



# Die Golden Gate Zecher

## Nachrichten

A Newsletter for Northern  
California and Nevada  
Stein Collectors

December  
2023

### President's Message

Hello Zechers, Our Oktoberfest meeting was a great success with an impressive 25 attendees. Some members enjoyed taking part in a photo-op standing by the Bavarian Guard Post on the patio. A big "Thank You" to Aurel Keck for generously donating his guard post!

Dave Bruha, of SCI's "Die Lustigen Steinjaeger von Wisconsin" chapter, gave us a preview of the 2024 convention to be held in Madison, Wisconsin along with a very interesting presentation on the artistic designs of Otto Hupp. We thank Dave for increasing our knowledge about the artist and his extensive work.

The board voted to eliminate the historian position due to it not being utilized over the past years. We do, however, need someone who can digitalize past photos that are still only in albums. Please contact Vicki Guay if you can help with this. The board and general minutes will be combined in a summary in the next newsletter.

Don't forget to attend our annual holiday party on Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup> at the Speisekammer German restaurant in Alameda, organized by Les Paul. Ron Fox, will be our speaker. You're welcome to bring steins for buy, sell, trade, or just for fun!

Our 2024 meeting schedule will include exciting programs and our much-anticipated Zecher auction, so be sure not to miss any meetings.

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving, a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!  
Prosit, Julie Hughes DGGZ President

### MEETINGS SCHEDULE 2023/2024

**Saturday December 9, 2023**  
11:30AM to 4PM (Must exit by 4PM!)  
Back by Popular Demand  
Speisekammer Restaurant  
2424 Lincoln Avenue, Alameda, CA  
Program: Ron Fox on a mystery topic

**Saturday April 13, 2024**  
Bob and Lin Bebermeyer's Home  
Location: Monterey, CA  
Program: TBD  
**Saturday June 8, 2024**  
Host: Jim and Cindi Rutter  
Location: Redwood City, CA  
Member's Auction

**Saturday September 28, 2024**  
Bill and Rhoda Fry's Home  
Location: Cupertino, CA  
Program: Steve Steigerwald  
on Mettlach  
**December TBD**  
Likely Speisekammer

### Annual Holiday Party at Speisekammer Restaurant [speisekammer.com](https://speisekammer.com)

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 9 at 11:30AM**

**Speisekammer Restaurant**  
2424 Lincoln Ave  
Alameda, CA

(must exit by 4PM)



**SPEISEKAMMER**

Est. 2002  
A GERMAN TAKE ON ALAMEDA

No Reservation Form!

**Just Order your own lunch  
at the restaurant.**

Speaker is Ron Fox on  
a mystery topic!

## Photo Memories at the Hughes's on October 14, 2023



Dave and Sharon Bruha in Aurel's Bavarian guard shack



Festive Zechers toast to Aurel



Jim, Bill, and Nancy learn more from Dave about Otto Hupp. The table had steins, calendars and books.

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## Errata

**Ron Fox**, SCI's new President, was one of the DGGZ members at the convention. He and Bill Fry did not make it into the group photo.



**Sandy Allred also won Best Dressed at the Convention German Dinner!** She had left the stage so quickly leaving Boyd Bissell on-stage, we assumed that she had taken second place. Both won!

## DGGZers on Bikes

Linda, Bob, Deb, Doug, Roger and Sam are pictured here at the Hungarian / Slovenian border. They rode their bikes 385 miles from Passau Germany to Budapest Hungary!







Terracotta Figure  
Photo by Ron Fox  
Other photos on this  
page are by Julie

## The Folklore Behind Garden Gnomes and Mushrooms

by Julie Hughes

My attraction to garden gnomes and the beautiful white dotted red cap mushroom statuary started when I was a child growing up in Wisconsin. My German mother would always say, "every garden needs a gnome to help the soil and plants flourish." My German father, on the other hand, was a mushroom forager and would take me with him to pick mushrooms from the morning moss at the base of oak trees in wooded areas. My father never revealed his treasured gathering spots to his friends or other relatives. Over the years, I've acquired quite an array of garden gnome and mushroom statuary that is dispersed throughout my backyard and fondly reminds me of my childhood. From my research on gnomes and mushrooms, I found the following information to be the most consistent.

A gnome is a mythical creature in folktales. Webster's dictionary defines a gnome as an ageless and often deformed dwarf of folklore who lives in the earth and usually guards treasure. The word gnome is believed to have come from the Greek word "genomos," which means earth dweller. The earliest appearance of gnomes was in ancient Rome. They were considered good luck charms and protectors of gardens and plants from evil spirits

The legend continues to the early 1400's in Turkey, where little people were dressed in pointed caps and colorful clothing and lowered down into mine tunnels to mine gold and minerals. Gnomes were thought to possess magical or supernatural powers that allowed them to move through the earth and this legend spread across Europe. Around the 1460's, stone carvings of gnomes started to appear in Bavaria.

In the mid 1500's, Swiss alchemist, Paracelsus, presented in his writings the theory that gnomes represented "earth," and possessed an element that enabled them to move freely in the earth. As a result of his theory, gnomes became a popular subject during the Renaissance period.

During the 1700's, a variety of gnome-like figures were crafted from wood and porcelain.

In the mid-1800s, the Bähr & Maresch Company (later renamed Johann Maresch, Aussig / Böhmen) made small ceramic and terra cotta statues of gnomes. Aussig is now known as Ústí nad Labem in the Czech Republic. The company was most likely the first creator of garden gnomes. These gnomes spread from Bohemia to the Saxony and Thuringia regions of Germany and onto France and Great Britain and wherever gardening was taken seriously. Not only were the gnomes displayed in gardens, but also as works of art inside of homes and estates. *(continued on next page)*





Mettlach Plaque  
designed by  
Heinrich Schlitt



Schierholz Porcelain  
Beer Stein



Two Diesinger  
Beer Steins

## The Folklore Behind Garden Gnomes and Mushrooms (continued from previous page)

In the late 1800's in the town of Gräfenroda, which is in the Thuringia region of Germany, a potter named Philipp Griebel created a terra cotta gnome with a red pointed cap, green apron, and sturdy shoes. Some of Griebel's descendants still make gnomes, although production has moved into other countries.

Another maker of gnome statuary was August Heissner, who made his first one in 1872 out of terra cotta and a material similar to cement. Much later in the 1970's and 1980's, gnomes were made of rubberized material, resin, and plastic. To this day, gnomes are considered a staple of a prosperous garden.

The white-spotted bright red cap "Fly Agaric" mushroom is probably the most recognized mushroom on earth. In European cultures, it is "The Mushroom" of Christmas and a symbol of a blessing for the New Year. In German folklore, it is seen as a good luck symbol or "Glückspilz" (Lucky Mushroom) and if you find one it will bring you good fortune. This famous mushroom honors nature and the beauty of the forest and is very popular in children's story books and fairy tales. It most often appears in the illustrations with a gnome or fairy perched on top or sitting underneath it.

Artist Heinrich Schlitt designed many plaques, pictures, and steins with gnomes and beautifully colored, umbrella shaped "Fly Agaric" mushrooms with red to orange caps covered in white "warts" stemming from a white underside with gills. These beautiful, but very poisonous, mushrooms are denizens of earth just as the gnomes depicted living underneath this fungi in the forest scenes created by Schlitt.

In a fairyland pictorial culture, the mushroom has a magical allure (experts believed it had hallucinogenic powers) that matches that of gnomes, like leprechauns and the pot of gold at a rainbow's end.

Resources:  
Webster's Dictionary, Wikipedia,  
New World Encyclopedia, Quora,  
and My Growing Traditions websites

Photos:  
Courtesy Ron Fox of Fox Auctions



Mettlach Figure of Gnome  
under Mushroom



## Meet New Member Doug Shankle, Monterey



Doug is originally from Texas and lived on his father's cattle ranch until he was 10 years old. In 1949, they moved to California where his father would go on to build houses. They first moved to Los Angeles and then settled in Pacific Grove, where Doug attended Pacific Grove High School and Monterey Peninsula College. Doug subsequently served in the Air Force for four years and returned home to work with his Dad building houses. In 1967, he struck out on his own and got his General Contractor's License and continued building homes until he retired last year. He has two children, Shannon and Jeff. He's also a grandfather to Scout, a little Bichon Frise pup owned by his daughter Shannon. Doug took up running at age 55 and completed a number of marathons along with hundreds of other races, some with Bob Bebermeyer. At age 80, he replaced running with road biking. Doug has already attended two of our meetings and Shannon joined in at one of them. We look forward to seeing them at future meetings!



Photos Courtesy Ron Fox of Fox Auctions

## Meet New Member Peter Armbrust, Monterey



Peter was born in Vienna, Austria in 1943 and emigrated to the U.S. in 1956. He received his B.A. from Canisius College and his M.A. from John Hopkins University. He served as a U.S. Army officer and taught at the Defense Language Institute on both coasts, moving to Monterey in 1974. While at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, he was Dean of the school of Germanic languages, followed by Romance Languages and finally of Asian languages. From 2002 until 2013, he chaired the Language Training Center at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany where he enjoyed hiking, skiing, and bicycling. Peter has been married to Sharon for 54 years. She is a financial analyst and appraiser in the TV field. They have two sons: one produces TV commercials in Los Angeles and the other works for Fidelity in risk management in New York City. Peter already has a small stein collection and looks forward to attending DGGZ meetings.

## Die Golden Gate Zecher Club Information

### 2023 Officers and Board of Directors

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**Find Die Golden Gate  
Zecher Beer Stein  
Club on Facebook!**

[facebook.com  
/DieGoldenGateZecher/](https://facebook.com/DieGoldenGateZecher/)

**Join  
DGGZ  
Today!**

### Die Golden Gate Zecher Membership Form

an organization for Northern California and Nevada Stein Collectors

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual dues are \$15 yearly or 3 years for \$40.**

Membership dues help support the cost of speaker programming and ancillary items.

Members receive a newsletter via email and have a vote in club affairs.

Make your check payable to: DGGZ

and mail it to: Dick Hughes

1532 Desvio Way

Belmont, CA 94002



**Did you know that Die Golden Gate Zecher has been an official Chapter of Stein Collector's International (SCI) since 1984?** Chapter members are encouraged to become SCI members and membership has its benefits! At only \$25/year for an online membership (\$45 for print with discounts for 3 years) you get access to: quarterly magazine (and back issues), member's directory, library, convention, and more! You can join on the web [stein-collectors.org/prosit2/](https://stein-collectors.org/prosit2/)

**"Die Golden Gate Zecher Nachrichten"** is published approximately four times a year for the benefit of our members. *Die Golden Gate Zecher*, an affiliate of **Stein Collectors International**, covers the Northern California and Nevada areas. We welcome contributions of articles, illustrations and photographs, letters of suggestion or encouragement, or general interest items from the membership. Material submitted to this newsletter originally appearing in another publication other than SCI must be accompanied by written permission to reprint. **Permission to reproduce material from this newsletter is granted to SCI or affiliate chapters, providing full attribution to this newsletter is given.** Zecher newsletter articles in native format will be provided upon request for the publication in SCI chapter's newsletters.