



**Teleconference  
DANK National Executive Board  
December 15, 2010**

**Meeting was called to order at 8 PM EST (7 PM CST)**

**Participating:** Erik Wittmnn, Donna Lippert, Maria Thompson, Beverly Pochatko, Edwin Gunther, Robert Miske, Hildegard Schloesser, Dave Hinz, Chris Decker, Margaret Potocki, Amelia Cotter, Rein Lippert, Christa Garcia.

**Exc.** William Fuchs

**Minutes** of the November Meeting were approved on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** (Maria Thompson) According to the budget, we budgeted \$96K and income is \$131K with the \$30K we borrowed. We are ahead of budget by \$5K. DANK North still owes us \$178 for postage used on our meter. Legal issues were a one-time unexpected expense that caused us to borrow from the investment account. Still need to increase our income for our on-going operations.

- ***Motion to accept Financial Report as presented by Beverly Pochatko, 2nd by Donna Lippert. Motion carried unanimously.***

**Investment Report** (Maria Thompson). We reduced our investment. We will be holding our own if we don't borrow from it again. Money is very well invested and we should continue to make money.

We voted to request income from our chapters as well as our membership to update our database, etc. Where will this money go? So far it (\$3K) is under donations and not making interest. It will take about 6 months to implement the new program. Eric said he could give her the names of some places where we can earn money on the short term.

Additions to AGENDA: Raffle Prize (Miske)

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**1. Membership Chapter Problems Updates**

**Region 1:** Still a reluctance of members to serve on Boards.

**Region 2:** Reluctance of members to serve on Boards and a lack of communications from two of the chapters.

**Region 3:** Reluctance of members to serve on Boards; improve communications between the chapters; rejuvenating two chapters who seem to be fading away.

**Suggestions:**

- C Decker: General membership meetings twice a year, during some times of the year; they should be monthly; what are we going to do that evening; a drive to recruit new members.
- Bev Pochatko: You need to get your board together and plan your programs for the year in January at the latest. People will plan ahead to attend if they know in advance that there is something to do. Don't wait until you are doing your newsletter to decide. In our Chapter, we try to plan our programs so they are related to something German – for instance we know health is important to Germans so our program for January is "Exercise while being a Couch Potato" and we

have a speaker coming in to present what we like to call 'mindless exercises' that you can do while sitting down. There are things that we can do but if you don't plan ahead, people will lose interest in attending Chapter meetings.

- Erik: How do we get more people to serve on Boards and Committees?  
Bev: Sometimes we need to let people know we need help. If you want to get new members on the Board, state that fact and let them know you need new 'blood' to take over....you are getting tired or just overwhelmed. Some people are intimidated because they think you are doing such a good job and they couldn't compare! Back down and say, unless someone comes forward, we won't have for instance....our Christmas Party this year...I just can't manage to do everything. Someone will step forward with some encouraging and they will do a wonderful job.
- Erik: Would it be helpful if at our next live meeting that we actually take an hour or two with ideas to take back to their chapters – an in-service and provide tools to help them? **ACTION: We will develop a program to develop a program to work this out utilizing either a Friday night or Sunday morning meeting.**
- How can I get more GAJ or German Life magazines? Request GAJ from Amelia/Darlene and specify where you are taking them. This will be on an on-going basis and delivered to your house. Erik can assist in getting copies of the German Life Magazine for promotional purposes.

**Membership Report:** As of 11/30/2010 our total membership was 3,431. Of these 3,000 are paid – 99% paid! We are continuing to lose members due to death, and various other reasons...but not as strong as in the past. We had hoped that the "Just Add One" campaign would motivate members, but didn't. We need to know what we can do to motivate our chapters to bring in new members. If everyone just brought one new member, then we could double our membership numbers. What does it take to in order to get our chapters to try to address this?

- Bev (Reg 3) felt that the lack of programming in some of the chapters and meetings – we have to learn to say that we are a meeting followed by a social program or whatever... having one general membership mtg. a year does not do anything to encourage attendance. We should have general membership meetings once a month. If you provide programming of interest and get publicity out there and always state that membership is open now, it makes a big difference. People will get involved, but they aren't going to get involved if you meet only once a year and you only hold a few parties and that's it. Why should they pay \$30-\$40 for membership if your Chapter isn't going to do anything?
- Edwin (Reg 1) – When we hold our monthly Board meetings, the members feel that they don't have a say thus there is a lack of response from the members. How would I rename our monthly meeting if there can't be a board meeting where only board members can come?- - - Hold two board meetings a year maybe in January and July for that particular year to plan events for the year... A board meeting every month gets more confusing and if you say it is for board members, then regular members don't come...even though it is open to all members. A general meeting with a program followed with coffee and cookies always seems to work. It may take a while to catch on, if that is what you are doing, but it always seems to work. Keep the meeting portion down you are relying on your board to help you through these things. It should help you make the transition and even showing videos works followed by coffee and cookies and then introduce the "Just add one" membership campaign.
- Donna (Reg 2) Benton Harbor tried a membership drive but it just didn't work out, but they usually get out good numbers at their meetings. Other chapters don't seem go out to get new memberships at all. ---What is it we need to do with the chapters to try to get them to understand the issue and give them what I call technical assistance? Christa: **she did a questionnaire at the start of her watch as**

national president around 2001 for South around 2001 and they voiced their opinions on various issues and various items that would interest them to come to a meeting and that seemed quite fruitful. We designed programs around those issues and sent out suggestions to the chapters and they enjoyed that. (Erik) Amelia, do you think that you and I, with input from some others, could develop a questionnaire that would be available to the chapter leadership for them to send out to their chapters and help them in the process. Christa: A little outline of here is some historical topics, and then would you as a Chapter be interested in getting more information and would your members enjoy a presentation or something – not a lecture as such - but an activity? Bev offered to help also.

3. **Office Update** – Amelia Cotter – We have the brand new member pins and the new membership cards so from now on everyone will get a new style of card with the updated pin prices that people can order and new members get the new design of the member pins. We have a design for the Life Member Pins and if everyone approves, we can get it ordered. We have received \$3000 for the database system and just received another \$50 for it. So all those donors have received a thank you note from Bill and our goal is to get \$6500-\$7000 for it. Niedersachsen ad request to place a ad -full-page color ad at a cost of \$120, for a full page black & white is \$100, \$70 for ½ page and \$40 for a ¼ page in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Niedersachsen Program. Amelia and Stephen Fuchs could design one for us. *Motion was made by Robert Miske, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Donna Lippert “To place a full-page color ad at a cost of \$120, in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Niedersachsen Program. Motion carried unanimously.*
4. **DANK House Ownership Update:** At the last face-to-face meeting, there was the issue of who owns the house. We all covered the fact that we tried to get legal counsel to determine exactly true ownership and as you know based upon the last board action we have not formally accepted DANK North’s view that they will be sole owners and what the conditions are; we are still continuing to deal with that. Part of the objective that has been raised is trying to negotiate a viable deal with DANK North assuming that the Board would accept the fact they have ownership, that the discussion has been ‘what is national going to get out of this’? Part of the discussion was whether or not we can garner free rent for national; whether we can get meeting space and all those things as a condition of our acceptance of the lawyer’s view that there is documentation there that would potentially give DANK North that ownership. Since that time, a number of other things have surfaced from people who still say that DANK North does not have a clear title to the property – that the title actually rests with national. There is really some conflicting areas in all of this stuff and so one of the things that the Board is trying to do, and with all speed, is to try to clean that up by taking all the information into consideration and then coming back to all of you, as we committed, to say okay, this is what it looks like, this is the route we should go. Much of the concern that was expressed by a number of you, and some who are not on this teleconference, is that we need to get something out of this for national’s benefit because right now it appears that DANK North feels it is in the driver’s seat and there are a lot of people who feel that is totally not only unacceptable but also not fair because in actuality they claim is that they own the property so how can they be in the driver’s seat? There is on-going conflict where one says that says yes we do and the other side says no we don’t. We are trying to work out a solution that frankly is a win-win for everyone, because there are consequences to what ever action we do. Ultimately we can not win the battle and lose the war. We don’t want to come up with a solution that keeps the DANK North Chapter satisfied but also not shaft the DANK organization. Once the board reviews this new information we will bring it back to all of you.  
Comments – Erik: there is a proposal afoot that DANK North is joining German Day and Maifest in an exchange of money and the national board has gone on record, via a communication that has gone to Chicago North, that we think there is some serious question of whether or not that is also a change of ownership when they allow two other parties into the process. That is an added component that we

are dealing with now because it is not only the original issue of who truly owns the house, but now we need to make sure that DANK North, while this is being settled, doesn't enter into an agreement that even brings in third parties. So we are trying to get some legal interpretation both informally and formally in that process as well. Bill did send communication, based on our board discussion, to DANK North that says we want to have a legal clarification from their lawyer as to why going into an agreement with German Day and Maifest, is not a change of ownership. So we are waiting for that and we are also simultaneously having communication with our own lawyer, and also there are some private folks also looking at this in order to do a determination. We need to move on this because we don't want to stretch this out. *Maria Thompson* said nothing has really ever been straightened out. Now they are going to scramble the whole thing all over again. Plus, every time DANK North squawks, we have to get a lawyer to straighten the whole thing to us and it will cost us plenty of money. So I don't see any reason to do it because they have to prove once and for all who the owner is and as far as we can see right now it's definitely not DANK North its DANK National. *Erik*: The dilemma is that they claim they have ownership and we have to challenge it; and if we challenge that, it is a legal process and that costs money. That's what the original board activity in hiring the law firm was intended - to indeed get to the bottom of that. We are not at the bottom of it and there is new information is coming in. But simply to say that national owns it and they don't, without having any more legal documentation than they have, doesn't solve the problem. *Maria Thompson* said all they have to do is show us the legal title to the property. *Erik*: This is the request that is going to Dagmar (North's President) saying that we don't think it is as clear as you claim - show us the title to the property. *Edwin*: That is the way it should be. They need to prove it in black and white that they own the property. There are so many stories and some people even say that they have letters that say DANK National – that they donated money to DANK National and not to DANK North. *Erik*: The issue right now is that DANK North has a piece of paper from the Chicago Title Company that indicates that they are the owners. That is different than showing a title, but the title company validates Chicago North ownership. *Christa Garcia*: *The original states that the property is held in fee simple – it's not ownership.* *Erik*: Then you also have, what compounds this, a number of actions by previous presidents of this organization, to do a quit claim deeds that do a whole number of things. There are legal people who challenged those quit claim processes and say they were not legitimate, and so therefore even though quit claims processes were undertaken to transfer the property from the original setup, there is this whole legal issue and cost of trying to challenge those things as well. This whole thing is really messy and it is not really simple and one of the things we are struggling with is how do we solve this problem without destroying the organization. *Bev*: I think that the fact that we are talking to North and asking their lawyer to address these issues is not going to cost us money. Now they are going to have to pay to prove they really do own it. The agreement they presented really looks good, but when you read between the lines, it does appear to be a transfer or exchange of property in exchange for money. *Erik*: North is proceeding with the belief they own the property and in part what we have to do is challenge that process. They are managing it and acting like there is no question, so part of our challenge is not only to get this clarified but also to challenge their right to act. *Christa* noted that on Page 2 of their pre-organization agreement, part E 2<sup>nd</sup> line they state that "property has served as the cornerstone of the German American community at the heart of Chicago's Lincoln Square since its purchase by DANK House in 1968..." The DANK House did not exist at that time! And there are several statements in this joint venture pre-organization agreement that simply isn't true. We can't solve this DANK House issue here today; it is an on-going struggle that is not going to go away. The dilemma is that if we don't get this clean, then we are never going to get it clean, because if we just give up and say okay let them have it with no conditions whatsoever, not

only potentially are we letting down the membership that feels that the property is owned by national; we can't ignore that fact. Vice versa, we just can't go and say we're going to battle to the end no matter what and risk totally alienating Chicago North, which makes up about one-fourth of our membership. It is not an easy process and we are trying really hard to be fair to all and be true legally to the cause. We, the Board, will keep you informed about the direction we are going and why we are going the direction we are going and allow you to provide your input. This will be an open process!

4. **National Convention Update:** Date has been changed from the first weekend of November to the last weekend of October at the request of national. (Oct 28-30). We are in the process now of forming our program committee (booklet, etc). We want to use this as an opportunity to bring members to the convention; it will be a 'fun' convention with plenty of activities for both delegates and guests. We want to showcase that there are German groups that do get along; We want to approach other ethnic groups to our banquet to show that DANK as a national organization is functional. We learn from other ethnic groups whenever we get together. Everyone felt that it was okay to invite the other groups to attend the banquet only. So far, while the contract is still being negotiated with the Radisson Hotel, the rooms will cost less than \$100, making it more affordable to attend.
5. **German American Education Fund:** Tentatively the German American Education Fund has accepted the merger but they haven't signed off on it yet. They want to see our (the DANK Education and School Fund) Articles of Incorporation. They want to maintain the German American Education Fund as a 501(c)3. In the merger, there will only be one Education Fund and designated as the main fund. We are still waiting for GATES, but nothing has been heard from them. They may stay as an independent group. If there is a merger, then the 'new' fund will go back to DANK national and ask if they will be incorporated into future dues statements; and we will redraw the board combining whoever joins in, and redefining the mission etc., then - if you recall, we will then re-establish the Education Committee that was temporarily suspended about 9 months ago, and the Education Committee hopefully will work directly with that fund. It will not become final until all papers are filed with the Attorney General of Illinois. A 10 point questionnaire filled out by various members of the GAEF was signed and they will be submitted in the filing.
6. **DANK School Leadership.** See submitted report (Christa Garcia)  
There was some discussion about support for the Adult Education programs in some of our chapters. Most chapters in Region 3 are teaching adult language classes. We are really expanding our language classes and they generally bring in 4-5 new members to a chapter.
7. **Financial Audit Report:** Donna Lippert will work with Maria Thompson to get password set as she 'forgot' it. Donna Lippert and Christa Garcia are on the audit committee. Maria Thompson will try to find two more members to help out. They will meet early in January as the books are current and it will make it easier to review.

NEW BUSINESS:

8. **Budget for 2011:** Bob Miske, Maria Thompson are working on it; looking to chapters for possible help. Maria was going to ask Willi Gohs to also work on this committee. Erik would like the Committee to work on this early in January. There are several things that need to be updated in the new budget, so we can't rely on last year's as a basis. We'd like to have this done by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in January. Maria said she would like to have this done by the first part of January because she will be getting busy.

9. **2011 Meetings:** Following discussion, a motion was made by Bev Pochatko and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Robert Miske “To change the May meeting to a teleconference call and the December meeting to a Chicago meeting”. Motion carried unanimously. This will have no effect on the budget as it’s an exchange of dates only.

**Tele-Conference Calls: (Thursdays)**

- January 20<sup>th</sup>
- May 19<sup>th</sup>
- July 7<sup>th</sup>

**Meetings in Chicago**

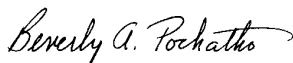
- March 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>
- September 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>
- Convention October 28<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup>
- December 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>

Amelia will send out notices to everyone.

10. **Raffle Distribution:** Robert Miske - The 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize in the November Raffle **Drawing** was won by Ursula Anderson of Satellite Beach, Florida **who** is not willing to accept her flat screen TV prize. Her biggest concern is that she has to give out her Social Security number in order to accept that prize, and she was also concerned about the taxes that would be due. Bob spoke with her that we would also pay the sales tax on it. After she was assured of that she was still insistent that she would not give out her SSN so he did not give an alternative solution to her, because in order for her to get the cash equivalent we would still need her SSN. She agreed to give the TV back to the organization. He then advised her that we would need some type of documenta-tion to release us from the burden of awarding the prize and she was amiable to signing the release. Amelia has helped draft a document that covers everything, including that her heirs cannot come back to us for the prize if she passes away. We will fill in all the pertinent information and she will just have to sign it and return it in a prepaid envelope. She is not a member to Bob’s knowledge. It was suggested that we give her membership for the coming year (2011), since she was not accepting the prize turning this negative into a positive. **Bob Miske made a motion that “Ursula Anderson of Satellite Beach, Florida, be given one year of membership in DANK in appreciation for gifting the TV back to the national organization.” Secoded by Donna Lippert. Motion carried unanimously.**

Since there was no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Donna Lippert and seconded by Hildegard Schloesser. Meeting was adjourned at 9:47 EST (8:47 CST)

Respectfully submitted,



Beverly A. Pochatko  
National Recording Secretary



**Teleconference  
DANK National Executive Board  
December 15, 2010**

**Motions and Future Actions**

- Motion to accept Financial Report as presented by Beverly Pochatko, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Donna Lippert. Motion carried unanimously.
  - Motion was made by Robert Miske, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Donna Lippert “To place a full-page color ad at a cost of \$120, in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Niedersachsen Program. Motion carried unanimously.
  - As a good will gesture, a motion was made by Robert Miske, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Donna Lippert to Ursula Anderson of FL (the 2<sup>nd</sup> PI raffle winner of the TV) since she will not accept the prize, after she signs the release form. Motion carried unanimously.
  - A motion by Bev Pochatko and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Robert Miske “To change the May meeting to a teleconference call and the December meeting to a Chicago meeting”. Motion carried unanimously.
  - Bob Miske made a motion that “Ursula Anderson of Satellite Beach, Florida, be given one year of membership in DANK in appreciation for gifting the TV back to the national organization.” Seconded by Donna Lippert. Motion carried unanimously.
- 
- Need to develop programs to assist chapters – have ready for next live meeting – so that Regional Reps can take information back to their chapters. *ACTION: We will develop a program to develop a program to work this out utilizing either a Friday night or Sunday morning meeting.*
  - Erik Wittmann, Bev Pochatko and Amelia Cotter will develop a questionnaire for chapters to use for programming and activities.
  - Financial Audit Committee: Donna Lippert and Christa Garcia. Maria Thompson will try to find two more members to help out.
  - 2011 Budget Committee: Robert Miske, Maria Thompson and Maria will talk to Willi Gohs..
  - Meetings for 2011 were scheduled:
    - Conference Calls:**
      - January 20<sup>th</sup>
      - May 19<sup>th</sup>
      - July 7<sup>th</sup>
    - Meetings in Chicago**
      - March 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>
      - September 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>
      - Convention October 28<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup>
      - December 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>