

Calendar of Events

JANUARY

- Jan 3: Buch club
- Jan 9: Guided Tour "The Declaration's Journey" at the Museum of American Revolution
- Jan 12: Winter Semester for German Language Courses begin
- Jan 14: Konversationsabend, 6pm im Ratskeller
- Jan 16: Friday Film Fest: "Riefenstahl", 6:30pm
- Jan 25: Wister & More! Concert Series presents Elissa Lee Koljonen and Natalie Zhu, 3:00pm

FEBRUARY

- Feb 11: Konversationsabend, 6pm im Ratskeller
- Feb 12: Dr. Emily Sneff virtual presentation "German Americans and the founders of the U.S."
- Feb 14: Buchclub in German— Georg Buechner "Lenz", 1.30pm
- Feb 14: PhillyKinder Fasching 4pm– 6pm
- Feb 15: Wister & More! Concert Series presents Night Music, 3pm
- Feb 20: Friday Film Fest: "Munich—The Edge of War", 6.30pm
- Feb 22: Galli Theater for Kids: 1pm "Sterntaler" (German), 2.30pm "Three Little Pigs" (English)
- Feb 28: Bierfest 2026 | 2pm– 5.30pm

MARCH

- March 11: Konversationsabend, 6pm im Ratskeller
- March 15: Wister & More! Concert Series presents Claire Huangci, 3pm
- March 20: Friday Film Fest: "Zwei zu eins", 6.30pm
- March 22: 6th Annual Bösendorfer Youth Music Festival, 3pm
- March 26: Prof. Jürgen Overhoff in-person discussion in the Library, Time to be determined

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Hosted by the German Society of Pennsylvania
For tickets and more info: PhillyBierfest.org

The German Society
of Pennsylvania

Neuer Pennsylvanischer
Staatsbote

CELEBRATING
1764 250 2014
YEARS OF
GERMAN
HERITAGE

Winter 2026

The Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2028
by Christine Stenner, VP of Strategic Planning

Over the past eighteen months, the German Society of Pennsylvania undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process to step back, assess where we are, and clarify where we want to go. The goal was to recalibrate our focus, align our efforts, and ensure that the Society remains strong, relevant, and sustainable as our community and its needs continue to evolve. Strategic planning helped us agree on shared priorities and a common direction that will guide decisions over the next several years.

The Society is more than a historic building and a collection of programs. It is a *Gemeinschaft*, a community of people who care about German language, culture, and connection. Communities change as generations change. Expectations shift. How people engage, volunteer, learn, and give their time looks different today than it did twenty or even ten years ago. Strategic planning gave us the space to acknowledge that reality honestly and without nostalgia-driven blind spots.

This process was intentionally people focused. It included two board retreats, a member survey, several focus groups, and many hours of discussion and work by the Strategic Planning Committee, with input from all board members. These conversations helped clarify strengths and opportunities and identify where clearer structure and coordination will best support volunteers, staff, and programs.

Strategic planning matters because it creates focus and alignment. It provides a shared framework for decisions and helps ensure that time, energy, and financial resources are directed toward agreed priorities. For the Society, this meant taking a close look at how community

engagement, programming, governance, finances, and infrastructure support one another.

The Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2028 is not a wish list. It defines five strategic areas: growing and engaging the community, delivering inclusive and relevant programming, ensuring financial and operational sustainability, investing in infrastructure, and strengthening leadership and governance. Each area includes clear responsibility and timelines to support accountability and follow through. The Board of Directors voted to implement this plan at its November 2025 board meeting. Progress will be reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee on a quarterly basis, obstacles or needs for support will be communicated, and objectives adjusted as needed.

This plan was built together, and it will only succeed through shared responsibility and continued engagement. It reflects a collective effort to honor the Society's history while preparing thoughtfully for the future.

P.S. I have always loved the word *Gemeinschaft*, and by chance, I settled in a township in Pennsylvania whose seal carries exactly this German word and the concept behind it: Lower Salford.



Our group during our Board Retreat

From the President Mark McGuigan Einen guten Rutsch... and warm wishes for the New Year!



I hope that all of you have had wonderful holidays filled with family and friends.

This year begins on an especially encouraging note as we welcome our new Executive Director, **Anett Mindermann**.

Many of you will know Anett from the past year, when she worked closely with departing Executive Director **Liesl Jandrey**. From the outset, Anett's energy, professionalism, and commitment to the Society's mission have been evident. I speak for the entire leadership when I say that we are very much looking forward to working with Anett in the coming months. Liesl will be very much missed—though we hope to see her and her young daughter at upcoming events.

Like many cultural organizations, the German Society faces real and ongoing challenges, particularly around fundraising. Sustaining meaningful programming, caring responsibly for our historic home, and planning for the future all require steady effort and shared responsibility. You can support these efforts through our Annual Fund (operations) and our Capital Campaign (Façade Project), both accessible through our website at www.germansociety.org. Your support matters more than ever. We cannot do what we do without it.

Speaking of which, I am especially pleased that the Board has recently approved a new Strategic Plan—as reported here on Page 1. This plan gives us a thoughtful and realistic framework for the years ahead and reflects careful listening, honest assessment, and shared priorities.

I want to offer my sincere thanks to our Vice President for Strategic Planning, **Christine Stenner**, for guiding this work with patience, insight, and persistence.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen zum Jahresbeginn,
Mark McGuigan

6th Annual Bösendorfer Youth Music Festival returns!

We are proud to present the **6th Annual Bösendorfer Youth Music Festival** on **March 22**, celebrating the talent and dedication of young musicians from across the Greater Philadelphia region. The festival welcomes instrumentalists, vocalists, and ensembles ages 6–18 who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to their craft. Following a competitive audition process, selected Gold and Silver medalists will perform live in a public concert, giving audiences the opportunity to experience the artistry of these emerging performers.

Now in its sixth year, the Bösendorfer Youth Music Festival has become a cherished annual tradition that encourages creativity, confidence, and musical excellence. The program reflects the German Society's long-standing mission to support education, cultural exchange, and the arts. We are still accepting sponsorships, which play a vital role in funding performance opportunities and awards while keeping the festival accessible to participants and audiences alike. To attend the concert for free or to become a sponsor, please scan the QR code below.



Lesen bei den PhillyKindern, by Birgit Splitt, PhillyKinder

Thanks to the German Society's generous donation of its children's book section and our landlord's, Ardmore United Methodist Church (AUMC), openness to sharing its library space, PhillyKinder now has its very own library. With the help of volunteers and board members, we sorted through the books, stored them temporarily, and then moved them onto freshly cleared shelves in our new space at AUMC. We are deeply grateful to the German Society for entrusting us with these books and helping us build this wonderful resource for our community.

Our library is now open to PhillyKinder families once a month for borrowing books, and each week different groups take turns visiting the



library, to choose stories to take home and read. In addition, classes regularly use the space to pick out books to enjoy reading together during PhillyKinder classes. To encourage even more reading, we introduced year-long "*Patenschaften*" – (reading) partnerships. Each younger group is paired with an older group, and they meet regularly throughout the school year to read and work together. One key insight from last summer's camp was how much younger and older children enjoy each other's company and look forward to shared activities. As *Klassen-Patenschaften* are also part of the traditional German school scene, we felt inspired by this enthusiasm and decided to build on it by creating *Patenschaften* for the PhillyKinder school year. The groups have al-

ready started reading with each other and accompanied one another during our annual lantern parade in November.

We are also delighted to share some exciting news: PhillyKinder had not one, but two winners at this year's German Language School Conference (GLSC) Reading Competition. Zoë R. and Henry B. each won first prize in their respective age categories in the heritage speaker section. Both winners have been part of our program since they were toddlers, and we are immensely proud of their achievement.

We believe that our non-traditional, more project-based approach of instruction, combined with opportunities for acting and small performances, helps our students grow in confidence and skill – especially when it comes to reading. To celebrate their success, they were invited to New York to read their excerpts to the attendees of the annual GLSC conference at the Global School Brooklyn. Zoë read from *Das doppelte Lottchen*, inspiring audience members to revisit the book, while Henry's dramatic performance from *Kuschelflosse* left everyone wanting to hear more. Each student enjoyed a complimentary night at the conference hotel and, after what many attendees called the highlight of the entire conference, a family day out in New York City.

We hope this marks the continuation of a wonderful trend and that many more of our students will take part in next year's competition.



What do you enjoy most about spending time in the library?

I get to see a lot of interesting building maintenance work.

Fun fact: What's something people might not know about you?

My life is an open book that people wisely leave unread (though really someone should shelve it correctly). I suppose few people know that I'm a big fan of swamps, and once canoed across the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia.

Karneval at the GSP in February

Karneval, Fasching or Fasnacht, Germans have different names and different traditions for this celebration, depending on the region. I grew up in Karlsruhe, where we had a big "Faschingsumzug" with floats and Funkenmariechen. Brigades of witches and devils terrified me with their massive, wooden masks, but I still had to stay up front to catch some of the candy that was raining down on us!

It's a time to have some fun before lent, an attempt at chasing away the spirits of winter, and for us at The German Society, it's a way to bring a little taste of home to our fabulous Ratskeller. Philly is not Cologne, of course, but on **February 13th, 2026**, we'll get into the Karneval spirit

with our Philly Alaaf dance party! Now in its fourth year, Philly Alaaf is a celebration of Karneval revelry, great music, dancing and friendship. Last year, we were delighted to have several members of a Philadelphia mummers brigade join us in full costume, we did a polonaise through the Ratskeller, and danced all night! Many of our guests were surprised to learn that Karneval is such a strong tradition in Germany. They associate these festivities with Mardi Gras in New Orleans, or Carnival in Rio, and they loved the fact that they could have a version of this right here!

Come in costume or come as you are, even if you are a "Faschingsmuffel" (somebody who usually hates anything related to Fasching) you will have a great time! Some terms to learn in preparation for our party are "Krapfen," the traditional sweet served during this time, Luftschlange, which are streamers, but, there won't be any "Büttenreden," which are the funny speeches given during traditional Karneval events.

Doors will open at 8pm, and tickets are available on our website or at the door.

- by Maiken Scott, Board Member



Marking our Nation's 250th Anniversary – Upcoming Events for 2026

Twenty twenty-six is finally here and events are popping up around Philadelphia to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Philadelphia's city government and many local institutions have special programming planned throughout the year to celebrate our nation's founding and Philadelphia as the place where it happened!

The Declaration was signed just a few blocks from the Lutheran schoolhouse on Cherry Street where German Society members met in 1776. The German Society of Pennsylvania already existed for almost 12 years by the time our nation was founded. Of course, Philadelphia was at that time home to a great number of German immigrants, and many prominent citizens were GSP members. To honor the part German-Americans played in our nation's founding, the Library Committee is planning some events related to that history. We will be adding more to the calendar, but here are a few you can take note of now:

January 9, 2026 - tour of the Museum of the American Revolution's exhibition "The Declaration's Journey - Dr. Emily Sneff will give a guided tour of the exhibit with an emphasis on the Germans. This event was sold out, but if there is enough interest, we can offer it again in the fall. Let us know if you would like to be put on a list to be notified.

January 22, 2026 - Opening reception for the Historical Society of Pennsylvania exhibition *Changing Faces of Independence: Pennsylvania in the 1800s*. Library representatives consulted with HSP on themes and selection of documents from their collection related to the German community in Philadelphia, and GSP members are invited to attend.

February 12, 2026 - Dr. Emily Sneff virtual presentation German Americans and the founding of the United States. Co-sponsored with the Max Kade Institute for German American Studies-Madison, WI and the German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C.

March 26, 2026 - Professor Jürgen Overhoff (Universität Münster) In-person discussion of his double biography of Frederick the Great and George Washington. The event will be a Q & A with Dr. Friederike Baer moderating.

June 5, 2026 - Special tour for GSP members of the exhibition: "Window to the Revolution: Pennsylvania Germans and the War for Independence" at Historic Trappe.

Keep an eye on your inbox or check the website periodically for more information about 2026 events.



In addition to the events being planned, we are selling (while supplies last!) a facsimile of the first German translation of the Declaration of Independence, printed by German Society members Carl Cist and Melchior Steiner on July 6, 1776. The high-resolution broadside, printed on heavy paper and measuring approximately 16 x 20", is reproduced from the original in the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin, one of only two surviving copies. It can be ordered on the Society's website www.germansociety.org, or by contacting our office.

The cost is \$50 (including shipping) and will be mailed to you in a tube container.

- by Bettina Hess, Librarian

Dr. Maria Sturm Honored with the 2025 AATG Friend of German–Educator Award

Dr. Maria Sturm has been a central figure in the German-speaking communities of Philadelphia for a good two decades.

She exemplifies what it means to be a “Friend of German” through the multitude of her official functions in connection with the German Society of Pennsylvania, that not only contribute to German Studies but also create educational opportunities for the public at large. Throughout her career, Maria Sturm has been continually looking for ways to enhance the German Society’s relationship with the local community, to strengthen German language programs, and to promote German culture. Within this context, her leadership was central to organizing a Society for German American Studies (SGAS) Conference as well as other academic gatherings. Based on her in-depth knowledge of the holdings of the German Society’s Horner Library, she also mentors college interns, supporting them in their effort to gain practical experience in transcribing historical documents as well as in preserving and curating the vast collection of this historic library.

As chair of the Library Committee at the German Society, Maria played a key role in guiding decisions about cataloging, digitization, and institutional partnerships—particularly with the German Historical Institute in Washington D.C., whose fellows regularly consult the library for their research, as well as the Max Kade Institute at the University of Wisconsin, where she has been instrumental in organizing and leading an online transcription group.

Maria Sturm’s dedication to promoting German language instruction in the U.S. is equally impressive. In 2012, after years of organizing a German playgroup, she co-founded PhillyKinder, a program that provides a social and cultural home for German-speaking families and offers German-language education for children of both native and non-native speakers. Originally part of the German Society, Maria successfully shepherded PhillyKinder’s

transformation into an independent, volunteer-driven nonprofit organization that continues to thrive and serve the region to this day.

She is also an active member of the German Society’s Language Committee, whose declared goal is to strengthen and broaden German instruction in the region in collaboration with other organizations. Her engagements range from actively supporting German teachers during the local “Sprachfest” to assisting with various regional events in cooperation with AATG, running German book clubs and advocating for increased cooperation among those institutions that still provide German language instruction.

Maria’s exceptional passion for promoting German language education and her dedication to strengthening German-American relations through her networking efforts and curatorial work have been transformational for German education in her region and beyond, and it is a pleasure to honor this immense accomplishment with the AATG’s “Friend of German Award.”



INSIDE THE GSP—Library

Meet Lorena Boylan, our cataloguer!



How long have you worked at the GSP?

I started at the Horner Memorial Library in April 2017, when I was hired to complete the cataloging of the Fiction Collection. I worked mainly with books published in Germany between 1918 and 1960. It

was originally a grant-funded one-year project, but we kept getting more grants, so I kept going. There were more than 5,000 volumes to be handled, and the majority were in Fraktur, so it was slow going sometimes. It took 7 years to finish. Now I’m cataloging our 19th and 20th century German-American periodicals.

What is your favorite part of your job?

I love working with older books and periodicals because they have so much to say about the time in which they were published, whether it’s their design or the subject matter they cover. Many of the periodicals that I am working on now have advertisements for local businesses owned by Germans. Some of the Philadelphia publications have advertisements for businesses that were in the area of 7th & Spring Garden Streets, which was a largely German neighborhood. Many of these publications were intended to support newly arrived immigrants, to help them maintain a connection with their German heritage, and to help them make a new life in a new country.

What motivates you?

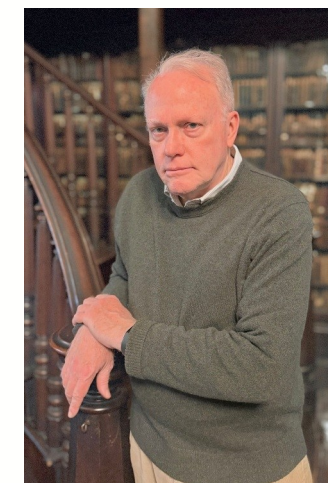
The job of a cataloger is to make library materials accessible through the library catalog. The Horner Library’s online catalog, which can be accessed through the GSP website, allows researchers to search our collections in ways not possible with the old card catalog. I get a lot of satisfaction from knowing that I am helping in this process.

Fun fact?

I am an avid collector of ceramics and pottery. Nearly all of the mugs, bowls, and plates that my husband and I use every day were handmade by artisans from all over the U.S., a number of whom are German-American.

Meet Mark Darby, a long-term volunteer cataloguer!

How did you first get involved with the German Society and its library?



I helped work on some preservation projects in the 90s as a volunteer, which is where I met the current librarian, Bettina Hess.

What motivated you to volunteer in the Horner Memorial Library?

After I retired from my position at Temple University Libraries, I was thinking about doing something useful with some of my time. Coincidentally, Maria Sturm and Bettina suggested I might be able to help around Horner Memorial Library.

What’s the most interesting project or discovery you’ve worked on so far?

I’ve spent most of my time on a project to catalog the library’s fiction holdings printed between 1918 and 1960 (and a little beyond). The project was technically satisfying--lots of badly-described works to puzzle out--and it was fun to learn about the authors and their publications.

How has your previous career at Temple University influenced your work here?

I worked as a cataloger at Temple for 23 years, so I’d say those years and the preceding 7 at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton taught me everything I know about library work.

— cont'd

members of the Society are with their contributions for important causes – we need to remember that in the past 15 years, excluding the three listed bequests, we raised almost \$ 3.00 MM for the *General Endowment* and the *Horner Memorial Library Endowment* with donations ranging from a few hundred dollars to \$ 100,000. 3. A memorial gift for a loved-one is an attractive option to honor someone and at the same time to support the German Society.

In closing, we would like to thank each and every member and friend of the Society who contributed to our endowments. And **please** consider remembering the German Society in your wills and estate plans. Any amount will be greatly appreciated.

We have come a long way since 2010 and it is an excellent start. **We can to this – to put the Society on a firm financial footing for generations to come – let keep it going – it's a journey!**

- by E. D. Weiler

Diplomfeier (Diploma Celebration) at the German Consulate in New York, Nov 2025

We are thrilled to share the highlights of the annual Diplomfeier (Diploma Celebration), hosted by the German Consulate General in New York City. These outstanding students attend German language schools from Connecticut to Philadelphia.

Representing the Immanuel German School/Deutsche Sprachschule Philadelphia is long-time Principal (now School Committee Head) and dedicated board member of the German Society of Pennsylvania, Dr. Del Hausman.

The German Language Diploma (Deutsche Sprachdiplom) is quite a prestigious award, and the exam, which takes place over two days, assess listening and reading comprehension as well as spoken and written com-



munication skills. Unlike most American exams, the four sections are not averaged together: students must be proficient in all four language skills in order to achieve the diploma.

The exam, exams, really, since there are two levels: DSD I and DSD II, corresponding to the levels B1 and C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Level B1 certifies proficiency sufficient for entry into a German *Studienkolleg*; C1 opens doors to study at a German university, where tuition is free or significantly lower than in the U.S.

- by Dr. Del Hausman, Board Member & Principal of the Immanuel German School

Immanuel German School/Deutsche Sprachschule Philadelphia



Featured in the photo : Anna Busch, Fachleiterin der ZfA, Dr. Del Hausman, Immanuel German School, Eva Heckelman, Lara Smith, Johanna Zewdie, Victoria Aiquel Gomez, Maximilian Klon, Carsten Rüpke, Deputy Consul General

Mark your calendar for Bierfest 2026!

Join us at the **13th annual Philly Bierfest on Saturday, February 28th** for one of the German Society's largest and liveliest events of the year!

The Original Philly Bierfest is a world-class winter beer festival that celebrates Pennsylvania's German brewing heritage and has been recognized as one of the country's top ten beer festivals in USA Today's Reader's Choice Awards. Showcasing only Pennsylvania beers made in German styles and German imports, this event reaches beyond our own property to include the neighboring Latvian Society building, resulting in a diverse range of entertainments and activities spread across six floors and two beer halls in these two historic buildings, as well as the outdoor garden.

You won't want to miss this happy occasion where over one thousand lager-loving beer fans bring joy to our halls as they enjoy an eclectic mix of live entertainments, German-inspired cuisine, and no shortage of beer tastings and pairings from local and global purveyors alike. Philly Bierfest attendees will be able to enjoy:

- Two Beer Halls pouring 100+ German-style beers from dozens of Pennsylvania's best craft brewers and Germany's world class breweries.
- Two Stages packed with live entertainment ranging from Roller Derby Arm-Wrestling, to T.C. Cole's Phil-billy music and Polkadelphia's Oompah Funk.
- A German Speakeasy featuring the Bavarian Ayinger Bar, the PA Cheese Cave and a "NoLo Bar" featuring German zero-proof and low-alcohol beers.
- Ratskeller Food Hall featuring traditional German wursts and pretzels, as well as the PA Cider Bar and the Home Sweet Home-braü homebrewing contest.
- Engaging educational opportunities in the Bierfest Academy, aka the beautiful 19th century Horner Memorial Library, including

legendary drinks author Marnie Old's guided beer tasting seminar on German & American Lager Brewing history. (While the 2/28 session of this seminar is sold out, we are about to launch an additional "overflow" session that will take place on Saturday, 2/21 in the German Society's auditorium.)

- Opportunities for rare experiences galore, such as traditional Bavarian "Bierstacheln" where Doppelbock beer are caramelized with hot pokers by the outdoor firepit, a "Beer Jello Masskrugstemmen" endurance contest and a chance to win Philly Bierfest's "Best Legs in Lederhosen" competition for those suitably attired.

For ticketing links and more information, visit www.PhillyBierfest.org or scan the QR Code below.



GSP Member discounts are available – contact the German Society @ info@germansociety.org for details.

- by Marnie Old, Bierfest organizer

Endowment Funds

By Ernest Weiler, VP of Advancement

When I joined the Board of Directors in 2004 it was obvious to the officers of the Society that we needed a new source of funds, in addition to membership dues, income from events and rentals. Foundations generally do not provide on-going support to not-for profit organizations; they typically support projects which are generally aligned with their mission. We will save our story about foundation support of the German Society for a future article in the Staatsbote.

We concluded that a meaningful endowment might be a solution to our longer term challenge – how to adequately fund the programs and activities of the German Society for generations to come and to also preserve our wonderful and attractive home, constructed in 1888. We learned that the Philadelphia Foundation would allow us to established an endowment for as little as \$ 10,000 and at the Christkindlemarkt event, on December 6, 2010, Ulrich Both and his son Ron Both presented us with a check for \$ 50,000 which allowed us to establish the first *General Endowment* of the Society. We were around for 246 years at that point but did not an endowment! Five year later, in 2015, we established the *Horner Memorial Library Endowment* to support the activities of the library. And since, we also initiated several endowments to support our scholarship program. These endowed funds are currently managed by the Haverford Trust Company; we have a small residual account with the Philadelphia Foundation.

We have made amazing progress. There have been many individual contributions to all three sets of endowed funds. Typically members and friends contributed to the funds of their choice. For example, the residual funds from the Women's Auxiliary were designated by the organization for the *Library Endowment*.

Donations to Endowments

Chairman's Circle – \$100,000

Estate of Vsevolod Arefjev
The Arcadia Foundation
Margaret Darby (20026)
The Max Kade Foundation
Irmgard Martino
Joseph Pfeifer
In memory of Elsa Schweikert
The Women's Auxiliary of the German Society
Hella and Lew Volgenau

President's Circle—\$50,000 or more

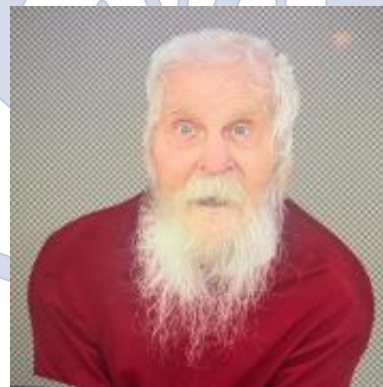
Ulrich A. Both
The Goerge and Isabella Beichl Memorial Fund
The H.D. Justi Memorial Fund
The F. William Sunderman Memorial Fund
Frank and Renate Genieser
Ruth Detwiler in memory of Gertrud and Martin Silge
Ernest and Jutta Weiler
David Haas, R. Gupta and L. Wilson in memory of John C. Haas

Council—\$25,000 or more

Hardy and Gudrun von Auenmueller
The Albert and Hete Barthelmes Foundation
The Ilona E. Bauer Memorial Fund
Carole Haas Gravagno, John & Janet Haas,
William & Jeanie Haas, Thomas Haas in memory of F. Otto Haas
Robert M. and Paula W. Koerner
Gabriele Windeck Lee
Doris MacPherson in memory of Jim MacPherson
Hans and Harriet Mueller
In memory of Gloria M. Schurer
Eugenija Dana Valius in memory of Augustina Z. Valius
In memory of Gertrude and Peter Hoehne

We received two bequests in 2025 and are expecting payment from a third bequest early in 2026 which have greatly increased the value of

the *General Endowment Fund* as well as the *Library Endowment Fund*, at the end of December, the account balances were \$ 4.15 MM and \$ 1.78 MM, respectively.



As far as we can determine, the \$ 2.00 MM distribution from the estate Vsevolod Arefjev is the largest gift to the German Society. Mr. Arefjev requested that \$ 500,000 should go to the *Horner*

Library Endowment and \$ 1.5 MM to the *General Endowment Fund*. These are partial distributions from the estate, which has not been settled. Additional distributions will likely be much smaller. As noted in his *In Memoriam* in the Spring 2024 issue of the Staatsbote, Mr. Arefjev was a refugee during World War II, settled in Munich, Germany, learned German, attended a gymnasium and subsequently emigrated to the U.S.A in the early 1950's. He attended Penn State University and graduated with an engineering degree. He worked in California for a number of years in the aerospace industry. 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.

The attorney for the estate of Irmgard Martino also made a partial distribution. The Society is listed as a residual beneficiary in her will and the estate will likely be settled in 2026. With prior gifts from Irmgard, her contributions the *General Endowment Fund* comes to close to \$500,000.

Irmgard was also a German immigrant. She worked for the Girard Bank and the Siemens Corporation in New Jersey. And, in her sixties, when most people retire, she took a job with the IRS and finally retired at the age of 78! As

we mentioned in her *In Memoriam* in the Fall 2023 issue of the Staatsbote, German causes and organizations were important to her. She was the president of the von Steuben Society of America, Pastorius Unit No. 38 in Philadelphia for many years; the group organized an annual commemorative event at the Friederick von Steuben statue in Valley Forge Park. She was on the Board of the Vereinigung Erzgebirge, a member of the Cannstatter Volksfest Verein and the German Society of Pennsylvania.

And finally in 2025 we learned that the German Society is the listed as a beneficiary in the estate of Margaret Darby. As we reported in Summer 2024 issue of the Staatsbote, she almost selected music career, mastered simultaneous interpretations, primarily between French and English, freelanced for the EC in Brussels and earned a masters degree in library science from Drexel. She worked at libraries and in schools in Delaware before moving to Philadelphia. At the German Society she was active in literary discussion and always attend chamber music events. For a number of years she provided interesting articles about our music programs and performances for the Staatsbote.

We expect to receive payment in January of 2026 and this will mean a significant contribution to the *General Endowment Fund*. Moreover, we will establish the *Darby Capital Fund*, to help pay for future projects at the Society. A building as old as ours, always has a significant maintenance and restoration budget. The latter will not be an endowed fund so that the monies are readily available as the need arises. With our endowments, we are contractually restricted to limit yearly withdrawals to 4% of the account balance.



What have we learned over the past 15 years!

1. What a huge difference generous legacy gifts have made to our efforts to establish meaningful endowments for the Society? 2. How generous