



# MITTEILUNGSBLATT OF DANK CHAPTER 71

## THE GERMAN HERITAGE SOCIETY OF ERIE

Volume 25 Issue 1

February 2016



I apologize for not getting out newsletters in the past several months. Unfortunately, while we tried to get someone to help and possibly takeover the newsletter, no one came forward. I have had visual problems that made it a little difficult for me to continue, thus no newsletters were published. Things are finally getting better and I hope to pick up where we left off. BUT...I would still like to find a new editor who can bring in new ideas, new format/ etc. This is your organization and your input is appreciated. Bev

**Meet the Schmidt Family and learn more about them at our next meeting on Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at the Männerchor Club.**

They will help you learn basic German, and more about the German culture! Learn how you can join the Schmidt Family adventure. There will be a brief meeting and our President (Jeff Chase) has several things on the agenda: .1) We need to see if changing our day and or the time will help you to attend futures meetings and activities. 2) Decisions to be made regarding funding projects and distribution, 3) Planning our annual Picnic, Christmas celebration and discussing other important issues. Coffee and kuchen will be served during the meeting. Your participation is important and we sincerely hope that you will attend this important meeting. Remember this is your organization and your support is important to us. Please respond to Bev at 456-9599 ([erieoma@verizon.net](mailto:erieoma@verizon.net) email) or to Jeff at



Sharing our stories and history with family and friends can lead more people to join in our pride of their/our heritage. As long as you show you are happy and proud to be part of DANK, proud to share your heritage, respect that there are differences – there are ways to do things differently. Think about it and let's act on it starting now. You are the strength of DANK now and in the future/



Your safety is first and foremost during the winter months. Meetings will be cancelled if the weather conditions are deteriorating as reported on the news. We will notify you of a cancellation via email. No email on file? Please call Bev at 456-9599



# MEMBER HAPPENINGS

Enclosed is a list of our Member's Birthdays and Anniversaries from our database. If your name is not on the lists, it is because you have not shared it with us, or perhaps I forgot to enter it. A quick call or email can help us get our lists in order. **Thanks to Brigitte Chase**, who is our "Sunshine Lady" who sends out the cards, including our Thinking of You for members who are "under the weather".



*Keeping you in our thoughts. . . .  
and prayers*

Glenn Blodgett  
Robert & Carolyn Brabender  
Christel Caldwell  
Emil & Gretel Daeschner  
Luise Dudkiewicz - at Golden Living  
Hilde Huttel - Stone Gate

If you know someone we have missed,  
please call Brigitte Chase at 814-823-3593.



**If in all the hustle and bustle of the holiday season you forgot to renew your membership, it's not too late!**

**It's also a good time to introduce family members and friends to DANK. \$40 (\$ 50 with spouse), College students are \$10. Children 18 years and younger are free. They will enjoy membership in the largest German cultural organization; receive six bimonthly issues of the German American Journal Magazine; and join in our social activities. Applications available at our meetings, or on-line at [www.DANK.org](http://www.DANK.org)**

**Your renewal notice is enclosed. Please update and return with payment to:  
DANK RENEWAL 750 East 10<sup>th</sup> St. Erie, PA 16503**

## **GERMAN WORD OF THE MONTH... Fingerspitzengefühl**

Compound nouns abound in the German language. One that applies well to a variety of scenarios yet is difficult to translate precisely into English is "Fingerspitzengefühl."

The literal translation of this expression - often used to connote someone who deftly handles all manner of tricky social situations, accurately assesses various signs of the times, or cleverly strategizes solutions in a range of contexts - is "finger tip feeling." Most German native speakers would use it to positively describe an individual or his or her actions.

In terms of traditional handicrafts or trades such as watchmaking, wood carving or hairdressing, the expression *Fingerspitzengefühl*, may also be taken literally - namely as someone showing fine dexterity with their hands, or excellent "finger tip feeling."...

# Dates to Remember

	Darren	Corsi
Jan 1	Jacki	Seib, Sr.
Jan 10	James	von Loewe
Jan 27	Patrick	Tarasovich
Jan 28	Bryan D.	Bechler
Feb 1	Margaret J	Carter
Feb 7	Hilde	Huttel
Feb 11	Melissa	Shearer
Feb 14	Thomas	Kliber
Mar 4	Beverly	Huttel, Jr.
Mar 29	Frank	Swiderski
Apr 5	Gerald	Koos
Apr 14	Janice	Zuschlag
Apr 24	John	Becker
May 1	Robert T.	Schlaudecker
May 11	Carol	Susann
May 17	Kathleen	Bechler
May 24	Steve	Seib, Sr.
May 27	Christopher	Shearer
May 29	Allene M.	Kraus
Jun 2	Luise	Dudkiewicz
Jun 5	Roland	Zuschlag
Jun 16	Else	Bayer
Jun 24	Melissa	Lesniewski
Jul 1	Charles	Roehrl
Jul 2	John	Lesniewski

# BIRTHDAYS

Jul 15	Susan	Roehrl
Jul 27	Patricia Munz	Schlaudecker
Aug 4	Mark	Lesniewski
Aug 8	Frederick K.	Huttel, Jr.
Aug 9	Julie A	Gould
Aug 11	Beverly	Pochatko
Aug 14	Ursel	Schmitt
Aug 14	Steven	Hipwell
Aug 20	Anne	Hipwell
Aug 28	Jason	Jaquith
Sep 14	Philip W.	Susann
Sep 14,	Daniel B.	Koza
Sep 2	David	Ungerman
Sep 24	Randall L	Romine
Sep 28	Emil A.	Daeschner
Sep 28	Gretel A.	Daeschner
Sep 28	Carole	Wunner
Sept 20	Mildred	Becker
Oct 10,	Mace M.	Bowersox
Oct 14	Margaret	Potocki
Nov 29	William	Koehle
Dec 2	Kathleen	Gausman
Dec 16	Judith	Koza
Dec 22	Nancy	Mottern-Madura

## ANNIVERSARIES

Apr 26 1986	Anne	Steven	Hipwell
Apr 27, 1967	Steve	Jacki	Seib, Sr.
Apr 28, 1962	Siegfried	Carole	Wunner
Apr 29, 1966	Daniel B.	Judith	Koza
Dec 5 1998	Roland	Janice	Zuschlag
Dec 22, 1956	Ursel	Hans	Schmitt
Jul 15 1972	John	Mildred	Becker
Jun 12, 1971	Philip W.	Carol	Susann
Jun 22, 1943	Emil A.	Gretel A.	Daeschner
Mar 27, 1967	Charles	Susan	Roehrl
Nov 18	Kathleen	Darren	Corsi
Nov 28, 1988	Frederick	Beverly	Huttel, Jr.
Oct 7, 2000	Bryan D.	Kathleen	Bechler
Sep 17, 1982	Melissa	John	Lesniewski
Sep 13, 1997	Christopher	Melissa	Shearer

## MEETING DATES

DATE	PROGRAM	
Feb 17	Meet the Schmidt Family	Dinner? Call Bev at 456-9599
Mar 16	t.b.a.	Dinner? Call Bev at 456-9599
Apr 20	Our 26 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	Info will be announced in March
May 18	Spring Traditions	Dinner? Call Bev at 456-9599
Jun 15	t.b.a.	Dinner? Call Bev at 456-9599
Jul	Annual Family Picnic - no meeting	Info will be announced in June
Aug 17	German Fest Plans	

*Happy Valentine's Day*



## Singers Wanted



Did you know that singing has health benefits? It helps to reduce stress and to lift your spirits. Come join us on Tuesday evenings from 5:00 to 6:30p.m. and have a great time singing old time favorites from the 40s to the 60's, patriotic songs, polkas and traditional German folk songs for Oktoberfest, Christmas and more! German folk music is taught phonetically by a native speaker. Director is Kathy Swanson Everyone is welcome!

**DANK / Männerchor Mixed Chorus - Erie Mannerchor Club – Diamond Room**  
**Tuesday evenings 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.**



For information, contact Bev (456-9599). Margaret (835-1939) or Carol (455-7009).

# Cancelled !

## Sontag Kaffee Klatsch

Our theme "Vergiss mich nicht" was conceived to bring together any person who desires to brush-up on their German language skills.



The Deutsche Sprache Kaffee Klatsch group meets monthly at Perkins Restaurant, and whether you are a recent arrival from a German speaking country, have lived in Erie for a number of years, speak German as a second language and are interested in practicing your language skill or mingling with speakers, it is a great way to meet people and get involved.



When: Sunday February <sup>th</sup> - 2:00 p.m.  
Perkins Restaurant- West 8<sup>th</sup> St (by the Colony Plaza)  
R.S.V.P. to Margaret at 835-1939

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## Last Chance - GERMAN LIFE MAGAZINE



Renewing your subscription or as a first time subscriber, this is a really great value! Through DANK, you can receive the six issues of the magazine for just \$15.95! A \$10 savings over the subscription rate of \$24.95! First published in 1995, **German Life** is a current bi-monthly magazine written in English and German for all people interested in the diversity of German, Austrian, and Swiss culture yesterday and today, and in the various ways that North America has been shaped by its German heritage element. The magazine is dedicated to solid reporting on cultural, historical, social, and political events.

Send check in the amount of \$15.95 PAYABLE TO: German Life Magazine to:  
Charlotte Chase (1425 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street – Erie PA 16503) by May30th



## Our Future is in Your Hands!



If we could look into the future, what would we see? Will we see families sharing the traditions of their ancestral ties? Will we see families proudly proclaiming their ethnic roots or will they become a part of the melting pot...forgetting all that was so important to the family that left Germany for a better life in America? Oh they may be there for the brats & beer festivals, but what will they pass on to their children and or grandchildren.

It is no secret that ethnic organizations are beginning to fade from the scene and among them many German societies that have been around even longer than DANK! We have watched various German choruses disband for lack of member/singers; Turnvereins have closed as well. How long can we stand by and watch our heritage disappear?

If you are proud of your heritage, now is the time to stand-up and get involved in maintaining this organization to be here for the next generation. Now is the time for you to get involved by becoming actively involved within your chapter and by your financial support.

DANK was organized by German immigrants who came for a better life, who banded together as they became naturalized citizens of the country they adopted and to share their culture, and to preserve the language, traditions and music they held dear from the 'Heimat'. Many Germans worked hard in various organizations to raise money to help one another through their "Kranken" funds ... basically the early forerunner of health insurance... money that was used to keep food on the table when 'Papa' couldn't work because he was sick or hurt at work. The ladies raised money for the organizations (today's auxiliaries) to build the halls where they could meet. They worked together for a common cause united by their heritage.

Somewhere along the line, we have become so sure of ourselves that not until its too late do we realize what is at stake—what we are losing.

Is your heritage worth the nine cents per day for membership in an organization dedicated to preserving what our grandparents held so dear? Will you give a gift of membership to another family member? Will you consider giving a gift of money to help preserve DANK? No gift is too small and remember even pennies add up! Perhaps you will consider remembering DANK in your will. You may ask, "What will I get in return?" Besides membership in an organization that values the preservation of our heritage, you help to leave a legacy of pride in having Germanic roots.

Right now, the future of DANK is up to you. You can chose to ignore the pleas for support; you can say I've paid my dues, BUT if you turn your back, then remember when you gather family around, after you depart this earth, you leave them nothing but your name. Gone will be the pride in your heritage because no one stepped forward to see the future.



In Munich the *Starkbierfest* 'strong beer festival' takes place during Lent, While Lent is normally thought of as a time to reflect and to fast, the fasting was a bit too much for the Bavarian monks. Craving something a bit heavier and more substantial during their fast, they came up with an officially sanctioned fasting loophole, Starkbier, which they actually referred to as 'liquid bread'. As beer is a drink after all, why not just drink a heartier version of it in great quantities to fight back those hunger pangs?



DANK Chapter 71  
German Heritage Society of Erie  
750 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Erie, PA 16503-1414

## TIME SENSITIVE



Meeting – Wed. the 17th

### Lenten Traditions: - Why do Bavarians eat donuts before Lent begins?

The answer to this question goes back to the religious meaning behind Mardi Gras and Lent. The Tuesday before Lent is about getting ready to fast (which is why it is called Fasching or Fastnacht in Bavaria) and to give up meat and fatty foods, for example. The word carnival itself has to do with “carne” or “meat”, so the meaning is similar; Mardi Gras means “fat Tuesday” in French, also referring to fasting during Lent. Basically, the period leading up to Mardi Gras or Faschingsdienstag (Shrove Tuesday) is an excuse to revel in excesses before giving them up. And that’s where the donuts come in. In other words, a perfect food to enjoy before going on your Lenten fast would be donuts! Donuts are, after all, cooked in hot oil. In one part of Germany, they’re called Krapfen. Yes, go ahead and giggle – the word sounds funny in English.

The pretzel is a traditional Lenten bread that in the Roman Empire maintained a strict fast butter, cheese, eggs, cream, and meat. In the late when he wrote to Augustine of Canterbury from flesh, meat, and from all things that come to preserve strength throughout the day, people middle of the afternoon with smaller snacks need for a simple food that met abstinence and fasting concerns.



dates back to the early 4th century. Christians during Lent that excluded from their diet milk, 6th century, Pope Gregory confirmed this regarding dietary rules in Lent: “We abstain from flesh, as milk, cheese and eggs.” In order would eat one meal in the evening or in the throughout the day. The pretzel fulfilled the

By making breads of water, flour, and salt, early Christians were reminded of the penitential nature of Lent and fasting. By shaping the bread in the form of crossed arms, they were also reminded of prayer. The Latin word for “little arms” is *bracellae*. Eventually invading German tribes corrupted the Latin to “brezel” or “prezel.”

From medieval times, the people of Germany, Austria, and Poland introduced pretzels annually on Ash Wednesday. In addition to giving out pretzels to the poor during Lent, other traditions include hanging pretzels from palm branches on Palm Sunday. Despite the fact that pretzels are now readily available throughout the year, there are still places in Europe that only serve pretzels from Ash Wednesday to Easter in keeping with the former symbolism.

A fifth century manuscript contains the earliest picture and description of the pretzel.