



This newsletter is a publication of Sister Cities of Arlington, Texas

www.arlingtontx.gov/sistercity/index.html

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2011

NO. 15

ATTENTION

Would you consider hosting a German exchange student? There are over 50 talented German students looking for families to stay with while they attend one or both junior year semesters in high school here in the North Texas area. If you would consider opening your home and sharing our culture and customs with a student, please contact me or go to www.cci-exchange.org.

Karen Mullins
Center for Cultural Interchange
celebrating 25 years of cultural exchange!
Area Representative
Arlington, Texas
817.300.7835
mullinsd@sbcglobal.net

GREETINGS, DEAR BK FRIENDS –

Happy New Year All! I trust you survived this month's winter storm and are looking forward to spring and the planning of our trip to Bad Königshofen, Germany. Please mark your calendars now and **SAVE THE DATE: Noon, Saturday, February 26, at Spring Creek Barbecue (3608 S. Cooper)** for our next Sister Cities of Arlington, Texas General Membership Meeting. We plan to have information about our Bad Königshofen trip available to share with you at that time.

Another major item on our agenda will be the election of our new board for 2011. I have enjoyed serving as your first President this past year under our new bylaws, and I am pleased with our many accomplishments, in particular the submittal of our final package to the IRS to receive our official 501c3 designation. This is a major milestone for our organization. **We owe a BIG Thank You to Martha Liehse and Steve Kilpatrick, CPA, for their dedication in seeing this project through to completion.**

It is with sincere sympathy that we note the passing of former Mayor of Arlington Tom Vandergriff on December 30, 2010. As Bad Königshofen Bürgermeister Thomas Helbling wrote in his letter of condolence to the Vandergriff family, Mayor Cluck and the residents of Arlington, "It was during Mayor Tom Vandergriff's term of office that the foundation was laid for the partnership of the cities Arlington and Bad Königshofen. He made it possible for Bad Königshofen's City Manager Kurt Zühlke, during a visit in Arlington, to make local contacts and to launch an aid campaign for his economically suffering hometown in that post-War era. ... I see it as evidence of the personal greatness of Mr. Vandergriff that at that difficult time in history he threw a bridge over to the country that had been an enemy and showed such kindness to the residents there."

Sister Cities of Arlington, Texas will continue, with pride, to honor Tom Vandergriff and his

family members through our sister cities organization initiatives, especially during this 60th Anniversary of the partnership and on into the future, following the lead of a man who acted locally and envisioned globally, even in 1951.

Shelia Gibson
President, Sister Cities of Arlington, Texas

IN BAD KÖNIGSHOFEN

By Martha Liehse

There's lots of historic preservation news to report about from our sister city.

We've told you before about the renovated 17th century building in Bad Königshofen that is now called the Culture Arsenal and Partnership House. Extensive renovations have been completed, the building has new furnishings inside, and its official dedication will take place in March. The building began its "life" as the town's arsenal and will now host cultural events. It will also house a permanent display about the Arlington/Bad Königshofen sister cities partnership. The local historical society, under the leadership of Hanns Friedrich, is hard at work with plans for that special display.

One event already held in this historic building, just this past December, was a presentation by Mr. Günter Schunk, who was born in Bad Königshofen but now resides in southern Bavaria. He has dedicated many years of his retirement to a special research project that resulted in his putting together a computer animation presentation that allows the audience to take a virtual walk around old Königshofen as it looked when the city wall still existed. He spent countless hours studying old drawings and historic records in museums and archives, and he photographed and measured Bad Königshofen's oldest buildings.

Bad Königshofen is now holding discussions with the county and the historical society about how to preserve and make accessible to the public the only remaining city gate. It was one of four gates in Königshofen's city wall, was built in 1581 and is now on private property.

The owner of the property also values its preservation.

We have heard that former Mayor Clemens Behr has not been idle in his retirement. Pursuing his interest in music and history, he recently completed the publication of a collection of traditional town songs from the whole "Grabfeld." ("Grabfeld" is the name of the geographic region where Bad Königshofen is located and stretches from that northern area of Bavaria into southern Thüringen.) He collected over 100 songs from 77 towns. During his work on the project he discovered that a few towns did not have a song, so they wrote songs reflecting their history and traditions.

FEATURE STORY

German Jews in China

By Klaus Driessen

During the month of November 2010 my wife Patty and I had the opportunity to travel to China. I have always wanted to go to China especially to visit the Jewish Community in Shanghai. During WW II my mother hid a Jewish lady in Vienna for over 4 years. During this time the Jewish woman tried to leave Austria and go overland to China. Many other Jews tried to escape Europe by going overland to China. Shanghai was an open city at this time and did not have any restrictions on immigration and therefore was a place of refuge for Jews trying to escape the persecution of the Nazis. The Jewish woman applied for a "protective" passport and was issued one but was turned back at the Austrian Hungarian border. Then all she could do was go into hiding.

Over 18,000 Jews immigrated to China between 1930 and 1940 and mainly to the port city of Shanghai. The district today is known as the Hongkou District. The number of Jews that came to Shanghai during this period equaled the number of Jews fleeing to Austria, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa combined. Shanghai was a "safe haven." By

1941 over 20,000 European Jews had fled to Shanghai.



Outside the Synagogue and Museum in Shanghai, China



This is a picture of the flags representing the countries from where Jews have come to settle in

The district today is still very much alive. The Synagogue in Shanghai is very active. There are other synagogues located in Beijing and Hong Kong. The German Jewish Community is very much alive and prospering in China. Our tour guide was Chinese but spoke fluent German. He had learned it from his parents who had fled Germany during the war. I was truly amazed to find German being spoken in China. What a great legacy for the Chinese people who took in refugees when no one else in the world would have them.

THE PARTNERSHIP GOES ON

By Martha Liehse

With the passing of Tom Vandergriff we have lost the last of those who were instrumental in

the founding of the Arlington/Bad Königshofen partnership.

The series of events leading to Arlington's adoption of Bad Königshofen in 1951 actually began when Arlington resident Theda Howell started a pen pal friendship with Irene von Falkenried of Marburg, Germany in the late 1940s. Unfortunately none of those letters appear to have survived.

In 1951, Irene joined a study tour of the U.S. along with other German educators and government officials. The last stop on the tour was on the Texas Christian University campus in Fort Worth, a short drive from Arlington where Irene's American pen pal friend, Theda, lived. The opportunity for the two young women to finally meet face to face was too exciting to ignore. The decision was an easy one, but Irene hesitated to make the short trip to Arlington alone.

Another member of the tour group was Königshofen's City Manager Kurt Zühlke, who agreed to accompany her for the visit. While in Arlington, Mr. Zühlke was introduced to the newly elected Mayor Tom Vandergriff and other community leaders during which he communicated to them the serious situation in Königshofen. Hundreds of refugees from the communist East had arrived in their town and there was an extreme shortage of food, clothing and medical supplies.

After Mr. Zühlke's return to Germany, Mayor Vandergriff, who was also a leader of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, wrote a letter dated September 17 to Königshofen's Mayor Lurz telling him of Arlington's decision to aid their town. Through the efforts of the Arlington Chamber and City leaders, local businesses, churches, community groups and many individuals, four shipments of aid were eventually sent. The townspeople in Königshofen accepted the aid as a true sign of friendship from across the ocean. And so with memories still fresh in the minds of those who once found themselves on opposite sides of a fiercely fought war, the people of two small towns, Bad Königshofen and Arlington, united in a common bond of brotherhood.

This year, as we celebrate 60 years of a strong sister cities partnership between Arlington and Bad Königshofen, we will be remembering all of those individuals for their early contributions to the wonderful friendship we enjoy today.



Photo by Jim Stiebing

Our group combined its December meeting with a Christmas tree decorating party at the Arlington Museum of Art's Festival of Trees.

SPRECHEN SIE ENGLISCH?

By Fred Weekley (*that's pronounced Veeklee*)

After Lynda had struggled through three trips to our sister city, and I had struggled through two, we decided it might make our upcoming visit to Bad Königshofen more enjoyable if we could speak at least a little German. We thought it might be nice to do something other than just stand there with a dumb smile on our face when greeted by someone. Or be able to order from a menu without pointing and hoping. We're slow to catch on, but after a while, we finally get it.

So, thanks to the University of Texas at Arlington's Continuing Education program, we signed up for a once-a-week class in Introductory German. Our professor is Bernhard Kainerstorfer.

Our first class was somewhat confusing since, alas, the University's book store did not have a sufficient supply of the textbooks. So, we sat there somewhat dumbfounded as the class was led through the first "dialogue" in the text – which we had no way of reading.

I use that as my excuse (Lynda will have to come up with her own) for not immediately catching on to the phrase, "*Wie geht es Ihnen?*" I'm sure that if I had just had a textbook in front of me that first night, I would have both understood the phrase and pronounced it perfectly. (Now that I have the textbook, I no longer have an excuse, but that's another story.)

Anyway, for those of you who would like to converse with our German friends when we arrive in Bad Königshofen, let me educate you concerning that phrase. In the first place, the word "*Wie*" is pronounced "*Vie*," the word "*geht*" is pronounced "*gate*," and the word "*Ihnen*" is pronounced "*een un*." The glorious thing about the phrase, linguistically, is that the word "*es*" is pronounced "*es*." So, you can see how easy the phrase is to pronounce once you've had it explained to you.

Now the next question is what in the world does it mean? And according to the newly acquired textbook, it literally means, "How goes it with you?" As a practical matter, it's the Germans' relatively complicated way of asking "How are you?" We have now attended our third week of class, and we still have not conquered "*Wie geht es Ihnen?*" or the proper response thereto which is either, "*Es geht mir gut, danke*," meaning "It goes well with me, thank you," or "*Nicht so gut. Ich habe Kopfschmerzen*" (Not so good. I have a headache.)

You can see how difficult it is for Lynda and me to learn the simplest German phrases; and you may also suspect that Professor Kainerstorfer may appear frustrated at times.

But alas, Lynda and I are not the only students giving Professor Kainerstorfer cause to wonder why he attempts to teach this course. We have a rather full class of GSLs (German as a Second Language). There are a total of twenty-one of us (and no, I don't know how to say that in German), including two of your officers, Shelia Gibson and Eric English.

This past Monday we attended Class Number Three (*drei*, if you're into the German numbering system), at which time Professor Kainerstorfer tried to pound into our heads the lessons we were supposed to have learned in the first two classes and attempted to move us along, assuming we had actually learned the first two lessons. He already has complained that some of our verbal responses to his questions are either (i) in English, (ii) in Spanish, or (iii) wholly un-intelligible.

Editor: Lynda Freeman
lyndaathomenow@aol.com
Asst. Editor: Martha Liehse
Contributors: Martha Liehse
Shelia Gibson
Klaus Driessen
Fred Weekley

All of our efforts, of course, will be without actual class credit, for the University doesn't appear to believe this class should qualify for a graduate level degree program. Nor do the students believe they should be subjected to taking an actual exam. We may get a certificate of some sort when the class is over, but only if we attend 80% of the classes. (And who says there's grade inflation in colleges today?)

Anyway, Lynda is yelling at me that it's time to study for next Monday's class. We try to bounce questions in German off each other, just for kicks.

So, ***auf Wiedersehen, Ya'!!!***

Editor's Note. In case you think that our difficulty in learning German has anything to do with a lack of qualification on the part of our teacher, you may want to "Google" Bernhard Kainerstorfer

NEWS

2011 Membership Dues are Due

Now is the time to pay your 2011 membership dues if you have not already done so. A current membership is one of the requirements for joining us on our Bad Königshofen trip this year. For your convenience, we have attached the membership form with this newsletter. Mail the form and your check to the address shown on the form or bring them with you to our February 26 meeting. With 2011 being the 60th Anniversary of our partnership with Bad Königshofen, you will not want to miss being included in our celebration plans.