

## SGGEE Convention Report 2001

The SGGEE Convention August 10-12, 2001 held at the La Quinta Inn in Tacoma, Washington is now behind us. All who attended experienced an educational, helpful and fun convention.

Holding the convention in the US instead of Canada was a new venture for our organization. The attendance of about 80 exceeded our expectations. There were many non-member drop ins. Most who were registered attended the banquet that featured Dale Wahl as the speaker.

The setup for the popular research room began Thursday afternoon. The convention committee chaired by Carol Castleman and Jan Butler arrived early to ensure the research room would be ready.

The convention began Friday as attendees started making good use of the research room. Many of our member experts were on hand to answer questions and in some cases actually helped people take those first thrilling steps in researching their roots. Special thanks go to Bill Fife, Gary Warner, Jerry Frank, Dave Obee, Rose Ingram and many others who assisted curious minds those three days. Several of these people gladly brought their own computers to have available for research and demonstration.

The agenda part of the convention began promptly at 8:30 Saturday morning. After opening remarks by outgoing President Bill Fife the first speaker Jerry Frank was introduced. The title of Jerry's presentation was Drang nach Osten "The German Migration to the East-who, why, when & where." Jerry presented general reasons for the various migrations, and their time frames. He discussed the many destinations of migration for the various German groups. These included Poland and Volhynia, Galicia, Bessarabia, Black Sea, Baltic, Volga, and the Danube Schwabians. His well received presentation was carried over to Sunday morning when he presented part II.

Second presentation was a panel entitled "Help I'm stuck and Success Stories" moderated by Victor Gess who was the master of ceremonies for the convention. Jerry Frank, Rose Ingram and Dave Obee were the panel members. Success stories were presented and many questions were asked. The panel's presentation was well received. The success of it was measured by many requesting that this format be used again.

The convention was very fortunate that Cyndi Howells of "Cyndi's List" was able to be with us. She was the last speaker of the morning. Her presentation was "Quit Surfing and Start Researching." Cyndi is a dynamic speaker that was very well organized and presented a wealth of information in her allotted one hour. She told us about her categorized index of approximately 88,000 online resources. She presented five Internet research rules. These are listed here in brief form. Rule 1. Decide that your aim is to look for a specific person, date and place in a person's life and stick to it. Rule 2. Don't assume you'll find actual records online. Rule 3. Don't assume that you will find exactly what you need for your research. Rule 4. Don't let the technology intimidate you or chase you away. Rule 5. The information found on web sites is only as reliable as the human beings that created the pages. Cindi also covered the following subjects. Web Browsers, Links and URLs, Bookmarks or favorites, Searching, and Research Strategy and Documentation. After her presentation she was surrounded with many interested researchers trying to placate their inquiring minds.

The afternoon until 4:00 o'clock was taken up with rotating workshops. The following presenters lead these popular workshops. Rose Ingram, record extraction and recording the information on uniform templates. Rose presented twice and her workshops were very well organized. Rose has been extracting records for many years and has thousands and thousands of extractions to her credit. Sue Foster from a local LDS Family History Center discussed the unlimited resources you can find at your local Family History Center. She presented this popular workshop twice. Gary Warner's workshop was on internet research. Both of his workshops were well attended and his handout was very helpful regardless of the researchers level of expertise. Gary is one of the Founders of SGGEE and is a past President. His job, along with his capable son Matt is to handle all of the web site issues for our organization. John Movius gave a workshop on exploring FEEFHS (Federation of East European Family History Societies) resources. John is one of the founders of FEEFHS and single handedly created the massive web site of that organization. His presentation was timely, as many of our members had requested help in being able to use this valuable resource to its fullest. John gave one very well attended workshop. He was available for individual help all afternoon.

At 4:00 the Annual General Meeting took place. After this Meeting which included the election of new directors, an organizational meeting of the board took place and this is the current list of board members. Rose Ingram-President, Victor Gess-Vice President, Virginia Less-Recording Secretary, Jan Butler-Corresponding Secretary, Bill Fife-Past President, Irwin Feldcher-Treasurer, and other officers of the Board Karl Lenz, Howard Krushel, Richard Benert. Each director is responsible for a committee. Rose Ingram-Research, Victor Gess-Website, Virginia Less-Publicity, Irwin Fledcher-Finance, Bill Fife-Journal, Karl Lenz-Convention, Howard Krushel-Library, Richard Benert-Membership.

All enjoyed the well-attended banquet. Dale Wahl was the banquet speaker. He was co-founder of the "pixel." He is a very active long time member of GRHS, and was instrumental in developing the clearing house for that organization. The title of his speech was "Society Experiences, Challenges and Opportunities." Dale spoke of observing changes within GRHS and other Societies, and the modifications made to respond to the interests of their membership. He noted changes brought on by technology and the importance of organizations making certain that these groups remain people oriented. Dale's lighthearted approach to a serious topic was appreciated by all.

Sunday morning Jerry Frank gave part II of his presentation of Drang nach Osten.

Dave Obee's presentation was "Using Maps and Gazetteers in Your Research". As a teenager, Dave's passion for family research began. He described the benefits of using the proper scale map for maximum effectiveness. He also described how terrain can be clues to the way people made their living and why they may have moved to particular areas. Dave's advice was constantly sought by many of the convention attendees. Dave has an online store, which sells genealogy books and maps.

John Movius was the final speaker on Sunday morning. His topic was "Finding your Volhynian locality of Origin in Europe". John was invited to attend our convention and made a presentation. He is very well known in the genealogy community and is always willing to help out and share his knowledge whenever he can. This knowledge, coupled with his computer ability and the massive database on FEEFHS always makes for an interesting presentation from John.

The general consensus was that the convention was a source of much usable information. Many of the attendees were thrilled with their new contacts and the tools that were available to them. Our thanks go to the convention committee and those many helpers that made it a success. Several of these workers, because of their duties were unable to attend the lectures and workshops. Carol Castleman, Jan Butler, Eldon Butler, and many of the board members were among those that had very time consuming jobs. The board will welcome any suggestions you may have that will help improve future conventions.

Victor Gess