

SWISS MENNONITE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
Board and Trustees Meeting  
March 24, 2011 @ 4:00 p.m. @Citizens State Bank

Present: LaVern Stucky, Keith Goering, Kathy Goering, Keith Albrecht, Don Kaufman,  
Alice Suderman, Gerry Schrag

Guest: Scott Waltner

1. Opening. President LaVern Stucky welcomed Scott Waltner, representative from Hopefield Church. Minutes of the 2/10/2011 meeting were approved.
2. Treasurers report-Keith Goering. Some funds in checking account were moved to a money market account where interest rate was slightly better; the renovation line now shows \$4046.39. Book sales at annual meeting were \$185. Four people purchased 10-yr memberships; five are new members. Gerry Schrag moved and Alice seconded to approve the treasurer's report. Motion carried. Research Committee has bills from their work that should be submitted. Next year's budget should consider adding funds for their projects.
3. Trustee update-Don Kaufman. Trustees will plan a workday at the cemetery for tree trimming and dirt work. Trees were sprayed in June of last year and will be sprayed again this year at the correct time. We expect that Daryl Schrag will cut the grass again.
4. What is our current relationship with Hopefield? Scott Waltner, Hopefield Church member, reminded the board about the 1998 deeding of the Hopefield cemetery land to the Swiss Historical Society (from the east hedge row - 450 west and from the north county road boundary 160 feet south approximately) - approximately 1.65 acres, with the following stipulations: 1) all present and future Hopefield Mennonite Church members be permitted to be buried in the cemetery at no cost; 2) as long as the Hopefield Mennonite Church is able they maintain the cemetery's lawn; 3) \$10,000 be transferred to the Swiss Historical Society to be invested and the principle be maintained but the interest be used for the repair and maintenance of the cemetery. This was passed by the Hopefield congregation and the Swiss Historical Committee in 1998.

The question was asked if any of these expectations are valid now that Hopefield Mennonite Church no longer exists. ("Mennonite" was taken out of the name and the congregation has withdrawn from the Mennonite Church USA Conference.) Scott acknowledged that the church has changed and only a few people of the 30-40 attenders have Schweitzer background, descendants of the first immigrants. SMCHA has reservations for plots for spouses of Hopefield people now buried there (Geneva Siefker, Ann Klein, Doris Stucky, Evelyn Miller, Arlene Stucky Thiessen). Scott mentioned that if Hopefield attenders are denied free burial at the SMCHA cemetery, they considered possibly starting another cemetery east of the church. Knowing that the very earliest and not even identified pioneers were likely buried there, would they bury people there anyway? Hopefield no longer has church records about the cemetery or other church business; these files disappeared a number of years ago. Question was asked about how many attenders at Hopefield now are likely to desire to be buried in the SMCHA cemetery. Cost of burial currently is \$250. Scott thought that if burial is free, some current attenders would desire to be buried there but others do not have close ties to this area. He would go back to the congregation for a response to this discussion. LaVern emphasized that this board intends to keep good relationships with the Hopefield congregation.

5. Annual meeting review. Business meeting too long. Secretary should give summary of minutes only. Singing too long. Many people walked past the treasurer's table and did not pick up programs. Rosemary Fisher's picture exhibit was very interesting. Donations did not cover food costs. Mary Martha Circle said if they serve again, they will charge instead of expecting donations. Keith Albrecht moved and Don Kaufman seconded a motion to send a check to Mary Martha Circle for \$100 over expenses (\$159.75). Motion carried. One suggestion was to serve only drink and simple dessert. Eighty four attended the meeting; 74 were served refreshments of sandwiches, cherry prei and poppyseed cake. Alice moved and Gerry seconded the motion to send an honorarium of \$50 to Moundridge Historical Association (her request) for Rosemary Fisher's presentation. Motion carried.
6. Follow-up of Rosemary Fisher's invitation to cooperate with Moundridge Historical Association. Rosemary invited SMCHA to fill a 4x8 or larger carpeted panel of history and/or pictures to exhibit at the museum. They are interviewing people to get histories of the area similar to our plan and offered the use of their equipment that transcribes audio cassettes into CDs. LaVern suggested that cemetery records should be taken to Rosemary since MHA is working on accumulating area cemetery information. However, we should rather consider affiliating more with Kaufman Museum since that institution relates to a wider group of Mennonites. Robert Stucky offered SMCHA a chest made by Jacob Schrag in Russia which had belonged lately to him and which he had offered to Kaufman Museum; his trunk there would have been placed in storage and he wanted it to be displayed so he gave it to Moundridge Historical Association. Some items may get more attention in the new Moundridge Museum. To have more space for SMCHA records at the Moundridge Museum would take a decision of the Museum Board of Directors.
7. Including Pretty Prairie and Freeman, South Dakota Schweitzers in SMCHA Activities. Efforts are made to encourage participation of Schweitzers in Pretty Prairie and South Dakota (for instance speakers and programs have come from both places) but the reality is that activities and cemetery maintenance responsibilities tend to apply more to people of this area. Fewer Schweitzers still live in those areas. Freeman has their own museum and Schmeckfest and two church cemeteries to care for. One way to continue to link would be to provide a column in *Schweitzer Salt* for news/information from Pretty Prairie and South Dakota. Could a satellite group be established in these other locations that would collect the kinds of research explored by the SMCHA Research Committee or gather stories that can be included in the Interviews Project?
8. Scholarship Committee: Alice Suderman reported no applicants yet.
9. Appointments: Ben Stucky will serve as liaison to the McPherson County Historical Society. Robert Stucky will serve as liaison to Moundridge Historical Association. Both should be invited to periodically attend the Board meetings to bring information and also to be able to share information with their respective organizations about SMCHA.
10. 2011 banquet. Alice will contact Gary Waltner again and ask him to respond by April 15 about the speaking engagement this fall so that we can make place arrangements and get the date on church and community calendars and the web site and arrange for a different speaker if he is unable to come. Other speaker possibilities include Rich Preheim, David Lasskin (author of The Children's Blizzard book), John Sharp, Mark Jantzen, and a Krehbiel scholar from Bethel College.
11. Membership Committee. Having a person(s) to focus on seeking members and finding methods to communicate with people who have not joined SMCHA yet could be quite helpful especially since *Schweitzer Salt* is going out only to members. At this time, 72 who paid last year have not paid

yet this year. Possibly a membership committee could phone reminders and/or send reminder cards that membership fees are due and spread the benefits of being a member. No names were suggested for this task. Will discuss next meeting. Kathy sent a postcard in early March to about 150 Kansas non-members inviting them to join in order to get Schweitzer Salt and to attend the Annual Meeting to hear about the history of early Moundridge.

12. Schweitzer Salt. An issue was sent early March containing Annual Meeting Information, proxy (no proxies were returned), reminder of dues and other articles. The importance of this communication instrument was emphasized.
13. Web. Dennis Quiring sent e-mail reporting that he requested that the swissmennonite.org domain be renewed for another three years; he will send the bill.
14. Updating centennial recipe book. A suggestion has come to reprint the primary ethnic recipes from the centennial recipe book dated 1974 and include a DVD of demonstrations of how to prepare the foods. Several women have expressed interest but a director of this project has not yet been located.
15. Other research. LaVern mentioned that Stan Saner will do research on the Burns community history. Kathy reported that Reed Graber has very interesting information about trails and a cemetery near Boundary Road near Pretty Prairie that should be included in the interviews efforts.
16. **Next Meeting, Time, Place: Thursday, May 5, 2011, 4:00** at the Citizens Bank or at Hutchinson truck stop if that place makes it easier for the Pretty Prairie board members to attend.