

Der Botschafter

(the messenger), a monthly newsletter.

United German-American Society of Florida, Inc. (UGASF)

December, 2017

This short newsletter is created to keep information flowing between board members, club members, and among clubs. Keep the communication open.

“German Heritage Day 2018.” The Central Florida German Society clubhouse in Casselberry was chosen for the next fest on Sunday, March 11, 2018.

This will be the 26th time we celebrate this fest. President Freiter wants all clubs to concentrate on selling tickets for this affair. Mention it at meetings and your club’s newsletters. Make copies of the flier and have them available for everyone who wants one. Get your neighbor and friends of the Germans interested. Perhaps we can get the German Gemuetlichkeit, (that we used to have in St Petersburg) back. The 2019 German Heritage Day celebration will depend on the outcome of this one.

Since I asked all UGASF member club’s presidents for info from their club’s activity for this newsletter, four answered and helped. Thank you. Yes, I know the rest of you are still thinking of helping.

So, I’ll give you a short story about Christkindl Markets in Germany:

All of Germany is excited with regards to the coming of Advent and Christmas time. Finally, the Christmas Market is open.

The Christmas Market began in the middle ages, in the mountains during the coldest winter season, to provide meat and winter time needs to carry the people through the winter. In the 1400’s came the need for nourishment and supplies. Products made by the Toymaker, Basket weaver and Sweets baker were allowed at the market for people to purchase, and joyfully for the children to receive Christmas gifts. It was believed the Christmas Market provided instant enjoyment. There were stands that sold chestnuts, nuts and almonds. In the year 1310 the first Nikolaus Market was held in Munich. In the year 1384, King Wenzel of Bautzen approved the holding of a free meat market on Saturdays starting on (Michaelstag) September 29 till Christmas. In time this became tradition in all German speaking lands. In the first half of the twentieth century the Christmas Market became a permanent part of the Christmas tradition. The larger commercial Christmas Markets are now held in November.

In the Protestant Church, markets held on the Sunday before Advent, known as Dead Sunday, one of the quietest days of the year, came with frequent criticisms. Therefore, most Christmas Markets begin on Monday after Dead Sunday or they remain closed on Sunday.

A typical Christmas Market with successful stands are setup in the middle of the town. Available for purchase are Christmas related items such as: baked goods and regional specialties, cookies, gingerbread, pancakes, Christstollen, assortment of sweets such as chocolate figurines and candies, roasted chestnuts and warm dining items. Also offered are warm drinks, such as Gluhwein, and punch to warm you. For many, the Christmas Market also provided a meeting place for work colleagues to meet after work and also to just bring people together.

Each region provides different regional products to sell that are unique to that area. At most Markets, you will find handmade wares for sale. At other Markets you will find lots of “made in China” items. Of all things, you can find Christmas ornaments, mangers, candles, smoker men and also **Schwibbogen**. At larger markets, all commercial stores are forbidden to sell their products. There are also markets where organizations also provide products for sale at booths. You might also see fictional or cultural programs at many markets.

For the children Nikolaus appears with his helpers or Santa Claus. The Christ child passes out gifts to the children. Horse drawn carriage rides are also provided. The manger and other figures are put on display. Also provided is a live manger with sheep, donkeys and goats. Then there’s the Drummer boy, as the cavalry for the Three Kings of the manger. In some towns, on the balconies of the City Hall, a manger might be put on display, or a Christmas concert might be provided.

For a special attraction, a large Christmas tree is put on display and a special lighting ceremony would take center stage after dark.

Christmas Markets are also provided outside of the city centers. Loved too are the markets in the Castles and Chateaus, Monasteries and Convents or city parks.

In Porta Westphalia, there is a market in a much-visited cave, a hall and a fern grotto. Crowd control is often needed at Christmas Markets.

Source: Das Fenster by Susanne Hunte.

Check out our web-site: UGASFlorida.org

If changes have to be made to your club's page then let Michele Kager know, and she will take care of it.

Merry Christmas

Martin Grum, editor

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