

# North Star Chapter

<http://www.northstarchapter.org/>

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

## **The Farm at Pony Gulch: Memoirs of a Boyhood in North Dakota**

**Saturday, March 17, 2012**

**Berea Lutheran Church,  
7538 Emerson Avenue S.,  
Richfield, MN 55423**

1 p.m. Short business meeting.  
Library will be open.

2 p.m. **The Farm at Pony Gulch**, to be published in 2012 by the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection (GRHC) at North Dakota State University, is the project of North Star Member Patsy Knalson Ramberg. Ramberg and her sister Phyllis

have long been wondering just what to do with their father Eddie Knalson's memoirs written in his later years after a long career in education.

Handwritten, first on lined notebook paper in "Eddiespeak" and later typed by Phyllis, The Farm at Pony Gulch is a story of Eddie's grandparents, Michael and Anna Sophia (Witt) Baier's immigration from Bessarabia to Dakota Territory and finally to Pony Gulch Township near Harvey, ND. The tale is part genealogy, storytelling, and travelogue. Eddie's mom was Christina (Baier) Knalson, seventh child of the Baier's fourteen; his father was John Knalson; they farmed near Martin, ND which is near Harvey.

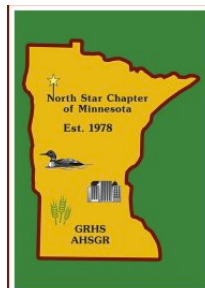
JOIN US AT BEREALUTHERANCHURCH FOR THESE EVENTS:

### **Upcoming Chapter Events**

**February 11, 2012:** Tour Russian Museum of Art with Docent

**March 17, 2012:** Author Patsy Knalson Ramberg, ND Memoir

**April 28, 2012:** Annual Spring Banquet



## **Antiquities From Ukraine: Golden Treasures and Lost Civilizations**

**The Museum of Russian Art  
SPECIAL TOUR for North  
Star Chapter Members**

***Saturday, February 11, 2012***

Docents of the Museum of Russian Art ([www.tmore.org](http://www.tmore.org)) will accompany two groups of up to 25 North Star Chapter Members for special guided tours of the exhibit "Antiquities From Ukraine" and the current art exhibit "The Art of Oleg Vassilliev." Tours will begin at 10:30 and 11:30 am. Advance ***reservations must be made by 27 January*** via email to: [caroljjust@gmail.com](mailto:caroljjust@gmail.com) or by calling 612-554-3050. Please state your time preference.

***This is a "MEMBERS ONLY" event, so you will need to make sure your membership is current for 2012.*** Membership details may be found on the back page of this newsletter. North Star Chapter members in good standing are eligible for one free ticket (per family) to this event. That means if two people in a family are reserving space, one ticket is free and the other ticket will be \$7, payable to the North Star Chapter if you pay in advance.

**Following the tours, we will gather at our usual meeting spot, Berea Lutheran Church, for discussion and fellowship with light lunch. Members Ron and Marilyn have offered to make the chapter library available for research.**

## North Star Chapter 2012 Officers

### President

**Ron Scherbenski**

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**Chuck Kurle**

**& Co-Chair Vicki Kurle**

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### Treasurer

**Marilyn Brink**

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### Please Take Note

The position of Layout/Graphics Editor of the newsletter is now being filled by Nancy Gertner. After eight years of dedicated contributions, Bill Brooks is stepping down to focus on his health. We thank him for his years of service and wish him well as he continues to heal.

### Thank You Volunteers!

Special thanks to Bernie Becker for being our chapter Librarian and to Helen Kleingartner for performing "Hospitality" functions. Helen also does "Sunshine" duties, so send her the news if you know of a member that merits a card for congratulations, condolences, or get well wishes.

### Member News

Roy Becker, husband of Bernie, had open heart surgery on November 4. He is now getting back to his normal activities.

The North Star Chapter welcomes new member Andrew Kroneberger, Spicer, MN.

### Happy Birthday!

**January:** Ron Anderson, John Groh, Sara Groh, Pete Kleingartner, Bernadine Kuhn, Roger Kuhn, Cindy Miller.

**February:** Paul Maggitti, James Gessele, Marilyn Brink, Nancy Gertner, Bernie Becker, Marlene Schonebaum.

### Snowbirds:

If you have a winter address, please notify the Membership Chair, Chuck Kurle, or assistant Vicki Kurle, or Newsletter Editor Cindy Miller. That way, we can get your newsletter to you in a timely fashion! Also, if you prefer to save paper and postage, you can receive your newsletter as an email. Please let Cindy Miller or Webmaster Duane Stabler know.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Annual Spring Banquet, Saturday, April 28, 2012

"Prairie Landscapes: How our Early Geography Influences our Creative Expression." Featuring the spoken word of Sharon Grenz Chmielarz, Poet, and the art of Ginny Weispfenning Peterson, Visual Artist.

### Saturday, July 14, 2012

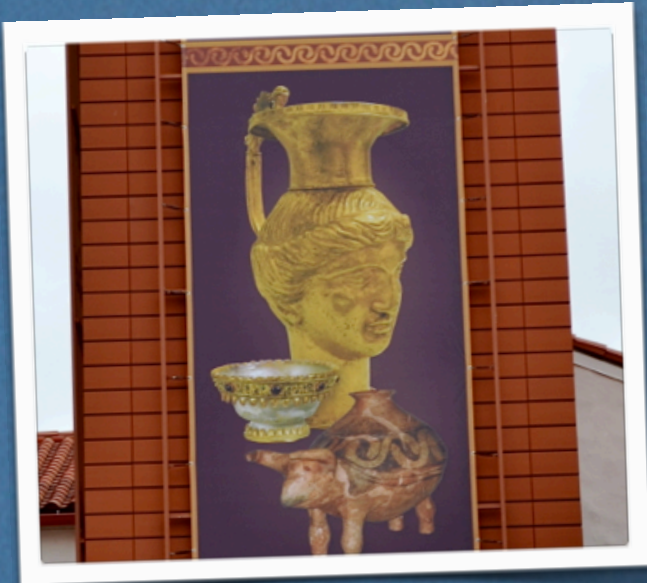
North Star Chapter will host a gathering to honor Dr. Ute Schmidt, of Berlin, Germany, author of **BESSARABIA: German Colonists on the Black Sea**. More details in a future newsletter, and updates on our Facebook page.



# ANTIQUITIES FROM UKRAINE

Golden Treasures and Lost Civilizations

2012



## The Museum of Russian Art Special Tour

*A Docent of the museum will accompany a group up to 25 North Star Chapter Members for a special guided tour of the antiquities. This is a "Members Only" event, so you will have to make sure your membership is current for 2012 if you want to attend.*

### Antiquities from Ukraine: Golden Treasures and Lost Civilizations

OCTOBER 1, 2011 - FEBRUARY 19, 2012

The Museum of Russian Art announces its exhibition of artifacts dating from the Neolithic age to the Byzantine era, unearthed in present-day Ukraine. TMORA is proud to be one of only three American venues hosting this private collection from Kyiv, Ukraine.

Presented in conjunction with the Government of Ukraine and The Museum of National Cultural Heritage PLATAR, the exhibition include unique clay objects from one of the most ancient civilizations of the world – the Trypilian culture, which flourished approximately 7,000 years ago before disappearing in the 3rd millennium BC.

## North Star Chapter Special Museum Event Saturday, February 11, 2012

5500 Stevens Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55419

At Diamond Lake Road and I-35W

Museum at SW Corner

Park in Mayflower Church Lot

Tour Start Times: 1030AM and 1130AM; Tours 90 Minutes Long

## Library Corner

### NEW BOOKS in the North Star Chapter Library

#### AHSGR Publishes New Black Sea Book

AHSGR has just published a book that has been translated from German into English on the German colonies in the Black Sea region. Many thanks go to Tim Geiger who initiated and supported the efforts to translate this book and bring it to publication. Highly recommended reading for those interested in the history of the German colonies in the Russian Empire, the locale of the Black Sea region has relevancy for those whose ancestors settled in the Russian Empire regardless of the area in which they lived.

**Origin, Development, and  
Dissolution of the German  
Colonies on the Black Sea  
via the Example of Kandel  
from 1808 until 1944** by  
Anton Bosch and Josef

**Lingor**, reviewed by Jerome Siebert

This book traces the history of the people and villages established by German colonists in the Black Sea area beginning in the early 1800s until 1944 using the village of Kandel and neighboring villages as examples. It is an attempt to provide insights into all aspects of economic, religious, and cultural life from the immigration into the area through the highs and lows of World War I, the Civil War, and Stalin's persecution during and after World War II. It describes various events and achievements focusing on people in Kandel and emphasizing people who were instilled with an undaunted pioneering spirit, and who were diligent, hardworking, and deeply rooted in the language and culture of the old homeland of Germany. From the colonies' origins to the height of their development, and then to eventual decline and dissolution through events that changed the political and

economic landscape and environment, the book details the impacts on the lives of the colonists and provides insight into their unyielding spirit and quest to succeed and overcome adversity. However, in the end, the village ceased to exist with their inhabitants dispersed in many parts of Siberia, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, East and West Germany, the United States, and Canada. However, the achievements they accomplished while colonists in Russia in order to assist it in becoming a huge empire and make it possible to achieve the status of a world power, are both notable as a tribute to their energy, and hard work. Whether someone has roots in the Black Sea area or is interested in German-Russian history, the book will provide interesting insights.

*Certified translation by Ilona Richey. Translation edited by Ted J. Becker (2008). Editing and layout for AHSGR by Dr. Jerome Siebert (2010)*

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#### **March Program: Author Ramberg** (continued from page 1)

Patsy Knalson Ramberg, a retired educator, has taken her father's memoirs, taped recordings from his Aunt Bertha, her own family lore and joined them all together for an enjoyable read, including recipes! We will all find parallels to our own family experiences as we follow the journey of immigrant pioneers Michael and Anna Sophia.

#### **NBC announces lineup for Season 3 of "Who Do You Think You Are?"**

The popular NBC TV show of celebrities tracing their family history premieres on Friday, February 3, 2012 at 7PM Central time. Follow these people as they learn their family history with the help of professional genealogists and ancestry.com:

*(Continued on Page 5)*



**“WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?” (NBC TV SHOW, SEASON 3) (CONTINUED)**

Martin Sheen, Marisa Tomei, Blair Underwood, Reba McEntire, Rob Lowe, Helen Hunt, Rita Wilson, Edie Falco, Rashida Jones, Jerome Bettis, Jason Sudeikis and Paula Deen.

Produced by Lisa Kudrow and Dan Bucatinsky, “Who” follows celebrities on a journey of self-discovery as they unearth family trees that reveal stories of surprise, inspiration and even tragedy often linked to crucial events in American history.

Season 3 has the show visiting different countries, and “each episode will expose surprising facts and life changing encounters that will unlock people’s emotions, and show just how connected everyone is not only to the past, but to one another.”

In this journey of discovery, NBC and Shed Media partner with Ancestry.com, the world’s largest online family history resource.

**November Program Provided  
Lessons on Bessarabia**

By Ron Scherbenski

November 19 was the first educational meeting of the North Star Chapter for the 2011-2012 season. The program was presented by our own Jim Gessele. Jim is a former editor of GRHS Heritage Review and past president of the North Star Chapter. Jim also has done a number of translations of books from German into English.

The topic of this presentation was Bessarabia, with the intriguing title “The Ukraine is Not a Hawaiian Musical Instrument, Nor is Bessarabia an Arab State – Just to Shatter Some Misconceptions.” Jim has a deep understanding of the subject because his ancestors were Bessarabians and his interest started when he asked his grandmother where they came from. She said “Bessarabia” but did not elaborate. Later when he asked her more she said it was not important because we were all Americans now. Jim’s curiosity was not satisfied for many years and eventually led to his translation of Ute Schmidt’s book *Bessarabia: German Colonists on the Black Sea*. It is a must-read for anyone with a Bessarabian background or anyone who would like to know

what life was like for those left behind. I should note that fate of the Bessarabians was much different in the years 1918 to 1940 when compared to the people who were under the thumb of the Soviets. Bessarabia managed to integrate itself with Romania which was not part of the Soviet Union at that time.

Jim pointed out that here in the west we were unaware of Bessarabia and the whole area of the Ukraine for much of the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It led to such things as the interesting title of Jim’s presentation that he put on for us as well as at the GRHS Convention in Spokane in 2011. Jim discovered that many people had to be informed that Ukraine was not a Hawaiian musical instrument (a ukulele), and that Bessarabia was not part of the Arab world and people that came from there were not white Arabs. Along with all the information Jim presented, he had maps that are included in the book showing the location of the German villages as well as villages of other ethnic groups. It turns out our ancestors were more integrated than it appears on the surface.

The North Star Chapter backed the publishing of this book with a \$5,000 grant, and the presentation that Jim made shows us what a great investment it is in

preserving our history. The book is available for checkout in the chapter library, and North Star Chapter members may purchase the book at a discount.

This book traces the history of the people and villages established by German colonists in the Black Sea area beginning in the early 1800s until 1944 using the village of Kandel and neighboring villages as examples. Provides insight into all aspects of economic, religious, and cultural life from the immigration into the new area through the highs and lows of World War I, the Civil War, and Stalin’s persecution during and after World War II. It describes various events and achievements focusing on people in Kandel and emphasizes people who were instilled with an undaunted pioneering spirit, and who were diligent, hardworking, and deeply rooted in the language and culture of the old homeland of Germany. From the colonies’ origins to the height of their development, and then to eventual decline and dissolution through events that changed the political and economic landscape and environment, the book details the impacts on the lives of the colonists and provides insight into their unyielding spirit and quest to succeed and overcome adversity.

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*North Star Chapter Officers for 2012*

## New Officers elected at November Meeting

Left to Right: Nancy Gertner, Marilyn Brink, Vicki Kurle, Jerry Renner, Carol Just, Chuck Kurle, Ron Scherbenski.

## President's Message

By Ron Scherbenski

The year 2011 is over and the North Star Chapter has had a good year. It is great being able to get together and learn more about our history and keep some of the old traditions alive.

*Weihnachtsfest* is a good example of that. We had a good turn-out and a good time was had by all. There was a good mix of people from children to seniors. The assortment of dishes at the pot luck was outstanding.

In November we had **election of officers** and have a full Board of Directors for the next year. **Chuck Kurle**, with his able assistant **Vicki**, will be our new **VP for Membership**. *Thanks to Ardella Bennett who has been the Membership VP for the last two years.* Ardella has been in various leadership roles for a very long time and deserves some time off. Thank you very much for your service to the Chapter, Ardella!

With Chuck taking over the duties of VP for Membership we had an opening at **Secretary**. **Jerry Renner** has agreed to take that job and we welcome him to that position.

*Lil Ward has completed two years as President and deserves a big THANK YOU for a job well done.* She is still on the board as past president so we will still have her around to get her valuable input. I will be your President for the next two years and ask for your support.

**Carol Just** and **Nancy Gertner** will continue as Co-chairs of **Programming**. They have done an excellent job this past year and also deserve a big THANK YOU! The Dakota Air show is an example of the event planning abilities of these talented members. The coming year looks very promising. Carol also chaired the Nominating Committee. Getting people to step up and take over duties of Chapter offices has its own challenges.

The duties of **Treasurer** will be in the capable hands of **Marilyn Brink**. Marilyn will be doing double duty as she will be assisting **Bernie Becker** with the library. Thank you, Marilyn, for your willingness to help.

We did not have a white Christmas but that is OK. Have a wonderful and prosperous New Year in 2012.

### November Program on Bessarabia (Cont fm Pg 5)

However, in the end, the village ceased to exist with their inhabitants dispersed in many parts of Siberia, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, East and West Germany, the United States, and Canada. However, the achievements they accomplished while colonists in Russia in order to assist their new homeland in becoming a huge empire and make it possible to achieve the status of a world power, are both notable as a tribute to their energy, and hard work. Whether someone has roots in the Black Sea area or is interested in German-Russian history, the book will provide interesting insights.

## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

by Nancy Gertner

Living in the Twenty-First Century: Everything we need is available via the cyberclouds of the Internet. Really? A wealth of information is as close as our keyboard. We can benefit from the work and research of many others. Do we still need any personal contact?

I remember the first “Genealogy” meeting of the North Star Chapter that I attended in a previous millennium. I met Cousin Arlene Yochem Ulstad, a long-time chapter member. My chance meeting with Arlene resulted in a visit to her home, where she shared the benefits of her years of research: The data of my ancestral German Russian family. This focused my research by pinpointing the Grunau parish as my immigrant ancestors’ origin in Russia.

A visit to the Cottonwood County Historical Society to view records yielded files of obituaries, along with the microfilmed records of the 1885 Minnesota State Census. The Township enumerator was my great-grandfather Jahnke! His handwriting

was both legible and beautiful. I don’t let anyone tell me my immigrant great-grandparents were illiterate! An employee at the Historical Society was the niece of my uncle’s wife. This personal visit to the archives resulted in some items from my aunt’s estate coming into my possession. These items included vintage photos, along with an 1866 German prayer book, and great-grandfather’s original naturalization papers in a leather case he crafted to carry them.

So are social and fraternal organizations destined to go the way of the dinosaur, as people develop a preference to stay at home, play games with their TV screens instead of other people, and network online via channels like LinkedIn and Facebook instead of at the local pub or coffee shop?

“No,” says journalist Tina Rosenberg, author of *Join The Club* (Harnessing the Power of Peer Pressure to Change the World), who claims “Joining a group can be as powerful for one’s health and well being as quitting smoking!” Now that’s a great return on investment for a membership investment of \$62 a year, isn’t it?

## ARE YOU A “JOINER?”

### Membership Time Again for North Star Chapter and the Germans from Russia Historical Society (GRHS)

by Patsy Ramberg, GRHS Member

Twelve dollars for our Chapter which brings us our programs, good food, and research information.

Fifty dollars for the GRHS, a heck-of-a-deal for all they offer: archives from the former Russian Empire, translations of letters and newspaper articles, family trees, and village archives. Heritage Review is GRHS’s four times a year publication. One issue alone (September, 2011) has articles on the Adam

Gieseinger Collection at NDSU, Soviet Documents in German Russian History Series, German Colonies in the Crimea, the ever popular Folklore Forum by Brother Placid Gross, articles from the *Dakota Freie Presse* (remember your grandfather reading that?), obits, poetry, pictures and more. I can’t be without it! It is also offered on line to members.

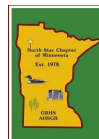
Your membership gives you a discount on the summer convention, this year in Bismarck, and in the GRHS store.

The \$12 for our chapter is a deal, too. The large meeting place at Berea Church has a rental fee, and the vast library is also stored there. That large library is a

wonder unto itself!

I found my grandmother’s village is documented in the book about Friedenstal, available in the library. I never would have known the sad history of grandmotehr’s family had I not found that book there. Those left behind were killed or “died in flight.” I’m torn between actually knowing what happened to them and wishing I didn’t know at all. The Chapter’s programs run from genealogical help to new books about the G/R experience; a spring banquet, summer picnic, and whatever suggestions you, as a member, suggest.

So pay your dues! Come to the meetings! Bring your family, neighbors, and interesting strangers to join us.



# Time to Renew Membership for 2012!

## 2012 Membership Form

\_\_\_\_ New    \_\_\_\_ Renew    \_\_\_\_ Individual    \_\_\_\_ Family

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

National Membership: \_\_\_\_ AHSGR    \_\_\_\_ GRHS    \_\_\_\_ Both

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

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

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

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

**Chuck Kurle, 2040 Highland Dr., Hastings MN 55033**

For newsletter greeting: Birthday Month(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Anniversary Month \_\_\_\_\_

North Star Chapter  
of Minnesota

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Non-Profit Organization

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