

Unless otherwise noted, North Star Chapter meetings and events take place at the United Methodist Church of Peace, 6345 Xerxes Avenue South, Richfield, MN (located just north of Southdale Shopping Mall)

# Genealogy Meeting

**Saturday, November 13, 2004, 10 a.m.– 4 p.m.**

\*\*Concordia College Library, Room 214, 1282 Concordia Avenue, St. Paul, MN\*\*

Our annual November genealogy meeting will be packed with useful information, whether you're deep in your family's history or wondering how you will ever get started. In the morning, Duane Stabler will demonstrate the genealogy computer program Family Tree Maker 2005 and Karl Lacher will demonstrate the program Legacy for Macintosh. Lunch is on your own; the university cafeteria will be open, and there are restaurants within walking or driving distance.

In the afternoon, Duane and Karl are prepared to go in-depth about these programs if there are questions. We will also have someone from the library show us how to use the facility and its resources. The library has one of the best German information sections in the region.

There is parking by the building and across the street, but it may be limited, so car pooling is highly desirable. Concordia College is located on the south side of I-94 between Snelling Avenue and Lexington Avenue. From the west, take I-94 to Snelling Ave. Take the service road to the corner of Hamline Ave. and the library is on the right. From the east, take I-94 to Lexington Ave., the service road to Hamline Ave., and across the freeway to the library.

Plan to join us for a day of education and fun.



# Weinachtsfest

**Saturday, December 4, 2004, 12 p.m.– 4 p.m.**

Oak Grove Lutheran Church, 7045 Lyndale Avenue South, Richfield, MN

Before the snow arrives to remind us that it really is the Christmas season, plan to attend the North Star Chapter's annual Weinachtsfest. We'll gather to enjoy a potluck meal at noon in the lounge, which is on the lower level, and accessible via elevator or stairs. Electrical outlets are available for plugging in crock-pots and other devices.

We'll enjoy traditional German Russian foods and share holiday traditions and songs. Bring your favorite foods to share, and don't forget to bring along the family. Beverages will be provided. Handicap or wheelchair seating is available.

Stay on St. Nick's "Nice" list...plan to attend Weinachtsfest with your friends and family. Froliche Weinachten!

The purpose of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is to bring together people who are interested in the history of Germans from Russia. Through a better understanding of these people we will also promote a better appreciation of them and a continuation of their culture through their descendants.

# President's Corner

By Duane Stabler

We are now into the fourth quarter of 2004 and I have to wonder where has the year gone? We've had some terrific meetings this past year and some very interesting speakers. We also still have a couple of events coming up including the fun event in December. I am sure Cindy will tell you more about it elsewhere so I'll not elaborate.

If you wonder why we've had such a good year, it's because we've been blessed with some terrific volunteers in various positions. It makes being president of the chapter an easy job. So if I stand up in the meetings, it's not me who has things under control. It's the other volunteers that have taken time to pitch in and make things happen. I thank each and every one of you that takes the time to volunteer and make the North Star Chapter a terrific organization. Without you volunteers, nothing happens!

For those of you who have yet to volunteer, I challenge you to consider stepping up and getting active by volunteering. See me if I've spurred your interest!

This is Lil's last year as the VP of Programming and I want to publicly thank her for stepping into this position even though she felt she lacked the experience. You'll have to agree that she's put some good programs together for us! Thank You Lil!

You'll be seeing me in the same position again in 2005 and I'm hoping for another terrific year. Again, I'll be depending on all those volunteers to make me look good!

One real highlight for our chapter is that we'll be an incorporated organization as we head into 2005. Our organization had never been incorporated and it was time to take that action. I thank those of you who attended the meeting and gave this some consideration. I also thank Jim Gessele for truly taking the lead to help make this a reality. You'll not see anything different about us as a result of this change but it was a necessary change. Thanks for your support.

Happy Holidays to all of you.

## FEEFHS Convention 2005 in Minnesota

The next Federation of East European Family History Societies (FEEFHS) will be co-hosted by the Germanic Genealogy Society and held in Minnesota. A planning group is currently working on Twin Cities-area site selection for the conference, which will probably be on a weekend in September 2005.

The Federation includes societies representing most eastern European countries, plus Finland and Greece. This is an excellent opportunity for those of us with mixed ethnicity to learn about our European heritage and further our family history research. Additional details, as planning progresses, will be published in future North Star Chapter newsletters, or can be found on the website of FEEFHS at [www.feefhs.org](http://www.feefhs.org). Chapter members with good ideas for speakers to address German Russian topics should contact President Duane Stabler.

## Best German in History

About a year ago, a German TV show asked history buffs to name the "best German." Post-war West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer was the winner when 3.3 million viewers called in to vote for 10 finalists from 100 nominations. Martin Luther placed second and Karl Marx, who wrote "Das Kapital," placed third. The rest of the top ten were: Hitler resistance fighters Sophie and Hans Schol, former West German chancellor Willy Brandt, composer Johann Sebastian Bach, poet Johan von Goethe, inventor Johannes Gutenberg, 19th century chancellor Otto von Bismarck, and scientist Albert Einstein.

**COMING!  
EVENTS!**



**MINNESOTA  
HUMANITIES  
COMMISSION**

North Star Chapter programs are made possible in part with funding from the Minnesota Humanities Commission in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Minnesota State Legislature.

NOVEMBER 13 • 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.  
*Genealogy Meeting*

DECEMBER 4 • Noon- 4 p.m.  
*Annual Weihnachtsfest*

Watch the website for further event details:  
[www.NorthStarChapter.org](http://www.NorthStarChapter.org)

## Please Take Note

Our new program chair, Bob Gies, would like to encourage everyone to bring up suggestions and ideas for future programs. The North Star Chapter's programs have always been a great strength to our organization. Keep those good ideas coming!

Volunteers to help set up and take down items for meetings are always welcome. No need to sign up in advance; just come a half hour early for the meetings or plan to stay a half hour late. I'm sure there's a better way to say this in German, but many hands make light work!

If you've read a great book, seen a good film, or heard an interesting speaker that concerns Germans from Russia and our interests, write a short account of your experience for the newsletter. It's energizing to hear from the different voices that make up our chapter.

## North Star Chapter Newsletter Staff

### Cynthia Miller

612-386-1436  
cynmillbea@hotmail.com

### Becky Siekmeier

651-291-1829  
siekm001@tc.umn.edu or  
rebecca.siekmeier@bestbuy.com

### Ardella Bennett

952-884-4241  
ajbennett@worldnet.att.net

If you have a story, article, genealogy tip, pictures – or even a joke in good taste – send it on to Cindy Miller or Becky Siekmeier for future publication.

## U.S. History's Most Formative Documents

Family Tree Magazine reported that almost 40,000 Americans voted to select the ten most formative documents in United States history.

Those selected were:

the Declaration of Independence

(1776),

the Constitution (1787),

the Bill of Rights (1791), the

Louisiana Purchase Treaty (1803),

the Emancipation Proclamation

(1863),

the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote (1920),

the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery (1865),

the Gettysburg Address (1863),

the Civil Rights Act (1964), and

the Social Security Act (1935).

## North Star Chapter 2005 Officers

### President

Duane Stabler, 952-447-8654,  
destabler@integraonline.com

### 1st VP/Program chair

Bob Gies, 952-934-9164  
RYGIES@aol.com

### 2nd VP/Membership

Helen Kleingartner,  
763-785-1713, hmkleingart@fox-internet.com

### Treasurer

Jorgiann Waltner,  
763-533-4090,  
Jwaltner@qconsult.com

### Secretary

Gwen Schock-Cowherd,  
651-426-0117,  
fairrose@gbronline.com

### Past President

John Hafner 952-881-5529  
jhghahrh@aol.com



## SEI UNSER GAST Cookbook Order Form

To order, fill out the information below and mail it with your check to: North Star Chapter of Minnesota, P. O. Box 583642, Minneapolis, MN 55458-3642, USA. Please make your check (US funds) out to the North Star Chapter.

The cost for each book \$11.95 for orders of 1-4 copies, \$10.95 each for orders of 5-9 copies, and only \$9.95 for orders of 10 or more cookbooks. If you are not going to pick these up at a Chapter event, add these shipping and handling charges to the price of each book in your order - one mailing per order:

**1 to 4 books:** \$1.75 each shipping (\$3.88 each Canada)

**5 to 9 books:** \$1.25 each shipping (\$2.75 each Canada)

**10 or more books:** \$1.00 each shipping (\$2.25 each Canada)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# of Books \_\_\_\_\_ Total Cost of Books \_\_\_\_\_

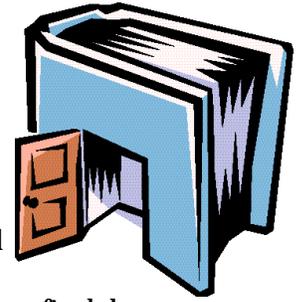
Postage & Handling (see above) \_\_\_\_\_

NOV 04 Thank you for your order! Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_



# Library Corner

by *Bernie Becker*



Aspecial thank you to the following for recently donating items to our library:

**Carol Just:** “Toward an Understanding of the Russia Germans” by Rev. S. Joachim.  
Source: Committee on Publications, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN

You may be tempted to look at this old, yellowing document with disdain. There is much in it, though repetitive to what you already know, told in a different way, at a different time. I believe you will find helpful.

It is an address delivered to the Western Conference of the Dakota District of the American Lutheran Church. Mr. Joachim was pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Beulah, ND, when he gave this address. It is an in-depth presentation of Russia German history, up to the 1930s, by a pastor who received the information about immigration from his parents.

He includes the trek from Germany to Russia, life on the steppes, coming to America, and how all this has influenced life in America.

If you want to understand what made your parents or grandparents who they were, this is a good read. For example: Why did I have to use the word “ihr” when addressing my grandfather? Why did I have to fight my father so I could attend high school? It even helped me understand myself. Why have I often found myself outside the mainstream of our culture? Because of my background, that’s why.

**Elvera Hepner Hofmann:** “The Kitchen Boy: A Novel of the Last Tsar” by Robert Alexander

With haunting prose, the author brings to life the Romanovs’ kitchen boy Leonka, whom the Bolsheviks mysteriously spared and who in turn vanished into the bloody tides of the

Russian Revolution. But what did the young boy see in those final days of the Imperial Family? He renders the plot beautifully with one final jaw-dropping and satisfying twist.

**Elvera Hepner Hofmann:** “When Comes the Spring” by Janette Oke

Elizabeth, the lovely young eastern schoolteacher, has braved the newly formed frontier of Alberta to spend a year teaching in a one-room schoolhouse. Now she and Wynn, her Royal Canadian Mountie fiancé, are planning their wedding and their new life together at this outpost in the far north. Will their love for each other sustain them through a harsh winter, loneliness, and the rigors of life without any of the conveniences they have been accustomed to?

## Book Report: DAKOTA KRAUT, A Memoir By Ron Vossler

By *Bernelda Becker*

Twenty years didn’t seem to make much difference between Ron’s childhood and mine. He, a child of the 50s; me, a child of the 30s, both living in small Dakota towns, had many similar experiences.

Both Ron and I determined to shuck our German language along with the accent, if possible. World War II and Nazi Germany were my reasons; his were going off to college and ridicule from friends. We both, later in life, regretted our lack of fluency in the mother tongue of our grandparents.

As I read his book, I found myself recognizing words I’d long forgotten. For instance, I only had to see the word *messer* and I knew it meant knife. That word had been lingering

in the back of my mind all these years, just waiting for a reminder trigger. A few other words were: *baum* for tree, *schnie* for snow, *heissa* for hot, *grottle* for crawling, *gesagt* for said.

How well do I remember some of the old superstitions the “old folks” had, as well as some of the things they told us children to frighten us into behaving. Just as Ron was convinced God dwelled at the top of the town elevator and watched him through the little window at the top, I accepted the story that thunder and lightning meant an angry God might return at any moment to snatch me up and send me to hell if I had done some evil act.

The gruff old grandmother who could not show love reminded me that I, too, had seldom seen affection openly displayed. I don’t recall my parents or grandparents ever telling me they loved me, but I knew they did.

Ron’s book stirred many memories, raised much nostalgia, and left me with a feeling of loss. I didn’t finish my growing up years embraced in the warmth of family as Ron did. We moved away when I was twelve. I finished growing up not belonging to a church or feeling part of a neighborhood. There is something to be said to know aunts, uncles, and cousins. I missed out on that. I highly recommend this good book.

# Giving Thanks for Grandparents

By Cynthia Miller

I know I am fortunate. At 35 years old, I still enjoy the presence in my life of both my grandmothers. Grandma Rufina is 94 and always beautifully dressed. Grandma Esther is 83, with dark hair and a feisty smile.

I was also very fortunate to grow up in the same town where all my grandparents lived. As a kid, I saw them several times a week. We took refuge at their houses when we were mad at our parents. We often sat by them in church. We scrambled underfoot when the grown-ups were "visiting," half in English, half in German. We spent every holiday with them.

A month ago, we got the devastating news: Grandma Fina has advanced pancreatic cancer. She decided to move into the nursing home, where she knows many people, so that she can be checked on around the clock. She is in good spirits and anxiously awaiting the visit in a few weeks from my baby nephew. He is her thirteenth great-grandchild and named after her beloved husband Sam.

I may be taking it harder than she is. Obviously I knew this day would come, but I could never really imagine it. But yet I know I can – maybe must – rejoice and give thanks. No matter where I've lived as an adult, I've gone back home several times a year. I can't remember all the meals I ate at Grandma's house, even when it was just salad and bread because I didn't like German food and she wouldn't coddle me. I've driven her all over Mercer County to see sites

she knew as a child. I've listened to her stories, taping or writing down many of them. This summer, we spent several evenings going through old pictures and she told me of a trip she took with her parents to California in a Model-T in 1932.

When I called her after I heard the news, I said, "I heard you aren't feeling so good." "No," she said with typical German-Russian reserve. "I've felt better." It was noisy in the background; family members were over for dinner. "The more at the table, the better the food tastes," Grandma told me. That is advice I will remember forever, and pass along to my nephews, nieces, and children.

I don't need to remind people to treasure the times with their family. But leaving money, possessions, or property is almost meaningless if you don't leave your loved ones the comfort and joy that your stories and memories bring. When you gather this holiday season, take the time to share these with your family, either in writing or tape recording. Listen carefully when people ask questions. Find out who is actually in all those old photos.

I am still fortunate; I will be able to spend time with Grandma in the next few weeks, with lots of other family gathered around. You can bet I'll have my pen, paper, camera, and tape recorder ready. This is true legacy and true hope for the future. I encourage all of you to keep the spirit of our ancestors alive as we celebrate the incredible good fortune we have to be Americans.

# Kinsman

By Wayne Hand, 1999

Alas, my elusive kinsman,  
You've led me quite a chase.  
I thought I'd found your courthouse  
But the Russians burned the place.  
You always kept your bags packed  
Although you had no fame, and  
Just for the fun of it  
Twice you changed your name.  
You never owed any man, or  
At least I found no bills.  
In spite of eleven offspring  
You never left a will.  
They say our name's from Europe  
Came stateside on a ship.  
Either they lost the passenger list  
Or granddad gave them the slip.  
I'm the only one that's looking  
Another researcher I can't find.  
I pray maybe that's his father's name  
As I go out of my mind.  
They say you had a headstone  
In a nice shady plot.  
I've been there twenty times and  
Can't even find the lot.  
You never wrote a letter  
Your Bible we can't find.  
It's probably in some attic,  
Out of sight and out of mind.  
You first married a Meier  
And just to set the tone  
The other four were Sarahs  
And everyone a Jones.  
You cost me two fortunes  
One of which I did not have,  
My wife, my house and Fido,  
Gosh, how I miss that yellow lab.  
But somewhere you slipped up  
Old boy, somewhere you left a track.  
And if I don't find you this year  
Well, next year I'll be back!

# Memoir Readings

By Gwen Schock-Cowherd

The programming at the July 2004 GRHS Convention was rich and varied. Interested in memoir writings (autobiographies), I enjoyed Kenneth Goetz's workshop, "Your Life Story: Tips on How to Write It and Happily Publish It". Ken, a former South Dakotan now residing in Kansas, retired from a distinguished career in medical research to devote himself full time to another love – writing. He read excerpts from his own autobiography *Bending the Twig*, describing his nomadic childhood filled with hardship while growing up during the Great Depression on the Dakota plains.

For those of you who are interested in memoir writing or just reading others memoirs, Ken shared the titles of three excellent books:

1. *Any Given Day* by Jessie Lee Brown Foveaux. Jessie was 80 years old when she started writing her memoirs for a senior citizens' group

project. Her writing instructor was so impressed with her book that he sent a copy of her manuscript to the Wall Street Journal that then featured her book. It must have been hard for her to open up the way she did at her age but she did it eloquently and opportunely provided loving advice so readers hopefully learn to make good life choices.

2. *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt. Frank, an Irishman now New Yorker, details his childhood of unbelievable poverty in Ireland. The book, winner of several awards, is heartwrenchingly sad - to me, at times a bit repetitious - but yet hard to put aside. I also viewed the movie (available at my local video rental store) based on the book's poignant parts some of which actually are humorous. Both are excellent.

3. *All Over but the Shoutin'* by Rick Bragg. Bragg, a 1996 Pulitzer Prize

winner for feature writing working for the New York Times, originally from Alabama, writes about his impoverished early life, making his mother the hero of his many accomplishments which he credits mainly to "luck." Luck and good timing may have played a significant part to his success but talent is what puts and keeps him in the winners' circle.

I read all four of the books provided to me by my local library. Unfortunately, all are stories of hardship with a dominant theme of alcoholic husbands/fathers and strong women. I encourage you to read these books and note the varied writing styles. If I "must" choose a favorite writer, I guess it would be Rick Bragg, the Pulitzer Prize winner with only one semester of college who works daily beside Ivy League co-workers and wins a coveted Harvard Nieman Fellowship. What a guy! The way he uses words is truly God-given.

## November and December in History

November 1922 – Archeologists discover King Tut's tomb in Egypt's Valley of the Kings. It had been sealed for more than 3,000 years and contained thousands of priceless objects, including the teenaged king's gold coffin. Most of the artifacts are now housed in the Cairo Museum.

November 1945 – The trial of 24 high-ranking Nazi officers for World War II atrocities began in Nuremberg. The proceedings lasted ten months and were led by a British justice, Sir Geoffrey Lawrence.

November 1963 – President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas by Lee Harvey Oswald. Days later, Oswald is assassinated by Jack Ruby. Kennedy is one of three presidents

killed while in office, including Lincoln in 1864 and McKinley in 1901.

December 1903 – Ohio brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright become the first people to successfully fly a heavier-than-air, self-propelled aircraft near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The gasoline-powered biplane stayed aloft for 12 seconds and flew 120 feet.

December 1911 – Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen becomes the first known person to reach the South Pole. He beat his rival, British explorer Robert Scott, by over a month. Amundsen was also successful in returning from the South Pole, which Scott was not.

December 1933 – The 21st Amendment to the Constitution is ratified, repealing the 18th Amendment and ending national alcohol prohibition. The anti-liquor law had lasted for nearly 14 years, and was especially despised by the German immigrant population, who thought a glass of beer after a hard day's work was a man's right.

December 1955 – Rosa Parks is jailed after refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama. A public transportation boycott, organized by Dr. Martin Luther King, lasted over a year, forcing the state and city segregation laws to be struck down.

# They Named the Baby What??

By Cynthia Miller

Jacob...Michael...Joshua...  
Matthew...Andrew...Joseph. Are you reading the Bible? No, these are the top six male baby names in the United States in 2003. The good old-fashioned, Biblical names are still strong favorites for new parents, although for boy names, that really isn't new. Michael has been in the top ten since the 1940s, and before the 1970s, David, John, James, and Thomas were in the top ten for decades.

For baby girls, there always has been more variety. But even here, many of the names you may remember from your mother, grandmother, or aunt are arriving on popular baby name lists. My mother, born in the 40s, thinks Emma is an old grandma name. She can hardly believe it's now the second most popular female baby name. Emily, Olivia,

Hannah, Elizabeth, and Abigail are other long-standing names that made it into the top ten in 2003. But I'll bet you didn't know anyone when you were a kid named Madison, Alexis, Ashley, or Samantha.

Even though you may be getting used to calling a niece or granddaughter Hayley or Brianna (and hearing the name ten times on the playground), some parents are being more creative. Over 500 couples named their baby girl Lena in 2003. Nearly 600 chose Martha and Jane, and at least 700 picked Alice and Helen. Of course, there also were the 500 or so couples each who went for Miracle, Destiny, and Justice. Over 1,000 parents named their baby daughter Heaven. My own name, Cynthia, one of the most popular names in the 60s, was beat out last year by Esmeralda.

Over the entire American population, however, names popular during the baby boom generation remain the most common names across the age range. According to a survey from 1990, the top ten names for female Americans are Mary, Patricia, Linda, Barbara, Elizabeth, Jennifer, Maria, Susan, Margaret, and Dorothy. The top ten male names are James, John, Robert, Michael, William, David, Richard, Charles, Joseph, and Thomas. Oddly enough, there are also 11,000 men named Mary and almost 5,000 men named Patricia.

So if you're trying to keep a straight face when your child tells you that your grandchild is going to be named Trinity or Kaden, just remember that some day, Grandma Brittany and Grandpa Jackson will sound just as normal as Grandma Ruth and Grandpa Norman sound to us today.

## Exploring the Web

*This column will list web sites that members have found interesting or useful. Please contact the newsletter staff if you'd like to contribute favorite sites of your own.*

### **www.kinamag.com**

KinA Magazine is dedicated to helping children learn German. The web site gives some content and subscription information. A four-issue, one-year subscription is \$14 and would make a nice gift for children and grandchildren or to add to your local library.

### **www.booksforsoldiers.com**

This site was set up during the Gulf War to provide soldiers with reading

material. Currently, soldiers in the Middle East and elsewhere can post what books or information they'd like. Addresses are provided and you can send an email if you agree to send anything. Soldiers are also requesting items to make their tour of duty a little more comfortable; some are just asking for letters and postcards from home.

### **www.lencistudios.com**

Elizabeth Lenci-Downs is a native Minnesotan now living in Arizona. She is a writer and artist, and her work is featured on her web site. One book, "I Heard My People Cry," details a German family's escape from Russia.

## German Wisdom

**Wo Wein eingeht,  
da geht der Witz aus.**

*(Where wine goes in, wit goes out)*

**Vorsicht ist besser  
als Nachsicht.**

*(Being prepared is better  
than having regrets)*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please list)

\_\_\_\_\_ Hospitality

\_\_\_\_\_ Ways & Means

\_\_\_\_\_ Sunshine

\_\_\_\_\_ History

\_\_\_\_\_ Refreshments

\_\_\_\_\_ Library

\_\_\_\_\_ Pubcity

\_\_\_\_\_ Genealogy

I would like to volunteer.  
Please check all that apply:

\_\_\_\_\_ Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ Address

\_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \_\_\_\_\_ Family

Local dues are \$12.00 per year plus membership in an approved national Germans from Russia organization such as AHSGR or GRHS. **AHSGR members please submit \$56** (\$50 for AHSGR, \$6 for North Star chapter membership). **GRHS members please submit \$46** (\$40 for GRHS, \$6 for North Star chapter membership). Please make your check payable to the **North Star Chapter** and mail it to:

Helen Kleingartner, 9500 W. Sandpiper Dr., Blaine, MN 55434  
Any questions, call Helen at 763-785-1713; hmkleingart@foxinternet.com

# Year 2006 Membership Form



American Historical Society  
of Germans From Russia

## North Star Chapter of Minnesota

Non-Profit Organization  
P.O. Box 583642  
Minneapolis, MN 55458-3642

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Minneapolis, MN  
Permit No. 18513

Return Service Requested

