

DEUTSCHER CHORVERBAND

SÄNGER ZEITUNG

Issue Number 34

Spring, 2017



Greetings from the President... Gary Luther

Dear Singers

(Liebe Sänger und Sängerinnen):

2016 was an eventful year for the Sängerbund and our country. The "great election" has taken place, our Sängertag is history and now we move on to another year, which I hope will be enjoyable for all singers of the NASB and their families.

I received holiday greetings from many of you, thank you. I also have gotten many positive and constructive suggestions from singers throughout our Association regarding future Sängertage, Sängertage and Sängerbund administration. To answer your suggestions, we have expanded our Steering Committee to include all members of the Sängerbund Board. A monthly conference call for the Board takes place to discuss current and future needs of our Association. The items discussed are gathered

and put into a Newsletter, which is emailed to each choral group following the meeting.

I also formed a By-laws Committee, as allowed per our current By-laws, to update our Constitution and By-laws. The NASB membership is contracting. One way the Board wishes to address this matter is by making the Constitution and Bylaws administration more user friendly. The update, if approved by the delegates at the 2018 Sängertag, will meet the functionality and current budgetary desires of our members and the organization.

We have received information from the Pittsburgh Sängertag Committee regarding the Mass Concert picture and the music CDs from the concerts. You will receive information shortly how to order the pictures and CDs. Watch the NASB Website and Facebook pages for the order forms.

Your new Board looks forward to providing you with the best information possible relative to events taking place at the district level; on preparations for Sängertag 2018; and the status of Sängertag 2019.

As we get into the new year, remember your current NASB Board is elected to serve you, your choir and district. Do you have a special event coming up? Let our

Webmaster, Geoff Kroening know by email or letter. He will get your event up on the website and Facebook in a very timely manner. Also, would you like to have a member of the NASB Board at one of your special events? Send an email to gary.luther@sbc-global.net and we will make every effort to have a member of the board at your function.

You may have noticed with the last issue of the Sängertag, at the suggestion of our Zeitung Editor, Ron Kabitzke, we have begun taking advertisements for the newsletter. This bit of support reduces the printing and postage costs of the publication. Would you like to place a small advertisement? Our publication is sent out to 2,500 members three times per annum. Rates are very reasonable so you get good exposure at minimal cost.

Finally, in this issue of the Sängertag you will read the State of the NASB report, which is required by the current By-laws. The "State" should bring you up to date regarding what occurred in 2016 and what to expect in 2017.

President, NASB

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North American Singer's Association
Nord-Amerikanischer Sängerbund

Madison Männerchor is the second oldest active German Choir in America

By Günther Ruch

Madison Männerchor

A group of German immigrants formed the *Madison Männerchor* (MMC) in 1852. The MMC is the oldest German men's choir in Wisconsin and is the 2nd oldest continuously active German men's choir in the United States. The *Columbus Männerchor* of Columbus, OH was formed in 1848 and apparently is the oldest German men's choir in the country.

The MMC's first concert was performed in February of 1853 at The Baptist Church on Carroll Street in Madison.

In the period from 1857 to 1869 the MMC formed an affiliated group called the *Schützenverein* or riflemen. This group had previous military training in Germany. All able-bodied men of the MMC *Schützenverein* fought in the Civil War for Wisconsin. Those who survived the conflict and returned to Madison re-established themselves with the MMC.

In 1879, the MMC won the Loving Cup of Gold trophy for a singing competition.

Because of the choir's success in competitive singing events, in 1881, it brought the competition to Madison. 1,200 singers participated in the competition in the Assembly Chambers of the Wisconsin Capitol Building. In addition to the 1,200 singers, approximately 6,000 visitors came to Madison to listen to the music.

In 1887, President Grover Cleveland and his wife visited Madison. They were guests at the mansion of Colonel William F. Vilas who moved to Madison in 1851 from Vermont. His residence stood on the shore of Lake Mendota. During this visit, the MMC performed a midnight serenade for the President and his wife paying tribute to the Chief Executive. Both President Cleveland and his wife were very pleased with the performance. The President announced that he, too, was a member of a German singing society, the *Buffalo Liederkrantz*, a German men's choir in Buffalo, NY.

From 1912 – 1935 the MMC went through some significant changes. From 1912 – 1917, the ranks of the MMC continued to swell. However, the size of the Männerchor was depleted when many young men of the choir enlisted into the military to serve during WWI.

Rehearsals and concerts continued during WWI, but the enthusiasm of the earlier years was not there. In 1927, the MMC celebrated its 75th anniversary in the auditorium of the Madison Masonic Temple.

In 1936, the State of Wisconsin celebrated its centennial anniversary. The MMC played a prominent role in the celebration by leading the German section in the International Cavalcade.

In November of 1940, however, tragedy struck. A fire destroyed Turner Hall, the home of the MMC. Spirits were crushed as every treasured possession of the choir was lost. This included its Steinway grand piano that was donated to the MMC by Mrs. Fred Rentschler in memory of her husband who was a member of the choir. The entire musical library was lost which had been collected for over 90 years. The MMC lost all flags, banners, Sängerfest trophies, records, and photographs. Music was donated, as were temporary quarters at K. P. Hall in the American Exchange Bank.

In October of 1941, the new Turner Hall was completed and dedicated by the Turners. At a private banquet and concert on November 4, 1942, the Ladies of the Auxiliary presented the Turners with a large American flag to replace the one lost in the fire.

In 1952, the MMC celebrated its 100th anniversary. In 1956, membership had declined to only 12 members as the interest in ethnic activities in young Americans declined. However, the MMC responded to the challenge by dedicating itself to strongly promoting the choir and its mission of keeping German Männerchor music alive. By 1967, membership had reached 36 members.

The MMC continued to evolve under the leadership of its new president, Paul Essert. Essert looked to expand the choir's activities. He established an annual spring concert and an annual Christmas concert and dinner that are still being held today. Essert, along with choir member Helmut Seaman came up with the idea of establishing an annual singing competition of the choirs in the *Wisconsin Sängerbezirk* (WSB). The annual competition, *Kommers*, is still being held today and has brought the German choirs together at least annually to celebrate their common heritage in a friendly competition. MMC has had success in the *Kommers* competition and was the winning choir in the 2015 competition, one of the closest competitions in recent memory.

In 1984, Essert led the MMC, along with a German men's choir from Denver, on a singing trip to Germany.

Essert was president of the MMC several times, first from 1972 – 1978, then from

1979 – 1984 and finally from 1988 – 1993. During those times, MMC thrived and became one of the leading choirs in the WSB.

In 1977, the MMC celebrated its 125th anniversary with a grand concert. In addition, the president of the German Singing Federation came from Germany to attend the event.

In 2002, the *Madison Männerchor* celebrated its 150th anniversary with a gala *Sängerfest* in Madison. MMC held an anniversary concert at the Wisconsin Capitol Rotunda. It also hosted an Oktoberfest at Madison's Essen Haus. Over 250 singers from Wisconsin and Illinois helped the MMC celebrate its 150th anniversary.

In 2012, the MMC celebrated its 160th anniversary with a special spring concert at Madison Turner Hall attended by former Wisconsin governor and former US Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson. In addition, the choir put on a concert in the Wisconsin Capitol Rotunda. Finally, the current governor of Wisconsin signed a proclamation declaring *2012 the year of the Madison Männerchor in Wisconsin*.

One very important tradition is the choir's annual cemetery sing. Every summer, the choir visits 3 local cemeteries where former members have been laid to rest.

Today, *Kommers* is the best-attended function of the WSB. The WSB consists of eight choirs. Five of the member choirs are from the Milwaukee area with one from Kenosha, two from the Sheboygan area, and the MMC. The MMC has won seven of the competitions since 1989.

The WSB is a member of the NASB which is a confederation of state German singing associations. The NASB holds a National *Sängerfest* every three years in different parts of the United States. In 2013, the *NASB Sängerfest* was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It was a great success with several thousand singers from all over the country meeting in Milwaukee.

The Madison Männerchor of today consists of 27 active singers. It still adheres to the customs and traditions that were established starting in 1852. They include perpetuating beloved German songs, holding concerts at Madison establishments, especially senior citizen facilities and Madison Turner Hall. The MMC adheres to the policy of non-sectarian, non-political principles and a loyal allegiance to the United States.

Save the date

Indianapolis hosting the 64th Bezirk Sangerfest

The Indianapolis Liederkrantz Damenchor is happy to announce the date and venue for the 64th Bezirks (district) Sangerfest. It will be held on April 13, 14 and 15, 2018 in the Indianapolis Union Station and our Fest hotel is the Crown Plaza Downtown Union Station Hotel. The welcoming dinner and dance on Friday will be held at the Indianapolis Liederkrantz Hall on East Washington Street.

You will definitely enjoy the historical feel of Union Station and maybe lucky enough to sleep in a real train car! We are anticipating a great weekend for all our singers and friends. So mark your calendars now and watch for details later.

*Mit Freundlichen Gruessen,
The Sangerfest Committee*

Wisconsin Sangerbezirk 2017 Schedule

April 1, 2017 – 6:30 pm – Milwaukee DANK Chor Frühlingsfest and Concert at the Schwabenhof, 14750 W. Silver Spring Drive, Menomonee Falls, WI

April 22, 2017 – 6:30 pm – MGW Harmonia 50th Annual Spring Concert at Holy Rosary Parish, 2224 45th St., Kenosh, WI

April 30, 2017 – 3 pm – Milwaukee Liederkrantz 139th Annual Concert, at the Schwabenhof, 14750 W. Silver Spring Drive, Menomonee Falls, WI

May 7, 2017 – 3 pm – Madison Mannerchor 165th Annual Concert at Turner Hall, 3001 South Stoughton Road, Madison, WI

October 15, 2017 – 3 pm – Milwaukee Damenchor 28th Annual Concert at the Schwabenhof, 14750 W. Silver Spring Drive, Menomonee Falls, WI

October 21, 2017 – 5:30 pm – Gesangverein Concordia Annual Concert and Dinner Immaculate Conception Parish, 2722 Henry Street, Sheboygan, WI

October 22, 2017 – 3 pm – Schwaben Mannerchor 119th Annual Concert at the Schwabenhof, 14750 W. Silver Spring Drive, Menomonee Falls, WI

German Christmas concert and reception: Flavors of the Season



Houston Sangerbund, Houston's oldest musical organization

By Mary Koenig
Houston Sangerbund

Wine and Spekulatius! Feuerzangenbowle (mulled wine set aflame)! Traditional German carols and more cookies! Free to the public on Tuesday, December 6, at 7:30 pm. The Houston Sangerbund, Houston's oldest musical organization, will present a concert, "A German Christmas" with flavors of the season at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Midtown at 1311 Holman Street. From its inception in 1883 until around 1900, there were over a thousand participants in German singing societies in the area. In the earliest years the Saengerbund was originally a men's chorus, and The Houston Symphony included many Sangerbund members. Today, the club features a men's and women's choir with seasoned members who proudly carry the club's musical traditions as well as younger

members and scholarship students starting their musical careers. From Rice University Joanna Latini and Duke Kim among others. From The University of Houston, graduate student Raphaella Medina, recently back from a Carnegie Hall performance. The combined sound of the New Saengerbund is sweeter and clearer – just listen to the poignant rendition of Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen - Innsbruck, I must leave you.

You are invited to breathe in the magic of a traditional German Christmas celebration as classics are presented in German, in English, and in Latin beginning with Praetorius' "Psallite" - Now we Sing! In addition to ensemble pieces like Still, Still, Still, Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen and Stille Nacht, The Sangerbund will showcase its accomplished scholarship singers performing Laudamus Te from Vivaldi's Gloria, and Suscepit Israel, among others.

To believe that there should be a winter wonderland is one thing; to sing it in German will certainly put a smile on your face. The Houston Sangerbund's motto - Komm Sing Mit Uns! – Come sing with us - will have a special meaning for the German Carol sing-a-long. Then follow the singers into the gracious parlor of First Evangelical Lutheran Church for seasonal German refreshments, some even home-made such as Christstollen and cookies. The highlight will be the Feuerzangenbowle, a hot red wine with spices. A rum soaked sugar loaf is set on fire and the caramelized sugar drips into the hot wine.

Children, grandparents, professors and students are all welcome. For questions about the concert, go to www.houston-saengerbund.org.

Indianapolis Liederkrantz 2017 Schedule

February 12 Liederkrantz Bell Choir Concert
February 25 Bock Beer Fest
March 10 St. Paddy's Party with Pat Grant
March 25 Allie Burbrink and Frank Lee
April 8 Men's Concert & Dance
April 28-30 Saengerfest in Ft. Wayne
May 6 Damenchor Maifest
Aug. 5 Summerfest-German Park
Oct. 7 Oktoberfest
Nov. 4 Men's Concert & Dance
Nov. 18 Damenchor Bunter Abend
Dec. 3 Children's Christmas party
Dec. 10 Weihnachtskonzert

From the Michigan Sangerbezirk

Blondine Klimach
Bezirk Prasidentin

Our singers have had a busy year, just like most of the other choirs of the NASB. We enjoyed seeing many of our friends at the NASB Sangerfest in Pittsburgh. Then we had our own concerts, which were successful and I am proud to be able to say that.

For this year I would like to give you the dates for the concerts we will be hosting at our Carpathia Club in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

Sunday, April 2, 2017 – Michigan Sangerbezirk Kommers at 3:00 PM

Saturday, May 6, 2017 – GBU-Saxonia Rheingold Chor Spring Concert

Saturday, May 13, 2017 – Schwabischer Mannerchor Spring Concert

Sunday, June 4, 2017 – Carpathia Chor Cafe Concert

Saturday, Nov. 18, 2017 – GBU-Saxonia Rheingold Chor Fall Concert

Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017 – Schwabischer Mannerchor Christmas Concert

We will also be performing as a District:

Deutscher Tag, Sunday Aug. 13, 2017 – at the Austrian Park

German-American Day, Saturday, Oct. 7, 2017 – at Carpathia

If you should be in our area on any of those dates and would like to come and spend a few happy hours, please feel free to get in touch with any of the choir or with me at 586-566-0174.

We wish all of our sisters and brothers in song a very successful year of performances.

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Beethoven Männerchor celebrating 150 years with an anniversary concert

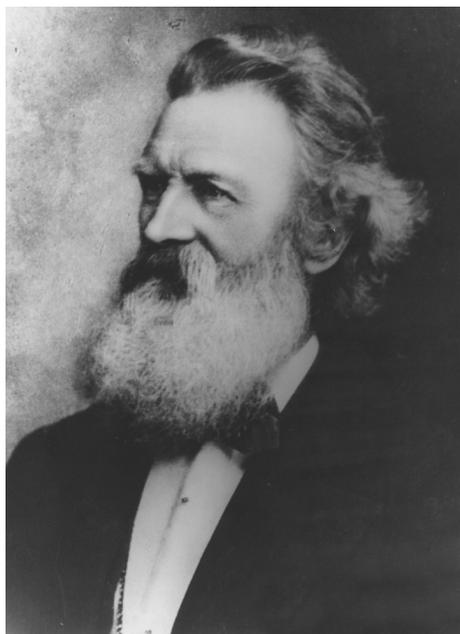
By David Uhler

Beethoven Männerchor

It was in 1873 – six years after the founding of the Beethoven Männerchor – that poet and musician Sidney Lanier received an invitation to attend a choir practice with the group during a visit to Texas.

“Seventeen Germans were seated at the singing table,” Lanier later wrote. “Long-necked bottles of Rhine-wine were opened and tasted, great pipes and cigars were all afire.

“The leader, Herr Thielepape – an old man with a long, white beard and mustache, formerly mayor of the city – rapped his tuning-fork vigorously, gave the chords



Wilhelm Carl August Thielepape

by rapid arpeggios of his voice...and off they all swung into such a noble, noble old German full-voiced lied that imperious tears rushed into my eyes, and I could scarce restrain myself from running and kissing each one in turn...”

The Beethoven Männerchor – now 50 voices strong – hopes to elicit that same kind of reaction on Sat., Feb. 25 during its 150th anniversary concert in San Antonio.

In addition to the choir, the Beethoven Concert Band and the Youth Orchestras of San Antonio (YOSA) will also take the stage for the free program at the 1,700-seat Tobin Center that includes (naturally!)



The Beethoven Männerchor of 1893

Beethoven’s “Freude, schöner Götterfunken,” popularly known as the “Ode to Joy.”

“Everyone is welcome,” says Beethoven president Claus D. Heide. “We want to fill every seat in the house.”

Founded on Feb. 24, 1867, the story of the origin of the Beethoven Männerchor will sound familiar to anyone associated with German singing and social societies.

Like many other choirs, the Männerchor was founded by immigrants who left their homeland in the mid-1800s to escape political and economic turmoil. Most of them came to America with little more than a couple of coins in their pockets, a love of song in their hearts and a strong work ethic and can-do spirit. The German choirs and other organizations they formed in the New World not only provided nostalgic links to the Old Country, they also offered plenty of *Gemütlichkeit* and opportunities for “my son Hans to meet your daughter Gretel.”

German singing and *Sängerfest* in Texas reached their peaks around the beginning of the 20th century. The Männerchor, which had been meeting in private homes and other locations for its first quarter century, built its own concert and club hall – the first ever erected in Texas – in 1894. The building burned down thirteen years later, but Beethoven members quickly replaced it with an impressive structure designed by Leo M.J. Dielmann, a noted San Antonio architect (and Männerchor singer). In addition to choir performances, the splendid Halle also hosted concerts by many well-known musicians and ensembles, including Sarah Bernhardt, John Phillip Sousa and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

The club continued to grow. In 1932, women from the local Mozart Society and

Männerchor wives banded together to form the Beethoven Damenchor. The Beethoven Concert Band had its first performance in 1945. The Beethoven Kinderchor took the stage for the first time in 1972.

Amid the triumphs, however, came other setbacks.

Like many German American organizations, the Beethoven suffered ostracism and membership declines during and between the two world wars. In 1921, progress in San Antonio forced the widening of Alamo Street and the demolition of the beautiful façade of Beethoven Halle. The Männerchor sold what was left of the building to the city and moved to a complex of buildings in the historic King William (formerly known as Kaiser Wilhelm) neighborhood, where they have operated ever since.

Following World War II, the Männerchor experienced a surge in membership as American soldiers brought home German brides and other Germans immigrated in search of better lives. By the 1960s, however, the growth had slowed and then-director Otto Ransleben told a young Claus Heide “I’m afraid the Beethoven will go under after we all die off.”

Ransleben passed away in 1981 and sadly, many choirs in Texas have indeed closed their doors. But, the Beethoven has more than 400 non-singing “passive” members today in addition to its 50-man vocal group.

“We’ve never been in better shape,” says Heide, who has served as präsident for 32 years. “I have high hopes for the future.”

Tickets for the Beethoven Männerchor’s 150th anniversary concert are free, but pre-registration is required. Please visit beethovenmaennerchor.com or the choir’s Facebook page for details.

State of the NASB for 2017

Dear Singers,

Happy New Year to all!

As per the Bylaws of the NASB, I write this State of the NASB letter to you as an update relative to our Association's current well-being and plans for 2017.

Financial Status

Paul Bockstege, our treasurer provided the following financial breakdown for the NASB Foundation and NASB Organization:

NASB Foundation

The current NASB Foundation Financial Balance as of December 31, 2016 is \$16,676 against \$15,447.13 in 2015.

Glenn Boberg, SOKII Bezirk agreed to join the Vorstand and write grants to help us finance some of the programs we would like to get started. The Foundation is a 501(c)3 corporation and donations are tax deductible.

NASB Treasurer Report 2016

2015	2016
Wells Fargo account balance	
\$33,345.95	\$30,003.79
WBF Genoa City Retirement Fund	
\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
The operating account balance	
\$ 1,494.20	\$ 3,769.05
Balance for all accounts	
\$44,840.15	\$43,772.75

Significant expenses for the past year were a result of Sängertag 2016. To date the Sängertag has not shown a profit. The expected 25% share of Sängertag was not realized.

The Sängertag publication and postage is the major expense of the NASB. The Board is attempting to reduce this expense by reducing the number of copies printed. The Zeitung is now available via email, on the www.nasaengerbund.org webpage, and via traditional US Postal Service. The Zeitung is also now accepting paid advertisements, of which there are currently three, to increase revenue.

Membership Report

Peter Herdeg, working together with Webmaster, Geoffrey Kroening, has updated the NASB membership roster and mailing list. We will report on the membership in the next Sängertag.

Archivist/Historian

Gary Luther continues to work closely with Marlena Voigt, our Archivist and Wolfgang Wengler, our Archivist Emeritus, in achieving the goal to preserve our files

and documents this upcoming year.

Publications

We will continue to expand on presenting our membership more options to access information in an accelerated fashion.

The Website continues to be updated more frequently by our Webmaster, Geoff Kroening. The website is found at www.nasaengerbund.org.

The Facebook is showing continued increases in "Likes" each month.

Our fine Newsletter die Sängertag is now published by Ron Kabitzke. Let Ron know of any items you might wish to have published in the publication. His email: lutheran@wi.rr.com.

Newsletter via email

The Board continues to meet monthly via a conference call. There is a newsletter published reflecting the activities discussed during the call. If your choral group, or you as a member, would like to be on the email list, send your list or email address to: gary.lutheran@sbcbglobal.net

NASB Calendar. We are attempting to keep you up to date with events occurring around the NASB. It is a difficult task, but we are showing progress. There are more and more events posted on our website and also in the Sängertag. Please contact Peter Herdeg with updates to your choral and district calendars.

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62. Sängertag 2016

Everyone agrees, Sängertag 2016 was a pleasurable event. Unfortunately, the Fest did not show a profit. A major factor for lack of a positive cash flow was the attendance. The cause of the lower attendance, we realized is that a significant number of singers cannot afford the cost of traveling the long distances and elevated rooming rates. A low attendance is a double edged sword. First, it places a per person cost significantly higher due to publishing, venue leasing and banquet costs. Secondly, the lower number of attendees reduced the number of rooms provided free of charge which thereby is ultimately a loss of revenue. The Board has taken this into consideration and is taking steps to alleviate these conditions in the future.

What your Board is evaluating to improve on the profitability of future Sängertag

while reducing the financial burden on singers, choruses and district.

- The number of active singers is dwindling. The NASB must find venues which fit our size. An example of this is the 2019 Sängertag which will be held in Peoria, IL. By moving to smaller convention cities, the room rates and banquet costs/person are reduced. The cost of the venue for concerts is considerably lower.

- Smaller cities have convention and visitor bureaus which readily lend assistance at preparing for the events.

- The NASB Board will search out future sites with travel distances close to the same as possible for all districts and choral groups.

Sängertag 2018

This Delegates Meeting will address the need to update our Constitution and Bylaws. During the next 16 months you will receive suggested changes to this document directed at improving the effectiveness and productivity of the administration of the NASB. If all goes as planned, the Delegates will be able to vote on the changes with knowledge and commitment to better this Association which we all cherish.

63. Sängertag 2019

Mary Dempster and Debbie Heddemann, Chair Persons of the Fest, sent the following update on our Sängertag 2019 in Peoria: – Just to let you know that the fest directors for the 2019 National Saengerfest will be Loesje Chandler, Glen Sorgatz and Russ Bolton (our director). They will work out the rotation. Mary has been in contact with Steve Lipnichan, Pittsburgh recently. Steve graciously offered to work on copyrights and retyping the music chosen by the Music Committee last year. He will be working closely with Loesje Chandler on getting it as close to perfect as possible! It is a work in progress and we very much appreciate the help everyone is giving us.

In conclusion, we continue to make every effort to make our NASB a friendly, worthwhile organization. We, the Vorstand, greatly appreciate any feedback so that we can provide the tools you need to keep your chorus vibrant and viable.

Wishing you and your Chorus a successful, enjoyable 2017.

Mit besten Sängertaggrüßen,



President