

THE SCHLARAFFIA SOCIETY

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This article is one portion of a larger article entitled "Schlaraffenland Steins and the Schlaraffia Society". The "chapters" in that article are:

- Hans Sachs and the Meistersingers
- *Schlaraffenland*, or "The Glutton's Paradise", a poem by Hans Sachs
- Schlaraffenland Steins
- The Schlaraffia Society
- Schlaraffia Chapter Steins
- Rubbing a Salamander
- Paragraph 11 and the *Schweningerkur*

There is a link at the bottom of this article to the next chapter, or, to read

["Schlaraffenland Steins and the Schlaraffia Society"](#)

in its entirety, click on the title of the article.

After a bit of research into the meaning of the steins discussed earlier, the mysteries began to fade, revealing a couple of interesting stories. The owl, or UHU, has been recognized since ancient times as a symbol of wisdom, but it is virtually unknown as the emblem of the Schlaraffia Society. The owl in this case, is the European Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*), seen at right.



The Schlaraffia Society was founded in Prague, on October 10, 1859, by opera singer Albert Eilers after he was snubbed for membership in Arcadia, an upper crust association of art aficionados. The goals of Schlaraffia are to foster an interest in music and the arts, provide some humor and promote friendship among its members. Songs, poems, or skits, written by members, making fun of the politically and socially pretentious, may often provide the humor. The selection of the eagle owl as their emblem was somewhat serendipitous. The Gasthaus, or hotel, where they held their first meeting had a stuffed eagle owl mounted over the inside entrance and those in attendance decided that it represented their interests and goals better than anything else.

At one time there were 144 Schlaraffia chapters in Germany alone. In 1935 Hitler ordered the society to expel all of its Jewish members. The society pretended to comply by removing those member's names from their membership lists. However, even though their names had been removed from the lists, all were encouraged to keep attending the meetings. Finally, in 1937 Hitler closed down the chapters for not complying with his orders, trashed their meeting halls, stripped the books from their library shelves and burned them.

After World War II it was still necessary for those members in Eastern Europe to meet secretly because the Society was banned by the Communists. Today they can once again meet openly in Prague where the society was founded. Shown below are a couple of modern Schlaraffia pins. The pin to the left is from *Schlaraffia Vindobona*. *Vindobona* is the ancient Roman name for what is now Vienna, Austria where this *Reych*, or chapter, is located.



Currently, the Schlaraffia Society has over 400 chapters worldwide, with some 12,500 members, about 1,000 of which reside in the United States. New Jersey alone has three chapters. The society has only two membership requirements, you must be male and you must speak German, or at least be willing to learn German. Their weekly meetings are held in halls called Burgs (see above), where they dress in medieval costumes, address each other with humorous titles and German is the only language allowed. Religion, business and politics of a personal nature, are forbidden subjects within the Burg. All members are considered equals regardless of their occupation, or station in life.



The LB&C stein discussed earlier could very well have been produced for sale to society members. The scene on the body of that steins shows two individuals dressed in medieval clothing with their street attire hanging on the bushes behind them; a glove, a top hat, a pair of long trousers and what appears to be a tie or cravat on one and a student jacket and a pipe on the other. This would seem to indicate that the characters are in costume only and not actually living in the middle ages.

Here again this scene reminds us of the promises of Hans Sachs' poem. The fellow at left need only lie on the ground and wine will gush forth directly into his mouth, while at right we see an example of -

*Roast Chickens, Geese and Pigeons go
Flying within reach, and slow:*

*And when the birds are winging South
Just gape - they'll fly into your mouth!*

[Click here to read the next chapter in this article - **Schlaraffia Chapter Steins**](#)

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