

50th Anniversary of the Bethel/Wuppertal Exchange Program, 1951-2001

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*Am schwärzesten Fluß, der Wupper, lernt man
erkennen welche Menschen leuchten.*

- Else Lasker-Schüler

*At the darkest river, the Wupper, one discovers
the people who really shine.*

In the Fall of 1951 Bethel College welcomed the first participant in what has become a truly unique exchange program between Bethel College and the Bergische Universität-Gesamthochschule Wuppertal (BUGH). In the intervening fifty years 151 students have participated in this exchange program and thereby gained a better understanding of themselves and another culture, while becoming fluent in their new language. As a part of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the Bethel/Wuppertal exchange program, this booklet containing words of welcome, brief history, personal essays, and photographs has been compiled. The historical segment, written by Erna Fast, a Bethel alumnae, who was instrumental in establishing the exchange program, originally appeared in a booklet published for a 1994 Fall Fest Bethel/Wuppertal Exchange gathering. She has graciously offered it for inclusion in this booklet as well.

WELCOME

We are delighted to welcome alumni and friends of the Bethel College/Wuppertal Exchange program for the celebration of the 50 year anniversary of the program. It is only a small measure of the profound personal significance of the exchange program that so many have returned from near and far to join in observing this milestone. As I have visited with Wuppertal alumni on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in the last six years, I have been impressed again and again with how these persons treasure the deep friendships, the changes in world views, the challenges to thinking and believing that arose from the experience of living and studying in Wuppertal or North Newton. This program has left its mark on hundreds of students.

But it has left its mark on our college as well. International study-exchange programs were rare in 1951. That Bethel College and the then "Pädagogische Hochschule" created this program speaks to the firm conviction that serious encounter and exchange among persons of different cultures and nationalities is essential to real education. That conviction has continued and grown at Bethel College in a variety of formats and programs, but the Wuppertal program was and is the prototype. We celebrate this remarkable program, its inspiration, its history and the mark it has left on the scores of people who have through it immersed themselves in growth and learning.

Dr. Douglas Penner
President of Bethel College

Since my arrival at Bethel College in 1985, I have been associated with the Bethel/Wuppertal Exchange program. In reflecting on the 50th anniversary of this program, I am reminded how much such an exchange program can be compared to a person. Like an individual, the program has experienced and survived occasional hardships, developed a network of friends, taken its place in educating students and broadening their world view, matured and taken on its own personality. Within the educational framework of Bethel College, the Bethel/Wuppertal Exchange program has given participants the opportunity for total immersion in a foreign culture and for developing proficiency in a foreign language, invaluable experiences in a liberal arts education, especially for language majors. Such a long-standing and affordable exchange program, the envy of many other language departments, deserves both the recognition that comes with its 50th anniversary and the continued support of Bethel College and the Bergische Universität-Gesamthochschule Wuppertal. Over the years I have appreciated the opportunity to interact with the students from Germany, to meet older participants in Wuppertal and to see the students from both institutions develop during their year in Wuppertal or in North Newton. I cherish the friendships that I have made through this program. In more recent years a group of the German participants founded the *Förderverein*, an officially registered organization dedicated to supporting Bethel College in a variety of ways and currently chaired by Christiane Renger. Thank you to each of you who are members of the Förderverein for looking after the Bethel students studying in Wuppertal and making their experience in Germany even more beneficial. I would like to personally thank Professor Uwe Multhaup, my colleague in Wuppertal for his support and guidance of the program in Wuppertal, especially since he has handed over responsibility of the program to his colleague, Professor Bettina Hofmann. On behalf of the Language Department I welcome all participants of the program to this celebration and thank you for your personal contribution in giving this program life, direction, and character.

Dr. Merle Schlabaugh
Professor of German

THE BEGINNING

Early in 1950 I came to Bethel College between terms of volunteer service with the Mennonite Central Committee to report on my work in Germany, much of which had been with university students, many of whom had been forced to flee across the "Iron Curtain" into West Germany. I still recall quite clearly how impressed I was by the enthusiasm and vitality of the students on campus in their eagerness to find ways to support the work of MCC. They had had a Work Day to earn money and some had participated in a fund raiser by skipping meals. Their hope was to support a project by which a personal and direct relationship might be formed. They suggested three ways to do this: scholarship funds for needy students, English books and other publications very much needed to be placed in a "Bethel College Corner" and, if possible, funds for equipment and supplies also in great need everywhere in Germany at that time.

This led to the decision to request that MCC arrange to funnel the Bethel College student project funds directly to one of the teachers colleges. That first year this translated into writing materials, books, Bibles, dormitory supplies and even food for needy students. As one of the professors later reported, "It was a time when we wrote our lectures on scraps of brown paper left from packages sent to us..." By the second year Bethel students proposed to support a student to come here to study and Fritz Potreck arrived as the first one. The next year Rudolf Wiemann came and by the fourth year, with Annagret Völker coming from Wuppertal and Otto Driedger going there, a true student exchange was under way.

I've been asked, "How was Wuppertal chosen?" First a bit of background: During my first term with the MCC much of my responsibility dealt with students at universities and "Hochschulen" in northern Germany, students who had fled on their hands and knees across the border between East and West. This led to involvement with the German Student Christian Movement (Evangelische Studentengemeinde - ESG) and to an invitation to return to Germany for a second term as a staff member of the ESG headquartered in Stuttgart. My responsibility was to be with the students at the schools, some newly-formed, where they would prepare to become elementary school teachers. As such their teaching task would include religious instruction as a part of the regular curriculum. These were young people born and growing up during the Nazi years and, in many cases, with no religious background of their own. As I learned to know these students I found many of them hesitant to take on the task of teaching this subject. Some would say, "I know nothing about the Bible but in order to get a teaching position I must have a license to teach religion." There would even be this assertion, "Well, I'll do it but I'll do it objectively!"

Wuppertal Akademie became the unanimous choice from almost their first days the Bethel project was discussed at the ESG office after the first trips to the major schools where these students were studying. At that time they were designated as *Hochschule*, *Akademie* or *Institut*, depending on the German state in which they were located. Dr. Horst Bannach, the Rev. Peter Kreyszig, my colleague on the staff, and Jacob T. Friesen representing the MCC office in Frankfurt/Main were involved with me in this decision.

Factors that played a role in the decision included the comparable sizes of Wuppertal and Bethel in terms of student body, the fact that Wuppertal had made a special effort to open its doors to refugee students with their special needs, and the exceptionally fine leadership at that school, a postwar institution just beginning its task of preparing students for the teaching profession. Among the instructors there at the time were Professor Johannes Harder, a Mennonite who taught the sociology courses, and Professor Inge Heuser, the religious education instructor. Both of these were well-liked and highly-respected in their fields. However, it was the reputation of the director of the school, Professor Oskar Hammelsbeck, that surely played a major role in the choice that was made. Dr. Hammelsbeck was well-known in his major field of pedagogy, was a tireless worker in setting up the school in emergency buildings with severe limitations and many handicaps, and was loved by his students. Of great importance, too, at that time was the fact that he was well-known nationally as a person who had been deeply involved in the formulation of the Barmen Confession and had been active as a participant of the *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessional Church) in its struggle with the Nazi regime during the war.

Surely, the leadership at Bethel College in those first years and since has played a vital role throughout the intervening years. I know that Dr. D.C. Wedel, Dr. H.A. Fast, and Leo Miller, President of the SCM, were very influential when the project began in 1950. Since then many others could be named in this respect. And you who are alumni of this exchange program deserve recognition as well for the role you have played in this venture that began in such a small simple way, yet carried a vitality of deep caring and a desire to reach out in a personal way to others.

Submitted by Erna J. Fast
 October 1994; Resubmitted in August 2001

PARTICIPANTS IN THE BETHEL/WUPPERTAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Bethel Students	Wuppertal Students
	Fritz Potreck 1951-52
	Rudolf Wiemann 1952-53
Otto Driedger 1953-54	Annegret Völker Gehlhoff 1953-54
Lillian Galle 1954-55	Rudolf Stubenrauch 1954-55
Ruby Woelk Baresch 1955-56	Elisabeth Friedewald Rohde 1955-56
Eldred Thierstein 1956-57	Christiane Klein Renger 1956-57
Theodore Zerger 1957-58	Karin Mühlen 1957-58
Janice Waltner Sevilla 1958-59	Klaus Sowa 1958-59
Dilores Rempel 1959-60	Barbara Schmidt Chang 1959-60
Karen Gilchrist 1960-61	Ursula Schumacher May 1960-61
Ruth Ewy White 1961-62	Hans Sieper 1961-62
Mary Janzen Wilson 1962-63	Christiane Vesper Mauss 1962-63
Robert Pankratz 1963-64	Katrin Frowein Kurzhals 1963-64
Peter Trott 1964-65	Henrik Eger 1964-65
Gordon Ratzlaff 1965-66	Heinz van de Linde 1965-66

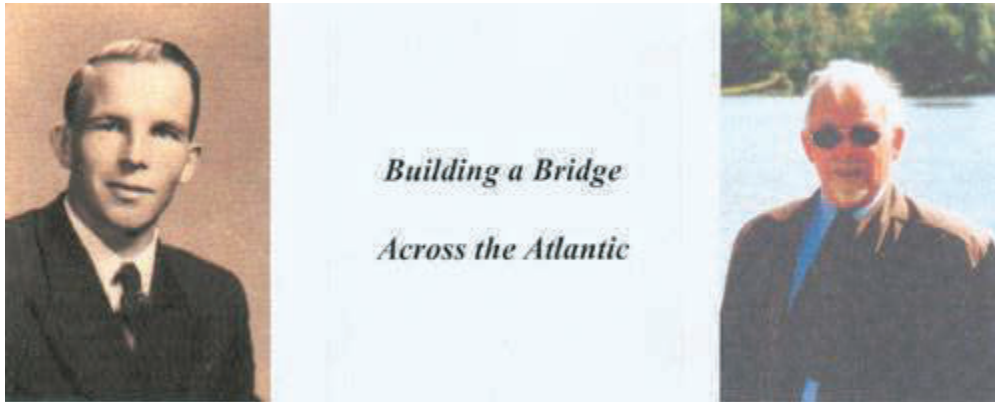
Ruth Nickel Friesen 1966-67	Ulrike Belzer Hartwig 1966-67
Walter Epp 1967-68	Karl Heinz Wilhelm 1967-68
Gregory Stucky 1968-69	Gabriele Einicke 1968-69
Carolyn Cox 1969-70	Ingeborg Gerritzen 1969-70
Cornelia Krahn-Olsen 1970-71	Peter Blobel 1970-71
Peter C. Preheim 1971-72	Michael Albrecht 1971-72
Patricia Stucky 1972-73	Anneliese Görres 1972-73
Timothy E. Schrag 1973-74	Bärbel Gemke 1973-74
Stanley Buller 1974-75	Sylvia Hasenkamp 1974-75
Michelle Friesen Carper 1974-75	Karen-Martina Hermann 1974-75
Max Stucky 1975-76	Franz-Josef Bürger 1975-76
Marcus Loganbill 1975-76	Elisabeth Henke-Röper 1975-76
Carol Schmidt Ward 1976-77	Egbert Fröse 1976-77
Kathryn Thieszen 1976-77	Werner Luthner 1976-77
Duane Goertz 1977-78	Karl Enßlen 1977-78
Laurie Warkentin 1977-78	Andrea Krause 1977-78
Maylene Thiesen Vinson 1978-79	Martin Klopstock 1978-79
Carl Edwards 1978-79	Karla Zimmermann 1978-79
Marla Wiens 1979-80	Günter Stibbe 1979-80
Mary Ellen Goertz 1979-80	Karen Beckmann 1979-80
Thomas Unruh 1980-81	Wolfgang Windfuhr 1980-81

	Gudrun Kossak 1980-81
Mary Sprunger 1981-82	Michael Windgassen 1981-82
Andrea Schmidt 1981-82	Marion Spies 1981-82
Paul Brown 1982-83	Monika Thölking 1982-83
Lynette Gingerich 1982-83	Barbara Nestler 1982-83
Nanette Goering 1983-84	Arno Fischer 1983-84
Mark Jantzen 1983-84	Bärbel Steffens 1983-84
Greta Hiebert 1984-85	Yvonne Florian 1984-85
Angie Smith 1984-85	Gerlinde Theis 1984-85
Cindy Ewy 1985-86	Angela Romot 1985-86
Ron Ewy 1985-86	Kirsten Hillringhaus 1985-86
Jon McCammond 1986-87	Kai Becker 1986-87
Christa Dyck 1986-87	Petra Kluth 1986-87
Ben Harder 1987-88	Pia Müller 1987-88
Philip Eisenbeis 1987-88	Martina Hütten 1987-88
Scott Graber 1988-89	Daniela Pruß 1988-89
Jonathon Hogg 1988-89	Patricia Krieger 1988-89
Greg Harms 1989-90	Ricarda Klatt 1989-90
Jeff Schmidt 1989-90	Michael Völker 1989-90
Amy White 1990-91	Christoph Klose 1990-91
Mark Pierce 1990-91	Sabine Laumann 1990-91

Robert Epp 1991-92	Stefanie Bremiker 1991-92
Olga Hernandez 1991-92	Cornelia Krüger 1991-92
	Carsten Busch 1992-93
	Christoph Martin 1992-93
Tammi Ediger 1993-94	Carsten Gerhardt 1992-93
Eric Jantzen 1993-94	Christoph Buse 1993-94
Andrei Campelo 1994-95	Meike Chaudiere 1994-95
Benjamin Jones 1994-95	Thomas Wegner 1994-95
Olivia Bartel 1995-96	Thomas Könen 1995-96
Kelly Janzen 1995-96	Natalie Kultscher 1995-96
Esther Kratzer 1996-97	Monika Christ 1996-97
Elizabeth Schrag 1996-97	Bettina Stubbe 1996-97
Christopher Miller 1997-98	Kerstin Düllmann 1997-98
Christopher Phillippe 1998	Tatjana Gluth 1997
Allison M. Schmidt 1998-99	Renard-Michael Bausa 1998-99
David Unger 1998-99	Marion Gorjub 1998-99
Brandon Nelson 1999-2000	
Lisa Thimm 1999-2000	
Angela Janzen 2000-2001	Anke Pollmann 2000-2001
Sarah Rempel 2000-2001	Jörg Vorberg 2000-2001
Allison Penner 2001-2002	Niloufar Ashour Novirdoust 2001-2002

James Regier 2001-2002	Marcel Plexnies 2001-2002
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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS



Building a Bridge Across the Atlantic

The Bethel/Wuppertal Exchange Program was started by Mennonites as a contribution to peace and better understanding between nations after World War II. I had the great opportunity to be sent as the first exchange student from the Pedagogical Academy in Wuppertal to Bethel College. At first I hardly could grasp my fortune, only little by little I began to realize what a great importance this opportunity meant for me. I was not sure if my English was sufficient, but my English lecturer had no objection. My mother, my sisters and my friends encouraged me and were glad with me.

The following weeks were very exciting and busy. In a short time I had to write my solicitation forms for the High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG), declaration of my finances (I had nearly no money), and a certificate of my health in English. I was lucky that my friends and former English teacher helped me. I had no typewriter and so I was allowed to do the writing in the church office. In less than a week the work was done and I sent the papers to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Frankfurt. After several weeks of waiting, I received a phone call: I should come to MCC and HICOG offices in Frankfurt. Fortunately I could go by car with Mennonites who were just at a meeting in Wuppertal. I met Erna Fast for the first time, the organizer of the exchange program, and I thanked her very much for the opportunity to study at Bethel College. At the office of the HICOG the interview began in English, and it ended in German with the happy result: "The Grand Travel is granted." I was very glad and I got a ticket for the train back home. It took weeks again until I got the papers for the Consulate in Düsseldorf, but I did not get the visa before I had passed the medical examinations for which I had to go once more to Frankfurt.

The grand travel started on Wednesday, August 22nd, 1951 at 5:12 a.m. from Wuppertal to Frankfurt where I had to check in at the military checkroom. I got information for the next day and went to MCC for a meeting with members of MCC and the nine other students going to the United States. We were invited for dinner and got to know each other. Two films informed us about the Mennonite church; the meeting was closed by reading Psalm 121, and we said good-bye with best wishes for the future. It was on Thursday, August 23rd, 1951, when we started by train to the Netherlands to go by ship to the States. We left the quay at 5 p.m. via Le Havre (France) and Southampton (Great Britain). The greatest journey of my life began!

We arrived in New York on September 4th, 1951, having passed the Statue of Liberty. I got my first impressions of a World City: Large modern quays, at one of them Queen Mary with 80,000 t (our ship):

12,000), huge buildings, the Empire State Building, heavy traffic on large roads. It was overwhelming! We were welcomed by a member of MCC of Akron, Pa., where we went by car. There we were addressed graciously by Ms. Harms. She said that we were supposed to build a kind of bridge between the nations across the Atlantic; The stones for that structure were tolerance, kindness and love. "Many things will be new for you: the culture, the way of living, especially life at college, etc., " she said and wished us good luck for the year of exchange.

The rest of the long way I went by train and by bus, one of the famous "Greyhound Busses" and arrived at Bethel College on September 7th, 1951. It began a year of wonderful experiences, of very much learning and so many important contacts between fellow students, members of the staff and many other people. I will never forget the great time I spent with them. I am still in contact with friends. I am so grateful for that year of exchange.

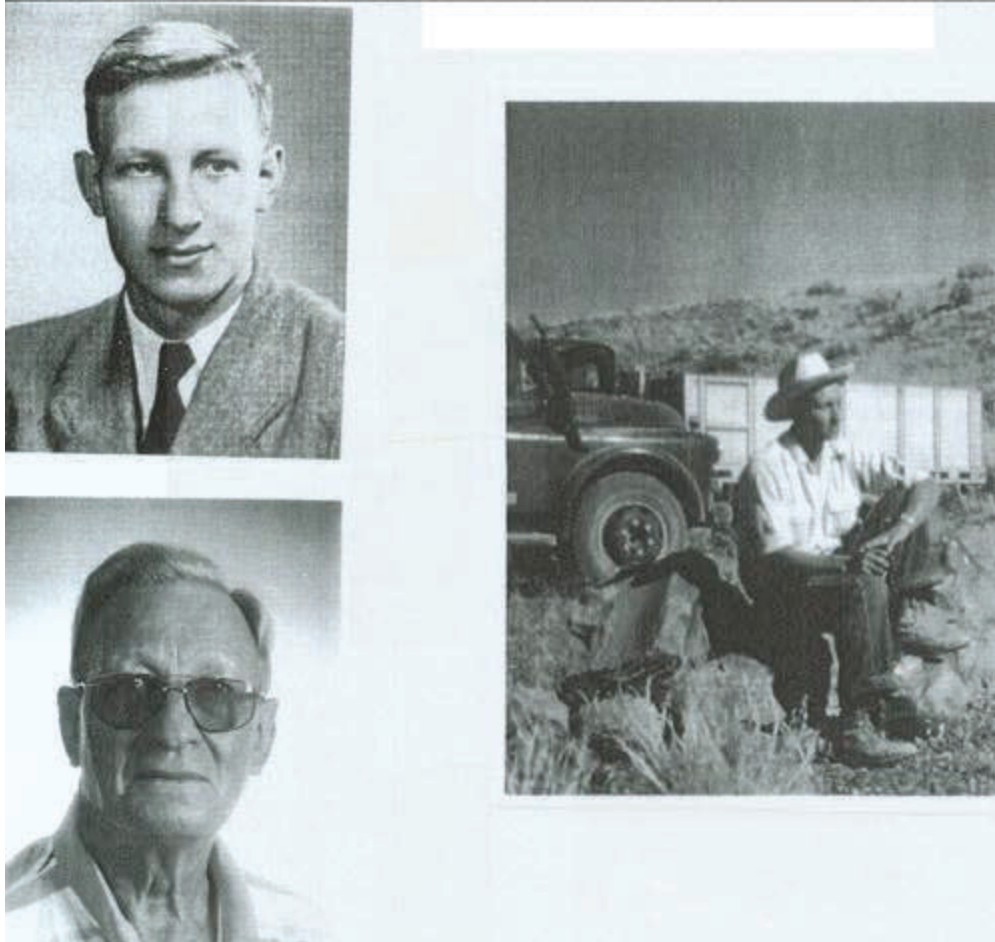
Fritz Potreck, August 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1951-52

Goessel Hall and How I Got My Driver's License, A Matter of \$1.00

During my Bethel year (1952-52) I roomed in Goessel Hall, just across Main Street - now the Kauffman Museum parking lot. (Goessel Hall by the way no longer exists. One day in the sixties "they moved her", as an eyewitness remarked, to Moundridge or another place in mid-Kansas. Its further fate is unknown to me.) My roommate was Eldo Neufeld from Inman, who now lives in Vancouver, together with his wife Grace (Miller). Eldo and the other 19 (?) fellow students (the Hiebert brothers, Elmer Wall, Delton Franz, Roland Duerksen, Carl Jantzen, Gordon Dyck, Ted Mueller and several others) of course owned their own cars which were parked on the rather spacious parking site in front of the dorm, all unlocked, sometimes even with the keys in the ignition. And whenever I wanted to go downtown for some business (or a Dairy Queen!) I just had to ask one of my fellow students if I could use his car and then take it. But in the first few weeks of September 1952 I, alas, did not yet have a valid driver's license, and so my mind was focused on getting it as soon as possible. Eldo and some other friendly campus folks, including the German instructor Mrs. Buller, taught me, understandingly and considerately, how to handle a car and thus prepare me in a kind of crash course for the driving test.

One morning the test day had come. Mr. Klassen, a kind friend of mine from Newton, took me to the Newton town hall, leaving me there with his Studebaker. I went in to present myself for the test and was told to wait outside at the car. And then the policeman appeared, looking like a Western sheriff with two big Colts left and right, coming up to me and saying, "Hop in, let's go." So I did. He asked me about my whereabouts, and of course right away noticed I was not American. "Where are you from?" he bellowed. "From Germany." "Germany? Heidelberg!" The sheriff's eyes sparkled, his voice had become tender and warm and he said, almost below his breath, while pointing to the roadside: "Park the car." And then Mr. Sheriff started talking about his service time with the US Army in Heidelberg after the War, about the Schloss and the town, about the river and the wine. And after half an hour he asked me to drive the car back to the town hall. We entered his office, I was congratulated on having passed the driving test, was handed the white driver's license card and had to pay \$1.00 for the trouble. And that little card from now on opened up the world for me as it were, on the campus and the surroundings, in the various US states, in the wheat harvest at Bob Franz's in Lind, Washington in 1953, back in Germany, and and and.

Rudolf Wiemann, August 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1952-53



Reflections of the First Bethel Student in Wuppertal

It was a great opportunity for me - being a Canadian - to be the first Bethel student to go to Wuppertal. When I arrived, the students had prepared a welcome for me which consisted of tea and tidbits. Their reasoning was that, coming from Canada, which is part of the British

Commonwealth, tea would likely be at the centre (note the English spelling) of our culture. There were approximately 10 to 15 students and since I was quite fluent in German, we had a great time.

After I had had several cups of tea, I politely refused another cup of tea, but they kept insisting, and when they pushed for the third time, I thought I had better be polite and accept another cup. This pattern of refusing and then relenting continued for a long time, and I was hard pressed to accommodate all the tea. Later, I found that their custom required that they offer at least 3 times. As a result, they were searching all over the dorm for enough tea to satisfy this Canadian with unlimited capacity!

Another amusing anecdote is the time six of us were having a discussion and I disagreed with the statement of one of the female students. In translating "You are wrong" into German, I said "Du bist Falsch". Everyone laughed, and when I asked what I had said that was so funny, they responded by saying I had just called her a prostitute. Literal translations do have their problems.

Faculty, staff and students were all extremely welcoming and assisted me to integrate into student life and study. Special events and excursions that were planned by different sections of the Akademie all welcomed me to take part. As a result, I was involved with a special "Freizeit" focused on academic matters, and also had the opportunity to join on the special ski trip to Kitzbühel with the Sports Division.

What impressed me most, was the way in which both faculty and students were getting on with life that still was very difficult, being a mere 8 years after the devastating war. Study and professional excellence were a high priority.

There were still many buildings in ruins but many were being rebuilt. Redevelopment of the economy and social fabric of the community and society in full swing. I was amazed at the high level of cultural events that continued during this difficult time. Concerts, opera, drama etc. were available weekly, and almost daily. This was at a much higher level than in North America, and it was supported publicly and individually.

Dr. Hans Harder was the professor who related most closely to students. He would frequently join students for a discussion on important social or cultural issues in a bar or coffee shop. His experience in both the East and West made his observations and analyses particularly powerful.

Discussing Soviet Communism, Socialism and Capitalism on the very borders of the East-West Cold War added reality to the dialogue that we lacked in discussions in North America.

The year provided an important perspective on my own country and the U.S. which one can only get when going off shore and spends time walking in the shoes of another country. In 1953 very few people spent quality time abroad. It was a privilege to be part of the process.

A heart felt THANK YOU to both Bethel and Wuppertal Pädagogische Akademie.

I'm sorry I will not be part of the celebration in person.

Otto Driedger, August 2001
Bethel exchange student at Wuppertal 1953-54

Reflections from 1955-56

Many memories were reawakened while looking through my annual from 1956! Since I could choose the courses of my studies, I was delighted to learn a lot in psychology, especially with Prof. R. C. Kauffman, in literature, and in music, especially playing the German flute in a quartette under Darlene Dugan's direction. In addition to the course work, it was important for me to live with American roommates and to participate in the students' activities on campus (sports, music, foreign students' club at R.C.'s every Sunday evening, etc.).

As I already wrote for the 25th Anniversary booklet, I'm still convinced that my interest in and understanding of other nations and their problems is the fruit of this exchange experience. I regret that I can't come to the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Bethel/Wuppertal Exchange Program because of my health. I retired from teaching high school nine years ago, having taught numerous subjects (music, arts, religion). My husband is also retired so we now have more time for our children and grandchildren, for our friends and for discussions about personal and general topics. I currently working on the "rules" of TCI (Theme Centered Interaction by Ruth Cohn). Although I can't come to the reunion on October 12th, I certainly hope to attend the Bethel College Choir concert in Solingen in January 2002. Many greetings to those who remember me, along with thanks for keeping the exchange program "alive."

Elisabeth Rohde, August 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1955-56

Memories via Photos

Since I will not be able to attend the events in November, I am submitting some photos from my year in Wuppertal, 1955-56. They were taken during a field trip with Professor Harder. Many of my memories of that year are of Professor Harder, who besides teaching some of the most interesting classes, frequently invited me to his home - a most stimulating experience. The Harder children were all serious students of music and languages. One son, Theo, was even a student at Bethel. Herzliche Grüße !

Ruby (Woelk) Baresch, August 2001
Bethel exchange student at Wuppertal 1955-56





Practice in Public Speaking

The Fulbright advisors had warned us: "Keep your talks short. Speakers are often scheduled before some meal or refreshment, so people will be sniffing the kitchen smells..."

My first speech - to a small group in a church sanctuary - was a welcome assignment. The topic, "What do German churches do for their youth?" had given me a reason to contact my Wuppertal pastor. Herr Pastor Schlimm, a bachelor whom many young women in our congregation rather thought of by his first name, did send me a list of items to present. No further correspondence ensued though. When I returned the following year, he had become engaged to one of my college classmates. By that time I had promised a certain Bethel student, John Chang, that I would come back to America for graduate study - on "permanent resident" status.

Back to the talk at the church: It turned out too short. No food smells came wafting. As we filed into the social hall too early, some ladies were just setting up the punch and doughnuts.

My second speech fulfilled all my expectations about a good crowd (the Rotary Club), good food and, I thought, a good short talk by me. Dean Schellenberger was the only listener who commented to me afterwards: "I can tell they teach you that British English overseas. You say, 'I have been [bean].' Here in the Midwest say, 'I have been [bin].'"

Have I ever since then bin mindful of my pronunciation, Dean Schellenberger!

Any encouraging experiences: Probably not until later that school year! Meanwhile I enjoyed my "speaking" engagement with a Girl Scout troop. I took my recorder. I played for them and sang with them. Then we baked Christmas cookies together.

Barbara Chang, August 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1959-60

The Most Important Year of My Life

It has been exactly 40 years now since I returned home after a year at Bethel College.

Before that year, I had grown up like many other kids of my generation: born at the beginning of World War II a the oldest of four children who at the end of the war realized that their father whom they hardly knew - he only came home for short leaves from the war where he served first as a minister and later on as a soldier in the army - would never come back. He was declared missing in action in April 1944.

In 1959 I began my elementary teacher training in Wuppertal. I specialized in German and English. When I learned about the exchange program with Bethel College, I applied for the scholarship - and got it! I also got a Fulbright travel grant, and in August 1960 I was on the boat BERLIN with about 180 German Fulbright students and had a good time during the 11 day trip. I was impressed by the skyscrapers and air conditioning. From New York to Wichita I experienced my first flight. When Dilores Suderman (Rempel), the Bethel exchange student in 1959/60 in Wuppertal, picked me up at the Wichita airport with Miss Galle, I was so exhausted I almost couldn't speak English. Luckily Dee was my roommate in Women's Residence Hall and helped me a lot to adjust to the completely different way of life as a college co-ed. When I read in my diary and the weekly letters to my mother, I now realize that many things would seem strange to college students of today as well: Closing hours for instance and the law that no male was allowed to enter the residence hall except on a single day of the school year. The rites of dating... The NO DRINKING, NO DANCING, NO SMOKING laws....

I was not ambitious to get an academic degree and could pick the classes which I liked most and still remember. My favourites were Miss Honora Becker's Introduction to Shakespeare, Dr. Fretz's Contemporary Political Issues (we watched and discussed the Kennedy-Nixon debates of the election year, and I thought that two of my classmates were outstandingly bright: Jim Juhnke and John Janzen.).

In Dr. Krahn's course Christian Heritage I learned a lot about the Mennonites of whom I, as a Lutheran, had never heard of before.

Aside from the academic studies, I loved to meet people on and around the campus. I was invited to many different homes, clubs, schools, gave talks, worked as a waitress in a local restaurant and cleaned houses for little money but a lot of experience. I remember that the dollar was worth 4.20 DM in 1960.

Highlights of my year at Bethel were:

- Homecoming and other formal events with special HOT DATES: most important for girls in those days,
- My 21st birthday on Oct. 26, 1960 - HEN PARTY in the dorm celebrating my legal age (without consequences for me on campus),
- A trip to Goshen College in Indiana for a big foreign students' conference,
- Christmas holidays in Bloomfield, Montana where Evelyn Unruh and her family had invited me to their farm, and other weekends of overwhelming hospitality in various homes.

Aside from many good memories that remain are: Life-long friends like Diloires Suderman (Rempel) and her husband Leland, Kay Krehbiel (Peters) and Paul, Reinhild and John Janzen. And last but not least: On the boat to New York I met my husband Edgar who was a Fulbright student at Washington University in Pullman. Five years later we got married. Our two adult children share our love and interest for the United States.

I am still thankful for THE MOST IMPORTANT YEARS OF MY LIFE: It widened my horizon and deepened my understanding for and tolerance toward other ways of life.

Ursula (Schuhmacher) May, September 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1960-61

100 years Wuppertal-Bethel Exchange Program: An open letter to the American and German students of the year 2051

Dear students at Bethel and Wuppertal,

By the time you will be reading this letter, many of us will have gone to greener pastures than the lushest green on a rainy day in Wuppertal and Bethel during spring time. And yet, in some ways, we will be with you while you may be weighing your options: to stay at home or to cross the Atlantic and experience a part of the world most tourists never ever get to see: Bethel and Wuppertal.

By the time you will be reading this letter, you will most likely be able to connect with each other across the Atlantic with live mini-cameras on the Internet, knowing a great deal about each other before you even apply for a scholarship at those two institutions of higher learning. And once you made it into the illustrious group of former Bethel-Wuppertal exchange students, you will most likely be able to cross the Atlantic within only a few hours time and experience each other's culture the way we taste Starbucks coffee today. Welcome to the brave New World of the 21st Century.

However, what you may not know is that the Wuppertal-Bethel exchange program was born out of pain during the time shortly after the worst disaster in human history when hundreds of cities all over Europe

went down in flames, bombed out of existence, except for a few ruins and the skeletons of churches and cathedrals--and refugees, covered in soot, crawling out of bunkers and the rubble.

Millions of people got killed; kids without parents roamed through deserted streets, wondering what kind of a world they had inherited. It was at that time, shortly after the end of World War II, that Mennonites in the US got together and helped in numerous ways. They sent as one of their ambassadors to Germany a wonderful woman, Erna Fast, plus food and books as they wanted young people to have a chance to move forward. And they decided to invite the first German student from Wuppertal to study at Bethel College in 1951.

You may have had a chance to read the history of the program which flourished and, after some years, broadened its scope so that Bethel students could study in Wuppertal as well. In fact, the exchange program turned out to be so successful and enriching all around that it was expanded to benefit two students on each side of the Atlantic Ocean each year.

I am one of those many former exchange students whose life changed dramatically as a result of that one year at Bethel. A former high school dropout in Germany because of poor performance in English and Biology, thanks to the encouragement I received at Wuppertal from one of my best teachers, Rudy Wiemann, one of the earliest Wuppertal exchangees at Bethel, and the support I received from many other wonderful people on both side of the Atlantic, I became a teacher of English in Germany, England, Iran, and India. And I now am a tenured professor of English and Communication at a college near Philadelphia, PA.

Similarly, my first speaking engagements at Bethel lead me to become a founding President of a Toastmasters International chapter in Chicago and a speaker who gets invited frequently. Reading international news on the campus radio at Bethel every night and studying writing helped me to write several radio programs for Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) in Cologne. And my first ever acting role at the annual Mennonite Festival fostered my interest in theatre in such a way that I became one of 18 theatre judges in Philadelphia and recently co-authored the *Handbook for Barrymore Nominators and Judges*, published by the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia.

But most important in my life is the social engagement that some of my teachers at Wuppertal and at Bethel had instilled in me: for example, my sociology professor--Johannes Harder, a Mennonite and one of the founding fathers of the Bergische University (then known as Pädagogische Hochschule Wuppertal) — and countless Mennonites at Bethel and elsewhere in Canada and the US who, through their example, encouraged me to speak up and take action, trying to give a voice to people whose voices have been muffled.

With the help of the Bethel Alumni office, I spent my first week on American soil in Harlem right after the race riots of 1964 and later stayed with a black family in Memphis, TN. And one of the greatest honors in my life was to have been invited by Martin Luther King in May of 1965 to translate his Nobel Prize mail from all over Europe which included an invitation from the church of Johann Sebastian Bach in Leipzig, an invitation the Mahatma Gandhi of the United States could not accept as the Peace Nobel Laureate had been maligned as a Communist in the US and did not dare to visit the Thomaner Kirche in (then) East Germany.

When you look at the history books (I mean, when you look it up on the Internet), you may find President John F. Kennedy who went to Berlin in June of 1963 and, facing the Berlin Wall, told the people of Germany, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Several decades later, on Sept. 11, 2001, when terrorists flew suicide missions into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center in New York City, killing thousands of people, the whole world grieved. And in Germany, church bells rang everywhere, flags were flown at half staff, the whole country stood in silence, flowers grew outside American institutions, and many Germans, like Kennedy before, showed solidarity, by saying, with tears in their eyes, "I am an American, too."

Perhaps that infamous day of Sept. 11, 2001, will connect the United States more than any other day with people in all those countries that were attacked and bombarded in the past. And maybe you, those who came a hundred years after the end of World War II, will continue to work toward a world in which the old spirit of the Mennonites prevails, a spirit that brings mutual understanding, acceptance of difference, and peace—not jingoism, hatred, and revenge.

Take it from this non-Mennonite, this happy agnostic: If the spinning globe on which you will live in the year 2051 should be as tough as it is today, feel encouraged to contribute toward a world in which the spirit of those Mennonites who reached out across the Atlantic with endless generosity and love—in spite of everything that had happened before—will prevail.

Ultimately, it's up to you, the Bethel and Wuppertal students of the future, to carry on our torch which we tried to pass on as a gift of those who came before us. Take good care of that flame so that it burns brightly and warms everyone who comes in touch with it. Welcome to the brave new world of 2051, and remember all those of us who tried our best, even though we did not leave behind a perfect world.

Henrik Eger, Ph.D., September 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1964-65

The Legendary 26th Birthday Party

Thank you for inviting me to the 50th anniversary events in October this year. I am sorry to say that I won't be able to attend although I would have loved to participate in the reunion at the Fall Fest. I shall be teaching then (English and pedagogy = Erziehungswissenschaft). Wenn das Fest ein Jahr später wäre, sähe die Sache ganz anders aus. Mein letztes Schuljahr fängt im August an und endet im Juli 2002. Dann habe ich 35 Jahre auf dem Buckel, wie man so schön sagt. Das muss reichen, und auch die Kinder muss man von alten Lehrern befreien. Das gegenwärtige Altersteilzeitprogramm erlaubt mir mit einer finanziellen Einbuße zwei Jahre eher aufzuhören. Dafür sollen junge Lehrer eingestellt werden. Einer von diesen ist mein Sohn Martin, der noch in Münster Englisch, Sozialwissenschaften und evangelische Religion studiert, bald fertig wird und schon ganz heiß darauf ist, den Schülern etwas beizubringen. Also kann ich guten Gewissens meine Tasche packen und ihr den Weg in die Schule ersparen.

Back into English. I need the challenge. We just had Kansans at our school from 2 till 8 June, 12 students from Abilene High School, guided and taken care of by Ingeborg Teasley (who you know) and her husband Mack. They brought a whiff of Kansas to the Catholic place of Kevelaer, which has been a town of pilgrimage for 350 years. My school maintains and operates various international school exchanges. I am in charge of international relations at my school, a rather time-consuming job, but, on the whole, quite rewarding. I consider these activities as part of a responsibility towards repaying some of the hospitality and generosity that I experienced while at

Bethel in 1965/66. There were the invitations to numerous homes (not all Bethel-affiliated), the free ticket a Newton family gave me for a season of classical concerts in Wichita, the days on a South Dakota farm during term break in spring '66 and the good rustic food. Incidentally, South Dakota was hit by a bad blizzard the day after I arrived at the farm. We were literally trapped and I remember enjoying the feeling of being confined to the farmhouse and its warm kitchen. The "Deutscher Verein" used to be a bit of home away from home with the singing of *deutsche Volkslieder* and the munching of *deutsche Plätzchen*. One is always tempted, of course, to glorify the past and shed an all too rosy light on things gone by.

What kind of impression did I leave behind with Bethelites, I have kept wondering. I guess I was a hard-working student and took my duties seriously (well, most of them, including the kitchen job on pots and pans under the strict, but well-meaning Miss Will). Yet there were some shady spots on that image some Bethel figures of authority must have thought at the time. Take my "legendary" 26th birthday on 14th

March '66 for example. I then invited a dozen of fellow students to an open-air party out in the fields somewhere near. We had a nice campfire going and drank canned beer. I had saved up hard to buy the entire beer supplies of the one and only liquor shop in Newton. What happened then was bound to happen. The fire had attracted the cops and the whole affair was passed on to the Bethel authorities and we were held to account for our misbehavior. I had to report to the Dean of Students (Esko Loewen) and was told that Bethel did not approve of that performance.

Well, there was always the lure of attractions outside the Bethel campus. And Dick's was one of them.

So if I am remembered for that kind of wrongdoings, right so. I deserve it. I hope my influence gradually wore off after I left. Although, I was told, Heinz's birthday used to be a day to remember for quite some time after my departure.

Dem Fest im Oktober wünsche ich gutes Gelingen und bitte Sie, denen, die dann dort sind, meine besten Grüße auszurichten. Eines kann ich mit Gewissheit sagen, dass Bethel in meinem Leben eine ganz große Rolle gespielt hat und noch spielt.

Ihnen und Bethel alles Beste.

Heinz van de Linde, July 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1965-66

The Beginnng of Continuing Friendships

So the Bethel/Wuppertal exchange programs exists for 50 years and I was in it in its first half. I do not belong to the pioneers of it, those whose names I knew by heart when I tried out for the exchange in summer 1965. But when I left my family, friends and boyfriend in summer 1966 to fly Icelandic from Luxembourg via Iceland to New York, I was scared by my own courage. Although I flew together with Gordon Ratzlaff, the exchange student to return home, and was picked up by Pete Trott, the student who had been in Wuppertal the year before, I felt like a pioneer, like someone on an expedition into unknown land. I was aware of the fact that I would not get in touch with my people at home other than through letters. A phone call would have been way too expensive and for emergency cases only. A vacation trip to the USA in those days was out of the question for family and friends.

All the information I had about the country in general and Bethel College especially turned out to be less than half realistic. So I found out about Kansas, the state flat, hot, dry, impressive by its low populated expanse, unknown to most Americans themselves, but breathtaking to me. I found out about college life in those days with dorm hours for girls, no men in the hall, homecoming queens and peace walks. I found out about the hospitality of Americans by countless invitations to their homes and I learned about Mennonites, their German last names, their home town always named with the state - like one word, their life strongly influenced by their belief so that in 66/67 during the time of the Vietnam War they had to suffer from insults of their fellow citizens who took the CO, conscientious objector, for the abbreviation of coward and sprayed yellow paint on the Administration Building.

Had I been on a true expedition, I could not have learned more. The impression of my Bethel year is a permanent imprint. I went when I was 21. I am 56 now, married with a son, a daughter and a grandson. When I left Bethel I knew I would be back some day and I was. Starting in 1971 my husband and I have visited our friends in Kansas, Minnesota, Colorado, Indiana, Massachusetts, or have had friends in our house. We have exchanged our children so that the friendship has continued into the next generation. We are in constant touch with the Seerys, the Andres, the Zergers, all from Kansas, the Geissingers from Minnesota, the Friesens from Colorado, Anneke Herrold from Michigan, and the Trotts from Germany.

Thanks to my parents who dared sending me so far away 35 years ago, no knowing but certainly hoping that the year at Bethel would add to my life. What a valuable and profound addition.

Ulrike Belzer Hartwig
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1966-67

Bethel College

Besondere

Erfahrungen:

Themenvielfalt,

Hilfen

Erproben,

Lachen.

Campus

Orientierungen:

Lebensart,

Leistung,

Ernsthaft

Gemeinschaft

Entwickeln!

These and many other rewarding experiences make me think back most gratefully, especially since our children have continued the exchange program in private terms. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Bethel/Wuppertal Exchange Program and Fall Festival, but all my family is looking forward to the concert the Bethel College Choir will be performing in January 2002 in Germany.

Wishing you a wonderful 50th Anniversary Celebration and hoping that the Exchange Program will be an ample opportunity for many students in the 21st century.

Bärbel Gemke-Landrock
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1973-74

The Bethel Experience: From Midtown-Manhattan to North Newton

After my studies in mechanical engineering and some practical experience in the industry I had the opportunity to continue my studies to become a teacher for vocational technical schools and Community Colleges.

During my studies at Wuppertal University I was also majoring in English as a foreign language. Very soon I realized that the acquisition of a foreign language cannot be restricted to schools and universities alone. Successful learning could only be possible in an English speaking country. Then I heard of an exchange program with an American College. Shortly after that I got in touch with Marcus Loganbil from Moundridge, Kansas who told me about Bethel. For me it then became clear that I had to utilize this chance. When I qualified for the exchange program and after everything was settled I was ready to go. Since it was my first trip to America, I was convinced that the place to arrive there had to be New York City.

And then the day came! On a bright and sunny Sunday morning in July of 1976 the plane was approaching the East Coast of America. And the first view were hundreds of yachts and sailing ships at the coast of Massachusetts. And two hours later I was standing in the middle of Time Square. I had a week to adapt to the American way of life and NYC seemed to be the right place for that. The Empire State-Building, the Statue of Liberty, Fifth Avenue, the Rockefeller Center, the Guggenheim Museum and Greenwich Village were the fascinating highlights of urban life.

After walking miles in the streets of this urban jungle and having used a dozen of elevators to travel up and down the skyscrapers all of a sudden this New York state of mind appeared. I was in the capital of the world!

But then it was enough. I had to move on to this American College somewhere out in the Midwest.

A TWA plane took me to Wichita with a stopover in Chicago. Then I made it! I was in the middle of rural America. After all the hustle and bustle of New York City the sight of Bethel College Campus appeared to me as calm and delightful.

The first jaunt took me on foot along Main Street into Newton. Thereby I made my first experience. Nobody in America goes from point A to point B on foot.

Incidentally I walked past a garage and a retailer of tires. And there it was, totally unexpected, this object of desire, a Goodyear-cap! Nothing special in America but a rarity in the Europe of the seventies, for formula-one drivers only. I bought it und immediately felt like an American.

Life on campus, college administration, lessons, everything appeared too unfamiliar for the moment. But it is therefore what makes up the allurements of staying in a foreign country. To do without the habitual things and to be open for the new that is what enriches one's own personality.

The longer I stayed at Bethel the better I felt. The intensive work with the English language during lessons and through personal contact with people led to the enhancement of self esteem. Every new day meant

new learning of words and linguistic structures. I felt like being on cloud nine. It was time for "taking off" and that exactly happened. Bob Harder from Seattle Washington spoke to me one day and asked me whether I was interested in accompanying him on a flight with a Cessna and gosh there it lay beneath us, Bethel Campus in the open space of Kansas. A mind blowing experience that was! But then one had to be brought back down to earth with a bump. Term papers had to be finished and the end of the academic year was approaching.

And then all of a sudden one had to part and to say good bye to friends and people who helped in many respects. Parting from embossed habits and impressions. Thank you Bethel College!

The Dodge Van was packed and we left Campus early in the morning. In front of us lay the roads of America, which were going to be home for us for the next three months. But that is another story.

Werner Luthner, September 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1976-77

Apropos Etcetera



The shirt I wore at the moment this picture was taken - about 20 years ago - was a bargain I bought at the Etcetera Shop in North Newton, no doubt; I remember being intrigued by those curious collar clips. And since the trees are full of leaves it must have been a good couple of months before or after I slipped so embarrassingly that thinking of it I still split my sides.

The second-hand shop, an outlet of privately organized social welfare, if I remember correctly, was one of my favorite addresses in Bethel's satellite North Newton. There I found - for very little money - some authentic gear. I felt so much up-to-date in: a checkered jacket for instance, or my very first baseball cap, dungarees and some of the fanciest shirts I ever had and which, having also decent shoes (no gyms!) to go with, eased my way into Hutchinson's glamorous Disco on Saturday nights.

Etcetera - it was my rescue port on one freezing winter's morning between Christmas and New Year's Eve. After being ripped off in Mexico I had to cancel further travelling plans and return early, with only the things I wore: flimsy trousers and a T-shirt, and arriving at about 14° Fahrenheit in North Newton (a

friendly old redneck from Texas lent me the money for the bus fare) I dashed into this beneficial institution and got some warm stuff for a song.

Back at the college I met Raylene Penner, my teacher in literature (who introduced me to Nabokov's Timofej Pnin, a Russian in exile, I felt a strong alliance to, for he was almost as troubled as I was with the American language and like me occasionally felt a bit odd in this foreign country). I told Raylene about my mishaps whereupon she expressed so much pity that I felt obliged to appease: There is a good side to it, I said thinking of the opportunity to join the *interterm class* offered to those who stayed at the college during christmas vacation. But prompted by some stray interference I mixed in a far-flung synonym for class, viz *course*, saying precociously to her instant and my delayed surprise: "Why, it's not bad as all that, 'cause now I'm back in time for inter..."

Michael Windgassen, August 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1981-82

A Unique Goal

My personal account of the time I spent in Germany started in the U.S. I was engaged to James Allen a few days before I left for Germany. Because of this I was homesick the whole time. However, it helped that my roommate, Marion Spies, the German exchange student at Bethel, flew back to Wuppertal with me. She helped me while I was in Germany along with an exchange student from Ireland, and a friend in Leverkusen. I spent a lot of time in Leverkusen with this friend whom I had met in the U.S. earlier. She and her family had me over a lot including for holidays and carnivals. I spent a lot of time in Germany walking. I walked when I had somewhere to go to and I walked, with friends, just for fun. I also got inspired to do some knitting. I ended up with a goal of knitting James a sweater by the end of the school year. I made that goal by the time James came to Germany. When he came, we did some traveling and flew home together. It was hard to say goodbye to friends, but I still keep in touch with some. Hopefully, someday, I will make it back to Germany again.

Lynette Gingerich Allen, August 2001
Bethel exchange student in Wuppertal, 1982-83

Bethel - Ein Meilenstein In Meinem Leben

Ich erinnere mich genau an meine Ankunft in Bethel im August 1988. Den ersten Menschen, den ich auf dem Campus traf, war Nancy Gale (geb. Kroecker), die in Warkentin Court vor den Briefkästen saß. Es war eine sehr einschneidende Begegnung, denn wir sind seit nun mehr 13 Jahren befreundet.

Von Beginn an genoss ich die Freundlichkeit und Aufgeschlossenheit meiner Mitstudenten. Jeder sagte "Hallo" und man hatte von Anfang an das Gefühl, dazu zu gehören. Aufgrund meiner sprachlichen Unzulänglichkeit war ich am Anfang jedoch über die Floskel "See you later!" verwirrt. Die ersten Tage dachte ich wirklich, ich hätte unzählige Verabredungen "irgendwann später."

Das mit dem Studieren habe ich während meines Austauschjahres nicht ganz so ernst genommen. Mein Hauptfach war "Socializing." Besonders gefielen mir nächtliche Ausflüge zu Druber's zum Donut essen. Gerne ging ich auch zu Spielen des Soccer Teams. Ich habe keine Begegnung verpasst und konnte auch viele amerikanische Freunde mit meiner Begeisterung anstecken.

Ein besonderes Highlight war die Interterm Reise nach Mexiko mit meiner Spanishlehrerin Karen Christian.

Es gäbe noch viele große und kleine Erlebnisse, die es wert wären, über sie zu berichten, aber das würde den Rahmen sprengen. Mein Jahr in Bethel ist sicherlich ein Meilenstein in meinem Leben und ich empfinde eine tiefe Verbundenheit mit Bethel und den vielen Menschen, denen ich während dieses Jahres begegnet bin. Ich freue mich immer sehr über das *Bethel Bulletin* und lese mit großem Interesse die Rubriken "Marriages", "Births" und "Class Notes".

Viele herzliche Grüße aus Wuppertal
Daniela Pruß, September 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1988-89

Good Coffee and Robert Frost

Attempting to give a personal account of all the positive experiences I made at Bethel would actually amount to producing a fairly large piece of text. Obviously, it was quite useful for me as the English teacher I am by now to experience how a language is learned in an authentic communicative setting. People simply didn't understand me when I compared a friend of mine who used to do a lot of weightlifting when he was at Bethel to a *beer* instead of a *bear*. My plan to grow a goat was also the source of some amusement, since I declared to let the *bird* on my chin grow. Well, and while the rest of the boys from my mod went to get some dessert, I was on my way to the desert.

Since teaching English also implies the teaching of some social and cultural aspects, it was quite useful to have experienced the *American Way of Life* and its Kansan variety myself. Besides, the *Kansan Way of Life* is part of the book we are using to teach English at our school. It features Janet, whom you'll definitely know, from Tonganoxie as a main character.

Talking about ways of life and thus about stereotypes to be honest, it wasn't only interesting to find out that many of my own preconceptions about the USA in general and the land of the south wind in particular were utterly untrue - good coffee *is* available in the US - , but also to be regarded as a representative of the *German Way of Life* and be confronted with other people's preconceptions about it.

Undoubtly, my year at Bethel College was also a year of intellectual growth, being instructed in English and American Literature, Linguistics, Physical Education, the Fundamentals of Broadcasting or Finite Maths by superb teachers.

However, I think all these aspect, as important as they are, do not suffice to account for my heartfelt gratitude to have been able to participate in the exchange. What makes my year at Bethel truly unforgettable is the hospitality I experienced there. Hospitality is an abstract concept which materializes itself in people's behavior. So it were the people I met while I was there who actually made the year what it was - great. As a matter of fact, I didn't meet one single person who didn't treat me with remarkable kindness. There are by far too many people who I remember for their friendliness and support to mention everybody by name, yet I'd like to thank them all that way.

In particular I'd like to thank the college and Merle for having made everything possible in the first place and for being a friend then and now. I'd like to thank Anna, Diane, Dan, John, Marc, Thane, Will and Frank whom I'd like to know that I didn't only benefit from what they taught me, but also from their being a role-model as good teachers. I am also most grateful to Jay, Curt and all the other boys from 8A for having been integrated from the first day on and for everything else they did for me. The same is true for

Ben, Marike, Ryan, Todd and the others from 8B and 9C, where I could always get a cup of the above-mentioned coffee.

To conclude by adapting Frost:

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
I remember you all too well,
since you made all the difference.

Thomas Wegner, September 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1994-95

Viele Neue Erfahrungen

Ich habe 1995/96 am Bethel/Wuppertal Austauschprogramm teilgenommen und wenn ich an die Zeit am Bethel zurückdenke, fallen mir spontan einige Begriffe ein, wie z. B.: "Convo, Ad Building, Fall Fest, Christmas Fest, Interterm, Bubberts, Chapel, Mantz Library, Afro-Centric Evening, International Student Club und Ultimate on the Green."

Convo hat mir immer sehr gut gefallen, die Themen waren interessant und von den eingeladenen Rednern gut vorgetragen. Im Ad Building habe ich die meisten Unterrichts-stunden verbracht. English und American Literature bei Ami Regier, John Sheriff und Brad Born. Spanisch habe ich bei Martha Peterka gelernt. Aber auch die US-History Stunden bei Tom Nierman und Aquarellmalerei bei Gail Lutsch haben viel Spaß gemacht. Ich habe eine Menge in Bethel gelernt und bin von den Professoren immer sehr nett betreut und unterstützt worden.

Das Interterm war für mich besonders interessant, da ich mit Julie Hart und ihrem Public Policy Global Issues Kurs nach Washington D.C. geflogen bin. Der Flug an sich war schon ein Ereignis, da wir bis kurz vorher nicht wussten, ob wir die Reise aufgrund des heftigen Blizzards überhaupt antreten können. Nachdem wir dann doch sicher in Washington angekommen waren, machten wir abends in kleinen Gruppen Spaziergänge, um die Stadt zu erkunden. Unser Spaziergang dauerte fast vier Stunden, da die einzelnen Sehenswürdigkeiten doch viel weiter auseinanderlagen, als uns irrtümlicher Weise erschien. Aufgrund der Schneeverhältnisse brauchten wir natürlich noch viel länger, um die Distanzen zwischen den Denkmälern zurückzulegen. Neben den Touristenattraktionen, die wir am Wochenende besuchen konnten, waren wir auch zu Gast bei zahlreichen politischen Einrichtungen und Organisationen, wie dem State Department, Pentagon, Supreme Court, Congress, Green Peace, Amnesty International, World Bank und haben einen Tag in einem Obdachlosenheim geholfen, in der Soup Kitchen zu arbeiten.

Die Feste, die Bethel organisiert hat, sind auch sehr schön gewesen. Beim Fall Fest habe ich zusammen mit dem Deutschclub geholfen, Bratwürstchen zu grillen, wobei mir auffiel, daß viele Amerikaner eine Vorliebe für dunkle, d.h. verkohlte Würstchen haben, was ich nicht so ganz nachvollziehen kann. Das Christmas Fest mit Dinner und begleitendem Gesang vom Bethel College Choir war sehr festlich gestaltet.

Der Afro-Centric Evening, zu dem wir Austauschstudenten eingeladen waren, war für mich eine neue, aber sehr interessante Erfahrung.

Zusammen mit Thomas Könen, der gleichzeitig mit mir am Austauschprogramm teilgenommen hat, habe ich mir ein Auto gekauft. Leider keinen großen amerikanischen Wagen, sondern witzigerweise einen

Volkswagen, den wir günstig über Beziehungen vermittelt bekommen haben. Mit diesem Wagen waren wir dann mobil und konnten so die nähere und weitere Umgebung am Wochenende erkunden.

Das Jahr in Bethel, in dem ich viele neue Menschen und Freunde kennengelernt habe und auch viele neue Erfahrungen gesammelt habe, hat mir sehr gut gefallen. Ich habe mich in Bethel immer wohl und zu Hause gefühlt.

Natalie Kultscher Gerlach, September 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1995-96

Wuppertal Sheds Tears For Us

At the end of a hot Egyptian summer, Wuppertal reminds me of rain. Once as I was walking down to the bus stop on the way to Berlin, my friend said, "Look Wuppertal is sad to see us go." And indeed the misting rain felt like tears. It also felt like love- and to come back four days later to the same rain didn't strike us as strange at all. We just assumed that Wuppertal was crying for joy to have us back.

I got to know two families in Germany. One shared Köln, family traditions, and Kölsch beer with me. The other shared Wuppertal, Tina Bausch, and Kölsch beer. In my memory, it never rained when I was with them. We enjoyed talking about German politics, and I was intrigued to realize that unlike the unadulterated American nationalism, German pride has been beaten and bowed. What remains is a paradoxically humble pride, a beautiful thing.

Living in the mods at Bethel with German exchange students, Tatiana and Kerstin, was just as special as living in the Wohnheim in Wuppertal. We admired Tati's pictures of her boyfriend and talked a lot about feminism, one of Tati's interests. It was funny watching Kerstin's reaction when Chris Semon, a somewhat crazy heavy-weight lifter on campus, called her up asking if she'd meet him at the weight room. She was curious, so she went and found that he wanted to lift her over his head like a rack of weights. She came back very alarmed and wanted to know if this was a cultural difference or if we also found his request very strange.

It's September now, and the new Wuppertal students are already over the fact that sport and music count for college credit. Soon new Bethel students in the Wohnheim will be trying to find the lady downstairs who rents out sheets, and it'll be raining.

Esther Kratzer Koontz, September 2001
Bethel exchange student in Wuppertal 1996-97

Bethel Students Are Helpful

What could I say about Bethel? I think it is a great college with good teachers who care about their students. The students are also helpful in a way a lot of Germans are not. I remember that once when I needed a ride, when I wanted to visit a friend of mine in Los Angeles, everything was just arranged for me. Doug Penner had a meeting in Kansas City that day and he took me with him. On my return from California a girl who had spent the weekend in Kansas City with her family waited for me at the airport late in the evening to pick me up. We got home late at night on Sunday and she did not even accept money for gas from me. I did not know the girl and had only talked to her on the phone one time because I wanted to know whether she went home for the weekend.

Kerstin Düllmann, July 2001
Wuppertal exchange student at Bethel 1997-98

A Year Unmatched in Personal Growth and Adventure

Being chosen to be the Wuppertal exchange student for the year 1970-71 allowed me to have a year unmatched in personal growth and adventure. As a "campus kid", that year was my first away from my family and their frugality allowed me only one phone call home at Christmas time, so I was very alone.

The Wuppertal experience, unlike so many other year abroad programs, promotes total immersion into the German culture and university life. I took that quite literally by not allowing myself any contact with the few Americans that I did meet there. I developed a wonderful relationship with my roommate, Ingrid Schrobang. We have visited each other many times in the ensuing 31 years. On September 11th, 2001, she was the first person to call me asking if we were alright and telling me that all of Germany was crying for us.

By the way, I did go on to get a Master's degree in German at the University of Kansas, and have taught for many years both in Texas and Wisconsin but by far the most valuable educational experiences for me were the personal ones.

Cornelia Krahn, September 2001
Bethel exchange student in Wuppertal 1970-71



Richarda Klatt



Brandon Nelson



Thomas Könen & Merle Schlabaugh



Annaliese Görres



Michael Völker



Ulrika Hartwig (l) & Rudolf Wiemann (r)



Klaus Sowa (l) & Rudolf Stubenrauch (r)



Monika Christ



Prof. Uwe Multhaupt (l),
Yvonne Florian Weber (m) & Monika Christ (r)



Marion Gorjub



Christopher Miller



Olivia Bartel



Benjamin Harder



Renard Bausa (l), Thomas Wegner (m),
Michael Albrecht (r)



Elizabeth Schrag



Robert Epp



Lisa Thimm



Daniela Pruß



Patricia Krieger



Renard Bausa



Mark Pierce & Amy White



Christoph Klose & Sabine Laumann



Eric Jantzen



Scott Graber (l) &
Jonathon Hogg (r)



Meike Chaudiere



Christopher Phillippe



Annaliese Görres (l), Brandon Nelson (m), Christiane Renger (r)



Anke Pollman & Jörg Vorberg



Angela Janzen & Sarah Rempel



Kerstin Düllmann



Christoph "Stoppel" Martin (l) & Carsten Gerhardt (r)

Addendum*

Favorite Memories

Of the many involvement possibilities that presented themselves when I arrived at Bethel in 1965, I was particularly intrigued by the Wuppertal Exchange program. I applied and went through the interview process. Karl-Heinz Wilhelm, who was the exchange student from Wuppertal to Bethel at the time, concluded the student council interview by asking me to translate: "Du kannst einen Esel zum Wasser führen, aber du kannst ihm nicht zwingen zum trinken." The translation went well enough, apparently, and I was soon on my way, stopping to visit Expo 67 in Montreal, for London on the ocean liner Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin. Then the Channel and the Cliffs of Dover and then a trip to Greece down the Adriatic coast in a Volkswagen Bus and eventually to Dietrich Bonhoeffer Weg 3. The world was an exciting place.

Some of my favorite memories:

Wolfram, Antje; Manfred, Brigitte - good friends from those days at the PH with whom we, as well as our families, are in regular touch .

Those great classes on my transcript:

Hist - Der Rappalo Vertrag, Intro to Weimar Republic, Hitler, Imperialism of the 19th C; PoSc - Intro to Marxist Theory; Phil - Descartes, Kant; Lit - James Joyce; PE - Skiing; Educ - The Problem of Teaching

Waldschlosschen - and learning the wonderful art of Bierdeckel flipping.

Trip to Israel over the Semester Ferien - working on a Kibbutz and dealing with the realities of being 'German' in Israel.

The PH ski holiday to Sellrain - it was rumored that we, the skiers on the slopes, were being filmed from the air for the movie 'Where Eagles Dare' and so, in a sense, co-starring with Richard Burton and Clint Eastwood.

The 67/68 student unrests - the urgency of the SDS seminars discussing Herbert Marcuse and being a part of a massive student demonstration led by Rudi Dutschke in Berlin (and gaining a poignant understanding of the cold war while traveling through the DDR.)

Developing a life long admiration for 'Kaiser Franz' and always being delighted when Bayern leads the Bundesliga - predictability is so comforting.

Passing through 'the Prague Spring' on my way to Russia to visit distant relatives just before the Soviet bloc 'invaded' - then being interviewed about it all by the FBI on my return to Bethel

From graduate work in German Literature, to a three years of teaching in a private boys school in Appenzell, to teaching German and History in Canadian High Schools, to a three year term with MCC in Zagreb, Croatia, to doctoral work at the University of Vienna, to teaching history at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the Bethel/Wuppertal exchange program profoundly influenced my life and shaped my career.

Walter Epp, September 2001
Bethel exchange student at Wuppertal, 1967-68

*In the compilation of this booklet, the submission by Walter Epp was inadvertently not included. However, this was discovered before the booklets were assembled and could therefore still be included. My sincerest apologies are offered to Walter Epp for this oversight.

Merle Schlabaugh