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The official registration information of the German Society of Pennsylvania may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-332-0990. Registration does not imply endorsement.

246th Annual Stiftungsfest Gala and Silent Auction
Saturday, November 6, 2010 at 6:30pm
While you are waiting for you Stiftungsfest invitation which will be mailed around Labor Day, we invite you to already start considering what you might have on hand to donate to our Silent Auction. This event is one of our main fundraisers for the year, and we are only able to make it such a success because of your generosity and donations! If you have subscriptions or tickets to sporting events, concerts, theater, or the opera, we would love to auction those off at the event. If you have a favorite restaurant, please consider asking them to donate a dinner for two. Past auctions have featured vacation home stays, works of art, handcrafted and decorative items, spa services, baskets of cheer, gift memberships, train sets, gift cards, books, and autographed photos. As we did last year, we will list all the auction items on our website for you to view in advance of the Stiftungsfest. Please contact the office if you have items to donate (215-627-2332). We are happy to have your support and hope to see you here in November!
—Sharan Knoell

P.S. If you own or manage a business, we will also be accepting ads for the brochure, a copy of which is given to each attendee. For rates and specifics, please contact the office at the number above.

President’s Message
We sincerely hope that all members and friends of the German Society are enjoying their summer vacations and will have an opportunity to relax and/or visit with family and friends. One can easily get caught up in all the negative news of this year, such as the environmental fiasco in the Gulf of Mexico, the continuing financial uncertainties, etc. It is important to remember that as you plan your activities for the fall, attending one of our many wonderful events at the Society might be a much needed diversion. Our previously announced plans for this summer, which included renovations of our bathrooms, construction of a handicapp accessible facility, and building a multimedia room adjacent to the Ratskeller (former Scharlaffia room) were just too ambitious for us.
More importantly, upon deconstructing several areas in the basement, we found that water intrusion caused considerable damage, probably over several decades. Consulting architects and specialists strongly recommend that we first solve the water intrusion problem from the exterior of the building, before we commence with any significant interior renovations.
We recognize that this will be a major capital project for us and we will need to secure the necessary funds. Hence, we will approach several potential funding sources.
Any help that you can provide for this project would certainly be appreciated. By mid-September, we expect to receive cost estimates for this project, which requires evacuating and sealing of all exterior walls. Upon conferring with Tony Michels, who has been carrying the major burden on these capital projects, we are refocusing our attention as follows:
First, we will concentrate on rebuilding the men’s room, which will include sealing a small section of that exterior wall.
Second, we will develop detailed plans for the creation of the multimedia room and implement the construction thereof.
Third, we will install a temporary, inexpensive rug in the areas recently damaged by a sewer back-up. And finally, the renovation of the first floor kitchen will be addressed during the next 12 months, as time permits.
We appreciate your understanding in this matter and are hopeful that we will not continue to run into any further unanticipated problems. We are confident that these improvements will significantly enhance our premises and help assure that our 19th century building will continue to serve future generations.
—Ernie Weiler

Chairman’s Comments
Last week, Gudrun and I returned from a three week trip to Germany. We enjoyed a relaxing and culturally uplifting vacation, under sunny skies and at moderate temperatures. Everyone was excited about their youthful soccer team reaching for the world cup championship, since it had eluded them four years ago. (As you know by now, this German team did not quite make it, but again reached a respectable third place!)
During the weeks leading up to our departure, several exciting things happened at the German Society. First, we enjoyed a well-attended beer tasting seminar during Philly Beer Week. Marnie Old, the well known Canadian sommelier, gave us an informative evening on some of the top craft beers in America.
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Herausgegeben von der Deutschen Gesellschaft von Pennsylvanien, a publication of the German Society of Pennsylvania
—Chairman’s Comments Cont’d

captured us again with a two-hour presentation on the great variety of German brews. This event drew front page publicity in the Sunday, June 6, 2010 issue of The Philadelphia Inquirer! The write-up included a picture of yours truly, appropriately dressed for the occasion in Lederhosen (see photo courtesy of the Inquirer), savoring one of the many beers offered at the tasting. Who says that a Saxon cannot look handsome in that garb? After all, if it had not been for a Saxon Princess, named Therese, who was to wed Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria just about 200 years ago, Munich would not be enjoying its well known Oktoberfest today.

It has become the largest Volksfest in the world—drawing over 6 million people annually. That is why the 100-acre site where the festival is held, is called the Theresienwiese.

The entire Bier- and Sommerfest drew over 500 people to our premises. Quite a few expressed an interest in touring our Society building, and several signed up to become members. Two bands taking turns—playing German or bluegrass music—provided good beer-drinking entertainment.

Unfortunately, the midday sun bore down hard on the people sitting on benches in the open space of our festively decorated parking lot.

Earlier, our last concert of the season, featuring the American Virtuosi consisting of the Borowsky siblings, Elizabeth, Emmanuel and Frances Grace, on Sunday, May 16, produced much enjoyment.

Just a few days earlier, in response to our grant proposal, the Albert & Hete Barthelmes Foundation of Tulsa, OK had issued a dollar-for-dollar matching challenge to us in the amount of $25,000 for the acquisition of a new grand piano. And on the Saturday before, WRTI broadcast an interview with the writer in their weekly show "Creatively Speaking". A podcast can be heard on WRTI’s web site. —Cont’d on next page

Jessica and Rob Staub
A Wedding To Remember

On January 2, 2010, Jessica Litts and Rob Staub were married in a beautiful ceremony in the library at the German Society. The couple met in a German course at Saint Joseph’s University in 2002. As undergraduates, Rob received an academic scholarship from the German Society, and Jessica worked there as a volunteer intern. During their studies, Jessica and Rob spent a semester together at the Philipps-Universität Marburg. After earning her M.A. in Foreign Language Pedagogy from the University of Delaware, Jessica currently works as a German instructor at Widener University.

The couple chose to get married at the German Society because of their special connection to the German culture. Their guests were fascinated by the large collection of German books in the library, which provided the perfect backdrop to their winter wedding. After the ceremony, their guests proceeded downstairs to the auditorium, where they enjoyed a traditional German meal and a full selection of German beer and wine. Many of the guests, including visitors from Germany, commented that the Society was a unique and memorable location for a wedding. After dinner, Jessica and Rob danced the night away with their guests. They truly had a perfect wedding day at the German Society.

If you would like to see a photo spread of the Staub wedding, pick-up an issue of Philadelphia Brides magazine, which will be on newsstands in late July. Their wedding at the German Society, with photos by Alison Conklin, will be featured on a multi-page spread!

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Calendar of Events

July and August

Mon. July 26  6-Week Summer Session of German Classes for Adults Begins
Mon. August 2-6 “Meine Umwelt” Summer German Camp for Children, 9am-1pm
Wed. August 25 Diskussionsrunde - “Germany 2010: As Seen by Three Students Visiting Philadelphia”, 12:00pm—1:30pm, Please bring bagged lunch.

September

Sept. 3, 4, 7, 10, 11 “A Crock of Schnitzel”, A Comedy by Barbara Pease Weber, 8pm in the Auditorium
Sept. 5 and 12 “A Crock of Schnitzel”, A Comedy by Barbara Pease Weber, 2pm in the Auditorium
Mon. Sept. 6 Closed for Labor Day Holiday
Sat. Sept. 4 Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10am
Sat. Sept. 18 Oktoberfest at the German Society, 2pm
Mon. Sept. 20—Dec. 10 12-Week Fall Session of German Classes for Adults
Wed. Sept. 22 Women’s Auxiliary Bus Trip to Hudson River Valley
Sat. Sept. 25 12-Week Fall Session of German Classes for Children

October

Fri. Oct. 1 German-American Day Proclamation at City Hall with Mayor Nutter, Room 202, 12pm
Sat. Oct. 2 Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10am
Sun. Oct. 3 “Wister and More!” Series presents Piano Duo Volker Ahmels and Frederike Haufe, 3pm
Fri. Oct. 8 “A Celebration of German Unity Day”, Selections include Schumann, Schubert, and Brahms Monthly Film Fest, Film TBA, 6:30pm
Fri. Oct. 15 Konversationsabend, “Report on Trip to China”, presented by Hardy von Auenmueller, 7pm

November

Sat. Nov. 6 246th Annual Stiftungsfest - Reception, Silent Auction, Dinner, Dancing, 6pm
Date TBA St. Martin’s Parade for Families
Sun. Nov. 14 “Wister and More!” Series presents The Wister Quartet, 3pm
  Selections include Paganini, Ravel, and Haydn
Mon. Nov. 15 Konversationsabend, “Das Leben in Suedwest-Afrika” By Author Katie Thieck, 7pm
Fri. Nov. 19 Monthly Film Fest, Film TBA, 6:30pm
Sun. Nov. 21 “My Name is Grieg, Edvard Grieg”, Portrayal by Rolf K. Stang of the Delius Society, 3pm
Thurs. Nov. 25—28 Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

Beginning in September, the Horner Memorial Library will be open Mondays and Tuesdays, 10am-4pm.

We thus registered double the ‘walk-in’ attendance for this concert which was quickly converted to a benefit event. When the above grant challenge was announced, the excitement of the audience was palpable. A “loaned” Boesendorfer Konzertfluegel from The Cunningham Piano Company sounded heavenly, and the acoustics in our auditorium—with its new windows—were greatly improved. Also, the afternoon sunlight glowing through our new golden curtains radiated a wonderful atmosphere so that, in the end, pledges for $18,000 were received. (The full matching amount has since been collected, as has the grant money—see listing of donors.)

Based upon these positive responses, the GSP Board, at its regular quarterly meeting the following night, authorized the start of purchase negotiations for a new instrument—with certain stipulations. Both, Boesendorfer and Bluethner, had earlier expressed a serious interest in placing an appropriately sized piano into our space. However, due to the summer holiday season, our negotiations have not yet been completed.

Nonetheless, in order to protect such a valuable acquisition, our colleague, Tony Michels, has agreed to build a humidity control chamber under the stage of our auditorium, with a scissor lifting device, for which we have set aside $10,000 that had been collected earlier for our piano fund.

Please remember, you too, should avoid the hot and humid weather! Thus, stay cool and enjoy your summer, wherever you are.

—Hardy von Auenmueller

P.S. Our first concert of the new season — scheduled for Sunday, October 3, 2010 — will coincide with the 20th Anniversary of German Unity. For that celebration we are planning to bring over a well established piano duo, Volker Ahmels and Friederike Haufe. While he hails from the West (Hamburg), her family roots go back to the East (Dresden)—thus perfectly symbolizing the re-unification of Germany.

Please mark your calendar! I hope to see you on that day.

Piano Fund Donors

For the privacy of our donors, all names have been removed.
Lisa studies the stories, thoughts, images, and general perceptions aimed at German Americans. For the last four years, Lisa has been living in Berlin where she completed her dissertation (jointly at Udine and Humboldt University Berlin) under the title, “Gedächtnisräume im postsozialistischen Berlin.” She just edited a fine collection of photographs of Berlin by American photography students and hope that it will be a great success!

German Historical Institute Fellows
Lisa Candidi, from the University of Udine in Italy, is the first GHI-GSP Fellow who is using our collection of German children’s and youth books from the 18th and 19th centuries as part of a scholarly project. As the cultural transfer between nations takes a particular form in this kind of literature, which includes primers and textbooks of learning German in an early age, Lisa studies the stories, thoughts, images, and general perceptions aimed at German Americans. For the last four years, Lisa has been living in Berlin where she completed her dissertation (jointly at Udine and Humboldt University Berlin) under the title, “Gedächtnisräume im postsozialistischen Berlin.” She just edited a fine collection of photographs of Berlin by American photography students and hope that it will be a great success!
A Memorable Saengerfest

When the Germans came to America, they brought with them their love for music and singing. This is reflected in their adage “Das Lied, das aus der Kehle dringt, ist Lohn der reichlich holten” (“The song that gushes from the throat is a rich reward in itself”). But singing had a deeper basis than mere personal pleasure, as can be seen in the motto I encountered at a choral society in Herbrechtingen, Germany. “Tausend Künste kann der Teufel Aber singen kann er nicht Denn das Gesang ist das Streben Unserer Seele nach dem Lichte.”

(The devil has mastered a thousand arts But singing is not within his might For song is the striving of our soul To reach the light.)

This can be recognized in the caliber of the songs offered at their concerts. The first male chorus, the Maennerchor, was founded in Philadelphia in 1835. Soon others appeared and saw the need for a union with each other. One such union was the Northeastern Saengerbund, which was founded in 1851.

Saengerfests were organized in various cities. The 18th Saengerfest held in Philadelphia was unique and is the subject of this article. There were many skeptics who questioned the ability of Philadelphia to stage this Saengerfest, since there was no auditorium with a stage large enough to accommodate the 6,000 singers who would attend. But the Philadelphia singers had assiduously appointed an Honorary Committee that helped them solve this problem. Chairman of this Committee was John Lankenu, a native of Bremen who was President of the German Hospital of Philadelphia—today flourishing as Lankenu Hospital. Vice Chairman was Charles Warwick, Mayor of Philadelphia. It was decided to petition the city for permission to build an appropriate auditorium on a city square.

The city granted this request and offered Fotteral Square to the United Singers of Philadelphia. The Square extended from 11th to 12th Streets and York to Cumberland Streets. However, there was also a proviso that the auditorium be removed after the Saengerfest. In October 1896, the architectural firm of Hazleharst & Hubel was selected to design the hall, and the construction was awarded to the lowest bidder, Doak and Doyle, for $24,900. At a special meeting of the Honorary Committee in November, it was decided to raise $25,000 by asking 50 persons to pledge $500 apiece, which was soon accomplished.

The hall was built of wood and iron and had a white coating (makite). It was 200 ft. wide and 400 ft. in length. The corners were surrounded by towers with gilded domes. It provided seating for 10,400 persons (folding chairs) and the mammoth semi-circular stage accommodated 6,000 singers, as well as an orchestra of 150 pieces. The height from floor to ceiling was 65 ft.

Now the Saengerfest could begin! The visiting singers arrived by train, some of which were chartered. They were met by members of the local singing societies who escorted them to the Junger Maennerchor clubhouse at 6th and Vine, where they were assigned their lodging (hotels and private homes), and given a lunch. The evening concerts were all sold out and the afternoon sessions of the competitive singing were well attended.

Mayor Warwick gave the welcoming address at the opening concert, in which he pointed out that nothing can promote the appreciation of music more than these huge festivals by the German-American singing societies.

In a series of articles of our quarterly Staatsbote, we will introduce readers to a group of selected German-Americans, who have made significant contributions to the political, economic, cultural or social welfare of their adopted country. The list of potential candidates is rather long, as we learned while preparing for our project. It is our intention to provide brief biographical summaries and discuss achievements.

In this, and the next two editions, we will focus on prominent German-Americans who were also major benefactors of the Society. In fact, we have three spaces named in their honor; the Horner Library, the Barthelmes Auditorium and the F. O. Haas Language Center.

The Haas story begins at the dawn of the 20th century. Migration to America was at a high level. All immigrants were searching for new opportunities and a better future. Mr. Otto Haas was twenty-nine years old when he left Esslingen (close to Stuttgart) for America. His father, a civil servant, had died when Mr. Haas was fifteen years old. His mother and younger siblings relied on him for financial support. He started as a bank apprentice, followed by a clerkship for a dye and chemical manufacturer. When he came to America in 1901, he was offered a job with the same chemical company. Several other positions followed, but Mr. Haas wanted a business of his own.

His good friend Dr. Otto Roehm developed the first generation of a revolutionary new bating solution, the critical component in the conversion of animal hides into leather. Oronop was born, a product based on pancreatic juices from cattle rather than dog manure, which had been used for centuries. A partnership was established in 1907, and Mr. Haas became Dr. Roehm’s American business partner. A US sales office was established in 1909 in Philadelphia, and Mr. Haas spent his time in tanneries along the Delaware River. By 1911, the business had grown to $47,891 and in 1912 an experienced German immigrant was hired as the first salesman.

US production started in 1911. By 1918, the Bristol plant was operational, and land, buildings and equipment were valued at $287,000. Sales were approaching million dollars per year.

The First World War brought many changes. By 1921 Rohm and Haas was an independent American corporation and Dr. Roehm had lost his financial interest in the company founded on his technology, due to the US government seizing the American assets of German citizens. To diversify, Mr. Haas purchased Charles Lennig and Co. with its operation in the Bridgesburg section of Philadelphia. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, Mr. Haas continued to transfer different German technologies, available through a series of acquisitions or licensing arrangements, to the American market.

During the depression years, sales and profits tumbled, but Mr. Haas kept his workforce on his payroll. He had them fix up equipment and improve the properties, and not a single worker lost his or her job. Probably the biggest contribution to the ongoing partnership with Dr. Roehm was the research and development of acrylic technology, which Mr. Haas subsidized for the rights to produce and market these products in the US. By 1936 Plexiglas, an acrylic sheet product, was introduced commercially, and was featured at the World Fair in 1939.

Soon Plexiglas was specified as the material of choice for military airplane wings along the Delaware River. By 1937, the three plants amounted to $43 million and the workforce had grown to $7,000. The company became a publically traded company in 1948.

Rohm & Haas, under the leadership of Mr. Haas, significantly diversified its product line and the introduction of textile chemicals, a broader range of materials useful in leather applications, agricultural products, plastics, oil additives and a wide range of products and technologies based on acrylic chemistries.

At the golden anniversary in 1959, the 87 year old founder was still at the helm. The company had grown to a multinational specialty chemical company with more than 10,000 employees and annual sales of $200 million. Dr. F. Otto Haas, his oldest son, took over the leadership of the company two weeks before his father’s death in 1959. Under his leadership, the transition from an entrepreneurial business structure to a professionally managed company occurred. He brought new innovations to the market, built a strong research organization and expanded international markets.

Because of a heart condition, Dr. Haas stepped down as president in 1970. For sixty years the family had shaped the
enterprise, which would now be handled by professional managers who had come up through the company ranks. Rohm and Haas grew and was widely respected as a specialty chemical suppliers by employees, customers and the financial community. The hundred year history of the company came to a close in 2009 with the acquisition by Dow Chemical for a purchase price of $18.8 billion.

Dr. Haas during his retirement years focused on various philanthropic activities. He was active in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation, the American Philosophical Society, and the German Society of Pennsylvania. He served on our Board of Directors and for several years was also the Honorary German Consul in Philadelphia.

The Haas family has been very generous for many decades. As noted, Mr. Haas kept his workforce during the depression years. In 1945, Mr. Haas and his wife, the late Dr. Phoebe Waterman, touched by the social problems caused by World War II, formed the Phoebe Waterman Foundation. By 1955 grant payments exceeded $100,000. And in 1959, when Mr. Haas died, he left the bulk of his estate to the Foundation. Mr. John C. Haas and Dr. F. Otto Haas headed the Foundation’s board, which by 1974 changed its name to the William Penn Foundation and was providing annual grants totaling $7 million to non-profit organizations in the Philadelphia area. By 1999 assets exceeded $1 billion. In December of 2009, Mr. Haas donated $747 million to the William Penn Foundation to use in perpetuity for the advancement of the Philadelphia region. Assets have now grown to $1.9 billion and last year the Foundation provided grants of $69 million to three areas of concentration: arts and culture, children, youth and families, and environment and communities.

With the reorganization of the family trusts in 2009, a newly formed William Penn Trusts were given for our ADA compliance activities, bathroom renovation projects, and installation of a first floor kitchen. We should also note that grants by the William Penn Foundation helped us install a new sprinkler system throughout much of the building and install new windows in the auditorium. A hundred years have passed since Mr. Haas arrived in Philadelphia from Esslingen, Germany. Certainly many thousands of employees are grateful for their careers with a great company and the citizens of this region have benefited and will continue to benefit from the vision, drive, and generosity of a prominent German-American and his family.

—Ernie Weiler
References: Rohm and Haas a Century of Innovation, by Regina Lee Blaszczyk 2009; and Rohm and Haas, History of A Chemical Company by Sheldon Hochheiser 1986

Back to School Fall German Classes

Since the German Society’s founding 246 years ago, language instruction has been an important part of our program offerings. Serving everyone from three year olds to senior citizens, our German classes will prepare you for a variety of language needs: travel for business or pleasure, graduate and post-graduate translation exams, career advancement...and don’t forget fun!

Because we have been perfecting the art of teaching German for so long, the biggest advantage of our program is the development of all communication skills simultaneously - speaking, reading, writing, and listening comprehension. All of our teachers have years of experience speaking and/or teaching the German language.

Our Fall Session will begin after Labor Day, during the week of September 20th. We will have another 12-week session with Saturday classes for 3-7 year olds and Pre-Teens (8-12 year olds). For those of you with children who just can’t wait until the fall to get started on their German, see page 9 for information on our August Summer Camp for Kids entitled “Meine Umwelt”.

If you would like more information, please call or email the office. We will be happy to tell you more!

—Sharan Knoell
P.S. If you are a German speaker (native or otherwise fluent), and would like to consider instructing others in the language, we frequently have openings in our program for teachers - from beginner to conversational level classes. Classes are held on nights and weekends, and we encourage you to let us know if you have an interest!

Additional Annual Fund Donors (since 3/19/2010)

We issue an enormous thank you to all those who contributed so generously. As operating expenses continue to grow, these much-needed funds allow us to maintain our historic building and daily operations.

For the privacy of our supporters, all member and donor names have been removed.