



Texas Wendish Heritage Society

Route 2, Box 155 / Giddings, Texas 78942-9769

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OPEN FROM 1:00 To 5:00 EVERY DAY EXCEPT SATURDAY, & HOLIDAYS

PHONE 409/366-2441

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that this newsletter will find that all of you had an enjoyable Christmas. This is the time of year when we all can have additional fellowship with our family, fellow workers, and especially enjoy the Christmas carols with our fellow congregational members by again celebrating the birth of our Savior.

At this time I want to wish each and everyone of you a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

I want to thank those of you who have made suggestions regarding some of the committees. Especially do I want to thank those of you who have also volunteered to serve on these committees. If you have not sent in your suggestions, or volunteered to serve on a committee, there is still time to do so. I encourage you to make suggestions and volunteer to serve on any committee.

Also, thank you to those of you who have sent in your 1992 membership renewal. If you have not renewed your membership, please, do so as soon as possible. These membership fees are used to operate and support the museum. This is a good opportunity for you to support the Museum and the Society by encouraging your relatives and/or neighbors to become members of the Society.

The local ladies are busy baking for an upcoming Bake Sale in La Grange on December 20th. Other members are urged to do the same thing in their areas. Contact your local officers of Lutheran Brotherhood and/or Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) to try to get matching funds. Area members are planning to have another Bake Sale in the Spring and hope to get matching funds.

On January 18, 1992 we will again be able to enjoy sharing our heritage by celebrating the Vogelhochzeit, to be held at the Sons of Hermann Hall in Giddings, Texas. I hope that all of you are making plans to take advantage of this event, as this will be a good opportunity for you to stay in Giddings overnight and visit the Museum on Sunday afternoon.

Ken Weiser
President

DREAMING of CHRISTMAS-CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

The Austin Chapter had the opportunity to set up a Christmas Tree, in the Wendish tradition, in Barton Creek Square Mall at the Noel Store. Irene and Reinhold Teinert directed the decorating of the tree, which was one of 10 ethnic trees decorated at the mall. They were assisted in the decorating by their son Nelson. Decorations were provided by Margaret Hart, Leona Behrend and the Teinerts. The Serbin Museum provided crocheted baskets.

As the tree was being decorated Reinhold was photographed and the picture and an article were published in The Austin American Statesman Neighborhood Section (picture below left). Many of our Lutheran friends will see the tree as they have asked, "Where is the tree, how do we get there?" The picture below right is the fully decorated tree.

For the press party on November 17 the Teinerts were accompanied by two of their grand-children, Cara and Nelson Teinert, Jr. who were in costume.



WENDISH CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS



For the Wends in Texas, Christmas was a joyous occasion which included baked goods, cedar Christmas trees, and festive church services conducted on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

In the Wendish home, preparations for Christmas were directed towards plenty of food and drink. The women worked for days baking elaborate cakes, cookies, and pastries. The largest meal of the year was usually served on Christmas Day when the family returned home from the morning church service.



A cedar tree was cut to use as the family Christmas tree; often, this tree had been pruned and trimmed for years to achieve the desired shape. The tree was then set up in the parlor. All of the parlor doors were locked and the windows were covered so that no one could see into this room. This was done so the rumpliche (a man, dressed in a striped tunic, fake beard, and a mask, who came around at Christmas time to determine who had been naughty and who had been nice) could decorate the tree at his own leisure and have it ready on Christmas Eve when the children returned home from church services. In addition, the older children would sneak into the parlor before Christmas and decorate the tree with bright red apples and cookies of different shapes. They also placed colored wax candles into small, round holders clasped to the cedar limbs.

The Christmas Eve service often lasted two or three hours and featured Christmas carols, recitations, and religious pageants presented by the children. After the service, each child received a bag containing nuts, candy, and fruit along with a religious picture. Many Lutheran churches in Texas still follow this tradition today.

When the family returned home from church, the children were delighted to find a decorated Christmas tree in the parlor. It was at this time that the Christmas presents were opened. Other activities included food, games, singing, and conversation. Traditionally, the eldest son of the family was delegated the task of passing on the message of Christ's birth to all dogs, cats, and barnyard animals.

Church services were also conducted on Christmas morning. Following the services, the families returned home for a Christmas feast.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 25	Museum will be closed - Christmas Day.
January 1, 1992	Museum will be closed - New Year's Day.
January 13, 1992	Deadline for articles for January newsletter.
January 18, 1992	Vogelhochzeit at the Sons of Hermann Hall, Giddings, Texas, 1:00 p.m. until ?
February 16, 1992	General Membership meeting at 2:00 p.m. at the Museum.
February 17, 1992	Deadline for articles for February newsletter.

LILLIE MOERBE CALDWELL MEMORIAL LIBRARY by Georgie B. Boyce, Librarian

Our thanks to CAREY B. NEITSCH for the many brochures, posters and other items that he brought to us from his summer trip to Bautzen, Germany. We do appreciate when you folks remember us on your visits to Germany.

Thank you to MARHATA ORNAF for donating 38 issues of the Wendish periodical, "Rozlad", and to CHARLES WUKASCH for donating 32 issues of "Ptomjo", a children's magazine and a copy of "Serbska Prstyka". Although, most of us cannot read Wendish, there are many interesting and amusing pictures of people and places of the Wendish area in Germany. These periodicals can be found on the shelf in the library, for those of you who may be interested. Dr. Wukasch also donated 4 copies of "Schriften Reihe", a German publication.

We have purchased the book, Historical Accounts of Industry, Texas 1831-1986 and also, American Naturalization Processes and Procedures 1790-1985.

AUSTIN CHAPTER CHRISTMAS PARTY by Reinhold Teinert, President

Approximately 40 people attended the annual Austin Chapter Christmas Party, on December 8, held at Redeemer Lutheran Church. Caroling was accompanied by Laurence Meissner, a professor at Concordia Lutheran College, Austin, playing his guitar.

Turkey and ham were provided by the Austin Chapter while those who attended brought dishes suitable for a Christmas dinner.

Hand made gifts were given as door prizes. So many members brought gifts that almost a fourth of those present received a gift.

ACCESSIONS

Carey B. Neitsch donated two "flutes", from the Gutttau Lutheran Church, given to him by Frank Heinig of Gutttau.

16 Christmas ornaments, approximately 60 years old, were donated by Herbert Falke. They had belonged to his mother, Alma (Melde) Falke.

A doily of the 1850's was donated by Elinor Louise Vlasak and Roberta Charlene Foerster, great-granddaughters of Pauline Haak Jenner, sister of August Haak, who wrote the diary of the crossing of the Ben Nevis in 1854.

Dr. Charles Wukasch gave two presentations at the October 31-November 2 meeting of the South Central Modern Language Association in Fort Worth. They both dealt with Wendish: "Herta Wiczec, the First Wendish Female Author" and "The Seventh Book of Moses: a Wendish Folkloric Motif."

WENDISH POEM
Translated by Dr. Charles Wukasch

A young man dressed in a homemade suit, wearing an ugly mask and carrying a long stick went from house to house asking children if they had been good during the year and what they wanted for Christmas.

The following poem describes why the most exciting time of the Christmas holidays, for the children, were the scary visits of Rumpodich (The Wendish Santa Claus).

Rumpodich

Štó bydli w lěsu tam?
Štó by tam dóšoł sam?
Tam bydli rumpodich,
kiž ma tón wulki měch.

Wón wjele darow ma.
Wón skradžu přichadža
we dołhim kožuše
do wjeski našeje.

Wón hlada přez wokno,
što nutřka stawa so,
hač džěci dušne su
a přeco poskaju.

A hdyž wón wobradža,
so wšitcy raduja.
Wón bórze přindže zas
a njezabudže nas.

by Wladimir Šěca

Rumpodich

Who lives in the forest deep?
Would you go there alone?
Rumpodich lives there,
A large sack on his back.

So many gifts he brings,
To our own village here.
He comes so secretly,
And wears a long fur coat.

And through the window he looks,
To watch the kids inside.
Have they now gone to bed,
Like Mother told them to?

And then he leaves the gifts,
And all the kids are glad.
They know he'll come again,
A year will pass so soon.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG WENDS!

David O'Leary, son of Joe and Linda O'Leary of San Antonio, received his Eagle Scout Award on Sunday, November 24. Among the approximately 100 attending the Eagle Court of Honor at Crown of Life Lutheran Church were David's grandparents, Leroy and Elinor Steglich of Warda.

Thank you, to the following for providing refreshments at the November meeting:
The Austin Chapter, Charles Wukasch, Esther Schmidt, Evelyn Kasper, Elinor Steglich,
and Barbara Hielscher.

MEMBERSHIP

New Members/Previous Members Renewed

Linda O'Leary, San Antonio, TX.

Kathryn Steglich Smith, Richardson, TX.

Betty Teston, San Angelo, TX.

Patron Members

Ludwig O. Groeschel, Austin, TX.

DOCENTS

November docents were: Jack and Marian Wiederhold, Herbert and Laverne Falke, Hattie Schautschick, August Zoch, Freddie Zoch, and Bessie Mertink, Thank You!

VISITORS

Visitors to the Museum in November came from, Washington, Arkansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, West Virginia, California, North Carolina, Kansas, and all parts of Texas.



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