



Houston Sangerbund

Founded October 6, 1883

SPRING/SUMMER 2010

Der Zweck des Vereins ist Pflege und Forderung des Gesanges, der Musik, Erhaltung der deutschen Sprache, Hebung des Gesellschaftlichen Lebens, Beforderung deutscher Sitten und Moral.

The purpose of the Society is to cultivate the furtherance of song and music, to preserve the German language, to promote the Society's life, and to convey good German customs and morals.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Houston Sangerbund has experienced some wonderful times recently. We were fortunate to be able to participate in the National Sangerfest in San Antonio the weekend of April 9-11. For this event, we worked closely with our sister club, Houston Liederkranz at its hall at 5100 Ella Blvd. and held joint rehearsals. All clubs sang the same songs for the National Sangerfest. Additionally we participated in the State Sangerfest on Sunday, April 11 in San Antonio and joined with Liederkranz in doing a solo Lied.

After the Sangerfest, we hosted the Bohmetaler BlasMusik and the Jagdhornblaser aus Walsrode for a concert on Thursday, April 15, to a full house at the Liederkranz Hall. SB hosted the bands to a barbeque dinner from Goode Company on the Wednesday they arrived, and also provided food for the concert. Many of our members and Liederkranz members were house hosts for the German musicians.

We were all surprised by the Iceland volcano eruption which delayed our musicians' return flight until the volcanic ash had subsided over Europe almost a week later. We took musicians to NASA, to parties, to sing with church choirs, to museums, hunting, to concerts in Round Top and with the Houston Brass Band, to the British Consul General's home, to pubs such as the Mucky Duck, and a myriad of other events including some jam sessions. We got to know our German musicians very well as did the public in that they were featured on Channels 11 and 26 and in a Houston **Chronicle** news story on April 22, the day most were able to fly back to Germany. We will miss our new musician friends.

On a much sadder note, we lost four members in the latter part of 2009 and early 2010. Long time member, Paul Beck, died last fall. Since the first of the year, we have lost our long time treasurer, Margaret Wright, former president and election chairman, Lawrence Hoff, and pianist, Stephen Tate. We miss all of them very much.

To fill their void, I ask each of you to ask a friend to consider singing with us when we start singing again in the fall.

Rodney C. Koenig, President

HEALTH REPORTS ON MEMBERS

In addition to those who passed away in recent months, there have several other Houston SB members who have been ill or had surgery. George Wiessner had shoulder replacement surgery; Linda Babin had hip replacement surgery; Mary Kay McMurrough had knee replacement surgery; Judy Brett had surgery on her foot; Becky Lee has had to have her pacemaker adjusted and is not feeling well yet; Kathy Austin fell and broke her ankle; Irene Pflingsten

fell and sprained her foot badly. Mary Ann Boyd also suffered a foot accident. All of the above but George Wiessner had planned to attend the National Sangerfest. Linda Babin, Mary Ann Boyd, and Kathy Austin attended but were unable to sing. Mary Kay McMurrough did sing but had difficulty walking and had to use a wheel chair. The others were unable to attend. Florence Hoff, who has not been well in the past year, stayed by Larry's side until the end.

IN MEMORIAM

PAUL BECK



Paul Beck, a modest man from Medford, Massachusetts, died Friday, November 13, 2009, in Houston, Texas. On meeting this quiet, unassuming man for the first time, one would not guess that he was the donor of the Marie Barbara Beck Building at the Salvation Army's Family Residence Center, the Paul Beck Building at its Harbor Lights Center and the Andreas Beck Unit at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

Paul was born October 21, 1921, in Medford, Massachusetts. He graduated from Medford High School in 1939 and went to work for the Civilian Conservation Corps. In May 1939, he joined the Merchant Marine and served throughout World War II. After the War he continued to work as a merchant seaman, primarily as a radio operator, until he retired in 1967.

Paul settled in Houston. He became a member of the Houston Sangerbund, the Sons of Herman and SPJST Lodge No. 88. He did volunteer for the Salvation Army.

Paul was a very private man. When asked how he acquired the wealth that he gave away, he only replied, "I made it honestly."

Paul never married. He had no children. He left all of his estate to ten local and national charities.

The Salvation Army conducted a service in Paul's memory on December 1, 2009 in the chapel of the Harbor Lights Center at 2407 North Main Street. The public was invited.

The friends of Paul Beck from the fraternal organizations of which he was a member gathered at the SPJST Lodge No. 88 at 1435 Beall in the Heights on December 3 for fellowship and to share their memories of this remarkable man. It was requested that in lieu of flowers, that those who wished to give something follow his example and give their time as a volunteer or donate treasure to a charity of choice. (Houston *Chronicle*, Nov. 25, 2009)

LAWRENCE CHARLES HOFF, JR.



Lawrence Hoff, Jr., age 80, born October 20, 1929, to Lawrence C. Hoff, Sr. and Linda Sontag Hoff in Bellville, Texas, passed away April 5, 2010. Mr. Hoff was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Barbara Jean Hoff. He is survived by his beloved wife of 59 years, Florence Berger Hoff; son, Lawrence "Larry" E. Hoff; grandson, Erich Hoff; sisters, Jerlene Ray and Shirley Hoff; nieces, nephews, other family and many friends.

Mr. Hoff graduated from Reagan High School, the University of Houston, and earned a Doctorate of Law from South Texas Law School, going on to practice family law for more than 48 years. He served his country proudly in the Army during the Korean War, stationed in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Mr. Hoff was a faithful member and past president of Zion Lutheran Church, where he taught Adult Class Sunday School for many years. He was a longtime Precinct Chairman, and was a member of SPJST Lodge 88, Sons of Hermann Lodge 47, Woodmen of the World, and American Legion Post 654.

Mr. Hoff was Past President and singer with Houston Sangerbund, Past President of Heights Lions Club and received the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award from the Lions Club. He was a life member of Lions Eye Bank and Texas Lions Camp.

Besides his family and friends, Mr. Hoff enjoyed nature, his place in the country, and especially his cattle. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

The family received friends on Wednesday evening, April 7, 2010, at Heights Funeral Home. A funeral service was held the next morning at Zion Lutheran Church, 3606 Beachamp. A graveside service followed at in the afternoon in Pilgrims Rest Cemetery, Bellville, Texas.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggested memorial donations be made to Zion Lutheran Church, Texas Lions Camp, Lions Eye Bank, or a charity of one's choice. (Houston *Chronicle*, April 7, 2010).

STEPHEN EMORY TATE



Stephen Emory Tate was born on March 31, 1963, in Borger, Texas, to Charles and Brenda (nee Johnston) Tate. He grew up mostly in Hobbs, New Mexico, where he studied the piano and was very active in a large Baptist church. Later, his family moved to Shreveport, Louisiana, where he studied piano with Nena Plant Wideman (who also coached Van Cliburn) and played with the Shreveport Symphony during his senior year in high school. He never considered any career other than music and, the summer before his freshman year in college, made a commitment to becoming a church musician.

He commenced organ studies during two and one-half years in the School of Church Careers in Centenary College, sang in the choir of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Shreveport and, being confirmed there, became an Episcopalian. In 1985 Stephen decided to settle in Houston where he matriculated at the University of Houston to continue organ studies under Dr. Robert Jones, professor of organ. Subsequently, Stephen worked as an organist and organist-choirmaster in several Methodist and Episcopal churches, but mostly spent 15 years serving in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Stephen began his service at Salem Lutheran Church in September 2008. His deep understanding of the liturgy, vast repertoire of appropriate organ and piano music and extensive resources in choral music were an ideal fit for that congregation. He also became a member of Salem and participated in many congregational activities. Among Stephen's gifts was a sense of humor that lent a bit of spice to a gently devout personality that respected and cared for others.

Stephen was also a member of the Houston Sangerbund, which he served as accompanist for several years. Attendance at the weekly rehearsals was a ritual for Stephen.

In addition to his musical talent, he enjoyed reading and cooking. He particularly focused on books about religion and foreign affairs. A talented chef, Stephen supplemented income from his music work by cooking, baking, and selling the food which he prepared as well as catering small dinners.

He also loved animals and would describe his dogs and birds as his children. Whenever possible, he would vacation in California.

On Sunday, March 17, 2010, after playing at the first worship service, he collapsed with what was later diagnosed as a major heart attack. Later in the day, he started to hemorrhage in the brain; surgery ensued, but Stephen never recovered. According to his own written wishes, life support was removed on Thursday, March 11; he died later that evening. His remains were cremated and the ashes scattered in the Pacific Ocean.

He was survived by his brother, John, of Rogers, Minnesota. (Memorial Service bulletin prepared by Salem Lutheran Church, March 14, 2010, the Rev. David A. Roschke presiding)

MARGARET GRACE WRIGHT

Margaret Grace Wright, 77, of Houston, formerly Baytown, was born March 4, 1932 in Baytown and passed away Tuesday, January 26, 2010, in a Houston hospital. She was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Houston, the Texas German Society, and the Houston Sangerbund. She enjoyed singing and traveled all over the world with various choirs.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Fred, Sr., and Marie Hans, and sister, Lillian Vestal. She was survived by her brothers and sisters-in-law, Fred Curtis Hans, Jr., of Baytown, Milton Glenn and Grace Hans of Highlands, and Gordon and Sonja Hans of Baytown; sister and brother-in-law, Juanita and Billy D. McClendon of Amarillo; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Family received friends at Navarre Funeral Home on Friday, January 29. A funeral service was held there the next morning with the Rev. Donald Black, senior pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church officiating. Burial followed at San Jacinto Memorial Park, Houston.

Serving as pallbearers were Garrett Rackley, Adam Hans, Richard Hans, Steve Mueller, Darren Rackley, and Pat Greever.

The family requested that memorial contributions be made to Trinity Lutheran Church in Houston. (Houston *Chronicle*, Jan. 29, 2010)



NOTE



On Sunday, February 28, friends, family, and members of the Houston SB and Houston Liederkrantz, Trinity Lutheran Church, the Houston Lutheran Chorale, UTHRO (the University of Texas Retirees Organization, Texas German Society, and Houston Liederabend gathered at the Houston Liederkrantz Hall to celebrate Margaret's life. A photo array was created by her niece, Tisha Rackley, including a greeting photo at the door of Margaret on her motorcycle.

A charter member of the Houston Lutheran Chorale, Margaret had a very good soprano voice and knew her music. The Houston Lutheran Chorale with whom Margaret had toured and performed in New York's Carnegie Hall; in Coventry, England; and at the Church Music Festival in Salzburg, Austria, performed several of Margaret's favorites. The Houston SB and Houston Liederkrantz sang several pieces including ones by Mozart, Schubert, and Mendelssohn, composers all of whom Margaret loved.

Then various friends and family members told stories about Margaret. Her brother, Milton Hans, gave the group a glorious insight into the mind of his sister who was truly a free spirit. Not only was she musically inclined, she lived life to the fullest, i.e., see the motorcycle photo above. She was always ready to go and went often. Yet she was very close to her family.

In spite of all her fun loving adventures, she took her responsibilities seriously. She was the long time treasurer of the Houston Sangerbund and watched every transaction like a hawk. She balanced her statements to the penny and was never late paying a bill. She was one of a kind. Like the old Frank Sinatra hit, "She did it her way!"

ANNUAL YEAR END PARTY AND ELECTION

It's party time. But first we need officers and directors. So everyone is urged to attend the annual SB election and General Membership meeting on Tuesday, May 11, at 7:00 p.m. at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1311 Holman at Caroline in Midtown.

As per the By-laws, all persons must be paid up full members into 2010 or honorary members in order to vote. New members as of 2010 are not eligible to vote the first year, but they are associate members and urged to attend and offer comments when called for. If you have not paid your dues from past years up into 2010, please do so, either now or at the meeting in order to be able to vote. Dues are \$35 per year. Eric Babin, Treasurer, 713-723-7562, will be glad to accept to receive your check at either the SB address, P.O. Box 70106, Houston, TX 77270, or at his home, 6111 Lymbar Dr., Houston, TX 77096.

The Election Committee has promised to keep this

meeting as short as possible so that the party can begin. Mary Koenig, Social Chairperson, has promised a spread of some kind. There will be beer and wine. Bring your guitars, accordions, and voices and we'll sing some songs.

Current officers and directors:

Rodney Koenig, President - 2008-2010*
 Burl Holloway, V. President - 2009-2011
 Eric Babin, Treasurer - 2008-2010*
 Flora von Roeder, Secretary - 2009-2011**
 Elmy Biermanns - 2008-2011**
 Erich Hoff - 2008-2010*
 Helmut Merz - 2008-2010*
 Ruth Millburn, 2009-2011
 Frank Neukomm, 2008-2010* **

*Up for re-election

**Filled vacated positions