



Chairman's Comments

Ever since the City of Philadelphia introduced a sequential "green wave" traffic light pattern on Pine Street, I have been using that route, and then cutting across the historic district of Philadelphia on 5th Street on my way to the German Society. Along the way, I have noted an impressive, modern structure being built right across from the Liberty Bell, and one block north from Independence Hall. That is the **National Museum of American Jewish History**, which opened its doors to the public in Fall, 2010. It tells the story of American Jews from their arrival in North America more than 350 years ago to the present - exhibiting and interpreting the American Jewish experience in a 100,000 sq. ft., multi-story building.

According to *Jay Nachman*, the museum's PR director, "the museum design is a composition of two interdependent forms—one translucent, the other opaque. The west façade facing Independence Mall is a glass prism that expresses the openness of America as well as the perennial fragility of freedom and democracy. The north wall is constructed of terra cotta symbolizing the strength and survival of

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Building News

The mission, vision and programs of our organization are all very important to the future of the GSP. However, maintaining our building is also a priority. The majority of ethnic organizations, dating back to colonial times, have lost their facilities and lack a physical space to conduct their activities.

Fortunately, the German Society has maintained its structure and we are now in the position of determining how to best use these facilities in the future. There are many challenges in maintaining the building; many volunteers have contributed countless hours to maintain the structure and keep it operating.

Now we have an opportunity to take a more structured approach and create a long-term plan to prepare the building for future needs and challenges. We have made many improvements. However, major systems such as steam heating and electric are still outdated and due for replacement.

We have recently begun a process to determine what our future needs will be and how we can best realize those needs with modern technology. We are initiating a plan to evaluate every room in the building and determine its needs. I would appreciate your input in this process. — Tony Michels

President's Message

With this report, I will try to focus on the generosity of our friends and members who continue to support the Society. In fact we could not operate our building nor could we continue to offer new programs and activities without your help.

Our Annual Fund Drive goal this year is \$45,000. At this time more than 130 members and friends have contributed. There is still the opportunity for others to donate. We use these funds to balance our operating budget.

This year we were not awarded any funds by the Philadelphia Cultural Fund and as a result we are \$10,000 short, which makes reaching the above goal so much more important.

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-President's Message Cont'd

I personally wish to thank all who have contributed.

Our efforts to building a meaningful endowment continue. At this time 20 friends and members have contributed \$170,000 and we received additional commitments for \$90,000. It might be interesting to note that five donations were in memory of a spouse or parent(s). In this issue of the Staatsbote, we feature an article by Doris MacPherson, who made a donation in memory of her late husband Jim. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed or has indicated that the Society is included in their wills or estate plans. I also wish to acknowledge the many good discussions I had with some of you on this endeavor.

Our elections for a new slate of directors will take place on May 20th at 3:00 PM. The insert lists the eight candidates who have agreed to stand for six open slots. I believe we have a strong slate of candidates who will bring their personal experiences and drive to the board. Each of them has prepared a short vision statement. I am hopeful that many of you will come to this important event. It is also an opportunity to talk about anticipated activities and programs at the Society and most importantly to hear from our members. Our 250th anniversary is but two years away.

We have two long standing direc-

tors who have chosen not to stand for reelections. We are indebted to Hella Volgenau and Alan Krumm who have served the Society with distinction. Both Hella and Alan have agreed to continue their voluntary efforts.

As many of you know we are a volunteer driven organization and could not carry out our programs and social functions without our dedicated volunteers. We thank them for their time and skills. What many of you do not know or see is that the ladies in particular bring personal donations such as home-made cakes or snacks to many of our social events and this adds such a personal and real 'German touch' to the activity.

We don't have a formal way to thank them, so let me take this opportunity to express our appreciation. In my prior report I noted that Mr. Ron and Mrs. Christel Tillmann have made a most generous donation to cover the costs of a new front door.

I am now happy to report that the Women's Auxiliary will make a \$20,000 donation for a new townhouse entrance door. I would like to express my sincere thank you to the Tillmanns and to the Women's Auxiliary.

On the financial front, we seem to be on track for the rest of our current fiscal year, because of your contributions to the Annual Fund and good growth in our rental income. —Ernest D. Weiler

- Chairman's Comments Cont'd

the Jewish people and the protective shelter of American freedom."

A few months ago, Tony, Beate and I had the opportunity to attend a forum, sponsored by the Philadelphia Foundation, which was held at that locale. Prior to the formal meeting and discussions, we were given a tour by one of the museum's docents. This afforded merely a glimpse of the various exhibits which I wish to share with you:

The "*Only in America*" Gallery/Hall of Fame, located on the main floor, features a select group of Jewish Americans achieving remarkable success. Among the first eighteen honorees are *Irving Berlin*, *Leonard Bernstein*, *Louis Brandeis*, *Albert Einstein*, *Estee Lauder*, *Jonas Salk*, *Steven Spielberg* and *Barbra Streisand*—all names with a distinct Germanic origin.

In 2009, the public had been invited to vote from a list of over 200 possible candidates. More than 200,000 votes were cast from 56 countries on the museum's website and at the museum's former home. Besides considering the public's recommendation, the museum's historians and curators sought to ensure that the group reflected the 350 year history of Jews in this country, and the diverse fields in which they have been

involved. The achievements of all the candidates included in the public vote can be explored in a touchscreen, interactive database available to all museum visitors and on its website. The "It's Your Story" video recording booth on the same floor invites visitors to share their family histories and personal memories which the museum archives for public viewing and through online links.

The earliest record of Jews in North America dates back to 1654. According to a Dutch court document, *Jacques de la Mothes*, skipper of the vessel *Sint Catarina*, requested payment for freight and board from his Jewish passengers, "23 souls, big and little, who must pay equally." The court ordered their goods sold at auction and the principal debtors imprisoned until they paid any remaining debt. Thus ended their journey for America, having fled from religious persecution in Recife (Brazil). Tragically, their forebears had been uprooted from Spain in 1492, when the Spanish Inquisition expelled the entire Jewish community of some 200,000 people from its territory. And those who fled to neighboring Portugal were ousted four years later, or forced - under the threat of death - to convert to Christianity.

The core exhibition traces the lives of American Jews from

those early days to the present, and explores their choices and challenges as they created a new home in a free land. The 25,000sq. ft. gallery space on 3 1/2 floors includes more than 1,200 artifacts, as well as films and state-of-the-art interactive technology.

If you care to approach the museum in an historic, chronological order, you should start at the top exhibit (fourth) floor with "Foundation of Freedom" (1654 - 1880) which examines the first wave of Jewish immigrants to America, and their emerging communities.

The third floor: "Dreams of Freedom" (1889 - 1945) chronicles the height of Jewish immigration during which many Jews landed in New York, while others took up residence in Boston and Philadelphia. During that period, a Jewish philanthropist initiated a plan to attract Jews from the crowded Eastern cities to the South and Midwest. Between 1899 and 1921, more than one million Jews came from Russia and the neighboring territories, 260,000 from Austria/Hungary, 103,000 from Rumania, 73,000 from Great Britain, 20,000 from the Ottoman Empire, and 15,000 from Germany.

The second floor: "Choices and Challenges of Freedom" (1945 - today) looks at the period immediately from World War II, and

the role of American Jews in the foundation of the State of Israel, their participation in the civil rights movement and the migration of Jews from urban centers to the suburbs.

Another item that caught my attention was the fact that Jews - when denied opportunities by mainstream US companies - created entire new industries, such as investment banking, motion pictures, advertising, public relations, cable TV and cosmetics. They also transformed others, such as clothing, retailing, newspapers, magazines, book publishing, real estate and insurance - mostly (but not always) for the better. In these industries and others, Jews relentlessly broke down established class lines among consumers. For example with blue jeans by Levi Strauss or the suburban housing developments of William Levitt. Jews have thus played a major role in restructuring America's former closed and clubby corporate world.

Another Jewish trailblazing position is the appreciation for their heritage! The \$155 million collected for the establishment of this museum certainly attests to that. Next month, we will have friends from Austin, Texas visiting us, who have expressed an interest to see the museum. It will certainly be worth their while.—Hardy von Auenmueller

Additional Annual Fund Donors*

**A Hearty Welcome to our
New Society Members!**

For privacy reasons, these names have
been removed.

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Annual Members' Meeting and Election

On Sunday, May 20, 2012 at 3:00 pm, the German Society of Pennsylvania will hold its Annual Meeting of Members/Election for Directors 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 the end of business, Friday, May 18, 2012. 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 *Beate Brockmann*, or e-mail her at *info@germansociety.org*.

A slate of eight (8) candidates was presented and approved by the Board of Directors at the March 19, 2012 meeting. The vision statements and photos of the various candidates follows below.

--Hardy von Auenmueller, Chairman

PS: Subsequent to the above Members' Meeting, the new Board will convene at the same locale in the Ratskeller.

For the privacy of our candidates, their mission statements and photos have been removed.

Honoring the Past Protecting the Future

When I learned about the German Society Endowment Fund and how it will provide for the Society's long-term sustainability, I knew that it would be a perfect opportunity to both honor my late husband, **Jim MacPherson**, and help insure the Society's future.

We joined the German Society about 1980 and both Jim and I appreciated the long view of history that we gained from our participation. As volunteers we got to know people we enjoyed working and being with at cultural and social events. While many things have changed at the Society since 1980, the essentials have remained. And that's very important.

Although the MacPherson name seems to belie German heritage, Jim was the son of a Scottish immigrant father and a Pennsylvania German mother.

Jim's dad and paternal grandparents arrived in Philadelphia in the early 20th century and further, we know that one of his maternal German ancestors came to Pennsylvania in 1737. Jim grew up in Philadelphia in proximity to both his 'city' MacPherson grandpar-



ents and his 'country' Imhoff grandparents. He loved hearing both grandpops' tales about their childhood and work-life experiences. These men were among his role models.

He savored the variety and abundance of foods to be tasted at Grandmom MacPherson's table that he contrasted to Grandmom Imhoff's, who had been raised German-speaking on a Bucks County farm.

Jim's character was solidified by these early experiences that shaped the core of his personal accountability to God, family and the wider community. Heritage and roots were important so his memberships in the Clan MacPherson Association and the German Society were a way he honored this birthright.

The German Society gave us a clear picture of the contributions of Germanic immigrants and their descendants to the development of Pennsylvania and the nation while keeping us in touch with contemporary culture in the German speaking lands of Europe.

Heritage is a personal and precious thing and so we honor it by a gift to insure that the German Society, this icon of our heritage, continues on. My gift to the Endowment Fund was given in memory of James R. MacPherson (1931-2009).

— Doris MacPherson

Teaching and Serving Prof. Dr. Harry W. Pfund (1900 - 1991)

As a long-time member, Board member, Chair of the Library Committee, and Vice President, Dr. Pfund was fully committed to the German Society. As one of his most appreciated achievements, he authored the book, "A History of The German Society of Pennsylvania, Bicentennial Edition, 1764-1964" in honor of the 200th Anniversary of the Society in 1964.

Dr. Pfund was born in 1900 in Philadelphia and was raised in a bilingual family. His ancestors had arrived in the U.S. with the wave of Germans who had fled their homeland after the failed Revolution of 1848. He graduated with a BA from Haverford College in 1922, taught German at Harvard until 1926 and then spent two years in Germany on an Ottendorfer Traveling Fellowship before returning to Harvard where he received his Ph.D. in 1931.

After another stint in Germany doing research, he came back in 1933 and accepted the position of Professor of German at the Quaker College of Haverford where he rose to Chairman of the German Department.

Dr. Pfund was also a founding member of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation and served for many years as its president.

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- Prof. Dr. Harry Pfund Cont'd

From what we were able to learn about Harry Pfund's life, we know that he and his wife, Marie, a native German, and their two children, Peter and Helga, felt comfortable in their life in Haverford. They often traveled to Germany. At home in his spare time, Dr. Pfund enjoyed playing classical music on his grand piano and reading.

He also was proud of his garden where he raised tomatoes and kohlrabi but also dahlias, zinnias and asters. Above all, however, he loved teaching German, and he regularly invited his students to his home for sessions of poetry reading, for example. While Dr. Pfund thus "nourished" the minds and souls of his students, Mrs. Pfund always offered enough food to sustain their bodies.

In his retirement from 1967 on, he continued teaching as Visiting Professor including as guest lecturer at different German universities. He died at age 91 in 1991 in West Chester, PA.

Steeped in both the German and American cultures, it was no doubt painful for Dr. Pfund to experience the conflict and subsequent damage inflicted by WWII on Germany, the country he knew so well. During the last year of the war, he and others at Haverford started making plans of how through the Quaker organization, the American Friends Service

Committee (AFSC), they could best provide help to the civilian population of devastated Germany after the war's end.

Letters from the Quaker Archives written by Dr. Pfund from 1946-47 to the AFSC Paris headquarters document vividly the difficulties encountered and subsequent ingenuity displayed by all team members in trying to ameliorate terrible conditions.



Dr. Pfund was responsible for leading the Quaker team that was assigned to the French Occupation Zone where the need seemed greatest. In autumn of 1946, he arrived in Freiburg barely ahead of a brutally cold and long winter. There was a shortage of everything essential for survival: food, clothing, shelter, heating materials, medicines, etc.

With cold weather fast approaching, the collection of food and wood became most urgent. Besides purchasing edibles from places like Switzerland or Sweden – shipments that were always awaited with great trepidation for

fear they might vanish en route – the Quaker team scoured the rural environment with their one truck to buy as many potatoes from farmers as they could find. When providence sent a second truck their way, they used that to drive into the Black Forest to "organize" and bring back loads of wood. However, there was the problem of getting enough of the severely rationed gasoline. Their expected allotment had not arrived which was not surprising because destinations were always reached "auf Umwegen" as many rails were not yet repaired, bridges were still destroyed, and roads were often impassable. Dr. Pfund decided to approach the Mayor of Freiburg to simply beg. He promised to repay the 500-liter loan he requested in kind a.s.a.p. And when would that be? the Mayor asked. Soon, was Dr. Pfund's reply. In the meantime, the wood-hauling excursions could continue.

The search for a barracks as "home" and distribution center faced many setbacks. Finally, an offer came from the City of Überlingen on Lake Constance to rent one to them. The measurements of 30x8x2 meters were perfect. They figured the best way to get it to Freiburg was to disassemble the barracks, drive the pieces to the railroad station and then implore the French to load them onto railroad cars.

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- Prof. Dr. Harry Pfund Cont'd

Upon arrival in Freiburg, trucks transported the parts first to a de-bugging oven (*Entlausungsofen*) – an absolute must – and then to the spot near the university where the city had constructed a foundation and latrines as well as providing water and electricity. Now they were really in business!

This barracks eventually served not only as service and distribution center but as study hall for students, as “Wärmehalle” for freezing citizens where they could rest on chairs (100) the City had donated and, last but not least, as living and sleeping quarters for the team members.

Before returning to the U.S. in 1947, Dr. Pfund joined the Quaker effort to utilize the services of the International Red Cross to learn of the fate of German POW's, especially those still in Russia. He visited returning Russian POW's to get information from them of their fellow prisoners. Their appearances always shocked him – little more than skeletons.

The City of Freiburg recently mounted a plaque at the so-called “Quäkerbaracke” in memory of the help received from the Quakers after WWII. Besides the devotion to his family and his profession, Dr. Pfund's life exemplifies the Quaker principle of unselfish service to people in need.

— **Renate Genieser**

Ralf D. Wiedemann installed new Honorary Consul of Germany in Philadelphia

Ralf D. Wiedemann, a lawyer with the Philadelphia firm of Montgomery McCracken, and a German Society member since 2010, was officially installed on January 26 as the new Honorary Consul of Germany in Philadelphia. He is the successor to Barbara Afanassiev, co-founder and President of the German-American Chamber of Com-

merce in Philadelphia, who had served as Honorary Consul since 2002. Mr. Wiedemann will be responsible for promoting German-American relations and providing assistance to German citizens throughout southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. He will also provide consular services regarding verification of legal documents that are

required for use in Germany. Born to a father from Hamburg and a mother from Geislingen an der Steige, Mr. Wiedemann, who grew up on Long Island, NY, is "a symbol of transatlantic partnership himself," said German Consul General Busso von Alvensleben.

Mr. Wiedemann specializes in immigration and nationality law. His practice is in the Business Department of Montgomery McCracken where he represents corporate and individual clients in a broad variety of employment and family-based immigration matters,



Busso von Alvensleben, Barbara Afanassiev, Ralf D. Wiedemann

including immigrant and nonimmigrant visas, petitions and applications. He holds dual U.S.-German citizenship, is fluent in German, and is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. His office as Honorary Consul is located at the Philadelphia headquarters of Montgomery McCracken at 123 South Broad Street.

— **Hardy von Auenmueller**

Konversationsabend

Our German Forum presents the following events:

April 25, 2012: The Philadelphia Story – the first 470 million years.

Professor Hermann Pfefferkorn, University of Pennsylvania will give a presentation on the exciting geological developments of the Philadelphia region in prehistoric times: continental movements and collisions, the birth of new Mountains, earthquakes, volcanoes, beaches under City Hall, semi-precious stones in the Wissahickon, roaming dinosaurs and the traces still visible if we know how to look for them.

May 30, 2012: Ein Heinrich-Heine-Brunnen in New York.

Karl Moehlmann will report about the odyssey of a fountain honoring Heinrich Heine to the Bronx in the 19th century. After being rejected by the city of Duesseldorf, Heine's hometown, the fountain found its way to New York under unusual circumstances and the special efforts of Carl Schurz, the famous German revolutionary and American statesman.

June 23, 2012: Wandertag, most likely with the Philadelphia Trail Club. (Time and place to be announced.)

—Helga Halbfass

Calendar of Upcoming Events

April 2012

- Sun. April 1 3:00pm Elissa Lee Koljonen, violin accompanied by Natalie Zhu, piano
- Sat. April 7 10:00am Women's Auxiliary Monthly Meeting in the Ratskeller
- Sat. April 7 11:00am *Kindervorlesestunde* - Easter egg hunt, Library
- Mon. April. 9 Start of Twelve-Week Spring Session of German Classes for Adults (Weeknights)
- Sat. April 14 1:30pm *Buchclub*, Library
- Fri. April 20 6:30pm Friday FilmFest presents "*Vier Minuten*", (German with English subtitles)
- Sat. April 21 Start of Ten-Week Spring Session of German Classes for Kids (Saturday mornings)
- Sun. April 22 3:00pm The Wister Quartet
- Wed. April 25 7:00pm *Konversationsabend, Topic: Die Philadelphia Story - die ersten 470 Millionen Jahre*

May 2012

- Sat. May 5 10:15am *Kindervorlesestunde*, Library,
- Sat. May 5 Noon Women's Auxiliary 112th Anniversary Luncheon
- Sun. May 13 3:00pm American Virtuosi Concert
- Fri. May 18 6:30pm Friday FilmFest presents "*Der rote Baron*", (English)
- Sun. May 20 3:00pm Annual Meeting Membership with subsequent Board Meeting
- Thurs. May 24 TBC *Sommerfest* by "German Society Philly Kinder"
- Wed. May 30 7:00pm *Konversationsabend, Topic: Ein Heine-Brunnen in New York*

June 2012

- Sat. June 2 10:00am Women's Auxiliary Monthly Meeting in the Ratskeller
- Sat. June 2 10:15am *Kindervorlesestunde*, Library
- Fri. June 15 6:30pm Friday FilmFest presents TBA
- Tues. June 19 TBA "Summer of Riesling" / Wine tasting
- Sat. June 23 TBA *Wandertag* with Philadelphia Trail Club



Women's Auxiliary 112th Anniversary Luncheon

We cordially invite you and your friends to our

Spring Festival

in the Barthelmes Auditorium of the German Society
on **May 5th, 2012 at 12:00 noon.**

- Celebrate the *Wonnemonat Mai*
- Toast our achievements with a glass of strawberry punch
- Enjoy a delicious meal with delectable dessert
- Welcome the Season with a *Frühlingslieder* sing-along
- Traditional Raffle

The cost is \$20, and reservations are a must (by May 2nd, latest).

For reservation, please call Doris Simon (215-342-5140).



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**Annual Members'
Meeting and Election
Sunday, May 20, 2012 at 3:00 pm**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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