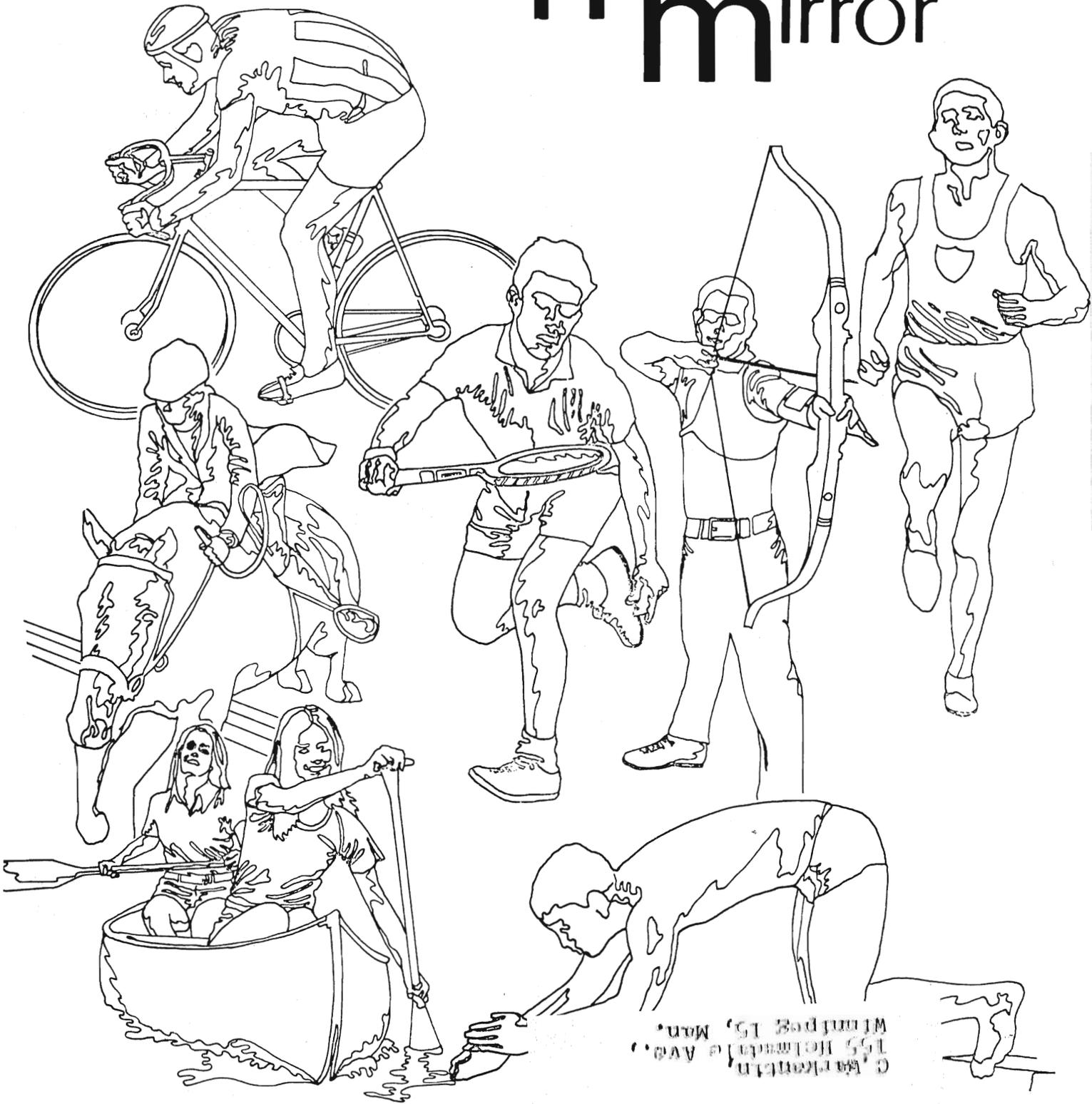


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# mennonite mirror



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## About this issue

Would spring be the same without the Mennonite Festival of Art and Music? If numbers are only one criterion, the festival was a huge success — more than 7,000 people poured through the doors of Polo Park on April 7. Indeed, there were so many people the opportunity to visit with “long lost” friends was probably the most memorable feature of the festival. Victor Penner, of Altona, was one of many to leave the west reserve region to journey with his trusty supply of sunflower seeds to the huge “urban reserve” to attend what he describes as the “biggest Mennonite kaffeeklatsch.” Mr. Penner’s observations of his delightful afternoon in the mall are found inside.

There appears to always have been an attitude that loans made by government or crown agencies are loans that don’t need to be repaid. Most of us are aware that in the 1920s hundreds of Mennonites succeeded in establishing themselves in Canada through the generous support of the CPR and the Canadian government. The support extended to the Mennonite board of colonization was in the form of loans. This money was available largely because the Mennonites had repaid a series of earlier loans given to support the migrations of the 1870s. This established for them a reputation for honesty and integrity that made it that much easier for them to get support in the 1920s. In view of the hardships that the Mennonite settlers of both eras faced in the first years in this country, one could argue that there was just cause to try to get away without paying. In this issue Mr. D. D. Rempel of Saskatchewan describes the efforts that were made to collect individual obligations so the colonization board could pay its debt to the railway and the government. Just as the conscience of one person can become the conscience of a people, so the duty that a few felt they had with respect to the immigration debt became the duty of all the people, with the ultimate result that it was all paid. This story has an odd ring to it in the mid-1970s: today one asks for a subsidy; or, if one gets a loan for a major project of any kind, there is an implicit feeling that failure to complete repayment will not carry serious censure. Both subsidies and “loan gifts” are viewed as matters of right without obligation in return. It is refreshing to read of a people who asked for help and who also make a point of fulfilling their part of the deal.

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# mennonite mirror

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*President and Editor:* Roy Vogt  
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*Vice-President and Managing Editor:* Edward L. Unruh  
*Office Manager:* Frieda Unruh

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There were more than enough people at the annual Mennonite Festival of Art and Music to make it a success. Probably the most memorable thing about it was the opportunity everyone had of meeting people they should have seen during the year. The photos here catch in a small way the wide variety of activity and are published here without comment:



---

FYI\*

\*for your information

---

# Mennofest '74: Blood is thicker than Coffee

by Vic Penner

The master of ceremonies of the biggest Mennonite Kaffeeklatsch in Manitoba met me and my family at the door of Polo Park shopping mall Sunday. It was gratifying that he let me in after what I'd written last year. Maybe he let me in because his wife and mine are both former East Reservers, and second cousins to boot. Blood is thicker than coffee, I always say.

Since he was accompanied by his wife Wanda at the time, and I had my wife Oilly by my side, the two immediately got into family talk and nobody got around to checking my credentials, so I slipped in on a pass somebody had generously given my wife.

It was a good thing, too, that I got in because I spent one of the most enjoyable Sunday afternoons I've had since the last time the Women's Committee of the Mennonite Educational Society arranged, staged and orchestrated a music and art festival.

It must be very satisfying, too, to the members of the Society to see the Polo Park mall become too small in only three years of the festival's existence. Advance publicity forecast attendance of 7,000 to 8,000. I think they made it — plus.

The press around the murals display deprived a lot of wouldbe viewers a chance of seeing and assessing their favorites. After trying to look over or around some ten rows of six-foot Mennonites from North Kildonan (the hotbed of Mennonite art today) I decided to shuck my good manners and start acting like a newspaperman. So I bellied up to the murals for a closer look.

My main discovery was that they were somewhat low, even for a short person; but my belt buckle got a good view. At eye-level I was able to examine quite closely the tops of most of the frames. So I judged the murals by their frames. My choice didn't win.

Once I got past the murals the socializing got started. The hand-shaking and smiling first gave the impression of a political rally, but when my mother-in-law appeared with three grandchildren in tow I knew it was a Mennonite affair. She distrusts all politicians, and wasn't even impressed with the greetings we'd solicited from Messrs. Trudeau, Mitchener, Schreyer, Juba, et al, for her golden wedding celebration.

Somehow I always miss the singing at these festivals. It's too far away from where I park the car. But I always make it to the lunch counters. Ahhh, that titillating smell of Mennonite baking. Terrific! But the prices always make me reach for my pocketful of knackscoat — a supply no self-respecting West Reserver is ever without, both for sustenance and other reasons. For instance, you never know when somebody will ask you to prove that you're a bona fide Mennonite, and it's simpler to pull out a handful of sunflower seeds than to take off your shoes to demonstrate your fallen arches.

And all this prattle reminds me that I didn't meet Abe Warkentine anywhere on the premises, although I learned that he was there. As you perhaps know, Abe made some kind remarks about the West Reserve on this page last month, and I wanted to thank him for it. He referred to our country in the West Reserve as all sky and sunflowers. How beautiful! Mind you, I like the East Reserve a lot too. I wouldn't have picked, both a wife and a farm there if I didn't.

The Mennofest at Polo Park is a great invention. The art and music is an excellent way of bringing Mennonites from the East, West and Winnipeg Reserves together. But the real value of the event lies not in art and music but in people meeting people. It reinforces and propagates our cultural and social values, and hopefully carries over into our religious life as well. mm





**with  
one hand in the soil  
the other in the sky  
my people  
committed to the maker  
of earth and air  
maintain the balance  
of bread and belief**

**menno wiebe  
gerry loewen  
august 22, 1973**

The students and staff of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate are proud of the ladies who made the April 7th Art Festival such a success. The Women's Auxilliary of the Mennonite Educational Society has been and continues to be a mammoth supporter of the school. We take this opportunity to say Thank You, we're proud of you.

Westgate is a school based on the philosophy of sound academic instruction, in an environment of warm human relationships, under the guidance of a dedicated christian staff. We believe in a low student-teacher ratio, not simply as a superior teaching situation, but as a way of life. We believe in sound religious instruction, that leads students to a clear understanding of what it means to be a christian. We believe in a living history, in a heritage whose wisdom constantly breeds wonder in young and old alike.

At present, the choirs are visiting Winnipeg churches. The senior choir is finalizing arrangements for a tour to Ontario where they will visit Mennonite churches and institutions. The grade nine class is also scratching together pennies for a Chicago trip, where they will be visiting churches, related institutions, and other places of interest.

In addition to the pressures of academic work, raising funds for special projects, and warding off spring fever, the students are knee deep in their second annual cyclathon. Since it is our centennial year many cyclists are making an effort to bring that magic number "100" into play. The event has been named **THE WESTGATE 100**, a group of riders have pledged themselves to riding 100 miles, others to raising \$100.00, and we've heard of more ambitious projects. The cyclathon will be held on May 11, and is open to all.

Many students are planning to wear their centennial T-shirts while cycling. The shirts boast the centennial symbol created by Gerry Loewen, and are available for purchase at the school.

Our program is an attempt to make our beliefs visible, to give form to the body of Christ, the Church of God, in our own small way. We support all institutions of similar conviction. We are thankful for the opportunity to relive the vibrant faith of our forefathers, a faith which makes us stand proud and firm in the conviction that it is we who must continue to teach our children well.

(John Enns, Principal)

# WMC

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# The wonderful ways of God

*In the following article Mr. D. D. Rempel, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, describes some of the difficult but interesting experiences that he and others had trying to collect money owing on the travel debt of the 1920 immigration. This is an excerpt from one chapter of a book which Mr. Rempel has just written. It will appear sometime this summer with the title, "Grandfather Reminiscences."*

**By D. D. Rempel**

As a rule, it is not the well to do or comfortable people who think of moving on, but the poor and destitute. This was true for a group of Mennonites who in the seventies of the previous century emigrated from Russia to Canada and settled in the southern parts of Manitoba. The government had made a large amount of money available to them for this purpose. Through the exemplary way in which they as a community dealt with the repayment of the loan they gained the respect and recognition of government and business. Even after almost half a century, the good reputation of these earlier settlers had not diminished. It was a contributing factor in the CPR's decision to bring some 20,000 impoverished immigrants from Russia to Canada on credit.

To facilitate the large task of this new immigration in the 1920's the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization was founded. It was made up of representatives from the various Mennonite congregations in Canada. Its task was to initiate steps towards making immigration feasible, to arrange for temporary lodging for the immigrants, to keep accounts, and later to assist the settlers in acquiring estates.

Time and again I was amazed at the confidence the CPR had in us, these strange, foreign immigrants. When in Russia we had proposed to be mutually responsible for each others fare, the offer was declined. All that was required of us was a promisory note, signed by the head of the immigrant family, stating that the incurred debt would be repaid to the company through the Mennonite Board of Colonization as soon as possible.

The total debt incurred by the immigration

of the 1920s added up to almost two million dollars. Most of us felt morally obligated to meet our responsibility in repayment of the total travel fare, despite the fact that the CPR had declined our offer of mutual responsibility.

Briefly I would like to explain how the immigrants of the twenties went about this task. As mentioned, the official channel through which our accounts were funnelled, our moneys received and forwarded, was the Mennonite Board of Colonization, with headquarters in Rosthern, Sask. chairman of this Board was the bishop of the Rose-nort Congregation, David Toews. The optimism of this great man, the unshakable faith he had in his people, and his trust in God, kindled the admittance of thousands (see previous issues of the Mennonite Mirror for excerpts from the diary of Toews - ed.)

Every province was divided into districts, headed by a "distriktmann" (districtman.) Besides this each province had a provincial committee. These committees and districtmen assisted the Board in clearing up the only collection agent appointed and salaried by the CPR. The expenses of the Board, and the salaries of its appointees, were covered by a small levy collected from the immigrants. The services of the provincial committees and the districtmen were of an honorary nature.

If we had hoped to repay the "Reise-schuld" (travel fare) in a matter of a few years, we were to be thoroughly disappointed. It was a good 20 years before the railway company could make out the last receipt, and that only after it had made some generous concessions. There was the odd illtempered recalcitrant among us though; perhaps the Board (and particularly bishop Toews) was too lenient about making collections at first, when people were not, or believed they were not, in a position to make payments toward their debt. The main reason, however, for the long delay was the unfavorable condition of the country. The depression made payment impossible for many. It was especially difficult for the immigrants who arrived in the late twenties.

In the early forties the whole matter was concluded in a typical Mennonite fashion. The CPR cancelled all the interest that had

accumulated during the thirties. Districts were formed to speed up the debt clearance. Funds were solicited to cover the debts of those who had died, or of those who categorically refused to pay their fare.

There were those who believed the debts were outdated and that the CPR no longer had the legal right to demand payment. Only in rare instances were the courts of the land used to exact payments from such recalcitrants. The odd debtor turned to the "Debt Adjustment Board." When the judges discovered what concessions had been already made by the railway company, went about making collections, they would not even listen to the complaints.

For several years I was a member of the Saskatchewan provincial committee; during the last few years in its service I was elected chairman. It was during this time that the final payments were made towards the fares. Here are some small examples of what the job at times entailed.

There was an older man, who stubbornly refused to repay his fare. He insisted that the CPR no longer had any right to expect payment; in fact, he tried to prove this on Biblical grounds. After much negotiation we were able to convince him of his error, and he made good his early promise to repay his debt.

Another man, his neighbours called him the mad D., was himself not an immigrant, but he had married an immigrant widow, whose debt became his responsibility. D. refused to honor this. My colleague and I were requested to go down and attempt to penetrate the shell of this obstinate man. Pankratz, our competent districtman, accompanied us. When we arrived on D's yard, Pankratz begged us to remain seated in the automobile and let him do the preliminary talking.

"You can just turn around and go home," was D's greeting, as he walked towards the car and recognized us. - "Today we are not leaving before you pay your wife's debt" was Pankratz' counter-greeting. - "You might as well go home," was the angry reply to any reasonable proposition that was put forward by our representative. - "I have already told you that today we will leave only after you have handed over the required

# reflections from our readers

Dear Sir:

Re: Al Reimer's article, "Last Tango: A Mennonite in Court," in the April, 1974 issue.

Mr. Reimer's thesis that modern Mennonites have "successfully wooed all the muses" is aptly illustrated, but he omits the most telling detail, namely the outcome of that court case.

There is indeed much reason to be "wondering what kind of Mennonite(s)" we have become. Wouldn't our forefathers of 1525 wonder whether we fit the New Testament description of Christians as "peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Peter 2:9?

Sincerely,  
Wm. Schroeder  
Winkler, Man.

Werter Freund:

Herr Peter Paetkau, Sperling, Man., besuchte uns vor etlichen Tagen, Er ueberliess uns bei der Gelegenheit ein Exemplar der Mennonite Centennial Nummer des Mennonite Mirror. Habe das Heft mit grossem Interesse gelesen. Von besonderem Interesse fuer mich war der Artikel "Bergtal's Pilgrimage to Manitoba."

Meine Frau und ich kamen im Jahre 1923 nach Canada. Seitdem ich im Ruhestand lebe, schriebe ich ein und das andere Erlebnis aus der Vergangenheit nieder. Im vorigen Herbst beendigte ich meine "Erinnerungen." Um diese auch meinen Enkeln zugaeglich zu machen (leider sprechen die Goeren kein Deutsch), hat meint Tochter sie ins Englische uebersetzt. Hoffe das Buch irgend wann im Sommer fertiggestellt zu haben. Es erscheint unter dem Namen: Grandfather Reminisces.

Ein Kapital des Buches handelt von der Reiseschuld, der in den zwanziger Jahren eingewanderten Mennoniten, und die Erledigung derselben. Habe in diesem Kapital auch etliche Zeilen den "Bergthalern" von 1874 gewidmet.

Ich lege diesem einen Auszug des besagten Kapitals bei. Sollten Sie dieses Material als geeignet fuer den Mennonite Mirror finden, drucken Sie es bitte irgend wann in irgend einer Nummer des M.M. ab. Danke.

Mit freundlichem Gruss,  
D.D. Rempel  
Saskatoon, Sask.

P.S. Ihr Vater und ich haben, wenn auch nicht in derselben Klasse, so doch zur selben Zeit die Zentralschule in Chortitza und nachher die Kommerzschule in Alexandrowsk besucht.

amount of money. Stop ordering us off your premises right now, and listen carefully to what I, and then Rempel, have to say to you. O. K., now, if you had not married this woman, you would have been compelled to hire a housekeeper. The wages of such a person would far surpass the amount of money required to pay your wife's fare to Canada. You are certainly getting off cheaply this time. Now listen to the proposal Rempel has to make."

Still grumbling, he asked me to say my piece. I showed him the account, drew his attention to the fact that the CPR had cancelled all the accumulated interest, and that in a case like this, the community of the immigrants were willing to take on a certain percentage of the total sum, but only if he paid now. The total bill was now less than half of the original account. - "Do I get a receipt, stating payment in full, if I give you the above mentioned sum now?" "You will." - "Come in!" was his laconic invitation to accompany him into the house. When Pankratz was about to enter the house, following the rest of us, the wife asked him in a whisper whether her husband had consented to clear up the debt. - "Right at this very moment your husband is in the process of unlocking his strong box. And you could quickly brew us a cup of coffee. Today we will stay for a snack."

D. was a changed man after he had paid up and had received his receipt. A stimulating conversation accompanied our coffee break. The grateful look in the wife's eyes as we parted revealed what a great burden had rolled from her heart.

Now we drove to D's son, who had married the daughter of his stepmother and who also refused to come across with the payment. The reception was similar to that which we had received earlier at his father's house. Pankratz knew these

people well. While I and my colleague remained in the car to negotiate with the man, he went into the house. Soon he returned to the car, followed by the housewife. It was immediately obvious who wore the pants in this family. The man had absolutely no more to say after this; didn't even try to interrupt, when I explained the account to his wife and drew her attention to the concessions, which they could benefit from if they paid now. - "We are in the process of building a new barn, but we can produce that sum. We'll pay today," was the decision. When the husband ventured a mild protest, his wife flared at him: "Boy, all your life you have been able to sleep in a warm, soft bed, and never have you had to miss a meal. If you had experienced what these men and I suffered in the old country, you would be singing a different tune. Now, hurry up and get the money!" Obediently the man trotted off and soon returned with the payment.

The above mentioned were isolated cases. As a rule our experiences were of a peaceful nature. Johann M. Neufeld, a minister of the Mennonite Brethren Church, and our committee chairman at that time, tells this: "I had in mind to travel to a remote district on immigration matters on a Monday. When the members of the church board discovered my plans, they requested that I leave earlier, so as to be there in time to serve the small congregation, which was without a pastor, with the word of God on Sunday. I complied with their wishes and preached the Sunday sermon. On Monday I entered the house of one who had unpaid travel fare liabilities. The housewife greeted me with these words: So, that's who you really are! On Sunday you feed the sheep in the tender, green pastures, and on Monday already you come to shear them!" mm

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# The Icing on the Cake

by Betty Dyck

During the summer our eldest son worked on a farm for the first time. He thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Impressed with his performance on the field and around the house, his employer exclaimed:

"You show him how to operate the machinery once and then he knows! Quite a difference from the 16-year old I hired last summer." The boy's mechanical knowledge comes from years of experience with his dad in the basement workroom.

"And he's considerate," added the farmer. "One Sunday when he visited a friend on a neighbouring farm, he was invited for supper. He phoned us for permission. We really appreciated that."

When I related these compliments to my neighbour over a cup of coffee, she remarked, "That's the icing on the cake."

And so it is. Unfortunately, there is no written recipe for this icing. A marriage certificate does not automatically grant couples a degree in parenthood. Marriage is the binding of two lives from dissimilar backgrounds with varying attitudes toward life. Couples believing in each other and bringing their best to their children. Learning the role of parent involves a perpetual "in-service" of trial and error, sprinkled liberally with common sense. Ernest Hemingway stated:

...this would require only the care that a good gardener would give to a good garden with good soil. (Parents) must try to be considerate and understanding and decent; to make good children who would do the same, to leave the world a better place and finally to be happy.

Being a parent in today's world is difficult. There is a vast difference between our childhood and the lives of modern young people. They feel personally involved in everyone's sorrows and frustrations, forced on them through TV, radio and the press. Gone are the days when a child grew up in the comfortable community of close friends and relatives. Corporation promotions accompanied by frequent moves scatter families and settle them in strange communities, often for periods of short duration. Children are ex-

posed to a variety of customs, cultures and companions.

Life is a succession of challenges to our sense of values, our judgment of what is important. . . In order to live, man must act, in order to act he must make choices; in order to make choices he must consider values. (Royal Bank Monthly Letter, Sept. '73)

Children's inquiring minds do not instantly accept all new notions, but check them for validity. What children decide at each way-station along the road of life will determine their eventual happiness. And happiness is closely connected with ambition in the enthusiastic combination of one's vitality with one's talents. In addition to this, if children are to get the most out of life, parents have to give them a set of values.

Courtesy, kindness and happiness are important ingredients for a full life. Parents can try to teach, guide, protect and punish with a loving manner and endeavour to assist their children to "grow in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man."

Courtesy consists of small things—a gentle manner, tolerant temper and civil behavior. Compliments are important. Braley said:

If with pleasure you are viewing any work a man is doing

If you like him or you love him, tell him now!

Spontaneous praise by parents and a hearty "thank you" for a job well done will be picked up by children, and like the popular chewing-gum commercial they will "pass-it-on". This habit will help them win friends. There is a need for the ties of friendship for people to live happily together.

Kindness comes close on the heels of courtesy. A kind person is seldom prejudiced. He will exhibit a positive effort to understand another's beliefs and practices. An unbiased attitude is learned first at home as each child is accepted for the unique person he is.

One of the most important points for parents to remember (and the easiest to forget) is that children are individuals. What works for one will not necessarily work for another. Still, every home will have a set of standards applicable to all. At our house we insist upon common courtesy, satisfactory

study habits and cheerful sharing of household chores.

One day while doing dishes with our boy, I learned some significant information. We enjoyed an interesting dialogue on school activities, his newest electrical project and his desire to commence driver training. I realized how many enlightening tid-bits were gleaned while we worked together. This regular routine results in communication at low levels before a minor problem becomes a major issue. With family members on varied schedules, some days we even eat at different times and it becomes difficult to find an appropriate opportunity to initiate a discussion. I feel that listening is an integral part of being a parent. During our dish drying, I am available to listen as the children express their hopes, desires and fears. Not the "sit-down-I-want-to-listen" method, but a free-wheeling spontaneous communication.

Sometimes, when the children would rather be doing something else other than helping with dishes, they express the wish that we invest in an electric dishwasher. When I weigh the pros and cons of owning a dishwasher, I feel that a purchase now would seriously curtail a viable means of communication in our home—too high a price to pay for any gain in labor saved.

In interaction with children, parents constantly have to spark their imagination, spur their ambition and assist them to attain their potential.

Parents invest years moulding, teaching and correcting children's attitudes and values. Raising a family is accompanied by disappointments, but dividends are realized frequently when you watch your children working and playing co-operatively in the home. Even if they never set the world on fire, hopefully they will carry healthy habits and conscientious conduct out into a world of loving relationships.

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Most holy God Omnipotent:  
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 From grateful flowers, wild shrubs and trees,  
 Amid the trilling bosomful of melodies  
 Arising from the lusty meadowlark's "Hallelujah" —  
 We hanged a man!  
 I saw his flaccid body swing  
 Against the pure and golden-brilliant birth of day;  
 And, though a black-robed figure, with six-inch rosary  
 Upon his breast, did imitate the sign of Cross,  
 What difference could his blessing make to the man now dead?  
 Is it not somewhat of a blasphemy to place the sign of Christ  
 Upon the sin of man?  
 This swinging corpse of recent-man  
 Hung blackly silhouetted 'gainst the golden morning dawn  
 While in the dew-drenched breeze his prison striped legs  
 Flapped weirdly at the sky;  
 Nor did his arms and feet, like scare-crow sticks,  
 Show evidence of inner stiff-limbed fortitude,  
 But hung, a ghastly loose, inert, puppetic villain,  
 With hair dishevelled, eyes fixed in vacant yet engorged,  
 Bulging stare, and tongue protruding — as in last lament  
 Of condemnation.  
 Dear God, this fellow surely had no soul,  
 For vainly would we snatch one from a man  
 When You have thus commanded in The Book:  
 "Thou shalt not kill" and "Vengeance, it is mine."  
 You spoke the word "Come into being" to earth and sky and sea  
 And to your noblest, upright, god-like image, man;  
 But who spoke thus to bring this limp, disjointed, soul-less  
 Rag-doll to the world of men?  
 \* \* \*

Upon another day,  
 Whose memory distilled by time,  
 Another figure hung —  
 A gloomy early-morning shadow 'gainst the rising, blazing sun,  
 This one upon a cross, not tethered by the bloody rope of man.  
 First, we had laid the wormwood on the dewy slope of little knoll;

Then pushed Him down, and screeched in blasphemous abuse  
 Commanding Him to stretch His arms out taut  
 While we snatched at them, tearing vein and sinews,  
 And whacked great bent and rusty nails, with fierce bold strokes  
 Into His hands spread on the board in strange and still co-operation.  
 The hammer-sledge fell heavily to pin  
 These unrevolting hands for all to see —  
 While of His blood red splotches sloched on me!  
 This latter would not cause me any grief —  
 If only — those gentle eyes had not looked tenderly at me;  
 If only — they had hateful, hostile been;  
 If only He had roared or blasphemed as all other men  
 Whom I to fore had galleyed to the cross.  
 But this one strangely seemed transfixed —  
 As though it were a blessed lot to feel my blows.  
 We crossed His feet and similarly pinned  
 Securely them to lower end of vertic bar.  
 Thus, with a hole nearby in waiting readiness,  
 We tugged the thing along and, with resounding thud,  
 Dropped it upright into the hole.  
 This, too, would leave me free of grief —  
 If only He had screamed as nails of agony  
 Tore rents into His skin and limbs,  
 And blood oozed down from hands and feet  
 Unto the ground, where, just beneath the cross,  
 We tossed the dice to comprehend whose throw  
 Would chance to win His costly one-loom woven sari-gown;  
 But not, not He —  
 Earth's strangest, keen phenomenon —  
 For, from His blanched, deadly lips arose  
 A voice of power, most strong and clear,  
 As if to reach into the highest sky.  
 Astounding words — the content imperceptible  
 To mind as mine — "Forgive them, Lord . . ."  
 He seemed to plead for me! For me?  
 "For, oh, they don't know what they do!"  
 by Clara K. Dyck

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# Centennial Reading about Mennonites

The following list of books and articles depicting Mennonite life in Russia, the emigration to Canada, and the early years in Canada was prepared by William Schroeder. Many readers have requested the *Mirror* to publish a bibliography of materials which can be used for further study. The list below is meant to help.

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## The Mennonites of Ontario

By Edward L. Unrau

*A String of Amber*, by Blowden Davies; Mitchell Press, Vancouver, 1973; 228 pages with illustrations.

The story of the Mennonites is a story of a people who have migrated throughout the western world searching not for a place that they might call "home" but for a place where they would be able to maintain their plain way of life, their biblical Christianity, and their commitment to live in peace with all men. There are Mennonites in every province of Canada - with Manitoba having more than any other, according to Canadian census records. To a large extent Canada has been the end of their wanderings because there have been no major emigrations of Mennonites from this country in the approximately 200 years that they have been here. (Some small groups of Mennonites have left Canada for South American countries to escape the "wordly" influence of modern-society.) The first Mennonites came to Canada in the 18th century from Pennsylvania, partly to find new farmlands and partly because of their desire to live under British rule. Later waves of Mennonites came to Canada in 1874, when some 7,000 came to Manitoba to settle in two Mennonite "reserves" in Manitoba, and in the 1920s and 1940s to escape the political turmoil of Russia and Europe.

One of the problems that any historian has in dealing with Mennonites is keeping track of the many variations of mennonitism. Mennonites can range from the very conservative Old Order Mennonites of southern Ontario, who are visibly different from both the larger society and other kinds of Mennonites, to the modern Mennonites who no longer maintain a visible separateness but who are, nevertheless, committed to the attitude of life that being a Mennonite demands. Even Mennonites themselves have difficulty keeping track of the variations and have not yet resolved the question of whether they are a religious movement, a cultural group, or both. In this kind of a context, any person who attempts to write a history of Mennonites runs the risk of focusing too much on one branch. This is the case with this book. Although *A String of Amber* is billed as "the story of Mennonites in Canada" it is really the story of Mennonites in Ontario, specifically those

who came to that province by way of Pennsylvania. Only passing reference is made to immigration of Mennonites in 1874, the 1920s and the 1940s, and no mention at all is made of the contributions of Mennonites to the fabric of present day society. The billing of the book as a story of Canadian Mennonites might well have been a decision of the publisher because Miss Davies died before she could see her manuscript through to publication. This may be the case, since it is clear from the total context from her book that Miss Davies is writing out of a fascination and respect for the simple way of life of the old Mennonites of Ontario and of a desire to give her readers some idea of the folk customs and traditions of these plain folk. Had she herself wanted to write about Mennonites in all Canada she would have herself moved the focus of her story out of Ontario.

*A String of Amber* is not an academic's book; rather, it is a book for people who like reading about people and how they lived. Accordingly, Miss Davies talks about the Mennonites she lived beside, about their folk heros and folk traditions and about the things that in Miss Davies' eyes made them more "Christian" than the Christians in the larger society. Miss Davies does not move in a straight line in this book and her writing is filled with many sidelights that do not make a direct contribution to the development of her main theme but which are effective, however, in helping her readers visualize how the old Mennonites lived in Ontario. Her research took place at two levels - living with and talking to her Mennonite neighbors at every occasion, and reading as much as possible about Mennonite European origins.

The most important point that Miss Davies makes is that the Mennonite tradition (if one can call it that) is much older than most people, including many Mennonites, realize. It is widely believed that the Mennonites got their name from Menno Simons, a 16th century reformer who left the Roman Catholic church because he believed that the anabaptist teachings were closer to the truth than those of Rome. Miss Davies found in her research that numerous groups of non-conformist Christians pre-dated the reformation and that these sometimes-called Defenceless Christians shared a very similar

religious theology even though they were scattered through the many valleys of central Europe. She argues that there was to some extent a synthesis of the traditions of these Defenceless Christians with the stands taken by such reformers as Menno Simons, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, George Blaurock, and others. In making this suggestion, Miss Davies introduces a contradiction which she does not fully explain: what would the men just listed - who were all learned men in their own right - have in common with the Defenceless Christians who were largely peasants? Miss Davies does an excellent job of explaining and describing the basic threads in the fabric that gave the Mennonites a sense of destiny from the time that they were led by leaders such as Simons through their wanderings in search of utopia ever since. The tradition of the Defenceless Christians fits the Mennonites perfectly, but it is not clear in this book how the two merged. The title, *A String of Amber* is both a testament to the long history of the Defenceless Christians and an explanation of how they merged with the Mennonites. Miss Davies explains that amber, petrified blobs of sap from pine forests, was used widely in antiquity as jewellery and for its healing power, Mennonites and Defenceless Christians both treasured and passed from generation to generation little strings of amber as healing charms. Miss Davies surmises that because the strings of amber found in Mennonite homes in Ontario resemble those found in European archeological diggings that there must be a connection. Another argument used to link the Defenceless Christians with reformation leaders is the tradition among the former of literacy. Both the Defenceless Christians and Mennonites maintained that each Christian has the right to search the scriptures for himself - to do this he must be able to read. Since Menno Simons, et al, were all highly learned men in their own right she suggests that a merging or synthesis of their movements was easily accomplished, for this reason and because both believed that a person should be baptised on confession of one's faith.

Whether or not there was any conscious decision to merge will probably never be known because Mennonite leaders of the 16th and 17th centuries usually died a

martyr's death before they ever got a chance to write, and even if there had been such an opportunity it is doubtful whether any of them would have taken it - to have done so would have jeopardized the safety of the entire group by providing the authorities with written documentation that could have been used against them. Indeed even today there is still a reluctance in some Mennonite churches in Switzerland to not publish even so much as a membership list for fear persecution may yet return.

Miss Davies, who is one of several non-Mennonites to write books about Mennonites in this century, wonders why Mennonites are reluctant to own up to their martyr's heritage and also why they make so little effort to research and record their own story. Part of the reason has already been explained and part of it is due to the fact that as a God-fearing people it was always more important to have their story written on God's book of record than on man's.

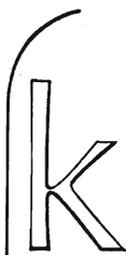
As mentioned earlier, Miss Davies book is an excellent study of the way of life of Ontario Mennonites. There is a much longer story that could be told of the Mennonites in Canada, and of their impact in this country.

Miss Davies' book is well worth reading. It is an informative and informal study of one brand of the Mennonites.

But the question remains: who will write a true history of Mennonites in Canada? Can we find a historian within our own ranks?

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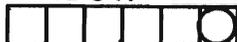


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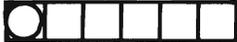
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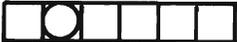
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A



Mix-Up is a contest to test your skill at spelling — that is, your ability to unscramble the letters and re-arrange them so that they form real words. The newly formed words should fit into the squares provided. Letters within squares with circles are to be combined to form an "answer" in the bottom row of circles.

Although no firm decision has been made, the contest judges have noticed that many entrants to the mix-up contest are people who have not paid a subscription. They would prefer to give the cash prize to a person who has a paid-up subscription. May we take this opportunity to gently remind you to include your subscription (\$3 for one year) with your entry if you have not paid?

Ms. Kay Froese, Ashburn Street, Winnipeg, is the winner of our cash prize for April.

Answers to the April puzzle are: risen, denial, anoint, perfidy, kingdom. The "answer" is Paska.

Entries for the May contest should be submitted by May 20.

A winner is selected by a draw from among the correct entries.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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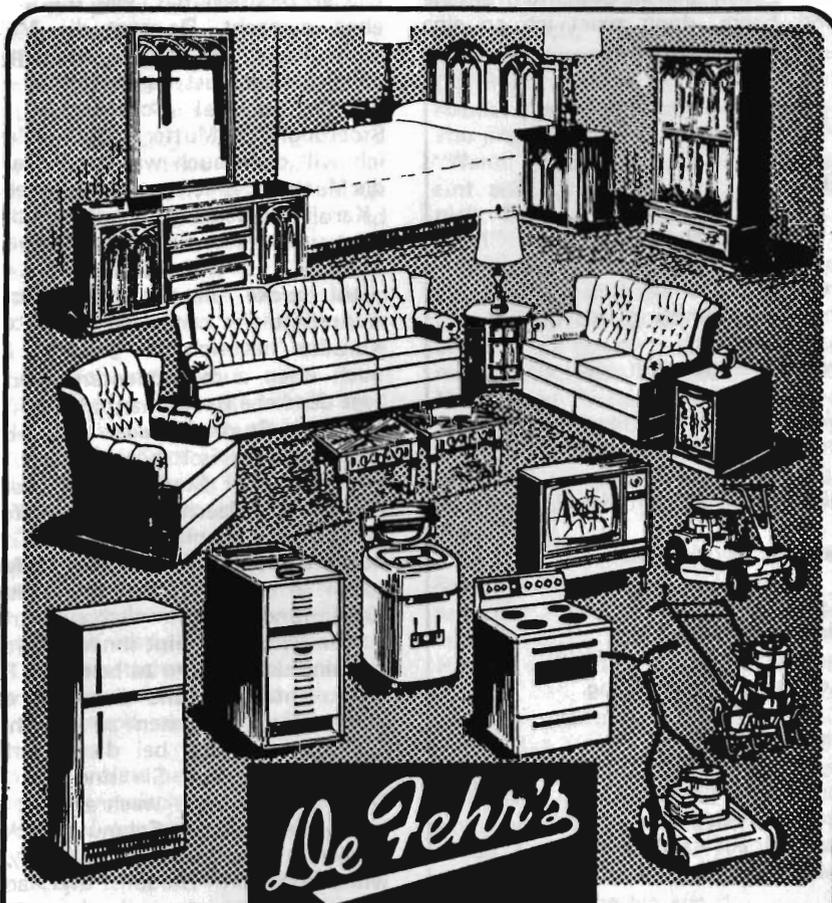
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# Still Hocke

von G. P. Schroeder

Es war im Jahre 1917, zur Zeit meines Dienstes im Roten Kreuz in Odessa, unter dem Fuersten Nik. P. Urussow, als auch die Deutschen im suedlichen Russland den Sieg der Revolution feierten und unter der Leitung bedeutender Maenner, dem Dumaabgeordneten Lutz und anderen, sich zu einer Organisationsversammlung eingefunden hatten. Viele wichtige Beschluesse wurden gefasst, die spaeter leider in ein Nichts verlaufen mussten durch den Umstruz durch die Bolschewisten im Oktober.

Eines war auffallend bei dieser Versammlung. Fast jedesmal, wenn alles

fertig zu sein schien, um eine wichtige Resolution anzunehmen, da gab es eine Opposition von einem Studenten, der oben auf der Galarië sass und eine Gruppe von Studenten um sich hatte. Ich beobachtete ihn eine Zeitlang und es wollte mir scheinen, dass dieser junge Mann ein besonderes Vergnuegen daran hatte, bei jeder Gelegenheit zu hemmen und zu stoeren.

Da meldet sich ein lieber Bauersmann zum Wort und erzaehlt in seiner schwaebischen Mundart folgende Geschichte: „Herr Vorsitzender, erlauben Sie mir auch ein Wort zu sagen. Wenn ich so den lieben Studenten ansehe und hoere, dann muss ich an eine

Geschichte denken. Es hat mal eine Mutter ein Toechterlein gehabt. Das hat viel gespielt und geschwaetzt. Doch wenn die Mutter eine Arbeit kaum beendet hatte, da hat das kleine Maedel, Karoling hat sie geheissen, jedesmal gestoert. Hat die Mutter den Fussboden gewaschen, da ist die Karoline sogleich mit ihren schmutzigen Fuessen 'ruebergelaufen. Hat die Mutter den Fussboden gefegt, so hat die Betten gemacht. so hat's Toechterlein die Betten wieder auseinander gerissen. Kurz - die Mutter konnte nichts machen, wo's Toechterlein nicht wieder zerstoert hat, was die Mutter eben gemacht. Da sagt die Mutter eines Tages: "Karolining, mein liebes Kind, warum tust du das immer und machts so viel Schabernack und Stoerung?" „O Mutter, sagt die Kleine, ich will doch auch was tun.“ Da hat die Mutter ihr einen guten Rat gegeben: „Karolining, ich sag dir was, und dabei zeigt sie mit dem Finger auf den nahen Stuhl.

**still hocke un net stoere isch a ei Aorbeit.** Die kannst du verrichten!" Karoline hat sich das gemerkt. Sie nach oben zum Studenten wendend sagt der liebe Bauersmann: Un des will i a dem Studente sage: Still hocke un net stoere isch a ei Aorbeit. Die kann der Herr Student tue!" Lauter Beifall und Gelaechter im Sall, Aufruhr und Unzufriedenheit unter den Anhaengern des Studenten. Wieviele Menschen in unserer Zeit glauben durch Kriteln und Noergeln auch eine Arbeit zu tun. Nichts scheint ihnen wichtiger zu sein, als ingerdwo zu hemmen, Fehler zu entdecken und dieselben recht laut andern Menschen zu erzaehlen. Sie kommen sich bei dieser Arbeit recht wichtig vor. Sie sind die einzigen Unfehlbaren, waehrend sie oft bis an die Ohren im Schmutz stecken. Denke an die kleine Karoline: „Ich will a aorbeite!" Du sollst und kannst auch arbeiten, aber das kannst du weit besser tun, wenn du nicht dauernd stoerst und hemmst. **Still hocke un net stoere isch a ei Aorbeit.** - Als ich im Sommer 1917 nach Hause kam und diese Begebenheit meinem Vater erzaehlte, da hat er herzlich gelacht und wenn abends oder am Tage "Onkels" zum Besuch kamen, da wurde ich gerufen, um zu erzaehlen ueber: Still hocke un net stoere isch a ei Aorbeit. mm

## Enn Best't uck nich

von Rueben Epp

Enn mol, du jingst nich mea aun Muttasch Haund,  
Rannsd du met korte Staappes derch een Gang  
Enn stundst mettenst ver 'ne Gjlaesawaund  
Enn sagst een Kjind met Uage framd enn bang.  
Enn daut weascht du.

Enn weascht 'et oba nich.

Du.waundaschd derch de Welt, aus de Jugend mag,  
Joahrut, joahren, haudst Hunga enn wordst sautt,  
Wachst hinja jieda Dreih, auf't Gjleckj doa lag,  
Enn fungst dien Nome enn Bild opp Buak enn Blautt.  
Jo, daut weascht du.

Enn weascht 'et uck nich.

Wiet es dien Waig. De Sonn steiht hinja die.  
Doch Eena jeiht noch ver die, schwoaht enn lang;  
Rannst du uck bie Mauncheenem vebie,  
Disa moakt dine Stuppe met, enn jeiht dien Gang.  
Uck daut best du.

Enn best 'et doch nich.

Weetst du dann, Menschekjind, waem dit nu jelt?  
Doa steiht een Hus: sass Braeda haft sien Holt.  
Dee doa wohnt, woat nich jefroagt auf't ahm jefaellt,  
Hee ligt doa eensom, ligt doa stell enn kolt.  
Enn daut best du.

Doch, best 'et uck nich.

*Von Wilhelmine Siefkes, Leer,  
Ostfriesland.*

*Aewasatt von Friesisch Plattduütsch  
opp Danziga (Preissisch) Plautdietsch  
von Rueben Epp.*

# Bie Rampels Enne Berstaund

Von Jack Thiessen

Aune 1936 em Somma wea daut so bettalich heat enn uck so schratjlich dreach, daut veele Mensche dochte, daut groute Triebal haud nu doch toujeschloage, wiels de Mensche so hasslich weare. Em Staul gaupte de Tjitjel mett op'nem Schnowel no Loft enn Wota, enn de Ente freide sich, wann eina han en wada ein baet utjwiold. De Pogge enne Ritsch sunge aula Baus enn bie Peta Schallenboajs haude de Tjeaj so wenig to supe, daut de Schallenboajsche biem Maltje reine Bottajliesta manke Finjasch treach. Sogoa de Tjoatje musste sich omstalle, so dreach wea daut enn bould fung de Breedajemeend aunt mett einem Schmauntkauntje to deepe enn de Tjoatjelje gauwe Rain-Checks.

Enn en Winnipeg wear'et noch vael schlemma; doa blewe de Koare mau grodso em koakenden Pavement steatje enn woar'a nich koakt, schloage Lied Heenaäia op enn brutzelde de oppem Pavement goa. De Ope em City Park gaupte enn funge aun tweestemmig daut Leed vonne Sons of the Pioneers "Water, cool, clear water" to sinje wann'et Schemma word.

"Yes, Lied, daut ess heat," saed Pankrautz, kreiweld sich manke denne Wonse opp'm Kopp, de nich richtig schosse wulle enn jing 'nen. De Tjinja wulla nich mea boaft gohne, nich weajne Heena em Graus; nae de weere se jewant oba de Steena en de Saund weare sou heet, so heet aus de feurige Ofen ute Sinndachschoul. Lange Hiebat veseffst enn saed, "Tom Schisja mett dise Messtwirtschaft," aus sine Ole nich doabie wea enn saed, he haud uck enn Russlaund manke Rode bliewe kunnt.

Oba sone Hett haft twee Siede, saed Taunte Rampelsche emma; daut jeft jewaultje Arbuse saed Rampel. Enn so wear'et uck; bold vekofft Rampel einen Entjelbaks voll Arbuse fe \$3.00. Lied muake Arbusetsierop enn bie de Tonn, Taunte Ungasche backt Bruschtje aus enn Russlaund, enn de Lied trocke aere tjleene Tjinja ut enn leete ahn aune Arbuseklompes sich saut aete, tweemol daen Dach. Vaele Mensche muake Arbuse emm Steentopp enn; andre dreajde Sot enn en gaunz Sued-Manitoba ritjt'et no Rollkuake. Jo, enn bie Rampels kaume de Lied enn jinje oba aula haude se Arbuse emm Foatig.

De Russe oba, dicht bie Rampels,

haude wada eascht em Juni Goade jemoakt enn waut de Cutworm nich naum, daut naum de Moltworm. Oba uck de Russe wisse von Rampel siene Berstaund enn jinge doa de Nacht tjnipse. Enn de wisse aulnoch schnorrig wone riep weare; de riepe Arbuse barschte se eint mett'e Fust enn fraute de mett Tjaena top opp.

Donn saed Rampel tom Russenoba Tilitzje, "Diene Junges vebiestre de Nacht enn gohne dann bie mie manke Arbuse! Hol diene Balj lewa Tus sonst woa etj de opplatzt noch de Reaj delenjd jehearich de Zarakoasch voll heiwei!" Tilitzje word blaus enn saed opp Dietsch, "To heck mett Junt, miene Junges schlope de Nacht. Bie Die fraete dietsche Schnoddanaese de Arbuse opp. Moak mie nich bossig," enn jing nenn! Rampel ropt hinjeraun, "Wann etj einem mett'e Schrotflint eint aum Zint bullre woa, woat daut nich Dien Jung senne?" "Fe sure nich!" saed Tilitzje.

Rampel jing nenn, dreid sich einem Old Chum, trannt sich eine Arbuse opp enn laepeld de ut. De easchte Nacht bleef he Tus, oba de tweede? Jo, horcht mau wieda, waut Rampel de tweede Nacht deed. Nohm Aete puld he daut Blie ute Schotgun-Schell rut enn schedd doa growet Solt nenn. De stoppd he enne Lop nenn, enn aus'et diesta wea, laed he sich enn Berstaund dol enn wacht.

De Mond jing so schmock opp, de Schirtje piepade, de Wilw fonge aun to jule, ein Schop metjad, aules schlep, aules gaup meid no fresche Loft. Blos Rampel lach doa enne Berstaund oppe woame Ead, docht aun Frintschauft enn Welt verstreit, docht aun sienen schmocken Hoff enn Russlaund, docht aune schataje Steena hia enn siene Schopfenz, dreid sich einen Old Chum enn wacht manke Arubseranke. De Mond tjitjt so nieschierig to, dretjt ein Oag aum Himmel to aus'a sach, daut de Mensche hia enn doa ein baet gaustrig weare enn freid sich besondasch aus'a mett einst Rampel enn siene Lop manke Arbuseblaeda sach.

"Wait and see" docht Rampel, "Du jniesaja Himmelstjars" enn freid sich, daut ahm de Mond so scheen dache deed. Mett einmol head Rampel waut enn he vestoak seinen Old Chum. "Yubetscherleif, doa kohme se, de russche Tjaete," docht he sich enn wacht, "Enn doch" saed Rampel sich

"eina meent, eina ess Tus aum Nippa; dise Loft, dise Ead, dise Arbuse, de Mond enn de Chochole!"

Tilitzjes Peta betjt sich, tnippst, plock enn aut, einmol, tweemol, dree-mol. "Dauts O.K." docht Rampel, lot ahm mau, wie habe jenoag." Oba waut mein Jie. Lied, de Jung haud einen Sack, einen Biedel, enn ein Pinjel mett enn aus 'a nu saut wea fung he aun de voll to prommlle. "Bozsche, pemozsche," saed Rampel, "Da wallt dem Deutschen doch." . . . docht aun Uhland enn tjneep ein Oag to enn hof de Lop opp aus Tilitzjes aeh Jratsta sich betjt enn tnippst. Rampel ziold noch einmol, poakad han enn hae, de Lop lach nu stell; opp'em aundren Enj 12 Schraed auf sach Rampel eine schwoaete doppelde Mond. . . . "Pascholl," schreacha enn pulld den Trigga. . . . Tilitzjes Peta - so maut Rampel aum naechsten Dach ut - wea mett einem Sautz vom Deadstart 34 Scho wiet jesprunge enn haud biem tweeden Sprung de achtschoje Schopfenz noch twee Scho jekliert. "Postoj" ropt Rampel, oba Peta haudet bosig enn rannd enn schreach "Tschorrt" enn breld "Tschorrt" enn rannd. Rampel jing no Hus, dreid sich einen Old Chum, schmustad aus de Rampelsche saed, de Stauldae wea oppeinst lud to jeschloage enn saed, he wull noch ein baet Duambratt mett'em olen Tilitzje spaele. He jing noh Tilitzjes enn spaeld Daumbratt, heiwd daem olen Tilitzje dreemol ut enn froag donn daem olen, "Du Petro Wasilowitsch, wo ess Peta? Mett daem jankat mie uck mol to spaele." "Don't know" saed Tilitzje. "Dann well wie daem mol seatje gohne," saed Onkel Rampel.

Enne Schien, doa saut'a! Haud de Betjse rauffjetrocke enn saut em Bottich mett woamet Wota enn let sich daut Solt utem Hinjraenj tratje. Saut doa enn tjititjt rauf, enn schaemd sich, wea mak aus'ne dodje Pogg, haud noch Arbusetjaene manke Hoa enn raed waut, daut he von nu aun doch ein baetje aum Diewel jleewe sull. "Waut ess daem," wull Rampel weete. "De haft Gnautz! saed Tilitzje. "Mett Sollt enriewe, dann jeit de wachj!" saed Rampel.

"Etj hab bie mie manke Arbuse ein pao Satj jefunge," saed Rampel, "tjenn Jie de vleicht brucke?" dreid sich einen latzten Old Chum, enn schmustad, enn piepad enn jing no Hus. mm

# Manitoba News



John Peters

**John Peters**, son of Mrs. Irene Peters (and the late Dr. John Peters), 136 Glenwood Crescent, is the recipient of a German Academic Exchange Fellowship, which will enable him to further his graduate studies in economic history at the University of Mainz, beginning in October, 1974. John is a graduate in honors history and economics at the University of Manitoba.

**Ed Elias**, president of Venture Industries, a division of Excel Fibre-Glass Ltd. of Winnipeg has announced plans to begin the construction of sectional homes. Facilities at the Winkler plant are being renovated to form an assembly line for this purpose. Till now that firm has been manufacturing only 13 foot fibre-glass Ventura travel trailers and some fifth wheelers.

## MENNONITE HOSPITAL MANAGER EXAMINES HAITIAN OPERATION

An experienced administrator from the Mennonite Hospital in Bloomington, Ill., recently lent a hand to a hospital in Haiti. From mid-December through February William E. Dunn, executive vice-president of the Bloomington hospital, served as an on-the-scene observer at Hospital Albert Schweitzer in Deschapelles, Haiti.

Mr. Dunn, invited to observe and evaluate the present hospital operations by Dr. William L. Meloin, who founded the medical center in 1956, concluded that Hospital Albert Schweitzer is "doing a commendable job of meeting a variety of needs for the 100,000 people residing within the Hospital district." For over 13 years Mennonite volunteers have been serving in all aspects of the hospital's work.

## COMING EVENTS

**May 25** Gospel Light Hour Fund raising Banquet, at Portage Avenue, Mennonite Brethren Church. Speaker: David Augsburg-er.

**May 26-27** Annual Church Meeting of the Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church.

**June 7-8** Manitoba Mennonite Brethren conference.

**June 22-23** Forsteier and Conscientious Objector Reunion at Camp Assiniboia.

**July 13-22** Presentation of *The Bridge*, A Mennonite Folk Opera, written by Esther Wiebe and Diana Brandt. Presentation at Steinbach - July 13; Altona - July 15-16; Boissevain - July 21, and Winnipeg - July 22.

22 / mennonite mirror / may 1974

Floods threatened several Manitoba Mennonite communities in the last two weeks of April, after unusually heavy snowfalls. Hardest hit were the areas around Carman and Morris. Farmers in southern Manitoba may be delayed several weeks in their seeding operations because of the heavy run-off.

Dr. Jack Thiessen, chairman of the German Department of the University of Winnipeg has been appointed chairman of the Manitoba Arts Council. The Council is made up of citizens of Manitoba appointed by the provincial government to supervise the allocation of government funds to the arts. Last year the Council allocated \$376,000 to various cultural programs.

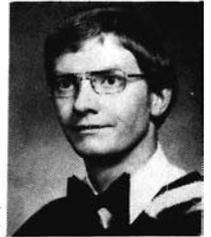
## REG TOEWS NAMED CANADIAN VS DIRECTOR

The Canadian Mennonite Central Committee's quest for a Voluntary Service director has finally hit pay dirt. After over a year's search, the MCC (Canada) executive committee recently (March 23) approved the appointment of Reginald Toews.

Mr. Toews, 33, will be resigning as executive director of the Social Services Branch of the Manitoba government's Department of Health and Social Development to take the MCC position. He is planning to begin his MCC duties on June 1, 1974.

Reg and Phyllis Toews are members of the Crestview Fellowship in Winnipeg. The congregation belongs to the Evangelical Mennonite Conference. The Toews have two girls, ages six and four.

**Wilhelm Janzen**, 271 McKay Ave., Winnipeg, has just published a small booklet on the contribution of the Anabaptists written by the well-known historian Ernest A. Payne. The booklet explains how the Anabaptists have influenced the modern world and can be purchased directly from Mr. Janzen.



Reinhard Penner

**Reinhard Penner**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Helmut Penner, 456 Dominion St., is graduating from the University of Manitoba with a B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering. He was awarded second prize in a student essay contest sponsored by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc.

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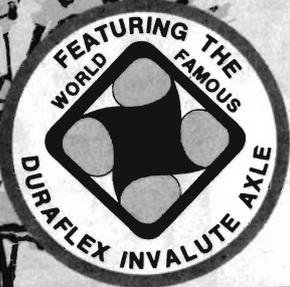
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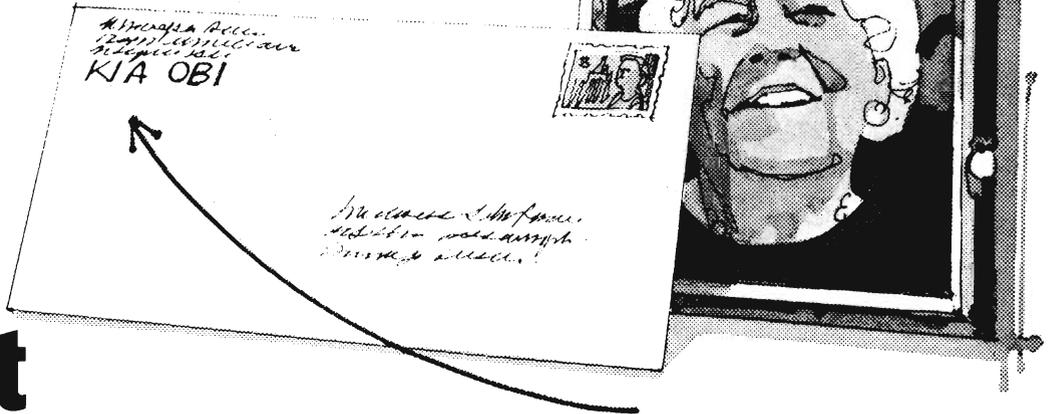
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