

Calendar of Events

The German Society's administrative office and library will be closed from December 21 through January 1. Normal hours will resume on Thursday, January 2.

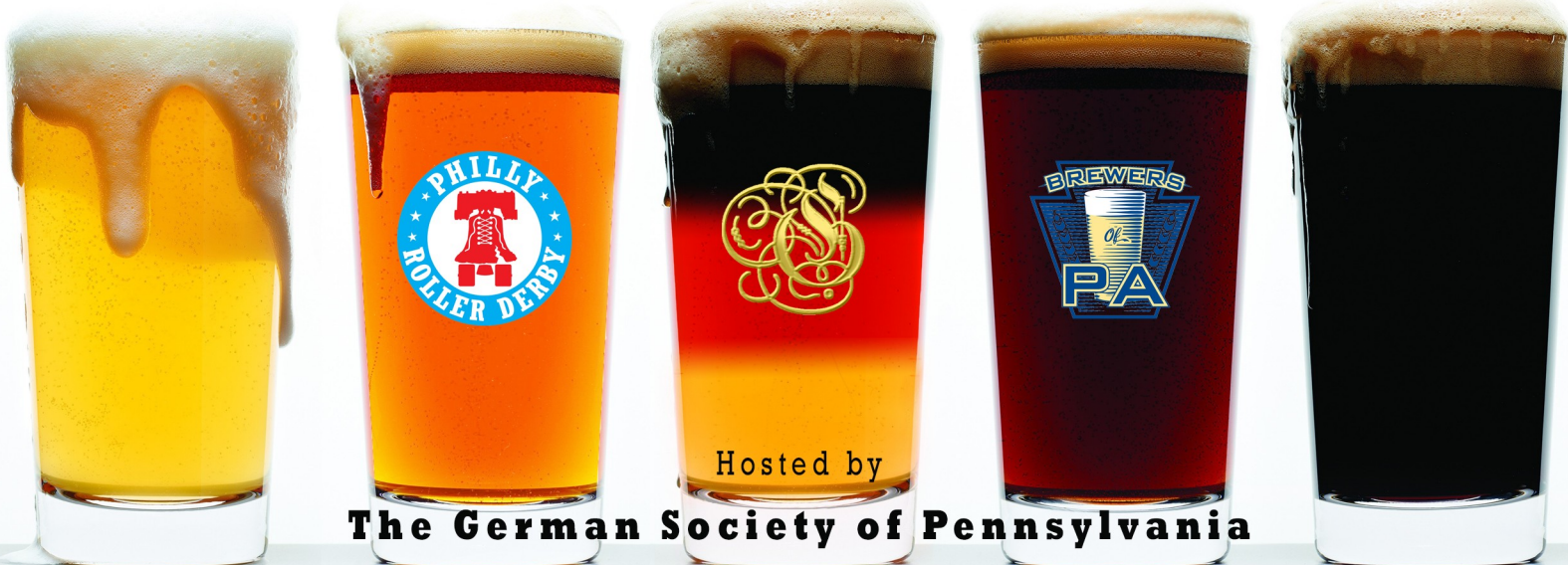
Sun. Jan. 5	"Wister and More!" presents Xiaopei Xu, piano, 3:00pm
Sat. Jan. 11	Buchclub: <i>Der Tod in Venedig</i> by Thomas Mann, 1:30pm
Fri. Jan. 17	Friday Film Fest: <i>Die Unsichtbaren</i> , 6:30pm
Sat. Feb. 8	Buchclub: <i>Die Verwandlung</i> by Franz Kafka, 1:30pm
Wed. Feb. 12	Konversationsabend: Glühwein Dreams, 6:00pm
Fri. Feb. 21	Friday Film Fest: <i>Transit</i> , 6:30pm
Sat. Feb. 29	9th Annual Bierfest, 2:00pm
Sun. Mar. 8	"Wister and More!" presents New World Recorders, 3:00pm
Wed. Mar. 11	Konversationsabend: The Bauhaus - 100 Years, 6:00pm
Sat. Mar. 14	Buchclub, 1:30pm
Fri. Mar. 20	Friday Film Fest: <i>Der Vorname</i> , 6:30pm
Tue. Mar. 31	German Script Course, 10:00am
Sat. Apr. 4	Hamburger Abend, 7:00pm
Tue. Apr. 7	Lecture by Philipp Stelzel, time TBA
Wed. Apr. 8	Konversationsabend: City Planning in the 21st Century, 6:00pm
Sat. Apr. 11	Buchclub, 1:30pm
Fri. Apr. 17	Friday Film Fest: <i>Trautmann</i> , 6:30pm

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NINTH ANNUAL Bierfest

SATURDAY | FEBRUARY 29 | 2PM - 5:30PM



For tickets or more information, visit PhillyBierfest.com or call 215.627.2332

The German Society of Pennsylvania

Neuer Pennsylvanischer Staatsbote

CELEBRATING
1764 **250** 2014
YEARS OF
**GERMAN
HERITAGE**

Winter 2020

The German Society at the Christmas Village in Philadelphia

During the past 11 years many of you have witnessed the development of the Christmas Village in Philadelphia. Established in 2008 during the last financial crisis as a relatively small (63 units) presence on Dilworth Plaza – at that time an unattractive concrete-paved location next to City Hall – it has grown considerably, becoming a major winter attraction in the region. It eventually moved to "Love Park" and has now expanded to also occupy a beautifully renovated Dilworth Plaza, the City Hall courtyard and the north side of City Hall, attracting up to 800,000 visitors annually from the Philadelphia area and beyond.

The German Society's relationship with Philadelphia Christmas and its founder, Thomas Bauer, began when he contacted the GSP in 2008 for help with getting in touch with German American organizations in Philadelphia. A relationship was established, and since then Mr. Bauer and his family have become life-time members of our organization. We host the administrative side of the business (German American Marketing) by leasing them office space at the German Society and cooperate on various levels during GSP events.

Early on the German Society recognized an opportunity to introduce itself to market visitors, and we began to maintain a volunteer-based presence at the Christmas Village in Philadelphia (CVP) on the weekends. At that time, we were unable on our own to arrange staffing for all hours of operation during the week and began to look for cooperative partners. Six years ago, we worked with a German chocolate company to achieve a full-time presence staffed by GSP members, but this arrangement did not

bring us the exposure we had hoped for. However, this year we agreed to work together with CVP to share, organize, and staff the Information Booth at the Christmas Village. The GSP now has a full-time presence in a highly visible location and we have a staff of German Society members who are up to the challenges of engaging with the public while promoting our organization. In order to achieve our marketing goals, we created a slide show highlighting



German Society activities and programs which runs continuously on a big screen, have a wide array of informational materials about the GSP available, and sell, in addition to CVP merchandise, a large assortment of Advent calendars and Christmas cards.

I believe that there is more potential in this co-operation than we were able to realize this year. We are looking forward to evaluating our efforts after the holidays and finding ways to improve our presentation next year.

Guten Rutsch ins neue Jahr.

- Anton Michels

Updated Bookshelves House Contemporary Literature

The contents of the bookshelves in the back hallway of the German Society have recently been completely reviewed, and a huge number of contemporary books in German and in English have been added. Next time you visit the Society, please take a moment to browse these shelves, take a few books that interest you, and leave a donation for any books taken. Suggested donation amounts are \$1 for paperbacks and \$2 for hardbacks, but please feel free to give generously!



Spring Bus Trip to New Jersey Sights

All the arrangements have been made for our Spring bus trip on Saturday, April 18, 2020. The Hagey bus will be leaving from the GSP on Spring Garden Street, and the second pickup location is at the Radisson Hotel in Trevoise.

Our first stop in New Jersey will be the Thomas Edison Laboratories in West Orange, where Edison perfected many inventions and collected many patents. Negotiations are still underway as to whether we can also visit his nearby mansion (and grave) in Llewellyn Park (tours are limited to a certain number per tour guide).

*Note: the entrance fee for the Labs/Mansion is \$15 per person, but is free for holders of the Golden Age Passport issued by the National Park Service. Each holder can also bring in three others for free. If you have a NPS card, let us know when you sign up.

The Great Falls in Paterson is next, made more famous recently by the well-known play featuring Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton was the first to recognize the potential of the falls to provide power for start-up industries, which began in the late 18th century, as opposed to his contemporary Thomas Jefferson, who preferred an agrarian economy. Hopefully, there will be enough early spring water to really show off the falls.



Great Falls, Paterson, NJ. Photo from NPS.gov

The third and final stop is the Newark Museum, one of the finest small museums in America. It also includes the Victorian Ballantine House, home to the family that ran one of the largest breweries in the 19th and 20th centuries (for those of us old enough to remember). A "Highlights Tour" of the museum is scheduled, but will still leave enough time to go around on your own.

The tour will end at the Iberia Restaurant in the Portuguese section of Newark for dinner. Because so many have raved about the food there last time (2014), we will have the same menu with several courses (and choices), ending with a help-yourself dessert buffet. Believe it or not, they still had the original menu on the computer, so it made it very easy to reorder everything again.

We are still reviewing the costs, but think it will be in the \$100 per person range. Flyers will be available in January, so stay tuned. It should be an interesting and informative trip.

- Claire Degnan

Notes from the Konversationsabend

We started in September with "Actualities", or the latest trends and events on the European stage. Perhaps the most surprising was the nomination and election of the German Minister of Defense, Ursula von der Leyen, to the office of President of the European Commission. In October we wanted to complement the GSP celebration of Alexander von Humboldt by shining some light on his brother Wilhelm, best known for his role as founder of the Berlin University. We did so by focusing not only on the famous statesman, but on the unique symbiosis with his wife Karoline von Guenderode and their rather modern cosmopolitan lifestyle. In November, Karl Moehlmann showed us the extraordinary documentary film of former Bunde-

spraesident Gauck's journey through Germany 30 years after reunification.

And then there was the **Christmas party on December 11**. We had not been able to book last year's live guitarists, but a large YouTube fireplace with an untiring virtual fire and soft guitar music, provided the backdrop. (Occasionally the screen went dark, keine Angst, no glitch - just going to sleep. One touch and back it was.) Our Baker in Chief, Renate Ruthberg, created a festive buffet, the GSP President, Tony Michels, was to be found in the kitchen, personally preparing the Gluehwein. The "guests" arrived, dropped presents in the Santa Pollyanna bag, headed to the buffet and to the Gluehwein corner before taking their seats at the roundtable.

Almost everyone contributed a poem or a story. Bertolt Brecht was quoted, Fereshteh Sholevar read a story from a novel she had once written; two Romantic songs, translated by Ed Cohen, were presented, sung so forcefully on YouTube by Dietrich-Fischer Dieskau that the amplifier started to squeak. When Tony offered to be acting Santa, everybody had to briefly perform again for permission to grab a present from the bag. One of the guests, foreign to this German tradition, was in despair - I can't first drop in a present and then take it out! Oh ja, we told her, just be good and say something or sing.

An unknown party buster appeared, quoted Goethe, got a present and left for the next Christmas party at a Mexican church. The Gluehwein emboldened some to sing a Capella. Then all joined in. Everybody sang the good old Christmas songs any way they remembered them, some arrived at the last verse before others had begun the first, what a hilarious quodlibet! And just a few days before, I had asked Liesl in the office to remove the image of young men merrily swinging cups of Gluehwein from the website, because a German Christmas party was not a party, but a solemn Weihnachtsfeier. Not quite so this time...

- Helga Halbfass

Development Report

Lifetime Membership

A growing and dynamic membership is very important to the German Society. Several of the foundations that have supported our capital projects over the past 10 years have stressed this need for growth, and in fact, we have committed to the William Penn Foundation that we intend to grow membership at a rate of 2-3% per annum, which is a significant challenge. If you have a family member or friend that might be interested in the Society, our programs and activities, you might consider a one-year membership subscription as a special gift!

We are also trying to increase the number of our lifetime memberships. At the Board of Directors Meeting on November 16, 2015 it was decided that all future lifetime membership fees would be added to the General Endowment Fund since they represent a long-term commitment to the Society. We are pleased to report that since the referenced date, twenty-four new members have been added to the listing. Their names follow. As soon as you upgrade your membership to the lifetime status, we will add your name or names to the Linden Society with a special notation that the fee of \$1,000 for a single person or \$1,500 for a couple has been added to the General Endowment Fund.

Donors' names have been removed from online version for their privacy.

Make a Tax-Free Gift from your IRA

As reported in the 2018 summer issue of the Staatsbote, the tax law changes enacted in December of 2017 present an opportunity to reconsider various giving options currently available, primarily because standard deductions under the new law have increased significantly. IRAs, however, still present an attractive option to consider, especially if you are 70 ½ or older.

You have saved faithfully for years and now as you begin to withdraw funds, as you are 70 ½, you need to pay income taxes on the amounts received. You can give up to \$100,000 each year from your IRA directly to a qualified charitable organization, such as the German Society, without having to pay income taxes on the gift! Furthermore, the donation counts towards your annual minimum distribution. Several of our members have discovered this opportunity and use it for annual gifts or donations to the endowment fund. We are grateful for their gifts. Provided you do need the yearly withdrawal for income purposes, we urge you to look at this opportunity.

What might be another use of your IRA funds? No matter what age, you can designate the German Society for all or for a percentage of your current IRA. The Society will benefit from your generosity at some future date. The process is simple. Contact the administrator of your account, request a change of beneficiary form and return it to the administrator. Also let us know and we will include your name in the Legacy listing of the Linden Society. The latter was created to recognize all gifts of \$1,000 or more to any of our endowment funds and to also provide a summary – in the Legacy portion of the list – of your fellow Society members that have included the GSP in wills and estate plans. Designating the German Society as the beneficiary for all or a percentage of your IRA is an easy way to make a long-term commitment to the

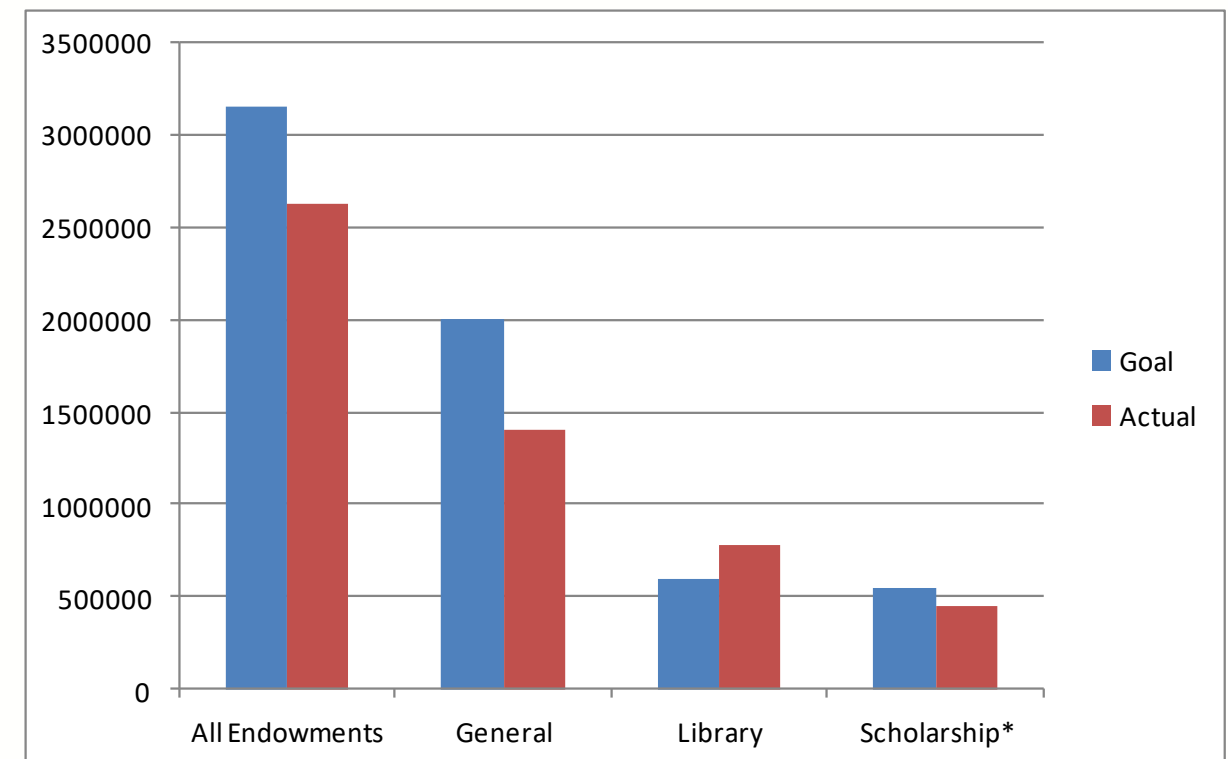
financial security of the organization.

As always we suggest you review your plans with your tax preparer or financial advisor.

Each year we are pleasantly surprised that a number of our donors leverage their gifts to the annual fund or to one of our endowments, by having the companies that they work for match donations. Not all companies offer such program, but maybe you currently work for or have been employed by an organization that offers such a program to retirees as well as employees. Yes, it takes a little effort, but it makes a big difference.

Endowment Funds

It has been our practice to include an update on our efforts to build several endowment funds for the Society in almost every issue of the Staatsbote. Just ahead of the annual Stiftungsfest, this year on November 2nd, we updated the Linden Society giving plaque located in the entrance area of the Society. The following graph illustrates where we are. Even though, the *General Endowment Fund* will likely end the year with a balance of \$1.43 MM, the pace of growth in the past two years has been slower than in prior years. Gifts of any size, small or large, are welcome.



* Scholarship total includes the Scholarship Fund (\$343,368.76), the Elsa Schweikert Scholarship Fund (\$25,861.59), and the Leon H. Volgenau Scholarship Fund (\$108,618.57).

Shopping that Benefits the Society

Do you shop at Amazon? Did you know that you can help the German Society every time you shop with Amazon Smile? It's simple! Visit smile.amazon.com, select the German Society of Pennsylvania as your preferred not-for-profit, and the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the Society. Why not sign up today – even small donations make difference!

- Ernie Weiler

How the German Society of Pennsylvania Celebrated Alexander von Humboldt's 250th Birthday

In the fall of 2017, out of the blue, I received a call from Gardner Cadwalader, an old friend from Philadelphia, asking me if I had heard of Alexander von Humboldt. It was an easy answer: yes, of course, I knew of Alexander von Humboldt and his brother Wilhelm. The University in Berlin even bears their name. What I did not know about, and what had prompted Gardner's question, was the large monument of Alexander on Martin Luther King Drive in Fairmount Park. Gardner became aware of the monument after reading Andrea Wulf's recent bestseller *The Invention of Nature. Alexander von Humboldt's New World*. Gardner was so impressed with the story of Humboldt and the timeless relevance of his view of nature as one giant interconnected organism that he thought the monument deserved a more prominent location. We formed a small Humboldt Birthday committee consisting of Barbara Afanassiev, Gardner Cadwalader, Maria Sturm, Eric Zillmer, and myself. We quickly learned from Maria that the Humboldt monument was commissioned by the German Society for the centennial of Humboldt's birth in 1869. The large standing figure of Humboldt with one hand on the globe was created by Friedrich Drake in Berlin. His most famous sculpture is the Victory on top of the Siegessäule in Berlin.

After some exploratory contacts, we quickly realized that the search for a better-suited location for the monument was going to take a long time under the best of circumstances, and the actual move would be very expensive (ca. \$100,000). As nice a birthday present as a more prominent location would have been, we decided to keep dreaming, but focus on something more realistic, and that was to invite Andrea Wulf for a talk based on her bestselling book. She was interested. We quickly reached an agreement for her to give a presentation on October 5th, 2019 and secured a donor to cover her honorarium and expenses.

We thought that an audience of 200 plus was

not an unrealistic goal, considering Andrea Wulf's reputation and success as a writer and speaker, and the relevance of the subject matter in times of growing concern about pollution and climate change. We also saw an opportunity to partner with another cultural or scientific institution in Philadelphia. An opportunity presented itself at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA), which had just opened a special exhibition "From the Schuylkill to the Hudson: Landscapes of the early American Republic". Humboldt had inspired many artists of his day, foremost among whom was Frederic Edwin Church, and the talk about him would beautifully complement this special exhibition. PAFA also offered its brand new 250-seat auditorium with state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment. The latter was essential for a presentation like Andrea Wulf's, which makes full use of the latest technologies. Attendees had the opportunity to see the special exhibit before or after the talk. I was told to be prepared for a real treat by somebody who had heard Andrea Wulf speak more than once before. It was no exaggeration. We received many favorable comments and compliments.



Andrea Wulf's lecture at PAFA. Photo by Eric Zillmer.

Several events led up to the Wulf lecture, starting with "Humboldt Through Our Eyes" in the Horner Library on March 20. This was a roundtable presentation by five members of the German Society about major topics and works that

are on our Library shelves. Prof. Liebersohn, a specialist on Humboldt and other world-famous travelers, summarized the discussion and presented a concluding view of the "last universal man", as Humboldt has been called.

We observed the actual birthday of Humboldt on Saturday, September 14th with a gathering at the Fairmount Park monument. It was a perfect late summer day. The City's Parks Administration had made a special effort to clean the monument and apply a conservation treatment. Alexander looked two hundred years younger. Bassoonist Chuck Holdeman and his young colleague, clarinetist Antonello di Matteo, treated us to some music from the 1869 celebration. We raised a toast to the birthday boy with a glass of champagne. Everybody considered it a big success. Maybe we should not wait another 50 years and pay our respects again next time his birthday falls on a weekend.



Birthday gathering at the Humboldt monument in Fairmount Park. Photo by Wendy Concannon.

Much of Alexander von Humboldt's fame is based on his exploration and adventures in South America. With that in mind, we organized a Latin American themed outdoor event on September 21. We called it the Humboldt Fiesta. Magdaliz Roura and her Latin Ensemble Crisol provided live music. We offered Latin American fare and beverages, and the Library organized a few brief presentations about Humboldt. The weather was perfect again, the

music was great, everybody got in the mood, and the Latin beat got many of our guests out of their chairs and on the dance floor. Although we had fewer attendees than we had expected, it was a lively and exciting event.

We also applied to the "Deutschlandjahr USA 2019" campaign of the Federal Republic of Germany for support of the creation of a web-based "Alexander von Humboldt" presentation. We received a grant and Maria led the project to a successful completion. You can learn about Humboldt's time in Philadelphia at www.humboldtinphiladelphia.org.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their interest, engagement and active support: Maria for organizing Library events, displays, historical information, and leading the Deutschlandjahr project; Barbara for connecting us with her consular network and handling the Fiesta; Gardner for his out-of-the-box thinking, creativity and donations of life-size posters and photography; and Eric for his inspiration, incisive comments, networking, fine lunches, and special occasions. It was a lot of work, but the collaborative synergy engendered by this great team made this project a great success. We can take pride in bringing Humboldt back again 150 years after the Society first honored him. Based on our experience, we recommend working with other cultural and scientific organizations when there is an opportunity, and to again present well known speakers on subjects of broad and relevant interest. Lastly, we will try to keep alive the dream of finding a more meaningful location for the Humboldt monument because "....his theories on nature not only as an interconnected system but also on humankind's destructive impact on the environment, are theories centuries ahead of their time....which are now accepted as humanity faces global warming and environmental devastation."

- Hans Mueller

Entdeckungen in Berlin: ein neues Verständnis von Deutschland

Ich saß in meinem Stuhl mit meinem Buch, nahm ein Schlückchen des kalten Kaffees, streckte meine Arme nach oben und starrte in die Ferne des offenen Lesesaals. Meine Mitschüler saßen vor ihren Computern und über Bücher gebückt, während sie für ihre Klausuren lernten und Hausarbeiten schrieben. Das Semesterende rückte näher, aber meine Gedanken waren weit entfernt von den Wörtern, die auf der Seite vor mir standen. Bald würde ich von meinem kleinen College in Ohio abreisen und ein Austauschsemester in Berlin beginnen. Ich kannte Deutschland nur von den Deutschkursen, die ich an der Universität belegte, und den Erzählungen meiner schweizerisch-österreichischen Familie. In Berlin wurde mein Verständnis von Deutschland neugestaltet durch die jungen Menschen, die ich dort kennenlernte.

Kurze, graue Tage und ein mir überwältigend erscheinendes Verkehrsnetz von Bussen und U-, S-, und Straßenbahnen begrüßten meine Berliner Ankunft im Februar. Ich fand meinen Weg zum Studentenwohnheim weit im Süden der Stadt in der Nähe der Freien Universität, wo ich studieren würde. Das Gebäude war ein siebenstöckiger, schmuckloser, roter Betonblock aus den 50er Jahren, der drinnen und draußen eine neue Schicht Farbe brauchte. Ich traf den Hausmeister, der mir Formulare zum Unterschreiben gab und ein Gespräch über die amerikanische Politik beginnen wollte, aber als er mein Zögern spürte, begleitete er mich zu meinem Zimmer auf dem sechsten Stock. Ich legte meine Taschen hin und schaute aus dem Fenster auf den blinkenden Fernseherturm, voll Nervosität und Aufregung: ich kannte niemanden und wusste nicht wirklich wo ich war, aber eine fremde, große Stadt voll neuer Abenteuer stand vor mir. Aber zu dieser Zeit ahnte ich gar nicht, dass viele der Abenteuer mit den Beziehungen zu den anderen Mitbewohnern des Wohnheims beginnen würden.

Die 300 Mitbewohner des Wohnheims stamm-



Lucas vor dem Bundeskanzleramt in Berlin

ten aus der ganzen Welt. Ungefähr die Hälfte kamen aus Deutschland und die andere Hälfte kamen aus Ländern wie Russland, Polen, Syrien, Italien, und Spanien. Ich war nur einer von zwei Amerikanern und hatte dadurch viele Gelegenheiten, Deutsche und auch Nichtdeutsche kennenzulernen. Die gemeinsame Küche, die Kneipe im Keller und das Fitnessstudio boten alle Plätze an, wo wir uns trafen und unterhielten. Die Nichtdeutschen waren besonders interessant und hatten oft eine ähnliche Geschichte: Sie hatten ihre Heimatländer verlassen und waren nach Deutschland eingewandert, um ihre Zukunft zu fördern, besonders durch die offenen, kostenlosen Universitäten und den starken Arbeitsmarkt. Die deutsche Willkommenskultur spiegelte sich in diesen Menschen wider: Mohammad von Syrien, Oskana von Ukraine und Danish von Syrien teilten diese Geschichten ihrer Einwanderung und ihres Lebens mit mir, die ich jetzt mit euch teilen werde.

Ich traf Mohammad im Fitnessstudio, wo er jeden Abend Gewichtraining übte. Er war ein kleiner, starker Syrer mit Brille. Er ist 2015

nach Deutschland eingewandert auf Grund des Krieges. Er hatte durch die Sprachprogramme der Regierung Deutsch gelernt und studierte jetzt Chemie an der Freien Universität. Er erzählte mir, dass er für die Möglichkeiten, die Deutschland ihm bot, sehr dankbar war, aber er sich trotzdem einsam fühlte und seine Heimat vermisste. Er war 22 Jahre alt und in Deutschland alleine ohne Familie. Ich fragte ihn nicht, wo sie waren, aus Angst die Wahrheit kennenzulernen. Er wollte heimkehren, aber diese Möglichkeit existierte nicht. Mohamad war unsicher was in seiner Zukunft lag, der erste Schritt schien, sein Bachelor Diplom abzuschließen. Trotz aller Förderung der Regierung, die ihm half, merkte ich durch Mohamad, dass eine vollständige Integration nur durch Beziehungen mit anderen Menschen möglich ist.

Oskana kochte in der Küche oft zur selben Zeit wie ich und nach einer Weile fingen wir zu reden an. Sie kam aus der russischen Ostukraine und hatte seit 3 Jahren in Berlin gelebt. In Ukraine hatte sie einen Bachelor in Sprachwissenschaften abgeschlossen und dadurch Englisch und Deutsch gelernt. Mit ihren Sprachkenntnissen zog sie nach Berlin und studierte Grafikdesign. Sie war dabei, ihre Bachelorarbeit fertig zu schreiben und hatte danach vor, in den Süden der Schweiz umzuziehen, um mit ihrem italienischen Freund zu leben, der dort einen Biobauernhof und ein Feriendomizil mit seiner Mutter führte. Sie war noch unsicher wie lange sie in der Schweiz bleiben würde, weil sie einen Job finden wollte. Sie sagte mir, dass sie Berlin vermissen würde, aber freute sich auf das nächste Abenteuer mit ihrem Freund.

Ich lernte Danish in der Kellerkneipe kennen, wo er fast jeden Freitagabend verbrachte. Danish wanderte auch von Syrien ein, aber kam schon 2012 und war Kurde. Seine Familie lebte in Hannover, aber er war in Berlin, um Fahrzeugtechnik an einer Hochschule zu studieren. Er wollte in der Zukunft für einen der großen deutschen Autokonzerne arbeiten. Nebenbei

arbeitete er auch für das Bundesamt für Integration und Flüchtlinge als Übersetzer. Er hatte sich für die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit beworben und erwartete jederzeit eine Antwort. Er liebte amerikanische Kultur und wollte die Vereinigten Staaten besuchen, wenn er die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit bekam. Am Ende meiner Zeit in Berlin bekam Danish einen Job in der Nähe von Dortmund, um Luxusautos an reiche arabische Kunden zu verkaufen. Er hatte viele Freunde im Wohnheim und wir feierten gemeinsam seinen Umzug mit Bier und Kuchen. Er schien seine Integration in Deutschland gut geschafft zu haben.

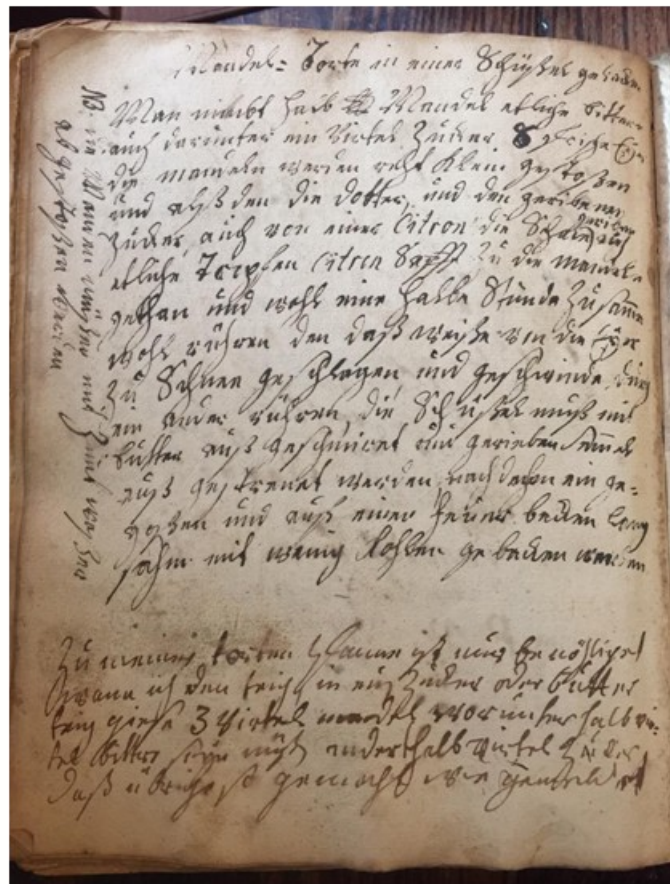
Die Einwanderungen und Integrationen von Mohamad, Oskana und Danish repräsentierten viele von den Geschichten der jungen Nichtdeutschen, die ich in Berlin kennenlernte. Sie waren oft ambitionierte, junge Menschen aus ganz Europa und der Welt, die entweder aus Not oder um ihre Zukunft zu verbessern einwanderten. Sie sahen die Ausbildungs- und Berufsmöglichkeiten, die Deutschland ihnen anbot und nahmen sie wahr. Diese Geschichten veränderten mein Verständnis von Deutschland: Ich sah es nicht nur als ein Land, das seine Vergangenheit bewältigt, sondern auch ein Land, das neue Chancen anbietet und Europa zusammenhält. Dieses Deutschland erinnerte mich an die Vergangenheit der Vereinigten Staaten, über die ich im Geschichtsunterricht lernte und das Land, welches meine eingewanderten Vorfahren aufnahm. Die Tatsache, dass es dies auch noch in der heutigen Welt gab, erfüllte mich mit Hoffnung.

- Lucas Kreuzer

Lucas was the recipient of a scholarship from the German Society and has previously supported the PhillyKinder program as a classroom and summer camp assistant.

Transcribing Manuscripts at the Horner Library

The Horner Library contains many individual documents and manuscript collections from the 18th through the 20th centuries, most of them handwritten in the old German script called *Kurrent*. This handwriting was used in Germany until the early 20th century when a modified form called *Sütterlin* was introduced. If you have old family documents or letters at home, they are probably written in this script, in which many of the letters are shaped differently from modern cursive, making it very difficult even for native German speakers to read.



One such example in our library is the German Society's own records, starting with the original minute book which dates back to 1764. We recently started a transcription group, which meets in the library on Tuesdays from 12-2pm, to work on deciphering some of our old documents to make them more accessible. One thing that has become clear is that it is much easier to do this transcription work in pairs or small groups rather than individually. What one

person may miss, another may pick up, and the more sets of eyes on a page, the easier it is to puzzle out what at first glance seems totally illegible.

The impetus for beginning this project was the Library's involvement with the German Historical Institute's *German Heritage in Letters* project, which has been collecting and digitizing the letters Germans sent to their emigrant relations in the United States between roughly 1850 and 1920, and to which we have contributed letters from our *Eugen Klee Collection*. One aspect of the project is the possibility for members of the public to contribute and also to transcribe and translate the letters directly on the Germanletters.org website.

On March 31, 2020, the Horner Library, in cooperation with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, will also host a day-long transcription workshop, led by Paul Peucker and Tom McCullough of the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, for anybody interested in learning how to read *Kurrent*, perhaps for letters or documents in their own family collections. For more information on the upcoming workshop or the weekly transcription group, please email: librarian@germansociety.org.

- Bettina Hess



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Music Notes

We began the season on September 22 with two familiar faces, Frances and Emmanuel Borowsky, who are now playing in a trio called the Amici Music Trio under the aegis of Amici Music, a large chamber music organization. Their new pianist is Daniel Weiser, the founder of Amici Music. Their program, *The Folk Spirit*, can be heard on the internet in a beautifully balanced recording of their May performance in Asheville, NC. Although they did not play any German or Austrian music, they did play a very bold version of the Dvořák's *Dumky Trio in E Minor, Opus 90*, three pieces by the Argentinian Astor Piazzolla, and the jazzy and boisterous *Café Music* by the American composer Paul Schoenfield.



Amici Music Trio. Photo by Margaret Darby



Karlsruher Konzert-Duo. Photo from Konzertduo.de

On October 27, we welcomed the return of the Karlsruhe Konzert-Duo who played a most amazing Brahms *Sonata for Cello in F Major, Opus 99*. The technical expertise and beautifully coordinated expressive phrasings were

outstanding. They also played the Beethoven *Seven Variations on a theme from Mozart's Magic Flute in E-flat major (WoO 46)*, pieces by both Robert and Clara Schumann, Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, and, inspired their recent tour of Ukraine, they introduced the audience to a living Ukrainian composer, Nikolai Kapustin, whose music has a lively jazz theme which segued into the verve of Astor Piazzolla's *Grand Tango*. They played an encore by Ernst Bloch called *Prayer*, a doleful hymn with Near-Eastern harmonies.

The third concert of the fall was the Wister Quartet's performance on November 24, sponsored by Robert Wynn in memory of his wife, Phyllis Wynn. Lloyd Smith gave a moving dedicatory talk before the concert. They played the Haydn *String Quartet in E-flat Major, Opus 33, No. 2* (called *The Joke*), pulling off the musical surprises with subtlety. In their performance of the Mozart *String Quartet in B-flat Major, K 458* (called *The Hunt*), the *Adagio* and *Allegro Assai* movements were stunning with beautiful phrasing which blossomed and faded into the quietest of nothings. The Debussy *String Quartet in G Minor, Opus 10* was fascinating as it had been considered 'incomprehensible' by critics when it premiered on December 29, 1893. The second movement had much pizzicato which the quartet managed to make ring through the auditorium. The third movement gave the major voices to the second violin and the viola – allowing the audience to appreciate the masterful playing by Davyd Booth, violin and Pamela Faye, viola. The quartet played an encore by the composer Louis Gesensway, the last of his *Five Russian Pieces*.

The music committee has had some modest success with offering tickets to music school students and their parents as well as to cultural organizations in Chinatown. They had four new audience members on November 24 through this initiative and hope to have more takers in the future.

- Margaret Darby