THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

DIE DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT VON MARYLAND

VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

SEPTEMBER 1998

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TICKETS FOR AWARDS BANQUET

Tickets for the Annual Awards Banquet are now on sale for the Friday, November 6th affair at Martin's West. \$50 per person. First come, first served. The event last year was "the best in many years," and this year's will be a repeat. Announcements will be mailed to all members, but due to popular demand and limited seats, you may send your checks to the Society's office now.

BALTIMORE KICKERS - 45 YEARS OLD

The Kickers Club will hold a 45th anniversary banquet on September 12 at Chesley Place in Parkville. Tickets are \$40, For information call the Kickers Hotline at 410-276-4949 or Loy Vogel at 410-335-2442. The Kickers promote soccer and German customs and language and operate a free German language school at its clubhouse on Broadway. The Kickers hold many German American events for its members during the year. It is the only German-American club in Maryland owning its own clubhouse.

ECUMENICAL SERVICE THANKSGIVING EVE

The annual ecumenical service sponsored by the German Society and Zion Church will be held Nov. 25 at Zion Church, across from City Hall. The event was begun in November, 1989 a few weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall, to commemorate the freedom of all Germans. After the service, the Society will provide food and drink for the reception in the Adlersaal. Mark your calendars.

GERMAN SOCIETY GIVES AWARDS TO 35 MARYLAND STUDENTS

The Society gave \$2,900 in awards to MD. high school students for their achievements in the study of German, as evidenced by high scores in the national German language exam of the American Association of Teachers of German. In keeping with its goal to encourage the study of German language and heritage, the Society instituted the awards program five years ago, in cooperation with AATG. Each year the number of students has been increasing. The awards were given to students at the following schools: Baltimore City College HS; Chesapeake HS; Dematha Catholic HS; Eleanor Roosevelt HS; Georgetown Prep School; Glenelg HS; John Carroll School; Loyola High School; McDonough School; North Hagerstown HS; Wilde Lake HS; Woodrow Wilson HS

The awards presentation followed a banquet honoring the students at Western Maryland College, Westminster, MD. Chairman of the event was Dr. Mohamed Esa, president of the Maryland chapter of AATG. Presenting the awards on behalf of the German Society were Christel van der Berg, Mike Nieberding and Ted Potthast. Schools with the most recipients were Chesapeake HS (6), taught by Mrs. Shirley Santora; Eleanor Roosevelt HS (4), taught by Mr. Hans-Alfred Schneider; and Loyola HS (4) taught by Mr. John Innes. All three of the teachers are members of the German Society of MD.

One of our recipients, John Lurz, a Loyola student who scored in the 99 percentile each year and won a scholarhip to study in Germany for a semester, received his school's highest award, The Loyola Medal for academic excellence and extra-curricular activities. He is now attending Princeton University.

"The purpose of the German Society of Maryland is to preserve and promote the German heritage, language 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."



LANDMARK BREWERY: FATE IS STILL UNKNOWN

The brewery on Gay Street in Baltimore, founded by an immigrant from Bavaria, closed but still standing is in poor condition. Although it is on the National Register of Historic Places, it my yet be razed. John Frederick Wiessner, born in Bavaria in 1831, came to Baltimore in 1853 where he worked at Rost's brewery until starting his own in 1863. There were 32 breweries in Baltimore then. In 1887 he built the magnificent structure. It has been described as a "German Carneval" style of construction which flourished in Baltimore's German neighborhoods in the late 19th century. An 1887 magazine article said that "This new and magnificent structure has a design entirely unique in brewery architecture." It remained in the Wiessner family until 1928 when it was bought by the Fitzsimons family which operated it under the American Beer label. An editorial opined: "There is no finer example

of Victorian industrial architecture...This Temple of Bacchus rises over the surrounding rowhouse community like a magical storybook castle."

The gigantic statue of King (Duke) Gambrinus, the reputed inventor of beer, was placed in front of the building by John Wiessner where it stood for over 100 years. It is now on loan to the Smithsonian Institute.

ZINZINNATI OKTOBERFEST

The world's largest German Oktoberfest outside of Munich will be held in Cincinnati on September 18 and 19th, with at least 500,000 revelers in attendance in the downtown district. Immigration from Germany began in the early 1800's and by 1890 the German-Americans constituted 57% of the population. The city presently has 18 German organizations, with 35,000 members. The city today sets aside an entire month as "German Heritage Month". It is the home of Univ. of Cincinnati's Max Kade Center for German language and culture. Of the greater Cincinnati area's 1.5 million residents, 45% are of German descent.

THE GERMAN WORK ETHIC

Did all the hard-working Germans migrate to America and leave the laggards back in the Fatherland? On average, a German stays in college until age 29 (with the government paying virtually all of the tuition and fees). On average, retirement comes at age 59, with a pension equal to 60% of the last year's salary. The average German is in the work force for 30 years, or 13 years fewer than the arch-typical American college graduate who works from age 22 to 65.

Germans get an average of 6 week's paid vacation per year, plus 12 paid holidays. Most can also get two paid weeks off for "self-improvement", which does not have to relate to the job. Plus sick leave. German postal workers routinely log more than 20 sick days per year. And every few years when the workers are stressed out, their doctor can prescribe 3 weeks of relaxation with pay at a spa, at the expense of the national health insurance. So the average German can claim up to 13 weeks off in a single year, plus sick days! Is this why German immigration to America has nearly come to a halt? Why leave a good thing?

MARYLAND GERMAN PIANO MAKERS: STIEFF AND KNABE

Nearly every home had a piano, which was the family "rec" center in the days before radio and TV. Piano making was big business. For Marylanders, the piano was either a Knabe or a Stieff, both fine German manufacturers. The Knabe factory was a block-long, 8-story building. In the 1890's Knabe hired many German cabinet-makers as they embarked from the boat at Locust Point. Among the hundreds of Germans hired by Knabe were four Potthast Brothers from Borgholz, Westphalia, who made pianos until they had enough to start their own furniture company. The building later became the Sweetheart Cup building, but has been razed for the Ravens football stadium. The cupola of the Knabe building has been removed, restored and placed at the Museum of Industry on Key Highway.

Stieff, the other German piano maker, had its factory in East Baltimore. It survived into the 1960's, but was burned to the ground in the riots of 1968. The Stieff family provided the German Society with many members over the years.

A "BERNHEIMER'S VEST"

Bernheimers, a popular Baltimore department store of yesteryear, was known as an all-out bargain store, good prices but no prestige. The term "Bernheimer's vest" came to mean a useless bargain bought in haste. Any stupid buy made during a shopping frenzy could be a "Bernheimer's vest" among Baltimoreans of the first half of this century. Bernheimer's, through a series of mergers, is now part of one of Baltimore's few remaining department stores, Hecht's.

HOLOCAUST MONUMENT IS ELECTION ISSUE

The proposal to put a Holocaust monument on 5 acres in central Berlin near the Brandenburg Gate has become an issue in the Sept. 27th German elections. The majority of Germans were not living during Hitler's time and the younger Germans complain that "enough is enough". Chancellor Kohl is being challenged in his reelection bid by Gerhard Schroeder in a close election. Kohl supports the monument and Schroeder claims that Kohl is out of touch with the majority of Germans too young to have any memories of the Nazi era.

KING OF WESTPHALIA ONCE MARRIED TO BALTIMOREAN

Jerome Bonaparte, whose brother Napoleon installed him as King of Westphalia, was married to a Baltimore beauty, Betsy Patterson. Joseph came to Baltimore with his close friend, Commodore Barry, and took up residence in 1803 in a still-extant home on Roland Avenue. He met Betsy and on Christmas Eve 1803 he married her in Baltimore. Napoleon was furious that his brother married a commoner, and refused to let her enter France. Unable to get the Pope to grant an annulment, Napoleon issued a civil decree annulling the marriage. He then order Joseph to marry Princess Frederica of Wurttenburg and promptly made him King of Westphalia, a large north-central German state. Betsy and Jerome had a son, also Jerome. She tried without success to arrange a royal marriage in Europe for him, and he returned home and married a Baltimorean. Betsy, (whose father was reportedly the 2nd richest man in America) despite an annual income of over \$100,000, became a miserly old woman and at the time of her death in 1879 at age 94, lived in a \$25 per month boarding house on Cathedral Street in Baltimore. She is buried in Greenmount cemetery.

HOW DO YOU BLESS BEER?

The owner of the Baltimore-Washington Beer Works wanted a blessing on his new brew "The Raven". After calling around, he found Father Leo Larrivee, pastor of All Angels parish who agreed to try. He consulted the "Book of Blessings of the Roman Ritual" and found a blessing for wine, the "fruit of the vine."

Without using the word beer, he altered the blessing to reference the "fruit of grains and hops." Somewhere in the German world, there must be a blessing for the product of the brewers. Can anyone help?

CATHERINE THE GREAT OF RUSSIA

She wasn't even Russian. She was German. She was born Princess Sophie Friederika Augusta of Anhalt-Zerbst in 1729. She married Duke Karl Peter Ulrich of Holstein-Gottorp, grandson of Peter the Great, and as such was in line to become Tsar of Russia with the name of Peter III. She changed her name to Catherine when she joined the Russian Orthodox church. In December, 1761 when Catherine was 32 her husband became Emperor. Seven days later he died and in a palace coup, Catherine was made Empress. She ruled until her death in 1796 at age 67.

FRAUENHILFSVEREIN REPORT

Margareta Kramer, President of The Women's Auxiliary of the German Society reports a successful operation for the past year. The organization conducts its meetings in German. In addition to its charitable activities, it continues to cultivate German customs, literature and music. Old folk songs are kept alive by singing them at each meeting. The membership has grown and its meetings are well attended.

The highlight of the year was the celebration of its 80th anniversary. 110 persons attended the festivities at Overlea Hall and were treated with a one-act play, *Oma wehrt sich*, in German by young scholars from the German Language school. It was followed by a presentation by Essex Community College students, *Senior Star Show Case*.

STUDY OF GERMAN IS FOSTERED BY OUR SOCIETY

Of 3,700 colleges and universities in the US, only 1,500 offer German language studies. German in high school attracts 2.5% of the students. About 25% of the American population of 265,000,000 are of German origin, but very few can speak the language of one's grandparents. German is the native language of 92,000,000 people. It is the language of 5 European countries: Austria, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, German and Switzerland (German is the mother tongue of 64% of the Swiss). The German Society has undertaken to provide moral and financial aid to Maryland school programs to encourage the study of German.

DEATH NOTICES SHOW LARGE PERCENT OF GERMAN NAMES

A check of the death notices in the Baltimore newspaper on a recent Sunday contains plethora of German names, such as: Althoff, Baier, Ferstermann. Hachemeister, Hart, Heinbuch, Hutschenreuter, Mohr, Schabdach, Schmitt, Schneider, Dunkel, Eckstein, Funk, Grauling, Hessler, Sickel, Walterhoeffer, Weller, Wiedefeld, Woehlke and Lehman. Twenty four percent of Marylanders claim German ancestry, and the death notices in the Baltimore area confirm that statistic.

2,000 JOURNALISTS MEET IN MARYLAND, RECALL MENCKEN

Henry L. Mencken, who wrote for The Sun many years ago, is an icon among American writers. He was a member of our sister society, The Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland. He was proud of his German ancestry and made frequent references to the German heritage. His legacy was recalled by over 2,000 journalists and journalism professors who held their convention in Baltimore in August. Some attendees at the convention recalled Mencken's criticism of journalists, which if he were alive today, might be more severe, considering that TV news did not exist in his day. Mencken wrote: "Most of the evils that continue to beset American journalism today, in truth, are not the rascality of owners...but simply and solely to the stupidity, cowardice and Philistinism of working newspapermen. The majority of them, in almost every American city, are still ignoramuses and proud of it." Of reporters assigned to Washington, he wrote: "The average Washington correspondent, I believe, is honest enough, as honesty goes in the United States, though his willingness to do press work for the National Committees in campaign time and for other highly dubious agencies at other times is not be forgotten. What ails him mainly is that he is a oman without sufficient force or character to resist the blandishments that surround him from the moment he sets foot in Washington."

"A few men, true enough, resist, and their papers, getting the benefit of it, become notable for their independence and intelligence, but the great majority succumb almost at once. A few months of associating with the gaudy magnificoes of the town and they pick up its meretricious values and are unable to distinguish men of sense and dignity from mountebanks. A few clumsy overtures from the White House, an they are rattled and undone. They come as newspaper men, trained to get the news and eager to get it; they end up as tin-horn statesmen, full of dark secrets and unable to write the truth if they tried."

AN INVITATION TO STUDENTS

High School and University students are invited to join the German Society as student members at special student dues of \$5 per year. Students may participate in all of the Society's events, and in most of the activities of member groups of the Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland



THANKS:

-to Paul and Lottie Schafer for their generous financial gift to the Society. Paul is a former director of the Society and the honoree at a recent awards banquet.

- to **Dutch Niemann** for his art work in preparing our "Schnitzelbank" chart, which is now ready for the printer.

to Harry Gruel, for his work as the Chairman of the Society's exhibition tent at the German Festival, and to all the people who staffed the exhibit: Bob Gay, Dan Brooke, Christel van der Berg, Mike Nieberding, Dick Ackler, President John Aymold, Arn Huther, Irma Tillman, Barbara Strati, Ted Potthast, Mark Potthast, Jim Schaub and Betty Gruel.

CONGRATULATIONS to Judge Gerard Wittstadt and Dr. Rosemay Wittstadt on the birth of their grandson, CHRISTIAN RAY WATSON.

DR. ALFRED SOHNIUS, a member of the Society for more than 50 years, died at age 93 on 10/19/97. Dr. Sohnius was born in Essen, Germany. He was a self-employed chemical engineer, was a also a member of the Edelweiss Club and President of German Circles. At the time he became a US citizen in 1950, he was the only Sohnius in the USA. He is survived by two daughters, Patricia LaMont of Tuscon, AZ and Marion Geist of Driburg, Germany.

KIMBEL E. OELKE. Kim Oelke, owner and publisher of the Dundalk Eagle newspaper, died in August at age 81. He is survived by his wife, Mary and ten children. Kim died while attending Sunday Mass at St. Rita's Church in Dundalk, where he had walked to Church as was his custom. He was a long-standing Society member. A newspaperman all his live, he founded the Eagle at age 50, was its sole reporter, editor, business manager and salesman, building the paper up from 1 employee and 500 readers to 20 employees and 24,000 readers at his death.

PASTOR OTTO ACTS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

A letter of H. J. Sigfried Otto, Pastor of Zion Church and the President of the Maryland Ecumenical Council, was recently published in The Sun, supporting the passage of a state version of the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (which was struck down by the Supreme Court last year). The legislation he proposes is intended to codify the long-standing tradition of religious tolerance that Maryland was founded upon. Pastor Otto has been a member of our Society since he arrived in Baltimore, and was the honoree of the Society in 1991 at our awards banquet.

- OLDEST IN THE WORLD

J. Gruber, son of German immigrants to Pennsylvania, moved to Maryland in 1797 and founded the Hagerstown Almanac. Since then it has been published continuously and has stayed in the hands of Gruber's family, the current editor, Charles Fisher, age 81, being a direct descendant of Gruber. Gruber sold 500 copies in 1797. Today 150,000 copies are sold at \$2.25 each. The official name is "J. Gruber's Hagers-Town Town and Country Almanack" Millions of copies have been sold over the years. (Hagerstown is the second largest city in Maryland.) The wisdom and prognostications have endeared the almanac to farmers of Maryland, Penna., Virginia and West Virginia who use the long-range weather forecasts to manage their crops. The almanac will stay in the Gruber family for at least another generation when Fisher's son takes over as editor, stretching the tenure of the German roots of the founder. The Almanack forecasts good weather for our Society's Nov. 6th Awards Banquet this year, with no major storms due until Nov. 11th.



PLANS FOR FUTURE EXHIBITS

The first seven panels of the Society's exhibit on the contributions of Maryland Germans was completed in time for the August German festival. The Society plans a permanent project of adding new exhibits. The first group dealt with businesses founded by German-American which are currently in operation. Additional firms will also be featured, such as the German wurst firm of Paul Schafer, a benefactor of the Society and a former Director. Ottmar Mergenthaler, inventor of linotype printing, called the "second Guttenberg" will be presented. He was a member of our Society. The project will also feature prominent members and former members of the Society, such as former Governor Theodore McKeldin and Governor Donald Schaeffer, and other educational and religious leaders. Exhibits are planned for religious oganizations founded by Germans, such as Zion Church and Notre Dame College; German businesses and manufacturers, as well as all of the present German Clubs in Maryland and some of the past groups which have become extinct. Members are urged to submit suggestions for possible exhibits of contributions of Marylanders by German-Americans.

FESTIVAL AT "THE AVENUE"

The German Society will join with other clubs to present a German exhibit at an ethnic festival on September 5 at "The Avenue" in Whitemarsh. Rain date: September 6. The first phase of the Society's exhibit of contributions by German-Marylanders will be on display. Italian, Polish and other ethnic groups will also participate. Members of the Society will be on hand to explain our goals and purposes and to recruit new members.

WEIHNACHTS MARKT

The German Heritage group at Zion will hold a Nürnberg-style Christmas Market in the Adlersaal, at City Hall Plaza in downtown Baltimore on November 28. German food and Christmas gifts, some imported from Germany, will be sold. Will there be Glühwein? In Nürnberg, the month-long event is called the "Kristkindlesmarkt" (Christ-child market).

VEREINS KALENDAR

Sept. 5	Ethnic Festival at Whitemarsh
Sept. 9-13	Edelweiss bus trip to Canada
Sept 12	Kickers 45th Anniverary banquet
Sept 13	Fidelitas bus trip to German Heritage
	Festival, Holmdel, NJ
Sept 19	Steuben Parade, NYC
Sept 23	Fanfarenzug Zell Gemütlichkeit
	Evening, Zion Church Adlersaal
Oct. 10-11	Oktoberfest, 5th Regiment Armory
Nov. 6	GERMAN SOCIETY AWARDS BANQUET
Nov. 25	Thanksgiving Eve Ecumenical Service
Nov. 28	Weihnachtsmarkt - Zion Adlersaal

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We found the following question and answer on an AARP form:

Q. What has been proven to be effective in prolonging life expectancy and improving your physical and mental well-being?

A. Volunteering!!

The German Society has projects to help you prolong your life and improve your physical and mental well being -- by volunteering in the Society's works and programs. Here is a list of areas of need:

- -Research for Maryland-German exhibits.
- -Write pamphlets about German Marylanders.
- -Serve on the banquet committee
- -Staff our booths at festivals
- -Recruit new members--send literature
- -Help with office mailings
- -Welcome new members.
- -Organize our archives.
- -Reply to inquiries from the public.
- -Write articles for our newsletter.
- -Plan a pilgrimage to a site of Maryland-German history

To volunter, call our office or drop me a line.

JOHN AYMOLD, President



Our Board of Directors. Seated: Betty Niemann, Brigitte Voelkel Fessenden, Christel van der Berg, Marcy Sturgill, Ilse von Veltheim (office manager). Standing: Ted Potthast, Harry Gruel, Edwin Wenck, Dandridge Brooke, Michael Nieberding, Robert Gay, Ronald Antlitz, Gerard Wm. Wittstadt, Clement D. Ehrhart, II. Absent from the photo are directors Hans Hurdle, Robert Karl Fritzsche, Frederika H. Hecht, Mark Potthast and President John Aymold. Pres. Aymold was called away just before the photo session to attend to his daughter who fell off a horse and was taken to the hospital. Happily, her injuries were minor and she is back riding again. Photo credit to Clem Ehrhart, assisted by Dutch Niemann.

EXHIBIT AT FESTIVAL - MAJOR SUCCESS - UNIVERSALLY ACCLAIMED

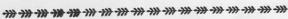
The exhibit sponsored by the German Society at the August German Festival was acclaimed as the best cultural component ever presented at the Festival. In cooperation with the Agricultal Dept. of the German Embassy and with Agart, Inc., a non-profit firm sponsored by the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, the German Society presented an exhibit of 60 panels showcasing the contribution of German Americans to agriculture. In addition, our Society commissioned 6 panels exhibiting the contribution of German Marylanders: bread, meat and candy firms, restaurants and a nurseryman. These are the first of a major display of the contribution of persons of German ancestry to the State of Maryland.

The Society members who staffed the exhibit reported comments by the visitors: "...absolutely fantastic", "...a first class presentation"; "Thank you for bringing this to us."; "We want to bring our families to see this again. When and where can we go to see it?"; "This is great. Why didn't anyone do this before?" Dr. Gerhard Glöy and Mrs. Constantin, officials from the German Embassy, also indicated their approval of the exhibit.

Dennis Bixler, president of Agart, Inc. played the major role in selecting and setting up the agricultural exhibit. Carolyn Stinson, a publicist engaged by the Society, and her asstant Mary Hermalian, researched the Maryland exhibits and Dennis Bixler and the Agart staff processed them.

Past presidents Mike Nieberding and Ted Potthast learned of the existence of the Agart exhibit and met in 1997 with Bixler to discuss bringing it to Maryland. They also saw it as a good way to kick off the Society's own program of publicizing the many achievements by Marylanders of German heritage.

FOUNDED 1783





The German Society of Maryland

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MAIL TO:

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Street:	
City:	Zipcode:
Spouse (Optional):	Phone:

"I hereby apply to be a member of the German Society of Maryland"

Annual dues \$15. Spouse may be included at no extra cost. Make check payable to "The German Society of MD" P. O. Box 22585, Baltimore, MD 21203–4585

This newsletter is published by The German Society of Maryland, an organization founded in 1783 and incorporated in 1817 by Act of the General Assembly of Maryland. It is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation pursuant to the provisions of §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Society is a member of Der Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland, D.A.N.K (German-American National Congress), The United German-American Committee of the USA, Inc. and other civic groups which promote German-American culture and heritage. Members and friends are encouraged to submit items of interest to Theodore J. Potthast, Jr., Editor, at 1819 Leadburn Rd. Towson, MD 21204-1830.

DOROTHY GALWAY - SERVICES

A memorial service will be held for Dorothy Galway at Zion Church at 11:15 AM, Sunday, September 13. She was a former director and was the office secretary of the Society. Members of the German Society are invited to attend.