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Spring 2023

Texas German Society

Organized September 6, 1983 ■ Witte-Schmid Haus Museum
Editor – Linda Phillips, 22777 Franz Road, Apt 2212, Katy, TX 77449-2760
Lphillips77@hotmail.com

Reporter

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President's Message

Guten Morgen meine Freunde!

Linda Phillips, Editor of The Reporter, has been very busy gathering information from the TGS chapters about their activities throughout 2022. And, of course, we have been planning the upcoming convention since the last convention in Tomball in March, 2022. The Executive Board has had several planning meetings and are busy putting the final touches to the events for the day. It promises to be a great day at **St. Roch's Church Hall in Mentz, Texas, on April 22!**

Information and registration forms are enclosed in this Reporter. Please share copies of those forms with fellow TGS members who do not have the capability to copy them. Also, invite family and friends to attend, and see how we continue to never forget our German heritage.

Mentz is a beautiful place to visit, especially in the Spring. Bluebonnets and other seasonal wildflowers are spread throughout

the countryside. St Roch's parish's earliest records go back to early 1840's when many German immigrants made this area their first home after arriving in Texas.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the convention!

Kathryn Haluska

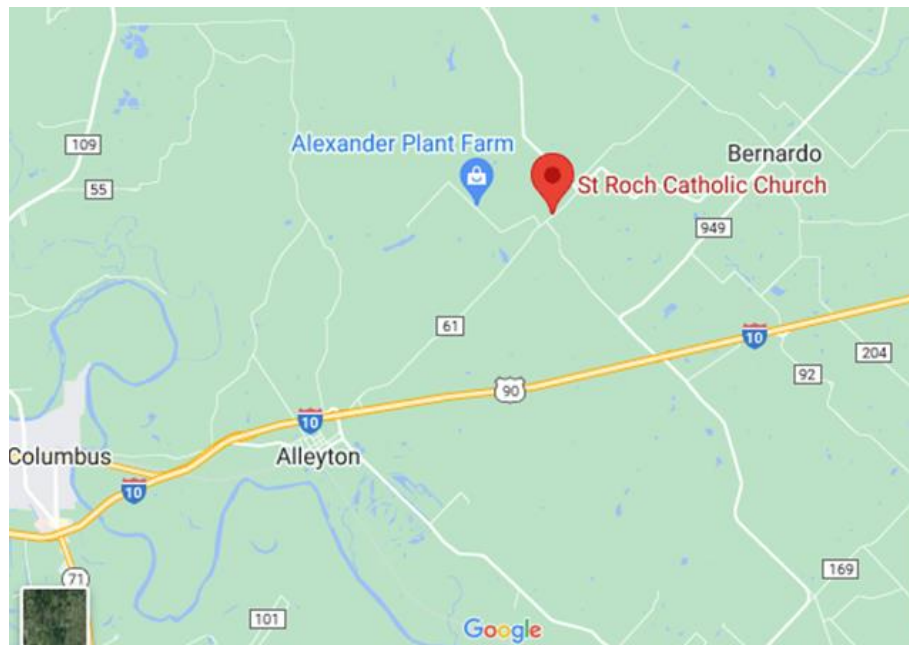
President, TGS

2023 Texas German Society State Convention – Our 40th year!

Guten Tag! From the Texas German Society. This is to inform you of the upcoming 2023 State Convention.

1. Date is April 22, 2023
2. Place and time - St. Roch's Catholic Church Hall. Physical address is 1600 Frelsburg Road, Alleyton, TX 78935, (church and hall are in the Mentz Community). Doors open at 8:00 a.m. **Registration will be from 8:30 to 9:30.** There will be Kaffee, Saft, Kuchen, etc, for everyone that morning. Lunch will be at 12:00 noon. The convention will start at 9:30 a.m and will be finished around 3:00 p.m.
3. Menu will consist of brisket, sausage, sauerkraut, onion & butter potatoes, green beans, tea and banana pudding.
4. Silent Auction donations – We ask that each chapter donate/bring at least two (2) new items for the silent auction. For questions, please contact Kathryn Haluska, 979-733-9129.
5. Hotels in Columbus and area:
Baymont Inn, 2535 Highway 71 South, Columbus, TX 78934, 979-732-3785
LaQuinta Inn, 2427 Highway 71 South, Columbus, TX 78934, 979-733-0522
Holiday Inn, 4321 I-10, Columbus, TX, 979-877-0700
Holiday Inn and Suites 2370 Highway 36 South, **Sealy**, TX 979-877-0700
There are various B&B's also.

6. Directions to St Roch Parish Hall, 1600 Frelsburg Road, Alleyton (Mentz), TX
- a. Coming from Houston, heading West on I-10 – Take exit 704 (this is also FM 949). Almost immediately after exiting turn right onto FM 949 North. Travel 6/10ths of a mile and veer left onto Frelsburg Road (look for Mentz Road sign) at the sharp curve. Continue down Frelsburg Road until you come to a “T”. Turn right and the parish hall is second driveway on your left. When you reach the “T” to your right you will see the church and hall to your right.
 - b. Coming from Brenham – Traveling from Brenham on FM 109 you will intersect with Business 71. Turn left and continue into Columbus crossing the river bridge and going under the RR crossing. At the light, take a left on Walnut Street (Highway 90). Continue on Highway 90 for about 4 miles. About 1 mile out of town you will be on the I-10 feeder road. When you get to the overpass that heads to Eagle Lake (FM102) do not cross over but take a left and continue on feeder road for a brief moment. The first left is Mentz Road. Take a left and continue on Mentz Road for about 3 miles. You will see St. Roch Church and Parish Hall on your left. Take the 2nd driveway up to the parish hall.
 - c. Coming from San Antonio, Victoria, Hallettsville or Schulenburg (or heading East on I-10) – Take exit 699 and turn left at the stop sign. Cross over I-10 and take an immediate right onto the feeder road (heading east). The first left is Mentz Road. Take a left and continue on Mentz Road for about 3 miles. You will see St. Roch Church and Parish Hall on your left. Take the 2nd driveway up to the parish hall.



Registration Form

2023 Texas German Society State Convention

Saturday, April 22, 2023

St. Roch's Catholic Church Hall
1600 Frelsburg Road, Alleyton, TX 78935

Registration: Postmarked by April 10, 2023 - \$20.00

Purchase at the door (must wait until all ticket holders are fed. Not guaranteed food) -\$25.00

(Please print the name/names wanted on name tag/tags) – Please print, no cursive

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Chapter or indicate if visitor _____
Please indicate:

_____ Number of people before April 10 X \$20.00 = _____ amount enclosed

_____ Day of convention – At Door X \$25.00 = _____ amount

Make checks payable to: Texas German Society

Return this form and money to: Texas German Society
c/o Peggy Schulin
1404 Baird Avenue
Katy, TX 77493

Families with same last name and address can use same form but please list first names separate for name tags.

2023 Texas German Society State Convention Vendor

Exhibitor Rules

Date: Saturday, April 22, 2023

Place: ST. ROCH'S CATHOLIC HALL,
1600 FRELSBURG RD.
ALLEYTON, TX. 78935 (Physical Address)
(Church and Hall are in the Mentz Community)

Cost of space is \$25.00 paid in advance for profit booths. Non-profits booth rental is FREE. Please make check payable to **Texas German Society** and mail check and application to: PEGGY SCHULIN 1404 BAIRD AVE. KATY, TEXAS 77493. For questions you may call Peggy at 713-582-5210 or email peggyschulin@comcast.net.

1. Booth size is approximately 10' X 10'
2. Booth site will be assigned inside convention hall and each exhibitor will be provided with one (1) table (3'x 8') and two (2) chairs. Vendors are welcome to bring their own small table. The Texas German Society will not be responsible for any loss, damage, or injury.
3. Booths should be set up by 8:30 am and remain until the end of the convention which will be approximately 3:30 pm. Hall will be open for setup at 7:30 a.m.
4. Limited electrical outlets are available. Please let us know if you need electricity for your booth, and must be for reasonable use. First come, first serve, and may affect the booth location. Please bring an extension cord (20') as plugs may be a distance away.
5. Each participant is responsible for collecting and reporting STATE SALES TAX. You sell directly to the public.
6. Deadline for submission of application is April 1, 2023
7. A catered meal will be available at lunch for \$10.00 per person (payable in advance).
8. Please write one check for cost of booth and lunch(es)

Texas German Society State Convention

Saturday, April 22, 2023

St. Roch’s Catholic Church Hall,
1600 Frelsburg Rd. Alleyton, Tx. 78935
(Church and Hall are located in the Mentz Community)

Booth Application – Please print, no cursive

Due April 1, 2023

Booth Name _____

Profit _____ (\$25.00) Non-profit _____ (no charge for booth)

Lunch = \$10.00 per person x _____ of people = \$ _____

Applicant’s Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____ Cell _____

E-mail _____

Items to be sold _____

Signed Agreement

I hereby release The Texas German Society of any responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to any work shown at the 2023 Convention. I agree to abide by the rules included with this application. I also agree that my booth name and items to be sold may be used to advertise the 2023 convention.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

(Mail application and check made payable to **Texas German Society** to Peggy Schulin, 1404 Baird Ave. Katy 77493

STATE CHRISTMAS PARTY, 2022
GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL



Bastrop County Chapter

Bastrop County Chapter meets six times per year; four meetings and two social outings. Refreshments are served before the meeting. After the meeting, we have had some very interesting discussions on topics such as (1) How did people communicate before telephones, (2) How they managed before electricity and, in the early days after receiving such, (3) Entertainment before the electric age and TV and (4) Where did people shop. All members took an active part and it was quite entertaining and enlightening. The common thread here was that we all had similar backgrounds and experiences. The social outings were to places such as local museums and eating out in nearby towns.

Rosie Schulz, Secretary

Bluebonnet Chapter

The Bluebonnet Chapter meets six times each year. We try to have presentations and events that our members are interested in. The Saengerfest, sponsored by the Bellville Lions Club and the Bluebonnet Chapter, was held on April 24 and was a success with good attendance, good food and good German music.

Members old and young look forward to the annual Ice Cream Social (Blue Bell) which is always held in July. Lots of ice cream and lots of good German music. The Bluebonnet Chapter was happy to meet Spencer Diem, the new German teacher at Sealy High School. Our Chapter always selects a student for our \$500 scholarship. The winner of the scholarship was Reghan Novicke a graduate of Sealy High School with a high academic record.

Our meeting date, time and location has changed. The chapter will meet the second Sunday every other month at 3:00 p.m., starting in January. The meetings are held at the Sens Center in Bellville.

The officers this year are: President: Herbert Schumann; Vice President: Sandy Schuff; Secretary: Grace Holtkamp; and Treasurer: Robert Herridge.

Colorado County Chapter

October 28, 2021 – Met for our regularly scheduled meeting with Angelica Mattern leading our group with the Lord's Prayer in German. President Kathryn thanked the fifteen chapter members that showed up at Commissioners Court to have a picture made announcing October 6 as German/American Day. The program for the evening was presented by two of our members. The first part was entitled "World War II Internment Camps" by Ellen Brendle and the second part by Nelda Hajdik entitled "The Train to Crystal City". This was an in depth study of the Internment Camps in the US with emphasis on those in Texas.

December 16, 2021 – Our chapter held their annual Christmas Party at Schobel's Restaurant with a large attendance enjoying German food and listening to Christmas music presented by John and Elena Holub.

February 24, 2022 – Vice-President Elena Holub welcomed a small group this very cold and wet evening to our regular meeting. Next on the agenda was announcement of the convention to be held on March 19 and to be sure to get registered. Our program for this evening was "Visiting

and Remembering". Just a good time talking about how our German upbringing affected our growing up and how our old traditions are kept up today. Everyone joined in and Easter traditions was discussed at length.

Fayette County Chapter

January

On January 25, 2022, the members visited the Texas Heros Museum in La Grange at 10 a.m. We were given a very interesting and informative tour by our vice president, Charles Murray and had lunch at a local Italian restaurant following the excursion.

February

On February 28, 2022, the members had their regular meeting at Randolph Rec. Center with the election of officers. Our guest speaker was Gavin Miculka, assistant site manager for Monument Hill/Kreische Historical site. He shared with us historical information concerning the Bluff Schuetzenfest and Schuetzenverein and invited everyone to participate in the Schuetzenfest event scheduled in May.

March

On March 28, 2022, the members visited Rohan Meadery in La Grange for food and refreshment. Wendy Rohan had a very interesting presentation on bees and honey.

April

On April 25, 2022, the members had their regular meeting at Randolph Rec. Center. Our guest speaker was Tracey Faske, German teacher at La Grange High School and her students. The La Grange High School Folk dancing group performed for the members.

May

On May 14, 2022, our chapter had a children's booth at the Schuetzenverein Family festival event at Monument Hill State Park. Children were invited to decorate cardboard Lebkuchenherzen and wear them around their neck with a ribbon to celebrate the Schuetzenfest. Over 40 children visited our booth and learned to say basic colors in German as well as the cultural significance of the gingerbread heart cookies at celebrations in Germany.

On May 23, 2022, the members visited some of the Painted Churches in the Schulenburg area – High Hill and Praha – at 10 a.m. and then had lunch following the tour at Oakridge Smokehouse.

September – November

No meeting due to family concerns with the chapter president.

Fort Bend Chapter



On Saturday, March 19, 2022, ten members of the Fort Bend Chapter attended the TGS 39th Annual Convention



On Thursday, June 9, 2022, members of The Fort Bend Chapter of the Texas German Society visited the Holocaust Museum in Houston, Texas. The Museum reopened in 2019 after a two-year expansion, more than doubling in size. The new facility ranks as the nation's fourth largest Holocaust museum. Authentic film footage, artifacts, photographs and documents expose Nazi propaganda. Included in the Museum are Circa 1700 Torah scroll, a 1942

German WW II-era railcar, and a Danish rescue boat.

After touring the Museum, the group ate at the Cleburne Cafeteria. Established in 1941, Cleburne Cafeteria is a family-owned business serving up fresh, homemade food by cooks that have been in the family for many years. The food was excellent!

Pictured are Evelyn Harris, Cathy Hanzik, Delbert Niemann, Loyce Anderson



On Friday, November 4, 2022, members of the Fort Bend Chapter of the Texas German Society had lunch at the Needville Senior Citizen Site at the Immanuel Evangelical Church. A delicious lunch was prepared by members of the St. Michael's Catholic Church in Needville. For more information regarding the Senior Citizen Site at the Immanuel Evangelical Church call Amy at 281-750-2524.

Golden Crescent Chapter

No Report

Harris County Chapter

Our Harris County Chapter met every other month (Jan/March/May/July/Sep/Nov) at Trini Mendenhall Community Center on second Thursday @ 6:45pm. We always have a wonderful Speaker for 45-60 minutes.

Our members bring a snack to share, so we have couple minutes for socializing before we open the meeting at 7pm.

Also our Chapter organized & hosted with North Harris County Chapter the 2022 TGS State Convention.

In October 2022 our President Marion McClinton & the North Harris County President Aaron Schindewolf was honored by the Mayor of Tomball, TX with a PROCLAMATION & announced the October 6th as the "German-American Day". Mayor Lori Klein Quinn thanked us for leading Texas German Society and keeping our heritage alive. (see picture under North Harris County, October 6, 2022)

For the first time our members met 10/06/22 at Rudi Lechner's restaurant to celebrate the "German-American Day", that was a big success. We decided to do this now every year.

In November we had Election of our staff:

President Marion McClinton

Vice President Janet Herbert

Treasurer Jarel Whitney

Speaker Coordinator Ruth Froebel

Secretary Marilyn Marek

Email Coordinator Elizabeth Stoerkel

Hospitality Coordinator Bernice Mistrot

Looking forward to a wonderful year 2023

Heart of Texas Chapter

No Report

Katy Tri-County Chapter



A group of 12 of the Katy Tri-County Chapter members attended the TGS State Convention on Saturday, March 19, 2022. It was an enjoyable day spent with many friends and good food.



On April 12, 2022, members of the Katy Tri-County Chapter and guests visited the Texas Cotton Gin Museum in Burton, Texas.



On July 29, 2022, the Katy Tri-County and Fort Bend Chapters and their guests, including visitors from Germany, visited the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern, had lunch at the Cleburne Cafeteria and visited the Photography Museum in Houston.



On Thursday, October 27th, 2022, seven members of the Tri County Chapter and six guests toured the Lone Star Flight Museum at Ellington Airport. They were able to get an up close look at the vintage airplanes.



On December 8, 2022, eleven members of the Katy Tri-County Chapter enjoyed a delicious meal at the Brookwood Café.



Lavaca-Dewitt County Chapter

The Lavaca/DeWitt Chapter meets on the second Thursday of every other month, with our first business meeting scheduled to be held in February.

In 2022, our membership roster reflected 20 paid members. In 2022, meetings were held at various venues due to no longer having access to the historic Hochheim Prairie Schoolhouse as a result of Betty Rathkamp's ill health.

During the year, we had business meetings in February, April, and August. In June, we attended our "indoor picnic" at the home of Heinz and Barbara Braun. In October, members celebrated Oktoberfest at Kloesel's Steakhouse in Moulton. Members also witnessed the annual signing of the German Day Proclamation. In Cuero, the DeWitt County Judge signed the proclamation. In Hallettsville, the Lavaca County Judge signed the proclamation. In December, members celebrated the season with a Weihnachtsfest hosted by Gray Westmoreland at Schatzie's.

Our first business meeting for 2023 is scheduled for 09 February.

Lee County Chapter

Have not met since the COVID-19 pandemic.

North Harris County Chapter

November 22, 2021

For this meeting, we watched the Rick Steves video “Swiss Alps”. Switzerland draws travelers from around the world for its legendary mountains. From the Matterhorn to the Jungfrau to Appenzell, we savor both the country’s jaw-dropping alpine beauty and the rich and resilient culture of its people. As we lace together that dramatic mountain wonder with scenic train rides, breathtaking lifts, and unforgettable hikes, we also enjoy alpine life — from exploring glaciers to making cheese the old-fashioned way.

January 24, 2022

January’s program was presented by chapter member Linda Brown, and Katherine Tramm, co-founders of Creating with Blind Abandon. Creating with Blind Abandon is an art program for children who are blind or visually impaired founded by Katherine Trimm, a CTVI Teacher, and Linda Brown, a Brailist. Their inspiration came after working with visually impaired students who love art, but do not have the opportunity to express themselves creatively. Katherine and Linda joined forces and began meeting monthly in January of 2018 at the public library in New Caney. This program is involved in the community with many outreach activities, also creating tactile art with Kids! Creating With Blind Abandon is thrilled to continue dreaming big for the future!

March 19, 2022

The North Harris County Chapter and the Harris County Chapter co-hosted the State Convention at the VFW Hall in Tomball, Texas. It was a great event, enjoyed by all who attended.

May 23, 2022

In the spirit of celebrating Easter, we watched the video “Rick Steves’ European Easter” at our meeting.

July 25, 2022

At this meeting, we discussed the on-going restoration efforts of the Battleship Texas and the upcoming dry-dock in Galveston. As you may be aware, it is anticipated that in August the Battleship Texas will be towed from its berth at the San Jacinto to Galveston to be dry-docked for extensive repairs. Its next permanent home has not yet been determined. With this new chapter in its history coming up, I felt it appropriate to have videos noting the history of the Battleship Texas and the most recent updates concerning on-going restoration efforts. Remember, this ship is well over 100 years old, with work starting on it in 1911, launching in 1912, and final commissioning on March 12, 1914.

September 26, 2022

For September’s meeting, father and son Steve and Matt Guettler presented a two-part presentation. The first was about their recent trip to Helen, Georgia. Helen was platted in 1912 and named after the daughter of a lumber official. The town was incorporated in 1913. Formerly

a logging town that was in decline, the city resurrected itself by becoming a replica of a Bavarian alpine town, in the Appalachians instead of the Alps. This design is mandated through zoning first adopted in 1969, so that the classic south-German style is present on every building, even on the small number of national franchisees present.

During the second part of the presentation, Matt Guettler demonstrated the software Duolingo, which he has been using to learn the German language. Duolingo offers over 100 total courses across over 40 distinct languages, from Spanish, French, German and Japanese to Navajo and Yiddish.

October 6, 2022



The City of Tomball issued a proclamation during its City Council meeting in recognition of German-American Day. Marion McClinton, President of the TGS Harris County Chapter and Aaron Schindewolf, President of the TGS North Harris County Chapter, were honored by Mayor Lori Klein Quinn and Tomball City Council to be part of the proclamation presentation and received each a copy of the proclamation.

November 28, 2022

At our meeting, we will be watching a video called "Art for the Ages: The Monuments of Glenwood (Cemetery)". For those of you who may not know, Glenwood Cemetery (founded in 1871) is considered Houston's cemetery for the rich and famous, and the burial spot of many early Texans who were instrumental in the development of our great State! From elaborate statuary to crisp modern memorials, the monuments at Houston's historic Glenwood Cemetery tell the story of 150 years of changing tastes, rising fortunes and varied personal motivations. Find out what we can learn from this art for the ages during this program featuring Preservation Houston Programs Director Jim Parsons and Glenwood Cemetery Executive Director Richard Ambrus.

South Belt Chapter

No report



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 15, 2023**

MAIL OR EMAIL COMPLETED PAPERWORK TO:

MS. GRACE HOLTkamp
1452 SOUTH CIRCLE
SEALY, TEXAS 77474-3914
graceholtkamp@att.net
(979)885-2169

AND EMAIL A COPY ALSO TO:
ROBERT HERRIDGE
robert1@herridgeconsulting.com



TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY
SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

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.

Steinway Square Grand Piano, Built 1872

Ownership History

The Baylor Women's College in Independence Texas purchased this piano brand new in 1872 for the college. In 1879 the Baylor Women's College was moved to Waco, Texas, closing the location in Independence Texas, but the piano stayed in the closed location.

Louis F. Niebuhr, brother-in-law to Edwin Schmid, purchased this piano in the early 1900's and gave it to Erna Ressel Schmid, wife of Edwin Schmid which she did enjoy to play.

Erna Ressel Schmid passed away in 1956 and her son Edwin Stanton Schmid inherited the piano and then stored it in his shop.

In 1985 Edwin Stanton Schmid gave the piano to his son, Patrick Wayne Schmid. Patrick Wayne Schmid spent the next two years restoring the exterior of this beautiful piano and had it completely re-strung professionally.

On February 11, 2022, Patrick Wayne Schmid and wife, Georgianne Schmid donated this piano to the Witte-Schmid Haus Museum to share with all.

Family History: Patrick Wayne Schmid's father is Edwin Stanton Schmid; Edwin Schmid is the grandfather. John Schmid is great-grandfather who married Emily Witte, Patrick's great-grandmother.



In Memorium



Barbara Ann (Leenen) Prause

May 1, 1931 – December 10, 2021

On December 10, 2021 Barbara Ann (Leenen) Prause, age 90, joined her loved ones in Heaven.

Barbara was born on May 1, 1931 at her Grandma and Grandpa Miller's house in Columbus, Texas to her parents Genevieve Frances (Miller) Leenen and August Jacob Leenen. She was baptized and confirmed at St. Peters Lutheran Church in Bellville, Texas.

Barbara was married in St. Paul Lutheran Church in Columbus, Texas to Clemons Lavo "Buddy" Prause on April 28, 1951. Their union was blessed with four children which she and Buddy devoted their life to. She was a member of the Texas German Society and the former Eastern Star.



Marjorie Sophia Pophanken Brune

April 6, 1927 – October 15, 2021

Marjorie Sophia Pophanken Brune, age 94, passed away in her home on Friday, October 15, 2021.

Marjorie was born in Brush, Colorado, located in Morgan County, Colorado, on April 6, 1927.

Marjorie married Thurman Ellis Brune on Wednesday, May 16, 1951 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Columbus. Pastor G. Wolf officiated.

Marjorie was very proud of her German heritage and was a member of the Colorado County Chapter of the Texas German Society and also a member of the chapter's singing group Unser Deutsche Sangers.



David E. Kahlich

August 7, 1930 – March 7, 2022

David E. Kahlich of Weimar, age 91, left this life on March 7, 2022, after a brief illness, while at home holding his wife's hand.

David was born August 7, 1930 to Frank and Lillie Kahlich in Weimar, the second of three children. He attended St. Michael School and Weimar High School.

He was active in Scouts and lettered in football and track while in high school. He also began a life-long love affair with planes and flying. Before he even had a driver's license, David obtained his pilot's license by taking advantage of a flight training school in Schulenburg during WWII. It's said that his mother was his first passenger. After graduating as Salutatorian of the Class of 1949, he attended the University of Notre Dame in Indiana where he received his BS degree in Aeronautical Engineering in 1953 with Cum Laude honors.

In high school, David met his future wife, Elvera Willrodt, at a sodality meeting in Moravia, Texas. They corresponded while in college, and, after a school dance his junior year at Notre Dame, he proposed to her at the Grotto, a Marian shrine on the Notre Dame campus. They married on August 15, 1953, at St. Anthony Catholic Church in Columbus, Texas, and settled down in Arlington, Texas, where David was employed as an engineer with Chance Vought Aircraft Inc.



Paul Schenck (1929 – 2022)

Paul Edgar Schenck was born 2 February 1929 in Algona, Iowa, the third son of Alfred B. Schenck and Elizabeth Upton Schenck. He grew up on the family farm homesteaded by his great-grandfather, Horace Porter Schenck in 1856. He and his three brothers all attended the one-room rural school adjacent to the farm. He graduated from Algona High School in 1946 and then received a bachelor's degree in English from Iowa State Teachers College, now the University of Northern Iowa, in Cedar Falls, in January, 1950.

Paul was drafted into the United States Marine Corps during the Korean Conflict. He served almost three years, first in the enlisted ranks and then as a commissioned officer – the last year in Yokosuka, Japan. The Marine Corps provided pivotal experiences, discipline and leadership for Paul that endured his lifetime. Upon discharge from the service, he moved to Houston, Texas, and began work as a writer and photographer for Tunnell Publications Inc. There he met and married Wanda “Tod” Tunnell. Paul was editor of Trailer/Body Builders trade magazine for 40 years, plus the company's two other magazines in the truck transportation field. He retired in 1998 yet continued as a consultant and field editor, especially in the international arena. He had covered truck and intermodal events throughout North America, Europe, the Orient and Australia for 45 years. Since 1971, Paul was actively involved in the restoration of pioneer Texas buildings.

Paul admired Germanic architecture, history, people and customs. . . . He supervised restoration work on the 1860 Witte-Schmid-Haus Museum near Shelby for the Texas German Society. Paul was actively involved in the operation of the Museum for decades.

He joined the Texas German Society and sang with their choral group. Paul was the only non-native German singer and truly enjoyed learning more about the German language and inflections from these friends. The richness of Paul's life revolved around history – history of the world, the USA, military and family.

Farm life, lifelong learning, stories of people, places and operations, classical music, his church and his family all blended for him. These interests converged with the influence from his 60 year membership at Christ the King Evangelical Lutheran Church. Paul died peacefully at home on March 30, 2022 and is survived by his wife of 60 years, Tod.



Glen Roy Guettler
May 14, 1935 – April 3, 2022

Glenn Roy Guettler, 86, of Houston, Texas went to be with his Lord and Savior on April 3, 2022.

Glenn was born on May 14, 1935 to Kirby Guettler and Ellen Gaertner Guettler. He was baptized on July 19, 1935 and confirmed on May 15, 1949, at Zion Lutheran Church in La Grange.

While in high school, he met the love of his life, Doris

Petrusek.

He attended the University of Texas in Austin, where he received his degree in 1958. He and Doris were married on August 12, 1956 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. It was a very happy day when they celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary in 2021.

He spent over 20 years as a teacher in Houston; his favorite subjects were geography and history. Glenn also served as assistant Boy Scout Troop Master for Troop 550.

Being very interested in the preservation of his German heritage, he joined together with four other enthusiasts to organize the Texas German Society in 1983. Shortly thereafter, Glenn introduced the idea of a Scholarship Fund for high school German students. He served as chairman of the committee until his recent retirement.



Charles Daniel Pfeffer
August 11, 1938 – June 22, 2022

Charles was born in Hempstead, Texas; baptized in St. Mary's Catholic Church; made first Holy Communion and confirmed in St. Peter & Paul Catholic Church in Bellville.

Survived by: wife, Janice Marie Pfeffer; daughter, Christine Marie Pfeffer Ruggiero & spouse, Jamie; sister, Delores Bentke; brother, Clarence Freudensprung & wife Bernice & children, Gary, Sandy, Laverne, Don & Shirley; Aunt Emila

Konieczny (age 102), numerous loving cousins and friends.

He graduated from Orchard High School in May 1958; served in the U.S. Army for 3 years & was known as the "financial wizard" of ATC. He married Janice Jetter April 20, 1963; blessed with the birth of daughter, Christine Marie June 12, 1975. He was the owner of Charles Pfeffer Real Estate in Fort Bend County & president of Fort Bend Real Estate Association. He was a member of the Texas German Society and assisted with Refreshment Committee.



Florine Schmid
February 6, 1925 – October 15, 2022

Florine Dorothy Schmid, 97, passed away peacefully on October 15, 2022. Florine was born on February 6, 1925, in Rowena, Texas, to Emil and Mary Ullrich.

Florine loved to do many things such as quilting, baking, gardening, watching or listening to the Astros games but out of all of her hobbies, fishing was her favorite! She was a devoted wife to Edwin for 67 years and was always by his side supporting him in every one of his endeavors while raising two beautiful children: Linda and Patrick. Later, she became her

very most favorite thing in the whole world and that was a grandma and great-grandma, and she will be greatly missed by all who knew her.



JAMES CLIFFORD "J.C." NEAL
(June 29, 1933 – February 10, 2022)

James Clifford "J.C." Neal, 88, passed away February 10, 2022, in Tomball, Texas. He was preceded in death by his wife Catherine, parents Clifford Angress and Nellie Frances (Rich) Neal, sister Florence Dodd, and brother Bill Neal. J.C. attended schools in the towns of Price, Troup, and New London, Texas, and graduated in 1950 from London High School in Rusk Co., Texas. He served as a clerk in U. S. Army headquarters at Fort Tilden, located on New

York City's Rockaway Peninsula. In 1954, he came home on leave and married Catherine L. Bailey at Trinity Lutheran Church in Spring, Texas, which was their home church for many years. They raised their family in Houston, Texas, where he worked as a machinist for Cameron Iron Works and a vocational training coordinator for Houston Community College.



LILLIAN AMANDA (FRITSCH) KUEHNLE
(April 19, 1924 – March 2, 2022)

LILLIAN went to be with the Lord on March 2, 2022. She was born to Gerhard and Selma (Pampell) Fritsche on April 19, 1924, in Loebau, Texas and was baptized and confirmed at Christ Lutheran Church. Lillian met the love of her life, Arthur Kuehnle, while staying with sister and brother-in-law Esther and Walter Nimtz at the Kuehnle farm on Kuykendahl Road in Spring. She married Arthur on November 9, 1940, and joined Trinity (Klein) Lutheran Church where she was a member the rest of her life. Lillian and Arthur had a loving marriage of 68 years until he went to be with the Lord on June 19, 2009. Lillian worked hard with Arthur on their dairy and vegetable

farm and was a loving mother to three children.



HENRY A. BROWN, JR.
(October 13, 1942 – April 18, 2022)

With heavy hearts, we announce the death of Henry A. Brown Jr. of Spring, Texas, born in Oceanside, California, who passed away on April 18, 2022 at the age of 79. He was predeceased by his parents, Henry Amsden Brown and Etha Mamie Bowling Brown; and his son Kevin Amsden Brown. He is survived by his wife Dorothy Brown (Braunagel); his children, Linda Brown Henning and Dean Joseph Brown (Susan).



LORENE FREDA RADFORD
(April 11, 1927 – July 23, 2022)

Lorene passed away peacefully, with her children by her side after a short battle with cancer. She is survived by her son Mark Radford (wife Angela) and daughter Patricia Radford (husband Carlos). Also survived by her granddaughter Brandy McWilliams (husband Grant), and great granddaughter Blakeley McWilliams.



Mary Massirer
May 22, 1939 – December 18, 2022

Mary Catherine Roberts Massirer, 83, of Crawford, passed away Sunday, December 18, 2022. Mary was born May 22, 1939, in Waco, Texas, to parents, Dorothy Denny Roberts and Sam C. Roberts of Moody, Texas. She was raised in Moody and attended school there, graduating at the top of her class in 1957. She attended TCU for a year before transferring to Baylor to complete a B.A. with a major in English. She went on to earn a master's degree from Baylor as well. She met Van Massirer while still in high school, and she and her family encouraged him to enroll at Baylor as well. She and Van married in June 1958 and enjoyed over 64 years of marriage and all the adventures that go along with it. Mary taught English classes for San Angelo College, Howard Payne University, and University of Maryland. In 1966, Mary began a 38-year career of teaching English composition and literature courses at Baylor, and she developed the technical writing program. She served as a Commencement Marshal for many years and was also a Bearer of the Mace. She was an active member of St. Paul Lutheran Church for many years, serving on the church council and the pastoral call committee. Mary played piano and church organ and was very adept at a number of creative hobbies such as crocheting, knitting, and baking.



Georg Raimund Ulbrich
April 27, 1943 - December 30, 2022

Georg Raimund Ulbrich, 79, of La Grange, Texas, treasured husband, loyal father, and beloved friend, passed away after a brief battle with Multiple Myeloma, surrounded by family, on Friday, December 30th, 2022.

Georg was born in Eichtal, Germany (now Dabrowka Gorna, Poland) on April 27, 1943, the son of Raimund and Marta Hudalla Ulbrich. He immigrated to Canada on his own at the age of 17 and eventually made his way to Houston and became a United States Citizen in 1973. In 2016 he met Betsy Clara Johnson Anderson at St. James Episcopal Church. They married on March 5, 2022.

Georg was a long-time member of St. James Episcopal Church. He was a member of Chorus Sine Nomine, the St. James choir where he found great joy and provided important leadership, and other choirs. He was the former president of both the Fayette County and Texas German Society. He was a scoutmaster and proudly helped both of his sons become Eagle Scouts. He was a charter member of the Friendswood Rotary Club where he helped create Stevenson Park.

Georg loved to build things and enjoyed wood working, owning 3 or 4 of every tool imaginable. He built houses, barns and water well houses, but he would often tell you, his favorite thing he had built was "The Outhouse."

To commemorate her birthday, actress/vocalist Julie Andrews made a special appearance at Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall for the benefit of the AARP.

One of the musical numbers she performed was 'My Favorite Things' from the legendary movie 'Sound Of Music'.

Here are the lyrics she used:

Botox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Cadillacs and cataracts, hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favorite things.

When the pipes leak,
When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favorite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Back pain, confused brains and no need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favorite things.

When the joints ache,
When the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.

During this year I have been reminded of what our ancestors endured when they left their homeland to come to Texas and the New World to begin a better life for themselves and their families. And we are here to carry on with what they left for us – our heritage. There is always something that you can share with your extended families – children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc., other family and even friends – things you remember from the “old days”! Younger generations may not want to hear it, but a ‘sprinkling’ of THEIR heritage can always be included somewhere. Even if it is a word or two in German, a German song that has been passed down, or sharing old photos of the ancestors. Or remembering life on the farm. Your family heritage is not taught in classroom – YOU are the teachers!! – author unknown

**THE FOLLOWING PAGES
ARE REPORTS OF HAPPENINGS IN
THE PAST
2022
FOR YOUR INFORMATION
ONLY**



TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY

WITTE-SCHMID HAUS MUSEUM

MINUTES OF THE TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY STATE
CONVENTION

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2022

TOMBALL VFW HALL, POST 2427, TOMBALL, TEXAS

“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, March 19, 2022, in Tomball, Texas at the Tomball VFW Post 2427 Hall.

The Convention was opened by the host chapter presidents, Aaron Schindewolf, North Harris County Chapter and Marion McClinton, Harris County Chapter. Dr. Richard Noack opened the day with prayer. The American and Texas flags were presented by American Heritage Girls, Troop TX2928.

Tomball Mayor ProTem, Lori Klein Quinn and Chamber of Commerce President, Bruce Hillegeist also welcomed the convention. German Consulate Michael Ott addressed the group.

Programs were presented by Aaron Schindewolf on the German Texans in Harris County and the Wunderlich Living History Farm and Klein. Rodney Koenig, one of the founders of Texas German Society, talked about St. Peter's United Church of Christ and the Spring Branch area. The Das ist Keine Kunst dancers entertained and music was provided by Enzian Buam, (Jason Keepers, Robert Herridge, and Austin Davis, age 16).

An annual business meeting was held during the convention. TGS President Kathryn Haluska called the meeting to order. There was a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the last TGS convention held on March 9, 2019, by Aaron Schindewolf and seconded by Glenn Altwein. The motion carried.

TGS Secretary Peggy Schulin reported the following balances as of convention date:

Frontier Bank, Elgin, State Checking \$15,170.65 State CD \$8,343.72

Frontier Bank, Elgin, Scholarship Acct.\$ 6,632.68

Fayetteville Bank State CD \$5,026.30

Fayetteville Bank Scholarship CDs \$4,634.25 and \$2,513.14

Expenses since January were \$200.00 to H & R Advisors for 2021 Income Tax preparation.

At convention date, 389 members had paid dues for 2022 and there are 13 chapters.

Glenn Altwein made a motion to accept the treasurer's report for audit and Marie Herridge seconded. The motion carried.

In the absence of Museum Treasurer, Susan Yancey, Peggy reported the balance in the Museum checking to be \$12,380.92 and the CD in Industry State Bank in the amount of \$12,981.11. There was \$887.00 in memorials and honorariums during 2021 and donations totaling \$7,755.00. The Sanford Schmid Trust gives

\$600.00 monthly for the upkeep of the Museum. Roy Whitney made a motion to accept this report and Ruth Froebel seconded. The motion carried.

President Kathryn gave the Witte Schmid Museum Improvement Plan for 2022 submitted by Mike Yancey as follows:

The annual maintenance and operations expenses for 2021 was \$5,549.15. Short and long term capital improvement work will require fund raising efforts. A grant request was completed in January to LCRA for their 2022 Community Grant Program to help pay for second floor interior repair and painting work estimated to cost \$15,000.00 (\$12,000.00 grant with our 20% match of \$3,000.00) If we are awarded the grant, we will accomplish the improvement work this year. Regular maintenance and repair will continue.

Scholarship Committee Chairperson, Grace Holtkamp, presented the names of the winners of the essay contest: 1st Place (\$1500.00) is Brynn Mikulenka from LaGrange High school; 2nd place (\$1000.00) is Rosa Ramirez from Travis High School in Ft. Bend ISD; 3rd Place (\$750.00) is Laura Davis from Seven Lakes High School in Katy ISD. Brynn Mikulenka and her mother were present to receive the certificate. The essays will be published in the next Reporter.

Reporter Editor, Linda Phillips, announced that she mailed out 165 paper Reporters at a cost of \$977.53 and sent out 245 emails. The next Reporter will be sent out in the Fall before the holidays.

In new business, Peggy Schulin along with the Nominating Committee of Herbert Schumann and Jarel Whitney presented the following slate of TGS officers and directors for 2022:

President: Kathryn Haluska - Colorado Co. Chapter

1st Vice Pres.: Sandy Shuff - Bluebonnet Chapter

2nd Vice Pres.: Jarel Whitney - Harris Co. Chapter

Secretary Peggy Schulin - Katy Tri-Co and Presidents Chapters

Treasurer* Aaron Schindewolf - North Harris Co. Chapter

Reporter Editor Linda Phillips - Katy Tri-Co Chapter

Publicity Glenn Guettler - North Harris Co. Chapter

Webmaster Anthony Stott - South Belt Chapter

2 Year Director Robert Herridge - Bluebonnet and Presidents Chapters

2 Year Director Mannie Fritsch-Schmid - Fayette Co. Chapter

2 Year Director Herbert Gerken - Presidents Chapter

(Original 2 year Directors with 1 year remaining)

Cindy Richards - Presidents Chapter and Anthony Stott - South Belt Chapter

*The Treasurer position allows that officer to open accounts for the State and Scholarship monies in a bank of their choosing, with the President as a cosigner on all accounts.

Since there were no nominations from the floor, Joyce McCleary made a motion to accept the slate of nominees by acclamation and Van Massirer seconded. The motion carried and the officers and directors were elected. Rodney Koenig installed the new officers and directors.

At the State Executive Meeting in January, it was voted to present to the membership at the Convention an Amendment to the TGS Constitution dated May 5, 2018. Under ARTICLE VII, "Local Chapters" Item #2 states:

"Local chapters will hold a minimum of four business meetings annually. The Executive Officers and Directors propose this addition: "Unless conditions of travel, health and environment prevent gatherings. Contact by email, phone, and mail is strongly encouraged until the conditions are removed."

Aaron Schindewolf presented this for discussion and/or a motion. Joyce McCleary made the motion to accept the Amendment and Mary Jane Beisert seconded. The motion carried and the Constitution will be amended.

President Kathryn asked for chapters to host the 2023 State Convention. Discussion followed about several chapters hosting together. There was volunteered help from Marion McClinton for signage, Shirley Friers of Colorado County for decorations and Peggy Schulin for printing badges.

President Kathryn did a Roll Call of the chapters present. Nine of the thirteen chapters were represented.

Aaron Schindewolf read the names of our deceased members since the last Convention in 2019, ringing a bell to remind us of those we lost.

President Kathryn thanked the hosting chapters of Harris County and North Harris County for a successful convention. She asked for a motion to adjourn the business meeting and Ruth Froebel made the motion to adjourn and Sandy Shuff seconded. The motion carried and the business meeting adjourned.

At the end of the Convention, Aaron Schindewolf introduced TGS President Kathryn Haluska to make a closing statement to the members. Here are Kathryn's closing remarks:

"During this year I have been reminded of what our ancestors endured when they left their homeland to come to Texas and the New World to begin a better life for themselves and their families. And we are here to carry on with what they left for us – our heritage. There is always something that you can share with your extended families – children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc., other family and even friends – things you remember from the 'old days'! Younger generations may not want to hear it, but a 'sprinkling' of THEIR heritage can always be included somewhere. Even if it is a word or two in German, a German song that has been passed down, or sharing old photos of the ancestors. Or, remembering life on the farm. Your family heritage is not taught in the classroom – YOU are the teachers!"

Respectively Submitted,

Peggy Schulin, TGS Secretary

Report of the Texas German Society 39th annual convention
Submitted by Cathy Hanzik

The Convention was opened by the host chapter presidents, Aaron Schindewolf, North Harris County Chapter and Marion McClinton, Harris County Chapter. Dr. Richard Noack opened the day with prayer in both German and English. The American and Texas flags were presented by American Heritage Girls, Troop TX2928.

Tomball Mayor ProTem, Lori Klein Quinn and Chamber of Commerce President, Bruce Hillegeist also welcomed the convention. German Consulate Michael Ott addressed the group.

Programs were presented by Aaron Schindewolf for Steve Baird on the German Texans in Harris County, the Wunderlich Living History Farm, and Klein, the Texas Historical Museum. Rodney Koenig, one of the founders of Texas German Society, talked about St. Peter's United Church of Christ and the Spring Branch area. The Das ist Keine Kunst dancers entertained and music was provided by Enzian Buam.

An annual business meeting was held during the convention. At convention date, 389 members had paid dues for 2022 and there are 13 chapters. Nine of the thirteen chapters were represented at the convention.

Aaron Schindewolf read the names of the deceased members since the last Convention in 2019, ringing a bell to remind us of those we lost. The Fort Bend Chapter of the Texas German Society had 6 members deceased since the last convention in 2019: Edwin Anderson, Paul Johnnie Cooper, Winona Luedeke, Pat Parma, Juanita Todd, and Walter Todd.

At the end of the Convention, Aaron Schindewolf introduced TGS President Kathryn Haluska to make a closing statement to the members present.

We sent out invitations to the German language teachers to have their students enter the essay contest for our Scholarship awards. There were 7 essays sent to Grace Holtkamp, the Scholarship chair. Here are the winners:

BRYNN MIKULENDA, LA GRANGE HIGH SCHOOL	\$1500 FIRST PLACE
ROSA RAMIREZ, WILLIAM B TRAVIS HIGH SCHOOL, FT BEND	\$1000 SECOND PLACE
LAURA DAVIS, SEVEN LAKES HIGH SCHOOL, KATY	\$ 750 THIRD PLACE

Grace Holtkamp, Scholarship Chair

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

Brijnn Mikulenda 1st Place

My Interest in the German Language, Culture, and my German Ancestry
My German ancestry extends to my maternal great grandmother and great grandfather. I have always been interested in the German language and heritage as a child. Unfortunately, my maternal great grandfather passed away at a very young age so I was not able to speak with him about our family heritage. My maternal great grandmother passed away when I was 6 years old. I vaguely remember playing in her kitchen with pots and pans as she would speak on the phone in a foreign language. I was not sure of the language at the time and even tried to speak it myself. As years passed, my mother would tell stories of my great grandmother speaking to her friends in German anytime she didn't want anyone to understand her conversation. I took interest immediately! I was intrigued to learn about a foreign language and specifically a language my ancestry was tied to. I was also interested in the German culture and wanted to learn more about it. I have taken German for the full four years of my high school career. I have been a member of the German Club and participated in Sprachfest. I was awarded 1st place for the German Doll costume at district level in Sprachfest. I went on to place 3rd with my doll at State level. I was inducted into Delta Epsilon Phi (German Honor Society) last year. I signed up for the German Exchange Program (GAPP) my sophomore year of high school. I was beyond excited to visit Germany and have a German exchange student to come to the US and live with my family. Unfortunately, COVID had other plans and the program was canceled. Our trip has been rescheduled for this upcoming summer. I have saved money from various jobs for the past several years to take this once in a lifetime trip to experience the culture of Germany and truly live as the German I was born as.

Rosa Ramirez 2nd Place

My interest in the German language, Culture, and my German ancestry
My interest in the German language actually started in a French class. At home, I learned to speak Spanish fluently. To expand my knowledge in languages, I decided to take French in high school because of its similarities to Spanish. Quickly, I realized that French was not the

language for me. Though it was also phonetic, the sounds were not ones I was able to easily reproduce. As the year had already started, I had to make a decision quickly.

The German program at my high school was, and still is, small. In a smaller classroom, I was quickly able to catch up to my peers and began to learn the beauty in a language often described as aggressive in American film culture. A more forgiving phonetic language, German quickly became my main hobby. Suddenly I could connect every aspect of my life to German. I would relentlessly compound nouns together to my parent's exasperated delight. The music I played in orchestra was written by German composers. The asparagus I enjoyed for dinner was "fun fact: there is a special asparagus season in Germany". I was enraptured, eager to find more connections and share them with others.

My freshman year probably became the year I was most involved in school activities. From German immersion days to German competitions. I signed up for it all. I learned folk dance from a local group, witnessed a spectacular performance from a local polka band, and even managed to become a recurring customer at a food truck turned established restaurant. With every aspect of German culture I encountered locally, it became more imperative to finally visit Germany myself.

I've been to Germany twice, once on a month-long tour of German cities and the second time on an 8-month long exchange through the US and German governments. With the former, we hit every major tourist spot. From the castles in Bavaria to the cold seas of the north, there was no hill we didn't climb and endless skies to see. With the latter, I developed a deeper connection and more worthwhile meaning to my German studies. Placed with a host family in Aachen, I was able to see the true, non-performative and touristy culture of Germany. I went to school, volunteered at a local retirement home, and effectively forgot about any other language than English for a month.

During my study abroad, it was not enough to simply experience the local culture, I felt obliged to insert and assimilate myself. Once a week, my host sisters and I would cook dinner. One memorable event was the first time I made quesadillas. The Mexican food in Germany was quite atrocious and I was proud to share an actual "meal" with my host family.

However, one thing I remember most clearly is the cultural differences I saw. Though no one was unkind in school, it could not be said they were welcoming. Teenagers who had gone to school together for over 6 years did not expect a foreigner to join their class with minimal understanding of their system. When asking to volunteer at a retirement home, the coordinator was convinced my initial email was a scam until I showed up in person to ask. These minute differences led me to understand the "aloof" stereotype applied to Germans and deepened my desire to learn more cultures.

I possess zero German ancestry myself. The only German-speaking country I've visited is Germany itself. As my school pilots its first ever German "schnupperkurs," I've come to realize the importance of learning all of the cultures that fall under the "German" umbrella. Ending my senior year, I'm hopeful to encourage more active participation from our younger students, sharing my personal experiences and the information I wish I knew to encourage the growth of our program. Simultaneously, I've planned my college courses to continue my German studies, taking the chance now to branch into countries I've previously ignored all with the intention to further my cultural appreciation.

Though I consider myself a relatively fluent German speaker, able to chat with the Omas who enter my workplace, there is still much I must learn. From regional differences to idioms only a native speaker could know, my linguistic education is never ending. With over 5 years of learning and multiple awards, I know this is still the beginning of my German experiences. An experience that will never end.

Laura Davis 3rd Place

“My Interest in the German Language, Culture, and my German Ancestry”

“FEUER!” I shout, slamming three aces on the table. My family groans simultaneously as I hold out a plastic container and collect their debt. Smoke from the grill outside sneaks in through tilted windows, tinting the German summer air, promising bratwurst and vegetable skewers. Playing cards lie scattered as Oma Ingrid, Tante Bettina, and Mama slip in and out of the tight kitchen. Following closely behind my cousins, I step into the backyard. We lie on the soft bermuda grass and listen to the deep laughter of Opa Wolfgang and Onkel Georg and the clink of beer glasses upon brick. The distance and time separating us for most of the year fade away, and when the grandfather clock calls out to us, I do not count how many times it gongs.

When I visit the other half of my family across the Atlantic, the atypical German culture that makes me proud to be multicultural resurfaces: sparkling water and pretzels dominate my meals, trips to Globus (the German Walmart-Costco combo) become exhilarating family outings, and evenings are spent playing cards and grilling bratwurst. Sharing my culture through stories, jokes, and pictures makes my German family seem closer and the time between visits shorter. At the same time, I have realized that being only conversationally fluent does not allow me to share essays that I am proud of, discuss politics, or explain an inside joke about London dispersion forces. It can be difficult for me to embrace my unique heritage when it sometimes makes me feel like a foreigner with fraudulent dual citizenship – inferior to the English version of me. However, I have recognized that this true understanding of what it feels like to be a stranger allows me to better relate, empathize, and form connections with those around me.

Furthermore, as it is within my power to become more comfortable with the German language, I read books, listen to music, and watch shows in German; although my family loves me regardless of how well I speak and understand German, with every trip to Germany, I feel more like an equal.

