

***This Issue's Theme:***



**April 2015, VOLUME 2 EDITION 4**

# **Life With Us**

**At Niagara United Mennonite Church**

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## **Palm Sunday**

**Jesus is coming!**

**From the mountainside, from the seaside,  
from the homes of the rich  
and the company of the poor,  
from the bedside of those who are sick,  
Jesus is coming!**

**Along dusty roads,  
with a ragged band of travellers,  
Jesus comes to Jerusalem,  
Jesus comes to worship.**

**Will we greet him with Hosannas?**

**Let's pray:**

**We have come to meet you today, Jesus.**

**We don't know quite what to expect.**

**We think we know what we need,  
how you can meet our needs.**

**But we come humbly, laying our coats before you.**

**It's your call.**

**Reveal to us who you are,  
how you can be a Saviour in our lives,  
a Saviour in our world today.**

**Come Lord Jesus!**

**Hosanna!**

## DID YOU KNOW?



**During the season of Lent**, Christians reflect on the life and death of Christ in special ways to prepare for Easter. Ever since 325 CE, these preparations have lasted forty days each year, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Eve (not counting Sundays). They have been a time of spiritual cleansing that reminds people of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness as he prepared for his ministry. Lent still invites Christians to withdraw from society's hustle and bustle, and to remove the clutter from their lives to help them prepare for the ministries where God would like their help.

**Lent** is a good time to offer oneself to God. When we do, interesting things happen. These can include having our expectations and understandings turned **upside down and inside out**.

**Shrove** comes from the old word, "shrive", which means to hear a person confess their sins and receive forgiveness, one of the ways people traditionally prepared for Lent.

On **Shrove Tuesday**, it was also traditional to make pancakes and use up the eggs, fat, and sugar that were in the house, because people would give up eating these foods for Lent.



**Ash Wednesday** gets its name from the ashes that were traditionally rubbed on the forehead of worshipers on this day. Ashes are a symbol of purification, because as fire burns it can separate what is valuable from what is valueless. In the same way, making crosses of ashes on each other's foreheads shows our willingness to be purified by Jesus, and that we are making space for Jesus to shape us for new and abundant life with him.

**Maundy** comes from the Latin "dies mandatum" which means "the day of the new commandment".

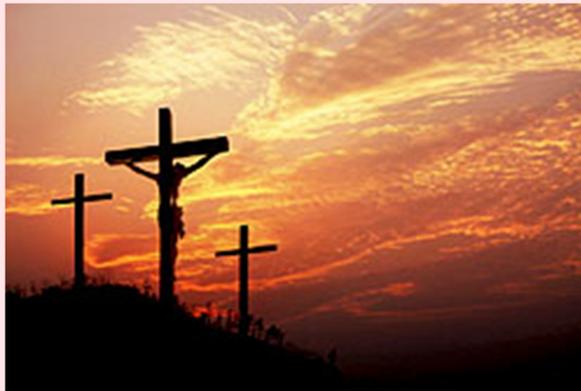
On that first **Maundy Thursday**, Jesus surprised his disciples by washing their feet. This was something that servants regularly did when people came indoors, because the Palestinian roads were dusty and their sandaled feet were dirty. But Jesus was their teacher! By kneeling in front of them and washing their feet like a servant, Jesus taught them something very important. Jesus expects his followers to be like servants to each other, instead of trying to boss each other around. Listen to the Gospel words: "After he had washed their feet...he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.'" John 13: 12-14.



## DID YOU KNOW?

**Good Friday** This Friday is considered “good” because nothing, not even Jesus’ painful death, could overwhelm God’s saving love and grace.

**Holy Saturday** is a day for silence and quiet anticipation of Easter Sunday joy. The sadness of Jesus’ sacrificial death lingers with us, but we already anticipate resurrection joy.



### Easter Sunday Prayer of Thanks

Dear God and Father of our living Lord,

We praise you for the power of your forgiving, life-giving love! We thank you for raising Jesus from the dead.

We thank you for the wonderful gifts of forgiveness and salvation that we can enjoy because of Jesus.

We thank you for the Bible, which helps us see how God’s love transformed the lives of Jesus’ first followers.

We thank you for Christians through the ages, who have loved and followed you.

Thank you that your love, which is stronger than sin and death, can and does lead through suffering to joy.

Thank you, God, for turning the world **upside down and inside out** by bringing life out of death and beginnings out of endings.

**Alleluia!**

*Christus ist  
auferstanden!*

*Le Christ  
est  
ressuscité!*

*Christo  
ha  
resucitado!*

*Christos  
Voskres!*

*Christ is risen!*

# What Is Your Favourite Easter Tradition?

## Thinking of Easter's past, includes memories and more...

When I think of Easter, my childhood memories include the smells of Easter Lilies, Hyacinths, Paska and special meals. Easter egg hunts as a child and then those with my children are full of laughter and fun. Easter service as a child meant special dresses were worn. We always remembered the 'real reason' for Easter and we raised our girls in the same way. Thinking about how much God and Jesus loves us is humbling; triggering mixed feelings of melancholy and joy. I absolutely love the singing in our church and especially traditional songs sung at special services, including both our languages of German and English are precious! I guess, something that we can take for granted, is how blessed we are to have multiple generations coming together at church and in our homes. Easter is also a time that I remember my loved ones who have already joined Jesus in Heaven and I think about how wonderful their celebration is. God is good! Spring time and Easter is a time of year that the wonder of flowers blooming when snow is still on the ground, reminds us of God's forgiveness and glory!

Patricia Regier

Tradition...Paska on Easter Sunday. But, to hear a choir sing "He is Risen", **THAT** is Easter.  
Martha Bartel

My favourite family Easter tradition was always the hunt! My brothers, sister, cousins and I would be awaiting the 'go' signal, while waiting in my aunt's basement, as eggs and treats were being hidden in the back field. I recall racing out of the basement doors and up the stairs, onto the lawn and chasing after colourful packages and treats. We would then equally divide up the rewards, but it was all about the thrill of the hunt.



My other favourite memory was watching "The Ten Commandments," starring Charlton Heston with my family, as it aired Easter weekend every year. We would have snacks and enjoy the long film before crawling into bed.  
Scott Vanderlee

Easter morning is always a happy time when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Easter morning was also exciting on the Andres farm when we as children would hunt for our Easter eggs that the bunny had left for each one of us. For some reason the coloured Easter eggs tasted so much better than the traditional ones.

Lena Van Bergen



Easter egg hunt in Botswana with Debbie Rempel, Boitumelo & Charles, 1974

“Easter morning worship service with all the Easter songs, is special to me.”

Hedy Kopeschny

I was very close with my great grandfather, Ben Friesen, and he joined our family for meals on most holidays, including Easter. He passed away 15 years ago, but I still remember how after every meal he had at my parents' house, no matter how simple, he'd exclaim, "That was *deee*licious! I doubt the queen of England ate this well today!"

Will Friesen

Our Easter activities have changed quite a bit over the years, and we don't have as many traditions at Easter as we do at Christmas, but here are a few *memories* of Easter:

My grandmother (Oma Bartel) died on Easter weekend when I was 10. My cousins and I were playing with our new young bunnies when someone came back from the hospital to tell us. That was a difficult holiday for our family.

When I was little, I really enjoyed getting new "church" shoes in spring, usually for Easter. (That hasn't really changed...!)

I loved the aroma of lemon rind and yeast in the kitchen when my Mom was preparing the paska dough. That task is mine now and I always get a little wistful when I do it. (The paska is never quite as good either...)

My cousins and I loved the annual Easter egg hunt. The instructions were that we should bring everything we find to the picnic table where the BIG basket was. From there, at the end of the hunt, our treats would be evenly distributed. We hunted and hunted and couldn't seem to fill the big basket. I didn't realize until I got a little older, that my uncle had been re-hiding some of those eggs while we were off looking under bushes and behind trees. It was a clever way to keep us occupied for a long time and cut down on the sugar-shock later!

When we were in Youth, we had sunrise services at the Niagara Glen. There's something special about the sun (Son) rising on Easter morning, especially near the cool freshness of the river.

It's comical to me how the potato salad for Easter 'Faspa' is usually multi-coloured because we've used up the eggs from the egg hunt.

Marlene Heidebrecht

# NUMC Ministries...



## JUNIOR YOUTH



We have been blessed with an amazing group of Jr Youth this year. Once a month we meet up for fellowship and fun. Our group is open to grades 6, 7, and 8 as well as any friends they would like to bring. This year we decided to do something a little different and host a spaghetti lunch in the auditorium. We have grown together as a group over the last few months, and we, as sponsors, thought it would be great to do a service event; and where better than at home? It was amazing to see how quickly the group was able to set the tables and clean up afterward. We did very little to tell them what to do. These kids are pros! We were also very grateful to see the incredible support both before and after the event from the congregation for this group of young people. It was wonderful to see everyone chatting and catching up, and getting to know who the Jr Youth are and what we do. It is very evident how much our children are appreciated by this community. Thanks everyone for your generous donations, this will help to make us a self sustaining group in the next year and continue to have more awesome experiences.

~ submitted by Jennifer Hinz

Jr Youth has been amazing this year. All of the events have been equally so much fun. Playing games outside, running around the church, racing down waterslides, and serving our community. I had an awesome time at the spaghetti lunch. We enjoyed reading all of the notes that were written on the tables while we were cleaning up. It was a great experience and I would love to do it again next year!

~ submitted by Kaitlin Hinz

## Reflections on the Spaghetti Lunch

It was really nice to serve the church with my friends  
~ Elissa R.

I really enjoyed serving and helping the church and my family. I had a great time.  
~ Emily D.

It was fun. It was nice to serve people.  
~ Braeden F.

I liked serving AND eating! It was fun!  
~ Niko T

I liked being able to help set up for the event, and serve.  
~ Kaitlin H.

I liked serving the people.  
~Grace P.

I really enjoyed seeing how much fun everyone was having.  
~ Taneal L.

I really liked serving.  
~ Ella H.





Hello NUMC,

Hope you are all doing well and that God is blessing each of you in a special way. We try and keep up as much as possible with the Niagara news by following the weekly bulletins and the newsletters. It's great to see that the church is still vibrant and doing wonderful things. You are very blessed to have a wonderful pastoral staff that still follows God's leading and that teaches this.

We've been here in British Columbia for nearly a year now and have also felt God's favour upon us. We are enjoying so many adventures and experiences and are in awe each day as we witness the beautiful creation around us. We never get tired of seeing the mountains and the beautiful colours around us. We have one special mountain that is about 2 1/2 hours away in the state of Washington, that on a clear day stands so majestic and white, yet it looks like it's at the end of the road. It's Mount Baker and it's snow covered most of the year. Burk has posted many pictures of this mountain on Facebook.

There is always something to do around here and we are taking advantage of all that BC has to offer. Last spring/summer we joined a hiking group and did some hiking in the local mountains. This was especially useful since Burk & I are both directionally challenged. We were fortunate that the city organized this activity with a naturalist who has been hiking these mountains most of his life and who lead our group on some unique trails all the while identifying flowers, trees, birds and so much more. Some spots were a little challenging and a little frightening (at least for me) but we made it through all the richer in our knowledge of our surroundings. We can now identify a Douglas fir tree by its bark and the unique cones that it produces.

We continue to ride our tandem bike discovering all the wonderful trails around here and even some of the nearby neighbourhoods. We have made a

few friends that also like riding and we've made some treks with them, the longest being a day-ride on Vancouver Island to Victoria. We miss our rides with the Teichgrafs and all the wonderful conversations we had during that fellowship time, we still cherish those years, enjoying that time and extend a hearty invitation to any of you to come enjoy some trails out here in the future.

We've made a few purchases of "fun" items that our kids are calling it our mid-life crisis toys. We just call them our fun toys. We started out with a scooter (it's a fair size one, I had to get a motorcycle license for this), then Burk bought himself a motorcycle and then we bought a second car (a SMART car, just like the Gades) since I took a job that is about 20 minutes away. It's been a lot of fun riding around like this as well, I don't ride the scooter for long distances, but enjoy some of the back highways around the lakes and mountains. Our longer rides we enjoy together on the motorcycle, and that way I get to enjoy the scenery rather than pay attention to my limited skills (haha). We are planning a short vacation the May long weekend to Vancouver Island to visit Victoria, and we'll go with the motorcycle, weather permitting, since it's cheaper fare for the ferry and a great way to explore.

After a couple of months of church shopping after we arrived, God lead us to a nearby church where we instantly felt at home and connected. We are enjoying the teachings, have been well cared for in a small care group, have made a few good friends, and are slowly becoming involved by volunteering in some of the events that they reach out to the community. As you are aware, we have become members at the church. They even have a wonderful library, albeit a lot smaller than the one at NUMC, but I guess my love for reading has become apparent and they have asked me to be on the library committee. Hopefully I'll be able to do at least half as well as Marlies, Debbie and Joannie have done for yours.

Last summer and fall we got to enjoy a couple visits from great friends. First in the late summer our friends from Ottawa came to spend a few days with us and we took them to places even we hadn't explored yet. Then a couple months later, John & Jocelyn Thwaites came for a few days. We enjoyed sharing our home, and "showing off" our surroundings and all the beauty around us. We even got to watch the flooding and harvesting of the cranberry fields with them. How fitting for farmers to watch other farms' harvest season. It

was great reconnecting with them and spending some precious moments together. This summer we're expecting a visit from our daughter and two granddaughters, and we're so excited to see them and enjoy their company for all that time, and we've been busy planning all the things we can do with them, places they want to see, and of course getting our home ready for two little ones. They will spend about 10 days with us here and then we'll be flying back to Ontario with them, spend a couple more days with them at their home and then head to Niagara for a couple of weeks. We are looking forward to seeing the rest of our families, celebrating a milestone birthday, and hopefully spending some time with friends. Hopefully we'll see some of you at a Sunday morning service as well.

Burk has been enjoying his new job within the company, enjoying the new challenges and his colleagues. The office will be moving in a few months, closer to home, which will make his commute a lot shorter. Who knows, he might even be able to ride his bicycle, which is something he really wants to do. He's working on some very interesting projects and it keeps his brain learning new things.

I am blessed with a great job, I work part-time for a financial advising firm that have an holistic approach. So I work with all Christians and it's special sharing that aspect in our everyday work approach, with clients and sharing our God moments in a safe environment.

Well that's all for now, as I said before, we wish each of you God's blessings, peace and strength, and looking forward to seeing you again when we visit.

Burk & Cheryl



Baobab in Tuli Block, Botswana



## Good Things Come ~ Nate & Taryn Dirks

“No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” 1 Corinthians 2:11

Last fall, groups of bikers from Mennonite Church Canada congregations across the country gathered in numerous communities to participate in a ride to raise funds for charity. Specifically, there were 8 teams, and they raised nearly \$20,000 to support the construction of a new park in a rough neighborhood in Gaborone, Botswana. Calgary, Langley, Niagara, Saskatoon, Surrey, Waterloo, and Winnipeg were all represented, and all connected themselves to the community of Bontleng (“place of beauty”) through their own beautiful acts of service. So, what’s happening with that park that so many good people risked getting those awkward splash marks up the middles of their backs to support? We’re glad you asked.

Before we begin, however – sometimes the best antidote to reading a boring article is, of course, coloring. I know that I didn’t have to tell you that. Please find a link at the bottom of the page which will allow you to find the drawing which is featured for this article. It was drawn by one of the youth local to Bontleng, to give a visual of how the park is roughly going to be laid out. Our request is this: print off a few copies of the drawing (printed in black and white) and ask your children, or some children from your congregation, to color one in. Then, either scan them and send them to our email address ([ntdirks@mennonitechurc.ca](mailto:ntdirks@mennonitechurc.ca)), or mail them to us in Botswana (PO Box 33, Gaborone, Botswana), so that we can make use of them and encourage the local team. And if you want to color one in yourself, who are we to judge? Actually, it would be pretty cool. (Picture featured on the back of the newsletter.)

For rest of story, check out **Nate & Taryn’s** blog or NUMC Facebook page.

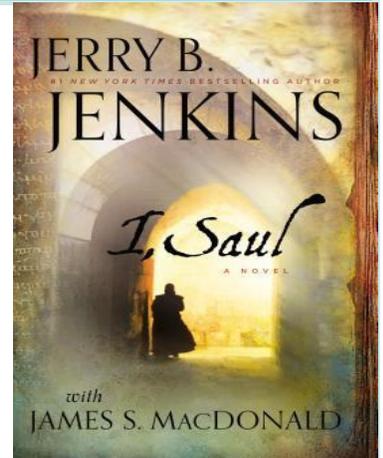
# BOOK CORNER

By Debbie Fast

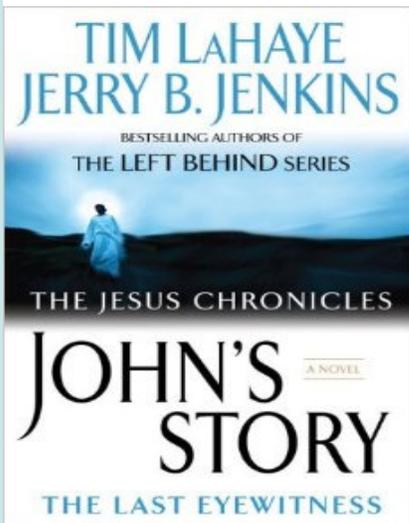
## **I, Saul** By Jerry B Jenkins

“A murderer who would change the world! A compelling international thriller that conveys you from present day Texas to a dank Roman dungeon in A.D. 67, then down the dusty roads of ancient Israel, Asia, and back to Rome.

A young seminary professor, Augustine Knox, is drawn into a deadly race to save a priceless parchment from antiquities thieves and discovers a two thousand year old connection with another who faced death for the sake of the truth. I, Saul consists of two riveting adventures in one, transporting you between the stories of Augustine Knox and Saul of Tarsus”



## **John's Story** The Jesus Chronicles By Tim LaHaye & Jerry B Jenkins



“Before the Tribulation, before the Rapture, before there was a legacy that could be left behind ... there was Jesus. Now the authors of the phenomenal Left Behind series introduce The Jesus Chronicles, four books that individually and collectively paint a vivid portrait of the Prince of Peace told in the voices of those who knew Him best: the Gospel writers, John, Mark, Matthew and Luke.”

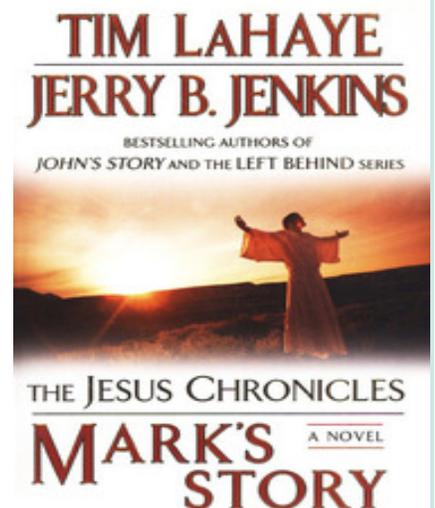
“The year is A.D. 95, and John, the one whom Jesus called “beloved” is the last of the twelve apostles still alive. Now nearing ninety, John is still committed to spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. When a renegade begins misleading the masses with dangerous, heretical teachings, John is called by God to write a Gospel to show that Jesus was in fact the Son of God”

“John’s Story brings to life the most important events in human history and also includes the very words that John wrote – words that continue to bring followers to Jesus every day”

## **Mark's Story** The Jesus Chronicles By Tim LaHaye & Jerry B Jenkins

“It is Jesus’ last day alive as a man, and a young boy – Mark – is about to witness firsthand some of the most pivotal events in all of human history: Judas Iscariot’s betrayal; Peter’s denial of his Master; and Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection as the risen Lord”

“Mark’s Story is a thrilling account that vividly depicts the day before Jesus’ crucifixion and the danger the early believers faced as they boldly proclaimed Him Christ the Lord.”



| SUN  | MON   | TUE   | WED  | THU   | FRI   | SAT   |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|
|  |   |   | <b>1</b><br>6:30pm<br>Pioneer Club<br>7:00pm<br>Prayer Mtg.        | <b>2</b><br>6:00pm<br>Model Seder<br>7:30pm<br>Choir Practice<br><b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b> | <b>3</b><br>10:45am<br>Worship Service<br><b>GOOD FRIDAY</b>                        | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>5</b><br>10:00am<br>Baptism 2<br>Youth SS<br>Interactive Sermon<br>10:45am<br>Worship Service<br>....(Rudy Dirks)<br><b>EASTER SUNDAY</b>   | <b>6</b><br>7:00pm<br>Women's Bible Study<br><b>EASTER MONDAY</b>                     | <b>7</b><br>9:00am<br>Women in Service<br>7:00pm<br>Church Council Mtg.     | <b>8</b><br>7:00pm<br>Prayer Mtg.                                  | <b>9</b><br>8:00pm<br>Choir Practice  | <b>10</b><br>Wholeness Through Christ<br>6:30pm<br>Registration<br>7-9pm<br>Session | <b>11</b><br>Wholeness Through Christ<br>8:00am<br>Registration<br>8:30-4 pm<br>Session |
| <b>12</b><br>10:00am<br>Baptism 2<br>Youth SS<br>Interactive Sermon<br>10:00 am<br>German Service<br>...(Hans H. Dau)<br>11:00 am<br>Worship Service<br>...(Paul from WTC)<br>1:00pm Jr. Youth | <b>13</b><br>7:00pm<br>Women's Bible Study<br>7:00pm<br>Niagara Community Male Chorus | <b>14</b><br>9:00am<br>Women in Service                                     | <b>15</b><br>7:00pm<br>Prayer Mtg.                                 | <b>16</b><br>8:00pm<br>Choir Practice   | <b>17</b><br>7:00pm<br>Youth  | <b>18</b>   |
| <b>19</b><br>10:00am<br>Baptism 2<br>Youth SS<br>11:00am<br>Worship Service<br>(Nate & Taryn Dirks)<br>12:00pm Potluck   | <b>20</b><br>7:00pm<br>Women's Bible Study<br>7:00pm<br>Niagara Community Male Chorus | <b>21</b><br>9:00am<br>Women in Service<br>7:00pm<br>Spiritual Council Mtg. | <b>22</b><br>7:00pm<br>Prayer Mtg.<br><b>EARTH DAY</b>             | <b>23</b><br>8:00pm<br>Choir Practice   | <b>24</b><br>7:00pm<br>Youth  | <b>25</b>   |
| <b>26</b><br>10:00am<br>Baptism 2<br>Youth SS<br>Interactive Sermon<br>10:00 am<br>German Service<br>...(Joachim Dau)<br>11:00 am<br>Worship Service<br>...(Rudy Dirks)                        | <b>27</b><br>7:00pm<br>Women's Bible Study  | <b>28</b><br>9:00am<br>Women in Service                                     | <b>29</b><br>6:00pm<br>Promises, Promises<br>7:00pm<br>Prayer Mtg. | <b>30</b><br>8:00pm<br>Choir Practice   |   |   |

# Milestones

**Join us as we celebrate one another's special milestones!**

The following members, who are 80 years of age and older are celebrating birthdays this month:

**Gerhard Friesen turns 86** (born April 4, 1929)  
**Margarethe Neufeld turns 85** (born April 10, 1930)  
**Kaethe Riemland turns 83** (born April 14, 1932)  
**John Willms turns 84** (born April 15, 1931)  
**Wilhelm Harder turns 80** (born April 22, 1935)  
**Anneliese Pankratz turns 82** (born April 22, 1933)

We wish you all much happiness and health on your special days!

Jenn and Nelson Thwaites joyfully announce the arrival of  
**Isabella Olivia**,  
born on Wednesday, March 4th.  
Proud grandparents are Jim and Cathy van der Zalm and John and Jocelyn Thwaites.



On March 28th, we celebrated the dedication of  
**Jeremy Joseph Vanderlee**,  
son of Scott and Yvonne Vanderlee  
brother to Joshua and Hannah.

## ADDRESS CHANGES:

**Henry & Elsie Siemens'** new email address,  
effective March 31st, 2015—[hsiemens25@gmail.com](mailto:hsiemens25@gmail.com)

**Peter & Mary Dirks**  
1 Tabor Drive  
Unit 117  
St. Catharines, ON  
L2N 1V9  
905.934.3414 x 1517

*Please accept our apology and the following corrections to March's Milestone's:*

*Jacob Enns turns 83 on March 12th  
John Harder turns 82 on March 12th  
Maria Enns turns 88 on March 19th  
Jacob Friesen turns 90 on March 23rd  
Erika Martens turns 84 on March 30th*

## A look back to this day in our history...

**April 1, 1960**

Our lovely Minister of Pastoral Care, Sharon Dirks was born to proud parents Arthur & Elvira (Willms) Andres. Happy Birthday, Sharon!!

**April 4, 1968**

Assassination in Memphis, Tennessee, of Baptist minister, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. a vocal advocate of civil rights.

**April 5, 1953**

The NUMC Easter Sunday bulletin announced what-was-then the usual Easter Monday worship service to start at 11:00am. Everyone was invited.

Contributed by Harold Neufeld

**April 5, 1959**

From the NUMC bulletin: ““The “Brunk” Tent Meeting is coming soon. The tent will be set up on the hayfield beside the Fruit Dealer “Gonos” on Lakeshore and Read Roads. Plan to attend. More information will follow shortly.”

Contributed by Harold Neufeld

**April 9, 1945**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is hanged by Nazis at Flossenburg Concentration Camp. Shortly before the end he says, “this is the end...for me, the beginning of life.”

**April 12, 1955**

From the NUMC bulletin “On Tuesday April 21 at 8:00pm, at the St. Catharines M.B. Church on Scott Street, there will be a meeting where the question of the construction of a Mennonite Hospital in the Niagara Area will be considered. The project would be a private initiative and all interested parties are invited.”

Contributed by Harold Neufeld

**April 17, 1955**

The NUMC bulletin proclaimed: “Born on April 3 to John and Hilda Willms, of our church, a son, by the name of Erwin.”

Contributed by Harold Neufeld

### My Mom by Terri Fast (nee Pankratz)

A reflection for her mother’s birthday.

What can I say about my mom? There are so many words that could be used to describe her, I don’t really know where to begin! She is most definitely one of the strongest, selfless, fiercely independent & determined, generous, caring & loving people I’ve ever known. I have always admired, respected, loved & been truly inspired by my mom ... but never so much as the day I gave birth to my first child, & became a mom myself. That day changed everything for me. I developed a whole new level of respect and admiration for her. I felt like I finally understood her a little bit better ... why she cares, gives & loves so deeply.

My mom has incredible strength. People often comment to me that they can’t believe all the things she does. I believe she is a true example of “when there’s a will, there’s a way”! Her inner physical, mental, emotional & spiritual strength has carried her along many paths in life. Her unshakable faith in God has kept her strong in times of trouble; and her endless optimism & determination gives her a very positive outlook on life.

My mom tirelessly loves & cares for her family. All 10 of her grandchildren have had amazing experiences with their Oma. She has done a wonderful job creating precious memories with them ... from road trips to and from B.C. (even one with two teenage grandsons!), to camping (in a tent!) in Northern Ontario, to making her famous dill pickles, lots of sleepovers, outings & countless meals together. She really is one awesome Oma!

My mom’s incredibly generous spirit shows through in all she does ... even outside of the family. Her love for all people is lived out every day. From the children on her school bus, to the off-shore workers she chauffeurs around, to the people she has in her home. Her many, many volunteer hours with MCC, The Benefit Shop, her church family at NUMC & beyond, all reflect her willingness to give. Each person she reaches is touched by her warm, kind heart. And each of us is richer for it. I only hope & pray that someday ... I can be just like her.

Thanks Mom. I love you.

## To Market, to Market to SELL me some pears! By Erv Willms



It seems that at some point in their life after having 5 children our parents decided that their kids “need to learn how to work”. (Parents – John and Hilda (Mary) Willms Children Erwin (Erv), Ruth, Don, Laurie (Lou), John (Johnny boy)).

So in 1968 with their oldest in grade 8, #2 in grade 7, #3 in grade 1, #4 in kindergarten the youngest in Jr. kindergarten (you’re right, they had only started with kindergarten the year before and no one yet knew that Jr. kindergarten was to follow – so let’s say he was 4), they bought a farm on Hunter Road in Niagara on the Lake.

Dad continued to work his hours at GM in St. Catharines and put in almost the same amount of hours at home on the farm, with our mother at his side and us kids tagging along someplace, learning how to work.

The 10 acre piece had been run down to the point that it took long hours of hard work to get it back into some semblance of order, making him wonder if he cut himself in the finger a bit (the low German version of that expression is much clearer in conveying the picture of a painful but non-life threatening injury – it was one of Dad’s favorite expressions when referring to other people’s mistakes), and if kids could not just simply learn how to work at someone else’s farm.

After an iffy crop in 1968 and a lack lustre effort in 1969, 1970 offered a different challenge. A nice crop with no market. By October it was time to harvest and sell the seckel pears (he had about 10 trees). We all loved the seckels as they were small (the size of a walnut – but later we learned to grow them larger – up to the size of a small tangerine), and when fully ripe were sweet as candy and tasted like it too. Our Oma Goerz would pickle them – they were fabulous. In our household they were referred to as kruschtji. (thanks to John Rempel for help with the spelling).

In a good year one tree might produce 10 to 15 11-quart baskets or 250 6-quarts (the old wooden kind) and even Oma was not going to process that many. So that year as always, Dad brought

them to the local co-op and wondered what price they’d fetch. After 1 week, the Co-op called and told him to come get them – they were not sellable “they’re too small” he was told “nobody wants them”. This was great for us kids (did I say they were sweet as candy) but not so good for Dad. He asked around and was told he should try a farmers market. So he loaded them into the family station wagon, a 1965 Chevy Impala with fold down jump seats in the back ( these seats were a hoot – 4 kids could fit behind the back seat – we once took our family of 7 plus 2 OMAs on a vacation in that station wagon) and 4:30 am one morning he found himself at the Ontario Food Terminal just off the Gardner Express Way on Park Lawn Road in Toronto, a whole sale farm market. Having lots of work back home, he wanted to sell his whole crop in one trip and did not bother with the retail markets.

“You get a little less, cause they (the buyers) gotta make money on it too, – but at the wholesale market they’ll buy it all – as long as it’s good quality” he was told.

Well to quote Dad – “They sold like hot cakes”. It turned out, he later learned, that these little pears that nobody wanted, the kruschtji were and still are a long time favorite with the Jewish community in Toronto. This worked out great for Dad, as he could sell everything we produced, year after year. And us kids – we learned how to eat the seconds, the ones with the scars and curly noses.

Dad was truly hooked. After a few years of “going to market”, as we called it, he was in with both feet and arms to boot. Summers became steady afternoons at GM (3pm to 11pm shift) for him. Mom and us kids would pick and pack all day. He’d come home at 11:30pm after his shift was over, pack the fruit into the station wagon (later the 1956 green Fargo pickup, with big rounded fenders, that came with the farm – every kid learned to drive standard in the truck), get some shut eye, up at 3:00am, Toronto by 5:00, into his stall at the market by 5:30, a quick trip around the place to gauge how many buyers and sellers the day would produce, and then the haggling would start. Sell it all by 8:00 or 9:00 if it was a good day, give up by 10:00 or 11:00 and bring some home, if it was a bad day. Back to the farm by lunch, into bed for some shut eye and punch the clock back at GM for 3:00 pm start of shift . There would be 3-5 of these trips per week during the busy season, a little less in fall with pears. Up to 30-40 trips per year.

Things on the farm changed a lot. We were now harvesting larger fruit (trickle irrigation), picking the same orchard multiple times, to insure optimum ripeness, packing more carefully into different

sizes and ripeness/colour (Some buyers want really ripe fruit ready to eat on the spot – others ready to eat in a day or 2.

Soon a cooler was purchased, then sold and a bigger one purchased, racks and a canopy added to the truck, more packing and sizing tables added, and everything went to the market. Strawberries, Sweet cherries (4 varieties), sour cherries, plums (2 varieties of yellow, 7 varieties of blue), apricots (4 varieties), peaches and nectarines (too many varieties to count), pears (5 varieties) and apples (only if there were lots, we did not have many and usually we kept them for ourselves).

Sometimes he'd have to take the Impala and the Fargo in the same trip which meant I got to drive. These were fun times as often he'd take one of the kids along, to help with the selling. Sometimes he'd change things up and leave right after work. On these trips sleeping bags and air mattresses came along and we'd sleep in the grass under the stars with the night sounds of the city all around us. Then up at dawn for a coffee, and a fresh off the grill bacon, cheese, egg and tomato sandwich – I can still taste them.

Brother Don and I debated a bit about the egg sandwich – here's his take on it. "The egg sandwich was only ordered later in the morning. We were sent with a couple of bucks to go get it. Dad's only request was to sprinkle some salt and pepper on the egg – as the waitress would never do it. So I gladly went to the restaurant to get the order – ask the waitress – or order clerk – for the sandwiches and some salt and pepper to which she pointed to the condiment table. I did my job for my Dad and brought his and mine back to the truck. He took one bite and looked at me, with that look that meant I was guilty of something big, and asked "what did you put on these eggs..." (I had accidentally put sugar on the eggs instead of salt!!)"

To understand the ins and outs of any given day's market conditions, Dad would walk a couple of trips around the stalls to see what the competition's produce looked like, gauge how much produce was on hand, see what buyers were there early, and most importantly – ask as inconspicuously as possible about price. Then he'd come back and make whatever adjustments were necessary to our sales strategy. In the mean time we'd be trying to sell whatever we could to the constant stream of buyers that would come along. Some days you'd hear the buyers say without even asking about the price – "nice peaches - I'll take em all". They must have walked around the market and realized there were not many peaches at the market that day. The next day they'd shake their heads and scowl "too much – too much", and keep on walking. That day they must have bought all they needed and were just

setting the tone for tomorrow's market.

Even our cousin Jim Goerz got a chance to help out at market. The fast pace of the selling and buying was a bit of an eye opener for Jim, who came home shaking his head and reporting. "that Uncle John!! –nothing was moving, so he upped the price. Then he gave everyone a discount. Before we knew it we were sold out". Apparently dad had not heard of false advertising. It was a big game and Dad loved it. I wish he'd have been a stock broker – we'd all be retired by now.

After almost 20 years of farming, in 1986, at the age of 55, Dad retired from GM and took up farming full time. By 1989 he needed a cube van to carry the load as he had purchased more land along the way and just about all of it had come into production and was being sold at the market. Us kids were slowly leaving the family farm and having learned to work along the way had little trouble finding off farm jobs. My brother John, followed by Don, both tried farming on their own for a while and Dad would help out with even more trips to the market.

In all the years of haggling, paying on a handshake, deals on, deals off, he only had 2 cheques bounce, both for \$100. One he took to small claims court and after many years was paid.

It didn't happen that often, on the other hand would not be unusual either, for Dad to come home with a sack of potatoes or onions, a bouquet of flowers, a basket of tomatoes or a bushel of pickling cucumbers, all of which were the best quality at the best prices. I once even ordered a 50lb sack of peanuts, which I left outside my door at work with a help yourself sign. I had no end of people looking into my office till they were gone.

By 1995, at age 64, he'd had enough. He sold the farm to the Magnota Wine Corporation and traded up for a new pickup truck, a 5<sup>th</sup> wheel and a couple of months in Florida each winter. None of the kids, who now knew MORE than enough about hard work, wanted the land. Imagine that!

He did however keep the house, the barn, and 2 acres around it. Not being able to sit still he planted those 2 acres to plums, apricots and some cherries. By 2003 he was once again at the market, only now for a short season, perhaps a dozen trips or less.

As the years passed, it became clear that mom's memory was going to be a problem for them and in 2008, at 77, he sold the house and 2 acres. It was the last year he went to market. However every grandchild (Dad's a big believer in treating all the kids the same as well as all the grandkids the same), has had a chance to go with him "to market" and learn a few tricks or make some observations, or eat a great bacon, cheese, egg and tomato sandwich.

Dad will turn 84 on April 15<sup>th</sup>!

## *From Happiness to Despair – Part of My Life Story* *by Wilhelm Harder*

*Jesus said:*

*Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation.*  
*Matthew 24:20, 21*

I was born in April 1935, in the small village of Halbstadt, West Prussia. My parents owned and operated the farm which they had bought in 1929, after their marriage.

With my brother Herbert, who is 2 years younger, we had a very happy, sheltered childhood. At age 6 years, I started to go to school, roughly one km from our farm, and all eight grades were combined in one classroom.

For several years we spent the summer holidays on the farm of our grandfather, a widower, who along with our aunt operated their farm. The time spent with them was the happiest of my childhood. The war had started, but it did not affect our lives yet.

On December 1, 1941 our father was drafted into the army. He was reluctant to go, but there was no choice. During his absence, the operation of the farm fell on our mother's shoulders, but good neighbours came to her assistance whenever needed. Our father was allowed to come home occasionally, the last time in December of 1944, as I recall.

Then, on January 23, 1945, late in the evening, orders were received to evacuate the village early the following morning. Everyone had to leave. Wagons were prepared, horses made ready, whatever deemed necessary was packed on the wagons. We left the farm on the bitter cold morning, leaving behind our home, to an uncertain future. We, along with all the other people of the village joined a trek of horse-drawn wagons, in

deep snow and freezing temperatures. We travelled in a westerly direction, away from the advancing Russian army. After many weeks on the roads, the Russian soldiers caught up to us, on March 15, 1945. By now, we were about 190 km away from home. Orders were given to return to our home, but with only those items we could carry, because the wagons along with horses had been taken away. It was a very scary time!

A group consisting of our village neighbours attempted to get back to Halbstadt. A very small cart including an ox to pull the cart was somehow obtained. We loaded our meager possessions, but some of the items we still had to carry ourselves. After travelling for many kilometres, we finally reached the Weichsel River, (Vistula in Polish). The bridges across the river in that area had been destroyed near the end of the war. Now what? Where to go from here? After some searching, a Polish man was located nearby, and he agreed to take us across the river in his small boat, but the boat was too small to take the ox and the cart, so an agreement was reached to slaughter the ox. The Polish man with the receiving half of the meat, and our group would get the rest, and we would carry it to our destination back to Halbstadt. It took several trips with the boat to bring all of us across the river. From this point our home was not that far away anymore, but still, packed with all our possessions which we carried on our backs, walking those last few kilometres was very slow and exhausting.

Back in Halbstadt on July 6, 1945, we occupied a farmhouse, not far from our own, with several families together. The threat of the Russian soldiers during the night was particularly frightening.

*Continued on the next page...*

Everyone was terrified during these nightly intrusions by the soldiers. All of the women were ordered to work on the farms, under the command of the Russians. Among them was our mother, who by now had suffered a lot and was very weak. Then, on August 25, 1945, everyone in the house got up as usual. So did my brother and I, who shared a room with our mother. After a little while we were wondering why our mother was not coming out of the room. Somebody went to check on her, and she had quietly passed away during the night. Herbert and I were not aware what had happened. I need not describe our feeling of sadness and despair. With people around us, we still felt so alone without her, but God was watching over us.

I am not sure how our grandfather was notified that

our mother had died. He and our aunt had returned to their farm, which was several km away. They came the next day with a horse and wagon he had borrowed from the Polish man on their farm. Two or three of the elderly men in our group of neighbours had quickly built a casket from old wooden doors from a barn nearby. Together they then loaded the casket onto the wagon. With Herbert, our aunt and myself sitting on the wagon, our grandfather directed the horses on the road to the church in Heubuden, the same church our parents were baptized and later married in. The casket was placed near the entrance door for burial the following day or the next. To this day, I still have that picture in my mind – the casket with our mother, alone in the empty church.

*-to be continued.*

## Paska

What would Easter be for us Mennonites from Russia without Paska?

It is a tradition we picked up in the Ukraine. *Paska* is based on the Hebrew word for Passover. For the Orthodox Ukrainians living around us in the Ukraine, Paska had more than a nutritional value, it was a holy bread. Ukrainian women took great care in baking their Paska. Besides the ingredients, which included lots and lots of eggs, there were quite a few century-old rituals, verbal formulas and incantations involved. Their Paska decorations were quite a bit different from what we do today.

With a stiff bread dough they shaped a cross, birds, wheat stocks and similar motives to put on top. The village priest would come to their houses to bless the eggs and bread. It was truly meant to be a Holy Bread.

Now, we Mennonites adopted the Paska, but not the blessing and the rest of the ceremonies. But never the less, for us Mennonites, it has almost come to the point, where Easter isn't Easter without a Paska. We Mennonite women decorate our Paskas with icing and coloured sprinkles. In some families it is the custom to bake a small nicely decorated Paska for each child or grandchild. I know, my Oma did. And if it is served with a sweet creamy cheese spread, that makes it just perfect for me. Well, Paska isn't Easter, but it is a nice Easter tradition for many of us.

Happy Easter!

Lani Gade



# Final Thoughts...

## The Four Fold Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with **discomfort**. Discomfort at easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with **anger**. Anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with **tears**. Tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

May God bless you with **foolishness**. Enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done. Amen



If you would like to submit any photos or articles for the newsletter, please contact any of the Newsletter Team of Editors:

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**Deadline for the May newsletter is April 15th, 2015.**



LIFE WITH US



NEWSLETTER



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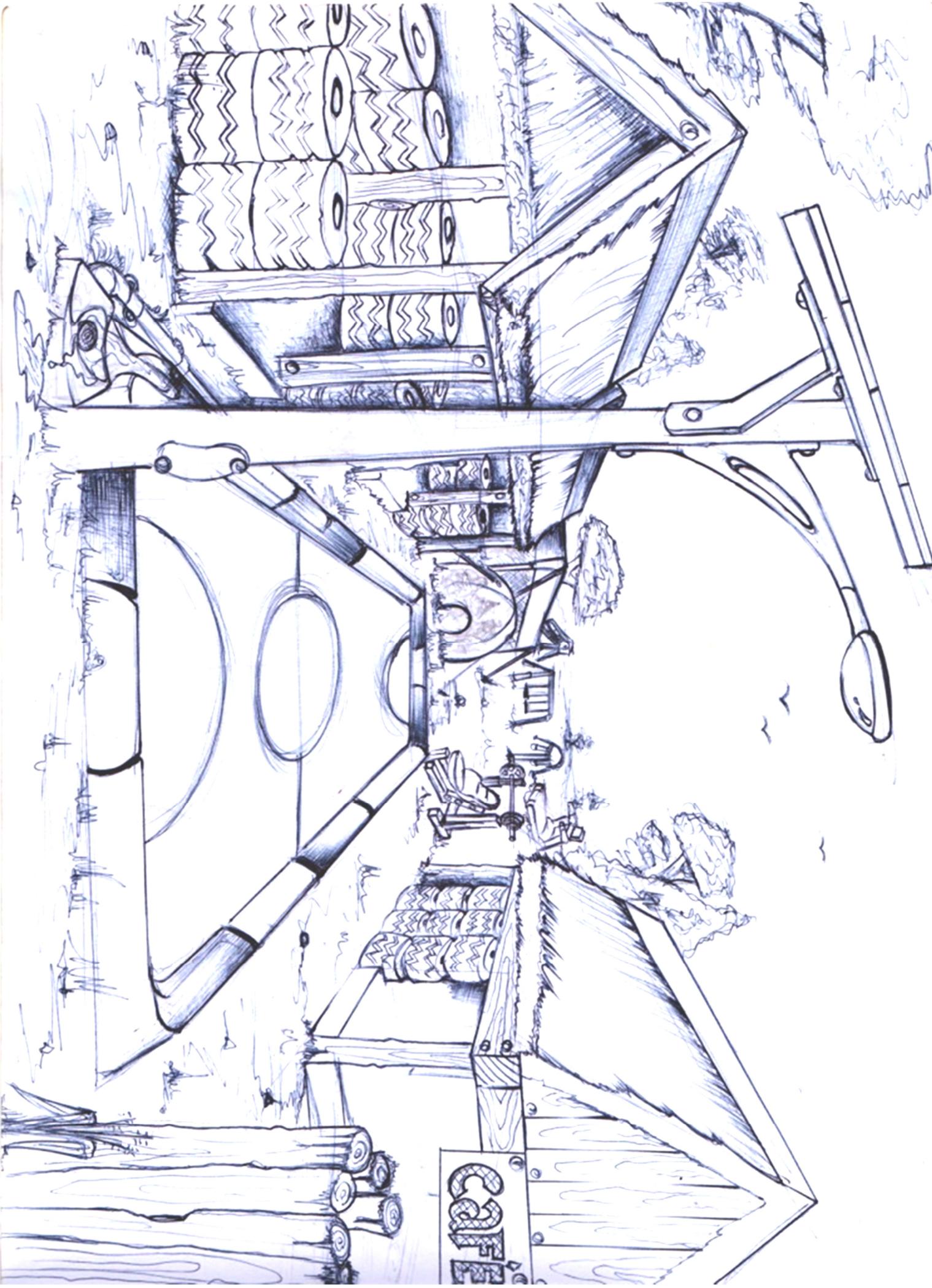
## COLOURING CONTEST

Park in Bontleng, Botswana

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Colour the picture on the back of this page  
and hand it in to the Welcome Centre  
over the next few weeks  
to be entered into a contest.

Pictures will be displayed in the front foyer during  
the month of April.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_