

SHOPTALK

Mennonite Central Committee Binational Thrift Shop Network Nov/Dec 2006

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The Network News

Canada



A cake with the Thrift Shop logo was served to customers as part of the opening celebrations in Kelowna.

British Columbia—Kelowna

Beautiful sunshine and warm smiling faces greeted everyone who came to the grand opening of the MCC Thrift Shop in the Rutland area of Kelowna on Saturday, September 23. A large crowd of volunteers, MCC staff, representatives of government as well as pastors from local churches gathered at the store front to hear speeches and watch the ribbon cutting.

Several "VIPs" addressed the crowd including the Mayor of Kelowna, Sharon Shepherd, a representative from MP Ron Cannan's office, pastors of the three Mennonite churches in Kelowna, Laura Loewen, Executive Director for MCC BC and Ed Loepky, the Thrift Shop manager. Marie Reimer, the interim Provincial Thrift Shop Coordinator and several managers of Thrift Shops from the Fraser Valley and Vancouver also came to show their support. Pastor Dave Goertz of Willow

United States



Anticipation of good deals and great selections brought customers to the door long before the opening hour.

Ohio—Millersburg

As Save & Serve outgrew its backstreet location in the small town of Millersburg, the board recognized the need for more space and a place where new processes and systems could be implemented. When an ideally located property with two suitable buildings was vacated by a lawn implement dealer, the board did not hesitate to purchase the property and proceed with a renovation.

The new location opened its doors on Friday, September 29, with the opening day sales topping over \$7,000. On the Sunday prior to opening day, the board hosted an open-house and dedication service. Pastor Ross Miller, of Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, opened the service with a meditation recognizing that Jesus is the foundation for the thrift shop ministry. Recalling the original vision of serving the local community by receiving and reselling

Canada



Park MB Church gave a prayer of blessing before the ribbon was cut, ending the formalities and allowing the shopping and feasting to begin. Cake and coffee was served and hot-dogs were sold to raise funds for an MCC food project.

The MCC Thrift Shop in Kelowna has been in operation since 1977 when it opened its first shop in the Mission Park Mall. Growth has caused the shop to move several times, first to two locations on Lawrence then to Bernard Avenue. Growth has been the impetus for this move to Rutland as well.

“We needed to find a space where the storage and work areas were easily accessible. The old location required us to store and sort up several short flights of stairs spread between 5 rooms,” explains Brenda Schmidt, chair of the Shop Committee. “In our new location, we have an elevator and 3800 square feet of work and storage area. We needed more parking and more area to display furniture as well.”

Upcoming Events

November 10

MCC Ontario Thrift Shops AGM, Leamington
Focus: Customer service and volunteer recruitment

December 1

World AIDS Day
Use promotional materials provided to create awareness of MCC program “Generations at Risk” during the week of November 27 – December 2

2007

Thrift Shop Network Learning Tour to Brazil
March 1-15, 2007



Sturdy aprons with the MCC Thrift Shop logo give your volunteers a professional edge.

Order a supply today!
Just \$8 each, including taxes, plus shipping to your location.

United States



used items, providing a place for people of the church to serve locally, and supporting the world wide ministries of MCC helped honor Sturgis and Bernice Miller who were two of the original founders the shop. Pastor Ross concluded by saying “Save and Serve and MCC are important agents in helping God’s people and God’s church be faithful in His call to go and serve the least of these, for as we do this we are serving Him.” Over 100 people read, in unison, the litany that was read at the first dedication 31 years ago. The words were as pertinent in 2006 as they were in 1975.

The move so far has exceeded all expectations. Increased retail space, effective merchandising and an excellent location that offers better visibility have contributed to increased sales. Donation rotation and improved donation processing systems allow for adding new items daily to the retail area.

In addition to the renovation and change of location, volunteers and staff have been challenged by the many changes that were made in how the day to day work is accomplished. The transitions have required a great deal of toil, mental energy, and cooperation. Change has not come without difficulty, but the results of change have brought rewards.

Customers appreciate the good lighting, the visual merchandising technique of color blocking, increased merchandise selection, and the same low prices. Volunteers appreciate the larger work space, good lighting and pleasing volunteer lunch area. At Millersburg Save & Serve we give God the glory for the foresight of the board and dedicated work of the staff and volunteers.



Sturgis and Bernice Miller were honored for their part in the original vision of a Save & Serve MCC Thrift Shop.

Ask Edgar



by Edgar Stoesz

Question

When I joined this board 3 years ago I saw it as an opportunity to share my gifts with a cause I believe in. Instead of the satisfaction I was expecting, I find myself frustrated and questioning how much I am contributing. The problem, as best I

understand it, centers in the Chairman. He has been in this office for many years. He is very dedicated and I have no question that he has contributed much. I like him as a person but now he is mostly hanging on, supported by a board that feels obligated to approve his wants. All the while the store is in a holding pattern. Under his leadership we do not really have an election—he just modestly agrees to continue another year, and so it goes on year after year. No one wants to hurt his feelings, and I don't either, but how can we get on with the challenges facing us?

Answer

You describe a very difficult problem and one that surfaces more than occasionally. It is a shame because in the end even the well-intended Chair is not being well-served. The problem really has two dimensions—one immediate and the second how to prevent it from re-occurring. Both can be addressed with the same action.

I am coming to the conclusion that a Board Service Committee (BSC) should be on the list of committees every board should have. This committee is an expansion of what has in the past been known as the nominating committee. A

BSC's main function is to keep under review how the board is fulfilling its board (governance) function. This includes evaluating how the individual members are functioning including the Chair. It anticipates future changes that will be needed and brings recommendations and nominations for board action. (Note: board committees are always subject to the board.)

When I Chaired the board of Habitat For Humanity International I was an ex officio member of all committees except the Board Service Committee. I was excluded from this committee because my role too as Chair was subject to its evaluation. It follows the dictum that everyone within an organization is accountable, including the Chair.

Under the direction of a BSC there is a time set aside each year for the board to evaluate how it is functioning. Members are asked to hold a mirror in front of themselves to face honestly how they are functioning and how they might function better. Members have an opportunity to evaluate how the Chair is functioning and make suggestions for improvement. It facilitates board and board member accountability. It eliminates deadwood and gives members an opportunity to express themselves.

The appointments of such a committee can help you address the problem you have described and keep it from re-occurring. It does not need to be a large committee—if your board is very small it might be a committee of one—but it needs to be someone who is widely respected and prepared to deal with some delicate issues. Even boards that are not currently facing a problem such as you are describing will find the appointment of a Board Service Committee to be an extremely helpful technique in the climb from good to great.

MCC Thrift Shop Network Learning Tour to Brazil March 1-15, 2007

What will this Learning Tour include?

Brazil is a land of staggering beauty with stretches of unexplored rain-forest, islands with pristine tropical beaches, and endless rivers. MCC provides funds and workers to help families build cisterns and wells, health and agriculture workers for community development and support to a group of artisans. The "no-frills" exploration of this country would include visits to schools supported by MCC's Global Family Program.

How will participants be chosen?

Preference will be given to those applicants who have never participated in an MCC Learning Tour. Managers, board members or key volunteers who are actively involved in the work of an MCC Thrift Shop, as well as provincial and regional Thrift Shop Coordinators may apply. Five participants will be chosen from Canada and five from the United States.

What is the cost of the Learning Tour and how will costs be covered?

It is estimated that the total cost will be about \$2,400 USD / \$2,700 Cdn., including return flights and in-country travel costs. It is recommended that Thrift Shop Boards consider covering or subsidizing the cost of this worthwhile front-line exposure to MCC at work in the world for their successful applicant.

For an application form or more information on this tour contact:

In Canada - Judy Dyck
519-745-8458
judyd@mennonitecc.ca

In the U.S. - Barb Schrag
605-925-4115
bks@mcc.org

or go to mcc.org/thrift

Global Gleanings

Indonesian Mennonites and Muslims work together after earthquake

Four months after an earthquake hit the Indonesian island of Java, Indonesian Mennonites and Muslims are rebuilding homes and forging new relationships across religious lines.

100 earthquake-resistant houses

The May 27 earthquake claimed more than 6,200 lives and destroyed tens of thousands of homes in Java, Indonesia's most populous island. Starting in October, MCC is sponsoring a project to build 100 earthquake-resistant houses in Java's Pundong district. The project will involve and benefit both Muslims and Mennonites, and it follows a successful interfaith relief effort.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, Indonesian Mennonites organized Mennonite and Muslim volunteers to distribute aid, clean up rubble and construct temporary shelters in Pundong.

Making peace by helping

Pak Payilan Martowiyardjo, a Mennonite whose home was destroyed in the earthquake, said that the Islamic group "made peace by coming to help."

"They cleaned our well," Pak Payilan said. "They are people just as we are people. We weren't afraid of them."

The volunteers worked together, ate together and slept together in tents and in a Mennonite church sanctuary. They were organized by Mennonite Diaconial Services, an agency of Muria Christian Church in Indonesia.

How can this happen?

Paulus Hartono, the agency's director, said that community members marveled at the cooperation between Mennonites and an Islamic militia. Some asked, "How can this happen?"

The partnership began several years ago when Hartono befriended the militia's commander by helping to mediate a



conflict involving the militia's radio station. Hartono is a member of Forum for Peace Across Religions and Groups, an MCC partner organization in the Indonesian city of Solo.

The commander then asked Forum for Peace Across Religions and Groups to organize conflict transformation workshops for militia members. The forum worked with Muslim and Christian facilitators from Duta Wacana Christian University's Peace Center to plan the workshops, which more than 75 militia members have attended.

The objective of the workshops was to enable participants to become agents of peace in their communities and purveyors of wisdom in addressing community problems. When the earthquake happened, trust had built to the point where collaborative peace work in the form of helping others was possible.

Housing priorities

The recipients of new homes will be 45 Mennonite families and 55 non-Mennonite families, most of whom are Muslims. Priorities will be given to families whose homes were irreparable, people who lost family members in the earthquake, widows, orphans and households with small children. Many of the families contributed to the project by salvaging building materials from their ruined houses, such as bricks, tiles and timber.

—Jeanne Jantzi is an MCC country representative for Indonesia. Tim Shenk is a writer for MCC communications.



Choose from 11 new shelf cards, designed to convey to your customers how their purchase will become a "gift to the world." Go to mcc.org/thrift/resources and follow instructions for printing these great new resources for your shop. User name and password available from your country coordinator (p.6)



Agnes Dyck celebrates a special birthday at the Selkirk Ave. MCC Thrift Shop in Winnipeg, Man.

Celebrating God's Blessing

The MCC theme for 2007 reminds us that we need to take time to celebrate the community that is affirmed and built through service and to express the joy that flows from being faithful to a calling.

"Do not forget to entertain strangers; for by so doing, some people have entertained angels without knowing it." —Hebrew 13:2

Throughout 2007, issues of Shoptalk will feature stories of Thrift Shop volunteers who have been "faithful to a calling." Your own story of a faithful volunteer is welcomed. (Contact information on page 6)

A nomination for the Premier of Manitoba's Volunteer Service Award in 2005 speaks volumes about Agnes Dyck's dedication to the work of MCC Thrift Shops. The first Thrift Shop in Calgary, Alberta opened in 1973 after Agnes applied her good organizational skills and hard work to the start-up.

In 1974, Agnes loaded her car with Self Help Crafts (now Ten Thousand Villages) and set up one and two day sales in shopping malls and church halls throughout the province of Alberta.

Agnes continued her Thrift Shop work following a move with her family from Alberta to Manitoba in 1978, serving at the Sargent Thrift Shop in areas such as sorting and pricing, recycling and on the administrative committee.

Thank you, Agnes.

Go Green in the Thrift Shop

"Going Green" implies that one is engaged in environmentally friendly practices. Reusing and recycling are familiar practices in the MCC Thrift Shop Network. But is there more we can do?

Yes, and here is how! With clean water being one of the central issues of the century, we all need to do our part to use resources wisely. Did you know each time your toilet is flushed, it uses 5 to 7 gallons of water? A small plastic juice bottle or laundry soap bottle filled with water and placed in the toilet tank (out of the way of the flushing mechanism) will save that amount of water each time the tank is flushed. Over 200 million hours are spent each day by women and girls collecting water from distant, sometimes polluted sources.

Did you know?

The average Canadian or US citizen uses about 450 liters (115 gallons) of water each day. Compare this to a person living in Mozambique who gets by on about 9 liters (2 gallons).

You can borrow *If We Had Water* in DVD or video and learn about families in the northeast region of Brazil who struggle with drought. Meet Maria Jose, Antonio and others for whom MCC has made a difference. (Contact your local MCC office.)

Everyday Volunteer Appreciation Ideas



We express appreciation to volunteers because we care about them and they need to hear how meaningful and valuable their role is in the work of the Thrift Shop. Often, appreciation is shown by hosting a major annual volunteer appreciation dinner.

But public recognition does not always have to be a big bash. Sometimes all it takes is a simple expression of thanks or some other 'pat on the back'. There are many ways to demonstrate appreciation for volunteers. And if you are like most people in a leadership role, you are continually looking for new ways to encourage, demonstrate support, affirm and say thanks. You are encouraged to try some of these ideas and use them as springboards to generate your own unique ideas.

- Write personal notes
- Recognize life events, such as birthdays and anniversaries
- Provide treats: a basket of mints in the break room labeled, "Volunteers are worth a mint" or, "Thanks a bunch for your help! We're bananas for volunteers."
- Create an area where volunteers go to give and receive prayer requests and blessings.
- Build a bulletin board featuring volunteer photos along with what they do for the shop, their favorite food and hobbies.



Shop Design 201

Perhaps you were inspired to create a new shop layout by the first column in this four-part design series. But, you may ask, where should we begin? The Board of Directors must be involved in any larger-scale projects and an overall business plan should be part of the process. See templates at mcc.org/thrift/resources

Many shops use “make-do” solutions to display problems, relying on any substandard fixture that may arrive through the back door. How often have you seen a less-than-stable 1970’s era television tray pressed into service as a stand to hold extra books, puzzles or other merchandise? Stop using band-aid solutions and develop a careful plan for a fresh, new look.

Measure the retail space and create a scale drawing which includes windows, doorways and other unchangeable factors.

Create a list of only the best existing fixtures which will fit into a new overall plan and find a source for new or gently-used items. Eliminate any substandard items altogether. Insert scale templates of new fixtures into your scale drawing.

Observe and evaluate how customers and volunteers move through the current layout. Are customers with strollers, wheelchairs, and walkers able to move easily through the clothing racks and household aisles?

Identify a “hot zone” in your shop. Typically in North America, the area to the right and ten feet from the entry is a hot zone. Best-selling items, collectibles and antiques could be placed here.

Recruit an ad-hoc design team which may include volunteers or other interested community members with a special interest in interior design

Determine if there is an existing retail model which you would like to imitate. What is the look you are trying to achieve? Boutique? Warehouse? Discount store? This will help you to decide whether the new colour scheme should be bold or subdued.

Consider wall systems for clothing so that fewer fixtures are needed in valuable floor space. Add elements of the MCC Thrift Shop Identity Program such as overhead departmental signs, education banners and window decals to pull your new look together.

Going ... going ... gone!

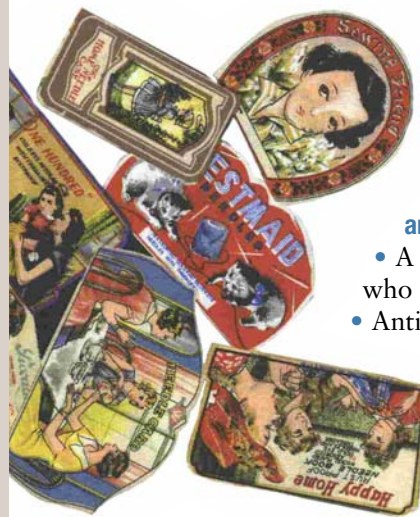
There is not always an easy path to deciding if an item should be offered on silent auction, priced for sale and stay in the shop or be posted on an internet auction site. Use the guidelines below to help direct your thinking. In general, the more work you do studying the antique or collectible and who might want to buy it, the higher the price you will get.

These features will always increase the price of a collectible:

- Original box, mint condition, maker’s label, directions or an instruction book
- Historical documents or proof of an item’s history
- Miniature version of a normally full-sized item.
- Event or occupation related objects, such as souvenirs of World’s Fairs, political campaigns or medical instruments and anything that pictures a railroad, streetcar, train, or sport.
- Complete sets.
- Documents or objects related to local or national history.

Here are some basic ways to learn the correct price for an antique or collectible.

- A knowledgeable volunteer who is a collector.
- Antiques & Collectibles price lists and publications available at your library or bookstore.
- Internet sources such as auction malls (Ebay), antique shop sites, and newsletters.
- Visits to shops, shows, auctions, flea markets, dealers, matching services and house sales.
- A formal appraisal



*Blessings to each of you
in this Season of Hope.
The work you do enables
MCC to respond to the
needs of a hurting world.*



Written/edited by:

Judy Dyck, MCC Canada Thrift Shop Coordinator
(519) 745-8458 judyd@mennonitecc.ca

Barb Schrag, MCC U.S. Thrift Shop Coordinator
(605) 925-4115 bks@mcc.org

Graphic design by Roberta Fast, MCC Canada