

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

Volume XXVII, Number 30 *A parish in the classical Anglican tradition* August 16th 2016

FROM THE RECTOR

Tragedy repeats itself as farce, or vice versa

In the days when an Iron Curtain cut the Soviet Bloc off from everywhere else, Western journalists assigned to cover East Germany were usually obliged to travel to Leipzig for the twice yearly trade fair to meet with the country's top brass.

The *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* restricted Western journalists' access to the cadres who headed one of the world's most repressive regimes to events surrounding the fair. This enabled the cash-strapped communists to shake down the free world's press for much needed dollars by charging usurious prices for scruffy hotel rooms, ill-prepared food and mandatory *betreueren*, a word loosely translated as "facilitators," but more accurately as "government snoops."

The East Germans actually had the gall to charge us for the privilege of being spied upon!

Another benefit for the regime was information control: When hundreds of journalists were all vying to interview the same few people, it was less obvious that toothless pussycats were being singled out to ask questions rather than correspondents with real teeth and claws.

In any event, on the eve of the fair's opening it was the "tradition" for the foreign press to be entertained to a bean feast in the Leipzig Zoological Gardens' elegant reception hall. Tables groaned under piles of sausages, shimmering smoked fish, vast heaps of ham, flotillas of smoked eel, and, lo and behold, even a lobster or two.

Our hosts were represented not only by the great of the land, but by the *lumpenproletariat* of East German journalism – often folks with only the most tenuous connections with the trade: in-laws, ex-wives, second cousins, third cousins thrice removed, and secret policemen assigned to monitor the country's newsrooms.

After the socialist equivalent of grace before meat, experienced Western news hands held back. A move toward the groaning boards would invite a stomping by hundreds of East German boots whose wearers were bent on grabbing a share of goodies never seen on the sparsely stocked shelves of the public grocery stores.

By the time the ravening hordes retired from the fray – bruised, battered, but still contentedly chewing – little was left for the Westerners but a couple of tattered lettuce leaves and an occasional lobster shell, licked quite clean of contents. Those of us who remembered wartime rationing found it hard to resent these bouts of gluttony. Food of that quality was reserved only for the upper most party members .

Next day the fair kicked off with a press conference presided over by Horst Soeller, Minister of Trade, and the unprepossessing Gerhardt Beil, Secretary for Foreign Trade. Hundreds of journalists, packed like sardines into a stifling hall, bereft of even a hint of air-conditioning, breathlessly awaited the first question.

It was "traditionally" asked by the chief correspondent of *Neues Deutschland*, the East German Communist Party newspaper. Portentously, he would ease himself from his seat and raise his hand. Graciously, Minister Soeller would recognize him.

The *Neues Deutschland* man would then nervously clear his throat and ask a question roughly as follows: "Colleague Minister [*East Germans didn't call each other 'comrade'*], we know our machine tool industry is extremely wonderful . . . How much more wonderful will it be next year?"

He would then resume his seat with an air of such triumph that it evoked Perry Mason impeaching the District Attorney's star witness.

After a pregnant pause, Minister Soeller would approach the microphone and unctuously reply: "Very, very much more wonderful." At this, the entire East German press corps

would burst into prolonged applause, before carefully recording his answer in their notebooks.

Meanwhile the Western press corps would sit in embarrassed silence at this involuntary exhibition of toadying, thanking our lucky stars that we would soon be returning to free societies where we were free to treat contemptible people with contempt.

In those days, Western journalists rarely applauded anyone – especially not politicians, not even those whose policies appealed to us. It simply wasn't professional.

These memories of times long past sprang to mind while I was watching a televised press conference by the Clinton presidential campaign. During the course of it, the representatives of the Fourth Estate actually burst into spontaneous applause as Mrs. Clinton outlined her political platform.

It was Leipzig Fair all over again – except these folks' unprofessional behavior was voluntary, not because the secret police were watching.

Please do not take this as criticism of Mrs. Clinton. She didn't ask for it, and it's doubtful she expected it. But it says

Parish Prayer List

Our Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, ring the parish office on 410 560 6776.

FOR RECOVERY: Hilarie, Phyllis, Edie, Bill, Alan, Terry, Helen, Jim, Adele, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Aida, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Eunice, Tom, Robert, David, Jan, Susie, Beth, Sophia, Bobby, Lee, Pam, Warren, Cary, Courtney & Marie.

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Melba, Scott, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Ned, Cindy

IN MEMORIAM: Helen Delich Bentley

FOR THOSE WHO MOURN:

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes; Lt Cdr Emma Hawkins, RN

a great deal about our nation's media. These days, more often than not, the media no longer presents us with a picture of the world as it is, but, like *Neues Deutschland*, with a picture of things as it wants us to see them.

The media used to be considered the guardian of our democracy. But it has become not just a player, but, increasingly, a king-maker. And this, in times of a lockstep, politicized media, portends baleful consequences not only for our democracy, but for the news organizations themselves.

It matters not whether we are Democrat or Republican, if we can't trust the media to play honest in the realm of politics, how can we trust it about anything else?

Few newspapers these days make a profit, and earnings in other news outlets are far from robust. Serve them – and us – right if eventually the only things we are left with are supermarket tabloids and TV cartoon networks! GPH✘

Ladies lunch on August 17th

This month the Ladies Who Lunch will meet at Peppermill at 12:00 noon Wednesday, August 17. TT Why not join us for a convivial get-together over a delicious meal? Good food and good fellowship – what more could you want?

Please ring Sara Douglas (at Tel: 410 560 9026) if you are able to attend; she will need a final count by Monday the 13th in order to place the reservation.

FROM THE TREASURER

Pity the poor treasurer!

“Are there no work houses? Are there no prisons?” that was Ebenezer Scrooge’s to people who begged him for alms at Christmas time. But I hope it won’t be your response to your church treasurer’s annual summertime plea.

The trouble is that folks cast all cares aside when they go away vacation and among the cares they cast aside are all

thoughts of poor church treasurers struggling to make ends meet with no pledge money coming in.

Parishioners go on vacation. Church treasurers get to go on vacation too – but only if they are up-to-date with the bills. And, sad to relate, bills never take a holiday.

Please do me a favor and bring your pledges up to date before you go away. That way I can take care of the bills and go away myself. Scrooge would say: “Bah! Humbug!” Personally, I’d much rather say: “Have a great vacation.”

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

We need help badly

The Sunday School is in desperate need of people to assist with the nursery during the 9:15 AM service. Current mothers, experienced mothers, stepmothers, mothers to be, foster mothers and men who mother, many hands make light work. Please consider stepping forward and signing up for the rotation. Look for the sign up form in the Church lobby. DIANE NOVICKI

St Stephen’s Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093

Office: 410 560 6776 · **Rectory:** 410 665 1278

Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Ven. Canon Guy P Hawtin, *Rector*

The Ven. Michael Kerouac, *Vicar* · The Rev. Michael Belt,
The Rev. John Novicki, The Rev. Robert Ludwig, *Associate Rectors*

The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, *Pastoral Care Chaplain*
Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8am: Said Eucharist

9.15am: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)

11am: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

6pm: Choral Evensong (as announced) –
evensong.ststeve.com

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30pm: Bridge Club

Tuesday, 7am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)

Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday August 17th, 12.00 PM

Peppermill

Weekly Silly Summer Suppers

Wednesday August 17th, 6.30 PM

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

St Stephen’s Anglican Church
11856 Mays Chapel Road
Timonium, MD 21093

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