

53rd International Convention of the
American Historical Society of Germans from Russia

Committee Reports

Ancestral Records Committee	1	Folklore Committee	8
Convention Management Committee	3	Marketing and Public Affairs Committee	9
Editorial & Publications Committee	4	Strategic Planning Committee	11
Facility Committee	6	Technology Committee	12
Financial & Personnel Committee	7		

Ancestral Records Committee
2023 Annual Report

The Ancestral Records/Small Publishing Groups have once again had a year full of activities and progress.

We welcome a new full-time archivist Karen Keehr to our staff and together we have accomplished several things since she has started. Just to name a few:

1. The expansion of the library has been completed, giving researchers more room to work and more room to add more shelves as needed. The bookcases have been updated, removing the old wooden ones and replacing them with metal bookcases.
2. Digitization Lab has been established in the library to begin the digitalization of our records. To date 1,051 files have been digitized.
3. Pastperfect has now been added online and will be Lunched at this year's convention.
4. We have an assistant archivist, Emily Amber. She is working working on items needed for the research library such as village records, what needs to be purchased to make sure that we have all the census records in the research library that are available.
5. We also have an intern working in the library on several collections.,
6. The vault, where many documents have been kept, has been inventoried and completely organized. We will slowly begin the process of seeing what can be made available to the membership either online on the new website, or placed in the store.

Our new website has been active for some time now and we are looking at making a few changes that will improve the way items are listed. We also plan to offer more FLIPPAGE documents to the site, one such item is a detailed index to the Letters from Hell.

Treffen Tuesday continues to be a popular monthly feather of the Society, bringing interesting speakers discussing a vast array of subjects. These programs are held on the last Tuesday of the month. Invitations are sent out to all members to register and join in on these fascinating programs.

The small publishing group continues to obtain records from Russia, translate and make these available for members. To date, our group has published 94+ printed documents of various vital statistics on a wide variety of villages. We continue to obtain the records we have with the funding that is available for these records. These records can become very costly, especially when we have to pay for translation of the documents. Some of the villages in the works now are: Katharinenstadt/Obermunjou, Schoen hen, Mariental, Rohleder, Kukkus, Eckhein, Dietel, Doenhof, Graf, and a few others. At this time we will be using our resources to get these records translated before we purchase any more.

Various other projects:

- Ausslieder Project – having cassettes of interviews translated and transcribed of Germans from Russia and made available to our membership via our website.
- Letters From Hell (1920-1921, 1922 and 1933/1934 are in the proofing stages now.
- Deportation Records are in the proofing stages for publication.
- Village Coordinators – We are looking for someone to take the lead on the VC's and should have this person before convention.

- A group of AHSGR board members and Society members continue to work on the new German Origins section for our website.
- Clues will no longer be published since all information is available on the AHSGR.org website.

Watch the AHSGR Email blast for all recent activities and new research documents that are available.

Convention Management Committee
2023 Annual Report

Committee Members: Susan Nakaji, Chairperson, Nancy Borrell, Sue Cassaday, Cheryl Glanz, Kevin Rupp.

SMART Goals:

1. AHSGR will host, in conjunction with the Colorado chapter(s), a three day Convention in Greeley, Colorado on August 3-5
2. The Convention will earn a profit of \$5,000, based upon attendance of 250 persons and the ability to meet our Food and Beverage minimums and room occupancy requirements.
3. The Convention committee will work with the Colorado Chapter to solicit grants, company sponsorships and individual donations.
4. The Convention will present a varied program inclusive of multiple areas of settlements of the Germans from Russia.
5. The Convention will include Genealogical, Historical, and Folklore of the Germans from Russia.
6. The Convention Management committee will develop a Five Year plan for future Conventions.

Theme for the 53rd Annual Convention: Roots of Our Heritage; Discover our History, Music Dance and Contributions to Northern Colorado and the World!

This was the first time in many years that we had a local chapter participate in the planning process. The Greeley committee started meeting monthly after the 2022 Lincoln Convention. They were a great help in developing plans and finding local resources. They found grant opportunities and worked with headquarters to apply for several grants. They also took on many planning aspects and reduced much of the burden from the office staff. The Quilts for the raffle, Silent auction items, the Welcome night plans, volunteer list were some of the jobs taken on by the local chapter.

The Convention Management committee (CMC) met bi-weekly via Zoom meetings, (beginning after the October Board meetings) to plan the Convention. A Call for Presentations was developed and the Publicity committee distributed it on various Social Media platforms and websites. Over 17 presentations were received by the due date of January 31 After the CMC prioritized the list of speakers, Sue Nakaji contacted the potential speakers until all the slots were filled. A budget and a draft schedule were developed early on in the process and adjustments were made as plans were developed. The CMC also attended the monthly Colorado planning meetings (via Zoom).

The headquarters staff worked in conjunction with both committees, developing the Convention Booklet, Speakers List, Online Registration, website updates, Convention e-blasts. The Publicity committee promoted the Convention via Social media.

International Speakers this year include: Dr. Reinhold Nachtigal and Dr. Olga Litzenberger.

SMART Goals 3, 4, 5 were completed. Goals 1 & 2 are still ongoing. Goal 6 is under development, and will be re-evaluated at the October Board meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Nakaji,
Convention Management Chairperson

Editorial & Publications Committee
2023 Annual Report

Committee Members: Anna Bartkowski (Chair), Michael Brown, Kris Jones, Elizabeth Koch, Sue Nakaji, Kevin Rupp, Delores Tippet. Guest: Jerome Siebert.

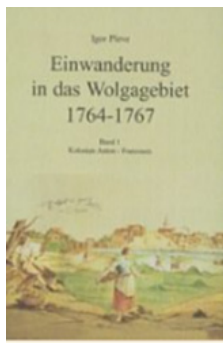
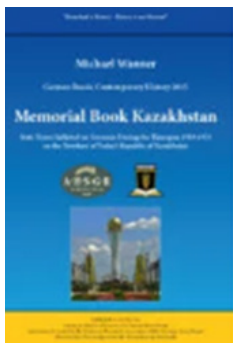
The Editorial & Publications committee set strong strategic goals for this year and worked to review, develop and promote new publications for the society and produce timely, relevant, and themed issues of the Journal and Newsletter.

PROCEDURAL:

- Reviewed and revised Policy and Procedure Manual to standardize best practices which were approved by the Board at Spring Board meeting.
- Submissions for Review spreadsheet created to track full details on pending publications requests, costs, and potential translations needed.

FINANCIAL:

- Updated strategic pricing strategy approved at Fall Board meeting.
- Updated Census Record/Monograph pricing strategy approved on May 30.
- Memorial Book of Kazakhstan translated, formatted, published and printed April 2023.
- Negotiated North and South American publishing and copyright rights to publish *Einwanderung in der Wolgagebeit* Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4.



TECHNOLOGICAL:

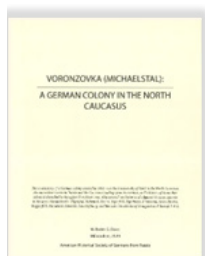
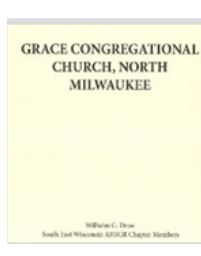
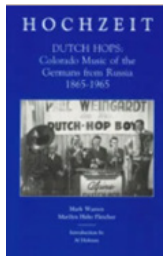
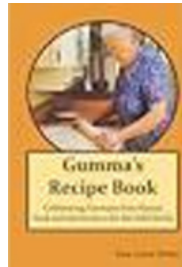
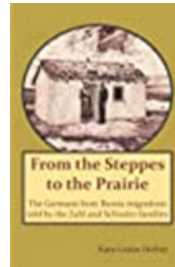
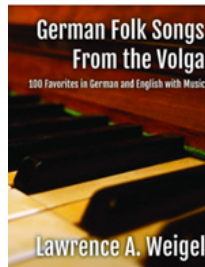
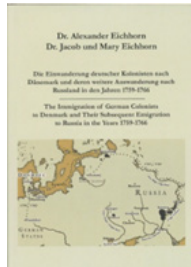
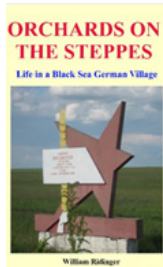
- Added New Releases and Best Sellers to store January 2023.
- Add Title Name and Title Description to store search. January 2023.
- Search function limited to categories selected below search field. January 2023.
- Enabled online purchases for outside US shipping addresses. January 2023.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Reviewed and offered the following publications for sale in store:
 - Orchards on the Steppes, Life in a Black Sea Village by William Ridinger.
 - The Immigration of German Colonists in Denmark and Their Subsequent Emigration to Russia in

the Years 1759-1766 donated from the Eichhorns.

- Lawrence Weigel's Music Book u Updated the cover and re-added as monograph.
- From the Steppes to the Prairie and Gumma's Recipe book by Kara Louise Hefner.
- Colorado Music of the Germans from Russia donated and written by Mark Warren.
- Grace Congregational Church, North Milwaukee by Wilhelm G. Doos
- Voronzovka(Michaelstal): A German Colony in the North Caucasus by Wilhelm G. Doos



- Works in Progress:
 - Mein Herz by Larissa Dyck and Heinrich Mehl
 - Anna's Red Purse by Anne Stang and Elizabeth Koch
 - Resumo Histórico e Genealogia dos Alemães do Volga by Carlos Alberto Schwab
 - Die Kolonien der Brüdergemeinde by Jakob Prinz
 - Der Wolgadeutsche in Siegel seines Brauchtums by Eduard Seib

Anna Bartkowski, Chair

Facility Committee
2023 Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2022 and Fiscal Year 2023

Board Members for the Facilities Committee include Philip Stuckert, Harold Penner, Mike Heil, and Heath Dumler.

AHSGR Staff support includes Claire Landolt and Deb Arenz.

Each year, and regularly at the October Board of Directors meeting held in Lincoln, Nebraska, the Facilities Committee meet to discuss upcoming capital improvement projects for the upcoming fiscal year. The list is long and includes many maintenance and safety related projects. Projects are usually but not always identified and prioritized based on safety issues, followed up by maintenance needs. Our project list consistently exceeds the amount of money budgeted for our committee.

In Fiscal Year 2022, the Facilities Committee identified priorities based on safety needs as well as maintenance needs. They include the following projects.

The safety issue involved replacing an existing damaged fire rated door accessing the staircase to the downstairs basement. This was a fire code safety issue.

One of the more important and sensitive maintenance projects, in a historical perspective includes moving the front exterior entry door showered with decorative ornamental carving work into the museum foyer space and replacing that doorway with a steel exterior door. Thus, preserving the integrity and workmanship on of the ornamental craftsmanship so beautifully laid out on both sides of the existing door. This door dates-back-to the construction of the museum building and depicts historical aspects of the AHSGR legacy. This project is complete.

The Committee was authorized by the Board of Directors to build a new ten by twelve-foot outdoor storage shed replacing a shed that was torn down several years ago. This new shed was recently completed and now stands on the north side of the museum and stores tables and chairs for staff and BOD meetings. Previously, ASHGR stored this equipment at a rental unit.

For Fiscal Year 2023, the Committee submitted request for quotes for roofing work and additional resurfacing and restoration work to the outside entryway area into the museum. One submittal provided by CoWol construction is under consideration.

This work includes replacing concrete surfacing to prevent tripping and slipping issues, surface preparation and painting of the exterior wood trim around the new steel door, and sidelights as well as touch up finishing and repainting of four windows near the entryway. Roof work includes replacing blown off shingles, recaulking of flashing around the elevator shaft housing above the museum apex roof and repainting of the exterior elevator housing. We are also looking to review and purchase new outdoor cameras for security issues. Work has not commenced as of the writing of this work summary.

Finance & Personnel Committee
2023 Annual Report

Members, Nancy Borrell, Sue Casseday (Chair), Gary Fuchs, Russ Gunther, Dodie Rotherham, Jerry Siebert

The year 2022 started with the Board of Directors approving a full budget. Included was the addition of several new members to our staff. The staff, as reported in various committee reports, are doing an outstanding job moving AHSGR forward. AHSGR members continue their generous donations to fulfil the mission of “Honoring our Past and “Embracing our Future”. And with the investment activities of Jerry Siebert, our Investment Manager, the organization has a sustainable future.

The 2022 year-end financial statement and auditor’s report are included elsewhere at Convention. If anyone has questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Folklore Committee
2023 Annual Report

Our number one goal is to preserve and promote our Storytelling Contest at our annual convention.

This year we have received and evaluated 12 submissions. Awards will be presented at convention this year for First, Second and Third place . This effort is ongoing.

Our other goals are to provide any assistance requested to provide a method to submit recipes of GR foods prepared by our families on the web site or by writing on paper. This effort can continue.

An additional goal of developing a method of submitting other Folklore ideas by web site, E blast, or written submissions. As an example, Folk medicine was stimulated by Duane Stabler's article published about "Brauche". And members sharing their memories of Folk medicine.

This effort is ongoing.

Also, promote Folklore on Facebook: AHSGR FOLKLORE AND FOOD page.

We will continue to promote and publicize the annual Storytelling contest.

We will continue to publicize Folklore and request inputs from our members

Harold Penner
Folklore Committee chair

Marketing & Public Affairs Committee 2023 Annual Report

Committee Members: Anna Bartkowski (Chair), Sheri Ertl, Russ Gunther, Mike Heil, Roz Rockweit.

The Marketing committee set strong strategic goals for this year and worked closely as a team to promote AHSGR news, events, and activities to attract new members to the society.

Conferences – Outreach to genealogical communities to share our history and connect with potential new members.



- A new professional backdrop attracts people to our in-person booth and communicates our brand and logo providing a strong professional image for the society.
- WikiTree Virtual Conference, Nov. 4-5, 2023.
- Rootstech, March 2-4, 2023 -With the Utah Intermountain Chapter, we worked the booth and engaged with hundreds of attendees sharing our story and adding potential members to our database.
- German Genealogy Conference, Virtual Exhibitor, June 9 to 11, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Product Sales - Added promotional merchandise to store to build brand awareness and revenue. Gift options targeted to attract the next generation. All items are at <https://ahsgr.org/product-category/gifts/>. Samples are shown below.



Social Media Presence and Results

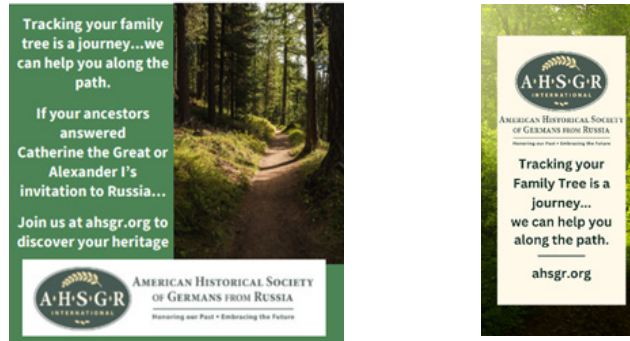
- Created over 260 posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn since August 2022 highlighting monthly themes, publications, merchandise, book club, Treffen Tuesday, events, recipes, books, and membership.
- Tracked engagement and impressions by post. Of 239 new members since Aug. 2022, members discovered us by: Website 29%, Other 19%, Google Search 10%, Ancestry 10%, and Family Search 9%.

Advertising -Paid promotion to reach our target market of families interested in genealogical research and history.

- Continued commitment to Family Tree Advertising digital and print magazine.
- Heartland Family Conference Program Ad in conjunction with Convention committee
- Candlelight Theater ad in conjunction with Convention committee. Sample ads are shown below.



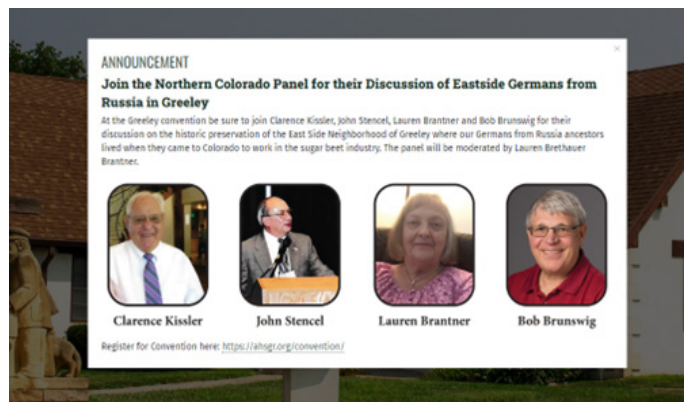
- Google ad program grant money promotes our website which has seen by over 300 people and clicked on by 48 from January through April 5, 2023. It increases awareness and helps people find our website faster.



Procedural - Reviewed and revised Policy and Procedure Manual to match best practices. Approved by Board 4-23.

Other Outreach

- Participated in WikiTree Challenge where researchers tracked 7 AHSGR member's family trees which is at Wiki Reveal. Researchers tracked a few families to the late 1500s/early 1600s. Those who did not discover new information were grateful for the corroboration of their original findings.
- Shared our history with the General Knowledge YouTube Channel and our ancestry will be featured soon on their channel at General Knowledge. Video scheduled for Oct. 6, 2023.
- Promoted Convention speakers and activities with website pop-ups. Sample shown below.



Anna Bartkowski
Marketing & Public Affairs Committee Chair

Strategic Planning Committee
2023 Annual Report

The Strategic Planning Committee met on October 11, 2022, October 21, 2022, March 9, 2023, May 10, 2023, and June 12, 2023. Various workgroups also met to discuss various elements of the 2024 Strategic Plan.

Members include Gary Fuchs, chair, Bill Doos, Bob Ahlbrandt, Health Dumler, John Spady, and Duane Stabler.

The Strategic Planning Committee assigned committee members as liaisons to respective committees to support the development of 2022 goals. Committee liaisons are:

- Ancestral Records/Genealogy – Bill Doos
- Convention – John Spady
- Editorial and Publications – Bill Doos
- Facilities – Health Dumler
- Finance and Personnel – Gary Fuchs
- Folklore – Duane Stabler
- Fundraising – Gary Fuchs
- Marketing/Public Affairs – John Spady
- Membership – Duane Stabler
- Technology – Bob Ahlbrandt

The Strategic Planning Committee liaisons worked to ensure that each committee had actional and measurable goals for 2023. The Committee's goals and objectives include:

GOAL 1 - 2023 ASHGR COMMITTEE GOALS

By the end of Q1, support all Standing Committees in the development of 2023 SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) Goals.

GOAL 2 – STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT - MEMBERSHIP & STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

By the end of Q2, in collaboration with the Membership Committee, develop and compile data from a questionnaire set to the membership and other stakeholders, and assess overall perspective of AHSGR.

GOAL 3 – STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT - SWAT ANALYSIS

By the end of Q2, complete a SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) analysis of AHSGR to establish a 2023-2024 Strategic Plan.

GOAL 4 – DRAFT STRATIC PLAN

By the end of Q3, complete a draft strategic plan for the AHSGR.

The Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the process for development of the next three-year plan and gathered ideas for input on reviewing overall strategic direction based on a situational analysis. The Committee facilitated a board SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis.

In addition to the SWOT analysis, the Committee has conducted a competitive analysis, a financial status overview, including a review of membership, donations, sales, and Foundation support of the Society. The Committee also completed a Membership Survey. This information will be used to recommend to the board the next three-year strategic plan.

Technology Committee
2023 Annual Report

Committee Members: Bob Ahlbrandt (Chair), Gary Fuchs, Lee Macklin, Duane Stabler, Philip Stuckert

A new Digital Imaging Lab was created early this year, funded by the Dennis Zitterkopf Memorial Fund. Located in the northeast corner of headquarters' library, the lab boasts two new scanners: an Epson 12"x17" Flatbed Scanner and a Context HD Ultra i4290s Scan Station Scanner. The Context HD scanner will scan oversize documents up to 42" wide. The scanners will be used towards the effort of digital preservation and cataloging the museum's inventory of maps, charts, photos, and other printed media. Scanning of AHSGR's collection of Surname Charts is ongoing. To organize all the scans, AHSGR will continue to use PastPerfect (collections management solution) to store metadata and eventually make photos available to the public. This effort is led by AHSGR's Archivist, Karen Keehr.

A series of website enhancements was completed including:

- On-line convention registration.
- Enhancements to on-line store, including ability to purchase store items for shipment to Canadian addresses.
- Made recordings from Treffen Tuesday, AHSGR Book Club and the 2022 Convention available for on-line viewing.
- Added Flavors from our Family Trees including recipes and videos.
- Additional reporting capabilities to support management and monitoring of membership data and financial transactions.
- Moved Donation processing into WooCommerce, consistent with all other financial transaction processing.

In 2023, our focus is on adding additional website content in several key areas:

- History
- Heritage and Culture
- Research guidance and tools
- Access to digital media (images, publications, videos, etc.).

Google Drive has been selected as the tool that AHSGR will use for file sharing and archival. A plan is being developed to migrate existing files from the server located at headquarters. The server will then be retired.

The headquarters staff has addressed a stockpile of assorted aging technology equipment, redeploying equipment with useable life remaining and recycling the remainder. Seven laptops that had reached end-of-life were retired. Three new laptops were purchased to support library visitors and convention attendees.

Bob Ahlbrandt
Technology Committee chair



**AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF GERMANS FROM RUSSIA**

Honoring our Past • Embracing the Future