Christmas Wishes 2014

May the wonders and spirit of Christmas follow you throughout the New Year.

As your newsletter editor, I wanted to chime in on several issues this Christmas season. First of all, to let you know that it has been a very rewarding experience representing the Oregon Chapter for almost two years now. Though it can be terrifying throwing ink at 14-20 pieces of blank electronic paper while in the throes of a deadline, seeing what will stick, the reward is in the completion and the positive comments afterwards. Many thanks to those who have contributed such quality ideas for publication!

My thanks go to Steve Schreiber and the dedicated officers, board members, and presenters who continue to step up and provide the kinds of presentations you have come to expect.

...more p. 4
President's Message
By Steve Schreiber, President, Oregon Chapter AHSGR

Like many of you, it's hard for me to believe that another year is beginning. Before we look forward to 2015, I'd like to briefly reflect on many of the Oregon Chapter highlights for 2014.

We started the year with a fascinating panel discussion about growing up in the Albina neighborhood at our January meeting. The Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany, Robert Manicke, spoke to us in February and in March we enjoyed a tour of the former Zion German Congregational Church on NE 9th and Fremont that has been beautifully restored by the Door of Hope Church.

In April and May, two distinguished guests from Lincoln, Nebraska; Yulia Tsymbal, AHSGR Archive Research Coordinator and Robert Wagner, the AHSGR International President, honored us by traveling to Portland to share news about the latest projects and initiatives that are underway at headquarters.

In August, we renewed our tradition of a summer picnic at the Bauder family’s Camp Emerald Forest – it was a wonderful event and we are very grateful to the Bauder family for their hospitality. During the summer we were also notified that our wonderful newsletter, produced by Michael Frank, won second place in the AHSGR International competition.

September and October brought us research experts Jewell Dunn and our own Herb Femling who inspired us all to continue our own family research. We’re fortunate to have such talent in our own backyard.

To satisfy our ethnic food cravings, Heather Arndt Anderson demonstrated the art of making Kraut Bierock (or Kraut Kuchen) and Eben Klöss (strawberry dumplings) at the German American Society.

Last, but not least, was our wonderful Christmas program organized by Harold and Loretta Kammerzell. Both Harold and Loretta deserve our sincere thanks for all their hard work. We had one of our largest turnouts in years and everyone enjoyed the musical performance of Al Jones and the reenactment of traditions from the Christkind to Belznickel narrated by Joanne Krieger. Bill Wiest and Bruno Reule read the Christmas story from the book of Luke to us in both German and English. The always entertaining, Jerry Schleining, shared his humorous memories of Christmas foods and traditions. Traditional white goodie bags containing fresh oranges; nuts and raisins (courtesy of Thelma and Bill Wiest and Bill’s cousin, Carl Buxman) were distributed to everyone. After the program we enjoyed social time together while sampling ham, sausage, cheeses and lots of Christmas treats. I’d like to offer our thanks to Mary and Roger Burbank for their generosity for donating many of these items.

While I know you’ll agree that 2014 was a great year, I’m eagerly looking forward to 2015. We have some very exciting programs coming your way and I hope you will take the opportunity to join us.

In January, I will have another opportunity to interview Loretta Kammerzell, Harold Kammerzell, Jerry Schleining and Kris Wunsch Zelinka about their experiences growing up on the German Russian enclave in the Albina area. Our program with this group in January of 2014 was a big hit with rave reviews coming from the large group that attended.

Our February 7th program will feature Professor Hans Boas from the University of Texas who is studying the Texas German dialect. Many of the Germans that settled in Texas were from the same areas in Germany that our ancestors lived in before their migration to Russia. The dialects our ancestors spoke offer clues as to their origins in Germany hundreds of years ago. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) interviewed Prof. Boas about his work and this video will whet your interest in our upcoming program: www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22490560

Don’t miss our March 21st program. Our very own Bruno Reule will tell us his riveting story about growing up in war torn Europe during the 1940s caught between the Soviet and German armies. This is a story that you’ll want everyone in your family to hear.
We have many more interesting programs planned for 2015 and will keep you notified about them through the newsletter, website and Facebook page. Please note that our website has moved to a new location at: www.oregonahsgr.org.

As we begin the New Year, I'd like to welcome our newest Director, Thelma Wiest, who was elected by the membership in October. Thelma is a long time member of the Oregon Chapter and her insights and energy will be a great addition to the Board of Directors.

We appreciate everyone's membership and support of the chapter. The Oregon Chapter has a long history dating back to 1971 and we only exist to serve the needs of members, so please tell us what type of programs you'd like to see.

My goal is to increase our membership to over 200 by the end of 2015. With your help, we can make this happen. If everyone invites a family member or friend to become a member we will reach this goal very quickly. Better yet, consider purchasing a membership for someone. They will appreciate your thoughtfulness. A tax-deductible $25 annual membership fee is a small investment to preserve our heritage and traditions.

Our ancestors met the approach of the New Year with many traditions. The Neujahrsfeier (New Year's celebration) was a time to not only remember all that had happened in the year just past, but also a time to look forward with hope to the year ahead.

From December 25th to January 6th, each of the 12 days predicted the weather for the coming 12 months. For example, the weather on December 27th represented what was to be expected in March of the next year. Others predicted the weather based on the observation of onionskins sprinkled with salt.

For those of you who are genealogists, you may have noticed that many marriages took place during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. The traditional wedding date was the second day of Christmas (December 26th) when multiple couples would gather to take their marriage vows.

On this holiday, the Neujahrmann (the New Year's Man) also visited many Volga German villages. The Neujahrsmann was a tradition brought from the colonists' homelands in the 1760s. This character went from house to house and wished the residents good luck and blessing in the coming year. In return, he received a small token of money or a drink of vodka or schnapps.

At midnight, the Neujahr (New Year) was also received with the ringing of bells. All the men in the village celebrated with a great enthusiasm and noise making.

Adults greeted each other on the arrival of the New Year. Traditionally, the first "visit" would start between four o'clock and five o'clock in the morning at the home of the godparents, and then they visited the in-laws, then aunts and uncles and friends.

Beginning in the mid-1800s, those greeting a family often fired their shotgun (which was decorated with ribbons and loaded with the smallest shot) either into the air, or at the front door (I don’t recommend practicing this tradition!), to awaken the entire family. The greeter immediately opens the door and shouts “Good Morning” and then recognizes all of those present in the house, "Godfather and Mother", "Aunt and Uncle", "Father-in-law and Mother-in-law", etc. Then the greeter recites a New Year's wish in the form of a poem or wish.

To welcome you all to 2015, I'd like to share a traditional German Russian wish:

Ich wünsche Euch Glück zum neuen Jahr, Gesundheit, Friede und Einigkeit, und ein lange Leben.
I wish you good luck for the New Year, health, peace and unity, and a long life.

All the best,

Steve Schreiber
President, Oregon Chapter of AHSGR
The Oregon Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia

New Internet Address: http://www.oregonahsgr.org/

New look...Wonderful content.

Chime in (from page 1)...

My thanks to Concordia University and the Center for Volga German Studies for providing such a great venue for ongoing activities by our Chapter.

For me, the last 30 or so years have been awe-inspiring. Along with my aunt, I was involved in the acquisition and publication of family information related to the village of Kautz. I’m also working with Karen Bouton and her Dietel records. This has also become an addictive outlet for my time. In the course of time, aunts and uncles jump from Christmas card recipients to obituary participants. My memories of them live on with fondness. Writings and audios enhance that memory, even bringing the wafting smells of rye bread and sausage back from my grandmother’s oven.

Going through church records of our long-lost ancestors gives me an opportunity to put names and dates and relationships to those who were once actual living, breathing villagers, long forgotten but for their faith and sacrifice so we could have the kind of life for which they could only dream. With my efforts and those of other village coordinators, they come back to life, no longer forgotten. For those who came before us, we salute you! Merry Christmas!

THE GERMAN CHRISTMAS PICKLE

A traditional German gift was a quart jar of homemade pickles given at Christmas. In Germany, glass ornaments depicting pickles are sometimes used to decorate Christmas trees. The pickle ornament also represented the opening of the initial jar of pickles made from the previous pickle harvest. The jar was opened during the Christmas Eve feast. In Germany, the fir tree was decorated on Christmas Eve. The pickle was always the last ornament to be hung on the Christmas tree, with the parents hiding it in the green boughs among the other ornaments. When the children were allowed to view the tree on Christmas morning they would begin searching for the pickle ornament. They knew that whoever first found that special ornament would receive an extra little gift left by St. Nicholas for the most observant child.

There are a number of different origin stories attributed to the tradition, but it was primarily thought to have originated in Germany. This tradition is commonly believed by Americans to come from Germany and be referred to as a “Weihnachtsgurke.” In fact, the tradition is largely unknown in Germany. It has been suggested that the origin of the Christmas pickle may have been developed for marketing purposes in the 1890s to coincide with the importation of glass.
Making A Donation

We are fortunate to have many individuals who have shown their commitment by making a donation to the Oregon Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR), allowing us to further our mission of collecting, preserving, and presenting the history of Germans from Russia in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Please consider supporting us through a financial contribution. The Oregon Chapter of AHSGR is a private, tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (Federal tax ID number 93-1313164). Your donation is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

To donate, please send your check (payable to Oregon Chapter AHSGR) to:

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

Please contact Jim by email or at (503) 367-1757 if you have any questions.

Your support is greatly appreciated!

Newsletter Mailing Costs

The chapter incurs considerable costs in providing paper copies of this newsletter to chapter members. If at all possible, and you are able to view the newsletters electronically, please let the newsletter editor know (Michael Frank, dm48@comcast.net, 360/601-7361), and we’ll save some trees and $$$ in the process. Be aware that the electronic copies are in color, whereas the mailed copies are in black-and-white. Also, you are able to increase the viewing size of the electronic version using the free software Adobe Reader. If you have a computer and printer, you can always print your own archival copy in color or black and white. Copies of past newsletters are also available for viewing or printing at the chapter website, http://www.oregonahsgr.org/.

On December 17, Ed Wagner passed on information that a reservation has been made and confirmed for the 2015 picnic at Camp Emerald Forest.

The date is Saturday, August 8, 2015.

Please mark your 2015 calendars.
Bruno and Isolde: A Story of Great Courage
By Thelma Wiest

Bruno Reule was born in Friedenstal, Bessarabia, on March 4, 1934 to Gotthilf and Olga (Funk) Reule. His grandparents had emigrated there from Stuttgart, in the southern part of Germany.

Bruno lived in Friedenstal until 1941 when at 7 years of age he and his family and other residents of their village were rounded up and transported to Poland. There they were put to work in Steranov on farms owned by Polish people. They remained in Poland until 1945 at which time they were rounded up again and told they were going to be sent to Germany. When they got to the train they realized they were not going to Germany, but to Russia. So, at the age of 11 Bruno and his family and many others were transported on a train to Novosibirsk, Siberia, and put into a prison work camp. It was there in 1944 that his father died. Needless to say, life there was horrific with all the comforts of life missing and the food supply meager. Somehow the rest of the family survived although by this time his mother was quite ill with tuberculosis. In 1946 they were transported to East Germany and put into barracks. At this time, at age 12, Bruno was put to work in a brick factory. Later he was placed into an orphanage because his father had died and his mother was so ill she had to be in a hospital.

At this point must be said that the above is a very brief outline of what happened to Bruno before 1947. Much has been left out and for those wanting to read more detail it can be found in the book he wrote about his life, which will be referred to at the end of this article.

In 1947 he and his mother fortunately were able to go to Unterkochen, West Germany where relatives took them in. At that time his mother’s health improved because of better nutrition and the availability of medication.

In Unterkochen at age 15 Bruno became an apprentice in a metal fabricating plant where he worked for three years and then was promoted to the position of journeyman. By then he was 18 years old and it was 1952.

That year, 1952, was a turning point in his life. Distant relatives from the U.S. came to visit and told of the many opportunities for work and a good life there. Bruno decided this would be a good thing for him. With his relatives as sponsors, he was able to immigrate to the U.S. in 1955 to Lodi, CA. He found work there and a year later, having heard how favorable Portland, OR was, he decided to make the move to the Northwest. Three days after arriving here he found a job and worked as a mechanic in steel fabrication for the next 35 years. Upon his arrival in Portland he was able to find a room for rent at the home of a Mrs. Popp in northeast Portland.

The rest of this story is not complete without another very interesting life history—that of Isolde (Schlaps) Reule. Isolde was born to Emanuel and Ida (Kraus) Schlaps in Kobadin, Dobrutsch, Rumania on December 20, 1936. Both of her parents were also born in Kobadin. In 1940 the family was moved to Lindach, Austria where they lived in a refugee camp. All of this happened, of course, during the turmoil just before World War II. Then in 1943 they were moved to Poland for two years after which, in 1945, they moved to Germany near Stuttgart.
Isolde had the opportunity to move to Portland in 1955 due to the fact that she had relatives here. She at first worked in a glass factory and later at the BP John Furniture Manufacturing Co. Meanwhile, Bruno had started going to night school to learn English. (He and Isolde hadn’t met yet.) At English school Bruno met a German woman, Mrs. Wiesner, who invited Bruno to her home for a party. She had also invited Isolde and her sister and that is where Bruno and Isolde met. This was in 1956 and they didn’t “go steady” right away. Bruno got drafted into the U.S. army in 1957 and eventually got sent to Munich, Germany. He was trained to be in the tank division but when called up for duty got assigned to an airborne mission for which he had no training! Fortunately, he never was required to go into active duty and was sent home safely back to the U.S. in 1959. Upon his return, he immediately looked up Isolde and proposed to her. Her answer, as we all know now, was “YES.” Bruno and Isolde have one daughter, Ramona who works in the Human Resources Department of the U.R.S. Corporation. They have one grandson, 18 years old, who is a college student.

Isolde’s favorite things to do at this time are gardening (she and Bruno have a huge vegetable garden in their backyard), and baking. (she makes fantastic German specialties!) Both she and Bruno enjoy visiting with old friends. They live in a large beautiful home in N.E. Portland for which Bruno did most of the carpentry.

They have been members of AHSGR for about 25 years and enjoy the camaraderie of people with similar backgrounds. Most members of the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR have been very fortunate in not having to go through the difficult times that Bruno and Isolde have experienced. For anyone who would like a more detailed description of Bruno’s experiences growing up there is a book titled Bruno: A Young Boy’s Survival in War-Torn Europe, which can be purchased from our local Oregon Chapter. It is the riveting story of Bruno’s journey as a child in Bessarabia, the horrors of deportation and finally a good life in Portland, OR. We are glad they both came to America and are members of our Chapter.

**Note:** Bruno will be the speaker at our March 21st meeting and we will have copies of his book available at the program.

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**PRESIDENT’S LETTER - Greater Seattle Chapter**

We have come to the end of another great year for the Greater Seattle Chapter of AHSGR. I want to say a sincere thank you to all of the members and friends who work hard to keep our chapter healthy and make it possible to prepare the programs and potluck dinners you all enjoy, including those whose who work behind the scenes and whose names are rarely mentioned – who wash dishes, make the coffee and punch, set up tables and chairs, lead singing, and make sure the food table is ready. Our chapter is lucky! Sadly, we have lost some good friends this year – they will be missed.

I have given several programs on the Germans from Russia at regional genealogy societies this year and am surprised at all the GRs who attend and who don’t know anything about their heritage, history, or the many new resources available for researchers and family historians. Recently in Burlington, when I asked the audience about their GR roots – one man said that his family was from Norka and he didn’t know where it was. He was surprised that Village Coordinator Steve Schreiber’s Norka website was free, on line and filled with information and pictures, including German origins for the Norka First Settlers. Many of the Norka Plehve charts are available at the **Center for Volga German Studies** in Portland. (Also for many other villages). New potential members are out there – keep talking about AHSGR and letting them know about our chapter. We will continue to offer programs of interest for all Germans who settled in all regions of Russia.

**Froeliche Weinachten!**

**Jean A. Roth, President**

Greater Seattle Chapter AHSGR
Roy Derring is honored at the September 2014 chapter program for his work to restore the Oregon Chapter banner that he created in 1991.

Mila, our very good friend and “Go To” person for Volga-German historical records.
California Volga German, Carl Buxman
Makes a Generous Contribution to our Oregon Chapter

Thanks to excellent planning by Loretta and Harold Kammerzell our Chapter experienced a much-appreciated Christmas program on the afternoon of Dec. 14, complete with the traditional sacks of fruit, nuts and candy that many of our older members remember from their childhoods. Other Chapter members assisted in various ways to make the program a success. Roger and Mary Burbank contributed much work, as well as ham, cheese and crackers for the event.

Bill and Thelma Wiest were among those asked to assist in obtaining goodies for the Christmas sacks that were handed out. Bill immediately thought of asking his farmer cousin, Carl J. Buxman, for advice about where such items could be found, possibly at wholesale prices. Carl from Reedley, CA, had developed an impressively large farming, packing and shipping operation (http://sunnycal.com) that shipped produce nationally and internationally. “Advice?” said Carl. “Listen, I can simply send you the oranges, walnuts and raisins you need. How much do you want?” Bill was taken aback by Carl’s generous offer, but didn’t take long to accept.

Carl was asked to describe a bit about the 80 pounds of oranges, 20 pounds of raisins and 25 pounds of walnuts he shipped to Portland. His reply:

“The oranges are from an orchard that is old line Washington navels that have a higher brix [sugar content] than all the newly bred varieties. This would be the kind that we all experienced 50 years ago. The walnuts are Chandler variety and are the same variety that our uncle Bill Buxman had that bordered his ranch. They are still a popular variety grafted on black walnut rootstock. When I was farming we had Flame seedless grapes mostly raised for the fresh market. We girdled the vines to upsize the grape berry. After harvest we would go back to glean the small bunches and other non-shipable grapes, putting them on the ground on paper trays to dry. The brix is higher when they are left on the vine longer and the size is triple. Most are marketed in specialty places where they are covered with some coating. Instead of drying on the ground by sun the raisins we are giving you were made by taking these same Flame seedless grapes to a dehydrator to dry—making them more yellow and lighter in color than sun dried raisins. Just a little info. Carl”

Carl J. was named after his grandfather, Carl A. Buxman, who with his wife, Maria Elizabeth (Weber) Buxman and a small son immigrated from the Volga village, Wiesenmüller (Wiesenseite), to the US in 1902; they settled in Windsor, Colorado where Carl A. engaged in carpentry learned in Russia and farmed sugar beets, alfalfa and other crops. Some 30 years later Grandpa Buxman and family moved to the San Joaquin Valley of California where he continued carpentry and engaged in fruit farming. Grandma Buxman kept busy helping with farm work, making curtains, and crocheting bedspreads for her family and for the needy.

The Board of Directors of the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR offer a hearty thanks to Carl Buxman for his gift to the Chapter and to Bill Wiest for writing and submitting this article.
The AHSGR Oregon Chapter hosted a "Wonderful Christmas Event" on December 14th at St. Michael's Lutheran Church. Our profound thanks to Harold and Loretta Kammerzell, Bill and Thelma Wiest, Mary and Roger Burbank, Joanne Krieger, Bruno Reule, and Steve Schreiber, all for their work in facilitating this event.

A special thanks to Jerry Schleinig, and Heidi and Hilary Kammerzell.

Our thanks to Michael Frank for not bringing his cold to this event.
A Genealogist’s Wish List

- 1890 Census
- Some Spit From My Dead Great-Grandmother
- A Brick-Wall Buster K3000
- The Restoration of Records From 3 Burnt Courthouses
- That Missing Page From My Ancestor’s Pension File
- The Long-Lost Family Bible

Russian Official Holidays

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>January 1</td>
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<td>Orthodox Christmas</td>
<td>January 7</td>
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<td>Gregorian New Year</td>
<td>January 13</td>
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<td>Defenders of the Motherland Day (Army Day)</td>
<td>February 23</td>
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<td>International Women’s Day</td>
<td>March 8</td>
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<td>Easter (2006)</td>
<td>April 23</td>
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<td>Spring and Labor Day</td>
<td>May 1</td>
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<td>Victory Day (Over German Nazism in WW2)</td>
<td>May 9</td>
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<td>Independence Day</td>
<td>June 12</td>
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<td>St. Cyrill &amp; St. Methodius, Inventors of the Alphabet &amp; Patron Saints of teachers.</td>
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<td>The day to go back to school.</td>
<td>September 1</td>
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<td>Day of the National Unity</td>
<td>November 4</td>
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<td>Constitution Day</td>
<td>December 12</td>
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2015 New Years Resolution:
Whether you’re naughty or nice, make a resolution to visit the Center for Volga-German Studies more in 2015. You knoweth not what lies waiting for you in the shelves and between the pages of history contained therein. Come. Expect to be surprised! Let our volunteers help you. Expect to learn a great deal more about your ancestral village and the people who made it happen.
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 (preferable).  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:

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

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

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.
### January 2015

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

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:
facebook.com/groups/AHSGR.Oregon/

Oregon Chapter Website
oregonahsgr.org

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