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SUMMER 2007

Looking Around Me...

"The hardest years of our lives are those between ten and seventy." Helen Hayes obviously said these words at the same milestone I passed at the end of May. Months earlier I had requested only one gift - could we possibly pull together an evening of music with daughter Bev at the piano and niece Cindy singing soprano as Eric, her husband, played cello? We had booked the very same three 15 years earlier for a similar night and at that time Sam had dubbed the musical trio "The Bishop's Grandkids" - since all three could claim a Mennonite bishop as a grandpa. I was asking for a return performance. They all said "yes."

We asked them simply to sing and play favorites, but could we expect joy for such an event in the midst of the uncertainty and sadness revolving around the short precious life of Baby Javid? [See note on page 4] We moved ahead to invite friends and family for a Memorial Day musical celebration. After Sam and I welcomed the 120 guests, we settled back to smile and applaud through this enchanted evening.

Cindy sang Bach's "Ave Maria," Bev played a sonata by Mozart, Eric added baritone to Cindy's lyrical soprano as Bev accompanied their dramatic exchange from *The Magic Flute*. Beethoven's "Seven Variations for Cello and Piano" closed the first half of the program. After a brief interlude niece Becky and her young son Seth sang, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." Amy joined Bev in an intricate piano duet by Debussy. Cindy delighted us with a short comic vocal, "Madam and the Minister" admitting as a pastor she found few songs that feature a preacher. Could I have asked for a better gift than the blended voices of Cindy, Bev, Amy and Ana Lisa (daughters-in-law) concluding with "My Life Flows On," "Like a Ship in the Harbor," "A Parting Blessing."

Was I surprised when our grandchildren and other children joined in a "Happy Birthday"? I did manage not to sing along. We headed to the fellowship hall for cake and ice cream - served by sons Tony and David, son-in-law Dale and Emmanuel, our young friend visiting from Phoenix whom we had met in Cairo, Egypt. The music rang in our ears - this was a time of healing. And it surely smoothed the way to "seventy."

- Helen L. Lapp

COME! SAIL AWAY ...

It is time! Don't fail to register for the Aging With Spirit Retreat scheduled again this fall (Sept. 30 - Oct. 2) at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. Presenters are Linford and Janet Stutzman joining loved song leader, Ralph Alderfer (Salford, Pa.) and boat builder/sailor, Lynn Miller (Bluffton, Ohio). Theme of Retreat #8: "Sailing ... With Spirit." Expect to learn and to laugh together, to share story and hobby, to sing and worship.

To register for the retreat, send e-mail to info@Laurelville.org or call 1-800-839-1021. [MARP members may request \$10 discount]

CONFLICTING PROVERBS

Match with opposite wisdom. Answers on page 2.
[For longer list, visit <http://marp.mennonite.net>]

1. Actions speak louder than words. / ____
 2. Look before you leap. / ____
 3. Opposites attract. / ____
 4. With age comes wisdom. / ____.
 5. The more the merrier. / ____
 6. The best things in life are free. / ____
 7. Never do evil that good may come of it. / ____
 8. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. / ____
 9. Never too old to learn. / ____
 10. Many hands make light work.
(or) Two heads are better than one. / ____
- A. The end justifies the means.
 - B. You get what you pay for.
 - C. Too many cooks spoil the broth.
 - D. Two's company. Three's a crowd.
 - E. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
 - F. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.
 - G. The pen is mightier than the sword.
 - H. Birds of a feather flock together.
 - I. He who hesitates is lost.
 - J. Out of sight, out of mind.

BOOK REVIEWS

The following reviews include four small recent books published by the Mennonite Church press. With these we move outside the politics of the moment and beyond the Harry Potter crush. Find them in a church library. Find them in paperback - read, savor, discuss with a group, hand on to a friend.

THAT AMAZING JUNK-MAN: The Agony and Ecstasy of a Pastor's Life by Truman H. Brunk. DreamSeeker Books, 2007. Yes, the "junk-man" Brunk referred to here is God who "takes our broken pieces" and makes "from them something precious." These are stories, poems, reflections on the "broken pieces" of our lives from which God makes "something precious." You will meet Preacher Taylor preaching and singing with showmanship and flair as he regularly collects the Brunk junk - finding value in their throwaways. Joining the junk-man in his joy and redemptive spirit, Truman's sister, Evelyn, creates family treasures from garage sale castoffs. One reviewer refers to these life stories told affectionately by Brunk as "parables ... part Garrison Keillor, part Mark Twain - filled with pathos, humor, and the Holy Spirit."

THE JOY FACTOR by Jep Hostetler. Herald Press, 2007. Ninety-nine pages! Only Jep would stop right there and refuse to satisfy the boring need to add one more just to make it to 100! And only Jep would tell us we are free to copy "the joy card" on page 94 but then insist that we do not ever change it at all and that we tell everyone where we found it! Those who have witnessed Jep performing his magic have found themselves not only totally mystified but helplessly laughing. This little book lets us in on some secrets - not how the magic is accomplished - oh, no! But there is much good help on tapping into the healing power of humor. The avoidance of life's pain is not Jep's point here, but he notes that we often say, "Someday I'll laugh about this." Jep declares that this move from pain toward laughter can bring renewed strength. "And most of us can learn to laugh," encourages Jep. Some of us have a lot to learn so we surround ourselves with resilient friends like Jep. Enjoy the hilarity and the wisdom. You may find you cannot part with this little book, so go ahead, buy copies for your friends.

FORGIVENESS: A Legacy of the West Nickel Mines Amish School by John L. Ruth. Herald Press, 2007. One reads this short little book not to get the complete story of the sad events on October 2, 2006, or even the specific responses of the Amish community to the senseless and shocking murder of five of their young schoolgirls, their daughters, their innocent loved little children. Here John considers the "extraordinary forgiveness" which is "the legacy of that heartbreaking day" stunning observers and challenging persons of faith worldwide. Chapter 18 provides a needed balance recognizing the very real and valuable emotion of anger and the need to deal with this openly and honestly on the way to forgiveness. Alongside the huge tome written by John to tell the history of Mennonites in Lancaster County, Pa., this small book surprises the reader with its lyrical tone and its economy of language - offering the reader a college course filled with Jesus' words and his example of forgiveness - profoundly lived out during this recent tragedy in our violent world. John adds this final brief coda: *A people synonymous with holding on have shown how to let go. A 'backward' people have pointed the way forward.*

SEARCHING FOR SACRED GROUND: The Journey of Chief Lawrence Hart, Mennonite by Raylene Hinz-Penner. Cascadia Publishing House, 2007. This book is Volume 7 in the C. Henry Smith Series. The most obvious story here, James Juhnke, says in his foreword, is that of Hart, Cheyenne Peace Chief and ordained Mennonite minister - "a remarkable man - a presence that inspires commitment and courage and a desire to act justly. We also meet "one of today's most creative Native American leaders." A second story is the author's personal engagement with Hart's story. "It is through Hinz-Penner's questions and efforts to understand Cheyenne culture that readers experience a nonlinear world view," writes Juhnke. As we read this book, we face an urgently needed revision of our own understandings of American history.

One more to consider - **POSITIVELY FALSE: The Real Story of How I Won the Tour de France** by Floyd Landis. Simon Spotlight Entertainment, 2007. Floyd tells his story as a plea for a fair hearing following his amazing biking victory in 2006 - then tainted by news of "testing results" claiming the win was achieved with performance-enhancing drugs. Landis experienced this as cruel injustice and his response is no ready forgiveness. In one of the final pages Landis does stand ready to forgive those who "sin but they're sorry." [Warning: some profanity.] The book is instructive as we walk with those in our faith communities who choose a different path - in this case a biking/racing path.

Earn the Right to Listen

We have all heard the old truism, "Listen to earn the right to speak." However, real listening is so much more than getting information. It also goes far beyond politely giving others "their turn" to speak. As one of those speakers, this writer must even confess to frequent use of listening time for catching my own breath!

In real listening we authentically give ourselves to others. After all, why were the two words "pay" and "attention" put together long ago? Genuine attention is indeed costly! Hopefully, you've been the receiver of this kind of *love listening*. Nothing feels more affirming or encouraging than to be *truly heard*.

For those who think of listening merely as silence, there's another surprise. Good listening is indeed active, involving real emotional energy. For example, it often becomes a time for conservative use of well-chosen words; direct feedback of what we think we've heard; low-key (not probing) questions; and simple feeling-level utterances like "um" and "wow."

But "earn the right to listen" is also a paradox. Although exhausted after exerting good listening energy, we often walk away from this special task of careful listening with a deep sense of having *received* grace: "I have not *earned* this level of trust!"

Several final questions: What is it that our Hebrew and Christian faiths agree God does most regularly and dependably in that place called "Heaven"? Is it not the way He *listens* to our prayers? Did Jesus then have *our* listening task in mind when he guided us to pray that "our Father's will be done *on earth as in heaven*"? Learning to listen effectively opens our own lives to God's heavenly will being done *here*.

Apostle James has it right: *"Let everyone be quick to hear, and slow to speak."*
- Dan Longenecker (Harrisonburg, Va.)

SOOP - On the go and with a smile

"COMING HOME" - SOOP VOLUNTEERS WHO RETURN TO SERVE AGAIN

Francis & Eloise Schrock (Goshen, Ind.)

Francis: "It is amazing the things people do without when they are broken - no money to make repairs - until we come and repair the items for them. This year I installed 15 new doors and frames on houses and trailers, also three new countertops and sinks and faucets. [Also: wheelchair ramps, new steps, new windows, new stool, new water heaters, shower walls installed, holes in floors repaired, many more.] I worked in 66 different homes in 40 days. I enjoy the challenges." ... "Tucson could use more people to do home repair."

Eloise added: "This winter I did office work one day a week at the Pio Decimo Children's Center, helped one day a week at the food bank and gave two days a week - sewing weighted vests, etc. - at the Adaption Station. We drove our car 356 miles to and from service - sharing rides as often as possible. We have worked in the Tucson area for 16 years. We enjoy our work and this area. It feels like coming home when we drive into Tucson!"

[During these 11 weeks Francis and Eloise Schrock served over 600 hours.]

A NOTE WRITTEN TO A FORMER VOLUNTEER: *I would love to hear from you. What's up?*

Edna Miller (Mogadore, Ohio) had served while waiting for her son to finish building on an apartment as her retirement home. During those months at two church camps Edna filled her off-hours with sewing MCC school kits and crafting items which also turned into a cash contribution to MCC. Her reply was true to her SOOP service style - while at home or away:

"I am keeping busy - have been blessed with good health - am so happy with my living arrangement in my downstairs apartment at my son's house. My other son and wife just moved to Colorado where he is pastoring a small church in Greeley. Their oldest daughter got married last Saturday and I flew out last Friday and just came back today.

"I am volunteering locally at the Ten Thousand Villages store and for the local Mennonite Central Committee thrift store - as well as with church projects. I plan to go with a sister and brother-in-law to Kentucky to work with a SWAP program there the last two weeks in June. I am planning to go to a family reunion in Kansas in July. We also have a garden here that I love to work in so that should keep me occupied this summer."

PHOENIX GETS A SOOP HOUSE **- and sends out a call for volunteers**

The SOOP program in greater Phoenix has gained a lot of momentum and those leading it have strongly sensed the importance of providing housing for volunteers while they serve. Within a block of Trinity Mennonite church there are three houses dedicated to the Goldensun program for adults with developmental disabilities and another house was recently purchased for the SOOP unit.

The house is located on a quiet street with lawn and flower beds to create a relaxing environment. It will be remodeled and furnished with six bedrooms and added bathroom facilities. There is room for an RV hookup on a neighboring lot.

SOOP volunteers coming to Phoenix have a variety of service options: the largest food bank in the country, the Glencroft retirement home, a Ten Thousand Villages store, a thrift shop. The volunteer can also choose to help with a housing repair program, give tutoring assistance to those learning English as a second language, and relate to the residents of the Goldensun houses.

During the month of October (and possibly November) volunteers will assist in retrofitting the SOOP house for community living. SOOP volunteers share in unit life and take turns cooking the evening meal. Very interesting conversation occurs around the large table each evening as volunteers discuss the experiences of the day.

As many as 40 persons have served in Phoenix annually for an average of one month each. Volunteers with interest in serving with SOOP are asked to contact the MARP office. [See contact info in newsletter heading. SOOP is a joint project with MMN (Mennonite Mission Network in Elkhart, Ind.) and MCC Canada in Winnipeg, Man.]

Roland and Dottie Yoder, formerly from Harleysville, Pa. - and now from Lancaster - continue to serve as On-site Coordinators of the SOOP program. The Yoders assist the volunteers with travel plans, find meaningful volunteer tasks and plan some interesting sightseeing for the volunteers while visiting the area.

You are invited to enjoy this delightful desert climate and to serve "on the way in Jesus' name."

MDS update in mid-June: The Mennonite Disaster Service RV Program plans to begin the Fall 2007 season on October 1, with volunteers participating in one or more four-week blocks. RV projects are designed for volunteers with their own RVs who want a more relaxed pace than the usual project. (<http://mds.mennonite.net/Projects/RVProgram>)
October 1-25, 2007; October 29-November 22, 2007; November 26-December 20, 2007; January 7-31, 2008; February 4-28, 2008; March 3-27, 2008; March 31-April 24, 2008

Javid Fynn Update

Our grandson, Javid, born very prematurely in October, died April 27 after miraculously living six months, growing into a darling little boy - but never leaving the "neonatal unit" for home care. We had watched this amazing development during his early weeks which included several scary surgical procedures - his tiny body conquering them all. This miracle baby responded to voice and touch and began adding pounds, nurtured by a constant supply of his mother's milk.

Ana Lisa and Tony (his daddy and our oldest son) visited Javid's crib side daily at Pa. Hospital and later at Children's Hospital - both near their home in Philadelphia. Our own frequent visits and those of his other grandparents, Paul and Ann Yoder from Harrisonburg, Va., became part of Javid's life support. Three uncles and an aunt, three nieces and a small nephew, work colleagues, friends and neighbors all shared the daily concern for this Wee One. Tony provided us with updates on an Internet blog with story and photos. Here the ups and downs of Javid's "wild little journey" had a faithful following with hundreds signing in and adding prayers and personal notes via a "guest book" click-on.

In the end Baby Javid's tiny immature lungs could not ward off a new threat called "pulmonary hypertension" in spite of high levels of ventilator support and drug ministrations from the hospital care teams who added their own love and warmth. The sorrow of losing "Wee Boy" was shared poignantly at the memorial service that brought together so many who had never even seen Javid. It was a blessed time of shared story, song, and tribute. Tony and Ana Lisa and the rest of us marvel at the impact of the short life of this tiny one. Support from friends, family, neighbors, caregivers remains strong and vital. Scriptures tug at our hearts with reminders of God's abiding love - for us and for Javid.

"Hope is the feeling you have that the feeling you have isn't permanent," writes Jean Kerr. Many reading this quote have lived with sorrow and know this as true. Life goes on - it must go on. In sharing the story there is added healing. Thank you.



A Borderlands Poem

Strong calls came during the recent MC USA Assembly in San Jose, Calif., to remain faithful to Jesus' way of peace.

Shoelaces, shoelaces, what do they mean?
More than you think; consider the scene.
Moving north they hold shoes firm on your feet
Strong for walking, and your heart strong too.

Over the border to the land of opportunity
How far would you walk to feed your family?
A dozen, a hundred, a thousand miles if you could
And your shoes have their laces: life is good.

Shoelaces, shoelaces, in plastic bags
With all your possessions, and Border Patrol tags.
You still have your shoes, but cannot walk far
Just back to Mexico from the Border Patrol car.

Your trip is over, your journey just begun
At Mariposa crossing there's no need to run.
Sarah brings a drink from Gilbert in the back
There is medical aid, and food for a snack.

Home is not near: a thousand miles to the south
And if you were there you'd see empty mouths.
So you'll keep on going, try it again
Walking the desert with a dozen of them.

Following the law of survival
Though you break laws of men.
Shoelaces tell the story: are they out, are they in?
Are you hopeful today, or is your hope growing dim?

May God bless your shoelaces,
As you put them back in.
Lord, bless these shoelaces.
Let the journey begin.

Written by Haven Whiteside after a June 2007 morning spent helping at a respite station for returned migrants, just over the border of Nogales, a town in the Mexican state of Sonora.

Follow Christian Peacemaker Team's Borderland's Witness at <http://cptborderlandswitness.blogspot.com/> Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) seeks to enlist the whole church in organized, nonviolent alternatives to war and places teams of trained peacemakers in regions of lethal conflict. Originally a violence-reduction initiative of the historic peace churches (Mennonite, Church of the Brethren, Quaker), CPT now enjoys support and membership from a wide range of Christian denominations.

To ask questions or express concerns, criticisms and affirmations, send messages to peacemakers@cpt.org

Office Notes

Plea from outgoing director: *I am retiring soon - so am asking readers to check the date above your name on the mailing label! If your MARP membership is currently paid up - wonderful - thanks for your faithful support. **TO ALL THOSE CURRENTLY OVERDUE:** Please do renew for at least three years and your check will be received with gratitude and your past arrears will be discounted. MARP counts on renewing support. It will bring personal joy to present you "in the clear" to the new director! **NOTE:** Members choosing at any time to update to "life" membership also send a message of support.*

Yes, you likely have seen this "retirement announcement" in the church media. This is a time of transition after eight years of enjoyable labor at the MARP director task. Candidates are currently being reviewed and interviewed by the Search Committee of four MARP board members. The board has asked that I continue serving during the search process. Look for breaking word of the new appointment.

Church bulletin announcements were sent out recently to Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations inviting all those "over 50" to join MARP. Please let us know if you have not seen it and we will resend the paragraph for inclusion soon. And thanks for personally inviting your "over 50, 60, 70, 80" friends to join.

MARP sent a check of \$130 to MCC to support a Global Family project in Lebanon - this was a tithe of the amount received for new memberships received here February through April. This was a good return from ads placed in the Winter issue of *PAGES* and in *The Mennonite* and *Mennonite Weekly Review*. MARP welcomes with joy all new memberships.

A plug for the sports classic came by e-mail recently: "I see you are leaving MARP. I wanted to let you know how I've enjoyed getting to know you and all you have done for MARP. I have enjoyed the Senior Sports Classic each year as I got old enough to join - especially glad for the fun of participating in it with my dad. To let you know what you helped put together: Last Saturday, Herb Zook rode his bicycle from State College, Pa., to Harrisonburg, Va., to visit his daughter (200 miles). Monday, I dropped off both Herb and Dan at the south entrance of the Shenandoah National Park (Skyline Drive) for a two-day ride. So Herb got to experience riding the Skyline Drive with Dan enjoying riding along with him - spotting deer and bear along the way, as usual. All this because Dan and Herb met during the Sports Classic sponsored by MARP. Is there a date for next summer yet? We plan on being there."

- Rosella and Dan Hernley (Luray, Va.)

FYI: The MARP board moved recently to change the name for this biennial event to MSFC (Mennonite Sports and Fitness Classic). MSFC #6 is scheduled for June 26-28, 2008, at Goshen College.

Have I saved enough? Tool from MMA can help ease your mind

Surveys have shown that many people near or in retirement are concerned about whether they have saved enough. Why is this a concern now? Two significant societal trends - we are living longer and our retirement savings options have changed. How long retirement savings will last is now an even more important question.

MMA has a tool that can help you answer that question. The MMA Retirement Income Risk Calculator helps you understand how much you can safely spend during retirement based on your life expectancy and how you invest your savings.

By analyzing your savings and estimated expenses based on 130 years of inflation and investment performance history, the calculator can give you a range of outcomes and show how likely - or not - each outcome may be. You can then choose the outcome you want to aim for. You can improve your probability of hitting it by adjusting your spending and the way you invest your savings.

So, if you would like to know how long your savings might last during retirement, contact your local MMA office or call 1-800-348-7468. This free analysis is done by MMA counselors.

- Mike Ehret, Communications
MMA

Check on address label if you are currently paid up as a member. Please renew membership - from current date.

MARP members and *PAGES* subscribers ... please note ... and circle your choice of renewal term.

1. Advise any change of address. 2. Look at the DUE DATE on this address label. 3. Renew if past due date. 4. Clip label.

RATES:	*LIFE	3 Years	1 Year
One person	\$300	\$40	\$20
Two persons at one address	\$400	\$60	\$30

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Just for Fun ...

Seven Thoughts on Exercise

1. It is well documented that for every minute that you exercise, you add one minute to your life. This enables you at 85 years old to spend an additional five months in a nursing home at \$5,000 per month.
2. I joined a health club last year, spent about 400 bucks. Haven't lost a pound. Apparently you have to show up.
3. I have to exercise early in the morning before my brain figures out what I'm doing.
4. I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.
5. The advantage of exercising every day is you die healthier.
6. If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.
7. My grandmother started walking five miles a day at age 60. Now she's 97 years old and we don't know where she is.

Pastoral Candidate Evaluations

Adam: Good man but problems with his wife. Also one reference told of how his wife and he enjoy walking nude in the woods.

Noah: Former pastorate of 120 years with not even one convert. Prone to unrealistic building projects.

Abraham: Though the references reported wife-swapping, the facts seem to show he never slept with another man's wife, but did offer to share his own wife with another man.

Joseph: A big thinker, but a braggart, believes in dream-interpreting, and has a prison record.

Moses: A modest and meek man, but poor communicator, even stuttering at times. Sometimes blows his stack and acts rashly. Some say he left an earlier church over a murder charge.

Miriam: A fine songleader and spokeswoman. Once floated her infant brother in a basket on a large river.

David: The most promising leader of all until we discovered the affair he had with his neighbor's wife.

Elijah: Prone to depression, collapses under pressure.

Elisha: Reported to have lived with a single widow while at his former church.

Hosea: A tender and loving pastor but our people could never handle his wife's occupation.

Deborah: Strong leader and seems to be anointed, but she is female. Extremely, extremely pushy.

Jeremiah: Emotionally unstable, alarmist, negative, always lamenting things, reported to have taken a long trip to bury his underwear on the bank of a foreign river.

Isaiah: On the fringe? Claims to have seen angels in church. Has trouble with his language.

Jonah: Refused God's call into ministry until he was forced to obey by getting swallowed up by a great fish. He told us the fish later spit him out on the shore near here. We hung up.

Amos: Too backward and unpolished. With some seminary training he might have promise, but has a hang-up against wealthy people--might fit in better in a poor congregation.

Melchizedek: Great credentials at current work place, but where does this guy come from? No information on his resume about former work records. Every line about parents was left blank and he refused to supply a birth date.

John: Says he is a Baptist, but definitely doesn't dress like one. Has slept in the outdoors for months on end, has a weird diet, and provokes denominational leaders.

Peter: Too blue collar. Has a bad temper - even has been known to curse. Had a big run-in with Paul in Antioch. Aggressive, but a loose cannon.

Paul: Powerful CEO type leader and fascinating preacher. However, short on tact, unforgiving with younger ministers, harsh and has been known to preach all night.

James & John: Package deal preacher and associate seemed good at first, but found out they have an ego problem regarding other fellow workers and seating positions. Threatened an entire town after an insult. Also known to try to discourage workers who didn't follow along with them.

Timothy: Too young!

Methuselah: Too old ... WAY too old!

Jesus: Has had popular times, but once his church grew to 5,000 he managed to offend them all, and then this church dwindled down to 12 people. Seldom stays in one place very long. And, of course, he's single.

Judas: His references are solid. A steady plodder.

Conservative. Good connections. Knows how to handle money. We're inviting him to preach this Sunday. Possibilities here.