

SAINT LOUIS

Deutscher Kulturverein

GERMAN CULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Rundschreiben



SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

SPRING 2023, VOL 23.1

Upcoming Events

May 19th-21st

Maifest

at Donau Park

July 10-14

Ferienlager

at the Donau Park

July 16th

Wiener 'n' Schnitzel Dinner

at the Donau Park

August 20th

Kirchweih

at the DKV Hall

August

Visiting Hungarian Dance Group

at Donau Park

September 1st-3rd

Landestreffen mit Tanzwettbewerb

at the Mansfield Liederkrantz

September 8th-10th

DKV Oktoberfest

at the Donau Park

September 22nd-24th

Saint Charles Oktoberfest

at Frontier Park

October 22nd

Musikalischer Nachmittag

at the DKV Hall

For more information about
our events, go to
www.germanstl.org

Interested in becoming a member of the *German Cultural Society?*

To request a membership application or information about membership in the German Cultural Society, email Kathy Stark at germanSTLnews@gmail.com or call 314-596-7466. Completed membership applications can be mailed to the PO Box listed below or emailed to germanSTLnews@gmail.com.

2023 Membership Dues

We collect membership dues annually. Current members, please pay 2023 dues by 4/30/23. New members can pay dues when submitting your membership application.

Senior (62+) \$25.00

Adult (18-61) \$45.00

Adult Dancer \$35.00

for Die Heimatgruppe

Child Dancer \$20.00

for the Kindertanzgruppe and Jugendgruppe

Family (2 Adults and 2 Children*) \$100.00

*Up to 2 Adults & 2 children/2 Youth Dancers in the same household

Please pay your 2023 membership dues to

The German Cultural Society

BY MAIL:

Please make your check payable to: German Cultural Society

Mail to: German Cultural Society

PO BOX 190486

St. Louis, MO 63119

BY CREDIT CARD ON OUR WEBSITE:

- 1) Visit germanSTL.org and click the CONTACT US tab.
- 2) Click on "Click here to make payment thru PayPal!"
- 3) ENTER the amount
- 4) SELECT payment by PayPal OR Credit or Debit Card
- 5) Write a note saying 2023 DUES and the names of members for whom you are paying
- 6) Complete the remaining billing information requested by PayPal.
- 7) QUESTIONS? Call or text Kathy Stark 314-596-7466.

Thank you for your support, which is always appreciated.

Meetings: General membership meetings are held on specific Sundays at 1:00 p.m. at the DKV Hall on Jefferson Ave., unless otherwise noted. The general board meeting schedule for 2023 is as follows:

January 15th *** March 12th *** June 4th

August 6th *** October 29th

Liebe Mitglieder,

Happy Spring everyone! Thank you to everyone who came to support our Rosenball. It was a great success! The Easter Egg Hunt and Wurstmart should be great successes too! Thank you to everyone who helped make these events possible. We could not do it without you!

Our dance groups are looking forward to a busy Maifest season. They will be dancing at Grant's Farm's Maifest over the first two weekends in May. Then, we hope to see you soon at our DKV Maifest over the weekend of May 19th-21st.

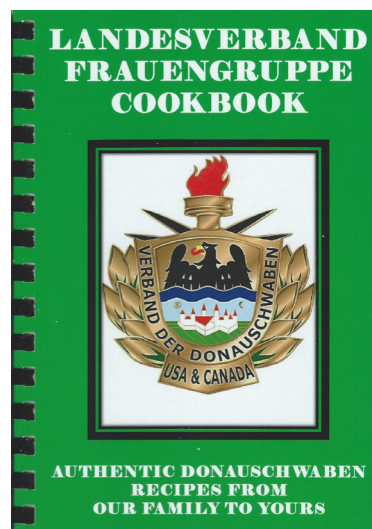
This August, we have a German Hungarian dance group from Pécs, Hungary (Fünfkirchen) coming to visit Saint Louis. We are still looking for host families. Please talk to me if you are interested in hosting from August 21st-24th. More details about a special event for their performance are to be announced soon.

Bis Bald!

Monika Lorenz & Terry Ficken

Cookbooks For Sale!

The German Cultural Society is selling the Landesverband Frauengruppe cookbook. This book features over 500 recipes from the different Donauschwaben clubs all over the USA and Canada. Cookbooks can be purchased at our events or on our website at www.germanstl.org.



Deutscher Kulturverein Rundschreiben

German Cultural Society Newsletter

Published by the German Cultural Society of St. Louis and delivered to our members. If you are interested in advertising in our newsletter, please contact us for details.

Members, please send submissions of articles and photographs by:

- March 1 for the Spring issue
- **July 1 for the Summer issue**
- November 1 for the Winter issue

Joey Wendt | germanstl.fb@gmail.com

314.914.7563



The purpose of the *German Cultural Society*
 "To foster and practice our culture,
 customs, and folklore in all its forms...
 meaning language, music, song, dance,
 crafts, sports, and good fellowship
 –*Gemütlichkeit*."

To do this as good citizens of the
 country we live in and to promote
 understanding with other ethnic groups.

The *German Cultural Society* is a
 cultural, charitable, not for profit
 and non-political organization.

www.germanstl.org

Executive Committee

President	Monika Lorenz
Vice-President	Terry Ficken
Treasurer	Heidi Warren
Recording & Correspondence	Becky Wendt
Secretary	
Membership	Kathy Stark
Controller	Lisa Hoffmann
Co-Controller	Susan Bauer
Members at Large	Rosemarie Ficken
	Donna Marlette
	Michael Wendt

Rental

Call 314.771.8368

John Unterreiner | germanstlhallrentals@gmail.com

Terry Ficken | donauparkrental@gmail.com

Tickets

314.771.8368

germanstltickets@gmail.com

Newsletter

Joey Wendt | germanstl.fb@gmail.com

This newsletter can also be found on our website,

www.germanstl.org

On the cover: 2023 Rosenkönigin,
 Sabina Lasinski, and Rosenkönig,
 Thomas Wendt, at the Rosenball
 on March 4th. Read more about
 and see pictures from our
 Rosenball on pages 6-8.



We Are a Volunteer Organization

Every now and then, a request is made to the German Cultural Society for a translation from German to English. We have a wealth of German speakers and are looking for a volunteer to translate texts, often old letters from family and ancestors. Please let us know if you are available for this service to our community! Call the office or find Moni Lorenz or Terry Ficken at any event and let them know! Thank you!

John Unterreiner is looking for club members to help on Saturday afternoons for several hours to open the hall for caterers, bakeries, and music to set up before the events start that evening.

Contact John Unterreiner at 314-771-8368 or e-mail at jjunterreiner@aol.com

The Garden Club needs some help! See page 31 for more information.

Seniorengruppe *Seniors Group*

Coordinators:

Liz Young.....314-583-3053.....lizzy681@gmail.com

Rose Hoh.....314-660-9028.....rphoh2@gmail.com

Susan Bauer.....Susan-Bauer@sbcglobal.net

Kathy Stark.....germanstlnews@gmail.com

Gathering Afternoons: 2nd Tuesday / DKV hall (except in Jan., Feb., & Aug.)

Grün Weiß *Soccer Team*

Coordinators:

Neal Thompson.....314-398-8893.....nmthompsoniii@hotmail.com

Steve Ballew.....314-486-2220.....ballewfam@aol.com

Handarbeit und Basteln Gruppen *Craft Group*

Coordinator: Leah Lorenz.....germanstlhandarbeit@gmail.com

Performance Groups

Deutschmeister Blaskapelle *Deutschmeister Brass Band*

Leader: Helmuth Glatt 314-566-9557

Assistant: Adam Glassl

Music Director: Peter Krege

Email: germanbandstl@gmail.com

Band Practice: Wednesdays @ 6:30 p.m. at DKV Hall

Damenchor

Ladies' Chorus

Music Director: Peggy Pancella

Tanzgruppen *Dance Groups*

Kindertanzgruppe

Children's Dance Group (Ages 3-12)

Coordinators: Monika Lorenz 314-402-0679

Elisheva Mankofsky 636-212-3728

email: germanstlmail@gmail.com

Practice: at DKV Hall. For schedules, contact Monika.

Jugendgruppe

Youth Dance Group (Ages 13-26)

Coordinators: Liz Young 314-583-3053

Kitty Lasinski

Instructor: Jennifer Thompson and Stephanie Schiro

email: stljugend@gmail.com

Practice: at DKV Hall. For schedules, contact Liz.

Die Heimatgruppe

Young Adult Dance Group

Coordinator: Joey Wendl stlheimatgruppe@gmail.com

Practice: at DKV Hall. For schedules, contact Joey.

Facebook: Die Heimatgruppe of St. Louis

Facebook Messenger: @stlheimatgruppe

Volkstanzgruppe

Adult Dance Group

Coordinator: Monika Lorenz 314-402-0679

Practice: at DKV Hall. For schedules, contact Monika.

Service Groups

Bar Committee

Bar Managers: John Lasinski 314-313-9802

Herbert Lorenz 314-717-5303

Bar Co-Manager: Steve Ballew

Bartenders

Matt Potje, Susan Bauer, Marilyn Heidbrink, Dave Marlette, Lisa Hoffmann, Hank Young, Matt Stark, John Lasinski, Kitty Lasinski, Rose Hoh, Gary Korte, Donna Marlette, Steve Hoffmann, Steve Ballew, Christian Hoefke, Nancy Plunk, Monika Lorenz, & Roger Gansmann

Donau Park Development Group

Meets to develop and maintain our Donau Park in Jefferson County on a year-round basis.

Members

Ralph Hoffarth, Klemens Wolf, & Terry Ficken

Donau Park Expansion Project Committee

Monika Lorenz, Klemens Wolf, Helmuth Glatt, Gerhard Glassl & Terry Ficken

Gartenverein

Maintains plants and flowers at both locations.

Coordinator: Kathy Starkgermanstlnews@gmail.com

Intermediary for Jugendgruppe: Liz Young

List of Garden Volunteers:

Vicky Boncek, Frank Breitenstein, Elisheva Mankofsky, Becky Haas, Barb Potje, Kathy Stark, Joe Wagner, & Gabi Wolf

Hall Maintenance Organization

Meets year-round to maintain our hall on Jefferson Avenue.

Members

Mike Wendl, Chuck Jackels & Terry Ficken

For information about volunteering, please contact Terry Ficken, Coordinator, at 314-566-2080.

Festkomitee

Responsible for the planning and executing of all menus for DKV-sponsored events, including ordering and receiving of the required supplies, the preparing and serving of food, and the workman-like maintenance of our kitchen facilities and related equipment.

The Festkomitee could not function without the numerous helpers who volunteer every time!

Members

Chuck Jackels, Amanda Jackels, Jannette Glassl, Gerhard Glassl, Dave Marlette, Monika Lorenz & Terry Ficken

We need your help! To help the Festkomitee ***per*** event or every event, please join our Sign-up Genius online OR call Terry 314.566.2080 to volunteer.

Social Media Staff

Members

Joey Wendl, Becky Wendl, & Kelley Glatt

Website Staff

Members

Joey Wendl, Becky Wendl, & Kitty Lasinski

Newsletter Staff

Co-Editor Joey Wendl

Co-Editor Becky Wendl

Advertising Joey Wendl

Distribution Kathy Stark

How to contact the Newsletter

Joey Wendl | germanstl.fb@gmail.com 314.914.7563

Deadlines:

- March 1 for the Spring issue
- **July 1 for the Summer issue**
- November 1 for the Winter issue

A thank you to all!

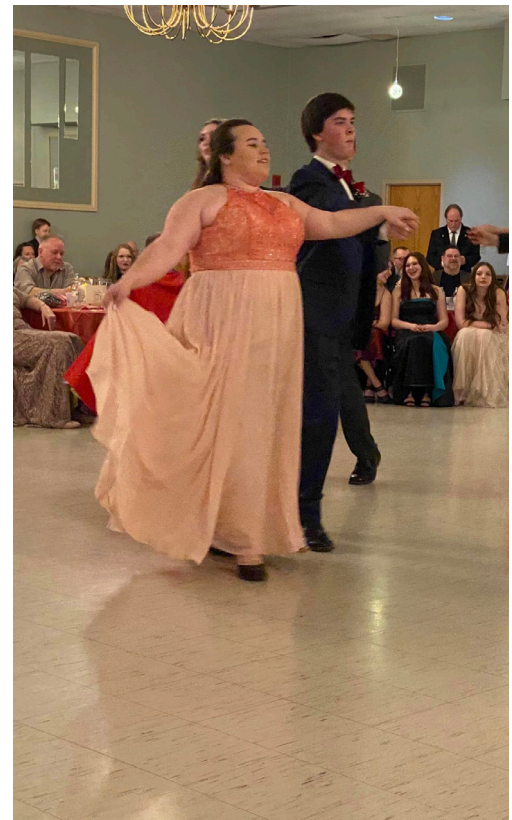
Named and unnamed--we appreciate all who help throughout the year to make the German Cultural Society the success that it is today!

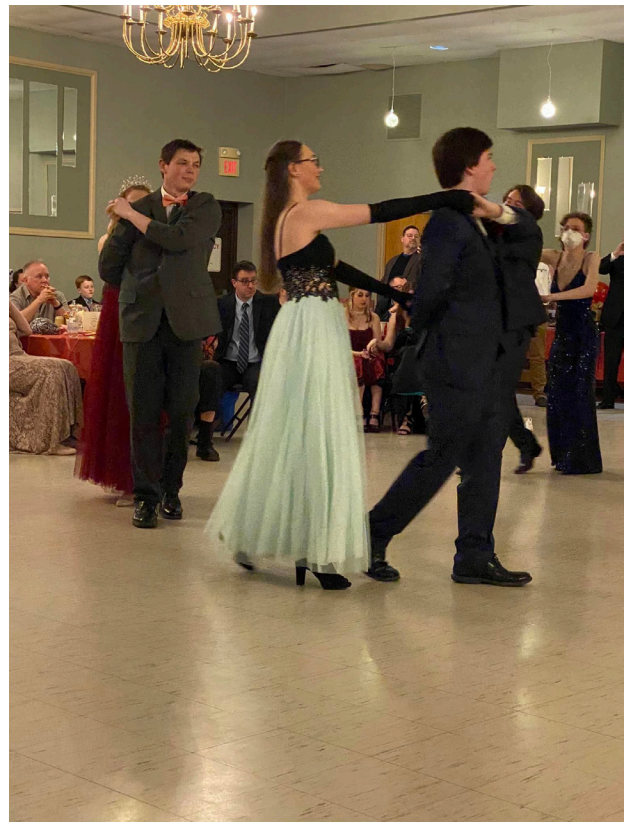
Rosenball 2023

The annual German Cultural Society Rosenball is hosted by the Society's youth group and has been a tradition for over 40 years. This year's ball was held on March 4, 2023 with 11 group members participating. The evening consisted of a program of music provided by Die Spitzbuam, a dance exhibition by the youth group of a selection of 5 ballroom-style dances, including a Viennese waltz and a tango, and a coronation ceremony in which a new presiding king and queen were crowned. The new royal court, Queen Sabina Lasinski and King Thomas Wendl, took over the duties of the outgoing court, Queen Mattie Marlette and King Tony Gallagher. Assisting in the coronation were Stephanie Schiro (Queen of 1994), Jennifer "Yenna" Thompson (Queen of 1999), and Kitty Lasinski. Watching over the proceedings were longtime Jugendgruppe leader Liz Young and German Cultural Society President Monika Lorenz. Die Spitzbuam entertained with their usual vigor and pizzazz, with numbers like the Fliegerlied and the Bobfahrer. A raffle and a silent auction rounded-out the evening. Lots of pictures and movie clips can be viewed on the Cultural Society page on Facebook. The Jugendgruppe looks forward to another great year and upcoming performances, including at the Maifest at Donau Park, and is always looking for new members. No dance experience necessary!



Thomas Wendl







MAIFEST



Come Celebrate the Birth of Spring...
GERMAN STYLE!



MAY 19, 20, & 21, 2023

Friday: 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Saturday: 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Sunday: 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM



DONAU PARK

5020 West Four Ridge Rd.
House Springs, MO 63051



Enjoy delicious German food & drink!

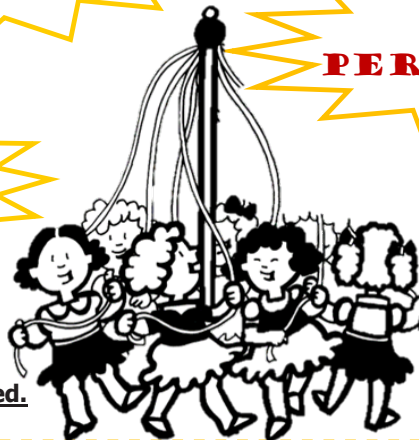
LIVE GERMAN MUSIC

**PRESENTATION
OF THE
MAIBAUM!**

**DANCE
PERFORMANCES!**

**ADMISSION
IS FREE!**

No coolers or dogs
allowed in the park.
Service animals are permitted.



**German Cultural Society
Of St. Louis**

3652 South Jefferson Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63118
(314) 771-8368

www.germanstl.org or on Facebook

Nikolaus Messmer: The Story of an Immigrant

Nikolaus Messmer, former member of the German Cultural Society passed away on December 31st, 2022. He was the long-time editor of our newsletter. He wrote down his life story in the mid 90s, and we would like to share it with our members.

I was born in Romania, in the German village of Sackelhausen on Sunday, December 1, 1935, the second child of Josef and Susanna Messmer; my brother, Josef, was born in 1932. I was baptized two weeks later in the Catholic Church of St. Michael, the only church in town.

Sackelhausen was a farming community that had a population of about 4,000 in 1940. The houses were clustered together for safety reasons and the farmland stretched for miles outside the community. German immigrants who floated down the Danube River in primitive boats, which were dismantled after their arrival for building material and put to other good uses, founded this community some 250 years ago, one of many such settlements in that area. They followed the calls of the emperors of Austria for German settlers after the Austrian Army had won the decisive battles against the Turks. These were not only wars for territories — the Turkish Army had advanced as far as Vienna — these were also the struggles for religious domination. “Kreuz oder Halbmond” [Cross or half-moon] were the battle cries of that time indicating the symbols of the opposing religions.

Many of these treks started in the German city of Ulm an der Donau (Ulm on the Danube River). The primitive craft previously referred to were also known as “Ulmer Schachteln” (Ulm boxes). The conditions in the German-speaking territories of central Europe were deplorable for many of the poorer young people. When then this opportunity arose with the promise of owning a piece of land in the process, the trips down the river Danube were organized and many young people joined in. What they found when they finally got there was some desolate swampland. Many died of sickness and starvation, but those who survived together with new waves of immigrants eventually succeeded with hard work and the tenacity never to give up, to make this the breadbasket of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

They were proud of their heritage, they were proud to be German. They had very little contact with the outside world, so that dress code and language remained virtually unchanged. Shortly after World War I, the settlement areas were split between Romania, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. The home-



Nikolaus and Hilde Messmer

town of my parents became part of Romania. And yet, church services were held in German and the local grade school, for the most part, taught only in German. I never had a single lesson in the Romanian language. Government offices conducted their services in the official language of the country. That's why my birth certificate, for instance, is issued in the Romanian language.

My parents were farmers, same as their parents and the previous generations of settlers. They raised cattle and hogs for export and they had large fields of corn, wheat, oats, and barley. In good years, they exported large quantities of wheat and other grains. They had their own vineyard, made their own wine for consumption and for sale, and they distilled spirits for their own use for medicinal and other purposes. They were pretty much self-sufficient.

The houses in Sackelhausen usually consisted of two parallel buildings located in the left and right corners of the shorter side of a rectangular lot and were separated by the courtyard. The one building was the living quarters of the younger generation, which was presently running the farm, the other was for the older generation(s), those who had handed the farm over to their children. The oldest son customarily inherited the farm; he had to take care of the parents for the rest of their lives and pay his brothers and sisters certain amounts of money over a certain period of time.

In the center of the courtyard there was generally a well with a large trough to water the animals. Behind the courtyard were shelters for the animals: the horses, the cows, the chickens, the geese, the pigs, and the sheep, and there were other areas for storage of machinery, farm products, and animal feed. There was also that enormous rectangular dung heap which steamed in the winter and smelled in the summer. Its size was one indicator of the wealth of the farmer: next to hard work it was the primary engine of the organic farming operation. Behind the storage area was the vegetable garden. It was over one acre in size and extended to the full width and to the end of the property line.

All three major areas were fenced in or separated by stable wooden fences. The two houses faced the street. They were connected by a white solid fence that had three gates: one near each house for people to come and go and one large double gate at the center for farm traffic. There was a brick-covered sidewalk just outside the fence, then a grassy strip of land with acacia trees, then a drainage ditch and then a wide dirt road

became the centerline for the mirror image of the houses on the other side of the street.

And yes, before I forget it, even by the time we left there in 1944, there was no running water, no sewer system, nor was there electricity. The only telephone in town was located at the local Post Office.

We were aware of it, but we noticed little of the beginning of World War II. Life on the farm is a world of its own. Then, in the summer of 1943, my father was drafted into the German Army, like all young men of the village of a certain age. Then my mother had to run the farm with the help from my brother. I was just trying to stay out of the way and have a good time.

My grandparents did the chores around the house, fed and took care of the animals and my mother and brother went to the farmland to plow and till and sow and to eventually bring in the harvest. We had a one-cylinder diesel tractor by that time which made my brother's presence mandatory whenever the tractor was used. He had a good mechanical understanding of things and he was not afraid to use it.

In the spring of 1944, war came closer to home as the eastern front began to collapse. Stalingrad had fallen and the westward advances of the Russian Army seemed to be unstoppable. We listened to the ten o'clock news on our battery-operated one-station radio until they sounded the all clear and played the by then international song of the soldiers, Lili Marleen.

We received an occasional letter from my father, who, together with his brother, had become truck drivers in the same outfit of the German Army in Finland.

The air raids further northeast began to intensify as we seemed to be in the flight path of the Allied bomber squadrons as they zeroed in on the oilfields in Romania and industrial plants in the larger cities.

In August of 1944, the distant rumble of artillery fire could be heard which grew louder and closer in the coming weeks. Temporary first-aid stations were set up in some houses along the main street to take care of wounded soldiers.

I don't remember the exact date, but in September orders were issued to evacuate the village. We had two hours to gather the essentials on a horse-drawn wagon and join the westward trek of the refugees. We were headed for the town of Hatzfeld near the Hungarian border that served as a holding area for refugees. There, the horses and wagons were taken over by the Army and the people and their belongings were loaded on cattle railcars. Forty people per car with their essential belongings. My mother had a clear understanding of what was essential: food. She had two fully cured smoked hams and two slabs of cured smoked bacon stashed away wrapped in a blanket. She also had some clothing for all of us

and she did not forget the necessary documents: birth certificates, marriage licenses, the letters from our father, and the like. She did not have to worry about money, we didn't have any, and it was worthless anyway.

There were six of us: my great-grandmother, the grandparents from my father's side, my mother, my brother and I. There were probably seven to eight families and their belongings in each railcar. We occupied the left front corner.

And so began our three-week journey to Austria. The train moved slowly and stopped frequently to let the essential traffic go by. Sometimes they left us stranded on a secondary spur when the engine was needed for more important duties on the main line. But they came back eventually and we chugged along in a westward direction. Like our ancestors who arrived two centuries ago in the Ulmer Schachteln, we returned in similar style in cattle cars to the country whose call our ancestors had followed originally.

We ended up in the small town of Münzkirchen in Upper Austria. The people were nice and helpful even though they thought we were somewhat weird. We spoke a different German dialect and our women folk dressed in a manner not seen in these parts for the past hundred years. We were first placed in a holding area, then were assigned living quarters with the local residents. We got two rooms in the house of an elderly woman who lived by herself.

At least one thing our people did well, they really worked. They were accustomed to hard work; no job was too small, too big, or below their dignity. They were possessed by the need to do something and to do it right.

My great-grandmother died shortly after our arrival in Münzkirchen. She was 94 years old. She was a tough, skinny old lady with a good sense of humor.

The refugee children were quickly integrated into the local school system, and life continued on a more normal basis. My fellow third graders kidded me without mercy about my first name: Nikolaus. That name was only customary there when applied to that fat jolly old fellow who ho-ho-hoes his way around on December 6, St. Nicholas' Day. No normal living person had such a name! I did. After the teacher had entered the room, all students had to stand up in the sequence in which they were seated to recite their full names. When my turn came, snickering already started before I could say my first name. Hilarious laughter drowned out my last name. But that also subsided in time when the teacher decided to discontinue that procedure since we already knew our names well enough and we needed to concentrate on learning. I wish I would have had the strength and understanding to laugh with them. There is no greater healing power than the ability to join in the laughter as others discover our shortcomings or when the joke is on us.

The older generation had a hard time understanding the

Upper Austrian dialect, speaking it was completely out of the question. We children picked it up with amazing speed and pretty soon we could rattle it off just as well as any local yokel.

Toward the end of the year 1944 more refugees arrived from the former eastern province of the old Austrian Empire, Silesia. These people spoke yet another German dialect and their women were dressed in a more modern style than the original locals. This kind of put the seal of acceptance on things that were different from the local standards of this secluded small town in the hills of Upper Austria.

In the spring of 1945, the population of refugees just about equaled the number of the original residents. In April of 1945 a wing of an American armored division overran this small town without firing a shot, and the war was over for Münzkirchen and its diverse population. There was still some sporadic fighting in various places but the war officially ended on May 8, 1945.

We were in the American Sector of the occupation forces in Austria. We were classified as Displaced Persons. The property of my parents in Sackelhausen was confiscated and any rights to their ownership terminated. So at least that part was settled: there was no going back.

One year after the war was over, my dad finally made it home from the POW-camps. Other than basic training, he had not fired a single shot in the entire war. He was a truck driver. He was originally captured by the French Army and later transferred to a POW-camp of the US Army.

After he was registered as a returned prisoner of war, he found work with a local builder. Later he found a higher paying job in a more distant steel mill, then as a concrete person in the large projects of building hydroelectric plants across the rivers Enns, Inn, and Danube.

My mother worked for food on a farm, later as a seamstress in a local dress shop and finally as a Girl Friday in a local butcher shop and restaurant. She kept this place clean, did all the painting work, and occasionally helped the construction crew on several expansions of the business.

My brother and I went to school. He attended the Hauptschule in Schärding (about 8 miles west of Münzkirchen), a High-School-like institution, and I still had some Grade School to go. By the time I attended the school in Schärding, he was already employed, learning the trade of mechanic. After Schärding, I attended a small five-year engineering school in Steyr, Austria.

In his work at the steel mill and the hydroelectric plants on the rivers Enns and Inn, my dad came home only every other weekend because of the distances and the cost of transportation. Only during the construction of the power plant in Jochenstein on the Danube River, 21 kilometers east of Münzkirchen, was he able to come home every night. His brother,

who had immigrated to the United States in the early fifties, urged him in his letters to call it quits in Austria and start over in the United States. And so, after he could see that his job in Jochenstein was likely to end within a year and his next assignment would probably be even farther away than his previous jobs, my parents decided to apply for immigration to the United States.

I liked Austria. I liked the people. I felt probably more at home in Austria than in any other place I had previously been. But I also understood my parents. This little country was swamped with refugees and there was little hope that things would improve for them soon even with all their determination and hard work.

In somewhat of a twist of irony, we were offered citizenship in Austria because of our background and having been part of the old Austrian Empire. And so we became citizens of Austria. I looked at it almost as a homecoming and considered it an honor. The older generation was more pessimistic, but glad to get rid of the label of Displaced Persons which in some ways is similar to the term homeless as it is used today.

At the time our visas came through for permission to immigrate to the United States, I was still in school. I was in my final year in that small engineering school in Steyr. Since the school systems are so different, I didn't want to break things up and start over on the other side of the Atlantic. Today, I understand, how difficult this must have been for my parents, but they eventually agreed with me. I stayed behind. My parents, my brother, and my grandmother left Austria in May of 1956. They settled in St. Louis, which had a large German population, many with the same background as theirs.

My father found work in a pulley factory as a lathe operator. People in management and most workers spoke German. He really liked it and he worked there until his retirement in 1977 at age 67. But even after that, he went back occasionally when they called him in for certain special jobs. He liked that. My mother worked as a seamstress in a clothing factory in downtown St. Louis, and my brother found a job as a machinist at the Nooter Corporation. The Selective Service interrupted his job there when he was drafted into the US Army. After Basic Training in Fort Leonard Wood and Aberdeen, they sent him right back to Germany for the remainder of his active duty.

I had meanwhile graduated and worked as a designer at the Steyrer Werke, a large automotive company. They had a huge plant in the suburbs of Steyr where they made ball and roller bearings for use in their automotive products and for other applications, I worked on the design of tools and equipment used in the manufacturing process. A company-owned two-room apartment was part of the compensation package. My personal property consisted of whatever clothing I had, a few cooking utensils, a violin, a trombone, and a bicycle. I had always made music as a sideline throughout my school

years and I made a Schilling or two in the process. I used my bike to get to and from work, and I used public transportation for longer distances.

It's really strange how things sometimes go, but here we were, my brother and I in Europe, our parents in the United States, probably worrying themselves sick about the two of us. We visited each other on several occasions. We were glad to see each other and we had a good time together. He had become a regular member of the round table in the only tavern in this small town on the German side of the Czechoslovakian border.

In the summer of 1958 my papers came up for review and I was granted permission to immigrate to the United States. I visited my brother one last time, and then I went back to Austria to put things in order for the big trip. I arrived in New York by plane from Munich on September 28, 1958, and took a 24-hour train ride from New York to St. Louis. My parents were at Union Station when I arrived. My brother was still missing, but we were almost a family again.

I finally realized how much desperation and courage it must have taken for my parents to take this big step into the unknown. Whoever claims to have no fear when relocating to a different country is either a liar, a fool, or an idiot. I was worried about the future. Could I hold a job? The technical school system of post-war central Europe was for obvious reasons somewhat skimpy on the higher technology of the day, I was afraid, I couldn't pass muster.

But as I looked around in the aircraft- this was my first flight — there were screws, rivets, bolts, and nuts, and there were flaps, hinges, latches, and locks, all the basic elements of mechanical design, my confidence increased and by the time I arrived in New York, I was ready to take on the world.

It didn't take me long to experience my first setback. I had nine years of English prior to coming to the United States. So there is this guy who is ready to take on the world, getting off the plane and ordering a pack of cigarettes in one of the airport shops. (In those days, almost everybody smoked.) "Give me a pack of Lucky Strikes, I said in the English that I had learned. And the man yelled right back, as he handed me the cigarettes, "You're from Germany!" It took me a while to understand how he had figured that out.

Within two weeks of arrival, I found a job as a draftsman in a small, privately owned company within walking distance from my parents' apartment on Senate Street. Southwest Truck Body Company, later known as Southwest Mobile Systems Corporation, became my place of employment for over 25 years.

In the late fifties, there were 17 or 18 German clubs still active in St. Louis. Young people met there on Saturdays and Sundays to talk in their native language, to have a couple of beers, or to dance. One such hangout was the Liederkrantz

Club on Grand Avenue. The name of that place had nothing to do with that foul-smelling soft cheese by a similar name. Liederkrantz in German simply means a wreath of songs, and this was the hall of a German singing society. And those Germans like to sing. After a few beers, they are unstoppable.

Since I didn't have a car at that time, my friend Frank Dimster, who is now associate professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, brought me there. As I looked up from my ice-cold Budweiser, I noticed this beautiful young lady on the other side of the dance floor. I had never seen her before. I stood up, looked at her and summoned enough courage to walk over and ask her for a dance. She smiled and said yes. From that moment on I knew it: This is the one.

Hilde Stetzkamp was here to stay with her aunt and uncle for a couple of years. They lived on Blaine Avenue. Then she would return to her hometown Warendorf in Westphalia. She worked as a seamstress in one of the clothing factories downtown and used public transportation to get to and from work. She did not live too far from the Liederkrantz Club. I told her of my predicament that I did not have a car yet, but if she didn't mind walking from her uncle's house to the Liederkrantz, I would pick her up the following Saturday. She said she likes to walk. The only thing was, I had to walk from Senate Street to Blaine Avenue, that's at least 2½ miles, pick her up and walk back to the Liederkrantz, then bring her back to Blaine Avenue, and eventually walk back to Senate Street. That was quite a distance, but I could hardly wait for the next Saturday.

This is how I met my wife. We did eventually get married, had two children, Robert and Joseph, and lived — for the most part — happily ever after.

My starting salary was \$80.00/week with assurances of future pay increases based on performance. That was just fine with me. I really enjoyed my work. By the time we got married, my salary had almost doubled. We had a nice apartment on Senate Street, just a few houses from where my parents lived, and we also had a car by that time, a 'slightly used' white 55 Ford. Hilde quit her job a few months before Robert was born, she stayed at home from there on out.

I brought her to Bethesda General Hospital, west of Grand on Vista. Things were a little different then. Bringing children into this world was a woman's job. Men, other than doctors, were not allowed in delivery rooms. They were to wait in those smoke-filled waiting rooms until the doctor gave them the good news. I hugged her as they rolled her toward the delivery room and squeezed her hand. "Good luck!" She was obviously in great pain. Then the doors closed and I joined those nervous people in the waiting area. I smoked as much as anybody, and I fit right in.

Robert had a difficult time coming into this world, and mother and child suffered a great deal in the process. I had

never seen a baby shortly after birth, I was more accustomed to those cuddly little things that newborns turn into after a few weeks of life. Dr. Junger came in and told me that they had some difficulties, but both are healthy and in good shape. He offered congratulations and told me that I could see my wife now in the recovery room.

Hilde was beaming when she saw me. She was well under the influence of anesthetics but she could not hold back to tell me what a beautiful little boy we had. I had to take a look. The nurse took me over to newborn row. She went inside. As I waited, I looked at these poor little creatures. The nurse brought Robert over and put him in one of the empty cribs. She pointed at the little fellow. I looked at him and looking back at the nurse, I pointed at myself. Me? She nodded.

Poor little kid. They must have had a hard time. He looked at me with one eye, the other one was closed and darker in color. He was bleeding from the middle of his forehead. The top of his head was formed as if there was yet another smaller head to come through. The nurse came over: "He'll be all right, in a week, you won't notice a thing anymore." That's part of her speech, I thought, she probably says that to everybody.

"Isn't he beautiful?" Hilde asked when I came back to the recovery room. I nodded, hugged her and urged her to get some rest. I'll be back tomorrow. Robert was born on May 29, 1960.

It turned out, the way it always does: the women were right. Robert turned out to be a beautiful baby and grew up to be a handsome young man.

Later the following year we bought the two-storied house on Neosho Street, just a few blocks north of Bevo Mill. We bought the house together with my parents. They lived downstairs, we lived upstairs. It had a full basement and a detached two-car garage. Hilde and my parents did a lot of work on the house. They stripped the paint from all doors, trim, and windows and brought all the wooden surfaces back to their natural color, including the hardwood floors. They stained and varnished, they repainted the whole house. It was really nice. My grandmother watched the baby and I was usually at work.

Hilde and my grandmother became good friends. We called her Grossi, a short form of the German word for grandmother. Grossi had a good sense of humor, she was a good cook and she really liked to eat.

Joey was born on June 18, 1962. I took Hilde to Incarnate Word Hospital on Grand and Lafayette. The German-speaking Dr. Junger was still on duty when Joe was born right on time and with a minimum of complications "Übung macht den Meister" — (practice makes perfect) — he said kiddingly.

Our children lived on Neosho Street in an environment where everybody spoke German. I remember one incident when the kids were playing in our fenced-in yard, when a neighbor lady called over. "Hi, Bobby" Robert didn't even look up "Ich bin kein Bobby, ich bin Robert!" He said it just loud enough so that his mother could hear it. Today, of course, even we call him Bob. One Sunday when we were a little late for church at St. John's on Delor, we had to sit upstairs near the choir. The children watched the organist and the choir, and when they had stopped singing and it was completely quiet, Joey yelled out in German "Alle", meaning something like that's all or it's over. My parents who were sitting in a pew downstairs knew then that we had made it to church. It was only later when they went through Kindergarten and the first years of Grade School that the children were somewhat embarrassed by our occasional use of the German language in public places. When their mother asked them in German in a store if they wanted a certain item, they didn't answer the question "English, Mom, English!"

Joey operated at a higher energy level. He was always in motion, jumping, running, climbing fences, and the like. Bob was more cautious. On one of his climbing expeditions, Joey fell off the fence and hit the back of his head on the edging of the flowerbeds. This resulted in Joey's first trip to the hospital for repairs of injuries of that sort. There were more to follow.

Part of the stipulation of my schooling in Austria was that after five years of graduation I could apply for the title of engineer (they use the French term *Ingenieur* or *Ing.* for short) provided that I had at least five years of certified successful work in the field of Engineering. Things have changed now, but that's the way it was at that time. In those five years in engineering school, we had 45 classroom hours per week, eight hours Monday through Friday, five on Saturday. No wonder, our people loved to go to work, it was a breeze by comparison.

I had more than the required five years of certifiable work experience when we went on our first trip back to Europe in the summer of 1965 to personally submit the application in Vienna and to have our first big vacation as a family. It was also Hilda's first trip back to Warendorf, to see her mother, her two sisters, and her brother, and to introduce her new family to her old family.

Hilde and the children left first. Since I couldn't get away from work for a month, I followed them two weeks later. Our first trip back to Europe: Four people, three different passports. US for the children, German for Hilde, and I had my Austrian passport.

Hilde and the children flew over New York to Frankfurt where her brothers-in-law picked them up and brought them to her mother's house in Warendorf. I flew over

Chicago to Cologne where Hilde and her sister Lieselotte met me at the airport. After touring the old venerable city a bit, we took the train to Warendorf.

They were all at Oma Stetzkamp's apartment when we got there. There was her mother, a small gray-haired lady, her other sister Marianne and her husband Willy Pomberg. Lieselotte and her husband Erich Schäfer, and her brother, Ludwig Stetzkamp. There also was Ralf Pomberg, then the only German first cousin of our children. I was glad to see that our children had made friends with everybody in the meantime. We had an assortment of cold cuts and breads, and the obligatory Kaffee und Kuchen.

Oma Stetzkamp took care of the children while the younger generation went out for the evening to visit — what seemed to me — every tavern in town. We had a good time.

We stayed at Oma's three-room apartment while in Warendorf. She normally lived there by herself. Her husband was killed in the last days of the war somewhere in the area of Berlin. He was a truck driver in the army and in his civilian life. She brought up the four children just about by herself.

She got up early in the morning, shined my shoes, then took off on her bicycle to her favorite bakery and butcher shop for freshly baked hand rolls and other goodies for breakfast. When she came home, she set the table, made some hard-boiled eggs and some strong German coffee. Now, that's a mother-in-law! The smell of coffee woke up her American visitors and we had a delightful breakfast together.

Time went by too fast. Hilde and I could have taken the trip to Vienna by ourselves and left the children with her mother, kind of like a vacation within a vacation. But she felt very strongly, if something were to happen to us, it might as well happen to us as a family. So we packed our suitcases, got the children ready, and together we went to Vienna by train. I delivered my paperwork at a certain Government agency on Ring-Strasse, then we toured this beautiful city in the afternoon and on the following day by foot and by streetcar, and returned to Warendorf the day after. Then we had one more big bash in Warendorf and returned over Frankfurt and Chicago to St. Louis. This was our first of several trips back to the Old Country.

Shortly after I returned to work, I was promoted. That company was really good to me. I received a substantial increase in pay and my workload and responsibility increased accordingly as the company grew and prospered. We knew now for certain where home was for us. In appreciation for the opportunities this country had offered us, we applied for citizenship and became citizens of the United States in April 1968. In the summer of that same year, we moved into our new house on Stonehurst Drive in

Oakville. By 1973, I was a member of the Board of Directors, then Executive Vice-President and General Manager; by the beginning 1983, I was named President of the corporation.

When the school had started in the fall of 1983, Bob was at the University of Kansas at Lawrence in pursuit of a degree in Architecture, and Joey was at Regis College in Denver.

In December 1983, on our way home from a Christmas party for our West Plains Division, we had a major accident. Hilde was sitting in the right front seat, nearest to the point of the impact, I was sitting behind the driver in the left seat of the second row of our van. All three of us were severely injured, but Hilde got the worst of it. We were both 13 weeks in the hospital.

We came home in wheelchairs, but we were glad to be home. My brother had widened the entrance from the garage to the house and had added a ramp over the steps to make things easier for us. After months of therapy we got rid of wheelchairs, crutches, and braces; we still walk a little funny, but we walk.

Hilde has very little controllable movement in her right arm, and she cannot move her right hand or her fingers. Her right leg is dragging when she walks and pain is in varying degrees her constant companion. She has difficulties with her speech, finding the right words and getting them out. Above all the pain and suffering that she had endured, that probably bothered her more than anything: She was the life of the party, now she is, for the most part, a listener.

But she is also remarkably resilient. After endless practice, she learned to write with her left hand. She also knows, she fills an important role in conversation. If nobody listens, talking is useless. But she is likewise sufficiently tenacious to chip in every now and then when she feels strongly enough that a point needs to be made. If somebody doesn't understand her, she tries to say things differently until she gets her point across.

Despite of all the broken bones, the greatest pain for me was the loss of my job. I had worked so hard to accomplish something, then all that got smashed in a fraction of a second. And through all of that, Hilde was by my side. She stood by me through the good times and the bad, she did everything for me. I felt terrible that she had to suffer so much because she was with me. It is now my turn to do everything for her.

When we had the six inches of snow late in April this year, we looked from our kitchen over the patio into our backyard. It sure looks like Christmas out there, I thought out loud. "You know", she said, "for us, every day is like Christmas", I closed my eyes and saw that beautiful young lady on the other side of the dance floor.

Seniorengruppe Report

The Seniorengruppe did not meet in January and February of 2023 as the bad weather keeps many of our Senioren indoors these first two months. Despite not being together in January, the following two members celebrated their birthday with families:

January 1 – Maria Irovic January 30 – Barbara Potje

There were 22 members who met on Tuesday, March 14 (3 days before St. Patrick's Day) and helped the Irish with this Spring celebration. We wish Hans Lengenfelder a Happy Birthday as he was born on St. Patrick's Day. Various games of Bingo were played, and everyone had an enjoyable afternoon.

We had a moment of silence for: Maria Thalheimer and Rudi Sterzl, who passed away in February 2023.

Several announcements were made on upcoming activities of the GCS:

- 1) The Ostereiersuchen (Easter Egg Hunt) will be held at our Donau Park in House Springs on Saturday, April 8, from 1:30 – 3:30 pm.
- 2) The Senioren Ostern Mittagessen (Easter Luncheon) will be held on Tuesday after Easter, April 11, in the GCS Hall on Jefferson at noon.
- 3) Our annual Wurstmart will be held at our Donau Park on Sunday, April 23, from Noon until 3:30 pm.
- 4) Mother's Day will be on Sunday, May 14 this year; our Senioren Gruppe meeting will be on Tuesday, May 9, celebrating our Mothers. We hope many of you can attend that day for dessert, beverages and Bingo!!!

Lastly, here is a fun joke to share with your family:

"What do dentists call their X-rays"? Tooth Pics!!!

The Seniorengruppe Committee

Liz Young, Kathy Stark, Susan Bauer, Walter Fett, Debbie Petzel, Mike Lukoszyk, & Rose Hoch

Seniorengruppe 2023 Schedule

May 9th at 1:00PM - Mother's Day
June 13th at 1:00PM - Father's Day
July 11th at 1:00PM - Independence Day
August - No Meeting
September 12th at 1:00PM - Oktoberfest
October 10th at 1:00PM - Fall Season
November 14th at 1:00PM - Thanksgiving
December 12th at Noon - Christmas Lunch





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Doors open at 2:45 pm
Concert from 3:30 pm
Buffet Dinner 5 pm
Dinner RSVP deadline:
July 8, 2023

For Tickets and Reservations,
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636-225-7332

To place an ad in our Program Book,
(ad deadline July 1, 2023) please call:
Tina Robtoy
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St. Louis Liederkrantz 150th Anniversary



Well, it's finally going to happen! After a three-year wait because of a world-wide pandemic, the St. Louis Liederkrantz is celebrating their 150th anniversary with a concert and dinner on Saturday, July 22, 2023, at the beautiful space of Si Commons at SLUH. We've survived two World Wars, the Spanish Flu, Covid-19, floods of immigrants, then the decrease of city population. Our love of the German folk music of our ancestors has kept us going for 153 years.

In 1870, when German immigrants were flooding the United States, especially the midwest, they were looking for a way to ease their homesickness for the 'Old Country'. Music is a way to connect with all people. So the St. Louis Liederkrantz was formed. When given the keys to the new concert building, then president of the Liederkrantz, F. W. Sennewald, was quoted as saying, "although a majority of us were born on a foreign shore, we all claim that this glorious country is also our country, and the old and noble city of Saint Louis is our home".

Currently, their 'home' is the Bethesda Orchard Community in Webster Groves, which is also the home of our current president, Norm Cleeland and his wife, Ann. Norm has been with the Liederkrantz for 65 years! As our longest active member and president for over 20 years, you'd think Norm would be fluent in the German words by now, but, in his own words, "I'm still trying to learn them!"

We are now a group of 25 male and female singers, some German-born, some of German descent, but all loving to sing the German folk songs from the 'Old Country'. We have an annual Spring concert, and sing at a variety of venues by appointment. The hearts and voices of our many predecessors are with us as we continue to spread the joy of German and American music.

Michelle Heitmann

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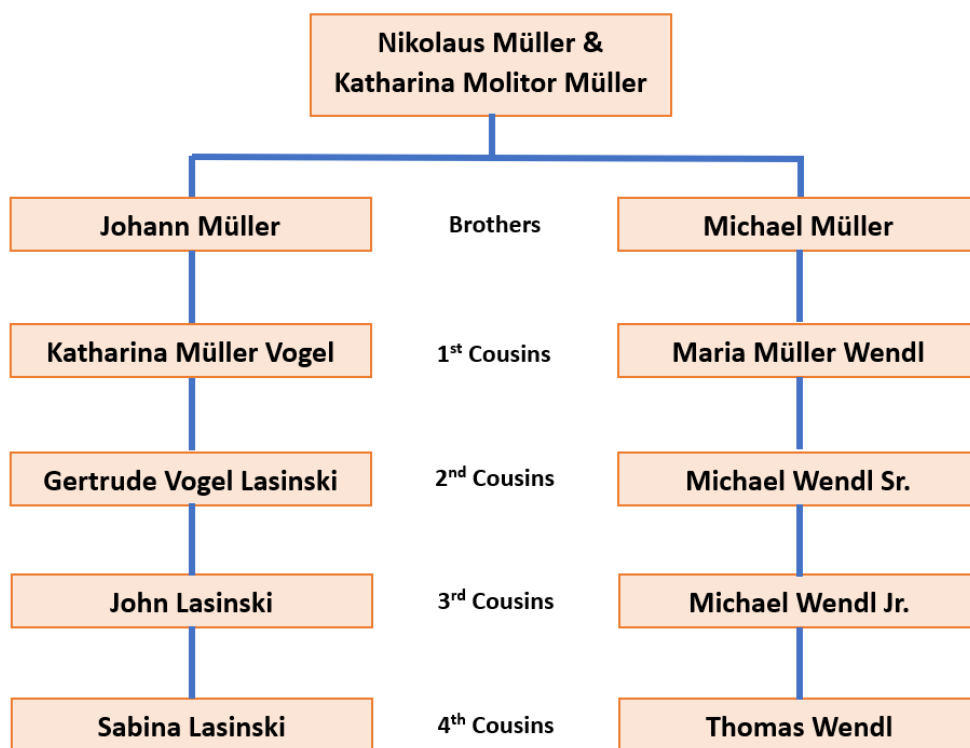
From Sackelhausen to Saint Louis

At this year's Rosenball, Thomas Wendl and Sabina Lasinski were crowned the 2023 Rosenball König and Königin. In addition to this great honor of being the King and Queen, these two go back much further. They are actually 4th cousins and trace their roots back to the Donauschwaben town of Sackelhausen. Below is a family tree showing their relationship to their common ancestors: Nikolaus Müller and Katharina Molitor Müller. Both were born in 1855 in Sackelhausen. They were married on February 25th, 1878 and had 7 children. The



picture to the right is the Müller family picture which was taken around 1911. Sitting in the center of the picture is Nikolaus Müller and Katharina Molitor Müller, Thomas' and Sabina's great-great-great-grandparents. The rest of the people in the picture are their children, spouses of their children, and their grandchildren. Standing on the top left corner are Sabina's great-great-grandparents, Johann Müller and Elisabeth Detemple Müller. Standing third from the right, is Thomas' great-great-grandfather Michael Müller who was also the founder of our Jugendgruppe. So even after 145 years, the Müller family is still together.

Joey Wendt



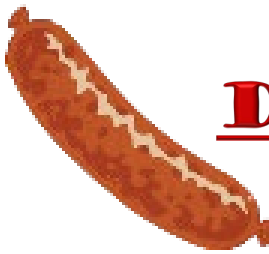
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Georg Ahrens' German Consular Tenure in St. Louis

Michael C. Wendl

Introduction

Large host countries like the United States often have many foreign countries' consular establishments spread across various cities and these function essentially as regional field offices of their respective embassies in the capital. Once upon a time, St. Louis had such offices representing several countries, reflecting its then-prominence as a midwest crossroads of commercial, industrial, and cultural importance. Among these was a consulate representing Germany and what follows is a brief recounting of the life and times of the head of that office from 1925 to 1932, Dr. Georg Ahrens. He is an interesting figure in both German-American history and the history of the City of St. Louis because he played a role in some of the most significant events associated with German-American friendship during the interwar years.

Ahrens' story begins in Berlin. Born in 1890 to Gustav and Johanna Ahrens, he finished secondary school in 1909 and completed his university education at Friedrich Wilhelm University (now Humboldt University) in 1913, graduating with a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree, just as the storm clouds of World War I were gathering over Europe. He was called-up to service by the German Foreign Office in January 1914 and was already attached to the diplomatic outpost in Shanghai by the time fighting broke-out several months later. But, by March 1915 Ahrens found himself in the US, having just been re-assigned to the Imperial German Embassy in Washington as a diplomatic attaché to Ambassador Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff [1]. It was the start of a deep attachment he would develop with America, its people, and its culture.

Early Days in Washington

The United States was, of course, not yet involved in the war, but the atmosphere was tense. Irish Americans and German Americans, the latter group now comprising more than 10% of the total American populace, generally sympathized with other non-interventionist groups that wanted to stay clear of Europe's current round of bloodletting. Then, on May 7, 1915, the German submarine U-20 hit the British-flagged ocean liner *Lusitania* amidships with a single torpedo, sinking it off the coast of Ireland, with almost 1200 lives lost. Among them were over 100 Americans. Ironically, Bernstorff's office had just issued an advisory the month before strongly recommending that American citizens avoid passage on British vessels through the war zone because of the grave risk (Fig. 1). But the notice was irrelevant after the *Lusitania* went down, as was the fact that she had actually been carrying a significant cargo of British ammunition [2]; public opinion would now start to swing distinctly against Imperial Germany.

The Royal Navy was the queen of the high seas in those days and British strategy involved a naval blockade of German ports in the North Sea to starve it of materiel. Germany responded with submarine warfare and the tonnage of ships of both sides that would ultimately go to the bottom of Atlantic waters is staggering. But, Germany also pursued a special program using unarmed merchant submarines, so-called "blockade runners", to keep the lines of commerce open with the still-neutral United States. The most successful of those vessels was the *Deutschland*, launched March 28, 1916 by Flensburger Schiffbau and which made several crossings, ferrying gold, diamonds, mail, and other valuable bulk cargo back and forth. A July 26, 1916 article in the *Boston Globe* regaled readers with the intrigue of how the *Deutschland* had recently evaded allied ships, surfacing to safety within US territorial waters outside of Baltimore, how English, French, and Russian spies surveilled it in port, looking for any information that could be relayed to allied warships in the open sea, and how the submarine had alternately evacuated and flooded its buoyancy tanks, staying at a constant draft while loading and unloading in order to obfuscate any inference of its cargo. It was genuine cloak-and-dagger stuff.

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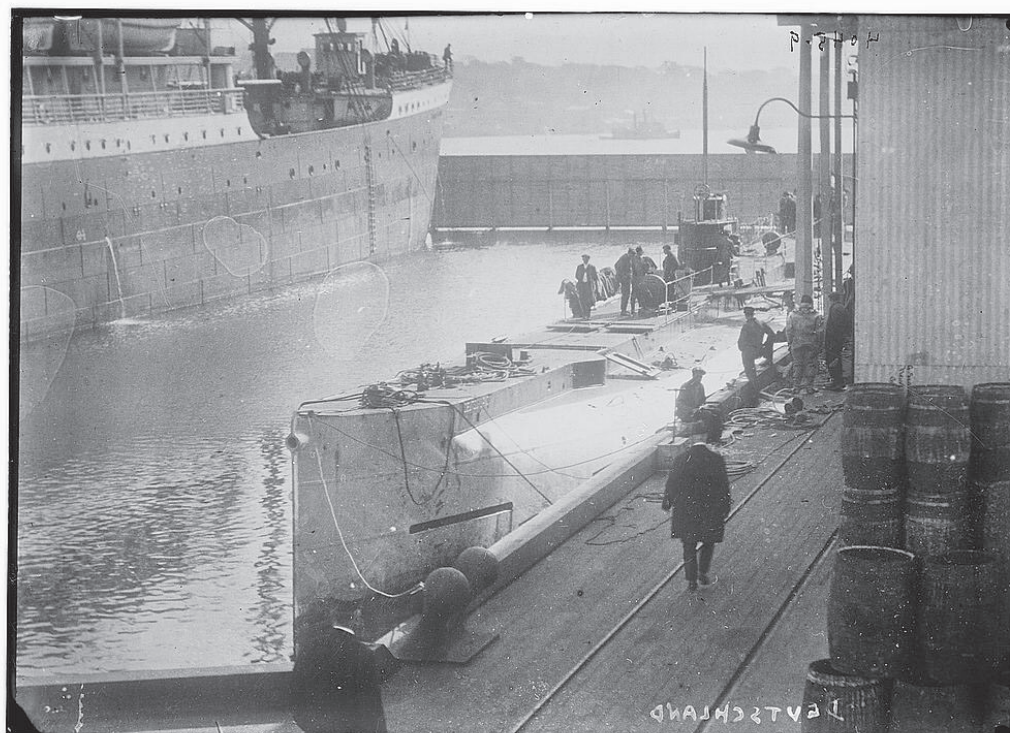
NOTICE!

TRAVELLERS intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and her allies and Great Britain and her allies; that the zone of war includes the waters adjacent to the British Isles; that, in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government, vessels flying the flag of Great Britain, or of any of her allies, are liable to destruction in those waters and that travellers sailing in the war zone on ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk.

IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 22, 1915.

Figure 1: Ambassador von Bernstorff issued an advisory in April 1915 warning Americans of the danger of sailing on British-flagged vessels through the Atlantic war zone. This particular specimen appeared in the *New York Times* on May 1, 1915 just 6 days before the *Lusitania* went down (courtesy of the *New York Times*).

November 1916 saw Georg Ahrens dispatched from the embassy in Washington to New London, Connecticut, where the *Deutschland* had just arrived after another crossing on November 1 (Fig. 2a). Reporters clamored to interview its gregarious and charismatic skipper, Paul König (Fig. 2b), who was, by now, something of a celebrity. König revealed that he had outfoxed 7 British warships during this particular trip and allowed that he was carrying roughly 500 tons of cargo worth more than \$10 million [4]. (This cargo would be valued at roughly \$280 million in inflation-adjusted dollars today.) Speculation held that stocks, bonds, and jewels were among the haul. Ahrens, who was more reserved, preferred to get on with his duties. He spent the day aboard the *Deutschland* being debriefed, presumably exchanging information on diplomatic matters and perhaps even matters related to the War. To this day, the exact nature of diplomatic meetings on board the *Deutschland* whenever it was in a US port remain unknown, but all details would be duly reported back to Ahrens' boss, Ambassador von Bernstorff.



(a) The *Deutschland* in port at New London.



(b) König's book.

Figure 1: The *Deutschland* was docked at the port of New London in Connecticut for 2 weeks in early November 1916. Its skipper, Paul König, enjoyed a brief celebrity status prior to US entry into the War and he penned a book, *Voyage of the Deutschland* [3], about the blockade-running exploits of his ship. It proved to be a morale booster on the German home front during the War (respective images courtesy of the George Grantham Bain Collection of the US Library of Congress and Wikimedia Commons).

At that time, the US was very careful to maintain both neutrality itself and all appearances of neutrality. It did not want to be wrongly perceived as giving safe harbor to any combatant warships. So, Ahrens had to go about his duties that day in the midst of various inspections, including from US Navy officers, who concluded that the only weapon on board the *Deutschland* was Captain König's personal sidearm. The Navy once again cleared the sub as a merchant vessel and not a warship. By the end of his stay, Ahrens had come away with the information he needed for his report and would also fetch back a large cache of mail and dispatches from Germany for the embassy to process and forward.

Back in Washington, Georg Ahrens continued to diligently perform his various attaché duties, all amidst an increasingly deteriorating atmosphere that portended eventual US entry into the War. By early 1917, diplomatic relations were close to a complete collapse and Ambassador Bernstorff was ordered to close the embassy and return to Germany. The logistics were no trifling matter. It would involve not only safely moving a complement of around 60 embassy staffers, counselors, messengers, typists, maids, valets, etc. from Washington to New York, but also arranging similar travel for almost another 100 recalled German expatriates scattered around the country. Ahrens again went about his duties with characteristic efficiency, prioritizing what had to be taken in terms of files, equipment, etc. and what would have to be destroyed, as well as organizing the large-scale packing, crating, and movement of all this government bulk to the train station. The preparations for evacuation must have had an orderly chaos similar to that of a large circus breaking-down the big top and hurrying elephants onto the train to race to the next city.

The *New York Times* reported that the American government was sufficiently concerned about the safety of Bernstorff and his staff at this point that it assigned a detail of 20 discretely-armed US Secret Service agents to escort the group. Under cover of darkness, all parties rendezvoused at Washington's Union Station, boarding a special train that departed a few minutes after midnight on Valentine's Day, February 14, 1917, making its way up the coast 220 miles to New York, where the steamer *Frederik VIII* was docked at Hoboken, just across the Hudson River. The embassy staff was ushered aboard the neutrally-flagged liner by the Secret Service, which then sailed from America under guaranteed safe passage from the British and French governments. It was the close of another cloak-and-dagger operation that Georg Ahrens helped to spearhead, but which he did not especially relish. The US would enter World War I a few months later in April, 1917 and fighting would rage on for another year and a half until the Armistice on November 11, 1918.

Back to America: Promotion and Re-opening the St. Louis Consul

Georg Ahrens busied himself with various diplomatic duties during and after the War. As international relations increasingly returned to normal, he was eager to again receive a foreign assignment, but none was yet forthcoming. In the meantime, he had married Hildegard Schmidt zur Nedden and they would have their first child, Johann Georg, in December of 1922. Ironically, the St. Louis consular office had already been re-established after the War by 1921 under Dr. Hugo Mundt, but the Weimar government in Germany closed it again near the end of 1923 because of budgetary issues wrought by hyperinflation. But, in a 1925 reversal, it was yet again decided to re-open the office because of St. Louis' commercial, industrial, and cultural importance, including the fact that a large fraction of its population was German-American and that there were important business and industrial connections associated with this group. Ahrens was very pleased when he learned that he would be appointed as Consul General in St. Louis. It would be a welcome move and a welcome promotion.

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* announced Ahrens' arrival in St. Louis on October 20, 1925 (Fig. 3). He took up temporary residence at the Jefferson Hotel, which had opened in 1904 as part of the gigantic supporting infrastructure for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, more popularly known as the St. Louis World's Fair. His immediate concern would be the workaday tasks associated with re-establishing the office itself, which had now been defunct for 2 years. Once things were up and running, he would then have some breathing room to send for his wife and son.

One of the first substantive matters requiring his attention involved Americans who held German government loan securities. Hyperinflation in Germany peaked around 1923, but the replacement of the old Papiermark with the new Reichsmark in 1924 had already started to bring some financial stability. Now, the Weimar government was exchanging old securities denominated in Papiermarks for new ones in Reichsmarks at an exchange rate of 40 to 1. Ahrens announced the exchange program in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on February 10, 1926, noting that a special department on the 3-rd floor of the gigantic First National Bank, 510 Locust Street at Broadway, had been established to handle transactions for people in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Kentucky. Security holders would have until May 15 to surrender their notes.

Exchanges went relatively smoothly, but there was an important and very problematic by-product. The large and shifting world of pre-war, wartime, and post-war German securities, which included emergency loan bonds, was very confusing to an inexperienced public and had opened huge opportunities for shady financial offerings. By April, Ahrens was again speaking directly to the public through the *Post-Dispatch* and other St. Louis dailies to warn about unscrupulous brokering of German financial instruments, hoping to educate the general public against being swindled through purchases of nearly-worthless paper. Aside from his altruistic purposes, he also wanted to be sure that this issue could not be used to make post-war anti-German sentiments any worse than what they already were.

Pastoral Duties and Cultural Gemütlichkeit

By 1927, Ahrens' consular office had been firmly established in the Planter's Building, 408 Pine Street, in downtown St. Louis (Fig. 4). He had fully settled-in and was diligently supervising the office and seeing to all of its official duties; they were numerous. He tended to expatriate Germans living in St. Louis, to American travelers to Germany for visas and such, to American and German firms wanting to do business with each other, and to the many miscellaneous financial, diplomatic, and government matters that seemed to arise on a regular basis. These activities comprised his "pastoral portfolio".

But, he also reveled in the cultural aspects that were closer to the *Gemütlichkeit* end of his job-description's spectrum. These were



Figure 3: Dr. Georg Ahrens, German Consul, at around the time he arrived in St. Louis in 1925 (photo *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*).

crucial to promoting German–American friendship and relations, especially after the War. His first really big event was hosting his new boss, Ambassador Baron Adolf von Maltzan, for a 4 day visit in March, 1927. It was the first time a German Ambassador had visited St. Louis since before the War and the Baron was eager to speak on increasing trade and the ties of business between the two countries. He gave a number of speeches around town, always extolling, as the *St. Louis Post–Dispatch* reported, the principle that “sound trade relations are the strongest ties with which nations can be linked together”. Ahrens and his boss were very much alike in mind.

As 1927 rolled into 1928, it seemed like Ahrens’ activities in the realm of cultural–diplomatic *Gemütlichkeit* and German–American *Freundschaft* grew more frequent, everything from hosting Dr. Otto Vollbehr’s famous collection pre–1500 books with Frederick Lehmann at the Chase Hotel*, to speaking at large civic events, like the German, Swiss, and Austro–Hungarian program of the Women’s National Exposition at the St. Louis Coliseum, to hosting German industrialists interested in touring St. Louis’ manufacturing infrastructure. Though constantly maintaining a packed schedule, it was work he enthusiastically embraced and which suited him much more than the cloak–and–dagger episodes that dotted his earlier assignment in Washington. But this general environment of *Gemütlichkeit* was also not without some externally–imposed friction. As noted above, St. Louis was, in those days, an important intersectional meeting place of notable German out–of–towners and wealthy, German–American captains of industry, the latter who were eager to greet and mingle with their visiting *Landsmänner*. In fact, competitions of sorts would break out on certain occasions among would–be hosts and none of these industrialists was more insistent than the head of the Anheuser–Busch Brewing Association, August A. Busch Sr. (Fig. 5), especially if the German parties in question were of sufficient interest or importance. So, the role of peace–keeping impresario among St. Louis’ heavyweight German–American industrialists would gradually become an additional, though unofficial part of Georg Ahrens’ job portfolio.

The first high–pressure test of his brokering skills came in May 1928 when Hermann Köhl, Günther von Hünefeld, and James Fitzmaurice, by then known as *Die Drei Luftmusketiere*, visited St. Louis shortly after completing the first east–to–west trans–Atlantic airplane crossing [6]. Their feat, which experts doubted was even feasible at the time, came after numerous aviators had perished in prior attempts.



Figure 5: August A. Busch Sr. (right) with his mother Lillian (Mrs. Adolphus Busch; center) and his nephew Adalbert Von Gontard (left) circa 1923 (photo courtesy of the George Grantham Bain Collection, US Library of Congress).



Figure 4: Georg Ahrens’ consular office operated out of the Planter’s Building, which had originally opened in 1894 as the Planter’s Hotel. This particular photo was taken circa 1972, when it was by then known as the Cotton Belt building, subsequent to the St. Louis Southwestern Railroad, popularly known as the Cotton Belt, moving its corporate offices there (courtesy Historic American Buildings Survey collection, US Library of Congress).

It was a remarkable moment of aeronautical achievement about which Georg Ahrens, always keen to promote German–American friendship, would comment in a May 15, 1928 article in the *Post–Dispatch*:

I am glad it was the German people who were first to reciprocate the visit of Colonel Lindbergh... It should go far toward bringing about a stronger friendship between Germany and the United States.

But, the event also created a pressing matter of how to handle their brief stopover in terms of a social schedule. August Busch was adamant; he was not coming into the city just to be part of a gaggle of anonymous admirers at an event someone else arranged; the rough–and–tumble brewer did not play second fiddle [7]. Instead, the *Luftmusketiere* and a proper delegation from the St. Louis establishment were being summoned, as it were, to his country estate out in Affton Missouri [8] to be hosted, entertained, and feted as only August Busch could do. After some wrangling, the requisite arrangements were

*Vollbehr’s collection would later be acquired through an Act of the US Congress by the Library of Congress [5].

negotiated and a caravan of cars carrying Georg Ahrens and more than 20 VIPs, including St. Louis Chamber of Commerce head Harold Bixby, publisher Joseph Pulitzer, and City of St. Louis Mayor Victor Miller, duly trundled 10 miles out rough Gravois road to Busch's estate. The group spent the afternoon around his gigantic dining room table chatting and pontificating with the *Luftmusketiere* on all manner of topics. Busch was impressed with the intrepid flyers and they with him. As for Ahrens, he had deftly averted a potentially serious social crisis, but it would not be the last time he would be called-in to handle matters involving Mr. Busch.

Sporting Affairs

Ahrens and his wife Hildegard would eventually set up housekeeping in a spacious apartment at the Gatesworth Hotel, 245 Union Boulevard, on the north edge of Forest Park. Hildegard had arrived in St. Louis with their older son Johann, now 7, in tow, but the couple had since had another son Rudolf, now 2. Ahrens' consular salary from the German government was even enough for the family to afford live-in help in the person of one Felicity Pitschas, a practical nurse and *Kinderpflegerin* from Berlin, who assisted Hildegard in tending to the children and running the household.

Miss Pitschas' efforts helped to give the Ahrens family some latitude for personal pursuits and one of Georg's was in physical fitness and sports as a component of healthy living. August 12, 1928 was the 150-th anniversary of the birth of Friedrich Jahn, the godfather of the physical fitness movement, and Ahrens was honored to be asked to place a wreath at the Jahn memorial in Forest Park during a large ceremony organized by several of the Turner's clubs in St. Louis. In fact, he often participated in the annual commemoration of Jahn's birthday sponsored by the German Sports Club, which fielded a respectable soccer team in the old St. Louis Municipal League [9]. Ahrens' well-being seemed to reside at the perfect intersection of his personal, social, and professional activities.

One event he was particularly looking forward to was an upcoming wrestling card on October 1, 1929 at the St. Louis Coliseum (Fig. 6) featuring his countryman Richard Schickat**. At 32 years of age and 216 pounds, the German professional wrestler had been recognized as the reigning champion by both the New York and Pennsylvania state athletic commissions after his recent defeat of Jimmy Londos in Philadelphia***. Schickat would be facing the contender, 212 pound Frank Brunowicz of Boston, in the main bout.



Figure 6: The St. Louis Coliseum at Washington and Jefferson Avenues occupied an entire city block, replacing the old St. Louis Exposition and Music Hall (torn down in 1907) as the city's main convention and event center (postcard courtesy of the James R. Powell Route 66 Collection, Curt Teich Postcard Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago IL).

On the evening of the Schickat-Brunowicz match, Ahrens was riding in a car driven by his friend, architect Charles Nagel Jr. While heading east toward the Coliseum, calamity struck at 4475 Washington Blvd. Two cars driven respectively by Albert Stribling, an out-of-town salesman from Mount Vernon, Illinois, and Violet Spooner, a schoolteacher who lived nearby on Forest Park Blvd, collided practically right in front of Nagel and Ahrens. Nagel could not brake fast enough, quickly adding a third car to the steaming wreck. Road travel did not involve the speeds it does today, but the force and lack of modern automotive safety features were still enough to bang-up Ahrens, including a complimentary broken nose, for which he was taken to nearby Barnes Hospital. Ironically, the 3 drivers each walked away without a scratch.

Ahrens missed the bout, which Schickat would incidentally win in the 22-nd minute. The accident came at a particularly bad time because there was yet another important German visitor on the docket that August Busch Sr. was eager to receive in 2 weeks at his castle in Affton, the Lord Mayor of Berlin, Gustav Böss. Arrangements were again negotiated and Busch entertained in his usual

**Richard Schickat had a fairly long career over which he wrestled under 3 successively simplified variations of his last name: Schickat, Schikat, and Shikat. In an October 2, 1929 story in the Post-Dispatch, his manager, Joe "Toots" Mondt, said the simplifications made the name easier to spell for newspaper men, apparently poking fun at the less-than-diligent manner with which some reporters went about their work.

***The nature of wrestling as a sport at that time was most similar to what we would now recognize as Greco-Roman wrestling in the Olympic Games. It is entirely different from the sports-themed entertainment that is generically referred to today as professional wrestling.

splendid fashion with a large luncheon on October 19, 1929. Ahrens was not yet recovered and the prospect of enduring 10 miles of bumpy road to Affton with a broken nose made him glad to be able to sit this particular visit out.

Dr. Ahrens continued this pace over the next few years, balancing official consul duties, family obligations, and his role as a cultural and social nucleus of German–American activities in St. Louis (Fig. 7). All indicators suggest he went about these activities happily and eagerly. However, the days in St. Louis would shortly come to a close for him and his family. The Foreign Service is similar to the priesthood and the military in the sense that one must go where one is sent and Ahrens was notified in 1932 of a pending transfer. After taking his family back home to Germany for a visit, he returned briefly to hand the office over to the new Consul, Reinhold Freitag, at the end of November. The Ahrens family then departed St. Louis the following week for Georg's next assignment in Mexico.



Figure 7: Dr. Georg Ahrens (center right) presenting the German “Wanderpreis” Cup to German Sport Club President Bernhard Deutschmann (center left) and the first-string players of its soccer team on March 21, 1931 (Image cropped from a photographic portrait by Hans Kaut, 1864–1934, of Kaut Studio, 2048 Victor Street, St. Louis, MO; from author's collection).

dry campaigns surrounding the First World War and the disastrous experiment of Prohibition that followed, but would likewise not live out the 1930s. With already-severe health problems worsening, he committed suicide at his castle in Affton on February 10, 1934 and the subsequent and gigantic gathering there for his visitation would be the last time Busch would host, so to speak, a group of VIPs at his beloved estate. It is today owned by several of August's grandchildren and remains open to the public as Grant's Farm.

Regarding the *Deutschland* (Fig. 2), it immediately became obsolete as a merchant vessel once the US entered the First World War, so it was converted to an armed U-boat (U-155), subsequently sinking more than 40 allied warships over the course of 3 tours of duty. It was surrendered after the Armistice in 1918 and by 1922 had been scrapped. The grand Planter's Hotel on Pine Street in downtown St. Louis, out of which Georg Ahrens operated the consular office, was razed in 1976, only a few years after the photo in Fig. 4 was taken. The St. Louis Coliseum (Fig. 6) was likewise eventually demolished, having been eclipsed by 2 newer venues, namely the St. Louis Arena and Kiel Auditorium, which opened in 1929 and 1934, respectively.

St. Louis no longer has a German Consul General, but is instead part of the Chicago consular district headed by incumbent Wolfgang Mössinger. Local matters are facilitated by an official network of volunteer assistants, termed Honorary Consuls, of which Paul Oberneufemann is the current assignee for the St. Louis region. Although almost a century has passed since Georg Ahrens' arrival in St. Louis, the mission of the diplomatic and consular corps remains the same, namely to care for and promote close friendship between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Acknowledgement

The life and times of Georg Ahrens in America were covered by various news dailies, including the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *New York Times*. Their archives were extraordinarily valuable in researching this story, as were papers from the 1930 United States Census. The author would also like to acknowledge an anonymous gift of photographic portraits originally made by Hans Kaut, which included the image in Fig. 7, and conversation with Craig Thomas, Curator of Animals, at Grant's Farm.

Epilogue

The Ahrens family had made numerous close and lasting friendships during their time in St. Louis and returned for several visits, as Georg's duties in Mexico would permit. Sadly, a family tragedy struck in 1938 when their older son, Johann, then 18, died as a result of a bicycle accident while he was in college back in Germany. Ironically, Georg and Hildegard received the news while in America during a visit with their old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Nagel Jr. Ahrens would subsequently hold a series of government, advisory, and foreign office posts during and after the Second World War, ultimately requesting retirement in 1955 and thereafter busying himself with translating Henry Kissinger's influential book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* into German [10]. Georg Ahrens died in 1967 in the city of Karlsruhe in southwest Germany, with his passing going largely unnoticed by St. Louis newspapers.

Ahrens' old boss, Ambassador von Bernstorff, left the diplomatic service during the Weimar era and became a member of the German Parliament, serving until 1928. With the growing political turmoil of the 1930s, he left Germany for Switzerland, dying there in 1939. August Busch Sr. (Fig. 5) successfully guided Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association through the anti-German

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DKV Membership Dinner

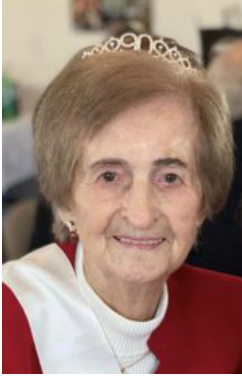
The DKV Membership Dinner was a lovely chance to come together and show appreciation for all members. We enjoyed music by the Deutschmeister Brass Band and an impromptu dance performance by Die Heimatgruppe with a special appearance by some members of the Volkstanzgruppe. Die Heimatgruppe and Volkstanzgruppe danced to a holiday version of “Rock Mi” to spread the holiday cheer. Dinner and dessert was complementary for all members to show thanks for all of the hard work and dedication throughout the year. Special thanks to those who volunteered to cook and serve. Thank you to everyone who made this day special.

Olivia Schaffer



In Memoriam

Deceased Members from December 1st, 2022-March 31st, 2023



Maria Thalheimer

February 24, 2023

Member of the Damenchor

Member of the Seniorengruppe

Assistant Financial Secretary 1987-1988

Auditor 1986-1988

Member of the Hallenunterstützungsgruppe

Member of the Ticket Committee



Rudolf Sterzl

February 27, 2023

Member of the Donau Park
Development group

Member of the Bar Committee

Member of the Seniorengruppe

Member of the Jugendgruppe
Eltern Committee 1987-1992



Kathy Heitzmann

March 29, 2023

Member of the Garden Club

Member of the Jugendgruppe

Member of the Seniorengruppe

Member of the Jugendgruppe
Eltern Committee 1983-1990

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Member Announcements



Congratulations to Agnes Toth on her 100th birthday!



Congratulations to Becky and Joey Wendt, who are due with their first baby boy in August!



Congratulations to Tricia and John Jabouri, who are due with their first baby in August!

Friends, Family Gather to Celebrate Agnes Toth's 100th Birthday

On Sunday, March 11, 1923, Cultural Society member Mrs. Agnes Toth was born in Torjanci, Croatia. One hundred years later, about a 100 of Mrs. Toth's friends, family, and neighbors helped her celebrate her birthday at the Cultural Society Hall. Family members included Mrs. Toth's niece, Mrs. Cathy Unterreiner, her niece-in-law, Mrs. Nancy Kastner, and her nephew-in-law, Mr. Isidor Stempfle. All of Mrs. Toth's great-nieces and great-nephews attended, as well as many of her great-great-nieces and nephews and their children.

Mrs. Toth and her guests were treated to a slide show of photographs of Mrs. Toth through the years – from a baby to the present. The slideshow was created by Mrs. Toth's great-nephew-in-law, Mr. James Stroup. Mrs. Toth's great-nephew Mr. Michael Unterreiner welcomed everyone to the party:

Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate Anges' birthday. Agnes was born in a small town in Croatia. When Agnes was 12 years old, her mother passed away from complications of the Spanish flu. This left Agnes, her older sister Maria, and their father on their own. The three ran a hotel/restaurant on the border of Croatia and Hungary.

After World War II, when Agnes was 21 years old, she and her family were refugees in Austria. Agnes had to work in France for a wealthy family, who thanked her for all her hard work by confiscating her passport and trying to keep her with them. Thanks to the kindness of a stranger, Agnes was able to escape her captivity and make her way back to Austria without a passport. A very daring escape! In 1955, Agnes was reunited with her family in St. Louis. She married Frank Toth, an immigrant from Hungary, in 1963. They were married for 24 years until Frank's death. Agnes has lived in the same house on Valcour in Affton for 60 years!

We can't let today slip away without acknowledging two very special women in Agnes' life. The first is Agnes' niece, my mother, Cathy Unterreiner. She has been more than a niece to Agnes. She has been her close friend, banker, and advocate for over 30 years. Thank you, Mom, from the bottom of our hearts. And Ann Shuck! Where would we be without Ann?! She has been an angel. With Ann's around-the-clock assistance, Agnes has not only survived, but thrived. We all agree that Agnes has never looked better than she has in Ann's care. We call Agnes "Benjamin Buttons" because she ages backwards. Ann is so much more than Agnes' neighbor and friend. We will always be so grateful to Ann, who has given us the gift of time with our aunt, our Teta. Ann and her husband Jim are stuck with us; they're family now.

After these remarks, guests enjoyed a lunch of sandwiches, potato-, tossed-, and fruit- salad. Guests were also served yellow and chocolate cake decorated with edible photographs of Mrs. Toth. Friends of Mrs. Toth brought homemade strudel and cookies. Guests spent an enjoyable afternoon visiting with Mrs. Toth and each other. Thank you to all those who made Mrs. Toth's 100th birthday even more special by celebrating it with her.

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Help Wanted!

Newsletter Journalists

Duties include writing articles for our newsletter about our GCS events and other outside events where our GCS subgroups perform.

Garden Coordinator at Jefferson Ave. Hall

Duties include weed control in the bed in front and on the side of the building. These beds already have commercial landscape fabric and mulch to minimize weeds.

Also trimming bushes as needed. No watering needed at Jefferson Ave. Hall. A lawn service cuts the grass so there is NO weed wacking or grass cutting.

Garden Coordinator at Donau Park

Duties include weed control in the several gardens throughout the Donau Park as needed. Also gardens need watering during hot, dry periods in the summer. Annual planting at the circle between the pavilion and lodge. Trimming bushes as needed.

Donauschwaben Corner

In June 2022, we took a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Europe. As a part of that trip we visited 15 Donauschwaben villages. On our second day in Budapest, we rented a car and went to the Donauschwaben village of Szár, where Joey's Opa (Frank Heitzmann) was born. This was the last day of the genealogy research portion of this trip. Luckily, we made it into town just in time to attend Sunday Mass at the Szár Church.

At the cemetery in Szár, we only found one direct ancestor of Joey, his great-great-grandfather. We worked really hard to read the grave we found- Frank Heitzmann's! The tombstone was falling apart and barely legible. I even had to lay on the ground to get a better angle to read the letters. After more than two hours of trying to decipher the letters we could read, we even had to call Joey's Opa for reinforcement in figuring out what the mystery word was. We ended up figuring out that the tombstone read "Gott sei ihm barmherzig" which translates to "God have mercy on him."

While in Szár, we also drove around looking at the houses of Joey's ancestors. Thanks to a map from Becky Haas, we were able to find both houses.

Up next, we will be featuring our visit to the village of Engelsbrunn, Romania, where Joey's Great-Grandfather and one of the founding member of our club (Nick Holzinger) was from.

Becky and Joey Wendt



Szár entrance sign (Saar in German)



View of the Szár Church from the Cemetery



Inside the Szár Church during Mass



Outside the Szár Church



Inside the Szár Church



Grave of Franz Heitzmann (Joey's great-great-grandfather)

****We had the most trouble reading/deciphering what the last line said. The tombstone was worn down and pieces of it were chipping away, making some of the letters very hard to see/read.**



House of Anton Heitzmann and Theresia Schlegel Heitzmann (Joey's great-grandparents) and Frank Heitzmann (Joey's grandfather)



House of Franz Heitzmann and Mathilde Freidler Heitzmann (Joey's great-great-grandparents)



Saar Sign by the church



**Above: Entrance to the Saar Cemetery
To the Left: Szár Heart at the School**

Report from Die Heimatgruppe



Things for Die Heimatgruppe have definitely been slower since fest season ended. Nevertheless, we still find ways to still dance! In December, we had a small performance at the DKV membership dinner. It was fun to show some of our dances to fellow members but also, we teamed up with Volkstanz to perform a Christmas-themed dance! It was to the tune of "Rock Mi," one of our combo dances that all the groups know. At the end of January, we performed at a birthday party! It was our first time dancing at a birthday party, but it was so much fun. Since then, we have been taking advantage of the quieter season by practicing and starting the 4th Winterfest prep! We have been continuing to teach our dances and we actually have a newer dance in the works- so stay tuned!

We are also continuing to post monthly on our Facebook page. Each month, there is either a post about something cultural or an introduction to a new member. You can find us at Die Heimatgruppe of Saint Louis.

Recently, a few of our members announced some exciting news.... Joey and Becky Wendl are expecting a little one in August, & Tricia and John Jabouri are also expecting a little one in August. We are so excited and congratulations to the new parents to be!

Our group is always looking for new members to share our love of culture and dance with. If you are interested, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Leah Lorenz

Deutschmeister Brass Band Report

With warmer weather right around the corner, the Deutschmeister Brass Band is gearing up for a busy Maifest season. Several of our favorite venues have invited us to join their springtime festivals in April and May including Stubborn German Brewing, Das Bevo, and Grant's Farm, in addition to the DKV's annual Maifest at the Donau Park. We hope to see many of our friends at these performances in the coming months as we share in the Gemütlichkeit of the season. We are always looking for new members, old and young, to join our group and welcome those who are musically inclined to join us for a rehearsal to learn more about our organization and style of musik. Details of our practice time and meeting location can be found on page 4 and you can also reach out to germanbandstl@gmail.com for more information.

Another point is that I believe our rehearsal details may be dated. We now rehearse at the DKV Hall on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:30pm. We don't meet every Wednesday, so it's generally a best practice to reach out to our email address to confirm the schedule before just showing up.

Adam Glassl

Date	Event	Time
4/15/23	Stubborn German 7th Anniversary	6:30-9:30pm
4/23/23	German Cultural Society Wurstmart	12:00-4:00pm
4/29/23	Das Bevo Maifest	7:00-10:00pm
5/6/23	Grant's Farm Maifest	2:00-5:00pm
5/7/23	Grant's Farm Maifest	2:00-5:00pm
5/12/23	Grant's Farm Maifest	6:00-9:00pm
5/13/23	Grant's Farm Maifest	2:00-5:00pm
5/21/23	German Cultural Society Maifest	12:00-6:00pm
7/15/23	Das Bevo Wurstmart	7:00-10:00pm
8/20/23	German Cultural Society Kirchweihfest	11:00am-5:00pm
9/9/23	Grant's Farm Oktoberfest	2:00-5:00pm
9/10/23	German Cultural Society Oktoberfest	12:00-5:00pm
9/15/23	Grant's Farm Oktoberfest	6:00-9:00pm
9/16/23	Belleville Oktoberfest	tbd
9/17/23	Grant's Farm Oktoberfest	2:00-5:00pm
9/24/23	Saint Charles Oktoberfest	tbd
9/29/23	Das Bevo Oktoberfest	8:00-11:00pm
9/30/23	Stubborn German Brewing Oktoberfest	3:00-6:00pm
10/6/23	Oktoberfest at Souard Market	tbd
10/7/23	Oktoberfest at Souard Market	tbd
tbd	Recess Brewing	2:00-5:00pm

Our new Handarbeit und Basteln Gruppe!

Die Handarbeit und Basteln Gruppe is coming back to the DKV! This group is a melting pot of all sorts of crafts, ages, and experience levels. While we are still forming this group and what it will be, we have lots of ideas and are excited to get started. Throughout the year, we hope to get together to have fun craft nights where we can socialize but also share tips, tricks, and techniques. A goal of ours too would be to create crafts to sell at our festivals and eventually a Christkindmarkt. If you are interested in getting involved, please don't hesitate to reach out! All experience levels are welcome, too, so if you have ever wanted to learn a craft, this would be a great way to start!

Please contact Leah Lorenz at germanstlhandarbeit@gmail.com if you're interested.

Leah Lorenz

Belleville Christkindlmarkt

Belleville Christkindlmarkt, an authentic open air German style Christmas Market in the heart of downtown Belleville, was a chilly performance for the Die Heimatgruppe. This is our group's second year dancing at this event. Despite the cold, many of the shoppers stopped by to clap along and watch the group dance. After dancing, the group toured the mart sipping on Glühwein and picked up some local gifts and goodies. We look forward to next year!

Olivia Schaffer



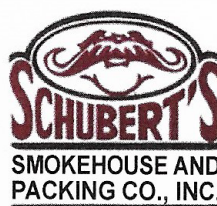
Weihnachtsgottesdienst

Photo submitted by: Dennis Kastens



Landestreffen 2023

This year's Landestreffen will be held in Mansfield, Ohio over Labor Day weekend (September 1st-3rd) at the Mansfield Liederkranz. Check out Mansfield's website for more information including information on hotel blocks.



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Garden Club Report

2023 Spring and Summer Yardening

Friends, club members, and “Landsleute” it’s been too many years since I last wrote anything for this newsletter. Figured I’d lollygagged long enough. Have to get cracking or my brain will crack and all the “smarts” will leak out.

In January, I took home one of the Aloe plants from the kitchen at the hall after seeing how gray and leggy they’ve become over these past blankety blank years, since Scheffel Kati donated them for that long-ago plant sale the club had hosted. They were some of the leftovers I thought would do well in the kitchen at the main hall since that’s where Aloe comes in handy for minor burns, cuts or scrapes. [Just spent half an hour researching SOME of the multiple varieties of Aloe, if they even resembled those at the hall. IF ANYONE CARES, Wikipedia tells us there are 580 species!!]

What I did discover is that the larger of the house plant is Aloe Ferox which works as Aloe Vera [or Barbadosensis Miller].

There are 580 varieties, if you’re inclined to check them out. [<https://brainygardener.com/aloe-ferox-cape-aloe-care/#pruning>]

How to care for the Aloe:

- Rarely needs repotting if pot is large enough. If roots overflow [some come out at the bottom drainage holes] then it’s time to repot.
- Repot in Spring
- Use Terracotta/Clay pot multiple drainage holes# [some helpful tips at bottom]
- Soil: mix of bark, perlite and vermiculite [or cactus mix]
- Add light layer of mix to cover the bottom, center cactus then add mix until mix reaches about two-thirds full.
- Water freely and see that it drains quickly
- Place pot in sheltered area with plenty of light and warmth

TIPS

For most potted house plants

- First place used dryer sheets over the holes to keep soil from falling out
- On top of that, layer those pesky gum balls that proliferate due to many sweet gum trees that abound.
- 3rd layer your potting soil

Becky Haas

Aloe Article submitted by Becky Haas

Aloe comes from tropical Africa. Related species are used as an antidote to arrow poison, but we value the plant for its healing effect on burns, wounds and insect bites.

Description

Aloe is a succulent, and grows to a height of 12 to 16 inches. It has a fibrous root system producing long, tapering, stemless leaves. These light green leaves have spiky margins and are blotched with cream. The firm upright stems bear several bell-shaped, fleshy, yellow-orange flowers.

Cultivation

How do you know when to split the plant or replant it into a larger pot, when should an aloe be repotted to a larger pot?

Plants may be transplanted at intervals between 6 mos. and 2 yrs. It is beneficial to the mother to have the new ones taken off to lessen the crowding and competition. When you see the new plants, let them get about 4-5” tall, with at least three good leaves. Take the entire plant out of the pot, lay on newspaper and gently separate the little ones from the mother, getting some roots with each plant, more for the original. I find it helpful to separate when the plant is on the dry side, as they break apart so easily and do not tear the roots in the process.

Propagate from small, rooted offshoots at the base of the parent plant. It may be grown from seed. It prefers a rough, gritty growing medium and a well-drained, sunny location. It will also grow in partial shade. Aloe needs temperatures above 40 degrees, and is grown indoors in cooler climates. When grown indoors the offshoots can be removed and re-potted when they are a few inches tall. Do not over water.

Harvesting

Cut the leaves as required.

Medicinal Use

Keep a pot of Aloe vera on your kitchen windowsill for handy access. The fresh juice of the leaf blades can be applied directly to ulcers, burns, sunburn, and fungal infection.

Aloe-emodin, an ingredient in aloe, is a powerful laxative and should always be used with caution. It can be combined with a tincture of caraway seed to prevent intestinal cramps and pain. Taken in small doses, it is an excellent digestive tonic.

Herpes and skin conditions

Preliminary evidence also suggests that aloe gel may improve symptoms of genital herpes and certain skin conditions such as psoriasis.

Constipation

Aloe juice or aloe latex, a yellow, bitter liquid derived from the skin of the aloe leaf, is a powerful laxative. However, it can cause painful cramping and is not recommended. Other gentler, herbal laxatives from the same plant family as aloe (such as cascara and senna) are generally recommended first.

Source: [https://ezinearticles.com/?Wonders-of-Aloe-Vera-\(Ulcers,-Sunburn,-and-Fungal-Infection\)---from-a-South-African-Perspective&id=265646](https://ezinearticles.com/?Wonders-of-Aloe-Vera-(Ulcers,-Sunburn,-and-Fungal-Infection)---from-a-South-African-Perspective&id=265646)

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KIRCHWEIHFEST

The German Church Consecration Festival



Sunday, August 20, 2023

Event from 12:30 until 5:00 PM

Food Served from 12:30 until 3:00 PM

at the German Cultural Society Hall

3652 South Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118

Catholic Mass in German will be celebrated at 11:30 AM

*The Damenchor will sing to the accompaniment
of the Deutschmeister Brass Band*

Followed by:

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Vereinskalender 2023 Event Calendar

15 Jan.	General Meeting <i>at the DKV Hall</i>	Jan. 15
4 März	Rosenball* <i>at the DKV Hall</i>	Mar. 4
8 Apr.	Ostereiersuchen <i>at the Donau Park</i>	Apr. 8
23 Apr.	Wurstmarkt <i>at the Donau Park</i>	Apr. 23
19, 20, & 21 Mai	Maifest <i>at the Donau Park</i>	May 19, 20, & 21
10-14 Juli	Ferienlager <i>at the Donau Park</i>	July 10-14
16 Juli	Wiener n' Schnitzel Dinner <i>at the Donau Park</i>	July 16
20 Aug.	Kirchweihfest <i>at the DKV Hall</i>	Aug. 20
Aug.	Visting Hungarian Dance Group <i>at TBA</i>	Aug.
8, 9, & 10 Sept.	Oktoberfest <i>at the Donau Park</i>	Sept. 8, 9, & 10
Okt.	German American Day <i>at the DKV Hall</i>	Oct.
22 Okt.	Musikalischer Nachmittag* <i>at the DKV Hall</i>	Oct. 22
5 Nov.	Totengedenkfeier <i>at Sunset Memorial Park</i>	Nov. 5
11 Nov.	Winzerfest* <i>at the DKV Hall</i>	Nov. 11
9 Dez.	Weihnachtsfeier <i>at the DKV Hall</i>	Dec. 9
10 Dez.	Weihnachtsgottesdienst <i>at Peace Lutheran Church</i>	Dec. 10
17 Dez.	Tag des Deutschen Kulturvereins <i>at the DKV Hall</i>	Dec. 17

* Event Tickets are available from germanstltickets@gmail.com or 314.771.8368

Meetings: General membership meetings are held on specific Sundays at 1:00 p.m. at the DKV Hall on Jefferson Ave., unless otherwise noted. The general board meeting schedule for 2023 is as follows:

January 15th *** March 12th *** June 4th

August 6th *** October 29th

Check out our Website
www.germanstl.org

Check out our Facebook page
German Cultural Society of St. Louis



German Cultural Society's Hall & Offices

3652 South Jefferson Avenue

St. Louis, MO 63118

Directions: From I-44, turn south at the **Jefferson Ave** exit. The Hall is on the left, a block north of the Jefferson/ Broadway/Chippewa intersection.

Or from I-55, turn north at the 4500 **Broadway** exit. Proceed to Jefferson Ave. and the hall is on the right.



German Cultural Society's Donau Park

5020 West Four Ridge Road

House Springs, MO 63051



Directions: From I-270, take **HWY 21** south past HWY 141 to the exit at **Old Route 21**-Shady Valley and turn left (south). Turn Right on **West Four Ridge Rd** and the entrance to the **Donau Park** is on the right.

To rent these locations for your event...

John Unterreiner at germanstlhallrentals@gmail.com
or Terry Ficken at donauparkrental@gmail.com
or call 314.771.8368

Addressee or current occupant

The Volkstanzgruppe performs in Carmel, Indiana at the Christkindlmarkt!

Members of our Volkstanzgruppe perform for the first time at the Carmel Christkindlmarkt. The group added the playing of the Alpine Glocken to their performance!

