

North Star Chapter

<http://www.northstarchapter.org>

Preserving the heritage of the Germans from Russia, in dual affiliation with the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) and the Germans from Russia Historical Society (GRHS).

“Urban Pioneer - or How I got into a Career in Computers!”

**Saturday, September 22,
2012, 1:00-3:00 pm
Berea Lutheran Church,
7538 Emerson Avenue S.,
Richfield, MN 55423**

1 p.m. Short business meeting.

1:45 Coffee time - Library will be open.

**2 p.m. Urban Pioneer – featuring
longtime North Star member Don
Weidenbach**

The North Star Chapter is made up of many “Urban Pioneers.” Most of us grew up in rural areas or small towns. Many of us descend from an agriculture-driven economy but have chosen to live, work and raise our families in urban centers. We bring to those urban centers the values and work ethic that our pioneer ancestors brought to the Great Plains over a century ago. **Don Weidenbach** will tell us about his pioneering experience in the early years of the computer age.



Don was born in Heil, North Dakota, in 1921. His family moved to Scotland, South Dakota, before his first birthday. Following high school graduation from Scotland High School in 1939, Don attended South Dakota State College, and earned his BS degree in Electrical Engineering in June 1943. He served in the US Army Signal Corps as a First Lieutenant, 1943-1946.

“In the fall of 1946 I was discharged from the Army, having served 38 months in the Signal Corps, first in training, then overseas in radio communications. By an unusual set of circumstances I came to the Twin Cities looking for a job, and by even stranger circumstances got a job in the brand new computer industry with Sperry Univac, 1946 - 1976. It was a great 30 year journey,” said Don.

Please join us for our first program of the autumn season and hear Don’s fascinating stories. Our library will be open and refreshments will be served.

October meeting is Saturday October 27 with guest speaker **Frieda Hofer Brehm Schlecht** talking about her trek from Bessarabia to North Dakota via Poland and Germany! See details on page 5.



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Please Take Note

“The Farm at Pony Gulch,” the memoirs of former North Star member, Ed Knalson, edited by his daughter, North Star member Patsy Knalson Ramberg, is now available for sale through the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection at NDSU. Visit <http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc>.

Many of you may recall 33 years ago when six Americans were rescued by the Canadian Embassy after militant students raided the American Embassy in Tehran, Iran, keeping 52 Americans hostage for over a year. A movie about the daring rescue, called “Argo” is scheduled for release in October 2012, directed by and starring Ben Affleck. Lee Schatz, a Department of Agriculture attaché from Idaho, was one of the six Americans rescued. He is German-Russian, and a second cousin of North Star member Cindy Miller (their great-grandparents came from Kronental, Crimea, in 1910). Schatz will be portrayed by TV and film actor Rory Cochrane (who is of Irish and Indian descent). A trailer for the movie can be found at <http://www.imdb.com> and entering “Argo” into the search box.

Have you checked out the SOAR database on the AHGRS website lately? There have been several changes and additions as the database continues to grow. Some highlights include Life Events postings, new Surname Charts, and the ability to use Paypal to order information. Visit <http://ahsgrsoar.org>.

Member News

Congratulations to Wilma and Robert Sellin, who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary in August.

Happy Birthday!

September: Janet Flegel, Elvera Hofmann, Marv Presler, Clarence Wanner, Arnie Zimmerman

October: Roy Becker, Ron Beauchane, Lucille Elrite, Mayo Flegel, Marv Geske, Helen Kleingartner, Myrle Reiswig, Alice Rutzen

Happy Anniversary!

September: Nancy Gertner & Paul Maggitti, Marlene & Chris Huber

October: Pat & Ray Current, Bernadine & Roger Kuhn, Cindy Miller & Sean Beaton

Snowbirds:

If you have a winter address, please notify the Membership Chair, Chuck Kurle, or assistant Vicki Kurle, or Newsletter Editor Cindy Miller.

Chapter President's Message

By Ron Scherbenski

The summer of 2012 is over, and it has been a good one for the North Star Chapter and for me personally. We had a July meeting where we hosted Dr. Ute Schmidt, the author of *Bessarabia: German Colonists on the Black Sea*. The event was well-attended and we gained some new members as well. Thanks to all the members who made this happen.

There was a good representation of the North Star Chapter at the GRHS Convention in Bismarck with 15 of us present. Our own Jim Gessele (who translated Dr. Schmidt's book) was at the presentations to assist Dr. Schmidt when she was unsure of her English. He also translated for a presentation put on by Bessarabiendeutscher Verein. If you are ever in Stuttgart, a visit to the Bessarabian Museum is a must. Angie Ibarra of the North Star Chapter did a presentation on her book

about Krassna, ND, and Patsy Ramberg did a session on her book *The Farm at Pony Gulch*. Duane Stabler was busy with tech support through the whole convention.

On July 5, 6, and 7, Eureka, SD celebrated 125 years of existence. Most of you know that a lot of Germans from Russia who settled in the Dakotas passed through Eureka, and there are still many who have ties to the area. The community did a great job organizing the celebration and they are very proud of their German-Russian heritage. Being a Eureka myself, I must say I had a great time meeting old friends and partaking in all that was offered. Michael Miller, representing the GRHC from NDSU, and Tom and Jan Stangl, representing GCRA, were there with displays and books for sale.

Carol Just and Nancy Gertner have been busy arranging the fall schedule, and I hope to see many of you at our upcoming events.

Upcoming Events:

October 27, 2012

"Frieda's Journey - from Bessarabia to America"

November 17, 2012

Biannual Genealogy Meeting
Presentation: "Their Century"
by David Schlosser

December 1, 2012

Annual Weihnachtsfest

Our annual holiday celebration with a pot luck meal, some music, and sometimes surprises for the good girls and boys!

January 26, 2013

Documentary: "At Home in Russia, At Home on the Prairie"

The newest documentary film of the Germans from Russia series produced by Prairie Public TV.



SEI UNSER GAST COOKBOOK MAKES A GREAT HOLIDAY GIFT

Look for cookbook sales at future chapter events to stock up on gifts. Our German Russian collection of recipes makes a great gift for bridal showers, weddings, birthdays, and holidays. An order form can be found on page 5.



Chapter Librarian Bernie Becker checks out chapter library materials to chapter members at upcoming meetings in September, October, and November.

Thank you Librarian Bernie, and to chapter member Marilyn Brink for assisting with the library. Thank you John Sailor and Elvera Hoffman for your recent donations.

Chapter Members: Please remember to return your summer reading materials!

LIBRARY CORNER

by **Bernie Becker**

I'm looking forward to some of those rainy fall days when I can settle down in my favorite easy chair and spend time in a good book or two. I hope you, too, have your reading glasses polished and ready because we have new and donated books as well as "oldies but goodies" for you to check out at our next meeting.

Recent Purchases include:

***Collectivization in the Soviet Union: German Letters to America, 1927-1932* by Janice Huber Stangl.** Published by Glueckstal Colonies Research Association in cooperation with the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, this work presents, with comments, translated letters written by village correspondents to German-language newspapers published in the United States. These letters present a view of life in the former German colonist villages of South Russia during the earliest years of the Soviet Union in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

***Russian-German Settlements in the United States* by Richard Sallet, translated by LaVern J. Rippley and Armand Bauer.** This good, basic research book replaces the one that disappeared from our library some time ago. May this be a gentle reminder to check your shelves and bring back books you may have checked out, misplaced, or forgot. We don't even charge fines—we are just glad to get them in circulation again.

As mentioned in former Library Corners, we received a large box of book donations from John Sailor and Elvera Hoffman. These books have now been processed and those that specifically address our German Russian heritage are in the library, and are listed on our Library Inventory that can be found on our website. Look for others--good and interesting--that will be placed on our "Free" table at chapter meetings.

A Free table example is ***The Inextinguishable Symphony—A true story of music and love in Nazi Germany*** by Martin Goldsmith. Author Goldsmith writes the story of his Jewish parents, a young couple in Nazi Germany. In tracking the extraordinary story of the author's parents and the Jewish Kulturbund, he unfolds a little-known piece of Holocaust history. A book to be read and passed on. I couldn't put it down.

Frieda's Journey - From Bessarabia to America

Saturday, October 27, 2012

Berea Lutheran Church,
7538 Emerson Avenue S., Richfield, MN

1 p.m. Short business meeting.
1:45 Coffee time - Library will be open.
2 p.m. "Frieda's Journey" with Frieda Hofer Brehm Schlecht of Gackle, North Dakota

Frieda Hofer was born in Hoffnungstal, Bessarabia, in 1930. At the age of ten, Frieda was transported with her family to Chemnitz, Germany. In 1943 the family was moved east to occupied Poland to work the land taken from Polish farmers. Join us as Frieda tells her story of leaving the only home she knew,

enduring the war years in Germany and Poland, the race back to Germany from the advancing Russian Army, life in post-war Germany, and her family's 1951 emigration to Gackle, North Dakota.



North Star Chapter of Minnesota

Cookbook Order Form *Sei Unser Gast*

Cookbooks may also be purchased at Special Chapter events at:

Berea Lutheran Church, 7538 Emerson Avenue South, Richfield, MN 55423

See chapter schedule of events (Page 3) for upcoming opportunities

Cookbook Prices

1 to 4 copies: \$12.95 each. 5 to 9 copies: \$11.95 each.

Save! Buy 10 or more *Sei Unser Gast* cookbooks and pay only \$10.95 each.

Make checks payable to:
"North Star Chapter."

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Number of books ordered : _____

Send form with payment to: **Cookbook Orders, North Star Chapter of Minnesota.**

P.O. Box 583642, Minneapolis, MN 55458-3642.

Postage/Shipping

1 to 4 books: \$2.50 per book (U.S.), \$5.75 (Canada)

5 to 9 books: \$2.00 per book (U.S.), \$4.50 (Canada)

10 or more books: \$1.50 per book (U.S.), \$4.00 (Canada)

CONVENTION REPORT

2012 GRHS Convention – Bismarck

By Cynthia Miller

Fifteen North Star Chapter members attended the 42nd GRHS convention, held in Bismarck July 19-22. We were well-represented with presenters with Jim Gessele on hand for his translation of Dr. Ute Schmidt's book, and Angie Ibarra and Patsy Ramberg presenting on their recently-published books. Board member Duane Stabler handled tech support.

One of the most popular sessions was a presentation by Merv Weiss on the Crimean War, and what its effects were on our ancestors in the area. Merv's presentation will be published in a future issue of the Heritage Review. Another popular event was the premier of a new documentary from Prairie

Public Broadcasting called "At Home in Russia, At Home on the Prairie." This film, the latest in the Germans from Russia series, tells the story of the Kutscherганers. The North Star Chapter will be viewing the film at a future meeting.

One change to the Bismarck location was that the library was not brought to the convention site. Shuttles took convention participants to the GRHS headquarters to buy books and conduct research. This eased work for the headquarters staff and allowed people to experience the library in its home. The GRHS library contains hundreds of rare items, and keeping everything at the headquarters preserved the safety of the items and allowed everyone to use them easily.

The 2013 convention will also be in Bismarck. Check out the GRHS website for photos and more information about conventions.

**Large Chapter Member Attendance at July Convention of Germans from Russia Historical Society
July 19 - 22, 2012
Bismarck, North Dakota**

Members attending (left to right) included Cindy Miller, Carol Just, Mayo and Janet Flegel, Marilyn Brink, Ron Scherbenski, Myrle and Jill Reiswig, Duane Stabler, Glorian Anderson, and Nancy Gertner.





**Special Summer
Event: Meet the
Author:
Dr. Ute Schmidt**

Saturday, July 14
Michael Miller (left),
Director and
Bibliographer, Germans
from Russia Heritage
Collection (GRHC),
The Libraries, North
Dakota State
University, presented
framed book covers to
Dr. Ute Schmidt, author
of *Bessarabia: German
Colonists on the Black
Sea*, and translator
James Gessele of the
North Star Chapter.

**SPECIAL SUMMER EVENT
FEATURED GERMAN
AUTHOR**

by Nancy Gertner

The North Star Chapter was honored to host Dr. Ute Schmidt of Berlin, Germany, author of *Bessarabia: German Colonists on the Black Sea*. Dr. Schmidt was in the Twin Cities on her way to the 42nd annual GRHS convention in Bismarck, ND, where she was the banquet speaker.

Bessarabia: German Colonists on the Black Sea was published by the Deutsches Kulturforum, in Potsdam in 2008. The book describes the origin and form of settlement of the Germans in Bessarabia (today part Moldova and Ukraine), their local autonomy, and their rural culture

steeped in Protestant ethics as well as the coexistence with other nationalities.

North Star Chapter member James T. Gessele translated the book into English and, with the help of a \$5000 grant from the North Star Chapter, North Dakota State University’s Germans from Russia Heritage Collection (GRHC) published the English translation in 2011.

At the Meet the Author Open House, Dr Schmidt displayed large banners highlighting the migration and history of the Germans from Russia who settled in Bessarabia. She also showed a stunning collection of vintage images from Bessarabia and signed copies of her book.

Dr. Schmidt’s presentation was followed by a social hour and an evening meal at the hotel to provide more opportunity for visiting.

More event photos: <http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/outreach/activities/utevisit/authorevent.html>



Time to Renew Membership!

North Star Chapter Membership Form

New Renew Individual Family

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

National Membership: AHSGR GRHS Both

Local dues are \$12 per year per family, plus membership in either AHSGR or GRHS.

AHSGR members please submit \$62 (\$50 for AHSGR, \$12 for North Star).

GRHS members please submit \$12. GRHS requests that you send your national membership (\$50) to GRHS, 1125 W. Turnpike Ave., Bismarck ND 58501

Please make your check payable to North Star Chapter and submit to:

Chuck Kurle, 2040 Highland Dr., Hastings MN 55033

For newsletter greeting: Birthday Month(s) _____ Anniversary Month _____

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