

# YOUNG CENTER

## *News*

THE YOUNG CENTER FOR  
ANABAPTIST AND PIETIST STUDIES  
AT ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE



## Young Center staff members create training course for conservationists

Senior scholar Steve Nolt and research associate Edsel Burdge Jr. have been teaching a three-day course, “Working Effectively with Plain Communities,” to soil conservationists, agricultural conservation specialists, natural resource specialists, and others this summer.

The course is the result of an invitation by the USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to submit a bid for presenting four training sessions for NRCS staff. Denise Coleman, Pennsylvania’s state conservationist, contacted Young Center director Jeff Bach in spring 2018 asking if the center had interest in submitting a proposal. Nolt, Burdge, and Bach worked on the proposal last summer, fine tuned it in early fall, and in late fall learned their course had been selected in a competitive bidding process.

Three sessions of the course have already taken place this summer and the fourth is scheduled for early September. Enrollment in each session is capped at 25; in total, 100 staffers will receive training.

The goal of the training course is to equip NRCS staff to work more effectively with Amish and other Plain farmers by providing cultural context and insight into their culture and way of life.

The training has three principal components. First, Young Center staff members Steve Nolt and Edsel Burdge Jr. discuss the culture of Amish and other Plain communities, explaining, for example, Plain Anabaptists’ views of government and their concerns over accepting public funds. Nolt and Burdge underscore the commonalities and diversity among Plain groups across Pennsylvania.

Second, the training includes significant interaction with Plain farmers, including a field visit to an Amish farm where the group



hears from the farmer about his successful conservation practices. The group then has a meal and conversation at another Amish farm. Nolt and Burdge also arrange a discussion panel composed of farmers from various Plain churches who share their experience farming and answer questions.

Finally, the training includes presentations by and discussion with conservationists who have long worked with Plain producers.

“The idea for holding these trainings arose from our interface with the Plain community,” Coleman, the state conservationist, said. “As more and more of them are seeking our assistance in relation to nutrient management, storage of animal manures, and overall soil health concepts, we thought that it would be prudent to train our folks on their culture. Our people would outreach to some communities and have success, but in other communities, it would be radio silence. We were interested in learning more about their

way of life so that we could be respectful and cognizant of the differences among these communities.”

“So far, the participant evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive,” she continued. “It has opened doors to our staff people, even those who have regular contact with the Plain communities. Many of our participants have asked that this be part of NRCS’s long-standing curriculum for planners.”

Bach linked the training to the Young Center’s mission. “The NRCS workshops are important opportunities for the Young Center staff to bring the fruit of our research to conservation workers who interact with members of Plain communities about the problems of soil conservation and water runoff,” he said. “In these workshops, our work on the religious, historical, and social background of various Plain groups contributes to solving real life, real world problems, using the humanities to serve present-day needs.”



## From the Director

This summer's travels have taken me to both new and familiar places where I have met new friends and enjoyed time with family and old acquaintances. Here at the Young Center, we have enjoyed new friends and old, familiar events and new endeavors. The Amish conference last June has become a regular event every three years. This year's focus on health and wellness brought some new presenters and original insights. During our training seminars this summer for Natural Resources Conservation Service staff members who work with farmers in Plain communities, we have met new colleagues and introduced them to friends in Plain groups.

We welcomed a new researcher for a month this summer. Simon Sun, a doctoral candidate in American Studies at Harvard University, researched the consumption of tea among Anabaptist and Pietist groups in Pennsylvania prior to the American Revolution. Although the topic might seem daunting, Simon discovered evidence indicating that tea was indeed important to some members of these groups.

Our administrative assistant, Rose Fisher, traveled away to Penn State to start a doctoral program. While we will miss her, we are happy to welcome Susan Asbury as our new administrative assistant starting in September.

We hope to see you at the Young Center for our programs this fall, whether you are a long-time friend or visiting here for the first time. Our evening presentations will feature some new topics. The Brethren Heritage Festival returns on October 19, during Homecoming weekend. We are also eager for you to see the Bowers Interpretive Gallery and to enjoy the new patio garden. Whether new friends or old, we welcome you to see and hear what's new at the Young Center and enjoy familiar friendships.

Jeff Bach  
Director

# Conference receives positive responses

About 200 people attended the Young Center's multidisciplinary conference, "Health and Well-Being in Amish Society," on June 6, 7, and 8. Participants noted the value of hearing about the work of other researchers and practitioners, and the chance to connect with colleagues and meet new people with similar interests.

Joanne Eshelman, director of Plain Community relationships for WellSpan Health, expressed enthusiasm about the event: "Our team was honored to participate in this conference as sponsors, presenters, and attendees. We found the sessions to be both informative and inspirational, and we valued the opportunity to connect with others who care about the well-being of those from the Amish and Mennonite community. There are

not a lot of opportunities to connect in a conference setting with those who care for the physical and emotional health of this population, and this event brought us all together for learning and dialogue."

"The conference offered an expanding model of interdisciplinary research to advance understandings of the Amish," Young Center director Jeff Bach observed. "Equally important were the opportunities for health care workers to share their insights and experiences about caring for Amish patients of many ages with various health care needs. The conference created a forum where attendees could learn from disciplines such as religion and history, as well as from medical research and health care, to address real, practical concerns about wellness in today's world."



Top left: Maja Bučan, professor of genetics at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, presents research on psychiatric disturbances in Amish families.

Top right: Dr. Joseph Martin, Edward R. and Anne G. Lefler Professor of Neurobiology, Emeritus, Harvard Medical School, presents the keynote address.

Bottom: Team members from Hospice & Community Care in Lancaster discuss the medical, psychosocial, and spiritual needs of Amish families dealing with terminally ill family members.

## Bach contributes to tour of heritage sites

On July 24, members of the Old German Baptist Brethren (New Conference) visited the historic Germantown Brethren meeting house as part of a tour of Brethren heritage sites in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. The group consisted of members from several states and various church districts. Elder Robert Matthews led the visit to Germantown and Young Center director Jeff Bach added comments about the history of the building, along with updates on the activities of the current Church of the Brethren congregation.



## Changes at the Young Center

### BOWERS INTERPRETIVE GALLERY AND PATIO GARDEN NEAR COMPLETION

Changes have been taking place at the Young Center this summer. The staff of Phoenixx Design are completing the last phases of the Bowers Interpretive Gallery, named for Kenneth L. and Rosalie E. Bowers. Exhibits include a time line of highlights of Anabaptist and Pietist history, along with panels about

peace and service. Guests can also view devotional books, Plain clothing, and an exhibit about the love feast. One set of panels features the Amish, while another sequence highlights cultural diversity and global growth among Anabaptist groups.

The Bowers Interpretive Gallery is free and open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except during college holidays. We welcome groups to visit and encourage people to call ahead so one of our staff members can give a tour.

Another new feature at the Young Center has enhanced the exterior appearance. During August, workers installed a new patio garden donated by the extended Miller family of York County. The garden extends around the front of the Young Center facing the parking lot and features a variety of flowering and foliage plants. Shrubs and a new tree add accents to the plantings. The patio includes a paved walking area and several benches. The new landscaping provides a place to stroll or rest and enjoy the natural beauty.



*Exhibit panel describes love feast practices.*



*Workers install a patio and garden near the Young Center's new front entrance.*

# New items added to Young Center special collections

Since last spring, the Young Center has acquired important new items for its special collections housed at the Hess Archives in High Library. The center purchased the Clarence E. Spohn Collection of Ephrata imprints, indentures, deeds, and artifacts. Among the objects are a rare woodblock engraving of the Ephrata seal used in printing and a rare wooden communion chalice and bread plate (paten). Spohn, who retired from the Ephrata Cloister museum in 1996, devoted his life to studying printing in Ephrata. The Spohn Collection is a priceless resource for studying German printing in early America.

The imprints include a rare liturgy printed by the Ephrata brothers in 1785 for the Moravian congregation in Lititz. The only other known copies are in the Moravian Music Foundation library in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

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## Staff transitions

Rose Fisher, the Young Center's administrative assistant, left Elizabethtown College in July to pursue a Ph.D. at Penn State University. Susan Asbury will join the center staff in Rose's place on September 3. Asbury holds a bachelor's degree in history from Berry College and a master's degree in public history from the University of South Carolina. She recently completed her Ph.D. in American Studies at Penn State Harrisburg.

Asbury is no stranger to the Young Center or Elizabethtown College. She has worked with the Young Center's collection in the past, through several public heritage classes she teaches at Penn State Harrisburg and via an Andrew W. Mellon Grant course she team taught with Jeff Bach this past spring. For the past nine years, Asbury has worked in the student life division at Elizabethtown.



"I am excited to become part of the Young Center team," Asbury says. "It is a place that is near and dear to my heart. I look forward to working with my new colleagues and engaging with the Center's audience."

Another imprint, *Das Andencken etlicher Heiligen Martyrer* (The Memorial of a Few Holy Martyrs), has special importance for Brethren. It is a small volume of two martyrs stories from the Dutch Mennonite *Martyrs Mirror*, translated into German by Bro. Theophilum, which was the spiritual name for Alexander Mack Jr., the youngest son of the founder of the Church of the Brethren. Printed in 1745, the book was one of the earliest imprints of the Ephrata press. It was printed at about the time that Alexander Mack Jr. left Ephrata with his friends Israel and Gabriel Eckerlin, who were expelled by Conrad Beissel, the founder of Ephrata. By 1748, Mack had rejoined the Brethren in Germantown. This little book was a precursor to the complete translation of the Dutch *Martyrs Mirror* printed by the Ephrata brothers in 1748.

Gene and Theresa Wampler donated correspondence, journals, clothing, textiles, and decorative items from Gene's parents, Ernest and Elizabeth Baker Wampler, who served as Brethren missionaries in China from the early 1920s to the late 1940s. Among the donated artifacts is the Chinese Bible that Elizabeth Baker Wampler used. Pages in the Bible were damaged when Japanese forces bombed the village of Tsin Chou where the Wampplers lived. A bomb exploded in front of the Wampler home while Elizabeth and their two young sons, Joe and Gene, were home. The three survived uninjured, but the Bible is a reminder of their close call.

Also in the collection is one of Elizabeth's coats, made in China and lined with wool that was produced in the Chinese women's woolen weaving project. Gene and Theresa also donated a blanket woven by Chinese women with wool from local sheep. Workers embroidered the blanket with Chinese characters expressing gratitude to the Wampplers.

These special objects symbolize the dedication and service of the Wampplers in China and the friendships that they formed there. Gene's death last April was a sad loss, and his memory survives in this the rich collection of materials about Brethren in China.

James and Elaine Gibbel donated records of the origins and activities of the Brethren Peace Fellowship in Atlantic Northeast District. The correspondence and meeting minutes reveal the importance of the peace witness for Brethren in this district. The Gibbels also donated correspondence and notes from James's mother, Florence, related to her support of the Brethren mission in India.

In July, the Young Center acquired a few items at the Clarke Hess estate auction. The most important book is a handwritten record of members, families, and activities of the German Seventh Day Baptist congregations at Snow Hill in Franklin County and at Salemville in Bedford County from the 1830s to the 1880s. This unique book, which contains extensive records of the families who were members of both churches, is the most detailed source of information about these churches.



Young Center director Jeff Bach and Clarence Spohn with part of Spohn's collection of Ephrata imprints.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## BROWN BOOK AWARD LECTURE The Meaning of the Pennsylvania Dutch Language

**MARK LOUDEN**

**Thursday, September 12, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Bucher Meetinghouse**



Though often misunderstood and even scorned by outsiders, the Pennsylvania Dutch language is flourishing today among members of Amish and Old Order Mennonite groups. This presentation explores how Pennsylvania Dutch has not only been able to survive but in fact thrive since it developed in Penn's Woods some two and a half centuries ago. Louden considers a number of social and geographic factors that underlie the successful maintenance of the language, as well as the emotional and even spiritual significance it held and continues to hold for its speakers, past and present. The presentation includes examples from Pennsylvania Dutch literature that illustrate the expressive power of the language.

Mark L. Louden is a fluent speaker of Pennsylvania Dutch and has written extensively on the language and its speakers. He is the author of *Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language*, which received the 2017 Dale Brown Book Award. Louden is the Alfred L. Shoemaker, J. William Frey, and Don Yoder Professor of Germanic Linguistics at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, directs the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, and is an affiliate faculty member in the UW Religious Studies Program.

## LECTURE Giving the Dunkers Their Due: The Other Side of the Antietam Story

**ALANN SCHMIDT**

**Tuesday, September 24, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Bucher Meetinghouse**



Alann Schmidt, coauthor of *September Mourn: The Dunker Church of Antietam Battlefield*, reflects on his experiences researching and presenting the story of the German Baptist Brethren and their meetinghouse at Sharpsburg, Maryland, looking at much more than just the Battle of Antietam.

Schmidt spent fifteen years as a park ranger at Antietam National Battlefield. He earned degrees from the University of Pittsburgh, Shippensburg University, Shepherd University, and the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science. While a severe case of Lyme disease forced him into early retirement, he currently serves as a pastor for the Churches of God.

## SNOWDEN LECTURE A Life Revealed in Letters: Insights from the Correspondence of John A. Hostetler

**ANN HOSTETLER**

**Tuesday, October 15, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Bucher Meetinghouse**



Drawing on extensive archived correspondence and using theories of adult development as a framework, Ann Hostetler uncovers the changes in thinking and interpretation expressed in her father's letters as he emerged from an Amish family to gain higher education and eventually become the leading interpreter of the Amish and communal societies of the second half of the twentieth century. Hostetler argues that the skills he developed in mediating situations in his own family paved the way for his later work in negotiating conversations between the Amish and outsiders through his scholarly work as a cultural interpreter.

Ann Hostetler is professor of English at Goshen College, where she teaches literature and creative writing. Her scholarship focuses on multiethnic literature in the US and Canada, including Mennonite writing.

## BRETHREN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

**Saturday, October 19, noon to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Young Center**

Enjoy bicycle-churned homemade ice cream, popcorn from the Resist popcorn wagon, and other treats served in the tent outside the Young Center. Then listen to country gospel music by Days of Old, participate in a hymn sing led by Janice Holsinger, and watch a quilting demonstration inside. Children's activities will also be available.

## INTERVIEW A Conversation with Clarence Spohn about Printing in Ephrata

**Tuesday, November 12, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Bucher Meetinghouse**



Clarence E. Spohn has spent years collecting imprints from the early presses in Ephrata, Pennsylvania. In this presentation, Young Center director Jeff Bach interviews Spohn about his collection of imprints, which the Young Center recently acquired.

Spohn worked at the Ephrata Cloister from 1968 to 1996. He has also been active in the Historical Society of the Cocalico Valley, serving as its president from 2004 to 2008 and as editor of its journal from 1988 to 2018.

Part of the Clarence E. Spohn Collection will be on temporary exhibit in the Young Center's Bowers Interpretive Gallery from November 1 through 22. The exhibit is free and open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.



**THE YOUNG CENTER  
FOR ANABAPTIST AND  
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## Ann Hostetler named Snowden Fellow

Ann Hostetler is serving as the Young Center's Snowden Fellow this fall. Hostetler is a professor of English at Goshen College, where she teaches literature and creative writing. Her scholarship focuses on multi-ethnic literature in the US and Canada. She is the editor of the *Journal of Mennonite Writing* ([www.mennonitewriting.org](http://www.mennonitewriting.org)); the author of two books of poetry, *Safehold* and *Empty Room with Light*; and the editor of *A Cappel-la: Mennonite Voices in Poetry*, an anthology of poems by 24 contemporary poets. With Steve Nolt, she revised *The Amish*, a classic short book by John A. Hostetler that has been in print for over fifty years.

During her semester as the Snowden Fellow, Hostetler will be working on a critical biography of her father, John A. Hostetler, based on the extensive correspondence he kept between the time he left his family farm and became a leading expert on the Amish. The research will draw on over 60 years of correspondence that ranges from family and personal letters to letters with academic and church leaders. Ann Hostetler will use the material as "a primary window through

which to view the stages of adult and cognitive development that [John] Hostetler moved through in his cultural transition from an Amish boyhood to higher education and finally to a position of authority as a scholar of the Amish."

"The correspondence is at the Penn State special collections library, but the Durnbaugh collection of books on Anabaptist and Pietist topics and the Young Center's extensive periodicals will be vital to my project," Hostetler noted. "Above all, I appreciate having a semester's time to work on this project, an office at the center, and colleagues such as Jeff Bach and Steve Nolt who appreciate the research I'm doing."

Ann Hostetler will present "A Life Revealed in Letters: Insights from the Correspondence of John A. Hostetler" at 7:30 p.m. on October 15 in the Bucher Meetinghouse.

The Snowden fellowship and lecture are named for Armon and Lucille Snowden, whose generous gift endowed them. The Young Center invites nominations and applications for its fellows programs. Visit [www.etown.edu/youngctr](http://www.etown.edu/youngctr) for more information.

FALL 2019

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CENTER  
*News*

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*Young Center News* is published twice each year for those interested in the work and events of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. For e-mail notification and a link to each new issue of *Young Center News*, send an e-mail message to [youngctr@etown.edu](mailto:youngctr@etown.edu).

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