

GSIA MINUTES

Wednesday, April 18 Meeting

Attendance:

Members: Jose da Cruz, Emmanuel Naniuzeyi, Pete Hodges, Leigh Ryan, Jim Anderson, Ed Eckstrand, Mehmet Ergul, Adriana Oliveira

Advisory Members: Francis X. Hayes, Mark Linsky, Alfonso Ribot, Colleen Cunningham, Molly Swagler

Ex-Officio: Manny Dominguez

Visitors: Karl Grotheer (German Friendly Society), Garry Nizzi (Salzburgers Society)

Chair Leigh Ryan called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. She welcomed our two visitors from the German Friendly and Salzburger Societies. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves and their occupational background.

Minutes: The minutes of the March meeting were approved with no corrections.

Program: sponsor

Karl Grotheer of the German Friendly Society gave the group a brief history of this society which was begun in Savannah in 1837. It began and continues today as a benevolent organization. It has provided great help to individuals with financial or social problems. It was also connected religiously and politically. Today it has about 120 members including current and lifetime members. Recent activities have been to support the Teutonic Council projects to bring soloists from the Halle Opera Company to sing the Messiah with the Savannah Philharmonic, to support bringing high school students from Halle to study in Savannah and to help sponsor the annual German-American Day Celebration in October.

The Salzburger Society was represented by Gary Nizzi, a past president of the organization. The brief history he presented told about the exile of this group from Salzburg (now in Austria) through the Martin Luther country which is near Halle, Savannah's sister city. Part of the group moved on to the Netherlands where boats carried the group to either Savannah or Pennsylvania around 1735. Others went to Prussia. The "Ebenezer Site" on the banks of the Savannah River is where they settled. This site is of important historical value for the Salzburger and the site now houses several restored buildings, a museum, and the active Jerusalem Church, one of the longest serving churches in North America according to Mr. Nizzi. There are lots of their documents housed at the museum, at Emory University and other libraries. They have been involved in a lot of research about their history, letters from pastors, and are connected with the Francke

Foundation and Museum in Halle. The Chatham County Library has a complete set of their books with copies also at the Ebenezer site.

International Exchanges:

Jim Anderson noted that the Teutonic Council is sending 2 high school teachers from Effingham High School to Halle in June. This is the third year of this exchange of teachers between Halle and the Greater Savannah area.

Mark Linsky reported that the Savannah Public Schools and Johnson High School hosted a group of high school students from Bremen, Germany for several days in early March. The Johnson students will be traveling to Bremen at a later date.

Emmanuel Naniuzeyi reminded the group that SSU is sponsoring a Fulbright trip for teachers to Ghana and Liberia in June.

Leigh Ryan noted that the WTC hosted 7 German delegates from all over Germany. The group included participants from different industries, and some from Halle. They were engaged in various educational and business meetings throughout the region. The WTC has also hosted several Atlanta-based consul generals this spring.

Manny Dominguez reported that the City of Savannah hosted 3 representatives from the city of Canberra, Australia who met with the WTC, City Officials and others involved in planning for the Greater Savannah area.

Jose da Cruz announced the some of the local Rotary Clubs, including Rotary East hosted a group of people from the India Exchange. A group spent 4 days here. This will be the final part of an exchange that involved a group from Savannah visiting earlier in India. Next year the exchange will be in Brazil.

GSIA Membership News:

Leigh Ryan announced that Pat Thomas has resigned his position in GSIA due to other obligations which leaves an open position. She encouraged members of the advisory committee to apply. The application deadline is April 30.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.
