

# Annual Members Meeting and Board Elections

On Sunday, June 5, 2022 at 3:00pm, the German Society will hold its 2022 Annual Meeting and Elections for Directors.

Members must be in good standing to be eligible to vote, i.e. current on dues no later than end of business on Friday, June 3, 2022. 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. Please be reminded that members at the Associate level (\$30/year) are not eligible to vote in our elections; if you an Associate member and would like to vote, please contact the Society's office to upgrade your membership to a higher level. If you have any questions about your current membership status, please contact the office.

Vision statements of the slate of approved candidates can be found on the following pages. There are five openings for Directors on the Board in the class of 2025 and one opening in the class of 2023. There are seven candidates running for these positions. Two Officer positions are also up for election: Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

## Candidates for Officers



**Treasurer: Lewis Volgenau**

For the past eleven years, I have been your Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer and have also served as the Vice President of Finance.

It is our vision to be recognized as the premier German ethnic Society in the United States. To accomplish this, it is vital that we manage our finances. I will continue to work with the Executive and Finance Committees to provide balanced budgets and prudent investments. We also need to continue our capital improvement projects to maintain our library and building. We are grateful for the support of our members for their donations and continued membership. I look forward to serving the financial needs of the Society

for another 2 year term.



**Assistant Treasurer: Tim Rausch**

Tim is an attorney and Certified Public Accountant who has previously served as the German Society's Treasurer for two years. Tim is presently employed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Human Resources as an auditor, and he also has a private accounting, tax and legal practice. He is a life-long resident of Philadelphia.

Tim has served as waiter for the Women's Auxiliary Annual Luncheon for several years, volunteers at various functions, and promotes the Society's reputation and unique historical circumstances whenever and to whomever he believes may have an interest. Tim is a candidate for the office of Assistant Treasurer so as to lend his legal, business and accounting expertise in support of the Treasurer in guiding the Society's future operational and financial success.

# Candidates for Directors



**Eric Zillmer**

I am very excited to be chosen to run for a Board seat at the German Society of Philadelphia. I am a GSP life member and bilingual in German and English having lived in Germany for 18 years during my formal schooling and university studies (Abitur, 1966-76 Werdenfels-Gymnasium, Garmisch Partenkirchen; Physik studium, 1976-78 Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich). My family has a strong connection to German-speaking Europe and Germany itself. My sister "Bibi" was a three-time German champion in the sport of figure skating and represented Germany in the 1968 Olympics in Grenoble, France. Bibi is a German citizen, and I hold an unlimited German residency permit. My father, David Zillmer, a USMA West Point alum, earned a MA in German language from the University of Heidelberg, and together with my mother, who was born in Vienna, we all spoke mostly German at home.

I have worked at Drexel University for over 30 years as a professor and its past Athletic Director. As a resident and participant of Philadelphia's arts, sports, and tourism infrastructure, I have a finger on the emotional pulse of our city's cultural and civic community. In addition, I have experience in fundraising, programming, the arts, and in partnering and collaborating with other organizations around the city. I also have a love for German culture. For example, I am curating a unique program at GSP entitled *Classical Guitar meets Classic Wine*, which is scheduled for May 15, and which features German, Austrian, and Italian wines that will be paired with classical guitar music, including Johann Sebastian Bach.

If elected, I would be very motivated in moving the Society forward to ensure that it is a celebrated, inclusive, and proud cultural icon for decades to come.



**Jackie Binstead**

For most of my career, I've worked in nonprofit accounting. The most important part of my job has always been to make sure that everything we did furthered the nonprofit's mission. I would be honored to be part of the GSP's Board and to work to increase awareness and understanding of the German and German-American culture and contributions.

There are many ways to help support the GSP's mission. A few of the key ones I would like to focus on are:

- Increasing revenue to provide resources for current and future programs and services
- Continuing to improve the building's beauty, usefulness, safety, and efficiency (for future revenue and programs)
- Further development of relationships with other German groups and with other cultural/historic groups

Thank you for considering me as a candidate for the Board of Directors.



**Ralf D. Wiedemann**

Thank you for considering my candidacy. For the past 21 years I have been an immigration attorney, helping foreigners from around the world obtain U.S. visas, green cards, and citizenship. This work involves advocacy on behalf of individual and corporate clients before U.S. administrative agencies and U.S. consulates. From this I have gained skills in fact-gathering, analysis, seeing issues from multiple sides, advising clients on preferred options, and persuading decision makers by making cogent arguments.

In the earlier part of my career I worked for large and medium-sized law firms. From that I learned how to function in organizations with diverse populations and interests. During the past five years I have been a solo practitioner. From this I have learned skills in self-sufficiency and what it takes

to run a small business.

For the past 10 years I have concurrently served as honorary consul of Germany in Philadelphia. In this role I assist German citizens with matters such as passport applications, registrations of births, and signature certifications on legal documents. I also meet with diplomatic and business delegations, and regularly interact with colleagues at the German consulate general in New York and the German embassy in Washington, DC. From this I have gained skills in giving careful explanations, diplomacy, time management, and above all, patience.

Both of my parents emigrated from Germany in the 1960s, and I am a first generation American born in the U.S. I am also a citizen of Germany thanks to the circumstances of having been born to a German parent. For the same reason, my children are citizens of both the U.S. and Germany.

Should I be selected to serve on the board, I look forward to utilizing my skills and experience in the service of the German Society of Pennsylvania.



**Karin Volkwein-Caplan**

Growing up in Germany, I came to the US to pursue a PhD at the University of Tennessee in Sport Philosophy in 1984. When I was hired at West Chester University in 1992, I joined the German Society and have served on the GSP board since 2019, seeking re-election for a second term. Over the last 30 years I have witnessed major changes and improvements at the GSP, not only with our beautiful building but also with the addition of new programs and change in membership; the GSP has become a more dynamic place to visit. "Wunderbar Together" is the slogan that represents the German-American heritage not only in the past but projects what we aspire for the future as well. Holding dual citizenship, I am interested in

furthering the relationship between our two countries.

My academic career as professor of Cultural Studies has provided many opportunities to support relationships between our two countries through social, political, cultural and educational issues and exchanges. I have led several student trips from Pennsylvania to Germany, and I have realized exchange programs between WCU with German universities, including Kassel, Heidelberg, Freiburg, Berlin, German Sport University Cologne. I have collaborated with German colleagues in research, publications, and education. My vision includes fostering more cultural exchange programs and supporting a better understanding, while preserving our German-American culture and heritage.

My passion includes supporting wellness and exercise programs that bring our members together, keep them fit and healthy, and provide ample opportunity to foster *Kameradschaft*. I have started these programs with support of Dr. Helga Halbfass (Wandern) and Dr. Selen Razon (Gentle Yoga) during COVID-times. As times are ever-changing, I am looking forward to new and varied opportunities to foster intercultural understandings through human movement.



**Marnie Old**

I am a wine and beer author and Philadelphia's leading expert in my field. I serve as director of vinlightenment for Boisset Collection, France's largest family-owned wine company. I also write, teach and consult independently on drinks, hospitality, service and marketing, as well as organizing events locally and acting as an expert speaker on wine and beer topics around the country. I am best known in Philadelphia as the wine columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer's Thursday Food Section, but German Society members know me as the mind behind our annual Bierfest, one of the largest and most successful events on our calendar. I may not be of German heritage or speak the language, but German wines and beers have

long been my personal favorites and causes I champion within the wine and beer trades. I have partnered with the GSP to promote them in a number of ways over the years, including the recent national lecture tour undertaken through the efforts of Hardy von Auenmueller to secure funding from the Goethe-Institut's Deutschlandjahr project, titled "500 Years of Lager Brewing: The German Ideal & The American Dream". With the growing enthusiasm of Americans for cultural exploration through gastronomy, I see great potential within my field for the German Society to leverage Pennsylvania's uniquely German heritage in order to meet its future goals. I believe that further diversifying programming centered on German brewing, German winemaking and German cui-

sine can increase our organization's visibility, expand our outreach and hopefully also increase membership, especially among younger audiences.



### **Daniel Lippard**

I grew up in Lansdowne. Pop's side was Alsatian, Mom's Saxon. After boyhood were Duke, Naval, Security Group, and Vanderbilt. Thereafter, I've been practicing law in Media for 47 years, with a focus on estate and real estate matters.

Though not as much as I could or should, I have tried to be a helpful participant in a variety of Society matters. I did, with the gracious cooperation of Tony and Liesl, facilitate in getting out to the membership an online Pennsylvania-conforming Healthcare Power of Attorney/Living Will at the beginning of the pandemic. I've made a presentation on estate planning to members as well as our Latvian neighbors. I've also provided a presentation and tour for those interested in doing genealogical research at the County Courthouse. I was also scheduled to represent the Society as a speaker on deeds as genealogical resources to the Pennsylvania Historical Society, although this event was also an early Covid casualty.

Goodness should be a product and not just an accolade, and I learned that from Pop and Mom too.



### **Brian Norton**

I would like to present myself to the Membership and ask that you support me in my desire to serve you, the Members and the Society as I have for the past two years in my role as VP of Finance.

During the six years that I have served the Society and its Members while on the Finance Committee, as a Board Member and most recently, officer. I am eager in this term to continue to expand my understanding and participation in the Society's other committees and step back from specific finance duties.

As someone who came to the Society looking for a hobby and finding a community, I feel committed to serving as board member representing Philadelphia and the very long relationship that the community has had with the Society. I feel that as an organization founded to serve an immigrant community, we offer a path and an example to America and that this represents a unique opportunity for us to continue to forge a path of diversity and the proverbial melting pot that has made Philadelphia and the German community so strong.

Should anyone have any questions for me, I would be happy to address them at the Annual Meeting.