



NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2008

NO. 8

IN ARLINGTON

Frohe Weihnachten! Merry Christmas!
Maybe I'm a little early but let me be the first to wish you a happy holiday season.

Several years ago I took a group of students to Germany. One of the young boys in the group bought a very nice present for his mother and had it wrapped for Christmas. When we were going through the security control, one of the officers asked the young man what he had in the wrapped present. He told them it was a gift for his mother. They immediately started to rip open the package. I intervened and asked what the problem was. They told me that the young man had told them he was bringing poison for his mother. The word for poison in German is gift. They thought he was trying to smuggle poison into the country to kill his mother. When you come back from Germany the next time, be sure to remember to bring back presents not gifts.

Christmas in Germany and America is a very special time of year for children as well as adults. Germans put up their Christmas trees usually on the 24th of December. The tree is decorated by the family. Most Germans prefer to go unto the forest and cut their own tree. Germans celebrate Christmas on the evening of the 24th. They call this Heiligabend (holy eve).

Many Germans go to Mass or church on holy eve. While they are at Mass one of the adults decorates the tree with lights. They put on the lights and place brightly colored presents under the tree. When the family returns from church, the room is locked. When the children hear the ringing of the bell they can go into the room. This is the first time they see the brightly decorated tree. The gifts are then opened. Many families sing songs or play games. This is a real time for family. Every household has its own traditions. We here in America wait for Santa to come and open our gifts the next morning. However you celebrate the holidays, I hope this will be the best one yet.

Happy Holidays and see you next year.

Klaus

IN BAD KÖNIGSHOFEN

By Martha Liehse

A New Hiking Trail Nearby

On October 3 (German Unification Day), a 10 km hiking trail near Bad Königshofen was dedicated that combines enjoyment of nature with features of historical significance, namely, remnants of the former East/West border. The trail makes a circle through an area that includes parts of nature preserves, and the route takes the hiker past pieces of the former border fence and along the patrol road that was used by the East German border guards.

Information signs along the trail educate the visitor about the area's history.

A New Cultural Center

At the end of October the long-awaited renovation work began on a 17th century building in Bad Königshofen that will become a cultural center and will be used for meetings, seminars, exhibits and receptions.

You may remember hearing about this building before. Former Bürgermeister Behr had worked hard to find grant money to pay for the renovation of this important historic building, and plans have referred to it at various times as the Arlington House, the Partnership House and also as a cultural center. Funding for it was finally approved in the last few months.



photo of the building being renovated and planned to be a cultural center

The cost of the project is about 700,000 euros (approx. \$ 900,000), with 70% of that amount being funded by a government grant. But because the money is only available until September 2009, the work on the building had to begin immediately. Plans had already been drawn up during the grant application process.

The massive two-story building is one of the oldest buildings in Bad Königshofen. It was built in the 1600s by Prince-Bishop Julius Echter for storage of war materials, and in 1812 the City bought it for use as a brewery. It has stood empty now for many years and will have a new life, while also promoting

international friendship through its many planned uses.

In Remembrance

On November 9 a ceremony was held in Bad Königshofen in remembrance of the victims of the 1938 Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) pogrom. Bürgermeister Helbling and others spoke about the importance of remembering the events of 70 years ago, about the victims and about the importance of freedom of religion. The names of the 28 Bad Königshofen Jews who were murdered between 1933 and 1945 were read aloud, and the important contributions to the town by members of the local Jewish community were described.

The ceremony was held at the site of the Bad Königshofen synagogue, which had been dedicated in 1904 and where today there is only a memorial marker. On November 9, 1938, the interior of the synagogue was destroyed, although the building remained standing until 1951, when it was sold and torn down to make way for a business establishment.

THINGS GERMAN

By Julia Burgen

German Connections Keep Popping up in Unexpected Places

Due to computer crash and replacement I recently found myself trying to reconstruct my email address book. One location that I had found last year for unusual bulbs was Southern Bulbs Co. There had been an article about them in The *Star-Telegram* Gardening section last year. When I finally made internet contact in September, they were advertising their fall bulb sale. They had both spider lily and blood lily bulbs available. I was so excited to see the blood lily as I got one several years ago at an Arlington Organic Garden Club sale. They are real traffic stoppers to those of us who are nuts about Kingdom Flora.

Chris Wiesinger who runs the bulb company puts video blogs on his website. In September he detailed his search for and retrieval of hundreds of the blood lilies from properties under sale and development. On the website he referred to the likelihood of finding the bulbs throughout south and east Texas in old homestead locations, many of which were virtually abandoned or no longer in use. He referred to German and Czech communities in Texas where the colonists had brought many bulbs and plants with them from Europe. They were then given and shared leading to their wide proliferation.

Later along came the more industrialized plant world and notions of different ways of gardening, which seemed to leave the old ways behind. Many of us are now trying to reconnect to these older plants. I love the spider lilies and the blood lily for their September show once summer's heat has broken. Actually I prefer the blood lily's other name - Schoolhouse Lily - as its bloom used to coincide with the start of school, before they air conditioned schools and pushed opening back into August.

If and when I get proficient in taking digital pictures and transmitting them I will send a photo of this flower. In the meantime I have another path to pursue on the impact of German immigrants to Texas in the 19th century.

GERMAN ANYONE?

By Jim Stiebing

Before our Bad Königshofen friends again visit us here in Arlington we can learn a few German words and their correct pronunciation.

For instance, this newsletter's word is "Bad Königshofen."

In "Bad" the "a" is pronounced like "ah" and the "d" at the end of the word is pronounced more like a "t" than an English language "d." Think of it as "baht."

In "Königshofen" the "ö" sound in the first syllable is close to the vowel sound in the

English word "her." The German letter "ö" is an "umlauted" vowel, that is, a modified vowel, and it does not occur in English.

(By the way, the German letter "ö" can also be written as "oe," so you may also have seen "Königshofen" written as "Koenigshofen" – in e-mail addresses, for example.)

The following phonetic pronunciation is very close to the correct pronunciation for the name of our Sister City:

baht cur-nicks-hoe-fin

The Umlaut is an accent unique to German. Most of us are familiar with the Tilde "~" accent in Spanish but not others such as the Grave in French and the Umlaut in German.

SAVE THE DATES

Tonight – Friday, Nov 21, German Band Concert



**Downtown Parade of
Lights – Dec. 6. Start
time 6:00 pm**

More to Come in Friends Newsletter- Part Two

NEWSLETTER (PART TWO)

NOVEMBER 2008

NO. 8

REFLECTIONS

By Juliann Warner

Martin High School Goes to BK

We arrived in Frankfurt early on Thursday morning, July 10. We were greeted by our EF guide and boarded our tour bus. After lunch in old Frankfort, we headed to Bad Königshofen. We reached the Gymnasium at about 3 pm. You could feel the excitement from the students on the bus. We were not going to just a European location to visit, it was like we were going to visit very special family members. The students had been exchanging email for weeks and even had pictures of each other. As they got off the bus, the Martin students found their host teens immediately and conversed as if they had known each other for years. Off they went to the homes of the host families with instructions to be at the town hall at 7 pm for a reception.

The reception was wonderful. How amazing to be in a structure that was hundreds of years old! Dagmar Lurz had spent so much time preparing events in the town to make us feel welcome. Bürgermeister Thomas Helbling welcomed us and we presented him with a plaque to honor the occasion, and of course, a Martin High School t-shirt. There was a t-shirt for Dagmar too. After the presentation there were sandwiches and drinks, lots of conversation, and of course picture taking with the Bürgermeister who had put on the Martin High School t-shirt.



MHS Students Katie Barasch and Elizabeth Capper with Bürgermeister Helbling.

Afterwards, the students went home to visit and get to know one another, and as several students have told me, lots of eating! I am sure that they stayed up all hours. Jet lag would not be a problem. We, the teachers from Martin, were hosted by teachers from the Gymnasium. Our conversations were like those you have with any colleague, shared stories of students, administration and curriculum.

The next morning we all met up at the Gymnasium for planned activities, including a tour of the school and an opportunity to sit in on some of the classes. The school was very impressive. It offered a great variety of courses and activities. I was very impressed with the display of student art. Around 10am, we met Dr. Gert Kabler who would be our guide for a walking tour through Bad Königshofen. What an amazing tour! He taught us the great history of the town; he was so very knowledgeable.

At the end of the tour we walked through Arlington Park, where he brought us to a spot where he told the students that if they kissed the ground they would return to BK some day. They did just that. From there we walked to the pavilion where I had expected a picnic lunch. I was mistaken; it was a feast! What a

delightful day. After the “picnic feast,” everyone went off with the host families for various tours and activities. The only sadness came when I reminded them that they had to be back at the school at 8am to board the bus for the rest of our European tour.



MHS Student Bobbie Stevens in foreground. Teens doing what they do best!

Eight a.m. on Saturday morning brought more picture taking, hugs, tears and promises that we would see each other again. While on the bus, everyone shared stories of their incredible visit and the wonderful friends they had made. We all knew that the two days spent in BK would be the very best part of our two-week tour.

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