

Mennonite Weekly Review

Putting the Mennonite world together

Once more, for the gold

Speed skater, ambassador for MCC, hopes to add to Olympic medal count

CELESTE KENNEL-SHANK
Mennonite Weekly Review

Cindy Klassen pauses for a moment before she hits the ice. “I always pray before every race, and my prayer is the same every time — that I would skate to the best of my ability, and do it all for the glory of God,” the Olympic speedskater wrote in an e-mail.

“He has given me the talent to skate, and I don’t want to waste it. A verse that is a good reminder for me is 1 Corinthians 10:31, ‘So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.’”

Klassen, 30, is Canada’s top-winning Olympian, with six medals, including one gold. She is also a four-time world champion in International Skating Union competitions.

Klassen, who grew up attending McIvor Avenue Mennonite



MWR file photo

Cindy Klassen at the 2006 Turin Games, where she won five medals.

Brethren Church in Winnipeg, Man., now plans to compete Feb. 12-27 in the Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver, B.C.



Mark Beach/MCC

Cindy Klassen traveled to Nigeria in 2006 to raise awareness of Mennonite Central Committee HIV/AIDS projects and now is promoting MCC relief efforts in Haiti.



In January the Canadian Mint released 22 million quarters featuring Klassen on the reverse and Queen Elizabeth on the obverse.

“My hopes for this year were to simply qualify for the games,”

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Ken Gigliotti / Winnipeg Free Press

Elizabeth Buhler with daughters, from left, Justina Suderman, Mary Dyck and Lena Pranke.

Oldest Mennonite?

Elizabeth Buhler of Manitoba, who’s turning 111, has lived in three centuries

BY KEVIN ROLLASON
Winnipeg Free Press

WINKLER, Man. — When Elizabeth Buhler was born, Queen Victoria ruled England, the Czar led Russia, the Boer War broke out and Manitoba was 29 years old.

Buhler — the oldest Canadian still living in Canada — is celebrating her 111th birthday Feb. 8.

She might also be the oldest living Mennonite. She’s a member of Bethel Berghaler Mennonite Church south of Winkler.

Buhler is in select company as a supercentenarian — someone who has reached the age of 110.

According to Wikipedia, only one Canadian, Mary Josephine Ray, is older, having been born on May 17, 1895, in Prince Edward Island. But Ray now lives

During the Russian Revolution anarchists came intent on pillaging her house and killing the family.

in New Hampshire and is seen on some lists as the oldest living American — and oldest person in North America.

Buhler’s age cannot be verified because her family says all birth records were destroyed during the years Josef Stalin was leader of the Soviet Union. But the family says Buhler always said she was born in Ukraine on Feb. 8, 1899.

She was just weeks shy of giving birth to her youngest daughter, Lena Pranke. ■ See **Manitoba**, page 2

Gifts to MDS help replace stolen tools

BY BRIAN PIPKIN
Mennonite Disaster Service

RAMONA, Calif. — Bert Hamm returned to the Mennonite Disaster Service camp site Jan. 5 after a Christmas break and noticed something unusual.

Hamm, MDS project director, couldn’t find the MDS tool trailer at the vacant Ramona Community School in San Diego County.

Local law enforcement officials believe the trailer, which held a

majority of the tools MDS needed to rebuild houses damaged by the 2007 wildfires, disappeared Dec. 12 or 13. The San Diego County Sheriff’s Department is asking locals to help recover the trailer.

The 6-by-12-foot trailer was recently donated to MDS by Storm Aid, an Amish group in Lancaster, Pa. According to Hamm, the tools and trailer are estimated to be worth more than \$10,000.

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Photo provided by MDS

A Mennonite Disaster Service tool trailer, like the one stolen in Ramona, Calif.

Is building safe in Haiti? MCC engineers decide

BY LINDA ESPENSHADE
Mennonite Central Committee

AKRON, Pa. — When the structural engineers working with Mennonite Central Committee in Haiti evaluate the soundness of earthquake-damaged buildings, their classification is very practical.

Is it safe to use? Can it be used with restrictions? Should it be abandoned?

During the one-hour inspection per building, structural engineers are reading the cracks in the walls and looking at the building from close up and far away, to make an immediate decision.

“What we’re doing now is emergency work,” said Johann

Haitians fear entering any building that has not been evaluated.

Zimmermann, a licensed structural engineer from Harrisonburg, Va., who is leading MCC’s team. “People have to get off the street. People have to get back in the buildings.”

The team of three engineers, which will soon expand to four, is focusing its work on public buildings used by organizations working in the community. Assessing

■ See **Engineers**, page 6



Ben Depp/MCC

Volunteer engineers, from left, Johann Zimmermann, Peter Pereverzoff and Marcus Schiere begin their work in Haiti by inspecting the MCC office’s structural integrity. The office is in Port-au-Prince.



■ Getting aligned

Consultant studying how to organize Mennonite Church USA recommends bigger role for area conferences / 3

■ Violence in Nigeria

After Christian-Muslim tension flares into violence in Nigeria, MCC plans relief and peacebuilding efforts / 6

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