

VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

NOV.-DEC., 2004

ISSUE NO. 48

AWARDS BANQUET DRAWS THIRTY STUDENTS OF McDANIEL COLLEGE

Our annual banquet celebrated the 221st anniversary of the Society with nearly 200 members and guests, including 30 German language students from McDaniel College in Westminster, along with their teacher, Prof. Dr. Mohammed Esa, a member of our board of directors. The presidents of the St. George Society and the St. Andrew Society were honored guests, seated at the dais along with President James Schaub and his wife, Abbey. The medal of the Society was presented by vice-president Brigitte Fessenden to the honoree, Dandridge Brooke. Music was provided by Heidi and Heimat Echo. One of the highlights was the playing of the alpenhorn.

Our director, Prof. Dr. Armin Mruck arranged for the event to be held at the Potomac Lounge of Towson University. Our members, Governor Robert L. Erlich and former governor William Donald Schafer were notably absent from this year's event, due to exhaustion from campaigning in the election of the United States president a few days before the banquet.

Our director, Rev. Siegfried H. S. Otto, presented the invocation before the banquet. Robert Fritschke, another director, led the assembly in the singing of the German and the American national anthems. President Schaub was master of ceremonies.

Director Gary Berg arranged for the printing of the banquet program, which contained many ads and greetings to the honoree. The program each year contains the names of all of the members of the Society and constitutes the official roster for the Society's archives.

ECUMENICAL SERVICE COMBINED WITH MICHAELMAS CELEBRATION

The celebration of the feast of St. Michael, patron of Germany was combined with our Society's annual ecumenical service on September 26 and produced a large turnout on a pleasant Sunday afternoon at the Zion Church. Refreshments were served in the Adlersaal after the liturgy. Zion's choir, boosted by trumpeters from the Baltimore Symphony, produced a musical extravaganza. Rev. Edwin O. Wenck, a lifetime director of our Society, preached the homily and held the congregation spellbound. He spoke of his youth among the German Americans of Maryland and of his family's ties to relatives in Germany. The ecumenical services, sponsored by our Society, Zion and the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, originated 15 years ago to rejoice at the fall of the Berlin wall and the freedom of the east Germans from the chains of communism.

MEMBERS STRIVE TO FULFILL PRESIDENT SCHAUB'S GOALS

Last month our president wrote to ask the members to help publicize the Society and recruit new members. Dan Brooke, accepting the award as the annual banquet, told how he always carries several membership applications in his coat pocket and hands them out to potential new members. Our membership is increasing due to the efforts of members like Dan, who is the chairman of the membership committee. If you would like a supply of application forms, call our office, leave your name and address on the machine and our manager, Bärbel Otto, will mail them to you.

"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."

KALENDER

November 27-28 - Christkindlmarkt at Zion

April 1 - German Society Annual Meeting

Visit the German Society's website:

www.germansociety-md.com

Articles from some past newsletters are posted on our website. Dr. Maureen Helinski updates the site.

For more local German-American happenings, check the web site of the Deutschamerikanischer Bürgerverein von Maryland: www.md-germans.org

Tune in to the Edelweiss Hour every Sunday:
Radio 750 AM 9 am

GET CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS, GIFTS ETC AT CHRISTKINDLMARKT

Zion Church and the Baltimore Kickers' Club will hold its annual German Xmas market on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 27 & 28 in the garden and Adlersaal at Zion Church, City Hall Plaza. Imported German cookies in collectors' boxes from Nürnberg, Lebkuchen, Pfeffernüsse, Marzipan, and Stollen, Xmas wreaths and greens, Advent calendars, decorations, gifts, cards, nutcrackers and novelties usually found at the Christmas markets in Germany will be available. To warm your hands and body, try a cup of Glühwein (hot, mulled wine) in the church garden, along with Wurst, other German food and baked goods. Recorded German Christmas music creates a festive holiday atmosphere. Parking is available in the church lot and in the surrounding streets. If you can't get to Germany to do your Christmas shopping, this is the next best place. The event is open Saturday from 10 a.m. to dusk, and on Sunday from 1 pm.

CONGRATULATIONS

to our lifetime director, **REV. EDWIN O. WENCK, ESQ.**, on the magnificent sermon he presented at our Michaelmas Ecumenical Service. It was inspiring and informative.

to our director, **REV. H.S. SIEGFRIED OTTO** on his 70th birthday. His family threw a surprise party for him when he was visiting Germany. His sons flew in from Baltimore and Toronto, and one daughter from Switzerland, to the home of a daughter who lives in Germany.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LECTURE AT TOWSON UNIVERSITY ?

Towson University's Auburn Society offers courses in its "Learning in Retirement" program. Our Society has been asked to supply lecturers on the subject of **German immigration to the USA, and especially to Maryland**. The program is presented in two sessions: first, March 7 - April 1, 2005 and second, April 11-May 6, 2004. It will consist of four lectures in each of these two sessions. One or more of our members, working as a team, can make a presentation in a lecture.

Volunteers are needed who will take an interest in the topic, research it and present their "paper" at the program. Our Society is most interested in becoming involved, since it will enlighten those attending the lectures, but could result in a document which we could publish for the benefit of our entire membership, as well as the public at large.

President Jim Schaub will chair the committee to organize the members who would like to participate. Our Society is full of interesting and talented members who can make this into a memorable project. Please call our office and leave your name and phone number, and Jim will call you to set up a committee meeting and hand out topics for research. The lectures will be held at the Auburn House on the Towson campus.

The curriculum chair for Towson's Learning in Retirement program is Jacqueline Gratz. She approached us with the concept.

SCHAEFER COMPLETES 10 YEARS AS MARYLAND'S COMPTROLLER

William Donald Schaefer, a member of our Society for more than 35 years, has two years left on his current term as Comptroller, and the popularity polls indicate he can keep the job until the day he drops. Don served eight years as Governor, eight years as Mayor of Baltimore and nearly a dozen on the City Council, about eight of them as Council Chairman. At age 83, he can say what he thinks without regard to worrying about political correctness. His straight-forward approach has endeared him to rural voters at a time when city people are leaning heavily to the left. His support among fellow Democrats has tapered off a bit, but Republicans are more and more liking what and how he says things. He has been a strong supporter of another of our members, Republican governor Robert Erlich, to the dismay of many Democratic legislators.

OUR ANNUAL BANQUET - HISTORY

Our Society's records do not describe in detail the banquets of our early years. There is mention of dinner meetings in the early 1900's when the Society had 40 or so members, at long-extinct hotels in Baltimore City. The banquet was suspended during the World War II years, although the annual meeting was held and attended by the mayor of Baltimore and the Governor of Maryland. At those meetings the loyalty of the German Americans to the USA was emphasized.

Some of our older members attended the annual banquets of the late 1950's and 1960's which were held in the grand ballroom of the now-raised Emerson Hotel. The ballroom was so immense that the participants executed the Grand March. Accompanied by the band, conducted by a prominent member, Prof. Dr. Johann Eltermann playing German marching music, couples proceeded from the back to the front of the ballroom, returned to the rear and then marched forward in fours, then back and forth in rows of eight, and finally sixteen abreast, when the band then broke into a waltz to commence the dancing. Afterward Dr. Eltermann led the group singing German folk songs.

When the Emerson was demolished in the 1970's, the banquet moved to Bluecrest North on Reisterstown Road, when ticket prices rose from \$12 to \$15. The next move was to Towson, at Martin's Eudowood, where it remained for a decade. For our 200th anniversary in 1983, the banquet was held at Mariott's Hunt Valley, with about 350 in attendance.

Our first "Awards Banquet" was held at Eudowood in 1987 and our first honoree was William Donald Schaefer, Governor of Maryland. Donald Tillman was then president and Judge Gerard W. Wittstadt served as banquet chairman. Nearly 500 attended, the largest turnout at any of our affairs.

Martin's lost its lease at Eudowood and built a palatial facility near Security Blvd. and the Baltimore Beltway, called "Martin's West" where the banquet was held for most of a dozen years. One Awards Banquet was held at Snyder's Willow Grove in Linthicum in the early 1990's.

In 2002 the Awards Banquet moved to the Patapsco Room at Towson University, which proved to be a convenient location, where this year's banquet was also held.

IDEA OF MUSEUM OF GERMAN IMMIGRATION IN BALTIMORE

Immigrants have come to Baltimore from Germany for more than 300 years. Bernard Penner, Esq., a member of our Society, has been exploring the possibility of establishing a museum to bring together historical artifacts, art and history of the local German community. Zion Church may be willing to use the "sexton's house" on the church grounds for such purpose. The building requires substantial renovations for this type of use. Bernard sees the prospect of obtaining grants from the City heritage agency and has learned that grants are available if a sponsoring organization raises matching funds. He has received encouragement from our Society and other German clubs and organizations. Bernard's plans will be presented to our Board of Directors at its next meeting. (Bernard lived at Zion as a child and teen-ager when his father served as Zion's pastor. The Adlersaal was his playground on rainy days.)

Ron Zimmermann, also a member of our Society, has been working for several years on the idea of an immigration museum. He had made significant progress in acquiring a building in Locust Point where immigrants were once welcomed, but the building burned down a couple of years ago. Although Ron's project is not limited to German immigrants, Locust Point was in fact a principal port of disembarkation for the North German Lloyd Line, carrying German immigrants from Bremerhaven bi-weekly.

GERMAN WOMAN JOINS LOCAL CARMELITE MONASTERY

Monika Bies, a native of Germany, came to Baltimore in 1999 after earning her university degree and working as an economist for the German government. She joined the Carmelite monastery on Dulaney Valley Road in Lutherville in October 2001 where she has spent a year as a postulant and two years in the novitiate. She professed her vows as a Carmelite nun on October 17, 2004. Carmelite nuns are a religious order of women who live a life of prayer within the cloister of a monastery. Though she misses her family and the cultural familiarity of Germany, Sister Monika said "I am thankful to God for bringing me here. The way we live life as community is the way I want to live it." Her presence adds a stimulating European flavor to the monastery's daily living.

The monastery chapel is open to the public during times of Mass and other religious services.

PASS ON YOUR HERITAGE, VALUES BY WRITING WHAT YOU KNOW

Before he died early this year, Clement Petrick, a Jesuit priest, wrote a book, to pass on his history, values and some of the wisdom he accrued over time. Clem was a Baltimore boy who graduated from Loyola High School in 1950, pursued the usual seminary studies, but also because he wanted to be a German teacher, took a master's degree in German at the prestigious language school of Middlebury College in Vermont. After he was ordained, he took graduate studies at the University of Mainz, where he preached in German and ministered to the local community. His teaching of German did not last long. He was selected to serve as the headmaster of one school, president of another and later became pastor of several churches.

Addressing a mother-daughter breakfast at St. Michael's parish in Overlea, he urged them to write their thoughts and deeds for posterity. He told them:

"No one will want to read your words now. But when you are on the point of departing this world the interpretation of your life that you pass on to your daughter will be cherished forever as your own will and testament, an inheritance for the ages. This document will keep you alive in the thoughts and memories of your children and long after them into the lives of your grandchildren and great grandchildren. Your words will give roots to subsequent generations and give them a sense of pride in their forebears. Your values and your deeds will live on in your carefully chosen words."

We often ask one another: "What part of Germany did your family come from?", only to hear them respond that "my father never told me." Your descendants will be grateful to you if you pass on to them your thoughts, values and family histories.

RUSSIA ADOPTING GERMAN WAYS?

Beer. It's part of German culture, at least as perceived by Americans. Russia is now the world's fastest growing market for the golden liquid. Recently, 50% of Russians aged 24 to 55 have switched from vodka to beer. The government has banned beer ads on TV between 7 am and 10 pm, to stem the tide. Vodka has been Russia's national drink since Czar Ivan the Terrible in the 16th century created a state monopoly and banned competing drinks like beer from all taverns. The Russian state has heavily relied on excise taxes from vodka ever since. Russia now has more than 100 brands of beer. A member of parliament, after voting for the ban on beer advertising said: "It looks like everyone here drinks beer day and night. It's not a country. It's a madhouse."

GERMANY, 15 YEARS LATER

The wall fell 15 years ago this month and Germany is still divided socially, economically and emotionally. 20% of them want the wall back up. The West gave the East new highways, and shopping malls, restored their national treasures and cleaned their environment. But the West also gave the East an entrenched regulatory and welfare system which hinders job growth and threatens its ability to compete with their neighbors in eastern Europe. If Germany is to be saved, it must make serious inroads with welfare reform and against its restrictive labor laws and wage negotiating practices.

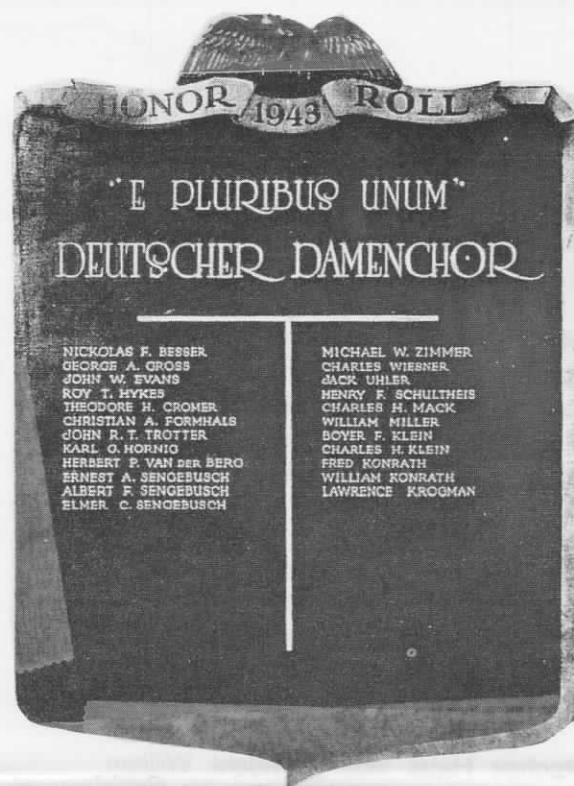
When the wall fell, the German Society of Maryland responded with a huge celebration which brought together our German American citizens to express joy that all of Germany was freed from communist oppression. Germany responded by inviting our members to parties at the Embassy of the Federal Republic for several years afterwards. Now the parties are over. Relations with the USA are not as good now as then, due to Germany's economic troubles, the fall of the value of the dollar vs. Germany's currency, the Euro, Germany's pre-war aid to Saddam Hussein, disagreements over Iraq, competition between the US and the European Union and other woes.

What has held strong, however, is the pride of German Americans in their heritage, their ongoing desire to visit the fatherland and the personal friendships forged over the years between individual Germans and Americans and, for those who have relatives on both sides of the ocean, the continuing affection and mutual respect for one another.

E.U. COMMISSION PROPOSES TURKEY TO THE UNION; MANY OPPOSE TURK MEMBERSHIP

The European Union commissioners have proposed Turkey as a member of the union, but many E.U. citizens oppose it. A poll of the French people shows that most are against the proposal.. Turkey would not be eligible for membership for nearly 15 years. At its present growth rate, Turkey would have a population of 82,000,000, making it the largest country in Europe. 98.8% of Turks are muslims. France, Italy and Germany fear the Islamization of Europe. The E.U. Commissioners think that by the time Turkey is eligible, a majority of the E.U. nations could be persuaded, on an economic basis, to welcome Turkey. Turkey's economy is growing at a rate of nearly 10% per year, while the E. U. is now stagnating.

PLACQUE FOR WWII TROOPS WAS HUNG IN DEUTSCHES HAUS



This plaque, listing the names of young German Americans serving in World War II was hung in Baltimore's Deutsches Haus by the local ladies' singing society, the *Deutscher Damenchor*, which practiced there. This copy was supplied by Christel van der Berg, who was brought to Maryland as a war bride by Herbert R. van der Berg whose name is listed here.

GAHS CELEBRATES TWENTY YEARS

The German American Heritage Society of Greater Washington celebrated its 20th anniversary in Sept. with a luncheon at Old World Restaurant in D.C. The Society is a member of the Association of German American Societies of Greater Washington, of which our Society is also a member. Our own members, Gary Grassl and Brad Miller have served as past presidents of GAHS. It has done excellent work in describing and preserving the German heritage in DC, MD and Virginia,

MERGENTHALER VS. MENCKEN

Which of our past members is more famous? H. L. Mencken's literary reputation probably prevails in the English-speaking nations, but Mergenthaler's advances in the printing industry have spread his name throughout the entire world. Both of them had connections to the Baltimore *Sun* newspaper.

RECALLING THE DEUTSCHES HAUS

When our director, Betty Buchhald agreed to marry Bruno (Dutch) Niemann, she gave Dutch the job of picking the place for the reception. Dutch picked the Deutsches Haus, and so the event took place there just 50 years ago, September 28, 1954.

Responding to last month's article, David Pardoe, a member from Columbia, MD, writes to us: "I used to work on Cathedral Street in the 60's and often went there for a lunch of good German sausage and sauerkraut. They had an amazing number of German beers on draft, and my favorite was Dortmund dark. A good friend of mine, John Eltermann, had a rehearsal room where he taught music and gave voice lessons. He was a well-known organist and choir director. He lived alone and often ate at the Deutsches Haus. It was a community place, sort of a cross between a club and a pub." (Ed note: Dr. Eltermann was an active member of our Society. He always attended our annual banquet and led us in the singing of German folk songs.)

Ted Potthast recalls having beers at the Deutsches Haus with Theodor Fehr, a retired merchant sea captain who told of his experiences of going to sea at age 13 as a cabin boy, and taking 7 months to sail from Germany to Chile, and 5 months on the return trip

Christel van der Berg was a young "war bride" when she arrived in Baltimore in 1947. Her husband, Herbert, often took her to the Deutsches Haus on Sunday afternoon for the music and dancing in the outdoor beer garden, which she says was just like in Germany. She remembers the plaques on the walls with the names of the soldiers who fought in the war, and a special one with the names of the German American soldiers who died. She remembers the Mannenchor and Damendchor singing under the direction of Dr. Eltermann. The large parties were held in the Rheinland Halle. It was the favorite meeting place for the young German Americans who often met there and found themselves a bride or a groom.

MANY THANKS to MARK DUERR, past president of the Baltimore Kickers Club, who read in our last newsletter that we were seeking information of the Deutsches Haus. Mark researched and wrote the article on pages 6 & 7. Mark said: "Although I never visited this celebrated establishment, I heard so much about it over the years that I decided to conduct my own research."

AN ORGANIZATION FOR SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

DEUTSCHES HAUS, INC.

1212 CATHEDRAL STREET

BALTIMORE, MD.

TELEPHONE VERNON 4565

A Brief Return to the *Deutsches Haus*

A mention of the Deutsches Haus to most any long-time member of Baltimore's German-American community is certain to evoke a nostalgic response. Opened formally on April 3, 1938 the Deutsches Haus occupied the corner of Cathedral and Preston Streets. The imposing 4 1/2 story structure of imported yellow English brick was built in 1890 at a cost of \$400,000, serving as the Bryn Mawr School. Its massive staircase, 15 fireplaces, 47 rooms and attention to architectural detail were a throwback to Old-World craftsmanship. The opening ceremonies that April afternoon began at the old headquarters of the "Deutscher Ring" at Lehmann Hall in the 800 block of Howard Street where the Jünger Männerchor sang a farewell to the old hall. The Kinderchor, a band, and representatives of 23 German organizations then marched with those assembled to their new headquarters, purchased for \$55,000.

The more than 3,000 German-Americans attending the ceremonies heard Mr. Bruce Bair, State Commander of the American Legion, dedicate the "Haus" to the "old Germany you and I knew." With war clouds ominously gathering in Europe, the Haus' board of directors echoed Mr. Bair's sentiments, banning all "foreign politics" or "European entanglements" within the new headquarters.

The keys to the Haus were presented to Deutsches Haus vice president William Engelberth, by Karl Thau, president. Those gathered then entered the building where Johann Eltermann simulated chimes on an electric organ while a dedication prologue was read by Mrs. Rose van der Berg. The Rev. Fritz Evers, pastor of Zion Church, delivered the dedication address in German. After the formal dedication, the open house began with familiar German tunes and dancing through the evening.

The Haus quickly established itself as the center for all German-American activity in Baltimore. The 23 German clubs headquartered there represented such varied groups as bakers, braumeisters, singers, sportsmen, actors, Skat players as well as benevolent societies and democratic clubs.

Several changes were made to the former school to accommodate the clubs and its many patrons. The gymnasium was converted to a rathskeller with a bar that was said to be the longest in Baltimore at that time. The swimming pool was covered over with tile and a kitchen installed above it. And an outdoor biergarten was created, a favorite meeting place during the summer months for enjoying a cold German import.

In December 1940, with war now escalating in Europe, the allegiance of the resident clubs, now numbering 28, came under the close scrutiny of the board of directors. They required all clubs to respond to a questionnaire intended to gather information on each club's activities, purpose and composition. This information would then be available to any interested government authorities. Any club failing to fully complete the questionnaire would be expelled from the Deutsches Haus. One question in particular directly challenged each club's loyalty to the United States, asking whether they endorsed "any agitation in favor of abolition or change" in the current structure of U. S. government. Henry Steingass, manager of the Haus during this time, assured that his meeting place was a "100 percent American enterprise" and added that he didn't want "any secret stuff or any funny stuff" taking place in its halls.

The war years were understandably a difficult period for the Deutsches Haus. While remaining open during the war, its patronage dwindled. There was suspicion that it had become a gathering place for German National Socialist sympathizers. None of this was proven true,

however. There were also unpleasant confrontations between German-Americans and Americans of other ancestry.

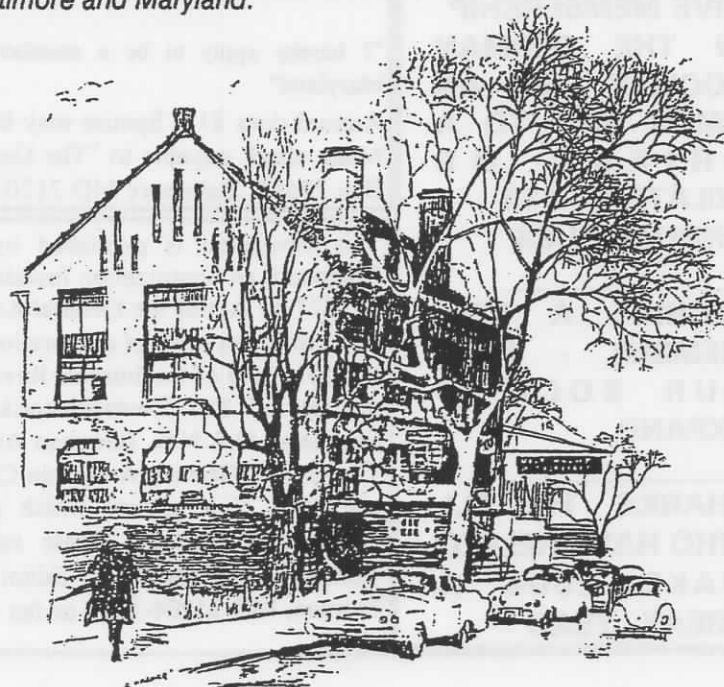
The post-war years witnessed a resurgence in the Haus' popularity. Sunday luncheons during the late 1940's and 1950's were always well-attended. These were also the years of Ivan Frank, who entertained diners with his variety of gadgets such as electric trains and windmills along with his organ music.

No one has really pinpointed when the Deutsches Haus began its decline, but observers agreed that three separate incidents led to its eventual demise. The first incident occurred in April 1957 when Heinz Heymann, the Haus president, was found murdered at the restaurant. Several muggings in the area at this time also unsettled some patrons. The fallout from the April 1968 riots in Baltimore City kept many former clientele from venturing back "downtown." The area was perceived to be unsafe at night and the Haus found it increasingly difficult to sustain itself on Sunday luncheons alone. The final explanation offered for the Haus' demise was simply a matter of social change. Younger members of the German-American community were not as enthusiastic as their parents to participate in ethnic activities. This newer generation had become fully assimilated in the American culture and did not identify with their ethnic heritage.

With the combination of a waning clientele and ever-increasing operating costs, the Deutsches Haus served its last beer on December 31, 1971. In its last year of existence, operating costs topped \$300 per day, even when the building was not open for business. Heating costs during winter months averaged \$600 per week. The remaining 17 clubs at the Haus finally sold the property for \$150,000 and paid off the stockholders' investments.

With its former site now occupied by the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, the Deutsches Haus today is but a fond memory to those who frequented this popular establishment. For many, it became a "home away from home"--a vivid reminder of the "heimat", where gemütlichkeit was not a contrived attitude but an infectious spirit!

The article, written by Kicker member Mark Duerr, was gleaned from the many contemporary newspaper accounts of Deutsches Haus activities. These clippings are located in the Vertical File of the central Pratt Library's Maryland Room. Also available here are several files containing information on active and former German clubs in Baltimore as well as general references to Germans in Baltimore and Maryland.



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



The German Society of Maryland

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WISHES ALL
MEMBERS A VERY
HAPPY CHRISTMAS**

**GIVE MEMBERSHIP
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SOCIETY AS AN
XMAS GIFT TO A
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RELATIVE - \$15
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**RECRUIT A NEW
MEMBER - HELP
OUR SOCIETY
EXPAND**

**THANKS TO ALL
WHO HAVE HELPED
MAKE 2004 A
GREAT YEAR**

MAIL TO:

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.
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