



Schweitzer Salt

Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association

June 2022

SAVE THE DATE!!!

After a long time of not meeting, the SMCHA Board has decided that we can meet for a fall banquet tentatively planned for October 27 at 6:00 pm at the Eden Mennonite Church near Moundridge. There will be more information in the next newsletter but tentatively save that date for a SMCHA meeting. It will be good to get together again!

CELEBRATING THE WORK OF MCC AND MDS

At the time that this issue of Schweitzer Salt is being put together, there is a lot going on to help people around the world who are suffering so intently. Of course, the primary country in the news is Ukraine from where many of our families came from many years ago. I have become aware of many Schweitzers who are helping in a variety of ways, so I decided to focus this issue on the work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) and the Schweitzers that I have heard of who are so involved with those organizations. The ones that I am highlighting in this issue are certainly not the only ones that are serving....it takes lots of people to carry out the work of these organizations! And because I'm in central Kansas and we just had our Kansas MCC Relief Sale, many of those featured will be Kansans involved here. South Dakota has their relief sale later this year so I hope to get some information for the following issue from them. I am so thankful for each of the Schweitzers who have been serving and who were

The 15th Annual Mennonite Central Committee Comforter Blitz draws people to Yoder from Oklahoma, Texas, Minnesota and across Kansas to help tie and finish comforters that will be donated to people who are recovering from natural disasters or who were displaced by war. The three-day event that began on Monday, March 7, was held at the Yoder campus of the Journey Mennonite Church, one mile north of Yoder. Last year, MCC shipped more than 53,000 comforters to Jordan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, North Korea, Iraq, Syria and Burkina Faso. They have requests for more than 50,000 comforters again this year. MCC also donated comforters to people in the United States. —Hutchinson News, March 9, 2022

I was able to attend one day of the Blitz, working at tables with women who had driven up from Texas. Kara (Kaufman) Klingenberg (daughter of Kenton and Nancy Kaufman) is the chair of the comforter blitz committee so I asked her to write something about it. This is what she submitted: We were able to finish 230 comforters this year at the blitz. This is a decrease slightly to the last blitz in early March 2020. Attendance was slightly decreased this year as well. Monday morning weather and covid concerns may have impacted numbers. Many more comforters are being made and tied at homes or in smaller groups since 2020. I am extremely grateful to each individual that does a small part to make a comforter. It is often not an individual project. One person often cuts the blocks, another sews them together, another sews the back, yet another ties them, and finally they are bound. Kansas Friends Of MCC was started by a group that wanted to help finish these comforters to send to MCC mostly overseas. Comforter blitz is run totally off donations to Kansas Friends of MCC. Mcc works with partners in over 50 countries around the world to provide relief and development and peace building. Comforters go to places like Ukraine, Haiti, Syria, and North Korea. They are used as dividing walls in a refugee tent, as a suitcase when fleeing violence, as a floor covering on a dirt floor, as well as comfort and warmth. Our partners tell us people so appreciate the blankets because they are colorful and handmade and they know they are people not forgotten. I love that many of the blankets, nearly 10 thousand last year alone, go to Ukraine, where many Mennonites have family history.

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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.

Editor's sidenote:

To see some entertaining farm videos, query "farmer Derek" in YouTube. Derek is the husband of Kara Klingenberg.

SCHWEITZERS INVOLVED WITH MCC

Jerry and Leann Toews from Goessel have been very active with the MCC Sale, so I asked LeAnn to submit an article: Jerry and I are very involved in the MCC sale. We make a good team acquiring vehicles, getting them ready to run again, marketing them and cleaning them up so they bring a good price at the sale. I am the Schweitzer from Pretty Prairie (parents were Herman and Viola Schrag) My Dad always said Jerry (low German) and me (Schweitzer) had a mixed marriage. What-ever!

The sale was a smashing success this year. I think conditions were "just right". With the war in Ukraine and our ancestral close ties to that area, with the return of the regular April MCC Sale, with the need to somehow be more directly involved in MCC and its programs, people were extremely generous. Jerry and I have been very involved with the vehicle part of the general auction now for over 20 years. This year was the first time we had modern farm equipment donated to the sale. We usually advertise on "Craig's List and Facebook Marketplace." This year we added online bidding and worldwide advertising by using the Online Auction Time Company. Jerry, luckily, is connected to car, truck, engine, tractor and many diverse areas of collecting. He became aware of the agricultural auction site better suited for advertising the large tractor and other three pieces. The online bidding definitely set a high bar for the final prices that the tractor, bat-wing mower, blade and grain cart brought.

The story of the family donating the large tractor and the other three pieces is a compelling one. Stories certainly help items sell. The parents of the Friesen family that donated the equipment did Voluntary Service with MCC in Akron, PA in the early 50's. They continued their Voluntary Service in Newton, Kansas and helped build the Prairie View-Hospital. He was in construction and she was a nurse. They married and moved back to his home in Meade to begin farming. The Friesen family decided to donate the farm pieces to the MCC Sale and records were set. The almost \$100,000 income from the four pieces of machinery definitely was a fitting memorial to the Friesen parents, Elmer and Eunice.

We think that the \$ 76,000.00 brought in by the tractor, is a record for the highest amount one item has brought at any MCC Sale. Praise be to God for generous hearts!

In order to keep SMCHA a vibrant organization, supporters who believe in SMCHA goals and activities pay annual dues of \$25 per year. We are encouraged when our friends send a donation. Please send dues or donations to Clemon Kaufman, Box 156, Pretty Prairie, KS 67570. Schweitzer Salt is sent to members. We appreciate it when you send information to share.

Another family who donated an item for the vehicle part of the sale was Jim Stucky of Goessel. As reported by Chad Frey in the Newton Kansan, "Right now someone wanting a 1971 Honda CL100 motorcycle can find one online for between \$1,100 and \$2,000, but that is not what Jim Stucky of Goessel was thinking about when he pulled his cycle out of storage to start restoration. He was thinking about how the bike, which needed some motor repair, could help Mennonite Central Committee. Stucky said, "I sent a picture of it to Jerry Toews and asked if he would like to have it even it doesn't run. His response was almost immediate. I delivered it to his shop in Goessel and he has carried the process forward from there. It was a decision not taken lightly, or without the input of his family. Purchased brand new in 1971, the small sport bike has been a part of the family for many years.

Stucky bought the cycle around the time his daughter Nikki (Stucky) Hightree was born, and because of that she always had a kind of attachment to it. She said the family used the motorcycle as she was grew, and she and siblings "had a blast" riding it in high school. But now is the time to let go.

"I was very excited when Dad approached us with the idea of donating it to the MCC sale. It is the perfect way to give it a new life while also supporting an organization that is close to our hearts," Hightree said. "Still, I'm sure there will be some tears shed as I watch it sell."

Jerry Toews reported that the bike brought \$4750 for MCC.

BOHNE BEROGGI

Bohne beroggi is one of the items sold at the sale that has Swiss Mennonite roots. 3864 were made at Moundridge High School on April 2 and 27 gallons of sauce was made at Pine Village on April 7. 97 dozen beroggi was sold the day they were made for \$3492; the rest were sold as part of the Feeding the Multitude meal. Tim and Bethany Schrag are also Schweitzers involved with MCC as coordinators of selling the bohne beroggi. Tim's parents are Robert and Marcy Schrag.

2022 Kansas MCC Relief Sale

Jim Robb is the chair of the Kansas MCC Relief Sale Committee. I have really appreciated his comments before the sale and the report you will find below of this year's sale. I'm not just complementing him because he's my cousin's (Beaty Goering Robb) husband but I appreciate his well thought-out press releases.

"We gathered for the 2022 Kansas Mennonite Relief Sale at the State Fairgrounds in Hutchinson on April 8 and 9. It would be the first time since 2019 for us to gather in April to raise money for the Mennonite Central Committee. In 2020 we cancelled the sale, but people became inspired and we were able to raise and/or donate directly over \$500,000 using the 1000 at a thousand initiative, people's creativity, and the acknowledgement that the work of MCC does not stop because there is a sickness in the land. In 2021 we had a sale, in July, at the Fairgrounds but it was not a full sale; but we still were able to raise and donate \$500,000 for use by MCC. And this year, we started our organizational year with the plan to hold the sale in April and to again raise \$500,000, a strong goal that we hoped we would be able to meet. By now you know that the 2022 sale profits were well over \$600,000. This number was released by the treasurer and staff after a long night of counting and resulted "hal-lelujah" in homes and churches on Sunday, April 9 as the preliminary total was announced. We had reached our goal and then some, and we rejoiced because of the good that will be done with the results of the sale..**

Often, when I am asked about the results of the sale, the expectation is that I will tell them the financial figures. But there are so many more results that come from the sale. So many stories of reunion, so many people being able to catch up after not seeing each other for a time, so many stories of quilts and tractors, of family donations, and giving hope. It is the acknowledgment that we are representatives of Jesus, and that while sometimes we fail, we mostly serve with joy and understanding. This year was no different, the coming together of people and donations, volunteers and visitors, not only on April 8 and 9, but in the weeks and months prior to the sale.

It is a family, that every year gets together at Christmas time to build some chairs out of wood, put together with pride, and donated with an understanding that what they bring to the sale will bring hope to someone.

It is people who donate things to the sale, knowing that they will be presented in the best possible way, so that the results of the bidding will equal joy for someone, somewhere. It is the decision to donate a tractor to the sale that helped to heal some family rifts and get people talking again. It is the excitement of an auction where there is friendly competition and there is joy when the bid is finalized, for the purpose in the auction is to help provide for those around the world who are hungry, displaced, needy, and in need of care.

It is congregations, and many individuals, who can trace their ancestry back to the Ukraine. For those who know their history, or have been there; the war in the Ukraine made the sale personal. It gave them more reason to be involved.

It is asking for more volunteers to help make verenike, and getting more than enough volunteers...so many that they were able to overcome some difficulty and get done in good time.

The results are found in the attitudes of people who come to the sale...they know what they are bidding on and what the purchase price produces. People are happy. It is individuals who have worked at the fair in the same capacity for 21 years, who offered help to those taking over get started, sharing their knowledge. It is the people who come to the fairgrounds at the beginning of the sale week, who help convert the fairgrounds into our relief sale village, putting their lives on hold for a few days, to carry out the sale "in the name of Christ". It is in the family that comes every year to volunteer at the sale, bringing with them some unchurched friends to help prepare food, with great conversation taking place, and all serving God.

The 2022 sale was a success. We raised money, offered up prayers to assist and support MCC Partners in the Ukraine, brought different groups together to work for the benefit of others, and in the meantime came to know ourselves and others better.."

** Update: A check for \$700,000 was given to MCC, the largest ever!!



Online at:
www.swissmennonite.org

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Thanks to my cousin, Valetta (Goering) Seymour for this account of an MDS trip she took with her sister, Wanda Knight... "Last fall my sister asked if I would like to go on a MDS service and learning trip to the border in February. Without much hesitation I said I was interested, and the 2 of us made preparations to go.

We left early on Feb. 19 and drove to San Antonio where we spent the night and attended the San Antonio Mennonite Church on Sunday. The church is very active in embracing and supporting immigrants that pass through San Antonio. The congregation is primarily Hispanic and the service is presented in a bilingual format. They treated us to a delicious meal outdoors (beautiful day) after the service. Then Pastor John Garland, a gifted bilingual speaker, helped us understand the complicated status in which would-be immigrants find themselves, most of it having to do with broken US immigration policies as well as extremely dangerous situations in the countries from which people are leaving..

By Sunday evening we had arrived in Weslaco, Texas, not far from McAllen, where we were warmly welcomed by long-term MDS staff and oriented to our week. We would be working on 4 homes destroyed by a flood in 2018. These homes are located in Colonias (neighborhoods) along the US side of the border of which there are thousands. Because these Colonias are not within any municipality, they are dependent on county and state governments to help them get access to services. And they are not a priority for county and state governments, so they are lacking in many basic services, such as trash pickup, police and fire department help, road maintenance, and some don't even have electricity and/or running water.

By 7:30 Monday morning we were on our way to our job sites. We were divided into 4 work crews, each going to a different site. I spent the first 2 days painting interior walls. The last 3 days I was moved to a different crew that was putting on siding, and my job was to cut up siding boards to the correct lengths. This required use of a chop saw and a skill saw, both of which I'd had no experience with. One of the volunteers who was putting the siding on the house helped me learn how to use these saws. I was able to do my job and stay ahead of their needs of having the appropriate board lengths ready for them. And I still have all my fingers! Wanda at age 80 was working on yet a different house mudding, taping, and sanding sheetrock. She easily kept up with the others on her crew.

We were able to attend a dedication of a house that had just been completed before we arrived. There was a short dedication ceremony along with some gift presentations to the new owners, a family of 6. The keys to the house were then presented to the family who was very grateful to MDS for their new home.

The learning part of the trip involved speakers which added another layer of interest to this trip. A speaker shared his life living the last 25 years in the poorest county in the country, in a Colonia just outside of Brownsville. We heard from a volunteer who crosses the border frequently trying to help with some of the needs of the asylum seekers living in tent cities. As you have likely heard, the living conditions in these tent cities are extremely harsh. Other speakers spoke of their advocacy work there. The week was filled with eye opening experiences, hard satisfying work, and enjoying time with the other volunteers. A week well spent."