

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

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

VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2008 ISSUE #62

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear members, friends, and supporters of the German Society,

In a couple of weeks we will be electing our incoming board members at our annual meeting. You will be hearing about our Society's past year's accomplishments and about our plans for the future; you will learn that we have been following our mission by supporting the promotion of the German language and culture, and you will be enjoying meeting many of your fellow German Society members! I am looking forward to seeing you on March 28

Brigitte V. Fessenden, President

OFFICIAL NOTICE

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, MARCH 28 IN THE DINING ROOM OF ZION CHURCH, CITY HALL PLAZA, AT 7 P.M.

Directors will be elected. Any member wishing to nominate a director must submit the name of the member in writing to the nominating committee by letter addressed to our office manager, Bärbel Otto, 3 Haddon Court, Baltimore, MD 21212 and postmarked on or before February 28, 2008.

(For more information, see page 2.)

KALENDER

March 28:	Annual Meeting
May 18:	Annual High School Awards
June 28:	Annual Picnic
July 26-27	Annual German Festival
Sept. 28:	Annual Ecumenical Service
Nov. 15:	Annual Awards Banquet

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome

TRUDY HINSON

as our first new member this year

2007 WAS A GOOD YEAR FOR GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

Our members set a record in 2007 for making gifts to the Society. When members sent in their annual dues, a vast number added a contribution to the educating fund and/ to the newsletter fund. Gifts were also made during the year. The educating fund received \$1,495 and the newsletter fund received \$608. The campaign for donations in memory of members' families at the time of the November annual dinner meeting produced nearly \$1,400. A major gift from a former director, exceeded \$13,000. Since our Society has a 501(c)(3) tax status, all gifts are deductible from federal and state income tax returns. The gifts foster the Society's mission. All members are encouraged to be generous in helping the preserve the German American traditions in Maryland.

ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY ON MARCH 28

Although the principal function of our annual meeting is the election of directors, it is also a great social and learning experience. The committee reports inform us of the activities of the Society for the past year and the plans for the future. Members get to meet one another, make new friends and renew old friendships. And by the way, we start off with an excellent dinner of German and American food, with beer, wine, sodas and coffee and snacks.

The annual meeting is an opportunity to introduce potential new members. Bring along some relatives or friends and encourage them to join. Upon a member's recommendation, We will sign them up on the spot.

The meeting is held on the Friday after Easter, March 28, in the dining room of Zion Church, across from City Hall in Baltimore. Ample parking is available on the street as well as in the church's parking lot.

Make a reservation by calling and leaving a message on our office answering machine: give your name and the number in your party. (410-685-0450)

If you are able, please bring a dessert. When you call in your reservation, indicate whether you plan to do so.

MEMBERS ELECTED TO FIDELITAS

Members of our Society have traditionally served as officers and directors of other German American organizations, and 2008 is no exception. Our director, Fred Riedel, was elected president of Club Fidelitas, an organization composed mostly of German American business people and civic leaders. William Kommalan was elected treasurer. Dutch Niemann, Dr. James Schaub and Ted Potthast were elected directors. for terms of two years. Club Fidelitas and our Society are both members of the Bürgerverein von Maryland.

Brigitte Fessenden, Merl Arp, and Siegfried Otto are our representatives to the Bürgerverein.

JUDGE JOHN F. FADER, II RETURNS TO THE BENCH

Our long-time member, John Fader, who retired from his position as a Circuit Court Judge for Baltimore County several years ago, has been requested to return to hear a series of cases to relieve caseloads of sitting judges. After his retirement, Judge Fader joined the faculty of the University of Maryland School of Law. Judge Fader, a loyal supporter of our society, has a habit of asking young children what they want to be when they grow up. (When asked why he does so, he responded: "I'm still looking for ideas.")

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.

JAMESTOWN TO CELEBRATE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST GERMANS COMING TO AMERICA APRIL 18 - 20, 2008

2008 marks the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first Germans to America and German Americans will celebrate that event at Jamestown in April. Gary Grassl, a historian and a member of our society, was one of the first to promulgate the celebration as an event of national importance. Gary was instrumental in gathering support of the German Embassy and the National Park Service to foster the commemoration of the first German presence in the American colonies. The United States Postal Service issued a tri-cornered stamp commemorative stamp last year.

AGAS TO SPONSOR BUS TRIP

The Association of German American Societies of Greater Washington, D.C. is in the process of planning to take a contingent from Maryland, DC and Virginia to Jamestown to participate in the celebrations. The German Society of MD is a member of A.G.A.S. The details for the trip have not yet been finalized. We expect that a representative group from our Society will sign up for the bus trip. We will notify our members as soon as we receive the information; an early sign-up will be needed in order to contract for buses and rooms.

Dr. James Schaub has served as our Society's delegate to A.G.A.S; he will keep us abreast of the details of the timing of the event and the sign-up requirements. Of course, persons who wish to attend the event at Jamestown on their own can make their own arrangements as soon as the dates are published.

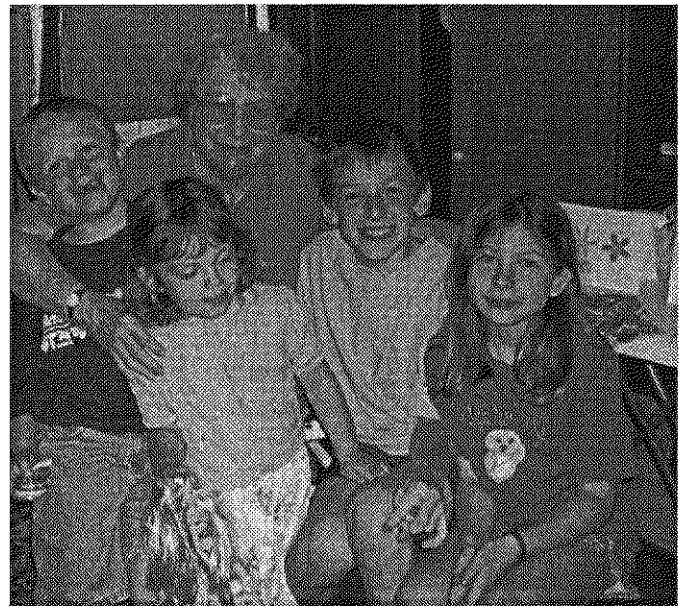
A detailed schedule of the events can be found at the following website later this month:
www.richmondgermansocieties.com

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

On February 4, 2008, our dear member Isolde K. Brooke, wife of our Director Dandridge Brooke passed away after a long and difficult illness. In addition to her husband Dan, Isolde is survived by her children Lynette, William, Brian, Randall, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Isolde has been a longtime supporting member of the German Society of Maryland; she was proud of her German roots; she believed strongly in the mission and goals of our Society, which include the love of the German language, music, literature, poetry, and traditions. She showed great respect for her parents' heritage and "Heimat". Along with her husband Dan, she made every effort to attend many of our events and functions, and she always contributed tremendously to the success of any affair with her warm and engaging personality.

The German Society is forever grateful for Isolde and her many contributions she made to the German community in Maryland.



FINANCE COMMITTEE'S TIMING WAS RIGHT; AVOIDED DECLINE

After lengthy consideration the finance committee made a major decision this year to liquidate the Society's portfolio in the fall. As a result, we were in a 100% cash position when the stock market tumbled, thus avoiding substantial losses. The committee decided to wait before reentering the market, and to do so gradually; the committee also decided to switch into mutual funds, with T. Rowe Price, a national firm with headquarters in Baltimore County. For the past several years the Society's investments were managed by Merrill Lynch, on a fee basis. The committee believed that it would benefit the Society by returning to the system which had been in place for most of the 20th century, by which the committee acted as the manager of the Society's assets, but with a major change: the committee will not pick and choose individual securities, but will select mutual funds in various concentrations of investment which will spread the risks over large areas. The new plan looks to income-producing securities which will allow us to budget more accurately for our programs and expenses. It is also expected to reduce accounting fees, which were reflective of frequent trading; we expect that trading will be minimized once initial purchases of a new portfolio are completed.

2008 BUDGET APPROVED BY DIRECTORS AT JAN. 31 MEETING

The finance committee submitted data to the directors for the purpose of drafting this year's budget; and after review and discussion, the input from the directors resulted in the allocation of income among the program and operating expenses of the society. The budget was based on income estimates: market forces will determine what the Society will receive from its investments; donations are difficult to forecast; and revenue from dues assumes that all who paid dues in 2007 will do so again in 2008 at the higher rate. Starting Jan. 1, dues were increased to \$25 from \$15. Last year the Society collected \$6,000 in dues, which projects to \$10,000 this year.

All donations to the Education Fund are used for educational purposes and expended during the year in which they are received, with one exception. Donations of one thousand dollars or more are set aside in a separate fund honoring the donor, and invested; the income from such funds is expended annually for the purpose specified by the donor. Donations to the newsletter fund help augment the size or frequency of the newsletter.

Total estimated income from all sources, including investments, dues and donations is \$37,587. Total operating expenses and educational grants total \$38,545, creating a budget deficit of \$958. The directors approved the 2008 budget after a lively discussion about future potential income as well as savings and after increasing the amount for the college merit awards to \$2,500.00 from \$2,000.00

THE SOCIETY'S SONGBOOK

The Songbook is currently under preparation, with attention to page layout. Over 100 songs are being prepared, including Christmas songs, children's songs, folk songs and others. The cost is estimated to be about \$10.00.

Place your reservations through the SOCIETY'S office. Send your name and address, and write the phrase "Songbook Reservation". Send no money at this time.

THANKS TO THOSE MEMBERS WHO GAVE US FINANCIAL GIFTS IN 2007

The German Society of Maryland is deeply grateful to all those who contributed to the Education Fund, the Newsletter Fund and the general treasury of the society in calendar year 2007. It set a record in the number of donations received by the society. These gifts have enabled the Society to make great strides in its mission by encouraging students of all ages to learn about the German language, and German American traditions and culture. We thank each and every contributor. Their names are listed here:

George Abendschoen
Phyllis Abendschoen
Barbara U. Abramson
Rev. Sandra & Lans Alexis
Josh Alford
Merl E. Arp
Delegate Susan Aumann
Karl Aumann
Jane K. & Robert Awalt
Emma S. Barzyk
Joseph C. Batz
Mae Marion Batz
N.E. Berneburg
Maxine Berneburg
C William & Bernice Bernstein
Nicholas & Karen Bertolini
Charles Birnstiel
K. Harry Blank
Carol J. Blank
Arthur E. Blenkle
James Boehm
Ann Boehm
Goswin Y. & Christine Boner
Dandridge & Isolde Brooke
James William Brown
Jennifer Marie Brown
Lloyd R. & Salena Bruck
Madeleine Bryant
Thomas J. Burger
Thurston & Nina Carleton
Joseph A. & Claire R. Chovan
Joshua F. Cockey of B., J.D.
Karin & Arthur Colquitt
Kyle Connor
David M. Cook
David W. Crosby
John Dausch
Dr. David Denisch
John H. Ditto, Esq.
Scott & Rebecca Doellinger
Richard E. & Barbara Drechsler
Rolf A. Engelhardt
Laura Helinski Eskenazi
Jonathan Eskenazi
Katherine Fader
Brigitte & Nicholas Fessenden
Richard F. & Alice Fischer
Fred S. Foerster
Barbara L. Foerster
Lester A. Foster, Jr.
Patricia Foster
Elfriede G. Fowler
Robert Karl & Lori Fritzsche
Eberhard J. & Janice Gabriel
Robert Herman & Louise Gay
Jeffrey C & Amy Glock
Frederick M. Goethe
Dr. Franz Xavier Groll
Helmut Guenschel

Magdalena Guenschel
Albricht R. & Marie Hafenmair
Ilse Moller Harrop
Ursula & Gary Harthausen
Gary E. & Anne L. Heiland
Maureen M. Helinski
Cecilia Muth Herman
Dorothy Herpel
Theresa Hirsch
Robert T Hobble
Charles F. Hobelmann, Jr
Jo Anne B. Hobelmann
John H. Hoffman, Jr.
Elsbeth Holland
Mary K. Pfeffer Hollidayoke
Dr. Matthias Hort
Andrea Grau
Olga Klein Hutchins
John R. Innes
Anna Jean Innes
Thomas Oberle Jelks, Jr.
Carlyn J. Johnson
Branch Jones
Ray W. & Virginia Kauffman
David E. Kindermann Esq
Anna L. Kindermann
Mary Walke Kittel
Harry W. Klasmeier
William K. Klein
Margarete Kramer
Krug family
Raymond J. & Esther Krul
Michael J. Kurtz
Roy L. & Lois A. Labs
Martin & Joan Lapera
Maria & Juergen Laue
Uta Lee
Roger D. & Michie Leonard
Wilhelm Lohmann
Annemarie Lohmann
Christel C. Losemann
Kenneth E. Lyons
Sharon Serio
Alvin & Carole K. Manger
John L. & Dione J. Meinhardt
Gerhard Meinzer
John Albert Metzger
Shirley Bond Metzger
Deborah McGee Mifflin
Bradford Miller
Ingeborg C. Miller
Stephen Moore
Eric Moos
Candace Moos
John T. Moylan Jr
Janice Moylan
Betty & Bruno Niemann
George N. Numsen
Virginia M. Numsen

Wolfgang Oehme
John F. Oppitz
Frances Aull
Pastor H.J. Siegfried Otto
Bärbel Otto
Paul-Gerhard Otto
Albert E. & Lucie Paulus
Annemarie C. & John Pickett
Theodore J. Potthast, Jr., Esq.
Connie Potthast
Ellen Pramschufel, Jr.
Karin A. Rau
John T. Rau, Jr.
Louis Reinhardt &
Phyllis Crowley
Walter A. & Mary J. Reiter, Jr.
David E & Patricia B. Roeder
Hans J. Ruehsen
Norbert & Sarah Sachse
The Hon. Wm Donald Schaefer
W. Brad Schlegel
John G. Schmidt
Eileen B. Schmidt
Mrs. Rolf Schmidt
William T. Scholtholt
Doris B. Scholtholt
Philip E. & Gisela Schwartz
Robert L. & E. Anne Seeger
Bernard F. & Ruth R. Semon
George & Chris Shriver IV
John William Siegmund
Elsa Jane Siegmund
Anton G. Smoot
Walter C. Spieker
Maria Springer
Kenneth A. Tabler
Annemarie H. Tahedl
Dr. Herbert Traxler
Dr. Carol Traxler
Christine S.. Tucker
Thomas H. Tucker
Amy Unverzagt
Eric Veres
Emil Volcheck
Brian & Mia P. Walsh
Joseph Walterhoefer
Betty Ann Walterhoefer
Walter & Helga Wappaus
Leo R. & Phyllis Wastler
Jack & Joan Weglein
Diana M. & Louis A. Wehage
Thomas A Werner
Colin C. White
C. Herbert Wineholt, Jr.
Robert L. Wirsing
Arthur E. Woolley Jr
Charles A. Wunder
Klaus Zurheide

THE FIRST 200 YEARS OF THE SOCIETY

The German Society was founded in 1783 by a group of men to combat serious problems facing immigrants from German-speaking parts of Europe - specifically a form of slavery.

What we recognize today as slavery, was then called "indentured servitude" because the German could only be held as slaves for a period of time, usually for 7 years. These immigrants became "indentured servants" because they could not pay their fare on the ship which brought them to America.



DR. CHARLES FREDERICK WIESENTHAL, *President 1783-1789*

Thus they allowed the ship's captain to sell them into servitude in return for their passage to America. A child had to stay in servitude until he or she reached age 21. The German "slaves" were called "redemptioners", since they redeemed themselves by serving their time working for the master who bought them off the ship. Ships full of immigrants lay in the Baltimore harbor laden with such immigrants; farmers and mechanics came to Baltimore and went aboard the ships looking for healthy workers whom they could buy from the captain. This system led to many abuses. The German Society came into existence to protect the immigrants from abuse.

GERMAN SOCIETY GOES TO COURT

The practice of indentured slavery continued and increased when trade with Germany grew after the War of 1812 and the later Napoleonic Wars. In 1819, the Society went to court to save two young German boys named Bruening who had been kidnapped by a Mr. W. Denny, a farmer from Queen Anne's County. The farmer went aboard the ship *Prima* in the Baltimore harbor, fancied two young brothers named Bruening and bribed Captain Maxwold to let him take the boys. Their parents saw Denny's boat sailing away with their two sons and protested, but to no avail. When the German Society learned of the situation, it hired an attorney to go to court, seeking the return of the boys. The Society was successful and obtained custody of them. Their parents, however, had been sold to a farmer in Pennsylvania and there was no way to reunite the children with the parents. The Society did the next best thing: they apprenticed the boys to a kind man who agreed to care for them and teach them a trade, until the parents were able to complete the term of their own servitude and recover their sons.

GERMAN SOCIETY CARED FOR THE POOR, WIDOWS AND CHILDREN

The 1700's and 1800's had no welfare system and persons in poverty and need had to rely on the charity of their neighbors and of organizations such as the German Society to care for them. Our Society's members quickly raised funds to help their fellow countrymen. The Society employed agents to seek out and help those in need; doctors and lawyers were appointed by the Society to assist in their endeavors.

THE BALTIMORE HEAD TAX

The majority of immigrants to Baltimore in the early 1800's were from Ireland and the German-speaking countries. (Germany as a country did not exist until 1870. Previously it consisted of over 200 political areas: kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities and small areas ruled by minor royalty). Baltimore City levied a tax payable by a ship's captain, upon each immigrant brought to the city. The German Society received 50¢ for each German, to be used to care for Germans in distress.

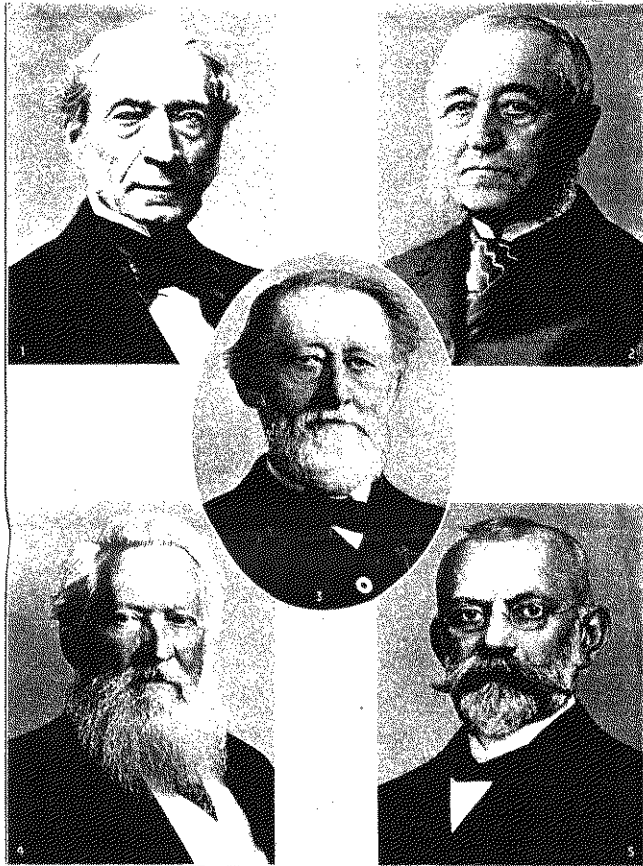
On one occasion, a ship's captain was not allowed by the city authorities to discharge his

passengers because he had not paid the tax. The passengers languished aboard ship until the German Society learned of the situation. The president of the Society advanced the funds to the tax collector to enable the Germans to get off the boat. The Society continued to receive the Baltimore head tax until it was declared unconstitutional by the U. S. Supreme Court (a city usurping federal taxing powers).

sorry crew of Germans were put ashore without pay on a far off beach, or worse, thrown overboard. For years the German Society tried to persuade the Maryland legislature to adopt laws to stop this practice, unsuccessfully. The watermen's lobby killed every bill introduced by the Society. When it became obvious that Maryland had no interest in stopping the practice, the German Society went to Washington. Our president and members testified before congress and through astute lobbying efforts, prevailed on congress to invoke federal jurisdiction and enact laws protecting the immigrants.

SOCIETY FUNCTIONS CHANGE OVER TIME

Through the late 19th and early 20th century, The German Society of Maryland continued to function as a social service for German-speaking immigrants and their families. As local, state and the federal government entered the welfare business, the need for such service abated. By the 1950's, as colleges began accepting more and more students via the GI Bill, the Society found a new need: aiding students of German ancestry to meet the financial burden of college tuition. From the 1950's to the mid 1980's a grant of a few hundred dollars went a long way to covering college expenses. As college expenses skyrocketed, the grants which the Society could make seemed paltry and not very helpful. College loan programs became plentiful and many college aid programs for needy students began penalizing those who received outside grants, such as from the Society. Again, the Society adapted, so that today one of its main goals is to encourage high school and elementary students to take up the study of German language and culture.



Presidents of the German Society of Maryland

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1. ALBERT SCHMMEIDER | 1811-1871 | 2. HERMAN VAN KAPPE | 1872-1878 |
| 3. GAAS VOORKE | 1879-1886 | | |
| 4. LOUIS P. HENNINGHAUSEN | 1887-1913 | 5. ROBERT M. ROTHER | 1914-1923 |

THE SOCIETY LOBBIES CONGRESS

In the mid 1800's German immigrants became the victims of Chesapeake Bay oystermen. Oystering on the bay was a hard life during the cold winter months and oyster boat captains had difficulty filling their crews. They solved their problem by kidnapping German immigrants: they were enticed into bars, made drunk by free whiskey, only to awaken in the morning aboard an oyster boat far down the Chesapeake Bay. When oyster season ended, the

"PIONEERS IN SERVICE"

A summary of the history of the Society is contained in a booklet entitled "Pioneers in Service", which appears on the Society's website.

Our website: www.germansociety-md.com