



# Schweitzer Salt

Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association

August 2016

## SMCHA Banquet, September 22, 2016, 6:00 p.m., Newton, KS

Growing up in Central Kansas in a Mennonite family gave Susan K. Goering the model for her life of helping others. That's what Mennonites do. Dad Milt Goering was an example of an activist who tried to make life better for others.

Susan, born in North Newton, Kansas, attended Bethel College Mennonite Church until her family moved to Ohio and then to Wichita, KS. Law school at Kansas University was the next step that led to a vocation of legal assistance for many. A two-year stint at the federal Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C. started a long list of legal activities that made a difference.

Susan has worked at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Maryland for 30 years and served as Executive Director since 1996. During that time, the ACLU initiated three long-running institutional civil rights cases, one on behalf of African American families denied fair housing, one on behalf of children denied the right to a good education, and another on behalf of African American motorists stopped by State Police for "driving while black."

Susan lives in Baltimore, Maryland. She is still a Kansas University fan, especially since her son attends there. She also appreciates the work of the Land Institute in Kansas.

The SMCHA Banquet will be held at the Faith Mennonite Church, 2100 N. Anderson Ave., Newton KS (316-2833-6370). Cost \$20/plate, ethnic food catered by Newton's Bread Basket. RSVP to Barbara Stucky at 620-345-8367 or bstucky39@mtelco.net. Payment may be made at the banquet or send to 100 Blake Ave., Moundridge KS 67107. Come enjoy a special evening. Open to all.

## Congratulations to 2016 Scholarship Recipients

The SMCHA Scholarship Committee (Helen Nachtigal, Kerwin Graber, Roger Juhnke) awarded two scholarships of \$500 each to two applicants this year.



Jennifer Kaufman just graduated with honors from Bethel College with a degree in Elementary Education. In August she will begin a year of service with MCC in the Service and Learning Together (SALT) program in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, working as a children's tutor and office assistant. She is a member of the West Zion Mennonite Church. Her parents are William and Ellen Kaufman.

Renae Stucky just graduated with honors from Bethel with a History major. She will be serving with SALT in Kigali, Rwanda, working in the Peace Library in the Transformational Leadership Center. She is a member of the Eden Mennonite Church. Her parents are Gregory and Karen Stucky.



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### SMCHA Mission:

- \* Collect and disseminate information concerning the spiritual and cultural history of Anabaptists of Swiss origin.

- \* Offer scholarships to qualifying college and seminary students.

- \* Relate in a meaningful way the faith of our Mennonite forebears to present and future generations.

- \* Maintain the Hopefield Cemetery and Swiss Mennonite 1943 Marker and Centennial Monument.

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SEEKING CONTRIBUTORS  
and CO-EDITOR

## Annual Meeting Report 2016

First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, hosted the April 3, 2016 SMCHA Annual Meeting. Pastor Tonya Ramer Wenger welcomed the approximately 65 Schweitzers. Richard Ratzlaff shared history of church. President LaVern Stucky summarized highlights including:

- Local Sites Tour August 30
- Annual Banquet at Eden with John Sharp and Tony Brown in "Common Threads" program
- Signs directing visitors to SMCHA properties were placed funded by member contributions to Moundridge Community Foundation Match Day in August
- Agreement with Eden Mennonite to care for properties should SMCHA cease to exist
- Master List of graves now on web site
- Scholarship to Caley Ortman
- Storytelling taught by Laurie Oswald Robinson.

Budget of \$8,970 approved. With resignation of Kip Wedel and Dale Schrag, two new Trustees elected: Eugene Goering and Nancy Stucky. John McCabe Juhnke, Professor of Communication Arts at Bethel College, presented a fascinating program showing sights of his sabbatical year in Ukraine including a visit to the place where Kotosufka had been located.

Participants appreciated Velma Ratzlaff's poppyseed rolls and snacks prepared by Hutchinson Church members.

### A Tribute to Harold and Ellen Schrag

Harold Schrag died July 16, 2016. Members of Eden Mennonite Church, Harold and Ellen served in Voluntary Service in Gulfport Mississippi in the 1950s when interaction with African Americans did not ordinarily occur in rural Central Kansas. Their love and care for African Americans was an important role model for us. Ellen and Harold also participated with prisoners; children reported that they would share Ellen's fried chicken on Sundays with a lucky inmate. Family members fondly remembered Harold and Ellen at this funeral, and nephew Dale R. Schrag wrote the following tribute.

I have long believed that my extended Schrag Family (and, by extension, the Goering Family and perhaps the entire Mennonite community around Moundridge) owes a deep debt of gratitude to Uncle Harold and Aunt Ellen. How so?

The Schrag Family was very much a part of that broader Mennonite community—exclusively Caucasian, strikingly homogeneous, decidedly endogamous (i.e., marrying only persons within the community), overwhelmingly inwardly-focused, a community shaped by a history of persecution, making it even more suspicious of the outsider, the stranger, "the Other." Never mind that at least some of these characteristics stand in marked contrast to the life, teaching, and example of the Jesus Christ that community members claimed to follow. This is who we were. Today we are a little less homogeneous, clearly less endogamous, at least somewhat more open to outsiders, to strangers, to "the Other." How did that happen?

Obviously it was partly a function of education, travel, technology--acculturation generally. But we know that doesn't explain it all. Indeed, today we see national movements, both here and abroad, moving in precisely the opposite direction. So something else is needed; progressive, prophetic pioneers are needed. Uncle Harold and Aunt Ellen were exactly such pioneers for the Schrag Family.

First, they adopted four beautiful children, none of whom shared that *Stuckigemeinde* DNA. They loved those children unconditionally, and in so doing demonstrated that God's love is never limited by boundaries of DNA or culture or race.

They spent 18 months in voluntary service in Gulfport, Mississippi, working in an African-American community, and they frequently had



members of that community visiting and staying with them on the farm west of Moundridge. When you went to Harold and Ellen's for a wiener roast, there was always a good chance that you'd discover an African-American or two in attendance. And the extended Schrag Family members in attendance, provided they took the time to interact with those Gulfport guests, would slowly learn that "the Other," in this case, was not to be feared, was instead to be appreciated and embraced. Harold and Ellen were also active in Offender Victim Ministries, and yet another "Other" began to be recognized as a child of God.

And so it was that Uncle Harold's funeral probably put on display more ethnic and racial diversity than the Eden Mennonite Church had ever seen. That diversity was not just beautiful to see as a more accurate reflection of the diverse and multicultural world in which we find ourselves; it was beautiful to see because it was a more accurate reflection of the multicultural world that God created and loves; it was beautiful to see as the harvest of seeds of discipleship planted years ago by two committed Christians willing to take the words and example of Jesus Christ seriously.

So thank you, Uncle Harold and Aunt Ellen. Your pioneering and prophetic witness has been for us an extraordinary and precious gift. "Way to chuff, Uncle Harold! Way to chuff!"\*\* (\*\*This was, I think, a uniquely Harold W. Schrag phrase meant to imply a job well done.)

—Dale R. Schrag

### SMCHA Local Sites Bus Tour III April 30, 2016

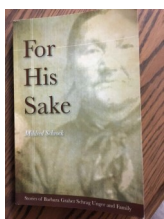
The day dawned wet, rainy and cloudy, muddy in fact. But as 50 participants gathered at Hopefield Church, the sun came out—a great day for a tour. Tour guide, Brian Stucky called our attention to the trails that crisscrossed the prairie, the Hapless Poles, Warkentin Homestead, the Alta Mill, the townsite of Christian KS, the site of the first Holdeman church, the Lone Tree Marker and more than 50 other sites. People were awed by what has happened in our part of Kansas.



Remarks included “The ethnic snacks were tremendous! The tour was well planned! Brian Stucky is a tremendous guide—a real walking-talking encyclopedia.” The tour provided a great opportunity to make new friends and renew old acquaintances. More want to take advantage of this interesting learning tour, so get your name on the spring 2017 waiting list soon.

## Good Reads of Swiss Volhynian Books

**For His Sake.** My paternal grandmother’s family were a part of the Volhynian Mennonites who migrated to the Midwest in 1874-75. Her immediate family, Joseph and Barbara Graber Schrag, moved from South Dakota to Oregon in 1883 and were a part of the “Schrag Church” at Dallas, Oregon. Grandmother’s oral account, undoubtedly learned from her mother, of the family’s multiple migrations from 1790s until 1900 were captured and published as a book, For His Sake (1972), prepared by my Aunt, Mildred Schrock. In 2014, I published a new edition of the book which includes 20+ pages of appendices of historical timeline, a carefully researched map of the Swiss Mennonite settlements in Volhynia, information about traveling to the U.S. in 1874 and several family photos of Barbara



Graber Schrag and her children. Mildred’s hope was that this book would help readers find an “urgent appeal to follow Christ’s way of peace and love.” — Wilbert Shenk *For a copy of this fascinating story, send \$10 plus \$3.50 for mailing to SMCHA, P.O. Box 93, Moundridge, KS 67107.*

**Timeless Values.** Our Dad, Martin H. Goering was known for his interesting stories. He grew up on a farm near McPherson, Kansas, (Elyria) in the 1920’s and became a farmer on that same piece of land. Timeless Values is full of short stories and family history (the John C. Goering family), speeches Dad gave and a few poems he wrote about family. He had a great memory for detail and includes some Eden Church history as well as Elyria and King City, Kansas history. For a copy of the book, we would ask for a donation of \$10 if picked up or \$15 if mailed. Contact Mark Goering (620-480-0128) or email pclark35@cox.net. —Patty J. Clark and Mark H. Goering

**For Conscience Sake.** Several copies of Solomon Stucky’s book are available for sale for \$10 each plus \$3.50 mailing from SMCHA, P.O. Box 93, Moundridge KS 67107. This book deals with the issues of conscientious objection to participation in war by looking at three generations of the same family and their response to WWI, WWII and Viet Nam. He deals with the consequences of total abstinence and with the prices that must be paid for non-participation. Author Solomon Stucky lived in Moundridge Kansas. He was a pastor, a farmer, and a student at different times of his life, and sometimes these vocations overlapped. He was influenced by Der. Robert Friedman and chose to write about his Mennonite heritage. He also wrote The Heritage of the Swiss Volhynian Mennonites, 1981. Solomon died in 1988 and his wife in 2014.

## Welcome new SMCHA Trustees



**Nancy Stucky** worked 26 years at Kingman Community Hospital as Human Resources Officer. She has three children, eight grandchildren and a husband (Dave) that loves SMCHA. She loves music, making quilts and baking/cooking. Four years ago, Dave

and Nancy turned their three-stanchion dairy barn into a Bed and Breakfast and last December developed a nine lot RV park.

**Eugene Goering** was born and raised in the Moundridge area, living within a mile of the immigrant house/1974 SMCHA monument. He attended Bethel College and graduated from Kansas State University and is a big K-State football fan. Eugene and Waneta Voth Goering have three sons and five grandchildren. He took over his father’s farm 45 years ago. Eugene especially enjoys Mennonite history.



## Renae Stucky Awarded for Bethel Senior Paper on Alta Mill

The Growth and Decline of the Alta Community: A Case Study of Dead and Dying Towns in Kansas” is the most recent Monthly Feature Archive on the swissmenno.org website. Renae Stucky (picture on front page as 2016 SMCHA scholarship recipient) received the Thresher Award for this Social Science Seminar paper on the Alta Mill in rural Harvey County. Renae lives a quarter mile north of the Alta Mill.

Renae begins her article “The story of the Alta Mill began in 1876 near the Little Arkansas River, just eighteen miles northwest of Newton. Joseph Schrag and Jacob Gering bought twelve acres of land on the eastern bank of the “Little River” and were the first to build a mill there. A small brush dam was constructed and the burr mill was powered by a water turbine, fed by the river. In 1884, Peter M. Claassen bought the land and mill from Schrag and Gering. He invested resources into updating the machinery adding a roller mill, replacing the brush dam with a wooden one, and in 1898 building a three-story building that is today recognizable in photographs as the ‘Alta Mill.’”

Read the rest of the story on the SMCHA website [www.swissmenno.org](http://www.swissmenno.org). An informative historical report well worth your time to read. Her paper includes not just the history of the Mill, but more of a study of a community — why it was formed and why it died, as well as reflecting about the importance of small communities and what is lost when they no longer existed.

**Schweitzer Program at Bethel College Fall Fest— Saturday, October 1, 2016— Focus on Children’s stories in German.** —Lorita Regier, Neva Kaufman, Maynard and Marlene Krehbiel

Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association  
P. O. Box 93  
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Online at:  
[www.swissmennonite.org](http://www.swissmennonite.org)

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**2016 Membership dues  
\$20/year or \$100 for six  
years. Schweitzer Salt is  
sent to members.**

## Freeman, South Dakota, News

At Freeman's 3rd consecutive year for an MCC sale, approximately \$32,000 was raised. Tamales and ethnic foods served. One quilt sold for \$1,700. Norman Hofer spoke about Johann Cornies who became the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture in Ukraine and helped the struggling Hutterites to come to Molotschna living close to the Mennonites who shared their basic Anabaptist beliefs. Hofer said we were refugees; now MCC raises money to help refugees, and we can help like Cornies did.

Recent bus trip planned by Susan Schrag focused on the tragic story of the South Dakota children who froze in the blizzard of 1887.

In 2014 bus trip, S. Roy Kaufman led tour from the Turkey Ridge Valley southeast of Freeman north to the Silver Lake area to visit historical places in these areas settled by the Swiss and the Low Germans and Hutterites after 1874.

*Should SMCHA plan a tour to see these Freeman historical sites next summer? Would you like to participate?*

## Digitizing Swiss Volhynian History Books

SMCHA is planning to digitize some of the oldest Swiss Volhynian history books and place them on the website ([www.swissmennonite.org](http://www.swissmennonite.org)) for interested persons to read or download. Some of these books are out of print but contain the best history. We will start with A Short History of the Swiss Mennonites who Migrated from Wolhynien, Russia to America and Settled in Kansas in 1874 written by P.P. Wedel and translated by Mr. and Mrs. Benj B.J. Goering and published in spring of 1960. After we see what might be involved and how these will be received, we may continue with other favorites.

*Which books have the best historical Swiss Volhynian information?*

*I was just leaving my weeding assignment, heart rate up, flushed face, when I saw them.— those little white flowers on our Russian sage bush. Well, that won't do, not after all the hours we slaved at the Monument dressing it up with beautiful hearty plants. So I stayed longer and started untangling. You think those little rascals would get dizzy winding round and round up every stalk. Where did those bind-weeds come from, or more important, how do I get rid of them? I know about their underground network of mischief. I don't want a potent chemical to damage the black-eyed Susans or taint the soil so the coneflowers can't reseed. Maybe just more willing hands to keep pulling so we eventually win the war at least in our limited Monument garden. Want to help occasionally? —Kathy Goering  
Weeding Team: Danielle Goering, Valetta Seymour, Gin Niehage, Jeanette Wedel, Barbara Stucky*



## Match Day 2016

Moundridge Community Foundation will be Thursday, November 3, 2016, 8:00-1:00 p.m. MCF will offer \$15,000 in grant money to be shared with the participants. Earned funds could be used for the Digitizing project or other SMCHA plans. Plan ahead to be a financial helper for our SMCHA organizational goals.