

# PANNEBAKKER FAMILY NEWS



NEWSLETTER OF THE PANNEBAKKER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

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## Leap Year



Who put the leap in leap year? We all know that a leap day is added every fourth year at the end of

February in most presidential election years. But why? The problem is

that the calendar year of 365 days does not correspond exactly to the tropical year of 365.242190 days, the actual time it takes for the Earth to rotate around the sun. Part of a day is left over each year.

Julius Caesar introduced the leap year in the Julian calendar in 46 B.C. It became obvious that the priests in charge of computing the calendar had added leap years every three years instead of the four decreed by Caesar. To correct this error, no more leap years were added until 8 A.D. After that, they were added every fourth year until the Gregorian calendar was introduced.

The Julian calendar, averaged over four years, produced 365.25 days a year, making it too long by .0078 days a year, or roughly three-fourths of a day over a century. From Julius Caesar's time to the 16 century, the first day of spring shifted from March 23 to March 11.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII shifted the calendar to make the first day of spring March 21 and introduced a new system of leap days. Rather than inserting a leap day every fourth year, 97 leap days were introduced every 400 years. The change, averaging 365.2425 days a year, came close to the tropical year.

The Gregorian calendar, which is used almost universally around the world, was fine-tuned. Now, leap days are added every four years except in turn-of-the-century years divisible by 100 but not by 400. Using this rule, 1900 was not a leap year, but 2000 was. The switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar in 1582 required a loss or leap over of 10 days between the actual time of year and the traditional time. The Pope decreed that the day after October 4, 1582, would be October 15, 1582. Much of the populace opposed the change. They feared landlords would cheat them out of a week and a half's rent. The leap-over only affected the Catholic countries of France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and the Catholic country states of Germany. Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland followed in a year or two, while Hungary adopted the leap year in 1587. The rest of Europe did not follow suit for more than a century.

In 1700, the Protestant German countries adopted the Gregorian reform when the calendar trailed the seasons by 11 days. England and the American colonies finally accepted it in 1752, adjusting the calendar by skipping from Wednesday, September 2, 1752, to Thursday, September 14, 1752. The change resulted in widespread riots with the people demanding to be given back the 11 days.

Sweden followed in 1753. Russia did not accept the Gregorian calendar until 1918, when January 18 was followed by February 14. In fact, the Russians and Iranians follow a

more accurate version that will remain synchronized with the Gregorian calendar for thousands of years.

Because leap years are seen as unusual events that disturb the orderly time line, certain folklore and superstitions have been attached to them. Leap years, according to folk traditions, were the only times women could propose marriage to men. This belief was termed "The Ladies' Privilege." It's unclear whether the privilege applies to February 29 only or the whole year.

A variant on the tradition held that a man so entreated either had to accept the proposal or pay the refused woman a substantial forfeit for turning her down, such as a silk gown or 100 pounds. In another twist, if the girl failed to wear a flannel petticoat, which was visible under her dress, the man would be spared both the fine and bad luck that normally followed.

The origins of The Ladies' Privilege are not definitely known, but one version has St. Bridget complaining to St. Patrick about women not being able to ask the men they fancied to marry them. According to folklore, St. Patrick initially offered a seven-year interval, but St. Bridget negotiated it down to four years to coincide with leap year.

## Message From The President

Greetings all!!

We have great news! I have a successor for President of this great organization. Effective on the date this newsletter is published, Mr. Ronald Pennypacker is our new president.

I want to thank him for volunteering to take this task and wish him all the best.

It has been a real pleasure to serve in this capacity for all these years since I succeeded Mr. Jack Pennybacker. I ask the members to lend Ron your support. I'm sure he will take good care of you.

Thank you so much,

Ron Mitchell

### **Editor's Note:**

It has been my extreme pleasure to work with Ron Mitchell over the past years! He has been a tireless worker for the Association, and a good friend. Largely because of Ron's work with the family database, we now have over 47,000 persons in the file. Simply amazing! I salute Ron's commitment to the privacy of those living members listed in the database.

I know that the officers and membership of the Association wish Ron and Carol good health and much happiness in the years to come.

## Message From The New President

Several years ago I decided it was time to retire. Thinking that retirement was an opportunity to sleep late and travel and put my feet in the sand in Myrtle Beach. Those plans were short lived as I realized I was conditioned to awaken at 5:00 am and keep busy with a task, a job, anything to stay off the couch. My immediate goal was to work on the house, and that job, five years later, is still ongoing. One thing that has always interested me is the genealogy of my family. With my brother's encouragement I became more involved in the family association.

I've been asked to assume the position of President of the Pannebakker Family Association, and I'm honored and excited by the chance to increase my participation. I'm looking forward to continuing the outstanding labor or love carried out for years by Ron Mitchell. The family association was truly blessed to have had Ron at the helm. His tireless research and development of family lines has made a tremendous contribution to furthering our knowledge of the origins of our family lineage.

So I don't take too much time introducing myself to everyone, I will make this brief. I live in Upper Dublin Township, Montgomery County, Pa. I'm married to Linda, and together we can take credit for eleven children. I'm a US Army Veteran having served six years. My studies included Humanities through the US Army Worldwide Campus while stationed in the US, France and Germany. For over thirty years I was the Director of Veterans Affairs for Pennsylvania. My appointment with the Governor's Veterans Center allowed me to work with Veterans and their families and was extremely rewarding.

My wife and I travel when we can and yearly make the trek to Myrtle Beach. I'm an avid golfer and enjoy spending the day with my brother Bruce, my son and nephew in constant pursuit of the perfect round. So far we are still searching.

My goals would seem obvious, continue to help make our Association something to be proud of and to grow our membership. With the assistance of all, we will continue to have an Association that enhances our understanding of how we are all connected.

God Bless America.  
Ron Pennypacker

### **The Envelopes** **Bruce Pennypacker**

The following entries are the accounts of our search for the men and women who were serving in the Armed Forces during the general election of 1944. These brave people took the time to mail in their votes, and I'm certain that they had "encouragement" from their superiors. The envelopes for those ballots have survived, and it has been our task to return them to the families of these soldiers and sailors.

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**ROLAND H. STOTT**, b. 14 Aug 1920, d. 3 Aug 1997. U.S. Navy RM 3/c V3.

After some checking I found that Roland was a Radio Man, Third Class in the Special Service Communication Reserve.

Address on the envelope from 1944 is Krewson Terrace, Willow Grove, PA.

Even though Roland was not from Royersford, his envelope caught my attention because of his last name. My father's mother was a Stott. I already had the Stott line in my family genealogy, but there was no Roland. I made a connection through another family tree and found that Roland was a 4<sup>th</sup> cousin.

Through this envelope I've found a whole new line in my family tree and hope to meet with some of my newfound cousins in the future. I mailed the envelope to Roland's daughter.

**HAROLD JOSEPH PANNEPACKER**, b. 8 Jan 1922, d. 10 May 1995. Warrant Officer

Address on the envelope from 1944 is 125 W. Oakdale Avenue, Abington, PA.

Although not from Royersford, he had to be related. There are over 50 different spellings of the family name. I found the son of Harold's cousin through Ancestry. After several emails, I found the phone number of Harold's son. My brother made the call to the family. He had a long conversation, and told me that there were tears of joy. Harold is my 4<sup>th</sup> cousin 1 time removed. I sent his envelope to his son.

**LEON J. ZIEGLER**, b. 30 Jun 1918, d. 17 Jan 1992. Private in the Army.

Address on the envelope from 1944 is Limerick, PA. Limerick is the town next to Royersford and the name Ziegler is a familiar one.

I found Leon through his obituary. The obituary led me to his son. Strange thing about this one is that his son now lives in Royersford, directly across the street from where I lived as a young boy. Small world! I sent his envelope to his son.

**DARWIN O. RAYSOR**, b. 24 Oct 1919, d. 16 Aug 2014. US Army S/Sgt

Address on the envelope from 1944 is P.O. Box 23, Linfield, PA. Linfield is very close to Royersford.

I found Darwin through his obituary. Unfortunately, I missed meeting Darwin by just a few months. His daughter-in-law told me that Darwin was in failing health for about a year, but was always cheery and full of life. Darwin served as an MP in Australia during the war. That's where he met his wife, Opal. Opal is still living and I hope to meet her. Upon further checking, I realized that the name Raysor appears in my family tree. It took some backtracking, but I found that Darwin was my seventh cousin. I sent the envelope to Darwin's daughter-in-law.

# PANNEBAKKER FAMILY NEWS

**WALTER BROWBACK SCHLICHTER**, b. 14 Jun 1921, d. 12 Aug 2007. USNR  
Address on the envelope from 1944 is 401 Walnut Street, Royersford.

I initially thought this one would be easy because I graduated with a girl whose last name was Schlichter and I thought Walter had to be a relative. I called my high school friend and found out that there was no memory of anyone named Walter in her family. I found Walter's obituary on line. The obituary named three children. Now the task was to track down one of the children.

I found Walter's son living in Connecticut and I called him. What a nice guy! We talked for about an hour. He told me some interesting stories about his father's war years, especially about how Walter went AWOL to get married. Walter was stationed in Florida at the time, and got a friend, Mr. Nick, to cover for him at roll call. Walter drove to Philadelphia where he married Jane Barber. He got back undetected, thanks to Mr. Nick.

Many years later, Walter and his family were in a restaurant in Connecticut having dinner. The owner of the restaurant called out to him, "Hey, Mr. Schlichter." Sitting two tables away at the time was Mr. Nick and his family. They hadn't seen or been in contact with each other for many years, but Mr. Nick heard the name and came over to the Schlichter table and started what turned out to be a very long and close renewed friendship.

I sent Walter's envelope to his son, who was excited to show it to his Mom, who is still living.

**HENRY R. MITTERLING**, b. 11 March 1916, d. 2 Sept 2014 Lieutenant JG US Navy  
Address on the envelope from 1944 is 37 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Royersford.

Henry was difficult to track down. There were no family trees on Ancestry that were of any help. I finally found the obituary for Henry's wife. Henry graduated from Susquehanna University after the war and was a teacher for 38 years. From the obituary I learned that Henry had two daughters. His first daughter had died in 2010, but the second daughter was still living. She was thrilled to hear the news about the envelope. I sent the envelope to Henry's daughter.

## *Pannebakker Family Association Web Site*

If you would like a user name and password, you must contact Bruce Pennypacker at, [throwcoach@gmail.com](mailto:throwcoach@gmail.com) and the necessary information will be sent to you.

Below is the URL for the web site:

<http://www.pannebakkerfamilyassociation.com>

## Officers

**President:** Ron Pennypacker

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## Board of Directors

Susan Costantini, Royersford, PA

Patricia Journeay, Lyons, CO

Ron Mitchell, Kewaunee, WI

William Pannapacker, Zeeland, MI

Bruce Pennypacker, Langhorne, PA

Patricia Rutins. Arlinaton. VT

## *Pannebakker Family Association*



The Pannebakker Family Association is an outgrowth of the family reunion held at Pennypacker Mills, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania on July 2-4, 1999.

The reunion celebrated the 300th year wedding anniversary of Hendrick Pannebecker and Eve Umstat, in Germantown, Pennsylvania in the year 1699.

In the words of the Steering Committee of the reunion, "We hope that the 1999 Pfannebecker-Umstat Reunion will lead to the growth of a family association, which will provide a forum for conversation, collection and preservation of information, and a sense of lasting community among the heirs of this rich cultural heritage."