

# Chronicle Unserer Leute



Oregon Chapter of the American Historical  
Society of Germans from Russia

**Volume 44, Issue 2**  
**April-June 2020**



## Catherine II, the Great

Empress of Russia

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# President's Message

Hello Everyone!

Haven't things changed for everyone in just a few short weeks! I'm hoping that you all are safe and healthy and managing to ride out this current corona virus health challenge. Hopefully, if we all follow the recommended procedures, this won't last too long, and we will soon be able to get back to our normal routines.

It has been very disheartening for all of us to be losing our association with Concordia University. It's sad for our chapter and worrisome about what will happen to The Center for Volga German Studies. But, we do want to happily announce that we have made an agreement with the GROW organization (Germans from Russia of Oregon and Washington) to meet jointly with them at the German American Society. I believe there are a number of you who are members of GROW as well as our Oregon Chapter of AHSGR, so you are already familiar with them. Their members tend to be more from the Black Sea colonies, as our group tends to be more from the Volga colonies, but we all share the same German heritage with a stopover in Russia. We have much in common with them, and they are really nice people.



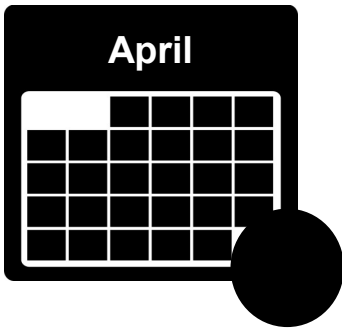
Our meetings will continue to be held on Sunday afternoons at 2:00pm, but will now be on the 4th Sunday of the month. The German American Society building is a very nice facility at 57th and Sandy Blvd. in Portland. Please read our calendar of events carefully for the correct dates of our meetings.

I know you are all anxious to know what will happen to the CVGS library. We have not yet received definite word, although I have been told that several organizations have expressed an interest in it, and a primary goal is to keep the collection intact. It is up to the University to make the final decision, and they hope to have it decided sometime in April. This information was shared with me before the corona virus crisis appeared, so it's possible that may have slowed down the decision-making process, but we will keep you posted on what happens.

So, dear friends, keep safe, keep healthy, and wash your hands!

Carole

# Upcoming Events

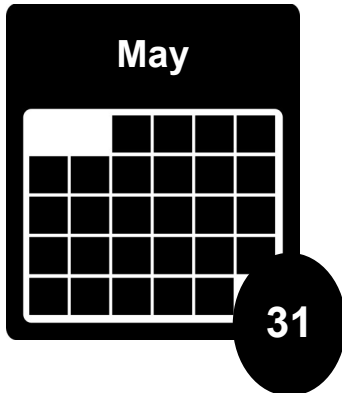


## No Program!

What was to be our final program at Concordia has been cancelled due to the library being closed for social distancing.

GROW will not be having a program either.

The below programs are tentative at this point and quite possibly could be cancelled due to ongoing social distancing precautions. Please check the chapter website or Facebook page for up-to-date information. You can also call/email one of the board members close to the meeting dates to verify.

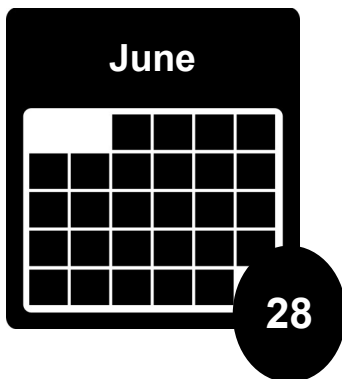


## Book Report about “A Higher Call” by Adi Hartfeil

*Sunday, May 31st, 2020, 2 pm to 4 pm*

*German American Society — 5626 NE Alameda St , Portland  
(NE 57th & Sandy Blvd)*

“A Higher Call” describes a miraculous WW2 battle between a Luftwaffe Ace & a very shot-up US B-17 Bomber, after having bombed the north-western part of Germany.



## German Celebration

*Sunday, June 28th, 2020, 2 pm to 4 pm*

*German American Society — 5626 NE Alameda St , Portland  
(NE 57th & Sandy Blvd)*

A cheerful German type celebration (boy will we need one) --- A Essen, Wurst, Kuchen, Bier, Wein & Musik Fest.

# AHSGR Convention Cancellation

AHSGR has cancelled their international convention this year which was to be held in Pasco, Washington. They have announced that next years convention (tentatively scheduled for July 27th—31st, 2021) will still take place in Pasco. So be sure to pencil in the dates on your 2021 calendar!

## Reinhold Klein (1923 — 2020)

The following obituary for Rev. Reinhold Klein has been submitted by Ed Wagner, long-time member and past president of our Oregon Chapter. Ed's parents, Fred and Anna (Siewardt) Wagner, and Rev. Reinhold Klein's parents were former residents and fellow villagers in the small village of Frank. Thus, they became fellow travellers and friends in their escape from Russia in December of 1921 through 1923. Their tragic journey has been documented in the article "Fugitives From Fear" by Barbara Christy Wagner in the AHSGR Summer Journal of 1982.



Rev. Reinhold Klein became world famous for his remarkable contribution to mankind several months before this portrait was taken, when he delivered Ed's mother to the hospital in San Diego, CA a few hours before Ed's birth!

Reinhold's parents were members of Zion Congregational Church in Portland. Reinhold's brother, Rev. Robert Klein was the minister of Zion during the transition to Rivercrest Community Church on NE 148th Street.

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## Reinhold Klein: Obituary (First Person)

**by Reinhold Klein**

I have lived a full life. I have enjoyed exhilarating, meaningful experiences and I have been blessed by the support I have received from the endless number of people who have touched my life and supported me in a thousand ways. I am thankful to God Almighty, all those whom I have known, and with endless gratitude to those who have loved me.

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# January: Michael Amen

## January Chapter Meeting

In January we were pleased to hear from one of our own chapter members, Michael Amen. He was entertaining and funny at times as he shared his thoughts with us. For the first part of the program he shared a little about his Amen-Claus family history. The Amen family came from the village of Frank, and the Claus family came from Norka. He knew very little about the story of his family until he was an adult. It wasn't talked about although the family did eat bierocks!

The second half of his program was about gathering family photos in times of downsizing with an eye toward creating photo presentations. As technology is constantly changing, photos must be preserved as jpg files, and slides need to be converted. Once photos are digital they can be used to create computer slide shows, PowerPoint presentations, or turned into photo books which can be used to celebrate major milestone birthdays or end of life presentations. He showed us examples of all three.

Michael didn't get into the nuts and bolts of scanning photos, which would include improving them by cropping and fixing fading and other flaws, or the ins and outs of creating presentations in PowerPoint although he would be pleased to meet



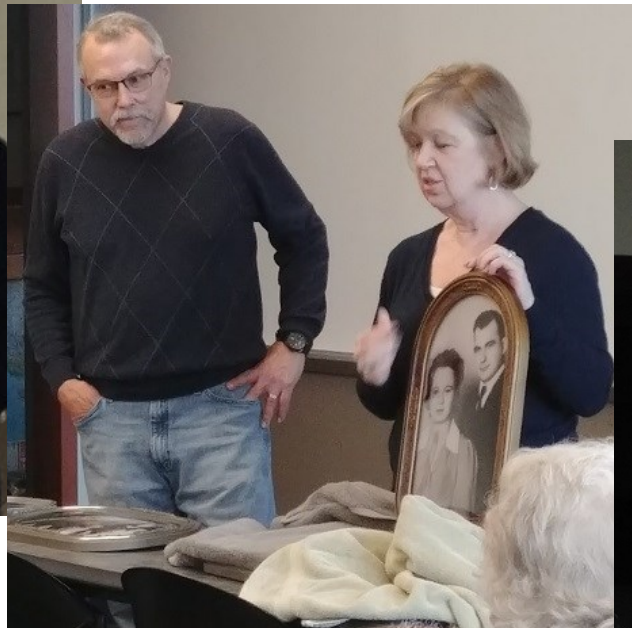
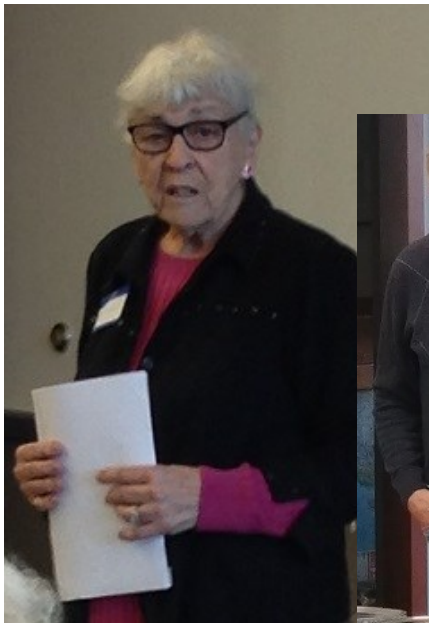
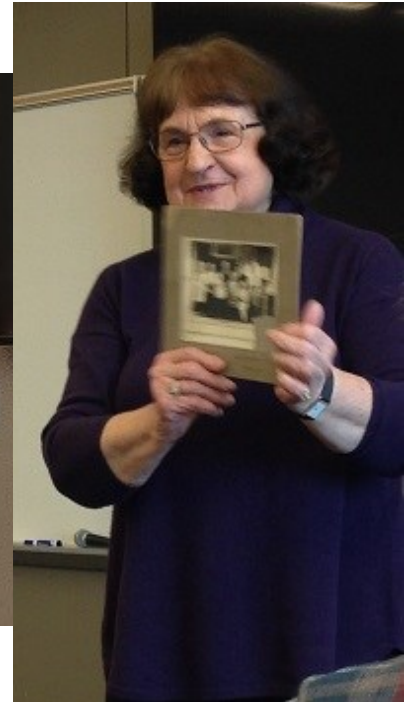
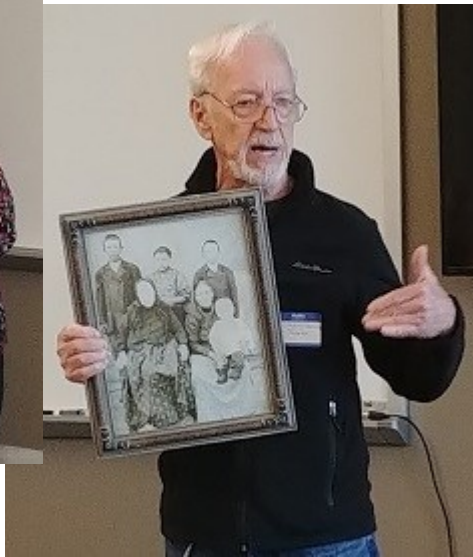
again with anyone interested to go a step further.

If there is wide-spread interest the chapter could facilitate another session with Michael or you could contact him individually. <amen.michael.a@gmail.com> Your feedback on this would be welcomed. Thank you, Michael, for a great program!

# February: Show and Tell

## February Program

Our February program (unbeknownst to us at the time) was our final chapter program at the Concordia University Library. For this program, we hosted a show and tell of family history memorabilia. It was great to see and hear about everyone's family history. Thank you to everyone for coming out and especially those of you who shared something!



## Reinhold Klein: Obituary (First Person), continued

I am the eldest surviving child of Henry and Maria Klein. My parents were members of the German colonies spread along the Volga River in Southern Russia. I was born as they were fleeing the Russian Revolution, without money or documents, in hope of emigrating to the German colonies of the American Great Plains, communities that shared the language, faith, and culture.

After homes in North Dakota and Montana, I spent my adolescence and teen years in Nebraska where I completed my public education. At home and the New York Avenue Congregational Church in Hastings I was instructed in the spiritual realm and came to know the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. New York Avenue Congregational is also where I first met Lydia Helzer.

In 1942 I enlisted in the U.S. Naval Air Corps and spent most of World War II in the Pacific Theatre. While overseas I maintained a correspondence with Lydia, we developed a meaningful kinship, and I proposed. When I returned from overseas we married on April 23, 1946.

Lydia supported my interest in ministry and I enrolled in College and Seminary in Yankton, South Dakota, where Lydia and I began our partnership in ministry. Beginning as student pastor at Lesterville, South Dakota, and continuing through ministries in Bazine, Kansas, and Biola, California, Lydia provided all forms of assistance and encouragement. These congregations supported us in unbelievable ways and made the Christian Ministry a pleasure for both of us.

Each of these congregations is also forever linked to the growth of our family. Our first child, Sharon, was born during my student pastorate in Lesterville. Looking on my infant daughter for the first time is an experience I will never forget, nor will I forget the pleasure of Sandra's birth in Bazine and our son Jay's birth in Biola. The children seemed more important to these congregations than their father.

While serving in Biola, one of my congregants helped me to understand the severe lack of appropriate housing for the elderly, not just in our community but far beyond. I spent the next year fundraising and planning a facility especially for the needs of the elderly. After a year of volunteering my time to this project, I was persuaded to lead the construction of a complex to provide services from simple shelter to a long-term skilled nursing care. Large numbers of families from four Congregational churches contributed substantial funds. Local, state, and federal officials found innovative ways to provide necessary funding and to accommodate the task. Everyone went out on a limb for what was to be the first project of its kind to be financed by the Federal Housing Administration in California. It became a model for numerous facilities to follow.

In 1961 I became the Administrator of the newly organized Retirement Housing Foundation. Lydia continued as my unpaid personal assistant as she had throughout my ministry. Our family moved from Fresno to Los Alamitos, California, and joined the Los Alamitos Community Congregational United Church of Christ where we worshipped for over 50 years. For six years with Retirement Housing Foundation I organized non-profit corporations sponsored by the foundation and local

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## Reinhold Klein: Obituary (First Person), continued

churches to construct facilities for elder housing and care throughout California and Arizona. Because the foundation had limited capital we faced each project with a need for seed money. To solve this problem we developed a model in which the directors of each project advanced personal funds or their personal credit to secure bank financing. It was these men and women, many now passed on, who, through faith and due diligence, created numerous institutions and formed the financial foundation for the Retirement Housing Foundation of today. There was significant risk but no one lost any money; all funds were repaid. This pioneering effort, some 40 years ago, had a dramatic effect on federal legislation and regulations governing programs for elderly housing and care.

Following my time with Retirement Housing Foundation I accepted a new challenge as Executive Officer of the Mead Housing Trust. The need was for disadvantaged family housing in Los Angeles County. This work, so much closer to home, reduced my travel and for the first time Lydia was free to give her full attention to our family and our son Jay who suffered from muscular dystrophy. Her ability to support my work while maintaining a stable household continues to amaze me.

Following a full recovery from a heart attack in 1972 I spent 20 years developing socially significant facilities throughout California as a consultant to Retirement Housing Foundation and numerous churches and community organizations. These associations crossed all forms of ethnic, community and religious lines. With support from these associates and public officials this became the most productive period in my career. Late in this period Lydia rejoined me after the passing of our son Jay. In 1995 I completed my last project and Lydia and I retired. In 2012, Lydia passed from this life but not from my heart.

My life has focused on family, church, social service and governmental relationships. I must thank my daughters Sharon and Sandra for their endless love and support. I must also acknowledge the individuals, associations, churches and government agencies who have enabled my work have my eternal gratitude. Without them I was one voice calling for change, with them we changed elder care and touched the lives of hundred of thousands. Let us celebrate their lives and those who have gone before and those who carry on today.

The Gospel of John tells us, "Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will receive you unto myself that where I am, you may be also."

The location and nature of such mansions is a mystery to me but I believe there is a spiritual realm where we will be one with God. Our lord Jesus said he would come again to receive us unto himself and so he does as each one of us passes from this life into the next. So we do not sorrow as those who have no hope. Jesus said believe in God and also in me. So grasp that faith, hold fast and anticipate life eternal.



# AHSGR Oregon Chapter Membership Renewal Form

Membership fees are for a calendar year that renews each January 1st. Annual dues for the AHSGR **Oregon Chapter** membership are \$25.

Membership Year 20\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I want my Oregon Chapter newsletter delivered electronically. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

I want to receive my Oregon Chapter newsletter in the mail (paper copy). Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

In order for us to serve our membership more effectively, please list all of your German-Russian family surnames and all of the villages that you believe your ancestors are from:

## Villages

## Surnames

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\_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues:	\$25.00
Annual Donation:	\$
<b>Total Enclosed:</b>	<b>\$</b>

Please make all checks payable to **AHSGR OREGON CHAPTER** and send your membership dues and form to:

**AHSGR OREGON CHAPTER**

**P.O. Box 55218**

**Portland, Oregon 97238-5218**

You can also send dues and donations electronically via PayPal to our chapter email address:

**oregonahsgr@gmail.com**

The Oregon Chapter of AHSGR is a tax-exempt non-profit organization organized under the Internal Revenue Code 501 (c)(3). As such, your dues are tax deductible to the extend allowed by law. (Federal Tax ID # 93-1313164)

PLEASE NOTE: Additional dues are required for membership in the AHSGR International Organization. (See [www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org) for current International membership levels and dues.) Please remit International dues directly to AHSGR Headquarters.

# AHSGR OREGON CHAPTER

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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.

The Chronicle Unserer Leute (Chronicle of Our People) is published periodically by the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR. Keep up to date with the latest news and events from the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR on our website: [www.oregonahsgr.org](http://www.oregonahsgr.org)  
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