

Calendar of Events

- Sat. Apr. 13 Buchclub, 1:30pm
- Sun. Apr. 14 "Wister and More!" presents Bijoux Saxophone Duo, 3:00pm
- Fri. Apr. 19 Friday Film Fest: *Die Spionin*, 6:30pm
- Sat. Apr. 20 Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am
- Sun. Apr. 21 AATG Award Ceremony, 10:00am
- Sun. Apr. 28 Classic Wines of German & Austrian Heritage: A Master Class with Wine Author Marnie Old, 3:00pm
- Sun. May 5 Gentle Yoga, 11:00am
- Sun. May 5 "Wister and More!" presents Claire Huangci, piano, 3:00pm
- Wed. May 8 Konversationsabend, 6:00pm
- Fri. May 10 "From Brahms to Broadway" with the Greater Philadelphia Choral Society, 7:00pm
- Sat. May 11 Buchclub, 1:30pm
- Sat. May 11 Eurovision Viewing Party & ABBA Dance Party, time TBA
- Fri. May 17 Friday Film Fest: *Einfach mal was Schönes*, 6:30pm
- Sat. May 18 Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am
- Sun. June 2 Gentle Yoga, 11:00am
- Sat. June 8 Buchclub, 1:30pm
- Sat. June 15 Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am
- Sun. June 16 Annual Members Meeting and Board Elections, 3:00pm

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CLASSIC WINES OF GERMAN & AUSTRIAN HERITAGE

A MASTER CLASS WITH WINE AUTHOR MARNIE OLD

Sunday, April 28 • 3:00pm
Tickets \$40 ea.



The German Society of Pennsylvania

Neuer Pennsylvanischer
Staatsbote

CELEBRATING
250
YEARS OF
GERMAN HERITAGE

Spring 2024

Verbindung und Community: The GSP 2024 Annual Meeting



GSP President Mark McGuigan

At the heart of the German Society are you, its members. This June, many of the more than 600 GSP members will come together for a reception and our 2024 Annual Meeting. We will be celebrating accomplishments, building a sense of community and connection, and electing members to our board of directors. This gathering is not just a tradition; it is a great opportunity for members to connect, discuss, and directly contribute to the shaping of our Society's future.

One of the most valuable aspects of the annual meeting is the opportunity it provides for members to meet face-to-face. In an era where digital communication dominates, the significance of personal interaction cannot be overstated. Members will have the chance to meet and mingle with the current board, candidates for the board election, and fellow society members. I look forward to seeing not only our long-time members, but also to meeting many of you who are new to the Society!

We are also excited to present a slate of dedicated individuals for election to our board who have stepped forward to volunteer their time and skills. The German Society ultimately thrives because of the tireless efforts of our volunteers, especially those who take on leadership roles. We are immensely grateful for the time, energy, and passion they contribute.

The GSP Annual Meeting is more than just a procedural event; it is a celebration of our community. On behalf of the Society, I invite all members to join us in this important gathering. Your participation and your voice are what make our society truly representative and strong. Let's come together to continue building a community that honors our 260-

year heritage while embracing the opportunities of tomorrow.

- Mark McGuigan, President

Join us on **June 16, 2024 at 3:00pm** for the **German Society's 2024 Annual Meeting and Elections of Officers and Directors** at our historic Spring Garden Street location. All members are invited! Please ensure your dues are paid by June 14, 2024 in order to be able to vote. Members must be present in person to cast their ballots; absentee or proxy voting is not permitted per our by-laws. Associate members (\$30/year) are not permitted to vote but can upgrade their membership by contacting our office.

Explore candidates' vision statements on the following pages. There are five positions available in the Class of 2027 and one vacancy in the Class of 2025. Six candidates are running for these positions. The candidate with the fewest votes will fill the vacancy in the Class of 2025, while the five with the most votes will make up the Class of 2027. The crucial Officer roles of Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are also up for election. Your vote is pivotal for our Society's future success!

Candidates for Officers

Treasurer: Jackie Binstead



I would be honored to continue the excellent financial reporting and stewardship of the past Treasurer and to use my several decades of nonprofit accounting experience in order to help support the mission and programs of the German Society of Pennsylvania.

Assistant Treasurer: Lewis Volgenau



Being term limited as your Treasurer, I welcome the opportunity to serve the financial needs of the Society in the role of Assistant Treasurer. Along with Jackie and the office staff, I want to continue the process of documenting the procedures used by the Treasurer for managing the funds of the Society. The goal is to provide guidance for future Treasurers and to transition some of the activities to the Executive Director and office staff. We will continue to work with the Executive and Finance Committees to provide balanced budgets and prudent investments. We must also fund our capital improvement projects to maintain our library and building. My thanks for the support of our members for their donations and continued membership.

Candidates for Directors

Monika Moyrer



As the US Program Director of Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP), I have a vital interest in educating a young generation of Germans and Americans to take responsibility, develop empathy, and serve the community. In addition to my day job, where I see myself as a bridge-builder between the German and American cultures—with a particular interest in Christian-Jewish reconciliation—I am deeply invested in promoting the German language. During my previous teaching career, most recently at Millersville University, I was developing teacher networks. Our Fortbildungen at local AATG chapter meetings, the Goethe Institut, and Conferences that promote German from high-school through college worked on strategies to make German relevant. Today, I chair the GSP's Language Committee where I rely on the knowledge, dedication, and expertise of my fellow GSP colleagues and teachers to continue this effort. We have reconnected with the local teaching community, organized a number of seminars at the GSP, and plan to be co-hosts for an event at the upcoming national ACTFL Conference in Philadelphia. Most importantly, we have taken steps toward the goal of becoming the hub for German in the Phila-

delphia area. It is a slow but steady process, and I am excited to lead this effort in the next years.

Daniel Wiese



I am pleased to express my interest in joining the Board of Directors of the German Society of Pennsylvania. Since my family's arrival from Hamburg to Philadelphia in 2009, the GSP has supported us in establishing ourselves in our new hometown. *Mein Fuß ist nun gefasst*, and I would be honored to contribute to the GSP's engagement in the building of and giving to our local communities, and to help strengthen GSP's financial position. I am confident that my contributions can help the GSP remain an important part of the cultural heritage in our region while following the Zeitgeist of our society.

I am a passionate health geographer, working as a researcher at the American Cancer Society and as a professor at Temple University. My interests include, among others, studying the history of Germans from Eastern Europe.

Stephanie Vogel



It would be my honor to serve the German Society of Pennsylvania for a second board term. I look forward to supporting the upcoming strategic planning process as we solidify our organization's growth plan to maintain a strong foundation for our operational success and sustainability. My interests are wide ranging, and I am enthusiastic about supporting many aspects of our work. In particular, I would like to help grow our youth outreach by engaging local high school students and teachers who participate in exchange programs with our Sister City Frankfurt, as I used to manage these relationships for Philadelphia in my previous job. Another area I enjoy is building partnerships with other leading organizations in the region to bring new audiences into our historic building and look for ways to gain support when promoting our programs. As a parent, I am raising my children bilingual in German and English, and the German Society of Pennsylvania is a tremendous partner in this endeavor. As part of the GSP's Marketing Committee, I will continue to work

closely with our staff, leadership, and all members to support our overall marketing efforts. It is critical that we communicate effectively and impactfully about the work we do, and the community we foster, as we advance the mission of the German Society of Pennsylvania. I look forward to doing this important work in partnership with you.

Edward V. Cattell, Jr.



I have served on the Board of our Society for two terms thus far. I would like to continue to serve for another term.

I have participated on the Finance Committee, and I believe I have made a positive contribution. I have regularly attended Wister concerts and support that program. *Ich diene weiterhin als Weihnachtsmann auf unserem Weihnachtsmarkt.*

Looking forward, I support Mark's progress in expanding our programs to include a broader representation in our communities – local and German speaking. I believe I can make a contribution in that effort as well.

Hardy von Auenmueller



After a twenty-five year career in the American chemical processing industry, I ventured out on my own – becoming a restructuring specialist of faltering enterprises in the US and – following the fall of the Berlin Wall – in Eastern Germany.

In 1999, my wife and I moved to Philadelphia for my retirement. Upon becoming a German Society member later that year, I recognized an opportunity to apply my trade as a turnaround specialist at this venerable institution. My first attempt to join the Board failed, but one year later, I was successful..., and soon thereafter, I was elected President, then Chairman, Senior Vice President and, for an interim period, Treasurer.

Due to other professional commitments – for a Rostock-based shipbuilding company, and as past President and Treasurer of the German-American Heritage Foundation in Washington, DC – I thought it prudent to resign as an officer of the German Society, but wish to continue my service at the Board

level for as long as my health and age permits me to do so.

I am currently co-chair of the Music Committee, serve on the Finance, Nominating, and Scholarship Committees, and have joyfully participated in the annual clean-up of our premises for many years.

Maiken Scott



I was born and raised in Karlsruhe, Germany and have lived in Philadelphia for most of my adult life. My first introduction to the German Society came years ago when I researched a history paper for grad school in the library. I have rediscovered the German

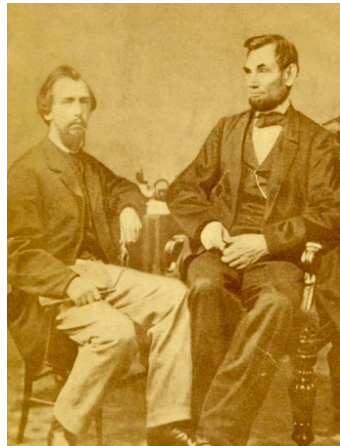
Society in recent years, I and have gotten involved with planning parties like our Fasnacht Tanzparty and the Glühwein Party. I've also moderated and hosted events, like a book talk with Nora Krug, a conversation with Consul General David Gill, and the GSP Stiftungsfest. Professionally, I have worked as a broadcast journalist for 25 years and have an interest in marketing. As a board member, I'd like to further the idea that the German Society represents Culture, Community, and Connection. In some ways, the German Society is a hidden gem for many people in our region, but once they're introduced to it, they love it! After several of our events in the Ratskeller, people who had never visited GSP before decided to become members! Others came back to volunteer during Bierfest. If elected, I'd like to help introduce more people in our region who have German roots or an interest in German culture to this wonderful resource.



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Let's Pause to Think of Lincoln and His German Friends in This Year's Presidential Election

As we reflect on our nation's divisiveness in this presidential election year, we cannot help but think of Abraham Lincoln, whose terrible responsibility was to steer the fate of the Union during the American Civil War. Fortunately, Lincoln had as close friends and advisors men of intelligence and integrity. Many were from Germany.



John Nicolay and President Lincoln, 1863

John Nicolay, Senior Secretary in the Lincoln White House, and John Hay, Assistant Secretary, collaborated on writing the ten-volume Abraham Lincoln: A History, published in 1890.

Perhaps his closest confidant was **John Nicolay**, whom Lincoln had named as his private secretary. Born in 1832 in the village of Essingen in Baden-Württemberg, Nicolay is said to have eased the president's burdens by serving as principal liaison between the White House and Congress, as gatekeeper of access to Lincoln, and as the president's sounding board when a crucial decision was to be made.

Highly devoted to the chief executive, Nicolay took careful notes during Cabinet meetings in Washington and traveled throughout the country on behalf of the president. Without Nicolay and his outstanding organizational skills, Lincoln would have been lost in a forest of details.

George Schneider, born in 1823 in the town of Pirmasens in Rhineland Palatine, was a journalist who became managing editor of the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* (*Illinois State Newspaper*) in 1851. Under Schneider, the influential newspaper made a forceful stand against slavery.

It was also Schneider who called the first meeting in Chicago to express opposition to

slavery's extension into the western states. Consequently, this opinion was adopted by a large majority of the German population in the region and, later, motivated them to support Lincoln and side with the Union during the Civil War. In 1861, Lincoln appointed Schneider as consul to Denmark, primarily to influence the public opinion of Northern Europe in favor of the Union cause.

Gustav Koerner left his native Germany for the United States in 1833, becoming a loyal Democrat until 1856, when the controversy over extending slavery westward drove him to the Republican Party. That same year, Koerner was elected chairman of the Illinois Republican Party; two years later, he became president of the Illinois Republican Convention. Koerner's influence was particularly strong among German-Americans in the southern part of the state, and Lincoln sought his advice about how to appeal to them.

Symbolic of their friendship, Koerner — an attorney himself — took over some of Lincoln's cases when he became president in 1861. Perhaps most telling was the honor bestowed on Koerner after Lincoln's assassination: Koerner was chosen as a pallbearer in the fallen president's state funeral; all of the other men were Lincoln's friends from the time he lived in Springfield.

Born in 1829 in Liblar (now Erftstadt), a town located in North Rhine Westphalia, **Carl Schurz** emigrated to the United States in 1852 as one of the liberal-minded "Forty-Eighters." At the Republican Party's 1860 presidential nominating convention, when it was clear that Lincoln had won, Schurz was placed on the committee to present Lincoln with the official announcement. Afterward, Schurz was asked to give speeches in both English and German, principally in German-American communities. That summer and into the early fall, Schurz campaigned earnestly for the Republican ticket, contributing to the genial relationship that

would develop between him and Lincoln.

In 1861, Lincoln appointed the diplomatically astute Schurz as ambassador to Spain. When the Civil War broke out in April of that year, Schurz requested to come home and serve his country. In 1862, he was commissioned a brigadier general.

A pressing issue facing Lincoln during the Civil War was the need for a code of conduct to standardize his officers' actions, particularly concerning the differing decisions they made regarding the treatment of Confederate prisoners and fugitive slaves seeking refuge. In early 1863, German-born **Franz Lieber** wrote *Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field*, outlining rules for the conduct of war.

Lincoln distributed the code to his officers in April of that year, providing the needed legal guidance. Throughout the war, Lieber — who had founded the nation's first encyclopedia — was a professor at Columbia University as well as a military advisor for the Union, frequently consulting with Lincoln on issues concerning military and international law.

- Lynne Breen

Development Report

Since we established the first endowment of the German Society of Pennsylvania in 2010, we have urged members and friends to remember the Society in their wills and estate plans. It took us nearly thirteen years, but we have reached our interim goals of \$2.00MM for the General Endowment Fund and \$1.00MM for the Horner Memorial Fund. Subsequently, our Board of Directors set longer range goals of \$4.00MM and \$1.5MM, respectively. As noted in numerous development reports in the *Staatsbote*, we believe we can only achieve these new goals by means of legacy gifts.

In the past four years we received two separate bequests: \$30,000, from the estate of Ilona E. Bauer and \$25,000 from Eugenija Dana Valius in memory of Augustina Z. Valius. These be-

quests have been acknowledged, and an *In Memoriam* column for Ilona E. Bauer was included in the winter 2021 issue of the *Staatsbote*. A photo of Ms. Bauer follows. We do not have a photo of Ms. Valius.

In the past four months, we were informed by the responsible executor or attorney for the following individuals that the Society is included in their respective wills: Irmgard Martino, Vsevolod Arefjev, and Sue Kruse, wife of the late Reinhard Kruse. Their photos follow, and *In Memoriam* notices for Mr. Arefjev and Mrs. Kruse are included in this issue of the *Staatsbote* (a column for Ms. Martino was included in an earlier issue). All three individuals had notified us that it was their intention to include the German Society in their estate plans, and they were members of the Linden Society.

Our recent experience tells us that it takes up to a year and a half to settle most estates, so we will not know for some time the exact dollar amounts, or whether there are residual amounts in the estate that will be coming to the General Endowment of the Society.

We are honored and very pleased that Irmgard Martino, Vsevolod Arefjev, and Sue Kruse remembered the Society their wills.

It gives us hope that others will do the same.

- E. D. Weiler



Spotlight on Past Members: Immigrant Leo Niessen was a Successful Businessman, Philanthropist

Leo Niessen was born in 1877 in Mönchengladbach, the seventh of eleven children of Franz Niessen (or Nießen) and Philippine Tillmann. His father was a wealthy textile manufacturer—but when Leo was ten, the business failed, and the family moved to Aachen, then Cologne. Leo and three of his brothers completed three years of study at the Humboldt-Gymnasium or *Oberrealschule* (practical high school) in Cologne. After their studies the family emigrated to the United States. Grandchildren say Leo's thrift and industriousness were inspired by the negative example of his father.



The Niessen family lived for a year or more in Paterson, then moved to Philadelphia. The family was on Buttonwood St., not far from the German Society, when Leo registered as a job seeker in the GSP's *Agentur* in 1894. The register

indicates he worked as a grocery clerk and bookkeeper and spoke some English—skills he may have picked up in the Humboldt-Gymnasium. The history of the GSP lists Leo as a member since 1893, and the Society's cash book for 1947 states that he was an honorary member.

Sometime in the 1890s Leo began selling flowers on the street or at the railroad station. After 1898 he was listed in the city directory as "Niessen, Leo, florist" at various business and home addresses. In 1904 he married Madelon Michell, the daughter of a seed merchant and Swiss emigrant named Frederick Michell. A photograph shows a horse drawn wagon and a truck of the business with Leo's name on the side. The company's stationery displayed the phrase "Say it with Flowers", an expression that may have been borrowed from Anna Jarvis

and Mother's Day, which was founded in Philadelphia in 1908. In July 1910 the Leo Niessen Company purchased a plot at the corner of 12th and Race Streets and hired the Ballinger Company to build a nine-story building. It was completed a year later, and Leo's company occupied two of its floors. The Niessen Building provided rental income for him and his son for several decades after he retired in 1928 before it was sold, then converted in 2007 to the Sheraton Four Points Hotel.

Three of Leo's younger brothers also worked for his company, but his older brother Emil, my grandfather, instead followed the career of his dye-master father, founding the Quaker Oil Products Corporation in Conshohocken. Leo was President of the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge Company from 1930 to 1948. He and his brothers all lived comfortably in retirement. The GSP's basement, which Leo visited in 1894, was later remodeled to host the Ratskeller. Perhaps the panorama of Cologne in the Ratskeller today was donated by Leo in gratitude for the GSP's helping hand and the education he and his brothers received in the city on the Rhine.

Germany awarded Leo Niessen the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit (*Bundesverdienstkreuz am Bande*) at a banquet in the German Society in January 1960 in recognition of his philanthropic activities and continued regard for his homeland. The citation notes he was a benefactor of the Holy Redeemer Hospital of Meadowbrook (near his mansion) and emphasizes his work with the Committee for the Relief of Central Europe, Inc. that shipped "over 100,000 tons of clothing and food" to Germany after World War II. The award was "a symbol of the high esteem and the heartfelt gratitude which the German people and their government have for you."

- Jim Niessen

Deutsche Lieblingsrezepte aus der Kindheit gesucht!

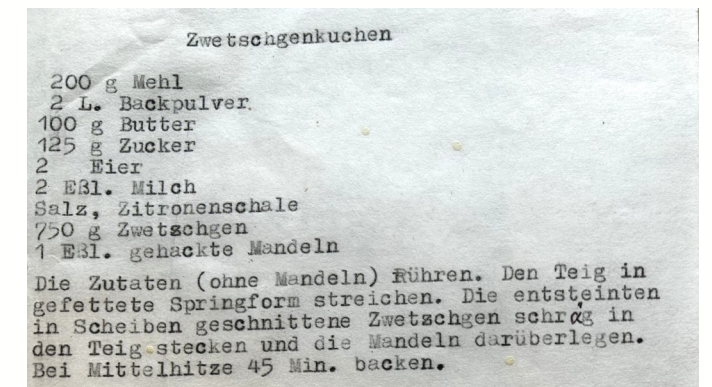
We are planning to publish a book of recipes and stories from German immigrants to Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania in general. What are your favorite German childhood recipes? What did you or your ancestors bring with them when they first arrived in America? What do you still make now? The smell and taste of dishes we cherish often bring up memories and stories of the past, and we hope these will help us recreate a culinary and historical panorama.

Cooking favorite German foods in the US can be challenging, since some ingredients are different and the dishes do not turn out as we remember them, while other ingredients can be impossible to find. We are very interested to learn how you overcame these challenges, and plan to include some helpful advice along with the recipes.

There exist a number of publications on the eating habits of German immigrants to the US, but they are often focused on a particular region in which they settled, and how the dishes were incorporated into the local American cuisine. Here in Pennsylvania, the focus is often on the Pennsylvania Germans and the dishes they brought with them in the 18th century. Our scope, however, centers more on the immigration that took place during the 20th century and extends to the present day. We are interested in the changing tastes and recipes of immigrants arriving in Philadelphia and its surroundings from all over Germany, as well as in the stories those recipes tell over time.

The book will consist of three parts: For the first part we will study the rich materials in the Joseph P. Horner Memorial Library at the German Society, for example the handwritten recipe collection and memoir from 1914 by Ernestine Hochgesang Schaefer, and the recipes in the old German handwriting on the blank pages bound in at the end of the *Brandenburgische Koch-Buch*, among other valuable sources for this early time.

The second part will explore the middle of the 20th century, and focus on the stories and



dishes brought by German immigrants during and after WWII. For this we rely heavily on family recipe collections and memories handed down in the homes of members of the German Society, and hope you will share them with us. The third part spans from the 1980s until today. For this section we invite more recent immigrants to tell us about their favorite recipes and stories. We will also work together with the children at PhillyKinder who in their classes will collect and discuss favorite family dessert recipes.

In order to help us study all these aspects of German cuisine and immigration, we encourage you to send us your favorite German recipes and the stories they evoke:

DeutscheLieblingsrezepte@gmail.com

Looking forward to learning about the flavors and memories of your German heritage!

- Maria Sturm

In Memoriam



Sue Kruse

In the last issue of the *Staatsbote*, we reported that Reinhard Kruse passed away on November 11, 2022, and we have since learned that his wife, **Sue Kruse**, died on October 20, 2023 after battling a long illness. Sue was

born and raised in Louisiana. She and Reinhard moved to Philadelphia in part because of their love of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Sue actively supported her husband's ministry, and the two of them touched many lives. Sue was very active in United Women in Faith, the official organization for women within the United Methodist Church. The pair volunteered with Hosts for Hospitals, an organization that offers housing for out-of-town patients in Philadelphia-area hospitals and their families. They also loved to travel.

Sue and Reinhard were long-time members of the Society and attended many events, especially our Wister and More Sunday concert series; they were Benefactors of the series for many years. They contributed regularly to the Annual Fund Drive and are Legacy Members. We have been informed by the estate attorney that the Society is listed as a beneficiary in their wills.

Our sympathy goes out to the extended Kruse family.



Helen Schutz

In the winter issue of the *Staatsbote*, we informed our readers that Victor Schutz passed away on October 15, 2023, and we recently learned that his dear wife, **Helen Schutz**, died on December 26, 2023. Helen

was 87; she and Victor were married for 65 years.

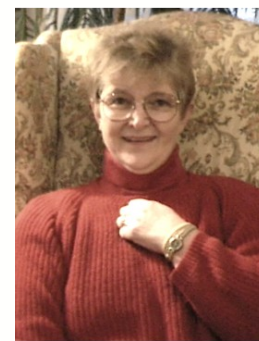
Helen obtained degrees in education from the University of Michigan and Temple University. She was gifted in foreign languages and became

a Spanish and French teacher in the Lower Merion School District for 40 years, mainly at Welsh Valley Middle School. In addition to Spanish and French, she also knew Finnish and was quite fluent in German.

During her retirement Helen enjoyed working as a volunteer for the German Society of Pennsylvania as well as helping the Women's Auxiliary – which might entail preparing delicious German dishes. For at least five years she was a regular helper in the office, always ready to take on any task. She was also an important part of our Scholarship Committee, which after a competitive interview and evaluation process awards yearly scholarships to top students from the tri-state area studying German at the college level.

Helen and Victor supported the Society financially with gifts to the Annual Fund Drives and to the newly established General Endowment. Both enjoyed attending events and were regulars at the Sunday concerts.

Our sympathy goes out to Douglas Schutz and the extended family.



Maria Rump

Wolfgang Fred Rump informed us that he lost his dear wife, **Maria "Marlies" Elisabeth Rump**, on September 8, 2023. She had been diagnosed with progressive dementia over 10 years ago and had forgotten much of her

past life, but not her husband of 63 years.

Marlies was a neighbor and fellow elementary school classmate of Fred's in Essen (Oldenburg), Germany. She was born in Oldenburg on July 8, 1938. Marlies came to the US in 1959, and she and Fred were married on April 30, 1960 in Philadelphia. Her main passion in life was taking care of her husband, children, and grandchildren. Her hobbies included working in the garden, sewing, quilting, and making Nantucket baskets.

Fred is the Founder and was Chairman/CEO of CompuData, Inc., an information technology ser-

vices firm based in Philadelphia. His daughter now serves in that capacity. During their retirement years Fred and Marlies relocated to Naples, Florida. Marlies accompanied Fred on many of his business and recreational trips.

Marlies and Fred are long-time members of the German Society, and before moving to Florida, they attended many GSP events. They contributed to the Annual Fund Drive and are Legacy Members. They have two children - Angela Maria Nadeau and Bernhard Frederick Rump. Angela is a lifetime member of the Society.

We extend our sympathy to Fred, Angela, Bernhard and the rest of the Rump family.



Vsevolod Arefjev

Vsevolod Arefjev of Philadelphia passed away peacefully on January 5, 2024 in his home in North Philadelphia. This was his residence for more than 50 years. His wife predeceased him. He was born on January 17, 1932.

As a refugee during World War II, Vsevolod settled in Munich, Germany, learned the language, attended school and subsequently emigrated to the US in the early 1950s. He attended Penn State University and graduated with an engineering degree. He worked in California for a number of years in the aerospace industry. His engineering activities brought him back to Pennsylvania.

His major nonprofessional interests centered on German and Russian literature. He was an avid collector of books and assembled an impressive private library. He was active in the German Society of Pennsylvania for many years and was a regular contributor to discussions among friends and colleagues at the *Konversationsabend*. He contributed to the Annual Fund Drive and was a member of the Endowment Legacy group.

A funeral service was held at the Russian Orthodox Church of Our Lady Joy for All Who Sorrow in Philadelphia on January 10 and interment followed at the St. Vladimir's Cemetery in Jackson, New Jersey.



Martin Knappe

Martin George Knappe, aged 88, died on January 15, 2024. He was the son of Otto and Betty Knappe, born on August 5, 1935, in Springfield, Massachusetts. He was proud of his German heritage, and he leaves behind his beloved

wife of 64 years, Stilla Knappe. He earned his forestry degree from SUNY Syracuse and an Industrial Engineering degree from Fairleigh Dickinson University, whereupon he received his Professional Engineering License. The International Paper Company provided a wonderful career for over thirty years; he headed the Liquid Packaging Division.

He was proud of his military service; he was a Colonel in the United States Army Chemical Corps Reserve. Moreover, he was a dedicated member of the Abiding Presence Lutheran Church in Ewing, New Jersey, serving in various capacities including Treasurer and Property Manager. He brought some of the same dedication and skill sets to the German Society. He served as an officer of the Society, and from 2005 to 2009 he was our VP of Operations overseeing many of our maintenance and facility enhancement efforts.

Martin also enjoyed many of our events, such as concerts and social programs – for example the *Stiftungsfest* and the *Hamburger Abend*. For the latter, we often reserved a special table for Martin, his family and friends. Martin and Stilla supported the Society financially with generous gifts to the Annual Fund Drives; he typically used mandated yearly IRA distributions for donations – these are excellent assets to use for charitable purposes.

Our sympathy goes out to Stilla, daughters Ursula Merriman (Mike), Ingrid Washington, and Erika Moyer (Rick), as well as the extended Knappe family. The Society would welcome donations in memory of Martin Knappe.

- E. D. Weiler

What We Are Reading at PhillyKinder

While looking into PhillyKinder reading habits, I realized that lately I haven't been reading much in German and have instead only been reading in English, which is a pattern that I have also observed in other kids at PhillyKinder. We are surrounded by English books, so we have to go out of our way to find a book in German, and, for most of us, English is our strongest language, so it takes a great deal more energy to read a German book.

In order to get a better understanding of the PhillyKinder reading habits, I created a questionnaire to learn about what and how kids are reading. Here are my findings: in the younger groups children are being read to in German almost every day, but as they get older that reading time decreases. This is most likely due to their ability to read on their own, but my results show that, on average, these kids almost never read on their own in German. In comparison, most kids say they read in English almost every single day. This same dynamic can be observed in PhillyKinder classrooms. The teachers in younger classes read to their students almost every week, while in the older classes teachers barely spend any time reading aloud to their groups.



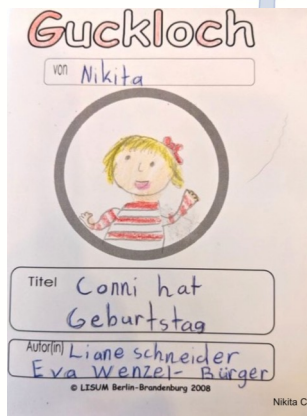
However, time is set aside for reading practice during classes. Most years, some groups get together as reading buddies. During this time older students practice reading with younger students. Other groups are putting on *Lesetheater* plays where stories are read aloud and performed. For example, the *Schlaue Füchse 2* recently presented "Kasper geht zur Schule". Lastly, the group I'm assisting is doing book presentations, where books are read in-

dependently and then presented to the rest of the class. All these activities increase engagement with German literature, and even if students are not reading at home, at least they practice this skill at PhillyKinder.

Knowing to read is only half the battle, the other half is the love of reading. So what are PhillyKinder students reading for fun? The most popular picture books are *Pettersson und Findus*, *Die Kleine Raupe Nimmersatt*, and *Conni* books, and the most beloved chapter books are *Der kleine Drache Kokosnuss*, *Schule der Magischen Tiere*, *Das Magische Baumhaus*, *Asterix und Obelix*, and *Die drei Fragezeichen*. Most of these books are over 20 years old, and some of them are books our parents grew up with. These stories, despite being quite old, have stood the test of time. They all have great stories with engaging characters and are, in many ways, timeless. This is what makes a classic a classic; they can be read by any generation without seeming too dated or out of touch.

I would suggest reading more with your children so that you can help them when they get stuck and encourage them to continue trying even if it seems difficult. I also believe that reading German books aloud will increase engagement with the literature and hopefully motivate your children to attempt to read on their own. Audiobooks could be an alternative, however, I believe that reading with someone else leads to a different level of engagement, and simply reading along with a parent encourages your child to continue reading on their own.

- Annika Grant (16),
PhillyKinder Student
Assistant Teacher



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