

DEUTSCHER CLUB HISTORY



On September 30, 1935, a group of men established a German Club to keep their heritage and culture alive. They first met in Nick Grünwald's Delicatessen Store in Rahway and soon the first official meeting was held at the Greven's Hotel in Rahway. Karl Kummer was elected as the first president and the name "Deutscher Club of Rahway" was adopted.

Present were the following, besides Nick:

Ludwig Gassmann, William Degenhardt, Hermann Klenner, Anton Horling, Karl Kummer, Hugo Müller, William Tröbling, Joseph Rack, to be followed by Oscar Rodig, Bernard Hitzler and Louis Grubel.

Shortly thereafter, their ladies joined them and the Club grew to a membership of 100. All enjoyed the activities, such as Easter egg hunts and Christmas parties with gifts for children from Santa, New Year's Eve parties, picnics, movies and lectures.

During the early 1940's, the club moved into Eagle's Hall in Rahway to support its increasing membership. When World War II began, many of the members were not American Citizens. John Barger, Mayor of Rahway (whose grandparents were German), received special thanks for his efforts in creating an atmosphere of German-American patriotism and fostering an excellent relationship within the community.

In 1950, the Deutscher Club decided to purchase a Club House to support its ever-growing membership. The members had the foresight to select an old Farm House located on acres of land, with abundant trees and adjacent to a reservoir. Their dedication, skill and hard work transformed this "Ole House" into a beautifully

enlarged Club House with a Manager's apartment. The work was completed in 1969, financed by selling certificates of indebtedness to members and it was called "Waldeslust". The Manager couple, Gottfried and Sigrid Monschke, whose hard work and dedication was a tremendous credit to the club, moved into the apartment

The first president, Karl Kummer, was succeeded by the following: Ludwig Gassmann, Karl Jacobi, Anton Horling, Franz Papen, Karl Ilg, Bruno Baum, John Münster, John Bohlen, Max Schöne, Lutz Weber, Roland Schaller, Horst Stabenau, Hans Weilandt, Kurt Fuchs, Walter Lehmann and our current president, Ursula Weuste.

At one time the club had its own Singing Group, Stamp Club, Soccer Team and Ski Club. All now inactive, but since 1980 the Skat players have met weekly and used to hold yearly tournaments.

The Ladies Division, first founded in 1955, was activated again in 1979, with Inge Kummer Gates as its first president. Over the years, the ladies have organized card parties, fashion shows and other cultural events, such as: Christkindlmarkt (Christmas Market). The proceeds from these events have enabled the Ladies Division to help beautify the club and make donations towards large purchases. The current president is Gretel Cenegy.

A special mention should be made of the Deutscher Club Blood Bank, which was started in the late 1960's. The bi-annual blood drive gives the club a ready reserve for its members and their families.

In 1973 the club's name was changed to "Deutscher Club of Clark, Inc.", and the by-laws were introduced.

In August of 1978, after some planning and designing, a new club flag was proudly dedicated.

In an effort to advance the German culture and education, the Deutscher Club financially supports many organizations, school and other cultural institutions, locally and nationally. Annual scholarships are provided for college bound students, who continue with the German language, culture and history. This fund is called the 'Karl Kummer Scholarship Fund' in memory of the first president.

A 'Miss Deutscher Club', is selected every year, at our 'Waldfest' (Fathers Day) picnic. She represents the club at many occasions. Such as the Steuben Parade, Picnics and many other club events.

Every year in September club members participate in the Steuben Parade. Buses will transport a marching delegation, including a guest band from Germany, from the Deutscher Club in Clark to 5th avenue in New York City. The following day the club celebrates its traditional 'Deutscher Tag' picnic in Clark. Members and guests enjoy German food, music, and 'German Gemütlichkeit' in the large grove, while being entertained by a guest band from Germany.

Since 1995, there have been quite a few changes. After the acquisition of land along the reservoir from the Middlesex water Co., plans were made to build a new 'Imbisshalle' (Food stand). To make room for that, the playground was relocated and some new equipment was added. In May 1997, Member Eduard Schielke grilled the first Bratwurst in the new Food stand. The old food stands were removed to make room for a "Festhalle" (Pavilion). The first step was taken in August of 1997, by installing posts and a roof. A blacktop floor and a dance floor together with a bandstand were completed in May of 1998. Various members donated the tables and benches. The parking lot was increased and paved. A new fence was erected along the entire length of the reservoir. The parking lot was increased and paved. In 2000, a new shed was built in which equipment, necessary for the care of the grounds can be stored. The next project was the complete remodeling of the former manager's apartment into a meeting room and offices for the executive Board members. The next phase was the kitchen renovation and in November 2001, the old utility building was demolished and a foundation for a new one was laid.

During the winter months, the inside work was done to have everything completed for the start of the 2002 picnic season. The new building houses storage rooms, the beer cooler, toilets used at all outdoor events, and Ratskeller. After completion of this addition, a Grand Opening was held in July 2003. The Westside façade received a new facelift, in addition to a new walkway along its entire length shortly thereafter. A new driveway was build with a beautiful landscaping added to the club entrance. In the fall of 2006 new carpet was installed in the ballroom and tiles placed around the outside bar area. New wallpaper was hung in the ballroom and the Ladies Bathroom was remodeled in 2007.

However, improvements and maintenance continues throughout the years. These achievements are only possible due to the generous donations of time and money by our members.

The Deutscher Club will continue to be an “Oasis for German-Americans in New Jersey”. Due to the dedication of the Executive Board and its members, we can all be proud of what has been accomplished.

In 2007 our first female president, Ursula Weuste was elected.

We Remember with Gratitude the Honorary Presidents

MAX SCHÖNE deceased
LUTZ WEBER deceased
ROLAND SCHALLER deceased
HORST STABENAU
HANS WEILANDT deceased
KURT FUCHS deceased
WALTER LEHMANN