

Helga's
Friendship
Award
7 May 2009

And Other
Awards by GTHS

by Helga von Schweinitz

Introduction

On 9 May 2009, Helga von Schweinitz received the Friendship Award. This was an accumulation of many other awards Helga had received from GTHS (German Texas Heritage Society) over the years.

This compendium first starts with the numerous other awards that Helga received while a member of GTHS and then covers the Friendship Award.

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Helga von Schweinitz | 3 |
| Summary of Accomplishments | 4 |
| Awards and Recognition pre 2009 | 6 |
| Application for Friendship Award | 20 |
| Award Ceremony 7 May 2009 | 41 |
| News Response After Friendship Award | 51 |
| Thank You After Friendship Awards | 54 |
| Congratulations After Friendship Award | 57 |
| The End | 69 |

Helga von Schweinitz

Helga and her husband, Hans, became members of GTHS way before 1991, probably in 1981. In 1996 Helga wrote an article for the GTHS newsletter "Schulhaus Reporter" that introduced herself because she was about to start her "Helga's Corner" articles.



HELGA VON SCHWEINITZ: was born Helga Pörtner in Herford, Germany. At the age of 20 she interrupted her education to spend a year with relatives in Milwaukee, WI., where she fell in love with German-born Hans von Schweinitz, got married and decided to become a US citizen. For 20 years they lived in various parts of the world while Hans served in the US Air Force. but she was able to graduate from the University of South Carolina with a Phi Beta Kappa key. She has taught German to all ages, from Kindergarten through Senior Citizens. She is active in many fields - the family investment business, translation of German publications. as

"Mutti" to their two children, Chris and Tina, and as "Oma" to grandson Matthew. She's been on the GTHS board for most of her 15 years of membership, and in 1991, when the German Free School was acquired, was instrumental in the founding of the GFS Guild, where she has spent thousands of hours volunteering in many roles. Helga hopes for more time in the future for free-lance writing and historical research. Helga's quiet, quick wit and her sunny disposition endear her to all of us, and we all look forward to "Helga's Corner" in every issue of the Schulhaus Reporter.

For more about the history of the German Free School in Austin that was acquired, see "German Free School in Austin Texas and GTHS from years 1991 to 1995" book written by Helga.

Summary of Accomplishments

In March 2008, Helga wrote a list of her accomplishments. So in her own words:

Activities promoting a good relationship between Germans and Americans

Koblenz–Austin Sister City Association. I was intensely involved in the founding of the association, and I am still active. I was a member of the first official Austin delegation to Koblenz. I was also part of the delegation when Texas opened a chamber of commerce in Frankfurt. I paid for my expenses in both cases. The Association successfully sponsors educational, cultural and business exchanges in which I take part in various roles.

German-Texan Heritage Society (GTHS). I have been an active volunteer for GTHS since 1980 and was a member of the Board of Directors for eight years. I was President of the German Free School Guild, the most important committee of GTHS, for two years. My major merits are the problem solving requiring countless hours and sleepless nights, developing of ideas, recruiting volunteers, etc. to turn the historic “German Free School” building into a German-Texan Cultural Center.

One of the programs I created was the weekly “Stammtisch” hour when only German is spoken, thus giving visitors, including tourists, from Germany the opportunity to meet Americans, out of which grew lasting friendships in many cases.

I also started German language classes, I make myself available for genealogical and historic research and help Germans and German-Texans living in Central Texas deal with official correspondence in German. All free of charge.

I am on the Advisory Board of GTHS and a docent with the specialty of giving tours of the German-Texan Cultural Center to visitors from Germany.

Friendship Force International. As a member of this organization I have served as exchange director for visiting groups from Germany and hosted many German “ambassadors” in my home and experienced how appreciative of American culture they became while staying here for a while, and Americans gained a better understanding of their German guests.

Teaching German. I enjoy teaching German language and culture and taught in public and private schools, in companies like AMD and MCC and in the Lifetime Learning Institute. During my years at Anderson High School in Austin, student enrollment increased considerably, and a second teacher had to be hired.

Helga’s Friendship Award and others

“Von Schweinitz Free Bed & Board”. In addition to having German relatives and friends spend long vacations with my husband and me, we are also offering our hospitality to strangers free of charge. Many German musicians who spend several weeks here with the Austin Chamber Music Center, some groups giving concerts, members of choirs and even an author in need of inspiration, like to make our castle their castle for weeks at a time. Their presence and demeanor make such a positive impression on our American friends.

Film, Documentaries and Research. The idea for the prize-winning (Golden Remi Award) documentary “Hin nach Texas” or “Off to Texas” was born in my swimming pool in a conversation between Karl Knietzsch from Dresden and me about the German-Texan painters Lungkwitz and Petri. The film is available in English and German. I am listed as assistant producer. I hosted the entire film crew and advised them daily for many weeks and also traveled with them as advisor and coordinator.

I am also involved in a documentary still in the making on the German pioneer Hermann Ehrenberg. I have hosted and traveled with the author of the film script and the camera man and coordinated locations and advised them on historical correctness extensively.

A documentary on the Steubenhoeft in Cuxhaven is being produced featuring me as one of the sample emigrants who walked through that hallowed hall. I was a guest of honor and speaker at the opening of an exhibit when the Steubenhoeft restoration was completed in 2002.

Public Presentations. On several occasions I gave public slide shows in Bremen and Cuxhaven on German immigrants and the homes they built in Texas and the influence they had on the development of Texas.

Helga’s Corner. My book “Helga’s Corner” and the articles with that title that I published later, are considered an amusing contribution to helping Americans learn a bit of German and about Germans and their ways. They are read on both sides of the Atlantic.

Curriculum vitae: Born in 1937 in Herford, Germany. Abitur in 1957. Emigration to USA in 1957. B.A. from University of South Carolina. Graduated Phi Beta Kappa. Author, teacher, translator, independent investor in the housing and mortgage industry. Married, two children, three grandchildren.

Awards and Recognition pre 2009



Often her husband, Hans, would also receive an award. While Helga was busy organizing, translating, presenting, being a deacon at the Free School, Hans would often be repairing and maintaining the Free School building and gardens.



THANKS!



GERMAN FREE SCHOOL GUILD



2nd Annual Volunteer Appreciation

the

MANY HATS

AWARD

is presented to

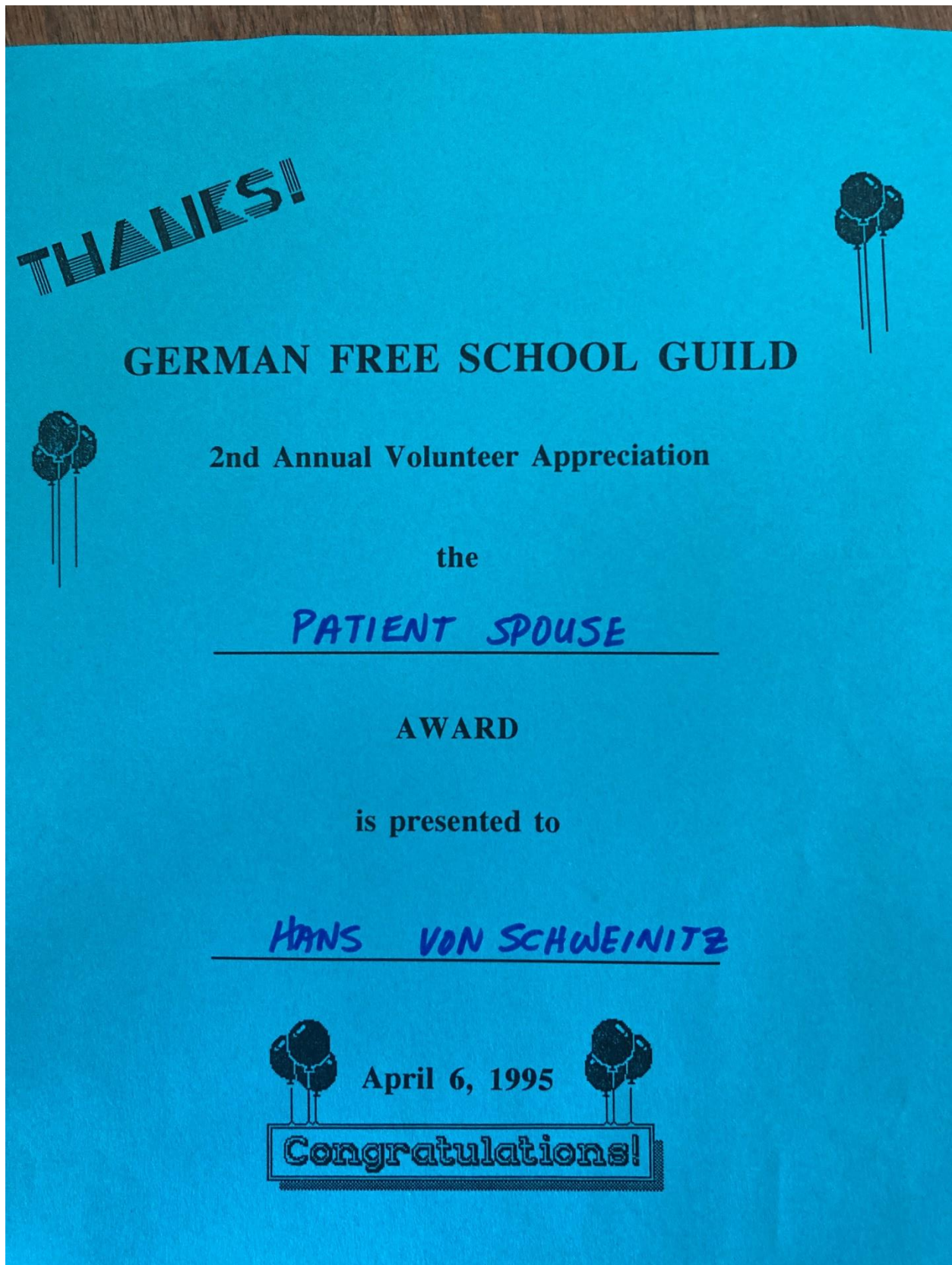
HELGA VON SCHWEINITZ



April 6, 1995



Congratulations!



Certificate of Appreciation

awarded to

Helga von Schweinitz

for volunteering Two Hundred Forty-nine to Three Hundred hours
of Guild service to the German-Texan Heritage Society

Teresa Schwausch Chavez

Teresa Schwausch Chavez, Executive Director
German-Texan Heritage Society



April 25, 1996

CHARLES F. KALTEYER

70 St. Stephens School Rd.

Austin, TX. 78746

512/327-9279

7 August 1996

Dear Theresa,

As discussed with you by telephone on the 4th of August, I would like to place the name of Helga von Schweinitz in nomination for the "EHRENSTERN" AWARD for 1996. I was most surprised to learn from her that she had not been recognized with this particular award for her many years of very active and dedicated work in behalf of the German-Texan Heritage Society.

As I understand, Helga has been a member of the Society since the early 1980's and is now serving in a third term on the Society Board. My first contact with her was in the late 1980's when for many years she was the "unofficial President" of the "unofficial Capitol Area Group" organizing monthly educational meetings for area Society members.

Some of her special projects over the years include the following:

Many years of effort to successfully convince the Barker History Center to have the German language newspaper "Das Wochenblatt" put on microfiche.

Worked with Charles Trenckmann in archive research and translation on the Wochenblatt in the interest of GTHS.

Worked with Rodney Koenig and Lew Marquard developing new Society bylaws.

Convincing the Austin History Center, with the help of Ann Lindemann and Lew Marquard, to catalog the 40 linear feet of "Bickler Papers. A catalog is now in our GTHS files.

Organizing groups of area GTHS members for such projects as decorating German Christmas trees in malls and museums as well as addressing schools and other groups in dirmde dress as good will ambassadors for the German-Texans.

Teaching German in various schools and judging statewide German language Competition like TAGS.

Working with Anna Thompson in 92/93 virtually full time handling the many challenges associated with the GTHS taking over the operation of the German Free School facilities from the Kelly Stevens estate.

Organizer and member of the committee which founded the GFS Guild consisting of Arlene Burges, Teresa Chavez, Renate Leonard and Charles Kalteyer.

Along with Anna Thompson, Helga accumulates the most volunteer hours each year in the GTHS headquarters as relief Executive Director, tour guide, docent, translator, librarian, public relations ambassador, international hostess, "Stammtisch" leader and the most sought after advisor regarding GFS and GTHS matters.

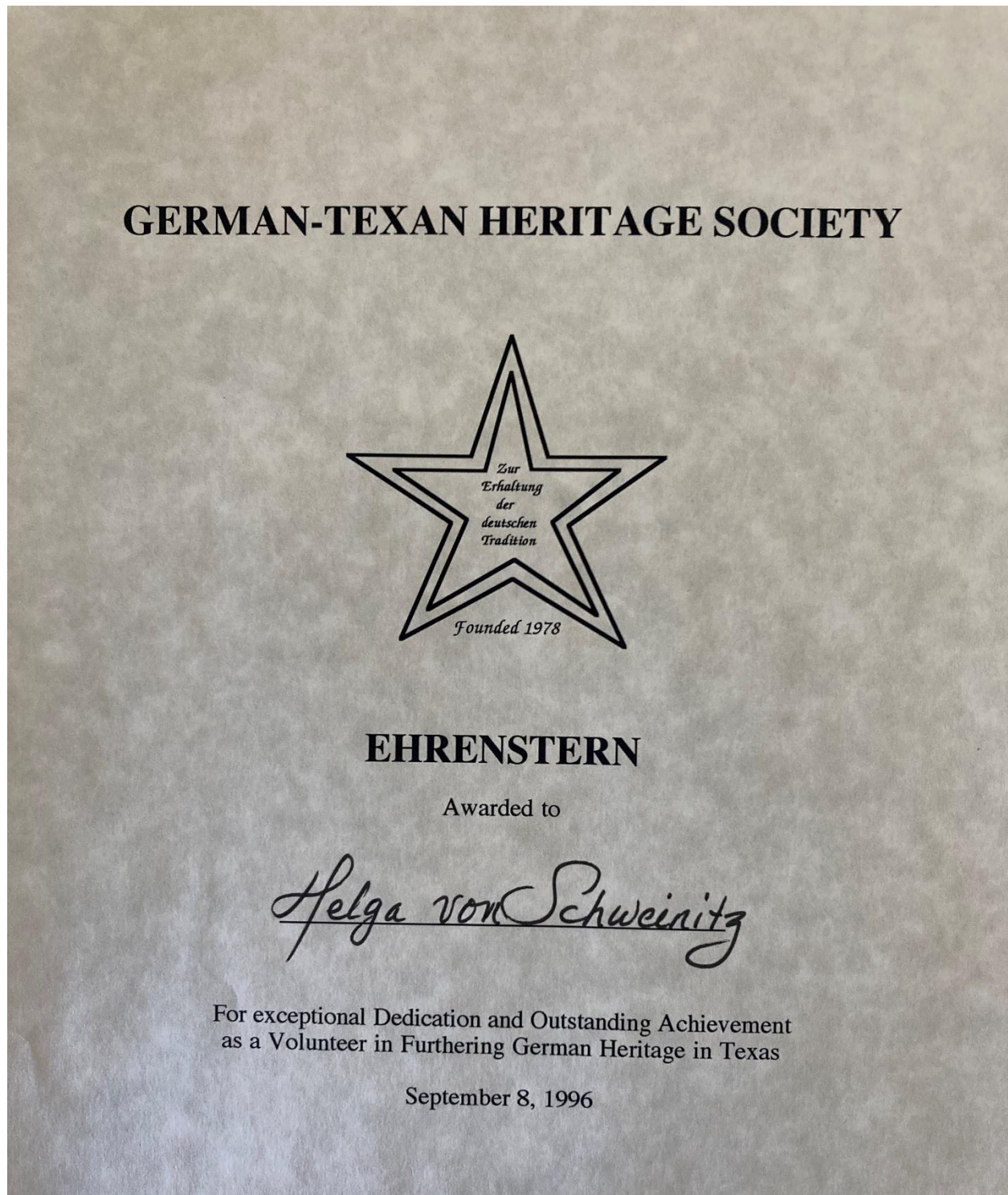
Instrumental in facilitating substantial monetary as well as physical donations to GTHS.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I nominate Helga von Schweinitz to receive the 1996 GTHS "EHRENSTERN" AWARD in recognition of her many years of fruitful, dedicated and faithful service to the GERMAN-TEXAN HERITAGE SOCIETY.

*With best regards,
Chuck*

Helga is recommended for the "Ehrenstern" [Star of Honor] award. Charles gives a wonderful list and explanation of Helga's contribution to GTHS

Helga's Friendship Award and others



Helga did receive the “Ehrenstern” award on 1996 September 8.

Helga’s Friendship Award and others

The German Texan Heritage Society has a true gem in Helga von Schweinitz. My name is Marsha Roose; my father is Charles Clinger. Through my dad's genealogy work his 7th cousin was located in Lautertal, Hesse, Germany. My brother and I are planning a trip there this summer to meet our relatives. Our emails back and forth, Germany to USA, USA to Germany, were not being translated well, so understanding was being lost. My dad contacted Helga, asked her if she could help me, and in no time she had emailed me with directions to her house and an exuberant promise to help. Helga contacted our German relative by phone, chatted with her and arranged a day/time for all three of us to chat. Helga opened her home to me, called Germany with her speaker phone on so I could hear, then shared with our German relative the list of specific items we needed to clarify. It was such a pleasure to listen as Helga spoke German with our relative. Through Helga's phone conversation I had the chance to hear our relative's voice and listen to her laughter. The plans for our trip were clarified, bonding began, and the excitement of meeting each other was conveyed all because Helga generously shared her German speaking ability to help me. I am exceedingly grateful for Helga's assistance and wanted to share with you how she made a great difference for my family here and in Germany.

Sincerely,

Marsha Roose

Helga also received letter that thanked her for helping people.
This family could talk to their relatives in Germany, through Helga.



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Office of the Dean • Dorothy L. Gebauer Building • 1 University Station G6000 • Austin, Texas 78712-1105
(512) 471-4141 • FAX (512) 471-4518

May 1, 2003

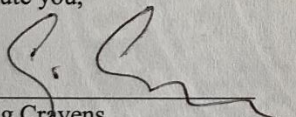
Helga Schweinitz
2319 Village Circle
Austin, TX 78745

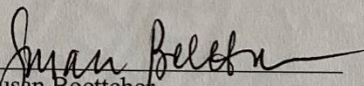
Dear Ms. Schweinitz,

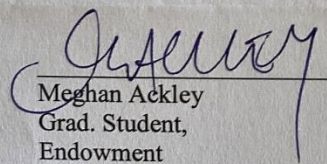
On behalf of the Swedish Studies Excellence Endowment, the Chair of Czech Studies, and the departments of Germanic Studies and Slavic Languages and Literatures, I would like to thank you for your participation in our Children's Activities Fair on March 28th, 2003 here on the University of Texas campus. The program was a tremendous success and exceeded all of our expectations. The time and effort you put into your preparations and the obvious joy with which you exhibited your arts and crafts were truly outstanding and doubtlessly instilled in the children a burgeoning curiosity that will with time blossom into mature and lifelong interest.

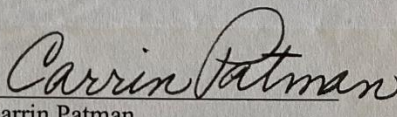
You are indeed a credit to your cultural heritage.

I salute you,


Craig Cravens
Fellow of Czech Studies


Susan Boettcher
Asst. Professor History


Meghan Ackley
Grad. Student,
Endowment
Slavic Lang. & Lit.


Carrin Patman
Swedish Studies Excellence
Chair

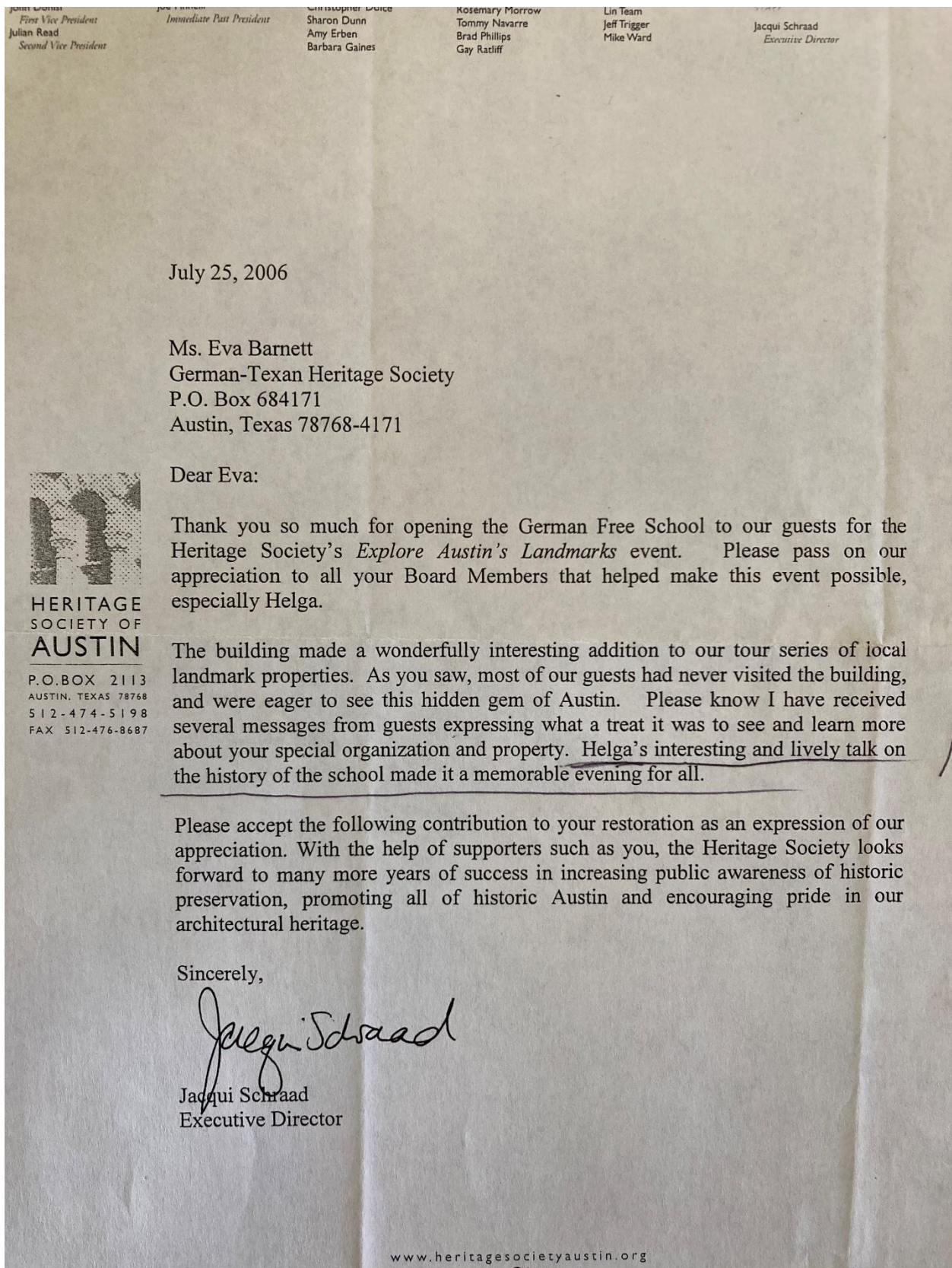
The University of Texas at Austin thanked Helga for using her teaching skills to present the Germanic Studies during a Children's Activities Fair.

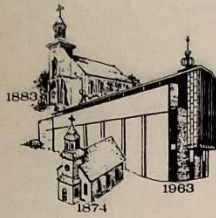


Both Helga and Hans receive recognition for their contribution.

Helga's Friendship Award and others







GETHSEMANE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
200 West Anderson Lane
Austin, Texas 78752-1106
(512) 836-8560
www.gethsemaneaustin.org
gethsemaneaustin@sbcglobal.net



September 22, 2011

Ms. Helga von Schweinitz
German-Texan Heritage Society
PO Box 684171
Austin, TX 78768-4171

Dear Helga,

Thank you for a wonderful presentation to our Men in Mission group last Thursday. We were grateful to get the opportunity to visit the German Free School and learn more about the German-Texan Heritage Society and the history of the building and school. I received many enthusiastic compliments from our men about the visit and your presentation.

You have a very delightful way of presenting and capturing the attention of your audience. And, you did catch our attention as evidenced by the overall interest shown and the questions we asked. While our church was the first Swedish Lutheran church in Austin, a number of the men in our group have German ancestry. All of us enjoyed hearing about the history of German immigration and settlement in Central Texas. Your anecdotes, stories and humor made your presentation all the more interesting and informative. You have an amazing knowledge about the German culture and traditions and the impact they have had in our area.

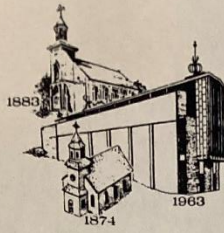
I also want to express my appreciation for your willingness to address our group on such short notice. Due to unusual circumstances, I was not able to plan this visit in advance. However, we made an outstanding "Deutsch" day out of it with a stop for lunch at Scholz Garten after our visit. A gut tag for all of us! Please pardon my German grammar if it is incorrect. I am 100% German, however, we never spoke it in our home. I took German many years ago in college but, unfortunately, it was not my best subject.

Again, danke schön for your hospitality and excellent presentation and tour. Sharing your knowledge with us helped make this a memorable day for our group! Best wishes to you in your volunteer work with the German-Texan Heritage Society. You represent them so very well.

Alles Gute,

Jack Westerman, President
Gethsemane Men in Mission

cc: Ms. Jean Warnecke, Executive Director
cc: Ms. Sheryl Zettner, Office Assistant



**GETHSEMANE
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

200 West Anderson Lane
Austin, Texas 78752-1106
(512) 836-8560
www.gethsemaneaustin.org
gethsemaneaustin@sbcglobal.net



September 22, 2011

Ms. Sheryl Zettner
German-Texan Heritage Society
PO Box 684171
Austin, TX 78768-4171

Dear Sheryl,

I can not thank you enough for helping set up the tour and presentation for our Gethsemane Men in Mission last Thursday. The way you handled my initial call and request created a very positive impression of both you and the Texan-German Heritage Society. You reacted very quickly to my request. It seemed like within minutes you had contacted Helga and called me back with options for a tour and presentation the next day. After an exchange of telephone calls, the visit was confirmed for our group of 19 people. I compliment you on your helpful and positive attitude and how pleasant it was to work with you.

In a thank you letter to Helga, I have expressed how pleased we were with her presentation and tour. We learned a lot about your building, the heritage society and the German immigration, settlement and culture in Central Texas. We really appreciated every bit of our visit and left feeling very grateful that we had come.

We have been taking tours around Austin for quite awhile and have wanted to visit the German Free School. We usually take outside tours in the warmer months and then schedule inside tours in the cooler months. Unfortunately, we had a cancellation at the last minute for an outside tour of the solar installation at the J.J. Pickle Research Campus. Hence, the short notice call to you.

Again, thank you so much for your responsiveness that resulted in a great day for our men's group. We wish you all the best in your efforts at the German-Texan Heritage Society.

Sincerely,

Jack Westerman, President
Gethsemane Men in Mission

cc: Ms. Jean Warnecke, Executive Director
cc: Ms. Helga von Schweinitz

Application for Friendship Award

The whole process began in March 2008. At that time, The Honorable Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bernard Buecker, from San Antonio, recommended the Bundesverdienstkreuz [The Order of Merit] for Helga. By December 2008, the award was the Friendship Award.

The Bundesverdienstkreuz [The Order of Merit] of the Federal Republic of Germany is the only federal decoration of Germany. It is awarded for special achievements in political, economic, cultural, intellectual or honorary fields.

The Friendship Award is given by the German Ambassador to extraordinary citizens to thank them for their ongoing support of the German-American cause. These individuals come from all walks of life but they have one thing in common – their desire to create mutual understanding and to continue the international exchange of thoughts and ideas.

The Friendship Award was award by the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Helga on 2008 December 17. On 7 May 2009, The Honorable Consul Ben Buecker, present the award to Helga.

The following are some of the correspondence that went into requesting the award and finally presenting the award.

Helga von Schweinitz
19117 Ganton Court
Pflugerville TX 78660
FAX (512) 989-8824
E-MAIL helgavs@aol.com
Home Phone (512) 990-3557

Dear Ben.

It was a pleasure to listen to your speech at the German Free School's 150th Birthday event. Some people were hoping that you would also get up and sing at some point.

I would like to ask you for some information, advice or even action about me getting nominated for a Bundesverdienstkreuz for my efforts to keep German – American relations pleasant on a grass-root level.

Several speakers at that birthday celebration mentioned my name and explained what an important role I played in the development of the German Free School as a German-Texan Cultural Center. Maybe you heard Rodney Koenig and Sherryl Brown.

While I first shrugged that honor off because I am so modest, other people came up to me and reminded me of other German-Texan and German-American projects I had dedicated myself to with lots of time, energy, sleepless nights, financial sacrifices and visions. However, everybody knows only a certain part of my involvements, not the entire picture. Last night I decided to list some of them.

Besides my efforts on behalf of the German-Texan Cultural Center (GTHS) which included starting programs like Speak-only-German-Stammtisch, language classes, used book sales a.m.m., I was intensely involved in the founding of the Austin – Koblenz sister city relationship and participated at my own expense in the first trip of Austin officials to Koblenz. That delegation also opened the Texas – German Chamber of Commerce in Frankfurt. Renate Anderson deservedly received the Bundesverdienstkreuz for her role in all of that. The Lehlings program was successful, and cultural and school exchanges are still going on, also some economic activities.

My teaching career included increasing the enrolment in German classes at Anderson High so that a second teacher had to be hired. I also taught German in companies like MCC and AMD, and at Lifetime Learning Institute, which supplied me with dozens of volunteers when GTHS took over the GFS.

On several occasions I gave public talks and slide presentations in Cuxhaven and Bremen about Central Texas, and I am presently part of a German documentary in the making as one of the featured emigrants.

I was the originator and then the assistant producer of the documentary "Hin nach Texas" (Off to Texas) about the German-American painters Petri and Lungkwitz. I am now working with a German film company on a documentary about Hermann Ehrenberg. (We need more financing), based on an article I published on him.

My book, *Helga's Corner* and my more recent articles under that title are considered an amusing contribution to helping Americans learn a bit of German and about Germans and their ways. They are read on both sides of the Atlantic.

This gives you a basic idea. Bescheidenheit ist eine Zier, doch weiter kommt man ohne ihr – an old German word of wisdom.

Please respond somehow. If I receive that award, it will create positive publicity for German – American relations.

Mir herzlichen Grüßen,

This is the first letter that Helga sent to The Honorable Consul Ben Buecker.

Subj: **Bundesverdienstkreuz?**
Date: 3/18/2008 9:59:07 PM Central Daylight Time
From: HELGAVS
To: rkoenig@fulbright.com

Dear Rodney.

The list of the correspondence to and by Kelly Stevens that we talked about at the Oktoberfest is still far from complete because all of those boxes are stacked away in the back of overstuffed closets in my house....but I haven't forgotten.

I would like to ask you for a big favor. After you and Sherryl Brown had mentioned my name in such a positive contents, and when several other festlers talked to me about the days when I was intensely involved in getting the Koblenz-Austin sister city relationship going, and an elderly gentleman told me that his son has a love for everything German ever since I taught him at Anderson High School, the question came up about how to suggest my name for the Bundesverdienstkreuz for my efforts to promote good German - American relations on a grass root level.

After brooding about it for a few month, I thought I'll get the stone rolling by asking our Honorary Consul, Ben Buecker, for help. He advised me to ask a few people to write a letter suggesting that award for me, and to send it to him.. He suggested your name, and I hope I am not imposing on you.

Renata Anderson, who deservedly received the Bundesverdienstkreuz for her efforts in the Austin-Koblenz organization, told me that she was asked to write down all of her achievements in that line to be submitted to wherever the request is considered. I'll create such a document in German in the next few days, and I can send you a copy if you would like to have one.

I have also asked other people for a letter: Dr. Julia Mellenbruch (Foreign Language Coordinator for AISD, ret.); Renata Anderson (President of Austin Sister City Association); Sherryl Brown (former Ex. Secretary of GTHS); Joanne Ancira (former President of The Friendship Force of Austin); The Oberbuergermeister of Koblenz; Suenderhauf Film Produktion, Dresden; Hoesel Film, Dresden; and others if needed to cover my efforts on many different levels.

Should I be honored by receiving the award, we can turn the ceremony into an event which really celebrates friendship between Germans and Americans.

Sincerely, Helga

This letter is to Rodney Koenig, request a letter of reference. It is an example of the type of letter Helga sent out.

FROM : BUECKER

FAX NO. : 210 226 2065

Jun. 12 2008 02:51PM P2

March 21, 2008

The Honorable Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany
Bernard Buecker
1220 Tower Life Bldg.
310 S. St. Mary's Street
San Antonio, TX 78205 8811

Dear Consul Buecker:

It is an honor and a special privilege to recommend Helga von Schweinitz as a worthy recipient of the Bundesverdienstkreuz.

Helga, a native of Germany, has devoted her years in Austin, Texas, to practicing and spreading the German culture in the United States.

She has written numerous articles on issues dealing with all phases of German culture. As a member of the German Texan Heritage Society she has translated letters, articles, and a script for a movie. Helga's booklet entitled HELGA'S CORNER is a compilation of a series of her popular column in the Newsletter of the German Free School Guild, in which she deals with the explanation of German expressions in a humorous style.

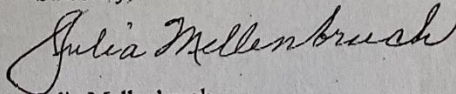
The German Texan Heritage Society inherited the 1856 building of the German Free School from a local artist in the early 1990's. Helga took a leadership role in converting the building into a museum, office, genealogical library and German language school. The spacious grounds are used for social events, Maifest, Kris Kringle Markt, programs on cultural and intellectual topics dealing with German culture, and weekly Stammtisch.

I met Helga in the 1970's at Anderson High School, Austin. As Austin Independent School District Secondary Foreign Language Coordinator, it was always a special treat to visit Helga's German classes. Her accordion stood ready to alleviate the student's struggles with German grammar to sing a few German songs, e.g. "Ich habe Hunger, Ich habe Durst."

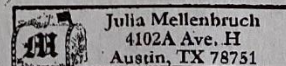
Helga's warm and generous personality, accompanied by her gifted leadership style has contributed to making the German Texan Heritage Society a center for spreading German culture in the community

Thank you for considering Helga for this prestigious award.

Sincerely,



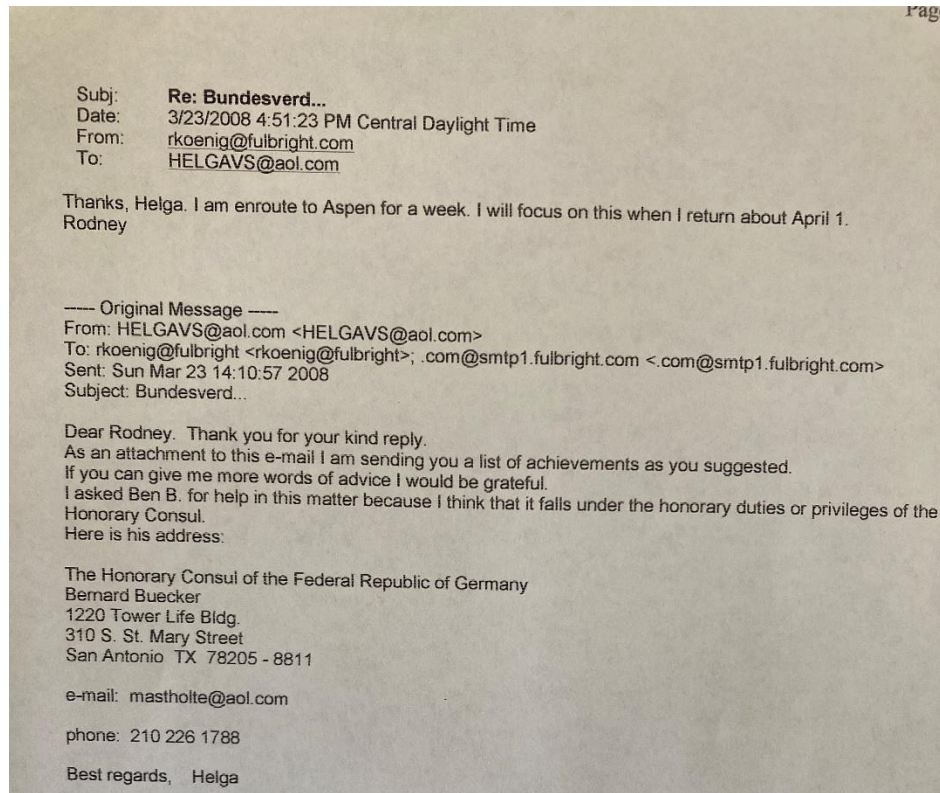
Julia Mellenbruch
AISD Secondary Foreign Language Coordinator (Retired)



juliam@att.com
512-451-4467

Julia Mellenbruch, Helga boss while teaching German at Anderson High School, was the first to write a letter of reference.

Helga's Friendship Award and others



Rodney Koenig asked for additional information before writing a reference letter.

achievements2.doc

**Helga von Schweinitz: Activities promoting a good relationship between
Germans and Americans**

Koblenz–Austin Sister City Association. I was intensely involved in the founding of the association, and I am still active. I was a member of the first official Austin delegation to Koblenz. I was also part of the delegation when Texas opened a chamber of commerce in Frankfurt. I paid for my expenses in both cases. The Association successfully sponsors educational, cultural and business exchanges in which I take part in various roles.

German-Texan Heritage Society (GTHS). I have been an active volunteer for GTHS since 1980 and was a member of the Board of Directors for eight years. I was President of the German Free School Guild, the most important committee of GTHS, for two years. My major merits are the problem solving requiring countless hours and sleepless nights, developing of ideas, recruiting volunteers, etc. to turn the historic "German Free School" building into a German-Texan Cultural Center.

One of the programs I created was the weekly "Stammtisch" hour when only German is spoken, thus giving visitors, including tourists, from Germany the opportunity to meet Americans, out of which grew lasting friendships in many cases.

I also started German language classes, I make myself available for genealogical and historic research and help Germans and German-Texans living in Central Texas deal with official correspondence in German. All free of charge.

I am on the Advisory Board of GTHS and a docent with the specialty of giving tours of the German-Texan Cultural Center to visitors from Germany.

Friendship Force International. As a member of this organization I have served as exchange director for visiting groups from Germany and hosted many German "ambassadors" in my home and experienced how appreciative of American culture they became while staying here for a while, and Americans gained a better understanding of their German guests.

Teaching German. I enjoy teaching German language and culture and taught in public and private schools, in companies like AMD and MCC and in the Lifetime Learning Institute. During my years at Anderson High School in Austin, student enrollment increased considerably, and a second teacher had to be hired.

"Von Schweinitz Free Bed & Board". In addition to having German relatives and friends spend long vacations with my husband and me, we are also offering our hospitality to strangers free of charge. Many German musicians who spend several weeks here with the Austin Chamber Music Center, some groups giving concerts, members of choirs and even an author in need of inspiration, like to make our castle their castle for weeks at a time. Their presence and demeanor make such a positive impression on our American friends.

Film, Documentaries and Research. The idea for the prize-winning (Golden Remi Award) documentary "Hin nach Texas" or "Off to Texas" was born in my swimming pool in a conversation between Karl Knietzsch from Dresden and me about the German-Texan painters Lungkwitz and Petri. The film is available in English and German. I am listed as assistant producer. I hosted the entire film crew and advised them daily for many weeks and also traveled with them as advisor and coordinator. I am also involved in a documentary still in the making on the German pioneer Hermann Ehrenberg. I have hosted and traveled with the author of the script and the camera man and coordinated locations and advised them on historical correctness extensively. A documentary on the Steubenhoeft in Cuxhaven is being produced featuring me as one of the sample emigrants who walked through that hallowed hall. I was a guest of honor and speaker at the opening of an exhibit when the Steubenhoeft restoration was completed.

Public Presentations. On several occasions I gave public slide shows in Bremen and Cuxhaven on German immigrants and the homes they built in Texas.

Helga's Corner. My book "Helga's Corner" and the articles with that title that I published later, are considered an amusing contribution to helping Americans learn a bit of German and about Germans and their ways. They are read on both sides of the Atlantic.

Curriculum vitae: Born in 1937 in Herford, Germany. Abitur in 1957. Emigration to USA in 1957. B.A. from University of South Carolina. Graduated Phi Beta Kappa. Author, teacher, translator, independent investor in the housing and mortgage industry. Married, two children, three grandchildren.

Helga emailed back this list of accomplishments. Quite impressive.

Subj: **Bundesverdienstkreuz**
 Date: 3/23/2008 2:29:10 PM Central Daylight Time
 From: HELGAVS
 To: Mastholte

Dear Ben. Thank you for your help so far. I contacted several people about letters - as you suggested - including Rodney Koenig. He'll be in touch with you. He and other Bundesverdienstkreuz recipients that I talked to told me that they had to make a written list of their achievements. So I made one and hope it helps give a clearer picture of my situation. I am attaching it to this email.

So far I have promises for a letter of recommendation from Rodney Koenig, Sherryl Brown, Dr. Julia Mellenbruch and Renata Anderson. Renata is in Germany right now and will write one when she returns in a week or so. She recommended that I or she should also contact the Lord Mayor of Koblenz about a letter. I don't know what the protokoll is with regards to the Bundesverdienstkreuz, and maybe you don't either, but I am sure that you know where to get that information. I certainly appreciate your effort. Do you think you need more letters? I could certainly ask more people, but I hate to bother them.

Thank you, Helga

Helga corresponding with Ben Buecker

Helga's Friendship Award and others

FULBRIGHT & JAWORSKI L.L.P.

A REGISTERED LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP

FULBRIGHT TOWER

1301 MCKINNEY, SUITE 5100

HOUSTON, TEXAS 77010-3095

WWW.FULBRIGHT.COM

RKOENIG@FULBRIGHT.COM
DIRECT DIAL: (713) 651-5333TELEPHONE: (713) 651-5151
FACSIMILE: (713) 651-5246

May 5, 2008

VIA EMAIL: MASTHOLTE@AOL.COM

The Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany
Bernard Buecker
1220 Tower Life Bldg.
310 S. St. Mary Street
San Antonio, TX 78205-8811

Re: Helga von Schweinitz

Dear Ben:

It has come to my attention that you are considering recommending Helga von Schweinitz for the Federal Republic of Germany's Bundesverdienstkreuz. I have known Helga for many years and can highly recommend her for this honor. I served on the Board of German-Texan Heritage Society (GTHS) and served as state President of GTHS. Helga served on the Board with me and was a wonderful addition and moving force when we acquired the German Free School from Dr. Kelly Stephens as a gift in the early 1990's. Helga was instrumental and the primary volunteer after Dr. Stephens' death in converting his home (the German Free School) to our state headquarters. She also helped in finding homes for Dr. Stephens' dachhunds. Helga was also President of the German Free School Guild, which is the docent volunteer group which cares for the German Free School. She has contributed her amusing anecdotes on German language to "Helga's Corner", a regular contribution to the German Free School Guild Newsletter. Her book "Helga's Corner" is a compilation of a number of amusing articles regarding Germans and their language which make many of us smile.

Helga was very active in founding the Koblenz-Austin Sister City Association and was part of the first Austin delegation to Koblenz. She remains active in this group, although I (being from Houston) am not as familiar with this group. She has also been active in Friendship Force International and has served as exchange director for visiting groups from Germany. Her home has been a waystation for numerous German groups, film crews and students.

One of the interesting aspects of Helga is her conceiving the idea for the documentary "Hin nach Texas" which became a prize winning film (Golden Remi Award) about German-Texan painters, Hermann Lungkwitz and Richard Petri. She is listed as assistant producer for this film and hosted and advised the film crew for many weeks while the film was

55232630.1

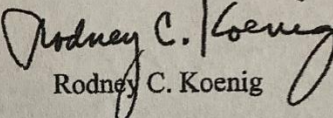
AUSTIN • BEIJING • DALLAS • DENVER • DUBAI • HONG KONG • HOUSTON • LONDON • LOS ANGELES • MINNEAPOLIS
MUNICH • NEW YORK • RIYADH • SAN ANTONIO • ST. LOUIS • WASHINGTON DC

The Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany
May 5, 2008
Page 2

being made. The film is in both German and English. I recall Helga's tireless efforts to enlist aid and support for this film (and others) involving German-Texans. She is also involved in another documentary still being made on Hermann Ehrenberg, a German Texan pioneer. She has also given numerous talks and presentations on German culture and language and has taught in these areas for a number of years.

Helga is one of the "go-to" persons and leaders in Austin and Texas when German visitors arrive here. As a recipient of the Bundesverdienstkreuz myself, I highly recommend Helga for this honor, knowing of her donation of substantial, significant time and efforts to improve the Germany-Texas relationships. She, in my opinion, is truly worthy of receiving the Bundesverdienstkreuz. I ask you to favorably consider her.

Sincerely yours,


Rodney C. Koenig

RCK/bth

Rodney Koenig's letter of recommendation.


Helga's Friendship Award and others

M : BUECKER FAX NO. : 210 226 2065 Jun. 12 2008 02:51PM P1

BERNARD BEN BUECKER
HONORARY CONSUL
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

LICENSED TO PRACTICE IN
TEXAS AND COLORADO
US DISTRICT COURT
COLORADO
TEXAS
WASHINGTON D.C.
MEMBER
ATTORNEYS CHAMBER - REGIONAL COURTS
MUNICH, GERMANY

1220 Tower Life Bldg.
310 S. St. Mary's
San Antonio, Texas 78205
TEL. (210) 226-1788
TELEFAX (210) 226-2065
MOBILE (210) 454 7742
Email - martholc@aol.com
www.bernard-ben-buecker.com
Designated Attorney
Consulate of the Federal Republic of Germany



June 12, 2008

Via fax no. 713 627 0506
RE: Helga von Schweinitz

Dear Rainer,

I have received the attached two letters of recommendation for Helga and another one coming from Rodney Koenig.

I don't know what type of awards are available now, but Albert and Veronica Kuest gave the Beethoven \$110,000.00 to buy the building for their museum, and have worked for the German cultural interests, I guess more than 50 years, and Klaus Heide over 25 years of service as President of the Beethoven and other projects. He is the head of the committee bringing in every German singing club to SA in 2 years. Neither have ever requested recognition.

Anyway, back to work,
Ben

mit Hinblick auf die Schwierigkeit einen Orden zu erhalten kenne Friendship Award in Frage 17/6

Generalkonsulat der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Houston
Eing. **13. JUNI 2008**
Tgb.Nr.
Anl. Dopp.

Handwritten notes:
3/9
Ku
F. Schröder
J.A.
17/6

Ben Buecker received from Helga the two letter of reference, from Julia Mellonbruch and Sherryl Brown. Ben is sending the request on to the General Konsulat in Houston.

FROM : BUECKER

FAX NO. : 210 226 2065

Jun. 12 2008 02:52PM P3

The Honorable Consulate of
The Federal Republic of Germany
Mr. Ben Buecker
1220 Tower Life Building
310 South St. Mary
San Antonio, TX 78205

Dear Mr. Buecker

I would like to nominate Helga von Schweinitz of Pflugerville, Texas for the prestigious Bundesverdienst Kreuz awarded to German born citizens who have made a significant contribution to German-American friendship and cross cultural understanding.

As you know, Ms. Von Schweinitz' volunteer work for the German-Texan Heritage Society has been very far reaching in scope over the past thirty years. Numerous times she has served on the board of directors of that statewide organization, also helping to establish the German Free School Guild that is responsible for the maintenance of the German Free School. For years she has worked tirelessly with volunteers and staff to implement programs that keep German traditions, language and culture alive in Central Texas and beyond.

From 1998 to 2001 I served as executive director of GTHS. During my tenure, Ms. Von Schweinitz served as my mentor, always giving me the support I needed to do my job well. First and foremost, she was always focused on the positive values of both German and American cultural traditions, and in this way she brought countless individuals and groups into the organization, increasing our membership and outreach into the State of Texas. She was ever present, well organized and thoughtful in her approach to problem solving.

Helga Von Schweinitz exemplifies the spirit of "Gastfreundlichkeit" in all that she accomplishes. I never knew her to criticize American values or to make negative comparisons between Germany and other countries, rather, she chose to bring out the best in every situation by demonstrating a compassionate attitude with tolerance for diversity.

2008
HAT June 12

Her good reputation as a German teacher with the Austin Independent School District was well established long before I knew her. Additionally, it was through her efforts that the gift of the property at 507 East 10th Street, the former home of Mr. Kelly Stevens, was deeded to the German-Texan Heritage Society in 1992. Under her direction, the legal hurdles were overcome, and this historic German Free School building that served as Kelly Stevens' home for years became the property of GTHS.

It is most appropriate that Ms. Von Schweinitz be honored by the Federal Republic of Germany for her service to the cause of German-American friendship and respect. It is my hope that she will be given this recognition at a time when all her accomplishments are very well known by countless citizens of this state.

Sincerely yours,


Sherryl Brown

Sherryl Brown
1105 Running Buck Lane
Fredericksburg, TX 78624

(830) 990-9305

Letter of reference from Sherryl Brown

M :BUECKER FAX NO. :210 226 2065 Aug. 25 2008 02:55PM P1

 Bernard Ben Buecker
Honorary Consul
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Honorarkonsul der
Bundesrepublik Deutschland
Attorney at Law
German Honorary Consul, 1220 Tower Life Building, 310 S. St. Mary's, San Antonio, TX 78205 USA

Mr. Rainer Muenzel
Via fax no. 1 713 627 0506

PH (210) 226 1788
FAX (210) 226 2065
MOBILE (210) 454 7742
EMAIL mastholte@aol.com
URL www.bernard-ben-buecker.com

August 18, 2008

Betreff: *fr. Spider zur*
(wie besprochen)

**Bundesverdienstkreuz
Helga von Schweinitz**

Dear Rainer,

Faxed herewith is Rodney's recommendation for Helga Schweinitz. This was sent into the X file by one of my interns, and I just now was able to locate it.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Viele gruesse,
Ben *[Signature]*

Wiedervorgelegt
am 1.2.09
[Signature]

[Signature]

Ben Buecker sends Rodney Koenig's Letter of Reference on to the General Consul in Houston.

Helga's Friendship Award and others

Subj: Re: (no subject)
Date: 12/8/2008 4:51:43 P.M. Central Standard Time
From: HELGAVS
To: Mastholte

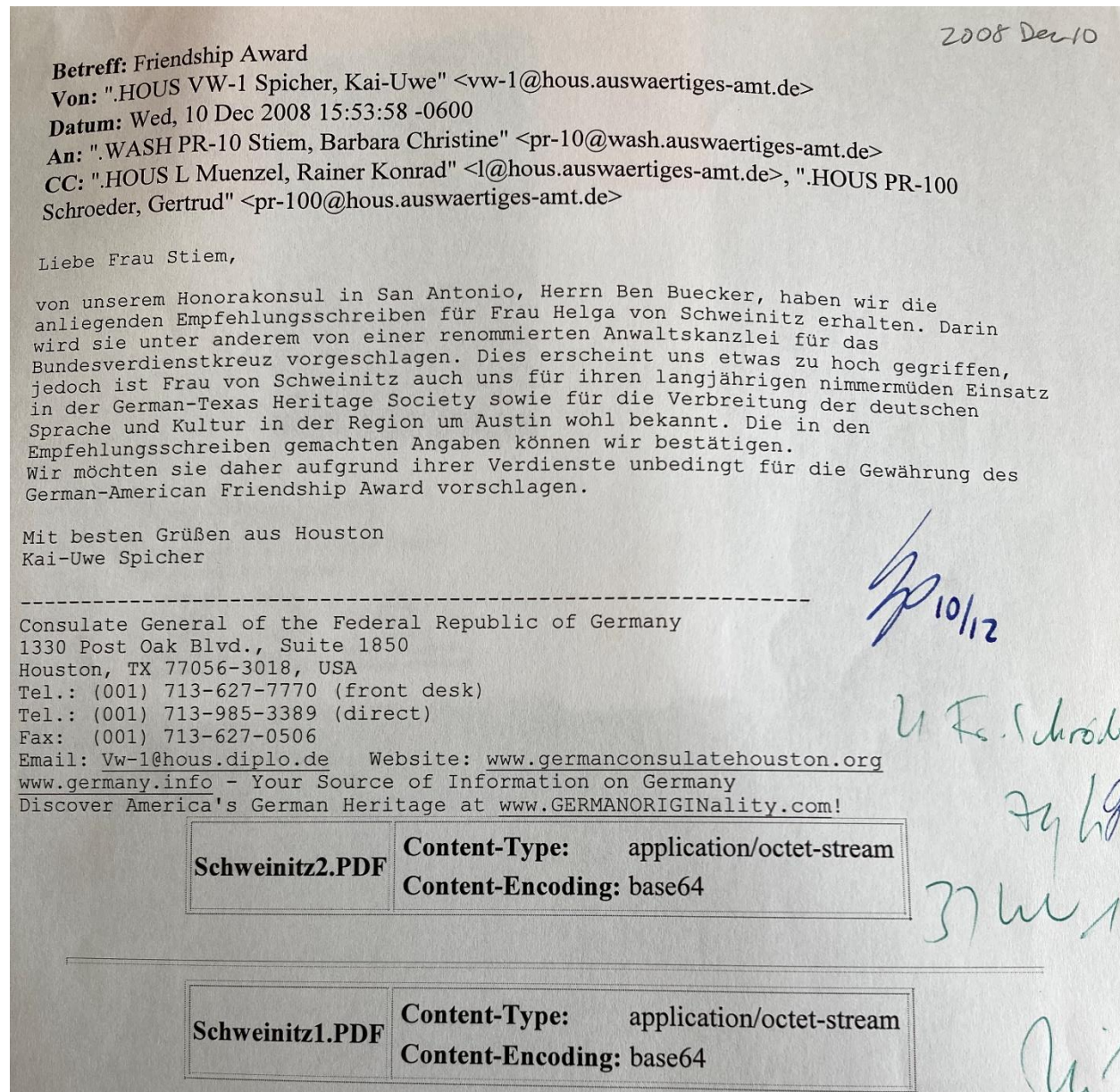
Dear Ben,
what a nice email. Thank you for reminding the Consul General and for informing me of the status. This gives me something to look forward to, at least to nurture the hope.
Sincerely,
Helga v. S.

In a message dated 12/8/2008 3:53:10 P.M. Central Standard Time, Mastholte writes:

Dear Helga,

After reminding our Consul General about my recommendation for your award, Mr. Muenzel informed me they are working on some form of recognition, and should hear soon.
Many thanks for your patience,
Sincerely,
Bbuecker

From August 2008 until December 2008, there is no correspondence between Helga and Ben Beucker.



The award is changed to the Friendship Award.

Liebe Frau Stiem,

von unserem Honorakonsul in San Antonio, Herrn Ben Buecker, haben wir die anliegenden Empfehlungsschreiben für Frau Helga von Schweinitz erhalten. Darin wird sie unter anderem von einer renommierten Anwaltskanzlei für das Bundesverdienstkreuz vorgeschlagen. "Dies erscheint uns etwas zu hoch gegriffen, jedoch ist Frau von Schweinitz auch uns für ihren langjährigen nimmermüden Einsatz in der German-Texas Heritage Society sowie für die Verbreitung der

Helga's Friendship Award and others

deutschen Sprache und Kultur in der Region um Austin wohl bekannt. Die in den Empfehlungsschreiben gemachten Angaben können wir bestätigen. Wir möchten sie daher aufgrund ihrer Verdienste unbedingt für die Gewährung des German-American Friendship Award vorschlagen.

Mit besten Grüßen aus Houston
Kai-Uwe Spicher

In English
Dear Ms Stiem,


We received the attached letters of recommendation for Ms. Helga von Schweinitz from our honorary consul in San Antonio, Mr. Ben Buecker. In it, among other things, she is nominated for The Order of Merit by a renowned law firm. "This seems a bit too exaggerated to us, but Ms. von Schweinitz is also well known to us for her many years of tireless work in the German-Texas Heritage Society and for the spread of the German language and culture in the Austin region. We can confirm the information provided in the letters of recommendation. We would therefore like to thank her with an award based on her merits. Suggest the German-American Friendship Award.

Best regards from Houston
Kai Uwe Spicher



The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany award Helga the Friendship Award on 17 December 2009. Ambassador in 2008 was Klaus Scharioth.

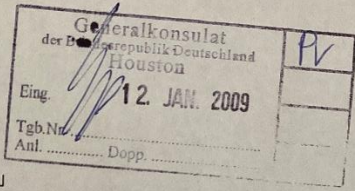
Now the correspondence changes to determining what is a good date to present this award to Helga.

 **Botschaft
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
Washington**
Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany

Washington, 6. Januar 2008

Gz.: Pr 312.00/3
(Bitte bei Antwort angeben)

An das
GK Houston
z.Hdn. Herrn Kai-Uwe Spicher o.V.i.A.



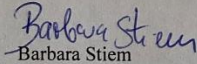
L J

Betr.: German-American Friendship Award
hier: Frau Helga von Schweinitz
Bezug: Ihre Email vom 10. Dezember 2008
Anlg.: -1-

Lieber Herr Spicher,

anliegend übersende ich Ihnen den für Frau von Schweinitz bestimmten German-American Friendship Award. Bitte lassen Sie die Urkunde vor Aushändigung vor Ort rahmen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen
Im Auftrag


Barbara Stiem

*Ben Buecker
erkundigt sich,
ob die Urkunde
ok ist (GK kann
erst dann)
Fr v. Schw. weiß nichts
davon*

Adresse: 4645 Reservoir Rd. NW
Washington, DC 20007

Telefon: (202) 298 4000

Telefax: (202) 471 5519

E-Mail: mediacontact@germany.info

Homepage: www.germany.info

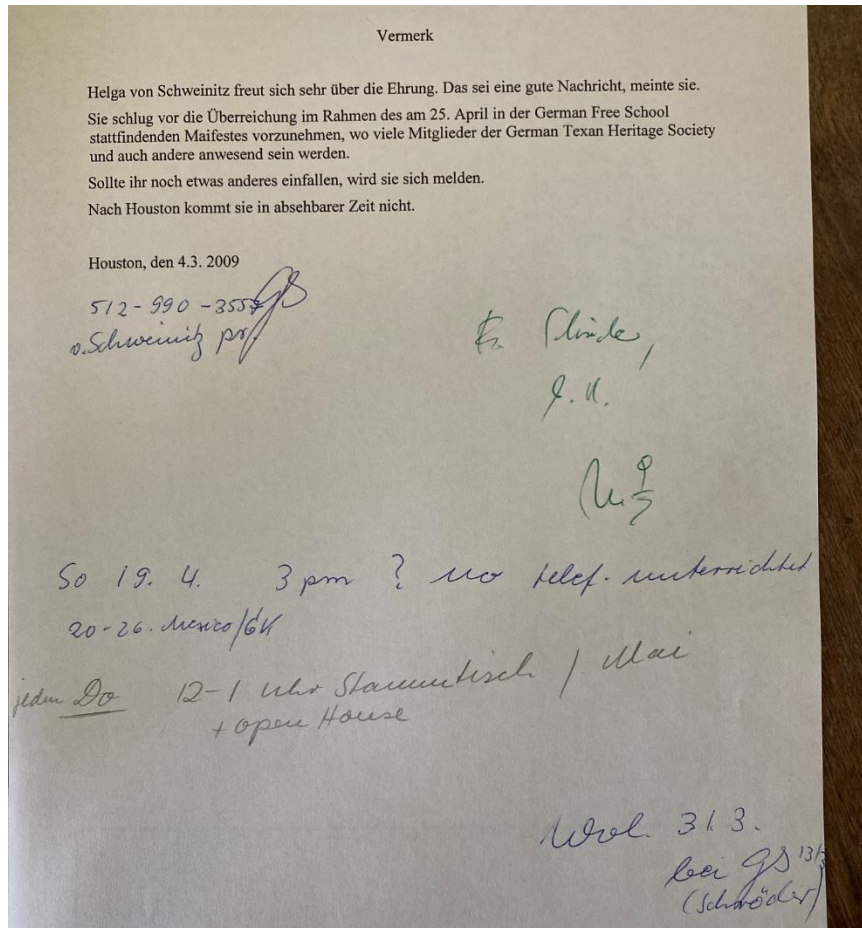
8013/2

Lieber Herr Spicher,

Anliegend übersende ich Ihnen den für Frau von Schweinitz bestimmten German-American Friendship Award. Bitte lassen Sie die Urkunde vor Aushändigung vor Ort rahmen.

Dear Mr Spicher,

I am sending you the German-American Friendship Award intended for Ms. von Schweinitz. Please have the certificate framed on site before it is handed over.



Vermerk

Helga von Schweinitz freut sich sehr über die Ehrung. Das sei eine gute Nachricht, meinte sie.

Sie schlug vor die Überreichung im Rahmen des am 25 April in der German Free School stattfindenden Maifestes vorzunehmen, wo viele Mitglieder der German Texan Heritage Society und auch andere anwesend sein werden.

Sollte ihr noch etwas anderes einfallen, wird sie sich melden.

Nach Houston kommt sie in absehbarer Zeit nicht.

In English

Note

Helga von Schweinitz is very pleased about the honor. That's good news, she said. She suggested that the presentation be held at the May Festival on April 25th at the German Free School, where many members of the German Texan Heritage Society and others will be present.

If she thinks of anything else, she will let you know.

She won't be coming to Houston any time soon.

Subj: **award**
 Date: 3/16/2009 1:34:49 P.M. Central Daylight Time
 From: **HELGA VS**
 To: **Mastholte**

Dear Ben.

Gertrud Schroeder from the German Consulate General informed me, that the German-American Friendship Award will be presented to me. I am very happy about that and I am sure you played a part in that. Thank you very, very much for your effort.

The Consul General will come to Austin in May on a Thursday to join us at Stammtisch at the German Free School and then present the award. He has not yet decided on what Thursday that will be. I am going to arrange for some publicity in the German-American community in Austin to let people know, that the friendship between the two countries is still appreciated by Germany.

I'll keep you posted.

Sincerely, Helga

At least the month has been decided, May.

Subj: **German-American Friendship Award for Helga**
 Date: 5/1/2009 9:28:06 A.M. Central Daylight Time
 From: **HELGA VS**
 To: **info@GermanTexans.org, Mastholte, lwanless@comcast.net**
 CC: **lmcmorrow@sbcglobal.net, abikhalel@mail.utexas.edu, Gyri20ca, lmartin@latka.de, joanne_ancira@hotmail.com, annakahn@comcast.net, art-marty@verizon.net, beran@ccsi.com, renae@bittner-family.de, cheetah@awesomenet.net, Paulandjoaniebrown@hotmail.com, eddafeatures@juno.com, bweber70@austin.rr.com, utecarson@hotmail.com, Chris.VonSchweinitz@Schwab.com, George L de S Jr, dieter.fahrig@gmx.de, elisabethnoelting@mac.com, gpehse@juno.com, eke@compuserve.com, hfey@rz-online.de, jfranks@yahoo.com, Germanyj, sigurd.schweinitz@arcormail.de, hans-christoph@familievonschweinitz.com, post@hoseselfilm.de, david.holland@sbcglobal.net, leaffield@hotmail.com, jwechsler@sbcglobal.net, JuliaFBusching, klausbocek@online.de, h.koperschmidt@gmx.de, KrauseBrigitte, L.schlenkrich@gmx.de, peterp@kfc.com, d.poertner@web.de, Rainbow@RevRainbow.org, marshallag, renata.m.anderson@qmail.com, glorob@austin.rr.com, RockySchenck, david@sergilaw.com, Shay.Cannedy@TheStoryofTexas.com, david.suenderhauf@totho.de, margietiedt@hotmail.com, tisaacs@SPC.cc.tx.us, tolmadh@email.uc.edu, jedi1312@web.de, amvlossow@gmx.net, Uhewagner**

Dear Friends.

Just in case you want to know: On Thursday, May 7, 2009, the Consul General of Germany in Houston, the Honorable Rainer Muenzel, will come to Austin to present me with the German - American Friendship Award. The Honorary Consul of Germany, Ben Buecker from San Antonio, will be there as well.

The "event" will take place at the Old German Free School on 507 E. Tenth Street (half a block west of Red River St.) at about 1 p. m..

Everybody is invited because we want to celebrate German - American friendship and all the good will and effort that go into it and all the pleasant experiences resulting from it. My award is a symbol of appreciation from the German government for my volunteer involvement in so many initiatives during my long life in endeavors like the Austin - Koblenz sister city relationship, student and apprenticeship exchanges, the GermanTexan Heritage society, teaching, hosting visiting artists, making documentaries and so on.

I know that most of you work on Thursday and can't make it. However, it would be nice to show the Honorable Consul General Rainer Muenzel that we German-Texans treasure our friendship with today's Germans by showing up for the short ceremony.

If you would like to contribute to the refreshments (cookies or fingerfood), let me know in advance by calling me at 512-990-3557, or email me.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen,

Helga von Schweinitz

Helga sends out an email announcing the date, 7 May 2008, and inviting everybody.

Helga's Friendship Award and others

Subj: **May 7 - Helga receives the German-American Friendship Award**
Date: 5/4/2009 12:39:39 P.M. Central Daylight Time
From: info@germantexans.org
To: info@germantexans.org

Dear Austin-area GTHS members,

On Thursday, May 7, the Consul General of Germany in Houston, the Honorable Rainer Muenzel, will come to Austin to present Helga von Schweinitz (GTHS Advisory Board member) with the German - American Friendship Award. Honorary Consul, Ben Buecker from San Antonio, will be there as well. The short ceremony will take place at the German Free School at about 1 pm, with a reception afterwards.

You are all cordially invited to join us on Thursday in celebrating German - American friendship and all the good will and effort that go into it and all the pleasant experiences resulting from it. This award is a symbol of appreciation from the German government for Helga's volunteer involvement in so many initiatives during her long life - in endeavors like the Austin - Koblenz sister city relationship, student and apprenticeship exchanges, the German-Texan Heritage Society, teaching, hosting visiting artists, making documentaries and so on.

I hope you'll have a chance to stop by for the award presentation. It would be wonderful to have a full house for the Consul's visit. Come at noon to participate in Stammtisch. If you would like to contribute to the refreshments for the reception, please contact Helga at helgavs@aol.com.

Cheers,
Eva Barnett

Executive Director
German-Texan Heritage Society
PO Box 684171
Austin, TX 78768
512-482-0927
866-482-4847
eva@germantexans.org
www.germantexans.org

The Directory of the GTHS sends out an email invitation also.

Award Ceremony 7 May 2009

On 7 May 2009, both Consul General of German Houston, the Honorable Rainer Muenzel and the Honorary Consul of Germany San Antonio, Ben Buecker present Helga with the award. Marianne Martine of Sister Cities International Program Coordinator for the City of Austin during the ceremony. This was a major event and the German Free School was packed with Helga's friends and family.



Honorary Consul of Germany San Antonio, Ben Buecker present Helga with the award



The Honorary Consul of Germany San Antonio, Ben Buecker, Consul General of German Houston, the Honorable Rainer Muenzel, Helga, and Marianne Martine of Sister Cities International Program Coordinator for the City of Austin

Dear Friends of Helga von Schweinitz,
as you all know Helga has devoted many years of
her life to keeping German culture alive in Texas
and beyond. She is a longtime member of the
German-Texan Heritage Society. She served on its
Board and proved to be a moving force when the
German Free School was acquired in the early
1990's. She was instrumental in converting it into
the state headquarters. Helga was also
President of the German Free School Guild which is
the docent volunteer group that cares for the
German Free School.
She regularly has contributed amusing anecdotes on
the German language through „Helga's Corner“ in
the Guild's newsletter and even published a book
with the same title which made many readers
smile.

She came up with the idea for the documentary „Hin nach Texas“, a prize winning film whose assistant producer she became. She tirelessly worked on enlisting aid and support for this film involving German-Texans.

Helga also was very active in founding the Koblenz-Austin Sister City Association and in Friendship Force International.

As a sign of appreciation of all her effort over the years it is my great pleasure to present to her the Friendship Award of the Federal Republic of Germany

We all know that Helga is a very worthy recipient

Speech given by Consul General of German Houston, the Honorable Rainer Muenzel while giving Helga the award.



Helga proudly displaying the vase given as part of the Friendship award by the German Consul.



Helga proudly displaying the snow(Bat) globe given as part of the Friendship award by City of Austin.

Helga's Friendship Award and others



Helga signing some copies of her book "Helga's Corner" for the Honorary Consul of Germany San Antonio, Ben Buecker



Helga being interviewed and filmed by reporter from News8 Austin.

Helga's Friendship Award and others



Helga cutting into a celebration cake provided by GTHS

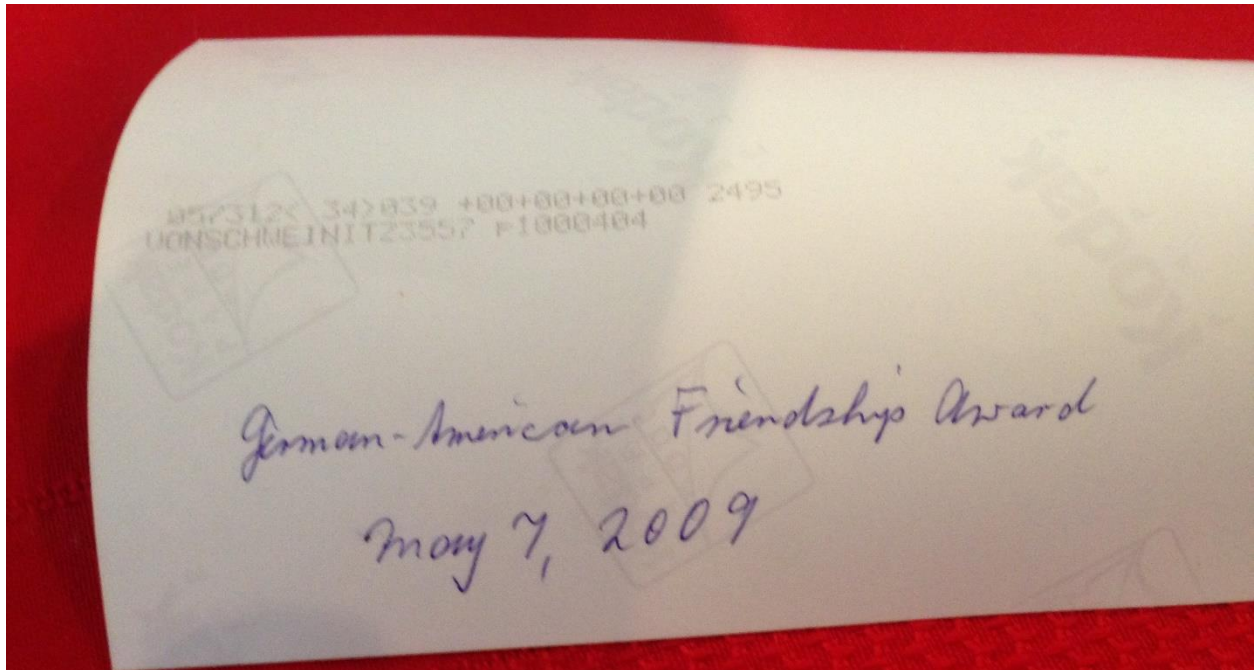


Herzlichen Glückwunsch! [congratulations from the Heart]

Helga's Friendship Award and others



vase given as part of the Friendship award by the German Consul.



Note Helga put inside of Vase so that family will remember.



Vase is made in Fürstenberg Germany [Germany dropped the West and East after 1989 when Iron curtain fell and Germany was re-united]



Austin snow (bat) globe gift given by Marianne Martine of Sister Cities International Program Coordinator for the City of Austin

Helga's Friendship Award and others

News Response After Friendship Award51



Some of the family members that attended the ceremony. Joane Brown [mother in-law], Chris [son] and wife Jill [nee Brown]

News Response After Friendship Award

After the award there were articles in the local newspapers and News8 presented a short interview as local News.

Thursday, May 14, 2009

Pflugerville Pflag

Local resident recognized as German Friend



Helga von Schweinitz is presented with "The Federal Republic of Germany Friendship Award." Pictured from left to right: The Honorary Consul of Germany, the Honorary Bernard Buecker from San Antonio; the Consul General of Germany, the Honorary Rainer Muenzel from Houston; Helga von Schweinitz; Sister Cities International Program Coordinator for the City of Austin, Marianne Martine

Pflugerville resident Helga von Schweinitz was presented with "The Federal Republic of Germany Friendship Award" on May 7, 2009, for her many years of volunteer involvement in promoting friendly relationships between Germans and Americans.

Friends and fellow volun-

teers, a television station and representatives from several of the groups in which Helga has been active attended the celebration. They included the German-Texan Heritage Society, the Austin-Koblenz Sister City Alliance, The Austin Independent School District, and even two house guests who represented the

many German guests like musicians, filmmakers, writers and penniless visitors the von Schweinitz home has hosted.

The event took place in the Old German Free School in Austin at 507 E. Tenth Street which Helga has helped to become a busy German-Texan Culture Center.

Article in the Pflugerville Pflag on Thursday May 14, 2009. Helga lived in Pflugerville, and this Newspaper was a weekly.

Helga's Friendship Award and others

News Response After Friendship Award53

www.news8austin.com

German-American honored in Austin
Updated: 5/7/2009 4:49:18 PM
By: News 8 Austin Staff

German heritage and German-American friendship were honored Thursday at the old German Free School.

Helga von Schweinitz was honored with the German-American Friendship Award for her work with German-Texan Heritage Society. The German consul general from Houston presented the honor.

She works with student and apprenticeship exchanges, teaches, and serves as host for the society.

"The relationship between Germans and Texas is very important," von Schweinitz said. "There are great opportunities that are developing between Texas and Germany."


If you're interested in visiting the German-Texas Heritage Society, it holds an open house from 1-4 p.m. Thursday afternoons at the German Free School (507 E. 10th St. in Austin).

For more information, visit the [German-Texan Heritage Society Web site](#).

All Your Moving Supplies
Paper Tape Bubble Wrap Speciality Boxes
www.armstrongmoving.com
V V

Austin Luxury Apartments
Discover a taste of truly living. Free Online Application!
Ads by Google

Copyright © 2009 TWEAN d.b.a. News 8 Austin




1708 Colorado Street
Austin, TX 78701-1311
www.news8austin.com
An exclusive community service of
Time Warner Cable

John Pope
Photographer/Field Tech

512.797.2106 cell

jpope@news8austin.com

512.531.8800 news desk
512.531.8888 breaking news line
512.531.1234 newsroom fax



City of Austin www.cityofaustin.org
Economic Growth & Redevelopment Services Office
Sisters Cities and International Program
301 W. 2nd Street, Suite 2030
Austin, TX 78701
Marianne Z. Martinez
Program Coordinator
Phone (512) 236-2403 Fax (512) 236-2404
Pager (512) 802-9404
marianne.martinez@ci.austin.tx.us
www.WorldWideAustin.org

<http://www.news8austin.com/shared/print/default.asp?ArID=239851> 5/7/2

No Video on Web yet.

On 7 May 2009, Helga checked the News8 website and found this article but no video yet. Video was on the evening news. A few days later the website also had the video.

Helga's Friendship Award and others



Screenshot of the News8 video.

Thank You After Friendship Awards

Helga sent out several thank you emails and letters.

Helga's Friendship Award and others

copy

*file name:
letter to consul muenzel.doc*

Helga von Schweinitz
19117 Ganton Court
Pflugerville TX 78660
FAX (512) 989-8824
E-MAIL helgavs@aol.com
Home Phone (512) 990-3557

Pflugerville, den 17. Mai 2009

Sehr geehrter Herr Generalkonsul Muenzel,

es war mir eine große Ehre, dass Sie am 7. Mai trotz Ihres anstrengenden Arbeitspensums nach Austin gekommen sind, um mir den German-American Friendship Award zu überreichen. Ich habe von vielen Anwesenden gehört, dass sie die kleine Feier genossen haben, weil alles so gelassen und gemütlich verlief, wozu Sie ja auch beigetragen haben. Die fast 50 Besucher waren nicht nur mir zuliebe gekommen, sondern sie wollten Ihnen als Stellvertreter der Bundesrepublik zeigen, dass ihnen die deutsch-amerikanische Freundschaft viel bedeutet.

Die schöne Vase macht sich gut auf meiner alten Kredenz aus der Heimat.

Ich wusste gar nicht, dass es diesen „friendship award“ gibt. Ich finde ihn in meinem Falle viel angebrachter und sinnvoller als das Bundesverdienstkreuz, das einige Bekannte von mir erhalten haben.

Ich lege ein paar Fotos von der Zeremonie bei und auch einen Artikel, der in der Pflugerville Pflag erschien.

Von Bildern der Eröffnung des European Office of the Texas Department of Commerce im September 1990, von der ich Ihnen kurz erzählte, habe ich ein paar Abzüge gemacht, alle drei auf ein Blatt Papier.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

SAVON: JOL: HELGAVS
Friday, May 15, 2009
Helga von Schweinitz
19117 Ganton Court
Pflugerville TX 78660
FAX (512) 989-8824
E-MAIL helgavs@aol.com
Home Phone (512) 990-3557

copy

Dear Ms. Martinez.

Your appearance at the award ceremony on May 7 was very much appreciated by me and by the other attending people. I thank you sincerely for your trouble and your speech.

The dome you gave me is a nice memento of the event. I'll fix a note underneath which show my off-springs why and from whom I got it.

I hope the two gentlemen I introduced to you will become active in the Austin-Koblenz Alliance . I'll ask them about it the next time I see them.

You mentioned that the Old Free School might be interested in showing the gifts from Germany that the City has. I'll discuss it with a committee and then call you to make an appointment to look at the items to get an idea about displaying them.

Sincerely,

May 17, 2009

Congratulations After Friendship Award57

Helga von Schweinitz
19117 Ganton Court
Pflugerville TX 78660
FAX (512) 989-8824
E-MAIL helgavs@aol.com
Home Phone (512) 990-3557

5 – 21 – 09

Dear Ben.

Your participation in the awarding of the German-American Friendship Award was really appreciated by all attendants, especially by me. Thank you for all your trouble and for all the effort you put into the matter beforehand. Several visitors told me that they did not know that there was an Honorary Consul in Texas.

The event went so casual and friendly, that I was bombarded with emails and phone calls afterwards expressing just that. I am glad we arranged the presentation in a way that German - Texans could show how much they value a good relationship with Germans. Several of them followed up by making a donation in my honor to the GTHS, one of them for the amount of \$1000.-.

I am sending you a few photos and a clipping from the Pflugerville Pflag. See how far your pfame in reaching?

Sincerely,

Congratulations After Friendship Award

The Congratulations came in two forms, emails and cards.

Some of congratulations came before 7 May 2009

Subj: **AW: German-American Friendship Award for Helga**
Date: 5/4/2009 12:49:12 P.M. Central Daylight Time
From: amvlossow@gmx.net
To: HELGAVS@aol.com

Liebe Helga und Hannelu,

Dank für Euer Email; ich freue mich an Helgas Erfolg und der Anerkennung, die sie auf diesem Wege erfährt. Als kleiner Dank und Freude besonders für Hannelu schicke ich 2 wiedergefundene Bilder (von Kopien) von Alt-Raudten. Was war es doch für eine schöne Heimat, jahrelang auch für mich durch die Liebe der Großeltern. Schöne Grüße Aennchen

Congratulations After Friendship Award58

Subj: **Re: German-American Friendship Award for Helga**
Date: 5/5/2009 12:42:56 P.M. Central Daylight Time
From: KrauseBrigitte
To: HELGA VS

Liebe Helga, danke für deine Einladung, aber ich bin ja noch bis Ende Mai in Cuxhaven und muss den film fertig machen. Es drängt. Vielleicht kannst du mir ein Foto senden, das zeigt, wie du den Preis bekommst? Auf jeden Fall nochmals herzlichen Glückwunsch.
Danke und Gruß Brigitte

Subj: **Gratuliere!**
Date: 5/5/2009 10:02:40 A.M. Central Daylight Time
From: ron_hunka@yahoo.com
To: helgavs@aol.com

Hi Helga,

I am glad the consular awards presentation finally got worked out for you. I plan to attend the ceremony as well as Stammtisch on Thursday, barring any unforeseen events.

I could provide assistance with the refreshments for the presentation. The wording in Eva's email was not perfectly clear to me whether a financial or in-kind contribution was in order. However, I would be glad to do either. If it is the former, please advise me as to an appropriate amount. If the latter, I could bring a cake, drinks, or something else. Since I will be running some errands prior to the noon hour on Thursday, I will need to pick up a dessert or other items en route. I am open to suggestion.

By the way, enjoyed your "Nullen" article in the *Schulhaus Reporter*. With your keen insight into cultural mores, you would have made a good anthropologist. :-}

Bis spaeter,
Ron

Congratulations After Friendship Award59



Helga:

I am happy to be here today as you receive the German-American Friendship Award from the Honorable Rainer Muenzel, Consul General of Germany in Houston.

It is with great pleasure to know of your many accomplishments and your involvement in the community.

There is so much to learn and share amongst our fellow citizen from around the world. It is wonderful folks like you who have the passion and the knowledge to share such cultural wealth.

All the best in your future endeavors as we continue to learn about the world around us.

Congratulations and Thank You for inviting me to be with you on this Special Day.

Marianne Martinez

Marianne Martinez
Sister Cities International Program Coordinator



City of Austin www.cityofaustin.org

Economic Growth & Redevelopment Services Office
Sisters Cities and International Program

301 W. 2nd Street, Suite 2030
Austin, TX 78701

Marianne Z. Martinez
Program Coordinator

Phone (512) 236-2403 Fax (512) 236-2405

Pager (512) 802-9404

marianne.martinez@ci.austin.tx.us

www.WorldWideAustin.org

Congratulations After Friendship Award60

Subj: **Re: German-American Friendship Award for Helga**
Date: 5/7/2009 8:02:50 P.M. Central Daylight Time
From: Germanyj
To: HELGAVS

Hi Helga!

What a fantastic honor!! You truly have earned it. I would have loved to have been there today....you were in my thought while I was in a mandatory work-related workshop in Galveston today. If it would have been possible, please know I would have been there.

It is such an honor for me to know you and consider you a friend!

Hugs!
julia

PS: Please give Hans my greetings!

Subj: **Your award**
Date: 5/7/2009 6:07:17 P.M. Central Daylight Time
From: solvitur@texas.net
To: helgavs@aol.com

Dear Helga,

Congratulations on your receiving the German-American Friendship Award. You certainly embody the ideals of the award. Suzanne and I have been in Ft Worth most of this week and were not able to attend the ceremony. Thanks for all your worthy contributions to the GTHS over many years.

Hochachtungsvoll!!!

Doug

Subj: **congratulations**
Date: 5/7/2009 11:19:43 P.M. Central Daylight Time
From: pbirdsall1@mac.com
To: helgavs@aol.com
CC: eva@germantexans.org

what an honor! and well deserved.

dear Helga,

i hope that you know that i would have been there if i had not my volunteer drive for the VA taking patients from austin to temple. we left about 8 and returned at 4.

am sure that you have some sort of "evidence" of the ceremony, and i am anxious to see.

also, i have to make arrangements to pay for and pick up my silent auction winnings.

mit hertzlichen gruesse,

Paul

pbirdsall1@mac.com

512/836-0423 c:512/573-2713

11804 Whitewing Av, Austin, Texas 78753-2252

Congratulations After Friendship Award61

Subj: **Greetings!**
Date: 5/8/2009 8:25:16 P.M. Central Daylight Time
From: George L de S Jr
To: HELGAVS

Dear Helga,

Congratulations on your richly-deserved award! It's great to know that the German Government has recognized your efforts and many, many contributions, over the years. Cousin Dorothea de S considered you an intelligent, wide-awake and interesting person, years ago, when she must first have corresponded with you and Hans, or met you. I remember her speaking of you and Hans, various times. I think when I first came to Washington, in 1967, and had the pleasure of living in her home for two years. Or maybe it was in the years just afterward. She recognized a fellow DOER! I regret that I was really sort of overwhelmed, as I got started teaching at Eastern Senior High School in the District, and didn't or couldn't follow up on many of the leads she gave me about interesting family members I could get in touch with, or interesting areas I could explore in the D.C. area. She would certainly have been pleased to learn about the recognition you have received. I'm sure it was a very fine occasion. I'm sorry Austin was just a little out of my range.

Now I must formally tell Hans Christoph, via e-mail, that I won't attend the Family Meeting in June, although I've already written this in a recent e-mail. I managed to get to Kreisau two summers ago because Polish friends very kindly drove to pick me up in Berlin. They wanted me to spend several weeks with them, afterward, in east Poland — and this was very enjoyable. This year the mother and father in this family are both working in England. They are extremely fortunate to have found jobs, and to have been able to hold on to them, up to the present. I need to try to accomplish some things here, this summer. Siegfried and Ruth are planning to go, I think. They'll see Siegfried's sisters, in Stuttgart, and I guess go over to England, to see Dietrich and his family, unless the latter will be attending the Meeting. We talked by phone several weeks ago. I don't know whether Miriam de S, or William and Kathy or any of their family are planning to attend. No news from any of them since this past Christmas. Clark de S, in Espanola, north of Santa Fe, said he might like to attend a meeting sometime, and take his wife, Johnnie Mae. This past January his mother, Elizabeth, died peacefully, in Santa Fe, after some years of health problems, and recently being confined to her bed. I was given a ride to her lovely memorial service, and one back, which made it much easier for me to attend. Bobbie and Jeff Borne are expecting the imminent arrival of their first grandchild, and this will keep them close to home in June.

I hope you and Hans are doing well, and Bettina, and Christopher, Jill, and their children. I enjoyed your green Christmas letter. It must have been very interesting to participate in the documentary "Steubenhoeft"! I'm hoping for an Oscar for you! And congratulations to you and Hans on celebrating your Golden Wedding Anniversary! You have a lot to think back on, and be thankful for, I'm sure. A great achievement, in this day and age!! Present treatments are keeping my esophagus happy. I develop some numbness in my hand after I do a lot of typing or writing, or even reading — turning pages, holding book — but considering the possible problems that are 'out there', I'm not complaining at all! Via Siegfried I am sending a small contribution to help with the redoing of the family web site, but it certainly doesn't match Hans' magnificent gift.

Just to let you know that I appreciate your Christmas greetings and family photo, with the Lord of the Manor! So many greetings and photos are such a pleasure to look at, that I haven't put them away, yet! Every two weeks my house cleaner, Guadalupe, faithfully takes them all down, dusts surfaces in living room and — yes — kitchen, and then puts them up again. Fortunately she is very artistic, so her arrangements always look fresh and cheerful. However, I'm afraid I'm really straining her patience, this year!!

I am so glad Hans is making good progress with his therapy.

With all best wishes to you both and your family,

Sincerely,

George

Congratulations After Friendship Award62

Subj: **Deine wohlverdiente Ehrung!!**
Date: 5/8/2009 8:05:47 A.M. Central Daylight Time
From: renata.m.anderson@gmail.com
To: helgavs@aol.com

Dear Helga,

All Members of the Austin-Koblenz Sister City Committee as well as many friends in and around Koblenz want to congratulate you upon receiving the very much deserved "German-American Friendship Award". You have been a valued Member of our Sister City Committee since its inception in early 1988. We do want to thank you so much for all your help for more than twenty years. You have been a tireless promoter of German-American Friendship and the German-Texan Heritage Society for more years than I can remember. America and Germany thank you so much for all your efforts.

Helga, please allow me to personally thank you for all the years, you have been involved in working so tirelessly with the Austin-Koblenz Sister City Committee, the German-American Friendship Circle and most of all for being my wonderful German-American friend. You have done so much, to much to mention them individually. We are all proud of you!!!

Congratulations and greetings from Germany to you and your family, particularly your husband Hans,

Renata

Renata Anderson
Chairperson
Austin-Koblenz Sister City Committee
5701 S.Mopac Expwy, Apt. 422
Austin, TX 78749
Tel: 512-892-0351
Cell: 512-294-9579
German Cell: 011-49-151-10485448

Congratulations After Friendship Award63

Subj: =?Windows-1252?Q?HERZLICHEN_GL=DCCKWUNSCH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!?=
Date: 5/8/2009 7:01:51 A.M. Central Daylight Time
From: lfey@rz-online.de
To: HELGAVS@aol.com

Heinz Fey Fritz von Unruhstraße 47 56077 Koblenz Telf 0261 75468 FAX 75480, Email: hfey@rz-online.de + lfey@rz-online.de (Laptop)

Howdy,
liebe HELGA,

recht herzlichen Glückwunsch zu deiner wahrlich verdienten Auszeichnung!
Da freuen sich hier alle dich kennenden Deutsch-Amerikaner von ganzen Herzen mit dir!

Man kann wohl sagen, dein ehrenamtliches Lebenswerk.

Da steckt über Jahrzehnte hinweg ein unerschütterliches Engagement dahinter.
Trage das Erbaute weiterhin von Erfolg zu Erfolg!

Dazu wünschen wir dir vor allen Dingen viel GESUNDHEIT!

Recht herzliche Grüße aus Koblenz

heinz und Familie und unsere > deine texanischen KO-Austinities

Einen schönen Gruß an Hans, dessen bestes Wohlergehen wünschend

PS:
liebe Helga, ich arbeite fast nur noch mit dem Laptop mit dieser Adresse,
es geht schneller, weil Lucia und ich noch weniger, nicht immer auf dem PC
in die Outlook schauen.

Congratulations After Friendship Award64

Subj: **Deine wohlverdiente Ehrung!!**
Date: 5/8/2009 8:05:47 A.M. Central Daylight Time
From: renata.m.anderson@gmail.com
To: helgavs@aol.com

Dear Helga,

All Members of the Austin-Koblenz Sister City Committee as well as many friends in and around Koblenz want to congratulate you upon receiving the very much deserved "German-American Friendship Award". You have been a valued Member of our Sister City Committee since its inception in early 1988. We do want to thank you so much for all your help for more than twenty years. You have been a tireless promoter of German-American Friendship and the German-Texan Heritage Society for more years than I can remember. America and Germany thank you so much for all your efforts.

Helga, please allow me to personally thank you for all the years, you have been involved in working so tirelessly with the Austin-Koblenz Sister City Committee, the German-American Friendship Circle and most of all for being my wonderful German-American friend. You have done so much, to much to mention them individually. We are all proud of you!!!

Congratulations and greetings from Germany to you and your family, particularly your husband Hans,

Renata

Renata Anderson
Chairperson
Austin-Koblenz Sister City Committee
5701 S.Mopac Expwy, Apt. 422
Austin, TX 78749
Tel: 512-892-0351
Cell: 512-294-9579
German Cell: 011-49-151-10485448



www.germantexans.org

German Free School Guild Board Meeting May 12, 2009

Personal Note:

Congratulations to Helga upon her receipt of the German-American Friendship Award.
Helga, you make all German-Texans proud.

Respectfully Submitted

Warren Friedrich

Congratulations After Friendship Award65

Subj: **Your award**
Date: 5/19/2009 5:48:59 P.M. Central Daylight Time
From: solvitur@texas.net
To: helgavs@aol.com

Dear Helga,

Best congratulations on your recent award--well deserved! You have done so much good for the GTHS.

Sorry that I was away from Austin then and could not mitfeiren.

Best wishes,

Doug *Wixson*

Subj: **Good-Bye**
Date: 8/3/2009 3:44:30 P.M. Central Daylight Time
From: pr-100@hous.auswaertiges-amt.de
To: helgavs@aol.com

Dear Friends,

My time in Houston as Consul General of Germany has come to an end.

The four years my family and I spent in this vibrant and welcoming city enriched our lives and we leave with fondest memories. We enjoyed meeting a large number of people of all walks of life and finding true friends.

My next assignment will take me to a posting at the German Embassy in Warsaw, while our daughter Sophia is heading for college (undecided yet whether in Germany or the States).

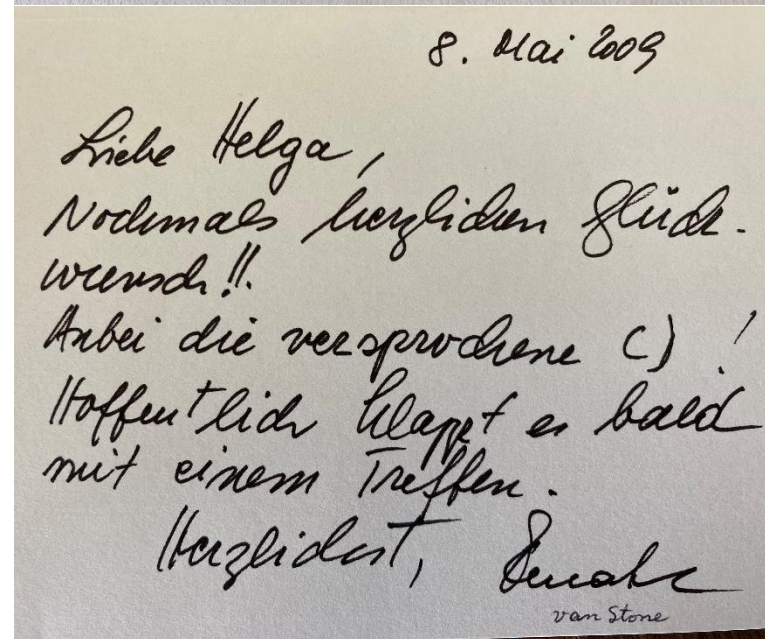
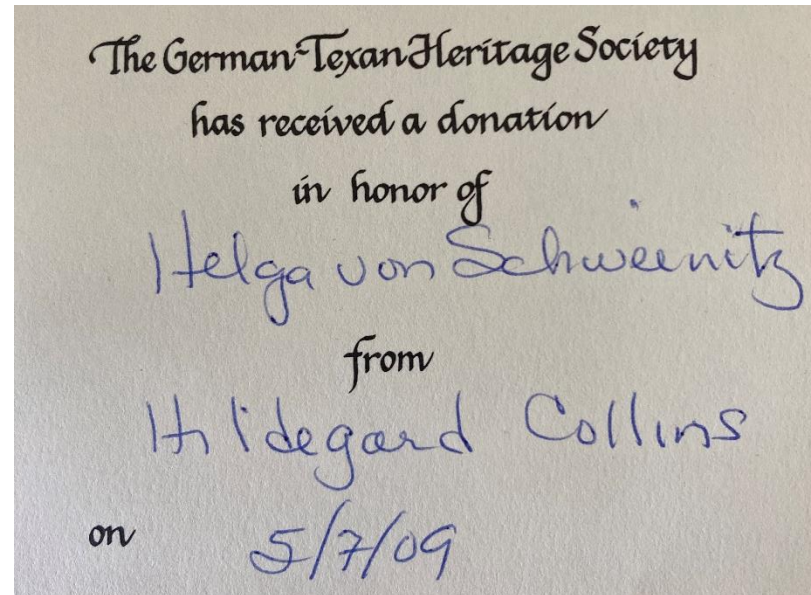
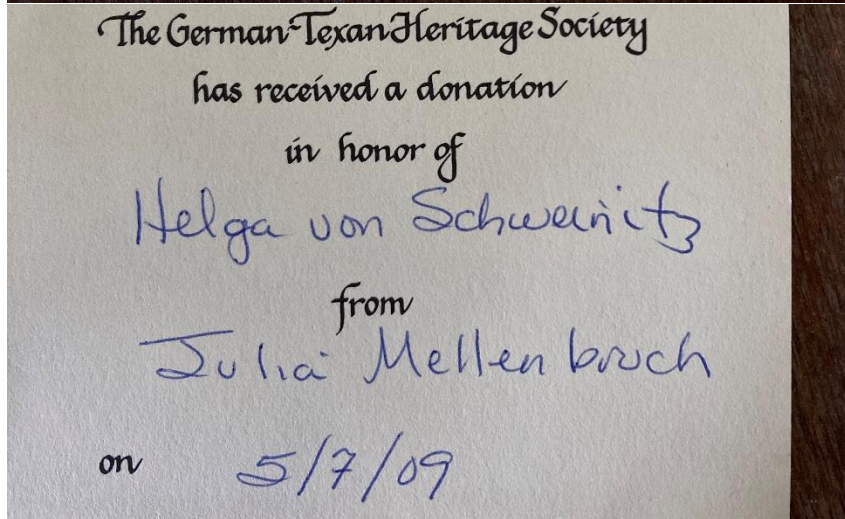
It is my sincere wish to stay in touch with all of you, and my link to Houston will be my wife Ursula who will maintain a second home here exploring her job opportunities.

With best wishes to "y'all"
Yours
Rainer Muenzel

Our new addresses_:

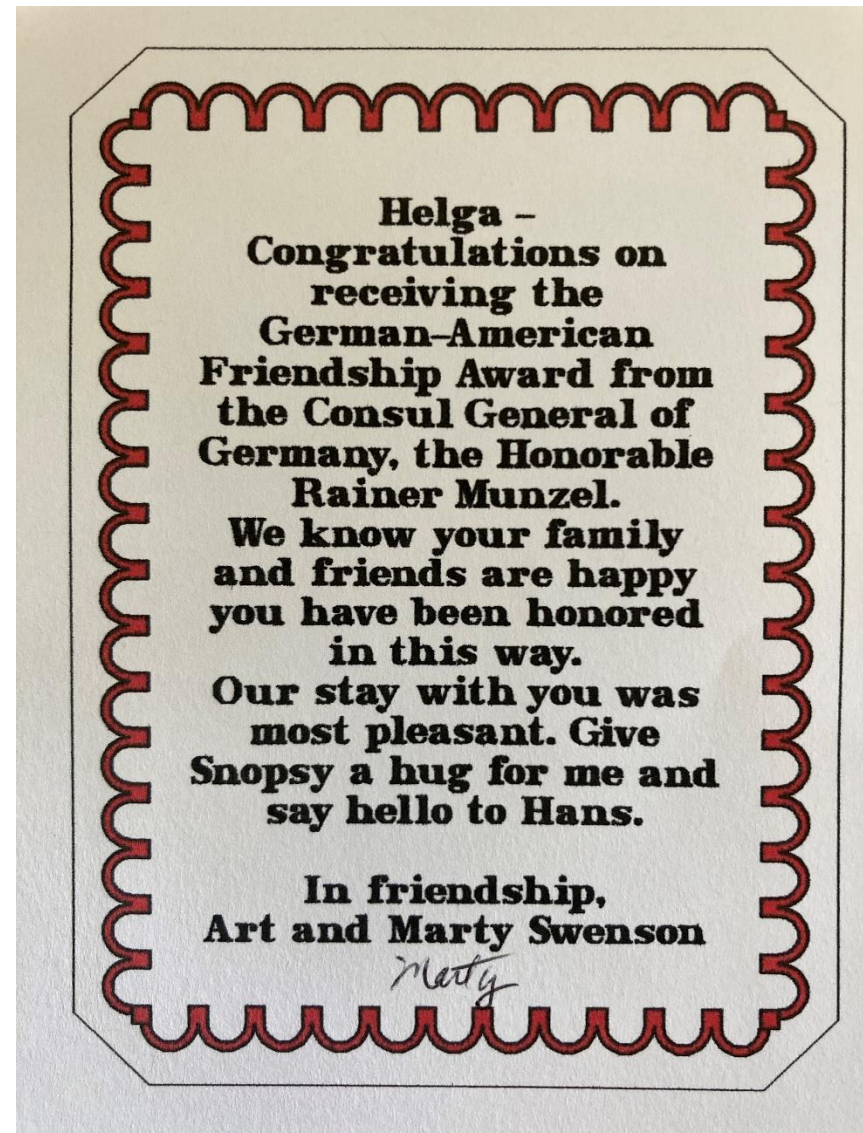
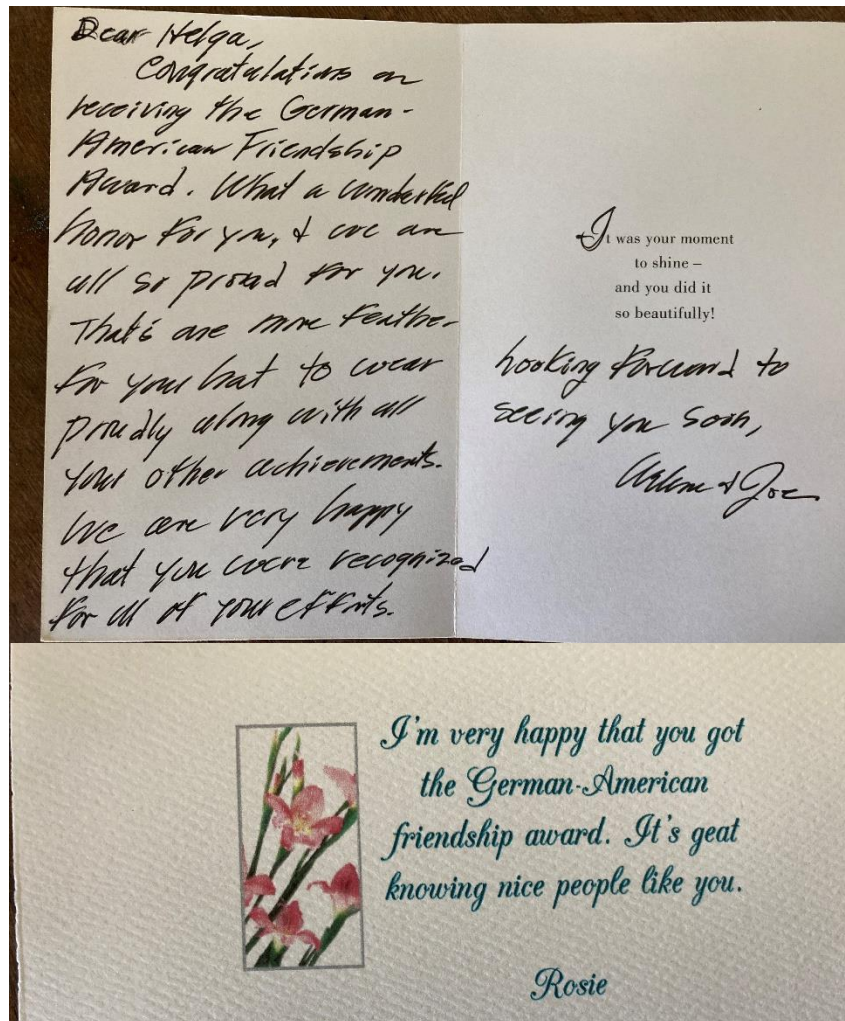
Congratulations After Friendship Award66

Following are just some of the cards that Helga received. Sometimes the design on the front of the card is included.



Helga's Friendship Award and others

Congratulations After Friendship Award67



Helga's Friendship Award and others

Congratulations After Friendship Award68

June 8, 2009

Dear Helga,

We apologize for being so late in this congratulatory note after learning that you received the German American Friendship Award on May 7th. We are certain that you really deserved it.

You have done so much for the German Japan Heritage Society and also the German Free School Guild. We are so glad to have your friendship. We also remember the respect our children Lisa and Stephen had for you when you taught at Anderson High School.

Best wishes,
Bill and Elvira

Liebe Helga,

So happy for you!

Herzlichen Glückwunsch
von Lili



Helga's Friendship Award and others

April 23, 2009

Helga Von Schminitz

Helga has been a star in the German Texan Historical Society, serving as an active participant ever since its inception.

As an intellectual participant she has been available to translate German letters and articles from German to English. She has also written articles about Texas German culture in both English and German. Her articles about the gems of German sayings are fascinating.

Helga has accepted various positions as officer of the society and has faithfully executed her duties. She was involved in the forming of the third Sunday afternoon programs. As a result many German customs which have survived in our society have been emphasized for those of us who have experienced them.

After the Society acquired the German Free School property, she became totally involved in making it the attractive facility we have today. Helga is truly our shining star!

Julia Wellenbrink

Dear Mrs. Helga + Mr. Hans,
Thanking you from the heart for the kind gift of the wooden animals from Germany that you were so thoughtful to give to Cristina.

They are lovely! We have been meaning to write you for a while now to express our appreciation +

You've been so kind.

were just caught up in all the paperwork for our Taiwan adoption process. Please forgive the long delay. It was nice to see you. We are glad you could come, and look forward to many more meetings + get together,

With thanks,

Juliana, Cristina + Thomas

The End