

NEWSLETTER

October, 2005

ISSUE 52



FESSENDEN IN BREMERHAVEN REPRESENTS MARYLAND STATE

MARYLAND IS ONLY AMERICAN STATE TO SEND DELEGATE TO OPENING OF EMIGRATION MUSEUM ; OUR SOCIETY IS ONLY U.S. GROUP

Brigitte Fessenden, our president, traveled to Germany to attend the dedication of the emigration center in Bremerhaven , representing Maryland and the German Society of Maryland . She carried greetings from Governor Robert Ehrlich, which she translated into German and read at the dedication. (Those in attendance concluded that our Governor is a fluent speaker of German.) See page 4 for the governor's letter. Brigitte also presented a gift from our Society to the museum. See p.7. The U.S. ambassador to Germany was represented. A number of American scholars attended, such as Prof. Don Tolzmann, who studies and writes on German emigration to the USA .

AWARDS BANQUET SET AT TOWSON U. ; TRAXLER HONOREE

The Society's annual awards banquet will be held at Towson University on Saturday, Nov. 19 in the Potomac Lounge. Dr. Carol Traxler , a leader in the Washington area German American community, will receive the Society's award as the German Marylander who has made significant contributions to our state and nation. We are now taking reservations for the event. Please attend and bring family and friends. We also ask your support by subscribing as a sponsor and/or by taking out an ad. Details for tickets, ads and sponsors are on page 5.

OUR SOCIETY NOMINATED FOR AATG'S HIGHEST AWARD

The American Association for the Teachers of German has selected The German Society of Maryland to receive its prestigious award given to a person or organization which has made an important contribution to the teaching of the German language. Fifteen years ago, our Society began the practice of giving monetary awards to high school students who took the national German language exam and achieved a score in the highest rankings. In that first year, 35 awards were given. **In 2005 more than 120 awards were given. 400 people attended the presentation in the Adlersaal in Baltimore** , including representatives of the German, Austrian and Swiss Embassies. The AATG award will be presented at the Foreign Language Teachers Convention in Baltimore on November 19. About 500 German teachers will attend from throughout the USA .

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KALENDER

October 18 German-American Day McDaniel College

November 6 - AGAS German festival at Blob's Park

November 19 - Annual Awards Banquet

November 26-27 - Christkindlmarkt at Zion Adlersaal

Visit the German Society's website:

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

ED BANKA , SOCIETY BENEFACTOR, TO BE REMEMBERED AT BANQUET

Ed Banka, whose \$40,000 bequest was the largest gift ever received by our Society, will be remembered at our awards banquet. Ed was a German soldier captured in North Africa at age 17, brought to the USA and offered citizenship for fighting the Japanese. He made a career in the US Air Force. Ed was a lover of music. Some of the income from the Banka fund will be used to pay for the music at the banquet.

ADOLF CLUSS ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBIT OPENS IN D.C.

Adolf Cluss, the German American architect who dominated the post-Civil War reconstruction of the District of Columbia , is the subject of a major exhibit which opened September 15 and will continue until February 16, 2006 at the Charles Sumner School , 17th and M St. N.W. in Washington . Details are available on the website: www.adolf-cluss.org/

JOSH COCKEY OPENS TWO LOCAL FAMILY HISTORY STORES

Joshua F. Cockey of B., a member of our Society, has established a Family History Store at 22 W. Pennsylvania Avenue in Towson and at 1 Locust Lane in Westminster . The stores specialize in the sale of family genealogically oriented products such as coats of arms framed for hanging; charts; tools to assist in searching family histories. The firm does not perform genealogical research. The firm is franchised and given logistical support by a national firm based in Utah . Josh has created a non-profit corporation to operate the stores and all profits go to charity. He has plans to open 4 more major stores in Maryland . Josh's own family roots in Maryland go back to 1667, but he is able to trace the family history back to the Normans . A Cockey was a cook in the army of William the Conqueror. Cockeysville , MD takes its name from his family. Josh started his first business at age 7 and has been an entrepreneur all his life. Although a lawyer, he has never practiced law.

Visit one of the stores. They are full of pleasant surprises. Pick up a free genealogy worksheet.

TWO NEW MENCKEN BOOKS CELEBRATE HIS 125TH BIRTHDAY

If you want to learn about one of our Society's most famous members, Henry Mencken, keep a lookout for these books:

H. L. MENCKEN, by Vincent Fitzpatrick. This is the best short work (50,000 words) on Mencken. Dr. Fitzpatrick is curator of the Mencken Room at the Pratt Library and teaches history at Loyola Blakefield. The book is an updated version of the 1989 edition. It was recently published by Mercer University .

MENCKEN: THE AMERICAN ICONOCLAST, by Marion Elizabeth Rodgers. This is due in the bookstores on November 29. (Oxford University Press).

Mencken was born September 12, 1880 . He was a member of The German Society of Maryland . His birth was commemorated by some of our members, who are also members of The Mencken Society.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS....

William Donald Schafer has let it be known that he intends to run for another term as Comptroller of the State of Maryland . **Gov. Robert Ehrlich** will be opposed for re-election by the winner of the democratic primary, either Mayor Martin O'Malley or Douglas Duncan or any other party hopeful in the running.

INVITE FRIENDS TO THE BANQUET

Since the AATG national convention this year is on the same day as our banquet, our teacher-members are in a bind: they can't come to our banquet. We need to fill their places with guests. Please help by bringing your family and friends to our banquet.

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Governor Bob Ehrlich assists Director Linda Butt at German Society stand at the Baltimore German Festival

THANKS FOR STAFFING OUR STAND AT THE GERMAN FESTIVAL

President Fessenden, who was in Bremerhaven representing the State of Maryland during the festival, wishes to thank our members who staffed the Society's stand at the Baltimore German Festival: Harry and Betty Gruel, Pastor Siegfried Otto and our office manager, Bärbel Otto ;, Robert Fritschke, Dr. Armin Mruck, Dr. Maureen Helinski, Merl Arp , Jean Arp, Dr. James Schaub, Christel van der Berg, Mike Nieberding, Linda Butt , Zack Butt, Dandridge Brooke, Ted Potthast , Barbara U. Strati, John Aymold, and Gov. Bob Ehrlich.

Special thanks to Jeff Glock who worked hard to set up the stand and bring the boxes of literature. President Fessenden personally prepared an exhibit of Carroll Park as the HQ of the Baltimore Schützenverein, a German shooting club in the late 1800's.



The German Society's festival stand attended by Directors Christel van der Berg and Dr. James Schaub



Jorg Schulz, the Lord Mayor of Bremerhaven holds Governor Ehrlich's letter of congratulations, with Brigitte Fessenden and Mrs. Schulz by his side.

BREMERHAVEN MAYOR ACCEPTS GOVERNOR'S CONGRATULATIONS

Bremerhaven 's leader appears happy to receive the letter from Maryland 's Governor Ehrlich following the dedication of the Emigration Center . Since Baltimore was a major destination for ships leaving Bremerhaven in the 19th century, we are hoping that its mayor will pay us a goodwill visit.

GERMAN AMERICAN CONNECTIONS

The College of Notre Dame of Maryland recently awarded an honorary doctorate to **Nancy Grasmick**, wife of our member, **Louis Grasmick**. The award was part of the College's Women in Education Program. Dr. Grasmick is the superintendent of Education for the State of Maryland .

Maryland 's **Steve Dannemann**, an accountant and resident of Severn, won \$4.25 million dollars by finishing second in the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas . He split the winnings 50/50 with his friend, **Jerry Ditzel**, who put up the \$10,000 buy-in for the tournament.

Was the family name for Supreme Court nominee, **Harriet Miers**, originally Meyers? Immigration officers often misspelled the names of immigrants, as many of us have discovered within our own families. Meyers in Germany is the most common family name, as is Smith in the United States .

BE A SPONSOR IN OUR PROGRAM p.6

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The following letter was sent by Governor Robert Ehrlich to the officials of the Emigration Center in Bremerhaven. It was read at the dedication of the Center by our President, Brigitte Fessenden, who herself emigrated to the USA from her native Germany. Brigitte translated the letter into German. All of the folks attending the dedication were quite impressed at our Governor's command of the German language. Maryland was the only American state to send a representative to the event.



ROBERT L. EHRLICH, JR.
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

August 8, 2005

Dear Friends:

Allow me to extend my congratulations and best wishes to those celebrating the grand opening of the German Emigration Center in Bremerhaven, the first museum and research institute of European history into the United States.

As Governor of Maryland, of German ancestry, I'm proud of the contributions made by citizens of German heritage over the years. German art, literature, music, philosophy and culture have a profound influence throughout the world. Moreover, members of the community continue to demonstrate impressive achievements in business, science, engineering education, medicine and virtually every other field or endeavor. A strong work ethic, sense of community, and commitment to maintaining a cultural identity are just three of the reasons behind these stunning successes.

Of the 7 million immigrants to the United States, close to 2 million chose Baltimore, Maryland as their port of entry. German Americans have helped make my State a better and happier place for all its citizens. The German Emigration Center will serve as a testament to that rich history.

Best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable event.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

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Annual Awards Banquet & Dinner Dance

Saturday, November 19, 2005 ~ 7:00 P.M. - 11:00 P.M.

Honoring Our Distinguished Awardee for the Year 2005

Dr. Carol Traxler

Potomac Lounge, University Union Building

Towson University

8000 York Road, Towson, Maryland 21252

Free Parking In Adjacent Covered Parking Garage with Connecting Walkway

~

Open German Wine and Beer Bar - Buffet - Live Entertainment

Dress optional

Members, Friends, Guests

Tickets: \$50 / Person

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(Use this coupon for ads and sponsors)

Amount of check enclosed: \$_____

a copy of the ad as you wish it to appear is attached

business card or message attached

PATRONS: _____

Your name (spouse may be included free)

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND THE COUPON BELOW TO:

Ted Potthast

1819 Leadburn Road

Towson, MD 21204-1830

(inquiries: 410-828-8137)

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TAKE AN AD IN OUR BANQUET PROGRAM

TO HELP OUR SOCIETY

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS

SEND GREETINGS OR CONGRATULATIONS

HONOR A FAMILY MEMBER OR A FRIEND

CONGRATULATE THE HONOREE

FULL PAGE AD \$150

HALF PAGE AD \$ 80

QUARTER PAGE \$ 45

BUSINESS CARD SIZE \$ 25

BE A PATRON \$ 5

**BE A PATRON and receive a
program in the mail \$ 10**

The printed program for our annual banquet contains a list of the names of all of the members of our society. It is the only time the names of our members are printed. Copies are placed in the archives of our Society and preserved as a permanent record of our membership for future generations.

Consider placing an ad to memorialize your ancestors and your family's German speaking heritage.

DEADLINE FOR ADS: November 1, 2005

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A MARYLAND CONNECTION

Did you know that William Edward Boeing, whose father emigrated to the USA from Germany and his mother from Austria, was the founder and owner of both Boeing Aircraft and United Airlines? His Maryland connection: Baltimore's Glen L. Martin personally taught him to fly. Boeing began as a timber man and iron-ore land investor. His hobby, flying, led him to start making airplanes.

GERMANY IMITATES OUR SOCIETY; EACH ELECTS WOMAN IN 2005

Angela Merkel has become Germany's first female president. It took the German Society of Md. 224 years to do it, while Germany did the same after about 56 years as a Federal Republic. Our president, Brigitte Fessenden, will send our congratulations to Germany's top woman. The change was brought about by an arrangement between two major parties, the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats, two warring factions which would otherwise make the American Republicans and Democrats seem like bosom buddies. Chancellor Schroeder is out after governing Germany for 7 years. One of Merkel's top priorities is to improve relations with the USA, which an American business man living in Germany said is at the lowest ebb he has seen in his 45 years there.

WHILE CAMPAIGNING, BAVARIAN LEADER SHOWED SOME CHUTZPA

Edmund Stoiber, the leader of the Christian Social Union whose base is in Bavaria, irritated voters in the rest of Germany by declaring: "If everywhere was like Bavaria, we wouldn't have any problems at all. Not all sections of the population are as intelligent as they are in Bavaria." Politics ran rampant in Germany during the election campaign. The battle between the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats made the division between Republicans and Democrats in America seem mild. A German woman on an elevator in Washington who had just come from her homeland commented that the campaigning had nearly driven her crazy and she was glad to get away from it.

MUSIC AT THE BANQUET WILL BE THE "CONTINENTALS" - WE CHANGED THE DATE TO GET THEM

LOCUST POINT GERMAN CHURCH PRESERVES CHRISTMAS TRADITION

Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church in South Baltimore, founded by German immigrants, recalls its heritage each Christmas by singing *Silent Night* in German. The church also holds a Christmas bazaar at which it serves hot soup - last year 200 gallons of it: split pea, chicken noodle, bean potato, beef barley and vegetable, all made by the parishioners. Locust Point's three churches (Christ Evangelical, Episcopal Church of the Redeemer and Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel) all support the activities of one another. "We were ecumenical before we knew what the word meant" said one parishioner.

CHRISTKINDLMARKT SET FOR NOVEMBER 25-27 AT ADLERSAAL

The traditional German Christmas market will again be held at Zion Church's refurbished hall, sponsored by the Baltimore Kickers' Club and the church. Many lovely Christmas decorations and gifts are imported from Germany just for this occasion. Cookies of all types come from Schmidt's bakery in Nürnberg and from other regions. German sausages, cakes and mulled wine are served in Zion's lovely garden and can be consumed in the covered walkway or, if the weather is gentle, in the garden itself. The hot wine is a "must" at all outdoor Christmas markets in Germany as a way to keep your hands warm.

Last year there were serenades by players of the Alpenhorn, the 8' long horn which rests on the ground, with deep low notes heard in the snowy Alps. Mark your calendar and plan to do some of your Christmas shopping there. Come early to get a fresh Christmas wreath for your front door.

OKTOBERFEST AT 5TH REGIMENT ARMORY HAD SOMETHING FOR ALL

The German music blared happily, the folk dancers were lively and vendors lined the walls with interesting German folk hats and clothing, linens, baked goods, candies and specialties. The sauerbraten and wurst of all kinds made for a festive occasion. In the afternoon the hall was filled with children trying to imitate the dancers and having fun. As the night wore on, the aficionados of imported German beer settled down to serious comparison of the brands. We felt the impact of 9/11: soldiers with rifles checked your ID.

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OUR SOCIETY'S GIFT TO THE EMIGRATION MUSEUM IN BREMERHAVEN

The photograph printed above is one of three century old photos which our Society presented to the Emigration Museum in Bremerhaven, Germany at its dedication in August. The photos were produced from glass plate negatives made by one of our members, William Albert Potthast, around 1903. They were printed and computer-enhanced by William's great-grandson, Michael Potthast, owner of an advertising production firm in Winter Haven, Florida.

William was one of the four brothers from Borgholz, Westphalia, Germany who immigrated to Baltimore in 1892 and founded the furniture company known as Potthast Brothers. He was also a photographer. It was his custom to meet the ships coming to Baltimore from Bremerhaven and take photos of the ships, crews and passengers. The glass plate negatives were found by our director, Ted Potthast, at the Potthast furniture factory, along with photos which William had taken in the Great Baltimore Fire of February, 1904. Michael donated the prints to our Society, for the purpose of presenting them to the new museum as a piece of memorabilia of the close ties between Bremerhaven and Baltimore.

Bremerhaven is located at the mouth of the Weser River, and the Potthast ancestral village of Borgholz is just a few miles from the Weser. The port of Bremerhaven and the Weser figure prominently into the story of how the Potthasts came to Baltimore.

Vincent, one of the brothers, was involved in a dispute at a party in Borgholz which led to fisticuffs. His opponent was knocked down and Vincent thought he had killed him. Fearing the consequences, Vincent set out immediately for Bremerhaven to flee to America. The next morning the opponent awoke and said he held no grievance, and that they should send horsemen up the Weser to find Vincent and bring him home. It was too late! Vincent's ship had set sail for America. Upon his arrival in Baltimore he promptly found employment and fell in love with the city. He wrote to his brothers and told them to come to this town of opportunity. His brother William, along with Theodore and John followed in his footsteps and opened a successful furniture business.

William passed his love of photography to his grandson and namesake, William, who opened a studio and became president of the Florida Professional Photographers' Association. Michael is his son.

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COME BACK AND GUZZLE

The grandfather of Dr. Seuss (Theodore Seuss Geisel) immigrated to Springfield, Massachusetts from Germany in 1870 and promptly, with a partner, opened a brewery called Kalmbach and Geisel. Its customers promptly gave it the nickname, "Come-Back and Guzzle."

Young Theodore grew up in a home where German was the family language and the religion was Evangelical Lutheran. As a boy scout,

Theodore won the prize in Springfield for selling the most U.S. war bonds, and his German grandfather bought \$1,000 of them. Theodore started drawing cartoons as a boy. He drew them as a college student at Dartmouth , and when his cartoons got him in trouble, he took the pen-name "Dr. Seuss" to hide his identity from the school authorities. After college he became a professional cartoonist and kept the pen-name. Prior to and during World War II, he drew political cartoons urging the U.S. to enter the war, chastising Charles Lindbergh and the "isolationists", and lashing out at Hitler, Mussolini and the "Japs."

He bragged to a friend that he could write a book for American children using a vocabulary of only 50 words. On a bet, he wrote "*Green Eggs and Ham*". It launched a new career into children's books (although he didn't even like children).

DIRECTORS CONSIDERING USES FOR GIFT FROM EDWARD BANKA

The committee studying proposals for the use of the funds left to us by Sgt. Edwards M. Banka, U.S.A.F.

has approved two projects: a \$5,000 gift for the elevator at the Zion Adlersaal and a contribution for the music at the Awards Banquet. These gifts will be a memorial to Banka .

HECHT'S, LAST MAJOR GERMAN NAME IN RETAILING DISAPPEARS

Hecht's department store will soon change its name to Macy's, leaving Maryland with no major retailer bearing a German name. At one time, nearly all of the department stores carried German names, but one by one, they disappeared. Older members of our Society will remember the litany of German store names: Hutzler, Hochschild, Brager, Eisenberg, Gutman etc. Most of them were founded in the 1800's and began disappearing in the 1960's as discount stores pushed them aside. The decline of the city population hastened the demise of the department store.

JEFFREY C. GLOCK, CPA, CMI, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR

Jeffrey C. Glock , CPA, CMI was elected as our first vice president in April and has taken his duties seriously. He assumed the most difficult role in our participation in this year's German festival: setting up our booth, stocking it and taking it down. He faithfully attends the board and committee meetings and contributes his wisdom.

He is a partner in the firm of Stout, Causey and Horning, PA and is the director of its real estate assessment appeal practice which operates nationally.

Jeff sits on the Board of Governors of the University of Baltimore Alumni Association and is a member of its Merrick Alumni Initiative. In 2004, Jeff received the university's Turner Service Award. He is a soccer and baseball coach for his children's teams. He lives in Harford County with his wife, Amy, and their children: Jack (6) and Will (4). His family is a member of the Fallston United Methodist Church . In addition to having received his designation as a certified public accountant, he has earned his Certificate Member of the Institute (CMI) from the Institute for Professionals in Taxation In German, Glock (e) means "bell".

J. ELMER WEISHEIT, 85

"Mo" Weisheit, a one-time member of our society, died June 7 at age 85. He was an eminent real estate lawyer who supervised the assemblage of land for

building the city of Columbia . After serving in the army in the Pacific from 1942 to 1946, he earned a law degree at Harvard University . He drove his Alfa-Romeo convertible with the top down even in the winter. A colorful personality, he was seen wearing his Russian fur hat with two inches of snow on the passenger seat.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

**Karen Boecker
Ralph Boecker
Marc S. Fisher
Julie M. Fisher
Del William J. Frank
Mary Jeanne Frank
Barbara K. Harper
Steven R. Harper
Christopher Healy
Jana Healy
Joseph Hum
William K. Klein
=====**

**ATTEND OUR ANNUAL AWARDS
BANQUET NOV 19
=====**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HONOREE, DR. CAROL
TRAXLER
=====**

**HONOR YOUR ANCESTORS - PUT AN AD IN OUR
PROGRAM**

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**SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT OUR SOCIETY; SIGN UP A
NEW MEMBER TODAY**

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**GIFTS TO OUR SOCIETY ARE TAX
DEDUCTIBLE**

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REMEMBER OUR EDUCATION FUND