MENNO ROUND TABLE –
GOING GREAT!
TWO THIS YEAR
THE FIRST ONE IS OVER!

“REMEMBERING THE
MENNONITE HOUR”

As we entered the fellowship hall at Park View Mennonite Church on Saturday morning March 25, there was music in the air and it was the familiar songs we once sang or heard on the “MENNONITE HOUR” radio programs.

John Horst, the host for the meeting, had with him copies of all CD’s which were made from original recordings of the various groups who sang on the Mennonite Hour.

John has been running a one-man show every Sunday morning on WEMC from 8:00-9:30, serving as disc jockey for the program “Mostly Mennonite, Mostly Acappella.”

(Continued on back cover)
AMISH, ANABAPTISTS AND MENNONITES IN VIRGINIA

To answer the questions “How many Mennonites and Amish are there in Virginia and who are the different groups? one needs a directory. Here it is. We need to include the word “Anabaptists” for those who prefer to emphasize that heritage—one example being the Cornerstone churches, who, according to Gerald Martin, prefer being listed as Anabaptists rather than Mennonite. In actuality, each group listed would likely claim to be spiritual descendants of the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century.

The interchangeability of words has become interesting. Perhaps the greatest variation occurs among the Beachy Amish. Note the example of the “Set Free Mennonite Church” near Warm Springs Virginia, a small congregation that just came to our attention. Years ago it was known as the Set Free Foursquare Gospel Church. Pastor Mike Puffenberg, however became acquainted with a Beachy Amish friend and he became interested in Anabaptism as interpreted by the Beachy Amish. Four years ago the congregation made the necessary changes (plain dress, beards for men, etc.) to fellowship with the Beachy Amish. So they changed their name to “Set Free Mennonite Church!”

Membership numbers keep changing, so we include the latest information available on how many members found in each congregation and each group. The numbers in the brackets indicate membership according to the latest sources available.

To put such a list together requires information from three major directories and obtaining information from a number of individuals. Here are the sources:

- Sent Across the Street, Virginia Mennonite Conference, 2004-05. Harrisonburg, 2005
BEECHY AMISH CHURCHES
[561 members in 11 churches in VA; 148 churches elsewhere]

Faith Christian Fellowship, Catlett, VA [56]
Faith Mission Fellowship, Free Union [94]
Farmville Christian Fellowship,
Farmville [40]
Gospel Light Mennonite Church,
Charlottesville [24]
Kempsville Amish Mennonite
Virginia Beach [69]
Light of Hope Christian Fellowship
Wytheville [55]
Mount Zion Amish Mennonite
Stuarts Draft [22]
Oak Grove Church, Aroda [101]
Pilgrim Christian Fellowship
Stuarts Draft [67]
Marianatha Bible Fellowship,
Rose Hill [13]
Set Free Mennonite Church, Warm Springs [20]

BIBLICAL MENNONITE ALLIANCE
[177 members in four churches in VA;
Elsewhere in other states and Canada
there are 35 more churches in this
Alliance]

Believers Fellowship, Waynesboro [11]
Blue Ridge Christian Fellowship,
Burnt Tree Grange, Radiant [17]
Calvary Mennonite Fellowship
Mt. Clinton [117]
Oak Hill Mennonite, Cumberland [32]

CHARITY MINISTRIES [23]
One church in VA; This group has 40
churches in 17 other states and Canada

Dayspring Christian Fellowship,
Amherst [23]

CONSERVATIVE Mennonite
CONFERENCE [116 members in three
churches in Virginia; 110 other congregations
are scattered widely in 24 states, Canada and
Mexico]

Dayspring Mennonite, Midland [42]
Providence Mennonite, Virginia Beach [34]
Trinity Mennonite, Prospect [40]

CORNERSTONE CHURCH AND
MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
[938 in three churches in VA; four other non-
Virginia churches are listed in the Directory]

Cornerstone Church of Albemarle,
Crozet [38]
Cornerstone Church of Augusta,
Staunton [225]
Cornerstone Church of Rockingham,
Harrisonburg [675]

MOUNTAIN VALLEY MENNONITE
CHURCHES
[363 members in VA; there is one
additional congregation at Salem WV]

Bethel Mennonite, Broadway [57]
Dayton Mennonite, Dayton [188]
Faith Mennonite, South Boston [27]
Morning View Mennonite, Singers Glen [91]

Shalom Mennonite [50]
MT. PLEASANT (Weaverland Conference) [144 members in VA. This group often calls themselves Old Order Mennonite, but they drive cars. They use the same hymnbook (in larger format) as the Old Order Mennonites.

Mt. Pleasant, Dayton [144]

NATIONWIDE FELLOWSHIP CHURCHES [158 in two VA churches]
The Directory lists 102 other congregations in Bolivia, Canada, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Nigeria, Paraguay, Philippines, and the United States

Pilgrim Mennonite, Amelia [105]
Pleasant Valley Mennonite Fellowship Harrisonburg [45]

OLD ORDER AMISH CHURCHES
[Estimated 125 members in two Virginia locations]

Charlotte Court House (Charlotte Co.) [50]
Pearsburg (Giles County) [75]

OLD ORDER MENNONITES [791]

This group began in 1900-01 in the Middle District of Virginia Mennonite Conference when some did not wish to go along with the majority group in certain worship and church life activities such as Sunday schools and revival meetings.

There are now two groups, since in the 1950’s a separation occurred among the local Old Order Mennonites. People in both groups use horses and buggies for transportation. The two groups

are much alike in worship patterns, daily living and outlook on life.

Both groups alternate worship services in the historic Pleasant View meetinghouse and the Oak Grove buildings near Dayton. Both hold funerals and bury in the cemetery at Pleasant View.

The Cline-Showalter-Wenger group (sometimes simply known as the Showalter group, after a former bishop) has 470 members, according to minister Lewis Martin. They purchase electricity from the utility company. This group has three “permanent” worship locations at Pleasant View, Oak Grove and Riverdale (which also have small cemeteries) and they have an outreach service twice a month at the Spring Hill school.

The other group, known as the Wenger group, has 321 members, according to deacon Robert E. Knicely. Both groups have up-to-date farming and dairy equipment. For electricity the Wenger group purchases generators and diesel motors and produce their own electricity. Their “permanent” worship locations are Pleasant View, Oak Grove (as they alternate with the other group) and twice a month this group has an outreach service at the Ridge View School.

Pleasant View Old Order Mennonite Church, Dayton, VA. This photo, the one on the front cover, and those on the next page were taken by the editor on June 13, 2004 at the funeral of Amy Martin Knicely.
OLD ORDER Mennonite (continued)

In search of farms the Wenger group tends to drift northward toward Singers Glen. One family has a major farm on the west end of Edom. At this point that family has a considerable distance by horse and buggy to get to a worship service.

For identification the groups are often named after the bishop. Currently, both groups have Wenger bishops who are first cousins.

Many from both groups subscribe to the Botschaft from Sugar Creek, Ohio, an English newspaper published for more conservative groups such as horse and buggy groups, and authorized by the Old Order Amish. Sugar Creek, Ohio is also the home of the well-known "Budget."

SOUTHEASTERN Mennonite Conference [586]

This group has three additional churches in West Virginia and two in Puerto Rico.

Bank Mennonite, Hinton [119]
Bethany Mennonite, Briery Branch [50]
Bethesda Mennonite, Broadway [32]
Ebenezer Mennonite, South Boston [58]
McDowell Mennonite, McDowell [18]
McGheysville Mennonite, McGheysville [31]
Mount Hermon Mennonite, Stanardsville [40]
Peake Mennonite, Hinton [85]
Pike Mennonite, Harrisonburg [78]
Rawley Springs Mennonite, Rawley Springs [47]
Strasburg Mennonite, Strasburg (formerly Front Royal) [28]

UNAFFILIATED CONGREGATIONS [242]

Bethel Mennonite, Gladys [96]

Broad Street Mennonite, Harrisonburg [17]
Island Creek Mennonite, Hillsville [22]
Lucas Hollow, Stanley [10]
Richmond Mennonite Fellowship [20]
Timberville Mennonite, Timberville [42]
Wills Ridge Mennonite, Floyd [35]

VIRGINIA Mennonite Conference, a member of Mennonite Church - USA

[The largest Mennonite group has 7,971 members in VA, in 45 congregations; VMC also has 21 churches in West Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Ohio and Washington, D.C. and five emerging congregations; that membership totals 700.]

Beldor Mennonite, Elkton [23]
Big Spring Mennonite, Luray [56]
Calvary Community Church, Hampton [2500]
(Steve Brown, associate pastor, gave a tour on April 1, 2006, in which he said membership is probably 2500 plus. They have many activities going, a staff of 62, and an annual budget of three million. They must be the largest Mennonite church in the U.S. in terms of membership. They have a large number of husband-wife “Care Deacons” to relate to the membership. Steve currently serves as Assistant Moderator of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

Calvary Community, Chesapeake [60]
Charlottesville Mennonite, Charlottesville [59]
Christiansburg Mennonite Fellowship, Christiansburg [50]
Community Mennonite, Harrisonburg [227]
Crossroads Mennonite, Broadway [32]
Family of Hope, Harrisonburg [12]
First Mennonite, Richmond [80]
Gospel Hill Mennonite, Harrisonburg [97]
Grace Mennonite Fellowship, Lacey Spring [111]
Greenmonte Mennonite, Staunton [100]
Harrisonburg Mennonite, Harrisonburg [735]
Hebron Mennonite, Fulks Run [87]
Huntington Mennonite, Newport News [119]
Immanuel Mennonite, Harrisonburg [60]
Lindale Mennonite, Linville [355]
Lynside Mennonite, Lyndhurst [86]
Mount Clinton Mennonite, Mount Clinton [125]
Mount Pleasant Mennonite, Chesapeake [285]
Mount Vernon, Grottoes [76]
Mountain View Mennonite, Lyndhurst [159]
New Beginnings Church, Bridgewater [110]
Northern Virginia Mennonite, Fairfax [25]
Park View Mennonite, Harrisonburg [405]
Powhatan Mennonite, Powhatan [127]
Providence Mennonite, Newport News [35]
Rehoboth Mennonite, Schuyler [19]
Ridgeway Mennonite, Harrisonburg [176]
Springdale Mennonite, Waynesboro [200]
Staunton Mennonite, Staunton [22]
Stephens City Mennonite, Stephens City [73]
  Stephens City is assisting a new Korean
  church which is just now beginning
Stuarts Draft Mennonite, Stuarts Draft [59]
Trissels Mennonite, Broadway [109]
Valley View Mennonite, Criders [70]
Vietnamese Christian Fellowship,
  Falls Church [45]
Warwick River Mennonite,
  Newport News [184]
Waynesboro Mennonite, Waynesboro [153]
Weavers Mennonite, Harrisonburg [305]
Williamsburg Mennonite, Williamsburg [76]

Zion Hill Mennonite, Singers Glen [52]
Zion Mennonite, Broadway [228]

Five emerging congregations, mostly in
Washington, D.C. metropolitan area--add four
more members

IN SUMMARY:

Virginia Mennonite Conference
  (Virginia congregations only) 7,971
  Beachy Amish 561
  Biblical Mennonite Alliance 177
  Central Dist. Conference – MC-USA 50
  Charity Ministries 23
  Conservative Mennonite Conference 116
  Cornerstone Churches 938
  Mountain Valley 363
  Mt. Pleasant 144
  Nationwide Fellowship 158
  Old Order Amish est. 125
  Old Order Mennonite 791
  Southeastern Mennonite Conference 586
  Unaffiliated with any conference or
  Alliance 242

TOTAL IN VIRGINIA 12,245

BOOK CORNER

Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the American Civil War*. New York: Viking, 2006. Of the writing of Civil War books there certainly is no end! (In fact, the editor of *SMH* hopes to have one out in a year.) Stout’s 550-page book elaborates in great detail the “just war theory” which both sides in the Civil War claimed. Both sides were sure that God was on their side! And there were plenty of preachers and secular newspapers and magazines to make that claim many times.

Author Stout is sure that wars can be just. He calls West Point “the seminary of America’s national religion.” He does admit up front that war “is killing” and is “evil,” but a “necessary evil” and therefore “right.” He doesn’t say which Civil War side is right. Both sides during the war declared days of “fasting and prayer”—the Confederacy calling for 10 such days and the North called for three, plus emphasized several thanksgiving days. The 45 chapters can get tedious in detail; the author was very thorough and often quotes preachers and newspapers proving the rightness of their cause. The author’s final conclusion? Every war is a perversion of peace, but we must “demand a just war and a merciful outcome.”

Obviously, people of conscience, such as Mennonites, find it impossible to imagine God on both sides, or that war is moral! Many Mennonites favored the North, but the Hildebrand Mennonite Church (this, of course, is not in Stout’s book!) rather unusually observed a day of fasting and prayer at least four times at President Davis’ request. One wonders how Bishop Hildebrand prayed. Deacon Jacob R. Hildebrand, in the publication, *A Mennonite Journal*, Burd Street Press, 1996, gives us his pro-Confederate perspective! The EMU library has a copy of Stout’s book, as does the *SMH* editor.

jol

*Shenandoah Mennonite Historian* / Spring 2006 / 7
REMEmBERING THE “MENNONITE HOUR”
(continued from front cover)

John Horst focused on the significant role of music in this radio program from the early 1950s until 1977. For years Norman Derstine was the announcer and B. Charles Hostetter the speaker on this program that went out to many radio stations. He pointed out two “eras” of music—the first in the 50s and early 60s which was primarily hymns led by J. Mark Stauffer and Earl Maust, and the second era when more trained singers sang choir anthems led by David Seitz and Marvin Miller. The ensembles of ladies and men disbanded in 1968. Recorded music from 19 ten-inch records was often used on the programs.

For quite some time David Augsburger was the popular speaker. Through the years there were many responses of appreciation, first from Christians then from others such as prisoners who later signed up for Home Bible Studies.

At this March Round Table, 31 people were present, about half of whom had been involved with the radio program. Richard Weaver whose studio was long used, and Hubert Pellman, author of Mennonite Broadcasts, First 25 Years, gave their perspectives. Ken Weaver talked about how things worked behind the scenes. Lewis Strite was noted for his vision and involvement.

We closed by singing from memory several songs which were frequently used. What a memory! Cassettes and CDs are available at Mennonite Media and EMU Bookstore.

Grace Mumaw

LOOKING AHEAD . . .

Next Round Table Discussion

“REMEMBERING PARK VIEW, PART II with Harold Lehman and Jim Rush at Park View Mennonite Church on September 23, 9-11 a.m.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
BRING MEMORIES AND PHOTOS

Photo: Courtesy of Edith Kurtz Himes, when she attended

Is your membership up-to-date?
$6.00 individual / $10 a couple

See Jim Rush rushi@emhs.net

Shenandoah Mennonite Historian Editor: James O. Lehman Sketch: Jonathan Gehman, Red Barn Studio, 271-2824

Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians
780 Parkwood Drive,
Harrisonburg, VA 22802