
Der Neue Pennsylvanische Staatsbote

A Publication of The German Society of Pennsylvania, founded in 1764

Summer 2003

Der Generalkonsul
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
The Consul General
of the Federal Republic of Germany

New York, 19. Mai 2003

German Society of Pennsylvania
z.H. Frau Annke Farago
Philadelphia

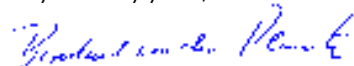
Dear President Freitag,
Dear Ms. Farago,
Dear Members of the German Society,

Time is flying. After three highly interesting years as Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in New York, our team is approaching its end. My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed being in this great country and meeting you all. We feel of course particularly sorry for leaving behind good friends, also in Philadelphia, to whom we now have to say good-bye.

We have been deeply impressed by the excellent work done by the German Society of Pennsylvania under the dynamic management of Annke Farago and Bernhard J. Freitag. The Society has, within the last decade, transformed itself into a cultural organization of major significance, and is now the preferred venue for the dissemination of German cultural programs in the Philadelphia region. Let me take this occasion to thank you all for your great commitment to enhance German-American relations through a number of programs that we consider very effective and very professional. I hope that these outstanding programs will go on, and I can assure you that for this you will have the continued support of the German Consulate in New York.

With my best wishes to all of you,
I remain

Very sincerely yours,



Bernhard von der Planitz



**Consul General of the Federal Republic
of Germany in New York
Bernhard von der Planitz**

THE CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT OF THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA FOR THE JUNE 11, 2003 ELECTION



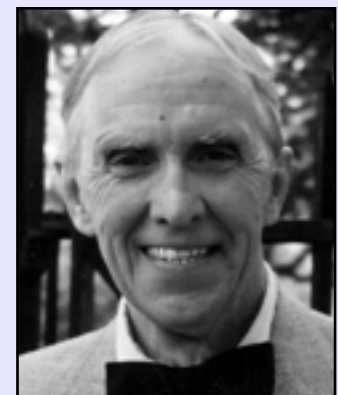
Eugene Edw. J. Maier

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James G. Mundy

Interview please see Spring 2003 Issue



Louis Oschmann

Interview please see pages 10 to 11

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President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

This issue of the Staatsbote is perhaps, for most members, the opening of the flood gates for information pertinent to the issues and elections which will be front and center at the Annual Meeting of Members [AMM] which is set for Wednesday, June 11, 2003. I can only hope and trust that each of the Society's



Bernard J. Freitag

members will take to heart the responsibility we share to act in the best interests of the Society and will make it a point to be informed and present on June 11th. When reflecting on what is at stake, I believe even the most dispassionate among us would

agree that the choices to be made by the members present on June 11th are as different as night and day as opposed to being variations on a single theme.

There is no precedent, at least in the past thirty years or more, for the number of candidates competing for the several offices to be elected. Please know that I will be recommending to the Board that 5 PM on June 5th be established as the cut off date for determining the eligibility of members to participate and vote at the AMM and noon on June 9th for preregistration by phone, fax, or email to be received at the Society's business office.

There are still a few offices for which no candidates have been nominated. However our Search Committee continues to actively seek candidates who bring the appropriate skills, commitment and experience to the task. This approach has worked well for us in the past and, on balance, has proved to be well worth the patience and persistence it takes.

By the time this Staatsbote is in your hands or shortly after, you will be able to access both the Bylaws of the Society and the proposed final version of the Board's Strategic Plan on the Society's website, www.germansociety.org. Action on the Strategic Plan will occur at the Board's Special Meeting being called for Monday, June 2nd. Both documents should be of interest to you in advance of the AMM and are also available for review by members at the offices of the Society.

Word may not have reached every member by now, but I do expect this to be the last President's message I write for the Staatsbote. It seems to me that 10 years at the helm of the Society are more than enough, especially when I recall that I thought 5 years would be a maximum. I believe the term limits of the Strategic Plan are right for our times. The Society will benefit by having leaders who can

handle the intensity of the responsibilities for a relatively shorter term and who will be comfortable passing the gavel to ready and enthusiastic successors.

There is much that has changed for the better at the Society in 10 years. I plan to report on that in greater detail at the AMM. I am grateful for the generous support of all those who made the trials easier to bear and the good times more fun to share. I have learned every step of the way. I remain in awe of the Society, all of its past, its rising status today, and the well-founded aspiration to see its service continue on its journey to a brighter future. My eternal gratitude to those in both the German Embassy and the German Consulate in NYC and to all the Society's leaders, Board members, staff, volunteers and members, who committed themselves to the best interests of the Society in these ten years and helped develop the vision we share.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen
Bernard J. Freitag
President

**Vision and Commitment
Statements of the
20 Candidates who run for office
in the June 11, 2003 Election**

**Eugene Edw. J. Maier
Candidate for President**

The German Society of Pennsylvania has sponsored and performed numerous and varied activities in the past two-hundred plus years. The educational and fraternal pursuits, i.e., maintaining the Library, the conversational abends, the Annual Dinners, are only a few. I believe we should maintain all of the current functions and perhaps expand, in some, new areas such as Public Relations.



Eugene Edw. J. Maier

However, I have seen a disturbing trend in the last few years, which must be corrected immediately. We must not only allow but encourage an opening of our organization to give our members a voice in the operation of the Society. In recent meetings, the Society members were not permitted to completely express their views. In the past, the usual rules of conducting meetings were ignored and an attempt was made to prevent members from fairly seeking election to the Board. Further, a meeting was adjourned without resolving the issues for which the meeting was called, because the President was unable to control the meeting.

We should encourage any and all members or groups within our Society, to function in a manner which would allow them to freely conduct their activities with a minimum intrusion from the administration of the Society.

In short, we should continue the good work that the Society has performed over the years, but in a manner which permits and encourages the members to communicate their views openly and fairly.

**James G. Mundy
Presently Director & Co-Chair
Library Committee
Candidate for President**

As someone who makes his livelihood from the practice of history, I appreciate and understand more than most people the dangers of trying to live in the past. The 21st century has already presented the German Society with new challenges to our survival in the present. Since 1764, the German Society has a history of meeting such challenges, and of overcoming them. Like our predecessors, we will use our creativity, our imaginations, our dedication, and our resolve to insure the Society's future.



James G. Mundy

- We must understand that our most important asset is us, the members of the Society.
- We must reintroduce **civility** and **dialogue** within the Society. We have to understand that there will be times when we must agree to disagree, and do so without rancor and mean-spiritedness. We must also learn that honest and sincere dialogue is healthy and beneficial for the Society. This should lead to cooperation and trust. No one person or group has all of the right answers or ideas. As Abraham Lincoln said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand."
- As Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee, I support its conclusions and recommended actions as endorsed by the Board of Directors. I also endorse the suggestion that the Board of Directors must become more personally active and "hands on" in the operations of the Society, and be held accountable and responsible for its actions. The Board must learn to lead if it expects the Society's members to follow.
- We must create a new culture of giving at the Society. As the old expression goes, charity begins at home! I have personally pledged and given \$1,000 to the annual fund the two years I have been on the Board. I also purchased the software program

Vision Statements Cont. from pg. 2

(a \$1,000 expenditure) being used to presently inventory and catalog our fine art collections. If we don't learn to support the Society first ourselves, we will have a very difficult time convincing foundations and others that they should give to us. Giving also includes time, and we all must learn to give more of it to the Society to accomplish the many activities and services we provide. To paraphrase President John Kennedy, ask not what the Society can do for you, but what you can do for the Society!

• We must substantially increase our fundraising efforts. If we don't, we won't have a German Society for very long. We already know that we cannot maintain our two historic buildings, our library, and our staff through membership dues alone. The Strategic Plan calls for the creation of a Development Committee, whose responsibility will be to raise funds for the Society. This is also something that the entire Board will have to learn to increase its participation in. Successful fundraising will lead to a Capital Campaign that will help establish an endowment for the Society. This will take many years of hard and tireless work if it is to be achieved, but there is no time like the present to start planning for the future.

• We must learn to build on the strength of the Society's **history** and **heritage**. Our **German language program** must be supported to maintain its success at both teaching the German language, but also as a magnet for membership in the Society (I am a good example of someone making this transition from student to Society member to active Board member). We must continue to support our **German language scholarships** as another means of promoting the language so basic to our culture. Our programs and activities must continue to broaden not only our appreciation of **German culture**, but that of the general public as well. For example, our **Friday Film Nights** have been tremendously successful, with many non-members included in the audience. Our many different **"Fests"- Oktoberfest, Wurstfest, Weihnachtsfest** - have proven to be another great introduction to things German, as well as being financially profitable for the Society. Our music programs continue to be applauded and appreciated by members and non-members alike, another outreach of our culture and heritage. The list could go on and on....

We, the Society, already do a lot of good and valuable things. We have momentum at the beginning of this new century. We need to keep it accelerating. We can all do it together.

**Louis Oschmann
Presently 1st Vice President
Candidate for President**

First, I endorse the Mission Statement and vision of the GSP as approved by the GSP Board of Directors on May 22, 2000. It clearly and concisely contains the essence of what we are and should be doing here at the Society. I am especially committed to the paragraph that reaffirms our intent to stay in our historic 1888 landmark building, which is on the National Registry of Historic Landmarks. As House Committee Chairperson at the Society for eight years, I have acquired a deep respect for these hallowed halls on Spring Garden Street—and am convinced that as long as the GSP exists as an organization, it should remain here at its historic headquarters.



Louis Oschmann

Second, I believe we can continue to be an educational magnet. The outstanding program of German language classes that Annke Farago has designed and implemented in the last six years has attracted many students to the GSP. In addition to providing income for our treasury, many of the students go on to become members, and some even Directors of the board. I pledge to do all I can to see that this excellent program continues to grow. I speak from experience—I have personally taken several of the courses and benefited greatly.

Third, I believe we can continue to be a cultural center through the outstanding programs we have been presenting over the years. The exciting speakers, musicians, exhibits, and performers that have graced our halls in the last three years have added much enrichment to our lives. The most recent example, of course, is *The Development of German-American Relations from Concord to 9/11*, sponsored by the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Honorable Bernhard von der Planitz, in our library Jan. 10-31, 2003.

Fourth, I believe the GSP can continue to be a community center. We are continuing to interact with the Spring Garden Tenants Association, the Guild House, the Friends Housing Corporation, the Northern Liberties Neighborhood Association, the Palmer Social Club, the Philadelphia Police Department's 6th District, and the list keeps growing as our commitment to our neighborhood continues. As Vice President for Outreach, I have tried to perpetuate these efforts.

Fifth, I envision the GSP as a well-funded non-profit organization, with a substantive endowment in place. I will work vigorously toward that goal. And my experience in fund

raising over the last six years will help, especially as Co-Chair of the Annual Fund campaign for the last two years. I've also learned how important it is to consider every funding opportunity, not only from members, but also from other individuals, foundations, corporations, and governmental sources. No stone should go unturned in our pursuit of financial aid.

Our greatest physical asset is of course our library. A treasure of rare and circulating titles, its 75,000 volumes are framed by a jewel of a showcase. This excellent 19th Century library space was recently remodeled in 1998-99, and is exquisite in appearance. As Project Manager for the renovation during that time, I was able to see first hand the transformation from a neglected space to a bright, attractive, exciting venue for research, study, reading, and celebration.

And finally, I see the GSP as a magnet for its most important resource—people. And by people I mean not only members, but all the people of the community of the Delaware Valley and beyond, and all those of any ethnic background who want to participate in the stimulating and rewarding activities of our society. At the same time, I believe that we all can be working together for mutual goals in an atmosphere of *gemütlichkeit* that promotes good will and positive accomplishments.

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Allen Krumm
Presently Director,
Chair, Finance Committee &
Co-Chair, Movie Committee
Candidate for Vice President, Finance

I have been a member of the German Society for 10 years and have participated in activities ranging from the language program and Film Committee to recently serving on the Board. My professional background comprises working as a consultant in the pharmaceutical industry (specifically in the software and compliance arenas) for the past twenty years.

My vision for the GSP is that of a self-sustaining cultural organization which maintains the essence of its heritage and traditions while serving as a relevant and contemporary contributor to the community at large.



Allen Krumm

In sum, we need to be a distinctively German society whose doors are distinctly open to everyone who shares our love of culture and community.

Like all non-profits, the German Society has faced increasing financial challenges over the past few years. In addition to such challenges from without, the Society has experienced more than its fair share of internal debates and tension. Hopefully the upcoming election will help us to resolve some of the issues that have divided us.

At this juncture I would like to state my high esteem for and support of the leadership of the current President (Bernie Freitag) and the current Executive Director, Annke Farago. I feel they have achieved considerable progress in the face of many challenges in implementing changes necessary for the long-term well being of the German Society. I also feel the President has gone out of his way in striving to be fair and civil to those who often disagreed with him in unfair and uncivil ways. I would also like to express my support for Jim Mundy as President in the upcoming election.

In fairness, it must be stressed that there are many devoted and sincere people on both sides of a host of issues over which there has been so much disagreement. Yet in the final analysis, it also must be emphasized that there are irreconcilable differences among groups within the membership in terms of the way the Society should function and in terms of a vision for its future.

It does not solve the problem to claim that issues have been misunderstood or that individuals have not been allowed to fully express their views. Issues have been discussed many times, and many individuals have been allowed to express themselves as fully as they have wished. When most of the issues are

boiled down, a basic disagreement about how the Society should be run is revealed.

My position is that the elected President, in conjunction with the Executive Director and the Board, must be given sufficient power of decision and planning (in accordance with the bylaws last amended and approved by the members on April 6th, 2003) to enable the Society to function efficiently and effectively, and particularly in order to continue to mitigate and ultimately resolve the current financial situation. This position is in harmony with the Strategic Plan which originated in December of 2001.

To be very specific, I do not believe there should be special groups or organizations within or connected to the German Society. The genesis of much of the dissension over the past few years has come from this 'separate but equal' outlook. The whole point of joining and participating in an organization like the German Society is because one believes, in common with a group of other individuals, in the mission and goals of that society. To one degree or another, you set your individual rights aside in your role as a member in order to promote the greater good of that organization.

The German Society will not survive, let alone thrive, in the future if it is continually forced to parlay and negotiate with groups within its ranks whose members also belong to other organizations which claim some sort of special privilege with the Society. Obviously the most salient example in this regard is the interaction of the Society over the past few years with members of the WAux who are also members of the Society. In many cases such individuals have made representing the interests of the WAux the basis and focus of their membership in the German Society. If the duly elected President and Vice Presidents and Board of Directors do not have the power to set the direction and control the management of the GSP, and make final decisions which they believe are in the best interests of the German Society, then it would seem no one does.

In terms of the vision I previously expressed, I believe there are several strategies we must pursue in order to fulfill that vision. We need to develop and implement management and business plans that make the GSP essentially self-supporting. The most important near term business goal is the Ratskeller/kitchen renovation project which has the potential to provide a steady revenue for the GSP. We must maintain regular programs which sustain our heritage and serve as effective bridges to the public. The most important program in this regard is the language program, and it should always be given precedence over all other programs.

We must continue to attract the allegiance and participation of key people in academia, business and the arts. A special emphasis should be placed on attracting young people (high school, college, young adult) to the GSP. The Board of Directors must lead by example

in terms of 'time, talent and treasure.' This means participating and contributing regularly to the life of the Society in practical as well as organizational terms.

Finally, we must focus on long-term fundraising efforts in order to build an endowment as the ultimate safeguard for the GSP. We will only succeed in these key areas with a united membership dedicated to serving the GSP so that the GSP can endure and prosper and serve the larger community. Just as with individuals, institutions need roots and wings. The GSP has wonderful, deep roots. Successfully implementing the vision of the Strategic Plan will give us the wings we need to soar into the future.

Thomas Mills, Ph.D.
Candidate for Vice President, Finance

I have been honored by my election as a director of the German Society on two separate occasions over the past twenty years. During that time I have seen the membership become increasingly divided over leadership and governance issues. The culminating event in a long series of unfortunate occurrences



Thomas Mills, Ph.D.

was the expulsion of the Women's Auxiliary from the premises of the German Society. If elected I will work to resolve the issues that divide us, restore the Women's Auxiliary to its rightful place within the Society and to rekindle the spirit of harmony and good fellowship which once graced our meetings.

Charles W. Becker, Jr.
Presently 3rd Vice President
Candidate for Vice President,
Operations

The past several years have been most prosperous and exciting in that our Language Program, Concerts, Holiday Programs, Special Event Dinners, and Civic Outreach, have proven to be the most successful programs, in content as well as financial profitability, in the history of the German Society of Pennsylvania. These types of events must and will continue in order to guarantee a bright future for our historic and beautiful building, library, and most important, German and German American History. In the past, the Society has had to depend on individual contributions from a few very affluent members, at time that we faced dire need for revenue. We must not continue on a course where we are dependent on a few to maintain our fiscal stability and meet our expenses. We must expand our horizons by promoting our present programs and continue our outreach to the community. The revenue we earn will go a long way

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in supporting an ever-growing need for addition revenue to meet our operating expenses.

During my present term as 3rd Vice President, with primary responsibility for GPS's Operations, I have strived to reduce expenditures and increase the quality of maintenance and services required to meet the City Codes as well as maintain and improve on our systems. I have saved thousands of dollars on annual "Preventive Maintenance" by dropping a contract vendor, who was charging the Society a ridiculous annual fee and moved the responsibility to a very proficient and cost effective company, that meets our maintenance needs on a "Time and Materials" basis.



Charles W. Becker, Jr.

I installed a new Burglar Alarm System, which also monitors the Fire System. This system was installed at an extremely reduced rate, as a result of my personal and business relationships within the community. I replaced all external locks and hardware, to include panic bars, locks, door hardware and handles, in compliance with City of Philadelphia Code, **at no cost to the Society.** This lock change was required to solve a serious premise security problem and bring the Society's locks, interior and exterior access up to Code. All labor and materials for the lock change were donated by another community business, with which I have been involved with for a number of years.

Repair and maintenance of the Gate have been accomplished at a reduced cost. I have and continue to negotiate contracts and or bills to obtain products, services, and repairs at a reduced rate, or at no cost, for the Society. Recent upgrading relative, to our electrical needs in the kitchen; to facilitate new equipment donated by Life Member Walter Staib, have been completed at a negotiated reduced rate in order to keep operating expense to a minimum.

My wife and I support the Society through volunteer efforts and community outreach. Support from one's family is extremely important to be effective in any venture in which one chooses to be involved. I served as Co-Chair for the Annual Fund Drive during the years of 2001 and 2002. Our efforts, as a group, resulted in record-breaking totals collected in donations ever experienced in the history of the Society.

Upon my initial nomination, I provided a brief **"Vision Statement"** which read: **"Provide the support, guidance, and leadership necessary to lead the German Society of Pennsylvania into the 21st Century in a manner that will create financial stability, increase membership, and foster new ideas to provide the services necessary to meet the needs of the community and all those individuals requiring our guidance and assistance."**

I believe my record of accomplishments is in keeping with my first Vision Statement, and I maintain that those same standards still apply. I will continue to work toward those goals stated above and dedicate myself to continue those efforts that will allow the German Society of Pennsylvania to be fiscally independent, successful, and fulfill our goals as an organization now and into the future.

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**Hardy von Auenmueller
Candidate for Vice President,
Operations**

As the German Society is about to enter into its 240th anniversary year, it would be a shame if the momentum gained in recent months towards greater financial stability were to be curtailed by the continuing internal strife. Surely our Society in years past had at times to face far greater adversities than those experienced today as a result of the current U.S. Macro-economic slowdown.

Rather than running a budget deficit for years on end, we, at the German Society, need to live within our means, i.e. we must focus our efforts on increasing revenue and/or reducing costs. I believe that a reasonable effort has been made to curtail operational expenditures, yet little has been written about it, and thus the GSP membership is not sufficiently informed. Hence, greater transparency in budgetary matters is needed.



Hardy v. Auenmueller

Furthermore, I think the Society should increase its efforts to garner additional volunteer and corporate support. Here, a redirection of the staff and a closer link to the German-American business community is indicated. The latter may require the total dedication of one of our Board members/Officers who at the same time should see to it that our ties with the German American Chamber of Commerce are strengthened.

As to my background: I spent 25 years in the chemical processing industry working stateside in various capacities for Hoechst and Degussa. For the past 15 years I have been a management consultant specializing in mergers and acquisitions which have often required a prior restructuring effort. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, I directed my focus toward similar projects in Eastern Germany.

Now that I am retired, I have taken on several volunteering jobs in Center City, including routine GSP bulk mailings, telephone solicitations, etc. I have also been pleased to lead an

enlightened GSP group in the monthly Konversationsabend meetings for the past two years. If given the opportunity, I would enjoy using my proven business skills as turnaround specialist for the benefit of the German Society.

**Timothy Urschel
Presently 2nd Vice President
Candidate for Vice President,
Programs**

I remain committed to continue providing the necessary support, guidance and leadership to facilitate the execution of the mission of the GSP as adopted by the Board on May 22, 2000. This will be accomplished through the contribution of Time, Talent, and Treasure of each member in the various activities and services the GSP provides to the community at large. Through servitude to the community the GSP will continue to prosper and provide a venue for the promotion of the German/German-American Heritage, Culture and Values.



Timothy Urschel

Over the past couple of years the GSP has undergone tremendous change and reinvention to ensure that it is meeting the current needs of the community, as well as meeting the needs of the GSP from a fiscal responsibility point of view, so that it may not only continue to exist in the coming years, but be a vibrant non-profit organization. Your Board has developed, and is in the process of finalizing, a strategic plan which will serve as a basis of direction and operation for the GSP in the near and long-term future. It was a pleasure to participate in this process, and I hope to see the continued implementation of the plan in the coming year(s) and play an active role as the implementation process proceeds Statement of Vision and Commitment.

**Hella Volgenau
Candidate for Vice President,
Culture & Heritage**

As a member of the German Society of Pennsylvania and the Women's Auxiliary of the German Society of Pennsylvania since February 2000, I have been involved in fundraising activities and maintenance projects, in addition to attending cultural events at the Society. The rift between these two groups is very disturbing to me. I believe it has adversely affected contributions to the Society at a time were every donation is critical to its continued existence.

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As an officer and a board member, I will work to quickly heal the separation of these two groups who are united in their support of our mission statement: to serve our members and our community especially those who share our interest in our German heritage and culture. This is important to the longevity and we-being of the Society and I will direct my energy to serve the stated goals of the Society.



Hella Volgenau

**Doris H. E. Simon
Candidate for Treasurer**

As the oldest German Society in America, the German Society of Penna. bears a tremendous responsibility to preserve the German cultural heritage. Other German American Organizations look to the German Society as a role model for upholding the rich German traditions and values.

I strongly support the Mission Statement of the German Society as adopted in May of 2000 "to serve our members and our community, especially those who share our interest in the German and German-American culture, heritage, and values".

As German immigrants in the 1950's, my family and I became active in the German Society. It is where we found a piece of "Heimat" away from our homeland, and it gave us the opportunity to enjoy so many traditional German cultural and social events while assimilating into the American way of life.



Doris H. E. Simon

With this background, I believe it is my duty to honor and preserve the traditions and culture of my ancestors. The German Society, which has served generations of German Americans, provides many opportunities to do just that. I firmly believe in, and strive to live by, the Goethe quotation which the German Society used as its motto for many years: "Was du ererbst von deinen Vaetern hast, erwirb es, um es zu besitzen". Translated, the adage says "Whatever you have inherited from your forefathers, earn it so that it will be truly yours."

It is important, at this time of our history when many ethnic organizations are having difficulty surviving, that the German Society receive and accept the support of all those who

cherish their heritage and want to use their energy and assets to sustain this organization. This can only be achieved by fostering an environment that is member-friendly, allowing freedom of expression of all points of view, and increased and improved communications with its members; in short, letting the democratic process flourish.

I served previously on the Board of the German Society - as Director from 1987 to 1989, Treasurer from 1990 to 1992, and 2nd then 1st Vice President from 1993 to 2001. I felt honored to be awarded the Society's Founder's Medal in 1990.

At this time, I am seeking the office of Treasurer. If elected, I will fulfill the duties of Treasurer to the best of my ability. I pledge to exercise fiscal restraint to ensure the financial stability of the GSP in the future and to provide timely and relevant financial information to members.

**Morgan Churchman
Presently Director
Candidate for Director**

It is imperative that the Society continue to offer quality services to its membership and to the community. To that end the future of the Society necessitates fiscal responsibility and teamwork. Today at the Society we are successfully working toward these goals through fundraising events, membership support, outside sponsorships and grants and greater participation of volunteers. During the next several years we must ratchet up fundraising and participation to the next level to increase services and begin additional phases of the renovation of our greatest asset, the building.



Morgan Churchman

**Randall Drain, M.D.
Presently Director
Candidate for Director**

My vision for the German Society of Pennsylvania is one of preservation and regeneration. I see the Society continuing to assume a leadership role in furthering the understanding of German and German Americans contributions to the growth of American history and culture. In these times, this task is very important in order to disseminate accurate information.



Randall Drain, M.D.

We can accomplish this objective by continuing to provide quality cultural programs and activities and excellent teaching of the German language while inviting public use of the Joseph Horner Memorial Library and preserving the Society's art and archival collection and its historic buildings. In this mission, we would continue to be inclusive of all interested people regardless of race, color or creed while maintaining an atmosphere of good will and hospitality.

And, of course, the continued implementation and ultimate expansion of all of these wonderful ideas require a) optimism b) effective and efficient planning c) unbridled support and encouragement of our superb staff d) commitment of resources from individuals and businesses in the areas of time, finance and expertise. As one of your directors, I will do my best to serve the Society in a faithful, honorable and committed manner.

**Frank H. Genieser
Candidate for Director**

I have been a member of the Society for 45 years and served for 14 years on the Board of Directors and on various committees from youth committee to finance to Project 2000. My wife is also a member of the Society and a past president of the Women's Auxiliary where my mother was treasurer for almost 30 years. I believe that the Society, which is older than the U.S., from its inception has been committed to the principle of being a society of the members, by the members and for the members. The Board should strive to interact harmoniously with each other, the Women's Auxiliary, the membership, and the community. It is also important to build bridges with other historical, cultural, and social organizations and offer charitable support for persons in need here and abroad. Because the flow of German immigrants has almost ceased, the Society has to reach out to people with German ancestry or those that have an interest in our language or culture to secure a base of membership for the future. In line with this, the Society must continue to offer attractive programs, scholarships, and language learning opportunities. In order to accomplish its objectives, the Society has to be made fiscally responsible and financially secure. This is no easy task but has to be tackled vigorously to ensure that the Society can flourish. I would like to rejoin the Board to help in achieving these objectives.



Frank H. Genieser

Vision Statements Cont. from pg. 6

**Joel Mynders
Candidate for Director**

Since my involvement with the Society over the past few years, I am in agreement with the progress made. I have personally worked on the Film Committee and attended classes and programs that have informed me of the goals and values of the organization.



Joel Mynders

I want to be a part of the Society's goal of financial stability for the future. I believe that my professional skills in operating a private practice as a business enterprise and my involvement on multiple public AND private boards has prepared me to assist in Society goals.

**Christiane R. Schmidt
Presently Director
Candidate for Director**

My vision for the German Society of Pennsylvania is embodied in those values that have allowed our cultural and educational treasure to exist for over 200 years. Included



Christiane R. Schmidt

in that is the belief that the needs of current and future members drive our decision-making. Thus, all constituencies of the GSP must be heard and plans developed in partnership with the Board of Directors. We need to continue

to think of creative ways to bring programs that enrich our community, inspire members new and old and cultivate the German culture.

I believe that with my many years on the Boards of both the GSP and the Women's Auxiliary, I bring the perspective of our various stakeholders to the table. Specifically, my service to the GSP Board includes approximately ten years as Secretary, several years as Chair of the Personnel Committee during which time the committee produced a policy and procedure manual for employees and the remaining years I was a Director.

My experiences outside the GSP allow me to draw on knowledge that translates to serving on a Board. Professionally, my over 20 years of human resources expertise bring human relations and critical thinking skills to Board discussions. Currently, I serve as the Vice President of Human Resources to Simpson Senior Services. In terms of other Board experiences, I am currently President of

the Board for Montgomery Early Learning Centers, a not-for-profit organization serving over 1000 children.

In conclusion, I am determined to carry forward the values and preserve the German culture that my parents instilled in me and that as a first generation German-American, I am proud to proclaim.

**Kile Smith
Candidate for Director**

My wife and I have been members of the GSP for over 10 years now, and love all that it stands for. I am the great-grandson of German immigrants who settled in Philadelphia, and have come to be involved in German American activities for quite some time. My high school German (many years ago!), two visits to Germany, and 15 wonderful years at Tabor Lutheran Church have given me a great appreciation of my culture and a yearning to know more of my heritage. In my work on various boards



Kile Smith

I have come to see that the greatest strength of any organization is the good-will of its members. Open communication signals that the loyalty and commitment of those who get things done is valued. It has been exciting to see the Society grow, and I believe that to build upon what has been established is the best recipe for future stability.

I would like to help in furthering the goals of the German Society of Pennsylvania and offer myself for nomination as a candidate for Director of the Board of the German Society.

**Thomas Unkefer
Presently Director
Candidate for Director**

I believe that The German Society has a significant unrealized potential in Philadelphia's cultural and social life. Because of my experience as a builder and



Thomas Unkefer

engineer, I would be happy to continue to help in the planning and execution of improvements to our buildings so they become places to which we would be proud to invite guests, potential members and the public. Annke is off to a great start with the renovation of the Kitchen and Ratskeller. Within five years I hope we may improve our rather shabby outside appearance with new windows, painting

and an architecturally inviting entrance. Within ten years I hope we may build an elevator and provide handicap access to all floors of the Library building.

I would be happy to continue working with the Arts Subcommittee to help realize cultural programs of interest to a wide audience, particularly ones about the accomplishments of German Americans: Kurt Vonnegut, Carl Schurz, and Dankmar Adler to name a few among so many.

I support a leadership that will strive to bring about healing and a sense of common purpose in the German American community.

**Carl Weber
Candidate for Director**

It is my belief that the German Society's most vital asset is its' members. Future members, in particular, are going to be the lifeblood of the Society, if the great traditions of the society are to be sustained in the 21st Century. I therefore strongly support the concept of a strategic plan that can allow the Society to evolve in an orderly way and a fiscally sound way to a broader appeal to new generations of members. At the same time, the Society must do all that is possible to involve the current members as deeply as possible in the Society, in its' growth and development. To do this, I would be committed to enhancing communications with the membership. Formal communications from the Society through the Staatsbote, website, membership meetings, etc. require constant efforts to insure their effectiveness. At the same time, new channels of informal two-way dialogue, particularly between the board and the membership must be fostered so that the key



Carl Weber

issues affecting the Society can be shared more deeply and candidly. The ideas, the creativity and the sense of participation of the membership itself can help provide much of the energy for the future, but communications is the key.

**Ernest D. Weiler, Ph.D
Candidate for Director**

The German Society of Pennsylvania was founded in 1764 with the purpose to protect and to help German immigrants in the Philadelphia area. The Society in a small way has been a home away from home for many immigrants for more than 200 years. We have enjoyed our association with the Society for more than 25 years, and during this time, we have noted many changes.

Vision Statements Cont. from pg. 7

I believe that the current mission and visions statements accurately reflect the strategic direction the Society must follow to assure that a vibrant, and financially sound organization continues to grow in the 21st century. We need to meet the needs of the existing membership, while our special events, activities and especially our outreach programs are broad enough to attract new members who are interested in the German and German-American culture and heritage.

As a Director, I will provide my full support to the Society and its Board of Directors to help assure that the strategic mission and vision are realized in a financially sound manner, and that the Society continues to prosper in the 21st century.

**Sigrid Wortmann Weltge
Presently Director &
Chair, Arts Committee
Candidate for Director**

As a director of the German Society of Pennsylvania I have been actively involved in fashioning and implementing renewed efforts to direct the Society into the 21st century. If the Society is to weather the current economic downturn and remain a home for people interested in German culture we have to pursue a new vision. One of these is the strategic plan, the others are attracting new and younger members (which is already happening), language instruction and a variety of cultural events. It is gratifying to see attendance and support steadily rising. While I am a candidate for director I also support the team of Jim Mundy.

As chair of the Arts Committee I can report that we have completed the first step of inventorying the collection. A few technical problems need to be ironed out. A further step is to have the collection appraised. Some of the more valuable objects are in need of restoration. We hope for funding to pursue this goal.

Long-range plans include display of restored art objects throughout the Society's buildings. We are also contemplating possible exhibits organized thematically or by individual or related artists. We are even hoping to establish a budget for the purpose of purchasing art that would round out the Society's holdings.



Ernest D. Weiler, Ph.D.

while our special events, activities and especially our outreach programs are broad enough to attract new members who are interested in the German and German-American culture and heritage.

The German Society, during its long history as a cultural institution in Philadelphia, is the repository of a large variety of art objects. Some of these are unique historic artifacts while others have the intrinsic value associated with sculpture and painting of a certain period. The collection has been largely inaccessible to the membership as well as to scholars who are increasingly interested in researching German art. It is the aim of the Arts Committee to restore to the Society, its members, and the scholarly community this impressive collection of German art. We feel that the Society's art collection is an important way to draw attention to German art and culture. Just as we are proud of our restored Library, so we must emphasize the unique works of art that demonstrate German talent. By highlighting this aspect of our history we can make an important contribution to the cultural life of our city. □

"I think the basis of the German Society is an ethnic society, and I think we should be pursuing the cultural aspect"
(Eugene Edw. Maier)

**Interview with
Eugene Edw. Maier
Candidate for President of the
German Society of Pennsylvania**

AF (Annke Farago) You are a member of the German Society and now you are seeking to become its President. Could you please tell our readers what you consider to be the desirable qualifications for a President and how you believe you will meet these qualifications?

EM (Eugene Edw. Maier) Well, I think it's important for people to be involved in their community, especially if they are tracing their ethnic backgrounds, and I think the circumstances of the Presidency are that you have to have a general knowledge of the public and what's happening in the government/political fields, in terms of what has been happening with the German Society in the past. I think my qualifications are, basically, having been involved in government, as a judge for the past twenty years. I think that gives me access to people who might not normally have in terms of being able to get people to come and be with us perhaps for grants to the Society. I'm not permitted to be involved in fund-raising as such, because of the Supreme Court.

AF OK, we come to the fund raising later.

EM Generally speaking, I think my qualifications are that I've been a public official for a long time, I've been a lawyer, I've been President of the John Peter Zenger Law Society, which was a group of lawyers and judges that trace their ancestry to German-speaking countries, I also have an Irish ancestry.

AF Could you please share your thoughts about the past and present of the Society, and, most importantly, where you would like to see the Society go in the future?

EM Well, one of the places, which I have found

very disturbing, just more recently, is that I have a feeling that the German Society has positioned itself in a way that is excluding people instead of including people. I have attended several meetings where people have had difficulty speaking, and just recently, when we went to the Board meeting, I understand it was the policy of the Board, said the President, that people other than Board members were not permitted to attend. But I think that's not a good...

AF This is a question for the Board, I believe.

EM But I think the circumstances are that I think all our Board meetings should be open, I think we should be practicing an activity of including everybody, everybody that wants to come in.

AF Member or no member?

EM Member, or no member, there should be some kind of common period with our regular membership that anyone who wants to have something to say should be able to say it and that doesn't mean that we should spend hours and hours...

AF It would end up that way, most likely...

EM No, I think that if you have someone who can run the meetings, that has leadership, and I think that I am well poised to do that...

AF Who introduced you to the Society and why did you become a member?

EM Well, I have been a member off and on. I think I was a member a long time ago, and I came back recently and I know many, some of the people in the Society that I think highly of.

AF Which are the current events or programs in which you participated?

EM Well, before you were here, I took German lessons, which were partially successful, not enough to converse in, but I have enough to get in.

AF Which programs do you consider to be important and why?

EM Well, I think probably one of the most important is the language program.

AF Why do you think so?

EM Because I think that's continuing the cultural aspect of the Society. What happens frequently is that when people want to take the culture away from somebody, they destroy their language, so if you have a language and you have a way of communicating, I think that's extremely important.

AF But the language program is not only to teach people of German descent, it is open to everybody.

EM Yes, but the point is that the more you spread the language, the more you spread the culture.

AF Have you taken the opportunity to enhance the programs of the Society?

EM No, I don't think so, other than, as I have said, taking the German lessons, attending some of the dinners and various functions.

AF I think it is absolutely essential that we continue to develop sources of unrestricted income, to develop new programs and attract new members. We have developed a number of new programs over the last few years and have been able to attract new volunteers who share our enthusiasm. There are quite a number of peo-

Interview w/ Eugene Edw. Maier cont. from pg 8

ple in those programs who have indicated they would definitely leave the Society if we could not continue what we have developed so far. How would you deal with such a situation?

EM Well, most of the programs that I know of in the German Society, I think are good programs, and I think they should be continued to the extent that they can be continued.

AF Let me elaborate a little more. The people who came to us, and whom we could recruit, are people who were not here in the past. These are volunteers, these are staff members who believe in what they are doing. Many members that had left in the past came back because they felt we had created a friendlier atmosphere. You cannot force volunteers to stay if they don't like the culture.

EM I think that everybody who wants to work for the good of the Society should be able to work for the Society. I think the essence of any society, especially any ethnic society, is getting people to participate.

AF As I have mentioned before, the German Society has gone through a major transition in the last few years in order to survive. We have been moving away from being a social club, whose programs are nice but are a drain on the Society to the extent that they do not generate income, to a genuine non-profit with many new programs and events that not only serve our members and are fun but also are of interest to the general public and generate much-needed income. Do you agree with this concept?

EM Well, I think it has to be both. I think the basis of the German Society is an ethnic society and I think we should be pursuing the cultural aspects.

AF Well, the difference to a club is, that if you are not a genuine non-profit, you do not qualify for grants. You have to be open to the public.

EM Well, let me tell you something. First of all, I do not think there is such a thing as a genuine non-profit. If you are a non-profit, then you have to position yourself to receive grants, you would have to have a business plan, but that wouldn't necessarily preclude the other social activities, or things of that nature.

AF Did you develop your own concepts and suggestions for additional programs and/or events at the Society?

EM There are a couple of areas - I have mentioned public relations - where we have to develop programs, and I know we've had musical programs, the small classical concerts, I don't know how many we have, but we have to have musical programs.

AF We have those programs.

EM I know we do, but I think we have to have them on a regular basis. Some of the churches in town have a regular group that plays there and Jefferson Hospital had a Christmas Program that I attended, a choral programs that was excellent. But the thing that has worried me in the past is the lack of inviting people in. It appears to be excluding people.

AF I don't think we do that, and I think that can be clarified.

EM See, if I interview you, then you could

answer that question. I am only telling you what my thinking is.

AF What is your view of the current financial situation of the Society?

EM Well, I don't know much about the current financial situation. I understand that we are not in as good shape as we would like to be, and I think that we need to get into more areas in that regard. I think we have two great assets here, one our location and the historical aspect of it and that we have a very nice Hall and the Ratskeller that can be used for various functions.

AF You probably know that the big project we are trying to push right now is the renovation of the kitchen, because that is an absolute pre-condition to having more functions here. So, do you then agree with the concept that we try to help ourselves by trying to improve our ability to generate more income?

EM No question, you have to do that in order to survive. I remember one of the dinners I attended, the cocktails were up in the library. I think the library is just an outstanding area to have a cocktail party, to have a reception.

AF To have a function in the library is an enormously difficult undertaking. We have to serve from the basement to the third floor, and also, some of the older members do not appreciate walking the steps to the library.

EM I understand that there are certain limitations. I am not being critical. These are the thoughts that occur to me. I think one of the things I bring to this job is that I have not been closely associated with this or that, with this person or that person, and I think that allows you to look critically at the things that are happening.

AF If you were elected President, how could you contribute financially?

EM Well. I would see what other people have done in the past and, unless there are people who have contributed a great deal of money, I think I would be able to do what other people in the past did. Generally speaking, when I was on one of the Boards for the alumni of a law school, they expected you to make a couple of hundred dollars a year in a donation, which I did and, whatever was done in that regard, is what I would do.

AF Are you well connected with prospective funding sources?

EM As I've said, I'm limited in what I can personally do in seeking donations. Under the rules I believe I am able to participate in a business fashion in the writing of grant applications, but otherwise I am not able to do those kinds of things, although the Society can do it, as long as I am not personally involved.

AF What would be your fund-raising concept for the future?

EM One is to continue what we have done in the past, to use the facilities we have here to generate funds. You might want to get into a particular fund-raising effort for a particular

project, air conditioning, kitchen, elevators. You might want to bring in a professional fund raiser, get your committee together first, those of the Board or members who may wish to participate, brainstorm and get the ideas of what people want, get some kind of a business plan, find out what the cost is, of a new kitchen, whether there is an alternative. I don't think we should commit ourselves to any great expenditure unless we know that's going to be the payoff.

AF Are you familiar with the use and the cost of the Joseph Horner Memorial Library, and what plans do you have, if any, to develop it?

EM I'm not familiar with the cost of it, but I do know we received a grant for it from Germany for air conditioning. I think those are the specific areas you would do extremely well with getting volunteers from the whole library community. I would contact some of the people who are in the libraries of some of the educational institutions, Temple, the law schools, I think there are many educational institutions that we could probably lean on to come in and help us do some of these things.

AF How do you see yourself dealing successfully with controversy and friction that might come your way?

EM All day, every day, I deal with conflict and friction, and I have done it for the last 21 years, so I don't think it's going to create any problems as far as I'm concerned.

AF Do you believe that members should ask, "What can I do for the Society", or would you find it satisfactory if they express the expectation of "What can the Society do for me?"

EM No, I'll go with the former, rather than the latter, as President Kennedy said.

AF How important do you think is a friendly atmosphere for the success of the Society?

EM It's critical.

AF If you're elected President of the German Society, what would you consider to be your main task and what would you like to change?

EM I think the main task would be getting everybody together, as it seems there are some problems within the Society itself. I think that is something I can do very well. At the minimum, we would find out what the real problems are, are there real differences, are they imagined differences, are people unhappy with someone here or someone there or just the current administration?

AF How much do you know about our present staff, and what plans do you have for changes, if any?

EM I know almost nothing about the staff other than that, I believe, you are the Executive Director, I know Lou, I see tending the bar on occasion, that's the extent of my understanding of the staff. At this point I had no thoughts of making any change in any way until I found out more about what is going on.

AF Could you also tell our readers about your professional background?

EM I'm a graduate of Temple University and Temple Law School, I was practicing Law for ten years. I was City Commissioner and Chairman of the City Commissioners, for a little short of



Eugene Edw. Maier

Interview w/ Eugene Edw. Maier cont. pg. 10

Interview w/ Eugene Edw. Maier cont. from pg 9

ten years. I then was elected to the Court of Common Pleas, and I've been on the Court for the past twenty-one years.

AF Can you also tell us a little bit about your family?

EM I have four children all of them married, twelve grandchildren. I was married for forty-one years, until last June, when my wife died. She was called back to heaven June 25th. We are doing OK, life goes on.

AF Are your children close by?

EM Oh, yes, three of our four children are in Philadelphia or nearby, and our oldest son is near our place in Brigantine, NJ, and we see them on weekends.

AF When did your family immigrate into the United States?

EM The first part of the German side of our family we had on the census of 1860, that was Christian Maier, up in Lancaster, and we had several more family members. I have a picture of an aunt, a Friederike Maier, from 1890. This was on my father's side of the family, which came from Bavaria. But we can't seem to find out anything further.

AF How would you respond if one of the other two candidates would be elected President? Would you support him, and if so, in what way?

EM Any way they want.

AF Thank you for taking the time for this interview. □

*"I've always thought of myself as a mediator and not a confronter".
(Lou Oschmann)*

Interview with Lou Oschmann Candidate for President of the German Society of Pennsylvania

AF (Annke Farago) You are the First Vice President of the Society, you have been House-Committee Chairman for eight years, you are a member of the Finance Committee, and many visitors to the Society know you from standing behind the bar. Now you are one of the three candidates for President of the German Society in the June 11 election. Could you lay out for our readers what you think about the past and present of the Society and, most importantly, where you would like to see it go in the future?

LO (Lou Oschmann) I think the past is very important and it must be connected with the present as a vehicle to the future, because we cannot forget the past and all the historical value that the Society has, all the efforts of those folks who have come before us, on whose shoulders we stand. That makes us, I think, unique among Philadelphia organizations, as our history goes back to 1764. What does that mean to the future? Well, what it means to me is that we have a value for our future genera-

tions that needs to be preserved and I think that is going to be a very difficult task, mainly because of finances.

AF How did you originally get engaged with the Society?

LO I became a member in 1972. Dr. Charles Steinmetz sponsored me. He, by the way, received the silver medal of the Society from Bernie Freitag, in 1998 right before he died. I didn't become very active until 1988 when I retired from any money-paying jobs.

AF Do you believe your long affiliation with the Society should serve as qualification for being elected to the office of President?

LO Yes, I have a depth of background of how this place works; I have seen it through many transitions. There are two buildings that really need a lot of work. As House-Committee chairman I certainly know every nook and cranny.

AF It seems to be the nature of any election campaign that many promises are made. In your vision statement of the Society you mention that you want to see it as a well-funded non-profit organization with a substantial endowment in place. On the other hand, being a member of the Finance Committee, you know how hard we are struggling to make ends meet. How do you believe you could reconcile vision and reality?

LO Well, I plan to spend half my time on the road, raising funds through corporations, foundations, individuals, wherever I can.

AF If you would be elected President, how could you contribute financially, or which connections could you bring into play that would hold the promise to become a sizeable funding source, and do you have connections already to foundations or corporations?

LO I do not have connections but I have a lot of ideas. And, as I've learned by campaigning for President, that many people are coming to me with ideas and leads.

AF It's one thing to have many ideas, it's another thing to have experience.

LO Absolutely, it takes a lot of hard work and as co-chair of the annual fund drive for the last two years, I know how difficult it is to raise money. Before that, we had a kind of development committee, which I worked on, in the late nineties. We had a telephone campaign where we contacted corporations. So I'm going to draw upon that.

AF In order to survive, the German Society has undergone a major transition, moving away from being a social club, whose programs are enjoyable but are a drain on the Society to the extent they produce no income, to a genuine non-profit with many new programs and events that not only serve our members and are enjoyable but also are of interest to the general public and generate much-needed income. Do you agree with this concept and/or did you develop your own concepts and suggestions for additional programs and/or events?

LO Well, I agree with the concept and I think

there can be a marriage between the social and the non-profit. Actually I think we have to do both to make the place interesting for people to come, who want to work, and make it even fun for some folks.

AF Don't you think we have fun at our social events now?

LO We have some, yes, but the fund raising thing is not fun. It's hard work.

AF I think it's very important that we look at our program budgets and see if we can afford to have programs that cost us money or do not bring in anything. We are running a very lean budget.

LO The programs have to make money, and I want to say that one of the main programs for me, aside from the social programs, is the language program. That is one of the gems and a moneymaking program, which you started and which today is an ongoing vehicle for fund raising and for promoting membership.

AF I am concerned that a lot of people who are enthusiastic about what has changed at the Society, should we reverse that course, would just simply leave us. That said, what is the best thing about the Society that you can think of?

LO The people. I have made so many friends in the years that I have been active in the Society. I think we need all volunteers, we can't afford to turn anyone away. You don't have to like somebody in order to work with them, and to me it's just appalling that people would not come just because somebody else is there. I mean, that's got to change. People have got to work together.

AF Volunteers don't have to do anything. That's what the word says, they volunteer. If they don't feel comfortable, they just go away. - You have been in charge of outreach for the Society. What avenues did you pursue and how did the Society benefit?

LO One of the things I'm proud of is that I brought the Sixth Police District Action Committee to the Society. They've been meeting in different venues in the City for ten years and I don't think they even knew of the German Society. Also, the Northern Liberties Neighbors' Association ...

AF Actually, there is not much going on there.

LO Well, they are aware of us. It's always good to be involved with the neighborhood organizations including the Fairmount Neighbors who meet at Eighth and Fairmount. I went to several of their meetings and the Spring Garden Tenants' Association, and the Day Care Center. It makes us appear as a good neighbor here in the community. For many years the neighbors would just look at this building and say "I wonder what goes on inside, some secret society?"

AF Are you familiar with the use of our Joseph Horner Memorial Library and what plans do you have to develop it?

LO I love that library. I wish we could get more people in there. I would like to have a full time librarian in there for five or six days a week. Lack of funding for even a part-time librarian gets back to my original point about fund raising. If we had a regular schedule, which we now have but did not often have, I would like to see it used more as a research library by students



Louis Oschmann

Interview w/ Louis Oschmann cont. from pg. 10

from local universities and with our inter-library loan program. Aside from the scholarly aspect of it, it's a great venue for shooting certain scenes and visuals. We've had companies come in here and do commercials. We can do more of that, renting the space. I've witnessed several productions up there and we've made some money from these.

AF What hampers us here is we don't have an elevator and there is often lots of heavy equipment involved for film shooting. - On another plane, how do you see yourself dealing successfully with controversy and friction that might come your way?

LO I've always thought of myself as a mediator and not a confronter, and I think as the past President of a number of non-profits, as well as community organizations, I have had to deal with a lot of controversy. I think that controversy destroys an organization, if it gets too bitter.

AF What do you practically have in mind?

LO I want to talk to people one on one. Any groups that have an interest in the Society, find out what's bothering them, and resolve it. Now, this is very optimistic, but I think I have those skills. I think I know enough people, I know the membership, and I know the German-American community beyond the membership.

AF It seems to crystallize that there are different opinions among the members of the Society of how they view their role in it. Do you believe that members should ask what can I do for the Society or should they ask, what can the Society do for me?

LO The former, of course, and I think that becomes increasingly clear to people once they become aware of the financial difficulty that we are in. People are going to say "I have to do something to help the Society, if I believe in the Society".

AF How important do you think a friendly atmosphere is to the success of the Society?

LO Without a doubt, a friendly atmosphere is all-important and as President I would do all to facilitate an atmosphere of Gemütlichkeit in the Society. Now, in the past, I've worked a lot in the Ratskeller, and the auditorium. I have made many friends in the Society and I feel friendly with almost everyone and I want to transfer the friendliness that I feel to everyone that I meet and to try to get that attitude instilled. I don't think I can change people but I think I can get them to work together.

AF I would like to add that communication with the membership could be improved, in my opinion. Do you share this opinion, and, if so, how do you believe you can improve it?

LO The Staatsbote, I think is a great vehicle for communication, as well as our website, and all the e-mail and phone calls that you and your staff have sent out for the various events are very helpful. All these are great communicators. Right now, I think that communication is good. I think it's very difficult to improve on the perfection that you have attained in communicating here.

AF Do you think you could improve the communication with Board and staff members and how would you do that?

LO As President, I would maintain personal contact with all of the Board members, solicit their views and try to gain a consensus for our positions before they become a crisis. With staff members, as I said, I would spend maybe fifty percent of my time. I would always be available, I would hope that staff members would communicate any of their concerns to me right away.

AF So, what do you think about the present staff?

LO From what I've seen, I think we have an excellent staff, and the programs that are emanating from the staff are excellent programs. For example, we had the Mayor of Berlin coming here and the contact with the Jewish-American Committee. For bringing the general public to the Society, that has been excellent.

AF Could you tell our readers about your professional background?

LO My professional background is mostly in human resources, so that's why I think I have the skills in dealing with people. I actively retired in 1988, that is, once you retire, the cliché is that you sit and do nothing. I got involved in organizations, not only here, but I became President of Washington Square Neighbors' Association, was an active member of the Police District Action Council, and active in my Church. This is in my curriculum vitae, which is on my [website, www.21.brinkster.com/lou4president/](http://www.21.brinkster.com/lou4president/).

AF Can you tell us a little bit about your family?

LO Well, I guess it would all have to be about me, because I have no current family. I have no children, am not married and I have no siblings. I have an extended family of cousins, many of who are scattered across the country. My background is that my grandfather came from Germany in 1873, settled in Philadelphia. He spoke little English, so my father grew up in a bilingual household. But he wanted to assimilate, so by the time I came along, he didn't want to speak German to me. He wanted me to be an American and he wanted to be an American. It was that kind of second-generation denial, at about the time of the First World War. So when he married my mother, in the early thirties, she was of Irish descent. My grandfather on my mother's side had come from Ireland. When I was raised, I was raised mostly with my mother's family, so I got a heavy exposure to the Irish side of me and it wasn't until I was about forty years old that I decided to become involved in the German side.

AF How good is your German in the meantime?

LO It's not a fluent German. I've been struggling with it, and I've taken classes from you and I've learned a lot, but I don't practice it much. That's one of my failings, that I don't speak fluent German. I often regret that my father did not speak more to me.

AF If you are elected President of the German Society, what would you consider to be your main task and what would you like to change?

LO Two main tasks: Two main planks in my platform. One is to heal the divisiveness, any divisiveness that there is in the Society, and secondly, to raise money for its continuation. What

would I change? I'd like to paint the outside of that building, where all that paint's falling off. I'd like to put an elevator in, you know. There are a lot of things I'd like to change.

AF How would you respond if one of the other candidates should be elected President?

LO I'm glad you asked. I've thought that through very carefully. I actually know both of the other candidates, one for many years and the other for three years and I like him a lot. I actually like both of them and if they were elected President, I would certainly congratulate them and offer them my support if they felt they could use me in their administration, I would volunteer. If they didn't, I would still be a member of the Society and do as much as I could.

AF Is there anything you would like to add that I didn't ask?

LO When you asked me about family, since I told you that I didn't have that much of a family now, I wanted to add that the German Society has kind of become my family, in the last twelve to fourteen years. As you know, I've lived here, when Frau Sonnenberg was here, I've stayed here many times and I have made certainly a lot of close friends here. So the German Society is my extended family.

AF Lou, thank you for the interview.

We thank our volunteer Frank Jost tremendously for making the big effort to transcribe both interviews. □

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**Website:
www.GermanSociety.org**

The Warmest Thank You To Retiring President Bernie Freitag and Executive Vice President Dr. F. Peter Kohler from Members of the Board

Time being our most precious commodity, I am, if for nothing else, most grateful to Bernie and Peter just for the amount of time they have taken from their own lives and given to the German Society. *Jim Mundy*

I have had the pleasure of serving on the Board of Directors with two of the finest individuals I have had the opportunity to meet and work with. Bernie Freitag and Peter Kohler have been the backbone of the Board and their diligent leadership and counsel will be missed. I know, because of the type of men they are, they will stay active and support the German Society in any way they can. It has been a pleasure to work with them and even a greater pleasure knowing them.

Charles W. Becker, Jr.

Thanks to the steady hands and leadership of Bernie Freitag and Peter Kohler, the German Society has been able to weather some pretty turbulent storms as of late, and has emerged much stronger than ever. *Karl Spaeth*

Thanks to both of you for persevering in the furtherance of the German Society of Pennsylvania during both hard and easy times. This devotion will always be treasured by the membership. *Charles M. Taylor*

President Bernie Freitag and Executive Vice-President Peter Kohler have both served the GSP with dedication and distinction for many years, and every GSP member owes each of them a debt of gratitude. I would like to extend my personal thanks and appreciation for their leadership and work on behalf of the GSP.

Allen Krumm

Thanks for the many years of devoted service to and stewardship of the Society, its mission and goals. *Todd Warner*

Bernie Freitag guided the German Society with determination and complete dedication during a period which posed the challenge to preserve and protect our Library and our extraordinary building. Peter Kohler contributed not only cool and precise judgment throughout this renewal process but contributed very substantial funds towards its realization. Both, Bernie Freitag and Peter Kohler deserve our gratitude for all they have done for the German Society. *Otto Reichert-Facilides*



Bernard J. Freitag

Bernie Freitag has made me proud of my membership in the German Society of Pennsylvania. This is easy to explain. Every ethnic society has to renew itself and its mission if it wants to avoid sinking into antiquarianism. As the premier German American organization, the German Society of Pennsylvania has given an example for a successful rejuvenation both as a modern-day forum for a growing group of younger members and a guardian of the rich ethnic heritage. Among those who deserve praise for this remarkable transition, Bernard Freitag ranks highest. He has been an indefatigable leader in a period of often stormy debates about the changes and has enabled others to become leaders themselves. The legacy of his tenure as President, so ably supported by Executive Vice President Peter Kohler, is not just a much improved building with a restored library, but a younger society that has the resources to fulfill its mission in the twenty-first century. *Frank Trommler*

During the tenure of Bernie and Peter diametric changes of the Society's purpose as well as significant building renovations have been undertaken. Even though mistakes have been made in the process, a new dynamic has evolved in the Society and I believe that generations of members to come will point to this last decade as the true beginning of the Society's 21st Century.

Morgan Churchman

Thanks very much, Bernie, for believing that I could be of some help to the German Society as a member of the Board. I hope that I haven't let you down! - It was a pleasure serving with you, Peter Kohler, particularly for the guidance you provided at the Retreat in 2001. *Tom Unkefer*

Many thanks go to Bernie Freitag and Dr. F. Peter Kohler for their tireless efforts on behalf of the German Society of Pennsylvania. With best wishes for a happy and healthy future.

Barbara Afanassiev

President Freitag was responsible for the successful renovation of the Library and other parts of the building. He was also responsible for the reorientation of the programs of the Society to fit modern requirements of the community.

Dr. Peter Kohler

Lieber Peter, Your bust belongs in the Valhalla of the GSP. Thanks for years of dedication to the best interests of the GSP. *Bernie*



Dr. F. Peter Kohler

Einblicke und Ausblicke

From the Executive Director

With great happiness I can report to you that our efforts to generate income from organizing our own fundraising events continue to be successful. Since October 2002, the beginning of this fiscal year, we were lucky enough to earn over \$40,000 with our fundraising events, which

constitutes roughly 40 percent more income than we were able to generate from the Annual Fund. Even though we are still not as financially solid as we would like to be and need to be, I believe it is justified to state that we are on an upward swing.

Also the quality of our events attracts more and more participants, members and non-members alike. We received beautiful compliments for the festive dinner reception for the Governing Mayor of Berlin Klaus Wowereit, who visited the Society on May 1 together with the



Not a 'Still Life' but the antipasto creation of Walter Staib for the Wowereit Reception.



Mayor Wowereit is impressed by the large selection of historical Berlin books in our library.

member of the German Parliament, Volker Beck, and the member of the City Council of Munich, Thomas Niederbühl. Our Cabaret Evening and Dinner Dance Fundraiser with the enticing Karen Kohler who was presenting Marlene Dietrich songs and the Kauriga Orchestra who played popular dance music was in a class of its own. Both events were sponsored and most tastefully catered by the unsurpassable Walter Staib and his "City Tavern" staff. Last but not least, we are also very grateful to the German Consulate General for their support in co-sponsoring the Cabaret night.

Another aspect that gives me the confidence to speak of an upward swing of the Society is the fact that we have found great new friends and volunteers who understand our mission, share our enthusiasm, stand behind us and contribute time and treasure to their utmost ability. I cannot possibly mention them all by name in this column, however, I would like to particularly mention Walter Staib, Proprietor/Chef of "City



Cabaret singer Karen Kohler presenting Marlene Dietrich songs on May 10 in front of a Marlene Dietrich picture drawn by Artist Tom Cunnane for this occasion.



Volunteers and staff dress up according to the Cabaret theme in order to bring our guests into a light mood. Front row r to l: Suzana Habibovic, Larisa Oblescuk, Andrea Fleegle, Anne Farago Back row r to l: Robert Zsembik, Werner Carrieri, Leanne Bergey, Donna Miller Thank you all for being such a great help! But wasn't it fun?

Tavern" and Chair of our Culinary Committee who has proven to be one of the strongest supporters of this administration. With my deepest gratitude I think of our parting Consul General, Bernhard von der Planitz, who has never turned us down when we asked for support or advice. Similarly, the Head of the Cultural Department of the New York Consulate, Ute Minke-Koenig, who is being transferred - together with her husband Dr. Günther Koenig, the Director of the German Information Center, - they have accepted a new post in the German Embassy of the Netherlands. Ute, your support meant a lot to me, you always gave me the feeling I found a

friend who wants us to succeed, no matter what. Herr von der Planitz, liebe Koenigs, im Namen der ganzen Gesellschaft sehr sehr herzlichen Dank fuer Ihre beispiellose Ermutigung und Unterstuetzung. Wir werden Sie sehr vermissen.

For these and many more reasons there is no doubt in my mind that we are on the right track, that the Society is breathing fresh air, that against all odds we are moving forward with a smile of hope and new confidence.

Both our President, Bernie Freitag, and our Executive Vice President, Dr. Peter Kohler, have been staunch supporters of the sometimes difficult transition of the German Society, and after many years of service on the Board both seem to feel that they want to retire to some more than deserved rest. Bernie and Peter, personally and in the name of our staff I want to thank you for your strong, steadfast support and advice, for your insights and history lessons, for your calm and wisdom.

Dear members and friends, as the Executive Director, as well as a dedicated member, I have tried to contribute to a healthier, more exciting, state-of-the-art Society. It is my strong hope that those who will be elected on June 11 will see the need to develop the Society further in this direction.

With the best wishes for all of you and the future of the German Society,

I remain faithfully yours,

Annke Farago



An upgraded Book Sale at the Society

By our Librarian Annette Ramke

The German Society of Pennsylvania held a book sale in the Ratskeller on Saturday, April 5th and Sunday, April 6th. For sale were books that had been donated to the German Society and which, due to space and/or scope reasons, could not be incorporated into the library's holdings.

There was a large selection of titles for every taste, and for ease of the book fans there were categories, dividing the books into history, literature, secondary literature and reference, biography, art and music and Austria. The majority of the books were written in German, but there was also a section devoted to English-language books. For those not inclined to reading there were also records and chocolates available.

In the two days of the sale, which encompassed the Memberfest, over \$500 was raised to benefit the Joseph Horner Memorial Library. Not only members of the Society, whose support was greatly appreciated, visited

the book sale but also university students and many individuals who made their first trip to the Society for the sale. In total we had approximately 125 visitors. The informal atmosphere of the event lent itself well to



Annette Ramke

informing those visitors about the German Society and upcoming events and classes, with many hoping to return to the Society in the near future.

Many thanks to Suzana Habibovic for her hard work and support, as well as to our volunteers, Robert Zsembik, Malte Hendrik Globig, Donna Miller, Meghan Fraatz, and Marlene Keenan, who helped us set up and staff the sale. Due to the good turnout and positive feedback we have received, we hope to be able to schedule further book sales in the future. □

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Communications

Website:

www.GermanSociety.Org

E-mail:

Contact@GermanSociety.org

Tel: **215-627-2332, ext. 10**

Fax: **215-627-5297**

Our library hours are: Monday,
9:15 AM – 2:45 PM;

Thursday, 10:30 AM – 6:00 PM
and

the 1st and 3rd Saturdays each
month, 1 – 5 PM.

The library will be closed on
Holidays.

The public is welcome during all
times the Library is open.
Library Tel: 215-627-2332, ext. 19

The German Society reserves the right to edit all submissions. Editing will be done at the discretion of the Editor and/or President.

The official registration and financial information of the German Society of Pennsylvania may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

performance at Verizon Hall on Sunday, May 18, 7:30 PM. For more info please call 215-893-1999. The Artistic Director, David J. Tang, assures us that he loves the acoustics of our hall. Unfortunately, we could not go along with a proposal to accept free advertisement as rent payment. It cannot be helped, we need cash.

May 9 Staff and volunteers develop new skills. In preparation of the Cabaret night on the next day we use the evening before the event to roll silverware into napkins, set the tables, clean the glasses, and my visiting friend Veronika Preussner from Bremen even plants 11 pots with Impatiens and Petunia in my back yard to serve as table decoration for the dinner. Chef Staib comments: "Not bad for a bunch of amateurs". – I guess we should be happy about this commendation.

May 10 Excitement, excitement. Last minute calls, cancellations, confirmations, - we will have over 90 guests. Fabulous. Karen Kohler practices, Suzana mixes the Mai-Bowle, we put on our top hats – and off we go with another fundraiser for the German Society.

May 19 The Bavarians are coming. Introduced by Dr. Frank Trommler, the Co-chair of our Library Committee, Dr. Michael Henker and Dr. Margot Hamm from the Center of Bavarian History in Augsburg visit our Library in an effort to prepare for an exhibition to be shown in Nördlingen, München and Fürth in 2004 and 2005 about the mass immigration from Bavaria and the Bavarian Palatinate to the United States.

May 20 A press release from the Program Director of International House, Michael Chaiken, informs about their showing of the 1919 film "Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" with color tints, silent with live musical accompaniment by Guglielmo Foffani on June 6 at 8 PM. Since we cooperate with International House German Society members will only be charged \$5. For more information please call Michael at (215) 895-6575. For December a series of German films from the time after the fall of the Berlin Wall is in preparation.

May 21 In order to meet the challenge matching fund of \$10,000 for the Kitchen Renovation we still need contributions or pledges in the amount of \$4,920. Until July 31, 2003 at the latest. The renovation of the Ratskeller kitchen to the level of a professional caterer kitchen is a significant step that will bring us in the position to generate more income. For questions or further information please call 215-627-2332. Thank you for supporting our ongoing efforts to help ourselves. □

We welcome our new members to the Society...und wir hoffen, es gefällt Ihnen bei uns.

John Albright
 Sylvia Beauchmin
 Graciela Bracamonte
 Heidi Brown
 Peter & Robert Camburn
 Andrew Davis
 Richard and Caroline Debrot
 Kevin Donaghy
 Dr. Henrik Eger
 Angela Fleegle & Ryan Deemer
 Jason Fleegle
 Malte Globig & Ariel Peleg-Globig
 Nicholas Grason
 Anna Hamuth
 Azra Hromadzic & Aaron Vlasak
 Claudio Kuhn & Elaine Farago
 John & Janice Kuhn
 P. Douglas Maier
 Joseph McGuire
 Neha Pandit & Daniel Gerhardy
 Carl Pledger
 James Pyle
 Axel & Annette Ramke
 Curt & Patricia Reiser
 Victor Rosado
 Peter Saxe
 Mark Shoeneveld
 Jennifer Shropshire
 Jelena Stjepanovic & Natasa Borcanin
 Edward Swenson
 Elizabeth Maier Tachdjian
 Anneliese Taylor & Bruce Andersen
 Denver Taylor & Sara Salam Lauriano & Otto Thellmann
 Annegret Voparil
 Lauren White

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May

Fri 30 Friday Film-Fest-Series: "Aimée and Jaguar".

In German with English subtitles. Donations \$15, \$12 for GSP members include our famous soups!

6:30 PM Ratskeller/Auditorium

Sat 31 Immersion Class: German III & IV. Immerse yourself in a day of German conversation, culture and grammar review. Lunch is included with class tuition. Instructor: Annke Farago. \$100, \$95 GSP members. 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

June

Wed 11 Annual Meeting of Members. 7:15 PM Auditorium

Fri 27 Friday Film-Fest-Series: "Die Verlorene Ehre der Katarina Blum" (The Lost Honor of Katarina Blum).

In German with English subtitles. Donations \$15, \$12 for GSP members include our famous soups!

6:30 PM Ratskeller/Auditorium

July

Mon 7 Summer Term for German Classes starts (through Aug. 16).

Fri 18 Friday Film-Fest-Series: "Mostly Martha". In German with English subtitles.

Donations \$15, \$12 for GSP members include our famous soups!

6:30 PM Ratskeller/Auditorium

August

Sat 2 & Sun 3 Sommerfest at Penn's Landing: Event pending. For updates, please check www.steubenparade.com

September

Mon 15 Fall Term for German Classes Starts (through Dec. 13).

October

Sun 12 Wister Concert. 3:00 PM Auditorium

Fri 31 Friday Film-Fest-Series: TBA. 6:30 PM

November

Fri 21 Friday Film-Fest-Series: TBA. 6:30 PM

Sun 23 Wister Concert. 3:00 PM Auditorium

December

Fri 5, Sat 6 & Sun 7 "Christmas at the German Society"

Tagebuch - from the desk of the Executive Director...

*Dear Members and Friends, liebe Mitglieder und Freunde,
I am looking forward to hopefully welcoming all of you to our new season 2003-2004 in the Fall newsletter, scheduled to come out in September.
Enjoy the summer,
With my best regards und mit sehr herzlichen Grüßen*

Ihre Annke Farago

April 29 Rein in die Kartoffeln, raus aus den Kartoffeln. Our frequent social events require a special kind of volunteers, volunteers that have strong enough muscles and a well-functioning heart in order to move hundreds of chairs in no time, transforming the concert hall to a dining room and vice versa, and vice versa and vice versa. We particularly thank Uwe Klauß and Malte Hendrik Globig, but also our staff members Dee and John Colbert for this exceptional exercise.

May 1 The Governing Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, accepts our invitation to a dinner party in his honor in the large hall of the Society. His appearance is a cooperative venture of the German Society and the newly founded "Friends of Freie Universität Berlin" group. Walter Staib, the Chef/Proprietor of City Tavern sponsors a plush buffet dinner with a selection of the finest Antipasto, a Carving Station with Prime Rib, roast turkey, his famous beef goulash and Pennsylvania German style Sauerkraut. Na, einfach toll

war das, Walter. A big Thank You to Walter and his "City Tavern" crew. Our thoughtful librarian, Annette Ramke, has prepared a table with a considerable selection of special Berlin books spanning from a "Glossarium der Berlinischen Wörter und Redensarten, dem Volke abgelauscht" from the years 1881 - 1891 to "Ein Bürgermeister von



Governing Mayor from Berlin, Klaus Wowereit during his reception at the German Society on May 1 with Chef Walter Staib and Executive Director Annke Farago

Berlin" von Johannes Rathenau, published in 1855. Bürgermeister Wowereit und Katja Horn, die Direktorin der "Berlin Marketing North America" waren ganz offensichtlich beeindruckt. Dr. Peter Kohler welcomes the guests on behalf of the German Society, Charles Taylor does the same on behalf of the Freie Universität Alumni Foundation, Walter Staib presents the Mayor with an old original map of Berlin, and for the Society Kristin Brandt had composed a portrait of the Mayor as a farewell gift. Thank you all. Und danke, Herr Wowereit, für Ihren Besuch, Ihre Bereitschaft, sich - trotz Jetlag - für Gespräche und Fotos mit unseren Gästen zur Verfügung zu stellen, und für die Originalradierung vom Brandenburger Tor.

May 13 - 15 The Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia rehearses for the first time at the German Society. During three days they practice the "St. Matthew Passion" by Johann Sebastian Bach, entirely in German, for their

Continued on page 11

PLEASE PRE-REGISTER AND COME TO VOTE ON JUNE 11, 2003!

Address Correction Requested

Summer 2003

**The German Society of Pennsylvania
611 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123 USA**