

# VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Liebe Mitglieder  
Dear Members,

Vacations are over, schools are back in session, and the nights are getting cooler. Yes, summer once again is coming to an end. Over the next several months, The German Society has some

exciting events coming up and I encourage all of you to come out in support. Please check the calendar and take some time to see what is happening.

Our annual Awards Banquet will be held this year on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015. We have a great new venue, outstanding food, entertainment and most importantly, we will be honoring a long time member and contributor to the German Society of Maryland. This year's honoree will be Christel van der Berg and more details of this great event will be sent out in the near future. I encourage all of you to attend and honor her for her service.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone that not only attended 115th Annual German Festival in Timonium but also gave their time at the society's cultural booth. This event allows people from all walks of life to experience a bit of what it is like to be German. I personally look forward to this event because it gives me an opportunity to see many of the people I usually don't get to see during the rest of the year.

While outreach events are meant to encourage membership, it is even more important to provide these future members with a greater understanding of not only who we are as an organization but also about how we support the language, culture and heritage of the German speaking community in the State of Maryland. Once we create this "Awareness", we need to create activities that will appeal to the desires and interests of potential new members. Our current membership list has gone thru some major reviews and thanks to Baerbel Otto, we have a much better understanding on where we are.

The search for our new social media guru has concluded and I would like to officially announce that Ms. Nora Malatinszky has been chosen to promote this new venture. A junior at the German School, Washington, DC, Nora has been studying German since she was little and recently has spent the summer studying German abroad in Austria. Being Hungarian, she enjoys sharing and broadening her European culture and heritage thru everything that is German and Hungarian. More details

will follow once we finalized all the details of this new venture. Special thanks to all of you who took the time to apply for this newly created internship. The German Society of Maryland is always looking for new members who are energetic and willing to put their talents to work. I encourage all of you to spread the word of this noble and honorable organization to anyone who would like to learn more about us. As always, please feel free to email me anytime you have a need.

Best wishes and speedy recovery to any of our sick or shut-in members. I look forward to seeing and chatting with many of you in the near future.

Mit freundlichen Gruessen,

Anton G. Smoot  
President  
[agsmoot@verizon.net](mailto:agsmoot@verizon.net)

## German-American Heritage Museum in Washington DC Tour

Have you ever visited this new and exciting venue? Well, this is your chance to do so and learn more about your German Heritage.

Date: Thursday, Oktober 21<sup>st</sup>

RSVP by: Friday Oktober 3<sup>rd</sup>

The German Society will provide a bus at no charge to all that are interested. I am still in the process of working out details so it is important that I know how many are seriously interested in attending. Plans are to arrive at the museum around 10:30 am and then have lunch somewhere after the tour. Each person will be responsible for covering the cost of their lunch.

Please email me at [agsmoot@verizon.net](mailto:agsmoot@verizon.net)

## IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS

Ecumenical Service September 27

German American Day Bus Trip to Washington Friendship Garden October 6

Oktoberfest at Timonium October 17 & 18

Museum Trip October 21

Henry Gunther Memorial November 11

Annual Banquet November 14

Christkindlmarkt at Zion November 28 and 29

Inner Harbor Christmas Market November 26-December 24

## **KIRCHGANG-ECUMENICAL**

Our society was founded in 1783. Zion Church in 1755. Most of our founders belonged to Zion. Over the years, the majority of our society's members belonged to some church, at first Lutheran and reformed and later Catholics and major Protestant denominations. Membership in the German Society was not large, 100 more or less. Membership was by invitation only. In addition to an annual banquet, the members attended church together once a year at a "Kirchgang" (going to church.) Since Zion was a German church, the service is held in German, the Kirchgang was held at Zion. In 1989, when the Berlin wall came down, our society approached Zion pastor, the Rev. Siegfried Otto, and arranged for a service of Thanksgiving that all of Germany, east and west, could now practice religion without the persecution by the Communists. At this point the event changed its name from Churchgoing to "Ecumenical Service." Our society's president was Donald Tillman, who set out to increase the number of members of our society. Today our membership exceeds 600.

This year marks the 26th year of the Ecumenical Service. It has become a tradition and all of our members are urged to attend. Three pm on Sunday, September 27. Our society contributes the pay for the music during the service and for food and drink at a social gathering in Zion's Adlersaal. The music consists of trumpets and the magnificent sounds from the newly restored church organ, one of the finest in America.

The service is ecumenical and will be attended by clergy from numerous local congregations.

Put the time, date on your calendar, and be sure to come, bring your family and friends.

## **HISTORY BANQUET AND LECTURE**

The Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland will hold its annual banquet on Tuesday, September 29 in Zion's Adlersaal. After dinner, there will be a lecture entitled "Mencken, the German" by Marion Rodgers, a noted author, speaker, and Mencken scholar. Henry L. Mencken, the most famous writer of his time, was a member of our society. He brought fame to Baltimore and was known as "the Bard of Baltimore." His Germanness was legend. When the U-boat "Deutschland" came to Baltimore in 1916, Mencken was offered \$50,000 (1916 dollars) to make the return trip to Germany aboard the submarine. He declined, thinking it may not survive the British blockade of the Chesapeake Bay. Mencken published more than forty books and wrote millions of words in newspaper columns spanning a career of more than 50 years. In his 1919 book, "In Defense of Women," he claimed that women were smarter than men; although men's brains were larger, women's brains were greater based upon relative body size.

We urge all of our members to attend the banquet and lecture. Tickets are \$40 for the dinner, beer, and wine, and can

be obtained from Dr. Randall Donaldson at the Modern Language Department, Loyola University, 4501 North Charles Street, 21210.

## **TRIP TO FRIENDSHIP GARDEN**

This event will be held this year on Oktober 6, 2015 at 10 am in Washington D.C. We are looking to put together a bus trip for all that are interested in attending. The German Society of Maryland will cover the cost of the bus for all that are interested.

"The German-American Friendship Garden Commemorates over 300 years of German immigration and contributions to Amerika and symbolizes the friendship between the German and American people"

Please RSVP by Friday, 9/19/15 if you are interested in going. Please notify President Smoot by email if you are interested in going on the trip.

## **deKALB EVENT AT STATE HOUSE**

Baron Johann deKalb was the commander of the Maryland line under George Washington in the Revolutionary War. deKalb was born in Bavaria. He became a general in the French army and became a good friend of Marquis de Lafayette. He was killed leading his troops against the British in the Battle of Camden, South Carolina.

Congress authorized a statue of deKalb to be placed on the grounds of the Maryland Statehouse. When our society discovered that there were no events commemorating the memory of General deKalb, we organized an event to honor him as a German-born officer who helped gain America's freedom. This will be the fifth year of this event. It will be held on the Southwest lawn of the Maryland Statehouse at the deKalb statue. The event will be held in October, as part of the celebration of German American month in Maryland, so declared by the General Assembly. Walter Mathers has been appointed chairman of the event which will be in mid-October.

## **OKTOBERFEST AT TIMONIUM**

The Buergerverein von Maryland will hold an Oktoberfest at the Timonium Fairgrounds on Saturday and Sunday, October 17&18.. It is possible our Society will have a beer stand. If we do, we will need volunteers to work the beer stand. Keep these dates open and be prepared to volunteer. Tell your relatives and friends about it. This is a new venture and we hope it will be successful. Our Society will benefit from any profits from the event. It will be a happy event and not just a beer-bash like many events billed as Oktoberfest. Good German music and cultural activities.

Visit the German Society's website:

[www.germansociety-md.com](http://www.germansociety-md.com)

For more local German-American events, check the web site of the **Deutschamerikanischer Buergerverein von Maryland**: [www.md-germans.org](http://www.md-germans.org) - and its Facebook: **Maryland Germans**

Read about prominent German Marylanders at the website conducted by our vice president and director, **Shelley Arnold**; [germanmarylanders.org](http://germanmarylanders.org) and Facebook: **German Marylanders**

Listen to German music and announcements on internet radio at [germanamericanradio.com](http://germanamericanradio.com)

Visit and participate in the interactive website "**Der Wecker**", founded by our member, **Walt Mathers**. Google search **German American Forum**

## THE FLOWER MART

German Society member Carol Karcher Purcel is the President of the Baltimore Flower Mart, which is held annually the first week of May in Mt. Vernon Place. Due to the unrest in Baltimore resulting from the April riot, she had to postpone the Flower Mart. The new date is September 11 and 12. Instead of selling spring flowers, the theme will be autumn, bulbs to plant to bloom next April. Carol invites us all.

## BREAD, WINE & A U-BOAT AN UPLIFTING WWII STORY

Vincent Pipitone died Aug. 14 at age 90. He had many relatives and friends in our Society. A few days after Pearl Harbor, when he was only 16, he lied about his age and joined the navy. He was assigned to man the 5" cannon aboard merchant ships. Two were sunk under him. He was lying in his bunk wearing nothing but skivvies when a torpedo struck. He ran to the side of the ship as it was sinking. A sailor next to him grabbed on to his skivvies as the ship was going down and the skivvies ripped off. Vince jumped overboard, and swam to a lifeboat. A while later the sub which had torpedoed his ship surfaced and a rubber raft with two Germans came over. The crew in the lifeboat expected to be shot. Instead, the submarine captain who spoke fluent English, gave them 10 bottles of wine and 10 loaves of bread and promised to radio the Americans and give their position as soon as the sub left the area. For the rest of his life, "Big Vince" had kindly feelings toward the Germans.

**MANY THANKS** to Dr. Vincent Fitzpatrick, curator of the Mencken Room at the Pratt Library, for his aid in providing research on H. L. Mencken and the visit of the U-Deutschland for our 2016 centennial commemoration.

## STRICKER'S SWISS ANCESTRY

"General John Stricker, descended from Swiss ancestors, was the son of Colonel George Stricker of the Revolutionary Army and was born in Frederick, Maryland on the 15th day of February 1759." (From a manuscript written by John Stricker, Jr. on November 23, 1837, about his father.) Gen. Stricker led the Maryland militia in the Battle of North Point and later served as vice president of The German Society of Maryland.

## THE MARYLAND GERMANS ?

When Dieter Kuntz wrote the definitive history of the Maryland Germans in 1939, he failed to mention that historic visit of the commercial submarine U-Deutschland, of July, 1916. Its captain, Paul Koenig, was feted at a banquet attended by the mayor of Baltimore and the governor of Maryland, and 10,000 German Americans greeted him at an event Kanstetter Park, a German gathering place in Baltimore.

## MENCKEN AS A BOY

Henry was born on Defenders' day 1880. It's hard to think of one of our Society's most famous members as a boy, but we read in an article in the Baltimore Sun of July 31 that he and his brother Charlie played in the Jones Falls and on the tracks of the Northern Central Railroad. From 1892 to 1898 their father owned a house on a hill overlooking the intersection of Falls Road and Belvedere Ave where the family spent their summers, away from the heat of their city home on Hollins Street near the market. In the 1890's it was then "in the country".

## 501(C)(3) FOR GERMAN RADIO

The corporation which sponsors the internet radio station "[germanamericanradio.com](http://germanamericanradio.com)" has been granted tax exempt status under sections 501(c)(3) by the Internal Revenue Service. The idea for the station originated at a Board of Directors meeting of our Society in a discussion about the loss of two weekly local German radio programs, The Edelweiss Hour and the German Radio Klub. The entity which sponsors the internet radio station is The German American Culture and Heritage Corp.

# The Great German Family Picnic Kurz's Beach - June 28, 2015



## CITY TO STRICKER— YOU'RE NOT WELCOME HERE!

Baltimore City has denied the German Society's request to place the Nation's first monument to Brigadier General John Stricker, the "Hero of the Battle of North Point," on Federal Hill. Thus, Stricker's monument will not join those honoring Colonel George Armistead, commander of Fort McHenry, and Major General Samuel Smith, commander of Maryland forces in September 1814 on the hilltop overlooking the harbor.

The city's decision was communicated to our past president Brigitte Fessenden in a brief email from Kim Domanski, a staffer in the Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts. Ms. Domanski reported that City Council member Eric Costello and Fran Spero of the Department of Recreation and Parks concluded Federal Hill residents did not support the placement of the monument in the park. The basis for this conclusion is unclear. The Stricker Committee was not allowed a promised opportunity to meet with the neighborhood association where we would share drawings and photographs, and explain the merits of the Stricker monument that would require just 100 square feet of the 10.3-acre park.

It is disappointing that we received notice from a staffer rather than Mayor Rawlings-Blake who received our formal offer to make the monument a gift to the City of Baltimore. Mayor Rawlings-Blake's government seems to have forgotten the enthusiasm with which Marylanders celebrated the bicentennial of the defense of Baltimore less than a year ago. The German Society of Maryland has maintained its

presence in Baltimore City for longer than Baltimore has had mayors and we count among our members three mayors: Jacob Small, Theodore McKeldin, and William Donald Schaefer. It appears that after 233 years the bands which connect us with the City are dissolving. It also appears the "Monumental City" has lost interest in monuments.

The Stricker Committee properly followed the Baltimore's process to erect a monument to General Stricker. Our delegation met multiple times with the Public Arts Commission which approved our proposal; our president made a formal offer to gift the monument in writing to the mayor; we sought meetings with the neighborhood association; and we have assumed responsibility for all the costs of constructing and installing the granite monument, and for the sculpting and casting in bronze the bust of Stricker.

The granite base of the monument awaits only the final carving of text on the panels. An engineering study of the ground must wait for the final site to be confirmed. Then the concrete subsoil base will be poured, and 4,000-pound monument will installed with the attached bronze bust. This will be a handsome monument and a fitting honor for General Stricker.

Where do we go from here? The Stricker Committee has already visited potential sites that are not controlled by Baltimore City. The preferred site would be easily accessible to tourists and Marylanders, of historical significance, and reasonable safe from theft and vandalism. Most important, site should say, "Yes, General Stricker, you are welcome here!"

Dr. James Schaub

# Maryland German Festival Timonium Fairgrounds – July 25-26, 2015



## SOURCES OF OUR HERITAGE

There are those among us who claim to trace their ancestry to Karl der Grosse (Charlemagne), but for most members of our Society with German ancestry, their homelands are found in the German-speaking areas of Europe. Prior to the creation of the Deutsche Reich in 1871, it meant one of a couple hundred sovereign entities consisting of kingdoms, duchies, principalities and minor political subdivisions. Germany came into existence in 1871 when Count Otto von Bismarck persuaded the kings of Prussia, Westphalia, Bavaria, Baden-Wurtemberg and the smaller entities to form an empire with the Prussian king as its Kaiser. The members of our Society fall into three categories, based on when their ancestors arrived in America: pre-1871, the period between 1871 and World War II, and post World War II.

Our membership includes a good percentage who arrived after WWII, including two of our past presidents (Brigitte Fessenden and The Rev. Siegfried Otto) our current president Anton Smoot, and some of our directors such as Dr. Armin Mruck and the war bride and this year's honoree Christel van der Berg.

Another category are those with grandparents and great-grandparents who emigrated from pre-WWII "Deutschland", while the classic German Americans with deep-rooted pedigrees find their forebears having arrived in the 16, 17 and early 1800's. These include persons such as our director Dr. David Denisch whose grandfather 10 generations back was among the founders of Frederick City.

All the ancient and modern immigrants have brought to us their diverse customs, traditions, music, literature and culture which today make up our German American heritage.

This is what our Society has pledged to protect, cherish and preserve. We need to study our roots, seek out their greatness, values and virtues and pass them on to the young people of today. Learning and teaching this heritage is a wise investment of our treasure. We have something precious to pass on to future generations, but it will happen only if the past is known and understood.

## BALTIMORE ROW HOUSES

Not long after WWII, my father came home from work one day and told this story to my brother and me about a "displaced persons" from Germany whom he had sponsored to come to Baltimore to work in his furniture factory. It was his custom to meet the new arrivals at the immigrant aid office, settle them in a room in a row house in the vicinity, take them to lunch and then to the factory. Thus he did for the new immigrant. At closing time, everyone left the factory. Next morning my father arrived at the factory, only to find the German sitting on the stoop.

with his head bent over resting on his knees. All Baltimore row houses looked alike to him and after work he couldn't find his way to his new home. He returned to the factory and spent the night sitting on the steps. My father took him to the corner lunch-room, gave him breakfast, led him to the rooming house for a few hours sleep and told him to come to work later in the day. My brother and I were teen-agers who grew up in the city. We couldn't imagine a grown man getting lost and we had a good laugh at his expense. TJP

## U-DEUTSCHLAND PLANS

In July, 1916 the world's first commercial submarine entered the Baltimore harbor carrying dyestuffs and medicinal drugs from Germany. World War I had been ongoing for two years and the U-Deutschland with its Captain Paul Koenig had successfully slipped through the British blockade and crossed the Atlantic.

Baltimore was once a city with a German majority. Next year's centennial commemoration of the 1916 visit of the U-Deutschland will remind Baltimore of its once heavily German population. When the German Society of Md. sponsors events in July, 2016 to tell the story of Captain Koenig and his U-Deutschland, we will remind our fellow citizens that the immigrants from Germany were, to a great extent, helpful in building the city.

The Germanic nature of the population explains why Captain Koenig chose Baltimore as the American destination of his journey. He was welcomed with open arms, and was feted at a banquet attended by the mayor and governor of Maryland. 10,000 citizens greeted him in festivities at Canstatter Park, then a local German gathering place.

Our Society has arranged for ceremonies to take place aboard the nuclear ship Savannah, berthed in view of the location where the U-Deutschland docked during its historic visit. Be prepared to join in and help with the commemoration. We will have a series of events to enlighten the community about its German history and how much of its citizenry leaned toward the German position in World War I until our own country became involved on the opposite side.

## STUDENTS: HOW TO JOIN

All students from 1<sup>st</sup> grade through university post graduates are eligible to become members of the German Society. Student membership is free. To join, send an e-mail to [Germansociety@verizon.net](mailto:Germansociety@verizon.net) with the following information: the name of your school, your grade or year and your e-mail address. You should have or wish to develop an interest in German Culture, heritage or language.

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND  
P.O.. BOX 22585  
Baltimore, MD 21203-4585  
410-46509540  
website: www.germansociety-md.com  
e-mail: germansociety@verizon.net

### **OFFICERS**

Anton Smoot  
President  
Dr. James Schaub, V-Pres.  
Dr, Armin Mruck, 2nd VP  
Dr. Mary Upman, Secretary  
Theodore J. Potthast, Treas  
Gerard Wittstadt, Counselor

### **DIRECTORS**

Shelley Arnold  
Kraig Dean  
Dr. Michael J. Kurtz  
Gerhard Meinzer  
Paul-Gerhard Otto  
Shirley Santora  
Anton Smoot  
Dr. Mary Upman  
John Vogt  
Kurt Wittstadt  
Gen. M. Hall Worthington

### **EX OFFICIO**

Pres., Women's Auxiliary  
Eva Maus Kelleher

### **LIFETIME DIRECTORS**

Merl Arp  
John K. Aymold, Jr.\*  
Dandridge Brooke  
Linda Butt  
Dr. David Denisch  
Dr. Mohamed Esa  
Brigitte V. Fessenden\*  
Dr. Maureen Helinski  
Dr, Armin Mruck  
Michael J. Nieberding\*  
Betty Niemann  
Rev. H.J.Siegfried Otto\*  
Bernard Penner, Esq.  
Theo. J. Potthast, Jr.,Esq.\*  
Dr. James Schaub\*  
Irma Tillman  
Christel van der Berg  
Thomas A. Werner\*  
Hon. Gerard W. Wittstadt

Office Mgr. Baerbel Otto

\* = past president

*"The purpose of The German Society of Maryland is to preserve and promote the German heritage and traditions through educational, social and benevolent programs; and to develop the unity and continuity of the German American community in the State of Maryland"*

This newsletter is published by The German Society of Maryland, an organization founded in 1783 and incorporated in 1818 by an Act of the Maryland General Assembly . It is a non-profit corporation, exempt from tax under the provisions of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal revenue Code. It is a member of the Deutschamerikanischer Burgerverein von Maryland and other groups which promote the German American culture and heritage. To submit notices or articles for this newsletter, contact Theodore J. Potthast, Jr., Editor, 1819 Leadburn Road, Towson, MD 21204 or call at 410-828-8137.

### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Dues \$25. Spouse included. Send application and dues check to The German Society of MD, P. O. Box 22585, Baltimore, MD 21203-4585

**STUDENT MEMBERSHIP:** The German Society provides free membership to students, elementary school through college. To apply, see instructions on page 7. Applications only via e-mail.