

## LAUDATIO!

### Dr. Alexander Ritter

April 16, 2011 Newark,  
University of Delaware

Literary scientist, literary scholar, literary critic, literature creator, Sealsfield expert, Dr. Alexander Ritter comes to us tonight from Itzehoe just north of Hamburg, Germany. At the neighboring University of Hamburg he had been for a decade a member of the teaching staff in the Institut für Germanistik II (neuere deutsche Literatur und Medienkultur).

Born in 1939 in the now Polish city of Guben near Görlitz, Niederlausitz, Ritter completed the Gymnasium with the Abitur in 1959, in 1967 his first Staatsexamen and two years later in 1969 his second Staatsexamen for a teaching position at an institution of higher learning. One year later, with the distinguished professor and critic Dr. Erich Trunz, Ritter had earned the PhD with a dissertation on the "Presentation and Function of the Landscape in the America Novels of Charles Sealsfield (Karl Postl): A Study of the Prose Novel of German and American Literature in the First Half of the 19th Century" with the distinction magna cum laude.

For some 20 years following, he served in the Landesinstitut für Praxis und Theorie der Schule (ITPS). His Habilitation in 1989 at the Department of Sprachwissenschaft at Hamburg University led to his appointment at the University of Hamburg. In addition to his teaching

confined to this university, Ritter has been a frequent lecturer literally at universities across the globe: Louvain, Straßburg, Paris, Bergamo, Montreal, Vancouver, Innsbruck, Wien and Klagenfurt, Ljubljana; in the United States at Albany, Austin, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Madison, and various others.

Besides lecturing, Ritter has judged: as editor for the Yearbook of the SGAS, for the publications of the Charles Sealsfield Society, for the Commission of the Senate at the Ernst Moritz Arndt University in Greifswald, and for the Ministry of the Interior's commission on questions concerning German minority groups, headquartered back then in Bonn.

Ritter's scholarly feats have concerned three areas, foremost and above all Charles Sealsfield: Sealsfield's German-Austrian-American literary relationships, German-language literary culture abroad, and the relationship of literature and National-Socialist cultural policies and their impulses. As to the first, Sealsfield, Ritter has published some 80 items, including the second edition of Sealfield's opus *Schriftenreihe der Charles-Sealsfield-Gesellschaft, 1986-2000*, 18 volumes. Since 2004, he has completed eight volumes of the Sealsfield-Bibliothek, which since 2004 have been forthcoming from the international Charles-Sealsfield-Gesellschaft in Vienna. Implicated by the mishandling of culture and literature by and from the German minorities during the Third Reich, literary scholars in Germany since 1945 have ducked the topic, rescued, in a way, through Ritter's numerous

lectures at home and abroad, by articles in journals, and by his anthology *Auslandsdeutsche Literatur der Gegenwart, 1974-2001*, 28 volumes.

A significant contribution to our own American literary scene is Ritter's editing of the volumes *Deutschlands Literarisches Amerikabild. Neuere Forschungen zur Amerikarezeption der deutschen Literatur, 1977*. His latest significant contribution is his 2010 reprint of the Austrian literary critic Eduard Castle's collection of Sealsfield letters. For his contribution to German-Austrian-American literary relations Ritter received from the Austrian Federal President the Österreichisches Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft und Kunst (Austrian Service Cross for Science and Art) in 2009.

It is with great pleasure and a distinct sense of awe that I present Alexander Ritter with the Distinguished Service Award of the Society for German-American Studies. He is a giant living among us. ♦

LaVern J. Rippley, St. Olaf College



LaVern Rippley and Alexander Ritter

# "do Deutsch" campaign

## News from the Max Kade Center at IUPUI

Claudia Grossmann

The Max Kade German-American Center and the German Program at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis participated in the "do Deutsch" campaign in cooperation with the German Embassy and Information Center. This year's campaign was aimed at raising awareness among students, teachers of German, political decision makers, as well as in the media, of the value of learning German. Learning German opens up opportunities, connects students to more than 200 million speakers of German around the world, and also provides insights into world history as well as family ancestry.

The events during the Campus Week at IUPUI, from October 4-8, included an art show with work created by students, alumni and faculty of the Herron School of Art and Design at IUPUI. The photography, drawings, prints and video, as well as conceptual work, dealt with a range of experiences including German heritage, travel experiences, and historical reflections. Some of the work touched upon the issue of ancestry. Lamar Richcreek (anglicized from the German name 'Reichenbach'), a faculty member of the Herron School of Art whose ancestors had emigrated during the time of the War of Independence, displayed a photographic installation of



atmosphere that is conducive to German-American dialogue. A panel discussion led by German professor Dr. Gabrielle Bersier titled "Jump Start Your Career With German: do Deutsch" brought together students and alumni with community leaders, including the Honorary Consul of Germany for the State of Indiana, Mr. Sven Schumacher, and the Vice President of Programs and Services at the International Center of Indianapolis, Mr. Martin Baier. The panelists emphasized the value of the German language, as well as the need for intercultural skills and international experience in today's global workforce.

Continued



IUPUI students and faculty from the German Department and the Herron School of Art at the do Deutsch exhibit hall.

farm imagery in northern Indiana where his immigrant forefathers had settled. Students were encouraged to express their opinion about German and/or Germany in a creative way by writing on two panels provided in the gallery. Not surprisingly, several students stated their ancestry as a major source of inspiration. Indiana's German heritage is among the highest in the Midwest, with about one out of three Hoosiers claiming German ancestry. Also, the Midwest has experienced a continuous growth in German economic investment over the past two decades. Therefore, the historical background and the present situation in Indiana have created an



## SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
IUPUI

Max Kade German-American Center  
Daniel Nützel, PhD  
Director  
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## Call for Papers

SOCIETY FOR GERMAN-AMERICAN STUDIES • APRIL 12-15, 2012  
36TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

### SYMPOSIUM THEME

"Transforming the Americas: Immigrants, Explorers, and Exiles"

### CONFERENCE PARTNER

North-American Society for Exile Studies  
"International Conference in Exile Studies"

### SPECIAL EVENT

Dedication of the Turner Archives and Research Annex at the Max Kade Center

Paper topics should address the general purpose of the Society for German-American Studies of studying the history, language, literature and culture of the German element in the New World, including the immigrants and their descendants from Germany, Austria, Switzerland and other German-speaking areas of Europe.

One-page abstracts of scholarly papers

dealing with any aspect of German-American Studies should be submitted—electronically if possible—by November 30, 2011 to:

PROFESSOR WILLIAM KEEL  
DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES & LITERATURES  
THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS  
1445 JAYHAWK BOULEVARD, ROOM 2080  
LAWRENCE, KS 66045-7594

E-MAIL: WKEEL@KU.EDU

Symposium sessions will be in the Oread Hotel adjacent to the campus of the University of Kansas. A reception—ein gemütliches Beisammensein—in conjunction with the dedication of the Turner Archives and Research Annex will be at the Max Kade Center for German-American Studies. The 36th Annual Symposium is sponsored by the Max Kade Center for German-American Studies and the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Kansas.

VOLUME 32 NO. 2

# SOCIETY FOR German- American Studies

NEWSLETTER

SGAS.ORG

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Change and Renewal. Those are the words which spring to mind as I sit down to write this, my first column for the SGAS Newsletter. This edition of the Newsletter is itself emblematic of the cycle of change. After more than forty years of yeoman service to the Society, Vern Rippley has stepped down as editor of the Newsletter and handed the baton off to Claudia Grossmann and Daniel Nützel of IUPUI. As I write, I don't know what the inaugural edition from Indianapolis will look like, but I do know that Vern has encouraged the new editors to put their own imprimatur on the Newsletter and that Claudia and Dan are hard at work on the task.



President Randall Donaldson, Vice President William Roba, and President emeritus William Keel.

When the Executive Board meets in mid-October for its fall meeting, about a third of its membership will be new, and many of the familiar faces will be occupying new positions. This will be the first meeting of the Board which reflects all of the many amendments the Society has made to its governance structure in the last five or six years. Those amendments foster change by limiting terms and encourage renewal by providing for continuity in the office of the president and the vice president.

The By-Laws also vest the Board with the responsibility for the on-going health and well-being of the organization. Of course, a vital element in the long-term survival of any group is planning for the future, and planning will be at the top of the agenda when the Board meets in October. We will be looking at ways to do business more efficiently in the electronic age by expanding the sgas.org website and entertaining several suggestions from the

membership to enhance opportunities for younger scholars. If you have ideas you would like us to consider or skills you'd be willing to put to work on behalf of SGAS, we'd love to hear from you.

And don't forget to submit your proposal and make your plans for the Symposium in Lawrence, KS, April 12-15, 2012! See you there!

Mit den herzlichsten Grüßen

-Randall Donaldson  
President, SGAS



# German-American Day

## Message of Greeting from German Ambassador Peter Ammon

October 6, 2011  
Washington, October 2011

Dear Members and Friends of the German-American Societies,

It is a great honor and a pleasure for me as the new German Ambassador to the United States to be able to convey my best wishes to you for the first time on German-American Day.

Many German immigrants and German Americans have helped shape the United States. They have played important roles in politics, business, and culture. Over four centuries ago, German artisans were already living in Jamestown, Virginia; the industries of many cities were shaped by the German pioneering spirit in the 19th century. Ethnic German intellectuals had an enormous influence on science and art during the 20th century. German-American Day pays tribute to the contribution all German-Americans have made to the development of this country.

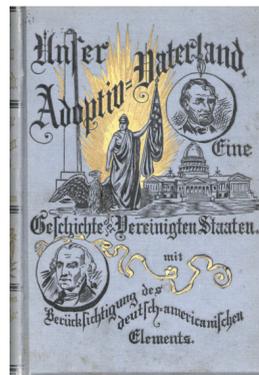
We should not, however, only look back. The traditionally close and friendly ties between Germany and the United States, which rest on shared values and ideals of democracy, preservation of peace, human rights, and the market economy, form the basis for common action in a rapidly changing world.

The German-American societies give life to transatlantic relations and help strengthen them. Stay this course, in the tried and tested manner, but also in new ways. Establish new networks and partnerships with German associations. Show young people the advantages to learning the German language and studying in Germany. Strengthen cooperation with local Germany-oriented business and cultural institutions. Our relations will thus remain fruitful and dynamic.

Thank you for your commitment to German-American friendship. I wish you all a memorable German-American Day.



Peter Ammon, German Ambassador



From the collection of the Max Kade Institute at UW-Madison

### MEMBERSHIP

We will soon be closing the books on 2011 SGAS membership. Please check your address label to determine your membership status. If you have not yet renewed for 2011, please visit our website ([www.sgas.org](http://www.sgas.org)) to obtain a renewal form. The latest volume of the Yearbook of German-American Studies will soon go to press, and it will be mailed only to those members who are current for 2011. Thank you for your continued support of the SGAS!

## LAUDATIO!

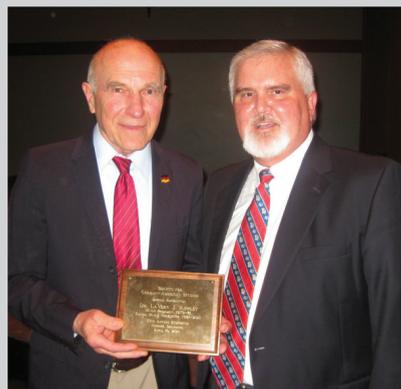
**Dr. LaVern J. Rippley**  
April 16, 2011  
Newark, University of Delaware

On behalf of the Society for German-American Studies, it is my great honor and pleasure to present our beloved colleague LaVern Rippley with the Society's Special Recognition Award. Vern stands without equal among our members in his dedicated service to our Society and the field of German-American Studies. With the publication of the March 2011 SGAS Newsletter, Vern completed some 30 years as our Newsletter editor. In this capacity, Vern has been responsible for maintaining contact with our membership four times a year with items of interest and scholarly significance. During that time, Vern has also been an active member of the SGAS Executive Committee, providing advice and support for the Society on many fronts. Vern served earlier, from 1979-81, as SGAS President following Robert Ward. Under his leadership the decision was taken to change from the quarterly *Journal of German-American Studies* to our current *Yearbook of German-American Studies*, which will publish its 30th volume later this year. Vern has served since its inception on the Editorial Board of the Yearbook. As editor of the Yearbook, I have valued Vern's keen insights and critiques in that role. Vern has also contributed a number of his own essays as well as a teaching bibliography to the Yearbook. Since 2001, Vern has chaired the Albert Bernard Faust Research Fund for SGAS, which supports the research of a number of younger scholars in our field. We should also note Vern's contributions in organizing four of our annual symposia: 1979 at St. Olaf College and 1999, 2004 and 2009 in New Ulm, Minnesota. What an outstanding record of service, scholarship and achievement! Please join me in extending Vern and his wife Barbara our sincere appreciation and our very best wishes for their future endeavors. •

**William Keel, University of Kansas**

## 35TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

The 35th annual symposium of the Society for German-American Studies took place April 14-16 at the University of Delaware in Newark. After a day of paper sessions and the annual business meeting on Friday, participants toured the Winterthur Museum and Country Estate on Saturday, where the staff had designed several customized tours to accommodate visitors especially interested in the life and culture of German-Americans in the area. Later that evening, symposium participants attended the final banquet, where LaVern Rippley presented Dr. Alexander Ritter with the SGAS Outstanding Achievement Award. The laudatio delivered by Rippley in Ritter's honor is reprinted in this Newsletter. President Keel then paid tribute to Vern Rippley and presented him with a plaque for his many years of service to SGAS. That laudatio can be read here as well.



LaVern Rippley and President emeritus William Keel

## Dear Readers,

This Newsletter marks the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. After 30 years of single-handedly compiling, editing, printing and mailing the SGAS Newsletter, LaVern Rippley has passed the torch to us. As the new editors of the Newsletter, we would like to thank Vern for his tremendous service to SGAS and for his help in making this editorial transition as smooth as possible. Only now can we truly appreciate the dedication Vern has shown to the Society over the past three decades.

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves briefly to those of you who may not yet know us. Claudia Grossmann earned her PhD in American Studies and is the Director of the German Program at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). She also serves as the Associate Director of IUPUI's Max Kade German-American Center. Daniel Nützel holds a PhD in Germanic Linguistics and is the Hoyt-Reichmann Scholar for German-American Studies at IUPUI, where he also is Director of the Max Kade German-American Center and Associate Professor of German.

As you will discover, your new editors have taken the liberty of changing the format and the contents of the Newsletter. First of all, the Newsletter will appear only three times annually: in the fall, winter and spring. Furthermore, we will depend on you, our readers, to supply us with a significant portion of the contents of future editions. Please send us any items of interest, including titles of recently published books, you may come across while reading or researching. We can be reached at [mkgac@iupui.edu](mailto:mkgac@iupui.edu). The current edition contains no recent publications or book reviews, since we have decided to devote a goodly amount of space to the symposium in Delaware.

Thank you in advance for any materials and/or feedback you may send to us in the future. We look forward to working with you, and we hope you enjoy the new Newsletter.

Mit den besten Grüßen aus Indianapolis

*Claudia Grossmann & Daniel Nützel*

## “do Deutsch” Continued

Other events included a German film screening, a panel for engineering students interested in studying or interning in Germany, a visual arts and an essay competition, and a Schnitzeljagd at the Athenaeum, the former “Deutsches Haus” in the center of Indianapolis, where participants could discover Indiana's German cultural heritage under the guidance of Dr. Daniel Nützel.

As studies of heritage and historical aspects of German-American relations have taken a stronghold in academic circles as well, the need for German language skills has grown even further. The field of German-American Studies is dependent on a strong foundation in the language itself, on cross-cultural experiences, as well as on an understanding of cultural heritage. Events such as the do Deutsch campaign therefore not only serve a narrow purpose of promoting German language study. They are essential in supporting the mission of German-American Studies in this country. •

For further information see  
<http://www.doDeutsch.com>



## News from the Max Kade Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Antje Petty**

For more than 25 years, the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (MKI) has been located in the Keystone House, an old former farmhouse at the western edge of our campus. During this time, the MKI has cemented its position as a premier institute for German-American Studies, researching the story of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants in a global, multicultural and interdisciplinary context; preserving American print culture and personal documents in the German language; and sharing its resources through publications, community outreach and educational programming.

Perhaps you attended one of the MKI's recent programs, such as our conference on “German and German-American Dimensions of the Civil War,” participated in one of our public discussions on “German Influences on American Regional English,” read one of our publications, or welcomed MKI staff to your community for a presentation on some aspect of the German-American experience.

Resources from the MKI Library and Archives are at the center of all our activities.



The University Club, new home of the MKI

Over the years, our programming has expanded and our holdings have grown. The Library now includes one of the largest collections of German-language materials published in North America.

and our archives regularly receive significant new donations of primary source documents, such as letters, diaries, photos, business records, materials from German-American community organizations, and family histories. In addition, the MKI's North American German Dialect Archive now contains several thousand hours of recordings of immigrant German dialects made between the mid-1940s and the present.

As a result, the Institute has outgrown the Keystone House. We are fortunate to be moving to a much larger and more centrally located space in the University Club on the UW-Madison Library Mall, and we are using the opportunity to build a state-of-the-art library and archival facility, including exhibit space and comfortable study and reading areas for our patrons. First, though, we have to raise the funds for this project. The renovation, which will be done in the summer of 2012, is budgeted at \$1.1 million, and we are within reach of our goal.

Please support our efforts to raise the final \$200,000. Through the end of 2011 all donations will be matched dollar for dollar by the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Gifts can be made by check, made out to the UW Foundation, with MKI Library Project in the memo line and mailed to the following address, or online through the MKI Web site:

**Max Kade Institute** <http://mki.wisc.edu>  
**901 University Bay Dr.** (click on MKI Library Campaign)  
**Madison, WI 53705**

All gifts to the MKI Library Project are fully tax deductible.

For additional information contact  
Antje Petty at the Max Kade Institute  
(608) 262-7546.

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