



THE AMBASSADOR

DER BOTSCHAFTER

A Publication of the German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA®
Chartered as the United German-American Committee of the USA, Inc.

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GAHF Partners with Genealogist Dirk Weissleder for Online Workshop on Dec. 4 to Assist German-Americans with Family Research

"A name is nothing small" once wrote none other than the great German poet and scholar Johann Wolfgang v. Goethe. And he was right. Names are not only what we use to identify ourselves as individuals, but they also provide clues about where we come from and connect us with the past. One of the problems people face today is that the meaning and historical background of names are often unknown. In a country of immigrants, such as the United States where people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds have come together, names present an even bigger challenge.

The search for the story behind names and families, the science of genealogy, has become a popular pastime for many Americans in recent decades, not just those of German-speaking descent. It is perhaps no surprise that people whose ancestors migrated from every corner of the earth, have enthusiastically embraced searching for their roots. Online sources, such as Ancestry.com, and the growing effort to digitize and search records from the comfort of one's home, have inspired many people to dive into the task of discovering their families' origins.

I regularly receive calls, emails, and social media messages from individuals who ask for assistance in deciphering and translating old letters, birth and baptism certificates or who request information about whom to contact in Germany to obtain passenger lists from ships, locate church or civil records, or even to find formerly German-speaking towns in the Baltics, in Poland or other countries. Sometimes I am able to help these individuals myself, but often I have to refer them to other resources.

I am very pleased to announce GAHF's first collaboration with Mr. Dirk Weissleder, the chairman of the national umbrella organization of German Genealogical and Heraldic Societies (DAGV), and 2nd Vice-President of the International German Genealogy Partnership (IGGP), to introduce you to the exciting world of family history research with a special focus on German-American heritage. This lecture will be an introduction to **German-American genealogy**, and will give you **helpful, example-based research tips and sources** that will allow you to trace your family name(s) through time. Before you start digging deeper into genealogical research, you need an understanding of the **historic development, function and meaning of German surnames**. While names may seem easy at first glance, each case can present unique challenges depending on family lines and region of origin. Without a name, an individual cannot be identified.

Please register now to secure your spot for this online seminar by visiting www.gahmusa.org → Events or by emailing info@gahmusa.org. The workshop will be held on Saturday, **Dec. 4 at 2 pm EST** via Zoom, an Internet-based video conferencing platform. The cost is \$30 for members and \$35 for nonmembers. You will receive the login information necessary to access the seminar upon completing registration.



OUR MISSION

The German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA® is dedicated to preserve, educate and promote the cultural heritage of Americans of German-speaking ancestry and to be a leading voice of German-Americans in cultural and public policy matters in the USA.

We serve as a national membership organization through which Americans, proud of their German heritage and language, work together on vital issues of common concern.

The German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA® was established in 1977 and chartered the following year as the United German-American Committee of the USA, Inc. as an independent, tax-exempt, educational not-for-profit organization.

We are committed to:

- Sharing a positive image of Americans of German-speaking heritage by focusing on their historical contributions to American society
- Strengthening the ethnic awareness and cooperation of German-Americans
- Promoting the German language and culture
- Cultivating German-American friendship and cooperation
- Supporting cooperative efforts among German-Americans and their organizations

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**The Ambassador
(Edition Fall 2021)**

Publisher: German-American Heritage
 Foundation of the USA®

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Photos: © GAHF

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Message from the Executive Director

Dear Members and Friends,

In my last letter to you, which had been written in early March, I expressed my cautious optimism that COVID-19 could soon be much less of a hurdle than it had been in 2020. Our museum in Washington, DC is open, it's also equipped with a beautiful new, durable and eco-friendly bamboo floor (see page 10 for more information), and we just had our first in-person event with more than 20 people in attendance since February of last year. On Nov. 16, author and attorney David O. Stewart celebrated the official launch of his historical novel about a German immigrant family, *The New Land*, set in coastal Maine in the 1750s at our remodeled museum. Since we are on the topic of books, our own anthology of Germanic influences entitled ***How German Ingenuity Inspired America: More Fun, More Beauty, More Freedom***, available through our website, Amazon, and our Facebook shop, is a fabulous present for a special someone. Even connoisseurs of German-American history will find tidbits that are new to them, whilst complete newcomers won't be overwhelmed with lengthy texts.

October was German American Heritage Month, and we once again celebrated the achievements of German-speaking immigrants with a **virtual program on Oct. 6** featuring contributions from different German-American clubs, including DANK, the German Information Center at the German Embassy, Rev. Katja Albrecht from Washington, DC's Vereinigte Kirche, Larry Schultz, president emeritus of the American German Business Club in Munich, and last but definitely not least, Rep. Glenn Thompson of Pennsylvania, the co-chairman of the Congressional German-American Caucus. Speaking of this Caucus, please visit our Website <https://gahmusa.org/congressional-resolution-on-german-american-friendship/> for a copy of the latest **Congressional Resolution on German-American Friendship**, which was submitted to the 117th Congress on Nov. 4 by Rep. Keating of Massachusetts. In it, Keating highlights the "close bond, historical ties and shared values that must be maintained and strengthened" to create and ensure peaceful, free, and democratic societies. Of course, the desire for peace, freedom, democracy, and economic opportunities also fueled emigration from German-speaking lands, and it is a fitting reminder that concepts and rights we often take for granted must be actively cherished and protected to remain intact for the next generation. Educating about the past and its implications on today and tomorrow is important for the future, and that is at the very core of GAHF's mission and vision. Organizations like ours perform a vital function by connecting people through shared traditions, preserving history, and teaching important lessons for society as a whole.

As always, thank you for your support and loyalty during the past and this coming year. I wish you a very happy Advent and Christmas season and a good start into 2022. Bis bald und alles Gute!

Yours sincerely,
 Katja Sipple

Message from the President



Dear Valued Members:

We had planned to celebrate German-American Day on October 6th at the German-American Friendship Garden this year, in time for a re-opening and re-dedication of the garden on the Mall overlooking Washington Monument and the White House. Regrettably, the fountain, which is a highlight of the garden, did not get completed due to a worldwide microchip shortage to operate it, and the German corporate sponsors could not participate, because the pandemic was still barring European Union nationals from entering the U.S. Therefore, our Executive Director, Katja Sipple, organized a one-hour virtual celebration via Zoom which was recorded and is available to be enjoyed on YouTube by using the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1MFQeisSzo>. Several guest speakers from the German Embassy, the German-American Congressional Caucus, the American German Business Club in Munich, and others were able to make the day a memorable occasion, including, of course, the reading of the Presidential Proclamation for German-American Day.

Although the pandemic was still with us, particularly this past summer, it wasn't a total washout. Some German-American clubs, like the Delaware Saengerbund of which I'm a member, started to have meetings again and planned to have its Oktoberfest the third weekend in September. Although it was touch and go at first with some logistical problems, the event itself was very successful with 14,000 attendees who were very hungry for some outdoor fun, German food, beer and music, and all the carnival rides.

I recently attended a historical outdoor event that celebrated the life of Christian Krauch with the unveiling of a new headstone at the Wilmington & Brandywine Cemetery. Krauch was born in 1805 in Waldenbuch, Bavaria, and he immigrated to Philadelphia in 1834 at the age of 29. He started brewing beer shortly after he arrived in the city using lager yeast that a fellow countryman, John Wagner, brought with him. In 1850, Krauch saw an opportunity to open a hotel and saloon in the affluent and growing city of Wilmington where he began brewing his lager beer. In 1853, a group of men singers formed a club at his saloon, which became the basis for today's Delaware Saengerbund. Krauch was nominated as the Saengerbund's first founding honorary member! He died in 1870 at the age of 65, apparently bankrupt, because a larger and more successful brewery had put small producers like Krauch out of business. However, 23 years after his death, a local newspaper remembered Krauch as the "Father of Lager Beer in Delaware," and he is still remembered as such.



As you might expect, 2020-2021 have been difficult years for GAHF. We managed to bring several online events to our members, and have survived the pandemic largely because members have shown their generosity and loyalty, as we continue to cultivate a greater awareness for German-American heritage and history. We received many positive reviews of our book, *How German Ingenuity Inspired America*, researched and written by Lynne Breen, which may be purchased through our website.

We also provided a courtesy listing of legitimate charitable groups that promised quick and effective help to the victims of last summer's devastating floods in Germany. Furthermore, I urge everyone to participate in GAHF's Annual Fund drive which was started on October 6th and continues through December 31st. You can conveniently and securely donate online at gahmusa.org.

Late fall is the time when we elect a new board, I thank all of our board members for their contributions. There are some whose terms will expire in 2021 and who will leave us, others who have decided to run again for three-year terms, plus two new board nominees who are listed in this newsletter. We urge all members to vote when the proxies are sent later this year. On behalf of all of us at GAHF, thank you for your continued support as we bring you new exhibits and events in the coming year, both online and in our museum.

Ich wünsche Ihnen ein erfolgreiches und gesundes neues Jahr.
Mit herzlichem Dank und Gruß,
Don Thureau

How German ingenuity Inspired America

In previous issues of our newsletter, I have on occasion written about certain historic aspects of how Germans and German-Americans have influenced our daily lives. Hence, I was very pleased when a good friend of mine introduced me to **Lynne Breen's** manuscript of the above-titled book. Upon reading just a few chapters, I immediately thought this book must be published by our organization.

That was almost two years ago. Because of coronavirus restrictions over the past 18 months, Lynne Breen, Katja Sipple and I had numerous virtual meetings and exchanged hundreds of e-mails with one another, before we finally had a chance this fall to meet in person.

While Lynne Breen had agreed to come for a book signing at our Museum in Washington, DC, on German-American Day, October 6, following our virtual celebration of that historic date, she and her husband spent the prior weekend in Philadelphia to re-acquaint themselves with its history.

It was a great pleasure for me to have her visit my alma mater, The German Society of Pennsylvania (GSP), which I have served for the past two decades in various voluntary functions — from dishwasher to President. The GSP is the oldest cultural institution in this country, dating back to colonial times. At that time, Philadelphia was the largest city in North America, and the center of commercial activity.

My most cherished place within the venerable GSP building is the Horner Memorial Library — with 80,000 books that I am planning to read, once I retire from my various voluntary jobs, both here in Philadelphia and in Washington, DC.



The GSP members attending this first in-person presentation on our book by Lynne Breen may have been surprised to find themselves going on a trip to the dentist, as she used this metaphor to illustrate how much **German Ingenuity** affects our daily lives.

Lynne described how we woke up to a cup of hot coffee, thankfully devoid of annoying coffee grounds, because a Dresden housewife named **Melitta Bentz** had invented the first disposable coffee filter — for which she received a patent in 1908. Lynne noted that we then glanced at our small kitchen blackboard, which informed us of a dental appointment that day. We wouldn't have had this reminder had it not been for **Christopher Dock**, a school teacher in Pennsylvania during the 1700s who had brought over the blackboard from his native Germany.

And, our dentist would not have known about a cavity needing attention had it not been for **Wilhelm Röntgen**, the Nobel-Prize-winning physicist who in 1895 had discovered x-rays!

We were heartened, however, to spy a rainbow outside our kitchen window, believing it to be a good omen for the day. Lynne reminded us that during the thirteenth century, **Theodoric of Freiburg** had determined that refraction causes rainbows. He was also able to calculate, with precise accuracy, that the angle of rainbows is 42 degrees.

A severe thunderstorm had pummeled Greater Philadelphia the night before, but residents did not lose power thanks to German-born **Charles Steinmetz** — known as the General Electric Company's "electrical wizard" — who had invented the arrestor that safeguards power lines from lightning harm.

Just before leaving the house, we thought to take along a couple of aspirin in the event of some lingering discomfort following the dental procedure. We were glad that aspirin now comes in tablet form, because when first developed in Germany in 1897 by the **Bayer** drug company, the pain reliever was available only in powder form.

For our short trip, we climbed into our automobile, an invention attributed to both **Karl Benz** and **Gottlieb Daimler**. While Benz in 1885 developed the first road vehicle powered by gasoline — rather than steam — it was Daimler, in the same year, who introduced a superior internal combustion system. The two far-sighted gentlemen lived just sixty miles apart in southwestern Germany, but would never meet.

Lynne noted that our car came equipped with a sporty sun roof, invented by German immigrant **Heinz C. Prechter**, who worked with Detroit's Big Three automakers in the 1960s to install sun roofs and moon roofs in cars as they proceeded along the production line.

As we drove past an airport on the way to the dentist, the modern jet we spotted on the tarmac reminded us of the Wright brothers, who made their historic flight in 1903 in North Carolina. Orville and Wilbur were inspired by **Otto Lilienthal**, Germany's "flying man," who invented and piloted the first successful manned hang glider, introduced some of the earliest known fundamentals of flying, and was the first person to have his picture taken while aloft.

After parking our car and walking toward the dentist's office, we passed a travel agency window, trumpeting "luxury cruises" in gigantic letters. This reminded us of **Albert Ballin**, the genius behind the Hamburg-Amerika Line, which began offering splendid cruises during the winter months in the warm seas of the Mediterranean and Caribbean.

The next store we passed was advertising 50 percent off on all of its Christmas merchandise. At first, we lamented that it wasn't yet Halloween, but then we remembered that most of America's Christmas traditions have come from our beloved Germany — the Christmas tree itself, colorful glass-blown ornaments, the crèche, the custom of gift-giving, and even our image of Santa Claus, drawn in 1863 by German-born illustrator **Thomas Nast**.

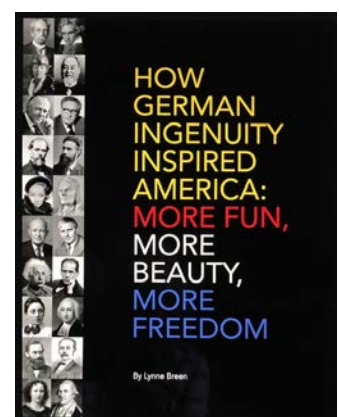
We arrived at the dentist's office grateful to **Ernst von Bergmann**, the German professor who introduced the necessity of sterilizing medical instruments, as well as the pristine white jacket worn by our dentist. To ensure we felt no pain, we were injected with a modern anesthetic — a successor to the novocaine of 1905 developed by German chemist **Alfred Einhorn**.

A highlight of Lynne's presentation, in my opinion, was a ten-question trivia quiz posed to the audience. Attendees, who correctly answered the German-related questions, each received a Hershey bar — appropriate because Milton Hershey learned how to make chocolate confections from a German candy maker, **J. M. Lehmann** of Dresden, whose automated equipment he acquired from the floor of the 1892/93 World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago.

As stated before, I believe our **German Ingenuity** compandium covering the many contributions by German-Americans must be made accessible to the general public, and as educational material for high schools, colleges and universities. The book is priced at \$39.99 plus \$7.00 for shipping and handling. For orders of 20 or more copies, we are waiving the \$7.00 s/h fee, and on quantities of more than 50 copies, we are granting a 10 percent discount.

Incidentally, at Lyne Breen's book presentation in Philadelphia, several attendees bought multiple copies. When asked what they will do with these books, I was told they are **perfect Christmas gifts** for relatives and friends . . . and I certainly agree.

— Hardy von Auenmueller



Meet the Candidates for our Board of Directors

On Saturday, December 11, 2021 at 1:00 PM, the German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA® will hold its 2021 Annual Membership Meeting / Election of Directors on the premises of the Cannstatter Volksfest Verein, 9130 Academy Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114; Tel: 215-332-0121.

Seven (7) candidates for 3-year-terms, five (5) of whom are incumbents, are presented for your consideration. Their vision statements and photos are found below. Complete statements will be mailed with the Notice of the Annual Membership Meeting. Members must be in good standing to be eligible to vote, i.e., current on dues no later than the end of business Thursday, Dec. 9. Members wishing to vote must be present at the meeting, or cast their vote by proxy and/or ballot.

As in prior years, the Board of Directors will convene after the Annual Membership meeting at which time the election of officers will take place in keeping with our by-laws. Should you have any questions, please contact our Administrative Director, Christine Yang at 202-467-5000 or via email at yang@gahmusa.org.

— Donald D. Thureau, President

Dr. Charles K.H. Borowsky, Baltimore, MD



I was born in Silesia. In 1945, my homeland became part of Poland under a communist regime. Later in life—as a professor of sociology with a research interest in the youth movements of the 1960s—I published my first book discussing the equivalent movement in Eastern Europe. This did not sit well with the Polish authorities, and I was asked to leave. However, that experience opened the door to various forums in Europe and America. After a conference at the United Nations, I was invited to join the faculty at Yale University.

Today, I am leading two organizations: Intermuse (promoting classical music around the world) and the International Institute for Regional Studies (built on my prior international academic experience). Through both avenues, I have lectured extensively, including ten universities in Germany. Over the course of my career in music management, I have brought many acclaimed German musicians to perform in the USA. Our family ensemble, known as The American Virtuosi, has performed worldwide and in Germany many times.

It is the music connection which first brought me into contact with the German Society of Pennsylvania. Having been a GSP member for many years and member of the Board of Directors for three terms, I arranged the 2008 U.S tour for the Youth Orchestra of Rheinland-Pfalz, including a performance at the Society. In the years since, I organized an annual “Lobster Feast” as fundraiser for the cultural programming.

I would gladly continue my service as a board member and support its mission by (1) sharing my academic and cultural management experience, including organizing fundraising events, (2) assisting the foundation with creative ideas, i.e. bringing in younger members, and (3) serving as a liaison with other ethnic groups.

Lynne Breen, Lansing, MI



In today’s changed world, nonprofit organizations, such as the German-American Heritage Foundation are facing unaccustomed challenges. I am interested in serving on the GAHF Board of Directors because I believe I can assist the organization in fulfilling its mission in two principal ways: communication and programming.

I joined GAHF because of the faith the Foundation placed in me by publishing *How German Ingenuity Inspired America*. My inspiration for writing the book came through my friendship with the co-author of my first book, *I’ll See You Again, Lady Liberty* (The True Story of a German Prisoner of War in America.) Not only did Ernst Floeter motivate me to research German achievements and contributions to America, he also rekindled my interest in my mother’s German heritage. Further, working on German Ingenuity with Hardy von Auenmueller and Katja Sipple convinced me that I want to be part of the GAHF “family.”

A history graduate of Eastern Michigan University, I hold a master’s degree in education from EMU and a master’s degree in journalism from Michigan State University. I retired in 2006 from the State of Michigan after serving for thirty years as a writer. Previous positions include writer for the University of Connecticut and English instructor at Northwest Ohio Community College.

For the past thirteen years, I have been a volunteer with Hospice House, Sparrow Health System, Lansing, Michigan. In 2009, I was named Hospice Volunteer of the Year; in 2011, I was the Hospice nominee for the Capital Area United Way Volunteer of the Year Award. My responsibilities have included writing and layout design for the program’s newsletter as well as creating informative foyer displays for family and friends visiting hospice patients.

My interest in German contributions to humankind continues as I am now conducting research on German-American activism in the Underground Railroad. I would be honored to apply the communication and programming skills I have acquired over the years in support of GAHF.

Robert L. Fricke, Denver, CO



My mission as Vice President of the Mountain Region of GAHF remains focused on membership recruitment for the organization and serving as its representative to the numerous German-American organizations located in my territory and elsewhere, where I may have contacts.

I grew up with the German-American organizations of Northern Ohio, and visited and participated in German-American gatherings throughout the country. I plan to remain actively engaged with GAHF for many years. As I review my last three years, I have benefited from challenges I have faced as I've learned the ropes, so to speak. I have learned through experience that recruiting members and raising funds requires careful articulation of benefits. I recently initiated a discussion to assist a local organization obtain support from a German institute for one of its projects.

While attending most board meetings in recent years, I continue seeking members and maintain regular contact with GAHF officers. I have traveled throughout my region on behalf of the organization, and contributed above and beyond my membership dues while a member of the GAHF board, and will continue this practice as my circumstances permit. Friends and family members have also contributed money or joined GAHF at my request.

In addition to fund solicitation, I have attended numerous German-American social events and venues as representative of GAHF - attending the German-American Chamber of Commerce (GACC) event at which I was acknowledged as representative of GAHF. I maintain strong ties with GACC representative Fred Beisser.

All in all, I consider GAHF to be the preeminent and most significant German-American organization in the US. As a board member I will consider it an honor to continue my service with GAHF.

Guntwin Galleisky, Oceanside, CA



I believe I offer a unique perspective which will be of benefit to GAHF in its efforts to expand exposure to the general public, as well as in the future in recruiting of both new members and sponsors. To be successful, GAHF needs board members with a positive outlook, a keen understanding of its goals, and the willingness to "get out there." I bring these to the table.

I was privileged to observe and participate in efforts by my father, Hartmut Galleisky, as the early work began in building a base from which to develop the museum. I went with him to many of our Southern California German-American clubs to help rally support for this effort. I gained a healthy respect and understanding of the effort involved to get such a project moving.

As a younger member, I would be seen as a "bridge" to the future, able and willing to carry out the mission and programs of the GAHF. I came to this country at the age of 4, went to school in Orange/San Diego County, attended university at UCSD, UCLA (earning bachelor's and master's degrees), and professional school at USC (earning a doctoral degree). I have kept contact with family in Germany and understand its culture quite well. These accomplishments show that I've lived the American dream and been a contributing member of society, a very positive role model for others to turn to and a positive picture to be used in presenting the Foundation.

I am willing to pursue funding from private persons and organizations, corporate donors, and other identified sources. Thinking "outside of the box" is what we will need in order to survive. I am comfortable as a public speaker, having presented papers to professional organizations when I was involved in basic academic research.

I take seriously anything I commit to. I firmly believe in the mission of the GAHF, and would like it to become the leader and role model that other immigrant groups choose to emulate. There can be no higher compliment.

Ute Kattner-Horn, Pompton Plains, NJ



In the post war years, I grew up in Hamburg, Germany where my sister, brother and cousins still live today. In my early twenties, I immigrated to the United States, where I was able to finish my formal education with a BA degree in the Social Sciences. I worked for Allied Signal Inc. for twenty years and retired as a Computer Systems Analyst, after Allied Signal and Honeywell merged.

For many years, I have been on the Board of Germania Park in Rockaway Township, NJ - serving as Corresponding Secretary. During these years, we successfully changed the emphasis of our

club members from speaking German to their German heritage as Americans. Germania Park generates most of its income from two popular Volksfest weekends, (in June and September – in tradition of the Bavarian Oktoberfest. During the coronavirus pandemic Germania Park concentrated on outdoor activities with Biergartenfests and dinners-to-go. My Pennsylvania-Deutsch husband and I very much hope that we can soon sing again in the German chorus of Germania Park.

I am encouraged by the Germania Park's shift to emphasize the German heritage of their members rather than German language skills. It has brought us more active, middle aged and younger members. I believe that this perspective is equally important for all German clubs and organizations across America who share and support the values of GAHF. I will gladly continue my service as a board member for another three years.

Christiane Schmidt, Philadelphia, PA



Inscribed in a stained glass window in the Ratskeller of the German Society of PA (GSP) in Philadelphia is the following saying from Goethe - *Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast, erwirb es, um es zu besitzen.* (What you have inherited from your fathers, earn it. Thus it will be yours.) As a first generation German-American, this saying speaks to me.

My mother was born near Tilsit, Ostpreussen and my father was born in Falkenburg, Pommern. Today most of my relatives reside in Western Germany. The above saying also causes me to think more deeply about the word "heritage" as it is part of the GAHF name. Cultural heritage, an expression of the ways of an ethnic group and passed on from generation to generation, includes customs, practices, places, artistic expressions, and values. Our heritage enables us to develop an awareness about ourselves and plays an important role in our politics, society, business and also world view.

Over the past thirty plus years I have been involved in the GSP in many ways – starting as an AATG award winner in high school, to a variety of roles on the Board (Director, Board Secretary and Executive Committee member, Personnel Committee chair, Anniversary committee member), and as President of the Women's Auxiliary. I have seen how important it is to reinforce and/or introduce German ethnic studies to young people to build future capacity. Heritage organizations have a duty to provide a wide variety of programming from youth development and education to community involvement. The preservation of the arts and customs is also part of that mission.

With my professional retirement in December 2019, I have more time to commit to helping preserve my German heritage. In my most recent role as Vice President of Human Resources at Penn Medicine Princeton Health, my duties included change and talent management for 3500 employees and 1000 physicians, as well as the management of an 800-member Volunteer Department – all areas of focus for any organization moving forward.

Given the changing world over the past eighteen months, the GAHF will need to find new and creative ways to continue its mission. I would be honored to share my passion and creativity with the GAHF as a Board member.

Donald D. Thureau, Wilmington, DE



Although I was born in Berlin in 1946, I left Germany with my parents in 1949 to migrate to Cuba. I did, however, maintain roots in Germany since I visited my grandparents and uncles in Berlin during many summer months.

All that travel helped prepare me for my career in DuPont where I ended up first as Market Development Manager out of Barcelona and later Sales & Marketing Manager for Latin America and Asia-Pacific.

I do have some experience with boards and foundations since I was on the Board of Directors for twelve plus years at the Skating Club of Wilmington as well as their President for two of those years and I am still President of the SCW Foundation which helps support our athletes who compete in U.S. Figure Skating qualifying competitions. I was also on the Board and served as President for the Tavistock Civic Association in Wilmington.

Because of a very busy career, I never gave myself the opportunity to join the Delaware Saengerbund until 2014 after I retired. However, in just three short years I became chairperson of the Saengerbund's Culture Committee besides taking German language classes there and the University of Delaware's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

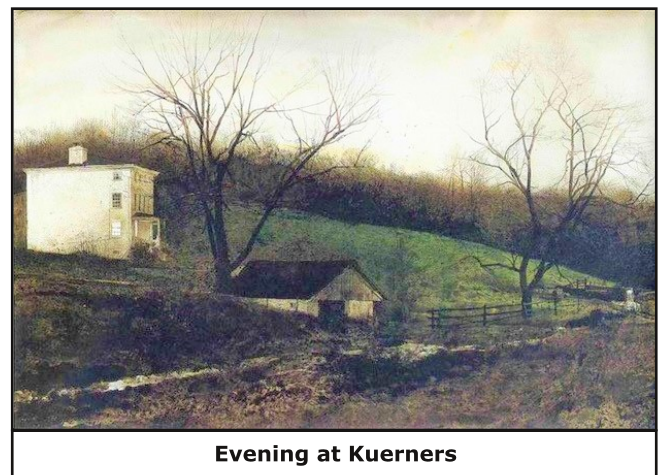
As a resident of Wilmington, DE and current president of GAHF, I would like to continue finding ways to inform, educate, inspire, lead, explore and support our cultural diversity as German-American for the benefit of our organization. I also welcome and enjoy the opportunity to interact with other board members to conceptualize a greater visibility of the contributions made by German-Americans in the U.S.

Andrew Wyeth and His German Inspirations

When one thinks of Andrew Wyeth, *Christina's World*—said to be his most famous painting—usually comes to mind. Christina's family, the Olsons, lived in Cushing, Maine, where Wyeth spent his summers. Lighthouses, fishermen, dory boats, and the Olson home are represented in the countless sketches and watercolors he made of his beloved Maine.

Except for these summers, Wyeth lived his entire life in Chadds Ford, his birthplace, a hamlet in the gentle hills of the Brandywine River Valley, twenty-five miles southwest of Philadelphia. As a young boy, Andrew became enamored with the dry brush watercolor paintings of Germany's most revered artist, Albrecht Dürer, as his father, N. C. Wyeth—an acclaimed artist himself—had given his son a copy of Dürer's engravings. The German artist's technique, such as in *Young Hare*, would become an inspiration.

Not more than a mile separated Andrew Wyeth's Chadds Ford studio from a farm belonging to Karl and Anna Kuerner. Karl had been born in Württemberg in 1898 and served in World War I before emigrating to the United States in 1923. Fascinated with Kuerner's German heritage, Wyeth sketched or painted 459 works between 1932 and 1976 that depicted the farmhouse itself, the hearth of the grand fireplace in the kitchen, the German shepherd "Nel" asleep under a window, the farm pond, snow drifts, the fence line, and the top of Kuerner's Hill where cattle grazed.



Evening at Kuerners

When Wyeth sensed that Karl Kuerner was nearing life's end, he asked his friend to don the uniform he wore during the Great War. The painting that emerged, *The German*, depicts a soldier both sturdy and resolute, his arctic-blue eyes keeping the secret of whether he was looking ahead—or back to his youth in the motherland.

Ailing in his later years, Kuerner took on a married mother of four from a neighboring farm to help care for him. Her name was Helga Testorf and, like Karl, she had emigrated from Germany. Helga was thirty-eight when Wyeth first painted her likeness in 1971. Over the ensuing fifteen years, the Helga Collection, as it is called, came to encompass 240 works of art: four temperas, nine dry brush paintings (Dürer's influence), sixty-three watercolors, and 164 pencil sketches. As he did with the Kuerner farm, Wyeth drew Helga with regard to every aspect of her being: awake, asleep, walking, sitting, standing near a tree, nude, clothed, with braids, and hair flowing.

Although Andrew Wyeth's official biography does not mention German ancestry, a person married to one of his maternal relatives was related to Hans Herr, whose son Christian built the oldest extant homestead (1719) in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania—known as the Hans Herr House and now part of a museum complex. Born in 1639 in Zürich, Switzerland, Hans moved to the Palatinate in southwestern Germany before emigrating to Pennsylvania in 1710. Wyeth himself was descended on his father's side from the Swiss-German Zirngiebel family.

Wyeth captured the medieval Germanic architecture of the Hans Herr House in a watercolor he painted in 1949.

— Lynne Breen

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