February 17, 2002

Dear Fellow Kremenetsers,

It has been quite a while since I have sent out a Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP Update message, so I'd like to take this opportunity to bring you up-to-date on all the things we have been doing in the past year.

Vital Records

The biggest news of the year is that we have obtained from the LDS all of the Kremenets Jewish Vital Records that they have microfilmed. At our request, our LDS contacts obtained Church approval and then Ukraine Archives approval to digitize the seven rolls of microfilm; They put the ledger images on cd-rom and provided the cd-rom set to us ... all at no cost to us. This greatly reduces our copying and mailing costs. More important, it makes the work of our translators/transliterators a bit easier. Now a translator can magnify the ledger page images, improving his/her ability to read the handwritten ledger entries. And, using a split screen on a monitor, the ledger page can appear on one part of the screen and our data input template on the other. The terms of agreement with the LDS and Ukraine Archives does impose some restrictions on us, however. The most important restrictions are (1) we can not make the image files generally available; They can go only to our translators, and (2) we have 2 years to complete our work on the files. All results will be freely available, so we have no restrictions on posting the results to our website and to JRI-Poland. We are deeply indebted to Wayne Metcalfe and Brent Griffiths of the LDS for shepparding our proposal through the approval process, and to Steve Valentine for getting the cd-roms produced and delivered to us.

Side Note: The Belarus SIG and the Litvak SIG obtained similar agreements with the LDS about the same we did.

Volunteers Needed: Now that we have the cd-roms, we need a few volunteers to "index" them. You don't need to know Russian or Hebrew to do this.
Let me explain. Each cd-rom contains the image files from one of the seven rolls of microfilm. Each image file is sequentially numbered. Each numbered file shows two ledger pages, a Russian page and the corresponding Hebrew/Yiddish page. The left columns on each page sequentially number the female and male births or deaths, or the marriages that occurred in that year. We need to index which numbered events appear in each image file. To do this, all you have to do is record the numbers in the left-hand columns for each page. I have done some of this indexing and have developed a data template to record the results. It is tedious work, but pretty straightforward. We need volunteers to complete this task. This is what you will need if you volunteer:

- a computer with a cd-rom drive (We will provide you with the cd-rom containing the data to be indexed.)

an imaging program on your computer that allows you to view the .tif images from the cd-rom (Microsoft Picture-It and Microsoft Photo Editor both work. Photo Editor is on the Microsoft Office cd-rom, but it requires separate installation.)

- a word processing program in which you can load the data input template. (We will provide you with the template and with a file showing the data that has been input to date.)

Indexing will allow us to locate, quickly, the file containing any particular record. If you can help, or if you have any questions about what is involved, please contact me (rondoctor@earthlink.net).

Vital Records translalations that have been completed: Until now, we have relied entirely on our fellow Kremenetsers to work as volunteer translators/transliterators. About a dozen of you have stepped forward to help. As a result, we have completed initial translation of the 1870 birth records, and the 1870 through 1872 death records, a total of 974 records out of the 15,000 we have. I'm sorry to say that I've been a bottleneck in getting the actual records on-line to the JRI-Poland site. However, we are taking steps to accelerate this effort. In the meantime, we have posted the surnames that appear in these records. They appear on the Kremenets section of the JRI-Poland website. Go to http://www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl/jripldat.htm. Scroll down the list until you get to Kremenets. There you will find the Surname List. It is indexed to indicate where in each source the surname was found.

Together with names obtained from our Yizkor Book translations (see below), we now have identified more than 1,500 names. Of those there are 415 different surnames and 257 different given names.

In addition to the names of people, we are extracting the names of towns mentioned in the vital records, and indexing where in the records they are mentioned. So far, we have a list of 47 different towns, most of them fairly close to Kremenets. We will make this list available to our Kremenetser group in the near future.

Many thanks to our volunteer translators: **Al Bell, Yael Driver, David Dubin, Gary Khusidman, Rick Liftig, Peggy Pearlstein,** and **Alan Shuchat** for leading the way on these translations, and to **Adam Bronstein** for translating the column headings..

Using Professional Translators for Vital Records Translations: Translating/transliterating the vital records has turned out to be much more difficult and time consuming than we anticipated. (Ask any of our volunteers about this!) Reading the old, handwriting is hard, despite the transliteration aides we have developed, so progress has been steady, but slow.

Now we are considering supplementing our volunteers with paid professional translators. Sheree Roth, Co-Coordinator of the CO-OP, is working to identify suitable professionals and to determine the lowest reasonable cost to get this work done. So far she has been in touch with 46

translators. She has received bids ranging from $.17 to $5.00 per single record. (Do the math ... That's a lot of money!)

Sheree will soon let you know what the results of this search are. Be sure to look for her message. If we can hire several professional translators we will be able to complete this part of the vital records translation in a timely manner, and all of us will have a better chance of extending our ancestral lines back to the 1850s and perhaps even earlier.

Yizkor Book Translation Project

As most of you know, in the two decades after World War 2, the Organization of Kremenets Emigrants published two Yizkor Books, one in Tel Aviv in 1954, the other in Buenos Aires in 1965. Our translation efforts have been focused on the Tel Aviv book. So far, we have translated about 110 pages of the 454 page book. The translation is on-line, complete with included figures and photos, at the JewishGen Yizkor Book website (http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/kremenets/kremenets.html). An addition to the translation was posted in early February, so if you haven't been to the website recently, be sure to visit and peruse the book. When you do, be sure to take a look at the Names Index, which we added to the translation to help you find people listed in the book. We also have included names from this and other Kremenets Yizkor Books in the Kremenets Surname List on JRI-Poland.

Many thanks to **Rob Goldstein**, **Aya Betensky**, **David Dubin**, **Rabbi and Mrs. Ben Friedman**, **Sari Havis, Jack Horbal, Barbara Lipkin, Thia Persoff, Elliott Raisen, Aviv Tzur, and Steve Wien** for contributing translations to the Yizkor Book project. In addition, we owe thanks to **Shalom Bronstein, Jules Feldman, David Goldman, Alan Hirshfeld, and David Wilk** for their translation assistance on the project.

Thanks to **Peter Kardon**, we now have the Buenos Aires Yizkor Book digitized and on cd-rom. In the next few months we will consider ways to distribute this book to our members, as well as the pages of the Tel Aviv book we have digitized and translated so far. To raise money for completing these translations, it has been suggested that we offer copies of the cd-rom to those who make some (as yet undesignated) minimum contribution to the Kremenets Yizkor Book project. I would like to hear your thoughts on this proposal, and on what the contribution should be. If you have any comments, please send them to me at rondoctor@earthlink.net.

The Booklet Series: In addition to the two Yizkor Books, from 1967 through 1982 the Organization of Kremenets Emigrants, published a series of at least 18 booklets. Most of them were titled, Kol yotzei Kremenits b'Yisrael v'batfutsot (Voices of those who departed Kremenets, in Israel and the Diaspora). The booklets were published in Tel Aviv and distributed to Kremenetsers worldwide through representatives in New York, Buenos Aires, and Winnipeg. **Norm Kagan**, whose father, **William Kagan**, was the New York representative of the Kremenets landsmanshaft has donated copies of all booklets he had to the CO-OP and to YIVO. We have added these Booklets (each 50 to 70 pages long) to our list of items to be translated.

However, several of the published Booklets are missing from our collection. They are Booklets #3 through #7, #9, #13, and #17, plus any numbered greater than #18. If any of you have one of these missing Booklets in your possession, I ask you to make a copy and send it to me, so that we can get it translated.

Other towns that appear in the Kremenets Yizkor Books: Several towns near Kremenets either have Yizkor Books of their own, or are included in one of the Kremenets Yizkor Books.

- **Pochayev** (Pitshayev, 50° 01'/25° 29', 11.8 miles WSW of Kremenets) is included in the Buenos Aires book. In addition, there is separate Yizkor Book for Pochayev. A partial translation, with a Name Index, is on the JewishGen Yizkor Book site. (http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pochayev/pochayev.html)
- **Shumsk** (Szumsk, Shumskoye; 50 07 N / 26 07 E, 17.8 miles E. of Kremenets) is included in the title and content of the Booklets beginning with Booklet 16 in 1979. In addition, there is separate Yizkor Book for Szumsk. A partial translation is on the JewishGen Yizkor Book site (http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/szumsk/szumsk.html).
- **Vyshgorodok** (Vishgorodek, 49° 46'/25° 58', 25.6 miles SSE of Kremenets) is included in the Buenos Aires book.
- **Yampol'/Tikhomel'** (49° 58'/26° 15', 25.4 miles ESE of Kremenets) has a separate Yizkor Book. It is on the JewishGen Yizkor Book site. (http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/yampol/Yampol.html)

Please advise me of any other Yizkor Books you know of that are for towns in the Kremenets area. It is important to recognize that our ancestors moved around quite a bit, and the Yizkor Books for nearby towns may have information about Kremenets families.

Kremenets ShtetLinks Website

Sheree Roth and her son Max have put forth a tremendous effort to create and then expand our Kremenets ShtetLinks website. If you haven't visited it recently, point your web browser to http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Kremenets/. You are in for a delightful treat. The website now has separate sections featuring:

- **General Information**, including Questions and answers about the Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP; Past updates about our activities, a brief history of Kremenets, a map of the Russian Empire, a description of the Kremenets Jewish Cemetery from the IAJGS Cemeteries Project, and a Biography of Isaac Stern from The Violin Multimedia Encyclopedia.
- **Reports produced by modern day Kremenetsers**, including a travel report by Beth Miller, and a letter about the New York City Kremenitzer Volyner Society submitted by Norm Kagan.
- **Kremenets records and name lists**, including, an article I wrote describing birth and death patterns in the vital records of Kremenets, Al Bell's guides for translating the Kremenets vital records, our initial inventory of the Kremenets Jewish vital records that appear on microfilms held by FHL, and the current Surname List from Kremenets Vital Records and Yizkor Books.

- **Translations of the Yizkor Books**. Go here to find web links to our current translations of the Kremenets Yizkor Books.

- **The Kremenets Photo Gallery** now has three sections: (1) Photos of Kremenets, (2) Photos of Kremenetsers, and (3) Do you know these people?

Many thanks to Kremenetsers **Norm Kagan and David Goldenberg** and to Polish photographer **Radek Orski** for donating their photos to the Kremenets Photo Gallery.

If you have travelled to Kremenets and have written about your trip, please submit your report to us so that we can put it on the website. If you can help identify any of the people shown in the Do you know these people? section of our Photo Gallery, please contact Sheree (ssroth@pacbell.net). And if you have photos of Kremenets, please submit them to Sheree so that we can put them on the website.

New Activities

The more we do, the more there is to do! That basic truth applies to our Kremenets activities as well as to other activities we engage in. Let me outline some of the projects on our "to-do" list.

Kremenets Jewish Cemetery Project. Remarkably, the Jewish Cemetery in Kremenets has survived. Not only that, the Cemetery includes readable tombstones dating back to the 16th century. The Center for Jewish Art in Jerusalem reports that the old section of the Kremenets Jewish cemetery, although in a "state of deterioration" contains 120 tombstones from the 16th to 18th centuries (50 from the 16th century, and 70 from the 17th and 18th century). They report, "Some of the tombstones are crumbling and engravings [are] legible on seventy-five percent of the remaining tombstones."

As Kremenetsers, this cemetery represents a very important part of our heritage. As a group, I would like to see us commit to a cemetery documentation, restoration, and preservation project. We need to do the following:

- Find out what documentation the Center for Jewish Art in Jerusalem has for the Kremenets and Yampol cemeteries. I have been unsuccessful so far in getting them to give me any information. **We need a volunteer in Israel to go to the Center and determine what documentation and photos they have and how we can obtain copies.**
- Document the cemetery. Get readable photos of all tombtones and translate them. Map the location of each tombstone. This should supplement whatever documentation the Center for Jewish Art already has done.
- Arrange for restoration of the cemetery.
- Arrange for ongoing maintenance of the cemetery.

This will be a major project. **We need a volunteer to manage the Kremenets Jewish Cemetery Project,** and we need volunteers to work on this project. **If you can help, please contact me** (rondoctor@earthlink.net). I will be going to Kremenets in September of this year

and will try to find out what local arrangements might be possible. And, I will try to assess the scope of the documentation, restoration and maintenance that needs to be done.

Digitize the Tel Aviv Yizkor Book and the Booklets that we have. As I mentioned earlier, Peter Kardon has digitized the Buenos Aires Yizkor Book. We also need to digitize the Tel Aviv book and the various Booklets in our possession. So, we need a volunteer with a scanner and with access to the books. Will you help?

Check YIVO's files for documents referring to Kremenets. We have copies of the documents that Norm Kagan submitted from his father's files. However, there are likely to be other documents in the YIVO collection. We need a volunteer from the New York area to do a search, identify, and copy mission. If you are interested in taking this on, please contact me.

Extract Kremenets entries from the Ellis Island Database (EIDB). One of our members, Mark Baich, has done this, at least partially. However, he has run into copyright issues. We need a volunteer who is skilled in copyright issues to help us get permission to make available to our members the names we extract from the EIDB. Please contact me if you can help.

Vital Records CD-Rom Indexing Project. Please see the description of this project near the beginning of this message. We need several people to work on this, so, if you can help, please contact me.

I know it is almost trite to say this, but we are living in a remarkable period of time, a time when Jewish genealogical resources are becoming available that we could only dream about a few years ago. In tapping these resources to expand our knowledge about our Kremenets ancestors, we can be helpers or takers. Jewish genealogy has expanded so rapidly because so many of us are helpers, willing to volunteer our time and skills to help expand and deepen the resource bases that we all use. The Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP needs your help now. Will you volunteer to help on one of these projects?

Ron Doctor and Sheree Roth
Co-Coordinators, Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP