

Notes from Alumni and Friends of Peace Studies

(updates were received during March 2008)

Anne Merkey '78 Mitchell married Chett Mitchell in 1985. Their son, Jesse Mitchell, is a freshman at MC, and is on the Football team. They also have two daughters, Chenoa (11th grade) and Elise (8th grade). They have lived in Elkhart IN since 1992 and attend Prairie Street Mennonite Church. Anne is now considered a "Middler" (second year) M.Div. student, at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. She hopes to graduate in December, 2009. Anne has worked as a hospice nurse and a psychiatric nurse in the past. She has an interest in chaplaincy, or possibly serving as a pastor. Anne reports that she values the Peace Studies and English degrees she earned at Manchester in 1978.

Graydon Synder '51 is currently writing a book on Africa, some of which will soon be published in *Brethren Life and Thought*. He is also at work on a chapter in another book that is focused on West European Christianity.

Judy Minnich '68 Stout was a Peace Studies Major in 1964-65. She reports that Gladdys Muir, who had return to Manchester out of her retirement, was her teacher and her inspiration. It was one of the best years ever. After two years, the second of which Judy served as *Oak Leaves* editor, she studied in Strasbourg, France through Brethren Colleges Abroad. Based to a great extent on these experiences, Judy elected to major in French. One significant outcome was that she later benefited from two Fulbright Exchange Teacher experiences in Germany—where she is currently residing. She is teaching English and French at Gymnasium Paulinum in Münster, Germany during the current academic year. Judy's first Fulbright teachers exchange year was 2003-2004—a year she spent in the Odenwald at Gymnasium Michelstadt, which is halfway between Heidelberg and Darmstadt.

Shawn Kirchner '92 continues his musical career in La Verne, CA. Highlights of the last year include the release of two CDs. *Meet Me on the Mountain* is a recording of original bluegrass/country songs inspired by the characters from the film "Brokeback Mountain" and performed by top LA musicians (and available at CDBaby.com). *Velvet Light*, a set of original Christmas carol arrangements, was commissioned by and performed with the Juniata College Concert Choir (available through Brethren Press). Other activities include Shawn's newly formed jazz quartet featuring his original songs, enthusiastic participation in the Obama campaign (precinct captain), and singing on the soundtrack of the upcoming Dr. Seuss movie, "Horton Hears a Who." His website (shawnkirchner.com) has more information on musical activities, newly published choral compositions, performances, etc.

Ralph '51 and Christine Dull's newest passion is encouraging the Dayton area to show leadership in support of "A World Without Nuclear Weapons." They want to focus narrowly on this goal and are organizing grassroots efforts to influence national leadership. They describe the initiative as, "sort of a nonviolent shove for those already committed in their hearts but not in action." Ralph and Christine want many area city councils, colleges, clubs, churches, etc. to sign their "Whereas" individual declarations in support of the campaign—

the culmination of which will be a huge event featuring a nationally known authority on the topic. They describe the goals of the campaign as more possible today given that there currently are only eight nuclear nations rather than as many as twenty nations (and non-nation threats) in the future.

Wilber Mullen '53 was honored as the first recipient of the Excellence in Service Award by the Board of Directors of the Brethren Retirement Community of Greenville, Ohio on September 21, 2007. Wilbur recently celebrated his 90th birthday and continues to walk two miles daily. Wilbur and wife Lena Belle continue to have opportunities to show and talk about the DVD documentary of "The Early Work of the Brethren Service in Europe." They both spent many years with Brethren Service in the US and in Europe.

Erin McCourt '06 is currently working at Stand! Against Domestic Violence as a full time domestic violence counselor and case manager. She is also working part time at the outdoor store REI. Erin is also completing a statistics class in preparation for her plans to an MSW next year.

Janet West Schrock, '58 is currently working as Senior Advisor for Heifer International. She works primarily in Heifer's Education Programs, which include Heifer Universities (week-end intensives), study tours (Poland, China, Ecuador), and presenting Heifer's work in various settings, most recently at the North American Rotary Peace Summit in Ontario, Canada. Tilbury House Publishers has published Jan's children's story, *Give a Goat* which describes the efforts of a 5th grade class in Maine that raised money for a goat through a creative math project. Jan works from her home office in Westbrook, ME and lives near her two children and four grandchildren.

Tina Rieman '94 is living in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. She works as a host and server at Cafe Gratitude, which serves organic, vegan, and raw foods with love. She appreciates the community she has found in the First Mennonite Church of San Francisco, and she loves many things about living in California.

Mimi Sexton '71 continues to enjoy retirement after a rewarding career as a clinical child psychologist. She divides her time between Fort Myers, FL in the winter and the Blue Ridge Mountains in Asheville, NC in the summer. Mimi spent four weeks in Finland and Lapland last summer with Finnish friends, enjoying saunas and swimming in the lake in front of their summer home and gazing at the tundra, mountains, lakes, and reindeer views in Lapland, which lies within the Arctic Circle. Her travel for spring 2008 includes London, Paris, the Trapp Family Lodge in the mountains of northern VT (where she may spontaneously burst into singing "The Sound of Music"), and Acadia National Park on Mt. Desert Island in northern Maine. Mimi remains the very proud godmother of Michael Brown and hopes he is enjoying Massachusetts and fatherhood. She also sends best wishes to Ken Brown for a long and healthy retirement.