

Concordia Trust

Cultivating and promoting the German language and cultural experience **Volume 6, Issue 1**

The Henry Melchior Muhlenberg Tercentenary

The Concordia Trust, created in 2001, is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable foundation. Its mission is to promote and support German language education, scholarship and cultural programming.

As you may recall from the lead-in article in last year's newsletter, this year marks the 300th anniversary of the German-American, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. Born in the German state of Hanover, he is recognized as the patriarch of the American Lutheran Church. The Muhlenberg legacy continues with several children who shaped the political and cultural landscape of colonial America. He deserves, and receives, much credit for many of his accomplishments.

Muhlenberg worked within a multi-cultural context. His congregations were not limited to those of German heritage - he additionally preached in congregations with predominantly Swedish, Danish, Dutch, and English members. His baptisms included people from the continent of Africa and the indigenous population of North America. Yet we may not conclude that his efforts were intended to increase a sense of everyone being united. Muhlenberg was also clear about where he needed to draw the lines, at least theologically. He was very concerned about (threatened by?) believers from different traditions. His journals are full of comments indicating his intent to not connect with members of the Roman Catholic, Reformed, or otherwise Anabaptist (e. g., Schwenkfelder) traditions.

Muhlenberg did much to respect cultural aspects of the New World. He found the separation of church and state to have its challenges, fussing about the resulting lack of money in the churches. We modern citizens may find it odd to read that nonetheless Muhlenberg offered communion to new immigrants, and signed documents after service that they had received communion as part of the requirements for naturalization. He comments in greater detail about the food for thought he exchanged with hosts than the food for his body, which makes all the more noteworthy his 1774 entry recalling his own heritage: "Today our good hostess treated us to a great rarity which had been sent to our host by a good friend from Philadelphia on Captain



Wright's ship, namely, sauerkraut, which to me and my family was like the gift of a costly medicine..."

All this and more leads us to consider the adjustments Muhlenberg made during his years of life and work in this country. He needed to be sensitive to others at the same time that he needed to be true to his sense of appropriate guidelines. He could not have brought people together for a common cause if he had not been able to listen to and reflect on the comments of others. Maybe as you attend an event about this early German-American you will be led to consider the experiences of countless others who came to thrive in this country. If you want to learn more about how this celebration is for more than just Lutherans, email Collegeville's Reformed Church Pastor Kriebel: trinityucc1854@verizon.net. Much of the celebration will actually begin this fall with the academic calendar, e.g., the Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College will open its exhibition and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (LTPS) will sponsor Convocation with a Muhlenberg theme.

Websites abound: muhlenberg300.org, hmp300.org (calendar of events), trappehistoricalsociety.org (Muhlenberg's house), and oldaugustus.org/m300, newhanoverlutheran.org, stmichaelsgermantown.org (three of Muhlenberg's churches).

Jean E. Godsall-Myers, Ph.D.

Photo source: ltp.edu/Muhlenberg300

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Concordia Trust Language Awards

Excellence in German Award

Matthew Duda received Concordia Trust's "Excellence in German Award" at the May 23 Awards Night program for Lower Moreland's graduating seniors. Matthew, who will attend the University of Pennsylvania in the fall, received a \$250 cash prize. He was selected to study in the prestigious Vagelos Scholars Program for Molecular Life Sciences. He will be a

pre-Med student at Penn. Matt was Valedictorian of the Class of 2011 and served as President of NHS (National Honor Society) at LMHS. He was also the Captain of the highly acclaimed Cross Country Track Team and qualified for states this year in 800 meter (individual) and 4x800 Relay. Matt is a remarkable student-athlete and person of the highest integrity.

Certificate of Achievement Award

Jacob Nawoyski, a senior at Washington Township High School in Sicklerville, NJ, received Concordia Trust's Certificate of Achievement Award and a \$250 gift during the school's Commencement Awards Assembly on June 16. Jacob plans on becoming a German teacher.

The award, presented by Concordia Trust, President, Marlene Stocks, is given to a graduating senior of German for maintaining a high academic average in Advanced Placement German and for displaying enthusiasm for the German language and culture.

Certificate of Merit Awards

On April 30, the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) honored 136 students from 38 public, private and parochial schools throughout the greater Delaware Valley for their outstanding performance on this year's AATG exam.

The Concordia Trust partnered with the AATG by presenting \$100 cash awards to the following deserving high school students of German:

Victoria Hammitt and **John Huemmler** — Strath Haven High School, and **Nicholas Change** — Radnor High School.

The AATG acknowledged the Concordia Trust's sponsorship by writing "thank you for your partnership as together we recognize the German language accomplishments of these exceptional students and strive to motivate others to excel in their German language studies."

Award Recipients Express Their Thanks



Concordia Trust Board member, Hon. Barbara Afanassiev, presented Nicholas Chang with his award.

"Thank you for recognizing the efforts of students like me in our studies of the German language. I feel truly honored to be given such a prestigious award. Thank you sincerely for this opportunity. As for my future plans, I'm not sure what I want to do; however, I want to incorporate German into it in any way I can. This award not only encourages me to continue studying German, but also taught me that hard work, while it may be busy work at times, pays off when you are recognized for it."

Nicholas Chang

"Thank you so much for this award! It means a lot to be recognized for all my hard work towards German. I had the incredible opportunity to travel to Germany a few summers back and it was a life-changing experience."

Matt Duda

"Thank you for your generous gift for the National German test. I've been to Germany twice and try as much as I can to make the most of these opportunities to speak as much German as possible. After finishing my fifth semester of German next year, I look forward to either taking AP German or going to Swarthmore College for further classes."

Jack Huemmler

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2011 Kalmus Scholarship Presented

Barbora Oborna, a Wissahickon Senior High School senior, was the 2011 recipient of The Gerhard W. Kalmus Scholarship. Dr. Kalmus and his wife, Karin, funded this scholarship for the sixth consecutive year. Dr. Kalmus, a resident of North Carolina, personally presented the scholarship on May 7, the final day of the Immanuel German School's 36th school year.

The \$1,000 scholarship will be used to help fund Barbora's education at Lehigh University this fall.



Barbora Oborna, with Prof. Gerhard W. Kalmus, being congratulated by Immanuel German School Principal, Raymond F. Anderson, III.

Support of Immanuel German School

"On behalf of the students, faculty, and families of the Immanuel German School, I would like to take the time to thank you very much for your donation of \$1,000 to the Immanuel German School. Your continued support of our school over the years is very much appreciated by and helpful to our organization. Please know that

your funds are used toward paying the rent for the facilities at Lower Moreland High School. Your support aids us in achieving our goal of teaching the German language and culture in a cutting-edge environment for learning."

Sincerely, Raymond F. Anderson III, Principal

Two Students Given New Concordia Trust Award

When Marlene Stocks retired from the Immanuel German School after 33 years of service, the faculty and staff funded the *Concordia Trust Marlene Stocks Award* in her honor to be presented to an outstanding student enrolled in the Immanuel program. The first award, in the amount of \$500, was presented to Germantown Academy senior, Ian Ochs, on the first day of German School classes in September 2010. Ian will attend Harvard University in September.

In his letter of thanks, Ian wrote "I am writing to thank you for the generous scholarship you have awarded to me through the Concordia Trust. I am glad, though, that you continue to preserve German language and culture in your new role as president of the Trust."

A second award, funded by the Concordia Trust, was presented in May 2011 to Baldwin School senior, Ariane Walker-Horn, during the German School's closing ceremony. Ariane has chosen to attend Cornell University in the fall.

Ian and Ariane attended the German School for many years. *Herzlichen Glückwunsch!*



Ian Ochs accepting his award from Concordia Trust Board members Dr. Jean Godsall-Myers and Dr. Delbert Hausman.



Ariane Walker-Horn with German School Principal, Raymond F. Anderson, III, and Marlene H. K. Stocks.

Supported Cultural Programs

Muhlenberg Legacy Educational Film Project

The Concordia Trust Board of Directors proudly presented the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (LTSP) with a grant in the amount of \$1,000 to support an educational film project exploring the legacy of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and his influential family.

The purpose of this short film project is to create and disseminate to a wide audience an informative series of short (two to three minutes) films, each focusing on a different aspect of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's legacy on the occasion of his tercentenary. Topics will include Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's role in establishing the Lutheran church in America, his use of language in connecting people, the legacy of his children including Peter Muhlenberg and Frederick Muhlenberg, the Muhlenberg women, the church at Trappe, and Muhlenberg and Germans in Pennsylvania. Undergraduate students studying communications at Muhlenberg College will develop and produce the short films in conjunction with student historians and German scholars. The films will be available in both English and German. They will be made available online for use by German language teachers, German/American history teachers, as well as local historical societies and church and community leaders interested in sharing the story of the Muhlenberg family in America.

For more Muhlenberg 300 information:

<http://ltsp.edu/Muhlenberg300-LTSPEvents>

<http://www.Muhlenberg300.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/Muhlenberg300>



Natalie Hand, LTSP Director Advancement Office Director, Grants; Dr. Jean E. Godsall-Myers, Muhlenberg Congregation Advisory Committee member and Concordia Trust Board member; Marlene Stocks; The Rev. Dr. Philip Krey, President, LTSP; The Rev. John Puotinen, Vice president for Advancement, LTSP.

United German-Hungarian Club Centennial

2010 was a memorable year for the members and friends of the United German-Hungarian Club in Oakford, PA — it observed its 100th anniversary and the celebration lasted all year.

To help the United German-Hungarian Club publicize its history, raise awareness for its sport and cultural programs, and promote many of its signature events, the Concordia

Trust offered a \$1,000 grant to gain media exposure by working with communication and public relations expert, Maria Evans. The culmination of Maria's collaboration with Club President, Bill Galgon, and his wife, Marlene, resulted in a prominent article in the March 30th Bucks County Courier Times that featured their popular Schnitzel Night and recipes from the club's "Mahlzeit" cookbook.

Support of Danube-Swabian Foundation



"Thank you for your donation of \$250.00. Your generous contribution will be used to further the goals of the Foundation, which include the support of German language instruction, the documentation of Danube Swabian history and the promotion of youth athletic activities in our clubs."

Marlene Stocks making the presentation to Danube-Swabian Foundation of the USA, Inc. President, Ed Tullius, with Rosalie Matico, President of the Philadelphia Danube-Swabian Association.

The Concordia Trust thanks its generous Benefactors*

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Experience the German Language and Culture

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A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within the Commonwealth 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

The Concordia Trust

invests in the future of German language education, scholarship and cultural programming by ...

- Providing financial support to the Immanuel German School
- Presenting language awards to deserving students of German
- Promoting German cultural events

“The Bilingual Advantage” by Claudia Dreifus

The following excerpts are from an interview between Claudia Dreifus and Dr. Ellen Bialystok that appeared in the New York Times on May 31, 2011.

“A cognitive neuroscientist, Ellen Bialystok has spent almost 40 years learning about how bilingualism sharpens the mind. Her good news: Among other benefits, the regular use of two languages appears to delay the onset of Alzheimer’s disease symptoms.”

Q. How did you begin studying bilingualism?

A. As a psychologist, I brought neuroscience questions to the study, like “How does the acquisition of a second language change thought?” It was these types of questions that naturally led to the bilingualism research.

Q. One of your most startling recent findings is that bilingualism helps forestall the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease. How did you come to learn this?

A. We did two kinds of studies. In the first, published in 2004, we found that normally aging bilinguals had better cognitive functioning than normally aging monolinguals. Bilingual older adults performed better than monolingual older adults on executive control tasks. That was very impressive because it didn’t have to be that way. It could have turned out that everybody just lost function equally as they got older.

That evidence made us look at people who didn’t have normal cognitive function. In our next studies, we looked at the medical records of 400 Alzheimer’s patients. On average, the bilinguals showed Alzheimer’s symptoms five or six years later than those who spoke only one language. This didn’t mean that the bilinguals didn’t have

Alzheimer’s. It meant that as the disease took root in their brains, they were able to continue functioning at a higher level. They could cope with the disease for longer.

Q. One would think bilingualism might help with multitasking — does it?

A. Yes, multitasking is one of the things the executive control system handles. We wondered, “Are bilinguals better at multitasking?” So we put monolinguals and bilinguals into a driving simulator. Through headphones, we gave them extra tasks to do — as if they were driving and talking on cellphones. We then measured how much worse their driving got. Now, everybody’s driving got worse. But the bilinguals, their driving didn’t drop as much. Because adding on another task while trying to concentrate on a driving problem, that’s what bilingualism gives you — though I wouldn’t advise doing this.

Q. Bilingualism used to be considered a negative thing — at least in the United States. Is it still?

A. Until about the 1960s, the conventional wisdom was that bilingualism was a disadvantage. Some of this was xenophobia. Thanks to science, we now know that the opposite is true.

Q. Many immigrants choose not to teach their children their native language. Is this a good thing?

A. There are two major reasons people should pass their heritage language onto children. First, it connects children to their ancestors. The second is my research: Bilingualism is good for you. It makes brains stronger. It is brain exercise.”

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