



# Sheboygan Area Chapter

Merry Christmas

December Newsletter 2017

## Kohler Madrigal Singers to perform at PTP Christmas party

The December 14<sup>th</sup> Christmas party is always one of our favorite People to People gatherings. We will say goodbye to our four Esslingen students who have been here since July, and we will enjoy the incredible music performed by the Kohler Madrigal Singers. It is always a special way to ring in the holiday season, and we look forward to a large attendance that night.



The menu for the evening will include a stuffed pork chop, baked chicken, parsley buttered potatoes, green beans Almandine, salad, rolls, and beverage. Ladies, please bring one dozen assorted Christmas cookies so that we can assemble a cookie plate for each table. Social hour begins at 5:30; dinner at 6:30; program at 7:30.

The cost of the dinner is \$16.00 per person. Please mail your checks to **Char Gumm, N6222 Woodland Rd., Sheboygan, 53083**. The deadline for reservations is **December 4**.

**The board will meet at 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 14th at the Elks Club. Please call Bob Quasius at 451-8565 if you need to be excused from the meeting.**

## Coming Events



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|---------------------|---|
| <b>Dec. 14</b>      | Chapter Christmas party at Elks Club                                    |
| <b>Jan. 11, '18</b> | Chapter meeting at Elks Club  |
| <b>Feb. 8, '18</b>  | Chapter meeting at Elks Club  |
| <b>Mar. 8, '18</b>  | Chapter meeting at Elks Club  |
| <b>Mar. 11</b>      | <b>Brat Fry at RCS Building</b>   |
| <b>Apr. 12</b>      | Chapter meeting at Elks Club  |
| <b>May 10</b>       | Chapter meeting at Elks Club  |
| <b>August 16</b>    | 5:30-8 PM – Thursday night picnic at the Howards Grove Community Center |

## A treat you will not want to miss



## Have you paid your 2018 dues?

Our treasurer, Rich Miesfeld, wants all dues paid by the December 14<sup>th</sup> chapter meeting. It is o.k. to bring your dues checks to the December meeting, or you can mail checks to Rich at 2047 Marion Lane, Sheboygan, 53083. Dues for 2018 will remain at \$35.00 for a family membership, or \$25.00 for a single membership.

When you send your check to Rich, please confirm your address, phone, and email address so that he can update his records.

**PTP** This newsletter is produced monthly for members of the Sheboygan, WI People to People Chapter, which is affiliated with People to People International. Newsletter items should be submitted by the **15<sup>th</sup> of the month** to Ann Keckonen, 1542 Golf View Dr. E., Sheboygan, WI 53083 or by Email to [akeckonen@charter.net](mailto:akeckonen@charter.net). Our website is [www.ptpsheboygan.org](http://www.ptpsheboygan.org)



## PTP meets U.S. State Dept.

Jon and Ann Keckonen met with members of the staff at the State Dept. in Washington D.C. on October 24 to discuss some of our concerns with getting proper documentation for our incoming exchange students. For several years it has been a difficult and time-consuming job to get the DS-2019 forms which are needed for our exchange students to obtain a J-1 Visa in order to study in the U.S. The Keckonens explained that we have a very small exchange program, and the fees we have to pay seem too high for the few students we have. Jon reports that they were pleased with the attentiveness of the staff who took many notes as they allotted more than an hour to address our chapter's concerns. Whether or not there will be any changes remains to be seen, but the meeting involved more time and people than they expected.

## Changes to Brat Fry fundraiser

Henry Schoen is willing to chair the brat fry again this year, but he needs help in replacing some very necessary chairpersons. Anna Schoen has retired as chairman of the wine and cheese raffle, and Esther Weiss has retired as chairman of the bake sale. This is a plea to all members – please call Henry at 451-9160 if you are willing & able to step into one of these positions.



**Because of the declining revenue in this area, the board decided to discontinue to flea market in 2018.** Instead, we are asking that each family make up a wine and cheese basket for the wine raffle. It can be large or small, elaborate or not, but it should contain a description of what is in the basket and its approximate value. We still need a volunteer to coordinate the wine raffle and arrange the baskets, but the job will be easier if each family contributes one basket of their own making. Anna will gladly answer any questions relating to the wine raffle position. The baskets can contain wine, cheese, crackers, gift certificates from one or more of your favorite venues, and/or souvenirs appropriate to the theme of your basket. If you start now, you have plenty of time to get an idea for your family's basket. Enjoy this new endeavor, and be creative!

## Tickets available in December

Henry Schoen will make sure he has the Brat Fry tickets available at the December 14<sup>th</sup> chapter meeting. Many people like to give them away as “stocking stuffers” or gifts to people at Christmastime whom you want to thank for extra special service. Each family is expected to sell 20 tickets (exchange families are asked to sell 75), and single members are asked to sell 10. You may pay for the tickets when you pick them up, or you may get your tickets and pay Henry after you have sold them. The main thing is to get them into the hands of people who are NOT members of our chapter by either selling them or giving them away. This is our means of encouraging the general public to attend our brat fry and support our fundraiser. The tickets sell for \$1.00 each, but 50 cents of that purchase can be used toward food or drink on the day of the brat fry, March 11. For that reason, it is easy to sell these tickets. They are a good value, and the Brat Fry is loads of fun.



## Students selected for exchange

We are happy to announce that we will have four students studying in Esslingen during the Spring semester, 2018. Those chosen to participate are Adam Domagalski, Reilley Horneck, Ben Barillas, and Amber Krause. Amber was not present when the photo was taken, so she is shown separately. We welcome the Domagalski, Horneck, and Barillas families to our chapter, as they



will be joining in order for their sons to participate in the exchange program. Amber Krause's family has been a member this past year because they are hosting Amber's exchange partner this semester, Emily Schwab.

## The origin of St. Nicholas



*Beth Hejl, former exchange student living in Germany, continues to entertain us with her blogs. This one is a repeat of one she wrote several years ago, but I am including it because of its timely nature. Also we have many new members who did not see this previously.*

## Sankt Nikolaus and his Shady Buddy

December 6th is Nikolaustag in many parts of the Western world. Children go to bed the night before after hanging their stockings at the fireplace or putting a pair of shoes (or boots, because they hold more) in front of

their doors, hoping for a visit from St. Nick, who will fill them with candy, treats, fruit, nuts, and perhaps a small gift.

This is another tradition that is mainly Catholic (most Protestant religions don't recognize saints). My clever Lutheran parents held off with the stocking thing until Christmas morning to buy themselves some extra minutes of sleep. When my brother and I woke up we could run downstairs to see the wrapped gifts under the tree, but we had to keep relatively quiet until our parents got up. We were, however, allowed to grab our stuffed stockings and unwrap, play with, or devour anything that was in there.

When my kids were young, I followed the German custom. They put their shoes in front of their bedroom doors when they went to bed, and St. Nick filled them with treats during the night.

Few children ever ask who St. Nick was. Well, I'm here to answer that question for my lucky readers.

There are actually several versions of the story, of course, but this one, which I learned from my Schwiegermutter, is my favorite.

Sankt Nikolaus is depicted as a bishop wearing a red miter and red cloak and carrying a shepherd's staff. He has gray hair and a flowing gray beard. He was the bishop of Myra, in modern-day Turkey, in the first half of the 4th century A.D. He was a kind and good man who cared for the less fortunate. A poor man in his community had three daughters who all had reached or were nearing marriageable age, but he had no money to provide a dowry for any of them. The girls were in danger of having to turn to lives of prostitution, because of course no man would marry a woman if her father had no money to give him. Nikolaus was wealthy and wanted to help, but secretly so as not to insult the father's pride. During the night while the family was sleeping, Nikolaus tossed three bags of coins one by one into their chimney as he passed by. The girls had washed their only pairs of socks the night before and had hung them at the fireplace to dry. Into these socks the bags of money fell, and when they awoke, the girls were delighted to see that they each now had enough money to marry.



Many American Christmas traditions come from Germany, and you can see some of them here: Santa Claus also wears red and has white hair and a beard, we hang our stockings at the fireplace

(if we have one), gifts are delivered secretly during the night... And it was German-American artist Thomas Nast who first gave us our image of Santa, which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in 1866.

Ah, but there's more. In Germany even today, Sankt Nikolaus doesn't travel alone. He's got a dark creepy companion who sloths behind him and scares the living pajezus out of children. This cad's name is Knecht Ruprecht, and you just don't want to mess with Servantboy Ruprecht. Like St. Nick, he carries a sack over his shoulder - but his isn't filled with toys. It's filled with the sad, now-repentant little hoodlum children who dissed their parents, sassd their teachers, or pulled the wings off butterflies in warmer months. That's right, Knecht Ruprecht's job is to gather up all the bad children and carry them away in his sack, never to be seen again by their loving parents. He carries a switch, too - a beating stick. The naughty little urchins get whacked before they're thrown into the dark sack and dragged away.



This side of the tale isn't just German (and in fact nowadays the Germans have toned down the frightening story), but rather widely known throughout Europe.

American kids get off easy in comparison! They just get threatened with empty stockings or pieces of coal if they're naughty around this time of year. But Germans have been scaring their children into behaving for generations with the help of the brothers Grimm, Max und Moritz, and stories like Suppenkasper and der Daumenlutscher, so the whole Knecht Ruprecht thing just fits right in.



At any rate, I wish you a happy Nikolaustag, and children, I surely hope you've been good!

 Merry  
Christmas