

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

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VEREINSNACHRICHTEN

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GERMAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN MD



Seated: Governor Martin O'Malley flanked by House Speaker Michael Busch (on his left), Senate President Michael Miller (right) and other dignitaries

Standing: right to left) Ted Potthast, Society Pres. Thomas Werner, Delegate Susan Aumann, Senator Katherine Klausmeier and State House official.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At our well-attended Annual Meeting, the membership voted Dr. David Denisch and Dr. James Schaub lifetime directors, which I feel was well deserved and long overdue. Thanks to those who made donations at the door and/or brought desserts, it helped defray some of the costs and reduce our overhead.

At the following board meeting a slate of existing officers were elected to serve another one year term.

I was unable to attend the Student Awards ceremony but our Vice President Shelley Arnold stepped up to take my place. Thank you Shelley.

Our Society took a major role in helping the Buergerverein secure Kurtz's Beach for the Great German Family Picnic on

June 23. I hope that our membership turns out in large numbers as they have in the past.

Our treasurer Ted Potthast and I went to the Maryland State House for the bill signing making October German American Heritage Month. While many of us over the past three years have helped make this a reality by testifying or attending hearings and/or contacting our Delegates or Senators to support the bill, no one came close to the hard work and passion of our V. P Shelley Arnold to make this designation come to be.

Please read the article about the German Festival and volunteer to work at our culture booth. Thank you.

Thomas A. Werner, President

KALENDER

- June 23 Annual picnic : Kurtz's Beach
- July 26-27 German Festival at Timonium Fairgrounds
- Sept 15 Capt. Paul Koenig memorial
- Nov. 2 Society's Annual Banquet

Visit the German Society's website:
www.germansociety-md.com

Articles from many past newsletters are posted on our website. Dr. Maureen Helinski maintains the site. "Pioneers in Service", the history of our Society, can be found on our web site.

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

You are invited to add articles about your German ancestors to the website conducted by our director, Shelley Arnold; (germanmarylanders.org) and to register to visit and participate in the website "Der Wecker", founded by our member, Walt Mathers.

NEW DIRECTOR JOHN M. VOGT

John has been active in the local German American community. His family includes members of our Society and his mother recently served on our audit committee. John missed our April 25 directors' meeting because of his trip to Germany. John's youth and his devotion to his German American heritage makes him ideal to serve on our board.

FATHER RICHARD DIMLER RESIGNS

Rev. G. Richard Dimler, S.J. was compelled to resign as a director of our Society because of health complications: a rare neurological illness which has severely limited his mobility. Fr. Dimler is a world-renowned scholar of Germanic studies and an author of many books and scholarly articles. He obtained a PhD from UCLA, studied several years in Germany, taught German at Loyola Blakefield, Loyola College and was a professor at Fordham University for 30 years. He was editor of a philosophical journal, "Thought" magazine. Before returning to retire in Baltimore, he served as a parish priest in California. He is a home-grown scholar, having been born and raised in West Baltimore, across the alley from our newsletter editor.

ANNUAL MEETING APRIL 12

The 230th annual meeting of the German Society was held in the dining room of the Zion Church, City Hall Plaza, attended by nearly 100 members

and guests. After a German dinner catered by Old World Deli, The Rev. Holger Roggelin, pastor of Zion and a member of the Society, began the dinner by offering prayers of grace. President Thomas A. Werner opened the meeting by introducing local dignitaries and presidents of other German American organizations He then made a report of the events of the past year and described plans for the upcoming year. Treasurer Ted Potthast presented the financial state of the Society. The committee chairpersons spoke of the accomplishments of their groups and described future activities. President Werner opened the floor to questions and discussions. Rüdiger Lentz, director of the German American Heritage Museum in Washington, concluded the meeting by describing the museum's goals and plans and invited the membership to visit it and contribute ideas for future exhibits and research projects. The meeting was a great success.

ADS NOW ACCEPTED FOR OUR AWARDS BANQUET PROGRAM

Plan now for an ad in our banquet program. The banquet is not until Nov. 2 but the deadline is not so far off. Fliers for both business ads and commemorative notices will soon be in the mail. Think about honoring your ancestors by recalling their memory via a statement in the program booklet.

FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Our Society will have a booth at the German Festival in the Timonium Fairgrounds the last weekend of July. We need you to tend our table to pass out literature and talk to the festivalgoers who want to talk about their German heritage and share their stories. It's a fun task. Sign up for a couple hours on Saturday or Sunday. Call our office, leave your name and number and one of our committee members will contact you to arrange a time slot. Everyone who volunteers is guaranteed to have a good time: and you can wander through the exhibits, eat some good German food and enjoy a beer or soda while you chat with kindred souls.

CONGRATULATIONS to James Heuser upon being named Boy Scout of the Year in Troop 828 at its awards ceremony on Feb. 14, sponsored by Havenwood Presbyterian Church. James is an Eagle Scout, a Junior at Loyola Blakefield and a member of its German Club, the Chess and Robotics Cclubs. Hans Bahlow's Dictionary of German Names lists Heuser as an ancient "legendary" German name, popular in Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden.

GOVERNOR SIGNS HB34

President Tom Werner and treasurer Ted Potthast stood beside Delegate Susan Aumann, and behind Governor Martin O'Malley as he signed the law declaring October as German American Heritage Month at a signing ceremony in the historic Maryland State House on May 2. Senate President Miller and Speaker of the House Busch sat beside the Governor during the signing. Afterwards the governor presented President Werner with the pen used for the signing. It will be placed in the archives of our Society. (The governor and the dignitaries sat on mahogany Chippendale chairs made for the State House by Ted Potthast's grandfather, an immigrant from Westphalia.) Senator Katherine Klausmeier, who sponsored the bill in the Senate, was present in the room during the ceremony but did not make it into the photograph taken by the official state photographer. See a copy of the photo on page one. It was a great day for the German Americans.

The State House was packed on "Signing Day" by the many persons interested in the activities. More than a thousand packed the floors and corridors of the State House, all happy people loudly expressing their ebullience in a spirit which provided an accurate definition of the word "pandemonium." As bills were called for the signing, the multitudes paraded in single file into the ceremonial room. Maryland's State House pre-dated the founding of our nation, and in its august chambers George Washington resigned his commission as commander in chief of the Continental Army. History and tradition oozed from every nook and cranny of the building. After a very lengthy wait, Tom, Ted and Susan left the building for a photo op; then Susan back to work in the House Office building and the other two to lunch.

WHAT ARE WE DOING WRONG?

A hundred years ago, there were 5 public schools in Baltimore teaching in German. In the 1930's and 40's, most public high schools taught German. Our Society gave them medals. Today there are no schools in the city teaching German and only one in Baltimore Country. 25 years ago most private schools in the region taught German. Now more and more are dropping it. The latest casualties are McDonogh, Bryn Mawr and Loyola. It is particularly distressing that Loyola Blakefield has abandoned a 150-year-old tradition of German studies.

Is there anything our Society could have done to

prevent the demise of German studies? The answer is: probably yes. We could have become involved by supporting the German clubs in the schools; by holding events for the German students, to make them special. We could have sponsored activities for the German students to make them the envy of the rest. Our resources for many years were poured into the colleges. Failing to realize that without German in "feeder" schools, interest in the language would evaporate, leaving no one wanting to take German in college.

It's not too late to try to save the programs in the schools which still teach German. We need advocates for K-12 German studies. Do we have any members willing to step up and help develop programs by which our Society can help preserve German studies at the pre-college level?

MEMBERSHIP IN OUR SOCIETY: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME ?

Nothing. Except maybe the satisfaction of knowing you're preserving your heritage. People belong to all of the other local German organizations because they get something out of it. The Arions get to sing. The social groups like the Edelweiss, the Kickers, Club Fidelitas get to have parties and go on trips. Zion Church belongs to our Bürgerverein: join the Church and you get to save your soul. Germania Lodge give you a place to go to speak German. The German Society gives very little, if anything, to its members. We are a group of givers, not of takers. Our members have a task: to support and preserve our German American culture and heritage and to encourage the study of the language (which is important for the culture). True, you get a free German dinner if you attend the annual meeting, but the cost of getting there may offset the meal. Not a motive for being a member. You get this newsletter, but it's online and anybody can get it free. Your dues and contributions support the newsletter, which spreads our Society's message; If there is anything you get from being a member of our Society, it's simply knowing that you are preserving the tradition of your ancestors and promoting the great culture of the poets, playwrights, philosophers, composers, scientists, and religious leaders whose roots lie in the German speaking areas of Europe and of those Americans who claim that culture and heritage.

So the next time you are talking to a potential member for our Society and they ask "what's in it for me?" your answer is "nothing, but....."

GERMAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN MARYLAND

by Shelley Arnold

The German American Heritage Bill finally passes and is now Maryland law. This was the third year efforts were made to pass this legislation and it appears the third year was the charm. I began this effort in 2010, which was also the impetus behind my website.

There are so many contributions to our life in Maryland by German Marylanders that the website was the only way their contributions could be categorized and maintained.

The new law would not have been possible if it had not been for the efforts of Senator Katherine Klausmeier and Delegate Susan Aumann, both of whom worked tirelessly over the past three years attempting to obtain co-sponsors and filing the bills, this year as a pre-filed bill before the session even began.

This year was a real "nail biter". It appeared that nothing would happen and the bill would die in both the House Committee (Health and Government Operations) and the Senate Committee (Education, Health and Environmental Affairs), however on April 5th, the Friday afternoon prior to session closing on April 8th, the House committee passed it out of their committee. The bill that was sent to the House floor for a vote was for German American Heritage Day. This bill passed the full House with a vote of 134-0 on the morning of April 8th, the last day of the session. Once the bill passed the House it had to be sent to the Senate for a vote, but first had to go the Senate Rules to see if it could be assigned to a committee. The bill went through Senate Rules and was assigned to Education, Health and Environmental Affairs. During the second reading, Senator Katherine Klausmeier introduced the amendment to make it German American Heritage Month, which included a few other rules and hurdles that had to be maneuvered. The committee passed the bill with the amendment and it went to the full senate for a vote. The Senate voted 46-1 in favor of the bill.

Now the bill, because of the amendment which changed the bill from Day to Month, had to go back to the House (remember the House voted in favor of the bill as a Day). I had a live stream listening to the bills that Monday evening as it went back to the House.

To be honest, I did not think they would get around to the bill. This session was quite contentious with the budget, gun bills, dog bills and so many other urgent matters that required the attention of the legislators. It was 11:19 p.m. (session would close "sine die" in 41 minutes) and House Leader Mike Busch said the last bill on the docket was House Bill 34. The reader read the bill as amended, the House concurred with the amendment, which means they agreed to the amendment to make it a month, and the vote was taken. The bill passed the house 135-2. The bill will now become law effective 7-1-2013.

Now we need to act. We need to pull the German Maryland community together to show that we are a cohesive and important element in the State. October should be a month to show our pride in our heritage, to fly the German flag, dance, drink and be merry at Oktoberfest, sing the songs of our forefathers and celebrate our heritage. We need to think outside the box...maybe essay contests, maybe working with a television station to spotlight the achievements of the German immigrant, similar to those events that take place during "Black History Month". We need to thank those that came before us... thank them for paving the way to our exceptional life in this exceptional country.

I wish to thank everyone that helped during this journey, those that provided testimony, that joined me in Annapolis, that wrote, called and emailed their legislators. I also want to thank those legislators that helped make this possible, especially Senators Klausmeier, Reilly, Frosh, Rosapepe and Colburn and Delegates Aumann, Frank, Kipke and Pena-Melnyk.

(Shelley Arnold is the vice president of The German Society of Maryland and is the lobbyist for the passage of the German American Heritage Month law. She also produces the website www.germanmarylanders.org, describing the accomplishments of Marylanders of German ancestry.)

A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION?

20 years ago our Society called a convention spread over 2 Saturdays and which resulted in the mission statement which appears in every issue of this newsletter. Now that Maryland has a German American Heritage Month, perhaps it is time for another such convention to determine what our work ought to be to carry out the new law. All in favor, say aye.

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS? --TO PROMOTE OUR HERITAGE MONTH

Now that there is a German American Heritage Month in Maryland, what are we going to do about it? As the oldest German American organization in Maryland, we are duty bound to take the lead in educating our fellow Marylanders of the contributions of our ancestors, and to honor their memory in the process. Take out a notebook and start writing down your ideas, or set up a file in your computer. President Tom Werner is preparing to form a committee to collect ideas and ways to implement them. Consider it your duty as a member of our Society to put your thinking cap on and give us the benefit of your brainstorming.

DR. FRANZ X. GROLL, 95

(Excerpts from an obituary of our long-time member, written by Jacques Kelly, *Baltimore Sun*.)

- Dr. Franz Xavier Groll, a retired physician who lived and practiced on Eager Street in downtown Baltimore's Mount Vernon neighborhood, died of pulmonary thrombosis April 2 at Keswick Multi-Care Center. He was 95.
- Born in Aalen in Germany, he was the son of a forest manager who was also a gamekeeper.
- He grew up at the time of Adolf Hitler's rise and was a member of the German Youth Movement. He studied medicine at the Ruprecht-Karls University of Heidelberg and served in the German army as a combat physician attached to a Panzer division.
- Kenneth P. Moore, the executor of his estate, said Dr. Groll told him that he witnessed the bombing of Stuttgart and that he had seen action in Italy, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union during World War II.
- He was taken captive by U.S. troops in Heidelberg in 1945.
- After the war, Dr. Groll began to study supplying blood throughout Germany.
- Dr. Groll became the vice president of the Deutsche Blutspende Dienst, a group that sought to reform the blood bank system in Germany.
- He later came to the U.S. to study with Dr. Elliott, a blood plasma expert.
- He moved to Baltimore in 1958 and established a practice on East Eager Street in Mount Vernon. Friends said his practice focused on the city, and he treated many neighborhood residents. He also served as a general surgeon at Mercy Medical Center from 1962 to 1999.
- He enjoyed classical music and opera, collected art, and traveled to Mexico.

“A JOY TO GO TO WORK EVERY DAY”: LAURA NEUMAN

Laura Neuman was a high school dropout, a rape victim, a determined young woman who took the GED exam, entered a community college, could never find the money to get a college degree, went to work and at age 30 had become a successful business woman. She was approached by Loyola to apply for its MBA program and was embarrassed to tell them she had neither a high school nor college degree, but was enthralled about being asked to apply and convinced the school to accept her and waive the college degree requirement. She received an MBA, went on to salvage a failing business, sold it for millions, took a job as Howard County's Development Officer, but when her home county, Anne Arundel, lost its county executive, she was one of many applicants for the job. With zero political background, she was nevertheless picked by the County Council and now serves as Anne Arundel County Executive. She took a \$100,000 pay cut to serve the county she called her home.

The council was required by law to pick a Republican. The 7-person council gave her the job with 1 Republican and 3 Democratic votes. (The other 3 Republicans on the council did not vote for her because she was not a member of the Republican inner circle.)

She balances her County job with her duties as a mother of 2 children. She also heads a nonprofit organization she founded to assist rape victims. She spoke of her own experience as a victim on a TV show on Sunday morning, April 20. A rapist broke into her apartment, she reported it to the police but they did not believe her and did not investigate. She attempted to get an investigation many times. 19 years after the incident, she convinced a detective to investigate and he solved the case in 3 days and brought the culprit to justice.

Mrs. Neuman fills the term of John Leopold and will be on the job for 22 more months. Neuman(n) is shown in Hans Buhlow's "Dictionary of German Names" as meaning "newcomer", Laura is certainly a newcomer to the political arena.

Our annual picnic at Kurtz's beach on June 23 is in her county. Maybe she will attend.

1ST TIME IN 30 YEARS: SORRY

What do you say to somebody who's been disappointed? Sorry. Connie Fava Potthast missed our Annual Meeting (April 12) for the first time in over 30 years. She was part of the crew which began the tradition of serving a dinner of German food at the meeting. In the early days we catered it ourselves.

Connie's kitchen was where the loaves of wurst were sliced and set out on trays to be schlepped to the meeting. Ted Potthast bought the cases of beer and iced them down in coolers. Irma and Don Tillman were in charge of the hot dogs and knockwurst which they boiled in big pots; Irma had her special formula for the cucumber and onion salad. She also cooked the sauerkraut, sweetened by Karo syrup Harry and Betty Gruel pitched in and brought other necessities for the dinner. The crew always set out bowls of pretzels and chips for the early comers to nibble on while waiting for the food line to open. As Connie and the original crew mellowed with age and ran out of steam, the food task was contracted out to a caterer, but Connie never missed a beat with her loyal attendance. Let's hope that weather and health favorably combine so she can make it next year.

Although this 100% Italian lady vehemently denies it, she has become, in part, by association and in spirit, a German American.

OSTERGLOCKEN

At our annual meeting a member told the story of a young German girl, on her visit to Maryland, observing a flower and happily exclaiming "Osterglocken!" -- Easter bells. They were our daffodils. They appear at Easter time and look like little yellow bells. A pleasant description.

25 YEARS OF STUDENT AWARDS

2013 marks 25 years since the German Society has been granting cash awards to pupils studying German in high schools. The program was the brainchild of or then president, Donald E. Tillman. Until now the ceremony was known as the German Society High School Awards. Although our Society funds the event with \$5,000, the

title has somehow morphed into "The AATG Awards" event. The AATG did, however, invite our members to attend the May 5th ceremony in the Adlersaal at Zion. Our vice president Shelly Arnold addressed the attendees which included several of our directors.

BOARD APPROVES GRANT TO TU

Prof. Gerard Phillips of Towson University appeared at the Board of Directors meeting on April 25 to request a grant for a program involving Towson students, along with students from Oldenburg, Germany and Cuba. The directors passed a resolution approving "in principle" a grant to be determined at a later date. The vote was not unanimous. The lengthy discussion was cut short when questions arose over the Cuban participation and the relevance to the purposes of our Society. The matter was referred to the Executive Committee for further study. The Oldenburg University has had a 25 year relationship with Towson University and also a relationship with Cuba.

STRICKER MONUMENT PLANNED

General John Stricker is known as the "Hero of the Battle of North Point". The battle in which the English general Ross was killed and resulted in the British evacuating their troops and going home. John Stricker was an incorporator of our Society and served as our vice president. As part of Maryland's commemoration ceremonies for the War of 1812, our Society plans to erect a monument to Stricker at the site of his famous battle. Our president and some directors visited the Battle Acre, a one-acre park owned by Baltimore County in a residential neighborhood in Dundalk. We need County approval to use the site and County officials seem receptive to our ideas. A committee is being formed to pursue and complete arrangements for the monument and for appropriate dedication ceremonies as part of Maryland's ongoing commemoration which will culminate in September, 2014.

General John Stricker was born in Frederick MD Feb. 15, 1759 and died in Baltimore June 23, 1825. He and his father served in the Revolutionary War.

THE GREAT GERMAN FAMILY PICNIC

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, AT KURTZ'S BEACH

Members of the German Society of Maryland, their families and guests are invited to our annual picnic. Sunday, June 23,

TIME: 12 NOON UNTIL 5 P.M.

PLACE: KURTZ'S BEACH

PASADENA, MARYLAND

The picnic is sponsored by the Deutschamerikanische Bürgerverein von Maryland of which the German Society of MD is a member.

Each organization collects the ticket money and supplies the tickets to its members. Our members, family and guests should fill out the form below and mail the form and the check to the Society's treasurer.

Ticket admission includes unlimited food, beer, sodas and dessert. Entertainment, Hansel & Gretel puppet show, etc.,

We need to give the caterer a count no later than Monday, June 16, so please put your check in the mail no later than Friday, June 14th. Directions will be sent with tickets.

Make check out to "German Society MD" and mail to

T. Potthast, Treas. 1819 Leadburn Road Towson, MD 21204 -1830

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ PHONE: _____

ADULT TICKETS @ \$22 _____ \$ _____

STUDENTS @ \$10 _____ \$ _____

Children under 12 (free) _____ -0-

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____ \$ _____

(Our student admissions are subsidized by our Society)



The German Society of Maryland
P.O. Box 22585
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410-685-0450
www.germansociety-md.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Henry Ballentine
Reid Delanois
Connor Haag
Joseph Luhrman

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ Zip _____

Spouse: (optional) _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Referred by: _____

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

Annual dues \$25 Spouse may be included at no extra cost.

The German Society of Maryland

P.O. Box 22585

Baltimore, MD 21203-4585