

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

DIE DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT VON MARYLAND

VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

DECEMBER 1998

Volume 1, Issue 19

YEAR END MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

1998 has been an exceptional year for the Society. New programs have begun and old programs have thrived. Our spring picnic brought our members together for fun and good conversation. The new "Exhibit" program to show the accomplishments of German Americans was the highlight of the summer German Festival and it continued to be shown at the White Marsh heritage festival and at our own annual banquet. We were proud to be able to give our annual award for a Maryland-German who has made major contributions to our state or nation to our long-term member Professor Dr. Armin Mruck. The Thanksgiving-eve German ecumenical service co-sponsored by our Society, Zion Church and the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland drew several hundred participants. Our goal of increasing our membership to 1,000 by the millennium year 2,000 is right on target. Our programs of promoting German language, culture and traditions among youth has met with great success, especially in the high schools and colleges of Maryland. All told, our Society is doing very well. However, we need for the new year volunteers for our future exhibits and to assist in our youth program. Please sign up to work on these committees.

On behalf of the officers and directors, I wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all the friends and members of the Society!

CHRISTMAS EVE 1998 IS 180th BIRTHDAY OF "SILENT NIGHT"

As related in an article of "German Life" magazine, a recent discovery of a manuscript signed by Josef Mohr shows that he wrote the lyrics to "Stille Nacht" in the Alpine village of Mariapfarr in 1816. His next assignment was to St. Nicholas' Church in Oberndorf, in the Salzburg province of Austria. When he found the church organ broken on Christmas Eve, he went to his friend, Franz Xavier Gruber for help. Gruber composed the music for Fr. Mohr's lyrics and the two of them sang "Silent Night" for the first time, accompanied by a guitar, that night.

Fröhliche Weihnachten

Merry Christmas



SOCIETY RECEIVES GRANT FROM GERMANY

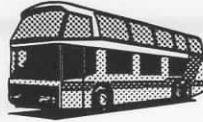
The German Society of Maryland is grateful to the Federal Republic of Germany for its grant of \$4,800 to publicize the contributions of German immigrants and their descendants to American agriculture, and for the preparation of new exhibits detailing contributions by German-Marylanders in the use of agricultural products. The Agart Foundation, established and funded by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and Germany's corresponding bureau, loaned the Society 60 of its historical panels which were exhibited at this summer's German Festival in Baltimore. That project has inspired our Society to launch a program of exhibits which will explore the works of Maryland Germans, to educate both ourselves and the general public. The Society has set a target of 10 new exhibits per year, so that we will have a comprehensive display.

Upcoming Events Calendar

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EDELWEISS BUS TRIPS

The Edelweiss Club has invited the members of The German Society to participate in its events. Edelweiss is sponsoring a program of bus trips, as follows: April - 2-day trip to Monticello/Charlottesville VA; May - Brandywine, Wyeth Museum; June - Hershey Park; September - Mackinaw, Michigan; October - Allenberry Dinner Theater, PA; November - Washington, DC; December - New York (Radio City and shopping). If you are interested, call Jules deFries at 410-377-9024 (Chairman of the Entertainment Committee). Edelweiss is also planning dinner trips to the various restaurants which sponsor its Sunday Radio Hour: Blob's Park; Cafe Mozart, Haussner's, Bavarian Inn and Candle Light Lodge.



VEREINSKALENDER

Feb. 13 Karneval Ball - Zion
Apr. 09 Annual Meeting of the Members

SEE IT WHILE YOU CAN

The 1887 landmark brewery shown in our last newsletter may not be around much longer. It is owned by the city government and may be razed. The style, once referred to as "German Carnival" is now referred to as "Prussian Gothic." It's builder, Bavarian born brewer John Frederick Wiessner, would surely not appreciate the description as "Prussian". The 1998 special "Baltimore's Best" issue of Baltimore Magazine cites it as the "best historical building" in town. But it states "...if you close your eyes, you can almost hear the building crumbling apart..." and thus now is the best time to see it. To get there from downtown Baltimore, take Charles Street north, turn right on North Avenue then right on Gay street to the corner of Lanvale.

SONGBOOK COMMITTEE

The German Society is now planning to publish a songbook for our members and for the students in grade schools, high schools and colleges, as part of our mission to foster our German heritage

1957 SONGBOOK FOUND

Christel van der Berg found a copy of a German songbook which was distributed at the Society's annual banquet in 1957. "*Wir Singen Mit*" is the name on the cover of the book which was printed in Baltimore by the German American Import Co., then located on Hamilton Avenue. The book contained 54 songs in German and 15 in English.



WEATHER PREDICTIONS

Our annual meeting is set for the April 9, 1999 - since the Hagerstown Almanac predicted snow for our usual mid-March date. Snow and ice have been the bane of our annual meetings, so we moved the date to a safer time.

WHAT THE GERMANS GAVE US FOR OUR CHRISTMAS HERITAGE

Santa Claus, Christmas cards, the Christmas Tree, Silent night and the tune to the Maryland State anthem. Thomas Nast, a German-born New York cartoonist and political satirist, in the 1860's drew the first picture of man with the large round belly, rosy cheeks, hearty laugh and long white beard whom we know today as Santa Claus. Louis Prang, an 1848 immigrant, popularized lithographed Forty-eighter Christmas cards in the mid 1879's. The Christmas tree, long a tradition in Germany, was introduced by the Hessian troops in Trenton, N.J. on Dec. 26, 1776 and it became a fixture in America by 1875. Silent Night, written in German by Austrian Francis Xavier Gruber, was introduced in America by the Ainer family of singers from the Tyrol. And the author of "Maryland, My Maryland" took the tune for this state anthem from the German carol "O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum" (Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree).

PAUL GUSTAV SCHAFFER

August 19, 1904 - November 15, 1998

Paul Schaffer started life as a merchant seaman and then became a merchant. He came to Maryland from his native Düsseldorf in 1928. By 1932 he began his "Sausage Kitchen" on Kenwood Avenue in Fullerton, Baltimore County, where it is still operating by his former employees.

Paul was a director of the German Society in the 1970's and early 80's. He was the last surviving founding member of Klub Fidelitas. He served on the board of the Greisenheim in Catonsville before its relocation as "Edenwald" in Towson. Paul personally cultivated Edenwald's gardens for many years. He loved flowers, and each year at Christmas he gave poinsettias to the Ladies Auxiliary of our Society and of Fidelitas at their annual Christmas lunches.

Paul operated a meat business in the old Lexington Market before the market burned in the 1940's. He then established the Old World Delicatessen opposite the new Lexington Market on Eutaw St. in Baltimore.

He was a member of the Junger Männerchor, the Deutsche Geselligkeit and the Eichenkranz Society. Paul was a generous contributor to The German Society and a supporter of Zion Church. His kindness and concern for his fellow German-Americans will be sorely missed. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Charlotte, and by his daughter Charlotte Marek, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

THEODORE J. POTTHAST, SR.

January 5, 1905 - October 14, 1998

Ted Potthast, Sr., the German Society's oldest director, died at his home in Rodgers Forge. He was born in Baltimore of a Westphalian father (John) and a Bavarian mother (Margareta Leib). He became a member of our Society 52 years ago, in 1946, when the president and a delegation from the Society came to the Potthast furniture factory to invite Ted's father, John, to join the Society. John, then 76, said he was too old and volunteered his son. Ted became a director 12 years later and has served in that capacity for the past 40 years, the longest term in the history of the Society. He brought his own family into the Society. Ted, Jr. served as president for 3 years and his grandson Mark is presently a board member. Ted first learned of the Society when his Uncle William, then an active member, brought him to the Society's annual banquet in 1928. One of his first dates with his future wife, Marie Corcoran, was at the 1929 banquet, and he rarely missed a banquet thereafter. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Marie, and by his son, four grandchildren and two great-grandsons, two sisters and many nephews and nieces.

His entire working life was spent in the family firm, Potthast Bros., Inc., where he rose from sawdust sweeper as a young boy to the post of President. The firm was founded in 1892 and its motto, "The True Antiques of Tomorrow", has proven true, since much of its furniture is still in use today.

DR. ARMIN MRUCK HONORED AT THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL BANQUET

At its awards banquet on Nov. 6, the Society selected Professor Doctor Armin E. Mruck as its honoree, as a Marylander of German ancestry who has made significant contributions to our state and nation. He has been an active member of our Society and has served for many years on our scholarship committee.

Dr. Mruck has lived and taught in Maryland since 1955, serving as a Professor of history at Towson University since 1967. He founded the University's exchange program with the University of Oldenburg, Germany, and although he has recently retired at Towson Univ., he is still active in the program. Representatives of Towson Univ. and Oldenburg attended the event.

He was born in Germany and obtained his Ph.D. from the Georg August University, Goettingen, Germany. He served as a member of the Faculty Senate of State Universities and Colleges for many years, and has written countless scholarly articles published by both American and German universities. On April 23, 1997 he was awarded the Verdienstkreuz of the Federal Republic of Germany (Distinguished Service Cross) by Roman Herzog, the President of Germany.

Through his efforts hundred of students and faculty members have been exchanged between the United States and Germany, encouraging the study of both languages and both cultures, to bring about better understanding and relations between these nations.

THANKS

- to **Louis Kohlmann** for his generous contribution to the Society.
- to **Dr. Mohamed Esa** and the Maryland Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German for their support of our Awards Banquet.
- to **Western Maryland College's German Club** for their attendance at our Banquet.
- to **Judge Gerard Wittstadt** and **Ted Potthast** for their efforts in making the Banquet a huge success.
- to **Ruth Ridenour**, for her donation of many hundred tapes of classical music which she accumulated over many years, and which members of the Society will enjoy for many more years to come.
- to **Charlotte Schafer** for her very generous contribution in memory of her husband, Paul Schafer. The Schafer family have been most generous to the Society for many years.
- to all those who contributed to the success of the annual Thanksgiving Eve Ecumenical Service, including: our 1st vice-president **Bob Gay** for many hours of hard work as chairman of the Service; to **Pastor H. J. Siegfried Otto** for arranging the liturgy and music for this event; to **Patricia D. Fosarelli, M.D., D. Min.**, for her inspirational preaching (Dr. Fosarelli is Assistant Dean at St. Mary's Seminary); to **Bärbel Otto** for conducting the children's choir; to **Frank T. Cimino** for conducting the Maryland State Boychoir during the services; to **John Heizer**, Organist and Director of the Zion Choir; to all who participated in the service as musicians, choristers, soloists, acolytes, banner bearers, readers and prayer petitioners; to the clubs, organizations and clergy representing various religious denominations throughout the region; to **Irma Tillman, Betty Gruel and Harry Gruel** for preparing and serving the refreshments afterwards; and to **Sister Benedict Viebeck, SSND** for her card of sentiments for the Ecumenical Service which health prevented her from attending this year.
- to **Brigitte Fessenden, Christel van der Berg and Ilse von Veltheim** for decorating the Society's office for Christmas and for hosting a reception for the board of directors.

CONGRATULATIONS



on the birth of **Andrew Thomas Hurdle**, born Sept. 28th, 1998 son of Cynthia Cootauco Hurdle and our board member, Hans Hurdle; grandson of members Dr. Edward Hurdle and Fredemarie Hurdle.

To **Michael Nieberding**, immediate past president, who was awarded the Medal of the German Society at our Awards Banquet, for his many services to the Society. Michael is a member of the board of directors of Edenwald and of the MD Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German.

GALWAY COMMEMORATION

A memorial service was held at Zion church on Sept. 13 for Dorothy Galway, former director and office manager of the Society. Several speakers eulogized her at the service. Fred Schneider, a member of the Society, spoke of her as his spiritual mentor. Dorothy was known for her piety, kindness and her gift for consoling people in times of sorrow. Her ashes were spread in Zion's rose garden, a place where Dorothy spent many hours.

AMERICAN MIRACLE AIDS
CANONIZATION OF GERMAN NUN

On Sunday, October 11 at a ceremony in Rome, Pope John Paul declared a German nun, Edith Stein, as a saint, pursuant to the Catholic rules of canonization which require evidence of miraculous intervention. A 2½ year old girl, Teresia McCarthy of Brocton, Mass. swallowed an overdose of Tylenol and suffered liver damage so severe that she was put on a priority list for a transplant. Overnight her liver recovered and her physicians wrote: "This child has made a miraculous recovery." The recovery was attributed to the prayers her family and friends made for the intercession of Edith Stein. Stein was born in 1891 into a family of German orthodox Jews; became an atheist and later became a Catholic Convert. In 1922 she became a Carelite nun. When Hitler began persecuting Jews, she was sent from Germany to a convent in Holland. The Catholic bishops there issued a scathing denunciation of Nazism. In retaliation to the Bishops' action, Hitler rounded up the Catholics in Holland who had converted from Judaism, among them Edith Stein. She was sent to her death in a gas chamber at Auschwitz.

GERMAN SILVERSMITHS STIEFF AND SCHOFIELD LOST TO MARYLAND

The last of the Maryland silver manufacturing firms will close and leave Maryland forever. Baltimore was noted for its 200 year old tradition of silversmiths, notably Stieff, Schofield (both German firms) and Kirk (British). The Stieff family provided the German Society with many members, including current members Charles C. Stieff, II and Clare Stieff.

The Lennox company acquired all three firms, and is planning to move its plant out of Baltimore to Massachusetts. The move is the result of a dramatic 50% drop in sales of silver products in the past five years. Silver service was traditionally on the list of most brides, but the higher prices of silver flatware has caused them to switch to steel or pewter.

The giant electric sign atop the Stieff building can be seen from I-83 in the vicinity of Hampden.

The artists who hammered away making silver hollow ware and specialties were largely German and English. Stieff produced the famous "Woodlawn Vase", the trophy which the owner of the Preakness race winner is awarded by the Governor of Maryland, to hold the vase until it is turned over to next year's winner. The trophy is a rare work of art, said to be worth more than \$1,000,000.

In the past few years, Lennox put the Stieff name on steel and pewter products, even making some "Stieff" items in Japan, much to the dismay of Marylanders. Baltimoreans treasure their silverware.

Writer Jacques Kelly pointed out: "One reason why Baltimoreans grow so misty-eyed about their silver is the sheer emotional hold of the precious metal. Nobody bought flatware like it was a sofa or a topcoat. Silver came for weddings and anniversaries, for special occasions." Kelly recalled the story of the woman

who lived opposite old Oriole Park."In the morning hours of July 4, 1944, the wooden grandstands burned down in a spectacular blazer. The woman fled her home and stood on the sidewalk clutching her insurance policy and her Stieff silver. Then, after a few minutes, she let out a terrified cry. She's forgotten her baby, asleep upstairs."

ADAMS ENGINEERING - 100 YEARS OLD

The Henry Adams Engineering firm was founded 100 years ago by a German immigrant, Henry Adams. Adams immigrated to Baltimore shortly after completing his engineering education in Germany. After a few years of working for other Baltimore firms, he started his own in 1898. The Adams firm is the oldest Maryland engineering firm in continuous operation.

HOLY CROSS CHURCH MARKS 140TH ANNIVERSARY

Holy Cross Church, founded in 1858 by German immigrants working in the nearby Federal Hill shipyards, held a dinner-dance on October 17 to mark its founding. It began as a German-speaking church, founded by the Redemptonist priests headquartered at St. Alphonsus Church. The church, located at 110 E. West Street in Baltimore, is a masterpiece of German craftsmanship. "We could never build anything like this again," said Father Rozanski, the current pastor. "It's German artisan ship they brought with them." The Church is close to the Cross Street Market and is a short walk to the Inner Harbor and to Oriole Park at Camden Yards.

BALTIMORE-BORN HARMONICA LEGEND PERFORMS AT BSO

Larry Adler, age 84, the world's foremost harmonica player, performed a Gershwin concert in September with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Marvin Hamlisch conducting. Adler, the son of a German-Jewish plumber, was born in Baltimore and grew up on Washington Boulevard. He won his first harmonica contest, sponsored by The Evening Sun, at age 14. Later he became a friend of Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and George Gershwin. He has been living in London since 1949.

GOETHE INSTITUTE HOSTS GERMAN UNITY DAY CELEBRATION

Officers of the German Society attended an October 2 celebration at the Goethe Institute in Washington, co-sponsored by the German American Joint Action Committee. President John Aymold, Past President Ted Potthast and our Counselor, Judge Gerard Wittstadt and Dr. Rosemary Wittstadt represented our Society. Merle Arp, President of the Washington Chapter of D.A.N.K., welcomed the attendees at the door. In the course of the cocktail party commemorating the unification of east and west Germany, representatives from the Embassy of the Federal Republic addressed the group, as did the presidents of three national German American groups: DANK, based in Chicago; USGAC, in Philadelphia and The Steuben Society, New York. Prof. Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann, president of the Institute for German American Studies, and Elizabeth Seewald, the moving forces behind President Reagan's declaration of October 6 as German American Day, were honored at the assembly. (D.A.N.K. is the German abbreviation for the German American National Congress; USJAC is the United States German American Committee.)



TOLZMANN ON THE 48-ers

Prof. Don Heinrich Tolzmann has edited a commemorative tribute entitled "The German-American Forty-Eighters", published January, 1998, available from NCSA Literatur Distributor, 430 Kelp Grove Road, Nashville, IN 47448. \$16.

SEX SCANDAL COST A GERMAN KINGDOM

In 1848 King Louis I of Bavaria lost his kingdom. He was having a scandalously extravagant affair with the famous adventuress Lola Montez. With her beauty, charm and brains she conquered Louis and virtually ruled Bavaria by 1847. This was too much for a Catholic country; the next year she was banished and King Louis was forced to abdicate. (Was this the old German version of "impeachment"?)

USA NOW EXCEEDS GERMANY IN NUMBER OF BREWERIES

Michael Jackson's newly released book "Ultimate Beer" points out that America now has well over 1,400 breweries, exceeding Germany by a fraction. The new interest sparked by new micro breweries brings this preeminence. Maryland has 14 breweries. Baltimore is now one of the nation's five beer centers. The principal difference between the USA and Germany is in the number of different types of beer. America has about 40 distinct kinds of beer, versus just a few in Germany.

GERMAN-AMERICAN CAUCUS IN CONGRESS?

Congresswoman Sue Kelly, Republican of Newburgh, NY, is attempting to establish a bipartisan German-American caucus for the 1999 session of congress. She stated: "Such a caucus will recognize the many contributions by Americans of Germanic heritage...we will then have a spokesperson in Congress who works with us and understands our concerns." Rep. Kelly participated in the Steuben Day parade in New York City in September.

KARL MARX BUST STOLEN

The east German town of Wernigerode had planned to re-erect the life-sized bust of Karl Marx, to celebrate his 150th birthday on May 5th. The bust had been moth-balled after the demise of communist east Germany. The festivities were marred when the bust disappeared without a trace on the eve of the birthday bash. Marx's hometown was Trier, an ancient city in Rhineland-Pfalz.

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GERMANS KIDNAPPED, FORCED TO VOTE IN BALTIMORE ELECTION

John Kitler and Frederick Teufel, naturalized German immigrants, went to the Court of Common Pleas on Nov. 2, 1859 to get their papers to vote in the next day's election. Instead they were taken prisoner, and put in a "coop" holding other prisoners of the American "Know-Nothing" party. On election day they were brought out of the coop in groups of threes and fours and taken around town to various polling places where they were forced to vote many times for the Know-Nothing candidates. Police and election judges assisted in the fraud. Another German, Jacob Ritzuis, was captured and forced to vote 13 times. (Comment: In those days the Baltimore politicians *really* knew how to stuff the ballot boxes!) The 1859 election was marred by riots and bloodshed. The contenders were the Democratic and the American parties. Each brought armed gangs and cannons to besiege the strongholds of the other. By the end of election day, 10 voters were dead and 250 wounded. (see MD Historical Society's magazine, Spring 1998)

HANSA HAUS TO REOPEN AS A BANK

The historic Hansa Haus, built in 1902 as the local headquarters for the North German-Lloyd steamship line, will reopen as a branch of the Bank of Maryland. The walls of the building, which show the traditional open beams of old Germany, contain the coats of arms of each of the cities belonging to the Hanseatic League. At one time the building housed the consulates of Germany and Sweden. It is located on the northwest corner of Charles and Redwood Streets in Baltimore. (At that time, Redwood Street bore the name "German Street." Later, in the years prior to World War I, President Woodrow Wilson, sought to put down German activity, stating the need to "crush out" the Prussian immigrants who "have poured the poison of disloyalty into the very arteries of our national life." This whipped up a national anti-German movement which resulted in German St.'s name-change.)

EARLY BALTIMOREANS TRADED WITH GERMANY

Charles Buck, a visitor to Baltimore from Germany, noted 24 German ships on a single day docked in the Baltimore harbor in 1799. He wanted to send a shipment of coffee back to his native Hamburg, but trade was so active that he could not book space from any of the six German sea captains who were returning to Germany. Trade with Germany was then between the cities of the Hanseatic League, mainly Hamburg and Bremen.

The lead article in the current issue of the Maryland Historical Society's quarterly magazine features a study of U.S. trade to north Germany wntitled "The Hanseatic Cities in Early U.S.-German Relations." Along with many interesting observations, the article points out that "...all the important transctions between the two peoples took place, where the businessmen of both societies met and formed friendships, and where the first tentative ties to meaningful diplomacy were being made at the lowest levels by trade consuls."

Since there was no "Germany" in 1799, but only a conglomeration of more than 200 separate entities, there were no diplomatic relations, but only trade and cultural exchanges.

DEUTSCHE MARK IS 50 YEARS OLD

The German Mark, introduced on June 20, 1948 is reknown for its stability. It will cease to exist when the European Union's "Euro" is installed in the near future

FOUNDED 1783



The German Society of Maryland

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410 685-0450

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ Zipcode: _____

Spouse (Optional): _____ Phone: _____

Referred by: _____

"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 International 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 21205-1830.