



American Aid Society of German Descendants **Vereinszeitung**



Jahrgang 56 - Folge 3

September – November 2026

Nummer 184

Das Arbeitsleben auf dem Bauernhof im 19. Jahrhundert (19th Century Worklife at the Farm)



Pußthof mit Ochsengespann, Öl auf Leinwand – Stefan Jäger

Bildbeschreibung (Image Description)

Den beiden ungarischen Ochs ist das Joch abgenommen, damit sie zur Ruhe kommen können. Mit einem Holzrechen harkt die Frau Stroh zusammen. Der Hahn und zwei Hennen haben etwas Fressbares entdeckt. Zwischen den beiden Gebäuden ist freier Blick auf die Weite des Flachlandes.

(The yoke has been removed from the two Hungarian oxen so they can rest. Using a wooden rake, the woman is gathering straw into piles. The rooster and two hens have discovered something to eat. Between the two buildings there is an unobstructed view across the vast open plains.)

Bemerkung (Note)

Beim Kukuruzlieschen werden die Deckblätter entfernt, so kommen die Maiskolben mit ihren goldgelben Körnern zum Vorschein. Sorgfältig werden dabei die "schönsten Kolben" ausgewählt. Diese werden dann Paarweise an den "Lieschnblättern" zusammengebunden und zum Trocknen aufgehängt. Der Samenkukuruz wird im Frühjahr (April) ausgesetzt.

(During the corn husking, the outer husks are removed, revealing the ears of corn with their golden-yellow kernels. Great care is taken to select the finest ears. These are then tied together in pairs by their husks and hung up to dry. The seed corn is planted the following spring (April)).

AMERICAN AID SOCIETY of German Descendants

is a **501 (c) (3) non-profit organization** dedicated to the preservation of our German culture and heritage. All gifts and donations given to this organization are fully tax deductible.

This organization is headquartered at our clubhouse address below:

6540 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60631-1750

website: www.americanaidsoctyofgd.org
email: americanaidsoctyofgd@gmail.com

Our Mission

This organization's mission is to cultivate and maintain our German heritage by our traditions, customs, beliefs, music, dance, language, and to remember and preserve our history. To respect and accept Germans from Europe and their descendants living throughout the world. To aid other Germanic peoples in times of need such as when natural disasters occur. Also, to give support to other ethnic groups in times of crisis throughout the world. To maintain our loyalty, trust, love, and duty to the United States. And locally, to foster goodwill among all non Germans living amongst us in our community through education and entertainment.

Officers

Robert Lengfelder
President

Jenette Goecke
1st Vice President

Blanca Tilli
2nd Vice President

Matthias Wissmann
3rd Vice President

Michelle Heidrich
Recording Secretary

James Heidrich
Treasurer

Laura Casey
Communication's Secretary

Bericht der Vizepräsidentin

A few words from our 1st Vice President



As the summer moves briskly along and we continue to endure these very warm temperatures, our members are working hard to prepare for the LANDESTRACHTENFEST MIT TANZ WETTBEWERB that will take place on Sept 5 and 6 in Lake Villa. This event is a huge undertaking; this is why we have a committee handling the details. There will be a Kinderplatz for children to enjoy, which will include a bounce house, lego area, craft area and more! A point of sale system will be used in the kitchen, which will help everything move smoothly and help us track sales. There is a Signup Genius for volunteers to sign up to help out in any way they can. Please see our website for a link to the Signup Genius.

As we prepare Lake Villa for Labor Day weekend festivities, we also have the Lennar building project moving along next door. As part of the signed storm water easement agreement, we will be getting a new driveway by the gate. This is very good news, as a new driveway is needed.

Not only am I the 1st Vice President, I am also on the Oktoberfest committee. Oktoberfest is also quite an undertaking and requires a lot of planning and a lot of volunteers. This is a very busy year for our organization. I understand that we are asking you, our members, to volunteer your time and energy for both the Landesverband festivities and Oktoberfest. However, without your continued commitment, we would not be able to sustain a successful organization. In order to keep this organization going, we need to have profitable events. Oktoberfest is our most lucrative. So, I ask you to put in some extra work this year and volunteer for both the Landesverband and Oktoberfest events.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the individuals on the Landesverband committee. This event is a lot of work. Thank you to Jamie Balcerak, Laura Casey, Erica Cwan, Erika Ehrat, Megan Gabler, Michelle Heidrich, Bernadette Henz, Anne Lengfelder, Erik Lisauskas, Erika Scheffrahn, Blanca Tilli, Kathy Weiner, and Matthias Wissmann. We are all looking forward to Labor Day!

I would also like to thank the Tuesday Crew for all their hard work throughout the year. Thank you to Pete Bappert, Bob Byrom, Laura Casey, Ron Farland, Ted Geiger, Eddie Glasenhardt, Dan Katzenmayer, Fred Mueller, Wally Neumayer, Gary O'Reilly, Walter Scheffrahn, Hans Schmitt, Joe Stein, Blanca Tilli, Larry Tilli, and Hans Wissmann. Your work at the picnic grounds is invaluable.

Thank you to all of the members who help out at all of our events throughout the year. This includes selling tickets, serving behind the bar, working in the kitchen, setting up, cleaning up, etc.

Finally, thank you in advance to each and every one of you that has already or will be signing up to volunteer at the Landesverband event and at our annual Oktoberfest. Your time and hard work is greatly appreciated!

– Jenette Goecke

PLEASE VISIT www.germanday.com FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Vereinunternehmungen (Club Activities)

Versammlungen (Club Meetings)

09 Sep 26	Rentnertreffen (Seniors' Meeting), 9 AM at our Clubhouse
18 Sep 26	Mitgliederversammlung (Membership Meeting), 8 PM at our Clubhouse
02 Oct 26	Vorstandsversammlung (Officers' Meeting), 8 PM at our Clubhouse
14 Oct 26	Rentnertreffen (Seniors' Meeting), 9 AM at our Clubhouse
16 Oct 26	Mitgliederversammlung (Membership Meeting), 8 PM at our Clubhouse
06 Nov 26	Vorstandsversammlung (Officers' Meeting), 8 PM at our Clubhouse
11 Nov 26	Rentnertreffen (Seniors' Meeting), 9 AM at our Clubhouse
20 Nov 26	Versammlung mit Wahl (General Meeting with Elections), 8 PM at our Clubhouse

Veranstaltungen (Events)

**04-06 Sep 26 Landestrachtenfest mit Jugendwettbewerb
(Danube-Swabian Gathering with Youth Dance Competition)**
Friday thru Sunday at our German Cultural Center, 259 W. Grand Ave in Lake Villa

REFER to our website for details:
www.americanaidsoctyofgd.org

Welcome! We are thrilled to host this year's *Landestrachtenfest mit Tanz Wettbewerb*. Get ready for a fantastic weekend filled with fun, festivities, and creating unforgettable moments. We can't wait to see everyone come together and enjoy this wonderful event.

19 Sep 26, 26 Sep 26 & 3 Oct 26 THREE Oktoberfest Parties
Saturdays at our German Cultural Center, 259 W. Grand Ave. in Lake Villa
1 mile west of Route 83 in Lake Villa & 9 miles west of Great America on Route 132
All dates from 6:30 PM until Midnight

17 Oct 26 Kirchweih (Kermes - Church Consecration)
Saturday at our German Cultural Center, 259 W. Grand Ave. in Lake Villa
Donations are \$ 10.00 per person – cash bar – credit cards now accepted
Doors open at 6:00 PM
Dinner available at 7:00 PM

23 Oct 26 Kindergruppe Kürbisschnitzen (Children's Pumpkin Carving)
Friday 7:00 PM at our Clubhouse, 6540 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago
Doors open at 6:45 PM
Pumpkins provided. Bring your own pumpkin carving supplies.
Fun for both parents and children! Show off your talents. Event begins at 7:30 PM.

01 Nov 26 Schlachtfest (Harvest Feast)
Sunday at our German Cultural Center, 259 W. Grand Ave in Lake Villa
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED, Reservations due October 26, 2026 – NO REFUNDS
Doors open at 12:00 PM, Dinner served at 1:00 PM
Donation is \$ 45.00 per person, cash bar – credit cards now accepted

Send reservations, payment, and requests for tables of 8 or 10:
Marianne Lisauskas, 3040 Fox Hill Rd., Aurora, IL, 60504, Tel. 630-484-8607
The club email address for reservations is: americanaidsocty@yahoo.com

Membership Dues

Dues to the American Aid Society are



\$25.00 per person or
\$50.00 per couple.

Anyone interested in the German culture and in its heritage is welcome to join.

Welcome New Members

Since our last issue, our organization has grown with the following new members:

KANDA, Diane
STYRCULA, Laurie
VACHA, Linda

We heartily welcome you to our large American Aid Society family. Your membership and your involvement in our organization will be greatly appreciated.

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This Vereinszeitung (club newspaper) is published quarterly with mailings to the membership prior to **March, June, September, and December** of each year.

It is your active participation which makes this newsletter informative, educational and entertaining reading. Mail or e-mail all articles, pictures or whatever you wish to share to the address below. Pictures will not be returned unless requested.

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Email publicist if you wish to receive your newsletters electronically. Include NEWSLETTER in the subject line.

DO NOT wait until the last minute since late submissions will either be heavily edited or omitted entirely. Best to submit shortly after each activity or event. *Accuracy is the responsibility of each author and not the Publisher!* Second, the publicist **will NOT write articles** on your behalf.

Contribution deadline for articles is **February 1st, May 1st, August 1st, and November 1st**. This allows sufficient time to edit, proofread, layout, print, and mail the newsletters to the membership before month's end.

Laura Casey: Communication's Secretary, advertising
Margaret Wolf: Editor and proofreader
Walter Scheffrahn: Layout, printing & distribution

Rückblick seit der letzten Ausgabe

(Review since the last issue)

Gedenktagsfeier

(Memorial Day Remembrance)

By Kelsey McMahan

Looking outside on Sunday morning of Memorial Day Weekend was a dreary scene. Rain had rolled in and the sun was buried deep in the storm clouds. This weather was not what guests and members of The American Aid Society had hoped for on the day of their first summer picnic. Mother nature lent a kind hand to this group of folks and the rain let up, the sun came out, and a nice breeze helped to dry everything out. A memorial mass was held inside the hall at 10:30am sharp; followed by a procession and a brief service in front of the beautiful AAS memorial monument. The American Aid Society would like to thank everyone involved in holding the traditional morning service honoring those no longer here.

With the memorial service concluded Blanca Tilli and her kitchen crew hurried along with the few remaining tasks and readied themselves to serve hungry guests. The Memorial Day menu is always a hit. Diners choose from a hearty bowl of Goulash, homemade Hungarian Wurst, or a skillfully grilled half a chicken. Sides included boiled potatoes, tangy sauerkraut, steamed green beans and AAS's classic potato salad. Cherry cheese and apple strudel alongside hot coffee were offered for dessert. After an hour or so of eating and drinking, folks headed back inside to enjoy a program from both the Kindergruppe and Jugendgruppe.

The Kinder were first to the stage led by Erika Ehrat and Ingrid Wissmann. These brave kiddos shared three dances with an eager crowd. During one of the dances there was a

little mix-up during a tricky switch-up; the older children could be seen earnestly guiding their younger friends into the proper spots. A sweet representation of the team effort and mentorship goes along with being a member of the Kindergruppe. After their divine dancing, the children had a project to share. One of the Kinder queens, Erika Ehrat, curated a map that showed the countries, regions, towns, and villages that each of the children's families came from. This was quite an undertaking as geography and borders change; what once was, may no longer be. The children were proud to share a visual representation of their heritage.

A small but mighty Jugend followed with an energetic three dances of their own. Many members of the Jugend had been in Lake Villa Saturday afternoon. They had the laborious task of bringing out all the picnic tables and placing them around the grounds. After all that *schlepping*, the Jugend spent some time practicing for their upcoming competition program, which will be held in the Lake Villa hall. For their Memorial Day program, the Jugend chose *The Old Polka*, *Peek-A-Boo* and *The Hungarian* as their dances. The audience enjoyed the enthusiastic showcase.

For the rest of the afternoon, guests enjoyed everything Lake Villa has to offer. Children took to the playground, the outdoor bar held laughter and good conversation, folks enjoyed a continued celebration of heritage inside the Heimat Museum, and the kitchen crew carried on serving hot meals. Memorial Day holds a somber history and is to be a day of reflection. The AAS community does a nice job of finding a balance of remembrance and respect for those they have lost with friendship and joy amongst those who remain.



Gespräche am Gedenktagsfeier (Memorial Day Speech)

Read by Karina Palffy

The message I am about to share with you is based on a speech delivered by Father Herman Joseph Rettig of Cleveland, Ohio in 1994, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the *Vertreibung*. I have abridged and updated the message for a 21st-century audience.

We stand today in silent remembrance of our beloved dead, and we whisper a prayer for the souls who have gone before us. It is their blood that runs through our veins, blood that not so long ago was shed in rivers as our people were barbarously slaughtered. It is this blood which binds us to one another and which has brought us together today. The heart of every one of us beats mournfully as a funeral bell tolling for the dead.

For whom does the bell toll? It tolls first for those courageous ancestors who so long ago left their old homeland to begin a new life in the inhospitable swamplands of southeastern Europe. These brave pioneers left everything, found nothing, and by the sweat of their brows made something. They were succeeded by generations of hardworking Donauschwaben who carried on what their forefathers had begun. In time and distance they were removed from their ancestral homelands, yet they preserved their customs and language from generation to generation. They led simple lives focused on family, faith, and community, and when the Lord called them home, they were buried in the land that they had worked. No crosses mark their graves today; no flowers decorate their resting places. It is for them that our bell tolls.

For whom does the bell toll? It tolls for men and boys sent off to two world wars, many of whom never returned home. Many of these soldiers were sent against their will, to fight on behalf of a nation they'd never even been to. Only the cruel chance of war would dictate which families would see their sons again. It is for them that our bell tolls.

For whom does the bell toll? It tolls for the Donauschwaben civilians killed in their homes and villages in the aftermath of World War II. Children

were forced to watch the massacre of their parents. Villagers were made to dig their own graves and were then shot into them. Towns were converted into concentration camps, where unsanitary conditions allowed deadly diseases to ravage the population. Food was made so scarce that grandparents sacrificed their rations – and, by extension, their lives – to give their descendants a chance of survival. It is for them that our bell tolls.

For whom does the bell toll? It tolls for the thousands of women and men who were deported to the Soviet Union as enslaved laborers, many of whom did not survive the harsh working conditions. Children born unto the imprisoned were removed from their mothers, raised in Soviet society, and made to forget – or even taught to hate – the people of their blood. It is for them that our bell tolls.

For whom does the bell toll? It tolls for the survivors, who were left to heal from this traumatic past in a world that was all too ready to forget what had been done to them. Who has heard of Baragan, Gakowa, Jarek, Krndija, Kruschiwl, Mitrowitza, Molidorf, Rudolfsgnad, or Valpovo? In these places, our people lie by the thousands in unmarked mass graves, while above them, an entirely different society has grown and developed. It is difficult to determine accurate numbers; one wishes neither to exaggerate nor to minimize, but we do know that more than 100,000 Donauschwaben died at the hands of the governments of Yugoslavia, Romania, and Hungary in the aftermath of the Second World War. For a small group of people such as ours, this loss was a catastrophe beyond measure and percentage. We must look at all such cases of gross oppression and genocide, regardless of who perpetrated them and on whom they were perpetrated, and we must say with those who are justifiably outraged at every instance: "Never, never again!" But in the eighty-two years since our people were nearly eradicated, it has become abundantly clear that the world has not learned. In every corner of the earth, the bones of the innocent lie in mass graves, silent witnesses to man's inhumanity to man. The darkest moments of the history of the Donauschwaben are one chapter of a terrifyingly repetitive story – the story of people groups failing to resolve their differences peace-

fully, the story of governmental leaders allowing their hatred to overtake their humanity, the story of innocent civilians paying the ultimate price. It is for them – ALL of them – that our bell tolls.

For whom does the bell toll? Look around you. Look into your hearts. Look to the past and to the future; to the people you've relied on and the people who have relied on you. In the words of famed English poet John Donne: "Ask not for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee."



Rückblick seit der letzten Ausgabe

(Review since the last issue)

USA vs. Germany Friendly Match

By Erika & Melissa Cwan

On the morning of Saturday, June 6th, a sold-out Soldier Field Stadium became packed with fans of both Germany and the USA. Over 63,000 fans screamed and cheered for their teams when the players took the field at the start of the friendly match. The German soccer team struck first, getting the first goal against the US soccer team, causing many cheers from the German fans in the crowd. Not to be counted out, Team USA responded with a goal of their own, making it a tie game. While it was a tough fight and the two teams stayed competitive, it was Germany that broke the tie and scored the final goal to win the game. Even though many fans of Team USA were a little disappointed by the loss, it was an amazing showing from both teams before the start of the World Cup. Finally, what would a soccer game be without a great tailgate party!



AAS Golf Ausflug (AAS Golf Outing)

By Laura Casey

We held our second annual golf out on Saturday, June 27.

The golfers gathered at Renwood Golf Course in Round Lake Beach, IL between 7:30-8 am to check in and meet up with their teammates for the day. After a quick registration, they filled out a chance to win a free round of golf and grabbed their goody bag before setting out on the course for an 8:30 am start.

The format was a shot gun start/best ball, so even for those participants who are not a golf expert, this format makes for a fun day on the links for all levels.

The weather was perfect, high in the low 80's and low humidity – a far cry from last year when the temperatures soared into the 90's. Most importantly both years have been rain-free!

On the course, each golfer received a hot dog or brat and a bag of chips, along with a few other goodies and refreshments.

A late lunch/early dinner was served at our fest grounds in Lake Villa after the outing. The meal consisted of BBQ pulled pork, coleslaw, roasted potatoes and baked beans, along with an open bar of beer, wine, soda and water.

Two prizes were awarded to the players that had the longest drive: this year our winners were Matthew O'Reilly at hole 5 and Erich Held at hole 18. Another set of prizes was awarded to the winners of the closest ball to the pin contest. This year our winners were Johnny Gruber at hole 4 and Brian Mendralla at hole 11.

The first-place team with the lowest score of 63 (9 under par) consisted of Bryan and Karl Bappert, Evan Fay, and Elliot Daneker. Big Congrats!

Valerie Mayer won the women's raffle for a free round of golf and Andy Goecke won the men's raffle for a free round of golf, both of which were generously donated by Renwood Golf Course.

Our thanks go out to Brad Rouse from the golf course who has been very instrumental in helping us get organized and has made numerous donations.

Another huge thanks to ALL our hole sponsors, many of whom sponsored a hole last year for our inaugural year. Thank you to all of our new sponsors this year – your support is greatly appreciated.

We had a total of fifteen foursomes

(sixty golfers in all) on the roster this year. We welcomed back many golfers from last year and increased our participation by an additional thirteen golfers. We are delighted to say we are planning for year three and hope everyone returns for another great event!

Finally, I'd like to thank Christine O'Reilly who coordinated this day with the course and handles all the logistics. Thanks to Renee Stein for setting up registration via the website. Thank you to our hole sponsor coordinators, Nick Balcerak and Matthias Wissman. Thank you to Gary O'Reilly who helped get our supplies delivered and to Angela Balcerak who not only helped prepare and serve lunch, but who also made the baked beans from scratch!

Please save the date and mark your calendars for next year's outing, which is planned for Saturday, June 26, 2027. Best regards and thanks again for making this outing so fun and successful!



Below is a list of this year's hole sponsors –
Thank you for your continued support.

Hole #	Thank You to Our Sponsors
1	American Aid Society Lake Villa Tuesday Crew
2	Lennar
3	Maifest Chicago Board
4	Davis & Engert Dentistry
5	Berger Heating & Air Conditioning
6	George Rieg
7	Ludwig Interiors
8	Chicago Donauschwaben
9	Rare Dirndl
10	Bernhard Woodwork
11	GAPA -German American Police Association
12	Marianne Lisauskas - In Loving Memory of Jonas Lisauskas
13	RGLA - Retail Solutions By Design
14	Laschet's Inn
15	Joe Richardt - The Wurst Man
16	German Day
17	The Will Heidrich Foundation for Pediatric Cancer Research
18	North Shore Auto Rebuilders



Rückblick seit der letzten Ausgabe

(Review since the last issue)

4. Juli Picknick (July 4th Picnic)

By Kelsey McMahan

Growing up in the USA, the Fourth of July holiday meant a few specific traditions; cook-outs, water-play, children with sparklers, American flags everywhere, and big flashy fireworks shows. This year America celebrated its 250th birthday. The Chicagoland area saw a heat wave and several severe weather systems bringing thunder, lightning and damaging winds. None of this deterred folks from honoring their chosen traditions and celebrating their country.

For those who grew up around the American Aid Society of German Descendants, some traditions look a little different. Each year on July 4, the club hosts a picnic on their beautiful Lake Villa picnic grounds. Aside from celebrating independence and enjoying a hot summer day, the folks at AAS also take this time to recognize accomplishments of their young members. It is a joyous day each year and 2026 was no exception.

The picnic grove opened at 10am. If you were on the grounds at that time, the air had an odd chill and the skies were a threatening tone of gray. Mid-morning saw some storms but the sun came out and the day seemed to take a turn for the better. The kitchen opened at noon and began serving eager guests. The menu was filled with delicious German options; Hungarian Wurst made from scratch, potato salad, and piping hot Goulash. Some traditional American fare made the menu as well; perfectly grilled chicken and hot dogs were a hit. The kitchen and its loyal crew of volunteers remained open for several hours, adding coffee and cake to their menu later in the afternoon. This wholesome event and all of its delicious offerings would not be possible without the dedicated volunteers who continue to show up for their community.

Just before 2pm the Balcerak brothers, Nick and Michael headed to the pavilion to lead the parade around the grounds. The music had started, the brothers had hoisted their flags, Kinder and Jugend members were lined up and ready to march when the clouds opened up and a downpour ensued. After realizing this rain would not be letting up immediately the whole parade backed themselves up and took shelter beneath the pavilion. The performers were quickly joined by members of the audience looking for a dry spot to stand. Although their

parade was literally rained on, this didn't stop the dance groups of The American Aid Society from strutting their stuff! The audience shifted and spread out on the sides of the pavilion, allowing ample room for the entertainment of the day. The children of the Kindergruppe were all smiles as they showed off their sweet dance moves, waved at parents and encouraged their peers. Two of those children moved up and are new members of the AAS Jugendgruppe! After putting on their last show with the Kindergruppe, Elizabeth Scharaga and Bree Roman joined the Jugendgruppe for the next set of dances. The Jugend brought their summer energy to the stage, smiled through the sweat, and stomped their hearts out. Despite the moody weather and brief interruption, both the viewers and the dancers were happy.

The sun shone for the remainder of the day over the sweet scene of Kinder indulging in popsicles and water-play. Folks lingered enjoying their coffee and cake, sharing a shot with old friends, and basking in the stunning summer air. Celebrating America with a German club may seem odd to some, but those in the community of AAS wouldn't celebrate the Fourth of July any other way.

A big Danke schön to all of the volunteers, dancers, and attendees that continue to support the club and make traditions like this possible.





Mitglieder Meilensteine

(Member Milestones)

Verstorbene (Deaths)

Four of our members passed to their eternal reward.



We are sad to share that Magdalena Beha passed away at the age of 91. As a longtime member, one of her greatest joys was watching her children and grandchildren perform.

Born in Yugoslavia, she lived a happy childhood until the war disrupted her humble life. Forced to leave her home, Magdalena and family loaded their belongings on a horse-drawn wagon, embarked on a new future, and built a new life. While enduring much hardship, they arrived in Germany where Magdalena met her husband, Paul. In the mid 50s, their journey brought them to Chicago where Magdalena and Paul married and started a family.

Magdalena was preceded in death by her husband Paul, mother Eva, and brother Martin. Magdalena is survived by son Richard (Liz), daughter Monika (late Brian), son Walter, grandchildren Samantha Beha, Nicole Dymitrowicz, and James Dymitrowicz.

On behalf of the American Aid Society, we send our deepest condolences to the Beha Family. May she rest in peace.



We regret to inform you that Elisabeth Dschida passed away peacefully with her family at her side on Sunday, June 7, 2026, in Delray Beach, Florida. Elisabeth was born December 11, 1938,

in a small town called Gakowa, which was part of Hungary before WWII, then Yugoslavia, and now Serbia. She was 87 when she passed and spent the last months of her life as a snowbird in sunny Deerfield Beach, Florida. Her husband, Martin, passed away in 2023, so she lived independently for over three years. Mom was a sweet, caring woman that cherished her family. She was constantly giving of her time and talents and always had a smile and wink to make you feel loved.

As a young girl, she had survived many hardships due to the tragedies associated with WWII. Their family fled from what was former Yugoslavia, to Austria, and then finally settled in the Stuttgart area

of Germany. She was a teenager when she first met the love of her life, Martin. He was five years older than Elisabeth and had decided to immigrate to the US in January of 1957. Martin invited her to his going-away party, but her father forbade her to attend as she was only 18 years old. Martin had a sweet spot for his "Lisi" as he noticed she had tears in her eyes when she told him goodbye. Those tears pulled at his heartstrings over the course of the next five years. So, the long-distance romance began.

Martin wrote letters to Lisi after his departure to the US. In 1960, he finally had the courage to write to her asking if she would marry him. To his surprise, Elisabeth's reply to his letters was "YES". They were married in Germany in March of 1961. Elisabeth immigrated to the US in September 1961 with only her clothes and her cookbook. They were officially married at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in Hyde Park on October 28, 1961, and their US adventure began. They moved their home from Hyde Park in Chicago to Johnsburg, Illinois after the birth of their daughter, Ingeborg. Elisabeth was not much of a city girl; she preferred the countryside to raise her family. The Dschida family bought a farm in Johnsburg, and the White Leghorn Farm was truly a family business. Elisabeth helped in so many ways, as she was never afraid to work hard. Their son Richard was born two years later, while everyone was busy taking care of chickens, eggs, and Martin's growing machining business. To help her husband with his new business, Elisabeth would put the kids to bed and help Martin run machines and deburr parts in the evenings to fill orders.

As the children grew, they became involved in various school activities. Elisabeth was the driver of kids to and from practice; she was always a big cheering supporter in the stands for every sporting event. She truly enjoyed having a home-cooked meal ready for her family each day. She was busy in the summers with a big garden, beautiful flowers and no lack of enthusiasm to make her home look wonderful. Once the grandchildren arrived, Oma was ever so happy to care for the little ones whenever she was available.

Elisabeth was fortunate to be able to retire at an early age and she and Martin became snowbirds that traveled to Florida each fall and returned to Illinois every spring. She enjoyed her life in Deerfield Beach, where she and Martin had many other friends, many of whom were German. Elisabeth was active in their condo community, participating in the

daily water aerobics, helping with cooking for condo parties in their clubhouse, and even participating in chair aerobics up until January of this year. She loved to bake sweet treats to spoil her neighbors and always had a smile, a wave, and a friendly kiss to greet friends and family.

Elisabeth was a wonderful homemaker, baker, and seamstress. She was a member of the American Aid Society of German Descendants as well as the Chicago Donauschwaben. Elisabeth traveled extensively with these groups. In addition, she enjoyed annual family vacations to Hawaii, cruises with friends to the Caribbean, and visits with friends and family in Europe. She and Martin were married for 62 years. She was a longstanding parishioner at St. John the Baptist Church in Johnsburg.

She will be dearly missed.

Elisabeth is survived by her daughter Ingeborg (Russell) Lund and her three grandchildren Benjamin, Nicholas, and Aaron (Maria) Lund, and her son Richard and two grandchildren Hannah (Matt) DeGroot and Cody Dschida; and her sister Katherin (Buschanski) Dschida of Winnenden, Germany.

She was preceded in death by her husband Martin, sister Anni Storz, and her parents Paul and Anna (Pfeifferroth) Buschanski.

On behalf of the American Aid Society, we send our deepest condolences to the Dschida Family.



We are sad to inform you of the passing of Peter Krebs. As a vital part of the team that built the Lake Villa hall, Mr. Krebs's talent and dedication left an enduring mark on our organization. His contributions were deeply appreciated.

Peter Krebs, 92, passed away peacefully, leaving behind a legacy built with his own two hands and a life richly lived.

He was the beloved husband of the late Theresa (née Ulrich) Krebs; loving father of Michael (Kimberly) Krebs and Irene (Don) Holmen; cherished grandfather of Alexis Krebs and Lauren Holmen; devoted son of the late Barbara and Peter Krebs; and dear brother of the late Frank Krebs and the late Maria Krems.

As a young man, Peter endured the hardships of the world before ultimately coming to the United States in search of a new beginning. Like so many of his

generation, he arrived with little more than determination and hope. He made Chicago his home, raised a family, and built a life one brick at a time.

He found his calling as a bricklayer and construction foreman, earning a reputation as a true artisan of his trade. Peter was a creator at heart, someone who took pride in everything he built, repaired, and brought to life. Toward the end of his career, Peter was entrusted by the City of Chicago to oversee the terra cotta restoration of Navy Pier, a project that perfectly reflected his talent, precision, and dedication to the craft. Even after work, he was happiest with a project in his hands, always building, fixing, or inventing something.

Peter will be remembered for his warmth, quick wit, infectious sense of humor, and as a true *Geschichtenerzähler*. He had an easy charm that put people at ease and a particular fondness for playful moments, especially in front of the camera. His laughter, jokes, and stories brought joy to those around him. His German heritage remained a source of pride throughout his life. Peter and Theresa were longtime members of the American Aid Society of German Descendants, where they celebrated the traditions, friendships, and culture that meant so much to them. Peter treasured his family. He was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, sharing a life shaped by heritage, hard work, and devotion to those he loved.

Peter will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

On behalf of the American Aid Society, we send our deepest condolences to the Krebs Family. May he rest in peace.



We regret to inform you that Elizabeth Schaller recently passed away. In her younger years, Elizabeth was a great helper in our kitchen for our events. She was born on September 27, 1940 and died July 29, 2026 at age 85.

Elizabeth Schaller (née Wingert) was the beloved wife of the late Franz Schaller and loving mother of Michael (Catherine) Schaller, John (Elaine) Schaller, and Paul (Erica) Schaller. Elizabeth was the cherished Oma of Eric, Tyler, Christopher, and Kelli.

On behalf of the American Aid Society, we send our deepest condolences to the Schaller Family.

Jubiläum (Anniversary)

A very momentous occasion has occurred this year! **(1936—2026).** **MEISZNER FUNERAL HOME** has reached its 90th anniversary in business.

John, Helen, Joyce and Joy span three generations of serving their German community, their neighborhood, many different faiths, and various ethnic cultures.

We are a small family-owned funeral home that continues to personalize funeral services. We focus on traditional services, cremation memorials, celebrations of life, untraditional services, and a return of your loved one back to their homeland. We may be "small," but our impact is mighty and we are able to accommodate larger funerals at different locations. The level of personal compassion shown coupled with the fact that we know most of the families we've served throughout nine decades speaks volumes. Whether three in the morning or two in the afternoon when that heart-wrenching phone call is made, we are here for everyone. Hopefully knowing who the person is that will answer that call gives you a sense of comfort.

We would like to thank our loyal, multi-generational families for their patronage. You have become life-long friends and we are grateful that you have trusted us to care for your loved ones.

— Joy Meiszner
Funeral Director



Spenden (Donations)

Donations

The following people have generously donated to our club.

Pat Colleran — \$100.00
Donald & Judith DeGroot — \$100.00
Therese Rose — \$100.00
Agatha Walter — \$100.00
Shelly Und — \$60.00
Dawn Lund — \$50.00
Cheryl Brickner — \$10.00
Elinda Kiss — \$10.00
in memory of Elisabeth Dschida

Once again, a heartfelt **DANKE SCHÖN** for your generosity. Additional tax-deductible contributions in support of the club are always greatly appreciated.



Hend ihr gwusdd, dass es scho vor der Erfindung vom Internet "Chatrooms" geba hodd. Hier a alte Windows-Version.



Komitee Bericht (AAS Committee Report)

Tuesday Group Report

By Joe Stein

This summer we are working more intensely on beautifying all of Lake Villa since we are hosting the Donauschwaben National Association Landesverband meeting. This will take place from Friday, September 4 to Monday, September 7. We are also hosting a group from Hungary and a group from Germany. Saturday is also the *Jugendgruppen Tanzwettbewerb*.

We are working on projects that can only be done during the summer months and weather permitting, like *Scotchguarding* our upholstered chairs. Most of the work involves painting, grass cutting, cleaning the storage rooms, disposing of garbage, and trying to get rid of things that are no longer needed. We take care of things before and after all events that take place during the summer – Memorial Day, the golf outing (a new event that replaced Sommerfest), the 4th of July, etc.

The golf event was a great success. Participants enjoyed themselves and praised the event's organization. It will be an event again in 2027.

This month we must trim all the bushes, stain all the benches and picnic tables, and seal all areas around the hall and the garage. Our biggest job is keeping up with weeds. We do all the things that need attention in order to improve the looks of Lake Villa. We work carefully and only for half the day when the weather is too hot. On rainy days or very hot days, we work inside the hall or in the basement. Up until now, we have been lucky with the weather. It has stopped us only once. The whole working crew is doing a great job beautifying our property and keeping everything in working order. A great big THANK YOU to all the volunteers.



Aus unseren Abteilungen (From our Departments)

Kindergruppe

Erika Ehrat – Kindergruppe Delegate
aaskindergruppe@gmail.com

Maifest Report

By Christi Mueller

What a beautiful day for Maifest!

On Sunday, May 31, our Kindergruppe dancers enjoyed a wonderful afternoon at Lincoln Square Maifest under bright sunshine and blue skies. The festive atmosphere, lively music, and enthusiastic crowds made for a memorable day for everyone involved.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was a special visit from the famous *Oscar Mayer Wienermobile*. The children were thrilled to peak inside, pose with the oversized props, and take home whistles and stickers. There were plenty of smiles, laughs, and photo opportunities as the kids enjoyed this unique Maifest attraction.

The excitement continued when our dancers joined members of the Chicago Donauschwaben Kindergruppe. Watching the groups come together was a wonderful reminder of the friendships and traditions that connect our communities.

Our Kindergruppe then took center stage and performed three additional dances for the Maifest crowd. The audience responded with warm applause, smiling faces, and enthusiastic support as the children proudly showcased the dances they had been practicing over the last few months.

A heartfelt thank you to all of our dancers, families, volunteers, and supporters who helped make this year's Maifest performance such a success. We look forward to many more opportunities to dance, celebrate, and share our culture together!



Memorial Day Report

By Christi Mueller

Continuing a cherished tradition, club members gathered on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend to reflect on the sacrifices that have shaped our history. The ceremony honored both the brave military men and women who gave their lives in service to their country and the Donauschwaben who suffered and perished in the years following the Second World War.

The day was made even more special by beautiful weather, with sunny skies and warm temperatures providing the perfect backdrop for reflection and fellowship.

One of the most touching moments of the day was the continuation of a beloved tradition as our Kinder carried the statue of Mary, our Blessed Mother, with dignity and care. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Mila, Stella, Addison, and Sonja for participating in this special procession and helping to make it such a memorable part of the ceremony.

Following the memorial service, the Kinder enjoyed a delicious meal lovingly prepared by our dedicated kitchen staff. Chicken, Wurst, and Goulash dinners were served, while the children enjoyed hot dogs, chips, and a cookie. The care and attention of our kitchen volunteers help ensure that our youngest members always feel welcomed, valued, and well cared for.

The children then delighted family and friends with three traditional dances performed indoors: the *Familiantanz*, *Ein Steller*, and *Man in the Hay*. This event was especially memorable for Lucy Weiner, who gave her very first performance. We congratulate Lucy on this special milestone and look forward to seeing her continue to grow in our cultural traditions.

Following the Kindergruppe's perfor-



mance, Erika Ehrat proudly introduced the Kindergruppe Memorial Day project. This meaningful undertaking was the result of countless hours of dedication, planning, and hard work by the Kindergruppe leaders, along with the support of several parent volunteers.

To conclude a wonderful day, the children spent time outdoors enjoying the playground. They also had great fun playing with a collection of Hot Wheels and monster trucks generously brought by the Bappert family.

The afternoon beautifully blended remembrance, community, culture, and joy. We are deeply grateful to everyone who helped make the day possible and to all who joined us in honoring the past while celebrating the future. We look forward to continuing these meaningful traditions together for generations to come.

July 4th Report

By Christl Mueller

Our annual Fourth of July Picnic once again brought together members and friends of our club for an afternoon filled with fellowship, tradition, and patriotic celebration. Although the weather kept everyone guessing, it certainly didn't dampen our spirits.

The day began with partly cloudy skies, but just as our Kindergruppe and Jugendgruppe were preparing to perform, the rain finally caught up with us. Families and guests quickly found shelter beneath the pavilion, and for a brief moment it seemed Mother Nature might have other plans. But, as they say in show business, *the show must go on!*

With smiles on their faces and enthusiasm in their hearts, the members of our Kindergruppe and Jugendgruppe proudly walked onto the stage together, proving that a little rain couldn't stop them. The performance opened with a beautiful rendition of "*The Star-Spangled Banner*," sung by assistant Kinderleiterin, Ingrid, setting a heartfelt and patriotic tone for the afternoon. Together, the Kindergruppe and Jugendgruppe then joined voices to perform the patriotic favorite, "*America the Beautiful*," followed by two beloved German children's songs, "*Häschen in der Grube*" and "*Mein Hut, der hat drei Ecken*." Their performance was a wonderful reminder that we can proudly celebrate both our American home and our German heritage.

In honor of America's 250th anniversary celebration, our dedicated kitchen crew treated the children to classic American picnic favorites, including hot dogs, chips, and cookies. It was a simple but meaningful way to commemorate this historic milestone while creating special memories for our youngest members.

The Kindergruppe delighted the audience with three traditional dances, showcasing weeks of hard work and practice. This performance was especially memorable for our newest dancers making their debut: Tommy Balcerak, Beatrice Tewers, and Eddie Bappert, who impressively participated in all three dances. We are so proud of each of them for their enthusiasm and courage as they took the stage for the first time.

Former Kinderleiterin Linda Byrom had the special honor of presenting Elizabeth Scharaga and Bree Perez with photo books filled with cherished memories from their time in Kindergruppe. Bree has been a part of Kindergruppe

for the past year and a half, while Elizabeth has grown up in Kindergruppe, participating since she was very young and making countless memories along the way. These photo books are a wonderful keepsake of the friendships, traditions, and special moments they have shared throughout their Kinder years. Please join us in congratulating Elizabeth and Bree on their time in Kindergruppe and celebrating this exciting milestone as they move up to Jugendgruppe!

After their performances, the Kindergruppe enjoyed popsicles together. Despite the rain and chilly weather, the sweet summertime treat was a fun way to celebrate and brought plenty of smiles to the children.

Rain or shine, it is days like these that remind us what makes our club so special. We cherish the friendships we share, the traditions we preserve, and the joy of passing our German heritage on to the next generation.



Aus unseren Abteilungen (From our Departments)

Jugendgruppe

Megan Gabler – Jugendgruppe Delegate
megangabler23@gmail.com

Past Activities Report

By Marguerite Schubert

Spingo

Multiple Choice Quiz: What is Spingo?

- A. A strong beer in Old England
- B. Spaghetti with side of BINGO
- C. An annual event hosted by AAS Jugend
- D. All of the above

If you guessed D, you're right!!

I'm not planning to dazzle you with Cornish ale brewing tips, but I would like to regale you with tales of 2026 SPINGO success! The pasta was delicious! The bar was well tended – including a shift by the dynamic duo of Katrina & Zac. A great time was had by all! A huge thank you to all who helped to make this year memorable!

Who doesn't love Spaghetti??? Add in a side of Bingo and you have Spingo!! Spingo was first introduced to the American Aid Society around February of 2013 and has proven to be a roaring success year after year! The Jugendgruppe members are thankful to our wonderful and supportive Jugend parents, who we can always count on for a helping hand, especially in the bar. We hope that Spingo will continue to be an everlasting tradition for generations to come!

This year Jugend was able to bring back the annual *Thank You* brunch! On behalf of all of Jugend, we are so very grateful for everyone's ongoing support. In addition to all of the wonderful contributions of food and drinks for the brunch, we enjoyed a fantastic cutting station, wide selection of food, and everyone's personal favorite, the Blood Mary Bar tended by Katrina Schubert.

Frühlingsbankett

My personal favorite event, Frühlingsbankett, had a wonderful turnout this year!

The Spring Banquet represents "new beginnings," as we come back from the winter season. In light of these new beginnings, we come together with an abundance of food, drinks, and music. This year showcased our newest members, Bree and Elizabeth, who joined the Jugendgruppe on the 4th of July.

With a majority of our members away at college, we have deep gratitude for your support and the determination of our *Gruppenleiter* (Erik) and *Gruppenleiterin* (Megan). Thank you!

Memorial Day Report

By Marguerite Schubert

We celebrate Memorial Day with remembrance and gratitude by holding a church service, honoring the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation. Memorial Day is an opportunity to teach our future generations about their culture and heritage. The girls of the Kindergruppe carry the statue of our Mother Mary and the Jugendgruppe follow behind them carrying the crosses with the names of locations where many Donauschwaben perished. We honor those who have passed with poems and songs, as a reminder that they are forever in our thoughts and hearts. This service also allows us to remember community members who we have lost more recently. It is important to honor them for all that they have done and accomplished for the American Aid Society.

Thank you for your service!

July 4th Report

By Marguerite Schubert

Happy Happy 250th Birthday, America! Although the rain and humidity came in full force this year, we still had an amazing turnout! This year, we introduced our newest members who are moving up from Kindergruppe. Elizabeth Scharaga and Bree Perez graduated from Chicago Academy and now attend Chicago Academy High School and Holy Trinity High School. Zachary LaCour also graduated from Wilbur Wright College with his associates degree and paralegal certification! Marijana Tomasicyk graduated from Regina Dominican High School and now attends the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she plans to major in Chemistry. I would also like to formally introduce our newest members, Lily and Natalie Manning. Thank you so much for joining us!

We were excited to perform four dances and welcome our new members! Thank you to all of the kitchen ladies and men who helped out and prepared all of the food. A big thank you to the bar volunteers for providing us with beer. Without all of you, we would all be left hungry and thirsty!

What do they call the 4th of July in nursing homes??????

– In Depends Day!

So Happy *In Depends Day* to all of our members!



Frauengruppe

Bernadette Henz – Frauengruppe Delegate
hebernadet@aol.com



Painting for Fun

Several months ago at the clubhouse, the Frauengruppe had a lovely afternoon of painting and sipping wine.

Additional activities are being planned. Contact Bernadette Henz hebernadet@aol.com for details.

About the Frauengruppe

The Frauengruppe was formed in 2012. Many of the ladies thought it would be nice to form a group that goes out for social events as well as teach some of the younger ladies many of our traditions such as baking and cooking traditional meals.

If you would like to become a member of the Frauengruppe, please contact Bernadette Henz at hebernadet@aol.com.



Geneva Boat Touring

On July 9, our Frauengruppe took to the water for a delightful afternoon boat tour of scenic Lake Geneva. Members enjoyed beautiful views, great company, and a relaxing summer day together.



Our next outing is "Grease Sing-Along" at the Ravinia Festival on August 23rd. We are also planning an architectural city tour of downtown Chicago.

Throughout the year, the Frauengruppe organizes weekend excursions and a variety of activities for members and guests. Everyone is welcome to participate in any Frauengruppe activity!





DONAUSCHWÄBISCHE STIFTUNG *2026- Sommerausgabe*

The Danube-Swabian Foundation of the USA, Inc.
Die Donauschwäbische Stiftung der USA, e.V.
6601 Edwood Ave.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45224
513-522-3849
<https://www.donaufoundation.org>

Dear Friends of the Danube Swabian Foundation (aka. Stiftung).

Exciting progress is being made by the officers and directors of our Stiftung. At our past annual meeting in April, we agreed to set new goals: to reach more donors and continue to grow our investments. (We agreed to increase our capital by an additional \$500,000 in the next 10 years.) We have made it easier for you to donate to the Stiftung through our website **Donaufoundation.org**. And, more importantly, we continue to increase the stipends to the various activities throughout our U.S. Donauschwaben community.

Last year in Mansfield during our Labor Day festivities, I asked for a show of hands by all in attendance, if they participated in their club's sponsored soccer tournament over Memorial Day, participated in their club's German school, played in their club's brass band, travelled with their youth group to Europe and/or a Welttreffen(s), attended a Jugendlager(s), wrote an essay for Oma Abt, or won a Kulturpreis. An overwhelming number of hands were raised by our young and old Schwowe. The Stiftung has played a significant part providing financial support and guidance to these activities and participants.

Please help us continue to keep our Donauschwaben heritage alive with your financial support. Young and old benefit from the Stiftung's backing. The stipends are shared equally among the U.S. Donauschwaben clubs toward the betterment of our activities. It's now easier to donate. Help us reach our \$500,000 (faster). Thank you to all that have previously made donations. I am sure if you were to ask someone in your club if they have been active in the above-mentioned cultural undertakings, you will find our Stiftung was there to help with guidance and offset some of the cost.

Ed Tullius
Danube Swabian Foundation President

Németkéri Német Nemzetiségi

From Laura Casey

As a member of the Weltdachverband der Donauschwaben, the Landesverband participates in a global cultural exchange. This exchange sends our dance groups on performance tours of Europe (made possible through Stiftung funding, thank you!) as well as hosts European groups during performance tours of North America. This year we are fortunate to have two such groups traveling to various cities, and both will participate in our Landestrachtenfest mit Jugendwettbewerb over Labor Day weekend.

Németkéri Német Nemzetiségi Tánccsoport is a cultural dance group from Németkér, Hungary making their first trip to the United States. After competing against dozens of dance groups, this group from Németkér currently holds the top festival prize from the Landesrat, the national cultural organization in Hungary. Traveling with them are Edina Bunth, Jugendvertreterin (Hungary) of the Weltdachverband, and Julianna Szabó, Tanzsektionvorsitzende of the Landesrat. Furthermore, we are happy to welcome the mayor of Németkér, Erika Horvath-Gál, who is also traveling with the group. This group, made up of members of a variety of ages, welcomed and hosted several of our American groups that recently traveled to Europe.



Danube- Swabian Association of the USA, Inc.

Landesverband der Donauschwaben USA, Inc

<https://donauschwabenusa.org>



Liebe Landsleute,

It has already been an exciting year for the Donauschwaben in the US! One look at social media will show you the vibrancy of our clubs, from Kirchweih and balls to car shows and everything in between. It is amazing to see the amount of hours that are put into our organizations and the amount of dedication shown by our membership, both young and old.

We have even more excitement on the horizon. This year we will host two award-winning groups from Europe on their tours in the United States, fulfilling our part of the cultural exchange with the *Weltdachverband* that allows our dance groups to experience the *Alte Heimat* every year. We return to Chicago for the Landestreffen hosted by the American Aid Society, and our *Jugend Wettbewerb* will once again put our groups on peak display. We have Oktoberfest, Traubenfest, and Rosenbälle to attend and to plan. It is a great time to be a Schwob in America!

Our clubs work hard to ensure that our culture sees tomorrow. Our youth involvement is nothing short of amazing: when in the modern age our Jugend could be doing any number of other things with their precious time, they are actively choosing to spend it in our club houses and at our events. They are actively building the future of our organizations and choosing to live it every day. Your donations are going directly to them, to help them at least financially to keep our heritage alive and kicking.

I have said before and I will say again: our culture does not survive by chance. It takes the daily affirmative choices of our membership to keep showing up even when staying home is the easier option in order to keep this American Schachtel going down the river of time. It is through your donations that we are able to do that.

Please consider adding a donation to the Stiftung to your giving plan this year. You will not regret it and will see your money at work firsthand in the smiles of our Kinder and Jugend whose participation in their ancestry is made possible by your gift. Thank you in advance!

Raymond Martini — CEO, Danube Swabian Foundation President, Landesverband der Donauschwaben USA



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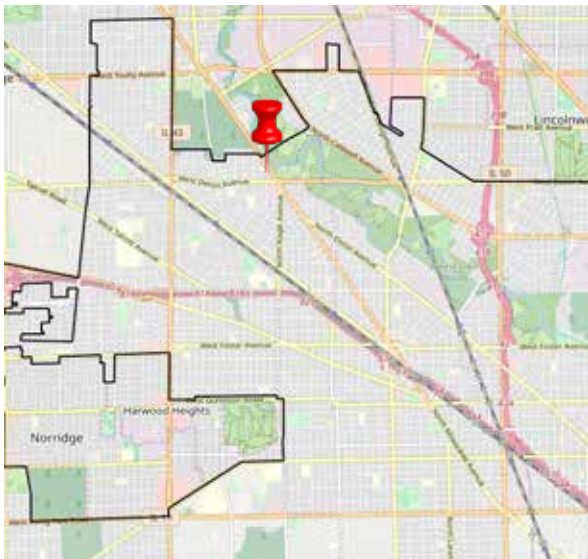
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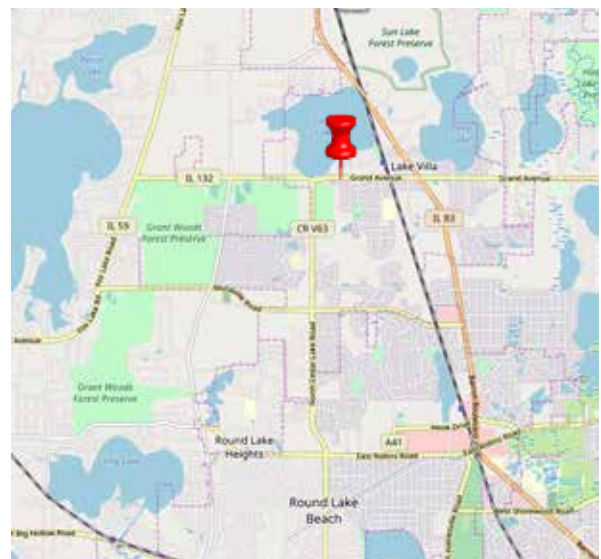
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Wegweiser fürs Vereinshaus und Kultur Zentrum (Directions to our Clubhouse and to our Cultural Center in Lake Villa)



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