



German American National Congress
Committee Meeting
May 22, 2010 10:00 A.M.

Attending: William Fuchs, Erik Wittmann, Donna Lippert, Maria Thompson, Beverly Pochatko, Edwin Gunther, Robert Miske, Hilde Schloesser, Rein Lippert, Chris Decker, Margarete Potocki, Ernst Ott, Amelia cotter, Eva Timmerhaus, Matthias Knobloch, Margita Mandel, Darlene Fuchs, Stephen Fuchs, Ursula Gunther, Dagmar Freiburger, Rudy Schloesser, and Christel Miske.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by President William Fuchs. Committees were reminded that they can meet with the Board on Friday afternoons and evenings. Darlene Fuchs started off with an "ice-breaker". The theme focused on listening and following directions.

Matthias Knobloch, who came here from Erfurt Germany, was introduced as one of our new interns, whose specialty is in the area of Marketing and Advertising. Darlene mentioned that he wrote an article in German, with the English translation, for the recent GAJ. He is also working on the new Associate Members Brochure that will soon be going to print.

He is using Bill's office. Amelia Cotter (Office Manager) said three other interns will be joining the office staff -

Database Computer – Jerry Schliephake and Dave Fairbrother couldn't be here today. The database computer is still a problem and they are trying to find a solution. Jerry is working with two companies and getting quotes for a program called "Sequel". They should have it within the next two weeks.

Our Epson dot matrix printer developed a break in one of the pin heads. Replacement for this part would cost \$258. They are now using a Panasonic dot matrix printer donated by Bill Fuchs several years ago. It is working quite well. We need to change the way we operate as technology changes and even though it may cost us money up front, it will pay off later.

Financial Benefits via Seminars/Teleconferences (Margret Schrant) Unable to attend, but offered info on a Sept. Seminar that would be beneficial to our members, especially those that are going into Social Security and Medicare re: what to do etc., and to help all people of retirement age. There will be more about this at our next meeting.

Public Relations (Margita Mandel) – There has to be communication between the Chapters and the Board; externally, the Committee will prepare press releases and send them out. Most chapters have members that are willing to work, but don't because they don't have the confidence to take this on. This will help solve the problem. This service will be available to all the Chapters. Margita will be instrumental in the 'kick-off' of the Uniontown Chapter by preparing media notices. Chris Decker was asked to forward the media details for area to the National Office, as well as the particulars of the event to Margita.

DANK SCHOOL COMMITTEE – A written report was submitted prior to the meeting. No one was at the meeting to represent them. NS Beverly Pochatko made comment that because of various laws and regulations, anything that is part of the minutes must be written in English. Part of the report, written by Alexandra Ott was in German and needs to be translated to be incorporated into the minutes.

YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM - (Claudia Craig – absent) NP Fuchs said he would like to see the YAP incorporate many of the ideas/guidelines of the former Miss DANK Program to establish structure and policies and generally use the previous guidelines as a starting point; to outline what meetings/dances and other events the Youth Ambassadors should attend; to develop the YAP to benefit youth in all chapters and not just in the Chicago area.

Kate Freiburger came to talk to the Board about their ideas for a youth group. She and Andrea Dietz would like to create Youth Groups -making them community oriented groups. Their ideas would be beneficial to bringing the younger (under 30) group to DANK. This is the group that is the future of this organization. Some of the ideas that Kate said they were considering is working at the local German Fests, sponsoring a 'Techno Night' (modern dancing), etc., group outings and planning fund raising events for them to be self-sufficient etc. She was told that better communication is needed before starting projects. The National Board requested that an organizational report and funding plan be furnished to them before they proceed.

Due to the large geographic area of DANK Chapters, a suggestion was made by Beverly Pochatko that perhaps a Youth Ambassador needs to be in place for each of the three DANK Regions. Kate said that it would even be good to establish a Youth Ambassador in each chapter.

School Associate Memberships – (See submitted ideas) NP Fuchs presented an idea that would possibly help in our outreach to schools. It would get schools associated with DANK via the school German Clubs as Associate Members. He would like to this developed in the next three or four months. We need to find people to work on this project.

It is a good idea, but Erik Wittmann said we need to clean-up what we have now...the Education Committee, that does its own thing, and the three Education Funds. It was his personal opinion that we abolish the Education Committee and reconstitute it as we shape the three funds, because we are running in different directions right now. Then, when this is settled, bring in this new concept.

OFFICE UPDATE: (Amelia Cotter) – See submitted Report. We currently have five interns...three of which are helping as writers and proof readers on the GAJ, A new intern starts in June on researching grants, how to write them and how to apply for them. Currently, our newest intern Matthias is selling items on e-bay. He has been helping create a brochure for Associate Membership. They got \$700 in new ads for the July issue of the Journal. Amelia suggested that we pay the \$300 for membership in the German American Midwest Chamber of Commerce as it will give us more contacts for our various projects. Possibly this might be a boost to an Endowment Fund (to be proposed at the Executive Board meeting) to boost not only DANK, but our Germanic culture and heritage. This will be discussed at the Executive Mtg. There have been requests for memberships from prisoners. Some are violent offenders...having checked them out on the website. We need to be careful that we don't pull in racists, skin heads, whatever... we don't want to pull in that factor. (Chris Decker) It could be a violation of the trust of our members. Need to recheck the bylaws regarding questionable applicants. We need to check out reasons for incarceration and then have board approval for membership. Amelia said she plans to send a weekly update to the Board and Regional Presidents as to progress in the office. The Regional Presidents can decide if it should be forwarded to their chapters. She will be submitting her vacation request to Bill and Erik.

GERMAN AMERICAN JOURNAL: (Darlene Fuchs) We are getting requests from Germany to submit articles and our members. The papers are printed and should be in the membership's possession next week. The deadline for the next edition (August/ September) is June 25th.

DANK WEB-SITE: Stephen said he will be launching the latest update to the current web site in August. He is adding web-site page for the individual chapters – includes Calendar of Events, and connection to Chapter's own web-site if one exists. Every chapter will have the same information on its site. Logos created for Chapters will be used. Regarding a Chapter's own individual web-site help is available via our interns in the office. The Regional reps were reminded that they are responsible to take this information to their chapters. This will be announced in the GAJ.

VISA CARD UPDATE: Of the \$32,629 charged by members on their cards, a dividend of \$50 was sent to our Treasurer. We will continue to promote the card at German Fests.

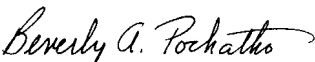
AWARDS: (Bev Pochatko) A request was made by Donna Lippert to give a certificate to those persons who receive the Large DANK Pin in recognition of their commitment to our German heritage. This was not done in the past – a person either received a certificate or a pin, but not both. After discussion, it was determined that a Certificate be created to go with the pin. Bev will receive the request and when approved by the Board, Amelia will print out the certificate. The certificate wording will be sent to the office. They will be placed in a presentation folder to be given to the recipient with the pin. At Donna Lippert's request, a certificate will be back-dated and sent to Christine Weiss. Scott Walter has not responded about the design for the life member pin. If we don't hear from him within 30 days, we will be looking elsewhere to design the pin.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: (Erik Wittmann) As of April 30th, we have 3,822 members, but only 83% of that number are paid. Active Chapters range from the 80-90% and the lowest is 70%. The "Just Add One" campaign did not work out. Anita Walthier and Erik Wittmann will be visiting the inactive chapters in June and July to see what they can do about getting them moving again. Our membership numbers are down, and there have been requests for starting chapters. We are trying to increase membership via appearances at the German Heritage Festivals. We are committed to Milwaukee's Fest; Cincinnati is too costly for us as a non-profit - even at 1/2 of the fee - \$3000; Kutztown is a 7 day event – too long for us to cover; the PA Bavarian Fest in Canonsburg PA is doable as is the Guttenberg Festival in Iowa (\$25 fee). They are checking into the Fort Wayne Festival. Chapters are encouraged to get DANK out there at their festivals.

The Mason-Dixon Sub-chapter of Pittsburgh will become the DANK Chapter 54 – Uniontown on June 5th. They have 42 members. NP Fuchs and VP Wittmann will attend the reception and present them with the Gründungsbrief (Founding Letter).

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM

Submitted by


Beverly A. Pochatko

National Recording Secretary