

# Texas Wendish Heritage Society and Museum - Serbin, Texas

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NEWSLETTER

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## President's Message

Whatever happened to those "lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer?" Activity around the museum complex has been so busy lately, it is hard to believe that this is the time of year when people should be on vacation! Thanks to our LCRA grant, repairs and upgrades to the Kilian Building have been in the works for several weeks. Some of the many changes include the addition of previously non-existent insulation in the ceiling, ceiling fans, replacement of rotten wood, repairs to windows, a new cupboard (pride and joy of the "noodle ladies"), additional interior lighting, and a covered back porch. And the building exterior also sports a shiny new coat of paint. When you come to visit, be sure to take note of the wonderful changes.

I am absolutely ecstatic to be able to announce that the Texas Wendish Heritage Society now has an official web site, thanks to the generosity of Dr. David Zersen, President, and David Kluth, both of Concordia University at Austin! They have been kind enough to let us "borrow" the talent of Concordia's webmaster, David Ancira, to design and build our web site. I cannot say enough good things about David Ancira's artistic talent, as well as his endless supply of patience as he has worked with me to put together what we all think is a "really cool" site. And, Concordia is also donating space on their server to host our site. The official address is <http://wendish.concordia.edu/>. I hope you will look us up next time you are web surfing, and please feel free to send us comments or suggestions for items you would like to see added to the site.

We want to give a hearty round of applause to Ron Knippa for his hard work in organizing and running the TWHS booth again this year at the Folk Life Festival in San Antonio. You can read more about the event in Ron's report inside this newsletter, but I want to steal a little bit of his thunder and announce that our booth was awarded **SECOND PLACE!** Congratulations, Ron, and thank you for all your efforts on our behalf. I had the opportunity to demonstrate the art of Wendish Easter egg decorating during the first two nights of the Festival, and it was great fun to talk to all the people who came by my table, asking questions about egg decorating and just about Wends in general. Even though my egg decorating talents can still be best described as "beginner," people were curious about the process and seemed to be impressed with the final results. This annual event offers another excellent opportunity to teach others about our culture and heritage.

I hope that by now you have marked your calendars and made plans to be at Serbin on September 24 for this year's Wendish Fest. Featured entertainment will be the Fayette Czech Singers and Dancers. Another treat at this year's Fest will be a special display of Wendish Easter eggs brought from Germany by Cornelia Thor, who plans to travel to Texas in September to participate in our event. And please note that we will include a silent auction at the Fest again this year, so all donations to this effort will be cheerfully accepted!

I look forward to seeing each of you at the Wendish Fest if not before!

Jan Knippa Slack  
President

## UPCOMING EVENTS

July 4 Museum will be **CLOSED** in observance of Memorial Day

July 22 Winchester Area Volunteer Fire Department annual Fish Fry at the St. Michael's Lutheran Church picnic grounds

August 20 General Membership meeting at the Museum at 2:00 p.m.

August 21 Deadline for articles for August newsletter

September 4 Museum will be **CLOSED** in observance of Labor Day

September 24 12th annual Wendish Fest at the St. Paul Serbin picnic grounds and the Museum Complex

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## AUGUST MEETING PROGRAM

Our next membership meeting will be held on August 20 at 2:00 P.M. in the Kilian Building on the Museum grounds. Following a short business meeting, the program will be presented by Dr. David Zersen, President of Concordia University at Austin. He will be speaking about the history and relationship between Concordia and the Texas Wends, about the relationships Concordia has developed with Wends in Germany, and about what he has learned about Wends during his tenure as President of Concordia at Austin. Dr. Zersen has been president of Concordia University at Austin for the past five and one-half years. Previously, he was Dean at Concordia University Wisconsin, Executive Director of the LCMS Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support, and a parish pastor. His doctorate degrees are in the area of administration and learning theory. Dr. Zersen is married to Julie, and they have two children. He is interested in the story of the Wends and seeks to support ongoing research in and support for Wendish heritage in Texas.

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Evelyn Kasper, Adele Wilson, Hattie Schautschick, Irene Boriack, J. B. Gersch, Jr., and Eunice Dunk supplied refreshments for the May meeting. Thank you all!!.

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## VISITORS

During the months of April and May we have had visitors from all parts of Texas and the following: Nebraska, Germany, New Mexico, Indiana, California, Florida, Washington, Ohio, Montana, Czech Republic, Arizona, Canada, and Nevada.

## DOCENTS

Thank you to the following for acting as docents during the months of April and May: Hattie Schautschick, J. B. Gersch Jr., Jan Slack and Charles Slack, Herbert and Laverne Falke, Mildred Kilian, Eleanor Schulze, Vivian Taylor, Lorine Domel, Janice Mitschke, Ruth Lindner, Georgie Boyce, Ashley Hielscher, and Barbara Hielscher.

# MEMORIALS

| In Memory of:            | Donor                    | Amount  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| Annie Tschatschula       | Ruth Lindner & Ann Smith |         |
| Alvin Schmidt            | Vivian F. Taylor         |         |
| Adele Sanders            | M/M Leslie Zabel         |         |
| In Honor of :            | Donor                    | Amount  |
| Mr. & Mrs. Mel Munsell   | M/M Herbert Falke        | \$15.00 |
| 50th Wedding Anniversary |                          |         |

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## GIDDINGS DEUTSCHES VOLKSBLATT Book review submitted by, Dr. Joseph Wilson

Daphne Garrett's recently published book on the Giddings Volksblatt newspaper received prominent attention in a rather long and very favorable review by Gertrud Mahling in the Wendish cultural journal, *Rozhlad* (Sept., 1999). The book is very well-done and most interesting to read or just to browse in, since it is filled with pictures of people and places and reproductions of old German (and sometimes Wendish) articles, advertisements, and even city announcements from the Volksblatt. Copies (sturdily hard-bound, xv/151pp.) may be obtained from the Museum or from Daphne (PO Box 35, Warda, Tx 78960), at \$25 each plus \$1.75 tax (if ordered by mail, add \$3 shipping plus \$1.50 for each additional copy).

Daphne's very important discovery of a Wendish *Agenda* (a book used by pastors for conducting services, containing orders of services, Bible readings, prayers, etc.) written by Pastor Johann (Jan) Kilian has also attracted excited attention in the Wendish area of Germany. Long after Kilian's death, in 1909, John Proske, the Volksblatt editor, printed the pages for the book but did not bind them, so its existence never became known until Daphne discovered the pages while researching the Volksblatt. Her Volksblatt book devotes a number of pages to the Agenda and gives reproductions of several of its pages.

### News from the Western Frontier: (Eden, Texas)

The *John Brick Chapter of the National Society of Colonial Dames*, San Angelo, Texas, welcomed Georgie Bernstein Boyce to their May 18, 2000, meeting for her program on our Wendish Heritage. These ladies, who trace their ancestry to the 1700s, and even earlier in America, were heretofore uninformed about the Wends. They were eager and attentive listeners as Georgie told her story, and displayed her collection of Wendish Easter eggs, books, photos, blaudruck fabric and other items from Lusatia.

### TOUR REPORT

by Evelyn N. Kasper, Co-Ordinator

We have had a very busy tour schedule this Spring. March 27th brought a group of 18 from Christ Evangelical Presbyterian Church from the Houston area.

On April 1st Bill Goodlick of Copperas Cove brought a big group for Coffee Cake, lunch, and a tour.

On April 4th, 49 people from St. Mary's Catholic Church, Plantersville, came for a luncheon and tour.

On April 7th, 27 people with an Antique group from Houston came for a luncheon and tour.

On April 13th, 38 members of the Unitarian Church came for a luncheon and tour.

April 17th brought a group of 51 from the New Braunfels Garden Club and Church for Coffee Cake, tour, and luncheon.

April 18th brought 20 members of a study group from Bellville for a luncheon and tour.

April 27th brought a group of 32 from St. Paul, Harlingen, for a tour only.

On April 29th, Ruby Muery of Bellville brought 8 people for a tour only.

May the 15th, 27 people from a Retirement Center in San Antonio came for a tour and luncheon. We were honored to have Dr. David Zersen from Concordia University in Austin and Dr. Roland Marti from Germany as special guests on that day while they toured the Museum.

June 19th brought a group of 40 school children from Giddings for a tour.

June 23rd brought a group of 54 from San Antonio for a tour and luncheon.

### NOODLE REPORT

by Hattie Schautschick, Chairperson

Over 1,000 pounds of noodles have been made this year and we are still very busy making noodles almost every week. There was a very nice write-up and picture of the noodles, and the ladies who make them, in the Giddings Times and News.

I would like to thank everyone who helped with the walk-in coffee and bake sale. Our location at the First Presbyterian Church in Giddings was very nice and enjoyable to work in.

THANKS again for helping!



### **OUTSTANDING AWARD**

Linda (Steglich) O'Leary was recently awarded \$1,000 for the "Making Healthy choices" program at MacArthur High School in San Antonio. This is in the category for Outstanding Award for established School Health Programs.

Each year the Texas Department of Health presents "Awards for excellence in Texas School Health". This program recognizes and rewards school health programs that improve the health practices of students and school staff. A maximum of 15 monetary prizes are awarded each year.

Linda has been a school nurse at MacArthur for 10 years. She will donate some of the award money to the Student Council and Health Occupation students. Linda said, "many of our teens are really creative and enthused about health issues and they can reach their peers better than an adult can. The students will be able to use the extra money for health promotion activities next year. Healthy choices by teens today, will mean healthier communities for the future. Together we can make a difference!"

Congratulations Linda!!

### **REMEMBER THE SILENT AUCTION AT WENDISHFEST!!**

A new attraction to our Wendishfest last year was the silent auction, and what a profitable attraction it was!! A number of people waited around to see if they would be the successful bidders on their selected items and, not only did that give us higher prices on the items, it also increased our food and drink sales while they waited. We will again have a silent auction and are asking our members and friends to remember it with an item - or items - to be auctioned off.

Naturally the hand made items are the most popular, but not everyone can do arts and crafts so most of us have to settle for store-bought items and they are great too. If you have an item in mind that you would like to put into the auction but can not get it to the Museum, you can send us a check, payable to the Texas Wendish Heritage Society, and tell us what you would like to put in; we have a volunteer who will be happy to purchase the item for you and you will be able to see it when you come for the festivities. We plan to have another hand made quilt as one of the items and will need a number of other items to go with it.

Don't forget to visit the silent auction when you come to the Fest—you may be able to find items you would like for yourself or to give as gifts, and you will be increasing the profits of our organization. We are getting excited about the planned festivities and are looking forward to seeing you on September 24.

TEXAS FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL REPORT  
by Ron Knippa, Chairman

What a wonderful festival we had in cool San Antonio! With much help from many wonderful people, we were awarded the 2nd place ribbon for our booth. Evelyn Kasper, Barbara Hielscher, Hattie Schautschick and Terri Droemer helped get everything together there in Serbin for its trip down to San Antonio. Jan and Charlie Slack brought down from Austin new propane stoves which made cooking and cleaning much easier. Jan demonstrated egg decorating on Thursday and Friday. Jim Hingst (San Antonio), on a moments notice built stands for our sound system from scrap wood as well as washed down and repainted our aging booth. Ron Lammert again provided space for storing and transportation for moving our ever-increasing mass of booth paraphernalia and also fashioned a new top for our beer booth. The James Baer family (James, Marieta, James, Rachel and Joshua) made wreaths and menu signs and worked faithfully as did David Knippa (San Antonio) and Nathan Knippa (Austin). Entertainment for our visitors came from Houston (courtesy of Steve Britton), Spring (courtesy of Peggy Carter) and San Antonio (Strings & Things), all through the effort of Susan Loy (San Antonio). Also from Spring, Allison Karisch, Evelyn Kasper's grand-daughter, brought her cello and her pioneering spirit to our stage for two sets of melodic tunes. Joanna Lentz and a friend (San Antonio) sang beautifully as our customers enjoyed eating, visiting and reading about our Wendish Heritage. Bill and Adell Knippa (San Antonio) prepared the necessary condiments for our BBQ drumsticks and made their home a gathering place for tired and hungry workers. Laverne and Walter Gersch, along with Freddy Zoch journeyed from Warda on Sunday to work and load up items for the return trip to Serbin. God kept away the severe heat that marked the traditional August date and also the early June rains until Sunday evening. About 5 PM, the wind became gusty, scooted the food booth south about a foot and the heavens opened up for 25 minutes of uninterrupted hard rain. Many booth workers got soaked but the smiles never left their faces. During the shower, we continued to vend beer, noodles, drumsticks, lemonade, pickles and sandwiches much to the delight of our booth patrons. Folklife festival officials (I think) are going to stick with the early June dates, and next year's festival is scheduled for June 7 - 10, 2001. We can all thank our dear Lord for giving us this wonder-filled opportunity each year to show to people from near and far the joy we have in being his children, and our pride in our Wendish Heritage; and my thanks to all who helped make this years festival a tremendous success.

In His service,  
Ron Knippa

Texas Wendish Heritage Society  
General Membership Meeting  
May 21, 2000

President Jan Slack called the meeting to order at 2:00PM in the Kilian Building of the Museum Complex at Serbin, Texas, on Sunday, May 21, 2000.

There were 30 members present and visitors, Marvin and Ruth Lorenz.

The opening devotion was given by Rev. Michael Buchhorn who lead the singing of "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past". He then read Psalm 127 and reminded us that things don't last. Our forefathers came to this land with nothing and the first thing built was a house of worship showing God as the centerpiece of their community. They left something to endure that would last beyond their days. That group of a few hundred became thousand who trace their roots back to this very spot. Rev. Buchhorn asked, "What will we leave behind?" God reminds us to build well for the future. We pray we will not build in vain but rather that we build with God as our centerpiece and continue the legacy of our forefathers. The devotions were closed by singing "Oh Blest the House."

The minutes of the February 20, 2000 meeting were approved as presented.

Hattie Schautschick reported the Noodle Committee has made "lots" of noodles working fast and hard getting ready for the Folklife Festival and the picnic.

Evelyn Kasper reported that April & May were very busy with tours, one from Plantersville being a group of 51 persons. She also mentioned that Dr. Zerson had visited with a Dr. Roland Marti from Germany.

Evelyn reminded everyone it was time to start thinking about the Wendish Fest. The Fayette Czech Singers & Dancers along with Leroy Matocha would provide entertainment and Dr. Schroeder will be the speaker. She said everyone should remember to think of some item to donate to the "silent auction" which is a good fundraiser.

Eunice Dunk reported that we are busy at work using the grant monies from LCRA and thanked everyone for their help. She introduced Walter Gersch who has been working the last couple of weeks adding insulation over the kitchen area with help from "Smoky" Zoch. He had photos of the attic area and told of what a giant task it was to clean the attic before they could begin insulating it. The ladies say they noticed the difference right away in the air conditioning. Walter also mentioned they

had cleaned light fixtures, moved the light over the sink, added fans, and did some much needed improvements to the pantry area. He said we are fortunate to have some good, dedicated carpenters nearby. Outside they replaced some rotted boards with hardi-plank, replaced some windows and flooring and hope to paint soon. Walter, Laverne & Smoky were applauded & thanked for their hard work.

Ken Waiser reported he had not had time to check on the billboard east of Giddings on 290.

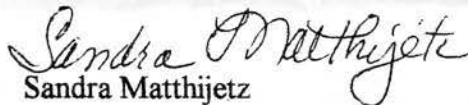
New Business:

Jan Slack reminded everyone that the Serbin Picnic was coming up on May 28<sup>th</sup> and volunteer workers would be needed. Also, the Folklife Festival, June 1-4th needs many helping hands and to let her know if anyone has any ideas for entertainment.

Jan also mentioned how glad we were to have Georgie Boyce, our former President, drop by while visiting in the area.

A motion was made and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Sandra Matthijetz



# **Year 2000 Family Reunion**

**Who?** Descendants of Johann Wuensche and Ernestine Dube Wuensche  
(Passengers on the Ben Nevis) and their guests.

**What?** The Bi-annual Family Reunion for Wuensche Cousins

**When?** Sunday July 9<sup>th</sup> starting at 10:00 AM

**Where?** The VFW Hall in Thorndale, TX

**How Much?** Free will offering. Drop in what you can. Help defray the cost  
of this and future reunions

**What to Bring?.** Desserts, Family Photos, Genealogy Charts.

**Who to Contact?** Frances and Burney Parker  
550 Farmers Road  
Brenham, TX 77833  
979-830-9199

**Has your address changed?** Let us know

Name

New Address

City and State

**See you There**



### IN SEARCH OF....."

I am searching for any records about Otto Ludwig Zoch, born August 25, 1933 in Lee County, Texas or his mother whose name was Anna. My research on my own family brings me to the Zoch line in Texas. I know that Otto Ludwig is still living but the information I am after is for his ancestors. Is this name on your family tree? I would appreciate any information that you may have. Jean Haman [jeenihaman@hotmail.com](mailto:jeenihaman@hotmail.com)

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