

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

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

VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

NOVEMBER 2011 ISSUE #80

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE with Thanksgiving and Confidence

Dear Members and Friends,

This newsletter again reports, informs and entertains. I would like to thank Ted Potthast for his faithful efforts. Our thanks go to several members of the board whose work made our award banquet a success again:

To Mohamed Esa for chairing the event, putting together the video about Eva Kelleher, our honoree, and filling three tables with students from McDaniel College. To Bernard Penner and Lauren Rizzo for co-chairing the duties of master of ceremony. To Shelley Arnold for procuring the ads and creating a wonderful program booklet. To Brigitte and Nick Fessenden and Maureen Helinski for setting up the tables and the beautiful decorations. To Mary Upman for the bio of Eva Kelleher and to Pastor Roggelin for his prayer and the write up of the Zion Language School. It was a special treat to listen to Ingeborg Carsten-Miller's poetry. We were honored by the presence of representatives of our sister societies: the St. Andrews, St. George's and Hibernian societies. Dorothy Kirchner represented the Bürgerverein. We are grateful to Gerhard Meinzer, the president of the Association of German American Societies of Greater Washington for his financial gift in initiating a scholarship for the summer student program in Germany.

Eva Kelleher was honored by proclamations from the Governor of Maryland, the Mayor of Baltimore and Senator Cardin. Cecilia Chandler, a former student of Eva's gave a laudatio.

The Jazz Trio's music, Old World's culinary food and drink, all contributed to a delightful and enjoyable evening. About 120 guests were in attendance among them 18 of our board of directors. We also want to thank Zion Church for her hospitality and Mr. Barry for his helpfulness and security service.

In honoring Mrs. Eva Kelleher we honor all German language teachers. They are cultural ambassadors, for the knowledge of a language is the portal through which heritage and traditions can be understood, lived and appreciated. In this spirit it was fitting that Mrs. Maureen Helinski, a longtime college teacher of German received the Society's medal of merit.

We all can be proud of the efforts of our society. We look with confidence to a new generation who will proclaim: "Ich spreche deutsch, und du?"

May the season of Advent and Christmas give us new hope and confidence.

Sincerely,

H.J. Siegfried Otto, President

HERITAGE FUND TAKES OFF TO A STRONG START

Our Society's new program to set up a fund to preserve Maryland's German American heritage has already collected more than \$10,000 in contributions from our officers, directors and members.

\$1,000 from the fund has already gone to assist a student from Salisbury to spend a year in school in Germany to learn the language and absorb the culture. The aim of the program is to strengthen our own members and their families in their knowledge of our heritage and to make it known to the general public. Immigrants from German speaking countries have played a major role in building our state and nation, but the history is being lost. The job of preserving it demands our effort, and funds are essential to telling our story. We seek small and large donations to the Heritage Fund from all our members and friends. As the end of 2011 approaches, please consider a tax-deductible gift to the Society's Heritage Fund.

KALENDER

- Dec. 9 AATG Summit II
- Feb 18 Fasching - Buergerverein
- April 13 Annual membership meeting
- April 26 German night at Meyerhoff
- April 26 Directors: election of officers
- May t/b/a High school & college awards
- May 29 Westminster City anniversary
- June 24 The Great German Family Picnic at Kurtz's Beach

Visit the German Society's website:

www.germansociety-md.com

Articles from many past newsletters are posted on our website. Dr. Maureen Helinski maintains the site.

"Pioneers in Service", the history of our Society, can be found on our web site.

For more local German-American events, check the web site of the Deutsch-amerikanischer Buergerverein 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.

GERHARD MEINZER MAKES \$5,000 GIFT: SUMMER STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Our prominent and devoted member, Gerhard Meinzer, has funded a summer student scholarship program with a gift of \$5,000. Mr. Meinzer is a resident of Montgomery County, MD and is the president of AGAS, the Association of German American Societies of Greater Washington. He has been a generous benefactor of our Society's works for a number of years and attends most of our functions and our annual meeting. He is well known in the German American community and is a frequent guest in the activities of the Embassy of the Federal Republic. Gerhard was born in Germany, trained in construction and when he came to America supervised many projects in Washington, especially in the governmental complexes. He is a leader and a source of inspiration to us.

EVA KELLEHER, OUR HONOREE

Eva Maus Kelleher received the award at our annual banquet. She has served for years as the president of our Society's Women's Auxiliary and is ex officio a member of our Board of Directors. Eva was born in Dortmund, Germany; at age 5 she moved to Austria with her family and lived there after WWII in the Russian zone. The family moved back to Germany and lived in an American zone where she met her husband, an American officer. He became a student at Boston College and received a sales position which brought them to Baltimore. In 1966 Eva began teaching German at the Zion language school. She became principal in 1985, a post she holds today. She also teaches German in Baltimore County Community College and at the Kickers' Club. Her biography appeared in the program of our Awards Banquet and is published on the German Society's website.

DR. NICHOLAS FESSENDEN ELECTED

The Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland elected Dr. Nicholas Fessenden as its president at its annual meeting in September.

Dr. Fessended is a member of our Society and is the husband of our former president, Brigitte Voelkel Fessenden. He is a retired history teacher and has long held an interest in the history of German Americans, especially in Maryland. He succeeds Hon. Gerard Wm, Witstadt, who served as its president for 23 years, the longest term of any president since its founding in 1883. Other officers elected were: Ted Potthast, 1st Vice President; William N. White, 2nd vice president; Dr. Maureen Helinski, Secretary; and Dr. Randall Donaldson, Treasurer and Editor, The Report; Elected as directors were: Merl E. Arp, Dandridge Brooke, Dr. Mohamed Esa, Dr. Michael Kurtz, Dr. Armin Mruck, The Rev. H. J. Siegfried Otto and Bernard Penner, Esq. Most of the foregoing are also members of our Society. Prior to Judge Wittstadt's service as president, another member of our Society, Dr. Carrie Mae Zintl, served as president for ten years.

ECUMENICAL SERVICE WELL ATTENDED

Our annual ecumenical service on Oct. 2 was most successful; a large contingent of our Society's members attended along with those from other German American groups from Maryland and Washington, D.C. We came together in thanksgiving for the freedom of our brothers and sisters in Germany and behind the Iron Curtain from the chains of communism. Our program began with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November, 1989. The clergy who participated included our Society's president, Pastor H. J. Siegfried Otto, our member, Pastor Dr. Holger Roggelin and several ministers and priests from nearby churches. The preacher was Rev. Dr. G. Richard Dimler, S.J. a member of our Society's board of directors. His sermon addressed the subject of freedom as referred to in the Old and New Testaments, as well as excerpts on freedom by Goethe. His homily was liberally sprinkled with thoughts in German from classic literature. The service was accompanied with beautiful trumpet music and by Zion Church's spectacular choir.

Following the service, a reception was held in the church's Adlersaal. Our Society contributed to the expenses of the day.

Thanks to Pastor Roggelin and to the ladies of the Zion congregation for their many labors in hosting the service and reception.

THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

The Women's Auxiliary of The German Society of Maryland has existed for over 80 years. Although women have been members of the Society itself for at least 150 years, it seems that women wanted to have a special unit of their own, exclusive of men. Speculating about the reason the auxiliary came into being, it appears that the women, although they could become members of the Society, perhaps felt that the men had a monopoly on the leadership roles. Perhaps they wanted a place in the organization where they could have complete control over their own destiny. Although the Society has had female officers for many years, it was not until after the year 2000 that a female president appeared on the scene: Brigitte V. Fessenden. The auxiliary also has several unique aspects: it meets monthly (the Society meets annually)

and much of the meetings' business is conducted in German. It is a very social group.

The president of the auxiliary is, ex officio, a member of the Board of Directors of the German Society. From time to time, the auxiliary raises funds and makes contributions for the works of the Society, in addition to financing its own activities.

The officers of the Society make no attempt to exercise any control over the Auxiliary. It has the use of our Society's name, and it has brought it honor over the years. The current president of the Auxiliary is Eva Maus Kelleher. Any women wishing to join the Auxiliary may contact Mrs. Kelleher by calling our Society's phone and leaving a message.

GERMAN AMERICAN MONTH IN MD

Our member Leon Benner called to remind us to get started working with our legislators on a bill to name October as German American month in Maryland. In the last legislative session our Society, in conjunction with other Buergerverein members, put up a strong effort to win over the General Assembly, but we were upstaged by a competing bill which favored an honor for Thurgood Marshall. The chairman of the committee which heard testimony on the bill, killed it. We are hoping that the bill will be re-introduced and we will have another chance. The sponsors in the House of Delegates last year were our members, Susan Auman and Bill Frank. Many of us went to Annapolis and testified for the bill. In the process we learned some valuable lessons, the most important of which is that we need to get the word out to the committee members who decide whether to let the bill get to the floor of the houses and the senate. Start thinking now about what you, personally, can do to make it happen. German Americans have helped build Maryland; the heritage deserves recognition and preservation. We will soon send out the call for help: please be ready to answer the call.

THANKS TO MEMBERS:

...to Bruce Alderman, Walt Mathers, Doug Polanski and Ted Potthast for staffing the Society's table at East Baltimore's Oktoberfest sponsored by the United Evangelical Church. They enjoyed the sour beef dinner and the music of The Heimat Echo Band which had the festival-goers singing along with the German folk songs. It was a family affair.

TERESA POTTHAST HIRSCH: AGE 100

The daughter of German immigrants, Teresa Hirsch died at her Glen Meadows residence on Sept. 18 survived by her three sons, Richard, Robert and Thomas, 6 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. Her brother, Theodore J. Potthast, Sr. had been a director of our Society and a member for 50 years.

At least 20 members of her family are also Society members. Teresa's father, John A. Potthast came to America from Westphalia in 1894; here he met Teresa's mother, Margareta Leib who came from Bavaria. She is prominently listed in the 640 page Potthast family genealogy being completed by her cousin, John T. Potthast. Teresa was married to Henry G. G. Hirsch, who died at age 97 three years ago. Teresa was a world traveler, having visited her cousins in Germany several times. When her husband was a Fulbright exchange teacher in England, she had tea with the Queen Mum, an event she loved to describe for the rest of her life.

OTTMAR MERGENTHALER: INVENTOR

Gutenberg's printing press needed a man to set type by hand and it was done that way for 400 years. Then Ottmar, a member of our Society, revolutionized printing with his linotype machine. He became world-famous. He is an important element of our German-Maryland heritage. Before the linotype, most newspapers had no more than 4 pages. With the linotype, papers swelled to 2 and 3 inches thick. Mergenthaler's name spread world-wide. He was our Society's most widely known member, and in the history books, he still is.

THEN CAME THE COMPUTER

Today printing is electronic and the computer does the work of setting up the pages of papers, books and hard-copy advertising. Our own newsletter often goes to the printer on a disk or is transmitted to the printer over the internet. Today linotype machines exist only in museums.

PRESERVING MERGENTHALER'S LEGACY

Ottmar's memory and the greatness of his accomplishments, as part of our German American heritage, will be lost unless we act to preserve it. About 15 years ago, our Society sponsored an essay contest among the students at Baltimore's Mergenthaler Vocational School. The school is known as "Mervo" and most of its students did not recognize the name Mergenthaler.

The publicity from that contest made his name known, at least to that generation of students. Perhaps it is time to do it again. . The winning essay was published and it served to recall Mergenthaler's name to the German American community. Does Maryland need another reminder of this great contribution to the world by a Marylander, a member of our Society?

(He was also a member of Zion Church of Baltimore; a stained-glass window of him and his linotype machine can today be seen in the vestibule of the church, opposite City Hall.)

DID IT COME FROM GERMANY?

If the product or the food in the box or can does not give the country of manufacture, check the bar code. The first letters of the barcode tell where it came from.

00-09 = USA & Canada 30-37 - France
40-44 Germany 371 - Taiwan
49 = Japan 50 - UK
690, 691 and 692 = CHINA

Since many Americans today are trying to avoid Chinese goods, China is not putting the country of origin on the products. The barcode tells the story, but not many know it. Some products only give the name and place of the American distributor. (Courtesy of our member, Lila Jenkins)

NOVEMBER: ACTIVE MONTH

For the German American community, October and November are the busiest times of the year.

Our annual banquet (Nov. 5) came on the heels of a season of Oktoberfests, spotlighting things German.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the Zion Hornfest honoring St. Hubertus On Nov. 6 will have passed, as well as our Society's commemorative laying of a wreath on the grave of Sgt. Henry Gunther on Nov. 11.

The annual Christkindlmarkt opened the Christmas season on the weekend after Thanksgiving on the grounds and in the buildings of Zion Church. Sponsored by the church and the Kickers Club, Christmas gifts, cookies and delicacies imported from Germany were on sale. Then follow the Christmas parties of the German clubs: the Kickers' children's Christmas party; the Christmas events of the Edelweiss Club, Club Fidelitas, Germania Lodge and others.

WHAT WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

The answers to these two questions need to be widely disseminated among the people of Maryland with a German American background if our Society is to survive. It has been around since 1783 and has never been more vibrant and active, but that is no guarantee of survival. We need to continue to bring in members, year after year. This won't happen until the public knows what we are and what we do. Our leadership (our officers and directors) are constantly thinking of ways to make this happen. The first step is to make sure that our current members can answer these questions, so they will themselves be motivated. Our two major goals are preserving our heritage and promoting the study of the German language and culture. Language study, by its nature, seems limited to younger people. Heritage and culture is not limited to any age: it can be spread from pre-kindergartners to nonagenarians. All of us need to work to spread the message. Ask what you have done recently to help another to appreciate our heritage.

MAGIC OF THE INTERNET

Since we announced that we are setting up a German American internet radio station, we have already received inquiries and offers from afar. A band in Germany contacted us to offer to post their music on our station. An internet German American radio station in Wisconsin has offered to provide programs from their own inventory of 5 years of on-air programming. We have a presence on the internet, although we have not yet installed any programming. To see the face page, google it at Germanamericanradio.com.

GEORGE SELTZER

Exceptional people live among us but we often know nothing about them until they die and we read their obituaries. Thus it is with George Seltzer. He died at age 99 on Oct. 17 at Edenwald where he had lived for 26 years. George was born and raised in Switzerland, moved to France where he apprenticed as a jeweler; joined the French Foreign Legion but was arrested by the Nazis and put into a concentration camp. He was Jewish, was proud of it and did not hide it. He was fluent in German, French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian and Yiddish. He was brought before a firing squad, but a German officer pulled him out of line, saying he was his interpreter. He went to Paris and fought in the French underground. Was caught and again went before a firing squad and was saved again by another German officer. He was sent to another concentration

camp in Bavaria; on April 25, 1945 he woke up and the guards were gone: they had deserted. The Americans arrived. In 1948 an uncle brought him to Baltimore where his knowledge of Yiddish got him a job as a jeweler for the Caplan company, a job he held until he retired in 1988. He often spoke to local schools and groups of his wartime experiences but bore no ill feelings toward the German people. He was quoted as saying: "How can you hate a whole nation or a whole group of people? A few fanatics start things that become wars or worse. There were good Germans." A memorial service was held at Edenwald. Without knowing it, Mr. Seltzer became a part of our Maryland German American heritage.

A FASCHING IN BALTIMORE

Germany has five seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter and Fasching. It begins in November and ends Ash Wednesday. The major day is Shrove Tuesday, also called Fat Tuesday. It is Germany's version of Mardi Gras. Wearing costumes is its hallmark. Locally it did not become a large success until the Buergerverein took charge and brought all the groups together. It has been very popular in the past few years. The 2012 Fasching is planned for Feb. 18, the Saturday before Ash Wednesday in the Adlersaal. Fliers with details will be forthcoming. For now, mark your calendars, plan your costumes and get your group together (or come alone). All are guaranteed to have fun. Prizes for costumes.

BSO GOES GERMAN

On April 26 the Buergerverein will have a block of seats at an event featuring all-German composers led by a conductor from Germany. Seats will be in the price range of under \$30. The block will sell fast; if you want tickets, call now. Tom Werner: 410-825-7166.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Nancy Bushover

Amos Bushover

Nancy Dirla

Werner Dirla

James M. Fitch

April P. Fitch

The Rev. Wolfgang D. Herz-Lane

The Rev. Margaret E. Herz-Lane

Raymond King

Charles William Markley

Marjorie Markley

Lynn P. Eskite-Tant

John Bruce Tant



TOP LEFT: Eva Kelleher with Ingeborg Carsten-Miller and Board members of the German Society

TOP RIGHT: Eva Kelleher surrounded by board members and teachers of German

MIDDLE LEFT: Eva Kelleher with Dr. Mohamed Esa and Dr. Armin and Mrs Marlene Mruck

MIDDLE RIGHT: Dr. Mary and Mr. Phil Upman

BOTTOM: Eva Kelleher with President H.J. Siegfried Otto and Dr. Mohamed Esa with his students from McDaniel College



INGEBORG CARSTEN-MILLER READS HER POETRY AT BANQUET

Our long-time member, Ingeborg Carsten- Miller, a poet of renown who writes poetry both in English and in German, was the featured performer at the Society's annual awards banquet. She read a half dozen of her works in both languages and held the audience spell-bound. Not the usual type of entertainment at an ethnic function. The honoree, Eva Maus Kelleher, was delighted. We re-print here one of her most famous poems, first written to celebrate American's bi-centennial, which was one of the selections read at our banquet:

WE - THE IMMIGRANTS

With dreams we come, with highest expectations.
For centuries we have come
to this New World we call:
"The Land of Gold, "
this Land of Endless Opportunities

We are no different now
from those who did arrive
hundreds of years ago - those first
to look for better lives,
fleeing from hunger, wars, and persecution.

This world is full of never ending sorrow.
There is no end to suffering,
bondage, and suppression, but
here we come in hope and desperation
the immigrants from everywhere.

We immigrants - we keep on coming
from all corners of the world,
from Europe, Asia, Africa, all continents,
searching for freedom,
looking for our own land.

"Bring me the unfortunate, the willing,"
America says,
America, the rich, the open hearted.

And we have come bringing our skills,
tilling the savage soil to grow,
wheat, rye, corn, beets, cabbage, and potatoes,
we helped form this land
in science, business, and the arts.

So, sing your song,
all you German-American immigrants
here in America,
sing of you ambitions, your dreams, and desires.
sing of freedom, equality, and liberty
forever.

Another of her poems, timely for this season is:

THANKSGIVING

There is so much
to be thankful for
that we forget
about it -

We should be thankful
for each day we are alive,
and able to open our eyes
to the world,

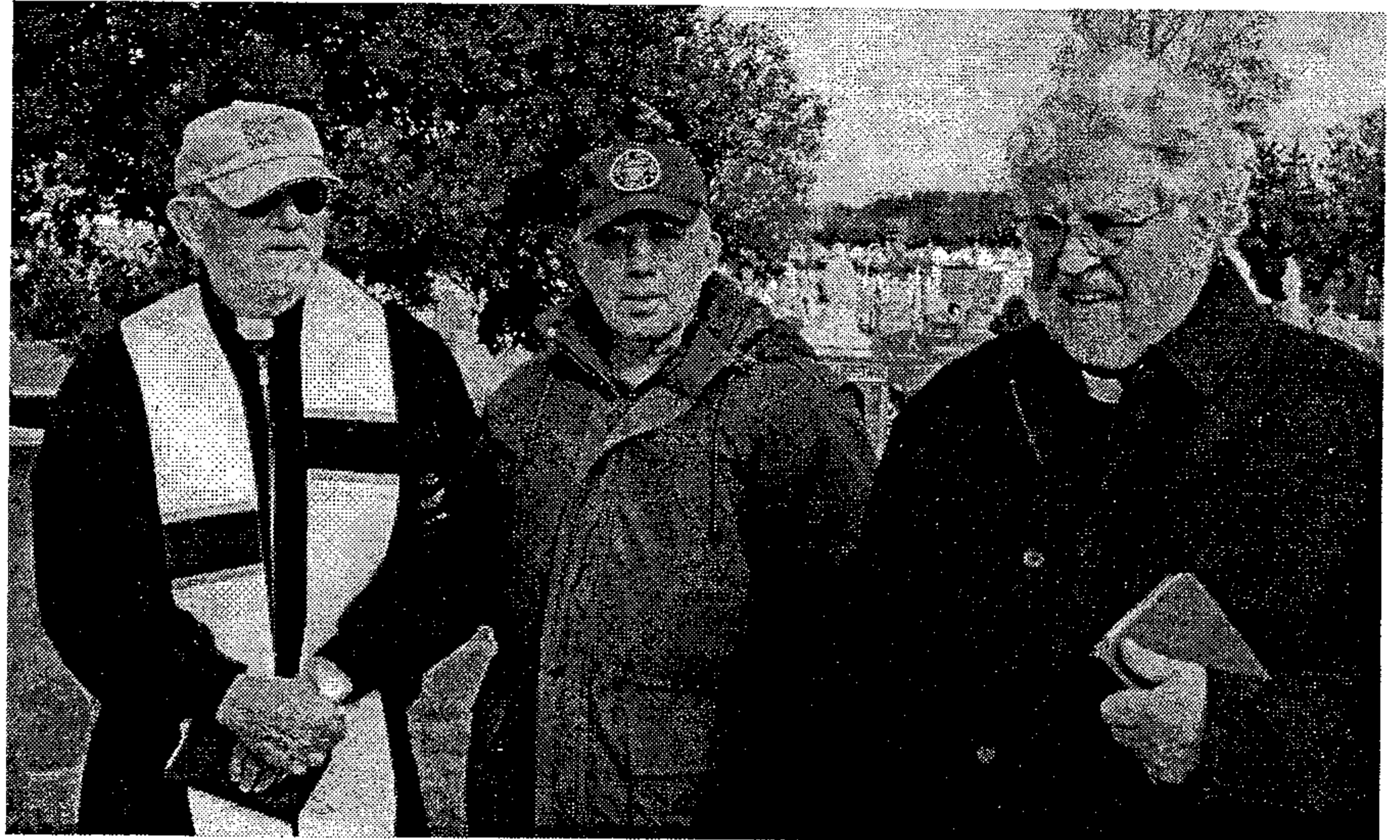
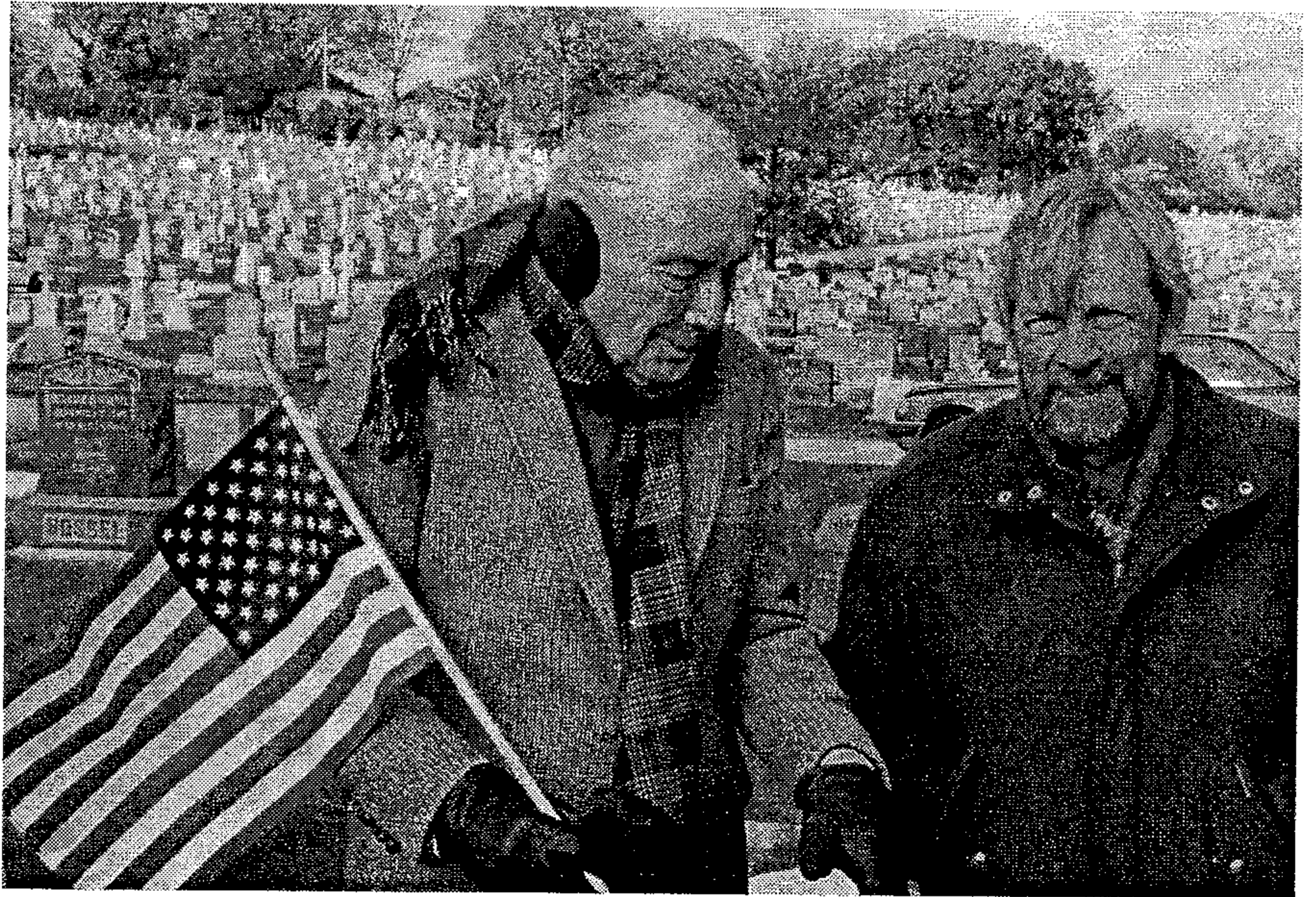
Can use our ears
to the sounds around us,
distinguish between
good and evil,

Know about
kindness and beauty,
appreciate all that
is done for us

There is a day
set aside in all our years
sit down together,
reflect and enjoy
Thanksgiving.

GUNTHER CEREMONIES NOV. 11 AT HOLY REDEEMER CEMETERY

Sgt. Henry Gunther, the last American killed in World War I died while attaching a German machine gun nest at 1 minute before 11 a.m., the time set for the end of the war. His was the final death on either side of the war. He was a German American Marylander and is part of our heritage. Our Society honored his memory in a wreath-laying ceremony on Friday, November 11. Now known as Veterans Day. Nov. 11 was formerly celebrated throughout the English speaking world as Armistice Day. The event was brief. Our president, The Rev. Siegfried Otto, said prayers over the grave. Our director, The Rev. G. Richard Dimler, S.J., read a psalm and some prayers for the dead hero. Valerie Mathers lay a wreath alongside the monument which we dedicated last year and our director, Dr. David Denisch affixed an American flag to the wreath. At 10:59 Mr. Walters called for a moment of silent prayer and those assembled bowed their heads. Our members Phil Hildebrandt, John Geppi and Mrs. Seeger participated in the ceremony. Our director, Dandridge Brooke, a veteran of WWI, wearing his veterans hat spoke to the crowd about some of the details of Sgt. Gunther's death, citing the fact that the German soldiers who shot him had placed his body on a stretcher and carried it over to the American lines, apologizing for his unavoidable death. President Otto recalled how his own father, a German soldier in WWII, as a French prisoner of war, had volunteered to clear a minefield and was killed when a mine went off in the process. Ted Potthast was present to take photos appearing here. Our Society thanks Valerie Mathers for the making and presenting the lovely wreath.



Summit II

GERMAN MEANS BUSINESS:

The Future of German in Our Region: Communication with the Business Community

December 9 2011, 2pm - 7pm

at the Goethe Institute Washington and the German American Heritage Museum (GAHM)

The program of the event is as follows:

- 2:00-3:15 Welcome
Panel Presentations
3:15-3:30 Coffee break
3:30-4:15 Discussion Groups
1. Partnerships: College Level
2. Partnerships: School Level
3. Promoting German and Germany
4:15-5:00 Group Presentations
Future Plans and Ideas
5:00-7:00 Reception at the GAHM

Presenters are:

GERMAN EMBASSY:

Dr. Bertam von Moltke and Andrea Christ

GOETHE-INSTITUTE:

Klaus Broderson

AATG:

Dr. Mohamed Esa and Dr. Claudia Bornholdt

German Business Representatives are:

ThyssenKrupp USA:

Gwendolyn L. Bluemich

Volkswagen Group of America:

Dr. Carsten Krebs

Lufthansa German Airlines:

Heidrun Miller

Stihl Inc:

Ken Waldron

German Industry and Trade:

Dr. Thomas Zielke

If you interested in attending the event please go to the MD-AATG website:

<http://www.marylandnovadc.aatg.org/>

to register. You should give your affiliation and your choice of the three discussion groups in the comments section.

CONDOR COMES TO MARYLAND

Condor, Germany's third largest airline, will commence service between Frankfurt and BWI on July 1 with two flights per week during the summer travel season. The Baltimore-Washington area is an important region for tourists from Germany. It also offers a direct flight to continental Europe from the mid-Atlantic area. A spokesman for Condor expressed a hope that BWI will repeat the airline's successful strategy to Fort Lauderdale: 2 flights the first season; three the second; then year-round service. Condor, which formerly served BWI, dropped it because of inadequate use. BWI's increased prominence may give Maryland a permanent place in continental European travel.

WE'RE NOT POLITICAL: WE'RE 501(C)(3)

Because the German Society is a tax exempt entity, we can't be political. We can't lobby. We can't support political candidates under pain of losing our tax exempt status. It wasn't always thus. When the Maryland legislature refused our requests to protect the Germans who were shanghaied to work the oyster boats of the Chesapeake 150 years ago, our officers went to Washington and successfully lobbied Congress to pass protective laws. Of course, there were no income taxes then. It was the Johnson Amendment of 1954 that prohibited political action by some non-profits. Then Senator Lyndon B. Johnson was being opposed in his re-election bid by some pastors who spoke against him from their pulpits. To get revenge, he amended section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code to punish pastors who were his political opponents. Prior to 1954, pastors, like everyone else, had a constitutional right of free speech. They had to give up that right so their churches would not be taxed. There are 29 other categories of organizations which are tax exempt and are unrestricted by the Johnson Amendment; for example, labor unions not only support politicians, but give hundreds of millions to politics. Thomas Jefferson said that the power to tax is the power to destroy. There is a movement to challenge the constitutionality of the 501(c)(3) restriction.

LUTHER STATUE REDEDICATED

On a cold, rainy Oct. 30th at Lake Montebello in Baltimore, a band of fervent Lutheran clergy and congregants assembled to re-dedicate the giant statue of Martin Luther, repeating the ceremony from 75 years earlier. The prayers and hymns were the same. Baltimore is a fit location for the monumental bronze image of Luther: it is a city built by hordes of German immigrants from northern Germany, Luther's home territory. It is currently the home of national and international Lutheran bodies: Lutheran World Relief; Lutheran Services of America and Lutheran Refuge and Immigration Services. The Maryland-Delaware Synod is one of the largest Evangelical Lutheran synods in America, led by Bishop Wolfgang Herz-Lane (who recently became a member of our Society). The 12-foot tall statue was commissioned by Arthur Wallenhorst, a prominent Baltimore jeweler who donated \$50,000 for the project. It was struck by the famous sculptor Hans Schuler, whose numerous works adorn the city. The event was well attended despite the rain and snow which is typical of Martin Luther's northern Germany. Participating in the event were our president, The Rev. Siegfried Otto and our member, The Rev. Holger Roggelin, our director Shirley Santora and German Society members.

150 PICNIC TABLES FLOATED AWAY

A German singing club in Lancaster, PA, the Liederkrantz, invites us to its annual summer picnic. A stream runs through their picnic grounds and a feature of the picnic is its annual duck race. You pick a plastic duck and plop it into the water at the starting line. Your duck has a number, the race is a fundraiser. You pay for the numbers on the duck. The gate is lifted and the current carries the ducks downstream. First to hit the finish line gets a prize. This year's duck race had to be canceled and the picnic postponed. Hurricane Irene and the next tropical storm dropped so much rain in Lancaster that the swollen stream swept away 150 picnic tables.

A PIECE OF GERMANY IN MARYLAND

Near Grantsville in Garret County, Maryland's westernmost province, is the site of the New Germany State Park and the town of New Germany. It was named by a group of German immigrants who wandered there from a journey on the national highway (now U.S. 40) and formed a settlement; it reminded them so much of their homeland that they gave it the

name "New Germany." (Coincidentally, Grantsville is where the magazine "German Life" was founded just a few years ago.) The website of the MD State Parks Service describes the sheer beauty and grandeur of New Germany State Park as "Maryland's Best Kept Secret." It is nestled among our highest mountains and the bright colors of autumn make it a romantic fall getaway. It has year-round amenities: check them out on the web.

CIVIL WAR ERA GERMANS IN SOUTH

From the Seelos Center News we read of the times surrounding the death of Rev. Francis Seelos, a Bavarian priest who spent nearly 20 years in Maryland and served as pastor of St. Alphonsus Church in Baltimore and Saints Peter and Paul in Cumberland, "In 1867 New Orleans experienced its first outbreak of yellow fever after the Civil War. The plague claimed 3320 deaths, including Father Seelos. Other towns in Louisiana were also hard-hit by the disease.

In 1845 thousands of Germans were stranded in Indiaola, Texas because their agent had gone broke. Some attempted to walk to their New Braunsfels and Frederick destinations; many others who could not finish their journey settled near Indiaola. During the Civil War Indiaola was occupied by the Union Army. After the war it was a port beginning to rival New Orleans, until fire did damage and the same year brought the yellow fever. Today New Braunsfels and Fredericksburg, Texas are well known for their German American heritage.

GERMAN BREWERS ENVY AMERICANS

We learn from the lecture at the annual meeting of The Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland that for the first time in history, American breweries outnumber German breweries and that the quality of some American beers are the world's finest. German brewers are beginning to look with envy at the quality of some American beers, particularly from some of our microbreweries. We also learn from reports in local newspapers that National Premium beer, once Baltimore's most respected brew, will soon return to Maryland and be brewed here in accordance with its original recipe.

BEER: BALTIMORE TO GERMANY

It was a delightful surprise to learn (at the historical society's lecture) that Baltimore beer was so good in the late 1800s that Germany was importing beer from Baltimore. The North German Lloyd line, which left Baltimore for Bremen every two weeks, carried local brew in its cargo holds back to Germany.

Nothing says fall better than churches' sour beef dinners

The nights come on earlier. The furnace clicks on. On a humid afternoon, the deep, resonant bell at City Hall sounds the time. It's sour beef's high hour in Baltimore.

In the next week, the aged beef from Hickory Chance Farm in Bel Air will be delivered to Zion Lutheran Church in City Hall Plaza, Lexington and Holliday streets in downtown Baltimore. An army of Zion kitchen volunteers will then begin their labors, days at a time. There's the trimming of the beef, the marinating, the tubs of flour and riced potatoes. It's the pickling spices and the vinegar, the red cabbage and the green beans. Then the lines form at the door, Oct. 26-27, for the annual sour beef dinner.

In Canton, at Dillon Street and East Avenue, there's a similar event, from noon to 5 p.m. Oct. 23. This is a Sunday afternoon Oktoberfest staged by members of the United Evangelical Church. It's another merry experience.

I've been to both congregational dinners and savor the experience of seeing so many faces of people whose identities remain a mystery to me. These are Baltimore faces, happy eaters accompanied by exhausted volunteer cooks and wait staff. William Donald Schaefer ate his sour beef. Sen. Barbara Mikulski knows a good thing, too.

Let's put it this way: My idea of answered prayers is a font of marinated beef, properly spiced and swimming in that heaven-sent sweet-sour gravy. Add to it the essential dumplings. The light fare of the summer is past, and it's time to tuck into something robust, a preview of the coming Thanksgiving.

This is not a dish of 30-minute preparation time. The beef spends three days souring in a vinegar-based marinade.



Jacques Kelly

And if it doesn't come off just right, picky Baltimore diners will say something like, "Well, it's not as good as last year's" or "Yours doesn't live up to my mother's." They have no shame. And by the way, there is no sour beef as good as Grandmother's, unless she is still living and at work in the kitchen. In the meantime, we should be thankful for the work of these two churches.

Every pot of beef, spices and vinegars bears the stamp of an individual cook. One of my grandmothers made hers with a thick gravy; the other made hers with thin. One made potato dumplings; another used more flour.

My mother was not a born cook, but she tried with grand enthusiasm. One year she skipped the beef altogether and used venison. We called it sour deer. It was delicious.

On another occasion, my mother's pot of dumplings completely disintegrated in the hot water. It looked like boiling white glue. But she was unperturbed, salvaged the meltdown and the next day produced tasty vichyssoise.

I'll also say this: Some years I go easy on the beef or the dumplings and just have the gravy over the green beans and ask for a double on the red cabbage. I've been known to frequent Zion's in-house bar, hosted by Hampden's Wine Source.

Zion Church's event will take place over two days: Wednesday, Oct. 26, and Thursday, Oct. 27. The dining room will be open from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday and from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday. The Beer Hall in Zion's marvelous hall, the Adlersaal, will be open both days from 4:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., with dinner served until 8 p.m. on both evenings. Dinner is \$14. I hope the supplies hold out.

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THE BALTIMORE SUN OCTOBER 15, 2011

Jacque Kelly's article on Baltimore sour beef is reprinted above with permission. Our Society had a presence at both of the events Mr. Kelly has described: we staffed a booth at the east Baltimore Oktoberfest and tasted the German tradition of its Sauerbraten, and many of our members attended club night at Zion's dinner. Attending church dinners and eating their sauerbraten is a sacred duty undertaken by our membership for the preservation of Maryland's Germanic heritage, a duty whose performance brings us great delight. Our Society has considered a sour beef contest among our members, but as yet the event has not come to fruition. Perhaps the chefs among us will take up the challenge before the end of another winter.

BETHLEHEM, PA: CHRISTMAS CITY

Called one of the world's top Christkindlmarkts, the entire city of Bethlehem, PA is turned into a Christmas wonderland for 5 weekends: Nov. 17-20; 25-27; Dec. 1-4, 8-11 and 15-18. Features aisles of handmade works by top artisans, live Christmas music, delicious food. \$8 at gate, \$15 for season pass. Children 12 and under free. Free parking. At the glass-blowing exhibit, beautiful ornaments and decorations are made on site; visitors may try their hand at making their own glass ornaments. Thurs.-Sat. 11 am to 8 pm; Sunday 11 am to 6 pm. Approx. 3 hours from the Baltimore area. Check the Bethlehem website for overnight accommodations.