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Spring 2009

German-American contributions have distinguished role in US life

*But diversity imposed
limits on influence*

By Ron Ross

Amerika, du hast es besser," wrote Johann Wolfgang von Goethe on the eve of the great outward migration from Germanic central Europe to the United States. The appeal of the New World that Goethe described in his poem from 1827, together with the promise of a better life for themselves and their children, attracted something like eight million Germans to our shores, the majority of whom arrived between 1840 and 1920. According to the census of 2000, the American descendants of those immigrants number nearly fifty million. As such, Americans who claim German ancestry now comprise the single largest ethnic group in the United States.

Most Americans tend to think of their German neighbors and fellow citizens as some kind of unified, undifferentiated, monolithic bloc, sharing more or less common characteristics and wielding considerable influence. In reality, however, German-Americans remain an enormously heterogeneous group, divided by provincial origins, religious differences, and social or class



Ron Ross, a director of Goethe House of Wisconsin, is Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where from 1968 until his retirement in 2004 he taught 19th and 20th century German history and the social and political history of Modern Europe.

background, to cite only the most obvious. Even their presumably common language is marked by regional or linguistic variation.

Local or regional affiliation, as much as a coherent national identity, has long played a role in the German's self-identification. Until the formation of the
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From the President

"What ever you can
do or dream, begin it." -

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

I am using this article as an invitation to all of our members to pay a visit to our new office and browsing center located in the Milwaukee School of Engineering Alumni Partnership Center building. We are very proud and happy to become a part of this great college campus.

Our new Executive Director, Jan Beger, is looking forward to sharing the hospitality of our new home with all the members and friends of the Goethe House of Wisconsin.

Our annual meeting and Christmas Party was held in the elegant Grohmann Museum and we were honored to have Dr. Eckhart Grohmann and Dr. and Mrs. Herman Viets, President of MSOE as our guests. We are now going forward in a joint collaboration with the College to provide the services of Goethe House to the students who are interested in the courses that we have to offer which will help to broaden their language skills and open the vistas of today's Germany.

"Patience and hard work is paying off."

Alles Gute, Alles Goethe!

-Jim Benz

Jim Benz and Jan Beger: New leaders of Goethe House of Wisconsin

Benz is elected president; Beger is appointed executive director



James A. Benz

The board of directors of Goethe House of Wisconsin has elected James A. Benz president of the German-American cultural institute to succeed long-time president Ted E. Wedemeyer Jr., who died July 23, 2008. Benz had been a Goethe House vice president.

Benz was born in Milwaukee in 1934. He was educated in the Milwaukee Public School system and at Wisconsin State College. In 1956 he became a partner in the family business, BENZ LAUNDRY & CLEANERS, which was started by his parents in 1930. He operated the business until 1994 when it was sold.

In 1974 he was elected an alderman in the City of Wauwatosa and served in that position until 1976 when he was elected mayor of Wauwatosa. He served as mayor from 1976 to 1984. He is presently serving Wauwatosa as Vice Chairman of the Assessment Board of Review, as a member of the Board of Election Canvassers and is Chairman of the Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) Review Board.

[Please turn to Benz, Page 7]



Jan Beger

“Ich bin eine Austauschschülerin aus den Vereinigten Staaten. Bitte sprechen Sie langsam!”

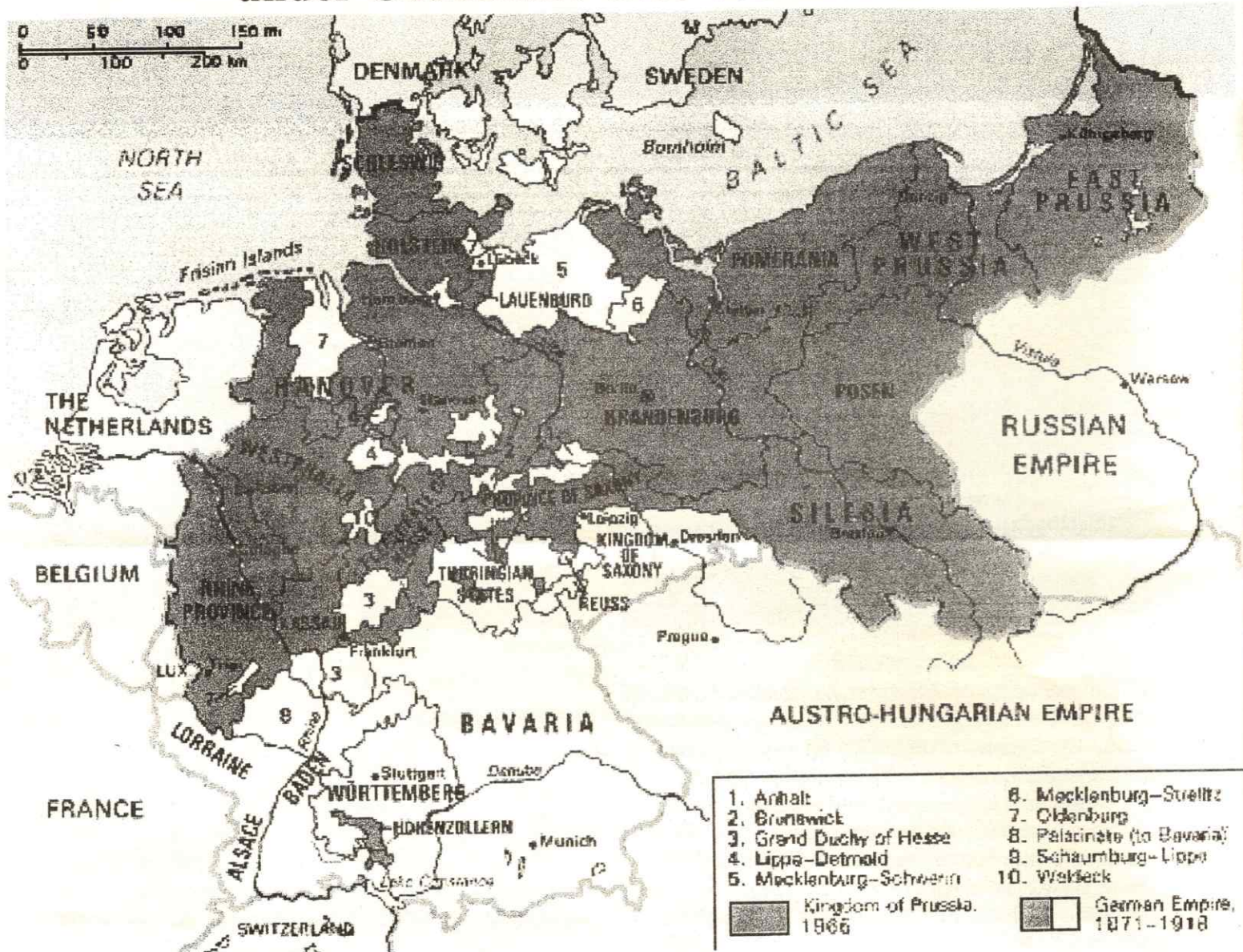
That was the extent of my German when I arrived in Goslar, Germany at the age of 16. This exchange experience gave me great insight as how one learns a foreign language by total immersion. When I returned to Wisconsin 11 months later, not only could I converse in German, I spoke English with a British accent.

I returned to Germany for a second time as a junior in college. This time I chose Bavaria. My first week in Munich I met “einen echten Müncher”, who eventually became my husband.

During visits with his family and their large circle of friends I was exposed to the different nuances of the language. His mother, originally from Altenberg, spoke one style of German, his father raised in Wien

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Germany was little more than a geographic expression until the formation of the German Empire in 1871 under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck



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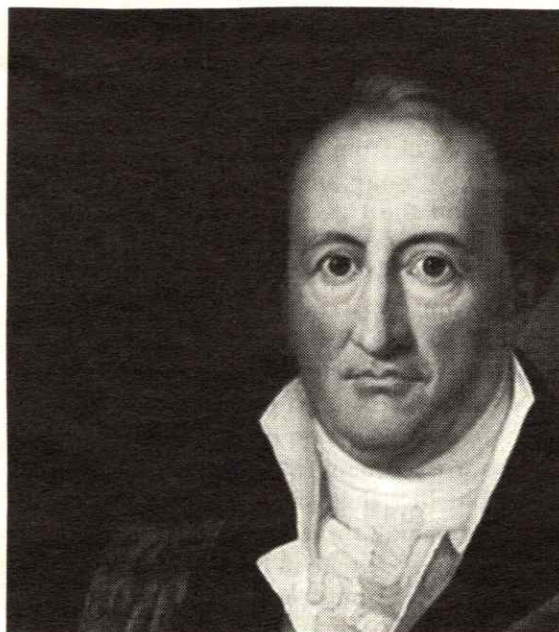
The new German Empire was composed of four kingdoms, six grand duchies, five duchies, seven principalities, three free cities and the so-called Imperial Territory of Alsace-Lorraine.

German-Americans enhanced life in US

[German-American, from Page 1]

German Empire in 1871 under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, Germany was little more than a geographic expression. But that new Empire, too, composed as it was of four kingdoms, six grand duchies, five duchies, seven principalities, three free cities, and the so-called Imperial Territory of Alsace-Lorraine, represented something of a patchwork. The various organizational frameworks that preceded the foundation of this new territorial unit—the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, for example, or the German Confederation—represented only loose covering shells that sheltered a mosaic of sovereign, independent states, both large and small. Chief among them were Austria, Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg, and Baden. Because these individual territories were stitched together over a long period of time and on occasion under different contractual conditions, they all too often remained internally dissimilar or lacked religious or political homogeneity. What self-identification developed, therefore, was shaped and molded by local customs, narrow political ties, social affiliations, and affection for Heimat, as much or even more than allegiance to some kind of overarching, central state authority that incorporated all of Germanic Central Europe. Even though they shared a common German cultural and linguistic tradition, the inhabitants preferred to identify themselves in narrower or particular terms as Austrians, Prussians, Bavarians, Saxons, and so on. Something of that legacy remains today in the form of Landsmannschaften, fraternal ethnic societies with links to territorial experiences in Bavaria, for example, or even provincial ties to Pomerania, Silesia, Swabia, or the shared experiences of the so-called Donauschwaben, to name but a few.

This diversity was also reflected in the patterns of settlement preferred by German immigrants during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although major cities like Cleveland, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, or St. Louis all possessed large numbers of Germans, the immigrants sorted themselves out on the basis of their local or regional ties and affiliations. Immigrants from Württemberg, a kingdom in southwestern Germany, for example, preferred to settle among their fellow countrymen in Philadelphia rather than in Milwaukee where Württembergers were scarcely represented. Hanoverian settlers from north central Germany, on the other hand,



"Amerika, du hast es besser"
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

were attracted not to heavily-German Wisconsin, but to Cincinnati and St. Louis where more of their Landsmänner had already put down new roots and with whom they were more familiar or comfortable. While these examples might be multiplied many times, this pattern of self-segregation mirrors the diversity of German immigrants and suggests that regional origin or even local neighborhood often counted more for German self-identification than common language or cultural background.

If the absence of a common national state until well into the nineteenth century or the persistence of local ties all combined to accentuate the diversity of the German immigrant experience, still another divisive ingredient was the long-term inability or unwillingness of many Germans to overcome the sectarian divisions and distrust that was another hallmark of their past. Ever since Martin Luther and the sixteenth-century Reformation, Germans have had to confront one another across a deep religious divide, and under these circumstances it was exceedingly difficult for German immigrants—like their fellow countrymen who remained home—to forge a unified, national identity.

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German-Americans

enhanced life in US

[German-American, from Page 5]

across confessional lines. Not for nothing, therefore, did German immigrants prefer to settle among their coreligionists. Wisconsin, for example, has proportionately more Catholics of German origin than does Nebraska. The former attracted settlers from predominantly Catholic southern Germany, and the latter drew immigrants from the Protestant north.

Beyond dissimilarities shaped by regional or religious experience, German immigrants to America were differentiated by class or social background and time of arrival in their new homeland. Until the First World War in 1914 most German immigrants were agricultural workers or simple craftsmen who came from agricultural regions in northern and eastern Germany. Between 1830 and 1845, however, this pattern was altered a bit to include a higher proportion of prosperous, skilled, or educated people than at any other time in the nineteenth century. These newcomers, as one historian describes them, were people of modest means, neither large-scale landowners nor hired agricultural workers. Their numbers included small, independent farmers, village shopkeepers, and craftsmen. Few came from large towns or cities.

Although their numbers were fewer, Germans who immigrated in the years following the First World War were on the whole better educated, more highly skilled, and more urban than their predecessors. These assets, however, did not always translate into economic advantage. With the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 some of these post-1918 immigrants fell on hard times, experienced the pain of unemployment, or perceived themselves as the victims of governmental neglect. Although the vast majority of these recently-arrived immigrants continued to believe in the promise of their new homeland, some 25,000 or so joined the Nazi-dominated German-American Bund. A few, especially those with engineering or tool-making skills, were recruited by German agents to return to Germany where they found employment in the Nazi rearmament program leading up to the Second World War. Interestingly enough, their descendants in present-day Germany, at least until the early 1970s, were still known as *Amis*, the slang term for Americans.

The rise of the Hitler dictatorship, of course, altered

once again the socio-economic background of German immigrants. Between 1939 and 1941, for example, at least 100,000 German refugees fleeing political, racial, or religious persecution were admitted into the United States. What was so striking about these arrivals was the high proportion of academics, scientists, technicians, authors, artists, musicians, and composers.

With the end of the Second World War in 1945 another million or more Germans made their way to our shores. Historians know little about this cohort, and only now are they becoming the focus of scholarly attention. Some of these immigrants were the brides of US military personnel stationed in postwar Germany. Others were former prisoners of war (POWs) who had spent their captivity in the continental United States for much of the war. Still others were those Germans both from the eastern part of the Reich itself and from the German ethnic Diaspora scattered across Hungary, Rumania, or Yugoslavia. They were the victims of the territorial transfers and population expulsions that came in the wake of Germany's military collapse in 1945. This diversity within German-American society has, as one observer noted, "guaranteed political weakness." Fragmentation along the lines of provincial background, religious preference, patterns of wealth, or occupational structure has meant for little agreement for a course of political action. Attempts in this direction between the two World Wars all ended in failure. With the passage of time, furthermore, as German-Americans became ever more assimilated, they no longer quite constitute the distinctive group that they once were. Doubtless this development diminished further what political influence some of their members may have desired—and their critics feared.

But even if the diversity and fragmentation of German ethnic society in America restricted a German-American political reach, and the process of assimilation has blurred their uniqueness, German-American cultural contributions continue to play a distinguished role in American life, to make their new homeland an even better place, and to reinforce America's distinctive features that Goethe celebrated so long ago. The cultural values and the varieties of experience these immigrants brought with them to their new homeland, in addition to their good sense, thrift, and industry, all permitted them to make remarkable contributions in science, technology, scholarship, manufacturing, commerce, and agriculture. That influence is felt to this very day.

Goethe House has new leadership

[Beger, from Page 3]

spoke another. The uncle, aunt and cousins spoke Bayerisch. One family friend came from Berlin and another spoke a mixture of Bayerisch and Schwäbisch.

Within this group I experienced learning German similar to TPR (Total Physical Response). My mother-in-law taught me the necessary vocabulary as she showed me how to make Spätzel and Pfannkuchensuppe. A family friend did the same as she made a Rauschgoldengel.

Over the years I have had many opportunities to observe language acquisition. Our children attended Milwaukee German Immersion School grades K 4-5 and continued German classes in different high schools. I taught middle and high school German for over 20 years. I attended workshops and acquired a shelf of books: "Learn German in 7 Days," "German in 10 Minutes a Day," "Learn German the Fast and Fun Way." I wrote the curricula for the current adult classes and Kindercamps offered by Goethe House.

I continue to look at new approaches to teaching German. One of my goals as executive director is to increase the number and types of classes Goethe House offers. The first step is a new class: **German for Travelers**, which will begin in April.

On May 2, Goethe House will be the host for a breakfast and workshop for middle and high school German teachers. One session will focus on ideas to increase enrollment. Another session will be a "Mini" Baustein. John Pustejovsky and Mark Wagner will share their expertise on the computer program "Audacity." Pustejovsky is associate professor of German at Marquette University. Wagner teaches German at Nicolet

[Benz, from Page 3]

In 1978 Benz was elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Greater Milwaukee Convention and Visitors Bureau and served in that capacity for 3 years.

He is presently serving as the Moderator of the First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa. He is also serving as the Vice-Chairman of the Wisconsin Congregational Home in Brookfield, Wisconsin. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the United Seniors of Wisconsin, a charitable non-profit corporation.

He married Joanne in 1962. She recently passed away. They have 3 sons and 10 grandchildren.

High School. Lastly a listening session where we can ask teachers how Goethe House may support their efforts to encourage the study of German.

We want to reach out to the college community. Later in May we would like to meet with professors of German to plan cultural events on the Milwaukee School of Engineering campus for German students. Eine Filmnacht? Could this be expanded to bring in not only German students but MSOE students too? Ein Nachmittagkonzert?

This summer we hope to increase our partnership with MSOE by holding a Kindercamp on the MSOE campus. Also during the summer we would like to reactivate the Academic Advisory Board to enlist this panel of educators to create more ways Goethe House can support the study of German in the community.

I would like to see Goethe House become a central meeting place for the study of German for all ages.

Bausteine

is a professional development workshop developed and conducted by and for teachers of German K-16 in southeastern Wisconsin.

On **May 2, 2009**, Goethe House and Wisconsin AATG present a "**mini-Baustein**" as part of the Goethe House teacher's forum:

**"A quick lesson in Audacity:
Using free, simple software
to improve listening skills"**

Presented by John Pustejovsky and Mark Wagner

Bausteine was begun in 2004 by two members of the Goethe Institut's TrainerNetzwerk, Mark Wagner of Nicolet High School, and John Pustejovsky of Marquette University. Workshop themes have included:

- teaching with music
- Poetry: spoken art for the German classroom
- Something to Talk About: Ideas for Speaking Activities
- Better Discussion through Better Questions
- Improving Pronunciation

For information contact

john.pustejovsky@marquette.edu

by Jan Beger

Spielplatz



Activities for children or for those young at heart... ☺

Write an Instant Spring Poem

- 1) Think of a spring word { like flowers, wind, robin }
- 2) Write the first word again on the second line & add another word to it
- 3) Write the same two words again on the third line and add another word to it to make a sentence
- 4) Line four add one more word until there are ten words in all.

Spring

Spring brings

Spring brings flowers

Spring brings flowers back

Versuch'

auch

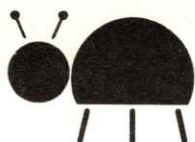
auf Deutsch !

Frühling

Frühling bringt

Frühling bringt Blumen

Frühling bringt Blumen bald



USE AS A PAPER WEIGHT WHEN SPRING WINDS BLOW

Ladybug Rocks

Supplies : smooth clean rock, acrylic paints black & color of your choice, black Sharpie marker, white craft glue, acrylic sealer spray, wiggle eyes, pencil.

1. Paint rock in desired color, allow to dry. Lighter colors will require more coats.
2. Paint ¼ of the front of the rock { the head } black.
3. Starting at the base of the head, draw line with black Sharpie down center of back.
4. Dip the end of pencil eraser in black paint & dot spots on back.
5. Once the paint is dry spray rock with sealer. Allow to dry completely.
6. Attach wiggle eyes with glue and let dry.

Wie heißen sie ?



Use the word fragments in the box to find the words

Re	Fro	Blu	nin	ne
Ka	gen	chen	gen	Re
gen	bo	Vo	Re	ter
schirm	sch	me	gel	Sch
met	Ei	gen	ling	Bie

Sources : <http://www.labbe.de>
<http://eetweb.lr.k12.nj.us/forms/SpringPoem.htm>
<http://www.Enchantedlearning.com>
<http://crafts.Kaboose.com>

Goethe House's Annual Meeting: a gala event at the Grohmann Museum

Goethe House of Wisconsin held its annual meeting and dinner on Dec. 3, 2008, at the Grohmann Museum on the campus of the Milwaukee School of Engineering. The star of the evening was the "Man at Work" art collection donated to MSOE by Dr. Eckhart Grohmann, a MSOE Regent and avid art collector.



Dr. Eckhart Grohmann, Fred Keller and Dan Sweeney view a painting. Keller and Sweeney are directors of Goethe House.



Dr. Herman Viets, president of MSOE, is shown with his wife, Pam (left), and Lorraine L. Hoffmann, a Goethe House director and a member of the MSOE Board.

Goethe in love: “...his dream will never come true.”

Martin Walser's
new novel on Goethe,
“Ein liebender Mann”
(A Man in Love)

A review

By Sebastian Luft

Friends of Goethe House will be interested in a new novel about the person after whom this institution is named. The famous novelist Martin Walser, who has written many well known books in the last four decades (*Halbzeit* and *Ein fliehendes Pferd* being perhaps the most known), has now written a “true story” about our old man—with some poetic license, to be sure.

The bare facts are: Goethe, at age seventy-four, some years after having lost his wife Christiane (in 1816) and having survived a bout with pericarditis (a heart disease), meets once again the 19-year old Ulrike von Levetzow, while spending the summer in the spa town of Marienbad in 1823. He immediately falls in love with the girl he has known from previous years, but who has now blossomed into a beautiful young woman. In his enthusiasm, he asks the mother (as the head of household) for the daughter's hand, as was appropriate at the time, but she turns down his request. On his trip back to Weimar, he composes the *Marienbader Elegien*, one of his finest works, to process his sorrow and disappointment. He prefaces these elegies with the famous epithet: “Und wenn der Mensch in seiner Qual verstummt, / Gab mir ein Gott zu sagen was ich leide.” (“And when a human being falls silent in his torment / a God gave me the capacity to express my suffering.”)

During the time in Marienbad, Goethe and Ulrike are often seen together in public, walking through the promenades, sipping the spa town's healthy water. Since Goethe was a celebrity at the time already, word got out very quickly of his new “acquaintance,” and as a consequence, Goethe suffered ridicule as a “lecher,” a “dirty old man.” It is ironic that Walser, himself over seventy, was also, as a reaction to his sensitive and tender descriptions of Goethe's feelings—the novel is written from Goethe's standpoint—called the same names after



Ulrike von Levetzow

the book's release. Walser has bitterly complained in public about this verdict.

In an age that hails youth and prefers Botox injections over life wisdom, nobody wants to hear about a man of over seventy years having romantic feelings for a woman, and such a young one to boot! It is an unfair verdict indeed. For what Walser achieves is nothing short of creating a faithful, or at least credible, image of the inner emotional world of the great poet. Goethe, who was constantly being approached by petitioners from all sides and asked for all kinds of favors, knew he had to keep up appearances and act the “Olympian” he was hailed to be. (I am not sure this is factually true, but at one point in the book he chastises his servant for secretly selling locks of his hair to women.) These parasites, which he constantly had to fend off politely, included, as he was well aware, women who had fallen in love with Goethe's youthful novel, *Sorrows of Young Werther*, and who imagined the author of this book, which Goethe loathed in old age, to be just like sentimental Werther. What they loved, or thought they loved, had nothing to do with the person in the flesh; hence there was, for Goethe, no possible way from superficial adoration to a possible romantic involvement. And indeed, one of the things that attract Goethe to Ulrike is her complete disdain for, and even ridicule of, his status as *Dichterrfürst*. In other words, Goethe was well aware of the discrepancy between his

[Please turn to Love, Page 12]

Goethe in love:

[Love, from Page 11]

public persona, which he had to keep up simply to protect himself, and his "real self," which, like a giddy teenager, had fallen in love with Ulrike head over heels.

The way in which Goethe comes to terms with this discrepancy between public and private is brilliantly described by Walser.

This was Goethe's tragic situation: It is one thing to live the public life, where everybody constantly expected brilliant quips, and to be ironic about it, which he certainly was. It is another, if one does this at the expense of having to bottle up one's feelings that yearn to burst out. But Goethe is no romantic fool either, at least in Walser's story. He is well aware of the fact that after the initial rejection by Ulrike's mother his dream will never come true. Yet he is eaten up by jealousy as he hears, both through third parties as well as through Ulrike's letters, that she spends the night on the town with a rich jewel merchant—and is clearly set up by her mother to marry this affluent but arrogant young man. But her steady stream of letters, written in a "code" they had devised over the summer, keep his hopes up and set off an emotional flurry each time he receives them. He is very much palpable as a Mensch, when Walser describes him as falling into his armchair upon receipt of a new letter, his hands shaking and ordering a case of beer from his servant, asking him to keep the world at bay for the next twenty-four hours.

Things come to a head when Goethe receives an invitation from the Levetzovs to attend a New Year's ball with them in Berlin. As he casually rides through his hometown Weimar in his carriage some days before the event, Goethe, who was short-sighted but famously refused to wear eye-glasses, sees a group of people whom he believes are the Levetzovs (Ulrike, her mother, and her two younger sisters) and immediately orders to be driven back home. He sends his servant to go back and verify if it is indeed them: the hunch is confirmed. Suddenly Goethe realizes he was set up: on their way to Berlin through Weimar, they do not bother to drop in to see him but only want to meet him in Berlin to have a celebrity at their table during the ball. At that point he is able to let go; he feels liberated and goes home to fall into a deep sleep for nearly a day. He thinks he is over it as he awakens, but, as the somewhat lewd last paragraph indicates, not quite yet...

The reviewer, Sebastian Luft, is associate professor in Marquette University's Philosophy Department and a director of Goethe House.

Walser has given us a unique insight into the emotional, as well as poetic and philosophical, world of Goethe. It is his Goethe, but he has painted a realistic, sensitive and very personal image of the great poet, who is at the end of the day simply that: ein liebender Mann, a man in love—an ageless phenomenon. While his descriptions of Goethe's inner life sometimes border on kitsch, it is nevertheless a credible rendering of someone in love, who happens to be one of the most revered persons in Germany at the time. Ulrike did not fare much better in the public eye: She, who never married, got so annoyed by her being referred to as "Goethe's last lover" that she felt forced to publish a public statement, rejecting the notion that there ever was anything more intimate between the two. As she wrote long after Goethe's death: Though she admired and even adored the great man, her conclusion was: Keine Liebschaft war es nicht.

Martin Walser: "Ein liebender Mann"

Rowohlt Verlag: Hamburg, 2008.

German film at UWM

By Jill Haas

Experimental Tuesday, April 28 - 7pm - Free Screening

Der Riese (The Giant)

(Michael Klier, Germany, 81 min., video, 1983)

rare screening of Michael Klier's early 80's West German "city-symphony".

A Der Riese (The Giant) is solely comprised of video taken from remote-controlled surveillance cameras stationed in various German cities. Recordings of public streets, shopping centers, airports, train stations and department stores are presented without commentary (with music by Mahler and Wagner) along side views recorded in offices, hospitals, and private dwellings. A tension mounts almost imperceptibly throughout Der Riese, as these dehumanized recordings of people accumulate traces of atmosphere and individuality allowing for the emergence of speculative narratives.

Germany's 60th anniversary party trimmed



A one-day event now is scheduled for May 23rd

Many Germans who were looking forward to celebrations to mark their country's 60th anniversary are going to be disappointed. Instead of three days of party, there will be a rather more sedate one-day event.

It's sobering news.

While classical music lovers can still, in all likelihood, look forward to a concert with top conductor Kurt Masur, Rolling Stones fans will be devastated that a free concert featuring the rock band will now no longer take place. Other spectacular program events are also going to be axed.

The taxpayer rather than private sponsors will now pick up the bill for the new slim line version of the celebrations, which will be run by Germany's Federal Press Office. The costs are estimated to run to some 3.5 or 4.5 million euros.

What remains unclear is how much the change of plans is simply down to the effects of the recession currently hitting Germany, and how much it is the result of a political campaign against the proposed events - the latter fueled, in part, by fears that the program would be hijacked by commercial interests, in particular by Germany's auto industry.

Government spokesman Thomas Steg said that the agency charged with organizing the celebrations,



Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and other members of her CDU Party were due to address the crowds on the first day of the event.

Media Event, had been unable to find enough sponsors. But he also added that it was important to remember that the party should be about "citizens celebrating themselves."



The party near the Brandenburg Gate will also mark the Fall of the Wall

He said a one-day event would now take place on May 23 to celebrate both the anniversary of the signing of Germany's Basic Law, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany (then West Germany) in 1949 and the 20th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall - which actually takes place this November.

[Please turn to Party, Page 14]



Archaeology report: Germans deceived Egyptians into exporting Nefertiti Bust

Germany's 60th Anniversary Party has been trimmed

[Party, from Page 13]

"We are a middle-sized, civilian power in Europe," said Steg, as he justified the slimming down of the plans.

German interior ministry spokesman Stefan Paris expressed "regret" at the pull-out by Media Event. He said that they had put forward a "very good and sound program," but that their decision had been guided by business considerations. The celebrations would now take place in a "reduced" form, Paris added.

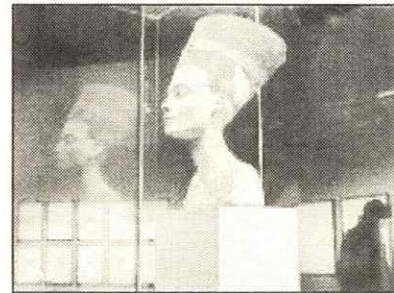
But Media Event said in a letter published in Die Welt newspaper that a "political campaign" waged against the event had led existing sponsors to jump ship. "Understandably, no firm would like to be associated with an event that has been so badly mauled by the press." The agency was planning to finance the three-day bonanza almost exclusively with commercial sponsorship.

The planned spectacle with a car show, a light pyrotechnic show, celebrity chefs, as well as Mick Jagger and company, had come under heavy fire from the SPD in particular. The Social Democrats' Secretary-General Hubertus Heil described it as "unworthy and embarrassing" also dubbing it "a small-minded car show."

Senior Social Democrats also criticized the fact that the keynote speakers on 23rd May did not include members of the SPD.

Besides the potential sensitivity of such an event in the current economic climate and an election year, Germany is notoriously ill at ease when it comes to national celebrations. Germany's national holiday on 3rd October - that marks German reunification - is a notably low-key affair worlds away from France's self-congratulatory July 14th spectacle.

-Deutsche Welle



The Nefertiti has been the center of German-Egyptian disagreement for decades

A document unearthed recently indicates German archaeologists may have duped Egyptian customs officers into letting them smuggle the bust of Nefertiti to Berlin nearly a century ago. German officials reject the claim.

Details of the document, which could prompt calls from Egypt for a return of the 3,400-year-figure of the Pharaonic queen, hailed as the world's most beautiful woman, were revealed by German news magazine Der Spiegel.

Written in 1924, the archival material recounts a meeting held on Jan. 20, 1913 between Ludwig Borchardt and Egypt's chief antiquities inspector Gustave Lefebvre to divide the treasures found in archaeological digs.

It indicates that Borchardt, the archaeologist who discovered the bust in 1912, deliberately withheld its true value from Egyptian authorities.

But the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, which is in possession of the bust, has rejected claims that the finds were not divided up fairly.

Nefertiti has the chief wife of Pharaoh Akhenaten who ruled about 1350 BC.

Germany, starting with Adolph Hitler's Nazi regime, has refused Egyptian requests to return the bust, insisting that its legal ownership of the bust is beyond question.

At the end of February, the bust was to be moved to the Neues Museum in Berlin.

-Deutsche Welle

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Goethe Words of Wisdom

In German

Deswegen sagte man ganz richtig;
"Wer die Menschen betrügen will,
muss vor allen Dingen das Absurde
plausibel machen."

In English

That's why one said quite correctly:
"He who wants to cheat the people
has - above all - to make the
absurd sound as if it makes sense."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe