



Luxembourg Heritage Society of Southern Minnesota



NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 / Edition 1

Winter, 2007

A New Beginning!

In 2005, Luxembourg tour leader, Rene Daubenfeld, stopped in New Ulm with his group of Luxembourgers who were touring the Midwest states of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Prior to his arrival, Rene asked, via the New Ulm Chamber of Commerce, if we could gather some local people with Luxembourg heritage to meet them. Using our many personal networks, about ten people welcomed the group, accompanied them on the city tour, and joined them for an evening meal. This happen-stance meeting was the beginning point for future gatherings.

Spurred by various casual conversations and "threats" to "get together someday," a group of descendants of Brown County's early Luxembourg immigrants started meeting in Sleepy Eye and New Ulm in January of 2007. These turned into monthly meetings and thus the germ of today's society began. The Society soon decided that "spreading the net further" to include southern Minnesota (and northern Iowa) would only make us stronger in the future.

With an emphasis on trying to understand the culture, history and legacy of their Luxembourg ancestors, in addition to learning about modern Luxembourg, the core group continued meeting. They established Bylaws, elected a Board of Directors, produced a membership brochure, and focused on how best to direct the fledgling Society, with a key component to their thinking – "what can we offer people for their membership dues?"

This Newsletter is one example of a benefit for your dues, but the Board wanted to do much more than that. In August, this Society was selected by the national Luxembourg American Cultural Society (LACS) for the honor of hosting the Archbishop of Luxembourg and also a famous singer from Luxembourg. A visit to a fellow Lux-Am Society in Remsen, Iowa is being considered for late this fall. A Luxembourg Wine Tasting event is being worked on for November and an Annual Meeting and Banquet is planned for January. Your Board has not been idle!

As we continue to grow in membership numbers and gain funds to carry on our goals, we will also look to gather more awareness of our Society with the public, the national LACS group, and with Luxembourg descendants out there to join with us in pursuit of telling the story of Luxembourg and its role in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. The future looks bright indeed!

By the way, Rene has expanded his tours, coming once in 2005, twice each in 2006 and 2007, and he looks to continue visiting in the future! He is probably not aware that his first visit was the start of something quite big!



"Luxembourg Wine Tasting"

Led by the Luxembourg American Cultural Society (LACS) from Port Washington, WI, our Luxembourg Heritage Society (LHS) will host a "Luxembourg Wine Tasting" event on **November 16th**. It will be held at the **Orchid Inn** at 500 Burnside Street S.E. in **Sleepy Eye**.

There will be "heavy hors d' oeuvres," such as salmon, shrimp, fruit, cheeses, crackers, vegetables and dips. But the highlight of the evening will be a welcome glass of sparkling wine, with opportunities to sample 9-11 Luxembourg wines at several stations. Luxembourg is world famous for their white wines and explanations of the wines' qualities and food compatibilities will be given at each serving station.

Dan Garland, of the famed wine merchants, "C.E. Madinger" from the St. Louis area, will be on hand to instruct us in the wines' nuances and to share his knowledge of fine Luxembourg wines. Dan will also have wine for sale and you may consider buying some for personal use or Holiday gift-giving. Our friend, Kevin Wester from L.A.C.S., will also be there to informally discuss his latest trip to Luxembourg and new developments at the L.A.C.S.



The cost will be \$30 for a single and \$55 for a couple. The L.A.C.S. and LHS will benefit from some of the wine sales, but it is primarily being done as a Luxembourg cultural experience, serving as a gathering of those of us with common interest. Wine lovers -or oenophiles ("e'-no-files") - will also enjoy the evening.

The format will be a "come at your leisure" schedule running from 5:00pm to 9:00pm. This means you may arrive at any time and enjoy the event for as long or little as you please. Invitations will be mailed out to all LHS members by LACS with reply information on the invitation, but the public and any of your friends are also welcome to attend.

If you didn't get an official invitation, R.S.V.P. to:
L.A.C.S. / P.O. Box 614
Port Washington, WI 53074
-or call- 1-262-376-3194.

Web-sites for Luxies!

www.bnl.lu - The National Library of Luxembourg

www.ont.lu - The National Tourist Office of Luxembourg

www.igd-leo.lu - A useful essay on Luxembourg emigration by the renowned, Luxembourg scholar, Jean Ensch, called "Pilgrim's Progress."

www.maplandia.com/luxembourg - Great aerial maps of the country, with zoom-in capability.

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome the first batch of new members! We will list new members in this section with the member's name and the names of their Luxembourg ancestors as they join.

New Members

Judy Beech
Gene Bertrand
Carol Bruggeman
Gail Christensen
Ron Schmitz
Terry Sveine
Peggy Tauer

Harold and Mary Schweiss
Robert Mersch
Mary Ann Zins

Helen Volz
Les Schrupp
Carol Evans
Chuck and Rita Felton

Marlys and Roger Huss
Bob Arens

Ruth Bertrand
Judith and Dick Collard
Olga Carlson

Leon Hoffmann
Waldine Guth
Sue Deppe
Stephen and Mrs. Vescelus

Ancestors' Names

Geschwind
Bertrand, Fiedler
Schmitz, Bertrand
Geschwind
Schmitz, Poncin, Arnoldi, Weter
Schmitz, Poncin, Arnoldi, Weter
Kioes, Schmitz, Bertrand

Stroesser, Fank, Homan
Mersch
Sengerich, Neiderraden, Groskampenber,
Leiderborn, Sevenig, Gerlostein, Kyllburg
Volz, Heyers
?
Weydert, Wagner, Wolfe, Klepper
Felton

Schmitz, Poncin, Arnoldi, Weter
Arens, Koob, Hendel, Busch, Remackel,
Weber, Rollinger
Bertrand, Fiedler, Kioes, Schmitz
Bertrand, Fiedler, Kioes, Schmitz
Weiss

Bertrand
Schmit
?
Count Siegfried, Founder of Luxembourg!

**Remember to send in your payment and feel free to ask others to join.*

**The fees are \$20 for a single per year, \$25 for a couple and \$50 for a business.*

**Applications can be gotten by sending to Terry Sveine for now until we have a Post Office Box address.*

A Conference, an Archbishop and a Singer

The Luxembourg American Cultural Society (LACS) held its first Cultural Conference in Port Washington and nearby Belgium, Wisconsin (about 15 miles north of Milwaukee) on August 10-12th. Seminars on different aspects on Luxembourg studies, a corner laying ceremony, a special Mass, vocal concert, an elegant banquet, and great camaraderie were the highlights of this conference.

LACS brought in the Archbishop and a singer (explained below) for a four-state tour of Luxembourg heritage towns in the Midwest. They honored our area by allowing those celebrities to visit our area.

On August 14th, the Archbishop of Luxembourg, Fernand Franck, with assistant, Father Jean Ehret, were welcomed in New Ulm by the parish priests at the rectory where they spent the night. They were hosted to a city tour of New Ulm prior to Archbishop Franck celebrating a Mass of the Anticipation of the Feast of the Assumption at New Ulm's Holy Trinity Cathedral with several accompanying priests.



A reception followed in the basement of the Cathedral with seven LHS members accompanying eight priests to The Kasierhoff Restaurant in New Ulm for a great meal, including the Kaiserhoff's famous ribs and locally-made, Schell's beer! The visitors shared stories of Luxembourg and answered questions put to them by others. All in all, it was a fine time and New Ulm and the area's Luxembourgers were honored by their presence.



Two days later, Marie-Pierre Schambourg, with her husband John Fletcher, visited Sleepy Eye for a day of friendship and touring. They were accompanied by LACS Board President, Lloyd Croatt, and were shown to a city tour, a meal at the Orchid Inn before preparing for an evening concert at the Sleepy Eye St. Mary's Auditorium.

Marie-Pierre sang 18 songs, some in her native Luxembourgish, some in English, including an original composition combining American and Luxembourg National Anthems. She gave commentary between songs that helped the audience relate to them. "Her voice was sweet and beautiful," said audience member, Ellie Sveine.

An after-hours visit to Judy and Rex Beech's house for conversation and refreshments capped a wonderful day!

ANNUAL MEETING & BANQUET

Our first, full-membership meeting will take place on **January 19, 2008** at the Orchid Inn in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota!

The plan is to have a Social Hour from 6:00-7:00pm, followed by a sit-down banquet of wonderful food from 7:00-7:45pm. A short business meeting, explaining the membership and organization's structure will follow for about 15 minutes.

The highlight of the evening will be a slide show and presentation by Luxembourg-native and LHS member, Olga Carlson from St. Peter.

This will also be a great chance to get to meet each other and share some stories. Many of us are only connected by e-mail notices and putting a face with a name will be a real pleasure!

Please send \$20 per person to:

Luxembourg Heritage Society of Southern Minnesota
c/o Judy Beech
110 Burnside Street S.W.
Sleepy Eye, MN 56085

To allow for a proper food count and seating capacity, please **send your money by January 10**. Make note of your name and address with the check and include the number of people attending with you. You won't want to miss this evening of meeting new people, learning and friendship.

Luxembourg Facts and Trivia

*American General George Patton is buried in the Luxembourg American Cemetery outside of Luxembourg City, in the town of Hamm, along with over 5,000 other American soldiers.

*Luxembourg measures 32 miles east-to-west and 51 miles north-to-south, making it smaller than Rhode Island and about the same size as two counties in southern Minnesota!

*There are about half a million people living in Luxembourg. Apply that number to the size and you have a nation with a large population density, although it has much green space to enjoy.

*With a thriving economy, Luxembourg's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of around \$66,950 (USD) is the highest in the world!

"Our Club House!"

LHS Treasurer, Gene Bertrand is one handy man with a welder! When in Sleepy Eye, take a look at his wonderful decorative metal work behind his property at 140 East Main Street.

Gene has made iron signs and filigree work on the back of the building and has even mounted a full-size American and Luxembourg flag in decorative wrought iron frames.

A highlight of this place has to be his 10-foot high, painted map of Luxembourg, encircled by the words, "Luxembourg Heritage Society of Southern Minnesota."

The basement of Gene's building is also full of his handiwork, with beautiful wooden tables made of refinished wood flooring from New Ulm's St. Mary's Church, which was demolished about three years ago.

A bulletin board featuring a large-size map of Luxembourg with small pennants of family names in the appropriate towns adorns the wall, as do several photos and related articles of Luxembourg and our Society. We have been holding many of the LHS Board meetings here and have taken to affectionately calling it "our club house." Thanks Gene for sharing your skill and love of Luxembourg!



Support the National Society

The Luxembourg American Cultural Society (LACS) is our leader in many things that we hope to achieve. Their help has been mentioned several times in this Newsletter.

Look at their web-site, www.luxameculturalsociety.org for more info and please consider joining them and supporting their fine work financially. **When they benefit, we benefit!** They can also be accessed by sending to:

L.A.C.S. / P.O. Box 614 / Port Washington, WI 53074 -or call- 1-262-376-3194.

Recommended Books

"The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg: Evolution of Nationhood," by James Newcomer, 1995.

It is a concise, yet thorough, overview history of the country.

It is "a must" for anyone interested in Luxembourg history and culture.

"Luxembourg: The Clog-Shaped Duchy," by Andrew Reid, 2005.

As its title may indicate, it is a less intense study than Newcomer's book, but still offers insights into how Luxembourg came into being. Done in a chronological fashion.

Pioneer Biography

Facing an uncertain future in Dommeldingen, Luxembourg, (now a northern suburb of Lux City) 26 year-old Peter Schmitz and siblings, Jacob Nicholas and Mary, left to explore America looking for a new home for their family in 1856.

After a winter in Chicago, presumably living in the north suburb called "The Ridge" which was full of fellow Luxembourgers, they came immediately to New Ulm, Minnesota in 1857. It is suspected that they heard about the new utopian Germanic settlement while in Chicago (since that's where the first group to settle New Ulm were living), and felt they could live together with those culturally-similar people. The next year two of their siblings and their father, Joseph Schmitz, joined them along with brother John and wife Catherine (nee George) and their children. Eventually their sister, Elizabeth and Phillip Kioes came from Muhlenbach, Luxembourg to complete the family.

Peter lived with his brother "J.N." and father on a farm west of New Ulm and a couple of miles east of Sleepy Eye (which is still in the same family!), until buying his own farm near modern Essig, around 1865. While with his brother and father, he helped console his sister-in-law after his brother John was killed digging a basement for his home south of Sleepy Eye in 1860 by an irate Indian that he had thrown out of his house a few weeks earlier. (The family has often wondered if this incident affected his feelings toward the natives in the events to follow two years later.)

The whole family was thrown into turmoil fighting in the "Sioux Uprising of 1862" that had two of the seven battles of that war happen in central New Ulm. Fighting alongside each other, fearful of the results to their whole family if they failed, they eventually succeeded in helping repel the Indian attacks. Peter, Jacob Nicholas, future in-laws Michael Arnoldi, Peter and Nicholas Permantgen, and William Galles are recorded as having served together in the ad-hoc militias. Records show that Peter and Jacob claimed \$700 and their father Joseph Schmitz claimed \$975 in government reparations after the war, which must have meant that they suffered losses on their farms or to their livelihood.

In 1867 Peter married German immigrant, Gertrude Richartz, who was living in Racine, Wisconsin with her family. The Richartz family moved to the New Ulm area soon after and a few of their other daughters married local men. Together Peter and Gertrude raised a family of 14 children, having one die in childhood and three who died in 1889 within eleven days during the dyptheria epidemic. People realized that some of their children may die early, but three deaths in eleven days had to be mortifying!

Peter joined other area Luxembourgers in signing his name to the famous proclamation requesting a Luxembourg consulate in 1889. This act has been cited as being a firm statement of connection with their homeland, despite living their lives half a world away.

Peter died at home in 1901 and his obituary said he was escorted from his farm to the New Ulm Cemetery with "an impressive cortege of 40 vehicles," indicating a man whose life and contributions were respected in the previous half-century of city-building. A Luxembourger had become a Minnesotan.



Luxembourg Heritage Society
c/o Terry Sveine
904 North Minnesota
New Ulm, MN 56073

The 2007-08 Luxembourg Heritage Society of Southern Minnesota BOARD:

Terry Sveine - President
Gene Bertrand - Treasurer
Gail Christensen - Board Member
Peggy Tauer - Board Member

Judy Beech - Vice-President
Carol Bruggeman - Secretary
Ron Schmitz - Board Member

Membership Events

- *November 16 - Luxembourg Wine Tasting
- *January 19 - Annual Meeting and Banquet

LHS Board Meetings

- *October 25
- *November 31
- *December 19