



**German American National Congress
National Executive Board Meeting
Saturday, March 6, 2010**

Meeting was called to order at 1:55 PM in the Midway Conference Room at the Residence Inn O/Hare

Attending: Bill Fuchs, Erik Wittmann, Donna Lippert, Beverly Pochatko, Edwin Gunther, Bob Miske, Rein Lippert, Dave Hinz, Margaret Potocki, Eva Timmerhaus, Amelia Cotter, Darlene Fuchs, Stephen Fuchs, Ernst Ott, Christa Garcia,
Excused: Maria Thompson, Chris Decker. **Guests:** Al Schafer, Martin Hartung, Christel Miske, Ursula Gunther, Mary Ann Hinz, Cobi Stein, Nikki Dombrowski, Scott Will.

Minutes of the January 21st, 2010 Teleconference meeting were approved on February 15th.

FINANCIAL REPORT: (Maria Thompson) A motion to approve the financial report as given was made by Bob Miske, 2nd by Dave Hinz. Motion carried.

2010 Budget (Bob Miske) The 2010 Budget was based on real income vs. the old way of setting a budget on anticipated income. This is no longer practical if we are to remain fiscally solid.

Erik, Maria and Bob met and discussed several points:

1. We need to do more fund raising since we can no longer function only on membership dues.
2. We are scheduled for 3 'sit-down' mtgs. and three teleconference mtgs. for the balance of the year. It is our recommendation that in 2011 we reduce the sit-down mtgs. to three and increase the teleconferences to five to balance out the year as a means of cutting our travel expenses.
3. Additionally we need to look at all our expenses and ways to increase our income such as the credit card program, getting a donation fund started, marketing component and other activities such as bringing in student and others to help out and save us money.

The Budget has not been finalized and you have a list of what is spent year-to-date and what the income is and the bottom line is that unless we get a handle on our expenses and income, in two to three years we will be using up what reserves we have. The 2010 Budget will be based on real income. If there is additional income, then that would be incorporated into potential expansion of projects. In order to meet the requirements of a balanced budget the report is incomplete and we need to dictate exactly where the cuts are based on our known income. Final Budget should be ready for approval at the May meeting.

Additions to the Agenda:

1. By-laws Proposal (Bob Miske) (New Business)
2. Increasing of dues and amount of reimbursement to chapters. (Nikki Dombrowski and Scott Will) (New Business)

OLD BUSINESS:

REGION /CHAPTER REPORTS submitted. There was a brief discussion that the Regional Presidents need to have a structured format to follow for submitting the info for the meetings.

MEETING PREPARATION: Committee Chairs and Regional reps are asked one month in advance to submit their reports to the National Office so they can be forwarded to meeting attendees. This gives attendees the opportunity to review them prior to the meeting and be prepared with any questions they may have. You are asked to print out your copies of these reports and bring them to the meeting.

Membership: (Erik Wittman) See report. Renewals are very slow this year. Up to March 4th, our Chapters are in the 50% + range and most of the smaller chapters are 100% paid. Lowest renewal was 44% paid. We need to target 3 festivals for recruiting new members (possibly: Cincinnati OH, Kutztown PA and Gutenberg Iowa) - prices vary from

festival to festival. We are looking at salvaging chapters; rebuilding our membership, and taking care of our inactive chapters (five under required membership for a chapter). Pittsburgh's first sub-chapter Mason-Dixon will become the Uniontown Chapter in May. The group agreed that we need to do outreach at festivals and that it will cost money to do this. The Benefits need to be taken into account and volunteers needed. A Budget for specifics will be prepared for the May meeting and a decision made.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS: List of benefits – Bev Pochatko was able to recruit 3 associate members prior to the new forms. List of benefits is over a \$500 value (30% discount on print advertising – etc.) and the membership cost is \$100. Brochures will be similar like our membership listing the benefits etc. Application will be a separate form. When design is done, they will be printed asap. Possibly design a certificate to give the Associate members. **Motion to approve the Associate Membership Proposal by Bev Pochatko, seconded by Bob Miske. Motion carried.**

NEW LIFE MEMBERSHIP PIN – is not ready at this time. It is expected they will be ready by June. Pins will be given to ALL Life Members retroactive. A new card is being designed also.

EDUCATION & SCHOOL FUND: (Erik Wittmann) In order to provide a more united front, the heads/representatives of the German American Education Fund (Christa Garcia), GATES (Fox Valley German American Team of Educational Sponsors) (Maria Thompson), and the DANK Education & School Fund (Ernst Ott) met with Erik Wittmann to determine the feasibility of combining/merging the three funds into one account. While all three funds are separate non-profit organizations connected with DANK in some manner, DANK does not control them. They felt it made sense to unite/merge into one. Two of the funds are a 501(c)3 and oldest one (GAEF) is a 509(a) (1) and 170(b) (1) (A) (vi) – which has a broader base line. The individuals will go back to their respective boards and get their approval. If the Funds were to unite/merge, a new Board would be formed and they would provide a new mission statement, and also provide guidelines how to apply for funding. Donations to this fund would be tax deductible. The resulting single fund would be reinstated on the membership renewal forms. They will come back to this Board for approval.

DANK OFFICE RENTAL AGREEMENT & LEASE: We have been presented with a 1 year lease at \$635/month starting April 1, 2010 ending March 31, 2011. Rent for the office and storage space increased by \$35/month. **A motion to sign the one year lease agreement with the understanding that depending upon whatever legal issues come about that may impact the agreement. Motion by Erik Wittmann, 2nd Beverly Pochatko. Motion carried.**

FINANCIAL AUDIT: The audit of our financial reports was done by Linda Voit and Donna Lippert just prior to the November Convention.

DANK MILWAUKEE 50th ANNIVERSARY: A plaque has been prepared in recognition of their 50 year mile marker and will be presented at their celebration on April 17th.

INTERN PROGRAM: (Amelia Cotter) We are going to have an on-going internship program rather than just specific time periods. 1. Graphic design (not advertised as we have a professional volunteer consultant); 2. marketing & advertising; 3. grant writing; and 4. The German-American Journal. We have 6 candidates and expect more. As soon as they are in place, Amelia will let the Chapters know and if they need help in a specific area, the interns will be available as time allows.

NEW BUSINESS:

DANK HAUS ISSUE: DANK Chicago (North) received a proposal from the German Day Association and the Maifest Committee to form a partnership in consideration for \$1 million in January. NP President Fuchs and our attorney met with seven people from Chapter Chicago (North) to reiterate that the National Organization has a responsibility to the members of the chapter to ensure that their best interests are met. In no way, shape or form does the National Board seek to own or control the property. Because of the many changes in the title, there were questions who actually own the property. Under former President Ernst Ott, a 'quit claim' was signed. The National Board has engaged the Law Office of Lesser, Lutrey & McGlynn to review the titles of the property to ensure that they (Chapter Chicago) have clear title to the Haus. So far, the National Board has accrued approximately \$4,500 in legal fees. The Firm is currently doing

a Title Search that will hopefully clarify ownership. Dagmar Freiburger verbally indicated that Chapter Chicago will share in the costs. **A motion to “approve the expenditure of up to \$7500 with the understanding that Chicago North Board is aware of the verbal agreement voiced by their President spoke appropriately on their behalf” was made by Erik Wittmann, 2nd by Beverly Pochatko.** Christel Miske suggested that we approach Chapter Chicago to share in the legal expenses since this is all being done to their benefit. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Six in favor, abstained: Rein Lippert, Nay: Edwin Gunther. **Motion carried.** It is believed that the Haus proposal will still need to have the approval of the National Executive Board according to our national bylaws.

DANK RAFFLE: (Bob Miske) After a brief discussion, it was determined that National will undertake the fundraising raffle again, using the same prizes, etc. as in 2009.

Milwaukee Germanfest Parade and Booth: The Board was asked by NP Fuchs to approve sponsorship of the Milwaukee Germanfest and a booth at a cost of \$2,000. We should be able to recoup all the money spent. After discussion, **a motion was made by Donna Lippert, 2nd by Rein Lippert to approve the \$2000 fee for Germanfest Milwaukee . The motion carried, with one nay by Erik Wittmann. Cobi Stein has agreed to once again be the coordinator for the DANK Unit in the Milwaukee Germanfest parade.** Since we need more volunteers (workers) NP Fuchs asked Secretary Beverly Pochatko to write a letter to the Chapters regarding the Milwaukee German Fest – who wants to be in the Parade, volunteer to man the booth, etc. Cobi will coordinate the Parade. Also discussed was having booths at Cincinnati, Kutztown, and Guttenberg’s German Festivals. It was agreed that the national board would pay for two nights lodging only.

Hockenmeier Hall in DC and German American Day: NP Bill Fuchs and wife Darlene will represent DANK at the opening ceremonies of Hockenmeier Hall in Washington, DC on March 20th. His hope is to recruit new Associate membership s while there and to work more closely with these groups. **He requested that his hotel bill of \$95 be covered by the national office. This was approved as a general consensus.**

Bylaws: (Bob Miske) Bob passed around a sample of the ‘sticker’ to be placed in the current Bylaws booklet. He requested permission to proceed with getting them printed and distributed to the chapters. A motion to proceed was made by Erik Wittmann, 2nd by Christa Garcia. Motion carried.

DANK Chicago (North) request: (Nikki Dombrowski & Scott Will) Nikki and Scott made a proposal to raise the national membership dues with a new breakdown of reimbursement to give the chapters more financial support. Erik Wittmann and others pointed out that each time there has been a dues increase, more members drop their membership....leaving us with less money had we not acted. Discussion ensued on how the national organization can help chapters to meet their needs. It is okay via our Bylaws and legally okay to raise funds for sustainability. **Bev Pochatko, Scott Will and Erik Wittmann will form a committee to come up with ideas for Chapters to increase their funding.**

Future meetings of the Executive Board: NP Fuchs has received permission to hold future meetings in the Schlaraffia Room. **The dates for the Chicago meetings are: May 22nd and November 6th, 2010**

Teleconferences are scheduled for:

July 8th, 2010
Sept 9th, 2010
Dec 2nd, 2010

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Edwin Gunther, 2nd by Donna Lippert.
Meeting adjourned at 4:50 PM



BEVERLY A. POCHATKO
National Recording Secretary



German American National Congress
National Executive Board Meeting
Saturday, March 6, 2010

MOTIONS / ACTIONS passed at the National Committee and Executive Board Meetings.

- *A motion to present a Chapter celebrating their 10th, 25th, and 50th anniversaries respectively with a plaque from national was made by Erik Wittmann, 2nd by Donna Lippert. Motion carried.*
- **FINANCIAL REPORT:** *A motion to approve the financial report as given was made by Bob Miske, 2nd by Dave Hinz. Motion carried.*
- **Final Budget** should be ready for approval at the May meeting.
- It was agreed that we need to do outreach at festivals and that it will cost money to do this. The Benefits need to be taken into account and volunteers needed. **A Budget for specifics will be prepared for the May meeting and a decision made.**
- **Motion to approve the Associate Membership Proposal by Bev Pochatko, seconded by Bob Miske. Motion carried**
- **DANK OFFICE RENTAL AGREEMENT & LEASE:** We have been presented with a 1 year lease at \$635/month starting April 1, 2010 ending March 31, 2011. *A motion to sign the one year lease agreement with the understanding that depending upon whatever legal issues come about that may impact the agreement was made by Erik Wittmann, 2nd Beverly Pochatko. Motion carried.*
- *A motion to “approve the expenditure of up to \$7500 with the understanding that Chicago North Board is aware of the verbal agreement voiced by their President spoke appropriately on their behalf” was made by Erik Wittmann, 2nd by Beverly Pochatko. Christel Miske suggested that we approach Chapter Chicago to share in the legal expenses since this is all being done to their benefit. ROLL CALL VOTE: Six in favor, abstained: Rein Lippert, Nay: Edwin Gunther. Motion carried.*
- **DANK RAFFLE:** It was determined that National will undertake the fundraising raffle again, using the same prizes, etc. as in 2009.
- **A motion was made by Donna Lippert, 2nd by Rein Lippert to approve the \$2000 fee for Germanfest Milwaukee . Motion carried, with one nay by Erik Wittmann.**
- NP Fuchs asked Secretary Beverly Pochatko to write a letter to the Chapters regarding the Milwaukee German Fest – who wants to be in the Parade, volunteer to man the booth, etc. . It was agreed that the national board would pay for two nights lodging only.
- Cobi Stein has agreed to once again be the coordinator for the DANK Unit in the Milwaukee Germanfest parade.
- *Bob Miske requested permission to proceed with getting a ‘sticker’ printed and distributed to the chapters to be placed in the current Bylaws booklet. A motion to proceed was made by Erik Wittmann, 2nd by Christa Garcia. Motion carried.*
- *NP Fuchs representing DANK will attend the opening of Hockenmeier Hall on March 20th. He requested that his hotel bill of \$95 be covered by the national office. This was approved as a general consensus.*
- Helping Chapters find funding: *Bev Pochatko, Scott Will and Erik Wittmann will form a committee to come up with ideas for Chapters to increase their funding.*