



Lincoln Chapter

The American Historical Society of Germans From Russia

NEWSLETTER

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A Message to the Membership

by Larry Schenkel, 489-3213

I had hoped to have this out to you sooner than this, but a lot of things got in the way, like convention.

The open house for charter members and grand kids was felt to be very successful and worth doing. We had 26 charter members attend and over 200 guests came through the front door – that signed in. Because all of the out-buildings and the back door were open, we had people come in who may not have registered. Also, some registered as a family, and we didn't have an accurate count. With charter members, volunteers, and visitors, I am sure there were over 300 people that went through your Heritage Center. I wish we had seen your face there. Well, maybe at the Christmas Decorating Open House.

There were many young people that came through at the open house and asked many questions about what the Heritage Center stood for and how it came to be. One, Deana Bukoski, asked if she could donate some of her mother's and grandmother's things. You will be hearing more about that in a later newsletter.

I mentioned volunteers. There were 24 of them helping serve cookies, punch, iced tea, coffee, and German chocolate cake. They were stationed in the out-buildings and throughout the Heritage Center, answering questions and talking membership.

You would have been proud of Molly Grenemeier and Norma Somerheiser in their ethnic clothing. Molly was in the chapel and looked like we all remember our grandmothers looking. Norma was hammering out German music on her dulcimer. (*There is No Place Like Nebraska?*)



Molly Grenemeier



Norma Somerheiser

These volunteers donated 125 man (or woman) hours just for that day. Hugh Dobler has been the volunteer hour-keeper for so long no one can remember when he started keeping statistics. But he has some interesting figures to look at over the past several years. I think it is interesting to see what happened from 1993-1998 and what is happening beginning this year. To all of you who volunteer, THANK YOU! To those who have but can't any more, THANK YOU! To those of you

who would but can't because of health or age, I understand. To those who have not been volunteering, what are you waiting for?

Since this is so late, I will tell you that Wyoming had a very successful convention. There were over 700 people registered and 271 volunteers that worked from three to six hours!

The only bad thing was fighting the horrible weather. That 15 percent humidity was a real killer! I hope the folks in Wyoming are proud of what they got done. A big thank you goes out to the chapters (Denver Metro, Northern Colorado Greeley, and Nebraska Panhandle chapter) who went to Casper a number of times to help get things put together. They worked hard and had one of the best conventions I have been to. Lincoln is going to have quite a challenge to meet in 2000.

By the way, Wyoming now has three chapters, not one. What a tremendous achievement.

Well, I've bent your ear long enough. I'll get to work on the next newsletter. Remember, if you have something you would like to contribute to the newsletter, call me. I am always looking for articles. Is there something you think we should write about? Call me.

Thank you for listening.

VOLUNTEER HOURS						
1993	1994	1995	1996	1007	1998	1999
5151	3582.25	3425.75	2042.5	1458.5	1201	THROUGH
						MAY
						1693.75

Brief Bios on AHSGR Staff...

Cate Wieck Membership Coordinator

Cate was born in Grand Island, Nebraska, to Jim and Ann (Warner) Wieck. She is the oldest of four and grew up on a farm near St. Libory, Nebraska, where her parents still live. Her parents own two businesses, J&A specialties – specializing in rubberized roof coatings, and J&H Company – an athletic equipment repair business, specializing in football helmets, shoulder pads, and tackling dummies. Both businesses keep them and their staff busy year-round.

Cate attended elementary school in St. Libory and went to high school at Grand Island Central Catholic. Upon graduation, she went to Wayne State College and received a B.S. in Theatre with a history minor.

It was in college that Cate learned of the Black Hills Playhouse in Custer, SD and spent two summers working in the costume shop as a costume designer, stitcher, and a part-time shop supervisor. The BHP is located in an old CCC Camp built in the 1930s under the Roosevelt administration. The company still uses several original buildings to house the different departments of a busy theatre as well as rehearsal spaces. They have also built dormitories for the company, so they can live on-site during the summer. At the BHP, Cate designed costumes for one production each year and helped build the costumes for another four productions.

After college, Cate went to work for the Sherwin Williams Company in Grand Island as a salesclerk and decorator. She worked in Grand Island for three years before being transferred to Lincoln as an assistant manager at the Alamo Shopping Center location. Cate spent two years at the Lincoln location before she found the AHSGR.

Cate is the new Membership Coordinator at the AHSGR. She is responsible for keeping the membership records up to date as well as operating

the bookstore and keeping up with the book orders that come in daily. Her business and management experiences have been very helpful in her new position.

Cate is very active in the Lincoln Community Playhouse as a Costume Designer and volunteer. She worked two productions at the LCP this summer: *Bugsy Malone*, a new musical for children, and *Tommy*, a rock opera. Both productions were presented on the main stage at LCP at the end of June and the end of July, respectively. Cate is involved with her church choir and loves volleyball, softball, track and football.

Stephanie Purdy Publications Editor

Stephanie's parents are Michael and Sophie (Fijalkowski) Purdy who live in Bellevue, Nebraska. Her mother was born in Germany and grew up in Torrington, Connecticut. Her father was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, and grew up in Atchison, Kansas.

Both of Stephanie's maternal grandparents are Polish, living in Poland until after world War II. Zygmunt (her grandfather) was a soldier in the Polish Army. He was put into the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen and after Liberation, moved to Germany to work for the U.S. armed services. Josephine (her grandmother) was forced to move to Germany and worked in a laundry facility. They met in Germany after Liberation and married. Two children were born in Germany, one of them being Stephanie's mother. The family immigrated to Torrington, where all the family still lives, except Stephanie's mother.

Her father's family lives in the Atchison, Kansas/St. Joseph, Missouri vicinity. The family is still researching its ancestry, but it is believed to be English, Irish and Scottish.

Her mother is a registered nurse, working at St. Joseph's Hospital in

Omaha, and her father is Assistant Principal and Athletic Director at Bellevue East High School. She has one brother, Matthew, who just graduated from UNO, with a degree in Criminal Justice, and at present is working in a correctional facility in Omaha.

Stephanie was born in Midwest City, Oklahoma, while both her parents were in the service stationed at Tinker Air Force Base. After her parents received their discharges from the Air Force, the family moved to Emporia, Kansas, so her father could finish getting his teaching degree. From there the family moved to Bellevue, Nebraska and has lived ever since. Stephanie came to Lincoln to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She received her BJ in 1993, double-majoring in Journalism and Anthropology with minors in English, German and Philosophy. She continued her studies at UNL, recently graduating with her Master's degree in Anthropology.

Her position at AHSGR Headquarters is Publications Editor. Responsibilities include editing all publications that leave Headquarters such as Newsletters, Journals and Clues. Her studies are perfectly suited for her position as the editor, including anthropology, as her emphasis was in Cultural Anthropology.

At present, she also works (12 hours per week) at the Lincoln Journal Star newspaper, in the news editorial department (composing and graphics). While studying for her Master's degree, she worked at the University's Department of Architecture. She also has worked at the Midwest Archaeological Research Center, identifying and cataloguing artifacts from various "digs" in the Midwest. She also worked as a research archaeologist on UNL Department of Anthropology survey teams. As part of the job here, the researchers would get permission from the farmers; go into the farmer's field and look for artifacts that may have been plowed up. Most of the time they would find such things as

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Loos Family Reunion



A celebration of the Loos Family in America 108 years was held on July 17, 1999. Descendants of Adam Loos and Margareta Krieger were present. There were four children who came to the U.S. They were Germans from Russia. The daughter, Anna Elizabeth Loos Spady, came to the U.S. in 1891. A son, Adam, came in 1906, a son, Peter, came in 1907, and a son, Henry, came in 1912.

From these four Looses there were over 260 descendants who attended the gathering at some time. They came from various cities in Nebraska, Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin, Nevada, and Kansas.

The idea of bringing the family together to meet and fellowship is one Eddie Loos had long dreamed of seeing in his lifetime. On a visit to Lincoln, a cousin, Weldon Loos, said over breakfast, he sure would like to know more of his relatives and have a reunion. That's all Eddie needed to hear to get the ball rolling. After consulting and convincing his wife and children, a committee was formed and, through an unimaginable amount of hard work, the Reunion became a reality.

The reunion theme was "Celebrating

108 Years in America." It was held Saturday, July 17, 1999 at the WSI Hall in Lincoln. Three meals were prepared and served by family members. A dance was held in the evening with music for all ages. On Sunday after church services those who stayed over, and those wanting to come were invited guests at the acreage of Eddie and Lillian Loos for a family picnic. Everyone seemed pleased and had an enjoyable time.

Memorabilia included Reunion T-shirts, key chains, pens, pencils, candy bars, candy bags, fans gift drawings, passports, placemats, bookmarks, a commemorative Genealogy Book and a video of highlights of the Reunion. A tour of the AHSGR Museum with 50 people was a real treat. Many good comments from this tour. It was a wonderful reunion.

Do You Know Anyone Here?





New Director / New Hours

You are (even more than) Welcome at Headquarters – We Need You Here!

Nancy Holland, who recently assumed duties as Executive Director of AHSGR, announces new open hours in effect for the month of August. Since the Society holds voluminous genealogical resources and an impressive historical library which could be made available for researchers who are otherwise occupied during office hours, the Headquarter's collections will be open

on **Sunday afternoons from 1:00-4:00** and on **Tuesday evenings from 7:00-9:00**, as well as the usual hours of 9:00 to 4:00 Monday through Friday and 9:00-1:00 on Saturdays. Since professional office staff cannot cover all of the open hours and still put in no more than 40-hour weeks, Holland hopes for a return to "the good old days" when Lincoln Chapter One members made Headquarters their home and helped with staffing duties while enjoying the Gemütlichkeit of fellow volunteers.

Holland, who traces her ancestors (Bernhardts, Knisses, Zwetzig, Fromms, and Fahrenbruchs) to the Volga villages of Norka, Frank, and Morgentau is planning open houses, fests, art exhibits, musical soirees, and German language lessons for interested Lincolnites during the autumn months if dedicated volunteers are numerous enough to support the open hours. The new E.D. invites anyone interested to drop into headquarters soon and see "Wie es geht!"

Brief Bios (continued from 2)

arrowheads, or broken glass or pottery, that had once been the property of a homesteader or early American. Once in northeast Nebraska, Stephanie had the opportunity to visit two Indian earthlodge sites.

Recently, along with several friends, she joined World Gym, an exercise facility in Lincoln. One of the activities she enjoys is weight lifting and riding the stationery bikes. Her hobbies include: watching sports – particularly basketball and football (especially Husker football). She likes to play softball, and is an avid Cubs fan. This past year, she spent several days in Chicago for the very first time. The highlight of the trip was when she went to Michael Jordan's restaurant.

Mark These Calendar Dates

Friday and Saturday, the 20th and 21st of August – That is when we will have our garage sale at the Heritage Center. If you have items to donate, call me and I will either meet you or have someone meet you at the Heritage Center to get your items. If you cannot bring items down, we can pick them up at your home. Give me, or one of the other board members, a call.

Remember, one man's "junk" may be another man's treasure. No item is too large, old or small.

If you would like to help with the garage sale, please give me a call. The more, the merrier. And if it is a scorcher, the more volunteers we have, the less time each has to work.

September 19 – General Membership Meeting. 1:00 p.m. St. Paul's Church, 13th and F Street, Potluck and Bingo.

December 18 – Christmas Decorating Open House at Heritage Center – We hope to get enough Christmas decorations to not only decorate the Heritage Center, but to decorate the out-buildings, too. Plan to attend this Open House. A little singing, a lot of visiting, help decorate, and don't forget, SACKS!

We will also have light refreshments. If you have a favorite Christmas cookie you would like to share, bring a dozen or two. Any leftovers will be taken to nursing homes.

Mr. & Mrs. Donald Schwartz
1000 Butler Ave
Lincoln NE 68521

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631 D Street
Lincoln, NE 68502-1199