



Schweitzer Salt

Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association

July 2018

October 2018 Fall Fest and Annual Banquet

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SMCHA Mission:

- * Collect and disseminate information concerning the spiritual and cultural history of Anabaptists of Swiss Volhynian origin.
- * Offer financial assistance to qualifying students.
- * Relate in a meaningful way the faith of our Mennonite forebears to present and future generations.
- * Maintain the Hopefield Cemetery and Swiss Mennonite 1943 Marker and Centennial Monument.

2018 Membership dues \$20/year or \$100 for six years. Schweitzer Salt is sent to members.

Saturday, October 6 is the annual Bethel College Fall Festival and this year 2018 is the Schweitzer event (every other year). Fewer people speak or understand Schweitzer so the SMCHA Board decided this year to have a Schweitzer Party at Fall Fest – a gathering to interact and eat poppyseed rolls.

The attraction will be Max Voran showing pictures of Ukraine, from the trip that 54 Schweitzers took in 2013, that will remind us of our shared past.

The German dialect will be included for a few minutes to enjoy the sound but no German language required to attend.

Many Schweitzers don't even know they are Schweitzers but we are betting that if they hear that poppyseed rolls are being served, they will realize that they belong to the family.

Check the schedule and bring your friends and family to the Schweitzer "party." No tickets required. Just join the fun.

Thursday, October 18, 2018 is the Annual Banquet also at Bethel College. Speakers Don and Joanne Hess Siegrist from Pennsylvania are knowledgeable about Trachselwald Castle in Switzerland where early Anabaptists were imprisoned and its important history. Dinner at 6:00 p.m. at Memorial Hall.

A Friday morning seminar at Bethel College's Convocation, "Building a Bridge Back to Switzerland," is open to all students and the public. This presentation will feature events of persecution days and stories of Swiss people who care about reconciliation.



On the next page, James Juhnke helps us understand the Anabaptist story of early persecution and relation to Trachselwald Prison.

Katharina Zimmermann's book Furgge, opens significant doors for understanding Christians called Anabaptist. Her book in German has just been released in English and is for sale at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society of Lancaster PA. John Landis Ruth describes it as "the most effective evocation I have read of the seminal days of persecution of Anabaptists in the Emme River Valley in Switzerland. The story unfolds in the era (1650-1717) leading up to the emigration of many Anabaptists to Alsace, southern Germany, the Netherlands, and America."

Trachselwald

Trachselwald is an old castle in the canton of Berne, Switzerland. Because it includes a dungeon that served as a prison for Anabaptists, it is an important site in Europe for Mennonite visitors who come in quest of their spiritual heritage. Many Swiss Volhynians from the U.S. have visited there. There is an image of the Trachselwald castle on page sixteen of the 1974 edition of the book by Martin H. Schrag, The European History of the Swiss Mennonites from Volhynia.

The Trachselwald castle was built in the Middle Ages in the 11th and 12th centuries, four or five hundred years before the Anabaptist Reformation.



It was rebuilt several times.

The builders were wealthy lords, initially the Baron Rueti bei Lyssach. The barons built castles as fortified royal residences for military protection. The castle allowed a baron or lord to control the surrounding land and people.

Medieval society was clearly divided between the rich and the poor. Our ancestors in the decades and centuries before the Reformation were poor peasants or serfs—not members of the rich nobility. The poor people were illiterate and did not own land. They no doubt were conscripted to do the hard labor of building Trachselwald Castle—as was true for the builders of hundreds of other castles built in Europe the late Middle Ages.

After the first Anabaptist baptisms in 1525, the Zwinglian Reformed church and state severely persecuted the Anabaptists. There was no separation of church and state in Switzerland. By 1571 some thirty or forty Anabaptists had been executed. The last Anabaptist to be executed was Hans Haslibacher. The last hymn (#140) in the Amish hymnbook, *The Ausbund*, tells Haslibacher's story.

Persecution of Anabaptists continued in Switzerland long after toleration had come to the Netherlands—the other main Anabaptist region. Into the 18th century the canton of Berne's Reformed church and the government cooperated to issue and enforce anti-Anabaptist mandates. Our Swiss-Volhynian ancestors escaped the persecution by emigrating to the Alsace and the Palatinate in the 1640s and 1670s.

Today Trachselwald Castle is owned by the district of Berne. Although it is recognized to be a national treasure, in 2014 a plan emerged to create a new foundation

that would own, manage and develop the facility as a museum open to the public, but did not succeed.

In the meantime the district of Berne has developed alternative plans to rent out sections of the castle to interested parties. Mennonite leaders Martin and Eveline Hunziker now live in the former granary of the Trachselwald Castle. For seven years Martin was pastor of the Mennonite congregation at nearby Langenau. That congregation is the oldest Mennonite congregation in the world in continuing existence.

A small museum exhibit in the castle needs to be improved and expanded. The dungeon area where prisoners were kept needs to be restored. Tim Huber, associate editor of *Mennonite World Review*, has lamented that visitors from America have defaced the area with their signatures.

One issue in the relationship of the Berne authorities to the Mennonites is how to apologize and receive apologies for past persecutions. On November 11, 2017, Christoph Neuhaus, government counselor and director of churches for the canton of Berne officially asked the Anabaptists/Mennonites for forgiveness for the persecution by the Reformed church/state in past centuries. There have been other apologies in past years, but none as clear as the recent one. But what does it mean for people to forgive and receive forgiveness for acts of those in earlier generations? And how does that relate to personnel changes and ongoing bureaucratic complications regarding the ownership and management of Trachselwald Castle?

It is to be hoped that one of the fruits of reconciliation will be cooperation in sustaining the castle and its memories.

--By Jim Juhnke, based in part on articles by Tim Huber in *Mennonite World Review*

SMCHA Annual Meeting at Pretty Prairie, March 11, 2018

"Schweitzer Culture and Peace in our Homes"

"Jesus loves the little children, ALL the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight."

After years of pastoring in the General Conference Mennonite Church as well as the Church of the Brethren churches, Kathy Goering Reid has spent the last nine years as Director of the Family Abuse Center, a 64-bed emergency shelter, in Waco, TX. She spends much of her time working at ways to prevent abuse and domestic



violence through education and prevention activities. Why does she do that?

Kathy gives credit to the importance of grandparents (Katie and Edward Wedel and Mary and Henry Goering) and her parents and a healthy upbringing for her current attitudes. Eight ministers came out of the Joe Wedel part of her family. She remembers her Grandma singing "Jesus loves ALL the children of the world" which meant that ALL people deserve respect and care. Three important values from family and community:

- * Education. Kathy's parents were adamant about her getting a good education.
- * Service. Grandparents served in Gulfport, disaster work, Hopi mission schools; her parents in Paraguay where she was born and Heifer Project.
- * Compassion for humanity, a fundamental value-- unspoken respect and recognition of each person's worth and dignity

From her work experience, Kathy shared frightening statistics: 1 out of 4 little girls (1 of 7 boys) molested before age 18. One out of three women suffered from domestic violence; 50% homeless are women. If gun is in the house, murder of someone is three times more likely. Women show up at their Center with literally nothing. However, 80% go back for economic reasons-- they can't meet the needs of their children by themselves. Kathy also sees a huge increase in trafficking in the last ten years. We can't begin to understand.

Should we think the Church is free from these problems, a study in Winnipeg churches revealed a higher incidence of abuse than national average.

Neuroscientists scan brains of children to discover that abused children have development problems that may result in mental illness, problems in school, behavioral

problems, and even shorter life span.

What we Mennonites have to offer is our healthier upbringing and the values we practice in homes and church and service and sermons and our realization that God is love. Many hurting people do not have home life, maybe no father figure, don't go to church and don't know they are loved by God.

We who believe that no person deserves to be beaten or live in fear of their lives are challenged to share with others what we have practiced in our own homes, churches, and community by showing compassion.

Budget \$6400 approved. Heard reports. New trustees Pat Rupp and Ladeen Frey elected and LaVern Stucky and Clemon Kaufman re-elected. Enjoyed poppyseed rolls and fellowship.

New Trustees: LaDeen Goering

Frey, a Schweitzer through and through, brings her interest in her heritage since she has retired from clinical social work at Prairie View for 28 years. Husband Rod, retired Bethel College registrar, and LaDeen have three married children and four grandchildren. They live in North Newton.



Pat Wedel Rupp graduated from the Bethel Deaconess School of Nursing and worked as a nurse for 40 plus years, the majority in Long Term Care. Now retired, Mark and Pat live on the farm north of Moundridge where they raised two children. Pat's Schweitzer heritage has always been important to her, following the example of her parents, Ben and Ruth Schrag Wedel.



SMCHA Scholarship to Dianne Schmidt

Currently Associate Pastor at Eden Mennonite Church near Moundridge, Dianne Schmidt is continuing her studies at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, IN. The \$500 award will assist her in completing her Master of Divinity degree.

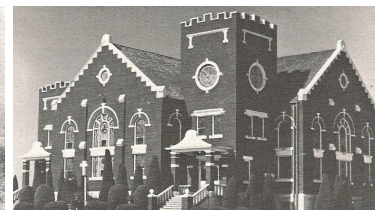
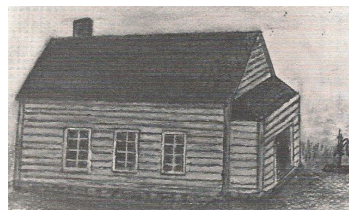
Dennis and Dianne were students at AMBS in 1970's preparing for overseas mission work. After returning from Africa, Dianne felt led to return to seminary.

Dianne says she has found seminary studies later in life to be relevant, enriching, challenging, and pertinent to her pastor role. Native Kansans, Dianne and Dennis now live in North Newton after having lived in IN and OH. Family includes three young adult children and two grandsons.



Pretty Prairie Church by Ty Stucky

Most families came from South Dakota to Pretty Prairie. Railroad gave nine sections. Land was \$6/acre. 30 families in 1884 in first church. Several churches de-



stroyed by tornado or fire through the years so kept building larger buildings; brick church dedicated in 1928. Education wing added in 1968.

150th Anniversary of Swiss Volhynian Mennonites Coming to America is 2024. How shall we celebrate? Looking for leaders to plan ahead. (Check the website to see the 125th Celebration at Hopefield.)

Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association
P. O. Box 93
Moundridge KS 67107



Daniel Wedel planting at the Monument.

Online at:
www.swissmennonite.org

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Krehbiel

Schweitzer Salt Editor
Kathy Goering, 620-345-8532
Moundridge, Kansas
kjgo@mtelco.net
Article submissions welcome.

Arnold M. Wedel Remembered

Arnold M. Wedel (1928-2018) was president of SMCHA 2001-2010 and vice president for seven years before that. During these years,

- First Mennonite of Christian, Eden, and Hopefield deeded the 1943 Marker to SMCHA.
- Hopefield Cemetery Directory Building was built.
- The www.swissmennonite.org web site was developed.
- Stone posts were installed at the Cemetery and rows marked.
- Scholarships were awarded to qualified Mennonite students.
- Schweitzer programs were presented at Bethel College Fall Festival.
- "Only Schweitzer Spoken Here" initiated.
- *Schweitzer Salt* newsletter by Donna Neufeld, then Charles Schrag, then Kathy Goering.
- Chortitza Oak Tree planted at the Monument.
- Centennial Monument repaired and maintained.
- Graves were restored and the Cemetery cleaned up; mower hired.
- SMCHA by-laws were updated.
- Efforts were made to increase the endowment.
- Early investigation of Schweitzer graves at Catlin.

As the SMCHA secretary for some of those years, I saw the respect that Arnold had for all things Schweitzer and the commitment he had to the SMCHA organization. I remember conversations with Arnold where I would be writing frantically to keep up with his rhetoric. He would say, "Herman Schrag—he knows everything." Or "Orpha Schrag—she knows everything." Or James W. Krehbiel, (the writer of the Schweitzer genealogical 'Bible') — he knows everything." But I was quite sure that Arnold M. Wedel knew about everything about Schweitzer history, Schweitzer families, and Schweitzer stories.



—Kathy Goering

Web Master recruit.

SMCHA is seeking a webmaster to continue the work of Dennis Quiring who has served in this capacity since 2002.

Continuing Only Schweitzer Spoken Here

If you are interested in more events to enjoy hearing and speaking the Schweitzer dialect, contact Lorita Regier Zook (386-0707) or Norvin Schrag (620-345-8476).

DANKE. Danke, für diesen guten Morgen. Danke, dass ich auch meine Sergen auf dich werfen mag. Danke, für alle guten Freunde. Danke, wenn auch den grösten Feinden ich verzeihen kann. Danke, für meine Arbeitsstelle. Danke, ach Herr, ich will dir dangen dass ich danken kann.

THANK YOU. For this good morning. Thank you for the many Blessings you bestow on me. Thank you for all good friends. Thank you when I can forgive those who are against me. Thank you for my job. Thank you, dear Lord, above all, that I can be thankful.