

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

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

VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

JUNE/JULY 2008 ISSUE #64

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The success of the Society is largely dependent on the efforts of our members. I therefore ask that you volunteer to work on a committee. For starters, we need a lot of workers at our booth at the German Festival in July. Sign up to work for an hour or two on Saturday or Sunday, July 26 - 27. See article inside. Ted Potthast is making out the schedule for Festival volunteers: call Ted at 410-828-8137.

We need an historian for the Society and a few people to help write about our story in a way that will stir up interest in the Society and inspire people to become members. If you like to read history and would like to write about it, sign up to do so. The executive committee, in its May meeting, directed me to find some people to serve as historians. The internet and our website give us an unlimited venue to publishing our history (in addition to the traditional print media).

Don't be shy. Pick up the phone and call any of our officers or directors and tell them that you want to help; we'll find a place for you in an area which tweaks your interest. You can always call our office phone and leave a message: one of our team will get back to you.

James d. Schaub, PhD, President

KALENDER

June 28	Annual Picnic
July 26-27	German Festival
Sept 28	Annual Ecumenical Service
Nov. 15	Annual Awards Banquet

ANNUAL PICNIC SAT JUNE 28 - LUTHERVILLE

Last call to sign up for our annual picnic! This year for the first time it will be held at Seminary Park. The pavilion only seats 64, so ticket sales will be limited. \$6 per person. Children 12 and under free. First paid, first in. We furnish beer, sodas, charcoal and lighter fluid for the grills, German music and a playground for Kinder. Pack your own lunch or bring your own burgers or hot dogs. Seminary Park is off Seminary Ave.; turn at Burton, just a block west of the light rail tracks or a block east of the bridge over I-83. Mail your check to our treasurer, Ted Potthast at 1819 Leadburn Rd., Towson, MD 21204-1830. Questions, call Tom Werner, chairman, 410-825-7166. Make it a family affair!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR GERMAN FESTIVAL

The Society will have a booth at the German Festival at the Timonium Fairgrounds Sat. July 26 and Sun. July 27. We need you to staff our table, hand out literature and answer questions about the Society. Leave your name on our answering machine and a committee member will call you back to discuss. Sign up for a 2-hour stint for either day. You get a free ticket to the festival. You'll have fun and meet nice people!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

David B. Edwards
Robert H. Imhoff, Jr.
Dr. Christoph U. Lehmann
Walther F. Mathers
Valerie A. Mathers

AUGUSTOBERFEST HAGERSTOWN

The City of Hagerstown will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Schmankerl Stube, the Bavarian restaurant owned by German society member **Charles Sekula**. Sat. Aug. 23 and Sun Aug. 24. The celebration will offer a three course Bavarian dinner in a tent, plus entertainment in the beautiful gardens of the University Plaza in downtown Hagerstown. The Augustoberfest is a charitable foundation which pays tribute to Hagerstown's German heritage. The event also raises scholarship money to send students to Hagerstown's sister city, Wesel, Germany, in an effort to raise awareness of the customs and values which the citizens of Hagerstown and Wesel have in common with one another.



The event is worth the trip to Hagerstown and our Society heartily encourages our members to do so. For directions and more information, consult Hagerstown's home page on the internet.

MEMBER'S GRANDFATHER- FIRST LEGAL BEER AFTER PROHIBITION

The Sunday Sun ran a feature on May 4 on the first legal beer brewed in Baltimore after Prohibition, brewed, ironically, by an Irishman (who studied brewing under German tutelage). John H. Fitzgerald, grandfather of Abbie Schaub, wife of our president Dr. James Schaub, came to Maryland from County Cork, Ireland. He was a brewer of English ale, but since that was not as popular as German beer, in 1901 he went to the Philadelphia Brewers' Academy to learn to brew lager. He worked as a brew master in Schuylkill County, PA and in 1916 he came to Baltimore to work for the Globe Brewery, makers of Arrow Beer ("It hits the spot"). He worked at Arrow until he died at age 74 in 1944. In our Society archives is a copy of a "Schnitzelbank" chart which was distributed in local bars by the Arrow Beer salesmen.

Portrait of a member

CLAUDIA FRIEND, PROMOTER OF GERMAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Claudia Wehdeking was born in Germany and grew up in the Alpine region of Garmisch-Partenkirchen (as close to heaven as one may possibly attain on earth!) While a student in Frankfurt, she met and married U.S. Navy Commander Joseph Friend (whose original family name was Freund). They lived in Frankfurt for two years, where their daughter was born. Joe was then assigned in 1960 to Norfolk, VA aboard the USS Muliphen, and after two more years he was assigned as the Assistant Naval Attache to the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden. In 1965 they returned to the USA and when Joe retired from the navy in 1971 the family, now with 4 children, moved to Columbia, MD. Claudia pursued her education and obtained an A.B. degree in education, along with German and French; and earned a Master's degree in library science and another Masters in Counseling Psychology. She worked 30 years at Catonsville Community College and at Glenelg High School, retiring in 1999.

Claudia founded the *Deutscher Kreis*, a circle open to persons who speak fluent German, which consists of about 45 members and meets in the homes of the members. The group discusses travel, news, special German events in the area, read poems and short stories, sing Volkslieder, Christmas and drinking songs. Claudia has an extensive library of German literature, poetry and music which she lends to the group. Claudia participates in German Society functions and is a member of our Songbook Committee.

HOST A GERMAN STUDENT

The Towson University program still needs host families for German students from July 11 to July 19. If you can take one or more, please contact Arlene Prince, International Programs, Towson Univ., 8000 York Rd AD234 Towson MD 21252 410-704-2239 or e-mail aprince@towson.edu

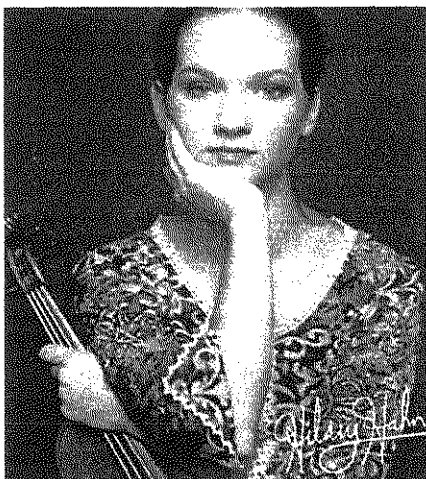
HISTORICAL SOCIETY BANQUET

Our "sister society", the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, will hold its 123 annual meeting and banquet on Tuesday, Sept. 16 in the Adlersaal of Zion church. Prof. Marcel Rotterwill is the speaker. Details will appear in next month's newsletter. Hon. Gerard W. Wittstadt is president of that society.

THE 2008 HONOREE AT OUR ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

GRAMMY AWARD WINNING VIOLINIST

Ms. Hilary Hahn



Saturday, November 15th, 2008 at 6 p.m.
Zion Church Adlersaal
Baltimore, Maryland

Hilary Hahn made her first public violinist appearance as a young child at Zion and she will return to be honored by our Society in Zion's Adlersaal. Each year we honor a Marylander of German ancestry who has made a significant contribution to our state or nation. Ms. Hahn, 27, has contributed to our culture as an internationally acclaimed classic violinist. She was named "America's Best" classical violinist by Time magazine in 2001. She appears on a regular basis with the world's greatest orchestras in Europe, Asia and North America.

Hilary Hahn began playing violin one month before her 4th birthday. In 1990 at age 10 she was admitted to Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music and made her major debut a year and a half later with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. In March, 1995, she made her German debut at age 15 playing the Beethoven concerto with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in a concert broadcast on radio and television throughout Europe. In 1996 Ms. Hahn signed an exclusive contract with Sony Classical and made her Carnegie Hall debut in New York as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Source: <http://www.hilaryhahn.com/bio.shtml>

For banquet ticket information, contact banquet chairman, Dr. Mohamed Esa. 410-967-1669 or at mesa@mcdaniel.edu

GRASMICK/GRASMÜCK

Several years ago a member of our Society, local business man Lou Grasmick, engaged the services of Gary Bruggey, a researcher of German-American family history to research his German ancestry.

After a very thorough effort produced the desired result, Lou learned of his family's roots giving him an opportunity to contact his cousin, Heinz Grasmück, in Gründau-Lieblos (approximately 40 miles from Frankfurt)

In August, 2006, Lou, his wife Nancy and brother-in-law Gil planned a vacation in Austria and Germany with a visit to meet Lou's relatives. There, in a small village they found the cousins living on a farm named "Seidelhof" that has been in the family since the 1700's. The village has some interesting history: a well-known visitor, Napoleon Bonaparte, spent three months there in 1813.

Last year one of the cousins, Andreas, married Bianca. Unfortunately Nancy and Lou were unable to attend, but for a wedding present invited the family to their home in Phoenix, Maryland. The responsibilities operating the farm at this time prevented all but Bianca from accepting the invitation for the present.

So during Bianca's visit in late June, Lou and his family will celebrate with a German-style party in her honor at the Zion Church. The event is being coordinated with the able assistance of Bärbel Otto and Sabine Evans.

THE GRASMICK FAMILY WELCOMES BIANCA GRASMÜCK.

WHAT DO DIRECTORS DO?

by Frederick H. Wehrenberg, President, 1981-1984
That was one of the questions in our January Newsletter. As "one of the old geezers who does not have much time left", I thought that some of the newer members may be interested in what some of the leaders of our Society have contributed to the organization. The feeble voices of the past are not easily forgotten and are well documented and are preserved in the minutes of the Executive Committee on file in our archives. Having served as a director or an officer since the 1970's, my duties now have changed considerably from those during "the lean years." Moving files and furniture as our office relocated from St. Paul Place to Commerce Street to Calvert Street to its present location in Mt. Vernon Place was but one of a director's responsibilities. Perhaps Goethe was thinking of a Director when he wrote "of those sun steeds of time pulling the chariots of our destiny."

108TH GERMAN FESTIVAL

TIMONIUM FAIRGROUNDS

THURSDAY JULY 26 11:30 A.M. - 10:00 P.M.

SUNDAY JULY 27 11:30 A.M. - 7:30 P.M.

FOOD, MUSIC, BEER, SODAS, STRUDEL, ENTERTAINMENT, CULTURAL BOOTHS

FUN FOR YOUNG AND OLD



VOLUNTEER TO HELP AT THE SOCIETY'S BOOTH (Call Ted Potthast 410-828-8137)

UPCOMING GERMAN EVENTS

JUNE 28 German Society Annual Picnic

JUNE 28-JULY 6 KUTZTOWN FOLK FESTIVAL

888-674-6136 www.kutztownfestival.com

JULY 26 & 27 German Festival at Timonium

Fairgrounds Adm. \$6; Seniors \$5

AUGUST 6 Club Fidelitas annual bus trip excursion

to Suicide Bridge, crab feast and cruise on the Choptank River. \$70

AUGUST 23-24 Augustoberfest, Hagerstown, MD

SEPTEMBER

7 Sunday Banquet celebrating Baltimore Kicker's 55th anniversary

20-22 Delaware Saengerbund German Festival \$7
Noon to 11 pm; Sun noon to 6 pm

28 Sunday 5 pm Ecumenical Service celebrating fall of the Wall separating East and West Germany

OCTOBER

18-19 Oktoberfest at Schifferstadt, Frederick, MD

22-23 Sour Beef event at Zion Church

NOVEMBER 29-30 Christkindlmarkt at Zion

co-sponsored by Baltimore Kickers Club

KING OF WESTPHALIA ONCE LIVED IN MD; MARRIED BALTIMOREAN

Jerome Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, paid a visit to Baltimore, met and fell in love with Betsy Patterson, the daughter of the second richest man in America (another Marylander, Charles Carroll was the richest). Jerome was extraordinarily handsome and Betsy was a raving beauty. They married and lived for a while in Baltimore in a home on Roland Avenue, just south of today's Northern Parkway. Jerome took Betsy to France, only to find that his brother Napoleon refused to recognize the marriage and had it annulled. Napoleon later arranged a marriage for Jerome to Princess Catherine of Wuerttemberg and crowned him King of Westphalia, a position he held from 1807-1813. (Westphalia was one of 4 kingdoms which in the early 1800's were part of present day Germany.) Jerome fought with Napoleon at Waterloo. When Napoleon fell, Jerome lived in Florence until his nephew, Napoleon III rose to rule France, when Jerome returned to be a marshall of France and president of its senate. Betsy Patterson lived to age 93 as a reluctant resident of Baltimore City.

GERMANS AT JAMESTOWN



President Brigitte Fessenden and husband Dr. Nicholas Fessenden hold the German society's banner above the historical marker at Jamestown, VA commemorating the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first Germans to English North America. April 19, 2008

Our Society had a strong presence at the celebration in Jamestown of the German 400th anniversary. A dozen of our members attended. We donated \$1,000 toward the historical marker and the ceremonies.

Leon T. Benner, one of our members, sent a list of interesting facts about the Germans at Jamestown:

...a German was the most highly educated member of the colonists: he was a medical doctor, a botanist and held a PhD in natural sciences;

...of nearly 1 million artifacts uncovered by archaeologists there, only 1% bore words, and 90% of the words were in German;

...copper was equal to gold to the local Indians; and the colonists kept alive the first winter by trading copper-alloy Rechenpfennige (copper pennies from N_rnberg) for food.

...the first industry in North America was glassmaking, by the German glassmakers in Jamestown;

...German woodworkers built a European-style house for Chief Powhatten and his daughter, Pocahontas.

MENCKEN: GERMAN TO THE END

H. L. Mencken, "The Sage of Baltimore" was a member of our Society. He died Sunday, Jan. 29, 1956, in his sleep around 4 a.m. in his home on Hollins Street, where his father had died in 1899. His last day on earth is described in the lead article in the summer, 2008 issue of *Menckeniana* by Frederick Betz entitled "Symmetries of Mencken's Last Hours." He shared his Saturday night dinner at home with his brother,

August and a close friend, Louis Cheslock. Earlier in that afternoon, he had listened to Wagner's opera "Die Meistersinger" on the radio. He was not feeling well and took a nap and came downstairs from his 3rd floor bedroom a few minutes after Cheslock had arrived. He approached Cheslock, shook his hand and said: "Louis this is the last you'll see me." Shortly thereafter, Mencken threw up and said he felt much better. Although Mencken skipped his usual evening cigar, he downed three martinis "rather quickly", according to August. They discussed music, television announcers and Mencken's new book, *Minority Report*. Mencken excused himself and once more told Cheslock he would not see him again. Mencken went to his bedroom and listened on the radio to Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G Minor. At 10 p.m. the radio program was over and Mencken's room became quiet. Six hours later he died.

Listening to Wagner and Mozart was most appropriate upon the last day of the life of this quintessential German American. Both were heroes to him. In 1925 Mencken had written to his biographer that Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* was "the greatest single work of art ever produced" and that "it took more skill to plan and to write it than it took to plan and write the whole canon of Shakespeare." Of Mozart, Mencken wrote in a letter of May 6, 1925 that he "was beyond critical analysis: he simply happened."

Source: L Frederick Betz, *Menckeniana*.

PRESIDENT PUTS OUT CALL FOR VOLUNTEER HISTORIAN

Our Society has a rich history which needs to be made known to our members and to our community. For example, the Society had the legal obligation of caring for German immigrants entering the port of Baltimore, for which it received a head tax from the captain of vessels bringing them to America. We also played a role as a lobbyist before the U. S. Congress to protect German oystermen after efforts to influence a corrupt Maryland legislature had failed.

The Society has had many influential members and their names and contributions need to be described and publicized by a Society historian. Such names are: General John Stricker, hero of the Battle of North Point; Dr. Charles Frederick Wiesenthal, our first president and a founder of the Society, who was considered the father of the medical profession in Baltimore; Ottmar Mergenthaler, father of the modern printing industry, inventor of the linotype; Henry L. Mencken, Maryland's most famous author; three MD governors, McKeldin, (continued on page 6)

DEUTSCHE GESELLIGKEIT PICNIC

A "Springfest" is set for Sat. July 12 , 1-6 pm at the Baltimore County Game & Fish Protective Assoc., 3400 Northwind Rd., 21234, \$30 per person; 10-14 \$10; under 10 free. Pit beef, ham, turkey, bratwurst, imported German beer, white wine, soda, coffee, the works! Catered by Old World Catering Service. For tickets call Gary Harthausen 410-592-34213 or Anton Smoot, 410-719-9211. Directions from beltway: Harford Rd. (Carney exit), north to 2nd light (North-wind Rd); right, 1 mile to Flying Goose sign on left.

BALTIMORE KICKERS CELEBRATE CLUB'S 55TH ANNIVERSARY

The Kickers will hold a banquet at Columbus Hall on September 7 to commemorate the passage of 55 years since its founding. Our members are invited to attend. The society has expressed its support for the Kickers and its gratitude for the Kicker's good works in fostering German language and culture by taking an ad on the back cover of the banquet program. The Kickers operate a free German language school at its clubhouse on South Broadway. It also co-sponsors with Zion church the Christkindlmarkt on the weekend after Thanksgiving. It sponsors two guided tours to Germany each year, one of which always occurs during the Advent season and visits famous Christmas markets in Germany. Before the phrase "soccer mom" was invented, the Kickers actively supported several soccer teams (whence it derives its name, "Kickers".) For banquet tickets, call Betty Niemann (one of our directors) who was recently elected president of the Kickers.: 410-796-8098

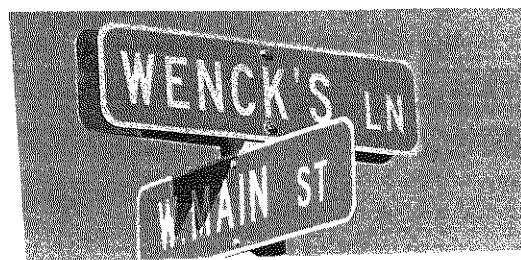
HOW ABOUT A SUMMER CRUISE & CRAB FEAST ON A LAZY RIVER?

Club Fidelitas is drumming up interest in an excursion to Suicide Bridge on the Eastern Shore of MD and a crab feast aboard a river boat down a lazy tributary of the Choptank river. The club needs a "critical mass" to fill a bus; our members are invited to come along. Past trips have produced fun, relaxation and gemuetlichkeit. Cost is \$70 per person. At this stage, Fidelitas just wants to know if enough are interested to allow them to go ahead with the plans. Date: Wednesday, September 7. If you think you would like to go, call Fidelitas President Fred Riedel at 410-823-4724 or Jim Yingling at 717-632-8413.

A WENCK FAMILY TRADITION

Edwin O. Wenck, a lifetime director of our Society, is both an attorney and an ordained minister in the Reformed Church. He is also an artist, having earned a degree in fine arts from Towson Univ. Ed was a Baltimore city prosecutor in charge of the State's Attorney's homicide division. He is presently an official with the Legal Aid Bureau. The Wenck family tradition has deep roots in Maryland.

In 1840, 600 immigrants came to the Frostburg area of Western Maryland from the German town of Iba in Hessen Kassel. Half of the 1200 citizens of that village left when the copper mines ran out and came to Maryland to be coal miners. Their religion was German Reformed, as that was the religion of the Landgraf of Hessen Kassel. One of those miners was Andrew Wenck, half brother to Ed Wenck's ancestor, also named Andrew Wenck. Ed's ancestor came a year later but went to Virginia and set up shop as a shoemaker. One of his descendants, Millard Fillmore Wenck, came to Maryland, taking a job with the B & O Railroad and settling in Brunswick. His son, Millard Jr. and grandson, Millard III were also born in Brunswick. Millard III, Ed's father, came to Baltimore. Millard, Jr. had 21 children; Millard III had only 9.



And so, the Wenck name is popular in Maryland. Wenck Lane, on the outskirts of Frostburg, bears witness to the name's popularity.

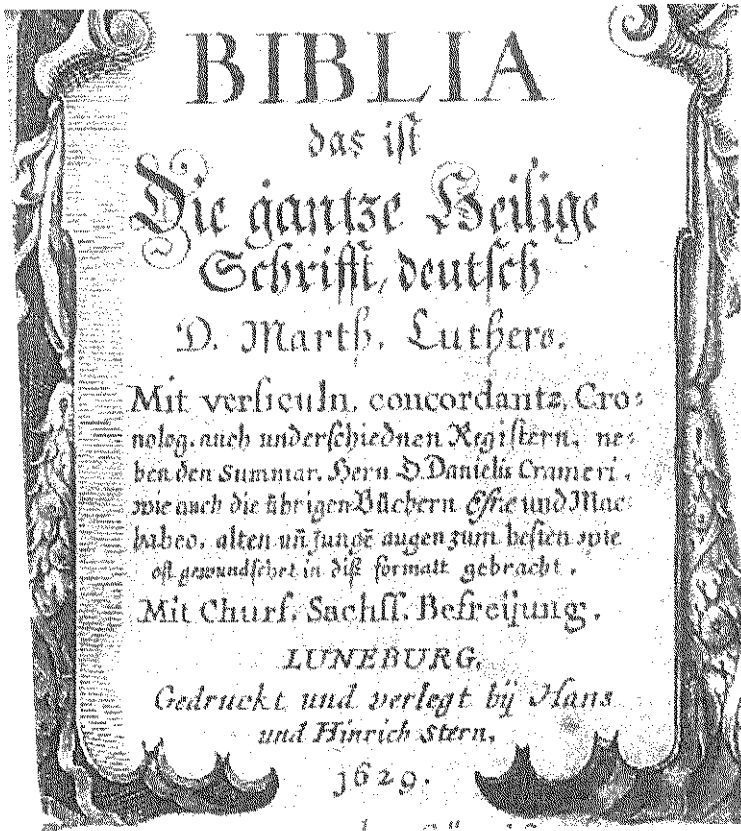
(HISTORIAN. continued from page 5)

Schaefer and Ehrlich; college presidents, Loyola's Sellinger and Hopkins Medical School's Heysll; and other important figures.

The qualifications for the job of historian are simple: (1) a keen interest in the subject; (2) the ability to express ideas and stories in clear, correct language; and (3) the ability to use a word processor and access to the internet.

If you would like the job as our historian, or if you are willing to help the historian by research or writing, please sign up. Drop a note to President James Schaub, or call our office and leave a message on our answering machine: Jim or a director will get back to you to discuss your interest.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY PONDERES FATE OF RARE BIBLE FROM 1629



In 1890 Louis P. Hennighausen, president of the Society for the History of the Germans in MD, presented the society with a gift of a rare bible. It was published in 1629 in Luneburg, Germany. Current president Judge Gerard Wm. Wittstadt is making inquiries as to the value of the rare book, looking to the prospect of a possible sale to benefit the historical Society. That Society owned another rare book, valued at \$5,000 which was purchased by Dr. Carrie Mae Zintl, (deceased) a director of our Society, who paid \$5,000 and donated it in 1895 to the Johns Hopkins University Rare Book Library.

HITLER'S HATRED UNWITTINGLY HELPED BALTIMORE SCHOOLS

Proverb: "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good."

The recent deaths of two nuns who left Germany when Hitler closed down all Catholic schools proves this proverb. Sister Benedicta Viebeck, SSND, a German Society member who died Feb. 28 and Sister Benigna Brandl, SSND who died May 15 at age 97 were part of a group of 14 Bavarian nuns who came to work in their order's schools in Maryland. Sister Benigna, born in Oberpfalz, Bavaria, spent the balance of her life in Baltimore, teaching sewing in the schools and even to

women prisoners in the jails. She was one of the nuns who volunteered for a long medical study on aging.

Other local firms also benefitted. For example, the Potthast furniture company (where most workers spoke German) brought dozens of "displaced persons" from German speaking countries to work as cabinet makers, carvers and woodworkers in their factory on Wicomico Street near Carroll Park. A German spice-maker came to Baltimore and concocted our beloved "Old Bay" seasoning. And many makers of Wurst, such as Egon Bingert, came here to make a new life after the devastation of WWII, to make us fat and happy!

"HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER": SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

In the printed program for last year's Awards Banquet, our Society acknowledged the donations of members and friends honoring their relatives. The gifts were acknowledged in program space ranging from a quarter to a full page, often including photographs, some in color. A schedule of suggested donations was published. The concept was very successful and produced substantial revenue for the Society, for use in our good works. We plan to repeat the process in the printed program for this year's Awards Banquet. We ask our members and friends to start thinking about making a gift to the Society in honor of parents or other relatives or friends. Collect a photograph and begin writing the words you wish to use to commemorate your personal honoree. Details will be published in a future newsletter.

MUTH PARK MYSTERY SOLVED

Cecilia Muth Herman, a member, asked for information about Muth Park, a destination for Germans of the 1800's. Mark Duerr found the answer in a 1965 book by William J. Kelly, entitled Brewing in Maryland. Louis Muth built a brewery in the 1800 block of Gay Street in Baltimore, just west of Belair Rd. and north of North Avenue. In the rear of the brewery he established a park where local Germans could enjoy his brew. Louis Muth was born in Prussia on April 16, 1836. He came to Maryland and in 1867 built a Weiss brewery which produced 7,200 barrels per year. The Baltimore Gazette of May 12, 1864 made mention of Muth's Park as a place where churches and fraternal orders held picnics. Louis died in 1891. His wife, Louisa Fiege, also born in Germany, died in 1921. They are buried in the Baltimore Cemetery, not far from their brewery. (Mark Duerr is a past pres. of the Kickers.)