

Newsletter

Summer 2006

vol. 9, issue 3



Sunflower Chapter
of the American
Historical Society
of Germans
from Russia

Mixing business with pleasure

by Sister Alice Ann Pfeifer CSA

WITH THE NEWS NOW OUT THAT HAYS WILL HOST THE 2006 Kansas Round-Up of Chapters and the 2007 International AHSGR Convention, the Sunflower Chapter's May meeting began with more business than usual. After reports from Leon Wolf, secretary, and Elmer Dreher, treasurer, Leona Pfeifer gave a report on the progress to date of the 2007 Convention Steering Committee. She emphasized that many of the chapter's 54 paid members will need to get involved for this event to be a success. Following are the committees with their chairs, if known at this time, that will be in need of volunteers:

Genealogy--Kevin Rupp, Chair
Hospitality Room--Dolores Pfannenstiel and Betty Leiker, Co-Chairs
Local Tours--Reuben Schuckman, Chair
Children's Activities--Carol Harrison, Chair
Fund-Raising--Kevin Rupp, Chair
Publicity
Bookstore
Computer Room
Information & Membership
Photography
Food Raffle

Leona also shared information about the Kansas Round-Up of Chapters coming up this October at the Hays Holiday Inn. Rooms will be available to out-of-towners for \$78 a night. The Sunflower Chapter will again take charge of organizing and buying prizes for the bingo. The raffle will feature prizes of \$100 cash, \$75 cash, a basket of homemade noodles, a set of Lawrence Weigel CDs, and a set of books related to our heritage.

During his president's report, Kevin Rupp announced that Betty Leiker and Bernie Schumacher have graciously agreed to be Program Co-Chairs for our chapter. Members can help them out by calling Betty or Bernie with any program ideas. *continued on page 4)*

In a spirit of fun, Hays High German teacher Ann Adams joins Leona Pfeifer in teaching a few German lessons at the chapter meeting.



Next Meeting

Aug. 6

**ATTENTION,
EARLY PLANNERS:**
The fall meeting &
annual banquet will
be on Oct. 8

PICNIC...12:30
GENEALOGY
TABLE/CARDS...1:30

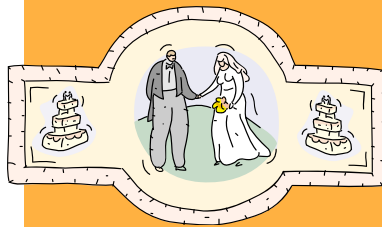
Come alone or bring a guest! We always meet in Munjor's old limestone schoolhouse. To get to Munjor, take Old Highway 40 east from Hays and turn right after passing the airport and just before reaching Toulon Road.



Summer 2006

OVERHEARD

The late Celestine Schumacher, Cellie's dad, really disliked eating outdoors for cookouts and picnics. One day after Cellie was all grown up, Celestine explained his opinion to his son in this way: "You know, in the good old days a person ate inside and went outside to use the *nushnik*. Nowadays, it's the other way around!"



Don't miss the special exhibit

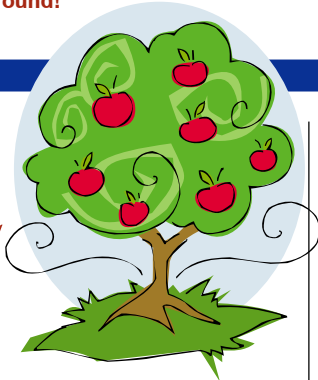
Volga German Wedding Dresses & Customs

at the Ellis County Historical Museum,

100 W. 7th Street, Hays. Summer hours are

1-5 pm on Saturdays. *Exhibit closes August 12!*

Kevin Rupp's Genealogy Update



CENSUS LISTS

If anyone is interested in the families of Roth, Wiesner, Beilmann, Zwenger, or Schoenfeld, I suggest that you check out the home page for the colony of Volmer at www.volmervillage.com. Angela Gartner is the webmistress for this site and has spent a great deal of time on it. She is offering the 1834 census and the 1850 census for this colony, so check it out!

Now to get closer to home, I have finished the 1857 census records for Schaffhausen and Susannental. These might interest some of you because of a few Bos/Boes and Gabel family connections between Obermunjou and Schaffhausen.

The 1850 census for Katerinenstadt will be completed by the end of summer, and hopefully I can begin work on the 1857 census of this same colony in the fall.

LIST SERVES

List serves are a very good way for all of us on the internet to stay in contact when working on genealogy and getting the word out about new sources of information. If you have not already done so, you must think about subscribing to a couple of these:

AHSGR-VILLAGE-COORDINATOR-
L@rootsweb.com

GER-VOLGA-L-request@rootswebs.com
Rothammeler@aol.com (for those interested in this colony)

I will bring some genealogy materials to our picnic on August 6 in case some of you would rather dig up your family tree than play cards.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is June as I am writing this. Sister Alice Ann has asked for my message to be written early so that she can have the newsletter ready to go before she leaves for summer school.

On August 6 we will have our annual picnic in Munjor. We will not have any business meeting so now is a good time for a few comments about upcoming events we need to be concerned with. At the picnic I can give you tickets for our September 10 All-You-Can-Eat Breakfast at the VFW. This fund-raiser has been very profitable for us, so I hope many of you will be able to sell-sell-sell these tickets!

Leona and I will attend this summer's International AHSGR Convention being in Lincoln. This will be a time for us to really keep our ears and eyes open to see how things are handled as we prepare for the international convention coming to Hays next summer. We are going to need lots of help for this, as well as for the Kansas Round-Up of Chapters to be held here this coming October 21.

One thing I would REALLY, REALLY like to see is all members getting out there and recruiting more members. There is no reason why our membership shouldn't grow with all the excitement of upcoming events. Sister Alice Ann has designed an up-to-date brochure explaining our chapter, and I will have copies ready for anyone who wants to give a few away to potential new members. If

you look around, you'll see that Jeremy is 24, I'm 44, and nearly everyone else in the chapter is over 60, so we really need to think about recruitment!

We are continuing to do the Mike Cooper Show every month and that has sparked some interest, but I hope that as we get closer to this fall, we can begin a membership campaign aimed at pushing harder for new members.

I would like to announce once again that Betty Leiker and Bernie Schumacher will be serving as program chairs for our chapter. So if you have any good ideas for a program, please talk to them at our next meeting or give one of them a call. One future program will be the viewing of a one-of-a-kind film called "Norka," which will be presented at the Lincoln convention in August. This is a re-mastered video of footage that was taken in the colony of Norka back in the 1920s.

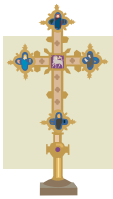
One more thing about the breakfast. I will have sign-up sheets for those people who can help with serving the food and staffing a table to sell our CDs and pass out membership information. So please help us all that you can, and see you August 6!

--Kevin Rupp

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

My special thanks go to Cellie Schumacher and Larry Weigel for their contributions to the current issue.

--Sister Alice Ann Pfeifer CSA



Lasset uns beten

A few of you have asked that we print German prayers from time to time. Here is the Hail Mary (*Gegruesset Seist Du Maria*).

Gegruesset seist du, Maria, du bist voll der Gnade, der Herr is mit dir; du bist gebenedeit unter den Weiber, und gebenedeit ist die Frucht deines Leibes, Jesu!

Heilige Maria, Mutter Gottes, bitte fuer uns Suender, jetzt und in der Stunde des Todes. Amen.

"The Karaganda community, encouraged by Bishop Chira, built their own church which he blessed on Christmas day, 1978. On that occasion Pope John Paul II sent them his Apostolic Blessing. When Bishop Chira read the Holy Father's telegram, all the people in the church cried for joy, and he cried together with them." (From www.carpatho-rusyn.org. See "Bishop Werth's Hero," p. 5)

Tribute to Lawrence Weigel from his son

Part Five

Lawrence Weigel Jr. wrote this biography as a gift to his father while Lawrence Sr. was still alive. In Part Four, published in the last issue, we learned of Lawrence's graduation from Victoria High School in 1935, his first job, and his carefree bachelor days, which were spent following his interests in music and in one very special lady who worked at the Duckwall store in Hays. Finally in 1938, he and Elizabeth Rohleder became engaged.

MOM'S COUSIN, FATHER RICHARD BOLLIG, MARRIED DAD AND Mom on June 3, 1940, in Victoria's Cathedral of the Plains. Father Richard had gotten the nickname of "Fish" when he taught at my high school, St. Joe's Military Academy, in the 1960s because he spoke softly and his lips reminded us of a fish when he talked. I don't think I ever told Mom that story because she didn't like it when anyone talked about her relatives. Alfred and Alice Windholz were the witnesses. Following the ceremony, Mom and Dad had a big celebration at the Knights of Columbus hall with financial support from the Rohleder relatives while Mom's uncle and nephew (not sure which ones) provided the music. It sounded as if they had the typical Volga German wedding celebration with great German food, dancing, and singing.

Dad said that not many people in those days had honeymoons, but they had one so they headed for Colorado in their 1933 Chevy. The motor was shot. He recalled on many occasions how he would put oil in the engine between gas fill-ups. Mom and Dad could make one dollar do the work of three or four. They left with \$30 for their trip and returned with \$5 in their pockets.

They paid for their wedding pictures with dimes they had saved. Mom saved enough money from her weekly salary of \$15 from Duckwall's to buy a bedroom set and some used furniture as they built their first nest and set up housekeeping at 416 E. 15th Street in Hays. There stood their little two-room house.

Mom knew going into this marriage that Dad had two women to support financially, even though his mom (my grandma) agreed to continue living in her house in Victoria, while Mom and Dad would live in Hays. Dad has praised Mom for her kindness to his mother and said, "Until my mother died at age 85 in 1978, there was never a problem between my mother and my wife."

In fact, Dad related an example of Mom's kindness. During a visit to his mother's house, my grandma started crying when they were starting to leave because Grandma didn't have a penny in the house. When Dad told Mom that they had only \$5 in cash until payday, Mom told him to give Grandma half of it because they could make it the rest of the month on \$2.50.

My dad's life changed right after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. While he continued

to work at the experiment station, the US government began building a large air base at Walker, just 14 miles east of Hays. Dad eventually became employed there.

Meanwhile, Mom and Dad's little family on 15th Street started to grow when my big sister Carole Sue was born on May 24, 1942. Dad recounted, "Oh, how we loved that baby; she was our pride and joy, and we were never happier."

When they celebrated Carole's first birthday in 1943, Dad started his first day on the job at Walker Air Base as a junior storekeeper. He worked for an Army colonel and was promoted to the position of Property and Supply Officer, the second-highest paid civilian job at the base. Walker was built to train B-17 bomber pilots. Later, B-29 long-range bomber pilots trained there. I remember Dad would tell us stories about the incredible wingspan of a B-29 plane.

Dad said that unfortunately it took a major war to stimulate the US economy following the depression years. Many people in the area benefited financially because the government salaries were double what they had been before the war started.

--TO BE CONTINUED

NEWS & MEDIA TIDBITS

--Congratulations to Jim Leiker, son of chapter vice-president Betty Leiker, for his recent appearance on Smoky Hills Public TV. On the program *Sunflower Journeys*, Jim discussed the big centennial celebration held last summer in Antonino.

--On May 14, PBS's *McLaughlin Group* discussed the latest news coming out of

Russia. President Putin's approval rating hovers around 70% among his citizens, no doubt largely due to his success in cutting the country's poverty rate in half since his rise to power in 2000. Today approximately 20% of Russians live below the poverty line, compared to approximately 40% six years ago. Because of Russia's abundant supplies of oil and gold, its prosperity can be attributed to rising prices for these two

resources on the world market. One of the show's panelists predicted that Russia will become the third-wealthiest nation in the world, after the USA and China, sometime in the not-too-distant future.

--In a significant gesture of reconciliation, the Russian Orthodox Church invited Bishop Joseph Werth of Novosibirsk to a World Summit of Religious Leaders July 3-5.

WHERE WAS THE VOLGA GERMAN REPUBLIC (1924-1941)?



Pokrovsk, the republic's capitol lying north of Katerinenstadt, was renamed Engels in 1931.

Mixing business with pleasure

(continued from page 1)

The meeting then proceeded with Leona's interactive program with our special guests, the German language teachers and students of Hays High School and TMP-Marian. Using many useful examples, Leona pointed out the differences between High German and Low German. Following are some of the expressions that are said quite differently, depending on what kind of German the speaker is using.

What is your name?

High German: *Wie heissen Sie? Wie heisst du?*

Low German: *Was ist dein Name?*

Is it far from here?

High German: *Ist es weit von hier?*

Low German: *Ist voll weit von do? Wie weit ist es?*

Isn't that right?

High German: *Nicht wahr?*

Low German: *Gella?*

As usual, Leona's lessons were punctuated with lots of laughter, making for another successful program.



During a genealogy segment of the May meeting, Ann Adams and Kevin Rupp spread out a family tree chart that Dr. Igor Pleve compiled for a local Volga German family.

LAST CHANCE TO BUY!

The 125th Jubilee Celebration: A Volga German Homecoming

July 21st - 27th, 2001

VICTORIA PFEIFER SCHOENCHEN MUNJOR CATHARINE LIEBENTHAL

- COMMEMORATIVE VHS COLLECTION -

Each village has a 2 VHS set documenting the events and entire Mass of each Jubilee Celebration. (Running Time Approx. 2 hrs. 50 mins.) \$25.00 per set.

ALSO AVAILABLE ... a VHS documenting highlights of each of the six events.

(Running Time Approx: 1 hr.) For an additional \$10.00.

To Order Call: Francis Schippers 785.235.2230
Jeremy Dammeholm 785.365.7777

Makes a Perfect Gift!
Get Them Before They're Gone!

Call Francis or Jeremy if you also would like a copy of the book *The Volga Germans of West Central Kansas* for \$17. Along with a photo essay, it includes information on the history, legal and political life, culture and folklore, religion, education, and dialects of the Volga Germans of West Central Kansas.

This informative volume was edited by William D. Keel with James L. Forsythe, Francis Schippers, and Helmut J. Schmeller.

NEWS & MEDIA TIDBITS

--Alana Rocha's interview with Leona W. Pfeifer and Leonard Schoenberger appeared on KBSH 7's 6:00 evening news on April 5. Leona and Leonard did us proud in explaining what it will mean for Hays to host the 2007 international convention. Leona encouraged youth to attend, while Leonard promised interesting surprises for persons of all ages.

--On May 12 Germany's Heinrich Boell Foundation bestowed an award on Russian lawyer Yuri Shmidt for his outstanding work fighting for human rights in Russia. "In recent times, he has been repeatedly persecuted for his activity," the foundation noted. In two different, highly controversial cases, Shmidt defended business tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, now in jail, and environmentalist Alexander Nikitin.

Bishop Werth's boyhood hero

Area Volga Germans who have flocked to talks given by Bishop Joseph Werth of Novosibirsk, Russia, may recall that he sometimes spoke fondly about the pastor of his Catholic community in Karaganda, Kazakstan, where he grew up. Nobody knew until the time of the good pastor's death in 1983 that he actually had been, all along, a secretly ordained auxiliary bishop of Mukachevo in the Ruthenian part of Ukraine.

Bishop Werth admired Bishop Alexander's personal holiness, and in fact the entire Byzantine Catholic Church today is praying for Alexander's canonization. Details about his life appear in a biography posted on the independent website founded in 1995 by Greg Gressa, www.carpatho-rusyn.org. What follows are a few points of common knowledge and a few highlights from that online article.

Bishop Alexander Chira was born into a large priestly family on January 17, 1897 in the village of Vulchiv'i. (Byzantine Catholic priests have always been allowed to marry, so it is not uncommon for priesthood to become something of a family tradition in some Byzantine Catholic clans.) He earned a master's degree in sacred theology at the University of Budapest in Hungary and was ordained a priest on December 19, 1920. A strong conflict had always existed between the Byzantine



This icon of Bishop Alexander Chira appears on No. 42 of the Byzantine Leaflet Series published by the Byzantine Seminary Press of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. To order a copy, visit www.byzantines.net/byzantinepress.

Catholics, who remained loyal to Rome, and the Russian Orthodox, but it grew worse in Communist times. While Moscow favored the Orthodox Church, it persecuted the Byzantine Church perhaps more vigorously than any other.

In his early years as a priest, Alexander became a spiritual director at a seminary and a college professor teaching canon law and Church history. Nicknamed "the Evangelist," he also organized numerous youth retreats to bolster the faith of the young in an increasingly hostile environment, created the Apostolate of Suffering for the sick, and became involved in prison ministry.

In 1945 the zealous priest was secretly

STRANGE BUT TRUE....

The story told in the last issue reminded Cellie Schumacher of his grandpa, George G. Jacobs, who went to town every six weeks for a wagonload of flour. (His wife Eva baked 13 loaves of bread daily for their large family.) Now, George always socialized in the tavern while his wagon was being loaded, and it was said he never needed to count his drinks because he had some "really smart horses" who could find their own way home as soon as George and the wagon were all loaded and ready to go!

ordained an auxiliary bishop to Bishop Romzha of Mukachevo. Alexander's faithfulness to a church driven underground produced predictable results, but when relatives suggested he flee the country to avoid persecution by the Soviet secret police, he replied, "I am a priest [even his relatives did not know he was a bishop] and my place is here, at home, with my people. Let God's holy will be done!"

When Alexander explicitly and openly refused to transfer his loyalty to the patriarch in Moscow, the Soviets arrested him the night of February 10, 1949, charged him with treason, and sentenced him to 25 years in prison. Until Kruchchev granted amnesty to all political prisoners in 1956, Alexander did time at various labor camps in Siberia: near Lake Baikal and in the oblasts of Novosibirsk and Omsk. After resuming his priestly duties in his hometown, he was arrested again in 1957, deported to Kazakstan, and ordered not to return home for the rest of his life. He served Karaganda's Catholics of German, Polish, Ukrainian and Lithuanian origins until May 26, 1983, when he died peacefully in his sleep

Don't let this picture fool you!

They might look totally serious **now**, but wait until they start **dancing** !

The Sunflower Chapter is pleased to offer for sale a re-mastered DVD of *Eine Hochzeit in Ellis County, 1881*. Originally produced in 1990 by Leona Wasinger Pfeifer, it captures the last performance of a mock Volga German wedding that enactors had begun doing in 1968. Many well-known Ellis



John and Marie (Dechant) Schumacher, 1881

Countians are visible in this DVD, including the late great Lawrence Weigel, Rupert Pfannenstiel, and Paul Werth. (The other performers are still with us but have gotten a little older.)

Eine Hochzeit in Ellis County, 1881 is available from the Sunflower Chapter for \$25 per DVD plus \$3 shipping.

If you are interested in owning it, please send your check or money order to:

Sunflower Chapter
2301 Canal Blvd
Hays, Ks. 67601

A portion of the proceeds will go to funding the Sunflower Chapter, the Kansas Round-Up of Chapters to be held in Hays in fall 2006, and the International AHSGR Convention to be held here in summer 2007.

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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