

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

2003 STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction

Institutions regenerate or die. As the society and environment change around and within them, each institution faces the challenge of reshaping its mission, its reason for being. Otherwise, who would support it?

The German Society of Pennsylvania has been in existence since 1764. Longer, amazingly, than the United States of America. Its original mission of helping and protecting German immigrants in Philadelphia from unscrupulous shipping agents has long since disappeared. It was these German immigrants, however (today still the largest ethnic group in the country), who shaped and developed the city of Philadelphia and the state of Pennsylvania. Now, after a century in which the popularity of being German or German-American reached its lowest point, and the German Society became a refuge from this disdain and a haven of self-protection, it is time again to regenerate.

The Society's Board of Directors began a strategic planning process to start this regeneration. With the help and guidance of professional non-profit consultants, Ted Swenson & Associates, a Board retreat was held in December 2001. From this retreat, and a newly created Strategic Planning Committee, came the groundwork that led to this report.

Guiding Principles

The Strategic planning Committee established a timeline that would guide the process of evaluation and re-creation of important principles. The first step in this process was to re-evaluate the mission, vision, core values, and constituencies of the Society. Re-written by the committee, the following were presented to the Board of Directors and approved:

Vision

The German Society of Pennsylvania seeks to further the understanding of German and German American contributions to the growth of American history and culture from the past to the present and into the future.

Mission

In fulfillment of our vision, we:

? ? Offer cultural programs and activities, such as concerts, lectures, movies and seminars.

- ? ? Teach German language, including Business German, and cross-cultural understanding. We also offer English language courses and orientation programs for newly arrived immigrants of all nationalities.
- ? ? Invite the use of the Joseph Horner Memorial Library, the largest German-American library in the United States. It contains over 70,000 thousand volumes and documents, many of them unique or rare. The Collection spans the last 250 years, from the Sauer Bible, the first bible printed in a European language (German) in the colonies in 1743, to contemporary periodicals and reference materials from Germany.
- ? ? Preserve and maintain the Society's art and archival collections and its historic buildings, designated as landmarks on the National Register of Historic Places. These encompass the Library, Auditorium, Ratskeller, and classrooms.

Core Values

The German Society of Pennsylvania values good will among all people, and serves its constituents and its community with dedication and respect.

Constituencies

Recognizing that the Society's primary constituency would always be its members, (German, German-American, and German speaking), it was also recognized that the Society must broaden its thinking to include its immediate neighborhood and beyond to include the people of the larger Delaware Valley region.

Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Following the guidelines in the Retreat Report from the consultants, the next step in the strategic planning process was the creation of individual task forces whose role was to evaluate the structure, management, and operations of the Board and standing committees, and to make recommendations of strategic goals, objectives, and actions. As a result, the following reports are presented.

Board Restructuring:

Incumbent in the new Board structure is the active participation of each Board member in one or more of the five new standing committees. It also acknowledged that the success of the committees and subcommittees will depend on the inclusion and participation of non-Board Society members who will volunteer their time and skills towards the achievement of determined plans and programs. Following is the approved structure:

Officers of the Board:

- President – 2 year term with one re-nomination
- Vice Presidents (5) – 4 year term with no re-nomination
- Treasurer – 4 year term with no re-nomination
- Secretary – 4 year term with no re-nomination

~~///~~ **Directors (15):**

- Three classes of 5 each to serve 3-year terms with 1 re-nomination

~~///~~ **Criteria for Officers and Directors**

- Minimum annual contribution measured by “Work, Wealth, Wisdom.” A minimum contribution of \$500 per year or 120 hours, or a combination of both and a demonstrated desire to benefit the Society with their individual talents.
- ~~///~~ Two absences per year [based on quarterly meetings] are cause for dismissal.
- ~~///~~ The President retains the discretion to review the aforementioned criteria for Board members and to determine if and when to judge a Board member’s participation.
- ~~///~~ If after six months an Officer or Director is not meeting minimum criteria, then the President will ask the incumbent to improve or resign, allowing six months for improvement. If after one year the minimum criteria are not met, then the President must recommend to the Board that they vote to remove that Officer or Director.

~~///~~ **Selection of Officers and Directors:**

- ~~///~~ The Nominating Committee has full responsibility for recruiting Officers and Directors from among the membership. These individuals will be presented for election to their respective offices each year at the Annual Meeting of Members following the procedures contained in the Bylaws.

~~///~~ **Committees:**

- ~~///~~ There will be five Standing Committees with subcommittees, each chaired by a Vice President with the Programs Committee to have a Vice Chair:
 - ?? Advancement Committee
 - Development Subcommittee
 - Marketing/Public Relations Subcommittee
 - Membership Subcommittee
 - Nominating Subcommittee
 - Website Subcommittee
 - ?? Culture and Heritage Committee
 - Archives Subcommittee
 - Art Subcommittee
 - Library Subcommittee
 - ?? Finance Committee
 - ?? Operations Committee
 - Beverage Subcommittee
 - Capital Projects Subcommittee
 - Human Resources Subcommittee

- Information Technology Subcommittee
 - Maintenance Subcommittee
 - ?? Programs Committee
 - “Fest” Subcommittee (Christmas, Member, etc.)
 - Language Program Subcommittee*
 - Movies Subcommittee
 - Music Subcommittee*
 - Scholarship Subcommittee (GSP & Undergraduate)
 - Lecture Series
 - Special Events Subcommittee
 - Steuben Day Subcommittee
- *These programs are recognized as “staff driven.”

Advancement Committee Task Force Report:

Goal: ensure the future membership vitality and financial stability of the Society.

Development Subcommittee:

Goal: acquire additional operational and capital funding.

Objective 1: determine additional funds needed to supplement the operational and capital needs of the Society.

Action: hire a development director.

Action: survey operational and capital financial needs of other standing committees.

Action: analyze appropriate foundations and submits grant proposals.

Membership Subcommittee:

Goal: to retain the existing membership and increase membership.

Objective 1: promote membership in the Society.

Action: create a membership committee to promote and increase the Society’s membership.

Action: create a member retention committee to ensure the annual renewal of the membership.

Marketing/Public Relations Subcommittee:

Goal: to increase awareness and knowledge of the Society among the membership and the general public.

Objective 1: promote the Society and its activities and programs to the membership and the general public.

Action: prepare marketing strategies and plans.

Action: establish relationships with the media.

Nominating Subcommittee:

Goal: prepare annual slates of candidates for the Board of Directors.

Action: review and nominate potential candidates for the positions of officers and directors of the Board.

Website Subcommittee:

Goal: advise the Society on the promotional and informational capabilities of the Internet.

Objective 1: promote the Society and its programs, activities, and services through the advantages offered by the Internet.

Action: review and make recommendations for the development and upgrading of the Society's website.

Action: consult with the standing committees for their input on website needs and content.

Action: review and make recommendations for hardware and software upgrades and improvements.

Culture and Heritage Committee Task Force Report:

Goal: This committee will oversee the management and care of the three collections – library, art, and archival.

Action: write and approve mission statements for each collection.

Action: create a "Care and Management of Collections" document that will guide the operations of all three collections.

Action: prepare annual operating budgets for all three collection areas.

Library Subcommittee:

Goal 1: Meet the intellectual and recreational needs of Society members, researchers, students, and others interested in the Society's Library.

Objective 1: Provide appropriate staffing so the library is open and accessible 40 hours a week.

Action: hire a full-time librarian

Action: hire a full time cataloger

Objective 2: perform a physical and intellectual appraisal of the collection.

Action: create a spatial map of the library and adjoining storage spaces.

Action: conduct an intellectual survey to assess the content and importance of the books.

Objective 3: promote the **intellectual and intellectual** assets of the library to the members and the general and academic public throughout the greater Philadelphia region in order to increase the number of public and academic users by 25% within 12 months.

Action: establish an information network of institutions and individuals.

Action: join PACSCL, the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special collection Libraries.

Action: devote a significant portion of the Society's website to promoting the library's assets by making the catalogue available on-line.

Action: create an outreach program for regional high school and college German language teachers and students.

Arts Subcommittee:

Goal: promote the Society's fine and decorative art collections (art, sculpture, prints, photographs, furniture, architecture) for the enjoyment of members, researchers, students, and the general public.

Objective 1: determine the size and content of the existing collections.

Action: inventory, catalogue, and accession the fine and decorative art collections on a database by December 2003.

Action: conduct an intellectual appraisal to assess the content and importance of each object.

Action: make the collection database available to members, researchers, Students, and the general public through the Society's website.

Objective 2: design a plan to ensure the proper safety, storage, and intellectual control of the fine art collection.

Action: conduct a condition assessment of the collection.

Action: perform an insurance appraisal of the collection.

Action: undertake conservation as funding permits.

Objective 3: design and hold art exhibits at the Society for the members and the general public.

Objective 4: design and hold fine arts lectures and programs at the Society for the members and the general public.

Action: develop relationships with regional cultural institutions to identify collaborative opportunities.

Objective 5: promote the fine and decorative art collections.

Action: devote a portion of the Society's website to the collections.

Action: promote exhibits and programs on the website.

Archives Subcommittee:

Goal: develop and organize the archive collection to better preserve and tell the story of the Society's 139 year history.

Objective 1: determine the size and intellectual content of the collection.

Action: inventory, catalogue, and accession the collection.

Action: conduct an intellectual appraisal of the collection.

Objective 2: design a plan to ensure the proper safety, storage, and intellectual control of the collection.

Action: perform an insurance and condition appraisal of the collection.

Action: undertake conservation as funding permits.

Objective 3: promote the archives to the members, researchers, students, and the general public.

Action: make the archives catalogue available on-line through the website.

Finance Committee Task Force Report:

Goal: to manage the finances of the Society.

Objective 1: develop an annual budget planning process.

Action: have each standing committee submit annual income and expense budgets for review and approval.

Action: coordinate with the Development Committee to link budget needs and fundraising goals.

Objective 2: project future expenses and revenues.

Action: prepare a rolling 3 to 5 year business plan including operational and capital projections.

Objective 3: manage the Society's investment portfolios in consultation with an investment counselor.

Action: hold monthly or quarterly meetings with the investment counselor with subsequent reports to the Board.

Operations Committee Task Force Report:

Goal: to ensure the occupation and operation of the Society in its historic buildings.

Maintenance Subcommittee:

Goal: to ensure the safe occupation and use of the buildings.

Objective 1: maintain the buildings and their infrastructure.

Action: perform custodial and repair work as required.

Action: evaluate and recommend utility and maintenance contracts.

Action: evaluate and recommend appropriate budget requests for the fulfillment of the aforementioned.

Capital Projects Subcommittee:

Goal: protect the physical integrity of the Society's buildings and infrastructure.

Objective 1: project present and future capital needs.

Action: determine present and future capital needs as recommended by the standing committees.

Action: prepare an annual and 5 year capital plan and budget.

Action: consult with Development Committee on projected financial needs.

Information Technology Subcommittee:

Goal: to provide the Society with information to take advantage of the best available technology for the operational efficiency of the Society.

Objective 1: ensure the daily operational efficiency of the Society and its staff.

Action: evaluate the present hardware and software in use by the staff.

Action: make recommendations for improvements to the computer and telephonic operations.

Action: consult with the Development Subcommittee for capital needs.

Beverage Subcommittee:

Goal: continue the traditional social beverage heritage of the Society.

Objective 1: manage the beverage operation of the Society.

Action: assure compliance with all federal, state, and city laws regarding the sale of alcoholic and other beverages in the Society.

Action: create guidelines for the appropriate purchase, inventory, and storage of beverages in the Society.

Action: create a price list for the sale of beverages.

Action: train and schedule qualified bartenders **for when needed** for

social

functions.

Human Resources Subcommittee:

Goal: create and maintain a healthy physical and emotional work environment for the staff.

Objective 1: ensure Society compliance with all federal, state, and city employee regulations.

Action: create an Employee Handbook with guidelines, procedures, and benefits that comply with all federal, state, and city regulations and others as deemed appropriate.

Action: create job descriptions for all staff positions in the Society.

Programs Committee Task Force Report:

Goals: to plan and provide programs and activities for the social and educational benefit of the membership and the general public.

Objective 1: drawing on the rich German and German-American cultural heritage of the Society, provide programs and activities that will be financially self-sustaining and provide additional income for the Society.

Action: review, evaluate, and recommend the continuation of present programs and activities.

Action: recommend new programs and activities as appropriate.

Fest Subcommittee:

Goal: promote traditional and annual *Feste* for the enjoyment of the members and the general public.

Objective 1: ensure the quality, benefit, and financial stability of the fests.

Action: review the physical and financial operation of each fest.

Action: recommend improvements or operational changes.

Action: recommend new events or the discontinuance of present ones.

Language Programs Subcommittee:

Goal: promote the appreciation of the German language.

Objective 1: conduct courses for the learning and use of the German language.

Action: develop a schedule for the German language courses for each trimester and the summer courses.

Action: hire qualified teachers.

Action: establish course fees and budgets.

Objective 2: develop supplemental language programs to enhance the language courses.

Action: hold monthly *Konversationsabende*.

Action: develop English language courses on an as-needed basis for native German speakers and others in need in the general public.

Movie Subcommittee:

Goal: promote the enjoyment and cultural wealth of German cinema for the members and the general public.

Objective 1: hold monthly Movie Nights at the Society.

Action: review and schedule movies.

Action: ensure that the appropriate equipment is available and maintained.

Action: prepare and submit an annual budget.

Action: work with the Marketing Committee to best promote the events.

Music Subcommittee:

Goal: promote the enjoyment and cultural wealth of traditional and contemporary German music for the benefit of the membership and the general public.

Objective1: hold monthly, quarterly, or random musical programs.

Action: continue the Classical Concert Series with the Wister Quartet.

Action: plan other programs as deemed of interest.

Action: prepare and submit an annual budget.

Action: work with the Marketing Committee to best promote the events.

Scholarship Subcommittee:

Goal: encourage the study of the German language at the undergraduate college level.

Objective 1: fortify and reinforce the teaching of the German language at regional Colleges and universities.

Action: as funding allows, award scholarships to high school seniors for undergraduate study of German at regional colleges and universities.

Action: work with the Development Committee to increase the money for scholarships.

Lecture Series Subcommittee:

Goal: promote the understanding and enjoyment of German and German-American history and culture for the enjoyment and benefit of the membership and the general public.

Objective 1:

Action: plan and present lectures on topics and subjects from an historical or contemporary German or German-American perspective.

Action: schedule semi-annual meetings of the Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache.

Action: prepare and submit an annual budget.

Action: work with the Marketing Committee to best promote the events.

Special Events Subcommittee:

Goal: to promote other related activities and programs for the enjoyment and benefit.

Objective 1: to act as a “think tank” for the development of new or unique programs.

Action: following the precedent established by the Welcome to America program and Society trips to Phillies baseball games, continue to plan events that may be of interest to the members.

Steuben Day Subcommittee:

Goal: promote the annual celebration of German and German-American contributions to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the United States.

Objective 1: encourage member participation in the annual events of Steuben Day.

Action: a representative of the Board shall participate in the planning of Steuben Day activities.

Consultant Recommendations

During the course of the Board retreat it was not possible to discuss in length a number of other issues that will bear directly on the direction or substance of the Society's strategic plan. The Strategic Planning Committee discussed and evaluated a number of these to insure that they would be brought to the attention of the Board for consideration.

The Woman's Auxiliary

It was the conclusion of the Strategic Planning Committee that the WAX, like the Society, must reinvent itself to meet a new century with new needs and challenges. It must adopt a mission and vision that will be aligned with and reinforce that of the Society's. There cannot be an "in between." If the Auxiliary is to remain a part of the Society, it and its leadership must also embrace the conclusions reached and adopted by the Board of the Society as presented in this strategic plan.

Board Leadership

Through the process of this strategic plan, the Committee believes it has addressed the issue of Board structure, responsibility, and management. However, it is also understood that, with this new structure comes the need to find Board members willing and capable of meeting these new expectations and operating circumstances, especially ones with connections and access to corporate and business giving. It is recommended that the Society become involved with Leadership, Inc. and the Business Volunteers for the Arts, both organizations whose goal is to find and encourage participation of corporate executives in non-profits, and to contribute their skills in such areas as fundraising, marketing, and public relations.

Government and Corporate Fundraising

The Society, its Board and its members, must understand that the operations of the Society cannot be funded with dues and investment income alone. In this new century, fundraising will become imperative. The Board must acknowledge and accept this responsibility. It must pursue individual contacts as well as corporate, foundation, and government ones.

Cross Disciplinary Themes

The Society's music, visual arts, and film programs have proven to be successful at attracting members and non-members alike. There is also greater promise of greater success. Based on the strength of the Society's own history and culture, the new Programs Committee will be challenged to further develop traditional and new programs that will reach more members and others, and attract greater support, including financial and new members.

Educational and Cultural Programs

At the Board retreat, these were consistently listed as the Society's greatest strengths. As in the previous paragraph, the success of our future lies in our ability to take advantage of our educational and cultural strengths. The Society must nurture its relationship with the

German Consulate in New York, which has and can continue to direct visiting German scholars and lecturers to the Society. The Society must also broaden its relationships with other German related organizations, such as the Germantown Historical Society and the Goethe Society, to promote more interest in German and German-American history and culture. The Culture and Heritage must expand its relationships to include teachers and students of the German language in the greater Delaware Valley region and introduce them to the benefits of the Society's incredible library. The Board, its committees, and its staff must learn to "think outside the box" when developing and promoting its educational and cultural programs. This kind of new thinking should also lead to new solutions in other areas of the Society.

External Environment

A visit to the Society on Spring Garden Street will make it abundantly obvious that it is no longer situated in the middle of a strong and dynamic German neighborhood as it was in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Yet the Society cannot afford to ignore its new neighbors. Institutions have a responsibility to serve their neighborhood. The Society has already developed a working relationship with the local Police district, and through it neighborhood community groups and organizations. The Board should also designate a member to act as a liaison with and develop neighborhood outreach.

Quality versus Quantity

Given the limited resources of the Society and its staff, the perils of ignoring this simple rule will become evident. The obvious solution is to follow "common sense" of which we must constantly be reminded – "life is the art of the possible."

Master Building Plan

Perhaps the greatest asset and the greatest liability of the Society is the same thing, its buildings. The financial overhead needed to maintain daily operations is difficult enough in the current budgetary situation. Capital projects, regardless of how much needed, are beyond the means of the Society. It is imperative that the Operations Committee develop a list of capital projects, by priority, with a timeline and costs in the analysis.

Individual Giving, Members versus Donors

It was the recommendation of the consultants that membership dues be designed to support the Society's budget on a break-even basis! This means that the Society must develop its programs and activities to maintain the interest and retention of current members, and attract new ones as well. Membership benefits must be clearly identified and promoted. Equally so, donors who are non-members must also be identified and approached for the support of the Society. The creation of a Development Committee must become an immediate priority. Additionally, Board members must be trained to ask for donations. It must be a "one for all and all for one" effort.

Appendixes

To be included in this section is an appendix that will show the strengths and weaknesses of the Society as discussed at the Board retreat and as they appear in the Strategic Planning Report submitted by Edward J. Swenson and Associates.

Other appendixes can be attached as suggested on page 16 of the retreat report as they can be developed.