

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

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

VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

APRIL 2011 ISSUE #77

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Preserve and Celebrate the German American Heritage, Promote and Save the German Language

Dear Members and Friends,

A recent newspaper ad praises *German engineering and American value*. The combination of both could give us good cause to ask the company to support our organization: We are proud of our German heritage always in the American context of loyalty and value.

During the past year our Board of Directors and the Executive Committee have been discussing a fund raising proposal which was initiated by Mr. Louis J. Grasmick and his wife, Dr. Nancy Grasmick with a gift of \$3,000.00 as seed money and in support for an American student for a possible study stay in Germany. both have become a reality:

1. Our Board of Directors at its February 3rd, 2011 meeting approved the fund raising initiative and
2. Yesterday the student Alessandra Sasha Daniels from Salisbury MD who had petitioned our Society was informed that she is the lucky recipient of the Congress Bundestag scholarship having won this competitive honor.

Our Society needs to decide how we implement the fund raising proposal and the support for the scholarship student.

The upcoming annual meeting of the Society will be a good occasion when the general membership can express its approval and give its support to the work of the Board of Directors.

In order to give an example of leadership we have initiated a request among the board members and the life time directors for a financial contribution or a non-binding financial commitment for the next two years. This will encourage you to be serious in your engagement and faithfulness to our mission: ***To preserve and celebrate the German American Heritage and to promote and save the German language.***

Looking forward to seeing you at the annual meeting.

H. J. Siegfried Otto

OFFICIAL NOTICE

The annual meeting of members of The German Society of Maryland will be held on Friday, April 29, 2011 in the dining room of the Zion Church, 400 E. Lexington Street, Baltimore, Maryland. A meal, free to members and prospective members, will begin at 6:30 p.m.. The meeting will commence after the meal. There will be election of directors, proposed bylaw amendments and reports of officers and committees. See details inside.

GREAT GERMAN FAMILY PICNIC: JUNE 26TH AT KURTZ' BEACH

This year's picnic will be a first. We join with The Baltimore Kickers, Club Fidelitas and other area German clubs to make this a spectacular event. Mark your calendar for Sunday, June 26th. Details inside.

KALENDER

- April 29 Annual membership meeting
- May 1 AGAS German Festival at Blobs
- May 15 High School Awards
- June 26 The Great German Picnic
- July 22-23 German Festival Timonium
- July 27-31 Bus trip Milwaukee Festival
- Nov. 5 Annual Awards Banquet
- Nov. 11 Veterans Day observance:
Henry Gunther Memorial

**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 now be found on our website. For more local German-American happenings, 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) and to register to visit and participate in the website "Der Wecker", founded by our member, Walt Mathers.

**HONORARY MEMBERS:
ALFRED ZELLER**

Anticipating a bylaw amendment for a category of "honorary members", the Board of Directors voted to make Alfred Zeller such a member. Alfred was the honoree at our last annual awards banquet

MAJOR EVENT AT BLOBS MAY 1ST

AGAS, the Association of German American Societies of Greater Washington, D.C. will hold its annual fundraiser at Blob's Park on Sunday, May 1st. The event will feature German music, food and beer. Rain or shine. All are invited. Admission \$8

**THE GREAT GERMAN FAMILY PICNIC
- SUNDAY, JUNE 26**

Our Society has joined ranks with the Baltimore Kickers and Club Fidelitas to hold the annual picnic

at Kurtz' Beach in Pasadena, MD. A German brass band from York, PA., the Dockenspieler, will provide merriment and a strong German flavor to the event. All of the organizations which belong to the Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland are invited. Plan to attend. This is a family affair, so bring your children, grandchildren, brothers, sister, fathers and mothers, aunts and uncles, cousins and friends. Make it a family reunion.

JOIN THE PICNIC COMMITTEE

Since we hope to have many activities for folks of all ages, shapes and sizes, we need a large picnic committee. Please lend your talents and a little bit of you time (not much). Sign up by calling our office phone (410-685-0450) and leave a message with your name and phone number, or call Co-chairman Ted Potthast (410-828-8137). A time and date will be set for the committee meeting.

AN EXCEPTIONAL PICNIC

This will be an extraordinary event: the first time ever that the German American Community has come together for this kind of informal activity. The ticket price is \$21 for adults, \$10 for children. Tickets will be limited to 600 on a first come, first served basis. Fliers will be distributed soon. The event is not open to the public, but only to club members, their families and guests. We want people to meet others who have an interest in German culture and heritage so we have a rule at the picnic: you can walk up to anyone and start talking.

BRINGEN SIE DIE KINDER

Bring the children. We want to see a big turnout of little ones, elementary, high school and college students. We will be subsidizing their ticket prices. The picnic is a way to pass on a part of our cultural heritage. We are planning many activities for them. We may even teach the little ones to sing the Schnitzelbank song. Kurtz' has a field of many acres for games for big and little. There are 3 horse shoe pits, so a tournament is in order. There will be plenty of prizes. We are even asking the German, Swiss and Austrian Embassies to supply us with items to hand out to remind us of our heritage.

FUNDRAISER APPROVED BY BOARD

At the urging of Lou Grasmick, our Board of Directors approved the concept of a major fund-raising program. Mr. Grasmick noted that our Society lacks the capital to devote to a major project which will make the community aware of our presence and our goals. He gave the Society a gift totaling \$3,000 to use as seed money to advertise the fundraiser; Mr. Grasmick has raised millions of dollars for non-profit organizations and believes that without funds, nothing can be accomplished. His message is that nothing can be begun without funding and he declined to suggest what our project might be, so long as it creates energy within the Society and motivates the community to join with us. He also indicated that he and his wife Nancy will serve as founders of a project, and he would like it to honor his good friend and pastor, our president H. J. Siegfried Otto. Our Board is now considering the type of project which will be appropriate. President Otto would like to include a student exchange for a Marylander to study in Germany; his own story is that while in high school, he came to America and it resulted in his calling to the ministry and coming to the New World as a missionary. That experience changed his life. Helping students to study in Germany is a worthy project. Our Board is considering student exchanges and other projects seeking ways to best serve our mission.

SUMMIT ON FUTURE OF TEACHING OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE IN OUR REGION

The February 26th conference at Catholic University produced action plans for preserving German as an academic course in high schools and universities. The results pleased both the planners and the participants. Our Society was well represented at the event. Nearly 100 attended: professors, teachers at all levels, administrators, business people and community representatives. After a long day of lectures and discussions, the conference broke into 4 working groups in different fields and each was required to come up with five ideas for action. Their results will be disseminated to everyone involved in the teaching process throughout the Maryland, Virginia and D.C. A few facts of interest: in Maryland, the public schools in Harford County have the greatest number of students

studying German; in Howard County, 11 of the 12 high schools teach German. None in Baltimore County (although several private schools teach German there). German comes in third behind Spanish and French in the number of students enrolled; but German has an important influence as a factor in increasing brain power, training the mind, far greater than most other languages. Students study German because they like the language and persevere in it.

FRUSTRATION: OUR BILLS KILLED

The chairman of the house committee said he had to decide between a German American Heritage Month or a day for Thurgood Marshall. He killed our bill. We understand: Marshall's black and he's black. That's politics. We don't understand the Senate action. The Senate committee actually took a vote and it was unanimous to kill our bill and we have no explanation. The senators who voted against us are: Conway, J., Chair; Dyson, R., Vice Chair; Benson, J.; Ferguson, B.; Montgomery, K.; Pinsky, P.; Reilly, E.; Rosapepe, J.; Simonaire, B.; Young, R. If you know any of these senators, please tell them we are not happy that they voted against us.

A GERMAN AMERICAN OCTOBER MIGHT HAVE HELPED SET RECORD STRAIGHT

The Feb. 24th Baltimore Sun's feature article on Black History Month quoted children at Johnnycake Elementary School - 2nd graders. One student praised George Washington Carver as one of our greatest scientists for inventing peanut butter. (That achievement pales when compared to the German Americans Albert Einstein whose theory led us to nuclear energy and Werner von Braun whose rockets put men on the moon).

Another student said he learned they would not be in an integrated school but for Martin Luther King. Of course, King preached in the late 1960's, but it was a German American president, Dwight Eisenhower, who integrated the schools in 1954 by enforcing a Supreme Court ruling by sending in U. S. Marshalls.

We need to educate the children about the many good things done by German Americans.

NOTICE: BYLAW AMENDMENT

The following amendment will be presented to the membership for a vote at the annual meeting of the Society on April 29, 2011: Article II is hereby amended by the addition of new section 2.4. "2.4 The Board of Directors may designate a person or an organization as an honorary member of the Society, to hold such membership at the pleasure of the Board. An honorary member shall not be required to pay dues and shall have no voting rights."

OUR ANNUAL MEETING: APRIL 29

For the first 150 years of our Society's history, most of our members lived in Baltimore City, a fairly small town. Even in the dead of winter, the members could get to the annual meeting despite inclement weather. As membership numbers expanded and people moved further from the center of the city, travel became more difficult and snow and ice would force postponements. To avoid the issues of ice and snow, the Society moved the date of its annual meeting from February to the Friday after Easter. During the 5 years in the 1990's, when Donald E. Tillman served as president, we began the custom of serving a meal before the meeting. Tillman's theory was that Germans always do better on a full stomach, so feed them first before the meeting. The meals have been improving each year. Meals are free to members and prospective members. So is the beer, wine, coffee and sodas. Tillman established a rule: the meeting cannot go beyond 9 p.m., and we have held to that rule for the past 20 years. The meeting is a great chance to meet other members, learn about the Society, give your input and find out what "Gemütlichkeit" is all about. So we can order enough food, call our office, leave your name and the number in your party. Our members bring the desserts, so if you can bring a dessert, indicate when you call, (we'll have to buy desserts if there are not enough volunteers). Come and bring your family and prospective new members.

DR UPMAN REPORTS ON THE SUMMIT

The report of our director, Dr. Mary Upman included the following statement:

The Maryland/DC Metro Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German hosted a conference on Feb. 26 at Catholic University that dealt with recent

cuts in German programs and the elimination of German from the curriculum of certain independent schools in Maryland. Even healthy programs led by very effective teachers have been closed and the future of German instruction is a matter of concern to German instructors at all levels of the educational system in this region.

The conference brought together people from many walks of life who share a similar vision, namely "the promotion and preservation of the language and culture of German-speaking countries."

Dr. Upman's report detailed the contents of the conference and her report can be obtained from our office manager upon request. One of the "success stories" in her report centers on the only two high schools in Dorchester County, Maryland. Jennifer Kraeer (a member of our Society) of North Dorchester High School and Attilie Kilmon of Cambridge-So. Dorchester High have successfully introduced German into these two schools. A major factor contributing to their success is a Dorchester/Dueren Sister County Partnership, an exchange program with Dueren (near Cologne).

The students who participate in the program work year-long to raise the \$1,500 per student needed for the air fare and expenses of the exchange. Dorchester is a poor county and it has been suggested that our Society help the students.

BUERGERVEREIN ELECTS KIRCHNER

Our Society is a member of Der Deutsch-amerikanische Bürgerverein von Maryland which recently elected Dorothy Kirchner as its president. Other officers are Thomas Werner, Vice-president; Kathy Kotowski, recording secretary; William Kommalan, corresponding secretary and Loy Vogel, treasurer. Mr. Werner and Mr. Kommalan are both directors of our Society.

GENERAL JOHN STRICKER: THE FACTS?

The "Hero of the Battle of North Point" was an incorporator and a vice president of our Society. We have two stories about his birthplace. One report says Switzerland, the other Frederick, MD. Which is right? Research it and let us know.

THE



SUN

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THURSDAY
March 31, 2011

GET ORIOLES NEWS ON THE GO

Text baseball to 70701 to get Orioles breaking news alerts sent to your phone

Assembly pushes for higher MTA fares

Rate has remained flat for the past eight years

By Michael Dresser
THE BALTIMORE SUN

Maryland's budget is shaping up in a way that could hand users of MTA services such as Baltimore buses and MARC trains their first fare increase in eight years, despite the O'Malley administration's reluctance to charge more.

With growing pressure from rising expenses and a costly union arbitration settlement, the MTA is running far behind its statutory goal of recovering 35 percent of its operating costs from the customers pay. In 2009, the

Grasmick announces she'll retire in June

As schools chief for two decades, she has ushered in numerous reforms



NANCY GRASMICK, 2009 HONOREE MAKES FRONT PAGE HEADLINES

The announcement by Dr. Nancy Grasmick, our member of long standing and our Awards Banquet Honoree, of her impending retirement proved such a news worthy event as to make the headlines of the Baltimore Sun, Maryland's premier newspaper.

Dr. Grasmick served as Superintendent of the Maryland schools system; her tenure lasted 20 years, the longest of any state superintendent in the USA. Under her leadership Maryland schools have ranked among the best in the nation. In the past three years Maryland schools were ranked #1 in the country by Education Weekly magazine and leaders in the field attribute this success largely to the talent and brilliance of Dr. Grasmick.

When she accepted the award at our recent banquet, Dr. Grasmick spoke of her pride in her German American heritage. Her husband Louis Grasmick, has provided leadership to our Society as well as having made significant financial contributions to encourage fund raising projects by our officers and Board of Directors.

THE BALTIMORE JAEGER'S FIFE AND DRUMS DEBUT BALTIMORE ARMORY

In a throwback in history, a new entity has appeared on the local German American scene: a fife and drum corps reminiscent of the 1800's. The group has revived the name Baltimore Jaegers, but opted for the Americanized spelling "Yeagers".

Their first appearance was at a military event at the 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore. The 10 man regiment, dressed in the uniform of their ancient predecessors make an imposing presentation and produce attention-getting music. Their repertoire is particularly German, unusual in this day and age. We are in hopes that they will perform at The Great German Family Picnic on July 26 at Kurtz' Beach.

WILLIAM DONALD SCHAEFER HOSPITALIZED

Former governor of MD and well-loved German Society member Don Schaefer, 89, spent April Fool's Day in St. Agnes Hospital recovering from pneumonia. He's back at Charlestown now. "Gute Besserung", Governor.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MEMBERS:

...to our former President, Brigitte V. Fessenden upon her retirement as an official of the City of Baltimore (the head of Baltimore's historic preservation department) and upon her husband, Dr. Nicholas Fessenden's retirement from a long teaching career at Friends School. They will be moving from their Roland Park home to the Howard County community of Columbia. Brigitte will retain her ties to Baltimore in her capacity as director of the Baltimore-Bremerhaven Sister Cities Program. Brigitte will also retain her leadership position in our Society.

...to Dr. Armin Mruck who received kudos from Claire Maurer, writing a thank you note for her gift membership in our Society. She promised to read our newsletter thoroughly and said she was happy to see Dr. Mruck as an officer and board member of our Society: "I took a wonderful course from him when I was working on my master's degree -- "Hitler's Germany". We met on Friday nights from 6 to 9 pm. Someone brought goodies and we had a coffee pot to keep our energy level up. Then we enjoyed three fascinating hours of his course and stories of his life in Germany under Hitler's reign." (Perhaps we can persuade Dr. Mruck to give a lecture to our Society on that interesting topic.)

...to Mia Walsh upon her election to the Board of Directors of the Porsche Club of America.

...to Teresa Potthast Hirsch, on her 100th birthday on April 21st. We think Teresa is our oldest member.

INTERNET RADIO PROJECT

Our plans are moving forward. We announced our idea at a recent meeting of the Buergerverein and the feedback and reception was encouraging; some good ideas were put forth by the board members. Our next push is to recruit college and high school students and German-speaking members to get involved with the project. We are in the process of forming a committee and if you are interested in being a committee member, let us know. We will be approaching the AATG (American Association of Teachers of German) for their cooperation. Our idea is not original; there are already many German language programs by American groups on the internet. We will explore what's already there, then get the program going.

PROJECTS PLANNED: 2012 & 2016

Our Society is looking for committee members to work on a project to make sure that the members of our Society who fought in the War of 1812, and especially our former vice president, General John Stricker, are properly honored in the giant program planned by the State of Maryland. Our State looks upon the War of 1812 as our "Second Revolutionary War" in which Marylanders defeated the British and sent their army packing back to Britain. Please consider being a member of our 1812 Committee.

Our Society is also looking forward to the celebration of the visit of the submarine Deutschland to Baltimore in 1916. The centenary of that event will soon be upon us. We are pressing a member of our Board of Directors, Dr. David Denisch, to accept the role as Chairman of our "Deutschland" celebration committee. Dr. Denisch is a distant relative of Captain Paul Koenig, the submarine captain who was feted by Marylanders, including our governor and the mayor of Baltimore, during the submarine's visit. Help us twist Dr. Denisch's arm to take on the chairmanship of the project.

THANKS TO MEMBER...

... to Air Force Col (Ret.). Mary Louise Broadbeck, a member of long standing, for her donation of a set of encyclopedias, in German, for our library. The books are of historical interest, having been published in the time of Hitler's Third Reich. During that time all publications contained a Nazi orientation. Another of her donations is a book on migration from Germany to the USA published in Stuttgart, in English which contained this statement: "A study by the Census Bureau states, on the basis of a 1979 investigation that "More Americans can trace their ancestry to Germany than to any other country...28.8 percent of Americans have reported themselves as being, at least partly, of German descent.;" (We recently heard that due to a rise in Maryland's Hispanics, the percentage of German Marylanders in 10 years fell from 23% to 15%.)

Maryland is a refuge state for illegal aliens: the legislature recently granted in-state college tuition to illegal aliens. This is in stark contrast to the days when legal immigrants needed a sponsor who had to guarantee the immigrant would not "go on the dole", i.e., seek to get on welfare.

Thumbnail sketch of a director

DANDRIDGE BROOKE, lifetime director

Dan Brooke is chairman of our membership committee and has recruited more members than anyone in the history of the Society. He is 86 years old, joined the Society 44 years ago, has never missed an annual membership meeting and is still extremely active. He recently donated to us a booklet published in 1914 by the Society for the History of Germans in MD to memorialize the German contributions to the War of 1812.

A few personal notes about Dan:

Dan was born in Germany while his parents were visiting there. He was given the family name Dandridge. His grandfather many times removed was the brother of Martha Dandridge Washington, George's wife. Because his father deserted the family, his mother retained her maiden name, Brooke, and gave that name to Dan. For his first five years of life, Dan grew up on his grandmother's horse farm in Baltimore County at the corner of York and Warren roads. His mother was a socialite and Dan was sent to boarding school in Leonardtown, MD. The West Nottingham Academy in Colora, Cecil County, MD admitted only farm boys and Dan qualified since he grew up on a horse farm. This famous school was founded in the early 1700's and produced two signers of the Declaration of Independence. At one point, Dan was assigned a seat once occupied by the infamous John Wilkes Booth, a fact which caused his grandmother great distress.

His grandmother supplied horses to the U. S. Coast Guard and her influence with some admirals got Dan an appointment to the Coast Guard Academy. Dan's mild dyslexia caused him to get an unsatisfactory grade in signaling, which resulted in a transfer to the Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point where he obtained an officer's commission and spent WWII on an ammunition ship carrying bombs, cannon shells and bullets to Europe. For that job he had to sign an affidavit that he did not smoke. Later, another affidavit that he did not drink, since after the war his ship carried whiskey to the occupation troops.

Dan's service to our Society made him our honoree in 2006. Dan's wife, Isolde, died 3 years ago; without her German cooking, Dan lost 40 pounds and is back to his naval officer weight.

CHARLES WUNDER, DIRECTOR

Charles Wunder served as a director of our Society and member of our finance committee for four years before his death in December, 2010. Charles grew up in West Baltimore, graduated from Loyola High School and Loyola College and served in the U. S. Army, attaining the rank of first lieutenant. Charles was a leader in the life insurance industry. When a brother-in-law died, leaving his sister with only a \$30,000 life insurance policy to raise her young family, Charles realized that for the same premiums he could have purchased \$1,000,000 in term insurance. Thereafter Charles became a missionary for the sale of term insurance and devoted his entire career to that product. His efforts resulted in many widows being able to raise and educate their families and live a worry-free life. Charles was also qualified as a financial planner, and in this capacity helped our Society in our investment policies. His memorial service was conducted in January at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, attended by 300 friends and relatives, including many members of our Society.

ST. ALPHONSUS HONORS PASTOR

John N. Neumann, a former pastor of St. Alphonsus Church, Baltimore, was honored on his 200th birthday at a ceremony at the church on March 27 presided over by Archbishop Edmund O'Brien. Neumann was born in Bohemia of a Bavarian father, came to America as a missionary, and served as pastor of St. Alphonsus for several years before being named as the Roman Catholic bishop of Philadelphia. His reputation for holiness earned him canonization by the Catholic Church and he is now known as Saint John Neumann. A number of schools and churches in Maryland and other states are named after him, as well as a college in Philadelphia.

FOUND: GERMANS OF COLONIAL MD

A ten page pamphlet published in English and German in 1914 for the Star Spangled Banner Centennial was discovered by Dan Brooke and will be on our website. Dr. Julius Hofmann, a member of our Society, wrote the Forword and is thought to be its author.