

Helmut Schmeller *Laudatio*

The 36th Annual Symposium of the Society for German-American Studies took place at the University of Kansas in Lawrence from April 12-15, 2012. The recipient of this year's Outstanding Achievement Award in German-American Studies was Helmut J. Schmeller of Fort Hays State University. At the annual symposium banquet, William Keel, former President of SGAS and present Editor of the *SGAS Yearbook*, held the *laudatio* for Schmeller, who was unable to attend. Keel's address is reprinted here:

...it is my great pleasure to announce the recipient of the 2012 Outstanding Achievement Award in German-American Studies: Helmut J. Schmeller, professor emeritus of history at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas.

On behalf of the Society for German-American Studies, it is my great pleasure to announce the recipient of the 2012 Outstanding Achievement Award in German-American Studies: Helmut J. Schmeller, professor emeritus of history at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas.

Helmut Schmeller is a native son of the *Oberpfalz* in northern Bavaria, and still yearns for a decent *Schweinshax'n* from time to time, as he often related to me when submitting his review of a manuscript for the Society's Yearbook. Following his studies in history and philology at the universities of Regensburg and Erlangen in the 1950s, Professor Schmeller eventually found himself on the High Plains of western Kansas, where he continued his academic career as an instructor in history at Fort Hays State University in 1966. He subsequently earned an MA in history at that university in 1968 and completed his doctorate in European History at Kansas State University in 1975. Professor Schmeller continued to teach at Fort

Hays State until his retirement in 1994.

Professor Schmeller's research interests in modern European history had a primary focus on National Socialist ideology and anti-Semitism with a number of publications in that field, including a 1970 monograph on *Hitler and Keitel: An Investigation of the Influence of Party Ideology on the High Command of the Armed Forces in Germany between 1938 and 1945*. However, being situated in the midst of what is one of the largest settlements of Volga

Germans in the United States in and around Ellis County, Kansas, Professor Schmeller also devoted much attention to the study of the history and culture of that



Dedication of a New Home for the Turner Society Collections



Representatives of the New York Turners at the Annual Symposium

In 1992, the University of Kansas Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures celebrated the renovation and opening of its Max Kade Center for German-American Studies, which subsequently became the home of the book collections of the Milwaukee Turnverein, the Lawrence Turnverein, and the exile works donated by John Spalek. Twenty years later, there was again occasion to draw

attention to a newly renovated facility, the Max Kade Annex, dedicated in connection with the recent conferences of the Society of German-American Studies and the Exile Society of North America. The extensive renovation work was made possible by generous donations by the New York Turnverein 1850 Foundation and the Max Kade Foundation. The building will serve as the home for the Turner Society collections.

The Max Kade Annex is a historic building. Built in 1861-62 by James H. Lane, the first leader of the "Jayhawks," it represents the days of "Bleeding Kansas" and the outset of the Civil War. The building will support the expansion of the center's library resources, with special focus on its recent acquisition, the New York Turner archives. The displays at the annex feature the history of the building, Jayhawk history, and the German immigration history in the 1850s.



Delfev Doherr and Nora Probst observing the displays at the renovated building.

The dedication program included the presentation by William Keel (Editor, *Yearbook of German-*



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SGAS NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write this, the weather is teasing us on the Eastern Seaboard with the promise of summer one minute and tinges of colder weather the next. But summer will come inevitably, and with it the opportunity for renewal, reflection, and relaxation.

Speaking of renewal, if you haven't yet renewed your SGAS membership for 2012, please take a minute to do so. The Society for German American Studies will itself be renewed when we meet in New Orleans next spring and the annual business meeting of the Society will include the biennial election of officers required by our Bylaws. Bill Petig (petig@stanford.edu), chair of the Nominations Committee, would be glad to receive your nominations for candidates for Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Bill is also the person to turn to with nominations for the Society's Outstanding Achievement Award.

Then there's reflection. Many of our members are academics, and for most of them summer brings an opportunity to devote oneself to work which often gets neglected in the daily rush of teaching and other duties during the semester and to do so in a deliberate, yet relaxed fashion. If you are among those taking up a scholarly project anew, consider submitting the finished product for consideration for publication in the Yearbook for German-American Studies. Contact editor Bill Keel (wkeel@ku.edu) or consult a copy of the latest Yearbook for specifics on submission. As chair of the committee which reviews applications for grants to assist in publishing book-length manuscripts through the Arndt Fund, Bill is also the person to contact if your monograph is ready for publication. Applications for support in defraying the necessary expenses of doing research should be directed Greg Divers (diversgr@slu.edu), chair of the committee overseeing the Faust Research Fund. The deadline for all applications and nominations is October 15.

No matter what your plans or projects for summer 2012, I wish you a productive, yet restful and relaxing season.

Herzliche Grüße,

Randall P. Donaldson

Randall P. Donaldson
SGAS President



Helmut Schmeller Laudatio continued

immigrant group. The nearby large settlement of Bukovina Germans from the Austro-Hungarian Empire provided Professor Schmeller with another significant German immigrant group for his studies in western Kansas.

Together with Professor James L. Forsythe of Fort Hays State University, Professor Schmeller initiated the *Center for Ethnic Studies* at that university in 1977. Their focus was the collection, preservation and study of records pertaining to the immigrant heritage of western Kansas, with a focus on the contributions of those immigrants to the social, cultural and economic development of the region. Professor Schmeller collaborated with his colleague in modern languages, Professor Leona Pfeifer, in building up the collection of documents, oral interviews, photographs, recordings and other materials from the German immigrant groups in that region. In addition, Professor Schmeller produced a bibliographic *Guide to the Collections*, originally published in 1997, and now available online.

Utilizing materials from the Ethnic Studies Collection, Professor Schmeller collaborated with Francis Schippers, James Forsyth and William Keel to produce the comprehensive anthology entitled *The Volga Germans of West Central Kansas: Aspects of Their History, Politics, Culture and Language* in 2005. Professor Schmeller also published a number of essays treating the Volga Germans on such topics as folk healing and cultural maintenance in the Society's *Yearbook*.

His service to the Society has been outstanding. From 1981 to 1987 he served on the Executive Committee of the Society as First Vice-President. During that period, Professor Schmeller organized the Society's very successful Symposium at Fort Hays State University in 1982, held in conjunction with the American Historical

Society of Germans from Russia. Since the inception of the Society's *Karl J. R. Arndt Publication Fund* in 2000 until last fall, he served as a reviewer for applications for the Society's publication subsidies.

Last, but by no means least, Helmut Schmeller was a member of the *Yearbook's* Editorial Board from 1984 until 2011. As editor of our principal publication and our supplemental series, I can state unequivocally that Helmut Schmeller was one of our most valued evaluators of manuscripts. We shall miss his insights, criticisms and suggestions for improvement of both essays and book-length manuscripts, not to mention his ever present Bavarian humor. The Society for German-American Studies is delighted to honor Helmut Schmeller with this richly deserved Outstanding Achievement Award. ■

Dedication of the New Home continued



American Studies) of Frank Baron's book *Abraham Lincoln and the German Immigrants: Turners and Forty-Eighters*, a musical program of arias from Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* and Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and a film about the *Jayhawks of "Bleeding Kansas."* ■

Immigrant Entrepreneurship: German-American Business Biographies, 1720- Present

German-Americans offer a comprehensive test case of the immigrant experience. They have played an important role in American history, including the sciences, the arts and humanities, as well as in the business and economic sector.

Spearheaded and coordinated by the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C., with support from the German Government and the European Recovery Program, the German-American Business Biographies project will feature a published collection of ca. 250 biographical essays about first and second generation German-American business people. The collection will be available in print and online. By synthesizing the diverse fields of business history, entrepreneurship research, migration history, and German-American studies, the project will make a significant contribution to a wide array of academic disciplines and offer unique tools for teaching and research.

There are five volumes planned. The volumes will be edited by an interdisciplinary group of researchers from both sides of the Atlantic who are renowned scholars in the field. Each volume will contain approximately 50 biographical essays, an overview article, as well as contextual essays which explore the wider themes of the respective period.

Vol. I From the Colonial Economy to Early Industrialization (1720-1840). Editor: Marianne S. Woceck

Vol. II The Emergence of an Industrial Nation (1840-1893). Editor: William J. Hausman

Vol. III From the End of the Gilded Age to the Progressive Era (1893-1918). Editor: Giles R. Hoyt

Vol. IV The Age of the World Wars (1918-1945) Editor: Jeff Fear

Vol. V From the Postwar Boom to Global Capitalism (1945 – today). Editor: R. Daniel Wadhvani

The editorial board invites feedback and suggestions. If you have source materials or would like to contribute to the project, please contact the German Historical Institute. Donations to the project from companies or individuals are also welcome and are fully tax-deductible to the extent of the law.

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News from the Max Kade German-American Center at IUPUI

By Daniel Nützel



On May 9, IUPUI's Max Kade German-American Center, along with the American Council on Germany and several other co-sponsors, hosted a lecture by Andreas Kraemer entitled *The German Nuclear Phase-out: Experiment or Endgame?* Kraemer is the Director and CEO of the Ecologic Institute, a private not-for-profit non-partisan think tank for applied environmental research, policy analysis and consultancy with offices in Berlin, Brussels and Vienna in the EU, and Washington DC and San Mateo, CA in the US; since 1993 he has also been a Visiting Assistant Professor at Duke University, lecturing on European integration and environmental policy in the Duke in Berlin Program. In his talk in Indianapolis, Kraemer outlined Germany's plans for phasing out its nuclear power plants and pointed out various ways in which the US and Germany could cooperate in developing economically sound environmental policies. More information can be found at www.ecologic.eu. As a participant in the German Embassy's Transatlantic Climate Bridge Program (see www.germany.info for details), the Max Kade Center at IUPUI has been actively involved in exploring German-American collaboration in developing sustainable, reliable, and affordable sources of energy.

From 1-3 October, 2012, the Max Kade Center will co-sponsor a conference on German philanthropic traditions since World War II at Indiana University's

Center on Philanthropy on the IUPUI campus. Philanthropy has been an essential element of all societies. Whether providing for common obligations that create a sense of belonging or common ties that form the basis of democracy, individual giving of time and valuables has played an important role not only in creating interpersonal relationships but also forming societal connections. Civic engagement for aims and purposes that transcend state policies and vested (economic) interests has generally been conceived as a key feature of civil society. It is often assumed that, through associational life and connections created in the philanthropic sector, civil society develops. The vast majority of literature addressing this connection is based upon the experiences in the United States. Conference papers will use the American experience as a point of departure but concentrate on the specific conditions in Germany to present a differentiated understanding of the relationship between philanthropy and civil society. As Europe looks to the United States to provide a model for philanthropic endeavors, it is appropriate to analyze the indigenous German tradition of giving and to find points of interaction with the United States. For further details on this upcoming conference, contact Greg Witkowski, Director of Graduate Programs and Associate Professor of Philanthropic Studies, Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, at gwitkows@iupui.edu.

Message from the Book Review Editor

CALL FOR PAPERS & BOOK REVIEWS

Dear SGAS Members,

I am writing to you now to help spread the word on two interesting opportunities. We would be very grateful if you could share this information with your colleagues and graduate students.

The first is our **Call for Papers** for the 37th Annual Symposium of the Society for German American Studies in **New Orleans, Louisiana** from May 9 to 12, 2013. The Symposium Theme is "German-American Influences on America: Time, Circumstance and Place." Institutional support is being provided by The Historic New Orleans Collection. Paper topics should reflect the general purpose of the Society for German-American Studies in focusing upon the history, language, literature, and culture of the interaction between the Americas and immigrants from German-speaking areas of Europe. One page abstracts of scholarly papers dealing with any aspect of German-American studies should be submitted electronically by November 15, 2012 to Dr. William Roba, Division of Arts and Sciences, Scott Community College, Bettendorf, Iowa. E-mail: broba@eicc.edu.

We are hoping that the location of our conference might entice you to submit a paper from the book or a related study. The members would be eager to hear what you have to say and I am sure you would meet scholars who share your interests.

Secondly, opportunity knocks for the **writing of articles and book reviews** for our annual *Yearbook*. If you, your colleagues, or your graduate students have articles in progress, if you know of books that we should be reviewing for our membership, or if you would like to write a review, please do let me know. We are always happy to receive articles from scholars in our field and will send them to reviewers right away. I will be sending out a list of books for review each fall—late fall—for members and graduate students. I can incorporate your suggestions and put you on our mailing list (schurer@sunlink.net).

I thank you in advance for your consideration of my new mission and that of the society.

Susan Schurer

Susan Schurer
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