

Harpist Eduard Klassen to Perform in Benefit Concert

By Vivian Beiler

Eduard Klassen, an accomplished harpist who grew up in poverty in Paraguay, will share his life story including the tremendous impact made by MCC (Mennonite Central Committee) on his community. The Klassen family was Russian Mennonites who sought refuge in Canada before migrating to Paraguay. The immigrants' struggle to survive in the wilderness provides the backdrop for Klassen's story as he observed the Paraguayan natives playing harps. He was able to acquire a harp and learned to play. Since making a personal commitment to Christ, he has traveled to 29 countries, presenting over 4,000 music concerts of Christian harp music from South America, North America and Europe. Throughout his concerts, he shares his personal testimony and stories of God's

work in his life, from boyhood in the wilderness of Paraguay to the present. Eduard is accompanied on the keyboard by his wife, Christine.

This event will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 22, 2016, at Fisher's Amish Restaurant, 3364 Harvest Drive, Gordonville, PA. The event is presented as a benefit fundraiser for the Nicholas Stoltzfus House Preservation Committee. Advance reservations are required and seating is limited to 200 persons. The cost is \$35.00 per person which includes a buffet meal followed by the concert and testimony. To acquire reservations, please send checks made payable to N.S.H.P.C. to Vivian Beiler, 243 W. Fulton Street, New Holland, PA 17557. Questions regarding this event can be directed to Ray Beiler (717)984-0293.



Eduard and wife Christine Klassen

Berks Amish Heritage Bus Tour

Check out the Berks Amish Heritage Bus Tour if you want to find out how the Stoltzfus family related to local historic Amish homesteads. Join us on Friday, Sept. 30, starting with breakfast at 7 a.m. at the Wyomissing Farmers Market. Stops include the Hochstetler, Hertzler, Strong, Jacob Yoder, and Detweiler homesteads. The guides for this tour are Sam Stoltzfus and Paul Kurtz. (continued on page 2)



In this 2009 file photo, J. Lemar Mast of Caernarvon Township visits a cemetery in Bern Township that displays a marker for Nicholas Stoltzfus, considered the forefather for most Stoltzfuses in the region. Historians believe Stoltzfus is actually buried in an Amish-Mennonite cemetery closer to Reading. The cemetery is one of the stops on the Berks Amish Heritage Bus Tour on Sept. 30. Photo by Richard J. Patrick

Berks Amish Heritage Bus Tour



J. Lemar Mast, 61, of Caernarvon Township, in this 2009 file photo, stands behind a restored portion of the Amish Hochstetler homestead. The Hochstetlers settled in Upper Bern Township in the 18th century. The homestead will be part of the Berks Amish Heritage Tour on Sept. 30. Photo by Richard J. Patrick

Hymn Sing

Over 100 singers and guests participated July 5th in the annual Amish Hymn Sing held at the Nicholas Stoltzfus House in Wyomissing. Hymns were sung in German and in English, along with some yodeling.



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Benefit Dinner

A Stoltzfus House Benefit Dinner was held on June 7 at the White Horse Fire Hall in Gap, Lancaster County. The main course featured a ham and fresh-cut green bean dinner by Stoltzfus Meats. Zach Stoltzfus portrayed the life of Nicholas to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Amish Stoltzfus Family Landing in Philadelphia on Oct. 18, 1766. Reading Eagle reporter Bruce Posten portrayed an inquisitive shipmate, and the two engaged in a fascinating and enlightening dialog. Jim Hodgkins produced a DVD; call 717-808-7785 if interested.



Reading Eagle reporter Bruce Posten, right, is an inquisitive shipmate to Zach Stoltzfus's Nicholas during the benefit dinner June 7.



Guests at the sold-out benefit dinner June 7 enjoyed ham and fresh-cut beans by Stoltzfus meats.

Annual Benefit Auction

The annual benefit auction/fundraiser at the Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead was held Saturday, May 7. This year's auction was another success with a wide variety of donated items along with quilts sold to the highest bidders. Visitors learned about the history of the homestead through cooking demonstrations and displays.



Cooking demonstrations were part of the activities during the Nicholas Stoltzfus House auction fundraiser on May 7.



Folks of all ages enjoyed walking the grounds of the homestead during the May 7th auction.



Beautiful quilts were auctioned as part of the fundraiser May 7 for the Nicholas Stoltzfus House benefit.

President's Message

We keep trying and although progress on the completion of the barn is slow, we keep moving ahead, slowly but surely.

We appreciate everything you all have done, and I know not everyone thinks history is as important as I do. Think about it; the Bible is full of history, and through the study of history we learn how to conduct ourselves in a manner that benefits ourselves and mankind. The presence of the Amish in Berks County is long gone, and the reason for its failure is a mix of numerous happenings.

Looking ahead, we have a few things happening for the Nicholas Stoltzfus House project.

The first fundraiser will be a concert and testimony by Eduard and Christine Klassen to be held at Fisher's Amish Restaurant at 3364 Harvest Drive, Gordonville, on Sept. 22, 2016, starting at 6:30 p.m. The concert will be given after the meal.

Eduard is a gifted speaker about his childhood in Paraguay, explaining why his Russian Mennonite parents moved to Canada and later to Paraguay. He also talks about how grateful they were to the Mennonite Central Committee for sending his parents a walking plow and other items. He also talks about his experience with snakes, frogs, and outside sanitation pits.

He was given a harp by the local Indians and taught himself to play the beautiful, old-time Gospel hymns. More information is available with the story on the front page of this newsletter. Don't miss this event.

Another event not to be missed is the Berks Amish Heritage Tour organized by Paul Kurtz beginning with breakfast available at the Wyomissing Farmers Market at 7 a.m. on Sept. 30, 2016. Paul's phone number is 717-808-7785 for more information on the tour.

May God bless you,
Moses B. Smucker



Samuel Stoltzfus explains the history of the Nicholas Stoltzfus chest to visitors to the Stoltzfus House benefit auction.

The Nicholas Stoltzfus House
 Preservation Committee
 1700 Tulpehocken Road
 Wyomissing, PA 19610

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On Saturday, October 15, 2016, at 3 p.m Ken Reed of California will be at the Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead to tell of his third novel, *Both My Sons* (Masthof Press). From his connection to Nicholas Stoltzfus came the inspiration to portray the **Amish and Quaker experience as the Scotch-Irish pushed the frontier and irked the native Indians. Then, too, there was the later colonial revolution. A light meal is provided. For information call (717) 808-7785.**

Send a copy to a friend.

Stoltzfus House in the News

The "One Last Look feature" in the July 13th Reading Eagle's Berks County section featured a photograph by Bill Uhrich of a hat hung outside the barn during the hymn sing July 5.

A story by Susan Shelly previewing the Harmonia Sacra concert at the homestead Aug. 14 ran in the Aug. 13th Reading Eagle.

Hat check

Photo By Bill Uhrich



If you would like more information or are interested in donating, please contact Paul Kurtz by email at psku04@ptd.net, by phone at 717-808-7785, or by visiting nicholasstoltzfus.org.

Rachel Hall of Philadelphia leads Harmonia Sacra shape-note singing at the Easter Friends Meeting house in Easter Township, where they hold the hymn sings twice a month. There also will be a shape-note singing event Sunday at the Nicholas Stoltzfus House in Wyomissing.

Other hymn opportunities

- A Berks County Singing group that uses the Sacred Harp hymn book meets on the third and fourth Sundays of each month from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Easter Friends Meeting, 191 Meeting House Road, Easter Township. You can learn more about the group at www.berkssacredharpsing.org.
- The 21st annual all-day sing using the Sacred Harp book is scheduled at the Maiden Creek Meetinghouse in Maiden Creek Township on Sept. 28 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. The meetinghouse is located at the intersection of Shoemakerville and Knoll Corner roads. No experience is necessary and learner song books will be available. A pot-luck meal will be served midday. More information is available by emailing Alex Forsyth at alex@shhsing.org.
- The Nicholas Stoltzfus House also has hosted Amish hymn sing and holds occasional events. More information about the homestead is available at www.NicholasStoltzfus.org. You can learn more about shape singing and Harmonia Sacra at www.harmoniasacra.org.

HYMN SING TAKES SHAPE

BY SUSAN SHELLY
 READING EAGLE CORRESPONDENT

Shape-note singers from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia will join local singers on Sunday for a hymn sing and supper by the stream.

Organized by a group of local shape-note singers led by the Rev. Calvin Kurtz, executive director emeritus of the Reading Berks Conference of Churches, the event will be held at the Nicholas Stoltzfus House at 1700 Tulpehocken Road in Wyomissing.

Singers with the Harmonia Sacra Society from Harrisonburg, Va., will lead the singing of shape-note music, a style of song that became popular in singing schools during America's colonial period.

Harmonia Sacra is the hymn book used by these particular singers. Other popular shape-note hymnals include Sacred Harp and Christian Harmony.

Shape notes were designed to facilitate group singing. There are various kinds of shape notes, which have been used for more than 200 years in a variety of musical settings.

Shape-note singing is most often, but not always, used in sacred settings, and is usually performed a cappella.

The musical style, which is traced back to English country churches during the early 18th century, came with colonists to New England, but was most widely practiced in the South.

Cori Warely, 9, of Schenectady, N.Y., at the hymn sing.

Sheet music that shows shape notes.

If you go
 What: Shape-note hymn sing and supper by the stream
 Where: Nicholas Stoltzfus House, 1700 Tulpehocken Road, Wyomissing
 When: Sunday, 3 p.m.
 FYI: All are welcome. Hymn books will be provided. A free will offering will be taken.

[See Shape >>> D3]