



## Chairman's Comments

### *From Russia with Love*

All my life, I have been fascinated by anything Russian. When I was little, my grandmother would read Pushkin's fairy tales to me, and tell me about her uncle's experiences at the Czarist court in St. Petersburg. He was posted as a diplomat, introducing German livestock breeding techniques to a country that was still primarily agrarian.

One day, on a trip by horse-drawn carriage to my grandmother's estate, we took a detour to the nearby *Völkerschlachtdenkmal* which commemorates the battle of Leipzig. There, Napoleon's army had been beaten by the combined forces of Prussians, Swedes, Austrians and Russians in 1813. While the sheer size of that monument was very impressive, I am still pondering the 60,000 casualties sustained by the victors, some of whom were probably just buried there in our fields, far away from their homes—only to be displaced by the bombing raids during WW II.

My love for Russian music was first stimulated by the soulful songs which I heard from POW's during harvest time working on our fields. It was also then that I picked up a smattering of Russian words that I knew better than to repeat at our dinner table.

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## Building News

There is no room in a building so important as a functional restroom. However, it is hard to choose a photograph which illustrates the accomplishment of a major restroom renovation; most of the work is now covered with elegant tiles and well painted walls.



The paint job was accomplished by our volunteers: Bill Hardham, Bob Jost, Reinhard Kruse, Lew Volgenau and Ernie Weiler.

The most visible changes in layout are the handicapped restroom and wider passage ways. Not visible is, for example, a rainwater retaining system that will not only make future sewer line backups more unlikely, but that gives us the opportunity to operate toilet flushing using collected rainwater.

We also installed a ventilation system that recovers heat or cold from the air before it is vented out. Other longtime major issues of water intrusion and crumbling tiles have been eliminated.

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## President's Message

Events and activities are once again in full swing at the Society. We look forward to a busy fall season, with concerts, films, book discussions and social events on our calendar. Our Stiftungsfest, our Founder's Ball, is scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup>. This is our 247<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We hope that we will see many of you at this fun filled event.

We welcome our new Office Manager, Beate Brockmann, to the Society. She has an impressive resume and a list of accomplishments. Beate has a dynamic and engaging personality and she will serve our membership well. This search was a long and difficult journey with a good outcome. My sincere thank-you to all who were part of the interview process: - Christiane Schmidt,

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*- President's Message Cont'd*

Maria Sturm, Doris Simon, Tony Michels, Hardy von Auenmueller, Hans Mueller and Lew Volgenau. And a thank-you to the ladies who helped in the office this summer: Doris Simon, Hannelore Schill, Helen Schutz, Anne Marie Colborn and Mary Catherine Baur.

On the financial front, I am happy to report that we ended our fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup> with a moderate surplus. Our rental program remains an important revenue source for us. We are trying to strengthen our Language School. Looking ahead and operating with a balanced budget will remain challenging, as our fixed costs continue to increase, and maintenance and a few critical building enhancements are significantly underfunded. We initiated our GSP Endowment Fund to address this long-term funding concern.

We see an encouraging response to our Endowment Fund solicitations. At this point fourteen (14) individuals or families have donated or pledged contributions to the GSP Endowment Fund and eight (8) have indicated that the Society is listed in estate plans or wills. Interestingly, a variety of gift annuities offered by the Philadelphia Foundation at attractive rates have been of interest to several donors.

Our Executive Vice President, **Tony Michels**, has spent many, many hours this summer supervising the construction of new bath-

room facilities in the basement of the Society. These bathrooms, the new hallway and storage areas look great. Thank you very much Tony..., and all the while he also covered the Office Manager functions well, for the past four months. We now have several additional project challenges. Mr. Ron and Mrs. Christel Tillmann kindly offered to pay up to \$25,000 for a new front door as long as it is installed before the end of the year. The existing door is beyond repair and is a source of water intrusion into the ladies restroom below. Also, we urgently need to start with the exterior project designed to seal all exterior walls below grade level to eliminate a significant water intrusion problem. This project has been funded by the William Penn Foundation earlier this year with a two-year grant for \$250,000.

And last but not least, I am happy to report that our Library has received a \$ 75,000 grant from the Max Kade Foundation to archive and catalog books, manuscripts and other items of interest for the period of 1919 to 1960. We are excited about this project since this effort will essentially complete the cataloging of our holdings. It is also a clear recognition by the Max Kade Foundation that we have a very unique collection which should be made available to much wider audiences. With best wishes for a nice fall season!

—Ernest D. Weiler

*Chairman's Comments Cont'd*  
During my formative years, I developed a special fondness for Russian orchestral music. Those things appeal to me - a belated romantic - so much that I have yearned to visit Russia for a very long time.

That wish finally came true when Gudrun and I had the opportunity to take a two-week Viking River Cruise from St. Petersburg to Moscow last month. The old imperial palaces, now converted to museums, are much more revered by the Russian people today than all the post-revolutionary, Soviet achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

While *Mikhail Gorbachev* is very much admired around the world because of *glasnost and perestroika* and for having brought the Cold War to an end, he is a pariah to most Russians. In their view, his policies brought down the mighty Soviet Union, and its international standing as a world power.

On the other hand, *Vladimir Putin* is held in high esteem, because he, the martial arts expert, possesses such physical strength and excellent leadership qualities. He also had the good fortune that world energy prices have skyrocketed over the past ten years, bringing a lot of wealth to the country and creating quite a few zillionaires who, for the most part, just happened to be good friends of his. With their backing he leads the United Russia Party, and thus  
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- *Chairman's Comments Cont'd*  
is considered a "shoo-in" at next year's presidential elections—now that he let be known he wants to return to that post. No other party, either on the left or right, has any chance, whatsoever. The fledging Democratic Party might not even gather sufficient support for any representation in the *Duma*.

On our cruise along the Baltic-Volga Waterway we experienced the scenic beauty and endless expanses of Russia. We also crossed the Southeastern corners of *Ozero Ladoga* and *Onega*, the two largest lakes in Europe, and stopped at historic sites on Kizhi Island, Yaroslavl and Uglich.

All in all, we were very much impressed by the wealth and breadth of art displayed in museums and churches, the cleanliness of the major city streets (no graffiti or trash lying about), the beauty and efficiency of the Moscow subway system, as well as many other things. I will gladly make a slide or video presentation at one of our *Konversationsabende*, if asked.—Hardy von Auenmueller

PS: Some of you have seen me sporting an Abe Lincoln-like beard since returning from Russia. Actually, I let my facial hair grow to a full beard before departing for St. Petersburg, since I did not want to be picked up by the successors to the KGB, and sent to Siberia on the one-way ticket I had refused to accept some 60 years ago.

## Dr. Albert & Hete Barthelmes - Our Greatest Benefactors

I have noticed that most people coming to the German Society for a concert, wedding or other social event are in awe of the beauty of our festive hall, the *Albert and Hete Barthelmes Auditorium*. While the acoustics of our auditorium are indeed world-class, our renovation efforts in that space over the past few years have made it a most desirable venue for all sorts of gatherings. This is reflected in ever-increasing bookings.

Now the question arises: Who are or were the *Barthelmeses*?



Where did they come from? How did they connect with the German Society? Well, in checking with the Tulsa, Oklahoma Foundation which carries their names, we learned that Dr. Albert J. (Doc) and Mrs. Hedwig (Hete) Barthelmes were natives of Germany who

loved their adopted country and left their legacy in Tulsa. Doc was born in Kassel, was trained as a physicist and received a doctorate in engineering from the Technical University of Darmstadt in 1924. He was not only an accomplished scientist and engineer—as his many patents attest—but also a man who loved life and appreciated the arts.

Classically trained as a violinist, Doc participated in a string quartet in Stettin, Hete's birthplace on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Mrs. Barthelmes took piano lessons at the Stettin Conservatory. While she enjoyed playing that instrument, her first love, however, was voice. In January 1925, Doc and Hete met at a masked ball of the German Alpine Club in Stettin, where they danced the night away, finding a shared love of literature and sports, but most of all, music and the arts.

When Hitler was ascending to power, Doc learned of the shortage of geophysicists in the growing US oil and gas industry. In 1932, at the height of the depression, he left for New York. But before doing so, he asked Hete to meet him there later to become his wife. Doc's courtship of Hete blossomed through correspondence, and finally - upon securing employment with the Shell Oil Company - he sent her a telegram that they could now get

married "under very good conditions."

Hete departed Germany - accompanied by a chaperone - aboard the SS Bremen on October 21, 1933, arriving in New York on November 6. She had received two things from her father: the first was the advice to get married immediately upon disembarking; the second was money for a return trip in case she had a change of heart.

Of course, she did not. Doc, Hete and her friend from Stettin, arrived at City Hall twenty minutes before closing. At 4:00 pm on November 6, 1933, they became Dr. and Mrs. Albert J. Barthelmes.

They established their first home in Houston, Texas. Two years later, following a chance meeting with Gerry Westby, an established Oklahoma businessman, Doc was recruited to join Seismograph Service Company, a small Tulsa-based enterprise with a big future. This prompted the couple's move to Tulsa, which was then considered to be the "Oil Capital of the World." Over the next 30 years, the company would grow to be one of the largest and most successful seismic exploration firms on our globe, and the Barthelmes' prospered along the way.

This was the time before the Interstate Highway System was built. In order to reach many of the oil fields, an airplane was the more useful vehicle than a car. Therefore, Dr. Barthelmes

learned to fly. When he returned from his field trips, he would swoop low over their homestead, thus giving a signal to his wife to drive to the airport and fetch him.

Since Doc and Hete were avid players of golf and tennis, they became founding members of the Southern Hills Country Club and The Tulsa Tennis Club. They were also among the first and strongest supporters of Tulsa's orchestra, opera, ballet, choral music and museums. Their passion for music and the arts, particularly symphonic music, was part of their daily lives. Often they gathered friends and held concerts at their home.

The Barthelmeses had no children of their own. But their fondness for children and their desire to help educate and share the joy of classical music with them became the basis for a life of philanthropy in support of the arts. As the largest contributors to the Tulsa Youth Symphony and The Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra, Albert and Hete Barthelmes were revered as one of the cornerstones in the arts infrastructure of their city.

Mindful of their German heritage, they were also founding members of GAST, the German-American Society of Tulsa which today is about equal to our organization in membership. They also supported many charitable organizations, both here and in Germany. One such organization was an orphan-

age in the Black Forest. When that institution closed its doors, they asked the American representative of the Quaker Relief Effort in the post-WWII French Zone of Germany for another worthwhile charity. That representative happened to be Dr. Harry Pfund, a former Vice President of our organization. He recommended the German Society of Pennsylvania as a worthy recipient of their charity. This is how Dr. and Mrs. Barthelmes were introduced to our Society and became one of our most generous benefactors.

At that time, Dr. George Beichl was our President, and he corresponded with them frequently. When they learned that he was involved with the Philadelphia Zither Ensemble, they invited the entire group to come to Tulsa, with travel and hotel expenses fully paid, to give a concert on the premises of GAST. This was the beginning of a very close relationship. Both, Albert and Hete, eagerly read our newsletter, and often called George to express their interest in certain activities. At one time, they came and participated in the festivities of our *Hamburger Abend, 'Ein Abend an der Waterkant'*, the brainchild of Mrs. Sonnenberg, our former Business Manager.

They visited us again when we dedicated the plaque identifying our concert hall as the *Albert and Hete Barthelmes Auditorium*. On

## Our 2011/12 Music Program

that occasion they also met several students who had received scholarships donated by them.

During their 63 years of love and commitment to each other, their faith and their community, they played and sang together, lived and loved together, and wove a rich tapestry of life - a tribute to strong values, integrity and substance.

— Hardy von Auenmueller

PS: Background information for this article was gleaned from the Internet and Dr. Beichl's reflections.

### New Office Manager

I'm a fresh German expatriate who is just taking her first steps on US soil. Having arrived only three months ago, following my husband who took up an academic job at the University of Penna, I'm amazed about the beauty of Philadelphia and the open-mindedness of its people.

We now live right next to Independence Hall and Liberty Bell (to the joy of all our guests from Europe!) and I go to work everyday by bike, which adds a spark of Germany to my new life here.

Born in the small town of Offenburg near the Black Forest, I have studied political science and German language and literature in both France and Germany, and have completed various internships in both countries.

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Two weeks ago, our 2011/12 classical concert series season commenced with the **Wister Quartet** playing a very rare piece, composed for string instruments by the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Italian composer, *Madalena Lombardini-Syrmén*. This music, as Tom Purdom of the *Broad Street Review* puts it, was rescued from obscurity by **Nancy Bean**. A friend had raved about it - declaring it will appeal to anyone who enjoys Mozart's quartets.

After finding the score with Philadelphia-based *Hildegard Publishers* - dedicated to works of women composers - she and her colleagues performed Lombardini-Syrmén's String Quartet, No 2 in Bb major with Mozart's K. 465 and the "American" String Quartet of Dvorak to the great delight of our audience.

The next musical *Leckerbissen* in our series will be the choral presentations by the **Dagilelis Lithuanian Boys' Choir** on Sunday, October 30. Modeled after the widely known *Leipzig Thomaner Chor*, this group of youngsters - on their first trip to America - will be presenting Lithuanian folk songs which you most likely have never heard before.

In addition they will render several classical pieces, such as *Ave Maria* by *J.S. Bach/Charles Gounod* and *Panis Angelicus* by *C. Franck*, accompanied by

the **American Virtuosi Trio**.

On November 20, the postponed **Delius Society** concert, featuring **Lloyd Smith**, cello and **Davyd Booth**, piano is scheduled. This concert had to be cancelled in the Spring, because of Lloyd's shoulder injury. I am happy to report that his shoulder has completely healed, and he feels "stronger than ever," as he demonstrated during the above Wister concert.

We will be enjoying the return of the **Ephrata Cloister Chorus** on December 11, with a rendition of various Christmas chorales and early American music. Early in the new year, **Claire Huangci**, the young Chinese-American piano virtuoso living in Germany, who last year held us in awe with her fast-finger interpretations of classical sonatas by Bach, Chopin, Liszt and Schumann, will be heard again in our hall.

Last but not least, please mark your calendar for the Sunday, January 29, 2012 **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert of Frederick Delius**, when the renowned British violinist, **Tasmin Little**, is making her debut in our concert hall. She will be accompanied by Japanese pianist **Akira Eguchi**, who is acclaimed for his extraordinary artistry. I can't wait to hear him perform on our new Bösendorfer grand piano.

— Hardy von Auenmueller

## Friday Film Fest

Over the past ten years we've shown more than 70 films at our Friday FilmFest and served a lot of good soup and deserts. Hopefully, the films have provided some good food for thought as well. Viewing and discussing German films has proven to be a uniquely effective venue for exploring a wide range of themes and issues. Probably the most rewarding part of our movie nights is having our audiences respond to the stories and techniques of the filmmakers with their own insights and outlooks. The reactions to the films have been wide ranging, sometimes surprising, but always illuminating.

As a native English speaker engaged in my own struggles with the German language, my standpoint when watching the films has mostly been from the outside - in. For native German speakers who see things from a different perspective, it is more often the reverse. We have tried to maintain a balance in our offerings, but confess to a predilection for current German cinema. Whatever the subject and era might be, the films have always been a great tool for those striving to improve their German language skills or desiring to gain a deeper understanding of German culture and history. We hope to see you during the upcoming season. — Allen Krumm

### - *New Office Manager Cont'd*

I started my professional life at the French Chamber of Commerce in Saarbrücken, helping French and German companies on their projects to export to their neighboring country.

I later moved to Brussels for a job in the European Parliament, excited to take part in this unique process of a United Europe getting ever closer. Sadly I had to leave this buzzing environment in July, at which time I did not yet know that Philly was such a sunny place, and that friendly people and exciting projects were already waiting for me.

Getting to know the German Society was certainly a lucky incident. I feel right away at home in this beautiful building and connected to its people.



I am very glad I can contribute to keep the German Society a place where “Germany” and “America” can meet and get to know each other better, much beyond the stereotypes of beer and Lederhosen.

— Beate Brockmann

### - *Building News Cont'd*

I will be more than happy to share the details of the renovation with you, if you are interested.

This photo gives you an idea of what the renovation looked like in its early stages:



*The ladies's room, same perspective, after demolition*

As you see, the renovation was really “from the ground up.”

- Tony Michels

## German Society Philly Kinder started

On Thursday, September 29, a very lively group gathered at Overbrook Presbyterian Church for the start of Philly Kinder: more than fifty bilingual kids ranging from 1 to 10 years old, getting ready to spend their afternoon in an immersion classroom.

You might be wondering: why Overbrook? Why another German language school? The German Society already offers youth language classes on Saturday morn-

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

ings ... and will continue to do so! But some families prefer to do other things over the weekend, and there are obvious limits how far you want to travel with little kids in order to get them to a program like this. For many, Overbrook Presbyterian is situated a lot closer, and after-school classes fit their schedules better. Furthermore, a core group of parents and teachers had already started a "Vorschule" there, and a wider demand for a program geared towards families with at least one German parent and based on what a German "Kindergarten" or "Grundschule" would offer, had become obvious. This group got in touch with the German Society to look for a possible cooperation, and now they can build upon our established framework of running a language school, while we reach a constituency with strong ties to the German language and culture which might not otherwise find its way into our beautiful old building on Spring Garden Street. I hope you will spread the word about this addition to the GSP's offerings! We're also planning to increase the library's holdings of children's books so that all those new little readers have enough to choose from. Hence, if you want to donate gently used children's books with a publication date after 1980, we'll be happy to accept them.

- Maria Sturm

### October

- Sat. Oct. 22 1:30pm Book Club Meeting  
 Wed. Oct. 26 7:00pm Konversationsabend "Magnetismus und Elektrizität", Dr. Günter Finke  
 Sun. Oct. 30 3:00pm Dagilelis Lithuanian Boys Choir—  
 accompanied by the American Virtuosi

### November

- Thu. Nov. 3 7:30pm German *a cappella* group *Vocaldente*  
 Sat. Nov. 5 10:00am Women's Auxiliary Monthly Meeting  
 10:15am Children's Story Hour - Library  
 Sun. Nov. 6 3:00pm *Kinderkino* "Das kleine Gespenst" &  
 "Hui Buh das Schlossgespenst"  
 at Overbrook Presbyterian Ch., 6376 City Ave  
**Stiftungsfest 2011**  
 Sat. Nov. 12 6:00pm  
 Fri. Nov. 18 6:30pm Friday FilmFest presents  
 "Sissi" (part 1 of trilogy)  
 Sat. Nov. 19 1:30pm Book Club Meeting  
 Sun. Nov. 20 3:00pm Delius Society Concert  
 Lloyd Smith, cello and Davyd Booth, piano  
 Wed. Nov. 30 7:00pm *Konversationsabend / Homage an Kleist -  
 eine Präsentation von Inge Niebisch.*

### December

- Sat. Dec. 3 12:00pm **Christkindlmarkt** of the Women's Auxiliary  
 afternoon Children's Story Hour - Library  
 Sun. Dec. 11 3:00pm Ephrata Cloister Chorus  
 Wed. Dec. 14 7:00pm *Konversationsabend / Adventsfeier bei  
 Auenmuellers*  
 Sat. Dec. 17 4:00pm *Krippenspiel* "German Society Philly Kinder"  
 at Overbrook Presbyterian Ch., 6376 City Ave

### January

- Sat. Jan. 7 11:00am Women's Auxiliary Monthly Meeting  
 Sun. Jan. 8 3:00pm Claire Huangci, Piano Recital  
 Wed. Jan. 25 7:00pm *Konversationsabend / Planung fürs Jahr 2012*  
 Fri. Jan. 27 6:30pm Friday Film Fest presents "Goethe!"  
 Sun. Jan. 29 3:00pm 150th Anniversary of Frederick Delius with  
 Tasmin Little, violin & Akira Eguchi, piano

**Our 247th Stiftungsfest - Saturday, November 12, 2011**

Do you know the good feeling of contributing to a great cause?

You will have that opportunity by attending the above gala event and by bidding on superb prizes - laid out at our silent auction. This annual gathering represents the **major fundraising event** of our Society. All proceeds will be used in support of our efforts to offer many programs and activities offered by the Society to our members and the general public.

Seven years ago, we added a silent auction to the evening of musical entertainment, fine dining, camaraderie and ball-room dancing.

In the past, many interesting auction items were donated, such as stays at vacation homes, tickets to sporting or cultural events, gift certificates to restaurants, sailing lessons and a variety of collector items.

**Andrew Payne**, the committee member organizing the auction, and I would like to appeal again to your generosity by asking you to donate any item of value - suitable for our auction. Kindly mail or bring your gift items to our office during regular business hours - no later than November 4, 2011. For reservations or additional information,

please call our office manager **Beate Brockman** at 215-627-2332.

Thank you! I look forward to seeing you at the Stiftungsfest.

— Frank Klare, Chairman, Stiftungsfest Committee

*The official registration 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.*

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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**See you at the  
Stiftungsfest  
Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> 2011**

