
NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Volume XX, Number 4
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Wendish Fest Plant Sale

Wendish Fest 2007 included an expanded version of last year's plant sale. Spearheaded by Altha Garrett, TWHS member and experienced horticulturist who is also a master gardener in Montgomery County, Texas, the plant sale booth proved to be a positive addition to our annual celebration. Pictured in the photo are (left to right): Altha Garrett, Bob Garrett, J.B. Gersch, Jr., and Steve Green.

Photo courtesy of Giddings Times & News.

Within the Fold...

Gertrude Birkman of Houston, TX, member since 1979, died July 23, 2007.

William Fischer of Houston TX, member since 2003, died May 25, 2007.

Edwin Moerbe of Kenedy, TX, member since 2002, died March 11, 2007.

Beverly Moerbe Bosworth of San Antonio, TX, member since 2003, died May 6, 2007.

Helen Blaschke of McDade, TX, member since 2006, died September 2, 2007.

President's Message

Greetings and best wishes to all,

What an awesome Festival in September! I look forward all year long to coffee cake, noodles and sausage (and in that order, thank you very much). But more than just food; it is the people, the faces of those who put it all together. The hours spent baking are not lost on those of us who are taken back to the days of our youth. I remember climbing off the school bus and the aroma of coffee cakes and sweet rolls baking and how hard it was to "wait till after supper" or "wait till breakfast." I thank each of you who contributed goodies for the bake sale; you took me home again.

It was interesting to watch the execution of all the events and tasks involved with Wendish Fest. As many of you know, a long list of willing volunteers is compiled in advance of the day. Invariably, not every detail goes off according to plan. For example, serving meals is directly impacted by the number in attendance. As a result, workloads shift and in some cases the volunteers end up "stretched a bit thin." One key reason that the process does not suffer is a willing group of people who offer to stand by with the attitude of "put us in when and where we are needed." I speak of the St Paul, Serbin LAF (Lutheran Adult Fellowship). Your generous contribution of willing energy is acknowledged by every individual involved in the festival and is very much appreciated.

Many times in the life of a volunteer organization, special people stand out. In the case of our organization, I have witnessed this time and again. We all admire those who commit time and treasure and it has been my observation that there is no shortage of people who energetically devote themselves wherever they are needed. As President, the tendency is to want to call roll of such individuals. In a forum such as this, space never allows justice to all who deserve. However, in the years that it has been my pleasure to serve as an officer, an individual stands out in my mind. One who frequently serves as museum docent and just as quickly is willing to pull weeds in a flower bed. One who commits days of hard work in Wendish Fest preparation and just as readily invests as much patient time as is necessary to explain to a new-comer the nuances of the Wendish story. Freddy Zoch is such an ambassador for the TWHS. He is one who truly has a heart for service and lives his conviction. I for one shall endeavor to emulate his quiet yet fervent love for the preservation of the Wendish heritage. Freddy, on behalf of the Officers, Directors and membership, I offer you our thanks and admiration.

This is my last message as your President, as the end of this year marks the end of my term. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve our organization. I strongly believe in the objectives and purpose of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society and I am proud to have had the opportunity to contribute to that effort during my tenure as an officer. Thank you all for the support and positive words of encouragement.

I look forward to seeing many of you on November 18th for the membership meeting, when we will elect officers for the upcoming two years, and after that, Lord willing, to opportunities in years to come to serve together.

Christ's blessings,
Steve Hooper

Memorials and Gifts

In memory of Viola Spacek:
Robin Goodson
Dr. Murphy and Joyce Nelson

In memory of Benno Gotzky (husband of long-time member Beverly Gotzky):
Frank and Vivian Taylor

In memory of Elsie Zoch Mertink:
Lillian Groeschel

In memory of Lorine Banks:
Mr. & Mr. Arnold Kasper

Quarterly Membership Meeting and Annual Christmas Party, Sunday, November 18, 2007, 2:00 PM

The next quarterly Membership Meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2007 beginning at 2:00 PM at the Museum complex. Following a brief business meeting and election of officers, the focus of the day will be our annual Christmas Party and Christmas carol sing-along, accompanied by Susan Michael on the Museum organ. Cooked sausage will be provided by TWHS. Please bring a plate of your favorite Christmas cookies or other sweet or savory snack to share for refreshments.

Wjeso 1e Hody! (Merry Christmas!)
Phonetically, it's "WYEH-so-weh HO-dee."
(Wendish stress is on first syllable.)

Noodle Committee Report

Hattie Schautschick, Chair

Thus far for 2007, a total of 4,417 pounds of noodles have been made by the Noodle Committee and their faithful volunteers, which is 975 pounds more than were made this time last year! A total of 92 pounds of noodles were cooked and served for Wendish Fest on September 23.

Tours Committee Report

Evelyn Kasper, Chair

Four tours are scheduled during the months of October and November. Many thanks to the volunteers who help with this important effort!

Thank you Museum Docents

During the months of July, August and September, the following served as Museum docents: Hattie Schautschick, Freddie Zoch, George Boyce, Rev. Robert Boyce, Vivian Dube, Vivian Taylor, Carolyn Bohot, Monroe Miertschin, George Boerger, Linda Jolly, Ruby Koslan, J.B. Gersch, Jr., and Evelyn Kasper.

Museum Visitors

During the months of July, August and September, we received visitors from Missouri, Arizona, Tennessee, Illinois, Wisconsin, Virginia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Connecticut, Kansas, South Carolina, California, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, and many cities in Texas.

Wendish Fest 2007

Eunice Dunk and Raymond Arldt, co-Chairs

The 19th annual Wendish Fest is now history, and we are grateful to everyone who worked so hard to make the event a success. We especially thank everyone who stepped in and covered for those who could not work their assigned shifts. To those who notified us in advance that they would not be able to help this year, we very much appreciated the heads-up, as it made finding replacements from the LAF members and other volunteers much easier.

We sincerely appreciate the people who worked so hard with the new activities – the antique cars display, moon walk, plant sales, and the return of the Klettern Pfosten. We had many compliments on these as well as all the other regular activities. We are also grateful to the many people who donated items for the Silent Auction this year. The Silent Auction was a success, and we could not have done it without you!

Our featured performers this year, the Taylor Czech Chorus, proved to be everything we had always heard they were. They provided lively musical entertainment that was so enjoyed by the audience that a few people danced in the aisles, especially during some of the polka music!

We also want to give heartfelt thanks to the individuals and businesses who became Wendish Fest Sponsors. You helped make the day more enjoyable for everyone. Please let us know if you are interested in joining the list for 2008.

Last but not least, we express our appreciation to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for the matching funds they provided through their Care in Regions program. You will see new roofing over our museum complex walkways very soon.



Wendish Settlements

Dr. George Nielsen, Special Features Editor

Other than Serbin and Warda, place names that reflect the Wendish presence in Texas are hard to find. There is one more, however, in Uvalde County, between San Antonio and Mexico, an area where you would least expect to find it. The town, originally called Chatfield, was re-named Knippa after George Knippa, who settled there in 1887. In the following article, Jan Slack provides a brief history of the town of Knippa and its Wendish roots. Jan is a past TWHS president and secretary, and currently serves on the board of directors and as the newsletter editor. Her connection to the Wends is through both her parents (great-great-grandfathers Johann Knippa and Mathaus Wukasch migrated on the *Ben Nevis* in 1854). She was born and raised in Austin and now resides in Bastrop County with her husband Charlie. She has three grown children and a 6-year-old granddaughter, and works as an assistant to a Civil Engineering professor at The University of Texas at Austin.

The January 2008 issue will carry the revised list of post-1854 immigrants. If you have any additions or corrections to the list that was printed in the July issue, please send them to me at gnie857317@rap.midco.net or 1132 Enchantment Rd., Rapid City SD 57701.

Knippa, Texas

by Jan Slack



George Knippa

Johann Knippa, his wife Christiana and 4 children were part of the Wendish migration to Texas on the *Ben Nevis* in 1854. The passenger list identifies the family as being from Buchwalde. After living in Fayette County and then Serbin, they eventually settled at Swiss Alp in Fayette County. George, the eldest child, was born in 1837 to Johann's first wife. In 1859, while the family was living at Serbin, George married Rosina Kambor, another Wend and *Ben Nevis* passenger. The marriage was performed by Pastor Kilian.

According to family tradition, George, who was in his early twenties when the Civil War began in 1861, was the horse-man of the Swiss Alp area and an expert at breaking and training work animals. Using his ability and expertise with horses, he ran a wagon train route to Piedras Negras, Mexico during the Civil War and post-war periods, hauling cotton and other farm products. It was during his first trip through the frontier of the Frio River area that George saw the place where he wanted to move his family and make a home. The area that George had seen was unsettled and had received abundant rainfall during recent years, so there was plenty of grazing land and water flowing in nearby creeks and rivers.

After the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway extended its tracks west from San

Antonio to Uvalde in 1887, George and Rosina sold their farm near High Hill and moved with their children to the area he had seen a few years before. The Knippa family was followed by the Kessler and Umlang families, also from Fayette County, and along with a few other families that also moved to the area, the town of Chatfield was settled at a railroad siding near the Frio River. George Knippa bought about 6,000 acres of land, built his home on the banks of the Frio River, and stocked his land with cattle and horses. Unfortunately, the year 1887 brought to the area the beginning of a severe drought that would last until around the turn of the century, which eventually dried up all the abundant grazing grass and flowing rivers. In order to survive, George and his sons sold portions of their land. Many head of cattle and horses were lost to the drought and resulting lack of feed and water, and other cattle were sold.

By the turn of the century, the drought eased and the area received more regular rainfall. Additional settlers moved to the area, which spurred growth in businesses and provided the need for a school, streets, and other town improvements. In 1904, George Knippa was one of the founders of a Lutheran congregation that designated German as the language for worship services. Church services were held in the homes of its members, who were served by area pastors and traveling missionaries. He died the next year, but in his will he identified a parcel of land that could be sold and the proceeds used to purchase a site for the future church building. That land was exchanged for the site on which the church, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, was built in 1910. The community acquired a post office around 1898-1900. According to local history, when the application was submitted for a post office, it was discovered that there was already a Chatfield in Texas, so Judge Albert Kessler renamed the town Knippa in honor of George Knippa, his father-in-law and the first settler to the area.

The town of Knippa and the surrounding area grew and prospered during the early part of the 20th Century, with the population reaching around

400; saw a decline in growth, population and businesses during the Great Depression (and another drought); a rebound as the economy improved; a loss of population during World War II as many young men were called away to service; prosperity during the late 1940s; and nearly another decade of drought during the 1950s with subsequent financial losses. After World War II and through the mid-1980s, the population was around 325. In 1990, the population was around 360 and had 9 businesses. In 2000, the population had grown to around 739 and had 19 businesses.

A traprock (also known as basalt) mine, the product of which was used as track ballast for the Southern Pacific Railroad, was opened west of Knippa around 1905. The mine was originally opened as a gold mine in 1904, but little gold was found. What was found, however, was an abundant supply of traprock, and in 1911 the Texas Trap Rock Company established a quarry. According to a Texas State Historical Marker at the site of the quarry, the mine and its employees became a vital part of the Knippa community, and the Knippa High School named its football team the "Rockcrushers" in 1946. Today, the Knippa Quarry, which is still in operation, is owned by Vulcan Materials.

George's wife, Rosina, continued to live at their home in Knippa after his death in 1905. Rosina passed away in August, 1921 and is buried next to her husband at the Knippa City Cemetery. A number of their children are also buried in the cemetery.

Today, when you hit the city limits of Knippa, Texas on U.S. Highway 90, a sign saying "Go ahead and blink, it's bigger than you think!" welcomes you to town.

Sources:

A Proud Heritage: A History of Uvalde County, published by El Progreso Club, Uvalde, Texas, 1975.

Handbook of Texas Online,

<<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/>>
<http://www.geocities.com/knippa_tx/>

Financial Report

George Boerger

Our profit from the Wendish Fest exceeded last year's profit by \$3,000 and it will exceed the budget by over \$800! This \$800 surplus will be used to pay for needed repairs at our museum. The income from the Wendish Fest is a very important component to museum operations and maintenance.

The preliminary net income from the Wendish Fest is \$8,613, which includes:

Food/drinks/misc.	\$5,048
Fixed cost *	(\$5,360)
Gross profit	(\$ 312)
Silent Auction	\$2,572
Donated desserts	\$ 871
Plant sale	\$ 472
Sub-total	\$3,603
Business sponsorships	\$1,750
Thrivent match	\$1,500
Sub-total	\$6,853
Noodle, Craft & book sales	\$1,760
Total	\$8,613

* advertising, entertainment, golf carts, grounds rental, trash, sound system, etc.

A New Membership Record!

George Boerger, Membership Chair

For the 6th year in a row, we have set a new membership record with 964 members, surpassing last year's record of 931. From 1981 through 2001, our membership was flat and we saw increases in only 7 out of those 20 years. Now growing 6 out of 6 years is an accomplishment that many of our members have greatly contributed to and can be quite proud of. What are your plans for helping us achieve a new record in 2008?

Of our 964 members, only 284, or 29%, were members in 2001. Of our 964 members, only 15 were members in 1977, the earliest year for which we have a membership list. Those 15 members include founding member Frieda Wendland, Betty Hutchinson, Ed and wife Sandy Wuensche (Betty and Ed are children of founding members),

Dorothy Allert, Bill Biar, Georgie Boyce, Mildred Coffey, Evelyn Kasper, George Kunze, Ron and Glenda Lammert, Aggie Linebrink, Vic Mathias, and Hattie Schautschick.

We added Karl Ivey from Fulton, Kentucky as a member, which now gives us members in 41 states. Thanks to Dorothy Allert for giving him the gift membership.

In the very near future, you will receive a 2008 renewal notice (unless you have already paid). Please complete the card and mail in your check. If your employer has a matching gift program, please fill out the form and send it in. The membership dues not only pay for the newsletter, but also pay part of the cost of operating the museum. When you join at a higher level, the extra money is added to the endowment and the interest from the endowment also pays for part of the cost of operating the museum. Without all of your generous contributions of time, talent, and money, the TWHS could not exist!

Patron Members (\$30)

Gunther Dube	Braunschweig, Germany
Joyce E. Fish	Corpus Christi, TX
Warren K. Moerbe	Wilson, TX
Audrey Nickodemus	Mt. Angel, OR
Erwin Nickodemus	Mt. Angel, OR
Doris Biehle Reagan	Austin, TX
Christian Symmank	Dusseldorf, Germany

Sponsor Members (\$50)

Gladys Duncan	Beaumont, TX
Renate Hardaway	Cypress, TX
Ken Zschappel	Fredericksburg, TX

Century Members (\$100)

Milton von Minden, Jr., M.D.	Colorado Springs, CO
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Student Members

Courtney Cooper	Live Oak, TX
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First Time Members

Deborah Beisert	Giddings
Michael D. Beisert	Giddings
Dean Childress	Taylor
Jeannette Childress	Taylor
Courtney Cooper	Live Oak
Adrian Early	Snohomish, WA
Joyce E. Fish	Corpus Christi

Rachel Marie Moebus Haberer	Angola, NY
Charles Head	Trinity
Delores Head	Trinity
Rev. Rudy Herbrich	Appleton, WI
Alfred A. Hohle, Jr.	San Antonio
Karl F. Ivey	Fulton, Ky
Johnny Johle	Schertz
Karan Knippa	Round Rock
Stephen Knippa	Georgetown
Timothy Knippa	Round Rock
Karen LiBassi	Waco
Keith Moerbe	York, PA
Warren K. Moerbe	Wilson
Paula Moerbe-Williams	Kenedy
Debra Moore	Austin
John Moore	Austin
Audrey Nickodemus	Mt. Angel, OR
Erwin Nickodemus	Mt. Angel, OR
David Robinson	Round Rock
Terri Robinson	Round Rock
Otto Schroeder, Jr.	Calliham
Helen Stogner	Smithville
Edna Teinert	Copperas Cove
Sylvia Thomson	Richardson
Milton von Minden, Jr., M.D.	Colorado Springs, CO
Betty Wendland	Manor
Margie Wendland	Austin
Ray Wendland	Manor
Tim Wendland	Austin
Ken Zschappel	Fredericksburg

Would you like to avoid paying taxes on your pension assets and support the Texas Wendish Heritage Society and Museum at the same time?

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows an individual over the age of 70-1/2 to make a gift up to \$100,000 from an individual retirement account (IRA) to the Texas Wendish Heritage Society and Museum without having to report the amount as income.* Gifts may count toward your required minimum distribution. The gift is transferred directly from the IRA plan administrator. Act now, as this opportunity ends December 31, 2007.

*No charitable tax deduction is allowed because these IRA transfers involve assets that have never been taxed.

Minutes of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society General Membership Meeting, August 19, 2007

The quarterly membership meeting of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society was called to order at 2:00 PM in the Kilian Building on Sunday, August 19, 2007, by Doug Symmank, Vice President, in the absence of the President, Steve Hooper.

Doug Symmank presented the devotion for today from *Our Daily Bread* in the absence of Rev. Buchhorn.

There were thirteen members and one visitor in attendance. Doug Symmank welcomed all of the members and guests.

The minutes of the May 2007 meeting were approved as presented in the July 2007 newsletter.

George Boerger reported that the membership was 964 exceeding the goal for 2007 of 950 members. Membership renewals were currently at 90%.

Doug Symmank gave a brief update on work on the Buildings and Maintenance. The roofs on all the buildings would need replacement soon; the roofs over the walkways connecting the buildings currently had a few leaks; and options for closing in the two back porches on the St. Paul Building were being studied.

Eunice Dunk reported that a \$2500 grant had been approved by the Giddings Hotel/Motel Tax Fund.

Evelyn Kasper reported that 3,753 pounds of noodles had been made so far this year. She reported that the last tour was in late July.

Eunice Dunk reported that the work assignments for this year's Wendish Fest were complete and would be mailed soon. A display of antique cars would again be included for this year. A "pass-along" plant sale would also be included.

There being no further business, the business meeting adjourned at 2:25 PM for some refreshments and travel to La Grange to tour the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center.

Respectfully submitted,
J. B. Gersch, Jr., Acting Secretary

In Search of...

The July issue of this newsletter included a request for information from Udo Tschatschula of Germany, who is seeking information on the descendants of his Tschatschula ancestors who immigrated to Texas on the *Hamburg* in 1876 and one who was born in Texas. His contact email address in the July newsletter was incomplete. If you have information to share, his correct address is tschatschula@onlinehome.de.

Johnnie Max Johle would like to hear from anyone who has information on the surname "Hohle" and if the name could have been changed to "Johle" at some point in time. If you have information to share, please send it to 1401 Schertz Pkwy, Apt. 402, Schertz, Texas 78154, or call 316-644-1837.

Wendish Fest 2007 Contest Winners!

Stick Horse Races

Horse Breed – Serbin Cedar

	Pre-K	Kindergarten
1 st Place	Chase Oltmann	Nicholas Nohilly
2 nd Place	Ashlyn Nohilly	Megan Nevlud
3 rd Place		
	1st grade	2nd grade
1 st Place	Cole Hampton	Thomas Birnbaum
2 nd Place	Elizabeth Hawkins	Emma Nevlud
3 rd Place	Timothy Medack	Erin Michael
	3rd grade	4th grade
1 st Place	Hannah Williams	Jacob Birnbaum
2 nd Place	Kayne Zoch	Christopher Schultz
3 rd Place	Tara Oltmann	Megan Becker

Washer Pitching

1 st Place	Clayton Wickle and Chris Paul
2 nd Place	Information not available
3 rd Place	Colter Zoch and Dillon Miertschin

Coffeecake Bake-off

	Streusel Division	Kaese Division
1 st Place	Laurie Kasper	Gladys Saegert
2 nd Place	Mary Ann Liebscher	George Boerger
3 rd Place	Evelyn Buchhorn	George Boerger

Special Division

1 st Place	Christine Boriack
2 nd Place	Lil Robertston
3 rd Place	Gladys Saegert

Cross-cut Saw Contest

Men's Division

1 st Place	Harvey Hobratchsk/Wayne Chapman
2 nd Place	Michael Williams/Vern Surman
3 rd Place	Eugene Schimank/Dwight Fredrick

Women's Division

1 st Place	Peggy Schimank/Joyce Iselt
2 nd Place	Sharon Foerster/Lisa Teinert
3 rd Place	Jannette Yanchak/Laverne Gersch

Men's/Women's Division

1 st Place	Tim Ruse/Nelda Munn
2 nd Place	Walter Gersch/Laverne Gersch
3 rd Place	Alice Wilson/Brian Wilson

Coloring Contest

	Pre-K and Kindergarten	1st/2nd grade
1 st Place	Makayla Furlow	Erin Michael
2 nd Place	Chase Oltmann	Robert Zoch
3 rd Place	Megan Nevlud	Emma Nevlud

	3rd/4th grade
1 st Place	Malyn Parker
2 nd Place	Megan Becker
3 rd Place	Tara Oltmann

Scenes from Wendish Fest 2007



Coloring contest



Stick-horse races

**Monroe Miertschin in charge
of the Klettern Pfosten**



**Wendish Easter egg demonstration,
Kornelia Thor and Joachim Koch
from Germany**





Coffeecake Bake-off contest winners

(front row, left to right): Evelyn Buchhorn, Gladys Saegert, Laurie Kasper, Mary Ann Liebscher, Christine Boriack, George Boerger (not pictured, Lil Robertson)



Taylor Czech Chorus

IMPORTANT DATES

November 4 Daylight Savings Time ends
November 18 Quarterly Membership Meeting with election of officers and Annual Christmas Party,
2:00 p.m., Museum complex
November 22 Thanksgiving Day, Museum CLOSED
December 24-25 Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Museum CLOSED
January 1 New Years Day, Museum CLOSED

Texas Wendish Heritage Society

Executive Director.....	Barbara Hielscher
Officers.....	Steve Hooper, President
	Doug Symmank, Vice President
	Evelyn Buchhorn., Secretary
	Laverne Gersch, Treasurer
Newsletter Editor.....	Jan Slack
Special Features Editor.....	George Nielsen

Please send Newsletter submissions to:

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