



THE AMBASSADOR

DER BOTSCHAFTER

A Publication of the German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA®
Chartered as the United German-American Committee of the USA, Inc.

Winter 2017/2018 / Page 1

Bobby Hitt Honored at the 31st Annual Council of 1000 Award and Fundraising Gala

The German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA® and over 130 distinguished guests and members of the international community honored South Carolina Secretary of Commerce, Robert "Bobby" M. Hitt, as the 2017 Distinguished German-American of the Year™.

The gala was held at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hall of Flags in the heart of Washington, DC on November 3, 2017. The magnificent Hall of Flags provided an impressive backdrop for this festive evening.

Every year since 1987, the award has provided national recognition for outstanding leadership, contributions, and achievements by Americans of German-speaking ancestry engaged in various aspects of society, including business, the arts, education, politics and science.

Mr. Hitt, a native of Charleston, SC and a graduate of the University of South Carolina, is of German descent. His ancestor Peter Heite/Hitt was born in 1683 in Siegen, Germany, and emigrated to Germanna, Virginia in 1714. Germanna was the first German settlement in Virginia, and the westernmost of all German-speaking settlements in the British Empire.

Prior to his position as Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Hitt was the manager of corporate affairs at the BMW Manufacturing Company in Spartanburg for 18 years. As Secretary of Commerce, he promoted economic development for South Carolina, and recruited more than \$23 billion in investments as well as 86,000 new jobs to the state.

Working together with BMW's Government Affairs office, past President Marc Wheat and First VP Ron Kosmahl developed a generous and attractive sponsorship package for the Gala, spearheaded by BMW and Gala Director Katja Sipple. BMW was able to assist in attracting corporate sponsorship from Continental, Bosch and Volvo, which were rounded out by the gala committee's successful efforts to bring in new supporters and reinvigorate previous ones. A special thank you also goes to Gary Lee Koerner, Gudrun and Hardy von Auenmüller, Susan and Dr. John Manoyan with CarolJean Siegert King, Marie and J. Marc Wheat, the World Heritage Foundation/Waltraud Prechter, Dräxlmeier, Representatives of Industry and Trade, Brauns International, Omega World Travel, the Embassy of Liechtenstein, Rolf Hoffmann, Megan Lott and Stephen Staudigl in support of this year's Gala.

The Gala opened with a cocktail reception in the foyer of the Hall of Flags accompanied by a trio of talented young musicians from Mason Music Productions affiliated with George Mason University. Guests then moved into the beautifully decorated Hall of Flags for the awards dinner. Ron Kosmahl welcomed guests with a brief opening speech that focused on the future of GAHF, the desire to bring in younger members, and to nationally expand the organization.



J. Marc Wheat presenting the Distinguished German-American of the Year™ award to Mr. Robert Hitt III

continued on page 4

OUR MISSION

The German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA® is dedicated to preserve, educate and promote the cultural heritage of Americans of German-speaking ancestry and to be a leading voice of German-Americans in cultural and public policy matters in the USA.

We serve as a national membership organization through which Americans, proud of their German heritage and language, work together on vital issues of common concern.

The German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA® was established in 1977 and chartered the following year as the United German-American Committee of the USA, Inc. as an independent, tax-exempt, educational not-for-profit organization.

We are committed to:

- Sharing a positive image of Americans of German-speaking heritage by focusing on their historical contributions to American society
- Strengthening the ethnic awareness and cooperation of German-Americans
- Promoting the German language and culture
- Cultivating German-American friendship and cooperation
- Supporting cooperative efforts among German-Americans and their organizations

Officers and Board of Directors

Hardy von Auenmueller	President
Ron Kosmahl	1st Vice President
Hank Stoffel	2nd Vice President
Rolf Hoffmann	Vice President
	External Affairs
John M. Manoyan, Ph.D.	Treasurer
Robin Estey	Secretary

Directors

Erich Ast
 Michelle K. Brooks
 John Carroll
 Robert Lee Fricke
 Guntwin Galleisky
 Fred Gauss
 Frederick H.W. Hansen
 William H Holly
 Karl Hormann, Esq.
 Erik Hotmire
 Peter Knapp
 Aaron Lewis
 Megan Lott
 Joachim Reppmann, Ph.D.
 Stephen Staudigl
 Hans P. Stein
 Richard W. Voss

Advisory Board

Kent Cutcomp
 Ulrich Gamerding
 Wolfgang Grams, Ph.D.
 Peter Lubrecht, Ph.D.
 Wade Olsen
 Waltraud E. Prechter
 Dr. Jürgen Ruhfus
 German Ambassador (ret)
 John P. Schmitz, Esq.
 Dr. jur. Immo F.H. Stabreit
 German Ambassador (ret)
 Don Heinrich Tolzmann, Ph.D.
 Dirk Weissleder

Executive Director

Katja Sipple

Museum Director

Mirela Gavins

Administrative Director

Christine Yang

The Ambassador (Edition Winter 2017/2018)

Publisher: German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA®
 Contributors: Hardy von Auenmueller, Ron Kosmahl, Katja Sipple, Mirela Gavins, Christine Yang
 Design: Michael Pindter, © GAHF
 Photos: © 2018 by the German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA®.
 Content: All rights reserved.

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Members and Friends,

My second month at the German-American Heritage Foundation and Museum is coming to a close, and what an exciting time it has been! I had previously worked with GAHF to manage two Galas, but I am delighted to now be on board in a permanent capacity. I, too, am an immigrant, and my story fits in nicely with the foundation and museum. I spent my childhood and youth in Europe, studied in the U.S. and in Germany, and married an American whose German mother hails

from Hamburg. I have an extensive non-profit background, having previously worked for a number of educational institutions, where I managed PR, development, event planning and marketing. I am also an experienced German-language teacher with a love for German literature of the 19th and 20th centuries. While I have already had the chance to meet some of you in person, I look forward to making many more connections in the future.

2017 was the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's Protestant reformation. To honor this historic event, we started the year with our "Luther in Mansfeld" exhibit that focuses on the town where he spent his early youth and childhood. It is still on display, but we are already busy working on a new one that will prominently feature our dedicated member clubs with beautifully designed panels, mounted on scratch-resistant acrylic glass, to tell their stories through texts and pictures. On February 27, three representatives of the Delaware Saengerbund took a trip to Washington, DC to bring us materials for their panel, and to take a look at the museum. We still have room for a few panels. Please flip to the last page for more information about this great opportunity.

February was a very eventful month at our museum, with a steady stream of visitors despite the cold and the rain, a wonderful lecture on the history of Germans in Baltimore by longtime GAHF member and Baltimore Immigration Museum historian Dr. Nicholas Fessenden, a visit by American University students, a German film presentation about Luther, and our first-ever beer tasting event in collaboration with the International Club of DC, that attracted 100 people, including many first-time visitors. A detailed description of these events and photos can be found on pages 5 / 6.

One topic that came up over and over again during our recent events and conversations, was the desire to learn and practice the German language. As a foundation and museum dedicated to preserving and promoting the history of German-speaking immigrants, we are in a unique position to assist people wishing to reconnect with their roots or who are simply interested in acquiring a new skill. To better gauge interest in such an offering from our local members, please let us know what level of German you would consider yourself, and what days and times would work best for you. I am also open to any other feedback, ideas and suggestions: sipple@gahmusa.org

I also encourage you to follow us at www.facebook.com/GAHMuseum/ where you will find a plethora of pictures, as well as information about upcoming events.

Yours sincerely,

Katja Sipple
 Executive Director

Message from the President



Dear Members and Friends:

It is a distinct honor and privilege to be elected, once again, to serve our organization as President, particularly, after we have been facing strong head- and crosswinds throughout the last year – which also affected our bottom line. Notwithstanding these challenges, we are determined to reverse this negative trend, and achieve the realistic goals which we have set for this year.

We also experienced several personnel changes during the past year: Erika Harms, our Executive Director, resigned after 2 1/2 years of service because her aging parents in Costa Rica needed more of her attention. Furthermore, Carl Anderson, our venerable Museum Administrator of the past four years, expressed a desire to continue his education in International Relations at the University of Florence in Italy.

For an interim period of four months, we were able to avail ourselves of the services of Mirela Gavins, whose husband is working for the U.S. Government. However, now that he received an overseas assignment, Mirela will be leaving us soon. We wish both of them, and their two children, all the best in their new "far away" environment. We are now looking to find a replacement for her.

On the other hand, I am pleased to report that we were successful in engaging Katja Sipple. She joined our staff in early January, and was confirmed by our Board as GAHF's new Executive Director on 2/10/2018. Katja is no stranger to many of us, since she helped us in the past to administer two successful galas honoring both, Doug Oberhelman in 2015, and Robert M. Hitt in 2017, as Distinguished German-Americans of the Year.

While we are currently still showing the "Luther in Mansfeld" Exhibit, prepared by Drs. Peter Lubrecht, Yogi Reppmann and Don Tolzmann, all current or former Advisory Board members of GAHF, to reflect on the historic importance of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017, we plan to present next some of our most dedicated member clubs, who supported our organization for the past eight to ten years, by featuring their histories, including photos and current activities, in an exhibit this Spring.

Thereafter, we wish to showcase the US beer industry, which overwhelmingly has its roots in Germany, as well as the German-American craft beer breweries – after having established a strong foothold in this country since the turn of the century. If anyone of you has personal connections to the management or owners of breweries, large or small, please let Katja know. Furthermore, we are contemplating a BMW exhibit later this year – to honor the company's 25th anniversary of establishing a manufacturing plant in South Carolina.

Last month, we submitted three ambitious proposals to the German Federal Government in support of its far-reaching Deutschlandjahr USA 2018/19 initiative that is to strengthen the ties between Germany and the US. Our submissions cover chamber music and lieder presentation by artists with "transatlantic" connections, beer tastings by a renowned Canadian expert and author, and a survey of German-American Heritage sites along the US coastal states, as an extension of the project started last year.

While we do not know, at this time, to what extent our submission will receive the desired governmental funding support, we wonder if any other German-American club or institution has participated in this call for proposals. If so, would you kindly contact us to see how we, in a combined effort, may achieve synergistic effects. In line with this, we also encourage any club – interested in the above music/lieder or beer presentations – to please let us know. We shall then try to schedule such an event, at a time that is mutually convenient.

Finally, I wish to express great appreciation to our friends of the Freundschaft Liederkranz organization of San Francisco who bestowed upon us their prized Kaiser Franz Joseph I Trophy, that was awarded to them more than 100 years ago, and is now prominently displayed in the music section of our museum, next to the bust of George Frideric Handel and our Wurlitzer grand piano. You may see this beautiful trophy on page 4 of this issue.

On behalf of all of us at GAHF, I wish to thank you for your continued support and involvement that makes our exhibits, programs, achievements and aspirations possible.

With sincere regards,
Hardy von Auenmueller

continued from page 1

Ron recognized the many contributions of past GAHF members, and the assembled guests also paid special recognition to the efforts of GAHF President Emeritus and 2013 Distinguished German-American of the Year™, Bern Deichmann. Bern, who passed away in June 2017, was acknowledged by Ron Kosmahl and Marc Wheat for his work to acquire Hockemeyer Hall, the GAHF's headquarters, and his tireless efforts to promote the many contributions of German-Americans.

Dinner was catered by a family-owned company called Helga's Catering and consisted of delicious beef roulade with spaetzle and red cabbage, followed by German apple strudel.

Then it was time for Marc Wheat to take the stage, introduce the honoree and present him with the award. Marc's speech focused upon the many contributions German-Americans have made both culturally, economically and politically. He emphasized that being German-American has not always been easy, particularly after the First World War, but that German-Americans had much to be proud of! He thanked Secretary Hitt for his service and many contributions on behalf of South Carolina and German-American business.



Mr. Hitt thanked Marc Wheat and the audience, and proceeded to talk about the importance of German-American relations exemplified by his own business experience with BMW in South Carolina. He told the audience that South Carolina's economy was doing poorly for the longest time with high unemployment rates and low wages. BMW's arrival, and the famous German dual-track vocational training program, turned things around and led to record employment and a productive labor force. South Carolina can be a role model for the entire nation at a time, when transatlantic connections and collaboration are more important than ever.

Thank you to everybody who came to this elegant event, and helped turn it into a success. We hope you will join us again – or perhaps for the very first time – for our 2018 gala.

– Ron Kosmahl



Trophy Freundschaft Liederkranz

Last Fall, a delegation of 20 people in representation of the officers and membership of the Freundschaft Liederkranz, and their wives came all the way from San Francisco to bestow upon us their prized Kaiser Franz Joseph I Trophy which was awarded to them in 1910. It is now properly displayed in the music session of our museum, next to the bust of George Frideric Handel and our Wurlitzer grand piano.

We are highly appreciative of this historic gift.



Luther in Mansfeld – Travel Exhibit



This exhibit, covering Martin Luther's early life, was on display at the GAHM from December 2017 until the end of February 2018. Prof. Peter Lubrecht, a co-curator of the exhibit and a member of our Advisory Board, held a lecture thereon during the opening reception on December 14, 2017.

The exhibit focuses on the small place in central Germany, where Luther grew up, and includes early views of the city, the Latin school that young Martin attended, commentaries on aspects of Luther's life, and a painting of his aged parents.

In March 2017, the Euro-Atlantic Conference *The Legacy of 1848 Through Today*, organized by Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann and The Stoltenberg Institute for Forty-Eighter Studies, Northfield, MN directed by Dr. Joachim (Yogi) Reppmann, created this traveling exhibit – Luther in Mansfeld.

Two Luther movies were shown at GAHM in December 2017/February 2018 as part of the exhibit.

Homeschooling Group VA, February 2, 2018

A Homeschooling class from Virginia visited our Museum in February. Elementary school kids and their parents learned a lot about German-American heritage and culture. They were very curious and asked a lot of questions. A German-American grandparent shared the story of his family with the group.



German-Americans of Baltimore, February 13, 2018

When we think of European immigration in the late 19th century, images of Lady Liberty in New York City's harbor come to mind – along with promises of freedom and a new start in life. Dr. Nicholas Fessenden of the Baltimore Immigration Museum lectured about Baltimore's role as the second-largest point of entry for German migrants during the Great Wave of 1830-1914. Many moved westward, following the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, but others stayed and left their mark in the city where approximately one quarter of the population was German during the second half of the 19th century.



American University Visit, February 15, 2018

Students from the American University with their professor came to visit the Museum on February 15, 2018. They enjoyed our presentation and short documentary – all in German. For many of them, it was the first visit to GAHM.



Beer Tasting Event, February 22, 2018

German beer, great food and live music by a fabulous duo certainly sound like a recipe for success! Despite the pouring rain, chilly temperatures, and bad traffic, over 100 guests from the International Club of DC and the German-American Heritage Foundation gathered at the GAHM last Thursday to participate in a beer sampling of some unique German, Austrian and German-style brews. The offering included such seasonal delicacies as Aventinus Eisbock and Weizenbock, smoked beers from Bamberg's famous Schlenkerla Brewery, Munich lagers and Bavarian Hefeweissbier. Local Forge Brew Works supplied a smooth golden Dortmunder lager. Pretzels, sausages, potato salad and home-made Bavarian Obatzda ensured that all that beer didn't land in an empty stomach. Liab und Schneid, two DC-area musicians, provided authentic Alpine music, including polka tunes, that inspired a few dancers to spin around in circles. If you missed this fabulous event, don't despair. There will be a repeat.



MEMBER'S CORNER

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

John Asquith, NY
 Elfa Halloway, MD
 George Hirsch, VA
 Liberty Home Association, OH
 Tim & Terry Schoessow, WI
 Society of Danube Swabians of USA, IL
 James Werth, SC

COUNCIL of 1000 MEMBERS — 2018

Raymond & Sally Ehrle, MD	Anton & Theresa Merle, CA
Robin Estey, PA	Harry & Marianne
Guntwin Galleisky, CA	Mueggenburg, CA
Horst Hiller, KS	Waltraud Prechter, MI
Norman Keller, NY	Frederick Schroll, NJ
Wolfgang & Doris	Hardy & Gudrun
Linnenbach, CA	von Auenmueller, PA
Rolf Mahler, NY	Herbert & Heike Waschull, FL
John & Susan Manoyan, CA	Ruth Wedelich, NJ
Marilyn Mautz, VA	

DONORS \$1,000 and above

Austrian Donau Club, CT
 Raymond & Sally Ehrle, MD
 Edward & Paula Fichtner, NY
 Freundschaft Liederkrantz, CA
 Marilyn Mautz, VA
 Wolfgang & Doris Linnenbach, CA
 Albert Schlenker, CA

CLUB MEMBERSHIP GOLD

Frauenverein Fritz Reuter Altenheim, NJ
 Delaware Saengerbund-Library Association, DE
 Die Alten Herren des Cannstatter, PA
 The Excelsior German Center Altenheim, CA

2018 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Yes, I/we would like to support the German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA® by renewing my/our MEMBERSHIP / Becoming a MEMBER:

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

- Student: (Non-voting): \$ 25 \$ _____
- Associate Member (Non-voting): \$ 50 \$ _____
- Basic Member: \$ 100 \$ _____
- Supporter: \$ 250 \$ _____
- Benefactor: \$ 500 \$ _____
- Council of 1000: \$1,000 \$ _____
- Patron: \$5,000 \$ _____

CLUB MEMBERSHIP "VEREIN'S CIRCLE"

(Based on \$1 per Member with a \$25 Minimum)

- Basic: \$ 1 per member (\$25 minimum) \$ _____
- Bronze: \$ 26 - \$149 \$ _____
- Silver: \$150 - \$499 \$ _____
- Gold: \$500 and above \$ _____

Yes, I/we want to also support the Annual Operating Fund of the German-American Heritage Museum of the USA™ and the Foundation offices:

- Additional Donation for 2018 Operations \$ _____
- Pledge (to be paid by ____/____/2018) \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____
=====

Your contributions are tax deductible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____ Email: _____

PAYMENT METHOD

Please check one: **Check:** Payable to: GAHF of the USA
 Credit Card: Visa MasterCard
 Mail to: GAHF, 719 Sixth St., NW, Washington, DC 20001
 or Fax: 202-467-5440

Name: (Print) _____

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature of Cardholder: _____ Date: _____



German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA®

719 Sixth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 467-5000 • Fax: (202) 467-5440
Email: info@gahmusa.org • www.gahmusa.org

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Richmond, VA
Permit #2367

Address Service Requested



@ GAHMuseum

Promote your Club at the GAHM in DC!

Are you looking for a way to get the word out about your club, and obtain an attractive display artifact?

We are planning a new special exhibit to honor our dedicated club supporters with a well-designed, large vertical display panel (approx. 2.25 ft. x 5.5 ft.) mounted on scratch-resistant acrylic glass to ensure durability. Each poster will consist of a balanced mix of text, including the club's history, a description of its mission and current activities, as well as photos. Send us your text and pictures, and we will take care of the layout and creation. At the end of the exhibit the panel is yours to keep and display!

The contribution to be featured is \$1,000 – including design and production.

In addition to displaying these panels in our museum exhibit space, we will also create a permanent online presence on our Web site, which will be promoted through social media to maximize exposure and visibility.

Please contact Katja Sipple at 202.467.5000 Ext. 105 or sipple@gahmusa.org

