

He has made  
everything  
beautiful  
in its time

Ecclesiastes 3:11



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# LIFE WITH US

At Niagara United Mennonite Church

## For the Beauty of the Earth

For the beauty of the earth,  
For the beauty of the skies,  
For the love which from our birth  
Over and around us lies,  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the beauty of each hour  
Of the day and of the night,  
Hill and vale, and tree and flow'r,  
Sun and moon, and stars of light,  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of human love,  
Brother, sister, parent, child,  
Friends on earth, and friends above,  
For all gentle thoughts and mild,  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of ear and eye,  
For the heart and mind's delight,  
For the mystic harmony  
Linking sense to sound and sight:  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our hymn of grateful praise.

Text: Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1835–1917  
Music: Conrad Kocher, 1786–1872

# From Dorchester to Deutschland...

Submitted by Rachael Peters

It's a quiet October evening at our house. Dave and I are sitting at the dining room table after dinner. My hands are clammy and I have butterflies in my stomach as Dave and I stare at the computer screen in front of us. I had been tracking flight prices for a few months and I couldn't believe I finally found it: a sale (a better deal than I had been hoping for) on roundtrip flights to Paris for the next summer. After quadruple checking our dates and the flight information, it was time. I clicked "buy now". That's all it took. We sat quietly at our dining room table, and I remember saying "I can't believe we just did that." All the excitement of the next 11 months of researching hotels, and transportation, and anticipating being reunited with family, all started with the click of a mouse. Although, zooming out to the larger picture, that's really just the tip of the iceberg for us. We'd been saving for this trip for five years, and had been *dreaming* about a trip like this for ten years. And that quiet October night at the dining room table, we booked it.

After months of pouring over maps, potential itineraries, and hours and hours of research, we came up with a travel plan that was 100% tailored to our interests. It was a ton of work, but an incredibly exciting process. Finally, it was August 17th. We rolled our suitcases down the front steps and locked the door behind us. I had no idea what to expect, but I was indescribably excited.

Here's the quick version of our trip:

5 days touring Paris

12 days catching up with Dave's family in Bielefeld and Espelkamp (split between two visits about a month apart)

6 days driving south through Germany along the Rhine and through the Black Forest

4 days exploring the Austrian alps

8 whirlwind days in Italy (Venice, Rome, and the Amalfi Coast)

6 days relaxing at a stunning resort in Greece

It's hard to find words to describe our experiences. So many have travelled these roads before us, and it's hard to not sound repetitive by attempting to describe how incredibly beautiful the sights and cultures are. AND, the food! Ohhhh the incredible food!!

In anticipation of writing this newsletter submission, I've been thinking a lot about how to sum up six weeks of adventures. I've tried writing from a few different perspectives, focussing on all the cities we saw, or all the food we enjoyed (boy are our pants tight now that we're back home!) or all the beautiful nature we seen... I've come to the conclusion that I can't do justice to everything. So, I'm going to narrow in on our favourite experience of the trip.

We were in Austria, surrounded by massive snow-capped mountains. We had purposely chosen to stay in the town of Stanzach because of its close proximity to Fallerschein, a small alpine village not easily accessible by car. Our plan was to spend the day biking to



**Relaxing at the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris**



**Small town of Maiori, Italy**

Fallerschein. We laid our biking trail out over breakfast, and formulated a plan. Our expectations were high, and were heightened even further by our server telling us about how she takes her family there every year, and how unreal the natural beauty is.

Not long after breakfast, we enthusiastically started our way on the "family friendly level" bike route, as the trail map called it. Well, let me tell you, our enthusiasm died quickly. That bike route was absolutely NOT family friendly. Now, I recognize that Dave and I weren't at our physical peak those days what with all the schnitzel consumption, but there is nooo waaaaay that route was family friendly! After

about a kilometre and a half of biking a steep uphill ascent, my enthusiasm level went from an excited "I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE GOING TO FALLERSCHEIN!!" to a wheezing "How... much... faaaaarther???" And that was only at kilometre 1.5 out of 11! I have to be truthful, and say that we *did* walk our bikes a good portion of the steepest section. (And pulled over, pretending to be interested in some aspect of the landscape when some crazy cyclist rounded the corner behind us, biking up at a half decent speed. I'm pretty sure he was defying gravity.)

The good thing that I didn't know at the time was that the first section was the steepest, and after about another kilometre or two, we completed that brutal section and the views became unbelievable. In total, the ride was 11km long, and we ascended almost 400 metres up.

We passed so many waterfalls that were coming down the mountain and the sound of the water coupled with the fresh and crisp mountain air was all the motivation we needed to keep on our way to find Fallerschein. A few kilometres later we found the trail that led off the main road towards the village. It got steep and quite rocky, but we were close, we could feel it!

Dave was biking in front of me, and after a few sharp turns, some more huffing and puffing, he stopped his bike, looked back at me and smiled as he saw what was around the last bend. We had arrived. The view around the final turn into Fallerschein was the most incredible thing I have ever experienced.

The depth of the mountains that our camera couldn't capture... the pastoral sound of cowbells close up, and quietly ringing father in the distance... birds chirping, the fresh morning alpine air with just a hint of farm... the feeling of accomplishment after the long bike ride and the pure joy of taking in so much beauty.... it was unreal.

We spent the next few hours exploring the tiny area, meeting villagers, and eating lunch. We left our bikes for a bit



**Impossibly blue water in Greece**

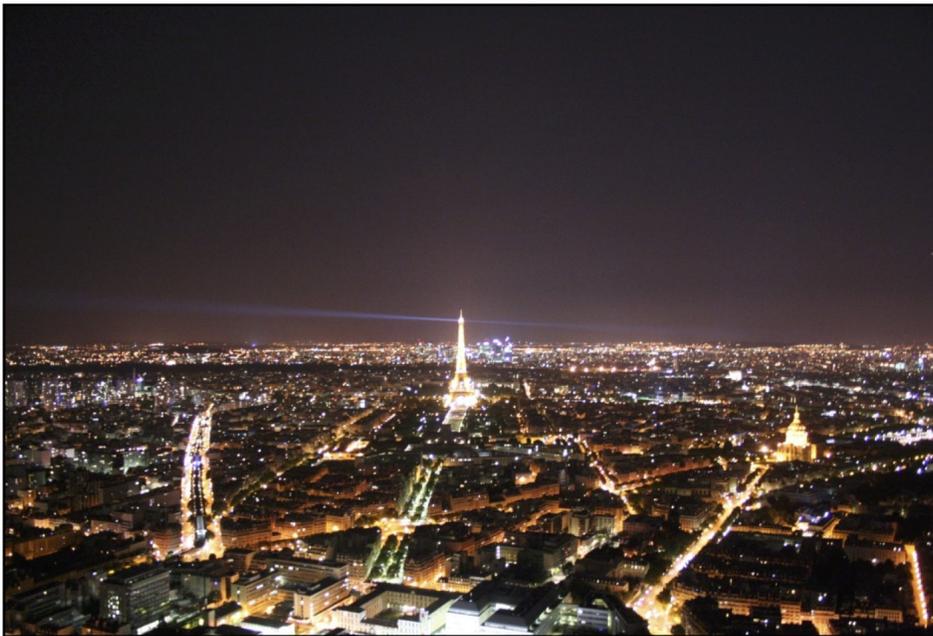
and climbed part of the mountain to get a higher vantage point over the village. There was an alpine stream and we drank the water right from the brook. We pet some goats and donkeys, took some photos, and attempted to just take it in.

When it was time to go back, I realized how fun the ride back was going to be! I almost forgot how much work it was going up. We barely had to pedal at all! Dave liked going faster than me, so he would round a few corners, then wait for me to catch up. I had no intention of plummeting

to my death, so I held on to that brake for dear life, and only let it go towards the end when steep cliffs were no longer a factor. Going fast towards the end of the bike ride was a purely joyful experience. We finished our day off with a trip to an outdoor giant hot tub with underwater loungers and strong water jets. We relaxed our tired muscles surrounded by the snowcapped mountains we had ascended earlier. It was a heavenly day.



***Our first glimpse rounding the bend into Fallerschein...***



***Nothing like the Eiffel Tower at night...***

In total, I calculated 50kms of travel by boat, 300kms of travel by bus and taxi, 750kms by train, 3000kms driving in our rental cars, and 3750kms by airplane! And that's without including our flights from Toronto to Paris, and back! It was quite the adventure.

Before we left, I started a blog to keep our family and friends up to date on our trip. If you're interested in reading more about our travels or seeing some more pictures, you can check out the blog: "From Dorchester to Deutschland". (We lived on Dorchester St. in NOTL when I started the blog.) If you do, feel free to leave a

comment! [www.fromdorchestertodeutschland.wordpress.com](http://www.fromdorchestertodeutschland.wordpress.com)

I'm also hoping to keep our blog up to date on our next adventure! In February, Dave and I will be volunteering with Mennonite Disaster Service in Fort Myers, Florida. It's our first experience with MDS, and we are so excited! See you on the blog!

## Feeling God's Hand of Peace

As I submit my requisition form to the receptionist for blood work I notice the principal diagnosis 'Sudden death' is listed as the reason for the request for Genetic testing. We need to determine whether the cause of my cardiac arrest is of genetic origin. As I review the requisition I am struck by the fact that this still seems surreal even after all these weeks.

On July 27 2017, while having a Prolotherapy procedure done by my naturopathic doctor, my heart stopped beating. Proliferative Therapy, is a recognized orthopedic procedure that stimulates the body's healing processes to strengthen and repair injured and painful joints and connective tissue. This was the second set of injections into the ligament tissue supporting my spine. The first one had gone okay. I've been having trouble with pain in the groin area, buttocks and nerve pain radiating down my legs for many years. It had gotten to the point where I needed a solution. Conventional intervention has not been helpful to this point.

Prolotherapy was a procedure I had heard of as a natural remedy boasting great success (although not permanent) to help regain mobility. I had done my research and learned that I was a candidate who would benefit from this procedure. 4 sets of injections are done 5 weeks apart to realize its benefit.

On July 27, 2017 I was scheduled for my second set of injections. I had just finished the 12 injections into my back and was asked to change position for the next set of injections. I had just repositioned myself when I felt overwhelmed by the need to rest my head, just for a moment, or so, I thought. I lowered my head on to my hands and then slipped into unconsciousness. It was as simple as that, nothing dramatic, I just, quietly, slipped into oblivion.

Lucky for me, the attending staff was not oblivious and immediately sprang into resuscitative action. My doctor began CPR to keep blood flowing to my brain while the attendant ran to get the oxygen, the AED machine, call 911 and bring in the other doctor. It took 12 minutes for the paramedics to arrive. Although they were close by, they were stuck in traffic.

Two and a half hours later I woke up to discover I was in a hospital. My very relieved doctor and Rick were at my side. I was wired up to a heart monitor and wearing a hospital gown. My preoccupation with my missing bra assured the doctor I had no brain damage. He left while the nurse allowed the rest of my gathered family to assure themselves their mother was alive and well.

After 1 ½ days in emergency I was admitted to the Critical Care Unit where my heart activity continued to be monitored very closely. The staff was kind and attentive. I was grateful for a lot of visitors. They helped me pass the time



since I was feeling fine.

After having been resuscitated by the AED machine in the doctor's office my heart rhythm returned to its normal rhythm. Despite lots of different tests, 3 cardiologists couldn't definitively determine what caused or why my heart stopped and I was discharged after 8 days.

Very shortly thereafter my care was changed to the Hamilton General Hospital where I was diagnosed with Long QT Syndrome which is a disorder of the heart's electrical activity. It can cause sudden, uncontrollable, dangerous arrhythmias in response to exercise or stress. It is a rare diagnosis and important to find the origin for effective treatment.

At the time this letter goes to print we are still waiting for the genetic test results which can help determine why I have a Long QT.

Heart failure is dramatic for all those closely involved. It takes time to process what happened and why. Throughout all of this I have felt God's hand very closely guarding and protecting my life. In Philippians 4:7 we read "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." I feel this peace. My heart is in God's hands and I completely trust Him with it. Words are not enough to express my family's gratitude and how humbled we are by the amount of prayer lifted on my behalf by our church community.

My family and my church family are awesome. I am so thankful to each and every one of you.

~ submitted by Erika Froese

## Celebrating Milestones

On November 8, 2017 my French teacher Mme. Zoccoli stopped the class just before the bell rang to say that one of the students in the class will be receiving the Volunteer Under 21 award through the Niagara-on-the-Lake Annual Recognition Awards. Then she called me up and I was honoured that she had nominated me. She also said that I would be receiving this award at Town Hall on November 13.

At Crossroads Public School I am an executive member of the Me2We. Me2We helps other people by running campaigns and raising awareness to problems or situations. For example this Christmas the Me2We ran a fundraiser called " 'Tis the week before Christmas". We collected over 500 lbs of food, we collected hats, scarves, mitts and toys for kids for Christmas. On the last day before Christmas break we made hot chocolate and cookies for \$1.00 each. We raised \$945.00 to support Community Care and The Books for Burundi Project.



In September 2016 and 2017 I was lucky to get a ticket to We Day in Toronto. We Day is an event in Toronto that you can't buy tickets to, you earn your way through your services. When I went in 2016, I learned of a campaign to recycle batteries to save lives in Kenya. It is called the Zinc saves Lives Battery Campaign. Zinc deficiency is a major health concern in Third World Countries causing many deaths every year. I asked Mme. Zoccoli if I could run a campaign like this and she agreed. Some friends and I set up a bin and explained to the school how the program ran so they could drop off their batteries. We counted them and there was close to 4,000 batteries. We did so well and we decided to continue this program into the following years.

Through this program I realized that each person can make their own difference and help to shrink our carbon footprint while helping others along the way. **Kids can make a difference too!**

~ submitted by Logan Friesen



It's always rewarding to acknowledge outstanding young volunteers for their involvement in the community, and Crossroads Public School student Logan Friesen is a youngster who is passionate about making a difference. She is an active member of the school's Me2We club, which is dedicated to helping less fortunate children around the world. Logan is a kind, caring and compassionate girl who recognizes that service above self is the way to help make a difference. She loves to lead campaigns, and has been extremely enthusiastic about collecting batteries for a company that removes zinc from them and turns it into electronic tablets that are then distributed to needy countries. She has also helped organize a We Scare Hunger campaign to raise awareness about hunger in our local community. This group at Crossroads collected more than 800 pounds of food for those in need last Christmas. Those who know Logan look forward to watching grow in her leadership abilities, and continue to inspire others.

**Winning the Provincial Championship was amazing!** Last year we lost out to Woodbridge and this year we came back swinging our bats. We worked hard all summer practicing and learning different strategies. We learned our positions and it helped me with patience, focus and trying again to learn from what I did wrong the first time. Being a part of a team is fun and even better when you get to see your friends each time you play. My dad practiced with me and we spent a lot of time together.



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My grandpa came to see the tournament that day and both him and my dad were proud of our team. This was what I spent the most time on during the summer and I am happy that my dad was there to help.



### Provincial champs!

FRED MERCINI/SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE  
The Niagara-on-the-Lake Lakers in the mite division of NOTL Minor Softball were recognized at council Monday night for their accomplishments this summer. Ending regular season play undefeated, they played in the provincial championship tournament in Woodbridge, winning three and losing one on their way to bringing home the gold medal.

## Oliver's Lessons to Live By

I actually didn't want a dog. I always *liked* dogs, but with three young children, a part time job, a household to run and the work of settling into a new home that we had recently moved into, the thought of adding a brand new puppy to an already busy life seemed far too burdensome and exhausting to me. I also knew who was going to end up with the job of primary caregiver – me! Well, seven years later we can't imagine life without our wonderful dog Oliver, a gentle, shaggy haired Golden Doodle, who is never too far from my side and has brought our family countless moments of laughter, joy and love. Surprisingly, Oliver has also taught us some things about the way to approach each day!

### Be a Good Friend

Oliver and I walk our neighbourhood usually three times a day. Sometimes these walks can take a while as he has many people to meet and greet along the way. Occasionally, we have to stop in front of a house while he pauses and waits to see if one of his favourite people might be home and just might need to pet him. Oliver approaches everyone he encounters without discrimination. Everyone is worthy of a kind greeting and a wagging tail in his eyes!

### Love is an Action Word

Oliver doesn't just feel love, he is the king of expressing his excitement and enthusiasm upon seeing his family and friends. Whether we have been away ten minutes or ten weeks he will always greet us like it's the first time! One of his most favourite moments is when his Oma and Opa pull up on the driveway. Before they have even gotten out of their car, Oliver eagerly sits on the front steps, his body shivering with excitement while he waits for their hugs and a pet on the head. Then with the happiness of a hundred people

he bounds off, running lap after lap around our yard as if to say "This is AWESOME!! My Oma and Opa have come for a visit!". Sometimes it is easy to get caught up in the busy-ness of life, but Oliver reminds us not to forget to take time to show the ones we care about how we feel. A hug and a kind word go a long way!

### Don't Forget to Play!

Kids and dogs are always ready to play, but as we get older it seems there is less time or interest in taking a moment to just have fun. There is always one more seemingly important thing to do. Oliver however, doesn't think so! He has the uncanny ability to show up, ready for a walk or a game of fetch when we most need the break! He may lean his head on your lap, or place his paw on your knee and stare deeply into your eyes. Then if that doesn't work and his message isn't getting through, you will soon have a collection of socks and underwear at your feet! You can't help but laugh at his persistence and join him in taking a moment to get up and go outside. And as always, he is right and you feel refreshed and ready to get back to work!

### Celebrate the Ordinary Moments

One of the most joyful parts of owning Oliver, is watching how he fully embraces every moment of his day, assuming that something great is just about to happen! Even the smallest insignificant events are approached with wagging enthusiasm. "Hey! I'm going for a walk!", "A visitor is at the door!", "Oh my gosh! There's a squirrel!!!", "Yay!! Sasha, Julian and Christian are here!", "I found my ball!". Everyday is a good day in Oliver's books and it's all about celebrating the ordinary moments. It's a good lesson and one that I've taken to heart. It is so easy to get caught up in worries and daily concerns and he reminds me to make the most of everyday and not to take myself or life not too seriously.

~ submitted by Marion Griese



## Reflections on Youth, 2017

From September-December, 2017, I had the opportunity to serve Niagara UM through the role of Youth and Education Director. Over these four months, I had the privilege of getting to know many of our youth, witness the selflessness of volunteers in our community, and experience many moments that grew and strengthened my faith in others and in the active, constant presence of God in our lives.

With our focus on relationships and our church's mission (*We are called to be servants of Christ in our community*) in our hearts, the youth responded positively to an idea presented to connect with youth from the Royal Elite International Academy, the private high school just up the road. The academy hosts 150 international students around the same age as our youth, who, as so many in our congregation can relate to, are new to Canada and need to be extended a warm welcome to our country.

An initial call to the principal of the academy was wholeheartedly received, and plans began in October for an event to take place to connect the youth from the two communities. On Friday, November 10th, we gathered in the staff room of the academy for what turned out to be an opportunity to not only serve but be served by others in our community. Youth from the academy met hours before our youth arrived to prepare their favourite dishes from five countries. When our youth arrived, a feast awaited them: spring rolls from Vietnam, chicken wings from China, enchiladas from Mexico, spiced chicken and rice from Nigeria, and the most Russian of Russian salads from... well, Russia (think beets, potatoes, sauerkraut, and pickles). A quick game of "Get to Know You" Bingo broke the ice, and we dug into the food, followed by our group's contribution of a most Canadian dessert - ice cream sundaes.



Following the meal, we moved to the gym for a game of Progressive Pictionary and Minute-to-Win-It. Our night concluded with a group photo and an open invitation from our group and from the academy to future events. I received a "bonus blessing" when, as I dropped off a Vietnamese student at her aunt's restaurant in Niagara Falls, I was invited in for a bowl of Pho and a cup of tea.



Initiating this event required that our leadership team and youth step outside of the familiar comfort zones, which I find God often calls us to do in order to live into the faith and fullness of life that I think God wants for us. The reward was huge. We discovered a rich and diverse community a stone's throw away from our own. We experienced service being flipped right on its head as we were the recipients of the academy's generous hospitality. Since that event, the academy has been included each week in invitations to our youth events, and we had two youth from the academy come out a few weeks ago. A meeting is planned to get the ball rolling on another collaborative event in the new year. The principal at the academy has hopes for the development of conversation cafes to help students practice their English, which has the potential to involve not only our youth, but any members of our congregation. By saying yes to the initial experience, the door has been opened for future relationships to grow. I am incredibly inspired by the youth who attended and engaged in this event, and am awed by the God whose plans are invariably greater than the plans

we can come up with ourselves, who asks us to take the first step in faith in order to show us just how rich and full our lives can be.

As our youth continue to meet on Friday nights, my hope is that they will come to know how actively God is at work in our lives, how deeply loved they are, and how huge and awesome God's plans are for us when we open ourselves to expanding our comfort zones and responding to opportunities as they arise.



It has been an absolute privilege to serve this community over the past four months, and I am so grateful to each and every youth for the gifts and personality that they bring to our church family.

~ submitted by Ellery Rauwerda



## Home on the Range

O give me a home where the buffalo roam,  
Where the deer and the antelope play,  
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word,  
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

### Chorus

Home, home on the range  
Where the deer and the antelope play  
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word  
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

Where the air is so pure, the zephyrs so free,  
The breezes so balmy and light,  
That I would not exchange my home on the range  
For all of the cities so bright.

### Chorus:

How often at night, when the heavens were bright,  
With the light of the twinkling stars  
Have I stood here amazed and asked as I gazed,  
If their glory exceeds that of ours.

### Chorus:

*These lyrics were originally written by Dr. Brewster M. Higley of Smith County, Kansas, in a poem entitled "My Western Home" in 1872.. In 1947, it became the state song of the U.S. state of Kansas.*



Dr. Brewster M. Higley &  
his homestead in Smith County Kan-



## KANSAS—The sunflower state

I'm sure many of you recognize this song from your elementary school days. I know I learned it at Virgil Public School from my music teacher Mr. Timms. It was always a favourite of mine along with Red River Valley. In time, I discovered that Red River Valley originated in Manitoba and I have now visited the Forks at the intersection of the Red & Assiniboine Rivers in Winnipeg quite often with our children and grandchildren. Home on the Range rested quietly in my memory bank until about 5 years ago when Will Friesen came into our lives. As we got to know each other better, we became familiar with Kansas and the fact that many Mennonites live there in counties around Newton, Wichita, Hesston, Meade, Hillsboro – names that are probably familiar to many of us from our Mennonite connections in Canada & Paraguay.

Important information we gathered from Will was that although the Mennonites had moved to Kansas from Russia already in the 1870's, they still had a familiarity with German – especially Plautdietsch (low German), some of them even still speaking it among themselves during quilting times. Among the enlightenment we received from Will about Kansas, also came the facts that Kansas celebrates Kansas Day on Jan. 29, has the sunflower as its state flower, is home to Dorothy of the Wizard of Oz, Gunsmoke in Dodge City, Laura Ingalls "Little House on the Prairie", and finally has as its state song, "Home on the Range". Kansas now felt much closer than it ever had, because of the connection to the song of my childhood, and Will won himself a spot in our family as a Mennonite from Kansas who "spoke" Plautdietsch, sang German hymns, and celebrated Kansas Day by singing "Home on the Range". We went so far as to honour Kansas and Will by singing "Home on the Range" with our male choir at one of our concerts with Will singing a solo – well done too!

And so our knowledge of Kansas grew and grew through our endless queries – about farming, size of fields covered in the famous red winter wheat brought to Kansas from Ukraine by Mennonites, helping to make Kansas the "breadbasket of the world", size and type of machinery used for harvesting, meaning of a Kansas shed as compared to our tool sheds (huge building to house combines, tractors), weather conditions, use of windbreaks to shelter animals and wheat fields from strong Kansas winds, reasons for and results of the famous/infamous Dust Bowl of the 1930's, living conditions during those early times, types of churches, hymns sung in churches, Mennonite colleges, and on and on.

Over the period of more than 100 weekends, Will never tired of answering our endless questions and telling us about his beloved Kansas. And so we thought we had become quite knowledgeable about Kansas, ready to see in person how Kansans lived in this land of endless wheat fields and blue skies. So when Will found a teaching position in Garden City Kansas Community College, we were excited to make our trip to visit our “son” in his homeland/state. I must say that we were not disappointed. I will try to describe our Kansas experience mainly through pictures and captions.

Will was an amazing tour guide for us in Kansas. He had planned and prepared trips to see parts of Kansas that he thought we would enjoy, and he certainly succeeded—actually beyond our expectations. We put many miles on his car touring the countryside between important cities and towns. From the very first leg of our journey from Wichita to Garden City I was overwhelmed by the vastness of the countryside, with golden wheat fields stretching beyond the horizon, where they met the infinite blue skies. I kept snapping pictures, trying in vain to capture the beauty of Kansas fields and skies. But none of the pictures do justice to the true beauty and vast expanse of Kansas!



- no shortage of wind to drive the myriads of wind turbines



To show us that not all of Kansas is flat prairie land, Will showed us Pawnee Rock, Flint Hills, Meade State Park lake—not flat, but still beautiful!



Why are there round wheat fields? Large sprinkler-irrigation systems pivot around a central pump drawing water from underground aquifers—an “aha” moment for me!



## Churches & Schools



### Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church

- result of the whole village of Alexanderwohl leaving Russia in 1874 to settle together near Goessel Kansas.



“The Cathedral of the Plains” - built in 1908 by Volga-Germans, fleeing from the steppes of Russia in 1876.



### Three Mennonite Colleges in Kansas :

**Bethel**

**Tabor (Will's Alma Mater)**



**Hesston**



**Dr. William Friesen's first position as chemistry professor!**



## Friends & Family



Home in Garden City, Kansas



Friesen Family



Utje (Agatha) & Will enjoying her Sommborscht with us & John W.

Practising Plautdietsch with Kayla & laughing at variety of PD "dialects" between John W. & us.



Enjoying lunch with Sam & Allison (Will's sister).



The highlight of our trip to Kansas was meeting and visiting with Will's wonderful friends & family. Everyone showed us warm hospitality & we spent many hours chatting & laughing together. We feel like we have gained new family members in Kansas through our connection with Will.



## Bees, Wonderful Bees

*In the March/April issue of Life With Us Rita Epp told us about John's bee keeping undertaking and their many interesting and sometimes down right exciting experiences with it. We learned a lot about these amazing, hardworking creatures. Then in November she invited John and Howard Bogusat, an other enthusiastic beekeeper, to our monthly seniors' tea. Now we had a real show and tell time because they brought a lot of their paraphernalia along, and I believe quite a few of us in that moment had the strong desire to join the bee keepers movement.*

*~ Lani Gade*

### Here are some excerpts from Howard's presentation that afternoon:

A strong hive in the summer will build up to a strength of 45-85,000 bees. The hive consists of 1 queen who is female and fertile, thousands of undeveloped females which are the workers, and hundreds of male drones who do not work. It is thought that they are there for general morale and are of course useful for mating with the queen. The queen is good for 2-3 years, a drone for the summer only, and the workers live 6-8 weeks till they work themselves to death. The queen is capable of laying up to 2,00 eggs a day in the May-June period and can lay male or female at will depending on the cell size.

In the winter the bees cluster in a ball and try to maintain close to 92 degrees in the centre, while in the summer they fan air currents around the hive in order to maintain the same 92 degrees. Their noses are so good that they can smell a source of nectar up to 2 miles away or more.

It is interesting what the Bible has to say about bees and honey.

Honey is mentioned 58 times in the Bible. John the Baptist existed on locusts and honey it is written. - 21 times it is mentioned along with the word milk. A land flowing with milk and honey suggested a land filled with the abundance of good things. In nature, fertile land produces honey by itself. One clear implication of the presence of wild honey is the existence of ample water and fertile soil that nectar plants require. An abundance of wild honey would imply other desirable conditions about a land and its climate. Surely, the ancients observed that honey was most plentiful in areas where their livestock produced the most milk. In these same pastures, rich in greens for grazing, would grow an abundance of flowers for bees.

And who hasn't heard about or even experienced the many health benefits of honey.

Many of you are still familiar with the term "quilting bee" or "barn raising bee". Even today in Amish settlements this tradition continues. At a barn raising you may see up to 700 men working on the building of a barn. With that many men it can take under 6 hours to finish a barn. Their sense of community and cooperation reminds me of the bees.





## Celebrating Canada's 150th Anniversary

How best to **celebrate Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** as a Country. This question crossed our minds as all kinds of interesting events were being planned across the nation and we wanted to be a part of it! When planning our annual camping trip last January Laury and I along with brother John and sister in law Janet agreed unanimously to explore parts of Canada that were new to us. Quickly we came up with a trip that included Quebec City, Gatineau, Ottawa and ending up at Sand Banks Provincial Park.



### Highlights:

A 30 km bike ride along the St. Lawrence River that landed in the pier area of Quebec City. Wandering around Quebec City with all its cobble stone streets, amazing old world architecture and European charm was topped off with numerous poutine tastings. So awesome!

Next came 5 days spent in the Gatineau hills and Ottawa. The city was full of 150<sup>th</sup> activities. We got back on our bikes to explore the parliament, Rideau Canal, Byward Market and The Governor Generals Residence Rideau Hall, and you guessed it more poutine.

The final leg of our journey brought us to Sand Banks Provincial Park. A place that we have wanted to camp for many years. The bikes came out again as we explored the campground and enjoyed the beaches. Erv and Esther joined us for a few days of relaxing on the beach.

On reflection of this trip we were so thrilled to experience these amazing parts of our country and thrilled to call ourselves Canadians. This is definitely a trip that we will not forget,

~ submitted by Ron Riediger



## Harold's Historical Finds from Past Bulletins:

*This is too good to pass by:* Unsern Gemeindegewistern Jacob und Anne-Marie Enns ist am 13. Januar 1959 ein Soehnen namens Rudy David geschenkt worden. Wir als Gemeinde wuenschen das Elternpaar Gottes Segen und Gedeihen. (*This means our own Rudy Enns is getting close to 60 years old!!*)

*From the January 20, 1963 Bulletin:* **Thank You** John and Lucy Harder wish to thank you for flowers, prayers and sympathy expressed in the remembrance of Kathy who passed away at the age of four months on January 15, 1963.

*The work of our church treasurer can be time consuming. Bill Goertz, our church treasurer from a much earlier time had the additional responsibility of managing the Virgil branch of what was then the Niagara Township Credit Union, currently the Meridian Credit Union. I take it, from the announcement in the January 14, 1962 bulletin, that the time spent on church work closed in on time spent on his regular job when the bulletin announced:*

*"A Note from the treasurer: Members should try to avoid giving their donations to the treasurer during his working hours at the Niagara Township Credit Union."*

*Somewhat I have in my mind, a constant stream of alte Omas talking in Plautdietsch no less, and sitting in front of an increasingly impatient upstart of an almost-English-only Bill Goertz, \$10.00 in hand for the church offering plate and a bag of fresh zwieback baked for the young Bill.*

*~ submitted by Harold Neufeld*

## Book Corner

~ by Debbie Fast

### The Innkeeper of Ivy Hill

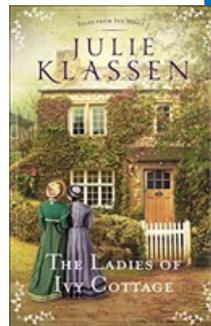
Tales from Ivy Hill 1

Julie Klassen

"The lifeblood of the village of Ivy Hill is its coaching inn, The Bell. When the innkeeper dies suddenly, his genteel wife, Jane Bell, becomes the reluctant landlady. Jane has no idea how to manage a business, but with the town's livelihood at stake & a large loan due, she must quickly find a way to save the inn.

Despite their stranded relationship, Jane turns to her resentful mother-in-law, Thora, for help. Formerly mistress of The Bell, Thora is struggling to overcome her losses & find purpose for the future. As she works with Jane, two men from her past vie for her attention, but Thora has promised herself never to marry again. Will one of them convince her to embrace a second chance at love?

As pressure mounts from the bank, Jane employs new methods, & puzzles over the intentions of several men who seem to have a vested interest in the place, including a mysterious newcomer with secret plans of his own. With the help of friends old & new, can Jane restore life to the inn, & to her empty heart as well?"



### The Second Half

Lauraine Snelling

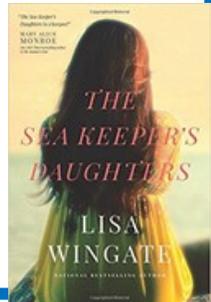
"Mona & Kenneth Sorenson are approaching the best years of their lives. Ken is days away from retiring after a successful career as the dean of students at Stone University, & Mona's biggest concern is keeping him from finding out about his surprise party. While she is building a business of her own, they're looking forward to traveling, occasional fishing trips with the grandchildren, & limitless hours in the garden. It's what they deserve after years of careful planning.

But life changes in an instant when they get a call from their son, a special forces officer in the Army, who is being deployed immediately to an unknown destination. Since his wife walked out on him & their two young children, his only option is to ask his parents to assume guardianship. Stepping back into the role they thought was behind them, Mona & Ken will need to find a way to embrace the second half that they never anticipated."

### The Sea Keeper's Daughters

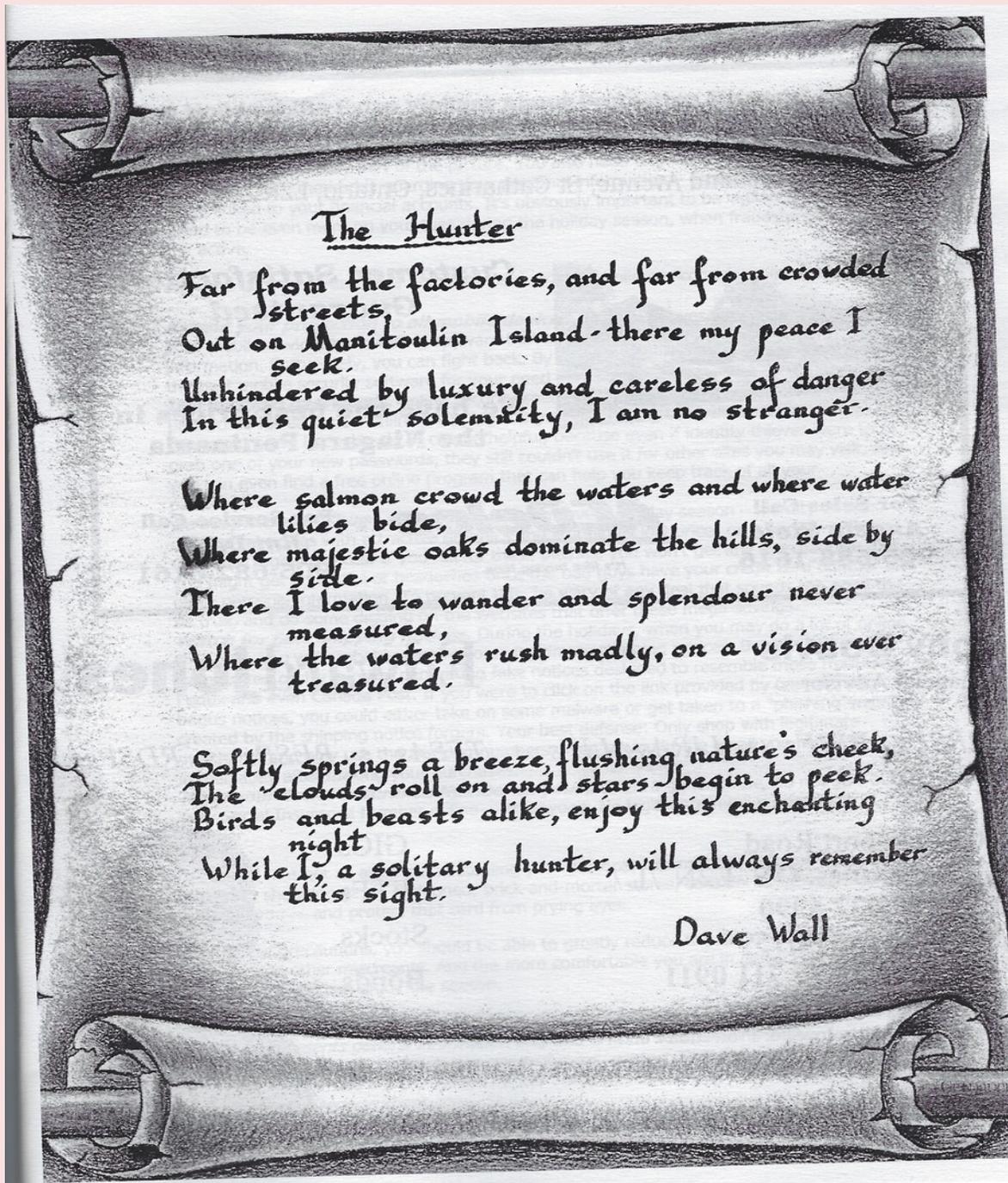
Lisa Wingate

"Whitney Monroe is desperate to save her high-end restaurant from a hostile takeover. The inheritance of a decaying Gilded Age hotel on North Carolina's Outer Banks may provide just the ray of hope she needs. But things at the Excelsior are more complicated than they seem. Whitney's estranged stepfather is entrenched on the third floor, & the downstairs tenants are determined to save the historic building. Searching through years of stored family heirlooms may be Whitney's only hope of quick cash, but will the discovery of an old necklace and a Depression-era love story change everything?"



John and I had the opportunity to visit with Dave and Helen Wall recently. Mr. Wall celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on December 15<sup>th</sup> and we had a wonderful time sharing stories from the past. As conversations go, we meandered to many different topics, including his hunting and fishing days. I was surprised to find out that Mr. Wall is quite a poet. He showed me a poem that he had written as a young man about his hunting trips to Manitoulin Island. The poem was recently published in a seniors magazine. My thoughts went immediately to our newsletter, and with his permission, I am pleased to share it with all of you.

~ submitted by Rita Epp



D

Ni - ag - ara moon, keep  
 Ni - ag - ara moon, keep  
 Ni - ag - ara moon, you were



B

Ni - ag - ara moon, we on - ly see by your light;  
 Ni - ag - ara moon, on the wa - ters at night;  
 Ni - ag - ara moon, you are show - ing us His love;

### Tribute to Eric Goerz and John Harder

Seeing as Eric Goerz is having a birthday in January, and John Harder has just recently sadly left us for Gloryland, I thought I would write a short tribute to two of my childhood heroes. I remember very vividly the cool cowboy hats and string ties (bolo ties) worn by Johnny and Eric as they sang some very cool songs. Actually, I must admit I don't remember any of the songs they sang, but they sure were cool! As a kid of 7 or 8, who didn't get to hear much music outside of hymns in church, the Peach Picker's country music caught my ear. One song I do remember is "Niagara Moon". I must have heard it on the radio that my teenage brother was listening to, and it was very special to me. But I don't think that the music was the main attraction for me. These young men had just the sweetest smiles and knew how to make a girl swoon. So when the Peach Pickers performed in church or at weddings, the heart of this little girl went pitter patter. Later, when both Johnny and Eric led junior choirs, male choirs, Sunday School groups, they remained special to me. By then I recognized the quality of their voices and the talents they both displayed on various instruments. They have both influenced my life in showing that musical talents can be expressed and appreciated in the gospel setting. I realized at a young age that Eric and Johnny had made a very conscious and difficult decision to leave the secular ambitions behind and dedicate themselves to singing the country gospel song. The Christian spiritual tradition inherent in their Mennonite heritage won out. Later on, the revived "Peach Pickers" took on a 5-year Christian fund-raising commitment to benefit the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine. What a wonderful service!

Thank-you Eric and Johnny for sharing your musical talents with us your church community.

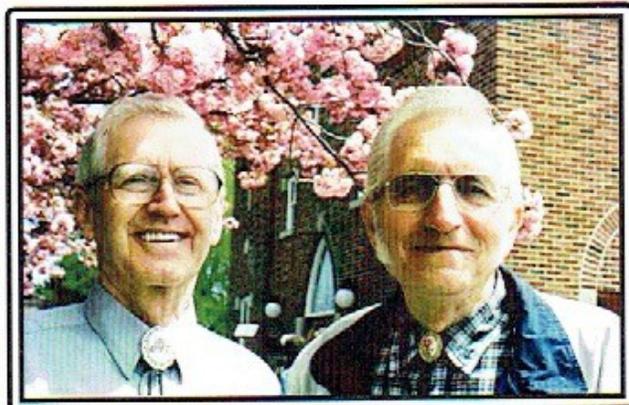
~ Kathy Rempel

A/E E9 A A/C# D

So shine bright - ly as we sing this li - 'l tune,  
 E - ven lov - ers of - ten use your light to spoon,  
 So shine bright - ly as we sing this li - 'l tune,

D/E E E9 C#m/E E7 A

- tion to Ni - ag - ara moon.  
 you old Ni - ag - ara moon.  
 - tion to Ni - ag - ara moon.



**Christmas Eve 2017**



**Advent Concert—Niagara Community Male Chorus**



**Candlelight Service 2017**

**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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