

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).

Five Generations of Migration from Russia in USA

**Saturday, September 21, 2019
Berea Lutheran Church**

**7538 Emerson Ave S
Richfield, MN 55423**

1:00 p.m. - Business meeting
2:00 p.m. Program

The Bender Family story takes us from a small village in Ukraine, to the city of Odessa on the Black Sea, traveling under secret arrangement to exit Russia, choosing to homestead on the rocky prairie of south-central North Dakota, to a thriving general store business in Eureka, South Dakota (the Odessa of the North); then Kenneth Bender's service as a U.S. soldier in the European theatre in WWII, returning home to marry, raise a family in St. Louis Park, MN, and build a successful Federated store franchise in North Minneapolis.



Author Rebecca Bender (right) at a recent book signing.

STILL (as in "are you STILL Jewish?") by Rebecca Bender and her father, Kenneth Bender, takes us on a journey through five generations of migration over 150 years.

Then . . . the story of the generations of the Bendersky/Bender family comes full circle and takes us back to North and South Dakota to honor the Jewish pioneers interred in a tiny cemetery on the prairie. Rebecca Bender's dedication in her journey to list the cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places is a story all by itself.

This immigrant family was dedicated to being good citizens of their adopted country while still observing their Jewish customs. Creatively finding work options off the farm, making do, having fun, staging plays, bringing musical theatre to the prairies, learning from their German-Russian neighbors, being good neighbors, sharing their religious traditions with others – all of this can be found in **Still**, a fine addition to ethnic prairie literature.

Published in 2019 by North Dakota State University Press, **Still** by Rebecca Bender won the 2019 Independent Press Award (Judaism category).

Follow us on Facebook at: North Star Chapter of Minnesota



North Star Chapter 2019 Officers

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Sue Ward

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Chapter President's Message

by Paul Maggitti

Chapter officer elections are in November; we need to fill our slate, please see notice on the back page. If you are interested in serving the chapter please see one of the chapter officers at the September or October business meetings -- current officers are listed on the column just left. Of particular importance: We need a new 1st VP, Programs; a new 2nd VP, Membership; and a new Secretary due to vacancies and term limits. Thank you to Ray Reinhardt who answered the 2018 nominating committee call to serve as Secretary in 2019; Ray was unable to complete his term this year. I want to thank Ron Scherbenski for stepping in to fill Ray's term as acting secretary for the remainder of this year. A big thank you to Lil Ward for her three consecutive years as 2nd VP, Membership. Of note, Carol Just stepped forward in the November 2018 election to serve as 1st VP, Programs from September to November of 2019. Carol has done a great job of filling our fall programs; see pages 1 and 3 for details.

The Board of Directors (BOD) met July 19 to discuss our website. We welcome new webmaster, Sue Ward, and thank her for creating a new website. The board members cast a unanimous vote to increase chapter dues to \$20 per year effective for our next fiscal year in January 2020. All chapter members present at the business meeting starting at 1:00 pm on September 21 may vote on this change. See notice on page 8.

Special thanks to Art and Carol Stabner for sponsoring the October program: "Find A Grave." Any chapter member can step forward to support all or a part of chapter programming with their financial donation to any upcoming programs in 2019 or 2020.

Upcoming volunteer activities include *Weihnachtsfest* on December 7. These dedicated volunteers set up and decorate tables, stuff sacks, and clean up after our pot luck meal and fellowship time.

Any chapter member can volunteer to work on programs and provide inputs to our newsletter. If you attended the AHSGR convention this summer, please consider writing an article, providing photos, and bringing forward new program ideas and presenters for future chapter meetings in 2020.

Please Take Note: *If you have a seasonal address, please notify the Membership Chair, Lil Ward.*

NOTE on email addresses: Use this format when emailing chapter officers.

name@Provider.com (Replace the "at" with the @ symbol and use no spaces in between.)

Find-A-Grave: Bob Rowe on “Using Cemetery Data in Your Family History Research”

**Saturday, October 12,
2019**

Berea Lutheran Church

**7538 Emerson Ave. S.
Richfield, MN 55423**

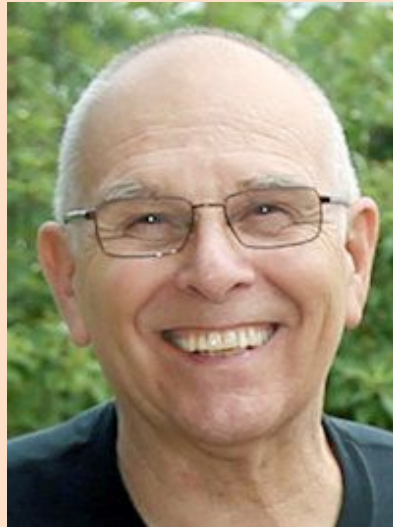
1:00 p.m. - Meeting

2:00 p.m. - Program

Find A Grave is a virtual cemetery, an online database with data on millions of the dear departed. Greatly expanded from its humble beginnings, the website contains cemetery data, along with family connections, obituaries, and photos. This is a great tool for genealogists, along with other sources of data. It can also be helpful in making contact with others researching your same family.

Joining us in October to explain the features of the **Find A Grave** website, Bob Rowe is a member of several local genealogy societies. His interest in genealogy began in the 1980s, when ads for Family Tree Maker software caught his eye. Bob began seriously researching genealogy in 1999; then joined **German Genealogy Society** (GGS) in 2001.

Bob became proficient in developing websites. He helped build **GGS** websites and the new International German Genealogy Partnership website, and became webmaster for both groups. Bob is also webmaster for Minnesota Genealogical Society, Norwegian-American Genealogical Association, the Pommern Regional Group, Swedish Genealogy Society, and the Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society.



Bob is a volunteer in the Enterprise Technology Department at the Minnesota Historical Society in Saint Paul. He also corrects the birth and death records in their databases, and adds thousands of missing records to the death database.

Bob is one of four primary people who helped add the nearly 20,000 burials at Acacia Park Cemetery in Mendota Heights to the website. When he worked at a nearby business, Bob spent many lunch hours at the cemetery taking pictures of graves, and attached the images to the appropriate **Find-A-Grave** memorials.

Bob's interest in genealogy gave him incentive to travel. In an online search, his daughter found a cemetery in Canada with about 30 people named Rowe. Bob thought "What are the chances we are related to any of them?" Well, he is related to ALL of them! Bob traveled to Canada to visit that cemetery in 2001. He also discovered a fourth cousin living just down the street from the cemetery, and hopes to make another trip to Canada to visit more cemeteries where relatives are buried.

Bob's online tree connected him to cousins in Norway. In 2012 they invited him to a family reunion outside of Tromsø, on the far north-western coast. This area is home of the indigenous Sami people. Bob's great grandparents were full-blooded Sami who lived northeast of Tromsø and immigrated to America.

Volunteerism has become Bob's passion during retirement. Bob enjoys staying busy and uses his talents to help others. Bob has presented on this topic to GGS, the Pommern Regional Group, the 3-M Genealogy Society, Dakota County Genealogical Society, and the 2016 Minnesota Genealogical Society Spring Conference.

Member Profiles: Meet the Chapter Officers!

Profiles of Executive Board Members and our new Webmaster address:

**"Where are you From?
Do you go back there?"**

by Nancy Gertner

Born and raised in Berlin, LaMoure County, ND, **Carol Just** has researched her family history since she was a teenager. Her degree in history focuses on pioneer and Native American women. All of her Great-Grandparents emigrated from the Glückstal Colonies and Bessarabia in South Russia to Dakota Territory beginning in 1873.

Carol traveled to her ancestral villages in Moldova, Ukraine, Bessarabia, Germany, Alsace and Poland. She is a charter member of the North Star Chapter of Minnesota. Carol lives in St. Louis Park and has two daughters and four grandchildren. She occasionally returns to North Dakota to make pickles, visit the family



***First Vice President,
Programming, Carol Just***

farm, now operated by a nephew, and attend special events at Saint Andrews Lutheran Church.



New Webmaster, Sue Ward

Sue Ward is the daughter of Chapter members Dayton and Lil Ward and was raised in Mounds View, MN. She works in the Information Technology Department at the University of Minnesota, loves to travel and can often be seen taking pictures and using her video camera. Sue enjoys visiting Gackle, ND, where both of her parents are from, to visit with family. A few years ago, she volunteered to create a website for the family, going back to her Great Great Grandfather and Grandmother, Johann and Barbara Mueller, and including all of their descendants. Sue finds her interest in genealogy increasing.

Paul Maggitti was born the son of a U.S. Air Force airman and English mother and lived in Chelmsford, Essex County, England. Before his first birthday, Paul's parents moved to Baltimore, Maryland. Paul spent his early years in Randallstown, Baltimore County, attending both parochial and public schools. He attended North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina, in the early and late 1970s, with a break for enlisted service in the U.S. Army.

After completing his Bachelor of Science Degree, Paul was commissioned an Army Second Lieutenant. He visited England with his parents in 1985. Paul met his wife-to-be, Navy Lieutenant Commander Nancy Gertner, in Stuttgart, Germany while they were both on a joint duty assignment. Paul retired as a Major in 1996, and began a civilian career in Bloomington, Minnesota the next year. One of the highlights of his Army career was attending the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California; his Master of Science in Systems Technology was a springboard to a variety of assignments during and following his Army career. In Minnesota, Paul worked on teams designing advanced military computers for both the U.S. Navy and Army. Retired a second time, Paul enjoys photography, cooking, travel – both in



Chapter President Paul Maggitti visited Abruzzo Region of Italy and met cousins 120 years after his grandfather was born there.

the United States and abroad – and researching the genealogy of his Italian and English ancestors. Paul and Nancy vacationed in Italy in 1999 and 2014. Paul visited his childhood home and schools in Maryland with his brother and nephew in 2012. An avid toy train enthusiast, Paul created train layouts for children of all ages for 2015–2018 *Weihnachtsfest* celebrations.

2019 Schedule

Sep 21: Author Rebecca Bender: “Still,” A Family Story of Five Generations.

Oct 12: Find A Grave with speaker Bob Rowe (Rescheduled from March 2019).

Nov 16: Genealogy Research Day in Chapter Library (Morning);

November Program:

Dr. William (Bill) Bosch, Spearfish, South Dakota on Russian Agriculture in the 1880s.

Dec 7: Weihnachtsfest:

Annual celebration with meal, music and fellowship.

GRHS Convention Report

by Carol Just

"Celebrating the Past"

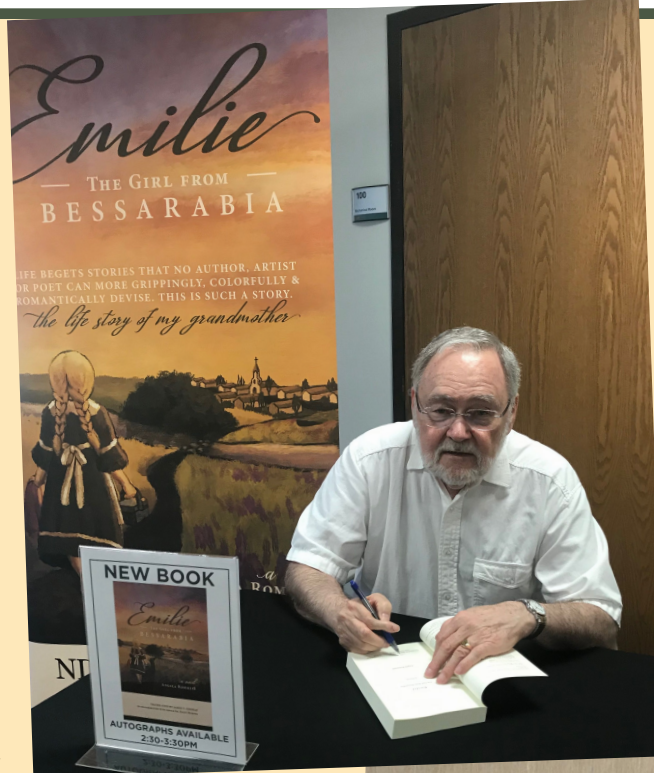
was the theme of the 49th Annual Germans from Russia Heritage Society (GRHS) Convention held at the Holiday Inn in Fargo, ND.

Events began on Wednesday afternoon, July 31, with an Open House at North Dakota State University's Germans from Russia Heritage Collection (GRHC) located at the NDSU Libraries. Many exhibits from the GRHC collection were on display. Custard *kuchen* and coffee were served to the large crowd. North Star Chapter's own Jim Gessele was on hand to sign his latest book translation, ***"Emilie: The Girl From Bessarabia,"*** an historical novel by Angela Rommeiss, published in 2019 by GRHS.

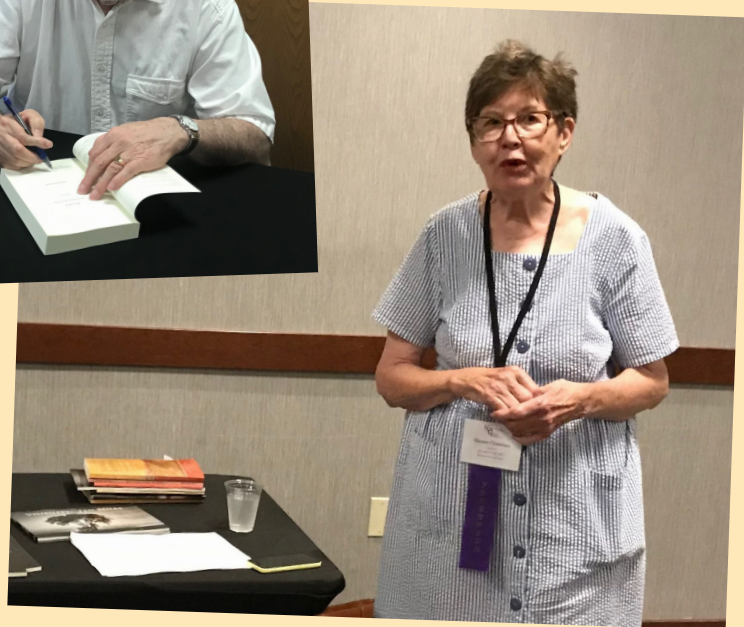
The historic Fargo Theater was the scene of the Wednesday evening event when 800 plus guests viewed the premier of the 10th documentary collaboration between Prairie Public Television, Tri-County Tourism Alliance, and GRHC, entitled ***"Women Behind the Plow."***

The convention officially opened Thursday with opening ceremonies including a procession of banners representing every chapter and regional interest group. Attendees represented 25 states and at least two Canadian Provinces.

A variety of wonderful workshops and banquet speakers filled the next three days. North Star Chapter's own Sharon Chmielarz presented ***"Gemutlichkeit of Poetry."***



North Star Chapter members that presented at the 2019 GRHS Convention included Jim Gessele (left) signing copies of his latest German to English book translation, and author Sharon Chmielarz (below) reading from her most recently published book of poetry.



There was a great turnout of North Star Chapter Members. We all look forward to the 50th GRHS Convention in July 2020 in Bismarck, ND

NOTE: Submission Deadline for the next newsletter is 15 October 2019. Please put newZletter in the subject line, and email inputs to: NancyGertner at mac.com No Zip files please!

In Memorial: Janet Lohberger, Wife of Mayo Flegel

Janet Lohberger, age 74, of Mankato, died at her home on Friday, August 9, 2019. Mass of Christian Burial was held Thursday, August 15, at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Waldorf, MN, with interment at St. Joseph Community Cemetery.

Janet Irene Lohberger was born September 1, 1944 in Mankato to George and Irene (Leet) Landsteiner. She grew up in rural Pemberton, where she attended grade school. Janet graduated from Waldorf-Pemberton High School with the class of 1962. On September 21, 1963 she was united in marriage to Dale Lohberger at St. Teresa Catholic Church in Mapleton. Together they made their home in rural Waldorf where they farmed and raised four children. They shared 36 years of marriage before Dale passed away on March 20, 2000. In 2004, Janet met Mayo Flegel, and they were united in marriage on May 6, 2005, at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Waldorf.

Throughout her life, Janet was a dedicated mother and farm wife. She also worked as a telephone operator, waitress, substitute teacher, surveyor at the Natural resource Conservation Service Office in Mankato and owned a dollar store in Mankato for three years. Janet was a devout Catholic and faithful member of St. Joseph Catholic Church where she taught Sunday school for many years. She enjoyed playing cards, bridge, camping, golfing, and having coffee with friends. Janet enjoyed traveling, especially to Europe and the Caribbean with Mayo, and her yearly trip to Texas for the winter. Education was very important to her, and she encouraged her grandchildren to explore higher education. Above all else, she knew how to run a tight ship, whether it was keeping a clean house, well tended yard and garden or making sure lunch and supper were ready at exactly 12 Noon and 6PM. Janet especially cherished the time she spent with her children, grandchildren, other family, and friends. She will be dearly missed.

Janet is survived by her husband, Mayo Flegel of Mankato; children: Lyndel (Evelyn Alexander) Lohberger of Rosamond, CA, Shelly (Kelly) Branscom



of Albuquerque, NM, Brian (Liz Sundet) Lohberger of Medford, and Curt (Joan Garcia) Lohberger of Edwards, WI; stepchildren: Jim (Amelia) Flegel of Plymouth, Paula Thuerman of Waupaca, WI and Anne (Matt) Podhradsky of Chaska; 11 grandchildren and step grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; siblings: Donald (Rose) Landsteiner of Mapleton, Dennis (Cathy) Landsteiner of Fremont, NE, and Donna (Larry) Kreykes of Kasota; sister-in-law: Donna Landsteiner of Waseca; several godchildren; nieces, nephews, other relatives and many friends.

Preceded in death by her parents; husband, Dale Lohberger; father-in-law and mother-in-law: Cleo and Ruth Lohberger; and brother: Cletus Landsteiner.

A memorial video of pictures of Janet with Mayo and family may be viewed at:

www.janesvillefuneral.com

North Star Chapter
of Minnesota
AHSGR / GRHS Affiliated
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PO Box 583642
Minneapolis, MN 55458

Board of Directors Proposes Dues Increase for 2020,

Member Vote Scheduled for September Meeting

The North Star Chapter Board of Directors (BOD) met July 19, 2019. At that meeting, the Board voted unanimously to increase chapter dues to \$20 per year for our fiscal year that begins January 1, 2020.

Chapter dues are currently \$15 per year per member / family.

Current dues do not cover the cost of four newsletter issues mailed to members through the year.

Membership provides programs and events scheduled for the chapter, access to the chapter library, and the printed newsletter delivered via mail.

This serves as written notice to members that a dues increase will be voted on at the Chapter business meeting on September 21, 2019. This meeting is scheduled to start at 1:00 PM.

Nominating Committee Needed to Recruit New Officers

The North Star Chapter conducts elections for officers during the final business meeting of the year (Nov. 16, 2019). Officers are elected for one-year terms; officers may serve up to three consecutive terms. The five current chapter officers are President Paul Maggitti, 1st VP Programs Carol Just, 2nd VP Membership Lil Ward, Treasurer Art Stabner, and Secretary (acting) Ron Scherbenski. A nominating committee is needed to present a slate of officers to serve in 2020 for election at the November business meeting.

If you are interested in being on the Nominating Committee, please contact President Paul Maggitti by email: paul_maggitti at mac.com or during the September business meeting. If you are interested in being nominated for any of the five officer positions, please contact any of the current chapter officers at the September or October business meetings.