took out the main road just above his house, and ruptured a 10" city water pipe. The ruptured pipe pointed in the direction of his house. Bill feels it was more the failure of the pipe that washed away the dirt around his foundation, which allowed the flood waters to then move the whole house downstream. It was considered to be a one in 1000 year event. Very few people had flood insurance for this sort of occurrence.

SO, Bill found himself with insurance – but no flood insurance, no house, and looking for help. He was still healing

from his back surgery, and the recent loss of his wife, so it was some months before he applied for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) help. He was assigned a case worker who then looked at his financial need, insurance, life savings etc and determined his assistance eligibility. He contributed \$20,000 of his own savings, and FEMA supplied the materials for a new house construction. MDS then partnered with FEMA to supply labour. And so it was that Esther and I were in Greenbrier West Virginia, helping these folks. Bill was on the job site every day, chatting and trying to be helpful where he could. When we left, the roof was shingled and the house was ready for services to be installed. As I write this I believe he has moved in.

As the week wore on we found out that Greenbrier is the home of The Greenbrier Classic PGA tournament in July of each year. It is a tourist destination with 4 other golf courses, all intertwined, all affected by the flood and just barely opening this spring (not to mention Oakhurst the oldest golf course in the US - they have sheep grazing on it just like in Scotland). Most of the people in the area work at the golf course and accompanying resort. I heard the resort employs 1500 people.

In the late 1950s, the USA Congress had its Senate Bomb Shelter constructed in a large addition that was added to the resort facilities. The shelter was hidden in plain sight (from 1962 till 1995) under the West Wing of the Greenbrier resort. It was hidden so well that companies would hold conferences in the bomb shelter – not realizing that large sections of their conference rooms were underground protected by concrete bunkers. The whole facility, golf courses and resort are privately held by the Governor of West Virginia, Jim Justice, a big MDS supporter, who gave us free tours of the bomb shelter - very cool. Due to the flood, there were only 9 holes open which we could have golfed for \$50 per day (in season they are \$400 if you can get on). On a normal year ie non flood year, they keep one course open all winter, and everything is open by Mid March.

On a side note, MDS has received a ton of funding in WV and has teamed up with an engineer and is building bridges (project is called Bridges), for home owners stranded by the flood - they expect to do this for 5 years - 1500 bridges. About 5 volunteers per week - should be a good project. If anyone is interested in more MDS advice (I see in the bulletin, that they are taking volunteers for Fort MacMurray) or is interested in going to an MDS site, please feel free to talk to us.

~ Erv and Esther Willms



*The MDS crew in Greenbrier West Virginia. Week of Feb. 27, 2017. MDS COOK is Maria, and behind her Gord Martens. You figure out where Erv and Esther are.*

## “Kia Ora”

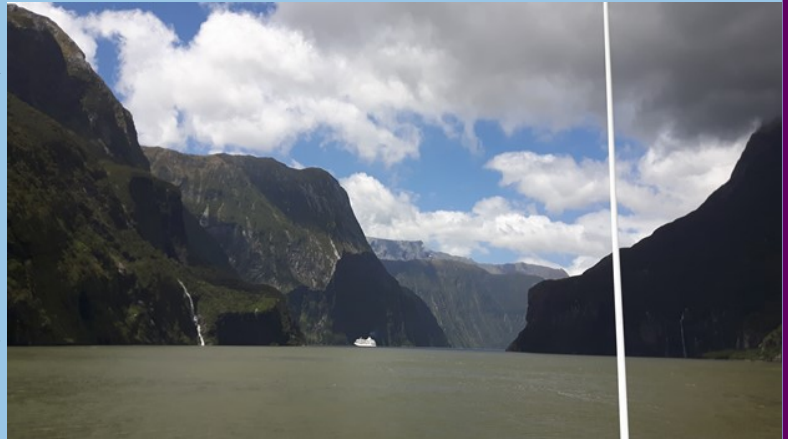
On January 21<sup>st</sup>, Peter & I flew to New Zealand, for a once-in-a-lifetime tour of that beautiful country Down Under. We landed in Auckland 2 days later, though we'd only traveled approximately 20 hours, due to the 16-hour time change. We met our tour host and 37 fellow tourists who were mostly Brits, Americans and Canadians, and one couple from Australia. We immediately sensed that this was going to be a fun group. Our 12-day tour would take us by Coach Bus from the north of the north island, to nearly the south of the south island.

“Kia Ora” is the greeting to which we became accustomed; in Maori it means “be well/healthy”, but it also just means “hi”. We visited the Waitomo Caves, home to thousands of Glow Worms, visited a Maori Culture Centre, where we ate traditional Maori food at a “Hangi Feast”, where the food is cooked underground, using geothermal heat. We watched sheep shearing, and sheep dogs herding their charges through obstacles, and this totally made me think of the movie “Babe”, where the little pig is equally successful at this event.

We had a kiwi encounter, in a Nature Park in Rotorua, where they are trying to re-establish the threatened kiwi population. Kiwi birds are native to New Zealand. We also explored the geothermal process. Our Maori guide explained that they heat everything with steam... water, heating their home, cooking certain foods., etc. Here the smell of sulphur in the air was everywhere.

We traveled to Wellington, New Zealand's capital, and from there boarded a Ferry for the South Island, approx. 3½ hours away. From Picton, instead of the shorter coastal highway, we had to take an inland route to Christchurch, to bypass the Earthquake damage in November at Kaikura, adding 3 hours to our travel time that day.

Our travels continued by TranzAlpine Train through the magnificent Southern Alps of New Zealand to Queenstown. From here we took 2 day tours, to Mt. Cook - New Zealand's highest mountain, and another to Milford Sound - probably one of the most beautiful places in the world! We traveled by Catamaran along the fiord, and out to the Tasman sea. The high steep cliffs loomed straight up above our heads.



We were happy that a full-sized Cruise Ship came along, which became a visual yardstick for those majestic cliffs.

After 12 days in beautiful and friendly New Zealand, we flew to Sydney, Australia to meet up with John & Jocelyn Thwaites, who had just arrived from Canada. And the fun continued!

Two of my favourite events happened with the Thwaites'. The first was attending the concert at the Sydney Opera House, featuring singer Lea Solonga of Disney fame, (Mulan, Aladdin, and also Les Mis and Miss Saigon) with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, under the Direction of Lea Solonga's brother Gerard (conductor and orchestrator). Of the 6 venues at the Sydney Opera House, this concert took place in the largest hall, which seats 2679, and this was the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 3 sold out performances! The encore was an Abba medley, and everyone was on their feet, singing and dancing. It was a great evening and my favourite day so far.



After Sydney we all flew to Ayers Rock, in the center of Australia, where it was over 40 degrees every day. This was one of Peter's favourite experiences: We traveled to Uluru, to watch the sunrise, and it was unbelievable. As the sun was preparing to rise behind us, a storm cloud was approaching from the north; I took time-lapse pictures of this amazing scene. Just as the sun began to shine on Uluru, the storm cloud hovered right above the famous rock and a double rainbow appeared, and Peter's thought was that this was just like a scene in “The Ten Commandments”. Even the tour guides who do this every day, pulled out their cameras and took pictures... it was so dramatic.







Fast forward about a week, and my 2<sup>nd</sup> favourite day was in Tasmania, at the Bono-rong Wildlife Park, where we saw rescue animals being prepared to be re-introduced to the wild, including Tasmanian Devils, Wombats, Echidnas, Quolls, and WE FED KANGAROOS! They licked the corn right out of our hands. And when we scratched their chests, as was suggested to us, they closed their eyes and writhed in joy, as they can't reach their chest with their short arms! You must realize that I generally don't even pet dogs!



One more special activity, before Peter & I returned to Canada, was in the Melbourne area, and going to "The Penguin Parade" at Phillip Island. Every evening at dusk the Little Penguins come from the sea and waddle to their burrows to feed their waiting chicks. There were thousands of them, and the excited little chicks were so noisy and happy to see their parents.

We returned home on Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> after an amazing time experiencing so many adventures, far too many to describe here. We met a lot of wonderful people, and had a lot of fun with the Thwaites'. Would we do it again?... absolutely, but there's still a lot more world to see.

~ submitted by Peter & Erika Janzen

## Barnaby, the camel with a penchant for cell phones

We (John and I) recently had the privilege of travelling to Australia and Tasmania, together with our friends, Peter and Erika Janzen. It's impossible to pick out the highlight of the trip, as it was wonderful in its entirety. Our luggage was lost for several days, we attended a fabulous performance of Lea Salonga together with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House, got drenched in the rain at the Sydney zoo, saw a rainbow over Ayers Rock at sunrise, saw rain and waterfalls off of Ayers Rock at sunset, fed kangaroos, hiked up to Wineglass Bay Lookout in Tasmania, as well as around Dove Lake at the base of Cradle Mountain. We toured beautiful (and I mean BEAUTIFUL) Freycinet Peninsula, explored the convict settlement at Port Arthur (where Britain sent her convicts from 1830-1877), and finished up by visiting orchardist friends in Australia.



Of the many highlights of the trip, a fun one that stands out was having the opportunity to ride a camel when we were at Ayers Rock. Actually, a dromedary. They only have one hump, not two. So, the saddles are designed to accommodate 2 riders. We happened along to the camel ranch around noon, not a popular time because of the heat (42C). The camels were tethered in a caravan of four, and since there were 4 of us, we each "got our own" camel. To mount our steeds, we got up on a platform and basically swung into the saddle as if it were a horse. (Note: each saddle had 2 seats, and the camels were tethered together rather

closely. Therefore, when getting into the back seat of the saddle, be careful not to swing that leg over wildly OR you will be kicking the camel behind you in the head....) The employees at the facility really knew their charges well, by personality. The camel I rode was named "Barnaby". We were told he had a bit of a temper, and therefore had to wear a muzzle. (Perhaps he had experienced too many unfortunate kicks in the noggin. We were all careful and did no harm.) Barny apparently had a penchant for cell phones....and not for texting either. He and I were behind John, on his faithful steed, Coober. Sure enough, partway through the ride, Barnaby started to demonstrate his tactics. He started nudging at John's hip, trying to dislodge a cell phone from wherever it might be hiding. (This time he didn't succeed due to the muzzle.) In past rides, he had been successful at this, and when the cell phone would hit the ground, he'd immediately snatch it up in his mouth, clamp down with his teeth and crunch it really well, then swing his head and throw it off to wherever. He had cost his owners too much money already, hence the muzzle. Our ride had no mishaps, and I totally enjoyed petting the head of Bonnie, the camel that Erika rode behind me. Bonnie seemed to appreciate getting the petting as much as I enjoyed giving it. In conclusion, God's world is beautiful, everywhere. See as much of it as you possibly can!

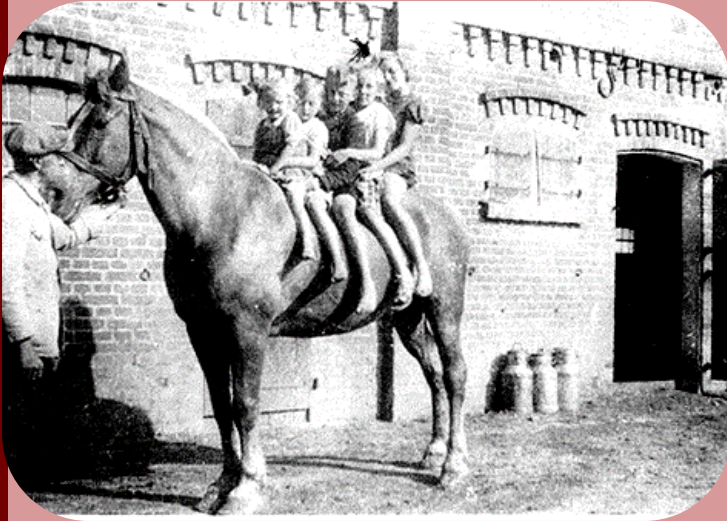


~ submitted by Jocelyn & John Thwaites



## My Love For Horses

My parents owned a mixed farm back in Prussia, Germany. I loved all the animals and I learned how dependent they were on us. Besides farming my father was also a horse breeder on the side so there were always young horses around. I loved to watch them running around and enjoying their freedom. I learned to ride, taking the horses to the pastures and bringing them back in the evening.



In

1944, when I was 14, one of the mares was ready to foal and I had asked my father if I could watch. There were complications and the mare died while giving birth but the foal was there and breathing. It was a beautiful little brown foal with a star. Then I heard my father talking with the vet saying they would have to put the foal to sleep because there was no substitute mare on hand to feed it. I started to cry and begged him and my mother to keep it alive and I would look after it. He gave me the responsibility to look after it. My mother put together some kind of formula, got a big bottle with a nipple and I had to feed it several times a day and once at night. I got up at five in the morning to feed it, clean it and to clean the stall. The foal stayed alive and grew. I called it "Inis". Her mother's name was Iris and the foal had to have a name starting with an "I" to be registered. With the birth of this little creature that God had created and kept alive, my love of horses grew and stayed with me until today. January 1945 came and we had to leave home. It was a very strong and cold winter and I could not take my little horse on the trek. One neighbour stayed back and promised to look after it. By that time it was already eating oats and hay. It was the last time I saw my little horse and I don't know what happened to it.

While staying a year in East Germany, I wrote a story about my little horse and sent it in for a contest for a children's book. One year later we were in West Germany when I received a letter from my grandfather who stayed in East Germany. My story was accepted and published in a children's book but they never sent me a copy.

In 1951 I came to Canada and got married to my husband Reinhard. We bought some land and started farming. In 1965 our oldest daughter, Vicky (9), started to ask for a horse. We got a

When she was 12 she got a horse. One year later I bought my first horse, Hanko, from the Lincoln Feed store. The owner had this brown mare with a white foal. I watched growing up and bought it as a 2 and a half year old stud. I trained it myself turning it into a beautiful

riding horse. After 20 years I had to put him to sleep after a very bad colic. Now I have a little Tennessee Walker mare. Her name is Aces Fatal Beauty but I just call her Beauty. There is a special bond between her and me because she was a gift from my husband Reinhard. Horses are very sensitive. When you get in the saddle they know how you feel. Whenever I have too much pressure or problems in my daily life I go out for a ride on my horse. There I see nature, sometimes a hawk or a coyote in my backyard. I feel a connection with God and it gives me peace and I can relax.

Through a close friend I have the chance to go to Arizona each winter. Riding in the desert is different but beautiful. In March the desert starts to bloom and comes alive. It is not just sand. There are different types of cactus, the mesquite bushes, and the Palo Verde trees. You see the different animals, the Gambel Quail, ten inches in height with a little plume on its head, the roadrunner, the coyote, rattlesnake, and if you ride down to the Salt River you might be lucky and see some wild horses. The desert goes on for miles and it is so peaceful because no motorized vehicles are allowed. And people respect and obey the law. The horse is still Number One down there. When I have a chance I rent a horse and go riding with my friends .





Now I am back home again and waiting for dryer and warmer weather to go riding with my Beauty. It is going a little slower to get in the saddle because I am turning 87 this year, but I still manage and Beauty is very patient. I love horses. God created a beautiful and intelligent animal and gave us Nature to enjoy it. I must say I feel sorry that slowly but surely we destroy what we have by building everything up into houses just for the mighty dollar!

~ submitted by Inge Enss



## Our Dog MOJO



We lost our dog, Charlie, very suddenly in June 2009 when he decided to run across Townline Road in front of a car chasing after a squirrel. Our daughter, Melanie, decided it was her mission to replace Charlie immediately as she was sure that her mom and dad were going to be desperately lonely after she left home to get married in August. Her post on Kijiji even stated her dilemma. After dragging us out to many a home to visit potential canine adoptions, we happened upon one post that I was determined to go along with as I really did not want another dog. Ironically, it was just around the corner on Line 1. The family had 4 dogs and needed to sell the puppy as he didn't fit in with the situation. They brought 'Mojo' out and Willi immediately said 'no' as this Lab was not white (all our others had been) and he was fat and terribly out of shape – at only 9 months old! They also wanted \$200 and the dog had no shots and wasn't fixed. I looked into his eyes and something about him made me want him. After a bit of debating we put Mojo at the back of the car and drove home with him. He seemed to be so very happy that we rescued him that he did everything to please us. In fact, after 9 years he is still like that. He cannot stand it if he displeases us. He is such a great dog. He has been a great companion for me when Willi was working out of town. He would guard our home from any potential danger and I also had someone to talk to. He never talked back! When we moved from the country into

town our back yard decreased considerably. There are no visible boundaries for a dog to see between the houses in our subdivision and yet Mojo stays within them.

We have walked Mojo almost every day since he came to live with us. Many times as I have gone for walks I have thought about the spiritual comparison that lies between myself and my Master, Jesus. Mojo trusts me totally and has learned that it's better to listen to me than even go after a tempting squirrel. All I have to do is quietly say his name and he knows what it means because he knows my tone. He never fights me when it's time to put on his leash as he knows that he cannot be independent for a good reason. He lies as near to our bedroom door as is allowed. He gets so excited when we feed him because he is hungry but has never torn anything apart or gone wild because we were late. He just trusts that we will come home and feed him eventually. One day, when Willi took him along to a vineyard he let him play and investigate to his heart's content. When he had finished picking the grapes that he needed to pick, Willi loaded the grapes and left. He went to visit a friend and was gone for quite a while before he realized he forgot all about Mojo. He went back to the vineyard and there was our dog, sitting at the side of the road where the truck had been, waiting for his master. I think to myself how I should be like this dog – trusting my Master totally, knowing that He knows best, listening, at all times, for His voice and knowing exactly what He wants from me because He is my Master and knows best. He can see the danger down the road which I cannot. He will give me what I need and I should wait, patiently and quietly. If only I could rest at His feet as Mojo does at mine, just being happy being there and not constantly restless and needing to be busy.

Our dog is a sweet, quiet old soul who keeps us busy but is worth it. He is so good with our grandchildren and gets so excited when they come over. It is ironic but I think it will be Melanie's children that will be lonely when Mojo goes.

~Submitted by Linda Pankratz

## May Birthdays

Hans Wiebe: 81 ( 5/3/36 )  
Aran Koop: 87 ( 5/23/30 )  
Emilie Pauls: 91 ( 5/26/26 )  
Albert Riemland: 81 ( 5/29/36 )

## June Birthdays

Justina Reimer: 88 ( 6/2/29 )  
Maria Dyck: 92 ( 6/5/25 )  
Mary Pompetzki: 80 ( 6/5/37 )  
Eckhard Schmidt: 82 ( 6/9/35 )  
Jacob Reimer: 92 ( 6/13/25 )  
Katharina Wiebe: 90 ( 6/13/27 )  
Henry Kopp: 89 ( 6/15/28 )  
Mary Dirks: 95 ( 6/18/22 )  
Gerald Enns: 94 ( 6/19/23 )  
Dietrich Claassen: 80 ( 6/19/37 )  
Werner Fast: 83 ( 6/20/34 )  
Ernie Pries: 82 ( 6/26/35 )  
Irene Wiens: 92 ( 6/29/25 )

## 25<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary

Chuck and Tatjana McShane: May 30<sup>th</sup> 1992

James and Carolyn Berg: June 6<sup>th</sup> 1992

## 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary

Erwin and Dora Helmelt: June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1967

## July Birthdays:

Anne Marie Enns: 82 ( 7/4/35 )  
Ingrid Reimer: 87 ( 7/12/30 )  
Eleonore Dyck: 84 ( 7/15/ 33 )  
Inge Enss: 87 ( 7/17/30 )  
Helene Nickel: 96 ( 7/18/21 )  
John Peters: 93 ( 7/23/24 )  
Mary Epp: 89 ( 7/24/28 )  
Erna Braun: 83 ( 7/26/34 )  
Erika Siemens: 82 ( 7/27/35 )  
Elizabeth Koehn: 91 ( 7/30/26 )  
Anneliese Fieguth: 81 ( 7/31/36 )  
Johannes E. Wiens: 80 ( 7/31/37 )

## August Birthdays:

Helen Epp: 80 ( 8/1/37 )  
Carl Neumann: 92 ( 8/3/25 )  
Wilhelm Schimann: 83 (8/3/34 )  
Klara Knelsen: 81 ( 8/7/36 )  
Erika Teichgraf: 91 ( 8/8/26 )  
Gerry Lamarre: 80 ( 8/13/37 )  
Louise Dyck: 90 ( 8/17/27 )  
Hilda Willms: 85 ( 8/20/32 )  
Ruth-Elisabeth Rempel: 86 ( 8/31/31 )

## 25<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversaries:

Siegmar & Paula Dau: 8/29/92

## 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversaries:

Arno & Hannelore Enns: 7/26/57



**MCC says THANK-  
YOU for the many  
quilts NUMC ladies  
have sewn!**



**...and the work goes  
on—rain or shine, hot  
or freezing. Nothing can  
stop these quilters!**





## Maple Syrup Cooking

In January of 2008 Rick and I, together with our three unmarried boys, moved to a new to us home situated on a 7-acre woodlot. It had been our dream to live in a rural setting yet close to amenities. One acre would have been plenty but 6 more were even more fun! We were told the woodlot had quite a number of sugar maple trees. Rick's step-dad, Henry Rahn, tapped sugar maple trees every spring while at the family cottage in Muskoka. The process was familiar. Rick and I talked about whether we should try this on our own.



A few years later while on a trip to Muskoka we stopped at a Maple Syrup supply shop and stocked up on the necessary supplies to start our very own maple syrup production. We didn't want the whole thing to become a big deal causing a lot of work so we only bought 15 pails, lids, spiles (to tap into the tree and hang the bucket from), drill bit (to bore into the tree), candy thermometer and filters (the finished syrup needs to be filtered). It has long been a tradition in our family to eat pancakes for lunch after church. We know approximately how much syrup we consume in a year. We very soon realized that making our own maple syrup was not going to be a cost saving venture. We would have to do this for fun only. At this point in our lives we felt that we didn't have enough time to feed

wood into a traditional wood burning maple syrup cooker (plus we were short of volunteers to split wood) so we bought a 3 burner propane stove on which to boil down the sap. That didn't do the job fast enough. We bought a much more powerful burner which required a huge pot while all of it needed to be serviced by 5 new propane tanks needing to be filled more than once during the process.

We don't cook maple syrup every year but the years we do we have fun. It is good exercise too. We go from tree to tree collecting our sap, sometimes more than once a day. We watch the weather forecast to help anticipate when and how quickly the sap will run. We store it in large green organics

bins on the North side of the house where it is out of the sun. We pack snow around the bins to keep the sap cool until we have enough to begin to boil it

down into syrup. The boiling down takes a long time, hours and days. We are pretty stuck at home at this time. The safety feature on the big boiler shuts off every 20 minutes. We asked our Papi to remove it. He said "no". It's really nice to get some visitors during this time since we can't go far if we want to keep the sap boiling. Due to this season's warm winter we started in February and left the sap running for two weeks. We wanted to make a little bit more than usual. Each year we run out. The kids complain we give too much away. We yielded 13 litres of syrup after boiling down about 520 litres of sap.



This particular year I did something different. As I collected the sap I thanked God for his amazing creation. As we boiled it I thanked him for the many awesome people he put into our lives, and after it was filtered and jarred I prayed that all those who would eat the syrup would be blessed by God's sweet provision. **What an amazing God we have!!**

*~ submitted by Erika Froese*

## Art Treasure found at MCC Thrift Centre



### MCC Photo/Ken Ogasawara

*Volunteer Louis Silcox and New Hamburg Thrift Centre Store Manager, Karla Richards, display the discovered treasure.*

An original Maud Lewis painting was discovered at the New Hamburg Thrift Centre. Volunteers at the New Hamburg Thrift Centre came across the unique piece while sorting through general donations. Maud Lewis is one of Canada's best known folk artists. How this painting ended up at the New Hamburg Thrift Centre remains a mystery. Karla Richards, General Manager of MCC's (Mennonite Central Committee) New Hamburg Thrift Centre explained "One of our amazing volunteers noticed the painting in a bin of art and before long it had been authenticated by JC Miller and Associates and the foremost expert on Maud's work, Alan Deacon, as the real thing".

The painting, entitled *Portrait of Eddie Barnes and Ed*

*Murphy, Lobster Fishermen, Bay View, N.S.* is painted on beaverboard, a pulp board, which is indicative of the types of media on which Maud Lewis' work was created. Living in poverty for most of her life, she sold her paintings from her small home near Digby, Nova Scotia for as little as \$2 and \$3. After achieving national attention through an article in the Star Weekly and being featured in a CBC TV documentary, two of her paintings were ordered by the White House during Richard Nixon's presidency. Lewis died in 1970. Since then, her paintings have sold for up to \$22,000.

MCC is inviting art lovers and the general public to an exciting evening celebrating Maud Lewis. The event begins with a special advance screening of the movie, *Maudie*, starring Sally Hawkins and Ethan Hawke, which celebrates Maud Lewis' life and has received awards and accolades, including the Super Channel People's Choice award at the Vancouver International Film Festival. Following the film screening, the painting will be available to view along with other Maud Lewis pieces from a local art enthusiast who has also written extensively about Maud Lewis.

The screening will take place on **April 20, 6:45 pm** at the Princess Twin Cinemas, 46 King Street North, Waterloo. The after party will start at **8:45 pm** at the Delta Hotel Waterloo. Tickets are \$50 each and are available at [mcco.ca/maud-lewis](http://mcco.ca/maud-lewis) or by calling 519-745-8458.

Bidding for the painting will open at the event and continue online until May 19. The original painting will be available to view from April 21 to May 19 at the **Homer Watson House and Gallery**, 1754 Old Mill Road, Kitchener. All proceeds from the sale will be donated to MCC's work in relief, development and peace.

"There's something moving about the work of an artist – who lived most of her life in poverty – supporting those also facing those same realities," added Rick Cober Bauman, MCC Ontario Executive Director. "By supporting emergency relief efforts, sustainable development initiatives, and peacebuilding projects in Ontario and around the world, the legacy of Maud Lewis' work will extend even further, making a real difference for others in need."

**Latest update on the auction sale of this painting: as of April 25, there have been 26 bids recorded with top bid being \$125,208.00. The painting is valued at \$16,000.00.**

**Message from the Editors Lani & Kathy:** The next issue of LIFE WITH US will be out in September, 2017. We wish all our readers a great refreshing summer, and hope you have enjoyed this latest issue. If you have or know of anyone who might have interesting & appropriate articles for the newsletter, please contact us. We also want to thank all those who have so willingly or unwillingly contributed to any of our past newsletters. Without your contributions, there would be no LIFE in our LIFE WITH US newsletter!

### LIFE WITH US NEWSLETTER

If you would like to submit any photos or articles for the newsletter, please contact any of the Newsletter Team of Editors:

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