

# THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

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

## VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

JULY 2014 ISSUE #93

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Bärbel Otto

\* = past president

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

The nice warm weather has finally arrived and the many events for the German clubs are getting under way, I look forward to seeing many of you at the annual German Festival in Timonium. Please take a moment to stop by our stand and say hello.

Part of my agenda for this year is to visit schools which teach German to get a better idea on how we can support these programs and what we can do to further foster these relationships. My first visit took me to Mt. Hebron High School in Howard County and I sat in on several classes which Mrs. Gail Zik teaches. I was amazed at how many students took German, considering the many choices available to them. The students were prepared with questions and we had very informative discussions. I was surprised that only 1 student had ever been to the German Festival or knew about Maryland's large German American community. Some of the students were born in Germany and others had German parents. I invited them to the Festival, not only to experience first-hand what they are missing, but also to meet people from all the German clubs. Thanks to Dottie Kirchner, President of the Deutschamerikanischer Buergerverein von MD, these students will have their entrance fee waived. Our Society will provide them with a voucher for food and drink.

Students such as these make up our future and I believe it is imperative that all the clubs work together to bring them into our organizations. The German Society of MD and all the other clubs have a wealth of knowledge that needs to be passed on before it is lost. I hope you all will get the chance to meet and speak with these students during their visit. Please send me your ideas on what the German Society can do to improve

our programs and events. I hope to see you at the festival.

### **ANTON SMOOT, PRESIDENT**

### **AATG ELECTS DR. ESA NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

Our longtime director Prof. Dr. Mohamed Esa was elected national president of the American Association of Teachers of German. Dr. Esa heads the German program at McDaniel College. He recently was honored by the Federal Republic of Germany for his leadership in teaching techniques for the German language. Dr. Esa has served with distinction in promoting our Society's educational programs. He has also served as chairman of our Awards Banquet Committee and personally directed and produced many documentaries on the recipients of our annual award. When Dr. Esa began teaching at McDaniel 20 years ago, he instituted an annual German Day for Maryland high school students, bringing nearly 2,000 students each year to attend a day of educational lectures and workshops at McDaniel. His initiatives have made Maryland a national leader in German language studies at the high school level. Our Society is justly proud of him and we have pledged to support his efforts in German language education.

### **\$5,000 GRANT TO AATG**

Dr. Esa took the reins of the National AATG and found its financial condition to be weak. The organization, founded in 1926, has been fighting to retain German studies in American schools. The study of German is in decline in the USA. Dr. Esa has been charged with holding the line in a difficult struggle. Since the promotion of the German language is a part of the mission of our Society, we answered Dr. Esa's call for help and made a \$5,000 grant to aid teachers.

**KALENDER**

- July 26-27 German Festival at Timonium
  - Oct. 6 German American Day at Friendship Garden at the Mall in Washington
  - Nov. 1 Annual Awards Banquet
- Events to be announced**
- October German Heritage month activities
  - Ecumenical Service
  - General de Kalb commemoration-Annapolis
  - Commemoration of General Stricker,
  - VP of our Society
  - Bus trip to Heritage Museum in Washington, DC
  - Visit to gravesite of Stricker, Westminster Cemetery.

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 be found on our web site.

For more local German-American events, check the web site of the Deutschamerikanischer Buergerverein von Maryland: [www.md-germans.org](http://www.md-germans.org). You are invited to add articles about your German ancestors to the website conducted by our director, Shelley Arnold; [germanmarylanders.org](http://germanmarylanders.org).

Listen to German music and announcements of local German American activities on internet radio at [germanamericanradio.com](http://germanamericanradio.com). You are invited to visit and participate in the interactive website "Der Wecker", founded by our member, Walt Mathers. Google search "these 3 words: German American Forum.

**SELECTING A STRICKER SITE**

Selecting a site to place the bust of John Stricker is not an easy task. There are many excellent and appropriate locations to memorialize General Stricker. The site preferred by our committee is on Federal Hill where Gen. Sam Smith and Col. Armistead, the other heroes of the 1812 Battle of Baltimore now stand. We have asked permission from Baltimore City to use that location but as of now, have no reply. We are also studying sites in Baltimore County close to the actual location of the battle of North Point, where Stricker held off the British. and earned the title "Hero of the Battle of North Point."

Some sites are not acceptable for security reasons. In recent years historical places have been vandalized and monuments stripped of metal. Just a few weeks

ago, the large iron gates at Battle Acre Park on North Point Rd. were stolen. Are times so desparate that citizens must resort to "grave robbing"?

**KICKERS WITHDRAW FROM GAV**

GAV, Inc. (German American Verein) was formed to search for a clubhouse for the local German community. The Baltimore Kickers had sold its building and was homeless. The Buergerverein, Club Fidelitas and our Society joined with the Kickers to find a place we all could use. A recent change in officers brought new thinking to the Kickers and it withdrew from the GAV. With the Kickers out of the group, the urgency is no longer a factor, so the other clubs can now proceed without any pressure of time.

**100 YEARS AGO: WWI**

On June 28, 1914 Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was shot by a 19-year-old Serb in Sarajevo. A month later World War I began. 100 years later, historians still cannot agree on who was responsible for starting the war. Some blame Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm. The only certainty is that it changed the world.

**LOTHAR BOZCEK: INTERNET RADIO**

Those who remember Lothar's Edelweiss Hour on the radio will be happy to learn that he is back and can be heard daily on the internet radio station 4 times per day on [germanamericanradio.com](http://germanamericanradio.com) at 4 am, 10 am, 4 pm and 10 pm. Lothar can be heard anytime, on demand, by going to the station's website and clicking on. Another popular personality on the same station is Wolfgang Grossmann, who was aired nationally on conventional radio with German programming.

**PROMOTING THE STRICKER IMAGE**

John Stricker was an incorporator and a vice president of our Society. We want to tell his story to the public, as part of the upcoming commemoration of the War of 1812. Dr. Nicholas Fessenden, a Society member and the President of the Society for the History of the Germans in MD, has written an article which will be published in the next issue of that Society's journal, The Report. We have asked Dr. Fessenden to write a pamphlet which our Society can distribute to publicize the name of Stricker, since he is not widely known among present-day Marylanders. We plan to provide copies of the pamphlet to libraries, schools, legislators, our own membership and the general public.

**JULY 26-27 GERMAN FESTIVAL  
AT TIMONIUM FAIRGROUNDS**

Food, Fun, And Live Entertainment!



**114th Annual**

**German Festival**

At The  
Maryland State Fair Grounds,  
Timonium, Md. In The  
Air Conditioned Exhibition Hall

JULY	ADMISSION
Saturday, July 26th 11:30am To 10pm	Adults.....\$8.00 Seniors.....\$6.00
Sunday, July 27th 11:30am To 6pm	Active Military With Id...\$6.00
ATM available	<b>KIDS UNDER 12 FREE WITH PAYING ADULT</b> No credit cards accepted!

**FREE PARKING!**      [www.md-germans.org](http://www.md-germans.org)

**NEW FEARS IN GERMANY?**

We read that Germans had begun thinking of themselves as a larger version of Switzerland: very safe place to live, in prosperity, freedom, without fears from outside influences, with great industry and commerce, with peace and harmony with their neighbors and nationalism put aside. Crimea seems to have brought a change. Fears that Vladimir Putin, with his anti-western stances and his ambitions to resurrect the Soviet Union is now a source of worry. They are coming to realize that they must now stand on their own, hopefully with European companions. They can no longer rely on the USA being their shield, and in reality they do not want it, considering the revelations of NSA spying and the debacles of Afghanistan and Iraq. The threat of another Soviet Union may help give the European Union a tighter solidarity.

**EDWIN OLIVER WENCK, ESQ.**

Ed Wenck died July 3. He was a lifetime director of our Society. Hard-working, intelligent and full of ideas and initiative, he played an important role in making the Society what it is today. He had many talents and many roles: lawyer, clergyman, artist, devoted husband, father and grandfather. He was both tough and gentle. As a lawyer, he specialized in prosecuting murderers in the Baltimore City State's Attorney's office. That was his tough side. His gentle side appeared when he served as an ordained minister and as a legal aide lawyer, assisting the poor in their legal problems. He was ordained in the Reformed Church, having attended the seminary in Lancaster, We well remember Ed in the pulpit of Zion Church as the principal preacher at one of our ecumenical services.

In his career as a lawyer, Ed sent many criminals to jail and the state penitentiary and made the city a safer place. He moved into the area of civil law where he spent many years at the Legal Aid Bureau, protecting the rights of the under-privileged. At one point, while serving as one of our directors, he went back to college and took a degree in art. This led to his work as a volunteer for several years at the Walters Art Gallery.

He was a deep thinker and was often called upon for his wise advice in projects of our Society. He and his wife, Patricia, often attended our Society's functions together (Pat was also a prosecuting attorney). He is survived by his two sons, Ed and Eric, and their wives, 4 grandchildren, plus step-brothers and step-sisters and their families.

In his memory, our Society has transferred funds from our general fund to the Education Fund, as his family requested gifts be made in his memory "to your favorite charity".

**DOES OUR PATRIOTIC MUSIC  
HAVE GERMAN ORIGINS?**

On the 4th of July as you listened to the military bands playing "Stars and Stripes Forever" and your heart beat with pride, did you consider the German influence on the composer? John Philip Souza was raised by his German immigrant grandmother and mother. His Portuguese father wasn't around when J.P. was a child. German music is famous for its marches which make you stomp your feet and match the beat and let the trumpets and drums reverberate in your head!

**A Unique Partnership: the German Society of Maryland and the Maryland/DC Metro Chapter of the AATG**

On May 18 the German Society of Maryland teamed up with the Maryland/DC Metro Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) to honor high school/private school and college/ university students of German for their excellence in the study of the German language and culture. The two organizations co-sponsored an Awards Ceremony in the Adlersaal of Zion Lutheran Church in Baltimore. German Society Board Members, Anton G. Smoot, Linda Butt, Dr. Mohamed Esa, Dr. Maureen Helinski, Eva Maus Kelleher, Gerhard Meinzer, Reverend H.J. Siegfried Otto, Paul-Gerhard Otto, Shirley Santora, and Dr. Mary Upman attended this event. Office Manager Bärbel Otto was also present.

Deborah McGee Mifflin of the AATG Maryland/DC Metro Chapter, the Testing Chair of the AATG National German Exam that is given at the high school level, coordinated this event and greeted the audience first. She introduced Pastor Otto, who congratulated the students on their achievements and spoke to them about the historic significance of the Adlersaal. German Society President Anton Smoot also spoke about his personal experience with learning English when he came to the USA from Germany at the age of 17. He said that it pleased him to see so many young people gathered here because they are studying German and being honored for their outstanding progress in learning the language.

Dr. Maureen Helinski, representing the Education Committee of the German Society's Board, explained that the German Society has generously funded the AATG Maryland/DC Metro Chapter Awards in the amount of \$ 5,000.00, annually for over 20 years now. This funding was initiated by Treasurer Ted Potthast and Dr. Mohamed Esa for the purpose of recognizing high scoring students on the AATG National German Exam and thereby encouraging them to continue their study of this language.

In recent years the German Society has also started giving scholarships to college/university level students who are majoring in German and have met the qualifications set by the German Society's Education Committee. Dr. Helinski presented an \$800.00 check to Jackson Berger, a student at the University of Maryland College Park who is pursuing a double major in German and history.

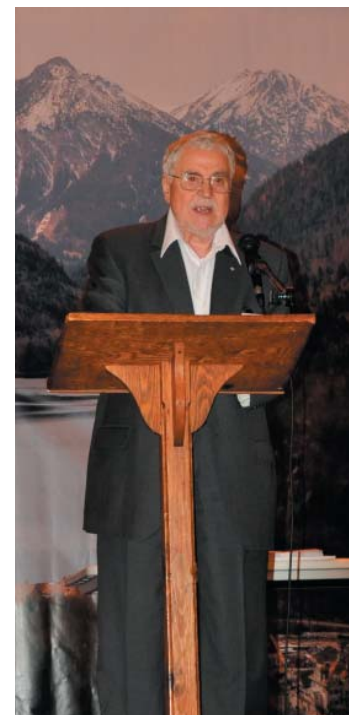
Four years ago when Rev. Siegfried Otto was president of the German Society, he initiated the German Language and Heritage Fund. He felt that with this fund the German Society would be able to send a Maryland high school student to Germany to experience life in that country. Rev. Otto was himself an exchange student to America and felt that this opportunity changed his life. For the past three years, with the generous contributions of many members and especially those of our board member Gerhard Meinzer, this fund has grown and the German Society has been able to send students to Germany with the AATG Summer Study Program.

The winner of the Gerhard Meinzer Summer Study Award this year is Frank Faust of Mount Hebron High School. Frank is an excellent German student and also a passionate and talented musician. Frank felt that German and music are a perfect combination. The 2013 winner of the Gerhard Meinzer Summer Study Award, Brittany Whiteside of Linganore High School, provided an interesting and scenic interlude in the ceremony with a power point presentation of pictures taken during her stay abroad. The Summer Study Award will be offered again next year. All German Society members are encouraged to nominate a student they know to apply for this award. The applications for the summer study award and the college student award can be found on the German Society Website.

Then Deborah McGee Mifflin continued with the Awards Ceremony. She recognized Jennifer Hu of the McDonogh School and Brent Strong of Fallston High School with 2014 AATG Summer Study Awards provided through the AATG National Office for their high scores on the AATG National German Exam. She honored Centennial High School's German teacher, Daniel Desmond, with the 2014 Langenscheidt Award. Then she called the names for the distribution of certificates, prizes and cash awards to 64 high school level students by a team of presenters that included AATG Maryland/DC Metro Chapter President Claudia Bornholdt of Catholic University in Washington, DC. The ceremony was brought to a graceful conclusion by Dr. Mohamed Esa who told the students an anecdote from one of his trips that conveyed the message not to think their studying of German was "finished." In truth, he implied, we are never "finished" with our learning in any area of study.

Refreshments were served and students, teachers and parents had the opportunity to share stories while Tom Leoni entertained the group with German music.

The article on page 4 and the photos below were provided by Dr. Maureen Helinski with the aid of Dr. Mary Upman and Dr. Mohamed Esa. Many thanks to them for their contributions.



## **CHARLES C. STIEFF, II**

A long-time member who once served on our board of directors, Charles Stieff died on May 17, 2014. He was the vice president of the famous Stieff Silver Company, founded by his grandfather and one of the oldest silversmiths in America. Several members of his family have been members of our Society.

## **DEEMER CLASS, ALL AMERICAN**

The son of our members William and Angela Class, Deemer Class was named a first team All American in college lacrosse. Deemer is a sophomore at Duke University. Based on his outstanding academics and athletics, Duke recruited him when he was just a sophomore in high school at Loyola Blakefield in Towson, MD. Deemer starred for Duke as the team won the national championship in 2013 and defeated Notre Dame for the championship again in 2014. Deemer is a top ranking student and a quiet, unassuming scholarly type who does not fit the nickname given him by his teammates, "Hollywood."

## **MANY THANKS...**

...to A.G.A.S, the Associated German American Societies of Greater Washington for its donation to our Society's education fund. Also to the Washington Saengerbund which also donated to that fund. Both organizations gave \$250. Our Society is a member of A.G.A.S.

## **OKTOBERFEST AT ARMORY**

Max Eggerl, recently of Blob's Park, will promote an Oktoberfest at Baltimore's 5th Regiment Armory on October 25 and 26. He will call on his experience of holding Oktoberfests over the years at Blob's Park. He is the great-nephew of Max Blob, the founder of the park and son of Katherine Eggerl who managed the park for many years. Katherine was the honoree at one of our Society's awards banquets. The Eggerl family has had members in our Society for many years.

## **MERGENTHALER STATUE LOST?**

Our director David Crosby writes that the statue which once graced the grounds of Mervo in Baltimore is no longer on the campus. He visited the campus and made inquiries, but no one knew of it. David remembers it from his student days at Mervo. He has launched an investigation to try to find it.

Ottmar Mergenthaler was a member of our Society, perhaps the most famous member. From the first

printing press in 1439 until Mergenthaler invented the linotype machine in the 1880's, all type had to be set by hand. Mergenthaler revolutionized the printing industry with a machine which operated like a typewriter to set type. This created modern printing. While he lived in Baltimore he attended Zion Church, where you will find a window portraying him and his invention.

When David Crosby visited Mervo, he was also surprised, when talking to some of the students and even a few teachers, that they had no idea of who Mergenthaler was or what he did.

It seems Mergenthaler is more widely known outside the USA than he is in his own hometown.

Since Ottmar is an important part of Maryland's German American heritage and of our own Society's history, David Crosby is willing to pursue the investigation into the lost statue and report his finding to our Society.

The mission statement of our Society includes the preservation of our heritage, and nothing could be more worthy of our efforts than to preserve the memory of the man who is perhaps our most famous member in the history of our Society. He earned the title "The Modern Gutenberg" after the inventor of the printing press. He certainly has had the greatest effect on the world's culture, industry and indeed, even the entire field of education, where books were once its greatest academic tool.

We fully support David in this endeavor. About 20 years ago, our Society once sponsored an essay contest for Mervo students and awarded a \$500 prize. At that time a painting of Mergenthaler hung in the school's lobby. We hope it is still there.

## **CONGRATULATIONS...**

...to our director, **SHIRLEY SANTORA** who is now the President of the MD-DC-VA chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German. Shirley has a long history with the AATG, having held many offices. We are proud to have Shirley as a director of our Society.

...to our members **BRIAN and MIA WALSH** upon their receiving the award of the Baltimore County Historical Preservation Society for the best residential preservation project of the year. They preserved the Historic Long Island Farm on Cromwell Bridge Road, where they live with our lifetime members, Katherine and Sara Walsh.

## THE GREAT GERMAN AMERICAN FAMILY PICNIC OF 2014



Amazing. Five years in a row. The sun shone brightly, the breezes of the Chesapeake Bay wafted, not too hot, an absolutely perfect Sunday afternoon for a picnic. Nearly 300 showed up at Kurtz's Beach in Pasadena, MD for the event. Bratwurst, Weisswurst, Bauernwurst und Knockwurst. Sauerkraut und Kartoffelsalat. Bier imported from the Vaterland. The band played German and American music. Lots of dancing. Plenty of all kinds of food. The children were treated to a puppet show and had their faces painted. Our members socialized with those of several other of the clubs belonging to the Buergerverein, which sponsored this year's event. The majority came from the Baltimore Kickers, the Edelweiss Club, Club Fidelitas, the Arion Gesangverein, Zion Church, and, of course, The German Society of Maryland and The Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland.



The German Society of Maryland  
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germansociety@verizon.net

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Sascha Newton-Mason

*“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.”*

### 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

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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.