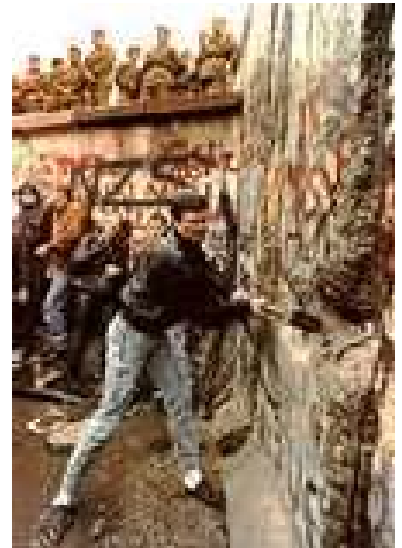




The voice of the German-American Society of Tulsa



The "Wall"



**Mr. Gorbachev,
tear down
this wall!**

President Ronald Reagan,
At the Brandenburg Gate
June 12, 1987

Source: Wikipedia

GAST Happenings

Handarbeitsgruppe Tue. at 10 AM	Dec 13 Adventsfeier	Mar 5 Stammtisch
Oct 31 Oktoberfest Party	Dec 19 Christmas Party	Mar 26 Weinkellerabend
Nov 6 Stammtisch	Dec 31 New Years Eve Party	Apr 2 Stammtisch
Nov 8 Konversationsrunde	Jan 8 Stammtisch	May 7 Stammtisch
Nov 15 Volkstrauertag	Jan 22 Weinkellerabend	Jun 4 Stammtisch
Nov 18 Brainstorming	Feb 5 Stammtisch	Jul 2 Stammtisch
Dec 4-6 Christkindlmarkt	Feb 16 Fasching Party (Fat Tuesday)	Aug 6 Stammtisch
Dec 11 Stammtisch	Feb 26 Weinkellerabend	Sep 3 Stammtisch

This page is sponsored by GAST Member Hildegard Schaffrin

...FROM THE GAST PRESIDENT



GUTEN TAG!

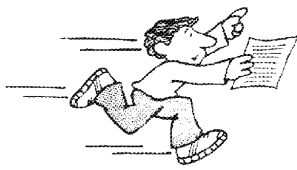
As I write this today, a crew is busy getting ready to move out to Oktoberfest. Our committee, under the leadership of **Arnold Bieber** has worked very hard getting all the pieces put in place for us to have a successful festival. This is our major fund-raiser and it takes a lot of work to get ready – ordering food, supplies and getting enough volunteers. That is the hard one – volunteers. Many thanks to **June Holmes and Darlene Tegeler** for working diligently on this project. We have had a great response from the area schools and we are thankful for that and look forward to working with the students. Our work efforts started in early October with a work party to inspect and repair all of our gas and electrical equipment. Many repairs were made, so our equipment should work better at the festival. This was made easier by storing the new storage unit where all the stoves and grills, etc are not stored on site. That way, we can get to it and work on it. This “party” was followed by a wash party where all the utensils, pots and pans were washed, sanitized and bagged for the appropriate tend. Some of the guys also repaired our screen doors for both tents. Thanks to **Donna Boggs, Ruth Bly, Ed Westenhiser, Arnold Bieber, Erica Hartman, Al Voeller, Doris Gallagher, Dale Parsons— and your’s truly even got his hands in the dishwasher!** It was a long day, but fun was had by all. I look forward to seeing all of our volunteers at Oktoberfest.

I understand that all is well in the preparations for Christkindlmarkt. **Hannelore Giles**, chair of this event reports that things are falling into place for this event. I know she has several people helping her and I appreciate everyone’s work there. I have heard from people at my church and at work that want to know when this is so they can go shopping.

At our last Board of Director’s meeting we had some great discussion on the future of GAST. We know that we have an aging organization and to keep it going, we must attract new, younger members. In this effort, I asked the question :”Why would someone want to join GAST? – Why would someone want to remain a member of GAST and

what do we offer our members to keep them active, involved and excited about belonging? Many great thoughts, comments and ideas were given. We know we must keep a balance of activities for all of our age groups – traditional German fare for those who came from Germany and founded our great organization and something to attract younger [family oriented] – perhaps non-German folks who are interested in this culture and heritage. That is the big trick for us right now. We must think outside the ‘box’ to find this mix! I heard from a few of you with your thought, concerns and ideas. From this, I want to get the entire membership involved in looking at what GAST will look like in 5 years and beyond. To start this, I want to have a **“Geistesblitz” – brainstorm session on Wednesday, November 18 at 7:00 PM in the Great Hall – accessible to all.** It is just a discussion, time to share ideas of all types to see if we can get some ideas to work to move GAST forward. No idea is too crazy at this meeting. No business can or will be conducted. This is your organization. So come and be part of helping in keep it going and moving forward. Ponder your ideas, jot them down and bring them with you. Hope to see ya there!

—Leon



**Newsletter
Deadline**

**Wednesday, Nov 18
by 6 PM
scheduled for the Wednesday
after the Board meeting.
The Board meets every
second Wednesday
of the month
at the GAST Center at 7 PM**

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...from the Arts President



Are those really Christmas trees springing up in stores? Is November already on our doorstep? It's difficult to believe that the weather is turning cold and winter will soon be upon us. However, even in winter there are enjoyable events we can look forward to at GAST Arts. As you are aware, I generally begin my column talking about the fabulous film offerings that **Erwin Jerchau** brings us on the first Monday of every month. We gather not only for the movie, but also for the camaraderie one gets in enjoying something special with friends. There's always something good to snack on and popcorn, of course! So do join us November 2nd in the Weinkeller. You won't be disappointed.

Our Konversationsrunde is continuing on a strong note. Thirteen people heard **Sabine Brown** give an insightful and sometimes amusing recollection of her time in Germany. **Gabi Richardson** plied us with wonderful cakes, wine and excellent coffee. This is the true meaning of German "Gastfreundlichkeit" and if you have missed the fact there no longer is a "Sonntagskaffee", this is as close to that as you can come. Our next Konversationsrunde on November 8th will be hosted by **Arnold and Gwen Bieber** in the Weinkeller. Our topic deals with the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification. Be sure to see the separate article dealing with the Konversationsrunde.

It was with great regret that I cancelled the Saturday **Kinderdeutsch** lessons. Where are all our children? Our child attendance was 4, 3 and 4 on the three Saturdays we tried to get classes rolling. Adults far outnumbered the children, and although the children had fun playing, having so few makes it difficult when teaching dances and songs. Yet we won't give up! At our children's Christmas party on December 12, I will have sign up sheets available for our Spring session, which begins February 6, 2010. Please encourage family and friends with children ages kindergarten through 5th grade to sign up their children for the Spring session. While their children enjoy the camaraderie and learning fun, the adults can take advantage and get some 'me' time. On an adult note, our **Adult Language classes** end November 17, with the Spring session beginning February 2, 2010.

November 15th marks the Annual Volkstrauertag (German Memorial Day), which we celebrate in El Reno where Germans and Italians who died while prisoner's of war in El Reno are buried. Please be sure to read **Fred Rother's** excellent article about this event in the last (Oct.) issue of the Echo. We will car pool from the GAST building. Please call **Arnold Bieber** to advise if you plan to attend and take part in the car pooling.

German American Day (GA Day) this year was dedicated to **Josef Hardt**, whose death this past year is a great loss to Tulsa and the German American Society. Known far and wide as **Mr. Oktoberfest**, he truly exemplified an individual who well represented his German heritage. Our thanks go out to **Professor Udwin**, our speaker, the **GAST Blaskappelle**, our event chairman, **Charles Meyers** and the many volunteers, including **John Toschik**, **Arnold** and **Gwen Bieber**. We are also most grateful to **Governor Henry** and **Mayor Taylor** for their GA Day proclamations. Some 62 individuals enjoyed the afternoon together, with **Susan Bey** and her able crew providing delicious refreshments.

And so another month draws to a close and before you know it we will be singing "Stille Nacht, Heilig Nacht" (Silent Night) and perhaps enjoy a snowflake or two.

—Uschi Mueller

Die Deutsche Konversationsrunde

This session of our Konversationsrunde will be held in the GAST Weinkeller, on Sunday, November 8. The meeting commences at 3 PM as always. We look forward to seeing you there.

The **Konversationsrunde** is a program under the auspices of the German-American Society of Tulsa Arts Association. It serves to promote the German language and other cultural interests of its members. For suggestions, information or hosting one of our meetings, please call Barbara Conrad at 492-3273 (Chair) or Gertrud Schmidt at 495-3727 (Co-chair).

—Arnold Bieber

Annual Volkstrauertag (German Memorial Day) Ceremony at Fort Reno, OK.

November 15, 2009

This event commemorates German and also Italian soldiers who died while interned in Oklahoma during WWII.



Chapel



Cemetery

The Arts Association is coordinating the annual Volkstrauertag (German Memorial Day) ceremony at Fort Reno, OK. This event commemorates German and also Italian soldiers who died while interned in Oklahoma during WWII. The event begins at 2 PM on Sunday, November 15 at the Ft. Reno Chapel, which was constructed by German prisoners of war. Charles Wiggin, Honorary German Consul and Colonel Robert Powell (Ret.) will speak during the ceremony. Participants will also include: the Governor's Honor Guard and a delegation from the German troop contingent at Fort Sill. Ceremonies conclude with laying of the wreaths at the post cemetery, accompanied by GAST members **David Marshall and Max Tankersley** playing the bagpipes. Fort Reno is located two miles north of Exit 119 off Interstate 40 approximately 30 miles west of Oklahoma City. We will organize a carpool of interested members to attend the event.

We hope that many GAST members will have an opportunity to attend in this very moving event. Please call **Arnold Bieber** at 357-9156 if you wish to sign up to join or to provide for car pooling.

The Fall of the Wall

The **Berlin Wall** (German: *Berliner Mauer*) was a physical barrier erected by the German Democratic Republic (DDR) (East Germany) completely encircling West Berlin, separating it from East Germany, including East Berlin. The longer inner German border demarcated the border between East and West Germany. Both borders came to symbolize the Iron Curtain between Western Europe and the Eastern Bloc. Prior to the Wall's erection, 3.5 million East Germans had avoided Eastern Bloc emigration restrictions to escape into West Germany, many over the border between East and West Berlin. During its existence from 1961 to 1989, the Wall stopped almost all such emigration and separated East Germany from West Germany for more than a quarter of a century. The Wall included guard towers lining large concrete walls circumscribing a wide area (later known as the "death strip") containing anti-vehicle trenches, "fakir beds" and other defenses.

During a revolutionary wave sweeping across the Eastern Bloc, the East German government announced

(Continued on page 5)

Come join us at the next
Stammtischrunde

Friday evening, November 6, 6:30 PM
 In the GAST Weinkeller
 Hope to see you there.



Zum Wohl,
 – Dann Björklund, Chair



Sweet Potato says:

There is nothing more
 frightful
 than ignorance in action.

– Goethe

(Continued from page 4)

on November 9, 1989, after several weeks of civil unrest, that all DDR citizens could visit West Germany and West Berlin. Crowds of East Germans climbed onto and crossed the wall, joined by West Germans on the other side in a celebratory atmosphere. Over the next few weeks, parts of the wall were chipped away by a euphoric public and by souvenir hunters; industrial equipment was later used to remove almost all of the rest. The fall of the Berlin Wall paved the way for German reunification, which was formally concluded on October 3, 1990.

Escape attempts

NVA officer Conrad Schumann defecting to West Berlin during the wall early days in 1961. During the Wall's existence there were around 5,000 successful escapes to West Berlin. The number of people who died trying to cross the wall or as a result of the wall's existence has been disputed. The most vocal claims by Alexandra Hildebrandt, Director of the Checkpoint Charlie Museum and widow of the Museum's founder, estimated the death toll to be well above 200, while an ongoing historic research group at the Center for Contemporary Historical Research (ZZF) in Potsdam has confirmed 136 deaths. Prior official figures listed 98 as being killed.

The East German government issued shooting orders to border guards dealing with defectors, though such orders are not the same as shoot to kill orders which DDR officials denied ever issuing. Guards were told by East German authorities in an October 1973 order later discovered by researchers that people attempting to cross the wall were criminals and needed to be shot: "Do not hesitate to use your firearm, not even when the border is breached in the company of women and children, which is a tactic the traitors have often used".

Early successful escapes involved people jumping the initial barbed wire or leaping out of apartment windows along the line but these ended as the wall was fortified. To solve these simple escape attempts, East German authorities no longer permitted apartments near the wall to be occupied and any building near the wall had its windows boarded and later bricked up. On August 15, 1961, Conrad Schumann was the first East German border guard to escape by jumping the barbed wire to West Berlin.



Later successful escape attempts included long tunnels, waiting for favorable winds and taking a hot air balloon, sliding along aerial wires, flying ultralights, and in one instance, simply driving a sports car at full speed through the basic, initial fortifications. When a metal beam was placed at checkpoints to prevent this kind of escape, up to four people (two in the front seats and possibly two in the trunk) drove under the bar in a sports car that had been modified to allow the roof and wind screen to come away when it made contact

(Continued on page 7)

This spot is sponsored by

Harold and Doris Wicks

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(Continued from page 5)

with the beam. They simply lay flat and kept driving forward. This issue was rectified with zig-zagging roads at checkpoints. The sewer system preceded the wall, and some people escaped through the sewers, in a number of cases with assistance from the German student group.

An airborne escape was made by Thomas Krüger, who landed a Zlin Z 42M light aircraft of the Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik, an East German youth military training organization, at RAF Gatow. His aircraft, registration DDR-WOH, was dismantled and returned to the East Germans by road, complete with humorous slogans painted on by RAF airmen such as "Wish you were here" and "Come back soon". DDR-WOH is still flying today, but under the registration D-EWOH.

If an escapee was wounded in a crossing attempt and lay on the death strip, no matter how close they were to the Western wall, they could not be rescued for fear of triggering engaging fire from the 'Grepos', the East Berlin border guards. The guards often let fugitives bleed to death in the middle of this ground, like in the most notorious failed attempt, that of Peter Fechter (aged 18). He was shot and bled to death in full view of the Western media, on August 17, 1962.



Memorial to the Victims with prophetic graffiti, 1982

Fechter's death created negative publicity worldwide that led the leaders of East Berlin to place more restrictions on shooting in public places, and provide medical care for possible "would-be escapees". The last person to be shot while trying to cross the border was Chris Gueffroy on February 6, 1989.

Source: Wikipedia

Now Playing at the GAST Theater

An Erwin Jerchau Presentation



Monday November 2, starting at 6:30 PM

Wintermärchen Wunderland Musik vom wilden Kaiser

Starting at 7:30 PM

Frühstück mit einer Unbekanten
Starring: Julia Jentsch, Jan Josef Liefers,
Stefan Kurt, and Andrea Sawatzki

The Sunshine Lady



GAST sent Get Well cards to the following; Katherine Curtis, Gerry Volz, Ed Lenfestey. Lois Voeller, Annemie Waldroop and Joy Walker.

Please call or E-mail me if you know of a GAST member who is ill. Also, please let me know if it is appropriate to send a sympathy card. E-mail me at book_worm34@hotmail.com or phone me at 357-9156

—Gwen Bieber

FOR SALE:

- 14k yellow/white gold diamond name necklace and yellow gold square foxtail chain, approx 17 ½ inches long. The 2" name plate is white gold and diamonds and says

HANNELORE

- Diamonds are 50-1.7 mm round brilliant cut of approx one carat total weight. Clarity is SI. Color is "H" to "I". Total weight is 7.69 grams. Written appraisal on 1/16/04 was \$1,550.00. **Sale price through GAST is \$900.00.** Photo of necklace available upon request)
- Telephone Charles Byrd at (405) 948-8140

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Berlin: Unter den Linden, ca 1900

Famous Avenue called: Under the Linden Trees

Source: Wikipedia