



# Vahsholtz Cousins

Fall 2006 Vol. 1 No. 1

<http://www.vahsholtz-cousins.org>

## Water witching

Hank Vahsholtz says finding water is a gift



Hank Vahsholtz at the 2006 reunion.

Hank Vahsholtz, 93, of Colorado has got the knack for finding water underground.

Water witching, also known as dowsing and divining, is an ancient art that has prompted lots of research and a few skeptics. But Hank says there's no question. Some people, including himself and his son, Steve, have the ability to find water hidden deep underground. "You have to have the gift," Hank said.

Hank started water witching about 10 years ago when he still lived in Emporia, Kansas.

"I first learned it witching water lines," he said. "I never did witch a dry hole."

Hank said it's easy to explain how water witching works. You hold the

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## Happy 90th birthday, Hattie Rathke

By Joyce Swift

A Vahsholtz-Rathke family reunion was held on June 25, 2006, to celebrate the 90th birthday of Hattie Vahsholtz Rathke.

The reunion was hosted by Hattie's children – Sandra Graham, Larry Rathke and Joyce Swift – and was held at Joyce's home in rural Matfield Green, Kansas. A picnic meal, birthday cake and much visiting was enjoyed by all who were there.

Those attending were Hattie Vahsholtz Rathke and Larry Rathke of Americus; Gale and Sandra Graham of Strong City; Richard, Kathy, Courtney and Zachary Graham of



Hattie Vahsholtz Rathke

Council Grove; Jim, Theresa, Levi and Luke Whitaker of Lebo; Lennie Graham of Strong City; Laurele Graham of Strong City; Greg and Kaitlin Graham of Strong City; Dwight, Holly and Josie Brittain of

**See AUNT HATTIE, Page 3**

## 50 attend 2006 Cousins Reunion

Kansas City in 2008?

By Geri Tate

The 2006 Vahsholtz-Cousins Reunion was held at Rock Springs Ranch, Kansas, in the Johnson Administration Building on Sunday, Oct. 15.

Fifty adults and three children, ranging from ages 5 to 93 years old, attended this reunion. A delicious meal of roast pork, scalloped potatoes, corn, salad, Rock Springs rolls and a brownie was served in the Williams Dining hall.

The day was spent taking pictures, visiting, sharing photos and stories.

At the business meeting, cousins decided to have the next reunion in October 2008. The location of the reunion hasn't been set.

Hosts for the 2008 reunion – Vickie and Philip Colvin and Les and Carole Vahsholtz – are looking into the possibility of holding the reunion at the Senior Center in Lenexa, Kansas, near Kansas City.

At the 2006 reunion, Fred and Della Fahsholtz shared their pictures and experiences visiting in Germany with Martin and

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## EIN PROSIT GERMAN TAVERN SONG

“**Ein Prosit**” literally means “A Toast” in German. This song is frequently sung among family and friends and is simply a “toast” to friendship, fellowship, and well being. The words of the song are:

*Ein prosit, Ein prosit  
Der gemutlichkeit  
Ein prosit, Ein prosit  
Der gemutlichkeit*

Gemutlichkeit translated means friendliness, comfortableness, cosiness

The “Ein Prosit” song was sung by all at the last reunion. Hear it or sing along online at [www.vahsholtz-cousins.org](http://www.vahsholtz-cousins.org)

### When should we meet?

Let your reunion planning committee know what you would like. How many cousins would come to the reunion in the summer months instead of October? The October date got started years ago when most who came to the reunion were farmers and wanted the reunion after harvest time. Where should the reunions be held? What activities should we have? E-mail your suggestions to [webmaster@vahsholtz-cousins.org](mailto:webmaster@vahsholtz-cousins.org)



Dennis Vahsholtz gives some pointers for disc golf during the 2006 reunion.

## Out for a fling

### Vahsholtz cousin demonstrates disc golf prowess

In a field just outside the reunion site, Dennis Vahsholtz took hold of a specially designed plastic disc and gave it a toss. The disc flew across the field toward a metal basket surrounded by chains.

It was close. Dennis almost made a hole in one as he demonstrated the art and sport of disc golf for those attending the 2006 reunion.

Dennis, who lives in Herington, Kansas, said he discovered the game of disc golf in the early to mid 1980s and immediately was hooked.

In disc golf, the goal is to toss a small plastic disc into a metal basket.

The game is scored like regular, ball golf. Disc golfers make drives and putts with specially designed discs. Fewer throws means a better score.

After his first experience with the game, Dennis discovered a talent and passion for the sport. He has been playing the pro disc golf circuit for many years.

In 1987, he installed a disc golf course in Herington. Since then, he has been instrumental in promoting, designing and installing several courses in Kansas, including the one at Rock Springs Ranch, where the Cousins Reunion was held.

While Dennis showed his skills, children and adults at the reunion also took a try at the sport. While the nov-

ices had varied success, they seemed to enjoy the game.

“It’s a game that you can get your exercise and fresh air and it’s cheap and it’s just a great game to do,” Dennis said.

The world record for throwing one of the golf discs is about 800 feet. Holes typically are between 250 and 350 feet and are designed to be par three.

“There are over 1,700 courses scattered throughout the world,” Dennis said. Kansas has 50 courses.

“Every little town that has some nice park area that is under-utilized is a great place to put a disc golf course in,” he said.

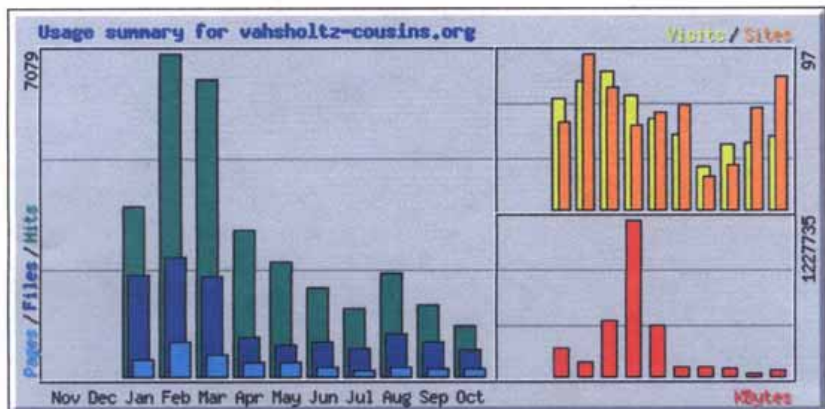
Soon after Dennis started playing disc golf, he started a business called Discs Unlimited to provide discs for him and friends.

“We have a company that merchandises these discs throughout the country and world wide,” Dennis said.

The company sells about 100 different models by five manufacturers. Discs usually sell for between \$7 and \$9, with high-end models selling for up to \$15 per disc.

Dennis said he’s pleased to help others get started in the sport. His whole family helps out.

Visit the company Web site at [www.discsunlimited.net](http://www.discsunlimited.net).



Summary by Month										
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Oct 2006	111	56	16	4	83	49756	45	165	568	1112
Sep 2006	53	25	5	1	63	23562	41	148	736	1540
Aug 2006	74	30	6	1	27	58390	40	187	925	2243
Jul 2006	48	20	4	0	20	66025	26	126	621	1468
Jun 2006	69	26	7	1	65	71816	46	202	744	1934
May 2006	80	22	9	1	60	400702	56	279	684	2489
Apr 2006	106	28	9	2	52	1227735	71	288	865	3205
Mar 2006	216	72	16	2	76	428873	86	482	2174	6488
Feb 2006	252	92	27	2	97	105329	80	761	2600	7079
Jan 2006	142	85	14	2	54	215471	69	371	2226	3698
<b>Totals</b>						<b>2647659</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>3009</b>	<b>12143</b>	<b>31256</b>



## Updated Vahsholtz Web site features reunion highlights

Les Vahsholtz reports that the Vahsholtz Cousins Web Site recently has been updated to reflect the 2006 reunion.

Online, visitors can watch and hear interviews with Dennis Vahsholtz about disc golf (Page 2) and Hank Vahsholtz about water witching (Page 1) and that pesky calf (Page 4).

At left, you can see Les's report on Web stats, tracking visits to the Web site from the launch to mid October.

"Visits" show when someone enters the website. Pages & files shows how visitors use the Web site, surfing from page to page.

Les said: "40 to 80 visits per month may not sound like many, but we only have around 60 to 70 valid email addresses. With so few with Web surfing capability, we're getting some frequent visits."

[www.vahsholtz-cousins.org](http://www.vahsholtz-cousins.org)

## Hattie

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Strong City; Eileen Janik of Emporia; Linda and Jeremy Schaffer of Topeka; David Conroy of Topeka; Rubie Vahsholtz of Emporia; Warren and Sharon Schmidt of Hartford; Connie and Christina

Pitts of Emporia; Gary and Donna Robinson of Reading; Betty Rathke of Emporia; Dan and Diane Hellen of Topeka; David Hellen of Oklahoma City, OK; John Rathke of Springfield, MO; and Ben Rathke of Kimberling City, MO.

## Reunion

### Continued from Page 1

Bridgette Vahsholz and his son, Wolfgang and his wife, Heidi. Martin and Bridgette live in Remagen, Germany. Wolfgang and Heidi live in Cologne, Germany.

At the reunion, stories were shared and photographs were taken of all.

The oldest Vahsholtz present was Hank (Henry) Vahsholtz. Hank's grandfather was Franz Leonard Vahsholtz. (See pages 119-122; 130A

in the "Road from Zwillipp" book for more details.)

Dennis Vahsholtz gave a demonstration of disc golf.

### Those attending the 2006 reunion:

Allan and Martha Brockmeier; Darrell and Madeline Brockmeier; Kent, Marci, Kaden and Karly Buer; Millie and Jack Colvin; Philip and Vickie Colvin; Karen Lane; David Conroy; Jane Devault and Katie Devault Engle; Velora and Ron

Drosselmeyer; Donna Goodman; Eileen Jenek; Mark and Brenda Meuli; Justin and Kristi Meuli; Jesse, Melissa and Jessa Howard; Ryan, Kelli, Katelyn and Benjamin Olson; Rob, Peggy, Kristin, Laura, Robbie, Daniel and Gilberta Scott; Geri and Jim Tate; Dennis, Annetta and Alex Vahsholtz; Merle and Lillie Vahsholtz; Les and Carole Vahsholtz; Hank and Olga Vahsholtz; Fred and Della Fahsholtz; Norwood Vahsholtz; and Arlene Young.

## Pesky calf and Model A Ford don't stop Hank

By Hank Vahsholtz  
As told at the  
2006 Cousins Reunion

We lived on Hwy. 50 five miles west of Emporia. I had this old, kind of a neighbor. He was three or four miles away, but we called him a neighbor. And he was hard up just like we were. But I had a little more together than he did.

He had a few cattle, and when they wanted to sell a cow or a calf or something like that, they would load it in the back end of an old Model A Ford coach they had. A lot of times he'd go by there and the cow or calf would stick its head out of the window.

This one day he come by and of course I'm just like I am now. I always had a lot of stuff around and people would turn their necks to look around. He was sitting there looking around to see what I had, and he drove in the ditch.

That night before we had had a rain and it was muddy, and he got stuck.

Well, he didn't know what to do. He came up and wanted to know if I'd hook up my team of horses and pull him out. I went to the barn and harnessed the horses up and we took the horses out and we went down there and I pulled him out.

In the meantime, the calf stuck his head out of the window and broke the glass. So he jumped out and went down the road.

### Water witching

Continued from Page 1

divining rod and walk. "When the thing goes down, that's where the water is," he said.

When Hank moved to Colorado, he witched wells for people for free. "I said, 'It's a God-given gift, and I won't charge for it,'" Hank said.

His son, Steve, started witching wells about three years ago. "When



Hank Vahsholtz, and his wife, Olga

I said, "I'll tell you what. I've got a saddle horse up there at the barn. I'll saddle that horse up and I'll go down and rope that calf."

OK so I did. I went down and roped that calf. It was about 3/4 of a mile from where he was stuck at. I should have told him to drive the car down there, but I didn't.

It was all the horse could do to pull that calf back up there. The calf weighed about 600 pounds.

We got the calf back in the car, but the window was broken.

The neighbor says, "What'll we do now?"

The only thing I know is I've got a larriat rope on my saddle. We can tie it around the door posts on the car and string that around the broken window and see if we can keep the calf in.

That's what we did.

The neighbor said something about me going to the sale with him, but I said, "I can't."

I said, "You be careful now.

Down the road there you've got to make that S curve. You might fall out of that thing."

We had to leave the door open on the driver's side where the rope was tied.

Sure enough, when he got down to the curves down there, he fell out. He fell out of the darn car. I got on down there and I said, "What in the heck is the matter."

He said, "I just didn't grip the steering wheel tight enough. I fell out."

In the meantime, of course, the calf had got out again. So I roped the calf again, and we drug the calf back up there and got it back in the car. I rearranged the ropes again.

He took off and I went home. But curiosity got the best of me. I had to go to the sale.

The neighbor sat there and waited until the calf came through the sale ring. Times were kind of hard and cattle wasn't bringing much. That calf wasn't bringing enough and he said, "I can't afford to take that for that darn calf."

He bid it in and bought back his own calf. In the meantime, another neighbor came by and said, "I'll haul that calf home for \$10."

He had a heck of a time trying to get the calf in the car, so he finally decided to spend the \$10. He told that old boy to haul the dang calf home. He got it home and the old boy helped him get it in the corral.

Then he says: 'Damn the luck to hell – the luck of the Irish.'

Steve got to witching water for this well digger, I said you're crazy if you don't charge for it," Hank said. "He never has witched a dry well."

Hank said the service of a good dowser (a person who can find underground water) is valuable to a well-digging company. "Steve is saving them a lot of money," he said.

Steve has witched hundreds of wells in the past three years. "A lot

of times he makes more doing that than at his regular job," Hank said.

At age 93, Hank says he doesn't waste his time sitting at home. He's interested in finding water. So when Steve goes out to look for a well, Hank said, "I just go along. Momma goes too. We see some of the goldarndest country you can imagine. People pretty well go to the end of the earth to find a well."