

**NEWSLETTER NR. 2  
FROM THE  
GERMAN GUN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION**

**July 2007**

**Another one this soon? Don't worry!**

This one is the exception to the rule for good reason. We all are inundated with bad news that comes our way in newspapers, magazines, TV, radio and websites.

**But we have good news and would like to share it with you.**

We told you this in the first newsletter: **PLEASE SEND US A REPLY RIGHT NOW, BUT ONLY IF YOU WANT TO TELL US THAT YOU DO NOT WANT TO GET THESE MAILINGS.**

**Not a single member asked us to take their name off the mailing list.**

The next day was like Christmas for us. We received all kinds of responses, all very positive and supportive, and we must share a few of them.

My daughter wrote that she liked the newsletter but also wrote, "Dad, you are wrong! The internet and the computer are not the future; they are the present," and she is right! But please accept that those of us who belong to the generation that came before the "baby boomers" are still struggling with computers and are at times not sure whether they are a curse or a blessing. I am most certainly aware of the fact that our Association would perhaps not even exist or have been able to accomplish many good things, in a relatively short time, if it were not for the computer and the internet. It also tells us that we need more baby boomers in our ranks, and even more so, their children.

The day after the Newsletter went out we had the following surprises:

- The first positive e-mail in support of the new Newsletter came from a member who is now Executive Director of the NRA Foundation.
- A life member of our Association called, offered his help as an officer or director and donated the money for buying a new computer monitor for Sabrina, our secretary.
- Another long-time member called and told us that his family was having a get-together with their father who is advanced in age, and that he owns more than 10 German and Austrian guns. He plans to have every family member except for the 6-month-old baby hold one of these guns and take their pictures. We plan to have them in an upcoming Bulletin Board or Journal. He also reported that his favorite gun was made by Simson in Suhl. We sent the Simson story from a previous Journal to him right away.
- Another long-time member called to let us know that he would be willing to become our treasurer. This offer is now in the hands of our Executive Committee.

All this and more happened in one day. You will hear more details in future publications. We thank all those who gave us donations and bought raffle tickets. We are closing the books on the first half year and know that, with your help, we have covered all our expenses.

The second reason for this newsletter is, to wish all of you an inspiring and reflective Independence Day. Jim Cate, incorporator, member and author of two books on Sauer (and working on the third), sent an inspiring article that you will find as an attachment. We all have a lot to be thankful for, but even more so, my family and I. In a time when immigration is in the news and is dividing Congress and the American public, I want to tell you the story of one immigrant and hope that it will not bore you.

I was almost 16 years old when American troops arrived in Suhl and World War II ended shortly thereafter. My grandfather, Franz Jaeger, had a business in New York City at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>

century. He met my grandmother there and their first son, Paul Jaeger, was born there. America was the “promised land” for us. We had great hopes for the future and right away tried to get in touch with Paul Jaeger, who had emigrated to the U.S. in 1929. But due to the agreements made by the Allies, our part of Germany was turned over to the Russians. After I had graduated from high school and served a short apprenticeship as an actioner and stock maker, I had only one thing in mind: to escape the repressive Communist rule.

Fortunately, the Iron Curtain was still porous and the wall in Berlin had not yet been built. I took a train to Berlin and took the subway to the American sector of the divided city. Coming up the steps from the subway station, the many refugees that arrived daily were taken by bus to one of the airfields that were used for what was called “Luftbrücke”, a bridge in the sky. Some of you may have seen the program that was recently shown on public television which told the history of this fantastic effort.

British planes brought coal to Berlin and took refugees out. I was on one of these flights, sitting on foldout benches and arriving in the British sector of Germany covered with coal dust, looking like a chimney sweep. That ended the first part of my dash to freedom.

Paul Jaeger, my uncle who owned a prospering gun business in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania had written to General LeMay at the headquarters of the American Air force in Wiesbaden, Germany, asking where his nephew could get a job as a gunsmith. Germans were not allowed to own any guns at that point in time. The answer came that I should report to the Wiesbaden Rod & Gun Club and that I would be given a job. This I did, and thus began my career as a gunsmith in the Free World.

When I left this job to open a business with another uncle, Kurt Jaeger, the commanding officer gave me the letter of recommendation that is attached. You might think that I like to make up stories, but what follows is true!

A few weeks ago I received an e-mail inquiry from an air force pilot whose grandfather had been stationed in Germany and left him some guns made by Kurt Jaeger. He wanted to know whether that company still existed. I looked at the name under the letter and it rang a bell. This was the name of the commanding officer at the Wiesbaden Rod & Gun Club. I searched old records for quite a while, found the letter of recommendation, and it confirmed that this was the same last name. His son confirmed that he was indeed the right man, that his father had passed away a few years ago, and that he inherited these rifles. He lives in California and will come to the Beinfeld Show in January in Las Vegas.

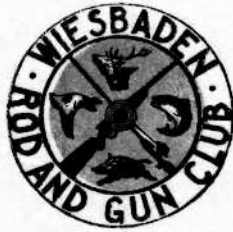
Since my uncle in America had let me know of his interest to bring me to America, I had applied for an immigration visa like so many others. In 1952 I was informed that my visa was approved, and in the same week I was notified by a German engineering school that I could begin my studies there. What to do? Due to the Cold War tensions and the closeness of the Iron Curtain, I leaned toward America, but I also had a girlfriend whom I hated to leave. I called her and put her on the spot, telling her that I could go to America but would not go without her. She agreed that we would get married and this way she could come along under my Visa.

In March of 1952 we sailed for America on the old Il de France out of Le Havre. Six or 7 days later we passed the Statue of Liberty. We were picked up by my uncle and regarded the new world with awe. Fifty-five years later I am still thankful that we had the opportunity and privilege to come to America, a new homeland for us, two children and three grandchildren.

Despite all troubles and tribulations, we cherish the freedom afforded to us by the Constitution and the laws of the land, and these are, in my view, the most important assets for the future of our country.

Have an inspiring and reflective Independence Day  
Dietrich and Sabrina

This newsletter was prepared in our central office in New Hampshire which can be reached by E-mail to our secretary at [Sabrina@germanguns.net](mailto:Sabrina@germanguns.net) or [jaeger@valley.net](mailto:jaeger@valley.net), or by phone at 603-469-3438.



Wiesbaden, Germany  
APO 633, USAF

9 March 1950

SUBJECT: Letter of Recommendation.

TO: Whom it may concern.

This is to certify that Mr Dietrich A p e l, has been employed under my supervision as a Master-Gunsmith since June 1949.

Mr Apel has shown keen interest in his work and his workmanship has been of the highest quality. Mr Apel intelligence appears to be above average and if given an opportunity to further his education, it is the opinion of the undersigned that he is capable, willing, and will make the most out of this opportunity.

JOE L. FERNANDES  
Captain, USAF  
12111-A  
Club Officer

*Class A Affiliated Club*  
NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Unless you know all four stanzas of the Star Spangled Banner you may find this most interesting. Perhaps most of you didn't realize what Francis Scott Key's profession was or what he was doing on a ship. This is a good brush-up on your history.

(Editor's Note- Near the end of his life, the great science fiction author Isaac Asimov wrote a short story about the four stanzas of our national anthem. However brief, this well-circulated piece is an eye opener from the dearly departed doctor.....) " I have a weakness -- I am crazy, absolutely nuts, about our national anthem. The words are difficult and the tune is almost impossible, but frequently when I'm taking a shower I sing it with as much power and emotion as I can. It shakes me up every time."

NO REFUGE COULD SAVE : BY DR. ISAAC ASIMOV

I was once asked to speak at a luncheon. Taking my life in my hands, I announced I was going to sing our national anthem -- all four stanzas. This was greeted with loud groans. One man closed the door to the kitchen , where the noise of dishes and cutlery was loud and distracting. "Thanks, Herb," I said.

"That's all right," he said. "It was at the request of the kitchen staff"

I explained the background of the anthem and then sang all four stanzas. Let me tell you, those people had never heard it before -- or had never really listened. I got a standing ovation. But it was not me; it was the anthem.

More recently, while conducting a seminar, I told my students the story of the anthem and sang all four stanzas. Again there was a wild ovation and prolonged applause. And again, it was the anthem and not me.

So now let me tell you how it came to be written.

In 1812, the United States went to war with Great Britain , primarily over freedom of the seas. We were in the right. For two years, we held off the British, even though we were still a rather weak country. Great Britain was in a life and death struggle with Napoleon. In fact, just as the United States declared war, Napoleon marched off to invade Russia . If he won, as everyone expected, he would control Europe, and Great Britain would be isolated. It was no time for her to be involved in an American war.

At first, our seamen proved better than the British. After we won a battle on Lake Erie in 1813, the American commander, Oliver Hazard Perry, sent the message, "We have met the enemy and they are ours." However, the weight of the British navy beat down our ships eventually. New England , hard-hit by a tightening blockade, threatened secession.

Meanwhile, Napoleon was beaten in Russia and in 1814 was forced to abdicate. Great Britain now turned its attention to the United States, launching a three-pronged attack.

The northern prong was to come down Lake Champlain toward New York and seize parts of New England .

The southern prong was to go up the Mississippi , take New Orleans and paralyze the west.

The central prong was to head for the mid-Atlantic states and then attack Baltimore , the greatest port south of New York . If Baltimore was taken, the nation, which still hugged the Atlantic coast, could be split in two. The fate of the United States , then , rested to a large extent on the success or failure of the central prong.

The British reached the American coast, and on August 24, 1814, took Washington , D.C. Then they moved up the Chesapeake Bay toward Baltimore . On September 12, they arrived and found 1,000 men in Fort McHenry , whose guns controlled the harbor. If the British wished to take Baltimore , they would have to take the fort.

On one of the British ships was an aged physician, William Beanes, who had been arrested in Maryland and brought along as a prisoner. Francis Scott Key, a lawyer and friend of the physician, had come to the ship to negotiate his release.

The British captain was willing, but the two Americans would have to wait. It was now the night of September 13, and the bombardment of Fort McHenry was about to start.

As twilight deepened, Key and Beanes saw the American flag flying over Fort McHenry . Through the night, they heard bombs bursting and saw the red glare of rockets. They knew the fort was resisting and the American flag was still flying. But toward morning the bombardment ceased, and a dread silence fell. Either Fort McHenry had surrendered and the British flag flew above it, or the bombardment had failed and the American flag still flew.

As dawn began to brighten the eastern sky, Key and Beanes stared out at the fort, trying to see which flag flew over it. He and the physician must have asked each other over and over, "Can you see the flag?"

After it was all finished, Key wrote a four stanza poem telling the events of the night. Called "The Defense of Fort McHenry ," it was published in newspapers and swept the nation. Someone noted that the words fit an old English tune called, "To Anacreon in Heaven" -- a difficult melody with an uncomfortably large vocal range. For obvious reasons, Key's work became known as "The Star Spangled Banner," and in 1931 Congress declared it the official anthem of the United States .

Now that you know the story, here are the words. Presumably, the old doctor is speaking. This is what he asks Key:

Oh! say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?  
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.  
Oh! say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave,  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

("Ramparts," in case you don't know, are the protective walls or other elevations that surround a fort.) The first stanza asks a question. The second gives an answer:

On the shore, dimly seen thro' the mist of the deep  
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,  
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,  
In full glory reflected, now shines on the stream  
'Tis the star-spangled banner. Oh! long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

"The towering steep" is again, the ramparts. The bombardment has failed, and the British can do nothing more but sail away, their mission a failure. In the third stanza I feel Key allows himself to gloat over the American triumph. In the aftermath of the bombardment, Key probably was in no mood to act otherwise? During World War I when the British were our staunchest allies, this third stanza was not sung. However, I know it, so here it is:

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore  
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion  
A home and a country should leave us no more?  
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.  
No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave,  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

(The fourth stanza, a pious hope for the future, should be sung more slowly than the other three and with even deeper feeling):

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation,  
Blest with victory and peace, may the Heaven - rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.  
Then conquer we must, for our cause is just,  
And this be our motto -- "In God is our trust."  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

I hope you will look at the national anthem with new eyes. Listen to it, the next time you have a chance, with new ears. Pay attention to the words. And don't let them ever take it away ... not even one word of it.

AND IT'S SUNG IN ENGLISH!!!