



Volume 34, Issue 5  
**CHRONICLE UNSERER  
LEUTE**



**Saturday, September 7, 10 am**  
Oregon Chapter Board Meeting

**Saturday, September 14 Noon**  
Oregon Chapter Program - Potluck  
Tanja Schell - Speaker

**Saturday, October 5, 10 am**  
Oregon Chapter Board Meeting

**Sunday, October 13, 2 pm**  
Oregon Chapter Program -  
Cookies / Coffee



**Catherine II, the Great**  
Empress of Russia

**AHSGR Oregon Chapter**  
P.O. Box 55218  
Portland, OR 97238-5218

# AHSGR Oregon Chapter Newsletter

## Chronicle Unserer Leute

### Oregon Chapter Program

**Saturday, September 14, Noon**

This chapter meeting will start with a potluck  
*(please bring your favorite salad, entrée or dessert!)*  
The lunch will be followed by an informative presentation by our  
featured guest, **Tanja Schell.**

This will be a great chance to learn from her first-hand information on  
life in Russia. You won't want to miss her in-depth knowledge of the  
German presence in Russia for over 130 years, continuing to this day.

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## Norka Founders' Day

**Held August 17<sup>th</sup> at Concordia University**

Descendants of those who lived in the colony of Norka have revived the celebration of Norka Founders' Day in Portland at Concordia University. A wide range of presentations was warmly received. This is the first of hopefully a long line of annual village events to be held in future years.

**Norka** was originally founded on 15 August 1767, and for many years the colonists celebrated the anniversary of the colony's founding. Immigrants to North America even continued this tradition for several years, but over time, the practice was discontinued. See page 2.

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NORKA FOUNDERS DAY  
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Welcome and Introductions **Brent Mai and Steve Schreiber**

History of Norka **Steve Schreiber**

Researching Norka’s Families, CVGS Resources / Norka Database  
**Brent Mai**

Portland’s “Little Russia” Neighborhood - **Jerry Schleining**

Dedication of the Spady Reception Hall

The “New Immigrant Story” - **Marina Webber**

Norka’s Canadian Settlements - **Reuben Miller**

Food Customs of Norka - Making Kraut Kuchen

Demonstration / sampling Coffee/Kuchen - **Ruth Werner**

German American Society / Women’s Relief Society

Volga Geman music - **Kurt Goldenstein, Anna Mai**, Dutch Hop

Social hour at German American Society of Portland



**Steve**



**Brent**



**Marina**



**Kurt and Anna**



**Spady Hall Dedication—CVGS**

## COMMEMORATING CATHERINE THE GREAT



### Catherine II the Great

Empress of Russia

1729 - 1796

Coronation - 1762

She made Russia one of the great powers of Europe and brought enlightenment and the arts to the people.



## “Schwartzbeere” - The Edible Nightshade of the Volga Germans

by Sam Brungardt

For several years I've been sharing *Schwartzbeeren* seed and growing instructions with people in many states and some Canadian provinces. My purpose is to ensure that this traditional Volga German crop will continue to be grown and that people will continue to enjoy some of the traditional dishes in which *Schwartzbeeren* are used.

My mother, Alexia Herman Brungardt, used to see that I would have fresh seed to share. While she still gardened, she grew the berries herself. Sometimes she'd buy *Schwartzbeeren* at the Farmers Market in Hays. Mom would dump the berries in a bowl of water, pop them with her hands to free the seeds, skim the empty skins off the surface of the water, then drain the seeds in a fine wire strainer. She'd then spread the seeds on rags or paper towels, leaving them in a warm, airy place until they had dried thoroughly.

When the first Volga German immigrants settled in Kansas in the 1870s, they brought seeds from Russia. I don't know of any Russian vegetable varieties that are still grown in Ellis and Rush counties, but many gardeners of Volga German descent grow *Schwartzbeeren*, perhaps a testament to their esteem for the berries and the plants' ability to grow under harsh conditions.

*Schwartzbeeren* (literally, “blackberries” in German) are an edible form of common or black nightshade, *Solanum nigrum*. Although related, *Schwartzbeeren* are not the same as the garden huckleberry, wonderberry, or sunberry.

Depending on the colony they came from, Volga Germans may have called *Schwartzbeeren* by other names: *Nachtschatten* (nightshade); *schwartzter Nachtschatten* (black nightshade); *yagoda* (which means “berry” in Russian. In Russian, black nightshade is called *paslen cernyj*).

This garden crop was probably developed as generations of gardeners saved the seed from plants whose berries were low in the alkaloids that make the species acrid tasting and somewhat poisonous. We'll probably never know whether this selection took place in Germany or in the German colonists' new home along the Volga River in Russia because *Solanum nigrum* is native to much of Eurasia. What we do know is that the Volga Germans valued these berries enough to bring seed along when they immigrated to North America. This crop seems to have found the hot, sunny and rather dry summers of the Great Plains and Intermountain states of the West especially to its liking.

Traditionally, *Schwartzbeeren* were grown as a volunteer crop. They were never intentionally planted. Instead, seedlings came up “volunteer” once the soil had warmed in the spring from seed that had been produced and dropped to the ground the summer before. The gardener then spaced the *Schwartzbeeren* plants by hoeing out or pulling up the excess seedlings.

*Schwartzbeeren* plants grow 2 to 3 feet tall, depending on how far apart they are spaced, how much water they receive during the growing season, and the fertility of the soil.

Since volunteer *Schwartzbeeren* come up in the garden at about the same time as volunteer tomatoes, one can conclude that the conditions that are conducive for good germination of tomato seeds are the same ones that *Schwartzbeeren* seeds require: a Soil temperature of 70 to 90 degrees F. So, start your *Schwartzbeeren* as you would tomatoes. Sow the seed indoors a month to six weeks before the frost-free date for your area. It will take 6 to 14 days for the seedlings to emerge. After the seedlings are large enough to handle (about the time they have their first true leaves), transplant them to small pots.

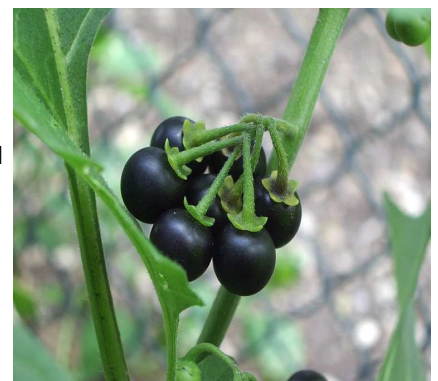
Or, simply sow the seed in a sunny place in the garden a couple of weeks before the frost-free date for your area, covering it with a scant 1/8 inch of soil. Thin or transplant the seedlings to stand 2 to 3 feet apart.

*Schwartzbeeren* berries are about 1/4 inch in diameter and are produced in clusters of 5 to 10. They consist of a thin, purple-black skin filled with juice and many small seeds.

*Schwartzbeeren* are fully ripe when the skins of the berries have turned from green to a dark purplish-black and have lost their sheen. If the berries are picked before they are dead ripe, they will not be as sweet as they could be and they will have unattractive, green juice.

To pick *Schwartzbeeren*, “tickle” them from their clusters; do not pinch or squeeze the berries hard or they will burst.

***Schwartzbeeren* are fully ripe when their skins turn black and lose their gloss. Fully ripe berries are so fragile they are best “tickled” off the clusters to keep them from bursting**



Schwartzbeere, continued...

The flavor of *Schwartzbeeren* is rather difficult to describe; the berries are sweet, with a somewhat acidic flavor. The Volga Germans enjoyed their beloved *Schwartzbeere* in several ways. They used the berries, mixed with sugar and flour and perhaps egg and cream in a topping for *Schwartzbeere'kuche*. They also used the berries, mixed with sugar and a little flour, to fill *Maultasche*, a filled pasta similar to pirogi or vareniki. And sweetened *Schwartzbeeren* were sometimes put over dumplings that had been slathered with *Schmeltz*, a rich butter and cream sauce. Volga Germans who immigrated to North America also learned to use the berries for pie, coffeecake and jam.

Recipes using *Schwartzbeeren* can be found in the *Sei Unser Gast (Be Our Guest)* cookbook, which I edited for the North Star Chapter of Germans from Russia. To order the cookbook, go to <http://www.northstarchapter.org/Cookbook.html> on the Internet or write to Cookbook Orders, North Star Chapter of Minnesota, PO Box 583642, Minneapolis, MN 55458-3642.

I hope you all try growing *Schwartzbeeren* so you can enjoy eating them.

(Editor's note: Sam Brungardt, a member of the Sunflower Chapter, grew up on his parents' farm north of Victoria, Kansas, near that jog in the road known as Emmeram. Sam lives and works in St. Paul, Minnesota. If you wish to correspond with him, write to: Sam Brungardt, 739 Como Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55103-1402; e-mail [sam739is@hotmail.com](mailto:sam739is@hotmail.com); or phone 651-488-9681.)



# Kraut Kuchen

Recipe From Ruth Werner, German-American Society

**Filling:** 1 medium head of cabbage, 1 lb of ground round meat, 2 medium onions, Salt and pepper to taste, ½ cup cooking oil

**P**lace meat in oiled hot skillet. Stir with fork until meat is crumbly and heated through. Salt and pepper to taste. Cool. Dice onions and shred the cabbage (not too fine). Place in heavy frying pan heated with ½ cup of cooking oil. Cover and let simmer on low heat, stirring often. Season the mixture to taste. Place in 325 degrees oven until the cabbage is tender and thoroughly cooked. Combine with meat and set aside to cool. This may be made the day before.

**Dough:** 1 cup milk, 4 tablespoons melted butter, 3 tablespoons sugar, ¾ teaspoon salt, 1 cake yeast, ¼ cup lukewarm water, 2 eggs (beaten), 3 ½ to 4 cups flour

**S**cald milk; do not boil. Add shortening, sugar, and salt. Cool to lukewarm temperature; add yeast softened in lukewarm water. Gradually add flour to form soft sponge. Add beaten eggs and beat. Gradually add remaining flour. Knead about 10 minutes, adding a little flour if necessary. Grease the sides of bowl, put dough in bowl and cover; letting dough rise until double in bulk (about 2 hours). Place on oiled surface in form of medium sized biscuits. Cover with cloth and let rise until double in bulk. Then roll dough in large shape to ¼ inch thickness and cut into 5-inch squares. Place large tablespoon of filling in center of each and close by pinching the edges together. Don't get edges oily or they will not stick. Place 1 inch apart on oiled pan and let rise 30 to 40 minutes. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes. Recipe makes about 14 biscuits.



**German American Society**, *5626 NE Alameda, Portland, Oregon 97213*

**WWW.GERMANAMERICAN.ORG**, Telephone: (503) 775-1585

## History of the Society

On February 3, 1871, a few prominent members of Portland's German community gathered at the Turnhalle of the Portland Turnverein on First Street between Oak and Pine. The purpose of their meeting was to discuss organizing a benevolent society to assist fellow Germans in Portland. At this meeting it was decided to go forward and meet, in four days, again at the Turnhalle. On February 7, 1871, C.H. Meussdorfer presided as provisional President and Charles Schumacher as Secretary. Nineteen prominent German men of Portland signed the Constitution and By-Laws of the new Allgemeine Deutsche Unterstützungsgesellschaft, in English, the General German Aid Society. Each member paid an entrance fee of \$2.50 and their first month's dues of 50 cents. They met again seven days later to elect officers for the new Society.

For the third time in the Turnhalle, on February 14, 1871, Henry Saxer, a German-Swiss and Portland's first Brewer, was elected President. Following him were Frank Dekum, Vice President; Charles Schumacher, Secretary; and Charles Burkhardt, Treasurer. Women were not allowed to become members. Immediately, the Allgemeine Deutsche Unterstützungsgesellschaft began its benevolent work.

Their original mission, stated in 1871, and restated in its March 8, 1878 Articles of Incorporation, was to erect and maintain a German Hospital, provide for the nursing of sick members of the Society, to relieve needy and distressed Germans, to obtain employment for jobless Germans and furnish advice and information to German immigrants.

The Society's first occasion of providing assistance happened the very first night they met. The members present had just heard of a German immigrant in Kalama who had seriously injured himself at work. They generously reached into their pockets and gathered money for the unfortunate individual.

The dream of building a hospital was never realized. The Independent German School, a separate organization founded in 1870, was successful for its first 25 years but by 1905 was suffering. The German School dissolved and gave its assets, including the old Turnhalle, which was used as the schoolhouse, to the Allgemeine Deutsche Unterstützungsgesellschaft.

With the land, building and other cash donations, the Society built the Arminius Hotel which today stands as an historical landmark at the SE corner of SW 11th and Morrison. The old Turnhalle was moved back behind the hotel and served as the meeting hall for the Society.

This and additional revenue prompted the Allgemeine Deutsche Unterstützungsgesellschaft to change its focus and on February 23, 1911 in its restated Articles of Incorporation declared the objective of building and operating an Altenheim or Retirement Home for Germans. Previously, on February 21, 1908, Louise Weinhard, then four years the widow of Henry Weinhard, founder of a local brewery, had purchased a twenty acre tract on Division Street near 82nd avenue from a Mr. Charles Niblen. On June 6, 1911 she donated that 20 acre parcel to the Allgemeine Deutsche Unterstützungsgesellschaft for its Altenheim dream. Terms of the gift stated that the Society must build and operate the home within two years and build an orphanage in fifteen. With a large crowd present, the cornerstone of the Altenheim was laid on August 6, 1911. Mrs. Weinhard, the President of the Society John Reisacher and other leaders of the German community were present. Nine months later, on May 19, 1912 and with much fanfare, our finished Altenheim was dedicated. By 1923, the Society desired to have a larger meeting hall. In July of that year the old Turnhalle was torn down, and in 1926 the new Deutsches Haus at 714 SW 11th Avenue was completed.

When World War II arrived, the Society came under the scrutiny of the U.S. Government. Investigations however, gave it a clean bill of health as it operated strictly as a benevolent society, was non-political and its officers were not involved in anything close to being anti-American.

After World War II had passed, in 1946, another German organization, the Portland Social Turnverein sold its Turnhalle. Its activities became dormant, but fourteen years later, in 1960 the remaining members of the Portland Social Turnverein merged their assets with the Society and became life members of the General German Aid Society. With these funds another wing was added to the Altenheim. In January of 1955 the first addition to the original Altenheim was completed. It was an eleven-room addition on the west side. Future additions were also made in 1978 and 1983.

In 1964, the German Aid Society founded its own weekend school of German language instruction. In the beginning, classes were small and the students were primarily children of Society members and other German club members. The parents wanted their children to be more fluent and improve their reading and writing skills in German. Many years later the program continues today as the German Saturday School of Portland.

In 1976, women were finally welcomed to join as members. Since the end of the World War II, and the demise of the Portland Social Turnverein, the General German Aid Society took on a more active social role in the German community.

On March 22, 1995, this finally led the organization to restate its Articles of Incorporation and change its name to the German American Society. This better reflected their continued mission to Portland and the German American community. The Society's Altenheim had continuously served Portland as a retirement facility since 1912. In the early years most of its residents were of German birth, but through the years as immigration slowed its residents came from all ethnic backgrounds. Unfortunately, in 2003, outside circumstances forced the Society to shut down the operation of the Altenheim as a retirement facility. Within two year's time the downtown Deutsches Haus was leased to a private party and the Society now uses the former Altenheim as its new Deutsches Haus and home to their own German Saturday School of Portland.

In 2006, the goals of the Society are to promote German culture and language in the Pacific Northwest through educational, social and benevolent programs.

In 2011, the Society moved to its temporary home at Bethany Lutheran Church at 4330 NE 37th Ave, Portland, OR 97211. This centrally-located facility has ample parking and is kitty-corner from beautiful Wilshire Park. The Saturday School will occupy up to 12 classrooms, as needed. Be assured the Society is fully committed to the success of the GSSOP moving forward.

In November, 2011, the Society purchased a 17,000 square foot building at 5626 NE Alameda (57th & Sandy Blvd), Portland 97213.

## ***Oregon Chapter Program***

*Saturday, September 14th – 12 noon – This will be a luncheon potluck.....  
so bring some of your great food to share!!!!*

## ***Special Guest Speaker - Tanja Schell***

*Don't miss this program!*



**Tanja Schell, Maggie Hein (village coordinator for Frank and Kolb), Michael Walter Fyler (vc for Walter), Alexander Spack of the website [Wolgadeutsche.net](http://Wolgadeutsche.net) ("The History of the Volga Germans") and Alex's son Georgiy after our meeting in downtown Volgograd back in June.**

“I am very glad to have been asked by the Oregon Chapter to come present in Portland and am very looking forward to my next visit in beautiful Portland. I am looking forward to see you again, too. Although I must admit that when in Russia this summer, we didn't have the time to make a stop in Kauz, I have many photos of the neighboring Dittel, Kratzke, and Seewald, so hope for the meeting to be very nice. And please, let people know I would like to hear questions about the trip or the life in Russia in general to make the most of our gathering.” ~Tanja



**Tanja, her mother Katrin Schell and her grandfather (Katrin’s father) Adam Schell.**

During this 2013 visit, I have met some individuals - both Russians and Germans - who are very dedicated to preserving the history of our people as a part of the region's local history. Although the population at large does not seem to care about the preservation of some outstanding examples of architecture such as industrial buildings, churches and regular family homes, I am hoping that the persistent interest from abroad will increase the willingness of the locals in Russia to do more to preserve the priceless historical heritage of the ethnic Germans in Russia.



### **Russian Documentary**

I stumbled upon a 2011 Russian documentary in English language called "Faces of Russia - The Volga Germans". Its theme is assimilation as well as cultural preservation for the German Russians who did not emigrate to Germany. This is a very good two-part documentary.

<http://rtd.rt.com/films/volga-germans-saratov/#part-1>

<http://rtd.rt.com/films/volga-germans-saratov/#part-2>

Tim Weeder, Village Coordinator for Paulskoye

# AHSGR Oregon Chapter Membership Form

Membership fees are for one calendar year that **renew each January 1st.**

Annual dues for the **AHSGR Oregon Chapter** membership are \$25.

Membership Year 20\_\_\_\_

New Member \_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_ Individual \_\_\_\_ Family \_\_\_\_

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 service 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:

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

**Jim Holstein, Treasurer  
AHSGR Oregon Chapter  
PO Box 55218  
Portland, OR 97238-5218**

**Questions? Contact Jim Holstein at [jimholstein@gmail.com](mailto:jimholstein@gmail.com)**

The Oregon Chapter of AHSGR is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization organized under the Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3). As such, your dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Additional dues are required for membership in the AHSGR International organization.

(See <http://www.ahsgr.org/membership.htm> for current International membership levels and dues).

Please remit International dues directly to AHSGR headquarters at 631 D Street, Lincoln, NE. 68502-1199.

# September 2013

**Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Chapter Board Meeting 10 am
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Oregon Chapter Program Noon - Potluck
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

# October 2013

**Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat**

		1	2	3	4	5 Chapter Board Meeting 10 am
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 Oregon Chapter Program 2 pm—Cookies	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**AHSGR OREGON CHAPTER**  
**P.O. Box 55218**  
**Portland, Oregon 97238-5218**

**Address**

**Address**

**Address**

**Address**



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 bimonthly by the  
Oregon Chapter of AHSGR.

Members can find the current schedule of chapter events and newsletters on our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AHSGR.Oregon/>

**Chapter Officers**

**Directors**

President:  
**Ed Wagner**  
503-228-0007

First Vice President:  
**Steve Schreiber**  
503-774-9753  
[steven.schreiber@gmail.com](mailto:steven.schreiber@gmail.com)

Second Vice President:  
**Bob Thorn**  
503-635-6651  
503-978-4466  
bobthorn@hotmail.com

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**Mary Burbank**  
503-639-4381

Treasurer:  
**Jim Holstein**  
503-367-1757  
[Jimholstein@gmail.com](mailto:Jimholstein@gmail.com)

**Herb Femling**  
(2014)

**Harold Kammerzell**  
(2013) 360-573-3015

**Jerry Schleining**  
(2013) 503-661-2986  
[jerry.schleining@gmail.com](mailto:jerry.schleining@gmail.com)

**Bill Wiest**  
(2013) 503-771-4321

**Michael Frank**  
(2014) 360-601-7361

**We have one vacant Board of Director position (the bylaws call for 6).** If you have an interest in serving on the Board, please contact Steve Schreiber:  
[steven.schreiber@gmail.com](mailto:steven.schreiber@gmail.com)  
or 503-774-9753