

GAMEO Management Board
Virtual Meeting (via Zoom)
2023 May 12 – 1:00-3:00 p.m. (Eastern)

Present: Jon Isaak (Chair; Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission), Elizabeth Miller (General Editor; Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism), Ken Sensenig (Mennonite Central Committee), Roberta Miller Yoder (Mennonite Church USA), Laureen Harder-Gissing (Mennonite Historical Society of Canada), Aileen Friesen (D. F. Plett Historical Research Foundation), Anicka Fast (Mennonite World Conference), Alf Redekopp (Associate Editor), and Bert Friesen (Associate Editor).

1) Opening and introductions

Jon Isaak welcomed all participants and called the meeting to order, pointing out that three attendees were participating for the first time (Elizabeth, Anicka and Roberta) and two had participated from the beginning in the 1990s (Bert and Alf). He proceeded to share the biblical verse from II Corinthians 5:18, “all this is from God who reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” He share of his recent visit with Cesar Garcia, General Secretary, Mennonite World Conference, observing his work with reconciling groups who hold varying perspectives, emphasizing that we need to respect individual differences and work together in the ministry of reconciliation that has been given to us from God. In our GAMEO project we also share in this ministry of reconciliation as we share differences and work together.

Jon invited each participant to share who they were represented at the meeting and to say something about their current environment (weather or something else).

- Jon: 22 degrees Celsius in Winnipeg with leaves bursting and lots of signs of Spring;
- Bert: called in from Calgary
- Laureen: was experiencing warm weather in Waterloo, but a little worried about potential frost killing fruit blossoms
- Anicka: reporting 36 degrees in Burkina Faso at 5 p.m.
- Ken: situated at Ephrata, Pennsylvania reported 80 degrees Fahrenheit
- Roberta: who works in Elkhart, called in from home in Goshen; she is filling in at this meeting for MC USA Archivist, a position that is currently vacant; cloudy and 70 degrees Fahrenheit
- Aileen: reported like Jon sunny Winnipeg
- Alf: reporting from St. Catharines, Ontario, a warm week with fruit blossoms, almost finished and optimistic about getting sour cherries from the tree in his back yard
- Elizabeth: sees a sycamore tree outside her window

2) Review of Chair’s Report and Agenda

Jon Isaak noted his written report. He said our discussion would focus on content, technology, and structural issues. He asked each of us to find at least one thing out of our meeting to volunteer to do this next year.

Consensus 1: to accept the agenda as circulated.

3) Minutes of May 15 2022

- Alf reviewed the minutes of May 15, 2022. The following updates grew out of the minutes:
- No response or commitment has come from Arnold Neufeld Fast about writing a new B.H. Unruh article.
- Ken has submitted updates and several articles on newer conservative Mennonite groups.
- Aileen did not write the news release. She spoke to Richard Thiessen but he was not prepared for a greater role with GAMEO. The D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation has hired a student to work at identifying articles for updating, based on the earlier work of Kerry Fast.

Consensus 2: to accept the minutes as circulated and reviewed.

4) Reports circulated before the meeting

a) General Editor (Elizabeth Miller)

Elizabeth introduced herself, sharing how she has worked in the U.S. and in Columbia, a career spanning interest in history and teaching to administrative work internationally with MCC. She sees that her current role with the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism (ISGA), will help generate GAMEO content from the international community. Projects that she has worked with in the past (about Paraguay and Columbia) and others that are currently before her (related to Zimbabwe and Ethiopia) also promise additional content.

Her report also raised the question about GAMEO's domain ownership in the context of ensuring the project doesn't experience disaster should Peaceworks, our current host, close down. This question came in the context of ISGA consolidating various domains that it owns.

b) Statistical Report (Laureen Harder Gissing)

The distributed report was a copy of the report she presented in January to the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada (MHSC). The list of new articles was compiled by Richard Thiessen. Alf added that there is now also a regional sub-committee in the province of Alberta that is generating content from that region.

c) Admin website report (Alf Redekopp)

Alf reported that the current arrangement re. receiving the e-mails sent to "admin@gameo" has not been onerous and he is willing to continue.

d) Technical issues / Peaceworks relationship (Bert Friesen)

This issue raised in Elizabeth's report re. Domain hosting was discussed. We were reminded that originally GAMEO was hosted at Conrad Grebel University College (CGUC) but because CGUC depends on University of Waterloo for its technology support, GAMEO decided it would be simpler to be hosted by Peaceworks, an independent commercial venture.

Consensus 3: that Laureen explore the contract arrangements between MHSC and Peaceworks re. GAMEO, specifically with regards to what happens if Peaceworks were to close operations, and that Elizabeth would explore what it would mean for Goshen College to take over the hosting.

5) GAMEO priorities

- a) Updating references and interpretation on Indigenous people

Consensus 4: that Laureen look at the two major articles that have not been updated and also at other articles related to Pennsylvania where interpretation needs to be reviewed and that Ken also work with Laureen on this latter aspect.

- b) B.H. Unruh biography revisions

Consensus 5: that Jon prepare an edited updated entry for B.H. Unruh, and pass it by management.

(This is a change from last year's decision to have an entirely new article.)

- c) Expanding content from global south

Elizabeth and Anicka will continue to work with students and keeping track of works that have been produced that can be included in GAMEO, so that there will be more congregational and biographical content about and by the people who it is about.

Aileen who works with students finds that her students are less interested in congregational and biographical content, and more interested in themes and topical articles.

Student involvement in these three contexts looks promising for the future of GAMEO.

- d) D.F. Plett Foundation initiative

A summer researcher has been hired to look through Kerry Fast's report which proposing changes and better language or under-represented groups. Aileen will ultimately edit the work and Jeremy Wiebe, work with getting the content into GAMEO.

Consensus 6: that Alf create a user profile in GAMEO for Aileen and / or Jeremy Wiebe to facilitate this initiative.

- e) Ukrainian Place names

Consensus 7: that Aileen will begin to review Ukrainian and Russian geographic place names.

6) Financial Report and budget

Bert reported that GAMEO finances are stable. Jon reported that sending invoices to institutions continues to work well for raising funds. Bert indicated that MWC is working on 3-year projections for finances, and that at our next in-person meeting we too should discuss what that means for us.

7) Next Meeting – May 2024

Elizabeth Miller extended an invitation for the GAMEO Management Board to meet in Goshen.

Consensus 8: that we meet in Goshen 24-25 May 2024.

8) Closing Review

Each participant confirmed the tasks that they had agreed to do in the upcoming year.

- Jon: BH Unruh
- Bert: Finances
- Elizabeth: work with students; explore domain name hosting
- Alf: admin e-mails and website updates, set up new users
- Anicka: translate and edit works for GAMEO. Also contact Michèle Sigg from DACB about speaking to our board about experiences of working in a multilingual project.

- Aileen – supervise Plett Foundation initiative; review Ukrainian place names
- Laureen- review Peaceworks contract details; review Indigenous content
- Roberta: contact Jason re. list of potential articles: transfer report to new archivist
- Ken: collaborate with Laureen on Pennsylvania content ; generate new or updated articles on plain people; make personal financial contribution and encouragement to others to do the same

9) Adjournment at 3:03 p.m.

Recorded by Alf Redekopp