



# WOLFENSBERGER

Newsletter of the Wolfensberger Family Association

August 2004

Vol. X, No. 3

Page 1

## W F A Approaches 10th Anniversary

### PRESIDENT'S LETTER.....

by Myrna Bingham Liddell, Pres.  
Dear WFA Family,

Happy summer to you all! We hope you are able to attend some family reunions this summer and fall.

First, thank you to all who responded to our picture query, which was submitted by **Bonnie Wolfenbarger** of Republic, Missouri. We are enjoying the comparison photos as we continue to identify the family of **John Melton Wolfenbarger, Sn.** and **Jn.** Every family has a few mysteries, and this one is no exception. John Melton Wolfenbarger, Sn. is a brother to our own ancestor, so we have a special interest in this effort, as well.

Great news! A new member of the WFA, Allen Rasmussen, of Magna, Utah, has introduced us to a whole new line of Wolfensberger descendants who came to America about June of 1875, going first to Wisconsin, and later to Utah. The ancestors who came was **Eliese Brandenburger**, great granddaughter of **Elsbeth Wolfensberger** and **Hans Heinrich Waeber**,

(cont. page 6 )

### Ten Years of Rich Family History Told in Wolfensberger Newsletter

by Bob Wolfenbarger, WFA Past Pres. & Past Newsletter Editor

**I**n a telephone conference call in December 1994, eight members of the worldwide Wolfensberger family formed a nonprofit family association to promote interest in our 700-year history. In that historic call, the founders voted to create an active voice for the association.

Ten years ago the voice of the Wolfensberger Family Association, our newsletter *Wolfensberger*, was first published as a means of intensifying communications among family members in the U.S. and elsewhere who descended from a 14<sup>th</sup> Century Swiss knight.

Since then the *Wolfensberger* newsletter has been distributed to the Association's hundreds of active members each quarter. Like the first issue, each issue blends a history of the family, invitations to family reunions, stories of interesting ancestors, and exchanges of genealogical information, with news of our Association.

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### Editor's Notes.....

by Richard Evans

As noted in the May Newsletter, the Wolfensberger Family Association is completing its 10th year of existence. During our Board Meeting on June 27th, the Board discussed what we could do to observe this great occasion. WFA President Myrna Liddell asked Board members to give some thought to how we might best celebrate our 10th year since Larry Jones and a few others got together to form the WFA and began by issuing our first newsletter in January 1995. For an organization such as ours which is spread across America and includes members in Switzerland, we need to find a way that we can all celebrate our anniversary year. I ask all our members to send their suggestions to our President, Secretary, Treasurer or the Newsletter Editor at the addresses shown in recent issues of the *Wolfensberger* Newsletter. Please let us hear from you!

One of the things that makes the *Wolfensberger* interesting is the articles about various members of the family. We appreciated hearing from the descendants of O. F. Wolfenbarger about their ancestor and his accomplish-

(cont. page 6)

**Wolfensberger Family Association  
Officers & Directors - 2004**

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Houston, TX

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Bauma, Switzerland

## MEMBERSHIP NOTES:

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!....**The WFA sends birthday greetings to WFA member Ina VIGENS of Choteau, MT who is celebrating her 83rd birthday. Ina is a descendant of George WOLFENBARGER who went to Montana from Missouri in 1888. Daughter Donna (Vigens) ANDERS of Quanah, TX sent us the information about Ina's birthday event.



Ina VIGEN (r. front) poses with her two sisters, Velda Vial (l. front) and June Vance (l. back) and Bert Bowers at the Wolfenbarger reunion two years ago in Lincoln, MT.

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**[www.wolfensberger.org](http://www.wolfensberger.org)**

Donna also reports her brother James Ross and his wife Sherry and her sister Pam Kramer and her husband Clarence celebrated their 25th anniversaries in June this year. Donna also sent along a picture of her son Kenneth Joseph FRIGGE and her grand-daughter Kasandra Ann FRIGGE who was born Jan. 23, 2003. (cont. on page 8)

## WOLFINBARGER MARKS 75 YEARS OF SERVICE

### Chino business was built from the ground up!



Olin F. and Jessie Wolfinbarger  
Starting out in California



After retirement

WHEN Olin Farrell and Jessie (Crabaugh) Wolfinbarger came to California from Arkansas in 1929, he might not have had the look of a man who would start a business that would last 75 years. It was the first year of a 10 year western migration that brought 400,000 Dust Bowl residents to the promised land in California looking to put down roots for a fresh start in life. He probably made at least part of the journey - even though Route 66 had opened three years earlier - over unpaved roads. In those days, there wasn't a lot of pavement west of Albuquerque and east of San Bernardino.

In 1929 Herbert Hoover was in the White House, Babe Ruth was setting home run records and Charles Lindbergh was the toast of a nation. But it really wasn't that different from today's world. Success was out there for a man who didn't mind getting his hands dirty.

Olin is long gone - he died in 1986 and grandson Randy runs the family business - but O.F. Wolfinbarger Inc. has been selling soil, soil mixes and landscaping materials in the Chino Valley for three generations

"We're pretty proud of that," said Randy, who says he takes care of the "office part" while brother Jerry Jr. runs the "out side part." The business has changed a lot since 1929, when O.F. started out by hauling loads of hay to the dairies and working as a part time milker. "He also used to set gopher traps," Randy said. "They paid him a few cents for every gopher he caught." It wasn't long before he saw another need, so he put side racks on his pickup truck so that he could haul manure out of the dairies and sell it as fertilizer. When he removed the fertilizer, it left holes in the ground, so he trucked in dirt and sold it to the dairies to fill the holes. (Cont. page 4)



Wolfenbarger family members (l.to r.) are Jerry, Sr., Jerry, Jr., Butch and Randy at the O. F. Wolfenbarger Inc. business in Chino, CA. Sons and grandchildren are shown atop the loader in the background.

Picture from the Inland Valley Bulletin of 6/16/04

### O. F. Wolfenbarger...(cont. from page 3)

Life was tough in the 1930s and O.F. was looking to do whatever he could to earn money and support his family. "My grandfather always told me, 'No matter how hard times are, you just keep working,'" Randy said. "He'd say the harder you work, the easier it gets."

"I was driving a truck through the groves when I was 5 years old," Jerry said. "I was more or less brought up in the company, and I learned as I went." He and his brothers learned about the value of maintaining relationships. A man named Oliver Maxwell came into the office recently and told Jerry that his father had been the first man ever to buy a load of fertilizer from O.F. back in 1929. "He told me my dad sent his dad a box of cigars at Christmas," Jerry said. "Every year for the rest of his life. That was just like my dad."

The company's biggest customers are nurseries, and Wolfenbarger's has been dealing with Colorama Wholesale Nursery in Azusa for more than 25 years. Colorama buys several truck-loads of dirt a week, and much of it has to be mixed to very specific recipes. "I have known these guys since 1970," said owner Richard Wilson. "I give them the recipes and they mix them perfectly. They have always done a good job for me and they stand by their products."

Wilson knew the family patriarch and praised him highly as well. "Olin was the salt of the earth," he said.. "He started a business and raised a big family. He understood what it takes to work hard, and every succeeding generation in the family is the same. They're like the people who started this country, the pioneers. That's how I saw Olin".

While all the sons and grandsons have gone into the company, some of them tried other things for a while. "I took a 15-year break," Jerry Jr. said. "I drove a truck. I guess it was just too much family. My dad and my Uncle Butch did the same thing, but something always drew us back." Stephanie is another member of the third generation of Wolfenbargers. She has been the office manager for 11 years, and she has seen boom times and slow ones. "We weren't that busy during the recession in the early '90s," she said. "But now, with the economy booming, we have grown back to where we were before."

Where they are today is heading toward a fourth generation and a second century. Randy's sons Michael and RJ., and Jerry Jr.'s sons David, Steven and Dustin have all spent summers working for the company, and one day, they'll run it.

Their challenges will be very different from those their greatgrandfather faced. Several million people live in an area that was wide open when that Model T finished its cross-country journey in 1929.

(cont. page 5)



**O. F. Wolfinbarger.....** (cont. from page 4)

More, than three times as many people live within 100 miles of Wolfinbarger's than lived in the entire state of California in 1929.

The family no longer lives in the home O.F. built. It's only an office now. But the company still strives to operate under the same principles O.F. did in the early years. "He was absolutely one of a kind," Randy said. "He was a very hard worker, always working. An awful lot of people around here liked and respected him, and a lot of them still come in to this day."

All because back when California was young, a kid from Arkansas didn't mind getting a little dirty. O.F. and Jessie had five sons and two daughters, all of whom are still alive. Not all of them went into the business, but enough did that the company remains strong. James, also known as Butch, is the only one of O.F.'s sons still working. Gene, Jack, Jerry and O.F. Jr. are retired. Daughters Judy and Janalee pursued careers outside the company. Olin Jr. and Vera live in Blythe, CA; Gene and Lucinda live in Fontana, CA; Jerry and Mary, James, Jay Dee and Janalee, Jack and Arlene live in Chino, CA; and Frank and Judy live in Knightsen, CA. The family has grown to 33 grandchildren, 56 great-grandchildren and 24 great-great-grandchildren and still growing.

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*Editor's Note....Much of the above text is from an article appearing in the Inland Valley Bulletin on June 16, 2004 which was sent me by Stephanie Wolfinbarger of Chino CA. Other information, including the photos of Olin and Jessie Wolfinbarger, was supplied by WFA member Gene Wolfinbarger of Fontana, CA. Jerry Wolfinbarger, Jr. is also a WFA member. We certainly appreciate their sharing this family information with us. Both Gene Wolfinbarger, a WFA member, and Stephanie Wolfinbarger contributed to this article. Perhaps other of the O. F. Wolfinbarger descendants will now want to join the Wolfensberger Family Association to support this great family group. And wouldn't a WFA family flag look great in the office of O. F.'s business. RLE*

**10 Years of History.....**(cont. from page 1)

That first issue announced the formation of the association and the appointment of directors. It told of the election of Larry Jones of Oklahoma City as the fulltime unpaid executive director of the WFA in late 1994. It also told of the family's early history based upon Jones' English translation of the introduction to the *Deutsche Schweizerishes Geschlechterbuch*, a 1929 German language genealogical history containing the first published account of the family.

The first *Wolfensberger* newsletter also offered U.S. members, most of who had never visited their ancestral home in Switzerland, a sense of their roots in Bauma, a modest Swiss village in northeastern Zurich canton. Later newsletters told of memorials Association members built in places important to the family's travels. Today, the Association has two major memorial sites: Schafferstown, Pennsylvania, where the first European immigrants lived after crossing the Atlantic; and Bauma, Switzerland, where the family originated.

Announcing reunions has always been part of the newsletter' role, and our first edition invited members to come to events in Tennessee, Texas, Kentucky, Missouri, and Virginia.

The Newsletter is also mailed to a number of libraries and Genealogical Societies.

A prominent article by Larry Jones told of Benjamin Wolfenbarger, grandson of the first Wolfensbergers to settle in the U.S., whose 4,000 to 5,000 descendents were believed to be the most numerous in the family.

The newsletter also announced members of the first WFA Board of Directors, 12 volunteer family members who met – and still meet – by telephone conference calls every four months. Members of our 1995 board included Bonnie Aspenson, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Larry Jones, Oklahoma City, Myrna Liddell; Langley, Washington; Ivylyn Martin, Mt. Airy, N.C.; Vernon Osborn, Magnolia, Texas; Weldon Parks, Lewisville, Texas, and John W. Sparger, Marion, Virginia. (Cont. on page 6)

## 10 Years of History....(cont. from page 5)

Members also included John W. Sparger, Marion, Virginia; James Sparger, Waynesville, Ohio; Shirley Sutphen, Montrose, Colorado; Bob Wolfenbarger, Summit, New Jersey; Wolf Wolfensberger, Syracuse, New York and William W. Wolfensberger, Winchester, Virginia.

Over the years, the Wolfensberger newsletter has reported stories about some of our most important ancestors, including some who were key players in the nation's history. Our ancestors can trace their service to the country back to the French and Indian War and Revolutionary War. At least two were generals in World War II.

Today the newsletter still serves as the voice of the Association. Members are strongly encouraged to share stories and pictures of their family or a prominent ancestor with readers. People with stories and pictures should contact the newsletter editor, Richard L. "Buzz" Evans, at 10903 Holly Springs Dr., Houston, Texas 77042. His email address is revans45@swbell.net.

In recent years, the newsletter has been augmented by an Internet website at [www.wolfensberger.org](http://www.wolfensberger.org). Contact WFA Secretary David E. Wolfensberger, 768 Chain Ridge Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63122, for information about this site.

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## Editor's Notes..... (cont. from page 1)

ments in establishing a thriving business that has been handed down to succeeding generations in the Chino area of Southern California. I am sure there are many other family stories out there that our readers would find interesting and informative.

As Editor of the *Wolfensberger*, I am delighted to meet with our readers to develop stories about our ancestors and invite you to write me at 10903 Holly Springs Dr., Houston, TX 77042 or e-mail at revans45@swbell.net or by phone at 713 977-4748. I'll be glad to help you in preparing family history stories. RLEvans

## President's Letter.....

(cont. from page 1)

residents of Wetzikon, Zurich, Switzerland.

**Elsbeth Wolfensberger** is the daughter of **Rudolf Wolfens-berger** and **Barbara Stauber**, whose lineage descends from **Hans Wolfensberger, aka "Bumann"**, born about 1560, whose descendants are found in the *Deutsch-Schweizerisches Geschlechterbuch*, Vol 4 [and *Duetsches Geschlechterbuch*, vol. 65]. This **Hans Wolfensberger** is one of the "**Unhang/ Relatives**" that the researcher for the Wolfensberger volume of the *Geschlechterbuch* was unable to find further documented connection back to the original Wolfensberger families of Switzerland. However, the researcher knew they were relatives, along with 8 other family lines including their descendants.

In additon, this family line connects through another Wolfensberger line, as descendants of **Hans Wolfensberger, 1579** and **Barbara Kindlimann** through their daughter **Anna Wolfensberger** who married **Heinrich Wolfensberger**, born 1620 in Wetzikon, Zurich, Switzerland.

Allen has also done the extensive research to "verify" each family ancestor of his Wolfensberger lines, by researching parish records, one by one. The good news is, he found no error in the Wolfensberger *Geschlechterbuch* research. This is a sweet confirmation of the dedicated work Paul Wolfensberger, of Switzerland who submitted to C. A. Starke Publishers, who printed Volumes 4, and 65 for the Wolfensberger family of Bauma, Zurich, Switzerland.

Allen's great grandmother came to America for religious reasons. He also has other Swiss ancestry through the Spaenhaur line of Basel, Switzerland.

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## JOHN WOLFENBERGER of Bureau, Ill. Buys a rifle in 1871!

by Charlotte Lucas, WFA member, Tulso, OK

Our relatives turn up in the most unexpected places.

I worked for Tandy Leather Company here in Tulsa for ten years before leaving the company in 1996. Some of our customers collected antique firearms and would buy leather to make cases. All of my "regulars" knew that I was working on my family genealogy and that my maiden name was Wolfenbarger.

Recently, while going through some of my files, I came across the ad shown below that one of my customers brought me some years ago. I had forgotten that I had it. The ad is from a page from a Walt Moreau catalog. The ad shows that John Wolfenberger of Bureau, Illinois in 1871, bought a Sharps rifle Serial No. C53451. Look at the price this rifle brings today! I wonder what John paid for it when he ordered it in 1871.

Who are this John's father and mother? Are any of his descendants members of the WFA? Let us hear from you if you know about John.

In addition to the telephone number, there is also an address for the Walt Moreau Co. P. O. Box 14764, San Francisco, Ca. 94114.

Like I said, you never know where one of our ancestors will turn up!

## President's Letter.....

(cont. from page 6)

Allen found us on the Internet. Please share our Internet website with the members of your extended family: [www.wolfensberger.org](http://www.wolfensberger.org) We may be able to find more families who have come to America as you do so.

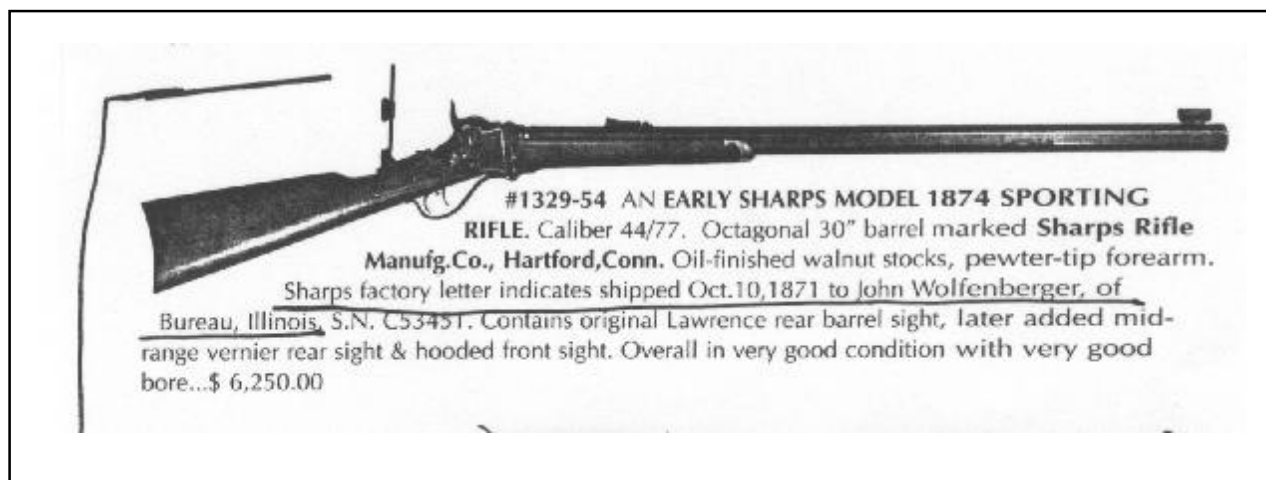
Thank you to Allen, and all the other researchers, who are keeping us "connected to our Cousins" as Larry Jones, our founder and first president would say.

We're looking forward to our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary next January 2005, and have asked our Vice-president, and newsletter editor to chairman the event's commemoration.

Thank you to those of you who have helped create family reunions this year for the Wolfensberger and Sparger/Spargur family lines.

Myrna Bingham Liddell, President

PS: If you have trouble reaching our web site using the address shown in the newsletter, try using the complete address--  
<http://www.wolfensberger.org/pages/543123/index.htm>



## Membership Notes....

(Cont. from page 2)



Kenneth Joseph FRIGGE and daughter, Kasandra Ann . Kenneth is the son of Donna Anders of Quannah, TX

## New Members.....

The following have become members of the WFA since the May newsletter:

Ervin DALTON, Monroe, OH Wolfenbarger

Leila DECKER, River Oaks, TX, Wolfenbarger

Greg VANICE, Salem, OR , Spargur

Mike WOLFENBARGER, Thorn Hill, TN

Joyce BROWNING, Reston, VA, Sparger

## Okla. Ancestor's Fair.....

In Grove, Oklahoma at the Ancestor Fair, on May 8, 2004. Charlotte Lucas helped a friend Annette Hixenbaugh, represent Scotland and helped attendees learn if their surname was Scottish or Irish. Annette let Charlotte have the end of one table for her Wolfenbarger genealogy display. She didn't run into any "cousins" but the Coat of Arms was a sensation! Everyone came by and asked about it.

Next to their table was the Muskogee Genealogical Society. When Charlotte told them about William Sylvester Wolfenbarger being an early resident of Oklahoma, they invited her to have a booth at the Ancestor's Fair on September 25th. Charlotte hopes to have the grandest booth of them all! She will display the new Wolfensberger flag and a tabletop size Swiss flag. She will also have four maps: Canton Zurich, Castle Wolfensberg site, migration to Alsace, and immigration to the Colonies which Larry Jones sent her several years ago.

She hopes to display pictures of the Swiss dedication on the Wolfsberg and the memorial stone in Pennsylvania. She will also have Dr. William Bell's booklet and the history of our family from our web site as well as other pages from our website. The history from our website has the Wolfensberger immigrations that Dr. Bell's booklet doesn't. And if possible, she would like to have a copy of Myma Liddell's translation on display. Below are the details for the Muskogee Ancestor's Fair.

If you're in the Muskogee, OK area in September, drop by the Ancestor's Fair and say hello.

## Muskogee Oklahoma Ancestor Fair

Sponsored by: Muskogee Genealogical Society and the Muskogee Public Library

Date: September 25,2004

Place: Muskogee Public Library - 801 W. Okmulgee - Muskogee, Oklahoma

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Admission: Free

## Visit the WFA Web Site

@

<http://www.wolfensberger.org/pages/543123/index.htm>





### **WOLFENSBERGER MEDALLIONS are still available!**

To obtain one of these heavy pewter medallions to mark a grave, decorate your door or use as a paper weight, send \$25.00 to WFA Treas. Al Creasy for each one. (Price includes postage). For shipment to Europe, ask Al Creasy for prices.)



### **WOLFENSBERGER CLOTH PATCH**

We have a supply of the Wolfensberger cloth patch you received when you became a member of the WFA. If you would like to have another for your new jacket, send \$2.00 (includes postage) to WFA Treas. Al Creasy for each one desired



### **WOLFENSBERGER FAMILY FLAGS are available!**

The 32X48 in. flag is now available for shipment.

Decorate your entry-way or den with this beautiful flag! Send \$37.00 to WFATreas. Al Creasy for each one. (The price includes postage)



### **WFA MEMORIAL DEDICATION VIDEO**

This VHS cassette of the ceremony on the Wolfsberg near Bauma, Switzerland in

Sept. 2001 is still available. Send \$10.00 for each one to WFA Treas. Al Creasy. (Price includes postage)

## **NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE ON LINE!**

At the Board meeting June 27th, the delivery of the Wolfensberger Family Association Newsletter by e-mail was discussed and approved. Any WFA member who has a computer that is "ON-LINE" and has the software Adobe Reader may request to receive the Newsletter by e-mail. There are several advantages to receiving your *Wolfensberger* this way. First, it is cheaper. There is no expense to this method of delivery. Next, it is faster. Further, many of the photos in the newsletter are in color which does not come out in the printing as color copies are MUCH MORE expensive than B & W copies.

There are several considerations to receiving the newsletter via e-mail. You must have an e-mail address and a mail box large enough to receive the newsletter file, which usually runs about 200-500 KB in size. The size depends on the number of pictures in the issue. Your computer must have the Adobe Reader software installed as the newsletter will be sent as a .pdf file which can be opened by the Adobe Reader. We recommend you have the latest version of Adobe Reader. To print copies of good quality, you will need a good printer. Dot matrix and other older printers will not produce good quality pictures even though the text will be satisfactory.

To receive the *WOLFENSBERGER* by e-mail, just write WFA Treasurer Al Creasy at 500 Beau Valley Lane, Tryon, NC 28782, by e-mail at [trebla1@alltel.net](mailto:trebla1@alltel.net), or phone at 828 859-0208 and request to be changed to e-mail delivery.

If, after making the change, you should you decide that you want to change back to again receive the newsletter via USPS, just let Al Creasy know.

Adobe Reader software is free at the Adobe web site at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com). Click on the Adobe Reader label which will take you to the Adobe Reader page. Follow the downloading

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**WOLFENSBERGER FAMILY ASSOCIATION**  
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**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

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## **Newsletter on Line!....**

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instructions to install the READER on your computer. When you receive the e-mail with the newsletter attached, save the newsletter attachment on your hard drive. Note where the newsletter .pdf file is saved. Then click on OPEN. Your computer should find the Adobe Reader software and open the newsletter. You can then print the newsletter on your printer in B & W or in Color as you wish.

RLE



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the Beautiful