

American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Heritage Calgary Chapter



*A newsletter for the descendants of
German speaking emigres from
Eastern Europe, connecting them
with their unique heritage.*

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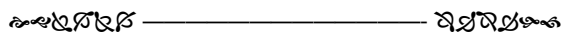
AHSGR Calgary Chapter website : calgarychapterahsgr.ca

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

— by Bonnie Laing —

This is a very busy time for the AHSGR Calgary Chapter with the AGM highlighting a special ethnic sausage supper. Another item on the agenda is the convention in Medicine Hat from June 15-21, 2009. This is the first Canadian convention since 1995, the people to contact for information are Mabel Kiessling, and Leona Mann.

Easter is fast approaching, this is a very special time for Christians and children, when I was young my GR grandmother gave us eggs coloured with onions and beet skins and to remind my younger cousins of this special tradition, I often give them eggs coloured this way. Hope you enjoy the spring and Easter traditions, see you at the next meeting.



CONVENTION 2009

— by Mabel Kiessling —

The Convention is a great place to meet fellow German-Russians, enjoy the many informative presentations and workshops, and research your family roots to learn more about your ancestors. Computer work stations for Saving Our Ancestral Records (SOAR) computer based records, research tools from our library, village records, the AHSGR Surname file containing over 477,400 names plus paper records including village maps and descendant charts based on records from Russia are only a few of the tools available to convention researchers.

It is also a great place to learn about the culture of the German Russians through music, singing, food, folklore and storytelling. There will be speakers highlighting topics from all regions of the Russian Empire, Europe and the continents of North and

South America. Planned tours take in sites around the city of Medicine Hat and area. Visit the many vendor tables showcasing German Russian resources.

Conventions are a great place to volunteer, to meet new and interesting people and make a lot of new friends. Consider volunteering at the Convention. Donations of funds or gifts in-kind are most welcome to help defray expenses.

Registration packages will be going out in the near future. As there are limited banquet tickets available, it is recommended that you register early to assure a place. Cut-off for both mail-in registration and for AHSGR group rate hotel reservations is May 14, 2009. After May 14 register at the Convention.



Ray Schmidt (left) and his brother Sig show off their lamp and clock silent auction donations for the 2009 Convention



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We publish 4 Newsletters per year. Our rate is \$8.00 for 4 issues per year in Canadian funds. Subscription requests and change of address should be forwarded to Leona Mann at 403-239-9138 or mail to 315 Edgebrook Rise N.W. Calgary AB T3A 5J9

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**AHSGR MISSION STATEMENT**

The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is an international organization dedicated to the discovery, collection, preservation and the dissemination of information related to the history, cultural Heritage and genealogy of Germanic settlers in the Russian Empire and their descendants.

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B.Y.O.B.

— by Nora Schmidt, Editor —

Now is the time for all good members to come to the aid of the Society. Bring Your Own (Picnic) Basket filled with; a plate (or for two) cup, bowl, napkin, fork, knife and spoon. By doing this we will find ourselves in a "Win/win" situation.

- (1) Cost of meals will be lessened. Did you know that the executive shell out hard earned dollars, about \$2 per plastic place settings which include bowls, cups, cutlery and a plate ?
- (2) We will be friendlier to the environment by not using disposable plastic objects. Your cooperation and/or feedback on this issue is appreciated.

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**CONVENTION RAFFLE**

— by Anne Stang and Susan Kuzina —

One of the traditions of the AHSGR conventions is to have at least one quilt to raffle. Some have been stitched by the quilting group in Lincoln, Nebraska. Others have been made by quilters in the area where the convention is held.

The quilt for the convention in Medicine Hat was designed, hand stitched and hand quilted by Kay Zerr and Barbara Kloster (both nee Stang) from Macklin, Saskatchewan. They generously donated both the materials and their skills. It's an old fashioned quilt, in a classic scrap nine patch pattern. They used only scrap materials for the top, but purchased backing and batting. The backing and border are dark blue, but there are many other colours in the quilt – an heirloom for the happy winner.

There will also be three other items offered at a silent auction. Sig Schmidt from Three Hills, Calgary Chapter, has made a large wooden church, with a clock in one tower. It's a very elaborately carved piece that anyone would be proud to own. His brother Raymond from Cochrane created a lamp, using elaborately carved walnut and perfect for a rumpus room.

Another item is a six piece wooden train set made by the late Jacob Stang of Wilkie, Saskatchewan. The pieces can be unhooked and rearranged and some of the cars can be "unloaded", and a cross stitch picture. Other donations will be gratefully received.

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Raffle Quilt for 2009 AHSGR Convention



PRESENTATION TO THE ALBERTA FAMILY HISTORIES SOCIETY

January 5, 2009

— by Anne Stang and Susan Kuzina —

Just before Christmas, Anne Stang received a request from AFHS to give a presentation at their next meeting, on the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia. She was in a hurry, barely skimmed the email and read "Hemochromatosis" for "Historical" (Well, both are longish words that start with "H"!)). She wondered for a minute about the topic but felt AFHS must have a reason for the unusual request, so she said "Yes". Mabel Kiessling's email a few days later made Anne realize her error, but the commitment had been made.

Fortunately, Susan Kuzina came to the rescue, offering to talk about the Society – the origin, organization, services and resources of both our local chapter and that of headquarters. Anne had already figured out that her part would cover the history from the 1760s to the present. Both Anne and Susan prepared handouts, and according to Mabel, did a good job of getting their information across. Apparently there was not much fidgeting in the audience. A display in the foyer with *Journals*, *Clues*, various interesting information sheets on the web sites and two books of photos was well received. Susan and Anne also fielded a number of questions and comments.

Besides telling an important group about our history and society, we hope we'll attract some AFHS members to use our library and maybe even to join our society. This is another good example of our Chapter's "Traveling Road Show".

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## KUCHEN FOOD DEMONSTRATION

January 24, 2009

— by Anne Stang,  
Adena Bauer & Susan Kuzina —

Following on 2008's successful noodle making demonstration, the program committee decided that this year it would be kuchen. Since every village or area had its own versions, Susan Kuzina, Adena Bauer and Anne Stang all came up with different styles and tastes. They made kuchen at home to be sure they had everything right, then they made more kuchen the night before the meeting and made still more kuchen at the meeting – over 35 all told, of great variety – cottage cheese, apple with custard topping, raisin, plum, prune, caramel and

Saskatoon with rivel (crumbs). They also had to do some logistics, getting all the equipment and supplies to the church in less than ideal weather. Anne made dough by hand; Susan and Adena used bread machines. Then they each explained their procedures, demonstrating as they went. The church ovens were a little overburdened, but eventually all the kuchen were baked and cut so they could be tasted. Despite a crowd of 60, and a good finger food potluck lunch, most of the kuchen quickly disappeared. Generous buyers bought the rest, thereby raising \$65 for the convention fund.

Members are asked to submit their favorite kuchen recipes to Susan so she can prepare a handout for a future meeting. They can also submit ideas for future demonstrations (kraut &/or fleisch bierock, liver dumpling soup or ???), or better still, offer to do a demonstration. On behalf of Susan, Adena and Anne we want to thank everyone who braved the cold to attend our January, 2009 meeting. It made all the baking, and baking, and baking very worthwhile.

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Marian Benner, Susan Kuzina, Adena Bauer, Anne Stang

OBITUARY FILES

— by Bev Rayburn —

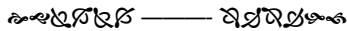
As you may be aware, Calgary Chapter of AHSGR have been collecting Obituary Files for a number of years. At this time there are over 3000 in the library.

For anyone with German/Russia heritage, we are interested in photos, funeral cards, family trees, and obituaries, these are kept on file. When an obituary is submitted the information is transferred to 5 x 8 inch cards. All originals are returned if requested.

One set of cards is kept in our chapter library, and a set is sent to head office for their library. An index binder in the library contains all the names in the obituary files.

Family Trees may be submitted to Mabel Kiessling or myself for the library. From the family trees we are able to use much of the information to complete the obituary cards e.g. names of parents, children, siblings, and places of birth and death.

If you have obituaries, family trees or information on your family that we could use, please pass it on to me at the meetings, call me at 403-277-4174 or email at hayobam@shaw.ca



MEMBERSHIP

— by Leona Mann —

Paid members is down to 136 from 196 in 2008. That includes 45 families and 46 individuals. Subscription to the newsletter is also down to only 15. If your membership is not current, please bring it up to date asap.

LETTUCE? Please advise us, if instead of having this newsletter sent to you via snail mail we could send it to you via email. Cost of producing the newsletter and postage costs continue to go up. IF you would be happy receiving it via email, let us know.



GROWING UP IN BRIDGELAND THE WAR YEARS

— by Bill Benner —

The early 1940's brought about some interesting changes to my life as a child. The first major change was starting school. Gone were the carefree days and along came the daily ritual of the educational process. The first step on the way to growing up.

Probably the most memorable event also at that time was the outbreak of World War II. I had a hard time understanding the disappearance of my young uncles and cousins who were joining the various branches of the Armed Forces to fight a war that was raging in another part of the world.

This war would soon have many repercussions on our own way of life. We would have to do with less so that many of our resources could go directly to the war effort. Soon we would be asked to do with less and in some cases without. Consumers were told to "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without".

Our German Russian people were well adapted to deal with these conditions after surviving the famines and adversities of the German Russian Colonies. They were very frugal and nothing ever

went to waste. Even after the fall potato harvest, all the small marble sized potatoes were gathered up, washed and peeled for potato sausage (Kartofel Wurst). All of our people had gardens in their back yard and we grew all of our own vegetables. They were called "Victory Gardens" during the war years. We grew our own cabbage and always had sauerkraut in a large ceramic crock in our basements. Some community residents had chicken coops and actually raised their own chickens in the city. It was just a matter of crossing the alley and buying a chicken from your neighbour. My mother would do this occasionally, chopped off the creature's head, plucked and cleaned it and we had roast chicken for supper.

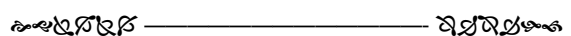
In 1942 we were introduced to Rationing. Food and gasoline were being rationed to ensure that families received a fair share of items that would be in short supply. Typical items that were on the ration list included meat and butter. Imported staples like sugar, coffee and tea were particularly hard to obtain. Because of the short supply of metal, people were asked to can their own foods in glass jars.

Gasoline was rationed in April of 1942 and the use of car pools and public transit arose. Tires could not be purchased unless one could prove that driving was essential. Antifreeze was hard to obtain and in the winter one would drain the water from the radiator to prevent the engine from freezing. When the car was to be put back into service, water was boiled in kettles on the kitchen stove and poured into the radiator to facilitate easy starting.

When women could no longer purchase silk stockings they created the illusion of stockings by lining the back of their legs with an eyebrow pencil to simulate seams.

In December 1942 butter was added to the ration list with a mere half a pound per person per week. Price inflation was not a problem because the government set the prices through the Wartime Prices and Trade Board. Rationing of meat began in May of 1943 in the amount of two pounds per week per person. Would you believe that beer was also rationed and required a coupon book like all other rationed items.

Ration books continued to be used after the end of the war because Europe's farmlands and factories were in ruins. Food, especially meat, was sent from Canada as emergency aid. Millions of Canadians gave their best to the war effort through the rationing program learning to make do with less. The last Ration Books were issued in September of 1946.



UNSERE LEUT

— by Adena Bauer —

We wish a

VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY

to all of the members who are celebrate birthdays in:

January: Eilene Taylor, Matilda Forsythe, Alex Sieppert, Norm Miller, Sadie Jahraus, Cam Bauer, Adena Bauer.

February: Margaret Sieppert

March: Teresa Bekker, June Gross, Orlin Anderson, Annie Schnell, Lois Fester, Gerri Schroeder, Sandra Litke, Mabel Kiessling, Lorna Schnell

And to those who have anniversaries,

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

January: Vic & Elfriede Fischer

February: Marshall & Vivian Towers

Bev Rayburn is recuperating at home after her long stay in the hospital. She is not able to do much yet, so we hope she gets better soon.

Elsa Underschultz had not been feeling well, and we hope she's feeling healthier.

Marge Fox had a fall, and we hope she didn't break anything.

Let me know if your birthday or anniversary date isn't recorded in our records. Please call or email me if you have anyone who is ill, or who has passed away. I am happy to send out cards or give a call to anyone that needs one.

Phone: 403-273-8178

email: happydogs3@shaw.ca

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## LIBRARY NEWS

— by Mabel Kiessling —

Great News! Our Chapter library will now be housed in the former storage room in the basement of St. Matthew Lutheran Church right beside the room where we hold our meetings and dinners. It will allow us to utilize the larger area for our researchers and also facilitate small group meetings when needed. Volunteers no longer have to move boxes of books from the library and back again for meetings. Parking will be more convenient as well. Thank you to Fred Hergert for making the suggestion to St. Matthew, and to Fred Butler and the St. Matthew Lutheran Church Resource Society for making the move possible.

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Techi-Bits — (Image Archiving)

— by Fritz Kiessling —

On the topic of digital images, that's photos from a digital camera for our purpose, and before we get into scanning and printing, etc., I decided to start at the end of the whole issue. It's always good to know where you want to end up, which in this case is, more likely than not, "in a box under the bed". So how do we get there?

When it comes to family photos the question of "storage" of digital images is not well understood, because there is so much media mambo-jumbo on the topic. You will have heard it said that CD's or DVD's have a long shelf life, like a hundred years. However, there are already some reports that people have lost data on just recently created disks. A small technical point, "shelf life" actually refers to the life before the data is burned on the disk. After the data is burned we should be talking about "archival life".

So what's the deal. One of the answers is in the word "deal". Simply said, if you buy the cheapest disks, you WILL NOT get good life. It's a matter of how the disks are made. The recording media, for "R" disks (that's "read-only" after the first "write") is a dye between "plastic" sheets. There are a number of dyes. Here is one: Phthalocyanine; the other names just get worse. There are many types of "plastic" sheets. Some of the techies I associate with suggest purple or gold coloured disks (that's related to the dye). The silver disks have a lesser reputation.

A very important part to remember is that heat affects both materials. The higher the heat the sooner the materials fail. I can't find any specs on cold, but I wouldn't leave my disks in the car in the winter either, nor in the fridge for that matter. Exposure to light is also one of the disks enemies. Strong light, especially ultra-violet (UV), affects the dye. Remember that we get most UV exposure from the sun. So don't leave the disks in the sun.

Here is the key advice

- 1) Buy good disks (Purple or Gold surface).
- 2) Use "R" media for long term storage. "RW" (that's read-write) media is for short term storage, and generally use "magneto" materials, that can be wiped out with a fridge magnet.
- 3) Keep the disks in the "dark", such as a box.
- 4) Use the disk envelopes that are not just plastic sleeves. There are sleeves with a fiber backing that wipes the dust off, and provides a soft surface for the data side of the disk.

Good luck with finding space under your bed ❧

TOUR OF ARGENTINA

March 25 , 2009

Anne Stang and Leona Mann

CDC MEETING

April 4 , 2009

GENERAL MEETING

April 26 , 2009

Program Pending, and Bake Table

SPECIAL NOTE:

All mail to AHSGR Calgary Chapter should be addressed to:

AHSGR Calgary Chapter
Box 31043 Bridgeland RPO
Calgary AB T2E 9A3
Canada

LIBRARY HOURS

4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Members may use the library free,
but non-members will be charged \$2.00.

NEW THE MONDAY NIGHT LIBRARY WILL BE HELD
IN THE CHURCH BASEMENT, "NOT" IN THE OFFICE

| | | |
|---------|-------|----|
| Monday, | March | 9 |
| Monday, | April | 13 |
| Monday, | May | 11 |
| Monday, | June | 8 |

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40th Annual International AHSGR Convention
June 15 to 21, 2009

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Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada
Telephone: 403-529-2222

For Reservations call 1-800-661-8095

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