

h e a d l i n e s

# ‘Voices’ resonate here

The arrival of the Voices of Conscience exhibit at the Bethel Church the second week of February sparked new energy at Heritage Hall Museum & Archives. We welcomed out-of-town visitors who came specifically to see the national touring exhibit that shares the stories of those who resisted participation in World War I. Freeman Academy used the exhibit as part of its American history class study of World War I. The Freeman Network for Justice and Peace (FNJP) met at the church to tour the exhibit. And dozens of local residents took advantage of the opportunity to learn about this part of our shared history.

A highlight was the program presented by Dora Maendel and Dr. Duane Stoltzfus at Pioneer Hall March 25 and 26. “On the Front Line of Conscience: An Account of Four



Students from Freeman Academy visited the exhibit April 7 as part of their study of World War I.

Hutterites Imprisoned at Alcatraz” focused on the experience of four from the Rockport Colony, located northwest of Freeman, who refused to serve in the military after being drafted during World War I.

Maendel, a storyteller, teacher and member of the Fairholme Hutterite Colony in Manitoba, and Stoltzfus, professor of communication at Goshen (Ind.) College and author of “Pacifists in Chains: The Persecution of Hutterites during the Great War” skillfully wove their unique perspectives to tell the powerful, poignant story culminating with the deaths of brothers Joseph and Michael Hofer who died in prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. About 300 people attended (the same program each night), including a large contingent of Hutterites.

The evening program was sponsored by HHM&A supported, in part, by a grant from the South Dakota Humanities Council (SDHC), an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The SDHC asked for written comments about the program and they were overwhelmingly affirming. Here’s a sample:

“Very interesting and touching.”



The historic Bethel Church was home to the Voices of Conscience exhibit Feb. 14 through April 24.

“I had never read or heard such detail on their life in prison. Thank you for depicting it so well.”

“Very effective. I learned a lot about where I come from.”

“It helped our community see how much our faith was fought for before we had freedom.”

“Very powerful and touching program.”

We also supported an FNJP program, also held at Pioneer Hall, on April 2. It focused on the experiences

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On March 25 and 26, Dora Maendel and Duane Stoltzfus shared their insights about the experiences of four Hutterites imprisoned during WWI.

**Heritage Hall Museum & Archives**

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