

Calendar of Events

The GSP Library will be closed from July 27 through August 22, with normal hours resuming on Thursday, August 24.

Sun. Sept. 3	Gentle Yoga, 11:00am
Sat. Sept. 9	Buchclub: <i>Berlin Alexanderplatz</i> by Alfred Döblin, 1:30pm
Sun. Sept. 10	"Wister and More!" presents Trio Montage, 3:00pm
Wed. Sept. 13	Konversationsabend, 6:00pm
Fri. Sept. 15	Friday Film Fest: <i>Im Westen nichts Neues</i> , 6:30pm
Sat. Sept. 16	Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am
Tues. Sept. 19	Zoom Lecture by Julia Lange: "German-American Identity Politics and Holocaust Remembrance", 6:00pm
Sun. Oct. 1	Gentle Yoga, 11:00am
Sun. Oct. 8	"Wister and More!" presents Elissa Lee Koljonen and Amy Yang, 3:00pm
Wed. Oct. 11	German Jewish Concert, time TBA
Thu. Oct. 12	Library Treasure Tour: Agentur Collection, 6:00pm
Sat. Oct. 14	Buchclub, 1:30pm
Fri. Oct. 20	Friday Film Fest: <i>Die Unbeugsamen</i> , 6:30pm
Sat. Oct. 21	Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am

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World Affairs Table: Germany

On May 11, the German Society teamed up with the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia and the German Consulate General New York for **World Affairs Table: Germany**, an event that brought together foreign policy discussion and German cuisine and culture. About 140 guests enjoyed the program, which featured the presentation of a special citation to Consul General David Gill from the City of Philadelphia, as well as an interview between WHY-FM's Maiken Scott and the Consul General. At the end of the program, GSP VP of Operations Tony Michels presented Consul General Gill with a lifetime honorary membership to the GSP, printed on a 19th century certificate recently found in the GSP's building. At the closing reception, attendees sampled German foods from Brauhaus Schmitz as well as a selection of German and Austrian beer and wine curated by the German Society's own Marnie Old.

– Liesl Jandrey

Top photo, left to right: Lauren Swartz, President & CEO, World Affairs Council of Philadelphia; Consul General David Gill; Maiken Scott, WHY; Mark McGuigan, President, The German Society of Pennsylvania

Bottom photo: VP of Operations Tony Michels presents Consul General David Gill with a historical lifetime membership certificate to the German Society of Pennsylvania.

Photos courtesy of the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia

The German Society of Pennsylvania

Neuer Pennsylvanischer
Staatsbote

CELEBRATING
250
1764 2014
YEARS OF
**GERMAN
HERITAGE**

Summer 2023

Ab in die Sommerfrische

Summer is here, and many of you are now enjoying some well-deserved time away – some even crossing the Atlantic to visit friends and family in Europe. Here at the German Society, while we do not officially close, our programming largely takes a break, and we have a chance to reflect and plan for the coming year.

Two years ago, we set out to expand and diversify programming, to increase outreach, and to build membership – all the while sustaining longstanding and beloved events. The last year has seen these efforts bear fruit.

Programs

Existing large events like the **Christmas Bazaar, Stiftungsfest, Wister & More Concert Series, and Bierfest** returned, bringing hundreds of guests to the German Society. Meanwhile, new events, like the **German Jewish Heritage Series, Classical Guitar meets Classic Wine,** and the recent **World Affairs Table** event honoring **German Consul David Gill**, drew 100-150 participants and demonstrated that there are new audiences eager to come to the Society. Our new **PartyAG TanzPartys** and events with **PhillyKinder (Martinszug, Galli Children's Theater)** each drew over 70 guests to fun events that engaged German-speaking families and folks looking to get their groove on, German style. Events for **German instructors and students** are also underway. All of this is only one small part of the German Society's diverse and growing program.

Organizational Capacity

A robust program requires also significant organizational capacity. Volunteers on numerous committees work to manage the Society's affairs. To this we have added active **Marketing, Language, Programs** (including **PartyAG** and

German Jewish work groups), and **Children's Programs Committees**. New leadership and volunteers are working together with dedicated long-time volunteers. New staff to support this effort has also arrived. In addition to our amazing Executive Director, **Liesl Jandrey**, we have added a full-time Administrative Assistant, **Kelley Dahlen**. I hope you will join me in welcoming Kelley!

Challenges Ahead

Sustaining this effort will be a challenge. Looking ahead, we want to create a sustainable yearly planning cycle for events and a place of connection for our members. A special thanks go out to our program partners: the **AATG, World Affairs Council, German Consulate, PhillyKinder, the Classical Guitar Society of Philadelphia, Congregation Rodeph Shalom, the Jewish Community Relations Council, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung,** and the **American Council on Germany**. These groups have made our new initiatives possible. In the coming months we will begin to look more strategically at marketing and membership recruitment and retention – core functions incredibly important for our long-term success.

Summer has come, and we wish all of you and yours a pleasant one – and look forward to seeing you in September. With your support and participation, I am convinced that the German Society is positioned to be a vibrant and relevant home for German and German American heritage, language, and culture – and an essential bridge between our region and German-speaking Europe – for years to come. Thank you all for your engagement in this important work.

– Mark McGuigan

GSP Member Served the Union with Honor; Visited by President Lincoln, in American Civil War

Spotlight on Past Members

We are delighted that Lynne Breen, author of *How German Ingenuity Inspired America*, has agreed to pen 'spotlight' articles for our *Staatsbote*. These pieces will focus on the life stories of selected past members of the Society. Her first of these contributions follows.

- E. D. Weiler

During the Civil War, the largest ethnic group to serve alongside Union soldiers born on American soil were German immigrants, representing fully ten percent of northern forces. Of special interest to members of the German Society of Pennsylvania may be the 98th Pennsylvania Infantry. The majority of men who volunteered for this regiment were of German heritage, including its leader, John Frederick Ballier.



John Frederick Ballier
(1815-1893)

Ballier's story begins in Aurich in what was then the Kingdom of Württemberg, where he was born in 1815. Trained as a baker, he emigrated in 1838 with his wife to Philadelphia, establishing a pastry shop to the delight of his fellow Germans, who had also made the city their home.

In 1852, Ballier was offered the position of Captain of the Nightwatch for the Philadelphia Mint. With the outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861, however, he left that post to form the 21st Regiment of Pennsylvania, holding the rank of colonel. When that unit's three-month term ended, Ballier recruited and organized the 98th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers for three years' service, seeing action at Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, among other engagements.

Ballier was wounded at the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862, and again in July 1864 at the Battle of Fort Stevens, when a rifle ball penetrated his thigh. President Abraham Lincoln visited Ballier during his subsequent hospital stay

and, acknowledging Ballier's heroic conduct, promoted him to brevet brigadier-general of volunteers. Following participation in several other battles, the 98th Pennsylvania Regiment was present at the surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox, Virginia on April 9, 1865.

Ballier returned to Philadelphia, where he opened a hotel called the Ballier House. Remaining true to his German heritage, Ballier became a member of the German Society of Pennsylvania and the German Hospital of the City of Philadelphia. He also co-founded the Cannstatter Volksfest Verein.

- Lynne Breen

Scholarship Awards for German Language Students

For the second consecutive year after a fifteen-year hiatus, German Society this spring hosted the Annual Award Ceremony of the local chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) for high school students of the German language. On April 23, our Auditorium was filled to the brim with teachers and parents of these students, who represented the tri-state area surrounding Philadelphia. A great variety of awards were given, including those from our Society.

Since the late 1990s, the Society has been able to grant many college scholarship awards – thanks to a sizable bequest by J. Conrad Linke, a well-known painter and philanthropist who had been a longtime member of the Society, and the unrelenting support of the Women's Auxiliary in years past, plus additional support from the Leon H. Volgenau and Elsa Schweikert scholarship funds.

In fact, our Executive Director Liesl Jandrey mentioned in her welcoming address to our guests that the Society has granted a total of ninety-nine scholarship awards since 2006. Accumulatively, these awards represent a value of approximately \$250,000.

During the previous three years – due to the Covid-19 pandemic – our selection process and personal interviews had to be conducted virtually. However, this year we were able to invite seven students to our premises for personal interviews on April 15 – after we had scrutinized their applications, including their high school or college transcripts and their required German essays.

The top prizes were awarded to two local high school students, **Caroline Albright** and **Daniel Porotov**, from North Penn and Lower Moreland, respectively. While Caroline is heading for Tufts University, Daniel plans to attend the University of Delaware. The other two high school graduates to receive awards are **Alegria Proano** of Central Bucks and **Elisabeth Spongr** of Phoenixville. They have elected to go to the University of Pittsburgh and Penn State, respectively.

In addition, three local college students were selected to receive scholarship awards: **Nathanael Brown** of Swarthmore, **Ethan Christman** of Haverford, and **Nuha Mohammed** of Bryn Mawr. All seven scholarship awardees attended the ceremony, and thus were captured in the photo below, taken by Liesl Jandrey – with me standing on the side.

As I have been privileged to be part of our GSP Scholarship Committee for the past fifteen years, I wish to take this opportunity to express my great appreciation to the following colleagues: Angela Bacher, Thomas Buckley, Jean Godsall-Myers, William Heintzelman, Carol Olen-schleger, and last but not least, Donald Rainey, our Committee Chair. You are a tightly knit group that knows the importance of teamwork! Hence, it is a pleasure to work with you.

- Hardy von Auenmueller



2023 Annual Meeting and Election Results

On Sunday, June 4, the German Society held its 2023 Annual Members Meeting and Elections of the Board of Directors, which was attended by 42 members of the Society.

This year, six candidates ran for six open Board positions. The five candidates with the most votes would join the Class of 2026, and the candidate with the least votes would fill an open position in the Class of 2025. The Officer positions of President, Secretary, Assistant Treasurer, VP of Operations, VP of Strategic Planning, and VP of Advancement were also up for election.

After remarks from President Mark McGuigan, the members cast their ballots, which were then counted by two groups of volunteers while other members socialized. The votes yielded the following results.

Mark McGuigan was elected to a second term as President. Other returning Officers include **Harold Glass** as VP of Strategic Planning, **Ernie Weiler** as VP of Advancement, **Tony Michels** as VP of Operations, and **Bill Hardham** as Secretary. **Jackie Binstead** was elected to serve as Assistant Treasurer.

For Directors, **Christine Stenner** was elected to fill the vacancy in the Class of 2025. The Class of 2026 will be comprised of returning Directors **Helga Halbfass**, **Jim Niessen**, and **Del Hausman**. They will be joined by a new Director, **Christina Frei**, as well as former VP of Capital Projects **Hans Mueller**.

Congratulations to our new board members, and thank you to the outgoing members of the Class of 2023 - **Maria Sturm** and **Marnie Old** - for your many years of service to the German Society!

- Liesl Jandrey



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The German Jewish Heritage Series & A Special Visit with Ruth Cyzner

This winter many families in the PhillyKinder community could be found attending events organized around the German Jewish Heritage Series at the German Society. Some came to the opening reception and visited the exhibition, several families joined the Sabbath service and dinner at Congregation Rodeph Shalom, and many attended the book reading of *Heimat* with Nora Krug. Overall, we received a lot of positive feedback from people who attended these events. Therefore, it is with deep gratitude that we thank the German Society and especially Mark McGuigan for organizing such an important series.

Inspired by the series, some PhillyKinder teachers included the topic of Jewish culture and life in Germany into their curriculum. In addition, we used the opportunity to talk about the challenges of growing up during the Nazi era and introduced our students to the remembrance culture of the Holocaust in Germany. The *Stolperstein* project and "Orte des Erinnerns" in the *Bayrische Viertel* of Berlin turned out to be meaningful ways to connect youngsters with this gruesome part of the German-Jewish shared history.

Growing up in Germany, we were taught about the Holocaust and WWII extensively, but few of us have had the chance to meet survivors of the Holocaust. The recollections of the era that were shared with those of us who grew up in post-war Germany mostly came from our grandparents' generation.

As their descendants, we are still coming to terms with Germany's past, which is one of the reasons why many of us relate to Nora Krug's book *Heimat*.

When I first arrived in the United States, I was introduced to Ruth Cyzner, the mother of a family friend. That afternoon, pregnant with my first child, I was rendered speechless when Ruth shared with me that she was a Holocaust survivor, and that it was only due to her mother's heroic act of putting her on a *Kindertransport* that she survived the Holocaust. She would never see her mother again. Ruth was the first Holocaust survivor I ever knowingly encountered.

I took inspiration from the German Jewish Heritage series and approached Ruth about meeting with our students to tell them about her childhood in Berlin as a Jewish girl. She agreed to meet with our oldest students, 7th grade and up, as well as their parents. The event was held on Sunday, April 16, and coincided with the first day of Holocaust Remembrance Week. Almost 40 attendees, among them 15 teenagers, joined us in Overbrook to listen to Ruth's recollection of her childhood and subsequent life.

In the following, we share some of the feedback we received after the event.

(1) Thank you very much for organizing the visit of Ruth to PhillyKinder in Overbrook. We are grateful to you and to her for creating an intimate environment to hear Ruth's story. On the way home from Overbrook, Paulina and Rudi said how informative her talk was. They said that it offered perspective, firsthand, that they have not experienced in school or at home.

When we arrived home, my parents (87 yrs.) asked about the event. I do believe that the talk would have been equally valuable and meaningful for them too. As Ruth indicated, so many victims were understandably reluctant to talk about their experiences earlier and only now have begun sharing details about the horrors they experienced. Please keep us informed about other talks or events where we can hear firsthand about the Holocaust experience. Ruth's candor and directness are essential. Sadly, with each



passing day, the opportunity to hear the accounts and try to comprehend what happened in Germany in the 30's and 40's will soon be something we can only read about.

With deep gratitude,
Rebecca, Ulf, Paulina & Rudi

(2) Thank you so much for organizing this important event for our parents and youth.

Especially my youngest son was enthralled with Ruth's message, and even my cool teenage boy was moved by it.

My 10-year-old, Kai, and I are currently reading the book *Once* by Moritz Gleitzmann, and I am amazed how much he is into the storyline, which at times is shocking and gruesome. When I queried him about the reason for this, he responded, because it was based on true events. I surmise that especially in childhood, many of us experience a deep yearning to listen attentively to "true" stories and receive first-hand recollections in order to try and understand the complexities of the world we live in.

- Manuela

(3) We were impressed by Ruth all around. She has such a strong and positive personality, and she is a good narrator of stories of many kinds. That said, it was great that she talked about her childhood, focusing especially on the years in her life that corresponded to the ages of the children and youths in attendance.

That same evening, our family discussed the uncle in England and how he separated the two sisters upon arrival, and took the older one in as a maid. Yet in hearing Ruth talk about that, there was no sign of anger or bitterness. She just moved on and made decisions for herself at such a young age. It's striking how clearly she saw the differences of her upbringing in Berlin as compared with the family she had to live with in England, which led her to choose to leave.

Ruth reflects about what she remembers, and how memories and history shape us, and it is true that her life would have been much different with a nicer uncle, who would have made sure that the sisters can stay together and go to school. Her explanation of why she kept her fam-

ily name, because there is no place she can go to remember her parents, the fact that they just had "disappeared", made me realize how lucky I am to have the grave of my parents in Germany, a place of comfort I can visit to remember them.

Thank you, Ruth, for sharing your memories!

Herzlichst,
Gudrun, Derick und William

As reflected in the feedback, it was a very well received event, which left no one in the audience untouched, and many families kept talking about Ruth and her life after returning home. Evidently, meeting a *Zeitzeugin* and listening to her account of her family history affected us intimately. It left all of us with a lasting impression in a way that reading about the subject will always fall short on, which is especially true if the narrator tells her story as skillfully and engagingly as Ruth did.

Unfortunately, soon there will no longer be any survivors and *Zeitzeugen* of the Holocaust and WWII left for any of us to meet in person, and we will have to rely on the memories passed down onto the second generation of survivors, plus taped resources and print material, to learn about the untold stories of this period of time.

Given that her audience was going to be rather young and mostly German, Ruth was initially reluctant to participate. Due to the trauma of her childhood she lost her German and only returned to Berlin when invited by the German government, and later to witness the laying of the *Stolperstein* for her father. Ruth was pleasantly surprised about the overwhelmingly positive feedback she received after the event. In the end, it was not only the audience, but also the speaker who came away with a changed perspective and new appreciation.

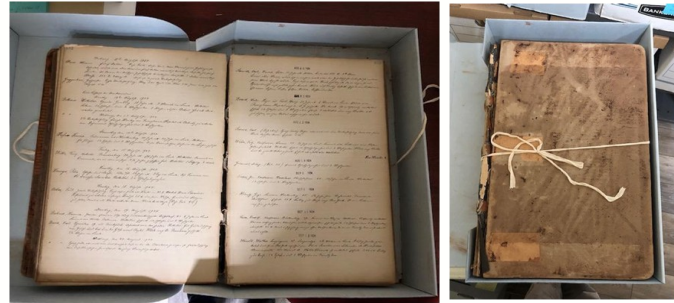
Thank you again to the German Society and in particular to Mark McGuigan who inspired us to have so many relevant and meaningful encounters in the beginning of 2023.

With gratitude,
Birgit Splitt & PhillyKinder



Adopt A Rare Book, Summer 2023

Our latest Adopt a Book offering is a little different from what we've done in the past. This time, we are focusing our preservation efforts on one of our manuscript collections, the German Society's *Agentur Records*. And our aim is digital preservation, rather than conserving the physical objects. The German Society's Agentur collection records information about tens of thousands of individuals who came to the Society for financial assistance and job referrals over the span of a hundred years, from 1847 to 1947, and it is therefore a treasure trove of genealogical and historical information about German immigrants in Philadelphia.



This manuscript collection is a largely untapped resource, and digitizing the volumes will be a critical first step to making the information they contain more easily accessible to researchers, especially those for whom it would be difficult to come to Philadelphia in person. One of the volumes has already been digitized, as it will be on loan to the **Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg** in Stuttgart as part of an exhibition on the emigration from this region to the United States which will run from October 2023 through July 2024. We will share more information on this project as it becomes available!

Through the Lutheran Archives Center in Philadelphia, we currently have the exciting opportunity to digitize all of the Agentur's 72 volumes! The cost of digitizing each volume will be \$200, however donations of any amount are welcome. Will you help us preserve this important piece not just of German Society history, but the history of immigration in general?

- Bettina Hess, Librarian

Meet our New Administrative Assistant



Hello! My name is Kelley, and I just recently took on the role of Administrative Assistant here at the German Society. I moved to Philadelphia from Minneapolis four years ago, where I earned a degree from the University of Minnesota. Since then I've done many things, including building a sculpture in West Philly and working at an artisanal sidewalk chalk company! I've always loved German language and culture, and I am so excited to be a part of the GSP and get to know everyone here. Can't wait to meet you all!

- Kelley Dahlen

Galli Theater



Galli Theater performers in the German Society's Ratskeller following their April 30 performances of Rapunzel and Rotkäppchen, which were presented in cooperation with PhillyKinder.

*Back row, left to right: Barbara Remus, Anell Moya, Joseph Bosse, Mario Greiner
Front row: Jose Vargas, Hanna Westi Mortensen*

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