**Annual General Meeting**

**Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe (SGGEE)**

**August 7, 2015**

**Ramada Plaza Hotel Manoir du Casino**

**75 Rue d’Edmonton, Gatineau, Quebec**

The meeting was called to order at 4pm by Sigrid Pohl Perry, President, with 34 members in attendance.

1. The approval of the minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting held in Calgary, Alberta, was the first item of business. These Minutes had been posted on the website and copies were available for perusal at the meeting. Marnie McCall moved to approve the minutes as written. Bob Frederking seconded the motion. The motion carried.
2. There was no business arising from the 2014 minutes.

**Committee Reports, 2014-2015**

**Membership: Renate Dilk**

This document provides the membership status as taken on July 31 2015 and reflects membership activities since last year’s convention report. Membership is virtually unchanged since last year, because the slightly lower renewal rate was offset by an increase in new members.

**Membership trend over the years**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2015** | **2014** | **2013** | **2012** | **2011** | **2010** | **2009** |
| Paid Members | 633 | 628 | 631 | 582 | 590 | 597 | 531 |
| Honorary Members | 11 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 11 | 10 |
| Journal Subscribers | ? | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Publication Exchange | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| **Total** | **665** | **651** | **655** | **607** | **615** | **622** | **553** |

**The categories of paid membership transactions for 2015 (Sept 15/2014 to July 31/2015) are:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **#** | **% of Total** | **Electronic payment** | **% of Total** | **Mailed Payment** | **% of Total** |
| New memberships | 111 | 18% | 100 | 16% | 11 | 6% |
| Renewed memberships | 522[[1]](#footnote-1) | 82% | 346 | 55% | 176 | 28% |
| **Total** | **633** |  | **446** |  | **187** |  |

From this table we can see that the majority of paid memberships are renewals and they are received electronically (58% of total paid memberships for the period).

**The countries associated with paid and honorary memberships for 2015 (Sept 15/2014 to July 31/2015) are:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **# of Members** | **% of Total** |
| Austria | 6 | 1% |
| Brazil | 2 |  |
| Canada | 240 | 37% |
| Denmark | 3 | .5% |
| France | 1 |  |
| Germany | 122 | 19% |
| Norway | 1 |  |
| New Zealand | 2 |  |
| Paraguay | 1 |  |
| Poland | 2 |  |
| Romania | 1 |  |
| Russia | 1 |  |
| Switzerland | 1 |  |
| UK | 3 | .5% |
| Ukraine | 1 |  |
| United States | 257 | 40% |

**The locations associated with paid and honorary memberships for North America for 2015 (Sept 15/2014 to July 31/2015) are:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Canada** | **United States** |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | **# of Members** | **% of CDN Total** | | British Columbia | 58 | 24% | | Alberta | 92 | 38% | | Saskatchewan | 25 | 10% | | Manitoba | 21 | 9% | | Ontario | 39 | 16% | | Quebec | 3 | 1% | | Nova Scotia | 1 |  | | NWT | 1 |  | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | **# of Members** | **% of USA Total** | | Arizona | 5 |  | | California | 38 | 15% | | Colorado | 4 |  | | Connecticut | 7 | 3% | | Delaware | 2 |  | | Florida | 11 | 4% | | Georgia | 2 |  | | Hawaii | 2 |  | | Idaho | 2 |  | | Illinois | 9 | 4% | | Indiana | 6 |  | | Iowa | 5 |  | | Kansas | 2 |  | | Maryland | 6 |  | | Michigan | 20 | 8% | | Minnesota | 10 | 4% | | Montana | 3 |  | | Nebraska | 3 |  | | Nevada | 1 |  | | New Hampshire | 1 |  | | New Jersey | 8 | 3% | | New York | 6 |  | | North Carolina | 3 |  | | Ohio | 10 | 4% | | Oklahoma | 1 |  | | Oregon | 9 | 4% | | Pennsylvania | 6 |  | | South Carolina | 4 |  | | Tennessee | 1 |  | | Texas | 8 | 3% | | Utah | 9 | 4% | | Vermont | 1 |  | | Virginia | 12 | 5% | | Washington | 22 | 9% | | West Virginia | 1 |  | | Wisconsin | 17 | 7% | |

**Databases: Gary Warner**

Databases report for 2015 convention

Prepared by Gary Warner and Rose Ingram and Frank Stewner, 13 July 2015

There are several existing databases that SGGEE maintains, and from time to time, some

planned that have not yet been received or posted on the SGGEE website:

**A. Existing databases**

**1. The Master Pedigree Database (MPD**)

This database contains data from original Polish records, and also from the research of

our members. It currently contains 523,339 (a net decrease of 2372 less than

at the last convention). The database is in a constant state of change because new data

is always being added as well as merged (there were approximately 10,000 new records

added this past year, so there were a lot of records that were merged in order to show

just the decrease in the number of records). The merge process establishes links

between the various family files in the database and is the process by which we

determine who among our members are cousins. This database now shows almost all

given names as the most common German form as an aid to the merging process, which

requires that the first 6 characters of the given name match for an automatic computer

matchup. The exception to the most common German given name is for all SGGEE

members and their spouses, which are maintained as submitted. The MPD currently

contains the SGGEE001r10 update, the last one received before the death of its author,

Al Muth. Gary Warner maintains this database.

See https://www.sggee.org/members/genealogy.html

**2. The Parish Records Index (PRI)**

This database is a listing of individual birth, marriage, death, and confirmation records

extracted from original records in Poland. It currently contains 364,375 names (same as

at last convention). The size of the database is increased by research supplied by

volunteers, and is reduced as yet other volunteers transfer the portions of the database

that have the most complete data to the Master Pedigree Database. Gary Warner

maintains this database by updating it with new data provided by SGGEE volunteers.

See https://www.sggee.org/members/pri\_guide.html

**3. The Alternate Surnames List**

This database is a listing of all of the alternate surnames used in the SGGEE Master

Pedigree database. It is useful for members in determining what names their ancestors

might have used in Poland or Russia as the result of their original surnames being

corrupted to change to the Polish or Russian equivalent of the German name. For

instance, the surname Schwarz (meaning the color black) has the Polish equivalent of

Czarnecki. There are substantiated alternates‐ those confirmed by others who have not

just submitted names to the Master Pedigree Database. This list is unchanged in the last

year. There are also unsubstantiated alternates‐ those submitted by SGGEE members

which may or may not be true alternates. This list also remains unchanged for the past

year. The substantiated alternate names database is currently 7 pages of double

column text. The unsubstantiated alternate names database is currently 218 pages of

single column text that show the unsubstantiated alternates. Gary Warner maintains

this database.

See https://www.sggee.org/research/AlternateSurnamesDatabaseSubstantiated.pdf

and also

https://www.sggee.org/research/AlternateSurnamesDatabase.pdf

**4. The Alternate Christian Names List**

This database is a listing of all of the various given names in the Master Pedigree

Database, and their most common German equivalent, if any. The list was developed

to assist in the merging of the records in the Master Pedigree Database, since the

computer matchup of names to be compared requires that the first 6 letters of the

given names be the same for a matchup. The list is currently 15 pages of double

column German names with their more common English, and other language

equivalents, and another 32 pages of double column English and other language names

alongside their most common German name equivalent. Frank Stewner, Ed Koeppen

and Gary Warner maintain this database. No significant changes in the last year, but a

few corrections were made.

See https://sggee.org/research/AlternateChristianNames.pdf

**5. The SGGEE001x database**

This latest version of this database was provided by Al Muth in 2009. We have been

unable to obtain any of the work he completed between 2009, and his death in 2013.

The current version of that database is SGGEE001r10, and contains 194,000 names.

The data is exclusively from Al’s extractions of Polish birth, marriage and death records.

This data is incorporated into the Master Pedigree and mostly merged with it. Gary

Warner is the keeper of this database

See https://www.sggee.org/members/parallel.html

**6. The Lodz Trinity database**

This is a database of original Polish records for the Lodz area, as input by John Marsch

from transcriptions of the original Polish Lutheran records of the Lodz Trinity church. It

is now complete and contains 34,492 names. This database is now a part of the Master

Pedigree database, and is almost completely merged with the Master Pedigree

Database. Gary Warner is the keeper of this database.

See https://www.sggee.org/members/lodz.html

**7. The membership database**

This is a database maintained by Ted Belke that contains the contact data for all present

and former members of SGGEE. It is updated every time a change or membership

application is received and posted on the website usually the same day as a membership

application is received. As of 2 August 2014, the database contained the names of 1894

present and past members of SGGEE. Renate Dilk is the keeper of this database.

See https://www.sggee.org/members/member\_data.html

**8. St. Petersburg birth, marriage and death indices (Volhynia, Kiev and Podolia)**

This is a database that was extracted from the St. Petersburg records for Volhynia, Kiev

and Podolia. It contains data on the births, marriages and deaths of Lutherans who

lived in Volhynia, Kiev and Podolia between 1836 and 1885, and in addition was

supplemented with data from later years for Rozyszcze and Wladimir‐Wolynsk parishes

and now contains approximately 422,000 names (an increase of 38,698 since last year).

A cleanup of the marriage records to correct known errors occurred in 2006, and a

similar cleanup of the birth and death records to remove known errors and to put data

in an easier to use format was completed by Dick Stein in 2009. Confirmation data for

Rozyszcze parish from 1862 to 1886 was added to the births index in 2010. Gary Warner

is the keepr of this database and the supplemental data was provided by Dick Stein and

his assistants. This year I found approximately 1000 records where the birth mother’s

surname and given names were reversed, so, as in all databases, there is always

something to correct.

See https://www.sggee.org/research/StPeteBirth.html

https://www.sggee.org/research/StPeteMarriage.html

https://www.sggee.org/research/StPeteDeath.html

**9. Galicia Index of Individuals**

This is a database of people who lived in various villages in Galicia. It contains birth,

marriage and death data of the villagers and their ancestors. The database is very

extensive and was prepared by Bill Fife, and has remained unchanged in the last year.

See https://www.sggee.org/members/galicia/galicia\_records.html Bill Fife is the keeper

of this database.

**10. History Books Database**

Many of the areas in which our ancestors settled in Canada and the USA have produced

history books of the area, variously called Centennial books, Anniversary books, Jubilee

books etc., which describe or tell about the original settlers in these areas. This

database is a listing of the books (and the individuals in the books) held by either our

members, or in the SGGEE Library. This database currently contains 26,000 names.

Gary Warner is the keeper of this database.

See https://www.sggee.org/members/localhistory.html

**11. Library materials database**

Howard Krushel has made a listing of all of the materials in the SGGEE library. He was

the custodian of that list until his retirement in summer of 2014. All Library material is

presently in Storage.

See https://www.sggee.org/members/library\_contents.html

**12. Lublin Digital Archive Database**

See separate report from Karl Krueger and Sigrid Perry

**13. The KGB file from Zhitomir Archives contains 4178 lines of data.**

Names of people arrested about 1931 to 1945 and their fate. Also includes birth dates and names of

family members.

See https://sggee.org/members/MembersIndex.html#kgb

**14. Resettlement or Repatriation of 1930's file** from the Zhitomir Archives contains 13,851

lines of data. Gives place of resettlement plus former residence.

See https://sggee.org/members/MembersIndex.html#kgb

**15. Eastern Volhynia records for Zhitomir** by Pastor Samuel Sigfried Lemke, recorded

October 1941 to November 1943. Baptism records contain 6977 names of those

baptized, plus the names of the parents‐ most records are of people born in 1920's to

1943. Also 502 lines of Marriage records contain marriages performed in 1942 and

1943.

See https://www.sggee.org/members/MembersIndex.html#lemke for access to these

records. Additional information on these records is available, and was not shown on

the website for privacy reasons (some persons would be less than 80 years old).

**16. Gazetteers** for Congress Poland, the old German, Russian and Austrian Empires, and

also for Volhynia and Galicia. These have been created by Frank Stewner to show

present‐day and old names for each of these areas, and include coordinates for ease of

locating on maps. Present villages identified in each area are:

Congress Poland‐ 6173 villages and towns

(https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer\_Poland.pdf)

German Empire‐ 3941 villages and towns

(https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer\_German\_Empire.pdf)

Russian Empire‐ 1294 villages and towns

(https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer\_Russian\_Empire.pdf)

Austrian Empire‐ 211 villages and towns

(https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer\_Austrian\_Empire.pdf)

Galicia‐ 578 villages and towns (https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer\_Galicia.pdf)

Volhynia‐ 5544 villages and towns (https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer\_Volhynia.pdf)

**B. Databases planned**

BMD indexed data from the Lutheran Records in Zhitomir and Rowno archives covering

church books for time period 1900 to about 1915. Rough copies of this data is here at

the convention, and we expect it to be on our website by the end of this year.

**Research: Rose Ingram**

**Update for Lublin Indexing Project – Karl Krueger Team Leader**

As reported last year, the Lublin Project is nearly complete regarding all the DVDs that we have received in a readable condition.

Dr. Dariusz Chwastek was the pastor at Lublin when this project was initiated in 2006. He was very instrumental in cooperating with us to see this project move forward. As of June 2013 he has been promoted to be the pastor at the main consistory in Warsaw where his absence is being felt in our communications with Lublin. Since Dr. Chwastek left we have been unable to receive any replies from Lublin. People who have ordered records from them have not received any feedback and even their PayPal payments were returned. Until things change it seems no one will be able to order records from Lublin. At the moment our database is the only resource one can use for finding details on records from this archive.

To date, there has been no substantial progress on this matter. We are investigating the possibility to access records which we have not yet received from Lublin Church.

Karl Krueger, Lublin Project Team Leader.

**Update for Lutheran records indexing in Archives in Volhynia area.**

The Zhitomir Archives indexing project for years 1900 to 1914 is still in the editing process, this is very big project. We anticipate having the searchable indexes on our Website later this year or early next year.

We have received about 98,500 lines of birth, marriage and death data which includes data from Heimtal, Emilchin, Novograd Volhynski, Zhitomir and Radomyl churches. Zhitomir is a major parish and has over 32,000 lines of data which still require a lot of editing and correcting.

Earlier this year we contracted with Alex Brzhezytsky and his team to extract and index records from church records from Rowno archives. We received approximately 26,900 lines of data from Tutchin and Rowno church records, at the cost of approximately $6,000. This data is also in process of editing. We anticipate having this searchable data on the website by October. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Other projects:**

As reported last year, there are two or three other parish records in Lipno region in Poland in process of being indexed by a few volunteers. Once the indexing is finished the data will be posted in the Parish Records Index database and notification of such will be given.

North American record indexing:

Last year we had planned to have some more Canadian records posted on the Website but the death of Jerry Frank last fall, this matter was put on hold for a while, until we obtain further records off his computer. Of interest are the Pastor Willing diaries, covering 1894-1933, particularly important 1894-1896.

Rose Ingram Research Co-ordinator.

**Publicity: Sigrid Pohl Perry**

Publicity Committee Report

Committee chair: Sigrid Pohl Perry

Members: Joyce Guasch, Beth Burke, Sylvia McCullough, Helen Gillespie, Edie Adam

When the date and a venue were secured, Publicity Committee members increased the list of organizations to be contacted to include more in the eastern states and provinces. A total of 158 genealogical, historical & cultural German organizations in Canada and the United States were contacted about SGGEE and the Convention. The organizations were later reminded about the early registration discount and an update on speakers and schedule so information on the Convention could be included in their newsletters or at meetings.

The general brochure about SGGEE was revised this year for distribution to interested organizations and a link for download was placed on the website.

A new Facebook initiative was launched as publicity for the Convention with the approval of the Board of Directors. It was created by Renate Dilk Pilon and Edie Adam on 8 May 2015. Renate is the moderator of the page. To date there have been 29 posts by SGGEE and 191 “likes” so that means that people are reading the posts and commenting on them. A separate report with recommendations about the Facebook page has been written by Renate.

Helen Gillespie will chair the Publicity Committee in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Sigrid Pohl Perry, Chair

**Facebook Page Initiative: Renate Dilk**

This document provides information regarding the SGGEE Facebook page. This page was created to increase visibility and disseminate information regarding the 2015 SGGEE Convention.

**What works:** The readership goes up when we post research related information.

Suggestions for improvements:

1. Change to a group format that requires users to join. This will allow for more privacy and information could then be exchanged between members and non-members. An option here could be to create a “group” page available to members-only? The con to this is that we will not have a visibility with non-members.
2. Post more research related information, this seems to be what our audience wants.
3. Add more photos.
4. Post a link to the journal(s)
5. Most important of all. If this is continued as a communication tool then some guidelines should be developed to outline what types of information should be shared/or not shared here. I always used my own judgement but this is SGGEE’s Facebook page so others should be involved in determining what we use Facebook for.
6. I recommend not duplicating any information from the web site, the web site should remain the “source” for information where possible. The Facebook page can “advertise” information that can be found on the web site and then links can be provided.
7. Limit “small talk” type messages … these do not seem to be very popular with the audience
8. Link to other genealogy Facebook pages and organizations

Some data regarding the page:

Created – May 8, 2015

Number of posts (by SGGEE) – 29

Number of Likes (total) – 191

**Journal: Ray Bloch,**editor

***The SGGEE Journal is produced on a quarterly basis for the membership.  The SGGEE Journal is typically between twenty-four and forty pages and after editorial review and proofreading is posted to the web site by Karl Krueger.  Rose Ingram publishes an email to the membership letting them know that the Journal is available for download.  There are approximately sixty copies of the Journal that are printed and sent out via postal mail.  Of these sixty, twelve go to various societies, two go to the Canadian National Archives in Ottawa, and the rest to those members who have requested a printed copy.  Of the members, two go to Germany and the rest are divided equally between the United States and Canada.***

***As an example of the types of societies that receive a printed copy, the Alberta Family History Society, the Allen Country Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the Calgary Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia are recipients of the SGGEE Journal.***

***As with any publishing endeavor, we are rely upon on our membership to provide stories and articles that relate to our area of study.  There has only been a few times where we haven’t published an article that has been submitted and it’s typically due to the article’s area of focus is outside of our geographic interest.  So please provide your personal and family stories – our membership enjoys reading these accounts and include pictures, the more you have the better.  We look forward to receiving your contributions.***

**Finance: Ken Kufeldt,** Treasurer

The full financial report for the fiscal year ended April 30, 2015 was published in the

June Journal. We experienced a small operating surplus as income and expenses were fairly

evenly matched. Subject to the longer term issue I raise below, SGGEE is in a sound financial

position.

The issue facing SGGEE is what I call a currency imbalance. This has had an adverse

effect on many Canadian dollar based organizations that have US dollar expenses. Basically

most of our income (which is from membership dues) is received in Can$ through PayPal. We

have some US$ income which is deposited in our US$ account. The rationale behind having

accounts in both currencies is that it enables us to pay our bills in either currency without the

need for currency conversions. In the past this has worked well. When I became Treasurer in

September 2011 we had ample US$ on hand to meet all foreseeable expenses in that currency.

However a couple of things have changed over time:

**1.** Fewer members now pay dues by US$ check, and are using PayPal which is in Can$.

**2.** At the same time our research, website server, and journal expenses are all in US$.

Also we have other sundry costs in that currency.

To illustrate, during the 31 month period October 1, 2012 to April 30, 2015 our US$

income was 19% of total receipts but our US$ expenses were 64% of operating costs. Obviously

this has rapidly depleted our US holdings -from $37,400 at October 1, 2012 to $7,200 at April

30, 2015. During this period we had no unusual expenditures except US$4,000 to purchase our

new website server. There was no skewing of results caused by convention locations. There was

one in each country, the normal pattern.

For the current year we have budgeted at least $15,000 of US expenses. We will have to

purchase at least US$5,000 to fund these activities.

Depletion of our US$ holdings would not be so problematical if the two currencies were

near equal in value. However many of you will be aware that the US dollar has strengthened

considerably while at the same time the Canadian dollar has taken a steep drop. A recent rate

quote from our bank confirms that every US dollar we purchase would cost SGGEE

approximately Can$1.27. (Retail exchange rates are much less favorable than those officially

posted.) To express it another way, a membership payment of Can$40 received through PayPal

would buy us only US$30.18.

As a matter of interest, some experts are predicting in the financial media that the Can$

will drop another seven cents relative to the US$. This would make a bad situation worse.

The obvious fix is to increase our US$ income by modifying our dues structure so that

more members pay in that currency. This is where it becomes a little more complicated. PayPal

will gladly accept US$ payments but because we are Canadian based it insists that receipts be

converted to Can$ when transferred to our bank account. PayPal will simply not allow US$

income to be transferred a US$ account located in Canada. There are ways to work around this

restriction, but they are a little awkward. Although we have only a small number of US payment

transactions, the Board has backed away from the available fixes. (Some Directors also cited the

safety of funds left on deposit with PayPal but this is also resolvable.)

In the meantime the fundamental imbalance issue remains unresolved. This will really

start to bite next fiscal year (May 2016 to April 2017) as our US$ bank account will hover near

zero. Over time, unaddressed and sustained operating losses caused by paying thousands of

dollars in currency conversions every year could impair our financial viability. Despite our good

financial position at the moment, our obligation to practice responsible stewardship should

impel us to curb avoidable losses.

As I see it, the new Board has three main options open to it:

**1.** Maintain the status quo in the hopes that the Can$ recovers. In the meantime pay

conversion penalties use our C$ holdings to purchase needed US$.

**2.** Change the dues structure so that more members pay in badly needed US$, and

work to minimize the complications created by PayPal regulations.

**3.** Change the dues structure so that more members pay in badly needed US$.

Reincorporate SGGEE in the United State as a non-profit organization and move all

banking and financial administration to that country.

There are possible modifications and permutations for options 1 and 2. Option 3 is a

"take it or leave it" solution and is the most radical. However, ignoring the politics it is the most

logical approach. If our primary financial obligations are in US$, this would make it very simple

to both collect dues and pay our major expenses in that currency. Can$ receipts could be

deposited in a separate Can$ bank account at the US bank, much the same as our present US$

account is now handled in Canada.

I am somewhat hesitant to endorse option 3, and I don't believe option 1 is a prudent

or responsible choice. My recommendation continues to be option 2. If we had a lot of

payment activity, this option could get cumbersome. However it is doable, given the small

number payment transactions involved. The earliest possible implementation date would be

October 1, 2016 which is the beginning of the 2017 membership signup.

As Director in charge of our finances I am responsible for ensuring the Board and the

organization as a whole are kept informed of any financial issues that may affect SGGEE, and to

propose solutions. However policy and procedural changes remain the purview of all Directors.

Respectfully submitted Ken Kufeldt, Treasurer

**Website: Karl Krueger**

The matter of greatest significance that affected our website was the passing away of webmaster Jerry Frank. Jerry is responsible for the current design of our website which has received notoriety for website presentation by nonprofit organizations. Jerry had been our webmaster since 2005 after taking over this responsibility from Gary Warner. Karl Krueger is the current webmaster, Matt Warner is the chief maintainer of the server, and Gary continues to be aware of all that happens with the website, but of course his chief responsibilities lie with maintenance of the databases. Since it is important that the sole responsibility of the website does not lie with one person, something Jerry had the foresight to understand, we should find another person to help out in a web editor role. Experience with html and css are important for the ability to edit our website.

One concern with the passing of Jerry is will SGGEE be able to update his maps if necessary since there may be copyright issues involved. A member residing in Calgary may have the necessary software to edit Jerry’s maps if needed and communication with Jerry’s son was in progress to handle this issue. For the last number of months no further updates with Jerry’s son have occurred on this front. This will be an important matter of consideration for the new board.

Frank Stewner continues to update the locations database and he is also providing us with a gazetteer of most regions of Europe that SGGEE is involved with. He has been providing us with annual updates to this gazetteer which is available on our website.

Over the winter a new page was added to the members only section where family stories about our ancestors from eastern Europe are given. Thus far Bill Remus and Karl Krueger have contributed stories. We invite more members to submit to this page to let others read the history of your family.

A link to the SGGEE Facebook page was placed on our homepage to make it easier to find our presence in social media.

The membership of our listserv continues to hover at around 800 so this number seems to be increasing slowly every year.

**Library: Elvin Myers,** Director overseeing Library

We reported at the 2014 convention that Howard Krushel had asked not to continue any longer as the librarian and for materials to no longer be stored in his home. At that time the Board determined that they should be stored in a local climate controlled facility and a SGGEE member to be found to succeed as librarian.

To date all the material is still in storage in Calgary and a list of contents is still posted on our website.

Since 2014 the Board has received offers of interest from two major Libraries to house the books. But before any firm decision is made, it was decided to remove the books and other material to a member’s home who volunteered to sort and keep anything that may be relevant to the Research Department.

This sorting will be done later this year and early next year, at which time the Board will then make a decision as to the disposition of the Library books. The membership will be informed of this decision.

**Convention: Bill Tucholke**

"Researching Our German Roots in Poland and the Russian Empire"

2015 Convention Committee Report

Gatineau, Quebec Canada was chosen as the site for the 17th SGGEE Convention and Annual General Meeting. This location was selected to provide an opportunity for our SGGEE members living in eastern Canada and the US to attend our convention without encountering an extensive amount of travel. It is our hope that more members will be able to attend their first SGGEE convention and benefit from the programs and interactions with other members.

Special thanks go out to Renate Dilk and Helen Gillespie who selected and made arrangements with the Ramada Plaza Manoir du Casino Hotel to host our convention. We would like to recognize SGGEE Board Directors Edie Adam (Convention), Sigrid Perry (Publicity), and Ken Kufeldt (Treasurer) for their help and support. Rose Ingram once again was actively involved in the planning along with the other members of the Convention committee who should be thanked for their numerous contributions. These included creating an SGGEE "*Facebook*" *website page*, updating the SGGEE informational brochure, deciding on a Convention theme and offering numerous speaker and workshop topic suggestions. As in prior years, the exit surveys completed by those who attended last year's convention proved to be a helpful in our planning.

This year we have expanded our workshop topics to include a video produced by the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection entitled "We (Never) Don't Forget" *Germans from Russia in* *South America*; a presentation on the 1915 Russian Deportation Law by Dick Benert; Post World War II German Re-Settlement by Sigrid Perry and a presentation by Professor Mathias Schulze on the German Oral History project by the University of Waterloo that targets German families and their adjustments to living in Canada.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many members and volunteers who have and are providing much needed assistance during the convention. Their willingness to volunteer creates a helpful and supportive atmosphere and the sharing of genealogical expertise among our members is often cited year after year as one of the highlights of our conventions. The Convention committee is always in need of fresh ideas and input from our members. We encourage you to join the Convention committee if you would like to become more involved in planning our future conventions. Next year we plan to meet in Calgary

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Tucholke, Convention chair

**New Business**

**1.** Sigrid Pohl Perry offered thanks and appreciation for the work that Ken Kufeldt has done over the past two terms as Treasurer

**2. Appointment of Auditor:** Member Virginia Braun will continue to do the annual audit and report. She does this as her volunteer contribution. Marnie McCall moved, and Bob Frederking seconded, that Virginia Braun be approved as auditor. The motion carried.

**3 Election of Directors** to replace two retiring Directors (Ken Kufeldt and Sigrid Pohl Perry), each for a 3-year term. Sigrid will remain as Past-President, replacing Ray Bloch in this capacity. Rose Ingram nominated David Neumann, and Willi Wiesner seconded the nomination. David was approved as Director. Ted Belke then nominated Susie Lewis and this was seconded by Bob Frederking. Susie was approved as Director and was appointed to be Treasurer of the organization.

Don Jabush moved to adjourn the meeting; Ray Bloch seconded the motion. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 5:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Benert, President

1. 11 members paid in advance in 2014 or earlier, these have been included in “Mailed” payments [↑](#footnote-ref-1)