The German Society of Pennsylvania
611 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123-3505

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Chairman’s Comments

Remember, Remember the Ninth of November

I know that the above English rhyme actually refers to the Fifth of November (commonly known as Guy Fawkes Day in the UK). On that day in 1605, a few of his Catholic friends tried to blow up the House of Lords in London during the Opening Ceremony of Parliament. The plot failed. Fawkes and others implicated in the conspiracy were hanged. From puritan polemics to popular literature, Guy Fawkes has been associated with the demonic ever since. However, today he is often toasted as “the last man to enter Parliament with honorable intentions.”

For Germans the Ninth of November has been an historic one several times over during the 20th century. It was on that day in 1923, that Hitler’s first attempt to seize power, in the so-called Munich Putsch (Beer Hall Rebellion), was foiled.

Exactly fifteen years later, during his reign, the Nazis staged vicious pogroms against the Jewish community in Germany. That day in 1938 came to be known as Kristallnacht (the night of broken glass), a reference to the many broken windows of synagogues, Jewish owned stores and community centers.

These pogroms marked an intensification of Nazi terror which would culminate in the Holocaust.

—Cont’d on pg 2

Volunteers at the GSP

As noted in many prior communications, we are a volunteer based organization. We have but one full-time employee, our Business Manager, Sharan Knoll. We rely on volunteers to paint, to do some minor repairs, to support our events throughout the year, to chaperone at rental events, to help with routine clean-ups on the outside and the inside of the building, and to provide office support such as mailing the quarterly issue of the Staatsbote or with other mailings. Volunteers also support our Library operations. Our volunteers have saved us more than $10,000 in expenses in the past 12 months! Unfortunately, the number of available individuals seems to be shrinking. Some are physically no longer able to volunteer, others have moved to retirement facilities or have taken on additional responsibilities outside of the Society. We are therefore again appealing to the generosity of our members.

Come and help us expand programs and activities and most importantly allow your Society to continue to rely on volunteers to maintain the building in tip-top shape. Listed on the following page are broad categories of volunteer opportunities, the best estimate of frequency and duration of the support required.

We also list the recent participants in our volunteer program. If you should be listed and are not, please accept our apology and give us a call to correct the record.

—Cont’d on pg 2

President’s Message

This is my favorite season for many reasons. It is a busy time for all of us with a lot of preparations for the Holiday Season, trips to various stores and, of course, cards and letters to our friends and relatives. It is also a season where we can count our blessings and most of all our memories. For me, the Christmas celebrations from 1945 to 1950 are still very real and vivid. We lived with my grandmother in a small town in Germany. Gifts were few, mainly hand-me-downs from cousins and friends and a few homemade toys. My mother exchanged my father’s topcoat for a used pair of army skis. I can still smell the wonderful cookies and breads baked for the Christmas meals. Later in the evening we would walk, sometimes over a fresh blanket of snow, to the small town church and listened to the Christmas carols. Please help our Society to continue to rely on our volunteer members. I thank you.

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Herausgegeben von der Deutschen Gesellschaft von Pennsylvanien, a publication of the German Society of Pennsylvania
President’s Message—Cont’d from p 1
I am sure we all have memories that we cherish. I believe it is important to share these memories with friends, our children and grandchildren, and what better time than at Christmas. We are very fortunate in the Philadelphia area to have a very vibrant German Society, which offers a lot of different events throughout the year. We have refurbished many parts of the beautiful building and our renovation efforts will continue in 2010. What we need most of all is for our members and friends to attend and to participate in the various activities and programs. Let me wish all of you a very enjoyable Holiday Season, all the best for 2010. Hopefully, we will be able to spend some time together at the German Society. Eine frohe und gesegnete Weihnacht, Ernest D. Weiler

Volunteers—Cont’d from pg 1
We ask that all of our volunteers sign our log, and we have included all who contributed a minimum of 20 hours in the past 12 months and who have used the sign-up book. If you would like to be included, please let us know or send us an email and indicate the area of interest and your availability. Please note that this goes to a very fine cause, but most importantly it can be fun and rewarding!

A list of Opportunities
Painting: 3 times per year; 3-4 hours; mainly touch-ups
Routine Maintenance: 4-6 times per year; 4 hours
Routine Clean-ups: inside and outside; 4 times per year

Rentals Chaperones: 15-20 events per year; 1 or 2 chaperones per events
We thank the above individuals wholeheartedly for their support!

Calendar of Events

January 2010
Mon. January 4
Sat. January 9
Sat. January 9
Sun. January 10
Fri. January 15
Mon. January 18
Tues. January 19
Fri. January 22
Sat. January 23
Sun. January 31

February
Sat. February 6
Thurs. February 18
Fri. February 19
Sun. February 21

March
Sat. March 6
Sun. March 7
Fri. March 12
Mon. March 15

April
Sat. April 10

Hamburger Abend, 7:00pm
Please mark your calendars!
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Library News
Greetings! For those of you who haven’t met me yet, I have been the librarian of the Joseph P. Horner Memorial Library since November 2008. I received my Ph.D. in German literature from the University of Pennsylvania, and trained as a manuscripts and book cataloger in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Penn (I continue to work at Penn part-time). With its books, manuscripts, pamphlets and ephemera peeking out from veritably every nook and cranny the Horner Library is a fascinating place to work.

Members and non-members alike are welcome to visit! The library is open Mondays and Tuesdays from 10 am to 4 pm, and one Saturday per month; the next Saturday hours will be on January 23, from 10 to 4. Whether you would like to read a German book or magazine for pleasure, or research a specific topic in German-American history, the library has rich offerings for you.

Please visit our webpage, www.germansociety.org/library.htm, where you can search in the online catalog, or peruse the reference guide that is available in pdf format: The German Society of Pennsylvania: A Guide to its Book and Manuscript Collections, by Kevin Ostoich. Books in the main library published after 1918 may be borrowed by German Society members. Although the lending-library books are not in the online catalog, they can be looked up in the paper catalog in the library (which has subject headings too).

Recent acquisitions of the lending library, including exciting new books purchased with funds donated by the Society’s auxiliary, can now be browsed online at the website: www.librarything.com. Search for “germansociety,” under Members and Locations.

Currently the library is making new strides in the cataloging and description of holdings. Thanks to a grant from the Landesregierung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Bettina Hess is back at work cataloging more books in the Carl Schurz and the German American Collections. And under a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (obtained by my predecessor Fritderike Baer), Maria Sturm is creating a finding aid for the records of the GSP’s “Agentur,” which assisted German immigrants from the mid-19th to the early 20th century.

Much of my time is also devoted to cataloging manuscript holdings and creating finding aids. Following are a few items that recently came to light:

- Magda Heuermann (1858-1962; miniature portrait painter of Illinois).
- Correspondence and Memorabilia, ca. 1901-1909.
- Georg Joseph Bischof (b. 1827; shoe-maker of Bavaria). Military and Emigration Papers, 1855.

I look forward to your visits and inquiries. Please feel free to contact me by phone via the German Society office or by email: librarians@germansociety.org — Violet Lutz

Winter German Classes
We want to issue a big “thank you” to all of you - adults and children alike - who took German classes with us in 2009. Though our language program was affected by the economy, we appreciate those of you who made use of the talented instructors we have here to teach both German and English to willing students.

Our First Summer Camp for Kids in August was also a success, and a good time was had by all as we learned about German fairy tales. We will be holding another camp this coming summer, and you can find details in an upcoming issue of this newsletter.

The Winter Session will start the week of January 4, 2010. Adult classes, from beginner to advanced, will take place on weekdays, and our Youth Session will begin again on January 9h. Kids of all abilities, ages 3-12, are welcome.

For a complete schedule, including a placement test and downloadable application, please feel free to visit us on the web at: www.germansociety.org/courses.html.

In addition to students, we are also seeking qualified teachers for our program. If you are a native speaker, or have a background in teaching German, and would like to teach our evening classes, Saturday kids’ classes, or private tutoring students, please contact us at info@germansociety.org. We have a curriculum to follow and other experienced teachers who can offer help or advice if needed.

Your support of this program is much appreciated. Should you have any other questions regarding our language program, I look forward to hearing from you!

—Sharan Knoell

My life here in the States also changed as a result of the Fall of the Berlin Wall! Having just experienced the traumatic affects of a major earth quake in the San Francisco Bay area, where I was working as a management consultant, I could barely fathom that the Iron Curtain had been lifted, and that I was free to return to my Heimat in Saxony after an absence of over 19 years. So, over the Thanksgiving holidays, I took a flight to Berlin, and then travelled by train to Leipzig. As I approached the area I could see, smell and taste the noxious industrial pollution. The pristine agricultural countryside of my boyhood days had been reduced to a moonscape.

What struck me most, was finding out that the largest coal-fired electric power plant of East Germany (DDR a.k.a. Die Dreckige Republik) had been built on the very land which the Russians had confiscated from my family after WWII. That facility in Thierbach was spewing more than 1500 tons of sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere per day, blighting the area and harming the health of the local population. I sensed an inner calling to do something about it. I quit my highly lucrative job, and over the next 12 years, I commuted on a monthly basis to Eastern Germany, working on many different projects, mostly on a pro bono basis. It was that volunteering spirit which encouraged me to offer my services to the German Society after we moved to Philadelphia to be near our grandchildren.

I wish you all the best for the coming holy days and a happy New Year!

—Hardy von Auenmueller

New Members
We extend a cordial welcome to all new members. We look forward to seeing you at upcoming events.

Monthly Movie Nights
For those of you who are fans of our Friday Film Fest, please note that we will be experimenting with moving the Movie Nights to various other weeknights of the month, beginning in February.

We acknowledge it is difficult for some of you to make it from work to the German Society on a Friday during rush hour. Therefore, please be guided by our Calendar of Events on page 11 for the varying dates.

Upcoming Schedule of Films:
January: “Buddenbrooks”

Set in the Hanseatic trade city of Lübeck during the mid-19th century, "Buddenbrooks" traces the family's decline as Tony and Thomas approach the age of marriage, powerfully conveying the trauma of living in a crumbling dynasty at the end of an era.

Feb.: “The Baader-Meinhof Complex”

A look at Germany's terrorist group, The Red Army Faction (RAF), which organized bombings, robberies, kidnapings and assassinations in the late 1960s and '70s.

March: “Häle”

A biography of Hildegard Knef, one of Germany's biggest post-war stars. If you have seen a German language movie that you would like to suggest we screen at one of our monthly film evenings, please feel free to contact the GSP office.

We aim for a balance of the old and new, light and serious...all among good friends and much appreciated Suppenküche. Please do come out and support our film showings!

—Sharan Knoell
Now that the first decade of the 21st century is coming to a close, it’s a good time to review what has been accomplished, where we stand now, and how do we wish to proceed from hereon forward.

As you know, the Konversationsabend (KA) is the only remaining program within our Society—besides our formal language courses—where the German language is still being spoken and used as a regular means of communication.

Shortly after I joined the German Society ten years ago, I was asked by the then-Executive Director whether I would be willing to share—at one of the monthly KA gatherings—my experiences, from my personal engagement in eastern Germany over the course of the preceding decade. Based on the enthusiastic response of the handful of people attending that presentation, and with the encouragement of the Society’s administration, I agreed to serve as the leader for this important cultural program. I’ve been doing so ever since. If my math is correct, we’ve discussed about 100 programs covering topics ranging from book discussions to theater and film, arts, sports to politics, reviews of historical events and hiking trips in and around Philadelphia. Much more diverse can we get?

Magdalena Scharf, Executive Director of said organization, which for the past 40 years has annually brought 25 young Germans to the US for voluntary service in various social projects. (Incidentally, ARSP was also our partner in a panel discussion held on the 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall a few weeks ago. That event drew a crowd that filled our library!) Further, in order not to show any favoritism to the group or any individual taking part in the discussion.

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Jan. 19: Action Reconciliation Service for Peace. A presentation by Magdalena Scharf, Executive Director of said organization, which for the past 40 years has annually brought 25 young Germans to the US for voluntary service in various social projects. (Incidentally, ARSP was also our partner in a panel discussion held on the 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall a few weeks ago. That event drew a crowd that filled our library!) Further, in order not to show any favoritism to the group or any individual taking part in the discussion. Additionally, ARSP was also our partner in a panel discussion held on the 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall a few weeks ago. That event drew a crowd that filled our library!) Further, in order not to show any favoritism to the group or any individual taking part in the discussion.

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This season, the Wister series has included a concert in collaboration with the Delius Society, offering some of the composer’s German songs with piano, sung by mezzo soprano Suzanne Du Plantis, an old friend, who performed with the Wister in Ravel’s “Chansons Madecasses.”

Eschenbach played with the quartet at the Society twice during his five years with the Orchestra; Sawallisch included a concert with them in every year of his decade at the Orchestra’s helm. Both conductor-pianists received honorary lifetime memberships in the Society. Smith tells how they “got” Maestro Sawallisch: “Nancy walked up to him, asked if he was interested in playing chamber music with this quartet we have at the German Society; he was amenable right away, and we signed him up! It was wonderful from the very beginning. At the end of the first concert, after we’d maneuvered down the lethal stairs from the stage to the ‘green room’—actually the Society’s Board Room—he turned to us and asked: ‘What’s for next year?’ and that was it!”

In the course of that decade, the Sawallisch-Wister concerts were a guaranteed sellout, as they offered all the major piano quintets in the repertoire “until we ran out of them,” explains Smith, “so we did piano quartets and Maestro Sawallisch played four-hand works with Davyd.” For the record, Booth is as fine a pianist as he is a violinist, and even played the accordion in a 2006 concert. Smith continues:

“Maestro played the Brahms Piano Quintet — his favorite — with so much feeling for it, it almost took your head off. When we talked with him about it a few years later, and Nancy suggested we repeat it, you could see from his face that he had been hoping we’d say that: his look said ‘Ah, yes!’ and that was typical of him, often not using a lot of words, but conveying so much with facial expression. Of course, the repeat performance was marvelous for all of us.”

This season also brought back the Keystone State Boychoir in a joint concert with the Heidelberger Jugendchor on October 25; the Wister/Delius event on November 15, and Duo Patricia on December 13. January offers two concerts: pianist Claire Huangci on the 10th and the Kreutzer Trio, back by popular demand the 31st.

The Invencia Piano Duo appears February 21st, and the American Virtuosi Trio (the Borowsky siblings), here last season, returns May 16th. In between are three Wister Quartet evenings: March 7th, March 28th, and April 18th. As always, all concerts are Sunday at 3:00 PM. —Susan Gould

Winter 2009/10
Music at the German Society of Pennsylvania (abridged)

The German Society has had its concert series in place and growing for over twenty years. It was established and initially funded by then-board member of the Society (and active member for decades) Dr. William Sunderman, a prosperous pathologist and serious amateur violinist who had an extensive collection of chamber music as well as a network of music-loving and performing friends. This remarkable gentleman died in 2003, just short of age 105, playing the violin almost to the end.

Through a close relationship with the cultural offices of the German government, the Society keeps abreast of young German musicians as well as others who would be ideal guests here. Among these have been pianist Rudiger Steinfatt, an authority on the compositions of his legendary colleague Wilhelm Kempff, the Württemberg Chamber Orchestra, violinist Arabella Steinbacher, and young pianist Birgit Gruezner, first as a soloist and then with her Frankfurter Kammertrio (clarinet, cello, and piano). The 100 exceptionally talented youngsters of the Landesjugendorchester Rheinland-Pfalz gave two concerts last October as part of the German-American Week commemorations of 325 years of German in Philadelphia. But the concert offerings are far from limited to those by German artists. Among the others have been Philadelphia Orchestra Principal Harpist Eliza- not much else musical was happening on Sunday afternoons in Philadelphia. Now there are Sunday performances everywhere! Guests of the Wister have included guitarist Allen Krantz (as pianists) Philadelphia Orches- tral Music Directors Wolfgang Sawal- lisch and Christoph Eschenbach. In 2006, the “Classical Concert Series” was named “Wister and More!” It was Dr. Sunderman who brought the Wister Quartet to the German Society; having heard the group at Swarthmore College and approaching them to set up their first concert for 1991. As Wister cellist Lloyd Smith tells it: “He wanted to expand the Society’s cultural activities, liked the quartet, and saw potential for a regular concert series. It came at a very good time for us, since we had more available time because the Orchestra was recording less, not only to perform but also to rehearse live as an quartet.” The Wister performed with Dr. Sunderman for his 95th birthday, after which he began studying with their second violinist, Davyd Booth. Smith recalls with a smile: “We’d been a bit worried the first time, but he played tastefully. He had studied with Jascha Brodsky for 30 years, but only off and on; Davyd took him more seri- ously. When we heard Dr. Sunderman on his 100th birthday, he’d improved enormously, with good ex- pression and intonation — at 100!” The choice of repertoire is left to the quartet, and along with the greatest works of chamber music, they have added some unusual touches, such as the programs “It Takes Four to Tango” in 2003; “Tango and Fandango” in 2005, the latter with guests Krantz and Orchestra concertmaster David Kim; and “Latin Passions” in 2007—inspired by a trip to Argentina by Smith and his wife Violin Nancy Bean, Wister first chair. Bean, in turn, playing Pellegrina violin as well as violin, has formed the Duo Parisi- enne with harpist Anne Sullivan, playing works (not only French) that are heard less often or, in this combina- tion, almost never, elsewhere. Spaeth describes the duo as one of the unique combinations that the Society wants to continue creating and promoting.

Three Medal Winners

On November 7th the German Society celebrated its 245th Stiftungsfest. We were pleased to honor three vol- unteers who have donated their time and talents to the Society. Doris MacPherson, who served as President of the Women’s Auxiliary for ten years, has been a loyal German Society volunteer for more than a decade. She can often be found “behind the scenes” at events and is a member of our Arts Committee. Her hard work and cheerful presence is evident throughout the building. Helen Schutz has been a member of the German Society and active volun- teer for many, many years. She cur- rently contributes her volunteer time to the business office and assists with filing, mailings, and more, on a regu- lar basis. She is a member of the Scholarship and Stiftungsfest Commit- tees and can be seen helping in many different capacities at Society events. Dr. Frank Trommler, our current VP of Culture and Heritage, has dedi- cated many hours and resources to the German Society. He leads our Li- brary Committee and provides profes- sional guidance to our Librarian, Dr. Violet Lutz. He has served as a panel- ist and moderator for seminars at the Society and facilitates the German Historical Institute Fellowship pro- gram at the Society each summer. Each of the three individuals received a medal as a token of the German Society’s appreciation for their dedi- cation. We offer another wonderful “thank you” to them and look forward to honoring a different group of vol- unteers at next year’s Stiftungsfest on November 6th. —Sharan Knoell

Honoring a Former President

Also at the Stiftungsfest, we were pleased to honor Hardy von Auenmueller for his years of service as President of the German Society. He was presented with a plaque—the text of which you can find below. Congratulations to Hardy and a most sincere “thank you” for all he has accomplished during his years as President.

During his term in office, Hardy inspired all with his enthusiasm, tenacity and drive to achieve the “almost impossible” by devoting uncountable hours to the business of the Society and breathing new life into many of its activities. Some of his notable accom- plishments as a true “turn-around specialist” are:

- Putting the Society back on a firm financial footing
- Reshaping the business model of the Society
- Reestablishing the relationship with The Women’s Auxiliary
- Broadening the Society’s visibility and appeal beyond its own constituency
- Reopening the Joseph Hormer Memorial Library in 2006
- Revitalizing events such as the Stiftungsfest and the Konversationsabend
- Providing leadership in improving the physical appearance of the Society
- Guiding the design of the mural and the historical marker
- Managing the elevator construction project

Hardy von Auenmueller for serving the Society as President from 2005 to 2009.

Urs du ererbten von deinen Vätern hast, 
Ewird esrum,um es zu besitzen. —Goethe

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Newly-refurbished GSP Auditorium setup for the annual Christkindlmarkt on Saturday, December 5th

Reception in the Library at the 245th annual Stiftungsfest celebration on Saturday, November 7th

Annual St. Martin’s Lantern Parade for Families on Saturday, November 14th

First Annual Summer Camp for Kids in August 2009 with GSP member Christa Farnon playing her dulcimer

Yearly Oktoberfest celebration in our Ratskeller on October 3rd

Awards Ceremony in our Joseph Horner Memorial Library during this year’s Stiftungsfest