

**GAMEO Management Board**  
**Goshen College Administration Building**  
**2024 May 24 – 9:00-12:00**

**Present (in person):** Jon Isaak (Chair; Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission), Elizabeth Miller (General Editor; Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism), Roberta Miller Yoder (Mennonite Church USA), Olivia Krall (Mennonite Church USA), Laureen Harder-Gissing (Mennonite Historical Society of Canada), Aileen Friesen (D. F. Plett Historical Research Foundation), Alf Redekopp (Associate Editor), and Bert Friesen (Associate Editor).

**Present (virtually via Zoom):** Ken Sensenig (Mennonite Central Committee) and Anicka Fast (Mennonite World Conference).

**1) Opening and introductions**

Jon Isaak began the meeting by inviting each person to introduce themselves, say who they were representing at the meeting, and say what would be happening today if they were at home. Jon concluded the opening with a Shabbat Prayer -- a blessing on our meeting and deliberations for the day.

**2) Review of Chair's Report and Agenda**

Jon Isaak noted his written report. He noted that this would be his last meeting – retiring as chair of GAMEO and retiring from his role with the MB Historical Commission at the end of the current year. Choosing a new chair for the GAMEO board would be an important agenda item. Other agenda items would center around the use of multiple languages and greater accessibility.

**Consensus 1: to accept the agenda and report as circulated.**

**3) Minutes of May 12 2023**

Alf reviewed the minutes of 12 May 2023.

**Consensus 2: to accept minutes as circulated.**

Items & reports arising:

Laureen reported that she had checked with Peaceworks, and Elizabeth Miller had checked with Goshen College, about what might happen if one or the other ceased to exist. It was felt that Peaceworks had a well thought out plan in case of such an event. The conclusion was to continue our relationship with Peaceworks.

Jon: reported that he worked on the B. H. Unruh article by adding an editorial note that was now posted.

Alf: reported that new user profiles had been set up for Aileen Friesen and Jeremy Wiebe.

Aileen: reported that she has started a list of geographic place names which include German, Russian, and Ukrainian forms of the names.

Laureen: reported that she had flagged several articles with an Indigenous element that were situated in Pennsylvania, and sent these to Ken Sensenig for further consultation or referral. Also, that she has not worked on combining the 2 general articles on Indigenous groups and ministries.

Anicka: reported that she has continued to edit and translate biographies; and she contacted and arranged for Michèle Sigg to attend part of the day's meeting. She also reported that MWC has approved a Global Biography Series that will focus on Congolese leaders.

Olivia: reported that she acquired the Michiana Anabaptist Historians list from Jason Kaufman.

Ken: commented that John Ruth could be consulted regarding Indigenous-related articles.

#### 4) Reports circulated before the meeting

##### a) General Editor (Elizabeth Miller)

Elizabeth highlighted work that she had done with students from Latin American and Ethiopia. She identified the main issues for the meeting as: a) multilingual content, b) improving accessibility to content, and c) working at a strategy for regularly updating outdated content.

##### b) Statistical report (Laureen Harder-Gissing): Highlighted aspects of the Google Analytics Report.

c) Website and Admin report (Alf Redekopp): Highlighted aspects of his written reported, particularly aspects that related to the use of languages other than English.

##### d) Financial Report FY 2023 (Bert Friesen): Noted that the management fee charged by MWC has increased by 200% without explanation.

**Consensus 3: AGREED that service fee be discussed with the MWC treasurer, seeking an explanation and a satisfactory resolution.** (ex. Ask not to pay next year; see the service as a gift in kind, other.)

*[Meeting break for 45 minutes to have a tour of the Mennonite Historical Library.]*

#### 5) Conversation about multilingual encyclopedia experience

Michèle Sigg, executive director, *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* joined us by Zoom and shared her experiences with their on-line project which currently has an interface that supports four languages: English, French, Portuguese and Kiswahili. Some of their decisions were based on an approach that would be accessible to users who primarily have smart phones and possibly very light band width, cost, and available expertise. The choice of open source software with the multilingual capability, allowed the creation of indexes in each language in a more automated way, than the earlier html webpage design approaches.

Some **Question and Answers** followed the presentation.

*[Lunch break occurred and the meeting resumed in the afternoon at **Mennonite Church USA Archives in Elkhart**]*

#### 6) Technical Issues

There was reflection on the presentation by Michèle Sigg and discussion about what we might do as we face the request for posting articles in additional languages. It was reported that our site uses a

Google translation widget which allows the user to translate the site interface into any language, although the site content itself is not translated.

**Consensus 4:**

- a) that Elizabeth would consult with Peaceworks about what it would take to extend the Google translation widget to all content,
- b) that GAMEO is willing to accept content in any language and will work at posting the content in that language,
- c) that Alf will set up “Language Categories” for the non-English articles and place the “available in other language” note at the top of the articles, instead of the bottom, and,
- d) Because increasingly users are accessing content via Smartphone devices, that Elizabeth and Alf explore with Peaceworks a redesign of the home page that will make it more Smartphone friendly / accessible, making it easier for users to submit comments and corrections, for example, having a submit button on every page.

**7) Administrative Restructuring**

Aileen Friesen volunteered to take on the role of chair of the GAMEO Management Board.

**Consensus 5: to accept and affirm Aileen as chair of the GAMEO Management Board.**

Jon Isaak offered to assist with the fundraising letters/invoices to the institutions.

Bert Friesen announced that he was retiring from his role as finance liaison with MWC for GAMEO.

**Consensus 6: that Aileen would be the GAMEO finance contact with MWC, submitting the budget and requesting an annual financial report.**

**8) GAMEO priorities for 2024**

There was a discussion about developing a strategy for more regularly identifying articles in need of update and revision work.

**Consensus 7:**

- a) that we remind congregations and institutions of their role in submitting updates for articles relating to their church or organization
- b) that Lauren would consult Google Analytics for most consulted articles and identify articles that need updating
- c) that Alf would explore if there are ways to isolate articles by the type of articles (i.e. template types).
- d) that Alf will explore how the date of publication field might be used to identify the articles most in need of updating.

Additional strategies were discussed for creating lists or flagging articles in need of updating, Jon Isaak volunteered to update 5 articles once identified.

- e) if the above prioritization options are inaccessible, that we as board members each take one letter of the alphabet to review on GAMEO and manually identify article to prioritize updating

**9) Promotion**

**Consensus 7: that Olivia Krall write a news release about the 2024 GAMEO Board meeting.**

**10) Finances and Budget FY2024**

**Consensus 8: that \$5000 be allocated for web updating in addition to the site maintenance costs; and the \$2000 be allocated for meeting and travel expenses.**

**11) Other Business**

Aileen identified Rudy Friesen's *Building on the Past* as an excellent source for geographical entries for current Ukraine.

**12) Date of Next Meeting**

**Consensus 9: that we meet virtually (via ZOOM) on Friday 9 May 2025 at 9 a.m. EST**

Elizabeth Miller thanked Jon Isaak and Bert Friesen for their leadership in GAMEO.

**13) Adjournment at 4:00 p.m.**

Recorded by Alf Redekopp