



**December
4th, 5th, and 6th**

Friday

10:00 am - 7:00 pm

Saturday

10:00 am - 5:00pm

Sunday

Noon - 5:00 pm

Christkindlmarkt 2015

24 Vendors will be displaying their wares, many favorites and a few new vendors, such as Walking Bird, USA.

As each year, there will be freshly prepared German food and, and this year, German Gluehwein (hot spiced red wine) will be available for purchase in the front hall.

Raffle tickets will be sold (\$1 each) for the beautiful quilt (at right) handmade by the Handarbeitsgruppe. In addition, vendors will be giving raffle tickets to each purchaser in the downstairs area for a child-sized quilt.

Harpist, and long-time GAST member, Linda Paul will perform throughout the event as well as several of her students with different solos, duets, and ensembles, so that there will be Christmas music each day from open to close. CD's will be available for sale.

For the children, Little Red Riding Hood puppet shows, the Bethlehem Village and special activities are on the lower level.



Entrance is free and open to the public!

UPCOMING EVENTS AT GAST

December

- 1 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 4-6 - Christkindlmarkt
- 7 - GAST Theater
- 8 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 11 - Stammtisch
- 12 - Christmas Party & Childrens
- 13 - Adventsfeier
- 15 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 20 - Konversationsrunde
- 22 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 29 - Handarbeitsgruppe

January

- 4 - GAST Theater
- 8 - Stammtisch
- 5 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 12 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 16 - Anniversary Party
- 17 - Konversationsrunde
- 19 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 26 - Handarbeitsgruppe

February

- 1 - GAST Theater
- 2 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 5 - Fasching Party
- 7 - Volkstänzer
- 9 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 12 - Stammtisch
- 14 - Volkstänzer
- 16 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 21 - Volkstänzer / Konversationsrunde
- 23 - Handarbeitsgruppe
- 28 - Volkstänzer



...from the GAST President — Arnold Bieber

We were shocked and saddened by the news from Paris. 130 people killed and more than 300 injured in one of the most horrifying terrorist attacks in recent times. ISIS, the brutal terror group which has taken over a large part of Syria and Iraq, claimed responsibility France's response has been lightning quick, pursuing leads and arresting suspected participants in the attack. Air strikes on ISIS controlled territory in Syria followed.

Syria has been the scene of civil war for several years now. Government forces are fighting various rebel groups, causing thousands of Syrians to flee for safer countries in Europe. Germany has been welcoming these refugees but was not really prepared for the waves of men, women and children that continued to arrive, needing food, shelter and health care. "Germany's Refugee Crisis" is the topic of the annual GAST Essay Contest for student enrolled in high school and college German language classes. As a former war time refugee myself, I am interested to read what our young people have say. The winners of the Essay Contest will be awarded cash prizes

at the Anniversary Party on January 16.

Preparations for Christkindlmarkt are keeping Ed Anthis' Committee very busy. Volunteers are still needed for several positions in the kitchen, the food service, the Bakery and the Laden. Please e-mail Ed Anthis (eanthis@cox.net) or call the Office if you would like to be part of the team. We have added "Glühwein" to the list of authentic German offerings. The hot spicy red wine is a popular drink at German Christmas Markets, so it made sense to offer it to our customers. Our Special Event Mixed Drink permit allows us to serve it to the public this year. The Bakery and the Laden have many new items for sale, and the list of Arts and Crafts vendors keeps growing. Please come and browse for that special gift, December 4, 5 and 6, and help us spread the word.

The GAST Choir will be in charge of our annual Christmas Party on Saturday, December 12. After a nice catered dinner the Choir will sing a number of the most popular German Christmas carols and you will be able to join in the sing-a-long. Earlier that day our Maikönigin, Angela Novak, will organize a Children's Christmas Party with good ol' St. Nick in attendance.

I am happy to report that the amendments to the GAST and GASAA (Arts) by-laws were approved by the membership at the General Membership Meeting on November 22. Here is a list of changes that were approved:

GAST objectives will include the words "To maintain and care for all property and assets of the Society"

A "Corporate Membership" will be added.

The Board of Directors of GAST will be reduced by eliminating the 1st and 2nd Vice President of the Building Corporation as ex-officio directors and as members of the Executive Committee.

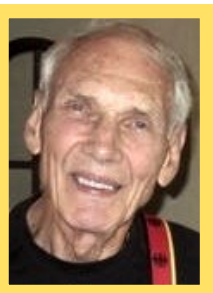
A "Building Committee" whose Chairperson shall be called "Building Manager" will be responsible for all real estate and improvements owned by the Society

Two subcommittees have been added. The "Operating Subcommittee will be responsible to the condition of all real estate and improvements owned by the Society and the "Leasing Subcommittee" will be responsible for leasing the GAST Center for all functions.

The GASAA by-law amendment approved is similar to number 3 above.

Looking forward to seeing you and meeting new members, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year

— Arnold



...from the Building President—Harold Wicks

Our Building is now decorated for Christkindlmarkt and the Christmas season. The lights and wreaths add a warm feeling to our Building. I hope that all of you will be attending the events we have scheduled.

CAROL WRIGHT has taken the time and effort to provide IN and OUT signs for the doors between the Great Hall and our Kitchen. A job well done. Thank You Carol.

Reminder: Do Not Park in the Dermatology Clinic Parking area. Your Vehicle Will be Towed At your Expense If You Do. I am sorry to have to include this message in our news letter.

Hope you enjoy the many holidays ahead.

Thank You,

— Harold



...from the Arts President — Gertrud Schmidt

It certainly is difficult for most of us to turn our minds to Thanksgiving and the Advent time of lights, love and peace while the News are full of the horrors of Paris and the Middle East in general.

The delegation of GAST members who paid homage to all war dead and in particular to those 62 German soldiers buried at the Ft. Reno cemetery observed a minute of silence as respect to those who died in the Paris terrorist attack on November 13, 2015. While Consul J. Olbricht emphasized the need to never stop seeking peaceful resolutions to conflicts Oberst Kressler, Commander German Air Force, Ft. Sill, brought to our attention the many hot spots on this globe and the need for well trained soldiers - a vigilant and effective military. Honorary Consul Wiggin reiterated Consul Olbricht's views and gave an insight into the costs of war in human casualties and destruction. For the first time in 17 years--since GAST celebrates Volkstrauertag at the Ft. Reno Chapel and cemetery--Italian liaison officer Major Mattia Marcotulli, Ft. Sill, partook in the celebration, spoke to the assembly and laid a wreath in honor of the Italian prisoners of war who are buried at Ft. Reno. GAST founding member Siegfried Heit, Professor for History at the University of Central Oklahoma, shared some wonderful anecdotes of the time when 30,000 prisoners of war were sequestered in camps around Oklahoma. The Governor's Honor Guards and the German Air Force Delegation stood at attention and had a tight grip on the flags as the proverbial Oklahoma winds blew hard. David Marshal played the bag-pipes, Pastor David Kaiser spoke the prayers, Taps were played and "Ich hat einen Kameraden" sung by Susan Calvert concluded the ceremony. The informal dinner at the Royal Bavarian Inn in Moore provided a relaxed atmosphere for the exchange of experiences, thoughts and plans. We thank Amy van Gundy of the Ft. Reno Historical Society for getting the programs and the Fort ready for us and Barbara Conrad for a very well planned and executed Volkstrauertag celebration.

By the time the December issue of Echo lands in your mailbox the Membership will have voted on amendments to the GAST and ARTS by-laws required by the change of responsibilities for the building and the transfer of assets approved by the Membership during the April General Membership Meeting. Arnold Bieber will inform us about the out-come in the next Echo.

Thanksgiving aka Turkey-day is fast approaching as I write this article and I do hope all of you have an enjoyable time with family and friends. 'Erntedank Fest' (harvest thanks day) is a very old Christian tradition giving thanks for a good harvest which will be shared with the less fortunate. 'Thanksgiving' harks back to the very early immigrants to America- the pioneers who gave thanks that they survived another tough year.

Four weeks of Advent precede Christmas. It's supposed to be a thoughtful and quiet time but it has morphed

into one of the most hectic weeks of the year. People are chasing bargains and 'must haves' and fret over who gets what from Santa Claus. Have you ever given some thought as to the origin of Christmas decorations--specifically the use of the Poinsettia flower which in Germany is known as the Weihnachts Stern (Christmas Star). I found an endearing story in 'A German Christmas Journal' which I want to share with you: In Mexico it is tradition to bring a gift to church for the Christ child. A very poor girl was so very sad because she just did not have anything to give. On the way to church she picked grasses and flowers along the path and wound them into a little bouquet and hoped this humble gift might be accepted. When she laid down the bundle of weeds and flowers at the altar the flowers turned a vibrant red. The congregation considered it a Christmas miracle and the flower became known as the 'Flower of the Holy Night.' Dr. Joel Poinsett, Ambassador to Mexico during the 1800s, brought the flower to the U.S where it is now known as a Poinsettia.

Come join us for the Advent Service on December 13, 2015, at 3:00 pm in the Great Hall of our GAST House. The sermon will be in German. The Hall will be decorated by our GAST Sänger with a big Advent wreath, Christmas tree and many Poinsettias.

Have a wonderful Christmas season

Gertrud

Newsletter
DEADLINE

December 16 at 5 PM

The newsletter goes to press the first Wednesday after the Board meeting. The Board regularly meets at the GAST Center at 7pm on the second Wednesday of the month.

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German-American Day Address

By Dr. Eric Schmaltz

Professor of History

Co-Executive Director, NWOSU Institute for Citizenship Studies
Co-Senior Editor, NWICS Civitas: The Journal of Citizenship Studies
Editor, Germans from Russia Heritage Society Heritage Review
Department of Social Sciences, Northwestern Oklahoma State University

Reprinted below is the remaining portion of Dr. Eric Schmaltz's address at the German American Day celebration in October.

After the Second World War, especially between 1948 and 1952, the United States further welcomed numerous Displaced Persons (DPs), civilian refugees from World War II's devastation, a number of whom came here to Oklahoma. Besides Jews and Poles, German nationals and ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe figured prominently among this category of people seeking new opportunities or fleeing oppression. For example, in North Dakota, my great-grandfather in 1951-1952 sponsored some of his extended family to settle as Displaced Persons. These people had fled Soviet Ukraine and Poland with the retreating German armies for the West near the end of the war.

In addition, among some of the new arrivals after the Second World War were the German war brides. Yes, the war brides. We might even have a few of them sitting in the audience with us here today! The last time I spoke here in 2011, I had accidentally neglected to mention them, and I wanted to make sure that this time that they, too, receive our attention. The war brides also are part of a special connection with Germany that we still can claim today!

Nor we can forget about those "other Germans" who lived in parts of Europe outside of what later became united Germany and who also made the long trek to the United States. By the late nineteenth century, growing political and socio-economic pressures prompted a large migration of tens of thousands of ethnic Germans from all parts of Russia to North and South America in the half century following 1870. By the late nineteenth century, the great U.S. railroad companies also conducted sweeping advertising campaigns abroad to entice East Europeans to set their stakes on the American prairies.

Often Germans from Russia, especially Mennonites, sent out advance scouts to survey prospective lands for purchase. As the remaining lands opened up by the 1862 Homestead Act began to close, the plains of western Oklahoma beckoned these people from the realm of the tsars. Land hunger drove them southward into Kansas and the Indian Territory in the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s, including the Cherokee Outlet in September 1893 in the northwestern part of what became Oklahoma. More than 10,000 Germans from Russia lived in Oklahoma by 1920 (counting the second generation), many of them coming from Russia's Volga region. At this time, more than half of these Russian immigrants in Oklahoma included Mennonites, while other German groups from Ukraine and Volhynia also settled in the new state.

The counties of Blaine, Ellis, Kingfisher, Major, Noble, Washita, and Woodward in Oklahoma all experienced a significant German-Russian influx, including the communities of Arnett, Corn (formerly Korn until World War I), Fairview, Meno, Shattuck, and Woodward. The Germans from Russia made significant contributions to the emergence and growth of the wheat and grain production segment of Oklahoma's agricultural industry. Further, it should be noted that the Mennonites introduced the hardy Russian (Turkey) red winter wheat to the Great Plains. Many communities in northwest Oklahoma, close to where I live, have received tremendous benefits from the accomplishments of the Germans from Russia and other early pioneers.

Beyond the accomplishments of German-Americans, we must also acknowledge the long-term impact of anti-German sentiment of the two

world wars. Admittedly, these terrible conflicts led to greater assimilation pressures here on German-Americans. In the case of Mennonites, their professed pacifism also made them a bitter target of both authorities and local populations, especially during the First World War.

It was not until the ethnic heritage revival of the 1970s that we began to devote more attention to the German-American heritage. Our improved historical circumstances have also dovetailed in recent years with growing popular fascination with genealogy and ethnic history in a mass immigrant society, including many German-Americans. In 1980, the German American Society of Tulsa appeared on the scene as well, another vital component of the ethnic heritage revival in the region. As some of you know well, the Tulsa Oktoberfest was named in 2005 as the Best German Food Festival by *Bon Appetit* magazine!

Part of the today's growing interest in Oklahoma's German immigrant history, however, also comes out of the World War II experience, namely the former Prisoner of War or POW camps. Just in time for German-American Day, the most recent issue of the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* has published a fine article on Camp Gruber by Trent Riley, indicating sustained popular interest in the topic.

From late 1942 until late 1945, 31 POW camps were constructed in the state, including Camp Alva, Camp Gruber, Fort Reno, Fort Sill, Camp McAlester, and Camp Tonkawa, to name a few. By the end of the war, upwards of 22,000 POWs were held in Oklahoma during a given time, including a good number from Erwin Rommel's Afrika Corps.

Because of their relatively good treatment in the POW camps, some former German POWs and their families have paid visits to the United States starting in the 1970s and 1980s, including to Oklahoma. Old wounds of war receded into the background as new friendships and alliances were formed on both sides of the Atlantic.

On that note of reconciliation, I was fortunate a few years ago to attend and speak at the other annual event held at Fort Reno, the Day of National Mourning (*Volkstrauertag*) hosted by the German American Society of Tulsa to honor and remember the 62 German and 8 Italian POWs who are buried there. The secular holiday of the Day of National Mourning itself as it developed in West (later united) Germany and is performed each November 16th across the world, is part of our living memory. Indeed, issues of memory and reconciliation for all war dead, civilian and military on both sides of the conflict, lie at the heart of this significant yearly event.

In closing, there is much to applaud about our German heritage and how it has helped enrich our United States. We could spend so much more time on the many famous German-Americans in national history and their different achievements, whether in the arts, literature, music, entertainment, education, politics, and the military. German-Americans are intimately woven into the cultural fabric of the United States. But suffice it to say that we have long been part of the unfolding American story.

Truly, our memory of the past is the future. We keep alive the past in our recollections and cultural activities, passing them down through the generations. May the German American Society of Tulsa and its friends continue to preserve and disseminate our great ethnic heritage.

Thank you very much (*Danke sehr!*)

Volkstrauertag at Fort Reno

**November
15**



Clockwise from upper left: Fort Reno Chapel built by German POW's during WWII; the Oklahoma Governor's Honor Guard; Officers of the German Air Force at attention; at bottom right, Italian Major Mattia Marcotulli with German Consul Jochen Olbricht (center) and Oberst Kresser of the German Air Force; graveside ceremony at bottom left; and GAST Member David Marshall playing the bagpipes, at left.



GAST

is grateful to the following members for their continued and generous support:

*Rick & Terry Pizzo
John & Teresa Gallagher*

If you are in need of an ATTORNEY in the Oklahoma City Metro Area, you may contact **CHARLES J. BYRD** at NECCO & BYRD, P.C. We are a law firm with over 80 years of combined experience.

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GAST Christmas Party

Saturday, December 12.

Doors open at 5:30. Dinner at 6 PM

Admission: \$ 15

The catered menu will be

- Baked ham
- Scalloped potatoes
- Mixed vegetables
- Salad
- Bread and butter
- Dessert
- Coffee, ice tea and water

The GAST Saenger are in charge of set up and decorations. They are looking forward to a festive evening of holiday music, a sing-along and dance music.

Please make your reservation by
Wednesday, December 9, 2 PM.

Children's Christmas Party

Saturday, December 12, Noon - 2 PM

Bring your Children and Grandchildren and their friends to the Children's Christmas Party for snacks, fun and games in the Weinkeller of the GAST House.

Busy St. Nikolaus surely will make a stop for pictures again.



Now Playing at the Erwin Jerchau

GAST Theater

Monday December 7, starting at 6:30 PM

Weihnachtsmelodien

Whit Roland Kaiser, Helene Fischer, Hansi Hinterseer, Sigrig and Marina, Geschwister Hofmann, Alexeander Lexter and many more
Starting at 7:30 PM

Oben drüber da schneit es

Starring Diana Arnet, Gisela Schneeberger, Wotan Wilke Möhring, August Zirner and many more.

Elke Leach

Sunshine Lady

This month we sent a get-well card to **Ron Baucom**, and a get-well card to **Ginny Rohr** with hopes both are on the mend.

Please call or email me if you know a GAST member who is ill, who has suffered an accident or injury or a family loss. We also like to express birthday greetings, congratulations on marriages, births of children and grandchildren and best wishes, "Get Well" or sympathy for our members.

Email: elke@one-ring.net
Or telephone: Elke Leach at (918) 252-3838

This page is sponsored by Arnold & Gwen Bieber

The back page is sponsored by Kenneth Renberg



Das Deutsche Echo

December 2015

Volume 36

Issue 12

The Voice of the German-American Community

Die Deutsche Konversationsrunde

The Konversationsrunde will meet for our traditional Christmas story telling and singing Sunday, **December 20, 2015** at 3:00pm at Gertrud and Ortwin Schmidt's house who live at 5133 East 86 Place.

Bring your favorite Christmas stories and songs. There will be coffee, hot spiced wine, cookies and stollen for all to enjoy.

The Konversationsrunde is a program under the auspices of the German American Society of Tulsa Arts Association. It serves to promote the German language and cultural interests of its members. For suggestions, information or hosting one of our meetings please call:

Barbara Conrad (chair) at 918-492-3273 or
Gertrud Schmidt (co chair) at 918-495-3727

Stammtischrunde

Friday, January 8, 2015 – 6:30 PM
in the GAST Weinkeller.

Hope to see you there.

Zum Wohl,

– Joe Rohr, Chair

New Members

The following individuals were added to the Membership at the most recent meeting of the GAST Board of Directors:

Chris and Liz Hancock
Tulsa

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