

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

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VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

MARCH 2013 ISSUE #87

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ANNUAL MEETING

The annual membership meeting will take place on Friday, April 12, in the dining room at Zion Church, City Hall Plaza. This is a change from our normal "Friday after Easter" date which has been the rule since 1995.

Make it a priority to attend. The meeting will be preceded by a free German dinner, which starts at 6:30 p.m. The business meeting commences when dinner is finished, but not later than 8 pm. The meeting is guaranteed to last not a minute more than one hour.

Our meeting is a happy affair; you get to socialize with and meet other members. Beer and wine is served, which helps lighten up the air and raise spirits.

Our president will present a report of the past year's activities and plans for the future. The committees will report on their events and plans. You will leave the meeting with a better knowledge of our Society: where we have been and where we are going.

Please use the meeting as an opportunity for recruitment: bring some relatives and friends whom you consider potential members.

So we can order enough food and drink for all to enjoy, please email germansociety@verizon.net or call our office 410-685-0450 and leave a message including your name and how many will be in your party. Also indicate whether you plan to bring a dessert: we rely on members to bring the desserts, homemade if possible.

Please call or email by Tuesday, April 9, the caterer's deadline.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The signs of spring are everywhere and we are looking forward to our Annual Meeting and Dinner on April 12th. I set the date of the meeting so that we don't conflict with an event held by another organization that several of our members, including board members, attend on a regular basis. As a keeper of the "Buergerverein" web calendar of events, I am charged with trying to prevent conflicting dates between member organizations. This extra week of waiting should not feel too long for you since our average Annual Meeting date normally falls later than April 12th. (Wait till you see next year.)

While we are in the process of weeding out very delinquent members, we are nevertheless comfortably the German-American organization in the area with the highest number of dues paying members. Thanks to those of you who pay your dues. It isn't fair to you for us to let the delinquents sap our resources.

Speaking of resources, our investment income from the Education Fund has not been sufficient enough to pay for all of the scholarship awards that we present. Thankfully the many small donations to the Education Fund from our members and especially those significant ones from Jane Awalt and Gerhard Meinzer are keeping us ahead. Only continuing contributions will keep us from dipping into the investment principal to maintain our current scholarship funding. Thanks again to those of you who add a little to your dues payment.

At the Annual Meeting you will learn much more about this year's honoree for our November Awards Banquet- The Legacy of Hans Schuler, Sr. - Renowned Sculptor.

(continued on page 2)

KALENDER

- April 12 Annual Membership Meeting
- April 25 Board of Directors:
- May 5 (1) Academic awards: (2) AGAS picnic
- June 23 Annual picnic : Kurtz's Beach
- Sept 15 Capt. Paul Koenig memorial
- Nov. 2 Society's Annual Banquet

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 Bürgerverein 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.

REV. DR. ERIC W. GRITSCH, 81

Eric Gritsch, a member of our Society, died December 29. He was a pastor and professor of theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg for 30 years. He also taught at St. Mary's Catholic Seminary in Baltimore and lectured throughout the United States. He also served as interim pastor of Zion Church of the City of Baltimore.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (page 1).

Currently, the 3rd and 4th generation of his family are actively involved at the Schuler School of Fine Arts at 9 East Lafayette Avenue in Baltimore, I mention this is advance because they will be open to the public from April 6th to April 14th for a fine arts exhibition "Furs & Feathers". For those of you curious about our Honorees this would be an excellent opportunity to witness one of their activities and location and enjoy some juried animal art.

Hope to see you on April 12th.

Thomas A. Werner, President

ANNUAL PICNIC JUNE 23

All those who attended The Great German Picnic last year had such a wonderful time that they demanded a repeat: and so it will be. Sunday, June 23 at Kurtz's Beach in Anne Arundel County. Unlimited parking, unlimited food, beer and sodas. For many it served as a family reunion: make plans to do the same. Bring your family and friends and line them up now. A live German band; games and lots of activities. Bring the children: they have more fun than the gown-ups and it is your chance to introduce them to their German heritage. Mark your calendar now. Details will follow.

HELP US CUT EXPENSES

By sending this newsletter to you via e-mail, our Society can reduce printing, postage and handling expenses by about \$1.25 per copy. That's \$7.50 per year. If half our our members will sign up for e-mail delivery of the newsletter, we can reduce our expenses by nearly \$2,000 per year. Plus you will get the newsletter quicker; you can forward copies to your friends via email, or print pages to pass out to friends, relatives and potential new members. We urge you to sign up for e-mail delivery by sending an email to our office manager, Baerbel Otto at germansociety@verizon.net

We also remind you that you can get back issues by going to the Society's website. Our webmaster, Dr. Maureen Helinski, has been putting the newsletter on our website for the past several years.

NOMINATIONS FOR DIRECTORS

We have several openings on our Board of Directors and we are seeking candidates who have an interest in the German American heritage and culture. If you are willing to serve, please contact the nominating committee chairman, Dr. James Schaub at 301-776-9094 or email: jamesdschaub@msn.com.

AGAS AT BLOB'S PARK

Our Society belongs to AGAS. Associated German American Societies of Greater Washington. AGAS relies on one fundraiser per year, a picnic at Blob's Park, the first Sunday of May (May 5). Please help support AGAS by attending. Call our office for a flyer. A German band, food and drink available at Blobs's. Buffet luncheon or order from the menu.

GERMAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

We hear the phrase "the German American community" and wonder What it means. When the German Society of Maryland was founded in 1783, the term German referred to people from countries where some version of the German language was spoken: Austria, parts of present day Switzerland, Poland, Russia, France and one of the many sovereign kingdoms, duchies, principalities and cities which compose present day Germany. In Baltimore they were united by a language. Today "German Americans" are identified mostly by their ancestry, though there is still an important contingent of post World War II immigrants. The question is: to what extent do these groupings constitute a community?

Unlike some ethnic groups, Germans do not make up a voting block. They fall into every color of the political spectrum. Most are of mixed ancestry, so some with "German" names have only a fraction of "German" blood in their veins. Many with German names don't have a clue about about their German ancestry, and some don't even know that their name is a German name.

So is there such a thing as a German American "community"? If such a community exists, it may include only a fraction of those who are eligible to use the trademark "German American". Belonging to the G-A Community seems to mean membership in a club or organization which profess, as one of its goals, the preservation of the traditions and heritage brought here from a German-speaking area of Europe.

How long before the G-A community disappears? One indication that it is on its way out is the leadership crisis. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find persons willing to stand up and accept an office of authority. The German Society is a member of an organization called the Buergerverein, an umbrella group of German clubs. Some of the member clubs have gone for spells without filling important offices because none of its members wanted the job. The president of the second largest local German club, The Baltimore Kickers, as an exemption to the club's constitutional term limit, carried over its president because no one volunteered to take the job. Our own Society tapped Tom Werner for president; he already had served as president of the Buerger-verein, and Club Fidelitas. He was picked because our club cannot settle for mediocrity: we needed a true leader and Tom was drafted for the job. Where will we get

future leaders? It's a hard question to answer, but if we do not find the answers, surely the "German American Community" will soon cease to exist.

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING

The Mid-Atlantic Germanic Society, a genealogical society, will hold its Spring program on April 6, 2013 at the Holiday Inn-Laurel West. Dr. Kenneth W. Heger, senior manager of the National Archives, will talk about the the Hapsburg Empire and the Austrian Germans from Bohemia. Domenic McDevitt-Parks, the Wikipedist-in-Residence at NARA in Washington, will speak on using Wikiprdia for family history. John Deebin, a genealogy archive specialist with NARA will discuss Documenting the War of 1812 Army Service. For more details visit the website: www.magsgen.com

CONGRATULATIONS

... to Der Wecker. which celebrated its 4th year on the internet on January 24th. Founded by our member, Walter Mathers, Der Wecker is an inter-active site which permits the public to see and post German American matters: events and activities, culture, heritage and the like. It keeps the community informed and facilitates the exchange of ideas.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jeanne Brasefield
 Ron Brasefield
 Jenny Foard
 Gary Foard
 Dr. Bruce H. Grant
 The Rev. Gigie Grant
 Theodore J. Lingelbach
 Ann Heether
 Benjamin M. Potthast
 Emma Potthast
 Alfred J. Veiel
 Lorraine L. Veiel
 Gabriele Weida
 Thomas Whiteside, Jr.
 Tina Whiteside
 Skyler Werner
 James W. Wines, Jr.
 Kathy Wines

DAN BROOKE HONORED

At its January quarterly meeting, our Board of Directors honored Dan Brooke for his 60 years of membership. Dan joined the Society on his 28th birthday, Dan turned 88 on Jan. 20, 2013, He has served as chairman of our Membership Committee for many years and during his tenure personally signed up over a hundred new members.

Dan and his family have a long history of service. His name, Dandridge, is a family name: his great aunt many times removed, Martha Washington, whose maiden name was Dandridge, was America's first "first lady".

Although Dan was born in Germany, his mother was a Maryland socialite who married a German citizen. After his parents' divorce, Dan carried his mother's name Brooke through life. Dan was raised on his grandmother's horse farm at York and Warren Road in Baltimore County. He attended elementary school in Leonardtown, Maryland and high school in Cecil County, an historic school which was attended by two signers of the Declaration of Independence. Dan was assigned the desk once used by Benjamin Rush, a signer.

His membership in the German Society is believed to be the longest of any member since our founding in 1783. Dan's name will go down in the history of the German Society of Maryland.

YOUR SENATOR, YOUR DELEGATE

For the third consecutive year, bills have been introduced into the Maryland General Assembly to delegate October to be German American month in Maryland. Senate Bill 17 and House Bill 34 in the Maryland legislature would delegate October to be German American month in Maryland. We ask all of our members to contact their senator and delegates requesting their votes in favor of these bills. Call, write or e-mail them -- or do all 3. This is the 3rd consecutive year we have tried to get the law enacted. It has been bottled up in committee in the House of Delegates. Delegate Peter Hammond of Baltimore City is the committee chairman; thus far he has been unsympathetic to our cause. Contacting Delegate Hammond is important to the success of this piece of legislation. For contact information for the house and

senate members, you may go on the internet at www.germanmarylanders.org and check "legislation". Our director Shelley Arnold is the principal proponent and lobbyist for these bills.

DELINQUENT DUES PAYERS

Never before in recent history have so many members of the Society failed to pay their dues. Our president has prepared a list of delinquencies. Many have not paid for multiple years; they will be dropped immediately. Others who are two years delinquent will receive one more billing and be dropped if the invoice is not paid. The expense of carrying members is mounting and our President wants to balance the budget. We don't know whether the non-payment rate is due to the economy or because the dues were increased to \$25 five years ago. At any rate, the number of dues-paying members is fluctuating. If you are not current in your payment of dues, PLEASE pay your dues soon.

HIGH SCHOOL AWARDS MAY 5

In 1984 our Society began a program to encourage the study of German in Maryland high schools by giving monetary rewards to those who proved their competency by high scores in the national German proficiency examination. Our Society has posted \$5,000 to be distributed this year to those students.

The awards will be given on May 5 at the Adlersaal of Zion church. Our members are urged to attend and encourage the students.

G-A DRUMMER BOY REMEMBERED

Henry Lightner, age 16, was the drummer boy at Fort McHenry on September 11, 1814 and sounded the alarm by beating his drum throughout the night. On his death he was buried on a grassy plot in Baltimore Cemetery, without a marker. In October, 2012 the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore erected a monument at his grave. His descendants added a footstone engraved "Drummer boy of Fort McHenry". Henry survived and fathered 12 children. The drum remained in his family until a descendant, in 1961, donated it to the Flag House. His father was a drummer boy during the Revolutionary War. Henry was from a German family and was a member of Zion Church.

AGAS ELECTIONS

The Feb. 12 elections of The Associated German American Societies of Greater Washington returned to office Gerhard Meinzer, Gary Grassl and James Schaub as president, vice president and secretary. All three are members of our Society and our Society is a member of AGAS. Rudi Becker of Northern Virginia was elected treasurer. Gary Lefebre, the accountant who prepares our Society's tax returns, retired as treasurer. Congratulations to all. The elections followed a dinner at the Old Europe Restaurant in the Georgetown area of Washington. Our Society was represented at the elections by President Tom Werner and Treasurer Ted Potthast. The dinner was "dutch".

JOE FLACCO & GUMMI BEARS

For our Great German Family Picnic last June, the German company, Haribo, maker of Gummi Bears, donated 500 bags of gummi bears for the picnickers. Haribo also loaned us the bear costume and one of our members played the role, leading the children in the manner of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. We now learn that Baltimore's own Joe Flacco has signed to endorse the product. Haribo learned that Flacco was a gummi bear lover. Haribo, congratulations and thanks for your gifts at our picnic.

THE CHANGING WORLD OF BEER

Beer, a subject dear to our hearts, finds itself in a changing world. 50% of the American beer market is held by Budweiser, a company owned by a Belgian corporation, Budweiser Inbev. That company also owns Beck, made in Hamburg, Germany. The U.S. Justice Dept. is trying in to block a \$20 billion buyout by Budweiser of Corona, the most popular imported beer in the USA. The govt. claims such a merger would drive smaller competitors off the shelves. (Mexican beer has a German tradition: when German brewers were closed down in the USA by prohibition, they moved to Mexico.) In the past decade nearly 4,000 "craft breweries" have sprung up in the USA. 60 years ago Baltimore had 15 large breweries, now gone, put out of business by the national giant breweries and large importers.

GERMANS AND TITLES

The recent resignation of the German Minister of Education, Annette Schavan, demonstrates how

important titles are among Germans. Her title of "doctor" was revoked by the Heinrich Heine University of Duesseldorf amid accusations that she plagiarized her dissertation 32 years ago. She threatens to sue to regain her title of "doctor". Each year 25,000 Germans earn the title of "doctor". (If Herr Schulz holds 2 doctorates, he is entitled to be addressed as "Doctor Doctor Schulz".) Volker Rieble, a law professor in Munich told the International Herald Tribune: "In other countries, people aren't as vain about their titles. With this obsession for titles, of course, comes the title envy." "Such a malady may be peculiar to Germans", wrote Suzanne Fields in the Washington Times. (Six current and lifetime directors of our Society hold doctorates.)

THE RIGHT TO BE STUPID

Secretary of State John Kerry was quoted by Time Magazine in its March 11, 2013 issue as speaking to a group of students in Germany and saying: "In America, you have the right to be stupid." Kerry must have been reading a lot of former German Society member H. L. Mencken, who held that theory nearly 100 years ago believing it applied especial to the American electorate.

ALLIGATOR EATS LOCAL BOY

Writing a booklet in 1914 for the centenary of the War of 1812, entitled "Germans in Maryland 1812-1814", our one-time member Pastor Julius Hofmann concluded with this anecdote:

A glimpse of the war: a short note in a contemporary newspaper reads: "Francis Xavier Muller of Baltimore, while attempting to swim to the shore from the privateer Janl Jones was taken down by an alligator in the Savannah River".

A HERITAGE TO BE PRESERVED

Our Society was founded in 1783, long before the Reich or the Federal Republic. Our predecessors were the Germans of the Kingdoms of Prussia, Westphalis, Bavaria, Baden and many duchies and principalities, of Austria and the German speaking areas of Switzerland and today's France and Italy. Our founders of the 18th and 19th centuries were the Germans of Beethoven, Bach, Goethe, Schiller and the great poets, philosophers, composers and writers. That is our German American culture and heritage, though not many of us speak the German language.

THE GERHARD MEINZER FUND

Many thanks to Gerhard Meinzer for his 2012 gifts of \$4,500, part of which will be used for the Meinzer Scholarship to send a Maryland student to Germany this forthcoming summer. Gerhard also donated \$5,000 the prior year and sent a student to Germany in the program of the American Association of Teachers of German. We are honored to have Gerhard on our Board of Directors.

JOSEPHINE GAY, AGE 7

Josephine Gay was one of the 20 school children killed in the massacre at the elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. She is the granddaughter of our long-time members Robert and Louise Gay. Bob Gay served as an active member of our Board of Directors for half a dozen years. After retirement, the Gays moved to Delaware to shorten the trip to Connecticut to visit their son and his family. Josephine was born 12/11/2005 and turned 7 just 3 days before her death. Our Society grieves for the family of Josephine and expresses our sincere condolences. Our hearts and prayers go out to them.

ARTHUR GUTMAN DIES AT 101

Arthur Gutman, an insurance broker who served as President of The Mencken Society for twenty years died Nov. 27 at age 101. Within that Society he made known that he was proud of his German-Jewish heritage. Gutman was not just a scholar, but a community leader who helped keep Mencken's name alive and flourishing, and promoted the study of Mencken's incisive and acerbic writings.

ROTTERDAM TO BALTIMORE: 1784

On page 38 of "Pioneers in Service", the history of The German Society of Maryland, we find a copy of a contract by a shipping firm to bring passengers to Baltimore. Terms of passage will make modern cruise ship passengers cringe: cook your own meals and bake your own bread. The ship's captain provided the passengers with victuals. The menu-- Sundays: one pound of beef with groats and onions. Mondays: barley with syrup. Tuesdays: one pound of flour for cake and salt. Wednesdays: one pound of beef with peas. Thursdays: one pound of flour and some salt. Fridays: dried codfish and one pound of butter for the whole week. Saturdays: pea soup, one pound of cheese and seven pounds of bread for the whole week. For each,

one cup of gin daily and two quarts of water. The ship had to provide beer. The passengers were allowed (if the Lord's weather permitted) to cook meals on deck from 6 am to 6 pm. Reduced fares for children under 14 years of age. The voyages lasted from one month to several months, depending on weather and winds. (The book "Pioneers in Service" can be viewed and down-loaded from the German Society's website. Written by Klaus Wust, it summarizes the history of our Society from its founding in 1783 through 1958.)

DUESENBERG'S RESTAURANT

Several of our members had dinner at the new (2011) German restaurant in Catonsville and issued a favorable report. Good food, generous portions and reasonable prices. Its Sauerbraten is sliced, not chunks; its Wiener Schnitzel is tender and tasty. Its salads were diverse and large. Open for dinner Wednesdays through Sundays. (Breakfasts and lunch is under difference management, not German). The manager and chef is Frau Christine Seiler, a young lady from Neu Ulm in Bavaria who has been but 3 years in America. Her goal is to provide healthy German food made from scratch. She speaks fluent English, and is a most jolly and pleasant personality. LOCATION: 10 Mellor Ave. 1/4 block S. of Frederick Ave. Reservations: 443-703-6102. Menu is on the internet. No liquor license, but bring your own German beer or wine.

INTERNET RADIO STATION UPDATE

Our Society's committee to initiate an internet radio station to serve the German American community is making slow but sure progress. We have secured the following URLs which will give us a serious national and international presence in the internet radio world:

germanamericanradio.com
germanamericanradio.net
germanamericanradio.org

The committee is still seeking members to help get the station up and running. Members who have an interest in German American culture, history, genealogy, language, German food, music etc. are urged to lend their assistance. Bob Mathers, manager of WTRR radio station in Westminster, has offered to help us get started; he has many years of internet radio experience. Bob acted as Master of Ceremonies at The Great German Picnic last June and secured many door prizes for it. A spring committee meeting is being organized. To volunteer, call our office and leave your name and number.

FORMER STUDENT WRITES

Lionel Foster is an African American from Baltimore, a free-lance writer, who as a 17-year-old high school student spent a year near Hamburg, Germany. He described his experience in a Thanksgiving Day article in the Baltimore Sun, writing about His hosts, the Wolframs, a family of 4. He described bantering at the kitchen table, occasional tensions in the family, trips to the Alps and on the rivers in Holland, some home-sickness and a memorable American Thanksgiving Day feast of turkey, cranberry sauce and the fixings held in his honor, since Germans don't have Thanksgiving celebrations. His article concludes:

"What kind of people welcome a stranger with questionable language skills into their home for an entire year, quirks and all, feed him, transport him, wash his clothes, then keep in touch long afterwards? I can still say "Danke" (Thank you) in German, but I can't fully explain that kind of generosity or imagine how I might repay it. It is a gentle, but persistent burden, one that I will gladly carry my entire life."

Mr. Foster's article expresses the sentiment we have often heard from our Society's members who have experienced exchange programs in Germany, as well as young people whom our Society assists with financial aid for their studies in German speaking countries.

THE VERB "TO RUCKERIZE": POLITICAL HISTORY IN BALTIMORE

A Tennessean of Bavarian ancestry cast the crucial votes in the vice-presidential election of 1835 at the Democratic convention held in Baltimore. The convention had begun but the delegation from Tennessee, which had 15 electoral votes, was not present. Martin van Buren, the vice president under Andrew Jackson, had clinched the presidential nomination, but the vice-presidency was hotly contested. Jackson backed his friend, Richard M. Johnson for VP, but lacked the votes. New York Senator Silas Wright, while in a Baltimore saloon, met Edward Rucker from Tennessee and persuaded him

to become a delegate. Silas talked the credentials committee into seating Rucker, who under the rules of the time, could cast all 15 of Tennessee's votes. He did and Johnson won the nomination for VP by 2 votes. Thus entered into the American political vocabulary the term "to Ruckerize", meaning to gain an advantage through trickery, chicanery and shenanigans. Baltimore's gift to the dictionary.

"THE DUTCHMAN" FIRE ENGINE

The Mechanical Company of Baltimore was a private volunteer fire company founded in 1763 by citizens, many of whom over the years were German speaking. Each member had to hang a leather bucket on a hook in front of his house and respond to the alarm of a fire in his vicinity. When engines were invented, the Company purchased one which it named "The Dutchman". Two men operated the pump and the others carried water-buckets to keep the tank full. (Similar pumping engines were in use at our annual picnic, with the children pumping away and the boys joyfully squirting one another). In 1859 Baltimore City formed its own municipal fire department and purchased all the equipment from the Mechanical Company. The Company is still in existence today, though it no longer fights fires. Today it is known as The Ancient and Honorable Mechanical Company and a goodly number of members of our Society also belong to that Company. Several of our members have served as president of The Ancient and Honorable, including Dandridge Brook, William Brooke and Ted Potthast. It holds an annual meeting to hear a lecture and reports, always on the first Thursday of December.

ZORN: PRESIDENT OF FIDELITAS

Al Zorn took the oath of office as president of Club Fidelitas on March 13 and presented its directors with a slate of activities for the new year. Walter Doleschal was named vice president. Club Fidelitas is a member of the Deutsch-Amerikanische Bürgerverein von Maryland®, of which our Society is also a member. It is a social organization interested in German culture and sponsored numerous events for its membership. It is seeking new members. If interested, contact members of our Society who serve on its board: Tom Werner, Jim Schaub, Bill Kommalan or Ted Potthast.



The German Society of Maryland
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 Baltimore, MD 21203-4585
 410-685-0450
 www.germansociety-md.com



**REMEMBER
 ANNUAL MEETING
 APRIL 12**

PAID YOUR 2013 DUES?

**SIGN UP A
 NEW MEMBER**

2120481830 0023



“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.”

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____
 Street: _____
 City: _____ Zip _____
 Spouse: (optional) _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____
 Referred by: _____

“I hereby apply to be a member of the German Society of Maryland”
 Annual dues \$25 Spouse may be included at no extra cost.

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 Baltimore, MD 21203-4585

Visit the German Society's website:
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