2017 is the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the majority of original Volga-German villages in Russia.

Sunday, September 10, 1:30 pm.
The CVGS is planning a dedication ceremony for the restored Colista Dowling mural that once hung in the former St. Pauls church on NE 8th and Failing. The ceremony is planned for Sunday, September 10th at 1:30 pm. The mural was donated to the CVGS/Concordia by the developer who demolished the old church structure and built new housing on the site. Private funds were raised to professionally restore the mural and it is now on display near the entry to the CVGS.

Sunday, October 22, 2017 - 2 pm
The Catherine the Great 250th Anniversary Adventure!
Join Volga German author and historian Dr. Richard Scheuerman for pictures and stories related to his 2017 tour to Germany and Russia to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Volga German colonization. Among several new features will be a look at the recently discovered St. Petersburg lodgings used by our people on their trek to the East, and other fascinating aspects of our remarkable heritage. The program will be held on the third floor of the Concordia University Library, adjacent to the Center for Volga German Studies.

Please tell your friends and family members to mark their calendars for this event.
President’s Message for September/October
Steve Schreiber, President

Summer is coming to an end and the season will soon be changing. I’m looking forward to enjoying some beautiful fall weather here in the Northwest.

Changes are also ahead for me personally. I’ve served on the AHSGR Oregon Chapter Board for over 20 years and as President for the past 4 years. I will be stepping down at the end of my term in December. I appreciate the opportunity to have been in a leadership position with the Oregon Chapter and look forward to staying involved, albeit in a less active role.

I will also be stepping down from my role as the Interim Director of the Center for Volga German Studies (CVGS) at Concordia University. I agreed to take on this role about 15 months ago following Brent Mai’s departure to Fairfield University in Connecticut. Our goal has been to raise funds to hire a paid Director for the CVGS. A Director is needed to lead the activities of the CVGS and create an academic connection to the university. Sadly, we have not achieved our fundraising goal. Without your immediate financial support it is unlikely that the CVGS will remain active in the future and a wonderful opportunity with the university will have been lost. A link to our pledge form is included on page 11 in this newsletter.

This will be my last message to you as President. I would like to thank the active members of our board for their support these past four years. I’m proud of the top-quality programs and newsletters we’ve made available to our members. The chapter is in sound financial condition and well positioned to remain viable. But, will the chapter remain viable? That depends on the interest of the membership and the willingness of a few members to step up and serve on the board. Without leadership, the future of the chapter is uncertain.

I thank you again for the opportunity to serve the Oregon Chapter these past years. I wish you all the best in the future.

Steve Schreiber
President, Oregon Chapter of AHSGR

Website: www.oregonahsgr.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/AHSGR.Oregon/
Sunday, November 19, 2017 at 2 p.m

Our last program of the year will be jointly held with the Germans from Russia Oregon and Washington (GROW).

GROW President Adi Hartfeil will present on the founding of the Black Sea German colonies in Russia and AHSGR Oregon Chapter President Steve Schreiber will present on the settlement of the Volga German colonies.

Please note that the Concordia Library will be closed on this date and our program will be held in Luther Hall 121 on the Concordia University campus. There is parking adjacent to Luther Hall. Luther Hall is adjacent to Holman Street.

Diane Gabrielson Koch
Feb. 12, 1932 - July 23, 2017

Diane was 85 years old when she passed Sunday, July 23, 2017, in Portland from multiple myeloma. She began her life in Portland, her parents were Orrin and Loraine Scharrer. Diane graduated from St. Mary's Academy in 1950. In 1951 she married Milton Gabrielson and they had two children, Debra and Michael. They lived for many years in Vancouver. After Milton passed, Diane started a new chapter and married Dr. Raymond Koch of The Dalles. Diane made The Springs at Tanasbourne her home for six years following Raymonds death. Diane’s positive attitude, quick wit and kindness carried her through life. She was preceded in death by her parents; brother, Herb Scharrer; husbands, Milton and Raymond; and her beloved son, Michael. She is survived by her daughter, Debra Mattson (Tom); stepsons, Peter and R.B. Koch; niece, Jan Kurth (Mike); grandchildren, Carl Mattson (Lacey), Heidi Bader (Matt), Adam Koch, Maddie Poe, Richie, Benny and LeeAnna Koch; great-grandchildren, Nolan, Evan and Landon Mattson, Blake and Carson Bader and Benny Koch.

Diane’s celebration of life was held at 11 a.m., Tuesday, Aug. 8, 2017, at The Springs at Tanasbourne. Please sign the online guest book at www.oregonlive.com/obits. Published in The Oregonian from Aug. 3 to Aug. 6, 2017

WELCOME:
Please join me in welcoming Professor Fabian Zubia-Schultheis as the new co-Village Coordinator for Dönhof and Neu Dönhof.
Russian Roulette for My Family

Dr. Elena Edelson

Chapter I

It’s early morning. I'm looking at the icy roof of my neighbors' building through the mini blinds of the living room window. A white color. The icy arena. It seems very familiar to me. I'm closing my eyes.

My memory is going back. Time stops. 1960s. The Soviet Union. The Russian North. The Kolyma region – the north part of the Far East – well-known by its prison camps (the Gulag) and gold mine. More than 168 miles from Magadan. A small village, Ust-Omchug, where I was born. A small old one-floor apartment building ("barrack"). The winter is -25°F. A frozen window.

I'm looking through the frozen window at the snowcapped hills and the foot of one of them where was a prison camp which name locals preferred not to mention – Butugychag – the prisoners mined the radioactive uranium there.

I'm petting my father's friend gift – a big grey and black German Shepherd that pricked her ears, listening to the whistle sounds from the windy street. A local vet found the dog with broken paws. He tightly bandaged them and brought her home. When my father saw the German Shepherd, he asked the vet to give me the dog.

I'm touching a big ugly scar on the right side of my neck. Once, the dog saved my life. It happened when my parents and neighbors were at work. Suddenly a section of the old rotten floor of our "barrack" collapsed, and I fell into the gap. I cried loudly and the dog tried to pull me out and grabbed my jacket collar and neck by her sharp teeth. By the time my parents returned home, we both lay exhausted near the gap, and the dog licked my injured neck. My father took me to the local nurse who stitched my wound as best as she could.

Why did we live there? Many years later, I can answer this difficult question.

More than 250 years ago, the Russian Empress Catherine the Great invited the Germans to settle on the shores of the Volga River. A big ship brought the Ulrich family, my ancestors, to Russia. According to the old records, on June 18, 1767, Lorenz Ulrich, 24 years old, arrived and settled in Messer (Ust-Zolikha).

In Messer, most of the settlers were from the Isenburg. They brought their Hessian dialect and culture of the descendants of the Chatti (Chatten), an ancient Germanic tribe, from the Isenburg-Büdingen, the county of southern Hesse, Germany. In the 18th century, it was the ordinary medieval county, consisting of small cities, villages, and castle, surrounded by the dense forests. It was located in Hessen, a west-central region of Germany, the European country, which hadn't yet been united into a single state, and its numerous small princecdoms fought with each other and sent their soldiers to other countries.

There were three main reasons why new settlers left Germany for Russia, such as a mandatory military service for the citizens, a lack of land, belonged to the German feudal landlords, for the farmers, and a religious pursuit of Protestants (Lutherans, Evangelists, and Mennonites).

The new colonists brought their religious faith and big hope to live and raise their children, using the benefits which Catherine the Great generously promised them in her Manifesto. The settlers were glad to receive their big plots of land, grow the abundant harvests, celebrate their religious holidays, and get an exemption from any military service. In their ship voyage, they put their clothes, kitchenware, and blankets in their heavy wicker baskets and simple handmade wooden chests and took their carpenters' and woodworking tools, inherited and carefully kept from a generation to generation, to cut down the forest, build their houses, churches, mills, and barns for cattle, and create a sturdy, simple furniture and heavy farm wagons in Russia. They were hard workers, and soon, their colony looked like a small German village.
My great-grandfather Joseph Ulrich (the son of Johannes Ulrich) was born in Messer in 1894. Time passed quickly, people were born and died, and some members of the Ulrich family left the colony for other places of the Volga region, such as Tsaritsyn, Norka, and Nieder-Monjou. Also, I was told that after 1900, a part of my family immigrated to the USA, including the uncles, brothers, and cousins of my great-grandfather, such as Amalia Ulrich, who married Heinrich Jacob Geis, and her two brothers, one of whom had a daughter Erna. I remember the post card that my grandmother showed me. It was sent to Messer from the USA in 1913.

One of my great-grandfather's cousins worked at the gun factory "Vikkers" in Tsaritsyn. Joseph came to him and found a job as the shoemaker. Then, he met, fell in love, and proposed to my great-grandmother Elena (Helen) who lived in Tsaritsyn. My great-grandparents married in 1920. At that moment, she was a beautiful 17-year-old girl with a brown thick plait and big brown eyes and Joseph was a 26-year-old strong man. After their wedding, Joseph and Elena left the city for Messer, and their first child Friedrich (Fedor) was born there. But soon, they returned back to Tsaritsyn where my grandmother Olga was born in 1925. Tatiana, one of her cousins, remembered that my grandma was born in a big house on the hill; at the foot of the hill the Volga River flowed.

Then, the family returned to Messer where the parents of my great-grandfather had a mill. The years, which Elena spent in Messer, were the happiest time in her life. Although her family worked very hard from morning till night, my great-grandma was proud of her life because the family ate a bread every day, and she had a heavy, unadorned wooden chest in which she kept her treasures: two long black dresses, wool and linen skirts, three cotton blouses, black embroidered jacket, warm coat, knitted wool shawl, and one pair of black leather, low-heeled lace-up booties, polished to a shine and neatly wrapped in an old newspaper. She didn't know that very soon the whirlwind of Soviet regime would change her life forever, her husband and his relatives would be called the "class enemies of the Soviet people" and "kulaks". The mill that belonged to my family would be confiscated by the "Bolsheviks", who represented the Soviet regime. But after the state expropriation of his property, Joseph was elected a chairman of the "artel" ("cooperative"), a collective peasant association, and could manage the work of the mill. At the time of "collectivization" and severe famine in the Volga region, Elena's family hid grain in sacks, burying them in the cellar dirt floor, and secretly, at night, her husband, his brothers and cousins threshed the grain, and she baked the bread, which they concealed from the Bolshevik confiscation, too. That bread saved the family from starvation. Unfortunately, their oldest twelve-year-old son, Friedrich (Fedor), was killed by his friend who played with a shotgun when all adults were at work.

My great-grandfather got pneumonia and died. Nobody could believe that because he was a very strong and healthy man. It happened after Joseph took his sick cousin to the hospital across the river. On the way back home, he drove his old, farm wagon. It was a dark and cold fall night, a heavy rain was pouring on my tired great-grandfather, his horses, and heavy cart. While Joseph was crossing the bridge, a bridge rail partially collapsed. The coachman attempted to keep his frightened horses and heavy wagon on the bridge. He got soaked to the bone.

After my great-grandfather death, Elena with her four children moved to Stalingrad where Joseph's cousin helped her to get a job as a worker at the local brewery.

Chapter II

My great-grandfather Joseph had siblings, and one of his sisters – Julia (Yulia) married Ilyichev Ivan, who worked at the Theater of Music Comedy, and they left Messer for Stalingrad. Their daughter Tatiana was born in 1937 there. In 1939, he was arrested and sent to the prison camp behind the village Niznij Cheer near the Don River. In 1941, when Tatiana was 4 years old, her father was executed after a short trial in the camp.
The Second World War had affected the lives of the Volga Germans drastically. After the beginning of the German invasion, according to the decree of the Soviet government, most of them were forcibly expelled to Kazakhstan and Siberia on August 28, 1941. The Volga German Republic, where hard work wasn't just a hallmark of national pride, but a model of lifestyle and measure of social and moral values, was eliminated forever. On the way to the Stalin's labor camp, near the Ural, Andrew (Andreas) Ulrich and some members of my family died of hunger and disease. Some of the relatives were sent to Siberia and Kazakhstan.

My great-grandma continued to work at the brewery, but its workers manufactured shells for the Red Army tanks and artillery howitzers. In the summer of 1942, the 6th Army of the German Wehrmacht under the General Friedrich von Paulus' command was close to Stalingrad. At that time, another city, Leningrad, had been under the Wehrmacht siege already, and to prevent the blockage or fall of Stalingrad, Stalin gave the order to resist and fight for control of the city to the last bullet. The fierce battle was a building-to-building fight. The intensive bombing raids of the Luftwaffe, the German Air Force, left the city in ruins. The civilian and combatant survivors dwelled in the building ruins and cellars, turned into bomb shelters.

One night, my great-grandmother and grandmother crossed the front line under a heavy shelling. In Germany, Elena worked at the factory. Olga married a relative and had a son. They didn't know what happened to Olga's husband because one day, he didn't return home. Once, I was told that he was killed when Olga was pregnant the second time at the end of the war. According to the Yalta conference agreement, the allies of the Soviet Union promised to Stalin to repatriate people who were Soviet citizens until 1939. So, after the unconditional surrender of Germany, my great-grandmother and pregnant grandmother were in the displaced person camp, and then, they were expelled back to Russia, to the Gulag. Galina, my mother, was born in a prison camp in Khabarovsky in 1946.

At the camp, one of the officer guards saw my grandma and fell in love. The officer asked Olga to marry him. Twenty one-year-old woman couldn't refuse his proposal. He adopted my mother and changed her documents. Due to his marriage to a daughter of the "class enemy of the people", the officer was forced to retire, and they returned to Stalingrad where his relatives lived before the war. He was entitled to an apartment at the center of the city because during the war, the officer had been assigned to the front line and had been awarded the medals for his bravery. Once, the rupture of shrapnel wounded him seriously, and he was treated at the hospital. In Germany, the officer bartered his military food rations for the "Singer", a sewing machine, manually operated and connected to a wooden table, which he brought to his mother, who gave it to my grandma as the wedding gift. Elena returned to work at the brewery. When Olga's husband died because of his old wound, one of his veteran friends helped her get a job at the marine equipment plant "Akhtuba" where she had worked as a guard for many years.

My mother and Victor, my father, lived in two buildings next to each other. Victor left Stalingrad for Saratov where he attended police officer college. Before his graduation, during his last school break, my father had visited his parents in Stalingrad and asked Galina to marry him. His parents, very successful lawyers, and my grandma were against that idea. My father's parents didn't like Galina and viewed that marriage as a mesalliance (a marriage with a person thought to be unsuitable or of a lower social position). They found for him a more suitable match – a daughter of professors, their close friends. Olga wanted Galina to marry Victor Ulrich – her relative. Only my great-grandma approved the future marriage. Because my mother was a minor – seventeen years old, according to the Soviet law, they had to receive the written permission of the city authorities in order to marry. The wedding was very modest. My father's parents didn't participate in a celebration, but Olga's relatives brought a lot of gifts for Galina and Victor. It was a time of the total deficit, and my parents were glad to get any tableware and beddings. After my father graduated from the college, due to the state educational policy, he couldn't look for a job and had to work at the location where he was assigned. Victor was told that because he married Galina, the Volga German and "class enemy of the people", my father had some choices: Kazakhstan, Altai Krai, or the Kolyma region. My parents moved to Ust-Omchug, a small village located more than 168 miles from Magadan.
I've looked at the old photographs and feel proud that I belong to the Ulrich family, who succeeded in Russia despite having many troubles to live there and who survived despite Stalin's desire to destroy the family and erase its roots.

Chapter III

It's the summer of 2015, ten o'clock in the morning and I'm opening a balcony door. The fresh wind is bringing the voice of a little girl, my neighbor's granddaughter. She is speaking to her dog very seriously, "It's very controversial issue, Toby. You have to agree with me. You cannot eat a lot of chocolate because it’s not healthy. And your teeth will be sick very soon, and you will go to the dentist. Toby, do you agree or disagree with me?" She is repeating the words which her grandmother told her yesterday.

The serious tone and words of the little girl sound very familiar to me. I'm closing my eyes. My memory is running back. Time stops. 1960s. The USSR. The Kolyma region. More than 168 miles from Magadan. A small village, Ust-Omchug, where I was born. A small old one-floor apartment building ("barrack"). My neighbors. My best friend. A little English speaking girl.

In the beginning of my life, I mostly grew as a bilingual child because in Volgograd, my great-grandmother and grandmother spoke German at home, and in Ust-Omchug, my parents and the most of the day care center teachers and kids spoke Russian. But, in the center, there were some people who spoke English. I remember one of them who worked as a nanny; she was sent from Moscow, where she studied Russian literature at the university and fell in love with a KGB colonel. The young pregnant student was accused as a British spy; and after her daughter was born, she started working at day care center because she needed to get money to survive as a single-mother. She sent numerous petitions to Moscow for government permission to return home. She lived with her daughter at one of the rooms of our barrack. The little English speaking girl was one of my best friends.

After I was born, my grandma flew from Volgograd to help my mother. I was a weak baby. Olga was concerned about my health, so she decided to take care of me. She took me to Volgograd. My retired great-grandma was my babysitter. At that time, the big industrial city was a more developed and advanced place than the small village. Although my great-grandma and grandma lived modestly, they bought me vegetables, fruits, and toys. Also, Olga sewed clothes for me. I was their little princess. The memory of my great-grandmother and grandmother and their endless love warmed me in the most difficult moments of my life. My father's parents thought about Victor's marriage as his big mistake, so they didn't want to participate in my upbringing. Three years later, when my parents had a vacation, they visited Volgograd and brought me back.

It was very hard time for my family. Because of harsh weather conditions, it had been possible to bring a food to the village only during a short summer. My parents had two cozy rooms at the small old one-floor apartment building ("barrack"). All habitants of "barrack" used a small restroom and kitchen with two sinks at the end of the building hallway. For many months they had to bring a cold water from the standpipe that located very far from their "barrack" because its old water pipes froze. In the morning, they stood in a long line to use the restroom. Once a week hot water was brought by a tanker, and my mother poured it into her metal bucket slowly, so my parents could bathe and wash their clothes.

My mother cooked a food on a "gollandka", a wood burning stove with a metal door. But I didn't want to eat the fried potatoes that she often gave me. Being a child, I couldn't understand that most of the time, my parents had only a big sack, full of potatoes, bottle of vegetable oil, and bread. One salary wasn't enough for living, and, sometimes, my father hunted and fished, supplementing my family diet. One day he put a white bear skin rug on the old wooden floor. It was his hunting trophy that Victor brought home after he apprehended a dangerous criminal at Chukotka, the northern territory of the Russian far east that belonged to the USSR. Often, police officers, who worked in the Kolyma region, were sent to find and arrest thugs at that area.
My mother found a job as the cashier in the local grocery store, and my father took me to the day care center. In the winter, he put me in a child's sled, dressed me in a "shuba" (a fur coat with hood), warm thick hat, and "valenki" (the Russian winter boots), and wrapped me in a warm blanket. Once, my father hurried and lost me on the road. When Victor reached the day care center, he realized that I was gone. In panic, my father returned back and found me in a big snowdrift. I was not scared and tried to find my way.

My grandmother decided to fly and bring me to Volgograd again. Two years later, my parents visited Volgograd and took me back to Ust-Omchug. When I was seven years old, Galina and Victor divorced. After my mother brought me to Volgograd, she found the job in another city. Galina worked and sent money to my family.

In Volgograd, I attended my elementary school where everybody spoke Russian. At the fourth grade, when I had a choice to learn either German or English, my grandma signed me to the German language class. She was sure that I had to learn German. I was a severe dyslexic. When I studied in the elementary school, my great-grandmother scheduled an appointment with the speech therapist who helped me a lot. Any language, which I learned, took a lot of hours of hard work to get a good grade. I struggled and struggled. And I often succeeded.

When I was 12 years old, my father decided to take me to his new family to Magadan. Two years later, I learned Polish and Bulgarian languages as one of my after school activities. Years later, at the university I studied Latin and English. Thanks to my childhood, many words and sentences sounded familiar to me.

Chapter IV

It's now November of 2016, Seattle. Sitting in comfortable chairs at the movie theater, we, my husband and I, watched "Allied", and suddenly I felt connected to the past through the episode in which a pregnant young woman was shown on the street near the hospital during a bombing raid. The labor started, illuminated by the bright light of the projectors and accompanied by the loud sounds of whistling bombs, which fell around the hospital. It was so realistic that I felt the horror and pain of the young mother and realized how the first baby of my grandmother was born. He was born in the ruins of the German city during the bombing raid of the British Royal Air Force. A family story, once told me by my great-grandmother many years ago, turned to the touchable and strong visual memory, I cried and understood why my grandmother had the character of the "Iron Lady".

April of 2017. Volgograd. I'm visiting my friend's mother. We are at her cozy kitchen. She is asking me if I want to drink a cup of coffee with fresh milk, which she bought in the local grocery store. Then she opened a door of the fridge. Suddenly she tells me that she remembers how I shared with her daughter a dry powder of milk which I received as a gift at the university where I worked in Magadan. The tears burst forth like a waterfall from my eyes. My memory turns me back.

Magadan. Its name sounded horrible for the population of the former Soviet Union. People repeated the proverb, "They would not be sent further than to Magadan." For the population of the former USSR, Magadan was a symbol of the end of the world full of the prison camps. But Magadan was the most liberal place in the country. The majority of the most intelligent, well-educated, liberal-minded people, and therefore enemies of the existing Soviet regime, were exiled to prison camps. After serving their sentence in the prison camps, their inmates could not return home and were forced to live in Magadan and its suburbs. The prisoners were used as slaves to mine gold, but free individuals, who voluntarily came to the Kolyma region, earned high salaries, benefits, and pensions for the same work.

The last years before the collapse of the Soviet Union were marked by a total deficit for basic goods. The food card system started. The shelves of grocery stores were emptied. It was so horrible for the north part of the far east because of its harsh weather conditions which had permitted to most of the supplies for the region by cargo ships during the short summer. At the beginning of every month, to
purchase their monthly allowance people had to stay in the endless long line. Near the grocery store, the queue was formed in the evening, and until the morning, people waited in line which encircled the store building like the motley python rings. The locals were afraid to lose their spots, and somebody, who was at the beginning of the line, wrote the numbers with the blue ink pen on their wrists. For my monthly allowance for me and my son, I could buy only one frozen chicken, 10 eggs, two kilograms of sausages and beef, one liter bottle of sunflower oil, 200 grams of butter, two kilograms of flour, one kilogram of white rice, buckwheat, semolina, sugar, half of a kilogram of salt, five small boxes of black leaf tea, three boxes of matches, two bars of soap, one small box of laundry powder soap, and one bar of laundry soap. Sometimes, I could buy a few kilograms of fresh potatoes, beets, carrots, and frozen fish after staying in the long line for hours. I had to "stretch" the amount of food for the whole month. I tried also to save sugar for blueberry preserve, cranberry sauce, cloudberry jam, and cowberry syrup which I cooked from the berries collected on the hills near Magadan in the summer. In addition, I collected mushrooms, grown on the hills, to supplement my family diet.

In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed. Overnight, the citizens lost all their savings, especially those who lived in the north part of the far east. Year after year, receiving the high salaries, but being very frugal, they opened bank saving accounts for their future retirement hoping to buy property in the places where the climate was mild instead of the harsh weather conditions of the Kolyma region. But inflation robbed them, and their dreams vanished overnight. Although I worked two jobs, we lived very modestly because of the drastically increased prices for food and utilities. Also, the salaries were paid irregularly, and by the time I got paid, I could buy very little due to high inflation. I remember that once when one of my friends visited my home, all I could offer her was a cup of tea without sugar and blueberry preserve which I cooked in the summer. I shared with my friends what I could receive as the gifts at work. Once, I got a big heavy bag of the dry powder of milk, and my friends transferred the precious powder from the bag into their small plastic bags with a soup ladle. Once, I shared a half of the big bag of dry potato powder and some canned salmon which was made in 1942 for the American army.

We, I and my son, survived because of help of my friends who understood how hard it was for me to be a single mother, whose ex-husband didn't pay child support. My best friend's husband worked at the hydropower plant. Near the plant, the workers built the cattle farm and greenhouse, where they could grow some vegetables. Once he brought me a few kilograms of sweet onion and meat. A wife of my father's friend knew that I felt upset that I couldn't buy for my son enough food, and once she brought me a kitten and three kilograms of beef saying that the meat was for the kitten because she didn't want to hurt my pride. Once, in the cold winter evening, when my son and I went slowly from one university to another for work, her husband, who returned from successful fishing, stopped his jeep near us. He gave us a ride. Next morning, one of his solders brought us a three-liter bottle of sunflower oil, a big bag of potatoes, and three big salmon. I was very appreciative. My son and I survived because of my friends' help. Years later, in a conversation with my best friend, I was told that I did the right thing saying goodbye to Russia.

I found some of my classmates, the Volga German descendants, living abroad of Russia – in Germany and the USA. They took back their first and last family names, which were changed to the ordinary sounding Russian names to protect their owners from Stalin's repressions and the hardships of the Soviet regime in difficult times. One of them lives in Worms, Germany. Suddenly, we found that we are relatives because her great-grandmother married Carl Ulrich, who had 16 siblings and lived in Messer, where Ulrich family had the mill.

I looked at the old photographs and feel proud that I belong to the Ulrich family members, who succeeded in Russia despite having many troubles to live there and who survived despite Stalin's desire to destroy the family and erase our roots.
Dr. Elena Edelson was born and grew up in Russia. She holds a Master's degree in Education and a Ph.D. in Linguistics. Her current research interests are cultural studies and genealogy. Numerous publications relate to cognitive linguistics, applied linguistics, and TESL. She’s worked at South Seattle College for seven years. She began to participate in the CVGS conventions and activities in 2012.

**Norka Baptisms**

Colonists that settled in Norka were largely comprised of people who were part of the Reformed Church in their homelands. As a result, Norka became one of a small number of Reformed colonies on the Volga.

In the Reformed Church, *Tauf* (Baptism or Christening) is always performed in the context of the church congregation. The congregation commits itself to the spiritual nurture of the infant, child, or adult being baptized. The baptism admits the infant into the church.

Typically, baptisms were performed within several weeks of the birth of a child.

In a typical ceremony, parents or godparents brought their child to their pastor of the church congregation. The rite included the sprinkling of water (aspiration) on the head of the infant. At the moment of baptism, the minister utters the words "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

The parents of the child were often presented with a *Taufschein* (Baptism certificate) by the pastor of the church to commemorate the event.
Dear Friends of the Center for Volga German Studies,

We at the Center for Volga German Studies (CVGS) at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, would like to extend our gratitude to all of you who have already supported us. Founded in 2004, the CVGS is the only academically-based Volga German research center in the world. The CVGS library and climate-controlled archive house thousands of materials related to Volga German history and culture.

The CVGS has had a very busy year! The Center assisted over 570 visitors from 8 different countries with their research. On our Facebook page, we correspond with 2,100 followers from 45 countries. We sponsored conferences in 10 different states with a combined total 780 registrants in attendance and purchased $36,000 worth of documents from the Russian archives that will open doors to our family histories.

With your generous support, the CVGS can help preserve the heritage, history, and traditions of the Volga Germans for generations to come. Please visit [http://www.cu-portland.edu/give-cvgs](http://www.cu-portland.edu/give-cvgs) to make your tax deductible gift to the CVGS today.

We wish you great joy and happiness during the year!

Best regards,

Steve Schreiber
Interim Director, Center for Volga German Studies
AHSGR Oregon Chapter Membership Form

Membership fees are for one 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 (preferable). 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:

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**Annual Dues:** $25.00

**Additional Donation:**

**TOTAL ENCLOSED:** $

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

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

Questions? Contact Jim Holstein at [oregonahsgr@gmail.com](mailto:oregonahsgr@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. (Federal Tax ID # 93-1313164).

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Please remit International dues directly to AHSGR headquarters at 631 D Street, Lincoln, NE. 68502-1199.
## September 2017

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## October 2017

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

Address
Address
City
State, Zip

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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