

Kauffman selected as Virginia Mennonite Missions president

By PAT SWARTZENDRUBER

Aaron M. Kauffman of Harrisonburg, Va., was chosen by Virginia Mennonite Missions' (VMM) 15-member Board of Directors as their next president at the October 18-19 meeting. Kauffman has extensive local and international mission experience serving most recently as VMM global ministries director and advancement associate since 2011. A seven-member search committee of Virginia Mennonite Conference members began their work in June, and recommended Kauffman to the VMM Board.

Phyllis Miller, chair of the VMM Board states, "We are delighted with Aaron's selection as president. His unanimous selection by the Board indicates a trust level in his leadership along with a proven track record as global ministries director. We are grateful to God for this servant leader he has given us to lead VMM for this next period of time."

Kauffman will follow Loren Horst, who has served since 2002 as VMM president. Loren and his wife, Earlene, will be considering future VMM mission assignments after he concludes his current role on December 31. He states, "I am very pleased with the selection of Aaron Kauffman. Aaron is relationally warm, missiologically sound, and administratively competent. He combines mission passion with a deep faith in Jesus and love for the entire church. Aaron's mission experience and proven leadership have prepared him well for this additional responsibility. I offer my full and prayerful support."

Growing up in Pennsylvania, and attending Mountville Mennonite Church, Mountville, Pa., Kauffman recounts learning a mission-minded way of living through the congregation's refugee ministry, active



Aaron Kauffman, newly-appointed president of Virginia Mennonite Missions, with his wife Laura Souder Kauffman and children (l-r) Sophie, 6, Abigail, 8, Asher, 3, and David, three months. Photo: James Souder

youth group and mentoring relationships with church members, including mission leader, David Shenk of Eastern Mennonite Missions. As a result, he eagerly participated in local and international short-term mission experiences while a high-school and college student.

After completing a Bachelor of Arts in Culture, Religion and Mission at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., he finished a MA in TESOL and Bilingual Education at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., in 2003. Following two years as an ESL teacher in Rockingham County Public Schools, he and his wife Laura were jointly appointed by VMM and Mennonite Mission Network and served from 2005 - 2008 in La Mesa, Colombia, as church youth group leaders, members of a church planting team, and as a teacher and a nurse, respectively, at the local Mennonite school.

Upon returning to Harrisonburg, Va., to attend seminary, he became curriculum coordinator of the Intensive English Program at EMU while also teaching university courses in language instruction and

methodology. He completed a Master of Divinity at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in 2012. He has since taught undergraduate courses in missiology as adjunct professor at EMU.

Upon his selection, Kauffman notes, "It is truly an honor to be asked to serve Virginia Mennonite Missions in this way. With

God's help and the church's prayerful support, I look forward to continuing VMM's legacy of faithful witness to the good news of Jesus Christ. It is an exciting time to be part of what God is doing around the world through the church."

Aaron and Laura Kauffman are members of Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va., a congregation of Virginia Mennonite Conference. They have four children, Abigail, 8, Sophie, 6, Asher, 3, and David, three months.



Pat is chair of the VMM Board of Directors Presidential Search Committee.

Alternative Christmas gifts project

Bless VMM mission workers by considering alternative gift ideas that meet real needs across a range of ministry projects.



See project list on page 7.

Listening and learning

By CLYDE G. KRATZ



When Jesus was beginning his ministry, John was watching him with two disciples. After John said “Look, here is the Lamb of God,” the two disciples followed Jesus. When Jesus noticed them, he asked, “What are you looking for?” After a brief exchange of cordialities, Jesus says to them, “Come and see.” (John 1:35-39)

As I begin my new role, I am seeking to be inquisitive, curious, looking, and learning about the various missional communities that comprise the larger religious community known as Virginia Mennonite Conference.

At the graduation service of Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Lansdale, Pa., the graduation speaker spoke about his personal experience in photography. He envisioned a career that utilized photography and had developed a portfolio to share with potential employers. On the occasion that he shared his portfolio with a potential employer, he experienced the critical review in such a way that he almost gave up the dream of being a professional photographer. Instead, he gathered the courage to return to the individual and asked what he could do to improve his photography. The individual indicated that all his pictures of people appeared to be taken from a distance by a telephoto lens. He advocated taking pictures with a 24 millimeter lens which means you have to be up close and personal with the subject. When the photographer changed his practices, he became an accomplished photographer.

As I begin my role as the Executive Conference Minister, I want to learn from Jesus and the photographer that closer is better. In other words, I want my ministry practices to focus on the relational aspect of my work which informs the navigation

of key issues, development of ministries, and allocation of resources. In order for me to build and maintain relationships with constituency of Virginia Mennonite Conference, I will seek to meet them in their place of worship and ministry, greet them as friends, and learn about their opportunities and challenges associated with their ministry.

As I plan my practice of ministry for this next year, it is my hope to sit with each congregation’s lead pastor and/or their pastoral team to engage them in conversation about their ministry. It is my goal to spend time with each regional and cluster overseer to gain insight about the missional leadership they are seeking to provide. While I would like to visit every congregation during a time of worship in the first year, I have set a goal of visiting 25 congregations or approximately one-third of the Virginia Mennonite Conference congregations in the first year and in subsequent two years visit the remaining congregations. It is my deepest desire that the relationships and learning from these relationships will help me to provide leadership to Virginia Mennonite Conference in ways that strengthen our life as the people of God.

I invite you to pray for my ministry as I seek to serve Virginia Mennonite Conference. I invite you to share your observations and ideas about our Conference as you have opportunity. I invite you to partner with the ministries of Virginia Mennonite Conference, not only with your intellectual capital and counsel, but also with your financial resources as we seek to be God’s presence in a world that needs to be recreated! The “how” of the new creation is left to our imagination or lost to our busyness!

Clyde Kratz
Executive Conference Minister
Virginia Mennonite Conference

Connections November 2013 – Volume 24, Number 1

© 2013 by Virginia Mennonite Missions and Virginia Mennonite Conference. *Connections* (USPS 007-205) is published monthly to connect congregations and agencies with each other. Editor: Gloria Lehman Assistant Editor: Jon Trotter

Connections is distributed free to each household of supporting congregations. Subscription rates: \$8/year, 2 years/\$15. To subscribe, contact: *Connections* Circulation Manager, (540) 434-9727 • (800) 707-5535 info@vmmissions.org

Websites: www.vmmissions.org www.virginiainconference.org

POSTMASTER Send address changes to: 901 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg, VA 22802. Periodical postage paid at Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

ON SERVICE ASSIGNMENT



Abby Musser, of Newport News, Va., began a one-year service term with the Service Adventure program of Mennonite Mission

Network on August 10.

Musser is living in community with other young adults in a unit house in Colorado Springs, Colo. Musser is the daughter of Rebecca and Eric Musser and attends Huntington Mennonite Church in Newport News, Va., a congregation of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

13. Publication Title		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below	
Connections		October 2013	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)			
		4,000	
b. Paid Distribution Outside-County Paid Subscriptions (Based on PS Form 3841 (Include paid and subscription advance orders, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)			
		32	
c. Paid Distribution Outside-County Paid Subscriptions (Based on PS Form 3841 (Include paid and subscription advance orders, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)			
		5	
d. Paid Distribution Outside the Mails (Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS)			

e. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)			

f. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 13b, 13c, 13d, and 13e)		37	
g. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3841			
		1,827	
h. Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3841			
		296	
i. Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)			

j. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)			
		1,740	
k. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 13f, 13g, 13h, and 13j)		3,863	
l. Total Distribution (Sum of 13f and 13k)		3,900	
m. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #5))		100	
n. Total (Sum of 13l and 13m)		4,000	
o. Payment (PS Form 3841, 13f and 13j)		15	
16. <input type="checkbox"/> Total circulation includes electronic copies. Report circulation on PS Form 3828, e-copies.			
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership			
<input type="checkbox"/> If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the _____ issue of this publication. <input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required.			
18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager or Owner			
Gloria Lehman Editor		September 23, 2013	
I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).			
PS Form 3828, August 2012 (page 1 of 2)			

Financial Focus

Virginia Mennonite Conference		Sept. 1, 2013 to Sept. 30, 2013
budget		\$21,366
expenses		\$10,233
income		\$8,633
investments		\$0
net		-\$1,600

Virginia Mennonite Missions		Sept. 1, 2013 to Sept. 30, 2013
total revenue		\$25,037
expenses		\$40,707
total revenue		\$112,233
expenses		\$76,205

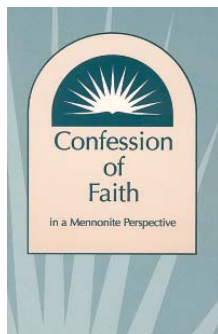
Consultation on Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective

By CLYDE G. KRATZ

As a student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary (1986-1989), I was introduced to *One Lord, One Church, One Hope and One God: Mennonite Confessions of Faith* written by Howard John Loewen and published as a text-reader by the Institute of Mennonite Studies. It is compilation of numerous confessions produced by Anabaptist-Mennonite communities.

Having participated in a Mennonite community in Pennsylvania, I was familiar with the *Schleitheim Articles* (1527), *Dordrecht Confession*, (1632), and the *Mennonite Confession of Faith* (1963). I had almost no knowledge or very limited awareness of the remaining 30 plus confessions that represented faith commitments of the broader Anabaptist-Mennonite communities. In my ministry formation, seminary faculty laid the foundation for the role a confession would have in ministry. Even more important, I was being prepared for the unfolding drama of discernment associated with creating a new confession, the *Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective* (1995).

Virginia Mennonite Conference is called to equip active ministers for the contemporary challenges facing the network of missional communities within our Conference. This “always” task of leadership



development is delegated to the Leadership Enrichment Committee of the Faith and Life Commission of the Conference. As members of the Faith and Life Commission recognized the contemporary challenge of bringing clarity to the purpose and function of a confession in pastoral ministry as well as group discernment at three levels—congregation, conference, and denomination—it seemed essential to convene the credentialed ministers for a conversation about the confession.

On November 8 at the Waynesboro Mennonite Church from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., all ministers holding credentials in Virginia Mennonite Conference are invited to a conversation of faith on the *Confession*. The invitation is for active and retired credentialed ministers. It is for chaplains, teachers, and administrators that hold VMC ministerial credentials. George R. Brunk III, seminary professor and former moderator of the Mennonite Church will make a presentation on the role of confessions in our history as well as an overview of what gave

rise to the need for a new confession during the 1980s. Owen Burkholder, former conference minister and former moderator of the Mennonite Church, will make a presentation on the learning from the 10-year celebration of the *Confession*, held in 2006. These presentations will give background and content for participants to engage in table discussions.

As I anticipate this conversation on faith issues, I am excited that credentialed ministers in Virginia Mennonite Conference have the opportunity to spend a day together in conversation about an aspect of their ministry that impacts communities of faith. I recognize the disappointment and concern that some individuals have expressed that this conversation does not involve lay people. I merely want to recognize that in the past credentialed ministers were held accountable for how the confession was utilized in their ministry. In this sense, equipping pastors for the way in which a confession is utilized in ministry is an essential component of ministerial conversations.



Clyde serves as Executive Conference Minister of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

Conference embraces sustainable financial mission

By CLYDE G. KRATZ

Virginia Mennonite Conference engages in the mission of providing vision and leadership to a network of missional communities that are located in Virginia, Washington DC, West Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Kentucky.

Our ministry is encouragement, evangelism, faith building, peace-building, and witness. Our call is to live in unity as disciples of Jesus as we give witness to God’s purposes for our communities and the world.

One aspect of our mission is a financial mission that provides resources to undergird our various endeavors. This past year the delegates of VMC approved Scott



Scott Beachy. Courtesy photo

Beachy to a three-year renewable term to the office of treasurer. Scott is a CPA and a partner in the firm of Martin, Beachy, Arehart, Harrisonburg, Va. We are grate-

ful for his availability, expertise, and insight for helping us with the financial integrity of VMC.

One of the ways that VMC is seeking to keep its constituencies up to date

with financial information is to provide a narrative financial mission. For many people, a budget tracks the various expenses in a detailed report. At times, this type of reporting is a vast amount of numbers in specific categories without a specific relationship to the vision and purpose of an organization.

VMC has worked on creating a narrative financial mission in which all the expenses (\$250,681) for 2012-2013 and their overall percentage of revenue are identified in four categories:

1. *Supporting Ministry Leaders* (38%)
2. *Equipping Congregations for Ministry* (29%)

(continued on page 4)

Our Community Farm has opportunity for internship

By KEN WITTIG

N*ew Creation through Cultivation* is a new internship that is partnering with VMM, designed to provide a twelve-month “immersion experience” for those interested in the intersection of Christian discipleship, social justice and sustainable living.

The host organization for the internship is Our Community Farm located against the backdrop of the George Washington National forest in the Shenandoah Valley. Our Community Farm serves as both a residential drug and alcohol recovery community for up to eight male adults and a sustainable farm.

This present year marked the first year for the internship, with two graduates of the recovery program returning to

serve as mentors for those in recovery and as learners in the way of Christ from the farm’s leadership.

We know that for anything to grow, either physical or spiritual, there needs to be the correct calibration of invitation and challenge; this year, for our first-ever interns, was marked by both. Jonathan and Joel carried the reins for sustainable farming through many various responsibilities from managing our farmer’s market stand, raising and caring for our milk goat and laying hens, and managing our half-acre CSA garden.

In the recovery community, Jonathan and Joel provided much needed mentorship and lay counsel as brothers to those coming

to the farm from broken histories of abuse, leading twelve-step meetings, book studies (*Celebration of Discipline*) as well as helping facilitate camping trips and other transformative experiences. In bi-weekly discipleship huddles and life transformation groups, we took time to process our experiences, encourage our strengths and confess our weaknesses.

New Creation through Cultivation 2014 begins the first week of March; *we have openings for two individuals or*



Friends enjoy planting seeds in the OCF greenhouse. Photos courtesy of author



Joel Dollarhite, a tranSender working at OCF, assembles the contents of a CSA (community supported agriculture) basket.

one couple. Our eyes survey the church of Christ seeking those committed to holding together in marriage what both society and the church too often divorce; namely, the love of God, through deep personal commitment to faithfulness and the love of neighbor through a radical commitment to justice in a broken world.

Visit ourcommunityplace.org/farm or e-mail any questions you might have to farm@ourcommunityplace.org



Ken is the Director of Our Community Farm.

CONFERENCE EMBRACES SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL PLAN (continued from page 3)

3. *Building Connections* (23%)

4. *Conference Overhead* (10%)

Staff expenses are represented in each category based on the perception of time staff gave to each category.

One of the challenges I face as the Executive Conference Minister is generating revenue on behalf of VMC.

Larry Miller, president of Everence, recently reported that there are two things that are hurting the financial health of our organizations: a three percent decline in congregational giving, and the growing number of new non-profit organizations competing for donor dollars.

As you can see, it will become increasingly more difficult to fund the things we

are doing, if we do not pay attention to the financial aspect of VMC.

In fiscal year 2012-2013, VMC received 55% of its revenue from congregations. We are grateful for the generous sharing of financial resources that congregations send to VMC. Gifts from committed and generous individuals within VMC account for 19% of our annual revenue. These donors have seen the value in providing charitable contributions to the work of VMC in an annual gift, a special gift for a project, and some individuals have made sure that VMC is part of their planned estate giving. Fourteen percent of revenue comes from investments. The funds associated with the former Virginia Property Aid are providing

financial resources for the ongoing work of VMC. The remaining 9% of revenue comes from fees for services, related ministries donations, and miscellaneous resources.

As you plan your congregation’s 2013-2014 financial mission, please incorporate an amount equivalent to the VMC congregational asking within the range of \$25-\$35 per member in your congregation. I also want to encourage you to consider ways that your congregation can continue to be generous for the work of building mission communities with the regions of VMC. Thank you for your generosity.

Clyde serves as Executive Conference Minister of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

Dream big!

By WENDY HOSTETTER DAVIS

Virginia Conference middle school students poured into the Smith Mountain Lake retreat center once again this fall – bringing their energy and enthusiasm with them!

After several hours on the road, groups spread out across the campus for free time activities including boating, mini-golf, and a climbing wall. Youth sponsors joined in, playing games of frisbee or basketball with youth while others called out encouragement from the sidelines. Mixer games followed and groups were pushed out of comfort zones just a little as they got to know new faces while chasing each other around the soccer field!

The serious side of the weekend was led by speaker Lesley Fransisco and worship leaders “The Walking Roots Band.” Both helped participants slow down and think about their own identities and what dreams God had for their lives. Youth were challenged to be the person God created them to be by dreaming big and feeding

upon God’s word.

Even the serious parts had their fun elements; however, the worship band led many crazy camp-style songs that got participants moving and laughing while praising God. Lesley and her side-kick Caleb McClendon continued the trend by starting out the sharing each evening with ice breakers ranging from bear hunting in bowls of whipped cream to cup stacking contests. All of these fun activities got students excited about worship and opened their hearts to hear what the adults standing in front of them had to say.

Worship and fun also happened around the campfire Saturday evening and a night game of capture the flag (complete with glowing bracelets) ensured that everyone



Middle School Retreat participants enjoy a climbing/rappelling activity. Courtesy of author

was sufficiently exhausted and ready to sleep at lights out!

Sunday morning came all too quickly and students and sponsors that did not know each other upon arrival hugged and called out farewells to new friends when leaving. A weekend of activity and fun had opened doors to learning about God, making new friendships, and dreaming big dreams.



Wendy serves with her husband Shaun as Western Regional Conference Youth Ministers.

Motorcycles on the road for missions

By GLORIA L. LEHMAN

At the beginning of 2013, Virginia Mennonite Missions received an energetic message from Tim Kennel, pastor of Powhatan Mennonite Church, suggesting that a motorcycle ride be organized for the purpose of raising funds for missions. Tim described the way the ride works and asked

if VMM was interested. Oh yes, indeed! We wanted to assist with organization, publicity and planning, and be the recipient of funds. “Motorcycle for Missions” was born, then developed, and carried through.

The ride began in Powhatan, with nine riders on seven motorcycles on July

24, arriving in Roanoke for supper and overnight lodging. The next day, the riders enjoyed the Blue Ridge Parkway, the good services of the support vehicle driven by Ed & Doris Ranck, and the joyful welcome at Virginia



Riders Tim Kennel, Rob and Patty Burdette, Phil Helmuth, Lowell & Miriam Haarer, Lowell Tieszen, Ray Horst, James Maust, with Ed and Doris Ranck, drivers of the support vehicle behind at left. Photo: Galen Lehman



Mennonite Conference Assembly just in time for the opening worship service.

During the worship service, the congregation applauded the “Motorcycle for Missions” participants and recognized the amount of money they raised after expenses: \$4,820.

VMM is grateful to Tim for spearheading this innovative way of raising funds, all the riders and their sponsors, the business sponsors (EMU and LD&B Insurance) and God’s protecting angels during the ride. Look for announcements in 2014 for the second annual “Motorcycle for Missions” and get involved!

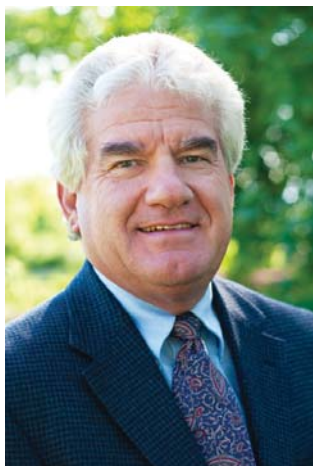


Gloria is Director of Public Relations of Virginia Mennonite Missions.

Nominee for Moderator of Virginia Mennonite Conference

By CLYDE G. KRATZ

Elroy Miller of Harrisonburg, Virginia, was enthusiastically approved as the nominee for moderator of Virginia Mennonite Conference by Conference Council on Friday, October 18. The Gifts Discernment Committee, which has the responsibility to select the nominee, will make the recommendation to delegates for their vote at the Winter Delegate Assembly held on February 1 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Va.



Elroy Miller. Photo: Lindsey Kolb, EMU

Elroy is no stranger to the work of Virginia Mennonite Conference. He has served as chair of the Faith and Life Commission from 2000-2006. In this capacity, he also was a member of the Conference Council. He and his wife Linda are members and attend Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, where his leadership and relational skills have been utilized.

Professionally, Elroy is an associate professor in the Applied Social Sciences Department of Eastern Mennonite University. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from Eastern Mennonite College (1975) and a Masters of Social Work from Southern Mississippi (1977). He has

practiced clinical social work in family service/mental health agencies and taught at Malone College and Eastern Mennonite University. In academic year 2012-2013, he received a Quality of Service Award from Eastern Mennonite University. He maintains a limited practice

with couples and with perpetrators of domestic violence.

While Elroy enjoys golfing and motorcycling, he also serves in not-for-profit organizations in the Harrisonburg area such as Pleasant View, Inc. He has also served in the public sector, providing his leadership to community agencies such as Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority and the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness Committee. Each of these aspects of his involvement reflect his personal statement about his life goal “to walk by faith and to strive for the good in our families, students, church, community and beyond.”



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Grace Mennonite engaged in ‘missional service adventure’

By CLYDE G. KRATZ

For the last five years, Grace Mennonite Fellowship, Lacey Spring, Virginia has been developing relationships with people in Jonesville, Virginia.

Jonesville is located in the most southern portion of Virginia near the Kentucky and Tennessee state lines. It has a population of about 1,030 with a median household income of \$24,439.

As part of the ministry of Grace, members and friends traveled to this small community with \$10,000 worth of donated building materials to assist the community in various projects.

One of the exciting aspects of a service opportunity for Pastor Richard Early is the engagement with the residents in the work. Richard described the significance of the Grace Mennonite Fellowship’s service not in terms of dollars for assistance, but the opportunity to work along side the residents in essential work that they wanted to have completed. The relationships that



A member of the Grace Mennonite team works on a new metal roof. Photos courtesy of Karin King

have developed in the conversations while working and eating together is as encouraging to the workers as it is to the residents.

Pastor Richard Early described the experience as an opportunity to be a partner with people who have need. He indicated that many of the families in this community have lost family members to cancer, have disabilities, or lack the financial means to make essential repairs to mobile homes and houses.



Grace Mennonite Fellowship members who traveled to Jonesville, Va.

With the economic realities of the community, Early believes that the congregational partnership with Appalachian Service Project is an avenue to provide hope and encouragement to the residents in the area. God’s call to engage in healing and hope has occurred through the service adventures of Grace Mennonite Fellowship.



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Give COMPASSION



\$3

TOWEL FOR INMATE
IN LOCAL PRISON

HAITI (LaRecointe congregation)



\$5

BED SHEET FOR INMATE IN
LOCAL PRISON



\$15

MATTRESS FOR REFUGEES
WHO SLEEP ON THE FLOOR

ECUADOR (David Shenk)



\$5

DENTAL HEALTH KIT
FOR STUDENTS AND
CHURCH MEMBERS

BELIZE (Nancy Marshall)

Give HOSPITALITY



\$5

KAFFEE & KUCHEN FOR
FRIENDSHIP MINISTRY

GERMANY (Stutzman family)



\$8

VISITING AND EATING WITH
NEIGHBORS IN ORANGE WALK

BELIZE (Chelsea Kobylarz)



\$20

WINTER CLOTHES
(SOCKS, COATS, GLOVES AND
BOOTS) FOR THE FARM

OUR COMMUNITY FARM



\$25

TRANSPORTATION COSTS FOR JESUS'
DEAF CHURCH (cost per Sunday)

BELIZE (Nancy Marshall)

Bless mission workers with Christmas gifts project

Consider these alternative gift ideas to provide compassion, hospitality, relationship and sustenance

How to CONTRIBUTE

Contact Gloria Lehman: (540) 434-9727 • (800) 707-5535 • gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org
Contribute online to the Christmas gifts project at vmmissions.org/support/alternative-christmas-gifts/

Give RELATIONSHIP



\$5

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM FOR SAMARITAN'S
PURSE GIFT DISTRIBUTION

MONTENEGRO (Campbell family)



\$5

BIBLE SCHOOL KITS

ITALY (Riddle family)



\$2

CHOIR MUSIC FOR LEZHA
ACADEMIC CENTER

ALBANIA (Lisa Mast)



\$15

TOWARDS MUSICAL
INSTRUMENTS FOR
LEZHA ACADEMIC
CENTER

Give SUSTENANCE

\$1

BABY CHICK



\$50

PIG



JAMAICA (Knepp family)



\$17

CHAIR FOR
SCHOOL DINING
HALL



\$1

SOUP & BREAD
FOR A KID'S CLUB
CHILD

ROMANIA (Hartzlers)



\$1

HOT BREAKFAST FOR
A JOSHUA CENTER
STUDENT

ALBANIA (Norma Teles)



\$25

REFRESHMENTS FOR FIRST
FRIDAY FUN NIGHTS (for 12
months)

BELIZE (Nancy Marshall)

Bike Shenandoah's five rides support four organizations

By HEATHER CRIBB

Despite some rain starting around midday, 95 cyclists enjoyed the 16th annual Bike Shenandoah ride on September 21.

Yearly highlights included the delicious food served at rest stops and after the ride, the beautiful country roads of the Shenandoah Valley, and the partnership among friends, family, and the larger community to participate in an event that benefits neighbors near and far.

The proceeds from Bike Shenandoah benefit four organizations, including Menonite Central Committee, Virginia Menonite Missions, MennoMedia, and a local service agency. This year's local agency, Bridge of Hope Harrisonburg-Rockingham, operates locally to help homeless mothers and their children acquire stability and security through various means of assistance.

Although the number of riders was slightly lower than last year, the event raised about \$4800 more than last year, for a total of approximately \$20,000 (after expenses). The increase is thanks in part to participants, who increased their efforts to invite others to sponsor their ride; many who did not ride gave generously in support of those who did. Business sponsors also generously contributed over \$8,000 to the event, in addition to numerous in-kind contributions.



Riders receive instructions just prior to their ride on September 21. Riders could choose between five route lengths, from a five-mile family ride to a 100-mile ride. Photo by ?

With five different routes ranging from five to 100 miles, Bike Shenandoah is a great event for the whole family and is suitable for beginners to advanced riders. Cyclists of all ages enjoy the ride; participants this year ranged in age from one to 81!

The beneficiary agencies are grateful for all who participated in any way to make

Bike Shenandoah a community success again this year.



Heather is on the Bike Shenandoah Planning Committee.

Bible Quizzing season will focus on Exodus

By MATT TROST

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase, "Let my people go!"

If you immediately thought of Charlton Heston, long hair and bearded, you are not alone. He played Moses in the Hollywood movie telling the story from the book of Exodus. Many powerful images come from this book of the Bible: the waters of the Red Sea rolling back as a strong wind steadily blew, the burning bush, and the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire leading the Israelites in the wilderness.

This winter, youth from Virginia Menonite Conference will study Exodus as they participate in Bible Quizzing, which runs from January through March.

Each Sunday a different team will host the quiz meet, and by the end of the season the quizzers are anticipating the tournament with teams from Ohio and Pennsylvania. The tournament will be hosted by the ACC quiz league in Lancaster, Pa., the weekend of March 21-23.

A former quizzer, and tournament winner, Matt Trost coordinates the youth Bible Quizzing league in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

As a former quizzer, I enjoyed studying Exodus. The stories were easier to remember than some of the other texts, and certainly no less important. Many of these stories have given insight and perspective for my life since that time, and are helpful



The 1994 tournament-winning team with Matt Trost, center. Courtesy photo

as I read other parts of the Bible that refer back to the people and events in Exodus.

I'm anticipating another exciting season of quizzing this coming year, with youth from many different congregations having fun, competing and learning to know each other and God's Word better.

For more information, you can visit the quizzing website at ymquizzing.com.

Matt coordinates the Bible Quizzing league in the Shenandoah Valley.

Mennonite Church USA Constituency Leaders Council meets

By CLYDE G. KRATZ

On October 13, representatives from the twenty-one conferences of Mennonite Church USA gathered at Amigo Centre, in Sturgis, Michigan.

Additionally, representatives from the Executive Board of MC USA, MC USA staff, key staff leaders from Mennonite Mission Network, Everence, and Mennonite Education Agency, as well as representatives from Constituency Groups were present.

This gathering of church leaders assembles twice annually to engage in conversation about our common life. Members from Virginia Mennonite Conference present at this gathering were Ervin Stutzman, *Executive Director*, Mennonite Church USA, Nichole Francisco, African-American Mennonite Association, Mauricio Chenlo, Mennonite Mission Network, Shirley Yoder Brubaker, *Moderator*, VMC, Barbara Moyer Lehman, *CLC Representative*, VMC, and Clyde G. Kratz, *Executive Conference Minister*, VMC.

There were three key items for discernment based on our engagement with our mission. A key discernment was reviewing the *Purposeful Plan*.

In light of our experiences in mission and in our relationships there was a desire to acknowledge the goals and activities that helped us to achieve our plan, but also to add items to our overall plan based on our new experiences.

Secondly, church planting is an essential part of our overall mission. As various conferences and church agencies participate in planting, developing, and sustaining new missional communities, there is a desire to convene a church planting summit.

This event would enable leaders, educators and church planters the opportunity to study scripture, share stories, knowledge and concerns about church planting, and encourage continued development of this work based on our emerging knowledge.

Finally, a conversation on funding and the financial health of MC USA was held. Funding the mission of the Church is a very



Shirley Yoder Brubaker meets with others at the CLC meeting for discussion. Photo: Clyde Kratz

important part of the work of leaders. Larry Miller, president of Everence, highlighted the awareness that congregational giving is declining at the rate of 3%. At the same time, there is an increase in the development of non-profit organizations which contributes to more competition for dollars from donors.

The most emotionally laden part of the conversation was on matters of reconciliation. Ervin Stutzman provided an overview of the discernment activity surrounding the John Howard Yoder legacy.

John Howard Yoder's legacy includes the tension between his brilliant theological and ethical ideas that have captured many a keen mind and the brokenness of his life that includes misconduct and abuse of women that has left a trail of scarred women. Chuck Neufeld, conference minister for Illinois Conference, shared a painful story of abuse involving John Howard Yoder.

As Ervin and others work at this discernment process, there is a keen awareness of the necessity of doing this type of reconciliation work on behalf of the broader church. As this work is unfolding, care is also being provided to family members of John Howard Yoder during this time of clarity.

As we engage in the mission of being the people of God new challenges emerge at various corners of the Church.

As some leaders see the leading of God's Spirit in a particular way, their new engagements and activities contribute to uncertainty about faithfulness and appropriateness of responses from other corners of the Church. Confusion emerges not unlike the challenges Paul and Barnabas faced as they eloquently proclaimed the Good

News, engaged in evangelism, and empowered people for ministry.

We hold in tension the belief that God has spoken to us in the past through scripture, experience, and community discernment which should be honored. We also believe that God can and does provide new revelation of God's will to the people of God through our reading of scripture, activity of mission, and community discernment.

This tension that we experience between honoring God's past revelations to us and God's unfolding revelation to us necessitates the convening of leaders to engage in worship, hearing one another's experiences in mission, and discerning our future life together based on our core values as a people of God. The Constituency Leaders Council represents this activity in the life of Mennonite Church USA.



Clyde serves as Executive Conference Minister of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

VMM welcomes intern

Lori Doll joined the Virginia Mennonite Missions staff as an intern in September while in her second year at Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

From Hartville, Ohio, she spent five years in missions and service, which included a two-year term in The Gambia, in an EMM business initiative for women.



She returned in 2010 to finish school and open the doors to another possible mission assignment or whatever God has in mind for her. Lori brings enthusiasm as she works with both Global Ministries and Advancement teams. Her past experience abroad and as a former MST chair helps her engage in the discussions and nurture her mission interest. VMM welcomes her as part of the team.

Seminary alum ministers to soldiers in Afghanistan and other Army posts

By STEVE SHENK

John Jacobs Jr., the only chaplain in his U.S. Army battalion, stood on a blood-soaked plywood board as he conducted a worship service for soldiers at a tiny combat outpost in the mountains of Afghanistan. Many wounded soldiers had been brought to this spot for transport back to a base hospital.

This lonely outpost was one of numerous stops for Jacobs as he traveled 5,000 miles, mostly by helicopter, to visit the 750 members of his battalion during his 10-month tour of duty in 2009.

Jacobs, who graduated from Eastern Mennonite Seminary in 2004 with a master of divinity degree, planned to return to EMS this fall to enroll in Clinical Pastoral Education. The intensive hospital-based program would prepare him for chaplaincy work among veterans and in hospitals and hospices. But he recently received notice that he is being called up in early 2014 for a 9-to 12-month deployment to the Middle East, to be stationed in Qatar.

Meanwhile other military chaplains have enrolled at EMS this fall. "Several new students this school year have expressed interest in being chaplains at veterans' hospitals or with active-duty personnel," said Laura Lehman Amstutz, the seminary's admissions director and communications coordinator. "The EMS focus on chaplain ministry and peace-and-justice theology is a valuable mix to these students who are sorting out how to care for those who have experienced war and military service first hand."

Jacobs is part of the Virginia National Guard, so he must be ready for duty at any time—at home or abroad. Stateside duty includes accompanying a senior officer to notify parents that their son or daughter has been killed.

In a war zone, a chaplain's duty is to nurture the living, comfort the wounded, and honor the dead. In addition to leading Christian services and performing various sacraments, Jacobs prayed with wounded soldiers from the battlefield and accompanied them to the operating room. "In

general, we are supposed to bring the presence of God," he said.

Jacobs also did a lot of marriage counseling for the many soldiers who were separated from their spouses.

Since Jacobs is a Protestant chaplain, he was also responsible for making sure that members of his battalion who were not Protestant had access to Catholic or other appropriate members of the clergy.

Jacobs enjoys the diversity he finds in the Army and the variety of people he met in Afghanistan. He learned to understand the motivation of the Taliban and enjoyed interacting with Muslims. One man, using the Muslim word for clergyman, called Jacobs his "American imam."

The seed for military chaplaincy was planted in Jacobs' mind after he completed nearly 13 years of active duty in the U.S. Army. First he had to finish an undergraduate degree and then find a seminary to attend. He picked EMS, arriving with his wife and three children in 2001.

"EMS offered me a safe place to be myself and bare my soul," he said. "They didn't make me feel like I had to be a perfect person."

While in seminary he took part-time jobs, making sure that he was able to interact with "common people," which he figured would help him in future ministry. In fact, ministry started for him on the job. "I talked about faith with people who would never come to church," he said.

Jacobs and his wife, Diana Patterson, are both



John Jacobs Jr., who earned an MDiv from Eastern Mennonite Seminary in 2004, is a military chaplain. Here he is conducting a service at Norfolk Naval Base. Photo courtesy of John Jacobs

from Lancaster County, Pa. John was raised Presbyterian and Diana was Mennonite. They were married when he enlisted in the Army at age 21.

Since his seminary days, the Jacobs family has been based in nearby Broadway, Va. He hopes that a future job in hospital chaplaincy will bring more stability to his life and more focus to his career.



Steve is a writer and instructor with the Intensive English Program at EMU.

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Contact Virginia Mennonite Missions for more information:
info@vmmissions.org / (540) 434-9727 / (800) 707-5535 / vmmissions.org

Called. Sent. Transformed.

NOVEMBER 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” Proverbs 15:22 (NIV)</p>						<p>The annual conference of the Italian Mennonite Church is held today and tomorrow. Pray for wisdom as it has been a difficult year for Chiesa Evangelica Mennonita Italiana. Chris & Melody Riddle and Floyd & Janet Blosser are attending.</p>
<p>3 Remember to attend the <i>Festival of Praise</i>, 4:00 p.m. today in the EMS auditorium where men's harmonies will praise God and an offering for Deaf ministries in Belize will be received. Come and bring others with you.</p>	<p>4 Pray for James Musser, pastor of Stephen City Mennonite Church, as he provides leadership to a congregation that is giving who they are and what they have so that their community and the world may know the love of Jesus.</p>	<p>5 Recently, Norma Teles returned to her home in Brazil from Albania; she has had corrective heart surgery. Please remember her in this time of healing and rehabilitation.</p>	<p>6 Pray for Micah Riddle who has started high school this year in a linguistics school in Carbonara, Italy. Pray that he can make new friends and that he will be able to comprehend the many languages he will study.</p>	<p>7 Pray for Sam Scaggs, pastor of Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church, Chesapeake, Va., as he provides Spirit-led leadership to a congregation that desires to be a Christ-centered family of God empowered by the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>8 Pray for Giovanni and Fiorella Greco and their all-church retreat at a camp through this weekend. Pray for strengthening of the believers as they study together from the book of Proverbs.</p>	<p>9 Steve & Laura Campbell rejoice that three believers were baptized this summer, becoming members of the church in Podgorica, Montenegro. The Campbells say, “Praise God for extending His Kingdom and enlarging His family!”</p>
<p>10 Pray for Chuck Hostetter, pastor of Mountain View Mennonite Church, Hickory, N.C., and overseer of TCK District, that he may experience the presence of God's spirit in his various responsibilities.</p>	<p>11 Steve Horst asks us to pray that he will make continual progress in learning language in Thailand and that he will have energy to be out-going, speaking to native speakers, and listening and responding to them.</p>	<p>12 Mark & Sarah Schoenhals meet with believers in Det Udom, Thailand, several times a week for Bible study, prayer and other edifying services. Pray for them as they demonstrate Christ's love to all they meet.</p>	<p>13 Pray for James Rhee, pastor of the Korean Community Church, who is currently participating in developing a school in the Philippines.</p>	<p>14 Maya Knepp goes to a Christian preschool in Jamaica a couple days a week and enjoys learning new things along with her friends. Pray for Maya's health and safety everyday as she lives in rural Jamaica.</p>	<p>15 Pray for Phil Kanagy, pastor of Weavers Mennonite Church, as he provides spiritual leadership for people to be transformed by worship, and to be nurtured and equipped for carrying out God's mission in the world.</p>	<p>16 Saturdays are busy preparation days for Nancy Marshall, pastor of Jesus' Deaf Church in Orange Walk, Belize. She gives careful thought to the worship service on Sunday morning, and connects with Deaf young men in a Bible study. Pray for her.</p>
<p>17 Pray for the many youth of the Jamaica Mennonite Church who will gather today at the Calvary Mennonite Church in Retreat, Jamaica, for the annual youth rally. Singing competitions, Bible quizzing, and fellowship are highlights of this event.</p>	<p>18 Michael & Ruth devote time to prayer everyday as they live and serve in South Asia along with their three young children. Ask God to give them clear direction for their witness and to provide the energy they need to carry it out.</p>	<p>19 Pray for Bong Gi Choi, pastor of Peace Fellowship Church, Fairfax, Va., as he provides compassionate ministry to his congregation.</p>	<p>20 Pray for Dini & Klementina Shahini as they serve in Lezhe, Albania, in various ways. May God grant them health and stamina for the many responsibilities they carry.</p>	<p>21 Pray for the five Bible study groups in four different towns where the Grecos live and work: Vasto, San Salvo, Termoli, and San Martino. Pray for the young leaders as they lead and that many more will be brought to Christ.</p>	<p>22 Pray for Kathy Hochstedler, pastor of Big Spring Mennonite Church, Luray, Va., who is seeking to provide leadership whereby people live in peace and hope in the light of Jesus' resurrection.</p>	<p>23 In Montenegro, Steve & Laura Campbell give thanks that Ranko, a brother of one of their believing friends, accepted Jesus as his Savior. Join them in thanking God, and pray for Ranko as he grows in faith.</p>
<p>24 David Stutzman has several roles to fulfill as he lives and serves in Bannental, Germany. Pray for him as he balances work and family life.</p>	<p>25 Pray for Craig Maven as he provides creative leadership to fulfill Harrisonburg Mennonite Church's vision of Christ's presence in worship, caring in growth, and global in mission.</p>	<p>26 Rafael, Solonge, and Paulo Tartari fly from Albania to Brazil today for a home leave. Prayers are appreciated. Their second child will be born in Brazil before they return to Albania.</p>	<p>27 In our culture, we are swamped with messages to consume, consume, consume! Counteract these messages by performing acts of kindness and by giving to those who can't return the favor, thinking of others more than ourselves.</p>	<p>28 While many of us have the opportunity to gather with family and friends on this American holiday, remember the workers who are in locations where they are far from loved ones. Ask God to fill their hearts with peace and contentment.</p>	<p>29 Don't miss the vocal recital by Brook Hostetter at Park View Mennonite Church, 7 p.m., featuring classic and contemporary pieces. Donations will be received to support Brook's service in Cusco, Peru, teaching in PROMESA, a Christian school.</p>	<p>30 Thank God for the successful Penny Power drive this year! Displaced persons in several countries will benefit from the funds raised. See the next issue of <i>Connections</i> for more information.</p>



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Announcements

You are invited to a **fundraiser event for David Shenk** on Friday, November 22, at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, 7-8:30 p.m. This event will include music, food, and a presentation by David about his mission work in Ecuador.

Hear the beautiful music created by Brook Hostetter, vocalist, and Phillip Martin, piano accompanist, Friday, Nov. 29, 7 p.m., Park View Mennonite Church featuring classic and contemporary pieces. Refreshments will follow. Donations will support Brook's service in Cusco, Peru, teaching in PROMESA, a Christian school. For more information, contact Brook at (540) 560-7752 or brookah22@gmail.com

The **Shawn & Laura Green family MST** will be selling pumpkin chocolate chip bread during November as a fundraiser for their work in Italy. Large loaves are \$12 and small loaves are \$6. These freeze very well. To place an order, please email mapsmission@gmail.com or call Tonya Swarey at (540) 649-1015 with your name, contact information, size, and quantity. These will be available for pick up or delivery during the week of November 17.



Perspectives
on the World Christian Movement

Tuesdays, 7:00-9:45 p.m.
January 7 to April 22, 2014
Grace Covenant Church, Harrisonburg, Va.
Contact Carol Tobin:
perspectives@vmmissions.org

EMPLOYMENT OPENINGS

Harrisonburg Mennonite Church seeks a full-time position for an **Administrative Assistant**. If you would like more information, please contact Lois Shank (540-820-6145) for more information or the position description. Applications will be accepted until November 8, 2013.

Pleasant View Inc. seeks a full-time **Development Director** who will embrace the ministry of enriching the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. This position oversees all fund raising, grants, planned giving, special events and annual fund. Bachelor's degree plus experience is preferred. If interested, contact Nancy Hopkins-Garriss at (540) 896-8401 or nhopkinsgarriss@pleasantviewinc.org



Virginia Mennonite Missions is seeking:

A full-time **Global Ministries Director**. Candidates must have strong leadership and administrative abilities, significant cross-cultural mission experience and formal training beyond the baccalaureate in theology/missiology.

A full-time **Director of Advancement**. Candidates must have skills in the areas of communications, public relations and fundraising. Church leadership and/or cross-cultural mission experience preferred.

Candidates for each position shall demonstrate personal faith in Jesus Christ, an active commitment to a Mennonite congregation, and a passion for God's reconciling mission.

Interested persons may contact Lois Maust: lois.maust@vmmissions.org, (540) 434-9727 by November 18.

UPCOMING TOURS

Join a motor coach tour to see "Moses," a new production at Sight and Sound Theater in Lancaster, Pa., April 4-5, 2014. The overnight bus trip, leaving from Harrisonburg, includes an exciting visit to Longwood Gardens, one of the world's premier horticultural display gardens. Dinner will be at Bird-in-Hand Family Restaurant and overnight at Clarion Inn. Contact Ed or Edie Bontrager at (540) 438-8304 or eebontrager@comcast.net. More information is at travelventuretours.com

Registration is now open for the upcoming **Nazareth/Bethlehem Work Group**, May 2-19, 2014, sponsored by VMM as part of the *Partners* program. The work group will engage in work projects at Nazareth Village and at Diyar Consortium, a ministry of Christmas Lutheran Church, Bethlehem. Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, contact Dorothy Jean Weaver: (540) 432-4276 or weaverdj@emu.edu.

Save \$300 per person by signing up by 12/31/13 for the next TourMagination trip to **Australia & New Zealand**. The dates are January 30-February 19, 2015. This outstanding three week tour will include: Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Alice Springs, Ayers Rock, the Great Barrier Reef and much more in Australia. The trip will conclude with six days on the South Island of New Zealand visiting Christ Church, Dunedin, Queenstown, a lunch cruise on Milford Sound and much more. The trip will be led by Wilmer & Janet Martin, with co-leaders Dave & Joyce Eshleman. Contact (800) 565-0451 for a brochure or email: office@tourmagination.com