



The 2012 Vahsholtz Cousins Reunion in **Colorado Springs**

Highlights of our **Beautiful City**

By Mary Dillon

When I think of Colorado Springs, I see Pikes Peak, Garden of the Gods Park, and the Air Force Academy.

Pikes Peak in all of its splendor stands out above all the famous local attractions. The mountain has several ways of approaching all the surrounding beauty. One popular way is to ride the Pikes Peak Cog Railway, which provides breathtaking views as it climbs to the top of the peak.

Or you can take a scenic drive up the now completely paved Pikes Peak Highway, which is used by the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb. It's the famous once a year race where our cousins compete. Check out this road. They race a little over 12 miles, making 156 turns, many of which are hairpin, and climb 5,000 feet. Leonard and Clint Vahsholtz are record-setting drivers on the course. That's the most exciting way to ascend the peak, but you don't need to go as fast as they race. They miss most of the scenery! But they live here and get to see it often.

If you *really* want to see the views, there is also access to climb Pikes Peak on foot using the famous Barr Trail, or you can use the old Manitou Incline which was transformed to a nice hiking trail. That takes a bit longer.

The Garden of the Gods speaks for itself. The beautiful red sandstone rising to the sky provides formations that tell a unique geological story. At the Garden of the Gods Visitor's Center you can view multimedia shows on "How Did Those Rocks Get There?" This visitor center provides three shops, a cafe, and free nature walks.

One of Colorado's most visited man-made attractions is the United States Air



Pikes Peak, and the road up

Force Academy. A learning institution that prepares cadets for careers as Air Force leaders. This Academy has a fascinating history, with striking architecture and a very successful sports program.

Our city has many other unique aspects for any visitor—something for everyone. We enjoy fishing, hiking, touring castles, riding horses, or feeding giraffes at Cheyenne Mountain Zoo. We love to enjoy our scenery while having a picnic lunch, or just a beer at the local brewery.

Just west of Colorado Springs is Manitou Springs, a quaint small town that offers many shops that exhibit the creations of local artists.

Going further west up the scenic Ute Pass Highway you will come to Woodland Park. With just a few more miles on to Cripple Creek where they feature 18 casinos for gambling. If your interest is in the mines of Colorado, you will discover plenty to explore or gain knowledge, in either Cripple Creek or



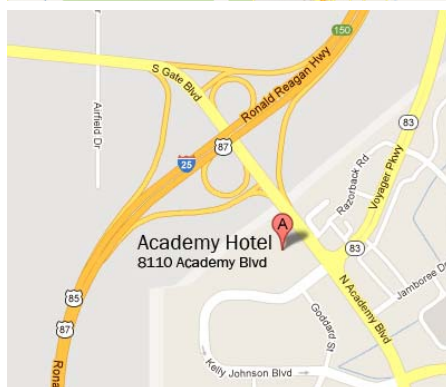
the town of Victor which lie about five miles apart.

Once in the mountains, if fishing is more of your desire, Lake Skaguay is nestled in the pines just waiting for a fishing line. This lake is a favorite of our family, as we have never failed to catch fish, and if you don't, the scenery will fill you to the limit.

Colorado feels, to me, a little like a poem. If we're smart, we'll let God take our heart and lead us home. A few days in Colorado will make you feel like that.

We look forward to seeing you in June. ■

Family Activities at the Cousins Reunion June 22 to 24, 2012



Hosted at the Academy Hotel, 8110 N. Academy Blvd. Colorado Springs. Exit 150 from I-25.

Phone 1-800-766-8524 for reservations and mention "Vahsholtz Reunion" for special rate—\$89 for two queen beds, \$99 for a king bed.

More info: www.vahsholtz-cousins.org

Friday

Most people will probably be arriving Friday afternoon or evening. That's typically a time when we meet in the lobby of the host hotel and greet friends old and new. Some of the best "family time" of each reunion. This hotel has a wonderful atrium for us to gather and build memories.

Saturday 9:00 A.M.

The hotel provides a complimentary hot

breakfast in the courtyard. At nine we'll gather in our meeting room.

The agenda includes this year's Update available for those who bought copies of *The Road from Zwillipp* and we'll talk a bit about what's in that.

Using information from the Registration Form on page eight Les will have built a PowerPoint presentation showing how those attending the reunion fit into the family tree.

We'll have the formal introduction of Hulda Vahsholtz Friedrich's newly published book, *MEMORIES Growing Up in Kansas—1880s*. Copies will be available. (See book review page seven).

Allan Brockmeier is not going to be able to attend, but we'll have a little report on the state of the treasury.

Perhaps most importantly, we'll talk about where to hold the next Cousins Reunion! There'll be an opportunity to talk about the many activities available at the reunion and for those who stay over, and perhaps organize some group

outings for those who choose to participate. That's when you'll commit to the Sunday cookout if you wish to attend, and a collection will be made to pay for the food.



Saturday 11:00

A great time for a drive up to the top of Pike's Peak. Those who wish can take their own cars for the drive. Leonard and Clint Vahsholtz, our family veterans of racing that road, have volunteered to drive a couple of van loads of us up to the top, and return them to the Academy Hotel. They promise to avoid using their racing mode!





Saturday 4 to 10

We'll go to Flying W Ranch for dinner and a show. Reservations are required. See www.flyingw.com. The cost is modest; Adults, \$22; Age 60+, \$20; Age 6-12, \$12; Age 3-5, \$5; Under 2; Free. Mail your prepayment checks for the Saturday Night Dinner along with the Registration Form, not later than May first, to our Vahsholtz Cousins Treasurer Allan Brockmeier. See page eight for details.



Sunday Morning

The Flying W Cowboy Church hosts a Non-Denominational Christian Service 9:30 A.M. or



Trout Fishing with Cousin Matt Dillon on the Skaguay Reservoir, leaving at 5:00 A.M. Matt can provide fishing gear for up to nine people; three in the boat and six on the banks. A Colorado fishing license costs just \$9 for the day and can be purchased at Walmart. If

more people sign up, a second trip may be scheduled for the afternoon.

Sunday Afternoon

Free time to visit or participate in some of the many activities available in the area.



Sunday Evening 4:30

Leonard and Barbara Vahsholtz are hosting a cookout in their backyard in Woodland Hills. Leonard's restored Model T Ford will be there and he's offering rides. Leonard says, "Everyone who rides in my Model T has a smile on their face." This will be a great time to hang out and get re-acquainted with your cousins. We'll pitch in to cover the cost of hamburgers, hotdogs and similar relaxing fare. That's Leonard above with granddaughter Carli.

A Few Other Things You can Do around Colorado Springs:

Plan to stay in the area and make this a family vacation! Some of the following might be of interest to you. Or you may want to undertake one of these adventures instead of the family activities we've planned. It's up to you! We've provided distances from the Hotel, hours, cost and web sites for more information.



\$5, Car Load \$40 (pikespeak.us.com)

Pikes Peak Highway—20 miles, 30 minutes
Gate opens 9 to 5; Adults \$12, Ages 6 to 15,



Pikes Peak Cog Railway—17 miles, 30 minutes

Open 12 to 3, Adults \$35, Ages 3 to 12, \$19 Trip takes 3 hours and 10 minutes (cograilway.com)



Garden of the Gods—15 miles, 25 minutes

This free center is a gateway to the geology, ecology and cultural history of the area through hands-on exhibits and great scenery (gardenofgods.com)



Cheyenne Mountain Zoo—16 miles, 30 minutes

Open 9 to 5, Adults \$14.25, Seniors \$12.25, Ages 3 to 11, \$7.25 (cmzoo.org)



Santa's Workshop North Pole

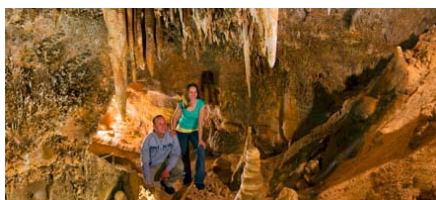
(Cascade)—20 miles; 28 minutes
Ages 2 to 59, \$18.59, Seniors Free, A Christmas themed family amusement park (santas-colo.com)



Manitou Cliff Dwellings—15 miles, 20 minutes
Open 10 to 4, 12 to 59, \$9.50, 7 to 11, \$7.50, Under 7 Free, Seniors, \$8.50
(cliffdwellingsmuseum.com)



Rock Ledge Ranch—10 miles, 20 minutes
Open 10 to 5, Ages 18-54: \$8; Ages 55+: \$5; Ages 6-17: \$4; under 5, free, A living history farm and museum of the region (rockledgeranch.com)



Cave of the Winds—16 miles, 25 minutes
Adults \$18, ages 6 to 11 \$9, Under 6, free, lantern tour, discovery tour, stalagmites, stalactites, Williams Canyon
(caveofthewinds.com)



Seven Falls—15 miles, 30 minutes
Open 9 to 5, Adults \$9.25, Ages 6 to 15 \$5.75, Located in a natural box canyon and is on the

National Geographic list of International waterfalls (sevenfalls.com)



Rodeo Hall of Fame—6 miles, 10 minutes
Open 9 to 5, adults \$6, Seniors \$5, A museum celebrating the great rodeo stars (prorodeohalloffame.com)



Air Force Academy—6 miles, 15 minutes
Stop at Visitor's Center for a tour (usafa.edu/superintendent/pa/visitor-center.cfm)



Focus on the Family—2 miles, 10 minutes
Tours 9 to 5 except Saturday, Donations,

Bookstore, Play Area, Soda Shop, etc.
(focusonthefamily.com/about_us/welcome-center.aspx)



Glen Eyrie Castle—8 miles, 15 minutes
Tours 11 and 1, \$6 per person, Specializes in Christ-Centered Adult and Family Retreats (gleneyrie.org)



Florissant Fossil Beds—45 miles, 1 hour
Open 9 to 5, Adults \$3, Under 16 free, all passes accepted, one of the richest and most diverse fossil deposits in the world (nps.gov/flfo/index.htm)



Molly Kathleen Gold Mine—55 miles, 1 ¼ hours
Open 9 to 5, adults \$18, Ages 3 to 12 \$10, The 1000 feet deep Mollie Kathleen 1890's Gold Mine, and tour Colorado's largest active gold mine
(goldminetours.com)



Cripple Creek and Victor Narrow Gauge Railway—55 miles, 1 ¼ hours
Adults \$13, Ages 3 to 12 \$8, Over 65, \$12, Trains depart 10 to 5 and run every 45 minutes (cripplecreekrailroad.com)



Royal Gorge Bridge—100 miles, 2 hours
Open 10 to 4, First Adult \$25, second half price, ages 4 to 11, \$19 (Price includes Bridge, Incline and Aerial Tram, The world's highest suspension bridge (royalgorgebridge.com))



Leadville Colorado—137 miles, three hours
A historic mining town at the top of the Rockies (leadville.com)

... and so much more! ■

Updates to The Road From Zwillipp

In the year of our Lord 2002, a bunch of us were inspired to gather Vahsholtz history, stories and genealogy from as many branches (and spellings) of the family as we could find. The book was built on Melvina Hitzeman's excellent work from three decades previous. The resulting book, *The Road from Zwillipp*, was published in the spring of 2003.

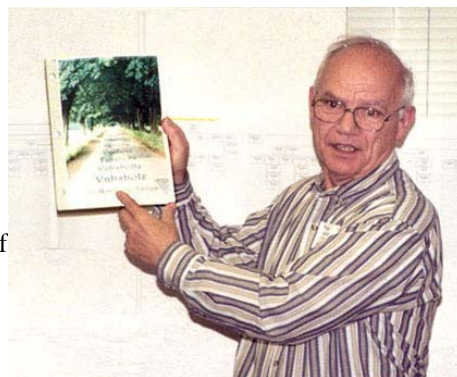
"Published" is perhaps not quite the right word. We printed copies on a big Canon inkjet printer, one at a time, with fold-out genealogy charts and post bindings. The 160 books we printed sold for \$15, not including the cost of the three printers we wore out (they were replaced under warranty). Les posted a copy on the Vahsholtz website (omitting the genealogy of living persons) that can be downloaded free.

After that tedious task, we said "no more" and subsequent copies of the book, excepting the color cover and foldout charts, have been printed commercially. The price had to be raised to \$20 to cover the increased cost.

When the book was introduced, we were aware that Melvina's original book had gone through several confusing updates and this one would surely do the same. To minimize confusion, we agreed we'd publish an update every two years to coincide with the Cousins Reunions, and free copies would be given to those attending, who had purchased a book.

That's all gone fairly well. Four updates have been published and there'll be another this summer—the biggest so far. The updates have included more additions, new stories and the like, than anticipated.

When we sell new books now, we have to charge \$29 because we include some 50 pages of updates, and they increase the size of the book by about 20 percent. Of course, postage is also up and we've even had to get taller



binding posts! We'll have copies printed with the current update at the Reunion. Please reserve by marking on your Registration Form, page eight.

This is good news. The Vahsholtz family is growing larger and finding new and better ways to keep in touch, even as we've lost the tradition of gathering yearly at a handy park in Kansas.

We do encourage you to keep your copy of *The Road from Zwillipp* up to date. And more importantly, send us updated information on *your* branch of the family! Toss in that story you just remembered about Uncle George (or whoever) that you'd like to share with the rest of us.

Maybe we'll print it in the updates or more likely, in this newsletter. ■

Your Editors

Yes, the family has grown. Well, not *grown* so much as gotten in touch again. We've come a long ways from bouncing down the rutted roads after church to share a Sunday dinner.

There are some 250 families on our mailing list for this newsletter! About 68 percent of you get the newsletter via email, which saves us postage and printing costs. Postage has gone up again, and we appreciate the donations that have come in to cover those costs. Keep them coming and keep those email addresses coming too. Every email address we can use saves us a few bucks each year.

We sometimes forget that some far-flung members of the family are only in touch via this newsletter or the

Vahsholtz website. Should you wish to send us a tidbit, you can contact your editors:

Bob & Marge Vahsholtz
866 Pine View Drive
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
mvahsholtz@gmail.com

Or send a note to Les Vahsholtz,
Lvahsholtz@yahoo.com ■

Speaking of Letters:

Bob & Marge: I just wanted to let you know I did enjoy this newsletter and am looking forward to seeing you in Colorado Springs. My mother-in-law lived at Manitou Springs for about 10 years and we visited her out there several times. There was always so much to do we never had enough time to do it all. I am also looking forward to reading Hulda's story. *Sharon Powless*

Marge & Bob: You make me wish I was a Vahsholtz! What a perfect job you all do in uncovering your family's history. I'm just starting to work on my dad's side of the family and it's so interesting and fun. Thank you for sharing. *Cheryl Hutchinson/Mueller*

Bob & Marge: Thanks so much for including the newsletter. I haven't had time to read it all, but looked it over. I am impressed! I was expecting a typical newsletter and boy was I happily surprised! I've worked in the printing industry off and on since I was 15, so I know what I'm talking about! Or at least I think I do. *Linda Gillis*

Marge & Bob: Nice job with the newsletter. Hope to see you in Colorado this summer. *Peggy Scott*

Bob & Marge: Thanks. Loved reading it. I think I read the story about the Richter's in Israel before but it was still interesting the second time around. It sound's like you've put together a wonderful reunion. Makes me wish I was a Vahsholtz. How many are expected? If the kinfolks on your mailing list is a clue, there could be a bunch. *John Hazelquist*

Marge & Bob: Colorado Springs is a great location. Sure wish that we could be there, however, the dates conflict with other commitments. We have visited some of the places in the Colorado

Springs area and especially enjoyed the Flying W Ranch! I'm sure everyone who attends will have a great time! *Royce Caldron*

Thanks to those and others who have written. We publish these to let you know that the newsletter is doing its job of helping us keep in touch. And also to let you know that we welcome input from all sources. Let us hear from you—especially if you have a story, photo or memory to share. ■

Leader Needed Seeking a Vahsholtz- Cousins Reunion Leader

By Les Vahsholtz

I've recently been diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) and will be stepping down from involvement with planning the 2014 and beyond Vahsholtz-Cousins Reunions due to uncertainty as to how this disease will progress.

We are looking for a person or team who will be willing to step up and work with Bob and Marge Vahsholtz, who have, along with myself and the Colorado Springs hosts (Mary Dillon & Ruth Klement) planned the upcoming 2012 Vahsholtz-Cousins Reunion.

Bob and Marge are also editors and publishers of our Vahsholtz-Cousins newsletter and appreciate assistance with that responsibility. My son Tim has agreed to take over as webmaster.

If you are interested in becoming involved with the Vahsholtz-Cousins Reunions, please email Les Vahsholtz: Lvahsholtz@yahoo.com or Bob Vahsholtz: mvahsholtz@gmail.com ■

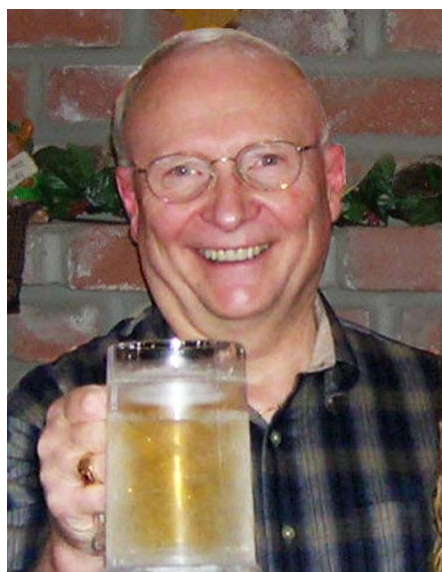
And Now a Postscript from your Editors

Les is not going anywhere. He's been very active in planning, photographing and serving as MC of these reunions for years, as well as pulling things together in the background.

One real downside of ALS is it affects his voice, and we all know Les has

been the heart and soul of these reunions. And how well he's done at serving as MC up there in front of the crowd. Marge and I will try to fill in this year, but ... well, we're sure not qualified to fill Les' shoes! Maybe you'd be interested in handling the photography or some other detail of Les' tasks? Fine, but what we really need is a leader who can keep the family together for these reunions as Les has done for so many years.

Think about it. We'll discuss this important matter this summer at the reunion. ■



History in a Shoebox

By Marge Vahsholtz

And what, you might ask, can be exciting about reading old obituaries found in shoeboxes from many years ago? Maybe you have to have a little detective blood in your system. Anyway, I'm hooked and once you're hooked, it seems you *stay* hooked.

Growing up in the farm community of Spring Valley, near the little town of Canton, Kansas (where Bob and I met), I was already saving clippings as a teenager. I snipped the obituaries of people I knew from the local newspapers and saved them from our church's funerals. Why? Who knows—I was always interested in people and remembering them.

My first real project was to do a simple three-ring binder of my Dad's father's family. My grandfather was the only one in his family to come from Germany, so it was pretty easy to gather up information from all my cousins who all live in the area where I grew up.

First I collected everything I could find about my dad's family; passport, death certificate, copies of church records and old photos. Then I put them in a binder to reflect the lives of my grandfather and his descendants. Sharing that binder with close relatives, I learned more.

All this came in handy now that I'm really "into" genealogy. Maybe that was the root cause of my interest? Anyway, it's helped in putting together family relationships between people that, in those early days, I didn't know were related. Many acquaintances turned out to be distant cousins. As I became "hooked" on genealogy and overwhelmed with information, we got a computer program called *Family Tree Maker*. It's popular and as a computer illiterate, I can attest, it's easy to use!

Maybe even more important has been saving all those old photos in our ancestors' photo albums and identifying the people in the pictures. Combined with the obituaries, it's amazing how many times such links help put together a family history. It's also a great way to get a conversation going with older family members. Most of them love looking thru the old albums. Try it sometime—you'll like it too! Then make notes of the information that comes up from those conversations. Much of it will prove to be wrong, of course. Human memory is poor competition to written records. But those memories often provide clues that can't be found in the records. Keep track of your sources, because it's best to know when conflicting information arises.

After starting with my known parents and grandparents, I kept pushing back and out, looking for more information from family members. Then we branched out.

Bob and I have worked on our eight

grandparent's family trees. Unlike those chasing ancestors as far back as possible, we get the most satisfaction from finding "lost" branches of the family and meeting newfound relatives of today. Many have become good friends.

Finding the "begats" is important but the people and their stories are what make family history and relationships interesting and special.

One day we discovered Madeline and Darrell Brockmeier were doing the same sort of thing. We met them and found Darrell had written some family stories, as had Bob. As Madeline and I were chasing begats, they boldly spoke up, "Why don't we gather stories and old photos to make those relatives come alive in a book for the family?" Well, that really got us fired up. Several other family members joined the fun—some of them cousins we'd not even met. The *Road from Zwillipp* was the result, along with all its updates and this newsletter!

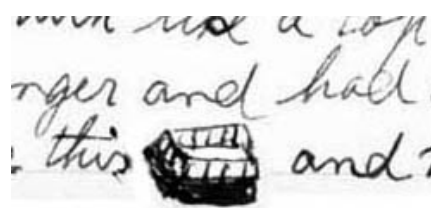
We found, working with eight different family trees, there's no single "right" way. We've met other people pursuing genealogy who take entirely different approaches, and they have fun too. The most enjoyable thing is to simply go where your heart leads you.

Being retired provides the time and makes for interesting trips. A reason to go knocking on someone's door just because you heard they might be able to help.

Small town people, big city people, relatives, friends, churches and even the bureaucrats at the courthouses tend to be amazingly helpful when they find you're seeking lost relatives.

For two decades, Genealogy has become my passion. It's a great hobby, and what better legacy can you leave behind than the history of your family?

Answering my own question, it would be much better if we didn't leave our family history *too* far behind. One of these days, we hope someone from a younger generation of the Vahsholtz family will take an interest, step up and carry on what Melvina gathered from many generations before her. It's a treasure to preserve and enhance. ■



Hulda inserted illustrations like the one at the top of this page into her journal's script. Her sketches are preserved in the book, along with more detailed illustrations to help clarify her points

MEMORIES—Growing Up in Kansas—1880's

By Hulda Vahsholtz Friedrich

A review by Joanne Vahsholtz

How many of us could remember, at age 63, in vivid detail, what we experienced at age six, eight or ten? That's exactly what Hulda Vahsholtz Friedrich did in her 300-page handwritten journal.

That story presents the reader with some idea of what it was like to transplant a family and its culture from Germany to middle America in the 1880s.

Some time ago Hulda's daughter, Velma Friedrich Peterson made this journal available to Marge and Bob Vahsholtz in Arroyo Grande, California. They, in turn, have done the work of having it published so the rest of us can enjoy it and learn from it.

Here is an example of what you will find in Hulda's book. One aspect of our children's lives in school these days is the act of bullying. Hulda writes at length of her and her siblings' experiences in this regard. As the saying goes, "There is nothing new under the sun." Truly, bullying was just as wretched then as it is now.

It is also interesting to read of her reactions, emotionally and reasonably,

to her father's stern disciplines—somewhat fearfully, but also respectfully. Hulda always speaks lovingly and admirably of her mother and in general, of her siblings. She relates stories of school and church, neighborly controversies as well as mutual concerns. Of course, one is deeply impressed with all the hard work of keeping the farm afloat, season after season.

Anyone reading the journal will be amazed at Hulda's ability to express herself in words; how vividly she describes all details of life at that time. There are poignant moments, humorous moments, exasperating circumstances and much more to engage our imagination. She leaves the reader in awe of how our ancestors managed to survive while maintaining a zest for life.

It's a good read!

Our thanks to Joanne for this review. She also helped by finding Rosemarie Yarborough as a translator for the German phrases (the family generally spoke German in the household in those days, and Hulda wrote some of those old expressions in German.)

After Velma had read the printed version of her mother's book, we asked for her thoughts. Reflecting on the matter, Velma told us Hulda was an adventurous person in addition to being a great storyteller. She came to California for a visit, then picked up and moved out to the coast. Hulda's father, Franz Leonard, was of the typical German patriarchal persuasion; he called the shots, while Hulda's mother Sophie managed in the background.

Hulda broke that tradition in marrying Dick Friedrich—a strong willed

man but an artist at heart. He loved to sing and was a big enough man to have a relationship with his wife based on teamwork and harmony. Hulda's was a strong voice in the marriage. She was a religious person all her life, but combined her faith with a good understanding of the "modern" things that make the world go 'round.

When you've read her book, you might be interested to follow up by re-reading her contribution to The Road From Zwilipp based on the journal she wrote as a young woman (see pages 118 A to 118 G).

We'll have copies of Hulda's book at the Reunion. The price will be \$13 if you pick it up there. Please reserve copies using the Registration Form below so we bring enough copies along! No obligation to buy. ■

Registration Form

It is important for your hosts to know how many of you are planning to come to the reunion and your interest in the various activities in order to make everything work as smoothly as possible. Be sure to include the full names of everyone in your group, so Les can show how we're all related and Geri can make nametags. Please take the time to clip or copy the form below and email it to mmbrock99@att.net or mail it with your check.

Your responses do not commit you to anything (except the Flying W dinner if you choose to attend) but will enable us make adequate preparations. Clip or copy the questions below, answer them and mail your response to **Allan Brockmeier, 11764 Kingston Dr., Festus, MO 63028** Phone 636-937-7865 or cell 314-954-0105 ...

... along with your check **not later than May 1** to reserve your spot for the Saturday evening dinner and the show at the Flying W. Here's a suggestion—*do it now, so you don't forget!*

1. **Yes, we plan to attend the reunion!** Number of people in our group: _____
 2. Number planning to stay at the host hotel _____
Elsewhere _____
 3. Number attending the Flying W dinner Payment enclosed:
Adults; \$22 __ Age 60+; \$20 __ Age 6-12; \$12 __ Age 3-5; \$5 __ Under 3; free, Total.....\$ _____
 4. Would like to go on the fishing trip, number: _____
 5. Interested in climbing Pikes Peak in the Vahsholtz Vans _____
Private car _____
 6. Would like to attend the Cowboy Church service; number _____
 7. Would like to join in Leonard and Barbara's Sunday cookout; number _____
 8. Plan to stay over (or come early) and see more of Colorado; number _____
 9. Might want a copy of Hulda's book; number _____
 10. When printing copies of *The Road from Zwilipp*, please reserve for me; number _____
- Full Names of Everyone in Our Group: _____