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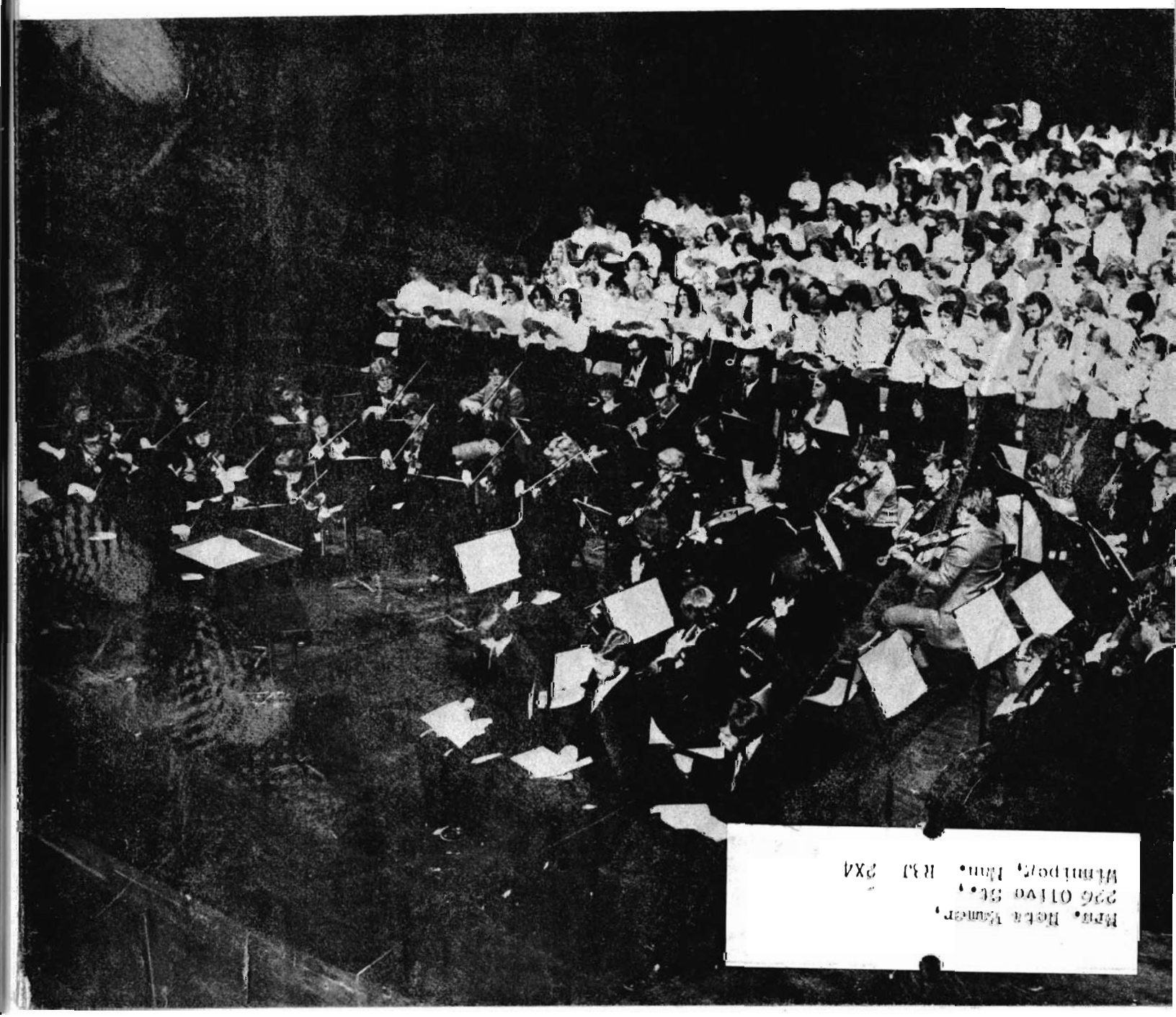

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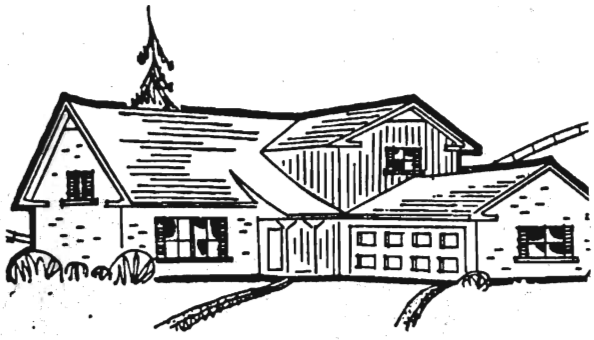

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inside

volume 8/number 9
may 1979

Gifts my father never gave me / 6
N-power: answers still needed / 7
Florida's fantasy land cures cabin fever / 8
Astronomer ponders cosmic questions / 9
Landmark sets pace in Low-German revival / 10
Fine performance for small audience / 11
Manitoba News / 12, 13, 14
Long way from Rosenfeld: A.J. Thiessen / 15
A voice from China / 17
The Presence / 18
De Jasch Sawautsche / 20
Your Word / 21
Our Word / 22

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Gifts my father never gave me

by Mary M. Enns

My father was a great cook. Too bad we saw the fruits of this talent so seldom. Not that my gentle mother discouraged his experimenting in the kitchen and messing it up. Neither did her pride stand in the way of his hustling up a choice morsel like cohoe salmon steaks straight from the fishermens' docks in New Westminster.

As a matter of fact, my mother loved the fringe benefits of being a married lady. And for her there seemed to be so many. First, it brought home the bacon. And if her husband wished to cook it, why that was by way of being a bonus. One thing my father made clear—he would tolerate no interference or helpful suggestions while he was the chef in the kitchen. But that's another thing my mother loved. She was one of the few women I know who actually enjoyed being bossed.

My father never cooked gourmet. But I challenge anyone to serve a finer roast of pork than his. I wonder, now, how come we had roast pork at our house at all, because to our everlasting sorrow we were never allowed the traditional pig-killing festival so prevalent among our friends and neighbours. The only explanation father would deign to give us, his dependants, was: "It's not healthy, all that fat meat." The only reason we did not suffer from this lack of pork was that my father, the storekeeper, had many customers who were in his debt one way or another. More importantly, he was really well liked. Time and again a "Farmer-Wurst" or a few pieces of "Rib-speer" would find its way into the Derksen kitchen. How we kids blessed those people! (Dad probably did too, under his breath.)

My father would fish in the nearby Vedder River and come home with a splendid eight-pound Steelhead. Out of the river and into the frying pan with no nonsense of scrimping on the butter. Of course, with the privilege of cooking the fish went the dubious privilege of cleaning it first. Sea food fit for royalty.

But his 'Piece de resistance' was . . . well, let me tell you the story. We, father, mother and three young daughters (David was almost grown up and certainly above such menial labour) would all be out on the raspberry field, picking the juicy red fruit for shipment to the cannery. The boss, our father, would be keeping up the general morale (and do not imagine that that was easy, for we were not endowed by nature with a dedication to work) with tales of his boyhood in Russia. This man was a raconteur of the highest order. Where memory failed creativity took over.

He told of constant cold or heated warfare amongst the eight brothers. The tools of war were dried chunks of earth (kluter), silent and most effective. Of tying tin objects to the camels' tails and driving them down the "grosse Strasse" just when their parents and the rest of the worshippers were walking home from church, the strains of the last hymn mellowing within their souls. The reckoning ("Verrechnen") that followed was dwelt upon but lightly.

But, back to the raspberry field. At one quarter of twelve my father would say: "Mittags-Zeit". He alone would leave the field and we followed some 15 minutes later knowing exactly what awaited us. It was called Hamburger Steak, pronounced the German way, and it was smothered in fried onions and garnished with potatoes fried golden brown and crisp on the outside, snowy and soft inside. He had never been told of cholesterol or calories, thank God. He would manage to serve this with such a flair that we could imagine no one more fortunate than we. And we forgave him for involving us in the ghastly business of child labour.

And there was another gift—his love of life and his enjoyment of just about anything he happened to be doing. Our trips to Vancouver, 60 miles by car, were fun times, that is if father were not doing the driving (his closest friends liked to refresh his memory every so often of that day when he tried to "move the Vedder Mountain" with our poor Model A, and every so often he would come home lighter in pocket from having run yet another red light. Still, all policemen were his friends. If Uncle George was with us on the way to the Big City we were assured of entertainment. The two brothers always laid bets with each other, always in high digits, and always in Low German, their luxury language. Both brothers eventually died owing each other millions of dollars.

That's how rich we all were. **mm**

Mary Enns is a staff writer.

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Nuclear Power: The questions are still demanding answers

Sig Wall is a professor of chemistry at the University of Winnipeg. He recently expressed his views on nuclear power in an interview published in that university's publication, **Inside Info.**

Although Sig Wall believes that we are creating our own apocalypse he is not a doomsayer in the true sense of the word. His faith prevents him from being pessimistic about "the ultimate end of things." But he does think that we are "self-destructing", that "the last judgment will work itself out in the nature of things."

An analytical chemist, Prof. Wall believes that nuclear power could be one of the many tools of our self-destruction. In the past year he has presented a paper, Nuclear Power: An Expression of Doubt, at a number of symposia. He plans to expand it into a book, geared to lay audiences, in the near future.

Prof. Wall points out that books on the nuclear controversy abound but that few deal with the Canadian situation. An adovocate of a Canadian version of the freedom of information act he believes that the nuclear power industry in this country hasn't been as open as its American counterpart. "People in the (Canadian) industry have admitted that this lack of openness permitted them to move ahead more quickly than if they had been accountable to the public."

Prof. Wall first became interested in the nuclear power controversy while doing background research for a course which considers the nature, detection and analysis of chemicals which may positively or negatively effect our society and environment. While he concluded that the polluting aspect of a properly functioning nuclear power plant ("and I underline *properly* functioning") is not a major concern, he became "uneasy" with some aspects of how people in the industry present their work. "They themselves admit they haven't been as candid about problems as they should have been. They have been more concerned with allaying fears. And that's legitimate if there's no reason to be afraid."

Prof. Wall believes that we do have some cause for fear not so much from the technology, which he calls "a fantastic achievement", as from the technologists. A recent Ford Foundation study conducted in the United States found that 90 per cent of research money earmarked for safety was spent to develop ways to predict how safe the existing technology was. Only 10 per cent was spent to develop additional safety measures.

"Such expenditure reflects a great deal of confidence in their own technology. Because their confidence is so great they're not prepared to take the kind of skeptical look (at the limitations of the industry) that I think is needed. I feel that someone who doesn't share that confidence should write a critique."

Prof. Wall, who spent 10 days this past summer discussing his reservations with scientists at the Pinawa Research Station, stresses that he does not question the integrity of the people in the industry. "They are quite sincere when they put their house down next to the nuclear power plant. A certain assurance grows that is not dependent on facts. It is natural for someone who is competent in their discipline and who has been in the industry for a long time."

The nuclear power industry has been developed against a background of accidents Prof. Wall says. One of the most serious known accidents occurred in the Southern Urals in 1957 or 1958. Perhaps involving nuclear waste materials it contaminated a large area of the countryside. The accident was publicly ignored or denied by the CIA and by government and nuclear agencies in Britain and did not become generally known until the early 70's.

As serious as this incident was, Prof. Wall believes that we haven't yet had the kind of accident that could take place. He questions the whole approach to safety analysis. "Given our present experience it's not sufficient on the basis of hindsight to estimate safety. And there hasn't yet been sufficient time to simulate conditions concerning the behaviour of nuclear wastes held over long periods of time. I can't be optimistic. If accidents can happen they usually do and the same accident usually doesn't happen twice."

Prof. Wall plans to outline the most serious prob;ems in his book but does not intend to resort to scare tactics. He says that information on known accidents has often been overplayed by opponents of the industry.

On the other hand, the active promotion of nuclear power by people in the industry has led to an unrealistic expectation of benefits, Prof. Wall says. "There is currently a mystique of nuclear power that is not warranted on objective grounds." He notes, for example, that it was often said that the electricity generated by nuclear power would be "too cheap to meter." In fact, environmental considerations have contributed significantly to the cost in recent years reducing the economic basis for choosing nuclear power. The economic consideration is a valid concern he says, "but we tend to make it central. For me that's a problem."

For Prof. Wall a central question of the nuclear power controversy is whether North Americans need the kind of power capacities that have been projected. In his paper he points out that North Americans use a disproportionate share of the world's energy resources. He distinguishes between energy needs and demands and stresses that the direct relation between energy consumption and material prosperity commonly believed to hold may be erroneous. "It is crucial for North Americans to reduce power consumption both from the safety point of view and the moral point of view. There is no way the world can sustain the standard of living that North America has. Imagine India developing to the point of the United States. It seems to me unthinkable in terms of the numbers of people and the pollution involved."

He doubts whether "de-development" (a term which he says he has borrowed from Paul Ehrlich, author of *The End of Affluence*) is possible. "Many people would say I'm unrealistic and I probably am. It's not in human nature to cut back. Then you have to talk in terms of compulsory conservation and you're talking about another kind of society."

Prof. Wall notes that there has been a

slow-down of nuclear power development in the United States under the Carter administration. However, he believes that this situation will change drastically if the current struggle for power in Iran, or a similar situation elsewhere, produces shortages. "Attitudes change in a short time. You become prepared to take risks that previously you had no intention of taking."

The nuclear power option cannot be ignored, Prof. Wall says. "It's such a fantastic source of energy if we can use it wisely and with reasonable safety. He believes that a mix of energy types might be the best solution for the future, but says that unless a decision regarding an appropriate mix is made soon, nuclear power may be our only option.

The decision for nuclear power development ultimately lies with the politicians says Prof. Wall. "They make the decisions and they can only lead by a little bit." He says that there is a need for independent comment "to help shape public opinion; to help politicians move in a climate of opinion that is more rational."

The nuclear power controversy covers a number of complex areas, says Prof. Wall, and critics will undoubtedly question his ability to write this book. "But really no one is competent to write in all these areas simultaneously in the ultimate sense." He says that he is "confident that proponents of the industry will shoot down anything that doesn't hold water."

There is no panacea for the energy crisis, Prof. Wall says. "When any technology arises there is always an impact on the environment." Solar energy is now being touted by environmentalists. "But there is no doubt in my mind that if it were developed on a large scale there would be serious environmental impacts. Not the least of which would be the number of people who fall from ladders each year while cleaning their solar panels."

Still Dr. Wall insists that he doesn't like to be a doomsayer. Given his gentle, compassionate manner it's even difficult to label him "crepe hanger". For the past two years he has served as a lay clergyman with the non-denominational church at Pine Ridge. One of the factors which contributed to Prof. Wall's decision to become involved in this way was the growing despair evident today especially amongst youth.

"I don't like to be a doomsayer. The doomsaying we see in the universities is producing a lot of despair in young people. If a man doesn't have faith he can't pretend to, and I pity my colleagues who don't have that faith. I sometimes get the impression that they like to puncture balloons. But they don't replace them with anything. We can replace those beliefs, Prof. Wall says, by working toward an "environmental theology." **mm**

Florida's fantasy land A cure for "Cabin Fever"

by Vic Penner

Four (or is it five) months of severe winter can wear you down and finally escape looms as the only answer to maintaining a semblance of sanity. So it was that the wife and I scraped together our life's savings and pawned our overshoes for a down payment on a vacation in the poor man's Hawaii; namely, Florida.

Did we care that other people were travelling to Hawaii, Tahiti, Australia, Spain, Jamaica, Barbados when all we could muster was Florida? Or course. But when you've never been to any of these places, Florida's as good as any.

The Holiday Inn in Grand Forks is nice, but there's nothing to beat the joy of departing Manitoba in a snowstorm and landing in 84 degrees F weather four hours later amidst waving palms and customs officers.

We landed in the heart of the Florida tourist trap—Orlando. That's about a dozen miles from Walt Disney World and the mecca of hundreds of thousands of tourists from all over the world. I think they were all there the same day we were. Kids love the place, and I guess some adults do too. Personally, spending an hour in a line-up to take a ten-minute "jungle cruise", where mechanical elephants squirt water through their mechanical trunks, and mechanical jungle dwellers pose with spears beside a narrow canal full of tour boats, wasn't the highlight of my Florida visit.

At Busch Gardens in Tampa, the beer money of Annhauser Busch has erected a tourist attraction that features real African animals—giraffes, lions, elephants, etc. roaming on Busch's own Serengeti Plain. You can view it all from a steam train, aerial gondola or monorail.

And then there's Sea World and Circus World, Cypress Gardens and Sunken Gardens, St. Augustine's and St. Pete's, Daytona Beach and Ormond Beach. And, of course, Kennedy Space Centre where all the American space action is launched into the wild blue yonder. The space projects take on new meaning for anybody who's visited Cape Canaveral and viewed the launching pads, space hardware and control centre. In my opinion the Space Shuttle has Mickey Mouse beat hollow, and yet I dare say the fictional mouse vastly outdraws the greatest technology of our age when it comes to tourists.

No matter, the biggest attraction by far in Florida is the weather. At the end of February the grass is green, the azaleas bloom in profusion, semi-trailer trucks rumble along the roads loaded with oranges and grapefruit. There are occasional spills of the fruit at roadsides the way sugar beet trucks spill bits of their cargo in the Red River Valley in fall.

In Florida there's sunshine every day—sometimes liquid. When it's the real thing though, poolsides at the major hotels are wall-to-wall northern tourists. They lounge languorously, taking time only to raise the odd tall cool one to sun-chapped lips or slather fresh gobs of lotion on blistering skin. A Panama Jack huckster peddles suntan oil that he assures will turn a burn into a tan.

Florida in Spanish means resurrection, rebirth, flowering. It lives up to its name for northerners caught in Manitoba's second harshest winter of this century.

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Visiting astronomer ponders cosmic questions

by Glen Klassen

During his first visit to Manitoba, Harvard University astronomer Owen Gingerich witnessed two memorable sights. One was the total solar eclipse and the other was the sight of rows of cars, each duly tied up to an electrical outlet. The plugged-in cars were a novel sight which he found quite amusing. But he did not come here to see the eclipse or to experience Manitoba weather, he came at the invitation of Intermennonite Campus Ministries to speak at the University of Manitoba's Festival of Life and Learning, which coincided with the eclipse. This was Gingerich's seventh eclipse, although for only two other eclipses was the weather as accommodating as it was for ours.

Gingerich, the son of the late Melvin Gingerich of Goshen, is known internationally for his numerous technical and popular writings. His present interests center around the development of astronomy during the time of Copernicus, the man who published a book in 1543 in which he set out the hypothesis that the earth moves around the sun, contrary to the ancient dogma that the earth was the stationary center of the universe. During a recent sabbatical leave, Gingerich tracked down about four hundred 16th century copies of the book, about half of them from the first printing. What makes these copies so interesting is that each one is unique due to marginal annotations, either copied from another annotated copy or composed by the original owner of the book. The most interesting copies turned up in Poland, the Vatican, and in Scotland.

By comparing marginalia, Gingerich could deduce who the original owner had been and could recreate something of the 16th century climate of thought in which the few learned people of the time struggled with Copernicus' radical hypothesis. Gingerich found that Copernicus and his peers were more interested in the technical elegance of their models than in the effects that their models would have on the real world. The Church was also content to allow the circulation of Copernican ideas as long as they remained esoteric and hypothetical.

Gingerich also spoke about cosmology. Will the universe end with a bang or a whimper? Most astronomers nowadays agree that the universe began with a bang about 13 billion years ago. Since then, galaxies by the billions have been speeding away from each other, creating time and space as they go. The big question is whether this expansion will go on forever with everything getting colder and darker or whether everything will be drawn together again into another fiery ball. The answer depends partly on whether there is enough mass in the universe to initiate the regathering of all matter. Astronomers disagree on this point, some preferring death by ice while others are inclined toward death by fire. This poetic summing up was taken from a poem by Robert Frost.

Festival organizers had invited a Dr. Dobyns from California to talk about the use of astrology in psychological counselling. When they heard that Gingerich was coming they came up with the idea of having a dialogue between an astronomer and an astrologer. Gingerich consented and the event took place before a very interested audience of students and others. Gingerich showed how astrology could not be considered to be a science, and therefore must be a faith. He said that, as a faith, it would not be one that he would adopt, but that he would not want to interfere if someone chose to believe in it. Dobyns agreed that astrology was a faith or an art, but at the same time maintained that it could be used scientifically and that scientific experiments could establish its validity. She claimed to be able to tell which of a pair of twins had been born first by comparing their personalities with the positions of stars at the moment of birth. Any real dialogue ended when Gingerich asked Dobyns whether the people in Utah who are now sick with leukemia due to early atomic tests were really only psychologically sick or not. Dobyns said that cancer especially was related to personality problems which result from living out of step with one's horoscope. The session ended with a lively discussion from the floor which showed that many students were grappling with the astrology question. It is likely that Gingerich's incisive logic and polite manner made a big difference in the thinking of a number of students present.

Gingerich also spoke at the two Mennonite colleges in Winnipeg. These talks focused on the question of whether there might be life on other worlds. He showed how exceedingly improbable our existence on this planet is by bringing together modern insights into the biochemistry of life with theories of how the chemical elements were made soon after the "big bang". Had cosmic energy levels in the big bang been a touch lower or higher, no carbon would have been created and as a result there would be no life as we know it. On the other hand, had life not appeared and changed the atmosphere of this planet from one of carbon dioxide to one of oxygen, the human race could not have lived. The oxygen is not only essential for life and breath, it also, in the form of ozone, protects us from deadly ultra-violet radiation from the sun.

Gingerich remains quite sceptical about the possibilities of life on other worlds but does not see that such worlds would threaten our theology. We need not expect that other life forms would have had the same history of relating to God that we have had. The unthinkable coincidences which are being found in the stars and in the genes make it difficult for a scientist to be an atheist, but only for those who are already committed to faith will science be theologically meaningful.

mm

Glen Klassen is a member of the University of Manitoba department of microbiology.

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Landmark operetta sets pace in Low German revival

DAUT STRAUME SCHALDUEK, as presented by the Landmark Alumni Drama Club at Landmark Collegiate, March 14-17, 1979.

A review by Al Reimer

Let's face it, friends. Landmark is not exactly the cultural centre of Manitoba. It isn't even a Mennonite cultural centre. Just finding the place is a feat of navigation. You may pass through it accidentally (and quickly) if you turn off #1 too soon on your way to Steinbach. Landmark is the kind of place that seems a little apologetic about interrupting the prairie landscape as you go by. At least it had the sense to choose a modest name. No delusions of prairie grandeur here—like Dominion City or Swan Lake.

That's only the physical place though—not much, but it's there. But Landmark is also a state of mind—and not only to its few inhabitants. For many years this dot on the map was known far and wide for two things: its tasty cheese and its fine football team—the Dutchmen—which used to trounce Steinbach and even Winnipeg teams with monotonous regularity. The only way Steinbach could beat them finally was to join them.

Yes, that's Landmark for you. The people out there have the *frachheit*, the sheer unmitigated gall, to think that their tiny community can embark on projects that Steinbachers haven't even thought of, or have thought of and rejected as useless for business.

And now these upstarts in Landmark are into Low German theatre. Low German theatre? Yes, Low German theatre. And you can save your superior chuckles and embarrassed blushes, at least until you have taken the trouble to investigate this unique phenomenon, as I finally got around to doing recently. It turned out to be quite an experience. By the end of the evening my belly muscles were weak from laughing, and I went home full of admiration and gratitude for what this group had accomplished.

The Low German drama group in Landmark has been active for several years. They have done some Low German songs and skits, some "Koop enn Bua" and other things. This year they got really ambitious and mounted a Low German version of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, picturesquely re-titled as *Daut Straume Schalduek*. The result was a production so thoroughly Mennonitized that the only traces of Gilbert and Sullivan left in it were the rollicking tunes. The setting had been changed from an English man-o-war to "Musdarp" at threshing time. Instead of sailors the chorus consisted of Mennonite "drascha Junges". In place of an overbearing, incompetent old time-server of an admiral, we got "Herr Panna von Kildona," the richest "Russlaenda" around. The bashful lovers were "Leinche", daughter of "Schult Kroeka" and "Jaunses Jasch", one of the "drascha Gang". Only "Butta Bloum" and "Doudja Derck" were recognizable from the original.

I should have known that the evening was going to be a success when I spotted Jack Thiessen's huge fourwheeler parked boldly in front of the main entrance. After all, would the compiler of the Low German dictionary attend a Low German operetta unless he had heard that it was good?

Inside the auditorium we were greeted by charming lasses who were doling out generous "Japsvoll Knacksoat", those delectable little Mennonite peanuts we learned to eat at our mother's knee. Another good omen. My friends and I walked up the aisle to our front-row seats on a comfortable carpet of sunflower shells. The place was packed and the air of festivity and expectation reminded me of church Christmas concerts years ago. Then the audience hushed, waiting for the performance to begin.

Instead, there was a commotion at the front entrance and in walked a Mennonite farmer (Menno Plett) complete with bib overalls and pitchfork. His role, obviously, was to warm up the audience—which hardly needed it—with some Low German banter and jokes. Sauntering through the audience, he asked how many people had come from Winnipeg and other places. When he spotted me in the front row he casually asked how many in the audience had been born in "the Linden teacherage two miles west." Not surprisingly, I was the only one to get up and take a bow. And I didn't need three guesses to discover who had told him about my humble origins.

Then the performance began. As soon as the "Drascha Gang" appeared from behind the walls of straw bales on stage and began to sing, you knew it would be a fun evening. Who cared if much of the singing and acting was of the "will I remember my lines?" and "what comes next?" variety. It was amateur theatre at its most charming and uninhibited. I kept looking across to the other end of the front row to see if Esther and Ben Horch were laughing as hard as my friends Roy Vogt and Arkie Wiens and I were. They were, but not as loudly. Ben kept fiddling happily with the little plug in his ear. He was tape-recording the performance.

The Drascha Gang choruses were hilarious and sung with a fine, casual yet controlled abandon—"*Wie schaufe op'm Laund*", etc. Peter Suderman as "Herr Panna" was exactly right for the role—all six foot four of him. His "success" song was side-splitting: "I am the richest Russlaenda in the whole G.C." and "I'll drive to the church with a Chrysler and a bride." The love duet between Jaunses Jasch (Grant Plett) and Leinche (Pat Plett) was another highlight. "*De Leev brennt hea op'e Stap so heat aus en Kildona,*" was Jasch's despairing cry when he thought he was losing his Leinche to Herr Panna.

All in all, this was a thoroughly relaxed and enjoyable evening of theatre. The audience lapped up every joke and sally as if they had been attending Low German theatre for years. I sensed that the spirits of such pioneer writers in Low German as J.H. Janzen and Arnold Dyck were hovering benignly over the stage. And what an irony that this Low German theatre renaissance should be spontaneously generated in the once dour and disapproving environs of a Kleine Gemeinde community.

Wilmer Penner, the director of *Daut Straume Schaulduek* and the leading light of this dedicated theatre group, deserves the highest praise for his yeoman service in this and in preceding productions. Mrs. K. Friesen is another who deserves recognition for her contributions in the translating of this work. I thought the libretto was first-rate, funny, witty and movingly sincere by turns. All of it was written in a crisp, vivid Low German vernacular that was several cuts above the usual doggerel.

My evening came to a mellow, nostalgic conclusion when a little old lady detached herself from the crowd after the performance and shyly informed me that she remembered seeing me in my cradle in the teacherage when I was a red-faced infant a few days old.

Let's see now, that was about 39 years ago?

As Arnold Dyck's Bua might have put it: "*Halle Wattsteen, Isaak, de Mensche sunge and vetalde doa enn Landmark daut et ne Lost wea to seane and heare. Joah, daut jing aube sea scheen.*"

mm

Fine performance for half-filled Concert Hall

A review by Peter Letkemann

The 250-voice Mennonite Oratorio Choir under the direction of George Wiebe, gave a first-rate performance of Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio *St. Paul* at the Centennial Concert Hall on Saturday evening, March 10, 1979. The soloists for the occasion were Henriette Cornies (soprano), Betty Hicks (alto), John Martens (tenor), Mel Braun and Len Ratzlaff (baritones). The 43-piece orchestra consisted of players from the Mennonite Community Orchestra and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

St. Paul was completed in the year 1835, when Mendelssohn was 25 years of age. Though not equal to his second oratorio *Elijah*, written 10 years later, it remains a masterpiece of oratorio composition in the great tradition of Bach and Handel. The subject of Paul's conversion reflects Mendelssohn's own personal and family history. He was born of Jewish parents into an illustrious Jewish family, which included the famous philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. In his time Jews were still being persecuted throughout Europe. They were not allowed to be citizens with voting and civil rights. Anti-Semitic feeling erupted into violence in 1819, when Mendelssohn was 10 years old. In these circumstances, many Jewish families converted to Christianity as the only means of survival. Mendelssohn's family did so in 1822. Though an act of compromise on the part of his father, Felix lived and thought as a faithful evangelical Christian. But contrary to many other Jews, he did not deny his heritage. He was proud of it, and actively supported the cause of Jewish emancipation. The similarities with Paul are many, and we can see why Mendelssohn chose this subject as the theme of his first oratorio.

The work has a long tradition among Canadian Mennonites, having received its first Mennonite performance in Rosthern, Saskatchewan, 51 years ago under the direction of Rev. F.C. Thiessen. This year's performance was especially significant for two reasons. It marked the first time in the history of these joint Oratorio Choir performances that the majority of the orchestral players were drawn from our own Mennonite community rather than from the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Though not as well prepared as the choir, the orchestra played well. As the Mennonite Community Orchestra continues to develop we can look forward to many more exciting choral-orchestral programs of this kind.

The concert was also significant in that it marked 25 years of dedicated service to Mennonite musical life on the part of George Wiebe. He began teaching at CMBC in 1954, and one of the first works he prepared with the college choir at that time was *St. Paul*. A more fitting work could not have been chosen to mark his silver jubilee. His interpretation had the maturity of 25 years association with the work, but was not lacking in freshness and youthful exuberance.

The choir, as always, was the highlight of the evening. It was well prepared and responded enthusiastically to George's spirited and capable direction. The tone was clear and vibrant and the diction was remarkably good. Choruses like "Stone him" and "Rise up, arise" were sung with real dramatic intensity. The chorales and choruses like "Happy and blest are they" were sung with lyrical reverance, Especially moving was the Conversion scene, with the ladies, like an angelic choir, singing "Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me".

The role of the soloists is not as prominent in this work as in most other oratorios. Their main function is to tell the story in the form of recitatives, rather than to reflect upon the action in the form of arias. This function was handled very capably by soprano Henriette Cornies and tenor John Martens. The role of St. Paul was sung with conviction by Mel Braun, one of the finest and most promising singers to come out of our Mennonite ranks in recent years.

Given such a fine performance, it was unfortunate that the Concert Hall was only half filled. **mm**

EDITOR REQUIRED

The Conference of Mennonites in Canada has an opening for the position of Editor. Work involves the preparation of the CMC inserts for the **Mennonite Reporter** and **The Mennonite**, preparation of news releases, bulletin inserts and other news writing. This is a half-time position. Please call or write Edward Enns, Congregational Resources Board, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4 tel. (204) 888-6781 for further information and application form.

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Dr. Gary Smith — Major Themes in the Minor Prophets.	Dr. Kenneth Kantzer — Current Issues in Theology.
Dr. Stan Willson — Premarital Counselling.	Dr. Stephen Woodward — The Christian Life and its Future (Book of the Revelation)
Dr. Linda Cannell— Contemporary Trends in Christian Education.	

For further information on the Summer School, or the full academic year, write:
Henry Esau, Registrar, Winnipeg Theological Seminary, Otterburne, Manitoba, R0A 1G0.

Manitoba news

Peter R. Schellenberg of Rosenfeld was one of four people in the province who received a service award from fellow seed growers in recognition for contributions to his community and the seed industry. Awards were presented to growers at an annual convention of the Manitoba branch of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association in Winnipeg on March 7 and 8.

Dr. Henry Friesen, head of the department of physiology University of Manitoba was recently awarded the Isaac Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship from the Canada Council. A $40,000 research award, it was the first of its kind for a U of M staff member. Dr. Friesen plans to use part of his leave studying principles and techniques relating to recombinant DNA, at University of California, in San Francisco.

Dr. Harry Loewen, Mennonite studies chair at the University of Winnipeg presented a paper "The Anabaptist Image in Gottfried Keller's Novellas" recently at the North Eastern Modern Language and Association Convention in Harford, Conn. He leaves Winnipeg for eight weeks on May 1 in the interest of research in Mennonite Literature in Mannheim and the Mennonite archives in Weierhof, Germany. During this time Loewen is to present a paper "Adjustments of Mennonites to City Culture in Canada" at the Free University of Berlin.

Rev. Martin Durksen, for the past 10 years producer and speaker of the MB Communications *Familienandacht* and last year originator of *Licht des Evangeliums*, has resigned effective September 30, 1979. During these years he was active in various deeper life campaigns, in counselling as a follow-up to the radio ministry, and in hospital visitations. Prior to the radio work Rev. Durksen served for 20 years in church, missionary and MCC work in South America. He taught for several years in a Bible School.

McIvor MB Church retreat is planned for June 8-10. Leander Rempel, a planter of churches in Kenora, the Yukon and Alaska will be the guest speaker. Rempel and his wife are member of the EMB Church in Steinbach.

Laura Loewen, Abbotsford, B.C., has joined the staff of MCC (Canada) as overseas services assistant, replacing Ken Langeman who now serves as controller in MCC offices in Akron, Penn. Miss Loewen has worked with Menno Travel Service in Akron, Amsterdam, Winnipeg and Clearbrook, B.C. She graduated recently with a Commerce degree from Simon Fraser University.

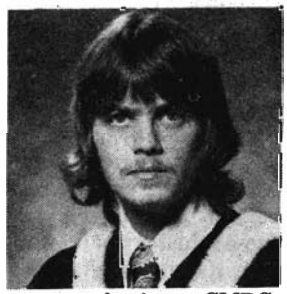
A meeting of all volunteer personnel for **MCC Community Self-Help Centres** took place on April 5 at Fort Garry MB Church. President of the organization, Justina Baerg, said the purpose of the meeting was to review and promote the work of the Thrift Shops. Guest speaker Vern Ratzlaff spoke to the theme: "You are called for such a time as this."

MCC (Manitoba) has appointed **John Doerksen** (recently returned MCC colunteer worker with Umsiedler in Germany) to co-ordinate a recently organized, in Canada, refugee assistance program here in Manitoba. Sponsorship here is an excellent way for a congregation or group to provide needy assistance to refugees,m for, as J.M. Klassen, executive secretary of MCC (Canada) states: "Many of us have also been refugees and can share in the feeling of thankfulness that someone cared and acted . . . enough to take the risk and help."

Dr. John Regehr, professor at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College, presented a paper on the topic "Caring—My Talent" at the Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly in Saskatoon. Helmut Epp and H. Klassen who were in attendance in Saskatoon have invited Dr. Regehr to do a repeat on May 15th at 11:30 A.M. at Donwood Manor.

Lynette Martens, daughter of Peter and Ruth Martens of Sanford, and presently a grade XII student at the MCI in Gretna won a writing award recently. Lynette was one of three Manitoba students to have been selected as the best young writers in the province at a 12th annual student writing contest. The purpose of the competition was to "search out young writers across Canada and encourage them to develop their creative talents".

Mr. D. Leonard Wiebe has been appointed to the position of principal of Westgate, beginning July 1, 1979. Mr. Wiebe is currently a teacher of physics and science at St. John's High School in Winnipeg. He is a graduate of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, University of Manitoba (B.Sc, B.A. and B.Ed.) and Temple Univeristy in Philadelphia (M.Sc.) He has twice been recipient of the Shell Merit Scholarship at Cornell University and has won many other scholastic honors. He was vice-principal at John Taylor Collegiate for several years and also taught for three years at Lahr, West Germany. Mr. Wiebe is a member of the Charleswood Mennonite Church. His wife Phyllis is also a teacher and they have three children.



Mel Braun, instructor of voice at CMBC, conductor of the sanctuary choir at Central MB Church, and the Madrigal Choir at CMBC, and baritone soloist with Hymn Sing was a second time runner-up in the recent Rose Bowl competition of the Manitoba Music Festival. Mr. Braun leaves in July to study in the Music Program of University of Western Ontario in London. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. B.N. Braun of Altona.

M.B.C.I. invites applications and inquiries for the following positions:

1) **Evening Caretaker,** for the months of September to June 1979-1980. The hours of work would be from 5:00-11:00 p.m.
2) **Dietician and Cook,** for school cafeteria. This is a seven hour per day position during the school term, September to June. The ability to make borscht is a decided asset.

Enquire from:
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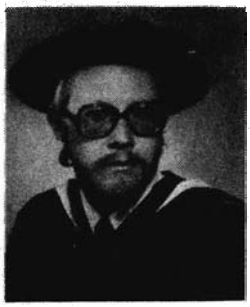
Phone: 667-8210

J.E. Toews, associate professor of New Testament, MB Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California, was the speaker at the March Bible conference held at the Fort Garry MB Church. His talks were based on the Book of Romans.

A Russian language youth group presented a program of Russian songs, dialogues and poetry at the **Central MB Church** on April 22.

Abram Hamm and **Walter Wedel**, members of the Evangelische Baptisten Brueder Gemeinde in Germany visited Canadian Mennonite churches recently in the interest of East/West relations. At an informal question and answer session at the offices of MCC (Canada) in Winnipeg they gave considerable insight into the situation behind the Iron Curtain. They told of their reasons for not having registered with the Russian government, contrary to their decision in the 1960's. They refused to sign when they realized that children and youth to age 18 should be excluded from church attendance, resulting in persecution. Because of the large numbers of Mennonites having migrated to Germany, including Hamm and Wedel, the Russian authorities have become more lenient toward the Christians. They told of packed churches, many conversions, large baptisms and flourishing work among and by the young people.



Paul I. Redekop graduated from York University in Toronto with a Ph.D. in sociology on December 2, 1978. Dr. Redekop attended Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, graduating in 1965. He received his B.A. from the University of Winnipeg in 1968 and taught high school in Boissevain the following year. In 1972 he graduated from Carleton University in Ottawa with his Master's. He was a lecturer with the Department of Sociology at the University of Winnipeg from 1972 to 1975. Paul's doctoral dissertation was entitled: *Morals in Marriage*—a developmental analysis of marital expectations.

The League for Life of Manitoba held a congress, **Festival of the Child**, in recognition of the International Year of the Child in Winnipeg on April 20-22. The interest of guests was captured by speakers, displays, resource material, books, films and entertainment by children. Featured guests were: Sean Morton Downey, Jr.-chairman of the pro-life committee in Washington, D.C., Dr. & Mrs. J.C. Willke—international experts in the field of pre-natal development and family life education, Nicola Schaefer—author of the book "Does She Know She's There?", Ellen Jones—local executive director of Pregnancy Distress Service, Sister Christella Buser—health co-ordinator of the L'Arche foundation of Winnipeg, the Mennonite Children's Choir, the Sam McConnell dancers and Les Danseurs de la Riviere Rouge. The festival emphasized the need to return to all children their most basic right—the right to life.

CMBC's class of 1979 is the largest in the history of the school. Of 36 candidates, 30 receive a bachelor or theology degree, four a bachelor of church music and two a certificate in theology. Festivities of April 28 mark the reunion of the classes of '49, '59, and '69, followed by an alumni banquet at Bethel Mennonite. At 8:00 p.m. guests take in the annual spring concert at the college gymnasium with the schools' chamber choir and ensemble performing. On Sunday, April 29, further joy is found in attending a baccalaureate service at the school and in the afternoon, graduation exercises at Home Street Mennonite Church.

Dr. Jack Thiessen, professor of German at the University of Winnipeg was recently appointed president of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Thiessen, who has been on the symphony board for the last year and a half, is also a former chairman of the Manitoba Arts Council. Thiessen was appointed to the position after the firing of two symphony administrators and the resignation of the previous president. Thiessen is optimistic about the future of the symphony and hopes that a fund drive will serve to help resolve the symphony's financial difficulties.

Menno Wiebe, Elijah McKay and **Peter Andres** in their work with MCC's native concerns hope to place 12 volunteer gardeners into northern native communities of Manitoba and Ontario. The general idea is to help the natives beat the high cost of food. The three volunteers who offered gardening expertise last year also came to be active in community sports, church work and cultural interaction. Fortunately also, natives were used to root cellers so preservation of produce was no real problem. Andres, the volunteer coordinator for MCC hopes to hear from people interested in offering a summer to this kind of work.

Stan Reimer and Sons of Marchand sold their breeding stock of Limousin cattle for a total of $190,000 at an auction sale in Grunthal this March. Buyers came from as far away as Washington State and Texas. The beef stock was sold in 133 lots at an average price of $1,400 per lot, an all-time record for a Limousin dispersal sale on this continent. Highest single price went to a full-blooded Limousin cow, $5,700. Mr. Reimer has sold the bulk of his breeding stock in order to concentrate on oil seed production. Some breeding stock will be sold privately later.

DATES

May 13: CBI, Columbia Bible Inst. at 10:45 service Sargent Mennonite.

May 25 and 26: 8:00 p.m. Westgate's Jr. operetta, "Tom Sawyer" at Tech. Voc.

May 27: Mennonite Art and Music Festival at Polo Park mall.

May 28: 8:00 p.m. Westgage annual meeting, Westgate.

May 31: 7:30 p.m. at Sargent Menn. Christian growth workshops geared for those newly committed to Christian life (followup, Marney Patterson crusade).

Henry Engbrecht has resigned as director of the choir of the Manitoba Opera Association, to devote more time to his numerous other choral activities and to his work at the University of Manitoba. He remains choir director at First Mennonite Church.

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COME, LET US SING: MENNONITE SCHOOLS CHORAL FESTIVAL

The setting was very ordinary—the gymnasium of the high school in Swift Current, but there was nothing ordinary about the music which echoed from the walls of that gymnasium on the afternoon and evening of March 25. It was magnificent.

The event was the Mennonite Schools Choral Festival, sponsored by the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools, and 350 students from six Mennonite high schools and Bible colleges in Western Canada participated. They arrived in Swift Current on Friday, March 23, and spent a busy weekend preparing for the concert. It was hard work. Each conductor rehearsed two songs with the mass choir, songs which the individual choirs had learned and which now required careful polishing. Before the final rehearsal was finished, some students were tired and tense from the effort of working with different conductors. Some muttered that, had they known that they would have to work so hard they wouldn't have come—they thought a choir tour would be fun—a break from school—but this was just too tiring—too much was being expected of them.

Something happened to the students during the first concert in the afternoon. The singers all wanted each conductor to feel satisfied with their performance. The six individual choirs became a unit. The result was a truly moving occasion. It was a privilege to sit in the audience and listen to 350 gifted young musicians raising their voices to the glory of God. At the end of the evening concert they indicated their appreciation to their conductors with a prolonged standing ovation. The experience was as meaningful to the singers as it had been to the audience.

The conductors had chosen a beautiful selection of sacred music. Some highlights for this listener were: Come, Let us Sing, by Gabrieli, Oster Psalm by Ruh, O How Blessed by Bruckner and Sanctus by the French composer, Gounod.

In addition to the 12 songs by the mass choir, each choir sang two numbers during the evening concert. The selections were all excellent and well executed. In the afternoon, the band of the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, ably led by Ken Epp, demonstrated that Mennonite young people certainly do not lack a sense of rhythm.

Participating schools were: Elim Bible School, Ben Pauls conductor; Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, Peter Braun conductor; Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Rudy Krahn conductor; Rosthern Junior College, Marv Regier conductor; Swift Current Bible Institute, John Poettcker conductor; and Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Garry Froese conductor.

All participants appreciated the warm hospitality of the Swift Current community and the Bible college, who undertook the task of providing meals for the musicians and provided overnight accommodation.

The choral festival has become an annual event and plans are already underway for next year's concert, to be held in the Centennial Concert Hall in Winnipeg. No one should miss this concert. **mm**

by Ruth Vogt

WESTGATE FESTIVAL SET FOR POLO PARK

The annual Mennonite Festival of Art and Music will be held this year on Sunday, May 27, from 12-6 p.m. at Polo Park in Winnipeg. Visitors will have an opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of displays of arts and crafts: ceramics, painting, photography, needlework, macrame, and sculpture will be included. Local authors and publishers will be displaying books and magazines.

For those who enjoy music, choirs from schools and churches in Winnipeg and other Manitoba communities will be performing throughout the afternoon at the north end of the mall. Folk singers will provide entertainment in the eating area and around the fountain.

Refreshments will be served, and will include a variety of home baked goods and traditional Mennonite foods.

All proceeds will go towards support of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate.

MENNONITE WORLD FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY

"Remember and pray for us as we pray for you."

These words from Charles Christano, president of the Mennonite World Conference are a fitting call to an observance of Mennonite World Fellowship Sunday on Pentecost, June 3, 1979.

This date has been set by Mennonite World Conference in consultation with the leaders of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in North America.

Many who attended Wichita '78 gained a new vision of the world-wide fellowship of which we are a part. The work of missions has borne fruit.

Organized Mennonite and Brethren in Christ conferences are found today in 45 nations.

This special occasion is intended as an annual observance. It is a time for remembrance, prayer and sharing of information.

The North American conferences have also suggested that a special offering be lifted on June 3 for the work of Mennonite World Conference. Rather than continuing a denominational budget allocation, each congregation is urged to share in contributing to the ongoing work of MWC.

Through the special offering, North American congregations will join with other congregations around the world to support the ongoing work of MWC and the travel fund.

An offering on World Fellowship Sunday in 1978 toward the tenth assembly expense and the travel fund resulted in a total contribution of $58,306.97.

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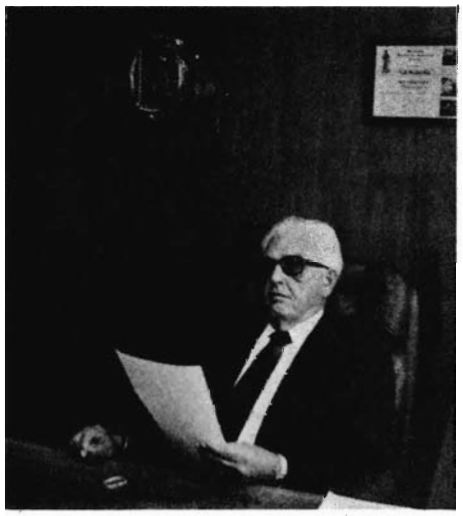
It's a long way from Rosenfeld: A. J. Thiessen and buses



by Mary M. Enns

Hard work, trust and the loyalty of employees build a business. A.J., as most people call him, feels very strongly about this slogan. "But it's also true" he says, "that behind most successful men there's a good woman."

When he and Lenora were married in 1935 they had little money, indeed. "The engagement ring, and the wedding ring cost me a total of $10." During the early years it was imperative that they live frugally. Now, at 68, five children, Ron, Bernie, Bill, Erwin and Carolyn, later, and after 48 years in the transport business, he says: "There are things in the course of my life that I might wish I had done differently. Sometimes I regret that the business was so time-consuming—time that I might have spent with my family while the children were growing up. It was a very busy life, but we knew no other way."

Thiessen launched out into the transport business in 1945. But that was after 14 years of working hard at other ventures. First it was in home town Rosenfeld, and it was in the business of buying chickens and eggs and peddling them in Winnipeg in order to support his mother and two brothers. "We never did have to go on relief." Eventually he took a partner, George Fast, into the growing business. They added cattle to the chickens and hauled freight from Winnipeg back to Rosenfeld. They started a Chrysler agency which continued for 25 years. Their General Store and Hatchery in Rosenfeld was subsequently taken over by Mr. Fast.

"I have always been grateful to the people of Rosenfeld and Southern Manitoba for their support of me whether it was in these business undertakings or later in 1953 when I was a Conservative candidate in Provencher in the Federal election, and in 1962 when I ran against Jake Froese provincially, losing to him by 17 votes. I would have to say that I won by losing, financially and otherwise."

Training for his present business career? None other than that the trucking business was a forerunner to the bus business. Strangely, all this was not at all what Thiessen had in mind for his future. What he really wanted was to go to India as a missionary. He was the first applicant in the General Conference in Canada. When the depression hung like smog over the horizon. No one had any money, neither the church to subsidize his studies, nor he. He had finished the Rosenfeld school at the end of Grade 9 at age 11 because the school offered no further grades. He was to work for eight years before entering Steinbach Collegiate. Those were good years and he decided he would like to be a teacher. His application for a teaching permit was refused, in view of his youth and his single status. He did the next best thing: He taught immigrants from Russia at night school for two winters—three nights a week.

Thiessen refuses to think of himself as a "self-made" man in spite of the struggles to achieve his various goals. "I believe a higher Providence has a hand in everything we do, and no one is ever really 'self-made'."

M.M.: What does your business today include?

T.: I'm chairman of the Board of Grey Goose Corporation, a holding company having control of waste management (Acme Sanitation Services) in Winnipeg, and the bus business in Winnipeg and Brandon. We have expanded into Alberta with the exclusive bus service of the airports in Edmonton and Calgary, a fleet of 900 taxis in those cities as well as Red Deer and the waste management in all three cities. We have moved into the state of Utah, also, with the latter service. Bill is in charge of Acme Sanitation, Ron heads the entire Alberta business, and the bus angle of the Manitoba

operations are in Bernie's hands. Erwin was our purchasing agent here until two years ago when he decided to launch out on his own. He has established a parts business and Gulf Oil distributership in Niverville. Carolyn was in music study in Goshen, graduating with degrees in voice and piano, in teaching and performance. She and her husband, Jochen Eggert live in West Berlin where Carolyn teaches music.

M.M.: Any plans for expansion?

T.: We have just bought a large bus company in Toronto. We expand into nothing other than rolling wheels.

M.M.: To what do you attribute your success in business?

T.: The reason for any success in my life must be shared with my wife. She never pushed me for material things, but managed the family and household with care and love. Any measure of success in business would have to be connected with the loyalty of my employees. They are my friends. My door is always open for any of them to come in.

One of his bus-drivers (the fleet of buses in Winnipeg is always around the 60 mark) says of him: "A.J. is a shrewd businessman, but he's a very fair man in his dealings." Abe Giesbrecht, vice president of operations who with his brother Ed has worked in the business for 25 years, smiles when he speaks of his employer: "He knows in which direction he wants to go. He has good leadership qualities, determination and a good moral sense. He has always taken the time to be interested in us and our families." Kurt Enns, general manager, Circle Tours, in charge of marketing, and most recent executive to be hired by Thiessen, feels that the biggest advantage in his association with the company is "my privilege of working directly with a man like A.J., one of the top people in the business world in Canada today. The education I'm getting here can only be of great benefit to me in the future."

A rare honour came to Mr. Thiessen last year with his appointment as an underwriting member of Lloyds of London. There are only eight members in Canada and he is the first in Manitoba.

M.M.: How do you feel about the Circle Tours part of your business?

T. We've been most happy about the response to these tours. People come to us not only from all over Canada but from as far away as Arizona. It was John R. Klassen who started these tours in 1965. Today he takes care of our business in Calgary and Kurt Enns has taken over here from him. Since then the business has not stood still but has expanded. We bought Grey Goose in 1961. Today Grey Goose, Thiessen Bus Lines, Interlake Bus Lines, and Red River—all have amalgamated into Grey Goose.

M.M.: What sort of contribution are you making as a result of this choice of career?

T.: It's a contribution in Manitoba in bus transportation. We are probably closer to the people than a large International corporation. We serve 90 per cent of this province with bus service. A lot of the outposts are a losing proposition, but we continue with it because the people need the service. We make a special effort with the handicapped, the aged and the students travelling in the province. Then, there was no concept of packaged tours in Manitoba until we started it. We think the idea of having one driver and a hostess taking care of the passengers throughout the tour is important.

M.M.: Have there been rough spots?

T.: If so, these have been people rather than financial. I've never had to worry about that, but neither have I had a desire to make a great deal of money. Not all problems can be resolved satisfactorily. I guess I learned a lot in my years as president of the Manitoba trustee association and then the Canadian school trustees. And until my latter years I was usually involved in some church committee or other. Church life has been of great importance to us as a family. We are privileged to worship at First Mennonite Church on Notre Dame, attending the German Services there. I was brought up with German Bible reading and prayer and somehow, that's how I still enjoy it best.

M.M.: Which spiritual values have been a guide to you in your career?

T.: I've tried to interpret scriptural values to our business, not only in basics but in actual dealings. From day one I've always felt that whatever we had was a gift entrusted to us. One of the men influential in my life was the late C.A. DeFehr. He was a prince in my books. A very quiet man, he never let his left hand know what his right hand was doing.

M.M.: What do you and Mrs. Thiessen do on holidays? Do you travel?

T.: Not that much, really. My good times are right here behind my desk. But we have enjoyed holidays with our family in Hawaii, Florida, Spain, the Canary Islands. On summer weekends we go to our cottage at Clearwater Bay, not with a lot of other people, but with our children and 11 grandchildren. Our concerns, our wishes, our prayers are geared toward our family.

Long ago I had a dream of building a radio station in Southern Manitoba. After much planning it came to fruition with the opening of CFAM. I enjoyed being its first president and general manager.

Bernie Thiessen talked about life in partnership with his father. "They've been enjoyable and surely challenging, the 13 years of full partnership with my father. Even before that we, his children were always included in the basic decisions in farming and business. I think of greatest influence in my life and that of the other junior executives has been his disciplined approach to business, his sense of accountability to customers, to people, his operating the business with clear perspective and charitable Christian overtones. It was assumed that we, too, were accountable for our decisions, that we must earn respect. I learned that you have also to earn trust and work hard at never losing it. Also, that top priority is the Christian mandate, and that this is non-negotiable. He has taught us that there is no conflict between community, of which the church is an integral part, and business, if this is done right. He is genuine, sincere in his work."

A.J. Thiessen once defined his business and life's philosophy to his four sons, quoting the first question and answer in the Mennonite catechism: "*Was ist das Notwendigste wonach ein Mensch in diesem Leben trachten soll? In Gottes Gemeinschaft und Gnade zu leben um nochmals die ewige Seligkeit zu erlangen*" "All the Christian philosophy and ideals," said he, "are expressed in this one question and answer. No one will regret in this life and the next having followed this rule in his personal, public and business life. Words need not be expressed too often, but actions indeed speak loudly, expecially in business."

Mary Enns is a Mirror staff writer.

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After decades a voice still remembers MCC in China

"It is my great pleasure to write to you because of the normalization and reunion of the two great countries," begins a letter received March 19 by Mennonite Central Committee from a Chinese citizen. "For about 30 years we had hoped to get news from you, and today we can write free again."

The writer reports that Mennonites in two Chinese towns "are all fine." One of the places is clearly identified as a site of a General Conference Mennonite mission. The other location was a place where MCC worked, assisted by Chinese Mennonites.

In his letter the writer asks for the addresses of J. Lawrence Burkholder and Dallas Voran, MCCers with whom he had worked in Shanghai getting relief supplies from that port city to needy inland areas. He writes, "Both are very close friends with us for a couple of years from 1947 to 1949. Both worked with Church World Service and MCC together." Burkholder is now president of Goshen (Ind.) College.

"I cannot express to you my feeling because it was 30 years," the writer of the letter continues. "Many good American friends left the world and rest in heaven. I hope you will reply to me and get your news as soon as possible. Frank Beahn must be 60 years of age. He was the last MCC man who left Shanghai."

Franklin Beahn, who was the last MCCer to leave China and is now deceased, left Shanghai December 1951. With increasing Chinese communist victories most of the MCC workers were forced to leave the country by 1949.

Early planners of the China work settled on Chengchow in Honan Province as a key place to work. J. Lawrence Burkholder, mentioned by the letter writer, was sent there in 1946. Needing money because of fighting around Chengchow, MCCers sent him to Shanghai.

Burkholder sent back money but stayed on in the city. American supplies for Church World Service, with which MCC cooperated, were held up at the docks, and he was asked to manage the situation. MCC also cooperated with the American Friends Service Committee.

It was in Shanghai that Burkholder worked with the letter writer. Burkholder's move to Shanghai provided a place for incoming MCC workers and for purchasing supplies for MCC. Eventually Burkholder was appointed director of Church World Service in China.

Planning for MCC work in China actually began in 1943 although work in Honon Province did not begin until 1946. The MCC Executive Committee chose two former missionaries to go into China to lay the groundwork for relief work. They were J.D. Graver who had served in India and Samuel J. Goering who had served in China.

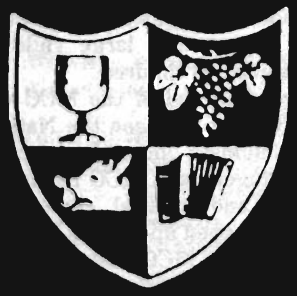
Graber and Goering contacted other agencies already at work in China to help them in their investigation and registered MCC with the Chinese government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The two men chose Honan Province as the best place for MCC to begin. It was near a former Mennonite mission location and had been hit by floods, locusts, drought and war. Whole villages were flooded. Bombardments had destroyed many factories with thousands put out of work.

A relief unit did not materialize immediately because of the Chinese government's instability. In 1945 MCC sent former Chinese missionaries S.F. Pannabecker and P.P. Baltzer to China to organize the effort. Not until 1946 did work begin in Kaifeng, Honan Province.

By the end of 1946 MCC had 32 workers in China. They worked mostly in rehabilitation since the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

The Happy Vineyard



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was bringing in massive supplies of food and clothing.

MCCers operated several clinics and hospitals. They also furnished drugs and medicines to other Christian clinics. Milk rations were distributed to undernourished children. They set up a training center where Chinese boys were taught a trade enabling poor students to become self-supporting. In the city of Fukuo MCC workers launched a large child center serving some 600 children.

Towards the end of the MCC work in China, civil war between the Nationalists and Communists increasingly caused a flow of refugees and MCC began feeding operations and medical clinics to help them. This opened up work in the province of Honan where MCC assumed responsibility for an orphanage at Hengyang in 1948. Chinese Mennonites, one of whom had studied at Bethel College, were MCC workers there.

The letter writer was in his twenties when the last MCCers left China. MCC Executive Secretary William T. Snyder said one meaning of the letter is that ordinary people can now be in touch with each other, but MCC is not yet ready to assess what the letter might mean otherwise. "We just feel good that he kept thinking about us after all these years," Snyder said.

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The Presence

by H.R. Pauls

Death would come easily, I thought as I sank gratefully into the soft inviting snow. A pleasant numbness . . . a sweet forgetting, and all would be over. Desperation weighed down each cell of my tired body, as I shifted my weight for greatest comfort. Even from this distance the din of the heaving rabble at the train station fell on my ears.

I had walked thirty-five miles in subzero temperatures for this—a last chance, and now I was refused. My body shook and retched. For two days I had not eaten or slept, filling my mouth with snow to ward off fainting. And now Control cried, "Your pass, Madam; your pass, sir—no one boards the train without a pass!"

A pass! I had no pass. I had never thought of a pass, and now it was the only ticket to my continued existence in Soviet Russia. Only a week before I had bid my despondent parents good-bye at the forest concentration camp, tricking the guards and escaping into the cold silent woods. My last chance at life itself lay in crossing Siberia to the area of the Black Sea. I hoped to find freedom among the relatives we had left behind so suddenly when the Soviet authorities had rudely rousted us from our baronal estate and had shipped us to the wilds of Siberia. How well I remembered that awful death trap!

Now I was free, but was I really? Without a pass I dared speak to no one; I could not be employed and I could not buy. Lack of a pass meant immediate imprisonment and I knew what that was like.

My spirit sagged. Surely God had forsaken me. For me there was no future. I waited in the snow for death to come. . . .

It was as if a Voice spoke. Was it inside me? It said, "You are my child. Get up, shake the snow off your clothes and walk to the place I will show you."

Dumbfounded, I arose. The station was behind me; the noises still clamouring in my ears. I walked south. A few modest, well-kept homes were set back on the trail. Station workers' dwellings, I assumed.

My Guide seemed to point out a small, yellow building. A light still shone. I had nothing to lose. Prison meant death anyway. I knocked.

A shuffling tread approached the door. Lights. Muted voices. The door opened slightly and kind, though sad eyes took in my desperate situation immediately. The door opened wider and I was silently motioned inside.

Did I not know, inquired the retired station agent, that he could be imprisoned for sheltering me? I looked down. He relented. Warm broth was prepared by his wife and my thin body tingled with a pleasant pain as the life-giving liquid

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seemed to reach every pore. For the first time since I'd left home a year ago, I had a soft bed, a pillow, warm blankets! I slept as if dead.

Before dawn, the agent shook me, and shook me again. Instantly, I was awake. The old fear returned: "Where to from here?"

He said, "Dress and follow me." New soft footcloths replaced my rags and we broke new snow as we walked to the train station.

"Here," he said to a friend, "here is your 'daughter' for this trip. Be sure she lies well back in your compartment and pretends to be ill and sleeping. If anyone asks, tell them she is your daughter and travels under the authority of your pass."

The old agent smiled at me kindly once more and whispered, "God go with you."

"God!" I had been experiencing God's help through one of his servants! God was with me! God was on my side! Joy welled up in my wasted young frame. God still loved me!

I crawled well back into the crowded compartment. Tears of relief flowed unendingly. God had not forsaken me!

With a jerk, the train left the station. Thousands heaved onto the tracks, clinging to ladders and couplings, in a last attempt to a ride. But my desperation had vanished, I was inside the train and God was very near. **mm**

H.R. Pauls is a writer, resident in Langley, B.C.

SAME STUFF

Father: "I'm worried about your being at the bottom of the class."

Teen-age son: "Don't worry, Dad, they teach the same at both ends."

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8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Introduction to Music — Don Thiessen
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Ethics — Dr. Al Hiebert
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De Jasch Sawautsche en aundre Menschen

von Victor Peters

Aus noam 2 Welttjrich sovael nieje Russlaenda ewakaumen wea de Oabrom Hoadasche uck doamank. Ae Frintschoft hoald ae auf, vom CNR Bohnhof en wullen ae uck foats Winnipeg wiesen. Se foaren met ae laengst Portage Avenue woa de straume Jebieda sent, so aus Eatons en de Bay.

Nue tiad sich de Hoadasche uck, oba donn saed se, "Wann Winnipeg aul so sitt, wo woat dann eascht Rosthern sehnen."

Se jie, de Hoadasche haud aul en Dietschlaund den "Boten" jelesen, en wiels se op de Zeitung hilt, docht se de musst doch von eane sea groatoatje Staudt koamen. De "Bote" kaum uet Rosthern.

Ean Zentraulschoallehra — daut es meist daut hechste woant it en Russlaund gauf, bueta dem Tjaisa — haud de Zeitung bolt aus he aune 1923 ewakaum aujefongen. En bolt lausen aule Russlaende dem "Boten", so het de Zeitung. Wens aule Russlaenda wont op sich waut hilden.

Wann so ean Russlaenda noa Staudt foa om entotjepen, brocht he uck siene Post met. En tues froag siene Fure dann nich: "Hast Due Mehl metjebrocht?" oda "Woa es de Zocka den etj bestald?" Nae, se froag: "Es de 'Bote' jekoamen?" So wichtig wea an de Zeitung.

En dann wort de von hinjen bat feren jelesen. Joa, feren, daut nannd sich "Oberlicht", daut kaum daut latzte. Hinjen, bie de Todesnachrichten, doa fung ena foats uet wea jestorwen wea, oda uck noch nich.

"So, so," saede de Lied dann biem Unkast aeten, "De es dann nue uck doat." oda, "Na schoen daut de haft stoawen kunnt, de haft vael derch jemoakt." Oda uck, "Etj docht de wea aul lang doat." En dann wort dorewa jeraedt. Wann de von de Olt-Kolonie kaum, dann haud emma Ohm Isaak Dyck de jedept. Ene Molosch doa wea meist en jieda Darp en Aeltesta, oba ene Olt-Kolonie wea bloss ena, en solang aus de measchte Mensche dentje kunnen, wearet Isaak Dyck.

Aus etj moal noa Mexiko foa, besocht etj uck eanen Aeltesta Isaak Dyck, oba daut wea en aundra. De saed to mie, "En Due tjemmst uet Russlaund? Tjanndst Due Aeltesta Isaak Dyck?"

Etj saed, joa, aus Tjint haud etj dem jetjant, en haud aus he bie ons to Gaust wea met am Arbues jejaeten. Na, saed the mexikaunscha Aeltesta, "Dann komm nenn," en wie wearen Frind.

En bie Jasch Sawautstes doa wort uck de "Bote" jelesen. Mehrendels se. He, de Jasch Sawautste, he laus weinja. Oba se fetald am daut measchte doaruet.

Nue wort de "Bote" nich bloss jelesen, de wea uck sea jeacht. De kaum foats hinja re Bibel en et Jesangboak. De wort nich foats noam lesen wajchjeschmaeten. Bie vaele Lied wort de topjehoalen, Joa noa Joa, daut de Lied meist nich wissten woa se doamet han sullen.

De Sawautsche saed noch to am: "Wie sullen noch den 'Prairie Farmer' hoalen, oda den 'Noadwasten', daut wie Papiea haben tom semorjes Fia moaken."

"Nemm den 'Boten'" saed Sawautste. "Daut kunn de Sawautsche dann meist nich ewaret Hoat brinjen, dem 'Boten' tom Fiamoaken! Oba se musst.

Tiedich semorjes, bie Klock 5, aus se opstunden, jintj Sewautste en de Junges em Staul to besorjen. Uetmesten, Foadern, de Tjae maltjen, daut Licht bie de Henna aunmoaken. En waut de Sawautsche wea, de musst Fia unjarem Heat moaken, en Koffee koaken, en daut Frehstitj op'm Desch brinjen.

De Sawautsche haud aul daut fien-jehackte Struck nenjebrocht, en nue sull se daut Papiea unjalajen en aunstetjen. Se satt sich hann, en naum den 'Boten' tom latzen moal ene Haenj eja se Fia moak.

Joa, ditt haud se mau fluechtig jelesen, en de Todesberichte laus se langsom noch eamoal. Najoa, en de Jeschicht. Se haud sich so vertieft daut se goanich jemoajkt haud daut Jasch wada bennen wea.

"Tom Hund han," fong de aun, "ena racket en schweat, en es hungrig, en waut deit se? Se lasst den 'Boten' aus wannet vendoag Siendach es."

Donn jintj it oba haustig. Bolt loddad de 'Bote', en daut Struck brennd, en de Koffee zischt. So jiecha haud se noch nienich Desch opjesat. Wiels Sawautste, de hilt nuscht von Wachten.

IN PRAISE OF JAHNT SIED WOMEN

She was Mennonite: Dutch, German, and Russian.
Her hair was wheat-field blonde: uncontrollably beautiful.
She was radiantly feminine from the tip of her nose to the ends of her fingernails. A choreography of sunflowers.
She was refreshingly elegant—like the ladies in the Eaton's show window—but with no pane between us.
She was slender, curving like the gently rolling quilt-work of the Pembina Triangle.
But she was a bit of a snob about Jahnt Sied.
So being the backwoods bearded bush boy I essentially am, I told her that I looked forward to seeing Winkler, and if I liked it, I thought I might bring it over to Dit Sied and use it for fertilizer.

by Jim Braun

Your word

PRINCIPLES ARTICLE FOUND OF VALUE

Dear Sir:

This is to express to you my deep appreciation of your editorial in the January 1979 issue: "The Mirror Reflects: A Statement of Aims and Principles." Its last paragraph sums up beautifully the aims you seek to achieve and the principles along which they are to be pursued.

The contents of the issue at hand are a splendid example of the course the *Mennonite Mirror* has charted for itself—to mirror Mennonite life and culture in its widest forms of manifestation. We have enough vehicles to serve us oldsters who are already safely lodged in an *Altenheim* or are enroute there. What we need most urgently is a journal which continues to interpret Mennonite life and culture in all its forms, especially in its secular garb, and one which not merely continues to hark back to the so-called "Gute alte Zeit", but one which also portrays the interests, thoughts and concerns of the young amongst us—those who are proud of their heritage and to preserve so much that was and is good in it, that which was and is uniquely a constituent part of Mennonite peoplehood, but who are also not afraid to read and to reflect on much of our past which was exceedingly parochial and unlovely.

The *Mennonite Mirror* has since its beginning endeavored to be a vehicle for people of various backgrounds and different, but broadly similar interests, to express themselves. I believe that one of its strengths has been precisely this constituency representing members of academia and people of "the other ranks."

May the *Mennonite Mirror* grow and prosper.

Sincerely yours,
David G. Rempel,
California

A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN LICENSE AND FREEDOM

Dear Sir:

Your editorial of March 1979, Some Thoughts on Censorship, expresses well the liberal response to censorship. I trust you believe in "free expression of ideas" in the sense that ideas different from those of the liberal also merit expression and consideration.

I had read Brian Moore's *The Doctor's Wife* and Jack Ludwig's *A Woman of Her Time* shortly before reading your editorial. Perhaps I am inordinately lascivious and naive, but I cannot say that the explicit depictions in those two books left my imagination and sensitivity more wholesome than they had been before my reading. You claim that "an adolescent in our society who doesn't already know the full vocabulary of street language and something about the mechanics of sex by the time he gets to high school would have to be an imbecile." I think you miss the point.

A jaded familiarity with sexuality and with vulgarity robs the human soul of freedom. Who would not prefer a wordless innocent understanding of sexuality to the mechanically sophisticated how-to approach of today's manuals? Of what use is profanity when it is the lingua franca?

Surely you yourself realize that, to go from the personal to the societal plane, the behavior of our society belies your words. In tyrannical censored U.S.S.R. there is an attention to words and ideas about responsibility and freedom that makes your editorial look rather pale, and of which Solzhenitsyn may not be the best example.

Your editorial refers to Rudy Wiebe, Margaret Laurence, and W.O. Mitchell as writers who need to be protected from censors. All three are thoughtful writers, who, presumably, strive to address thoughtful people. But thoughtful people know how to read books so as to get the author's intended meaning. So it is fairly safe to deduce that the authors in question are trying for a wider market, and know that "salacious" material is the only way to compete with TV stupor. (This assumes, of course, that these authors believe that literary realism is no more real than any other literary "ism").

Finally, I sometimes wonder if liberal editorialists realize the immense pressure for conformity they put on people who wish to censor schoolbooks. Our society in the letter of its law and in practice does not censor sexual and vulgar language. But liberals do all they can to censor people who oppose this situation. To make concerned parents look like ignorant Luddites is to exert a pressure greater than that of the law itself.

The philosopher Leo Strauss, in his book *Persecution and the Art of Writing* speaks of the political question par excellence, "Of how to reconcile order which is not oppression with freedom that is not license."

I trust you do not imagine that question answered!

Yours truly,
Menno Maendel
Killarney

CENSORSHIP NEEDED TO CONTROL GARBAGE

Dear Sir:

I have read with great amazement the editorial (in March/79 issue) regarding censorship. I could hardly believe what I was reading. The fact that you would go to such great lengths to defend literary garbage such as the book *The Diviners*, is astounding. You call it good literature, by what definition of good and literature? To my understanding in one school where the book *The Diviners* was being used (for the subject of English would you believe?) the students were busily telling each other the pages where they had found something filthy so that the others could look it up too! Long after the positive??? effects of this book are forgotten the verbal pornography will still be in the reader's mind.

You mention that it is written in the language of the street, well please tell me why the street language has become what it is. It is because of people who not only condone but even defend such language, be it verbal or written. It will continue to get worse as long as people allow the god of this world to blind them to the fact that filth is filth and it is ugly in print and in spoken word.

My neighbour's garbage may have some things in it that are still fit to eat. but I am not going to go through his garbage to find it! This is exactly what people are doing when they read books like *The Diviners* in the hope that they will gain something worthwhile by reading it.

Why do the cities of North America have near epidemic situations regarding VD? It is because that, the input we have has a lot to do with our morals. On TV in books, movies, etc. we have immoral input available as never before. The divorce rate, VD etc. in our country are in direct proportion to the immoral input we have from the above mentioned sources.

I am most disappointed that your magazine would take such an unscriptural stand on this issue. God has a lot to say about filthy communication in His Word. There are absolutes that don't change. The subject in question is one of them.

Hoping that this is not an indication as to the type of magazine that you will be publishing in future.

Yours sincerely,
John Dyck,
Winnipeg

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The reader says that he refuses to go through his neighbor's garbage for something still fit to eat. May we suggest that what he is doing is deliberately looking for garbage at a table that is decked with fine, attractive, well-cooked literary food! If he had read our editorial with attention and an open mind, he would realize that we are as concerned about moral values and Christian standards as he is. But attributing the ills and sins of society to the literary use of certain words is as naive as it is baseless in fact.

Our word

THERE'S MORE TO LOW-GERMAN THAN USUALLY MEETS THE EAR

The recent Landmark production of *Daut Straume Schalduek* (reviewed in this issue), a Low German version of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, proved once again, if proof were still needed, that Low German can be a literary vehicle of surprising range and sophistication. The common notion that Plautdietsch is a good workaday Mennonite farmer's dialiect but fit for nothing more exalted than broad peasant humor, has long since been refuted by Low German writers like J.H. Janzen, Arnold Dyck, Fritz Senn, J.W. Goerzen and others. Unfortunately, even as these writers were making Low German respectable in a literary sense, it was already beginning to disappear from our midst as our ethnic language. Soon Low German will be alive only in the more isolated rural Mennonite communities on this continent and in the more remote parts of South America and the Soviet Union.

And yet, now that we have switched to English we are developing a nostalgic affection for Low German. Having abandoned our homely Plautdietsch back on the farm in favor of glamorous, big-city English, we have gradually come to realize that the old gal wasn't so homely after all. Dress her up a little, put some lipstick on her, and she's not half bad. She reminds you of home, you can relax with her. Sometimes, when the light is right, she can even look beautiful.

Indeed she can. The range and beauty of a language are not determined by its ordinary users, but by writers who have the art and sensitivity to explore its inner dynamics and its aesthetic possibilities. It is in literature that the range and texture and grace of a language are cultivated for the benefit of its users. Even our humble Plautdietsch can be made to shine and speak eloquently in the proper literary setting when the writer is a master like Arnold Dyck.

But a language—especially a peasant language—does not flower into literature overnight. It has to be well-rooted and mature before it can start bearing literary fruit. And the literary conditions for Plautdietsch were unfavorable from the start. Although the Prussian-Russian-North American group of Mennonites has spoken Plautdietsch for a good two centuries, the first Low German literary work—J.H. Janzen's play *de Bildung*—dates from only 1912. It took another twenty years before Dyck came along to show just how rich the artistic resources of Low German were.

Why did it take so long for Plautdietsch to come into its own as a literary langugage? One rather obvious reason is that there was no written tradition for the distinctive brand of Low German developed by the Mennonites, especially after they moved to Russia. Even today there is no standardized system of grammar, syntax or spelling for our Low German. High German was the language of church and school and therefore had the "literary" status to which the lowly Plautdietsch dared not aspire. In Russia, for example, it was taken for granted that at home a Mennonite boy would address his "Mutta" only in Low German, but that when he left home to serve in the "forstei", say, he would never write to her in anything but High German.

It simply never occurred to anyone that Low German could be used for literary purposes. There was the example of Fritz Reuter, of course, the nineteenth-century German writer who produced volumes of shrewd, funny peasant stories and sketches in a Low German dialect closely related to Mennonite Plautdietsch. Reuter was known and loved in Russian Mennonite circles but he was, after all, a *German* writer and not one of "*die Stillen im Lande*." Mennonite Plautdietsch was simply too "*prost*" for literary service. In fact, many Russian Mennonites, especially in the affluent Molochnaja, had switched to High German entirely long before the Revolution. In some of the wealthy Mennonite homes it was even becoming fashionable to speak Russian in the home.

And yet Plautdietsch was at the very heart of the Prussian-Russian Mennonite experience and culture in a way that High German never was and English never will be in our own ethnic experience. It was no accident that during the two centuries during which the Mennonites spoke Low German they also evolved into a distinctive ethnic group. Arnold Dyck was aware of this ethnic-linguistic identity as few have been. In some of the more serious moments of his Koop enn Bua writings he warns his readers about the ethnic consequences of losing Plautdietsch. In one of the early sketches one of the characters states emphatically that we will remain Mennonites only as long as we and our children understand Low German. For Dyck Plautdietsch was the *only* cement that could bind Mennonites in various parts of the world together. Even the church cannot do this, a character in the very last of the Koop enn Bua books argues. In fact, it may be that religious issues will tear us apart "if we are no longer able to make hay." When we consider that more and more Mennonite churches are changing their names and leaving the Mennonite fold, and that urbanization is having a powerful negative effect on our ethnicity, Dyck's words sound almost prophetic.

It would seem that in our haste to become assimilated we have discarded a priceless and irretrievable linguistic heritage. English is one of the world's great languages, but it will never be the language of our most initimate ethnic experience, even though English is almost as close a relative to Low German as standard High German is. Our Mennonite Plautdietsch is the soul and voice of our ethnic heritage, and it still has the power to make one feel instantly at home with other Mennonites in any part of the world.

Those who know Low German best, our writers, have never doubted its value and importance as a language. The Mennonite linguist and poet J.W. Goerzen, who was featured in the April issue of the *Mirror*, says that Low German "is euphonic and not as gutteral as High German and as such is meant for greater things than the portrayal of crude humor." In one of Dyck's Low German plays about the "*forstei*", one of the characters relates a comic fable of how Low German came to be the language of the Mennonites. It seems that way back in time, when the Tower of Babel was still under construction, "old man Janzen from Pordenau" was such a diligent worker on the project that when the big break-up came and everybody was to speak in a different language henceforth, Janzen was given first crack at the languages in the sack. Naturally, he chose Low German. Perhaps old Janzen knew something we have forgotten.

It is true that the world's 600,000 Mennonites speak many different languages. And that is as it should be. But there is one important difference between the Prussian-Russian group and all other groups of Mennonites. Other groups became Mennonites within the linguistic and cultural contexts of their own countries. The Prussian-Russian group were religious nomads who evolved their own language and group identity as a portable sub-culture which could be taken from country to country. Here in America, however, we have decided to unpack and settle in permanently. We have decided that we no longer need our linguistic-ethnic baggage. And so, bit by bit, we are relegating it all to the attic amidst recurring twinges of regret.

At the moment we still have a few writers who are adding to the small, precious body of Low German literature. And there are still Mennonite readers who enjoy Low German writing, including the Low German pages of the *Mirror*. But in fifty years who will be left either to write or to read Plautdietsch?

In the meantime, let us be grateful to the Landmark group and to others who are lighting small candles to our ethnic past. They help to illumine a little longer an ethnic-linguistic experience that will someday vanish from our consciousness.

A.R.

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