

## **NEWSLETTER ISSUE 50**

### **May-June, 2005**

#### **FESSENDEN ELECTED PRESIDENT**

#### **GLOCK, ARP, VICE-PRESIDENTS**

At the meeting of the directors on April 28, Brigitte Voelkel Fessenden was elected president, Jeffrey Glock, first vice president and Merl Arp second vice president. Michael Nieberding was re-elected treasurer and Christal van der Berg secretary.

Mrs. Fessenden is the first female president in the 222 year history of our Society. She is an immigrant from Germany and is married to Dr. Nicholas Fessenden, an official at Friends School. Brigitte became active in our Society when she served as our volunteer office manager in the early 1980's. She has been active on many committees and is chair of our archives committee. Brigitte is a licensed architect and is an official of the City of Baltimore dealing with historic preservation.

Jeffrey Glock is a certified public accountant who specializes as a consultant to the real estate investment industry. He travels extensively through the USA serving national clients.

Merl Arp is a national vice president of D.A.N.K, the German American National Congress, in Chicago. He is also active in the Associated German American Societies of Washington. He has served as a major contributor of ideas to our board of directors.

Michael Nieberding has served four years as the Society's president and three as our treasurer. Christal van der Berg has been our corporate secretary since her election to our board of directors 8 years ago.

#### **SOCIETY MAKES MAJOR GIFTS FOR ZION'S ADLERSAAL ELEVATOR; \$5,000 IN MEMORY OF E.M.BANKA**

In gratitude for Zion Church's support of our Society for the past 100 years, our directors approved a gift of \$10,000 from our general fund and \$5,000 from the bequest of Staff Sgt. Edward Michael Banka, USAF, in his memory. Both gifts are earmarked for the new elevator to the Adlersaal which our Society has used for many functions. Approved by the Md-Del Lutheran Synod as a German cultural center, Zion is the only such institution in Maryland.

Ed Banka was a loyal member who left his entire estate of \$48,000 to our Society. He left no survivors and so our directors undertook the duty of preserving his memory. A plaque bearing his name will be installed near the elevator.

#### **DR. SCHAUB COMPLETES TERM AS PRESIDENT - RECEIVES THANKS**

James Schaub, PhD, who has served three terms as president of the Society, stepped down following the election of new offices on April 28. Our directors expressed their gratitude to him for his faithful services and accomplishments and have received his assurance that he will remain active in our future projects. The president is elected for a term of one year, and may serve a second year. When Dr. Schaub's second term expired, he was asked to serve for an additional year to accomplish a special purpose; namely, to cement the relations between our Society and AGAS, the Association of German American Societies of Greater Washington, of which our Society had recently become (continued on p.4 - Dr. James Schaub)

#### **MAY-JUNE 2005 VEREINSNACHRICHTEN The German Society of Maryland Page 2**

#### **KALENDER**

**May 22 - German Society Student Awards**

**August 19-21 - German Festival at Carroll Park**

**Oct. 2 - Annual Ecumenical Service**

**November - Annual Awards Banquet**

**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.

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)

## GERMAN STUDENTS NEED ROOMS

High school (Gymnasium) students from Oldenburg need a place to stay for a week - July 16-23 - to attend a program at Towson University. Prof. Dr. Armin Mruck teaches both at Towson and in Oldenburg, Germany. He asks us to house the students in our homes for a week. This involves picking them up and taking them to Towson U. in the morning, bringing them back in the evening and feeding them. They are about 18 years old and all speak English. If you can help the students, contact Armin or his colleague, Arlene Prince, at the University at **410-740-2239** or send an email to [AMruck@Towson.edu](mailto:AMruck@Towson.edu) or to [aprince@towson.edu](mailto:aprince@towson.edu).

## WANT TO HELP? SIGN UP

In the process of preparing for the new cycle of projects, the committee chairmen and chairwomen will be scrambling for volunteers. Call our office and leave your name as a volunteer and one of the chairs will contact you. If you have a committee preference, say so; otherwise you will be offered an assignment. And even if you don't call in to volunteer, don't be surprised if you get a call from a committee head hoping to draft you.

## GERMAN DEPT. MERGES AT JOHNS HOPKINS

"The Hopkins", a premier Maryland institution, founded on the principles of the German university system, has "merged" its German department with the "Romance Languages" Department. This may indicate a trend of a natinal decline in the study of language in American universities. We hope not.

## SOCIETY, BÜRGERVEREIN EACH GIVE GIFT TO PRIDE OF BALTIMORE

The Baltimore clipper, *Pride of Baltimore II* sailed for Germany on May 2 deeply in debt. At the bequest of our president, Brigitte Fessenden, our board of directors approved a gift of \$1,000 to aid the journey.

At the monthly meeting on April 29, on motion of Tom Werner, the Bürgerverein also approved a \$1,000 gift to match our Society's gift. The ship will represent Maryland at the grand opening of the Emigrant Museum in Bremerhaven in August. For many years, ships plowed the seas carrying passengers and cargo between Baltimore and Bremerhaven on a bi-weekly basis. Bremerhaven was the chief European port of embarkation for emigrants. Many of our ancestors came to Maryland from that port. The City of Bremerhaven has made a gift of \$35,000 to bring the *Pride of Baltimore* there for the occasion. The city has named one of the piers in its harbor the Baltimore Pier.

### Members Urged to Contribute

Although the *Pride* is owned by the State of Maryland, its operations are funded by private contributions. The State has made a small contribution, but the City of Baltimore, when asked to help the *Pride's* voyage to Bremerhaven, refused. The contribution of the City of Baltimore: \$0 - zero. Our board of directors resolved to ask our members to make private donations to increase our gift for the trip, and issued instructions to publish this request in our newsletter. Please send a check to our Society with a note stating that is for the *Pride of Baltimore*. The gift is tax-deductible.

## BRIGITTE FESSENDEN MARYLAND'S AMBASSADOR TO BREMERHAVEN

Our Society's new president, Brigitte Fessenden, will attend the opening of the German Emigration Center in Bremerhaven, Germany as the representative of the State of Maryland. She will stand-in for Gov. Ehrlich at the event. Over 7 million Europeans traveled to Bremerhaven to sail for America and other ports throughout the world. The 3500 square meter exhibit will commemorate the history and routes of these emigrants. The museum, designed to replicate an ocean liner, will include special exhibitions, films and cultural events. For information about the museum, visit the website:

<http://www.dah-bremerhaven.de>

In the late 1800's, the North German Lloyd line scheduled a ship every two weeks between Baltimore and Bremerhaven.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear German Society of Maryland Members:

I am honored to have been elected as your new president and would like to thank all of you who have encouraged me to take on this challenge in the 222nd year since the founding of our Society. I am delighted to have been given this opportunity to

continue the work of our past presidents, and to promote our mission by supporting our educational programs and benevolent works. To keep our German heritage alive we must not only cherish our history and accomplishments - we must also look to the future and ensure that our young generation be encouraged to stay interested in their German culture by studying German language and literature. With the support of you and our board, I feel confident we can achieve our goals.

**Brigitte V. Fessenden**

## **HISTORICAL SOCIETY LECTURE: CATHOLICS IN 19TH CENTURY MD**

On May 10 at the annual dinner-meeting of The Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, Rev. Joseph Rossi, S.J. of Loyola College presented a paper on the contributions of German Catholics to 19th century Baltimore. This was the first of a series of the impact of various German church groups of that era.

19th century German immigration to Maryland included a high percentage of Catholics. The church of that era was controlled by English and Irish bishops who were prejudiced against the German priests. Until the German Catholics established their own parishes, their services were conducted in the basements of the churches of the diocese. German Catholics were placed under the jurisdiction of the Redemptorist order, whose German priests produced prominent leaders such as Saint John Neumann and Blessed Francis Seelos, both having served as pastors of St. Alphonsus Church in Baltimore. Nuns from Bavaria, the Schools Sisters of Notre Dame, established dozens of grade schools, a high school and The College of Notre Dame. There was dissension and distrust between the German and Irish clergy. As time went on the Germans established many churches of their own, although the Irish continued to the present to hold on to the title of archbishop of Baltimore. Father's Rossi's paper will be published next year in "The Report," the publication of the Historical Society.

## **VEIL OF SECRECY FINALLY PIERCED: BÜRGERVERIN'S FUNDS EXPOSED**

Our Society is a member of the Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland. The last time we saw a report of its finances was nearly 20 years ago when its treasury held about \$14,000. The officers of that organization have refused to reveal the state of its finances for the past 20 years. Efforts of our officers to get that information caused strained relations between our Society and the Bürgerverein and was a main reason we have not participated in the German Festival for the past 8 years. At the monthly meeting on April 29, it was inadvertently disclosed that the treasury holds more than \$200,000. This caused consternation among several member organizations, prompting the approval of a resolution calling for full disclosure of the finances on a monthly basis. No explanation for the veil of secrecy has yet been forthcoming.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE STUDIES INDEX AS INVESTMENT VEHICLE**

Michael Nieberding, our treasurer and chairman of the finance committee, presented the executive committee a proposal to change our investments to a method which would mirror various stock indices. The switch is expected to give greater diversification, increase performance, decrease risk and lower management fees. The committee will compare the index method against our current system in light of the recent volatility of the market.

## **BERNARD PENNER ELECTED DIRECTOR AT ANNUAL MEETING**

Bernard Penner, Esq., a member of our Society for many years, was elected to the Board of Directors on April 28. Mr. Penner is an Assistant Attorney General of Maryland. His father was a Pastor of Zion Church and was a chaplain of our Society. Bernard grew up living at the parsonage of Zion Church and the Adlersaal was his playroom and basketball court. He takes a great interest in the preservation of local German culture and is presently working on a project to raise funds for the establishment of a Maryland German heritage museum to house artifacts used by our ancestors after immigrating here. Other directors re-elected at the meeting were Linda Butt, Dr. David Denisch, Dr. Maureen Helinski and Dr. James Schaub.

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## **95 ATTEND ANNUAL MEETING**

The 2005 annual meeting of members was held April 1 in the dining room of Zion Church, following a fine German dinner supplied by Old World Deli and provided by Merrill Lynch, our financial advisors. The large crowd enjoyed the companionship of one another. Members came from all around Maryland and from Northern Virginia. Treasurer Mike Nieberding presented a financial report indicating a prosperous year. President Jim Schaub detailed the past year's activities and presented plans for the present year. He was given a standing ovation and the grateful thanks of the members for his 3 years of service as president.

## **JAMES SCHAUB (cont'd from p.1)**

a member. He is an official of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture with offices in downtown Washington. He was in a special position to maintain close contacts with AGAS, attend its meetings and stay in close communication with its leaders. As a result, our position as a member of AGAS has been solidified. Dr. Schaub has also agreed to serve as our Society's representative to AGAS in the future.

Our directors also gave special thanks to Jim's wife, Abbey, who has not only supported him in his endeavors but also has

contributed her talents to many of our programs.

## OUR ARCHIVES ON MICROFILM

About 10 years ago, we sent many of our archives to the Maryland State Archivist. The State put them on microfilm, kept a copy for itself, gave us a copy and returned the originals. We have about 6 rolls of microfilm in our office. Our plan was that the public could come in and look at the microfilms, so the originals would not be disturbed or damaged. The problem: we do not have a microfilm reader. Does anyone know where we could get a donation of a reading machine?

If we can't get a donation of a reader, we will have to plan for the future purchase of one.

We recently received a request from an out-of-town researcher who asked us to search our list for the names of her ancestors who came to Baltimore from Germany. We are looking for a volunteer from among our members to go through the original passenger lists to help us comply with this request. Please call our office and leave a message if you would like to volunteer.

## EDELWEISS HOUR SHUT DOWN BY STATION'S CHANGE OF OWNERS

For many years the weekly program of German American news and folk music sponsored by the Edelweiss Club has been aired on Radio AM 750.

That station also aired Greek and Polish programs on Sundays. Because the station has changed its policies and format to attract a different audience and advertisers, it notified the Edelweiss Club that it will no longer carry its program. This is a double blow to the local German American community, since the program of Baltimore's Radio Klub was cancelled recently because of financial reasons. We hope the Edelweiss will find a new home and resume its programming in the future. This club is a cultural and educational institution which deserves your support. Sign up today!

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR TRAVELS

Our members like to hear about what other members DO AND SEE IN their travels. Especially when you visit the Fatherland. With vacation time coming up, many members will be going to Germany, Austria, Switzerland. When you do, send us a short run-down of the highlights of your journey, so we can start a "Travel Section" in our newsletter. At our annual meeting on April 1, President Schaub made everyone stand up and give a personal thumb-nail sketch. Most recited how and from where their ancestors came to America. It was the most interesting part of the evening. It helps broaden our outlook and we learn about one another.

## WE GET REQUESTS FOR FUNDS

Our Society frequent receives requests for money from many sources. Since our income barely covers our expenses and projects to which we are dedicated, most requests are denied. When we spend money, we ask the question: does this carry out the purposes of our Society?. We don't give grants to private individuals, but only tax-exempt entities, such as the American Society for Teachers of German, etc.

## PROCESS FOR ELECTING OFFICERS

The directors elect the officers. The nominating committee presents a slate to the board. The nominating committee consists of the president all past presidents and one member appointed by the president.

Board members may also nominate candidates. The entire board then votes to elect our officers.

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### ABOUT OUR MEMBERS:

#### DID YOU KNOW THAT.....

Mentioned in a local paper as a possible candidate for the United States Senate Seat to be vacated by Paul Sarbanes was **Kendell Ehrlich**. **Governor Robert Ehrlich** is reported to have been approached by GOP leaders to announce for the slot. Both declined to run, for now.

#### CONGRATULATIONS

to **Pastor Siegfried Otto**, our director, and **Barbel Otto**, our office manager, on the birth of their granddaughter Isabelle Laura. Barbel spent two weeks in Germany with her daughter, Susanne Otto Bomio, helping out with the new baby.

to **Dr. Carol Traxler** on her election as the first female president of the Washington Gesangverein.

to our illustrious member, **Prof. Dr. Volker Schmeissner** upon his election as a director of the United German American Committee.

to our director, **Prof. Dr. Mohamed Esa** upon his election as president of the Maryland Foreign Language Association. Dr. Esa is Associate Professor of German at McDaniel College and past president of the Maryland Association of Teachers of German.

to our director and 2004 Honoree, **Dandridge Brooke**,

who celebrated his 80th birthday in January.. Another director, **Christel van der Berg**, celebrated birthday #80 on November 21; however the notice, mailed by her daughter in October, arrived late with 2 postmarks - October 16, 2004 and March 9, 2005!

to our member and past Honoree, **Governor Robert Ehrlich** for his bravery in plunging into the icy waters of the Chesapeake Bay for the fund raiser for the Maryland Special Olympics, sponsored by the MD State Police on January 29. Earlier in the week icebreakers were operating in the bay to keep the channels clear. Governor Ehrlich was joined by fellow German Society member **Jim McAlister** and 2,000 other polar bears.

to **Cappy Potthast** for completing her final term after 9 years on the board of trustees of her alma mater, St. Michael's College in Vermont. She was a member of the first class of women to graduate from the former all male school. She joined the board as its youngest member and only woman. She is a Towson lawyer.

**GUTE BESSERUNG** - best wishes for a speedy recovery to our devoted member, Maryland's State Comptroller and former governor **William Donald Schaefer** who was recently released from Johns Hopkins Hospital. He received 2,000 get-well cards and hopes to answer every one of them.

## MEMBERS SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF THE GERMAN CELEBRATIONS

When we couldn't find the meanings of some of the events celebrated by local Germans, our readers kindly wrote with the explanations.

**David Pardoe** sent us pages from his German-English dictionary which throw some light on the meanings of some celebrations we inquired about in our last newsletter:

**Dr. Herbert Traxler** and **Christel van der Berg** also sent information on the meanings of the events, which we summarize as follows:

**Heurige:** (a) wine of this year's vintage the year's new wine; (2) a new-wine tavern (open air) wine gardens or restaurant. Also, a "new-wine" fest.

**Fasching:** time before Lent, beginning 11/11/11 at 11 AM, having many parties and parades.

**Fastnacht** - Shrove Tuesday, when fasting starts; the day before Aschenmiwoch (Ash Wednesday).

**Schützenfest** - the event at which the marksmen shoot to determine who will be the Schützrnkönig for the year. Der Schützenverein is the rifle club.

**Das Schlachtfest** - the day the animals are slaughtered and the lunch-meat is fresh. Schlachtfeld is a battlefield. Schlachtkreuzer is a battle cruiser.

## PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES- WE RELY ON DUES TO PAY OUR BILLS

Dues are a major source of income to accomplish the goals of the Society: i.e. preserving our German language, culture and heritage.

## VIENNESE COOKING SCHOOL FLOURISHES IN MARYLAND

Maria Springer, a native of Austria, conducts private classes year round in Viennese cooking in her own restaurant-sized kitchen or in your private home. Our members who patronize her gave high grades. Maria publishes a newsletter distributed by e-mail, full of recipes and pointers on Austrian culture and heritage, including stories about her life as a child in Europe. Call her at 410-561-1157 or visit her website:

[www.southernlivingathom.com/maja](http://www.southernlivingathom.com/maja)

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### ZION CHURCH 250TH CELEBRATION Spring-Summer Events

April 25 to May 18 -- exhibit of the study of German

will interest adults and children. It is sponsored by the German government and the Goethe Institute. Free. Take the whole family.

May 15 - Springfest

June 5 - bilingual Homecoming Service and reception

August 28 - Mission Fest

Sept. 28 - Gartenfest with Bratwurst and a flea market

## **LOCAL MEMORIAL FOR GERMAN-AMERICAN NUN KILLED IN BRAZIL**

A memorial service was held March 13 at St. Ursula's Church in Baltimore County honoring Sister Dorothy Stang and attended by Brazil's ambassador to the US and members of her religious order, The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Dorothy Stang was killed six weeks earlier by hired gunmen. She had devoted the past 39 years helping peasants who live in Brazil's interior forests, advocating social justice for those oppressed by a corrupt local government, large cattle ranchers and lumbermen who cut down the forests.

While on her way to a meeting she was confronted by a group of hired gunmen. She realized the end was near, took out her bible and, according to witnesses, began reading: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." The gunmen listened in silence as she read. Then they shot her six times. Three of the gunmen have been captured. One hundred members of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur work in Maryland. One is a member of our Society.

## **CLUB FIDELITAS CELEBRATES ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY JUNE 11**

Club Fidelitas was founded 50 years ago to bring business and professional persons of German origin together to promote their common interests and camaraderie. Membership is limited and by invitation. It holds its 50th anniversary dinner dance on June 11 at the Country Club of Maryland. It is a member of the Deutschamerikanischer B urgerverein von Maryland, along with our Society. Wm. Kay Kommalan is the club's president and Tom Werner, one of our directors, is its vice president. Many members of our Society also belong to Club Fidelitas. We extend to them our congratulations and best wishes.

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## **MEIN KAMPF NOW A BEST-SELLER IN BOOKSTORES IN TURKEY**

Adolf Hitler is admired in some parts of the world, including modern Turkey, as a result of a surge of nationalistic reaction against Turkey's application to join the European Union. Many Turks distrust the European world and believe it is either rejecting Turkey or is openly hostile to it, according to Doga Ergil, a political scientist at the University of Ankara. He adds: "It's very easy to whip up national sentiments." Many Turks see that, to gain admission to the EU, Turkey will have to make major concessions, including acknowledging the slaughter of millions of Armenians in 1915 by the Ottoman Turks, ceding Turkey's claims to the Greek portion of Cyprus and abandoning the persecution of its minorities.

Older Turks still remember the glory years of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled much of the Mediterranean region for over 600 years (1298 to 1934), including parts of Austria and southeast Europe. Istanbul was its capital. Turkey was on the wrong side in World War I and lost most of its territory. It collapsed in 1923.

It may happen, in the next century, that the Turks will accomplish by a population explosion what they could not do by waging war, i.e. take over Germany. Math question for our student members: with the Turks producing 5 babies for each 1 ethnic German baby, how many years will it take before the 3 million Turks outnumber the 80 million ethnic Germans, assuming a new generation every 20 years? The birthrate of the Turks living in Germany is four times the birthrate of ethnic Germans.

## **GERMAN MARYLANDERS PLAY A ROLE IN THE EQUINE INDUSTRY**

Horses are a significant part of the Maryland economy. Baltimore County ranks second in the USA, behind Lexington County, KY in the number of horses. The industry accounts for 10% of the open land in MD and employs thousands in caring for the equines, maintaining fences and barns, providing feed, training, and may other roles. Race horses account for 40% of the total and the rest are involved in recreation and sports such as jumping, dressage, and our state sport: jousting. Many Germans came to Maryland as farmers and used horses as their chief work engine. One of our members, Eicke von Veltheim, a former olympic champion in dressage, lived 20 years in Maryland teaching dressage before he returned to Germany with his wife, Ilse, the former office manager of our Society. Eicke regularly returns to the USA to teach dressage.

## **1850's BALTIMORE: WAS IT A BAGHDAD ON THE PATAPSCO?**

The Irish potato famine of 1845-50 and the German revolution of 1848 sent waves of Irish and German immigrants to Baltimore, triggering a population explosion. With it came increased vagrancy, crime, unemployment, organized gangs and violence, growth in the prison system and the need for a greater police presence. Violence broke out regularly between the free black workers, the Irish, German and native groups.

The journal of the MD Historical Society reported on the Baltimore elections of 1856. It was reminiscent of the recent elections in Iraq. Partisan gangs blockaded polling places in precincts where their opposition was strong. One polling place was blown up by a cannon to prevent the opposition from voting. Many had to fight their way to the polls. Over 200 were killed attempting to vote in the election. Of course, the victims were men, since women did not have the dubious privilege of going to the polls then. The lack of female voters might be the main difference from the recent Baghdad elections!

## **THANKS YOU FOR YOUR LETTERS**

Our members have written us with ideas for promoting membership and other matters. We have received more memories of the Deutsche Haus which we will publish in future issues. If you have any matters of interest to our members, send them in.

## **GERMAN AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY IN BALTIMORE COUNTY**

Charlie Gast met Mary Frances Mueller when she was pumping gas into boats at Buedel's Marina on Middle River. Her parents owned the marina. They fell in love and married. Charlie started a construction business. They recently bought the marina from her parents and now are planning to build a \$25,000,000 condo complex, with docks and boat slips.

## **BURGERVEREIN 105 YEARS IN 2005**

The Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland turns 105 years old this year. Every 5 years it holds a special function to commemorate its antiquity. No date has yet been set for the celebration.

**NOTICE:** DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL, THERE WILL NOT BE A PICNIC THIS YEAR.