



# German Society of Maryland

## Vereinsnachrichten

*Founded in 1783 and Incorporated by Act of the General Assembly of Maryland Chapter 100, February 3, 1818*

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### *President's Message – Steven R. Harper*

Dear Members / Liebe Mitglieder,

All Society members should have received their invitation to the Society's 241st Anniversary Dinner to be held on November 2nd. Invitations were sent by email on Sept. 13th, so check your inbox. You can find details of the event and RSVP information on page 4 of this newsletter.

I hope you have availed yourself of the many opportunities to attend an Oktoberfest this year. Did you know that the first Oktoberfest in the United States was held at the beer and dance hall operated by Max Blob in Jessup, Maryland in 1947? Even though Oktoberfest in Munich ends on October 6, Maryland will keep on partying throughout the month. The Schifferstadt Museum wraps up Oktoberfest season with an event on October 19 & 20.

Be sure to check out the many cultural and culinary events that will celebrate Maryland's German heritage this fall and winter. The Society's own events are highlighted in this newsletter, but don't miss the sour beef dinners, Christmas markets, and concerts offered by other organizations. We list some of these events on our website. Let us know about any that you think we should add to our list.

Finally, if you know of high school students in Maryland learning German, be sure they are aware of our scholarship for the summer study program in Germany. The application form for the 2025 scholarship will be available soon on our website. I want to give a special thanks to the Edelweiss Club, whose generous donation to our Scholarship fund underwrites this program for the next two years.



*Steven*

*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. The German Society of Maryland is a nonprofit, charitable corporation under the provisions of §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are welcome and are fully tax-deductible.*



*Bill Kommalan, First Vice President of the German Society, staffs the Society's booth on the first day of the 2024 Maryland German Festival. See page 2 for the full story.*



## Family Fun at the 2024 Maryland German Festival

On July 13th and 14th the Maryland German Festival returned to the State Fairgrounds for a celebration of Maryland's German heritage. Over 2,300 people attended this year's festival, drinking about 37 kegs of beer!

The German Festival is sponsored by the Maryland Bürgerverein, an umbrella group for the state's German organizations. As a constituent member of this "club of clubs," the German Society of Maryland joined other member organizations in staging this popular Maryland event. The member organizations include the Kickers Soccer Club, Zion Church of the City of Baltimore, Germania Masonic Lodge, and the Arion Gesangverein.

Gus Nothdurft serves as president of the Bürgerverein and oversees the planning and execution of the festival.

### The German Society's Role

The German Festival is an important means for the German Society to make ourselves known to the general public, advertise our mission to preserve Maryland's German heritage and traditions, and recruit new members. In addition to staffing our own cultural information booth, Society members assisted with the overall festival planning as members of the Festival Committee.

This year, our members took the lead in organizing the festival's online ticket sales, finding a new source for festival-branded beer pitchers, and coordinating the volunteers who checked the IDs at the front gate.

### Barrel March Reinvented

The Barrel March has always been a popular feature of the festival. Since the barrel that had been used for many years was falling apart, a new barrel had to be procured.

Society President Steven Harper found a suitable replacement from a brewing supply store in Philadelphia. He delivered it to the woodworking

shop of Bob Hunt, president of Germania Masonic Lodge. Bob sanded, stained, and varnished the new barrel. He also equipped it with a new saddle to ensure the safety of the rider.

Bill Kommalan, First Vice President of the German Society, took charge of finding children brave enough to ride the barrel. Dressed in his lederhosen and waving his beer mug, Bill led the parade through the festival hall several times each day.

This year, the Barrel March was accompanied by live music from the Edelweiss Band. This was made possible by the efforts of the festival's entertainment chair, Jenn Thomas, who planned the daily schedule.



*Admission to the Festival is free when you wear your dirndl or lederhosen!*



*Men from the Alpenrose Schuhplattler Verein pitched in for the Barrel March*

### New this Year

Thanks to members of the Baltimore Kickers, a soccer clinic was added to the lineup of activities for the children this year. Of course, the pony rides, Professor Horn's Punch and Judy Show, and the rock-climbing wall also returned. These activities keep the young ones amused while the parents and grandparents enjoy food and drink.

### Mark Your Calendar

The 2025 Maryland German Festival will be held July 12 & 13.

Planning will begin in January. If you would like to serve on the Festival Committee, please contact the German Society president.



*Festival attendees enjoyed a selection of beers from Munich's Hofbräu Brewery*



## High School German Summer Study Scholarship

For recent years the German Society has offered a scholarship to a Maryland high school student to participate in a summer study program in Germany. The program is conducted by the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) and an agency of the German government, Pedagogical Exchange Service. Participants in the program live with a family for 3 weeks, attend a German high school, and travel with other participants to nearby cities.

### Small & Large Gifts Support the Scholarship

In 2024, the summer study scholarship was funded directly from the Society's Education Fund. This was made possible by many small gifts from Society members, as well as a gift of \$1,000 from the Mary Jean and Oliver Travers Foundation.

In early 2024, the German Society received a generous gift of \$10,000 from the Edelweiss Club with the stipulation that the money be used for the high school summer study program. This gift will provide funding for the scholarship for the next two years.

### The 2024 Recipient

The winner of the 2024 Summer Study Program Scholarship was Charlie Schmidt, a homeschooled student from Catonsville, MD. Last July Charlie spent 3 weeks in Öhringen (Baden-Württemberg) living with a host family. Along with the other American students participating in the program, Charlie also traveled to Nuremberg.

Charlie will have a display of photographs from his travels at the Anniversary Dinner on November 2nd. During the initial reception, members will have the opportunity to talk with Charlie about his experience.



2024 Scholarship Winner, Charlie Schmidt (left), with his host family in Öhringen, Germany

### 2025 Summer Study Scholarship

Application materials for the 2025 scholarship will be available on the Society's website by early November.

Please encourage any Maryland high school students who will have completed at least one year of high school German by the end of the 2024/25 school year to consider applying for the scholarship.

## German for Beer Festivals

Get ready for your next German beer festival by learning basic conversational German along with some German drinking songs.

That is the idea behind *German for Beer Festivals*, a joint undertaking of the German Society, the Arion Gesangverein and the Rathskeller Restaurant in Elkridge.

Members of the Society and Arion will pair simple conversational German with the singing of the best-known German drinking songs. Participation is free.

The Arion Gesangverein is Baltimore's last German singing society, with a history of over 170 years. In tandem with other German singing societies, Arion performed at the dedication of the Gettysburg cemetery and won honors in numerous national and regional competitions.

The first 1-hour session will take place on Tuesday, October 15, at 6:30 pm. The Rathskeller is located at 5782 Main St. in Elkridge, MD. See our webpage for more information: [germansociety-md.com](http://germansociety-md.com).

Dear German Society of Maryland,  
 Thank you SO MUCH for sponsoring my trip to Germany! It was probably the best trip I have ever taken. The experience was new and exciting, the food was excellent and being able to speak at least some of the language deepened the entire experience. I'm so glad I could broaden my mind and enjoy new experiences on this trip!

I look forward to giving a presentation next May for the awards ceremony!

Sincerely,  
 Charlie Schmidt

Thank-Your Note from Charlie Schmidt to the German Society of Maryland

## St. Martin's Day Lantern Procession

At 5:00 pm on November 9th, the German Society will co-sponsor the annual St. Martin's Day Lantern Procession at the German Language School (GLS) at the Zion Church of Baltimore. The GLS has celebrated this popular German children's holiday for nearly 15 years.

This free activity has always been open to all interested families, and the German Society hopes that its co-sponsorship will provide stronger financial stability for the event and help attract even wider participation.

The event includes a mass re-enactment of the story of St. Martin, a procession with songs and lanterns around Baltimore's City Hall Plaza, and refreshments.



*Weckmänner are a traditional treat for St. Martin Day events*

Children receive a Weckmann, a traditional baked good associated with the holiday. Parents and grandparents are invited to enjoy the first Glühwein of the season, prepared by German Society President and long-time GLS teacher Steven Harper from his secret recipe.

## Schifferstadt Architectural Museum

Members and friends of the German Society of Maryland enjoyed a private tour of the Schifferstadt Architectural Museum on September 28 in Frederick.

Schifferstadt was the family homestead of the German immigrant family of Joseph and Cathrine Brunner, who arrived in Frederick County in 1736. They named their new farm after their hometown in Germany. The surviving stone farmhouse was constructed in 1758.

Schifferstadt is one of the oldest surviving homes in Frederick County and is a unique example of how German immigrants adapted to life in their new homeland.



*Members of the German Society at the Schifferstadt Museum*

After touring the Schifferstadt Museum, Society members repaired to the Frederick Oktoberfest to enjoy German food and drink.

## 241st Anniversary Dinner November 2 RSVP by October 17

The German Society of Maryland will hold its 241st Anniversary Dinner on November 2, 2024, at 6:00 pm.

The event will take place at Matthew's 1600 Restaurant located at 1600 Frederick Road, Catonsville.

The buffet-style dinner will feature beef, chicken and vegetarian options. A cash bar will be available.

Katja Sipple, Executive Director of the German-American Heritage Foundation, will be the speaker.

Musical entertainment will be provided by Emmanuel and Frances Borowsky, a brother/sister duo featuring violin and cello. Hailing from Baltimore, the pair has performed around the world.

Tickets are \$80 per person. You can become a patron of the dinner with a \$25 donation. Patrons' names will be listed in the program. Reservations and payments can be made online at [germansociety-md.com](http://germansociety-md.com), by phoning or texting Steven Harper at 443-685-5928, or emailing him at [president.gsm@germansociety-md.com](mailto:president.gsm@germansociety-md.com).

Checks may be made payable to **German Society of Maryland** and mailed to German Society of Maryland, PO Box 1585, Ellicott City, MD 21041.

## Welcome to New Members

Greg & Michaela B., Colin C., Germaine & John D., Alan & Donna H., Inge H., Sonja H., Sarah B. & Kurt I., Shannon & Brad J., Larissa K., Walter L., George & Julia M., Thomas M., Kurt N., Regina & David R., Theodore R., Emily S., Hans-Jurgen S., John & Janet S., Bethany W. and Nadia J., Michael & Lisa Van A., Lothar W., Sarah W., and Sonya W.

## Contact Information

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## Become a Member

For membership information, visit [germansociety-md.com](http://germansociety-md.com).

Annual dues are just \$25 per year.

Dues for teachers are just \$15.

