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### A Friend in Need



We are delighted to report that the current issue of *German Life* (Oct/Nov 2007) includes a feature story on the history of the German Society. Titled *A Friend in Need*, our librarian Dr. Friederike Baer explains how the Society was founded as an organization that offered German newcomers help to gain a foothold in the new world. The Society's services *Agentur*, which German immigrants between the 1840s and 1920s in a variety of ways, such as offering employment, funding the construction, or, in some cases, providing a destination, or, in some cases, providing a house. The article also focuses on the many educational, social and cultural programs that the Society has offered German-Americans or those interested in German culture, including what for many years constituted the highlight of its busy calendar, German

The above photo documents German Society building as it looked in 1937.

## German-American Day Celebration October 5-7

The valiant efforts of various friends in recent months towards "Making Philadelphia a German Town", as described in the previous issue of this newsletter, appear to be bearing fruit!

The first concert scheduled for Friday morning, October 5, by the well-known *Liedermacher* and entertainer **Uwe Kind** has long been sold out (mostly to area high school students). That prompted us to persuade the artist to present a second concert in the early afternoon, right after lunch.

And speaking of food, **Thomas Bauer**, an enterprising young man from Germany—also currently a Ph.D candidate at the University of Nuremberg—is taking a break from his studies to offer, throughout the weekend, a variety of delectable items, such as *bratwurst, pretzels, sauerkraut etc.* which he will prepare and serve from a booth in our fenced-in garden.

Another booth, staffed by members of the **Womens' Auxiliary**, will offer *Kaffee & Kuchen (Bienenstich/Apfel-torte)*, to those with a sweet tooth.

While bottled water, sodas and the like, will also be available in the garden; all other beverages are served in our *Ratskeller*. There you may choose from a vast selection of imported German beers from the Beck's, Franziskaner, Paulaner and Spaten breweries.

All in all, there are ten different events presented over the three-day weekend, many of them for the first time here in Philadelphia. For further details, please be referred to our earlier write-

up in the Staatsbote, website [www.germansociety.org](http://www.germansociety.org) or the Calendar of Events presented in this issue on page 7.

We hope to see you all at many of these events during our special German-American Day celebration in early October...and you will become a part and witness to our success of "Making Philadelphia a German Town". —Hardy von Auenmueller

## A New Face in the Office



Growing up in Southeastern PA, I have always been acquainted with German heritage and culture. My mother worked for the Schwenkfelder

Library in Pennsburg, PA as an educational historian who regularly conscripted my brothers, sisters and me to aid her at the Goshenhoppen Folk Festival and other such events.

After graduating from Susquehanna University, I moved to the City to work for the Philadelphia Live Arts and Fringe Festival. At that time, I applied for the administrative assistant position at The German Society. I have been enjoying getting to know many members, as well as assisting Sharan in her job functions.

I am in the office every weekday from 10am-2pm. I'm sure I'll soon converse with most of you by phone or through email. I look forward to meeting you all. —Mark Henne

## Interim President Farewell

When Hardy and I discussed last spring the possibility of my coming in as Interim President to give him a much deserved breather, I had many reasons not to take this on, believe me! I have a full-time job, a part-time job, three children at home, a music group, and my composing, which includes a large commission deadline hanging over my head. Besides, there are any number of good GSP folks more qualified! Well, all of those reasons were good, and none have changed, but sometime you just have to do what you feel needs to be done...so I took a deep breath and went ahead anyway. It's been a fun trip! But now that summer is over, it is time for me to give the reins back.

It's been quite an education for me, having been a member of the Society for a number of years but now seeing

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the Board from the inside for the first time. You should be very proud of the entire Board, as I am, and of the tremendous dedication and work that goes into making the Society run. Not only that, but we are expanding, with more activity than ever before, new construction, new programs, great staff, many new members, and of course, our invaluable volunteers.

The Board and Executive Committee have been discussing the leadership succession, and perhaps a special membership meeting will even be called for, so keep your eyes open for that. We don’t know what solutions may eventually come out of this, but I want you to know one thing: this is a good kind of “problem” to have! I say that because, make no mistake, the German Society is expanding. It’s important that we manage our growth responsibly.

While the timetable for my stepping down is now, there really is no perfect time for transition. The German-American Weekend on October 5-7, the Stiftungsfest on October 13, and a raft of programs are all underway.

I’ve enjoyed my time doing this, although my input has been necessarily limited, as we knew it would be when we discussed my possible participation. I’ll continue my work on the Library Committee and will see many of you at various Society events. I come away with a renewed appreciation for the German Society, and especially for the work our volunteers, staff, and Board accomplish day in and day out.

—Kile Smith

Friends of the Library

We wish to acknowledge the following donors who have contributed to the Friends of the Joseph Horner Memorial Library Fund.

The donations will be used to support the operating costs of the library, archives and our librarian.

We are grateful for your contributions to keep our wonderful collection and related cultural activities open to members, the public, scholars, and students.

Names removed for Online Version-

2007/08 Concert Series

The upcoming “Wister and More” Concert Series, this year comprising ten concerts, is about to begin, with the first concert on Sunday, September 30 at 3:00pm, featuring Petronel Malan, a young South African pianist who is rapidly achieving “star” status in the world of piano soloists. We will also present four concerts by the Wister Quartet, and a performance by a violin and harp duet, the Duo Parisienne.

Additionally, we will present another *Liederabend* by Jacqueline Smith (soprano) and Larry Indik (baritone), accompanied by Marvin Keenze (piano), which is still favorably remembered by all those who attended the Reopening Ceremony of our Library last fall. We will also enjoy the Frankfurter Kammertrio—whose principal appeared last year with Lloyd Smith, cellist of the Wister Quartet—the Tokito-Oka-Uhlig Trio, and the Philadelphia Trio, who are both well known to last year’s audiences.

With musicians of such high quality, we are confident that those attending the series will find each presentation delightful and inspiring. Additional information, including dates, ticket prices, programs, and biographies of the performers is available by calling the Society or visiting our website. You may select from a variety of subscription choices, as well as tickets for individual concerts—all moderately priced.

For additional concert offerings, including a cabaret-style performance by Karen Kohler and a concert by the Philadelphia Beck Band in memory of many 19th Century German contributions, see the Calendar of Events on page 7.

—Karl Spaeth

Calendar of Upcoming Events

October

Fri. Oct. 5	Uwe Kind Concert, 12:30 pm, \$5 World-renowned <i>Liedermacher</i> who teaches German by setting it to familiar tunes “German for Sale” Lecture by Dr. Sandro Moraldo, 5:30pm, Free Friday Film Fest, “Das Leben der Anderen”, 7:00pm (German with English subtitles) \$10 students, \$12 members, \$15 nonmembers
Sat. Oct. 6	5K Walk Departing from German Society, 8:00am-2:00pm, \$3 or \$20 contribution to benefit the German-American Heritage Center in Washington, DC Singalong of <i>Volkslieder</i> led by Siri Süchting and Isabella Beichl, 3:00pm, Free Susanne Linke Lecture and Modern Dance Demonstration, 5:00pm, \$20 Champagne reception with Choreographer Susanne Linke and other artists, 6:00pm, \$30 Karen Kohler Cabaret Performance, 8:00pm, \$20 Songs include a tribute Marlene Dietrich, Kurt Weil, Cole Porter and Edith Piaf
Sun. Oct. 7	Ecumenical Service at Old Zion Lutheran Church, 10:00am, Free Will Offering German-American Beer Tasting with Marnie Old, 12:00 noon, \$30 members, \$35 nonmembers A comparison and contrast of German and American beer styles and types Beck Brass Band Concert, 4:00pm, \$20 Concert in memory of Germans—the largest ethnic group in the Union Army during the Civil War
Fri. Oct. 12	Introduction to Ballroom Dancing with Prof. Peter Kadel, 7:00pm, Free
Sat. Oct. 13	243rd Annual <i>Stiftungsfest</i> and Silent Auction, 6:00pm, \$120 (\$70 of which is tax-deductible)
Sat. Oct. 21	“Wister and More!” Concert Series, The Wister Quartet, Haydn, Beethoven, Debussy, 3:00pm

November

Sat. Nov. 3	Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10:00am
Fri. Nov. 9	Friday Film Fest, “Der Name der Rose”, 6:30pm (German with English subtitles)
Sun. Nov. 11	St. Martin’s Day Parade, 4:00pm
Mon. Nov. 12	<i>Konversationsabend</i> , Artists’ Colony Worpswede, by Prof. Sigrid Weltge, 7:00pm
Sun. Nov. 18	“Wister and More!” Concert Series, <i>Liederabend</i> , with Jackie Smith, Larry Indik, and Marvin Keenze, 3:00pm

December

Sat. Dec. 1	Christmas Bazaar of the Women’s Auxiliary, 12:00 noon
Fri. Dec. 7	Friday Film Fest, “Joyeux Noel”, 6:30pm (German with English subtitles)
Sun. Dec. 9	“Wister and More!” Concert Series, The Wister Quartet, Rachmaninoff, Borodin, etc., 3:00pm
Wed. Dec. 12	<i>Konversationsabend</i> —Traditional Advent Celebration at the Auenmuellers, 7:00pm



Thanks to Our Volunteers

Over the summer months, we have had a number of dedicated individuals who have pruned trees, stuffed envelopes, mailed invitations, rewired our office technology and boxed books for sale. We are ever-so-grateful to these people who donated their time to prepare for our fall event season.

We acknowledge the work of Hans Fremuth in preparing the office computers and phones for the new face in our office (see page 1).

Thank you to Ray Dietrich for his many hours of removing unwanted trees, roots, and branches outside the building.

The Society was pleased to have Martin Alexion, a senior German student at Abington High School, volunteer his time to do some heavy lifting and gather old books around the building for a spring book sale.

Great thanks to those of you who helped with the mailings sent out this summer: Paul Coyne, Don Detwiler, Bill Felker, Frank and Ellie Klare, Robert Koelsch, Lou Oschmann, Inge Niebisch, Bobbie and Henry Shaffner, Helen Schutz, and Richard Wilking.

And a tremendous thank you to the Women’s Auxiliary for supplying cookers, servers and cleaner-uppers for the Oktoberfest and our other events. I assure you your presence and willing spirit do not go unnoticed!

Also, our gratitude is extended to our bartenders Laurie Colborn, David Finglerle and Werner Carrieri.

If you have a few hours a month free in your schedule and would like to join our volunteer team, please call the Society’s office. We’ll be happy to put you to work! —Sharan Knoell

Oktoberfest

As “Eins, Zwei, G’suffa” and other accordion favorites played in the background, 133 people dined on scrumptious slow roasted pork, sauerkraut, potato salad, wieners and wursts in our Ratskeller during this year’s Oktoberfest.

The most successful in recent years, a good time was had by all—adults and children alike—as the beer flowed and we swayed to and fro with the music.

Thank you to all who participated and all who helped to make the event a success. We already look forward to next year’s celebration!



◀ Heike Richardson and Hanna Winter, two Saturday morning German students, vie for Don Bitterlich’s job



Enjoying some good conversation...



...and time with family.

Building Improvements

The next few months will be an exciting time at the Society, as our building improvement activities continue. The addition of a sprinkler system throughout most of the building is an important project we now have the funds to implement. The ceiling in the Ratskeller will be replaced. After the sprinkler system has been installed in the basement area, we will install a high efficiency ceiling tile system produced by Armstrong. The Schlaraffia Room will be renovated and expanded to become part of the Ratskeller. Movable doors, a new floor and ceiling, and reconditioned, operable windows for much needed air circulation are planned.

The sprinkler system will also be installed in the Auditorium and this will lead to a need to repaint the auditorium. We are still awaiting the results of grant applications to see if we can proceed with this painting project, the replacement of the Auditorium windows and the renovation/repainting of the upper exterior story of the building. We also expect to replace the badly worn windows in the Directors Room.

Last but not least, the Mural Project on the building adjacent to the Society has been delayed until early spring. Our artist, Michael Webb, is presently occupied with another project. Board members and a few friends of the Society have contributed \$5,000 for this project.

With this many projects going on, we expect some construction impacts. Rooms may not be available for routine functions; however, every effort will be made to minimize impacts on our normal activities and the rental program. We ask for your understanding as we strive to enhance the functionality of our facilities. —Ernest Weiler

It’s Never Too Early...

Some of our women were already thinking of *Christkindlmarkt* in the middle of August. Herta Toneatto organized a repair and painting party to freshen up the appearance of our *Knusperhäuschen* (market stands).

Ingrid Greim, Desiree Heigl, Jutta Lendvay, Maria Neitzel with Theresa (an Au-Pair), Kathryn Olson, Hannelore Schill, Margot Sawicki, and Hella Volgenau scraped, sanded, masked and painted for several days in the heat of summer. I think everybody knows how hot the Auditorium of the Society gets during those dog days of August, but as you can see in the photo, this did not dampen their enthusiasm. In fact, they made this task a fun event, even singing while working.

Martin Knappe and Lew Volgenau sawed new icicles and attached them to the roof line.

A heartfelt thank you to all of you.

Come and admire our work on December 1st! This is the date of our Christkindlmarkt, which will start as usual at 12:00 noon. It will include our hand-made goodies: home baked cakes and cookies, hand-sewn, crocheted and knitted items, fresh evergreen arrangements, tree ornaments, attic treasures, a silent auction, chocolates, marzipan, and much more. A delicious lunch will be served in addition to *Kaffee und Kuchen*. Proceeds of the Bazaar go toward welfare and scholarship opportunities.

Please mark your calendar! It would be nice to see all of you.

—Christel Tillmann, President of the Women’s Auxiliary



Herta Toneatto, Margot Sawicki and Ingrid Greim

Membership

Membership is a key element in any successful nonprofit organization. Without loyal and new members, the German Society cannot continue to exist. Much gratitude is due to all those loyal members who have stayed with us for many years. New members help us to revitalize. And an excellent way to acquire new members is to have loyal members recruit them. This can be done very easily by simply telling anyone you know about the German Society, and then asking them to join. Or, you could give a **gift membership** and surprise a close friend or relative on a special occasion. Either way, the German Society benefits. For questions about membership, please call Lou Oschmann, Membership Chair, at 267-872-0568.

Welcome to our Newest Members

We are pleased to extend a warm greeting to all of our newest members.

Names removed for WEB  
version

Konversationsabend

Ever since Gudrun and I moved to Philadelphia a few weeks before the turn of the century, we have been very much intrigued by the city's history, and the myriad parts which Germans had in it. When I got acquainted with Annke Farago, the then Executive Director, I was pleased to learn that the Society offered a monthly forum where presentations—lectures and discussions—are made in our native tongue. In those days, the *Konversationsabend* was led by former Board member Mike Masko. When he resigned due to an increased work load as administrator in the Bucks County School District, I was asked to step in. I was glad to do it. Wow!—I cannot believe that seven years have passed since I took on that responsibility. In early 2000, I was still regularly commuting across the Atlantic to help my Saxon countrymen get a handle on the daunting market requirements of the "new economy". While most of them, particularly the younger generation(s), have since become accustomed to the values of the western world, I still feel the occasional urge to report on my personal experiences in Eastern Germany and the positive changes noted there. During the intervening years, we dwelled upon a great variety of subjects at our *Konversationsabend* sessions. We offered numerous lectures by eminent professionals on many different historic, religious or sociopolitical developments. We enjoyed panel discussions on current affairs, elections and sport events, as well as book reviews and readings by the authors. Our attendance has also grown over the years, from a low of 20 to a high of 80. The best attended was Prof. J. Overhoff's presentation of his biography on Benjamin Franklin

A Well Established Tradition of the German Society

—*Erfinder, Freigeist, Staatenlenker*. Even Ralph Archbald, the actor who so often portrays Franklin, was there. This year, before our summer break, we covered the following three diverse topics which have been summarized by Inge Niebisch, a long-time Society member and regular participant in our *KA-Runden*:  
**Beim Häuten der Zwiebel** - Buchbesprechung mit **Dr. Helga Halbfass**  
*Dieses Buch von Guenter Grass wurde uns in unterhaltender und kompetenter Weise von Frau Dr. Halbfass nahegebracht. Obwohl keiner der Anwesenden, ausser der Vortragenden, das Buch bereits gelesen hatte, war doch allen die Kontroverse bekannt, die Grass' Autobiographie hervorgerufen hat. Dass er seinen Eintritt als 17-Jaehriger in die SS (kurz vor Kriegsende) so sorgfaeltig verschwiegen hat, waehrend er die gesamte Nachkriegszeit hindurch ueber die politische Korrektheit seiner Landsleute gewacht hat, bringt ihm offensichtlich nun Feinde ein. Selbst ein alter Freund, wie der Historiker Joachim Fest (kuerzlich verstorben), hat sich mit harschen Worten von ihm distanziert. Gern haetten wir noch andere Ansichten zu diesem Thema gehoert: denn sie haetten den Abend noch interessanter gemacht.*  
**Aktion Suehnezeichen Friedensdienste—Dr. Matthias Hass**  
*Die Organisation Aktion Suehnezeichen wurde auf einer Synode der protestantischen Kirche im Jahre 1958 als Anerkennung der deutschen Kriegsschuld ins Leben gerufen "we are requesting all peoples who suffered vio-*

*lence at our hands to allow us to perform good deeds in their countries,...to carry out this symbol of reconciliation." Seit 1968 nennt sich die Organisation: "Aktion Suehnezeichen Friedensdienste". Obwohl Personen jeder Altersklasse in dieser Organisation zu Friedensdiensten eingesetzt werden, sind es doch vorwiegend junge Leute, die sich gleich nach dem Abitur zu einem solchen Einsatz, meistens fuer ein Jahr, zur Verfuegung stellen—noch bevor sie eine Berufsentscheidung getroffen haben. Wir hatten die Gelegenheit, fuenf solcher tapferen jungen Leute an diesem Abend kennenzulernen. Sie sprachen ueber ihren Einsatz in einer juedischen Gemeinde von Philadelphia bzw. Camden, NJ. Diese tapferen, jungen Leute haetten mehr Anerkennung verdient als die Anwesenheit von nur 20 Mitgliedern der Gesellschaft bekundete.*  
**Luthers Spiritualitaet von Drs. Peter und Philip Krey**  
*Dieses Buch wurde auf Anregung des Paulist Verlages geschrieben, der eine Serie ueber die 3 groessten Weltreligionen publiziert: ueber den Islam, den Buddhismus und das Christentum. Der Anfrage des Verlages bei den Bruedern Krey, ob sie sich der Aufgabe, ueber das Christentum zu schreiben, stellen wollten, verdanken wir einen interessanten und gut besuchten Konversationsabend. Es bedurfte grosser Aufmerksamkeit den Ausfuehrungen der Autoren zu folgen, deren Geist u.a. an den Philosophien von Hegel und Thomas von Aquin geschult ist. Jeder Anwesende hat aber wohl Luther's praktische Le-*

*bensweisheit verinnerlicht, die da sagt, dass Einsamkeit und Gruebelei der Verfuehrung durch den Teufel Tor und Tuere oeffnet. Der Christenmensch soll die Gemeinschaft suchen (auch in der Ehe) denn diese bietet Schutz vor Depressionen und Suenden. Wenn das nicht hilft, lange man zum Glaeschen Wein oder Bier. Da jeder ein guter Christ sein moechte, sollte man diesen Ratschlag befolgen—und so war im Ratskeller um 22:00 Uhr immer noch gute Stimmung.*  
In the fall, we expect to present **Prof. Sandro Moraldo** with the subject: **Deutsch for Sale!** Deswegen Deutsch schoener per Gesetz - zum "Lightwesen" populaerer Sprachkritik. This lecture will take place on **Friday, October 5** as part of our German-American Day Celebration. On **Monday, November 12** we will enjoy a presentation by **Prof. Sigrid Weltge** about her life long research on the German artist colony **Worpswede**. Sigrid, a true friend of the German Society and a former Board member, has recently donated her entire collection of books and writings on that subject to our Library, for which we are ever so grateful. And on **Wednesday, December 12**, we will gather at our Center City home, known to most of the regular KA-attendants, for a traditional **Adventsfeier**. This time, our present house guest, **Björn Oberhössel**, who is doing research in the GSP library, will respond to any questions on his favorite subjects: History, Theatre and Political Science. In fact, you might wish to challenge him on the workings of the 'Model' United Nations. —Hardy von Auenmueller