

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

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

VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

FEBRUARY 2012 ISSUE #81

OFFICERS

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

DIRECTORS

Shelley D. Arnold
Dr. David A. Denisch
The Rev. G. Richard Dimler, S.J.
William Hay Kommalan
Paul-Gerhard M. Otto
Bernard A. Penner, Esq.
Lauren Rizzo
Dr. James D. Schaub
Shirley S. Santora
Dennis F. Tausendschoen
Dr. Mary Upman
Thomas A. Werner

EX OFFICIO

Pres., Women's Auxiliary
Eva Maus Kelleher

LIFETIME DIRECTORS

Merl E. Arp
John K. Aymold, Jr.
Dandridge Brooke
Linda Butt
Dr. Mohamed Esa
Brigitte V. Fessenden
Dr. Maureen Helinski
Dr. Armin E. Mruck
Michael J. Nieberding
Betty Niemann
The Rev. H.J. Siegfried Otto
Theodore J. Potthast, Jr., Esq.
Irma Tillman
Christel van der Berg
Frederick H. Wehrenberg
The Rev. Edwin O. Wenck, Esq.
Vernon H. Wiesand, Esq.
Hon. Gerard W. Wittstadt

OFFICE MANAGER

Bärbel Otto

MEINZER PROGRAM

The program made possible by a grant from our member, Gerhard Meinzer is off to a good start, with nominations received from our members now under review. Our Society will select and send a student to Germany this summer, using the services of the American Association of Teachers of German. High school students with at last 2 years of German studies are eligible, including the class of 2012. Dr. Maureen Helinski of our Education Committee will supervise the selection process. Nominations are now closed. The Meinzer scholar-ship will cover transportation, tuition, and most living expenses while the student is in Germany. Our student will travel with other students from the USA but will attend a German school. Only members of our Society could nominate students for the program.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A special report by President Otto appears on pages 4 and 5, detailing accomplishments of the past year.

REPORT FROM AUSTRIA

Our Society gave a \$1,000 grant to Rachel Trageser, a college student, to study abroad at the University of Salzburg and asked her to report back on her activities. Her report appears on Pages 6 & 7.

PENDING LEGISLATION

The Maryland General Assembly is considering bills to declare October as German American month in Maryland. They are Senate Bill #42 and House Bill #102. A hearing was held on the House Bill at which our Society presented testimony. A date has not been set for the Senate Bill. The first obstacle is to get the bills out of committee and on to the floor of the General Assembly. Our efforts last year did not make it to the floor.

The forces behind the bills are Shelley Arnold, a member of our Board of Directors, and two of our members, Susan Aumann and Bill Frank, both members of the House of Delegates.

We would like to have a large number of our members present in Annapolis for the vote on the bill. More important is the necessity to bombard the legislature with letter, phone calls and emails urging their support of the measure. Will try to keep our members abreast of the action by the legislature as the bills pass through the process. Our website and that of Shelley Arnold (GermanMarylanders.org) will give the current status.

The chairman of the House Committee only permits one "ethnic" bill per year to get to the floor of the entire House of Delegates for a vote. This year our competition is a bill to declare March as Irish American month, and another bill to declare "Juneteenth" as Emancipation Day.

Write to your senators and delegates urging support for these bills. MD has a strong German heritage.

KALENDER

Feb 18 Fasching - Buergerverein
 April 13 Annual membership meeting
 April 26 German night at Meyerhoff
 April 26 Directors: election of officers
 May 20 High school and college awards
 May 29 Westminster City anniversary
 June 13-19 Greet German ship Hesse: Fells Point
 June 24 The Great German Family Picnic at Kurtz's
 July German Festival at Timonium

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the annual meeting of the membership of The German Society of Maryland will take place of Friday, April 13 in the Dining Room of the Zion Church of Baltimore, City Hall Plaza, Baltimore, MD at 7:45 p.m. The meeting will be preceded by a dinner for our members and their guests which will commence at 6:30 p.m. Doors will open at 6:15 p.m. Parking is available in the parking lot of the church. The dinner will feature German food and drink and the cost is free. Contributions are accepted but are not required. Persons wishing to attend the dinner must call our office not later than Tuesday, April 10 so that we may arrange to have enough food for all. Leave your name and the number in your party. If you are able to bring something for dessert, please say so when you call. Home-made desserts are especially welcome, but not essential. Please bring any prospective new members to the meeting. Election of directors will be held during the business meeting.

2011 TREASURER'S REPORT

The report submitted by our treasurer, Ted Potthast to the Board of Directors for the calendar year 2011 indicted the following:

Receipts: \$41,360.61

Expenses: \$41,888.80

Excess of expenses over income: \$528.19

Assets as of 12-31-11

Checking account:	\$ 1,365.08
Education Fund	\$ 265,969.61
General Fund	\$ <u>278,959.82</u>

Total Assets

(\$7,039.07 is required to be transferred from the General Fund to the education Fund.)

The details of the 5-page treasurer's report listing all income and expenses will be posted on the Society's web site in the near future.

FASCHING: SAT., FEB. 18

Sponsored by the Buergerverein, a gala Fasching costume party will be held in the Adlersaal of Zion Church from 7 to 11 pm. The \$25 admission includes music by the Heimat Echo band, assorted snacks, German beer (Spaten), soda and setups and costume prizes for various categories. All are welcome. To reserve a spot, send your check, payable to the Buergerverein, to Loy Vogel, 12732 Cunningham Cove Road, Baltimore, MD 21220. 410-335-2442. German Society members are encourage to attend and bring your guests.

CONDOLENCES....to our president, The Rev. Siegfried Otto, on the loss of his uncle, Heinz Nowak who died in Eirmasens in the Palatinate, Germany at age 89. He was his mother's youngest brother, the last of her generation, He was born in Silesia, conscripted in the army at a young age, became a POW of the Russians who finally released him at age 20 in 1948 due to ill health. He recovered, married and had 5 children. Pastor Otto left on Jan. 23 to participate in the funeral services. While in Germany he will meet up with Mrs. Baerbel Otto, our office manager and visit their two daughters.

GERMAN NIGHT AT BSO

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra will present an evening of German composers at the Meyerhoff on Sat., April 28: von Weber; Beethoven's Violin Concerto; and Schuman's Symphony N. 3. Guest conductor is German born Jun Maerkel. Featured violinist, Arabella Steinbacker (German). This is a rare German offering. Our Society has purchased 20 students tickets and committed them to 3 local high schools and one college in an effort to promote German culture among the young. The Buergerverein has reserved a block of Terrace Center seats. We encourage all members to attend. Tickets \$25. Send checks payable to "Buergerverein" to its treasurer, Loy Vogel, 12732 Cunningham Cove Rd., Baltimore, MD 21220. Do it now before al the seats are sold out.

Consider a donation to our Newsletter Fund. Postage is now 45 cents. With increased costs of paper, printing can reach 60 cents per copy. Our goal is to issue a newsletter every month.

DORCHESTER INVITATION

Our Society has been invited by the language clubs of Dorchester High School to participate in a cultural event featuring German and Spanish, to take place in April. Part of the culture of Spain will be demonstrated by flamingo dancers. Our President, Siegfried Otto, will make a presentation on the culture of Germany. At the moment, we have arranged to present the students with a supply of cookies, Stollen, other baked goods and candy confections imported from Germany and we are searching for other means to explain the German American heritage. We are hoping some of our members will step up and volunteer to help. Please call our office to sign up. Jennifer Kraeer, the German teacher at Dorchester High, is a member of our Society. She is a recent graduate of McDaniel College and one of our director Dr. Mohamed Esa's premier students.

HERITAGE MUSEUM PRESENTATION

Rudiger Lentz, the director of the German American Heritage Museum in Washington, D.C., will attend our annual membership meeting and advise our Society of the progress which the new museum has achieved since its recent opening. Many of our members have already visited the museum and sung its praises. The Society is in the process of planning a group visit sometime in 2012. Mr. Lentz brings a strong background of German American culture to his position with the museum.

CONGRATULATIONS to the internet website "Der Wecker" on achieving its 3rd anniversary on January 26th. It is a thriving source of information and conversation. Find it by googling "German American Forum": it will come up as the #1 source of communication via the forum format. Congratulations also to its founder, our member WALT MATHERS, who has been the backbone sustaining the program.

BUERGERVEREIN ELECTIONS

Officers for the year 2012 were elected at the January meeting: President, Dorothy Kirschner; Vice-president, Thomas Werner; recording secretary, Kathy Kotowski; corresponding secretary, Bill Reamy; Treasurer, Loy Vogel. Mr. Werner is also First Vice President and a Director of our Society. The DeutschamerikanischerBuergerverein von Maryland

is an organization established more than 110 years ago and is an umbrella organization of German clubs, of which our Society is a founding member.

GERMAN WARSHIP TO FELLS POINT

A German naval vessel, the Hesse, a "frigate", will dock for a week in early June as part of a flotilla of tall ships in Baltimore to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the start of the war against Britain. The public may board the ship at specific times which will be reported in a future newsletter. The Buergerverein is planning an entertainment for the crew of the ship. Volunteers are needed. Our past president, Brigitte Fessenden, is a member of the reception organization. Details later.

HIGH SCHOOL GERMAN AWARDS

The German Society has put up \$5,000 to be awarded to Maryland high school students for excelling in the national German language examinations. The funds will be distributed at ceremonies held on Sunday, May 20, 2012 in the Adersaal at Zion Church, City Hall Plaza, Baltimore. One of the stated purposes of our Society is the encouragement of the study of the German language, and this program is intended to carry out that purpose. Members of our Society are invited to attend the function to show support for the students.

A separate program is in effect for college students.

KICKERS CONSIDER A MOVE

The Baltimore Kickers have placed their clubhouse on Broadway in Baltimore City for sale and are considering a move. The Buergerverein is floating the idea of a clubhouse for the use of all the member organizations (of which our Society is one) and a committee has been formed to explore the feasibility of the concept. Officials of seven clubs met recently to discuss the idea and a committee was formed to look into the many elements which would be involved in such a project. The financing of the project is the major hurdle, and the issue of ownership, shared usage, office space, meeting schedules, parking and location. The committee has concluded that a location in Baltimore County is the most convenient for the majority of the clubs, since it is by far the area where the greater number of members reside. Our Society has a representative on the committee.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Today's Sun paper (January 21, 2012) contained an article and editorial on the demise of the Eastman Kodak Company: "Kodak was blinded by past" and "A sad Kodak moment". In reflecting on them they can teach us a valuable lesson as we understand the vision and mission of the German Society of Maryland: Let me quote the pertinent sentences and then draw some conclusions:

1. Kodak was Rochester-centric.
2. It's like living in a museum.
3. Kodak became bound up in nostalgia. ("Nostalgia is lovely but it does not allow people to move forward")
4. The company did not want to embrace change.
5. The company was compared "to a bird that likes to fly backwards.... because it's more comfortable looking where it's been than where it's going."
6. Lack of vision and failure of imagination are the fundamental causes for Kodak's decline.

Whenever we meet, wherever we come together, we need to remind ourselves of our vision and mission: to preserve the German American heritage - which has a profound impact on life in Maryland - and to promote the German language - which is the portal to understand, value and appreciate the German culture.

Heritage is "Kulturerbe" for us. It is kept alive

- when we remember people and their achievements and their struggles,
- when we tell their stories,
- when we share and practice family rituals and recipes,
- when we celebrate and enjoy what has been passed on to us, of which we now have become its guardians.

This responsibility gives us the freedom to be creative with traditions so that they reflect who we are and what expresses our values, our contributions.

German language promotion is an integral part of our mission. We are fortunate to have competent and dedicated teachers on our board and that our annual financial contributions to high school and college students are substantial.

Due to the initiative of Mr. Louis J. Grasmick and his wife Dr. Nancy Grasmick a Heritage Fund has been established which as its first purpose is to support the summer program in Germany, operated by the AATG (American Association of Teachers of German). Here again Mr. Gerhard Meinzer, President of AGAS (Associations of German American Societies in Washington) sponsored the first student this year with his most generous donation.

All our board members have contributed to the Heritage Fund. It is our hope to distribute a brochure this year for the general membership.

In honoring Mrs. Eva Maus Kelleher, longtime teacher and principal of the Zion Language School with the Society's Award for Outstanding Achievements of a Marylander of German Descent our priority on German language education has become evident.

In 2012 the Society will support as educational projects:

- High school and college student awards
- Summer student program
- A cultural event April 24, 2012 at North Dorchester High school
- A cultural event at Calvert School
- Gilman's Cultural Arts Festival on February 12, 2012
- German American Day at McDaniel College

Our Society actively supports the Bürgerverein, which is the umbrella organization of all German American entities, representing most German American organizations. Here are some of their upcoming dates:

- February 18 2012 Fasching
at Zion Church Adlersaal

- April 26, 2012 German Music Night
at the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
- May 9, 2012 Westminster City Anniversary
- June 24, 2012 The Great German Family
Picnic at Kurtz's Beach

An exploratory committee has been formed under the leadership of the Baltimore Kickers studying the possibility of establishing a joint cultural facility in Baltimore County. Mr. Ted Potthast will be our representative.

Our board member Mrs. Shelley Arnold again this year is spearheading our efforts to have the month of October declared German American Heritage Month by the Maryland legislature. Special hearings will be held, the bills and the list of the committee members are published on her website: www.germanmarylanders.org. (Go to Legislative Efforts). It would be imperative that members from all organizations attend the hearings and that members contact their respective government representatives.

Our Society received a special donation of Lederhosen, Dirndls and hats from the Annapolis Bavarians. We hope that they will find new use in school projects or plays.

The Women's Auxiliary of the German Society of Maryland has published an annual report in German. We reproduced it in the original form, followed by an English translation of the Secretary's letter. (Attached to this report)

Our annual meeting has been scheduled for Friday, April 13, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. in the dining hall of Zion Church. (Please enter from the parking lot into the lane) Old World Delicatessen and Bakery will provide the food. We have invited Mr. Rüdiger Lentz, the director of the German American Heritage Museum of the USA in Washington to speak to us. Please call our office number 410-685-0450 if you plan to attend, we need this information for the caterer. While the food will be complimentary a free will donation is appreciated. We appeal to our ladies to bring a dessert which we will all share. Beer, wine, coffee, and soft drinks will be provided.

2012 is an important anniversary in the history of our country: the decisive battle in the war of 1812-1814 took place in Baltimore. The vice president of our Society, General John Stricker is one of the heroes of this conflict. He was commander of the Third Brigade in the Battle of North Point. He was born in Frederick in 1759, son of Colonel George Stricker "of revolutionary fame". It has been claimed that the commands of the Third Brigade were given in German. An army report praised the "bold and intrepid charges of the German soldier Sergeant Keller of Captain Bird's company of U.S. Light Dragoons who with three dragoons dispersed a guard of 18 fusileers, taking six of them prisoners despite of their fire and that of a four-pounder within half canister distance." (From the Germans of Maryland 1812-14, published for the Star Spangled Banner Centennial September 1914, Baltimore)

The importance of the German element since colonial days in the history of Maryland and the nation itself cannot be overrated. It is one of the mammoth tasks of our community to give witness to it, to share it, to celebrate it and to encourage our fellow citizens to be aware of their own roots and to appreciate them. They may have more in common with our heritage than they realize.

Thank you for your commitment and participation!

H. J. S. Otto, President

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Rosemarie Guntzel
Paul Guntzel
Ellen Lichtfuss
Robert Lichtfuss
Peggy Nickson
Don Nickson
John Vogt
Heather Vogt

LETTER FROM RACHEL TRAGESER – SEMESTER IN SALZBURG

Dear German Society of Maryland,

I hope it has been a good year for the organization and all its members, and that all had a great Christmas (Weihnachten) and New Year's (Silvester).

I know this E-mail is quite a bit late, and I apologize for that. This semester has been extremely busy with trips, excursions, tests, schoolwork, etc., so I finally have some time to sit down and write this now that it's winter break. I tried to send a letter through the mail about 6 weeks ago, but I think it got lost in the mail somewhere because other people I had sent letters to never received them.

I want to start off this E-mail by expressing my sincerest gratitude for the help and support the German Society of Maryland has shown for me in preparation and during my time here in Salzburg, Austria.

I cannot thank the organization and all its members enough for the financial assistance and the various other forms of support that were extended to me for this trip; you all made it all the more possible for me to have this once-in-a-lifetime experience. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

These past three months of my life here in Austria have truly been unreal. I have seen so much, done so much, accomplished so much, have met so many people, and have learned so much about myself. Last night on New Year's Eve, my friend and I sat down and we thought about all the monumental things that happened in 2011

for both of us, and the milestones during this study abroad semester, and I was overwhelmed with thoughts of all the amazing experiences I have had over here (with still another month to go).

Before I get into explaining some of them, I first want to say that learning another language, especially German, has been both difficult and rewarding. Difficult because the Austrian dialect is nothing like the "hoch-Deutsch" I learn in the classroom, and of course because of der, die, das. But I could have never learned the amount I did in such a short period of time back in the States. The complete immersion into the culture has not only improved my German-speaking skills immensely, it has given me a broader perspective and understanding of the world. Learning about all the rich history in Austria, and all of Europe for that matter, while being over here, as opposed to being in an American classroom where everything, for the most part, is related back to the United States, has taught me why Europe is the way it is, why Germans and Austrians are the way they are, and why learning another language, especially one as prevalent as German, is invaluable in life. By learning German, I have come to understand that language truly is the social glue that keeps a culture together.

The places I have visited since I have been here are: Salzburg, Innsbruck, Vienna (Wien), Stiermark, Prague, Barcelona, Leipzig, Rühdesheim, Munich (München), Venice, Mauthausen, and this week coming up is Dublin and London. I traveled through the alps on Christmas, saw fireworks above the Festung in Salzburg on New Year's, saw an opera at the Wien Opera House, ate at the oldest restaurant in Europe (St. Peter's Stiftskeller in Salzburg circa ~800), experienced Mozart's classics live, saw

my first ballet in Prague, saw the Thomanerchor live in Leipzig, witnessed the architecture of Gaudi in Barcelona, had a very emotional experience at the Mauthausen concentration camp, ate chocolate torte at the famous Sacher Hotel, hiked the alps, went paragliding off the Alps, took a gondola ride in Venice, and so much more.

One memorable highlight during my time here was in Innsbruck, a city 2 hours away from Salzburg by train in the Tirol Bundesland (federal state). My friends and I decided to take a day trip there one weekend, and I am so glad we did. We took a cable car to the top of a peak in the surrounding Alps and it was the most breathtaking view I have ever seen. You could see the entire city and river that went through the middle of it with the Alps all around us. It was a rare moment when I was actually left speechless. I didn't know what to do or say, I was simply blown away by the beauty all around me. I thought to myself how blessed I am to be able to be here, to see all of this, because most people will never see this in their lifetime. I have had the same thought during many of my experiences here.

The academic side to this time abroad has also been an entirely separate experience in itself. I have learned to be a more confident German speaker, allowing me to have conversations with people everywhere from the bus stop to the grocery store to the classroom. I have become a better writer, have sharpened my grammar skills, and have read a great deal of German literature as well. Because German is not my major back at the University of Delaware, just my minor, and only one subject on my usual vast repertoire of classes, this time abroad has allowed me to really focus on just German alone. The constant thinking, speaking, and writing in German, as

exhausting and overwhelming as it can be at times, has solidified many concepts to the language in my head in a way only possible through a study abroad experience like this one. I was constantly out of my comfort zone, which basically forced me to learn the language. The best part about it is that I am with other students in my program who are going through the exact same experience with me, so we all have each other for help along the way, sometimes with assignments and sometimes with nerve-racking 20 minute long presentations (all auf Deutsch of course).

All in all, this study abroad trip has definitely been life changing. I am so grateful I was able to go on the trip, do all the things I did, have all those wonderful experiences, learn about the cultures of Europe, and of course, become a better student of German. My family's heritage is mostly, if not all, German, so this experience has also been special in that it has continued on the language and traditions of my ancestry and brought me closer to the history of my family. It has also taught me the importance and significance of organizations like The German Society of Maryland who seek to keep alive the prominent German culture in the United States. I plan to find a way to continue on the ideals and knowledge instilled in me to the future generations of my family.

There's a whole world out there to see, and I am so happy this time abroad has allowed me to see some of it. Once again, thank you to the entire German Society of Maryland for all the help and support. I am looking forward to talking with you all about my time here when I return after January.

*Sincerely,
Rachel Trageser*