



Volume XXV, Issue 2
Fall 2023

Texas German Society

Organized September 6, 1983 ■ Witte-Schmid Haus Museum
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Reporter

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This edition of the Reporter is dedicated to our German Heritage and in celebration of German-American Day to be celebrated on October 6 each year. Many of our chapters do something special in October to both celebrate Octoberfest and German-American Day. We can celebrate in October in many ways: having special programs about German history; ways in which our families have observed these special days over the years; going out to a German restaurant to have German food (although there are not that many German restaurants in Houston); view DVDs about German cities or special places. What are some of the ways that you have celebrated over the years? I hope that you all celebrate these days in your own special way and be thankful for our ancestors who came to this country, became part of this wonderful nation and have contributed so much to it. All of us have a lot to be proud of and we must pass those memories on to future generations.

Also in this edition of the Reporter are Guidelines and an application that can be given out to students in high school for our scholarships. This is

another way that we can help to contribute to the future. German is a very important part of music mathematics and science, in addition to many other studies. We need to encourage our young people to learn as much as possible of the language and culture. If you know anyone in high school studying German, ready to begin their college career, please share the Guidelines and application with them and encourage them to apply.

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events: State Christmas Party at Das Haus on December 3, 2023 and State Convention in Needville on April 6, 2024.

Tschüss

Linda Phillips

TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY
MINUTES OF THE TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY STATE CONVENTION
SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023
ST. ROCH CATHOLIC CHURCH HALL, MENTZ COMMUNITY

“The purpose of the Texas German Society is to preserve and promote the German heritage, culture, and language.”

The Texas German Society held its annual State Convention on Saturday, April 22, 2023, in the Mentz Community at St. Roch’s Catholic Church Hall.

The Convention was opened by TGS President Kathryn Haluska. The American and Texas flags were presented by Columbus Vietnam Veterans Chapter #1127 who led the pledges. German Consul Markus Hatzelmann gave a welcome and Fr. Bob Knippenberg, pastor of St. Roch Catholic Church opened the Convention with a prayer. We were also welcomed to the area by Colorado County Judge Ty Prause.

Rodney Koenig of the Harris County Chapter and a founding member of Texas German Society gave an interesting and informative program on the 40th Anniversary of the beginning of TGS on October 6, 1983. He introduced members and their families in the audience who were connected to the founders of TGS.

Entertainment for the day was provided by the LaGrange High School Dancers and the Bellville High School Polka Band.

TGS 1st Vice President Sandy Shuff did the Roll Call of Chapters. Eleven of the fourteen chapters were represented.

Scholarship Chair Grace Holtkamp then presented the Scholarship Essay contest winners, all three and their families were present. They are:

\$1500.00 Roger Jarboe, Marcus High School, Flower Mound, Texas

\$1000.00 Nina Wallach, Bellaire High School

\$750.00 Allie Habeck, Brazoswood High School, Clute, Texas

The Convention audience participated in a moment of silence as we were reminded of those members of TGS that had been lost in the past year. Vice President Sandy Shuff read the list.

An annual business meeting was held at the end of the day’s program. TGS President Kathryn Haluska called the meeting to order. There was a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the last convention held on March 19, 2022, by Herb Gerken and seconded by Ruth Froebel. The motion carried.

TGS Treasurer Aaron Schindewolf gave the financial report as of April 15, 2023, as follows:

Amegy Bank, State Checking \$18,289.44 State CD \$10,892.37

Amegy Bank, Scholarship Checking \$10,086.87 Scholarship CD \$9,678.65

This report is available for audit along with detailed copies of expenses and income.
At the time of the Convention there were 360 paid members of 14 chapters.

Witte-Schmid Haus Museum Treasurer Susan Yancey gave the following financial report:
Museum Checking account as of March 31, 2023 in Industry State Bank \$17,557.23

Museum CD as of March 31, 2023 also in Industry State Bank \$13,150.95

Sanford Schmid Trust gave \$13,000.00 on Jan. 5, 2023 toward the update construction on the upstairs of the Haus. This amount was paid to Steve Short Construction also on that date.

Mike Yancey, Museum Commission member, has been overseeing all the construction and improvements on the Haus. On the long-term plan, it will be necessary to replace the air conditioning system. Also, Mike asked for volunteers to help with shutter repair due to squirrel and weather damage.

It is also noted that both Susan and Mike Yancey are resigning their positions due to a move to Austin, Texas. Commission member, Herb Gerken is asking for those interested in becoming an active member of the Museum Commission to get in touch with him.

Reporter Editor Linda Phillips asked chapters to send any photos or information about their activities as soon as they happen and not to wait until the next date of the printing is announced. She reported that 129 Paper Reporters were sent out and 245 Emails sent.

TGS Secretary Peggy Schulin gave a final Convention registration count of 145 and 21 walk-ins for the day. Approximately 200 were served a meal which included the entertainers and our guests.

In New Business, the Nominating Committee of Herb Gerken, Cathy Hanzik, and Mannie Fritsch-Schmid put forth the following list for 2023 Officers and Directors:

President	Marion McClinton	Harris County Chapter
1st Vice Pres.	Sandy Shuff	Bluebonnet Chapter
2nd Vice Pres.	Jarel Whitney	Harris County Chapter
Secretary	Peggy Schulin	Katy Tri-County Chapter
Treasurer	Aaron Schindewolf	North Harris Co. Chapter
Reporter Editor	Linda Phillips	Katy Tri-County Chapter
Webmaster	Anthony Stott	South Belt Chapter
2-year Director	Cathy Hanzik	Ft. Bend County Chapter
2- Year Director	Patrick Schmid	Bluebonnet Chapter

Directors with one year remaining on 2-year term:

Mannie Fritsch-Schmid	Fayette Co. Chapter
Robert Herridge	Bluebonnet Chapter
Herb Gerken	President's Chapter

Lifetime Directors:

Flora von Roeder	Harris County Chapter
Alfred Drescher	Fayette Co. Chapter

President Kathryn asked for any nominations from the floor. None were presented.

Bernice Mistrot made a motion to accept the nominees as read and Rodney Koenig seconded. The motion carried and the nominees were elected. Immediately following, Rodney Koenig installed the newly elected officers and directors.

The subject of who would be hosting the 2024 State Convention was discussed by President Kathryn and Ft. Bend County Chapter has volunteered to host that event next year.

Outgoing TGS President Kathryn Haluska gave closing remarks about her tenure as president for the last three years. She encouraged us all to preserve our German heritage and to bring in new members to TGS.

There being no further business, Aaron Schindewolf made a motion to adjourn and LaWanda Fricks seconded. The motion carried and the business meeting was adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,
Peggy Schulin, TGS Secretary

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Report of the Texas German Society 40th annual convention
By Linda Phillips

The Convention was opened by Texas German Society State President, Kathryn Haluska and the Colorado County Judge, Ty Prause, welcomed the convention. The flag ceremony with American, German and Texas flags was presented by the Columbus Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #1127 and the invocation was given by Fr. "Bob" Knippenberg. German Consulate Markus Hatzelmann addressed the group.

A very informative program on the 40th anniversary of the Texas German Society was presented by Rodney Koenig. Rodney, along with Alfred E. Drescher, Glenn R. Guettler, Dolores Kuehn Crowe and Eddie Simmons were Founding Directors of the TGS on October 6, 1983. October 6 is German-American Day, and is significant for other events, such as: German immigrants reached Philadelphia (Germantown) on October 6, 1683 and Houston Saengerbund was founded on October 6, 1883.

Rodney also reminded us that once our mortgages, car loans and educational funds for children and grandchildren are paid off and we are comfortable with amounts passing to a spouse and close family, then giving to church, charities, and groups such as TGS where you can do a lot of good, should be considered. If you have no close family, or they are otherwise well provided for, then consider supporting a charity in your will, such as TGS, which will remember you and will do a lot of good.

The LaGrange High School Dancers provided great entertainment before lunch. Then a great lunch was provided by Mikeska's Bar-B-Q. After lunch the Bellville High School Polka Band entertained with many familiar songs.

Sandy Shuff read the names of the deceased members since the last Convention in 2022, then the presentation of the Scholarships.

An annual business meeting was held, with election of officers for 2023, installed by Rodney Koenig. Marion McClinton of the Harris County Chapter will be the new state president.

At the end of the Convention, Kathryn Haluska, outgoing president, made a closing statement and thanked everyone for attending the convention and for making her term a memorable one.

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*****REMINDER: NEXT STATE CONVENTION IS APRIL 6, 2024 – SAVE THE DATE*****

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TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES

This Scholarship is given by the Texas German Society.

The recipient shall be a Texas high school or Home School senior and is planning to attend college.

The purpose of the Texas German Society is to preserve and promote our German-Texan heritage, culture, and language.

1. Applicant must be a graduating high school senior and have passed all university/college admission requirements.
2. Copy of the seventh semester high school transcript must be submitted with completed application.
3. Applicant must submit an essay of at least 300 words written in the English language on the topic "My Interest in the German Language, Culture, and my German Ancestry". In addition, on a separate page, we require that you briefly demonstrate your ability to write in the German language a 30 to 50 word profile of yourself.
4. This scholarship is awarded for the academic year immediately following high school graduation. (Must be used during this year) for two long terms (fall and spring) as a full-time (12 or more semester hours) student.
5. The amount of the scholarships is 1st place \$1,500.00, 2nd place \$1000.00, and 3rd place \$750.00

6. The application deadline is March 1, 2024

MAIL OR EMAIL COMPLETED PAPERWORK TO:

ROBERT HERRIDGE
5462 Highway 159 W
Bellville, TX 77418
robert1@herridgeconsulting.com

TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY
SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION NAME



NAME _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CELL PHONE # _____ HOME PHONE # _____

NAME OF FATHER _____ ADDRESS _____

NAME OF MOTHER _____ ADDRESS _____

Are you currently employed? _____ Name of employer _____

Do you plan to work while attending college? _____

What is your educational objective? _____

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS Extracurricular Activities

Offices held in organizations, clubs

Special Honors and Awards _____

On a separate sheet of paper, please explain in a HANDWRITTEN statement how the Scholarship will help you achieve your educational goals. Please explain any extenuating circumstances which might add to your educational costs.

YOUR APPLICATION WILL NOT BE PROCESSED WITHOUT THIS STATEMENT.

We sent out invitations to the German language teachers to have their students enter the essay contest for our Scholarship awards. Here are the winners of the 2023 scholarships:

\$1500.00 ROGER JARBOE III MARCUS HIGH SCHOOL, FLOWER MOUND, TX

\$1000.00 NINA L. WALLACH BELLAIRE HIGH SCHOOL, HOUSTON, TX

\$ 750.00 ALLIE HABECK BRAZOSWOOD HIGH SCHOOL, CLUTE, TX

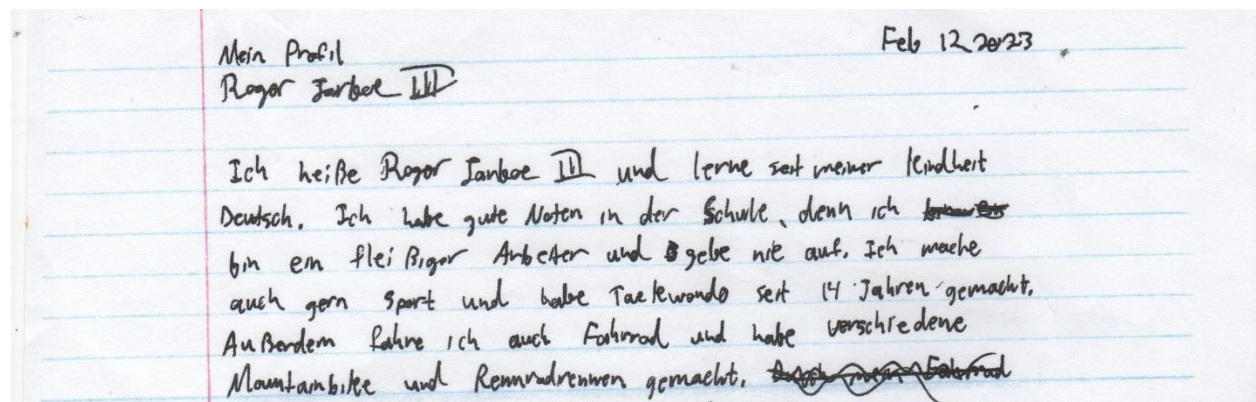
Grace Holtkamp, Scholarship Chair

Below are the scholarship winners essays as they were submitted by the applicants:

Roger Jarboe III 1st Place

I have been developing my German Language skills my whole life because my mother is a German immigrant, and I grew up speaking both English and German. My drive to develop myself led me to spend over one year abroad in Germany as an exchange student for my 7th grade year of middle school. During this time, I lived with my grandmother which was exceptionally difficult because she doesn't speak English. I had to start living only speaking German. Germany also differs culturally from the US with Germans placing a heavier emphasis on public transportation, which is something completely foreign to me. On top of this the German school system was night and day compared to the American school system I grew up with. I faced all these challenges to improve and develop my German Language skills, and in the end, I improved. I was able to have better conversations with my great-grandmother and my grandmother, and better understood the German Language and culture as a whole.

With my year abroad I was also able to learn a great deal from my great-grandmother and my grandmother. My great-grandmother had lived through the second World War and then with my grandmother, through the Communist Russian control of Eastern Germany. They had witnessed firsthand the fall of Nazi Germany and then the rise and fall of the Communist regime. I learned a great deal about the German cold war history from a unique perspective and found my passion for the history of tanks.



Nina L. Wallach 2nd Place

This scholarship will help me achieve my goal of contributing to the cost of my education, specifically studying abroad in Germany. I am very fortunate that my parents can afford college tuition, but I am still trying to relieve some of the burden on them through summer work and scholarships.

Last summer I spent a month studying abroad in Berlin, and it was amazing. Living in Germany enormously improved my German language skills and because of this experience, I hope to spend a semester, or even a year studying abroad in Germany during college.

At the moment I am planning to go into public health or public policy, and I think learning about how different countries approach solving health and policy issues will be beneficial to my career. Of course, doing this in Germany is ideal because of my connection to the country and German language skills.

Unfortunately, studying abroad is expensive. I would really appreciate if the Texas German Society could help me offset the cost of my plans to study abroad. This will help me strengthen my personal connection with German language and culture, in keeping with the TGS;s goal of promoting Texans' connection with their German heritage.

Vielen Dank!

Allie Habeck 3rd Place

For a while, I have had a significant interest in the German language and culture. What first sparked my interest is my ancestry. My great-grandmother from my dad's side of the family traveled to Wisconsin from Germany in 1910 when she was just three years old. When I was quite young my grandfather (my great-grandmother's son) was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia. Because of his mental decline through the time period of my younger years, I never got to know him and his true personality very well; therefore, I have tried to get in touch with his character more by asking my grandma questions about his family and increasing my knowledge of German history, culture, and language. Another reason I was inspired to learn more about Germany, was visiting Europe the summer before my freshman year. Although we only passed through Germany on a layover, we stayed in Switzerland for quite a while. I had the BEST time there. It was by far my favorite country we had stayed in during our time in Europe. I found that the people were super nice and the staff at the hotel where we stayed even taught me some German phrases! It was after this trip that I realized I really liked and had a passion for the German language. Because of these experiences, I went on to take German for all four years of high school and joined the National German Honor Society at the end of my sophomore year. I became an officer the next year as treasurer and went on to be vice president my senior year. Being involved in the German program at Brazoswood Highschool has been a huge honor and a great privilege. I am so glad I chose German as the path to take to meet my foreign language requirement. Ultimately, I love the German language and culture, as well as having the opportunity to learn more about my ancestry!

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COLORADO COUNTY

October 27, 2022 – Met for our regular meeting receiving information of upcoming events – State Christmas Party, December 4 at Witte Schmid Haus and local Christmas party at Schobels Restaurant December 15. She also thanked local chapter members who had met on September 26 for picture taking at Commissioners Court proclaiming October 6 as German/American Day. Our program was presented by Gary McKee entitled “Dance Halls of Colorado County”. Gary is the Editor/Photo Journalist for “Texas Polka News” as well as a dance hall historian. It was an enjoyable history of hearing and seeing pictures of where most of us danced in our earlier years.

December 15, 2022 – Met at Schobels Restaurant for our annual Christmas Party with 29 members, 2 new members joining tonight and 9 guests in attendance. We were served a traditional German meal of Weinerschnitzel, Rotkohl, Deutche Kartoffeln, and dessert. Gifts were exchanged and everyone enjoyed Christmas songs in German and English accompanied by Elena Holub on the keyboard.

February 23, 2023 – Met for the regular scheduled meeting at the EMS facility receiving information on the upcoming State Convention on April 22, 2023. Our program was presented by member, Shirley Isbell, who had visited the Lake Constantine area of Germany. She had many stories and pictures shown on the big screen and ended with a toast unique to the area along with refreshments common to the area.

June 22, 2023 – Meeting held at the EMS facility and received a full report on the convention held April 22, 2023, at the Mentz Hall. Our program was presented by Betsy Wagner a local author and 4th generation Texan whose books about searching for your descendants as well as why the German people came to the US is of great interest.

FAYETTE COUNTY CHAPTER

On Monday, January 23, 2023, the Fayette County Chapter of the TGS met at La Grange Randolph Rec. Center. We held election of new officers and discussed possible programs and outings for the upcoming monthly meetings. We enjoyed a fun evening of wine tasting with our refreshments paired to the wine. Glenn Altwein generously donated 4 bottles of his homemade wine – Black Cherry, Mustang Grape, and Pear for us to taste and grade according to appearance, aroma, taste aftertaste and overall impression.

On Monday, February 27, 2023, our chapter met at 3:00 p.m. at the Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives in La Grange. Rox Ann Johnson, the museum archivist and curator, gave a very informative and interesting presentation concerning early German immigrants to our area. After the presentation, our members went to eat together at Sealand Restaurant in La Grange.

On Monday, March 27, 2023, our chapter gathered at 5:00 p.m. at La Grange Randolph Rec. Center. Our guest speaker was Charles Hebert, author and historian. Mr. Hebert gave a very interesting presentation about the Kreische family. He has done extensive research on the Kreische family and has published books about the subject.

On Monday, April 24, 2023, our chapter met for our regular meeting at 5:00 p.m. at La Grange Randolph Rec. Center. The La Grange High School German Club dancers were scheduled to perform for us, but due to conflicts, our guest entertainment had to cancel.



On Wednesday, May 31, 2023, our chapter met at 11:00 a.m. at the historic Casino Hall in La Grange. Caleb Parks, Main Street Manager, gave us a tour of the building and shared the German heritage and history of the building. Following the tour, the members enjoyed a delicious catered lunch by Las Fuentes Restaurant in La Grange.

Earlier in the month on Saturday, May 20, 2023, our TGS chapter hosted a booth at the second annual Monument Hill Schuetzenfest celebration on the bluff in La Grange. Over fifty children visited our booth this year - where the children made their own cardboard Lebkuchenherz, learned about the significance of Lebkuchenherzen at festivals, and learned to name the various colors in German. The festival seems to grow each year and is a fun family event.



On Tuesday, June 27, 2023, our chapter met at 11:00 a.m. at Oakridge Smokehouse in Schulenburg for our annual "picnic". We enjoyed a lovely meal and fellowship in their banquet room. Our special guest was Zach Novak and his parents, Mark and Sharon Novak. The very talented Zach Novak entertained us with a fun sing-a-long accompanied by accordion before and after the meal.

Our chapter plans to have Bobby Nash as our guest speaker next month in September and we will commemorate German/American Day. In October, we plan to host another Oktoberfest celebration at JWs Steakhouse in Carmine. November will be our outing to Flatonia and the E.A. Armin Museum and December will be our Christmas party.

FORT BEND CHAPTER

January 8, 2024 Planning ~ Albert George Library
January 30, 2023 Planning ~ Albert George Library
March TBA Tour of Das Haus, Potluck meal
April 22, 2023 TGS Convention ~ Mentz, TX
May TBA Fort Bend County Museum
July 10, 2023 Ice Cream Social ~ Albert George Library
September or October TBA George Ranch
November 3, 2023 Senior Citizen Lunch ~ Needville Evangelical Church
December 3, 2023 Das Haus Christmas Party
January 8, 2024 Planning ~ Albert George Library

FORT BEND CHAPTER (continued)



On Monday, March 27, 2023, members of the Fort Bend Chapter of the Texas German Society made a trip to tour the Witte-Schmid Haus Museum in Shelby, Texas. The Witte-Schmid Haus Museum is an unusual country house built in 1860 by the German settler Dr. Ernst Witte with cut limestone and *Fachwerk* construction. The house museum depicts early 1900s lifestyle. It has a ground floor with a breezeway, a parlor, a kitchen, a cellar, and an upstairs with bedrooms accommodating new settlers and travelers since there were no hotels in those days. The Witte Schmid Haus Museum is operated by the Texas German Society. The admission is free, but donations are appreciated. The drive to Shelby was lovely with all the Texas wildflowers in full bloom. After the tour, the group shared a potluck lunch at the Witte-Schmid Haus Museum, then visited the Witte-Schmid Historic Cemetery which is on the property, visited Eckermann's Meat Market which is down the road on FM 1457, and lastly stopped at the Shelby Store and visited with Ms. Carolyn who was full of information about the local history and people of Shelby. Visits and tours to the Witte-Schmid Haus Museum are by appointment at witte.schmid.museum@gmail.com.

Pictured are Ed Geiger, Loyce Anderson, Lynn Roesler, Joyce Geiger, Clarence Thielemann, Carol Niemann, Delbert Niemann, Cathy Hanzik, and Erna Thielemann



On Tuesday, April 4, 2023, members of the Fort Bend Chapter of the Texas German Society ate at the House of Blue Restaurant which is part of the Culinary Arts Department at the Needville High School. The students under the direction of Chef Sarah Pugh cooked and served a German-style meal consisting of a fruit cup, Pork Schnitzel with Noodles, Red Cabbage, Homemade Bread with herb butter, and Black Forest Cake. It was delicious!



Fort Bend County Chapter members at the Texas German Society Convention on Saturday, April 22, 2023

FORT BEND CHAPTER (continued)



On Tuesday, June 20, 2023, members of the Fort Bend Chapter of the Texas German Society toured the Fort Bend Museum. The Fort Bend Museum is located in the heart of Richmond, Texas, historic district. The group toured the 1855 Long-Smith Cottage which is one of the oldest buildings in Richmond. It was originally built by Jane Long, the "Mother of Texas". The 1883 Moore Mansion was also toured. The home had 3 generations of this prominent Richmond

Moore family live in it. The mansion is in beautiful Victorian style. The exhibit gallery was viewed at each member's leisure. The exhibit gallery has items from the Fort Bend History Association's extensive collections. Before touring the Fort Bend Museum, the group enjoyed lunch at Sandy McGee's Restaurant located in Richmond, Texas.

HARRIS COUNTY CHAPTER



Had our first meeting after the State Convention in May 2023. Our members celebrated me, Marion McClinton, their Chapter President & now as the TGS State President too with a beautiful, yummy cake. And we tried something new. Our speaker just came back from a Germany trip & lives in League City. So we projected his theme "Google Earth Map" via Zoom. We had a few little hiccups, but overall it went very good!

HARRIS COUNTY CHAPTER (continued)

On July 23, 2023, Vice President Janet Herbert opened the meeting at 6:05pm with a greeting and welcome to 20 members and guests. We continued with the Happy Birthday song to those with June & July birthdays.

We followed this with upcoming dates for the next meeting for the State Board to be held at the Witte-Schmidt house near Shelby August 6th. Our next meeting will be at tonight's location on September 28th. National German-American Day is October 6th for which we will gather at Rudy Lechner's German Restaurant located at 2503 S Gessner at 6:45 to start at 7pm. On November 30th we will have our Thanksgiving get-together replacing the usual turkey and dressing with Pulled Pork and Sausage. As usual we bring side dishes to go with the menu. The Keine Kunst have agreed to be our entertainment without cost but they are invited to have dinner with us.

Our membership dues will need to be increased to continue as \$7 currently goes to the state and \$8 dollars remain with us. Occasionally money goes to a speaker and costs go to paper goods, water and meats at Thanksgiving.

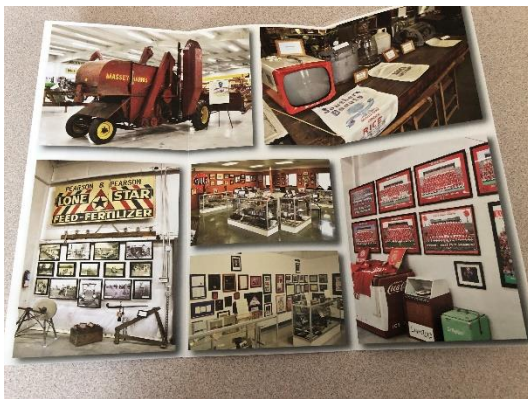
The Texas German Society was organized 40 years ago this year. Alfred Drescher, one of the original organizers, passed away this July.

The program for the evening were Rick Steves videos visiting the cities of Dresden, Leipzig & Nurenberg.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Marilyn Marek, Recording Secretary

Katy Tri-County

January 29, 2023 Six members of Katy Tri-County met at Luby's in Katy to welcome in a new year and to celebrate their 30th year of being a part of Texas German Society



Nelson Heritage Museum in Katy on Thursday, February 9. There were nine of members who enjoyed a very informative history of the beginnings of Katy and shared a lunch at Los Cucos Mexican Restaurant.



The Katy Tri-County Chapter celebrated their 30 year anniversary in March with a delicious lunch at the Adriatic Café Italian Grill. After lunch had coffee and cake at Peggy Schulin's house where the Chapter scrapbooks were displayed with many memories recalled. Those present were Helga Miller, Betty McMahon, Maesa and Kevin Williams, Lin and Ron Drees, Francis and Regina Hartford, Peggy Schulin, Rena Severin and Linda Phillips.



On Thursday, March 30, the Katy Tri-County Chapter had a field trip to Chappell Hill Lavender Farm. Enjoyed feeding the miniature Donkeys and goats and visiting the gift shop with many items made of lavender. Enjoyed a Bar-B-Q lunch, then visited Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site. Site of the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

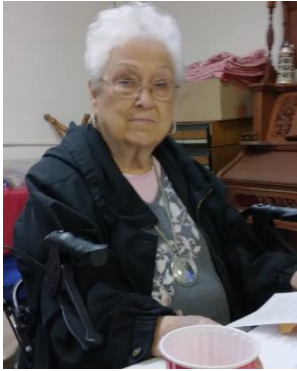


On Thursday, July 19th, Members met for Ice Cream at Peggy's house and for a July meeting. Those enjoying themselves are Linda Phillips, Francis and Regina Hartford, Marie and Paul Gray, Lin and Ron Drees, Helga Miller, Susan and Mark Daniels, and Peggy Schulin.



On Thursday, August 17, 2023, members of the Katy Tri-County Chapter visited the Hemi-Hideout in Pattison, TX

LAVACA/DEWITT CHAPTER



The Lavaca/DeWitt Chapter has held its regular meetings on the second Thursday of every other month. We began the year with twenty members. At our first meeting in February, we had only nine members in attendance. This pattern has continued throughout the year.

Our membership is now down to eighteen. Two members, Gray Westmoreland and Gladys Eckhardt passed away in 2023. With the death of Gray Westmoreland, we lost our meeting site. We are now meeting in local restaurants. In April, the main topic was the State Convention. None of our members were in attendance. This is due to health issues or being unable to drive such a distance. In June, we celebrated with an outdoor picnic in the park. It was an evening of freundschaft. We look

forward to the rest of the year.

The photo is President Joyce Manning bringing the first meeting of the year to order.

NORTH HARRIS COUNTY CHAPTER

January 23, 2023

For our January 2023 meeting, we watched the video “The Great Storm – The Galveston Hurricane of 1900” presented by Nicholas P. Cox, PhD, History Program Coordinator and Professor of US and Texas History, Houston, Community College. Dr. Nicholas Cox talks about the devastating impact of the hurricane on Galveston’s population and economy. He also discusses the long-term consequences of the hurricane on the Island, the Gulf Coast, Houston, and other parts of Texas. President Aaron Schindewolf provided additional commentary and photos from the hurricane and showed photos of structures that survived the hurricane and still stand today.

March 27, 2023

For our March 2023 meeting, we hosted Texas Master Naturalist (Heartwood Chapter), Jerrel Geisler, who presented “Nature in Your Backyard, and Beyond”. We learned about our local wildlife and what happens when it shows up in our yards, and what should your impression be. Also, we learned how to become a supporter, mentor, and how to assist in teaching others.

May 22, 2023

At our May 2023 meeting, we watched the PBS NOVA video “Rebuilding Notre Dame”. Following the April 2019 fire that almost destroyed Paris’ Iconic Notre Dame Cathedral, a team of engineers, masons, and timber workers set out on the daunting challenge of restoring France’s historic landmark. The program traces the dramatic human and technical challenges of the project’s first three years, going behind-the-scenes with carpenters shaping lumber for the new roof and spire, stone masons repairing gaping holes in the vault, and artisans who use traditional techniques to restore stained glass windows. A symbol of the nation’s identity and resilience, Notre Dame gradually rises from the ashes, thanks to a restoration project like no other.

July 2023 – No meeting was held in July.



**TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS
CELEBRATION**

2:00 P. M.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023

WITTE-SCHMID HAUS MUSEUM

SCHOENAU COMMUNITY

2650 WITTE-SCHMID RD.

NEW ULM, TEXAS 78950

**JOIN YOUR FELOW TGS MEMBERS FOR FOOD, MUSIC
AND A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS**

PLEASE BRING YOUR FAVORITE CHRISTMAS

GOODIE OR SNACK TO SHARE

HOSTED BY YOUR TGS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

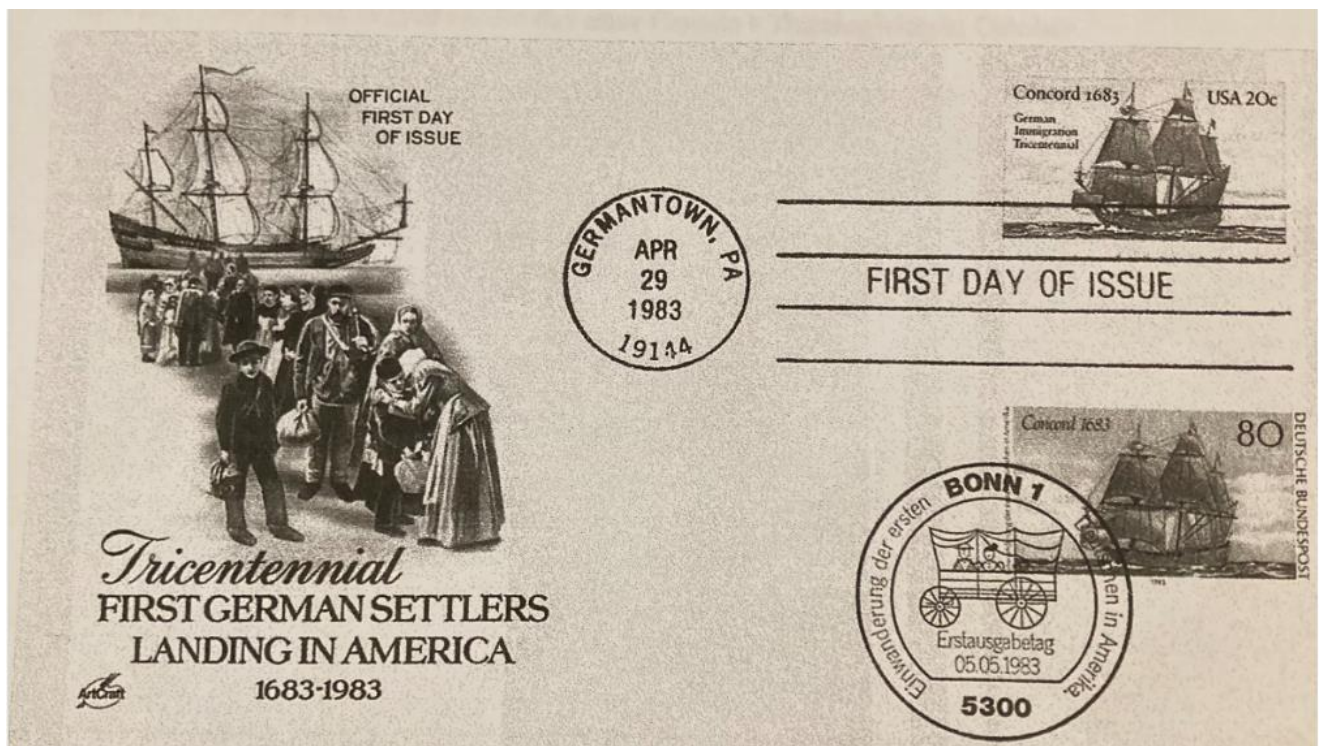
For questions and concerns, contact Peggy Schulin at : peggyschulin@comcast.net

THE FIRST GERMAN-AMERICAN DAY IN 1983

Now known as German-American Day, the original observance began simply as “German Day” on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the founding of Germantown in 1883. Similar celebrations of German-American heritage arose in other areas of the US over time. With the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the ensuing anti-German sentiment of the time, and the later entry of the US in what came to be known as World War One, the custom largely died out.

Joint Commemorative Stamps

As the tricentennial of Germantown’s founding approached in 1983, efforts were made to revive the German-American observance. People and organizations in the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany came together to revive the custom and give it national standing. Postal officials in both countries even worked together to issue joint commemorative postage stamps by the US Postal Service and the Deutsche Bundespost. Both the German and American stamps were based on a watercolor painting of the merchant ship *Concord* by the artist Richard Schlecht, but they had minor differences reflecting varying approaches to the engraving and printing process. (See the image below.) The first-day-of-issue ceremony in the United States took place in Germantown (in Philadelphia), Pennsylvania, on 29 April 1983, as part of a community celebration.



Joint commemorative stamps issued in 1983 by the US and Germany depict the “German Mayflower”, as the Concord is sometimes dubbed, the ship that brought the first settlers to Pennsylvania in October 1683. PHOTO: Wikimedia Commons

President Reagan's 1983 Proclamation

To commemorate the “tricentennial anniversary year of German settlement in America” President Ronald Reagan proclaimed the first German-American Day on 6 October 1983. But it would take another four years for Congress to pass legislation making the October 6th date an official observance that every US president has recognized by proclamation every year since 1987.

The effort to reinstate “German Day” as German-American Day began in 1986. A national campaign and petition drive was begun. Indiana’s Republican US Senator Richard (“Dick”) Lugar (1932-2019) introduced a resolution, and in a bipartisan effort he also asked Democratic Senator Don Riegle of Michigan for support. Senator Lugar then supported the efforts of Ohio Representatives Lee Hamilton and Thomas Luken of Cincinnati, who introduced a similar resolution in the House.

In response to Congressional Joint Resolution 108, designating 6 October as German-American Day, the bill became Pub.L. 100-104, 101 Stat. 721 after President Reagan signed it on 18 August 1987. The president then issued a proclamation to this effect on 2 October 1987 in a formal ceremony in the White House Rose Garden, at which time he called on Americans to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. The practice of proclaiming October 6th as German-American Day has continued with succeeding presidents to the present day.

In 2012, Senator Lugar, partly of German heritage himself, was recognized by Indiana German Heritage Society (IGHS) as the “Hoosier German-American of the Year” in recognition of his interest and help related to German and German-American causes over many years. Lugar served as a United States Senator from Indiana from 1977 to 2013, as chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 1985 to 1987 and from 2003 to 2007, and as the ranking member of the committee from 2007 until his departure in 2013.

German American Heritage Month

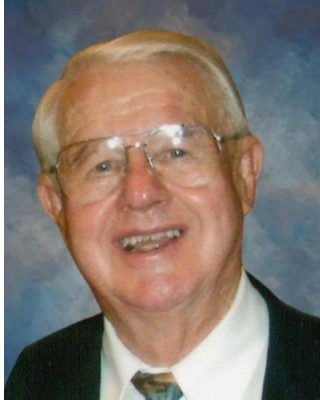
Although it is not an official national observance by law, much like Black History Month in February, German American Heritage Month is observed in October. Stemming from German-American Day on October 6th, the month is also related to Germantown’s history and October 1683. Some American libraries promote October as a time to read **books about German American history** and to learn more about **notable German Americans**.

The proposal for a German American Heritage Month first came in 1995 from German-American Joint Action Committee (GAJAK) that was formed with the main objective of promoting German-American events in Washington, D.C. and nationwide. The GAJAK was made up of the German American National Congress (Dank), the United German American Committee of the USA, and the Steuben Society of America. Based on other national heritage months devoted to various nationalities, such as Greek Americans (March), Italian Americans (October), and French Americans (July), the proposed German American Heritage Month would be in October, or from 15 September to 15 October.

But unlike Italian-American Heritage and Culture Month, also in October and legally established by Congress in 1989, the German heritage month proposal was never supported by law in the way that German American Day was in 1987. However, in 2013 the month of October was designated German American Heritage Month, as official state observance, by the Maryland General Assembly.

Nevertheless, informal observances of German American Heritage Month still take place in many areas with a German heritage history. Educational, social, and historical organizations use October to promote German American Heritage Month through traditional folk customs (Oktoberfest), biographical information (Adolph Coors, Albert Einstein, John Roebing), and other elements related to German-American ties, the German language and culture. In Canada, a similar observance is German Pioneers Day in Kitchener, Ontario (a city formerly named Berlin) and its Oktoberfest. German Pioneers Day is held on the day after Canada’s Thanksgiving in October.

IN MEMORIAM



Judge Robert Henry Thonhoff Sr

Judge Robert Henry Thonhoff, Sr., noted author, historian, speaker, emcee, educator, and community leader passed away on January 17, 2023.



Gladys Eckhardt

October 12, 1935 – January 6, 2023

Gladys Eckhardt (nee Gold), 87, of Yoakum, passed away January 6, 2023.

She was born on October 12, 1935, to Edwin & Meta Heimann Gold, in Fredericksburg, TX.

She married Eric Eckhardt on November 6, 1999. She was a member of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Yoakum.

Gladys was baptized and confirmed at Holy Ghost Lutheran Church in Fredericksburg, TX. She attended Meusebach Creek School for grades 1-8 and graduated from Fredericksburg High School in 1954. Her first job was as a

Western Union operator at the Radio Post in Fredericksburg.

Gladys earned 30 credit hours from Southwest Texas State University for her work-life experience.

She retired after 32 1/2 years from USAA in San Antonio as an insurance area manager. She was a member of Thrivent Financial, Texas German Society and Golden Eagles (USAA Retiree's Group). She enjoyed vacationing and being active in her church. Her lifelong enjoyment was singing in the church choir.

Kenneth Meador

June 6, 1937 - July 3, 2023

Author of the book "A New Day Beyond the Horizon" about his wife, Annie, and her life in Germany during WWII and her arrival in America. Member of Texas German Society, Katy Tri-County Chapter.



Elliott F. Koehn
September 11, 1934 – March 31, 2022

Elliott F. Koehn joined his Heavenly father, his parents, his beloved wife and many friends and family members on March 31, 2022 after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer.

Elliott was born on September 11, 1934, the first child of Edwin and Erna (Wienken) Koehn. Elliott was born near Weimar, Texas on the family farm. Just a few years later, this land served as a US military installation during World War 2 and in 1992 was honored by the State of Texas for being in continuous ownership by the same family for over a century.

Elliott attended school in New Bielau and graduated Weimar High School in 1953. Elliott was active in athletics and the Future Farmers of America. While at Weimar High, Elliott met Ava Hill, a 'new girl' that had recently moved to Weimar. This young lady would become Elliott's wife on July 12, 1958, and they would share two children (Derck and Dalinda) and 57 years of marriage before her passing in 2015.

After high school, Elliott attended the University of Texas at Austin, and graduated from Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University) in 1957.

After graduation from college, Elliott worked for Texas Instruments in Dallas and in Houston, overseeing international purchasing for the company. Upon retirement from Texas Instruments, Elliott and his family moved back to Weimar, where Elliott worked in business operations for Herder Truck Lines. Later, Elliott enjoyed doing custom hay work in the Weimar area.

Elliott's true calling lay in his volunteering and serving the community. Elliott became an Emergency Medical Technician and volunteered with the Colorado County Emergency Medical Services for many years. Elliott was an active member of the Lion's Club in Weimar, his church (Weimar United Church), and he and Ava provided scholarships for worthy graduates in the Weimar and Schulenburg school districts.



TOD SCHENCK
September 13, 1924 – July 24, 2023

Wanda Lynn Schenck (Tod) passed away peacefully at her home in Houston, Texas on July 24, 2023.

Tod was born on September 13, 1924 on her maternal grandparents' ranch in Tahoka, Texas. She was the first daughter of Charles N. Tunnell and Rubye Opal Burckhartt.

Her parents took Tod and her twin sisters, Rita and Nita to Austin at an early age so her father could attend The University of Texas. When her father graduated from UT, they moved to Houston. After finishing high school in Houston, Tod attended Sam Houston State University, where she enrolled in the first summer school exchange program between Sam Houston State and University of Puebla. This led to many years of travel and study in Mexico, and her life-long love of Mexico, and everything Mexican. After graduating from UT, Austin, Tod planned to return to Mexico but soon became involved in her father's publishing business. Using Tod's fluent Spanish, and her many connections, Tunnell Publications

TOD SCHENCK (continued)

launched their first two Spanish language magazines serving the baking and dairy industries throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

They later started Trailer Body Builders magazine that was edited by Tod's late husband, Paul Schenck. It wasn't long before they were publishing six different magazines. Tod's children, Robin and Ray became part of the team as they came of age, and the company became a true family business. Tod retired from the business in 2019 after 75 years of loving service.

Tod and Paul were married at Christ the King Lutheran Church in 1962. Tod's second "Happy Place" was her beloved farm in Fayette County. Since 1971, Tod & Paul were actively involved in the restoration of pioneer Texas homes. They restored or moved five early Texas homes to their farm – a true testament to their collaborative effort to leave Texas better than they found it.

Tod was preceded in death by her loving husband, Paul Schenck.



JAN REAGAN ROWLAND (1944 – January 18, 2023)

Jan Reagan Rowland died January 18 in Houston, Texas. He was born in Beaumont, Texas, in 1944, attended local schools there, and enrolled at Lamar University in Beaumont, where he studied electrical engineering and enrolled in German language classes. He completed two years of study before being called into the United States Army and serving from 1966 to 1968, where his expertise in speaking German earned him an assignment in Munich, Germany. It was there that he met his future wife, Hanne, and they were married in Berlin in 1969.

As his tour of duty in the army was nearing its end, the United States representative for E. F. Walcker & Cie. of Ludwigsburg, Germany, suggested that Rowland take a job at Walcker so that he could become more useful as a skilled organ installer once he returned to the United States. Rowland worked at Walcker for 35 days in July and August of 1968, then returned to the United States, where two Walcker jobs awaited installation: one in Michigan, the other at Colby College, Waterville, Maine. While in Waterville, Rowland learned of another installation happening at the First Congregational Church in the same town and made a visit to the church, where he met David W. Cogswell, the owner/president of Berkshire Organ Company. Cogswell telephoned Rowland early in 1969 with an offer of a job as factory manager of Berkshire, which Rowland accepted, and within a couple of months he was named executive vice president. Discussions between Rowland, Cogswell, and others about the costs of travel to Europe to meet with organ builders germinated the idea of an organization of organ building individuals, not companies, and resulted in a convention with no title in Washington, D.C. That gathering in 1973 became the founding of the American Institute of Organbuilders. As an attendee of that convention, Rowland was considered a co-founder of the organization and was designated a charter member. Later in 1973, concerned about the slow growth of the Berkshire Organ Company, Rowland decided to form his own company with Pieter Visser, who was hired by Berkshire only four months earlier. Houston, Texas, was chosen as the site for the new company, Visser-Rowland Associates. The company grew as Houston expanded in the 1970s and 1980s, with oil companies creating more jobs and more churches being built. For the next eleven years, Visser-Rowland built dozens of pipe organs for sites from Maine to California. One of the last instruments before Rowland's retirement from the firm was built for Bates

JAN REAGAN ROWLAND (continued)

Recital Hall at the University of Texas at Austin. At the time, it was the largest mechanical-action organ pipe organ built by a United States firm, having 67 stops. Rowland was accepted into membership of the International Society of Organ Builders in 1984 and became a member of the editorial board of the society's information trade journal, for which he wrote articles on various organ building techniques. He often translated articles and speeches of other organ builders from German into English. He was invited to Europe over two dozen times to the annual International Society of Organbuilders congresses due to his expertise. In 1984 Rowland started his own shop producing custom draw knobs for many organ builders in America, Europe, and Japan. However, his real enjoyment came from designing and building special tools and machines for different organ builders, tools and machines that could not be bought elsewhere. Rowland was perhaps best known for his intelligence and ability to imagine, invent, and make things work better and more efficiently. He was internationally respected for his designing of a computerized lathe for completing tasks such as shaping draw knobs for pipe organs. This enabled pipe organ builders to cut costs enormously by reducing labor and time, making tens of thousands of hours of tedium and templates obsolete through his inventions. Rowland constructed some of these computerized systems for pipe organ companies in Europe, filling the cargo hold on a plane to ship the devices overseas.



ALFRED E. DRESCHER
April 26, 1934 – July 24, 2023

Alfred E. Drescher, 89, died peacefully on July 24, 2023 in Katy, Texas. He was born on April 26, 1934 in Lee County, Texas, the last of Charles and Elizabeth (Schutz) Drescher's six children. He graduated from La Grange High School in 1953. Alfred had a storied career in the U.S. Air Force from 1953 until 1974, retiring as a Captain. He was stationed throughout the world including the Dominican Republic, Morocco, and Germany where he met and married Carola Lehr. In addition to his military duties, he worked nights and weekends to further his education. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Southwestern State College (1963), a Master of Science in Education from the University of Southern California (1969), and a Master of Arts from Providence College, Rhode Island (1972).

His love of history and genealogy stayed with him and prompted him to found the Texas German Society with a few friends from La Grange in 1983. The organization still thrives today as the largest organization of its kind in Texas.

He was a member of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, VFW Post #5254, and the Texas German Society.



HARRISON GRAY WESTMORELAND
March 9, 1945 – March 5, 2023

An obituary is not available. Member of Lavaca/DeWitt Chapter