President’s Notes....
By Robt. J. Wolfenbarger

One of the things that struck me at our dedication of the Wolfensberger family memorial in Bauma was the curiosity of our Swiss cousins about their American relatives. They were as interested in our ancestors who figured into the Revolutionary War and the Texas War for Independence as many of us were about their ancestors who figured into medieval history.

Truth is, the American Wolfensberger family has a number of distinguished ancestors who played small but important roles in our nation’s history. There was the son of our original immigrant who served at George Washington’s side in the American Revolution. Or how about the Wolfensberger (maybe it was a Wolfenbarger) who was among the Virginia militia marching to Yorktown just before they learned Lord Cornwallis had surrendered to Washington in the final battle of the Revolution. There are countless others who helped build this nation.

The history of the American family is no less distinguished than that of our Swiss or European cousins. They understand that. We should also understand our remarkable history in Europe and the United States. Their family - and ours - traces its roots back some 700 years to a castle that once stood guard over the Toess River Valley through what is now Bauma, Switzerland. We can take pride in that ancestry, because it is ours as much as it is theirs.

We now have a permanent memorial to our shared ancestry. On the mountain where a castle once stood - with a watchtower standing guard and surrounded by a protective moat - we now have a memorial marking the place where our family originated. Plaques tell the brief story of our family in German and English - a tribute as

SWISS HISTORY
SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CONNECTION OF THE VON WOLFBERG FAMILY TO RAPPERSWIL
by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger

Many of the branches of our family can trace themselves back in an uninterrupted line to Hans von Wolfensberg/Wolfensperger, born before 1414, and his four or five sons. Farther back, the line gets sketchy, with spotty documentations of members of the family ending with Ritter (knight) Baldebert von Wolfberg being mentioned between 1233-1259.

The word “von” means “of” or “from”, and is actually related to the English “from”. Only families of the nobility were entitled to put the “von” in front of their names. When someone was knighted, in effect, they were given a new name, often that of a locale, plus the “von”. The locale might be the one from which they originated, or the one they were given as a lien by their overlord. This locale might be or bear the name of a geographic place or feature where the family already had or eventually erected some kind of stronghold. This is the case with our family that was named after the Wolfsberg, the site of their stronghold (Wolfsburg), with the former meaning Wolf Mountain, almost certainly because at one time, wolves had their lairs there before they were exterminated, as they were in much of Western and Central Europe.

By the way, this is why the most correct way to render the ancestral name is von Wolfsberg, or v. Wolfsberg, rather than its many variations (often phonetic mutilations) though none of us still uses the Wolfsberg form. The reason the “-er” ending was added later was that it signified where one had come from, especially once one had moved away. For instance,
Larry’s Corner
New Members, Reunions, and
In Memoriam

OBITUARIES

Collier Bryson SPARGER of Venice, FL died on the 9th of January 2002 at the age of 101 years. He was born 3 November 1900 in Mount Airy, NC the son of Joseph Bingham SPARGER and Elizabeth Valerie CASE. Collier married Hope S. CARLSON who was born in 1902 and died in 1973. To this union was born a daughter Stephanie Hope SPARGER who preceded Collier in death. After the death of Elizabeth, Collier married Alta Stronge JERALDS who is a survivor. Collier had three sisiters, Margaret, Mary and Eloise and two brothers Randall, Sr. and William, all preceded Collier in death. Collier is survived by his wife Alta of their home and nephew Randall SPARGER, Jr. of Phafftown NC and Jim SICELOFF of Hilton Head, SC and niece Betty Lou BAILEY of Shreveport, LA. Collier moved to Venice, FL from Ridgewood, NJ in 1968. He received his Bachelor’s degree from the Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he received his Master’s degree and Juris Doctor of Law degree in 1922. He taught accounting at the Univ. of North Carolina from 1926 to 1929. He worked for Coastal Metals for 31 years, and during that time, served as vice-president, secretary-treasurer, house counsil and a director. He was also associated with Ingalls & Co. as a utility property broker. He was a member of the North Carolina and the New York Bar Association. He was a member of the Venice United Church of Christ, and served many posts at the church.

Collier was a great great grandson of John (SPARGER) Wolfersberger who was born in 1754 in PA.

A photo of Collier and his wife, Alta, was in a recent issue of the WFA Newsletter and Collier had an article in the July 1998 issue of the

New Members
Herbert D. DUEY, Portland, CT, Wolfersberger
Lissa JOHNSTON, White Bear Lake, MN, Wolfenbarger
Claudia B. CLARK, Harker Heights, TX, Sparger
Kit SEAY, Austin, TX, Wolfenbarger
Peter MEGREW, Amarillo, TX, Wolfersberger
Betty LAKEY, Bartlesville, OK, Wolfenbarger
Donna J. VAN ASPEREN, Battle Creek, MI, Wolfersberger
Thomas H. EVANS, Jr., Waco, TX, Sparger
Mary ASADURIAN, Torrence, CA, Sparger
Mrs. Lee PRIER, Fountain Valley, CA, Sparger

FAMILY REUNIONS 2002

The details of the family reunions for the Wolfensberger families and their sub-families have not all been determined as of this printing. The next newsletter will contain details of all the reunions that we have prior notification. Listed below is a brief outline of those reunions of which we have some knowledge. If anyone has information on other reunions of our family, please contact Larry JONES.

Sparger Reunion in Galax, VA probably on Sunday 18 August 2002.
Wolfenbarger Reunion in Irvine KY. Date and place to be determined.
Wolfenberger Reunion generally held in Bastrop, TX for the descendants of Samuel WOLFENBERGER born
WFA Board of Directors
After all the mail-in ballots have been counted, all the hanging chads left hanging, all loose chads swept under the carpet, the courts have met and adjourned leaving the courtrooms deserted, and the lawyers arguing about ENRON, the TV cameras focusing on events in Afghanistan, we are pleased to announce the following members will compose the WFA Board of Directors for the year 2002. They are to serve the membership, so do not hesitate to contact them to make suggestions or inquiries concerning the Association, to submit articles for the newsletter, learn more about your Wolfensberger ancestors or just to say hello.

They are:

Robert J. WOLFENBARGER, President, Summit, NJ, Tel: (908) 273-7631; Fax: (908) 273-7738; e-mail: BobWolfenbarger@att.net

Myrna LIDDELL (Wolfinbarger), Vice-Pres., Langley, WA, Tel: (360) 321-4971; e-mail: richl@whidbey.com

William F. SPARGUR, Secretary, Palmdale, CA, Tel: (661) 722-0282; e-mail: wfspar@qnet.com

Albert H. CREASY, (Sparger), Treasurer, Tryon, NC, Tel: (828) 859-0208; e-mail: afhracre@alltel.net

Richard L. EVANS, (Sparger), Newsletter Editor, Houston, TX, Tel: (713) 977-4748; e-mail: revans45@swbell.net

W. Frank WOLFENBARGER, Financial Advisor, Irving, TX, Tel: (972) 986-5753; e-mail: cpawolf@flash.net

Lawrence (Larry) M. JONES (Wolfenbarger), Membership & Historian, Oklahoma, City, OK, Tel: (405) 721-4383; e-mail: wolfensberger@cox.net

Ora W. KIRBY (Wolfinbarger), Irvine, KY, Tel: (606) 723-4073

David E. WOLFERSBERGER, St. Louis, MO, Tel: (314) 961-5032; e-mail: dewolf@swbell.net

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Jodi WOLFENBARGER, Monroe, MI, e-mail: wolfenbargerjodi_2000@yahoo.com

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Rudolf WOLFENSBERGER, PhD, Solothurn, Switzerland, Tel: 011 41 32 622 7711; e-mail: rawolfensberger@swissonline.ch

Wm. (Bill) W. WOLFINBARGER, Palo Alto, CA, Tel: (650) 326-7764; e-mail: wfnbrgr@aol.com

WOLF WOLFENSBERGER, Syracuse, NY, Tel: (315) 446-2944: Bus.Tel: (315) 443-4264

Heini WOLFENSBERGER, Bauma, Switzerland: Tel: 011 41 252 386 1437

Editor’s Note
The Board of Directors intended to have our President, Bob Wolfenbarger, present a special plaque to Lawrence “Larry” Jones during the Memorial Dedication in Bauma, Switzerland last September so all those attending could join in honoring the Founder & Past President of the WFA. But because of his family situation, Larry was unable to make the trip. Instead, the Board presented the plaque to Larry at the close of the September Board meeting. The walnut framed plaque, with etched lettering and a double border read as shown below. This plaque is a small token of the appreciation we all have for the wonderful effort Larry has made over the years to make the WFA a fine family association.

Thank you, Larry
In gratitude and honor
We acknowledge
The timeless Service of
Lawrence M. Jones
Founder and First President of the
Wolfensberger Family Association
Founding Date: October 1993
President from October 1993 to October 2000
President’s Notes... (cont. from page 1)
much to our European relatives as to our American relatives.

I encourage every member of the family - American or European - to make note of this site and, when traveling in the area, visit it to learn something about ourselves.

The Wolfensberger Memorial is now among the attractions of the Bauma area, part of the rolling uplands of the Alps, a region better known to Europeans as the Zuercher Oberland. If you are fortunate enough to travel to that part of the world, drop into the Bauma Verkehrsverein, the Bauma tourist information office, and ask for English language driving directions to the castle site. We gave copies of the English-language pamphlet to the Verkehrsverein, which is located in Bauma’s Gemendehaus or Town Hall at 41 Dorfstrasse in the center of the community. The office is open from 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays. Local telephone number is 52/397 10 10. (Or ask an international telephone operator to help you call.)

If a trip to Switzerland isn’t on your agenda, there is another way to take in the sights and history of the region. WFA Board member Ruedi Wolfensberger of Solothurn, Switzerland, has created a PowerPoint software presentation on a CD-ROM disk, which we expect to make available to any Association member. If you have a computer that uses Microsoft Windows operating system software, you can probably view it.

The presentation has some 200 photos and illustrations of the memorial dedication and historic sights in the region. It gives a homebound traveler a quick trip to Switzerland and the homeland we share without the expense. More important, it is the gift of a Swiss cousin who cares very much about his American cousins. Oh, it’s in English, too.

Ruedi’s CD is one of the most magnificent travelogues of the area you’ll find, regardless of the cost. Stay tuned to The WFA newsletter to learn how to order the CD.

And thank you Ruedi, for making this rich and exciting picture presentation available to all of us who could not attend the WFA memorial dedication last September. RJW

Larry’s Corner.... (cont. from page 2)
in 1804 in VA and settled near Bastrop, TX. This family reunion was held in Tomball, TX on Saturday 22 September 2001. Details of this year’s reunion will be provided later.

WOLFENBERGER REUNION For the descendants of Samuel WOLFENBERGER born 1820 in TN and settled near Weatherford, TX. This reunion is generally held on the 4th Sunday of October near Weatherford, TX.

MEDALLIONS
On page 10 of the last previous newsletter it was announced that we are planning on having available medallions cast of pewter metal in the same size and shape of the family badges. These medallions could be used to attach to grave stones of our ancestors or used in any manner desired. As of this date there have been about 30 medallions tentatively ordered. The previous cut off date for tentatively ordering these medallions was 1 February. A new cut off date for ordering is now changed to 1 April. Remember this tentative ordering date is set to determine the number of medallions to have to order. When we are ready to place the order each person having tentatively placed an order will be contacted and requested to send their check. If the individual having placed the order has changed their mind and wants to order more, less or none that request will be honored. We now have received tentative orders for about 30 medallions.

HOME PAGE
The address of our website has changed to: http://members.cox.net/wolfensberger. The email address of Lawrence M. JONES has changed to wolfensberger@cox.net
someone named Bamberger had moved from Bamberg to somewhere else, where people called him “the Bamberger,” while in Bamberg itself, he had been known by another name.

Three important facts are, unfortunately, unknown to us (at least as far as I know). (a) When the first of our ancestors was knighted, or why; (b) who the last of our family was who underwent the knighting ceremony, and (c) who the last of our family was who laid claim to a title of nobility.

As to the first question, there have been speculations (sometimes erroneously stated as fact) that the first knighting may have occurred because of an ancestor’s feats during one of the crusades, perhaps one in the early 1200’s (the first of many crusades started in 1096) because our crest shows three green hills which a knight was allowed to incorporate into his crest for participating in a crusade. However, many dynasties went on crusades already as knights, and added the three hills later.

Among the many crusades, there were three that had much German participation, and therefore are particularly likely to have had a v. Wolfsberg participation: the third one of 1189-1192, the fifth one of 1218-1219, and the sixth one of 1227-1228. At the 1218 one, there was particularly much participation by nobles from the Wolfsberg area, which makes this Crusade the most likely candidate. This also suggests that Baldebert was not the first knight in our lineage.

As to the second and third questions, a war (der alte Zunckerkrieg, i.e., the Old Zurich War) brought devastation, including to many castles, in the area of the Wolfsberg, including in 1444 to the castle Greiffenberg almost next door to the Wolfsberg. The marauders may also have destroyed whatever stronghold there was on the Wolfsberg, or they may have ignored it in favor of destroying the Greiffenberg if it was then more substantial than the Wolfsberg. Very likely, this war ended the careers of the v. Wolfsberg as nobles, especially since some of the v. Wolfsberg had at one time been appointed administrators of the Greiffenberg castle.

Herman von Wolffensperg, documented in 1467, may have been the last one to carry that attribute (von) of nobility, though he may never have actually undergone a knighting ceremony. However, there is also a distinct possibility that the v. Wolfsberg already began to relinquish their noble status after the Battle of Nafels (about 20 road miles southwest of Rapperswil) in 1388, and merely kept the “von” for a while longer out of tradition, nostalgia or pride. By the way, the Battle of Nafels was one of several that the Hapsburg dynasty, and the Swiss nobles loyal to it, lost against the Swiss confederates.

(The Hapsburg family originated not far west from the Wolfsberg, but became the ruling Dynasty of Austria.)

However, there are three important facts we do know about our ancestors.

1. The immediate overlords of the v. Wolfsberg were the Counts of Rapperswil (formerly spelled Rapperswyl). These counts had their seat in what was once the fortified town of Rapperswil. Before the Counts of Rapperswil became counts in 1233, they were Lords of Dillingen and Vogts (i.e., administrators on an overlord’s behalf) of Rapperswil. Thus, it is possible that if a von Wolfsberg was knighted before 1233, he would have either had some noble family of higher rank other than the counts of Rapperswil as overlords, or the abbot of the monastery of St. Gallen, or the Vogts of Rapperswil. St. Gallen (to the east of the Wolfsberg) at that time held many properties in that part of Switzerland, including some administered by the counts of Rapperswil.

The fact that the Lords of Wingen became the counts of Rapperswil the same year (1233), as Ritter Baldebert von Wolfsberg was first mentioned in documents may be more than a coincidence, and suggests that the v. Wolfsberg arrived as vassals of the Lords of Wingen when these were promoted to the courtship, and were given the Wolfsberg as a lien.

(Cont. on next page)
Swiss Family History
(cont. from previous page)

The Habsburg family has always been staunchly Catholic, and therefore so were the counts of Rapperswil, and therefore so were the v. Wolfsberg--at least until the Reformation, when they split into two branches: a Protestant one that stayed in the Canton Zurich, and a Catholic one that emigrated to Canton Aargau (at that time, part of Canton Lucerne), presumably in order to remain Catholic.

The dukes of Rapperswil managed to retain their nobility and their Catholicism after the v. Wolfsberg lost it, and while there is undoubtedly information on this, I do not have it.

Rapperswil was of some strategic importance because it controlled a route along the northern shore of Lake Zurich, and the shallow part of the lake where it could be crossed; and it sat on an important North-South route. We also know that Rapperswil remained with Austria when during the Reformation the area around the Wolfsberg had become Protestant and under the sway of the city of Zurich.

The overlord of the Counts of Rapperswil, in turn, were (at least for some time) the dukes of Habsberg, once these had become dukes of Austria. This explains why knight Hermann v. Wolfensberg fought with Habsburg against the Swiss federation--and was slain in 1315 in the Battle of Morgarten, northeast of the Wolfsberg.

2. Various knights kept houses in Rapperswil, on a street known to this day as Herrengasse, i.e., “street of the lords”, perhaps to stay there when visiting the town and/or the Count. A Ruodi Wolffisbeweg still resided in the Herrenstrasse in Rapperswil in 1500, and may have inherited that property in a direct line of descent from one of the knights von Wolfsberg of the 13th and 14th century.

3. For almost 200 years, the v. Wolfsberg buried their dead away from home, namely on the grounds of the monastery Ruti (and very likely at least in part in its chapel) which they had helped endow early on, and to which they almost certainly continued to donate. The monastery, founded ca. 1206, was abolished in the Reformation, and the renovated and modernized chapel has since become a village church. Ruti is about three miles south of Rapperswil, and in the olden days, about 10-15 miles south of the Wolfsberg, depending what route one took. When the v. Wolfsberg took their dead to be buried in Ruti, they passed through Rapperswil.

Our earliest documented ancestor, Ritter Baldebert v. Wolfsberg (documented from between 1233-1259) was among the many nobles who is recorded to have made donations to the monastery. Many other families of the Swiss nobility, including some very prominent ones, had participated in the founding and endowing of the monastery, and were buried there.

Altogether, it is memorable that the laying of a commemorative plaque on the Wolfsberg should be celebrated in the Rapperswil Castle, considering the long bond between the v. Wolfsberg and the counts of Rapperswil.

The End.

DUES ARE DUE!

If you have not already done so, send your check to Larry Jones today for the Year 2002 WFA Dues

6400 Ann Arbor Terrace
Oklahoma City, OK, 73132
This very old drawing, depicting the Battle of Morgarten, was furnished by member, Max Wolfensberger of Staefa, Switzerland. This picture, in color, is quite beautiful. The Battle of Morgarten is another historical instance where a small group of citizens were able to defeat a much larger and better armed force and thus change the course of history. By using the element of surprise and rolling large stones and tree trunks down the mountain, the army of Leopold I was defeated. Knight Hermann v. Wolfensberg was slain in this battle while in the service of Leopold I.
Driving Instructions

to the

Wolfensberger Family Memorial

From Bauma’s Town Hall (Gemeindehaus) to the Schloss on the Wolfensberg

Driving Instructions pamphlet to the Family Castle site!
Planning to visit the family memorial in Bauma, Switzerland, any time soon? Want help getting there?

If you’re traveling to the site of the family’s long-vanished mountaintop castle on the Wolfensberg, just a few kilometers from the center of the community, there is a pamphlet available to help you drive from the town hall to the castle site.

The Wolfensberger Family Association left copies of a four-page pamphlet at the offices of the Bauma Verkehrsverein, the community’s tourist bureau, for Americans who drop into the area and want to see the memorial stone and picnic area.

The Association encourages American visitors to contact the tourist office instead of family members in the area. The “Driving Instructions” pamphlet in English shown at left will enable you to drive from the center of town to a parking area near the castle in a matter of minutes.

Bauma also has a railway station on Switzerland’s modern and efficient railway system. The community is located only 40 to 50 kilometers by rail from Zurich’s Bahnhof railway station in the center of the city.

“If you want to know where your family originally came from, this is the site,” said Bob Wolfenbarger, president of the Association. “It doesn’t take much imagination to envision a castle with a watchtower and a moat around it.”

“But it’s not easy to figure out how to get to the site from the town hall,” said Wolfenbarger, “if you’ve never been to the site before.”

Now this four-page pamphlet shows a roadmap from the town hall to the castle site. It’s in English and describes step-by-step directions to the site.

Visitors are welcome to hike through the forested-countryside around the castle site. If you want to cook lunch, there is also an iron grill for cooking on the hilltop site. You’re welcome to make a small wood or charcoal fire and cook on the site, much as if you were living at the site centuries ago.

American family members who want to visit the site can get help from the staff of the Bauma Verkehrsverein, located in the town Gemeindehaus on Dorfstrasse 41. Office hours are daily from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., then from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

You can also phone the Verkehrsverein at 052/397 10 10. In most cases, you’ll talk with a Verkehrsverein stall member who speaks English.
WFA’s HERITAGE AWARD

By Robert J. Wolfenbarger, WFA Pres.

For their major contributions to the members of the Wolfenberger Family Association, board members Mrs. Myrna Liddell of Langley, WA, and Ruedi Wolfenberger of Solothurn, Switzerland, were awarded the Association’s Heritage Award.

Mrs. Liddell, of the Wolfinbarger branch of the family, will receive the WFA’s highest award for her translation of the German-language German-Swiss genealogical history, the Deutsch-Schweizerisches Geschlechterbuch. Originally published in 1929, the book is intended for genealogical research into descendents of the Swiss family that originated in Bauma.

The original text was written in an archaic form of Swiss and printed in German Gothic type, but was translated into a form of English that was as close in format to the original German text as possible.

C. A. Starke Verlag, a printing firm in Limburg, Germany, published the original genealogical history and holds the book’s 1929 copyright.

Mrs. Liddell’s translation traces the family’s history to Hans von Wolfensberg, who was born on the Wolfensberg - the Canton Zurich mountain that is the site of the family’s original castle in what is now Bauma - sometime before 1414. He was presumed to have died in Ettenhausen, Switzerland, nearly 40 years later.

Copies of the translation are available to students of the family history from Mrs. Liddell.

Dr. Ruedi Wolfenberger of the Swiss family will receive the Heritage Award for his PowerPoint presentation of slides, maps and photographs of the September 28, 2001 dedication ceremony of the family memorial at the castle site in Bauma.

The PowerPoint presentation will be offered on a computer compact disk to family members sometime this spring. It includes more than 200 photos of the event and pictures of the scenic region. But among the illustration are photos of sites associated with medieval history during the years of Switzerland’s formation.

Dr. Wolfenberger created the PowerPoint presentation to give family members lessons in their homeland’s history with scenes of historic battlefields and monuments. The presentation, which can be viewed on monitors of Windows-based computers, was downloaded to a CD and enriched by selections of music and sound effects.

The Wolfensberger Family Association expects to offer CDs containing the presentation at a nominal price to members.

The WFA Heritage Award was created last year for use in honoring Swiss people and organizations that contributed to the construction of the family memorial stone on the Wolfensberg, not many kilometers from the center of Bauma.

It was given to the Bauma Community Council, the Verkehrsverein (a tourist information office in Bauma), the Zuercher Wanderwege, a cantonal organization that advocates hiking, as well as the owner of the property on which the castle once sat and the Bauma Forester. A photo of this presentation was in the last WFA newsletter. RJW

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Do you have an interesting family event you would like to see in the WFA Newsletter? Drop me a note.

Editor
Wolfensberger Family Flags

As often happens, the best made plans can go awry and unexpected events can delay them being carried out. This is the case of the Wolfensberger Family flags that were shown in the August WFA newsletter. Mrs. Jodi Wolfenbarger received a good response and the orders were placed with a flag maker in plenty of time for Christmas delivery. Then, the events of 9/11 occurred. For weeks after, American flag makers started to consume fabrics in red and blue to meet the high demand for post-September 11 U. S. flags, the Michigan flag maker hired to sew the Wolfensberger family flag was caught in this supply situation.

"Our order for family flags hit at exactly the wrong time," said Mrs. Jodi Wolfenbarger, the WFA Board member who is fulfilling orders for the popular family flag. "We're sorry we couldn't fill the orders we received in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, but every flagmaker was facing the same shortage."

The flagmaker attributes the long delays to unexpected demand for red fabrics by the nation's U. S. flagmakers. But Mrs. Wolfenbarger said the picture is now brightening. She expects to send out some 20 flags in February and the rest during March. She is optimistic that all orders will be filled by the end of March.

The Wolfensberger family flag is one of the most popular items offered to WFA members. Family members from across the nation ordered more than 60 flags.

RJW