

S. G. Alpenland - History

In the Beginning...

In 1929, Karl Bauer arrived in Vancouver where he remained until 1936 during which time he became one of the founding members of the Vancouver Schuhplattlergruppe Edelweiss. After returning to Europe he came back to Canada and settled in Montreal in 1937. At this time he began schuhplattling for his own enjoyment and made periodic performances with his very close friend and business partner Mr. Sepp Freundl.

This entertainment caught on with several other interested individuals and continued for a few years under informal circumstances. In 1941 Karl Bauer met Ann Scholz who joined his dancing activities and later became his wife. They delighted audiences in Montreal. During the following ten years,



schuhplattling became the sole responsibility of Karl Bauer and his wife Ann, others having dropped out.



The First Assembly

An organized group was formed in 1952 when Karl Bauer brought together six dedicated couples who realized and appreciated the importance of preserving this culture. Among these couples were Karl and Ann Bauer, Hans Stumpf and Katie Geisinger, Hans Koller and Margareta Erk, Fred Leber and Katie Speckert. Their first public performances were relegated to small social clubs. As the Montreal German community became aware of this fledgling group, others quickly joined in and the Schuhplattlergruppe Alpenland was off to a good start with (in alphabetical order) 3 Elster sisters (Inge, Anna, Maria), Helmut and Hanne Giza, Nick Hehn, Maria Hewaen, Joe Koscher, Erna (Hebel) Koller, Willy

Lebherz, Fred Lown, Johnny Pecho, George Piller, Jack Schlott, John and Lucy Scholz, Hans and Wanda Schupp, Arthur Schupp, Erwin and Trudy Venske and Rosi Zwicknagel. They were accompanied by Gerry Galinat and Liesel Schmulder on the accordion and Anni Niederwimmer as the Yodlerin.

Such success with so many interested parties in the 1950's was due to the huge influx of German speaking immigrants into Canada at that time. Homesick and a long way from family and Vaterland, they naturally found one another and craved each other's company and friendship. Some had plattled back home in Bavaria and Tyrol but most who were not specifically from that region in Europe, learned to Schuhplattle in Montreal and learned to love it.

During these early years, Montreal audiences became more and more familiar with the group. It appeared under the auspices of "Le Pageant Folklorique" at the Montreal Forum, as well as in the St-Jean Baptiste Society's yearly parade. Many other occasions included performing on television and at special events for the Citizenship Council atop Mount Royal, the highest point on the island of Montreal.



Our First Loss

The passing of Karl Bauer in 1957 was not only a sad loss to the community but to the Verein as well. Members were uncertain of the group's future. In keeping with the memory of Karl, they rallied under the able directorship of Ann Bauer, Vorplattler Helmut Giza, and later Vorplattler Hans Schupp.



In June 1963, several of our members attended a Trachtenfest in Buffalo New York and in October 1964, a Fahnenweihe in Passaic New Jersey. In 1965, the year before the Gauverband was established, we attended our first Preisplattling competition as a participating Verein, in Milwaukee Wisconsin, affording us



the opportunity of meeting scores of other Vereine that would soon found the Gauverband. At the time, we announced our decision to have a Fahnenweihe in Montreal on July 2nd and 3rd, 1966. We are proud and honored that Schuhplattlergruppe Alpenland Montreal is one of the founding members of the Gauverband Nordamerika. We have always been staunch supporters of Gauverband activities. At the first (official) Gaufest: 1967 – Newark, NJ – Montreal won 3rd Prize.

Our Flag Blessing

The first event to be held officially within the Gauverband was our own Fahnenweihe on July 2 and 3, 1966. Schuhplattler Gebirgstrachten-Verein Edelweiss of Buffalo New York became our Patenverein. Twenty Vereine from the United States and Canada attended our Fahnenweihe, nearly all of them members of the Gauverband. One of these clubs came all the way from California. The Montreal Verein unveiled it's own special flag which was designed by Hans Roch Sr. of Montreal. The flag was blessed at two churches- St. John's Lutheran Church and St. Boniface Roman Catholic Church. We also donated the Wanderpokal to the Gauverband for the Weitpreis at our Fahnenweihe. Mr. Helmut Schumacher of Lufthansa German Airlines donated this item to the event. The first club to receive the prize was Holzacker Buam, Milwaukee.



In 1972 at the delegate's meeting, our Schuhplattlergruppe Alpenland (Montreal) bid for the opportunity to host the Gauverband Nordamerika's 5th Gaufest and won the bid. This was a huge responsibility and we knew we needed a good sized group to fill the various responsibilities. We incorporated Bayern Verein as an umbrella organization with 2 types of membership, active dancing members and supporting members. At its high point in 1975 we had a membership over 200.

Gaufest in Montreal

The 5th Gaufest was a success. It took place July 4th, 5th and 6th at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, in the downtown area of Montreal. The official events began Friday night with a traditional welcoming dance followed by Preisplattling the next morning, the Saturday night formal banquet with white gloved French waiters serving a four course meal and a baked Alaska parade finale. The Sunday picnic was held at the Loyola College Campus football grounds (later to become part of Concordia University), a 20 minute shuttle bus ride from the hotel. Remembering back, the July sun was incredibly hot and many were more than tanned. Side show events during this weekend included a children's banquet in a separate hall featuring Magic Tom and sightseeing tours. The visiting Vereine



got a taste of this city's Joie de vivre fitting nicely to the camaraderie entrenched in Schuhplattling worldwide.

In those early Gaufest days, along with hosting and organizing the entire weekend affair, the host club was responsible in supplying and training the judges. Due to potential conflict of interest, we as a host club in 1975 were not allowed to participate in the Preisplattling event. Looking back, all the best dancers were busy as judges, we would not have been able to field a six couple team anyways. Only years later would the Gauverband Nordamerika organize a pool of judges from its membership which greatly relieved a host club's responsibilities at Gaufests and would allow them fair participation in the Preisplattling event.

Riding the Wave!

Later in 1975 with our higher membership and renewed enthusiasm, we felt that we were embarking on a new era all the while remaining aware of the commitments to our own charter objectives as well as those of the Gauverband Nordamerika, in the preservation and promotion of Bavarian heritage and traditions. We formed a youth/teen wing of 5 to 6 couples under the leadership of Karl and Rosemary Belafi and Erech Morrison. Karl and Rosemary Belafi taught them to dance and Erech taught the girls to play the cow bells in harmony. Dirndls and Lederhosen were purchased specifically for this young group who performed at our next few Jaegerballs and picnics. These teenagers quickly grew up and most left to pursue other interests. It was difficult to bring in new teen dancers, by now the supporting membership of Bayern Verein had dwindled. It was also a time of difficulty for the Montreal German community, our German House was in financial trouble, eventually was to close its doors completely.

In 1978, Erech and Ingrid Morrison moved to Ottawa and joined the Maple Leaf Almrausch. It was with mixed emotions, we wished them well on their new life. Our loss was surely Ottawa's gain. Soon after, Karl and Rosemary Belafi stepped down as active dancing members to devote more time and grow their business. A few others stepped aside as well, leaving most of the management to Ann Bauer, our president. We were left with a young group, with little combined experience but a good group.

Life Goes On

During the next 2 decades, we continued to uphold traditions and customs. Our annual events such as the Jägerball and picnic have stood the test of time and have flourished. Our commitment to the German community in Montreal has not wavered. We are one of many German organizations actively involved in the Sommerfest committee. Also, we can be counted on to partake in the annual (Montreal) Canada Parade representing German speaking Montrealers as well as the Bavarian Schuhplattling culture.

Along with the annual fare, we've had many dance jobs in Montreal and a number of memorable ones out-of-town. We flew into Halifax, took a bus to Quebec City, and car pooled to most of the others: Chateau Montebello, Morin Heights, St-Adolf de Howard, Mont Tremblant, Sutton, Knowlton, Howardville, Hudson, Lacolle, Alexandria, Ottawa, Massena NY, Whiteface Mountain and New Hackensack NY. Many of these were repeat jobs over 2 or 3 years and usually occurred either during Oktoberfest season or during summer festival times.

Our Gauverband travels!

Since the early 60's and before the inauguration of the Gauverband Nordamerika, our club has participated at most of the North American Vereins' Trachtenfests(T), Fahnenweihes(F) Preisplattlers(P) and Gaufests(G). These include Buffalo (T 1963), Passaic (F 1964), Milwaukee (P 1965), Montreal (F 1966), Newark (1stG 1967), Buffalo (T 1968), Denver (2ndG 1969), Detroit (3rdG 1971), Cleveland (F 1972), Washington (4thG 1973), Chicago (F 1974), Montreal (5thG 1975), Philadelphia (F 1976), Milwaukee (6thG 1977), New York (F 1978), Toronto (F 1978), Los Angeles (7thG



1979), New York (8thG 1981), Cleveland (9thG 1983), Hamilton (F 1984), Denver (10thG 1985), St. Catharines (F 1986), Milwaukee (11thG 1987), Troy (F 1988), Passaic (12thG 1989), Ottawa (F 1990), Poughkeepsie (F 1991), Vancouver (13thG & F 1991), Westchester (F 1993), Buffalo (14thG 1993), Philadelphia (F 1994), Sheboygan (15thG 1995), Kingston NY (F 1995), Oley (F 1996), Newark (16thG 1997), St. Paul (17thG 1999), Reading (T 1999), New York *Nevele* (18thG 2001).



A few times only 2 delegate members attended, other times a small group under 10 but often we attended in force. It's always a challenge to get a group to and from an event. When the opportunity afforded us, we rented a bus and brought supporting members with us along for the ride. During these long hours, we wiled away the time by belting out a number of popular tunes usually accompanied by that famous instrument, the kazoo. We also told jokes, played cards, drank and ate well. After all, each family packed a cooler full of food. The bus inevitably would turn into a social club on wheels at each event, always with Ann Bauer as our matriarch riding shotgun at the front of the bus.

Can't dance without music!

Over the many years, we've been served well by a host of loyal accordionists, beginning with Gerry Gelinat, followed by Eddy Dudicz, Fred Reeb, a former dancer, the late Harry Pfeiffer, Lorenz Tilly, Daniel Jacob, Joe Mueller, also a former dancer, and presently Peter Emedy who has become an active member and gives his time to both the adult group and the children's group.

Kindergruppe

In the early 1990's, Esther Bauer, Margaret Schuster and Anny Mueller revived our Kindergruppe, this time with even younger children. The idea was get them interested in dancing and Schuhplattling at a very young age, let them make friends with each other before they get the notion this stuff is 'uncool'. We have been blessed with a number of dedicated families that have allowed their children to grow up with us and become an important young contingency of our adult group. The Emedys, the Pirschs, the Bauers, the Schusters and the Walshs are among the longest members. We have also been blessed with a continuous stream of new children dancers over the years thereby allowing us to keep the Kindergruppe alive and growing. Officially in the group today, we have: Alex Trischa and Kayley Walsch, Michael and Jenna Belafi, Nicole Krauss, Angelica and Rosemary Tarquinio, Brittany Felde, Elizabeth Leber, Alexander and Christina Bassila and Adrienne Tohermes.

Our Ann Bauer

Sadly, on October 28th, 1998, we lost our very own Ann Bauer. She was very much the heart of this club and we are proud that we have been able to make her fondest wish come true, a big 50th Anniversary celebration. I'm sure that she is also very proud of the fact that a third generation of her family, Karl and Roxanna Bauer are active dancers in the club and are carrying on the family tradition.

Big Shoes to Fill

During Ann's last years of illness, she passed on her reigning staff with all its responsibilities to a number of individuals who stepped forward and carry on. Wolfgang Kinkelin as President has worked hard in guiding us through these recent years with success. His experience in the club spans 4 decades and various positions from Treasurer and Vice President in our own club, to Gau Judge, delegate, bicycle soccer star, story teller, microphone enthusiast, Opa and one of the four W's whose planning and hard work has paid off with the Sommerfest entrenched as an annual event in Montreal. Kathy Tolnai Firtl as Secretary has worked diligently organizing, cataloging, keeping the minutes, receiving and sending correspondence and much more. Her commitment has been unwavering even while caring for twin girls. HOW DO YOU DO IT? Many others have also come forward with jobs well done. Stefan Hiris, our heroic historian, always camera ready to capture new moments in time and lately, the 50th anniversary souvenir book graphic artist and publisher; Margaret Schuster, Gary Firtl, Joe Mueller in finance; Hans Bauer, Fred Schuster and Anny Mueller leading practices and dance engagements. Lastly, none of the above could have had success without the support and commitment from every other member in the group who has stepped in when needed.

Statistics and Memories

Over 50 years, one accumulates a lot of memories, but multiply that by the number of people who have been active dancers and it's incredibly astounding!

How about a few statistics! For starters, we counted over 150 Dirndls and Schuhplattlers, most of which joined as young unattached adults. What would follow you ask? Over 50 weddings. Next? We've produced well over 100 children, 11 of which are active dancers today.

A few of our memories include (not in any particular order):

- Old Montreal Forum when it was still new.
- St-Jean Baptiste parade when it was a non-political celebration.
- The Armory
- The Lorelei
- Expo 67 and Rack's Biergarten.

- Kronentanz transformation since the 60's: Christmas lights over real cedar decorated wooden bows hooked to a car battery, then to D-cell batteries, then fake cedar with phosphorescent white and blue ribbons under black lights, to today's version with fake cedar over bowed tubing, with white and blue ribbons and flexible lighting all plugged to an extension cord.



- Tirolerland!
- Place des Nations, waiting (im)patiently under the hot sun for our 5 minutes of fame dancing for Trudeau and Drapeau.
- Sepp Schnagelpuss and his Biergarten in Knowlton.
- The Lily Marlene and meeting that newly formed quintet "The Internationals".
- "Helmut, wo bist du?"
- Birthday ceremonies and folkdancing with Alt Washingtonia.
- Decorating for Jägerball at the German House with real cedar garlands, Jägerhütte, with stag horn and crossed rifle displays, about 200 manhours of work each year.
- Rambette!
- Our used to be annual cross-country ski tournament and Rocky's ice sculptures.
- The barn party.
- Picnics at the Slovack grounds.
- Participating in the multicultural Grey Cup Half Time Show, Montreal 1981
- Jägermeister test tubes.
- Tuesday night dance practices at the German House, meeting Lily and the soccer players.
- Timing the melting of an ice cube on Charlie's head.
- This man!
- Renting van or Lumina and driving 'till we dropped to participate in a Stiftungsfest, Anniversary dance, Waltfest, Oktoberfests, etc. of another Schuhplattler Verein.
- The island party.
- Losing our precious Stefan not once but twice in New Hackensack as we made our way back to (the) Camelot.
- Meeting "Kissie" for the first time.
- Finger lakes.
- 508 Bloomfield, Sepps Sausage and Delicatessen in die Lawrence and the factory on Colonial.
- The "Silent Party".
- Cow bells: a dance with the bells, performing the bells in harmony by the teenage group led by Erech Morrison, followed by an angel quartet at Christmas and lately as single players.
- "Stevies Eyes"
- The not so annual cribbage tournament.
- The "Yodeling Cow".
- The Arcade Hotel, the adoption ceremony and the stair diving event.
- The Jägermeister song, a Montreal inspiration.
- Establishing friendships with Schuhplattlers in various Vereine in New York, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania and Ontario. Too many to itemize, but all close to our hearts. You know who you are!

Annual Events

As mentioned earlier, our current events include our annual Jägerball, which has been held since January 1969. Until now, it has taken place in mid-winter, usually on the first Saturday in February. We appreciate the great turnout over the years and the support of the visiting Schuhplattlers that brave the winter cold to come to Montreal.

Usually every third Sunday in August, we host a picnic at the St. Boniface grounds in Lachute. Many of our own members drive out the day before to organize and stay out overnight where a bonfire can be enjoyed.

Since the days of Bayern Verein, we hold an annual Christmas party for all our supporting members. Refreshments including home baked goods are enjoyed by all. The children are kept busy at a craft table where they make a trinket to take home. Santa Claus and his Reindeer always show up just on time to pass out gift bags to all the kids. Most recently, a raffle for Christmas wreaths and centerpieces donated by Mrs. Tolnai, has become a big hit with the adult crowd.

Along with the above, we take pride in donating our time to special events such as the Canada Day parade, charity benefits and senior residences. As well, we are a proud participant of the annual Sommerfest, a joint effort with various German clubs and associations. All the proceeds of this Sommerfest are turned over to benefit German language schools in Quebec. This year, we wish to thank the Sommerfest committee who has graciously agreed to hold their event on Sunday July 7th, our 50th anniversary weekend. In turn, we have organized a parade of all our visiting Schuhplattler Vereine immediately after church Sunday morning to the Sommerfest grounds, a short walking distance from the hotel. Our out-of-town guests will be able to enjoy this wonderful Montreal German festival. Viel Spaß!

1952-2002 Our 50th Anniversary

It has been many years since we started the preparations for this event and we thank all those who have joined us in Montreal on this momentous occasion. We hope you have a great time and return home with wonderful memories of kinship and friendship. We hope that in the future we continue to uphold our customs and traditions. Let us not forget: **“Sitt’ und Tracht der Alten wollen wir erhalten”**.



**Weißt du, worin der Spaß des Lebens liegt?
Sei lustig! - Seht's nicht - so sei vergnügt!**

Goethe







S.G. Alpenland, Montreal (from 2002 to 2018)

S.G. Alpenland (Montreal) is a not for profit cultural club dedicated to uphold Bavarian and Tyrolian traditions through dance, costume and music. We are a member of a larger umbrella organization Gauverband Nordamerika made up of over 75 clubs located throughout the USA and Canada.

We have 5 elected officers: President (Anny Mueller), Vice-President (Hans Bauer), Vorplattler (Karl Bauer), Secretary (Kathy Tolnai) and Treasurer (Johanne Mueller). All the other positions held by active club members are appointed. We also have many supporting members who help throughout the year and attend our functions. Some of these are the parents of our active children's group. Anyone wanting to join our club is more than welcome. You can choose to be a supporting member or an active dancing member.

Jägerball - Saturday February 3, 2018

Wow, what an unforgettable Jägerball. All you saw were smiles in the hall in the Chateau Royal, Laval.

- Almost 500 people were in attendance, some from as far away as Austin, Texas and Penticton, BC.
- 6 Visiting Schuhplattlervereine (60 people) came with their club flags: Maple Leaf Almrausch - Ottawa (ON), Almrausch - Poughkeepsie (NY), Almrausch - Philadelphia (PA), Auerhahn - Oley (PA), Alpenrose - Lancaster (PA), Alt-Washingtonia - Washington (DC).
- SG Alpenland - Montreal had 55 active members in attendance which included 8 teens and 13 children under 13.
- Merit pins were presented to 3 long standing active members: Walter Lefort received the Ehrenkünstler pin for his many years of service with his art work and painted canvas wall hangings. Stefan Hiris received the Ehrenarchivar pin for his many years of service for documenting our events with his photography, history lessons, photoshop work, etc. Lastly, Wolfgang Kinkelin received the Ehrenvorstand pin for his years of leadership and guidance since Mrs. Ann Bauer gave up the reins.
- The new and improved Krohnentanz was performed with the crown on a rolling stand and a battery pack (no more orange extension cord on the floor to trip over, yay!).
- Karl Bauer, our Vorplattler, did a great job at the programming and ensuring the parade of flags and anthems ran smoothly.
- The band, the Wanderers, did a great job and kept everyone entertained between performances with a good mix of all types of dance music.

50th Anniversary of SG Alpenland, July 2002

Held at the Sheraton Laval Convention Center, 456 Visiting Schuhplattlers from 26 Schuhplattler Vereine came to Montreal to celebrate our golden anniversary. On Friday night we held a Welcome Dance. Saturday a traditional Mundartmesse was celebrated with our own Deutscher Chor Montreal as the singers. This was followed by a banquet with a parade of flags, speeches

by a number of dignitaries and Ehrentänzen by our visitors. Together with our supporting Montrealers, we were 900 strong. Sunday began with an outdoor parade, the Gauplattler performed by 400 dancers and ending in a picnic/Sommerfest with over 1000 people. That summer, forest fires were out of control in northern Quebec and the haze from those fires hung over all of us in Laval and Montreal. Our US friends still remark today on that grey sky.

What has the club been up to since 2002 when we held our 50th Anniversary party?

- Our annual events are still going strong. Jägerball in February, Alpenfest (our picnic) in the summer and our Christmas party a few weeks before Christmas.
- We hold regular practices, mainly in the Haus der Heimat.
- Oktoberfest season (Sep-Oct) keeps us busy with a number of dance engagements.
- We attend a Gaufest every odd year, a Gauverband delegates meeting every even year.
- Wolfgang Kinkelin and Anny Mueller are Gaurichters who attend judge training sessions every year or so in a different city usually in the east or the mid-west USA.
- We visit other clubs and attend their Stiftungsfests and Heimatabends.

In other words, we keep busy. There is always another event to prepare for or to attend. In 2017 we went to the Gaufest in Buffalo with in a chartered bus. We are planning on doing the same for Washington, DC in 2019.

More information is available on the following webpages:

SG Alpenland Montreal website <http://www.alpenlandmontreal.com/>

Main photo page <http://www.alpenlandmontreal.com/photos>

Some event photos <http://www.alpenlandmontreal.com/showallphotos.php>

Website of Gauverband Nordamerika <http://www.gauverband.com>

List of all Gaufesten <http://www.gauverband.com/gaufeste>

List of all Gau member Vereine <http://www.gauverband.com/member-vereine>