

**The German Society of
Pennsylvania**

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Friday Film Fests: *Dresden* Two Part Mini-Series

When it premiered on German TV in 2006, “Dresden” drew 12.7 million viewers. The film is set during the 1945 Allied bombing that flattened the city and killed at least 35,000 residents, and many more refugees and soldiers in transit, but focuses on a tragic love story between a woman and two men.

The young nurse, Anna Mauth, who is working in a hospital in Dresden gets engaged to Dr. Benjamin Wenninger. At the same time, an English bomber is shot down, and the severely-injured pilot manages to hide in the hospital’s basement. Anna discovers him and decides to render help.

“Dresden” is the most expensive film ever produced for German television, costing \$13.2 million.

Reportedly, the film is also the first to treat this WWII event as drama, which focuses on the fictional romance between the pilot and the nurse.

Both parts of the two-part series will be shown in German with English subtitles, and you do not have to see the first part to understand the second.

The showing of “Dresden” will bring our 2009/10 Film Fest series to an end.

If there are movies that you have seen recently or those you would like to suggest we incorporate into our monthly series, please do not hesitate to make your opinions known to us. We are always looking for new films to show, and we aim for a mix of the old and new, light and serious.

—Sharan Knoell

(Facts courtesy of imdb.com)



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Internet: www.germansociety.org

Spring 2010

Chairman’s Comments

I have noticed that volunteering one’s services to the community is very much ingrained in the American culture. No doubt, it goes back to the early European settlers of this country, when people supported each other in their new surroundings with skills that their neighbors were lacking.

Still today, on a per capita basis, Americans give three and a half times as much to causes and charities as the French, and seven times as much as the Germans. Americans are also fifteen percent more likely to volunteer their time than the Dutch, and thirty-two percent more likely than the Germans.

Volunteering is not just an altruistic act. It is an opportunity to advance in all areas of your life! It can also be an excellent opportunity to improve your resume, help your community, and make you feel good about yourself. So when you feel blue the next time, get up and help someone in need! It gets your mind off your own pain and forces you to count your blessings.

When I was growing up in Germany, and later when traveling there as an adult living in the States, I often heard that charity is something the state is supposed to do (or the church, for that matter.) Often I was told, “we are paying church taxes”—which the government imposes on anyone who is registered as a member of an official church, and collects such levies along with other

—Cont’d on page 3

President’s Message

We have done a marvelous job to bring about a series of very significant building improvements over the past four years. Some of these will continue in 2010 and maybe into 2011.

Now that we have a facility which should serve our mission and our membership for years to come, it might be appropriate to ask, what is the biggest challenge we face at the Society in the next five or ten years?

I believe that we need to grow our membership substantially.

There are five colonial societies in Philadelphia – Welsh, Scottish, English and Irish Societies and of course the German Society. All were founded in the 1700s to help immigrants establish themselves in America.

We are the only one fortunate enough to have its own building with a wonderful concert hall and library. Most colonial societies have an annual ball at the Union League or a country club, and maybe have one or two social events throughout the year.

We, on the other hand, have the fixed expenses associated with our building, and each year we need to raise over \$300,000 to cover our costs.

In recent years, we have hosted close to 50 events at the Society each year. These include our music program, lectures, seminars, films, *Ham-burger Abend* and others.

These are important to our mission, but as a group they do not contribute substantial funds to the Society,

—Cont’d on page 3

Continuing Renovation

Now that the upper two levels of our venerable building have been substantially renovated over the past 10/12 years, and the auditorium with its new windows has been turned into a true concert hall with world



class acoustics, lacking only the window treatment (see picture above) which will be installed later this month, it was agreed at our last Board Meeting that the basement level be targeted next.

—Cont’d on page 10

In This Issue	pg.
◆ Annual Fund Donors	2
◆ Cultural Trip Postponed	3
◆ Piano Fund	4
◆ Membership	4
◆ Annual Meeting/Election	5
◆ Library News	7
◆ <i>Agentur</i> Ledger	7
◆ WAUX Luncheon/Trip	8
◆ <i>Konversationsabend</i>	8
◆ G-A Heritage Center	9
◆ Library Fellowship Prog.	10
◆ Calendar of Events	11

Annual Fund Donors *

For the privacy of our donors, all names have been removed.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

April

Sat. April 10	Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10am
Sat. April 10	<i>Hamburger Abend—Ein Abend an der Waterkant</i> , 7pm
Mon. April 12	Spring Session of Evening German Classes for Adults Begins
Fri. April 16	Film Fest, “Dresden” Part I of II, 6:30pm (in German with English subtitles)
Sat. April 17	Spring Session of Saturday Classes for Children Begins
Sat. April 17	Horner Library Open, 10am-4pm
Sun. April 18	2009/10 “Wister and More!” presents The Wister Quartet, 3pm Selections by Zipoli, Beethoven, and Dvorak
Sun. April 25	Annual Members’ Meeting and Election, 3pm
Wed. April 28	<i>Konversationsabend</i> , “Globalization—Challenge for Germany and the USA”, 7pm Presented by Dr. Charles Borowsky

May

Sat. May 1	Women’s Auxiliary Annual Spring Luncheon, 12noon
Sat. May 8	Horner Library Open, 10am-4pm / Introduction of Children’s Books by Maria Sturm, 11am
Sat. May 8	Book Discussion on Daniel Kehlmann's "Vermessung der Welt" with Ochirbat Boldbaatar and Maria Sturm in the Library, 1:30-3pm
Fri. May 14	Film Fest, “Dresden” Part II of II, 6:30pm (in German with English subtitles)
Sun. May 16	2009/10 “Wister and More!” presents American Virtuosi, 3pm Selections by Bach, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, and others - A Piano Fundraiser
Mon. May 17	German Society Board Meeting, 7pm
Wed. May 19	<i>Konversationsabend</i> , “German South West in Africa”, 7pm Book Discussion by Author Katie Thieck

June

Sat. June 5	Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10am
Sat. June 5	<i>Sommerfest</i> and German Beer Tasting with Marnie Old - Details to be published soon!
Sat. June 19	<i>Wandertag</i> (location TBA), 10am

To find out more about any of these events, please visit us online at www.germansociety.org.

Editor’s Note

A good friend from Boston, MA has brought to our attention that a typographical error occurred in the “Chairman’s Comments” article which appeared in the Winter 2009/10 issue of this publication. Please note that the transfer value of support from the Western part of Germany to the East has been **\$100 billion per year**, and not \$100 million as it was mistakenly printed. Thank you, dear Ernst, for being such an attentive reader!

philanthropy on the Wall of Honor. The stairs leading up to the main exhibition floor showed on its risers, among others, the names of *Fred Astaire*, *Doris Day*, *Elvis Presley*, *Babe Ruth*, *Dwight Eisenhower* and *Herbert Hoover* whose Austrian or German ancestry are not readily recognized, while early immigrants, such as *Pastorius*, *von Steuben*, and *Schurz*, have long left indelible marks in our nation's history books. The large timeline panels hanging on the walls were well written, and so were the individual presentations of certain regional clubs which will be exhibited on a rotating basis. (The GSP has been invited to participate in this project, with an appropriate donation to cover the cost of display.) In general, the press reviews about this new ethnic museum were positive, except for the *Washington Post* whose staff writer, *Marc Fisher*, took exception to that cultural shift in Washington, claiming that "the Balkanizers are in control." He chastises American academia to using a hyphenated approach to present U.S. history rather than explaining the remarkable story of how so many different people came together in a new kind of nation.

He criticizes the museum for omitting reference to the German-American Bund and what it represented. But he also makes the unsupported and even far-fetched claim that many Germans in government and the private sector believed that they needed to counter the Holocaust museum with one of their own. It seems we do have need of such a monument, to counter our being pigeon-holed and stereotyped in such a manner. —Hardy von Auenmueller

Library Fellowship Program Continues in 2010

For the fourth year the German Society of Pennsylvania this summer will host a number of (mostly young) scholars who pursue research in German-American history and culture. The "GHI Fellowship at the Horner Library", sponsored by the German Historical Institute every summer since 2007, is a prestigious award that attracts numerous applications from scholars in America and Europe.

As announced on the Institute's web site (www.ghi-dc.org), fellows usually stay for two to four weeks at our Library, studying rare documents of the archive or unique titles, usually in German or of German-American printers, that have not been preserved in other North American libraries. They often take advantage of the option to complement work at the collections of the Library Company of Philadelphia or the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Every year, GSP members have been invited for a brown bag luncheon seminar where the fellows report on their findings, and we will do this again this year. Topics have ranged from the work of the Moravian Brothers and the Catholic Renewal in the 19th century to the fate of German Americans in World War I and the politics of German-American associations during the Nazi years. Dr. Violet Lutz, our special collection librarian, will again provide service and advice in June and first half of July. We expect to announce this year's topics and the date of the luncheon seminar later in spring.

—Frank Trommler

—Cont'd from page 1

Several areas, such as the downstairs kitchen and the Ratskeller, have already been upgraded, yet there is a need to do more.

Fortunately, several months ago, we were able to get the much needed funding support for the renovation of our toilet facilities, including a new handicapped bathroom, which we plan to tackle first.

While the actual de- and reconstruction of our bathroom areas will be done during the summer months (July and August) when our operational staff, including volunteers, will take a much needed break, it will be necessary to undertake some prior investigative work.

Since we do not have any reliable building plans showing as to where and how the underground water and sewage lines were installed more than 100 years ago, we need to rip up the concrete floor. Hopefully, we will then see a pattern that allows us to draw up a sketch that is needed for the solicitation of bid proposals.

This type of exploratory work will, of necessity, have to be done as early as May, which means that for a period of six weeks or so, there will be areas in the bathrooms that are temporarily covered with plywood boards. We apologize for the inconvenience and ask for your understanding! Furthermore, right after the *Hamburger Abend*, we need to rip out the paneling and some of the walls that have sustained water damage in the *Schlaraffia* room. Also, the concrete floor of that room needs to be replaced. Any person wishing to lend a hand in this grub work is asked to speak up. Thank you.

—Tony Michels

—President's Message Cont'd

in part because we face a rather competitive environment in Philadelphia for various cultural events.

By comparison, net profits from the Stiftungsfest, membership dues, and the Annual Fund Drive provide around 55% of our annual income. All three categories are heavily dependent upon the participation of members.

Clearly, if we were able to increase our membership substantially, we would place the society on a much firmer financial footing. Our Membership Committee, under the leadership of Joseph DeMaria, has set itself the objective to significantly increase membership. The best way that any of us can support the Society is to invite a friend or two to join in 2010.

Please help us fill the wonderful space we inherited from prior generations with programs and activities. I invite all of you to be ambassadors for the Society and to ask your friends to become active members.

—Ernie Weiler

Postponement of Cultural Trip to Germany

Unfortunately, the second Cultural Trip to Germany, which we had scheduled for late April/early May, targeting the major metropolitan areas of Germany, will have to be postponed because the trans-atlantic airfares have just about doubled over the past 12 months.

It appears that the airlines, in view of rising fuel expenditures, and ever increasing security fees are constructing their pricing in such a fashion that they now advertise only the so-called "net

fares", and BUYERS BEWARE, let you struggle with the other charges if you wish to fly.

Since airfares are usually dropping in the fall, we are tentatively planning to reschedule the above trip for that time, perhaps as late as early December. In that case, we could enjoy some of the beautiful atmosphere of the old-fashioned German Christmas markets. Please let me know what you think of this idea?

—Hardy von Auenmueller

—Chairman's Comments Cont'd

withholdings of wage taxes, social security and health care premiums, etc.

Only in East Germany, in face of the overbearing state control, did I see something akin to the community spirit which one can widely observe in the States.

What are the required characteristics for anyone wishing to become involved in the work of a church or a not-for-profit organization, such as the German Society? Perhaps, I can give you an answer based upon my full time experience in that area over the past twenty years:

First is **patience**. If you are in a hurry, this type of work is not for you. Those who have known me for a long time are aware that this is an area where I had to make the most effort. And I'm still struggling with it.

Next is the **ability to work with people**—diplomatically, I might add. Never lose your temper, never say anything you are likely to regret! There are times when it is best simply to smile and keep your mouth shut.

Finally, I would suggest **having a thick skin and a short memory**. This means that you should not hold grudges over things that someone has done to you, or said about you, at some point along the way.

In summary, if you are patient, diplomatic, and have a short memory, you will do fine in your volunteering efforts. I hope this encourages you to step forward and offer your time and talent to the German Society.

—Hardy von Auenmueller

Piano Fund

Dear Members and Friends:

Now that our premises have been splendidly renovated—with new auditorium windows, and an elevator for easy access to all levels of our building—it has become apparent that our concert hall has excellent acoustics for all sorts of musical events—including piano concerts, if only we had a better instrument.

Our **Steinway** piano has been showing its "**centenarian**" age for a while. The heavy action on many keys has been a problem for quite a few pianists in recent years. Several cracks in the keyboard have developed of late, most probably as a result of the ever changing atmospheric conditions in our hall. In short, our instrument is in a state of continual deterioration which needs to be addressed.

A recent examination of our instrument by a renowned, local piano technician, who has been in the business of rebuilding grand pianos for more than 40 years, determined that it would cost at least \$35,000 to bring back its tonal quality. However, even if we were to make that investment, this piano would still be considered "small" for our beautiful space.

Hence, a decision was made at our most recent board meeting to establish a **piano fund**, and I have volunteered to head up a special fund drive for an appropriately sized **grand piano**, either new or refurbished. In fact, I have already taken a management job for a European company on a part-time basis which, to date, has generated \$5,000 in support of that particular cause.

On the other hand, if you or someone you know has such an instrument standing around and are prepared to donate it to our Society, we will gladly have it inspected and evaluated. Your friend or relative, and you might be delighted to know that his or her *Konzertfluegel* has found a new home!

Incidentally, we are presently planning to hold a **special fundraising event** concurrent with our last concert of this season when the *American Virtuosi* are returning to our premises on **Sunday, May 16, 2010 at 3:00 PM**. Please mark your calendar and stay tuned for further announcements.

—Hardy von Auenmueller

New Members

We extend a cordial welcome to all new members and look forward to seeing you at upcoming events!

For the privacy of our new members, all names have been removed.

Membership Challenge

This year, we are asking you to solicit one new member from among your friends or extended family. If each member were to bring in just one new person per year, we would have the volunteer assistance and funds to really become the premiere resource for German-American life in the United States.

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!

OUR GOAL IS THAT EACH OF
YOU RECRUIT
ONE NEW MEMBER
TO THE SOCIETY DURING 2010.

PLEASE HELP WITH THIS
IMPORTANT DRIVE!

Opening of the German-American Heritage Center

Many who travelled to Washington on the eve of *J.S. Bach's* 325th birthday will remember the Spring equinox of 2010 as the date on which a long awaited dream of a few Pennsylvanians became reality.

In the late 1970's, **Dr. Hans R. Haug**, pastor of the Immanuel Lutheran Church and a well-known figure in the German-American community of Philadelphia, met with a few like-minded people to discuss the formation of an national ethnic umbrella organization.

This not-for-profit entity was first known as "United German-American Committee of the USA." It was to be an organization in which German-Americans work together on vital issues of common concern and promote the heritage of Americans of German-speaking ancestry.

Later on, when a decision had been made to establish a physical presence in our nation's capital, the new leadership under its current president, **Bern E. Deichmann**, changed the name to "German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA."

So, under a sunny Washington sky—which used to be called "*Kaiserwetter*" when *President Teddy Roosevelt* played tennis with

the German Ambassador—, the new **German American Heritage Museum** opened on March 20th (see Ribbon Cutting Ceremony below).

The museum is housed in a gorgeously restored Victorian house on Sixth Street NW, known as **Hockemeyer Hall**. The name is derived from its builder, *John Hockemeyer*, a successful German-born merchant, who made his home there towards

of "oral and visual" records.

This latter project, financed by the German government with ERP (European Recovery Program) funds, will give ordinary German-Americans the opportunity to have their life stories recorded as part of an academic research effort to be archived by the federal government and major libraries across the country—similar to Ellis Island.



the end of the 19th century and who established one of the first *Buena Vista Clubs*. The building represents one of the last remnants of the rich history of the German-American population of that era in the so-called Penn Quarter.

However, this center is more than an architectural gem and meeting place for German-Americans with common ancestry. It will contain temporary and permanent exhibits, multimedia installations and a collection

headed the organization's capital funding drive.

Prominently displayed in the left column of that wall were the names of the five most generous donors, all from Pennsylvania. The sum total of their benefactions represented the lion's share of the funds collected to date. This should make *Pastor Haug*, and his family, proud of his vision.

Incidentally, a few other GSP members were also recognized for their

—Cont'd on next page

Women's Auxiliary 110th Anniversary Luncheon

All are welcome to our celebration luncheon and spring festival in the Barthelmes Auditorium at the Society on **May 1, 2010 at 12:00 noon**. The event will feature our famous *Erdbeerbowle*, a delicious meal (salmon or chicken) and delectable dessert, and a sing-along of *Frühlingslieder*. The cost is \$20, and reservations are a must (deadline April 28th). For information, please call Doris Simon (215-342-5140).

September Bus Trip to West Point and Hudson River Cruise

The Women's Auxiliary invites you to join us for our trip to the Hudson River Valley on **Wednesday, September 22, 2010**. Visit the US Military Academy at West Point. With our step-on guide, we will have a 90 minute tour of the site, including stops at the Main Cadet Chapel, Trophy Point, Battle Monument, Monument to the Great Chain, and the Parade Field. We will enjoy a buffet lunch at the landmark Thayer Hotel. In the afternoon, we will board the MV Commander for a two-hour cruise through the scenic and historic Hudson highlands. Cost is \$115 and includes transportation, guided tour, lunch, river cruise, and gratuities. For information, pick up a flyer at the Society or call Doris MacPherson (570-897-7791).
—Doris MacPherson

Konversationsabend with Action Reconciliation Service for Peace

As a guest to the German Society, during the "**Konversationsabend**" on January 19th, Lucia Mair describes how radically her life has changed in the past few months: "Instead of living in a small, peaceful town, I'm spending one year in the poorest city of the United States. Instead of going to school in the mornings, I go to my workplace, a homeless shelter. Instead of strolling through my hometown Homburg I make sure to leave center city before it gets dark."

Lucia, one out of 24 young people currently doing a volunteer service with Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP) in the USA, works at Christus Lutheran Church and New Visions in Camden, one of the countries poorest cities.

What motivates these young people to spend a year of their lives working here with homeless people, with their children in after-school programs, interacting with Jewish communities in general and with Holocaust survivors in particular, living and working with disabled people, visiting elderly and homebound people, teaching children and teenagers about the history of the Holocaust as well as about life in Germany today?

This was a question directed at the four ARSP-volunteers presenting the organization's work that evening.

Lucia answers: "Every single day here I learn more than I could have learned in a whole year in Hom-

burg". And Alexander Harder, working for the Jewish Family and Children's Service adds: "Many of us (young men) do this voluntary year instead of our military service in Germany. It is often more interesting as such, but the mission of ARSP has become more and more part of my motivation to do such a volunteer work."

ARSP was founded in 1958 by members of the Protestant Lutheran Church in Berlin to confront the legacy of the Nazi era by setting a sign of atonement. To quote the founding father, Lothar Kreyssig: "We Germans began World War II and for this reason alone, more than others, we are guilty for bringing immeasurable suffering to humankind...We ask the peoples that suffered violence at our hands to allow us to perform a good deed in their countries... whatever they request, as a sign of atonement...a request for forgiveness and peace."

This responsibility is still felt by many young people today. Every year ARSP sends around 180 volunteers to 13 countries for a one-year of service, taking an active stance against racism and anti-Semitism today, working towards the inclusion of those living on the fringes of society and engaging themselves in peace work and community organizing.

—Magdalena Scharf
Director, ARSP

Annual Members' Meeting and Election

On Sunday, April 25, 2010 at 3:00pm, the German Society will hold its 2010 Annual Meeting/Election for Directors and Officers at 611 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123.

Members must be in good standing to be eligible to vote, i.e. current on dues no later than end of business, Friday, April 23, 2010. Members wishing to vote must be present at the meeting—there is no provision for absentee ballots or proxy voting under the Society's By-laws. If you have any questions about your current membership status, please contact the Society's office at 215-627-2332 and speak with Sharan Knoell, or email the Society at info@germansociety.org.

A slate of candidates standing for office was presented and approved by the Board of Directors at the March 15, 2010 meeting. Mr. Oschmann is running for Secretary and all others for a Director position.

The vision statements and photographs of the various candidates are listed below and on the following page.

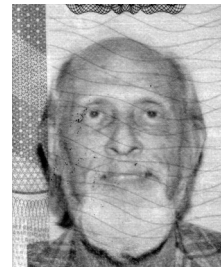
—Karl Spaeth, Secretary



The previous four years of my Board membership have provided me with much interesting insight into the way the German Society is functioning. I have seen mostly positive developments - the establishment of the Horner Library as a research institution, the renovation of the Barthelmes Auditorium, the extension of the events calendar, the successful rental program which has connected the Society with life in the city, the new mural on the adjacent building, the brand new elevator - to name a few. The more the Society grows, the more grows the scope of support required to maintain and expand its activities. While the library has been opened to members, much more needs to be done to make it attractive to prospective patrons. This would be an ongoing interest of mine, as well as assisting Hardy von Auenmueller in planning and organizing the events of the Konversationsabend. As before, I will continue to participate in the numerous volunteer activities without which the Society could not be run. —Helga Halbfass

As a new member to the German Society of Pennsylvania, I stood by the front steps at 611 Spring Garden Street for the first time in November 1987. "*Brewed in Philadelphia - A 19th Century View*" brought me to the Society 23 years ago in search of both beer history and German culture. The brewery tour and exhibit at the Society served to intensify my hunger for German food, beer, and history. I also take great pride in my German ancestry (Kloekner and Kirschner.) My membership in the Society has provided me with the opportunity to expand my knowledge and experiences in German culture, and in turn, pass on that knowledge and celebration to my family and friends.

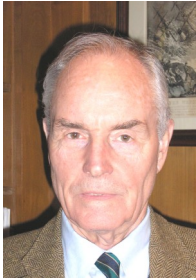
—Mark Kleckner



I foresee serving the Society in three areas. One is in the area of economic and financial questions. I worked in economic planning in the public and private sectors, in the US and abroad, for 21 years. For two years I was the *de facto* state economist of Pennsylvania in the Governor's Office. I have a MA in econometrics from the Wharton School, and have been a successful real estate investor for over 25 years. A second area is the physical plant of the Society. I am a mechanical engineer and a journeyman bricklayer and have a great deal of experience in both construction and building maintenance. The third is the Library, which I consider a particular treasure of the Society. Since finding my father's and grand-father's letters from the front, in 2001, my principal activity is studying and writing German WW I history, and have collected many hundreds of books on the topic. My wife has been a foreign language librarian for over 26 years, and is an avid book collector.

—Robert G. Lembke





I grew up in Dresden and started my engineering education there. I came to Wilmington, DE in 1969 via California, where I attended Graduate School in Pasadena. I have been with the DuPont Company for more than 40 years in research, management and strategic planning. My wife and I joined the GSP about twenty years ago.

I would like to help the Society thrive and prosper, as a participant in the decision making process and as a hands-on participant in projects or programs. —Hans Mueller

It has been a personal privilege and honor for me to be a member the German Society for 38 years. Over the years, I've seen many changes, mostly for the better, and I've served the Society in various official capacities. However, the most important aspect has been knowing so many interesting people, those who represent the best of German American culture.

As a lifetime member and current Board member, I am active on the Arts, Finance, Library, and Membership Committees, and see the German Society as a well-funded non-profit organization, with a substantive endowment. Also, I see it as a cultural center, an educational magnet, a community center, and a vital link to all other German-American groups in the Delaware Valley.

—Lou Oschmann



I am very much committed to helping the German Society of Pennsylvania realize its vision statement, having been a member of the Board when that statement was approved. My special interest lies in the area of music and cultural matters generally, and I currently serve as Chair of the Music Committee. Most of my professional experience was as a corporate lawyer, with particular emphasis on the activities of corporate secretary, and I expect to bring that expertise as a Director of the Society.

—Karl H. Spaeth, Esq.

For the past year, I've been a member of the Library Committee, after having been involved on and off with the library since the early 1990s. Given all the interesting developments taking place right now in the world of books in particular, and in the context of membership organizations in general, it seems like a good moment to take my involvement with the German Society a step further. Moreover, for the last decade I've been organizing a German playgroup, which ensured that I experienced many different aspects of having – and trying to maintain – a German background in today's America. I think the GSP can still be an integral part of this endeavor, though not without some effort to keep it relevant in a rapidly changing world, and I would like to be a part of that effort – and given my background as a historian, do this while always keeping in mind and preserving the achievements of the past, and at the same time being open for future developments. — Maria Sturm



My father's family is from Germany, and they instilled in me a true love and respect for German culture, food, and music. My first introduction to the German Society of Pennsylvania was when my wife and I were looking for a place to have our wedding reception. Upon touring the GSP building and talking with Sharan, we both knew it would be perfect for the reception. I also realized that the GSP is a very special place that should be preserved and its missions promoted, so we joined the GSP and began attending several of the Society events. Additionally, we are both active in bringing our friends, family, and colleagues to events and eventually into the Society. The lifeblood of the GSP is its members and their commitment to the missions of the Society, and I am honored to have the opportunity to further the goals and missions of the GSP. —Shawn Terkhorn

Library News

Most of you probably know a little about the many rare or unique items at the Joseph P. Horner Memorial Library of the German Society of Pennsylvania –the books, pamphlets, and manuscripts that, piece by piece, reveal the stories of German-American life and culture.

It is worthwhile to stop and think about how the riches housed in the Horner library are, in turn, only a small part of a larger mosaic of print and archival materials documenting the local, regional, and national history of the United States.

In the Philadelphia area alone there is an astounding array of fellow libraries, large and small, that likewise are home to what are aptly known as “special collections.”

Since 1985 some of the libraries in our area have been coming together to learn more about each other's holdings, and to discuss common concerns, in what is today a vibrant cooperative organization of 33 members called the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries, or PACSCL.

In the years following the successful restoration and electronic re-cataloging project (1994-1999), German Society library staff and committee members worked hard to clarify and renew the mission of the Horner Library, and it was a natural step to seek contact with PACSCL. The Horner Library became an associate member in 2007.

The PACSCL website publicizes current events and initiatives, with links to all of its member libraries: <http://www.pacscl.org>

Related to our ongoing efforts to cata-

log and describe the manuscript holdings of the Horner Library (see Maria Sturm's article about her work with the German Society “Agentur” records), we are planning to begin using the open-source archival-management software called Archivists' Toolkit, which will enable us to produce electronic forms of our finding aids for the library website.

Fortunately, technical support and training will be available from the staff of the PACSCL-sponsored “Hidden Collections Processing Project” - the local Philadelphia-area incarnation of the nation-wide “Hidden Collections” program run by the Council on Library and Information Resources, and funded by the Mellon Foundation.

An exciting event on the horizon: from June 22 to 25, PACSCL will be the local host when the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) holds its annual preconference meeting here in Philadelphia.

The RBMS, as part of the Association of College and Research Libraries (a division of the American Library Association), is the premier professional group working for greater public awareness of special collections.

The dramatic and timely theme of this year's gathering is: “Join or die! Collaboration in Special Collections.”

As a contributor to the PACSCL fund supporting local arrangements, the German Society - with partial financial support from the Women's Auxiliary - will be officially recognized as a sponsor of a workshop at this important event.

—Violet Lutz

The Agentur Ledgers

For the last few months, I've been working on creating a finding aid for the records of the *Agentur* – the name given in 1847 to a separate entity within the German Society devoted to the “Relief of Distressed Germans”.

While helping the less fortunate members of the German community had always been the main stated purpose of the German Society since its founding in 1764, it was only by the mid-19th century that this support became formally organized.

The first three volumes of ledgers documenting the efforts of the *Agentur* are missing, but starting in 1869, there is a complete set of ledgers, indexes, reports, and cash books covering the years up to 1938.

In addition, there's another set of records chronicling the efforts of the German Society to find work for members of the German community in Philadelphia, which covers the period from 1885 to 1922.

Taken together, they offer a fascinating glimpse of everyday life in Philadelphia during that time, and provide valuable information on many details not only of the immigrant experience, but also of the fate of those who had been in the country for a long time already.

The project, which was made possible by a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, will be finished by the summer of 2010, and I am planning a talk at the German Society on the history of the *Agentur* for the fall.

—Maria Sturm