Hoosier German Holidays

At Thanksgiving, Christmas trees appear in stores and on street corners. Christmas music, most of it popular, will pour out of loudspeakers to lure shoppers into stores. However, in homes, churches and clubs the Holiday Season is filled with recurring rituals, symbolism and affirmation of the divine. It is also filled with human relations and values, cherished, and passed from generation to generation.

In keeping with the religious significance of Christmas, the Advent Season, the period of the four Sundays before Christmas, is a time of preparation for the arrival of Christmas. "Christkindchen kommt bald" (the Christchild will come soon) you can hear whispered. And, on Dec. 6, good children will recite: "Advent, Advent, ein Lichtlein brennt, erst eins, dann zwei, dann drei, dann vier, dann steht das Christkind vor der Tür." (Advent, Advent, one little candle burns, first one, then two, then three, and then the Christchild will be at the door.) The word "Advent" comes from the Latin word advenire-arrive, waiting for the arrival. Finally Christmas Eve ushers in the twelve days of Christmas which end on January 6 with Three Kings (Epiphany).

The Hoosier Christmas reveals an array of time-honored traditions, ranging from the Advent wreath, Christmas tree, to German Christmas ornaments and decorations, wooden toys and nutcrackers. There is the Festival of Gingerbread Houses at Conner Prairie, there is Hansel and Gretel and the Christmas Opera by Engelbert Humperdinck, and the Nutcracker Suite by Tchaikovsky with Klara and Uncle Drosselmeyer. In churches, homes and schools, "Silent Night" and "O Christmas Tree" will be sung. Gingerbread, Springerle and Pfeffernüsse (gingerbread cookies) can be purchased in many stores. Stollen, which originated in Dresden, a bread made of butter, flour, raisins, almonds and spices, is sold in large quantities, together with other authentic German treats, at every ALDI store.

Christkindl Markets (Christ Child Markets) are held in Indiana and neighboring states. They are modeled after
the Christmas markets in the German-speaking areas of Europe found, from end of November thru Christmas Eve, in the town square of almost every town and city. There is nothing like standing out in the winter cold, sipping a hot drink, Glühwein (a spiced red wine) or spiced apple cider, surrounded by the smells and sounds of Christmas, while looking for a special gift.

At the Ferdinand Christkindlmarkt on Nov. 16 and 17 Christmas wares are sold in festive settings with tours of the Benedictine Monastery, visit of St. Nikolaus, Sisters' Concert in the Monastery Church and more.

For an authentic German Market you can visit the Christkindlmarket in Chicago, Nov. 19 to Dec. 23, at Daily Center Plaza & "Block 37." German and European gifts and foods are offered from over 50 timber cabins. A large half-timbered house and large tent offer warming areas to enhance the event's unique atmosphere. It is patterned after the Nürnberg Christkindlesmarkt that dates back to 1545 and is famous for Bratwurst, Lebkuchen, and Zwetschgenmännlein (figures made of prunes, and nuts).

Nov. 22-24 there will be a Christkindlmarkt at Germania Park, 3529 West Kemper Rd, Cincinnati. In Fort Wayne, Nov. 29 to Dec. 1, a Christkindl Markt will take place downtown in Freimann Square. Colorfully decorated tents will house vendors of various arts and crafts and German-style foods and drinks will be offered.

In Indianapolis at the Athenaeum, Dec. 6-8, there will be, once again, the Old World Christkindl Market and on Dec. 8 the annual St. Nikolausfest with St. Nikolaus and Ruprecht and a live Christmas tree. It draws several hundred children and their parents.

Dubois County, Indiana's Olde World, proud of its German heritage, carries on many Christmas traditions. Southern Indiana's architectural wonders, created by German Catholics and their descendants, such as St. Joseph Catholic Church or the Benedictine Monastery of the Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, provide a perfect setting.

Huntingburg's Christmas Stroll leads through the Downtown historic district, located along Fourth Street. You walk on brick paved sidewalks, along restored 1890s facades with period lighting, and tree-lined streets. The O'Tannenbaum Days in Jasper, Dec. 6 to 8, provide many events. There will be free carriage rides and carolers walking the downtown, exhibits in the Dubois County Museum, the Kremp Art Gallery, and artists and artisans will be in their stores.

In Terre Haute on Dec. 15, at the German Oberländer Club, there will be an Advent Celebration with musical selections by Crossroads Brass, lighting of the Advent wreath, Advent songs and German baked goods, cold cuts, Glühwein and a "Feuerzangenbowle" (a hot red wine punch with flaming rum-soaked sugar cane). St. Nikolaus and Ruprecht have promised an appearance. On Dec. 21 at the Christmas Celebration one can listen and dance to either music by Karl Kugler.

The Indianapolis Liederkranz will hold its Christmas Party and Dance on Dec. 1 and on the 7th there will be the annual Christmas Concert. On Dec. 15 there is a Christmas Party at the German American Klub in Indianapolis.

In Louisville, on Dec. 8, the German-American Club Gesangverein, will hold its Christmas Concert and Dinner. On Sunday, Dec. 15 at the Children's Christmas Party, a Christmas Play will be performed, followed by a program: "German Christmas: Die schönsten Melodien zur Weihnachtszeit aus Deutschland," featuring a cast of German performers on a U.S. tour. The club is located at 1840 Lincoln Avenue, Louisville.

New Year's Eve, the last night
of the year, is called "Silvester" (named after Pope Sylvester I) in German-speaking lands. The change of year is celebrated noisily and merrily. Guests are invited or one attends a "Silvester Ball."

In Indianapolis there is a New Years Eve Gala at the German American Klub with Jay Fox and the Bavarian Showtime Band and a New Years Party at the Indianapolis Liederkranz. New Year's Eve is also celebrated at the German Oberländer Club in Terre Haute with the Doppeladler and at the Louisville German-American Club Gesangverein there is a New Year's Eve Dance with the Rheingolds.

The New Year ushers in the Carnival season. Carnival is known by many names. It is "Karneval" in Cologne, "Fasching" in Munich and Vienna, "Fasnacht" in Basel and "Mardi Gras" (Shrove Tuesday) in New Orleans. The "crazy season" begins on New Year's Day or immediately following "Twelfth Night," (Three Kings or Epiphany), on Jan. 6, and ends as the clock strikes 12 and ushers in Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Traditions vary, but two things are always present: Noise and masks.

Dressing up at a masked ball is an individual decision. The choice may be a costume, rented or self-made (Halloween outfits work well), or revellers may come in their best finery or in grandmother's or grandfather's most elegant outfit. Everything goes! Children's celebrations are usually on a weekday afternoon or evening, but they participate at all stages of the event.

In Indianapolis on Feb. 8, from 6-11 p.m. there will be "Karneval: A Masked Ball" at the Athenaeum. You can dance to the music of "Die Freudemacher." At the German American Klub, Indianapolis on Jan. 18, there is "A Viennese Ball" and on Feb. 22: "Fasching/Karneval."

Find out more at these Websites:

The Nürnberg Christkindlesmarkt
http://www.christkindlesmarkt.de

Learn about German Christmas Markets http://www.serve.com/shea/germusa/advmarkt.htm

Sylvester-New Year's Eve
http://www.serve.com/shea/germusa/silvestr.htm

A Traditional German Holiday Meal
http://www.serve.com/shea/germusa/xmasmeal.htm

Karneval, Fasching, Fasnacht
http://www.serve.com/shea/germusa/karneval.htm

ST. NIKOLAUS AND SANTA CLAUS
by Ruth Reichmann

In German-speaking countries, and Holland and Belgium as well, December 6 is St. Nikolaus Day, on which children receive sweets, nuts, and other little gifts. The origins of Santa Claus are found in the legends of Sankt Nikolaus (St. Nicholas), the 4th-century bishop of Myra in Asia Minor. He died on December 6, 343. After a life said to be studded with miracles and good deeds he was later sainted by the church. St. Nikolaus is also known as St. Nick and Kris Kringle, a misnomer of "Christkindl" Christ-child.

"Kris Kringle" was created by English speakers who misunderstood their German-speaking neighbors when they spoke of the "Christkindl" coming on Christmas.

According to tradition, the evening before December 6, small children will place their shoes on a window sill, in front of the door or hang their stockings by the fireplace. During the night, so they believe, Nikolaus would come and place small presents into them. The family of Claude Eckert of Jasper, Ind. hung socks outside on the porch for St. Nick. Claude remarked that "most of the time there were some goodies in there, but occasionally also a stick." Claude's parents observed the
custom of Dec. 6. For Martina Eckert (nee Wehr), who lived on a farm outside of town, Santa Claus came on Christmas. Her family had live trees, American cedar, which were put up a day or two before Christmas.

Most of the time, St. Nikolaus is portrayed as a distinguished gray-haired man with flowing beard, bishop's raiment and pastoral staff who knocks on doors and asks about the behavior of children. He may appear together with Knecht Ruprecht, St. Peter, with an angel—the Christkindl (Christkindl) or another companion. In many families the Saint (a friend or relative dressed up) would appear in person.

The Saint is known as the friend of youth, evident in his examination of the children, but he is also known as the tamer of evil spirits. More diverse than those of the saintly Nikolaus are the many legends and traditions surrounding his often wild companions, many of them pagan in origin. His best known companion is Knecht Ruprecht, "Knecht" meaning servant. Historically, Ruprecht was a dark and sinister figure clad in a tattered robe with a big sack on his back in which, legend has it, he will place all naughty children. However, in the famous poem by Theodor Storm, "Knecht Ruprecht" "Von drauß vom Walde komm ich her..." he is depicted as a loyal servant to the Christchild. In Protestant areas of the German-speaking lands Ruprecht began to take on the role of the gift-bringer. According to the Jasper Weekly Courier, December 25, 1885: "Christmas and Santa Claus, known in Germany as Knecht Ruprecht, have made children happy for hundreds of years, and the habit of giving presents at this time dates back to the early Christians, some say to the reign of the Emperor Commodus, somewhere about A.D. 190, when he burned up a whole church full of Christians for observing the day, being jealous of the worship of Christ, and of the presents then given to the fathers in the church. It has been a feast day in the Catholic church since the 6th century, and has grown in favor till all Christian churches observe it, and is growing more in favor with all peoples every year."

As the splendor of the candle-lit Christmas tree and emphasis on the birth of Christ began to shift the function of the gift-giving St. Nikolaus from Dec. 6 to Christmas, Knecht Ruprecht in the role of servant to the Christchild became the patron saint of Christmas and was called "Weihnachtsmann," Father Christmas or Santa Claus.

As with the Christmas tree, St. Nikolaus and his companions were brought to this country by German immigrants in the 1830s and 1840s. They helped weave the legend of Santa Claus, the jolly good fellow created--on the basis of Clement Moore's poem, "Twas the Night Before Christmas"--by German-American cartoonist Thomas Nast. In A Country Christmas, under the heading of "Thomas Nast's Christmas" we read as follows: "Without Thomas Nast, our vision of Santa Claus might be very different. A political cartoonist who originated the familiar symbols of the Republican elephant and the Democratic donkey, Nast is thought to have been the first artist to draw Santa Claus as the "jolly old elf" we know today.

Nast was born in Germany [Landau] in 1840 and immigrated to New York with his family at age six. As a teenager he enrolled in art school and, at fifteen, began his career as an illustrator. After jobs with several periodicals, he joined Harper's Weekly in 1862 as a war correspondent and began to produce acclaimed cartoons and Civil War sketches.

About the same time, Nast "met" Santa when a publisher asked him to illustrate a book of holiday poems that included Clement Moore's "A Visit from St. Nicholas." Combining imagery from Moore's verse,
and his childhood memories of Christmas, Nast created a round, bearded, pipe-smoking figure in a woolly suit and cap, carrying a large sack of toys." *Time-Life-Books* (1989), 156.

![Merry Old Santa Claus by Thomas Nast, 1881](image)

As the Santa Claus legend and custom developed in America, Thomas Nast’s portrayal of the "Pelznickel" and "Klaus" of the Palatinate took on the features of Santa Claus, who then became the dominant symbol of a secularized Christmas. In Indiana, as elsewhere in the United States, "Santa" became the indisputable central figure of the secularized Winter Holidays and to some the symbol of the season’s commercialism.

The "Holiday Season," supported by the business community, encourages lots of gifts, popular songs and a Santa Claus, arriving through a chimney on Christmas Eve. There is a veritable proliferation of Santa helpers and stand-ins in the nation’s shopping malls and stores. The twelve days of Christmas no longer last from Dec. 24 through Jan. 6 (Three Kings). Now the "twelve days" are shopping days leading up to the nation’s greatest gift-giving day.

The village of Santa Claus in Southern Indiana is the main destination for children’s letters to Santa. And some philatelists are ardent collectors of the annual cancellations of their stamps by the Santa Claus Post Office. The little town was founded by German immigrants and named Santa Claus in 1852. Two legends on the selection of the unusual name of the town are found in *Eb. Reichmann’s Hoosier German Tales*, p. 18.

German-speaking Europe has several places where Christmas mail accumulates, addressed to the "Christkind" or to the "Weihnachtsmann": Himmelsthrur, Himmelsporten, and Christkindl near Steyr.

**ANNUAL SANKT NIKOLAUS FEST AND CHRISTKINDL MARKET**

Sunday, December 8, 12:30-5:00 p.m.

Celebration of the arrival of Sankt Nikolaus, children’s dance workshop, gingerbread house making activities, crafts and puppet show, nostalgic Christmas tree candle lighting, Sankt Nikolaus’s festive arrival and court.

Reservations required $5.00 Adults, $3.00 Children under 13.

Old World Christkindl Market: Friday & Saturday, Dec. 6-7, 6:00-9:00 p.m.; Sunday 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

This Old World tradition will take place once again at the Deutsche Haus-Atheneum in Indianapolis, 401 E. Michigan Street. For more information and reservations call 630-4569 x1.

**THE FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE IN FORT WAYNE (1840)**

"The first home in Fort Wayne to be graced by the presence of a Christmas tree was that of Dr. Charles A. Schmitz, in 1840... In June of 1840 Dr. Schmitz arranged for the shipment of the tree from Cincinnati to Fort Wayne via the canal. On Christmas Eve, this tree, glittering with candles and brilliant ornaments and decorations, was viewed by a company of invited guests. An infant daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Schmitz was placed in a basket beneath the tree, and the guests, including a number of Indians, were admitted. The beautiful tree brought exclamations of delight from the red men, but it is recorded that they found the baby a more lasting object of admiration." (Eb. Reichmann’s *Hoosier German Tales* (1991), p 203.)
NEED A BRASS BAND?
The "Crossroads Brass," a semi-professional brass group in Terre Haute, has amassed a sizable library of authentic German and Austrian Christmas music for brass as well as a large collection of traditional German folk songs and folk music. The group will be playing at several events in the Terre Haute area in December, including the Oberländer Club Adventsfeste, and they would be interested in performing at German events in the Indianapolis area as well. They may be contacted by mail at P.O. Box 3955, Terre Haute 47803, or by phone at 812-235-8939.

GERMAN CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Zion Evangelical United Church of Christ in Indianapolis
Sunday, December 15, 3:00 p.m. Annual German Christmas Service. Although conducted in German, the service is easy to follow. The hymns are familiar to most churchgoers and the sermon is printed in English for participants to follow. The service and following reception provide the opportunity to meet with others of German ancestry. The church is located at 416 E. North St., Indianapolis Information 317-639-5411.

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Terre Haute
Sunday, December 22, 4 p.m. Weihnachtsstoffsfeier, the annual Christmas service conducted entirely in German, will be celebrated again this year. German coffee and baked goods will be served immediately following the service. Immanuel Lutheran was founded by German Lutheran immigrants from Prussia in 1858. The present sanctuary—named on the cornerstone as "Evangelisch-Lutherische Emanuel's Kirche"—was completed in 1938 and includes considerable craftsmanship created and shipped from Germany in the 1890s. The church is located at 645 Poplar Street (corner Seventeenth and Poplar). Philip G. Meyer, Pastor. Information 812-232-4972 or email pastor@indy.net

BELSNICKEL IN INDIANA
by Ruth Reichmann

Old-timers in Indiana still remember Belsnickel, the "Pelznickel" (literally "Fur-Nikolaus") of the Palatinate. Belsnickel's name appears in many variations such as Bells Nickel, Belschnickle, Belsnigles and Belsh Nickle, etc. When he arrived at their door, he represented a nostalgic reminder to the adults of their childhood days; however, the children viewed him with mixed feelings. Known to
19th-century children as a servant of Saint Nicholas, "der Belsnickel" would carry a bunch of switches which were a threat to those who had been bad, and he carried goodies of peanuts, cookies or candy in a burlap bag or ample pockets, as he made his rounds to check on the behavior of boys and girls. He would have a large book in which the names of the children and their good or bad deeds were kept. Only good children were to receive treats. If a child had been naughty he could also receive a lump of coal or a stick as a reminder to behave in the future.

Belsnickel may wear a long, black or brown coat or robe, held together at the waist with a rope, and a fur cap or bear skin hat, decorated with bells. He may have a band of Black Peters with blackened faces, or other rough characters with him. They would be dressed in fantastic costumes, some trimmed with fur, and move through the streets and from house to house, rattling chains and bells. The bells would announce Belsnickel's approach and that of his retinue before they would come into view. If the children were good, they received some fruit or sweets, but if they were bad—or doubted the "reality" of Belsnickel—they got a switch!

Dr. Elmer Peters of Brookville, Franklin County testified to that: "Belsnickel came—at times with Christkindl played by a gentle woman. When some of the teenage boys denied the existence of Belsnickel, the usually sturdy helper of St. Nikolaus grabbed the doubting Thomas and gave him a good whipping with his stick—which was great entertainment for the older folks." ("You Better Believe in Belsnickel!" in Eb. eichmann's Hoosier German Tales (1991), 80.

Belsnickling or Klausentreiben," the "running" of groups of masked young men or youth, came to Indiana with the immigrants from German-speaking lands. It is chronicled in the Jasper Weekly Courier: December 9, 1881: "ST NICHOLAS DAY Last Tuesday being the birthday of this patron saint and giver of good things to the young folks, a number of young boys on the evening before dressed in false faces and fantastic costumes and essayed the teaching of lessons of charity to still younger ones. They made a hideous looking appearance, and if St. Nicholas looked anything like them, children would shun him instead of clinging to his knees, and climbing to his shoulders with joy." December 11, 1891: "Quite a number of boys were before Esq. Vest this week for whipping a boy of Mr. John Haller on "St. Nicholas, or Belsnickel's" night last Saturday, which the boys celebrated instead of on the 6th, which comes on Sunday. It was evidently a case of the officers wanting some flour in their barrels, for while the boys were technically guilty of assault and battery, numbers of these cases could be hunted up every year for similar performances on that night, and it has never been thought anything of except an exhibition of rough fun and boisterousness and has been generally encouraged by the parents of the victims. This example shows that sometimes the wrong person may be struck for the pockets of the boys or their parents, and it will be a good thing if it
breaks up a bad observance of the night. The boys pleaded guilty and it cost them about $7 each, so it is safe to say they are not likely to engage in acting 'Belsnickel' again."

Dec. 10, 1897: "A lot of boys had great fun Monday night masquerading as observers of "Belschnickel" anniversary. It is said one of the "devils" caught a confectionery lady in his arms and kissed her, and about 20 of them visited Mr. Hunter's, where a number of young girls had met, and drove the neuralgia away from the host's head by compelling his laughter." December 11, 1909: "Saturday night was 'Belschnickel' night and was observed by a large number of Jasper youngsters, who with their masks and odd makeup furnished amusement for those at home who did not venture out. This is an ancient custom of the "old country" but is still observed annually by the little folks in Jasper, who have great fun on this occasion. Jasper is probably one of a very few places in which this custom is still observed." December 9, 1910: "Tuesday night was Belschnickel night and was observed here as usual by many boys and even some girls who masked and visited homes just for the fun of it."

Christmas in American churches and homes reflects a multicultural origin of its observation. And individual families have been adding to the varieties of customs. The late Lillian Doane of Jasper remembered that "in fall there was the hunt for the finest red ear of corn to save and proudly lay out for Saint Nick to feed his reindeer during the holiday season." Pam Service of Bloomington reports that her family took the old custom of St. Nicholas and Belsnitchel, moved it to Dec. 31, and gave it a new twist: "I think they did that to keep us kids good while we were out of School." According to her father, "Benschneckel" was Santa Claus' skinny mean brother. He wore a green suit, lived at the South Pole, and his sleigh was drawn by Penguins. On New Year's Eve, Service said, her family would put their hats on the hearth. And if they were good, Benschnickel would leave gifts in the hat. If they were bad, the visitor would deposit limps of coal and switches. (Sunday Herald Times, Dec. 26, 1993, p. A8).

The custom of Belsnickel was quite common until the early 1940s. But then it began to fade out for various reasons. Mary Lou Golembeski in the Harmonie Herald reports: "At each house he would visit, Belsnickel received some refreshments such as cider, beer or wine. However, after too many visits and after a long evening, the many refreshments would dull his awareness and his punishment to the children would be a painful remembrance of his visit. A community sometimes had several Belsnichels roving about and at times a woman would have to portray this important character. The custom of Belsnichels was quite common among the Pennsylvania Dutch until the early 1940s when one of the last known public appearances was in 1955 in Fredericksville."

While the custom disappeared in the U.S., in German-speaking areas, especially in the Alemannic region, it is observed and thriving. The celebrations are as varied as is the retinue of St. Nikolaus. In Bavaria the Saint may be followed by the Klaubau, a shaggy monster with horns. In Lower Austria he is followed by a similar horned creature, called Krampus, covered with bells and dragging chains; in Styria this attendant is named Bartel. Sometimes a female figure appears with him, usually a boy dressed up as Budelfrau in Lower Austria, Berchtel in Swabia, and Buzeberta in the neighborhood of Augsburg. Buzebert wears black rags, has a blackened face and unkempt hair. Others are Rumpel-klas, Bellzebub, Pelznickel, Hans Muff, Klaubau, Drapp or Zwarte Peter.

On the Eve of St. Nikolaustag, young men, dressed in skins and furs, will gather for the "Klausentreiben" and move
through the streets of town or village, rattling chains and bells. Midwinter customs are generally thought to be of pagan origin and in most of them the noise is to drive evil spirits away. The Klausentreiben, however, is solely focused on the improvement of children. Good children are rewarded and naughty ones will come into the sack—(Do you know the story of the "Struwwelpeter").

The Klausentreiben customs must not be confused with celebrations that will go on during the wild nights at the end of the twelve days of Christmas (around January 6), like, for instance the running of the "Perchten". These customs are ushering in "Fastnacht" and are exclusively focused on the driving out of winter.

There are several very large St. Nikolaus festivals such as the "Klausenjagen" at Künzacht in Switzerland. It is organized by the Künzacht St. Nikolaus Society and involves 1,300 walkers and 30,000 spectators. It begins on the eve of Dec. 5 and lasts through most of Dec. 6. All around Salzburg there are Krampus Runs around December 5th. The largest one is organized by the Grossmainer Krampusse and supported by the Organization for the Preservation of Valuable Customs in Grossgmain, Austria.

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**MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS VIDEO**

"Alle Jahre Wieder" takes you through the Holiday Season with songs, color, app. 60 minutes (all in German) presents this period and captures its spirit. Color, app. 60 minutes, (all in German) it presents the Holiday Season and captures its spirit. Using many of the best known German Christmas songs, this beautiful, musical and cultural excursion takes the viewer through the Advent Season to Christmas Eve. Some of these songs, in their English version, are familiar to American audiences.

Played against the backdrop of the medieval city of Dinkelsbühl, the Königssee, Hintersee and the Ramsau in the area of Berchtesgaden, with visits to Nürnberg and the Nürnberger Christkindlmarkt, to the Wallfahrtskirche Grössweinstein, the Cathedral at Bamberg and the Church at Thurnau, it features some of Germany's best known choirs: collegium musicum, Regensburger Domspatzen, Kölner Kinderchor, Tölzer Knabenchor, Berliner Mozarteum, Heino and the Sonntagskinder and other soloists and music groups. It shows close-ups of church interiors, from the romanesque to the baroque and rococo, magnificent altars and nativity scenes. You can find information on the songs in order of their presentation at: www.serve.com/shear/germusa/allejahrr.htm

This video and many others are available from the German Language Video Center, 7625 Pendleton Pike, Indianapolis, IN 46226; 317-547-1257; FAX 1+3175471263

*Ruth Reichmann*

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**Programs**

**STAMMTISCH AND PROGRAMS**

Our monthly gatherings are on the second Wednesday of the month at the Deutsche Haus-Athenaeum, 401 E. Michigan St., Indianapolis. At 6 p.m. right after the board meeting (members are always welcome!) the presenter, members, and guests meet for Stammtisch and a German meal in the Atheneum Rathskeller. Good food and good talk, some in German! At 7:15 p.m. there is a program, presented by a member or invited speaker in the Max Kade German-American Center Seminar Room, First Floor. We are always on the look-out for programs. If you would like to present or know of someone, contact Ruth Reichmann at 812 988-2866 e-mail: reichman@indiana.edu

Wednesday, December 11: "Sankt Nicholas and his
friends - German Christmas figures and folklore!" James D. (Jim) Gould will share what he knows about St. Nikolaus, Christkindl and Weihnachtsmann, with slides and Santa figures from his collection.

Jim Gould loves Christmas. Nostalgic, Old world Christmas. It's in his blood. His ancestor, William Haueisen, was partners with Charles Mayer and Company 1860-1888, the Indianapolis Toy and fancy goods store. As an importer, he introduced Indianapolis to German dolls, toys and wonderful German Christmas ornaments and decorations. Haueisen's family kept a number of these decorations and passed them down generation to generation. Gould was so inspired by an antique Santa candy container; he began making and collecting Santa Claus and Holiday figures. He has researched the many different images and stories of the world famous Christmas gift bearer, Sankt Nikolaus. He will illustrate, through pictures and his collection of antique and reproduction Santa candy containers, the story of the German Christmas gift bearers - Sankt Nikolaus, der Weihnachtsmann and Christkindl and their influence on American Christmas.

January 8: There will be a Board Meeting, but no Stammtisch and Program.

February 12: "German-American Relations: Policies and Issues". John Clark, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute will be the speaker.

The programs— in English—are free of charge and open to the public. Information: Ruth Reichmann, 812 988-2866; office 317-464-9004.

CALENDAR

Nov. 16 and 17: Ferdinand Christkindlmarkt (800-968-4578 www.duboiscounty.org)

Nov. 28 to Dec. 23: Christkindlmarket Chicago at Daily Center Plaza & "Block 37" on Washington, Dearborn and State Streets (1-312-644-2662 or info@christkindlmarket.org; http://www.christkindlmarket.com.

Nov. 29, 30, Dec. 1: Christkindl Markt, Freimann Square at Main/Clinton, Fort Wayne (260 747-2592)

Dec. 1: Christmas Party and Dance, Indianapolis Liederkranz (317-889-6912 or 317-352-4240)

Dec. 6-7, 6:00-9:00 p.m.; Old World Christkindl Market at the Athenaeum, Indianapolis (630-4569 x1)

Dec. 6 to 8: Jasper O'Tannenbaum Days (800-968-4578 www.duboiscounty.org)

Dec. 7: Christmas Concert, Indianapolis Liederkranz (317-889-6912 or 317-352-4240)

Dec. 7: Christmas in Huntingburg (800-968-4578 www.duboiscounty.org)

Dec. 8, 12:30-5:00 p.m.: St. Nikolausfest and Christkindl Market at the Athenaeum, Indianapolis (630-4569 x1)

Dec. 8, 5-9 p.m.: Christmas Concert and Dinner, German-American Club Gesangverein, 1840 Lincoln Avenue, Louisville (502-894-9512 or 502-426-1740; www.german-americanclub.com)

Wednesday, Dec. 11, 7:15 p.m.: "Sankt Nicholas and his friends - German Christmas figures and folklore!" James D. Gould; Athenaeum, Indianapolis (317-464-9004)

Dec. 15, 3:00 p.m.: Annual German Christmas Service, Zion Evangelical United Church of Christ, Indianapolis (317-639-5411)

Dec. 15: Christmas Party, German American Klub in Indianapolis (317-888-6940)
Dec. 15: 2-5 p.m. German Ad-
vent Celebration, German Oberländer Club, 1616 Lafayette Avenue, Terre Haute (812-533-1954)
Dec. 15: 2-5 p.m. Children's Christmas Party, German-American Club Gesangverein, Louisville (502-491-8095)

Dec. 15: 7 p.m. German Christmas: Die schönsten Melodien zur Weihnachtszeit aus Deutschland. German performers on a United States tour. German-American Club Gesangverein, Louisville (502-894-9512 or 502-426-1740)

Dec. 21 Christmas Celebration at the Oberländer Club in Terre Haute, with Karl Kugler and his zither.

Dec. 22, 4 p.m.: Weihnachtsgottesdienst, Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Terre Haute (812-232-4972)

Dec. 31: New Years Eve Gala, German American Klub, Indianapolis (317-888-6940)

Dec. 31: New Years Party, Indianapolis Liederkrantz (317-889-6912 or 317-352-4240)

Dec. 31: New Year's Eve, Oberländer Club, Terre Haute. with the Doppeladler (812-533-1954)

Dec. 31, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.: New Year's Eve Dance with the Rheingolds, German-American Club Gesangverein, Louisville (502-894-9512 or 502-426-1740)

Jan. 18: Viennese Ball, German American Klub, Indianapolis (317 888-6940)

Feb. 8: 6-11 p.m.: Karneval--A Masked Ball. Dance to the music of "Die Freude im Leben" at the Athenaeum, Indianapolis (630-4569 x1)

Feb. 12, 7:15: "German-American Relations: Policies and Issues". John Clark, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute will be the speaker. Athenaeum, Indianapolis (317-464-9004)

Feb. 22: Fasching/Karneval, German American Klub, Indianapolis (317-888-6940)

ALBRECHT DÜRER AT THE INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART

Through February 23, 2003 the IMA features a special exhibit, "The Print in the North--The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden: Selections from the Metropolitan Museum of Art." The exhibit includes 10 prints by Albrecht Dürer. In the total of 81 engravings, etchings and woodcuts are also works by other German Renaissance artists: Martin Schongauer, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Hans Baldung Grien, and 28 others from the period of 1425 to 1550, "which saw the development of printmaking as a fine art in Germany and the Netherlands" (at that time still part of the Holy Roman Empire of the
Docent-led tours are Thursdays at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays, 2 p.m.—More info on the IMA website: www ima-art.org/.

New Books

**RESEARCHING IN GERMANY: A Handbook for Your Visit to the Homeland of Your Ancestors**, by Roger P. Minert and Shirley J. Riemer. Sacramento: Lorelei Press (2001), 254 pp., ill., index. A goldmine of information for 1) family historians who do not speak German, 2) travelers who feel insecure about getting around in countries whose ways are strange to them, 3) researchers with no experience in using research repositories in the German-speaking areas of Europe, 4) sight-seeing and recreational hints. The book places emphasis on: step-by-step preparation needed before leaving home -- what to expect and how to deal with the details of everyday living abroad -- packing for the trip -- measures to take for successfully conducting family research at archives, parish offices, and libraries. Information is included for archival research in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia. The book is fully indexed. Surprisingly, it is the only one ever published for preparing German ancestry hunters to travel abroad in search of their roots. Send prepaid order ($21.75--check or M.O.) to our distributor: NCSA Literatur, 430 Kelp Grove Rd., Nashville, IN 47448.

**Deciphering Handwriting in German Documents: Analyzing German, Latin, and French in Vital Records Written in German**, by Roger P. Minert. Woods Cross, UT: GRT Publications (2001), 192 pp. Going far beyond our 1987 reprint of Witter's FI-BEL, Dr. Minert presents systematic instruction for deciphering German handwriting for researchers on all levels of expertise. He reviews the history of handwriting styles and alphabets in German-speaking regions of Europe and offers methods for deciphering German texts in German source documents, Latin texts in German source documents, and French texts in German source documents. Appendices provide Alphabet Comparisons -- German, Latin, and French Genealogical Vocabularies -- Samples of Standard Registries -- and lots of writing samples used for showing genealogical detective work with that old German script. A remarkable guide! Send prepaid Order (22.50 check or M.O.) to: NCSA Literatur 430 Kelp Grove Rd., Nashville, IN 47448.

**German-American Urban Culture: Writers and Theaters in Early Milwaukee**, Peter C. Merrill, the author of the biographical dictionary *German Immigrant Artists in America* (1997), has turned again to the artistic scene of "the German-American Athens" of the 19th century with essays that delight cultural historians. The writers he covers were mostly immigrants from German-speaking countries and made their living as journalists, teachers, lawyers, civil servants or officers, and priests as well. The theater scene--both repertoire and architecture--are given detailed descriptions and evaluation also in terms of their acceptance and role within the German-American community--half of Milwaukee's population! The 128 pp. book, complete with bibliographies and index was published in 2000 by University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI.
Indiana German Heritage Society

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Board and Membership News

IGHS BOARD AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE STRENGTHENED

by Renee Bilgram, 1st Vice President of IGHS

The positive impact German-Americans have had on Indiana, and indeed the Nation, has been tremendous. It is the mission of IGHS to document and preserve the important contributions Germans have made in the State, something no one else is doing.

Critical to the future of IGHS is the strengthening of the Board and organizational structure. 2002 has been a time of assessing what has been done in the past, determining what needs to be revised, and ultimately making positive changes.

Revision of the By-Laws will be completed at the November Board of Directors meeting. The revised document more clearly defines the mission, structure, and functions of the organization.

Committees have been formed which include governance, funds development, membership, programs, research and publications, finance, nominations and community relations. Each committee has been asked to develop plans which will be implemented next year. Plans will include what should be done, who will do it, a timeline, and associated costs and/or anticipated income.

The Board of Directors governs the organization and determines its future. Thus, Nominations is the most important IGHS committee. The Nominations Committee will develop an approach and materials to use in recruiting, determine expertise needed on the Board; and recruit members who are willing to share their time and expertise on behalf of IGHS.

Once new Board members are elected at the Annual Meeting and oriented, the entire Board of Directors will participate in a strategic planning process.

Through these changes, IGHS will continue to be an organization of which to be proud.

It is Membership Renewal Time!

The membership year is the same as the calendar year. Please check your mailing label for your membership status. The form is on page 13 of this Newsletter. Thank You!

Louise Lamkin, Membership Chair

SHARE YOUR INTEREST IN THE HOOSIER GERMAN HERITAGE

This Christmas give a gift that keeps on giving: Give an IGHS membership and win a new member! For a gift membership, use the form on page 13 in this Newsletter and send it to: IGHS Membership Chair, 401 East Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

GERMAN LIFE MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS AT REDUCED RATES

As a part of the membership subscription to German Life Magazine is available to IGHS members at 30% off the regular subscription price. The reduced rate is $15.95 per year (six issues). The magazine has interesting stories and photographs of people and places in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, as well as fascinating tales of German-Americana. If you are interested in subscribing fill in the form in this Newsletter on page 14.
If you miss the holiday information and events in this issue of your Newsletter, you may face the wrath of Belsnickel. (see page 6)