
German Studies Association

Newsletter

Volume XXVIII

Number 2

Winter 2003

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340 E. 15th St., Tempe, AZ 85226 USA

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Number 1
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Section One

Association News

Over the next year, the Newsletter will gradually be shifting to a new format, and most of the news on grants, other conferences, and other more time-specific matters will be placed on the Association web pages. The Newsletter itself will deal mostly with other matters of interest to GSA members, especially Association News, news for ready use, such as computers, and the like. The Newsletter will also print articles on German Studies, curricula, teaching, articles on the profession, and so on. Members are invited to contribute such articles to the Newsletter. Kindly send manuscripts to thegsa@yahoo.com as an attachment. I will endeavor to respond as soon as possible.

Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference New Orleans

The Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference of the Association was held at the Radisson Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana, near the French Quarter. It was the largest conference in the history of the Association, with more than 770 persons registered and 168 sessions scheduled.

There were a few problems. The hurricane that swept through the Caribbean Sea and then sped up the East Coast wreaked havoc on airline schedules. Many East Coast flights were cancelled and some people were unable to reach the Conference. Others left one day early, and made it without difficulty, but had to pay an additional hotel night. I suppose it is important to repeat here that GSA conference participants have always been required to cancel their own hotel rooms, and should not ask GSA staff to do so for them. All room cancellations and arrival and departure changes are the responsibility of the participant, as our instructions clearly state. One participant wrote me an angry e-mail that a GSA staff member in our Main Office had assured him on the telephone that GSA would cancel his hotel room for him. It made a nice story. The GSA telephone at the Main Office is not answered by GSA staff, but by an answering service, and they only take messages. No GSA staff person can speak to long distance callers on the telephone. The staff works with only local phone service, and can only make outgoing local calls and receive no incoming calls. Most GSA communications are by e-mail to us at thegsa@yahoo.com and the days of long distance telephoning seem to be over. In fact, if I wish to speak to the GSA Main Office staff, I send them an e-mail and ask them to call me! It's a local call, so they can do so.

Some European participants were shifted around in order to get them to New Orleans. Some had to fly Frankfurt-Los Angeles-New Orleans, a genuine Weltreise. A less competent local airline representative shifted some to Frankfurt-Pittsburgh, not being familiar with North American geography, and not realizing that Pittsburgh was directly in the path of the storm. These German participants overnighted in Pittsburgh before they could travel on. Then, there were a few problems on check-in. Fortunately, the GSA Registration Desk was up and running even before most people arrived, so we were able to assist a number of people.

A number of people commented that the New Orleans French Quarter district is not exactly in good repair, and that better and less well-appointed districts seem to merge around that part of the city. So it is. On the other hand, the restaurants were reported to be well worth it. The hotel bell staff made good recommendations, and that appeared to be a welcome way of networking when one was not at the hotel. Other hotels in the vicinity that were as large as the Radisson were charging \$190 a room or more for conferences of our size the week we were there. We turned down one hotel for \$179 a night because there were 6 fewer meeting rooms. Over eight session blocks, that would have resulted in far fewer sessions.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear GSA Members,

The idea for a "letter from the president" is part of an overall agenda of increasing communication with and involvement of our members. The most prominent aspect of that agenda is, of course, the ever-expanding and ever more useful GSA web page, www.g-s-a.org, which we hope will become habit-forming! Another, sorely underutilized, venue for such communication and involvement is the Business Meeting, always held on Friday afternoon at the annual conference. All members are invited, encouraged, urged to attend and make their voices heard, but surprisingly few do. As a further step in improving communications, we plan to resume publishing minutes of that meeting.

With the successful 2003 conference behind us, efforts are now focused on 2004, for which you will find important information in this Newsletter. We believe, of course, that it was the stimulating interdisciplinary atmosphere of GSA and not the touristic repute of "the Big Easy," that brought a record 770 German Studies scholars together in New Orleans. Gratifyingly, satisfied comments about the outstanding quality of the program significantly outweighed disgruntlement about the shortcomings of the hotel accommodations, where promised

renovations were seriously inadequate. About one third of our conference participants came from outside North America. The largest number, almost 200 strong, arrived from German-speaking Europe, with notably increased representation of our Austrian colleagues. In perusing the program, I was delighted to note colleagues from 15 other countries, including many from the UK, but also from Australia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Sweden. While it is marvelous to anticipate that the 2004 conference in Washington, D.C., will top this record -- and take place in a hotel with which we had an excellent experience in 2001 -- it also means that the Program Committee will face ever more difficult decisions on proposals for the number of sessions to which we are limited by the economics of hotel space allotments, which Gerry Kleinfeld has elaborated on several occasions.

One of the major duties of the GSA president is the appointment of committees that carry on much of the work of the Association. Since, counting members of the GSR Editorial Board appointed by the Editor and elected members of the Executive Committee, nearly seventy people serve GSA in one capacity or another every year, we are always on the lookout for potential appointees to our various committees (book prizes, article prizes, nominations, investments, and program committee). If you are interested in serving, please let any one of the officers know; we consult on all such appointments.

The newest committee to which appointments are being made is for the American half of the selection committee for fellowships to the Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin, with which GSA has recently entered into a cooperation agreement. In 2004, the transition from the Social Science Research Council to GSA as U.S. agent of the program will be complete. In existence since 1986, this insufficiently known program represents an extraordinary opportunity for dissertation writers and very recent PhDs preparing their first monograph in all fields and we are determined that word of this program reach more young scholars who can benefit from it. We have an application pending to add to this mix a regular NEH Fellowship for a more senior scholar; watch for an announcement in spring if we are successful. Modeled on other interdisciplinary institutes for advanced study, the Berlin Program excels at supporting interdisciplinary research with its mentored program of biweekly seminars and infrastructural support, including contacts with experts and resources for research all over Berlin. See the GSA website for details on the application process; the next deadline will be Dec. 1, 2004.

A very major improvement in member participation and involvement has been brought about by the new election system. Ballots and candidate information are now sent to you with your dues notice in order to encourage higher rates of participation. This is the next item you will receive in the mail from GSA; please

don't ignore either part of it. Dues reminders are time-consuming and expensive and this year's election is for a larger-than-usual slate: candidates in history, political science, and Germanics, as well as a vice-president who will succeed to the presidency.

As I hope this first communication makes clear, we need and want your involvement. Please feel free to contact me, any of the other officers, or members of the Executive Committee with your ideas and concerns.

With best wishes,
 Patricia Herminhouse
 (pahe@troi.cc.rochester.edu)

Input on Future Conferences

As with other organizations, GSA books its conference hotels several years in advance. We are now, at this writing, booked through 2006 and are in negotiations for 2007 and 2008. The first really open date at present is 2009, when we will probably return to Washington, D.C., so there are few open slots available.

In the past, we have tended to work with some local members. There have been good and not-so-good experiences. Sometimes, local members are just unable to help get students to volunteer to serve at the Registration Desk, even when we pay them. That is tough for us, and requiring some rethinking about how to operate the desk. As for selection of hotels, local members have often helped by playing the "good cop/bad cop" game with pricing as an assist to us. It helps, but not much. This is really a professional task. Hotels either have or do not have the facilities we want. Most downtown hotels in many major cities are too expensive for GSA. Why? Well, first of all, our meeting time is very expensive. Other conferences, which meet at different times, get different rates. Our conference time is in high season in most cities, and this gets the highest rates. Second, our members tend to double up more often than many other conference-goers. We sell fewer rooms because people share rooms. Third, our members tend to eat fewer arranged meals, like the luncheons and the banquets. Hotels earn a lot from catered meals and pass some benefits on to the conference by reducing room rates. They don't get much from the coffee shop. So, we get charged more. Fourth, we need a huge number of meeting rooms - many more than the average for other conferences with our number of sleeping rooms and meals. Finally, we don't drink enough at cocktail receptions. This is a serious conference, and we do not drink enough. All of this counts.

The best available meeting room/sleeping room/price situation is usually at a

hotel not downtown. Often, it is at a hotel near an airport, because those are built for conferences. We have not met at an airport area hotel since Los Angeles, more than a decade ago. We cannot meet anywhere near downtown in New York City, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and many other cities because there are simply no hotels that meet our requirements at a price that our members can afford and are willing to pay. The number of cities in this category is growing. However, there are some second-tier cities that we could meet in. I have recently signed a contract with a hotel in Pittsburgh, for 2006. There are two possible downtown hotels in that city and very decent air connections. I can see us coming back to each of those Pittsburgh hotels if the prices remain stable. We do not have the same in Atlanta. I found hotel situations difficult in Dallas and Houston. So, we are searching all the time. Your input is always helpful. Use the Business Meeting to ask and to offer, or write me at thegsa@yahoo.com with ideas.

GSA-DAAD Book and Article Prizes

The Prize Committees and the Guidelines for submitting books for consideration will be posted on the GSA web site at www.g-s-a.org as soon as possible. Consult the web site for the latest information on the various prizes.

The GSA Business Meeting – DUES INCREASE!

Again, this year, the Business Meeting was poorly attended. The Executive Committee presented the results of elections, the budget, and information on the Berlin Program. I talked about the conference, conference sites, and about the new web registration situation. Secretary-Treasurer Gerald A. Fetz (German, University of Montana) explained that rising costs necessitated a dues increase for the first time in many years. We are caught between staff costs and rising printing and postage costs. And, web site improvement is also a new cost factor. Facing these figures, **the Executive Committee voted in New Orleans to raise dues to US\$55 for North American members, and US\$65 for non-North American members.** The non-North American rates include the extra postage costs for three issues of the journal, two of the Newsletter, and the one issue of the Conference Program. Members receive more than 1000 pages of printed matter a year, mailed in six separate mailings!! This is an extraordinary concentration of paper and postage. And, when addresses are not correct and a special mailing is necessary, postage costs are astronomical. It costs \$1.65 alone to mail the Conference Program under those cases. Not counting the envelope, or staff time! Thus, the pressure to use on-line interactive methods is very great. Many Newsletter sections will now appear only on the web site. GSA membership is still a bargain, and is still even the same as student rates for some other scholarly associations, while our Conference registration fees are also almost always significantly lower than those other associations. However, not only does our relatively smaller membership not give us their economy of scale,

but we often are expected to have a far more personal approach and direct contact with members than other associations. This has been a GSA characteristic from the first, and still is there. However, it is increasingly difficult to maintain. As President Herminghouse (German, University of Rochester) has indicated in her letter published in this issue, the leadership really wants to maintain direct contact with members, and wants input. But, the Business Meeting is a good place for this and is largely ignored. We come to talk with you, to hear your views. Come out and talk with us. GSA is anything but a top-down organization, with over seventy people serving on committees that actually make decisions. When counted over a four or five-year period, this is an enormous percentage of the total membership.

It is important to know that Vice President Katherine Roper (History, St. Mary's College) is right at this moment collecting the names of possible candidates for committee appointments that she will need to make beginning with the Fall of 2004. If you are interested in serving after 2004, please contact her as well at kroper@stmarys-ca.edu if you want to serve after 2004, and if you want to serve sooner, then contact present President Herminghouse at the e-mail she gave you in her letter. GSA remains one of the most open organizations in the scholarly world.

Members should be aware of the Association structure and administration because it will help in communicating and understanding how decisions are made. The full text of the Association By-Laws is published on the GSA web site. Essentially, GSA has officers for specific functions. The President's duties are outlined in the By-Laws. We do not elect a president, but a Vice President, and that person serves two years on the Executive Council before succeeding to the Presidency. The Secretary-Treasurer's role is also explained in the By-Laws. That person is the main financial officer of the Association and makes financial decisions and administrative decisions respecting finances. The Executive Director's role is likewise explained in the By-Laws. That person runs the Main Office of the Association and is in overall charge of the Conference. The Editor is the main individual for the Association's journal, and that person's role is also outlined in the By-Laws. Together, the President, the Vice President, the Secretary-Treasurer, the Executive Director and the Immediate Past President constitute the Executive Council, a body which makes interim decisions between meetings of the Executive Committee, which meets once a year. All these persons, with the exception of the Executive Director and the Editor, who are appointed, are elected by the membership. In addition, there are a number of committees, including the Program Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Archives Committee, the Book Prize and Article Prize Committees, and several other committees whose members are all appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Council. In all, as President Herminghouse has pointed out, there are over 70 members serving at various times in various posts

throughout the Association. This is a very democratic organization in which there is a division of powers, and a large number of elected and appointed members serving in various capacities. This number of people means that the leadership is constantly in search of the names of other, new people who can be brought in and serve in various capacities. At each meeting of the Executive Committee, the new members are introduced – since we come from a variety of disciplines not everybody knows the persons who have been elected. In short, the leadership is broad and diverse and does not consist of people who generally know one another before they have been elected or appointed. Therefore, we encourage communication with the membership and seek constantly to develop lists of people who are willing and able to serve in various capacities.

New Staff Appointments

In the GSA Main Office, much correspondence will be handled by Administrative Assistant Ramaswamy Vadivelu. Many of you met him at the GSA New Orleans Conference. His role of Office Manager and Operations Director has already put him in touch with many of you. He is the person at the other end of many e-mails that get sent to us. Again, as mentioned earlier, your telephone call to the office is answered by a friendly and efficient answering service. They will take your message, but we do not and cannot return long distance calls. You should leave your e-mail address for contact. In addition, I now have a deputy, largely for Conference affairs, Douglas Easton. Easton works out of metro Denver, Colorado, and is the owner of New West Indexing Corporation. Easton will be handling many of the details for the GSA Annual Conference, and will be doing a lot of the coordinating. In many cases, as with Vadivelu, an e-mail addressed to thegsa@yahoo.com will be answered by either Easton or Vadivelu. You may have met Easton at an earlier GSA conferences. Both Easton and Vadivelu will be at the 2004 Conference in Washington, D.C.

Audiovisual Services at the GSA Conferences

There are numerous pages in this Newsletter devoted to audiovisual services at the Conference. To some, this may appear to be overkill. It is not. This issue has generated more heat than any other. It has generated more words from people who have not read our materials, more angry criticism that is unjustified given what has been written, and more angry comments that the GSA leadership is not sympathetic to the needs of people who use such devices at conferences than anything else. Not only is the GSA leadership sympathetic, but we have devoted untold hours of discussion, e-mails, and meetings to audiovisual services in a vain effort to reach solutions that are acceptable to all members. We have held discussion meetings – the most recent in San Diego at the Business Meeting. Yet, people who come to no such meetings, who fail to read the policies carefully, and who write no e-mails in response to pleas in the Newsletter, still complain that

their voices are not heard. I just recently received an angry e-mail about our policy from someone who quoted the Spring Newsletter call for input, but who had failed to respond to it. Members have had every opportunity to express views, make suggestions, and offer ideas. In frustration, some people have proposed simply eliminating all devices, or all papers which require them, saying that NOTHING whatever that is possible will satisfy, and groused that people will complain first, and read the Guidelines afterwards.

As Executive Director, I have tried very hard to do what I can. I have even turned over much of the decision process on audiovisual policy to the Executive Council, which may have been a mistake, because that body meets only infrequently, and can only infrequently address the problem. It seems that we need to discuss it constantly. The Guidelines are an Executive Council document. The Council members have tried desperately to be clear. Some complainers do not cite the Guidelines in their complaints. Maybe they have not read them. Please read them. We repeat ourselves to make certain that nothing is misunderstood. Some people say that the Guidelines are too detailed. Others complain that we leave things out. First, we try to put everything in, then it doesn't get read, so we are urged to shorten the document so that it might be read. Please bear with us. We are trying to listen to the members and we are trying to help. We really are.

Let us be honest. There is no perfect solution, no magic key.

The latest suggestion is that all those who write that their paper needs audiovisual devices should be taken at their word. If lack of sufficient funding dictates that their paper does not receive a device, then their paper ought to be rejected for the conference, goes this argument. Some call this draconian. Others say that this is a wise response – the authors know their papers. Certainly, there would be no angry persons at the conference, giving papers that would have been better with an av device.

We managed to provide audiovisual services to more people and more sessions in New Orleans than ever before. To that end, the minimal \$35 co-payment required of av presenters whose requests had been approved helped us to add more devices, but only a few more devices. It is too small a sum. And, because not everybody reads the Newsletter carefully or the web site either, some people were convinced a) that \$35 was the whole cost of the devices, and b) and/or that it was enough money to support all requests, so that all were approved. In other words, the sum of \$35 was a failure. As we have tried to explain, the average rental cost per device is now running to \$300. At the Business Meeting in San Diego in 2002, there was much discussion of what to do about the escalating av costs. We discuss this until the cows come home, but there seem to be no solutions that satisfy everyone, and not everyone will read the av Guidelines

anyway, so all solutions fail with some people. That does not stop them from complaining, mostly about me when I try to enforce what has been decided upon by a committee.

We seem to have a few basic problems here:

- 1) Not everybody reads the guidelines and instructions. We don't know what to do about this. Some people appeared to believe that \$35 was the total cost for an av device rental despite what we wrote and have written over years and years. If the cost were only \$35, we would not have any problems. Actually, rental costs are often \$175 per device, plus \$75 setup and \$75 takedown, plus tax, plus service charge, and that often means a great deal of money. It averages \$300.
- 2) Some people have been moving equipment from rooms in which they were scheduled to other rooms. This is theft. The people in the scheduled rooms lose their equipment without notice, and those who take it are taking something that they have not paid for and have not been assigned.
- 3) We know that some equipment breaks down, and that bulbs burn out. We try to have a hotel/av company repair person on site. It is mostly successful, but sometimes takes a while. Because presentations are back-to-back, time is of the essence, and we will try harder in the future to have the site representative have replacement bulbs. We cannot do much if the machine breaks down.

GSA has tried to do its best to help participants who need these devices for their presentations. The Executive Committee has listened to people's views in the Business Meeting, and in private conversations with affected persons. Let us make a few things clear to those who have not been a part of this discussion, so that they can be brought up to date on it:

- 1) We do not have enough money to fund the rental of every av device requested.
- 2) The Program Committee must make decisions based on what we can afford.
- 3) We have instituted a \$35 co-payment to deter unnecessary use and to help add a few dollars to the overall budget so that a few more devices can be funded. It is not enough. It is enough to irritate people and to provide a few more devices, and to convince others that it is the total cost, but it does not help to solve the whole problem. It probably needs to be raised to a more realistic sum. Because this is now a committee decision, it cannot be made for 2004.

- 4) We make efforts to tell people in advance which devices are approved and which are not, but nobody should assume that they are going to be approved for the devices requested just because they need it. We don't have enough money for that. If people have not heard, it is their responsibility to ask.
- 5) Some devices are much more expensive to rent than others, and we can do only limited rental of expensive devices.
- 6) The Program Committee saves on setup and takedown charges by settling on a few rooms to have the equipment all day long and rotating the sessions needing the devices into those rooms. This is better than bringing the devices first to one room then to another and then to a third, thus incurring three setup and takedown fees for three sessions.

People who want to use av devices at GSA Conferences have a choice. If they are approved, fine. If their request is denied, they can then either bring hand-outs for the audience or revise their topic to eliminate the need for the device. Some people have suggested that all presentations turned down for av be denied acceptance for the Conference at all, since they probably would be better replaced by presentations that did not seem to need av devices. This seems overly harsh, but some presenters agree. They feel that they cannot present that particular topic without a device. We have sought input as to whether it is then a good idea simply to cancel a paper, if it is not accepted for av. We just do not have the money for all requested devices. Next year, in Washington, rental costs are higher. They seem to go up every year. Last Spring, in the Newsletter, I asked for more suggestions and input from the members. The number of responses to that request was zero. One person did write after the New Orleans Conference and state that the Spring Newsletter call for input and suggestions was the Association av policy statement. Obviously, the person had not read the section carefully. It really was a request for input. The policy statement is on the web site at www.g-s-a.org and in the Winter Newsletter, along with the Call for Papers. We are sometimes, as professors, bombarded with so many guidelines and statements and mission statements and memos from our departments that this overkill leads many of us not to read the documents we get, but sometimes just to scan them, skim through them, or just glance at them. Believe me, our Executive bodies spend a lot of time writing them. We try to make them clear, understandable, and not capable of misinterpretation. Often, there is a lot of discussion necessary for the perfect formulation of what is meant, and what compromises between positions A and B are needed. Thus, we ask your indulgence, and hope that you will write to us at thegsa@yahoo.com if you ever encounter a formulation that seems unclear. We are trying to be fair to everyone, and to make fair decisions on policy.

The Program Committee is in charge of deciding whose requests are approved or denied. If you have made an unclear request, if the reason given for use of the device is not clear, then it will not have as good a chance as those requests which have well-founded reasoning. This should be obvious. Expensive devices are hard to come by. Slide projectors are inexpensive, but more easily replaced by hand-outs than video presentations. So, slide projectors are most likely to be rejected. Also, one can often bring one's own slide projector. These days, they are not larger than laptops. Computer projection devices are coming down in cost, but not in rental fees. These are often quite expensive to rent. PAL/SECAM/NTSC devices are outrageously expensive to rent. Did you know that we must also rent a screen when we rent an overhead projector? That there is a separate setup and takedown fee for the screen? GSA has purchased an overhead projector and somebody carries it to the Conference. This reduces our costs. However, someone must volunteer each year to bring it. Should we buy a second? Who would carry it? These are all real issues.

For 2004, I will put a list of those sessions approved by the Program Committee for av devices on the GSA web site. I will do this as soon as I am able. Nobody will be able to say that they did not know whether their request was approved. I know that somebody will complain that the list was posted too late, because they were already writing their paper. This is a no-win situation for me. We also want to find out if those whose requests were not approved were able to give competent papers. If not, we must think seriously about rejecting the papers themselves if the devices are not approved.

And, we must do something about persons who steal devices from one room and move them into another. Therefore, in Washington, in 2004, we will charge participants in that session the FULL PRICE of rental of the devices, plus setup and takedown and service and tax for EACH device stolen in this manner. Moving of devices will not be permitted. Moving of the device constitutes an authorization to charge the full price! Please re-read this paragraph.

READ the web site. It is the last word. READ the Guidelines. They explain our policy. Come to the Business Meeting and be heard on this and other matters. The leadership of the Association wants to know your views!! We want to make just decisions. Please don't write to me or to the President and tell us that we have no policy, or that our policy is not clear, or that administering the policy is not fair. Please do not write to me and tell me that I reacted strangely when you told me something that was absolutely unbelievable. I try not to be shocked. But, occasionally, I am. We have really tried and are still trying. The Executive Council will discuss this entire policy again in January. Good grief!

The GSA Web Site Upgrade, New GSR Sub-Site

We are in the first stages of upgrading the GSA web site. The site will contain

much more information, regular news about GSA, and a number of interactive pages. It will also ultimately have a new look. Since the Newsletter cannot print all information about upcoming conferences and symposia and seminars around the country, and we rarely get the information sent to us in any case, we will discontinue these sections of the Newsletter. Instead, the GSA web site will contain an entire section of links to the sites of other organizations, including those which will have conferences or contain information about conferences, and also it will have links to grants, scholarships, and other such sites. The GSA web site will contain a variety of links, especially those you suggest to us, that will provide all sorts of information. Please send any suggestions for links to us at thegsa@yahoo.com, and we will be happy to consider them.

The first major upgrade is the new *German Studies Review* sub-site. Editor Diethelm Prowe (History, Carleton College) and Book Review Editor Judith Ricker (German, University of Arkansas) are having a variety of good information for you there. In fact, the GSR pages are their own site, designed to provide the best information about the journal. Over three hundred "hits" were reported on this site in the first weeks it was operational, and that was before we announced it anywhere. This is quite remarkable, and shows the potential of the entire GSA site for all members. The GSR pages have been redesigned, with all information updated. The pages now include tables of contents both for current/forthcoming issues and back issues since the beginning (Feb. 1978). All these back issues, volumes 1-25 (1978-2002), except 11/1 (Feb. 1988) and 17/2 (May 1994), are available for purchase at US \$5 in North America, and US \$10 via air mail all other destinations (all including postage). Bulk purchases will be much less (charges are essentially postage). Check with DProwe@carleton.edu. Starting with the February 2004 issue all articles will be published with 100-word abstracts. These will also be accessible through the web page displaying table of contents for the current and most recent issues.

The interactive part of the GSA web site will contain your membership data. In the future, GSA will join other societies and associations in putting membership forms and data on the web site. Each member will receive a PIN number and can access their own membership data. In this way, you can enter your credit card for automatic charging of your dues every year, update your own address so that it is always up to date, and change any such information that you need to do. This will be an easy process, similar to that of other associations, and the GSA will save on mailing costs. The savings are passed on to members. In addition, you can guarantee that we have your address so up to date that you never miss an issue.

This year, many people used the GSA On-Line Conference Registration. This year, it will be the only way to register in advance for the Conference. That section of the web site is also being upgraded.

On-Line Conference Registration the Only Way for GSA in 2004!

The On-Line system was so successful that we have decided to eliminate paper conference registration for 2004, except for On-Site Registration. Everyone already has a computer, or access to one, or can find a place where someone will do it for you. This is so time-saving, and so efficient, that we have joined other organizations who now do this exclusively. All of the comments of those who used it in the testing, or beta, version for 2003 have been considered in the upgrade for 2004. We are now ready for the full launch. You will need a Visa or MasterCard/Eurocard for the Conference Registration, but you can also use American Express or Diner's Club for the Hotel Reservation if you prefer. You must read the instructions carefully, and you **MUST** instruct your computer to accept cookies for the duration of the process. You should not break off to teach a class and finish it later, but you will be permitted to re-enter the site for limited access.

As soon as you finish the form, and click on the right button, your credit card will be charged for the registration and meal fees. You can re-enter the site later, but your credit card has already been charged. Thus, you cannot change the order. We will do our best to find a way in the future to allow you to change an order, but GSA has to pay the bank a processing fee for each charge and for each revision and for each refund. Therefore, we may have to institute a charge to the person who wants to change the order. The best way is just to change your affiliation, your address, or whatever, but not to try to change the amount of the order. It may be possible to ADD meals, but not to subtract. A new charge is acceptable by the bank. So, we will see how to do that. However, in this version, we will try just to ask you to decide before you charge your card what you want to buy, just like ordering books on-line. Same thing, you cannot change the order afterwards, but you can place a new order.

It will be important for you to decide how you want your name to read on the GSA Conference Badge. The badges will be printed as per your instructions on the web site. So, if you want your name all in small letters, like e e cummings, then that is the way it will be printed. Doesn't look so good, I would advise you. Also, try using periods. Like , for example. Please do not use all caps. It does not look good. Be sure that your affiliation is spelled correctly. You would be surprised. The badge likes to have umlauts. Use umlauts when you use them normally. The site allows you to use umlauts, and shows you how.

One great result of the on-line system is that we will not have so much correspondence with people who fill out paper forms incorrectly. (chuckle, chuckle, maybe we will use that time writing about av devices?) What about the person in 2003 who wrote next to the place for credit card: YES. ??? Would you believe? Or, the ones who put expiration date 04/99? Yes, an expired card. One person, when we finally tracked them down, said that they already had the replacement card with the new expiration date, but felt that the old card could

still be used with the old date because it had been renewed. Huh? How about the rubber checks that we receive? Nobody did that intentionally, but many people move bank accounts, close accounts, keep minimum balances because the rest of the money is in interest-bearing accounts, and so on. This costs money and staff time. And, it sure saves on entering data, where misspellings can always occur.

Do write your e-mail address clearly on the web site. We may need to contact you.

Now, for hotel reservations. These are sent directly by us to the hotel. We cannot actually make reservations, but we can ask the hotel to make them for you. That is why we cannot confirm reservations. Only the hotel can do that. We can also not cancel or change reservations. You have to do that with the hotel. So, once you have made a reservation on the web site, give us time to send it to the hotel, and then check with the hotel if you have not received a confirmation. As a rule, staff layoffs at hotels due to economic conditions have reduced the ability of hotels to send out a lot of confirmations to individuals, and they prefer to have you ask them. This is a general comment, and not meant to apply to any specific hotel, but it is our general observation. We do occasionally get a rooming list from the hotel, and we use that to check for spelling of names, to help them find you when you arrive at the check-in desk. However, we cannot guarantee anything. You must check with the hotel to confirm whether they actually have you in their computer. It does not help if we do and they do not. So, check with them.

The Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. October 6 - 10, 2004

The Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference of the German Studies Association will be held October 6 – 10, 2004 at the Marriott Crystal Gateway Hotel in the Arlington, Virginia suburb of Washington, D.C. This was the location of our 2001 Conference, and the hotel proved to be a beautiful and excellent site. The spacious lobby, finely appointed sleeping rooms, and expansive meeting room area have made it a perfect setting for our regular conferences in Washington. As long as rates remain within our range, we can view it as a permanent part of our conference planning. For those interested in future planning, consult the GSA web site for future conference dates and locations. In 2005, we will meet at the Milwaukee, Wisconsin Hilton Hotel from September 28 – October 2. This is the same hotel we met in the last time we were in Milwaukee, but the hotel's chain affiliation has since changed.

The Guidelines below should be self-explanatory. They are virtually unchanged from the 2002 Winter Newsletter. If anything is unclear, do write the Association Main Office or the Program Committee member.

Guidelines for Submitting Proposals

1. **Deadline.** The deadline for submission of proposals is February 15, 2004! In addition, scholars are advised that no requests for audiovisual materials may be submitted after February 15. Everything is due on February 15!

2. **Proposal Form.** The web site and the Winter GSA Newsletter contain a proposal forms that may be used for individual paper proposals or session proposals. The form may be duplicated.

3. **Multiple Proposals.** Individuals may not present more than one paper, or appear normally on more than two separate panels. Each panelist may have one function only on any given panel. Those presenting a paper on one panel may serve as moderator, commentator, or roundtable speaker on one other panel. Multiple proposals may only be submitted when each Session Coordinator who receives a proposal is informed and receives a copy of the other proposal. All presenters on a panel may not come from the same institution.

4. **Interdisciplinary Proposals.** Should be submitted to one of the session coordinators for that time period.

5. **Submission Guidelines.** When submitting an entire session, it is necessary to get the permission of the other presenters, and to include all relevant information about them, including address and e-mail address. Titles of all presentations must be given in the language (English or German) in which they will be presented if accepted.

- a. All proposals must be submitted to the appropriate Session Coordinator, not to the Program Director, and proposals should not be submitted to the Executive Director.
- b. Each proposal must be submitted to one Session Coordinator only, not to two or more simultaneously. The program committee will move proposals to other Session Coordinators if necessary.
- c. Proposals may be submitted to the appropriate Session Coordinator electronically, by snail mail, or by Fax.
- d. Complete Panel Proposals should be assembled and submitted by one organizer, and must include the following materials:
 - cover sheet listing panel (panel title, all panelists with affiliations, and titles of papers) as it would appear in the conference program.
 - sheet with abstract of the panel
 - sheets with title and abstract of each paper
 - sheet listing all panelists with addresses, telephone numbers,

fax numbers and e-mail addresses

- brief (1-2 pages) vitas of all panelists

e. Individual paper Proposals must include the following materials:

- title and abstract of paper
- brief (1-2 pages) vita

6. Graduate Students. Each session may have no more than one graduate student. Graduate students may not be commentators or moderators. German or other non-North American graduate students, defined as those persons without the terminal degree, the doctorate, may not be included in any session.

7. Modification of proposals by the Association. The Conference is the Conference of the Association. Accordingly, GSA reserves the right to add a paper or papers to a proposed session and/or to delete a paper or papers from a proposed session, or to replace a moderator or commentator. Proposers may be assured that GSA does this only in the interests of the Association.

8. Affiliated Organizations. GSA has recognized certain affiliated organizations or societies, which are granted one session each at the Conference. These are also subject to modification. Certain societies may place a second session, provided that this second session is vetted through the normal process. Therefore, such organizations must prioritize their proposed sessions. Accepted sessions are listed as "Sponsored by" in the program. The Committee may not accept sponsorship for any session by any organizations whose application to sponsorship has not been previously approved by the Association. If an organization wishes to apply for sponsorship, the person in authority in the organization should contact the Association at thegsa@yahoo.com and apply for sponsorship approval.

9. Round Table Sessions. GSA discourages a large number of round table discussions without papers, but there are always circumstances and issues that are best handled in a round table. If you plan to submit a proposal for one, it must be thoroughly justified. Submission of round tables should include as far as possible the materials required for complete panel proposals, as outlined above. No more than a maximum of six persons can be on a round table. There are no commentators on round tables.

10. Send Papers to Commentators or There May be a Problem. If the commentator does not receive the paper from a presenter before three weeks in advance of the conference, the Commentator will not have sufficient time to review the presentation. This is a constant problem with all organizations. If you do not send in your paper before three weeks in advance, GSA reserves the right to deny you an opportunity to present at the next Conference.

11. Audiovisual Equipment. It is necessary to indicate on the proposal form what

PROPOSAL
FOR A PRESENTATION AT THE GSA CONFERENCE 2004
PLEASE PRINT (BLOCKSCHRIFT) THROUGHOUT

Presenter's name as it should appear (omit academic title):

Title of presentation as it should appear in conference program booklet:

Presenter's institutional affiliation as it should appear in print:

Audiovisual equipment request and justification (be very specific!). AV equipment requires a CO-PAYMENT \$35 charge PER SESSION (not per presentation) PER PIECE OF EQUIPMENT towards the total, much higher, cost. **In this request provide below name of individual whose credit card is to be charged, whether Visa or Mastercard, card number, and expiration date.** If this information is NOT provided, NO request will be considered. Use back of this form if more room is required. **NOT ALL AV REQUESTS WILL BE APPROVED!!:**

Signature of person whose credit card is to be charged if the AV request is approved:

Address on the credit card account (**IMPORTANT**):

If presentation is to be part of a session already being planned, give name/affiliation of organizer or moderator, and approximate session title:

In case not all the other proposals for that session arrive on time, I would like to have mine considered independently: ____ Yes ____ No.

I am willing to be a moderator ____ or commentator ____:

in any case ____

only if my presentation is accepted ____

Presenter's address:

Presenter's telephone numbers;

Office: (____) ____ - _____

Home: (____) ____ - _____

Fax: (____) ____ - _____

e-mail: _____

Deadline for submission of proposals is February 15, 2004. Each participant must submit a separate proposal. GSA will decide date and time of session. GSA reserves the right to make changes up to the printing of the final program. The final printed program is correct. Since GSA expects the participants to be present for the entire conference, GSA reserves the right to make changes in time and date of a session at any time.

GSA Cancellation Policy: Persons who cancel after April 1 may be denied the right to appear at a GSA Conference for THREE YEARS! Cancellation of accepted proposals is a serious matter. It is the responsibility of the proposer to be informed about acceptance. GSA may only make a reasonable effort to inform by use of the data herein. Persons who wish to cancel must inform the GSA Executive Director promptly and provide reasons for such cancellation.

audiovisual equipment proposers may want to use in the session. Funds are very limited, and the time allocated for presentations is not ordinarily long enough for length audiovisual enhancement. Requests for such equipment must be justified. Those who would normally use slide and overhead projectors are urged to bring hand-outs should projectors not be available. Tape recorders will not be provided. Multiple version VCRs (PAL, Secam, and NTSC) will not be provided because of the extraordinary rental charges for such machines. Slide projectors are as small as laptops these days, and can be brought by presenters. Their high rental cost makes their local availability problematic. There is now a co-payment charge of \$35 per session (not per presentation) for AV equipment. This charge is due as soon as the session with the presentation has been accepted, and is not refundable. The Proposal Form **MUST** include the a credit card for the charge, so it must include a signature of the person on the credit card, the type of card - Visa or MasterCard - the card number, and the expiration date. If the card information is not included with the proposal form, the AV request will not be processed. Including the credit card information does **NOT** guarantee that AV equipment can be provided, since our budget is limited and there are more requests than can be authorized, and equipment costs are generally five to ten times the \$35 to be charged. Only those whose requests are approved will have their cards charged. If your request is not approved you may negotiate personally with the hotel for equipment.

DESPITE THE SECTION ABOVE, REPRINTED VIRTUALLY VERBATIM FROM THE WINTER 2002 NEWSLETTER, SOME PARTICIPANTS IN THE 2003 CONFERENCE COMPLAINED THAT 1) THEY THOUGHT THAT \$35 WAS THE TOTAL COST FOR AV DEVICES, OR 2) THEY THOUGHT THAT ALL DEVICES PROPOSED WERE AUTOMATICALLY APPROVED AND THAT THE POLICY AS STATED ABOVE WAS NOT CLEAR. PLEASE READ THE GUIDELINES HEREIN PRINTED AND ON THE WEB SITE. WE DO NOT PROVIDE ALL AV DEVICES REQUESTED, AND \$35 IS A VERY SMALL SUM, MUCH LESS THAN THE ACTUAL COST, WHICH MORE CLOSELY APPROXIMATES \$300. IF YOU CHOOSE TO RENT YOUR OWN DEVICES AT THE GSA CONFERENCE, BE AWARE OF ACTUAL COSTS. I REGRET REPEATING THIS TWICE, BUT I DO WANT TO BE SURE THAT YOU DO NOT MISS IT. I AM TRYING TO HELP – NOT TO CRITICIZE. IT HELPS US ALL IF YOU KNOW THE POLICY. IT IS YOUR CONFERENCE AND YOUR PAPER. I WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY WITH BOTH.

AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, I WILL EDITORIALIZE HERE, BEYOND THE APPROVED TEXT: I ADVISE ALL PROPOSERS WHO APPLY FOR AV DEVICES TO HAVE A BACK-UP PLAN. IF YOUR PROPOSED DEVICE IS REJECTED BY THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE, EITHER

BE PREPARED TO RENT YOUR OWN DEVICE OR BE PREPARED TO PRESENT THE PAPER WITHOUT A DEVICE. THIS MAY MEAN DISTRIBUTING HAND-OUTS OR RE-WRITING THE PAPER. DECISIONS MADE BY THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE ARE JUST AS IF THEY WERE DECISIONS REJECTING SESSIONS OR PAPERS. WE HAVE LIMITED RESOURCES. THE SMALL CHARGE OF \$35 ADDS VERY FEW ADDITIONAL DEVICES AS A CO-PAYMENT, AND CHARGES ARE RISING EVERY YEAR. OTHER ORGANIZATIONS CHARGE MUCH MORE. WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO LET YOU KNOW AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. AS SOON AS I AM ABLE, I WILL PLACE THE APPROVED LIST ON THE WEB SITE. DO NOT INQUIRE AT OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS. WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO RESPOND TO HUNDREDS OF INQUIRIES. WATCH THE WEB SITE. IT WILL CONTAIN THE INFORMATION AS SOON AS I AM ABLE. YOU MUST NOT ASSUME THAT YOU WILL HAVE A DEVICE. IF YOU THINK THAT THE DATE THE LIST IS POSTED IS TOO LATE FOR YOU, BECAUSE YOU ARE WRITING YOUR PAPER, THEN WRITE IT AS IF YOU WERE REJECTED FOR A DEVICE. DO NOT WAIT FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT IF IT APPEARS TOO LATE FOR YOU TO WRITE AN EXCELLENT PAPER. WE CAN ONLY MOVE SO FAST. IF TIME IS PRESSING, AND YOU MUST PROCEED TO WRITING THE PAPER, THEN DO IT AS IF THE DEVICE WERE REJECTED. THIS IS ONLY LOGICAL.

Additional GSA Conference Policies:

1. Affiliation. As indicated above, it is necessary to list the names, addresses, e-mail addresses, and affiliations of all participants in each session. This is important so that each participant can be contacted by the Association and can receive a printed copy of the Conference Program. Students must indicate that they have student status. Student participants are eligible for registration at a reduced rate. The Association does not have separate student sessions, but integrates accepted student participants into regular sessions.

No more than two presenters in any session may be affiliated with the same institution, university, or institute.

2. Withdrawal from the Conference. Persons who apply to present at the GSA Conference are expected to present at the Conference if their proposals are accepted. Withdrawal is accepted through April 1 without penalty. Withdrawal after April 1 must be justified in a letter (or e-mail) to the Executive Director of the Association. In accordance with a decision of the Executive Committee of the Association, persons whose withdrawal is not accepted by the Executive Director may be barred from presentation for three years.

Should an individual withdraw from the Conference after paying registration and/or meal fees, refunds will be made as follows: withdrawal prior to ten days before the beginning of the Conference will allow a refund of the fees paid minus \$25 service fee; withdrawal within ten days of the beginning of the Conference will not permit a refund of any registration or meal fees paid. Meal tickets cannot be transferred by the Association. Should a member pick up her/his meal ticket at the Conference and give it to someone else, that is acceptable. The Association will not reassign tickets.

3. **Hotel Reservation by the Association.** The Association undertakes to attempt to make hotel reservations for Conference participants. Only Conference participants may take advantage of this service, and participants are defined as those who wish to attend the Conference, whether they are on the program or not. Therefore, Conference Registration is a pre-requisite for hotel reservation by the Association. The only way to obtain hotel rooms at the reduced Conference rate is through the Association. This prevents non-Conference participants from using our reserved hotel block. When our block has been sold, or when the deadline for making reservations has passed, the Association will make a reasonable effort to secure more rooms, but cannot guarantee this. The Association does not confirm hotel rooms. This is the responsibility of the Hotel.

Should a Conference Participant wish to cancel or change the dates of the hotel reservation, this is the responsibility of the Participant and not of the Association, and it must be done directly with the Hotel. The Association takes no responsibility for changes or cancellations of room reservations.

The Program Committee and Conference Session Selection

The Annual GSA Conference has become as large as it presently can be maintained in our conference hotels. We are unable to obtain additional meeting rooms. Why? One reason is the low overnight hotel room booking of conference participants. We have about 700 participants in the conference each year, but sell less than 500 sleeping rooms. People share rooms, find a less expensive hotel, or stay with friends.

Given the tight allotment of meeting rooms, we have had to make some adjustments. Cancellations, which allow a meeting room to go unused, when some other session could have been accepted, prevent others from participating. They must be discouraged.

The Decision Process: The GSA Conference has no unified theme, requiring all proposals to address a particular topic, nor can the Association permit a disproportionate number of sessions to address a single theme, to the exclusion of others. The selection process involves not only an examination of the quality of proposals, but also a determination of balance among many factors. These include discipline, theme, and even century. For example, we cannot completely

exclude sessions that focus on the period prior to 1900 or 1800 or some such date. This does not mean that lesser quality sessions will be accepted, because we have more good quality proposals than we accept. Rather, it means that we try to secure a balance. It does mean that not all good quality proposals will be accepted, but it does mean that only good quality proposals will be accepted. The competition for acceptance is very stiff, because the number of meeting rooms is very limited. Each year, many proposals cannot be accepted. The Executive Committee has determined that priority will be given to good quality proposals from individuals who have not presented as often over those who have presented more often in prior years.

Rejection: The Program Committee makes its determination accordance with Association Policy and has the advice of the Executive Council through the president and the Executive Director on this matter. Accordingly, there is no appeal from a decision. The Committee works very hard in a very short time. Proposers should make their proposals as clear and as strong as possible, so that the Committee will have the proper information from which to make a decision.

European Participation: Because of the necessity of obtaining funds for transatlantic travel, European participation is dependent upon outside factors. The Association knows that the transatlantic nature of our Conference is a unique feature, and the GSA is a transatlantic dialogue. That German is a co-equal language at the Conference aids in this. GSA is the least expensive form of transatlantic conference in German Studies reaching the largest number of excellent scholars that is held anywhere! We try to maximize the number of foreign scholars, but are very dependent upon outside funding. Cancellations occur here, too, and we are also unable to accept every excellent transatlantic session. Our funding sources should understand that those transatlantic participants who ARE accepted are very special, and are genuinely deserving of funding. We understand the shortage of funds everywhere. We do our best.

DFG Funding: The DFG may require an application to the DFG dated January 1, 2003. Participants are warned that the DFG occasionally enforces this rule. In other words, the DFG may require an application six weeks prior to the GSA deadline for submitting proposals. GSA is attempting to clarify this ruling.

GSA Funding: The German Studies Association has limited funds available from donations and contributions, and can use these funds to aid a very small number of non- North American scholars in participation in the Conference. Scholars who seek GSA travel support ordinarily must have applied elsewhere as well, because our funds are so limited. Scholars wishing to avail themselves of GSA funds for travel must apply to the Executive Director of the Association for such support. This can be done by e-mail to thegsa@yahoo.com and should be done as soon as possible and with full information. Those persons who are

granted funding and who subsequently cancel their participation are liable for all costs of ticket, hotel, registration, meal tickets, and may also be subject to a service charge of US\$100 for such cancellation.

The Program Committee cordially invites proposals on any aspect of German Studies, including (but not limited to) history, Germanistik, film, political science, and cultural studies. Proposals for entire sessions and for interdisciplinary presentations are encouraged. Individual paper proposals are also welcome. Kindly submit to the appropriate Committee member in accordance with the GSA Guidelines.

Program Committee for the 2004 GSA Conference in Washington, D.C.

Program Director: Prof. Mark Rectanus e-mail: mwr@iastate.edu, fax: 515-294-9914 phone: 515-294-4324 mail: Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, 300 Pearson Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011.

20th Century Literature and Cultural Studies: Prof. Barbara Kosta e-mail: bkosta@u.arizona.edu, fax: 520-626-8268, phone: 520-621-7385, mail: Department of German Studies, LSB 301, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721.

20th Century History: Prof. Elizabeth Heineman e-mail: elizabeth-heineman@uiowa.edu, fax: 319-335-2293, phone: 319-335-2299, mail: University of Iowa, Department of History, 280 Schaeffer Hall, Iowa City IA 52242-1409.

19th Century History, Literature, and Cultural Studies: Prof. Andrew Lees, e-mail: alees@camden.rutgers.edu, fax: 856-225-6602, phone: 856-225-6071, 6080, mail: Department of History, Rutgers - The State University of New Jersey, Camden, NJ 08102.

18th Century History, Literature, and Cultural Studies: Prof. Alexander Mathäs, e-mail: mathaesa@oregon.uoregon.edu, fax: 541-346-4126, phone: 541-346-4101, mail: Dept. of Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1250.

Political Science: Prof. James Sperling, e-mail: jcs4@uakron.edu, mail: 231 S. Main Street, Granville, OH 43023, phone: 740-587-2641 (MWFSS), 330-972-8261 (TTH after 1:30-4:00).

Section Two

Computers and Internet

Handheld PDA's and Cell Phones

Some of us are still in the dark ages with paper address books and appointment calendars. However, now that handheld PDA's are more and more available, less and less expensive, and have more and more features, it may be time to invest in one or to upgrade if you already have one. First of all, a PDA is a Personal Digital Assistant. This is geek-speak for a small electronic device that replaces an address book and an appointment calendar and does much more, besides. The biggest advantage over the paper address book is that each new name is automatically alphabetized and you never have to worry about not having enough pages under "A" or "M," for example. A second advantage is that, when people change their addresses, their names (get married or divorced or whatever), or affiliations, you can just enter the information and it is automatically there. You do not have to worry about erasing or scratching out, or such. A third advantage is that you can have your appointment book together with the address book, and never forget one when bringing the other. Finally, there is the great joy that you do not have to re-copy everything when the device gets shabby – you can just download the data into a newer device. Disadvantage is that it costs more than \$12.95 to buy one.

OK, everyone should have a PDA, even if you only use it for addresses or for addresses and appointments. Which should you buy, and how much does it cost? Finally, how do you use it?

Let's take this one at a time. There are two basic varieties, but many, many brands. The two varieties are: 1) Palm-based, and 2) Windows-based. Palms got there first and still have the biggest market share, though they are fighting hard against the Windows ones. Palms are generally thinner, and lighter, because they need less memory and battery than the Windows ones. Both are easy to use, and it is a toss-up which you would like. You do not need Windows compatibility with your desktop unless you are transferring text and other things. Most academics do not much bother with the rest of the software, staying largely with addresses and appointments. If you do other work on the device, you may want Windows compatibility. The Palm software for addresses and appointments works great on Windows computers, so that it really is a matter of preference. On the other hand, the Palm software also works on Macs, so if you have Apple Mac, then you might want to stay with Palm.

Next, you may want to decide whether you want the PDA combined with a cell

phone. There are those devices out there, and you get one with the cell phone. If you upgrade your cell phone regularly, you may not want it, but it may be just handy to have only one device and that always with you. These tend to be slightly larger than most cell phones, because they need a bigger screen, and they tend to use up your battery more, because you are using it for two purposes, and each uses the battery, so it needs to be charged more often. Once you get beyond that, then the choice is yours. Unless, of course, you opt for the newer cell phones with pictures and a camera. Hard to get everything in one device just yet. As an example, Samsung has three separate phones on the market. One is with Microsoft Windows Mobile, one with PalmOS, and one has different features with Windows Mobile. It is integrated, with the PDA on the flip side and the phone on the base side of the clamshell. It seems sleek and handy. I'm sorry, but I don't know what to do yet with a camera on these things. Oh, don't forget: Nokia, Motorola, and the other cell phone makers are busy developing their own PDA software so that they do not have to use Microsoft's Windows (and pay for it) or Palm. Expect this to come out soon. Probably, just after you buy something else and before you have unpacked the box.

OK, let's assume that you have decided on either Palm or Windows and whether you want to have it combined with a cell phone or not. Now, you have to pick the actual device itself from a blurry mist of numerous products from different manufacturers. There are three criteria here: 1) price, 2) size, and 3) additional features.

You can get a basic device for about \$100. It isn't large, and is probably made in China by underpaid individuals who are delighted to destroy the American manufacturing industry and put its employees out to pasture. Ever wonder why tax cuts don't work any more? Because, as soon as people have more money, they go out and spend it. And, instead of buying something made in the USA and providing jobs and a stimulus to the economy, they buy something made in China and stimulate the Chinese economy instead. That is why the USA buys 34% of the total exports of China and I could not find a toaster made anywhere else but China when I needed to replace mine. Anyway, enough editorializing. As soon as you look to pay a little more, you might get a brighter screen with more resolution and/or with color, so that your eyes don't get tired trying to read it in daylight. This drives the price up, and usually means more of a drain on the battery. Since laptop computers are getting smaller and they do what I want. Or, since I can take a hard drive with me and plug it in somewhere (the keychain ones are down to \$35 each), I really myself do not look for more than a PDA in a PDA. So, the less expensive ones are just fine, except I like to be able to read the screen. If you want additional features, let the salesperson tell you why you need them.

Interacting with your home computer is a cinch, and you can have the same

address book and appointments on your desktop. Now, the only other device you would need is a Cardscan. This handy little add-on, available only for Windows computers, reads business cards and easily adds them into your address book. Do you believe? Yes, it will read them in English, German, French, etc. and do it flawlessly for the most part. Whenever I go to Europe, I always come back with a fistful of them, and hand out a fistful myself when I am there, so the little Cardscan is a lifesaver. It sits on the computer tower under my desk, and I don't even know it is there until I need to use it. This is just great, and I don't know how I ever got along without it in the past. Cardscan works both with Palm and Windows PDA's but only with Windows computers. In other words, it is not for the Mac. You can synchronize your desktop and PDA in less than a minute. How? You just sit your PDA into its cradle, press a couple of keys on it and the computer, and wait. Presto! Piece of cake.

Now, as soon as you get one, put the GSA data in it.

One for the Mac

Ever wonder why Mac owners don't complain so much about viruses? Because they do not get them as much as the Windows computer owners. Why not? Well, the *Wall Street Journal* reports, people do not write them for the Mac because it doesn't seem to be worth the effort. There are so many million more Windows computers out there, it really is a waste of time to write a virus that will affect the Mac OS. And, the Mac OS is based on a different format than Windows, and is more difficult to infect. So, why bother? You get lots more publicity working on developing a virus for Microsoft. This does not mean that Macs are free of viruses, but there are just many, many fewer of them out there. And, the new Macs come with their own firewall.

Bloomba? Is it a drink or a music group?

Actually, it is neither. It is e-mail, and it is better than Eudora. What? Why do I need it? Well, if you are in Windows, and using Outlook Express, you might get a heads-up from your local computer expert. Microsoft hasn't revised Outlook Express in years, and doesn't seem interested in doing so, and lots of weirdos are targeting it with viruses. Netscape is a browser-based alternative, but they are slow. They make it difficult to work offline, and they don't archive messages, says Stephen H. Wildstrom of *Business Week*. He likes Bloomba. One of the great advantages of this e-mail program is that it is search-capable. It archives messages as they come in, and you can search for words in text through hundreds of messages instantly. Gee! That's interesting! You can save messages in groups, according to subjects, themes, authors, or whatever.

How to get Bloomba? You can download it for \$49.99 from bloomba.com and it comes with Saproxy Pro, a spam-killer. The more people who buy it, the better the chances that they will make enough money to keep updating their search engine. I haven't used it myself, but it sounds fascinating. And, it is a way out of Microsoft. I may just try it.

How to buy a laptop

PCWorld likes to say that laptops come in four sizes, and it is probably a good idea to understand what each size represents, so that you can make a good decision in buying one. This is the season to buy, around Christmas, and lots of people are buying laptops, even against desktops. So, you will want to give it some thought. The four sizes are:

- 1) subnotebook, or under 3.5 pounds
- 2) ultraportable, or 3.5 – 5 pounds
- 3) mainstream, or 5 – 7 pounds
- 4) desktop replacement, over 7 pounds

Subnotebooks are great for taking anywhere. Their main disadvantage is that their keyboards are pretty small and their battery life is relatively limited. Ultraportables have larger keyboards and better battery life, but their screens are smaller than regular sizes. Mainstreams have all you need, but are heavier, and do not have a screen as large as the bigger desktop replacements. The latter are really as good as desktops, but are as heavy as a ton of bricks, and their batteries generally die after two hours. OK, this is a good way to decide what you want. You need to give up something for every one of them, but most academics probably want either the smallest or the biggest. The biggest as a desktop replacement. Frankly, I opt for the smallest two. And, I would buy a keychain hard drive and get a card for internet access on wi-fi. In other words, make your notebook accessible to internet by wireless. You get the best of all worlds with this, and don't have to spend all that money. Prices are dropping on them, and battery life is getting better. Even with my big hands, I can manage the small keyboards. But, it is a personal matter. I just love the smaller Mac portables, and the Windows ones from Sony, the Vaio. They are small, and great. However, other people have different attitudes. Check out the range, but remember what you are looking for. Remember that it is not the salesperson who is going to use the laptop, but you. I like having a regular desktop at home, and cannot see lugging one of the huge ones around. I prefer the laptop as an accessory for traveling. In that case, it is best to get a smaller one. They have all the access points. So, go shopping with YOUR needs in mind, not somebody else's – not mine or the salesperson.

Big Laptops

OK. Let's say that you have decided for the big laptops, the desktop replacement kind that you can carry around (if you have the strength) but also might use as a desktop. Surely, it is more convenient, you say, than transferring files back and forth all the time. So, you look at a few sample models. Let's say that you start with the IBM Thinkpad. It weighs in at 8.54 pounds, and has a battery life of 3.5 hours. That is among the longest battery life of a laptop of this size out there. It is a real value. It has a good keyboard, but IBM likes this Trackpoint instead of a mouse. If that is all right with you, it might be what you are looking for. On the other hand, lots of people liked the Fujitsu Lifebook, which is slightly lighter in its N Series at 8.05 pounds, but whose battery life is only 2 hours. Screen is really sharp, and it does a lot. Can you get away with only 2 hours of battery life? Well, then look at the Toshiba Satellite, too. This behemoth weighs 9.9 pounds (I said that you needed strength), and really is packed with power, but it, too, lasts only 2 hours on the battery. Otherwise, you might check the Dell, or the Gateway. The Dell Inspiron 5150 is the battery champ. Weighing in at 10.5 pounds, its battery lasts about 5 hours. You could always get someone to help you live this "portable" laptop. At \$1799, it isn't cheap. The Gateway is more expensive still, but \$500 more saves you two pounds in weight. It comes with Wi-Fi. And, there are many others. Frankly, though, they weigh a lot, and a couple of hours on the battery probably makes the IBM sound good. I'm too small to think of lugging anything like the Dell around anywhere. So, I would look further, or advise that you get a smaller laptop. Until, unfortunately, you meet the star attraction. Oh, I'm sorry. It's the Mac Powerbook G4. It weighs 6.8 pounds, and its battery lasts 4.5 hours! It is one inch thick, the screen is a fantastic 17 inches, the keyboard reasonable, and with \$99 more and an Airport Extreme card, you are up and computing at the local Starbucks Coffee Shop or anywhere else there is Wi-Fi. Not only that, but the screen colors are easy on the eyes for a long work period. It has an anodized aluminum case, comes with MacOS X Panther operating system, a really fun OS, and can do most if not all of what you want. That said, it is much more expensive than the IBM, unless you opt for the smaller screen. Then, you can get one for the same price. Is that a challenge, a smaller screen? Are you kidding? On this beauty? Oh, well, if you prefer a PC, then stick to the others. I've got one, the smaller screen model, and put my Sony away for it. It's so neat, you can even use it on the airplane to watch DVDs. Just get earphones.

If you travel a lot

If you travel a lot, and have a laptop that you can lift and take with you, the alternative to long battery life is the airline seat adapter. Now, those going to and from the East Coast of the United States do not have much of a problem, but for the rest of us, with maybe ten hour trips, there aren't any batteries made that can

handle more than a fraction of the trip. So, it is a good idea to think of the adapters that will plug your laptop into the new seat power outlets on many airliners. There are two tricks to this. First, you need to find out from your airline which kind of adapter they need, not only which kind will plug into your computer. The airlines have no universal standard outlet. Second, you will need to find out if the outlets are available at every seat, or in every row. If not, you may either have to have an extension cord, or persuade the airline to give you a seat next to the outlet. The adapters are relatively inexpensive, generally selling for less than \$100. So, if you want to watch your own DVD movies, or just compute along the way, it is a good idea to check out the outlet availability on your favorite airline.

Wi-Fi or not to Wi-Fi

Ok, you are on the road somewhere and you think that there may be a wireless network in your vicinity. You would like to use it and get on the internet. How? Well, you could pull out your trusty laptop and boot it up, wait for it to recognize Windows or MacOS, and then see if there is a connection. What a bother! OK, try something else. Buy a \$29.95 device from Kensington – the accessory people who always think of something that we need even before we know we needed it. It is a credit card sized little device that checks if there is a usable 802.11b or 802.11g wireless signal active where you are. Red is no. A single green light means yes, but barely. Three green lights and you are ready to roll! Does it work? Well, not all the time. Come on Kensington, make it better!!

VCR to DVD?

Well, all you av fans who want to do something at a GSA Conference, I don't know what to say. However, HP has a new device on the market that easily converts videos to DVD. It costs \$399. Is it worth it? Well, would you use it? Of course, you can always buy a DVD camcorder.

Panther is here

This is the new MacOS that is a relatively significant upgrade of Jaguar, the original MacOSX operating system. I haven't used it, but I have seen it, and it is really fun to use. It offers a bunch of new features, and sells for \$129 commercially or about \$69 on campus stores. Installing it is not so easy, because you have to re-install all of your internet access codes, which is a bear, and requires that you write them down before you start, or you will have to call for assistance. Otherwise, it is a "cool" interface, and gives you multiple views on the screen at the same time. This is VERY helpful if you are doing a number of things simultaneously, which I find myself doing a lot. So, I probably will install

it when I work up the courage to mess up my internet interface. What I really like about Apple stores is the geek desk, a desk at the back where you can just walk up with your problem and some smart young person just smiles and tells you nicely how to solve it. They are SOOOO very nice, and soooo very smart that it is really a pleasure and a good reason enough to buy a Mac. By the way, a neighbor hadn't ever bought a computer, and he finally got the iMac. Started it up in a cinch, was on-line without a hitch, and is now happily surfing German newspapers (how about www.zeitungen.de) and sending me his analyses of the latest developments. I had to do almost nothing to get him going, and he is just computing as if he took a course somewhere. That is certainly one advantage of Macs that they have retained. The iMac keeps getting better. Unfortunately, it is still more expensive than a basic PC.

New Batteries for Digital Cameras

Energizer has come out with the Lithium E battery, and you might give them a try on your digital camera. The AA size will last five times longer than the regular alkaline batteries. Their rechargeable batteries have a new system that recharges them in less than an hour.

Small Digital Cameras

In getting a digital camera to take along with you, you may be thinking of what it can do for you when you get there. That is a big option, but first you have to take it along. Alas, I have two cameras. One, I use for trips where I have one flight, one stop, and then just make short day trips. It is a larger camera, with 10X zoom. Really nice, and has a great lens and takes great pictures. I don't like to heft it through multiple airports, many trips, and a long journey with many stops. It is just too big and bulky. So, I bought a small Canon Elph, a little larger than a credit card. It takes good pictures, but is only 3X zoom, and cannot do the bells and whistles of the larger one. Still, the pictures are great. Now, here is the problem. In the smaller cameras, small makes for problems. You see, some of the cameras out there do not have good lenses. I have seen some where the pictures have too much green, and the color is not true. I have seen some which sacrifice simplicity, or which do not offer some of the real features that you want and need. For example, the Canon has a viewfinder as well as the look-through-the-lens feature. This is very, very important in a digital camera. Why? Because taking a picture in sunlight, especially direct sunlight, can wash out the image of the picture in your screen, and you cannot see what it is your camera is taking a picture of. It is a guess. You can see perfectly well in subdued light, but in direct sunlight many digital cameras offer no option and you cannot see your intended picture. This is where a viewfinder comes in. A simple add-on, but some camera-

makers have forgotten it. If the camera is really small, there is a good chance that the lens is not too good or that the battery life is about twenty minutes. Now, that is an exaggeration, but it seems to me that the smaller digital cameras kill off their batteries sooner than some others. So, you have to carry spare batteries. On the other hand, the small ones are really good for popping them out in a hurry and snapping a picture of something that you can use in class or for whatever.

Mighty amazon.com and "Search Inside the Book"

Jeff Bezos, founder of amazon.com, has done it again. His site has now digitally scanned 33 million pages of more than 120,000 book titles that are currently in print. If you are a registered subscriber of amazon.com, and there is no fee to become one, you can go to their site and search their data base not only for the title of a book, but for content. You can actually find a reference on the very page it is and call it up and read it on line. Of course, you will not be permitted to see more than 20% of any book, but it is enough to help you do your research and help you decide which book or books to buy. Bezos hopes that you will buy them on amazon. This is an enormous achievement. You can now find whole references, whole pages, and read them for free. After a few pages, you will be prompted to buy the book, or you can shut your reading down. The service industry serves! Competition is great. Now, let us see how many of your students use the service to write their term papers!!! And, whether you give them credit for it or Jeff Bezos. Hat's off to him.

Section 3

GSA Archives Committee Report

The German archival system is still being shaped by developments which we reported on last year.

Budget shortfalls which affect the federal government as well as states and municipalities continue to curb the activities of archives, which stand relatively low on the priority list. Cuts mean ever fewer personnel to be available for researchers; critical delays in restoration and in filming endangered materials, etc. There have even been discussions about privatizing state archives.

Many archives are even demanding fees for use of their materials, occasionally per file presented to the researcher. Personal advising of users is giving way to standardized forms and frequent rejection notices.

In addition, the transfer of documents from state agencies to archives is endangered by the fact that cuts in budgets and personnel prohibit or retard approaching agencies which do not automatically forward their materials to archives. These materials are thus lost to research.

Exacerbating this generally gloomy picture is a trend in the archival profession toward concentrating on "core responsibilities," i.e. those activities which are prescribed in the archival laws. This trend is strengthened by the fashionable definition propagated by Angelika Menne-Haritz of the archivist as "archives manager", i.e. archivists who see their task as receiving, categorizing, storing and retrieving collections without, however, being very much aware of the contents or their significance or relation to other collections. The growing size of collections in connection with the diminution of personnel strengthen this trend.

At the same time, there is a tendency not to acquire non-governmental materials, such as personal papers, company archives, collections from various political parties, etc. In Cologne, for example, there lurks the threat of the dissolution of some of these kinds of record collections already in the holdings. In other archives as well archivists are considering no longer acquiring these kinds of records, including film collections.

In Hamburg it has been announced that funds for portions of municipal archives and history workshops (*Geschichtswerkstaetten*), which are not to be sure "archives" in the formal sense, but which nevertheless contain much valuable material for *Alltagsgeschichte* such as personal papers, newspaper interviews and interviews of contemporaries as well as photographs, are to be cut to the point where these repositories will no longer be usable. Should these be shut

down, there is no indication of what will happen to the materials housed there. There is, however, some resistance developing to this plan.

Electronic data acquisition continues to be an issue. This form of documentation is becoming ever more the rule in official agencies. Archives are often not included or not included in a timely fashion in discussions about how this data will be sent to archives. In all discussions about the electronic processes of communication in and among governmental agencies there figures prominently questions about *Datenschutz* of electronically stored materials and the organization of those records. Many faxes and emails simply do not get included in materials sent to archives, and, if they are, get mixed up in questions of provenance and cataloguing.

We would point this year particularly to problems in researching religious history. Whereas the major denominations have their own archives, some of which material can be transferred to state archives or used on site, the picture gets much bleaker when we consider the independent denominations and smaller religious communities. In the evangelical state churches the records of individual local congregations remain the property of the individual Gemeinden. These records are very important, especially for *Lokal* - and *Alltagsgeschichte*, but seldom find their way into the larger religious archives. Often they are not properly catalogued or stored, again because of scarcity of funds, and therefore not accessible to researchers.

One useful initiative in response to this problem is that of the *Kirchenkreisarchiv* "Alt-Hamburg", which has organized a research project on the history of local parishes during the Nazi period. In addition to the scholarly research, the plan includes finding and making parish archives accessible for research purposes. Unfortunately, the means are lacking to then transfer these smaller collections into the larger archive. Still, the first step has been taken which should not only be a useful contribution to research on the Nazi period but also offer a model for other cities to emulate.

One useful piece of information deals with the very interesting source of primary information from both world wars: *Feldpostbriefe*. These letters were of great public interest after the First World War, but drew little attention after the Second World War until the 1980s. It is estimated that the Second World War alone generated between 30 and 40 billion letters in the postal system, of which over one hundred thousand survive, scattered in a number of collections. (No one knows how many are in private hands) I'll only mention one here for times sake; the Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte Stuttgart has two large collections: the "Sammlung Sterz" with 25,000 documents and the "Sammlung Schüling" with 35 000 documents. In many cases these documents are extracts from original letters which eliminate personal information, but include "comments on political

or military events". You can find out about this and other repositories at the website: www.feldpost-archiv.de. (Note: there is also a website www.feldpostarchiv.de, but that is a small, private site which just contains a small sampling of letters.

The committee would also like to draw the membership's attention to the massive declassification of records in Washington, especially of the OSS, as a result of the Nazi War Crimes Discloser Act and the activities of the International Working Group (IWG). This material includes British intercepts of German messages, particularly those from the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) that were provided to the US, but classified until now as Foreign Government Information. In many cases, the German originals no longer exist.

In addition, we would like to refer members to the newly established (August) "Forschungs-und Dokumentationszentrum Kriegsverbrecherprozesse" in Marburg/ Hessen, which aims at housing the records of all trials of German and Japanese war criminals worldwide. This center arises from a five year pilot study carried out by Peter Cohen, Berkeley and Dieter Simon, president of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences. Currently the collection has 400 microfilm rolls with c. 400 000 pages of documentation. But their goals are ambitious. In the Soviet Union alone there were 34000 war crimes trials up to 1950. Apparently the Polish trials are in the best condition--1817 Germans were tried in Poland after the war. Other countries are problematic, however, especially France, where the 100 year rule applies and Italy, where documentation is scattered all over the country , and no central register exists. (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 9/5/03).

For a comprehensive and quite informative report from the Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik we direct the membership attention to a press release of September 12, 2003 which can be accessed at: presse@bstu.bund.de

A new Federal Archives law went into effect last year and addressed the issue of the 50, 60 or 80 year rule on holdings. As it stands now, researchers have the right to access generally to archival holdings of the Federal government from 30 years ago or earlier; to holdings which contain records of individuals only 30 year after the death of that person or, if the death date is not known, 110 years after the death of the person. Otherwise, with regard to certain records [2; 4??] the time is 60 years after the origin of the document, but does not apply to documents generated prior to 23. May 1949 which are necessary for certain scholarly research or for other legitimate purposes.

Some member complaints continue to be registered with regard to high costs and delays in copy making at German Federal Archives branches. The archives have farmed out copying to private companies, for example, Selke Archivdienst,

which collect orders, make and send copies. But the process is often cumbersome. All copies have to be cleared and paid for through Koblenz and often a month goes by until the copies are finally sent out to the researcher. If the scholar has returned home in the meantime, this means the extra expense of air mail to avoid further delay. Moreover, while the files to be copied are in the hands of the copy companies, they cannot be released for the use of other scholars who happen to be waiting for them. I don't think there is much we can do about this. The archives are saving themselves money in times of financial exigency.

It has also been reported that the Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes in Berlin is sending documents to Bonn to be copied for scholars. This policy does not just cause long delays for researchers, but also undermines the whole purpose for this archive to maintain a separate special status—namely that its documents need to be immediately available when needed. Not to mention the wear and tear on the documents themselves in transit.

In other case it has been reported that postwar German trials records, usually housed in the Landesarchiv, in the case of Rheinland-Pfalz for all practical purposes are not available for researchers, because of a law which permits neither copying nor notetaking.

We are investigating both cases and will, if appropriate, recommend that the GSA president direct a written complain to the proper authorities.

As always, members are encouraged to report to the Archives Committee on any issues, opportunities or problems which they have encountered in their research in German archives or in other archives which hold German materials.

Ronald Smelser, Chair, GSA Archives Committee
 Gerhard Weinberg
 Rainer Hering
 Alan Steinweis
 Bettina Birn
 Geoffrey Giles

