

# THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

Founded 1783 Incorporated by Act of the General Assembly of Maryland, Chapter 100 Feb 3, 1818

## VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

DECEMBER 2010 ISSUE #75

### OFFICERS

The Rev. H.J. Siegfried Otto.  
President  
Merl E. Arp  
1st Vice President  
Prof. Dr. Armin E. Mruck  
2nd Vice President  
Thomas A. Werner  
VP Finance  
Christel van der Berg  
Secretary  
Theodore J. Potthast, Esq.  
Treasurer  
Hon. Gerard Wm. Wittstadt  
Counselor

### DIRECTORS

Shelley D. Arnold  
Merl E. Arp  
Linda Butt  
Dr. David A. Denisch  
Prof. Dr. Mohamed Esa  
Dr. Maureen Helinski  
William Hay Kommalan  
Prof. Dr. Armin E. Mruck  
The Rev. H.J. Siegfried Otto  
Bernard A. Penner, Esq.  
Dr. James D. Schaub  
Dennis F. Tausendschoen  
Dr. Mary Upman  
Thomas A. Werner  
Charles A. Wunder

### EX OFFICIO

Pres., Women's Auxiliary  
Eva Maus Kelleher

### LIFETIME DIRECTORS

John K. Aymold, Jr.  
Dandridge Brooke  
Brigitte V. Fessenden  
Michael J. Nieberding  
Betty Niemann  
Theodore J. Potthast, Jr., Esq.  
Irma Tillman  
Christel van der Berg  
Frederick H. Wehrenberg  
Edwin O. Wenck, Esq.  
Vernon H. Wiesand, Esq.  
Hon. Gerard W. Wittstadt

### OFFICE MANAGER

Bärbel Otto

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends and Members,

At the end of the calendar year, when days grow darker and winter can be a challenge, most of us celebrate Christmas as a festival of light, love and hope. May your lives enjoy the bonus of family and friendship, of giving and receiving. Our celebrations often contain the element of nostalgia and remembrance, as much as the wish for a good future.

Our Society can be grateful and proud of several events in the past year that have been a testimony of our vitality and relevance:

- 1) The awards ceremony giving scholarships to 80 Maryland high school and 4 college students.
- 2) The Great German Picnic
- 3) The cultural booth at both the Festival at Timonium and the Festival at Fort Meade.
- 4) The award banquet honoring Alfred A. Zeller and presenting the Medal to Betty Niemann, President of The Baltimore Kickers, Mohamed Esa, Professor for German at McDaniel College, and Denis Smith, photographer for our events who donated all of his albums to our Society.
- 5) Dedicating the Memorial Plaque for Sergeant Henry N. Gunther in the Most Holy Redeemer

Cemetery in honor of his exceptional bravery and heroic action. All of the events were successful because of the hard work and involvement of our members and directors. We appreciate their dedication and efforts.

We are sad that we lost two of our directors:

Frederick L. Riedel  
Robert Karl Fritzsche

We remember them and are grateful for their contributions to our Society.

Please take advantage of giving gift memberships in our Society for \$10 until the end of this year. For this small amount you provide your friends and members of your family with a gift of value to them and to our Society.

H. J. Siegfried Otto, President

## OUR MISSION FULFILLED

"...to preserve the German American heritage." With the dedication of the plaque for Sgt. Henry Gunther on Nov. 11, we carried out our mission. Sgt. Gunther's heroism is a significant part of Maryland's German American heritage.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS and  
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO  
ALL OUR MEMBERS AND  
FRIENDS OF THE GERMAN  
SOCIETY OF MARYLAND.**

•••••  
• **KALENDER** •  
•  
•

- March 5 Buergerverein Fasching
- April 29 Annual membership meeting

•••••  
**Visit the German Society's website:**  
**[www.germansociety-md.com](http://www.germansociety-md.com)**

Articles from many past newsletters are posted on our website. Dr. Maureen Helinski maintains the site.

"Pioneers in Service", the history of our Society, can now be found on our web site.

For more local German-American happenings, check the web site of the Deutschamerikanischer Buergerverein von Maryland: **[www.md-germans.org](http://www.md-germans.org)**

**CONGRATULATIONS...**

to Judge Gerard Wm. Wittstadt, Sr. and Dr. Rosemary Wittstadt, long-time members and former honorees of the Society, on the acceptance to the United States Naval Academy of their grandson, Christopher Padgett. Judge Wittstadt is our Society's counselor.

**MEMBERSHIP TO STUDENTS**

The Board of Directors of our Society passed a resolution at its summer meeting granting a one-year membership to all high school and college students who receive an award for scholastic achievement in the study of the German language at our annual awards presentation in May. This will entitle the students to receive copies of our newsletter and notices of our events. It is hoped that these contacts with the Society may encourage the students to continue their relationship with us. The motion for the resolution was made by Thomas Werner and seconded by Dr. Armin Mruck.

**BUERGERVEREIN DELEGATES**

Each organization which is a member of the Deutschamerikanischer Buergerverein von Maryland has representation based upon the number of its members. The German Society is represented by its president, three delegates and alternates. Our

delegates are: Merl E. Arp, Paul-Gerhard Otto and Dr. James D. Schaub. Theodore J. Potthast is an alternate. The Buergerverein meets on the last Friday of the month at 7:45 p.m. at the clubhouse of the Baltimore Kickers on South Broadway. If you are interested in serving as a delegate or alternate, please call our office and leave a message or drop a note to the president.

**GERMAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

The German American museum which opened in Washington, DC in March is soliciting funds to maintain its operations. Our Board of Directors approved a gift of \$100 to the Foundation which operates the museum.

**GERMAN AT NAVAL ACADEMY**

Add Navy to the list of Maryland colleges in which German is taught. We learned this from one of our members, Shirley Santora, a German teacher at Arundel Community College, who received a request to help out by tutoring a midshipman. She couldn't do it herself, due to time restraints, but was seeking a tutor for the middle. We were pleased to learn that the Academy conducts German courses.

**WWI FINALLY OVER**

On Oct. 3, 2010 Germany made its final payment to the United States as reparations agreed upon in the armistice of Nov. 11, 1918. By coincidence, Sgt. Henry Gunther of Baltimore had closure to the story of his death on Nov. 11, 1918 in a ceremony initiated by our Society dedicating a monument to him at his grave in Baltimore. The terms of the armistice placed such a harsh burden on Germany that an American statesman predicted the terms were a guarantee of another war. The prediction was accurate: WWII broke out 20 years afterward.



## **HELP MAKE OCTOBER GERMAN AMERICAN MONTH IN MD**

Susan Aumann and Bill Frank, two members of our Society who have just been reelected to the Maryland House of Delegates, have pre-filed a bill to make October German American month in Maryland. It won't happen unless the bill is passed by the legislature. That's where we come in. Susan and Bill need other legislators to sign on when the bill is introduced; and they need a large contingent to show up in Annapolis for the hearing once a hearing date is set.

Shelley Arnold, a member of our Board of Directors, is savvy on the workings of Maryland's General Assembly and will lead our efforts to get a large turnout for the hearing. She will keep us posted on the timing and the location of the hearing room. This will likely occur in February. Shelley tells us that the more co-sponsors of the bill and a large turnout at the hearing is essential to assure passage of the bill. So please gear up to call your representatives in Annapolis to ask them to co-sponsor the bill; and stay loose so you'll be available to go to Annapolis for the hearing.

Our Society is considering getting one or more buses to take us to Annapolis. We are also expecting that the other members of the Bürgerverein will also support these efforts. As soon as we have the details, we will send out a flier with information on what to do to assure that German Americans in MD have equal rights with the other groups which have months set aside for them, such as February for "Black History Month" (requiring special classes in public schools), Irish American month, etc.

## **GEARING UP FOR 200TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF WAR OF 1812**

The United States Mint is planning to issue a \$5 gold piece and a \$1 silver piece in early 2012 to kick off the national celebration of the War of 1812, our nation's second war of independence. The State of Maryland is also planning the biggest celebration in its history, since it was the Marylanders who defeated the British in 1814 and sent them packing back to England. The German Society of Maryland had many members who fought at Fort McHenry and at North Point and withstood the British army at Patterson Park. Our

own member, General John Stricker received the title "The Hero of the Battle of North Point". Our Society is forming a committee to publicize the role of German Americans in the War of 1812. We are looking for some charter members for the committee. Our own lifetime director, Dandridge Brooke, served as national president of The Society of the War of 1812 and will hold a leadership role in our Society's commemoration. Brig. General Hall Worthington, the military successor to Gen. John Stricker, will serve as the chairman of the committee.

## **HERITAGE MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS**

The National German American Heritage Museum in Washington, D.C. has an immediate need for volunteers to staff the museum on weekends. If you are able to do so, please contact Lemlen Anderson at [anderson@gahfusa.org](mailto:anderson@gahfusa.org)

## **FULL HOUSE FOR ECUMENICAL SERVICE**

The 22nd annual ecumenical service commemorating the fall of the Berlin Wall was held on Oct. 2. The event originated in 1989 when German Society president Donald Tillman met with then pastor of Zion Church, our current president H. J. Siegfried Otto and Judge Gerard Wittstatt, president of the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland to plan the event. More than 80 members of our Society attended this year's event which was open to the public. Zion Church was full. Our Society funded the trumpeters and assisted with the reception.

## **MD. HISTORICAL SOCIETY ASKS US TO TRANSLATE GERMAN NEWSPAPER**

A 19th-20th century newspaper published in Baltimore in the German language is being scanned electronically and preserved as part of the German American heritage of Maryland. They also plan to publish translations into English and have asked us for our help. Will you volunteer to translate a single page? We are also calling upon college and even high school student German clubs to join the effort. Please contact our office for an assignment.



## German-American Day, 2010

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

The American story has been written by those who have come to our shores in search of freedom, opportunity, and the chance at a better life. The German men and women who braved numerous perils to cross the Atlantic long ago left a legacy of millions of Americans of German ancestry who have been an integral part of our national life. On German-American Day, we pay tribute to the role this community has played in shaping America and contributing to our progress and prosperity.

On October 6, 1683, 13 courageous German families arrived in Pennsylvania to start a new life. They began a chapter in the American narrative that has influenced our country in all walks of life, and their resolve lives on in the men, women, and families of German descent who enhance civic engagement, steer our industries, and fortify our Nation's character. With their dedication and determination, the United States has been a leader in ingenuity and entrepreneurship, and has delivered a message of hope and opportunity that resonates around the world. Today, German Americans innovate and excel as leaders in all sectors of our society.

On this occasion, we honor not only the countless achievements and rich heritage of German Americans, but also the strong ties between Germany and the United States. Our two nations share unbreakable bonds as allies with solemn obligations to one another's security; values that inspired those brave settlers four centuries ago; and a vision for a safer, freer, more peaceful, more prosperous world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 6, 2010, as German-American Day. I encourage all Americans to learn more about the history of German Americans and reflect on the many contributions they have made to our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand ten, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style.



**FREDERICK L. RIEDEL, 82***by William Kommalan*

Our Society and the German American Community has lost a special friend. Fred Riedel, a member of our Board of Directors, died October 4th at the age of 82 years after a long struggle with heart disease.

Fred was born on June 23, 1928 and raised in South Baltimore of immigrant German grandparents. He and his wife, Louise visited his relatives in Germany several times. Fred's father was a fireman and died when Fred was 5. Since his youth, Fred wanted to be a fireman like his father. So for 44 years he served in the Baltimore County Fire Dept. retiring as Captain in 1997. For 11 years Fred served in the Marine Reserves. In 1952 Fred was drafted into the Army serving from 1952 to 1954 in the Korean War. In his later years in the Fire Dept., Fred developed and implemented Fire Prevention programs and was always happy to recount his fireman exploits.

In 1961, Fred married Louise, whom we have known as an inseparable couple for 49 years. They met at the Alcazar where they often danced during their courtship. Their 50th anniversary would have been next year. Fred was already planning the celebration when he died. He is survived by Louise; their son, Frederick L. Riedel III, and 3 grandchildren. Fred the 3rd is a Lieutenant in the Anne Arundel County Fire Dept. which follows the long family tradition of service to the community.

After retiring, Fred became a park ranger at Ft. McHenry for 10 years. He was active in many other German organizations and clubs: at his death he was president of Club Fidelitas, Inc.; Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von MD; Club Geselligkeit; Germania Lodge & Composit Lodge of the Ancient & Accepted Order of Masons. Other organizations to which Fred belonged are the Boumi Temple Shrine; the Tall Cedars; the Scottish Rite; the St. George's Society; The Society for the War of 1812; the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars & the Korean War Veterans Assn. He was a communicant of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church. He was buried at Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens in a service in which our president, The Rev. Siegfried Otto participated. He received full military honors. The German Society and his many friends will miss him, especially his jokes, which he never seemed to lack and enjoyed telling. God speed Fred and thank you for your time with us.

**MENCKEN STAINED GLASS WINDOW IN LEIPZIG, GERMANY RESTORED**

We learn from the newsletter of The Mencken Society that the stained glass window memorializing the family of our former member, Henry L. Mencken has been restored and is ready to be re-installed in its original place of honor in the Thomaskirche in the university town of Leipzig. H. L. Mencken saw it while visiting Leipzig in 1922. His family members served on the faculty of the university: Otto Mencke(n) (1674-1707), Lueder Mencke (1658-1726; Johann Burckhard Mencke (1674-1732) and Friedrich Otto Mencke (1708-1754). The St. Thomas Church dates back to the 12th century and is the final resting place of Johann Sebastian Bach. The impetus for the restoration of the window was the work of Dieter Spielberg, a member of the German Mencken Society. Martin Luther preached from the pulpit of Thomaskirche in 1539. Our member, H. L. Mencken was proud of his German ancestry and especially of his relatives on the university faculty, even though Mencken himself never attended college.

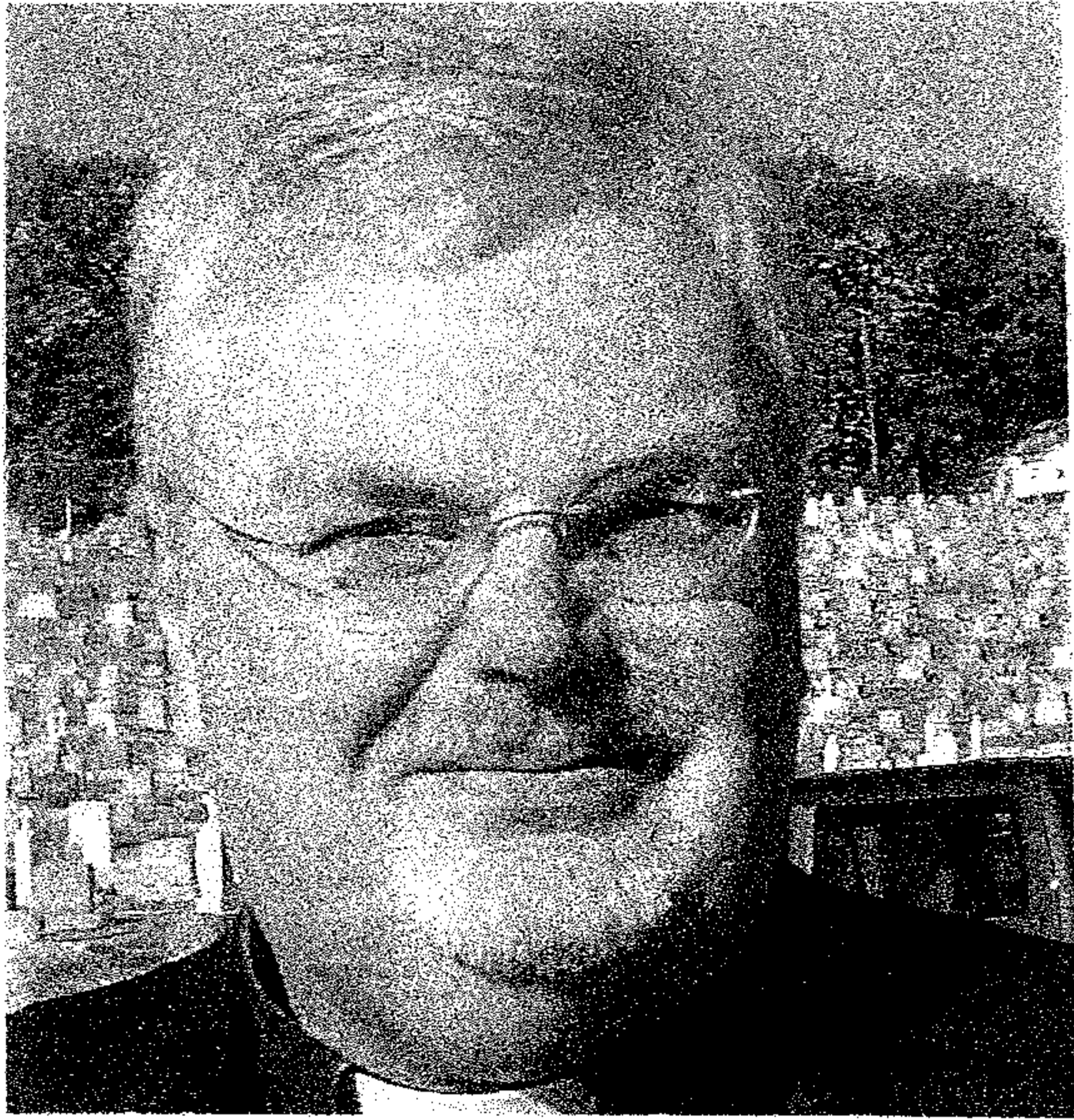
**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS:**

...to our former President, **Brigitte V. Fessenden** upon her retirement as an official of the City of Baltimore (the head of Baltimore's historic preservation department) and upon her husband, **Dr. Nicholas Fessenden's** retirement from a long teaching career at Friends School. They will be moving from their Roland Park home to the Howard County community of Columbia. Brigitte will retain her ties to Baltimore in her capacity as director of the Baltimore-Bremerhaven Sister Cities Program. Brigitte will also retain her leadership position in our own Society.

...to new member **Jane Roger** for accumulating 106,544 votes in the recent election for the Orphans Court. She accepted no political contributions and spent only \$200 of her own money. (She lost.)



## PASTOR ROGGELIN'S FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE AS A U. S. CITIZEN



The Rev. Dr. Holger Roggelin, a member of our Society, spoke at the ceremony for the dedication of the Sgt. Henry Gunther plaque on Nov. 11th and announced that this day was his first full day as an American citizen. He and his wife had been naturalized the day before. All present applauded.

## WAGNER, MULLER IN THE NEWS

A new member of our Society, Sister Virginia Muller, found herself unexpectedly featured on national TV. As trustee of a trust set up by another member, Ted Potthast, she became the owner of a rare 1906 baseball card of shortstop Honus Wagner.



Tom Callahan came into the card in 1936 when he was a youngster, preserved it and on his death gave

it to The School Sisters of Notre Dame (an order of nuns founded in Germany). Once Sister Virginia sent it to the auction house, sports writers all over the USA wanted a piece of the story. She appeared on national TV, ESPN sports network and spread the word that the proceeds of the sale will be used by the School Sisters to benefit the poor and for education in the U.S. and in the sisters' world-wide missions. Although the card is damaged, it still brought \$279,000 at auction. A mint condition card of Wagner was recently sold by Wayne Gretzky (a famous hockey star) for \$2.3 million dollars.

## REV. ALLEN NOVOTNY, S.J., 58

German teacher, school president

Father Allen Novotny, a Baltimore native, died in his room at Gonzaga College High School in Washington, D.C. while serving as the school's president. He attended Sacred Heart school in Highlandtown and graduated from Loyola Blakefield in Towson, where he taught prior to his ordination. Afterward he returned as rector of the Jesuit community, dean of students and teacher of German. He had studied in Heidelberg, Germany as a Fullbright scholar. An athlete, he would often disappear from the president's office and spend an afternoon bicycling on Washington's Mall. He previously served as a chaplain at Loyola Univ. He exhibited flu symptoms on a Monday and died on Wednesday, Oct. 27. As a fundraiser, he was able to build a 20 million dollar addition to Gonzaga in a year and a half.

## "SUMMIT" ON THE FUTURE OF TEACHING GERMAN IN OUR AREA (MD, VA and DC)

German courses in our area are on the decline. School administrators are claiming that German is no longer "relevant." One of our directors, a high school German teacher, reports that it is difficult to recruit students. Colleges and high schools are dropping German courses. It has become a crisis.

The local chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German believe it is time to call a Summit to find solutions. The summit is set for Feb. 26, 2011 at Catholic Univ. in Washington. Everyone who wants to keep German in the schools is invited, including all members of our Society. The AATG has asked us for financial help for the program.



**ROBERT KARL FRITZSCHE,  
LIFETIME DIRECTORS DIES;  
SOCIETY LEADER**

Rob Fritzsche, who served our Society faithfully for many years, died Nov. 13 after a 3-year bout with Lou Gehrig's Disease. Rob was president of the Arion Gesangverein. For nearly 20 years he led the singing of the German and American national anthems at our annual banquet. Bob was chairman of our song-book committee and had finished a large part of it when he died. He donated his body to medical science. A memorial service was held on Dec. 11 at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Baltimore; many members of our Society attended. An obituary of Rob will appear in the next newsletter.

**HENRY GUNTHER MONUMENT  
DEDICATED ON VETERANS DAY**

A plaque atop a granite stone honoring Sgt. Henry N. Gunther was dedicated at an emotional ceremony on November 11, formerly celebrated as Armistice Day. Gunther was a Baltimorean who was the last American soldier killed in World War One. The war ended at 11 a.m., Nov. 11, 1918; Gunther was killed at 10:59 a.m. At 10:59 on Nov. 11, 2010, the bugler played taps and a bell tolled 11 times, following patriotic speeches and ceremonies. A complete description and photos of the event will appear in the next issue of this newsletter.

**ALFRED ZELLER HONORED AT  
SOCIETY'S ANNUAL AWARDS  
BANQUET, NOV. 13.**

A man who was born in Germany and emigrated to Baltimore nearly 60 years ago and became a great asset to its German American community was the honoree at our annual banquet: Alfred Zeller. The event took place in the Adlersaal of Zion Church, attended by a capacity crowd of 170. Our Society's Medal of Merit was presented to Dr. Mohamed Esa, Betty Niemann and Denis Smith during the ceremonies. Photos and details of the event will appear in our next newsletter. An impressive program was prepared by Shelley Arnold and Dr. Esa & printed at McDaniel College.

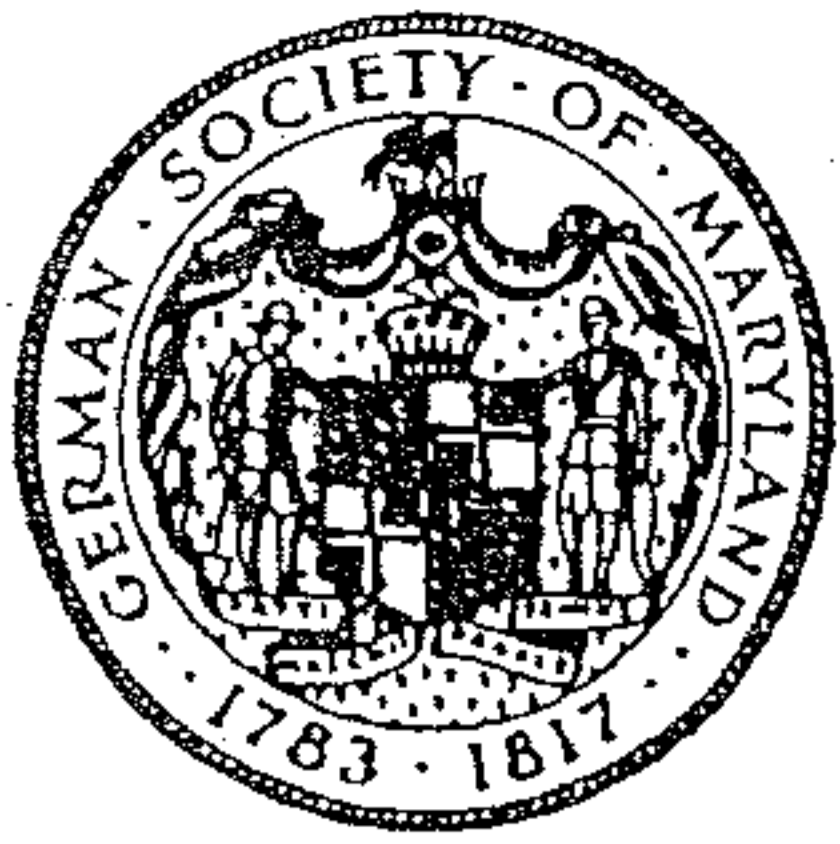
**LAST CHANCE TO MAKE SPECIAL  
GIFTS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE  
SOCIETY**

The program expires on December 31, 2010. Our Directors set a four month period wherein current members can give a gift membership by paying dues of only \$10 as a gift to the new member. The purpose is to increase our membership, since dues are now the major source of funding for our programs and projects. Payment of the \$10 now covers the recipient's dues through December 31, 2011. If the new member is happy with his or her membership, he or she may remain a member by paying the normal dues of \$25 when the bill arrives in 2012. If they do not wish to remain on the rolls, they simply ignore the bill.

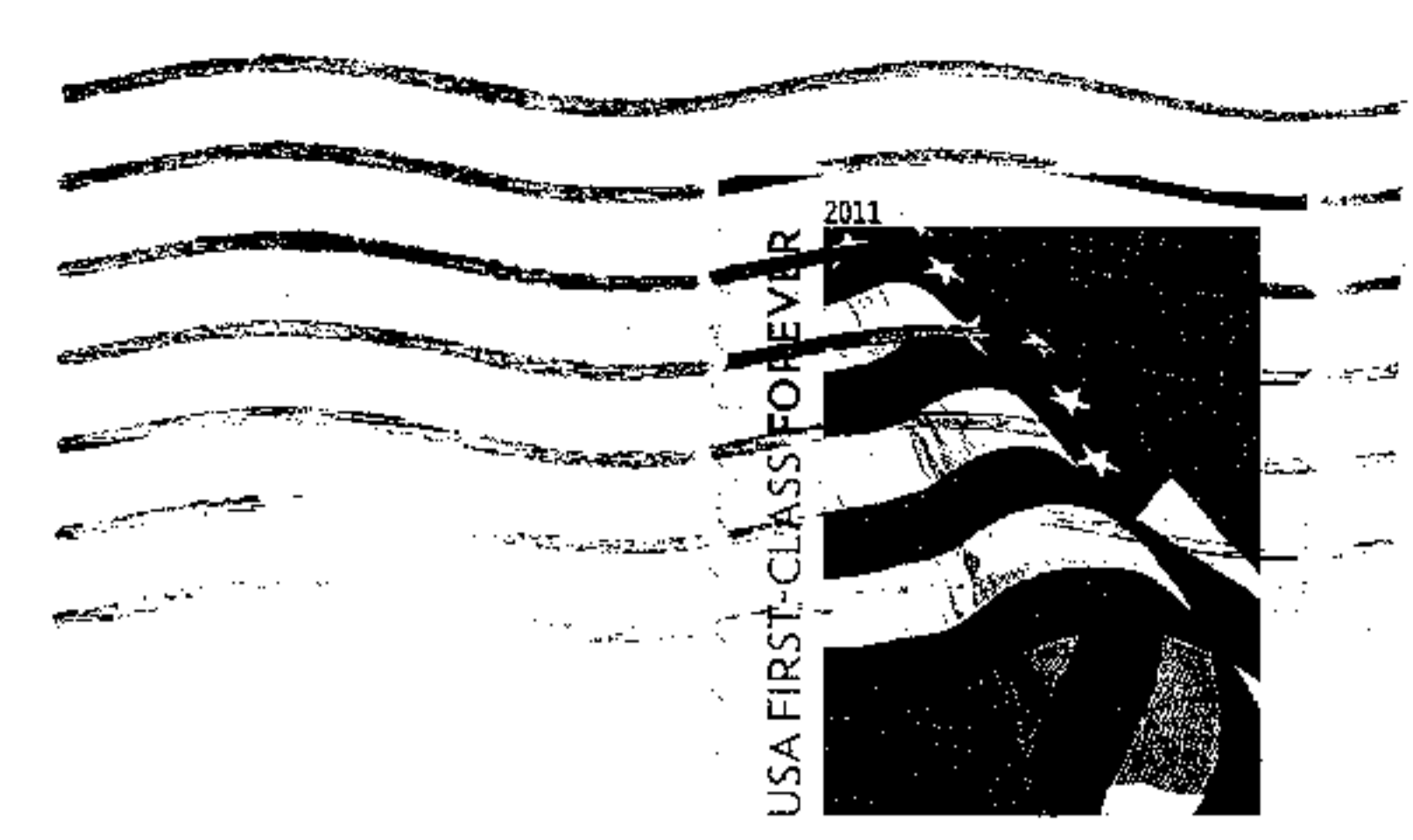
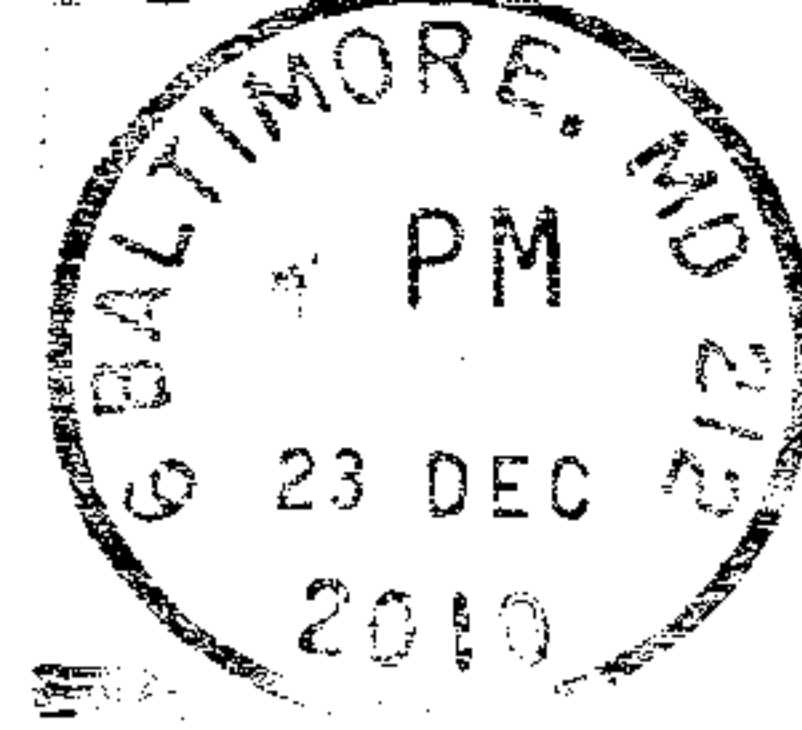
This program is our major membership drive and it is a temporary program which will not be repeated in the near future. The gift may be made to an individual or to a husband/wife unit.

**Fill out form below and mail it with your check for \$10 to our office:  
P. O. Box 4585 Baltimore, MD 21203-4585**

<b>GIFT MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION</b>
Name of member making the gift (your name)
Name of recipient of the gift (new member)
Street Address of new member
City, State, zip code
Phone number
E-mail address, if available



The German Society of Maryland  
 P.O. Box 22585  
 Baltimore, MD 21203-4585  
 410-685-0450  
 www.germansociety-md.com



## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Alderman Bruce  
 Arnold Stacey  
 Arnold David  
 Bell Millard "Buddy"  
 Bell Helga M. Scharf  
 Class Angela  
 Class William  
 Curran Andrea  
 Curran William  
 Dewitt Lynn  
 Dimler David  
 Donoho Jr. Ron  
 Gralley Kevin  
 Griffin Margaret  
 Gugliette Jason  
 Hirsch Dr. Robert  
 Hirsch Kathleen  
 Judkins, Lila Bachmann O'Meara  
 Klasmeier Jerome  
 Klasmeier Jane  
 Kresslein, Patricia  
 Kresslein, Esq. Charles

Lammers Nicole  
 Lammers Dr. Bernhard  
 Langford Rick  
 Langford Rebekah  
 Liningier Carol  
 Liningier Brett  
 Maurer Claire B.  
 Muller Sr. Virginia  
 Norris, Jr. Victor J.  
 Nye Penny  
 Potthast Charles  
 Potthast John T.  
 Potthast C. Michael  
 Reinhardt Crowley Phyllis  
 Reinhardt, Esq. Louis  
 Roger Jane  
 Schamber Edward Paul  
 Thibault Artus Nagy  
 Weglein Jack  
 Weglein Joan  
 Wies, Irene Schanberger  
 Wies, Jr. Theodore

Maureen M. Helinski  
 22 Glenmore Ave.  
 Baltimore, MD 21206

***"The purpose of the German Society of Maryland is to preserve and promote the German heritage and traditions through educational, social and benevolent programs; and to develop the unity and continuity of the German American community in the State of Maryland."***

Visit the German Society's website:  
[www.germansociety-md.com](http://www.germansociety-md.com)

Articles from some past newsletters are posted on our website. Dr. Maureen Helinski maintains the site. "Pioneers in Service", the history of our Society, can now be found on our web site. For more local German-American happenings, check the web site of the Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland: [www.md-germans.org](http://www.md-germans.org)

This newsletter is published by The German Society of Maryland, an organization founded in 1783 and incorporated in 1817 by Act of the General Assembly of Maryland. It is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation pursuant to the provisions of §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Society is a member of the Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland, D.A.N.K. (German American National Congress) The United German-American Committee of the USA, Inc. and other civic groups which promote German-American culture and heritage. Please submit items of interest to Theodore J. Potthast, Jr., Editor, at 1819 Leadburn Road, Towson, MD 21204-1830 or fax 410-832-2903.

### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_

"I hereby apply to be a member of the German Society of Maryland"  
 Annual dues \$25 Spouse may be included at no extra cost.

The German Society of Maryland  
 P.O. Box 22585  
 Baltimore, MD 21203-4585