



Winter 2026
January 2026

Texas German Society

Organized September 6, 1983 ■ Witte-Schmid Haus Museum
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Reporter

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President's Message

Herzlich Willkommen Jahr 2026,
willkommen liebe TGS Mitglieder &
Freunde!

Ich hörte etwas, das ich mit euch teilen
möchte, quote:

Vor euch liegt ein Buch mit 365 leeren
Seiten für 2026, fülle jede Seite und
mache es zum großartigen Buch! Ich
persönlich freue mich sehr auf TGS
Convention im April, Oktoberfest im
Oktober und Weihnachtsfest im
Dezember. Mehr Informationen
findest du im Reporter.

A warm welcome year 2026,
welcome dear TGS members &
friends!

I heard something that I like to
share with you all, quote:

In front of you is a book with 365
empty pages for 2026, fill each
page and make it a great book! Me
personally am excited about the
TGS Convention in April,
Oktoberfest in October and
Christmas Celebration in December.
More information will be in
Reporter.

Marion McClinton



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

APRIL 11, 2026
TGS CONVENTION
ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
502 N. Holland St, Bellville, TX

Registration Form

2026 Texas German Society State Convention

Hosted by the TGS Executive Board/Chapters

At St. John's Lutheran Church, 520 N. Holland St., Bellville, Tx. 77418

April 11, 2026

Registration: Postmarked by April 1, 2026 - \$20.00 (After April 1st and at Door, \$25.00)

(Please print the name / names wanted on name tag – **Please print, no cursive**)

(Families can use same form-list names separate for name tags)

Name: _____

Address: _____ **City/State/Zip:** _____

Phone Number: _____ **Email address:** _____

Chapter or indicate if visitor: _____

Please indicate:

_____ **Number of people by April 1, 2026 X \$20.00 = _\$** _____

**** OPTIONAL DONATION IN SUPPORT OF WITTE-SCHMID HAUS MUSEUM _\$** _____

(DONATIONS ARE USED FOR CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THIS 1860 HISTORIC HOME)

TOTAL ENCLOSED _\$ _____

Make checks payable to: TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY

Return this form and check or money order to: PEGGY SCHULIN, TGS SECRETARY

Email: peggyschulin@comcast.net

1404 BAIRD AVE. KATY, TEXAS 77493

Cell: 713-582-5210



TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES

This Scholarship is given by the Texas German Society.

The recipient shall be a Texas high school or Home School senior and is planning to attend college.

The purpose of the Texas German Society is to preserve and promote our German-Texan heritage, culture, and language.

1. Applicant must be a graduating high school senior and have passed all university/college admission requirements.
2. Copy of the seventh semester high school transcript must be submitted with completed application.
3. Applicant must submit an essay of at least 300 words written in the English language on the topic "My Interest in the German Language, Culture, and my German Ancestry". In addition, on a separate page, we require that you briefly demonstrate your ability to write in the German language a 30 to 50 word profile of yourself.
4. This scholarship is awarded for the academic year immediately following high school graduation. (Must be used during this year) for two long terms (fall and spring) as a full-time (12 or more semester hours) student.
5. The amount of the scholarships is 1st place \$1,500.00, 2nd place \$1000.00, and 3rd place \$750.00
6. The application deadline is **MARCH 10, 2026**

MAIL OR EMAIL COMPLETED PAPERWORK TO:

ROBERT HERRIDGE robert1@herridgeconsulting.com
5462 HWY. 159 W.
BELLVILLE, TEXAS 77418
(713)582-2461



TEXAS GERMAN SOCIETY
SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION
Please write legibly

NAME _____ DATE _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CELL PHONE # _____ HOME PHONE # _____

NAME OF FATHER _____ ADDRESS _____

NAME OF MOTHER _____ ADDRESS _____

Are you currently employed? _____ Name of employer _____

Do you plan to work while attending college? _____

What is your educational objective? _____

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Extracurricular Activities

Offices held in organizations, clubs

Special Honors and Awards _____

On a separate sheet of paper, please explain in a HANDWRITTEN statement how the Scholarship will help you achieve your educational goals. Please explain any extenuating circumstances which might add to your educational costs.

YOUR APPLICATION WILL NOT BE PROCESSED WITHOUT THIS STATEMENT.

Oktoberfest 2025
WE HAD 37 ATTENDEES AND HOPE TO INCREASE
THE INTEREST EVERY YEAR



Christmas Party
December 6, 2025



Witte-Schmid Haus Museum

"Das Haus"



HONOR YOUR PAST – PRESERVE YOUR LEGACY

The Witte-Schmid Haus Museum, is a historic landmark home built in 1860 of sandstone and Fachwerk in the North German Style construction. The Witte-Schmid Haus has a ground floor with breezeway, parlor, kitchen, a cellar, and upstairs with bedrooms that would accommodate new settlers and travelers. It is set on top of a beautiful hill overlooking the Texas landscape. It is a great place for an outing with family and friends! It is not just the beautiful location on top of a hill with views all around, there is landscape to relax and enjoy, and an interesting museum depicting a German lifestyle of early 1900's. The Witte-Schmid Haus and Cemetery are located at 260 Witte Schmid Road, off Schoenau Road near FM 1457, near Shelby. More information is available on the website of the Texas German Society www.texasgermansociety.org, the Texas Historical Commission www.thc.texas.gov and the National Register of Historic Places www.gsa.gov/national-register-of-historic-places. Reservations can be made on a mutually convenient time. All inquiries will be answered. There is no charge for the visits, however, donations are appreciated.

Consider donating in memory or in honor of a family member, loved one, or a friend to help preserve our German Heritage. Remember the Witte-Schmid Haus Museum in your will.

German houses in Texas, particularly in the Hill Country are characterized by durable, expert craftsmanship that often blended European log, half-timbering, and limestone techniques with local materials, creating lasting structures designed to withstand the Texas climate.

Bastrop County

A social outing on Sunday, August 10, where 13 members met at the Roadhouse Restaurant in Paige.

For our Oktoberfest meeting all members brought food along with some authentic German dishes. The most popular dish is Koch Kaesa, along with sauerkraut und wurst. Melvin Schulz gave an interesting talk regarding information on the ship bringing passengers to Galveston from New York. Then the home life of his paternal grandmother, Adelheid Schulz, after she married Otto. They suffered the loss of several babies, the birth and care of a preemie, Rudolf, (Melvin's father) and how they put the baby in a shoe box and kept him warm in an oven. He described the house, which is still standing and being lived in and also a dipping vat located on the property. A look into their life was interesting. Sixteen members attended this meeting.

The December meeting was combined with members of St. Andrew Lutheran's Community Christmas event where everyone contributed to the meal followed by games and socializing.

Colorado County Chapter

September 25, 2025 Verna Nell Dittmar gave an update on our Christmas party. She suggested that we make a change this year and use Pilsners to cater for the event. Kathryn Haluska had offered the use of her rental house on Milam for our party. The group discussed the fact that it would be nice to do something different and to support Pilsners who have been significantly challenged by all the constructions along I-10. We discussed having a traditional turkey and dressing dinner with coffee, tea and German chocolate cake. Estimated cost would be \$8.00 for the meal and an additional \$2.00 for the cake for a total of \$10.00.

Kathryn stated that the 2026 State Convention will be in Bellville again at the same location as before at St John's Lutheran Church Hall in April.

October 2, 2025, we are invited to the Fayette County Chapter Texas German Society Oktoberfest @ 11:00am at JW's Restaurant in Carmine, Texas. German entertainment and beer available for purchase Dutch treat for meals ordered of the menu. Desserts will be provided.

October 5th will be Daus Haus Oktoberfest, German American Day celebration from 2:00-4:00pm at the Witte-Schmid Haus in Fayetteville, Texas. Food will be "finger food" We are welcome to bring samples of our favorite German Foods to share. BYO Bier. Tea and water provided.

December 7th is the State Christmas Party for Witte Schmid Haus in Fayetteville. Details to follow. All are welcome to come for music and fellowship. Bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

Program: Our program was presented by Hostesses:

Mary Stavinoha, Sharon Roensch, Jean Ellis, Mike & Debbie Braden and Elvera Kahlich.

Our guest speaker was our own member LaWanda Fricke. She shared with us her recent trip to German and her journey exploring her family genealogy. She gave us a lot of tips about her research process and shared maps of her trip and how she organizes her research. She spoke of all the generous help, and guidance she received from local German citizens in the area she visited.

Colorado County Continued

December 18, 2025 Christmas Social Hostesses for the event were: Verna Nell Dittmar, Kathryn & Jerry Haluska, John & Elena Holub, Janice Houghton, Nelda Hajdik, Paula Buschalla, and Winfred & Ada Eben.

We shared a wonderful meal of turkey & dressing was served by Pilsners along with German Chocolate cake for dessert. Elena Holub played the piano and we sang Christmas Carols in both English and German. We also had a small gift exchange. It was a wonderful evening to gather with old friends and celebrate our German Heritage.

Kathryn ended the evening with a thank you to everyone who came, helped decorate, serve and our hostesses and for the delicious meal provided by Pilsners.

Fayette County Chapter

On Monday, January 27, 2025, the Fayette County Chapter of the TGS met at La Grange Randolph Rec. Center. We held election of officers and discussed possible programs and outings for the upcoming monthly meetings. Fellowship and refreshments were enjoyed after the meeting.

On Tuesday, February 18, 2025, the Fayette County Chapter of the TGS met at 4:00 at La Grange Randolph Rec. Center for our regular meeting. Norman Wied gave a very informative and interesting presentation concerning interesting German personalities in Fayette County.

On Monday, March 17, 2025, the Fayette County Chapter met at 5:00 p.m. at Randolph Rec Center for our regular meeting. Our guest speaker was Charles Murray. Charles gave a very interesting presentation concerning German Texans in the military.

On Thursday, April 24, 2025, the Fayette County Chapter met at 2:00 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Round Top. Audrey Huenefeld gave a very interesting presentation concerning Johann Traugott Wandke and his amazing cedar pipe organ. Audrey's husband is a direct descendant of Wandke and she read sections from Wandke's journal that he kept as he crossed the Atlantic to come to America. After the presentation, we enjoyed coffee and a slice of pie at Pie Haven in Round Top before returning home.

On Monday, June 30, 2025, our chapter met at 11:30 a.m. at Sealand in La Grange for our annual "picnic". We enjoyed a lovely meal and fellowship in their side room.

On Wednesday, September 24, 2025, our chapter met at Hound Song Brewery in Columbus, Texas at 4:00 p.m. for a private tour and tasting. We enjoyed a private tour of the facilities by the owner and master brewer, Travis Kocurek. He gave a very informative and interesting presentation on the brewery process and afterward we were able to sample several beers where he highlighted the influence of the ingredients and the brewing process on the beer. The evening was enjoyed by all.

On Monday, October 6, 2025 at 10:00 am, County Judge, Dan Mueller, signed the proclamation declaring, October 6 German American Day in Fayette County. Our chapter attended the proclamation signing and the Fayette County Record was there to take our picture for the newspaper.

Fayette County Continued

On Thursday, October 2, 2025, our chapter met at JW's restaurant in Carmine at 11:00 a.m. to celebrate Oktoberfest. German beer was available for purchase and the meal was Dutch treat from the menu.



Gene Hackemack entertained our group with music and great sing-a-long songs. Homemade German desserts were provided after the meal by Lee Ann Hartmann.

On Wednesday, November 12, 2025, our chapter met at the Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives in La Grange at 1:00 pm. Rox Ann Johnson, the museum archivist and curator, gave a very interesting presentation about the Hermes family of La Grange.

On Wednesday, December 17, 2025, our chapter attended a Christmas party at 2:00 p.m. at the home of Audrey Huenefeld. Her home is a wonderful setting for a Christmas party because it is so beautifully decorated for Christmas. We enjoyed Christmas goodies and Gluehwein in the afternoon **as well as singing Christmas carols in German. Audrey gave an interesting presentation concerning the historical background of Raeuchermaennchen from the Erzgebirge region of Germany**

In Germany we have 1,500 different types of beer. 3,200 types of bread and 1,000 types of sausage, In the state of Bavaria, beer is actually considered a food!

Fort Bend Chapter



On Friday, November 7, 2025, members of the Fort Bend Chapter of the Texas German Society met to have lunch at the Immanuel Evangelical Church in Needville. Every Friday, different churches in Needville volunteer to cook a homemade meal for the Senior Citizens in the area. That day's menu was roasted pork loin with raisin gravy, buttered potatoes with onions, mixed vegetables, cole slaw, bread, and carrot cake. It was very delicious. The group enjoyed the meal and the opportunity to visit.

Pictured are:

Sitting: Cathy Hanzik, Erna Thielemann, Evelyn Schmidt, Ruth Kendziora, Loyce Anderson
Standing: Dan Pavlos, Dr. Ed. Geiger, Clarence Thielemann, Lynn Roesler, Raymond Schmidt, Patsye Roesler, Helen Altimore, Barbara Cooper

On Tuesday, April 15, 2025, 17 members of the Fort Bend Chapter of the Texas German Society ate a German meal prepared by the students of Needville High School House of Blue. The menu was wiener schnitzel, homemade noodles, red cabbage, homemade bread with herb butter, Black Forest Cake, coffee, and tea. The students prepared and served the delicious meal under the direction of Chef Sarah Pugh.

On Monday, July 14, 2025, the members of Fort Bend Chapter of the Texas German Society had a very enjoyable ice cream social at the Albert George Library in Needville, Texas.

Fort Bend Chapter plans for 2026

01/12/2026	Schulze Bar-B-Que Restaurant, Rosenberg
Spring	Meal at House of Blue, Needville High School
04/11/2026	State TGS Convention, St. John's Lutheran Church, Bellville
07/13/2026	Ice Cream Social/Dr. Ed Geiger's Down the Rhine Trip – Albert George Library, Needville
Fall 2026	Rosenberg Railroad Museum and lunch, Rosenberg
10/03/2026	Senior Citizens Lunch, Immanuel Evangelical Church, Needville
12/06/2026	Christmas Party, Das Haus Museum, Shelby
01/11/2027	Planning for 2027

More than 800 million currywurst sausages are eaten every year in Germany. The snack is so popular that there is even a museum dedicated to it in Berlin.

Heart of Texas Chapter

On March 22, eight members went to Ingrid Martine's home near Valley Mills. She and her husband built their home which includes straw bales for some of the insulation. Their home is very unique and we really enjoyed the tour. Ingrid provided us with some samples of her German sauerkraut and red cabbage.

On April 22, fourteen members enjoyed a program on Easter as it is celebrated in Germany, provided by members Kathy Radde and Laura Scott.

On May 27, nine members heard John Thiele tell us about the hunting trip he and his son, Zach, recently took in Africa.

On June 24, approximately 20 members were very pleased to attend a hamburger supper at the Thiele farm. The Thieles provided their farm-raised beef, buns and drinks. Members provided other items.

On September 27, approximately 20 members joined together for lunch at the Corner Drug Cafe in Clifton. The food was great, especially the strudel. Then we took some time to view the newest displays at the Bosque Museum.

On October 28, ten members and 1 guest enjoyed hearing about the experience from Liza Mayes of being in Berlin when the wall came down in 1989.

December 9, approximately 20 members attended our Christmas party at Trinity Lutheran Church in Woodway, Texas. We had a wonderful catered meal including all the typical Christmas food. Then we had our usual gift exchange.

Katy Tri-County Chapter



On September 18, 2025, we met at Luby's cafeteria, enjoying a great dinner and meeting.



On Thursday, October 30, 2025, the chapter met at Southern Dough Baking Company for a meeting and an enjoyable, delicious meal.

Katy Tri-County Chapter continued



Annual Christmas Party, at Union Kitchen, Katy, on December 6, 2025

North Harris County

September 22, 2025

For our September 2025 meeting, we watched the Rick Steves' video "Luther and the Reformation". This is an interesting video telling more than just about Martin Luther, but also the changes there were occurring all across Europe as history was moving from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance Period. Here is a description of video: Five hundred years ago, Martin Luther kicked off the Protestant Reformation, which contributed to the birth of our modern age. In this one-hour special — filmed on location in Europe — Rick Steves tells the story of a humble monk who lived a dramatic life. Rick visits key sites relating to the Reformation (including Erfurt, Wittenberg, and Rome) and explores the complicated political world of 16th-century Europe — from indulgences to iconoclasts, and from the printing press to the Counter-Reformation. It's a story of power, rebellion, and faith that you'll never forget.

November 24, 2025

For our November 2025 meeting, to get into a more "Christmasy mood" by watching the Rick Steves' video "Best of the Alps". Join Rick Steves on an alpine adventure, with scenic train rides, breathtaking lifts, majestic glaciers, and unforgettable hikes. We conquer the Dolomites in Italy and the Zugspitze in Austria. In Switzerland, we savor the beauty of the Matterhorn, the Jungfrau, and Appenzell. And in France, starting off from Chamonix, we ride the lift up to the Aiguille du Midi and hike the iconic Tour du Mont Blanc. Following the video, refreshments were enjoyed to Christmas music.



Germans have more varieties of bread than most other countries. According to the bread register of the German Institute for Bread (of course there is such a thing), there are now more than 3,200 officially recognized types of bread in the country. German bread culture was officially added by UNESCO to its Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2015.

IN MEMORIAM



Kenneth Charles Benfer
July 24, 1935 – November 25, 2025

Kenneth Charles Benfer was born in Bammel (Spring), Texas on July 24, 1935. He went home to be with his Lord in Heaven on November 25, 2025, at the age of 90. He would have celebrated his 66th wedding anniversary with Elaine on December 4, 2025.

He was born to Paul and Evelyn Theiss Benfer and grew up on the family farm, where he learned from his father and grandfather how to grow vegetables. They would sell their crops at the Airline Farmer's

Market. Kenneth was a lifelong member of Trinity Lutheran Church-Klein. He was a direct descendant of founding members of the church Henry Benfer from his father's side and Jacob Theiss on his mother's side. He was baptized on August 25, 1935 and confirmed his faith on October 16, 1949 at Trinity. He attended Klein High School where he graduated in 1953.

In 1959, Kenneth married Elaine Froehlich at Salem Lutheran Church. They made their home in Klein, where they raised their four daughters. He farmed in the early years, eventually going to work as a foreman at Concrete Pipe and Products, later Hanson Concrete Pipe. Upon retirement, he and Elaine built a house where the original Froehlich homestead had been and lived in Rosehill, Texas.

In retirement, Kenneth enjoyed working in his garden. He could grow anything and gladly shared his crops with his family. Like his father, he carefully saved seeds year after year and had his own mini version of an heirloom seed repository. His tomatoes, okra and cucumbers were always eagerly anticipated. If anyone needed a gardening tip, he was the one to see. He also maintained their yard and flower beds by watering and mowing until his final days.

For years, he and Elaine enjoyed playing dominoes (88 and 42) with a large group of friends, then later at the Hockley Community Center. A potluck meal would be shared, then an afternoon of dominoes. They also enjoyed going to the grandchildren's sports meets.

Kenneth loved his German heritage and belonged to the Texas German Society. He enjoyed going to the Tomball German Festival and listening to polka music. He was also an authority on the history of the Klein community. He could recall the names of most of the early residents of Klein, where they lived and an anecdote or two about the family. He was proud that his family was among the original settlers and pleased that Benfer Elementary School was named after his family.