

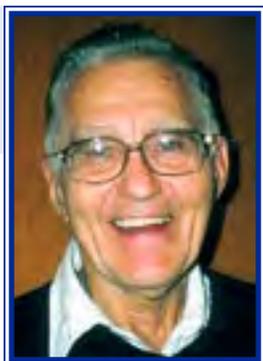
# GROW Quarterly Newsletter

Area Chapter of the Germans from Russia Heritage Society (GRHS)

Volume 7 Issue 1

October - November - December 2007

## Message from the President



**Roger Haas, President**

GROW has done exceptionally well as we enter into the third quarter of 2007, in spite of some serious illness among our members.

First, we know of least 12 GROW families who attended our annual GRHS Convention this year in Bismarck. We need to thank Arlene Maston and Alice Summers for honoring us in carrying the GROW Banner in the Convention Opening Ceremony.

Second VP Kurt Radtke represented us along with Treasurer Alice Summers and Membership Chairman Arlene Maston at the Saturday's Chapter Officers' Meeting. It should be mentioned that Leon and Kay Hagen represented GROW both in the AHSGR Convention in Hayes, KS as well as in Bismarck. Thank you, Leon & Kay.

Bob Schauer was appointed to the Heritage Foundation of Germans from Russia (HFGR). Bob & Dolores Schuh, who brought to Portland our GROW Charter in 2001, made their 30th trek (?) to the National GRHS Convention and Bob was honored on Friday for his outstanding Contribution to the Kutschurgan as Coordinator, Researcher, and much much more. Congratulations, Bob and thanks, Dolores, for that terrific support.

See some Convention reports in this issue of other members attending. Thank you for each of you attending and sharing your highlights and experiences. Our 23 Sept. Chapter meeting will give opportunity for those attendees to share and for you to ask questions.

In our last issue, I referenced the challenge to exceed the 2002 membership record. Well, we have not succeeded, but have 192 on the membership Roster, which is 18 better than in 2006. Invite your friends. We had about 50 at our annual GROW Picnic on the 26 Aug at the Deutsches Haus with the

Radtkes (Kurt and Jane) taking charge and barbecuing sausages, etc. The food was outstanding and the fellowship was great. Oscar Geiszler deserves a big hand in bringing a number of new faces and potential members. What a recruiter you are!!

We need to remember some our dear GROW members who have not enjoyed the best of health: Geraldine Gander, who spent 28 days in the hospital, a month in recovery, and is now back again for additional surgery; Brad Maston, Arlene's husband, who has been in & out of the hospital several times; Maxine Daily, who was so active on the Board, has not been in public for almost a year due to her breathing problems; Cliff Haberman, GROW Co-founder, continues to get weaker and First VP Jan is very limited in her GROW activities, being a full-time caregiver; Paul Voeller, who has been recovering from colon cancer and will have chemo until December, needs your prayers; Marcine Herinck has had a fractured knee and was out of circulation; Lorraine Geiszler has chronic health issues; the list goes on.

We are so grateful for new members: Katherine Bell, Billy & Eva Glaser, Ella Schmunk, Michael Turner and Kathy Turner, are just a few of several of the new GROW members, who bring vitality to the Chapter. Thank you for your interest and talent you bring to the GROW Family.

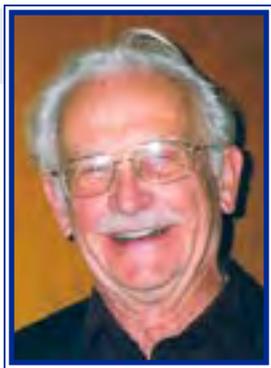
We hope that your summer has been great and that you are eager to participate in the Fall GROW activities.

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## Ed's Corner

In the last corner I discussed the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. One definition says that the Dust Bowl condition describes the worst world ecological disaster of the twentieth century. North and South Dakota are on the northern edge of the Dust Bowl and didn't feel the full effect of the dust storms, but they were involved.



Ed Weber

At height of the dust bowl conditions, 1934-35, in Isabel I recall some strange happenings that occurred in my life. Even though we lived in town my father had a cow and chickens and relied on grain, corn-stalks and hay that was harvested on his homestead to feed the animals. The dust bowl effects for the Isabel area were no hay, corn or grain crops. A pesky weed, the Russian thistle, seemed to thrive on draught and some person discovered that the Russian thistle when it was cut green could be fed to cattle. My dad got a small stack of Russian thistle to feed our cow one winter.

How did an old-world thistle get the name Russian thistle? The answer lies with our ancestors; the Germans from Russia are responsible for bringing the thistle seed to America. This was not done maliciously, but can be traced to the fact that the Germans stuck to their culture when they moved to Russia with the promises of Catherine the Great. They were a culture frozen in place and when the Russians canceled most of the promises of Catherine the Great the Germans moved to America and their culture was transplanted whole to the Great Plains. Without them, it is possible that wheat never would have been planted on the dry side of the plains. For when they boarded ships for America, the Germans from Russia carried with them seeds of Turkey Red — a hard winter wheat — and incidental thistle sewn in the pockets of their vests. In Russia, it was the Turkey Red; short-stemmed and resistant to cold and drought that allowed the Germans to move out of the valleys and onto the higher, drier farming ground of the Steppe.

The thistle came by accident, but it grew so fast it soon owned the West. In the Old World, thistle was called *perekati-pole*, which meant, "roll-across-the-field." In America, it was known as tumbleweed. The Russian thistle thrived in the draught conditions of the Dust Bowl. The thistle got caught along fences and often acted like snow fences. In the Dust Bowl it wasn't snow that drifted behind the fences and tumbleweeds but dust to the point that the fences were buried.

My family moved from the Russian thistle area of Isabel, SD to a farm in Western Washington State. No Russian thistles in this area, however we did have to contend with the Canadian thistle. Part of the crop rotation on our farm was to plant Oats. You guessed it, the thistle here came with the Oats seed purchased from Canada.

That's it from Ed's Corner.

## Meet Cathy Lobb

Cathy Lobb grew up in Tigard and graduated from Tigard High School. She worked for the State Welfare Dept. until 1952 when she married her husband Jerry. Cathy and Jerry have three children, Michael, Linda and Karen, three grandsons and many grandsheep.



Cathy Lobb

Cathy's favorite hobby was counted cross-stitching until she got involved in genealogy, and that of course, doesn't leave much time for anything else.

Through GROW, Cathy has met two relatives by marriage, Geri Gander (who introduced her to GROW) and Paul and Albert Wolf, both of whom have Ochs and Malsams in their family tree. They have exchanged info on their family trees and learned more in the process.

Roger's niece Vania (Haas) Malsam in Aberdeen, SD married Melvin Malsam and there are big families of Malsams in the Bowdle area, which I believe are all related to Cathy Lobb and the Wolff families.

Cathy is a charm and has been doing the book sales, helping with the raffles, even assisting with hospitality and greeting of the members and friends attending the Chapter meetings. She gave her Bio at the June Meeting along with her family history. Stop by at the front table, see her display and thank her for the great job she is doing.

Along with the above, she has also been our Sunshine Gal, sending out Welcome, Sympathy, Remembering You cards with no fan fair but right on and so unassumingly quiet. Thank You, Cathy, YOU ARE APPRECIATED! Jan Haberman continues to assist Cathy as she is able, being a full time care giver.

## Convention Report - Katherine Bell

by Katherine Bell

This GRHS 37th Annual International Convention was my second visit to Bismarck, North Dakota.

My mother was born at Alta, near Washburn N.D. She graduated from McClusky High School in 1933 and attended two years of college at Fargo before heading west to Portland, OR. Mother soon joined her three older sisters in the Lodi-Stockton, CA area and that is where the twins and I were born. When I was a second grader, we all moved north with a new stepfather to 120 acres in the hills six miles from Clatskanie, OR where my youngest brother was born.

It is not entirely difficult to imagine what it must have felt like to the youngsters of my great-grandparents and grandparents to find themselves in a different world away from all that was familiar. But they had a whole group move together keeping their immediate family ties intact except for the one who stayed behind to die in a march to Siberia. We left all our relatives and friends behind and as a kid I felt lost and powerless to do anything about it. Researching the family history has been a quest to find the missing pieces to plug the holes in the puzzle and to console that eight year old little girl of long ago.

For those of us who have a North Dakota connection the Heritage Center at the capitol in Bismarck and the GRHS library are wonderful sources for copying actual documents.

The Heritage Center has microfilm of naturalization papers which can help pin-point the actual place of birth rather than the generalized "Odessa" or "Ukraine" answers great uncles gave. Maps of townships show where the North Dakota homesteads were located. In the GRHS library I have found books made by various branches of my family.

Once again the wonderful GRHS staff and volunteers moved most of the library to the convention site. It was conveniently located in a large room next to where the meals were served and was always in use. If you didn't know where to start a search there always seemed to be someone willing to make a suggestion to point the way.

Although exercise was not a scheduled part of the convention, and walking the halls and down the stairs at the Ramkota Hotel to get to most of the workshops provided it. If more exercise was desired, just walk across the street to a large air conditioned shopping center. I bought the latest Harry Potter book there.

Greg Wusk's presentation about resources available through North Dakota Heritage Center, which I had already used, inspired me to go back and use the computer to look for vital statistic information. I am ready to go back and do more research! Regarding naturalization records, if before 1906, there is limited information, until 1922 the wife, and to 1940s the children, were all included in the husband's naturalization papers.

Alex and Mike Herzog's presentation on "Three



**Katherine Bell, left, is sitting with Wilbert and Louise Harsch at a Hoffnungstal table for village night.**

*Ways of Preserving a Family History* explains that there can be different approaches. Their father kept a chronicle and his story was a philosophical approach; another story was a practical approach. Don't be put off by multiple stories of the same event. Each person sees the story through their own filter. The story doesn't have to be in chronological order and can include places, times, experiences, vignettes, stories, with photos, footnotes, history notes, maps. To help with their books they had many recording sessions of various lengths at various locations.

Shari Huettl, after producing a documentary about her mom and family, started a business to help others preserve their history and stories. She interviews people, mixes in pictures and home videos and creates DVDs. She also teaches classes on the subject. *"Hearing others stories helps trigger one's own."*

The "Hoff Girls" presentation was of travel to the Ukraine in 2006 and even though their visual part malfunctioned, the talk was just as interesting without the pictures. We all had mind pictures as they spoke. We could almost hear Cindy singing in the crumbling old churches and see the villagers drawn to the sounds.

Ron Vossler said stories don't have to be perfect and true—"here's a family story". Being "too careful about the little stuff is a hindrance to writing", "writing is like a piece of sausage, lots of bits of stuff in it." Include jokes, fragment stories, folklore, genealogy, intuition, day dreaming, and smell memory. His smell memory includes wood smoke, manure, and mowed grass. Also, "Well, nothing was said,"—that is history too.

Gayla Gray gave a great piece of advice: "Document your sources." Websites won't always come back the way they were, so note date of website and print a copy of the site, as it contains the URL.

The most interesting workshop to me was one that

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## It's a Long Way to Bismarck

*By Kurt Radtke, 2nd VP*  
Although Bismarck, ND is only some 1100 miles from Portland (as the crow flies), Jane and I added almost 6000 miles onto the odometer of our new (2005) Ford Taurus to attend the annual convention of GRHS in July of this year, 2007.



**Kurt and Jane Radtke**

Since we are always long on time and short on money (a credit card sure helps), we decided to take a shortcut and take the northern route through Canada, since we were going to also meet a newly-discovered relative in Yorkton, Sask. We entered Canada at Ossoyoos, B.C., and traveling east, we soon entered Dhokobor country, had lunch at a Ukrainian restaurant in Grand Forks, the metropolis of this area. Two things we learned quickly: The Canadian Dollar is almost even with the American Dollar (no more 75¢ to \$1 ours). And when the posted speed says 50, you better not go 50 mph, as I did in the town of Yahk, B.C., where a member of the RCMP told me he was giving me a good deal when he handed me a ticket for \$138 and told me also to have a good time. I put the Ford on cruise control and didn't stop until we drove into Regina, Sask., a delightful midsize town that I last visited in 1955 when I still had lots of relatives living there. They have all moved west to B.C. many years ago because it gets "too damm cold" in the winter. We had intended to stay in or near Yorkton for several days but were told by our newly discovered cousin that he would rather meet us in Bismarck at the convention in order to save us the 8 hour trip from Regina. So we headed to Brandon, Man., home of the Wheatkings.

Crossing back to the states on Highway 10/281 caused our well-meaning border guards to ask us some serious questions: Do you carry firearms? No! Where are you going? Bismarck! Why are crossing here? I took a shortcut! Do you have any contraband? Only the GROW Banner! Do you have any Cuban cigars? I already smoked them! Do you have any alcohol? I already drank it! (a good thing Alice and Arlene took the gift box of Oregon wine to the Convention.) After all these questions I still had to open the trunk, and he also looked under the car with his mirror. I thanked him for his doing his duty to keep our country safe from foreigners and terrorists. I was sure glad I was back home in our country, safe and sound, without being unduly harassed.

Next stop, Crookston, Minnesota, where many of the Woodburn Russian Old Believers are resettling, to get away from the overpopulated Willamette Val-

ley in Oregon. A party in our honor was well attended by many of our old friends and acquaintances. We were also greeted by the unofficial state bird of Minnesota, the biting mosquito.

On to Detroit Lakes (east of Fargo), where we spent several days with some old and dear friends, and where I finally caught my first Walleye (after 5 previous trips to this area). Walleye is probably the best tasting fish in the world – if properly prepared, and washed down with a bottle or two of Grain Belt Beer. While I played golf, Jane spent her time in the local quilt shops.

On to Bismarck, we got as far as Jamestown where we stopped for the night, to rest and to also see the albino buffalo. Never caught a glimpse of him, but met some nice older people in this town (the young ones have all moved away). I like to take shortcuts and looking at the map of North Dakota, I decided to take the southern route to Bismarck, by way of Edgely, Kulm, (where we had a Krautburger for lunch) Fredonia, Lehr, and finally the metropolis of southern North Dakota, Wishek. We loaded up on some homemade wurst in a little grocery store in town (no Wal-Mart until you get to Bismarck, where there are two of them) and didn't stop any more in Linton, Hazelton or Moffit, until we got to our hotel next to the convention headquarters.

After we registered at the Ramkota Hotel Best Western for the convention, we went back to our hotel and had us a good meal of wurst, brot and Grain Belt.

The next three days were strictly devoted to the convention: workshops, bookstore visits, opening ceremony, sing-a-longs, socials, chapter officer meeting, business meeting, lunches, dinners, memorial service, and meeting with my cousin from Yorkton. No time for anything else. Never a dull moment.

Next stop, the Haas Homestead, near Zeeland, (did stop in Napoleon to fill the tank with Supreme unleaded – cheaper than regular – at a one-pump service station, where the attendant pumped the gas and washed the bugs off the window), on our way to Luverne, Minnesota to visit Jane's brother and sister-in-law.

Seems like we won't have to import oil from the Arab countries any more. Every farmer in the Midwest is growing either corn or soybeans or rape seed (canola) for ethanol fuel. After we figure in the subsidies paid to our farmers, it would be a lot cheaper to use fossil-based fuel.

Ashley and Ellendale were only dots on the map. Did stop in Aberdeen, SD. A thriving community where a chocolate covered cone of soft ice cream from a 1950's type Tastee-Freeze did wonders to our

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## It's a Long Way to Bismarck, cont.

palate.

Interstate 29 in SD offers very little for the tourist, or anyone else, until you get to Sioux Falls, SD. Therefore, US 75 through Minnesota offers more scenery through Canby and Pipestone, destination Beaver Creek in extreme SW Minnesota. Visiting, playing golf in Rock Rapids, IA, fishing and sightseeing in the area took up a whole week.

Next stop was St. Cloud, Minn, in the center of the state, on the Mississippi River, crossing bridges several times over the river (they didn't collapse); even fished for bass off the bank of this mighty(?) river.

Jane's family reunion for the descendents of four Ritter brothers who settled in Minnesota around 1856 and had emigrated from the old German (Roman) town of Trier.

About 1000 people attended. Sunday on to Fargo, where a German Folk Festival was to be held at the Rheault Farm, and where Ron Vossler, a professor at UND, was to give a presentation of German humor (is there such a thing?) Ron is a member of GRHS, and was also a presenter at the Convention in Bismarck.

Met several other people at this festival who had

also been at the convention. I was told that the local chapter in Fargo (and several other chapters in North Dakota) had disbanded due to a lack in membership; that is sad! Left Fargo at noon and traveled to Big Timber in Montana. Nothing much to see from the freeway.

Got home the next day – Monday – by way of Missoula and Lewiston, a wonderful drive until all you see are wheat fields. It was a wonderful trip, a great convention, but there is nothing like home – Oregon.

Casper, Wyoming will be our next convention, a joint effort of GRHS and AHSGR in 2008.

The following GROW members attended the Bismarck Convention: Katherine Bell, Leon and Kay Hagen, Arlene Maston, Kurt and Jane Radtke, Bob Schauer, Alice Summers, Harley and Sharon Miller, Frank Ruscheinsky and Robert Schuh. Also several people from our area attended who are affiliated with GRHS, but not with GROW.

## Bob Schuh Honored

**B**ob Schuh, GRHS Kutschurgan Village Project Coordinator, was given a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Convention in Bismarck. Bob was honored at the Friday night banquet for all his work done in Kutschurgan Village/RIG plus for all he has contributed at the Annual GRHS Conventions.

President Val said in part, "Bob was honored for his tireless, ongoing efforts to bring information out of the Kutschurgan and to CONNECT THE DOTS... something he has done very well!

He is a man who quietly goes about his business with no personal gain or personal agenda, doing great work. Bob was into his dedicated journey way before any of us even heard of GRHS!"

Congratulations Bob for this well-deserved award!



**Bob Schuh, GRHS  
Kutschurgan Village  
Project Coordinator**

## Convention Report, cont.



**Carol Guymer talking about her quilts.**

I didn't intend to see, but when I looked into the Grand Room, next to where we dined, and saw all the beautiful and varied quilts, I entered. And then as I watched and listened to Carol Guymer I was completely captured by her disarming charm, and imagination. (I have made a DVD from my digital camera's movie mode clips.)

Sing-a-longs and kuchen in the courtyard, wonderful meals, musical entertainment, speeches, youth awards, elections, and Regional Interest Groups round out what I attended. Since I was staying with an aunt in Bismarck I did not go to programs in the evening. I was tired.

Next year we meet in Wyoming.

## Convention Report - Alice Summers and Arlene Maston

by Arlene Maston

On Sunday, July 15, Alice and I finished literally “stuffing” my Camry with enough clothes, shoes and other necessities of life with the intention of reaching Missoula, MT by that evening. I arrived at Alice’s house early that morning and then we had to begin eliminating what didn’t fit. I had been packing my things in the car all night and when I realized Alice’s luggage, refrigerated cooler, etc. still had to go in, I had to un-pack some of mine. Anyway, we finally got everything we couldn’t live without and promptly got on I-84 Eastbound.

Alice got behind the wheel, and I took a much needed 3-hour nap. To discourage us from stopping at a truck stop and ordering biscuits and gravy, we had our cooler packed with low-fat cheese, turkey, ham, fruit, water, etc. Nonetheless, when we stopped for gas, we toddled into an adjoining diner and split a vegetarian omelet. We had reservations at the Day’s Inn in Missoula so Alice set the “cruise” at 80mph and we just flew to Montana. Still can’t believe we got 36mpg most of the time. That was great because it seemed whenever we needed gas it was always over \$3.00 a gallon.

We had some funny experiences with that refrigerated cooler because it seemed our rooms were always on the second floor with no elevator. I don’t know how Alice managed to get these “Brad Pitt-type” gentlemen to carry it up and down the stairs for us. Inevitably while I was still fussing about how we could possibly get that cooler up a long flight of stairs, suddenly she appeared with help.

The second day we drove on to Miles City. The scenery was spectacular, but there was a lot of smoke in the air as Montana was experiencing some forest fires right off I-90. It would have been kind of scary, but right next door to our room a forest firefighter was staying and he had his big rig loaded with flame retardant nearby. He told us he had been spraying fires all day from a helicopter and that they were finally getting a handle on the situation. That was



Arlene Maston



Alice Summers

nice to hear. By the way, we experienced temperatures between 95 and 105 degrees most of the way. We didn’t waste much time at the rest stops since the heat was stifling and we couldn’t wait to get back in the air-conditioned car.

The next day we left Miles City for Minot, ND. Many of my relatives, including my paternal grandparents and two siblings are buried in the St. Peter and Paul Cemetery in Karlsruhe, ND. I was born in Velva and still have a lot of family in McHenry County. Alice was looking for relatives with the sur-

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St. Peter and Paul Cemetery, Karlsruhe, ND.

### Share Your Stories!

**Research requested for  
Germans from Russia  
in Portland in the early years.**

*Where did they live?*

*What were their customs?*

*Where did they go to  
school, work, or church?*

We have received this request from  
an individual out of the area.

If you would like to take this on,  
it would be great information to  
put in the newsletter as well.

Please contact: Lola M Weber,  
106 Victoria St, Longview, WA  
98632, or call 360-423-8359 or  
email: [hunter6806@msn.com](mailto:hunter6806@msn.com)

## Genetic Genealogy: A New Tool for Genealogists

Also of interest to genealogists is mitochondrial DNA. Mitochondria are organelles found in each cell that have their own DNA that is distinct from the DNA found in the nucleus. Mitochondrial DNA has 16,569 base pairs arranged in a loop, of which 1449 base pairs found in 3 hypervariable regions don't code for anything. The first woman tested was from England and her sequence became known as the Cambridge Reference Sequence (CRS). Mitochondrial DNA test results are reported as the differences in any one person's mitochondrial DNA with respect to the CRS.

Mitochondrial DNA is always passed down from the mother to her children. Thus, mitochondrial DNA testing provides information about what the mitochondrial DNA sequence was for any given individual's maternal line as far as they can trace it back. Mitochondrial DNA mutates relatively infrequently. On the average there is only a 3% chance that there will be a mutation in any of the bases in the mitochondrial DNA sequence in any given generation. Thus, if two people share the same great grandmother on the maternal line of descent then we would expect that those two people would have identical mitochondrial DNA sequences, or at the most have one base that was different in their mitochondrial DNA if a mutation had occurred somewhere along the line as it was being passed down to each of these two people from their great grandmother.

Mitochondrial DNA testing can be utilized by genealogists to help prove or disprove suspected relationships between potential ancestors. I am currently having selected people tested who descend from the early Loewen families in the Chortitza Colony on the maternal line of descent to help give me a clue as to which early Loewen family my great great great grandmother Maria Loewen (d. ca 1853)(Grandma #55831) was a member of.

Since humans also have 44 autosomal chromosomes containing a total about 3 billion base pairs there is also a huge amount of information in these chromosomes that is potentially of interest to genealogists. It appears that autosomal DNA will be of most help in determining relationships between people who share a common ancestor within the past 6 to 8 generations. Each parent passes on 1/2 of their autosomal DNA to each of their children. Siblings share 50% of the same autosomal DNA markers and first cousins share 12.5% of the same markers. The more distantly related two people are to each other the fewer autosomal markers they would share in common.

Mennonite genealogists have particularly been utilizing DNA testing during the past three years. Amelia Reimer and Glenn Penner began a DNA project for Mennonites and the Amish with the company

Family Tree DNA ([www.familydna.com](http://www.familydna.com)) in 2004. So far, there are 158 members who are participating in that project. Of those, 101 people are of Low German Mennonite ancestry. Just recently Glenn Penner and Richard Thiessen have recently set up a web site at [www.mennonitedna.com](http://www.mennonitedna.com) that is focused solely on the DNA results for Mennonites of Low German ancestry. The long term goals are to determine the number of male progenitors there were for each Mennonite surname, to determine how many female Mennonite progenitors there were, and to use the DNA results to complement traditional genealogical research in determining relationships among various ancestors.

The DNA results that have come in from the testing done thus far give fascinating insight into the geographic origin of various Mennonite surnames. The Y chromosome results strongly suggest that the progenitors of Mennonites with the surnames Epp, Loewen, Wiebe, and Hiebert, as well one line of Janzens and one line of Wielers, were Frisians and thus originally lived in the area of Friesland, which is located in the northeastern portion of the Netherlands. The results for Mennonites with the surnames Fehr, Thiessen, Neufeld, Friesen, and Wall indicate that their progenitors were of Anglo-Saxon origin, suggesting that they originally lived somewhere in the vicinity of the Netherlands or northwestern Germany. The data for Mennonites with the surnames Dyck, Bartsch, and Reimer would suggest that their progenitors lived along the coast of Europe, possibly as far south as Iberia at one point. The data for Mennonites with the surnames Froese, Ratzlaff, as well as one line of Wielers and one line of Schroeders, would suggest that they were part of a common European variety called the Atlantic Modal Haplotype.

Family Tree DNA is an excellent company, but participation among Mennonites has been limited by the costs of the testing. Typical tests, such as the 37-marker Y chromosome test for males, costs \$189 (U. S.) and the mitochondrial DNA test for Hypervariable Regions 1 and 2 costs \$189 (U. S.) if ordered through the Mennonite DNA project. Due to the high costs associated with DNA testing with companies such as Family Tree DNA many genealogists have instead been using the Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation in Salt Lake City, Utah to do their DNA testing since the foundation will do the testing for free. The Sorenson Foundation was established in 1999 and is funded by a very wealthy philanthropist named James Sorenson. In December 2005 I discovered that one could readily extract one's DNA markers from the

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## Genetic Genealogy, cont.

foundation's online Y chromosome database at <http://www.smgf.org/pages/ydatabase.aspx> if they simply changed the marker values on the search screen until all the correct values appeared. The option of free testing led a large number of Mennonites to send samples to the Sorenson Foundation this year. So far, at least 600 Mennonites have sent DNA samples to the Sorenson Foundation. It usually takes at least 6 to 12 months for one's results to appear in the foundation's databases.

The Sorenson Foundation is currently testing 43 Y chromosome makers, the 3 hypervariable regions of the mitochondrial DNA, and 300 autosomal DNA markers. Their mitochondrial DNA database was released in July 2006 and is available at <http://www.smgf.org/mtdna/search.aspx>. Their autosomal DNA database will be released in about a year. The foundation is comparing the autosomal markers found in the Mennonites who have sent in samples with the genealogical data in the Grandma database and other genealogical information to infer the various autosomal markers that each of our Mennonite ancestors carried in their DNA. This information will then be used to determine relationships among people that can't be determined through traditional genealogical research.

At this point a DNA sample from anyone of German-Russian ancestry, particularly from older people, would be helpful. Ideally, it would be best to have the oldest cohort of German-Russians tested by the Sorenson Foundation. If you would be willing to contribute a DNA sample, you could order a free test kit from the Sorenson Foundation from their web site at [http://www.smgf.org/pages/request\\_kit.aspx](http://www.smgf.org/pages/request_kit.aspx). All that is required for the test is a sample of cells from the inside of your mouth that comes from rinsing your mouth with a mouthwash and a copy of your pedigree chart.

I also have test kits that the Sorenson Foundation has provided me with that anyone coming to one of the GROW meetings could use to send in a sample. Feel free to talk to me about being tested if you are interested in this. I would be happy to collect a DNA sample from you and send it to the Sorenson Foundation. I also have kits that you could use to collect samples from other relatives if you want to get them from me.

I would be willing to extract your results for you and send you my interpretation of them when they come in. I have written instructions on how to extract both one's Y chromosome results and one's mitochondrial DNA results from the SMGF databases. Those instructions may be found at <http://www.mennonitedna.com>. If anyone has questions about DNA testing in general feel free to contact me at [tjanzen@comcast.net](mailto:tjanzen@comcast.net).

### 2007-08 GROW Board of Directors

**Roger Haas, President/Liaison**

8618 SE 36th Ave. (503) 659-8248  
Portland, OR 97222 rahaas@haasfamily.us  
*Term ends: 2010*

**Jan Haberman, 1st Vice President**

8110 SE Madison (503) 252-5480  
Portland, OR 97215 haberman988@msn.com  
*Term ends: 2008*

**Kurt Radtke, 2nd Vice President, Programs**

20023 Quinalt Dr. 503-518-8181  
Oregon City, OR 97045  
*Term ends: 2009*

**Jeanette McDermid, Secretary**

327 SE Elliot Ave (503) 666-6939  
Gresham, OR 97080-7726 toadlilyunique@comcast.net  
*Term ends: 2010*

**Alice Summers, Treasurer**

130 SE 155th Place (503) 775-9929  
Portland, OR 97233 sewsum4u@msn.com  
*Term ends: 2008*

**Arlene Maston, Membership**

8202 NE Going St. (503) 255-5493  
Portland, OR 97220-4860 amaston@aol.com  
*Term ends: 2009*

**Oscar Geizler, Fundraising**

803 5th Ave (503) 656-1802  
Oregon City, OR 97045 oscarandlorraine@msn.com  
*Term ends: 2010*

**Ell Schiermeister, Member at Large**

12010 SE McGillivray 360-253-2499  
Vancouver, WA 98683  
*Term ends: 2009*

**Leona Koth Hix, Member at Large**

2704 Haworth Ave. 503-538-4508  
Newberg, OR 97132-1918 JWHIX@comcast.net  
*Term ends: 2008*



**Maxine Daily, Director Emeritus**  
**Clifford Haberman, Director Emeritus**  
**Robert Majhor, Director Emeritus**  
**Ed Weber, Director Emeritus**

## Convention Report - Alice Summers and Arlene Maston, cont.

name Keller, and we found numerous graves with Keller on the gravestones. We stopped at the post office in Karlsruhe and inquired about the Kellers. The longtime postman said there were still some Kellers in an assisted living residence on the highway going back to Velva. Alice made a note of the information and plans to contact someone there to see if any of them are related to her family.

We then went to Velva, where my aunt and uncle owned the Star City Café in the 50's. I would take the Soo Line railroad from Wimbledon (near Jamestown) and go to Velva to work in the café for several weeks during the summer months. I was surprised to see it is still there, but not in business at the moment. We went to the café down the street and had a wonderful breakfast with homemade bread toast (I know that is not low-fat!). We spoke with the owner and she said the Star City has had many owners in the last few years, but they just can't seem to support two restaurants in Velva. I remember when there were three cafes, and we would have lines waiting outside for lunch.

Later that afternoon we drove to Minot to spend the night. It would have been after dark before we got to Bismarck. I have only one minor criticism of North Dakota – the scarcity of road signs. Even in daylight it is easy to make a wrong turn. Also, we had run into some road construction, and we did not know what was ahead of us on the way to Bismarck. We arrived in Bismarck on Wednesday afternoon, checked into the Ramkota Hotel, registered for the convention and tried to get our bearings. Alice did fine, but I was always lost.

Thursday morning, Alice attended the Beresan workshop before she and I participated in the Official Convention Opening Ceremony at 10:00 AM. We represented GROW by carrying our banner to the front of the assembly. Alice and I then spent the rest of the morning and until the workshops began in the library. We had many favorable comments about our banner (Thank you, Maxine and Jan Prunier).

Alice attended the *Bessarabian Area Workshop* conducted by Dale Wahl. I attended the *Kutschurgan Area Workshop* led by Margaret Rehwalt and Dennis Roth as well as the *Using the Internet for Genealogy Research* by Gayla Gray which followed.

I believe Alice attended all three workshops that afternoon as well, but since our interests (villages) differed, we did not always go together.

Friday, both Alice and I spent a great deal of time doing research at the library. I bought several more books also. Alice went to the workshop entitled *From Ukraine to Spokane* since her grandmother first settled in that area. We both went to the *Use & Navigation of the GRHS Website* by Gayla Gray and Rich Aspenleiter. I think we picked up some good new information.



**Karlsruhe is a very small town near Velva and Minot in the northwestern part of the state. It was named that because the grass is very thick and a gorgeous shade of green which makes it look like velvet, thus Velva. The Mouse River runs along the highway and is its source of water.**

Friday afternoon some of my high school classmates from Wimbledon/Jamestown came to Bismarck. That morning I was talking with Betty Brosz from the James River chapter. She told me that her uncle, Herbert Bertsch, taught at Wimbledon High School for several years and that she had brought him from Jamestown to Bismarck with her. She graciously offered to go get him and his wife and bring them to the hotel so he could see his former students. What a wonderful surprise to see our biology/German teacher after almost 50 years. Later that evening Alice joined us for dinner at the Red Lobster.

I had been in constant contact with my husband during the time I was gone, and I could tell it was time for me to cut the trip as short as I could and get back to Portland.

Alice and I attended the Chapter Officers Meeting hosted by President Val Wangler on Saturday morning. We had already packed up our things and with some reluctance began our trek back to Portland. Unfortunately it seemed we had more luggage than when we started the trip, but that didn't prevent us from cramming several bags of Dakota Maid flour, chokecherry and huckleberry jams, syrups and honey wherever we could find a free inch.

I always get a BIG lump in my throat whenever I leave North Dakota. Although my family struggled (as did most) with the extreme weather and economic conditions, it is funny how one tends to forget the bad and really only remembers the good. I always appreciate the wonderful people, refreshing clean air and no crowds.

Thank you to the GRHS host chapter for an excellent convention. I heard many positive comments about the convention in general. The GROW chapter knows very well how much work putting on a convention entails. Thank you again for a job well done.

# GROW 2007 Quarterly Calendar

O C T O B E R 2 0 0 7						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 Columbus Day	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Board Meeting	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 Chapter Meeting	29	30	31 Halloween			
N O V E M B E R 2 0 0 7						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Board Meeting	14	15	16	17
18 Chapter Meeting	19	20	21	22 Thanksgiving	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 7						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1 Newsletter Deadline
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29
30 New Years Eve	31					



**Chapter Meetings are held at:  
Deutches Haus**

**7901 SE Division, Portland, OR**

**Doors open at 1:00 pm**

**Meeting starts at 2:00 pm until about 5:00 pm**

**Coming from I-205 South take Exit 19 Ramp and turn West on Division St., then turn left and go to 7901.**

**Coming from I-205 North take Exit 19 Ramp onto Division St. Go West on Division to 7901.**

## Chapter Meetings

**23 Sept. 2007** Convention Reports; Family History Workshop

**28 Oct. 2007** Family History Workshop

**18 Nov. 2007** Family History Workshop and Thanksgiving Memories celebrated by GROW members.

**Dec. 2007 - No Chapter Meeting**

The Board changed the regularly scheduled Board Meetings for October and November to Tues, Oct. 16 and Tues, Nov. 13.

Potluck starts at 12:30 pm The membership is welcome to attend.

Board Meetings are held at Alice Summers home:  
130 SE 155th Place, Portland

## Fundraising Opportunities—

### At No Cost To You!!

- Electronic Newsletters. Receive your newsletters via email, and save GROW in postage costs. Thank You!
- Albertson's Scan Cards - Contact **Roger Haas** for your card if you don't already have one. Thank You!

### Other Opportunities to Help...

- **Oscar Geiszler** is recycling inkjet and laser cartridges. Bring your empty cartridges to Chapter Meetings or contact Oscar directly. He can also help you receive approximately 50% discount on refilled cartridges.
- Visit **Joe and Geri Gander, Cathy Lobb** before/after the Chapter Meetings to view the fascinating collection of books, audio CDs, videos, etc. that are available for sale. Also take a look at the tote bags, key chains and magnets, all with the GROW logo.

# Pay Your Dues Directly to GROW

You may have read in the Heritage Review that members should send their dues DIRECTLY to GRHS. That may be fine for some Chapters that haven't the desire for membership recruitment or don't care about their membership status.

GROW does not wish to WAIT up to three months for the GRHS to provide GROW's LIST OF PAID MEMBERS. Hence, the Chapter doesn't know whether the member is a paid GRHS member or not, plus the Chapter does NOT know the Members, such as having become a LIFE member? Even more important. WHEN did the member pay?

GROW has had an excellent service record, commencing about 15 October of requesting the following year's dues for both GRHS & GROW to be paid at a Chapter Meeting or by mail in (1) One check for both the National Dues and the local Chapter donation: a convenience to the Member. GROW records any changes in addresses, phone numbers, family name searches, added or deleted ancestral villages, birthday, and anniversary dates. Usually within 1 or 2 weeks, GROW forwards the national dues with other member dues to Bismarck. GROW DOES NOT

HAVE TO WAIT UP TO THREE MONTHS to get some of the information back and YOU will NOT have a delay of getting your password or Heritage Review.

GRHS sends its reports to the Chapter in January, April and July. GRHS changed its format in 2007 and has NOT provided in its new report the Members' GRHS number to match what the Members share as their membership number, current E-mail addresses, or other additional information found on the Member's application.

GROW provides more frequent & regular Membership reminders while GRHS sends out one reminder in January. Members are busy and sometimes lay papers aside and forget, are on vacation, or whatever. They respond with a gentle phone call or E-mail memo. GROW, being the largest, or next to the largest GRHS Chapter, has done MORE for enrolling GRHS members with about 150 families on the GRHS Membership rolls in 2007.

It is also obvious that the 42 GROW Associate or friends of GROW, choosing not to pay the National

*Continued on page 12.*



## GROW Membership Application

### Germans from Russia Oregon and Washington



Years of Membership \_\_\_\_\_  New  Renewal

Birth Month (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Anniversary Month (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (include area code) \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of ancestral village(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Family surnames \_\_\_\_\_

Names of adults in household desiring membership cards \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my remittance of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Membership fees are due annually on January 1.

#### GROW Newsletter/Operation Donation (minimum \$5.00)

GRHS Membership \$40.00 • GRHS Lifetime Membership \$650.00 (\$130.00 per year)

**Make checks payable to GROW - US Currency Only • Mail to: Arlene Maston, 8202 NE Going St., Portland, OR 97220-4860**

**Please send email updates and address corrections to Arlene Maston - amaston@aol.com**

#### GROW Quarterly Newsletter Deadlines: September 1 • December 1 • March 1 • June 1

All submissions are welcome. If you would like any materials returned, please include a SASE.

Send articles to: [icprunier@comcast.net](mailto:icprunier@comcast.net) or by mail at 1218 Pacific Ave., Everett, WA 98201

## Pay Your Dues Directly to GROW, cont.

GRHS Dues, are interested in the services rendered by GROW. They feel that they get their money's worth. They may attend their Chapter Programs/Meetings, but they don't hold offices.

GROW Members paying directly to Bismarck delays our Membership Chair from quickly compiling the information and putting together the Membership Directory that allows you to have a copy.

Look at the GROW Roster and see all the bits of information on it. You get NOTHING like this from Bismarck. A lot of changes occur in one year. HELP THE GROW MEMBERSHIP CHAIR. Bring your dues/donations to the Chapter meeting or send your combined GROW/GRHS check DIRECTLY TO GROW in Oct or when you respond. THANK YOU!

### Newsletter Submissions Welcomed!

Please send articles, photos, stories, anecdotes, recipes, etc. to:

Janice Prunier, Editor • 1218 Pacific Ave., Everett, WA 98201

[jcprunier@comcast.net](mailto:jcprunier@comcast.net)

*Deadline for next issue is December 1, 2007.*



Germans from Russia Heritage Society

#### **GROW Chapter**

8618 SE 36th Avenue  
Portland, OR 97222