

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

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VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

SEPTEMBER 2014 ISSUE #94

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OCTOBER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

The Maryland legislature last year gave a gift to our community: by naming October as German American Heritage Month. Now that we have it, let's celebrate it. Make it a personal project to bring your German heritage to life! Make plans now. Call to mind your German ancestors. Attend a German function. Pay a visit to a place that honors a German American. Read a book by a German American, say H. L. Mencken. Tell your children about where their ancestors came from. How they came to America. If you don't know, do some research and look it up. Cook a German meal. Eat a bratwurst or a schnitzel. If you have a German, Austrian or a Swiss flag, put it on a flagpole for all to see. Make a gift to a group whose mission it is to promote the culture the German American heritage or the German language. (hint: our Society).

Spread the word. October is almost here. Let our legislators know we appreciate what they did for us. Let the world know you are a member of The German Society of Maryland. Recruit a new member. Visit the gravesite of a famous German American: John Stricker at Westminster Cemetery; Mencken and Mergenthaler at Loudon Park Cemetery. Cheer when our Society's banner passes by in the Columbus Day parade. German Americans helped make this country great: tell everybody about the days when German Americans were persecuted because of the world wars; that is long behind us. Make our children and grandchildren proud of their heritage. Remind our fellow Americans that our ancestors gave this country a strong work ethic, brought prosperity, honor, and strong values. Hold your head up high and be proud!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Liebe Mitglieder – Dear Members,

Summer seems to have gone by way too quickly and we are busy with planning many events over the next several months.

First, let me thank everyone that took time out of their busy schedule to not only attend the German Festival this past July but also spend time at the German Society's table. The event seemed to be well attended and all of our volunteers did an outstanding job letting people know what the German Society is all about. We had many individuals that were really interested in where their ancestors came from and our map of Germany was a popular spot to visit.

I would like to reach out to all the German teachers that are also members of the German Society or would like to learn more about this organization. I welcome any opportunity to visit your school and students to not only learn about you but most importantly, provide information on the history and purpose of the German Society. Please email me and let me know how we can work together to get the next generation of German-Americans involved.

I encourage all of you to visit our website and check the calendar for all the important and exciting events that are coming up. We are a very strong organization and we not only welcome your input but also encourage your participation.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Anton G. Smoot

KALENDER

- Aug 23-34 Augustoberfest in Hagerstown
- Sep 1 Immigration House event - Hull Street
- Sept. 13 Mencken Day at Pratt Central Library
- Sept 18 Annual banquet - Society for History of Germans in Maryland - Adlersaal
- Sept 28 Ecumenical Service at Zion
- 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
- 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

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 Bürgerverein von Maryland: 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.

Listen to German music and announcements of local German American activities on internet radio at 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."

GERMAN DAYS IN HAGERSTOWN

Take our word for it, it's worth the trip. The whole city of Hagerstown is involved. An Oktoberfest in August - Sat-Sun, 23rd and 24th. Good food served by young, cheerful volunteers. Easy free parking. Reasonable prices. Great variety. Delightful music. A family event: from Kinder to Opa und Oma. Even babies in strollers. Check it out on the internet. Just Google Augustoberfest and it pops right up. Hagerstown was founded by a German, Jonathan Hager, and the German heritage and tradition is still alive and well in the town - a Maryland jewel.

STRICKER LECTURE BY DR. NICHOLAS FESSENDEN

Dr. Fessenden is a historian who has studied the life of General John Stricker. Dr. Fessenden is a member of our Society, as was General Stricker. He is president of the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland. His address at the annual meeting of that Society will address the General's role in the Battle of North Point in the War of 1812, as well as other aspects of Stricker's life. Members of the German Society are invited to attend the banquet. For ticket information, call Ted Potthast at 410-828-8137. Ted is the vice president of that historical society. Dr. Fessenden has also written a pamphlet at the request of our Society, which will soon be published and made available to all our members.

Sept. 1, LABOR DAY - GIESSENER AUSWANDERUNGSGESELLSCHAFT

A group of Germans who had formed the Giessen Emigration Society and wanted to establish a Utopia in America, landed in Baltimore in late July 1834 and then went to Missouri. The arrival of that group will be re-enacted on Sept. 1, from 5 to 8 pm at the Baltimore Immigration Memorial Garden in Locust Point at the foot of Hull Street (Tide Point). Our members are invited to attend. Esther Steubenbrecher will be dressed up in the garb representing an 1834 immigrant. Those in attendance will welcome her by the singing of songs prevalent in that day: Shenandoah, Blue-tailed Fly, Turkey in the Straw, Camptown Races, Michael Row Your Boat Ashore, and others. Free parking is available in the Under Armor's visitors parking lot. The group will then walk to the United Church of Christ at 1308 Beason Street for a presentation, a light supper and a chance to tour the Immigration House next door.

If you wish to attend, respond by calling Nick Fessenden at 443-542-2263 by August 25 or email nicholasfessenden@comcast.net. There is no charge.

1.5 million Europeans arrived in Baltimore between 1821 and 1914.

The event is co-sponsored by The Society for the History of the Germans in MD and the German American Heritage Museum and the Baltimore Immigration Memorial. The museum has prepared a traveling exhibit, "Utopia - revisiting a German State in America?".

OCTOBER COMMEMORATION?

To celebrate October as German American Heritage Month, one of our members has suggested that the German Society honor three of its most famous members by visiting their gravesites, placing wreaths and saying a few words: General John Stricker, Ottmar Mergenthaler and Henry L. Mencken. Stricker lies in the Westminster Cemetery in downtown Baltimore and Mergenthaler and Mencken lie in the Loudon Park Cemetery. We need to do our part to preserve the heritage. What better way than to commemorate our own famous members?

GERMAN MAJORS IN COLLEGES

Our Society allocated 4 awards of \$800 each to college students majoring in German and this year, 2014, we were able to find only one who was recommended for an award. Our scholarship committee asked the Board of Directors to change the rules so that future awards can also be made to those with a minor in German and the Board agreed. German language studies are declining rapidly throughout the USA.

67 students graduated with majors in German from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte last year. That's more than graduated from every college in Maryland combined.

Why the anomaly in North Carolina? The answer lies in a single individual, Kurt G. Waldthausen, a German who has lived in North Carolina for nearly 30 years. He founded a non-profit German heritage corporation which raises funds to send German majors to Germany for post-graduate studies. He solicits contributions from German firms doing business in North Carolina. He raises nearly \$250,000 per year by promising the companies an American pool of potential employees with a background in German. The program does not accept gifts of less than \$2,500.

A VISIT TO BALTIMORE

A few weeks ago Mr. Waldthausen visited Baltimore to see the sites where the U-Deutschland, a German submarine, which came here in 1916. His great-uncle was the brains and force behind the sub which was warmly welcomed in Baltimore.

GERMAN SOCIETY ESCORTS MR. WALDTHAUSEN

Dr. David Denisch, one of our directors, hosted Mr. Waldthausen during his visit. They, along with past

president Ted Potthast were given a tour of the Baltimore harbor by our member, Walt Mathers, who was able to point out all of the areas where the U-Deutschland arrived, moved around and moored while in port. The tour began aboard the N.S. Savannah, whose bow commanded a view of the harbor.

Mr. Waldthausen gave our directors valuable suggestions on how we may encourage German studies among Maryland's collegians.

GERMAN VIEWS OF USA

In early August the Pew Research group took a poll which found that 51% of Germans had a favorable view of the USA, while 47% had an unfavorable one. (Comment: probably not much different from the views of Americans themselves.)

THE 2014 GERMAN FESTIVAL

See page 4 for some photos from last month's German Festival at the Timonium Fairgrounds. It was a success, but we were disappointed in our program to attract young people. Our Society announced it was giving \$6 to each youth ages 2 to 20 who was brought to our cultural stand by a member of our Society. We printed 100 certificates, anticipating a good turnout. To our chagrin, we had only one customer. Shame! The festival featured German music, dancing, healthy food, happy spirit, all of which would have given the youngsters a sense of their heritage to carry throughout life. Alas, our members let us down. The fault lies, for the most part, in the German community which did not encourage a turnout long enough in advance. Our calendars are so fully loaded with activities that we need at least 3 months to get an event on a calendar. The lesson is learned: we will try to give much more notice of such things in the future.

We have already registered one complaint with the Buergerverein: the admission fee for young people is too high. Children are free up to age 12, but a 13-year old must pay an \$8 admission. A soldier or an oldster of 65 only pays \$6.

We have to come up with a way to get the young folks at our events. We want them to experience their heritage. Let's lobby for free up to age 16, \$2 from 17 to 20. If they're 21 and can drink beer, well that's another story.



Anton Smoot, President of the German Society of Maryland, and Nick Fessenden, President of the Society of the History of the Germans in Maryland.



Member John Geppi with his friend.



Anja Cyriax is the cultural representative of the German Embassy in Washington D.C., Dorothy Kirchner (left) is the President of the Deutschamerikanischer Buergerverein, and Gerhard Meinzer (next to her) is the President of the Association of the German American Societies (AGAS) in and around Washington D.C. (also a board member of the German Society)



Maureen Helinski, Ted Potthast, Brigitte Fessenden and standing behind them is David Crosby.

“GERMAN JOKES ARE NO LAUGHING MATTER”: MARK TWAIN

This was quoted in an article about Francis Seelos, a Bavarian priest who once served as pastor of Baltimore's St. Alphonsus parish. Seelos was known for his ability to entertain his community with hilarity and his jokes gave the lie to Mark Twain, or at least served as the exception to the rule. Seelos was also known for his charity and holiness. His cause towards being canonized as a saint by the Catholic Church is steadily progressing. Seelos also served as pastor of St. Peter and Paul Church in Cumberland and St. Mary's in Annapolis.

PRESERVING FAMILY HISTORY

The German American Heritage Museum in Washington has launched a program to help preserve the family histories of German Americans. The Museum is collecting your stories and will use your story to produce documentaries of families who have come to America from German speaking countries. To participate in the program you need an Internet connection and a web-cam. The person telling the story must sit in front of the web camera mounted on top of the computer screen and tell the story. After being connected by means of the Internet to the Museum's program, the program will interview you. The name of the program is Einsteinchen. Einsteinchen is an animated cartoon character who will interview you by asking a series of genealogical-related questions. The voice of Einsteinchen is that of Rudiger Lentz, the former Museum Director who often attended meetings of our society. The interview will allow you to tell your family's history which will then be archived for use in making documentaries. To find out about the program, visit the Museum's special website: www.gahmusa.org/oralhistory.php

OUR SOCIETY & U-DEUTSCHLAND

Germany and England were at war in 1916. Great Britain's navy had blockaded Germany and most commerce between the USA and Germany was halted. Cargo from the USA to Germany had to be designated to a neutral European port where it was forwarded onward. A German shipping line, The North German Lloyd created a subsidiary which built a commercial submarine, the U-Deutschland. In 1916 the sentiments of the people of Baltimore, a heavily German city, was on the German side. The North German Lloyd line had a long standing relationship with Baltimore so it was not surprising that the sub's maiden voyage was to Baltimore. When it arrived the citizenry welcomed it with great celebrations. Its Captain, Pal Koenig, was feted by the city's mayor and the governor of Maryland. The crew went to the White House and asked to see the president. However, he was busy and sent them to the office of the Secretary

of the Navy, who spoke fluent German and welcomed them. His name was Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a president who later went to war against Germany.

The German Society connection: most members who came to Baltimore in the late 1800's and early 1900's came on a North German Lloyd vessel. One of our presidents, Schumacher, was the Baltimore agent of that steamship line.

SHORTAGE OF GERMAN MAJORS

In recent years our Society has given cash awards of up to \$1,000 to college students majoring in German who have achieved academic excellence in the subject. We authorized 4 such grants. However, the 2014 award was made to only one student, because there were no other acceptable candidates. As a result, the selection committee asked and received from our Board of Directors permission to include those with German minors as candidates for the awards. This reflects a national decline in the study of German in American colleges. Even Johns Hopkins, once the foremost university in America in the field of German language, last year dissolved its German Department and merged it into its Modern Language Department. We are trying to find a solution.

PASSING ON THE HERITAGE

Our mission requires us to preserve the German American Heritage. This means passing it on to future generations. We have a youth program to promote German language but nothing in the way of educating the youth about its heritage. The 1600s belong to the English. When our nation was formed, there is a rumor that Congress debated making German our official language. Since the 1700s, German speaking people continued to come until very recently. This history is not taught in schools and the German heritage is nearly lost to today's youth. It is our job to do something to educate young people in our history and the contributions which our ancestors brought to make America the great country that it is today.

THE U-DEUTSCHLAND AND FDR

When the Deutschland was docked in Baltimore in July, 1916 and its crew was on leave, they did what many other tourists have done for years, visited Washington and went to see the White House. In those days the White House was open to the public and you could walk right in. The crew asked to see President Wilson. He sent word that he was busy, but sent them to see the Secretary of the Navy--Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt spoke German fluently and entertained the crew, which returned to Germany with fond memories of FDR.

PUZZLE BY A MEMBER

One of our student members, Ben Potthast, sent in this puzzle. Ben is a student of Josh Brown of C. Milton Wright High School in Bel Air, MD. He and a group of fellow students, along with teachers Josh Brown and Carol Wyman, took a tour of Germany and Austria this summer.

Find the words listed below
They may be up, down, across or diagonal

GERMANY	SAXONY
BERLIN	AUSTRIA
PALATINE	BAVARIA
MUNICH	SWISS
VIENNA	RHINE
LEIPZIG	MOSEL
ZURICH	FRANKFURT
PRUSSIA	

G W E P M B N T F A Z B G S U
 E Q R T Y O B H W Z D S A F I
 R W R T R K A C A G W X R Z O
 M E T J U Y V I R N O A N K Z
 A U S T R I A R V N N Z L N P
 N U N Y I O R U Y K B E M M K
 Y P P I U M I Z F Z I N I Z L
 F N S P C B A U J P L G K V P
 A A I S U H R K Z G S J S A T
 D I R L I T L I L F A D L R D
 F S T E R W G E D D A A E H M
 A S O I J E S T H S T Q C H N
 Z U R U H O B R R I Q R R N H
 F R T Y M F Y Q N Y N T E W H
 T P E H H J M E N J Y E E Q D

THE FOUNDING OF OUR SOCIETY

In 1983, when our Society celebrated its 200th birthday, Dr. Armin Mruck wrote an article, which explained the circumstances surrounding the founding of our society and the activities, which it undertook. That extremely interesting article is preserved on the German Society's website. Our webmaster, Dr. Maureen Helinski, has placed it in a prominent position to make it accessible and recommends that all of our members go to our website and read it (or re-read it if you saw it when it was first printed many years ago).

EVEN THE GREAT MENCKEN NODS

Students of the ancient classics know the phrase "Even the Great Homer nods." It signifies that the greatest of writers sometimes make mistakes. Henry Mencken, a former member of our society and one of America's greatest writers, wrote a poignant piece about a 1922 Baltimore hanging of a murderer. He erred by naming Philip as the killer and John Johnson as the victim though it was the other way around. Throughout his story, Mencken called the hanged man Johnson when he was really the killer.

So occasionally, our newsletter makes a mistake, think back to Homer and Mencken and be forgiving in your judgment.

A LOST GENERATION?

The younger people of today know hardly anything about the German American heritage, or for that matter, about the culture, which came to the USA from any European nation. Public school students of all races know a lot about the African American story, because the schools set aside the whole month of February to teach them, and the RV channels are full of black history. No other ethnicity gets government funding to teach its heritage to young people. Parents are too busy with other things, or lack the knowledge themselves to pass on the heritage to their children. The mission of our Society is to preserve the German American heritage, but we don't have a program to do so. This must change. We need to make a substantial investment of time and money to instill the knowledge of our heritage in the children. We have programs promoting the study of the German language, but that outreach is very limited; it only benefits students who are actually enrolled in German languages classes. The heritage applies to all, not just students of the language. Can we find a few members of our society who are willing to take up the task of promoting our heritage among the youth? It does not take many workers, just a few with ideas, time, and energy to attack the problem. Perhaps our directors will authorize a committee for this purpose.

MANY THANKS

To the Haribo Company for donating hundreds of packs of gummy bears for our table at the German Festival and to Walter Mathers for arranging and delivering the gummy bears to Timonium.

DIRECTOR'S PAGE

DR. MICHAEL J. KURTZ

Michael J. Kurtz, one of our new Directors, serves as a Visiting Professor at the University of Maryland's College of Information Studies where he directs the archival specialization track in the Masters of Library Science program. Prior to this he worked for 37 years as professional archivist, manager, and senior executive at the National Archives and Records Administration. Dr. Kurtz has published extensively in the areas of American history and archival management, including *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband* (2006, paperback 2009), *The Allied Struggle Over Cultural Restitution, 1942-1947* (International Journal of Cultural Property, 2010), *The Inheritance of Jewish Property* (Cardozo Law Review, 1998), *John Gottlieb Morris: Man of God, Man of Science* (Maryland Historical Society, 1997), *Emancipation in the Federal City* (Civil War History, 1978), and *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* (2004). He lives outside Annapolis, Maryland, with Cherie and their two cats-Samson and Delilah.

DAVID W. CROSBY

Another of our new Directors, David Crosby was born in Baltimore and was graduated from Mergenthaler Vocational Technical High School as an electrical maintenance technician. He has been active in the air filtration and respirator industry. He began working in 1962 with Air Techniques International (ATI) until his retirement, but continues to work as a consultant and remains active in the industry's professional associations. His work involved design, engineering, quality control and government contract administration. He holds degrees in electronics, heating, air conditioning, refrigeration and business management.

Dave is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the Institute of Environment Sciences and Technology and the Controlled Environment Testing Association. He is a charter member of the International Society of Nuclear Air Treatment Technologies and serves on the Committee on Nuclear Air and Gas Treatment and has served on the Board of Directors of various technology organizations. Mr. Crosby helped design the first portable aerosol photometer and holds several patents on photometers. He is a contributing author to various trade publications and has written and presented many technical papers. He also lectures on HEPA filtration theory, aerosol generators and aerosol photometers for the Harvard University School of Public Health, and other training facilities. He is an IEST fellow and has received many prestigious awards in his field of expertise.

For recreation Dave is into fishing, boating, computer repair and helping folks with their computer problems. He also enjoys working as a volunteer for our Society, Baltimore-Bremerhaven Sister Cities Committee, and for the Baltimore Kickers.

AN UNHERALDED GERMAN IMMIGRANT HERO

I don't know why, but anytime you mention a Maryland German immigrant the first names to come to mind are deKalb, Stricker, and Nast. However, if you considered who gave the most to the human population of the world, it would be Ottmar Mergenthaler. Before his invention of the Linotype machine printing was a laboriously time consuming job. The result was newspapers were shared at taverns and of course school books were scarce in public schools. With the advent of his invention most people could afford newspapers and public schools could afford to buy books for students.

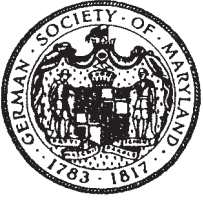
Here are a few facts gleaned from internet sources:
Ottmar Mergenthaler (5-11-1854 to 10-28-1899)

- German-born inventor, called a second Gutenberg
- emigrated to the United States in 1872
- invented the Linotype machine, which set lines of type for printing presses.
- revolutionized the art of printing.
- made newspapers and books available to everyone worldwide.
- worked with his cousin August Kahl in Washington
- moved with Kahl's shop to Baltimore, MD.
- he studied attempts by others to make a typesetting machine and eventually invented the linotype.
- he wrote: "more books-more education for all. At home we had no money for school books..."
- Baltimore's high school, Mergenthaler Vocational Technical High School, which opened in 1953, is named after him.
- Mergenthaler Hall on Homewood Campus of the Johns Hopkins University was built in 1941 with donations from his widow and son.

Hopefully our members will not forget Ottmar Mergenthaler in the future.

Respectfully submitted,
David W. Crosby, Director

Editor's note: Mergenthaler was a member of The German Society of MD. He was also a member of Zion Church where a stained glass window of him and his linotype machine can be seen.



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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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Robert Faust
John P. Grosskopf
Sharon Grosskopf
Paul Gutral
Rachel Gutral
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Andrew Mauer
Thea Mauer
Max D. Young
Liz Young

“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.