

The German Canadian Cultural Association is the result of the amalgamation agreement of three German clubs, The Friends of Berlin, the Phoenix Club, and the Edelweiss Club which took place in the year of 1983.

I would like to tell you a bit about these three clubs so you will learn the history of this club, in a sense.

The **Phoenix Rotary Club** was started in the 1950s and in 1955 it became a registered social club. At first this club was a traveling club, today they have motor homes, then they had trailers, and they loved to go on trips to the lakes. They purchased the lake property at Lake Isle, and then they bought a small church building where they met to play card games, and occasionally they had a Saturday night dance, i.e. Weinfest.

It was the Phoenix Club that founded the Ladies Choir Wildrose.

The Edelweiss Club is the oldest of the three clubs. The City of Edmonton became a City in 1904 and the Edelweiss Club was the first German club to become a registered club with a Social Club status. During World War 2 the club was closed down. Sometime after the war the club was allowed to reopen again.

The Edelweiss Club bought a club building downtown and established a Dress Code, that meant you could not enter without a shirt, suit and tie. Only members were allowed to come to the club, and guests had to be signed in by a member.

They also established the German language school Edelweiss Schule, where children came from Kindergarten up to grade 10 to learn German, usually on a Wednesday evening. They also had a Soccer Team. Every Saturday there was a dance. Their only problem was that they did not have any parking space for their members.

This Club Edelweiss would have celebrated their 100th birthday on May 6, 2006.

In 1961 the Berlin wall was build by the East Germans which might have been an incentive to found the club **Friends of Berlin** . They chose the name Friends of Berlin because they wanted all Germans to be part of the club and not only people that had immigrated to Edmonton from the city of Berlin. The Friends of Berlin started to meet in the early 60 and became a registered social club in 1962 or 63. The people I asked were not so sure.

The first meeting place was in a basement in the Coop building on 99 Street and 70 , Ave, they met once a month to hold meetings and for dances they went to different clubs, i.e. the legions, Holland Club or Polish hall. In 1972 they purchased a piece of land with a building, close to the CFRN TV station and with the help of a lot of volunteers they reconstructed and changed the building so it would become their club. In 1984 the building of the Friends of

Berlin burned down and the Province of Alberta would not allow them to rebuild. They got money for the place, since the land was supposed to be used for the Anthony Henday Drive, but as we know today, they did not use the land, but rather moved more to the west. They now had money but no club.

The Amalgamation has brought these three clubs together, they would not compete for memberships for each other or for attendance for dances, but rather put their resources together.

There were 4 members of each club who were also part of the EXECUTIVE which looked after purchasing this piece of land, where our club sits now.

They also looked after getting this building up.

On April 26, 1986 the official opening took place and it was a great day and event, when the German Canadian Cultural Centre opened its door.

Today we have around 800 members. Here is what we are today:

Ladies Choir "Wildrose"

Male Choir "Liederkrantz"

Bavarian Schuhplattlers

Alpenspatzen, a children's dance group

Shooting group "Hubertus", the Ladies Circle Germania,

Blauen Funken "Carnival and Mardi gras group originating in Cologne

And the GCCA library, which has German books, German movies on VHS and on DVDs

And the AEGBEE Children German Community library which has about 1500 books available to children, K to Grade 12, taking German free of charge.

Every Friday we have a Dance Social, and of course throughout the year we hold different events, i.e Oktoberfest, Christmas Dances, Christkindl Markets, and New Years Eve Dance.

We run three programs out of the GCCA library from September to April:

Story Telling Hour, once a month

Kino im Klub, or German Movie on the first Wednesday of the month

And German Movie & Popcorn for the children on the last Saturday of the month.

The German Canadian Cultural Association holds the Annual General meeting in March where 12 executive members are elected, and who each have their position. The Club has an operation manager who looks after the business side of the banquets and the restaurants, which help to keep this cultural centre going.

I am now at the end of my presentation. Thank you for listening. Any questions?

Thank you.