

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

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

VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

JANUARY 2008 ISSUE #60

OFFICERS

Brigitte V. Fessenden
President
Dr. Armin Mruck
1st Vice President
Merl Arp
2nd Vice President
Christel van der Berg
Secretary
Theodore J. Potthast, Jr.
Treasurer
Hon. Gerard W. Wittstadt
Counselor

DIRECTORS

Shelley Arnold
Merl Arp
Linda Butt
Dr. David Denisch
Prof. Dr. Mohamed Esa
Robert Karl Fritzsche
Dr. Maureen Helinski
Prof. Dr. Armin Mruck
Betty Niemann
Rev. H.J. Siegfried Otto
Bernard Penner, Esq.
Frederick Riedel
Dr. James Schaub
Christel van der Berg
Thomas Werner
Charles Wunder

EX OFFICIO

Pres., Women's Auxiliary
Eva Maus Kelleher

LIFETIME DIRECTORS

John K. Aymold, Jr.
Dandridge Brooke
Brigitte V. Fessenden
Michael J. Nieberding
Theodore J. Potthast, Jr.
Irma Tillman
Frederick H. Wehrenberg
Edwin O. Wenck, Esq.
Vernon H. Wiesand, Esq.
Hon. Gerard W. Wittstadt
Office Manager
Bärbel Otto

JANE AWALT PRESENTS SOCIETY WITH LARGEST LIFETIME GIFT BY DONOR

Past director and past chair of our genealogy committee, Jane Awalt, on Dec. 7, presented the Society with the largest gift in the history of the society by a living person. (We have received bequests of an equal or larger amount by deceased members via a Last Will and Testament). Jane made the gift to the Society in 2007 in excess of \$13,000. The funds will be set aside and called "The Awalt Education Fund", the income from which will promote the study of the German language for students from kindergarten through college.

Jane and her husband, Bob, have been members of our Society for many years. Bob died just a few months ago. He suffered from Parkinson's disease, which required Bob and Jane to move from the long-time home in Lutherville to reside at Oak Crest's assisted living facility. When Bob's condition became serious, Jane had to resign from our Board in order to care for him. In the four months before Bob's death, Jane was at his side day and night.

Jane has also been active in genealogy organizations. She is an author: one of her books is ready for publication and she is working on another, a history of her family.

The Society is truly grateful for Jane's generosity; we pledge to use her gift to help young people study the German language and culture.

KALENDAR

Jan. 31	Board of Directors Meeting
March 28	Annual Meeting-Member
May	Annual High School Award*
June	Annual Picnic*
July 26-27	Annual German Festival
Sept.	Annual Ecumenical Service*
Nov.	Annual Awards Banquet

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Harry S. Barnes
Cathy Frank Barnes
Sonja Brackvogel
Michael W. Brill
Dorothy Herpel
C. Louis Raborg
Becky Raborg
Susanne Sutton
Paul Sutton

MT. VERNON HOLLY TOUR VISITS GERMAN SOCIETY'S OFFICE

500 tour-goers visited our office on the Mount Vernon Holly Tour on Dec. 9th.. President Fessenden decorated the office with wreaths and holly so that it presented a festive 19th century Christmas display. Our office is on the corner of Maryland Avenue and Mt. Vernon Place in a turn of the century building owned by the Wiesand family, long time members of the society.

ANNUAL BANQUET PRODUCED GOOD LUCK FOR ATTENDEES

The honorees at the Society's annual awards banquet, the blacksmiths Ted, Peter and Stephen Krug were seen throughout the hall shaking hands with our members and guests, bestowing good luck with every handshake. One of our members attending the banquet,, Cappy Potthast, told the story of her family's visit to their ancestral village of Borgholz, Westphalia to celebrate the 700th anniversary of its founding. During the festival, her cousin, Josef Potthast, led each of the 7 American visitors to the village blacksmith and insisted that they shake his hand. The traditio is that shaking a blacksmith's hand brings good luck. The blacksmith was the most popular figure at the festival.

(P.S. IT'S TRUE! I went fishing a couple days after the banquet and told my five companions: "I'm going to be lucky today; I shook the hand of a blacksmith." Nobody on the boat caught a thing except me. On a single line I simultaneously caught TWO 20-pound rockfish. TP)

HISTORICAL SOCIETY LECTURE FEATURED GERMAN JEWISH ROOTS

At the annual meeting and banquet of our sister Society, The Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, Elizabeth R. Kahn of the staff of the Jewish Museum of Maryland presented a glimpse of the German Jews of Baltimore. The Germans were the first to immigrate, followed later by Jews from Russia and Poland. For the first half of the 20th century, the nationalities rarely mixed socially and each had separate synagogues, although this changed in the latter part of the century Mrs. Kahn was well received by the historical society.

LARGE TURNOUT AT ANNUAL ECUMENICAL SERVICE AT ZION

A packed house attended our ecumenical service was held at Zion Church on Sept. 30, The history: Less than three weeks after the fall of the Berlin wall, in November, 1989, the German Society, along with Zion Church and The Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, called for an ecumenical service of thanksgiving: our fellow countrymen in eastern Germany became free from communist domination and could practice their faith openly. Each year since 1989 the Society has been a sponsor of an ecumenical worship service. The date was selected as the closest Sunday to the feast day of St. Michael, Archangel, the patron of Germany.

Our Society provided the trumpeters for the service and contributed to the refreshments afterwards.

WILL DON SCHAEFER'S STATUE STAND IN THE INNER HARBOR?

A group headed by Baltimore business man Ed Hale has agreed to raise \$500,000 for a 15 foot tall statue of William Donald Schaefer to be placed in the Inner Harbor. A commission appointed by Baltimore's mayor Sheila Dixon is considering the location but it was reported that they don't want it in a prominent place at the Harbor. Schaefer is a former governor and comptroller of Maryland and a former mayor of Baltimore and president of its city council. It was during his administration as mayor that the Inner Harbor project was initiated.

**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 Services", the history of our Society, can now be found on our website.

NOTES:---

Our long-time member, **RICHARD. W. ATER** died September 24, 2007 of cancer. Dick attended many of our functions. He gave up an accounting practice to enter the family carpet business, Direct Factory Sales, Inc., founded by his father. Dick became the president and owner before retiring from that business and becoming a real estate broker. He was a close friend of another of our members, Judge John F. Fader, II, who helped care for Dick in his last illness.

Our Board of Directors wishes to thank **Nicholas and Brigitte Fessenden** for hosting a Christmas party for the board members at the Fessenden home in Roland Park. The group had a good time and a chance to talk over some of the Society's plans for the future.

The Society also thanks our director, **Prof. Dr. Mohamed Esa** whose efforts made our recent Awards Banquet a resounding success. Among the many tasks he accomplished, Dr. Esa put together the program which was printed at the facilities of McDaniel College; and he produced a movie presentation of the history of the Krug family blacksmith operations which required him to travel to Pennsylvania to film parts of the movie. A large contingent of Dr. Esa's German language students from McDaniel attended the banquet.

Our loyal member, **Wolfgang Oehme**, internationally famous landscape architect and author, designed the grounds of the Towson Courthouse which he personally maintains as a civic contribution. The grounds create an atmosphere of peace and grace. A group of philistines (a/k/a planners) want to plow it up and change it. The Towson citizenry are up in arms, calling Wolfgang's work "magical" and imploring county officials to leave it alone.

MEMORIAL PROGRAM YIELDS \$1,490 IN GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

We recently requested our members and friends to make donations to the Society in memory of the deceased family members in a program which we called "Honor Thy Father and Mother." The results were heartening and the following gifts were given:

\$150 from Ellen Pramschufer in memory of her husband Francis, his parents and her own parents

\$200 from **Teresa Hirsch** in memory of her husband, Henry G. G. Hirsch and her parents, John and Margaret Potthast.

\$200 from **Ted Potthast** in memory of his parents, Theodore and Marie Potthast.

\$130 from **Jack and Joan Weglein** in memory of Jack's parents, Rev. Edward Weglein and Naomi Lutsche Weglein

\$100 from **Mrs. Katherine Fader**

\$100 from **Mrs. Dorothy Herpel**

\$70 from **Dan and Isolde Kluge Brooke** and family in memory of her parents, Willy and Ilse Kluge.

\$40 from **Cecilia Muth Herman** in memory of her parents, Sebastian and Anna Marie (Roth) Muth

\$40 from **Maureen McCarthy Helinski** in memory of her mother, Marjorie Ruth Behrens McCarthy and her grandfather, Frederick Behrens.

\$70 from **Merl E. Arp** in thanksgiving to his great-grandpa, Peter Arp for coming to America

\$130 from **Jane Awalt** in memory of her husband, Robert Francis Awalt.

\$70 from **the Krug family** in memory of their great-great grandfather, Gustav Krug

\$70 from **David A. Denisch, DDS**, in memory of his ancestors, the Brenners, founders of Frederick, MD

\$70 from **Robert Karl Fritzsche** in memory of his father, Karl Richard Fritzsche.

\$40 from **Louis Reinhardt and Phyllis Crowley** in memory of their father, Louis A. Reinhardt, Sr.

\$40 from **Berniece Gies Bernstein and C. William Bernstein**, honoring their heritage from Bernstein aus Schlitz-Hessen.

\$70 from **Pastor H. J. Siegfried Otto and Bärbel Otto** in memory of their parents, Gerhard and Olga Otto and Alfred and Ilse Heinrich.

BALTIMORE - BREMERHAVEN SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

The effort to establish a sister city relationship with the German City of Bremerhaven is moving forward with the planning of projects that the two cities can do together. The program is under the auspices of the Mayor's Office, but will be administered by a Committee of 10 members. We are currently 4 members short and would appreciate anyone to come "on board" and be part of this exciting endeavor. You do not need to live in Baltimore City or to speak German in order to be a member, but you should have a general knowledge of Baltimore, its history, its geography, its cultural diversity, etc. Meetings are on the third Tuesday of the month and held in City Hall; free parking is provided. Please call Brigitte Fessenden, Committee Chair at (443) 984-2726 (w) or 410-532-7581 (h), or e-mail: Brigitte.Fessenden@Baltimorecity.gov.

EDELWEISS BAKERY CLOSES DUE TO DEATH OF DIETRICH PAUL

Dietrich A. Paul, founder and owner of the Edelweiss Bakery on Harford Road in Baltimore, died Nov. 16. His widow, the former Genevieve Miller, who had worked along with him in running the bakery and restaurant, closed it down because she could not operate it without him. The German community mourned the loss of Mr. Paul and the closure of the bakery, one of the last places in the city where truly German baked goods could be found. The small restaurant featured its excellent sauerbraten every Thursday and customers came from near and far for lunch on that day. Many members of our Society patronized the Edelweiss Bakery; they will miss their beloved bakery

NANCY GRASMICK, MEMBER, RECEIVES NEW 4-YEAR TERM

Nancy Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools and her husband Lou Grasmick, a well-known business man, have been prominent members of our Society. Nancy has held the post of State Superintendent longer than any other educator in the USA, for 16 years, having served under 4 governors. The State Board of Education appoints the superintendent, so that the position will be non-political. Gov. O'Malley wants to oust her as a result of a skirmish during his tenure as mayor of Baltimore. Mrs. Grasmick was critical of several failing schools in Baltimore, and she also pushed for accountability by the local school systems. Gov. O'Malley and the legislature are looking for ways to replace her.

GERMAN AMERICAN DAY AT McDANIEL DRAWS STUDENTS

On October 126 hundreds of students studying German at high schools throughout the State assembled on the campus of McDaniel College for an educational program of over 20 seminars. The day was sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of German and was organized by Dr. Mohamed Esa, a director of our society and a professor at the college. Our Society encourages the study of the German language and culture by high school students. We provide the AATG with annual cash awards to be distributed to the students for excellence in their German language studies.

BLOB'S PARK SHUTS ITS DOORS

Maryland will lose a piece of its German American heritage when the park, founded by Bavarian immigrant Max Blob closes. Since 1933 it has served as a meeting place, a festival location, restaurant, party hall and picnic spot for thousands of German American families and friends. After Max's death, his niece, Katherine Blob Eggerl and her children kept it alive. Her son, John Eggerl announced that his mother, prior to her recent death, had arranged the sale of the property to a developer.

Max, Katherine and her children were members of our society. Katherine had been honored by the society at an awards banquet for her role in holding the German American community together.

An article in the Baltimore Sun described the restaurant's exit: "A black and white photo of a smiling Max Blob holding five steins of beers, a blessing for departing visitors ('Behut euch Gott', or 'God be with you') and a wooden crucifix hung by the door."

OUR GERMAN SONGBOOK.

Get on the reservation list for guaranteed delivery of the songbook which our committee is now finalizing. We will base our initial printing by the number of early reservations we receive. The price is expected to be around \$10; we are now taking bids from printers. Send your name and address to our office and simply write "Songbook Reservation". State number of copies if you want more than one. Send no money. 100 songs, in German, with explanation in English, many for children.

COMMENTS have been coming in about the content of our newsletter. **Members want to know what events are happening** dealing with German culture, find German food and music and have fun while cultivating their ethnic heritage. We try to find out what's going on and let you know; please let us know of items which deserve newsletter space.

New membership application forms have been printed and we have a good supply. Keep a few copies handy to pass out to potential new members. Call our office manager, Bärbel Otto at 410-372-0630 and ask her to mail you a supply.

Our **finance committee** has spent many hours in meetings and review of alternatives to increase the income from our investments. Our assets were liquidated in September; we will reinvest when the markets stabilize.

AWARDS BANQUET HONORS KRUG HISTORICAL BLACKSMITH FIRM

At our annual banquet on Nov. in the Adlersaal of Zion Church, we honored G. Krug & Son of Baltimore. Recognized as the oldest continuously operating blacksmith's shop in the United States, G. Krug & Son provides its customers with a wide range of hand-forged ironwork that is beautiful, durable and meets the highest level of quality and craftsmanship. The shop is located in an old historic house at 415 W. Saratoga Street that was acquired in 1830 by Andrew Merker. The Krug family entered the company in 1848 when Gustav Krug emigrated from Germany to Baltimore and began working as an apprentice in Andrew Merker's shop. Krug quickly rose to the position of foreman and acquired a proprietary interest in the company, which was then renamed "A. Merker & Krug." Krug later bought out Merker and gave the firm its present name of G. Krug & Sons.

FIRM'S HISTORY SHOWN IN MOVIE

Dr. Mohamed Esa showed a video that he filmed and edited especially for this occasion. It presented the history of the Krug family and its involvement with the craft of hand-forged wrought iron from 1848 to the present day. The script had been written by Mary Upman and was narrated by Andrea Shalal-Esa. Immediately after the viewing of this video, Theodore, Peter and Steven Krug were invited to the stage by President Brigitte Fessenden. The Krugs were presented with proclamations from

Governor Martin O'Malley and Mayor Sheila Dixon. These proclamations recognized and honored the achievements of the Krug family.

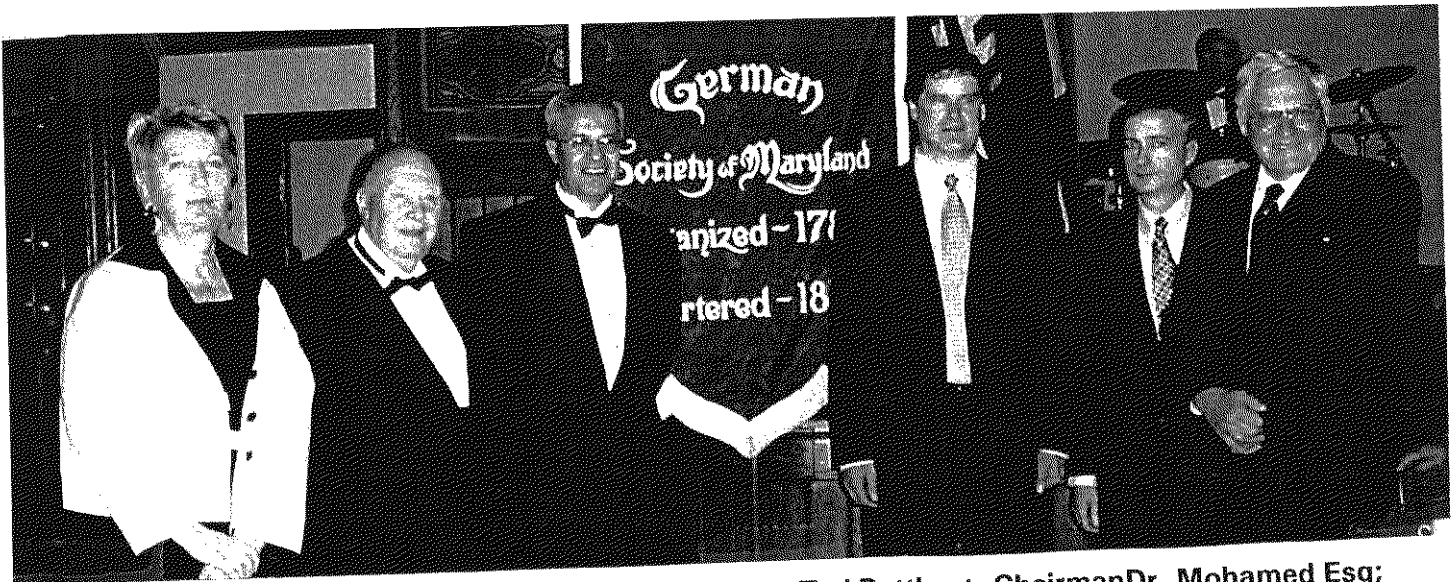
THANKS TO THE ORGANIZERS

The event was organized by President Fessenden and Dr. Esa, Chairman of the Banquet Committee, assisted by other members of the committee: Dr. Maureen Helinski, Betty Niemann, Bärbel Otto, Dr. James Schaub and Theodore Potthast, Jr., Esq. who served as the Master of Ceremonies. Musical entertainment was provided by Mike Surratt and his popular German band, The Continentals.

133 guests were in attendance. Bernard Penner, Esq. greeted the honorees and guests on behalf of Pastor Holger Roggelin of Zion Church. After the singing of the national anthem of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United State of America, Reverend H. J. Siegfried Otto gave an inspirational German invocation.

ADDRESS BY McDANIEL CLUB PRESIDENT

The awards ceremony that followed dinner was a very meaningful and joyous event. The mood was set by an eloquent speech delivered by Sarah Brackbill, President of the McDaniel College German Club. Ms. Brackbill graciously thanked the German Society of Maryland for all of its efforts on behalf of high school and college-level students, including its scholarships for college students majoring in German and the generous financial support provided annually for the local branch of the American Association of Teachers of German for awards to high school students of German. (ARTICLE & PHOTO BY MARY UPMAN)



Pres. Brigitte Fessenden; Master of ceremonies, Ted Potthast; Chairman Dr. Mohamed Esa; and the Krugs, Steven, Peter and their father, Theodore

RIPKIN NOW A DIPLOMAT

Cal Ripkin, a famous German American Marylander who was inducted in early August into the Baseball Hall of Fame, was credentialed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as a special envoy of the State Department. His first assignment is to serve as a United States representative to China. Ripken and his entourage, which includes another Maryland German American, B. J. Surhoff, visited the Great Wall of China on Nov. 1 during their tour of Chinese schools to teach baseball to the youth. He appeared on national TV to say that he hopes to spread the joy and message of baseball to the youth of the world.

GINGERBREAD HOUSE BUILDERS

Maria Springer, a talented member of our Society, is busy during the Christmas season giving lessons to children and their parents on making gingerbread houses. Her business, "Maja's Viennese Kitchen" is conducted from her home in her large, professional kitchen. Her students are children aged 5-12 who meet on weekends before Christmas. Each child gets to build a house and take it home, full of the pride of accomplishment and bursting to show it to family and friends. If you have any little ones, think about signing them up for next year's course. Call Maria at 410-561-1157 or check her website at majaskit@aol.com

WHAT DO OUR DIRECTORS DO ?

They do a lot of thinking and kicking their ideas around. In a recent brainstorming session, they asked questions like these:

How can we recruit young members to the Society? The old geezers don't have much time left and we need young blood to take over.

How can the Society help to preserve the memory of the members, so that future generations will know who they were and what they did? We have membership lists dating back to the 1800's, but we don't know anything about those deceased members.

Organizations go out of existence every year. How can we assure that our Society will still be around in 100 years?

In 1783 the Society's purpose was to aid immigrants. Today our purpose is preservation - of German language, heritage and traditions. How can we make sure that every dollar we spend will directly serve this purpose?

Besides sitting around and thinking, our directors also take action, fostering programs to carry out our purpose.

WAS BEDEUTED "NACHRICHTEN"?

A member reports that a card next to the phone in his hotel room in Berlin instructed him to dial 100 for his "Nachrichten/Messages." It reminded him of the title of our newsletter.

RESTAURANT IN FREDERICK, MD.

One of our members has written to us to recommend a new restaurant in Frederick, MD., "Hennings", at 177A Thomas Johnson Drive. The owner is Henning Lorengen, formerly of the Wurzburg Haus in Rockville. Phone 301-668-7777. Mon-Thurs 11 to 9; Fri & Sat 11 to 10.

GERMANS IN MD. LEGISLATURE

The Nov., 2007 special session of the Maryland legislature voted to send the issue of slot machines to a referendum. Of the 24 members of the House of Delegates with German names, 13 voted in favor and 11 voted against. 85 votes were needed for a referendum. The measure passed by only one vote.

CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWS IN MEDIEVAL GERMANY - BRATWURST

The Bratwurst Museum located in Erfurt (the capital of the German state of Thuringia) has put on display a recently discovered recipe for the sausage dating to 1432. The laws at the time provided a 14 pfennig fine (a day's pay) for selling bratwurst which did not have the purest, unspoiled meat. Medieval towns in Germany had committees charged with monitoring the quality of meats and produce - an early version of a consumer protection agency.

SCHOLARLY BOOK BY A MEMBER

Rev. Richard Dimler, S. J., has just published two new books on the history and importance of symbols used during the Renaissance in Europe made by woodcuts in scholarly and religious books. Having begun the study of symbolism as a hobby, he is now one of the world's experts in the field.

BÜRGERVEREIN WEBSITE

For more local German-American happenings, check the web site of the Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland: www.md-germans.org

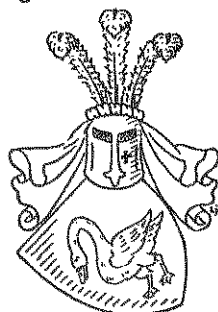
MEMBER'S ANCESTOR HELPED TO CREATE MODERN GERMANY

Today's Germany formerly consisted of 4 kingdoms and over 200 independent states before they united for the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Bismarck brought them together to form a new country. His first cabinet included Berthold von Ploetz as the Minister of Agriculture. He united the German farmers into an efficient entity for the production and distribution of farm products, thus making the new Germany a self-sufficient nation, able to feed its own population and also export food to other countries. Berthold's grandson held the same position in future years.



The great-granddaughter of Berthold von Ploetz came to America and is a member of the German Society of Maryland, Fredemaria von Ploetz Hurdle. Her son, Hans, and her daughter Frederike Hecht have served as directors of the Society. Fredemaria's father was also named Berthold. Fredemaria is one of 6 children; her brother Hans served as German's Secretary of State and as Ambassador both to Great Britain and Russia. Fredemaria came to America as a nurse to work at Johns Hopkins Hospital. A doctor on the staff introduced her to her future husband, Dr. Edward Hurdle, also a member of our Society. They have 3 sons and a daughter. Her sister, Annette, also married an American and lives in Virginia.

VON PLOETZ
COAT OF ARMS



MENCKEN: MOST QUOTED AUTHOR

Our most famous member, Henry L. Mencken, is America's most quoted literary figure. Mark Twain comes in second. Dr. Vincent Fitzpatrick, curator of the Mencken Room at the Pratt Library, accumulates 1,000 pages annually in the scrapbook he maintains. (Mencken himself, at age 23, employed a newspaper clipping service for his own scrapbooks, which are also part of the Pratt library collection.) In his lifetime Mencken wrote 40 books, produced 15,000,000 words

MUTH FAMILY PHILANTHROPY

Cecilia Muth Herman, a long-time member of our Society, is the Muth family genealogist. She recently searched the records of the Orphans Court for Baltimore County and learned that one of her great uncles was a philanthropist. George Leo Muth was born on Feb. 2, 1843, the 5th child of Sebastian and Anna Marie (Roth) Muth who came from Allenau, Germany to Baltimore aboard the ship Chilo on August 18, 1840. George died on October 10, 1908. His Last Will and Testament, on file in Annapolis, lists many thousands of dollars bequeathed to Maryland schools, churches, orphanages, hospitals, and institutions for the poor. Cecilia's father, Leo Muth, was named after his uncle, George Leo.

WREATH FOR GENERAL STRICKER?

General John Stricker, the hero of the Battle of North Point which effectively ended the War of 1812, was vice president of our society for many years after we received our corporate charter by act of the Maryland legislature in 1818. Until 2003 he was honored for many years on Defenders Day by a caravan which toured the Baltimore area. The caravan was organized by the Society of the War of 1812.

The German Society went along and always laid a wreath on the grave of Stricker in the old Westminster Church cemetery. The 1812 Society dropped Westminster and Stricker's grave from the tour. However, if it is not on the 1812 group's agenda for 2008, the German Society will form a delegation to visit Stricker's grave and lay a wreath.

(We are considering doing the same for our other famous members, Ottmar Mergenthaler, the father of modern printing and Henry L. Mencken, the "Sage of Baltimore", and Theodore R. McKeldin, Mayor of Baltimore and Governor of Maryland..)